

The Conquered Conquers: The Art of Exile in Josephus

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Abstract

Josephus may have looked like a loser. His nation had suffered profound military defeat in AD 70. Throughout the empire, Jews experienced marginalization. Though Josephus had legitimate reason to surrender his own views and conform to perspectives of the majority, he did the opposite. In *The Jewish War* and *The Antiquities of the Jews*, he instead lays claim to victory and recommends that others join him in his perspective on the world.

In *The Conquered Conquers: The Art of Exile in Josephus*, I present a framework which seeks to account for such confidence on the part of Josephus. I demonstrate that Josephus' literary approach mimics in significant fashion the approaches of Musonius, Dio Chrysostom, and Favorinus. These three philhellenic philosophers were subjected to exile, yet they found ways to retain their confidence. Though marginalized by the predominant powers of their day, they expressed in writing specific perspectives which contributed to their sense of victory. While Josephus was not a physical exile, the distinctiveness of his views positioned him as an exile of thought. Like the philhellenic philosophers, Josephus also crafted his writing to lay claim to victory in the midst of apparent defeat.

In arguing that Josephus was an exile of thought, I seek to characterize Jewish status in the Roman Empire in the first century AD. I engage rather optimistic views of Jewish status as presented by Eric Gruen, Martin Goodman, and Louis Feldman. I also consider the contrarian view of Peter Schäfer, who foregrounds the reality of anti-Judaism. I propose that seemingly contradictory threads of evidence can find alignment when distinguished based on the societal strata that produced them. After characterizing the positions of imperial administration, local governments, and the general populace, I propose a consistent theme: there was an underlying current of antipathy toward Judaism linked to the exclusivist nature of Jewish theology. This current could lay low, but it also could erupt. An environment of risk was constant.

This environment of risk informs our understanding of Josephus. Though an exile of thought in a world so different than he, Josephus humbly lays claim to victory.

Introduction

John Barclay, in a chapter entitled “The Empire Writes Back,” suggests a link between “post-colonial theory” and Josephus.¹ Post-colonial theory, which initially proposes to explore the lingering cultural effects of a colonizing power once that power has withdrawn, also grapples more generally with the dynamic existing between dominant and subordinate peoples. Barclay, positioning Rome as the dominant culture and Josephus’ Judaism as the subordinate one, suggests that while Josephus may have addressed Rome in a respectful and even commendatory fashion, subversion was lurking beneath.

As an example, Barclay describes how Josephus counters the argument by a Hellenized Egyptian, Apion, that repeated Jewish defeat at the hands of other countries and their subsequent subservience is evidence that Jewish culture is inferior. Josephus lists others that experienced defeat but were not looked down upon as a consequence:

ἔῶ βασιλέας τοὺς ἐπ’ εὐσεβείᾳ διαβοηθέντας [ᾧν ἕνα Κροῖσον], οἷαις ἐχρήσαντο συμφοραῖς βίου· ἔῶ τὴν καταπρησθεῖσαν Ἀθηναίων ἀκρόπολιν, τὸν ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ναόν, τὸν ἐν Δελφοῖς, ἄλλους μυρίους, καὶ οὐδεὶς ὠνείδισεν ταῦτα τοῖς παθοῦσιν, ἀλλὰ τοῖς δράσασιν.

I say nothing of such kings as have been famous for piety, particularly of one of them whose name was Croesus, nor what calamities he met with in his life; I say nothing of the citadel of Athens, of the temple at Ephesus, of that at Delphi, nor of ten thousand others which have been burnt down, while nobody cast reproaches on those that were the sufferers, but on those that were the actors therein.²

The final phrase, “. . . while nobody cast reproaches on those that were the sufferers, but on those that were the actors therein,” is the text Barclay latches onto. Barclay’s position can be paraphrased in this way: “Look, Josephus is subtly launching a barb at the Romans. In order to insulate Jews from Apion’s reproach of their defeats, Josephus shows that being defeated is not

¹ Edmondson, Mason, and Rives, *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome* (2005) 316ff.

² AA 2.131. This and all subsequent quotations from Josephus, unless otherwise indicated, come from Whiston’s translation of *The Works of Josephus* (rev. 1987).

always evidence of inferiority. Sometimes people look down on the victors. Apion is rebutted. But perhaps there is something more going on as well. Josephus may be subtly assaulting those who destroyed the temple in Jerusalem. The Jews had suffered defeat, but it was the Romans who were the victors, those who ‘acted,’ and Josephus has said that reproach should be cast on those who did the deed. Perhaps Josephus is generally deferential, but here he has taken a sort of revenge. He continues to represent the Jews as subservient, but he has also shown himself to be in the right. Deniability is maintained, yet Josephus has scored a hit on the Roman eagle.”

Barclay acknowledges that this argument is a bit tenuous. There is no incontrovertible indication that Josephus was contemplating all the potential implications Barclay highlights. One could propose that Josephus was simply trying to show the fallacy of Apion’s argument, not intending there to be a second conquest, that of Rome, via his rebuttal. Nevertheless, Barclay shows a door to be open. He feels justified in seeking indication that Josephus believed the Jews had not truly been made subservient. Perhaps their victory was only a moral one, but it could still be a victory.

It is this sense, that Josephus in some way viewed himself as being on the winning side even after profound setback, which drives this project. In *The Conquered Conquers: The Art of Exile in Josephus*, I present a framework which can, at least in part, account for such confidence. I demonstrate that Josephus’ literary approach mimics in significant fashion the approach employed by three philhellenic philosophers exiled by Roman emperors at the end of the first century AD and at the beginning of the second. As those philosophers retained their sense of superiority and a confidence that they were “in the right” in spite of their circumstances, so Josephus could proceed with optimism in a world where his people were subject to denigration both covertly and overtly.

To associate Josephus with such exiled philosophers, I argue first that tension did exist between a Jew like Josephus and the world that surrounded him. So, the first part of this project will focus in detail on the status of Jews in the Roman Empire during the imperial period.

In chapter 1 (“Jewish Status: Perspectives on the Problem”), I will engage the different perspectives that four prominent scholars offer on the question of Jewish status during the imperial period. Three of the scholars offer a rather optimistic view of Judaism in the Roman period. One scholar represents a pessimistic point of view.

Erich Gruen offers a thorough and forceful jumping off point for this discussion. He engages a significant number of fundamental issues, arguing strongly for an optimistic view of Judaism in the imperial period. His approaches include recontextualizing negative events in an effort to support a positive perspective, as well as challenging the truthfulness of the historical record in order to inoculate an optimistic position against evidence to the contrary. I will engage Gruen with respect to some of his factual claims. I will propose that some of his argumentation may seem unnecessarily compelling because of the employment of false choices. Nevertheless, in the end Gruen remains a forceful proponent of the optimistic view.

Martin Goodman maintains a similarly optimistic view. He proposes that while the outward customs of Judaism were certainly distinctive, there was no behavior on the part of Jews that would authentically threaten their neighbors. He feels that the distinctiveness of Jewish theology was in no way foregrounded. In particular, he contends that conversions were not an objective of Jews, and so pagans would have little opportunity to feel confronted by Judaism.

The final proponent of optimism to be considered is Louis Feldman. While he is much more open to acknowledging that there were in fact negatives which Jews faced, he nevertheless argues for an optimistic view of Judaism in the imperial period. He does this, essentially, based

on a single proposed observation. He claims that there were an extraordinary number of conversions to Judaism. Whatever negatives there may have been, then, they obviously paled in comparison to the evident attractiveness of the Jewish religion. Different currents of data on Jewish status may exist. But in the end, if people continued to find Judaism attractive, life could not have been all that bad for a Jew.

While Gruen, Goodman and Feldman promote an optimistic view of Jewish status in the Roman Empire, Peter Schäfer suggests the opposite. He does not deny the presence of positives when considering life for Jews in the first century AD, but he makes clear that the negatives cannot be dismissed as inconsequential. He foregrounds evidence highlighting the pagan perspective that Jews hated non-Jews. He notes the presumption, as inaccurate as it may have been, that the distinctiveness of Jewish religion was evidence that Jews looked down on others. He also highlights the consequence of this perception: enemies responded to perceived hate with actual hate, a despising of Jews by non-Jews. In making the case for a more pessimistic view of Jewish status, Schäfer also seeks to identify the ultimate cause – who is to blame.

With regard to all of the optimistic and pessimistic views, I offer initial analysis and reaction. When I have evaluated all the perspectives, I engage in subsequent chapters the dilemma created when a similar body of evidence results in disparate interpretations, proposing a resolution to what may appear to be incompatible views. In particular, I suggest that the various pieces of evidence, which admittedly can appear to fall into either an optimistic or pessimistic camp, in fact can be tied together by a particular thread: while there could be times when Jews avoided negativity, nevertheless there was a persistent undercurrent of antipathy toward Jews brought about by a sense on the part of some that a Jew's maintenance of distinctive practices and convictions was an unspoken yet clear rejection of the practices and beliefs of the pagans.

To lay the groundwork for this contention, in chapter 2 (“Jewish Status: Classifying Ancient Views”) I consider a key feature which contributes to the seemingly incompatible optimistic and pessimistic strands of evidence existing with regard to Jewish status in the empire. The complicating reality is that there were multiple relevant entities each with a distinct, and sometimes malleable, view of Judaism – imperial administration, local governments, and the common people. Making the reality even more complex, fascinating family relationships between Jews and influential members of the imperial family had the potential to favorably impact imperial policy toward Jews. I examine in some detail the nature of these social relationships and then move on to define with greater precision how the perspectives of government entities could vary depending on the nature of that institution – imperial or local. I also demonstrate how the perspectives of government could vary significantly from the attitudes of the local populace. Ultimately, categorizing opinions toward Judaism based on the source of those opinions can help bring order to an otherwise confusing collection of evidence.

Once I have characterized the various constituencies, in chapter 3 (“Jewish Status: A Source of Antipathy”) I propose and then evaluate in detail a likely source for the antipathy present within particular constituencies of the empire. The exclusivist nature of Jewish theology proves a key factor in how individuals responded to Judaism. Josephus himself appears eager to present such a concept with a tone of moderation. Careful analysis of various passages of Josephus demonstrates that he could be careful and circumspect. At the same time, even in Josephus the underlying reality of Jewish exclusivism remained intact. But did pagans perceive this theological exclusivism? While there is no question that outward Jewish customs attracted attention among outsiders, there is also clear evidence that underlying convictions were known to those around them. I argue that this exclusivist theology could be perceived by outsiders as

threatening. Consideration is then given to assigning blame for this threat – is Jewish theology/philosophy responsible, or can blame properly be assigned elsewhere? In the end, the resulting tension created a sense of risk for those who sincerely embraced the Jewish perspective.

Josephus, as a Jew, operated in this environment where Jews stood out, separate in significant ways from the society which surrounded. How did the the reality of being distinct because of his convictions impact his literary approach? I propose that the circumstances of three exiled philhellenic philosophers offer a template through which the writings of Josephus can profitably be read. In chapter 4 (“An Exilic Path to Follow”) I explore the lives and ideas of Musonius Rufus, Dio Chrysostom, and Favorinus, philosophers who were separated from their homeland by Nero, Vespasian, Domitian, and Hadrian. In their exile, each of these men took a philosophical stand which laid claim to victory in the face of apparent defeat.

While having much in common, each of these exiles also offered unique points of emphasis. Musonius emphasized positives in the face of negatives, demonstrated a Stoic-like acceptance of his circumstances, and affirmed that to be viewed as “in the wrong” does not inevitably mean that one is “in the wrong.” Dio Chrysostom emphasized the role of the divine in controlling the broader circumstances of life. He also claimed that the divine was a source of help to someone like himself when facing a challenge. Favorinus is unique in that he explicitly pointed fellow exiles to the hope of an eternal reward. Life can be hard here, but one can expect something far better in the future.

Chapter 5 (“Josephus Follows the Path to Victory”), then, seeks to demonstrate how Josephus’ own pathway parallels in so many ways the pathways charted by Musonius, Dio and Favorinus. As they were physical exiles, so Josephus was an exile of thought insofar as he embraced a theological system different from the perspectives of those around him. Yet he, in

essence, invites those on the “inside” to join him on the “outside.” He wrote what he did so that readers might learn lessons about the way God interacts with the world. He described the proper path toward blessing, and he invited those who read to apply their minds to God.³ He laid claim to a worldview that he believed others ought to follow. Arrogant? Delusional? Some might see it that way. But not Josephus. Josephus was calmly employing an approach also used by other philosophers, claiming victory in the midst of apparent defeat.

To make this case, specific comparisons will be made with the emphases of each of the three Greek philosophers. Josephus, like Musonius, exemplified confidence in the face of the implication that he was in the wrong, employed a Stoic-like acceptance of the circumstances as they were, and emphasized positives in the face of negatives. Josephus, like Dio, spoke of the dominant role of divine providence in controlling history and then highlighted his confidence that the divine was his personal helper amidst the challenges of life. Josephus, like Favorinus, focused on the expectation of an eternal reward. Josephus confessed that death would not be his end; rather, he had an immortal soul and himself would come to physical life again with a perfect body. This belief in resurrection is reinforced by his association with the Pharisees, a Jewish sect which confessed this same confidence regarding post-death existence. In the end, Josephus believed that everything physical could turn out badly, yet his victorious future would overcome any sense of loss.

It is this theological/philosophical sense of victory, then, which closes the circle with the Greek philosophers. As they could exist in exile with confidence that they were in no way lesser men because of an unjust imperial act, so Josephus could proceed in the face of defeat and subjugation with an optimism that transcended outward circumstance. He was convinced that he

³ *Ant* 1.14-15.

was on the right side of history, a committed follower of the God of Israel. Josephus' God controlled the present, and Josephus looked forward to a joy-filled future. His art – the art of an exile – was his capacity in writing to lay claim to such victory in the face of apparent defeat. Josephus did this, just as Musonius and Dio and Favorinus did. In the end, Josephus also conquered.

CHAPTER 1 – Jewish Status: Perspectives on the Problem

Josephus was a Jew. This ethnic and theological/philosophical heritage was not incidental to Josephus' view of the world nor to his place in that world. While an individual, he could never fully separate – nor would he have wanted to – his individual existence from the history and culture of his people. To better understand how Josephus viewed himself relative to his Greco-Roman audience, then, it becomes important not only to understand Josephus as an individual, but also to understand the social status of Jews more generally during that period of history.

Characterizing Jewish social status is problematic on many levels. While evidence is abundant, a great many details are unavailable. While details are known about specific settings and locations, it is challenging to determine the degree to which such evidence can be generalized for the depicting of Jewish status across the empire. Evidence can seem contradictory at times, and it is difficult to know which types of evidence are most important.

These potential challenges for characterizing Jewish social status in the first century AD may account for the variance one finds as scholars attempt to address the issue. To get a handle on the debate and to begin setting the stage for my own conclusions, the views of four individuals will be presented and evaluated in some detail. The first three scholars represent, as a group, a more optimistic view of Judaism during the imperial period. Erich Gruen (2004) seems most categorical in this regard, actively recharacterizing potentially negative events so as to maintain a positive characterization of Jewish social standing in the first century. Martin Goodman (1994 & 2007) seems more ready to acknowledge negatives, but he employs strategies to marginalize their importance. Louis Feldman (1993) ultimately arrives at a destination similar to that of Gruen and Goodman, but he does it while fully acknowledging that so many negatives

existed. He seeks to overcome those negatives by making a factual argument based on demographics.

As these three scholars present a decidedly optimistic view of Judaism in the first century, Peter Schäfer (1997) offers an alternative view. He highlights the authentic hatred faced by Jews, arguing that antipathy was real and Jews were its targets, and he ultimately arrives at a much more pessimistic perspective on the status of Jews amidst their pagan counterparts.

As the positions of each of these four scholars are presented, I will offer periodic initial analysis of their positions. Overall, I will seek to demonstrate that argumentation offered to support a more optimistic view can legitimately be challenged. The corrective which Peter Schäfer offers, on the other hand, would seem well supported and helpful in characterizing Jewish status more generally.

Gruen's Optimism

Erich Gruen recognizes that many events in the early empire might lead one to conclude that Jews were a persecuted people. While he does not deny that bad things happened to Jews, he works energetically to contextualize those events so as to suggest that life for Jews was not as oppressive as some might make it out to be.

Minimizing Jewish uniqueness

One way Gruen seeks to do this is by presenting Jews as little different from any other group of people. When they did suffer harsh treatment, Gruen suggests, it was not due to some sort of deep-seated anti-Jewish feeling. Rather, a sequencing of very understandable historical occurrences led – in a rather dispassionate way – to the ultimate maltreatment of Jews. Writing specifically about the widespread execution of Jews in areas surrounding Palestine soon after the onset of the Jewish insurrection in AD 66, he opines:

To be sure, outbreak of the insurrection brought reprisal outside the homeland. Inhabitants of cities in the vicinity of Judea made haste to exhibit loyalty to Roman power by turning upon Jews who dwelt in their midst and whose retaliation escalated the violence. Large numbers fell in towns and villages of Galilee, Syria, Phoenicia, and across the Jordan. The riots soon spread to Alexandria, and eventually to Antioch. But pragmatic and cynical considerations prevailed. Alexandrians, Antiochenes, and others were eager to distinguish themselves sharply from the Jews in their cities, in order to avoid the potential wrath of Rome. . . . It will be prudent not to read that fierce dissension and impairment back into the centuries that preceded the loss of the temple. Very different circumstances held in that era for the life of diaspora Jews. It merits close examination in its own terms.¹

While willing to grant that Jews suffered, Gruen suggests that persecution was primarily a consequence of specific historical incidents rather than any long-standing antipathy toward the Jews as a race.

While Gruen does not offer in-depth analysis of the various escalations which followed the outbreak of the Jewish revolt, one can certainly identify details of these events which would seem to make Gruen's case, that external events and behaviors were key triggers rather than a simple innate anti-Judaism. In one of these incidents, Tiberius Alexander, the governor of the city of Alexandria, sent more than two Roman legions into the Jewish quarter of the city to kill and plunder without restraint.² While Josephus reports that there had been constant conflict between the Jews and Greeks, he also acknowledges that one of the sparks for a violent Roman response was an unreasonable ignoring of the governor's plea. After a potentially explosive incident, Tiberius Alexander restrained his military and instead sent emissaries to some of the Jewish leaders, begging the Jews to keep the peace. A group of seditious revolutionaries ridiculed this effort at reconciliation. It was only when the governor recognized that some among the Jews would insist on refusing peace that his military rampage was unleashed. A

¹ Gruen (2004) 6-7.

² *JW* 2.488-498.

massacre resulted, but the complexity of events which preceded could suggest that more was going on than simple blind anti-Semitic rage.

There is another incident which could be read as supporting Gruen's contention that persecution against Jews was the consequence of specific historical incidents rather than long-standing antipathy. Josephus describes an occurrence in Antioch soon after conflict in Jerusalem launched the war between the Jews and Romans: "But about this time when the present war began, and Vespasian was newly sailed to Syria, and all men had taken up a great hatred against the Jews . . ." (καθ' ὃν δὲ καιρὸν ὁ πόλεμος ἀνακεκήρυκτο, νεωστὶ δ' εἰς τὴν Συρίαν Οὐεσπασιανὸς καταπεπλεύκει, τὸ δὲ κατὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων παρὰ πᾶσιν ἤκμαζε μῖσος).³ Notice the imagery in the final phrase of the citation. A literal rendering would read, "The hatred against the Jews was blooming (ἤκμαζε) with everyone." This image of "blooming" speaks of something that was new. If one were seeking out support for Gruen's perspective, one might read this as opening a door to the possibility that there was no previous long-standing hatred against Jews in Antioch. It was contemporaneous historical incidents which caused this anger to blossom. Yes, Antiochenes did hate Jews now, but prior to this, there was no such anger. Of course, one might propose an alternative understanding of "blossom," that the image implies a pre-existent "bud" representing precursors to the eventual violent outbreak of anger. But if one views the picture of "blossoming" as focalizing simply on the fact that this anger was new, the door remains open to Gruen's perspective.

Another detail of this Antioch incident highlights unique historical circumstances that led to the persecution of Jews. As Josephus' recounting proceeds, he explains that the son of the governor of the Jews in Antioch accused his own father before a great crowd in a theater. This

³ JW 7.46-47.

son claimed that his father and others had decided to burn down the entire city of Antioch in a single night. This Jewish son inflamed the passions of the Greeks, and the Greeks savagely slaughtered many of the Jews. From Gruen's perspective, one could emphasize that it was treachery on the part of one Jew – perhaps exaggerating the danger for his own personal benefit – which produced the violent reaction which ensued. Again, this event might suggest that there is something more going on here than simple blind anti-Semitic rage.

While one can read this particular incident in Antioch charitably with regard to Gruen's position, and while one can also see how the previously referenced incidents in Alexandria and in the areas surrounding Palestine might also seem to support Gruen's perspective, such analysis is not the only possible interpretation of these incidents. While acknowledging that there were external triggers which may have had little to do with Jewish ethnicity and yet inspired acts of persecution against them, a good body of evidence suggests that one dare not be too optimistic about the general status of Jews in the Roman Empire in the century preceding and the century following the rise of Augustus.

In the events cited above, one must explore what positioned Jewish people as so noticeably distinct in the Alexandrian milieu. One must ask what made the relationship between Jews and non-Jews so flammable that a single misstep could spark tragedy. While acknowledging that an attack by Jews on Romans elsewhere could make the non-Jewish population in Antioch nervous, the fact that hatred "bloomed" could indicate that there was a preexistent bud on the metaphorical flower, a bud poised to burst. Perhaps there was an underlying current of distrust or discomfort in the hearts of Greeks. Though a son's treachery played a notable role, that does not mean there was no preexistent deeply held antipathy against Jews. While one can appreciate Gruen's eagerness not to overgeneralize attitudes toward

Judaism with regard to the large-scale slaughter of Jews in areas that surrounded Palestine after the Jewish revolt began, at the same time antipathy was so broad-based and seemingly spontaneous that one would dismiss with hesitance the suggestion that tension had been of long-standing.

In fact, a significant body of evidence leads one to envision an environment where Jews could thrive and yet remain at perpetual risk. One could make the case that there was a pervasive, though at times admittedly stereotypical, view of Jews that was not all positive. Josephus offers multiple characterizations which are markedly negative. He speaks of “reproaches that are laid against us by those who bear ill will to us” (ταῖς ὑπὸ δυσμενείας ὑπὸ τινων εἰρημέναις προσέχοντας βλασφημίαις);⁴ “they are in a bad reputation among their neighbors” (κακῶς ἀκούοντες ὑπὸ τῶν ἀστυγειτόνων);⁵ a critique by Apion who says, “if the Jews (says he) be citizens of Alexandria, why do they not worship the same gods with the Alexandrians” (si sunt ciues, eosdem deos quos Alexandrini non colunt);⁶ a description of the motivation of Arabians and Syrians as they joined the Romans against the Jews, that they did this “out of their hatred to the Jews” (τῷ πρὸς Ἰουδαίους μίσει);⁷ a characterizing of historians’ motives, that they would write certain things “out of hatred towards the Jews” (μίσει τῷ πρὸς Ἰουδαίους).⁸ Then, consider a papyrus letter dated to the first half of the first century BC. While much of the letter is indecipherable, and consequently the context is elusive, one phrase near the end is clear: “You know that they loathe the Jews. Greet . . .” (οἶδας γὰρ ὅτι βδελύσσονται Ἰουδαίους. ἀσπάζον . . .).⁹

⁴ AA 1.2.

⁵ AA 1.191 (or 192).

⁶ AA 2.65. A lengthy lacuna exists in all extant Greek manuscripts for *Against Apion* 52-113. This Latin text comes from a manuscript ordered by Cassiodorus, the minister of Theodoric [Thackeray (1926) xviii].

⁷ JW 5.556.

⁸ JW 1.2.

⁹ Tcherikover et al., Vol. 1 (1957) no. 141.

Posing false choices

Gruen works hard to suggest that Jewish uniqueness need not be viewed as the magnet for anti-Jewish behavior, instead suggesting that other historical factors played the significant roles. But that is not the only strategy Gruen employs to counter what might seem to be explicit and undeniable references to an underlying attitude of antipathy directed against Jews. There are occasions where Gruen might be viewed as misdirecting analysis, offering extreme options as potential interpretations of an event with the result that all offered choices are ultimately unsatisfactory. In the end, to avoid one clearly wrong extreme option, the evaluator can feel compelled to select an equally unsatisfactory extreme option, one that happens to be more in line with Gruen's generally optimistic view. Two incidents serve to highlight this particular approach by Gruen. Cicero's defense of Flaccus will offer an initial sample of this persuasive technique. Gruen's analysis of Tiberius' expulsion of Jews from Rome in AD 19 will provide a second case study.

When examining Cicero's defense of Flaccus, who had instituted a ban on the export of gold from Asia which then prevented diaspora Jews from sending offerings to the Jerusalem temple, Gruen asks, "Does he represent a virulent form of anti-Semitism, an example of Roman hostility to that religion and its practitioners?"¹⁰ It is true, Gruen agrees, that Cicero employed rather harsh language against the Jews. He called their religion "a barbarous superstition" (*barbara superstitio*).¹¹ He spoke negatively of Judaism's status both before and after the capitulation of Jerusalem to Pompey in 63 BC:

stantibus Hierosolymis pacatisque Iudaeis tamen istorum religio sacrorum a splendore huius imperi, gravitate nominis nostri, maiorum institutis abhorrebat; nunc vero hoc

¹⁰ Gruen (2004) 20.

¹¹ *Pro Flacco* 67, trans. by Yonge.

magis, quod illa gens quid de nostro imperio sentiret ostendit armis; quam cara dis immortalibus esset docuit, quod est victa, quod elocata, quod serva facta.

While Jerusalem was flourishing, and while the Jews were in a peaceful state, still the religious ceremonies and observances of that people were very much at variance with the splendour of this empire and the dignity of our name and the institutions of our ancestors. And they are the more odious to us now because that nation has shown by arms what were its feelings towards our supremacy. How dear it was to the immortal gods is proved by its having been defeated, by its revenues having been farmed out to our contractors, by its being reduced to a state of subjection.¹²

But, observes Gruen, Cicero also critiques groups other than Jews. He accuses Greeks of being liars:

verum tamen hoc dico de toto genere Graecorum: tribuo illis litteras, do multarum artium disciplinam, non adimo sermonis leporem, ingeniorum acumen, dicendi copiam, denique etiam, si qua sibi alia sumunt, non repugno; testimoniorum religionem et fidem numquam ista natio coluit, totiusque huiusce rei quae sit vis, quae auctoritas, quod pondus, ignorant.

But I say this of the whole race of Greeks; I allow them learning, I allow them a knowledge of many arts; I do not deny them wit in conversation, acuteness of talents, and fluency in speaking; even if they claim praise for other sorts of ability, I will not make any objection; but a scrupulous regard to truth in giving their evidence is not a virtue that that nation has ever cultivated; they are utterly ignorant what is the meaning of that quality, they know nothing of its authority or of its weight.¹³

He accuses Greeks of being immoral: “Do not we appear to prove to you clearly enough, by the authority of these men, the profligate habits and impudent licentiousness of the Greeks?” (satisne vobis coarguere his auctoribus dissolutam Graecorum consuetudinem licentiamque impudentem

¹² *Pro Flacco* 69, trans. by Yonge.

¹³ *Pro Flacco* 9, trans. by Yonge. Cicero has more to say in a similar vein. “When a Greek witness comes forward with a desire to injure a man, he does not think of the words of his oath, but of what he can say to injure him. He thinks it a most shameful thing to be defeated, to be detected, to allow his enemy’s innocence to be proved. That is the contest for which he prepares himself; he cares for nothing beyond. Therefore, it is not the best men, nor the wisest, but the most impudent and talkative men who are selected as witnesses.” (Graecus testis cum ea voluntate processit ut laedat, non iuris iurandi, sed laedendi verba meditatatur; vinci, refelli, coargui putat esse turpissimum; ad id se parat, nihil curat aliud. itaque non optimus quisque nec gravissimus, sed impudentissimus loquacissimusque deligitur, *Pro Flacco* 9); trans. by Yonge. Also, Cicero says of the Greeks, “Indeed, my speech would be interminable if I were to take it into my head to unfold the faithlessness of the whole nation in giving evidence” (etenim potest esse infinita, si mihi libeat totius gentis in testimoniis dicendis explicare levitatem, *Pro Flacco* 12); trans. by Yonge.

videmur?)¹⁴ He then calls out Asian Greeks, whom Cicero sees as distinguishing themselves in badness even from fellow Greeks in the Greek homeland. He accuses Asian Greeks of being inconstant. First giving the impression of friendship, they then turned on Roman neighbors during the Mithridatic War.

liceat mihi potius de levitate Graecorum queri quam de crudelitate; auctoritatem isti habeant apud eos quos esse omnino noluerunt? nam, quoscumque potuerunt, togatos interemerunt, nomen civium Romanorum quantum in ipsis fuit sustulerunt. in hac igitur urbe se iactant quam oderunt, apud eos quos inviti vident, in ea re publica ad quam opprimendam non animus eis, sed vires defuerunt? aspiciant hunc florem legatorum laudatorumque Flacci ex vera atque integra Graecia; tum se ipsi expendant, tum cum his comparent, tum, si audebunt, dignitati horum antepontant suam.

Let me be allowed rather to complain of the inconstancy of the Greeks than of their cruelty. Are these two men [Asian Greek witnesses at Flaccus' trial] to have influence with a people which they wished utterly to destroy? For whomsoever they could they slew while in the garb of peace; as far as depended on them they annihilated the name of Roman citizens. Shall they then give themselves airs in a city which they hate? among those people whom, if they had their will, they would not look upon? in that republic to the destruction of which it was their power that was unequal, and not their inclination? Let them behold this noble body of ambassadors and panegyrists of Flaccus who have come from the real honest Greece. Then let them weigh themselves in the balance, let them compare themselves with these men; then, if they dare, let them compare their dignity with that of these men.¹⁵

Cicero does lambaste Jews, but he also brings low Greeks. He then targets with even greater disgust those Greeks from Asia. Clearly, Gruen implies, this indicates that Cicero is not prejudicial. Cicero is an equal opportunity critic, not one who has a particular problem with Jewish people. Gruen concludes, "Plainly prejudice is not the issue here, only the strategy of the advocate."¹⁶

So, what options is Gruen offering his readers? In evaluating Cicero's attitude toward Jews, one choice is to see Cicero as a virulent anti-Semite. Or one can recognize that Cicero's

¹⁴ *Pro Flacco* 20, trans. by Yonge.

¹⁵ *Pro Flacco* 61, trans. by Yonge.

¹⁶ Gruen (2004) 21.

critiques of Jews were little more than equal-opportunity put-downs. In that case, Cicero can be seen as displaying no prejudice but simply strategizing as an advocate with essentially neutral views, views transformed into something aggressive simply for the benefit of winning the case. Is that a fair choice? Surely one would hesitate to call Cicero an “virulent anti-Semite” – that would communicate an anti-Jewish attitude that seems to go far beyond what Cicero was displaying. But does that make the alternative correct, that Cicero can be safely characterized as essentially neutral toward Jews? That seems extreme on the other end.

In seeking to characterize the status of Jews in the Roman Empire, then, Gruen offers first an untenable option and then presents as the inevitable alternative an overly optimistic option. While the reader may feel drawn to that overly optimistic option, it is only by presenting a false choice that the optimistic option becomes attractive. The choices offered do not need to be so extreme.

Consider an alternative, a middle road. Gruen accurately notes that Cicero was an equal opportunity critic – Jews, Greeks, and Asian Greeks were all targets. Rather than employing the wide target zone as evidence that Cicero’s attacks were not so much prejudicial as they were legal strategy, what if one proposes that the attacks were a viable legal strategy precisely because they were thoroughly prejudicial? Not all Asiatic Greeks were liars. Not everything any particular Asiatic Greek said was inevitably a lie. But there was a perception among many Romans that such Greeks could not be trusted. Cicero purposefully taps into that. It is strategic advocacy, but the strategy depends on prejudice.

The key question for us is not, ultimately, whether the prejudicial opinions were factual in every respect. As we evaluate the place of Jews in the Roman Empire, the key question is whether underlying prejudicial opinions existed. To address this question in connection with

Cicero's defense of Flaccus, Gruen poses the choice of identifying Cicero as either virulently anti-Semitic or as employing skillfully "the strategy of the advocate." At some level, this is a false choice. There is a third way. Cicero can possess anti-Semitic prejudice, presume that his audience possesses anti-Semitic prejudice, and consequently employ anti-Semitic prejudice as one of his advocacy strategies. Cicero himself, then, becomes a likely indicator of prejudice. Cicero's presumption about his audience implies that he considers such prejudice in others not simply to be likely, but to be expected. Cicero's defense of Flaccus becomes a significant indicator of negative attitudes toward Jews in the first century BC.

Gruen's discussion of Tiberius' expulsion of Jews from Rome in AD 19 provides a second example of this technique of posing two unsatisfactory choices so as to lead the evaluator to a conclusion that conforms more closely to Gruen's largely optimistic view of Judaism. As Josephus presents this incident, he contextualizes it by first describing another incident of imperial justice levied against inappropriate religious practice. He speaks of a Roman noblewoman who was tricked into a sexual relationship on account of her devotion to the goddess Isis.¹⁷ When Tiberius found out about this, he did not act precipitously. Rather, he first investigated the matter. When he did discover the accusations to be true, however, his response was severe. He crucified the priests who were involved, demolished the Temple of Isis, threw her statue into the river, and banished the young man who had tricked the noblewoman.

Immediately after this account, Josephus presents another noble Roman woman who was taken advantage of in the name of religion. Four Jewish men told her that they would take her donation of purple and gold to Jerusalem and present it in her name. After receiving her wealth,

¹⁷ *Ant* 18.65-80.

they spent it on themselves. The woman's husband found out about it, he spoke to Tiberius, and Tiberius compelled all Jews either to become soldiers or to leave the city.¹⁸

In connection with this expulsion, Gruen does refer to citations from Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dio which point to Jewish religion as key to Jews being expelled from Rome under Tiberius in AD 19.¹⁹ However, Gruen then offers this bottom line: "Even if one interprets all the collected evidence as making reference to Jewish rites and practices as the primary targets of repression, this speaks only to the public posture of the authorities, not to authentic motivation."²⁰

With this bottom line, Gruen is setting up the options from which he wishes us to choose. Gruen ends up arguing that either one must conclude that "Tiberius was bent upon the suppression of a distasteful and repugnant religion" and had a "determined policy to stifle Jews as a sect and Judaism as a religion,"²¹ or one must conclude that Tiberius' described repression of Jewish rites and practices was not a reflection of heartfelt motivation to do so, but simply a public posturing on the part of the government.²² Either Tiberius is an anti-Jewish militant or a politician thinking about nothing more than image. This choice is well shaped if one wishes to characterize the expulsion in a way that does not reflect some kind of underlying antipathy against Jews in general, but such a choice appears to permit no middle ground.

It is certainly fair to note that there was not a general and widespread imperial policy to persecute Jews. What remains relevant to the larger question of Jewish life in the Roman Empire in the first century AD, though, is how an event like that described by Josephus could so easily

¹⁸ *Ant* 18.81-84.

¹⁹ *Tac. Ann.* 2.85.4, *Suet. Tib.* 36, and *Dio* 57.18.5a.

²⁰ Gruen (2004) 32.

²¹ Gruen (2004) 32.

²² Gruen (2004) 32.

trigger a larger persecution. In that respect, it appears that Josephus tries to account for this by presenting the Isis incident in parallel.²³ While generally permissive toward the customs and practices of foreigners, Tiberius leaves no doubt after this pair of religious incidents that these religions are to be considered guests. Were some violation to occur in connection with a Roman temple or priests, one would expect consequences. However, one would not expect the expulsion of Roman religion from Rome. But when a foreign faith crossed a line, reactions were less restrained.

The larger point, then, is that the worship of Isis, along with Judaism, to some degree lived on the edge. One can agree that Tiberius did not have a “determined policy to stifle Jews as a sect and Judaism as a religion.”²⁴ Such an extreme position was, admittedly, nonexistent. But to present the issue in such a way might inadvertently minimize the negativity Romans had toward Judaism. Yes, Romans were ready to coexist. No, one could not accurately describe Tiberius’ policy as being intended to wipe out Judaism throughout the empire. At the same time, there was an “authentic motivation”²⁵ on the part of Tiberius that cannot be accounted for simply by noting that Tiberius needed to teach people a lesson. Tiberius was treating crimes committed in connection with foreign religions differently than he would have treated improprieties linked

²³ While this particular example serves to demonstrate Gruen's employment of uncomfortable choices to argue his case, his handling of this particular incident also anticipates another approach he employs – one that I will subsequently address – that of questioning the factuality of certain events. With respect to Josephus' description of the cause of the expulsion, the exploitation of the woman by four Jewish crooks, Gruen comments: “We need not pause over the explanation offered by Josephus. The idea that Tiberius would penalize every Jew in Rome for the misbehavior of four Jewish rascals cannot be taken seriously. Among other things, it would be wildly out of character for that emperor, who frequently mitigated punishments, to indulge in overkill of such proportions. Josephus plainly had no plausible reason to provide. The paired tales of Paulina, the deceived Isis worshiper, and Fulvia, the deceived proselyte, represent an artificial coupling. They reek of folk-tale, romance, and fiction.” [Gruen (2004) 32.] While such an analysis serves Gruen’s overall purpose, the largely unprovenanced presumption that Josephus was making things up seems unnecessarily risky. The events as Josephus presents them can naturally be interpreted in a way that is consistent with other evidence on Judaism in that period, as this project seeks to demonstrate.

²⁴ Gruen (2004) 32.

²⁵ Gruen (2004) 32.

to Roman religion. A lesson was going to be taught, but the ferocity of the consequence was directly linked to the foreignness of the religion that was tied to the crime.²⁶ The expulsion by Tiberius, then, is not best characterized by emphasizing that opposition to Judaism could have been worse. The expulsion, rather, serves as an indicator that foreign religion – in this case, Judaism – did stand out in the minds of Roman officialdom, and not in an altogether positive way.

In the case of Cicero's defense of Flaccus and in the circumstance of the AD 19 expulsion of Jews from Rome, Gruen appears to advance his argument for an optimistic attitude toward the status of Jews by offering seemingly extreme choices. The options offered are framed in a way which might lead the evaluator to conclude that of the options presented, the more optimistic avenue is preferable. When the available options are broadened, however, one recognizes that events which certainly appear to be evidences of negative attitudes toward Jews can in fact be properly interpreted in just that way.

Questioning factual claims

Not only does Gruen offer seemingly extreme choices to argue for an optimistic attitude toward the status of Jews. Gruen also directly challenges the factuality of certain claims. Three examples serve to highlight this strategy. The first instance involves once more Cicero's defense

²⁶ Tacitus also describes this expulsion, speaking of the guilty as being "infected with those superstitions" (ea superstitione infecta, *Annales* 2.85). The religious nature of this expulsion is highlighted in another way by Tacitus in *Annales* 2.85 – individuals could avoid leaving Rome if they would lay aside their impious rites. "There was a debate too about expelling the Egyptian and Jewish worship, and a resolution of the Senate was passed that four thousand of the freedmen class who were infected with those superstitions and were of military age should be transported to the island of Sardinia, to quell the brigandage of the place, a cheap sacrifice should they die from the pestilential climate. The rest were to quit Italy, unless before a certain day they repudiated their impious rites." (actum et de sacris Aegyptiis Iudaicisque pellendis factumque patrum consultum ut quattuor milia libertini generis ea superstitione infecta quis idonea aetas in insulam Sardiniam veherentur, coercendis illic latrociniis et, si ob gravitatem caeli interissent, vile damnum; ceteri cederent Italia nisi certam ante diem profanos ritus exuissent.) Trans. by Church & Brodribb.

of Flaccus, on this occasion considering the motives which led to Flaccus' confiscation of Jewish gold. The second instance of this strategy in play involves another expulsion of Jews from Rome, this time in 139 BC. The final instance deals with yet another removal of Jews from Rome, the expulsion by Claudius in AD 49.

The first example of Gruen challenging facts is the case of Cicero defending Flaccus. At the heart of this case was an accusation against Flaccus. He was alleged to have inappropriately confiscated Jewish gold that was bound for Jerusalem. Were this true, it would be strong additional evidence against an optimistic view of Judaism in Asia Minor. Gruen seeks to minimize the potential impact of such evidence by challenging the factual claim that the ban on the export of gold from Asia was "directed explicitly against Jews."²⁷ He says that "nothing suggests that, and plausibility stands against it. Cicero says only that Flaccus' edict forbade shipment of gold from Asia and that it followed frequent senatorial pronouncements, including one in the orator's own consulship of 63."²⁸

Gruen is implying, then, that Flaccus' action was more monetary policy than it was a direct rebuke to Jews. If Gruen is right, the Flaccus case recedes significantly in any argument seeking to position Judaism as under assault. But is Gruen's interpretation a fair read of Cicero? Does Cicero leave the door open to interpreting the ban on exporting gold as rather generic? Does Cicero back away from the implication that Flaccus was targeting Jews?

It is true that Cicero referred to the Roman Senate's determination, when he was consul, that it was not proper for gold to be exported. While not identifying the scope or nature of this rule, this reference in Cicero's speech does seek to portray Flaccus' behavior as consistent with other Roman actions. But Cicero was not backing away from acknowledging the specific goal

²⁷ Gruen (2004) 21.

²⁸ Gruen (2004) 21. Referring to *Pro Flacco* 67.

Flaccus had in mind. Cicero prefaces his stipulation that “Flaccus issued an edict establishing a law that it should not be lawful for gold to be exported out of Asia” with the explanation, “As gold, under pretense of being given to the Jews, was accustomed every year to be exported out of Italy and all the provinces to Jerusalem . . .” (Cum aurum Iudaeorum nomine quotannis ex Italia et ex omnibus nostris provinciis Hierosolymam exportari soleret . . .)²⁹ Cicero then goes on: “To resist this barbarous superstition [was] an act of dignity, to despise the multitude of Jews, which at times was most unruly in the assemblies in defense of the interests of the republic, was an act of the greatest wisdom” (huic autem barbarae superstitioni resistere severitatis, multitudinem Iudaeorum flagrantem non numquam in contionibus pro re publica contemnere gravitatis summae fuit).³⁰ Cicero in no way is backing away from connecting the export ban to anti-Judaism. On the contrary, he highlights the anti-Jewish rationale. Gruen’s contention that “plainly prejudice is not the issue here” falters.

In fact, prejudice seems to be central to Cicero’s argument. Even if one were to suggest that Cicero himself was not prejudiced and that his argumentation was purely a lawyerly tactic, not reflecting personal feelings at all, Cicero clearly presumes that there is a healthy dose of prejudice on the part of those deciding the case. Regardless of whether Cicero himself believed what he was saying, there is no question that Cicero believed his approach to be persuasive. The Jews were a recognized subgroup. They were a notable special interest faction in Roman popular assemblies.³¹ Their characteristic traits were of a religious nature. It was an act of dignity to stand against such a superstition, and Cicero is unafraid to trumpet such dignity.

²⁹ *Pro Flacco* 67, trans. by Yonge.

³⁰ *Pro Flacco* 67, trans. by Yonge.

³¹ *Pro Flacco* 66.

Gruen's strategy of challenging factual claims comes into play not only in the characterization of Flaccus' action against the Jews. The strategy is also significant in characterizing the expulsion of Jews from Rome in 139 BC. This particular expulsion is not well attested. The only extant account is located in Valerius Maximus' *Memorable Doings and Sayings*.³² Though we have the relevant section of this work only in epitome form, there are two significant epitomes which have survived, thereby making comparison possible as one seeks to recover the original information Valerius sought to share.

Valerius arranged historical anecdotes according to topic rather than according to time. The nature of his groupings, then, serves as an additional interpretive tool, as one can draw legitimate conclusions about a particular event not simply from the description of the event itself, but also from the events that Valerius purposefully associates with it. The section including the Jewish expulsion was titled, "Of Superstitions." The first subject referenced was the mysteries of the Bacchanals at Rome. Described as a "practice newly introduced" (*mos novus institutus*), the rights "were abolished when they passed into pernicious madness" (*cum ad perniciosam vaesaniam iret, sublatus est*).³³ Many of the participants were executed. The second event described a man who was consul in 242 BC: "Lutatius Cerco, who ended the First Punic War, was forbidden by the senate to consult the lots of Praenestine Fortune. For they judged that public business should be conducted under national auspices, not foreign ones." (*Lutatius Cerco, qui primum Punicum bellum confecit, a senatu prohibitus est sortes Fortunae Praenestinae adire: auspiciis enim patriis, non alienigenis rem publicam administrari iudicabant oportere.*)³⁴ Again, notice the focus on the foreignness of the religion. The account of the Jews comes next. Then,

³² Goodman (1994) 82.

³³ *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 1.3.1.

³⁴ *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 1.3.2.

the fourth and final subject referenced was the demolishing of Egyptian temples in 50 BC.

“When the senate decreed that the temples of Isis and Serapis be demolished and none of the workmen dared touch them, Consul L. Aemilius Paullus took off his official gown, seized an axe, and dashed it against the doors of that temple” (L. Aemilius Paullus consul, cum senatus Isidis et Serapis fana diruenda censuisset, eaque nemo opificum attingere auderet, posita praetexta securem arripuit templique eius foribus inflixit).³⁵

From beginning to end, in the section regarding superstitions, one sees a pattern of Roman propriety rejecting foreign forms of religion, in particular when these forms of religion began to or threatened to impact the lives of Romans. Initial tolerance seems evident – for example, the mysteries of the Bacchanals were abolished only when (cum) “they passed into pernicious madness.” Roman reaction does not appear to be knee-jerk. But we do get the sense that when a religion crossed a line of propriety, as defined by Rome, or when a religion proved a threat to Roman piety (either by ignoring Roman practice or by threatening to convert individuals from Roman practice), then government officials took action.

It is in this context that Valerius Maximus speaks of the Jews. Both epitomes contain a summary of this section. First, consider the epitome offered by Julius Paris, probably from the fourth or fifth century AD.

Cn. Cornelius Hispalus praetor peregrinus M. Popillio Laenate L. Calpurnio coss. edicto Chaldaeos citra decimum diem abire ex urbe atque Italia iussit, levibus et ineptis ingeniis fallaci siderum interpretatione quaestuosam mendaciis suis caliginem inicientes. idem Iudaeos, qui Sabazii Iovis cultu Romanos inficere mores conati erant, repetere domos suas coegit.

Cn. Cornelius Hispalus,³⁶ Foreign Praetor, in the Consulship of M. Popillius Laenas and L. Calpurnius, ordered the astrologers by edict to leave Rome and Italy within ten days.

³⁵ *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 1.3.4.

³⁶ According to the Loeb edition of Valerius Maximus, this is Cn. Calpurnius Piso. “The year was 139 and the Praetor Cn. Cornelius Scipio Hispanus, apparently confused with his father, Cn. Cornelius Scipio Hispal(l)us, Consul in 176” (47).

For they spread profitable darkness with their lies over frivolous and foolish minds by fallacious interpretation of the stars. The same Hispalus made the Jews go home, who had tried to infect Roman manners with the cult of Jupiter Sabazius.³⁷

Then, consider the epitome offered by Januarius Nepotianus:

Chaldaeos igitur Cornelius Hispalus urbe expulit et intra decem dies Italia abire iussit, ne peregrinam scientiam venditarent. Iudaeos quoque, qui Romanis tradere sacra sua conati erant, idem Hispalus urbe exterminavit arasque privatas e publicis locis abiecit.

Therefore Cornelius Hispalus expelled the astrologers from the city, ordering them to leave Italy within ten days, lest they tout foreign knowledge. The same Hispalus banished the Jews too from the city (they had tried to pass on their religion to the Romans) and threw out their private altars from public places.³⁸

Note the consistency of the themes in this Jewish portion relative to the surrounding sections in Valerius Maximus. It would seem fair to conclude that as a consequence of behavior that was consistent with Judaism, a significant degree of hostility arose on the part of Romans. This would suggest, then, that cultural, social, and political marginalization was a very real risk – and sometimes a reality – for Jews living in the Roman Empire. While tolerance was present, so too was the recognition that Jewish and Roman religious perspectives were at variance. As a consequence, there would always be a barrier to full incorporation of Jews into Roman society.

Rather than highlight the marginalization evidenced in *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, Gruen seeks to minimize the meaning of Valerius' reporting. He goes so far as to say that "the government, in short, was making a statement, not purging itself of alien ethnic groups."³⁹

While elsewhere he hesitates to deny categorically that Jews were expelled from Rome in 139, Gruen clearly wishes to question the likelihood of that happening; for certain he seeks to

³⁷ *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 1.3.3. The association of Judaism with the Phrygian god Sabazius is puzzling. Schäfer (1997) offers this explanation: "It seems most likely, then, that the 'Jupiter Sabazius' is either a corruption of 'Iao Sabaoth' ['Lord of Hosts,' a name for the Jewish God] . . . or another piece of evidence for the pagan attempts to identify the Jewish God with Jupiter, the highest God of the Roman pantheon. From a historical point of view it is more probable that the Jews try to introduce their 'original' Jewish cult in Rome and that later on, either by Valerius Maximus or by his source, this cult was identified with the one of Jupiter Sabazius." (51)

³⁸ *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 1.3.3.

³⁹ Gruen (2004) 19.

minimize the significance if it did occur. He suggests that proclamations of expulsion could fit into a category of Roman laws that were passed to make a point but were “plainly unenforced and unenforceable.”⁴⁰ He notes as representative examples the sumptuary laws which dictated what species of fish and bird could be served at the table. Surely, he suggests, the Roman government did not follow through.⁴¹ In this context, he characterizes expulsion decrees by saying, “Posturing rather than pragmatism took precedence.”⁴² He encourages further doubt as to the actuality of expulsions with a parenthetical remark: “An occasional removal (or, at least, proclaimed removal) of foreign groups with alien practices could cleanse the conscience without risking serious disruption.”⁴³

It is important to note, as Gruen does, that if one were to assume Jews were expelled in 139 BC, nevertheless there was a prospering Jewish community in Rome subsequent to that. Either the Jewish community continued to exist because some were left behind or it renewed its presence in Roman and then prospered. Such a resurgence, however, need not be evidence that the action taken in 139 was somehow less heartfelt or less authentic than Valerius Maximus appears to imply. The fact that Jews lived in Rome in significant numbers later on does not in itself recommend dodging Valerius’ claims, characterizing them as “not constitut[ing] serious

⁴⁰ Gruen (2004) 18.

⁴¹ While not contemporaneous, an action taken during the consulship of Faustus Sulla and Salvius Otho in AD 52 offers another example of a law that was likely unenforceable. Tacitus, in *Annales* 12.52, reports the banishment of Furius Scribonianus, son of a consul, because he had consulted astrologers about the emperor’s death. Tacitus goes on, “A decree of the Senate was then passed for the expulsion of the astrologers from Italy, stringent but ineffectual.” (de mathematicis Italia pellendis factum senatus consultum atrox et inritum). One can imagine such a law serving to communicate to Claudius senatorial support, even as it would have been exceptionally difficult to expel all astrologers from the entire region of Italy. [Cornelius Hispanus also expelled astrologers, according to Valerius Maximus (I.3.3, Paris epitome – see Smallwood (1981) 129). Gruen seeks to call into question whether Jews were actually expelled by noting that even though astrologers were supposedly expelled, astrologers did not vanish from the Roman scene. When comparing the Hispanus expulsion with the senatorial expulsion of astrologers in AD 52, it is important to note that Hispanus’ expulsion order only affected the city of Rome, while the senatorial order almost two centuries later targeted all of Italy. It is much easier to make the case for the country-wide senatorial order being unenforceable than it is to suggest that a city-wide order was unenforceable.]

⁴² Gruen (2004) 18.

⁴³ Gruen (2004) 19.

evidence . . . for genuine Roman hostility to Jews.”⁴⁴ Whatever happened later, the 139 BC incident need not be viewed as just a show. Valerius’ recounting is most easily interpreted as evidence of the fundamental problem Romans had with religions that violated their sense of propriety and/or directly challenged Roman beliefs through attempted conversions.

As we have seen, Gruen has challenged the facts in his characterization of Flaccus’ confiscation of Jewish gold and he has called into question the expulsion in 139 BC, implying that it may have been little more than a verbal show. Gruen’s strategy of questioning details presented by ancient authors comes into play as well in his analysis of the expulsion of Jews from Rome in AD 49 by Claudius.

The historian Suetonius speaks of the expulsion of Jews from Rome by Claudius. He writes, “Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, [Claudius] expelled them from Rome” (*Iudaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantis Roma expulit*).⁴⁵ Suetonius reports this event in a section where he is describing how Claudius, in many respects, was resetting Roman practice to more traditional norms. Claudius punished freedmen who had been so bold as to take for themselves the rank of equestrian. He made it unlawful for foreigners to adopt Roman names. He freed the people of Ilium from the responsibility to pay taxes, showing them appreciation as founders of the Roman race. He also restored a Roman temple and reimplemented the ancient traditional practice of sacrificing a sow when treaties were made with foreign nations.

Suetonius, then, may have viewed the expulsion of Jews as yet another example of Claudius’ inclination to return to traditional ways. This expulsion was linked to a particular historical trigger – there were disturbances because of a certain man named Chrestus, and so

⁴⁴ Gruen (2004) 19.

⁴⁵ *Claudius* 25.4; trans. by Rolfe.

Jews paid a price.⁴⁶ Yet the Claudian expulsion also very naturally reflects a general concern Claudius seems to have had with regard to Jews more generally.

While not virulent anti-Semitism, Dio Cassius also serves to reveal a moderate sense of anti-Judaism on the part of the emperor. Apparently referring to an event earlier in Claudius' reign, Dio Cassius reports, "As for the Jews, who had again increased so greatly that by reason of their multitude it would have been hard without raising a tumult to bar them from the city, [Claudius] did not drive them out, but ordered them, while continuing their traditional mode of life, not to hold meetings" (τούς τε Ἰουδαίους πλεονάσαντας αὐθις, ὥστε χαλεπῶς ἂν ἄνευ παραγῆς ὑπὸ τοῦ ὄχλου σφῶν τῆς πόλεως εἰρχθῆναι, οὐκ ἐξήλασε μὲν, τῷ δὲ δὴ πατρίῳ βίῳ χρωμένους ἐκέλευσε μὴ συναθροίζεσθαι).⁴⁷ The mere fact that Jews were numerically increasing raised concerns in the mind of Claudius. Now, as Suetonius reports, when disturbances occurred, Claudius' reaction was more forceful.

Gruen wishes to discount the implication that the Claudian expulsion represented any sort of anti-Jewish perspective. His strategy to accomplish this is to challenge the factuality of key aspects of the Suetonius account.

Claudius may well have coupled his ostentatious resurrection of national rituals with action against an alien cult, especially if an excuse was found or invented that indicated some disturbance. This reflects no inveterate anti-Judaism on the part of that emperor, let alone a long-standing imperial hostility toward Jews. Nor, on the other hand, should one conclude that Rome acted to put down disturbances and maintain order in the city. Jews had no reason to promote disorder. And there is little likelihood that on this occasion, as on others, large numbers of Jews were, in fact, removed from Rome. Jews were not registered as such, and it would cause far more trouble than it was worth to attempt a round-up. So far as our evidence goes, the Jewish communities in Rome gave the authorities no reason for displeasure through the reign of Nero. Nor did they make a peep during the rebellion in Palestine that followed. Action by the regime in Rome under

⁴⁶ Rolfe (1914), in his translation of Suetonius' history of Claudius, adds this note with respect to Chrestus: "Another form of Christus; see Tert. Apol. 3 (at the end). It is uncertain whether Suetonius is referring to the beginning of the Christian cult in Rome or to some Jew of that name. Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44, uses the correct form, Christus, and states that he was executed in the reign of Tiberius" (51).

⁴⁷ Dio Cassius 60.6.6-7.

Claudius, as under Tiberius and in the Republic, came only when it might benefit the government's image – and even then it was largely performance and ceremony.⁴⁸

Gruen challenges the factuality of Suetonius' claims. First, Gruen says that there is no evidence that Jews could have created sufficient disturbance as to rile up Claudius, and therefore one should question the factuality of Suetonius' report that Jews created sufficient disturbance to rile up Claudius. He simply dismisses Suetonius' reporting. Second, Gruen goes on to say that because Jews were not officially registered as Jews, it was nigh unto impossible for Claudius to do what Suetonius says he did. This challenges not only what Suetonius says happened, but also what Dio Cassius says Claudius was considering at another time, refraining not because the action of expulsion was impossible due to lack of Jewish identification but because removing all those who were identified as Jews could cause an uproar. Third, Gruen says that because there were times when Jews did not cause trouble, that suggests that they did not cause trouble this time either. Finally, Gruen asserts that whatever this expulsion was, it was really nothing substantial – it was “largely performance and ceremony.”

One can evaluate Gruen's challenges to factuality in different ways. From his perspective, the larger framework which he believes to be accurate about Jews – that there was really no significant undercurrent of antipathy – requires analysis of this expulsion which avoids any sense of anti-Judaism. The degree to which Gruen is comfortable denying the details of Suetonius' report, however, would suggest that an imposed template is having more impact on the analysis of circumstances than the available data itself. The fact that Jews were not officially registered does not mean that Claudius could not have effectively implemented an expulsion – Dio Cassius makes clear that on a seemingly different occasion he considered the possibility and dismissed it not because of a technical inability but because of logistical difficulty. The fact that

⁴⁸ Gruen (2004) 41.

on other occasions Jews were restrained in no way suggests that Jews could not have created a public disturbance on this occasion. Finally, there is no indication from the reporting of Suetonius that this was simply a ceremonious performance. Suetonius says that Claudius expelled the Jews because they had done something wrong. Jews had transgressed norms. Claudius imposed a consequence on Jews.

By questioning Gruen's challenges to factuality, I do not intend to imply that Claudius was an inveterate anti-Semite. Admittedly, that would be saying too much. By spotlighting Gruen's approach, rather, I intend to highlight the techniques Gruen employs to inoculate his optimistic characterization of Judaism from events which suggest something different. The expulsion of Jews by Claudius was clearly negative. It appears to have been a broad expulsion. Paulus Orosius, a fifth-century author, cites an otherwise unknown citation from Josephus which speaks in seemingly all-encompassing fashion: "In his ninth year the Jews were expelled by Claudius from the city."⁴⁹ Thomson, in his translation of the Suetonius passage, feels comfortable enough with the broadness of the expulsion that he adds the interpretative word "all" – "He banished from Rome *all* the Jews, who were continually making disturbances at the instigation of one Chrestus."⁵⁰ In the end, Suetonius gives no indication that the expulsion was limited in scope. The expulsion, then, fits the template introduced by Dio Cassius, who implies that the growth of the Jewish populace in Rome was troubling to Claudius. The expulsion would represent another instance of that negative current of thought directed against Judaism.

⁴⁹ Paulus Orosius links this citation from Josephus to the report by Suetonius. The full Orosius quotation reads, "Josephus reports, 'In his ninth year the Jews were expelled by Claudius from the city.' But Suetonius, who speaks as follows, influences me more: 'Claudius expelled from Rome the Jews constantly rioting at the instigation of Christ [Christo, or rather *xpo*].' As far as whether he had commanded that the Jews rioting against Christ [Christum] be restrained and checked or also had wanted the Christians, as persons of a cognate religion, to be expelled, it is not at all to be discerned." [Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII 7.6.15-16, cited in Slingerland, 'Orosius', JQR 83, 1/2 (1992), p. 137.]

⁵⁰ *Claudius* 25.4; trans. by Thomson; italics mine.

Gruen does have a reason to minimize this event. He chooses to challenge its factuality in a number of different fashions. This approach is consistent with his handling of other potentially challenging events. Yet in the end, permitting the events to stand as reported seems less risky than to reframe the events so as, ultimately, to challenge their very factuality.

Gruen seeks to characterize Judaism in an optimistic light by reframing apparently negative events. Another key line of argumentation for Gruen in his effort to characterize Jewish status in optimistic fashion is his highlighting of circumstances which do position Jews in a positive light. For example, he draws attention to many occurrences of Jews not being oppressed by Roman governance. Large numbers of Jews comfortably gathered for open displays of grief at the funeral of Julius Caesar in 44 BC.⁵¹ Eight thousand Jews from Rome publicly supported Jewish claims in the presence of Augustus upon the death of King Herod.⁵² Augustus made a special allowance for Jews in connection with the grain distribution, so that their Sabbath strictures would not put them at a disadvantage should distribution day fall on a Saturday.⁵³ Since I am ready to acknowledge that in fact Jews did enjoy many positive circumstances in the empire (this will be discussed in detail in chapter 2), I am not paying significant attention to this particular aspect of Gruen's argument. The key issue is not whether there were positives, but

⁵¹ Suet. *Iul.* 84. "In this public mourning there joined a multitude of foreigners, expressing their sorrow according to the fashion of their respective countries; but especially the Jews, who for several nights together frequented the spot where the body was burnt" (In summo publico luctu exterarum gentium multitudo circulatim suo quaeque more lamentata est praecipueque Iudaei, qui etiam noctibus continuis bustum frequentarunt); trans. by Thomson.

⁵² *JW* 2.80.

⁵³ Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium* 158. "Moreover, in the monthly divisions of the country, when the whole people receives money or corn in turn, he never allowed the Jews to fall short in their reception of this favour, but even if it happened that this distribution fell on the day of their sacred sabbath, on which day it is not lawful for them to receive any thing, or to give any thing, or in short to perform any of the ordinary duties of life, he charged the dispenser of these gifts, and gave him the most careful and special injunctions to make the distribution to the Jews on the day following, that they might not lose the effects of his common kindness" (οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ κὰν ταῖς μηνιαίοις τῆς πατρίδος διανομαῖς, ἀργύριον ἢ σῖτον ἐν μέρει παντὸς τοῦ δήμου λαμβάνοντος οὐδέποτε τοὺς Ἰουδαίους ἠλάττωσε τῆς χάριτος ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ συνέβη τῆς ἱερᾶς ἐβδόμης ἐνεστώσης γενέσθαι τὴν διανομὴν, ὅτε οὔτε λαμβάνειν οὔτε δίδόναι ἢ συνόλωσ τι πράττειν τῶν κατὰ βίον καὶ μάλιστα τὸν ποριστὴν ἐφεῖται προσετέτακτο τοῖς διανεμοῦσι ταμιεῦν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις εἰς τὴν ὑστεραίαν τὴν κοινὴν φιλανθρωπίαν); trans. by Yonge.

whether the mere fact that there were positives is sufficient for characterizing Jewish status in the Roman Empire more generally in optimistic fashion. Key to addressing that question is whether one can legitimately acknowledge that there were concurrent negatives of a significant sort.

Gruen seeks to maneuver around this concurrent set of negatives. It is that strategy, then, which has drawn evaluative focus.

Overview of Gruen

Gruen has employed a number of strategies to minimize the impact historical events might have in suggesting that Jews were a marginalized group in Roman society. With regard to massacres of Jews in areas surrounding Palestine after the beginning of the Jewish revolt in AD 66, Gruen attributes cause not in any way to a deep-seated anti-Jewish antipathy but rather to an unfortunate brew of political and historical happenstance. He seeks to blunt the impression that Ciceronean legal strategy depended on prejudice against Jews by proposing a false choice, bypassing a middle-of-the-road analysis that acknowledges the presence of authentic prejudice. He employs the same technique in characterizing the expulsion of Jews from Rome by Tiberius, seeking to avoid the implication that antipathy against Jews played a significant role. Gruen also emphasizes an optimistic view of Judaism in the first century by challenging the factuality of various claims. He calls into question the role anti-Judaism played in Flaccus' confiscation of Jewish gold by challenging the factuality of Flaccus' alleged motives, though in the end Cicero himself attributes anti-Jewish motives to Flaccus. Gruen calls into question whether anyone was actually expelled in 139 BC, even suggesting that Romans simply said they were going to do the expulsion but never really followed through. He challenges Suetonius' description of the AD 49 expulsion, suggesting that multiple features of the scenario Suetonius describes are inaccurate.

In the end, the strategies Gruen employs permit him to claim that Jewish circumstances were better than the evidence might appear to indicate. To the degree that these strategies have weaknesses, however, Gruen's optimistic perspective on Judaism is equally weakened. It is important to avoid overstating the negatives Jews experienced within the Roman Empire. At the same time, in the case of Gruen it appears that an effort to accomplish that worthy goal ultimately understates the very real sense of differentness, and even prejudice, that was a persistent undercurrent for Jews in the Roman Empire.

Goodman's Optimism

While Gruen is comfortable challenging fundamental elements of reported historical events, Martin Goodman is more open to accepting the historical accounts at face value as well as drawing attention to the distinctiveness of the Jewish people. Yet in the end, he stands with Gruen in minimizing certain differences and highlighting examples of the positive reception of Jews in the Roman Empire.

Not downtrodden, but distinctive

Goodman, like Gruen, is interested in characterizing the status of Jews in the first century Roman Empire. Goodman explains, "I therefore set out to examine whether the Jews of Jerusalem in the first half of the first century CE felt themselves to be the oppressed subjects of a hostile empire, as Judean Jews clearly did 100 years later, when the rebel leader Shimon bar Kosiba (known to later Jewish tradition as Bar Kokhba) led them in a second bloody revolt in 132-5 CE."⁵⁴ Goodman's goal parallels closely that of Gruen. But in characterizing Jewish status, Goodman moves away slightly from the more optimistic views of Gruen. While Gruen

⁵⁴ Goodman (2007) 3.

applies energetic effort to account for apparent persecution of Jews by highlighting every potential factor other than prejudice toward an ethnicity, Goodman maintains an optimistic focus even while devoting attention to the relevance of Jewish ethnicity. He demonstrates this approach initially in the overarching organization of his book *Rome and Jerusalem* (2007). His subtitle, “The Clash of Ancient Civilizations,” highlights the direction that he takes. He presents Judaism not simply as another component of the Roman Empire’s melting pot. Rather, this was an institution with such solid delimiters that it needed to be recognized, even though it was subordinated to an empire, as a civilization unto itself. Goodman is putting the spotlight on what set it apart. He acknowledges that the distinctiveness of Jews was very much a potential factor for distinct treatment.

So, while Gruen can come across as minimizing almost to the point of extinction the role that ethnic uniqueness and consequent prejudice could have played in Roman-Jewish relations, Goodman highlights ethnic uniqueness but then accounts for how Jews could succeed nevertheless. He recognizes the many occasions when Romans overlooked Jewish ethnicity, but he does not use those to discount or deny a role for ethnicity in Roman-Jewish relations.⁵⁵

Goodman’s handling of the case of Tiberius Alexander is instructive in this regard. Tiberius Alexander was the son of Alexander the alabarch.⁵⁶ Alexander had served as the alabarch (or Jewish governor) in Alexandria, Egypt. This Alexander was the brother of Philo.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ In this project I will be focusing on Jewish-Roman relations *prior* to the destruction of Jerusalem. In his *Rome and Jerusalem* (2007), Goodman’s larger goal is to account for what he views as unprecedented hostility toward Jews *after* the destruction of Jerusalem. While not ignoring what happened before the destruction, Goodman brings to the fore his contention that antipathy toward Jews after AD 70 is due significantly to the Flavian dynasty needing a profound event to justify their existence as emperors. Goodman suggests that Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian all held onto the victory over the Jews as a crowning achievement and a source of continuing affirmation for Flavian rule. Ongoing official policy and attitudes toward Jews, then, needed to be consistent with a glorying in the Jewish defeat. (Goodman highlights the unusual emphasis Flavians placed on this victory by noting, for example, that coins bearing the phrase *Iudaea Capta* were minted by Domitian in AD 85, 15 years after the war was over.)

⁵⁶ *Ant* 20.100.

⁵⁷ *Ant* 18.259.

So, Alexander’s son Tiberius Alexander was a nephew of the great Jewish philosopher. From AD 46 through 48, Tiberius Alexander served as procurator of Palestine. By that point the territory governed by the Roman procurator was vast, including all of the country over which Herod the Great had ruled.⁵⁸ In contrast to Tiberius Alexander, his father Alexander “differed from his son [Tiberius] Alexander with regard to his piety for God; for [Tiberius Alexander] did not continue in the ancestral customs.”⁵⁹ So, Tiberius Alexander was a Jew, but he no longer was a practicing Jew.⁶⁰ Perhaps this makes slightly less stunning the role that Tiberius Alexander ultimately played.⁶¹ He became the commander, under the overall leadership of Titus, of the entire Roman army that besieged and ultimately destroyed the city of Jerusalem.⁶² A Jew managed the destruction of Judaism’s most treasured city.

How can this be? How could an ethnic Jew ever rise to such a trusted position in an atmosphere in which so many could look down on Jews? Would not such a circumstance be definitive evidence that at times ethnicity could play absolutely no role in a Jew’s existence in the Roman Empire? One might think so, yet even here, in this seemingly most obvious of cases, Goodman reveals his readiness to attribute to Jewish ethnicity a still relevant distinctiveness. To

⁵⁸ *Ant* 19.274-275.

⁵⁹ *Ant* 20.100.

⁶⁰ Josephus reports that while both Tiberius Alexander and his predecessor were procurators, “making no alterations of the ancient laws, [they] kept the nation in tranquility” (οἱ μηδὲν παρακινουῦντες τῶν ἐπιχωρίων ἔθῶν ἐν εἰρήνῃ τὸ ἔθνος διεφύλαξαν, *JW* 2.220). Twenty years later, however, when Tiberius Alexander was governor in the city of Alexandria, Egypt, the term “tranquility” did not describe the relationship between Tiberius Alexander and the Jews. Not long after the Jews in Judea rose up against the Romans in AD 66, conflict arose in Alexandria between the Jews there and the Greeks (*JW* 2.487ff). At a tense moment, Tiberius Alexander did all he could to reduce tensions by refraining from using the military against the Jews, instead sending emissaries to have a private conversation, begging Jews not to provoke the Roman army. The Jews laughed at these pleas from Tiberius Alexander, reviling him. When it became obvious to Tiberius Alexander that the only thing the Jews would understand was force, he dispatched 17,000 soldiers. In the end, 50,000 Jews were killed.

⁶¹ In the interim, Tiberius Alexander had served as the governor of the city of Alexandria (ὁ τῆς πόλεως ἡγεμών—*JW* 2.492). Subsequently, as governor of both Egypt and Alexandria, he committed his legions to support Vespasian (*JW* 4.616-617).

⁶² Tiberius Alexander is described as “leading the armies” (τῶν στρατευμάτων ἄρχων, *JW* 5.46) and “the one ruling over all the armies” (τοῦ πάντων τῶν στρατευμάτων ἐπάρχοντος, *JW* 6.237); personal translations.

offer context for this incident, he says, "... ethnic origins could be ignored if someone was sufficiently talented."⁶³ This incident did not reveal Romans as blind to ethnicity. Rather, Goodman accounts for the surprising role played by Tiberius Alexander by indicating that in his case, Romans chose to do what they normally would not have done.

Not prejudice, but taste

Even with what Romans might normally do, however, Goodman is hesitant to identify their attitude toward Jews as prejudice. He contextualizes Jewish status vis-à-vis the majority culture by referring to comments from Roman literary figures who expressed "*aesthetic* judgments on black-skinned 'Ethiopians' and the pale faces and 'excessive' height of northern Europeans."⁶⁴ Insulating Romans further from anything improper, he characterizes these descriptions as "matters of taste rather than moral or social significance."⁶⁵

Goodman is comfortable acknowledging that ethnicity can have something to do with the Roman mindset. This might be an approach more open than Gruen's to the possibility that there was a persistent undercurrent of prejudice against Judaism in the Roman Empire more generally. Yet even when Goodman comes close to affirming such a prejudice, he backs away by placing Roman attitudes toward Jews into a category similar to attitudes which focus on "taste" rather than on something morally or socially significant.

Goodman comes right out and says, "Romans were not racially prejudiced in the sense of believing that some peoples were inherently inferior."⁶⁶ Goodman acknowledges that Romans did think about the category "barbarian" and measured cultures accordingly. In such cases,

⁶³ Goodman (2007) 151.

⁶⁴ Goodman (2007) 151; italics mine.

⁶⁵ Goodman (2007) 151.

⁶⁶ Goodman (2007) 148.

however, with proper Roman influence barbarians could become just as Roman as Romans. So, Goodman's characterization regarding racial prejudice may accurately portray Roman views toward barbarians. It may, in a narrow sense, be true that they were not racially prejudiced across the board. In fact, when it came to Jews, it might even be accurate to say that Romans were not *racially* prejudiced. But that claim in itself is not enough to conclude that cultures among which Jews lived were not prejudiced against Jews. Any generally negative feelings toward Jews may have not had their origin primarily in race, but in some other trait unique to Judaism – in particular, their religion.

Not theology, but lifestyle

Goodman does not ignore the role that religion could play in defining the attitudes that surrounding culture may have had toward Jews. However, when approaching elements related to religion, he chooses not to focus on underlying Jewish convictions and the role a passionate commitment to them might play with regard to another who does not share the same convictions. Rather, Goodman approaches the question of religion more via its manifestations on lifestyle. It was more the uniqueness of their behavior that attracted attention rather than actual philosophical/theological distinctiveness. The relationship between Jewish customs and theology will be addressed in additional detail in chapter 3. Here, a briefer consideration seeks to evaluate Goodman's views.

It is certainly legitimate to suggest that outward actions initially alerted society to Jewish distinctiveness. It is another thing, however, to imply a virtual wall between lifestyle and inner convictions. Goodman's creation of such a space between Jewish belief and Jewish lifestyle is not inconsequential. This focus on lifestyle rather than theology appears to be drawn largely from Goodman's sense that Jews themselves did not feel it important to foreground their

religious tenets. Goodman feels that Jews would have felt little eagerness to highlight their convictions because, from his point of view, Jewish belief was not as exclusivist in its claims as many contend that it was.⁶⁷ This characterization of Judaism fits comfortably with Goodman's parallel contention that Jews were not involved in energetic missionary activity. He says, "The generally relaxed attitude of Jews to unconverted Gentiles outside the land of Israel . . . meant that Jews lacked an incentive for proselytizing."⁶⁸ There was less need to bring others to your side if in fact there were multiple acceptable sides. Goodman suggests that the prevailing Jewish view at the time was that Jews should not object to pagan idolatry as long as it was not taking place in the land of Israel.⁶⁹

Goodman does acknowledge that there is "some evidence of a Jewish mission to win Gentile sympathizers in the first century. . . . that some Jews felt able to justify it to themselves seems clear. The way in which they found justification is however quite inexplicit and it may well have been political or social rather than theological."⁷⁰ Though acknowledging some evidence to the contrary, ultimately Goodman holds to his position. He asserts that Jews did not feel a compulsion to bring pagans into their theological fold.⁷¹

With respect to relations between Jews and pagans more generally, then, Goodman can observe, "So long as neither side tried to impose their views on the other, the contrast between

⁶⁷ Louis Feldman, who was much more open to the possibility that Jews were involved in proselytizing, characterizes Goodman's position in this way: "Goodman argues that the Septuagint (Exodus 22:27), by rendering G-d in the plural in the commandment 'Thou shalt not revile G-d,' made Judaism tolerant of other religions." [Feldman (1983) 292.]

⁶⁸ Goodman (1994) 88.

⁶⁹ Goodman (1994) 58-59.

⁷⁰ Goodman (1994) 87.

⁷¹ Other citations of Goodman to this effect are found in his chapter entitled "Jewish Proselytizing in the First Century" in Lieu's *The Jews Among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire* (1992). Goodman states, "The role of the Jews was simply passively to bear witness through their existence and piety; how the Gentiles reacted to such witness was up to them" (72). Or elsewhere, "[The Gentiles] only duty, in the eyes of Jews, was a general morality. Jews thus lacked an incentive for proselytizing" (74). Or again, "There is no good reason to suppose that any Jew would have seen value in seeking proselytes in the first century with an enthusiasm like that of the Christian apostles" (75).

Jewish and Roman perspectives on the world was unlikely to create friction, but more difficult to ignore was the way that people lived every day.”⁷² Goodman does not believe that Jewish theology had the potential to create conflict. Lifestyle, however, did have that potential. Simply by acknowledging that there was a feature of Judaism which could contribute to conflict, Goodman is proving a bit more open to acknowledging a climate of negativity. Yet even in his openness, he employs a strategy of minimization.

This focus on lifestyle rather than on theological convictions could be viewed as an attempt to minimize the profundity of the differences. In other words, by suggesting that lifestyle was at the heart of the issue, Goodman paves a smoother path to the conclusion that really, friction was not that severe between Jews and those who surrounded them.⁷³ Had he characterized the differences as more fundamental, then one could expect consequent clashes to be more likely and to be more severe.

Goodman is positioned to minimize the theological distinctiveness of Judaism because, as earlier noted, he challenges the exclusivist characterization of Judaism. This particular feature of Judaism will be examined in much greater detail in chapter 3 of this project. I will argue that in fact Judaism was theologically exclusivistic, consequently recommending against a minimization of the role played by Jewish theology. But even absent that argument, one may properly ask whether it is legitimate within Judaism to create significant space between their “views” and their outward practices. Even if Goodman were correct in thinking that Jews felt little compulsion to speak of foundational tenets, the key unique features of their lifestyle were

⁷² Goodman (2007) 273.

⁷³ In a chapter entitled “The *Fiscus Judaicus* and Gentile Attitudes to Judaism in Flavian Rome” in Jonathan Edmondson’s book *Flavian Josephus and Flavian Rome*, Goodman writes, “Anti-Jewish prejudice in Flavian Rome focused not on Jewish origins but on Jewish customs” (172). Admittedly, Goodman is describing events after the fall of Jerusalem, which is not the period of time in focus in this project. Nevertheless, one sees Goodman employing the same tactic: an attempt to split Jewish existence into components which, it could be argued, are inextricably intertwined.

directly informed by theological views. Jewish lifestyle involved refraining from physical labor on Saturdays. They only did this because they believed the God of Israel must be honored as speaking truth, and he commanded that they refrain from physical labor on Saturdays. Theology was intertwined with practice.

Not only was Jewish theology intertwined with Jewish practice in substance. It is also reasonable to suggest that others, even if they did not know much about Jewish theology, could naturally have viewed such distinctive ethnic practices as having more implication than simply being interesting and unique. While even in modern times there are certain differences in outward practice which create no inevitable offense – for example, one may wear a blue shirt or white shirt or eat fish instead of steak – on other occasions outward practice is perceived by the observer as as a challenge to their own worldview. This discomfort is not inevitable with every outsider who observes a particular practice. But given the right combination of perspectives, a particular clothing choice can make another uncomfortable because of an association implied by that choice. The refusal to eat certain kinds of foods at a particular time of the year may give an unspoken profession of a certain allegiance. Variations in the outward actions of lifestyle are not in themselves problematic. But when they are perceived as problematic, the tension arises not from the lifestyle act in itself but from the unspoken implication that such a lifestyle choice makes.

In the case of Jews, then, to suggest that unique features of lifestyle were inevitably perceived as distinct from underlying theological principles seems risky. Refusal to participate in pagan worship practices was a “lifestyle” choice. Consequent absence from a pagan temple was in itself just a physical act. But that outward practice could not help but convey to a society surrounding some kind of message more fundamental. Even if Romans were not passionately

committed to a personal theology, the refusal by Jews to participate in outward religious customs conveyed at least in some fashion a rejection of what pagans presumed to be proper.

Lifestyle and theology are distinct. Certainly there could be occasions where observers would conclude nothing more than that Jews were different, and perhaps even intriguing. An effort to minimize the potential perceived abrasiveness of a distinctive lifestyle, however, by implying inevitable separation from underlying philosophical/theological principles may leave one less than convinced. Goodman is more open to acknowledging Jewish distinctiveness. Yet he conditionalizes that distinctiveness – in this case limiting it to lifestyle – on his path to retaining an essentially optimistic view of Judaism in the first century Roman Empire.

Overview of Goodman

In seeking to characterize the status of Jews in the Roman Empire, then, Goodman begins from a slightly different position than Gruen does. Goodman is much more open about acknowledging the distinctiveness of Judaism within the empire. Roman actions could be significantly influenced by the ethnicity of the individual they were dealing with. Yet at the same time, such a bias could be overcome. Jews were not inevitably subordinated because of their background.

Even as Goodman is more open to acknowledging such a distinctiveness, he also works energetically to minimize the distinctiveness. He characterizes attitudes toward Judaism in general not so much as prejudice, but simply as a matter of taste. Also, he proposes that interpreters insert space between the theological tenets of Judaism and its associated outward lifestyle, suggesting that in themselves distinctions in lifestyle should not be viewed as likely sources of antagonism.

Simply by foregrounding to a greater degree the fact that Jewish lifestyle distinguished them from their pagan counterparts, Goodman may be viewed as taking a gentle step away from the more thoroughly optimistic view of Jewish status in the Roman Empire espoused by Gruen. Yet it in the end, by minimizing the impact Jewish distinctiveness would be expected to have, Goodman's view of Jewish existence in the Roman Empire – like Gruen's – ultimately is rather optimistic.⁷⁴ If in fact bad things did happen, Goodman felt it was due to an anomaly – one side was trying “to impose their views on the other.”⁷⁵ From Goodman's perspective, this imposition of views would not have been a normal activity, given his characterization of Judaism as less than exclusivistic and given his conviction the Jews had little impetus to be involved in missionary type activity. In the end, then, one would expect that relations between Jews and pagans should be calm. This is Goodman's optimistic view.

Feldman's Optimism

Gruen reinterprets key events in Jewish-Roman history so as to maintain a sense of generally positive relations between Jews and Romans, seeking to minimize differences that otherwise might be attributed to the distinctiveness of the Jewish people. Martin Goodman does more to emphasize marked differences between Jews and Romans, but he minimizes the impact these differences would have had by sidelining Jewish religious distinctiveness. In this

⁷⁴ In fact, Goodman says, “Roman comments about Jews were rarely hostile before the outbreak of war in 66. Far more common were amusement, indifference, acceptance, admiration and emulation” [Goodman (2007) 366]. When accounting for the expulsion of Jews by Claudius in AD 49, he sounds remarkably similar to Gruen, who explained expulsions by saying that individuals were not even necessarily kicked out of the city; a public statement simply needed to be made. Goodman writes, “It is also not impossible that the expulsion of 49 had a symbolic role. . . This was the year that the emperor, notorious for his pedantic antiquarianism, reinstated a raft of ancient Roman religious practices. . . . A symbolic expulsion of Jews would fit nicely. That the exile was indeed symbolic seems confirmed by the evidence for a sizable Jewish community in the city in the time of Nero.” [Goodman (2007) 370.]

⁷⁵ Goodman (2007) 273.

connection, he denies that Jews were involved in significant missionary activity, so eliminating yet another potential annoyance to pagan neighbors.

Louis Feldman comes to a conclusion similar to that reached by Gruen and Goodman. He believes that the overarching trajectory of Judaism in the first century BC and the first century AD was one of success. But he comes to that conclusion in markedly different fashion. In contrast with Gruen, he is much more willing to accept the negative historical events – expulsions of Jews from Rome, for example – at face value. Also, he foregrounds the fact that people hated Jews. In contrast to Goodman, he believes that there was significant conversion activity taking place in the centuries that preceded Jerusalem’s destruction. Also in contrast to Goodman, he views the distinctiveness of Jewish theological thought as much more significant. In the end, however, he still characterizes the relationship between Jews and Gentiles as generally positive. In fact, he characterizes Judaism as in many ways attractive to non-Jews. At the heart of such conclusions is Feldman’s conviction that significant numbers of non-Jews converted to Judaism. Whatever the other evidence, Jewish status in general had to be positive, Feldman asserts, or such conversions could not have happened.

Growth in numbers

Feldman begins his optimistic view of Judaism with a demographic assertion.

Employing conclusions drawn by Salo W. Baron, Feldman accepts that at the time of the destruction of the First Temple in 586 BC, Jewish population numbered no more than 150,000.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Baron summarizes his findings in the “Population” article in the *Encyclopedia Judaica* (2007). Baron offers an important caution when he begins that entry by stating, “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. . . . In their report to the International Congress of Historical Sciences in 1950 Carlo Cippola and his associates reported on behalf of their Committee that ‘in the eyes of demographers bent on scientific precision and certainty all demographic research undertaken for any period before the 18th century runs the risk of appearing as mere fantasy.’” (Vol. 16, 381.)

By the middle of the first century AD, however, that number had increased to no less than 8 million. Adolf von Harnack, a more conservative estimator, proposes that there were 4 million Jews in the empire at that time.⁷⁷ Even if that lower number is closer to the truth, Feldman feels that “only proselytism can account for this vast increase, though admittedly aggressive proselytism is only one possible explanation for the numerous conversions.”⁷⁸

Feldman’s primary claim is unqualified. He believes that the Jewish population increase can be attributed in large measure to non-Jews becoming Jews. He acknowledges uncertainty regarding the tactics, if any, which were employed – he does not know the degree of aggression involved in Jewish missionary activity. Whatever the case, Feldman believes that positives associated with Judaism were striking enough that huge numbers of non-Jews were attracted.

This leads to the dilemma Feldman attempts to resolve: “Our question has been how to explain the apparent success of Judaism in the Hellenistic-Roman period in winning so many converts and ‘sympathizers’ at a time when, apparently, Jews were hated by the Gentile masses.”⁷⁹

Contextualizing negativity

While scholars can characterize the status of Jews in the Roman Empire by minimizing apparent negativity directed against Jews, Feldman simply acknowledges the negativity. He refers to the “hatred the masses apparently felt for them.”⁸⁰ He notes that “the fact that no fewer than eight cities in Asia Minor were pressured by the Romans to stop the harassment of the Jews

⁷⁷ Feldman cites Harnack’s *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries* (1908) 1-8.

⁷⁸ Feldman (1993) 293.

⁷⁹ Feldman (1993) 416.

⁸⁰ Feldman (1993) 107.

indicates . . . how deeply these privileges were resented locally. . . .”⁸¹ When discussing the riots which broke out against Jews in communities not far from the land of Israel immediately after the Jewish rebellion in AD 66, Feldman says that these actions indicated “that popular resentment against the Jews was deep-seated and long smoldering.”⁸²

In an effort to resolve this dilemma – the concurrent presence of evident negativity yet presumed massive conversion activity – Feldman explores different potential causes for the negativity so as to characterize the negative environment in a way that permits massive conversions still to make sense. Presented in summary form here, each of these causes will be evaluated in greater detail.

First, Feldman considers whether or not Jewish customs on their own were sufficiently abrasive to engender antipathy. He discounts this possibility, believing that Jewish customs alone did not have that capacity. Next, Feldman proposes that Jewish political and economic success engendered opposition. While this suggestion would permit opposition to Judaism without a concurrent opposition to the theological tenets of Judaism, there is a notable lack of evidence for this particular claim. Feldman moves on to evaluate the suggestion that an alleged lack of patriotism led others in the empire to be angry with Jews. While he sees attractiveness in this, he himself acknowledges that this cannot be at the heart of the matter. Ultimately, Feldman foregrounds the distinctiveness of Jewish theology as a likely candidate for generating antipathy against Jews. Yet the massive number of conversions claimed by Feldman suggests that in some way Jewish theology must have been attractive to the masses. Feldman proposes that perhaps it

⁸¹ Feldman (1993) 423. Significant privileges were granted to the Jews by Julius Caesar in gratitude for their assistance during the civil war against Pompey. These privileges included exemption from military service, the right to send money to the temple in Jerusalem, and the right to form corporate groups [see Feldman (1993) 93].

⁸² Feldman (1993) 118.

was only the pagan intellectuals who were bothered by Jewish inflexibility; people more generally may have had a different view.

As Feldman evaluates various sources for negativity, his ultimate goal – as was the case with Gruen and Goodman as well – is to craft an optimistic perspective on the status of Jews in the empire. Note that he seeks to discount possible sources of negativity that are linked to Jewish uniqueness while being more open to sources of negativity which do not touch as directly on Jewish theological distinctiveness. When theology does seem to engender antipathy, he seeks to limit the breadth of any opposition. In the end, he wishes to craft a characterization of Judaism which allows theology to be attractive so as to engender conversions.

In evaluating potential sources for antipathy against Jews, Feldman initially offers an angle claimed by some to be significant, though in the end it seems to him like shaky ground. He evaluates whether some of the unique outward practices of the Jews were grounds for anti-Jewish hatred. Regular Sabbath rest led Tacitus to accuse them of laziness.⁸³ Refusal to eat pork led to convulsive laughter on the part of Caligula's court.⁸⁴ Circumcision, as the notable sign of Judaism, is targeted sarcastically by Petronius as he speaks well of a slave who was perfect in every respect, except for the fact that he was circumcised and he snored.⁸⁵ Yes, "the loyalty of Jews to one another and their isolation from other people due to their restrictive code of law provoked the charge that they hated every other people."⁸⁶ But in puzzlement, Feldman subsequently notes, "The mere fact that Jews were unlike others in their practices would not have led others to hate them any more than it led to organized hatred or persecution of the people of

⁸³ *Histories* 5.4.3. Juvenal, in *Satire* 14.106, speaks of the Jew "for whom every seventh day was a lazy one" (cui septima quaeque fuit lux ignava).

⁸⁴ Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium* 361.

⁸⁵ *Satyricon* 68.7-8.

⁸⁶ Feldman (1993) 425.

India or Britain or Arabia, who, from a Greek and Roman point of view, were so idiosyncratic.”⁸⁷ In the mind of Feldman, unique Jewish outward practices alone cannot account for hatred of the Jewish people.⁸⁸

Feldman presents another option as more attractive. He accounts for civilian hatred of Jews by referring to important bureaucratic positions Jews held, the fact that they took advantage of opportunity for individual economic initiative, and the great wealth which was accumulated in the temple (while there was a shortage of gold in Italy). “What added to this envy and created additional bitterness during this period was the rapidly increasing number of contributors due to the success of the Jews in gaining converts.”⁸⁹

In accounting for Gentile hatred of Jews due to Jewish business and financial success, Feldman cites Josephus’ account of a fire deliberately set in Antioch soon after the destruction of Jerusalem.⁹⁰ This account occurred sometime not long after the previously referenced slaughter of Jews by the Antiochenes, when Jews had been falsely accused of planning to burn down the entire city of Antioch in a single night.⁹¹ In this new incident, an actual effort was made to burn the marketplace and the archives, where public records were preserved. The same Antiochus who had accused the Jews previously stepped forward to accuse the Jews again. Further investigation revealed that the fire was started by non-Jewish individuals greatly in debt who were hoping to burn the public records so that they might be freed from financial accountability. Referring to an occasion during the French Revolution when enemies of the Jews burned records

⁸⁷ Feldman (1993) 426.

⁸⁸ The linkage between outward customs, theology, and the negative reactions of non-Jews will be explored in-depth in chapter 3.

⁸⁹ Feldman (1993) 425.

⁹⁰ *JW* 7.54-62.

⁹¹ *JW* 7.47.

of debt that they owed to the Jews,⁹² Feldman suggests that this event reported by Josephus is comparable. “Here we can plainly see the economic motive of the Jew-baiters.”⁹³

But how can a similar economic motive be seen in this event? It is true that the fire was started by men who had an economic motive.⁹⁴ It is true that Antiochus blamed the Jews for starting the fire.⁹⁵ But nowhere is it indicated that the debt records being burned recorded debts owed to Jews. In fact, if that were true, Antiochus’ accusation that Jews wanted to burn the public records building would have made no sense. Jews would not have wanted to burn records that required other people to pay them money. Nevertheless, this event is offered by Feldman as evidence that Jewish financial success made Jews a target. It seems most difficult to make that case from the Antioch fire.

This is not the only weakness in Feldman’s position. After agreeing with the conclusion of Ralph Marcus⁹⁶ that the Alexandrian riot of AD 38 was due to “long-standing resentment at the privileged position and influence of the Jews,”⁹⁷ Feldman then acknowledges, “Ancient writers, as we have remarked, rarely stressed or even indicated economic causes of events, and this riot was no exception.”⁹⁸ Said another way, there is no actual ancient evidence for an economic cause to the Alexandrian riot of AD 38. Feldman attempts to minimize this absence of evidence by suggesting that such silence among ancient historians is not due to the absence of

⁹² Feldman (1993) 121.

⁹³ Feldman (1993) 121.

⁹⁴ *JW* 7.60-61. “Not one of the Jews incriminated by Antiochus had any part in the affair, the whole being the work of some scoundrels, who, under the pressure of debts, imagined that if they burnt the marketplace and the public records they would be rid of all demands” (καὶ τῶν μὲν τὴν αἰτίαν ὑπ’ Ἀντιόχου λαβόντων Ἰουδαίων οὐδεὶς οὐδ’ ἐκοινώνησεν, ἅπαν δὲ τοῦργον ἔπραξαν ἄνθρωποι τινες ἀλιτήριοι διὰ χρεῶν ἀνάγκας νομίζοντες, εἰ τὴν ἀγορὰν καὶ τὰ δημόσια καταπρήσειαν γράμματα, τῆς ἀπαιτήσεως ἀπαλλαγὴν ἔξιν); trans. by Thackeray.

⁹⁵ *JW* 7.55. “Antiochus accused the Jews of the deed” (ταύτην Ἀντίοχος τὴν πρᾶξιν Ἰουδαίων κατηγορεῖ); trans. by Thackeray.

⁹⁶ “Anti-Semitism in the Hellenistic-Roman World.” In Pinson (1946) 72.

⁹⁷ Feldman (1993) 114.

⁹⁸ Feldman (1993) 115-116.

such factors, but lack of focus on such factors. While one cannot eliminate the possibility of an economic role, it is difficult to make a strong case that hatred toward Jews resonated because of Jewish wealth.

Feldman has considered distinctive Jewish practices as well as political and economic prominence in his effort to account for negative attitudes toward Jews. Another factor Feldman highlights as being closely tied to antipathy was a perceived lack of patriotism. He cites with approval Ralph Marcus, who presents as one of the underlying claims against Jews “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 the Empire.”⁹⁹ In a similar vein, Tacitus tells his audience that the first thing those who convert to Judaism learn is to “to despise all gods, to disown their country, and set at nought parents, children, and brethren” (*contemnere deos, exuere patriam, parentes liberos fratres vilia habere*).¹⁰⁰ Juvenal, in *Satire* 14, says that Jews are “accustomed to considering Roman laws as unimportant” (*Romanas autem soliti contemnere leges*).¹⁰¹

The relevance of Jewish patriotism is very much in play in Philo’s recounting of the Alexandrian riot of AD 38. This incident, which saw native Egyptians turning on the Jewish population of Alexandria and which resulted in the slaughtering of large numbers of Jews, included at its outset an outwardly patriotic test. Egyptians placed images of Emperor Caligula in Jewish synagogues. Having these images in their places of worship violated the ancient laws of the Jews. This action would seem to highlight all the more that a lack of Jewish patriotism was a key contributor to Alexandrian antipathy.

⁹⁹ “Anti-Semitism in the Hellenistic-Roman World.” In Pinson (1946) 72.

¹⁰⁰ *Histories* V.5; trans. by Church and Brodribb.

¹⁰¹ *Satire* 14.100; personal translation.

There is little question that Greeks knew Jews would not worship the Roman emperor as other subjects would. The key question, however, is whether this refusal on the part of Jews was a critical – or the critical – annoyance, so that patriotic Roman citizens would instinctively recoil at the thought of a group publicly refusing to worship their emperor and be led to riot in defense of their leader.

Feldman agrees with Marcus' contention that the Alexandrian riot exemplified the pagan concern about Jewish lack of patriotism: "Marcus has already noted that this riot illustrates a typical pattern of ancient massacres of Jews: . . . Second and more immediate, the accusation that the Jews were unpatriotic."¹⁰² Surely one can acknowledge that patriotism was involved. But Philo, who supplies the vast amount of available information on the Alexandrian disturbance, ensures that we understand precisely what role patriotism played. Philo does not present mere patriotism as being a prime, or even secondary, cause of the riot. First, in explaining how the Alexandrian governor Flaccus could permit the antipathy of local Egyptians to get out of control, Philo describes an underlying terror that Flaccus had of the new emperor Caligula. Flaccus had been an excellent ruler for five years under Tiberius, but when Caligula ascended to the throne, Flaccus was concerned that his prior participation in a conspiracy against Caligula's mother, who was ultimately executed as a consequence, would come back to haunt him.¹⁰³ Playing off of these fears, former enemies of Flaccus who were now viewed by Flaccus as friends suggested a way he could set aside the anticipated anger of Caligula. Flaccus could preserve his position by getting the people of Alexandria passionately on his side, which he could accomplish "by abandoning and denouncing all the Jews."¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Feldman (1993) 113-114.

¹⁰³ *In Flaccum* 3.9.

¹⁰⁴ *In Flaccum* 4.18, 23; trans. by Yonge.

Philo offers additional perspective which explains why the populace of Alexandria was ripe for an encouragement to persecute Jews. In the course of describing Alexandrian reaction to the visit of Agrippa, newly appointed King of the Jews by Caligula, Philo characterizes Egyptian feelings toward Jews more generally:

οἱ δ' ὑπὸ φθόνου ῥηγνύμενοι βάσκανον γὰρ φύσει τὸ Αἰγυπτιακόν καὶ τὰς ἐτέρων εὐτυχίας ἰδίας ὑπελάμβανον εἶναι κακοπραγίας καὶ ἅμα διὰ τὴν παλαιὰν καὶ τρόπον τινα φύσει γεγεννημένην πρὸς Ἰουδαίους ἀπέχθειαν ἤσχαλλον ἐπὶ τῷ γεγενῆσθαι τινα βασιλεῖα Ἰουδαῖον οὐχ ἦττον, ἢ εἰ αὐτός τις ἕκαστος βασιλείαν προγονικὴν ἀφῆρητο.

But the men of Alexandria being ready to burst with envy and ill-will (for the Egyptian disposition is by nature a most jealous and envious one and inclined to look on the good fortune of others as adversity to itself), and being at the same time filled with an ancient and what I may in a manner call an innate enmity towards the Jews, were indignant at any one's becoming a king of the Jews, no less than if each individual among them had been deprived of an ancestral kingdom of his own inheritance.¹⁰⁵

Philo explains that the Alexandrians had a problem with Agrippa because of their envy. Agrippa was the beneficiary of good fortune, and Philo says that this made the Alexandrians mad. But there was also something more fundamental in play. Philo explains that the Alexandrians had an attitude toward Jews more generally – they held an “innate enmity” toward them. This was an “ancient” enmity, a hatred of long-standing.

It was this hatred, as Philo understood matters, which led the mob to calculate how they could hurt the Jews the most. One of the first things the mob did against Jews more generally was to “erect images in the synagogues” (εἰκόνας ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς ἀνατιθέναι).¹⁰⁶ This plan to place statues of Caligula in the synagogues could give the impression that a Jewish lack of patriotism was a key reason for Alexandrian antipathy. Philo claims to see right through this. Although the troublemakers understood that erecting images in the synagogues was a violation of the Jewish law . . . “though they knew this (for they are very shrewd in their wickedness), they

¹⁰⁵ *In Flaccum* 5.29; trans. by Yonge.

¹⁰⁶ *In Flaccum* 6.41; trans. by Yonge.

adopted a deep design, putting forth the name of Caesar as a screen, to whom it would be impiety to attribute the deeds of the guilty” (καὶ τοῦτ’ εἰδότες ὀξύτατοι γὰρ τὴν μοχθηρίαν εἰσὶ κατασοφίζονται τὸ Καίσαρος ὄνομα προκάλυμμα ποιησάμενοι, ᾧ προσάπτειν τι τῶν ἐπαιτίων οὐ θεμιτόν).¹⁰⁷

Philo characterizes the insertion of patriotism as nothing more than a clever tactic, describing the Alexandrians’ employment of the name of Caesar as a cover for their own evil. They possessed an ancient and innate enmity. They were intent on hurting the Jews. They knew that if they could make it appear that the real enemy of the Jews was Caesar, then they could cloak their own evil actions in the appearance of righteousness. They could make it appear that they were really agents of the emperor. Fully aware that placing an image of Caesar in the synagogue was a violation of Jewish law,¹⁰⁸ they could make it seem that Jews were unpatriotic and worthy of abuse.

But as Philo notes, this was not at all the key feature of Alexandrian antipathy against Jews. Patriotism was not the trigger. For Flaccus, the death of Tiberius and his subsequent fear of Caligula was key. For the Alexandrian mob, an ancient and innate hatred of Jews was preeminent. An appeal to patriotism was a masterful tactic. But it would be difficult to conclude from this event that there was an instinctive perception on the part of the Roman populace that Jews were authentically unpatriotic. Their religious principles could be used against them to make them look unpatriotic. But in the end, the Roman government itself had given Jews permission to practice their religion according to their principles. Philo notes that it was an emperor, Caesar Augustus, who was “in the habit of confirming . . . our own laws” (τοῖς ἰδίους . .

¹⁰⁷ *In Flaccum* 6.42; trans. by Yonge.

¹⁰⁸ *In Flaccum* 6.42.

. νομίμοις, ἃ καὶ τῷ Σεβαστῷ φίλον βεβαιοῦν).¹⁰⁹ In reality, then, it was the Alexandrian mob who was unpatriotic as it unilaterally dismissed the determination of Augustus that Jewish practice should be permitted.

The incident in Alexandria, then, does highlight that an accusation of lack of patriotism could be engineered as a pretext by enemies of the Jews. More generally, though, lack of patriotism in itself is not easily identified as a significant basis for hatred toward Jews. This particular incident does not demonstrate that Jews were hated because they did not love the government enough. In the case of the Alexandrians, and in the case of others as well, one properly can discover something more fundamental in play.

Though wishing to present patriotism as a factor, Feldman seeks not to overplay that hand. “But that the Jew-baiters decried not merely the alleged lack of patriotism but 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* 11.96) rather than to worship the image of the Emperor.”¹¹⁰ Feldman himself appears to be giving indication that mere patriotism was not at the heart of this. The issue was broader and touched on the uniqueness of Jewish religious principles, including divinely mandated dietary restrictions.

¹⁰⁹ *In Flaccum* 7.50.

¹¹⁰ Feldman (1993) 116. *In Flaccum* 11.96 reports, “And then, when it was found that they were of another race, they were dismissed; for they apprehended many women as Jewesses who were not so, from want of making any careful or accurate investigation. And if they appeared to belong to our nation, then those who, instead of spectators, became tyrants and masters, laid cruel commands on them, bringing them swine’s flesh, and enjoining them to eat it. Accordingly, all who were wrought on by fear of punishment to eat it were released without suffering any ill treatment; but those who were more obstinate were given up to the tormentors to suffer intolerable tortures, which is the clearest of all possible proofs that they had committed no offence whatever beyond what I have mentioned.” (εἴτ’ ἐπειδὴ μὲν ἐγνωρίσθησαν ἑτέρου γένους, ἀπελύοντο πολλὰς γὰρ ὡς Ἰουδαίας ἀκριβῆ μη ποιούμενοι τῆς ἀληθείας τὴν ἔρευναν συνελάμβανον, εἰ δ’ ἐφάνησαν ἡμέτεροι, προσέταττον οἱ ἀντὶ θεατῶν τύραννοι καὶ δεσπόται γεγονότες κρέα χοίρεια διδόναι κομίζοντας ὅσαι μὲν οὖν φόβῳ κολάσεως ἀπεγέυσαντο, μηδὲν ἔτι δεινὸν προσυπομείνασαι ἀπελύοντο· αἱ δ’ ἐγκρατέστεραι βασανισταῖς παρεδίδοντο πρὸς αἰκίας ἀνηκέστους, ὅπερ τοῦ μηδὲν ἀδικεῖν αὐτὰς σαφεστάτη πίστις ἐστίν.) Trans. by Yonge.

Feldman has dismissed the role of mere outward customs in generating antipathy against Jews. He has argued for finding a source of antipathy in Jewish political and economic success, but the evidence for that is very slim. When he argues for attributing cause to a perceived Jewish lack of patriotism, not only do the details of the Alexandrian incident recommend against seeing that as key; Feldman himself seems to acknowledge that the issue was more fundamental, an antipathy toward Judaism and its theology more generally.

Feldman does explore the impact of Jewish theology on pagan antipathy in much greater detail. He observes, “It is this illiberality on the part of the Jews in denying the validity of any other religion and this lack of patriotism in refusing to acknowledge the religion identified with the state that leads to attacks on Jewish theology.”¹¹¹ He says more.

The main, most serious, and most recurrent charge by intellectuals against Jews is that they hate Gentiles. The greatest influence on all the philosophies of the Hellenistic and Roman periods was Socrates, who encouraged debate about basic premises. The Jew, on the other hand, at least according to his own theory, could not debate his basic premises, notably the miraculous revelation of the Torah at Sinai. Moreover, the Jew, most intolerantly – at least to the pagan intellectual – asserted that the premises of pagan polytheism were all wrong and indeed insisted that pagans, as children of Noah, were forbidden to worship idols. Jews, ironically, welcomed others into their midst as proselytes – but only on their terms. It is this illiberalism that is constantly attacked by the pagan thinkers. Moreover, intellectuals, almost by definition, seek to persuade others of the validity of their points of view; and, as we shall remark, they must have seen in the Jews dangerous and often successful rivals to their missionary propaganda.¹¹²

The Jews were inflexible. The Jews were illiberal. One could very much understand, then, that negative reaction on the part of others might follow. This does seem like fertile ground for an effort to account for antipathy against Jews. Yet, in this moment when Feldman seems to have opportunity to present a strong rationale for hatred, he qualifies the inflexibility and illiberality of the Jews by suggesting that perhaps they were not as inflexible as they may have seemed.

¹¹¹ Feldman (1993) 151-152.

¹¹² Feldman (1993) 125-126.

In summary, to the intelligentsia it is precisely the unwillingness of Jews to engage in meaningful dialogue with other religious groups on a plane of equality – a *sine qua non* for the intellectual who welcomes debate – and to be ready to adopt another point of view if it can be shown to be superior to their own attitude that proved that the Jews were illiberal, unscholarly obscurantists. It is precisely to answer such a charge that Josephus (*Antiquities* 1.161) puts a liberal attitude into the mouth of Abraham, who descends into Egypt to an international scientific congress, so to speak, with the Egyptians, in which the loser of the debate agrees to adopt the philosophic position of the winner. The intellectuals could not understand the illiberalism of the Jews in failing to accord respect to the religions of others, as Apion (quoted in Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.65), for example, complained; and hence the efforts of the Septuagint, Philo (*De Vita Mosis* 2.38.205 and *De Specialibus Legibus* 1.9.53), and Josephus (*Antiquities* 4.207; *Against Apion* 2.237) to show, on the basis of an interpretation of Exodus 22:27,¹¹³ that Jews are actually committed to accord such respect. But these apologetics were clearly contradicted by the Bible itself and by the oral tradition that the increasingly important Pharisees were expounding during this very period.¹¹⁴

Even though he sees the Bible as occupying an opposing position, Feldman feels that those seeking to defend Judaism intellectually left the door open for greater openness to the views of others. At some level, Feldman seems to feel, then, that the conclusion by Greek intellectuals that Judaism was inflexible was illegitimate to some degree, and Jews “in the know” worked hard to emphasize this fact.

Note the dilemma that Feldman finds himself in. On the one hand, he sees Judaism making great strides as they add incredible numbers of people to their faith. This presumes pagan familiarity with the tenets of Judaism, and presumably, with their distinctiveness. On the other hand, he sees intellectual recoil at illiberal theology and presumes that many Jews worked hard to mitigate the implications of Jewish theology. At the same time, though, he characterizes such attempts at mitigation as contradicting the Bible itself.

¹¹³ This passage, as well as Josephus’ account of Abram’s visit to Egypt, will be evaluated in significant detail in chapter 3. I will demonstrate that both the use of Exodus 22:27 by Josephus and others and Josephus’ reporting of Abram in Egypt need not be viewed as reflecting liberal views.

¹¹⁴ Feldman (1993) 175.

Jewish illiberality would theoretically lead to hatred by non-Jews. But Feldman suggests illiberality was mitigated by liberality. Yet that contradicted the Bible, and so where does that leave one? In the end, Feldman seems to see contradictions, though he remains constant in arguing against viewing hatred of Jews as flowing from the theological tenets of Judaism. In fact, even to the degree that Greek intellectuals clearly viewed Judaism as inflexible, Feldman saw an opening to minimize the relevance of those views.

And yet we must make two final remarks. In the first place, not all the intellectuals agreed in viewing the beliefs, practices, and traits of the Jews negatively; indeed, a sizable number among the philosophic schools of the Neo-Pythagoreans and the Neo-Platonists admired them. Second, none of the attacks in antiquity of the intelligentsia on the Jews, not even the blood libel, ever led to an organized physical attack on them, so far as we can tell, with the possible exception of the riot of 38 in Alexandria. The influence of the intelligentsia on rulers or assemblies was, to say the least, minimal. Even a Cicero or a senator or a Tacitus, who were involved in politics, never, so far as we know, translated his anti-Jewish sentiments into political or other measures against the Jews. In short, the vertical alliance of Jews and rulers was unaffected by the writings or speeches of philosophers or rhetoricians or poets or satirists.¹¹⁵

In the end, then, Feldman feels that Jewish theological tenets would not have inevitably led people in general to look down on Jews. Yes, there were some intellectuals who looked down on Jews as a consequence of their beliefs. But there is no evidence that these individuals had any broader impact on the opinions of others.

Feldman acknowledges that there were people who hated Jews. Yet in characterizing the position of Jews in the Roman Empire, he recommends caution before making things seem too negative. Feldman evaluates various proposed rationale for hating Jews. Some of his argumentation can be challenged. Some of Feldman's explanations seem challenged by Feldman himself. It is almost as if he recognized that people did hate Jews, but then he keeps coming back to a sense that they really should not have hated Jews. Whatever the strength or weakness

¹¹⁵ Feldman (1993) 175-176.

of Feldman's arguments regarding why others hated Jews, the driving force behind his evaluation is what he views as incontrovertible fact, demographics. Demographics – the huge increase in number of Jews over the centuries – determine that things must have been more positive than any negatives might imply. Feldman believes that significant numbers of people converted to Judaism. Clearly negatives could not have been too negative. In addition, potential negatives must have faded in light of a huge list of attractions present in Judaism. It is these attractions that Feldman addresses next.

Highlighting attractiveness

Recall Gruen's claims that many of the seemingly negative actions toward Jews were not actually as bad as they may have seemed. Recall Goodman's foregrounding of the distinctiveness of Jews but also his view that Jews were not involved in missionary activity; consequently, many of the potentially uncomfortable features of Judaism were not being trumpeted, and as a result many were not troubled by them. Feldman is ready to acknowledge that the theology of Judaism was in circulation. Many were converted. So, he is consequently compelled to seek out as many positives as possible, attractive features that would have drawn individuals to the Jewish faith, features that would have overcome any of the potential negatives associated with Judaism.

Feldman's list of positives is long. To begin, there was official imperial governmental support of the Jewish people. Feldman notes, "Our survey leads us to conclude that official government prejudice against Jews was not a significant phenomenon in the ancient world."¹¹⁶ Successive Roman administrations maintained privileges that had been granted by Julius Caesar

¹¹⁶ Feldman (1993) 106.

to Jews in gratitude for their support during Caesar's war with Pompey: exemption from military service, the right to send money to the temple in Jerusalem, and the right to form corporate groups.¹¹⁷ While such privileges, admittedly, could have led some to envy, others may have seen in them the attraction of status and protection.

Other factors, however, are viewed by Feldman as more critical. "Undoubtedly, religious and cultural factors were primary inducements in winning Gentiles to Judaism."¹¹⁸ The antiquity of the Jewish religion was attractive. Strict monotheism, and with no worshipped image, stood out. Some may have seen Judaism as guarding them against magic. Brave endurance of persecution could be honored. There was a large community that networked across the empire. There was inner security when one was part of the tightly knit Jewish family. The Jews had a reputation for wisdom. Charity was practiced within the Jewish community. Accommodations were offered for travelers. And to whatever degree the Jews had exclusivist religious claims, well, so did the Greeks.¹¹⁹

One might consider these observations by Feldman and wonder whether each of them would inevitably have come across as positive to the Gentile community at large. Recalling Feldman's ultimate purpose – a desire to account for his conclusion that there were many converts to Judaism – he is obliged to look at the glass half full when it comes to characterizing features of Judaism.

These aforementioned traits could legitimately be viewed by some as positive. There are occasions, however, where Feldman seems to go a bit too far in his attempt to depict attitudes toward Jews as positive. For example, Feldman refers to Apion's accusation that the Jews kept a

¹¹⁷ Feldman (1993) 93.

¹¹⁸ Feldman (1993) 336. The listing of factors which follows is discussed by Feldman after this quoted citation.

¹¹⁹ AA 2.255-269.

donkey's head in the temple and worshiped it.¹²⁰ While Apion seems clearly to have intended this to generate ridicule, Feldman suggests that given the honor donkeys received in Greek literature, hearing such a thing would not necessarily have alienated Greeks from Jews. Feldman explains, "According to Pausanias (10.18.4), it was their timely braying that led to the routing of the Molossians by the Ambrakiots, who later dedicated a bronze statue of an ass in token of gratitude; and in another instance, according to Herodotus (4.129), it was Darius's contingent of asses that proved most effective in the route of the Scythian Calvary."¹²¹ One can properly note times when donkeys played prominent and positive roles in history, but to imagine that this reality would have caused Apion's mocking to fall flat seems challenging to envision.

On another occasion, Feldman refers to the fact that Tacitus, no lover of Jews, offered as one of the possible Jewish origin stories an account that Jews came from Crete at the time of Saturn's expulsion by Jupiter. Feldman then explains, "The association with Saturn was with the god who was connected with the golden age of humankind and whose return was longed for almost messianically. The fact that Saturn was said to have the greatest potency among the planets may explain the mixture of respect for and fear of the Jews, who were at this time winning so many adherents."¹²² Again, one wonders whether such an implication would have crossed the minds of many.

Overview of Feldman

While some implications Feldman offers could be viewed as strained, nevertheless they offer additional insight into the mindset Feldman brings to the question of the status of Jews in the Roman Empire. Feldman summarizes:

¹²⁰ AA 2.80.

¹²¹ Feldman (1993) 146.

¹²² Feldman (1993) 430.

The masses, largely for economic reasons, may have resented Jewish privileges and may have envied Jewish wealth and influence, but many of them saw distinct advantages – religious, social, and economic – in adopting Judaism in whole or in part. Even after the three great revolts of 66-74, 115-17, and 132-35, the Jews were hardly powerless and indeed continued to win proselytes and especially “sympathizers.” In short, the lachrymose theory of Jewish history, highlighting the weakness and suffering of the Jews, would not, on the whole, seem to apply to the ancient period.¹²³

Feldman needs a view of Judaism that permits significant conversions. As a consequence, he needs to recontextualize any seeming negatives. He does this by attributing cause for antipathy to features of Judaism that are not as centrally linked to Jewish theology: for example, blaming economic success more than distinctive Jewish customs. When noting the role of theology, he seeks to minimize the negativity by claiming that prominent Jews sought to moderate features of Judaism which might have generated antipathy, and any negativity expressed by pagan intelligentsia had little impact on others.

While there was hatred, then, perhaps it was not as bad as others might make it out to be. Whatever negatives might have remained, so many attractive features of Judaism would have overwhelmed them. In the end, Feldman claims – with confidence – that Jews experienced conversion success. Figuring out precisely how that could have happened – resolving how both negative realities as well as positive ones could simultaneously coexist – may be elusive. What can be known, Feldman proposes, is that numbers do not lie – mass conversions demand an optimistic view of Judaism in the first century.

Schäfer’s Pessimism

With Gruen, Goodman, and even Feldman, ultimately an optimism regarding Jewish existence in the Roman Empire prevails. Not all scholars are so ready to embrace such a

¹²³ Feldman (1993) 445.

conclusion. Peter Schäfer, author of *Judeophobia*, prefaces his own exploration of the status of Jews in the Greco-Roman world by referencing the views of Louis Feldman. Schäfer pulls no punches:

The emphasis upon both sympathy for Jews and their achievements in the Greco-Roman world is also the declared purpose of *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World* by Louis Feldman, which being overly apologetic, however, grossly overshoots its mark. Only once is the term “anti-Semitism” mentioned, and then—as the index expressly points out—only to document its “inappropriateness.” No further examination of the phenomenon, regardless of what one might call it, is offered.¹²⁴

Schäfer believes that Feldman, as he noted positives for Jews in the Roman Empire, ended up creating an overly optimistic false impression. Schäfer stipulates from the outset that his hypothesis will be different:

[The approach of this present book] starts from the presupposition that there did exist in antiquity a phenomenon which may be called “hatred of Jews,” “hostility toward Jews,” “anti-Semitism,” “anti-Judaism,” or whatever label one chooses to describe it. Although it is true, as Gager, Feldman, and others maintain, that we also encounter a remarkable degree of sympathy for Judaism in the ancient world, the patterns of animosity are undeniable.¹²⁵

Antipathy a reality

Schäfer does not wish to deny that there were positive features of Jewish existence in Greco-Roman times. He does wish to present a different bottom line, though, intending to craft a characterization that highlights the pressures Jews regularly faced. To do this, Schäfer addresses various categories of Jewish life – their history, their God, their unique practices, their relationship with non-Jews – and shows how antipathy was a constant theme.

Schäfer offers evidence of different sorts. First, he notes that pagans accused Jews of hating all other people. This might appear an extreme indictment, but evident Jewish

¹²⁴ Schäfer (1997) 6.

¹²⁵ Schäfer (1997) 6.

distinctiveness and their readiness to live separate lives apparently left the door open to such a conclusion. Apollonius Molon, a first century BC Greek rhetorician who taught both Cicero and Julius Caesar, is reported by Josephus to have reproached the Jews in just such a way: “He reviles them as atheists and man-haters” (ὡς ἀθέους καὶ μισανθρώπους λοιδορεῖ).¹²⁶ Another Greek from the first century BC, the historian Diodorus Siculus, reports an occasion when many anti-Jewish advisors encouraged Antiochus VII Sidetes to treat Jews harshly. Antiochus had been besieging Jerusalem in 135/4 BC, and the surrounded Jews were now seeking terms of peace. The majority of Antiochus’ friends discouraged such terms, promoting instead a wholesale destruction of the Jewish race. Why? “Since they alone of all nations avoided dealings with any other people and looked upon all men as their enemies” (μόνους γὰρ ἀπάντων ἔθνῶν ἀκοινωνήτους εἶναι τῆς πρὸς ἄλλο ἔθνος ἐπιμιξίας καὶ πολεμίους ὑπολαμβάνειν πάντας).¹²⁷ Antiochus’ friends, having spoken about the Jewish exit from Egypt and their subsequent conquest of land in Israel, go on: “And having organized[,] the nation of the Jews had made their hatred of mankind into a tradition, and on this account had introduced utterly outlandish laws: not to break bread with any other race, nor to show them any good will at all” (συστησαμένους δὲ τὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἔθνος παραδόσιμον ποιῆσαι τὸ μῖσος τὸ πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους· διὰ τοῦτο δὲ καὶ νόμιμα παντελῶς ἐξηλλαγμένα καταδειξαι, τὸ μηδενὶ ἄλλῳ ἔθνει τραπέζης κοινωνεῖν μηδ’ εὐνοεῖν τὸ παράπαν).¹²⁸ Tacitus speaks of Jews in similar fashion. After noting the fidelity Jews display to other Jews, he says, “Against all others, [they display] a hostile hatred” (adversus omnes alios hostile odium).¹²⁹

¹²⁶ AA 2.148.

¹²⁷ *Bibliotheca Historica*, XXXIV-XXXV, 1:1-5, in Photius’ *Bibliotheca*, ed. Bekker, cod. 244, p. 379 = *GLAJJ*, vol. 1, no. 63; trans. by F.R. Walton, *Loeb Classical Library*.

¹²⁸ *Bibliotheca Historica*, XXXIV-XXXV, 1:1-5, in Photius’ *Bibliotheca*, ed. Bekker, cod. 244, p. 379 = *GLAJJ*, vol. 1, no. 63; trans. by F.R. Walton, *Loeb Classical Library*.

¹²⁹ *Historiae* V.5.

In addition to highlighting the separateness of Jews and negative Gentile characterizations which followed, Schäfer draws attention to Jewish religious exclusivity. While noting that there were different pagan perceptions of the Jewish belief system, he cites an objection raised by Apion: “If they are citizens (of Alexandria), why are they not worshipping the same gods the Alexandrians worship?” (si sunt cives, eosdem deos quos Alexandrini non colunt?)¹³⁰ Such religious exclusivity could turn people off, but it also could result in conversions. Even then, though, negativity could follow. Schäfer highlights productive proselytism as creating friction with the Gentile community. In commenting on pagan negativity linked to the Jewish refusal to eat pork, he summarizes, “Whereas the beginning of this negative attitude seems to be connected with the successful Maccabean expansion, its renewed rise in the second half of the first and the beginning of the second century CE no doubt has to be regarded as an expression of increasing ‘Judeophobia’ because of the success of proselytism.”¹³¹

Schäfer does not avoid mentioning Greco-Roman perspectives on Judaism which are positive. For example, he cites Augustine’s mention of Varro:

Dicit etiam antiquos Romanos plus annos centum et septuaginta deos sine simulacro coluisse. “Quod si adhuc,” inquit, “mansisset, castius dii obseruarentur.” Cui sententiae suae testem adhibet inter cetera etiam gentem Iudaeam;

[Varro] says, also, that the ancient Romans, for more than a hundred and seventy years, worshipped the gods without an image. “And if this custom,” he says, “could have remained until now, the gods would have been more purely worshipped.” In favor of this opinion, he cites as a witness among others the Jewish nation.¹³²

¹³⁰ AA 2.65

¹³¹ Schäfer (1997) 81.

¹³² Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 4.31.2; trans. by Dods. Also, with regard to the ancient Roman practice of worshipping the divine without an image, see Plutarch’s *Numa* 8.7-8: “Furthermore, [Numa’s] ordinances concerning images are altogether in harmony with the doctrines of Pythagoras. For that philosopher maintained that the first principle of being was beyond sense or feeling, was invisible and uncreated, and discernible only by the mind. And in like manner Numa forbade the Romans to revere an image of God which had the form of man or beast. Nor was there among them in this earlier time any painted or graven likeness of Deity, but while for the first hundred and seventy years they were continually building temples and establishing sacred shrines, they made no statues in bodily form for them, convinced that it was impious to liken higher things to lower, and that it was impossible to apprehend Deity except by the intellect. Their sacrifices, too, were altogether appropriate to the Pythagorean worship; for most

Nevertheless, though acknowledging what other scholars choose to focus on – that is, the positives – Schäfer ultimately insists that such positive views of Judaism cannot set aside the reality that there was real antipathy faced by Jews in the Roman Empire. Positives were present, but in no way does that alter the overriding conclusion: antipathy against Jews was a constant theme.

Responsibility for antipathy

As Schäfer wishes to foreground the reality of antipathy, he also is interested in identifying who is responsible for such antipathy. He wishes to ensure that Jews are not viewed as blameworthy. While other scholars could insulate Jews from being blamed for mistreatment experienced at the hands of others by suggesting that Jews really were not that bad off – in other words, it was not a normal occurrence that they were mistreated as a people – Schäfer needs a different strategy. He did believe that, in important respects, Jews were looked upon and treated as second-class by various elements in Roman society. But he does not view Jews as being worthy of blame in this regard. He refuses to acknowledge that Jews had provided non-Jews a legitimate reason to look down on them. Rather, the source of maltreatment is properly located not in the victims, but in the perpetrators. “[Greco-Egyptian and Greek authors] 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.”¹³³

of them involved no bloodshed, but were made with flour, drink-offerings, and the least costly gifts.” (ἔστι δὲ καὶ τὰ περὶ τῶν ἀφιδρυμάτων νομοθετήματα παντάπασιν ἀδελφὰ τῶν Πυθαγόρου δογμάτων, οὔτε γὰρ ἐκεῖνος αἰσθητὸν ἢ παθητὸν, ἀόρατον δὲ καὶ ἀκτιστον καὶ νοητὸν ὑπελάμβανεν εἶναι τὸ πρῶτον, οὗτός τε διεκάλυπεν ἀνθρωποειδῆ καὶ ζωόμορφον εἰκόνα θεοῦ Ῥωμαίους νομίζειν. οὐδ’ ἦν παρ’ αὐτοῖς οὔτε γραπτὸν οὔτε πλαστὸν εἶδος θεοῦ πρότερον, ἀλλ’ ἐν ἑκατὸν ἑβδομήκοντα τοῖς πρώτοις ἔτεσι ναοὺς μὲν οἰκοδομοῦ μεν οἱ καὶ καλιάδας ἱερὰς ἰστῶντες, ἄγαλμα δὲ οὐδὲν ἔμμορφον ποιούμενοι διετέλουν, ὡς οὔτε ὄσιον ἀφομοιοῦν τὰ βελτίονα τοῖς χείροσιν οὔτε ἐφάπτεσθαι θεοῦ δυνατὸν ἄλλως ἢ νοήσει, κομιδῆ δὲ καὶ τὰ τῶν θυσιῶν ἔχεται τῆς Πυθαγορικῆς ἀγιστείας· ἀναίμακτοι γὰρ ἦσαν αἱ γε πολλά, δι’ ἀλφίτου καὶ σπονδῆς καὶ τῶν εὐτελεστάτων πεποιημένα.) Trans. by B. Perrin (1914).

¹³³ Schäfer (1997) 210; italics original.

Overview of perspectives

Eric Gruen characterizes the relationship between Jews and Romans optimistically, interpreting events so as to highlight evidence of a positive relationship. Martin Goodman acknowledges differences more openly, but he minimizes the impact which distinctive Jewish religious tenets would have had. He reduces Jewish distinctiveness more to lifestyle than to a fundamentally different outlook on life, and so he concurrently minimizes the likelihood that significant disjunction would have existed between Jews and non-Jews. Louis Feldman lays bare some of the more vicious accusations leveled against Jews, but in the end he positions them as not having much significance. His demographic argument that the number of Jews must have increased greatly via conversions during this period trumps any argument one might make that Judaism was unattractive to many. So, three prominent scholars of Judaism minimize the negative. Peter Schäfer approaches the issue from a different perspective. He believes that other scholars have underestimated the animosity that existed toward Jews. His ultimate interest is in explaining the “why.” But for purposes of characterizing Jewish status in the first century AD, he does make obvious his disagreement with other scholars – he views Jewish existence more pessimistically.

All four of these scholars begin with essentially the same facts. All four scholars recognize that there is evidence available to promote an optimistic view of Jewish status in the first century. They also all recognize that evidence is available to promote a pessimistic point of view. In navigating the junction of these two streams, then, each develops a standard for determining which of the two flows finally to follow. In the course of evaluating these four authors, I have challenged those efforts which seek to minimize the negativity. While strategies to minimize the negativity are strenuously employed and sincerely presented, ultimately such

strategies appear to require a sidelining of seemingly clear data to accomplish their purpose. I raise the following questions. Can we leave intact the factuality of those events Gruen questions? Can we permit the standout features of Judaism – its theological perspectives and concurrent practices – to remain inextricably intertwined rather than to be distinguished, as Goodman seems to prefer? Is Feldman’s perception that evidence for an increase in the number of Jews sufficient to call into question what otherwise would be clear evidence for a negative pagan view of Judaism? And finally, does Schäfer’s plea for realistic pessimism offer a helpful corrective?

This all matters because Josephus was a Jew. In attempting to understand his negotiation of the world in which he lived, one benefits greatly from understanding better the world in which he lived. He lived as a Jew. He wrote as a Jew. He presents himself as inextricably intertwined with the history and culture of his people. To understand how Josephus viewed himself relative to his Greco-Roman audience, we need to understand Josephus not only as an individual but also as a member of a distinctive social grouping within the empire. The more precisely we can characterize the status of Jews in the first century, then, the more likely we are to accurately understand the nature of Josephus’ own work.

CHAPTER 2 – Jewish Status: Classifying Ancient Views

Understanding Josephus depends on understanding the place of Jews in the Roman Empire. Scholarship divides into two key camps in characterizing Jewish status in the first century AD. Gruen, Goodman, and Feldman defend an optimistic view of Jewish status. Schäfer promotes an alternative view, one that acknowledges positives but at the same time highlights the reality of antipathy directed against Jews in the empire.

The opinions of each of these scholars are influenced by various factors: confidence in historical sources, decisions about which evidence to emphasize, and the starting point for one's line of argumentation. Characterizing Jewish status in the Roman Empire is not easy, in particular because there are multiple non-Jewish entities which each had a distinct view of Judaism. By classifying ancient perspectives on Judaism according to the entity which held that particular perspective, however, it proves possible to create some order amidst the complexity.

The first entity I will consider is the imperial bureaucracy. The Roman Empire as well as its representatives in the provinces took a particular position vis-à-vis the Jews. The second entity comprises local government officials. For example, the magistrates of Laodicea, in Asia Minor, were challenged by an imperial edict regarding their treatment of Jews. These magistrates had to submit – at least in appearance – to imperial representatives, but any preexistent views toward Jews, even if forcibly restrained, would likely represent the feelings of everyday Laodiceans more precisely than a perspective conveyed by an imperial representative. The third entity is the common people. Local governmental institutions can reflect the views of those they govern, but they still operate on a different plane. In determining how to treat a particular ethnic subgroup, they have to consider the good of the community as well as the

relationship of their governmental body to any higher political authority. Individual neighbors of a particular ethnic minority, however, are more free to act on their prejudices.

I will evaluate the evidence we have for interaction between Jews and non-Jews from these three perspectives. While the evidence in totality is complex, categorizing evidence according to these three perspectives can offer the beginnings of a path through the maze and ultimately help identify a common thread useful for defining Jewish status in the first century.¹

Imperial administration

Imperial dealings with Jews, though marked by an occasional rough patch, in general were quite protective of Jewish rights. The origins of this protection were, in many respects, pragmatic. Consider, for example, the credit Jews earned through their support of Julius Caesar.²

After Caesar had defeated Pompey in the battle of Pharsalus, Pompey fled to Egypt. Upon arriving, Pompey was assassinated by advisors of the young Ptolemy and a former member of Pompey's own army. This assassination was an attempt to gain Caesar's favor, but the action provoked quite a different attitude. Caesar had planned to gain respect by pardoning Pompey. Those who robbed Caesar of this opportunity were now considered his enemies. Achilles, one of the assassins, was given command of the army of Ptolemy and proceeded to march on Alexandria, where Caesar was now located with only a single legion. Part of Caesar's plan to

¹ As I consider the status of Jews in the Roman Empire, I rely heavily on Josephus' *Antiquities* since that is our only source for many of the circumstances and events pertinent to this question. I refer to other literary sources where possible and find that they present a general outlook consistent with that presented by Josephus.

² A focus on the role that Jews played in supporting Julius Caesar is not to deny that there were good relations between Romans and Jews before this. Rather, Jewish support for Caesar at a critical moment stands out because it is subsequently used as a prominent rationale for good treatment of Jews. As an example of positive imperial treatment of Jews prior to the incidents about to be described, note the decree issued in 49 BC by the consul Lucius Lentulus: "I have at my tribunal set these Jews, who are citizens of Rome, and follow the Jewish religious rites, and yet live at Ephesus, free from going into the army, on account of the superstition they are under" (πολίτας Ῥωμαίων Ἰουδαίους ἱερὰ Ἰουδαϊκὰ ἔχοντας καὶ ποιῶντας ἐν Ἐφέσῳ πρὸ τοῦ βήματος δεισιδαιμονίας ἕνεκα στρατείας ἀπέλυσσα, *Ant* 14.228).

avert disaster was to enlist Mithridates of Pergamum in a rescue mission, but Mithridates' approach was blocked at the city of Pelusium, on the eastern edge of the Nile delta.

It is at this point that Jews step into the story. The Jewish ruler Antipater, father of Herod the Great, came to Mithridates' aid with 3000 armed men. Antipater also rallied Arabian and Syrian troops to the fight. With the muscle of these additional forces, Mithridates attacked Pelusium. The story continues.

Μιθριδάτης δὲ ἄρας ἐκ Συρίας εἰς Πηλούσιον ἀφικνεῖται καὶ μὴ δεχομένων αὐτὸν τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπολιόρκει τὴν πόλιν. ἠρίστευσε δὲ Ἀντίπατρος κατασύρας τι τοῦ τείχους καὶ ὁδὸν εἰσπεσεῖν παρέσχετο τοῖς ἄλλοις εἰς τὴν πόλιν. καὶ τὸ μὲν Πηλούσιον οὕτως εἶχεν.

τοὺς δὲ περὶ Ἀντίπατρον καὶ Μιθριδάτην ἀπιόντας πρὸς Καίσαρα διεκώλυον οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι οἱ τὴν Ὀνίου [χώραν] λεγομένην κατοικοῦντες. πείθει δὲ καὶ τούτους τὰ αὐτῶν φρονῆσαι κατὰ τὸ ὁμόφυλον Ἀντίπατρος καὶ μάλιστα ἐπιδείξας αὐτοῖς τὰς Ὑρκανοῦ τοῦ ἀρχιερέως ἐπιστολάς, ἐν αἷς αὐτοὺς φίλους εἶναι Καίσαρος παρεκάλει καὶ ξένια καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐπιτήδεια χορηγεῖν τῷ στρατῷ. καὶ οἱ μὲν ὡς ἐώρων Ἀντίπατρον καὶ τὸν ἀρχιερέα συνθέλοντας ὑπήκουον. τούτους δὲ προσθεμένους ἀκούσαντες οἱ περὶ Μέμφιν ἐκάλουν καὶ αὐτοὶ τὸν Μιθριδάτην πρὸς ἑαυτοῦς· κάκεῖνος ἐλθὼν καὶ τούτους παραλαμβάνει.

So Mithridates marched out of Syria, and came to Pelusium; and, when its inhabitants would not admit him, he besieged the city. Now Antipater signaled himself here, and was the first who plucked down a part of the wall, and so opened a way to the rest, whereby they might enter the city, and by this means Pelusium was taken.

But it happened that the Egyptian Jews, who dwelt in the country called Onion, would not let Antipater and Mithridates, with their soldiers, pass to Caesar; but Antipater persuaded them to come over to their party because he was of the same people with them, and that chiefly by showing them the epistles of Hyrcanus the high priest, wherein he exhorted them to cultivate friendship with Caesar; and to supply his army with money, and all sorts of provisions which they wanted; and accordingly, when they saw Antipater and the high priest of the same sentiments, they did as they were desired. And when the Jews about Memphis heard that these Jews were come over to Caesar, they also invited Mithridates to come to them; so he came and received them also into his army.³

Antipater and his Jewish soldiers played an important role in breaking through a roadblock and then in enlisting additional Jewish support. But there was more. In the heat of a decisive battle, the actions of Jews were critical.

³ *Ant* 14.130-132.

ἐπεὶ δὲ τὸ καλούμενον Δέλτα ἤδη περιεληλύθει, συμβάλλει τοῖς πολεμίοις περὶ τὸ καλούμενον Ἰουδαίων στρατόπεδον. εἶχε δὲ τὸ μὲν δεξιὸν κέρας Μιθριδάτης, τὸ δ' εὐώνυμον Ἀντίπατρος. συμπεσόντων δὲ εἰς μάχην κλίνεται τὸ τοῦ Μιθριδάτου κέρας καὶ παθεῖν ἂν ἐκινδύνευσεν τὰ δεινότατα, εἰ μὴ παρὰ τὴν ἡύονα τοῦ ποταμοῦ σὺν τοῖς οἰκείοις στρατιώταις Ἀντίπατρος παραθέων νενικηκῶς ἤδη τοὺς πολεμίους τὸν μὲν ρύεται, προτρέπει δ' εἰς φυγὴν τοὺς νενικηκότας Αἰγυπτίους. αἶρει δ' αὐτῶν καὶ τὸ στρατόπεδον ἐπιμείνας τῇ διώξει, τὸν τε Μιθριδάτην ἐκάλει πλεῖστον ἐν τῇ τροπῇ διασχόντα. ἔπεσον δὲ τῶν μὲν περὶ τοῦτον ὀκτακόσιοι, τῶν δ' Ἀντιπάτρου πεντήκοντα.

And when Mithridates had gone over all Delta, as the place is called, he came to a pitched battle with the enemy, near the place called the Jewish Camp. Now Mithridates had the right wing, and Antipater the left, and when it came to a fight, that wing where Mithridates was gave way, and was likely to suffer extremely, unless Antipater had come running to him with his own soldiers along the shore, when he had already beaten the enemy that opposed him; so he delivered Mithridates and put those Egyptians who had been too hard for him to flight. He also took their camp, and continued in the pursuit of them. He also recalled Mithridates, who had been worsted, and was retired a great way off, of whose soldiers eight hundred fell; but of Antipater's fifty.⁴

The commander from Pergamum was most gracious and complimentary when reflecting on the danger just escaped.

Μιθριδάτης δὲ περὶ τούτων ἐπιστέλλει Καίσαρι τῆς τε νίκης αὐτοῖς ἅμα καὶ τῆς σωτηρίας αἴτιον τὸν Ἀντίπατρον ἀποφαίνων, ὥστε τὸν Καίσαρα τότε μὲν ἐπαινεῖν αὐτόν, κεχρησθαι δὲ παρὰ πάντα τὸν πόλεμον εἰς τὰ κινδυνωδέστατα τῷ Ἀντιπάτρῳ· καὶ δὴ καὶ τρωθῆναι συνέβη παρὰ τοὺς ἀγῶνας αὐτῷ.

So Mithridates sent an account of this battle to Caesar, and openly declared that Antipater was the author of this victory, and of his own preservation; insomuch that Caesar commended Antipater then, and made use of him all the rest of that war in the most hazardous undertakings: he happened also to be wounded in one of those engagements.⁵

Though initially Antipater had been on the side of Pompey in the civil war, his strategic conversion to the side of Julius Caesar after Pompey died⁶ and his subsequent service to Caesar brought immediate and rich benefit. Caesar gave him citizenship in Rome and freedom from taxes everywhere.⁷ He invited him to select whatever territory he would like to govern.

⁴ *Ant* 14.133-135

⁵ *Ant* 14.136.

⁶ *JW* 1.187.

⁷ *Ant* 14.137.

Antipater chose Judea and became its ruler.⁸ Caesar declared that Hyrcanus, the high priest and titular head of the Jewish people whom Antipater served, was entitled to have his family continue to function in that position and to serve as arbiter should questions arise elsewhere about Jewish customs.⁹ Caesar also allowed Hyrcanus to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.¹⁰

Benefits from Rome for this rescue by Antipater and his troops, however, did not accrue only to a few individuals. Caesar permitted freedom from taxes every seventh – the sabbatical – year for territories of the Jews. He prohibited the raising of troops from Jewish territory and also insisted that no winter quarters be demanded or other money exacted.¹¹

Yet benefits from Julius Caesar were not restricted only to those who lived in recognizable Jewish territories. It came to Caesar's attention that the local governing body of Parium, a coastal town not far from Troy, had forbidden Jews "to make use of the customs of their forefathers, and their way of sacred worship" (τοῖς πατρίοις ἔθεσι καὶ ἱεροῖς χρῆσθαι).¹²

Caesar's response was categorical:

ἐμοὶ τοίνυν οὐκ ἀρέσκει κατὰ τῶν ἡμετέρων φίλων καὶ συμμάχων τοιαῦτα γίνεσθαι ψηφίσματα καὶ κωλύεσθαι αὐτοὺς ζῆν κατὰ τὰ αὐτῶν ἔθη καὶ χρήματα εἰς σύνδειπνα καὶ τὰ ἱερά εἰσφέρειν, τοῦτο ποιεῖν αὐτῶν μηδ' ἐν Ῥώμῃ κεκωλυμένων. καὶ γὰρ Γάιος Καῖσαρ ὁ ἡμέτερος στρατηγὸς [καὶ] ὑπάτος ἐν τῷ διατάγματι κωλύων θιάσους συνάγεσθαι κατὰ πόλιν μόνους τούτους οὐκ ἐκώλυσεν οὔτε χρήματα συνεισφέρειν οὔτε σύνδειπνα ποιεῖν. ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ γὰρ τοὺς ἄλλους θιάσους κωλύων τούτοις μόνους ἐπιτρέπω κατὰ τὰ πάτρια ἔθη καὶ νόμιμα συνάγεσθαι τε καὶ ἐστιᾶσθαι. καὶ ὑμᾶς οὖν καλῶς ἔχει, εἴ τι κατὰ τῶν ἡμετέρων φίλων καὶ συμμάχων ψήφισμα ἐποιήσατε, τοῦτο ἀκυρῶσαι διὰ τὴν περὶ ἡμᾶς αὐτῶν ἀρετὴν καὶ εὐνοίαν.

Now it does not please me that such decrees should be made against our friends and confederates, whereby they are forbidden to live according to their own customs, or to bring in contributions for common suppers and holy festivals, while they are not forbidden so to do even at Rome itself; for even Caius Caesar, our imperator and consul, in that decree wherein he forbade the Bacchanal rioters to meet in the city, did yet permit

⁸ *Ant* 14.143.

⁹ *Ant* 14.190-195.

¹⁰ *Ant* 14.144, 200.

¹¹ *Ant* 14.202-204.

¹² *Ant* 14.211.

these Jews and these only, both to bring in their contributions, and to make their common suppers. Accordingly, when I forbid other Bacchanal rioters, I permit these Jews to gather themselves together, according to the customs and laws of their forefathers, and to persist therein. It will be therefore good for you, that if you have made any decree against these our friends and confederates, to abrogate the same, by reason of their virtue, and kind disposition towards us.¹³

Notice Caesar's logic. Yes, he refers initially to his father – Caius Caesar – and to an exception made already at that time for the Jews' benefit. But he concludes his appeal with a second reference to Jews as "friends and confederates." He then insists that the Parians annul their anti-Jewish decrees "because of their virtue and good will concerning us" (διὰ τὴν περὶ ἡμᾶς αὐτῶν ἀρετὴν καὶ εὖνοιαν). Caesar had seen evidence of friendship and good will in the rescue mission Antipater had launched to protect the life of his emperor. Jews had fought on his side (συμμάχων). That significant decision by Jewish leaders to step in on the side of the eventual winner in the civil war was paying significant dividends.

These dividends continued after Caesar's death in 44 BC.¹⁴ While political upheaval followed the assassination, it is noteworthy that in the immediate aftermath of the death, the Roman Senate took actions to affirm Julius Caesar's goodwill toward the Jews.¹⁵ Also, Dolabella, who served as consul with Mark Antony after Caesar died, sent this message to Ephesus as the chief city of Asia:

Ἀλέξανδρος Θεοδώρου πρεσβευτῆς Ὑρκανοῦ τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου υἱοῦ ἀρχιερέως καὶ ἐθνάρχου τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐνεφάνισέν μοι περὶ τοῦ μὴ δύνασθαι στρατεύεσθαι τοὺς πολίτας αὐτοῦ διὰ τὸ μήτε ὄπλα βαστάζειν δύνασθαι μήτε ὁδοιπορεῖν ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῶν σαββάτων, μήτε τροφῶν τῶν πατρίων καὶ συνήθων κατὰ τούτους εὐπορεῖν. ἐγὼ τε οὖν αὐτοῖς, καθὼς καὶ οἱ πρὸ ἐμοῦ ἡγεμόνες, δίδωμι τὴν ἀστρατείαν καὶ συγχωρῶ χρῆσθαι τοῖς πατρίοις ἐθισμοῖς ἱερῶν ἕνεκα καὶ ἀγίοις συναγομένοις, καθὼς αὐτοῖς

¹³ *Ant* 14.214-216.

¹⁴ The close relationship between the Jews and Julius Caesar is evidenced in Suetonius' observation, in *Jul* 84:5, that "in this public mourning there joined a multitude of foreigners, expressing their sorrow according to the fashion of their respective countries; but especially the Jews, who for several nights together frequented the spot where the body was burnt." [Thomson (1889).] (In summo publico luctu exterarum gentium multitudo circulatim suo quaeque more lamentata est praecipueque Iudaei, qui etiam noctibus continuis bustum frequentarunt). [Ihm (1993).]

¹⁵ *Ant* 14.217-222. A decree concerning the Jews had been passed on February 9, 44 BC but had not yet been registered in the Treasury at the time Caesar was killed. On April 11, 44 BC, the Senate acted to make that happen.

νόμιμον, καὶ τῶν πρὸς τὰς θυσίας ἀφαιρεμάτων, ὑμᾶς τε βούλομαι ταῦτα γράψαι κατὰ πόλεις.

Alexander, the son of Theodorus, the ambassador of Hyrcanus, the son of Alexander the high priest and ethnarch of the Jews, appeared before me, to show that his countrymen could not go into their armies, because they are not allowed to bear arms, or to travel on the Sabbath days, nor there to procure themselves those sorts of food which they have been used to eat from the times of their forefathers,—I do therefore grant them a freedom from going into the army, as the former prefects have done, and permit them to use the customs of their forefathers, in assembling together for sacred and religious purposes, as their law requires, and for collecting oblations necessary for sacrifices; and my will is, that you write this to the several cities under your jurisdiction.¹⁶

The goodwill of Julius Caesar toward the Jews had, in many ways, a simple beginning – a military intervention that turned out well. Through the years that preceded Caesar’s death, the goodwill continued, and death itself did not extinguish the favor. In fact, the imperial goodwill initiated by Antipater’s bold action had residual effect for decades to come, as evidenced also by the way Caesar Augustus responded to a collection of incidents during his rule.

Numerous cities in Asia and Libya had been trampling on the rights of Jews, appropriating money gathered for temple contributions and making life difficult in other ways. The Jews sent ambassadors to Augustus, who reaffirmed relevant rights by sending letters to the provincial officials on behalf of the Jews.

“Καῖσαρ Σεβαστὸς ἀρχιερεὺς δημαρχικῆς ἐξουσίας λέγει. ἐπειδὴ τὸ ἔθνος τὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων εὐχάριστον εὐρέθη οὐ μόνον ἐν τῷ ἐνεστῶτι καιρῷ ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῷ προγεγεννημένῳ καὶ μάλιστα ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐμοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοκράτορος Καίσαρος πρὸς τὸν δῆμον τὸν Ῥωμαίων ὃ τε ἀρχιερεὺς αὐτῶν Ὑρκανός, ἔδοξέ μοι καὶ τῷ ἐμῷ συμβουλίῳ μετὰ ὀρκωμοσίας γνώμη δήμου Ῥωμαίων τοὺς Ἰουδαίους χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἰδίῳις θεσμοῖς κατὰ τὸν πάτριον αὐτῶν νόμον, καθὼς ἐχρῶντο ἐπὶ Ὑρκανοῦ ἀρχιερέως θεοῦ ὑψίστου, τὰ τε ἱερὰ εἶναι ἐν ἀσυλίᾳ καὶ ἀναπέμπεσθαι εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα καὶ ἀποδίδοσθαι τοῖς ἀποδοχεῦσιν Ἱεροσολύμων, ἐγγύας τε μὴ ὁμολογεῖν αὐτοὺς ἐν σάββασιν ἢ τῇ πρὸ αὐτῆς παρασκευῇ ἀπὸ ὥρας ἐνάτης. ἐὰν δέ τις φωραθῇ κλέπτων τὰς ἱερὰς βίβλους αὐτῶν ἢ τὰ ἱερὰ χρήματα ἔκ τε σαββατείου ἔκ τε ἀνδρῶνος, εἶναι αὐτὸν ἱερόσυλον καὶ τὸν βίον αὐτοῦ ἐνεχθῆναι εἰς τὸ δημόσιον τῶν Ῥωμαίων. τὸ τε ψήφισμα τὸ δοθέν μοι ὑπ’ αὐτῶν ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐμῆς εὐσεβείας ἧς ἔχω πρὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους καὶ ὑπὲρ Γαίου Μαρκίου Κηνησωρίνου καὶ τοῦτο τὸ διάταγμα κελεύω ἀνατεθῆναι ἐν ἐπισημοτάτῳ τόπῳ τῷ

¹⁶ Ant 14.226-227.

γενηθέντι μοι ὑπὸ τοῦ κοινοῦ τῆς Ἀσίας ἐν Ἀγκύρῃ. ἐὰν δέ τις παραβῆ τι τῶν προειρημένων, δώσει δίκην οὐ μετρίαν.” ἐστηλογραφήθη ἐν τῷ Καίσαρος ναῷ.

“Caesar Augustus, Pontifex Maximus with tribunician power, decrees as follows. Since the Jewish nation has been found well disposed to the Roman people not only at the present time but also in time past, and especially in the time of my father the emperor Caesar, as has their high priest Hyrcanus, it has been decided by me and my council under oath, with the consent of the Roman people, that the Jews may follow their own customs in accordance with the law of their fathers, just as they followed them in the time of Hyrcanus, high priest of the Most High God, and that their sacred monies shall be inviolable and may be sent up to Jerusalem and delivered to the treasurers in Jerusalem, and that they need not give bond (to appear in court) on the Sabbath or on the day of preparation for it (Sabbath Eve) after the ninth hour. And if anyone is caught stealing their sacred books or their sacred monies from a synagogue or an ark (of the Law), he shall be regarded as sacrilegious, and his property shall be confiscated to the public treasury of the Romans. As for the resolution which was offered by them in my honour concerning the piety which I showed to all men, and on behalf of Gaius Marcus Censorinus, I order that it and the present edict be set up in the most conspicuous (part of the temple) assigned to me by the federation (*koinon*) of Asia in Ancyra. If anyone transgresses any of the above ordinances, he shall suffer severe punishment.” This was inscribed upon a pillar in the temple of Caesar.¹⁷

Notice the key phrase, words which link the defense of Jewish rights by Augustus to noteworthy deeds of Jews during the governance of Julius Caesar: “Since the Jewish nation has been found well disposed to the Roman people not only at the present time but also in time past, and especially in the time of my father the emperor Caesar, as has their high priest Hyrcanus . . .”

The deeds of the Jews *especially* (μάλιστα) during the time of Julius Caesar, when Hyrcanus was high priest and Antipater the general, continued to color the lens through which an emperor many years later looked.¹⁸ Augustus was clearly conscious of an ennobled past as he came down firmly in favor of Jews who were being oppressed by native populations.

¹⁷ *Ant* 16.162-165; trans. by Marcus.

¹⁸ To highlight just how long an imperial appreciation for past Jewish support was lingering, C. Marcus Censorinus, who is mentioned in this rescript of Augustus, served as consul with C. Asinius Gallus in 8 BC. His name (Censorinus) then indicates that he served as censor sometime after that, and at some point close to 3 BC, he was appointed proconsular governor of Asia. (See Syme 1995, pp. 302-307.) The support given to Julius Caesar by Antipater had occurred almost 50 years earlier.

The positive attitude that emperors held toward Jews was in many ways simply pragmatic – they were expressing appreciation for political and military support received from Jews in the past. This atmosphere of affinity created the context for another significant contributor to imperial favor for Jews: personal relationships between prominent Jews and those who would become – or who currently served as – emperor.

Herod the Great deserves credit for building on good feelings spawned by the noble actions of his father Antipater. The benefits of Herod's relationship building seem particularly evident in the actions of Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, a most trusted and prominent partner of Augustus who had been granted powers almost equal to that of the emperor. Herod had developed a friendship with Agrippa so that Agrippa even agreed to come to Judea to be entertained. After spending many days with Herod, Agrippa returned to Ionia before the onset of winter.¹⁹ That next spring, Herod sailed after Agrippa as Agrippa was launching a campaign in the region of Pontus. During this period,

πᾶν γοῦν ἦν αὐτῷ κατὰ τὴν στρατείαν Ἡρώδης, ἔν τε τοῖς πραγματικοῖς συναγωνιστῆς κἂν τοῖς κατὰ μέρος σύμβουλος, ἡδὺς δὲ κἂν ταῖς ἀνέσεσι καὶ μόνος ἀπάντων κοινωνὸς ὀχληρῶν μὲν διὰ τὴν εὖνοιαν, ἡδέων δὲ διὰ τὴν τιμὴν.

Herod was all in all to Agrippa, in the management of the war, and a great assistant in civil affairs, and in giving him counsel as to particular matters. He was also a pleasant companion for him when he relaxed himself, and a joint partaker with him in all things; in troubles because of his kindness; and in prosperity because of the respect Agrippa had for him.²⁰

After the matters in Pontus were taken care of, Agrippa and Herod traveled together through Asia Minor. When they arrived in Ionia, some Jews who lived in that area appealed to them. The locals had been forcing them to go to court on sacred days, had been taking away money that Jews intended to send to the temple in Jerusalem, and had been compelling Jews to serve in

¹⁹ *Ant* 16.15.

²⁰ *Ant* 16.22.

the army. Josephus presents the relationship that Herod had established with Agrippa as central to the resolution of these issues.

συνιδῶν οὖν Ἀγρίππας βιαζομένους ἀπεκρίνατο ταῦτα· διὰ μὲν τὴν Ἡρώδου πρὸς αὐτὸν εὐνοϊάν τε καὶ φιλίαν ἔτοιμος εἶναι πᾶν ὅτιοῦν χαρίζεσθαι Ἰουδαίοις, ἃ δὲ ἀξιοῦσιν καὶ καθ' αὐτὰ δίκαια δοκεῖν· ὥστ', εἰ μὲν ἐδέοντο καὶ πλειόνων, οὐκ ἂν ὀκνήσαι τά γε μὴ λυποῦντα τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχὴν παρασχεῖν. ἐπεὶ δὲ ἃ καὶ πρότερον εἰλήφασιν ἄκυρα μὴ γενέσθαι, βεβαιοῦν αὐτοῖς ἀνεπηρεάστοις ἐν τοῖς οἰκείοις διατελεῖν ἔθεσιν. τοιαῦτα εἰπὼν διέλυε τὸν σύλλογον. Ἡρώδης δὲ προσεστῶς κατησπάζετο καὶ τῆς εἰς αὐτὸν διαθέσεως ὡμολόγει χάριν. ὁ δὲ καὶ εἰς ταῦτα φιλοφρονούμενος ἴσον αὐτὸν παρεῖχεν ἀντεμπελεκόμενος καὶ κατασπαζόμενος.

So when Agrippa perceived that they had been oppressed by violence, he made this answer:—That, on account of Herod's good will and friendship, he was ready to grant the Jews whatsoever they should ask him, and that their requests seemed to him in themselves just; and that if they requested anything further, he should not scruple to grant it them, provided they were no way to the detriment of the Roman government; but that, while their request was not more than this, that what privileges they had already given them might not be abrogated, he confirmed this to them, that they might continue in the observation of their own customs, without anyone offering them the least injury; and when he had said thus, he dissolved the assembly: upon which Herod stood up and saluted him, and gave him thanks for the kind disposition he showed to them. Agrippa also took this in a very obliging manner, and saluted him again, and embraced him in his arms . . .²¹

We see Agrippa stepping in on behalf of the Jews on other occasions. He commanded the city of Ephesus, “I will that the care and custody of the sacred money that is carried to the temple at Jerusalem be left to the Jews of Asia, to do with it according to their ancient custom” (τῶν εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν τὸ ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἀναφερομένων ἱερῶν χρημάτων τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν καὶ φυλακὴν βούλομαι τοὺς ἐν Ἀσίᾳ Ἰουδαίους ποιεῖσθαι κατὰ τὰ πάτρια).²² Any who stole this money were to be dealt with. In the same letter, Agrippa also commanded the praetor “that no one compel the Jews to come before a judge on the Sabbath day” (ἵνα σάββασιν μηδεὶς ἀναγκάζῃ Ἰουδαῖον ἐγγύας ὁμολογεῖν).²³

²¹ *Ant* 16.60-61.

²² *Ant* 16.167.

²³ *Ant* 16.168.

Ephesus was not the only city on Agrippa's itinerary. A letter from Agrippa arrived in Cyrene:

Μάρκος Ἀγρίππας Κυρηναίων ἄρχουσιν βουλῆ δῆμῳ χαίρειν. οἱ ἐν Κυρήνῃ Ἰουδαῖοι, ὑπὲρ ὧν ἤδη ὁ Σεβαστὸς ἔπεμψεν πρὸς τὸν ἐν Λιβύῃ στρατηγὸν τόντε ὄντα Φλάβιον καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἄλλους τοὺς τῆς ἐπαρχίας ἐπιμελουμένους, ἵνα ἀνεπικωλύτως ἀναπέμπηται τὰ ἱερὰ χρήματα εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα, ὡς ἔστιν αὐτοῖς πάτριον, ἐνέτυχόν μοι νῦν, ὡς ὑπὸ τινων συκοφαντῶν ἐπηρεαζόμενοι καὶ ὡς ἐν προφάσει τελῶν μὴ ὀφειλομένων κωλύοιντο· οἷς ἀποκαθιστάνειν κατὰ μηδένα τρόπον ἐνοχλουμένοις, καὶ εἴ τινων ἱερὰ χρήματα ἀφῆρηνται τῶν πόλεων τοὺς εἰς ταῦτα ἀποκεκριμένους καὶ ταῦτα διορθώσασθαι τοῖς ἐκεῖ Ἰουδαίοις κελεύω.

Marcus Agrippa to the magistrates, senate, and people of Cyrene, sendeth greeting. The Jews of Cyrene have interceded with me for the performance of what Augustus sent orders about to Flavius, the then praetor of Libya, and to the other procurators of that province, that the sacred money may be sent to Jerusalem freely, as hath been their custom from their forefathers, they complaining that they are abused by certain informers, and, under pretense of taxes which were not due, are hindered from sending them; which I command to be restored without any diminution or disturbance given to them; and if any of that sacred money in the cities be taken from their proper receivers, I farther enjoin, that the same be exactly returned to the Jews in that place.²⁴

While the letters to Ephesus and Cyrene are not dated by Josephus, in the *Antiquities* they are placed after Josephus' presentation of Herod as a close friend to Agrippa. So, it seems reasonable to offer these additional rescripts as further evidence of positive treatment of Jews that was fortified by the good relationship Herod established and sustained with Agrippa.

Agrippa was influential, but he was not the emperor. Of even greater consequence for the Jewish people were relationships that linked the family of Herod with those who either were closely related to or actually served as emperors of Rome. These connections seem to have begun in earnest in 22 BC, when Herod had his sons Alexander and Aristobulus move to Rome and live in the home of Gaius Asinius Pollio, the former consul who is mentioned in Virgil's

²⁴ *Ant* 16.169-170.

Fourth Eclogue.²⁵ Herod intended to achieve more than simply giving his sons an education or having them associate with a famous former consul.

ἔγνω τοὺς παῖδας αὐτοῦ πέμπειν εἰς Ῥώμην Ἀλέξανδρον καὶ Ἀριστόβουλον, συντευξομένους Καίσαρι. τούτοις ἀνελθοῦσιν καταγωγὴ μὲν ἦν Πολλίωνος οἶκος ἀνδρὸς τῶν μάλιστα σπουδασάντων περὶ τὴν Ἡρώδου φιλίαν, ἐφείτο δὲ καὶ τοῖς Καίσαρος κατάγεσθαι· καὶ γὰρ ἐξεδέξατο μετὰ πάσης φιλανθρωπίας τοὺς παῖδας· καὶ δίδωσιν Ἡρώδῃ τὴν βασιλείαν ὅτω βούλεται βεβαιοῦν τῶν ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγονότων,

He resolved to send his sons Alexander and Aristobulus to Rome, to enjoy the company of Caesar; who, when they came thither, lodged at the house of Pollio, who was very fond of Herod's friendship: and they had leave to lodge in Caesar's own palace, for he received these sons of Herod with all humanity, and gave Herod leave to give his kingdom to which of his sons he pleased.²⁶

Herod had in mind that his sons would enjoy a close relationship with Caesar himself. This relationship which Herod saw as important was also viewed as important by Caesar – he offered evidence of his confidence in Herod by deferring to his choice of a successor. Some time later, Herod's sons Archelaus and Antipas and Philip followed in their brothers' footsteps, also sent to Rome for training.²⁷

But it was not the connections of any of these sons which proved key to subsequent positive treatment of Jews by Roman emperors. Rather, it was a child of one of these sons who appears to have had disproportionate influence within the royal family and, consequently, on Jews throughout the Roman Empire.

Aristobulus was the third son of Herod the Great, Herod's second son with his favorite – only to be executed – wife Mariamne I. In 11 BC, when Aristobulus was about 20 years old, his

²⁵ Feldman (1985) 140.

²⁶ *Ant* 15.342-343. See also *Ant* 16.6: "Now at this time it was that [Herod the Great] sailed to Italy, as very desirous to meet with Caesar, and to see his sons who lived at Rome; and Caesar was not only very obliging to him in other respects but delivered him his sons again, that he might take them home with him, as having already completed themselves in the sciences" (ἐν δὲ τούτῳ τῷ καιρῷ καὶ τὸν εἰς τὴν Ἰταλίαν πλοῦν ἐποιήσατο Καίσαρ τε συντυχεῖν ὀρμηθεὶς καὶ θεάσασθαι τοὺς παῖδας ἐν τῇ Ῥώμῃ διατρίβοντας. Καῖσαρ δὲ τὰ τε ἄλλα φιλοφρόνως αὐτὸν ἐξεδέξατο καὶ τοὺς παῖδας ὡς ἤδη τελειωθέντας ἐν τοῖς μαθήμασιν ἀπέδωκεν ἄγειν εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν).

²⁷ *Ant* 17.20-21.

wife Bernice gave birth to one of his five children, Agrippa. Four years later, Aristobulus was charged with treason and executed by Herod the Great. Four-year-old Agrippa was fatherless. Bernice remarried, but her second husband Theudion was also executed, accused of conspiring against Herod.

Bernice had lost two husbands in about two years.²⁸ With her now six-year-old Agrippa she moved to Rome.²⁹ Fortunately for her and her family, she was not without friends.

Ἡρώδου τοῦ βασιλέως ὀλίγον πρὸ τῆς τελευτῆς Ἀγρίππας ἐν Ῥώμῃ δαιτώμενος καὶ ὁμοτροφίας καὶ συνηθείας αὐτῷ πολλῆς γενομένης πρὸς Δροῦσον τὸν Τιβερίου τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος υἱὸν καὶ Ἀντωνία τῇ Δρούσου τοῦ μεγάλου γυναικὶ εἰς φιλίαν ἀφίκετο, Βερενίκης τῆς μητρὸς τιμωμένης παρ' αὐτῇ καὶ προαγωγῶν ἡξιοκυίας τὸν υἱόν.

A little before the death of Herod the king, Agrippa lived at Rome, and was generally brought up and conversed with Drusus the emperor Tiberius's son, and contracted a friendship with Antonia, the wife of Drusus the Great, who had his mother Bernice in great esteem, and was very desirous of advancing her son.³⁰

Antonia, mentioned as one who held Agrippa's mother Bernice in great esteem, was the daughter of Mark Antony. However, that was not her most enduring mark of distinction. Antonia's influence was noteworthy not because of who her father was, but because of who her husband and – in the end even more importantly – because of who her sons were. Antonia was the wife

²⁸ The likely death date for Herod is presumed to be between 4 and 5 BC.

²⁹ No information is available which explains the reasons behind this move. What seems unlikely is that Bernice would have felt that her children were in any danger (we do know that the move occurred before the death of Herod the Great – *Ant* 18.143). While Herod acted viciously against sons of his whom he felt to be treacherous, he appeared to care deeply about his grandchildren. Josephus reports, “Now Herod brought up his sons’ children with great care; for Alexander had two sons by Glaphyra; and Aristobulus had three sons by Bernice, Salome’s daughter, and two daughters; and as his friends were once with him, he presented the children before them; and deploring the hard fortune of his own sons, he prayed that no such ill fortune should befall these who were their children, but that they might improve in virtue, and obtain what they justly deserved and might make him amends for his care of their education.” (ἀνέτρεφεν δὲ αὐτὸς τῶν παιδῶν τὰ τέκνα πάνυ ἐπιμελῶς· ἦσαν γὰρ τῷ μὲν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ ἐκ Γλαφύρας ἄρσενες δύο, Ἀριστοβούλῳ δὲ ἐκ Βερενίκης τῆς Σαλώμης θυγατρὸς ἄρσενες τε τρεῖς καὶ θήλειαι δύο. καὶ ποτε παρόντων αὐτῷ τῶν φίλων παραστησάμενος τὰ παιδάρια καὶ τῶν υἱῶν ἀνακλαύσας τὴν τύχην ἠῤῥαχτο μηδὲν τοιόνδε παισὶν τοῖς ἐκείνων συνελθεῖν, αὐξηθέντας δὲ ἀρετῇ καὶ συμφορᾷ τοῦ δικαίου τὰς τροφὰς ἀμείψασθαι, ἃς ποιοῖτο, *Ant* 17.12-13.) We presume that all of her four other children came along as well. Josephus does explicitly state that “Agrippa was brought up with his other brethren, Herod and Aristobulus” (Ἀγρίππας ἐτρέφετο μετὰ καὶ ἐτέρων ἀδελφῶν Ἡρώδης καὶ Ἀριστόβουλος, *Ant* 18.133).

³⁰ *Ant* 18.143.

of Drusus the Great (or, the Elder). Drusus the Great was the brother of emperor Tiberius, and both of them had become stepsons of Caesar Augustus through their mother Livia's second marriage. So, this woman who was befriending Bernice was the wife of Emperor Augustus' stepson.

Given the friendship between Bernice and Antonia, it is no surprise that the son of Bernice ended up being brought up with the nephew of Antonia. This nephew, Drusus, was the son of Antonia's brother-in-law Tiberius. Drusus was only two years older than Bernice's son Agrippa.³¹ These two little boys became such good friends that when Drusus died at the age of 35 from likely poisoning, Drusus' distraught father, now Emperor Tiberius, did not allow Agrippa to come into his presence. So closely was Agrippa associated with Drusus that to see him would have reminded Tiberius of his son, and the resultant grief was something Tiberius did not want to endure.³²

Agrippa's childhood companions included not only the son of a future emperor. Agrippa also went to school *with* an emperor. Recalling that Antonia and Bernice were very close friends, it is no surprise to learn that Bernice's son Agrippa went to school with Antonia's son Claudius.³³ Claudius was one year younger than Agrippa. While we do not know precisely how close a friend Agrippa was to Claudius, we know that Agrippa's friendship with Drusus was strong and that Drusus and Claudius were first cousins. One could not be faulted for imagining

³¹ Drusus was born in 13 BC, and Agrippa had been born in 11 BC.

³² *Ant* 18.146.

³³ *Ant* 18.165. In the context of explaining why Antonia was later willing to loan an indebted Agrippa a significant amount of money, Josephus reports, "So, out of regard to the memory of Bernice, his mother (for those two women were very familiar with one another), and out of regard of his and Claudius's education together, she lent him the money" (ἡ δὲ Βερενίκης τε μνήμη τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ, σφόδρα γὰρ ἀλλήλαις ἐχρῶντο αἶδε αἱ γυναῖκες, καὶ αὐτῶ ὁμοτροφίας πρὸς τοὺς ἀμφὶ Κλαύδιον γεγεννημένης, δίδωσι τὸ ἀργύριον, *Ant* 18.165).

moments when a 12-year-old Drusus and a 10-year-old Agrippa and a nine-year-old Claudius engaged each other in wooden sword fights or in more serene contests of knuckle bones.

The stage is almost set for a playing out of how these early relationships as children became influential relationships in adulthood. But there is one more important relationship to consider. In some ways, one could say that this relationship had its origin in a very dark moment. We do not know exactly when Agrippa's mother Bernice died. What we know is that her son Agrippa had grown to a sufficient age that he was capable of putting into practice an instinct to be overly generous in his gifts. His inclination was to spend freely, even if it meant spending beyond his means. Josephus explains that while his mother Bernice was alive, Agrippa restrained this inclination. However, when his mother died,

γενόμενος ἐπὶ τῷ αὐτοῦ τρόπῳ, τὰ μὲν εἰς πολυτέλειαν τῆς καθ' ἡμέραν διαίτης, τὰ δ' εἰς τῶν δωρεῶν τὸ μὴ μέτρῳ προϊέμενον ἀνάλωσε τῶν χρημάτων, τὰ πλεῖστα δ' εἰς τοὺς Καίσαρος ἀπελευθέρους ἐτετέλεστο ἐλπίδι πράξεως τῆς αὐτῶν, πενία τε ἐν ὀλίγῳ περὶ αὐτὸν ἦν. καὶ τοῦτο ἦν κώλυμα τῆς ἐν Ῥώμῃ διαίτης

[when] he was left to his own conduct, he spent a great deal extravagantly in his daily way of living, and a great deal in the immoderate presents he made, and those chiefly among Caesar's freedmen, in order to gain their assistance, insomuch that he was in a little time reduced to poverty, and could not live at Rome any longer.³⁴

This struggle with managing money was a blot on Agrippa's record which only grew as he kept refinancing his debt with greater and greater loans. After a fair amount of time, his position had become exceedingly dire, with debtholders coming after him.³⁵ At a certain point, when he sought an audience with the father of his presently deceased dear friend Drusus, the now emperor Tiberius initially welcomed him (Tiberius' initial reluctance to see the friends of his deceased son apparently had faded³⁶). The day after Agrippa began his visit of Tiberius, however, a letter

³⁴ *Ant* 18.145-146.

³⁵ *Ant* 18.147ff.

³⁶ *Ant* 18.146.

arrived. This note reported that Agrippa owed the treasury of Caesar 300,000 drachmas and that when Agrippa had been forbidden to leave a particular place until he had paid off this debt, Agrippa had fled under cover of darkness to escape responsibility.³⁷ When Tiberius heard this, he was furious. He refused to see Agrippa again until the debt was paid.

What did Agrippa do? He went to the dear friend of his now deceased mother, that friend whose nephew Drusus had been Agrippa's childhood companion and whose son Claudius had been his schoolmate. He went to Antonia.

ἡ δὲ Βερενίκης τε μνήμη τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ, σφόδρα γὰρ ἀλλήλαις ἐχρῶντο αἶδε αἱ γυναῖκες, καὶ αὐτῷ ὁμοτροφίας πρὸς τοὺς ἀμφὶ Κλαύδιον γεγεννημένης, δίδωσι τὸ ἀργύριον, καὶ αὐτῷ ἀποτίσαντι τὸ χρέος ἀνεπικώλυτος ἦν ἡ φιλία τοῦ Τιβερίου.

So, out of regard to the memory of Bernice, his mother (for those two women were very familiar with one another), and out of regard of his and Claudius's education together, she lent him the money; and, upon the payment of this debt, there was nothing to hinder Tiberius's friendship to him.³⁸

Antonia made it possible for Agrippa to pay his his debts. As this permitted Agrippa's relationship with Tiberius to be mended, Tiberius now worked to enhance that relationship by inviting Agrippa to become good friends with his grandson, who was also named Tiberius (he was the son of Agrippa's now deceased companion Drusus). Agrippa went on to play a significant role in educating Tiberius' grandson,³⁹ but Josephus notes as well that Agrippa devoted significant attention to another grandson,⁴⁰ the grandson of Tiberius' sister-in-law Antonia, the lady who had given him the loan to pay off his debt. This grandson of Antonia was Caius, later to be called Caligula.

³⁷ *Ant* 18.163.

³⁸ *Ant* 18.165.

³⁹ *Ant* 18.191.

⁴⁰ As will soon be explained, this decision by Agrippa later came back to haunt him, at least for a time (*Ant* 18.188ff).

Not surprisingly, Agrippa's effort to promote a friendship with Caligula involved the showering of generous gifts. He financed these gifts by borrowing 1 million drachmas from a freedman of Caesar. With this sum he paid back Antonia and then used a good portion of what remained to give presents to Caligula. What was the result? "The rest of the money he spent in paying court to Gaius, with whom he consequently rose to higher favour" (τῶν λοιπῶν τῷ ἀναλώματι θεραπεύων τὸν Γάιον μειζόνως ἐν ἀξιώματι ἦν παρ' αὐτῷ).⁴¹

The stage is now set. We have an accounting of the relationships which positioned Agrippa to have significant influence in the imperial court. His mother Bernice had been very good friends with Antonia, who was the sister-in-law of Tiberius, the mother of Claudius, and the grandmother of Caligula. This female friendship permitted Agrippa to have childhood association with both Tiberius' son Drusus and Antonia's son Claudius. Agrippa's connection with Claudius and Antonia's recollection of her friendship with Bernice opened the door, during a financially fraught period in Agrippa's life, for a growing friendship with Antonia's grandson Caligula.

The first of these imperial connections to benefit the Jews turned out to be the last relationship Agrippa initiated, his friendship with Caligula. At least initially, however, Agrippa's newfound friendship with Antonia's grandson Caligula did not turn out well for Agrippa.

προϊούσης δὲ ἐπὶ μέγα τῷ Ἀγρίππᾳ τῆς πρὸς Γάιον φιλίας αἰωρουμένοις ποτὲ λόγος περὶ τοῦ Τιβερίου γίνεται, καὶ τοῦ Ἀγρίππου κατ' εὐχὰς τραπομένου, μόνῳ δ' ἦσθιν, ἧ τάχος Τιβέριον ὑπεκστάντα τῆς ἀρχῆς Γαίῳ παραχωρεῖν ἀξιοτέρῳ τὰ πάντα ὄντι, τούτων ἀκροᾶται τῶν λόγων Εὐτυχος, Ἀγρίππου δ' ἦν ἀπελεύθερος ἠνίοχος, καὶ παραχρῆμα μὲν σιγῇ παρεδίδου.

Now as the friendship which Agrippa had for Caius was come to a great height, there happened some words to pass between them, as they once were in a chariot together, concerning Tiberius; Agrippa praying [to God] (for they two sat by themselves) that

⁴¹ *Ant* 18.167; trans. by Feldman.

Tiberias might soon go off the stage, and leave the government to Caius, who was in every respect more worthy of it. Now, Eutychus, who was Agrippa's freedman, and drove his chariot, heard these words, and at that time said nothing of them . . .⁴²

The foreboding mention of Agrippa's freedman did in fact presage an unfortunate turn of events. The freedman was subsequently accused by Agrippa of stealing some clothing. This led Eutychus to flee. When he was caught, he sought to insulate himself from punishment by telling the prefect of the city of Rome that he had information for Caesar with regard to his safety. He was sent to the island of Capri, Tiberius' residence at the time.

Tiberius was aware that Eutychus intended to make an accusation against Agrippa, but he chose not to grant Eutychus a hearing. Instead, he just let him sit in prison. Agrippa, observing that no evident justice had been applied to his thieving freedman, went again to the dear friend of his now deceased mother, asking Antonia to request some action from her brother-in-law Tiberius. Although Tiberius warned Agrippa that if he did pursue this matter, it could be determined that Eutychus' accusation against Agrippa was true, nevertheless Agrippa wanted the matter investigated.⁴³

The hearing was held, and Tiberius found Eutychus' accusation to be persuasive. Agrippa was bound and imprisoned. Fortunately for Agrippa, Tiberius grew ill soon after, and within six months Caligula had succeeded his great uncle as the new emperor. The longing Agrippa had expressed on a chariot to his blue-blooded friend had now come to fruition.⁴⁴ As a result, Caligula was now in a position to set his friend Agrippa free.

⁴² *Ant* 18.168.

⁴³ *Ant* 18.183-184.

⁴⁴ In *Antiquities* 18.292, Caligula expressed appreciation for the sufferings Agrippa had endured at the hands of Tiberius because he had spoken well of Caligula: "Agrippa, I have known in my heart before how highly you regarded me and how you have proved your great loyalty even amidst the dangers with which, because of it, you were encircled by Tiberius" (Αγρίππα, καὶ πρότερον μὲν σοι τιμὴν συνήδειν ἢ ἔχρῶ τὰ πρὸς ἐμὲ καὶ πολλὴν εὐνοίαν μετὰ κινδύνων ἀποδειχθεῖσαν, οἷς ὑπὸ Τιβερίου περιέστης δι' αὐτήν); trans. by Feldman.

Caligula did just that. And Caligula did more. For a Jew who had grown up with the imperial house but then had struggled enough so that he returned to Rome deeply indebted, Caligula offered a complete change of circumstance.

εἶτα δὲ τὸ διάδημα περιτίθησιν τῇ κεφαλῇ καὶ βασιλέα καθίστησιν αὐτὸν τῆς Φιλίππου τετραρχίας δωρησάμενος αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν Λυσανίου τετραρχίαν, ἀλλάττει τε σιδηρᾶ ἀλύσει χρυσοῦν ἰσόσταθμον.

. . . after which he put a diadem upon his head, and appointed him to be king of the tetrarchy of Philip. He also gave him the tetrarchy of Lysanias, and changed his iron chain for a golden one of equal weight.⁴⁵

When Agrippa had traveled from Rome to his homeland of Israel some 14 years earlier – after the death of his dear friend and Tiberius’ son, Drusus – he had been a pauper. In fact, he had even depended for daily bread on the largess of his sister Herodias and her husband Herod Antipas, who at the time was tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. But now, through the intervention of Antonia’s grandson, he was returning a wealthy king.

Personal benefit was gained from his imperial relationship. But Agrippa’s relationship with Caligula benefitted the Jews more generally as well. While Caligula was serving as emperor, there was a conflict between the Jews and Greeks in Alexandria. An embassy was sent to Rome, and Jews were accused of being unlike all others – they refused to raise a statue in honor of Caligula, and they would not swear by his name. Caligula was enraged. Philo, an eminent man in his own right but also brother to the caretaker of the property of Caligula’s grandmother Antonia,⁴⁶ was ready to make a defense. On this occasion, however, family connections seemed to mean nothing to the emperor. Caligula permitted not a word. Instead, he

⁴⁵ *Ant* 18.237.

⁴⁶ *Ant* 19.276.

appointed a new governor for the province of Syria and commanded that governor, Petronius, to attack Judea and forcibly place a statue of Caligula in the Jerusalem temple.⁴⁷

Such an act would have resulted in the deaths of many, many Jews, as they were committed to preventing this blasphemy at the cost of their lives. It so happened that at the time, King Agrippa was not living in the territories he was governing but was residing in Rome. In spite of the turmoil affecting Jews more generally, “King Agrippa, who now lived at Rome, was more and more in the favor of Caius” (Ἀγρίππας δὲ ὁ βασιλεύς, ἐτύγγανεν γὰρ ἐπὶ Ῥώμης διαιτώμενος, προύκοπτε φιλία τῇ πρὸς τὸν Γάιον μειζόνως).⁴⁸ Agrippa sought to take advantage of his preferred position with Caligula on behalf of his people far away.

The plan began with an invitation to dinner. This dinner exceeded all others in its extravagance. Josephus reports that not even Caligula himself could have equaled, much less surpassed, it. But Caligula did not want to be surpassed, even by a friend. So, after the dinner he made Agrippa an offer:

“Ἀγρίππα, καὶ πρότερον μὲν σοι τιμὴν συνήδειν ἢ ἐχρῶ τὰ πρὸς ἐμὲ καὶ πολλὴν εὐνοίαν μετὰ κινδύνων ἀποδειχθεῖσαν, οἷς ὑπὸ Τιβερίου περιέστης δι’ αὐτήν, ἐπιλείπεις τε οὐδὲν καὶ ὑπὲρ δύναμιν ἀρετῆς χρῆσθαι τῇ πρὸς ἡμᾶς. ὄθεν, αἰσχρὸν γὰρ ἡσᾶσθαι με ὑπὸ τῆς σῆς σπουδῆς, ἀναλαβεῖν βούλομαι τὰ ἐλλελειμμένα πρότερον· ὀλίγον γὰρ πᾶν ὅποσον σοι δωρεῶν ἐχόμενον ἀπεμοιρασάμην. τὸ πᾶν, ὅπερ σοι ῥοπήν ἂν προσθεῖη τοῦ εὐδαίμονος, δεδιακονήσεται γὰρ σοι προθυμία τε καὶ ἰσχύι τῇ ἐμῇ.” καὶ ὁ μὲν ταῦτα ἔλεγεν οἰόμενος γῆν τε πολλὴν τῆς προσόδου αἰτήσεσθαι ἢ καὶ τινων προσόδους πόλεων,

“Agrippa, I have known in my heart before how highly you regarded me and how you have proved your great loyalty even amidst the dangers with which, because of it, you were encircled by Tiberius. And now you never fail to show kindness to us, going even beyond your means. Consequently, inasmuch as it would be a stain on my honour to let you outdo me in zeal, I wish to make amends for past deficiencies. Indeed, all the gifts that I have allotted to you are but slight in amount; any service that can add its weight in the scale of prosperity shall be performed for you with all my heart and power.” He spoke these words thinking that Agrippa would ask for a large accession of territory adjoining his own or for the revenues of certain cities.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ *Ant* 18.257-261.

⁴⁸ *Ant* 18.289.

⁴⁹ *Ant* 18.292-293; trans. by Feldman.

Agrippa played coy. He did have a plan, but it was not yet time to speak his mind.⁵⁰ Caligula was astonished. He asked Agrippa yet again to request a gift. Now Agrippa spoke.

ὁ δέ, “ἐπεὶ περ, ὃ δέσποτα, προθυμία τῇ σῆ δωρεῶν ἄξιον ἀποφαίνεις, αἰτήσομαι τῶν μὲν εἰς ὄλβον φερόντων οὐδὲν διὰ τὸ μέγਾਲως με ἐνδιαπρέπειν οἷς ἤδη παρέσχε· ὅ τι δ’ ἂν σοὶ δόξαν προσποιοῖ τοῦ εὐσεβοῦς καὶ τὸ θεῖον σύμμαχον ἐφ’ οἷς θελήσειας παρακαλοῖ κάμοι πρὸς εὐκλείας γένοιτο παρὰ τοῖς πυνθανομένοις, ὡς μηθενὸς ὦν χρησαίμην ὑπὸ τῆς σῆς ἐξουσίας ἀτυχεῖν πώποτε γνόντι· ἀξιῶ γάρ σοι τοῦ ἀνδριάντος τὴν ἀνάθεσιν, ἣν ποιήσασθαι κελεύεις Πετρώνιον εἰς τὸ Ἰουδαίων ἱερόν, μηκέτι πράσσειν διανοεῖσθαι.

Agrippa replied, “Since, my lord, in your kindness you declare me worthy of gifts, I shall ask for nothing that would make me richer inasmuch as I am already extremely conspicuous because of the gifts that you have hitherto bestowed upon me. But I shall ask for something that will bring you a reputation for piety and will induce the Deity to help you in everything that you wish; and it will bring me the renown, among those who hear of it, of never having known failure in anything that I desired your authority to obtain for me. Well, I ask you to abandon all further thought of erecting the statue which Petronius has your orders to set up in the temple of the Jews.”⁵¹

Agrippa’s neck was now extended. As great as his friendship was with Caligula, Agrippa was asking a man of sufficient pride to swallow it on behalf of a friend. Agrippa’s life was itself on the line. Both because of the witnesses to his promise as well as the unselfishness of Agrippa, Caligula said yes. Both the assault on Judea and the plan for placing an imperial statue in the Jerusalem temple were rescinded.⁵²

⁵⁰ *Ant* 18.294.

⁵¹ *Ant* 18.296-297; trans. by Feldman.

⁵² The role of Agrippa in this change of heart is spotlighted even in the message Caligula sent to Petronius, his commander on the ground: “He also wrote thus to Petronius, commending him for his assembling his army, and then consulting him about these affairs. ‘If, therefore,’ said he, ‘thou hast already erected my statue, let it stand; but if thou hast not yet dedicated it, do not trouble thyself further about it, but dismiss thy army, go back, and take care of those affairs which I sent thee about at first, for I have now no occasion for the erection of that statue. This I have granted as a favor to Agrippa, a man whom I honor so very greatly, that I am not able to contradict what he would have, or what he desired me to do for him.’” (γράφει πρὸς τὸν Πετρώνιον, ἐκεῖνον τῆς τε ἀθροίσεως τοῦ στρατεύματος ἐπαινῶν καὶ τοῦ πρὸς αὐτὸν περὶ αὐτῶν ἐπεσταλκότος· “νῦν οὖν εἰ μὲν φθάνεις τὸν ἀνδριάντα ἐστακῶς, ἐστάτω· εἰ δὲ μήπω πεποιήσαι τὴν ἀνάθεσιν, μηδὲν περαιτέρω κακοπαθεῖν, ἀλλὰ τὸν τε στρατὸν διάλυε καὶ αὐτὸς ἐφ’ ἃ τὸ πρῶτόν σε ἔστειλα ἄπιθι· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔτι δέομαι τῆς ἀναστάσεως τοῦ ἀνδριάντος Ἀγρίππα χαριζόμενος ἀνδρὶ παρ’ ἐμοὶ τιμωμένῳ μειζρόνως ἢ ὥστε με χρεῖα τῇ ἐκείνου καὶ οἷς κελεύσειεν ἀντειπεῖν.”) [*Ant* 18.300-302.]

What made the difference? In that moment, everything Antipater had done for the army of Julius Caesar was but a memory. Any past positive behavior by Jews on behalf of the empire was, in Caligula's mind, negated by their impudence. Yet what had the power to change the mind of an emperor? A young Jew, given an opportunity because of family relationships, had won the friendship of the most powerful man in the world. That was it. That is what made the difference.⁵³ That can almost feel like cheating. Such an arbitrary impact on history might seem to undermine one's evaluation of as well as the relevance of larger trends. Yet such connections cannot be minimized, and such connections did not dissipate in their influence.

Soon after enjoying the dinner offered by Agrippa and freeing Jews from danger, Caligula was assassinated. The Roman senate saw great opportunity in this moment. There were those eager to regain control of the Roman government, as Caligula's administration had made most clear the perils of imperial authority. The praetorian guard, however, had a different view. Not only did they question whether a democracy could effectively manage the empire; they also realized that if they had no role in selecting the next leader, that next leader might have little interest in treating them well.⁵⁴ So, the soldiery acted. They invited Claudius to accept the throne and carried him to their camp.

The general populace was pleased, because they felt that emperors were positioned to restrain the covetous inclinations of senators and they were convinced that Claudius as emperor

⁵³ It must be acknowledged that very soon after Caligula sent his letter to Petronius, he received a letter from Petronius – who at the time did not yet know of Caligula's change of heart – letting him know that the Jews were passionately opposed to Caligula's original decision, with an implication by Petronius that there might be benefit in Caligula reconsidering his course of action. This letter launched Caligula into a rage. While we have no evidence that he reversed his decision (and so we might say that the friendship with Agrippa continued to have influence), he did demand that Petronius commit suicide for challenging the commands of an emperor. Fortunately for Petronius, this letter demanding his death traveled slowly, and a subsequent letter informing Petronius of Caligula's assassination arrived first. (*Ant* 18.308-309.)

⁵⁴ *Ant* 19.162-165; 214-215.

could prevent a civil war.⁵⁵ The senate, initially, tried to convince Claudius to submit to them.⁵⁶ They warned that much of the army was on their side and many slaves could be employed to assist them. The ambassadors who brought this message to Claudius, however, added – seemingly on their own – an additional thought. When they saw the number of soldiers that were on Claudius’ side, they more meekly made a suggestion which came close to undermining most of what they had just said:

εἴ τε τῆς ἀρχῆς ὀρέγοιτο, παρὰ τῆς βουλῆς δέχεσθαι διδομένην· αἰσιώτερον γὰρ καὶ εὐδαιμονέστερον χρῆσθαι τὸν μὴ μετὰ ὕβρεως ἀλλ’ εὐνοίᾳ τῶν διδόντων παραλαμβάνοντα

That if he did desire the government, he should accept of it as given by the senate; that he would prosper better, and be happier if he came to it, not by the injustice, but by the good will of those that would bestow it upon him.⁵⁷

There was a reality on the ground. Yet there remained the longing of so many senators to seize the moment and take control of the government. It was at this moment that Agrippa enters the story.

Recall that Agrippa was a schoolmate of Claudius.⁵⁸ Agrippa was only one year older than Claudius, and the mothers of Claudius and Agrippa had been best friends. It is no surprise that Agrippa had access to Claudius even at this most dramatic moment, and it is no surprise that the voice of Agrippa was heard as persuasive in this time of decision. While that fickle visit by representatives of the senate had left Claudius somewhat afraid, nevertheless “he was encouraged [to claim the government] partly by the boldness of the soldiers, and partly by the persuasion of king Agrippa, who exhorted him not to let such a dominion slip out of his hands, when it came thus to him of its own accord” (ἅμα μὲν θάρσει τῶν στρατιωτῶν ἅμα δὲ Ἀγρίππου

⁵⁵ *Ant* 19.228.

⁵⁶ *Ant* 19.230.

⁵⁷ *Ant* 19.235.

⁵⁸ *Ant* 18.165.

τοῦ βασιλέως κελεύοντος μὴ προέσθαι τῶν χειρῶν τηλικαύτην ἀρχὴν ἤκουσαν αὐτόματον).⁵⁹

Agrippa's encouragement of Claudius is described in another way:

πυθόμενος δὲ τοῦ Κλαυδίου τὴν ὑπὸ τῶν στρατιωτῶν ἀρπαγὴν ὠθεῖτο πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ καταλαβὼν τεταραγμένον καὶ οἷόν τε ἐκχωρεῖν τῇ συγκλήτῳ ἀνήγειρεν ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι κελεύων τῆς ἡγεμονίας.

But when he had learned that Claudius was carried away violently by the soldiers, he rushed through the crowd to him, and when he found that he was in disorder, and ready to resign up the government to the senate, he encouraged him, and desired him to keep the government.⁶⁰

Not only did Agrippa have the ear of Claudius in this decisive moment; he also had the ear of the senate. It is evident, however, which team he was playing for. He had just returned home from encouraging Claudius to seize the throne when the senate sent for him. When he got word of their request, he put perfumes on his head to make it appear that he had just been out on a date with his wife. When he arrived at the senate chamber, he played dumb: “He also asked of the senators what Claudius did” (καὶ ἤρετο τοὺς βουλευτάς, τί πέπραχε Κλαύδιος).⁶¹ He made it appear that he was very much on their side, saying “that he was ready to lose his life for the honor of the senate” (τελευτᾶν μὲν ὑπὲρ τοῦ κατ’ ἐκείνην εὐκλεοῦς ἔτοιμος ἦν).⁶²

But when he gave his advice, it was advice much to the advantage of Claudius.

Admittedly, it was likely to the authentic advantage of the senate as well, given the circumstances. However, mutual concern is not presented as Agrippa's primary motivation.

When the senate asked Agrippa what he thought they should do, these were his carefully crafted words:

⁵⁹ *Ant* 19.236.

⁶⁰ *Ant* 19.238.

⁶¹ *Ant* 19.239.

⁶² *Ant* 19.240. Also, when later noting that the size of the military force on the side of the Senate was inferior to that on the side of Claudius, he described the Senate's military force as “ours” (τὰ δ’ ἡμέτερα, *Ant* 19.243).

σκοπεῖν δὲ ἐκέλευε περὶ τῶ συμφέροντι πᾶν ὅ τι καὶ εἰς ἡδονὴν φέροι ὑπεξελομένους·
χρεῖαν γὰρ εἶναι τοῖς ἀρχῆς μεταποιοιμένοις καὶ ὄπλων καὶ στρατιωτῶν, οἱ φράζαιντο
αὐτοῖς, μὴ καὶ ἀπαράσκευοι καταστάντες εἰς τάδε σφαλεῖεν.

[He] desired them to consider what was for their advantage, without any regard to what
was most agreeable to them; for that those who grasp at governments, will stand in need
of weapons and soldiers to guard them, unless they will set up without any preparation
for it, and so fall into danger.⁶³

He went on to imply that the senate's forces would lose any military confrontation. He
suggested, with continuing duplicity, that the senate send individuals to Claudius in an attempt to
persuade him to give up any claim on authority, even offering to intercede on their behalf.

The senate took his advice. They sent ambassadors to Claudius, one of whom was
Agrippa. Agrippa continued his crafty game. Not only had Agrippa shared his advice to the
senate knowing full well that he had just encouraged Claudius to keep the government in spite of
the senate. When the embassy arrived at the military camp where Claudius was located, Agrippa
communicated in secret to the emperor in waiting.

τὴν τε παραχρῆν τῆς βουλῆς διηγεῖται καταμόνας πρὸς τὸν Κλαύδιον ἐδίδασκέν τε
ἡγεμονικώτερον ἀποκρίνασθαι καὶ τῶ ἀξιώματι τῆς ἐξουσίας χρώμενον.

[Agrippa] privately informed Claudius of the disorder the senate was in, and gave him
instructions to answer them in a somewhat commanding strain, and as one invested with
dignity and authority.⁶⁴

Claudius took his advice. He was circumspect in his language but firm in his intent. He would
be their emperor. As soon as they left, Claudius proceeded with even more decisiveness. He
paid 5000 drachmas to each of his soldiers and promised the same for the rest of the armies to
solidify support.

When the senate met again, soldiers who had been on their side now demanded that the
senate choose an emperor. The individual who had assassinated Caligula, Cherea, had hoped for

⁶³ *Ant* 19.240-241.

⁶⁴ *Ant* 19.245.

a much different course of events. He was furious. He reproached the soldiers. He now said that he would bring them the head of Claudius, a fool. The soldiers once aligned with the senate now drew their swords, went to Claudius, and promised to be faithful to him. The senate was suddenly alone.⁶⁵

Now the senators themselves began to reconsider. Some traveled to Claudius to pay their respects, but the soldiers did not receive them kindly. One senator was even wounded. As the accession of Claudius to the throne was almost complete, Agrippa steps into the story once more. While he had been less than forthright with the senate as to his role in recent events, at this moment,

Ἀγρίππας ὁ βασιλεὺς προσελθὼν τῷ Κλαυδίῳ ἀξιοῖ τοῖς συγκλητικοῖς ἠπιώτερον καταστῆναι· γενομένου γάρ τινος κακοῦ περὶ τὴν βουλήν οὐχ ἕξειν ὧν ἄρξειεν ἐτέρων.

King Agrippa went up to Claudius, and desired he would treat the senators more gently; for if any mischief should come to the senate, he would have no others over whom to rule.⁶⁶

The son of Antonia acquiesced to his Jewish classmate of so many years before. The influence of friendship was on display once more.

The events of Claudius' ascent to power reaffirm that there was a close relationship between the emperor and his Jewish boyhood companion. The events of this ascent to power naturally led to great personal benefit for Agrippa. Claudius commended him by affirming to Agrippa the kingdom that Caligula had given to him and then adding Judea and Samaria to his domain. But the close relationship on display during Claudius' ascent to power also appears to have paid dividends for Jews more generally.

⁶⁵ *Ant* 19.259.

⁶⁶ *Ant* 19.265.

Evidence of this emerged almost immediately. As soon as Caligula had been assassinated, Jews in Alexandria who had been mightily oppressed during Caligula's reign now took courage and began to fight back against their Alexandrian enemies. Claudius' first goal was to quiet the conflict. But King Agrippa asked for more. Claudius complied.

πέμπει δὲ καὶ διάγραμμα παρακεκληκότων αὐτὸν Ἀγρίππου τε καὶ Ἡρώδου τῶν βασιλέων εἰς τε τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρειαν καὶ Συρίαν γεγραμμένον τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον· “Τιβέριος Κλαύδιος Καῖσαρ Σεβαστὸς Γερμανικὸς δημαρχικῆς ἐξουσίας λέγει. ἐπιγνοὺς ἀνέκαθεν τοὺς ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ Ἰουδαίους Ἀλεξανδρεῖς λεγομένους συγκατοικισθέντας τοῖς πρώτοις εὐθὺ καίροις Ἀλεξανδρεῦσι καὶ ἴσης πολιτείας παρὰ τῶν βασιλέων τετευχότας, καθὼς φανερὸν ἐγένετο ἐκ τῶν γραμμάτων τῶν παρ’ αὐτοῖς καὶ τῶν διαταγμάτων, καὶ μετὰ τὸ τῆ ἡμετέρα ἡγεμονία Ἀλεξάνδρειαν ὑπὸ τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ ὑποταχθῆναι πεφυλάχθαι αὐτοῖς τὰ δίκαια ὑπὸ τῶν πεμφθέντων ἐπάρχων κατὰ διαφόρους χρόνους μηδεμίαν τε ἀμφισβήτησιν περὶ τούτων γενομένην τῶν δικαίων αὐτοῖς, ἅμα καὶ καθ’ ὄν καιρὸν Ἀκύλας ἦν ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ τελευτήσαντος τοῦ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐθνάρχου τὸν Σεβαστὸν μὴ κεκωλυκέναι ἐθνάρχας γίνεσθαι βουλόμενον ὑποτετάχθαι ἐκάστους ἐμμένοντας τοῖς ἰδίους ἔθεσιν καὶ μὴ παραβαίνειν ἀναγκαζομένους τὴν πάτριον θρησκείαν, Ἀλεξανδρεῖς δὲ ἐπαρθῆναι κατὰ τῶν παρ’ αὐτοῖς Ἰουδαίων ἐπὶ τῶν Γαίου Καίσαρος χρόνων τοῦ διὰ τὴν πολλὴν ἀπόνοιαν καὶ παραφροσύνην, ὅτι μὴ παραβῆναι ἠθέλησεν τὸ Ἰουδαίων ἔθνος τὴν πάτριον θρησκείαν καὶ θεὸν προσαγορεύειν αὐτόν, ταπεινώσαντος αὐτοῦς· βούλομαι μηδὲν διὰ τὴν Γαίου παραφροσύνην τῶν δικαίων τῷ Ἰουδαίων ἔθνει παραπεπτωκέναι, φυλάσσεσθαι δ’ αὐτοῖς καὶ τὰ πρότερον δικαιώματα ἐμμένουσι τοῖς ἰδίους ἔθεσιν, ἀμφοτέροις τε διακελεύομαι τοῖς μέρεσι πλείστην ποιήσασθαι πρόνοιαν, ὅπως μηδεμία ταραχὴ γένηται μετὰ τὸ προτεθῆναι μου τὸ διάταγμα.”

He also sent an edict, at the request of king Agrippa and king Herod,⁶⁷ both to Alexandria and to Syria, whose contents were as follows: “Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, high priest, and tribune of the people, ordains thus:— Since I am assured that the Jews of Alexandria, called Alexandrians, have been joint inhabitants in the earliest times with the Alexandrians, and have obtained from their kings equal privileges with them, as is evident by the public records that are in their possession, and the edicts themselves; and that after Alexandria had been subjected to our empire by Augustus, their rights and privileges have been preserved by those presidents who have at diverse times been sent thither; and that no dispute had been raised about those rights and privileges, even when Aquila was governor of Alexandria; and that when the Jewish ethnarch was dead, Augustus did not prohibit the making such ethnarchs, as willing that all men should be so subject [to the Romans] as to continue in the observation of their own customs, and not be forced to transgress the ancient rules of their own country religion;⁶⁸ but that, in the time of Caius, the Alexandrians became insolent toward the

⁶⁷ Agrippa's brother, the king of Chalchis (*Ant* 19.277)

⁶⁸ While she notes that this particular letter of Claudius is “in all probability a largely genuine document (and not just a version of the letter),” Rajak (2001) does believe that the edict “has been falsified in places” (315). While I

Jews that were among them, which Caius, out of his great madness, and want of understanding, reduced the nation of the Jews very low, because they would not transgress the religious worship of their country, and call him a god: I will, therefore, that the nation of the Jews be not deprived of their rights and privileges, on account of the madness of Caius; but that those rights and privileges, which they formerly enjoyed, be preserved to them, and that they may continue in their own customs. And I charge both parties to take very great care that no troubles may arise after the promulgation of this edict.”⁶⁹

The logic which Claudius employed cited precedent and general Roman policy toward conquered peoples. No nepotism was explicit. Nevertheless, this reaffirmation of Roman treatment of Jews found its genesis in an appeal by Claudius’ friend Agrippa. The broadening of Claudius’ target audience – moving beyond Alexandria to all of Syria – appears also to have been a component of Agrippa’s request. Yes, one could suggest that this action by Claudius was little more than an expected partnering with those who represented him politically in a volatile part of the world. That facet cannot be denied, particularly as Agrippa’s brother and fellow king, Herod, is also identified as influential in this action.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, in view of the unique role that Agrippa played in Claudius becoming emperor, evidently enhanced because of a preexistent

will not evaluate all her concerns in detail, I will mention that she challenges one point of particular relevance to the argument that imperial policy did go to significant lengths to protect the Jews. She writes, “This Josephan edict is in fact suspect at one further point material to our argument, when it describes an articulated policy of general tolerance to Augustus (*AJ* XIX 283), saying that he wished ‘the separate peoples to be subject to their own customs and not to be compelled to violate the religion of their fathers’. The latter is probably a Jewish elaboration on a less ambitious original, for this picture of the empire as a consciously plural and tolerant society finds its parallel only in another claim made by Jews, the assertion of Nicholas of Damascus, as composed by Josephus, that ‘the happiness which the whole human race now enjoys through you we can measure by the fact that it is possible for people in every country to go through life and prosper while valuing their own ethnic traditions’ (*AJ* XVI 37). Yet even Nicholas did not go as far as to claim that the *princeps* himself had deliberately sought to foster ethnic traditions, only pointing out that this was a valuable *consequence* of empire” (316). This approach seems to suggest that for the description of Augustus’ motives to be credible, the Greco-Roman world would have had to be a consciously plural and tolerant society. While one can properly evaluate any statement for its credibility, the particular rationale offered appears to presume more of a uniformity in imperial and popular perspective than may in fact have been the reality on the ground. I intend to argue that there was significant disjunction between imperial and popular perspective in many cases, which then would permit this characterization of Augustus to stand in spite of evidence on the ground to the contrary. [Rajak surely recognizes the disjunction between government and popular opinion but does not seem to give that factor as much weight in this particular case (301).]

⁶⁹ *Ant* 19.279-285.

⁷⁰ It is also possible – and maybe even likely – that there was some childhood familiarity between Claudius and Herod as well, but Josephus’ narrative of events provides no explicit evidence for that.

friendship, it seems most fair to presume that Claudius' personal appreciation for Agrippa was also in play when he acted in Agrippa's name on behalf of Jews more generally.

Claudius acted on behalf of Jews more generally not only in Alexandria and in the vicinity of territory ruled by Agrippa. In the name of Agrippa and his brother Herod, Claudius offered reaffirmation of Jewish rights throughout the empire.

τὸ δ' εἰς τὴν ἄλλην οἰκουμένην εἶχεν οὕτως· “Τιβέριος Κλαύδιος Καῖσαρ Σεβαστὸς Γερμανικὸς ἀρχιερεὺς μέγιστος δημαρχικῆς ἐξουσίας ὑπατος χειροτονηθεὶς τὸ δεύτερον λέγει. αἰτησαμένων με βασιλέως Ἀγρίππα καὶ Ἡρώδου τῶν φιλάτων μοι, ὅπως συγχωρήσαιμι τὰ αὐτὰ δίκαια καὶ τοῖς ἐν πάσῃ τῇ ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίοις ἡγεμονία Ἰουδαίους φυλάσσεσθαι, καθὰ καὶ τοῖς ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ, ἥδιστα συνεχώρησα οὐ μόνον τοῦτο τοῖς αἰτησαμένοις με χαριζόμενος, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτοὺς ὑπὲρ ὧν παρεκλήθην ἀξίους κρίνας διὰ τὴν πρὸς Ῥωμαίους πίστιν καὶ φιλίαν, μάλιστα δὲ δίκαιον κρίνων μηδεμίαν μηδὲ Ἑλληνίδα πόλιν τῶν δικαίων τούτων ἀποτυγχάνειν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ θεοῦ Σεβαστοῦ αὐταῖς ἦν τετηρημένα. καλῶς οὖν ἔχειν καὶ Ἰουδαίους τοὺς ἐν παντὶ τῷ ὕφ' ἡμᾶς κόσμῳ τὰ πάτρια ἔθνη ἀνεπικωλύτως φυλάσσειν, οἷς καὶ αὐτοῖς ἤδη νῦν παραγγέλλω μου ταύτη τῇ φιλανθρωπία ἐπιεικέστερον χρῆσθαι καὶ μὴ τὰς τῶν ἄλλων ἐθνῶν δεισιδαιμονίας ἐξουθενίζειν, τοὺς ἰδίους δὲ νόμους φυλάσσειν. τοῦτό μου τὸ διάταγμα τοὺς ἄρχοντας τῶν πόλεων καὶ τῶν κολωνιῶν καὶ μουνικιπίων τῶν ἐν τῇ Ἰταλία καὶ τῶν ἐκτός, βασιλεῖς τε καὶ δυνάστας διὰ τῶν ἰδίων πρεσβευτῶν ἐγγράψασθαι βούλομαι ἐκκείμενόν τε ἔχειν οὐκ ἔλαττον ἡμερῶν τριάκοντα ὅθεν ἐξ ἐπιπέδου καλῶς ἀναγνωσθῆναι δύναται.”

The edict that was sent into the other parts of the habitable earth was this which follows:— “Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, high priest, tribune of the people, chosen consul the second time, ordains thus:—Upon the petition of king Agrippa and king Herod, who are persons very dear to me, that I would grant the same rights and privileges should be preserved to the Jews which are in all the Roman Empire, which I have granted to those of Alexandria, I very willingly comply therewith; and this grant I make not only for the sake of the petitioners, but as judging those Jews for whom I have been petitioned worthy of such a favor, on account of their fidelity and friendship to the Romans. I think it also very just that no Grecian city should be deprived of such rights and privileges, since they were preserved to them under the great Augustus. It will therefore be fit to permit the Jews, who are in all the world under us, to keep their ancient customs without being hindered so to do. And I do charge them also to use this my kindness to them with moderation, and not to show a contempt of the superstitious observances of other nations, but to keep their own laws only. And I will that this decree of mine be engraven on tables by the magistrates of the cities and colonies, and municipal places, both those within Italy and those without it, both kings and governors, by the means of the ambassadors, and to have them exposed to the public for full thirty days, in such a place, whence it may plainly be read from the ground.”⁷¹

⁷¹ *Ant* 19.286-291.

While Claudius offered significant benefits to Jews more broadly at the encouragement of his childhood companion Agrippa, the existence of that close relationship should not be understood as having given Agrippa *carte blanche* nor should it be viewed as suggesting that the emperor had a positive personal attitude toward Jews in all respects. At one point, Claudius learned that Agrippa was making the walls of Jerusalem too strong and too high. Claudius commanded Agrippa to stop the rebuilding program immediately. Agrippa obeyed.⁷² As more evidence that Claudius' view toward Jews was not rose-colored, Dio Cassius describes an event in Claudius' first year of rule:

τούς τε Ἰουδαίους πλεονάσαντας αὐθις, ὥστε χαλεπῶς ἂν ἄνευ ταραχῆς ὑπὸ τοῦ ὄχλου σφῶν τῆς πόλεως εἰρχθῆναι, οὐκ ἐξήλασε μὲν, τῷ δὲ δὴ πατρίῳ βίῳ χρωμένους ἐκέλευσε μὴ συναθροίζεσθαι.

As for the Jews, who had again increased so greatly that by reason of their multitude it would have been hard without raising a tumult to bar them from the city, he did not drive them out, but ordered them, while continuing their traditional mode of life, not to hold meetings.⁷³

So, in the very year that Claudius issued a rescript on behalf of Agrippa which affirmed Jewish rights in Alexandria, Syria, and the rest of the Roman world, he was also restricting Jewish activity in the city of Rome.

This split view was evidenced even in Claudius' handling of the previously referenced Alexandrian situation. As he composed an edict for Alexandria and Syria on behalf of Agrippa and Herod, there was an additional set of instructions which Claudius issued. This additional letter is perhaps referred to in the opening phrase of *Antiquities* 19.279, which immediately precedes the recounting of the letter written on behalf of Agrippa and Herod. That phrase reads,

⁷² *Ant* 19.326-327.

⁷³ Dio Cassius 60.6.6; trans. by Cary.

“So Claudius sent an order to the president of Egypt, to quiet that tumult” (καὶ Κλαύδιος ἐπιστέλλει τῷ ἐπαρχοῦντι κατὰ τὴν Αἴγυπτον ὥστε τὴν στάσιν καταστεῖλαι).⁷⁴

In this added letter, Claudius first conveyed both to the Jews and to the Alexandrian Greeks the benefits of compliance. “If you both give up your present ways and are willing to live in gentleness and kindness with one another, I for my part will care for the city as much as I can, as one which has long been closely connected with us” (ἐὰν τούτων ἀποστάντες ἀμφοτέροι μετὰ πραότητος καὶ φιλανθρωπείας τῆς πρὸς ἀλλήλους ζῆν ἐθελήσητε, καὶ ἐγὼ πρόνοιαν τῆς πόλεως ποιήσομαι τὴν ἀνατάτῳ καθάπερ ἐκ προγόνων οἰκίας ὑμῖν ὑπαρχούσης).⁷⁵ But then there was a threat, and a pejorative characterization, which uniquely targeted the Jews: “Nor are [Jews in Alexandria] to bring in or invite Jews coming from Syria or Egypt, or I shall be forced to conceive graver suspicions. If they disobey, I shall proceed against them in every way as fomenting a [sort of] common plague for the whole world.” (μηδὲ ἐπάγεσθαι ἢ προσεῖεσθαι ἀπὸ Συρίας ἢ Αἰγύπτου καταπλέοντας Ἰουδαίους, ἐξ οὗ μείζονας ὑπονοίας ἀνανκασθήσομε λαμβάνειν. εἰ δὲ μή, πάντα τρόπον αὐτοὺς ἐπεξελεύσομαι καθάπερ κοινήν τεινα τῆς οἰκουμένης νόσον ἐξεγείροντας.)⁷⁶

That final phrase provides a window into Claudius’ thinking. While one can understand prohibiting a warring party from importing additional combatants, Claudius’ threat chooses to view potential Alexandrian disobedience as something coloring Judaism as a whole. On the one hand, this concern could be viewed as an unbiased political calculation – presuming Jewish behavior to be monolithic, rebellion in one area will inevitably result in rebellion elsewhere. Victor Tcherikover’s analysis of the statement might be read from such a perspective. He says

⁷⁴ *Ant* 19.279.

⁷⁵ Tcherikover et al., Vol. 2 (1957) no. 153, lines 100-104.

⁷⁶ Tcherikover et al., Vol. 2 (1957) no. 153, lines 96-99.

that “the sense of the sentence is, that the potential refusal on the part of the Alexandrian Jews to obey his orders will signify an act of sedition, which can rapidly spread like a pest among the numerous centres of the Jewish diaspora and threaten the peaceful existence of the whole Roman Empire.”⁷⁷

It seems fair, however, also to note that there could be a more prejudicial premise underlying what Claudius threatens. He views Judaism – simply the fact that people are Jewish – as a presumptive carrier of something akin to a plague. While rebellions can spread, and there is potential for people closely connected in ideology to instinctively support those of similar ideology, to so suddenly color an entire class of people as likely to mindlessly embrace the virus of rebellion might be characterized in modern times as prejudicial. While we hesitate to apply our own mores too readily, it seems at least fair to suggest that the words of Claudius in this additional letter to Alexandria reveal the risks of portraying Claudius as inherently pro-Jewish.⁷⁸

Yet all these evidences of Claudius’ negativity toward Jews – viewing wall building by Agrippa as potentially seditious, restricting behavior of Jews in Rome, and portraying Jews in general as susceptible to revolt – highlight even more the role of personal relationships. If Claudius gives clear evidence that his instincts were not universally pro-Jewish, one then asks why there could be such notable positive exceptions. The personal relationship Claudius had with Agrippa seems very much at the heart. So powerful was acquaintance and friendship that it overcame, at least in given moments, a broader and deeper prejudice.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Tcherikover et al., Vol. 2 (1957) 55.

⁷⁸ Tcherikover would enthusiastically agree. He called the opinion that Claudius was a “philo-Semitic” emperor “obsolete.” [Tcherikover et al., Vol. 2 (1957) 48; see also Tcherikover et al., Vol. 1 (1957) 73-74 for references to some of his contemporaries and their scholarship on the issue, as well as Tcherikover’s analysis.]

⁷⁹ The expulsion of Jews by Tiberius in AD 19 would serve as another reminder that imperial attitudes were not universally pro-Jewish even when there was a close relationship between the emperor and a prominent Jew. When the expulsion occurred, Tiberius’ son Drusus was a close friend of Agrippa. Tiberius was clearly aware of this friendship, as when Drusus died in AD 23, Tiberius no longer permitted Agrippa to come into his presence because the mere sight of Agrippa would remind Tiberius of his deceased son (*Ant* 18.146). Nevertheless, when Tiberius

The close relationship that Claudius enjoyed with Agrippa lingered in a significant way even after Agrippa's death in AD 44. While Agrippa still was alive, he had entrusted the care of his teenage son to Claudius: "Now Agrippa, the son of the deceased, was at Rome, and brought up with Claudius Caesar" (ὁ δὲ τοῦ τεθνεῶτος υἱὸς Ἀγρίππας ἐπὶ Ῥώμης ἦν ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ τούτῳ τρεφόμενος παρὰ Κλαυδίῳ Καίσαρι).⁸⁰ With the elder Agrippa dead, Claudius was inclined to make the younger Agrippa ruler of his father's territories. It was only Agrippa's youth – he was 17 years old – that held Claudius back. Instead, he entrusted Agrippa's kingdom to Cuspius Fadius.

That did not mean, however, that he entrusted Agrippa's kingdom completely to Cuspius Fadius' judgment. Very early in his administration, Fadius insisted that the Jews once again place the high priest's garments in the tower of Antonia, located on the northwest corner of the Jerusalem temple complex, that they might be under the authority of the Romans.⁸¹ Jewish leaders resisted, as they felt this action might result in a popular rebellion. They were allowed to

determined that Jews had behaved badly in AD 19, his son's friendship with Agrippa did not lead Tiberius to overlook the offense. So, a level of friendship existed between Tiberius and a Jew. And we know that Tiberius proactively protected Jewish interests—after the anti-Jewish false accusations by Sejanus and then Sejanus' ultimate death, Tiberius sent letters to all provincial governors reassuring Jews that he did not embrace Sejanus' approach and that Jews could continue to practice their customs (Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium* 160-161). However, I am not examining the case of Tiberius here primarily because there are no explicit linkages between Tiberius' positive treatment of Jews and the existence of a personal friendship with a Jew (like Agrippa). Nothing in Tiberius' tenure challenges the concept that personal relationships with emperors had a significant impact on how Jews were treated. At the same time, there are no specific examples to cite. The best one can do is note that a generally positive relationship existed between Tiberius and Agrippa up until the final six months of Tiberius' reign. This is indicated by the fact that ultimately Tiberius' hesitance to meet with the close friend of his deceased son faded, and Agrippa did visit Tiberius and enjoy his friendship (*Ant* 18.161, 165). In addition, Tiberius had Agrippa play a role in educating his grandson Tiberius (*Ant* 18.191). Unfortunately for Agrippa, during the last six months of Tiberius' rule he was imprisoned because his expressed wish that Caligula become emperor in Tiberius' place was reported to the emperor by Agrippa's freedman (*Ant* 18.185-190).

⁸⁰ *Ant* 19.360.

⁸¹ The garments of the high priest had been kept in a tower on the northwestern corner of the temple complex from the time of the first Hyrcanus who served as Jewish high priest, as he lived in that tower. When Herod the Great rebuilt this tower, he chose to keep the garments in the same place but retained for himself control of the tower. His son Archelaus did the same. When the Roman prefect Coponius took over Judea after the disastrous reign of Archelaus, the Romans also assumed control of the high priest's special clothing (*Ant* 18.93). This arrangement lasted for about 30 years, at which point the Roman governor of Syria returned control of the garments to the Jews (*Ant* 18.90). Fadius, about seven years later, is now attempting to revert to the previous policy.

appeal to Claudius for a final determination. At this key moment, once again an Agrippa – this time the son – tipped Roman policy toward Jews in a favorable direction:

παραγενομένων δὲ εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην αὐτῶν γνοῦς ὁ νεώτερος Ἀγρίππας ὁ τοῦ τετελευτηκότος παῖς, καθ' ἣν ἤκουσιν αἰτίαν, ἐτύγγανεν δὲ ὢν παρὰ Κλαυδίῳ Καίσαρι, καθὼς καὶ πρότερον εἶπομεν, παρακαλεῖ τὸν Καίσαρα συγχωρῆσαι τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ἅπερ ἠξίουσιν περὶ τῆς ἱερᾶς στολῆς καὶ Φάδῳ περὶ τούτων ἐπιστεῖλαι. Καλέσας δὲ Κλαύδιος τοὺς πρέσβεις ἔφη ταῦτα συγχωρεῖν καὶ ἐκέλευεν αὐτοὺς Ἀγρίππα χάριν εἰδέναι, ταῦτα γὰρ ἐκείνου ποιεῖν ἀξιώσαντος

But when, upon their coming to Rome, Agrippa, junior, the son of the deceased, understood the reason why they came (for he dwelt with Claudius Caesar, as we said before), he besought Caesar to grant the Jews their request about the holy vestments, and to send a message to Fadus accordingly. Hereupon, Claudius called for the ambassadors, and told them that he granted their request; and bade them to return their thanks to Agrippa for this favor, which had been bestowed on them upon his entreaty.⁸²

The letter that Claudius composed for the Jews heaped even more praise on Agrippa.

Κλαύδιος Καῖσαρ Γερμανικὸς δημαρχικῆς ἐξουσίας τὸ πέμπτον ὑπάτος ἀποδεδειγμένος τὸ τέταρτον αὐτοκράτωρ τὸ δέκατον πατὴρ πατρίδος Ἱεροσολυμιτῶν ἄρχουσι βουλῆ δῆμῳ Ἰουδαίων παντὶ ἔθνει χαίρειν. Ἀγρίππα τοῦ ἐμοῦ, ὃν ἐγὼ ἔθρεψα καὶ ἔχω σὺν ἐμαυτῷ εὐσεβέστατον ὄντα, προσαγαγόντος μοι τοὺς ὑμετέρους πρέσβεις εὐχαριστοῦντας ἐφ' ἧ πεποιήμαι τοῦ ἔθνους ὑμῶν κηδεμονία, καὶ αἰτησαμένων σπουδαίως καὶ φιλοτίμως τὴν ἱερὰν ἐσθῆτα καὶ τὸν στέφανον ὑπὸ τὴν ἐξουσίαν ὑμῶν εἶναι, συγχωρῶ

Claudius Caesar, Germanicus, tribune of the people the fifth time, and designed consul the fourth time, and emperor the tenth time, the father of his country, to the magistrates, senate and people, and the whole nation of the Jews, sendeth greeting. Upon the representation of your ambassadors to me by Agrippa my friend, whom I have brought up, and have now with me, and who is a person of very great piety, who are come to give me thanks for the care I have taken of your nation, and to entreat me, in an earnest and obliging manner, that they may have the holy vestments, with the crown belonging to them, under their power,—I grant their request . . .⁸³

Clearly Claudius felt a close connection with this young man, and he presented that relationship as having played a decisive role. Once again, though, imperial deference to a close Jewish friend should not be viewed as implying that Claudius was blindly inclined to do

⁸² *Ant* 20.9-10.

⁸³ *Ant* 20.11-12.

anything Jews wanted him to do. To offer just one example, Suetonius reports that “he banished from Rome all the Jews, who were continually making disturbances at the instigation of one Chrestus” (Iudaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantis Roma expulit).⁸⁴ Presuming that a dating of this expulsion around AD 49 is reasonable,⁸⁵ this banishment of Jews from Rome occurred while Claudius’ friend Agrippa II was representing the emperor as ruler over Chalcis, in addition to serving as overseer of the temple and being responsible for appointing the high priest. So, it would be wrong to conclude – as was the case with Agrippa I as well – that a close relationship between a Jew and the emperor meant that the emperor would never take negative actions against Jews. On the other hand, recognizing that an emperor’s treatment of Jews was not perpetually and blindly positive highlights even more the power of the personal relationships that did exist. Friendship with the emperor was able to bring about actions that otherwise may not have been the path pursued.⁸⁶

Tracking and tracing influential connections between emperors and Jews requires a course marked out over many years. Herod the Great and Alexander and Aristobulus provide a beginning. The tender friendship between Bernice and Antonia provides the foundational

⁸⁴ *Claudius* 25.4; trans. by A. Thomson.

⁸⁵ See Slingerland (1992) for other views regarding this dating.

⁸⁶ This pattern of Jewish influence via imperial friendships displayed itself again during the reign of Nero, though not in connection with the imperial family’s relationship with Agrippa. In fact, the decision ultimately made by Nero actually rejected the position taken by Agrippa in this particular instance. Agrippa had built a very large dining room in his Jerusalem palace, a room which made it possible to see into the inner courts of the temple and watch what was going on. The Jews did not want others to view the inner courts, particularly as this is where sacrifices were being made. So, they appealed to Caesar. “And when Nero had heard what they had to say, he not only forgave them what they had already done, but also gave them leave to let the wall they had built stand. This was granted them in order to gratify Poppea, Nero’s wife, who was a religious woman, and had requested these favors of Nero, and who gave order to the ten ambassadors to go their way home; but retained Helcias and Ismael as hostages with herself.” (Νέρων δὲ διακούσας αὐτῶν οὐ μόνον συνέγνω περὶ τοῦ πραχθέντος, ἀλλὰ καὶ συνεχώρησεν ἕαν οὕτως τὴν οἰκοδομίαν, τῇ γυναικὶ Ποππαίᾳ, θεοσεβῆς γὰρ ἦν, ὑπὲρ τῶν Ἰουδαίων δεηθείση χαριζόμενος, ἢ τοῖς μὲν δέκα προσέταξεν ἀπιέναι, τὸν δ’ Ἑλκίαν καὶ τὸν Ἰσμάηλον ὀμηρεύσοντας παρ’ ἑαυτῇ κατέσχευεν, *Ant* 20.195.) While there is certainly debate regarding the meaning of the term θεοσεβής, this instance seems to make quite likely that it is referring to a proselyte, an individual of non-Jewish blood who has embraced the Jewish religion (or, at the least, significant elements of it). The wife of Nero, with Jewish predilections, employs her relationship with the emperor to influence imperial policy in favor of a vocal segment of the Jews.

substance for connections that would last for decades. There were little boys who studied and played: Agrippa and Drusus and Claudius. There were boys more grown up – Caligula and Agrippa – who enjoyed a chariot ride, with a conversation overheard. There was a Jewish king who could play both sides, advising a trembling Claudius and pushing along a hopeful – then tremulous – senate. As these circumstances demonstrate, sometimes the most consequential events in the history of Jews in the empire were tied to little more – but no less – than a relationship between friends.

Jews appear to have enjoyed a unique advantage that was disproportionate to their otherwise minimal capacity to impact imperial policy. In addition to having established themselves well with the Romans by the military intervention of Antipater at a moment when Julius Caesar was in peril, the Jews sustained a positive relationship with those in authority in large part through a felicitous friendship between two ladies. This relationship brought together men in youth who would become factors of great significance in later years.

As noted, imperial policy toward Jews was not universally affirming. It was not blindly commendatory. But if one were to characterize the status of Jews in the first century AD, one would certainly acknowledge the imperial role to be a generally protective one. Understanding in greater detail the factors which produced this more positive imperial bent seems critical in grappling what will become an evident dichotomy. In fact, without the recollection of military assistance and without the influence of personal relationships, there may not have been as much of a dichotomy. There may have been far more uniformity in negativity. But a dichotomy there was. As it turns out, imperial support of the Jewish people often stood out in contrast, differing greatly from the attitude of local government.

Local governments

During the imperial period, Jews were scattered – and in significant numbers – throughout almost every portion of the Roman Empire. Petronius, who was governor of Syria while Caligula was emperor, reflected on the vast spread of this people:

ἔννοιά τε αὐτὸν εἰσήει τοῦ ἔθνους ὅσον ἐστὶν ἐν πολυανθρωπία, ὅπερ οὐκ ἐδέξατο καθάπερ τῶν ἄλλων ἕκαστον μιᾶς χώρας τῆς ἀποκεκληρωμένης αὐτῷ μόνῳ περίβολος ἀλλ' ὀλίγου δέω φάναι πᾶσα ἡ οἰκουμένη κέχεται γὰρ ἀνά τε τὰς ἠπείρους καὶ νήσους ἀπάσας ὡς τῶν αὐθιγενῶν μὴ πολλῶ τιμι δοκεῖν ἐλαττοῦσθαι

[Petronius] also gave a thought to the circumstances of the nation itself, to its exceeding populousness, so that it was not contained as every other nation was by the circuit of the one region which was allotted to it for itself, but so that, I may almost say, it had spread over the whole face of the earth; for it is diffused throughout every continent, and over every island, so that everywhere it appears but little inferior in number to the original native population of the country.⁸⁷

While imperial authority often played the role of affirming Jewish rights wherever the Jews lived, local governmental structures were not always so inclined. These institutions could craft policies that subordinated the interests of non-native Jewish populations to the interests of natives. One area where local governments came into repeated conflict with Jews was in the region of Asia Minor.

Asia Minor experienced its major influx of Jews during the reign of Antiochus III, the sixth ruler of the Seleucid Empire. Beginning his governance in 222 BC, Antiochus inherited a kingdom in decline. He sought to reverse that trajectory, taking personal control of military ventures which incrementally restored much of what the Seleucids had originally governed. Jews played an important role in his effort to sustain his gains in Asia Minor. As Josephus reports it, Antiochus wrote this letter to the general of his forces:

βασιλεὺς Ἀντίοχος Ζεύξιδι τῷ πατρὶ χαίρειν. εἰ ἔρρωσαι, εὖ ἂν ἔχοι, ὑγιαίνω δὲ καὶ αὐτός. πυνθανόμενος τοὺς ἐν Λυδία καὶ Φρυγία νεωτερίζοντας μεγάλης ἐπιστροφῆς ἠγησάμην τοῦτό μοι δεῖσθαι, καὶ βουλευσαμένῳ μοι μετὰ τῶν φίλων, τί δεῖ ποιεῖν,

⁸⁷ Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium* 214; trans. by Yonge.

ἔδοξεν εἰς τὰ φρούρια καὶ τοὺς ἀναγκαιοτάτους τόπους τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς Μεσοποταμίας καὶ Βαβυλωνίας Ἰουδαίων οἴκους δισχιλίους σὺν ἐπισκευῇ μεταγαγεῖν. πέπεισμαι γὰρ εὖνους αὐτοὺς ἔσσεσθαι τῶν ἡμετέρων φύλακας διὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν εὐσέβειαν, καὶ μαρτυρουμένους δ' αὐτοὺς ὑπὸ τῶν προγόνων εἰς πίστιν οἶδα καὶ προθυμίαν εἰς ἃ παρακαλοῦνται· βούλομαι τοίνυν καίπερ ἐργώδους ὄντος τοῦ μεταγαγεῖν ὑποσχομένους νόμοις αὐτοὺς χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἰδίοις. ὅταν δ' αὐτοὺς ἀγάγῃς εἰς τοὺς προειρημένους τόπους, εἷς τ' οἰκοδομίας οἰκιῶν αὐτοῖς δώσεις τόπον ἐκάστω καὶ χώραν εἰς γεωργίαν καὶ φυτεῖαν ἀμπέλων, καὶ ἀτελεῖς τῶν ἐκ τῆς γῆς καρπῶν ἀνήσεις ἐπὶ ἔτη δέκα. μετρεῖσθωσαν δὲ καὶ ἄχρις ἂν τοὺς παρὰ τῆς γῆς καρποὺς λαμβάνωσιν σῖτον εἰς τὰς τῶν θεραπόντων διατροφάς· διδόςθω δὲ καὶ τοῖς εἰς τὰς χρείας ὑπηρετοῦσιν τὸ αὐτάρκες, ἵνα τῆς παρ' ἡμῶν τυγχάνοντες φιλανθρωπίας προθυμότερους παρέχωσιν αὐτοὺς περὶ τὰ ἡμέτερα. πρόνοιαν δὲ ποιῶ καὶ τοῦ ἔθνους κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν, ὅπως ὑπὸ μηδενὸς ἐνοχλῆται.

King Antiochus to Zeuxis, his father, greeting. If you are in good health, it is well. I also am in sound health. Learning that the people in Lydia and Phrygia are revolting, I have come to consider this as requiring very serious attention on my part, and, on taking counsel with my friends as to what should be done, I determined to transport 2000 Jewish families with their effects from Mesopotamia and Babylonia to the fortresses and most important places. For I am convinced that they will be loyal guardians of our interests because of their piety to God, and I know that they have had the testimony of my forefathers to their good faith and eagerness to do as they are asked. It is my will, therefore – though it may be a troublesome matter – that they should be transported and, since I have promised it, use their own laws. And when you have brought them to the places mentioned, you shall give each of them a place to build a house and land to cultivate and plant with vines, and shall exempt them from payment of taxes on the produce of the soil for ten years. And also, until they get produce from the soil, let them have grain measured out to them for feeding their servants, and let there be given also to those engaged in public service sufficient for their needs in order that through receiving kind treatment from us they may show themselves the more eager in our cause. And take as much thought for their nation as possible, that it may not be molested by anyone.⁸⁸

Many significant events followed this massive resettlement of Jews. Over the next 150 years, Seleucid overseers were replaced by Romans, and recollections of the original rationale for inserting Jews into Asia Minor may have faded. What remained was a clear distinction between native populations and the Jews. Jews continued to follow their own laws and so were markedly different, in important respects, from their neighbors. Such distinction could lead to

⁸⁸ *Ant* 12.148-153; trans. by Marcus.

disagreement and conflict. Available evidence indicates that local governments regularly took a position against Jews.

In 48 BC, the Roman proconsul had to address an issue in the city of Miletus, on the shores of the Aegean to the south of Ephesus.⁸⁹

Πόπλιος Σερουίλιος Ποπλίου υἱὸς Γάλβας ἀνθύπατος Μιλησίων ἄρχουσι βουλῆ δῆμῳ χαίρειν. Πρύτανις Ἑρμοῦ υἱὸς πολίτης ὑμέτερος προσελθὼν μοι ἐν Τράλλεσιν ἄγοντι τὴν ἀγόραιον ἐδήλου παρὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν γνώμην Ἰουδαίοις ὑμᾶς προσφέρεισθαι καὶ κωλύειν αὐτοὺς τὰ τε σάββατα ἄγειν καὶ τὰ ἱερά τὰ πάτρια τελεῖν καὶ τοὺς καρποὺς μεταχειρίζεσθαι, καθὼς ἔθος ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς, αὐτόν τε κατὰ τοὺς νόμους εὐθυνκέναί τὸ [δίκαιον] ψήφισμα. βούλομαι οὖν ὑμᾶς εἰδέναί, ὅτι διακούσας ἐγὼ λόγων ἐξ ἀντικαταστάσεως γενομένων ἐπέκρινα μὴ κωλύεσθαι Ἰουδαίους τοῖς αὐτῶν ἔθεσι χρῆσθαι.

Publius Servilius, the son of Publius, of the Galban tribe, the proconsul, to the magistrates, senate, and people of the Milesians, sendeth greeting. Prytanis, the son of Hermes, a citizen of yours, came to me when I was at Tralles, and held a court there, and informed me that you used the Jews in a way different from my opinion, and forbade them to celebrate their Sabbaths, and to perform the sacred rites received from their forefathers, and to manage the fruits of the earth according to their ancient custom; and that he had himself been the promulgator of your decree, according as your laws require; I would therefore have you know, that upon hearing the pleading on both sides, I gave sentence that the Jews should not be prohibited to make use of their own customs.⁹⁰

The local authorities had taken a clear stand against the Jews. Prohibiting Jewish practices was no longer simple private prejudice, but official policy. What is striking about the decision by the local rulers of Miletus is that, apparently, there was an awareness that they were taking a position

⁸⁹ In considering relationships between communities in Asia Minor and Jews, it might seem appropriate also to note Cicero's *Pro Flacco*. In this document, examined previously in chapter 1, Cicero records his successful defense in 59 BC of Flaccus, who was propraetor in Asia for three years. Flaccus was accused of many injustices, including the seizing of gold Jews had given for the temple in Jerusalem. Unlike the many other examples offered, where Roman government officials stepped in on behalf of the Jews against the local authorities, the case of Flaccus had the Roman government official taking the lead in oppressing Jews. What might account for this apparently different stance on the part of imperial authorities? While it may be difficult to attribute cause with certainty, clearly imperial attitudes toward Jews had evolved to a much more positive position by the early 40s BC. The previously cited military action by Antipater, the father of Herod the Great, on behalf of Julius Caesar around 48 BC likely played a significant role in transforming any negative inclinations within imperial officialdom to positive ones. Also, one properly contextualizes the Flaccus' confiscation of Jewish gold sometime prior to 59 BC by recalling that in that very same time period (63 BC) Pompey had just prosecuted a successful siege of Jerusalem. Flaccus' hesitance to permit Jewish gold to travel to Jerusalem may have found some justification in the Jewish unrest which initiated that conflict.

⁹⁰ *Ant* 14.244-246.

contrary to that held by the proconsul. The very fact that Prytanēs felt it was legitimate to report the actions of those in Miletus indicates that there was a presumption that such actions against Jews were violations of some sort. One can properly propose, then, that the governing body in Miletus was fully aware that they were pushing the boundaries. Their dislike of Jewish practice was so intense that they were willing to risk Roman rebuke.

Two years later, in 46 BC, Julius Caesar himself intervened in a similar conflict, this time in Paria.⁹¹

Ἰούλιος Γάιος ὕιοσο στρατηγὸς ὕπατος Ῥωμαίων Παριανῶν ἄρχουσι βουλῆ δῆμῳ χαίρειν. ἐνέτυχόν μοι οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐν Δήλῳ καὶ τινες τῶν παροίκων Ἰουδαίων παρόντων καὶ τῶν ὑμετέρων πρέσβεων καὶ ἐνεφάνισαν, ὡς ὑμεῖς ψηφίσματι κωλύετε αὐτοὺς τοῖς πατρίοις ἔθεσι καὶ ἱεροῖς χρῆσθαι. ἐμοὶ τοίνυν οὐκ ἀρέσκει κατὰ τῶν ἡμετέρων φίλων καὶ συμμάχων τοιαῦτα γίνεσθαι ψηφίσματα καὶ κωλύεσθαι αὐτοὺς ζῆν κατὰ τὰ αὐτῶν ἔθη καὶ χρήματα εἰς σύνδειπνα καὶ τὰ ἱερὰ εἰσφέρειν, τοῦτο ποιεῖν αὐτῶν μηδ' ἐν Ῥώμῃ κεκωλυμένων. καὶ γὰρ Γάιος Καῖσαρ ὁ ἡμέτερος στρατηγὸς [καὶ] ὕπατος ἐν τῷ διατάγματι κωλύων θιάσους συνάγεσθαι κατὰ πόλιν μόνους τούτους οὐκ ἐκώλυσεν οὔτε χρήματα συνεισφέρειν οὔτε σύνδειπνα ποιεῖν. ὁμοίως δὲ κἀγὼ τοὺς ἄλλους θιάσους κωλύων τούτοις μόνοις ἐπιτρέπω κατὰ τὰ πάτρια ἔθη καὶ νόμιμα συνάγεσθαι τε καὶ ἐστιᾶσθαι. καὶ ὑμᾶς οὖν καλῶς ἔχει, εἴ τι κατὰ τῶν ἡμετέρων φίλων καὶ συμμάχων ψήφισμα ἐποιήσατε, τοῦτο ἀκυρῶσαι διὰ τὴν περὶ ἡμᾶς αὐτῶν ἀρετὴν καὶ εὖνοιαν.

Julius Caius, praetor [consul] of Rome, to the magistrates, senate, and people of the Parians, sendeth greeting. The Jews of Delos, and some other Jews that sojourn there in the presence of your ambassadors, signified to us, that, by a decree of yours, you forbid them to make use of the customs of their forefathers, and their way of sacred worship. Now it does not please me that such decrees should be made against our friends and confederates, whereby they are forbidden to live according to their own customs, or to bring in contributions for common suppers and holy festivals, while they are not forbidden so to do even at Rome itself; for even Caius Caesar, our imperator and consul, in that decree wherein he forbade the Bacchanal rioters to meet in the city, did yet permit these Jews and these only, both to bring in their contributions, and to make their common suppers. Accordingly, when I forbid other Bacchanal rioters, I permit these Jews to gather themselves together, according to the customs and laws of their forefathers, and to persist therein. It will be therefore good for you, that if you have made any decree

⁹¹ There is some debate regarding what location is meant. Paria is located on the coast of the Troad, east of the Hellespont. Schürer proposes that Παριανῶν should be read Παρίων, then referring to the island of Paros [Marcus (1966) 561]. This island is only 10 miles away from the island of Delos, which could make more understandable Caesar's note that Jews from Delos were visiting their location.

against these our friends and confederates, to abrogate the same, by reason of their virtue, and kind disposition towards us.⁹²

As noted when employing this citation earlier to highlight the broad geographic application of imperial benefits to Jews, the description of Jews as “friends and confederates” likely recalled the significant military assistance that Jews gave Caesar via Antipater, the father of Herod the Great. Unlike the circumstance in Miletus, the implication of “acting against better knowledge” is not quite as strong. Nevertheless, it still is there. Julius Caesar does refer to the policies of his father Caius Caesar, implying that tolerant treatment of Jews is surely not unprecedented and should have been presumed. Viewing the incident more broadly, here is yet another example of local authorities taking a strident position against Judaism, a position they are forced to abandon only because imperial authority would permit no other way.

This theme of local authorities being eager to mistreat Jews, and even being ready to challenge the imperial position of protecting Jews, shows itself again in the circumstance of Laodicea around 45 BC.⁹³

Λαοδικέων ἄρχοντες Γαίῳ Ῥαβελλίῳ Γαίου υἱῷ ὑπάτῳ χαίρειν. Σώπατρος Ὑρκανοῦ τοῦ ἀρχιερέως πρεσβευτῆς ἀπέδωκεν ἡμῖν τὴν παρὰ σοῦ ἐπιστολὴν, δι' ἧς ἐδήλου ἡμῖν παρὰ Ὑρκανοῦ τοῦ Ἰουδαίων ἀρχιερέως ἐληλυθότας τινὰς γράμματα κομίσαι περὶ τοῦ ἔθνους αὐτῶν γεγραμμένα, ἵνα τὰ τε σάββατα αὐτοῖς ἐξῆ ἄγειν καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ ἱερὰ ἐπιτελεῖν κατὰ τοὺς πατρίους νόμους, ὅπως τε μηδεὶς αὐτοῖς ἐπιτάσῃ διὰ τὸ φίλους αὐτοῦς ἡμετέρους εἶναι καὶ συμμάχους, ἀδικήσῃ τε μηδὲ εἰς αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ ἐπαρχίᾳ, ὡς Τραλλιανῶν τε ἀντειπόντων κατὰ πρόσωπον μὴ ἀρέσκεσθαι τοῖς περὶ αὐτῶν δεδογμένοις ἐπέταξας ταῦτα οὕτως γίνεσθαι· παρακεκλησθαι δέ σε, ὥστε καὶ ἡμῖν γράψαι περὶ αὐτῶν. ἡμεῖς οὖν κατακολουθοῦντες τοῖς ἐπεσταλμένοις ὑπὸ σοῦ τὴν τε ἐπιστολὴν τὴν ἀποδοθεῖσαν ἐδεξάμεθα καὶ κατεχωρίσαμεν εἰς τὰ δημόσια ἡμῶν γράμματα καὶ περὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὧν ἐπέσταλκας προνοήσομεν, ὥστε μηδὲν μεμφθῆναι.

The magistrates of the Laodiceans to Caius Rubilius, the son of Caius, the consul sendeth greeting. Sopater, the ambassador of Hyrcanus the high priest, hath delivered us an epistle from thee, whereby he lets us know that certain ambassadors were come from Hyrcanus, the high priest of the Jews, and brought an epistle written concerning their nation, wherein they desire that the Jews may be allowed to observe their Sabbaths and

⁹² *Ant* 14.213-216.

⁹³ Marcus [(1966) 577] offers this date, citing Juster (1914) 146 n. 7.

other sacred rites, according to the laws of their forefathers, and that they may be under no command, because they are our friends and confederates: and that nobody may injure them in our provinces. Now although the Trallians there present contradicted them, and were not pleased with these decrees, yet didst thou give order that they should be observed, and informed us that thou hadst been desired to write this to us about them. We therefore, in obedience to the injunctions we have received from thee, have received the epistle which thou sentest us, and have laid it up by itself among our public records; and as to the other things about which thou didst send to us, we will take care that no complaint be made against us.⁹⁴

Not only had the Laodiceans been comfortable restricting the rights of Jews. When the issue was brought before the proconsul, representatives of another community just 80 miles to the west, Tralles, openly expressed displeasure with the consul's decision. The Laodiceans' mention of this in a note professing readiness to obey suggests their own displeasure at the ultimate decision. In addition, Rajak characterizes the final words of this memorandum as less than positive: "... the Laodiceans too were intending to drag their feet and offering no clear sign of obedience with regard to the Jewish matter."⁹⁵ Yet again, then, there was readiness on the part of local authorities to act contrary to the imperial position whenever they could get away with it. When restrained, there was resentment.

In Ephesus, sentiment toward Jews appears similar to that expressed in their neighboring towns, Tralles and Laodicea. In 42 BC, the Ephesians issued this decree:

ἐπὶ πρυτάνεως Μηνοφίλου μηνὸς Ἀρτεμισίου τῇ προτέρᾳ ἔδοξε τῷ δήμῳ, Νικάνωρ Εὐφήμου εἶπεν εἰσηγησαμένων τῶν στρατηγῶν. ἐπεὶ ἐντυχόντων τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει Ἰουδαίων Μάρκῳ Ἰουλίῳ Ποντίου υἱῷ Βρούτῳ ἀνθυπάτῳ, ὅπως ἄγωσι τὰ σάββατα καὶ πάντα ποιῶσιν κατὰ τὰ πάτρια αὐτῶν ἔθνη μηδενὸς αὐτοῖς ἐμποδῶν γινομένου, ὁ στρατηγὸς συνεχώρησεν, δεδόχθαι τῷ δήμῳ, τοῦ πράγματος Ῥωμαίοις ἀνήκοντος, μηδένα κωλύεσθαι παρατηρεῖν τὴν τῶν σαββάτων ἡμέραν μηδὲ πράττεσθαι ἐπιτίμιον, ἐπιτετράφθαι δ' αὐτοῖς πάντα ποιεῖν κατὰ τοὺς ἰδίους αὐτῶν νόμους.

When Menophilus was prytanis, on the first day of the month Artemisius, this decree was made by the people:—Nicanor, the son of Euphemus, pronounced it, upon the representation of the praetors. Since the Jews that dwell in this city have petitioned Marcus Julius Pomperus, the son of Brutus, the proconsul, that they might be allowed to

⁹⁴ *Ant* 14.241-243.

⁹⁵ Rajak (2001) 323.

observe their Sabbaths, and to act in all things according to the customs of their forefathers, without impediment from anybody, the praetor hath granted their petition. Accordingly, it was decreed by the senate⁹⁶ and people, that in this affair that concerned the Romans, no one of them should be hindered from keeping the Sabbath day, nor be fined for so doing; but that they may be allowed to do all things according to their own laws.⁹⁷

Again, when a local Asia Minor community had opportunity to establish policy on its own, it enforced regulations which were anti-Jewish. Jews knew full well that their only hope for policy reversal was an appeal over the heads of the leaders in Ephesus. The proconsul granted their request, which the Ephesian leaders recognized and implemented. However, once again it appears that subtle reluctance is embedded in the presentation of this decree. With the words “the matter belonging to/pertaining to the Romans” (τοῦ πράγματος Ῥωμαίοις ἀνήκοντος), the Ephesian rulers seem to make obvious their own preference even as they submit to authority. One might paraphrase, “This is a Roman opinion, not an Ephesian one.”

As Josephus shares examples such as this and then refers to other similar decrees which were made on behalf of Jews,⁹⁸ he offers an interesting angle on what he has just reported. “I cannot suppose anyone so perverse as not to believe the friendship we have had with the Romans, while they have demonstrated the same by such a great number of their decrees relating to us” (οὐδένα δ’ οὕτως ἡγησάμην σκαιόν, ὃς οὐχὶ καὶ περὶ τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἡμῖν πιστεύσει φιλανθρωπίας, ὅτι ταύτην καὶ διὰ πλειόνων ἐπεδείξαντο πρὸς ἡμᾶς δογμάτων).⁹⁹ Yes, Josephus was interested in demonstrating that the Jews had a good relationship with imperial authorities. But there is another conclusion one properly draws from the same decrees – Jews could have very bad relationships with local authorities.

⁹⁶ Whiston’s translation reflects a variant reading, which adds τῆ βουλῆ καὶ prior to τῶ δήμῳ.

⁹⁷ *Ant* 14.262-264.

⁹⁸ *Ant* 14.265.

⁹⁹ *Ant* 14.267.

Imperial compulsion could address symptoms of those bad relationships, but such compulsion in one moment did not guarantee solicitous treatment years down the road. Less than 30 years had passed since the Ephesian decree which protected Jewish Sabbath practice. Now, in 14 BC, Herod the Great was traveling through Ionia with Agrippa, who was serving as governor of the eastern provinces at the time. As Miletus and Ephesus were prominent Ionian cities, one properly reads Jewish complaints to Herod and Agrippa in view of decrees issued almost 30 years earlier which were to protect the interests of Jews.

τότε δὲ περὶ τὴν Ἰωνίαν αὐτῶν γενομένων πολὺ πλῆθος Ἰουδαίων, ὃ τὰς πόλεις ὄκει, προσήει καιροῦ καὶ παρρησίας ἐπειλημμένοι, καὶ τὰς ἐπιηρείας ἔλεγον, ἃς ἐπιηραζόντο μήτε νόμοις οἰκείοις ἐώμενοι χρῆσθαι δίκας τε ἀναγκαζόμενοι διδόναι κατ' ἐπήρειαν τῶν εὐθυνόντων ἐν ἱεραῖς ἡμέραις, ^{§28} καὶ τῶν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα χρημάτων ἀνατιθεμένων ἀφαιροῖντο στρατειῶν καὶ λειτουργιῶν ἀναγκαζόμενοι κοινωνεῖν καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα δαπανᾶν τῶν ἱερῶν χρημάτων, ὧν ἀφείθησαν αἰεὶ Ῥωμαίων αὐτοῖς ἐπιτρεψάντων κατὰ τοὺς οἰκείους ζῆν νόμους.

But now, when Agrippa and Herod were in Ionia, a great multitude of Jews, who dwelt in their cities, came to them, and laying hold of the opportunity and the liberty now given them, laid before them the injuries which they suffered, while they were not permitted to use their own laws, but were compelled to prosecute their lawsuits, by the ill usage of the judges, upon their holy days, and were deprived of the money they used to lay up at Jerusalem, and were forced into the army, and upon such other offices as obliged them to spend their sacred money; from which burdens they always used to be freed by the Romans, who had still permitted them to live according to their own laws.¹⁰⁰

Roman policy toward Jews had been made very clear to the Ephesians. In fact, when Agrippa – in response to the request brought to Herod and himself – agreed to grant the request, he did so with this in mind, that “what privileges they had already given them might not be abrogated” (ἃ καὶ πρότερον εἰλήφασιν ἄκυρα μὴ γενέσθαι).¹⁰¹ In other words, the Jews should not have had to ask again. What they were requesting had been given to them already by Roman authorities.

¹⁰⁰ *Ant* 16.27-28.

¹⁰¹ *Ant* 16.60.

Strikingly, the very same message had to be communicated to the Ephesians yet again about 10 years later, in 4 BC. At that time the proconsul Julius Antonius wrote,

Ἐφεσίων ἄρχουσιν βουλή δήμῳ χαίρειν. οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ κατοικοῦντες Ἰουδαῖοι εἰδοῖς Φεβρουαρίοις δικαιοδοτοῦντί μοι ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ὑπέδειξαν Καίσαρα τὸν Σεβαστὸν καὶ Ἀγρίππαν συγκεχωρηκένοι αὐτοῖς χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἰδίοις νόμοις καὶ ἔθεσιν, ἀπαρχάς τε, ἃς ἕκαστος αὐτῶν ἐκ τῆς ἰδίας προαιρέσεως εὐσεβείας ἕνεκα τῆς πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἀνακομιδῆς συμπορευομένους ποιεῖν ἀνεμποδίστως. ἦτουν τε, ὅπως καὶ γὰρ ὁμοίως τοῖς ὑπὸ τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ καὶ Ἀγρίππα δοθεῖσιν τὴν ἐμὴν γνώμην βεβαιώσω. ὑμᾶς οὖν βούλομαι εἰδέναι ἐν τοῖς τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ καὶ Ἀγρίππα βουλήμασιν συνεπιτρέπειν αὐτοῖς χρῆσθαι καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ τὰ πάτρια χωρὶς ἐμποδισμοῦ.

To the magistrates, senate, and people of the Ephesians, sendeth greeting. As I was dispensing justice at Ephesus, on the ides of February, the Jews that dwell in Asia demonstrated to me that Augustus and Agrippa had permitted them to use their own laws and customs, and to offer those their firstfruits, which every one of them freely offers to the Deity on account of piety, and to carry them in a company together to Jerusalem without disturbance. They also petitioned me, that I would confirm what had been granted by Augustus and Agrippa by my own sanction. I would therefore have you take notice, that according to the will of Augustus and Agrippa, I permit them to use and do according to the customs of their forefathers without disturbance.¹⁰²

The repetition of decrees and the consistent reluctance of Ephesians to comply, along with the additional examples from Miletus and Laodicea and Tralles, all reinforce the same general truth.

While the imperial position was often favorable to Jews, we have numerous examples of local authorities taking a negative stance.

This negative view toward Jews on the part of local authorities was not limited to Asia Minor. After addressing persecution of Jews by Alexandrians in Egypt in AD 41, Emperor Claudius gives indication that the issue was broader by agreeing it would be good to have local governments throughout the empire affirm Jewish rights.

καλῶς οὖν ἔχειν καὶ Ἰουδαίους τοὺς ἐν παντὶ τῷ ὕφ' ἡμᾶς κόσμῳ τὰ πάτρια ἔθη ἀνεπικωλύτως φυλάσσειν . . . τοῦτό μου τὸ διάταγμα τοὺς ἄρχοντας τῶν πόλεων καὶ τῶν κολωνιῶν καὶ μουνικιπίων τῶν ἐν τῇ Ἰταλίᾳ καὶ τῶν ἐκτός, βασιλεῖς τε καὶ δυνάστας διὰ τῶν ἰδίων πρεσβευτῶν ἐγγράψασθαι βούλομαι ἐκκείμενόν τε ἔχειν οὐκ ἔλαττον ἡμερῶν τριάκοντα ὅθεν ἐξ ἐπιπέδου καλῶς ἀναγνωσθῆναι δύναται.

¹⁰² *Ant* 16.172-173.

It will therefore be fit to permit the Jews, who are in all the world under us, to keep their ancient customs without being hindered so to do. . . . And I will that this decree of mine be engraven on tables by the magistrates of the cities and colonies, and municipal places, both those within Italy and those without it, both kings and governors, by the means of the ambassadors, and to have them exposed to the public for full thirty days, in such a place, whence it may plainly be read from the ground.¹⁰³

On the one hand, imperial support of the Jewish diaspora was relatively consistent from the time of Julius Caesar through the rule of Claudius. On the other hand, resistance to such accommodations appears to have been persistent in many local governmental bodies. In attempting to characterize the status of Jews during the imperial period, one properly recognizes this evident dichotomy. One also must then weigh which of these two competing forces had a more significant effect on the day-to-day living of Jews. In an effort to help determine that, we consider the third key player in defining Jewish status in the first century Roman world: the local population.

General populace

While local governmental attitudes surely tell us more about the day-to-day interactions between Jews and non-Jews than imperial rescripts might, the policies of local governments would be expected to be more constrained than the attitudes of the populace more generally. Local governments not only would be expected to calibrate their policies relative to imperial threats and promises; they would also have to contemplate the consequences of their actions on public peace and tranquility. As individuals, local authorities might wish to implement the prejudices of their people in the harshest of manners, but in the end they may refrain because they are responsible for avoiding community conflict. Seeing how willing local governments

¹⁰³ *Ant* 19.290-291.

were to implement measures against Jews is all the more striking, then. But even those measures may not fully reveal the depth of antipathy which could flow more freely through the words and actions of common people who perceived no concurrent responsibility to consider the public good.

What were the attitudes of common people toward Jews? In his *Studies in Josephus' Rewritten Bible*, a commentary on Josephus' *Antiquities*, Louis Feldman concludes with a list of "factors and goals that influenced Josephus most in his rewriting of the Bible."¹⁰⁴ One of Feldman's proposed factors was Josephus' "insistence that gentiles do not hate Jews."¹⁰⁵ Feldman goes on to say, "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."¹⁰⁶

While Josephus certainly had an interest in highlighting examples of Jews having good relationships with Gentiles, it may not be as easy to demonstrate that Josephus was emphasizing a universal non-hatred of Jews by Gentiles. In fact, the very presence of so many rescripts from Roman officials defending Jewish rights cannot help but expose the antipathy which prompted such defense. Rajak observes, "Paradoxically, Josephus, in arguing for harmonious coexistence, highlights situations of tension, because the situations often conclude in the legal or quasi-legal interventions which constitute the only tangible evidence he can produce of good treatment of the Jews. In arguing his case, he tends also to be suggesting its opposite."¹⁰⁷ An even larger question, however, is whether Josephus himself believed that there was a universal non-hatred of Jews by Gentiles. He was interested in promoting harmonious coexistence, but it seems he was also well aware of underlying tensions that existed.

¹⁰⁴ Feldman (1998) 543.

¹⁰⁵ Feldman (1998) 558.

¹⁰⁶ Feldman (1998) 558.

¹⁰⁷ Rajak (2001) 329-330.

Feldman, to support his contention that Josephus had an agenda of insisting that Gentiles do not hate Jews, offers as one example the account of Haman and Esther. This story, included both in the Hebrew Bible as well as in Josephus' *Antiquities*, is presented by Josephus with some modification relative to the biblical account. Feldman's methodology highlights such additions or subtractions relative to the biblical story and then attempts to identify a Josephan agenda behind those changes. In the account of Haman and Esther, Feldman suggests that one key Josephan "addition" is found in the characterization of Haman's motivation. Yes, Haman was motivated to destroy the Jews, which might seem to suggest that Gentiles hate Jews. But Feldman claims to see a Josephan modification, one which recontextualizes Haman's hatred so as to minimize its application with regard to pagan attitudes toward Jews more generally.

Esther was a Jew who had become the wife of the ruler of Persia in the fifth century BC. She had an uncle, Mordecai, who refused to bow down before Haman, a man the Persian king had chosen to honor. Josephus accounts for Mordecai's action in this way: "But Mordecai was so wise, and so observant of his own country's laws, that he would not worship the man"

(Μαρδοχαίου δὲ διὰ σοφίαν καὶ τὸν οἴκοθεν αὐτοῦ νόμον οὐ προσκυνοῦντος ἄνθρωπον).¹⁰⁸

Haman would not stand for this.

παραφυλάξας ὁ Ἀμάνης ἐπυνθάνετο, πόθεν εἶη. μαθὼν δ' αὐτὸν ὄντα Ἰουδαῖον ἠγανάκτησεν καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν εἶπεν, ὡς οἱ μὲν ἐλεύθεροι Πέρσαι προσκυνοῦσιν αὐτόν, οὗτος δὲ δοῦλος ὢν οὐκ ἀξιοῖ τοῦτο ποιεῖν. καὶ τιμωρήσασθαι θελήσας τὸν Μαρδοχαῖον αὐτὸν μὲν αἰτήσασθαι πρὸς κόλασιν παρὰ τοῦ βασιλέως μικρὸν ἠγήσατο, τὸ ἔθνος δὲ αὐτοῦ διέγνω πᾶν ἀφανίσει· καὶ γὰρ φύσει τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ἀπηχθάνετο, ὅτι καὶ τὸ γένος τῶν Ἀμαληκιτῶν, ἐξ ὧν ἦν αὐτός, ὑπ' αὐτῶν διέφθαρτο.

Haman, having observed this, inquired from what people he came. And when he learned that he was a Jew, he became indignant and remarked to himself that whereas the free-born Persians prostrated themselves before him, this man, who was a slave, did not see fit to do so. And although he wished to be avenged on Mordecai, he considered it too little to ask that he alone be punished by the king, but decided to exterminate his whole nation,

¹⁰⁸ *Ant* 11.210.

for he naturally hated the Jews because his own race, the Amalekites, had been destroyed by them.¹⁰⁹

Feldman focuses on Josephus' claim that Haman did what he did because his own people, the Amalekites, had been militarily crushed by ancient Israel hundreds of years before. What does Feldman conclude?

Josephus presents the unscriptural detail attributing Haman's hatred of the Jews not, as Haman later tells Ahasuerus, to the Jews' misanthropy (*Ant* 11.212) but rather as a natural (φύσει) consequence of his being descended from the Amalekites, who had been destroyed by the Jews (*Ant* 11.211). Here hatred of the Jews is depicted not as an eternal Jewish-Gentile conflict but rather as the result of a particular, even a personal, grudge.¹¹⁰

Is this what Josephus is doing? Did he add this detail regarding Haman's Amalekite heritage so as to lead his reader to conclude that there was no pervasive anti-Judaism present in the Persian Empire, but that this was simply an issue of personal long-standing resentment between two men, one the descendant of a defeated neighbor of ancient Israel?

First, there may be legitimate debate as to how much of an addition to the Biblical text this mention of Amalekite heritage really is. It is true that the Bible does not explicitly ascribe the word Amalekite to Haman. Rather, Esther 3:1 describes Haman as an Agagite. However, 1 Samuel 15:8 notes that Agag was the king of the Amalekites, notable because he was inappropriately kept alive by King Saul of Israel after a battle, only to be executed by the prophet Samuel.¹¹¹ That noteworthy king apparently was sufficiently honored that descendants of the Amalekites became known as Agagites.¹¹² Feldman acknowledges this connection in a footnote: "Presumably, Josephus derives the notion of Haman's Amalekite descent from the fact that Agag

¹⁰⁹ *Ant* 11.210-211; trans. by Marcus.

¹¹⁰ Feldman (1998) 530.

¹¹¹ 1 Samuel 15.

¹¹² Note also the view of Keil & Delitzsch (1971) 780: "Agag (אַגַּג, the fiery) is not the proper name of the Amalekite king defeated by Saul (1 Sam. 15:8), but the title (nomen dignitatis) of the Amalekite kings in general, just as all the Egyptian kings had the common name of Pharaoh, and the Philistine kings the name of Abimelech." This view would establish even more strongly a linkage between the terms "Agagite" and "Amalekite."

was king of the Amalekites.”¹¹³ What Feldman views as a Josephan addition, however, is Josephus’ foregrounding of this ancestry and his implication that this ancestral connection was central to Haman’s action.

It is true that Josephus explicitly links Haman’s Amalekite ancestry with Haman’s desire to punish more than just Mordecai, but instead to abolish the entire Jewish nation.¹¹⁴ It is fair to note that Josephus felt this personal linkage played a role. But is it fair to present this “motivation inspired by one’s Amalekite heritage” as an addition to the biblical account, and therefore a clear sign of Josephus’ agenda with regard to characterizing in general the relationship between Gentiles and Jews?

While the biblical account may not be as explicit as Josephus’ story, its manner of presenting certain pieces of material certainly could be read as linking quite closely Haman’s Amalekite heritage and his attitude toward the Jews. In Esther 3:1, the first time that Haman’s name appears in the Esther account, Haman is described as “Haman, son of Hammedatha, the Agagite.”¹¹⁵ It would seem fair to presume that the author is inviting the reader to have Haman’s heritage in mind – he is an Amalekite (an Agagite) – as they learn what happens next. But could not the mention of heritage simply help identify who this Haman is, in a vein similar to the mention of Haman’s father?

At the next significant dramatic moment, after Haman has made his request to punish the Jews and readers are now wondering how the Persian ruler will respond, again Haman is described as the Agagite. His name is mentioned seven times in between those two positions, and his heritage is not referred to. But when the Persian ruler gives him his signet ring to employ

¹¹³ Feldman (1998) 525.

¹¹⁴ *Ant* 11.211.

¹¹⁵ אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּנוֹ הַמִּדְיָהּ הָאֲגָגִי

as he pleases, then Haman is again described as an Agagite. Yet once more, could not the mention of heritage simply help identify who this Haman is? Perhaps, but first, there is something added after the mention of his heritage. “So the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.”¹¹⁶ Notice the phrase that is added: “the enemy of the Jews,” or more precisely, “the one who is acting as an enemy of the Jews.”¹¹⁷

There was no need for the author of Esther to mention again that Haman was an Agagite. That fact had already been established. But this is a dramatic moment. This is the moment when Haman received authority to do the wicked deed he had planned. This is the moment when the author chose to highlight the nature of Haman, that he was one acting as an enemy toward the Jews. When seeing the word Agagite again, Jewish readers would naturally have associated Agagites, who were Amalekites, with the recollection that they were traditional enemies of the Jews. This was the first nation that attacked Israel after its departure from slavery in Egypt, assaulting them before they had even reached Mount Sinai.¹¹⁸ This was the nation that Moses said God would be in perpetual war against, from generation to generation.¹¹⁹ This was the nation God asked King Saul to destroy because they had attacked Israel as it departed Egypt.¹²⁰ A Jew reading Esther’s description of Haman could hardly have been unaware of the Agagites’ history. It seems fair to conclude that Jewish readers would have picked up on this antagonistic connotation already from the beginning of the account in Esther 3. Then, when the phrase “the

¹¹⁶ *The New International Version* (2011) Esther 3:10.

¹¹⁷ צַרְרַת הַיְהוּדִים

¹¹⁸ Exodus 17:8ff.

¹¹⁹ Exodus 17:16.

¹²⁰ 1 Samuel 15:3.

one acting as an enemy toward the Jews” is added in Esther 3:10, this would simply have reinforced that historical association.

All this is shared not to challenge the fact that Haman’s heritage had something to do with his hatred of the Jews. Quite to the contrary, it clearly did have something to do with it. But is it safe to say that Josephus’ decision to explicitly connect Haman’s action to his heritage constitutes the addition of an “unscriptural detail?”¹²¹ Again, perhaps one could view it that way, but the scriptural presentation, while admittedly not explicit, nevertheless implicitly makes that very point. As a consequence, one cannot confidently say that the account of Haman is an example of Josephus trying to manipulate his recounting of history to make it appear that Gentile nations had a good relationship with Jews. Mentioning that Haman hated Jews because he was an Amelekite is not an addition to the Scriptural text of a sort that seeks to imply less general hatred toward Jews. Rather, it is simply a delineation of concepts already embedded in the Scriptural text, doing nothing to enhance a “gentiles do not hate Jews” agenda.

In fact, there are sufficient additional details in the Esther-Haman story Josephus tells which would make the very opposite point. Josephus demonstrates that in the land of Persia, there was a very significant anti-Jewish sentiment and population. Even if one were to grant that Haman did what he did only because he was an Amalekite, there were many others in the Persian Empire who had anti-Jewish inclinations but no linkage to the Amalekites. Josephus makes this obvious by reporting that on the day Haman had intended Jews to be killed, Jews were given permission to kill enemies of the Jews instead. On that day “the Jews at Shushan slew five hundred of their enemies” (τοὺς ἐν Σούσοις Ἰουδαίους ἀποκτεῖναι τῶν ἐχθρῶν περὶ

¹²¹ Feldman (1998) 530.

πεντακοσίους).¹²² The next day they killed 300 more of their enemies.¹²³ But even more informative as to the general tenor of sentiment toward Jews throughout the Persian Empire, Josephus reports, “Now there were slain by the Jews that were in the country, and in the other cities, seventy-five thousand of their enemies” (ἀπέθανον δὲ καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις πόλεσιν Ἰουδαίων τῶν ἐχθρῶν αὐτοῖς ἑπτακισμύριοι καὶ πεντακισχίλιοι).¹²⁴ For so many enemies to be killed, so many enemies needed to exist. While popular antipathy against the Jews could be kept in check, Josephus was making evident that there was a broader discomfort with Jews that had infiltrated the Persian Empire.¹²⁵

Even on the basis of details which Josephus himself reports, then, it would be difficult to conclude that Josephus felt it realistic to make the case more generally, as Feldman suggests, that “gentiles do not hate Jews.”¹²⁶ Josephus certainly worked to demonstrate that any dislike of Jews was unjustified. He certainly gave evidence that governmental action could restrain and undermine any popular dislike of Jews. In fact, as Esther’s uncle Mordecai was given the authority that had once belonged to Haman, Josephus reports:

οἱ δὲ ἄρχοντες τῶν σατραπειῶν καὶ οἱ τύραννοι καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς εἶχον ἐν τιμῇ τοὺς Ἰουδαίους· ὁ γὰρ ἐκ Μαρδοχαίου φόβος ἠνάγκαζεν αὐτοὺς σωφρονεῖν.

But now the rulers of the provinces, and the tyrants, and the kings, and the scribes, had the Jews in esteem; for the fear they were in of Mordecai forced them to act with discretion.¹²⁷

¹²² *Ant* 11.288.

¹²³ *Ant* 11.290.

¹²⁴ *Ant* 11.291.

¹²⁵ While the Persian ruler was ultimately ready to defend those who shared his wife Esther’s ethnicity, Josephus does note that Esther married him without telling him what her ethnicity was. As we have no explicit mention of rationale, we can say little with certainty. One might propose that her hesitance was linked, in some fashion, to an awareness that her ethnicity was not universally viewed as a positive.

¹²⁶ Feldman (1998) 558.

¹²⁷ *Ant* 11.287.

Yet even in the effort to highlight government's capacity to promote Jewish interests, once again Rajak's observation that Josephus paradoxically highlights the tension seems to ring true.¹²⁸

Josephus' mention of Mordecai's clout reveals that even the government officials in Persia would have been disinclined to support the Jews, except for the fact that they were afraid.

Threats of force and official retribution could protect the Jewish people. That Josephus could confidently claim, and he did, both in his presentation of the Persian Empire as well as in his description of Jewish status in the Roman Empire. But Josephus does not seem to have on his agenda what would be an insurmountable goal, an "insistence that gentiles do not hate Jews."¹²⁹ Josephus does not make the case that popular opinion was instinctively inclined in a pro-Jewish direction. Rather, the incident recorded in Esther provides an example – going so far as to offer numerical definition – of widespread dislike of Jews among the populace more generally.

Evidence of similar dislike is present in the Roman period as well.¹³⁰ Common people in the Roman Empire could have very negative attitudes toward Jews. In this regard, while one might challenge Feldman's phrasing of a particular Josephan goal and his analysis of a particular event in ancient Israel, it is important to note that Feldman was seeking primarily to characterize Josephus' intentions and was not discrediting, in substance, a claim for widespread antipathy

¹²⁸ Rajak (2001) 329-330.

¹²⁹ Feldman (1998) 558.

¹³⁰ One might also note the observation of Hecataeus of Abdera, a late fourth century BC Greek philosopher of Ionia, who reflected on the status of Jews in his day: "Whereupon he adds, that although they are in a bad reputation among their neighbors, and among all those that come to them, and have been often treated injuriously by the kings and governors of Persia, yet can they not be dissuaded from acting what they think best; but that, when they are stripped on this account, and have torments inflicted upon them, and they are brought to the most terrible kinds of death, they meet them after a most extraordinary manner, beyond all other people, and will not renounce the religion of their forefathers" (τογαροῦν, φησί, καὶ κακῶς ἀκούοντες ὑπὸ τῶν ἀστυγειτόνων καὶ τῶν εἰσαφικνουμένων πάντες καὶ προπηλακιζόμενοι πολλάκις ὑπὸ τῶν Περσικῶν βασιλέων καὶ σατραπῶν οὐ δύνανται μεταπεισθῆναι τῇ διανοίᾳ, ἀλλὰ γεγυμνωμένως περὶ τούτων καὶ αἰκίαις καὶ θανάτοις δεινοτάτοις μάλιστα πάντων ἀπαντῶσι μὴ ἄρνούμενοι τὰ πάτρια, AA 1.192-193/191). This observation by Hecataeus offers a bridge between the Persian period and the Roman period, noting that negativity toward Jews spanned the gap.

toward Jews in the Roman Empire. He himself refers to “the hatred the masses apparently felt toward them” in the Hellenistic and Roman periods.¹³¹ Rajak refers to “the frequent alienation of Jews from their neighbors.”¹³² She notes that “at the local level, Jews on the one hand and Greeks and natives on the other were often profoundly hostile to one another.”¹³³ Multiple types of evidence support such a contention: a papyrus in Egypt speaks of hatred; documented historical events offer examples of antipathy; and literary men made observations which negatively characterized the Gentile-Jewish dynamic.

The relevant Egyptian papyrus is a mysterious letter dated to the first half of the first century BC. This letter is largely indecipherable. Nonetheless, one phrase near the end is clear: “You know that they loathe the Jews. Greet . . .”¹³⁴ In his commentary on this document, Tcherikover notes, “Unfortunately, the identity of the people who are said to ‘loath the Jews’, and whether the writer and the addressee are Jews themselves, cannot be ascertained.”¹³⁵ What Tcherikover does feel confident concluding is that if the likely dating of this document to the first half of the first century BC is accurate, “. . . it would seem to be the first known example of anti-Semitic feeling in the daily life of Hellenistic Egypt.”¹³⁶

This papyrus stands out for a number of reasons, but perhaps the most significant is simply the fact that it exists. While documentary evidence for imperial attitudes toward Jews is abundant and similar evidence for local governments’ attitudes toward Jews is sufficient, one could expect to work harder to find evidence for the thoughts of the common person. While this

¹³¹ Feldman (1993) 107.

¹³² Rajak (2001) 322.

¹³³ Rajak (2001) 301.

¹³⁴ Tcherikover et al., Vol. 1 (1957) no. 141. This citation, along with some other references that will be made, were briefly mentioned earlier in this project when summarizing negative attitudes held toward Jews in the Roman imperial period.

¹³⁵ Tcherikover et al., Vol. 1 (1957) 256.

¹³⁶ Tcherikover et al., Vol. 1 (1957) 256.

papyrus leaves many questions unanswered, Tcherikover's observation seems fair – that both the author and the recipient of this letter are well aware of an attitude that exists toward Jews. This general attitude, then, is fairly presumed to be that of people generally, at least that of people in Egypt or in a particular portion of Egypt. This papyrus is a hint that whatever imperial policy may have been toward Jews, pro-Jewish governmental positions need not imply pro-Jewish popular opinion.

Documented historical events give additional insight into the attitudes of common people toward Jews. It becomes clear, for example, that anti-Jewish attitudes in Egypt as reflected in a first century BC papyrus did not dissipate in the century that followed. As noted earlier in chapter 1, a group of Jew-haters in the city of Alexandria – home to the largest population of Jews in Egypt – maneuvered themselves into positions of influence with Flaccus, the lieutenant governor of Alexandria and the area surrounding it.¹³⁷ As Philo describes it, this proved possible because Flaccus had despaired of having a good relationship with the new emperor Caligula after Caligula executed two of Flaccus' close and influential friends.¹³⁸ In his grieving, he began to turn against advisors who truly cared about him and instead welcomed the deceptive words and appearances of those who at heart remained his enemies. Those enemies “devised a most grievous design against the Jews” (βούλευμα βουλεύουσι κατὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἀργαλεώτατον).¹³⁹ What is most significant, however, is not the feelings of these individual influential advisors. Rather, what communicates volumes is the strategy they believed would work. These conspiring advisors addressed Flaccus:

¹³⁷ This Flaccus, Aulus Avilius Flaccus, was appointed prefect of Egypt in AD 32 by Tiberius (Philo, *In Flaccum* 1.2). He is distinct from Lucius Valerius Flaccus, who served as governor in Asia and was defended by Cicero in *Pro Flacco*.

¹³⁸ Philo, *In Flaccum* 3.8-16. By AD 38 Caligula had executed Tiberius Gemellus, the grandson of emperor Tiberius, as well as Naevius Sutorius Macro, the prefect of the praetorian guard.

¹³⁹ Philo, *In Flaccum* 4.21; trans. by Yonge.

ἔρρει μὲν σοι τὰ ἀπὸ Τιβερίου Νέρωνος τοῦ παιδός, ἔρρει δὲ καὶ ἡ μετ' ἐκεῖνον ἐλπίς, ὁ ἑταῖρός σου Μάκρων, αἴσια δ' οὐκ ἔστι σοι τὰ ἀπὸ τοῦ κρατοῦντος· δεῖ δὴ παράκλητον ἡμᾶς εὐρεῖν δυνατώτατον, ὑφ' οὗ Γάιος ἐξευμενισθήσεται. ὁ δὲ παράκλητος ἡ πόλις Ἀλεξανδρέων ἐστίν, ἣν τετίμηκε μὲν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἅπας ὁ Σεβαστὸς οἶκος, διαφερόντως δ' ὁ νῦν ἡμῶν δεσπότης παρακλητεύσει δὲ τυχοῦσά τινος παρὰ σοῦ δωρεᾶς· μείζον δ' ἀγαθὸν οὐδὲν αὐτῇ παρέξεις ἢ τοὺς Ἰουδαίους ἐκδοὺς καὶ προέμενος.

All your hope from the child of Tiberius Nero has now perished, and that which was your second best prospect, your companion Macro, is gone too, and you have no chance of favour with the emperor, therefore we must find another [most capable] advocate, by whom Gaius may be made propitious to us, and that advocate is the city of Alexandria, which all the family of Augustus has honoured from the very beginning, and our present master above all the rest; and it will be a sufficient mediator in our behalf, if it can obtain one boon from you, and you cannot confer a greater benefit upon it than by abandoning and denouncing all the Jews.¹⁴⁰

These new advisors to Flaccus persuaded Flaccus that he could get the populace of Alexandria on his side if only he abandoned and denounced the Jews. They were right. A good number of Alexandrians, pejoratively characterized by Philo as ones accustomed to “idleness and laziness” (ἀργίαν καὶ σχολήν) in contrast to the “ordinary and well-regulated” (καθεστὼς καὶ δημοτικός) residents,¹⁴¹ were eager to make life difficult for Jews and so placed images of Emperor Caligula in the synagogues.¹⁴² Anti-Jewish sentiment clearly was preexistent. Those advisors to Flaccus who wanted to cause trouble knew they just needed to give it free rein.

One can appropriately conclude that in Alexandria and perhaps in Egypt more broadly there was an undercurrent of antipathy against Jews which could rise to the surface given the right circumstances. Surely this did not affect all Egyptians, but the number infected by anti-Judaism appears substantial. Yet one might argue that the Alexandrian circumstance was unique compared to the Roman Empire at large. Perhaps Egyptians had greater reason to dislike Jews because Jews occupied such a significant section of Alexandria, meriting even their own Jewish

¹⁴⁰ Philo, *In Flaccum* 4.22-23; trans. by Yonge.

¹⁴¹ Philo, *In Flaccum* 6.41; trans. by Yonge.

¹⁴² Philo, *In Flaccum* 6.43.

ruler, the alabarch. One might propose that Alexandrians perceived Jews to be an authentic physical threat given their numbers and consequently saw religion as a convenient way to undermine them.

There may have been unique circumstances in Egypt, but that did not mean that anti-Judaism was unique to Egypt. Philo presents the fear that the anti-Jewish actions in Alexandria, which ultimately turned violent, would find affirmation throughout the empire and spread.

καὶ δέος ἦν, μὴ οἱ πανταχοῦ τὴν ἀφορμὴν ἐκεῖθεν λαβόντες ἐπηρεάζωσι τοῖς πολίταις αὐτῶν Ἰουδαίοις εἰς τὰς προσευχὰς καὶ τὰ πάτρια νεωτερίζοντες

And there was reason to fear lest all the populace in every country, taking what was done in Egypt as a model and as an excuse, might insult those Jews who were their fellow citizens, by introducing new regulations with respect to their synagogues and their national customs.¹⁴³

Philo presents the danger as real and universal. He views antipathy to be widespread. He characterizes non-Jews elsewhere in the empire as primed to take advantage of an “opportunity” (τὴν ἀφορμὴν). Equally important, he does not limit that group eager to take advantage of opportunity to the politicians or the prominent. He simply speaks about “those everywhere” (οἱ πανταχοῦ). It seems fair to conclude that Philo presumed a meaningful portion of the empire’s populace was ready to oppose the Jews.

Philo speaks of this widespread group of perceived opponents as being present also at an earlier time, during the rule of Augustus. In his *Embassy to Gaius* Philo states, “Therefore, all people in every country, even if they were not naturally well inclined towards the Jewish nation, took great care not to violate or attack any of the Jewish customs or laws” (τοιγαροῦν οἱ πανταχοῦ πάντες εἰ καὶ φύσει διέκειντο πρὸς Ἰουδαίους οὐκ εὐμενῶς εὐλαβῶς εἶχον ἐπὶ καθαιρέσει τινὸς τῶν Ἰουδαϊκῶν νομίμων προσάψασθαι).¹⁴⁴ The restraint exercised in not

¹⁴³ Philo, *In Flaccum* 7.47; trans. by Yonge.

¹⁴⁴ Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium* 159; trans. by Yonge.

attacking Jewish custom resulted from protective actions taken by Augustus.¹⁴⁵ Philo's observation here, however, serves to highlight yet again that a significant component of public opinion could be inclined against Jews. Such views could be restrained, but that did not mean such views were not present and looking for opportunity to act.

As we have seen, evidence of general antipathy against Jews is found on a papyrus letter, common people demonstrated antipathy against Jews in the environs of Alexandria, and Philo acknowledges that an antipathy toward Jews existed throughout the empire so that others could view events in Alexandria as an excuse for persecuting Jews in their own communities. This characterization by Philo of the empire as a whole is not without support – there were places other than Alexandria which could prove hostile to the Jewish people. Ionia was one of those places.

In attempting to discern the attitude local Ionian populations had toward Jews, one might initially cite the multiple interventions on the part of imperial authority to require local governments to treat Jews well. Evidence of local government opposition to Jews makes it likely that the local populace was opposed to Jews as well. This presumption seems explicitly affirmed in a circumstance involving Augustus' trusted partner and representative, Marcus Agrippa.

ὁμοιον δέ τι τούτῳ καὶ Μάρκον Ἀγρίππαν φρονήσαντα περὶ τῶν Ἰουδαίων οἶδαμεν· τῶν γὰρ Ἰόνων κινηθέντων ἐπ' αὐτοὺς καὶ δεομένων τοῦ Ἀγρίππου, ἵνα τῆς πολιτείας, ἣν αὐτοῖς ἔδωκεν Ἀντίοχος ὁ Σελεύκου υἱὸν ὁ παρὰ τοῖς Ἑλλησιν Θεὸς λεγόμενος, §126 μόνοι μετέλθωσιν, ἀξιούντων δ' εἰ συγγενεῖς εἰσὶν αὐτοῖς Ἰουδαῖοι, σέβεσθαι τοὺς αὐτῶν θεοὺς, καὶ δίκης περὶ τούτων συστάσης ἐνίκησαν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τοῖς αὐτῶν ἔθεσι χρῆσθαι συνηγορήσαντος αὐτοῖς Νικολάου τοῦ Δαμασκηνοῦ· ὁ γὰρ Ἀγρίππας ἀπεφώνησε μηδὲν αὐτῷ καινίζεῖν ἐξεῖναι.

We also know that Marcus Agrippa was of the like disposition towards the Jews: for when the people of Ionia were very angry at them, and besought Agrippa, that they, and they only, might have those privileges of citizens which Antiochus, the grandson of Seleucus (who by the Greeks was called The God), had bestowed on them; and desired that, if the Jews were to be joint partakers with them, they might be obliged to worship

¹⁴⁵ Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium* 144-158.

the gods they themselves worshipped: but when these matters were brought to trial, the Jews prevailed, and obtained leave to make use of their own customs, and this under the patronage of Nicolas of Damascus; for Agrippa gave sentence, that he could not innovate.¹⁴⁶

This passage speaks to the intervention of imperial authorities on behalf of the Jews. It also presumes that in some way the citizens of Ionia employed representatives, as the entire body of them would not have appeared before Agrippa. But at the same time, this incident gives every indication of popular discontent with Roman tolerance of Jews and Jewish practice: “the people of Ionia were very angry at them” (τῶν γὰρ Ἰώνων κινηθέντων ἐπ’ αὐτούς). Non-Jewish individuals did not want Jews to be treated the same as they. Because of religious differences, Ionian natives felt the Jews should be excluded from citizenship.

In this particular case before Marcus Agrippa, the rights of Jews were preserved. At the same time, this effort to rob them of their rights speaks powerfully of the opposition of the local populace. One might even go on to propose that popular attitudes in Ionia toward Jews likely would have grown even worse after such a decision was rendered. Rajak concludes, “. . . the Jews in the cities were constantly dependent upon Roman support in any struggle to hold their own against Greek authorities whose attitude was often hostile. A vicious circle was soon no doubt created, in which renewed appeal to Roman intervention served to incur further local hostility.”¹⁴⁷

Popular antipathy toward Jews in Ionia is attested also by a decree of the city of Halicarnassus, a community just south of Miletus on the Aegean Sea. While the decree itself aims to protect Jews, it reveals not only the possibility of original reluctance on the part of those who issued to the decree (the action is taken because of Roman advice), but also an awareness

¹⁴⁶ *Ant* 12.125-126.

¹⁴⁷ Rajak (2001) 322.

that there are those who would choose to violate the decree were it not for threatened consequences. In other words, positive behavior toward Jews on the part of at least a portion of the local populace had to be coerced.

ψήφισμα Ἀλικαρνασέων. ἐπὶ ἱερέως Μέμνονος τοῦ Ἀριστείδου, κατὰ δὲ ποιήσιν Εὐωνύμου, Ἀνθεστηριῶνος ἔδοξε τῷ δήμῳ εἰσηγησαμένου Μάρκου Ἀλεξάνδρου. ἐπεὶ [τὸ] πρὸς τὸ θεῖον εὐσεβές τε καὶ ὅσιον ἐν ἅπαντι καιρῷ διὰ σπουδῆς ἔχομεν κατακολουθοῦντες τῷ δήμῳ τῶν Ῥωμαίων πάντων ἀνθρώπων ὄντι εὐεργέτη καὶ οἷς περὶ τῆς Ἰουδαίων φιλίας καὶ συμμαχίας πρὸς τὴν πόλιν ἔγραψεν, ὅπως συντελῶνται αὐτοῖς αἱ εἰς τὸν θεὸν ἱεροποιαὶ καὶ ἑορταὶ αἱ εἰθισμέναι καὶ σύνοδοι, δεδόχθαι καὶ ἡμῖν Ἰουδαίων τοὺς βουλομένους ἄνδρας τε καὶ γυναῖκας τὰ τε σάββατα ἄγειν καὶ τὰ ἱερὰ συντελεῖν κατὰ τοὺς Ἰουδαίων νόμους καὶ τὰς προσευχὰς ποιῆσθαι πρὸς τῇ θαλάττῃ κατὰ τὸ πάτριον ἔθος. ἂν δέ τις κωλύσῃ ἢ ἄρχων ἢ ἰδιώτης, τῷδε τῷ ζημιώματι ὑπεύθυνος ἔστω καὶ ὀφειλέτω τῇ πόλει.

The decree of those of Halicarnassus. “When Memnon, the son of Orestidas by descent, but by adoption of Euonymus, was priest on the [...] day of the month Aristerion, the decree of the people, upon the representation of Marcus Alexander, was this: Since we have ever a great regard to piety towards God, and to holiness; and since we aim to follow the people of the Romans; who are the benefactors of all men, and what they have written to us about a league of friendship and mutual assistance between the Jews and our city, and that their sacred offices and accustomed festivals and assemblies may be observed by them; we have decreed, that as many men and women of the Jews as are willing so to do, may celebrate their Sabbaths, and perform their holy offices, according to the Jewish laws; and may make their *proseuchae* at the seaside, according to the customs of their forefathers; and if anyone whether he be a magistrate or a private person, hindereth them from so doing, he shall be liable to a fine, to be applied to the uses of the city.”¹⁴⁸

Threats with financial consequences were issued. Obedience was demanded. While pro-Jewish on its surface, such an approach offers yet more evidence that the local populace could instinctively have pursued a different course.

Ionia was not the only site of tension. On the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, just as Emperor Claudius was beginning his rule, “the young men of Doris, preferring a rash attempt before piety and being naturally bold and insolent, carried a statue of Caesar into a synagogue of the Jews, and erected it there” (Δωρῖται νεανίσκοι τῆς ὁσιότητος προτιθέμενοι τόλμαν καὶ

¹⁴⁸ *Ant* 14.256-258.

πεφυκότες εἶναι παραβόλως θρασεῖς Καίσαρος ἀνδριάντα κομίσαντες εἰς τὴν τῶν Ἰουδαίων συναγωγὴν ἀνέστησαν).¹⁴⁹ This incident was not orchestrated by the local governing authorities.

In fact, when Publius Petronius, the governor of Syria, wrote a letter to the leaders of Doris demanding the arrest of those responsible, he sought to distinguish between the local authorities and the unruly mob.

τοὺς μὲν παρὰ τὸ διάταγμα τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ τοιαῦτα τετολμηκότας, ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ αὐτοὶ ἠγανάκτησαν οἱ δοκοῦντες αὐτῶν ἐξέχειν οὐ τῇ ἰδίᾳ προαιρέσει γεγενῆσθαι λέγοντες ἀλλὰ τῇ τοῦ πλήθους ὀρμῇ, ὑπὸ ἑκατοντάρχου Πρόκλου Οὐιτελλίου ἐκέλευσα ἐπ' ἐμὲ ἀναχθῆναι τῶν πεπραγμένων λόγον ἀποδώσοντας

I therefore ordain that Proculus Vitellius, the centurion, bring those men to me, who, contrary to Augustus's edict, have been so insolent as to do this thing, at which those very men who appear to be of principal reputation among them, have an indignation also, and allege for themselves, that it was not done with their consent, but by the violence of the multitude, that they may give an account of what hath been done.¹⁵⁰

Every indication suggests that this action was generated not by officialdom, but by members of the local population who acted on individual initiative. Whatever positive position the Roman government might take toward Jews, that could not set aside instinctive and seemingly visceral actions by members of the local population against Jews.

Perhaps the most striking display of popular discontent with Jews occurred when the Jewish revolt against the Romans began in AD 66. After Jews had executed a Roman garrison in Jerusalem, spontaneous pogroms erupted in cities that neighbored the land of Israel.

οἱ τὰς πέριξ τῆς Συρίας πόλεις κατοικοῦντες τοὺς παρ' ἑαυτοῖς Ἰουδαίους συλλαμβάνοντες σὺν γυναῖξι καὶ τέκνοις ἀνήρουν οὐδεμίαν αὐτοῖς αἰτίαν ἐπικαλεῖν ἔχοντες· οὔτε γὰρ ἐπὶ Ῥωμαίων ἀποστάσει νεώτερόν τι πεφρονήκεσαν οὔτε πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἐκείνους ἐχθρὸν ἢ ἐπίβουλον.

Those that dwelt in the neighboring cities of Syria seized upon such Jews as dwelt among them, with their wives and children, and slew them, when they had not the least occasion of complaint against them; for they did neither attempt any innovation or revolt from the

¹⁴⁹ *Ant* 19.300.

¹⁵⁰ *Ant* 19.307.

Romans, nor had they given any marks of hatred or treacherous designs towards the Syrians.¹⁵¹

What motivated this slaughter?

ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτοὶ τοὺς ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν λαμβανομένους ἀπέσφαττον οὐ μόνον κατὰ μῖσος, ὡς πρότερον, ἀλλ' ἤδη καὶ τὸν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς κίνδυνον φθάνοντες. δεινὴ δὲ ὅλην τὴν Συρίαν ἐπεῖχεν ταραχὴ, καὶ πᾶσα πόλις εἰς δύο διήρητο στρατόπεδα, σωτηρία δὲ τοῖς ἑτέροις ἦν τὸ τοὺς ἑτέρους φθάσαι.

For they killed those whom they caught in their cities, and that not only out of the hatred they bare them, as formerly, but to prevent the danger under which they were from them, so that the disorders in all Syria were terrible, and every city was divided into two armies encamped one against another, and the preservation of the one party was in the destruction of the other.¹⁵²

It is true that when an initial slaughter of Jewish citizens in Caesarea Maritima, on the western edge of Israel, took place, Jewish forces retaliated against other communities in the area. So, non-Jews in communities that surrounded the land of Israel had good reason to fear that they themselves might be in danger. But Josephus does not present that factor as the only motivating force. He speaks of actions taken against Jews “not only out of the hatred they bare them, as formerly” (οὐ μόνον κατὰ μῖσος, ὡς πρότερον). There was a pre-existing hatred present in many communities neighboring the Jewish lands. With the trigger of violent action pulled, this hatred erupted into violent action of its own.

Whether in Alexandria or Ionia or Syria, one recognizes a theme of local populations bearing antipathy against Jewish people. While imperial authorities sought to protect Jews and while local governments at times were compelled to follow suit, what seems undeniable is that so many different locations in the empire reflected an undercurrent of dislike for Jews.

¹⁵¹ *Life* 25.

¹⁵² *JW* 2.461-462. Note that Josephus is describing events which followed the onset of the Jewish revolt in two of his works, the *Jewish War* and the *Life*.

This undercurrent of discomfort with Jewish people displayed itself as well in literary works produced at the time. Authors from the first century BC through the beginning of the second century AD make evident that all was not copacetic between Jews and non-Jews.

While initially a defense in a court case, Cicero's *Pro Flacco* was preserved in written form and serves to offer an initial read on the attitude many Romans had toward Jews. Flaccus served as a governor in Asia, and in 59 BC he stood trial for various alleged improprieties. Cicero's defense of Flaccus, addressed in additional detail in chapter 1 when considering Eric Gruen's views on the status of Jews in the Roman Empire, includes a moment when Cicero praises Flaccus for confiscating the gold that Jews had intended to contribute to the Jerusalem temple. Cicero says, "To resist this barbarous superstition [was] an act of dignity, to despise the multitude of Jews, which at times was most unruly in the assemblies in defense of the interests of the republic, was an act of the greatest wisdom" (huic autem in resistere severitatis, multitudinem Iudaeorum flagrantem non numquam in contionibus pro re publica contemnere gravitatis summae fuit).¹⁵³ Cicero encouraged those judging the case to concur with Flaccus' determination to "despise" (contemnere) the Jews. Cicero then stigmatized the inhabitants of Jerusalem, describing their city as "a city so prone to suspicion and to evil speaking" (in tam suspiciosa ac maledica civitate).¹⁵⁴

In considering these critiques, one might fairly note, as I have in chapter 1, that in *Pro Flacco* Cicero did not target only Jews with his condemnatory speech. He also spoke of various groups of Greeks in similarly demeaning terms.¹⁵⁵ One might also suggest that Cicero may not have deeply believed everything he was saying, choosing to employ striking invective simply in

¹⁵³ *Pro Flacco* 67, trans. by Yonge.

¹⁵⁴ *Pro Flacco* 68, trans. by Yonge.

¹⁵⁵ *Pro Flacco* 9, 12, 20, 27, 60, 61.

the interest of winning his case. In other words, perhaps Cicero was not as anti-Jewish as his words may convey. Yet even if those ameliorating observations are true, the larger point in attempting to discern the attitudes of common people toward Jews is the fact that Cicero felt these insults would be persuasive. Cicero was tapping into something. There is no indication that such accusations against Jews would have been considered politically incorrect. To the contrary, Cicero believed such accusations would bring those evaluating the case onto his side. Cicero's *Pro Flacco* offers helpful insight, then, into the prevailing winds of perspective regarding Jews, attitudes likely also held by the general populace.

Cicero was not the only author to offer such a view. The first century BC rhetorician Apollonius Molon called Jews “atheists and man-haters” (ἀθέους καὶ μισανθρώπους).¹⁵⁶ Lysimachus, the first century BC Egyptian grammarian, also attributed this “man-hating” trait to Jews. He reported that when Moses was leading the Jews out of Egypt, he commanded them “to have no kind regards for any man, nor give good counsel to any, but always to advise them for the worst” (μήτε ἀνθρώπων τινὶ εὐνοήσῃν μήτε ἄριστα συμβουλεύσῃν ἀλλὰ τὰ χεῖρονα).¹⁵⁷ The historian Diodorus Siculus, who wrote in the second half of the first century BC, speaks in similar fashion. He describes the Jews who had recently escaped Egypt and were now settling in the land of Canaan:

τοὺς δὲ ἐξορισθέντας καταλαβέσθαι μὲν τοὺς περὶ τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα τόπους, συστησαμένους δὲ τὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἔθνος παραδόσιμον ποιῆσαι τὸ μῖσος τὸ πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους· διὰ τοῦτο δὲ καὶ νόμιμα παντελῶς ἐξηλλαγμένα καταδειξαι, τὸ μηδενὶ ἄλλω ἔθνει τραπέζης κοινωνεῖν μηδ' εὐνοεῖν τὸ παράπαν.

The refugees had occupied the territory round about Jerusalem, and having organized the nation of the Jews had made their hatred of mankind into a tradition, and on this account had introduced utterly outlandish laws: not to break bread with any other people, nor to show the many good will at all.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ AA 2.148.

¹⁵⁷ AA 1.310/309.

¹⁵⁸ *Biblioteca Historica*, XXXIV-XXXV, 1:2 = *GLAJJ*, vol. 1, no. 63; trans. by F.R. Walton, *LCL*.

Strabo, in his *Geography*, offers another negative characterization of Jews. He suggests that Moses actually started off the Jewish nation on the right foot, but bad priests who came later were the cause of superstitious practice.

ἔπειτ' ἐφισταμένων ἐπὶ τὴν ἱερωσύνην τὸ μὲν πρῶτον δεισιδαιμόνων, ἔπειτα τυραννικῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἐκ μὲν τῆς δεισιδαιμονίας αἱ τῶν βρωμάτων ἀποσχέσεις, ὧν περ καὶ νῦν ἔθος ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς ἀπέχεσθαι, καὶ [αἱ] περιτομαὶ καὶ αἱ ἐκτομαὶ καὶ εἴ τινα τοιαῦτα ἐνομίσθη,

Afterwards superstitious persons were appointed to the priesthood, and then tyrants. From superstition arose abstinence from flesh, from the eating of which it is now the custom to refrain, circumcision, excision, and other practices which the people observe.¹⁵⁹

Tacitus critiques Jewish practice in unrestrained terms.

Hi ritus quoquo modo inducti antiquitate defenduntur: cetera instituta, sinistra foeda, pravitate valere. nam pessimus quisque spretis religionibus patriis tributa et stipes illuc congerebant, unde auctae Iudaeorum res, et quia apud ipsos fides obstinata, misericordia in promptu, sed adversus omnis alios hostile odium.

This worship, however introduced, is upheld by its antiquity; all their other customs, which are at once perverse and disgusting, owe their strength to their very badness. The most degraded out of other races, scorning their national beliefs, brought to them their contributions and presents. This augmented the wealth of the Jews, as also did the fact, that among themselves they are inflexibly honest and ever ready to shew compassion, though they regard the rest of mankind with all the hatred of enemies.¹⁶⁰

Tacitus says more. He calls their worship “tasteless and mean” (*absurdus sordidusque*).¹⁶¹ He identifies Jews as “this vilest of nations” (*taeterrimam gentem*).¹⁶² He characterizes elements of their Sabbath practice as evidence of “[the Jews being led by] the charm of indolence” (*blandiente inertia*).¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ *Geography* 16.2.37; trans. by Hamilton.

¹⁶⁰ *Histories* V.5; trans. by Church and Brodribb.

¹⁶¹ *Histories* V.5; trans. by Church and Brodribb.

¹⁶² *Histories* V.8; trans. by Church and Brodribb.

¹⁶³ *Histories* V.4; trans. by Church and Brodribb. Specifically, Tacitus notes that while initially they rested only on the seventh day, they also were to dedicate every seventh year as a year of rest.

A lawyer, a rhetorician, a grammarian, historians, and a geographer critiqued Jews. The satirist Juvenal contributes something as well, noting not only the perceived trait of laziness but also highlighting the alleged lack of concern for other people. In his Satire 14, where he explains how children naturally follow the bad habits of their parents, Juvenal speaks about the children of a Jewish father:

Quidam sortiti metuentem sabbata patrem
 nil praeter nubes et caeli numen adorant,
 nec distare putant humana carne suillam,
 qua pater abstinuit, mox et praepudia ponunt;
 Romanas autem soliti contemnere leges
 Iudaicum ediscunt et servant ac metuunt ius,
 tradidit arcano quodcumque volumine Moyses,
 non monstrare vias eadem nisi sacra colenti,
 quaesitum ad fontem solos deducere verpos.
 sed pater in causa, cui septima quaeque fuit lux
 ignava et partem vitae non attingit ullam.

Then there are those that, blessed with a father who
 Reveres the Sabbath, worship only the clouds in the sky
 And its spirit, who draw no distinction between the pork
 From which their father had to abstain, and human flesh,
 And who swiftly rid themselves of even their foreskins.
 It's their custom to ignore the laws of Rome, the Judaic
 Code being that which they study, adhere to, and revere;
 The Pentateuch, the mystic scroll handed down by Moses:
 Nor do they reveal the way to anyone but a fellow-believer;
 Leading only the circumcised, when asked, to the fountain.
 It's the father that's to blame, treating every seventh day
 As a day of idleness, separate from the rest of daily life.¹⁶⁴

Juvenal portrays Jews as unpatriotic, rude, and lazy. But just as was the case with Cicero, whose personal views might still be elusive even as he presented Jews in a bad light for the sake of his client, one might wonder whether Juvenal really believed what he was writing. Was he exaggerating just to make a joke? Again, as with Cicero, even if that were true, a key point would still stand, particularly as one seeks to identify the perspectives of the common people:

¹⁶⁴ *Satires* XIV.96-106; trans. by Kline.

Juvenal felt that his audience would get it. Juvenal wrote as he did because he presumed such thoughts would ring true. He, along with so many other authors of the era, strengthens the case for claiming that there was a persistent anti-Jewish undercurrent which operated instinctively in the minds of so many during the empire period.

The Roman government was quite protective of Jewish rights. Local political authorities were less so, though they moderated their opposition because imperial authority put the foot down. The populace in general did not always honor such constraints. Whether in Asia Minor or Egypt or Syria, common people were ready to take active steps against Jews when provided the opportunity. As I have demonstrated, documentary evidence, recorded historical events, as well the observations of literary men all point to an undercurrent of anti-Judaism among the empire's population.

Overview of ancient views

In attempting to characterize the status of Jews in the first century AD, then, the evidence might initially seem to point in different directions. In the end, however, there is a consistent thread. Local government and everyday people appear, in general, to be on the same page. The apparent exception to the rule was imperial authority. However, when one identifies the influences that impacted the position of imperial authority, one no longer sees such a dichotomy in views toward Jews.

The attitude Julius Caesar had toward Jews was directly impacted by the rescue mission Antipater launched when Caesar was surrounded in Egypt. Given the instinct to respect the policies of the assassinated *princeps*, it is no surprise that succeeding emperors maintained a protective approach toward Jews. That approach was significantly enhanced by personal relationships that developed between members of the Jewish aristocracy and the imperial family.

Most notably, Agrippa I and his connections with Caligula and Claudius set the tone for official imperial pronouncements for many years.

The reality of these external influences on imperial policy is not inconsequential to our overall characterization of the status of Jews during the imperial period. The important roles that personal relationships and prior history played in protecting the Jews leave the door wide open to the possibility that absent those “interventions,” imperial policy may have been much more negative toward Jews. Because of the impact of family connections, imperial policy becomes less an indicator of what people in general thought of Jews than it is an indicator of the power of relationships. Because of the impact of heroic deeds on behalf of Julius Caesar by Antipater, imperial policy becomes less an indicator of what the general populace thought of Jews than it is an indicator of the sense of appreciation that a beneficiary can have toward a donor.

In fact, Rajak characterizes Roman authorities in this way: “[Their] deeper instincts were by no means wholly tolerant when it came to strange oriental cults.”¹⁶⁵ There are more explicit glimpses of this – the expulsions of Jews by Claudius in AD 49 and Tiberius in AD 19.¹⁶⁶ But even without these glimpses, it seems reasonable to suggest that imperial authorities crafted their positions toward Jews not because of instinctive affection, but because of personal connections and past heroic deeds.

If imperial policy fades as a likely indicator of what life was actually like for a Jew, then the views of local government and the common people concurrently rise in importance. The negative attitudes incontrovertibly demonstrated by local governmental institutions and the

¹⁶⁵ Rajak (2001) 302.

¹⁶⁶ Surely other hints could be added: for example, the fact Claudius restricted the ability of Jews to meet together in AD 41 (Dio Cassius 60.6.6-7) and that, in his rescript to Alexandria which protected Jews from the Greeks, he warned Jews by explaining that disobedience on their part could lead him to view their people as a plague on the Roman world (Tcherikover et al., Vol. 2 (1957) no. 153, lines 96-99).

general populace become much more meaningful indicators of Jewish status. Suddenly, there is no longer such a mixed message regarding the status of Jews in the empire. Yes, they had imperial defenders who preserved, for the most part, their peace and security. As a consequence, in many cases they were able to survive and even thrive. Yet there was a consistent undercurrent of prejudice present almost everywhere, clearly existent among the common people and within local governments and periodically surfacing even at the highest levels of imperial power. This undercurrent remained an ongoing threat.

CHAPTER 3 – Jewish Status: A Source of Antipathy

If one grants that the circumstances for Jews in the first century AD were at times negative, at times positive, but at all times perilous, it becomes important next to identify the cause. One seeks to determine the forces which generated this undercurrent, persistent among the populace, present in local governmental structures, and existent even though often repressed or overcome among imperial authorities.

Just as there have been significant efforts to minimize the negativity Jews faced in the imperial period, so also are there attempts – once antipathy is acknowledged – to normalize it by suggesting that it was the simple consequence of political happenstance. Shaye Cohen accounts for antipathy against Jews in this fashion: “Anti-Judaism was the consequence of political strife between the Jews and their neighbors in both Judea and the diaspora. The revolt of the Maccabees against the Seleucid Empire marks the entrance of the Jews into the rough-and-tumble world of the politics of the Hellenistic world.”¹ As Cohen presents the Maccabean revolt as one political trigger for anti-Judaism, he views other anti-Jewish incidents as caused by mere political factors. “. . . the persecution of Judaism by Epiphanes, the attack on Alexandrian Jewry by the mob, and the destruction of the Temple by Titus were each caused by local factors and not by some deep-rooted anti-Judaism.”²

One can certainly acknowledge the impact of local political factors. But Cohen is not simply saying that political actions were involved. Surely politics did play a role. But Cohen’s emphasis on the politics is a purposeful deemphasis – even a denial – of the alternative, that there was inherent underlying antipathy against Jews which was also in play. Cohen simply states,

¹ Cohen (2006) 40.

² Cohen (2006) 40.

“Anti-Semitism did not exist in antiquity, but anti-Judaism did.”³ He defines this anti-Judaism as that which results from political strife. In other words, having equated anti-Judaism with that which results only from political issues, he essentially says that there was no other source of underlying antipathy against Jews. In fact, such antipathy did not exist.

Significant evidence has already been offered to argue for a strong undercurrent of antipathy that existed even apart from major political events. To understand how Cohen attempts to bypass such evidence, consider one example, the previously cited literary volleys launched by Tacitus. Among other insults, Tacitus identified Jews as “this vilest of nations” (*taeterrimam gentem*).⁴ Rather than view such denigrations as reflecting a preexistent bias, Cohen sees Tacitus’ verbal disparagement of Jews as essentially contrived. He describes Tacitus’ assault as little more than propaganda to “justify the Roman destruction of the Temple in 70 CE.”⁵

Yet even if one were to affirm a more contrived propagandistic motive, it would still seem that Tacitus’ words are evidence of a broader undercurrent of antipathy. Propaganda is crafted to tap into preexistent biases and sensibilities. Even if Tacitus was not reflecting his own personal feelings, his manipulation of information to tap into the feelings of others is evidence that others had such feelings, feelings which would affirm Tacitus’ claims against Jews.

That said, there seems little reason to believe that Tacitus’ effort was manipulative propaganda. There seems no reason to deny that Tacitus authentically felt what he was communicating. Cohen’s effort to recontextualize Tacitus’ words is certainly faithful to Cohen’s

³ Cohen (2006) 40.

⁴ *Histories* V.8; trans. by Church and Brodribb.

⁵ Cohen (2006) 40.

view of anti-Judaism, but it seems to expose the weakness of suggesting that anti-Jewish feeling was essentially – and, in the end, exclusively – political.

The view which Cohen promotes has been characterized as functionalist: “ancient anti-Semitism was not based on the ‘essence’ of Judaism, however defined, but rather on very concrete *political* conflicts.”⁶ The alternative approach, identified as the substantialist view, proposes that while political events certainly are not to be ignored, “pagan anti-Semitism in the ancient world is fundamentally of a religious character.”⁷ With such words Jan Sevenster positions the bulk of causation for an antipathy undercurrent on the nature of Judaism. This approach presumes that there is something about the essence of Judaism which contributes uniquely to anti-Semitism. This perspective highlights the distinctiveness of Jews and attempts to define the particular features of Judaism which can be linked to antipathy.

Should one pursue a substantialist approach, a number of additional questions come into play. Are the Jews at fault, or should those who permitted antipathy to arise in their own hearts be to blame? Were outward customs responsible for the antipathy, or was there something more fundamental in play? Is it simply the fact that the Jews were different and strange which led others to despise them, or was it their theology? Did non-Jews know Jewish theology? Did they need to know it in order to be troubled by it? Ultimately, what was it that led to this otherwise difficult-to-explain undercurrent of negative feeling which was repeatedly directed at Jews without any clear external cause?

⁶ Schäfer (1997) 4, citing conclusions drawn by Isaak Heinemann in his essay “Ursprung und Wesen des Antisemitismus im Altertum” [*Festgabe zum Zehnjährigen Bestehen der Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums 1919-1929*, Berlin (1929) 76-91] and in his entry on “Antisemitismus” in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft* [Supplementband V, Stuttgart (1931) cols. 3-43]. Scholars who pursue a similarly functionalist line include Elias Bickerman, Martin Hengel, Christian Habicht, and Klaus Bringmann, though, as Schäfer observes, these fundamentally “functionalist” scholars do embrace some elements of the alternative substantialist approach [Schäfer (1997) 5]. Italics in quotation are original.

⁷ Sevenster (1975) 89.

In the process of addressing questions like this, I will propose a primarily substantialist view which highlights the linkage of separatist customs with a theology that is substantially distinct and implicitly condemnatory. Judaism was exclusivistic. As such, it conveyed an inevitable message about other approaches. In an effort to challenge the contention that Judaism is exclusivistic, one might suggest that Josephus himself was rather flexible theologically. I will argue that any hints that Josephus viewed his religion as less than exclusivistic speak more to a technique of patient and gentle persuasion than they do to personal uncertainty about whether Judaism was the only right path. In an effort to minimize the potential impact of exclusivist claims on the part of Judaism, one might suggest that pagans were not really that aware of Jewish theological claims; they simply were familiar with odd customs. I will argue that the inextricable linkage between customs and underlying theology cannot safely be overlooked. With those most distinctive Jewish customs, there was a consistent meta-message which spoke to deeper truths. In this connection, rather than seeing those deeper truths as simply informing outward practice but then dissipating as to their relevance, I will suggest that strange outward customs bothered non-Jews because there was an instinctive recognition on the part of many pagans that the deeper philosophical/religious claims underlying such customs challenged their own understanding of truth. While the nature of this challenge may not always have been clear to those on the outside, it was certainly present and in the end was assaulting the core of who non-Jews were. Finally, in linking negative responses to Judaism to Jewish theology, one might presume that Jewish theology must consequently be to blame. I will argue that it was not the theology itself that was blameworthy, but the reactions of others to that theology.

Jewish theology challenged the philosophical and religious worldview of the non-Jewish world. While not always explicitly stated, Jewish theology viewed other worldviews as lacking,

or more directly stated, as wrong. Understood in this way, such theology was implicitly condemnatory. Non-Jews could choose to overlook or ignore such an evaluation. Some thought about it most carefully and were drawn to conversion. But an additional group of significant size did think about it – or just instinctively perceived it without deep thought – and found themselves deeply offended. When events permitted, this instinctive, internal, visceral antipathy against those who could seem so nonthreatening – but who possessed convictions which could be perceived as violently assaulting – would erupt. In the end, this potential for pagan reaction created an environment of risk. It is in such an environment of risk that the author Josephus operated.

Exclusivism and Judaism

When seeking to characterize the relationship between Judaism and the non-Jewish world in such terms, it is important first to identify whether the Jewish religion was in fact exclusivist or not. In other words, for one to suggest that the Jewish religion was implicitly condemnatory of all other worldviews requires evidence that the Jewish religion believed itself to be the only right way.

Exclusivity, if such a term can properly be applied to Judaism, would not have been the exclusive claim of Judaism. Apollonius Molon, a Greek rhetorician who served as an instructor of Cicero and Julius Caesar, launched a multilevel accusation against the Jews, one feature of which – as reported by Josephus – was this: “that we [Jews] do not admit of such as have different notions about God, nor will we have fellowship with those that choose to observe a way of living different from ourselves” (ὅτι μὴ παραδεχόμεθα τοὺς ἄλλαις προκατειλημμένους δόξαις

περὶ θεοῦ μηδὲ κοινωνεῖν ἐθέλομεν τοῖς καθ' ἑτέραν συνήθειαν βίου ζῆν προαιρουμένοις).⁸

Josephus responds succinctly: “Yet even this habit is not peculiar to us; it is common to all, and shared not only by Greeks, but by Greeks of the highest reputation” (ἀλλ' οὐδὲ τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἴδιον ἡμῶν, κοινὸν δὲ πάντων, οὐχ Ἑλλήνων δὲ μόνων, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἐν τοῖς Ἑλλησιν εὐδοκιμωτάτων).⁹

In offering evidence of this, Josephus refers first to the Lacedaemonians but then makes a compelling case with regard to the Athenians.

οἱ δὲ κοινήν εἶναι τὴν ἑαυτῶν δόξαντες πόλιν Ἀθηναῖοι πῶς περὶ τούτων εἶχον, Ἀπολλώνιος ἠγνόησεν, ὅτι καὶ τοὺς ῥῆμα μόνον παρὰ τοὺς ἐκείνων νόμους φθεγξαμένους περὶ θεῶν ἀπαραιτήτως ἐκόλασαν. τίνας γὰρ ἐτέρου χάριν Σωκράτης ἀπέθανεν; οὐ γὰρ δὴ προεδίδου τὴν πόλιν τοῖς πολεμίοις οὐδὲ τῶν ἱερῶν ἐσύλησεν οὐδέν, ἀλλ' ὅτι καινοὺς ὄρκους ὤμνυεν καὶ τι δαιμόνιον αὐτῷ σημαίνειν ἔφασκεν ἢ διαπαίζων, ὡς ἔνιοι λέγουσι, διὰ ταῦτα κατεγνώσθη κώνειον πῶν ἀποθανεῖν.

As for the Athenians, who glory in having made their city to be common to all men, what their behavior was, Apollonius did not know, while they punished those that spoke contrary to their laws about the gods, without mercy; for on what other account was it that Socrates was put to death by them? Certainly, he neither betrayed their city to its enemies, nor was he guilty of sacrilege with regard to their temples; but on this account, that he swore certain new oaths, and that he affirmed, either in earnest, or, as some say, only in jest, that a certain demon used to make signs to him [what he should not do]. For these reasons he was condemned to drink poison, and kill himself.¹⁰

After including some additional examples of individuals threatened with punishment because of heterodox religious claims, Josephus offers this concluding statement:

τί δὲ δεῖ θαυμάζειν, εἰ πρὸς ἄνδρας οὕτως ἀξιοπίστους διετέθησαν, οἳ γε μηδὲ γυναικῶν ἐφείσαντο; νῦν γὰρ τὴν ἰέρειαν ἀπέκτειναν, ἐπεὶ τις αὐτῆς κατηγορήσεν, ὅτι ξένους ἐμύει θεοῦς· νόμῳ δ' ἦν τοῦτο παρ' αὐτοῖς κεκωλυμένον καὶ τιμωρία κατὰ τῶν ξένων εἰσαγόντων θεὸν ὄριστο θάνατος. οἱ δὲ τοιοῦτῳ νόμῳ χρώμενοι δῆλον ὅτι τοὺς τῶν ἄλλων οὐκ ἐνόμιζον εἶναι θεοῦς· οὐ γὰρ ἂν αὐτοῖς πλειόνων ἀπολαύειν ἐφθόνουν.

Can one wonder at their attitude towards men of such authority when they did not spare even women? They put Ninus the priestess to death, because some one accused her of initiating people into the mysteries of foreign gods; this was forbidden by their law, and

⁸ AA 2.258.

⁹ AA 2.259; trans. by Thackeray.

¹⁰ AA 2.262-263.

the penalty decreed for any who introduced a foreign god was death. Those who had such a law evidently did not believe that the gods of other nations were gods; else they would not have denied themselves the advantage of increasing the number of their own.¹¹

Athens could take a hard line with regard to religion. While not expressed as starkly, the perspective that Ionian Greeks presented to Marcus Agrippa hints at a similar instinctive inclination to presume one's own religion correct and others inadequate. In an argument against granting Jews citizenship, these Ionians expressed the desire that "if the Jews were to be joint partakers with them, they might be obliged to worship the gods they themselves worshipped" (εἰ συγγενεῖς εἰσιν αὐτοῖς Ἰουδαῖοι, σέβεσθαι τοὺς αὐτῶν θεούς).¹² Rather than being completely open about religion, feeling that all can worship whichever gods they wish – and it should not have any impact on citizenship – the Ionians felt their standard ought properly be applied to others. Though in this case their "standard" was that religions should not be exclusive about which gods they worship, in a very real way they were themselves being exclusive. They were saying that any group that believed certain gods were wrong should not be treated the same as others.

Whether to greater or lesser degrees, the principle of religious exclusivity, then, was not the sole possession of any one group. But was Judaism itself exclusivist in nature? Was it unwilling to embrace competing philosophical/theological claims? The details of Josephus' reference to Athenian exclusivity might suggest that there should be little debate with regard to Josephus' own view of Judaism. Speaking of theological exclusivity in general, Josephus states, "Yet even this habit is not peculiar to us; it is common to all" (ἀλλ' οὐδὲ τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἴδιον ἡμῶν, κοινὸν δὲ πάντων).¹³ In highlighting the fact that exclusivity was possessed by other prominent

¹¹ AA 2.267-268; trans. by Thackeray.

¹² *Ant* 12.125.

¹³ AA 2.259; trans. by Thackeray.

cultures, he openly acknowledges that this principle of exclusivity was a feature of Judaism. He was not embarrassed about this. He did not try to minimize it. He took an accusation that blamed them for exclusivity and said, “Yes, but we are not the only one.”

In spite of such a seemingly clear statement, some suggest that Josephus was in fact more open with regard to religion than such phrasing might imply. The proposed implication is that Jews in general must also have been more open. The ultimate goal of such argumentation, then, is to reduce the likelihood that antipathy directed against Jews could have been caused by Jewish theology. If Judaism was actually conciliatory and flexible with regard to other religious points of view, it might seem less likely that individuals would have persecuted Jews for their religion.

In order to buttress this claim of openness on the part of Josephus, scholars cite elements of Josephus’ rewriting of the Old Testament biblical text which, it is proposed, have Josephus adding details to Biblical accounts in order to undercut any aura of exclusivism. Such proposals can even be made in a context of suggesting that one must keep the door open to the possibility that Jews were syncretistic.¹⁴

On their face, such claims may seem difficult to believe, given Josephus’ seemingly clear embrace of exclusivity in his response to Apollonius Molon.¹⁵ While a closer examination of the

¹⁴ Goodman goes even further, suggesting that Judaism was open to universalism – that there were multiple valid paths to God, and so there was no need for Jews to persuade the pagans. Feldman cites this view of Judaism as a potential challenge to his own claim that many converted to Judaism [(1993) 291-292]. If Goodman is right and Jews in general believed that Judaism was unimportant for obtaining a share in the world to come, why would any effort be made by Jews to convert non-Jews? Feldman responds not by contextualizing or rebutting various rabbinic citations which could be read to support a more universalist view. Rather, he cites other rabbinic opinions which state precisely the opposite, ones which note the cruelty and immorality of Gentiles as a group. Clearly, he concludes, Jews had reason to convert Gentiles. While some of the rabbinic citations offered in support of the universalist bent (Tosefta Sanhedrin 13.2; Baba Bathra 10b) certainly would benefit from further evaluation and contextualization, it seems fair to note that while there may have been variation of opinion among Jewish teachers, a predominant vein even in rabbinic thought did lean strongly toward an exclusivist opinion. In addition, understanding as clearly as possible what Josephus himself believed about this matter is of greater significance to this project rather than a characterization of any variation that may have existed within Judaism more broadly. With that in mind, then, further analysis of rabbinic argumentation can be deferred.

¹⁵ AA 2.259.

rationale can demonstrate the challenges of characterizing Josephus' position, in the end there is neither reason to suggest that Josephus backed away from exclusivity nor evidence that Judaism as a whole embraced syncretism. On the contrary, the evidence can safely be read as consistent: Josephus, as well as many Jews more generally, viewed Judaism not only as distinct from the philosophical/religious worldview of others, but also as exclusively correct.

If one wished to propose the opposite, that Josephus and Jews more generally did not view Judaism as exclusivist, one might understandably begin with Josephus' retelling of Abram's trip to Egypt. In the face of potential disaster brought on by famine in the land of Canaan, Abram traveled to the land of the Nile for food. While the biblical text in Genesis 12:10 attributes no motives to Abram for this trip other than avoiding starvation, Josephus speaks of additional motives.

λιμοῦ δὲ χρόνοις ὕστερον τὴν Ἰουδαίαν καταλαβόντος, Ἄβραμος Αἰγυπτίους εὐδαιμονεῖν πυθόμενος μεταίρειν πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἦν πρόθυμος τῆς τε ἀφθονίας τῆς ἐκείνων μεθέξων καὶ τῶν ἱερέων ἀκροατῆς ἐσόμενος ὧν λέγοιεν περὶ θεῶν· ἢ γὰρ κρεῖσσοσιν εὐρεθεῖσι κατακολουθήσειν ἢ μετακοσμήσειν αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον αὐτὸς ἄμεινον φρονῶν.

Now, after this, when a famine had invaded the land of Canaan, and Abram had discovered that the Egyptians were in a flourishing condition, he was disposed to go down to them, both to partake of the plenty they enjoyed, and to become an auditor of their priests, and to know what they said concerning the gods; designing either to follow them if they had better notions than he, or to convert them into a better way, if his own notions proved the truest.¹⁶

Louis Feldman focuses on Josephus' characterization of Abram's "open" attitude. He notes that the additional details Josephus reports – particularly, Abram's willingness to follow "better things if they are discovered" – could have been added by Josephus as "an answer to the

¹⁶ *Ant* 1.161.

charge that the Jews are illiberal in being unwilling to listen to other points of view.”¹⁷ Feldman further characterizes Josephus’ account:

The rabbis, like Josephus, speak of Abraham as a missionary, but in the rabbinic writings about him there is no philosophical setting in the Hellenistic style of real debate, including a willingness to be converted if defeated an argument; instead, the picture is of a dogmatic missionary proceeding systematically to win converts. Josephus, sensitive to the charge that the Jews are aggressive missionaries, is careful to modify this picture.¹⁸

Feldman then characterizes the way Josephus finishes his account of Abram in Egypt as emphasizing the same “liberal spirit . . . with which Abraham’s Egyptian excursion had begun.”¹⁹

One can certainly read Feldman as questioning whether or not Judaism can properly be characterized as exclusivist, believing itself to represent the only accurate worldview.

Admittedly, Feldman does not explicitly state that Josephus viewed Judaism as potentially in error and still in need of correction from Egyptian wise men. Feldman does not explicitly state that Abram’s interest in conversing with Egyptian wise men reflected lack of confidence with regard to what he already knew about God. But later, in his “Conclusion” chapter of *Jew & Gentile in the Ancient World*, Feldman does say this:

Furthermore, there are syncretistic elements in several apparent Graeco-Jewish writers, such as the statement in the *Letter of Aristaeus* (16) that the Jews worship the same God as the Greeks do (Zeus or Dis) under another name. Moreover, Philo speaks of Moses as initiating the Jews into mysteries. Again, several documents in the papyri referred to the Ptolemies as gods. Likewise, inscriptions on tombstones speak in terms of pagan mythology. Furthermore, there are numerous charms and amulets with various names of the biblical G-d side-by-side with those of pagan deities.²⁰

This concluding paragraph seems to offer insight into Feldman’s larger purpose. It seems fair to suggest that he believes Judaism of the Hellenistic and imperial periods to be less than

¹⁷ Feldman (1993) 134.

¹⁸ Feldman (1993) 134-135.

¹⁹ Feldman (1993) 135.

²⁰ Feldman (1993) 421.

exclusivistic in substance. He seems to be leaning heavily toward – though never explicitly stating – a view that Judaism as an institution was more flexible on theology than might initially be presumed. Feldman is not simply suggesting that there may have been a few individual Jews who had more liberal views. He offers his evidence in the context of understanding Judaism as a whole.

The care with which he evaluates the account of Abram in Egypt, then, and his repeated emphasis on the liberality of Abram, is hard to read apart from the larger context of Feldman's effort. It seems fair to presume that one can read his analysis of Abram's visit to Egypt in the context of his larger desire to leave the door open to Judaism being syncretistic. But does the account of Abram in Egypt leave open such a door? Or perhaps more precisely, does the account of Abram in Egypt inevitably lead to the conclusion that such a door is open?

Just a few paragraphs before the description of the trip to Egypt, Josephus introduces Abram.

δεινὸς ὧν συνεῖναί τε περὶ πάντων καὶ πιθανὸς τοῖς ἀκροωμένοις περὶ τε ὧν εἰκάσειεν οὐ διαμαρτάνων. διὰ τοῦτο καὶ φρονεῖν μείζον ἐπ' ἀρετῇ τῶν ἄλλων ἠργμένοσ καὶ τὴν περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ δόξαν, ἣν ἅπασι συνέβαινε εἶναι, καινίσαι καὶ μεταβαλεῖν ἔγνω. πρῶτοσ οὖν τολμᾷ θεὸν ἀποφῆνασθαι δημιουργὸν τῶν ὅλων ἓνα

He was a person of great sagacity, both for understanding all things and persuading his hearers, and not mistaken in his opinions; for which reason he began to have higher notions of virtue than others had, and he determined to renew and to change the opinion all men happened then to have concerning God; for he was the first that ventured to publish this notion, that there was but one God, the Creator of the universe.²¹

Abram is described as someone who wants to renew and change people – καινίσαι καὶ μεταβαλεῖν. He is described as someone who is not in error – οὐ διαμαρτάνων.

His views proved quite troubling to his Mesopotamian neighbors. When they objected, he did not express an openness to their perspective and a concurrent willingness to change his

²¹ *Ant* 1.154-155.

own. To the contrary, when confronted with those who confessed differently than he, Abram was forced to leave his native land.

δι' ἄπερ Χαλδαίων τε καὶ τῶν ἄλλων Μεσοποταμιτῶν στασιασάντων πρὸς αὐτὸν μετοικεῖν δοκιμάσας κατὰ βούλησιν καὶ βοήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν Χαναναίαν ἔσχε γῆν

For which doctrines, when the Chaldeans and other people of Mesopotamia raised a tumult against him, he thought fit to leave that country; and at the command, and by the assistance of God, he came and lived in the land of Canaan.²²

This is the context which immediately precedes Josephus' account of Abram visiting Egypt. While the account of Abram's visit to Egypt might, by itself, make one think that perhaps Abram was uncertain of his own convictions and exceptionally open to adopting the views of others, the context which precedes suggests otherwise. Every indication is that Abram was firmly convinced that there was only one God. So certain was he that he moved his family to a completely different place because of his convictions. It would not make sense that now, without any pressure of persecution, he would suddenly be ready to surrender such convictions. Is that what Josephus' mention of Abram's interest in finding out if Egyptian priests had "better things" (κρείσσοσιν) to offer needs to imply? Or is it possible that Josephus was not reversing his earlier characterization of Abram, his description of Abram as "not mistaken in his opinions"? Perhaps Josephus was simply presenting Abram as someone who was always willing to learn more things. In other words, Josephus can be presenting Abram's interest in speaking to the Egyptian priests not to imply an uncertainty with regard to the convictions he already had. Rather, Josephus presents Abram as open to accepting additional information which was consistent with his convictions but added improved and enhanced – "better" – insights.

²² *Ant* 1.157.

On the other hand, perhaps a slightly different emphasis is in play, that Josephus is highlighting the humility of one who is fully committed to the truth. One who is convinced he has the truth need not be arrogant in his defense of it, because he knows that the truth ultimately will prevail. So Abram is humble, open to listening, convinced that in the end what is true will win out. Is Josephus simply highlighting that humble attitude of Abram rather than implying that Abram's commitment to the one true God was in question?

Admittedly, it is hard to say with certainty what Josephus was trying to suggest. Yet even if the previously mentioned scenarios were not the ones Josephus had in mind – even if one would go so far as to say that Josephus' view of Abram would have allowed Abram to say to the Egyptian priests, “I am wrong, you are right, I am going to change” – that itself would not have constituted a less-than-exclusivistic view of religion. To the contrary, every indication is that if Abram had been persuaded, then he would have viewed his improved conclusions as true and not in error and as superior to any conclusions that differed. The whole premise of Abram's trip to Egypt was, according to Josephus, to accurately embrace and profess that which was true.

Of course, while one might be challenged to understand the preexistent Abramitic motives as presented by Josephus, in the end the listening tour conducted by Abram resulted in absolutely no changes to his convictions. Not only did he not find any “better things,” but instead he discovered many improper ideas which needed correction. He intervened in some intra-Egyptian religious disputes and, “confuting the reasonings they made use of, every one for their own practices, demonstrated that such reasonings were vain and void of truth” (διαπτύων τοὺς λόγους οὓς ἐποιοῦντο περὶ τῶν ἰδίων κενοὺς καὶ μηδὲν ἔχοντας ἀληθεῖς ἀπέφαινε).²³

²³ *Ant* 1.166.

In the end, then, the account of Abram's visit to Egypt not only gives no indisputable evidence of flexibility within Judaism, but in fact it offers a case study for the opposite. Judaism was subjected to close scrutiny and was determined to be correct. In addition, the tenets of Judaism confronted the thoughts of others and exposed them as false. Even Josephus' additions, then, are not safely characterized as crafting a syncretistic concept of Judaism. The account of Abram's visit to Egypt offers no firm rationale for subsequent Jewish openness to other religions. On the contrary, if anything, Josephus' additions highlight that even when one humbly lends a listening ear to the ideas of others, the ultimate conclusion will be the same – even well-reasoned rebuttals cannot in the end undermine or call into question the well-founded convictions of the patriarch.

This account of Abram in Egypt is the one that might appear to leave the door most open for a less-than-exclusivistic view of Judaism. Yet if this is the door most open, perhaps this indicates just how strong the evidence is for the alternative view, that Judaism was and, during the time of Josephus, continued to be an exclusivist religion.

If the account of Abram in Egypt provides the “door most open,” Josephus' presentation of the biblical account of Elijah and the prophets of Baal may be employed to demonstrate that the door was really quite closed.²⁴ Jewish exclusivity is not only on display – it is the focal point of the account. Elijah served as a prophet during the reign of Ahab, king of the northern kingdom of Israel during the 9th century BC. Josephus, in describing this wicked king, reports the heterodox worship deviations of King Ahab and then notes as well the blatant idolatry he learned from his non-Jewish wife Jezebel.²⁵ Josephus then presents the deserved divine

²⁴ 1 Kings 17:1 - 18:46.

²⁵ *Ant* 8.316-318.

punishment: the prophet Elijah comes to Ahab and announces a kingdom-wide consequence of drought.

After a period of time, Elijah sought a follow-up audience with Ahab. As Josephus retells the story, the prophet explained to Ahab the reason for the drought:

ὁ δ' οὐδὲν ὑποθωπεύσας αὐτὸν εἶπεν ἅπαντα τὰ δεινὰ πεποιηκέναι καὶ τὸ γένος αὐτοῦ ξενικούς ἐπεισηνοχότας τῇ χώρᾳ θεοῦς καὶ τούτους σέβοντας, τὸν δ' ἴδιον αὐτῶν, ὃς μόνος ἐστὶ θεός, ἀπολελοιπότας καὶ μηδεμίαν ἔτι πρόνοιαν αὐτοῦ ποιουμένους.

Thereupon the prophet, without flattering him in the least, said that it was Achab [sic] himself and his family who had brought on all these misfortunes by introducing foreign gods into the country and worshipping them, while their own God, who was the only true one, they had abandoned and no longer gave Him any thought.²⁶

Exclusivity is in focus. There is no openness to considering the validity of other deities. In fact, the consequences which befell Israel were a direct consequence of pursuing a syncretistic path.

Josephus presents these details in unvarnished fashion.

But there is more. Elijah asked Ahab to gather together his own prophets, who were supporting his false ways, as well as those prophets who supported the religious practices of his foreign wife. These individuals, along with a crowd of onlookers, gathered at Mount Carmel for a contest between the gods of Ahab and his wife Jezebel and the God of Elijah. To this large group of people Elijah spoke.

μέχρι πότε διηρημένους αὐτοὺς τῇ διανοίᾳ καὶ ταῖς δόξαις οὕτως βιώσειν ἔφασκε νομίσαντας μὲν γὰρ τὸν ἐγχώριον θεὸν ἀληθῆ καὶ μόνον ἔπεσθαι τούτῳ καὶ ταῖς ἐντολαῖς αὐτοῦ παρῆναι, μηδὲν δὲ τοῦτον ἡγουμένους ἀλλὰ περὶ τῶν ξενικῶν ὑπειληφότας ὡς ἐκείνους δεῖ θρησκεύειν αὐτοῖς συνεβούλευε κατακολουθεῖν.

“How long will you live thus in uncertainty of mind and opinion?” He also exhorted them, that in case they esteemed their own country God to be the true and only God, they would follow him and his commandments; but in case they esteemed him to be nothing, but had an opinion of the strange gods, and that they ought to worship them, his counsel was, that they should follow them.²⁷

²⁶ *Ant* 8.335; trans. by Marcus.

²⁷ *Ant* 8.337.

At first glance, one might imagine that Elijah is truly open to having them make a choice – “There are two good options, the God of your country or strange gods; the only bad option is if you try to have both.” But it is evident that this was not at all the thought behind Elijah’s question. His challenge to them was a rhetorical exposing of their hypocrisy. Yes, it was true that thinking they could have both was wrong. It was not possible to be faithful to their nation’s God while simultaneously disobeying everything he had said about other gods. Thinking one could have the best of both worlds was not possible. But what about the other two options – deciding to go exclusively with their nation’s God or with the strange gods?

As Josephus continues the story, it is evident that these two options were not equally good. The contest was fire. To determine which god was true, first Ahab and Jezebel’s prophets would call upon their gods to light their sacrifice on fire. Then Elijah would do the same with his God. The first group of prophets had no success. Even cutting their bodies could bring no demonstration of supernatural strength. Elijah then prayed. He asked God “to make manifest his power to a people that had already been in an error a long time” (ποιεῖν τῷ πεπλανημένῳ πολὺν ἤδη χρόνον λαῷ φανερὰν τὴν αὐτοῦ δύναμιν).²⁸

The contest was held to demonstrate that there really was no choice – there was only one true God. The final prayer of Elijah characterizes the syncretistic practices of the Jews as evidence of error – he refers to them as “a people that had been in an error” (τῷ πεπλανημένῳ . . . λαῷ). When fire does now fall from heaven and consume the sacrifice of Elijah, there was no question in the minds of the onlooking crowd what the lesson was.

οἱ δ’ Ἰσραηλῖται τοῦτ’ ἰδόντες ἔπεσον ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ προσεκύνουν ἓνα θεὸν καὶ μέγιστον καὶ ἀληθῆ μόνον ἀποκαλοῦντες, τοὺς δ’ ἄλλους ὀνόματι ὑπὸ φαύλης καὶ ἀνοήτου δόξης πεποιημένους· συλλαβόντες δ’ αὐτῶν καὶ τοὺς προφῆτας ἀπέκτειναν Ἥλῖα παραινέσαντος.

²⁸ *Ant* 8.342.

Now when the Israelites saw this, they fell down upon the ground, and worshipped one God, and called him The great and the only true God; but they called the others mere names, framed by the evil and wild opinions of men. So they caught their prophets, and, at the command of Elijah, slew them.²⁹

Not only did they understand the positive side of the lesson, that there was only one true God.

They also confessed that anything else called a god was nothing of the sort – they described these “gods” as inventions of men. But not only did they confess both the positive and negative sides of their newfound understanding. They also gave evidence that their theology was not simply conceptual. They took action. They seized those once honored as representatives of the divine and destroyed them.

Whatever one might wish to propose with regard to Josephus’ approach to theology, it is difficult to dodge the implications of this account. Clearly there is no hesitance on the part of Josephus to present the Jewish God as the only one worthy of worship. There is no hesitance on the part of Josephus to confront a Gentile audience with a stark evaluation of other so-called gods. There is no hesitance on the part of Josephus to use a story, full of drama and intrigue and violence and blood, to characterize the options for a religious path as a matter of life and death.

One might suggest that Josephus was constrained by the biblical text. He had no other choice. Perhaps this really was not his own personal belief. Is that theoretically possible? It surely could be. But as was previously noted, scholars have worked hard to argue that Josephus purposefully adjusted the text, when he felt it necessary, to make Judaism appear less exclusive. Such a suggestion is made with regard to the account of Abram in Egypt, previously discussed. As noted, though the account of Abram and Egypt need not lead to such a conclusion – it can be seen as itself supporting a theology of exclusivity – the very fact that scholars see Josephus as capable of changing the text for ulterior motives highlights even more the implications of the

²⁹ *Ant* 8.343.

Josephan Elijah/Ahab text. The key elements of his text track the biblical text very closely. No significant changes – additions or subtractions – are made. Even employing the logic others might use to try to present Josephus as less exclusivist, one would end up concluding here that Josephus himself was comfortable with the exclusivist character of this text.

Josephus had no theological problem presenting his God in such terms. In the end, the Elijah/Ahab component of Josephus' re-presentation of the Old Testament offers strong evidence for the exclusivist view of Jewish theology, both on the part of Josephus as well as in Judaism more generally.

Such a characterization of Jewish theology was not unknown to those outside of Judaism. Tacitus, in his *Histories*, reports that “those who come over to their religion adopt the practice, and have this lesson first instilled into them, to despise all gods” (*transgressi in morem eorum idem usurpant, nec quicquam prius imbuuntur quam contemnere deos*).³⁰ He says more:

profanos qui deum imagines mortalibus materiis in species hominum effingant; summum illud et aeternum neque imitabile neque interiturum. igitur nulla simulacra urbibus suis, nedum templis sistunt.

They call those profane who make representations of God in human shape out of perishable materials. They believe that Being to be supreme and eternal, neither capable of representation, nor of decay. They therefore do not allow any images to stand in their cities, much less in their temples.³¹

Dio Cassius, writing about a century after Tacitus, understood the same to be true.

κεχωρίδαται δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀνθρώπων ἕς τε τᾶλλα τὰ περὶ τὴν δίαίταν πάνθ' ὡς εἰπεῖν, καὶ μάλισθ' ὅτι τῶν μὲν ἄλλων θεῶν οὐδένα τιμῶσιν, ἓνα δὲ τινα ἰσχυρῶς σέβουσιν. οὐδ' ἄγαλμα οὐδὲν < οὐδ' > ἐν αὐτοῖς ποτε τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις ἔσχον, ἄρρητον δὲ δὴ καὶ ἀειδῆ αὐτὸν νομίζοντες εἶναι περισσότατα ἀνθρώπων θρησκεύουσι.

They are distinguished from the rest of mankind in practically every detail of life, and especially by the fact that they do not honor any of the usual gods, but show extreme reverence for one particular divinity. They never had any statue of him in Jerusalem

³⁰ *Histories* V.5; trans. by Church and Brodribb.

³¹ *Histories* V.5; trans. by Church and Brodribb.

itself, but believing him to be unnameable and invisible, they worshiped him in the most extravagant fashion on earth.³²

Josephus presents Judaism as an exclusivist religion. He does not view this as a position unique to Judaism, explaining that Athenians and Ionians could also insist on a certain theology. As Josephus presents Abram as open to listening to what others had to say, that need not imply that he viewed Abram as concurrently less confident in his own convictions. Josephus' account of the exclusivist actions of Elijah toward the prophets of Baal demonstrates his comfort in portraying Judaism as the only proper path. Finally, Josephus' understanding of Judaism as exclusivistic was not simply his own personal view; non-Jews like Tacitus and Dio Cassius were also aware that Jews refused to honor the gods of others.

Exclusivism and moderation

While Josephus presents the Jewish religion as exclusivistic, Josephus also gives evidence of moderation in his presentation of Judaism. As was mentioned with regard to the account of Abram in Egypt, so moderate can Josephus' approach seem that some read into it a less than exclusivistic view of Judaism. Is moderation in fact undermining exclusivistic conclusions like those expressed in the account of Elijah and the prophets of Baal? Or is Josephus offering both exclusivistic and non-exclusivistic views of Judaism, leaving the reader to decide which elements of a self-contradicting author to embrace? Or is there a pathway through the various elements of Josephus' presentation which permits the reader to see in Josephus a consistent yet nuanced understanding of Judaism in a pagan world?

³² *Historia Romana*, XXXVII, 17:2 = *GLAJJ*, vol. 2, no. 406; trans. by E. Cary.

Such a pathway exists. Evidence which might suggest a more open view toward other religions should instead be viewed as an indicator of persuasive technique. Josephus, by virtue of his exclusivist beliefs, possessed the conviction that ultimately it would be better for those who were not Jews to embrace realities made evident by Jewish theology. In an effort to be persuasive, Josephus wishes not to strong-arm someone into an appropriate set of understandings. Rather, he wishes gently to convince. When presenting a hard-to-believe event, he speaks in terms that a questioning reader might appreciate. When reflecting on the evident exclusivity which non-Jews might be annoyed by, he seeks carefully to nuance and contextualize.

Such patience and gentleness could be viewed as something less than absolute personal conviction. But such literary approaches can also simply reflect a recognition on the part of Josephus that any journey to Judaism would likely include multiple small steps rather than one big one. His ultimate desire was to have others carefully consider the workings of the divine in the history of the Jewish people. His ultimate hope seems to have been that others would see the hand of the Jewish God at work and take away appropriate lessons from that divine work. Josephus was asking a lot. His patient and gentle writing approach enabled incremental steps toward that goal.

Josephus, when explaining his rationale for composing a history of the Jewish people, notes in the prologue to the *Antiquities* that historians can have many different reasons for initiating their work. Some write to show off. Others compose to give thanks to those who were involved in the historical events being reported. Josephus did not write for either of those reasons.

εἰσὶ δ' οἵτινες ἐβιάσθησαν ὑπ' αὐτῆς τῆς τῶν πραγμάτων ἀνάγκης οἷς πραττομένοις
παρέτυχον ταῦτα γραφῆι δηλούση περιλαβεῖν· πολλοὺς δὲ χρησίμων μέγεθος πραγμάτων

ἐν ἀγνοίᾳ κειμένων προύτρεψε τὴν περὶ αὐτῶν ἱστορίαν εἰς κοινὴν ὠφέλειαν ἐξενεγκεῖν. τούτων δὴ τῶν προειρημένων αἰτιῶν αἱ τελευταῖαι δύο κάμοι συμβεβήκασι· τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον καὶ τὰς ἐν αὐτῷ πράξεις καὶ τὸ τέλος οἷον ἀπέβη πείρα μαθῶν ἐβιάσθη ἐκδιηγῆσασθαι διὰ τοὺς ἐν τῷ γράφειν λυμαινομένους τὴν ἀλήθειαν . . .

But others there are, who, of necessity and by force, are driven to write history, because they are concerned in the facts, and so cannot excuse themselves from committing them to writing, for the advantage of posterity; nay, there are not a few who are induced to draw their historical facts out of darkness into light, and to produce them for the benefit of the public on account of the great importance of the facts themselves with which they have been concerned. Now of these several reasons for writing history, I must profess the two last were my own reasons also; for since I was myself interested in that war which we Jews had with the Romans, and knew myself its particular actions, and what conclusion it had, I was forced to give the history of it, because I saw that others perverted the truth of those actions in their writings.³³

Josephus wanted to get the facts right. But this was not just an arbitrary interest in getting accurate material into written form. Josephus expands on these words by noting that he had a specific audience in mind as he wrote his *Antiquities*: “Now I have undertaken the present work, as thinking it will appear to all the Greeks worthy of their study” (ταύτην δὲ τὴν ἐνεστῶσαν ἐγκεχειρίσμαι πραγματείαν νομίζων ἅπασι φανεῖσθαι τοῖς Ἑλλησιν ἀξίαν σπουδῆς).³⁴ Josephus felt that non-Jews could particularly benefit from what he was going to compose. But this was not simply an effort by Josephus to spawn generic academic intrigue among Greeks and Romans. Josephus had something bigger in mind.

τὸ σύνολον δὲ μάλιστα τις ἂν ἐκ ταύτης μάθοι τῆς ἱστορίας ἐθελήσας αὐτὴν διελθεῖν, ὅτι τοῖς μὲν θεοῦ γνώμη κατακολουθοῦσι καὶ τὰ καλῶς νομοθετηθέντα μὴ τολμῶσι παραβαίνειν πάντα κατορθοῦται πέρα πίστεως καὶ γέρας εὐδαιμονία πρόκειται παρὰ θεοῦ· καθ’ ὅσον δ’ ἂν ἀποστῶσι τῆς τούτων ἀκριβοῦς ἐπιμελείας, ἄπορα μὲν γίνεται τὰ πόριμα, τρέπεται δὲ εἰς συμφορὰς ἀνηκέστους ὅ τι ποτ’ ἂν ὡς ἀγαθὸν δρᾶν σπουδάσωσιν, ἤδη τοίνυν τοὺς ἐντευξομένους τοῖς βιβλίοις παρακαλῶ τὴν γνώμην θεῶ προσανέχειν καὶ δοκιμάζειν τὸν ἡμέτερον νομοθέτην, εἰ τὴν τε φύσιν ἀξίως αὐτοῦ κατενόησε καὶ τῇ δυνάμει πρεπούσας ἀεὶ τὰς πράξεις ἀνατέθεικε πάσης καθαρὸν τὸν περὶ αὐτοῦ φυλάξας λόγον τῆς παρ’ ἄλλοις ἀσχήμονος μυθολογίας· καίτοι γε ὅσον ἐπὶ μήκει χρόνου καὶ παλαιότητι πολλὴν εἶχεν ἄδειαν ψευδῶν πλασμάτων· γέγονε γὰρ πρὸ

³³ *Ant* 1.3-4.

³⁴ *Ant* 1.5.

ἐτῶν δισχιλίων, ἐφ' ὅσον πλῆθος αἰῶνος οὐδ' αὐτῶν οἱ ποιηταὶ τὰς γενέσεις τῶν θεῶν, μήτι γε τὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων πράξεις ἢ τοὺς νόμους ἀνενεγκεῖν ἐτόλμησαν. τὰ μὲν οὖν ἀκριβῆ τῶν ἐν ταῖς ἀναγραφαῖς προΐων ὁ λόγος κατὰ τὴν οἰκείαν τάξιν σημανεῖ· τοῦτο γὰρ διὰ ταύτης ποιήσιν τῆς πραγματείας ἐπηγγελιάμην οὐδὲν προσθεῖς οὐδ' αὖ παραλιπών.

But, speaking generally, the main lesson to be learnt from this history by any who care to peruse it is that men who conform to the will of God, and do not venture to transgress laws that have been excellently laid down, prosper in all things beyond belief, and for their reward are offered by God felicity; whereas, in proportion as they depart from the strict observance of these laws, things (else) practicable become impracticable, and whatever imaginary good thing they strive to do ends in irretrievable disasters. At the outset, then, I entreat those who will read these volumes to fix their thoughts on God, and to test whether our lawgiver has had a worthy conception of His nature and has always assigned to Him such actions as befit His power, keeping his words concerning Him pure of that unseemly mythology current among others; albeit that, in dealing with ages so long and so remote, he would have had ample licence to invent fictions. For he was born 2000 years ago, to which ancient date the poets never ventured to refer even the birth of their gods, much less the actions or the laws of mortals. The precise details of our Scripture records will, then, be set forth, 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.³⁵

For non-Jews who were interested in learning about Jewish history, this history would teach a lesson. The lesson would not be a political one. The lesson did not revolve around the characteristics of strong leadership or the kind of political system which would permit a state to prosper. The lesson was theological. When one follows the will of God and does not violate those laws of finest quality which have been laid down, everything turns out right, in a manner beyond belief, and a reward of happiness is directly dispensed by God. On the other hand, whenever one deviates from strict obedience to these laws, calamity awaits.

Who was this God? And to which laws was Josephus referring? This was not a generic appeal on Josephus' part. The laws were distinct from "the laws" (τοὺς νόμους) of "the poets" (οἱ ποιηταί). The laws were given via "our lawgiver" (τὸν ἡμέτερον νομοθέτην), Moses. The God associated with this lawgiver is the one who gave these laws through Moses, the God of the

³⁵ *Ant* 1.14-17; trans. by Thackeray.

Jews. Is he the equivalent of non-Jewish gods, but simply with a different name? Josephus makes clear there is a distinction as he contrasts the Jewish God with “the gods” (τῶν θεῶν) of “the poets” (οἱ ποιηταί).

In considering Josephus’ rhetorical persuasive technique, one can safely stipulate that Josephus was not seeking to dodge a confrontational truth. Josephus was not attempting to make it seem like there were no differences between Jews and non-Jews. Josephus was not cloaking his ultimate purpose in verbal misdirection. Josephus gently makes it clear that those who are interested in reading his text will discover a profound lesson: when one follows the will of the Jewish God and strictly obeys those divine laws given through the lawgiver Moses, blessing will follow. This Jewish God stands in contrast to the other gods of the Gentiles. These Jewish laws stand in contrast with laws presented in non-Jewish literature. Josephus was gentle, but as he presents his purpose for writing, he leaves no doubt that he intends to highlight the uniqueness – the exclusivity – of Judaism.

Josephus has an exclusivist message to offer. But Josephus is aware that his audience may not be instinctively inclined to embrace his announced purpose. So, Josephus crafts an approach which recognizes this, yet still seeks to be gently persuasive. Already in these prologue paragraphs, one detects features of a style Josephus will continue to employ as he presents challenging truths to curious but as-of-yet unpersuaded readers. First, Josephus seeks to normalize interest in Jewish theology. He precedes his announcement of purpose by mentioning

non-Jews who, on their own, were interested in learning about Judaism – Epaphroditus³⁶ and Ptolemy II Philadelphus.³⁷ The curious did exist. Josephus simply seeks to satisfy them.

Next, Josephus emphasizes that any acceptance of what he says ought to be willing, not begrudging. When actually stating his purpose, he presents himself not as an ideologue intent on forcing his beliefs upon another, but as a humble teacher eager to make instructive material available for any who might want it. In explaining what he wants readers to learn, he emphasizes that the envisioned audience is under no compulsion: “But, speaking generally, the main lesson to be learnt from this history by any who care to peruse it . . .” (τὸ σύνολον δὲ μάλιστα τις ἂν ἐκ ταύτης μάθοι τῆς ιστορίας ἐθελήσας αὐτὴν διελθεῖν).³⁸ Only those who “care to peruse it” are potential subjects for Josephus’ persuasion.³⁹

These willing readers are not left unchallenged, but Josephus’ approach is non-combative. Having stipulated this presumption that those who read his Jewish history are in fact

³⁶ *Ant* 1.8: “However, some persons there were who desired to know our history, and so exhorted me to go on with it; and, above all the rest, Epaphroditus, a man who is a lover of all kind of learning, but is principally delighted with the knowledge of history . . .” (ἦσαν δὲ τινες, οἱ πόθῳ τῆς ιστορίας ἐπ’ αὐτὴν με προύτρεπον, καὶ μάλιστα δὴ πάντων Ἐπαφρόδιτος ἀνὴρ ἅπασαν μὲν ἰδέαν παιδείας ἠγαπηκῶς, διαφερόντως δὲ χαίρων ἐμπειρίας πραγμάτων . . .)

³⁷ *Ant* 1.10: “I found, therefore, that the second of the Ptolemies was a king who was extraordinarily diligent in what concerned learning and the collection of books; that he was also peculiarly ambitious to procure a translation of our law, and of the constitution of our government therein contained, into the Greek tongue” (εὗρον τοίνυν, ὅτι Πτολεμαίων μὲν ὁ δεῦτερος μάλιστα δὴ βασιλεὺς περὶ παιδείαν καὶ βιβλίων συναγωγὴν σπουδάσας ἐξαιρέτως ἐφιλοτιμήθη τὸν ἡμέτερον νόμον καὶ τὴν κατ’ αὐτὸν διάταξιν τῆς πολιτείας εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα φωνὴν μεταβαλεῖν).

³⁸ *Ant* 1.14; trans. by Thackeray.

³⁹ Josephus’ commitment to avoiding any sense of compulsion when presenting Jewish convictions to others is evident also in an account recorded in his *Life*: “At this time it was that two great men, who were under the jurisdiction of the king [Agrippa], came to me out of the region of Trachonitis, bringing their horses and their arms, and carrying with them their money also; and when the Jews would force them to be circumcised, if they would stay among them, I would not permit them to have any force put upon them, but said to them, ‘Everyone ought to worship God according to his own inclinations, and not to be constrained by force; and that these men, who had fled to us for protection, ought not to be so treated as to repent of their coming hither.’ And when I had pacified the multitude, I provided for the men that were come to us whatsoever it was they wanted, according to their usual way of living, and that in great plenty also.” (Κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν καιρὸν ἀφικνοῦνται πρὸς με δύο μεγιστάνες τῶν ὑπὸ τὴν ἐξουσίαν τοῦ βασιλέως ἐκ τῆς τῶν Τραχωνιτῶν χώρας ἐπαγόμενοι τοὺς ἑαυτῶν ἵππους καὶ ὄπλα, χρήματα δ’ ὑποκομίζοντες. τούτους περιτέμενεσθαι τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἀναγκαζόντων, εἰ θέλουσιν εἶναι παρ’ αὐτοῖς, οὐκ εἶασα βιασθῆναι, φάσκων δεῖν ἕκαστον κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ προαίρεσιν τὸν θεὸν εὐσεβεῖν, ἀλλὰ μὴ μετὰ βίας, χρῆναι δὲ τούτους δι’ ἀσφάλειαν πρὸς ἡμᾶς καταφυγόντας μὴ μετανοεῖν. πεισθέντος δὲ τοῦ πλήθους τοῖς ἦκουσιν ἀνδράσιν τὰ πρὸς τὴν συνήθη δίαίταν ἅπαντα παρεῖχον δαμιλῶς, *Life* 112-113.)

ones who “want” (ἐθελήσας) to do it, Josephus is now even more direct. “At the outset, then, I entreat those who will read these volumes to fix their thoughts on God” (ἤδη τοίνυν τοὺς ἐντευξομένους τοῖς βιβλίοις παρακαλῶ τὴν γνώμην θεῶ προσανέχειν).⁴⁰ Though more direct, still this appeal to view one’s reading as a theological quest is not couched in presumptive and universal terms, though his view of God would certainly have permitted him to state things more stridently. Instead, he issues to an already willing audience a gracious invitation and humble plea: “I entreat” (παρακαλῶ).

Next, when inviting readers to think more carefully about Jewish laws, he does not employ absolutist terminology but simply asks them carefully to consider. Though he could have said, “I know these laws are right and they are the best for you,” he instead positions the legislation of Moses as something that needs to be evaluated by them, “to test whether our lawgiver has had a worthy conception of His nature” (δοκιμάζειν τὸν ἡμέτερον νομοθέτην, εἰ τὴν τε φύσιν ἀξίως αὐτοῦ κατενόησε).⁴¹ Obviously Josephus was not calling into question his already stated certainty that the laws of Moses were right and best. He had just finished saying that his purpose for writing was that others might learn that when Moses’ laws are followed, blessing ensues, but when those laws are violated, calamity comes.⁴² Josephus was not changing his tune in the space of twenty words. Josephus was not implying that his conviction regarding Jewish exclusivity was suddenly being called into question. Instead, Josephus was employing useful persuasive technique. By inviting his readers to “put our lawgiver to the test,” he was giving them the space to be potentially persuaded.

⁴⁰ *Ant* 1.15; trans. by Thackeray.

⁴¹ *Ant* 1.15; trans. by Thackeray. Capitalization of “His” original.

⁴² *Ant* 1.14.

If in fact Josephus was right, he knew that the “testing process” would in no way undermine his claims. On the contrary, his approach indicates that his own conviction – and what he wishes to become the conviction of others – is based completely on the facts as they stand. No manipulation is necessary. No literary tricks are required. No strong-armed tactics are needed. His openness to evaluation, then, does not reveal lack of certainty. Rather, his confidence makes him comfortable going as far as he can to recognize where his readers are coming from – from a place of curiosity and uncertainty – and then to affirm the legitimacy of taking time to personally evaluate all that he is saying.

Josephus also demonstrates his gentleness by presenting clear contrasts in indirect fashion. A key tenet of Judaism was that there is only one true God. A key tenet of Greek and Roman religion was that there were many gods. Rather than position these two contradictory beliefs in such close spatial and logical proximity so as to leave the reader no choice but to choose sides – and that only a few paragraphs into his twenty-volume work – Josephus demonstrates deftness and patience. While noting that the Jewish God is unique – it is only by following his principles that one proceeds well through life⁴³ – the contrast with the plurality of Gentile gods is embedded in a discussion about the antiquity of Jewish writings compared to Greek and Roman ones: the singular Jewish God – θεοῦ – is noted in *Antiquities* 1.14, while the multiplicity of pagan gods – τῶν θεῶν – is not mentioned until *Antiquities* 1.16. Then, Josephus only gently hints at another significant distinction between the Greek and Roman gods relative to the Jewish God – the gentile gods had “origins/beginnings” (τὰς γενέσεις),⁴⁴ while those familiar with the Jewish God would have known that he was eternal.⁴⁵

⁴³ *Ant* 1.14.

⁴⁴ *Ant* 1.16.

⁴⁵ *AA* 2.167: “Moreover, [our legislator Moses] represented God as unbegotten, and immutable, through all eternity, superior to all mortal conceptions in pulchritude; and, though known to us by his power, yet unknown to us as to his

The data is there. A curious and perceptive reader will not miss Josephus' point. But the issue has not been shoved in the reader's face. Josephus does not draw attention in confrontational fashion to the distinctions that clearly existed between Jewish and Gentile concepts of the divine. Does this lack of aggressiveness imply that Josephus was open to multiple views of God? Not at all. This was persuasive technique, not evidence of uncertainty.

The gentleness of Josephus' persuasive technique is evident already in the opening prologue paragraphs of the *Antiquities*. This approach is found elsewhere as well, including in his delicate handling of miracles. Consider, for example, Josephus' recounting of the miraculous dividing of the Red Sea.

As the Jewish people were fleeing slavery in Egypt, Pharaoh and his army had trapped Israel on the edge of the Red Sea. There seemed to be no escape. But then, as Josephus reports, Moses acted:

τύπτει τῇ βακτηρίᾳ τὴν θάλατταν. ἡ δ' ὑπὸ τῆς πληγῆς ἀνεκόπη καὶ εἰς αὐτὴν ὑποχωρήσασα γυμνὴν ἀφήσιν τὴν γῆν ὁδὸν Ἑβραίοις εἶναι καὶ φυγῆν. Μωυσῆς δὲ ὄρων τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὸ πέλαγος ἐκκεχωρηκὸς αὐτοῖς τῆς ἰδίας ἠπείρου πρῶτος ἐνέβαινε αὐτῇ καὶ τοὺς Ἑβραίους ἐκέλευεν ἔπεσθαι διὰ θείας ὁδοῦ ποιουμένους τὴν πορείαν καὶ τῷ κινδύνῳ τῶν παρόντων πολεμίων ἠδομένους καὶ χάριν ἔχοντας διὰ τὴν παράλογον οὕτως ἐξ αὐτοῦ σωτηρίαν ἀναφανεῖσαν.

He smote the sea with his rod, which parted asunder at the stroke, and receiving those waters into itself, left the ground dry, as a road and a place of flight for the Hebrews. Now when Moses saw this appearance of God, and that the sea went out of its own place, and left dry land, he went first of all into it, and bid the Hebrews to follow him along that divine road, and to rejoice at the danger their enemies that followed them were in; and gave thanks to God for this so surprising a deliverance which appeared from him.⁴⁶

essence" (ἓνα αὐτὸν ἀπέφηνε καὶ ἀγένητον καὶ πρὸς τὸν αἰδίων χρόνον ἀναλλοίωτον πάσης ιδέας θνητῆς κάλλει διαφέροντα καὶ δυνάμει μὲν ἡμῖν γνώριμον, ὁποῖος δὲ κατ' οὐσίαν [ἔστιν] ἄγνωστον).

⁴⁶ *Ant* 2.338-339.

Josephus goes on to explain that the Israelites made it through the Red Sea safely, while the Egyptian army was destroyed when the sea returned to its place. This incredible salvation led the Hebrews to sing. They were free.

After reporting these incredible events, Josephus makes clear that while he is comfortable confronting his audience with seemingly unbelievable detail, he is just as eager to acknowledge the challenge his audience might have in accepting such details. He wants to be gentle. He wants to be patient. He wants to be accommodating in whatever way possible.

ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ὡς εὔρον ἐν ταῖς ἱεραῖς βίβλοις οὕτως ἕκαστον τούτων παραδέδωκα· θαυμάση δὲ μηδεὶς τοῦ λόγου τὸ παράδοξον, εἰ ἀρχαίοις ἀνθρώποις καὶ πονηρίας ἀπείροις εὐρέθη σωτηρίας ὁδὸς καὶ διὰ θαλάσσης εἴτε κατὰ βούλησιν θεοῦ εἴτε κατὰ ταυτόματον, ὅποτε καὶ τοῖς περὶ τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον τὸν βασιλέα τῆς Μακεδονίας χθὲς καὶ πρόην γεγονόσιν ὑπεχώρησε τὸ Παμφύλιον πέλαγος καὶ ὁδὸν ἄλλην οὐκ ἔχουσι παρέσχε τὴν δι' αὐτοῦ καταλῦσαι τὴν Περσῶν ἡγεμονίαν τοῦ θεοῦ θελήσαντος, καὶ τοῦτο πάντες ὁμολογοῦσιν οἱ τὰς Ἀλεξάνδρου πράξεις συγγραψάμενοι. περὶ μὲν οὖν τούτων ὡς ἕκαστω δοκεῖ διαλαμβανέτω.

As for myself, I have delivered every part of this history as I found it in the sacred books; nor let anyone wonder at the strangeness of the narration, if a way were discovered to those men of old time, who were free from the wickedness of the modern ages, whether it happened by the will of God, or whether it happened of its own accord,—while, for the sake of those that accompanied Alexander, king of Macedonia, who yet lived, comparatively, but a little while ago, the Pamphylian Sea retired and afforded them a passage through itself, when they had no other way to go; I mean, when it was the will of God to destroy the monarchy of the Persians: and this is confessed to be true by all that have written about the actions of Alexander, but as to these events, let every one determine as he pleases.⁴⁷

Note both Josephus' confidence in what he is saying as well as his evident gestures to the anticipated incredulity of his audience. He expresses his confidence by defending his presentation as consistent with the "the sacred books" (ἱεραῖς βίβλοις). He elsewhere speaks about the nature of the content and authors of these sacred books: "Every one is not permitted of his own accord to be a writer, nor is there any disagreement in what is written; they being only

⁴⁷ *Ant* 2.347-348.

prophets that have written the original and earliest accounts of things as they learned them of God himself by inspiration” (ἄτε μήτε τὸ ὑπογράφειν αὐτεξουσίῳ πᾶσιν ὄντος μήτε τινὸς ἐν τοῖς γραφομένοις ἐνούσης διαφωνίας, ἀλλὰ μόνον τῶν προφητῶν τὰ μὲν ἀνωτάτω καὶ παλαιότατα κατὰ τὴν ἐπίπνοιαν τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ μαθόντων).⁴⁸ Josephus was confident in what he was saying because he believed the ultimate author of the texts which guided him to be God himself.

Nevertheless Josephus, in recognition of the fact that not all would have such confidence as their starting point, tries to meet people where they are at. He suggests that if people are unwilling to accept the events as possible due to direct intervention by the divine, might they admit that something could happen spontaneously, on its own? While such a proposal might strike one as potentially compromising Josephus’ personal conviction, the fact that he seems to retain his personal conviction while at the same time making such a suggestion leads one to conclude that, rightly or wrongly, he views his approach as uncompromising yet acceptable persuasive technique. Finally, in his presentation of a potential parallel to the proposed “spontaneous/on its own” interpretation of the Red Sea splitting – the Pamphylian Sea during the time of Alexander – he ends up still attributing even that event to the “the will of God” (τοῦ θεοῦ θελήσαντος).⁴⁹ He wants to be sensitive to his audience. At the same time, he seems unable to restrain his inner confidence that all these things were the work of God.

That said, he does finally conclude his presentation by inviting each reader to make their own decision: “But as to these events, let every one determine as he pleases” (περὶ μὲν οὖν τούτων ὡς ἐκάστῳ δοκεῖ διαλαμβάνετω).⁵⁰ Does such a concluding thought inevitably imply

⁴⁸ AA 1.37.

⁴⁹ Ant 2.348.

⁵⁰ Ant 2.348.

that Josephus himself was uncertain as to the nature and origin of the splitting of the Red Sea? As was mentioned in the analysis of the prologue to the *Antiquities*, Josephus' invitation "to test whether our lawgiver has had a worthy conception of His nature" (δοκιμάζειν τὸν ἡμέτερον νομοθέτην, εἰ τὴν τε φύσιν ἀξίως αὐτοῦ κατενόησε)⁵¹ need not be understood as evidence of personal uncertainty, but rather as evidence of confidence and an openness to have one's convictions put to the test. In similar fashion, Josephus' invitation to the reader to "determine as he pleases" need not imply personal uncertainty. One might certainly question whether such a phrasing could lead a reader astray, making it seem like it really did not matter how one understood the event. In other words, one might question the wisdom of this particular phrasing in Josephus' persuasive rhetorical approach. But it nevertheless seems likely that such phrasing did not reveal doubt on the part of Josephus, but rather a desire to be as well received as possible though he knew that so much of what he was sharing was of a most challenging sort.

In this connection, it is noteworthy that a similar concluding phrase is added by Josephus after describing miraculous events surrounding the giving of the law at Mount Sinai: "Now, as to these matters, every one of my readers may think as he pleases; but I am under a necessity of relating this history as it is described in the sacred books" (καὶ περὶ μὲν τούτων ὡς βούλεται φρονεῖτω ἕκαστος τῶν ἐντευξομένων, ἐμοὶ δὲ ἀνάγκη ταῦτα ἱστορεῖν καθάπερ ἐν ταῖς ἱεραῖς βίβλοις ἀναγράφεται).⁵² Would Josephus, in connection with a central event of Jewish history and theology – the giving of the law at Mount Sinai – be saying that he himself was uncertain as to the veracity of the account? Though Feldman elsewhere seems comfortable acknowledging a greater openness by Jews toward other theologies, in this particular case he mentions with

⁵¹ *Ant* 1.15; trans. by Thackeray. Capitalization of "His" original.

⁵² *Ant* 3.81. For another example of this phrasing in Josephus, see *Ant* 4.158 (after the account of Balaam cursing the Israelites).

approval a conclusion reached by Gerhard Delling: “It is obvious, as Delling 1957-58, 300 and 306, remarks, that Josephus himself is not expressing any doubt on the matter, since he would be guilty of blatant self-contradiction if he were to doubt that G-d was the author of the Law.”⁵³

Josephus’ invitation to his readers to “think as they pleased,” then, was simply Josephus’ rhetorical way to avoid heavy handedness. Such an approach could have had the unintended effect of undermining a wavering reader’s growing confidence in what Josephus himself believed to be true. But Josephus’ likely intention was to remove stumbling blocks. He knew that not all would immediately or even ever agree with him, but he clearly was eager to avoid losing readers in the process of his persuasive effort.⁵⁴

Josephus shows his eagerness to be persuasive, even as he presents the exclusivity of the Jewish God, in yet another way. On occasion he employs nuance when characterizing the attitude Jews should have toward other gods. There are certainly occasions when such nuance is not foregrounded. The previously discussed account of Elijah and the prophets of Baal is an

⁵³ Feldman (1998) 432.

⁵⁴ Another example of apparent openness on the part of Josephus is found after Josephus presents the prophetic work of Daniel, highlighting how multiple historical events demonstrated the accuracy of what Daniel had prophesied. He then reflects, “Now, as to myself, I have so described these matters as I have found them and read them; but if anyone is inclined to another opinion about them, let him enjoy his different sentiments without any blame from me” (ἐγὼ μὲν περὶ τούτων ὡς εὔρον καὶ ἀνέγνω οὕτως ἔγραψα· εἰ δέ τις ἄλλως δοξάζειν βουλήσεται περὶ αὐτῶν, ἀνέγκλητον ἔχέτω τὴν ἑτερογνωμοσύνην, *Ant* 10.281). Must Josephus’ words “let him enjoy his different sentiments without any blame from me” (ἀνέγκλητον ἔχέτω τὴν ἑτερογνωμοσύνην) be viewed as implying that Josephus is open to multiple views of truth, and that in the end he does not have complete confidence in his own convictions? Just a few lines earlier, Josephus explains that God showed Daniel those things which he wrote down, and there was a natural consequence of that activity: “insomuch, that such as read his prophecies, and see how they have been fulfilled, would wonder at the honor wherewith God honored Daniel; and may thence discover how the Epicureans are in an error” (ὥστε τοὺς ἀναγινώσκοντας καὶ τὰ συμβαίνοντα σκοποῦντας θαυμάζειν ἐπὶ τῇ παρὰ θεοῦ τιμῇ τὸν Δανιήλον καὶ τοὺς Ἐπικουρείους ἐκ τούτων εὐρίσκειν πεπλανημένους, *Ant* 10.277). Josephus is clearly not comfortable with the beliefs of the Epicureans. He suggests that one evaluating all of the information will conclude that Epicureans are wrong. Yet he persists in being gentle in presenting his perspective. Further characterizing the Epicureans, he says, “Those men seem to me very much to err from the truth” (δοκοῦσί μοι σφόδρα τῆς ἀληθοῦς δόξης διαμαρτάνειν, *Ant* 10.280). Josephus’ use of the words “δοκοῦσί μοι” offers rhetorical insulation for his claims. His rhetorical cushion “let him enjoy his different sentiments without any blame from me” (ἀνέγκλητον ἔχέτω τὴν ἑτερογνωμοσύνην) does something very similar. Again, Josephus ought not be read as calling into question his previously and clearly stated convictions. Rather, one can properly see such phrasings as technique, an effort by one with categorical convictions to be gently persuasive.

example of this. Josephus' reporting of this event makes obvious that traditional Jewish belief embraced the concept of the exclusivity of the Jewish God. The account of Elijah and the prophets of Baal also makes obvious that a representative of God can, under circumstances where one is compelled to make a clear confession, even mockingly expose the falsity of other gods. Josephus reports that "when there appeared no effect of the prayer or invocation of the prophets upon their sacrifice, Elijah derided them, for they might either be on a journey or asleep" (ἐπεὶ δ' οὐδὲν ἀπήντα παρὰ τῆς εὐχῆς καὶ τῆς ἐπικλήσεως θύσασι τοῖς προφήταις, σκώπτων ὁ Ἡλίας μεγάλη βοῆ καλεῖν αὐτοὺς ἐκέλευε τοὺς θεοὺς· ἡ γὰρ ἀποδημεῖν αὐτοὺς ἢ καθεῦδειν).⁵⁵ This unnuanced reporting of derision (σκώπτων) is followed, in Josephus' account, with an evaluation of false gods more generally. After fire fell from heaven and devoured the altar of Israel's God, "Now when the Israelites saw this, they fell down upon the ground, and worshipped one God, and called him The great and the only true God; but they called the others mere names, framed by the evil and wild opinions of men" (Οἱ δ' Ἰσραηλιῖται τοῦτ' ἰδόντες ἔπεσον ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ προσεκύνουν ἓνα θεὸν καὶ μέγιστον καὶ ἀληθῆ μόνον ἀποκαλοῦντες, τοὺς δ' ἄλλους ὀνόματι ὑπὸ φαύλης καὶ ἀνοήτου δόξης πεποιημένους).⁵⁶ Again, Josephus determines that this was not a place for nuance.

While Josephus is clearly comfortable presenting an exclusivist view of Judaism and while he is comfortable presenting even the mocking of idolaters when stakes are the highest, he also presents Jews as ones having been required, generally speaking, to treat the worship of others with respect. In listing laws given by Moses, Josephus recounts:

βλασφημεῖτω δὲ μηδεὶς θεοὺς οὓς πόλεις ἄλλαι νομίζουσι. μηδὲ συλαῖν ἱερὰ ξενικά, μηδ' ἂν ἐπωνομασμένον ἢ τινι θεῷ κειμήλιον λαμβάνειν.

⁵⁵ *Ant* 8.339.

⁵⁶ *Ant* 8.343; capitalization of "The great . . ." reflects Whiston's translation.

Let no one blaspheme those gods which other cities esteem such; nor may anyone steal what belongs to strange temples; nor take away the gifts that are dedicated to any god.⁵⁷

In his work directed against Apion, Josephus says:

ἐγὼ δ' οὐκ ἂν ἐβουλόμην περὶ τῶν παρ' ἑτέροις νομίμων ἐξετάζειν· τὰ γὰρ αὐτῶν ἡμῖν φυλάττειν πάτριόν ἐστιν, οὐ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων κατηγορεῖν. καὶ περὶ γε τοῦ μήτε χλευάζειν μήτε βλασφημεῖν τοὺς νομιζομένους θεοὺς παρ' ἑτέροις ἄντικρυς ἡμῖν ὁ νομοθέτης ἀπείρηκεν αὐτῆς ἕνεκα προσηγορίας τοῦ θεοῦ.

Now I have no mind to make an inquiry into the laws of other nations; for the custom of our country is to keep our own laws, but not to accuse the laws of others. And indeed, our legislator hath expressly forbidden us to laugh at and revile those that are esteemed gods by other people, on account of the very name of God ascribed to them.⁵⁸

Josephus describes Moses as forbidding the blaspheming of foreign gods. Moses prohibited stealing from temples which belonged to foreign gods. Jewish custom was not to accuse the laws of others. Josephus reports that Moses expressly forbade Jews “to laugh at” (χλευάζειν) foreign gods, out of respect for the name “God.” Nowhere is Josephus saying that these gods are valid and authentic. But a reader surely perceives a new nuance being employed by Josephus. While the content may not explicitly contradict exclusivity, the tone is certainly more moderate.

It is important to note that Josephus’ claim that Moses expressly forbade Jews “to laugh at” foreign gods may not actually be an accurate recounting of what Moses said. In making this claim, Josephus appears to refer to Exodus 22:27. In the Hebrew Masoretic text, this verse reads: לֹא תִבְלֶה אֱלֹהִים וְלֹא תָרִיץ אֶת־מֶלֶךְ עַמְּךָ כִּי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יְהוָה. The Septuagint translates in this manner: θεοὺς οὐ κακολογήσεις καὶ ἄρχοντας τοῦ λαοῦ σου οὐ κακῶς ἐρεῖς.⁵⁹ A modern English translation reads, “Do not blaspheme God or curse the ruler of your people.”⁶⁰ The key translation issue in this verse is how one handles the term אֱלֹהִים (Elohim). Josephus translates this Hebrew plural form

⁵⁷ *Ant* 4.207.

⁵⁸ *AA* 2.237.

⁵⁹ Rahlfs (2006) Ex 22:27.

⁶⁰ *The New International Version* (2011) Exodus 22:28. Note the variation in verse numbering – verse 27 in Masoretic Text and Septuagint is the equivalent of verse 28 in modern English translations.

as a plural, “gods.” He consequently associates the term with foreign gods, as there is only one true Jewish God. This approach on the part of Josephus appears to match the conclusion of the Septuagint, which also translates the term as a plural: θεοὺς οὐ κακολογήσεις.

Two issues arise in this connection, however. First of all, is it legitimate to translate the plural Hebrew word as a plural Greek or English word? Second, if it should be translated plural, is the word “gods” in this case referring to divinities?

With regard to whether the translation of the term should be singular or plural, the Hebrew word, though plural in form, is repeatedly used to refer to the singular divinity worshiped by the Jews. For example, in Genesis 1:1, אֱלֹהִים (Elohim) is paired with a singular Hebrew verb, noting that in an important respect the seemingly plural noun is to be viewed in the singular – “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”⁶¹ So, the term אֱלֹהִים (Elohim) in Exodus 22:27 ought not inevitably be read to refer to a plurality of gods and thus be presumed to refer to foreign gods.

Even more important, however, is the question of whether the term, if it is to be translated as a plural, actually refers to divinities. The very same plural term for God is used earlier in the same biblical chapter of Exodus, in verses 8 & 9, and in those verses the plural term cannot be referring to foreign gods. The *New International Version* translates Exodus 22:8-9 in this way:

But if the thief is not found, the owner of the house must appear before the judges (אֱלֹהִים, Elohim), and they must determine whether the owner of the house has laid hands on the other person’s property. In all cases of illegal possession of an ox, a donkey, a sheep, a garment, or any other lost property about which somebody says, “This is mine,” both parties are to bring their cases before the judges (אֱלֹהִים, Elohim). The one whom the judges (אֱלֹהִים, Elohim) declare guilty must pay back double to the other.⁶²

⁶¹ *The New International Version* (2011) Genesis 1:1. בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ.

⁶² *The New International Version* (2011) Exodus 22:8-9; Exodus 22:7-8 in the Masoretic text and in the Septuagint.

The English equivalent for עֲלֵמֵי דִינֵי (Elohim) in this section is “judges,” that is, those who represent God.⁶³ Though the NIV does offer as a footnoted option “God,” the context makes obvious that whatever the translation, the entity or group of people in mind are integrated into the Jewish community. Jews would theoretically go to human Jewish judges, who would be representatives of God, to determine their cases. Jews could theoretically go to the singular God himself for adjudication, but it would be quite the stretch to conclude that Jews were being asked to go to foreign gods for help in such circumstances.

Given the close contextual use of the same term that then is used in Exodus 22:27, it seems far more likely that Exodus 22:27 is focusing on something other than foreign gods. It would seem quite likely that this passage is focusing in its entirety on Jewish judicial practice – they are not to revile their judges, and they are not to curse their ruler. If this is correct, then Josephus’ conclusion that Exodus 22:27 is referring to foreign gods is highly problematic.

Though Josephus appears to be wrong in his interpretation of Exodus 22:27, his potential misunderstanding of this verse is very understandable given the possible influence of the Septuagint translation as well as the interpretive challenges associated with the verse.⁶⁴ In

⁶³ The *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, a collection of writings dated to AD 375-380, draws a similar conclusion, though moving even further so as to make a contemporaneous application. It equates the “judges” of Exodus 22:27/28 with bishops in the Christian church: “He is your ruler and governor; he is your king and potentate; he is, next after God, your earthly god, who has a right to be honoured by you. For concerning him, and such as he, it is that God pronounces, “I have said, Ye are gods; and ye are all children of the Most High.” And, “Ye shall not speak evil of the gods [Exodus 22:28].” [2.26.31; Roberts (1886)].

⁶⁴ It is suggested that Philo had an understanding of Exodus 22:27 similar to that of Josephus. This is possible, perhaps even likely. Notice, however, that Philo does not explicitly cite the Hebrew Bible in his encouragement, making it possible that he was offering his own advice based on more general Old Testament principles. In *De Specialibus Legibus* 1.9.53, Philo writes, “Moreover, he also enjoins his people that, after they have given the proselytes an equal share in all their laws, and privileges, and immunities, on their forsaking the pride of their fathers and forefathers, they must not give a license to their jealous language and unbridled tongues, blaspheming those beings whom the other body looks upon as gods, lest the proselytes should be exasperated at such treatment, and in return utter impious language against the true and holy God; for from ignorance of the difference between them, and by reason of their having from their infancy learnt to look upon what was false as if it had been true, and having been bred up with it, they would be likely to err” (προστάττει δὲ μὴ, παρόσον αὐτοῖς ἰσονομίαν καὶ ἰσοτέλειαν ἐπηλύταις παρέχει κατεγνωκόσι τοῦ πατρῶου καὶ προγονικοῦ τύφου, στομαργία χρήσασθαι καὶ ἀχαλίνῳ γλώσσει βλασφημοῦντας οὐς ἕτεροι νομίζουσι θεούς, ἵνα μὴ κάκεινοι διακινηθέντες ἂ μὴ θέμις φθέγγωνται κατὰ

addition, even without this verse, Josephus could have properly emphasized that Jews, though they rejected foreign gods, were not to use underhanded and immoral and rude tactics to make their case. Most important, however, his ultimate use of this verse – even if inaccurate – serves to highlight his eagerness to present Jewish exclusivity with a moderate tone.

Josephus' eagerness to persuade led him to balance Jewish exclusivity with a reminder that Jews were to treat the religions of others with respect. They were not to rob temples. They were not to accuse the laws of others. They were not to ridicule those that others viewed to be gods. Surely such words could have struck some non-Jews as accommodating. But knowing that Judaism was not divinely required, in every circumstance, to physically destroy the worship of others would help non-Jews better grasp the heart of Josephus' persuasion, that he was eager to help and not to hurt. Hearing Josephus assure them that Jews were not to treat as a light thing – with humor and jesting – the sincerely held religious practices of others again gave evidence to readers that Josephus wished to be their friend and not their enemy.

At the same time, a larger question arises: was such moderation on the part of Josephus undermining his exclusivist views? By encouraging others not to make fun of false gods, for example, was he affirming the legitimacy of foreign gods? A small piece of one of Josephus' most significant moderating comments, found in *Against Apion*, hints at the answer to this question. The larger context of the comment leaves no doubt. Previously cited prior to the discussion of Exodus 22:27, these are the moderating words:

ἐγὼ δ' οὐκ ἂν ἐβουλόμην περὶ τῶν παρ' ἑτέροις νομίμων ἐξετάζειν· τὰ γὰρ αὐτῶν ἡμῖν φυλάττειν πάτριόν ἐστιν, οὐ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων κατηγορεῖν. καὶ περὶ γε τοῦ μήτε χλευάζειν μήτε βλασφημεῖν τοὺς νομιζομένους θεοὺς παρ' ἑτέροις ἀντικρυς ἡμῖν ὁ νομοθέτης ἀπείρηκεν αὐτῆς ἕνεκα προσηγορίας τοῦ θεοῦ.

τοῦ ὄντως ὄντος· ἀγνοία γὰρ τῆς διαφορᾶς, ἅτε τὸ ψεῦδος ὡς ἀληθὲς προμαθόντες ἐκ παίδων καὶ σύντροφον ἔχοντες, ἐξαμαρτίσονται); trans. by Yonge.

Now I have no mind to make an inquiry into the laws of other nations; for the custom of our country is to keep our own laws, but not to accuse the laws of others. And indeed, our legislator hath expressly forbidden us to laugh at and revile those that are esteemed gods by other people, on account of the very name of God ascribed to them.⁶⁵

Josephus begins this paragraph with an imperfect verb (ἐβουλόμην) and ἄν. This construction, identified as a Past Potential, denotes past potentiality or probability.⁶⁶ The words are most precisely translated, “I would not have wanted to probe further concerning the laws which others have.” The imperfect verb and ἄν indicate that what Josephus wanted, however, would not be what Josephus now would do. In other words, the statement of Josephus’ openness to leaving the laws of others alone is in fact phrased in a way which indicates he will do the opposite of what he otherwise would have wanted. Yes, it was his desire to avoid conflict. Yes, it was not his custom to randomly target the laws of others for ridicule. Yes, he had a generous and patient heart. But did such a heart coexist with an openness to back away from his own personal conviction that Jewish laws were best?

Moderation ought not be interpreted as flexibility with regard to exclusivity. In the paragraph that follows this paragraph of moderation, Josephus explains why his desire to leave the laws of other nations alone is a desire that will be left unrealized. “But since our antagonists think to run us down upon the comparison of their religion and ours, it is not possible to keep silence here” (τῶν δὲ κατηγορῶν διὰ τῆς ἀντιπαραθέσεως ἡμᾶς ἐλέγχειν οἰομένων οὐχ οἷόν τε κατασιωπᾶν).⁶⁷ When directly confronted, Josephus will not back down. He proceeds to directly address features of Greek religion which contradicted revealed Old Testament truth. The notions he dismisses include “that [Greco-Roman gods] may be allowed to be as numerous as they have a mind to have them; that they are begotten one by another, and that after all the kinds

⁶⁵ AA 2.237.

⁶⁶ Smyth (1920) paragraph 1784, page 402.

⁶⁷ AA 2.238.

of generation you can imagine” (ἀριθμῶ μὲν ὁπόσους ἂν αὐτοὶ θελήσωσιν ἀποφαινόμενοι ἐξ ἀλλήλων δὲ γινόμενους καὶ κατὰ παντοίους τρόπους γενέσεων).⁶⁸

Even in his stridency he still maintains his desire gently to persuade. He precedes his recounting of inappropriate pagan religious notions by saying that he is not the only one who has said these things – Greeks admired for their wisdom have said similar things.⁶⁹ He follows his critique of pagan religion in a similar vein:

ταῦτα δικαίως μέμψεως πολλῆς ἀξιοῦσιν οἱ φρονήσει διαφέροντες καὶ πρὸς τούτοις καταγελῶσιν, εἰ τῶν θεῶν τοὺς μὲν ἀγενεῖους καὶ μειράκια, τοὺς δὲ πρεσβυτέρους καὶ γενειῶντας εἶναι χρὴ δοκεῖν,

And justly have the wisest men thought these notions deserved severe rebukes; they also laugh at them for determining that we ought to believe some of the gods to be beardless and young, and others of them to be old, and to have beards accordingly.⁷⁰

He positions his harshest words – the fact that pagan notions are worthy of “rebuke” – not as coming from his pen, but as coming from the mouths of “the wisest men.” Josephus’ interest in persuasion remains prominent. But he is, nevertheless, quite plain with regard to his feelings about other gods. He characterizes those wisest men as ones who “laugh at them” (καταγελῶσιν).

This is striking, given his just-stated conviction that one should not “revile” foreign gods. Josephus might seem to be breaking his own rule. But he is not. Instead, he is helping his readers understand just what he means to say and what he does not mean to say. In the *Antiquities* he had presented as divine law this prohibition: “Let no one blaspheme those gods which other cities esteem such” (βλασφημεῖτω δὲ μηδεὶς θεοῦς οὓς πόλεις ἄλλαι νομίζουσι).⁷¹ Just a few paragraphs prior to his *Against Apion* mention of wise men laughing, he mentions the

⁶⁸ AA 2.240.

⁶⁹ AA 2.239.

⁷⁰ AA 2.242.

⁷¹ Ant 4.207.

law again: “Indeed, our legislator hath expressly forbidden us to laugh at and revile those that are esteemed gods by other people, on account of the very name of God ascribed to them” (περί γε τοῦ μήτε χλευάζειν μήτε βλασφημεῖν τοὺς νομιζομένους θεοὺς παρ’ ἑτέροις ἄντικρυς ἡμῖν ὁ νομοθέτης ἀπέριηκεν αὐτῆς ἕνεκα προσηγορίας τοῦ θεοῦ).⁷² Yes, there were definitely circumstances when it was wrong to ridicule foreign gods. But there were clearly also times when it was acceptable. Josephus is, in this place, helping thoughtful individuals understand how a prohibition against laughing and ridiculing can coexist with a description of Elijah mocking Baal prophets whose gods are not responding to their pleas.⁷³

What unravels the riddle? What permits the prohibition and then the seeming violation to comfortably coexist? The prohibition on laughing is an appeal to decorum. The seeming violation with Elijah on Mt. Carmel is not a violation at all, but an occasion where decorum was no longer in place. Josephus is making clear that any encouragements to decorum ought not be understood as evidence of theological moderation with regard to exclusivity. Decorum is to be employed wherever possible. Mocking and ridicule ought not be the characteristic trait of Jews when they observe individuals of other religions. But if somebody directly challenges a Jew with regard to revealed truth, then shaming can be used defensively. Elijah’s ridicule can properly expose a lie. The laughing of “the wisest men” can properly rebut an error.⁷⁴ While Josephus is eager to avoid any appearance of pride or dismissiveness, Josephus will not hesitate to stand up for truth.

⁷² AA 2.237.

⁷³ Ant 8.339: “Elijah mocked them and told them to call their gods in a loud voice, for either they were on a journey or were asleep” (σκώπτων ὁ Ἠλίας μεγάλη βοή καλεῖν αὐτοὺς ἐκέλευε τοὺς θεοὺς· ἢ γὰρ ἀποδημεῖν αὐτοὺς ἢ καθεύδειν); trans. by Marcus.

⁷⁴ AA 2.242.

This Josephan flexibility which depended on the circumstance helps one characterize other examples of openness on the part of Josephus. They ought not be viewed as compromising exclusivity. Rather, such instances are properly viewed as manifestations of rhetorical persuasive technique. He wants readers to view Judaism as accommodating as it can possibly be. He wants initial non-Jewish impressions to be positive. But such an eagerness ought not be positioned as evidence that Josephus was subtly surrendering his conviction of Jewish exclusivity. To the contrary, the softness of Josephus' approach was intended to permit such convictions to be carefully considered over the course of time with the ultimate hope that those convictions would be embraced.⁷⁵

Customs and theology

Judaism, and in particular the Judaism reflected by Josephus, was an exclusivist religion. Any elements in his texts which appear moderate possess this feature due to his persuasive style, not because of hesitancy with regard to his convictions. One can certainly envision, then, how such strongly held theological positions, which implicitly condemned the theological positions of non-Jews, could be viewed by non-Jews as offensive and result in negative, even violent, counter reactions.

Moving along such a line of logic, however, presumes that it was in fact the theological positions of Judaism which really got under the skin of non-Jews. Before proceeding any further, it becomes important to determine whether this was in fact the case. Were non-Jews

⁷⁵ A presentation of unwavering Josephan convictions in a context of gentleness occurs also in *Against Apion* 1.37-38. There he refers to the text of the Hebrew Bible, information that men learned by inspiration from God, and then concludes, "Twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed . . ." (δύο δὲ μόνα πρὸς τοῖς εἴκοσι βιβλία τοῦ παντὸς ἔχοντα χρόνου τὴν ἀναγραφὴν, τὰ δικαίως πεπιστευμένα). He does not directly confront one who might believe differently, but he does clearly state his position and notes that the one who acts "justly" (δικαίως) will concur.

even aware of Jewish theology? Might non-Jews have only been aware of the customs of Jews and little more? Might any antipathy have resulted simply from some kind of annoyance caused by countercultural customs rather than from something deeper, a visceral sense of having been philosophically and theologically assaulted?

Shaye Cohen seeks to sideline significantly the role that philosophical/theological beliefs played in the religion of any ancient people. In his book *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, he introduces a section entitled “The Jewish ‘Religion’” by saying, “In the eyes of the ancients, the essence of religion was neither faith nor dogma, but action.”⁷⁶ In identifying the distinctiveness of Judaism he says:

Both Jews and Gentiles recognized that the Jews denied the gods of the nations and claimed that their God alone was the true God, the Lord of the universe, but for both Jews and Gentiles the boundary line between Judaism and polytheism was determined more by Jewish observances than by Jewish theology.⁷⁷

Cohen, then, would seem ready to minimize the likelihood that the theological position of the Jews could get under the skin of non-Jews. Questions like “were non-Jews even aware of Jewish theology” would appear almost nonsensical in Cohen’s view, as he seems to suggest that not even Jews would have focused on the distinctiveness of their theology vis-à-vis the Gentiles.

Cohen views Josephus as reflecting this mentality as well. In spite of what has previously been noted with regard to Josephus’ focus on theological concepts – for example, his front-loading the 20-volume *Antiquities* with an overarching theological statement of purpose⁷⁸ – Cohen sees certain phrases of Josephus as implying a different position:

⁷⁶ Cohen (2006) 51.

⁷⁷ Cohen (2006) 51-52.

⁷⁸ “Upon the whole, a man that will peruse this history, may principally learn from it, that all events succeed well, even to an incredible degree, and the reward of felicity is proposed by God; but then it is to those that follow his will, and do not venture to break his excellent laws;—and that so far as men any way apostatize from the accurate observation of them, what was practicable before, becomes impracticable; and whatsoever they set about as a good thing is converted into an incurable calamity;—and now I exhort all those that peruse these books to apply their minds to God; and to examine the mind of our legislator, whether he hath not understood his nature in a manner

Josephus defines an apostate as a Jew who “hates the customs of the Jews” or “does not abide by the ancestral customs.” He defines a convert to Judaism as a Gentile who, through circumcision, “adopts the ancestral customs of the Jews.” These definitions omit the theological tenets of Judaism.⁷⁹

While it is certainly fair to say that Josephus used such phrasings to describe adherents and non-adherents to Judaism, it does not seem fair to imply that a failure to describe in greater detail such an individual’s linkage to theological tenets is itself evidence that theological tenets were not important to Jews. If one refers to “customs,” that need not imply a purposeful sidelining of theology.

Cohen, however, sees the sidelining of theology as central to understanding ancient Judaism. He concludes that “Judaism was not defined as a theology.”⁸⁰ Yet with such a statement, might we read Cohen more flexibly? When he says that Judaism is not “defined” as a theology, is he simply noting that people in general were more familiar with the outward manifestations of Judaism than they were with its internals? That does not seem to be the extent of Cohen’s emphasis. Recall Cohen’s introductory statement: “The essence of religion was neither faith nor dogma, but action.”⁸¹ He is seeking to downplay the role of theology most broadly.

He himself seems to find this effort challenging. While not permitting countervailing details to adjust his conclusion, he does qualify citations which highlight supposed failure by ancients to focus on beliefs or faith by noting, “These facts do not mean that the ancients had no

worthy of him” (τὸ σύνολον δὲ μάλιστα τις ἂν ἐκ ταύτης μάθοι τῆς ἱστορίας ἐθελήσας αὐτὴν διελθεῖν, ὅτι τοῖς μὲν θεοῦ γνώμη κατακολουθοῦσι καὶ τὰ καλῶς νομοθετηθέντα μὴ τολμῶσι παραβαίνειν πάντα κατορθοῦται πέρα πιστεως καὶ γέρας εὐδαιμονία πρόκειται παρὰ θεοῦ· καθ’ ὅσον δ’ ἂν ἀποστῶσι τῆς τούτων ἀκριβοῦς ἐπιμελείας, ἄπορα μὲν γίνεται τὰ πόριμα, τρέπεται δὲ εἰς συμφορὰς ἀνηκέστους ὅ τι ποτ’ ἂν ὡς ἀγαθὸν δρᾶν σπουδάσωσιν, ἤδη τοῖνυν τοὺς ἐντευξομένους τοῖς βιβλίοις παρακαλῶ τὴν γνώμην θεῶ προσανέχειν καὶ δοκιμάζειν τὸν ἡμέτερον νομοθέτην, εἰ τὴν τε φύσιν ἀξίως αὐτοῦ κατενόησε, *Ant* 1.14-15).

⁷⁹ Cohen (2006) 52.

⁸⁰ Cohen (2006) 53.

⁸¹ Cohen (2006) 51.

deeply felt beliefs about the gods.”⁸² In the midst of his efforts to minimize the role of theology in the rabbinic literature, he does acknowledge, after highlighting that significant amounts of detailed and sustained analysis are applied to legal matters (as opposed to theological ones), “The rabbis have many things to say about God, sin, atonement, the creation of the world, the election of Israel, the covenant, the Messiah, the reward of the righteous, the punishment of the wicked, and the resurrection of the dead.”⁸³

Cohen realizes the challenge of trying to downplay the role of theology too much. Nevertheless, he persists in seeking to minimize the place that theology played in any ancient religion. If he is right, can it even be proposed that the theological position of the Jews could get under the skin of non-Jews, when supposedly neither side would have cared that much? Would not one need to conclude that whatever it was that created an undercurrent of antipathy against Jews, it must have been something simply outward? Cohen’s views appear to leave no choice – one must lean heavily in the “outward” direction.⁸⁴

As I have argued, however, even with these most aggressive efforts to sideline the role of theology in ancient religion, Cohen is compelled repeatedly to acknowledge the role of theology. While it is certainly fair to note, within Judaism, that there is significant emphasis on outward behavior, it is most risky to presume that such an emphasis presumes inevitable deemphasis of more profound theological claims. A much more likely scenario is one which presumes linkage between customs and underlying theological claims. Should such a linkage be demonstrated, it can subsequently be proposed that a question examining whether customs or theology is the key

⁸² Cohen (2006) 51.

⁸³ Cohen (2006) 52.

⁸⁴ While Cohen’s skeptical view of the role of theology is employed here to demonstrate the opposite – that even when one has such a skeptical view, one still seems compelled to acknowledge a role for theology – Cohen’s view of why Jews were hated assigns cause not to their outward customs. Instead, he believed that “Anti-Judaism was the consequence of political strife between the Jews and their neighbors in both Judea and the diaspora” [(2006) 40.] As noted earlier, Cohen is a Functionalist when it comes to characterizing opposition to Jews.

feature of anti-Jewish feeling is in fact posing a false choice. One should not view such a question as being answered by one or the other. Rather, one would answer such a question safely only by offering a solution that is “both-and.”

Seneca, it seems, paves a path for just this conclusion. Cited by Augustine in *The City of God*, Seneca first speaks very negatively about the Jews. “Meanwhile the customs of this most wicked race have been such influence that they are now received throughout the world. The vanquished have given laws to their victors” (Cum interim usque eo sceleratissimae gentis consuetudo convaluit, ut per omnes iam terras recepta sit; victi victoribus leges dederunt).⁸⁵ But all is not negative. In seeming begrudging admiration, Seneca adds, “[The Jews] are aware of the origin and meaning of their rites. The greater part of the people go through a ritual not knowing why they do so” (Illi tamen causas ritus sui noverunt; maior pars populi facit, quod cur faciat ignorat).⁸⁶

Seneca’s words of admiration highlight a reality that is fundamental but perhaps easily overlooked. Customs are outward, and religious customs can be practiced without consideration of underlying meaning. But that does not mean that outward practices have no underlying meaning. Seneca felt the Jews knew the meaning, the *causas*. Seneca felt the Jews knew the “why,” the *cur*. Seneca seems to leave the door wide open for dismissing the legitimacy of that false choice, the choice proposing that either customs or theology is the key player in anti-Jewish feeling. Seneca exposes as false the premise that any emphasis found in Jewish theology on outward practice is *ipso facto* evidence against Judaism possessing a well-known and sincerely

⁸⁵ Latin from *GLAJI*, 186; *The City of God*, VI, 11; trans. by Goodman (2007) 373. It is interesting that Martin Goodman (2007) draws attention to Seneca, as Goodman himself did not believe there was much negativity directed at Jews. He chooses to recontextualize events that would have seemed to indicate negativity (366-372), but when he does speak of Seneca, he acknowledges a challenge. “More difficult to locate in its proper context is the rhetoric of Seneca in the time of Nero” (373).

⁸⁶ Latin from *GLAJI*, 186; *The City of God*, VI, 11; trans. by Goodman (2007) 373.

embraced underlying theological basis. If one finds a mention of or an emphasis on Jewish customs, then one should not ask simplistically whether Jews focused on outward behavior or on inner conviction. Rather, one properly contemplates an integration of the two. Jews were taught to keep in mind principles when engaging in distinctive outward customs. Any highlighting of customs, then, should not inevitably be interpreted as evidence that theology was not in play.

Granted, Jews could be prone to the same deficiency that Seneca observed in most other people – they could go through religious motions while ignorant of, or at least not thinking about, the theological basis. Yet should a Jew focus on outward customs and be dismissive toward inner realities, this would not be evidence that theology made no difference to Judaism. Rather, it would be an example of deviation from what was to be.

Having noted that customs need not be viewed as inevitably distinct from theology – in fact, in the case of the Jews, quite the opposite is true – one then properly asks whether this linkage of theology to outward practice had an impact on non-Jews. Said another way, one could stipulate that customs and theology were commonly linked in the mind of the Jew, but does that mean that such a linkage would have been communicated to those who observed the Jews? Would non-Jews have viewed customs as something more than just outward behaviors? Could distinctive behaviors have served as signposts to underlying theological realities, realities which would have challenged a non-Jew? For some – even many – non-Jews, could outward customs have been a testimony to Jewish theological exclusivity, a philosophical/theological claim that had the potential to spark offense, resentment, and retribution?

While Martin Goodman does not address these questions directly, he does offer an opposing view, one which presents Jewish customs as rather innocuous. Recalling that Goodman, overall, has a rather optimistic view of the status of Jews in the Roman Empire, he

does acknowledge that Judaism had many practices which were distinctive. However, he does not consider it likely that such practices would have contributed to a sense of antipathy. Speaking primarily of the city of Rome, he observes, “If Jews were lazy, would not eat pig, or mutilated the sexual organs of their sons, these practices had no effect on their neighbors. Jews might be ridiculous, intriguing, mysterious or contemptible, but they were certainly not dangerous to the safety and prosperity of Rome.”⁸⁷ Summarizing the attitude he believed non-Jews had toward Jews, he speaks of the details he has offered as “evidence for general toleration of Jewish ancestral customs.”⁸⁸

Goodman views Jewish customs as mere outward behavior which could lead neighbors to laughter and ridicule, but certainly not to retribution or violence. However, Josephus assumes a tight linkage between Jewish customs and theological implications, as well as a coordinate deeply felt agitation on the part of non-Jews, when he relates the appeal of the Ionians to Marcus Agrippa:

ὅμοιον δέ τι τούτῳ καὶ Μάρκον Ἀγρίππαν φρονήσαντα περὶ τῶν Ἰουδαίων οἶδαμεν· τῶν γὰρ Ἰώνων κινηθέντων ἐπ’ αὐτοὺς καὶ δεομένων τοῦ Ἀγρίππου, ἵνα τῆς πολιτείας, ἣν αὐτοῖς ἔδωκεν Ἀντίοχος ὁ Σελεύκου υἱωνὸς ὁ παρὰ τοῖς Ἕλλησιν Θεὸς λεγόμενος, μόνοι μετέλθωσιν, ἀξιούντων δ’ εἰ συγγενεῖς εἰσὶν αὐτοῖς Ἰουδαῖοι, σέβεσθαι τοὺς αὐτῶν θεοὺς, καὶ δίκης περὶ τούτων συστάσης ἐνίκησαν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τοῖς αὐτῶν ἔθεσι χρῆσθαι συνηγορήσαντος αὐτοῖς Νικολάου τοῦ Δαμασκηνοῦ· ὁ γὰρ Ἀγρίππας ἀπεφήνατο μηδὲν αὐτῷ καινίζειν ἐξεῖναι.

We also know that Marcus Agrippa was of the like disposition towards the Jews: for when the people of Ionia were very angry at them, and besought Agrippa, that they, and they only, might have those privileges of citizens which Antiochus, the grandson of Seleucus (who by the Greeks was called The God), had bestowed on them; and desired that, if the Jews were to be joint partakers with them, they might be obliged to worship the gods they themselves worshipped: but when these matters were brought to trial, the Jews prevailed, and obtained leave to make use of their own customs, and this under the patronage of Nicolas of Damascus; for Agrippa gave sentence, that he could not innovate.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Goodman (2007) 374.

⁸⁸ Goodman (2007) 374.

⁸⁹ *Ant* 12.125-126.

The resolution of this matter makes clear that the Jews were to be permitted to continue in all of their customs – “τοῖς ἔθεσι” is plural and so refers to something more than simply their allegiance to a single God. The fact that the Ionians sought, as a key remedy, obligatory worship of their own gods indicates that though the outward customs of the Jews were well known, Ionians clearly recognized a theological basis behind the Jewish customs. The distinctiveness of Judaism was intimately connected to their exclusive commitment to a single divine being. Finally, the distinctive Jewish customs with their clear theological linkage left the Ionians very agitated (τῶν γὰρ Ἰώνων κινηθέντων). The non-Jews were not simply laughing or ridiculing. They were seeking retribution.

This example demonstrates that outward customs can convey something more than just a distinctiveness of behavior. Yes, there may have been circumstances where outsiders were content to leave oddity be. But for the Ionians, a deeper chord was struck. For the Ionians, a clear linkage was recognized between outward customs and a theological basis. For Jews, this linkage was presumed. For non-Jews, customs could help communicate a reality that lay behind the customs. As Seneca observes, there was meaning behind Jewish customs. The Ionians appear to have instinctively recognized this meaning, and they further concluded that the deeper philosophical/religious claims underlying such customs were in fact challenging their own understanding of truth. This was not acceptable. The Ionians worked very hard to punish Jews for this.

The Ionians were not the only non-Jews who perceived a close connection between Jewish customs and underlying theology. During the reign of Caligula, when Flaccus was governor of Alexandria, an anti-Jewish mob determined “to erect images [of Caligula] in the

synagogues” (εἰκόνας ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς ἀνατιθέναι).⁹⁰ Clearly they understood enough of Judaism to know that worshiping an emperor as a god was problematic. Their initial tactics were theological. But they did not stop there. Philo goes on to explain how they determined if a woman was a Jew and consequently worthy of torture:

ἀλλ’ ἦν, ὡς ἔφην, ὅλον τὸ πρᾶγμα ἐπιβουλὴ τῆς ἀποτομίας Φλάκκου καὶ τῶν ὄχλων, ὧν ἀπέλαυσαν καὶ γυναῖκες. οὐκ ἐν ἀγορᾷ γὰρ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ θεάτρου καθάπερ αἰχμάλωτοι συνηρπάζοντο καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν σκηνὴν ἐφ’ ὅτῳ δήποτε συκοφαντούμενοι παρήγοντο μετὰ τινος ἀφορήτου καὶ ἀργαλεωτάτης ὕβρεως· εἴτ’ ἐπειδὴ μὲν ἐγνωρίσθησαν ἐτέρου γένους, ἀπελύοντο πολλὰς γὰρ ὡς Ἰουδαίας ἀκριβῆ μὴ ποιούμενοι τῆς ἀληθείας τὴν ἔρευναν συνελάμβανον, εἰ δ’ ἐφάνησαν ἡμέτεραι, προσέταττον οἱ ἀντὶ θεατῶν τύραννοι καὶ δεσπόται γεγονότες κρέα χοίρεια διδόναι κομίζοντας ὅσαι μὲν οὖν φόβῳ κολάσεως ἀπεγέυσαντο, μηδὲν ἔτι δεινὸν προσυπομείνασαι ἀπελύοντο· αἱ δ’ ἐγκρατέστεραι βασανισταῖς παρεδίδοντο πρὸς αἰκίας ἀνηκέστους, ὅπερ τοῦ μηδὲν ἀδικεῖν αὐτὰς σαφεστάτη πίστις ἐστί.

The truth is, as I have said already, the whole business was a deliberate contrivance designed by the cruelty of Flaccus and of the multitude, in which even women were included; for they were dragged away as captives, not only in the market-place, but even in the middle of the theatre, and dragged upon the stage on any false accusation that might be brought against them with the most painful and intolerable insults; and then, when it was found that they were of another race, they were dismissed; for they apprehended many women as Jewesses who were not so, from want of making any careful or accurate investigation. And if they appeared to belong to our nation, then those who, instead of spectators, became tyrants and masters, laid cruel commands on them, bringing them swine’s flesh, and enjoining them to eat it. Accordingly, all who were wrought on by fear of punishment to eat it were released without suffering any ill treatment; but those who were more obstinate were given up to the tormentors to suffer intolerable tortures, which is the clearest of all possible proofs that they had committed no offence whatever beyond what I have mentioned.⁹¹

The Alexandrian mob had an understanding of Jewish theology – they placed images of Caligula in synagogues, recognizing that this violated the Jewish commitment to a single deity. But they also had a clear understanding of a more seemingly mundane Jewish custom, the eating of pork. In their persecution practice, they employed an assault on theology in the case of men and an assault on customs in the case of women. There is no indication that they felt one approach

⁹⁰ Philo, *In Flaccum* 6.41; trans. by Yonge.

⁹¹ Philo, *In Flaccum* 11.95-96; trans. by Yonge.

would be inferior to another. There is no indication that they believed one would be less effective than the other. This perception of equivalence of the part of Alexandrians highlights that pagans themselves did not see much space between Jewish theological tenets and Jewish customs. They viewed them as a package. Distinctive customs were inextricably intertwined with distinctive – and for non-Jews, potentially offensive – theology. Greeks in Ionia saw clearly a linkage between Jewish customs and their worship of a single divinity; Gentiles in Alexandria understood the same.

In summary, then, it seems most fair to propose that while distinctive Jewish customs were unproblematic for some, for so many others they were inextricably intertwined with Jewish theology and consequently Jewish exclusivity. This linkage was presumed on the part of Jews. But this linkage was so often recognized by non-Jews as well. Seeing how tightly customs and theology were connected, then, helps account for the contention that broad-based antipathy arose against Jews as a consequence of their theology of exclusivity. Yes, it is true that customs would have been the most visible feature of Judaism within a Gentile community. To acknowledge that Jewish customs were well known, however, need not undermine the proposition that it was the theological position of Judaism which really got under the skin of non-Jews. Even in the minds of many non-Jews, Jewish customs and Jewish theology were inextricably intertwined. Constant observance of distinctive Jewish customs could bring to mind repeatedly the distinctiveness of Jewish theology. One of the key distinctives of Jewish theology, Jewish theological exclusivity, stood out in a society with plural gods and plural religions. When such a theological concept is promoted in a seemingly more pluralistic society, one would expect an impact.

A challenge implicit

In considering the status of Jews during the empire period, I have proposed that while official imperial policy could be protective, nevertheless Jews lived a precarious existence. The natural next question is why. In recommending a substantialist view – that there was something about who Jews were in substance that made the greatest contribution to the undercurrent of antipathy – I have proposed that exclusivist theology was at the heart. In evaluating Josephus, it is evident that he himself lays claim to such a theology. Admittedly, he couches his claims in gentle and accommodating terms, but not because he wishes to undermine his conviction of exclusivism. Rather, he employs persuasive technique so as to avoid unnecessary opposition and facilitate a path toward an ultimate embracing of his positions. In the end, though, exclusivism remains. Should one then wish to propose, however, that it was not such fundamental theological claims that were connected to non-Jew opposition, but simply the oddity of Jewish customs, I have offered evidence which demonstrates the close tie between an awareness of Jewish customs and an awareness of Jewish theology. With this repeated linkage shown to be present, the door is kept wide open to a claim that theology was at the heart of antipathy.

Having highlighted the exclusivist nature of Jewish theology and having suggested that to whatever degree customs played a role, they were quite capable of functioning as implicit pointers to exclusivist theology, I will now consider the impact such theology could have on non-Jews. Stated succinctly, Judaism posed an implicit challenge to the beliefs of others. Stated more fully, exclusivist Jewish theology challenged the philosophical and religious worldviews of the society that surrounded it by essentially characterizing them as lacking, and ultimately, as wrong. This stark characterization was not always explicitly stated, and even when made clear, non-Jews could choose to overlook or ignore any implications. Some who did not overlook the implicit condemnation were actually drawn to conversion. But others who thought about it – or

who instinctively perceived it without deliberate consideration – found themselves deeply offended. When they understood what Judaism was saying about them, there was for many an instinctive, internal, visceral antipathy that could lay low but, when events permitted, could also erupt.

To suggest that such a sequencing reasonably explains the undercurrent of antipathy that seems to have existed in the first century AD, I must first demonstrate that Judaism was in fact perceived by others as an implicit challenge to their own convictions. The objection of Ionian citizens to Jewish theology offers just such an example. The appeal of Ionians to Marcus Agrippa, previously described, included a proposed solution. The nature of this solution – demanding that Jews worship the gods of the Ionians – makes clear that Ionians did in fact view Judaism as an implicit challenge to their own beliefs. The remedy for this challenge was to impose their own Ionian beliefs on Judaism.

This example alone could make a strong case that the Jewish theological position of worshiping only one God could rub many the wrong way. The circumstance of Alexandrian citizens placing an image of the emperor in Jewish synagogues offers additional support. While involving more political complexities, this Egyptian situation does highlight, at the least, that non-Jews understood Jewish theological objections well enough to know what would spite them. As to whether Alexandrians felt their own theology personally assaulted by the theology of Judaism, one might add Josephus' reporting of the objection of Apion: "If the Jews (says he) be citizens of Alexandria, why do they not worship the same gods with the Alexandrians?" (inquit, si sunt ciues, eosdem deos quos Alexandrini non colunt?)⁹² Just as was the case in Ionia, Egyptians could view Judaism as an implicit denial of their own beliefs. The remedy for this

⁹² AA 2.65.

challenge was to impose their own Egyptian beliefs on Judaism. So, in Alexandria as well, the exclusivism of Jewish theology was tied closely to the perception on the part of non-Jews that native theology was concurrently being rejected.

Simply from those two situations, one can make a strong case that Jewish exclusivist theology could be perceived by others as an implicit condemnation of their own. More evidence would be helpful, however, evidence which initially seeks to reinforce the fact that non-Jews were well aware of the theological underpinnings of Judaism. For them to feel bothered by Jewish beliefs, they would have had to know them or at least would have had to experience a strong instinct as to the implications of Jewish belief. They would have needed an understanding deeper than a simple awareness that Jews did not work on Saturday or that Jews circumcised their infant boys. Then, if it can be demonstrated that there was for many an awareness of Jewish belief, one needs next to identify in what respect Jewish belief would have been perceived a threat. Was Jewish exclusivism a political risk? Did it challenge people's patriotism? Or was it much more personal? Finally, if the threat was perceived in a most personal fashion by non-Jews, who is to blame?

To substantiate the claim that Jewish exclusivist theology could be perceived by others as an implicit condemnation of their own views of the divine, it is important to reaffirm just how aware non-Jews were of the theological underpinnings of Judaism. Louis Feldman offers this observation:

That indeed the pagans largely objected to the Jewish contempt for other religions is evidenced in Pliny the Elder, who refers relatively often to the geography and products of Judea but who has only one reference to the Jews that may be regarded as anti-Jewish, namely (13.46) where he describes a variety of dates called *chydaeus* (i.e., "abundant," "common") by the Jews and then gratuitously adds "a race remarkable for their contempt for the divine powers" (*contumelia numinum insignis*).⁹³

⁹³ Feldman (1993) 152.

A closer look at the context may help account for Pliny's description of the Jews and perhaps make it appear a bit less gratuitous. It so happened that the particular date Pliny was describing had religious significance among the Romans. Pliny explains, "The variety of this class which we offer to the honour of the gods is called *chydaeus* by the Jews" (nam quos ex his honori deorum damus, chydaeos appellavit iudaea gens).⁹⁴ The Greek term *χυδαῖος* can simply mean "abundant," but it also can refer to something that is "common, vulgar, coarse."⁹⁵ One can propose, then, that in their naming of this particular type of date, Jews were purposefully denigrating pagan divinities. It is only after noting the apparently pejorative term Jews used to label these dates, then, that Pliny goes on to describe Jews as "a race remarkable for their contempt for the divine powers" (gens contumelia numinum insignis).⁹⁶ Adolf Hausrath makes the linkage explicit: "To the great naturalist [the Jews] especially seemed to be a 'gens contumelia deorum insignis,' because they termed the use of dates as applied in the temples "the Chydaeus" – date-filth."⁹⁷

Even if the Jewish name for these dates was simply descriptive – they were common dates – and not pejorative, Pliny's words still make clear that non-Jews were cognizant of the distinctive Jewish theological position – they showed "contempt for the divine powers." But if the Jewish name for these dates was in fact pejorative, then Pliny's comments reveal even more, suggesting that purposeful actions on the part of the Jews made it even more unlikely that Gentiles would miss their theological distinctiveness. One might go on to suggest that Jewish

⁹⁴ *Natural History* 13.46; trans. by Rackham (1968).

⁹⁵ Liddell et al (1996).

⁹⁶ *Natural History* 13.46; trans. by Rackham (1968).

⁹⁷ Hausrath (1878) 178.

actions like naming the dates could have been viewed by non-Jews not simply as an implicit condemnation of their own convictions, but as an explicit one.

Pliny is not the only author who makes it obvious that it was not simply outward practices of Judaism that were commonly known, but the theological positions behind those customs as well. The fact that Jews worshiped their God without an image was highlighted by Varro, and interestingly, in a positive light. Varro's views are cited by Augustine:

Dicit etiam idem auctor acutissimus atque doctissimus, quod hi soli ei uideantur animaduertisse quid esset Deus, qui crediderunt eum esse animam motu ac ratione mundum gubernantem, ac per hoc, etsi nondum tenebat quod ueritas habet (Deus enim uerus non anima, sed animae quoque est effector et conditor), tamen si contra praeiudicia consuetudinis liber esse posset, unum Deum colendum fateretur atque suaderet, motu ac ratione mundum gubernantem, ut ea cum illo de hac re quaestio remaneret, quod eum diceret esse animam, non potius et animae creatorem. Dicit etiam antiquos Romanos plus annos centum et septuaginta deos sine simulacro coluisse. “Quod si adhuc, inquit, mansisset, castius dii obseruarentur.” Cui sententiae suae testem adhibet inter cetera etiam gentem Iudaeam . . .

The same most acute and learned author [Varro] also says, that those alone seem to him to have perceived what God is, who have believed Him to be the soul of the world, governing it by design and reason. And by this, it appears, that although he did not attain to the truth,—for the true God is not a soul, but the maker and author of the soul,—yet if he could have been free to go against the prejudices of custom, he could have confessed and counselled others that the one God ought to be worshipped, who governs the world by design and reason; so that on this subject only this point would remain to be debated with him, that he had called Him a soul, and not rather the creator of the soul. He says, also, that the ancient Romans, for more than a hundred and seventy years, worshipped the gods without an image. “And if this custom,” he says, “could have remained till now, the gods would have been more purely worshipped.” In favor of this opinion, he cites as a witness among others the Jewish nation . . .⁹⁸

Varro is aware that Jews worshipped their God without an image. Emperor Claudius also was aware of Jewish theological niceties, referencing in a rescript to the governor of Egypt his understanding of why the actions of Caligula were so offensive.

Ἀλεξανδρεῖς δὲ ἐπαρθῆναι κατὰ τῶν παρ' αὐτοῖς Ἰουδαίων ἐπὶ τῶν Γαίου Καίσαρος χρόνων τοῦ διὰ τὴν πολλὴν ἀπόνοιαν καὶ παραφροσύνην, ὅτι μὴ παραβῆναι ἠθέλησεν τὸ Ἰουδαίων ἔθνος τὴν πάτριον θρησκείαν καὶ θεὸν προσαγορεύειν αὐτόν, ταπεινώσαντος

⁹⁸ *De civ. Dei* 4.31.2; trans. by Dods (1984).

αὐτοῦς· βούλομαι μηδὲν διὰ τὴν Γαίου παραφροσύνην τῶν δικαίων τῷ Ἰουδαίων ἔθνει παραπεπτωκέναι, φυλάσσεσθαι δ' αὐτοῖς καὶ τὰ πρότερον δικαιώματα ἐμμένουσι τοῖς ἰδίῳις ἔθεσιν

But that, in the time of Caius, the Alexandrians became insolent toward the Jews that were among them, which Caius, out of his great madness, and want of understanding, reduced the nation of the Jews very low, because they would not transgress the religious worship of their country, and call him a god: I will, therefore, that the nation of the Jews be not deprived of their rights and privileges, on account of the madness of Caius; but that those rights and privileges, which they formerly enjoyed, be preserved to them, and that they may continue in their own customs.⁹⁹

Claudius understood that the Jews were exclusivistic in their theology. Tacitus, cited earlier to demonstrate that Jewish theology was exclusivistic, makes evident that he understood that, and much more, about the Jewish religion:

transgressi in morem eorum idem usurpant, nec quicquam prius imbuuntur quam contemnere deos, exuere patriam, parentes liberos fratres vilia habere. augendae tamen multitudini consulitur; nam et necare quemquam ex agnatis nefas, animosque proelio aut suppliciis peremptorum aeternos putant: hinc generandi amor et moriendi contemptus. corpora condere quam cremare e more Aegyptio, eademque cura et de infernis persuasio, caelestium contra. Aegyptii pleraque animalia effigiesque compositas venerantur, Iudaei mente sola unumque numen intellegunt: profanos qui deum imagines mortalibus materiis in species hominum effingant; summum illud et aeternum neque imitabile neque interiturum. igitur nulla simulacra urbibus suis, nedum templis sistunt; non regibus haec adulatio, non Caesaribus honor.

Those who come over to their religion adopt the practice, and have this lesson first instilled into them, to despise all gods, to disown their country, and set at nought parents, children, and brethren. Still they provide for the increase of their numbers. It is a crime among them to kill any newly-born infant. They hold that the souls of all who perish in battle or by the hands of the executioner are immortal. Hence a passion for propagating their race and a contempt for death. They are wont to bury rather than to burn their dead, following in this the Egyptian custom; they bestow the same care on the dead, and they hold the same belief about the lower world. Quite different is their faith about things divine. The Egyptians worship many animals and images of monstrous form; the Jews have purely mental conceptions of Deity, as one in essence. They call those profane who make representations of God in human shape out of perishable materials. They believe that Being to be supreme and eternal, neither capable of representation, nor of decay. They therefore do not allow any images to stand in their cities, much less in their temples. This flattery is not paid to their kings, nor this honour to our Emperors.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ *Ant* 19.284-285.

¹⁰⁰ *Histories* V.5; trans. by Church and Brodribb.

Though writing at a somewhat later time, Dio Cassius – also cited earlier in the presentation of Judaism as exclusivistic – offers yet another reminder that non-Jews were familiar with Jewish theological concepts.

κεχωρίδαται δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀνθρώπων ἕς τε τᾶλλα τὰ περὶ τὴν δίαιταν πάνθ' ὡς εἰπεῖν, καὶ μάλισθ' ὅτι τῶν μὲν ἄλλων θεῶν οὐδένα τιμῶσιν, ἓνα δὲ τινα ἰσχυρῶς σέβουσιν. οὐδ' ἄγαλμα οὐδὲν < οὐδ' > ἐν αὐτοῖς ποτε τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις ἔσχον, ἄρρητον δὲ δὴ καὶ ἀειδῆ αὐτὸν νομίζοντες εἶναι περισσότατα ἀνθρώπων θρησκευούσι.

They are distinguished from the rest of mankind in practically every detail of life, and especially by the fact that they do not honor any of the usual gods, but show extreme reverence for one particular divinity. They never had any statue of him in Jerusalem itself, but believing him to be unnameable and invisible, they worshiped him in the most extravagant fashion on earth.¹⁰¹

Non-Jews were familiar with the theological underpinnings of Judaism. Pliny, Varro, Claudius, Tacitus, and Dio Cassius all give evidence of this. Jan Sevenster offers a helpful summation of the awareness non-Jews had of Jewish theology:

... the people of the ancient world had some idea of what was behind the ἀμιξία, separateness, of the Jews. The exclusive worship of the God of Israel in obedience to this one god led to their strange way of life and to their violent resistance to the worship of other gods, to their refusal to participate in the cult of those gods.¹⁰²

As Sevenster notes and the cited authors and emperor reflect, non-Jews were not only aware that Jews were distinctive, that they had customs which reflected a separateness relative to their neighbors; non-Jews were also aware of the underlying theology.

This awareness makes it possible, then, for there to have been a reaction to separatist theology on the part of non-Jews. But in order to characterize such a potential reaction with precision, one needs to identify in what respect the exclusivist theology of Judaism was perceived to be a threat. Was the theology of Judaism viewed as a threat to the political structure

¹⁰¹ *Historia Romana*, XXXVII, 17:2 = *GLAJJ*, vol. 2, no. 406; trans. by E. Cary.

¹⁰² Sevenster (1975) 96.

of the empire? Closely connected to that, was Judaism problematic because it insulted the innate patriotism of those who lived in the empire? Or in its essence, was negative reaction to Jewish theology a much more personal and visceral reaction – was Judaism perceived not so much as an assault on one’s country but as an assault on one’s self?

The words of Juvenal in his Satire 14 have been previously cited – particularly in the discussion of Louis Feldman’s view of the status of Jews in the Roman Empire – to acknowledge that some characterized Judaism as an opponent to the empire. Juvenal writes, “It’s their custom to ignore the laws of Rome, the Judaic Code being that which they study, adhere to, and revere” (*Romanas autem soliti contemnere leges Iudaicum ediscunt et servant ac metuunt ius*).¹⁰³ In this particular statement, it seems unlikely that Juvenal is suggesting that Judaism purposefully violated elements of the Roman civil code. When he refers to “leges,” it would seem more likely that he is referencing the “principles” or “rules” of Roman religious observance. Given that Roman religious observance was inextricably intertwined with the Roman political system, however, it is understandable that Romans may have viewed the religious practices and tenets of Judaism as a threat to the political order.

Cicero employs similar logic when characterizing Judaism in his defense of Flaccus. In describing the worship of the Jews prior to the turmoil that was ultimately repressed by Pompey in 63 BC, Cicero says, “While Jerusalem was flourishing, and while the Jews were in a peaceful state, still the religious ceremonies and observances of that people were very much at variance with the splendour of this empire and the dignity of our name and the institutions of our ancestors” (*stantibus Hierosolymis pacatisque Iudaeis tamen istorum religio sacrorum a splendore huius imperi, gravitate nominis nostri, maiorum institutis abhorrebat*).¹⁰⁴ In slightly

¹⁰³ *Satire* 14.100-101; trans. by Kline.

¹⁰⁴ *Pro Flacco* 69; trans. by Yonge.

opaque fashion, Cicero positions the religious practices of the Jews: they are contrary to the “splendor of the empire.” Precisely what “splendor” refers to may be uncertain, but there is no question Cicero feels that goodwill can be gained among those judging his case by suggesting that Judaism was a religious opponent to the nation as a whole.

Continuing in this vein of Roman characterization of Judaism, Schäfer brings his book *Judeophobia* to a conclusion by saying, “The deeply felt threat that the Jewish superstition might succeed in finally destroying the cultural and religious values of Roman society is the very essence of Roman hostility against Jews.”¹⁰⁵ While focusing on “cultural and religious values,” given the tight integration of culture and politics in the Roman imperial system, it seems safe to include Schäfer’s view under the category of those who would suggest that Judaism was perceived by some as a threat to the political structure of the empire. Schäfer is suggesting that Judaism was viewed not primarily as a threat to the convictions of individuals, but as a potentially destabilizing force for Roman society as a whole.

So, did fears that Jewish religious practices and values would undermine the empire’s Roman cultural foundation play a role in negative views toward Judaism? It seems fair to suggest that those concepts were important to at least some Romans. However, two key considerations argue against raising this factor to a level of great significance.

First, emperors repeatedly defended the Jewish right to practice their religion. As has been noted, there were occasions when Jewish practice was suppressed by emperors to a limited degree – the expulsions of Jews from Rome by Tiberius in AD 19 and Claudius in AD 49. But by far the general tenor of imperial treatment of Jews is one of toleration and protection. One considers the multiple letters of instruction to cities in Asia Minor, referenced earlier in the

¹⁰⁵ Schäfer (1997) 210.

discussion about local government opposition to Judaism. One recalls the letter from Claudius to Alexandria, insisting that Jewish rights be defended. While a case has been made for emperors having been influenced by personal relationships with prominent Jews, nevertheless the emperors who defended Judaism surely did not feel that they were undermining the empire in the process. This suggests, then, that while a lawyer like Cicero or a satirist like Juvenal can observe that the principles of Judaism contrasted with the principles of Roman religion, it goes too far to suggest that such a tension was viewed more broadly – particularly in higher echelons of power – as an authentic threat to the empire.

Not only do the actions of emperors argue against the proposal that Judaism was viewed as a threat because it might undermine Roman political structure. The fact that anti-Judaism could thrive absent an interest in defending Roman politics also argues against seeing Roman politics as key to understanding the threat of Judaism. The actions of the Greeks in Asia Minor demonstrate this clearly. The anti-Judaism of inhabitants of Laodicea or Ephesus or Miletus, who were ultimately rebuked by Roman officials for their persecution of Jews, would not have originated from a love for the Roman Empire. In fact, it was the Roman Empire that took a position against their anti-Judaism. Something else was going on.

Suggesting that Judaism aroused antipathy because it was viewed as an actual political threat to the empire seems hard to demonstrate. But could the threat have been less profound, yet still be linked to Roman society as a whole and individuals' commitment to it? Was there a sense of personal patriotism that was challenged by Judaism? The Alexandrians and their insertion of images of Caligula into the synagogues in their city might seem to recommend such a perspective. Was not their innate patriotism insulted by the religious views of Jews? Were

they not passionately defending their emperor in the face of those who refused to honor him in a particular way?

While their use of images of Caligula might initially suggest patriotism, the argument has already been made that this was a manipulation of a symbol in support of quite different ulterior motives. But even if one would wish to make the case that this was authentic patriotism, the subsequent actions of Claudius make clear that the imperial government was not on the Alexandrians' side. If participants had thought that patriotism was involved, how confusing Claudius' ultimate response – that Jews “may continue in their own customs” (ἐμμένουσι τοῖς ἰδίοις ἔθεσιν) – would have been.¹⁰⁶ The institution they would theoretically have been supporting turned against them, with Claudius taking a position diametrically opposed to the actions of the Alexandrians. If there was any patriotism involved, it was exposed as misguided. But far more likely is that patriotism really had no role at all. Judaism was not viewed as a threat primarily because it challenged the patriotism of non-Jews.

Rather than being viewed as a political or patriotic threat, it would seem that Judaism engendered such opposition because it was viewed as a personal threat. The theological claims of Judaism, consciously considered by some or just instinctively perceived from the separateness

¹⁰⁶ *Ant* 19.285. A larger portion of Claudius' rescript to Alexandria reads, “In the time of Caius, the Alexandrians became insolent toward the Jews that were among them, which Caius, out of his great madness, and want of understanding, reduced the nation of the Jews very low, because they would not transgress the religious worship of their country, and call him a god: I will, therefore, that the nation of the Jews be not deprived of their rights and privileges, on account of the madness of Caius; but that those rights and privileges, which they formerly enjoyed, be preserved to them, and that they may continue in their own customs. And I charge both parties to take very great care that no troubles may arise after the promulgation of this edict.” (Ἀλεξανδρεῖς δὲ ἐπαρθῆναι κατὰ τῶν παρ' αὐτοῖς Ἰουδαίων ἐπὶ τῶν Γαίου Καίσαρος χρόνων τοῦ διὰ τὴν πολλὴν ἀπόνοιαν καὶ παραφροσύνην, ὅτι μὴ παραβῆναι ἠθέλησεν τὸ Ἰουδαίων ἔθνος τὴν πάτριον θρησκείαν καὶ θεὸν προσαγορεύειν αὐτόν, ταπεινώσαντος αὐτούς· βούλομαι μὴδὲν διὰ τὴν Γαίου παραφροσύνην τῶν δικαίων τῷ Ἰουδαίων ἔθνει παραπετωκέναι, φυλάσσεσθαι δ' αὐτοῖς καὶ τὰ πρότερον δικαιώματα ἐμμένουσι τοῖς ἰδίοις ἔθεσιν, ἀμφοτέροις τε διακελεύομαι τοῖς μέρεσι πλείστην ποιήσασθαι πρόνοιαν, ὅπως μηδεμία ταραχὴ γένηται μετὰ τὸ προτεθῆναί μου τὸ διάταγμα, *Ant* 19.284-285.)

engendered by Jewish customs, were an implicit challenge to the convictions of any who were not Jewish.

Gavin Langmuir seeks to downplay the role that Jewish theological claims could theoretically have played:

. . . those who identified with [the Persian, Greek, and Roman] cultures could hate or ridicule Jews without feeling any threat, other than the fact of difference, to the foundations of their own sense of identity. Though they hated Jews for what Jews were really doing – or not doing – they had no need to examine seriously the beliefs of Judaism and try to demonstrate their errors. Their anti-Judaic hostility thus differed little from many other instances of ethnocentric hostility throughout history.¹⁰⁷

While it is true that Jews were a different ethnicity – and ethnocentricity in some form could surely also have contributed to anti-Judaism – there are good reasons for avoiding the implication that any role for ethnicity ought concurrently to sideline a significant role for Jewish theology.

In passages cited earlier to note that non-Jews were familiar with Jewish theology, both Pliny and Tacitus highlight the role religion – not simply ethnicity – played in conveying negativity. Pliny describes Jews as “a race remarkable for their contempt for the divine powers” (*gens contumelia numinum insignis*)¹⁰⁸ and Tacitus says that Jews teach others “to despise all gods, to disown their country, and set at nought parents, children, and brethren” (*contemnere deos, exuere patriam, parentes liberos fratres vilia habere*).¹⁰⁹ Clearly there was negativity in the minds of those authors as they characterized Jewish convictions.

In addition, it seems fair to propose that these characterizations by Pliny and Tacitus reflected some personal feeling by the author toward such theological angles. Their descriptions go beyond mere neutral reporting. These authors are highlighting features which directly

¹⁰⁷ Langmuir (1990) 6-7.

¹⁰⁸ *Natural History* 13.46; trans. by Rackham (1968).

¹⁰⁹ *Histories* V.5; trans. by Church and Brodribb.

assaulted the most fundamental attitudes that they and many of their countrymen would have had. Simply the harsh tone of their words, then, offers strong support to the contention that non-Jews could view the theology of Judaism as personally threatening.

The concept of personal threat stands out as central in the recently referenced Ionian appeal to Marcus Agrippa. Presuming that the Ionians' own worship of their gods can be considered personal in some respect, the solution that Ionians offered to Marcus Agrippa indicates that Ionians viewed the unique practices of Judaism as something more than simply ethnic distinctions – they wanted Jews to be compelled to have the same personal religious practices as they did. They requested that “if the Jews were to be joint partakers with them, they might be obliged to worship the gods they themselves worshipped” (εἰ συγγενεῖς εἰσὶν αὐτοῖς Ἰουδαῖοι, σέβεσθαι τοὺς αὐτῶν θεοῦς).¹¹⁰

While Seneca does observe with regard to non-Jews that “the greater part of the people go through a ritual not knowing why they do so” (maior pars populi facit, quod cur faciat ignorant),¹¹¹ Josephus makes evident that any such ignorance would not necessarily make non-Jews' interaction with their own pagan religion less personal. The Ionians' personal commitment to their own theology and religious practice is characterized by Nicolas, a Jew advocating against the Ionians before Agrippa, in this fashion:

εἰ δέ τις αὐτοὺς ἔροιτο δύο τούτων θάτερον ἐθέλοιεν ἂν ἀφαιρεθῆναι, τὸ ζῆν ἢ τὰ πάτρια ἔθνη τὰς πομπὰς τὰς θυσίας τὰς ἐορτάς, ἃς τοῖς νομιζομένοις προσάγουσι θεοῖς, εὖ οἶδ', ὅτι πάντα μᾶλλον αἰρήσονται παθεῖν ἢ καταλῦσαι τι τῶν πατρίων· καὶ γὰρ τοὺς πολέμους οἱ πολλοὶ διὰ ταῦτα αἰροῦνται φυλαττόμενοι μὴ παραβαίνειν αὐτά, καὶ τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν, ἣν νῦν τὸ σύμπαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος δι' ὑμᾶς ἔχει, τούτῳ μετροῦμεν τῷ ἐξεῖναι κατὰ χώραν ἐκάστοις τὰ οἰκεῖα τιμῶσιν αὔξειν καὶ διαζῆν. τοῦτο μὲν οὖν οὐκ ἂν αὐτοὶ παθεῖν ἐλόμενοι βιάζονται δρᾶν κατ' ἄλλων ὥσπερ οὐχ ὁμοίως ἀσεβοῦντες, εἴτε τῶν οἰκειῶν εἰς θεοὺς ὁσίων ἀμελοῖεν, εἴτε τὰ οἰκεῖα τισὶν ἀνοσίως καταλύοιεν.

¹¹⁰ *Ant* 12.125.

¹¹¹ Latin from *GLAJJ* I, 186; *The City of God*, VI, 11; trans. by Goodman (2007) 373.

And if someone should ask them which of these two things they would rather have taken from them, life or their country's customs, including the processions, sacrifices and festivals which they observe in honour of the gods in whom they believe, I know very well that they would rather suffer all manner of things than violate any of their country's customs. Indeed, it is for the sake of these that most men undertake war, so careful are they not to transgress them. And the happiness that the whole human race now enjoys, thanks to you, we measure by the fact that it is possible for people in every country to live and prosper while respecting their own (traditions). And what our opponents would not choose to suffer themselves, this they forcibly try to do to others, as if they were not acting just as impiously in violating the sacred traditions of others as they would in neglecting their own sacred duties to their own gods.¹¹²

Convictions regarding sacrifices and divinities clearly weighed heavily, then, even if it is to be acknowledged that non-Jews were not as aware of theological underpinnings as Jews were.

These personal convictions led a whole group of people to seek a political remedy, an imperial compulsion to stop Jews from being theologically different.

If having one's personal convictions threatened resulted in antipathy toward those on the outside – those who were not only Jews theologically but also ethnically – the reaction toward a convert from one's own people, where distinction in ethnicity played no role at all, was even more raw. The second-century AD Greek philosopher Celsus might at first appear to be a voice of moderation, seeming to speak against the kind of reaction evidenced in Ionia. As he goes on, however, he offers yet more evidence of how Jewish theology can be interpreted as a personal assault:

εἰ μὲν δὴ κατὰ ταῦτα περιστέλλοιεν Ἰουδαῖοι τὸν ἴδιον νόμον, οὐ μεμπτὰ αὐτῶν, ἐκείνων δὲ μᾶλλον, τῶν καταλιπόντων τὰ σφέτερα καὶ τὰ Ἰουδαίων προσποιουμένων. Εἰ δ' ὥς τι σοφώτερον εἰδότες σεμνύονται τε καὶ τὴν ἄλλων κοινωνίαν <ὡς> οὐκ ἐξ ἴσου καθαρῶν ἀποστρέφονται . . .

If indeed in accordance with these principles the Jews maintained their own law, we should not find fault with them but rather with those who have abandoned their own traditions and professed those of the Jews. If, as though they had some deeper wisdom,

¹¹² *Ant* 16.35-37; trans. by Marcus.

they are proud and turn away from the society of others on the ground that they are not on the same level of piety . . .¹¹³

Celsus initially conveys moderation. For Jews who wanted to live according to their own Jewish principles, Celsus was content to “live and let live.” Celsus quickly makes it obvious, though, that one such as he who was living this “moderate” approach could still experience the very same kind of personal offense that the Ionians did. Celsus targets converts. Converts from one’s own people have a much closer relationship with the majority culture than any member outside one’s own ethnicity might. Celsus viewed those who converted not simply as making a free and personal adjustment. Celsus viewed the embrace of Judaism as a powerful and pointed personal rebuke to those who did not convert. An embrace of Jewish theology did result in a completely different attitude toward the divine. An embrace of Jewish theology did result in a turning away from many past practices.¹¹⁴ An embrace of Jewish theology was, in essence, saying something about the non-Jewish theology a convert had previously called their own. This statement about non-Jewish theology was then saying something about those who had not converted. This was a problem, felt Celsus.

Pliny, Tacitus, the Ionians, and Celsus all convey a sense of negativity toward Judaism.

This negativity does not seem to flow from a political perspective. Patriotism does not seem to

¹¹³ *Alethes Logos*, cited in Origen, *Contra Celsum*, V, 2:41 = *GLAJJ*, vol. 2, no. 375 (pages 256 & 286); trans. by H. Chadwick.

¹¹⁴ As pagans viewed conversions to Judaism as offensive because of a rejection of pagan views, Jews saw the same conversions as powerful affirmations of their own views. Philo, in *De Virtutibus* 33.179, says, “All those men therefore who, although they did not originally choose to honour the Creator and Father of the universe, have yet changed and done so afterwards, having learnt to prefer to honour a single monarch rather than a number of rulers, we must look upon as our friends and kinsmen, since they display that greatest of all bonds with which to cement friendship and kindred, namely, a pious and God-loving disposition, and we ought to sympathise in joy with and to congratulate them, since even if they were blind previously they have now received their sight, beholding the most brilliant of all lights instead of the most profound darkness” (πάντας οὖν, ὅσοι τὸν κτίστην καὶ πατέρα τοῦ παντὸς εἰ καὶ μὴ ἐξ ἀρχῆς σέβειν ἠξίωσαν ἀλλ’ ὕστερον μοναρχίαν ἀντὶ πολυαρχίας ἀσπασάμενοι, φιλάτους καὶ συγγενεστάτους ὑποληπτέον, τὸ μέγιστον εἰς φιλίαν καὶ οἰκειότητα παρασχομένους θεοφιλῆς ἤθος, οἷς χρηρὴ καὶ συνήδεσθαι, καθάπερ ἂν εἰ καὶ τυφλοὶ πρότερον ὄντες ἀνέβλεψαν ἐκ βαθυτάτου σκοτόυς ἀυγοειδέστατον φῶς ἰδόντες); trans. by Yonge.

be the consistent driving force. Discomfort with Judaism, at least for many, finds its source in the exclusive claims of Judaism and their implicit condemnation of competing claims. Many may have chosen not to think about this. Others may have thought about it and decided it was not worth getting upset about. But it seems most legitimate to propose that the sense of personal threat, if not explicitly recognized, was so often implicitly perceived. It was this personal threat that had the capacity to account for so many of the manifestations of anti-Judaism in the first century. At times this negativity was suppressed by political forces. At other times it may have receded into the background because of the press of other issues or because of the busyness and outward successes of life. But at opportune moments – made opportune by a variety of factors – the underlying undercurrent of antipathy could raise its ugly head, and Jews became targets.

If one positions Jewish exclusivist theology as posing an implicit challenge to the convictions of others, a subsequent conclusion may be inaccurately drawn, that Jewish theology itself was to blame for any antagonism that resulted. Shaye Cohen seems to draw this conclusion, at least in part. While he subsequently qualifies his statement so as not to place full blame on the Jews,¹¹⁵ he offers this perspective on Apion's demand that Jews should worship the same gods as the Alexandrians:

As Apion, the leader of the “anti-Semitic” party, asked, “If the Jews wish to become Alexandrian citizens, why don't they worshiped the Alexandrian gods?” – An excellent question. The Jews wanted equality with tolerance, to be allowed to be the same as everybody else while also being different from everyone else, and Apion rightly refused.¹¹⁶

Cohen seems to anticipate that many might raise an eyebrow at such an analysis. In a footnote he adds, “If it be objected that I am following the ‘anti-Semitic’ interpretation of the events in

¹¹⁵ Cohen later adds, “. . . but here, I concede, perhaps we must allow for a certain degree of ‘anti-Semitic’ feelings to account for the scale and severity of the [incident].” [Cohen in Berger (1986) 47.]

¹¹⁶ Cohen in Berger (1986) 46.

Alexandria, I believe that the reconstruction is correct no matter what its origin.”¹¹⁷ His larger point, however, seems clear. He is suggesting that significant responsibility for the troubles Jews experienced in Alexandria rested on Jews. They were unreasonable in presuming that exclusivist religious claims could coexist with a full-fledged partnership in a community.

It would seem that Cohen’s analysis reinforces the concept that Jewish exclusivity is instinctively perceived as threatening. Cohen himself views such a theological perspective as something that ought not be permitted to coexist with full-fledged partnership in the community, and so he feels that Apion was justified, to a significant degree, in his response to the Jews. However, while properly affirming the fact that Jewish exclusivity can be personally threatening, Cohen’s view that such a theological position is inevitably blameworthy can be challenged.

Josephus does challenge it. In explaining why he had recounted official decrees which spoke favorably of Jews, he says, “And if I frequently mention these decrees, it is to reconcile the other nations to us and to remove the causes for hatred which have taken root in thoughtless persons among us as well as among them” (ποιοῦμαι δὲ πολλάκις αὐτῶν τὴν μνήμην ἐπιδιαλλάττων τὰ γένη καὶ τὰς ἐμπεφυκυίας τοῖς ἀλογίστοις ἡμῶν τε καὶ κείνων μίσους αἰτίας ὑπεξαυρούμενος).¹¹⁸ He characterizes those who have engendered any justification for hatred as “thoughtless,” as unreasonable. With such a statement, surely Josephus is not viewing his own theological positions as worthy of blame.

Josephus characterizes the negative reactions of opponents to Judaism in another way:

τούτων ἡμᾶς ἀφαιροῦνται κατ’ ἐπήρειαν, χρήματα μὲν ἂ τῷ θεῷ συμφέρομεν ἐπόνυμα διαφθείροντες καὶ φανερώς ἱεροσυλοῦντες, τέλη δ’ ἐπιτιθέντες κὰν ταῖς ἑορταῖς ἄγοντες ἐπὶ δικαστήρια καὶ πραγματείας ἄλλας, οὐ κατὰ χρείαν τῶν συναλλαγμάτων, ἀλλὰ κατ’ ἐπήρειαν τῆς θρησκείας, ἣν συνίσασιν ἡμῖν, μῖσος οὐ δίκαιον οὐδ’ αὐτεξούσιον αὐτοῖς πεπονθότες.

¹¹⁷ Cohen in Berger (1986) 46.

¹¹⁸ *Ant* 16.175; trans. by Marcus.

Now our adversaries take these our privileges away in the way of injustice; they violently seize upon that money of ours which is offered to God, and called sacred money, and this openly, after a sacrilegious manner; and they impose tributes upon us, and bring us before tribunals on holy days, and then require other like debts of us, not because the contracts require it, and for their own advantage, but because they would put an affront on our religion, of which they are conscious as well as we, and have indulged themselves in an unjust, and to them involuntary hatred.¹¹⁹

Josephus characterizes the hatred of opponents as “not just” (οὐ δίκαιον), but then he says something more. He calls their hatred “not in their own power, not voluntary” (οὐδ’ αὐτεξούσιον). It is intriguing to see how translators handle “οὐδ’ αὐτεξούσιον.” Ralph Marcus, in the Loeb translation, translates it “unauthorized.”¹²⁰ Tessa Rajak offers the translation “[not] legitimate.”¹²¹ But Liddell offers as a definition “[not] in one’s own power, free.”¹²² While Marcus and Rajak appear to insert an external standard into the definition of the term – the hatred is unauthorized or illegitimate, presumably according to some kind of external standard – there seems no reason to move beyond the targeted, self-contained nature of the term. The words “οὐδ’ αὐτεξούσιον” highlight the instinctive nature of anti-Jewish behavior – it is “not in one’s own power.” What Josephus is saying is that the negative reactions of non-Jews to Jews reflect something so deep and instinctive and visceral that they themselves may not fully understand why they are feeling the way they do. To the degree they do understand, they are being unjust. To the degree that they are reacting instinctively in an unexplained way, they are still in the wrong. Whatever the source of their antipathy, Josephus insists that it is not Judaism that is to blame, but those who are assigning blame to Judaism.

These citations from Josephus are one response to the presumption that if one views Judaism as exclusivist, that inevitably means that Jewish theology must include some

¹¹⁹ *Ant* 16.45.

¹²⁰ *Ant* 16.45; trans. by Marcus.

¹²¹ Rajak (2001) 331.

¹²² Liddell et al (1996).

blameworthy facet. Another response to this presumption could come from the fact that many non-Jews were converted. Feldman contends that Judaism grew as it did only because of conversions. He refers to “Jewish success not only in winning converts but also in gaining ‘sympathizers.’”¹²³ Clearly the very features of Jewish religion which could somehow be repulsive to some were powerfully attractive to others. Ironically, even Cohen – who wishes to assign some blame to Jewish theology for the negative reactions of non-Jews – recognizes the complexity of the issue and notes Judaism’s potential to attract:

The Greco-Roman world consisted of those who hated Judaism, those who were indifferent to it, and those who loved it. . . . Judaism’s denial of the pagan gods and refusal to be incorporated into the religious system of the civilized world (beliefs that could be called “Jewish anti-paganism”) aroused both hatred and admiration. A discussion of “anti-Judaism” in antiquity that ignores the other half of the question, the power of attraction exerted by Judaism on the Greco-Roman world, is lachrymose indeed.¹²⁴

If individuals are being brought into Judaism, could that suggest that the theology itself is not to blame but rather something about the individual who was responding to the theology? The mere fact of conversions cannot answer that question definitively. But the fact of conversions can, at the least, leave the door open to the conclusion that exclusivist theology need not inevitably be blameworthy should negative reaction on the part of some ensue.

Having noted that the exclusivism of Jewish theology is at the heart of antipathy that resulted, must that mean that Jewish theology is to blame? Apion would say “yes.” Shaye Cohen would concur, at least in a respect. The citations from Josephus, on the other hand, openly object to this conclusion. Josephus’ view was that Judaism in no way was to blame for the negative reactions which were produced. Admittedly, Josephus was an adherent of Judaism and so might be expected to have such an opinion. At the same time, his status as a Jew did not

¹²³ Feldman (1993) 119. See chapter 1 for further discussion of Feldman’s views regarding conversions.

¹²⁴ Cohen in Berger (1986) 47.

inevitably mean that his point of view was illegitimate. Regardless, the bottom line is that there is a way to view negative reaction to Jewish exclusivist theology through a lens that does not place blame on the Jew. The reality of conversions to Judaism seems to offer support to this perspective – even outsiders could come to see nothing essentially blameworthy in Jewish theology and practice.

If Jewish exclusivist theology need not inevitably be blamed, blame for antipathy against Jews rested elsewhere. Josephus proposes that unreasonable and even involuntary reactions to Jewish exclusivity on the part of non-Jews were the cause of the undercurrent of antipathy.

Overview of Jewish status

Defining the status of Jews in the Roman Empire in the first century AD involves significant complexity. Through the classification of ancient perspectives on Judaism according to their source, however, some patterns emerge. While imperial Roman administration repeatedly stepped in to defend Jewish rights, to a large degree their actions represented pragmatic political payback for favors formerly offered rather than a fundamental appreciation of Judaism. In addition, significant family relationships between Jews and the imperial family had the capacity to influence governance in favor of Jews. Absent those historical and familial factors, it is possible that imperial administration would not have been as favorable to the Jewish people.

The mere fact that imperial administration had to step in so many times to protect Jews hints at a concurrent reality – Jews needed protecting. When moving on to consider the decisions of local governments as well as the perspectives of the general populace, clear strains of pervasive antipathy against Jews become obvious. These ground-level views would seem to represent much more meaningful indicators of Jewish status in the Roman Empire than some

imperial rescript might. In fact, in the end, it seems that the message regarding the status of Jews is not as mixed as it may initially have appeared. While important imperial protection made it possible for many Jews to survive and even thrive, yet a distinct undercurrent of prejudice infiltrated the general populace and local government and even, periodically, imperial governance itself.

This persistent undercurrent of prejudice had a source. While outward Jewish customs served as the face of Judaism, the sense of separateness that such customs communicated had the potential to tap into something much deeper in the psyches of the pagan communities that surrounded. Judaism was an exclusivistic religion. Its adherents confessed a proper path to follow, and even as Josephus was clearly interested in presenting Jewish principles in as moderate away as possible, he too gently made obvious his desire that others recognize the value in and ultimately honor the principles of the God of Israel.

This exclusivist approach, then, contained within it an implicit challenge to those with alternative views. Many may have been oblivious to this sense of challenge. Others may have recognized it but decided to ignore it. But for some, the sense of personal threat, if not explicitly recognized, could be implicitly perceived, and that sense of threat had the capacity to account for various demonstrations of anti-Judaism in the first century. That did not mean that Jewish theology in itself was to blame. But it did mean that adherence to Jewish theology could create for a Jew an ongoing sense of risk. This risk was no small thing, not because it was often or even regularly realized but simply because it was always there. To at least acknowledge this risk seems helpful in understanding the status of Jews in the Roman Empire in the first century AD.

From antipathy to exile

Recognizing this risk, then, helps us better understand the world in which Josephus wrote. While in so many ways he was integrated into his society, because of the nature of his beliefs there was an embraced implicit condemnation of his society. Josephus was different from those around him. Josephus did not fit in to the world in which he lived. His Jewish beliefs, by definition, distinguished him in a most fundamental way from so many strangers, so many neighbors, and even so many of his friends. Josephus could not escape his separateness.

Josephus was not alone in being separate from the society that surrounded him. In the two chapters that follow, I will explore the circumstances of three philhellenic philosophers who were separated from society both by imposed physical exile as well as by the uniqueness of their philosophical views. In spite of their marginalization, they retained confidence in their philosophical principles and professed a sense of victory in spite of apparent defeat. The experiences of these individuals will provide templates, then, for a characterization of Josephus' own approach as one marginalized, himself an "exile of thought" who yet retained his sense of victory.

CHAPTER 4 – An Exilic Path to Follow

The world in which Josephus lived was only too familiar with exile. Tacitus, describing the circumstances of AD 69, speaks of “a sea filled with exiles” (*plenum exiliis mare*).¹ The rhetorician Lucian reflects on the proliferation of exiles, highlighting the capacity of this phenomenon to bring honor to the exile rather than primarily shame. In fact, the *faux* philosopher in Lucian’s *Peregrinus* sees such status as so attractive that he purposefully exiles himself. Sure enough, just as he wished, others spoke admiringly of him as “the philosopher exiled because of his free speech and excessive freedom – and on these grounds, he joined the company of Musonius, Dio, Epictetus, and anyone else who found himself in such a predicament” (ὁ φιλόσοφος διὰ τὴν παρρησίαν καὶ τὴν ἄγαν ἐλευθερίαν ἐξελαθείς, καὶ προσήλυνε κατὰ τοῦτο τῷ Μουσωνίῳ καὶ Δίῳ καὶ Ἐπικτήτῳ καὶ εἴ τις ἄλλος ἐν περιστάσει τοιαύτῃ ἐγένετο).²

Exile as punishment

While some may have associated honor with personal exile, the default mode was to view exile as what it was intended to be, a punishment. Dio Chrysostom, in presenting his own wrestlings with the concept, characterizes the general attitude toward exile: “So [since it seemed that I would be an exile,] I began to consider whether this matter of banishment was really a grievous thing and a misfortune, as it is in the view of the majority” (τότε δ’ οὖν, ἐπεὶ με φεύγειν ἔδοξεν, ἐσκόπουν πότερον ὄντως χαλεπὸν τι καὶ δυστυχὲς εἶη τὸ τῆς φυγῆς ὡς κατὰ τὴν τῶν πολλῶν δόξαν).³

¹ *Hist* 1.2.

² Lucian, *Peregrinus* 18; trans. by Whitmarsh (2001) 135.

³ Dio Chrysostom, *13th Oration* 2; trans. by J.W. Cohoon.

This “majority” view – that banishment is a “grievous thing and a misfortune” – would have found affirmation in the words of one who was arguing before the Senate for an imposition of exile. Thrasea Paetus, a senator during the rule of Nero, was arguing against the death sentence at the trial of Clutorius Priscus. While taking a stand in that regard, he in no way gave the impression of promoting leniency. He viewed the alternative penalty he proposed still to be harsh. He argued for Priscus’ exile, highlighting the mental anguish exile had power to produce:

multo cum honore Caesaris et acerrime increpito Antistio, non quidquid nocens reus pati mereretur, id egregio sub principe et nulla necessitate obstricto senatui statuendum disseruit: carnificem et laqueum pridem abolita et esse poenas legibus constitutas quibus sine iudicum saevitia et temporum infamia supplicia decernerentur. quin in insula publicatis bonis quo longius sontem vitam traxisset, eo privatim miseriorem et publicae clementiae maximum exemplum futurum.

This House is not obliged, under such an excellent ruler, to impose the maximum sentence that the act deserves. The executioner and the noose were abolished long ago; the laws laid down penalties which inflict punishment without brutalizing the judges or disgracing the times. Let him forfeit his property and be sent to an island, where the longer he drags out his guilty life, the better example will he be of private misery and public clemency.⁴

Exile was considered one example of “penalties laid down by the law” (*poenas legibus constitutes*). To experience exile was to be inflicted with “private misery” (*privatim miseriorem*). Exile was not execution. But it was presented as the next best – or worst – thing.

In an ironic twist, this senator who recommended exile because of its capacity to bring misery was mentored by the philosopher Musonius Rufus.⁵ Musonius, who would become an exile himself, is employed later in this chapter as an example of one who sought to recontextualize exile – that it need not be “private misery,” as Thrasea Paetus characterizes it. In fact, Musonius wrote, “But if you are bad, it is the evil that harms you and not exile; and the misery you feel in exile is the product of evil, not of exile. It is from this you must hasten to

⁴ Tacitus, *Annales* 14.48.5-7; trans. by Bauman (1996) 84.

⁵ Claassen (2001) 66.

secure release rather than from exile” (εἰ δὲ τυγχάνεις κακὸς ὄν, ἢ κακία σε βλάπτει καὶ οὐχ ἡ φυγή· καὶ τὴν γε λύπην ἢ κακία σοι ἐπάγει, οὐχ ἡ φυγή· διὸ ταύτης ἀπολυθῆναι δεῖ σε σπεύδειν μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς φυγῆς).⁶ In spite of his mentor’s views, however, Thræsea Paetus is clear regarding his own perspective on exile: it is a purposefully miserable experience.

Ovid would have agreed. He presents a similar negative view on being separated from one’s homeland as he describes relegation.⁷ While scholars debate whether Ovid actually experienced relegation personally or whether he was just writing about it, in the end his characterization of the experience clearly expected to find resonance in a society familiar with such an imposed punishment. In the *Tristia*, one of Ovid’s exilic compositions, the poet describes the hurt of recollection, the fears of an unknown and dangerous place, and the impact of exile on one’s own mental perspective and capacity.

Scribis, ut oblectem studio lacrimabile tempus,
 ne pereant turpi pectora nostra situ.
 difficile est quod, amice, mones, quia carmina laetum
 sunt opus, et pacem mentis habere volunt.
 nostra per adversas agitur fortuna procellas,
 sorte nec ulla mea tristior esse potest.
 exigis ut Priamus natorum funere ludat,
 et Niobe festos ducat ut orba choros.
 luctibus an studio videor debere teneri,
 solus in extremos iussus abire Getas?
 des licet in valido pectus mihi robore fultum,
 fama refert Anyti quale fuisse reo,
 fracta cadet tantae sapientia mole ruinae:
 plus valet humanis viribus ira dei.
 ille senex, dictus sapiens ab Apolline, nullum
 scribere in hoc casu sustinisset opus.
 ut veniant patriae, veniant oblivia vestri,
 omnis ut amissi sensus abesse queat,

⁶ Lecture ix, 51-52; trans. by Lutz.

⁷ Relegation was distinct from exile in that one was permitted to retain ownership of property left behind. While this is not an inconsequential distinction (see, for example, Ovid in *Tristia* V.xi.9-10; 15-18; 21, where he clarifies for his wife that he has been pronounced not an exile but one who has been relegated [Wilson (2002) 58]), for purposes of characterizing the emotional state of those separated from their homes under compulsion, the experiences of relegation and exile will be viewed as more similar than different.

at timor officio fungi vetat ipse quietum:
 cinctus ab innumero me tenet hoste locus,
 adde quod ingenium longa rubigine laesum
 torpet et est multo, quam fuit ante, minus, . . .
 sic utinam, quae nil metuentem tale magistrum
 perdidit, in cineres Ars mea versa foret!

You write: I should lighten my sad hours with work,
 lest my thoughts vanish through shameful neglect.
 What you advise is hard, my friend, since songs
 are the product of joy, and need a mind at peace.
 My fortunes are blown about by hostile winds,
 and nothing could be sadder than my fate.
 You're urging Priam to dance at the death of his sons,
 and Niobe, bereaved, to lead the festive chorus.
 You think poetry and not mourning should claim
 one ordered off alone to the distant Getae?
 Grant me a heart strengthened by the vigorous power
 they say Socrates had, who was accused by Anytus,
 wisdom still falls crushed by the weight of such misfortune:
 a god's anger's more powerful than human strength.
 That ancient, called wise by Apollo, would have had
 no more power to write in this situation.
 If I could forget my country, and forget you,
 if all sense of what I've lost should leave me,
 still fear itself denies me peace to perform the task,
 I live in a place encircled by countless enemies.
 And add to that, my imagination's dulled, harmed
 by long disuse, and much inferior to what it once was. . . .
 If only my *Ars Amatoria*, that ruined its author,
 who anticipated no such thing, had turned to ashes!⁸

The pain of relegation left Ovid wondering whether one could be more grieved. Cicero seems to feel the same.

Cicero, who certainly did personally experience what he describes, lived through a period of relegation that exceeded a year. During that time, he composed voluminous correspondence to his friend Atticus which, among other things, bemoaned his fate. In a letter composed in 58 BC, he writes:

⁸ Ovid, *Tristia* V.XII 1-22, 67-68; trans. by A.S. Kline.

me ita dolere, ut non modo a mente non deserar, sed id ipsum doleam, me tam firma mente ubi utar et quibuscum non habere. Nam, si tu me uno non sine maerore cares, quid me censes, qui et te et omnibus? Et, si tu incolumis me requiris, quo modo a me ipsam incolumitatem desiderari putas? Nolo commemorare, quibus rebus sim spoliatus, non solum quia non ignores, sed etiam ne rescindam ipse dolorem meum; hoc confirm, neque tantis bonis esse privatum quemquam neque in tantas miserias incidisse. Dies autem non modo non levat luctum hunc, sed etiam auget. Nam ceteri dolores mitigantur vetustate, hic non potest non et sensu praesentis miseriae et recordatione praeteritae vitae cotidie augeri. Desidero enim non mea solum neque meos, sed me ipsum. Quid enim sum?

. . . though I do grieve, yet I keep all my mental faculties, and it is precisely that which vexes me—I have no opportunity and no one with whom to employ so sound an intellect. For if you cannot find yourself separated from one individual like myself without sorrow, what do you think must be my case, who am deprived both of you and of everyone else? And if you, while still in possession of all your rights, miss me, to what an extent do you think those rights are missed by me? I will not enumerate the things of which I have been despoiled, not only because you are not ignorant of them, but also lest I should reopen my own sorrow. I only assert this, that never did anyone in an unofficial position possess such great advantages, or fall into such great miseries. Moreover, lapse of time not only does not soften this grief, it even enhances it. For other sorrows are softened by age, this one cannot but be daily increased both by my sense of present misery and the recollection of my past life. For it is not only property or friends that I miss, but myself. For what am I?⁹

Cicero is tortured by his separation. Yet his is not only a sorrow of lost associations. It is a pain of lost connection even with himself – exile had created a crisis of self-identity. In the most subtle and deepest fashions, exile could be torturous.

Exile moderated

Exile was presumed to be punishment. The senator Thrasea Paetus presents exile as the harshest of consequences, short only of execution. Ovid presents separation from one's homeland as capable of producing inordinate grief. Cicero depicts his own relegation as capable of robbing even his own self from himself. Yet while examples abound of exiles giving

⁹ Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* Book III Letter 15; trans. by E.O. Shuckburgh.

expression to this pain, there were also efforts by some to contextualize exile in a way that would permit it to be less grievous.

Ironically, Cicero himself offers an example of such optimism. Plutarch also stands out as a notable proponent of such a perspective. Both of these prominent individuals engaged the topic of exile and sought to position it in such a fashion so as to bring encouragement to those who were struggling. In the face of exile, they projected optimism. These individuals, then, are worthy of consideration as one seeks models for Josephus' own handling of his virtual exile. They have the potential to serve as a useful pattern against which Josephus' own optimistic approach can be compared.

Positioning Cicero as a potential model for optimism in the midst of exile does seem a bit ironic. He is the very one who claimed almost to have lost his very identity through the experience of exile.¹⁰ Was that optimism, or was that verging on despair?

In the case of Cicero, the passage of time and perhaps the change in circumstances, as he was no longer an exile himself, seem to have had an impact on his perspective. Cicero was now ready to offer optimistic advice to others. He seeks to lessen the pain of exile by reminding his friend Fadius that he can reflect on blessings though separated by distance:

tu vero, qui et fortunas et liberos habeas et nos ceterosque necessitudine et benevolentia tecum coniunctissimos, quomque magnam facultatem sis habiturus nobiscum et cum omnibus tuis vivendi . . . omnibus his de causis debes istam molestiam quam lenissime ferre.

You indeed – seeing that you keep your fortune and your children, and have me and the rest closely bound to you by the ties of intimacy and goodwill, and also because you are likely to have every opportunity of living with me and all your friends . . . for all these reasons then you ought to bear that trouble of yours with as light a heart as possible.¹¹

¹⁰ Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* Book III Letter 15.

¹¹ Cicero, *Letters to Friends* Book V Letter 18.2; trans. by Williams.

Fadius can consider the fact that his fortune remains intact, and his family as well. Friends remain. Hope endures, as Cicero believes that his ultimate return from exile is likely.

Cicero also attempts to bring perspective in the midst of exile by reminding others that suffering is not unique to their situation. He addresses Manlius Torquatus in this fashion:

etsi ea perturbatio est omnium rerum, ut suae quemque fortunae maxime paeniteat nemoque sit quin ubivis quam ibi, ubi sit, esse malit, tamen mihi dubium non est quin hoc tempore bono viro Romae esse miserrimum sit. qua re, etsi multarum rerum desiderio te angere necesse est, tamen illo dolore, quo maxime te confici audio, quod Romae non sis, animum tuum libera.

Though the universal upset is such that each man thinks his position the worst possible, and that there is no one who does not wish to be anywhere but where he is, yet I feel no doubt that at the present moment the most miserable place for a good man to be in is Rome. . . . Therefore, though you must necessarily be pained by the absence of many objects, yet from that particular sorrow, with which I am told that you are specially overpowered—that you are not at Rome—pray free your mind.¹²

Attempting to ameliorate pain by reminding the hurting that others hurt too might be viewed as cold comfort. Nevertheless, Cicero seems authentically to be trying to help.

Cicero employs additional themes in his effort to comfort those who are exiled. Jo-Marie Claassen, in her *Displaced Persons*, summarizes the approaches Cicero employs in his letters:

. . . private grief is small against public woe, exile is preferable to watching in person the debilitation of the state, the addressee's woes are temporary, the exile must count his present blessings, particularly the kindness of family, friends and children; the blows of Fortune are part of the human condition; public life is experiencing a convulsion which will end an era; death will bring relief; the exile must undertake literary studies as a means of curing grief; time brings change; the addressee must work for his own relief by a conscious moral effort; a consciousness of innocence and rectitude brings in her comfort.¹³

Cicero is certainly open to acknowledging the grief that exile can bring. But in general, he consistently suggests that when one views exile from a broader perspective, one can embrace

¹² *Fam* 6.1; trans. by Shuckburgh.

¹³ Claassen (1999) 79.

the positives and arrive at an ultimate peace. While it does not seem that Cicero found himself capable of this perspective while he himself was an exile, it is evident that he believes a more optimistic perspective to be possible, and he encourages his friends to view events in that way.

Cicero is not the only one who sought to shine a brighter perspective on the hardships associated with exile. Plutarch does the same. His approach comes across as energetic and heartfelt. In his lengthy essay *On Exile*, he seeks to bring comfort and perspective to a man from Sardis who had not been exiled to a particular place, but he had been prohibited from returning to his home.¹⁴

To set the stage, Plutarch does not soft-pedal the pain exile can bring. “But let us grant (as many say and sing) that it is a grievous thing to be banished” (ἔστω δὲ δεινόν, ὥσπερ οἱ πολλοὶ λέγουσι καὶ ἄδουσιν, ἢ φυγή).¹⁵ Yet he proceeds immediately to offset the bad with the good. “So there are also many things that we eat, of a bitter, sharp, and biting taste, which yet by a mixture of other things more mild and sweet have all their unpleasantness taken off” (καὶ γὰρ τῶν βρωμάτων πικρὰ πολλὰ καὶ δριμύα καὶ δάκνοντα τὴν αἴσθησίν ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ μινύοντες αὐτοῖς ἕνια τῶν γλυκέων καὶ προσηνῶν τὴν ἀηδίαν ἀφαιροῦμεν).¹⁶ Exile is bitter. But there are other bitter things in life which people do not notice very much. So, one should not assume that exile, though bitter, will ultimately taste bad.

Plutarch offers additional ways to reframe an experience that is painful.

καίτοι γελῶμεν τὴν ἀβελτερίαν τοῦ φάσκοντος ἐν Ἀθήναις βελτίονα σελήνην εἶναι τῆς ἐν Κορίνθῳ, τρόπον τινὰ τὸ αὐτὸ πάσχοντες ὅταν ἀμφιγνοῶμεν, ἐπὶ ξένης γενόμενοι, τὴν γῆν, τὴν θάλατταν, τὸν ἀέρα, τὸν οὐρανόν, ὡς ἕτερα καὶ διαφέροντα τῶν συνήθων.

We shall certainly laugh at his folly who shall affirm there was a better moon at Athens than at Corinth; and yet we in a sort commit the same error, when being in a strange

¹⁴ Plutarch, *Moralia—On Exile* 12.

¹⁵ Plutarch, *Moralia—On Exile* 3; trans. by Goodwin.

¹⁶ Plutarch, *Moralia—On Exile* 3; trans. by Goodwin.

country we look upon the earth, the sea, the air, the heavens doubtfully, as if they were not the same, but quite different from those we have been accustomed to.¹⁷

With these words, Plutarch implies that a broader perspective can help the exile realize that things are not as different as they might initially seem. The exile should be content that the place where he now lives has the same component elements as the place he left. There is still dirt there. There is still air.

By speaking of bitter foods and a single moon in the sky, Plutarch employs creative logic to help the exile smile and be more accepting of his circumstances. Plutarch addresses the consequences of exile in other ways as well. He notes that those whose exile entails significant financial loss have opportunity to rebuild their accounts.

πλοῦτον μὲν γὰρ ἀποβαλόντα ῥαδίως καὶ ταχέως οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλον συναγαγεῖν, πατρις δὲ γίνεται πᾶσα πόλις εὐθὺς ἀνθρώπῳ χρῆσθαι μεμαθηκότι καὶ ρίζας ἔχοντι πανταχοῦ ζῆν τε καὶ τρέφεσθαι καὶ παντὶ τόπῳ προσφύεσθαι δυναμένας

It is not easy indeed for him that has lost his wealth quickly to gather it up again; but every city becomes presently that man's country who has the skill to use it, and who has those roots which can live and thrive, cling and grow to every place.¹⁸

Exile does return an individual to square one, but there is hope for financial recovery.

Plutarch offers more encouragement. He acknowledges that exile separates one from the many experiences of one's former life, but he then proposes that this can be viewed as a positive. Plutarch says that an exile who is handling things well will sing these words of Pindar: "I've little land and so not many trees, But free from sorrow I enjoy much ease" (ἐμοὶ δ' ὀλίγον δέδοται μὲν γᾶς, ὅθεν ἄ δρῦς, οὐ πενθέων δ' ἔλαχον, οὐ στασίων).¹⁹ Building on this theme of separation from the cares of life, Plutarch shines the spotlight even more brightly on this proposed benefit of exile.

¹⁷ Plutarch, *Moralia—On Exile* 6; trans. by Goodwin.

¹⁸ Plutarch, *Moralia—On Exile* 7; trans. by Goodwin.

¹⁹ Plutarch, *Moralia—On Exile* 9; trans. by Goodwin.

ἀνήρ δὲ μὴ τετυφωμένος παντάπασι μηδὲ ὀγλομανῶν οὐκ ἄν, οἶμαι, μέμψαιτο τὴν τύχην συνελαινώμενος εἰς νῆσον, ἀλλ' ἐπαινέσειεν ὅτι τὸν πολὺν ἄλυν καὶ ῥέμβον ἑαυτοῦ, καὶ πλάνας ἐν ἀποδημίαις, καὶ κινδύνους ἐν θαλάσσει, καὶ θορύβους ἐν ἀγορᾷ, περιελούσα, μόνιμον καὶ σχολαῖον καὶ ἀπερίσπαστον καὶ ἴδιον βίον ὡς ἀληθῶς δίδωσι . . .

And, indeed, a man that is not puffed up with conceit nor madly in love with a crowd will not, I suppose, have any reason to accuse Fortune for constraining him to live in an island, but will rather commend her for removing so much anxiety and agitation of his mind, for putting a stop to his rambles in foreign countries, to his dangers at sea, and the noise and tumult of the exchange, and for giving him a fixed, vacant, undisturbed life, such a life as he may truly call his own . . .²⁰

So, not only does exile set one free from negatives. The absence of such negatives opens the door for something many crave – an undisturbed life which one can truly call one's own.

Plutarch goes on to say, “We, whilst we pore upon one part of banishment which is ignominious, overlook its vacancy from business, and that leisure and freedom it affords us” (οὕτως τῆς φυγῆς πρὸς ἓν μέρος τὸ ἄδοξον ἐντεινόμενοι, παρορῶμεν τὴν ἀπραγμοσύνην καὶ τὴν σχολὴν καὶ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν).²¹ An exile is wrong, suggests Plutarch, to contemplate only the shame that can be associated with exile. Let the exile recognize benefits that so many can only wish for, but the exile actually enjoys.

Plutarch makes multiple arguments to soften the blow of exile. He employs creative logic – he associates the bitterness of exile with bitter foods overcome by attractive flavors and he tries to moderate the loneliness of exile by noting that basic elements of dirt and air are present in the new place as well. He redirects the exile to the future, suggesting that the prospect of future financial gain can soften the blow of vast resources lost. He recontextualizes the loss of previous activities, noting the burden of such activities and then highlighting the freedom and flexibility in one's now empty schedule.

²⁰ Plutarch, *Moralia—On Exile* 11; trans. by Goodwin.

²¹ Plutarch, *Moralia—On Exile* 12; trans. by Goodwin.

There is one more argument Plutarch makes. As he brings his *On Exile* to a close, he ventures more deeply into the world of philosophy. He presents his conviction regarding the origin of the soul. He describes an existence for the soul which preceded association with the body, a time when the soul was free to fly and wander. However, it was subsequently “tied and linked to the body” (ἐνδεδεμένη τῷ σώματι).²² When combined with the body, the soul lost the memory of its former glorious state.

Had the soul retained its memory of its former glorious state, it would seem more likely that small moves from place to place on the earth would have little impact. The soul would recognize the greatness of the change from its former existence to its present one and see all earthly movement, including exile, to be comparatively inconsequential. However, because of the soul’s forgetfulness, “if she is forced to make little removes here from place to place, the soul hereupon is ill at ease and troubled at her new and strange state” (ἂν μικρὸν ἐνταῦθα τόπον ἐκ τόπου παραλλάξῃ, δυσανασχετεῖ καὶ ξενοπαθεῖ).²³

Plutarch is helping an exile understand why he experiences discomfort in his new circumstances, even though there can be so many reasons – as Plutarch confidently shares them – for having a more copacetic view of the separation. The discomfort arises because the soul is ill at ease. Yet that does not mean an exile is without hope. Plutarch immediately asserts that “no place can deprive a man of his happiness” (ἀνθρώπου δὲ οὐδεὶς ἀφαιρεῖται τόπος εὐδαιμονίαν)²⁴ and offers a few final examples of individuals who maintained their composure in exile.

When offering a path for optimism in the face of exile, Plutarch does not pretend that such circumstances cannot bring pain. In fact, in his final philosophical section, he validates the

²² Plutarch, *Moralia—On Exile* 17; trans. by Goodwin.

²³ Plutarch, *Moralia—On Exile* 17; trans. by Goodwin.

²⁴ Plutarch, *Moralia—On Exile* 17; trans. by Goodwin.

pain by attributing it to something so deep that exiles may not even be able to understand it. Yet Plutarch offers multiple techniques for redirecting the exile and subordinating the pain.

Happiness, he contends, is not dependent on place but on perspective.

Exile overcome

During the imperial period, exile was not an unfamiliar occurrence. While exile was plainly and properly viewed as punishment, various individuals sought to recontextualize the experience so as to permit a more optimistic perspective on the part of the victim. Recalling again the larger project, I am arguing that Josephus may be viewed as writing from the perspective of exile. While not physically exiled in the same sense as others, he was part of a group that was, in many respects, separated from contemporary culture as a whole. So, while Josephus was not an exile of land and space, one can propose that he was an exile of cognition and perception. His beliefs set him apart. Yet as he wrote, he presents not a pessimistic view of his status as one who is different – one who is an “exile” – but instead he is optimistic. In fact, he wishes those who are “free” to join him in his “exile.”

As striking as this may seem, there were other individuals more or less contemporary who also presented an optimistic take on an apparently pessimistic set of circumstances. Cicero and Plutarch, even as they recognized the difficulties, sought to insert some optimism into the normally negative experience of exile. Might these two men, then, offer a helpful template against which one can compare the approach of Josephus?

In some ways, the answer to that question could be yes. Both Cicero and Plutarch address the concept of separation from surrounding society. Both encourage positive attitudes in the face of a negative. But there are facets of the writings of these individuals which do not connect as well to the experience of Josephus. Cicero offered consoling letters to exiles as one

who had experienced exile himself, but in those months when he was actually an exile years before, he presented a very different attitude than the one promoted in his letters of consolation. Then, while Plutarch clearly applied a great deal of thought to the experience of exile, Plutarch himself had never experienced exile. In the cases of both Cicero and Plutarch, then, there is arguable separation between a perspective offered in literary form and the reality of what it was like to actually live out separation with optimism. While Cicero offered optimism, it is challenging to reconcile that with his clearly pessimistic view when actually an exile. While Plutarch offered optimism, one may wonder whether he sufficiently understood the pressures an exile could feel. In sum, these may not be the best witnesses one could bring for authentic conquest in the face of exile.

In seeking models for Josephus, then, might there be better subjects for comparison? Are there exiles who not only plotted out an optimistic pathway in literary form but also tested and authenticated that pathway through real-life experience? And among those who had the real-life experience of exile, are there ones who did not only talk a good game after the fact, but actually laid claim to victory in the very moment of their trauma?

Three individuals stand out. These individuals lived more or less contemporaneously with Josephus. These individuals were exiled. They wrote of their exilic experiences in terms that conveyed not simply a sense of perseverance, but a sense of conquest. In addition, this sense of conquest is conveyed not in contrast to the way they really felt when they were exiled. Rather, this sense of conquest is offered as their authentic take on their own challenging circumstances. They did not simply write about the potential for conquest. They themselves had actually conquered.

Musonius Rufus, Dio Chrysostom, and Favorinus are these conquering philosophers. They will serve to characterize the course that Josephus followed in so many ways. Their lives spanned a period from the mid-first century to the mid-second century. All three were exiled. Musonius Rufus was exiled by Nero and then again by Vespasian;²⁵ Dio Chrysostom was exiled by Emperor Domitian; and Favorinus was exiled by Hadrian.

Not only were these three similar in that they had exilic experiences. They also had close ties intellectually. The connections began with Musonius serving as Dio's teacher. This linkage is identified by Marcus Cornelius Fronto, a Roman grammarian and rhetorician active in the mid-second century AD, in a letter defending his right to use eloquent speech. In this letter, whose recipient is unknown to us, Fronto offers a list of famous individuals who also employed artful words: "What in our own recollection of Euphrates, Dio, Timocrates, Athenodotus? What of their master Musonius? Were they not gifted with a supreme command of words, famed as much for their eloquence as for their wisdom?" (Quid nostra memoria Euphrates, Dio, Timocrates, Athenodotus? Quid horum magister Musonius? Nonne summa facundia praediti neque minus sapientiae quam eloquentiae gloria inclyti [sic] extiterunt?)²⁶ In this listing of the eloquent, both Musonius and Dio are included. Musonius is presented as Dio's master – Dio is the student.

Dio apparently learned well, and ultimately he became Favorinus' teacher. Philostratus, in his *Lives of the Sophists*, describes this relationship in the context of an appointment that

²⁵ This second exile of Musonius is attested in only one place, in the *Chronicles* of Jerome (*Anno* 2096) where he writes, "Titus recalled Musonius Rufus from exile" (Titus Musonium Rufum de exilio revocat). Because there was an occasion where Vespasian expelled many philosophers from Rome but specifically excluded Musonius, some scholars doubt this citation by Jerome. They question whether a Vespasian who was kind to Musonius early in his reign would subsequently exile him so that he would be in need of Titus' help. Clearly, however, the passage of time and changes in circumstances can result in a change of imperial perspective. There seems to be no strong reason for calling into question the second exile of Musonius.

²⁶ Fronto, 2.50-53. Latin and translation from the 1920 Harvard University Press edition; trans. by Haines.

Favorinus received to be high priest. Favorinus was reluctant to take on this responsibility, and he was intending to argue that philosophers traditionally have been exempt from such public service. When he learned that Emperor Hadrian was going to oppose his effort to escape responsibility by saying that Favorinus really was not a philosopher, Favorinus had a sudden change of heart:

“ἐνύπνιόν μοι,” ἔφη “ὦ βασιλεῦ, γέγονεν, ὃ καὶ πρὸς σὲ χρὴ εἰρῆσθαι: ἐπιστὰς γάρ μοι Δίων ὁ διδάσκαλος ἐνουθέτει με ὑπὲρ τῆς δίκης λέγων, ὅτι μὴ ἑαυτοῖς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῖς πατρίσι γεγόναμεν: ὑποδέχομαι δὴ, ὦ βασιλεῦ, τὴν λειτουργίαν καὶ τῷ διδασκάλῳ πείθομαι.”

“O Emperor,” he cried, “I have had a dream of which you ought to be informed. My teacher Dio appeared to me, and with respect to the suit admonished and reminded me that we come into the world not for ourselves alone, but also for the country of our birth. Therefore, O Emperor, I obey my teacher, and I undertake this public service.”²⁷

Musonius had been the teacher of Dio. Dio became the teacher of Favorinus. Favorinus completes the circle by himself referring back to Musonius. In explaining how philosophers who show contempt for exile can have very different reasons for doing so, Favorinus writes:

φυγῆς δ' ἂν καὶ ἕτεροι
[δι' ἄλλας α]ιτίας καταφρονήσαιεν, ἀλλ' ὁ [Σι]
[νωπεὺς Διογέν]ης καὶ Κ[ρ]ά[τ]ης [ὁ Θηβ]α[ῖος καὶ]
. . [ad 10 ll.] ιπ[πο]ς [κα]ῖ [ad 11 ll.]
[. . . καὶ ὁ Τυ]ρρηνὸς Μουσώνιος κατεφρό[νη]
σ[αν οὔτοι] δὴ μίσει τῶν πατρίδων οὐδὲ ἔχ[θρα]
[τῶν σφετ]έρων πολιτῶν, ἀλλὰ τὰ παρόντα
πταί σματα²⁸ πάντα ὡς ἀνθρώπινα ἀσπαζόμε[νο]ι.²⁹

Different people may show contempt for exile for different reasons, but Diogenes of Sinope, Crates of Thebes, [Chrysippus of Soi], [Dio of Prusa], and the Etruscan Musonius showed contempt for it out of neither hatred of their fatherlands nor enmity

²⁷ Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* 490; trans. by Wright.

²⁸ No space should exist between the ι and the σ. Efforts to ensure that dots were under both letters resulted in the extra space.

²⁹ The Greek text is from Barigazzi's *Favorino Di Arelate Opere*. This is the text which Whitmarsh used for his translation.

toward their fellow citizens, but because they accepted as part of the human condition all the circumstances that befell them.³⁰

Favorinus refers to Musonius one additional time. In listing individuals who suffered apparent disaster yet would be considered more fortunate than those who appeared to be successful, he writes:

τίς δὲ οὐκ ἂν ἀποθανεῖν <μᾶλλον> εὖξαιτο ὡς
Σωκράτης ἢ ζῆν ὡς Ἄνυτος καὶ Μέλητος; τίς
δὲ οὐκ ἐζημιῶσθαι μᾶλλον ὡς Περικλῆς ἢ
κρ[ατ]εῖν ὡς Κλέων; τίς δὲ οὐ πένεσθαι
μᾶλλον ὡς Ἀριστείδης ἢ πλουτεῖν ὡς Καλ-
λίας, καὶ ἠτιμῶσθαι ὡς
Θρασύβουλος ἢ ἄρχειν ὡς Κριτίας, καὶ φεύ-
γειν ὡς Μουσ[ών]ιος ἢ βασιλεύειν ὡς Νέ-
ρων;

Who would not pray to die like Socrates, rather than to live as Anytus and Meletus did? Or to be punished like Pericles rather than to hold power like Cleon? To be poor like Aristides rather than rich like Callias, to be stripped of one's position like Thrasybulus rather than to rule like Critias, to be an exile like Musonius rather than to rule like Nero?³¹

Admittedly these references by Favorinus to Musonius do not of themselves establish a linkage between the two, any more than the mention of Nero indicates some connection between Favorinus and the emperor. Evidence suggesting a connection lies in the teacher-student ancestry. But the citations do demonstrate that Favorinus was not unaware of his philosophical ancestor. The citations make evident that Favorinus had great respect for a man who had preceded him on the exilic path and had charted a course that he himself would ultimately follow.

³⁰ *On Exile* 2.1; trans. by Whitmarsh.

³¹ *On Exile* 23.1; trans. by Whitmarsh.

Musonius, Dio, and Favorinus all shared the experience of exile. They also enjoyed a close association intellectually, which makes it no surprise that many views on exile were also held in common. Finally, these three individuals shared the perspective of being cultural outsiders.

Absent that factor of being a cultural outsider, Seneca might seem another good candidate for serving as a point of comparison for Josephus. Seneca's last years were contemporaneous with the first years of Josephus' life. He too experienced exile personally – from AD 41 to AD 49. Finally, he proved himself capable of presenting an optimistic perspective in the midst of his exile. He wrote a touching consolation to Helvia, his mother, employing themes that resonate in the three authors who will be considered in greater detail.³²

While suitable in so many ways, he did write in Latin as a Roman. Musonius, Dio Chrysostom, and Favorinus wrote in Greek, one feature of their status as cultural outsiders. Surely language of composition is in no way determinative of one's philosophy toward exile. However, when models are being sought, there can be benefit in finding points of comparison that mimic as closely as possible the subject of analysis. As Josephus also wrote in Greek as a

³² Ernst Ludwig Grasmück (1978) does offer a slightly contrary view of Seneca with respect to the measure of his optimism. In his *Exilium: Untersuchungen zur Verbannung in der Antike (Exile: An Analysis of Banishment in Antiquity)* Grasmück first links the three exiles under consideration in this project: "In their statements regarding exile and in their behavior, the philosophers Musonius, Dio, and Favorinus distinguish themselves from the examples handled so far" (In ihren Äußerungen zur Verbannung und in ihrem Verhalten unterscheiden sich die Philosophen Musonius, Dio und Favorin von den bisher behandelten Beispielen) [141]. He then acknowledges the common ground these three share with Seneca: "They overlap in many cases with that which we have learned with regard to Seneca" (Sie überschneiden sich vielfach mit dem, was wir bei Seneca kennengelernt haben) [142]. But Grasmück then highlights what he feels is a distinctive feature of Musonius, Dio, and Favorinus: "In our context only a few points are of interest, ones which reflect a distinctive mentality and a shift in emphasis. In the writings of the referenced philosophers which have been preserved for us, no complaining rings out which would awaken pity" (In unserem Zusammenhang interessieren nur wenige Punkte, die eine andere Mentalität und eine Akzentverlagerung erkennen lassen. In den uns erhaltenen Schriften der genannten Philosophen ertönen keine Klagen, die Mitleid wecken wollen) [142]. In the case of Seneca, however, Grasmück is not so complimentary. He speaks of "the covert complaints of Seneca about being far away from Rome" (die versteckten Klagen Senecas über das Fernsein von Rom) [142]. Grasmück detected not even that moderate degree of negativity in Musonius, Dio, and Favorinus. While Seneca was clearly capable of projecting optimism, Grasmück's observation can be viewed as supporting the conclusion that Musonius, Dio, and Favorinus remain preferable points of comparison.

cultural outsider, Musonius and Dio and Favorinus seem ideal templates against which to evaluate Josephus' approach.

In this connection, Tim Whitmarsh, while pursuing a slightly different emphasis than that of this project, nevertheless also views the Greekness of Musonius and Dio Chrysostom and Favorinus as a meaningful bond. He writes:

In the late republic and early principate, as is well known, a considerable body of Latin writing was devoted to the subject of exile, most notably by Cicero, Ovid, and Seneca. The present chapter considers the Greek counterparts of these writers, who often share similar (predominantly Stoic and Cynic) sources, but present such ideas from a specifically Greek vantage, and treat specifically of the relationship between Greek paideia and Roman power.³³

Seneca could surely prove another fruitful source of comparison. The status of cultural outsider which Josephus and the three Grecophile philosophers share, however, makes points of comparison between their views even more meaningful.

Musonius, Dio Chrysostom, and Favorinus had in common the experience of exile, their intellectual heritage, and their outsider status. Most important, in the midst of their exile they shared an authentic sense of conquest. Yet while they did have so much in common, each also possessed elements distinctive in their particular approaches to exile.

Musonius Rufus

As noted previously, Musonius Rufus was exiled by Roman emperors twice.³⁴ Nothing is known about his second exile under Vespasian other than the fact that, as reported by Jerome

³³ Whitmarsh (2001) 136-137.

³⁴ Dillon (2004) speaks of a third exile which would chronologically be the first, occurring earlier in Nero's reign when Musonius accompanied a senator who had been exiled to Asia Minor (6). Because there is no evidence that Musonius himself was officially exiled – he simply joined someone who had officially been exiled – that incident is not counted here.

in his *Chronicles*,³⁵ the next emperor Titus recalled Musonius from his exile. More is known, however, about Musonius' first exile. This exile occurred under Nero. Dio Cassius links this banishment to a role Musonius played in the Pisonian conspiracy:

τί δ' ἄν τις καταλέγοι ὅσα ἐπὶ τῇ ἐπιβουλῇ ταύτῃ ἢ τοῖς δορυφόροις ἐδόθη ἢ τῶ τε Νέρωνι καὶ τοῖς αὐτοῦ φίλοις ὑπέρογκα ἐψηφίσθη; Ροῦφος μέντοι Μουσώνιος ὁ φιλόσοφος ἐπὶ τούτοις ἐφυγαδεύθη.

And why should one enumerate the sums given to the Praetorians on the occasion of this conspiracy or the excessive honours voted to Nero and his friends? Suffice it to say that Rufus Musonius, the philosopher, was banished for his connexion with these events.³⁶

Tacitus shares additional information, explaining that Musonius' prominence played a role in drawing attention to him when it came time for applying punishments: "It was the splendour of their name which drove Verginius Flavus and Musonius Rufus into exile. Verginius encouraged the studies of our youth by his eloquence; Rufus by the teachings of philosophy" (Verginium <Flavum et Musonium> Rufum claritudo nominis expulit: nam Verginius studia iuvenum eloquentia, Musonius praeceptis sapientiae fovebat).³⁷

Musonius was exiled to the island of Gyaros, about 60 miles southeast of Athens. Gyaros was sufficiently repulsive that in the case of one Caius Silanus, a proconsul of Asia found guilty of extortion, Emperor Tiberius viewed expulsion to the island as too harsh. Tacitus reports:

addidit insulam Gyarum immitem et sine cultu hominum esse: darent Iuniae familiae et viro quondam ordinis eiusdem ut Cythnum potius concederet. id sororem quoque Silani Torquatam, priscae sanctimoniae virginem, expetere

He further said that Gyarus was a dreary and uninhabited island, and that, as a concession to the Junian family and to a man of the same order as themselves, they might let him

³⁵ *Chronicles Anno 2096*. Jerome writes, "Titus recalled Musonius Rufus from exile (Titus Musonium Rufum de exilio revocat)." As indicated in an earlier footnote, some scholars doubt this citation by Jerome because Vespasian actually refrained from exiling Musonius on an earlier occasion when he expelled many philosophers from Rome. As also mentioned earlier, a prior allowance need not imply that circumstances could not have changed.

³⁶ *Roman History* 62.27.4; trans. by Cary (1925).

³⁷ *Annales* 15.71; trans. by Church and Brodribb.

retire by preference to Cythnus. This, he added, was also the request of Torquata, Silanus's sister, a vestal of primitive purity."³⁸

In the case of Silanus, the emperor Tiberius viewed exile to Gyaros as too harsh.

Philostratus, however, seems to present Musonius' exile to that island in a slightly different light. When locating Musonius on Gyaros, Philostratus can be read as implying that Nero's decision to exile Musonius so close to Greece was an attempt to frustrate the philosopher's eagerness to suffer as much as possible.

Philostratus sets the stage for this characterization of Musonius' exile by referring to the head of Domitian's praetorian guard, Aelian. Aelian used reverse psychology to protect a philosopher acquaintance, Apollonius, from the sword of Domitian. The soldier explained to Domitian that the philosopher actually wanted to die and was trying to provoke the emperor to kill him. As Domitian consequently refused to satisfy the philosopher's longing, in this roundabout way Aelian preserved Appolonius' life.³⁹

Philostratus then notes that Nero was drawn to seemingly merciful judgments because he too wanted to rob philosophers – in this case, Demetrius the Cynic⁴⁰ – of the pleasure of suffering too much:

ταῦθ' ἡγοῦμαι καὶ Νέρωνα ἐνθυμηθέντα μὴ ὑπαχθῆναι ὑπὸ Δημητρίου ἀποκτεῖναι αὐτόν,
ἐπεὶ γὰρ θανατῶντα ἤσθετο, οὐ κατὰ ξυγγνώμην ἐπανῆκεν αὐτῷ τὸν θάνατον, ἀλλὰ καθ'
ὑπεροψίαν τοῦ κτεῖναι

³⁸ *Annales* 3.69; trans. by Church & Brodribb.

³⁹ *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* VII.16.

⁴⁰ Seneca refers to the philosopher Demetrius a number of times in his *Moral Letters to Lucilius*. In Letter 20, he offers him as an example of someone who lives his life consistent with what he teaches. Having told Lucilius, "Prove your words by your deeds" (*verba rebus proba*, *Epistulae* 20, 1), Seneca highlights Demetrius as an eminent example of one who follows this principle: "I, at any rate, listen in a different spirit to the utterances of our friend Demetrius, after I have seen him reclining without even a cloak to cover him, and, more than this, without rugs to lie upon. He is not only a teacher of the truth, but a witness to the truth." (*Ego certe aliter audio, quae dicit Demetrius noster, cum illum vidi nudum, quanto minus quam stramentis, incubantem; non praeceptor veri, sed testis est, Epistulae* 20.9.)

This I think was the reason which weighed with Nero and prevented his being drawn on by Demetrius into slaying him. For as he saw that he was anxious for death, he let him off not because he wished to pardon him, but because he disdained to put him to death.⁴¹

Having presented these two parallel incidents, Philostratus now describes the circumstances of Musonius:

καὶ μὴν καὶ Μουσώνιον τὸν Τυρρηνὸν πολλὰ τῇ ἀρχῇ ἐναντιωθέντα τῇ νησῶ ξυνέσχεν, ἧ ὄνομα Γύαρα, καὶ οὕτω τι τῶν σοφιστῶν τούτων ἦττους Ἕλληνας, ὡς τότε μὲν κατὰ ξυνουσίαν αὐτοῦ ἐσπλεῖν πάντας, νυνὶ δὲ κατὰ ἱστορίαν τῆς κρήνης· ἐν γὰρ τῇ νήσῳ ἀνδρῶ οὔση πρότερον εὖρημα Μουσωνίου κρήνη ἐγένετο, ἣν ἄδουσιν Ἕλληνας, ὅσα Ἐλικῶνι τὴν τοῦ ἵππου.

Moreover in the case of Musonius the Tyrrhenian, who opposed his rule in many ways, he only kept him in the island called Gyara; and Hellenes are so fond of these Sophists, that at that time they were all making voyages by ship to visit him, as they now do to visit the spring; for until Musonius went there, there was no water in the island, but he discovered a spring, which the Greeks celebrate as loudly as they do the horses spring at Helicon.⁴²

Philostratus describes Musonius as one who had opposed Nero's authority in many ways –

πολλὰ τῇ ἀρχῇ ἐναντιωθέντα. Yet even in that case (καὶ Μουσώνιον – even with Musonius)

Nero confined him to Gyaros, implying that this was a surprise destination for someone so

virulently opposed to the emperor. While Tiberius had viewed the island as too harsh, Nero

seems to have had a slightly different view. Philostratus appears to imply that in the case of a

philosopher, Nero could view exiling someone to a location near Athens and its cadre of

philosophers as a way to frustrate the apparent disdain with which philosophers could meet

punishment. Did they crave harsh treatment? Nero would not satisfy such a desire. Instead he

would apply only a moderate punishment.⁴³

⁴¹ *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* VII.16; trans. by Conybeare.

⁴² *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* VII.16; trans. by Conybeare.

⁴³ Vespaian dealt with the philosopher Demetrius in similar fashion. When Demetrius refused to go into exile as Vespaian had commanded, Vespaian sent this message: “You’re doing everything to force me to kill you, but I do not slay a barking dog” (σὺ μὲν πάντα ποιεῖς ἵνα σε ἀποκτείνω, ἐγὼ δὲ κύνα ὑλακτοῦντα οὐ φονεύω, *Dio Cass.* 66.13.3); trans. by Cary.

If this analysis of Nero’s motives is accurate, one may conclude that Musonius’ exile could have been worse. Nevertheless, this would only have been a matter of degrees. Exile remained a punishment. The island of Gyarus was barren and isolated. Nero intended to harm Musonius. Whether Nero was intending to moderate the punishment or not, Musonius still faced extreme challenge. In the face of such a challenge, he presents a most surprising point of view.

While we do not know the precise chronological relationship between Musonius’ two exiles and his lecture entitled “That exile is not an evil,”⁴⁴ we do know that he was an exile when he composed this work. Musonius makes this obvious when, in his lecture on exile, he is demonstrating that exile need not rob a man of his freedom of speech. He refers the circumstances of Diogenes, who had been an exile in both Athens and Corinth. Though Diogenes was an exile, Musonius explains, there was no one in those cities more free to speak as he pleased than he (ἐλευθεριώτερος ἄλλος τις ἢ Διογένης τῶν τότε ἀνθρώπων ἦν;).⁴⁵ Having cited a figure from the past, Musonius then observes, “But why should I employ examples of long ago? Are you not aware that I am an exile? Well, then, have I been deprived of freedom of speech?” (καὶ τί δεῖ τὰ παλαιὰ λέγειν; ἀλλ’ ἐγὼ σοι οὐ δοκῶ εἶναι φυγάς; ἄρ’ οὖν ἐστέρημαι παρρησίας;)⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Writings of Musonius Rufus remain accessible to us largely due to a compilation of Greek texts gathered by Joannes Stobaeus in the fifth century AD. Among materials preserved by Stobaeus were 21 discussions by Musonius on various topics. These discussions include Musonius addressing the question of whether sons and daughters should be given the same education – with some exceptions for particular practical skills, he believes that they should. Musonius speaks about the purpose of marriage and traits that make a marriage work – each partner should look to the interests of the other. The philosopher even speaks about cutting one’s hair – he argues that men should wear beards. In recommending facial hair, he concludes, “How could hair be a burden to men? Unless, of course, one should say that feathers are a burden to birds also” (τί γὰρ δὴ καὶ εἰσὶν αἱ τρίχες ἀνθρώποις βᾶρος; εἰ μὴ νῆ Δία καὶ τοῖς ὀρσέοις τὰ περὰ φαίη τις ἂν εἶναι βᾶρος, Musonius XXI; trans. by Lutz). Included in that collection of discussions is this lecture addressing exile. [For additional discussion regarding Stobaeus’ transmission of Musonius’ works, see Theodor Pflieger’s *Musonius bei Stobaeus* (1897).]

⁴⁵ ix, 41.

⁴⁶ ix, 42-43; trans. by Lutz.

As an actual exile, then, the suffering which Musonius sought to offset with his argumentation and philosophical approach was not theoretical. He was speaking as one who knew by personal experience the pressures an exile faced. Unlike Plutarch, who wrote of exile without having experienced it himself, Musonius' words would consequently carry an extra measure of credibility. Also, unlike Cicero, his written comments on exile were not written years after the fact and then in contradiction to attitudes displayed while actually an exile. While Musonius was writing to help another who was experiencing exile,⁴⁷ he was at the same time personally implementing his strategies in his own exile. "The reflections which I employ for my own benefit so as not to be irked by exile, I should like to repeat to you" (οἷς δὲ λογισμοῖς χρῶμαι πρὸς ἐμαυτόν, ὥστε μὴ ἄχθεσθαι τῇ φυγῇ, τούτους καὶ πρὸς σὲ εἶποιμι ἄν).⁴⁸ Musonius was not a doctor dispensing medicine he himself was unwilling to take. Instead, he embraced the very prescription he wrote for another. On multiple levels, Musonius was the real deal.

Musonius' prescription for enduring exile offered an approach that would not result in further despair but in growing confidence and ultimate philosophical victory. His approach was multifaceted. He sought to minimize the negatives by emphasizing positives. He focused on the essence of a good life, showing that essence to be just as demonstrable in circumstances of suffering as it is when everything seems to be going well. Finally, he identified who the real winners and who the real losers were.

First, like Plutarch, Musonius framed exile from the perspective of the positives that it brings as opposed to the positives that it takes away. He noted the expanded capacity to enjoy leisure.

⁴⁷ Musonius' ninth lecture is introduced in this way: "Hearing an exile lament because he was living in banishment, Musonius consoled him in somewhat the following way . . ." (φύγδος δὲ τινος ὀδυρομένου ὅτι φεύγει, οὕτω πῶς παρεμυθήσατο αὐτόν . . . , ix, 1); trans. by Lutz.

⁴⁸ ix, 46; trans. by Lutz.

καὶ μὴν πρὸς γε τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν τὴν ἑαυτῶν καὶ πρὸς κτῆσιν ἀρετῆς πῶς ἂν τὸ φεύγειν ἐνίσταται; ὅποτε γε μήτε μαθήσεως μήτε ἀσκήσεως [καὶ] ὧν χρὴ εἴργεται τις διὰ τὴν φυγὴν. πῶς μὲν οὐκ ἂν ἡ φυγὴ καὶ συνεργοίη πρὸς τὸ τοιοῦτον, παρέχουσα γε σχολὴν καὶ ἐξουσίαν τοῦ μαθάνειν τε τὰ καλὰ καὶ πράττειν μᾶλλον ἢ πρότερον . . .

Furthermore, how should exile be an obstacle to the cultivation of the things that are one's own and to the acquisition of virtue, when no one was ever hindered from the knowledge and practice of what is needful because of exile? May it not even be true that exile contributes to that end, since it furnishes men leisure and a greater opportunity for learning the good and practicing it than formerly . . .⁴⁹

Next, reflecting his Stoic views, Musonius presented exile as an opportunity to display qualities which are always to be at the heart of a man's existence but which have particular opportunity to shine when man's existence is not so pleasant. “. . . if you are that good man and have his virtues, exile will not harm or degrade you, because the virtues are present in you which are most able to help and to sustain you” (εἰ μὲν ἀγαθὸς εἶ οὗτος καὶ τὰς ἀρετὰς ἔχεις, οὐκ ἂν σε βλάπτει ἡ φυγὴ οὐδ' ἂν ταπεινοίη, παρόντων γε τῶν ὠφελεῖν καὶ ἐπαίρειν μάλιστα δυναμένων).⁵⁰

Finally, not only does exile facilitate advantages not as readily available apart from exile and concurrently permit the most fundamentally positive parts of humanity to shine brightly – in other words, not only can an exile view his exile from such optimistic perspectives, minimizing greatly the intent of the persecutor to bring suffering. There is something else which comes into play when the exiling itself is unjust. If the exiled individual was in fact in the right all along and yet someone else saw fit to exile him, it is not the exile who is the loser. Rather, it is the one who misused power who stands guilty.

εἰ δ' ἀδίκως, τῶν ἐξελασάντων τοῦτ' ἂν εἴη κακόν, οὐχ ἡμέτερον· εἴπερ νῆ Δία τὸ μὲν ἀδικεῖν θεομισέστατόν ἐστιν, ὅπερ [ἐν] ἐκείνοις συμβέβηκε· τὸ δ' ἀδικεῖσθαι, ὅπερ συμβέβηκεν ἡμῖν, καὶ παρὰ θεοῖς καὶ παρ' ἀνθρώποις τοῖς ἐπιεικέσιν ἐπικουρίας, ἀλλ' οὐχὶ μίσους ἄχιον εἶναι ὑπείληπται.

⁴⁹ ix, 11-12; trans. by Lutz.

⁵⁰ ix, 50; trans. by Lutz.

If [we were banished] unjustly, the evil involved is not ours, but falls upon those who banished us,—if in fact you agree that doing a wrong (as they have done) is the most hateful thing in the world, while suffering a wrong (as has been our fate) in the eyes of the gods and of just men is held a ground not for hate but for help.⁵¹

Not only does guilt fall upon one who improperly exiles another. Honor and good repute can ultimately crown the exile. Musonius observes:

ἀλλ' οὐδὲ κακοδοξεῖν πάντως ἀνάγκη τοὺς φυγόντας διὰ τὴν φυγὴν, γνωρίμου γε πᾶσιν ὄντος, ὅτι καὶ δίκαια πολλὰ δικάζονται κακῶς, καὶ ἐκβάλλονται πολλοὶ τῆς πατρίδος ἀδίκως, καὶ ὅτι ἤδη τινὲς ἄνδρες ἀγαθοὶ ὄντες ἐξηλάθησαν ὑπὸ τῶν πολιτῶν· ὡσπερ Ἀθήνηθεν μὲν Ἀριστείδης ὁ δίκαιος, ἐξ Ἐφέσου δὲ Ἑρμόδωρος, ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ Ἡράκλειτος ὅτι ἔφυγεν ἠβηδὸν ἐκέλευεν Ἐφεσίους ἀπάγξασθαι. ἔνιοι δὲ γε καὶ ἐνδοξότατοι φεύγοντες ἐγένοντο, καθάπερ Διογένης ὁ Σινοπεὺς καὶ Κλέαρχος ὁ Λακεδαιμόνιος ὁ μετὰ Κύρου στρατεύσας ἐπ' Ἀρταξέρξη· καὶ ἄλλους <δ> ἂν τις ἔχοι βουλόμενος λέγειν πολλούς. καίτοι πῶς ἂν εἴη τοῦτο κακοδοξίας αἴτιον, ἐν ᾧ τινες ἐνδοξότεροι γεγόνασιν, ἢ πρότερον ἦσαν;

Furthermore, it is not at all necessary for exiles to suffer ill repute because of their banishment, since everyone knows that many trials are badly judged and many people are unjustly banished from their country, and that in the past there have been cases of good men who have been exiled by their countrymen, as for example from Athens Aristides the Just and from Ephesus Hermodorus, because of whose banishment Heraclitus bade the Ephesians, every grown man of them, go hang themselves. In fact some exiles even became very famous, as Diogenes of Sinope and Clearchus, the Lacedaemonian, who with Cyrus marched against Artaxerxes, not to mention more. How, pray, could this condition in which some people have become more renowned than before be responsible for ill-repute?⁵²

Such ultimate victory is not what one would expect for an exile. Yet this is precisely the point Musonius repeatedly makes. One should not judge based on the initial outward appearance of things. It might appear that the exile is the guilty party. But when exile is unjust, this appearance masks the truth. The true loser is the one perpetrating injustice. The oppressor is not the victor; instead, the one maintaining integrity in spite of unjust treatment comes out on top.

⁵¹ ix, 59; trans. by Lutz.

⁵² ix, 27-29; trans. by Lutz.

Tim Whitmarsh suggests that this disjunction between appearance and reality ought not be applied solely to the outward manifestation of physical exile. Musonius did want to recognize that the exilic form of punishment is not a valid indicator of who was in the right. Yet the gulf between personal experience and popular opinion clearly existed even prior to any imperial act of banishment. Whitmarsh writes:

Exile plays a metaphorical role in this connection: Musonius is not merely topographically relocated, but also conceptually isolated from the norms and conventions of regular society. In a literal sense, the Emperor banished him from Rome for practicing philosophy; at a deeper level, Musonius' decision to philosophize had already condemned him to a kind of exile from society.⁵³

While Musonius is offering advice for viewing physical exile from an optimistic perspective, Whitmarsh's words would suggest that the tactics of optimism Musonius employs could have had a function even before Musonius went into physical exile. Musonius' Stoic philosophical views had already separated him from the society that surrounded him. Exile did change his location, but it did little more than make concrete a difference of conceptual perspective which had preexisted the exile.

What is the significance of such an observation? It makes even more clear why an imposition of physical separation would do nothing to alter Musonius' views. His adherence to Stoic principles created a fundamental philosophical separation that preexisted the exile. Then, it was those very Stoic principles which girded Musonius to maintain confidence and optimism in spite of what the rest of the world might think of him. Once actual physical exile struck, this did nothing but offer an opportunity to highlight what Musonius already knew made him different. His Stoic view that proper dispassionate behavior, which constitutes virtue, would bring a good life could now be highlighted in a circumstance most viewed as bad. Exile offered opportunity

⁵³ Whitmarsh (2001) 145.

to live out with increased clarity the very things Musonius always felt had given him victory. Exile would not change his views. Exile only reinforced his convictions. In the midst of persecution, then, Musonius had every reason to claim conquest and to recommend his tactics to other exiles that they might enjoy similar victory. Nero and Vespasian may have thought they were winning. How far, Musonius believed, they were from the truth.

Musonius, an exile of thought long before he became an exile in the flesh, offers an important point of comparison in the effort to understand what it might mean to read Josephus through the lens of exile. Musonius, who laid claim to victory in his exile, promoted his sense of optimism in different ways. He emphasized positives in the face of negatives. He modeled a Stoic acceptance of his circumstances, noting that an exercise of virtue can be maintained even in the most challenging of circumstances. Finally, he explained that exile itself is not a good measure of the rightness or wrongness of an exile's views. In all of these ways, Musonius serves as a template against which one can evaluate the approach of Josephus.

Dio Chrysostom

Dio Chrysostom is the second philosophical exile whose approach will help construct an framework for reading Josephus. Dio Chrysostom was born around the year AD 40. The city of Prusa, located in the Roman province of Bithynia, was his hometown.⁵⁴ As noted earlier, the Roman grammarian Marcus Cornelius Fronto identifies Dio as the student of Musonius. Dio, then, enjoyed an exceptionally close relationship with a philosopher who himself had learned to claim victory in the midst of exile. Yet Dio was prominent in his own right. He garnered particular praise from Philostratus in his *Lives of the Sophists*:

⁵⁴ Modern Bursa, Turkey.

Δίωνα δὲ τὸν Προυσαῖον οὐκ οἶδ' ὅ τι χρὴ προσειπεῖν διὰ τὴν ἐς πάντα ἀρετὴν, Ἀμαλθείας γὰρ κέρασ ἦν, τὸ τοῦ λόγου, ξυγκείμενος μὲν τῶν ἄριστα εἰρημένων τοῦ ἀρίστου, βλέπων δὲ πρὸς τὴν Δημοσθένους ἠγῶ καὶ Πλάτωνος, ἧ, καθάπερ αἱ μαγάδες τοῖς ὀργάνοις, προσηχεῖ ὁ Δίων τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ἴδιον ξὺν ἀφελείᾳ ἐπεστραμμένη.

As for Dio of Prusa, I do not know what one ought to call him, such was his excellence in all departments; for, as the proverb says, he was a “horn of Amalthea,”⁵⁵ since in him is compounded the noblest of all that has been most nobly expressed. His style has the ring of Demosthenes and Plato, but Dio has besides a peculiar resonance of his own, which enhances theirs as the bridge enhances the tone of musical instruments; and it was combined with a serious and direct simplicity of expression.⁵⁶

This man of many gifts also became a target. Just like his instructor Musonius, Dio was exiled. The emperor Domitian was his nemesis. In his Thirteenth Discourse, Dio explains,

ὅτε φεύγειν συνέβη με φιλίας ἔνεκεν λεγομένης ἀνδρὸς οὐ πονηροῦ, τῶν δὲ τότε εὐδαιμόνων τε καὶ ἀρχόντων ἐγγύτατα ὄντος, διὰ ταῦτα δὲ καὶ ἀποθανόντος, δι' ἃ πολλοῖς καὶ σχεδὸν πᾶσαν ἐδόκει μακάριος, διὰ τὴν ἐκείνων οἰκειότητα καὶ ξυγγενεῖαν, ταύτης ἐνεχθείσης ἐπ' ἐμὲ τῆς αἰτίας, ὡς δὴ τάνδρῳ φίλον ὄντα καὶ σύμβουλον· ἔθος γάρ τι τοῦτό ἐστι τῶν τυράννων, ὥσπερ ἐν Σκύθαις τοῖς βασιλεῦσι συνθάπτειν οἰνοχόους καὶ μαγείρους καὶ παλλακάς, οὕτως τοῖς ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἀποθνήσκουσιν ἐτέρους προτιθέναι πλείους ἀπ' οὐδεμιᾶς αἰτίας·

When it fell to my lot to be exiled on account of my reputed friendship with a man of good character and very closely connected with those who at that time were Fortune's favourites and indeed high officials, a man who lost his life on account of the very things which made him seem fortunate to many men, and indeed to practically everyone, I mean his connection by marriage and blood with these officials; the charge brought against me being that I was that man's friend and adviser — for just as among the Scythians it is the practice to bury cupbearers and cooks and concubines with their kings, so it is the custom of despots to throw in several others for no reason whatever with those who are being executed by them . . .⁵⁷

While Dio does not identify the man whose demise brought consequence to another, he does offer important detail: this executed individual had close connections with high officials, and not just connections of affinity but connections of family and blood. These details provide

⁵⁵ Footnote in Wright (1922) 17: “The horn of plenty, or cornucopia, was said to have belonged to a goat named Amalthea which suckled the infant Zeus.”

⁵⁶ Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* 486-487; trans. by Wright.

⁵⁷ 13.1; trans. by Cohoon.

the impetus for many to identify the executed friend of Dio as T. Flavius Sabinus.⁵⁸ Sabinus was married to Julia, the daughter of Titus and thus the niece of Domitian. In addition, Suetonius identifies Sabinus himself as a cousin of Domitian.⁵⁹

So, Sabinus had intimate familial linkage to royalty. His life story also matches Dio's description in that Sabinus was executed, and he lost his life in a circumstance where family connections may have contributed to his being perceived a threat. Suetonius presents the violent and seemingly unjustified demise of Sabinus at the hands of Emperor Domitian:

cuus criminis occasione philosophos omnis urbe Italiaque summouit. occidit et Heluidium filium, quasi scaenico exodio sub persona Paridis et Oenones diuortium suum cum uxore taxasset; Flauium Sabinum alterum e patruelibus, quod eum comitorum consularium die destinatum perperam praeco non consulem ad populum, sed imperatorem pronuntiasset.

Upon this occasion [Domitian's execution of two Stoic senators] he likewise banished all the philosophers from the city and Italy. He put to death the younger Helvidius, for writing a farce, in which, under the character of Paris and Oenone, he reflected upon his having divorced his wife; and also Flavius Sabinus, one of his cousins, because, upon his being chosen at the consular election to that office, the public crier had, by a blunder, proclaimed him to the people not consul, but emperor.⁶⁰

As Dio describes it, then, he himself was exiled because he had been a friend and advisor to this executed man. One wonders if Domitian's previous expulsion of philosophers after the execution of two Stoic senators may have offered additional momentum for him to exile Dio, given Dio's embrace of features of Stoic philosophy.⁶¹ Whatever the case, one need not presume

⁵⁸ See Sidebottom (1996) for a presentation of this point of view as well as consideration of an alternative.

⁵⁹ Suetonius, *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, Domitian 10.4.

⁶⁰ Suetonius, *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, Domitian 10.3-4; trans. by Thomson.

⁶¹ In his Third Discourse, Dio does highlight his willingness to speak truth to power. This may also have been a contributing factor in his expulsion. In Dio's Third Discourse, it is likely that he was speaking to Trajan. He seeks to demonstrate that he is clearly not speaking with flattery by noting, "If, in bygone days when fear made everyone think falsehood a necessity, I was the only one bold enough to tell the truth even at the peril of my life, and yet am lying now when all may speak the truth without incurring danger — then I could not possibly know the time for either frankness or flattery" (εἰ δὲ ἐγὼ πρότερον μὲν ὅτε πᾶσιν ἀναγκαῖον ἐδόκει ψεύδεσθαι διὰ φόβον, μόνος ἀληθεύειν ἐτόλμων, καὶ ταῦτα κινδυνεύων ὑπὲρ τῆς ψυχῆς, νῦν δέ, ὅτε πᾶσιν ἔξεστι τάληθῆ λέγειν, ψεύδομαι, μηδενὸς κινδύνου παρεστῶτος, οὐκ ἂν εἰδείην οὔτε παρρησίας οὔτε κολακείας καιρόν, 3.13); trans. by Cohoon.

that Domitian needed a rationale greater than arbitrary vindictiveness. Dio makes this clear when describing the perpetrator of his exile in the Forty-fifth Discourse, which is addressed to the population of his hometown sometime after his release from exile:

ἄνδρες πολῖται, βούλομαι ὑμῖν ἀποδοῦναι λόγον τῆς ἐπιδημίας ταύτης, ἐπειδὴ καὶ βραχὺν οἴομαι τὸν λοιπὸν ἔσεσθαι μοι χρόνον. τὴν μὲν γὰρ φυγὴν ὅπως διήνεγκα, μὴ φίλων ἐρημίας ἠττηθείς, μὴ χρημάτων ἀπορίας, μὴ σώματος ἀσθενείας, πρὸς δὲ τούτοις ἅπασιν ἐχθρὸν ἀνεχόμενος οὐ τὸν δεῖνα οὐδὲ τὸν δεῖνα τῶν ἴσων τινὰ καὶ τῶν ὁμοίων ἐνίοτε φθεγγομένων, ἀλλὰ τὸν ἰσχυρότατον καὶ βαρύτερον καὶ δεσπότην ὀνομαζόμενον καὶ θεὸν παρὰ πᾶσιν Ἑλλησι καὶ βαρβάροις, τὸ δὲ ἀληθὲς ὄντα δαίμονα πονηρόν . . .

Fellow citizens, I want to render you an account of this sojourn of mine, since I believe that the time remaining to me is going to be very brief. Well, how I bore my exile, not succumbing to loss of friends or lack of means or physical infirmity; and, besides all this, bearing up under the hatred, not of this or that one among my equals, or peers as they are sometimes called, but rather of the most powerful, stern man, who was called by all Greeks and barbarians both master and god, but who was in reality an evil demon . . .⁶²

In assigning the blame for Dio's exile to Domitian, called a master and god but in reality most evil, initial chronological parameters fall into place for determining the timing of Dio's exile. Linking Dio's experience to the execution of Sabinus provides even greater precision with respect to the dating of Dio's banishment. More generally, Dio characterizes his period of banishment as "so many years of exile" (τοσαῦτα ἔτη φυγῆς).⁶³ When speaking to the people of his hometown, he compared himself to wandering Odysseus, noting that "all had come to despair of me and no one any longer expected me to return in safety" (πάντων ἀπεγνωκότων με καὶ μηδενὸς ἔτι σωθήσεσθαι προσδοκῶντος).⁶⁴ Clearly his exile was lengthy. If Sabinus was the friend responsible, Sabinus' election as consul in AD 82 offers a clear time marker. As the ill-

⁶² 45.1; trans. by Crosby. In Dio's Fortieth Discourse, he also appears to equate Domitian with the phrase "τύραννον ἐχθρόν," a tyrannical enemy (40.12).

⁶³ 45.10; trans. by Crosby.

⁶⁴ 45.11; trans. by Crosby.

fated words of the herald accompanied Sabinus' selection and then his death likely followed promptly, one can envision Dio's exile beginning early in Domitian's reign.⁶⁵

When Domitian died in AD 96, a new emperor came to power who had a very different attitude toward Dio. Dio writes:

τελευτήσαντος δὲ ἐκείνου καὶ τῆς μεταβολῆς γενομένης ἀνήειν μὲν πρὸς τὸν βέλτιστον Νέρβαν. ὑπὸ δὲ νόσου χαλεπῆς κατασχεθεὶς ὅλον ἐκεῖνον ἐζημιώθη τὸν καιρὸν, ἀφαιρεθεὶς αὐτοκράτορος φιλανθρώπου καμὲ ἀγαπῶντος καὶ πάλαι φίλου.

However that may be, when that man [Domitian] had died and the change of administration had been effected, I was on the point of going to visit the most noble Nerva; but, having been prevented by a serious illness, I lost that opportunity completely, being robbed of an emperor who was humane and fond of me and an old-time friend.⁶⁶

It seems apparent that the accession of Nerva restored to Dio his freedom. The report of the Roman historian Dio Cassius does speak generally about Nerva's attitude toward exiles:

“Nerva also released all who were on trial for *maiestas* and restored the exiles” (καὶ ὁ Νέρουας τοὺς τε κρινομένους ἐπ' ἀσεβείᾳ ἀφῆκε καὶ τοὺς φεύγοντας κατήγαγε).⁶⁷ The special friendship Nerva apparently had with Dio would have ensured that this exile of perhaps 13 years would now be free.

Though Dio had endured a lengthy separation from home and friends, his time of exile brought other burdens. In a speech after returning from exile, when he was encouraging fellow citizens to look kindly on peaceful overtures offered them by a neighboring town, Dio characterizes consequences of his time away. First, he notes the impact his absence had on property left behind. He explained that now, as a free man, he needed to be giving attention to

καὶ τῶν περὶ τὴν οἰκίαν, κομιδῆ φαύλως διακειμένων, ἃ τοσοῦτον ἀπολωλότα χρόνον οὐδεμιᾶς ἐπανορθώσεως τετύχηκεν. ὅπου γὰρ ἀποδημία δεσπότης χρονίσαντος ἰκανὴ διαφθεῖραι καὶ τὴν μεγίστην οὐσίαν, τί χρῆ προσδοκᾶν ἐν τοσοῦτοις ἔτεσι φυγῆς;

⁶⁵ Domitian ruled from AD 81 to AD 96.

⁶⁶ 45.2; trans. by Crosby.

⁶⁷ Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 68.1.2; trans. by Cary (1925). See also Pliny *Ep.* 1.5.10 and 9.13.5.

. . . my domestic affairs, now in thoroughly bad condition, affairs which, though so long in ruinous state, have met with no improvement. For when a proprietor's absence from home, if protracted, suffices to ruin even the greatest estate, what should one expect in the course of so many years of exile?⁶⁸

As one can imagine Dio, during his time of exile, being fully aware of the negative impact his absence would have on his personal properties, one learns that such emotional turmoil was not the only source of challenge. Again, explaining what he now needed to give attention to as a free man, Dio says, “. . . in my opinion, I should take some thought . . . for my body, exhausted as it is from great and unremitting hardship” (οἶμαι καὶ τοῦ σώματος δέον ποιήσασθαι τινα πρόνοιαν, ἐκ πολλῆς καὶ συνεχοῦς ταλαιπωρίας ἀπειρηκότος).⁶⁹

So, Dio's exile was long, lonely, and debilitating to personal properties left behind, and it also took a toll on his body. While these were burdens to bear, this price netted significant rhetorical dividends. As was true with Musonius, Dio would not be speaking from a theoretical perspective when describing appropriate attitudes toward exile. He had experienced the challenges. His words of optimism would properly bear persuasive weight, particularly as there is no evidence – as there was with Cicero – that apparent optimism after the fact contrasted with pessimism during the experience itself. As Claassen observes, “Dio's report on his own exile is an illustration of *consolatio-in-action*, wholehearted philosophical adoption of his own creed.”⁷⁰

The creed that Dio embraced is not easily equated with a single philosophical school. Cohoon observes, “[He] drew his philosophy from Plato, the Stoics and Cynics.”⁷¹ He did view

⁶⁸ 40.2; trans. by Crosby.

⁶⁹ 40.2; trans. by Crosby.

⁷⁰ Claassen (2001) 25.

⁷¹ Cohoon (1932) xi.

himself as a philosopher, though his entry into that status occurred in an unusual way. In the course of his exile,

στολήν τε ταπεινήν ἀναλαβὼν καὶ τᾶλλα κολάσας ἑμαυτὸν ἠλώμην πανταχοῦ. οἱ δὲ ἐντυγχάνοντες ἄνθρωποι ὀρώντες, οἱ μὲν ἀλήτην, οἱ δὲ πτωχὸν ἐκάλουν, οἱ δὲ τινες καὶ φιλόσοφον. ἐντεῦθεν ἔμοι συνέβη κατ' ὀλίγον τε καὶ οὐ βουλευσάμενον αὐτὸν οὐδὲ ἐφ' ἑαυτῷ μέγα φρονήσαντα τούτου τοῦ ὀνόματος τυχεῖν.

. . . putting on humble attire and otherwise chastening myself, I proceeded to roam everywhere. And the men whom I met, on catching sight of me, would sometimes call me a tramp and sometimes a beggar, though some did call me a philosopher. From this it came about gradually and without any planning or any self-conceit on my part that I acquired this name.⁷²

Having acquired the title “philosopher,” Dio now had to begin thinking like one.

πολλοὶ γὰρ ἡρώτων προσίοντες ὅ τι μοι φαίνοιτο ἀγαθὸν ἢ κακόν· ὥστε ἠναγκαζόμεν φροντίζειν ὑπὲρ τούτων, ἵνα ἔχοιμι ἀποκρίνεσθαι τοῖς ἐρωτῶσιν. πάλιν δὲ ἐκέλευον λέγειν καταστάνα εἰς τὸ κοινόν. οὐκοῦν καὶ τοῦτο ἀναγκαῖον ἐγένετο λέγειν περὶ τῶν προσηκόντων τοῖς ἀνθρώποις καὶ ἀφ' ὧν ἔμελλον ὀνίνασθαι τὰ ἔμοι φαινόμενα.

For many would approach me and ask what was my opinion about good and evil. As a result I was forced to think about these matters that I might be able to answer my questioners. Furthermore, they would invite me to come before the public and speak. Consequently it became necessary for me to speak also about the duties of man and about the things that were likely, in my opinion, to profit him.⁷³

The perspectives which Dio shared with others could have implication as well for his own personal challenge, the challenge of exile. Key “to liv[ing] a more virtuous and a better life” (ἐπιεικέστερον καὶ ἄμεινον βιώσεται)⁷⁴ was recognizing the futility of pursuits so dear to the majority:

κυκώμενοι δὲ καὶ φερόμενοι πάντες ἐν ταύτῳ καὶ περὶ τὰ αὐτὰ σχεδόν, περὶ τε χρήματα καὶ δόξας καὶ σωμάτων τινὰς ἡδονάς, οὐδεὶς ἀπαλλαγῆναι τούτων δυνάμενος οὐδὲ ἐλευθερῶσαι τὴν αὐτοῦ ψυχήν· καθάπερ, οἶμαι, τὰ ἐμπεσόντα εἰς τὰς δίκας εἰλούμενα καὶ περιστρεφόμενα καὶ οὐχ οἷά τε ἀπαλλαγῆναι τῆς δινήσεως.

⁷² 13.10-11; trans. by Cohoon (1939).

⁷³ 13.12-13; trans. by Cohoon (1939).

⁷⁴ 13.13; trans. by Cohoon (1939).

They all are being thrown into confusion and are swept round and round in the same place and about practically the same objects, to wit, money and reputation and certain pleasures of the body, while no one is able to rid himself of these and set his own soul free; just as, I fancy, things that get into a whirlpool are tossed and rolled without being able to free themselves from the whirling.⁷⁵

The futile pursuits of money and reputation were naturally less accessible during a period of exile. As previously noted, Dio's banishment compelled him to put on "humble attire (στολήν ταπεινήν),"⁷⁶ and when others saw him they "would sometimes call me a tramp and sometimes a beggar" (οἱ μὲν ἀλήτην, οἱ δὲ πτωχὸν ἐκάλουν).⁷⁷ There was little opportunity to acquire money or a good reputation. Yet Dio still could proceed confidently though a humble exile, because he was not at all restricted from pursuing the life that others so often failed to attain. He could pursue a life with a soul set truly free. He could live an unburdened life, free from futile pursuits and in no way impeded from pursuing qualities virtuous to all no matter what their circumstances: "temperance, manliness, and justice" (σωφροσύνην δὲ καὶ ἀνδρείαν καὶ δικαιοσύνην).⁷⁸

The benefits of exile could be many. It could help free one from futile pursuits and in no way needed to impede a focus on virtue. Whether or not such benefits were foremost in Dio's mind as he initially reflected on the fact that he was an exile, he was open from the beginning to the notion that exile need not be as bad as so many presume.

τότε δ' οὖν, ἐπεὶ με φεύγειν ἔδοξεν, ἐσκόπουν πότερον ὄντως χαλεπὸν τι καὶ δυστυχὲς εἶη τὸ τῆς φυγῆς ὡς κατὰ τὴν τῶν πολλῶν δόξαν, ἢ πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα ἕτερόν τι πέπονθεν, ὁποῖον λεγόμενόν ἐστι περὶ τὴν μαντείαν τὴν τῶν γυναικῶν ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς. ἐκεῖναι γὰρ βῶλόν τινα ἢ λίθον αἴρουσαι σκοποῦσιν ἐν τούτῳ περὶ τοῦ πράγματος οὐ πυνθάνονται.

⁷⁵ 13.13; trans. by Cohoon (1939).

⁷⁶ 13.10; trans. by Cohoon (1939).

⁷⁷ 13.11; trans. by Cohoon (1939).

⁷⁸ 13.32; trans. by Cohoon (1939). In noting the positive qualities one should pursue and in exposing the futile pursuits so often treasured most, Dio did not imply that he easily succeeded at maintaining a proper perspective. Instead, he presented himself as also in need of encouragement: "While I was uttering these and similar upbraidings of all others, but first and foremost of myself . . ." (ταῦτα καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα τοὺς τε ἄλλους ἅπαντας καὶ μάλιστα καὶ πρῶτον ἑμαυτὸν καταμεμφόμενος . . ., 13.14); trans. by Cohoon.

καὶ δὴ ταῖς μὲν αὐτῶν φασι γίνεσθαι κοῦφον, ταῖς δὲ βαρύν, ὡς μηδὲ κινήσαι δύνασθαι
 ῥαδίως. Μὴ ἄρα καὶ τὸ φεύγειν καὶ τὸ πένεσθαι καὶ γῆρας δὴ καὶ νόσος καὶ πάντα τὰ
 τοιαῦτα τοῖς μὲν βαρέα φαίνεται καὶ χαλεπά, τοῖς δ' ἑλαφρά τε καὶ εὐκόλα·

. . . so I began to consider whether this matter of banishment was really a grievous thing
 and a misfortune, as it is in the view of the majority, or whether such experiences merely
 furnish another instance of what we are told happens in connection with the divinations
 of the women in the sacred places. For they pick up a chance clod of earth or a stone, and
 try to see in it the answer to their enquiry. And, so the story goes, some find their clod
 light, while others find theirs so heavy that they are not able even to move it easily.
 “May not exile after all,” I thought, “and poverty, yes, and old age too and sickness, and
 all such things, appear heavy to some and grievous, but to others light and easy?”⁷⁹

Dio was suggesting that the mere fact of exile need not be burdensome. Just as women in sacred
 places, so the story went, would lift a particular clod of earth and mysteriously find it difficult or
 easy, so exile by definition need not inevitably be difficult. Rather, the very experience which
 some viewed as torturous could also be handled with equanimity.

Later in the same discourse, Dio emphasizes this perspective yet again. Dio notes an
 occasion where Apollo encouraged Croesus, king of the Libyans, voluntarily to leave his country
 and go into exile. When Apollo did this, he reassured Croesus that such a flight was no disgrace,
 Reflecting on this incident, Dio observes, “Then next the thought came to me that exile is not
 altogether injurious or unprofitable, nor staying at home a good and praiseworthy thing” (ἐκ δὲ
 τούτου ἐνεθυμούμην ὅτι οὐ πάντως ἡ φυγῆ βλαβερὸν οὐδὲ ἀσύμφορον οὐδὲ τὸ μένειν
 ἀγαθὸν καὶ πολλοῦ ἄξιον).⁸⁰ This had to be the case, thought Dio, because surely Apollo would
 not have commanded Croesus, a devout man, to do something injurious to himself.

Exile, Dio concluded, need not be injurious. To the contrary, one could live the life of an
 exile with optimism. In fact, so optimistic could Dio be about exile that, later in life, when he

⁷⁹ 13.2-3; trans. by Cohoon (1939).

⁸⁰ 13.8; trans. by Cohoon (1939).

was on the verge of recounting additional details about his separation experience to the citizens of his home town of Prusa, he stopped himself. His reason for stopping is striking.

τὸ δὲ περὶ τούτων καθ' ἕκαστον λέγειν ἡγοῦμαι εἶναι περιττόν παρ' ἄλλοις γὰρ μᾶλλον γινώσκειται ταῦτα καὶ τυγχάνει δόξης καὶ τιμῆς τῆς προσηκούσης· παρ' ὑμῖν δὲ ἂν διεξίω τὸν τῆς φυγῆς χρόνον, οὐκ ὀδύρεσθαί με φήσει τις, πολὺ δὲ μᾶλλον ἀλαζονεύεσθαι.

But to speak of these things in detail I think is superfluous, for these matters are better known among other men and enjoy a renown and honour which is their due, whereas if I narrate in Prusa the course of my exile, men will say, not that I am lamenting, but far rather that I am boasting.⁸¹

Dio was afraid that his perspective on exile might come across as boasting. He had not simply survived the experience. He felt that he had conquered in the experience. Exile could free one from pursuits so common to man yet futile. Exile did not impede the pursuit of things uncommon to man, virtues to be valued.

For Dio, though, another key factor stood out in his sense of conquest. He credited the divine as giving him confidence as an exile. The divine played multiple positive roles. First, Dio believed the divine to be in control of the broader circumstances, capable of increasing or lessening the burden of exile and so making it possible, as earlier mentioned, for exile to be light and easy:

μη ἄρα καὶ τὸ φεύγειν καὶ τὸ πένεσθαι καὶ γῆρας δὴ καὶ νόσος καὶ πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα τοῖς μὲν βαρέα φαίνεται καὶ χαλεπά, τοῖς δ' ἑλαφρά τε καὶ εὐκόλα· ἐκεῖ μὲν ἴσως κατὰ τὴν τοῦ πράγματος διαφορὰν ἐλαφρύνοντος τοῦ δαιμονίου τὸ βάρος, ἐνταῦθα δέ, οἶμαι, πρὸς τὴν τοῦ χρωμένου δύναμιν καὶ γνώμην.

“May not exile after all,” I thought, “and poverty, yes, and old age too and sickness, and all such things, appear heavy to some and grievous, but to others light and easy? For in the first case perhaps God lightens the weight according to the importance of the matter in question, and in the second case, I imagine, to suit the strength and will-power of the afflicted one.”⁸²

⁸¹ 45.2; trans. by Crosby.

⁸² 13.3; trans. by Cohoon (1939).

Not only did he believe the divine to be monitoring circumstances and gauging the challenge according to the strength of the individual. He also viewed the divine as a source of strength and help in challenging situations. As Dio described how he bore up under exile – particularly as one victimized by the vicious hatred of Domitian – he notes both what he did not do and what he did do:

καὶ ταῦτα οὐ θωπεύων αὐτὸν οὐδὲ τὴν ἔχθραν παραιτούμενος, ἀλλὰ ἐρεθίζων ἄντικρυς καὶ τὰ προσόντα κακά, μὰ Δί', οὐ μέλλον νῦν ἐρεῖν ἢ γράψειν, ἀλλὰ εἰρηκῶς ἤδη καὶ γεγραφώς, καὶ τούτων πανταχῆ τῶν λόγων καὶ τῶν γραμμάτων ὄντων, οὐχ ὑπὸ μανίας καὶ ἀπονοίας ταῦτα πράττειν ἐπαιρόμενος, ἀλλὰ κρείττονι πεποιθὼς δυνάμει καὶ βοηθείᾳ τῇ παρὰ τῶν θεῶν, ἧς καταφρονοῦσιν οἱ πολλοὶ καὶ ἀνωφελῆ νομίζουσιν

. . . and this too without fawning upon him or trying to avert his hatred by entreaty but challenging him openly, and not putting off until now, God knows, to speak or write about the evils which afflicted us, but having done both already, and that too in speeches and writings broadcast to the world, not being goaded by madness or desperation to do these things, but trusting in a greater power and source of aid, that which proceeds from the gods, though most men scorn it and deem it useless.⁸³

Dio was comfortable standing his ground, retaining his sense of personal justification, and even aggressively promoting a point of view rejected by the emperor because he had confidence in something bigger than both him and the emperor. He retained his sense of victory amidst a saga of persecution because he was confident the greatest of all power was on his side.

Dio could be optimistic in the face of exile for multiple reasons. Exile could help set one free from the futile quest for money and reputation and pleasure. Exile impeded in no way one's pursuit of virtues like temperance, manliness, and justice. Exile was opportunity for the powerful divine to support one seemingly threatened by powers far inferior.

It is not surprising that one so confident in the face of exile was ready – even eager – to instruct the very ones who may have viewed him as an outcast. Though his status as an exile may have implied that he was in need of redirection, Dio demonstrates that quite the opposite

⁸³ 45.1; trans. by Crosby.

was true. Others should imitate him. The “exile” wanted those accepted in society to join his position outside of societal norms.

οὕτω δὴ καὶ ἐγὼ ἐπειρώμην διαλέγεσθαι Ῥωμαίοις, ἐπειδὴ με ἐκάλεσαν καὶ λέγειν ἤξιουν, οὐ κατὰ δύο καὶ τρεῖς ἀπολαμβάνων ἐν παλαίστραις καὶ περιπάτοις· οὐ γὰρ ἦν δυνατὸν οὕτως ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ πόλει συγγίγνεσθαι· πολλοῖς τε καὶ ἀθρόοις εἰς ταὐτὸ συνίουσιν, ὅτι δέονται παιδείας κρείττονος καὶ ἐπιμελεστέρας, εἰ μέλλουσιν εὐδαίμονες ἔσεσθαι τῷ ὄντι κατ’ ἀλήθειαν, ἀλλὰ μὴ δόξῃ τῶν πολλῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὥσπερ νῦν· εἴ τις αὐτοὺς μεταπίσει καὶ διδάξει παραλαβὼν ὅτι τούτων μὲν οὐδέν ἐστιν ἀγαθόν, ὑπὲρ ὧν σπουδάζουσι καὶ πάσῃ προθυμίᾳ κτῶνται, καὶ νομίζουσιν, ὅσῳ ἂν πλείω κτήσωνται, τοσοῦτῳ ἄμεινον βιώσεσθαι καὶ μακαριώτερον·

And thus it came about that I too endeavoured to talk to the Romans when they had summoned me and invited me to speak, but I did not take them by twos and threes in wrestling-schools and cloistered walks; for it was not possible to meet them thus in that city; but when a great number had gathered in one place, I would tell them that they needed a better and more carefully planned education, if they were ever to be happy in truth and reality and not merely in the opinion of the majority, as was now the case; that if anyone should win them to this view and take them in charge and teach them that not a single one of those things is a good to which they devoted themselves and which they strove with all their zeal to acquire, in the belief that, the more they acquired, the better and happier their life would be . . .⁸⁴

Dio had pursued a course which distinguished him from the majority. As Whitmarsh noted with Musonius, in many respects it was true for Dio also that his “decision to philosophize had already condemned him to a kind of exile from society.”⁸⁵ But Dio did not conclude that exile, whether physical or of a more conceptual sort, in any way diminished the correctness of his views. He felt he was right, and he wanted others to embrace his perspective.

In seeking models for Josephus, a man who also positioned himself within a society so different than he, Dio Chrysostom offers another helpful pattern for comparison. While in many ways similar to his instructor Musonius – for example, Musonius also had noted that exile in no way impedes a man’s pursuit of authentic virtue – Dio does spotlight a particular new factor

⁸⁴ 13.31; trans. by Cohoon (1939).

⁸⁵ Whitmarsh (2001) 145.

which contributed to his optimism. He explicitly cited the role of the divine in his positive perspective amidst even the worst of challenges. He believed the divine to be in control of the broader circumstances of life. He also viewed the divine as a source of help in difficult times. This conviction, along with the other techniques he employed to support himself in exile, made it natural for Dio to claim a sense of victory even when things were not going well. He claimed victory personally. He confidently promoted his perspectives more broadly. This confident man who highlights the role of the divine serves well as an additional template against which I will compare Josephus.

Favorinus

As Dio reflected his instructor Musonius' approach to exile in many ways yet also offered some distinctive emphases, so Favorinus, a student of Dio,⁸⁶ presents a similar pattern. Favorinus embraces exilic views which mimic those of Dio. Yet he too offers something unique.

Favorinus lived from approximately AD 80 to AD 160. Philostratus reports that his home city was Arelatum (modern Arles), on the Rhône River in southern France.⁸⁷ He was a prominent orator. While this prominence likely preceded the reign of Emperor Hadrian, it drew significant imperial attention during his reign. Hadrian, who is characterized by Dio Cassius as an insatiably ambitious man,⁸⁸ wanted to be better than everyone at everything.

ὁ δὲ δὴ φθόνος αὐτοῦ δεινότατος ἐς πάντας τοὺς τιμὴν προέχοντας ὧν πολλοὺς μὲν καθεῖλε συχνοὺς δὲ καὶ ἀπώλεσε. βουλόμενος γὰρ πάντων ἐν πᾶσι περιεῖναι ἐμίσει τοὺς ἐν τιμῇ ὑπεραίροντας. κακὸν τούτου καὶ τὸν Φαουωρῖνον τὸν Γαλάτην τὸν τε Διονύσιον τὸν Μιλήσιον τοὺς σοφιστὰς καταλύειν ἐπεχείρει τοῖς τε ἄλλοις καὶ μάλιστα τῷ τοὺς ἀνταγωνιστὰς σφῶν ἐξαίρειν, τοὺς μὲν μηδενὸς τοὺς δὲ βραχυτάτου τινὸς ἀξίους ὄντας·

His jealousy of all who excelled in any respect was most terrible and caused the downfall of many, besides utterly destroying several. For, inasmuch as he wished to surpass

⁸⁶ Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* 490.

⁸⁷ Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* 489.

⁸⁸ *Roman History* 69.3.2.

everybody in everything, he hated those who attained eminence in any direction. It was this feeling that led him to undertake to overthrow two sophists, Favorinus the Gaul, and Dionysius of Miletus, by various methods, but chiefly by elevating their antagonists, who were of little or no worth at all.⁸⁹

Initially Hadrian employed indirect retribution. Hadrian worked to sideline Favorinus by elevating unworthy competitors. Nevertheless, while Favorinus' prominence and skill clearly had annoyed Hadrian, still there were no significant consequences applied directly to Favorinus. In fact, even in a moment of confrontation, Favorinus seemed to emerge unscathed. Dio Cassius explains:

καὶ ὁ Φαουωρίνος μέλλων παρ' αὐτῷ περὶ τῆς ἀτελείας ἦν ἐν τῇ πατρίδι ἔχειν ἡξίου δικάσασθαι, ὑποτοπήσας καὶ ἐλαττωθήσεσθαι καὶ προσυβρισθήσεσθαι, ἐσῆλθε μὲν ἐς τὸ δικάστηριον, εἶπε δὲ οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ ὅτι “ὁ διδάσκαλός μου ὄναρ τῆς νυκτὸς ταύτης ἐπιστάς μοι ἐκέλευσε λειτουργεῖν τῇ πατρίδι ὡς καὶ ἐκείνη γεγεννημένον.” Ἀδριανὸς δὲ τούτων μὲν, καίπερ ἀχθεσθεῖς σφισιν, ἐφείσατο, μηδεμίαν εὐλογον ὀλέθρου κατ' αὐτῶν ἀφορμὴν λαβῶν·

And Favorinus, who was about to plead a case before the emperor in regard to exemption from taxes, a privilege which he desired to secure to his native land, suspected that he should be unsuccessful and receive insults besides, and so merely entered the court-room and made this brief statement: “My teacher⁹⁰ stood beside me last night in a dream and bade me serve my country, as having been born for her.” Now Hadrian spared these men, displeased as he was with them, for he could find no plausible pretext to use against them for their destruction.⁹¹

Even in that moment of confrontation, Hadrian chose not to satisfy his envy by bringing an unjustified consequence on Favorinus at that time. Hadrian's restrained response toward Favorinus contrasts with the reaction in Athens. The city was furious at Favorinus because of

⁸⁹ *Roman History* 69.3.3-4; trans. by Cary (1925).

⁹⁰ Dio is directly identified as Favorinus' teacher by Philostratus in his description of the same event: “O Emperor, he cried, ‘I have had a dream of which you ought to be informed. My teacher Dio appeared to me, and with respect to the suit admonished and reminded me that we come into the world not for ourselves alone, but also for the country of our birth. Therefore, O Emperor, I obey my teacher, and I undertake this public service.’” (“ἐνύπνιον μοι,” ἔφη “ὁ βασιλεῦ, γέγονεν, ὃ καὶ πρὸς σὲ χρὴ εἰρήσθαι: ἐπιστάς γάρ μοι Δίῳ ὁ διδάσκαλος ἐνουθέτει με ὑπὲρ τῆς δίκης λέγων, ὅτι μὴ ἑαυτοῖς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῖς πατρίσι γεγόναμεν: ὑποδέχομαι δὴ, ὦ βασιλεῦ, τὴν λειτουργίαν καὶ τῷ διδασκάλῳ πείθομαι,” *Lives of the Sophists*, 490); trans. by Wright.

⁹¹ *Roman History* 69.3.6 – 4.1; trans. by Cary (1925).

this incident, angered by what they perceived to be actions on his part that should justly have made him Hadrian's enemy. Precisely what angered them is elusive. It may have been Favorinus' initial efforts to avoid making a financial contribution for the public good. Perhaps the cleverness Favorinus employed to dodge an anticipated rebuke from the emperor galled them. Whatever the case, Philostratus reports, "The Athenians however took the affair seriously, and, especially the Athenian magistrates themselves, hastened in a body to throw down the bronze statue of Favorinus as though he were the Emperor's bitterest enemy" (Ἀθηναίοις δὲ δεινὰ ἐφαίνετο καὶ συνδραμόντες αὐτοὶ μάλιστα οἱ ἐν τέλει Ἀθηναῖοι χαλκῆν εἰκόνα κατέβαλον τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ὡς πολεμιωτάτου τῷ αὐτοκράτορι).⁹²

While the Athenian action might make Hadrian appear temperate in comparison, the previously cited quotation from Dio makes it clear that Hadrian really was upset at Favorinus – "displeased as he was with them" (καίπερ ἀχθεσθεῖς σφισιν). Dio gives every indication that if Hadrian could have found a pretext, he would have employed it. The only thing restraining him was perceived lack of opportunity.

It would seem that at some point later in Hadrian's reign, opportunity presented itself. Hadrian would become angry at Favorinus and exile him. Some propose, however, that in fact this did not happen – Favorinus, they suggest, was never exiled. This claim is not inconsequential, as I argue that Favorinus is one of the ideal templates for Josephus, in part, because he actually experienced exile. Considering challenges to that contention, then, is critical.

Claassen offers one of these contrary claims. She writes, "Dio Chrysostomus' pupil Favorinus of Arelate was reputed to have been of the third generation of Stoic exiles; *perhaps he*

⁹² Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* 490; trans. by Wright.

merely wrote on exile.”⁹³ Claassen is not the only one who has questions. Swain opines, “I am inclined to dismiss the exile.”⁹⁴ The door to such skepticism swings significantly on what appears to be a summary observation presented by Philostratus. Speaking of Favorinus, Philostratus says,

διαφορᾶς δὲ αὐτῷ πρὸς Ἀδριανὸν βασιλέα γενομένης οὐδὲν ἔπαθεν. Ὅθεν ὡς παράδοξα ἐπεχρησάμει τῷ ἑαυτοῦ βίῳ τρία ταῦτα· Γαλάτης ὢν ἑλληνίζειν, εὐνοῦχος ὢν μοιχείας κρίνεσθαι, βασιλεῖ δαιφέρεσθαι καὶ ζῆν.

Though he quarreled with the Emperor Hadrian, he suffered no ill consequences. Hence he used to say in the ambiguous style of an oracle, that there were in the story of his life these three paradoxes: Though he was a Gaul he led the life of a Hellene; a eunuch, he had been tried for adultery; he had quarreled with an Emperor and was still alive.⁹⁵

Philostratus’ characterization certainly leaves the door open to the conclusion that Favorinus suffered no consequences of any sort, including no exile. But his characterization does not slam the door shut on such a possibility. Admittedly, the phrase “he suffered no ill consequences” (οὐδὲν ἔπαθεν) could seem categorical. It appears to suggest that Favorinus did not suffer anything at all in connection with his relationship with Hadrian. Yet the larger context recommends caution with respect to such a categorical interpretation.

In the third of Favorinus’ paradoxes – “he had quarreled with an Emperor and was still alive” – he clearly has in mind the extreme consequence of tangling with an emperor, death. Favorinus presumes that those who would hear his paradox would presume that his interaction with the emperor should have resulted in the ultimate penalty. Yet still he lives. Might this allow, then, for the conclusion that Philostratus’ seemingly categorical “he suffered no ill consequences” is also speaking more narrowly about what all might have expected to happen to

⁹³ Claassen (1999) 66; italics mine.

⁹⁴ Swain (1989) 157.

⁹⁵ Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* 489; trans. by Wright.

someone who crossed the emperor like Favorinus did? In other words, Philostratus is saying, “He suffered nothing – i.e. he did not receive the normal consequence for his actions, death.”

Bowersock, who does hold the position that “the exile was by no means a secure fact,”⁹⁶ nevertheless expresses openness to the possibility that there was in fact an exile. He agrees that to make such a case, “It becomes necessary to give special weight to the verb ‘live’ in Favorinus’ paradox: he quarreled with an emperor and *lived*, that is to say – he survived.”⁹⁷ Such emphasis leaves the door open to this interpretation, that Favorinus quarreled with an emperor and did not die, but that need not imply that he emerged unscathed. The door is open to a consequence less than death, a consequence like exile. That line of thought would dovetail with the observation that Favorinus’ “suffering nothing” (οὐδὲν ἔπαθεν) need not suggest that he suffered absolutely nothing at all, but that he did not suffer the ultimate penalty. Admittedly, Bowersock views “οὐδὲν ἔπαθεν” as a more difficult phrase to account for. He is less willing to allow for the interpretation that “suffered nothing” leaves the door open to some kind of penalty, but just not the ultimate one. While less willing, he nevertheless does acknowledge the possibility: “A similar construction [to that employed with “lived”] may perhaps be put on οὐδὲν ἔπαθεν, but less easily.”⁹⁸

Swain is not so agreeable. Appearing to react to such a line of thought, Swain opines: “To what does Philostratus’ ‘he suffered no harm’ refer? It is suggested that it means exile (as opposed to death); that is stretching matters.”⁹⁹ Pessimistically, one could view Swain’s perspective as effectively calling into question the actual exile of Favorinus, and consequently, removing from the philosopher the sense of authority that comes with one who has experienced

⁹⁶ Bowersock (1969) 36.

⁹⁷ Bowersock (1969) 36; italics original.

⁹⁸ Bowersock (1969) 36.

⁹⁹ Swain (1989) 154.

such suffering personally. Optimistically, one might note that for Swain to acknowledge that a particular interpretation is a stretch is at the same time an acknowledgment that Philostratus does not categorically deny the possibility of exile for Favorinus.

Swain has additional arguments challenging the possibility. He asserts, “No ancient testimony alludes to exile. The absence of a report in Philostratus is in fact particularly acute.”¹⁰⁰ Though this observation is useful, it remains an argument from silence. The issue of Favorinus’ exile remains unsettled.

There is a point which Swain makes, however, which he feels does settle the issue, and categorically so. Swain believes that it was impossible for Favorinus to be an exile in the way that others propose because if he was, one of the statements Favorinus allegedly makes could not possibly have been true. Swain observes that in Favorinus’ essay *Περὶ φυγῆς*,¹⁰¹ “[Favorinus] talks confidently of his future progeny (τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐμοῦ γενησομένοις), who will look to Chios as the land of their father (9.1-3, 385 B.). This man could not be Favorinus.”¹⁰² According to a

¹⁰⁰ Swain (1989) 155.

¹⁰¹ Hereafter referred to as *On Exile*.

¹⁰² Swain (1989) 156. Note that Swain reports his citations “by papyrus column and line and the pages of Barigazzi’s edition” [Swain (1989) 156, footnote 26.] Future references from Favorinus’ *On Exile* will employ the methodology used by Whitmarsh, who explains, “I have used the chapter system of Barigazzi, rather than the unwieldy papyrus column numbers” [Whitmarsh (2001) 302]. Also, with respect to Swain’s linking of Favorinus’ exile to the island of Chios, Claassen notes that placing Favorinus’ exile on the island of Chios requires some speculation: “Favorinus quarreled with Hadrian and retreated, *perhaps* to Chios.” [Claassen (2001) 66; italics mine.] However, the speculation required seems minor. Support for the Chios connection is found in *On Exile* 16.3. In a larger section that explains how family relationships can make exile more difficult, Favorinus notes how true friends do not hesitate to follow the one they care about. “And as for Theseus, do you think he would have hesitated to traverse the paltry sea between Mimas and Chios, given that he willingly sailed with his friend to Acheron, and sat with him on the rock of Lethe, and was uprooted thence against his will, thanks to Heracles’ aggression?” (Θησεὺς δ’ ἂν ὀκνήσαι σοι δοκεῖ | ἐπὶ Χίου ἐκ Μίμαντος μικρὰν θάλασσαν περαιώσασθαι, ὃς καὶ τὸν Ἀχέροντα τῷ φίλῳ ἐκὼν ξυ|έπλει καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς Ληθαίας πέτρας ξυνεκάθητο, ἐν|τεῦθεν δὲ ἄκων ὑπὸ τῆς Ἑρακλέους βίας ἐξάνεσ|τη;) [Trans. by Whitmarsh (2001). Greek from Barigazzi (1966).] The implication seems clear. Theseus had no known reason himself to travel to Chios. Theseus’ significant sacrifice in that he sailed with his friend to Acheron intends to highlight the relative smallness of a trip from the mainland to Chios, presumptively because that is where Favorinus was. In fact, just a few lines later, in *On Exile* 16.4, Favorinus speaks about someone who would claim to be his friend and asks whether such a friend would “for himself willingly forgo my company when both nature and law allow it to him” (ἐξὸν αὐ|τῷ ἀπὸ τῆς φύσεως καὶ τῶν νόμων, ἐκὼν τῆς | ἐμῆς συνουσίας αὐτὸν ἀποστερήσει). [Trans. by Whitmarsh (2001). Greek from Barigazzi (1966).] Favorinus seems clearly to be speaking of his own location, the place where one might enjoy his company, and a friend’s willingness or unwillingness to visit him

proposed chronology of Favorinus' exile, Swain feels that Favorinus would have been far too old when he was released from exile to physically have children. If truly an exile, Favorinus could not have talked confidently about progeny. Since he does talk about progeny, that must mean that he was not an exile.

Swain continues to pursue his claim that there was no actual exile. In characterizing Favorinus' *On Exile* as a whole, he says:

The speech is a fine example of characterization and impersonation - hence the circumstantial details - and no more. One can imagine its effect as Favorinus "charmed his audience with the resonance of his voice, the suggestiveness of his glance, and the flow of his words" (VS 491).¹⁰³

Swain thus views Favorinus' speech as made up. While he does offer some additional elements to his argument, the absoluteness with which he speaks of the impossibility of "τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐμοῦ γενησομένοις" applying to Favorinus stands out. As noted, Swain's primary concern appears to be his view that this phrase implied that Favorinus would have children in the future. If in fact Favorinus was born around AD 80, and if Favorinus' exile ended after Hadrian's death in AD 138, Favorinus would have been close to 60 years old when he finally could have had opportunity again to father children. Swain believes that this phrase necessitates a speaker who is not "too old."¹⁰⁴ The likely dating of Favorinus' life, then, is seen as posing an insurmountable obstacle to the claim that Favorinus experienced actual exile.

It might appear that such a line of thought would settle the issue. Clearly, some propose, Favorinus could not have been an actual exile. Yet presumptions upon which the proposed incongruity rests merit further consideration. Three presumptions in particular seem vulnerable.

there. This reinforces the conclusion that his most recent mention of Chios was not random. Rather, it was his own location, the place where he could be visited.

¹⁰³ Swain (1989) 157.

¹⁰⁴ Swain (1989) 156.

I will list them here and treat them in more detail below. First, the proposed dilemma presumes that the “ἐμοῦ” in “τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐμοῦ γενησομένοις” speaks of Favorinus. Context leaves the door open for this “ἐμοῦ” to be part of a quotation that Favorinus’ is referencing. Second, even if Favorinus is referring to himself with the possessive pronoun, the proposed dilemma presumes that he is speaking about himself in reality and not simply presenting a more generic argument into which he places himself for rhetorical purposes. Finally, if the phrase is speaking about Favorinus in reality, the proposed dilemma presumes that the phrase must refer to first-generation children from the body of Favorinus.

None of these three presumptions is inevitably true. First, regarding the person to whom the “ἐμοῦ” is referring, context reveals the complexity of answering that question.

λογιζόμενος δὲ εὐρίσκω οὐδὲν ἕτερον οὔσαν ἢ ἐν ἣ ἡ οἱ πρόγονοι ἡμῶν κατέκησαν ἢ διέτριψαν. Ὅτι γὰρ οὐκ ἐν ἣ αὐτοὶ ἐγενόμεθα, δῆλον ἐκ τούτου· πολλοὶ γὰρ ἐτέρωθι γεννηθέντες ἐτέραν πατρίδα νομίζουσιν. εἰ δὲ τοῦτό ἐστιν πατρίς, τὸ σύνηθες τοῖς προγόνοις χωρίον, τί δὴ οὐχὶ τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ καὶ ταύτην φιλητέον, ἐν [ἣ] τὰ νῦν διατρίβομεν; πολὺ γὰρ ἐκά[στω ἐγγυτέ]ρω ἐν ἣ αὐτός τις οἰκεῖ ἢ ἐν ἣ οἱ πρόγονοι αὐτοῦ ὄκ[ησαν, τοῖς δ]ὲ ἐξ ἐμοῦ γενησομένοις ἢ αὐτῇ αἰτία καὶ πολὺ δικα[ιοτέρα τὴν] ἐμὴν ἀναγκαίαν ἐνδιαίτησιν πατρίδα ποιεῖν . [. .] . ἀδ [8 ll.]ς ὑπεδέξατο πευγοντα. Τοῦτο ὁ Λέσβιος Ἀλκαῖος λεγεί, ἀ[νὴρ πε]ρί [γ]ε τὴν πατρίδα φιλοστοργότατος.

On reflection, however, I discovered that [my fatherland] is nothing other than the land in which my forebears settled or resided. That a fatherland is not the country in which we ourselves were born is clear from the following: many people, though born elsewhere, regard another land as their fatherland. If our fatherland is this, the territory to which our ancestors have become accustomed, why by the same token should we not also love the country in which we currently reside? After all, the land in which one dwells is much closer than that in which one’s ancestors dwelled, τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐμοῦ γενησομένοις¹⁰⁵ will have the same reason (or even more just cause) to make my enforced dwelling-place their fatherland [because they] received me [hospitably] as an exile. Such are the words of Alcaeus of Lesbos, a man most devoted to his fatherland.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ The Whitmarsh translation of the phrase in question will be supplied as the argument is developed further. Swain would translate this “and my future progeny.”

¹⁰⁶ *On Exile* 10.1-2; trans. by Whitmarsh. Greek from Barigazzi (1966).

While none of what Favorinus states in this section has been found in known fragments of Alcaeus,¹⁰⁷ Favorinus clearly attributes elements of what he has just said to Alcaeus. It seems reasonable to suggest that in some fashion the words that precede this attestation may represent cited ideas, either direct or paraphrased, from the poet of Lesbos. If borrowing from Alcaeus played some role in “τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐμοῦ γενησομένοις,” no longer need the phrase apply directly to Favorinus. Favorinus could be representing sentiments of another man who had experienced exile yet need not have ended up too old to have children. With such an interpretation, no longer would this phrase be supposed evidence of “impersonation” on the part of Favorinus. Consequently, there would be one less reason to presume that Favorinus’ exile must have been a mere literary construction.

Admittedly, one cannot demonstrate with certainty that the phrase came from Alcaeus. A second possibility for interpreting “τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐμοῦ γενησομένοις” involves recognizing that Favorinus may not have been speaking about himself “in the flesh,” but he may simply have been using himself as a theoretical example for a larger point which he felt applied universally. He was speaking about fatherland. He explains that the common definition of fatherland is the place where one’s ancestors made their home. For many, that is true. But for some, their birthplace – the home of their ancestors – does not remain what they consider to be their fatherland. They move. They set up their home in a different place. A new “fatherland” has been established.

One can look at exile in a similar way, says Favorinus. He was living in a new land. That land was much closer to him than the land in which his ancestors had lived. Those who would be descendants of Favorinus would have even more reason than he to consider his current

¹⁰⁷ Whitmarsh (2001) 309.

abode their home, as his new land had received him with open arms. Any descendants would not only be living in this new place because their ancestor had been exiled there; they might also have extra reason to stay, because the original inhabitants were so welcoming.

But does not this line of thought imply that Favorinus would have children? Favorinus appears to explicitly say that those who are born to him – his descendants – will have good reason to consider his new exilic home their own. He will have individuals born to him. He will have descendants.

This phrasing leads Swain to observe that Favorinus would have been too old for that. But there is another way to view Favorinus' reference to himself at the end of this reflection on what constitutes a fatherland. Consider the following restatement of the passage (*On Exile* 10.1-2), which highlights the shifting of persons – from first person to third person and back again, and from definite to indefinite and back again – in a larger flow of “general truth.”

I discovered that fatherland is where **my** ancestors *settled* (as opposed to where they were *born*). Fatherland is not where **we ourselves** were born. **Many** regard another land as fatherland. Why shouldn't **we** love the land **we** live in? For nearer is that place to **each one** in which **someone himself** lives than the place **that someone's** ancestors lived, and to those who will be born to **me** belongs the same reason to make **my** compulsory home [their] fatherland.¹⁰⁸

Notice the sequencing – first-person singular definite, first-person plural indefinite, third-person plural indefinite, first-person plural indefinite, third-person singular indefinite, first-person singular definite. Admittedly, Favorinus begins this sequencing by speaking personally with a definite pronoun. But every other grammatical-subject reference that follows is indefinite until the phrase under consideration – “τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐμοῦ γενησομένοις.” While this ought not be presented as the only possible interpretation, it seems reasonable to suggest that Favorinus is

¹⁰⁸ Personal translation and synopsis.

working to highlight a general truth, and he makes it personal at the end not to draw focus to his own life situation, but simply to personalize a lesson that is a general one. The fact that he finishes off this section by then referring to Alcaeus – noting that these ideas belong to someone else – seems to highlight the “general truth” nature of this section even more.

If the phrase “τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐμοῦ γενησομένοις,” then, is not intended to draw attention to Favorinus’ personal situation, but is simply a personalizing focus in the midst of a generalizing statement, this can help address Swain’s concern that Favorinus was too old to have children. If Favorinus was generalizing, then he was not even raising the issue of whether or not he personally would have children.

One additional important detail offers further support for the proposal that “generalizing” may have been what was on Favorinus’ mind. Ironically, this additional evidence initially proposes a dilemma more challenging to overcome than the old age dilemma which Swain presents. In the end, however, a pathway for rebutting Swain’s concerns is paved even more smoothly.

There is an issue Swain does not appear to raise which would bring one right back to the dilemma he poses, that “τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐμοῦ γενησομένοις” could not possibly refer to Favorinus. Favorinus was born with a unique physical condition. Philostratus reports that Favorinus “was born double-sexed, a hermaphrodite” (διφυῆς δὲ ἐτέχθη καὶ ἀνδρόθηλυσ).¹⁰⁹ Given that the particular label Philostratus applies does not represent a detailed medical diagnosis, one does not know from the term itself whether or not Favorinus had the ability to father children. Philostratus does go on to say, however, that Favorinus viewed it as a paradox that “though he was . . . a eunuch, he had been tried for adultery” (εὐνοῦχος ὦν μοιχείας κρίνεσθαι).¹¹⁰ One

¹⁰⁹ Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* 489; trans. by Wright.

¹¹⁰ Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* 489; trans. by Wright.

might view this statement as implying that Favorinus was a hermaphrodite who was impaired reproductively.

While a rebuttal of Swain's concern regarding old age may not ultimately depend on that involved interpretative argument which notes sequencing between definite and indefinite pronouns, Favorinus' status as a hermaphrodite seems to make more attractive this particular "general truth" interpretive approach. If Favorinus' physical condition prohibited the fathering of children, he certainly would have known that, and his readers quite possibly would have known it too. If in fact he was not able to have children, and that was well known to him and to others, then a reference to himself in the first person with regard to progeny clearly had more a rhetorical than a literal sense. Such a reference surely would not have been seen by him or his readers as a personal reference, implying that something could happen that really could not – the fathering of children. This would simply have been a personalizing touch in a context which always had been intended to convey a general – not primarily personal – point. Referring to himself individualized the argument, but it was not intended to make his own personal capacity the arbiter of whether or not the argument was true.

Adelmo Barigazzi, who has produced the critical text of *On Exile*, offers this footnote in connection with the phrase in question: "It is a saying/proverb to speak in that way, because the speaker knew that due to his physical condition, he was not able to have children . . . , or, if he had experienced the thing, he wanted to pass along to posterity the opposite of that which was known at the time."¹¹¹ In the final portion of this reference, Barigazzi leaves the door open to yet another option that will be considered next. But for the moment, he makes it evident that he too

¹¹¹ Barigazzi (1966) 444. Footnote on Column 9, 2. Personal translation. Original Italian text: "è detto così per dire, perché l'oratore sapeva che per le sue condizioni fisiologiche non poteva aver figli (cfr. testim. 1), o, se ha avvertito la cosa, ha voluto tramandare ai posteri il contrario di ciò che allora era notorio."

can see the phrase “τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐμοῦ γενησομένοις” as being used more generally. He says that it is a saying, a proverb, a general statement. Favorinus need not be playing with make-believe. He can simply be speaking general truth in a personal way.

Barigazzi does not only affirm the possibility that Favorinus is speaking general truth. He leaves the door open to another option as well. In the course of suggesting that Favorinus’ statement about progeny may have been more proverbial than actual, Barigazzi begins with the premise that Favorinus could not have children because of his physical condition. Barigazzi, however, does not view that as an inevitable scenario. He postulates, “If [Favorinus] had experienced the thing . . .” (in other words, if in fact he did have children . . .).

If Favorinus’ hermaphrodite condition did not in itself prohibit the fathering of children,¹¹² it is possible that children were fathered by Favorinus sometime earlier than the later writing date Swain presumes. This door appears to be left wide open by Favorinus’ description of those currently with him in his exile: “. . . my parents and sister are dead and I am living abroad with my remaining household . . . (οἱ μὲν τεθνᾶσι ἐγὼ δὲ σὺν τῇ λοιπῇ οἰκίᾳ ἀποδημῶ).¹¹³ While “remaining household” need not inevitably imply children, it certainly allows for and maybe even suggests it.

So, perhaps he was too old to have any more children when he wrote *On Exile*. But the future concept embedded in “τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐμοῦ γενησομένοις” could still apply to him, referring not to his first-generation children but future descendants from those children – his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. These progeny could still properly be spoken of as “who will come

¹¹² Swain himself does not appear to categorically deny this possibility. He focuses on old age as the prohibitive factor rather than something else.

¹¹³ *On Exile* 13.3; trans. by Whitmarsh. Greek from Barigazzi (1966).

from me.” Whitmarsh’s translation, shared earlier but with the phrase in question left untranslated, reads this way in full:

After all, the land in which one dwells is much closer than that in which one’s ancestors dwelled, **and my future descendants** (τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐμοῦ γενησομένοις) will have the same reason (or even more just cause) to make my enforced dwelling-place their fatherland [because they] received me [hospitably] as an exile.¹¹⁴

Whitmarsh considers it legitimate to translate γενησομένοις as “descendants” rather than “children.” With this approach as well, then, the seeming categorical objection that Swain poses is set aside. The words “τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐμοῦ γενησομένοις” can legitimately apply to Favorinus as an actual exile.

In sum, not all believe that Favorinus was actually exiled. Some feel quite strongly about this conclusion. Swain feels that the words “τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐμοῦ γενησομένοις” present an insurmountable barrier to viewing Favorinus’ exile as authentic. As I have attempted to demonstrate, the barrier would not seem insurmountable. The evidence available does not exclude the possibility that Favorinus experienced actual exile.

At the same time, it is a completely different thing to offer indications that in fact Favorinus’ exile did occur. The strongest evidence for Favorinus’ exile comes from Favorinus himself. In Barigazzi’s reconstruction of the opening lines of Favorinus’ *On Exile*, which are filled with lacunae, Favorinus says:

[ad 7 ll.] οἰμην κᾶν τις ὑ[π]οπτεύ[σ]η τ[ῆ]ν | [ἀλήθειαν] τοῦδε τοῦ λόγου ω[ς] ἐπ’ ἀλαζ[ο]νεία | [καὶ ἔτι ἐν] περις[τ]ά[σει] τινι ἀκαίρῳ ἐπὶ [φ]ι[λοδοξία] ξυγκειμ[ένου.] εἰ γὰρ αὐτὸς μὲν | τινά μοι παρ]ακελεύ[ομα]ι, αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ πειθ[όμ]ε[νος ταῦτ]α (vel ταῦτ]α) δράσω, [ἐγὼ] οὕτως ἔχω ὡς φ[έρω] | [πράως τὰ πα]ρόντα. [ἀλλ’] ὡς ἴσως τις καὶ π[επα]ι | [δευμένος ὠφελ]ηθῆναι βούλ[ε]ται, ὅδε ὁ λό[γος] | [γέγραπται, ἵνα γένη]ται ἡ γνώμη βεβα[ι]οτέρα πρὸς καιρόν. ἐγὼ γὰρ] ἠγοῦμαι ἐμαυ[τὸν παρέχων παράδειγμα ἐ]πιδειξαι ὅτι [ἄ]ν | [ἕκαστος ἄνθρωπος αὐτῶ τῷ λόγῳ ὀρμη[ν] | [πᾶσαν κατέχοι καὶ πάσης κα]ταφρονήσειε | [ξυμφορᾶς. καὶ δὴ καὶ τινες] ἀμέλει . . .¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ *On Exile* 10.2; trans. by Whitmarsh.

¹¹⁵ The unreconstructed text as transcribed by Barigazzi: “[ad 7 ll.] οἰμην κᾶν τις ὑ[π]οπτεύ[σ]η τ[ῆ]ν | [ad 7 ll.] τοῦδε τοῦ λόγου ω[ς] ἐπ’ ἀλαζ[ο]νεία | [ad 7 ll.] περις . . . [. . .] τινι ἀκαίρῳ ἐπὶ [. . .] | [ad 7 ll.] ξυγκειμ[ένου.] εἰ

[. . .] even if someone were to suspect [the veracity] of this essay, thinking that it is composed out of imposture [and a desire for glory] in some inopportune circumstance. For if I am addressing [certain] exhortations to myself, nevertheless *I* shall be the one to obey them and act in this way, it is I who am in a position to bear my situation [with dignity. But] this essay [has been composed in view of] the possibility that someone, perhaps even [an educated person], might require [help, so that] his will [might become] surer [in the face of his circumstances.] For I think [that by using] myself [as an example] I can prove that [every man might rein in] his emotions and disdain [every misfortune, thanks to this very essay.] . . .¹¹⁶

The state of the text is unfortunate. Yet if Barigazzi's reconstruction is fair and – given the context of the rest of the essay – even probable at least as far as sense, these introductory statements find Favorinus speaking as a fellow sufferer of the circumstance he is about to describe. He will talk extensively about exile. He describes himself as experiencing this very thing. He says, “It is I who am in a position to bear my situation.” As a consequence, he speaks of himself as “addressing [certain] exhortations to myself.” Favorinus is experiencing the situation he intends to talk about – exile. It is no surprise, then, that he views himself as needing the encouragements that he is about to share with others.

Should the lacunose nature of this particular portion of *On Exile* suggest that the argument itself for Favorinus' exile may be weak, further quotations from the essay support the thrust of Barigazzi's reconstruction. Favorinus says,

γὰρ αὐτὸς μὲν | [ad 5 ll. παρ]ακελεύ[ομα]ι, αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ πειθ[όμ]ει[νος ταῦτ]α δρᾶσ[ω, ἐγὼ] οὕτως ἔχω ὡς φ[έρω] | [. . . τὰ πα]ρόντα. [ἀλλ'] ὡς ἴσως τις καὶ π[. . .] | [ad 10 ll.]ελ[. . .]αι βούλ[ε]ται, ὅδε ὁ λό[γος] | [ad 16 ll.] ται ἢ γνώμη βεβαί | [ad 21 ll.] ἡγοῦμαι ἐμαυ|[τὸν ad 17 ll. ἐ]πιδειξαι ὅτι [ᾗ]γ | [ad 19 ll.] τῷ λόγῳ ὀρμηγ | [ad 20 ll.] κα]ταφρονήσειε | [ad 21 ll.] ἀμέλει . . .” When comparing the reconstructed text with the original unreconstructed text, note that the *περισ* in the original transcript becomes a *περις[τ]ά* in the reconstruction. This may be a typographical issue. Also, sometimes letters that are dotted as uncertain in the original transcript lose their notation of uncertainty in the reconstruction. Again, this may simply be typographical. A few other minor critical markings are different in the original transcript as compared to the reconstruction, but none of the deviations is significant. (For example, an opening bracket before *ξυμφορᾶς* is missing in the reconstruction. In that case, the change seemed an evident error and I reinserted the bracket for clarity.)

¹¹⁶ *On Exile* 1; trans. by Whitmarsh; italics original. Greek from Barigazzi (1966). Whitmarsh footnotes his translation of this first chapter by saying, “This chapter consists largely of a translation of Barigazzi's reconstruction of the lacunose beginning of the papyrus.” [Whitmarsh (2001) 303.]

ἐγὼ γ[ὺν ὑπεῖ]ξ[αι οὐ θέλω] ἢ ἀπ[ο]κάμνειν¹¹⁷ | μ' ἐπ[οτρύνων ο]ὐκ ἐν [εὐπρα]γίαις
μόνον οὐδὲ | ἄ[λ]λαις, [ὄ]σπερ τινές, [τύχαις, ἀ]λλὰ καὶ ἐν τούτοις | π[ο]λὺ μᾶλλον εἶνα[ι
σοφὸς καὶ ἐν[ε]πιδείξασθαι.

Now I do not want to give up, or grow weary of, exhorting myself, either in good circumstances alone nor, like some, in other situations; rather, even in this state, I would rather be wise and display my learning.¹¹⁸

Favorinus desires to do something positive “even in this state” (καὶ ἐν τούτοις). While that phrase alone is ambiguous, the immediate context indicates that the condition referred to – this state – is something negative. The negative state repeatedly addressed in this essay is exile. It would seem most natural to see Favorinus speaking here about his unfortunate state, that he too is an exile.

Favorinus becomes more explicit. In beginning his discussion about what place one properly considers his fatherland, he says,

τὴν δὲ πατρίδα | φιλῶ μὲν [καὶ αὐ]τὸς οὐδενὸς δεύτερος καὶ | ἐκὼν αὐτῆς οὐκ ἄν ποτε
ἀπελείφθην· λογιζόμενος δὲ εὐρίσκω οὐδὲν ἕτερον οὐ|σαν ἢ ἐν ἧ̄ οἱ πρόγονοι ἡμῶν
κατώκη|σαν ἢ διέτριψαν.

And I too love my fatherland: my love is second to no one's, and I should never have left it willingly. On reflection, however, I discover that it is nothing other than the land in which my forebears settled or resided.¹¹⁹

Favorinus' words “and I should never have left it willingly” (καὶ | ἐκὼν αὐτῆς οὐκ ἄν ποτε ἀπελείφθην) seem definitive. He is speaking clearly about departing from his home country. He explicitly states that this was not a willing departure. While one might theoretically suggest that this departure was for some other odd reason – for example, that he was sick and had to find a better climate for his health – such a suggestion would so violate the larger context so as to be

¹¹⁷ Bracket positioning reflects Barigazzi text.

¹¹⁸ *On Exile* 5.1; trans. by Whitmarsh. Greek from Barigazzi (1966). For another example of this type of evidence, see *On Exile* 5.2

¹¹⁹ *On Exile* 10.1; trans. by Whitmarsh. Greek from Barigazzi (1966).

untenable. Favorinus has been and will continue to be speaking about exile.¹²⁰ Favorinus is describing himself as experiencing the very thing that he is discussing.

Finally, Favorinus highlights even more clearly the unwilling nature of his current status by contrasting it with adventurous roaming that was a part of his life as a young man, in the process explicitly identifying himself as one experiencing exile: “As for me, however, my life even before my compulsory exile was mostly spent roaming around many parts of the earth and the sea, and in meetings abroad with foreign men” (ἐμοὶ δέ, ᾧ καὶ πρὸ τῆς ἀναγκαίας φυγῆς τὸ πλεῖστον τοῦ βίου ἀνὰ πολλὰ μέρη γῆς τε | καὶ θαλάσσης ἀνδρῶν τε ἀλλοθρόων ἐκδήμους ἐπιμειξίαις ἀνάλωται).¹²¹ What he did as a young man was completely by his choice. What he was experiencing now was compulsory exile (τῆς ἀναγκαίας φυγῆς). He was separated from his homeland by force. He was an exile.¹²²

Claassen was open to the possibility that Favorinus never experienced exile. Swain is convinced it never happened. In evaluating arguments claiming to challenge the authenticity of a Favorinus exile, it would seem that none of those arguments is unassailable. To the contrary, there seem to be good and reasonable explanations for details viewed by some as calling into question his exile. On the other hand, Favorinus himself leaves no doubt that he is presenting

¹²⁰ To offer one example, in a section where Favorinus is comparing the attitude an exile should have with the attitude athletes have as they compete in games, he notes the reality of competitors. In exile, there will be many challenges to overcome. He then says, “You must not despise them: quite the opposite, you must try to overcome them with your will, as if to pay them back for all the mortal illusions, desires, [. . .], emotions and appetites that burden all other occasions and now wish to render *exile itself* more difficult” (καὶ οὐ χρῆ|καταφρονεῖν α[ὐτ]ῶν, ἀλλὰ τούναντίον | πειρᾶσθαι ὑπερβα[λ]έσθαι τῶ φρονή|ματι, ὥσπερ ἀντὶ π[ασ]ῶν τῶν ἀνθρω|πειῶν δοξῶν τε καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν κ[α]ὶ [. . .] | μων καὶ ὀρμῶν καὶ ὀρέξεων, αἱ δὴ τάς | τε ἄλλας ἀπάσας ζυντυχίας ἐπιφο[ρ] | τίζουσι καὶ γῶν τὴν φυγὴν αὐτὴν | χαλεπωτέραν ἐθέλουσιν ἀποδεικνύ|ειν, *On Exile* 5.1); trans. by Whitmarsh; italics mine. Greek from Barigazzi (1966). The focus of Favorinus’ essay is clearly exile.

¹²¹ *On Exile* 13.2; trans. by Whitmarsh. Greek from Barigazzi (1966).

¹²² Favorinus refers to his personal exile quite explicitly in other places in *On Exile*. In 14.1 he notes that locals can consider him a foreigner and a stranger. In 28.1 and 29.2 he describes his exile as occurring on an island.

himself as an exile, and there is no compelling reason to view that presentation as anything other than an authentic description of something he experienced personally.

As one who actually experienced exile, then, Favorinus serves as yet another good example – in addition to Musonius and Dio Chrysostom – of one who can speak about exile with the credibility that comes from personal experience. In addition, Favorinus also mimics his philosophical forebears in their optimistic perspective while in the midst of exile.

Favorinus' path to victory follows, in significant ways, the trails blazed by his teacher and his teacher's teacher. As both Dio Chrysostom and Musonius reflected key features of stoicism in their approach, it is no surprise to find Stoic elements in the philosophy of Favorinus as well. Claassen places the perspective of Favorinus firmly in this philosophical camp as she asserts, "Dio Chrysostom' pupil Favorinus of Arelate was reputed to have been of the third generation of stoic exiles."¹²³

Other details, however, might lead one to wonder whether Favorinus was instead a Skeptic and not a Stoic. Aulus Gellius, a Latin author of the second century AD, characterizes the skeptical school of philosophy and then describes a connection Favorinus had with this approach.

Quos Pyrronios philosophos vocamus, hi Graeco cognomento σκεπτικοί appellantur; id ferme significat quasi quaesitores et consideratores. Nihil enim decernunt, nihil constituunt, sed in quaerendo semper considerandoque sunt quidnam sit omnium rerum de quo decerni constituique possit. . . . Indicia enim rei cuiusque et sinceras proprietates negant posse nosci et percipi, idque ipsum docere atque ostendere multis modis conantur. Super qua re Favorinus quoque subtilissime argutissimeque decem libros composuit, quos πυρρωνείων τρόπων inscribit.

Those whom we call the Pyrronian philosophers are designated by the Greek name σκεπτικοί, or sceptics, which means about the same as inquirers and investigators. For they decide nothing and determine nothing, but are always engaged in inquiring and considering what there is in all nature concerning which it is possible to decide and determine. . . . they deny that proofs of anything and its real qualities can be known and

¹²³ Claassen (2001) 66.

understood, and they try in many ways to point this out and demonstrate it. On this subject Favorinus too with great keenness and subtlety has composed ten books, which he entitled πυρρωνεῖοι τρόποι, or The Pyrronian Principles.¹²⁴

Aulus Gellius credits Favorinus with a vast work which explored the principles of skepticism. Admittedly, however, simply writing about a philosophical approach does not inevitably imply embrace of that approach. In this respect, Philostratus offers helpful information. When listing texts that he feels are either properly or improperly attributed to Favorinus, Philostratus concludes:

τὸν δὲ ἐπὶ τῷ ἀώρῳ καὶ τὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν μονομάχων καὶ τὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν βαλανείων γνησίους τε ἀποφαινόμεθα καὶ εὖ ξυγκειμένους, καὶ πολλῶ μᾶλλον τοὺς φιλοσοφούμενους αὐτῶ τῶν λόγων, ὧν ἄριστοι οἱ Πυρρώνειοι· τοὺς γὰρ Πυρρωνεῖους ἐφεκτικὸς ὄντας οὐκ ἀφαιρεῖται καὶ τὸ δικάζειν δύνασθαι.

But the speeches *On One Untimely Dead*, and *For the Gladiators*, and *For the Baths*, I judge to be genuine and well written; and this is far more true of his dissertations on philosophy, of which the best are those on the doctrines of Pyrrho; for he concedes to the followers of Pyrrho the ability to make a legal decision, though in other matters they suspend their judgment.¹²⁵

Like Aulus Gellius, Philostratus attributes a significant work on Pyrrho to Favorinus. However, Philostratus makes evident that Favorinus wrote multiple other works which described various philosophies. Of all those Favorinus had composed, Philostratus felt that Favorinus' work on the doctrines of Pyrrho was the best.

This observation by Philostratus supports, then, the measured characterization of Favorinus as offered by Jessica Berry. She simply notes that Favorinus was “an author of skeptical arguments.”¹²⁶ We know that Favorinus wrote about skepticism, just as he wrote about

¹²⁴ *Attic Nights* 11.5.1-5; trans. by Rolfe (1927).

¹²⁵ Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* 491; trans. by Wright.

¹²⁶ Berry (2010) 27.

other philosophies. To classify him as a skeptic philosopher, however, would go beyond the evidence.

It is no surprise, then, to discover that skepticism plays no obvious role in Favorinus' philosophical perspectives on exile. As noted earlier, stoicism does appear to influence his arguments. This is evident in Favorinus' view that humans should be accepting of all the circumstances they confront in life, whether seemingly positive or negative. He writes:

ἡμεῖς δὲ ἀγανακτήσομεν ἐν τῷ τοῦ βίου δράματι πειθόμενοι τῷ ἅπαντος τοῦδε τοῦ κόσμου | ποιητῇ θεῷ, ἐὰν ποτὲ μὲν ἄρχοντας ποτὲ | δὲ φυγάδας, ποτὲ δὲ πλουσίους αὐθις δὲ πένη ||¹²⁷ [τας κελεύη ἡμᾶς ὑπο]κρίν[ας]θαι; κα[ὶ] ἐ]ν [μὲν ἀρχαῖς τε καὶ δ]υναστεῖαις ὄντες | [οἱ ὑποκριταὶ λαμπροὶ] καὶ εὐδαίμονες εἰ]ν[αι] ν[ομι]ο[ῦ]σιν βέ[βαι]α τὰ παρόντα ἡγού[μενο]ι, ἐν δ[ὲ] δυσπραγία]ις καὶ φυγαῖς κακο[δαί]μονες [ὡς πάντων ἀ]πεστερημένοι, | ἀλλ' οὐ σχήματο[ς μὲν σ]κευὴν καὶ προσω[πεῖον] μεταβεβ[λῆ]σθαι, ο]ἱ δὲ αὐτοὶ εἶναι ἐν]δοθεν, ὥσπερ σω[μ]ά[τια]

What of us? Is it obedience to the poet¹²⁸ of the whole cosmos if, in life's drama, we complain when he bids us play now rulers, now exiles, now wealthy men and now paupers again? Do actors consider themselves egregious and blessed when they are in their kingdoms and tyrannies, judging their present circumstances secure? Do they consider themselves forlorn of everything when they are in the midst of disasters and exiles? Do they not consider, rather, that they have changed the style of their clothing and their mask, that their true selves reside within, like little bodies?¹²⁹

Favorinus' first point, then, in encouraging acceptance of exile is that the outward circumstances of life do not fundamentally change a person. The essence of who someone is remains constant no matter what the role. Happiness and sadness ought not depend on the costume and mask one is wearing at the time. Rather, one can find contentment simply in playing well whatever role has been assigned.

¹²⁷ || = Indicator of new column in Barigazzi's text.

¹²⁸ It appears that the term θεῷ is left untranslated by Whitmarsh. One might translate ποιητῇ θεῷ "the divine poet" or even "the divine maker." The translation "poet" does fit the acting context well, even as the concept of "maker" would not militate against that context. Perhaps Favorinus wished both thoughts to resonate.

¹²⁹ *On Exile* 3.3; trans. by Whitmarsh. Greek from Barigazzi (1966).

ὥστε οὔτε | φυγή οὔτε πάλιν αὖ μόνῃ, οὔτε ἀτιμία οὔτε τιμή, οὔτε ἀδικία <οὔτε —, οὔτε ἐλευθερία> οὔτε δουλεία, οὔτε πλοῦτος ἢ πενία | ἀγαθὰ ἢ κακά, ἀλλὰ ἢ μὲν τούτων εἰς τὸ δέον χρῆσις ἀγαθῆ, ἢ δὲ εἰς τὸ μὴ δέον κακῆ.

So it is not exile and remaining at home, nor loss of honour and honour, nor injustice and <justice, nor liberty and> slavery, nor wealth and poverty that are good and bad, but the proper handling of these things is good and the improper bad.¹³⁰

The ups and downs of life are not determinative of success. Rather, how one makes use of these moments is the critical marker of conquest. Specifically, one has opportunity in all circumstances to exert self-control.

ἢ λαμπρυνοῦμαι ἐκείνοις μᾶλλον | ὅτι ἐτέρων ἤρχον ἢ τοῖς νῦν, ἐάν γ' ἐμαυτοῦ ἄρξαι δυνηθεῖς (ἢπερ μεγίστη ἀρχὴ ἦν) ὑπεράνω γένωμαι τῶν δεινῶν;

Shall I pride myself more on my past, because I held a position of power over others, than on my present, if I can show power over myself (which is the greatest form of power), and master my sufferings?¹³¹

By highlighting acceptance of one's situation and focusing on virtuous behavior – in this case, self-control – in the midst of that situation, Favorinus follows in the footsteps of Dio, Musonius, and others:

φυγῆς δ' ἂν καὶ ἕτεροι | [δι' ἄλλας αἰτίας καταφρονήσαιεν, ἀλλ' ὁ [Σι] | [νωπεὺς Διογέν]ης καὶ Κ[ρ]ά[τ]ης [ὁ Θεβ]αῖος καὶ | . . [ad 10 ll.] ιπ[πο]ς [κα]ῖ [ad 11 ll.] | [. . . . καὶ ὁ Τυ]ρρηνὸς Μουσώνιος κατεφρό[νη] | [σαν οὔτοι] δὴ μίσει τῶν πατρίδων οὐδὲ ἔχ[θρα] | [τῶν σφετ]έρων πολιτῶν, ἀλλὰ τὰ παρόντα | πταισμάτα¹³² πάντα ὡς ἀνθρώπινα ἀσπαζόμε[νο]ι. . . ὅστις δ' ἀρετῆς ἐφιεμενος ἐν τοῖς τοιούτο[ις] εὐθυμεῖται, αὐτὸς μὲν ἰκανὸς προσ[δέ]ξασ[θ]α[ι], εὐφροστατος δὲ καὶ ἄλλω ξυμβουλεῦσαι οὐ λόγῳ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ οἰκείῳ παραδείγματι | προτρέπων . . .

Different people may show contempt for exile for different reasons, but Diogenes of Sinope, Crates of Thebes, [Chrysippus of Soli], [Dio of Prusa], and the Etruscan Musonius show contempt for it out of neither hatred of their father lands nor enmity towards their fellow citizens, but because they accepted as part of the human condition all the circumstances that befell them. . . . The man who shows equanimity and aims at virtue in such a situation is capable of dealing with matters himself, and also most

¹³⁰ *On Exile* 24.4; trans. by Whitmarsh. Greek from Barigazzi (1966).

¹³¹ *On Exile* 13.3; trans. by Whitmarsh. Greek from Barigazzi (1966).

¹³² A dot should also be under the iota.

suitable for advising someone else too, not just verbally but also exhorting him with his own example . . .¹³³

These words of Favorinus do match the sentiment of his teacher Dio¹³⁴ who, as earlier noted, observed this: “‘May not exile after all,’ I thought, ‘and poverty, yes, and old age too and sickness, and all such things, appear heavy to some and grievous, but to others light and easy?’” (μη ἄρα καὶ τὸ φεύγειν καὶ τὸ πένεσθαι καὶ γῆρας δὴ καὶ νόσος καὶ πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα τοῖς μὲν βαρέα φαίνεται καὶ χαλεπά, τοῖς δ’ ἐλαφρά τε καὶ εὐκόλα·).¹³⁵ Musonius speaks in a similar vein: “. . . if you are that good man and have his virtues, exile will not harm or degrade you, because the virtues are present in you which are most able to help and to sustain you” (εἰ μὲν ἀγαθὸς εἶ οὗτος καὶ τὰς ἀρετὰς ἔχεις, οὐκ ἂν σε βλάπτοι ἢ φυγὴ οὐδ’ ἂν ταπεινοίη, παρόντων γε τῶν ὠφελεῖν καὶ ἐπαίρειν μάλιστα δυναμένων).¹³⁶

They speak with one voice. Musonius, his pupil Dio, and Dio’s pupil Favorinus conquer in exile by accepting whatever circumstances they face and by viewing challenging circumstances as opportunities to exemplify the virtues they have always held dear.

Recognizing that virtue can shine in all circumstances, even in exile, was one key piece of Favorinus’ path to victory in the face of such challenge. Favorinus also attributed an important role to the divine. In this respect, Favorinus largely mimicked Dio. Dio viewed the divine as being in control of the broader circumstances. He saw the divine as capable of increasing or decreasing the burden of exile. Favorinus also viewed the divine as responsible for giving benefits and for taking them away.

¹³³ *On Exile* 2.1; trans. by Whitmarsh. Greek from Barigazzi (1966).

¹³⁴ Admittedly, the inclusion of Dio in the reconstruction of Favorinus’ *On Exile* 2.1 text is speculative. Nevertheless, Dio’s own words would legitimize his inclusion in a list like this.

¹³⁵ 13.3; trans. by Cohoon (1939).

¹³⁶ ix, 50; trans. by Lutz.

εἰ δέ τινα καὶ δανείσαντες ἡμῖν πρὸς καιρὸν δόντες, οἷον τὰς τιμὰς τε καὶ δόξας καὶ ἀρχὰς καὶ πλοῦτον | καὶ σῶμα αὐτό, πάλιν αὖ ἐξήκοντος τοῦ χρόνου ἀπαιτήσαιεν, ἀγανακτῆσομεν καὶ πρὸς τὸν δανειστὴν | ἀγνωμονήσομεν, ὅτι ἄρα, τοσοῦτω χρόνω ἡμῖν παρασχὼν τοῖς αὐτοῦ ἐναπολαῦσαι ὅσῳ πεπωμέ|νον ἦν, καὶ ἄλλοις βούλεται μεταδοῦναι καὶ δανεῖσαι;

If [the gods] make us certain loans, such as honours, reputations, offices, wealth, and civic rights, giving them in season but recalling them when our time is up, shall we grow angry and grudging towards our creditor, because he has allowed us to enjoy his possessions for such time as was fated, and wants instead to loan them to someone else?¹³⁷

While Favorinus acknowledged the broad control the divine exercised, he did not view the gods as disinterested in his personal situation. Like Dio, who saw the divine as a source of strength and help, so Favorinus believed that divine assistance was available, and specifically for those who were virtuous. He highlights this as he discusses whether location makes a difference when calling upon the gods:

κ|αθόλου δὲ περὶ μὲν θεῶν οὕτω | χρῆ διανοεῖσθαι, ὡς ἀνδρὶ μὲν πονηρῷ καὶ ἀ|δίκῳ οὐδαμ[οῦ] ὑπακουσομένων, ἐάν τε ἐν τῇ | πατρίδι αὐτοῖς εὐχεται ἐάν τε, ὡς ἀνυστόν, ἐγ|γυτάτω πέλας τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ἢ [ἐ]ὰν ἐν Τροίᾳ, ἐν|θα μάλιστα, ὡς Ὅμηρος λέγει, θεοὶ ἀνθρώποις | ὠμίλησας. . . . ἀνδ[ρὶ]¹³⁸ δ' ἀ|γαθῷ | καὶ ὁσίῳ [τοὺς θεοὺς ἀπ]ανταχοῦ [ὑπακουσομέ]νους

Generally as regards the gods, you should consider that they are likely to heed a wretched, unjust man nowhere, whether he prayed to them in his fatherland, whether as close as one can get to heaven, or whether in Troy, where, as Homer says, gods mixed with men. . . . But the gods will pay heed everywhere to a good and pious man . . .¹³⁹

Favorinus suggests that if an exile is good and pious, the gods will be on his side. While outward circumstances might imply separation, the divine source of help is within easy reach.

There is reason to be optimistic. There is reason not to lose hope when one is an exile.

¹³⁷ *On Exile* 22.1; trans. by Whitmarsh. Greek from Barigazzi (1966).

¹³⁸ Barigazzi's manuscript has ἀδ[ρ]ι, an apparent typographical error.

¹³⁹ *On Exile* 13.3; trans. by Whitmarsh. Greek from Barigazzi (1966).

So far Favorinus has followed the track of Musonius and Dio. Victory in exile comes as one is willing to accept any set of circumstances, all the while maintaining virtue. Victory is gained when one recognizes that the divine is controlling all things, and an exile can comfortably submit to that plan. In addition, victory is assisted as the divine is readily available to offer help. But there is one more thing Favorinus discusses, an emphasis unique from his philosophic exilic ancestors. Favorinus chooses to offer hope to those who are exiles by reminding them that there is an eternal reward, one enjoyed after this life comes to an end.

When considering the role that ongoing existence after death can play in offering optimism to exiles, one must distinguish between two distinct concepts of immortality. First, an exile can believe that he will achieve immortality simply because his words will endure beyond his death – he will live on in an abstract sense in his poetry or prose. Second, an exile can foster optimism as he focuses on the hope of a better personal existence after death. His current circumstances may be filled with trouble, but he is looking forward to a better life on the other side.

Claassen, in addressing the relationship between exile, death, and immortality, highlights that first type of immortality. She notes that with an author like Ovid, “poetry has power to immortalise.”¹⁴⁰ Such perspective on the future can bring benefit to an exile in the moment of their trouble:

In the Roman world, exile and death were closely related. Because exile frequently served as preemption of or substitute for the death penalty, it was often portrayed in literature as the virtual equivalent of death. Yet even in banishment, intimations of immortality often served to lighten some exiles’ lot.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Claassen (1999) 244.

¹⁴¹ Claassen (2001) 11.

Ovid closes his *Metamorphoses* with just such a focus, offering as a last word his hope that his words will last forever:

Iamque opus exegi, quod nec Iovis ira nec ignis
nec poterit ferrum nec edax abolere vetustas.
Cum volet, illa dies, quae nil nisi corporis huius
ius habet, incerti spatium mihi finiat aevi:
parte tamen meliore mei super alta perennis
astra ferar, nomenque erit indelebile nostrum,
quaque patet domitis Romana potentia terris,
ore legar populi, perque omnia saecula fama,
siquid habent veri vatum praesagia, vivam.

And now, I have completed a great work,
which not Jove's anger, and not fire nor steel,
nor fast-consuming time can sweep away.
Whenever it will, let the day come, which has
dominion only over this mortal frame,
and end for me the uncertain course of life.
Yet in my better part I shall be borne
immortal, far above the stars on high,
and mine shall be a name indelible.
Wherever Roman power extends her sway
over the conquered lands, I shall be read
by lips of men. If Poets' prophecies
have any truth, through all the coming years
of future ages, I shall live in fame.¹⁴²

The exilic author Ovid looked forward to living on through his poetry. Favorinus, however, while he surely has lived on in his writing, was speaking of something different when he spoke of a future after death:

ἐὰν δὲ πειθόμενος εὐγνωμόνως ἔχῃς, καλῶς καὶ ἀπταιστώως | τὸν τοῦ βίου δ[ρόμον
ἐξ]ανύσας τῆ ἐκείνου προνοία ἐπιβήσῃ[ι ἐς τὸν] λιμένα ἄκλυστον εὐδαιμονίας, ἧ
ἐκβήσῃ[ι κα]ὶ τὰ πάλαι θ[ρυ]λούμενα Ἡ[λ]υσίων πεδ[ί]ων [ἀγ]αθὰ ὄψει . . .

If you consent [to the cosmic governance of Zeus] and show equanimity, you will complete the course of life well and without mishap, thanks to your foreknowledge of it, and will arrive at the sheltered harbour of happiness, where you will disembark, and see the long-renowned benefits of the Elysian plains . . .¹⁴³

¹⁴² Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 15.871-879; trans. by More (15.1288-1301).

¹⁴³ *On Exile* 27.2; trans. by Whitmarsh. Greek from Barigazzi (1966).

Having described what a proper perspective on life is, particularly as an exile, Favorinus points his readers to their ultimate destination. While details of that existence are unmentioned, it seems evident that Favorinus is referring to a positive conscious existence after death which can serve as an encouragement to exiles facing challenge in their current lives. Admittedly, Favorinus does not explore any nuances to his personal convictions in this regard.¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless, for purposes of characterizing his approach to exile, it seems fair to conclude that some sort of positive eternal future was viewed as relevant to an exile's optimism. A look to one's postdeath future contributes to an exile's appropriate sense of conquest in the face of difficulty.

Favorinus' perspective on exile mimics in many ways the perspectives offered by Dio and Musonius. He promotes an acceptance of one's circumstances and the importance of virtue. He promotes a confidence that the divine remains in control and that the divine is ready to help those who are good and pious. Favorinus also charts his own course in an important way, choosing to focus on an additional element, one's postdeath existence.

Overview of the exilic path

In a first-century Roman world so familiar with exile, repeated philosophical efforts were made to overcome its negativity. Three philosophers in particular stand out as ideal templates for characterizing Josephus' approach in the midst of his "virtual exile." Musonius, Dio Chrysostom, and Favorinus not only presented optimistic views with regard to exile, but they did this while concurrently experiencing the challenge of exile personally.

¹⁴⁴ He does draw attention to the longevity of the convictions that he is tapping into: they have been "repeated over and over again for a long time" (πάλαι θ[ρ]υλούμενα). Also, he highlights the goodness ([ἀγ]αθὰ) of the anticipated experience.

Musonius maintained his optimism by focusing on positives in the face of negatives, emphasizing that virtue can thrive even in the face of difficulty, and finding peace in the fact that exile itself is not an accurate determiner of the rightness or wrongness of an exile's views. Dio mimicked in many ways these perspectives of Musonius, even as he also focused on the role of the divine. The divine controlled the larger circumstances of life, including exile. In addition, the divine was ready and willing to help the exile in his challenging circumstances. Favorinus followed the path paved by his philosophical predecessors, accepting his circumstances, promoting the continued exercise of virtue, and depending on divine assistance. But he emphasized an additional element, his expectation of an eternal reward.

The perspectives of these three Greek exiles will now serve as a template against which the views of Josephus can be compared. In so many ways, the "virtual" exile tracks the footsteps of those physically exiled, footsteps which follow a path not of pessimism but of optimistic triumph.

CHAPTER 5 – Josephus Follows the Path to Victory

Josephus, an exile of thought

While the status of Jews in the Roman world of the first century AD is admittedly complicated and often inconsistent, there is a thread visible in much of the evidence that exists. Jews faced risk. By embracing a theological culture that contrasted so significantly with the philosophy and convictions of those that surrounded them, Jews stood out. When non-Jews contemplated such a distinctive culture – and in particular the exclusivist nature of Jewish theology – it was possible for non-Jews to perceive a rejection of their own religious culture. While this perception may have been difficult to verbalize and, on the part of some, may have been little more than an ill-defined instinct, it could feel like an authentic threat. While various factors could determine whether and how non-Jews reacted to this perceived threat, for Jews a sense of risk remained. Even absent a physical manifestation of the theological/philosophical tension, the reality of this dichotomy between Jewish religious culture and non-Jewish religious culture remained.

Josephus, as one who embraced the uniqueness of the Jewish religious culture, naturally stood out as well. While in so many ways he had gone further than most in his integration into the non-Jewish world, nevertheless his beliefs distinguished him from so many strangers, so many neighbors, and even so many of his friends. Imposed physical exile was never a consequence of his distinctiveness vis-à-vis Roman society, but that did not mean Josephus was not an exile. As earlier noted, Whitmarsh observed with respect to Musonius:

Exile plays a metaphorical role in this connection: Musonius is not merely topographically relocated, but also conceptually isolated from the norms and conventions of regular society. In a literal sense, the Emperor banished him from Rome for practicing

philosophy; at a deeper level, Musonius' decision to philosophize had already condemned him to a kind of exile from society.¹

In a similar way, Josephus' determination to devote himself to the God of Israel can appropriately be viewed as consigning Josephus to a "kind of exile from society." Whitmarsh reinforces his perspective that convictions have the power to make one an exile: "The philosopher, divorced by his insight and education from a parochial worldview is, by definition, always already an exile of sorts."²

When one exists as an exile, that status can weigh like the burden of a punishment. Or, as in the case of the three exiles highlighted in the previous chapter – Musonius, Dio Chrysostom, and Favorinus – heartfelt convictions can overcome separation-induced pain. These three philosophers did respond to their exile in striking fashion. While others may have viewed them as losers, they confronted apparent defeat by boldly laying claim to victory.

This feature of their response to exile positions them as a template against which the approach of Josephus to his "exile-of-thought" status can be compared. As one whose customs and theology had been marginalized in much of the empire and whose people had been militarily crushed in AD 70, Josephus had every reason to be pessimistic about the convictions of his people. His de facto exile could have weighed like the burden of a punishment. This is not what we see. Josephus is not pessimistic in the least. In his writings, all of which were composed after the destruction of Jerusalem, he gives no hint of feeling less confident about his convictions. To the contrary, he is so bold as to recommend that others learn from him an appropriate view toward life. He displays acceptance of life's circumstances, promoting a path

¹ Whitmarsh (2001) 145.

² Whitmarsh (2001) 146. Also, Sarah Cohen, in a chapter entitled "Cicero's Roman Exile" in J. F. Gaertner's *Writing Exile: The Discourse of Displacement in Greco-Roman Antiquity and Beyond* [(2007) 109-128], discusses how exile can be a state of mind rather than actual physical separation from one's home.

of confident optimism no matter what the situation. He presents the God he serves as the determiner of events and as his personal source of guidance and assurance. He holds on to the certainty that those who have a proper perspective on life and an understanding of the divine can look forward to a future that transcends life, and even death.

The three philhellenic philosophers claimed victory in exile. Josephus also claimed victory in exile. While Josephus would not have embraced all perspectives of the three philhellenic philosophers – in key respects their theological views did not mimic his own – yet in many ways he followed the pathways they each employed to claim victory. His following of their pathways need not have been conscious direct imitation. Rather, identifying parallels in their pathways intends simply to highlight that both the philosophers and Josephus viewed themselves in similar fashion relative to the dominant authority or surrounding culture in play. They chose not to view themselves as others might view them. They found confidence, instead, in higher principles and convictions.

I will now compare the pathways of each of the three philosophers to Josephus' approach. As we see Josephus following these pathways, we also see Josephus mastering the art of exile, that art of conveying via writing what outward circumstances might argue against: that the conquered had actually conquered.

Following the pathway of Musonius

The pathway Musonius paved to victory in exile employed a number of different features. He emphasized positives in the face of negatives. He exemplified Stoic acceptance of his situation, noting that virtue is not impeded in the least by challenging circumstances. Finally, he observed that exile itself is not a good indicator of the rightness or wrongness of an exile's

views. Each of these optimistic perspectives served to affirm that Musonius, though an exile, was in no way the loser. Rather, he was overcoming in the face of exile.

Josephus followed in Musonius' path by also emphasizing positives in the face of negatives. His largest work, the *Antiquities* (c. AD 94), was a twenty-book history of the Jewish people which started with "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (ἐν ἀρχῇ ἔκτισεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν)³ and concluded with events in the twelfth year of Nero, just as the Jewish war against the Romans was beginning.⁴ This conclusion to his history could leave the reader with little but a sense of foreboding. In addition, other elements of Josephus' story describe great troubles faced by the Jewish people. Yet Josephus is nothing but optimistic as he prepares his readers for his lengthy account. In his prologue to the *Antiquities*, he characterizes all that he is about to write:

τὸ σύνολον δὲ μάλιστα τις ἂν ἐκ ταύτης μάθοι τῆς ἱστορίας ἐθελήσας αὐτὴν διελθεῖν, ὅτι τοῖς μὲν θεοῦ γνώμη κατακολουθοῦσι καὶ τὰ καλῶς νομοθετηθέντα μὴ τολμῶσι παραβαίνειν πάντα κατορθοῦται πέρα πίστεως καὶ γέρας εὐδαιμονία πρόκειται παρὰ θεοῦ· καθ' ὅσον δ' ἂν ἀποστῶσι τῆς τούτων ἀκριβοῦς ἐπιμελείας, ἄπορα μὲν γίνεται τὰ πόριμα, τρέπεται δὲ εἰς συμφορὰς ἀνηκέστους ὅ τι ποτ' ἂν ὡς ἀγαθὸν δρᾶν σπουδάσωσιν, ἤδη τοίνυν τοὺς ἐντευξομένους τοῖς βιβλίοις παρακαλῶ τὴν γνώμην θεῶ προσανέχειν

Upon the whole, a man that will peruse this history, may principally learn from it, that all events succeed well, even to an incredible degree, and the reward of felicity is proposed by God; but then it is to those that follow his will, and do not venture to break his excellent laws;—and that so far as men any way apostatize from the accurate observation of them, what was practicable before, becomes impracticable; and whatsoever they set about as a good thing is converted into an incurable calamity;— and now I exhort all those that peruse these books to apply their minds to God . . .⁵

What is Josephus claiming? First, he is indicating that not all the history he tells will be positive. He anticipates that readers might conclude there is good reason for pessimism with

³ *Ant* 1.27.

⁴ *Ant* 20.257-258.

⁵ *Ant* 1.14-15.

regard to the Jewish people or the governance by God of the world. Quite the opposite is the case, claims Josephus. When such disasters occur, they do not challenge one's optimistic perspective of Judaism or of the divine will. To the contrary, such negative events only confirm the appropriate path to a positive perspective. When one follows the will of the God of Israel and does not break his laws, many blessings come. But when one chooses an alternative path, suddenly even those things which would appear inevitably to succeed can turn into calamity.

This was Josephus' view of divine governance of the world as a whole. But from a personal perspective, this was also Josephus' confession of personal optimism. He did not view himself as one who had chosen an alternate path, a path of apostasy from accurate observation of God's law. Rather, he saw himself as a faithful follower of the God of Israel. As a consequence, he retained personal confidence even if everything around him should appear to go wrong.

This personal optimism is highlighted at one of Josephus' greatest moments of defeat. As reported in his *Jewish War*, Josephus and his men had been militarily overcome at Jotapata in Galilee. Josephus was considering the possibility of surrender to the Romans. In that moment, he prayed a secret prayer to God.

κάπειδὴ τὸ Ἰουδαίων, ἔφη, φύλον ὀκλάσαι δοκεῖ σοι τῷ κτίσαντι, μετέβη δὲ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους ἢ τύχη πᾶσα, καὶ τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν ἐπελέξω τὰ μέλλοντα εἰπεῖν, δίδωμι μὲν Ῥωμαίοις τὰς χεῖρας ἐκῶν καὶ ζῶ, μαρτύρομαι δὲ ὡς οὐ προδότης, ἀλλὰ σὸς εἶμι διάκονος.

And [he] said, "Since it pleaseth thee, who hast created the Jewish nation, to depress the same, and since all their good fortune is gone over to the Romans; and since thou hast made choice of this soul of mine to foretell what is to come to pass hereafter, I willingly give them my hands, and am content to live. And I protest openly, that I do not go over to the Romans as a deserter of the Jews, but as a minister from thee."⁶

⁶ *JW* 3.354.

Not only did Josephus not view his God as having abandoned him. He confidently moved forward into a potentially traumatic future confessing that he was God’s servant. He viewed God as being with him.

In this one example Josephus exemplifies his overriding approach. He contextualizes his entire history of the Jewish people by explaining that though events reported will be both good and bad, they will all demonstrate one pervasive and all-encompassing truth – that to follow the paths God has laid out is to always be on the right side and, ultimately, to have reason for optimism. Negatives there will be. But the positives transcend any negatives.

Josephus follows in the path of Musonius not only in that he contextualizes negatives from the perspective of positives. Josephus also has an interesting linkage with Musonius’ appeal to Stoic philosophy. Musonius provided philosophical support for a view of life that can be accepting of all circumstances – he noted that virtue can thrive no matter what one’s outward situation; in fact, exile can highlight the power of virtue in one’s own life.⁷ In similar fashion, as Feldman summarizes, “[Josephus] shared the attitude of the Stoics in accepting the *status quo* as that which must be.”⁸ Not only did Josephus demonstrate again and again that he could be content with circumstances as they were. He lays explicit claim, at least in part, to the philosophical views of the Stoics. After describing his personal quest as a young man to evaluate the various sects of Judaistic thought, he presents his ultimate decision and then relates that association to a Greek philosophical school. “[I] returned to the city. Being now in my nineteenth year I began to govern my life by the rules of the Pharisees, a sect having points of resemblance to that which the Greeks call the Stoic school” (εἰς τὴν πόλιν ὑπέστρεφον.

⁷ ix, 50.

⁸ Feldman (1998) 566. Feldman goes on to offer a number of specific examples which he feels are evidence of Stoic resonance in Josephus (566-567).

έννεακαιδέκατον δ' ἔτος ἔχων ἠρξάμην τε πολιτεύεσθαι τῇ Φαρισαίων αἵρέσει κατακολουθῶν, ἢ παραπλήσιός ἐστι τῇ παρ' Ἑλλησιν Στωϊκῇ λεγομένῃ).⁹ As Musonius embraced Stoic philosophy, so Josephus was part of a sect that had significant similarity to the Stoics.

Not only did Josephus follow Musonius' path to victory by emphasizing positives over negatives and by exemplifying a Stoic-like acceptance of events as they played out. He also embraced Musonius' view that exile – separation in some respect from the society that surrounds – is not inevitably an affirmation of society's views. Musonius highlights that when exile is unjust, it is not an affirmation of the attitudes which condemned a man to exile, nor is it a condemnation of the attitudes embraced by the man who is exile. If exile is unjust, the evil rests solely with the leaders – or the society – which chose to marginalize the exiled victim.¹⁰ In a similar way, Josephus nowhere wrestles with the possibility that his theological/philosophical positions are less likely to be true because so many do not accept them. Instead, Josephus repeatedly gives evidence of his confidence in the divine plan. His attitude reflects the belief that even if it might seem for a long time that pursuing God's path is of little value, in the end God's path will be proven right. Josephus' reflection on the house of Herod offers one example of this confident, and patient, perspective:

βούλομαι οὖν εἰπεῖν ἐπὶ μακρότερον περὶ τε Ἡρώδου καὶ γένους αὐτοῦ ὡς ἐγένετο, ἅμα μὲν καὶ διὰ τὸ ἀνήκειν τῇ ἱστορίᾳ τὸν περὶ αὐτῶν λόγον, ἅμα δὲ καὶ παράστασιν ἔχειν τοῦ θεοῦ, ὡς οὐδὲν ὠφελεῖ πλῆθος οὐδ' ἄλλη τις ἀλκὴ τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἐπιτετευγμένων δίχα τῶν πρὸς τὸ θεῖον εὐσεβειῶν,

I have now a mind to describe Herod and his family, how it fared with them, partly because it is suitable to this history to speak of that matter, and partly because this thing is a demonstration of the interposition of Providence; how a multitude of children is of no advantage, no more than any other strength that mankind set their hearts upon, besides those acts of piety which are done towards God.¹¹

⁹ *Life* 1.12; trans. by Thackeray.

¹⁰ ix, 59.

¹¹ *Ant* 18.127.

For a long time it may have seemed that Herod was prospering and, as a consequence, that Herod was winning. But in the end, Josephus' subsequent story makes clear that things did not turn out well for so many in Herod's family. Though at one point it may have appeared that the path Herod had chosen was right, ultimately it was the principles Josephus espoused which were themselves proven right.

So, seeming to be alone in following a particular theological/philosophical path is not in itself evidence that one's path is wrong. A Stoic acceptance of one's circumstance because one has a larger perspective need not be evidence of weakness. Though negatives can be a part of life, one can properly focus on the positives. These claims were made by Musonius as he sought to recontextualize his personal exile. Josephus followed a similar course, retaining confident optimism though distinct in such significant fashion from Roman society.

Following the pathway of Dio

Musonius is not the only exiled philosopher charting a path which is paralleled, in important respects, by Josephus. Dio Chrysostom also set such a course.

Dio, as a student of Musonius, naturally possessed many points of similarity to his teacher. As Musonius highlighted the capacity of positives to outweigh the negatives in exile, so Dio also would focus on the positives of exile – for example, that exile naturally separated one from the pursuit of futile things.¹² As Musonius noted that exile offered opportunity for virtues in a man to shine,¹³ so Dio also confessed that exile in no way needed to impede one's pursuit of qualities properly considered virtuous.¹⁴ In multiple ways, then, Dio reflects a perspective

¹² 13.33.

¹³ ix, 50.

¹⁴ 13.32.

similar to that of Musonius. There is one area, however, where Dio invests significant additional focus.

While Musonius does refer to the divine in two places in his ninth lecture, “That exile is not an evil,”¹⁵ these references are somewhat tangential and in no way become a focus for Musonius’ professed manner of handling exile. Dio deals with the divine much more directly. He confesses the divine to be in control of the larger circumstances of life – the divine can providentially increase or lessen the burden of exile.¹⁶ Dio also presents the divine as ready and willing to assist the human in challenging circumstances.¹⁷ For Dio, then, the divine was an active force playing a significant role in Dio’s capacity to retain optimism in the face of maltreatment.

This emphasis on the divine finds deafening echo in the approach of Josephus. Dio’s view that the divine is capable of lightening or increasing the weight of suffering is similar to Josephus’ confession that God is actively impacting events in the world, providentially exerting control over world history. Dio’s presentation of the divine as a personal source of help parallels Josephus’ own presentation of God, addressing his own relationship to the divine and the clear benefits such a positive relationship entails.

As testimony to Josephus’ view that God is in ultimate control of history, the preamble to Josephus’ *Antiquities* stands out.¹⁸ Cited earlier when noting that both Josephus and Musonius emphasize positives in the face of negatives, this preamble encapsulates Josephus’ understanding of the relationship between God and human events. Josephus is convinced that a providential God is actively involved in the broad scope of world events. He confesses that for the one who

¹⁵ ix, 8 & 59.

¹⁶ 13.3.

¹⁷ 45.1.

¹⁸ *Ant* 1.14-15.

follows his will and avoids transgressing the “do not cross” lines that were established by God in such excellent fashion, blessing beyond belief will flow from God. But if individuals step away from the most careful observance of God’s revealed principles, only disaster awaits.

This understanding of the divine is central to the entire history Josephus writes. Josephus is telling his reader at the beginning of his chronicle, “If you decide to go through this entire history I have written, this is the lesson you will learn” (τὸ σύνολον δὲ μάλιστα τις ἂν ἐκ ταύτης μάθοι τῆς ἱστορίας ἐθελήσας αὐτὴν διελθεῖν).¹⁹ Said another way, this characterization of the divine role in history, though expressed in just 75 words, is intended by Josephus to be the thread that ties together every element of the 20 books that are to follow in his *Antiquities*. This positions Josephus’ view of the divine, and the divine’s providential role in human history, as central to his composition and concurrently, then, as central to his own worldview. To be convinced that God is controlling everything for the benefit of those who are in concert with his will, and then to be convinced that one personally is in concert with God’s will, is to be convinced that one is on the winning side no matter what. Such conviction inevitably brings optimism, even if one’s views are markedly distinct from the perspectives of the predominant culture.

Having indicated at the beginning of the *Antiquities* that one should expect to see evidence of God’s providential control of the world, Josephus proceeds to supply that evidence. It is noteworthy that such evidence is not limited to the *Antiquities*, where Josephus’ programmatic preamble regarding God and history can be found. The same providential control is cited and contextualized repeatedly in the *Jewish War* as well. This view of Josephus, then,

¹⁹ *Ant* 1.14.

should not be viewed simply as a feature of a particular work. This view is at the heart of Josephus' view of life.

Beginning with the *Antiquities*, Josephus offers both examples of divine benefit due to faithful observance of God's law as well as examples of divine punishment when individuals act improperly. In the circumstances of King Asa, Josephus highlights the positive side of this providential equation.

King Asa began his rule of the southern kingdom of Judah about 20 years after King Solomon, the son of David, had died. Josephus describes him in this way:

ὁ δὲ τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων βασιλεὺς Ἄσανος ἦν τὸν τρόπον ἄριστος καὶ πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἀφορῶν καὶ μηδὲν μίτε πράττων μίτ' ἐννοούμενος, ὃ μὴ πρὸς τὴν εὐσέβειαν εἶχε καὶ τὴν τῶν νομίμων φυλακὴν τὴν ἀναφορὰν. κατώρθωσε δὲ τὴν αὐτοῦ βασιλείαν ἐκκόψας εἴ τι πονηρὸν ἦν ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ καθαρεύσας ἀπάσης κηλίδος.

Now Asa, the king of Jerusalem, was of an excellent character, and had a regard to God, and neither did nor designed anything but what had relation to the observation of the laws. He made a reformation of his kingdom, and cut off whatsoever was wicked therein, and purified it from every impurity.²⁰

Offering an example of Asa's regard for God, Josephus reports that this godly king faced an enemy force from Ethiopia, a force which outnumbered his own troops by vast margins. Asa prayed to God to give him victory.

οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄλλω τινὶ θαρσήσας ἔλεγεν ἢ τῇ παρ' αὐτοῦ βοηθείᾳ δυναμένη καὶ τοὺς ὀλίγους ἀπεργάσασθαι κρείττους τῶν πλειόνων καὶ τοὺς ἀσθενεῖς τῶν ὑπερεχόντων ἀπαντῆσαι πρὸς μάχην τῷ Ζαραίῳ.

“For,” said he, “I depend on nothing else but that assistance which I expect from thee, which is able to make the fewer superior to the more numerous, and the weaker to the stronger; and thence it is alone that I venture to meet Zerah and fight him.”²¹

²⁰ *Ant* 8.290.

²¹ *Ant* 8.293.

Asa's prayer was answered. "God gave him a signal of victory" (νίκην ἐσήμαινεν ὁ θεός),²² and the army of Asa crushed the enemy. As Asa and his army were returning to the city of Jerusalem, Josephus reports that they met a prophet along the road. The prophet, Azariah, accounted for their victory:

ὅτι ταύτης εἶεν τῆς νίκης παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τετυχηκότες, ὅτι δίκαιους καὶ ὁσίους ἑαυτοὺς παρέσχον καὶ πάντα κατὰ βούλησιν θεοῦ πεποιηκότας.

That the reason why they had obtained this victory from God was this, that they had showed themselves righteous and religious men, and had done everything according to the will of God.²³

Josephus then proceeds to discuss two very wicked kings, kings of the northern tribes of Israel. He notes how evil King Baasha "did a great deal of mischief to the multitude, and was injurious to God, who sent the prophet Jehu, and told him beforehand that his whole family should be destroyed" (τὸ πλῆθος κακὰ διέθηκε καὶ τὸν θεὸν ἐξύβρισεν· ὃς αὐτῷ πέμψας Ἰηοῦν τὸν προφήτην προεἶπε διαφθερεῖν αὐτοῦ πᾶν τὸ γένος).²⁴ After Baasha's death, more evil kings followed. In reflecting on them, as well as on Omri, a ruler of the northern kingdom who succeeded these other evil kings, Josephus observes,

διέφερε δ' οὐδὲν τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ βασιλευσάντων ἢ τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν εἶναι· ἅπαντες γὰρ ἐζήτουν πῶς ἀποστήσουσιν ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν λαὸν τοῖς καθ' ἡμέραν ἀσεβήμασι καὶ διὰ τοῦτο δι' ἀλλήλων αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς ἐποίησεν ἐλθεῖν καὶ μηδένα τοῦ γένους ὑπολιπεῖν. ἐτελεύτησε δὲ καὶ οὗτος ἐν Σαμαρείᾳ

Now Omri was no way different from those kings that reigned before him, but that he grew worse than they, for they all sought how they might turn the people away from God, by their daily wicked practices; and on that account it was that God made one of them to be slain by another, and that no one person of their families should remain.²⁵

²² *Ant* 8.294.

²³ *Ant* 8.295.

²⁴ *Ant* 8.299.

²⁵ *Ant* 8.313.

When rulers honored God, blessing followed. When kings decided to go their own way, disaster ensued. This is the truth Josephus introduced at the beginning of the *Antiquities*. This is the truth Josephus affirms repeatedly as he tells the story of the Jewish people. Josephus presents God as providentially controlling history, and with a very clear rubric in mind:

μαθεῖν δ' ἔστιν ἐκ τούτων, ὅσην τὸ θεῖον ἐπιστροφὴν ἔχει τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων, καὶ πῶς μὲν ἀγαπᾷ τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς, μισεῖ δὲ τοὺς πονηροὺς καὶ προρρίζους ἀπόλλυσιν·

Now by these events we may learn what concern God hath for the affairs of mankind, and how he loves good men, and hates the wicked, and destroys them root and branch.²⁶

This divine control of history was not limited to events depicted in the Hebrew Bible and then retold by Josephus. In the *Antiquities* Josephus portrays a more general application of this dynamic playing out in his own day as well. He cites Caligula's demise as another example of divine rule in action.

Caligula had acted most impiously against the Jewish people, intending even to put a statue of himself in the Jewish temple. As Josephus is about to describe Caligula's assassination, he alerts his audience to the lesson his full account of the matter should teach:

²⁶ *Ant* 8.314. Following these words, Josephus says, “For many of these kings of Israel, they and their families, were miserably destroyed, and taken away one by another, in a short time for their transgression and wickedness; but Asa, who was king of Jerusalem, and of the two tribes, attained, by God’s blessing, a long and blessed old age, for his piety and righteousness, and died happily, when he had reigned forty and one years” (οἱ μὲν γὰρ τῶν Ἰσραηλιτῶν βασιλεῖς ἄλλος ἐπ’ ἄλλῳ διὰ τὴν παρανομίαν καὶ τὰς ἀδικίας ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ πολλοὶ κακῶς διαφθαρέντες ἐγνώσθησαν καὶ τὸ γένος αὐτῶν, ὁ δὲ τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων καὶ τῶν δύο φυλῶν βασιλεὺς Ἄσανος δι’ εὐσέβειαν καὶ δικαιοσύνην εἰς μακρὸν καὶ εὐδαιμον ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ προήχθη γῆρας καὶ τεσσαράκοντα καὶ ἓν ἄρξας ἔτος εὐμοίρως ἀπέθανε, *Ant* 8.314). It is interesting that in his effort to offer a clear and succinct testimony regarding God’s providential rule of the world, Josephus chooses to leave out the analysis of 2 Chronicles 16 with regard to the behavior of Asa, an otherwise good king. 2 Chronicles explains that when Asa sought the assistance of Damascus to protect him from evil king Baasha of the northern kingdom of Israel, a prophet condemned Asa for turning to an earthly king rather than to the Lord for assistance. As a consequence, the prophet announced that Asa would no longer enjoy peace in his kingdom. Asa became angry and put the prophet in prison. Asa subsequently became sick, yet 2 Chronicles 16:12 reports that “even in his illness he did not seek help from the LORD.” [New International Version (2011).] In some ways, these added details from the end of the life of Asa would have reinforced even more Josephus’ proposition that obedience brings blessing and disobedience brings trouble. The events Josephus did choose to describe in detail, however, ultimately make the same point.

ἄλλως τε ἐπειδὴ καὶ πολλὴν ἔχει πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς δυνάμεως καὶ παραμυθίαν τοῖς ἐν τύχαις κειμένοις καὶ σωφρονισμόν τοῖς οἰομένοις αἰδίων τὴν εὐτυχίαν, ἀλλὰ μὴ ἐπιμεταφέρειν κακῶς ἀρετῆς αὐτῆ μὴ παραγενομένης.

. . . because it will afford great assurance of the power of God, and great comfort to those that are under afflictions, and wise caution to those who think their happiness will never end, nor bring them at length to the most lasting miseries, if they do not conduct their lives by the principles of virtue.²⁷

Josephus presents the demise of Caligula as offering yet another reassurance that the God of Israel was managing all events for the best.

Examples of God’s providential rule to support those doing right and to judge those doing wrong are found not only in Josephus’ *Antiquities*. The *Jewish War* provides additional evidence that Josephus viewed God as the master of history, both to bless and to punish.

After Josephus was captured at the Battle of Jotapata, Vespasian gave orders that the soldiers guard him very carefully, with the thought that soon he would send him to Nero. As Josephus heard Vespasian issue this command, he asked if he might speak to Vespasian privately. He proceeded to predict that Vespasian would ultimately become ruler of the entire Roman Empire. Vespasian smelled a trick, thinking that Josephus was making such a claim so as to preserve his own life. But something changed. As Josephus reports, “But in a little time [Vespasian] was convinced, and believed what he said to be true, God himself erecting his expectations, so as to think of obtaining the empire, and by other signs foreshowing his advancement” (κατὰ μικρὸν δὲ εἰς πίστιν ὑπήγετο τοῦ θεοῦ διεγείροντος αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν ἡγεμονίαν ἤδη καὶ τὰ σκῆπτρα δι’ ἑτέρων σημείων προδεικνύοντος).²⁸ What led Vespasian to grow in his trust of Josephus’ prediction? Josephus presents God as actively working, raising his expectations internally and pointing to his ultimate acquisition of power through various signs.

²⁷ *Ant* 19.16.

²⁸ *JW* 3.404.

Josephus presents God as in control, and in this case, impacting the perception of one who was about to receive a great benefit.

For Vespasian, God's role did not end with providing indications that imperial power would soon be his. Josephus presents God as the one who actually gave Vespasian imperial power. After Josephus explains how Vespasian's opponent for the role of emperor, Vitellius, was decapitated in Rome, Josephus then moves the scene to Alexandria, the place from which Vespasian's son Titus would soon march on Jerusalem. Josephus reports:

ἔτι δ' αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρειαν συγκαθισταμένου τῷ πατρὶ τὴν ἡγεμονίαν νέον αὐτοῖς ἐγκεχειρισμένην ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ συνέβη καὶ τὴν ἐν [τοῖς] Ἱεροσολύμοις στάσιν ἀνακμάσασαν . . .

Nay, indeed, while [Titus] was assisting his father at Alexandria, in settling that government which had been newly conferred upon them by God, it so happened that the sedition at Jerusalem was revived . . .²⁹

God had placed the governance of Roman territory into the hands of Vespasian and his son Titus. The divine was in control.

In the *Jewish War*, Josephus not only presents the divine as one active in making things turn out well. He also presents the divine as bringing vengeance on those who had made themselves enemies of what was right. Standout targets of this divine vengeance were those rebellious Jews who had behaved so wickedly and were ultimately crushed in the Roman conquest of Jerusalem. On repeated occasions, Josephus characterizes them as experiencing divine judgment. When rebels abandoned towers in Jerusalem that occupied a strong defensive position, Josephus comments, “So they now left these towers of themselves, or rather they were ejected out of them by God himself . . .” (καταλιπόντες δὴ τούτους, μᾶλλον δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ καταβληθέντες ἀπ’ αὐτῶν).³⁰ Describing the fear and madness which gripped those who

²⁹ *JW* 5.2.

³⁰ *JW* 6.401.

illogically abandoned these strong towers, Josephus observes, “Here one may chiefly reflect on the power of God exercised upon these wicked wretches” (ἔνθα δὴ μάλιστ’ ἄν τις καταμάθοι τὴν τε τοῦ θεοῦ δύναμιν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀνοσίοις).³¹ When depicting the imminent Roman assault on those Jews who were protecting the temple, Josephus reflects in foreboding fashion:

τοῦ δ’ ἄρα κατεψηφιστο μὲν τὸ πῦρ ὁ θεὸς πάλαι, παρῆν δ’ ἡ εἰμαρμένη χρόνων περιόδοις ἡμέρα δεκάτη Λώου μηνός, καθ’ ἣν καὶ πρότερον ὑπὸ τοῦ τῶν Βαβυλωνίων βασιλέως ἐνεπρήσθη.

But, as for that house, God had for certain long ago doomed it to the fire; and now that fatal day was come, according to the revolution of ages; it was the tenth day of the month Lous [Ab], upon which it was formerly burnt by the king of Babylon.³²

The control that God exerted over history brought benefit to Vespasian in that it conferred the Roman government on him. That same control brought defeat to the rebels of Jerusalem and even to the house in which God had been worshiped. Josephus also presents divine control as bringing justice upon a man who otherwise had seemed to escape it.

In the very last episode of his final book of the *Jewish War*, Josephus explains how a certain Catullus, Roman governor of the Libyan Pentapolis, promoted the unjust accusation of prominent Jews after the destruction of Jerusalem in hopes of settling old quarrels or gaining funds. He succeeded in executing around 3000 of the Jews who lived in his territory.³³ Josephus then explains that in order to undermine any Jews from Alexandria or Rome who might accuse him of injustice in this regard, Catullus orchestrated accusations against Jews in those communities as well. One target of these new accusations was Josephus.³⁴

³¹ *JW* 6.399.

³² *JW* 6.250.

³³ *JW* 7.445.

³⁴ *JW* 7.448.

In the end, Vespasian and Titus saw through Catullus' deception and many Jews were protected. But as for this misguided governor, the imperial house treated him with leniency. It may have seemed that Catullus got away with murder. As Josephus reports, however, another brand of justice awaited.

οὐκ εἰς μακρὰν δὲ νόσῳ καταληφθεὶς πολυτρόπῳ καὶ δυσιάτῳ χαλεπῶς ἀπήλλαττεν, οὐ τὸ σῶμα μόνον κολαζόμενος, ἀλλ' ἦν ἡ τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτῷ νόσος βαρυτέρα. δείμασι γὰρ ἐξεταράττετο καὶ συνεχῶς ἐβόα βλέπειν εἶδωλα τῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ πεφονευμένων ἐφεστηκότα· καὶ κατέχειν αὐτὸν οὐ δυνάμενος ἐξήλλετο τῆς εὐνῆς ὡς βασάνων αὐτῷ καὶ πυρὸς προσφερομένων. τοῦ δὲ κακοῦ πολλὴν ἀεὶ τὴν ἐπίδοσιν λαμβάνοντος καὶ τῶν ἐντέρων αὐτῷ κατὰ διάβρωσιν ἐκπεσόντων, οὕτως ἀπέθανεν, οὐδενὸς ἧττον ἐτέρου τῆς προνοίας τοῦ θεοῦ τεκμήριον γενόμενος, ὅτι τοῖς πονηροῖς δίκην ἐπιτίθησιν.

Yet was it not long before he fell into a complicated and almost incurable distemper, and died miserably. He was not only afflicted in body, but the distemper in his mind was more heavy upon him than the other; for he was terribly disturbed, and continually cried out that he saw the ghosts of those whom he had slain standing before him. Whereupon he was not able to contain himself, but leaped out of his bed, as if both torments and fire were brought to him. This his distemper grew still a great deal worse and worse continually, and his very entrails were so corroded, that they fell out of his body, and in that condition he died. Thus he became as great an instance of divine providence as ever was, and demonstrated that God punishes wicked men.³⁵

This was the last episode recorded by Josephus in his seven books on the Jewish war.

His very next sentence states, “And here we shall put an end to this our history” (ἐνταῦθα τῆς ἱστορίας ἡμῶν τὸ πέρας ἐστίν).³⁶ Josephus does go on to offer a concluding statement about the truthfulness of what he has written, but the essence of his history ended with his observation regarding the role of the divine: “Thus [Catullus] became as great an instance of divine providence as ever was, and demonstrated that God punishes wicked men.”³⁷ Just as the *Antiquities* started off with the proposition that all events to follow would demonstrate God's role in bringing blessing where appropriate and bringing punishment when needed, so the very

³⁵ JW 7.451-453.

³⁶ JW 7.454.

³⁷ JW 7.453.

end of the *Jewish War* makes precisely the same point: God intervenes in history to bring about his plan.

Josephus believed that God was actively intervening in history, and he offers examples which he believed demonstrated this. Just as Dio Chrysostom viewed his understanding of the divine to be significant in giving him confidence in the face of exile, so Josephus foregrounds the role of the divine in his own compositions. God's overall control of events demonstrated that confidence in the God of Israel was well-placed, and Josephus had placed his confidence in just this God. While Josephus may have been an exile of thought relative to the perspectives of so many in his day, in no way did he feel that he was on the wrong side.

Dio Chrysostom saw the divine as impacting events to bring about a proper outcome. Dio also viewed the divine as a personal source of assistance in the face of trouble. In similar fashion, Josephus presents the God of Israel as personally interested in him – as one with whom he had a right relationship – and consequently as a source of personal help.

As he began his *Antiquities*, Josephus noted the centrality of having a right relationship with the God of Israel. What was the essence of this relationship? In the preamble to the *Antiquities*, Josephus explains that when one follows the divine will and avoids crossing lines which God says one should not cross – as revealed primarily through the legislator Moses – great blessing will come. Josephus viewed himself as enjoying just that sort of relationship.

Josephus characterized himself as one who was in a right relationship with God in a number of different ways. When Josephus presented the theology and principles of Judaism, he did not discuss them as something foreign to himself, offering as an author mere cold and dispassionate descriptions of what others confessed. He claimed the Jewish faith as his own.

For example, when describing his intention to write additional texts about Jewish theology, texts which – if they were in fact written – do not survive, he says this:

προήρημαι δὲ συγγράψαι κατὰ τὰς ἡμετέρας δόξας τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐν τέσσαρσι βίβλοις περὶ θεοῦ καὶ τῆς οὐσίας αὐτοῦ καὶ περὶ τῶν νόμων, διὰ τί κατ' αὐτοὺς τὰ μὲν ἔξεστιν ἡμῖν ποιεῖν, τὰ δὲ κεκόλυται.

I have also an intention to write four books concerning our Jewish opinions about God and his essence, and about our laws; why, according to them, some things are permitted us to do, and others are prohibited.³⁸

Note in particular the two first-person pronouns. Josephus calls the Jewish views of God and his essence “our” views (ἡμετέρας δόξας). In these four books, he intends to explain why some things are forbidden, while other things are permitted “to us” (ἡμῖν). Clearly Josephus views Jewish theology as his own.

In addition to presenting Jewish theology as his own, Josephus gives examples of his personal adherence to Jewish practice. In describing the moment when God revealed his divine name to Moses, Josephus explains, “Whereupon God declared to him his holy name, which had never been discovered to men before; concerning which it is not lawful for me to say any more” (καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτῷ σημαίνει τὴν αὐτοῦ προσηγορίαν οὐ πρότερον εἰς ἀνθρώπους παρελθοῦσαν, περὶ ἧς οὐ μοι θεμιτὸν εἰπεῖν).³⁹ The first person pronoun μοι makes evident that Josephus feels himself bound by Jewish principles – it would be unlawful for him to do otherwise, to speak of the actual name of God.

Josephus not only mentions examples of personal adherence to Jewish practice. He also embraces fundamental Jewish theological assertions. For example, when contrasting the ancient texts of other peoples with those of the Jews, he describes the Hebrew Bible in this way:

³⁸ *Ant* 20.268. Note that Whiston’s original translation mistakenly translates “τέσσαρσι βίβλοις” as “three books” rather than “four books.”

³⁹ *Ant* 2.276.

ἄτε μήτε τὸ ὑπογράφειν αὐτεξουσίῳ πᾶσιν ὄντος μήτε τινὸς ἐν τοῖς γραφομένοις ἐνούσης διαφωνίας, ἀλλὰ μόνον τῶν προφητῶν τὰ μὲν ἀνωτάτω καὶ παλαιότατα κατὰ τὴν ἐπίπνοιαν τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ μαθόντων . . . οὐ μυριάδες βιβλίων εἰσὶ παρ' ἡμῖν ἀσυμφώνων καὶ μαχομένων, δύο δὲ μόνον πρὸς τοῖς εἴκοσι βιβλία τοῦ παντὸς ἔχοντα χρόνου τὴν ἀναγραφὴν, τὰ δικαίως πεπιστευμένα.

Every one is not permitted of his own accord to be a writer, nor is there any disagreement in what is written; they being only prophets that have written the original and earliest accounts of things as they learned them of God himself by inspiration . . . For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another [as the Greeks have], but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine.⁴⁰

Josephus presents this conviction that Jewish theological texts had direct divine origin – they were inspired by God himself – as his own. Again, he uses the first-person pronoun (ἡμῖν) to link himself to these convictions. He also is sufficiently committed to this proposition that he states generally, “[These books] ought to be believed” (τὰ δικαίως πεπιστευμένα).⁴¹

Josephus reveals more about his relationship to these holy texts. Speaking of himself, he says, “He was not unacquainted with the prophecies contained in the sacred books, as being a priest himself, and of the posterity of priests” (τῶν γε μὴν ἱερῶν βίβλων οὐκ ἠγνόει τὰς προφητείας ὡς ἂν αὐτός τε ὢν ἱερεὺς καὶ ἱερέων ἔγγονος).⁴² Not only was his commitment to these texts natural because he was a Jew. He links his familiarity with the Hebrew Bible to his unique genealogy, that for centuries his ancestors had been tasked with serving the God of Israel in a special way as priests. As one of the appointed intermediaries between God and humans, it is no surprise that Josephus knew well those texts he confessed to be God’s message to humans.

Not only was Josephus a priest, however, and as a result presumed to be knowledgeable regarding the Hebrew Bible. He also presents himself as a special conduit for new divine

⁴⁰ AA 1.37-38. Note that Whiston’s Greek text does not have “to be divine.” The Greek simply says “which are justly to be believed.” Whiston’s translation reflects a variant reading attributed to Eusebius, who includes θεῖα before πεπιστευμένα [see Niese (1888)].

⁴¹ AA 1.38; personal translation.

⁴² JW 3.352.

messages to the people of his day. As he was contemplating whether he should surrender to the Romans after the defeat at Jotapata, his thoughts drifted to the past:

ἀνάμνησις αὐτὸν τῶν διὰ νυκτὸς ὀνείρων εἰσέρχεται, δι' ὧν ὁ θεὸς τὰς τε μελλούσας αὐτῷ συμφορὰς προεσήμαιεν Ἰουδαίων καὶ τὰ περὶ τοὺς Ῥωμαίων βασιλεῖς ἐσόμενα.

He called to mind the dreams which he had dreamed in the nighttime, whereby God had signified to him beforehand both the future calamities of the Jews, and the events that concerned the Roman emperors.⁴³

He then spoke, in a secret prayer, of the special role he felt he had. He said to God, “Thou hast made choice of this soul of mine to foretell what is to come to pass hereafter” (καὶ τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν ἐπελέξω τὰ μέλλοντα εἰπεῖν).⁴⁴ Finally, he confessed in prayer that he was ready to surrender, but not as a deserter – rather, “as a minister from thee” (σὸς εἴμι διάκονος).⁴⁵

Josephus did not view himself as some kind of shallow adherent to the Jewish faith. He was committed to following Jewish practice. He claimed Jewish theological tenets as his own. He also gloried in his special status as a priest. In addition, he understood himself to be a direct communicator of divine perspective to the humans of his day. He was not just associated with the God of Israel. He viewed himself as a servant of the God of Israel.

Clearly Josephus presents himself as one who had the closest of personal relationships with his God. As he enjoyed this relationship of trust and blessing with the divine, one would certainly expect Josephus to view divine providence as his personal help and protection. In fact, such confidence played out in events which transpired after the prayer earlier mentioned, which he prayed when he was contemplating whether to surrender to the Romans.

When Josephus had completed that prayer, he was ready to give up. But his opinion was not the only one that counted. A small group of Jews holed up with him became angry at

⁴³ JW 3.351.

⁴⁴ JW 3.354.

⁴⁵ JW 3.354.

Josephus for his willingness to become a slave to the Romans. They saw only one proper outcome – they all needed to commit suicide. Josephus tried to dissuade them. They were so committed, however, that they seemed ready even to kill Josephus in response to his opposition to their suicidal plan. Ultimately none followed through on their mortal threats. Yet in that most stressful moment, Josephus applied personal focus to a truth that would facilitate peace and purpose in his own heart:

ὁ δ' ἐν ταῖς ἀμηχανίαις οὐκ ἠπόρησεν ἐπινοίας, ἀλλὰ πιστεύων τῷ κηδεμόνι θεῷ τὴν σωτηρίαν παραβάλλεται, κάπει δέδοκται τὸ θνήσκειν, ἔφη, φέρε κλήρω τὰς ἀλλήλων σφαγὰς ἐπιτρέψωμεν, ὁ λαχὼν δ' ὑπὸ τοῦ μετ' αὐτὸν πιπτέτω, καὶ διοδεύσει πάντων οὕτως ἡ τύχη . . .

However, in this extreme distress, he was not destitute of his usual sagacity; but trusting himself to the providence of God, he put his life into hazard [in the manner following]: “And now,” said he, “since it is resolved among you that you will die, come on, let us commit our mutual deaths to determination by lot. He whom the lot falls to first, let him be killed by him that hath the second lot, and thus fortune shall make its progress through us all . . .”⁴⁶

Josephus entrusted his personal safety to God, his protector and guardian (κηδεμόνι).⁴⁷

Once again, the controlling providence of the divine was determinative, yet Josephus here makes the focus very personal. This great and grand truth, demonstrated in the lives of a powerful man like Vespasian and an evil group like the rebellious Jews in Jerusalem and a corrupt governor

⁴⁶ *JW* 3.387-389.

⁴⁷ Definitions for κηδεμών from Liddell et al (1996). Also, Josephus’ description of this particular event might lead some to wonder how he viewed the relationship between the guardianship of God and the role of chance. While he entrusts his safety “to his divine protector” (τῷ κηδεμόνι θεῷ), he also speaks about “chance” (ἡ τύχη) making its way through all of his small group. Even more interesting, when all the group had committed suicide except for Josephus and one other man, Josephus observes, “Yet was he with another left to the last, whether he must say it happened so by chance, or whether by the providence of God” (καταλείπεται δ’ οὗτος εἴτε ὑπὸ τύχης χρὴ λέγειν, εἴτε ὑπὸ θεοῦ προνοίας σὺν ἑτέρῳ, *JW* 3.391). While this characterization certainly merits more attention, Josephus may be handling this topic in the gentle manner in which he handled other truths that might challenge his audience (see the discussion regarding Josephus’ techniques of persuasion in chapter 3 of this project). He could be saying, “Some would attribute this to chance, but another can attribute this to the determined foreknowledge of the divine.” Such an approach would be one way to permit the interpretation that Josephus himself was not wavering with regard to his confidence in divine intervention, but he was recognizing that others might look at the event and come to a different conclusion.

like Catullus, had intimate meaning for one who saw himself as most closely connected to the God of Israel. Josephus enjoyed the closest of personal connections with the divine. As a result, he was confident that the divine was his certain source of help in trouble.

Dio Chrysostom presents the divine as a controlling force in human history. Dio also presents the divine as a personal source of assistance. As a result, Dio could maintain a sense of optimism whatever the circumstances, even if he was exiled. Josephus could do the same. While his fundamental theological convictions would have diverged in significant ways from those of Dio, there is a similarity in the general approach of the two men. Josephus also confessed his God to be the one who governed the events of history, bringing blessing to those on his side and standing against those who would oppose him. In addition, Josephus presented his God as a source of help – Josephus foregrounds the fact that he personally is on the right side of divine history, and he has confidence that the divine will bring assistance when needed. When your God controls all and when your God is your friend, then you have nothing to fear. No matter how much others might marginalize you, you have a clear path to victory.

Following the pathway of Favorinus

Josephus followed the model of Musonius in that he emphasized positives in the face of negatives, exemplified a Stoic-like acceptance of events as they occurred, and recognized that being sidelined by one's society is not proof that society is right. Josephus took the same approach as Dio in that he placed foundational confidence in the divine – he accentuated God's providential control of history and he rejoiced in personal assistance expected from the divine.

Josephus' approach also matched, in an important respect, the approach of Favorinus. Favorinus, in his own efforts to claim victory in exile, included focus on an eternal reward, something enjoyed after this life comes to an end.⁴⁸

In speaking of a future after death, Favorinus was not simply referring to the fact that authors could imagine themselves living on through their writings. As cited earlier, Favorinus was speaking of something different:

ἐὰν δὲ πειθόμενος εὐγνώμωνως ἔχῃς, καλῶς καὶ ἀπταίστως | τὸν τοῦ βίου δ[ρόμον
ἐξ]ανύσας τῇ ἐκείνου προνοίᾳ ἐπιβήσῃ[ι ἐς τὸν] λιμένα ἄκλυστον εὐδαιμονίας, ἣ
ἐκβήσῃ[ι κα]ὶ τὰ πάλαι θ[ρυ]λούμενα Ἡλυσίων πεδ[ί]ων [ἀγ]αθὰ ὄψει . . .

If you consent [to the cosmic governance of Zeus] and show equanimity, you will complete the course of life well and without mishap, thanks to your foreknowledge of it, and will arrive at the sheltered harbour of happiness, where you will disembark, and see the long-renowned benefits of the Elysian plains . . .⁴⁹

While there are surely many details of Favorinus' view which are worthy of exploration, what is evident is a key feature of his pathway to optimism in exile. Favorinus offers encouragement to exiles by describing for them a positive conscious existence after death. Time on earth may be hard, but one must persevere with confidence, for a glorious future awaits.

Again, critical pieces of foundational theology would distinguish what Favorinus describes and what Josephus confessed. Nevertheless, Favorinus' example highlights how exiles could retain confidence in the face of marginalization by focusing on a future that lies beyond this life. Josephus possessed such a focus, confessing confidence in a conscious, happy existence after death. In particular, he believed in the immortality of the soul and had the expectation that he would come to life again, after death, with a perfect body.

⁴⁸ For evidence that this conviction, while employed uniquely by Favorinus, was itself not unique, see *On Exile* 27.2. Favorinus there describes his views on an eternal future as being "repeated over and over again for a long time" (πάλαι θ[ρυ]λούμενα).

⁴⁹ *On Exile* 27.2; trans. by Whitmarsh. Greek from Barigazzi (1966).

The concepts of immortality of the soul and even the potential for a soul to inhabit a physical form after death were not at all unheard of in the classical world. After noting a more ancient attestation for belief in the soul's immortality, Steve Mason observes that "the conviction that the soul both leaves the body at death and passes into another body can only be securely attributed to Pythagoras (sixth century BC)."⁵⁰ From that point on, though, discussion of the ongoing existence of the soul and its reentry into a physical form found multiple forums: Herodotus, Pindar, Plato, and Ovid all engage the topic.⁵¹

Though there was a broader interest in this subject, there is no question that the convictions of the Jews stood out, and even in the minds of pagan observers. Tacitus describes the Jews in this way:

transgressi in morem eorum idem usurpant, nec quicquam prius imbuuntur quam contemnere deos, exuere patriam, parentes liberos fratres vilia habere. augendae tamen multitudini consulitur; nam et necare quemquam ex agnatis nefas, animosque proelio aut suppliciis peremptorum aeternos putant: hinc generandi amor et moriendi contemptus.

Those who come over to their religion adopt the practice, and have this lesson first instilled into them, to despise all gods, to disown their country, and set at nought parents, children, and brethren. Still they provide for the increase of their numbers. It is a crime among them to kill any newly-born infant. They hold that the souls of all who perish in battle or by the hands of the executioner are immortal. Hence a passion for propagating their race and a contempt for death.⁵²

In these words Tacitus reports the Jewish belief that souls were immortal. While Tacitus does highlight as examples of this Jewish conviction those engaged in battle and those being executed, there is no reason to conclude – even from his description – that the Jewish view of immortality was limited to soldiers and martyrs. What is indisputable is that pagans were aware of the Jewish belief that this life was not the end.

⁵⁰ Mason (2001) 162.

⁵¹ For additional detail, see pages 161-165 of Mason (2001).

⁵² *Histories* V.5. Trans. by Church and Brodribb.

Josephus personally affirms this Jewish view, and with the broadest possible application.

In the context of addressing self-murder, Josephus speaks about the longevity of the soul:

τὰ μὲν γε σώματα θνητὰ πᾶσιν καὶ ἐκ φθαρτῆς ὕλης δεδημιούργηται, ψυχὴ δὲ ἀθάνατος αἰεὶ καὶ θεοῦ μοῖρα τοῖς σώμασιν ἐνοικίζεται· εἴτ' ἂν μὲν ἀφανίσῃ τις ἀνθρώπου παρακαταθήκην ἢ διαθῆται κακῶς, πονηρὸς εἶναι δοκεῖ καὶ ἄπιστος, εἰ δέ τις τοῦ σφετέρου σώματος ἐκβάλλει τὴν παρακαταθήκην τοῦ θεοῦ, λεληθέναι δοκεῖ τὸν ἀδικούμενον;

All of us, it is true, have mortal bodies, composed of perishable matter, but the soul lives for ever, immortal: it is a portion of the Deity housed in our bodies. If, then, one who makes away with or misapplies a deposit entrusted to him by a fellow-man is reckoned a perjured villain, how can he who casts out from his own body the deposit which God has placed there, hope to elude Him whom he has thus wronged?⁵³

This is not the only place where Josephus describes souls as immortal. In presenting the history of Herod Archelaus, Josephus explains how Archelaus violated the ancestral code of the Jews by marrying Glaphyra, the wife of his deceased brother Alexander.⁵⁴ Josephus then reports that, in apparent retribution for this evil action, Alexander appeared in a dream to Glaphyra and predicted her death so that she could once again be his. After noting that she died only a few days later, Josephus explains to his readers why he included reports of such events:

ἐγὼ δὲ οὐκ ἀλλότρια νομίσας αὐτὰ τῷδε τῷ λόγῳ εἶναι διὰ τὸ περὶ τῶν βασιλέων αὐτὸν ἐνεστηκέναι καὶ ἄλλως ἐπὶ παραδείγματι φέρειν τοῦ τε ἀμφὶ τὰς ψυχὰς ἀθανασίας ἐμφεροῦς καὶ τοῦ θείου προμηθείᾳ τὰ ἀνθρώπεια περιειληφότος τῇ αὐτοῦ, καλῶς ἔχειν ἐνόμισα εἰπεῖν.

I do not consider such stories extraneous to my history, since they concern these royal persons and, in addition, they provide instances of something bearing on the immortality of the soul and of the way in which God's providence embraces the affairs of man; therefore I have thought it well to speak of this.⁵⁵

⁵³ *JW* 3.372; trans. by Thackeray.

⁵⁴ *Ant* 17.341.

⁵⁵ *Ant* 17.354 (or 353); trans. by Marcus.

Not only did Josephus view these events as evidence of God’s providential control of history. In his understanding of the Glaphyra episode – apparently insofar as Alexander was still capable of communicating with his wife – he also saw evidence for the human soul being immortal.

Tacitus understood Jews to believe that souls were “eternal” (aeternos). Josephus presents the Jewish conviction that the soul is “eternally undying” (ἀθάνατος ἀεί).⁵⁶ But Josephus had an understanding of existence after death that went beyond his belief in the immortality of the soul. Whatever this eternal existence would be, it was consciously perceived by the individual enjoying it. Also, there was a direct linkage of some sort to the life that one was currently experiencing.

In the context of presenting both consequences for disobeying God’s law as well as the benefits of obeying it, Josephus explains:

τοῖς μέντοι γε νομίμως βιοῦσι γέρας ἐστὶν οὐκ ἄργυρος οὐδὲ χρυσὸς οὐ κοτίνου στέφανος ἢ σελίνου καὶ τοιαύτη τις ἀνακήρυξις, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸς ἕκαστος αὐτῷ τὸ συνειδὸς ἔχων μαρτυροῦν πεπίστευκεν, τοῦ μὲν νομοθέτου προφητεύσαντος, τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ τὴν πίστιν ἰσχυρὰν παρεσχηκότος, ὅτι τοῖς τοὺς νόμους διαφυλάξασι κἂν εἰ δέοι θνήσκειν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν προθύμως ἀποθανεῖν ἔδωκεν ὁ θεὸς γενέσθαι τε πάλιν καὶ βίον ἀμείνω λαβεῖν ἐκ περιτροπῆς.

For those, on the other hand, who live in accordance with our laws the prize is not silver or gold, no crown of wild olive or of parsley with any such public mark of distinction. No; each individual, relying on the witness of his own conscience and the lawgiver’s prophecy, confirmed by the sure testimony of God, is firmly persuaded that to those who observe the laws and, if they must needs die for them, willingly meet death, God has granted a renewed existence and in the revolution of the ages the gift of a better life.⁵⁷

The ongoing existence of the soul after death was not the extent of Josephus’ understanding of post-death existence. Josephus believed that there was something more awaiting those who observed God’s principles, including himself.

⁵⁶ JW 3.372.

⁵⁷ AA 2.217-218.

Josephus considered himself one who observed God's principles. When taking on the slanders of Apion against the Jews, Josephus summarizes the laws and principles of the God of Israel and then concludes with the presumption that “. . . no one observes them better than ourselves” (καὶ χρώμενοι μάλιστα πάντων βλεπόμεθα).⁵⁸ Clearly he positions himself as being in the group that is living as God wants.⁵⁹

For such individuals – those who observed God's principles – there would be a time when they would come into being again (γενέσθαι πάλιν). This would happen at the περιτροπῆς, elsewhere described as the περιτροπῆς αἰώνων.⁶⁰ Mason defines this phrase as “sudden upheaval, inversion, or succession.”⁶¹ This revolution – or sudden upheaval or succession – of the ages would occur at some significant moment in the future when everything was turned upside down. At this transformative “transition into a new age,” one like Josephus would come into being again and would enjoy “a better life” (βίον ἀμείνω).

Josephus has already noted that the soul is immortal. There was no need, then, for the soul to “come into being again.” It was already in a state of ongoing existence. When Josephus speaks about “coming into being again” (γενέσθαι πάλιν), he is speaking about something additional. Something was going to come into being that had once existed, had stopped existing, and now was going to exist again (πάλιν). What had once existed, but at death went out of existence? It was physical life that was going to happen again. In addition, the continuity highlighted by the πάλιν (“again”) leaves little doubt that the life to be regained is a continuation of the same life that once existed. This was going to be an “again” living. The most natural

⁵⁸ AA 2.295; trans. by Thackeray.

⁵⁹ For additional examples of Josephus' personal conformity to what he understood God's principles to be, see *Antiquities* 14.63 (discusses when it is appropriate to fight on the Sabbath) and the previously referenced *Antiquities* 2.276 (notes that there are limits beyond which one cannot discuss the name of the Lord).

⁶⁰ JW 3.374.

⁶¹ Mason (2001) 168.

interpretation is that this new living being would be Josephus himself. Whatever will be in the future once was in the past.

There was more. This anticipated existence after “coming into being again” was going to be a conscious existence. This was not some kind of amorphous, atomistic floating of soul particles in space, where the personality and consciousness of the individual were scattered to the stars.⁶² Josephus claims that at this transformative moment, he will receive “a better life” (βίον ἀμείνω). As life now can be hard, there would be the conscious experiencing of a life that was superior.

There was a clear linkage between the life to come and the life that was. There was the clear expectation that the experiencing of this future life would be a conscious one, and it would be a better one. That was not all. Josephus offers additional detail about his personal understanding of life after death. Following his discussion of the immortality of the soul,⁶³ he says to friends who were contemplating suicide to avoid capture by the Romans:

ἄρ' οὐκ ἴστε ὅτι τῶν μὲν ἐξιόντων τοῦ βίου κατὰ τὸν τῆς φύσεως νόμον καὶ τὸ ληφθὲν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ χρέος ἐκτινύντων, ὅταν ὁ δοῦς κομίσασθαι θέλη, κλέος μὲν αἰώνιον, οἴκοι δὲ καὶ γενεαὶ βέβαιοι, καθαροὶ δὲ καὶ ἐπήκοοι μένουσιν αἱ ψυχαί, χῶρον οὐράνιον λαχοῦσαι τὸν ἀγιώτατον, ἔνθεν ἐκ περιτροπῆς αἰώνων ἀγνοῖς πάλιν ἀντενοικίζονται σώμασιν.

Do not you know that those who depart out of this life, according to the law of nature, and pay that debt which was received from God, when he that loaned it to us is pleased to require it back, enjoy eternal fame? That their houses and their posterity are sure, that their souls are pure and obedient, and obtain a most holy place in heaven, from whence, in the revolution of ages, they are again sent into pure bodies.⁶⁴

⁶² For example, see *De Rerum Natura* 3.455-456, where Lucretius writes, “It follows therefore that the whole nature of the spirit is dissolved abroad, like smoke, into the high winds of the air” (ergo dissolui quoque convenit omnem animai naturam, ceu fumus, in altas aeris auras); trans. by Rouse.

⁶³ *JW* 3.372.

⁶⁴ *JW* 3.374. Whiston’s translation has been slightly adapted for clarity: “lent it us” is now “loaned it to us.”

With these words, Josephus makes clear that he is envisioning an existence in the life to come which is a bodily existence. Souls pure and obedient, separated from their bodies at death, will be given a home once again in σώμασιν, in bodies. The πάλιν (“again”) suggests, as it did previously, that there is a linkage between the future and the now. The fact that a body would be joined to the soul *again* indicates some kind of continuity between the nature of body and soul on earth and the nature of body and soul at the “revolution of the ages.” But there would be one thing different. In the future, the bodies would be holy, or pure (ἄγνοις).

Josephus gives clear testimony regarding his personal view of the future after death. He looks forward to a conscious and happy existence, one which he will enjoy in a perfect body. Some suggest, however, that such a characterization of Josephus’ views on the afterlife is not so certain.

Joseph Sievers, for example, is comfortable classifying Josephus’ understanding of the relationship between the soul and the body as Platonic. After introducing “the idea of the soul’s being freed by death from the body,” Sievers concludes, “. . . it does seem likely that [Josephus] found the idea congenial to his own views.”⁶⁵

Such a characterization of Josephus’ view of existence after death, however, seems contrary to Josephus’ own words. From a Platonic perspective, “life in the body is inimical to the soul and something from which he desires to be released.”⁶⁶ Josephus’ own words do not present such an antithesis between body and soul. To the contrary, Josephus explicitly states that “their souls . . . are again sent into pure bodies” (αἱ ψυχαὶ . . . ἄγνοις πάλιν ἀντενοικίζονται

⁶⁵ Sievers’ “Josephus and the Afterlife” in Mason (1998) 31. Claudia Setzer appears to reach a similar conclusion, characterizing Josephus’ views on existence after death in this way: “Josephus reports a variety of views, some attributable to his sources, but seems most at ease with the Platonic idea that the soul is freed from the body at death.” [(2004) 18.]

⁶⁶ Mason (2001) 163.

σώμασιν).⁶⁷ Being rejoined to a body is a reward. Enjoying ongoing existence in the future in a body is a prize to be gained. This is a better life (βίον ἀμείνω).⁶⁸ This is not Platonic.⁶⁹

The striking difference between the plain words of Josephus and the apparent conclusion of Sievers can be accounted for in the methodology Sievers employs. While his approach is admittedly complex, a few details can help account for his alternative characterization of Josephus' understanding of the afterlife.

Sievers writes, "A very fruitful approach to Josephus's thought has been through an analysis of the major speeches."⁷⁰ Sievers is not referring here simply to major speeches that Josephus himself made. Instead, Sievers is suggesting that when one, for example, reads the speech of Eliezer, a Jew who persuades the defenders of Masada to kill themselves, one can learn something about Josephus's own views about the immortality of the soul.⁷¹

Sievers is eager to go even beyond the major speeches, hoping to locate elsewhere some clues that could add to our understanding of Josephus' view of the afterlife. In itself, this approach need not be a dead-end. It is certainly possible to learn something about Josephus even as he is describing the views of someone else. For example, when comparing Josephus' retelling of Old Testament events to the Bible's presentation of the same events, one can evaluate whether any adjustments Josephus appears to make reveal his own personal perspective. Yet in such a case a point of comparison, that is, the Hebrew Bible, clearly exists, and through a comparative reading we can use them to evaluate authorial perspective. Sievers, however, is eager to take this

⁶⁷ *JW* 3.374.

⁶⁸ *AA* 2.218.

⁶⁹ Note that Plato does not deny the possibility of a soul's re-entry into bodies (see the myth of Er, in *Republic* 10.613e – 621d; for a particular occurrence, see *Republic* 619c-d). What Plato highlights, however, is that returning to a body is not a positive occurrence. Also, as Plato envisions the possibility of receiving another body, it is a body distinct from one's prior existence. As will be demonstrated, this is not Josephus' view.

⁷⁰ Sievers' "Josephus and the Afterlife" in Mason (1998) 21.

⁷¹ Sievers' "Josephus and the Afterlife" in Mason (1998) 22.

another step, suggesting that his methodology can work even when source material, which would then serve as a point of comparison, cannot with confidence be identified. Sievers suggests that if one can find “a term or tradition or concept in different parts of [Josephus’] work that cannot come from the same source [that Josephus appears to be using in a particular passage], [this term, tradition, or concept] probably reflects [Josephus’] own view. On the other hand, if a tradition is found only in one part of his work or in different parts that may be derived from the same source, then there is considerable likelihood that it is derived from that source.”⁷²

Sievers’ approach depends on the ability to identify sources for various elements of Josephus’ works, sources that are not explicitly identified by Josephus. Without venturing further into the details of his approach, it is evident simply from the focus on sources that there is significant risk associated with such a pursuit. Sievers’ approach depends in large measure on the scholar’s capacity to identify when a source is being used, how that source is being used, and ultimately whether the fact that an author may have used a particular source is significant in any notable way.

While theoretically useful, a method so dependent on sources which cannot with confidence be identified is at best uncertain. In fact, in discussing one particular individual source issue, Sievers himself characterizes the quest for a conclusion as “interesting and complicated.”⁷³ With so much uncertainty on the “input” side, data theoretically produced on the “output” side ends up being uncertain as well. Guesses – educated to a greater or lesser degree – certainly can be an important part of the search for new discoveries. Such guesses need not be bad. A clear red flag rises, however, when an approach based on significant uncertainty ends up contradicting something that seems so clearly stated. As earlier noted, Sievers’ proposed process

⁷² Sievers’ “Josephus and the Afterlife” in Mason (1998) 30-31.

⁷³ Sievers’ “Josephus and the Afterlife” in Mason (1998) 28.

concludes that “it does seem likely that [Josephus] found the [Platonic] idea [regarding the antithesis of body and soul] congenial to his own views.”⁷⁴ Yet Josephus explicitly states that the “better life” he anticipates is a life where the soul and body have been reunited. Considering reunification of the soul with the body to be a reward, to be a “better life,”⁷⁵ is not Platonic. Characterizing Josephus’ position as Platonic, then, does not seem accurate.

Sievers has offered a contrarian view regarding Josephus’ conception of the afterlife. As noted, one of the key conclusions he draws appears to contradict an explicit personal profession by Josephus. Such a contradiction compels one to consider carefully whether the methodology Sievers employs offers a safe, or rather a more risky, path.

Though promoting his own methodology and conclusions with regard to Josephus’ sense of the afterlife, Sievers does reference an approach different than his own. He characterizes this opposing view as “somewhat minimalist,”⁷⁶ but one might suggest that it is both safer and more certain. Sievers is speaking of an approach employed by Mason, who seeks to “ascertain Josephus’ view about the afterlife only from texts in which he clearly expresses his own opinions.”⁷⁷

Mason believes that four texts are presented by Josephus as giving “Josephus’ own views about immortality:”⁷⁸ *Jewish War* 2:157, *Jewish War* 3:372-375, *Antiquities* 17:349-354, and *Against Apion* 2:217.⁷⁹ It has been these very texts – with the exception of the first⁸⁰ –

⁷⁴ Sievers’ “Josephus and the Afterlife” in Mason (1998) 30.

⁷⁵ *JW* 3.374; *AA* 2.218.

⁷⁶ Sievers’ “Josephus and the Afterlife” in Mason (1998) 23.

⁷⁷ Sievers’ “Josephus and the Afterlife” in Mason (1998) 22.

⁷⁸ Mason (2001) 158.

⁷⁹ Mason (2001) 158.

⁸⁰ Mason appears to include *Jewish War* 2.157 as a text which presents Josephus’ own views on immortality because of his observation that after discussing the views of the Essenes – which Josephus does in this text – Josephus then adds his enthusiastic support. After presenting Essene views, Josephus does say this: “These are the divine doctrines of the Essenes about the soul, which lay an unavoidable bait for such as have once had a taste of their philosophy” (ταῦτα μὲν οὖν Ἐσσηνοὶ περὶ ψυχῆς θεολογοῦσιν ἄφικτον δέλεαρ τοῖς ἅπαξ γευσασμένοις τῆς σοφίας αὐτῶν

which have served as the basis for my characterization of Josephus' views on existence after death. These texts do, as Mason suggests, convey in the first person Josephus' own perspectives. These are the texts which discourage one from proposing for Josephus a more Platonic view of soul and body. Instead, they present Josephus' understanding of a conscious and happy post-death existence, one which he will enjoy in a perfect body. These are the texts which provide the safest, most sure foundation for characterizing Josephus' own views.

Josephus' personal statements regarding the afterlife give us a sure starting point for characterizing his own views. Yet the three previously referenced personal statements – one from the *Jewish War*, one from the *Antiquities*, and one from *Against Apion* – are not necessarily the only sources of information about Josephus' personal convictions. There is another potentially fruitful source of information located within Josephus' works which can add a bit of breadth and depth to our understanding of Josephus' concept of the afterlife: his self-identification as a Pharisee. In multiple places, Josephus describes in some detail the Pharisees' understanding of existence after death. Not only do these further descriptions contradict in no way what Josephus has already said personally about the afterlife. Given his close association with the Pharisees, these further descriptions provide helpful additional information about what Josephus himself believed.

In his biographical composition entitled *Life*, Josephus introduces himself by speaking of his priestly ancestry, noting the year of his birth, and sharing the names of ancestors as well as the names of his three sons. He then proceeds to characterize his own youth. He explains that he

καθιέντες, *JW* 2.158). While such authorial reflective analysis highlights the attractiveness of Essene teaching, in the end Josephus does not explicitly associate himself with the Essenes. For that reason I have not included this citation in my analysis of Josephus' own beliefs, though in the end this citation would only support what has already been proposed with regard to Josephus' views.

seemed to have a wonderful memory and the capacity to understand. By the age of 14, his love for learning gained such a reputation that “the high priests and principal men of the city came then frequently to me together, in order to know my opinion about the accurate understanding of points of the law” (συνιόντων ἀεὶ τῶν ἀρχιερέων καὶ τῶν τῆς πόλεως πρώτων ὑπὲρ τοῦ παρ’ ἐμοῦ περὶ τῶν νομίμων ἀκριβέστερόν τι γινῶναι).⁸¹ Two years later, Josephus engaged in an impressive quest. Aware that there were three primary theological sects that offered a pathway for a conscientious Jewish young man, Josephus determined to try them all out. He explains:

τρεις δ’ εἰσὶν αὗται, Φαρισαίων μὲν ἡ πρώτη, καὶ Σαδδουκαίων ἡ δευτέρα, τρίτη δ’ Ἑσσηνῶν, καθὼς πολλάκις εἶπομεν· οὕτως γὰρ ᾧμην αἰρήσεσθαι τὴν ἀρίστην, εἰ πάσας καταμάθοιμι. σκληραγωγήσας οὖν ἑμαυτὸν καὶ πολλὰ πονηθεὶς τὰς τρεῖς διήλθον, καὶ μηδὲ τὴν ἐντεῦθεν ἐμπειρίαν ἰκανὴν ἑμαυτῷ νομίσας εἶναι πυθόμενος τινα Βάννου ὄνομα κατὰ τὴν ἐρημίαν διατρίβειν, ἐσθῆτι μὲν ἀπὸ δένδρων χρώμενον, τροφήν δὲ τὴν αὐτομάτως φυομένην προσφερόμενον, ψυχρῶ δὲ ὕδατι τὴν ἡμέραν καὶ τὴν νύκτα πολλάκις λουόμενον πρὸς ἀγνείαν, ζηλωτῆς ἐγενόμην αὐτοῦ. καὶ διατρίψας παρ’ αὐτῷ ἐνιαυτοὺς τρεῖς καὶ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν τελειώσας εἰς τὴν πόλιν ὑπέστρεφον. ἐννεακαιδέκατον δ’ ἔτος ἔχων ἠρξάμην τε πολιτεύεσθαι τῇ Φαρισαίων αἵρέσει κατακολουθῶν, ἣ παραπλήσιός ἐστι τῇ παρ’ Ἑλλησιν Στωϊκῇ λεγομένη.

These, as I have frequently mentioned, are three in number—the first that of the Pharisees, the second that of the Sadducees, and the third that of the Essenes. I thought that, after a thorough investigation, I should be in a position to select the best. So I submitted myself to hard training and laborious exercises and passed through the three courses. Not content, however, with the experience thus gained, on hearing of one named Bannus, who dwelt in the wilderness, wearing only such clothing as trees provided, feeding on such things as grew of themselves, and using frequent ablutions of cold water, by day and night, for purity’s sake, I became his devoted disciple. With him I lived for three years and, having accomplished my purpose, returned to the city. Being now in my nineteenth year I began to govern my life by the rules of the Pharisees, a sect having points of resemblance to that which the Greeks call the Stoic school.⁸²

Josephus explains that he began his quest with clear intent. After devoting time to an evaluation of the various options, his plan was to choose the best option (οὕτως γὰρ ᾧμην

⁸¹ *Life* 9.

⁸² *Life* 10-12; trans. by Thackeray.

αιρήσεσθαι τὴν ἀρίστην).⁸³ Those three sects which were known to him served as his presumed targets. When he learned of another, he sought to understand that one as well. In the end, when he was 19 years old, he “began to govern [his] life by the rules of the [sect of the] Pharisees” (ἠρξάμην τε πολιτεύεσθαι τῇ Φαρισαίων αἵρέσει κατακολουθῶν).⁸⁴

The conclusion seems clear. Josephus evaluated the options and decided that he would be a Pharisee. For purposes of understanding his views regarding the afterlife, then, subsequent descriptions of what Pharisees believed about existence after death are particularly relevant.

Though Josephus’ stated association with the Pharisees seems plain, Steve Mason proposes a completely different perspective.

Josephus was not, and never claimed to be, a Pharisee. . . . He always resented the Pharisees’ hold on the masses but, like the Sadducees, he accepted this influence as a fact of life. Thus he acknowledges that when he ended his blissful years of wilderness retreat with Bannus and returned to the city, he began to involve himself in public life, which meant “following the school of the Pharisees”.⁸⁵

Mason acknowledges that Josephus had some kind of connection to the Pharisees – he “[followed] the school of the Pharisees.” Yet Mason recoils at the concept that, in some fundamental way, Josephus ever claimed to be a Pharisee. Mason is not completely alone in this perspective. Setzer, citing Mason, appears to embrace his approach: “Josephus, who also claims to have been a Pharisee but is no longer . . .”⁸⁶

Mason’s argument depends on a significant reinterpretation of Josephus’ *Life* 10-12. In particular, there are three phrases he chooses to understand in a particular way. I will consider these three phrases in sequence, using grammatical and contextual arguments to demonstrate that in fact Josephus’ status as a Pharisee is not undermined by them at all.

⁸³ *Life* 10.

⁸⁴ *Life* 12; trans. by Thackeray.

⁸⁵ Mason (2001) 374.

⁸⁶ Setzer (2004) 22.

Mason’s reinterpretation of this key section of the *Life* begins with his new interpretation of the phrase “not content, however, with the experience thus gained” (μηδὲ τὴν ἐντεῦθεν ἐμπειρίαν ἰκανὴν ἑμαυτῷ νομίσας εἶναι).⁸⁷ He suggests this meaning for those words: “The experience [Josephus] gained was not sufficient to attract him to any of the three schools. That is precisely why he went to follow Bannus in the wilderness.”⁸⁸ Said another way, the insufficiency (ἰκανήν) of the test (ἐμπειρίαν) was due not simply to the fact that there was more to explore. The insufficiency of the test is the equivalent of saying that none of the groups he had so far tested were sufficient for him. According to these words, Mason asserts that Josephus had arrived at the firm conclusion that he did not want to be a Pharisee or a Sadducee or an Essene; so he pursued another option.

Do these words inevitably imply that Josephus, after his test of the three, had concluded he did not want to be a Pharisee or Sadducee or an Essene? These words do clearly indicate that Josephus viewed his experience up to that point is insufficient. There was something incomplete about the testing process so far. But there is nothing in Josephus’ words which inevitably implies attraction, or lack of it, with respect to the first three schools. He simply says that the “experience” was not “enough for him.”

Why was his experience not enough? Mason’s suggestion represents one possible scenario. Josephus’ experience was not enough because he did not like any of the three major sects he had tried. So he looked for other options. He subsequently discovered another one – Bannus – and spent three years with him.

Mason’s scenario plays out most smoothly if Josephus first had come to the conclusion that the examination process was insufficient, and then he subsequently learned about the

⁸⁷ *Life* 11.

⁸⁸ Mason (2001) 344.

opportunity to visit Bannus. Said another way, Mason's conclusion seems to presume that Josephus, after visiting the first three sects, determined that none of them would work for him. He was without an option. The determination that his experiences were "not enough" preceded his learning about Bannus.

But if in fact his learning about Bannus preceded his determination that the process up to that point had been insufficient, then another interpretive option is available. He may have come to that conclusion that his experiences with the first three groups were insufficient simply because he had discovered another option to explore. His intent had been to find the best. He originally had thought only three choices existed. Having discovered a fourth, he recognized that stopping after three would fail to finish his job. Pursuing three possible options was now "not enough." He had one more path to pursue before making his decision.

Before looking more closely at the chronological relationship between Josephus' "determination" and his discovery of Bannus, it should be noted that even if the Bannus discovery did not precede Josephus' "not enough" determination, Mason's interpretation is not inevitable. Mason suggests that Josephus' determination that his first three experiences were "not enough" meant that he had permanently and categorically closed the door to the three groups. Yet it is possible, even if the "determination" happened prior to learning about Bannus, that Josephus was simply explaining that he was not ready to make a decision. There were positives and negatives, but he did not feel like the experiences had been enough for him to decide which was best. So, Mason's implication of a categorical rejection of the three groups is not the inevitable conclusion even if the Bannus discovery occurred after Josephus' "determination."

But if in fact Josephus' discovery of Bannus did precede Josephus' conclusion that the experience so far had not been enough, then it is much harder for Mason's line of thought to stand. It is much easier to suggest that the "not enough" was simply a recognition that there were more options than Josephus had initially thought.

There is in fact grammatical evidence that recommends positioning Josephus' discovery of Bannus as chronologically prior to his determination that his search thus far was "not enough." A single *καί* – or more precisely, the absence of it – makes all the difference.

In the previously cited *Life* 10-12 section, there are two main verbs which describe Josephus' experiences with the four sects. From the phrase "so I submitted myself to hard training" (*σκληραγωγήσας οὖν ἑμαυτόν*) until the phrase "I became his devoted disciple" (*ζηλωτῆς ἐγενόμην αὐτοῦ*), the only main verbs are found in the phrases "[I] passed through the three courses" (*τὰς τρεῖς διήλθον*) and (*καί*) "I became [Bannus'] devoted disciple" (*ζηλωτῆς ἐγενόμην αὐτοῦ*). All the other verbal actions in this section are represented by participles. The first main verb, *διήλθον*, is modified by two participles: "**σκληραγωγήσας** οὖν ἑμαυτόν **καὶ πολλὰ πονηθεὶς**" (having treated myself harshly and having suffered many things).⁸⁹ The second main verb, *ἐγενόμην*, is also modified by two participles: "*μηδὲ τὴν ἐντεῦθεν ἐμπειρίαν ἱκανὴν ἑμαυτῷ νομίσας εἶναι πυθόμενός* τινα Βάννου ὄνομα κατὰ τὴν ἐρημίαν διατρίβειν" (having not considered my experience up to that point to be sufficient for myself, having learned that a certain Bannus by name was living in the desert).⁹⁰

Observe the notable difference between these two participial structures. Each of the two main verbs has two participles that modify it. But in the first case, the two participles are joined with a *καί*. In the second case, they are not. In the first case, the two participles represent two

⁸⁹ Personal translation.

⁹⁰ Personal translation.

features of Josephus' life with the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes – he treated himself harshly and he suffered. These two verbal actions are considered a pair in the way they engage the main verb – they speak of two attendant circumstances to the action of the main verb. With the second main verb, however, the two participles do not represent two equally balanced verbal actions that connect with the main verb. Had a *καὶ* been present, one might interpret the participles as indicating two actions that were sequential in nature, both of which could be viewed as offering reasons for Josephus' decision to become a Bannus follower: “Since Josephus had found his experience up to that point to be insufficient **and** since he had learned that there was a certain Bannus who was living in the wilderness, he became his follower.” With a *καὶ*, two coordinate causes contribute to Josephus becoming a follower of Bannus: first, he had determined that his previous experiences were insufficient; second, he learned that there was a Bannus. Without the *καὶ*, however, a very different flow is suggested. Instead of connecting both participles in an equal way to the main verb, one would naturally begin with the first participle – “Josephus had found his experience up to that point to be insufficient” – and recognize the second participle to be qualifying in some way the thought expressed by the first participle. That second participle, *πυθόμενός* (“having learned”), naturally offers an explanation for why Josephus found his experience with the first three to be insufficient. One would properly translate, “Since Josephus considered his experience up to that point inadequate for himself – for he had learned that there was a certain Bannus by name who lived in the desert – he became his zealous follower.”

Notice the impact this has on Mason's proposition. Mason's argument seems to require Josephus' evaluation of his experiences up to that point to precede – at least in logic and most likely in time as well – his awareness of Bannus. Mason's argument needs Josephus to feel discontent with the first three sects independent of any awareness of Bannus. But the participles

strongly suggest that it was his very discovery of Bannus which contributed to the determination that his investigation so far was incomplete. His determination of “not enough,” then, says nothing significant – positive or negative – about the first three sects. Most assuredly, he is not inevitably implying that he is substantially antithetical to any of the three. He is simply noting that in his quest to find the best, his discovery of a fourth required him to investigate that option as well before drawing a final conclusion.

As noted earlier, three key phrases stand out in Mason’s reinterpretation of Josephus’ *Life* 10-12. Analysis of his first key phrase argues against Mason’s conclusion that Josephus had no love at all for the Pharisees. On the contrary, the structure suggests that Josephus’ determination to evaluate Bannus was more a quest for completeness than it was a rejection of the first three options.

The second key phrase involved in Mason’s reinterpretation includes mention of a particular “desire, or yearning,” of Josephus. As Mason wishes to argue that Josephus had no love for the Pharisees – and so he surely would not have attached himself to them in any meaningful way – he makes a concurrent argument that Josephus’ quest for an appropriate religious association was ultimately satisfied in Bannus. He supports this conclusion based on these words: “having spent three years with [Bannus] and having completed his desire, [Josephus] returned to the city” (καὶ διατρίψας παρ’ αὐτῷ ἐνιαυτοὺς τρεῖς καὶ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν τελειώσας εἰς τὴν πόλιν ὑπέστρεφον).⁹¹

Mason understands this phrase to mean that Josephus’ ἐπιθυμίαν (“desire/yearning”) was satisfied specifically and solely by the religion of Bannus. According to Mason’s view, Josephus’ “desire” was not to find the best sect for a lifetime of association and fulfillment.

⁹¹ *Life* 12; personal translation.

Rather, Josephus' desire could potentially be satisfied with the mere experience – for however short a time – of religious fulfillment. That is what he found during three years in the desert with Bannus.

Again, grammatical features play a key role in arguing against this understanding. First, there is an article with ἐπιθυμίαν, which has the effect of specifying or particularizing the noun. The article indicates that Josephus is referring to a specific desire that should readily be recognized by the reader. In interpreting the articulated noun, then, one looks back to the context for a desire that has previously been mentioned. The word “desire” in itself could theoretically refer to any desire, including a longing to be spiritually fulfilled for a limited period of time. In addition, it is certainly true that a yearning to find an appropriate spiritual connection was at the heart of Josephus' quest. But Josephus' initial description of his quest presents not simply an interest in experiencing such a connection for a limited period of time. The specific, well-known desire that has been explicitly shared in the immediate context was Josephus' desire – after evaluating all the sects – to “choose the best” (αἰρήσεσθαι τὴν ἀρίστην) and then, presumably, to associate with that group for a long period of time.

The article with the noun, then, leads one to look back in the context for that specific desire previously expressed. The specific desire previously expressed was not simply an interest in experiencing something for a time; rather, the specific desire was Josephus' intention to make a choice. In order to accomplish this, he wanted to πάσας καταμάθοιμι – “examine all of them closely.” When he thought there were only three choices, his plan was to evaluate three. When he found out there was a fourth, he wanted to evaluate that one as well. Once he had finished evaluating the fourth – “having spent three years with Bannus” (καὶ διατρίψας παρ' αὐτῷ ἐνιαυτοῦς τρεῖς) – and now had completed his plan – or desire – to choose the best (καὶ τὴν

ἐπιθυμίαν τελειώσα), he officially ended his youthful quest and returned to the city (εἰς τὴν πόλιν ὑπέστρεφον).

Admittedly, once Josephus was done with Bannus and so had brought to completion his plan to examine all closely so that he might choose the best, Josephus does not immediately report to us the choice he had made. That comes next. But to associate the ἐπιθυμίαν (“desire/yearning”) with anything other than the clear contextual driver of this section – Josephus’ desire to identify the best – seems risky at best.

Yet even if one were to grant that the vocable “desire/yearning” theoretically could refer only to an underlying longing for some period of spiritual fulfillment, brief as it might be, once again the particle καὶ – and this time its presence – speaks volumes. Mason’s argument presumes that Josephus’ longing was satisfied, in a most narrow sense, by his three years with Bannus. Mason translates in this way: “Having lived with him three years and having (thereby) satisfied my yearning I returned to the city” (καὶ διατρίψας παρ’ αὐτῷ ἔνιαυτοὺς τρεῖς καὶ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν τελειώσας εἰς τὴν πόλιν ὑπέστρεφον).⁹² As was noted in earlier argumentation regarding the relationship of participles to a main verb and the role that καὶ plays in that connection, the presence of καὶ here indicates that the two aorist participles have a relationship of balance relative to the main verb. Both participles seem to indicate a temporal or perhaps causal relationship with the main verb: “After living with [Bannus] for three years and after bringing to its conclusion my desire, I returned to the city.”

If there had been no καὶ, one would naturally have seen the second participial phrase as qualifying in some way the thought expressed by the first participle. Then, one could read Josephus to say, “After spending three years with [Bannus], having fulfilled my desire, I returned

⁹² *Life* 12; trans. by Mason (2001) 344.

to the city.” The absence of a καὶ would seem to leave the door a bit more open to Mason’s conclusion, that Josephus’ “desire” was satisfied within the bounds of that three-year period – his heart found joy with Bannus. Even limiting oneself to the narrower context, though, such a reading would still not inevitably lead to Mason’s conclusion. One could view such a participle relationship as suggesting, for example, that it was during that three-year period that he realized his bigger quest of finding the best was done – Bannus was not the answer, and so he was ready to move on. Considering again the larger context, the centrality of that original desire Josephus expressed, to find the best, still seems overpowering. Yet the absence of the καὶ would make the kind of reading Mason prefers a bit more accessible.

But there is a καὶ, and its presence is significant. The presence of the καὶ avoids tying the concept of “fulfilling my desire” closely with “spending three years with Bannus.” The καὶ, instead, allows both of those concepts to exist independently, linked closely not inevitably to each other but definitely to the main verb. Josephus returned to the city. What preceded that return to the city? There were two things which preceded his return. First, Josephus finished his three-year experience with Bannus. Second, Josephus brought his desire to a conclusion. The absence of a grammatically close relationship between the actions of the two participles recommends even more what seems to be the contextually persuasive argument: Josephus’ desire was to find the best, and once he had spent three years with Bannus and now had arrived at a conclusion with respect to which of the four he would follow, he returned to the city.

Analysis of Mason’s two arguments so far has intended to keep the door open for the conclusion that Josephus’ selection of the Pharisees was in fact the fulfillment of his original plan, or desire, to choose the best. From Mason’s perspective, however, not only is he interested in maintaining that Josephus had no love for the Pharisees. He also understands the importance

of explaining what Josephus then meant when he spoke about some kind of connection with the Pharisees. In this third key phrase for Mason’s argument, Josephus says, “I began to govern my life by the rules of the Pharisees, a sect having points of resemblance to that which the Greeks call the Stoic school” (ἤρξάμην τε πολιτεύεσθαι τῆ Φαρισαίων αἵρέσει κατακολουθῶν, ἢ παραπλήσιός ἐστι τῆ παρ’ Ἑλλησιν Στωϊκῆ λεγομένη).⁹³

In an effort to characterize this statement in a manner synchronous with the rest of his argument, Mason engages the term *πολιτεύεσθαι*. He first suggests that many translators, and consequently interpreters, have missed the point of the term. Then he proposes his preferred translation. Finally, he explains how this new translation more evidently allows for his characterization of Josephus’ relationship with the Pharisees.

Mason observes that many English translators have equated *πολιτεύεσθαι* with something like “to behave or act.”⁹⁴ He presumes that this definition is behind two influential translations of the phrase “ἤρξάμην τε πολιτεύεσθαι τῆ Φαρισαίων αἵρέσει κατακολουθῶν.” William Whiston renders it, “I began to conduct myself according to the rules of the sect of the Pharisees,”⁹⁵ while Henry Thackeray translates, “I began to govern my life by the rules of the Pharisees.”⁹⁶ Mason believes that this approach to translating *πολιτεύεσθαι* makes it easier to conclude that Josephus actually decided to become a Pharisee, a conclusion he feels is unjustified. Mason observes, “All of the major English-speaking commentators take the phrase ἤρξάμην πολιτεύεσθαι as a conversion statement, with the sense that Josephus became a Pharisee. Since it is demonstrable that these critics are generally influenced by the Loeb⁹⁷

⁹³ *Life* 12; trans. by Thackeray.

⁹⁴ Mason (2001) 349.

⁹⁵ Though William Whiston produced his classic translation of Josephus in the 18th century, his work is still in use today.

⁹⁶ Thackeray provides the translation in the 1926 Loeb edition.

⁹⁷ The Loeb edition of 1926 contains Thackeray’s previously referenced translation.

translation—many cite it verbatim—, it is probable that their interpretations of *Life* 12b are not wholly independent.”⁹⁸

One may disagree with Mason’s implication that citing the Loeb translation is evidence of a lack of interpretive independence. Scholars may, in fact, have independently concluded that the Loeb translation, while certainly not the only possible accurate translation, nevertheless has accurately captured the meaning of this phrase in context. At the same time, it is worthwhile to consider what other translation options might be.

Mason suggests that πολιτεύεσθαι should be translated “to engage in public affairs” rather than “to behave or act.”⁹⁹ While he acknowledges two occasions where Josephus himself uses a middle form of πολιτεύω to mean “behave” or “conduct oneself,”¹⁰⁰ Mason offers multiple examples of the term being used to describe public activity, even the actual holding of a public office.¹⁰¹ To support his choice of this definition, he offers, among other arguments, the conclusions of German scholars who translate the term in just this way: B. Niese’s (1896) “*in das öffentliche Leben einzutreten*” (to enter into public life); H. Rasp’s (1924) “*die öffentliche Laufbahn . . . begonnen*” (to begin his public career); and E. Lohse’s (1971) “*begann, sich im öffentlichen Leben zu betätigen*” (to begin to busy himself in public life).¹⁰²

In the end, this definition for πολιτεύεσθαι does – by itself – little to settle the larger issue of Josephus’ relationship to the Pharisees. Mason appears to acknowledge this. Though citing multiple German scholars who do translate πολιτεύεσθαι in a way that places greater emphasis

⁹⁸ Mason (2001) 347-348.

⁹⁹ Mason (2001) 351.

¹⁰⁰ *Ant* 17.103, 243.

¹⁰¹ Mason (2001) 349-350.

¹⁰² Mason (2001) cites in his footnotes on page 348 the following references for these citations: Niese, *HZ*, 194; Rasp, “Religionsparteien”, 34; E. Lohse, *Umwelt des Neuen Testaments* (1971), 102.

on activity in the public sphere, Mason acknowledges that even they “also tend to see *Life* 12 as proof of Josephus’s decision to become a Pharisee.”¹⁰³

Changing the definition, then, does not by itself lead to the conclusion that Josephus was not a Pharisee. In fact, the only thing that inevitably seems to flow from the revised definition of *πολιτεύεσθαι* is the reminder that at this stage Josephus was now entering into a public life. He was not just “conducting” his life in a way that followed the Pharisees; rather, he began participating in the public sphere, following the ways of the Pharisees as he did.

What did it mean to participate in the public sphere? Entering public life did not need to suggest that he now occupied some kind of official government position. Entering public life did not imply that he suddenly had authority over others. Entering public life could mean nothing more, but also nothing less, than moving from a private life of learning and exploration into the public life of engaging the world through a career or occupation of some sort.¹⁰⁴ The verb *πολιτεύεσθαι*, then, serves primarily as a marker of Josephus’ transitioning into maturity. So far in the *Life* he had spoken of his birth in AD 37,¹⁰⁵ the beginning of consultations with high priests and important men of the city about the law when he was 14, and his exploration of various sects which began when he was 16. That effort took three years. At the age of 19, he transitioned from the private life of a youth to the public life of a young man. The term *πολιτεύεσθαι*, then, was Josephus’ way to describe his transition into that next stage. The

¹⁰³ Mason (2001) 348.

¹⁰⁴ The first known “public” act of Josephus was an effort on his part, seven years later when he was 26, to gain freedom for some priests who had been imprisoned by the procurator of Judea. They had appealed to Caesar in Rome, and so Josephus went to Rome to try to help them. He ended up obtaining his goal through a friendship he developed with a Jewish actor familiar to Nero’s wife. Through her intervention, the priests were set free. (*Life* 13-16.)

¹⁰⁵ *Life* 5.

German scholars Mason cites appear to use it precisely in this way: “He began to busy himself in public life.”¹⁰⁶

What does Mason gain, then, by preferring the translation “entry into public life”? Mason appears to feel that the mention of “public,” and perhaps its potential association with governance, leaves the door open to suggesting that Josephus’ following of the Pharisees was of the narrowest of sorts. Josephus was not really a Pharisee at heart, but he simply understood that to make progress in his career – and in particular if his career would include some form of public service – he needed to be in the party of the Pharisees to gain popular approval. Mason cites a Josephan description of the Sadducees to help make his case. After explaining how Sadducees had different convictions compared to the Pharisees yet were often very prominent individuals, Josephus presents a compromise they could make for purposes of expediency.

ὅποτε γὰρ ἐπ’ ἀρχὰς παρέλθοιεν, ἀκουσίως μὲν καὶ κατ’ ἀνάγκας, προσχωροῦσι δ’ οὖν οἷς ὁ Φαρισαῖος λέγει διὰ τὸ μὴ ἄλλως ἀνεκτοῦς γενέσθαι τοῖς πλήθεσιν.

For when [the Sadducees] become magistrates, as they are unwillingly and by force sometimes obliged to be, they addict themselves to the notions of the Pharisees, because the multitude would not otherwise bear them.¹⁰⁷

Josephus, Mason suggests, made the Sadducean calculation. By saying he was following the Pharisees, Josephus was really not saying that he had become a Pharisee. Rather, Josephus was simply recognizing that to succeed in the career phase of his life, his only option was to conduct himself as a Pharisee. This was not a commitment of the heart. This was a concession to reality, an act of political opportunism.

¹⁰⁶ Mason (2001) cites in his footnotes on page 348 the following reference for this citation: E. Lohse, *Umwelt des Neuen Testaments* (1971), 102.

¹⁰⁷ *Ant* 18.17.

While such a claim could theoretically fit into the space of unknowns present in the phrase “ἤρξάμην τε πολιτεύεσθαι τῇ Φαρισαίων αἵρέσει κατακολουθῶν,” the question is whether there is anything contextual which would recommend such an understanding. First, as was demonstrated, πολιτεύεσθαι can simply refer to the fact that he was now moving into the public phase of his life. He was a grown-up. Contextually, there is no reason to insert the Sadducean situation into what Josephus was doing as a 19-year-old. Additionally, from all we know he was not at that stage taking on ruling authority.

But what if Josephus was thinking ahead? What if he was looking forward to serving in an official public position (which ultimately he did)? One might suggest that he chose to become a Pharisee for just that reason, because he wanted to succeed down the road. He would have recognized the importance of having the populace on his side and so cleverly positioned himself through an alliance of convenience. Again, that is theoretically possible. But absent any contextual clues to suggest that sort of manipulative and contrived association, on what basis would we propose such a strategy on Josephus’ part? Mason feels that such a strategy is likely because his analysis of the first two phrases discussed in this section leads him to believe that Josephus had categorically closed the door on a relationship with the Pharisees from any philosophical or theological perspective. If the door was in fact closed on the Pharisees, then one understands why an interpreter would need to propose an alternative explanation for the association with the Pharisees that Josephus does claim at the end of *Life* 10-12. When an interpreter feels the context has constrained him, an option that would otherwise be viewed as rather narrow and speculative can ultimately feel inevitable.

But as the contextual clues Mason requires have been shown not to carry the weight he suggests – in fact, both syntactically and contextually those same passages naturally flow in a

direction that would support the fact that Josephus became a Pharisee – there is no reason to seek out a minimalistic explanation for Josephus’ Pharisaic association.¹⁰⁸

In addition, other elements of the context strongly recommend an understanding of *Life* 12 which sees Josephus presenting himself as a Pharisee in the broadest possible sense. The first significant contextual clue is linked closely to the structure of *Life* 10-12. This section is a unit. It is preceded by a chronological accounting of Josephus’ youth up to the age of 16. It is followed by what happens at the age of 26. This *Life* 10-12 unit contains within its boundaries a single and specific episode of Josephus’ life: his quest for a sect to which he could feel comfortable subscribing.

In this connection, then, the concept of “sect” is the bookend which brackets both sides of this unit. At the beginning of the contextual unit, Josephus explains that “I determined to gain personal experience of the several sects into which our nation is divided” (ἐβουλήθη τῶν παρ’ ἡμῖν αἰρέσεων ἐμπειρίαν λαβεῖν);¹⁰⁹ his object was to make a choice, to “select the best” (αἰρήσεσθαι τὴν ἀρίστην).¹¹⁰ At the end of the same contextual unit, he says that he “began to govern [his] life by the rules of the [sect of the] Pharisees” (ἤρξάμην τε πολιτεύεσθαι τῆ Φαρισαίων αἰρέσει κατακολουθῶν).¹¹¹ This unit of three paragraphs has nothing substantial

¹⁰⁸ While Mason’s evaluation of *Life* 10-12 seems essential to his argument, Mason also questions the likelihood that Josephus was a Pharisee because Josephus writes negative things about the Pharisees. For example, Josephus reports that Pharisees played a role in trying to depose him when he was governor of Galilee (*Life* 1.189-193). Also, in one particular incident, he describes Pharisees as capable of “greatly opposing kings,” “a cunning sect,” and ones who could do “mischief” (*Antiquities* 17.41). Josephus was surely not hesitant to call Pharisees out when they were doing something wrong. But Josephus also could speak of them positively. He describes them as “friendly to one another” in contrast to the Sadducees, who are “wild” and “barbarous” (*Jewish War* 2.166). He mentions an occasion when the chief of the Pharisees protected him from danger (*Life* 20-21). These examples of negative and positive descriptions present a sect that had strengths and weaknesses as well as good guys and bad guys. Such examples make clear that Josephus would not have viewed his association with a sect as inevitable agreement with everything that sect did. However, the fact that Pharisees could act in inappropriate ways ought not in itself be viewed as evidence that Josephus could never have been a member of that sect.

¹⁰⁹ *Life* 10; trans. by Thackeray.

¹¹⁰ *Life* 10; trans. by Thackeray.

¹¹¹ *Life* 12; trans. by Thackeray.

which precedes the first mention of “sects,” and this unit of three paragraphs has nothing substantial which follows the last mention of a “sect.” Mason’s suggestions notwithstanding, there is nothing between those first and last mentions of “sect” which does anything to inevitably lead the reader to conclude that somehow this section does not have cohesion. As Josephus introduces his quest in connection with a “sect” at the beginning, the most natural conclusion is that he completed his quest with respect to a “sect” at the end. While one can properly explore potential definitions for a word like πολιτεύεσθαι, one cannot easily dismiss the clear bookend structure of *Life* 10-12. Josephus’ quest for the best sect is concluded with the selection of the best sect.¹¹² Josephus’ association with the Pharisees, then, can be categorized not as a narrow, expedient association. He viewed his association with the Pharisees as an expression of meaningful allegiance after a careful period of examining the various options.

One more contextual detail supports this argument for a meaningful allegiance, an allegiance which expressed Josephus’ substantial agreement with what the Pharisees stood for. As the larger context seems to make most natural the presumption that Josephus’ action at the end of this section is the answer to the quest introduced at the beginning of this section, so the immediate context – the very last words of this section – makes evident that Josephus’ association with the Pharisees was more than base political opportunism. Having explained that he was following the sect of the Pharisees, he adds that the Pharisees are “a sect having points of resemblance to that which the Greeks call the Stoic school” (ἡ παραπλήσιός ἐστι τῆ παρ’ Ἑλλησιν Στωϊκῆ λεγομένη).¹¹³

¹¹² It is interesting to note that when Josephus described the purpose behind his evaluation of the sects (τῶν αἰρέσεων), he spoke of his plan to “select” (αἰρήσεσθαι) the best. The Greek terms for “select” and “sect” employ the same root. Josephus intended to make a choice. In the end, he began to govern his life by that choice, that sect, the Pharisees.

¹¹³ *Life* 12; trans. by Thackeray.

This addition is significant. To the degree that Josephus was communicating with an audience unfamiliar with the intricacies of Judaism, he felt it helpful to offer a comparison. Josephus was comparing the Pharisees, an unknown to the Greeks, with a group very well known to the Greeks, the Stoics. This is the first time that Josephus employs the term Stoic in his *Life*. One can presume, then, that Josephus expected them to associate with the term Stoic their most instinctive, general sense of what Stoicism stood for. The Stoic school, at its most basic, was a group that had certain philosophical principles. Learning that the Pharisees resembled the Stoics, readers would naturally have concluded that the Pharisees were a philosophical group of some sort. They would also have concluded that the philosophical approach of the Pharisees possessed similarities to the approach of the Stoics.

This last phrase is significant, then, in that Josephus concludes this important unit of thought by drawing attention not to the potential political benefits of associating with Pharisaism. To the contrary, the most natural reading of this addition has Josephus drawing attention to the Pharisees' philosophy – their core convictions. If he is focusing on core convictions when describing Pharisaism to an unfamiliar audience, it would seem inevitable to presume that his own association with Pharisaism was built on the very thing he chose to draw attention to – their philosophical/theological convictions. This last phrase, then, serves as an exclamation mark to the larger proposition that in this section Josephus is transparently laying claim to the status of being a Pharisee.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ Mason does engage the final phrase of this section (that the Pharisees resemble the Stoics), but only briefly in his main text and then a bit more in a footnote. In his main text, he suggests that these words speaking of the Stoics may be “intended to remind the reader of what Josephus has said elsewhere about the pervasive influence of the Pharisees in Jewish society” [Mason (2001) 354]. This seems to be an unnecessarily shallow point of comparison – that Josephus wanted the audience simply to conclude that the Pharisees were an influential group, like the Stoics were, without any other implications. In the associated footnote Mason does acknowledge that commentators usually focus on the philosophical similarities between the two. He then offers an affirmation to that even as he seems to want to focus elsewhere: “Without diminishing in the least the significance of those parallels, I should like to suggest a further aspect of comparison” [Mason (2001) 354]. Mason’s readiness to grant a philosophical linkage

Mason argues carefully to suggest that in fact Josephus was not a Pharisee. By evaluating his characterization of three key phrases in *Life* 10-12, I have attempted to demonstrate that the pillars of his argument can reasonably be viewed as shaky. In the end, I do not think that one can comfortably embrace the conclusions he has drawn.¹¹⁵ Instead, the more sound interpretation is that Josephus, after considering the various options open to him, did associate himself with the philosophical/theological convictions of the Pharisaic sect.

Josephus' words in *Life* 10-12 are central to the contention that Josephus himself was a Pharisee. This claim is not insignificant as one wishes to get a comprehensive sense of Josephus' view of the afterlife. Acknowledging that Josephus was a Pharisee permits one to consider additional passages from Josephus in the effort to define his views regarding existence after death. On a number of occasions, Josephus explains what Pharisees believe. Components of Pharisaic belief involved the afterlife. In recognizing that Josephus enjoyed a close philosophical association with the Pharisees, then, one can then presume that beliefs attributed by Josephus to the Pharisees with regard to the afterlife may reasonably be attributed to Josephus as well.

As I have discussed earlier, much is known about Josephus' understanding of the afterlife from his own personal statements. Josephus was convinced that after death, at a significant moment in time (at the "revolution of the ages"), his living soul would be rejoined to a body in a way that denoted continuity with the existence he once had on earth. This new body would be perfect, and in it he would enjoy a conscious and happy post-death existence. While Josephus'

perhaps indicates his awareness that this is the most natural understanding. Yet Mason's eagerness to focus again on "a further aspect of comparison," going on to recommend the unnecessarily shallow concept of "broad influence" as the key point of comparison, does seem necessary to maintain his larger argument.

¹¹⁵ Mason himself, as he mentions scholars helpful to his project in the preface to his book *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees* (2001), notes this: "None of the academics mentioned above, as far as I know, wanted to have his name tied to the hypotheses that I advocate in the present work." [Mason (2001) xiv.]

personal statements do reveal significant – and perhaps even sufficient – information about his concept of the afterlife, his descriptions of the Pharisees serve to affirm and enhance our sense of Josephus' thinking.

Josephus' words regarding the Pharisees offer two key additional facets to one's understanding of Josephus' view of existence after death. First, Pharisees – and so also Josephus – believed that the gift of a new body after death was reserved only for those who were good, that is, those who followed the principles of God during their lives. Second, Josephus' words regarding the Pharisees bring additional clarity to our understanding of the nature of the body that would be enjoyed after death. Josephus was not confessing metempsychosis, a sort of transmigration or reincarnation into a new body that was distinct from one's previous existence.¹¹⁶ Rather, the nature of the post-death body links closely to what is customarily associated with the term resurrection – clear continuity between the body once enjoyed and the body newly enjoyed.

Josephus' personal statements already hint at the fact that receiving a new body after death is limited only to those who are good. When addressing compatriots who were contemplating suicide, Josephus said:

ἄρ' οὐκ ἴστε ὅτι τῶν μὲν ἐξιόντων τοῦ βίου κατὰ τὸν τῆς φύσεως νόμον καὶ τὸ ληφθὲν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ χρέος ἐκτινύντων, ὅταν ὁ δοὺς κομίσασθαι θέλῃ, κλέος μὲν αἰώνιον, οἴκοι δὲ καὶ γενεαὶ βέβαιοι, καθαρὰ δὲ καὶ ἐπήκοοι μένουσιν αἱ ψυχαί, χῶρον οὐράνιον λαχοῦσαι τὸν ἀγιώτατον, ἔνθεν ἐκ περιτροπῆς αἰώνων ἀγνοῖς πάλιν ἀντενοικίζονται σώμασιν· ὅσοις δὲ καθ' ἑαυτῶν ἐμάνησαν αἱ χεῖρες, τούτων ἄδης μὲν δέχεται τὰς ψυχὰς σκοτεινότερος, ὁ δὲ τούτων πατὴρ θεὸς εἰς ἐγγόνους τιμωρεῖται τοὺς τῶν πατέρων ὑβριστάς.

Do not you know that those who depart out of this life, according to the law of nature, and pay that debt which was received from God, when he that loaned it to us is pleased to require it back, enjoy eternal fame? That their houses and their posterity are sure, that their souls are pure and obedient, and obtain a most holy place in heaven, from whence,

¹¹⁶ This transmigration into a different body was a feature of Platonism. See the myth of Er in *Republic* 10.613e – 621d.

in the revolution of ages, they are again sent into pure bodies; while the souls of those whose hands have acted madly against themselves, are received by the darkest place in Hades, and while God, who is their father, punishes those that offend against either of them in their posterity?¹¹⁷

In speaking to his fellow Jews, Josephus explains that those who leave this life “according to the law of nature” (κατὰ τὸν τῆς φύσεως νόμον) will one day be “again sent into pure bodies” (ἀγνοῖς πάλιν ἀντενοικίζονται σώμασιν). When describing those whose hands have “acted madly against themselves” (καθ’ ἐαυτῶν ἐμάνησαν αἱ χεῖρες), however, he does not speak of bodies. He simply says that their souls “are received by the darkest place in Hades” (τούτων ἄδης μὲν δέχεται τὰς ψυχὰς σκοτεινότερος).

While this section clearly hints at the fact that only the good receive new bodies, in the end this section only permits an argument from silence. With regard to the bad, bodies are not mentioned. Given the clear contextual contrast with the outcome for the good, we might fairly presume that they did not receive new bodies. Yet Josephus does not explicitly exclude those who are bad from receiving new bodies. Josephus’ description of Pharisaic beliefs removes any uncertainty: “[They maintain], on the one hand, that every soul is imperishable, yet on the other hand, that only the soul of those who are good passes over into another body, while the souls of the evil are punished with everlasting retribution” (ψυχὴν τε πᾶσαν μὲν ἀφθαρτον, μεταβαίνειν δὲ εἰς ἕτερον σῶμα τὴν τῶν ἀγαθῶν μόνην, τὰς δὲ τῶν φαύλων αἰδίῳ τιμωρίᾳ κολάζεσθαι).¹¹⁸ One word makes the point definitively: “only” (μόνην). Josephus explains that Pharisees believed only one group of people would receive bodies in the afterlife, those who were good. Those who were evil would remain only souls and in that form experience punishment.

¹¹⁷ *JW* 3.374-375. Whiston’s translation has been slightly adapted for clarity: “lent it us” is now “loaned it to us.” Also, while not relevant to this particular discussion, it can be noted that Whiston’s translation of the last phrase may be a bit hard to understand. Thackeray (1967) translates “ὁ δὲ τούτων πατήρ θεὸς εἰς ἐγγόνους τιμωρεῖται τοὺς τῶν πατέρων ὕβριστάς” in this way: “God, their father, visits upon their posterity the outrageous acts of the parents.”

¹¹⁸ *JW* 2.163; personal translation.

Josephus' description of Pharisaic belief, therefore, clarifies that only the good receive bodies after death. That same citation, however, introduces an element which might initially seem to complicate our understanding of Josephus' views on the afterlife: Josephus states that the good will receive a "different/other" (ἕτερον) body.

When previously characterizing Josephus' personal understanding of the new body he expected to receive, continuity was emphasized. In some respect there was continuity between bodily existence on earth and the bodily existence that would occur after death. This continuity was emphasized through Josephus' use of the term *πάλιν* ("again"). In speaking to those who were contemplating suicide, Josephus had explained that "in the revolution of ages, [those who depart out of this life according to the law of nature] are *again* sent into pure bodies" (ἐνθεν ἐκ περιτροπῆς αἰώνων ἀγνοῖς *πάλιν* ἀντενοικίζονται σώμασιν).¹¹⁹ Josephus used similar terminology when he explained that "[those who had lived exactly according to the laws would] come into being *again*, and at a certain revolution of things receive a better life than they had enjoyed before" (ἔδωκεν ὁ θεὸς γενέσθαι τε *πάλιν* καὶ βίον ἀμείνω λαβεῖν ἐκ περιτροπῆς).¹²⁰ As previously noted, since Josephus asserts that souls are immortal, "coming into being again" (γενέσθαι *πάλιν*) would naturally refer to the reacquisition of the body. Given the "again" nature of this action, the implication is that there is some linkage between the second occupation of the body and the first occupation of the body. Also, the phrase "again sent into pure bodies" (ἀγνοῖς *πάλιν* ἀντενοικίζονται σώμασιν) likely emphasizes a connection between the former body and the new body.

This is not the view of all. Feldman, in reference to the phrase "again sent into pure bodies" (ἀγνοῖς *πάλιν* ἀντενοικίζονται σώμασιν), notes that Thackeray understood these words in

¹¹⁹ *JW* 3.374; italics mine.

¹²⁰ *AA* 2.218; italics mine.

a very different way. “This passage in [the *Jewish War*], says Thackeray, contains a reference to metempsychosis.”¹²¹ As mentioned earlier, metempsychosis is a sort of transmigration or reincarnation into a new body, a new body that is in significant ways distinct from one’s previous existence. Metempsychosis is contrasted with the concept of resurrection, where the new body, while distinct in a respect – in Josephus’ case, it would be holy – is still an expression of direct continuity with the original body.

In the passage previously cited to note that only the good receive new bodies, the question of metempsychosis or resurrection is left unanswered. “[The Pharisees maintain], on the one hand, that every soul is imperishable, yet on the other hand, that only the soul of those who are good passes over into another body” (ψυχὴν τε πᾶσαν μὲν ἄφθαρτον, μεταβαίνειν δὲ εἰς ἕτερον σῶμα τὴν τῶν ἀγαθῶν μόνην).¹²² All this passage says is that the good pass into a “different/other” (ἕτερον) body. This “other body” could theoretically be of an animal or of a completely different person. ἕτερον does not eliminate the possibility of a resurrection concept – the body would be different simply in that it would be holy. But ἕτερον does leave the issue unresolved.

A Josephan passage describing Pharisaic belief offers clarity:

ἀθάνατόν τε ἰσχὺν ταῖς ψυχαῖς πίστις αὐτοῖς εἶναι καὶ ὑπὸ χθονὸς δικαιοῦσαι τε καὶ τιμὰς οἷς ἀρετῆς ἢ κακίας ἐπιτήδευσις ἐν τῷ βίῳ γέγονεν, καὶ ταῖς μὲν εἰργμὸν αἰδίου προτίθεσθαι, ταῖς δὲ ῥαστώνην τοῦ ἀναβιοῦν.

[The Pharisees] also believe that souls have an immortal vigor in them, and that under the earth there will be rewards or punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life; and the latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison, but that the former shall have power to revive and live again.¹²³

¹²¹ Feldman (1965) 13.

¹²² *JW* 2.163; personal translation.

¹²³ *Ant* 18.14.

In the personal statements of Josephus previously cited, Josephus has already described existence after death as “coming into being again” (γενέσθαι πάλιν)¹²⁴ and “to be introduced as inhabitants to bodies again, bodies which are pure” (ἀγνοῖς πάλιν ἀντενοικίζονται σώμασιν).¹²⁵ While arguments revolving around the use of the term πάλιν (“again”), as previously presented, strongly lean the interpreter toward a resurrection-type understanding, this Josephan citation of Pharisaic perspective contributes clarity. According to Josephus’ characterization, Pharisees believed that to the virtuous, the opportunity “to live again easily” (ῥαστώνην τοῦ ἀναβιοῦν)¹²⁶ would be given. This was not simply a “coming into being again,” where the type of existence is not defined as explicitly. This was not simply an “inhabiting bodies again” where, in spite of the πάλιν, one might try to suggest that Josephus is leaving the door open to kinds of bodies other than human or to the body of a completely different human. The Pharisees believed in a “living again.” Whatever life once was, that is what was going to be again. In fact, Josephus explicitly refers, in the immediate context, to that life which once was. He notes that it is behavior “in this life” (ἐν τῷ βίῳ)¹²⁷ which impacts one’s post-death future. Employing the same βίος root in a verb, ἀναβιόω, and no less than 12 words later, strongly implies that the definition of “life” is presumed to be the same in both places.

So, there was physical life before death, and then there was a restoration of life again after death. This restoration of life was not in connection with the soul – the soul was immortal. The only thing naturally presumed to “live again” would be the body. This was not someone else’s body. This was not another creature’s body. The most natural way to understand what Josephus is saying is to conclude that the body of the deceased was the body which would live

¹²⁴ AA 2.218.

¹²⁵ JW 3.374.

¹²⁶ Ant 18.14; personal translation.

¹²⁷ Ant 18.14.

again. This was not metempsychosis. This was not what is customarily associated with the term reincarnation. This “living again” of the original body is most commonly referred to as resurrection. This is what the Pharisees confessed, and this is what we would naturally presume Josephus, a Pharisee, confessed.

Feldman concurs. In reference to this particular passage from the *Antiquities*, he writes, “But our passage . . . refer[s] not to metempsychosis, which was not a tenet of the Pharisees, but to the belief in resurrection, which was a central doctrine of the Pharisees.”¹²⁸ In support of this assertion, Feldman notes an instance where a form related to ἀναβιώω – in this case ἀναβίωσις – is paired with the Greek term for “rising again,” ἀνίστημι.

This linkage of forms which Feldman refers to is found in a passage in 2 Maccabees, a text which discusses the defilement of the Jerusalem temple in the second century BC by the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes, as well as the subsequent cleansing of the temple by victorious Jews. In the course of Antiochus’ oppressive actions, a young Jewish man was about to be executed by Antiochus for refusing to violate Jewish religious principles by eating pork. As he was being tortured and was about to breathe his last, 2 Maccabees 7:9 reports that the young man said, “[Like an avenging spirit you take] us out of this present life, but the King of the world shall raise us up, who have died for his laws, unto everlasting life” (σὺ μὲν, ἀλάστωρ, ἐκ τοῦ παρόντος ἡμᾶς ζῆν ἀπολύεις, ὁ δὲ τοῦ κόσμου βασιλεὺς ἀποθανόντας ἡμᾶς ὑπὲρ τῶν αὐτοῦ νόμων εἰς αἰώνιον ἀναβίωσιν ζωῆς ἡμᾶς ἀναστήσει).¹²⁹

This 2 Maccabees verse connects two important concepts. In describing the beliefs of the sect he had joined, Josephus has already explained that it was given to the virtuous “to live again

¹²⁸ Feldman (1965) 13.

¹²⁹ 2 Maccabees 7:9 in Swete (1909). Translation in part from *The Apocrypha: King James Version* (1995); the phrase “Thou like a fury takest” has been replaced with “Like an avenging spirit you take,” a personal translation.

easily” (ῥαστώνην τοῦ ἀναβιοῦν).¹³⁰ In 2 Maccabees 7:9, a young man confesses confidence that “[the King of the world] will raise us up (ἀναστήσει) for an eternal living again (ἀναβίωσιν) of life.” The same Josephan term, “living again” (ἀναβίωσιν), is employed, yet this time it is explicitly connected to the concept of “being raised up (ἀναστήσει). To rise again in Latin is *resurgo*, or as a noun, *resurrection*. The term Josephus uses for “living again” is tightly paired with the term “resurrection.”

One could properly have made that association even without the Maccabees verse. But Feldman sees the Maccabean linkage as useful. Feldman explains that 2 Maccabees 7:9 “employs ἀναβίωσις, the noun corresponding to the verb ἀναβιώω (the word used by Josephus in our passage) in a clear reference to resurrection.”¹³¹

Pharisaic views on existence after death fill in our picture of what Josephus, a Pharisee, himself believed about the subject. From his own personal statements, we know that Josephus anticipated a conscious post-death existence where his immortal soul, at a notable moment in time, would be rejoined to a perfect body that had continuity of some sort with Josephus’ existence prior to death. From descriptions of Pharisaic belief, we are able to add certainty to the implication that it was only the souls of the good who would be rejoined to a body. In addition, Josephus’ characterizations of Pharisaic belief make even more explicit that the acquisition of a new body was not to be a manifestation of some sort of reincarnation, but it is in fact a resurrection – in some fashion the body once employed prior to death will be given life again.

Giving definition to Josephus’ views about a personal resurrection helps characterize the close linkage between Josephus’ attitudes toward his virtual exile and those of Favorinus. Just as Favorinus directed exiles to find confidence in their challenging circumstances by anticipating an

¹³⁰ *Ant* 18.14; personal translation.

¹³¹ Feldman (1965) 13. (No comma is found in the original citation after “. . . our passage”).

eternal reward, so one can see how Josephus could find great confidence – though a marginalized member of society – in a transformative future after death. Josephus could know that so many dismissed the fundamental tenets and practices of Judaism. Josephus could be aware that in so many places in the empire, Jews faced consequent antagonism from neighbors. Josephus could recall the brutal defeat that Jews experienced in the destruction of Jerusalem. Whatever the specific factors on his mind at a given moment, Josephus could contemplate the virtual exile that he experienced as a Jew in a pagan society and find reasons to be discouraged. Yet this is not what we see. Instead, he remained confident. To know that he was looking forward to a post-death existence and resurrection, with soul and body recombined for a better life, is to understand how the events of a moment need not have undermined his perspective on the future. All things earthly could be taken from him, he could confess, yet in the end he would lose nothing.

That such a powerful kind of confidence can come from the belief in resurrection is affirmed, in a rather ironic way, by one rejecting the reality of resurrection. Characterizing her perspective on the Jewish belief in resurrection in Josephus' time most bluntly, Setzer states, “. . . *resurrection was fabricated out of the 'toolkit' of Jewish culture.*”¹³² Yet Setzer does capture well the role that resurrection confidence can play for one who feels like a virtual exile:

. . . resurrection is an effective strategy because *resurrection allowed its adherents to live in the world as it is*. It allowed adherents to retain their commitment to a certain community and its history while managing the discordant reality around them. They could continue to believe in a watchful God who acts in history, the election of Israel, the eventual punishment of evildoers, and reward for the righteous. It allowed them to accommodate the temporary triumph of the Roman state and their own subjection.¹³³

¹³² Setzer (2001) 90; italics original.

¹³³ Setzer (2001) 94; italics original.

Josephus would have rejected the “fabrication” component of Setzer’s observation. But her sense of the powerful role resurrection can play affirms the proposition that for Josephus, resurrection was central to his optimism in the face of a society which viewed Jewish belief as little more than fabrication. He was a virtual exile, but his confidence in resurrection positioned any such exile as only temporary.

Overview of Josephus’ exilic path to victory

Josephus existed as an exile of thought in the midst of a pagan society that surrounded him. Though such a status could easily have weighed on him like the burden of a punishment, instead Josephus demonstrated an optimistic perspective that mimicked, in many fashions, the approaches of some philhellenic philosophers. He followed in the footsteps of Musonius as he focused on the positives in spite of negatives, as he exemplified Stoic-like acceptance of events as they transpired, and as he refused to accept the determination by others that his own theological/philosophical path was wrong. He walked in a path similar to that of Dio Chrysostom as he confessed his God to be the one who controlled human history, the one who also would bring blessing to those who stood on God’s side. Finally, Josephus traveled a course similar to that of Favorinus as he laid claim to the expectation of an eternal reward, the resurrection of the body and a better life to come.

Musonius and Dio and Favorinus created an exilic path to follow. They were determined to maintain personal confidence even though others had tried to sideline them. In the end, they laid claim to victory. Josephus charted a course similar in many ways, even as it was distinct in some most fundamental respects. Ultimately, he too was determined to maintain personal confidence though a marginalized member of society. He confessed a confidence that rested

ultimately on the God of Israel. Certain of divine providence in life and looking forward to resurrection after death, Josephus laid claim to the ultimate in victory.

Conclusion – The conquered conquers

Josephus, a Jew and a general and ultimately a historian, found a way to view himself as being on the winning side in spite of societal marginalization and military defeat. The world in which he lived, though viewed by many scholars as less than antagonistic to Judaism, in fact demonstrated repeatedly that while propitious events and political expediency could insulate Jews from antipathy that surrounded them, there was a constant low grade “fever” that could periodically and violently spike. This antipathy can reasonably be linked to the exclusivist theological claims of Judaism and the implicit condemnation of competing claims. While outward cultural manifestations of Judaism did reflect an obvious separatism relative to their non-Jewish neighbors, underlying theological claims of Judaism were also not unknown. Some pagans would have been most comfortable ignoring all of this. But for others who either explicitly recognized it or only implicitly perceived it, Jewish distinctiveness became a rationale for intolerance.

On so many occasions, the strength of imperial authority did step in to defend Jews under pressure. Fascinating family connections solidified supportive policies toward the significant Jewish pockets that existed within the empire’s borders. But at other moments, and due to a diversity of factors, the underlying current of antipathy could rise to the surface, and Jews became targets. Josephus assigns blame for this antipathy not to the character of Jewish theology. Rather, the cause lay in those who were unreasonably reacting to the uniqueness of Judaism. Yet whatever the cause, the fact remained that Jews lived in an environment of risk.

It is in view of such generalized risk that Josephus can properly be viewed as a virtual exile. He was different from those around him. His Jewish beliefs, by definition, set him apart in a most fundamental way from those who surrounded him. Even as he integrated into his culture to a significant degree, his separateness was woven into the fabric of his being. Whatever his physical status, he remained an exile of the mind.

His writings, then, can beneficially be viewed as having been composed through the lens of exile. Yet his writings were not just exilic in nature. They were victoriously exilic. Just as Musonius and Dio and Favorinus demonstrated how through writing one can lay claim to victory even when one's outward circumstances indicate defeat, so Josephus employed that same art of an exile. He laid claim to the status of "winner" even though, in the eyes of many, he would have seemed the furthest thing from victorious. No matter how others might have viewed him, he was convinced that his worldview was being proven true. History itself – as discouraging as it could at times appear – was elucidating the very principles he was promoting. The God of Israel was governing events. Following the principles of the God of Israel was key to receiving divine blessing. Treasuring the principles of the God of Israel was key to an afterlife enjoyed, an ultimate resurrection of the body and a better life to come.

These are not the perspectives of one defeated. These are not the words of one demoralized. These are not the inclinations of one about to forfeit the tenets that had guided his life so far. These are the views of one who was so confident in tenets that had guided his life that he wanted to share them. In texts which encompassed a span of history going all the way back to the beginning,¹³⁴ Josephus sought to convey the key to history. His approach was a gentle one. He understood that certain things he wrote might strike the reader as stunning. In moments like

¹³⁴ *Ant* 1.27.

that, he was not maliciously confrontational but persuasively indirect. He persisted in repeatedly and coherently tracing a path of divine providence and order, a pathway present even in the appearance of defeat.

John Barclay, cited earlier as one who could envision Jews claiming a type of moral victory in the face of Roman dominance,¹³⁵ observes this about Josephus:

What we might also find in Josephus, suitably concealed or partial in expression, are hints of a cultural defiance which refuses to let Judaism merely mirror back to the Romans their own cultural mores. This is not a necessary or inevitable feature of writers under colonial conditions: some have simply erased their native cultural pride. But Josephus has not rested content with showing that the Jews are simply, as it were, “Romans” from Judea. By insisting on the extreme antiquity of Judaism and the originality of Moses’ constitution (which has been imitated and envied by all other peoples), and by inserting under Roman moral categories his own Jewish customs (e.g. the Jewish ban on abortion, Ap. 2.202), Josephus, as it were, infiltrates Roman discourse with his own distinctively Jewish traditions.¹³⁶

While I have given additional distinct definition to likely reasons for Josephus’ confidence – for example, confidence in divine providence and expectation of the resurrection of the dead – Barclay’s observation does affirm a general principle. Josephus could be a minority in the face of the majority yet not surrender in the least. He could embrace convictions distinct from his surrounding culture yet not at all feel inclined to adjust. Josephus could be an exile of thought and yet simultaneously be one who had mastered the art of exile. To be an exile is not inevitably to be wrong. To be an exile is not inevitably to be worthy of such separation. One can be an exile, distinct from the culture that surrounds him, and yet be fully convinced that he is in the right. This reality fuels the exile’s art, the capacity in writing to lay claim to victory in the midst of apparent defeat. This is the artistry Josephus employed, and in the end, the conquered had in fact conquered.

¹³⁵ See introduction to this project.

¹³⁶ Barclay (1996) 321.

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