Perceptions of the Ancient Jews as a Nation in the Greek and Roman Worlds

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Abstract

The question of what made one Jewish in the ancient world remains a fraught topic for scholars. The current *communis opinio* is that Jewish communities had more in common with the Greeks and Romans than previously thought. Throughout the Diaspora, Jewish communities struggled with how to live amongst their Greco-Roman majority while continuing to practise their faith and thereby remain identifiably ‘Jewish’. To describe a unified Jewish identity in the Mediterranean in the period between 200 BCE and 200 CE is incorrect, since each Jewish community approached its identity in unique ways. These varied on the basis of time, place, and how the non-Jewish population reacted to the Jews and interpreted Judaism. This thesis examines the three major centres of Jewish life in the ancient world - Rome, Alexandria in Egypt, and Judaea - demonstrate that Jewish identity was remarkably and surprisingly fluid. By examining the available Jewish, Roman, and Greek literary and archaeological sources, one can learn how Jewish identity evolved in the Greco-Roman world. The Jews interacted with non-Jews daily, and adapted their neighbours’ practices while retaining what they considered a distinctive Jewish identity.

Each chapter of this thesis examines a Jewish community in a different region of the ancient Mediterranean. The first chapter examines the Jewish community of ancient Rome. Many Roman authors wrote on Jewish practices, from satirists such as Martial and Juvenal, to the historians Tacitus and Cassius Dio, and the orator Cicero. Special attention is given to the Jewish catacombs, one of the only surviving primary sources on the Jewish community of Rome. The second chapter examines the Jews of Alexandria and Egypt. Charting the Jews’ rise to prominence as part of the Ptolemaic kingdom, this chapter demonstrates that a significant degree of acculturation occurred, personified by the Jewish Hellenistic philosopher Philo. However, anti-Jewish riots in the early first century CE demonstrate that some of the non-Jews resented the Jews of Alexandria, which demonstrates that acculturation does not necessarily engender acceptance. The third and final chapter examines the Jews of Judaea. The majority of the sources are concerned with the various Jewish revolts, first under the Hasmoneans against the Seleucids, and then the failed revolts against the Romans. Jewish identity is at its most complicated in Judaea: different factions struggled with how to handle Greek and Roman influence, along with the development of an autonomous Jewish state. This thesis reveals that when the Jews comprised a minority group, as was the case in Rome and Alexandria, a greater degree of acculturation occurred, with Jews adopting Greek and Roman elements. In Judaea, the opposite occurred, as Jews resisted the influence of Hellenistic culture and Roman political involvement, going so far as to revolt. This was a result of, and contributed to, the emergence of a Judeo-centric, nationalistic identity from the mid-second century BCE to the mid-second century CE.
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Introduction

In the ancient world, the concept of a nation or ethnic identity would seem unfamiliar. A Roman citizen would consider himself Roman, regardless of whether he was born in Britain, Africa or Italy. It is important to note that, for most scholars, terms for ethnicity are largely interchangeable, and, to an extent, the same held true for the ancients. One of the Latin words to denote a united group, *gens*, could refer to a race or nation, as well as non-Roman peoples. The Greek word for a nation, ἔθνος, could refer to a group of men, a race, tribe, or nation. The Greeks divided the various peoples between two groups: the Greeks themselves, and the βάρβαροι, those who did not speak Greek. From the Augustan age (27 BCE to 14 CE) onward, the Romans began to use the term *Barbarus* as well, aligning themselves with the Greeks. For the ancient Jews, the term *goy* was used for non-Jews in the Hebrew Bible, usually translated as ‘gentile’, which itself comes from the Latin *gentilis*. Even in the *lingua franca* of the Eastern Mediterranean, Greek, the Jews distinguished themselves from non-Jews. In the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint, the word λαός refers to the Jews, while the translators use ἔθνος for gentiles. It is interesting to note the similarity between the Greek division of peoples and the Jewish division between gentiles (non-Jews) and Jews. Just as today, the practice of dividing groups between ‘us’ and ‘them’ is universal and constant.

Scholars have long thought of the Jews in the ancient world as outsiders, people who could not fully participate in Greco-Roman society, even though there may have been as many as

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1 Gruen 2013, p. 2; Hall 1997, pp. 2, 19, 33, 177; Radin 1919, pp. 48-49; Goodblatt 2006, pp. 3-27.

2 *Gentilis* itself derives from the Proto-Indo-European *ǵénh₁*, which means ‘to produce, to give birth’, indicating that there is a connection between a *gens* and a biological family.
five million Jews within the Roman Empire in the late first century CE.\(^4\) Being a monotheistic group in a world of polytheists, the Jews often found it difficult to engage those around them. Following the destruction of Solomon’s Temple, in 587 BCE, the Jewish people began to spread throughout the Mediterranean, setting up communities within established cities, living, sometimes peacefully and sometimes in an atmosphere of tension, alongside their non-Jewish neighbours. Aside from the Jews and, later, Christians, ancient cultures accepted the existence of a variety of deities; this is a central aspect of their culture at odds with core Jewish beliefs. Regardless, the Jews enjoyed the support of rulers such as Alexander and Augustus, while others, such as Gaius, Trajan, and Hadrian, were clearly suspicious, if not explicitly anti-Jewish.\(^5\)

The question of identity in the ancient world has always faced significant issues for scholars, since the information that survives largely comes from upper-class sources, most often from Greeks or Romans. Yet Greco-Roman culture was not uniform, with many different peoples co-inhabiting and interacting. Most often, scholars have no option but to leave these groups in the dark corners, since the surviving evidence is insubstantial. For the ancient Jews, however, a great deal of evidence survives. This thesis explores how Jewish identity developed in the ancient world, both for the Jews themselves, as well as the non-Jewish groups who

\(^3\) Said 1978, pp. 54, 322.

\(^4\) Bruce 1964, p. 39.

\(^5\) While scholars such as Peter Schäfer (1997) attribute such sentiments to anti-Semitism, this thesis will attempt to avoid the term. Ancient peoples viewed identity differently than modern groups, and the connotation of anti-Semitism is heavily coloured by recent history which is unfamiliar in the ancient world. The term ‘Judeophobia’ attempts to decouple the anachronistic nature of anti-Semitism, and, while it emphasises fear over other emotions, is adequate for describing the perceptions of individuals, but should not apply to the larger community. Isaac 2004, pp. 442-443.
interacted with them. There are a variety of factors to consider, such as time, place, and the non-Jewish groups with whom the Jews lived. The ancient Jews were not an isolated group; they interacted with non-Jews regularly, sometimes peacefully, and other times in armed conflict. Furthermore, different Jewish communities developed in different ways, changing their own Jewish identity in the process. Part of this was a response to how the non-Jewish population viewed the Jews, whose own views on Jewish identity evolved over the course of time. This thesis will argue that Jewish identity in the ancient world must be treated _ad hoc_, with regions developing their identity in different ways; that is, there is no single, unified Jewish identity in the ancient world. However, it can be stated that Jewish identity tended to accept elements that are non-Jewish when the Jewish community was a minority, while Jewish separatism was more strongly felt in the majority Jewish Judaea.

There are several important scholars who serve as the foundation of debate over ancient Jewish identity. Louis Feldman’s _Jew & Gentile in the Ancient World_ (1991) and _Judaism and Hellenism Reconsidered_ (2006) explore the relationship between Jews and non-Jews throughout the ancient world. Feldman’s work is comprehensive, examining how the two groups interacted on a daily basis, and how the two groups are closer than previously thought. This thesis aims to build upon his research, viewing Jewish identity through a Greek and Roman context. Seth Schwartz’s _Imperialism and Jewish Society_ (2004) details the effects imperialism had on the Jews, beginning with the Persians, then the Hellenistic monarchies and finally the Romans. The influence of outside communities on Jewish identity is considerable, since these cultures helped shape the Jews. By expanding the focus to include Rome and Alexandria, the role Greco-Roman culture played in Jewish identity can take shape. Peter Schäfer’s _Judeophobia: Attitudes towards the Jews in the Ancient World_ (1997) takes a more lachrymose approach to Jewish history,
focusing in on what he believes are the origins of anti-Semitism in Hellenistic Egypt, along with anti-Jewish sentiments amongst other Greek and Roman authors. While anti-Jewish sentiments certainly existed amongst elements of the non-Jewish population, the exact nature of the relationship between the Jews and non-Jews is complicated, sometimes even mutually beneficial, which further examination of the sources elucidates.

This thesis examines three major regions which had substantial Jewish populations: Rome, Alexandria, and Judaea. The chapter on Rome argues that the Jewish community was relatively well integrated, adapting to Roman customs and visible in daily life, but still identifiably Jewish. The majority of the primary sources for this section are Roman. Poets such as Martial and Ovid, as well as historians such as Tacitus and Cassius Dio frequently mention the Jews in their works. These authors are important sources, as they are influenced by the political and social ideologies of their time, which can illuminate ancient views on the Jews. Some Jewish sources survive, with some small passages in Philo and Josephus, as well as archaeological remains from the Jewish population of Rome. The chapter will also consider Roman attitudes towards Jewish practices, since Roman-Jewish interactions described in Roman authors occurred in Rome itself, as well as the historical record of the Jews in Rome, and the development of Roman views on the Jews.

Ancient Egypt, especially Alexandria, is an important location in the history of the Jews. Not only is it the site of the Biblical Exodus, but the Jewish community of Alexandria is the most

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6 Schäfer has no qualms using the term ‘anti-Semitism’ in describing ancient attitudes towards the Jews, and in fact it is the first word that appears in his work. Schäfer 1997, p. 1.

notable example of a Hellenised, and therefore arguably acculturated, Jewish group on record. The most important source for the region is Philo, a Jewish resident of Alexandria who recorded many events in the mid-first century CE. Papyri also detail the Jewish community in Egypt, along with non-Jewish authors such as Manetho and Hecataeus, who survive in the works of Josephus. While still a minority, albeit a large one, the Jews of Alexandria sought further integration within the city, namely through acquiring citizenship rights. Better attested than the community at Rome, the Alexandrian Jews showed a high level of integration within Ptolemaic Egypt, yet they too retained a Jewish identity, which their opponents in the Roman period would attack, leading to an anti-Jewish riot, and later the cessation of the influence of the Hellenised Egyptian Jews.

Finally, Judaea exhibits a martial side of Jewish identity, due in no small part to the Jews’ status as a majority within the region. The Jews of Judaea fought several revolts against foreign rulers, some successful. Unlike in Rome and Alexandria, the Jews of Judaea sought to ensure the continuance of Jewish practices, reacting violently to signs of Hellenisation or foreign interference and influence. The primary sources for this region are overwhelmingly Jewish, the most prominent of which are the Jewish historian Josephus and the Books of Maccabees. The Roman historian Tacitus also provides some details on Judaea, and coins minted by rulers in Judaea illustrate the messages they wished to convey. With the failure of the Bar Kochba revolt, however, the Jews of Judaea take a similar position as those in Rome and Alexandria, forced to adapt to the new status quo in order to ensure a continued Jewish life. The Romans, who had destroyed the Temple of Jerusalem and violently put down the revolts, believed that they could integrate the Jews into their empire by removing the Temple. In a sense, they were correct, as
Jewish identity in Judaea Romanised after the revolt, since the Jews were no longer the majority within the region.
CHAPTER ONE

THE CITY OF ROME AND THE JEWS

The city of Rome is said to have been founded on 21 April, 753 BCE by the mythological son of the god Mars, Romulus. Set on the bank of the Tiber River, Rome quickly outgrew its surroundings. The Romans expelled its kings in 501 BCE and adopted one of their proudest accomplishments: the Republic. Throughout the fourth and early third centuries, Rome fought a series of wars against their neighbours to the south, the Samnites, expanding their control to most of central Italy. As an emerging Mediterranean power, Rome quickly came into conflict with the Carthaginians, the predominant power at the time, as well as the Greeks, resulting in numerous wars. In 146 BCE Rome sacked both Carthage and Corinth, ending any threat to Roman dominance in the Western Mediterranean.

From its foundation, Rome was ethnically diverse, best illustrated by their national poem, *The Aeneid*. At the climax of the epic, the goddess Juno beseeches her husband Jupiter to allow the Trojan refugees to intermarry with the Latins, creating a new race, the Romans (12.820-828).¹ As Rome took its place as the Mediterranean power, the city of Rome became more diverse. Not only was the near-constant warfare of the mid to late-Republic supplying the city with a stream of slaves, but also Rome’s status as the capitol of the empire made it a primary destination for traders and merchants.

It is in this context that the Jewish population of Rome found itself. That the Jews took up habitation in the city is undeniable, perhaps as early as the mid-second century BCE. Population numbers are always a contentious issue in the ancient world, owing to the lack of specific

¹ Tarrant 2012, pp. 299-301.
demographic information, though suggestions for the Jewish population range from 30,000 to 40,000.

For this chapter, it is important to consider how the Roman sources react to Judaism. The Romans frequently mentioned the Jews in their literature across a variety of genres. Most often, Roman views on Judaism come from satirists such as Juvenal and Martial, though important information can be gleaned from the speeches of Cicero as well as historians such as Tacitus and Cassius Dio. The Jewish sources are also important, though these are both scarce and late (the Jewish catacombs of Rome were in use as early as the second century CE, and potentially as late as the fifth century). From what one can adduce from inscriptions, the Jews in Rome acculturated to some extent. While the Roman sources are somewhat negative, focusing on the distinction between the two groups, the Jewish sources suggests that the Jews of Rome were not as different from their neighbours as the Roman sources would like to believe.

I. Roman Primary Sources on Jews in Rome.

Writing in the first century BCE, the orator Cicero provides one of the earliest proofs of Jewish inhabitants in Rome. Oddly, Cicero makes no mention of the Jews in his philosophical treatise on theology, *De Natura Deorum*, where one would expect some form of reference to the Jews.

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2 Noy 1998, p. 79; Bowersock 2005, p. 54. Bowersock’s suggestion is only for the city of Rome, and does not include Ostia. The existence of a Jewish community at Ostia was initially in doubt, due to only a single inscription (NS 1906, 410) referring to a Jewish element (Meiggs 1973, p. 389). However, archaeological finds of a carved seven-branched candelabrum and other Jewish symbols provide evidence of a synagogue, as well as a Greek inscription recording the gift of an ark for the scriptures (Meiggs 1973, p. 588). The exact population of the community at Ostia is unknown, and while it was certainly less than at Rome, a sizeable number of Jews must have
owing to their unique practices.\(^3\) Rather, Cicero speaks of the Jews in his defence of the praetor of 63 BCE Lucius Flaccus. One Publius Laelius accused Flaccus, who acted as governor of Asia in 62 BCE, \textit{inter alia}, of preventing the Jews of Asia from sending their annual tribute of a half-shekel to the Temple.\(^4\) Cicero does not deny this charge, but in fact, supports Flaccus’ action, mentioning that during his own consulship of 63 BCE the Senate sought to restrict the exportation of gold (\textit{Flac. 67}). Of note is Cicero’s reference to the Jews: \textit{huic autem barbarae superstitioni resistere severitatis, multituidinem Iudaeorum flagrantem non numquam in contionibus pro re publica contennere gravitatis summae fuit}, ‘to resist this barbarous superstition, to condemn the crowd of Jews who sometimes were inflamed in the assemblies on behalf of the Republic was of the highest severity’ (\textit{Flac. 67}). It appears that, at least by 59 BCE, the Jews were a sizeable number in Rome, and had at least some influence in the city, given the attention that Cicero gives them.\(^5\)

Moreover, Cicero indicates that the Jews of Rome were firmly entrenched in the \textit{Populares} camp in the schism of Roman politics: the phrase \textit{in optimum quemque} (\textit{Flac. 66}) is how he usually refers to the \textit{Optimates}. Cicero thus asserts that the \textit{Populares} used the Jewish mob in Rome to attack him and the \textit{Optimates}. That the Jews would be part of the populist group who claimed to fight on behalf of the lower classes is not that surprising, given that the majority of the Jewish population of Rome was urban poor, and their later support of Julius Caesar.

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\(^3\) Feldman 1993, p. 123. Feldman correctly points out that, given how unusual monotheism is to the polytheistic Romans, Cicero’s silence on them in his work on theology is strange.

\(^4\) Marshall 1975, p. 139.

Cicero’s negative depiction of the Jews is understandable, given a statement in another case, his defence of Aulus Cluentius, where he admits that what he says is not indicative of his own convictions, but simply an attempt to achieve the desired effect (Clu. 139). This could mean Cicero was exploiting the prevailing Judeophobic sentiments prevalent in Rome in his period in his defence of Flaccus. Cicero’s argument would have little success if there was not some truth to his argument. In his defence of Flaccus Cicero drew upon Roman anxiety concerning the Jews, whom the Romans had subdued only four years earlier. What is important is that the Jewish population was numerous and politically inclined enough that Cicero could draw upon these Roman anxieties in his defence.

The lyric poet Horace in his Satirae (65-8 BCE) writes that if his patron Maecenas did not allow him to indulge in his papers (chartis), a band of poets will swarm him and convince him to join their party, just as the Jews (ac veluti...Iudaei) (1.4.139-43). It is unlikely that Horace means that the Jews pressure people to convert through their numbers, as there is no evidence of Jewish missionary activity in Rome but, like Cicero, he claims the Jews use their numbers for political pressure. Horace obviously considers the Jews a large and influential group in Rome, and his readers must have been familiar with such behaviour for him to include such a simile. Horace describes no other ethnic groups in Rome as such, even prominent communities such as Greeks, Egyptians, and Syrians. That the Jews were at least somewhat influential in the upper classes of Rome comes from another Satire, when an acquaintance attempts to use the day, the

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6 Leon 1960, p. 8.
7 Goodman 1994, p. 74.
‘Thirtieth Sabbath’ (*tricensima sabbata*) to escape from his creditor (1.9.67-72). While Horace never expounds upon this point, it appears that, to some extent, Romans were aware of Jewish practices and some had even gone as far as observing first-hand Jewish practices, though it is possible the acquaintance simply needed an excuse to abandon his creditor.

Ovid references Jewish practices in his *Ars Amatoria*. The first book of Ovid’s didactic poem focuses on how a man can find a woman, and here Ovid mentions the Jewish population of Rome. He advises any male looking for romance not to shun the seventh day, sacred to the Syrians of Palestine (*Ars*. 1.75-76; 1.416). The implication is clear: the Jews who celebrated the Sabbath drew a crowd, one primarily of women. The term that Ovid uses for the Jews, *Palaestino...Syro* is not without precedent. According to Josephus, the first reference to Jews in gentile literature was in Herodotus, who mentions that the Syrians of Palestine learned circumcision from the Egyptians (*Ap*. 1.168-71; *Hdt*. 2.104.3).

Of the various genres of Latin literature that mention the Jews, the most overtly hostile is satire; the examples from Horace discussed above prove to be atypical. The satirists have little positive to say about Rome’s Jewish population, and they tend to focus their barbs on their economic condition and the strangeness of Jewish rites. They may be prone to hyperbole for comedic effect, but a satirist relies on some aspect of perceived truth for effect, and they must have perceived some distaste towards the crowds of Jews on city streets. The satirist Juvenal provides a physical location for the Jews in Rome, claiming they made an encampment in the

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9 Leon 1960, p. 12.
Grove of Egeria, outside the Porta Capena (3.12-16).\textsuperscript{12} Juvenal also makes use of the stereotype of a Jewish beggar (3.296; 6.542-47).\textsuperscript{13} The first reference is rather obscure, as Juvenal describes the dangers of Rome at night, including a violent beggar who threatens the poet if he does not answer his question: \textit{ede ubi consistas; in qua te quaero proseucha?} ‘where do you stop to eat; I beg you, in which \textit{proseucha}?’ \textit{Proseucha} comes from the Greek \textit{προσευχή}, meaning a place of prayer, usually used in reference to Jews. This place of prayer is usually equated with a synagogue, which means that in Juvenal’s time the Jewish population in Rome was of such a size that permanent places of worship were established.\textsuperscript{14} The second instance is more explicit. As part of his argument for avoiding marriage, Juvenal warns that women are especially superstitious, easy prey for a sickened female Jew who abandons her begging-basket and tells those seeking their fortune whatever they wish to hear in exchange for a copper coin. While likely exaggerated to some extent, there must be some perceived truth in Juvenal’s account. Jewish support of the \textit{Populares} may have been partly because of the poor economic condition of many of the Jews, though Pompey’s status as an \textit{Optimas} likely convinced many Jews to support the rival \textit{Populares} as well, given their hatred of the Roman general.

The image of a Jewish beggar also appears in the poet Martial, who complains about the ceaseless noise in the city, including a Jewish boy taught by his mother to beg (12.57.13).\textsuperscript{15} Martial differs from the sources mentioned thus far in that he also refers to the Jews of Rome interacting with the citizens on a personal level. He criticises one Caelia, presumably a prostitute,

\begin{enumerate}
\item Leon 1960, p. 137.
\item Levine 2000, pp. 97-99.
\item Feldman 1993, pp. 192-193.
\end{enumerate}
for giving herself to a wide range of peoples, including *recutitum... inguina Iudaerum*, ‘the circumcised groin of Jews’ (7.30.5). Of interest is that Martial considers the Jews as similar to other non-Roman peoples to whom Caelia has given herself, such as Egyptians, Parthians, and Dacians. It is an interesting note that the Romans conquered all of these people (admittedly only symbolically, in the case of the Parthians), which may mean Martial views the Jews as simply one conquered people among many. The Jews in Martial’s poem are, like the other foreigners, distinct from Romans, usually for the worse. Far more interesting is his address to a rival poet, whom he describes as circumcised, and accuses him of stealing some of his verses and trying to steal his loved one (11.94). This unnamed rival’s status as a Jew is an easy target for the poet, and circumcision is clearly both an identifying marker of a Jew as well as the subject of derision. For the Greeks, the ideal foreskin was ‘long, tapered, and well-proportioned’. The Romans adopted the Greek’s appreciation for an unblemished body, and viewed circumcision as a sign of

16 *Das Parthis, das Germanis, das, Caelia, Dacis,/ nec Cilicum spernis Cappadocumque toros;/ Et tibi de Pharia Memphiticus urbe fututor/ navigat, a rubris et niger Indus aquis;/ Nec recutitorum fugis inguinal Iudaerorum,/ Nec te Sarmatico transit Alanus equo./ Qua ratione facis, cum sis Romana puella,/ quod Romana tibi mentula nulla placet?* ‘You surrender to Parthians, to Germans, to Dacians, Caelia, nor do you reject the beds of Cilicians and Cappodocians; and to you a lover from Pharian Memphis sails, and a dark Indian from red waters; nor do you flee the groin of circumcised Jews, nor does the Alan pass you by on Sarmatian steed. By what reason do you do this, although you are a Roman girl, why does no Roman member please you?’

17 *Quod nimium lives nostris et ubique libellis/ detrahis, ignosco: verpe poeta, sapis./ Hoc quoque non curo, quod cum mea carmina carpas,/ compilas: et sic, verpe poeta, sapis./ Illud me cruciat, Solymis quod natus in ipsis/ pedicas puerum, verpe poeta, meum./ Ecce negas iurasque mihi per temple Tonantis./ Non credo: iura, verpe, per Anchialum.* ‘The fact that you are livid beyond measure and our writings you disparage, I forgive: you have your reason, circumcised poet. This also I do not worry about, although you criticize my songs, you steal them: thus also, o circumcised poet, you have your reason. That torments me, that although you were born in Jerusalem, you sodomise my boy, circumcised poet. Lo you deny it and swear to me by the temple of the Thunderer. I do not believe you: swear, circumcised one, by Anchialus.’

18 Glick 2005, p. 31. See also Clark 2005, p.44, which describes the general opinion of the Greeks and Romans towards circumcision as that it ‘interferes with nature and it does not look good’.
lechery and thus a target of mockery.\textsuperscript{19} The exposure of the glans led to the belief that circumcision was a crude imitation of an erect phallus, to which Martial here possibly alludes.\textsuperscript{20} Martial's experiences with the Jews in Rome are more personal than those of the other sources, namely due to this rivalry with the unnamed Jewish poet. His use of \textit{verpe}, which can mean both ‘erect’ and ‘uncircumcised’ (in lines two, four, and six), chides the unnamed Jew both for being a Jew and being a lustful \textit{pedicator}.\textsuperscript{21} The obscure reference to \textit{Anchialus} in line eight must refer to some commonly believed aspect of Judaism to be effective to a Roman audience, but the exact meaning appears to be lost to time.\textsuperscript{22} At least to some extent, the Jews of Rome did not segregate themselves from their gentile neighbours, and even went as far as to have romantic relations with them.\textsuperscript{23}

\textbf{II. Jewish Primary Sources in Rome.}

The vast majority of Jewish sources for the Jewish community in Rome comes in the form of archaeological evidence; the literary evidence is lacking in comparison. The single greatest source of information regarding the Jewish community in Rome is the catacombs. All the archaeological evidence from Rome which relates to the Jews is funerary in character, such as sepulchral inscriptions and sarcophagi. These objects come from four catacombs and two Jewish

\textsuperscript{19} Hodges 2001, p. 388; Glick 2005, p. 219 n.19.
\textsuperscript{20} Hodges 2001, p. 31.
\textsuperscript{21} Kay 1985, p. 258.
\textsuperscript{22} Kay 1985, pp. 259-260.
\textsuperscript{23} Radin 1919, p. 326.
hypogea located around the city, outside the late third century CE Aurelian walls.\textsuperscript{24} The dates for these have changed over the last several decades. One suggestion is that they were in use as far back as the first century BCE, with the majority of their usage in the first through third centuries CE. Scholars have reached the consensus that they were in use from the third through fifth centuries CE, due in part to paleographic and epigraphical considerations, the style of the sarcophagi, and the material culture found within.\textsuperscript{25} Unfortunately, almost no archaeological evidence for the Jews in Rome during the late Republic or early principate has survived.

The most abundant kind of evidence from the catacombs are inscriptions. For most Jews living in Rome, the primary language was Greek. The catacomb that provides the most inscriptions, Monteverde, includes 155 Greek inscriptions, more than three times the other inscriptions combined. There are only thirty-nine Latin inscriptions in Monteverde, but it makes up a larger percentage at Vigna Randanini, where excavators found sixty-three Latin inscriptions, half of the 126 Greek inscriptions at the same time. At Villa Torlonia, 122 Greek inscriptions exist, compared to only five Latin. At Vigna Cimarra and Via Labicana, only Greek inscriptions survive (five and three respectively). Also interesting is that, while the Jews of Rome largely adopted the \textit{lingua franca} for foreigners (Greek), some retained their ancestral tongues. At Monteverde four Hebrew inscriptions are present, alongside two Aramaic ones. At Villa Torlonia, only one Hebrew inscription survives. Furthermore, at least some Jews utilised multiple languages in funerary inscriptions, as four bilingual inscriptions come from

\textsuperscript{24} Ruters 1992, p. 104.

\textsuperscript{25} Levine 2000, pp. 97-99; 264.
Monteverde, two Greek and Latin and two Greek and Aramaic, while seven Greek and Latin inscriptions come from Vigna Randanini.\textsuperscript{26}

Regardless of the exact numbers, it is clear that the Jewish population at Rome was primarily Greek speaking, with a sizeable minority who adopted Latin as well. Yet in death some retained the languages of their ancestors and homeland: Aramaic and Hebrew. Whether this was simply because of a desire to solidify their Jewish identity in death or they actively used the language in daily life is not possible to clarify, since there is no evidence that Jews in Rome used Aramaic or Hebrew in their daily life.

The prevalence of Greek in Jewish inscriptions is certainly not unique to Rome either, as attested in finds elsewhere. In Sicily, while the number of inscriptions totals only thirteen, twelve are Greek, with the thirteenth having an opening formula in Hebrew, then concluding in Latin. However, the inscriptions of Sicily tend to favour local preferences. For example, Jewish inscriptions from Venosa in southern Italy favor ὡδε κιτε, ‘here lies’ over the Roman ἐνθάδε κείται, which has a similar meaning, and often start with τάφος, ‘burial’, which never occurs at Rome.\textsuperscript{27} While Greek was the predominant language for funerary inscriptions, there was a substantial amount of flexibility to accommodate local preferences, and Jews often conformed to these.

The use of languages in inscriptions raises the questions of names taken by Roman Jews. Given the propensity for Greek, one would expect to find that the Jews in Rome also took Greek

\textsuperscript{26} Cappelletti 2006, pp. 179-180. Louis Feldman’s count varies slightly: of the 534 inscriptions from Rome, he counts 405 in Greek, 123 in Latin, three in Hebrew, one Aramaic inscription, one bilingual Greek and Latin example, and one in Aramaic and Greek. Feldman 1993, p. 54.

\textsuperscript{27} Rutgers 1997, pp. 246-248.
names, but from the inscriptions that include the names of the deceased, Latin and Semitic (Aramaic and Hebrew) names are more prevalent. In fact, the majority of names found are in Latin. The Jews of Rome adopted Latin names far more readily than Latin itself. This may signify that the Jewish population at Rome came from the Diaspora, where Greek was the lingua franca. Perhaps they originally came as slaves, and upon receiving their freedom they adopted the name of their former masters. At Appia, 116 of the names are in Latin, with seventy-three Greek, and twenty-one Semitic names. Combinations of names are also common, with sixteen Latin and Greek names and five Latin and Semitic names attested. At Monteverde, there are ninety-five Latin names, fifty-nine Greek, thirty-five Semitic, thirteen Latin and Greek, and seven Latin and Semitic. At Nomentana, twenty-six Latin names, twenty-four are Greek, seven Semitic, and three Latin and Greek combination names. It is important to stress that the control one has over his or her name is minimal, and has little to do with his or her inclination to adopting the Roman or Greek lifestyle. While Leonard Rutgers suggests names are cultural indicators, Feldman astutely points out that it does not imply the attitude of the person, but their parents. Even today, for instance, parents give their children Biblical names with no familiarity of their origin. Even though a child is named Joseph, it does not mean he has a connection with the patriarch Joseph, or with any religious tradition or text. Feldman’s point, that the name conveys the cultural mores of the parents rather than the offspring seems apt. To Rutger’s benefit, such naming conventions do not seem to have led to any consternation on the part of the child once he or she reaches independence, so one must have generally accepted his or her name.

29 Leon 1960, p. 110.
Perhaps more important is that, while Latin and Greek names certainly dominated in the surviving inscriptions, the option to adopt a more traditional Jewish name existed, and a notable portion of the population did have Jewish names.\(^{31}\) Interestingly, over half of the attested inscriptions referring to women indicate a Latin name, while Greek was more common for men than women.\(^{32}\) Women, who lacked the physical identifier of circumcision, likely found it easier, and thus were more likely, to adopt Latin onomastic practices, while the men retained the Greek tradition from the Diaspora. Jewish families gave their sons family names, which would be Greek, while girls would take popular contemporary names.\(^{33}\)

Perhaps the most perplexing bit of information concerning the onomastic tendencies of the Jews at Rome is the existence of names styled after Greek and Roman gods, such as Aphrodisia and Dionysias, named after Aphrodite and Dionysus. One suggestion is that the Jews at Rome took those names because they were popular in the surrounding communities, and there was no religious concern in doing so. This seems likely, since no criticism of adopting non-Jewish names in the Roman community exists, nor in the ancient world at all.\(^{34}\)

The longstanding opinion in scholarship is that Jews were the exclusive occupants of these catacombs. However, the existence of pagan style art and dedications to the gods of the underworld has opened this up for debate. Inscriptions from Monteverde and Villa Torlonia use dedications to the gods of the Underworld as opening formula. While some are recycled owing to the Jewish inscription on the back (Frey 1, nos. 9 and 36), others have no evidence of reuse (Frey

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\(^{31}\) Rutgers 1997, p. 256.

\(^{32}\) Leon 1960, p. 109.

\(^{33}\) Leon 1928, pp. 220-221.

\(^{34}\) Leon 1960, p. 121; Leon 1928, pp. 216-217.
Generally, the assumption has been that Jews secured items such as sarcophagi, gold glasses, and wall paintings from workshops that served a mixed clientele (i.e., Romans, Christians, and Jews). The existence of what would be considered “pagan” art does not necessarily mean these are pagan tombs, but like the dedications to the gods of the Underworld, the Jews may have had no objection to such images or language. It may not be that they acculturated, but were secure enough in their Jewish identity. The depiction of non-Jewish divinities was not a cause for concern. Unfortunately, there is insufficient information regarding such finds to assess the Jewish community at Rome, such as the economic status of the Jews, though the presence of gold glasses and sarcophagi would suggest that at least the wealthy had no issue in adopting the artistic norms of their non-Jewish contemporaries. Such images would have been incomprehensible to the Rabbis of the later Jewish tradition, however. Compared to the situation in Judaea, one can make a few interesting observations. During the Hasmonean-Herodian period, the archaeological evidence suggests that the Jews of Judaea were firmly against painting or sculpture in general. By the third century CE, however, Jewish art begins to resemble that of the Greeks, with three-dimensional depictions of characters like Helios and Medusa. These objects are found almost exclusively on the coast and in Judaea proper, where contact between the Jews and non-Jews would be most common. It appears that Jews adopted the styles of art of the people with whom they interacted on a daily basis. Jewish identity can thus act as a malleable object, which can borrow from other cultures while still being recognised as distinctively Jewish to the viewer. Whether Greeks and Romans could view such objects, free from context, as Jewish is another matter.


36 Feldman 1993, pp. 39-40.
The Jewish literary sources on the Jewish community at Rome are sadly scarce. The Alexandrian Jewish scholar Philo visited Rome at least once as part of an embassy to the emperor Gaius (see chapter two, p. 82), but outside of that context, he barely mentions the Jews in Rome. He does note, however, that most of the Jews who lived in Rome originally came as slaves, and were later freed (Leg. 155). Philo is also a useful source on Roman synagogues, and places the Jewish population of Rome in the Transtiberine region, in which at least seven of the eleven synagogues attested in inscriptions were located. Aside from Philo referring to the synagogues as προσευχαί, while the epigraphic evidence uses the term συναγωγαί, what Philo writes about the synagogues of Rome largely confirms what scholars understand about synagogues throughout the ancient world: Jews met there regularly, engaged in liturgical study, and sent funds to the Temple of Jerusalem (Leg. 156). Philo may be placing the practices on Rome with which he is familiar in Alexandria, though one cannot dismiss Philo on those grounds alone. The term for the synagogue which Philo uses is not entirely without merit, since Juvenal, who is far closer to Philo than the third- through fifth-century catacombs, uses the term proseucha in his Satires (3.296; see above, p. 12). That most of the Jewish population that came to Rome were war slaves, presumably during the conquest of the East by Pompey, seems likely. A slave who refuses to work on certain days and eat certain foods would be a problem for most, and even torture may not be enough to force a Jew to forsake his traditional rights, as Josephus suggests (Ap. 1.191). Furthermore, according to the Torah, if a non-Jew owns a Hebrew slave, the local Jewish community must try to purchase him, and he enters the service of

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38 Rutgers 1994, p. 59.
his redeemer and works for him until the Jubilee year, that is after seven years (Lev. 25:47-54).
The freed slave would then likely move to the Transtiberim, the fourteenth region of Augustan Rome and modern Trastevere, which is regarded as the region Syrians and the poor settled in, as references by Juvenal (Sat. 3.62) and Martial (1.41) discussed above attest. Pompey’s own attitude toward the Jews seems to be one of indifference; they were another people of the East to conquer.  

One can thus summarise the Jewish community of Rome as follows. It appears that they were largely poor, sequestered in the Transtiberim region of the city. Like their co-religionists throughout the Mediterranean, they had synagogues, sent a yearly tribute to the Temple in Jerusalem, and attended public readings of the Torah. They also practiced several of the familiar Jewish rites, observing the Sabbath, circumcision, and dietary laws. For the vast majority, however, they adopted the language of their environment, along with some of the cultural norms. Greek and Latin names were vastly popular, while Greek, according to the inscriptions, was the primary language for the community, with Latin a distant second.

Some Jews may have retained some knowledge of their ancestral languages, Aramaic and Hebrew, but the inscriptions in those languages are scarce. People named after Greek and Roman gods appear often for Jews in Rome, though they likely found no issue with them. More surprisingly, the Jewish catacombs contain several distinctly non-Jewish elements, such as wall painting and sarcophagi in the style of their Roman neighbours, as well as inscriptions to the gods of the underworld. The suggestion that these are ‘Romanised’ Jews may be a step too far, but it appears that those interred had no problem with such depictions. Perhaps the ban on graven

40 Greenhalgh 1981, pp. 141-142.
images was of little concern to the Jews of Rome, or they adapted Greek and Roman styles to fit a Jewish context.

III. Roman Views on Jewish Practices.

For most Roman authors, interaction with Jews occurred in the city of Rome. Daily contact with the Jews would have heavily influenced Roman opinion on the Jews throughout the Empire. This contact, most noticeable on the Sabbath when the Jews abstained from work and participated in the rites, was not always positive. The Romans viewed the Sabbath as a sign of laziness, dietary laws a sign of seclusion and thus misanthropy, and Jewish monotheism as a form of atheism. Contact with a practising Jewish population meant that the Romans viewed the Jews as a strange people with a foreign cult, whose values did not mesh with those of Rome. While non-Jews may not have read the Torah, they were certainly familiar with Jewish practices, as the Roman sources prove throughout their works. Of these practices, the ones the Romans were most familiar were circumcision, observance of the Sabbath, and dietary laws.

While the Jews would become the most common example of circumcision in the ancient world, the Romans and Greeks were aware that it was not a practice unique to Judaism. Circumcision was a major point of contention for those who wished to convert, as illustrated by the first century CE king of Adiabene, Izates. Both Josephus and the Talmud (AJ 20.38-44; Genesis Rabbah 46.11) recount the tale: Izates wanted to convert, and required circumcision to become a full Jew. His mother, Helena, also a convert, convinced her son that, due to how his gentile subjects viewed circumcision, he should not fully convert. Eventually, a Jew named Eleazer told Izates that, according to the Pentateuch, he was not Jewish unless he underwent
circumcision. The story is indicative of the major obstacle faced by non-Jews interested in conversion. Not only was circumcision a risky surgical procedure, but the Greeks and Romans did not view it favourably. As mentioned earlier, Herodotus claims the Syrians of Palestine learned the practice from the Egyptians (2.104.31 see above, p. 11). Strabo mentions that the Egyptians circumcised males and excised females, adding that male circumcision was normal amongst the Jews (7.2.45.824). Strabo does not attribute the introduction of circumcision to the Jews, however, asserting that it was made necessary by superstitious priests after Moses’ death (16.2.37). When discussing the tribe of Creophagi, he remarks they practice circumcision as well, citing the Jews again (16.4.9.771). Tacitus claims that the Jews adopted circumcision to separate themselves from other people (Hist. 5.5.2). Juvenal writes that the final step a potential convert to Judaism must take is circumcision (14.96-99).

The Roman satirists constantly stressed the connection between circumcision and the Jews. Petronius remarks that if he were uncircumcised, a Jew would be removed from his people (Fr. 37). In his Satyricon Petronius describes a slave who is perfect except for two faults; he snores and is circumcised (68.7-8); and in another passage, a character asks to be circumcised so that he may look like the Jews (102.13-14). Horace (S. 1.9.70) and Persius (5.184) use circumcision as the defining feature of the Jews. As far as the Romans knew, circumcision was a central part of Jewish identity, a practice of which the Romans disapproved. Both the Romans and the Greeks considered circumcision a form of physical deformity, one that barred one from entering the Olympic Games.

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That the satirists often refer to the practice means that the Romans considered it humorous, an assertion to which Philo alludes. He immediately defends circumcision in his apology, *De Specialibus Legibus*, in which he tries to rationalise Jewish law against critics. He specifically mentions that non-Jews considered the practice of circumcision humorous (γελωμένου) (1.1.1-2). Philo elsewhere states that for potential proselytes circumcision is not a necessity, but the important step is turning one’s heart to God (*Quaest. Ex.* 2.2).\(^{43}\) For the Romans, however, circumcision was a common identifier for Jews. That Paul decided that Christians would not undergo circumcision, choosing to interpret the law allegorically, may reflect this distaste for circumcision in the Greco-Roman world, and may have contributed to Christianity’s success in winning converts.\(^{44}\)

The observance of the Sabbath was familiar to the Romans, who generally knew that it involved abstaining from work, such as Horace’s friend who avoided repaying debts due to the Sabbath (S. 1.9.170; above, pp. 10-11). Ovid refers to the seventh day as being sacred to the Syrian Jews (Ars. 1.75-76, 413-416). Romans must have known that the Sabbath meant Jews would not engage in warfare, since Pompey took advantage of this during his capture of Jerusalem in 63 CE (Strab 16.2.40.763; Cassius Dio 37.16). The fifth-century CE Christian Synesius provides another example of the Jews’ strict observance of the Sabbath, though it is comically absurd: during a sea voyage, the Jewish captain left his post because of the Sabbath. A terrible storm fell upon them, and the captain refused to return to the rudder, even when threatened with violence. Only when his passengers convinced him they were in mortal danger did he return to his post (*Epist.* 4.11-15). Strabo’s account of Pompey’s siege of Jerusalem also

\(^{43}\) Goodman 1994, p. 73.

\(^{44}\) Feldman 1993, p. 155.
illustrates that the Romans did not completely understand this practice. He claims Pompey deliberately waited for the νηστείας ἡμέρας, the day of fast. However, this would refer to the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, while Josephus claims that Pompey captured the city in the third month after the siege began, which was in spring (AJ 14.66). This Roman belief that the Sabbath was a day of fasting appears most famously in a letter from Augustus to Tiberius quoted by Suetonius: Ne Iudaeus quidem, mi Tiberi, tam diligenter sabbatis ieiunium servat quam ego Hodie servavi 'Not even a Jew, my Tiberius, so diligently observes the fast of the Sabbath as I have today’ (Aug 76.2). Augustus shares in the ignorance of the time, since he is not the only Roman who believes the Sabbath was a day for fasting, such as Strabo (763), Petronius (fr. 50 Mueller), and Martial (4.4.7). Pompeius Trogus, cited by Justin, erroneously claims Moses decreed the Sabbath to be a fast day (Epit. 36.2.14). Given how widespread the belief that the Sabbath was a fast day amongst the Romans, it is possible some Roman Jews did fast on the Sabbath, though that would be a point of departure from other Jewish communities.

While the Romans somewhat understood the observance of the Sabbath, the reason for the dietary laws, namely the avoidance of pork, puzzled them. Like circumcision, avoidance of certain foods was not unique to the Jews in the ancient world. Vegetarians like the Pythagoreans would also avoid pork, for example. Petronius claims that the Jews worshipped a pig-god, which was why they did not eat pork (Fr. 37). Such an idea may seem outlandish and an example of satirical reduction to absurdity, but Plutarch, who is relatively familiar with Jewish practices,

45 Wardle 2014, p. 466.
offers the same reason for the abstention from pork (Quaest. Conv. 669f-670a).\textsuperscript{48} Plutarch is the only gentile author to mention many aspects of Jewish life, such as the holiday of Tabernacles, the Levites (Quaest. Conv. 671d-e), the association of wine with the Sabbath and the clothing of the high priest (Quaest. Conv. 672a).\textsuperscript{49} That Plutarch suggests that this is the reason for the dietary law concerning pork suggests that it was a serious opinion, at least amongst some. Tacitus has the same view of their dietary laws as circumcision: it is a way to separate themselves from others (Hist. 5.5.2).

Not every aspect of Judaism received scorn from Roman sources. Seneca, cited by Augustine, remarks that unlike other peoples, the Jews understood the purpose behind their cults (De Civ. Dei 6.11).\textsuperscript{50} Strabo, Varro, again recorded by Augustine, and Livy support the Jewish prohibition on graven images, comparing it positively to early Roman religion (Strab. 16.2.35; apud. Aug., De Civ. Dei 4.31; apud. Sch. Luc. Scholia in Lucanum 2.593).\textsuperscript{51}

The Romans identified the Jews on the basis of their practices. It is important to note that no ancient source ever suggests that the Jews were physically distinguishable from other people. There were no crude caricatures of Jews in Rome.\textsuperscript{52} The only physical difference between a Jew and Roman would be circumcision, and it would be difficult to determine on the streets such an operation occurred on the streets. Even then, other peoples practiced circumcision; it was not an exclusive indication of being Jewish, just as the avoidance of pork does not make one Jewish.

\textsuperscript{48} Feldman 1993, p. 49, p. 152.
\textsuperscript{49} Feldman 2005, pp. 234-236.
\textsuperscript{50} Feldman 1993, p. 207; Cappelletti 2006, p. 67.
\textsuperscript{51} Feldman 2006, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{52} Cohen 1999, p. 28.
Regardless, for the Romans these practices became synonymous with Judaism. The suggestion that Roman attitudes display an anti-Jewish sentiment, however, seems to take Roman opinion too far. The Romans never prohibited the Jews from practising their faith, and aside from a few short (though bloody) periods, they protected the Jews’ right to worship freely. While the Jews’ practices may seem strange to the Romans, most foreigners’ rites were equally strange, such as the Egyptian worship of animals.\textsuperscript{53} Perhaps the association between the Jews and Egypt is the cause of some Roman’s belief that the Jews worshipped a pig god.\textsuperscript{54} At worst, the Romans viewed the Jews with confusion and bewilderment. They might mock some practices, but never sought to alter or restrict them. This may mean the Romans did not feel Jewish practices were a threat to Roman religion and identity.

IV. The Historical Record of Jews in Rome.

The history of the Jews in Rome, while unfortunately sparse, provides important details on the relationship between the Jews and Romans. While the literary sources provide some details, the only concrete information concerning the Jewish community of Rome, what actually happened to them, comes from the historical sources. Thankfully, quite a few sources mention events that affected the Jews of Rome directly. Not only do they provide examples of how the Romans put their views about the Jews into practice, but it also shows the context of daily Jewish life within the city.

\textsuperscript{53} Boatwright 2012, pp. 112-113.

\textsuperscript{54} For the Roman belief that the Jews worshipped a pig god, see above, pp. 26-27.
The first chronological reference to a Jewish element in Rome comes relatively late, from the first century CE Roman author Valerius Maximus. According to Valerius, the praetor peregrinus of the year 139 BCE, Gnaeus Cornelius Scipio Hispanus, expelled the Jews, along with astrologers and Chaldaeans from Rome.\(^55\) The reason given for the expulsion is that they attempted to transfer their sacred rites to the Romans, as well as trying to establish a cult for a ‘Jupiter Sabazius’, with no distinction drawn between Jews who promoted this and those who kept to themselves.\(^56\) In one version, Hispanus also removes private altars from public places. The author substituted a general term familiar with the Roman audience, since it is difficult to conceive that the Jews of Rome, unlike all Diaspora Jews, worshipped at altars.\(^57\) Oddly, Jupiter Sabazius was not a Semitic deity, but a Phrygian god conflated with Zeus/Jupiter and Dionysus/Bacchus. It is unlikely, however, that Valerius Maximus or his epitomisers added the Sabazius detail, and likely came from a perceived connection between the two divinities.\(^58\)

\(^{55}\) The primary issue with this account is that it does not actually appear in Valerius Maximus, but his epitomisers included it at 1.3.3, in the middle of a large lacuna from 1.1.21 to 1.5.1 (Cappelletti 2006, p. 33; Feldman 1993, p. 301). Further confounding the issue is that the three manuscript traditions and the epitomisers themselves differ in substantial ways. The most common version of these events comes from a ninth century Vatican codex, which scholars publishing editions of Valerius Maximus often used (Vat. Lat. 4929). The epitome itself comes from Julius Paris, who dates to the fifth century CE. In this version, Gn. Cornelius Scipio, as the praetor peregrinus, orders the Chaldaeans and Jews to depart (abire) the city. There also exists another version from Paris, recorded in two separate codices (Cod. Berensis 366; Cod. Berolinensis 46) used up to the nineteenth century, which does not mention the Jews by name. The third manuscript comes from another epitomiser, the sixth century Januarius Nepotianus (Vat. 1321). In this version the epitomiser mentions both the Jews and Chaldaeans as being expelled, but does not mention the cult of ‘Jupiter Sabazius’ (Cappelletti 2006, pp. 33-34; Feldman 1993, p. 301).

\(^{56}\) McKnight 1990, p. 73; Leon 1960 p.2; Feldman 1993, p. 47.

\(^{57}\) Wardle 1998, pp. 150-151.

\(^{58}\) Leon 1960, p. 3; Wardle 1998, pp. 150-151.
It is highly unlikely that the expulsion of the Chaldaeans is a fabrication of the epitomisers, given that both epitomisers record it and give the reason for the expulsion. For the Jews, however, some have doubted such an expulsion even occurred, since Rome was involved with a series of treaties with the Maccabean government at the time, as recorded in Josephus and First Maccabees.\(^{59}\) The first embassy sent to Rome, while under the rule of Judas, dates to 161 BCE, and Rome and the Maccabees negotiated an alliance, with a copy engraved in bronze and kept in the Capitol (1 Macc. 8.17-32; AJ 12.414-419). Another embassy in 143/142 arrived in Rome, at the behest of the Senate, after Simon succeeded his brother Jonathan, and a new alliance was made (1 Macc. 12.1-4; AJ 13.163-165 and 169-170). Around the same time, the Senate informed the kings of Syria and Egypt that they must recognise the independence of the Jewish state. In 134, John Hyrcanus requested Roman aid in his war with the Syrian king Demetrius, which he immediately received (AJ 13.259-266). The question remains how the Romans could expel the Jews from Rome in the midst of these negotiations without upsetting the delegations. It appears that the Romans had no issue with separating the Jews in Rome from those in Judaea, substantiated by the Jewish population in the western empire not reacting to the later revolts.\(^{60}\) If so, the Romans did not view the Jews as a homogeneous group that they could deal with in a uniform matter, but Roman interaction with the Jews was very much \textit{ad hoc}, based on local considerations. On the part of the Roman Jewish community, some connection with their Judaean compatriots likely remained, since they continued to recognise the Temple of Jerusalem’s importance within Judaism. That the Romans did not partake in state-sponsored, wide-scale anti-Jewish actions during and after the revolts supports this theory. Whereas Rome

\(^{59}\) For the Hasmoneans and their treaties with Rome, see chapter three, p. 103-104.

considered the Jewish rebels in Judaea as political agitators, they did not conceive of the war as being against the Jews in general. By the time of the revolt, a Jewish community had existed in Rome for at least 200 years, or eight generations. By this point, the Romans may have even considered the Jews of Rome as members of the larger Roman community, though the Jews lacked citizenship and participation rights in most civic cults. This is not to suggest that the Romans thought that the Jews themselves were heterogeneous, however. Most authors do not mention the various sects of Judaism, aside from the Essenes, whom Pliny the Elder singles out for their asceticism (*NH 5.73*).\(^{61}\)

That the *praetor peregrinus* was the one who instigated the expulsion is of some note. There were two praetors elected in Rome annually, and the two officials oversaw different legal aspects: the *praetor urbanus* oversaw cases between Roman citizens, while the *praetor peregrinus* handled disputes between citizens and non-citizens. The assumption of scholarship has been that the Jews whom the *praetor perigrinus* expelled in 139 BCE were not permanent residents of Rome, and had no citizenship rights, since a citizen could not be expelled without a trial. There is a hint of this in the manuscript tradition, since both Paris epitomes conclude the description of the expulsion with *repetere domos suas coegit* (Vat. Lat. 4929)/*domos suas repetere coegit* (Cod. Berenensis 366; Cod. Berolinensis 46), ‘He compelled them to return to their homes’, which implies that they were not permanent residents at Rome.\(^{62}\) One reasonable interpretation of this expulsion is that after the initial treaties between Rome and Judaea, Jewish

\(^{61}\) Feldman 1993, p. 45.

\(^{62}\) Leon 1960, p. 4; Cappelletti 2006 pp. 39-40; While the use of *domus* instead of *patria* or *civitas* may appear strange, as *domus* usually refers to a physical home, it can be used to refer to one’s country of residence or birth (*OLD*, s.v. *domus*).
traders established a market in southern Italy and lived temporarily in Rome. The charge of proselytism and corrupting Roman rites will be discussed later (see below, pp. 46-50), but some scholars argue that Jewish proselytism could not have existed in the late Republic because they lacked the organisation required for such a programme. Instead, one of the epitomisers, Paris and Nepotianus, or one of their sources introduced these charges due to their familiarity with Jewish proselytism, which was much more prevalent in late antiquity.

During the first century BCE, the sources attest a more permanent community in Rome, as Cicero indicates in his speeches. Cicero’s assertion that the Jews of Rome were supportive of the *populares* appears to be true, given their admiration for their *de facto* leader, Gaius Iulius Caesar. Perhaps the main reason for their loyalty to Caesar was his opponent in the civil war, Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus. His conquest of Judaea in 63 BCE will be discussed in the chapter on Judaea, but for Jews throughout the empire he was remembered for murdering many, violating the sanctity of the Temple, and enslaving countless numbers. While the Jews of Egypt provided to Caesar’s army support that was more direct, the Jews of Rome certainly benefited from their allegiance, evidenced by the decrees of Caesar recorded by Josephus (AJ 185-216), which granted rights and privileges to Jews throughout the empire. These included full freedom of worship, relaxation of the rules on private associations (*collegia*), and permission to raise money to send to the Temple in Jerusalem, the right for Jewish courts to settle matters between Jews, and, due to dietary law and observance of the Sabbath, Caesar exempted them from military service. It would appear that Caesar understood the synagogues of Rome as operating like a

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63 Cappelletti 2006, p. 41.
64 Cappelletti 2006, p. 42-43.
65 Leon 1960, p. 9.
collegium, a voluntary association such as a guild or burial society. In a sense, Caesar was not far off the mark. The synagogue was of central importance in ancient Jewish life, not just as a religious focal point, but a community center as well. Members of the synagogue would do charitable acts for the community, and it would act as a place of refuge for Jewish travellers. The specific acts cited by Josephus in which other collegia could not engage, such as collecting money and eating communal meals, Caesar allowed to the Jews alone (AJ 14.214-215). The biographer Suetonius encapsulates the Jews’ affinity for Caesar, singling out the Jews among those foreigners who lamented the death of Caesar, travelling to his funeral pyre and staying there for several uninterrupted nights (Jul. 84.5).

Scholars have accepted the Roman equivocation of the synagogue with collegia because of the passage cited in Josephus, as well as the remark by Suetonius that after 46 BCE Caesar dissolved all collegia except for those with ancient roots (Jul. 42.3). Alongside Suetonius’ biography of Caesar and Josephus, a Caesarian law regarding collegia appears in Suetonius’ biography of Augustus (Aug. 32) and an inscription (CIL VI 2193, VI4416). However, Caesar did not create legislation that turned the synagogues into collegia, and more likely, these rights relied more on the Caesarian policy of freedom of religion than on Caesar’s reforming of collegia. Levine summarises the synagogue as incorporating

Jewish communal life within its walls: the political and liturgical, the social and the educational, the judicial and the spiritual… For all the very important comparisons that have been made between the

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67 Leon 1960, pp. 9-10.
68 Cappelletti 2006, pp. 3-5.
69 Cappelletti 2006, p. 11.
synagogue and comparable Greco-Roman associations (thiasos, koinon, collegia, etc.), no analogy does justice to the unique role of this institution within Jewish society.\textsuperscript{70}

The association of the synagogue with the collegia is thus an attempt to understand a foreign institution in Roman terms, an interpretatio Romana. The Romans were viewing a Jewish institution in their terms, and did not attempt to alter them. Rather, they allowed it to continue, granting the synagogue a special status so Jews could continue to practise their rights within. There was little concern on the Romans’ part that the Jews would use this privilege for nefarious means, and Caesar trusted the Jews as valued allies.

With the transition from the Republic to one-man rule under the emperor, it is important to consider how emperors could shape Roman perspective. The ideological foundation of the empire changes with the institution of the emperor, who has the authority to redefine community boundaries. Perhaps more importantly for the Jews living within the empire, traditional Roman pietas towards the state now focuses on the emperor himself in the principate.\textsuperscript{71} While Jewish monotheism can exist within the state-focused government of the Republic, the shift to one-man rule creates new tensions between the Jews and the Romans.

The Jews thus became wholly reliant on the whims of one man. Sometimes this was to the Jews’ benefit. The emperor, while having absolute power, nevertheless sought advice from his consilium. For example, in a dispute between the Jews and the Samaritans of Judaea, the Jewish king Agrippa II convinced Claudius to give the Jews a fair hearing (AJ 20.131-136; BJ

\textsuperscript{70} Levine 2000, pp. 158-159.

\textsuperscript{71} Roller 2001, p. 43.
Agrippa also helped the Jews regain custody of the high priest’s robes through his relationship with Claudius (AJ 20.8-14).73 The opposite also occurred: advisors of the emperor who harboured anti-Jewish sentiments could influence imperial policy and even attain positions of power. Helicon, a freedman of Gaius, received bribes from the Alexandrian Greek community from which he belonged to sway Gaius against the Jews.74 Likewise, a freedman of Claudius, Felix, gained control of Judaea, and the Jews accused him of misconduct upon his removal in 60 CE (Suet. Claud. 80; AJ 20.182).75 While the Jews did have recourse to petition the emperor to remove incompetent officials, which they often did, the physical location of the emperor, most often residing in Italy, made such excursions time-consuming and dangerous.76

The sources record another wave of expulsions, in 19 CE during the reign of the emperor Tiberius. Josephus explains it as the result of a Jew who dwelt at Rome and, along with three others, convinced a certain Fulvia, whom Josephus describes as a woman of high-status and a proselyte, to send gifts to the Temple (AJ 18.81-85). However, the embezzlers took her gifts for themselves. Fulvia’s husband Saturninus reported this to Tiberius who ordered all the Jews in

72 Henceforth, BJ will always refer to Josephus’ Jewish War.
73 Millar 1977, p. 231.
74 Millar 1977, p. 74.
76 Most famously, both the Jews and Samarians travelled to Rome in 6 CE to accuse Herod Archelaus before Augustus. Upon hearing their complaints, Augustus summoned Archelaus and banished him to Vienna (J. AJ 17.342-44).
Rome to depart. Four-thousand of those whom Tiberius expelled went to the island of Sardinia as soldiers, while the emperor punished those who were unwilling to abandon their practices. In his version of the expulsion, the Roman historian Tacitus applies the exile to all Jews. He also adds that those sent to Sardinia were the descendants of enfranchised slaves, *superstitione infecta*, implying they were converts. The rest were compelled to leave Italy unless they abandoned their rites (*Ann.* 2.85.4).\(^{77}\) Suetonius repeats most of this in his biography on Tiberius, adding that Tiberius sent those of military age to provinces *gravioris caeli*, ‘of more ponderous climate’ (*Tib.* 36). However, Cassius Dio, who was writing around two-hundred years later, records that Tiberius expelled most, but not all, the Jews in Rome (57.18.5a). Finally, Seneca the Younger alludes to these events when he writes that, during the reign of Tiberius, foreigners introduced their own rites into Rome, one of which was the abstention from eating certain animals, which immediately brings to mind the Jews (*Ep.* 108.22).\(^{78}\)

Of these accounts, it would be easiest to discount Josephus’ version, given its detail and the complete reversal it would suggest in Roman attitudes. That the actions of four Jews could lead to the mass expulsion of all of the Roman Jewish population seems excessive. Rutger’s suggestion that Josephus added this account to his version to shift the blame from the Jewish community to a select few, and in turn protect them from the common charge that they attempted

\(^{77}\) See also Goodyear and Woodman 1972, p. 441-444. While they quickly dismiss Josephus’ version on account of the severe punishment being applied to the community, they do accept the view that Tiberius expelled the Jews on account of proselytism, namely in the upper classes. However, they do dismiss the notion that *infecta* implies that only converts were conscripted, since *libertine generis* includes sons and grandsons of freedmen, who would make up most of the Jewish population at Rome.

\(^{78}\) Feldman 1993, p. 47, 302.
to convert Romans to Judaism seems plausible.\textsuperscript{79} Feldman considers that this is the result of Jewish missionary activities, but of the sources, only Dio mentions this as the impetus behind the expulsions, which may be the result of Dio’s contemporary situation. The Romans only gave the offer of apostasy instead of expulsion to the Jews, which may mean that the Romans acted to curb proselytism.\textsuperscript{80} Tacitus, Suetonius, and, if he is referring to this episode, Seneca all refer to a religious factor in the expulsions, and both Tacitus and Suetonius couple the expulsion of the Jews with that of those partaking in Egyptian rites.\textsuperscript{81} This ban may have only affected the \textit{peregrini}, pointing out that both Tacitus and Suetonius do not remark on the act being illegal, but rather the harsh climate of where those four-thousand military age Jews were.\textsuperscript{82} It thus seems likely that this expulsion was the result of Roman tensions regarding growing foreign religious sects in the city, which included the Jews, and that Tiberius took action to curb the growth in accordance with the law. Tacitus’ comment on this expulsion, that if those sent to Sardinia perished due to the climate, it was a \textit{vile damnum}, a ‘cheap loss’ (\textit{Ann} 2.85.4), likely reflected the feeling of the Senate, and Tiberius did nothing wrong in expelling those elements from Rome.\textsuperscript{83} The death of Germanicus in 19 CE may have further complicated the matter, as magic was thought to have played a role in his death.\textsuperscript{84}

As much as the emperor would have liked to believe, expulsions rarely achieved the desired result, driving the undesired group into hiding for a short time before they inevitably

\textsuperscript{79} Rutgers 1994, p. 61; Cappelletti 2006, p. 65.
\textsuperscript{80} Seager 2005, p. 125; Goodman 1994, pp. 83, 144.
\textsuperscript{81} Feldman 1993, p. 302.
\textsuperscript{82} Cappelletti 2006, p. 64.
\textsuperscript{83} Seager 2005, p. 125.
returned. At best, expulsions would give the impression that the emperor was working to address the problem. That Tiberius did not completely expel the Jewish population at Rome seems likely, and the expulsion must not have lasted very long, since the sources mention yet another incident in 41 BCE, during the reign of the emperor Claudius. Claudius himself has an interesting relationship with the Jews, primarily due to his childhood friend and future king of Judaea Herod Agrippa, also known as Agrippa I, who grew up alongside the future emperor in the household of Antonia. According to Josephus, just before the death of Herod I, Agrippa traveled to Rome and received an education alongside Tiberius’ son Drusus and Claudius (AJ 18.143). Following the death of Gaius, Agrippa encouraged Claudius to accept the role of emperor offered to him (AJ 19.236-237). This is the point in which Jewish influence in the imperial court is at its highest. This period would appear to be the closest the Jews of the empire would get to receiving full acceptance as members. Suetonius does not mention the relationship at all in his biography of the emperor, so Josephus may have added the story to increase Agrippa’s standing in Rome, though Cassius Dio writes that Agrippa aided Claudius, and in return, Claudius enlarged Agrippa’s kingdom and gave him the rank of consul (60.8.1-3). It is important to note, however, that Josephus’ account greatly emphasises the role Agrippa had in Claudius’ ascension. While an official version of the event must have existed, the sources that survive emphasise different details. For example, Suetonius’ account follows the rise of a fool character to power, whereas Josephus depicts Agrippa as the sole ally of Claudius, who is utterly incapable of gaining power without his friend’s help. Claudius likely did have some support in the Senate at

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85 Levick 1990, p. 12.
86 Feldman, 1993, pp. 96-97.
the time of his ascension, and any opponents recognised that Claudius’ reception by the army meant he would soon be emperor.87

Claudius’ relationship with the Jews would sour, especially concerning events in Alexandria, and while Josephus exaggerates the role Agrippa I played in ensuring Claudius became emperor, he did contribute. The near-immediate expulsion of the Jews from Rome upon his ascension seems odd. Suetonius’ account is both brief and, frustratingly, lacking in specifics. He only devotes a sentence to the matter, *Iudaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantis Roma expulit*, ‘he [Claudius] expelled the Jews from Rome, always making disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus’ (*Claud.* 25.4). Unsurprisingly this Chrestus is usually taken to mean (Jesus) Christ. As far as the Romans were concerned at this point, the Christians were the same as Jews, so it is entirely possible that the ban may have targeted Christians, and the Romans included the Jews by association. Rutger’s suggestion, that the appearance of Christianity in Rome caused turmoil in the Jewish population, may also be possible, since the Jews and Jewish Christians argued over whether this Chrestus was the expected Messiah.88 Cassius Dio, however, claims that there was no expulsion at this time, because the Jews were so populous in Rome that it would be impossible to expel them peacefully. If Bowersock’s population estimate for this period (40,000) is correct (see above, pp. 7-8), Claudius would have found it near impossible to remove such a great number of people from the city.89 Instead, Claudius forbade them from holding public meetings. Dio provides no reason for this decision, so presumably it is due to Roman concern over their growing numbers (60.6.6). The fifth-century historian Orosius, citing

87 Levick 1990, p. 33, 36.
88 Rutgers 1994, p. 66; Keresztes 1984, p. 409
89 Bowersock 2005, p. 54.
Josephus, claims this expulsion occurred in the ninth year of Claudius’ reign, dating it to 49 CE (Adv. Paganos 7.6.15).

A Christian source, the Book of Acts (18.1-3), also mentions this expulsion. The apostle Paul arrived in Corinth, and there met a Jew named Aquila and his wife Priscilla, who had recently departed Italy after Claudius ordered all the Jews to leave Rome, again with no explanation as to why.90 Given that only one source explicitly explains that Claudius expelled the Jews, and the sum of this account is seven words, the exact nature of this event remains controversial. That there was an expulsion seems likely, given that only one (later) source states that they were not compelled to leave the city.

Nero’s relationship with the Jews is rather complicated. Josephus claims his second wife, Poppaea Sabina, was a proselyte or, at least, a θεοσεβής, or God-fearer (AJ 20.195; Vit. 16). The God-fearers are an interesting development, as they were non-Jewish people who worshiped the Hebrew God to some extent, either only adopting some elements of Jewish worship (such as observation of the Sabbath), or following all Jewish rites without officially converting. Famously they appear alongside Jews in the New Testament (Acts 13:16 and 26).91 Perhaps, some suggest

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90 Feldman 1993, pp. 303-304; Rutgers 1994, p. 66.

91 The exact nature of the God-fearers is frequently debated. Joseph Tyson suggests that the Book of Acts deliberately targeted these God-fearers (Tyson 1995, p. 25). A. Thomas Kraabel suggests that the God-fearers in the Book of Acts are a literary invention by Luke to describe the origins of Christianity: Kraabel 1981, pp. 118-120. Dietrich-Alex Koch, however, notes that the Book of Acts also mentions proselytes (Acts 2:11), which no one would suggest are a literary invention: Koch 2006, p. 80. The Book of Acts never actually uses the term for God-fearer: Bonz 1994, p. 297. The most famous example of the God-fearers appears in the Aphrodisias inscription. Two inscriptions provide a list of donors to the local synagogue, which include Jews, proselytes, and God-fearers. Bonz 1994: pp. 295-297 suggests that the Side B inscription, which she believes dates to the second or third centuries CE (compared to Side A, which dates to the fifth century CE), refers to genuine non-Jewish sympathisers, while those described as God-fearers on Side A are given the title as exceptionally pious Jews.
this is why Nero avoided blaming the Jews for the Great Fire of 64 CE, and instead targeted the Christians, if it happened at all.\textsuperscript{92} Interestingly, Josephus’ treatment of Nero softens over time. In his account of Nero’s suicide, Josephus stresses that Nero abused his power and gave his freedmen Nymphidius and Tigellinus control over Rome (\textit{AJ} 4.491-493). Later, however, Josephus accuses the other historians of not recording the truth of Nero, either because they received benefits from him or because they hated him (\textit{AJ} 8.154-147). Perhaps this less invective approach to Nero is indicative of a changing Jewish perspective on Nero.\textsuperscript{93}

When the first revolt began in Judaea, it is surprising that the Jews in the Western Diaspora do not seem to have reacted at all. No source mentions any form of unrest amongst the Jews in Rome, not even while Vespasian and Titus led the Jewish captives and Temple treasures through the streets of Rome. Nor does any source record any negative reaction to the destruction of the Temple, nor the erection of various monuments to celebrate the suppression of the revolt. How the Jews of contemporary Rome reacted to these events has been lost to time. The Temple of Peace, Arch of Titus, and Flavian Amphitheatre were all financed by the spoils from the revolt. Vespasian created a new tax, the \textit{Fiscus Judaicus}, which replaced the Jews’ annual tribute of a half-shekel (approximately two denarii) to the Temple in Jerusalem and instead went to rebuilding of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline Hill (\textit{BJ} 7.218; Cassius Dio 66.7.2).\textsuperscript{94} Perhaps the Jews of Rome did not react because they no longer considered

\textsuperscript{92} Shaw 2015, pp. 73-100 has recently brought into question the veracity of the Christian persecution under Nero, and makes a compelling point, arguing the most reliable source on these events, Tacitus, probably reflects the environment of the early second century CE, not during the reign of Nero.

\textsuperscript{93} Radin 1919, p. 296.

\textsuperscript{94} The tax itself was not likely called the \textit{Fiscus Judaicus}, which referred to the treasury which collected and oversaw the tax. Bruce 1964, p. 35.
themselves the same group as the Jews who revolted in Judaea, though their connection to Judaea through the yearly half-shekel tribute meant some connection between the two groups remained. Following the events at Alexandria in 38 CE, perhaps the Jews of Rome, an even smaller minority within the city than the Jews of Alexandria, decided openly supporting the Jewish revolt in Judaea would lead to their deaths.

The importance the revolt had for the Flavians must not be understated. Unlike the Julio-Claudian predecessors, the Flavians required some martial conquest to legitimize their dynasty. While the suppression of the revolt added no new territory to the empire, for the Flavians their victory was, as T.D. Barnes suggests, a foundation myth. The new dynasty quickly capitalised on their victory, building monuments with the spoils acquired. By 75 CE, Vespasian completed the Temple of Pax and deposited the golden vessels taken from the Temple in Jerusalem within (Cassius Dio 66.15.1; BJ 7.161). A triumphal arch, completed in 81 CE, honoured Titus in the Circus Maximus, with an inscription stating that Titus subdued the Jews and destroyed the city of Jerusalem (CIL 6.944 = ILS 265). The original inscription on the Flavian Amphitheatre claims Titus funded its construction through the spoils taken from the Jews (CIL 6.40454a). Even the

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95 Barnes 2005, p. 129. The Flavian’s foundation myth stands in contrast with that of Romulus and the rape of the Sabine women. Livy records both stories in his Ab Urbe Condita. Livy provides two versions of Romulus’ murder of his twin brother Remus, an event which gave Rome its name (1.6.4-7.3). Early in Rome’s history Rome held a festival, inviting many neighbouring peoples including the Sabines. The Romans then launched a concentrated attack, carrying off the young women. The Sabine men prepared to fight the Romans, but war was averted when Romulus won over the Sabine women’s hearts (1.9). Both of these foundation myths, along with the formation of the new Flavian dynasty, share their basis on acts of violence. However, in the case of the rape of the Sabine women, and most of Rome’s early Italian enemies, Rome eventually incorporated the defeated into Roman identity. The Flavian dynasty is similar to the Julio-Claudian, which drew prestige from its subjugation of the Egyptians. Like Augustus, Vespasian and Titus could draw on their military victory over a foreign peoples.
poets and authors (for example, Pliny the Elder, Quintilian, and Statius) immortalised the Flavian victory, including Domitian, Titus’ brother and future emperor.96

The more famous (and extant) Arch of Titus features relief panels portraying the triumphal procession, with the goddess Nike crowing the *triumphator* Titus while his soldiers carry the spoils, most noticeably the golden menorah and golden Table of the Shewbread (*BJ* 7.148-50). As a symbol of Roman victory, the arch is a central monument in Flavian Rome. While the Jews of Rome who would witness this monument may feel under attack, some points of divergence with other Roman war memorials exist. Nowhere does the arch depict the Jews themselves (unlike Trajan’s Column, which depicts several beheaded Dacians).97 The only Jewish elements on the arch are the spoils, the Golden Menorah and Table of Shewbread. This suggests that the Flavians meant to bring Jewish identity, firmly anchored in Judaea by the Temple, to Rome. Roman-Jewish identity replaces Jewish identity, emphasised by the fact that neither Vespasian nor Titus took the title of *Iudaicus*, since the Jews are now a central part of Rome.98 The imposition of a new tax would emphasise that the Jews were not yet Romans, however. This then is a major shift in how the Romans perceived Jewish identity; before the revolt, the Romans considered the Jews outsiders, free to continue their alien rites as long as they did not interfere with Roman identity. Now, the Romans sought to Romanise the Jews, making Jewish and Roman identity compatible.

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97 Chlup 2012, p. 226.

The Jews in Rome, like those throughout the empire, were subject to the *Fiscus Iudaicus*, though it appears that initially it brought no new problems. Instead of sending the yearly sum to Jerusalem, Roman officials collected it just as any other tax, a financially opportunistic move by the new emperor.\(^99\) Josephus, explaining the law in the Torah that requires this tribute (Exod. 30.11-16), claims that all free men between the ages of twenty and fifty contributed (AJ 3.194-196). As illustrated by Cicero earlier, this tribute did on occasion engender ill will and Roman intervention, but Josephus writes that the Romans never completely prohibited this practice (AJ 16.27-61 and 160-78).\(^100\) This new Roman tax had a wider net, since an ostraca found at Edfu reveals that women, children, and slaves also paid the tax.\(^101\)

Under Domitian, however, the Romans collected the tax with a greater intensity than before. Suetonius claims that this arises due to Domitian’s financial difficulties caused by his building programme and public entertainments. Domitian sought out and prosecuted those who did not publicly admit to being Jews and those who hid their identity to avoid the tax. It is possible that those who did not pay the tax did so not because they wished to avoid the cost, but because they no longer considered themselves Jewish, their Roman identity having become dominant. Suetonius recalls a distressing experience in his youth when he witnessed a ninety-year old man stripped bare to inspect whether he was circumcised (*Dom. 12.2*). Suetonius’ definition of who was a Jew was thus ethnic, since those who did not openly or actively practise Judaism as a religion still had to pay the two denarii. However, this does prove that some Jews had successfully integrated within Roman culture, and were virtually indistinguishable from a

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\(^99\) Bruce 1963, p. 37.

\(^100\) Rives 2005, pp. 152-153; For Cicero and the Temple tax, see pp. 8-9.

native Roman. A Jewish person who ceased following Jewish practices and worshipping the Jewish God was, in the eyes of the Roman state under Domitian, however, still a Jew. Considering that Suetonius finds no issue with this definition, it appears that the Romans viewed the people as a community up to the late first century. The Romans assumed anyone who was ethnically Jewish also practised Judaism, equivalent to the standard gentile usage of the Greek Ἰουδαῖος and Latin Iudaicus before 70 CE.\(^\text{102}\) It also appears likely that those targeted were ethnic Jews who no longer practiced Judaism, not gentiles who adopted Jewish practices. The Roman state would charge them with atheism, and the punishment was death, not legal recognition with a tax. Not only did the Romans officially recognise the Jews as a political and cultural community throughout the ancient world, replacing the previously established Temple tax with a Roman equivalent, they also provided a passage for those who wished to join Judaism. For the Jews themselves, the idea that one who is ethnically Jewish could disassociate himself from Judaism was difficult to understand.\(^\text{103}\)

Following the death of Domitian in 96 CE, the Senate appointed one of their own, Nerva, as emperor, who quickly ended the prosecutions started by Domitian. Sadly, no ancient source records this, and the only evidence of this are coins minted by Nerva, proclaiming Fisci Iudaici Calumnia Sublata (BMC III 88) ‘The blackmail of the Fiscus Iudaicus has been lifted’. One theory is that Nerva consciously ended this abuse to demonstrate how he would differ from his unpopular predecessor; this seems reasonable. Cassius Dio refers to the Fiscus Iudaicus, stating that as early as 70 CE only those who practised Judaism were liable to be taxed. Dio likely

\(^{102}\) Goodman 1989, p. 40.

\(^{103}\) Goodman 1989, pp. 40-42.
backdates Nerva’s reforms to when the tax was initiated in 70 CE (66.7.2).\textsuperscript{104} Nerva minted this coin three times, and he must have wanted to stress the separation between the new emperor and Domitian. This does not mean that the tax ended, even though the construction of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus had finished years earlier. It is important to stress that Nerva did not feel compelled to end the tax abuse because of Jewish complaints, especially as one of his first acts of emperor. Instead, Roman citizens incorrectly targeted by the tax collectors compelled Nerva to take action.\textsuperscript{105} There was no concern on Nerva’s part that the Jews in Rome were suffering under the tax, but when it became politically expedient to change it, he quickly acted.

While the historical account of the Jews in Rome is lacking in Jewish sources, there is much material on the Romans’ view of the Jews and Judaism. Most often, the Jews of Rome appear during records of expulsions, occurring frequently throughout the early empire. These obviously were not very successful, as their appearance during the next recorded expulsion attests. While the Romans made no effort to end Jewish practices, there was some concern, especially amongst the upper classes, about the attraction Judaism might have among Roman citizens. Expulsions may have been an attempt by Roman authorities to check this movement.

While the Jews of Rome did not rise up with their Judaean co-religionists during the Jewish War, they certainly suffered the consequences. The number of monuments created by the Flavians in commemoration of their victory would remind both the Jews and the Romans of the Jews’ status as the ‘Other’, which would also unite the Jews of Rome with the Jews of Judaea and throughout the Diaspora. The imposition of the \textit{Fiscus Judaicus} would serve as a further

\textsuperscript{104} Goodman 1989, pp. 40-41.

\textsuperscript{105} Grainger 2003, pp. 52-53.
humiliation, the former Temple tax now going to pay for a temple to one of the victor’s gods. This tax was probably the greatest form of punishment for the Jews in Rome, affecting every Jewish person yearly. While the Romans certainly meant for it to be a punishment, the tax also had the effect of contributing to Jewish proselytism, as anyone who desired to convert to Judaism could pay the tax and receive recognition as a Jew from the state. Before the tax, Roman recognition of Jewish converts was non-existent; Judaism was strictly for those Rome considered ethnic Jews.

V. Jewish proselytism in Rome.

While Nerva may have altered the Fiscus Iudaicus for political reasons, his actions also fundamentally changed how the Romans officially viewed Jewish proselytes. Now, anyone who willingly offered to pay the two denarii a year to the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, the Romans considered a Jew. That is not to say that those who paid the tax were content with the funds being used to build a temple to a gentile god, but that the tax bought them freedom of worship and the privileges that came with it, such as being allowed to not participate in civic cults or engage in court cases on the Sabbath. Traditionally, Roman and Greek views on citizenship did not allow someone who joined a cult to join the ethnic group to which that cult belonged as well.\(^{106}\) Nerva’s reforms allowed the Romans to accept a definition based on religion, not birth, and gave legal recognition to Jewish converts. However, this does not mean that Romans accepted widespread conversion. In fact, while the reform allowed converts recognition from the state, it also opened a path for Jews who had abandoned Jewish practices to

\(^{106}\) Goodman 1989, pp. 41-43.
join the Roman community by ceasing to pay the tax. Essentially those who did not pay the tax lost the privileges granted to Jews who did, and the Romans expected to participate in matters such as civic cults as any other non-Jew. 107

The epigraphical evidence for proselytism in Rome is not substantial. Προσήλυτος appears in roughly one percent of Italian inscriptions, but not at all in synagogue inscriptions. 108 Of the 534 inscriptions from Rome, only seven mention proselytes. Five of these seven belong to females, and the same number of them are in Latin. 109 The barrier for women to conversion is considerably lower than men, since there was no female circumcision requirement; therefore, it is not surprising that most of the archaeological evidence suggests that most of the Roman converts to Judaism were women. There is no evidence that these female proselytes would then try to convert their husbands or brothers. Josephus records that early in the revolt, the citizens of Damascus decided to kill the Jews who lived with them. The men were prepared to do this, but worried about what their wives, the majority of whom had converted, would think (BJ 2.20.2). It would appear that the converts found no difficulty in remaining married to non-Jews. It is likely that the women’s conversion occurred after the marriage occurred, and it may be that they were not full converts, but had simply adopted some Jewish practices, enough that their non-Jewish husbands considered to signify a full conversion.

The question remains what exactly conversion meant to a Roman. For many potential converts, a full conversion was never a realistic option; instead, they adopted some Jewish

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practices while remaining Roman. These ‘Judaizers’ maintained a Roman identity. The benefits of conversion outweighed any possible negative repercussions.

Most of the Roman literary sources seem convinced that the Jews in Rome were successful in winning converts, but the question remains whether this was an organised attempt on behalf of Roman Jewry or simply done at the impetus of the convert. Unlike Alexandria and Judaea, Rome lacks a Jewish author who explains how the community in Rome reacted to these converts. Josephus certainly lived in Rome, but in the apologetic context of his works, he tries to distance the Jews from the accusations of missionary activity which are frequent in the Roman sources. The expulsion of 19 CE is a perfect example (see above, pp. 34-36): Josephus claims it was the result of four Jews stealing from a wealthy Roman convert (AJ 18.81-85), while, according to Cassius Dio, the Jewish population at Rome was converting so many that Tiberius expelled many of them (57.18.5a).

Conversion to Judaism was not undertaken by ordinary Romans only. Josephus claims Fulvia, the woman involved in his account of the expulsion of 19 CE, was a convert. Cassius Dio writes that Flavius Clemens, consul and nephew of Domitian, his wife Flavia Domitilla, and Acilius Glabrio (consul of 91) were charged with atheism, the typical charge brought against those who adopted Jewish practices (67.14.1-3.1). However, none of these accounts explains why they converted. The benefits of conversion, especially for upper class Romans, do not seem substantial. Aside from observance of the Sabbath, conversion meant joining a group upon whom the Roman elite did not look kindly, and the primary benefit for the poor to convert,

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111 Cappelletti 2006, p. 130.
access to Jewish charities, would not apply for the wealthy. It is entirely possible, however, that upper class Romans converted due to a genuine belief in Judaism. In some cases, it was probably an easy explanation for the falling out between members of the imperial elite, possibly a trumped up charge making use of Roman resentment towards the Jews.

It is important to remember that in the Hellenistic-Roman world, not just in Rome, no one recorded the name of a single Jewish missionary, nor does any piece of literature survive with the explicit goal of gaining converts.\textsuperscript{112} Any argument made for the growth of the Jewish population based on proselytes lacks evidence. No Jewish author mentions such an influx of Jews, and with the advent of the \textit{Fiscus Iudaicus} and the need for circumcision, the disadvantages may have outweighed the benefits to those considering full conversion. Perhaps the God-fearers made up the majority of these people, similar enough to the Jews that the Romans considered them converts, while distinct to the Jews. That these God-fearers made up a third group with a unique sense of identity is an intriguing possibility, though they may have only placed themselves between the two groups, drawing equally from both the Jews and Romans. Since no God-fearer goes into detail on his or her daily life experience, conclusions are not easy to reach. Regardless, only in Judaea is there evidence of mass conversion. It is likely that any references to the adoption of practices such as observance of the Sabbath or adherence to dietary law refers to the spread of Judaising, the observance of some practices without full conversion, rather than Judaism itself.\textsuperscript{113} While the literary and archaeological evidence confirms that Romans could (and did) convert to Judaism, the only occasions where any Jewish

\textsuperscript{112} Feldman 2006, pp. 205-206.

\textsuperscript{113} Feldman 1993, p. 290.
missionary activity is alleged is during expulsions, and even then, the information is inconclusive.

It is interesting to note that after the expulsions under Claudius, no more evidence exists for an expulsion of Jews from Rome. If these expulsions did stem from the conversion of Roman citizens to Judaism, whether because of Jewish missionary activity (which is unlikely) or personal preference, one wonders why later emperors did not attempt to expel the Jews from Rome when a small number of the upper classes began to convert. There is one intriguing possibility: that there was a fundamental change in how the Romans viewed the Jews as a community. Nerva’s reform of the *Fiscus Iudaicus* marked a shift in the Roman view of Judaism, giving those who converted some level of recognition from the Roman state that they were indeed Jewish. The Roman authorities no longer believed the Jews were attempting to convert citizens to Judaism, which led to the expulsions. Rather, Romans understood that Judaism was a personal choice one could freely make, albeit one that remained confusing for them. The only people punished for converting were members of the imperial family or senators, perhaps for threatening traditional elements within the aristocracy of Rome. While a plebeian who converts might draw some scorn, there is little concern in isolated incidents. For patricians, however, relinquishing their Roman identity and adopting a Jewish one comes at great risk, as *Romanitas* is a central aspect of the patrician character. Regardless, a Jewish community in Rome thus became an accepted and established group within the city.
VI. Conclusion.

The Jewish community at Rome, unlike the communities at Alexandria and Judaea, lack a Philo or Josephus who can supply a more detailed account of Jewish life within the city. Most of the evidence that comes directly from Jews is funerary in nature, coming from the catacombs underneath the city that were largely in use during the first through third centuries CE. Inscriptions, however, provide a tantalising glimpse into the Jewish life in Rome. Greek was the predominant language of the community, followed by Latin. The Jews of Rome, while adopting the language of their surroundings, also took the onomastic practices of their environment, with Latin and Greek names dwarfing traditional Semitic names. Amazingly, some even named their children after Greco-Roman divinities, and found no issue with the art styles of their contemporary environment appearing in their catacombs. That the Jews were placed in separate catacombs would suggest they were not entirely Romanised; however, they certainly adapted to, and were influenced by, their surroundings.

From the Roman perspective, many authors discuss Jewish practices and events in Rome. Their familiarity with Jewish practices such as circumcision and observation of the Sabbath would come from their interaction on the streets of Rome. While most authors found the Jews a strange people with foreign rites, some found admirable elements within Judaism, and the rest never called for Jewish practices to cease and the community at Rome to assimilate. The Romans recognised the basic elements that made up Jewish identity, and their refusal to take any drastic steps to curb Jewish rites within Rome suggests Roman officials recognised Jewish identity within the city.
The historical record occasionally touches on the Jews of Rome, most commonly recording expulsions from the city. These were always temporary; the Jews returned shortly thereafter. It appears that these were brought about by Jewish proselytism, though it is unlikely the Jews actively attempted to convert Romans. Rather, the Senate and emperors sought to check the growing (though still likely small) number of Jewish converts, especially when those proselytes were patricians. There is no record of how the Jews of Rome reacted to these converts, that is, if they considered them Jewish.

While the Jews of Rome did not attempt to support the Jewish revolt in Judaea, the Romans exacted punishment on them, namely the new tax, the *Fiscus Iudaicus*. Before Nerva’s reform, anyone who was Jewish at one time, even if he or she was no longer practising, was liable to pay the tax, which suggests an ethnic definition of Jews by the Romans. Nerva’s cessation of the tax’s abuse may have created an avenue for non-Jews to receive recognition as Jews in the eyes of the state, since converts could pay the tax, and the state would consider them Jewish. That no author records expulsions after the reign of Claudius would suggest a change in Roman attitude towards the Jewish community from an ethnic group to a religious one. Given that most of the information on Nerva’s reform comes from a small phrase minted on his coins, it remains speculation, albeit a tantalising one. The cessation of widespread punishments for conversion following the reign of Claudius does suggest a change in the Roman response to Jewish proselytism. Only when high-ranking Romans or members of the imperial family convert was punishment imposed.

The Jewish community at Rome certainly did not endeavour to separate itself from its neighbours in life. They spoke the languages of the Roman Empire, adopted Roman names, and
were visible members of the Roman community at large. It is entirely possible that a Jew in Rome thought they had things in common with Romans, Gauls and Egyptians.
CHAPTER TWO

The Jews of Alexandria and Egypt

The relationship between the Jewish people and the people of ancient Egypt is of central importance to both Judaism and the history of the Jews. Aside from Judaea, no region was as important in the formation of a Jewish identity as Egypt, both for the Jews themselves and their Greco-Roman counterparts. The literary evidence confirms the existence of a Jewish community in Egypt, most famously in the book of Exodus in the Hebrew Bible. While this event marked the departure of Jews from Egypt, the Book of Jeremiah recounts Judaeans settling in Egypt following the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem in 586 BCE by the Babylonians (42:1-44:30). The conquest by the Persians of both Judaea and Egypt allowed a notable number of Jews to return to Egypt as well, attested most noticeably at Elephantine, a small island on the Nile River in southern Egypt. As part of a military settlement established by the Egyptian pharaoh Psammetichus I around 650 BCE, the fort remained in use during the Persian occupation. The most interesting aspect of the colony is that there was a Temple to the Jewish God JHW, mentioned in the famous Elephantine Papyri dating to the late fifth century BCE. On 25 November 407 BCE, the local Egyptians, spurred on by the priests of the god Khnub and the departure of the Persian governor destroyed the Temple of JHW (C 30/A4.7 and C 31/A 4.8). While the Persians allowed the Jews at Elephantine to rebuild, the Persians forbade burnt offerings, and the Egyptians would destroy the temple again a short time later.¹

This chapter reflects upon several aspects of Jewish life in Egypt and Alexandria. A Jewish contingent was present shortly after Alexandria’s foundation. Although the Jews and

Egyptians often found themselves on competing sides, the Jewish population of Egypt remained an important group in the region. The pinnacle of Jewish life in Egypt occurs in the Hellenistic and Early Roman periods, centered in the Greek city of Alexandria. The Jews were important members of the Ptolemaic system, frequently used as soldiers for the foreign dynasts, and they benefited from their allegiance. The native Egyptians were displeased with the Jews, as shown by the variations on the Biblical Exodus, which portrays the Jews as impious, diseased exiles; some of these accounts would influence later Greek and Roman descriptions on the origins of the Jews. Jewish loyalty was a primary concern in the mid to late Hellenistic period (198-30 BCE), as the Ptolemaic rulers grew concerned whether the Jews of Egypt would remain loyal to the Ptolemies after Judaea was lost to the Seleucids and an independent Hasmonean state established. The question of Jewish rights in the city of Alexandria became an important issue with the arrival of the Romans, and tensions between the diverse populations of Alexandria led to anti-Jewish riots, and Jewish counter riots, throughout the first and early second centuries CE. The Jews of Alexandria and Egypt inhabit a unique place in terms of Jewish identity, eager to be productive members of Egyptian life and gain citizenship rights in Alexandria, but constantly accused of disloyalty to the Greco-Roman rulers.

Once again, Josephus proves an important source for the region, largely due to his Contra Apionem, an apologetic work that cites many lost texts, including several variations on the Exodus story from the Hebrew Bible. The climate of Egypt also allowed a large amount of papyrological evidence to survive; this is an important source for how the non-elite lived. The most important source for the Jewish community of Egypt, however, is the philosopher Philo, an Alexandrian Jew who lived in the first century BCE. He leaves a large body of works, including his accounts of the riots of 38 CE. His status as a preeminent member of the Alexandrian Jews
resulted in him leading a delegation after the revolt to the emperor Gaius. Philo was, however, an elite member of the Alexandrian Jewish population, who had Hellenistic sympathies. One of his chief concerns was reconciling Jewish faith with Greek philosophy, so it is important to consider that he may only represent himself when discussing elements of Jewish life in early-Roman Egypt.


Founded by Alexander the Great in, probably, 331 BCE, Alexandria quickly became a major Hellenistic capital in the Mediterranean, eventually replacing Athens as the intellectual centre of the ancient world. According to papyrological evidence, the Jews were present at the new city early in its history, participating both in agriculture and in a military capacity (CPJ I, nos. 48-55). In view of sources like the Letter of Aristeas (12-14), Josephus (BJ 2.488), Philo (In Flacc. 46) and the Satrap Stela 2.4-5, it appears that the Jews arrived in Alexandria around 311 BCE. Josephus, citing the geographer Strabo, claims that Alexander gave a sizeable portion of the city to the Jews, and appointed an ethnarch to govern them (AJ 14.117); elsewhere Josephus writes that Alexander himself gave the Jews a particular quarter of the city in which to live (Ap. 2.42). A slightly later date for Jewish habitation in Alexandria is preferable, since Josephus probably seeks to enhance the prestige of the Alexandrian Jewish population by placing their roots contemporaneously with Alexander. That the Jews spread throughout the city is certain, given

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4 Gambetti 2009, p. 132.
Philo’s remark that, of the five districts, two were distinctly Jewish, in that the majority of the people residing in the district were Jewish (In Flacc. 8.55).\textsuperscript{5}

Ancient authors have proposed a variety of estimates for the Jewish population in the city. Philo, who was certainly in the position to be familiar with the situation, claims that in Egypt the Jewish population was no less than one million (In Flacc. 43).\textsuperscript{6} One modern suggestion is a total Jewish population in the Early Empire of seven million Jews, one million of whom resided in Egypt (approximately ten to fifteen percent of the population).\textsuperscript{7} As for Alexandria itself, the most common suggestion is around 180,000 Jews, stemming from a papyrus fragment dating to the first century CE (Papyri Giessen University 5.46). Given a total population of around 500,000-600,000, this would mean that Jews made up over one-third of the population of the city, substantially larger than the Roman population of Alexandria.\textsuperscript{8}

It is thus unsurprising that the Jews considered themselves equal members of the Alexandrian population, having settled in the city shortly after its foundation. Many Alexandrian Jews would consider themselves just that: Alexandrian Jews. While they were an important part of the Ptolemaic structure, however, it does not seem that Greeks, and later Romans, thought of the Jews as being equal citizens within the city.

\textsuperscript{5} Feldman 1993, p. 64.
\textsuperscript{6} Bilde 2010, p. 111.
\textsuperscript{7} Green 1985, p. 91.
\textsuperscript{8} Feldman 1993, p. 108; Feldman 2006, p. 53;
II. The Jews in Ptolemaic Egypt.

The Jews were an important part of the Ptolemaic government, and received many benefits for their service. The physical evidence for Jewish habitation in Egypt largely comes from papyri, thanks in no small part to Egypt’s dry climate that preserved the samples. It is important to caution against taking definitive conclusions from the papyri, however, since none came from Alexandria; almost all came from the small town of Oxyrhynchus.\(^9\) Alexandria’s status as the Hellenistic capital of the Mediterranean may have attracted a more Hellenised Jew than the much farther south Oxyrhyncus. The extent to which the Jewish population of Oxyrhyncus shared perspective with those in Alexandria remains an important issue to consider, but the papyri do provide several tantalising glimpses of the life of the Jews in Egypt during the Hellenistic period.

As mentioned above, several papyri establish that a Jewish community existed in Alexandria soon after the city’s foundation, involved in both agriculture and the military (CPJ I, nos. 48-55). The scepticism that observance of the Sabbath would preclude the Jews from serving in a military capacity appears unfounded, and the Ptolemaic reliance on the Jews for soldiers makes sense. Like the Jews, the Greeks were minorities themselves in Egypt, and just like the Persians before them at Elephantine, there was no hesitation to use the Jews as border security. The children of these soldiers, classified as *epigone* (children of non-Egyptian soldiers), would then enter the military themselves, ceasing to be *epigonoi* and providing the Ptolemies with a steady supply of new recruits.\(^10\) Those Jews who did partake in military service desired some level of integration and acceptance, and concerns over observance of the Sabbath and


\(^10\) Feldman 1993, p. 87; Bevan 1927, p. 172.
dietary considerations did not prevent them from becoming members of the Ptolemaic military. How widespread observation of the Sabbath in Egypt is an important question, though it does appear to have been prevalent. Philo recounts a governor of Egypt who attempted to change the laws concerning the Sabbath, implying it was prevalent enough amongst the Jewish community of Egypt (De Som. II.123-129). Jews also served at the Fayum in the third century BCE.\textsuperscript{11} The benefit for Jews who served in the military was that they received \textit{cleruch} land. \textit{Cleruch} land ranged from five to 120 \textit{arurae} (one \textit{arura} is equal to 0.677 acres), and the amount received was dependent on the ethnicity of the recipient; the average Egyptian received only seven \textit{arurae}, while a Macedonian received an average of 80 \textit{arurae}. Those who owned \textit{cleruch} land did not have to rely on the royal monopolies required of farmers on royal land.\textsuperscript{12} By the second century BCE, the Jews who owned \textit{cleruch} land were able to become upwardly mobile, partially because most did not farm their land but leased it to Egyptian peasants, freeing them to pursue other interests. Some, such as Helkias, Ananias (AJ 13.285ff and 348ff), and Dositheus (Ap. 2.49) served as generals in the army, while another Dositheus was an Alexandrian priest, described in Third Maccabees as an ethnic Jew who had apostatised (CPJ v. 1, nos. 127a-d; III Macc 1:3).\textsuperscript{13} The incorporation of Jews within the Ptolemaic armies helped integrate them into Ptolemaic society. The Jews, by accepting military service, desired to be a part of Ptolemaic life. Those who served in the military reached previously unheard of heights for a Jew within Ptolemaic Egypt, attaining lofty positions both within military and religious spheres. It would be impossible for them to receive such positions if the Ptolemies did not accept the Jews as equal partners within Hellenistic Egypt.

\textsuperscript{11} Green 1985, pp. 185-186.
\textsuperscript{12} Green 1985, pp. 31-32.
Part of the reason so much information on the Jews in Egypt survived was because the Ptolemaic bureaucracy recorded every soldier in their employ. An early πρόσταγμα (or administrative order), dated either to the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphos or Ptolemy III Euergetes, states that the soldiers must register, provide their name, place of origin, their unit and rank, as well as the information of their father (P. Hamb., II 168, 11.5-10). Strangely, the Jew Dorotheos refers to himself in such a document as Περσης ἀπόγονος, a Persian Epigone (P. Polit. Iud. 8, 11.23-15) 14. This might be because the ethnic term, such as Perses or Ioudaios may be a pseudo-ethnic up to the late Ptolemaic period that does not signify a true ethnic origin. However it is important to note that there is no evidence that Ioudaios was a pseudo-ethnic category, nor is anyone in Ptolemaic Egypt a member of Ioudaios and another group. Further complicating the matter is that by the late Ptolemaic period and into the early Roman period, all other ethnic designations disappear from the documents, with only ‘Greek’, ‘Egyptian’, and ‘Jew’ appearing. It would appear that by the end of the Ptolemaic dynasty the Jews were a distinct and identifiable cultural group alongside the Greeks and Egyptians. 15

As discussed in the previous chapter, the names used by Jews provide insight into their self-identification. The surviving papyri indicate that that the Jewish population in Egypt easily adopted non-Jewish names, and that such naming conventions were quite common, similar to the situation to Rome, where Greek names were common amongst the Jewish inhabitants. Three-quarter of the names of the military settlers at the Fayum in the third century BCE are Greek, and names similar to the Greek gods appear as well, such as Apollo (CPJ v.1 no. 23) and Dionysus

13 Green 1985, pp. 79-80.
15 Cohen 1999, pp. 102-104.
(CPJ v.2 nos. 241, 294, and v.3 no. 1538). Egyptian names are also common (CPJ v.1 nos. 38, 46, 91 and v.3 nos. 1480, 1484, 1486, 1493, 1496 and 1520).\textsuperscript{16} The Jews of Egypt, like the rest of the Diaspora, overwhelmingly adopted Greek in their daily life, as the papyri attest.

Of the 520 papyri pertaining to Jews from the third century BCE to 400 CE, only one, the Nash Papyrus, is in Hebrew. Dating to the mid-second century BCE, the Nash Papyrus contains the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17), potentially explaining why the text is in Hebrew.\textsuperscript{17} The Letter of Aristeas claims that King Ptolemy II Philadelphus (r. 285-246 BCE) commissioned the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint (38).\textsuperscript{18} The Jews of Egypt would thus have had a Greek version of their sacred text, infinitely more accessible to the Greek-speaking population, for over a century. A small section of the population who maintained Hebrew for religious usage may have remained, but most of the Jews in Egypt wholly adopted Greek as their \textit{lingua franca}. Another possibility is that the papyrus belonged to a recent immigrant from Judaea. Josephus does claim that during the Maccabean revolt several influential families fled to Egypt from Jerusalem, including the high priest Onias III (\textit{AJ} 13.62; \textit{BJ} 1.33, 7.423).\textsuperscript{19} A similar situation appears in the small number of inscriptions that survive from Egypt. Only six of the 122 inscriptions are not in Greek.\textsuperscript{20} One of these non-Greek inscriptions, found in a military cemetery of Alexandria, is in Aramaic, for one ‘Akabiah son of Elioenai’ (CIJ v.2 no. 1424). Akabiah, from the root ‘\textit{qb} ‘to keep’, is theophoric, and his father’s name, Elioenai,

\textsuperscript{16} Green 1985, pp. 155-156.
\textsuperscript{17} Feldman 1993, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{18} Feldman 1993, p. 87.
\textsuperscript{19} Petersen 2010, p. 136.
\textsuperscript{20} Petersen 2010, p. 54.
literally means ‘Toward the Lord do my eyes turn’, appears often in Biblical and Jewish texts.\(^{21}\) This may mean that, because of the deceased’s name and choice of language, he was likely a recent immigrant to Alexandria, and still had strong ties to the onomastic and linguistic practices of Judaea.\(^{22}\) It would appear in the case of the Nash Papyrus and the Akabiah inscription that most established Jews in Egypt adopted Greek, while recent immigrants retained their traditional language. Most likely, the children of the immigrants acculturated to their Greek surroundings as well. A series of early Ptolemaic inscriptions at the necropolis of El-Ibrahimia in northeastern Alexandria show that the Jews, while easily discernable as Jewish graves, shared their burial areas with non-Jews (JIGRE nos. 15 and 17). Another inscription from the late Ptolemaic period, found at Gabbary in southwestern Alexandria, is for a *proseuchê* created by one Alypus on behalf of the queen and king (JIGRE no. 13). At least for Alypus, there is no difficulty in being both an observant Jew and a royal subject.\(^{23}\)

The papyri also illustrate that the Jews were heavily involved in the Ptolemaic bureaucracy, more so than some sources suggest. Quoting Strabo’s lost historical work, Josephus alleges that the Jews of Alexandria had an *ethnarch* to settle disputes, who was like the archon of an independent city (AJ 14.117). While Philo mentions a *gerousia*, or council of elders which had administrative authority over the Alexandrian Jews, an institution certainly in existence following the Roman conquest of Egypt, it may not have existed during the Ptolemaic period.

\(^{21}\) Notable examples include the eldest son of Neariah, son of Shemaiah (1 Chronicles 3:23,24) and a priest during the time of Ezra (Ezra 10:22).

\(^{22}\) Modrzejewski 1995, pp. 77-78.

\(^{23}\) Petersen 2010, pp. 130-131.
(Flacc. 74). However, in legal papyri during the Ptolemaic period, which do involve a Jewish party, there is little evidence of Jewish practices. Rather, these papyri use a documentary type known as *synchōrēsis*, a conciliation of parties in a fiscal or civil court, which originated from Alexandria (CPJ v.2 nos. 142-149, 151-152). The Egyptian Jews also accepted some economic standards of the Ptolemies, astoundingly disregarding some Jewish law. It is likely that, while most Jews followed the well-known elements of Judaism such as observing the Sabbath and practicing circumcision, smaller details, such as the collection of interest on loans, were either unknown or ignored. For example, according to the Torah, the collection of interest on a loan between two Jews is strictly forbidden (Exod. 22:24; Deut. 23:20). However, of the six papyri that are evidence of just such loans, four have an interest rate of 24 percent, the usual rate in Ptolemaic Egypt (CPJ 1.20, 1.24, 2.148, 2.149). Only one loan does not have interest, but that only applies if the borrower repaid the loan within a year. If not, the standard rate of 24 percent came into effect (CPJ 1.23). While this does not mean that these Jews who accepted such terms were acculturated, it does show that some elements of Judaism had not yet become concrete, and variation did occur.

While the Ptolemies may have afforded the Jews some autonomy in affairs between Jews, the Jewish population of Egypt did participate in the legal system of Ptolemaic Egypt to some extent. Another example of Jewish adoption of Ptolemaic legal precedent is a divorce agreement dated to 13 BCE. The Rabbinic understanding was that only the husband may initiate divorce (Deut. 24:1). However, the papyrus follows non-Jewish formulae, similar to the other divorce

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24 Petersen 2010, pp. 132-133.
26 Feldman 1993, p. 76.
documents involving non-Jews, and the spouses agreed to divorce (CPJ 2.10-12 no.44), showing that Judaism itself is still not concrete and open to variation.\textsuperscript{27} Philo is a vehement opponent of intermarriage, claiming that any offspring might stray from Jewish law (\textit{De Spec. Leg.} 3.5.29). The Torah itself also explicitly condemns marrying off sons or daughters to non-Jews for the same reason, explicitly forbidding intermarriage (Deut. 7:3-4). Philo may be speaking about a common practice during his time, arguing that while the parent may remain loyal to Judaism, the children of intermarriage follow their non-Jewish parents’ religion (\textit{De Spec. Leg.} 3.5.29). Regardless, it does not appear that intermarriage was common in Egypt, owing to the concentration of Jews in certain parts of cities (such as the Delta Quarter in Alexandria) and the large population making marriage to another Jew possible. It is important to consider that Philo does not base his objections to intermarriage on some ideal of ethnic purity, but rather the concern that it could lead to idolatry. As discussed in the previous chapter, marriage between a Jew and non-Jew was perfectly acceptable as long as the non-Jewish partner converted.\textsuperscript{28} Such an occasion appears to be infrequent in Egypt, however, as only one example unambiguously mentions intermarriage between a Jew and non-Jew (Berlin Papyrus no. 11641).\textsuperscript{29} It is more likely that, with such a large Jewish population present, it was not necessary to seek non-Jewish partners, though the Berlin Papyrus illustrates that intermarriage could occur. Concerns on the Jewish side over idolatry would have the unfortunate side effect of leading Greeks and Egyptians to believe the Jews were intentionally segregating themselves from the larger community in the city.

\textsuperscript{27} Feldman 1993, p. 77.

\textsuperscript{28} Such marriages were often predicated on the non-Jewish partner converting. For Herod’s demand of conversion before marriage, see chapter three, pp. 112.
Both culture and religion affect Jewish identity in Ptolemaic Egypt. Culturally, as outlined above, it is clear that the Jews largely incorporated themselves with their Greek neighbours, serving in the army, sometimes in high positions, possessing land, and generally being socially mobile. Like the Jews of Rome, they adopted Greek as their daily language, as well as Greek names (see above, pp. 60-61). They also followed the legal norms of the Ptolemies, even disregarding some Jewish law in the form of restrictions on interest payments. In later Judaism, burial in a separate, Jewish cemetery became a marker of Jewish identity, yet in Egypt, there was no issue in shared burial grounds. Yet the ultimate form of acculturation, endogamy, remained taboo. Jewish identity in Egypt, as in Rome, could adopt the accoutrements of the surrounding non-Jewish culture, but intermarriage remained uncommon, specifically due to the fear that it would lead to the offspring following the non-Jewish parent and practising idolatry. While the Jews of Egypt were a vital part of the Ptolemaic system, they took some measures to seclude themselves to protect their rites.

III. Anti-Jewish Sentiment in Egyptian Versions of Exodus.

While the Jews of Alexandria benefited from their connection to the Ptolemaic dynasty, it also caused tensions with the native Egyptians. A fiercely independent people, the ancient Egyptians found their situation no better than when they were part of the Persian Empire. During the Hellenistic period, this resentment usually appeared in the literary evidence; just as the Egyptians at Elephantine had to wait for the Persian governor to leave, the Ptolemaic Egyptians could not act while the Greeks supported the Jews. Egyptian anti-Jewish sentiment often appears in their

29 Feldman 1993, pp. 78-79.
versions of the Exodus story, which serves as an aetiological explanation for their Jewish invective. In many ways, these versions of Exodus form the basis for later attacks on the Jewish population of Egypt, depicting the Jews as misanthropic atheists who are incompatible with Egyptian life, charges that would return during later revolts.

The earliest account of the Jewish departure from Egypt comes from the lost Aegyptiaca of Hecataeus of Abdera, cited by Diodorus Siculus in his Bibliotheca Historica (40.3.1-3). Hecataeus places his account just before Pompey’s conquest of Jerusalem, inserting a small digression to discuss the origin of the Jewish people. According to Hecataeus, a plague overcame Egypt, which the Egyptians believed was sent by the gods, who were upset with the various foreign religious rites that had come to the land. The native Egyptians thus expelled all foreigners, of which the most notable went to Greece, such as the legendary Danaus and Cadmus. Most of the refugees, however, went to Judaea, with Moses as their leader. Hecataeus ascribes to Moses many innovations and virtues: he divided the people into twelve tribes to match the number of months in the year; he forbade statues, since God was the heavens that surround the earth, and thus has no human form; and he appointed men of the highest value as priests. Moses himself was an excellent military commander, conquering the surrounding territory and dividing it equally amongst the people and founding the city of Ierosolyma. Surprisingly, he does not mention the aspects of Jewish life one would expect, such as circumcision, observance of the Sabbath, or dietary laws, which were the identifiers of Judaism to non-Jews. He does stress two important negative characteristics of the Jews, that because of their expulsion Moses ἀπάνθρωπον τίνα καὶ μισόξενον βίον εἰσηγήσατο,~‘he introduced a hostile and xenophobic (lit. hating the alien) life’ (40.3.4). Hecataeus does not elaborate on this in the passage Diodorus cites, but does appear to approve of this Jewish separation, since he
mentions that, through intermixing with their conquerors, Jewish traditions were altered (40.3.8).

Strangely, μισόξενον appears only once elsewhere in Greek literature, fittingly enough in Josephus, in reference to the hatred of foreigners by the people of Sodom. In their pride, the Sodomites forgot the benefits God gave them, as well as the fact that εἶναι τε μισόξενοι καὶ τὰς πρὸς ἄλλους ὀμιλίας ἐκτρέπεσθαι ~ ‘they were both hostile to foreigners and avoided the company of others’ (AJ 1.194).\(^{30}\)

Peter Schäfer runs counter to prevailing scholarly opinion when he stresses that Hecataeus’ accusation that the Jews live an inhuman and xenophobic life does not come from an earlier Egyptian source, but is an addition by Hecataeus himself.\(^{31}\) Most of what survives concerning Hecataeus comes from the biographer Diogenes Laertius, who claims he visited Thebes during the reign of Ptolemy I Soter (r. 323-283 BCE) and wrote his Aegyptiaca (I.46.8). Given his knowledge of Jewish life, such as the lack of a king, judicial function of the priests and compulsory military service, Max Radin believes that Hecataeus must have had some source familiar with the Jews. Radin thus argues that any negative elements in Hecataeus’ account must originate from a non-Jewish source.\(^{32}\) Further complicating the matter is that Diodorus is not the only author to cite Hecataeus, as Josephus refers to his work as well (Ap. 1.183-204). In Josephus, Hecataeus stresses that under the Persians the Jews suffered greatly, and expresses admiration for their refusal to abandon their ancestral rites (Ap. 1.191). Even with Alexander’s victory over the Persians, the Jews remained steadfast; when Alexander ordered all his soldiers to participate in the reconstruction of the Temple of Bel in Babylon, the Jews alone refused, even


\(^{32}\) Radin 1917, pp. 94-96.
under punishment and heavy fines, before Alexander eventually pardoned them (Ap. 1.192).\textsuperscript{33}

The differences between Diodorus’ Hecataeus and Josephus’ such as the apologetic tone in Josephus and Hecataeus’ anachronistic understanding of tithing have puzzled scholars. A variety of suggestions exists to explain this, though most scholars agree that Josephus’ text is authentic. One is that Josephus is referencing a pseudo-Hecataeus, a Temple priest who desired to stress the positive relationship between the Ptolemies and Jews as well as counter the negative assertions of the real Hecataeus, cited by Diodorus Siculus. Another possibility is that either Josephus embellished the original text, certainly possible given the status of Against Apion as an apologetic text, or that Josephus received Hecataeus through a presumably Jewish intermediary.\textsuperscript{34} The idea that Josephus purposefully avoided the negative aspects of Hecataeus does not seem sufficient, since his detractors would have had access to the same copies. The existence of an intermediary would explain the differing accounts, but that only applies if Hecataeus, as cited in Diodorus, explicitly introduced anti-Jewish aspects into his work. Given Hecataeus’ admiration for Moses as a leader and the traditions of Judaism, the assertion that Diodorus was himself anti-Jewish appears out of place, and it appears more likely that the charges of misanthropy and xenophobia are remnants of earlier Egyptian sources.

Another author who may have made use of an earlier Egyptian source is the third-century BCE author Manetho, who wrote his account shortly after Hecataeus.\textsuperscript{35} Once again, the question is whether Manetho introduced anti-Jewish elements into his narrative on his own or whether

\textsuperscript{33} Feldman 1993, p. 150.

\textsuperscript{34} Ben Zeev 1993, pp. 218-222.

\textsuperscript{35} Schäfer 1997, p. 17
they came from a hypothetical earlier source. Josephus preserves Manetho’s version of Exodus in *Against Apion*, possibly through an intermediary as well. A priest at Heliopolis, he wrote an *Aegyptiaca* of his own in Greek (*Ap. 1.73*). Manetho provides two versions of the Exodus, both preserved by Josephus. In the first account, Manetho recounts the Hyksos people, whose shepherd-kings ruled over Egypt for five hundred and eleven years before being expelled by the pharaoh Alisphragmuthosis (Ahmose I, r. c. 1539-1514 BCE) (*Ap. 1.81*-86). The Hyksos then travelled to Asia, building a city in Judaea called Jerusalem (1.90). There is no direct mention of the Jews in this account, though the implication is that the Jews are the descendants of the Hyksos.

Josephus claims the second account is fictive and the result of reports and rumours persuading Manetho (1.229). In this version, a King Amenophis, who, under consultation of his namesake (Amenhotep), drove the lepers and impure peoples out of Egypt. However, some of those inflicted with leprosy included priests, one of whom, Osarsiph, a priest of Heliopolis, was made leader of this crowd and decreed that they would no longer worship the Egyptian gods, instituted laws opposite of those of the Egyptians, and attacked Egypt (1.232-240). Only at the end of the account does Manetho claim that Osarsiph changed his name to Moses, which may be an addition by Manetho to a prior account (1.250). Of the two versions, this is certainly more hostile towards the Jews, depicting them as criminals and lepers. Peter Schäfer believes the

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38 Schäfer 1997, p. 17.
40 Radin 1917, pp. 99-100.
second version drew from an Egyptian antecedent, along with the themes that the Jews were impious Egyptians and opponents of traditional Egyptian religion. However, he argues that the charge of misanthropy is an invention of Manetho.\textsuperscript{41} Given that both Manetho and Hecataeus prominently feature a disease affecting the Egyptian community, a divinely ordered expulsion of the afflicted, and the strange and hostile new rites of those exiles, it could be that both drew on a shared source. Another possibility is that the two are deliberate parodies of the Torah account. The Septuagint’s composition is roughly around the same period as Manetho, but too late for Hecataeus. Most likely neither Manetho nor Hecataeus read the Jewish account, instead hearing it from another party. However, whereas Hecataeus indicates some admiration for the Jews, Manetho’s account is entirely devoid of any positive qualities, instead focusing on the abject cruelty and depravity of the invaders from Jerusalem, who joined the leprous Egyptians (1.248-249).

In the fifth book of his \textit{Histories}, the Roman historian Tacitus inserts a digression before he narrates the final days of Jerusalem during the Jewish Revolt, offering six variations on the origin of the Jews. One of Tacitus’ largest concerns is determining whether the Jews are an autochthonous people or immigrants, a similar issue that appears in his discussion of the ancient Britons in the \textit{Agricola} (10-12), and the ancient Germans in the \textit{Germania} (2).\textsuperscript{42} In the case of the Britons, Tacitus quickly dismisses the notion that they were autochthonous, but were rather an admixture of Germans, Iberians, and Gauls (Ag. 11.1). Tacitus, as a historian, is uninterested in regurgitating the fantastic versions, and seeks to provide a rational version of the origins of

\textsuperscript{41} Schäfer 1997, p. 19.

\textsuperscript{42} Feldman 1993, p. 183; for more on the \textit{Agricola}, see Woodman 2014, pp. 143-150; for more on the \textit{Germania}, see Rives 1999, pp. 108-111.
both the Britons and Jews. Of the six theories on the origins of the Jews, three state that the Jews came from Egypt. The first of these Egyptian theories suggests the Jews lived in Egypt during the reign of Isis. Due to overpopulation, the Jews left Egypt into the surrounding regions, under the leadership of Hierosolymus (Jerusalem) and Iuda (Judah) (Hist. 5.2). This theory is fairly similar to another Tacitus provides, that the Jews were originally from Crete, expelled when Jupiter overthrew Saturn (Hist. 5.2). The connection of the Jews with the mythic past (Saturn/Jupiter in Crete, Isis in Egypt), which would be a sign of the Jews’ antiquity and thus importance, and lack of negative characteristics likely means that Tacitus is not drawing from an Egyptian source for the Isis theory. Strangely Plutarch, whose depiction of the Jews is usually sympathetic (see chapter one, pp. 25-26), provides a more hostile alternative to this version of the Jewish Exodus, with both of the Jewish leaders retaining their names. However, both are the offspring of Typhon, the evil Egyptian god of wilderness, eclipses, storms, and darkness, and whose sacred animal was an ass, a symbol of folly to the Egyptians (De Iside et Osiride 31.363D). The shortest explanation of Tacitus does retain some sense that the Egyptians loathed the Jews, and they drove them out during the reign of Cepheus (Hist. 5.2)

By far the longest account Tacitus provides, however, is markedly similar to those of Hecataeus and Manetho. Opening with the statement that many authors (plurimi auctores) agree with this version, Tacitus describes how, during the reign of Bacchoris a plague broke out in Egypt. Consulting with the oracle of Hammon, Bacchoris gathered this genus hominum invisum deis, ~ ‘race of men prejudiced against the gods’, and expelled them (5.3). Their leader, a man

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43 Woodman 2014, p. 143.
44 Feldman 1993, pp. 184-188.
named Moyses, told his followers not to trust in gods or man, but only themselves, and to take as sacred the first thing that should help them in their crisis. Eventually, they came upon a herd of wild asses, which they followed to a spring. After a journey of six days, they arrived at a new country and expelled the inhabitants, founding a city and their Temple. This origin, like that during the reign of Isis, also appears in another author, the first century BCE grammarian Lysimachus of Alexandria, whom Josephus references (Ap 1.304-312). Lysimachus’ account is even more hostile towards the Jews, however, as Tacitus removes or changes several parts of Lysimachus’ Exodus narrative. In Tacitus the plague affects the entire population and the historian does not explain the maladies in depth, noting that they were only afflicted with bodily disfigurement (Hist. 5.3), compared to just the Jews in Lysimachus, who suffer from leprosy and scabies (1.305). Tacitus also does not mention the Jews begging for food (Ap. 1.305), which was an accepted stereotype (see chapter one, pp. 11-13) in Roman literature. Finally, Tacitus does not name the city that the Jews founded, while Lysimachus does and claims the name Hierosolyma means a town of temple-robbers (J. Ap. 1.311). Whether Tacitus altered these anti-Jewish elements from his source (whether it be Lysimachus or an earlier author) or Lysimachus added those details on his own. The common charges of hostility to the traditional religion of Egypt and misanthropy appear in Tacitus’ account, just as in Hecataeus and Manetho before him.

Feldman’s opinion of Tacitus’ digression is rather negative. He suggests that Tacitus may have tried to style his excursus on the Jews as an ‘anti-Aeneid’, owing to the statement that Moses told the Jews not to seek help in gods or men, in contrast to Aeneas’ devotion to his family and household gods (Hist. 5.3.1). This suggestion that Jews were diametrically opposed to the Romans does not seem to have any consequence in Rome itself, however, as the Jews are

46 Feldman 1993, pp. 190-193.
generally unmolested. There is no evidence of anti-Jewish riots in Rome, which would appear in Alexandria. The Romans did not instigate the Alexandrian riots, but in fact, the Romans played a vital role in ceasing the violence. If Tacitus truly meant to depict the Jews as the inverse of the Romans, one would expect to find a greater amount of Jewish hostility on the part of the Romans. Feldman does concede that Tacitus’ portrayal of Moses is more positive than Manetho’s, who claims that Moses was a renegade Egyptian priest (J. Ap. 1.235, 250), instead saying nothing on his past. Philo writes that the Greeks made no mention of Moses in their histories, partially due to envy (De Vita Mosis 1.1.2), which would make Tacitus’ reference to him a concession by the historian of his importance.47

Erich Gruen posits a more favourable interpretation of Tacitus’ excursus, suggesting it is not meant to be read at its word, but with heavy irony included by Tacitus. Several inconsistencies within Tacitus’ digression support this conclusion. For example, Tacitus claims the Jews worshipped an ass (Hist. 5.4.2), and shortly after writes that the Jews worshipped no images (Hist. 5.5.4), and Pompey, upon entering the Temple, found nothing at all (Hist. 5.9.1). He laments how the Jews teach their converts to despise gods, country, and family (Hist. 5.5.2), and that the Jews are so prone to leisure, not only do they take every seventh day off, but every seventh year (Hist. 5.4). Such lethargy is not compatible with the idea that the Jews are vigorous missionaries. Tacitus includes both stereotypes to show their absurdity. Not only this, but how can the Jews, who are so adamant about remaining separated from others (Hist. 5.5.1-2), gain converts? Even Tacitus’ discussion on the origins of Jews should not be taken seriously, as the longest account has the Jews expel an entire country, found a city, and build a city in the span of one day (Hist. 5.3.1-2). Tacitus very likely approves of the Jews’ abstention from images (Hist. 5.5.1).

5.5), as he is a vocal critic of the emergence of the imperial cult. Tacitus uses his excursus to challenge the reader’s conceptions, part of which stem from earlier authors like Manetho. It is a more nuanced account than it first appears. Tacitus draws observant readers to recognize and consider the contradictions put forth by earlier authors, without mentioning them by name.

The origins of the Jews is a contentious issue amongst Greco-Roman authors, with a variety of times and places suggested. The most common features are that the Jews are an ancient people, and were closely connected with Egypt, both elements of the Jews’ own Exodus account. However, some versions, especially those of Greek-Egyptian authors such as Manetho and Lysimachus, emphasise negative characteristics, such as the Jews’ perceived impiety and the diseases they carried. Other authors, such as Hecataeus of Abdera, praise the Jews on some aspects of their lifestyle. Tacitus, who provides the most versions of Jewish origins, appears to follow the negative portrayal, but a closer reading finds inconsistencies that suggest Tacitus dismissed such accounts as true history. How much the Roman population subscribed to these origins is difficult to determine, but for the Greeks of Alexandria, along with the Egyptians, the negative Exodus accounts must have held some sway. The common charges against the Jews, of disloyalty and impiety, which owe their origin to these accounts, would appear again in Egypt, with bloody consequences.

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48 When Augustus desired priests and flamens for himself, Tacitus remarks that there would be nothing left with which to honour the gods (Ann. 1.10). When someone made a suggestion to build a temple to Nero, he quips that some thought this meant he would die soon (Ann. 15.74).

49 Gruen 2010, pp. 188-196.
IV. Conflicts between the Jews and Ptolemies.

While the Egyptian tradition suggests that there already existed an anti-Jewish element as early as the third century BCE, only on rare occasions did the relationship between the Jews and the Ptolemaic dynasty break down. The Third Book of Maccabees records one such occasion, dating to around 217 BCE during the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopator: the Jews at Jerusalem denied Ptolemy IV entrance to the Temple, which enraged him. He gathered the Jews of Alexandria and, as punishment, ordered the keeper of the elephants to drug them with wine so that they would trample the Jews (1:9-5.4). However, God prevented Philopator from carrying through this plan, first putting him to sleep (5:11), and then making him forgetful of his plan (5:28). Finally, when it appeared the elephants would trample the Jews, the priest Eleazer prayed to God, who sent two angels, visible to all but the Jews, which terrified the elephants and caused them to trample the Egyptians (6:1-29). A similar story appears several decades later, recorded by Josephus. Following the death of Ptolemy VI Philometor in 145 BCE, a civil war broke out between Philometor’s brother Physcon and the legitimate heir Cleopatra II. Two of Philometor’s generals, the Jews Onias and Dositheos, loyal to Cleopatra, fought against Physcon, who in turn held all of the Jews of Alexandria captive and planned to trample them with drunk elephants. Once again, the elephants turned against the Egyptians, and the Jews escaped destruction (J. Ap. 2.49-55). Most likely, the first is a duplication of the events recorded by Josephus, with the added fantastical details. Regardless, it is clear that the Jews were well aware that their position with


51 Josephus wrote Contra Apionem after 94 CE, suggested by his reference to his Antiquities several times (1.1; 1.54; 2.287). The dating of IV Maccabees is less certain. Eusebius (Eccl. Hist. 3.10.6) claims Josephus wrote the text, though this appears unlikely. David deSilva summarizes the suggestions for the dating of the text, supporting a date in the first half of the first century CE. (deSilva 1998, pp. 14-18).
the Ptolemies was precarious, and that their status as Jews would make them targets should the relationship falter.\textsuperscript{52}

Much like in Rome, Jewish loyalty was always an issue that opponents were quick to stress. The question of where the Jews’ loyalty lay, with the ruling dynasty or Judaea, remained a complicated issue, slightly alleviated when the ruler of Judaea and where the Jewish population lived were the same. For over a century, the Ptolemies controlled both Egypt and Judaea, allowing the Jewish population freedom of movement between the two regions. However, the Seleucids conquered Judaea in 201 BCE, cutting off the Jews of Egypt from their homeland. While the experience with Ptolemy VI was foreboding, the loyalty of the Jews of Egypt would come into serious question by the late second century BCE. In 102 BCE, the Judaean king Alexander Jannaeus was quickly expanding his territory, much to the concern of the Ptolemaic queen Cleopatra III. Her advisers warned her not to allow one man, especially a Jew, to gain control of so many resources, and to attack Judaea. Her chief commander, Ananias, himself a Jew, warned Cleopatra that by doing so she would make not only enemies of the Jews of Judaea, but the Jews in Egypt as well. Given that many of the Egyptian Jews tied their recent ancestry to Judaea owing to recent emigration, and a sizeable portion served in the army, Cleopatra wisely chose to seek peace with Jannaeus. (AJ 13.353-55).\textsuperscript{53}

Not long after this, Jewish loyalty would become an important issue for the native Egyptians, partly due to the arrival of Rome in the region. When the Egyptians revolted and expelled Ptolemy XII Auletes in 58 BCE, the frontier defences established by the Ptolemies

\textsuperscript{52} Feldman 2006, pp. 162-163.

\textsuperscript{53} Feldman 1993, p. 89.
remained heavily Jewish. When the Roman proconsul of Syria, A. Gabinius came to Egypt, the Jews at the border fort of Pelusium allowed the foreign army in with no conflict, owing to Gabinius’ friendship with Antipater, who held power in Judaea at the time (AJ 14.99; BJ 1.175). Less than a decade later, in 48 BCE, the Jews’ reverence for Antipater again allowed a foreign army to enter Egypt without resistance. Gaius Iulius Caesar, trapped in Egypt and requiring aid, sought help from Antipater. Once again, Antipater convinced the Jews guarding the Egyptian borders to allow aid through, this time producing a letter from the high priest Hyrcanus urging his fellow Jews to receive Caesar’s allies (AJ 14.131-32; BJ 1.190). Perhaps Hyrcanus’ support caused the Jews to support Caesar. While there was no punishment for the Jews in either episode, potentially due to how heavily the Ptolemies relied on them, the question of where the Jews’ loyalty lay was firmly entrenched in both the Egyptians’ and Greeks’ minds. The relationship between the Egyptian Jews and the Ptolemaic dynasty completely disintegrated with the last Hellenistic monarch, the infamous Cleopatra VII. While the Jews may have initially supported her due to her association with Caesar, the Jews leaned towards supporting Caesar’s adopted son Octavian following Caesar’s murder. Cleopatra harshly treated the Jews of Egypt, since, according to Josephus, she refused to give the Jews any grain rations during a famine (Ap. 2.60). With the defeat of Antony and Cleopatra at Actium, in 31 BCE, the Hellenistic kingdom of the Ptolemies would share the same fate as that of the Seleucids and the Macedonians, absorbed by the Roman Empire. The Jews of Egypt welcomed the Roman

54 Feldman 1993, pp. 89-90.
56 For the Jews’ support of Caesar, see chapter one, pp. 31-33.
57 Feldman 1993, p. 90.
conquerors openly, but for the Egyptians, who were never content with Ptolemaic domination in the first place, and the Greeks, who now found themselves out of power, the Romans were oppressors. That the Jews supported the Romans only led to more animosity between the groups.58

Various loyalties divided the Jews of Egypt in the late Hellenistic period, a charge that would occur in recent times as well. Jewish identity struggled with its connection to the Ptolemaic culture of which it had become a part and their fellow Jews in Judaea, who had established an autonomous state. Aware of this attraction, the Ptolemaic monarchs began to view the Jews with a suspicious eye, and occasionally even enacted communal punishments against them. It would appear that the connection between the Jews of Egypt and Judaea superseded the relationship with Ptolemaic culture. The Jews of Egypt supported the Romans at the behest of their compatriots from Judaea. Yet the Jews still believed they could be a part of the Alexandrian citizenry, which would have consequences for the community in the centuries to come.

V. Jewish Rights within Alexandria.

The privileges bestowed upon the Jews by the Romans, first by Caesar and later reaffirmed by the emperors, often led to friction between the local population and the Jewish community, especially in Alexandria. It is not difficult to assume that, after Egypt became a Roman province, the Greek population of the city, the former ruling class, found themselves chafing under Roman dominion, and the fact that the Jews retained their gerousia and ethnarch, as well as their right of assembly in synagogues, certainly struck the disempowered Greeks as unfair. The situation in

58 Bilde 2010, p. 99.
Alexandria would reach its culmination when the Alexandrian Jewish population sought to add citizenship rights as well; the Greeks, perhaps fairly, demanded that the Jews would then have to increase their civic duties, namely military service. The issue arose as early as 14 BCE, when the two sides confronted Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa. There was no definitive answer for either side, since Agrippa simply reaffirmed the status quo.\(^{59}\)

The question of where exactly the Jews of Alexandria stood in regards to rights has long been a point of contention. According to Josephus, in return for their support Alexander gave the Jews of Egypt equal rights to the Greeks (BJ 2.268).\(^{60}\) As mentioned above, the Jews likely did have many unique rights, such as the *gerousia* and *ethnarch*. However, it appears unlikely that the Jews received citizenship rights in Alexandria, and the Jews’ social position in the city following the Roman conquest fell. One possible explanation is that, with the Ptolemaic army disbanded, many Jews lost the means to advance in the social hierarchy in Egypt. Furthermore, important positions that the Jews had held in Ptolemaic Egypt shifted hands to the Greeks under the Romans.\(^{61}\) It is not difficult to imagine that many Jews moved to Alexandria following the Roman conquest, owing perhaps to the already large population of the city. Most likely, the urban poor made up the majority of the Alexandrian Jewish population. Several papyri showcase the poor conditions of Jews throughout Egypt: Some found work as wet nurses for Greek families (CPJ v. 2 nos. 146-7) or as servants (CPJ v. 2 no. 148), others placed themselves under arduous loan terms for money (CPJ v. 2 nos. 148-149) or even for food (CPJ v. 2 no. 144). One

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\(^{59}\) Feldman 1993, p. 94.

\(^{60}\) Feldman 2006, p. 165.

case of an illiterate Jew survives (CPJ v. 2 no. 411).\textsuperscript{62} That there was some discrimination from the Romans also seems likely, since Germanicus, Tiberius’ nephew and hopeful heir, excluded the Jews from his distribution of grain while in Egypt (Tac. \textit{Ann.} 2.59). Josephus attempts to temper this by claiming it was a barren year (\textit{Ap.} 2.63).\textsuperscript{63} Of course, the situation in Alexandria would reach its zenith in the summer of 38 CE.

Jewish identity in Alexandria appears to have been closely tied with the city itself. Under the Ptolemies, Jews who were members of the higher classes considered themselves as members of the Alexandrian community, and enhanced their social position. When Egypt became a Roman province, the Jews lost this social mobility, but retained some of the benefits granted by the previous rulers. When they sought full citizenship from the Romans, the Greeks, having their own position in the city usurped by the Romans, attacked the Jewish position, attempting to emphasize the Jews’ status as outsiders in the city.

\textbf{VI. The Revolt of 38 CE: Origins, Causes, and Results.}

The exact reasons for the anti-Jewish riots in Alexandria are unclear, owing to the most detailed sources of the events, Philo’s \textit{Against Flaccus} and \textit{Embassy to Gaius}, which first blames the Egyptian prefect of Alexandria, Aulus Avilius Flaccus, then the emperor Gaius. It is important to consider also whether hatred of the Jews motivated the riots, either on the part of Flaccus, Gaius, or the rioters themselves, or due to a political conflict within Alexandria.

\textsuperscript{62} Pucci Ben Zeev 1990, p. 234.

\textsuperscript{63} Feldman 1993, p. 95.
Philo’s initial depiction of Flaccus is surprisingly positive. Appointed in 32 CE by Tiberius, Flaccus handled his duties and responsibilities well for the first six years (*In Flacc. 2-8*). However, with Tiberius’ death, in 37 CE, Flaccus feared that the new emperor Gaius would include him in his cleansing of Tiberius’ friends and supporters (*In Flacc. 9-15*). Assuming the Jews would remain loyal to the new emperor, Flaccus sought to ally himself with prominent Greek citizens in Alexandria (*In Flacc. 20*). In August of the same year, the Jewish King Agrippa I arrived in Alexandria on his way to his new kingdom in Judaea (*AJ 18.237*). The arrival of Agrippa sparked anti-Jewish riots throughout the city (*In Flacc. 36-39, 41-3, 47-9, 53*). Philo charges that Flaccus, who could have easily ended the riots, instead gave the rioters complete impunity (*In Flacc. 40*). Flaccus’ actions further worsened the issue when he declared the Jews foreigners in Alexandria, stripping them of their rights (*In Flacc. 54*). This is an event of critical importance for Jewish identity: a Roman official appears to redefine Jewish identity within Alexandria. According to Flaccus, the Jews were not proper inhabitants of Alexandria, regardless of whether the Jews thought themselves to be Alexandrian. Such an action appears unprecedented when it comes to the Jews, as no similar decree applied to any Jewish population elsewhere in the Roman Empire. The rioters then drove the Jews from most of the quarters of the city, and contained them within the Delta Quarter. Eventually Gaius removed Flaccus from office (*In Flacc. 108-115*). Flaccus died after being stabbed as many times as the number of Jews he wrongfully put to death (*In Flacc. 188-89*). Meanwhile in Alexandria, his replacement, Caius Vitrasius Pollio, restored order, and allowed the two contesting parties, the Greeks and Jews, to send embassies to Gaius.\(^{64}\)

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Thankfully Philo’s account of this embassy, which he himself led (Leg. 370), survives. In his *Embassy to Gaius*, written several years after the revolt, Philo shifts the blame from Flaccus to the emperor and his anti-Jewish advisors, most notably the Egyptian Helicon (Leg. 120-37). Gaius disregarded the Jewish delegation, since Philo remarks that Gaius behaved not as judge but an accuser (Leg. 349). The embassy’s purpose was for Gaius to reassert the Jewish rights suspended by Flaccus (Leg. 349; AJ 18.257-60), though some scholars have suggested the Jews sought Alexandrian citizenship. However the Greek delegation, headed by Apion (who would later be the target of Josephus’ apologetic *Contra Apionem*), attempted to assert that the Jews did not deserve to have rights, owing to their unpatriotic nature and refusal to pay honour to the emperor (Leg. 153). Gaius worried himself with whether the Jews considered him a god, and the Jewish delegation’s only defence was to remain silent (Leg. 360-367). Unfortunately the *palinodia*, which would contain Gaius’ final ruling, does not survive, though the final lines of Philo’s account make clear that the Jews were awaiting Gaius’ final decision concerning his divinity (Leg. 372). Any chance for a decision concerning Jewish rights in Alexandria fell victim to Gaius’ flippant attitude.65

Immediately one must confront Flaccus’ role in the revolts. One common suggestion, that Gaius targeted Flaccus for supporting his rival Tiberius Gemellus, is unlikely.66 However, even if Flaccus did not ally himself with the Greeks for their support should Gaius attempt to remove him, the question remains why Flaccus allowed the riots to occur. Philo wonders as much, as

65 Bilde 2010, p. 103; Feldman 1993, p. 57; Gambetti 2009, pp.214-217

66 It is unlikely that Gaius would remove Flaccus for his support of Gemellus, not only because Flaccus was far from the imperial court and had little influence therein (Gambetti 2009, p. 138), but also as Tacitus 2008, p. 457 notes, while Gemellus had reached puberty, he had yet to receive the *toga virilis*, which would officially mark his entrance into adulthood.
Flaccus could easily have put an end to the conflict within the hour if he so chose (Leg. 132). Gambetti however posits an interesting theory that the order came from Gaius himself, due to an earlier legal decision.

There is papyrological evidence that suggests that the delegations, led by Philo and Apion respectively, were not the first to meet with Gaius (P. Yale II 107). Shortly after the Senate conferred imperial powers upon Gaius in 37 CE, the newly crowned emperor adjudicated a case between two embassies, one representing the Alexandrian plaintiffs, whom scholars suggest were Jewish, and the defendants, Areios and Gaius. While most of the text is lost, it does appear that during the trial the procedure called the exceptio peremptoria occurred, in which the positions of the plaintiff and defendant switched, and the legitimacy of the prosecution is scrutinized. It appears the two sides were arguing about their patris, or their civic definition of the city, which also pertained to matters of legal and civic status. In the end, Gaius found the plaintiff guilty, since Areios convinced Gaius that the plaintiff was a foreigner. Gaius declared the plaintiff’s patris false and his inhabitation within the city illegal. The punishment was death.

This case presents a similar situation to another surviving papyrus of one Helenos. An Alexandrian Jew, Helenos petitioned the Egyptian prefect, Gaius Turranius, in 5 BCE, for aid against one Harus. In the letter, Helenos calls himself ‘son of Trypho’, an Alexandrian. A later scribe scribbled out this mention and replaced it with ‘A Jew from Alexandria’. While Helenos considered himself Alexandrian, at some point that status was revoked (CPJ v. 2 no. 151).

68 Gambetti 2009, pp. 116-118.
69 Gambetti 2009, p. 127.
70 Petersen 2010, p. 130.
both examples, the matter is where exactly the Jewish person’s *patris* lies. The Areios papyrus shows that the matter was contentious, and inevitably resulted in a legal judgement by Gaius, in which the Jewish party lost. Gaius’ decision, reported in a letter to the Alexandrians, thus became an imperial *decretum*, a precedent for all similar cases. Therefore, any Jews who, like the accuser in the trial of 37 CE, lived outside *patris* could have property rights revoked. Flaccus did not attack the Jews from hate, but because of a change in the legal situation because of the 37 CE trial. The delay in Gaius’ judgement and the enactment of the decision in Alexandria partially comes from the emperor falling ill. The administrative network throughout the empire would slow with the emperor disposed, and it is possible that this delayed the report of the trial. Philo reports that the Alexandrians did not hear of Gaius’ recovery until just before the seas closed for the winter of 37 CE (*Leg.* 18). It is only in the spring of 38 CE that they would learn of Macro’s death, Flaccus’ reappointment, and Gaius’ legal decision.

Agrippa’s arrival in the city can also support this theory. In the Republic, the Senate would entrust the governors of the provinces with their power through a *senatus mandata*, which Augustus appropriated as one of the powers of the emperor as the *mandata principis* (*Dio* 53.14.4). Flaccus’ time as prefect in Egypt officially ended with Tiberius’ death, and Gaius selected a new prefect, Macro. However, Gaius would force Macro to commit suicide before he could depart, leaving Egypt without an officially designated prefect. Contemporaneously, Gaius appointed Agrippa I as king of Judaea. Agrippa would then travel to his new kingdom, and on his way traveled to Alexandria. Some scholars have suggested that Agrippa did not officially plan to arrive in Alexandria, but Philo does claim that Gaius advised Agrippa to take the shortest

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71 Gambetti 2009, pp. 147-150.
72 Gambetti 2009, p. 150.
route from Rome to Judaea, which would take him through Alexandria (In Flacc. 26-27). For Flaccus to remain as prefect, he would require a new *mandata principis*, which would require delivery in Alexandria. Gambetti thus reasonably suggests that Agrippa’s arrival in Alexandria was in part to deliver Flaccus’ new *mandata*.73

If a legal decision of Gaius, not anti-Jewish sentiment on the part of Flaccus instigated the riots, the question becomes why Gaius had Flaccus removed from office if he was only following an order of the emperor. Philo’s reason for Flaccus’ removal is rather obvious, in that the prefect has acted illegally in removing Jewish rights and declaring the Jews foreigners in Alexandria. There is also a sense of divine intervention in Philo’s account. That Bassus arrested Flaccus during the festival of Succoth (In Flacc. 116), and that Flaccus died after receiving as many stab wounds as the Jews he wrongly executed (In Flacc. 188-189), suggest that God had some role in Flaccus’ downfall.74 However, an important event occurred just before the riots that may explain why Gaius ended Flaccus’ time as prefect. On June 10, 38 CE, Gaius’ sister Drusilla passed away (In Flacc. 56). Gaius then issued an *iustitium*, an announcement of public mourning, for his sister (Dio 59.11.5, Sue. Gai. 24.2). Part of this public mourning was that only ordinary religious and political activities could occur. Most likely news of the *iustitium* would not arrive in Alexandria until late June, and the period of mourning would continue until late July or early August. Philo mentions that, when Agrippa arrived in Alexandria, the Jewish shops in the city were still closed in accordance with the *iustitium* (In Flacc. 56-57; Leg. 129). Around the same time Flaccus, possibly hoping to illustrate his support for the emperor, began enforcing the legal decision of 37 CE, which he would have received recently. It is for this reason that Flaccus

73 Gambetti 2009, pp. 154-155.
74 Gambetti 2009, p. 192.
ignored the imperial call for public mourning by carrying through the orders of Gaius from the previous year, and this is why Gaius removed him from power.\textsuperscript{75}

The aftermath of the riots is not clear, though it appears that by late 41 CE the status quo returned. There was some reprisal on the part of the Jews following the death of Gaius, as they took up arms against the Alexandrians (\textit{AJ} 19.278-9).\textsuperscript{76} Another pair of delegations travelled to Rome, this time to meet with the new emperor Claudius. The Letter of Claudius, discovered in 1912 and dated to 10 November 41, has Claudius order the two sides to reach a peaceful agreement (\textit{CPJ} v. 2 no. 153, P. Lond. 6 1912).\textsuperscript{77} The letter’s authenticity is clear, and Claudius takes a neutral position in the letter, chastising both sides of the conflict: the Alexandrians for their intolerance, and the Jews for not being content with their position in the city. Nevertheless, Claudius returns Jewish rights suspended by Flaccus years earlier.\textsuperscript{78}

Claudius’ letter also answers a recurring question: whether the Jews of Alexandria held citizenship rights. The 19\textsuperscript{th} century theologian Emil Schürer, in his work \textit{The History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ (175BC-135AD)}, claims that the Alexandrian Jews did have citizenship. However, with the discovery of the Letter of Claudius, most scholars accept that the Jews of Alexandria did not have citizenship.\textsuperscript{79} There are two other Claudian edicts concerning the Alexandrian Jews, both of which come from Josephus. The first claims that the Jews of Alexandria did have citizenship rights as early as the Ptolemaic period, and that only

\textsuperscript{75} Gambetti 2009, pp. 156-57, 192-193.
\textsuperscript{76} Pucci Ben Zeeb 1989, p. 38; Bilde 2010, p. 102.
\textsuperscript{77} Bilde 2010, p. 102; Petersen 2010, p. 133.
\textsuperscript{78} Bell 1924, pp. 18-22.
\textsuperscript{79} Gambetti 2009, pp. 2-3.11
under Gaius was this situation altered (AJ 19.280-285). The second, addressed to the entire empire, focuses on the privileges granted to the Jews concerning their religion, and stresses that the Jews should not worry themselves with the practices of others (AJ 19.288-290). These are likely genuine edicts. Along with the Letter of Claudius (lines 73-104) it appears that the Jews of Alexandria were not citizens. Most likely Josephus fabricated the claim that the Jews were citizens in the first edict.80

Claudius’ relationship with the Jews was the cause of some consternation for the Alexandrians. The Acta Isidori et Lamponis, also known as the Acts of the Alexandrian Martyrs, a series of papyri that tell the story of Alexandrians clashing with the Romans, contains one reference to Claudius being the son of the Jewess Salome, an attempt by the Alexandrian delegation to attack the new emperor (CPJ v. 2 no. 146d, lines 11-12).81 One argument the Alexandrians make is that the Jews of Alexandria are on the same level as the native Egyptians, who would have to pay the poll tax and thus are not worthy of citizenship (CPJ vol. 2 no. 156c, col. II, lines 22-30).82 The poll tax may date to the reign of Augustus, perhaps as early as 24 or 23 BCE. Only Greek citizens were exempt from this tax, which may have contributed to the status of citizenship being desirable for the Jewish population.83 The equation of the Jews with the Egyptians had a more violent precedent during the revolt. According to Philo, the rioters captured the Jewish gerousia and scourged them. In the Alexandrian legal system, there existed two distinct kinds of scourging, one meant for the Alexandrians, in which group the Jews were

80 Schäfer 1997, pp. 146-149.
81 Feldman 1993, pp. 96-97.
included, and Egyptians. The Jews, however, received the same punishment as the Egyptians in this case (In Flacc. 80).\textsuperscript{84} In general, these papyri present the Jews as representing Roman interests in Alexandria. Just as with the Ptolemies, the Jews become the stand-in for local resentment towards foreign conquerors.\textsuperscript{85} Claudius, however, did support the Alexandrians in their conflict with the Jews somewhat, as he expelled them from gymnasiatric games, and thus the gymnasium, and thus citizenship.\textsuperscript{86} The Jewish search for citizenship in Alexandria ended fruitlessly.

It is clear then that, as far as Jews like Philo were concerned, the Jewish population of Alexandria was just as much Alexandrian as it was Jewish. Although some Jews may have desired to isolate themselves and give up the goal of attaining citizenship, the Letter of Claudius suggests that some remained hopeful they could gain those rights. These Jews likely considered themselves both Jewish and Alexandrian. For the Greeks and Romans, however, there was a sharp distinction between the two: one could not be both. The Greek inhabitants of Alexandria considered the Jews closer to the Egyptian natives, and that they should lose, but not gain, rights. Gaius sided with the Greeks, removing Jewish rights in the city and opening up the Jewish population to the violent riots of 38 CE. Claudius chose to return to the status quo, while sternly reminding the Jews that they were not Alexandrians, and should not continue to push for citizenship.

\textsuperscript{84} Schäfer 1997, p. 141.
\textsuperscript{86} Schäfer 1997, p. 57.
VII. Later Revolts and the Destruction of the Jews of Alexandria.

The next major event in Judeo-Roman relations was the Jewish Revolt in Judaea, which did have consequences for the Jews of Egypt. Following the Roman victory in 70 CE, several cities throughout the empire requested that the emperor Vespasian or his son Titus remove Jewish rights. Most famously, the city of Antioch in Asia Minor repeatedly requested Titus to expel the Jewish population, which he refused, stating that since the Jews’ country no longer existed there was nowhere else for them to go (BJ 7.100-111). The Alexandrians likewise assumed that, with the Romans’ violent suppression of the Jewish Revolt, they could rely on Roman support in their conflict with the Jews. According to Josephus, they asked Vespasian and Titus to remove some Jewish rights, which the two Flavii refused. Instead, Vespasian affirmed the rights of the Alexandrian Jews (AJ 12.121-4). That the Jewish population of Alexandria was loyal to the emperor, even after the events of 38-41, seems likely. Josephus comments that, after Jerusalem fell to the Romans, some six hundred Sicarii fled to Alexandria, hoping to stir up sedition there. The Jewish leaders of Alexandria denounced the rebels, capturing the Sicarii and handing them over to the Romans to be executed (BJ 7.409-19).\(^\text{87}\) The appearance of Sicarii in Egypt seems to have caused Vespasian’s decision to close a Jewish temple at Leontopolis (BJ 7.421). Established around 160 BCE, it does not appear that the Egyptian Jews recognised the legitimacy of the Leontopolis temple, as there is no record of discontent with its closure. While some Jews supported the Temple, their number must have been small, and most Egyptian Jews, like Jews throughout the ancient world, supported the Temple of Jerusalem.\(^\text{88}\) Like their co-religionists


throughout the Empire, the Jews of Alexandria and Egypt also had to pay the *Fiscus Iudaicus*.\(^8^9\) The Jews of Egypt paid the tax in eight drachmas and two obols. Since the tax was two denarii, the obols were a surtax for using local currency. Of the seventy Greek ostraca that record the names of those who paid the tax, a wide origin of names appears. People with Greek, Roman, Jewish, and Egyptian names all paid the tax in Egypt.\(^9^0\) While the names alone do not provide information on the ethnic backgrounds of the people, the preponderance of non-Jewish names suggests that the Jewish population of Egypt came from throughout the empire.

The last surviving evidence of the Jewish tax in Egypt dates to May 18, 116 CE (Ostracon Edfu 159; CPJ v. 2 no. 229). This is synchronous with the last major event for the Egyptian Jews, the Jewish revolt of 116-117. Little information survives about the origin of this revolt, or much of the details, though it does appear to have started in Cyrenaica and eventually spread to Egypt. The Jews were able to defeat a Roman legion; native Egyptians then defeated the rebels just outside of Memphis.\(^9^1\) The most famous account of the revolt comes from a Christian source: Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History*. The Jews attacked their Greek neighbours, which escalated into a total war in Egypt. The Greeks who fled went to Alexandria, where they massacred the Jewish population there while the Jews of Cyrene continued to plunder the countryside. Eventually Trajan sent Marcius Turbo with both a land and naval force, who killed many of the rebels (4.2.1-4). An epitome of Dio Cassius contains an exceptionally graphic account of Jewish atrocities and is most likely a case of extreme hyperbole because of its

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\(^8^9\) Cappelletti 2006, p. 111.

\(^9^0\) Modrzejewski 1995, p. 214.

\(^9^1\) Birley 1997, p. 74.
extravagant gore (Epitome of 68.32.1-2).\textsuperscript{92} Trajan did not lead the Roman response himself, since he was preparing to march to Mesopotamia in response to the Parthians’ attempts to retake the region. Regardless, the choice of Turbo suggests that Trajan did not take the Jewish revolt lightly.\textsuperscript{93} Thus with this revolt, and its violent reprisal from the Romans, the Jewish population of Egypt either completely disappeared or simply lost relevance until the early fourth century CE.\textsuperscript{94}

The disappearance of the Hellenised Jews of Alexandria was a major factor in the development of Jewish identity. As one of the most important Jewish communities in the Diaspora, the Alexandrian Jews were the preeminent example of integrated Jews. While it is difficult to make sweeping generalisations about the entire community, some Jews, such as Philo, desired further integration into Hellenistic culture. Unfortunately, the Greek population, with occasional backing by the Romans, refused to accept the Jews as full members of the community. The exact nature of the Jewish revolt of 116-117 may be lost, but Eusebius’ account, that the Greeks who fled to Alexandria slaughtered the Jewish population there, suggests that the Alexandrian Jews were not a part of the revolt themselves. There is no mention that the revolt had any consequences in Alexandria until the arrival of those fleeing the revolting Jews. Since the Alexandrians had already attacked the Jews in the prior century, it is difficult to imagine they would not have acted if the Jews of Alexandria attacked them. Regardless, the Alexandrian Jews suffered the consequences. It is not an impossible suggestion that this event, combined with the riots of 38 CE, the Jewish Revolt, and the Bar Kochba revolt served to alienate the Jews and help

\textsuperscript{93} Bennett 1997, pp. 203-204.
foster an exclusionist Jewish identity. The destruction of the Hellenised Jewish faction of Alexandria would have left the isolationists alone to guide the future path of the Jews.

VIII. Conclusion.

Egypt plays a large role in the story of Judaism. According to the Hebrew Bible, it was from Egypt that Moses led the Israelites and founded a kingdom in Judaea, and Jewish remembrance of the events described in the Book of Exodus forms a central part of many Jewish practices, such as the observance of Passover. The connection between the Jews and Egypt was not uniquely Jewish, since most ancient authors, when considering the origins of the Jews, suggest a relationship between the two. While the Book of Exodus describes a Jewish flight from Egypt, a Jewish community returned to the region, most notably at the new city of Alexandria, created by the Macedonian Alexander the Great following his conquest of Egypt. This Alexandrian Jewish community would become one of the most important in the Diaspora.

Ptolemaic society saw Jews become surprisingly well integrated. Some served as soldiers in the army, with a few even attaining new heights as generals. As in Rome, the Jewish community adopted Greek as their daily language, took Greek names, and some even named children after non-Jewish gods. Unlike Rome, there is evidence beyond inscriptions that provides important details on daily life. Copious papyri indicate that the Jews followed the Ptolemaic standards in matters such as interest payments and divorce. Only intermarriage, which appears unambiguously only once in the papyri, appears to have remained taboo, likely because of the fear that it would lead to idolatry. While the Jews integrated, they did retain some desire to remain separate.
Of course, the most important source for the Jewish community of Alexandria is Philo. While Rome has no Jewish author to speak for the Jewish population, Philo was a prolific writer. However, his status as an eminent member of the community, and his desire for Jewish integration with the Greeks, cautious against drawing wide-ranging conclusions. Philo spoke only for himself, arguably, and at best represented the interests of the Jewish aristocracy of Alexandria.

While the Ptolemies generally valued the Jews, occasionally periods of concern over Jewish loyalty arose, most often in relation to the recently created Hasmonean state to the east and the arrival of the Romans from the west. Having lost their position of power, the Greeks sought to maintain their position of privilege over the Jews. A delegation to Gaius, instigated by a Jew, provided the opportunity when the emperor ruled against the Jews, officially labelling most of the Jews of Alexandria outsiders and allowing Alexandrian attacks. Philo’s account, while useful for details, struggles to place the blame on the correct source. As a Hellenised Jew, Philo refuses to believe their new status within the city. Claudius returned the city to the status quo, but the damage had been done. The later revolt of the early second century CE would completely remove the Hellenised Jewish faction from Alexandria and most references in the sources to a Jewish community in Alexandria until the rise of the Christians.

In comparison to Rome, the Jewish peoples of the two cities share many similarities. Both were minorities in non-Jewish cities (albeit a large minority in the case of Alexandria), and seem to have adapted to their environs and to some extent acculturated. This does not mean either group assimilated, however, since they would then be indistinguishable from their non-Jewish neighbours. Jewish identity in Rome and Alexandria meant a mixture of local and Jewish elements, one never completely overpowering the other, but allowing the Jews to live
comfortably in a foreign city without sacrificing what made them Jewish in the first place. This establishes a point of comparison for analysis of Judaea, where Jews comprised the majority. It is important to consider the effect of the shift the Jews experienced in Judaea, how changing from a majority group subject to a foreign power, then to an autonomous power in the eastern Mediterranean and back again affected Jewish identity.
Chapter Three

The Jews of Judaea

Unlike Rome or Alexandria, the ancient Jews perceived the region of Judaea, also known as Palestina, as their homeland, and thus it retains a status of central importance to the Jewish people. Even for the Jews in the Diaspora, Judaea remained a second homeland. Part of Judaea’s importance stems from the Temple of Jerusalem, the most widely recognised place of Jewish worship in the ancient world. Jerusalem was the centre of the Jewish cult, and they could only perform sacrifices within the Temple at Jerusalem, aside from the small minority at the temple of Leontopolis.

The sources for Judaea from the time of the early first century BCE to the second century CE are thankfully copious. Most important is Josephus, whose account of the Jewish War (66-70 CE) is the longest extant account of events. His *Jewish Antiquities* also covers a wide area of Jewish history in the region, beginning with his retelling of the Hebrew Bible up to the outbreak of the Jewish War. Initially a general fighting against the Romans, the fall of Yodfat led to Josephus’ surrender; thereafter he acted as an interpreter and apologist for the Flavians. While Josephus was Jewish, his audience was Roman, and the *Jewish War* acts as a defence both of the majority of the Jews (placing the cause of the revolt with a small minority of rebels) and the actions of the Romans. While the apologetic nature of his work must be kept in mind, he is an indispensable source for the region.

The Books of Maccabees also recount the Hasmonean revolt in some detail, and are useful insights into the goals of the Jews who revolted against Hellenistic rule. The historian
Tacitus provides a Roman interpretation of events, and the geographer Strabo includes a description of Judaea in his work.

Along with the usual epigraphic and archaeological sources, numismatic evidence provides some information on Judaea. The Hasmoneans, Herod, the Romans, and the Jewish rebels all minted coins, and the language used on the coins, as well as the symbols depicted upon them, provide insight on what each party felt important to emphasize. The history of Jewish interaction with non-Jews, most notably the Greeks and Romans, is exceptionally well attested in Judaea, especially in comparison to Rome and Alexandria. Unlike those cities, the Jews were the majority in the region. The imposition of foreign rulers created a unique situation: while the Jews of Rome and Alexandria as well as some Jews of Judaea accepted some degree of acculturation, most resisted the foreign rulers, leading to multiple armed revolts against the Greeks and Romans. The Jews who revolted had a different view of Jewish identity, which separated itself from Greco-Roman culture.

I. Epigraphy and Language in Judaea.

Just as in Rome and Egypt, a good amount of primary evidence from Judaea survives. However, the epigraphic evidence of Jerusalem is far less in comparison with other eastern cities, which perhaps results from the scarcity of monumental and honorary inscriptions from the city.\(^1\) Jewish avoidance of euergetism appears in Rabbinic Judaism, most notably a dislike in building monumental synagogues (Y Peah 8.8, 21b).\(^2\) Many of the inscriptions come from ossuaries, a

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1 Schwartz 2009, p. 87.
2 Schwartz 2009, p. 130.
form of secondary burial common in Judaea in the first century CE.\textsuperscript{3} Surprisingly, there were some Jewish inscriptions written in Greek, such as in the necropolis of Jerusalem, which most often appeared in family groups (CIIP I.1,288-311; I.1,324-332).\textsuperscript{4} In most cases the Greek used in inscriptions is simple, often little more than a name and age of the deceased, and the inscriber may have chosen to write in Greek to deter grave robbers. Knowledge of Greek in Judaea was likely not that high, as the first Greek letter appears only during the Bar Kochba revolt, and is rife with spelling mistakes.\textsuperscript{5} In total, 337 of the ossuary inscriptions from Jerusalem are in Hebrew or Aramaic, nine in both languages, 194 in Greek, one trilingual (Hebrew/Aramaic/Greek), two Latin, and five in Palmyrene script.\textsuperscript{6}

It is important to note that the necropolis was not restricted to Judaeans alone, as seventy of the inscribed ossuaries describe the deceased as a Jew born outside the region.\textsuperscript{7} One person appears to have written groups of inscriptions, an untrained hand likely belonging to a family member or friend.\textsuperscript{8} It does appear that, in most cases, Aramaic was the common language of Judaea, since in inscriptions from Mt. Gerizim, Aramaic outnumbers Hebrew nine to one.\textsuperscript{9} In the Dominus Flevit complex on the Mount of Olives, used up to the Bar Kochba Revolt, 22 ossuaries survive. Of these, only three are inscribed, one in Greek, two in Aramaic (CIIP I.1,181-183).\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{3} Goodblatt 2006, pp. 52-54.
\textsuperscript{4} Goodblatt 2006, pp. 404-405.
\textsuperscript{5} Feldman 1993, pp. 14-15.
\textsuperscript{6} Price 2011, p. 407.
\textsuperscript{7} Price 2011, pp. 404-405.
\textsuperscript{8} Price 2011, pp. 408-409; Goodblatt 2006, pp. 52-54.
\textsuperscript{9} Goodblatt 2006, pp. 52-54.
\textsuperscript{10} Price 2011, pp. 411-412.
In comparing Judaea and the Jewish communities of Rome and Alexandria, immediately noticeable is the language difference. Greek is the common language of Diaspora Jews, comprising the majority of inscriptions in Rome and Alexandria, as well as a good number of those in Judaea. Aramaic and Hebrew, the traditional languages of Judaea, did not disappear with the Macedonians and Romans, and continued to be the dominant language of daily life. Greek was likely common when interaction with non-Jews was a common occurrence. Latin is, unsurprisingly, rare in the inscriptions, but its presence suggests some use for it. Like their co-religionists in Rome and Alexandria, some Jews of Judaea were multi-lingual, a possible recognition of the important role Greek had assumed in Judaea.

In some instances, Hebrew outnumbers Aramaic by a significant margin. Of the 900 manuscripts found at Qumran, 27 are in Greek, 130 in Aramaic; the remainder are in Hebrew. However, the Hebrew used in the Qumran texts shows Aramaic influences, which suggests that Aramaic was the predominant language. 11 Most likely, those who strove to separate Jewish identity from other groups favoured Hebrew. There is no evidence of a non-Jew who was fluent, or even competent, in Hebrew. Hebrew, as the language of the Hebrew Bible, was intrinsically connected with Judaism, since the Hebrew Bible fulfilled many roles within Jewish life, acting both as a history and as source of laws. These two elements likely attracted those seeking to establish a separate Jewish identity. As the later revolts would attest, the Jews who sought to create an independent Jewish state based many of their actions on the Hebrew Bible, which required Hebrew for comprehension.

11 Goodblatt 2006, pp .52-54.
II. Antiochus IV, Hellenism, and Judaea.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes took control of the Seleucid throne in 175 BCE. While Jewish sources are, perhaps understandably, hostile, other sources also present Epiphanes in a negative manner. He spent his youth as a political prisoner at Rome, alongside the historian Polybius. Polybius’ appraisal of his character is negative, observing that, while he took the name Ἐπιφανής, meaning ‘glorious’, he also had the nickname Ἐπιμανὴς, ‘the Mad’ (26). The Jewish sources are hostile to Epiphanes due in no small part to his capture of the city of Jerusalem in 167 BCE. According to Josephus, infighting amongst the Jews drew Antiochus’ attention. He occupied the city by force, and attempted to cease various Jewish practices (BJ 1.31-34; AJ 12.237-264). The First Book of Maccabees also chronicles these events, placing the blame for Antiochus’ actions on Hellenised Jews, who approached Epiphanes to receive approval to build a gymnasium within Jerusalem (1 Macc. 1.11-15). In passing, Josephus refers to eight sports buildings in the land of Israel. Aside from the priesthood of Jason, there is no suggestion the Jews took part in athletic activities, so it is likely that non-Jews patronised these institutions. Maccabees then explains Epiphanes’ victory in Egypt (1 Macc. 1.16-19), before describing how Epiphanes and his army attacked Jerusalem, entered the Temple, and stole many of the treasures found within before leaving the city (1 Macc. 1.20-24). This defilement of holy ground is hardly new to Epiphanes, however, since Polybius writes that Epiphanes held extravagant games following his victory over Ptolemy VI, all paid for by despoiling the temples of Egypt (30.25-26). He also plundered Syrian

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12 Goodman 2007, p. 49; Feldman 1993, p. 92. This may be an attempt by Polybius to attack the character of Epiphanes, since the historian disliked the king’s egalitarianism.

13 Radin 1919, p. 141.

shrines such as Hierapolis, often through violence.\textsuperscript{15} The philosopher Porphry ascribes Epiphanes’ motivation to greed (ap. Jerome, Commentary on Daniel 11.31ff). Epiphanes’ actions in Jerusalem therefore were not due to some anti-Jewish sentiment, but pure greed and general disrespect for temples.\textsuperscript{16} Another possibility is that Epiphanes required an influx of wealth to pay for several concurrent conflicts in the East. At the time, Epiphanes was dealing with four conflicts: the Parthians, Ptolemies, Romans, and a potential civil war in the Seleucid Kingdom.\textsuperscript{17} The wealth of the Temple made it an attractive target for the cash-strapped Epiphanes.

Epiphanes was probably not attempting to complete a process of Hellenisation that had begun centuries earlier. Diodorus Siculus (34.5.1), Tacitus (Hist. 5.8.2) and the author of 2 Maccabees do not mention that this was an ongoing process within Jerusalem. Most likely, the decision to abolish Jewish rites was a spontaneous decision by Epiphanes with no precedent.\textsuperscript{18} Moreover, Epiphanes did not attempt to prosecute the Jews who lived elsewhere in the Seleucid Empire, most notably in Syria and Asia Minor.\textsuperscript{19} Antiochus may have acted because of extreme Jewish Hellenisers, who convinced him that the only way to assure the safety of the kingdom’s southern border was to suppress Jewish practices.\textsuperscript{20}

The existence of Jewish Hellenisers during this time is not in doubt. Easily the most famous example was the high priest Jason, originally named יושע, or Jesus, whose priesthood is

\textsuperscript{15} Radin 1919, p. 140.
\textsuperscript{16} Radin 1919, p. 140.
\textsuperscript{17} Feldman 1993, p. 91.
\textsuperscript{18} Feldman 1993, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{19} Feldman 1993, p. 91.
\textsuperscript{20} Feldman 1993, p. 92.
the apex of Jewish Hellenism. Jason bribed Epiphanes to allow him to build a gymnasium within the city, causing the priests to neglect their sacrifices and, perhaps worst of all, made the young men of Jerusalem wear Greek hats (2 Macc. 4:7-14), a clear attempt to Hellenise Jerusalem. While the author clearly disapproves of Jason, he does not record an attempt to revolt due to these introductions, so any changes Jason sought either had yet to occur or were innocuous. It was only after Epiphanes’ persecution that the anti-Hellenism faction began to revolt.

It is clear that any attempt to define Jewish identity during the early-second century BCE immediately faces a challenge not yet encountered. Partially due to lack of an in depth Jewish voice in Rome, and the overwhelming figure of Philo in Alexandria, the sources downplay the existence of the tension between the dominant surrounding culture and Judaism, though the Jews of these communities struggled with them on a daily basis. However, the sources plainly state that the Jews of Judaea were divided on how to handle Hellenism. Some Jews had no issue fully embracing Greek culture. The question is whether they retained their identity as Jews, or fully acculturated as Greeks. Unfortunately, the sources that do survive, namely the Books of Maccabees, largely condemn the Hellenisers (1 Macc. 1.11-15). However, though criticised in Maccabees for his philhellenism, Jason retains his identity as a Judaean: thus kinship and birth

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22 The ἐφηβοί, Greek youths training in the gymnasium, wore hats, called πέτασος, to protect them from the sun. See Scolnic 2010, p. 108.

23 Schwartz 2014, pp. 41-42.
remained an important part of identity. What is surprising is that the Maccabees themselves acculturated more than they may have wished.

III. Hasmonean Judaea.

Epiphanes’ actions quickly led to a revolt led by Mattathias, and following his death, his sons such as Judas Maccabee and Simon. The death of Epiphanes and the subsequent succession troubles within the Seleucid kingdom did not stifle the revolt, and, after the death of the Helleniser high priest Alcimus, Judas became high priest. By 142 BCE, the Hasmoneans finally won independence from the Seleucids under Simon (AJ 12.268- 13.215).

The most common approach to this revolt, the same that the author of Second Maccabees espouses, is to depict it as a struggle by those in favour of traditional practices, in other words Judaism, against the encroachment of Hellenism. The author describes the soldiers of Judas Maccabee as ‘men who had remained faithful to their religion’ (8:1). Yet there are several important details to note. That high priests such as Jason and Alcimus supported Hellenism and, in Alcimus’ case, actively plotted against Judas Maccabee suggests that there was a division in Judaea. How large this division was is uncertain, though it is likely that the number that supported Judas dwarfed the Hellenisers. While the Seleucid king appointed the high priest in the case of Alcimus, regardless of the opinion of the Judaeans, the people themselves appointed Judas, suggesting popular support for his group. It appears that the rebels themselves were to an extent Hellenised. The author of Second Maccabees wrote in Greek, not Hebrew.  

Goodblatt suggests that the existence of Jewish literature in Greek stemmed from the Hebrew Bible, which prevented Hebrew from following the fate of other languages, such as Phoenician. Not only did the Hebrew Bible lay out the ancestry of all Israelites, but it also recorded the markers of Jewish identity such as circumcision and observance of the Sabbath. With a Jewish identity firmly established in Hebrew, the authors of Maccabees could establish Jewish identity in Greek without fear of compromising their identity based on Hebrew: thus, the Jews could represent their identity in both languages.26 One of Judas’ compatriots, Eupolemus, wrote a history of the Judaean kings in 159 BCE, in not only Greek, but also following the conventions of Greek historiography.27 Interestingly, it appears that the Hasmoneans attempted to re-establish ties with the Spartans. First Maccabees (12.6-13), Second Maccabees (5.9), and Josephus (AJ 12.226-27, 13.166-67) claim that the Jewish high priest Onias, c. 300 BCE, contacted the Spartan King Areus (r. 309-265 BCE), because Abraham served as the ancestor of both peoples, a connection which Jonathan mentions when asking for a new alliance between the Spartans and Jews. Although the Spartans were a shadow of their Classical predecessors in the mid-second century BCE, they were still very highly regarded in the ancient world, especially by the Romans, who traced their own connection to the Spartans through the Sabines (Dionysius, Roman Antiquities 2.49).28

While the Romans made no direct intervention during the Maccabean revolt, they played an important role in establishing Hasmonean independence. As discussed in the first chapter, the

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26 Goodblatt 2006, pp. 29-30. For more on circumcision and observance of the Sabbath as Jewish identifiers, see chapter one, pp. 22-27.

27 Schwartz 2001, p. 34.

Hasmoneans and Roman Senate signed a series of treaties in the mid-second century BCE. Tacitus’ brief excursus on recent Jewish history in his *Histories* attributes their success to the weakness of the Seleucids and the immaturity of the Parthians, with Rome too far away to act (5.8.5). These treaties helped secure Hasmonean independence, as in 135-34 BCE the Seleucid monarch, Antiochus VII Sidetes, invaded Judaea in an attempt to re-subjugate the region. Josephus records that, inexplicably, Sidetes allowed a truce because of the feast of the Tabernacles, going so far as to supply sacrifices. Sidetes then came to terms with the Hasmoneans, withdrawing his forces from the region (*AJ* 13.236-46). In the *Jewish War*, written nearly twenty years earlier, Josephus alleges that John Hyrcanus bribed Sidetes to withdraw with treasure from the Tomb of David (1.61), a similar claim he makes in an earlier book of the *Antiquities* (7.393). It appears that Sidetes retreated due to Roman affirmation of their treaties with the Hasmoneans (*AJ* 13.259ff), and his actions were meant to appease the Romans and save face. Josephus’ conflicting narrative is thus the result of a transition from Jewish sources (recorded in the *Jewish War* and up to book seven of the *Antiquities*), to Roman ones (which he details in the thirteenth book of the *Antiquities*).

The beginning of Hasmonean Judaea is an appropriate point at which to digress briefly to terminology. Some scholars argue that, for the period up to the mid-second century BCE, the term Ἰουδαῖος, and Latin *Iudaeus*, should translate as ‘Judaean’, not ‘Jew’. These are ethno-graphic terms used for those who lived in their ancestral land, a feature missing from Cicero’s

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29 See chapter one, p. 29.  
30 Bruce 1984, p. 41.  
31 Rajak 2000, pp. 81-95.  
32 Cohen 1999, p. 3.
use of *Iudaeus*, which strictly refers to the Jews of Rome, and thus translates better as ‘Jew’.\(^{33}\)

Thus Ἰουδαῖος, when referring to the region of Judaea, means Judaean. There was no separation between an ethnic and religious definition of Ἰουδαῖος yet. However, the creation of an autonomous Jewish state in the region complicated the matter, especially as the state began to expand.

Several other peoples lived amongst the Judaeans, and the Judaeans themselves heavily emphasised their distinction from these groups. One group, the Idumeans, used a marriage contract in the early second century BCE similar to that of the Judaean *ketubbot*.\(^{34}\) Yet in the *Wisdom of Sirach* Ben Sira espouses hatred of the nations of Se’ir, the Edomites (also known as the Idumeans), as well as the inhabitants of Shechem, the Samaritans (50.25-6). The officials of Antiochus IV, however, could make no distinction between the Samaritans and Judaeans, and the Samaritans wrote the king a letter expressing how they differed by both race and customs (*AJ* 12.261).\(^{35}\) Further complicating the issue is the eventual conquest of the Idumeans by the Hasmoneans under John Hyrcanus (c. 125 BCE), and their incorporation within the Jewish state.

Following the death of Antiochus VII, the son of Simon and leader of the Hasmoneans, John Hyrcanus, attacked various cities in Syria, and captured the Idumean cities of Dora and Marissa, as well as subduing all the Idumeans. Hyrcanus then gave the Idumeans a choice: they could remain in their land if they underwent circumcision and followed the laws of the Jews, or they could leave. According to Josephus, the Idumeans who desired to remain in their fatherland

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\(^{33}\) Cohen 1999, pp. 69-70, 94; for Cicero and the Jews, see chapter one, pp. 8-10.

\(^{34}\) Goodblatt 2006, pp. 21-22.

\(^{35}\) Goodblatt 2006, pp. 21-23.
agreed to the conditions, and thenceforth became Jews (AJ 13.254-258). Strabo provides a slight variation of this account, claiming the Idumeans were Nabataeans who voluntarily joined the Hasmonean state after sedition amongst the Nabataeans led to their banishment (16.2.34). The Hasmoneans also incorporated other peoples into their state; a small fragment of the Greek first-century BCE historian Timagenes recorded by Josephus expresses admiration for Aristobulus, the son and successor of John Hyrcanus, who bound the Itureans through circumcision (AJ 13.319). Strabo likewise calls the Hasmoneans ‘tyrants’, claiming that they conquered much of Syria and Phoenicia (16.2.37).

The incorporation of non-Judaean peoples within the Judaean state marks an important point in the development of Jewish identity in the region. As discussed earlier, Ἰουδαῖος is better translated as Judaean until this period. However, these new Jews created through conquest and conversion produces two new definitions of Judaean: a religious term for those who worship the God of the Temple, and a political term for the citizens of the Judaean state. The Jews of the Diaspora referred to themselves as ‘Judeans’, while they used ‘Israel’ in liturgical contexts. ‘Israel’ appears only once in non-Jewish pre-Christian Greek literature, a reference by Pompeius Trogus to one ‘Israhel’, a king of Damascus whose ten sons created ten kingdoms, which became ‘Judaean’ after one of the sons, Judah, perished at a young age (Justin 36. 2.3-4). It appears that ‘Judaean’ is the common designation for Jews, by both non-Jews and the Jews themselves.

36 Goodman 1989, p. 42.
38 Rajak 2000, p. 75.
40 Goodblatt 2006, pp. 118-119.
The Hasmonean rulers of Judaea took the title of high priest as early as 152 BCE, with the accession of Jonathan; all male Hasmonean rulers retained the title of high priest, up until Mattathias Antigonus in 37 BCE. Their status as high priests was vital to their rule, which they emphasised appropriately on the coins minted by the Hasmoneans. It is important to note that the Hasmoneans themselves lacked the Zadokite or Davidic heritage that had previously been necessary to become high priest, and in fact tended to skirt around Biblical law. As generals, they often had to deal with corpse impurity, which should have disallowed them from taking the position of high priest. Regardless, their position that the Torah was the only legal power within the state was likely enough to win the support of the other Judaeans. According to Josephus, it was Aristobulus I in 104 BCE who turned the Hasmonean state into a kingdom and placed the diadem on his own head (AJ 13.301). This marks the official recognition by the Hasmoneans that they are no longer an ethnic state, but a political and territorial one. None of Aristobulus’ coins mark this change, however, as he continues to advertise himself as high priest, hakohen hagadol. The legends of these coins appear in Greek, Aramaic, and Hebrew, a recognition by the Hasmonean rulers that the composition of their state was multi-lingual, and the coins could end up in the hands of non-Jews. Interestingly, they do not adopt the name ‘Israel’ for their new state, and instead continue to use derivatives of ‘Judah’, which first appears in the Persian period. Perhaps this is because in the Biblical account Israel and Judah refer to two different kingdoms. Hasmonean coinage does not provide the name of the state itself, though coins often

41 Goodblatt 2006, pp. 84-85.
42 Schwartz 2001, p. 34.
43 Schwartz 2005, p. 68.
appear with the term ‘hever of the Judaeans’. There are two interpretations for this terminology: either it is roughly the equivalent of the Greek ‘ἔθνος of the Judaeans’, and thus the state itself is called Judaea, or it refers to a specific council. In either instance, it is likely that the term ‘Judaean’ is part of the name of the Hasmonean state.\textsuperscript{46}

Another intriguing development in the Hasmonean period is the transition away from using figural art. The consensus was that Jews avoided figural art due to the second commandment, as well as the attested aversion to images in other authors. Archeological evidence discovered over the last century has caused a reconsideration of this position. Figurines and seal engravings, often of animals such as monkeys, snakes, horses, and lions appear in Israelite sites dating to the eighth and seventh-centuries BCE. In the Hebrew Bible itself various pieces of figural art appear, such as cherubs over the ark (Exodus 25:20). In the Biblical period, there was no concern that figural art would break the commandment against idolatry.\textsuperscript{47} In the Persian and early Hellenistic periods, coins depicting a wide variety of subjects appear, from animals such as eagles and owls, figures like governors, high priests, and warriors, and even specific portraits such as Ptolemy, Berenice and Athena. The literary sources suggest that, since the Jews during the Persian period were isolated, foreign styles heavily influenced their coinage.\textsuperscript{48} With the advent of the Hasmoneans, Jewish art avoided figural representations of humans or animals for nearly three hundred years. There are several suggestions for why this occurred: a reaction to the attack by Antiochus IV on the Temple; a policy of the Sadducees, who

\textsuperscript{45} Goodblatt 2006, pp. 121-122, 140-141.
\textsuperscript{46} Goodblatt 2006, p. 150.
\textsuperscript{47} Levine 2000, p. 208.
\textsuperscript{48} Levine 2000, pp. 208-209.
controlled Jewish policies for most of the period; a Hasmonean policy meant to cultivate uniquely Jewish forms of art; or a reaction by the Jews against foreign influence.\textsuperscript{49} It is important to note that two of these suggestions attribute this trend to a reaction against non-Jewish intervention, and the Sadducees and Hasmoneans may have instigated these policies in reaction to these outside influences as well.

Another civil war broke out in Judaea in 67 BCE, between the brothers Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus (\textit{AJ} 13.430-14.18). Meanwhile, to the west, the Roman general Pompey was conquering the remaining Seleucid territory. The Jews were greatly concerned by Pompey’s actions, since they could not rely on Roman support with the Seleucids gone, but would now have to deal with Rome on their borders.\textsuperscript{50} Unsurprisingly, both Hyrcanus and Aristobulus recognised the importance of support from the Roman general, and appeared before him to lodge complaints against each other. Pompey sided with Hyrcanus, and promised to settle affairs following his conflict with the Nabateans (\textit{AJ} 14.34-47). Aristobulus, attempting several times to win Pompey over through flattery, eventually shut himself in at Jerusalem, with Pompey’s armies laying siege to the town (\textit{AJ} 14.48-53). After Pompey imprisoned Aristobulus for failing to deliver Jerusalem, he captured the city in 63 BCE (\textit{AJ} 14.58-70; Plut. \textit{Pomp.} 39.2). Strabo, in his \textit{Geographica}, reports that Pompey captured the city on the Sabbath, though he is slightly confused on some details (16.2.40).\textsuperscript{51}

Pompey then returned the high priesthood to Hyrcanus. He also stripped away the territories the Hasmoneans had conquered, reducing the region to a client state of the Romans

\textsuperscript{49} Levine 2000, p. 209.

\textsuperscript{50} Greenhalgh 1981, p. 137.
(AJ 14.74). Pompey removed the title of king from Hyrcanus, since he no longer ruled non-Judaean territory, and became an *ethnarch*.\(^{52}\) Ironically, the Syrians and Greeks living within the territory captured by the Hasmonaeans likely welcomed this decision and Roman intervention in general, in sharp contrast with the situation in Egypt following Roman annexation.\(^{53}\) The conquest of Jerusalem was one of the many important events celebrated in Pompey’s triumph - Aristobulus himself appeared in chains.\(^{54}\) While the Jewish view of Pompey is largely negative because of this event, he appears respectful of the Temple. He left the treasure within untouched, and ordered the attendants of the Temple to purify the building and return to their usual rituals.\(^{55}\) The Jewish civil war did not conclude, however, as Aristobulus’ faction found support in the east from the Parthians. In 40 CE, the Parthians invaded the region and captured Hyrcanus.\(^{56}\) The Roman Senate declared Herod king, supplying him with Roman troops. Along with his own Jewish soldiers, Herod and the Roman forces recaptured Jerusalem from the Parthians in 37 BCE. The soldiers of Herod massacred those Jews who had sided with the Parthians, who were likely non-Judaean Jews. Herod sent the captured Antigonus to Antony for execution.\(^{57}\)

Hasmonaean Judaea’s influence on Jewish identity is significant, and a quick sketch of the events and details of the period can hardly encapsulate the complexity of Jewish identity during


\(^{52}\) Schwartz 2005, p. 68.

\(^{53}\) Greenhalgh 1981, p. 138. For Greek concern on Roman intervention in Egypt, see chapter two, pp. 76-78.

\(^{54}\) Leach 1978, p. 223.


\(^{56}\) Schwartz 2001, p. 43.

\(^{57}\) Schwartz 2001, pp. 43-44.
the century of Jewish autonomy. Even during the Maccabean revolt itself, the matter of foreign influence divided the Jews, discord that would return at the end of the Hasmonean’s reign. While the region of Judaea was important to Jewish identity, the expansion of the Hasmonean state incorporated other peoples as Jews, though not without difficulties, as the next chapter discusses. The disappearance of figural art from Hasmonean Judaea would suggest that they were attempting to seclude themselves from foreign influence, yet to some extent the Hasmoneans themselves Hellenised. They wrote their history in Greek; they used Greek on their coinage, presenting themselves and their state through the coins, and, like the other Hellenistic kingdoms, sought to expand their territory through martial conquest. To suggest that the Hasmoneans were strictly Jewish in their identity is a gross simplification of the world in which they dwelt.

IV. Herodian Judaea

The Roman Senate appointed Herod as king of Judaea in 40/39 BCE. The Romans at the time were embroiled in a series of civil wars, which resulted from, and further exacerbated fractionalisation of the Senate.\(^{58}\) The death of Gaius Iulius Caesar, in 44 BCE, led to a new conflict between Caesar’s adopted son Octavian (the future Augustus), and one of Caesar’s generals, Marcus Antonius (more commonly known as Mark Antony). It appears that initially the new king of Judaea supported Antony, who had made Herod a tetrarch in 41 BCE at Daphne (\textit{BJ} 1.245; \textit{AJ} 4.326), and Plutarch includes Herod as one of Antony’s supporters (\textit{Antony} 61.2).\(^{59}\) The victory of Octavian at Actium, in 31 BCE, should have meant Herod’s rule would end,

\(^{58}\) For the Jewish support of the \textit{populares} faction, see chapter one, pp. 9-12. For support of Caesar in the civil war, see chapter one, p. 31.
though it appears that Herod was able to exhibit his support for Octavian, who allowed Herod to continue as king. Herod himself was not present at Actium because of an earthquake in Judaea, which may have helped him win Octavian’s support. Herod showed his support to the new emperor by the actions of traditional Hellenistic monarchs, building a new port city named Caesarea, as well as constructing Greek institutions such as theatres and amphitheatres near Jerusalem. Herod even established athletic competitions, completely alien to the Jews of Judaea, aside from during the brief period in the mid second-century BCE, though it would likely please the non-Jewish inhabitants (AJ 15.267-79). Yet Herod also strove to emphasise his own Jewish identity, and ingrati ate his Jewish subjects. Most famously, he had the Temple refurbished. Herod insisted that prospective non-Jewish marriage partners undergo circumcision. When Herod’s sister Salome was to marry the Arab Syllaeus, Herod predicated the union on Syllaeus’ circumcision, which he refused, and thus Herod called off the marriage (AJ 16.225).

Herod’s status as a Jewish king is an interesting situation. Antigonus lambasts Herod, scoffing at the idea of handing the kingdom to an Idumean, a half-Jew (AJ 14.399-403). Aside from this passage, the only judgement Josephus takes in regard to Herod’s Jewish identity is his lack of orthopraxy. Herod was never a strict observer of Jewish law, which his Jewish subjects likely resented. In 40 CE, while celebrating his accession in Rome, Herod joined Roman

64 Eckhardt 2011, p. 95.
magistrates for a sacrifice to Jupiter on the Capitoline (BJ 1.285). Furthermore, Herod’s mother, named Cypros, is of Nabataean ancestry, which Josephus brings up twice in his works (AJ 14.119-121; BJ 1.181). It is important to note that this does not preclude Herod from being Jewish, since the matrilineal principle of Rabbinic Judaism did not exist in the first century CE, and Antigonus’ barb that Herod was a half-Jew stemmed from his Idumean father, not his Arab mother. Two Christian authors, Justin (Dialogue with Trypho 52) and Sextus Iulius Africanus (ap. Eus. Eccl. Hist. 1.7.11) claim Herod was not Jewish. This is in stark contrast with the position of Herod’s chief councillor, Nicolaus of Damascus, whom Josephus cites as claiming Herod’s family came from a leading Babylonian Jewish family (AJ 14.9), though Josephus himself dismisses the notion as an attempt by Nicolaus to praise Herod. While the Jewish (and later, Christian) tradition was to dismiss Herod’s claim to a Jewish identity, it appears that as far as the Romans were concerned, Herod was Jewish. Plutarch, in describing the various kings who allied with Antony, identifies him as Ἡρώδης ὁ Ἰουδαῖος, ~ ‘Herod the Jew’. Plutarch considers Herod as Jewish, regardless of his ancestry. Strabo considered Herod a local (16.2.46).

Herod’s largest contribution to Judaea was his intensive building programme. Immediately after Actium, Herod displayed his support for Octavian by constructing the new city

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69 Cohen 1999, p. 15.
70 Eckhardt 2011, p. 95.
at Actium named Nicopolis which Octavian had founded (AJ 16.147).\textsuperscript{71} Herod re-founded Samaria as Sebaste in honour of Augustus as a Greek city as well (BJ 1.403; AJ 15.296).\textsuperscript{72} Herod also built temples to Augustus in the cities of Sebaste, Caesarea, and Paneion, following late-Republican Italian styles.\textsuperscript{73} Many cities in Judaea received Greek institutions such as theaters and baths under Herod, appearing in Jerusalem, Herodeion, Masada, Machairous, and Caesarea.\textsuperscript{74} In fact, until the reign of Nero Judaea had more baths and theaters than Rome itself!\textsuperscript{75} The gymnasia and stadia Herod constructed were also the venues for athletic games, such as the Aktia at Nicopolis and Kaisareia at Caesarea and Jerusalem, which also featured musical and dramatic competitions, foreign to Jewish customs.\textsuperscript{76} The king did not build gymnasia at Jerusalem, however, probably recognizing that the prior attempt to introduce gymnasia in the city led to revolt.\textsuperscript{77} Herod desired to align Judaea with the Greco-Roman world, but knew that many would oppose any flagrant attempts to Hellenise (or Romanise) the Jews. Herodian art styles, like their Hasmonean predecessors, avoided figural art, though vegetative and geometric art appears frequently in wall paintings and mosaics.\textsuperscript{78} Herod generally adopted Roman styles and techniques, such as the barrel vaulted platforms from Republican sanctuaries and marble

\textsuperscript{71} Roller 1998, p. 88.
\textsuperscript{72} Jacobson 2001, p. 101.
\textsuperscript{73} Roller 1998, p. 92.
\textsuperscript{74} Roller 1998, pp. 93-98.
\textsuperscript{75} Roller 1998, pp. 258-259.
\textsuperscript{76} Roller 1998, p. 116.
\textsuperscript{77} Roller 1998, p. 117.
\textsuperscript{78} Roller 1998, p. 118.
Herod’s blending of Hellenistic and Roman elements appears at the port of Caesarea, based on the Hellenistic port at Alexandria. Caesarea used Roman techniques in its construction, and acted as a forbearer for the harbour at Ostia. Of course, the most prominent construction undertaken by Herod was the refurbishing of the Jerusalem Temple, which Josephus claims Herod funded from his own finances (AJ 15.380). The discovery of an inscription in Jerusalem, however, suggests this may not be true. The inscription records a donation by a Rhodian man, presumably a Jew, who made a donation towards the pavement of the Temple Mount (CIIP I.1,3). It is unlikely that Herod only received one donation, and of all things for pavement.

Herodian coins contain only Greek writing, in contrast with the Hasmoneans’ use of both Greek and Hebrew. This can mean that either Greek had become completely dominant in the economic climate of Judaea, or that Herod had little concern with what the Jewish majority desired. One coin in particular, minted in Samaria has struck scholars as odd. David Jacobson suggests a tripod of Apollo appears on the obverse, while the reverse depicts a Dioscuri cap, commonly worn by the twins Castor and Pollux (Hendin 486). Jacobson believes that Herod’s true devotion was to non-Jewish religion, which he could more freely express in a coin minted in a Greek city. He cites the tradition of Antipater being a temple slave of Apollo in support of his argument, that Herod was not Jewish. Charles Brenner, however, points out that the cap

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81 Price 2011, p. 402.
83 Jacobson 2001, pp. 100-104.
depicted on the Herodian coin is unlike any other Dioscuri cap depicted, and is more likely a helmet with crest, cheek pieces, and strap. The appearance of military equipment is far less surprising, as John Hyrcanus I used helmets on coinage, as would Herod’s successor, Herod Archelaus.84

Jewish identity under Herod, therefore, is a complicated matter. Not since the priesthood of Jason did the ruler of Judaea push for such a degree of acculturation. The exact impetus of this is unclear. Herod equally appears to try to push the Jews towards Greco-Roman practices with buildings such as gymnasia and theaters while also trying to emphasize his Jewish identity by stressing the importance of circumcision in marriage and spending a vast amount of wealth on repairing and greatly expanding the Temple. It is the Temple that was Herod’s legacy, however, as his various theatres and games disappear following his death.85 Herod’s own Jewish identity seems to be a matter of contention, since his opponents criticize him for being a half-Jew. It is important to note that Herod was in an unenviable position: the Romans probably approved of Herod’s building programme and desired the Jews to incorporate themselves within the empire, while the Jewish subjects resisted this trend.86 It is hard to argue against the claim that Herod attempted to lead Judaea on the path of incorporation into Greco-Roman culture. He spent vast amounts of wealth building not only in Judaea, but in Greece as well. Yet, if Herod believed what Nicolaus of Damascus claimed, he was entirely Jewish.

85 Schwartz 2014, p. 69.
86 Schwartz 2009, p. 129.
V. Roman Judaea before the Revolt.

Following Herod’s death, Augustus divided the territory of Judaea between his sons, granting Herod Archelaus half of the kingdom along with the title of ethnarch (BJ 2.93-96). However, Archelaus was not a kind ruler, instead treating the people poorly, which led to embassies sent to Augustus to have Archelaus removed from power (BJ 2.111). Archelaus’ territory then became a Roman province (BJ 2.117).

Almost immediately, some Jews called for open revolt against the Romans. A man named Judas the Galilean declared the Jews cowards if they submitted to the Romans and allowed them to tax the Jews (BJ 2.118). Though nothing would come of this, tensions between the Jews and the Romans persisted throughout the Roman occupation of Judaea. The Procurator Pontius Pilate, who governed from 27 to 36 CE, familiar to most for his role in the crucifixion of Jesus, was widely disliked by the Jewish population. He attempted to bring military standards depicting the image of Tiberius into the city of Jerusalem (BJ 2.169-174; AJ 18.55-59), and he using money from the Temple to build an aqueduct for Jerusalem. When the Jews complained about this use of sacred funds, Pilate had the mob beaten by his soldiers (AJ 18.60-62; BJ 2.175-177). Strangely Josephus makes no mention of a Jewish attempt to have Pilate removed, but it is in fact a Samaritan assembly to the Syrian governor Vitellius that succeeds in removing Pilate from power (AJ 18.85-89). Some have accused Pilate of being anti-Jewish, though it is more likely that Pilate was simply over-zealous in seeking to demonstrate his support for Tiberius. These events hint at a growing anti-Roman sentiment amongst the Jews of Judaea. Jewish identity in the region was heavily based on religious practices, and the interference of the

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Romans in aspects of Jewish religious life led to conflict between the Romans and an increasingly nationalistic Jewish faction.

Upon Gaius’ ascension, the new emperor released the grandson of Herod, Agrippa I from imprisonment. Tiberius had placed Agrippa in chains after a slave, Eutychus, overheard a discussion between Agrippa and Gaius in which Agrippa commented that soon Tiberius would perish and Gaius would become emperor (AJ 18.186-194). Shortly after Tiberius’ death, Gaius freed Agrippa, and made him king of the tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias (AJ 18.237). Shortly after, Agrippa also gained the tetrarchy of Herod Antipas, after Gaius determined the tetrarch was attempting to start a revolt, adding Galilee and Perea to Agrippa’s kingdom (AJ 18.250-252).

Agrippa played a vital role in defusing an explosive situation in Judaea in the following years. According to Philo, a group of non-Jews set up an altar to Gaius in the mixed city of Jamnia near the Mediterranean coast. The Jews of the city, outraged by this action, destroyed the altar (Leg. 200-202). The procurator of Judaea, Herennius Capito, whom Philo claims instigated the whole affair, alerted Gaius to the Jews’ actions. Gaius then ordered that an extravagant statue of himself be set up in the Temple at Jerusalem (Leg. 203). Gaius then sent an army to Judaea with orders to construct a statue of Gaius in the Temple, and if the Jews resisted, wage war (AJ 18.257-261). The officer Gaius appointed, Petronius, seeing the numbers of the Jews willing to stage a revolt because of the statue, delayed action and met with several assemblies of Jews (AJ 18.268-288). Agrippa then interceded on behalf of the Jews, requesting that Gaius reverse his

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88 Bilde 2010, p. 102; Josephus’ account does not mention the altar at Jamnia, instead attributing his actions to the embassies led by Philo and Apion, and Apion’s assertion that the Jews alone did not worship Gaius. For this embassy to Gaius, see chapter two, p. 82.
decision, and owing to Gaius’ respect for Agrippa, he conceded (AJ 18.296-300). Gaius wrote to Petronius in Judaea, telling him to dismiss the army. However, Gaius then received a report from Judaea on how the Jews prepared to revolt over the statue, and, once again changing his mind, warned Petronius that, while he was free to do as he pleased; he now faced the displeasure of the emperor (AJ 18. 301-304). Luckily, Petronius received news of Gaius’ assassination before this second letter, and abandoned the project (AJ 18. 305-309). Once again, a sizeable number of Jews showed their willingness to die for their practices, and even prepared to revolt over a statue of Gaius. The early first century is a period of increasing Roman intervention in Judaea, and the Jews began to react with hostility. However, not all Jews were opposed to Rome, as some, most notably Agrippa, owed their fortune to Roman friendships. Agrippa tried to appease both the Romans and his Jewish co-religionists, a position that became increasingly difficult to maintain.

Agrippa died in 44 CE, and his kingdom would return to direct Roman control; the period between the reign of Herod and the Jewish War provides a good amount of foreshadowing for what was to come. It is important to note that Gaius’ decision to install a statue of himself in Jerusalem is a stark transition from the position of other rulers in Judaea, aside from Antiochus IV and, nearly a century later, the emperor Hadrian. The Roman position towards Judaea allowed a great deal of flexibility, and much as in Rome and Alexandria, Roman intervention in Jewish practices came about only at the instigation of select individuals. Agrippa I, like his grandfather Herod, was a Roman-appointed king, and he had some amount of sway in Roman politics. Agrippa also supported the Jewish community, using his friendship with Gaius to avoid a revolt. Nevertheless, direct Roman rule of Judaea was inevitably going to lead to open revolt, as poor

89 Such as his role in the ascension of Claudius (see chapter one, pp. 37-38).
leadership by the Roman officials such as the procurator Pontius Pilate and the emperor Gaius only added fuel to the calls of revolt that had begun decades earlier.

Jewish identity in the early first century BCE in Judaea is similar to that under the Seleucids; tired of foreign intervention in Jewish affairs, a growing number of Jews begins to react with hostility when foreigners interfere with their religious practices. While open revolt is staved off through fortuitous timing and pro-Roman Jews such as Agrippa, Jewish identity becomes increasingly militarised and nationalistic. For the Romans, especially the emperors such as Gaius, Jewish resistance to Rome was unexpected; other conquered peoples had accepted Roman ways, yet the Jews remained steadfast opponents of any drastic change, going so far as to bare their necks in defiance. This period of early resistance shaped Roman-Jewish interactions for the decades to come, as the Romans began to recognise the difficulties presented by the Jewish subjects of Judaea, while they could rely on some high profile Jews, such as Agrippa I, to support them.

VI. The Jewish War.

The Jewish War, fought from 66 to 70 CE (some scholars date the end of the war to the fall of Masada in 73 CE), is a seminal moment in Roman history. While provincial revolts against Roman rule occurred frequently, most of the information concerning them come from Roman sources. While Josephus certainly wrote for a Roman audience, his position as a Jew who began the conflict fighting against the Romans provides a new position to view the revolt. Josephus’ work is, however, apologetic, and aims to convince the reader that it was only a small number of
Jews who desired a revolt.\textsuperscript{90} A good number of the Jews did struggle against Roman rule, and their numbers must have been sufficient to make such a revolt feasible.

Josephus provides a quick overview of the various Jewish sects in both the eighteenth book of his \textit{Antiquities} and the second book of the \textit{Jewish War}. According to the historian, there were three main groups amongst the Jews: the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes (\textit{AJ} 18.11; \textit{BJ} 2.119). The Pharisees live simple lives governed by reason, believe the soul is immortal, and have a great amount of sway over the people (\textit{AJ} 18.12-15). The Sadducees however deny the immortality of the soul, and only a few people follow their ways. When a Sadducee comes into a magisterial position, they follow the Pharisees, because they would not be able to follow the Sadducee path (\textit{AJ} 19.16-17). The Essenes also believed that everything comes from God, and Josephus describes them as surpassing all others in terms of virtue (\textit{AJ} 18.18-22). Josephus also provides a fourth, unnamed, sect, that owed its origin to Judas the Galilean, who in all ways agreed with the Pharisees, but were earnestly committed to the ideal of liberty, and that God alone was their ruler. They do not fear death, and, Josephus claims, this sect revolted under Gessius Florus (\textit{AJ} 18.23-25). Most often, the name of this sect is ‘Zealot’, from the Greek ζηλωτής. In Hebrew, the term is \textit{kana’im}, one who is zealous on behalf of God. The Zealots and the unnamed fourth sect may not be the same, however, since Josephus never draws a clear connection between the two groups, as he only uses the name Zealot halfway through the revolt.\textsuperscript{91} Rather, the Zealots, first introduced in Josephus in book four, may have been Jewish peasants, forced to leave their homes by Vespasian’s advance in the north, who banded together

\textsuperscript{90} Wilker 2012, p. 159.

\textsuperscript{91} Horsley 1986, pp. 160-161.
forming bandit parties that eventually took refuge in Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{92} Regardless of whether the two groups are the same, both sides had similar goals: establishing a new state. The Zealots had a strong political and religious focus, basing their new state on Jewish traditions, and viewed themselves as installing a theocracy. They struggled against not only the Romans, but also the mediating group within Judaea.\textsuperscript{93} Their very name, Zealots, suggests that Judaism was central to their identity, as was a strong desire for liberty and a willingness to use a militant uprising to achieve their goals.

One must not take the existence of a pro-Roman party in the Jewish Judaean population for granted, however. In all likelihood, they made up a non-negligible portion of the population, though the exact balance between the rebels and ‘loyalists’ shifted over the course of the war. For instance, the Jews of Scythopolis aligned themselves with the non-Jewish population of the city against the rebels, though the alliance was short-lived as the non-Jews, probably suspicious of their Jewish allies, massacred them in their sleep (\textit{BJ} 2.466-468). The Jews of Sepphoris and Tiberias also sided with the loyalists led by Agrippa. That is not to say that these cities were strictly pro-Roman, but that the majority of Jews within the city walls sided with the Romans.\textsuperscript{94} This suggests that Jewish identity can also be divided across two groups: those Jews who are pro-independence and those who are pro-Roman, though strategy and pragmatism likely played a role as well. Perhaps those who were pro-Roman had nationalistic ambitions as well, but saw an alliance with the Romans as being a greater benefit than seclusion from them. The success of the Romans likely also contributed to towns opening their gates to the Roman armies. According to

\textsuperscript{92} Horsley, p. 163.

\textsuperscript{93} Horsley, pp. 190-191.

\textsuperscript{94} Horsley, pp. 171-174.
Josephus, there was no controversy in Sepphoris regarding welcoming Caesennius Gallus, an officer of the general Cestius (BJ 2.511), and they gladly offered hostages to show their loyalty (BJ 3.31).

The destruction of the Temple itself, in 70 CE, was undoubtedly the most important event of the revolt. The remaining Jewish rebels had barricaded themselves within the Temple. After several unsuccessful attempts to capture the Temple, Titus finally succeeded on the tenth of Ab, the same day that Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Temple five centuries prior (BJ 6.249-250). Some of Titus’ commanders suggested Titus destroy the temple, because the Jews would continue to rebel against Rome while the Temple remained. This would suggest that some Romans viewed the Jewish religion and the Jewish uprising in Judaea as complementary. The Jewish customs that occurred in the Temple contributed to the desire for independence that had troubled the Romans. Despite this, Titus declared that the Romans would not take their revenge on an inanimate building, but allowed the Temple to remain as an ornament of their empire. Titus then ordered his soldiers to try to stop the fire (BJ 6.237-243). The rebel Jews however attacked the soldiers trying to stop the flames, and after putting the Jews to flight, a Roman soldier spread the fire further into the Temple (BJ 6.249-253). Titus tried to order his soldiers to stop the fire, but went unheard in the fighting (BJ 6.254-259).

Josephus’ account of this event is problematic. Throughout his work, he depicts Titus as a competent general in good control of his soldiers. Here, however, Titus uncharacteristically loses control, allowing the fire to destroy the Temple. However, the building was largely made of stone, meaning fire alone could not destroy the Temple. While Josephus did not wish to place the decision to destroy the Temple with Titus, and thus created this account to absolve him of guilt, it does seem that Titus meant to destroy the Temple. There exists a Tacitean fragment found in
Sulpicius Severus, in which, much like in Josephus’ account, Titus calls a council to determine the fate of the Temple. While some suggest that destroying the Temple would make the Romans barbarians, in this account Titus is on the side of those who call for the Temple to be destroyed, so that they may destroy Judaism and Christianity (Chronicle 2.30.6). This addition of the Christians is likely by Severus, and the passage itself is more a paraphrase than a quotation, but it is far more reliable than the apologetic Josephus.\footnote{Bruce 1984, pp. 43-44.} Furthermore, by the time the fire broke out in the Temple, the Temple cult had ended for some time. Sacrifices had ceased on the 17th of Panemus (a Macedonian month corresponding to June/July) when the sacrifices ran out, and most of the priests were deceased after years of civil war and famine.\footnote{Levick 1999, pp. 117-118.} Titus likely destroyed the Temple on purpose, perhaps at the behest of his father Vespasian. A similar event occurred at Leontopolis, where Vespasian ordered the destruction of a Jewish temple after Jewish rebels travelled to Egypt and attempted to start a revolt there as well (BJ 7.409-421). The new tax imposed on Jews throughout the empire, the Fiscus Iudaicus, which replaced the annual half-shekel tribute by every Jew to the Temple with a tax of two denarii a year to a temple for Jupiter Optimus Maximus, in Rome further emphasises that the Flavians had no intention of allowing the Temple cult to return.\footnote{Rives 2005, pp. 153-154. For the temple at Leontopolis and the fallout of the Jewish Revolt in Egypt, see chapter two, pp. 89-90. For the Fiscus Iudaicus, see chapter one, pp. 43-47, and chapter two, pp. 89-90.} The Romans viewed the Temple as the institution that drove the Jews to rebel, and hoped its removal would prevent further revolts. Perhaps the Romans believed that by destroying the Temple, the centre of the Jewish faith that was the primary point of distinction between the Jews and other peoples, they could finally incorporate the Jews within the Roman
Empire. The Romans thus believed that the Temple was the main aspect of Jewish identity, and its removal would lead to further Jewish integration.

The question remains why some of the Jews of Judaea decided to revolt. Of all the peoples the Romans conquered, none struggled as much as the Jews did, though this perhaps owes to the abundance of evidence for this revolt in the sources. If the Germans or Britons had primary sources, there may exist similar motivations and factors in the revolts. While attributing the Jewish Revolt to ‘nationalism’ may be anachronistic, it does appear that the Jewish rebels had national aspirations. Josephus’ own history suggests that the Jewish rebels desired freedom from the Romans and to create an autonomous Jewish state. The ending of the sacrifices for the benefit of the emperor and the Roman Empire marked a separation of Jewish affairs from those of Rome, and the attacks on Roman garrisons within the city, Syrian villages and cities on their borders (BJ 2.430; 2.449-456; 2.458-260) illustrate that the Jewish rebels separated themselves from the Romans.98 The order to destroy Agrippa II’s palace at Tiberias due to idolatrous images shows that the rebels desired to create a state based on Jewish religious principles (Vita 65-69).99 Documents found in the caves at Wadi Murabb’at, which date to the first revolt, show that daily life continued under a new system. The documents include sales of land (Mur. 22, 25, and 30) as well as a bill of divorce (Mur. 19). Of the dated examples, the documents date the year using ‘the freedom of Israel’ (Mur. 23), ‘the redemption of Israel’ (Mur. 22, 29, 30), or ‘freedom of Jerusalem’ (Mur. 25).100 There are quite a few similarities between the actions of the Hasmoneans and the Jewish rebels, even though they are they are separated by nearly two

98 Mclaren 2011, pp. 133-34.
99 Mclaren 2011, pp. 136-137.
100 Mclaren 2011, pp. 142-143.
centuries. Both groups placed themselves in opposition to foreign conquerors, willing to bear arms in an effort to win their freedom. Likewise, both the Hasmoneans and rebels based their actions on religious principles, and centered their new states on the Temple of Jerusalem. The similarities between the two suggest that there was a sizeable number of Jews who saw no incompatibility between their religion and military might, and in fact the two supported each other. Both the Hasmoneans and rebels viewed war as a necessary action to ensure the continued observance of Jewish practices, which were central to their identity. They stood in contrast to the Hellenised Jews, who, while still considering themselves Jewish, adopted Greek and Roman practices and were more willing to appease the foreign powers.

The rebels express similar sentiments in their coins. The silver shekels minted by the rebels is of exceptionally pure quality, over 98 percent silver, likely meaning the minter was the Temple institution or high priests, with the support of the various rebel factions.\textsuperscript{101} The symbols used on the silver coins are mostly the same, depicting a chalice on the obverse, likely the same ritual vessel that the Arch of Titus depicts, and a staff with pomegranate buds on the reverse, which Deutsch suggests the high priest used.\textsuperscript{102} The symbols on other coins are intrinsically connected with Judaea and Judaism as well, such as \textit{lulav} and \textit{ethrog}, the palm branch and citron used in the Festival of Tabernacles, and date palms, common to the Judaean Desert.\textsuperscript{103} Unlike the Hasmonean coins, the rebel coinage does not name the minter or a leader.\textsuperscript{104} However, they do

\textsuperscript{101} Deutsch 2011, pp. 365-366; 369-371. The rebel mint was likely based in Jerusalem, as rebel coinage ceased being minted after 70 CE. Deutsch 2011, p. 361.

\textsuperscript{102} Deutsch 2011, pp. 361-364.

\textsuperscript{103} Goodman 2007a, p. 164; Deutsch 2011, p. 361.

\textsuperscript{104} Goodman 2007a, p. 165.
provide a name for their state, which neither Josephus nor the Romans recorded. Most coins use ‘Israel’, perhaps referring to the people of Israel, along with ‘Jerusalem’ and, on the bronze coinage, ‘Zion’. This suggests that the rebels had a clear breakdown of their state, Jerusalem the capital city, and Zion the Temple Mount itself, which formed the basis for their actions.\textsuperscript{105} If so, the rebels clearly viewed their new state in religious terms, centered on the Temple of Jerusalem. This is similar to the Hasmoneans, who celebrated their arrival to power with the purification of the Temple, suggesting both groups viewed the Temple cult as intrinsic to Jewish identity. No coin uses any variation of the term ‘Judaea’, itself a Latin word, perhaps because the rebels equated the name with foreign occupation. The name of the province under the Hellenic rulers and the Romans was Judaea, thus lessening any Jewish sentiment that they could draw on.\textsuperscript{106}

The rebels further separated themselves from the non-Jews by inscribing the coins in an archaic-Hebrew script, meaning the audience who could interpret the coins and their meaning was limited to Jews. In the 1930s, scholars debated whether these coins even belonged to the revolt due to the use of Hebrew.\textsuperscript{107} It is important to note that simply minting the coins established the separation of the Jewish rebels from the Roman state, as the ability to mint coins was the exclusive domain of the emperor to give to whom he pleased.\textsuperscript{108}

There are two points to emphasise concerning the Jewish revolt of 66 to 70 CE. First, much like the Maccabean revolt two centuries prior, the Jews were not a monolithic block who wholeheartedly supported the rebels. Like the Hellenisers of the mid-second century BCE, a

\textsuperscript{105} Goodblatt 2006, pp. 121-125; McLaren 2011, p. 146.

\textsuperscript{106} Goodman 2007a, p. 166; Goodblatt 2006, p. 166.

\textsuperscript{107} Goodman 2007a, p. 164.

\textsuperscript{108} McLaren 2011, p. 148.
significant minority of Jews were perfectly content with Roman rule. Although Josephus’ assertion that a small group of Jews began the war is purely apologetic, some Jewish communities, such as those at Tiberias and Sepphoris, allied with the Romans. Some of these people, like Agrippa II and Berenice, benefited from the Romans, while others changed sides as the inevitable result became apparent. Josephus, whose support for the rebellion is indicated by his taking an active role as general, realised it was better to work with the Romans than die. Combined with the infighting amongst the rebels, the Jewish revolt is also a civil war concerning Jewish identity and their relationship with the Romans. The status of the Jews as a minority throughout much of the ancient world has led to the belief that Jewish identity is uniform. In other words, the Jews of Rome maintained the same Jewish identity as the Jews of Alexandria or Judaea, each equally recognisable as Jewish. However, in Judaea, where the Jews were the majority of the population, a clear divide in Jewish identity appears, exacerbated by the various conflicts within the region. That such a divide occurred only in Judaea is unreasonable, and the conditions of Judaea likely appeared elsewhere in the ancient world as well, perhaps lacking the extreme results that led to infighting amongst the Jews of Judaea. Second, those Jews who did decide to revolt had the express goal of establishing an autonomous Jewish state, just as the Hasmoneans before them, based on religious values. The Romans, once victorious, came to the same conclusion, and decided to destroy the institution they felt served as a focal point for the rebels, the Temple of Jerusalem. However, this would not be the last Jewish revolt the Romans faced.

109 McLaren 2011, p. 133.
VII. Post-Revolt Judaea, Bar Kochba, and Roman Palestine.

The defeat of the Jews did not mark the end of Jewish life in the region. Although the Romans killed and captured countless numbers, the Jews remained in Judaea. The Romans continued to use the name ‘Judaea’ for the province in their coins. Perhaps the Romans were aware of the ‘Israel’ state created by the rebels and hoped to reinforce their control - or they simply did not care. Imperial coins are undoubtedly pieces of propaganda, and the new Flavian coins celebrated the conquest of Judaea with *Iudaea Capta*, the sole Jewish element a palm tree (RPC II:303).\(^{110}\) Several silver denarii minted by Vespasian show a captive female figure, likely the personification of Judaea, a connection supported by the date tree underneath which the figure sits, perhaps with her hands bound behind her back (Brom. 291). Some versions also include a Roman soldier standing guard over the prisoner (Brom. 286, 295). Almost immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem, a group of Jews founded a settlement at Shu’afat, approximately four kilometres north of the Old City of Jerusalem. The community is identifiable as Jewish thanks to *Miqva’ot*, ritual baths, and the low number of bones from ritually impure animals such as pigs. However, the settlers quickly abandoned the town around 130 CE and never returned.\(^{111}\) At the same time, Judaea once again rose up in revolt.

While another Jewish revolt in Egypt broke out during the reign of Trajan, Judaea remained quiet for over a half-century following the failed revolt.\(^{112}\) Judaea remained at the whim of Roman governors, including one Lusius Quietus, who violently suppressed any hint of

\(^{110}\) Goodman 2007a, p. 166.

\(^{111}\) Price 2011, pp. 415-416.

\(^{112}\) For the Egyptian Jewish Revolt, see chapter 2, pp. 90-91.
revolt or dissent within the province. One of the Emperor Hadrian’s first acts upon his ascension in 117 CE was to remove the governor, under the accusation of planning to usurp the new emperor (HA Had. 5.8). Hadrian would not prove to be a friend of the Jews, however, perhaps due to the Egyptian revolts, which may have contributed to Hadrian’s anti-Jewish sentiments. This dislike is likely mutual on the part of the Jews, owing to Hadrian’s encouragement to worship his young lover Antinous, who had drowned in the Nile River in 130 CE. The specific reason a new revolt occurred is unfortunately unclear.

The general suggestion that Hadrian made several anti-Jewish decrees is not well attested, and may in fact be a consequence of the revolt, not what caused the revolt itself. An attempted ban on circumcision only appears in a short note in the Historia Augustae, and Cassius Dio, one of the closest historical sources to the event, makes no mention of such action, instead attributing the revolt to an attempt to colonize Jerusalem (Had. 14.2; Dio 69.12.1-14.3). Why Hadrian would make such decrees is another question. One possibility is that Hadrian was emulating Antiochus IV by turning Jerusalem into a Greek city and Hellenising the Jews. The cessation of circumcision, one of the most easily identifiable Jewish elements among non-Jews, would suggest that Hadrian had the incorporation of the Jews within the Roman Empire in mind. Coins commemorating Hadrian’s visit to Judaea in 130/131 depict the personification of Judaea, dressed in typical Greco-Roman fashion, greeting the emperor (BMC III Hadrian no. 1655).

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113 Birley 1997, pp. 78-79.
Judaea appears as any other Hellenised province within the Roman Empire, with no element that one could connect to the Jewish population of the province. If the coins were the only surviving evidence on Imperial Judaea, it would appear the same as any other province.\textsuperscript{118} This supports the earlier hypothesis that the Romans believed that they could incorporate the Jews within their empire. Judaea, no longer tied with the Temple cult, was the same as any other Roman province, and the Jews were another people whom Rome had conquered and would eventually integrate.

Regardless of the exact circumstances that caused the revolt, the Jews of Judaea once again strove to end Roman rule within Judaea beginning in 132 CE. Dio does imply that other peoples joined the revolt.\textsuperscript{119} Unlike the rebels of the revolt of 66-70, the Jews appear to have coalesced under the leadership of one man. Although the Roman sources make no mention of this, later Christian sources provide the name Shim’on ben/bar Kos’ba, commonly referred to as Bar Kochba, who took the title of nasi, ‘prince’, of Israel.\textsuperscript{120} Rabbinic sources give the leader the derogatory name Bar Koziba, meaning ‘son of deception’.\textsuperscript{121} That one leader became synonymous with the revolt suggests that the Jewish rebels were largely unified under Bar Kochba, unlike the prior revolts which featured infighting amongst the rebels due to multiple leaders contesting amongst themselves. Like the prior rebels, Bar Kochba also minted coins, concentrated within the district of Judaea referring to himself as leader, and used a dating system based on the legeullaht yisrael, ‘redemption/freedom of Israel’, again similar to the first revolt’s

\textsuperscript{118} Birley 1997, pp. 231-232.

\textsuperscript{119} One suggestion is that these were inhabitants of Arabia, though it is likely that the majority of those who rebelled were Jews. Birley 1997, p. 269.

\textsuperscript{120} Birley 1997, pp. 269-271.

\textsuperscript{121} Schwartz 2014, p. 94.
coinage. The symbols and language used are equally Jewish in character; the coins use Hebrew, and the images recall the Temple and its rituals.\textsuperscript{122} Several letters dating to the revolt use the term ‘house of Israel’, which may be analogous to the modern ‘state of Israel’, or may refer to the Jewish people as a whole (5/6Hev 49; Mur. 42-44), and shows that Bar Kochba and his supporters continued the tradition of the first revolt, using Israel as the name of their state.\textsuperscript{123}

The Roman response was unsurprisingly fierce and swift. The Romans destroyed 50 Jewish outposts and 985 villages, killed 580,000 in conflict, and the number of those who died because of famine, disease, and fire was immeasurable (Dio 69.14.1). Hadrian’s punishment for the Jews involved the expulsion from Jerusalem, which officially became a colony named Aelia Capitolina. The province of Judaea no longer existed; it was renamed Syria Palaestina. Perhaps this reflects Roman thoughts on the Jews, as the name of the province lost its Jewish connotation; the Jews, like Judaea, were now like any other people within the empire. Any hope of a free Judaea ended here.

Following the Bar Kochba revolt, an interesting development occurs within Jewish art. While figural art had disappeared with the Hasmoneans, Jewish art in the decades reintroduced figural representations. Knowledge of this change is thanks to the archaeological discoveries at Bet Alpha (1928-29), Dura Europos (1932), and Bet She’arim (beginning in 1936). There are two suggestions for this reversal in artistic trends: either Jews Hellenised, or the increasing minority status of the Jews within Judaea meant accommodation became necessary, and

\textsuperscript{122} Schwartz 2014, p. 93; Goodman 2007a, p. 166; Birley 1997, p. 270.

\textsuperscript{123} Goodblatt 2006, p. 134.
restrictions on the portrayal of images relaxed as a result.\textsuperscript{124} Scholars have argued the exact meaning of these images. Some saw that non-Jewish elements, such as the depiction of a sun god in a mosaic floor at the Hamat Tiberias synagogue, had some religious meaning to the Jews reflecting a popular form of Judaism, and others suggest that they were simply decorative.\textsuperscript{125} The return of figural art in Jewish context after nearly three centuries suggests a change in how the Jews viewed themselves. While from the period of the Hasmoneans onward, the Jews avoided depicting figures, the Jews post-Bar Kochba found themselves as the minority in Judaea, and, just as in Rome, adapted to their new surroundings. This included adopting stylistic trends of the surrounding culture. The new position for Jews in Judaea meant the return of a moderate, somewhat Hellenising group.

While the defeat of Bar Kochba signalled an end to the hope for an autonomous Jewish state in Judaea for several centuries, Jewish life within Judaea continued. While the Romans expelled them from Jerusalem, they remained in Judaea, increasingly becoming a minority within the province. Thus, as in Rome and Alexandria, the Jews of Palestine accepted that some level of acculturation was preferable to disappearance. The archaeological discoveries of the prior century show that the Jews did adopt non-Jewish styles, and found no religious controversy in doing so. It is important to stress that this shift in Jewish attitude in Judaea meant that the prior interpretation of Jewish identity centered on an autonomous Jewish state disappeared post-Bar Kochba. This division was slightly alleviated by the failed revolts, which proved that, under the current circumstances, continuing the struggle would be self-destructive.


\textsuperscript{125} Schwartz 2001, pp. 133-136.
VIII. Conclusion.

When considering Jewish identity within Judaea, especially in contrast with the communities at Rome and Alexandria, it is important to remember that Judaea was unique in that it was a predominantly Jewish region; that is to say, that Jews made up a majority of the population. Whereas the Jews of Rome and Alexandria were small minorities within a foreign land, the Jews of Judaea held far more power owing to their sheer number. The Jewish experience in Judaea is thus completely different from that throughout the Diaspora.

Although the term may be anachronistic, the Jews did experience nationalistic sentiments, beginning in the mid-second century BCE. Spurred on by the actions of Antiochus IV, whose attack on Jewish rights lacked precedent amongst the foreign rulers of Judaea, a large group of Jews, led by the Hasmonean family, rebelled against the Seleucids, and successfully established an autonomous state that lasted for a century. When Judaea became a Roman province in the early first century CE, once again the Jews rose up in hope of expelling the foreigners and returning Judaea to Jewish rule. Only after two bloody revolts did the Romans pacify the region and put an end to Jewish hopes for a free Judaea. For those who fought against the Greeks and Romans, a free Judaea was an important part of Jewish identity, based on Jewish religious traditions and the Temple of Jerusalem. The Romans likely recognized the importance the Temple had to the rebels, and the Romans viewed its destruction, whether ordered by Titus or not, as another step of incorporating the Jews within the empire. Hadrian’s ban on circumcision and the colonisation of Jerusalem may have had the same goal.

While a sizeable number of Jews resisted Hellenisation, some, such as the high priest Jason and the Roman appointed kings Herod and Agrippa II, accepted foreign influence in
Jewish affairs. Just as in Rome and Alexandria, some Jews in Judaea did adapt to Greek and Roman life, adopting the languages and showing appreciation for the art. How to handle foreign influence divided the Jews of Judaea, and sometimes led to armed conflict. Following the Bar Kochba revolt, a nationalistic Jewish group ceased to have any real sway, and most Jews, like their counterparts in Rome and Alexandria, conformed to the new status quo. The rabbis, who would eventually become the new leaders of Judaism, struggled with this new system, and debated amongst themselves how to live a Jewish life in a Roman world.

While the revolts would suggest the rebels viewed Jewish identity as exclusive, just as in Rome conversion to Judaism was possible. Under the Hasmoneans this was not entirely voluntary, since the Judaeans gave the Idumeans the ultimatum of converting or leaving their ancestral land. Regardless, the Judaean state incorporated the Idumeans, who adopted Judaism and a Jewish identity for themselves. While Herod, an Idumean, considered himself a Jew, it was still a contentious issue in the early first-century CE. The Idumeans played a pivotal role on the rebels’ side in the Jewish Revolt, however, signifying their attitudes concerning Jewish identity aligned with those of the Judaean Jews who revolted.

In summary, while the Jews of Judaea were the majority, and when foreign powers proved especially troublesome, Jewish identity incorporated a nationalistic veneer, supported by Judaism itself and achieved through military arms. Unlike Rome and Alexandria, the Jews of Judaea were the majority population in the region. Any changes instigated by the Greeks and Romans met fierce resistance, often resulting in bloodshed. With the defeat of Bar Kochba and the expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem, any Jews remaining in Judaea had to accept their new position as minorities, while maintaining their Jewish identity as those Jews of Rome and Alexandria.
Conclusion

Identity, ancient and modern, remains a difficult concept to define. Self-identity constantly evolves, shaped by individuals and the world around them. Those who lived in the ancient world also struggled with their identity, as interaction with other peoples, whether peaceful or hostile, led to the introduction of new ideas and practices. The Romans themselves are a suitable example of this phenomenon, coming into contact with Greek culture through their expansion, first into southern Italy, and then into the Eastern Mediterranean and Greece itself. While Rome conquered Greece, Greek culture thoroughly penetrated Roman identity to the point where the Romans tied their origins to one of the seminal moments of Greek identity, the Trojan War. Aeneas, the Trojan prince, became the mythological pre-founder of Rome, most famously recounted in Virgil’s *Aeneid*. Greek philosophies became increasingly popular amongst the Roman elite, and Greek slaves became pedagogues for Roman children. Roman identity incorporated the Greek culture to such an extent that it is commonly designated Greco-Roman culture.

This thesis has explored Jewish identity in three major centres of the ancient world: Rome, Alexandria in Egypt, and Judaea. Unlike the Romans and Greeks, there is far less information that comes directly from the Jews, and the sources that do survive do not clearly outline what made one Jewish in the ancient world. It is likely that for them such a question was self-evident, but in examining the Jewish communities of Rome, Alexandria, and Judaea, a surprising amount of variation appears. Jewish identity emerged and evolved in a different way in each region, sometimes in a similar manner, other times radically different. Likewise, how the non-Jewish population of these areas regarded and reacted to the Jews shifts, from peaceful
acceptance and perhaps even conversion (though probably in very small numbers) to anti-Jewish riots that left much bloodshed and destruction in their wake.

Of the three regions, Rome has, unfortunately, the least evidence from the Jews themselves. What is certain is that the Jewish community of Rome was large enough to support several synagogues within the city, and their actions within the synagogues largely conformed to those of other Jewish communities: the Jews studied Torah and held communal gatherings. While this is hardly surprising, the funerary evidence suggests the Jews were, to some extent, incorporated within the larger Roman community. Greek and Latin names far outnumber traditional Jewish names, the common language for Roman Jews, much like other Diaspora communities, was Greek, and some Jews even used non-Jewish art forms at their gravesites. While it is impossible to determine the precise extent the Jews acculturated to their Roman surroundings, it is clear that there was no religious conflict living alongside non-Jews, interacting with them on a daily basis.

Further information on the Jewish community of Rome comes from Roman authors, who mention the Jews frequently. Most often, these authors focus on Jewish practices such as circumcision, observance of the Sabbath, and dietary restrictions. While occasional details are incorrect, the Roman authors are generally aware of Jewish elements and consider them indicative of one who is ‘Jewish’. The Jewish community at Rome appears several times in the historical record, most often in the context of expulsions of foreign religions from the city. This has led to the charge that the Jewish community of Rome aggressively sought out converts, a claim which has no substantiation. While it does seem the Jews were expelled several times, the expulsions never lasted very long, and it is difficult to believe that Romans gave up on expelling the supposed missionaries after the first half of the first century CE. It is more likely that some
individuals converted of their own free will to Judaism. With the advent of the *Fiscus Iudaicus* following the failed Jewish Revolt of 66 to 70 CE, these converts received state recognition as Jews. How the Jews of Rome themselves regarded these converts is unknown.

The identity of the Jews of Rome is, perhaps, the most difficult to place. Jewish rites and practices were central to Jewish life, but some measure of adapting to their Roman surroundings took place. The lack of a Philo or Josephus, a Jewish author who came from and wrote extensively on Rome makes it difficult to reach a definitive conclusion. Inferences can be drawn from archaeological remains, though that is as far as they can be taken. It appears that the Jews of Rome occupied a space which was, arguably, culturally Jewish, yet given the freedom to adapt Roman cultural aspects as they felt sufficient.

The Jews of Alexandria and Egypt integrated into the surrounding culture surprisingly well. The Jews of Egypt could, and did, serve as soldiers in the Ptolemaic armies, gaining privileges and reaching high positions such as priests and generals. That is not to say that the Jews were indistinguishable from their Ptolemaic counterparts, however; this was made clear with the loss of Judaea to the Seleucids in the early second century BCE. The question of Jewish loyalty became increasingly of concern to the Ptolemies, especially with the arrival in the East of Rome, who was an ally of the Jewish state of Judaea. At the behest of the compatriots in Judaea, the Jewish border soldiers allowed Roman armies within Egypt. While the Jews of Egypt adopted the language, names, and even legal norms of their new home, the connection with Judaea remained. Intermarriage remained rare, since Jews did not marry non-Jews, not for ethnic concerns, but religious ones. While the Jews of Egypt could acculturate and adapt, they retained a Jewish identity.
Alexandria itself was home to a large number of Jews, perhaps as much as a third of the city’s population. The most famous member of this community, Philo, represented a Hellenised faction amongst the Jews; he desired further integration within Alexandria, as well as citizenship rights. How large this faction was is impossible to say, and, like at Rome, it is likely the majority of the Jewish population was urban poor. Regardless, the calls for Alexandrian citizenship for the Jews were sufficient to elicit a response from the Greeks, who had been deposed as rulers by the Romans. While the actions of the governor, Flaccus, may not have stemmed from anti-Jewish sentiment on his part, the rioters took the opportunity to attack the Jewish community at Alexandria, destroying Jewish property and killing many. This riot ultimately resulted in the return of the status quo, but its effect on Jewish identity is massive. While the Hellenisers continued to hope for citizenship, some Jews must have decided the alternative was preferable, seeking exclusion and separation. Likely these Jews would form the backbone of later revolts. While Egypt remained quiet during the Jewish Revolt, they experienced their own uprising in the early second century CE. Not much is known about the revolt, only that it was brutally put down, and most of the Jewish community of Egypt disappeared shortly after.

Jewish identity in Alexandria is thus the closest to full integration with the surrounding culture. For a period, the Jews were considered equal members of Ptolemaic Egypt. The Jews could serve in armies with no concern over observance of the Sabbath or dietary laws, and fully enjoy the benefits they received. However, the Jews of Egypt maintained their Jewish traditions. Much like in Rome, the Jews’ status as a minority meant compromises had to be made, but they retained Jewish practices like synagogue worship and monotheism. Unfortunately, this meant the Greeks and Egyptians viewed the Jews as outsiders with divided loyalties, to Judaea and, later, Rome.
Judaea represents a different perspective on Jewish identity, as Jews went from being a minority group within the Diaspora to the majority. This meant that the Jews of Judaea did not have to adapt to the surrounding culture; they were the majority. They also continued to use traditional languages such as Aramaic and follow Jewish practices closely. The conquest of Judaea by Alexander the Great meant that the Jews, much like the Egyptians, became a majority ruled by a minority. While some Jews appear to have accepted this situation and sought to incorporate Hellenism into their daily lives, similar to the Jews of Egypt and Rome, most openly opposed the growing influence of Hellenism, eventually revolting against the Greek Seleucids. These Jews based their identity on Judaism, centering their new autonomous state on the Temple of Jerusalem and presenting themselves with Hebrew coinage. Yet they were not entirely exclusionary, incorporating non-Judaean peoples, most notably the Idumeans, into their new state. These Idumeans would become Jews themselves, though the question of their ‘Jewishness’ would remain, as the opponents of the Idumean Herod, Roman-appointed king of Judaea whose devotion to Judaism was at times tenuous, accused him of being a ‘half-Jew’.

While nationalism may not be suitable for the ancient world, the ancient Jews of Judaea certainly exhibited nationalistic tendencies, seeking to establish a Jewish state free from foreign influence. While the Hasmonean state lasted for a century, Rome eventually replaced the Seleucids as foreign rulers of Judaea. Several times the Jews attempted to revolt, echoing the language and goals of their antecedent, the Hasmoneans. There were also those who, like the Hellenisers before them, sought to incorporate themselves within Roman society, though they were likely the minority. Even the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, which the Romans likely thought would end Jewish aspirations for independence, did not cease the revolts, as yet another broke out under Bar Kochba which the Romans harshly put down. Only then, once the Romans
had killed or enslaved a large number of Jews, does a similar situation to Rome and Alexandria appear, as the Jewish minority finds accommodation necessary in order to continue daily life. Even figural art, which had disappeared from Jewish art with the arrival of the Hasmoneans, returned with the end of the Judaean revolts.

Jewish identity in Judaea is unlike that of Alexandria or Rome, perhaps because, for a brief period, the Jews were self-autonomous. Self-autonomy allowed the Jews greater freedom to shape their state as they wished, contributing to the development of a unique Judaean-Jewish identity. Judaism formed the basis of the state, which centered itself on the Temple of Jerusalem. Most of the Jews of Judaea detested Hellenism, and often conflicts arose between them and the Hellenisers. Subjugation by the Seleucids and Romans, ironically, served to nurture a nationalistic sentiment amongst the Jews of Judaea. Jewish identity in Judaea was thus utterly unlike that in Alexandria and Rome, where compromise and integration were desirable goals.

The matter of Jewish identity is a vast and complex issue. To speak of a single, unified Jewish identity in the ancient world is simply unfeasible, since each region’s Jewish population faced different issues. While Judaism provided the common background, even within a city the Jewish population could be divided, between language, such as Greek and Latin in Rome, or ideological grounds, such as the response to Hellenism in Judaea. Jewish identity in the ancient world is highly dependent on where the Jews themselves dwelt, and could change over time. While Greek and Roman largely based their views on the Jews on their practices, the Jews of Rome, Alexandria, and Judaea, while all maintaining their ‘Jewishness’, adapted in different ways.
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