JOSHUA EFRON

STUDIES ON THE HASMONEAN PERIOD

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STUDIES ON THE
HASMONEAN PERIOD

STUDIES IN JUDAISM IN LATE ANTIQUITY

EDITED BY

JACOB NEUSNER

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JOSHUA EFRON

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BY

JOSHUA EFRON

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PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS BY E. J. BRILL

A memorial to
my father Ephraim,
my mother Rivka,
my sister Manya,
dust and ashes
among the ruins
of Polish Jewry

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PREFACE

The chapters included do not cover the period in all its facets and dimensions, do not embody a complete and comprehensive solution to a complex of riddles and questions, nor even present the happenings on a continuous canvas. They deal with just seven topics, circumscribed but crucial, the fruit of studies previously published on separate occasions,[1] which have been re-examined, corrected and re-annotated. The problems treated form the links of a critical analytic chain designed to test the principles and methods of many a modern school, attack the faulty theories prevalent in the field, and contradict dubious conclusions still generally favored with only a few scholars expressing sporadic reservations or intermittent objections.

The sometimes sharp tone here adopted has no personal motivation but is designed purely to refute, dislodge and eliminate the mistaken notions that have obscured the Hasmonean period and dwarfed the image of the vigorous popular movement which led the nation faithful to its Law and covenant through a via dolorosa and martyrdom to courageous revolt. It was that movement that saved the Jewish people from the tyrannical coercive decrees which for the first time in its history endangered the survival of its Torah; it was that movement that preserved the stronghold of monotheism and restored to the Jewish people the independence lost when its Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians.

Rather bellicose and revolutionary though variegated at the outset, emerging from the villages and townlets, the Jewish Pietist movement developed in various directions evolving into the Pharisee fellowships and fathers of talmudic scholarship, the Zealots, the Essenes and even the architects of the Christian church.[2] The original movement is well reflected in primary testimonies. The visions of Daniel faithfully express the dreams and thoughts of the suffering Pietists-Hasids, and their willingness to die for their faith, praying for the collapse of heathen despotism and for national, universal, human and individual

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[1] For nearly twenty five years, these studies, while developing and crystalizing, served as subjects of university lessons and lectures in various frameworks. The location of the earlier version is indicated in the first notes of each chapter below. A certain amount of unavoidable repetition is the result of the publication of these separate studies in one volume. Relevant bibliographical details are provided in the footnotes of each chapter. All names of authors, collective works, anthologies and commentaries are also listed in the Index.

[2] Space does not permit an in-depth survey of the development and ramifications of these streams.

salvation.[3] The Hasmonean Revolt itself is reported in two Books of the Maccabees,[4] from two points of view. *I Maccabees* is rooted in the Bible, in the same soil as its heroes, sharing the warriors' feelings, and accepting the Hasmoneans as the legitimate leadership, while *II Maccabees,* representing Jewish Hellenistic literary and historiographical art in approach and style, was originally composed in Greek, remote from the environment of zealous pietism and the Revolt.

For the post-Revolt period direct internal Jewish sources of information are unavailable, and the history of the independent Hasmonean state is related in secondary sources. Foremost among these is Josephus Flavius whose two parallel treatments constitute the chief sources. Written from the perspective of the Roman period, they are admittedly anti-revolutionary, drawing mainly from foreign sources mostly unsympathetic to Jews and Judaism, and include only fragmentary recollections and legends of a Jewish nature.

On the other hand the talmudic treasury has retained an inherent tradition, basically Pharisee in origin, so that despite its composite nature, protracted compilation in academic surroundings, distant viewpoint and geographic dispersal, its Eretz Israel foundation contains scattered blocks of recollections, reports and descriptions embodying a solid core from the days of the first Pharisees and their forefathers.

The concepts and current trends of European culture had their effect on scholarly approaches and the Hasids of Hasmonean times began to be considered sectarian, or like replicas of present day Jewish Orthodox groups. Thus also the modern notion of the separation of church and state[5] led to the unfounded conviction that the Hasids supported the Hasmoneans only until religious coercion ceased, and thereafter opposed them strenously. In the liberal spirit typical of the nineteenth century emancipation movement, the Pharisee successors to the Hasids were conceived as contemptuous of the political ends and military means adopted by the Hasmoneans, and content with a theocracy

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[3] The visions of Daniel were sealed (Chapter 4 below, Section A and n. 4) not merely before the rededication of the Temple, but even before the information reached the country and was confirmed (I Macc. III 37) regarding the departure of Antiochus Epiphanes (in 147 of the Seleucid era, that is 166/165 B.C.E.) to the countries of the East, and not as expected (Dan. 11:40 ff.) on another expedition to Egypt. It is not surprising therefore that the terror of the persecution still lurked, the atmosphere of martyrdom still obtained, and there was a slight echo of the armed conflict that was just beginning.

[4] The term "Hasmoneans" is rooted in Judaism (Chapter 1, n. 7) and preferable to "Maccabees" who were canonized in the Christian church.

[5] While it is true that Judaism is characterized by a code combining law and religion, secular slogans calling for the separation of ritual from the state and for total freedom of conscience never developed even in the idol-worshiping Greek and Roman societies. See N.D. Fustel de Coulanges, *The Ancient City* (New York 1956); G. Glotz, *La Cité Grecque* (Paris 1953); A.D. Nock, *Conversion* (Oxford 1933); V. Ehrenberg, *The Greek State* (London 1969); Plato, *Republic* IV (5) 427; idem, *Laws* VI 759; Aristotle, *Politics,* III 1285b; M.T. Cicero, *Laws* II 7, 18 ff.

under foreign rule so that they even welcomed Pompey, the enemy commander and Roman conqueror, at the gates of Jerusalem.[6]

These assumptions were accepted as almost axiomatic truths, although based on a distorted interpretation of the main early sources—Daniel, the Books of the Maccabees, Josephus and the talmudic recollections. Support was extracted for those misinterpretations from pseudepigraphic books (such as the *Psalms of Solomon*) which wrapped in a scriptural cloak a covert Christian viewpoint that was laboriously construed as Hasid-Pietist, Essene or Pharisee, although they involved a superhuman redeemer alongside God, judging the world and defeating the forces of darkness.[7]

This literature has now been supplemented by the Qumran Scrolls which disseminate the doctrines and ceremonies of the "New Covenant" (such as baptism combined with atonement for sins) and prophesy destruction for those who sinned against the savior-Messiah, who will redeem the faithful.[8] Despite some superficial similarities, the fellowship of the Scrolls does not correspond to the Hasids or Essenes admired and pictured with enthusiasm by Philo and Josephus, who certainly had no intention of glorifying heretical sects hostile to genuine Judaism.[9]

Delusions of that sort caused the image of the Pietist and Zealot popular and real movement in the Hasmonean Revolt to fade, and be supplanted by a rootless apocalyptic one paving the way to Christianity. Sadducee tendencies

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[6] Julius Wellhausen (Chapter 1, n. 28) polished and formulated the extremist theory. Despite its contradictions and weaknesses, it has supporters to the present day among scholars such as A. Schalit, *König Herodes* (Berlin 1969), p. 541, or V. Burr, "Rom und Judäa," *ANRW* I.1 (1972), p. 878. See Chapter 6, n. 51.

[7] The Book of Daniel is entirely lacking in the typical principal qualities of the well known apocalyptical pictures: There is no cosmic catastrophe, no Christ-like messiah versus an Antichrist, no heavenly host against Satan and his cohorts in dualistic opposition, no elect community or children of light believing in an exalted savior against those despising him denounced as the children of darkness, nor is there total negation and sharp enmity to historical Judaism and its genuine sanctities. We shall disregard here Jewish messianic literature which was born in the Middle Ages and shows definite signs of external influences: Yehuda Even-Shmuel, *Midreshei Geula* (Jerusalem–Tel Aviv, 1954).

[8] The Scrolls are dealt with here in a few notes and addenda to Chapter 2 (Nn. 71–78). The texts mentioned are in the *Manual of Discipline,* or Rule Scroll (ed. J. Licht, Jerusalem 1965). The concept of the "New Covenant" appears in the Scroll of the *Damascus Document* (VI 19, p. 80 in A.M. Habermann, *Megillot Midbar Yehuda* (Tel Aviv 1959) and according to the reconstructed text in the Scroll of the Habakkuk Commentary (II 3, ibid, p. 43).

[9] The calendar of holidays and specific sectarian rules, the cancelation of the ritual that unites dispersions and generations in Jewry, and the disqualification of Jerusalem and its Temple definitely contradict the Jewish Torah. There is no controversy here between movements and streams within the community, but rather a sign of an unbridgeable chasm between the nation and a separate hostile fellowship. Now the christological lines in the style of Christianity emerges, in the light of texts found and so far published (see Chapter 2, n. 63) from the caves in the Qumran area, such as: J.M. Allegro *DJD,* Vol. V; *Qumran Cave 4* (Oxford 1968), p. 9 ff.; J.T. Milik, "Milki-Sedeq," *JJS* 23 (1972): 95ff.; idem, "4 Q Visions de Amram," *RB* 79 (1972): 77 ff.

and secular inclinations were read into *I Maccabees,* despite transparent associations with the Daniel dramas and clearly Pharisee traditions,[10] while purely Hasidic viewpoints and true Eretz Israel Phariseeism were attributed to the characteristically Hellenistic-Jewish *II Maccabees.* Furthermore, there has not been proper examination of Josephus' two parallel treatments in order to ascertain the reasons for the disagreements on the cardinal questions that troubled the Hasmonean kingdom, and uncover the facts behind the censure that has distorted the epoch in non-Jewish historiography.[11]

The Pietists-Hasids, defending and fighting for the Torah during rebellion and military struggle, were neither liberal reformist rabbis nor rigid medieval-type Orthodox ones. But because of the confusion in historiographic conceptions and research, methodological criteria for basic chronological distinctions were forgotten. As a result the Jerusalem Talmud was often dismissed in favor of the posterior Babylonian Talmud, despite its mixed nature, because the latter Talmud seemed to accord with Josephus' versions.[12] That is the reason for the disregard of a very early Eretz Israel talmudic document of great value, the Scroll of Fasting-Megillat Ta'anit. For even if no other support were available, that Scroll, which notes the dates of Hasmonean victories and the steps in the expansion of Jewish hegemony, is itself conclusive evidence of Pharisee identification with national aims.[13]

The criticism applied in this book removes the layers of distorted theories, erroneous assumptions, and illogical hypotheses, but suffices only to lay the cornerstone for further research that will complete the picture.

Chapters 1 and 2 focus on the main problems arising in connection with the Hasmonean Revolt. Chapters 3 and 4 deal with the stories and visions of Daniel, in which he symbolizes the people who remained faithful to their ancestral heritage, guides the nation in time of stress, its destiny exemplified by the suffering Servant of God who will become "like a son of man" when Israel is truly redeemed and overcomes the heathen citadels.

Chapter 5, on the basis of a systematic examination of sources, investigates the internal relations within the Hasmonean kingdom, relying mainly on the talmudic tradition of Eretz Israel, which, contrary to the Babylonian Talmud and Josephus, posits that Jannaeus was not a despicable character and there was

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[10] The work is by no means neutral from the ideological religious point of view, so that "Hasmonean tendencies" do not suffice to characterize its nature and purposes.

[11] Criticism and analysis of the Josephus versions appear in Chapter 5, Section D.

[12] References and examples are cited below in Chapter 5, Section A.

[13] Even those who have attacked the predominant methods have not stressed the uniqueness and importance of this document, which was already known and trusted by the sages of Yavneh. On the other hand confusion has arisen because of a lack of clear distinciton between the body of the early document (Chapter 5, Section H, and the end of Chapter 1) and the error-laden scholia commentaries that pile up till the Middle Ages.

not an unbridgeable abyss between the Pharisees and the Hasmonean dynasty. Chapter 6 deals with the period of decline of the Hasmonean kingdom, refuting the absurd claims about Pharisee treason ostensibly supported by the pseudepigraphic *Psalms of Solomon.* Chapter 7 clarifies the problems of the Great Sanhedrin and thus goes beyond the Hasmonean period, comparing that institution as reflected in the Talmud and the New Testament. The latter reflection was evolved by Christian theology and corresponds only partially to the councils described in clear historical testimonies while the talmudic literature does not present a uniform picture.

In the talmudic tradition of Eretz Israel the Great Sanhedrin is a vital element of an ideal code which was never realized in full. It was conceived as independent of the political regime whose members had popular pietist qualities ("wise, humble, sensible, discerning, modest and self-effacing, of good heart, of good instincts, of good parts"[14]), not dignitaries of high priestly nobility, plutocrats or aristocrats, but godly sages and educators from townlets and villages, farmers and craftsmen who combine manual work and Torah.[15] They were not academic Utopians but cast in the mold of the well known leaders such as Yose ben Yoezer and Yose b. Yoḥanan, Simeon b. Shataḥ and Judah b. Tabai, Shemaiah and Avtalion, who were concerned with the education of the people, and with preserving Law and justice in the spirit of the Torah, aspired to reform their world and stubbornly confronted oligarchical tendencies, social-moral decline and looming despotism during the period of the Hasmonean kingdom.[16]

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[14] ySanhedrin I 19c. The Jerusalem (y)Talmud is here marked (chapter, page, column) according to the early printed editions (Venice, Cracow, Krotoschin), and the Babylonian (b) Talmud (page and column) like the Mishnah (m) and Tosefta (t), according to the standard printed editions; e.g. the Babylonian Talmud, ed. Romm Vilna (repr. Jerusalem 1963); the Jerusalem Talmud, ed. Krotoschin (repr. Jerusalem 1960); the Mishnah, Ch. Albeck ed. (Jerusalem 1952 etc.); the Tosefta, S. Lieberman ed. (New York 1955 etc.) and M.S. Zuckermandel ed. (repr. Jerusalem 1963).

[15] Existential, social and religious questions produced the rifts and quarrels, but there are no grounds for the speculative beliefs that the Hasmoneans were blamed for ursurping the crown of David (Chapter 2, nn. 55, 49) or the priesthood from the descendants of Zadok. The heads of the Onias family in Egypt (the offspring of Joshua b. Jehozadak, a descendant of Zadok's) expressed loyalty and extended support (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* XIII, 354; XIV 131 ff.; XIV 99) to the Hasmoneans. Even in Herod's time and in the Roman period, when the high priestly family was replaced, no demand to reinstate the Onias family (ibid., XV 22 ff.; XX 247 ff.; *Jewish War* IV 153 ff.) as high priests in Jerusalem was voiced.

[16] This early Pharisaic Hasidic ideology in the social and religious domain continued to attract adherents and inspired the Shammai school during the period of Roman rule up to the destruction of the Second Temple, as shown by Israel Ben Shalom, *The Shammai School and Its Place in the Political and Social History of Eretz Israel in the First Century* (Hebrew), Ph.D. Dissertation (Tel Aviv University 1980).

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Tel Aviv University, August 1983 JOSHUA EFRON

ABBREVIATIONS

AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
AB	Anchor Bible
AJPh	American Journal of Philology
ANET	Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, ed. J.B. Pritchard
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt
ARW	Archiv für Religionswissenschaft
ASTI	Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovanensium
Bibl.	Biblica
BJRL	Bulletin of the John Rylands Library
BM	British Museum
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZ	Biblische Zeitschrift
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAH	Cambridge Ancient History
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBQ	Catholic Bible Quarterly
CCL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina
CIJ	Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum, ed. J.B. Frey
ClPh	Classical Philology
ClQ	Classical Quarterly
CPJ	Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum, ed. V. Tcherikover–A. Fuchs–M. Stern
CSHB	Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
DB	Dictionnaire de la Bible
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
EB	Encyclopaedia Biblica
EJ	Encyclopaedia Judaica
EKK	Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
EM	Entziklopedia Mikra'it
ETL	Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses
FGH	Fragmente der griechischen Historiker, ed. F. Jacoby
FHG	Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum, ed. C. & T. Müler
GCS	Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HAW	Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HSAT	Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testaments
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
HZ	Historische Zeitschrift
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature

JE	Jewish Encyclopaedia
JHS	Journal of Hellenic Studies
JJLG	Jahrbuch der Jüdisch-Literarischen Gesellschaft
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JPOS	Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society
JQR	Jewish Quarterly Review
JRS	Journal of Roman Studies
JSHRZ	Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit
JSJ	Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KEKNT	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
MGWJ	Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums
MWJ	Magazin für die Wissenschaft des Judentums
NT	Novum Testamentum
NTS	New Testament Studies
OGIS	Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae, ed. W. Dittenberger
OTL	Old Testament Library
PAAJR	Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research
PEQ	Palestine Exploration Quarterly
PG	Patrologia (Series) Graeca, ed. J.P. Migne
PL	Patrologia (Series) Latina, ed. J.P. Migne
PW-RE	Pauly-Wissowa, Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft
RB	Revue Biblique
REG	Revue des Études Grecques
REJ	Revue des Études Juives
RHPhR	Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses
RHR	Revue de l'Histoire des Religions
RQ	Revue de Qumran
SEG	Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum
SIG	Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum, ed. W. Dittenberger
TLZ	Theologische Literaturzeitung
TSK	Theologische Studien und Kritiken
TUGAL	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
TWNT	Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament
VDI	Vestnik Drevnei Istorii
VT	Vetus Testamentum
YCS	Yale Classical Studies
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZDMG	Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft
ZDPV	Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZWT	Zeitschrift für Wissenschaftliche Theologie

Abbrereviatons of rabbinical commentaries, collections and authors are listed in the Index.

CHAPTER ONE

THE HASMONEAN REVOLT IN MODERN HISTORIOGRAPHY

A. *Point of Departure and Principal Evidence*

The Hasmonean events aroused waves of sharp debate ever since the fateful storm erupted, and their sound has not yet faded entirely. An ideological confrontation was joined to a military and political contest. Not only earthly assets but also heavenly values were placed on the scale. The banner of the Judaic Torah was raised against the splendor and might of the haughty Greek culture that ruled the roost. A forceful popular awakening pushed insurgents to take a stand against the flooding tide of assimilation, to destroy the imposed role of the Hellenizers, and exterminate the traitorous upper echelon. Out of villages and small towns men flocked down from the Judean hills, nameless volunteers burst out of the valleys to tear up the conversion edicts, to defend their liberty and independence, to rescue their land from the hands of oppressors, and their defiled sanctities from destruction. Enthusiastic and courageous, they cleaved to the mission of their forefathers, answered the call for an ordained war, assailed the strongholds of the evil kingdom, despite the treachery of their priests and the perfidy of their defiant brothers. In their anger they rushed to demolish impure shrines, shatter the pagan idols and sweep their rites out of their land. Zealous piety burned in their hearts and inspired the warriors on the path of torment and sacrifice toward the hoped-for salvation.[1]

The spiritual tenor and essential quality of the Revolt were etched in first-hand testimony, close to the locus of events and sensitive to the heartbeats of the generation. These descriptions are not the product of relaxed observation and cool assessment. Embers from the flames flash from their recesses. Fresh memories, documents, battle cries, lamentations and songs of praise were cast in the artistic molds of the Books of the Maccabees (in Hebrew more properly the Hasmonean Books). The visions of Daniel open a window on the hidden world and mysteries of the faith of those Hasids who prayed for redemption. These works contain the echoes of the exploits, the sounds of the dilemmas and struggles and reflections of the men of the Revolt and their faithful allies. Josephus edited ancient sources and recollections considerably later, offering a double secondary version (*Jewish War* I 31ff..; *Jewish Antiquities* XII 237ff..),

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[1] In abbreviated form, this paper was read at the Seventh Convention of the Israel Historical Society (1962) and published in *Historionim ve-Askolot Historiot* (Jerusalem 1963). A summary of the conclusions had been submitted at a previous convention (1957).

evidently variegated. The talmudic framework caught isolated fragments of reports which were woven into the colorful fabric of legend. The Hanukkah holiday has immortalized the miracle of the salvation.

Hellenistic notes and reactions from those days, meager and fragmented, repeat the arguments of the enemy and indicate the vast gap between the two sides. All of them exude great animosity for the Jewish rebels and builders of the Hasmonean state.[2] Antiochus Epiphanes supposedly carried the torch of civilization in the darkness of barbarity. His troops were wrapped in the mantle of a moral spearhead charged with eradicating distasteful customs and restraining the Jewish savagery that was impeding the spread of Hellenism. His coercive decrees and persecution were lauded. His admirers contemned the Jerusalem Temple which in their view involved odious practices, defamed the Jewish race, abominated the Torah, whose precepts abounded in misanthropy. Philosophers and scholars, teachers and writers, Posidonius of Apamea or Apollonius Molon, along with their disciples and followers, like Apion of Alexandria, spared no denunciation.[3] Thereafter evil libels were spread regarding human sacrifices and loathsome practices in Judaism. The poisoned arrows were dipped in the venom of Seleucid propaganda from the time of the conflict. The Hasmonean state, the product of the suffering and heroism of the rebels, left not a single spark of admiration in those circles. In its course they saw only iniquity, piracy, and the destruction of culture.[4]

The Roman historian, Tacitus, voices gross condemnation, in the style of his Greek predecessors, and glorifies the greatness of Antiochus for his efforts to root out the superstition of Judaism and correct the reprehensible traits of "the most despicable nation."[5] These expressions of hatred are a release of fury at the Jewish wars and revolts, which started at the time of the conversion decrees issued by Antiochus Epiphanes. The figures and accomplishments of the Hasmoneans represented militant Jewish devoutness, whose course agitated the Hellenistic world and often shook the Roman empire. When its death throes ceased the voices of enmity were stilled. Bar Kokhva's battle at Bethar

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[2] Signs of enmity and malicious libels about Judaism did not suddenly emerge and end during the Hasmonean wars. The reasons are age-old and profound, according to testimony scattered through the sources. See Th. Reinach, *Textes d'auteurs grecs et romains relatifs au Judaïsme* (Paris 1895); M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism,* vols. 1-2 (Jerusalem 1974-1980); J.N. Sevenster, *The Roots of Pagan Antisemitism* (Leiden 1975).

[3] Diodorus Siculus XXXIV–XXXV 1, (*LCL*) ed. F.R. Walton, vol. 12 (London 1967); Josephus, *Contra Apionem* II (7), 79ff., (*LCL*) ed. H. St. J. Thackeray, vol. 1 (London 1961). Posidonius' original position is however considered problematical by modern critics. See M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors,* vol. 1, No. 28, p. 141ff. See also n. 83 below on Josephus.

[4] Strabo, *Geography,* XVI 2. 27 (758)ff. (*LCL*) ed. H.L. Jones, vol. 7 (London 1954); Pompeius Trogus, *Historiae Philippicae,* Prologus libri 39; Justinus, *Historiarum Philippicarum Epitoma* XXXVI 1.9ff.; XL 2. 4, ed. O. Seel (Stuttgart 1972).

[5] Tacitus, *Histories* V 1ff., (*LCL*) ed. C.H. Moore, vol. 2 (London 1951).

terminated the Modi'in episode. The tension of a long period expired. The aggressive traits of Jewish nationalism appeared weakened. The bitter strife subsided, until it vanished at the time of the collapse of paganism in the Hellenistic world.[6]

B. *The Christian Heritage and Initial Criticism*

Christianity built its church on the solid rock of the Jewish faith, drew pearls from the treasures and adapted the heritage of the Hasmonean Revolt as well. The eschatological visions of Daniel, the mysteries of prophecies, the devotion and heroism of Hasids, their dignity in the face of tyranny and pagan arrogance, watered and nourished its growth. The exaltation of martyrdom in time of siege and distress was to set an example for Christian martyrdom. The protagonists of the story were sheltered under the wings of the Church, the victims of the presecutions and rebel warriors came to be called Maccabees, were enveloped in a cloak of Christianity and attached to its complement of saints.[7] Special rites were accorded them and a name day in the calendar.[8] The Books of the Maccabees were preserved among the spiritual treasures of the Church which throughout the Middle Ages provided inspiration for Latin and Byzantine preachers, poets and exegetes.[9]

The pillars of dogmatic Christian tradition flourishing on the soil of Europe began to totter as the modern age dawned. The revival of the culture of antiquity and the germs of secular learning, social changes and spiritual ferment breached its walls. The records of ancient Greek and Latin literature surfaced, forgotten methods and views floated up from the depths of oblivion, among them pagan arguments against the Jews.[10] The philosophical rivalry between the competing trends in Christianity which split in the wake of the religious reformation

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[6] Antisemitism did not of course disappear but emerged in various Christian reincarnations. See James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue* (New York 1969).

[7] Actually, we prefer the term "I Hasmoneans,", etc. based on Jewish tradition, to "I Maccabees," etc. The primary sources do not use "Maccabees" in the plural. Only Judas Maccabaeus bears the name, whose meaning and root have not been sufficiently clarified despite numerous etymological suggestions. Eusebius in *Ecclesiastical History,* VI 25. 2 (*LCL*) ed. J.E.L. Oulton, vol. 2 (London 1957), cites Origen on the original Hebrew name, which is entirely different from the name "Maccabees," and figured at the beginning of the first book in the series. The inscription was preserved in garbled form in the Syriac version, See W. Kappler, *Maccabaeorum liber* I (n. 62 below), p. 18.

[8] Origen, *Exhortatio ad martyrium, PG* 11, col. 592ff.; Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Oratio in Machabaeorum laudem, PG* 35, col. 911ff.; Joannes Chrysostomus, *In Sanctos Machabaeos Homilia, PG* 50, col. 617ff.; Augustinus, *In Solemnitate Martyrum Machabaeorum Sermo, PL* 38, col. 1376ff.

[9] Joannes Malalas, *Chronographia* 8, ed. L. Dindorf, *CSHB* (Bonn 1831), p. 205ff.; Rabanus Maurus, *Commentaria In Libros Machabaeorum, PL* 109, col. 1126ff.; Marbodus Redonensis, *Carmina Septem Fratrum Machabaeorum, PL* 171, col. 1603ff.

[10] Jean Bodin, *De Republica* (Frankfurt 1591), IV 7, p. 757.

accelerated this tendency to seek the roots of the faiths at the point of their emergence. Theological philosophy combined with classical learning in the study of Jewish history. The first fruits were not initially blessed with brilliance and suffered from unripeness.[11] But critical thought ploughed ever deeper and steadily broadened its furrows: its ramifications included Christian works, the Hebrew Bible, the Apocrypha, pagan writings and Jewish tradition. Exceptional individuals even began peering into the Talmud.

The Second Temple was of crucial importance in the evolving research, and the Hasmonean period was one of its objectives. Because of the inclinations and perplexities of the time, special attention was paid to the main religious streams and factional schisms. Consequently, already at the beginning of the seventeenth century there was debate regarding how to define the essence of the pious fellowships called Asidaeans (Hasids) in the Books of the Maccabees. Nicholas Serarius, a Jesuit scholar, proposed identifying them with the Essenes, in contrast to the Protestant Johannes Drusius who tended to connect them with the Pharisees. The famous Joseph Scaliger asserted that those Hasids did not yet constitute a sect, but were groups that had begun to form in the days of the Return to Zion, of people who were strict in following the Torah and set additional reservations to its laws.[12] This group operated as a unified body during the Revolt, and after it developed into the Pharisee and Essene sects.[13] Various and changing views on the essence of Hasidism succeeded each other from then on. They determined the evaluation and judgement of the vital internal elements in the Hasmonean period. Our survey will henceforth follow their route, which serves as a main artery in the study and assessment of that historical problem.

The first steps were tentative. A distinction between the Hasids and other factors in the Revolt was accepted mainly on the basis of Scaliger. The Hasidic faction was however represented in the guise not of a rigid isolationist sect but as an active and activating element in the popular movement.[14] The religious storms in Europe, the wars of the Protestants in Germany and the Huguenots in France and the revolutionism of English Puritans, militant religious

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[11] B.C: Bertramus, *De Politia Judaica* (Geneva 1580); C. Sigonius, *De Republica Hebraeorum* (Bologna 1582).

[12] Drusius and Scaliger, the outstanding scholars of their generation, were both Protestants and held similar views. According to Drusius (van der Dresche) the Essenes were a collateral branch of the Pharisees.

[13] N. Serarius, *Trihaeresium* (1604); J. Drusius, *De Hasidaeis* (1603); idem, *De Tribus Sectis Judaeorum* (1619); J. Scaliger, *Elenchus Trihaeresii* (1605); all in Jacobus Triglandius, *Trium Scriptorum Illustrium de Tribus Judaeorum Sectis Syntagma* (Delft 1703).

[14] Cornelius a Lapide (van den Steen), *Commentaria in Scripturam Sacram,* vol. IV, in Libros Machabaeorum (Paris 1860 ed., p. 420: ...Dico ergo Assidaeos fuisse milites belli sacri...); Hugo Grotius, *Annotationes in Vetus Testamentum, Opera Omnia Theologica,* vol. 1, Ad Maccabaicum I-II (Amsterdam 1679), pp. 718, 739, 785.

movements, affected the way the Jewish Hasidism of antiquity was construed. These were the guidelines followed by commentators and historians for several generations.[15]

The rise of rationalistic thought was increasingly discernible from the middle of the eighteenth century on. Efficacious critical tools for dealing with ancient sources and prevailing opinions were tempered and honed. Protestant scholars opened wide and combed the Books of the Maccabees, operated on them with a sharp scalpel, pointed out their weaknesses, laid bare the gaps and contradictions.[16] Their Catholic rivals on the other hand sought to support the reliability of those books, approved by ecclesiastical authority. A similar process of inevitable extreme criticism was applied to all the great works of antiquity—the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament or the epics of Homer.

Skepticism and debunking gained ground in the era of Voltaire and Diderot, provided with breathing space by the French Revolution. The storming of the Bastille shook the fortresses of the Church. The Church's domination of the souls of the occidental nations weakened. Its might sufficed to restrain but not avert the crucial changes. A new image of the Hasids began to be reflected in the mirror of the period, as bearers of the standard of pure religion during the Hasmonean era. J.D. Michaelis distinguishes between Pietists who strove only for religious freedom and whose conscience did not allow them to persist in a war against a legitimate government for a secular purpose and the group that followed Judas Maccabaeus. His hypothesis is cautiously worded, does not set a sharp dividing line, and does not deprive the warriors in the Revolt of their spirit, but the direction is indicated.[17] Scholarly research was nurtured by the soil of its period, absorbing the trends of its environment. Nationalistic and revolutionary tendencies collided with the religious elements. Demands for the separation of ecclesiastical authority from the state filled the Western skies and slogans calling for religious tolerance became increasingly widespread. According to the prevailing atmosphere, the concepts were applied to the past.

C. *Research in the Nineteenth Century and Jewish Scholarship*

The diligent investigations of the Christian schools bore fruit in the middle of the nineteenth century. Commentary on the Books of the Maccabees gathered

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[15] J. Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs,* vol. 2 (The Hague 1716), p. 519ff.; H. Prideaux, *Histoire des Juifs* (trans. from English), vol. 4 (Amsterdam 1728), p. 206ff.; A. Calmet, *Commentaire littéral sur tous les livres de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament*, vol. 3 (Paris 1724), pp. 835, 871, 1004.

[16] G. Wernsdorff, *Commentatio historico-critica de fide historica librorum Maccabaicorum* (Breslau 1747); J.G. Eichhorn, *Einleitung in die apokryphischen Schriften des Alten Testaments* (Leipzig 1795).

[17] J.D. Michaelis, *Deutsche Übersetzung des ersten Buchs der Maccabäer mit Anmerkungen* (Göttingen und Leipzig 1778), p. 155.

its rich crop and rose to a high level of precision. Patterns of broad historical synthesis were forged, marked by a rationalistic approach, and a separation of the complex elements, material or spiritual, in the scene of events. Antiochus Epiphanes' policy, the course of the Jewish Revolt and the Hasmonean plans were explained against a real background, in the light of verified testimony and manifest circumstances. In regard to Hasidism, the few traveling the old path diminished and eventually vanished. The new point of view acquired shape and sharpness in Germany. The distinction between the religious and the temporal, in a modernistic spirit was finalized and set in the foundation of the historic picture of the Revolt. The Hasids concerned themselves with the Torah and its precepts, while the Hasmoneans craved the glory of statehood. The partnership between the two operated only during the persecutions. After these were officially canceled, the Hasids returned from the fray, resumed their religious vocation, and refrained from lending a hand to the war for independence. From then on, the increasingly widespread view was the one that breaks up the rebel camp into fragments and tears the yearning for freedom away from its inherent connection with the popular faith that stirs hearts.[18]

The diffusion of secular education throughout Jewish communities led to critical thought that encompassed the history and achievements of the nation. The pioneers in this field learned methods and adopted tools from the workshops of their Christian counterparts, but retained their particular quality and cleaved to their internal tradition. At the outset, as expected, they departed only slightly from the naive approach to historical events. In the 1830s and 1840s there emerged a group of writers who dealt with Jewish antiquity, among them serious scholars who combined Jewish learning and familiarity with the attainments of European scholarship. Their teachings enriched and gave more concrete form to the picture of the formation of Hasidism at the time of the Hasmoneans when the remnants of its heritage were drawn from fountains of the talmudic Halakha and legend. The prolific writers of that generation who dealt with this, although far apart and varied, such as Levi Herzfeld and Nachman Krochmal,[19] did not depart from the straight road traced in early memories, and were not tempted to open abysses in Judas Maccabaeus' camp. Samuel David Luzzatto sharply inveighed against the views of Christian scholars who turned the Hasids into a closed sect and ascribed alien features to it. In his

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[18] H. Ewald, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel,* vol. 3 II² (Göttingen 1852), p. 348ff.; K.L.W. Grimm, *Das erste Buch der Maccabäer* (Leipzig 1853), pp. 44, 110ff.; idem, *Das zweite, dritte und vierte Buch der Maccabäer* (Leipzig 1857), p. 194; H. Holtzmann, *Judenthum und Christenthum* (Leipzig 1867), p. 115ff.; F. Hitzig, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel,* vol. 2 (Leipzig 1869), p. 390ff.; C.F. Keil, *Commentar über die Bücher der Makkabäer* (Leipzig 1875), pp. 64, 128; A. Kuenen, *The Religion of Israel,* vol. 3 (London 1875), p. 104ff.

[19] Nachman Krochmal, *Moreh Nevukhei ha-Zeman* (London 1961-ed. pr. 1851), Chapter 10, p. 65ff.; L. Herzfeld, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel,* vol. 1² (Leipzig 1863), p. 238ff.

view, these fellowships of fervid Torah devotees flocked to Mattathias' colors and did not quit the battle till it ended.[20]

Little by little the views emanating from external sources were absorbed. In his first book, Isaac Marcus Jost already attacked the Pharisees, offspring of the Hasids, with sharp stinging vexation, in quite extreme orthodox Christian style. In his second book he claimed that because the Hasids were more concerned with cult than with national freedom they tended to compromise with the Seleucid government.[21]

Heinrich Graetz was of the opinion that the Hasids disdained the paths and tricks of politics. They were drawn to rebel at the time of the oppressions and religious persecutions. When the horrors of the coercive decrees receded, they quickly retired from the political turmoil and enclosed themselves within the walls of their learning. They condemned Judas Maccabaeus' profane tactics and the alliance made with Rome. The depletion in the rebel ranks derived as well from fatigue at the long war. The problem was explained by other writers along similar lines.[22]

Joseph Derenbourg made a harsh point: the Hasids' enthusiasm for war waned the moment they were no longer required to defend their faith. During the same period they kept away from political activity and refused to help to strengthen independent Jewish rule, which they deemed valueless. Their heirs, the Pharisees, too, remained isolated and cut off from the realities of their homeland, totally indifferent to national liberty and passively yearning for a purely divine kingdom that their Creator would drop down on them. The Jewish sages of the Hasmonean period were thus cleansed of any stain of aggressive fanaticism or narrow nationalism and entitled to join the salon of the friends of refined liberalism in the West. This point of view was forced on the ancient sources, without regard for counter-arguments, and more than once blocked the way to an unvarnished understanding of the Talmud chapters that were assiduously recorded and edited by Derenbourg himself.[23]

A respectable group of Jewish scholars adjusted to the spirit of their age, to the goals of emancipation in Europe, and the methods of Christian theology. Outstanding among them is the contribution of Abraham Geiger to the alteration and revision of evaluations in regard to the problem, according to his reformative objectives. The central pivot of his thesis focuses on internal dynamics and on the essence of the main trends that shaped Judaism during Second Temple days. In his view the Sadducees were not lawless and licentious,

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[20] S.D. Luzzatto, *Lezioni di storia giudaica* (Padua 1852), p. 83ff.

[21] I.M. Jost, *Geschichte der Israeliten,* vol. 1 (Berlin 1820), p. 55ff.; idem, *Allgemeine Geschichte des Israelitischen Volkes,* vol. 1 (Leipzig 1850), p. 491.

[22] H. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden,* vol. 3[3] (Leipzig 1878), p. 2ff.; M.J. Raphall, *Post-Biblical History of the Jews,* vol. 1 (London 1856), p. 242ff.

[23] J. Derenbourg, *Essai sur l'histoire et la géographie de la Palestine* (Paris 1867), pp. III, 56ff.

completely enveloped in the atmosphere of worldly life and addicted to its pleasures, but they were the priestly nobility which dominated the life of the nation from Shivat Zion (the Return to Zion) on, and wove the fabric of its existence. In contrast, the Pharisees represented the "progressive bourgeoisie" which sought equal status and a certain democratization in religious law. The attraction to the prevailing foreign culture within aristocratic groups and the resultant risk of Hellenization engendered a revolutionary popular movement led by the Pharisees. After their victories the Hasmonean leadership quickly withdrew from its Pharisee allies, and attached itself to the Sadducee nobility. The alliance between the Hasmoneans and the Pharisees (or the Hasids) was temporary and transient.[24]

The method described elevates the Sadducees to the rank of architects of national institutions, in theory and law, in the days of the Second Temple. Geiger did not eschew distorting texts and piling on casuistic jugglery in order to invent entire Sadducee layers concealed in talmudic strata. Great effort was devoted to inflating dubious hints, in order to pour vital juices into the abstract sketch of Sadduceeism and enhance its hidden creativity.[25]

Two books of the Maccabees were classified accordingly: the first expresses Sadducee views, in his opinion, and the second counters with polemics and propaganda of the Pharisee persuasion. Thus the crowning point was added to the arguments of a number of Christian commentators, who stressed the differences between the two books, sometimes to an exaggerated extent, and some of them already pointed out a conjectural polemical tone in the second book against Sadducees, who deny resurrection.[26] Geiger's conclusion, whose fragility will be seen below, plucked from the soil of the Revolt the fine, ripe, artistic fruit. An additional point no less feeble, which was also made by Zachariah Frankel in partial and cautious form, contributed to exacerbating the lines of opposition between the Pharisee tradition and the Hasmonean dynasty: that the talmudic sages minimized the glory of the Hasmoneans, censured them, even pushed the Hanukkah festival into a sorry corner, and dimmed its splendor.[27]

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[24] A. Geiger, *Urschrift und Übersetzungen der Bibel* (1857, repr. Frankfurt 1928), p. 24ff.; idem, *Sadducäer und Pharisäer* (Breslau 1863); idem, *Das Judentum und seine Geschichte* (Breslau 1910), p. 77ff.; idem, *Nachgelassene Schriften,* vol. 2, (Berlin 1875), p. 97ff.

[25] His method fits his purposes. In contrast to the conservative Sadducees, constructors of early social and legal foundations, the Pharisees are depicted as pioneering reformers and innovaters. The characterization and classification of the two basic ancient Jewish sources is an important factor in the structure of the theory as a whole.

[26] G. Wernsdorff, *Commentatio* (see n. 16 above), p. 14; J. Jahn, *Einleitung in die göttlichen Schriften* (Vienna 1793), p. 521; K.L.W. Grimm, *Das zweite, dritte und vierte Buch der Maccabäer* (see n. 18 above), p. 15.

[27] Z. Frankel, "Die Epoche des Maccabäerkampfes und die heutige Zeit," *Zeitschrift für die religiösen Interessen des Judenthums,* 1 (Berlin 1844): 110; idem, *Darkhei ha-Mishnah* (Tel Aviv 1959—repr. of Leipzig ed. 1859), p. 321.

D. *Development of the Dominant Method.*

Julius Wellhausen established his method on the foundations described above.[28] His predecessors had assumed, to a greater or lesser extent, the isolation of the Hasids from the political reality. Geiger had stressed the hostility of the Pharisee tradition to the Hasmoneans, and the decisive role of the Sadducees in the existence of the realm. On these lame conjectures Wellhausen based his astonishing, extreme conclusion: the Hasids and the Pharisees abstained from the daily dilemmas and desires of their nation. It was not admiration but scorn that they felt for the people. They had no intention of advancing them and raising them to a decent moral level. Their entire spiritual entity was confined in the rigid shell of a frozen "church sect." They despised all political aspirations and longings for liberty and sovereignty as they did vice and crime. Their participation in the Revolt was momentary and forced, under the pressure of the persecutions, and they took no real part in military actions. It was not indifference but hatred that they developed toward the founders of political independence, for they rejected the very existence of a free Jewish kingdom. Their theocratic constitution did not tolerate national secular liberation movements, and could be realized properly only under alien patronage. The Sadducees were the builders and defenders of the Hasmonean kingdom from beginning to end. In contrast, the Pharisees completely opposed the government of the Hasmoneans, their right to wear the priestly and kingly crowns. The Pharisee soul yearned passionately for subjection. The Pharisees' animosity subsided only when they witnessed the destruction of the Jewish state. They joyfully blessed Pompey's invasion, and lovingly loaded the Roman yoke onto their shoulders.[29]

The distorted picture turns the straight into crooked, contradicting the words and spirit of the ancient texts of all kinds. The barriers were removed after Geiger and Derenbourg. Finding Jewish authority for the thinness and weakness of talmudic tradition, Wellhausen and his disciples could belittle its obvious meaning, disparage its trunk and branches. They painted an absurd image of Jewish pietism along the thorny lines reflected in the hostile facets of the evangelical mirror, and on it appliquéed imaginary threads, torn out of

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[28] J. Wellhausen, *Die Pharisäer und die Sadducäer* (Hanover 1924, repr. of Greifswald ed. 1874), p. 8ff.; idem, *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte*[8] (Berlin 1921), p. 238ff.

[29] The Sadducees who represent the social élite, political and military leaders, are for him the true patriots, in contrast to the Pharisees who favor the principles of the theocracy as founded and well established since the Return to Zion, under conditions of foreign sovereignty and willing subordination. Consequently the Pharisees are supposed to have denied the longing and striving for political independence.

apocryphal mists (such as the *Psalms of Solomon*) whose origin and nature they had not properly clarified.[30]

The version presented by Wellhausen and his followers, outwardly polished, shaped with keen logic, spread throughout the world in the convenient conditions of a spiritual climate. Its incarnations varied, were sometimes moderate, sometimes extreme, bland or sharp with detours in some points, but with no questioning of its firm base.[31] Emil Schürer's comprehensive and thorough research endowed it with great weight.[32] Its spokesmen and adherents are too numerous to list. It flowed out of Germany and encountered no dams to stop it.[33] The Soviet Russian school went along.[34] Catholic scholars, too, though conservative, drifted with the rising tide and allowed themselves only a few reservations.[35]

The polyphonic chorus did not lack the discordant notes of scourgers who sharpened the stings of the research in order to lash at Judaism. A dense atmosphere of nationalism and anti-Semitism encouraged some scholars to identify in crude or mild language with the oppressors of Hasmonean times. A defense of Antiochus Epiphanes was heard. Ulrich Wilcken, the celebrated papyrologist, preferred the hostile testimony of Tacitus to all the Jewish sources.[36] Hugo Willrich viewed the Jewish masses of the period as almost exclusively perjurers, scoundrels and forgers.[37] The most prominent of the

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[30] The reasons based on those dubious books and the arguments denying the legitimacy of Hasmonean rule, kingly or priestly, are explained in Chapters 2 (Section D) and 6.

[31] O. Holtzmann, "Das Ende des jüdischen Staatswesens und die Entstehung des Christentums", in B. Stade, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel,* vol. 2 (Berlin 1888), p. 336ff.; F. Weber, *Jüdische Theologie* (Leipzig 1897), p. 7ff.; A. Bertholet, *Das Ende des jüdischen Staatswesens* (Tübingen 1910), p. 8ff.; H. Guthe, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (Tübingen 1904), p. 309ff.; A. Schlatter, *Geschichte Israels* (Stuttgart 1925), p. 114ff.; W. Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums* (Tübingen 1926), p. 57ff.; W. Kolbe, *Beiträge zur syrischen und jüdischen Geschichte* (Stuttgart 1926), p. 147ff.; W. Foerster, *Neutestamentliche Zeitgeschichte,* vol. 1, (Hamburg 1955), p. 44ff.

[32] E. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi,* vol. 1[4] (Hildescheim 1964, repr. of Leipzig ed. 1901), p. 203ff.; idem, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ,* A New English Version, revised and edited by Geza Vermes & Fergus Millar, vol. 1 (Edinburgh 1973), p. 145ff.

[33] E. Montet, *Essai sur les origines des partis saducéen et pharisien* (Paris 1833), p. 11ff.; E. Renan, *Histoire du peuple d'Israël,* vol. 4 (Paris 1907/1909), p. 334ff.; R. Travers Herford, *The Pharisees* (London 1924), p. 25ff.; E.R. Bevan, "Syria and the Jews," *CAH,* vol. 8 (Cambridge 1954), p. 520; W.O.E. Oesterley, *A History of Israel* (Oxford 1932, 1948), p. 228ff.

[34] A.B. Ranovitch, *Ellinizm I Ego Istoricheskaia Rol* (Moscow 1950), p. 134.

[35] H. Weiss, *Judas Makkabaeus* (Freiburg im Breisgau 1897), p. 27ff.; M.J. Lagrange, *Le Judaïsme avant Jésus Christ,* (Paris 1931), p. 47ff.; F.M. Abel, *Histoire de la Palestine,* vol. 1 (Paris 1952), p. 134ff.; G. Ricciotti, *The History of Israel* (trans. from Italian), vol. 2 (Milwaukee 1955), p. 238ff.

[36] U. v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Reden und Vorträge,* vol. 2 (Berlin 1926), p. 30; U. Wilcken, "Antiochos IV," *PW-RE,* vol. 1 (1894): 2476.

[37] H. Willrich, *Urkundenfälschung in der hellenistisch-jüdischen Literatur* Göttingen 1924); idem, *Das Haus des Herodes* (Heidelberg 1929).

group, Edward Meyer, debases the Hasmoneans to the level of a gang of bandits, robbers and murderers, devoid of all morality. Hasidism is reflected in his presentation in the image of the Wellhausenian model, with the addition of a wondrous discovery of his own: Hasids were called Pharisees (פרושים) that is, seceders, because they left the rebel camp after the oppressive decrees were rescinded and refused to continue the struggle for national sovereignty. The one and decisive "proof" of this bizarre explanation was drawn from medieval Islamic history, where a similar epithet—namely Kharijites—was applied to a seceding faction. Meyer's defamatory language was somewhat moderated in regard to the Hellenizers, for they represented "progressive reform Judaism," but they, too, were disfigured by the "typically Jewish" defects, such as slyness and avarice. These are just a modest bundle of the thorns and nettles from the fields of the German schools.[38]

E. *Interpretation and Approach in Modern Judaism*

The prevailing view completed the dissolution of the Hasmonean Revolt heritage into empty molecules and the mashing of its body into disparate organs. The marvelous epic was stripped of all its raiment, deprived of values; its flavor was distorted, its radiant brilliance dimmed. Groups of Hasids do not implant faith, inspire courage, but rather roll up and wizen into a narrow shell, cut off from the roots of their nation's vitality. Their fossilized religiosity is isolated from their native land, alien to their people's thinking and to human nature. Their gardens produce only hollow rituals, harsh strictness, conglomerate oppressive restrictions. The rebel camp lost its spirit, remained godless, orphaned and vacuous. The sound of its songs faded, the light of its vision obscured. The Hasmonean dynasty was impelled to its actions by the lust for power, material incentives and shallow secular interests. The Jewish state, perverted and criminal, devoid of any moral justification, was constructed without a spark of majesty. The ordinary people, ignorant and benighted, were not mature enough for outright Hellenization, and consequently followed leaders that were incompetent and obstructive, constantly quarreling and splintering.

Jewish scholars of recent generations were trained in western scholarship, absorbed its methods and were nurtured by its fruits. They transplanted the prevailing notions into Jewish ground, but tried to sweeten them and rid them of the dross and chaff.

Elias Bickerman devoted labor and expertise to exonerating Antiochus Epiphanes, supposedly raised on a philosophy of tolerance, of the harsh

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[38] E. Meyer, *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums,* vol. 2, (Stuttgart-Berlin 1921), p. 128ff.

accusation of cruel decrees and religious coercion. The full blame for all the troubles was put on the Hellenizers, who strove for modification of Jewish religion, like the modern reform movement, and hastened to carry out their program by force. In opposition to their goal a struggle ensued "for freedom of conscience" which preserved the monotheistic faith. It is in these precious qualities that the eternal human value of this historical period lies. The aim of the Revolt was achieved when the oppressive decrees were rescinded. Thereafter the Hasmoneans lost supporters, and attracted only gangs of adventurers.[39]

Solomon Zeitlin had reservations regarding the drastic conclusions of the German school, but did not deny its basic elements. Jewish pietism of the Revolt period represents pure religiosity free of any nationalist taint,[40] and that is the source of the absolute negation of any aspiration to statehood. Jewry resembled a pure religious community, in the view of the Hasids, and embodied no national features.[41]

Joseph Klausner rejected the vilification of the Hasmoneans, softened the prevalent notions, but did not shake their foundations. The Hasids left the battle, in his view, when their demand for religious freedom were met. "Those devout men fought only for the ancestral faith and the existence of the nation" in the narrow sense. Judas Maccabaeus advanced toward political freedom..." which was basically a secular end...and what had scribes and Hasids to do with exclusively political and secular causes?" In defining the hostile stand of the Pharisees to a Hasmonean state Klausner also adopts the ruling established by the German scholars.[42]

Victor Tcherikover, on a rich broad canvas, unrolled and explained the real backgound of the Revolt. Through a detailed analysis of the literary sources and archaeological findings, he indicated social and economic factors that set it in motion. "At the start of the Hellenistic movement the people evidently reacted to the reform with indifference. It did not involve a direct danger to the traditional religious customs, and not everybody was a Hasid. But after the people perceived the internal connection between the Hellenistic reform and the rule of the sons of Tobias and their faction, Hellenism became hateful to them... to the extent that Hellenism served as a slogan for the powerful, Jewish tradition became the slogan for the people."[43] The working and lower classes rose up against the aristocratic and rich Hellenizers when the latter utilized the manners

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[39] E. Bickermann, *Der Gott der Makkabäer* (Berlin 1937), p. 50ff.

[40] S. Zeitlin, *The History of the Second Jewish Commonwealth* (Philadelphia 1933), p. 32ff.; idem, *The Rise and Fall of the Judaean State,* vol. 1 (Philadelphia 1962), p. 88ff.

[41] S. Zeitlin, *Korot Bayit Sheni,* vol. 1 (Jerusalem 1968), p. 90ff.; also S. Zeitlin-S. Tedesche, *The First Book of Maccabees* (New York 1950), p. 19.

[42] J. Klausner, *Historia shel ha-Bayit ha-Sheni,* vol. 3 (Jerusalem 1950), p. 40ff.

[43] V. Tcherikover, *Ha-Yehudim ve-ha-Yevanim ba-Tekufa ha-Helenistit* (Tel Aviv, 1931), p. 216; Second edition (Tel Aviv 1963), p. 159ff. An English translation of the revised edition is available: *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (New York 1979), p. 175ff.

of a foreign culture and the tools of the polis constitution to exploit and tyrannize. The alliance between the rebellious people and religious pietism was conditional and temporary. Against the Hellenization proposed by the prominent and wealthy, the insurgents waved the flag of the Torah. Its guardians were the Hasids; religious sectarians numbering scribes and devotees of extreme ritualism.

The war of the Hasids against the Hellenizers, according to Tcherikover, was not only an ideological struggle for compliance with the precepts of the Torah, but also a fight for the survival of an entire official class, for Jason's nullification of the laws of the Torah made the whole class superfluous. That class of scribes had risen in Judaea during Persian rule in imitation of the Persian class of officials, and shortly acquired the character of a "class of learned men well versed in the Mosaic law and precepts." When their position was jeopardized they took their place at the head of the popular struggle to which they lent a religious tone.[44] Then religious persecution and forced conversion were added to political oppression. Small wonder that the temporary partnership dissolved after the repeal of the oppressive decrees and the re-establishment of the Torah. Tcherikover's fine sociological structure rests on the shaky scaffold of the previously discussed theories. Even the official stratum of pietist scribes, derived from the Persian model, lacks any evidence in early sources, and was created in the same scholarly workshop that effectively froze and embalmed Jewish pietism.

Outside the circle of the prevailing notions were a few representatives of Orthodox Jewry (like Isaac Halevi and Zeev Yavetz) whose adherence to simple tradition and natural instinct immunized them against shallow modernization and alien theology.[45] But they did not have the proper means to confront champions armed with the best weapons of scholarly research. Vigorous isolated voices (like that of Pinchas Churgin) attacked the reiterated claim that talmudic tradition exuded enmity toward the Hasmoneans, and that the entire construction and development of their kingdom was exclusively a Sadducee endeavor.[46] Gedalyahu Alon contradicted the widespread views attributing to the talmudic sages intentions of effacing the memory of the Hasmoneans and diminishing the value of the Hanukkah festival, and corrected the distorted picture of the Pharisees hostile to their country and the independence of their people.[47] Yitzḥak (I.F.) Baer stresses that "in the center of the national-religious

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[44] V. Tscherikover, *Ha-Yehudim ba-Olam ha-Yevani ve-ha-Romi* (Tel Aviv 1961), p. 175ff. See also Chapter 2, n. 33.

[45] Isaac Halevy, *Dorot ha-Rishonim,* vol. 1 (Frankfurt 1906, repr. Jerusalem 1967), p. 325ff.; Z. Yavetz, *Sefer Toldot Yisrael,* vol. 4 (Jerusalem 1929), p. 80ff.; Isaac H. Weiss, *Dor Dor ve-Dorshav,* vol. 1 (Jerusalem 1964), p. 98ff.; 195; J.L. Fishman, "Tekufat ha-Ḥashmonaim be-Sifrutenu ha-Keduma," *Sinai* 4 (1939): 59ff.

[46] P. Churgin, *Meḥkarim bi-Tekufat Bayit Sheni* (New York 1949), p. 63ff.

[47] G. Alon, *Meḥkarim be-Toldot Yisrael,* vol. 1 (Tel Aviv 1957), p. 15ff.

movement that constituted the background for the Hasmonean Revolt" the foremost were the Hasids in whom was stored the force that inspired the nation. These fellowships helped to establish the Hasmonean kingdom and meant to realize through it their idealistic plans. They were "the centers and pillars of the people of Israel."[48]

These voices notwithstanding, the predominance of the prevailing method persisted, its spead was not halted, its supporters did not retreat or reconsider. Its shadows still envelop and overcast the Hasmonean Revolt as reflected in modern historiography. Scholars and teachers disseminate its version throughout the world, within both Jewish and foreign circles.[49] It is our duty to uncover its roots and analyze them critically without prejudice. In our concise survey we shall examine its main points relating to the primary sources.

F. *The Books of the Maccabees*

The Books of the Maccabees are the artistic configuration of the heritage of the Revolt. Their formation was completed not long after the events, while memories were still fresh and pulses beating. For generations commentators have diligently sought to discern their features, ascertain their reliability and sift out facts. For the most part, the scholars preferred the first book as being sober and factual, clear and restrained, in contrast to the second, crowded with imaginative stories and miracles, abounding in speeches, riddled with morals, and confusing chronology. Protestant scholars (like Wernsdorff, see n. 16 above) pointed out the different, even contradictory lines in the two parallel descriptions. Geiger followed suit with more far-reaching conclusions. His method enhances the basic opposition between the two books, attaching Sadducee features to the first and the sting of Pharisee contentiousness to the second. As a result, the historical picture blurred and reinforced the tendency to isolate the Hasmonean leadership from the popular insurgent movement. Let us examine the evidence.

The first book was written by a native of Eretz Israel,[50] an enthusiastic

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[48] Y. Baer, *Yisrael ba-Amim* (Jerusalem 1955), pp. 36ff., 58ff.; idem "Redifat ha-Dat ha-Monoteistit" (etc.), *Zion* 33 (1968): 101ff.

[49] S. Dubnov, *Divrei Yemei Am Olam"*, vol. 2 (Tel Aviv 1962), p. 38; A. Schalit, *Hordus ha-Melekh* (Jerusalem 1960), p. 251ff.; idem, *König Herodes* (revised German version, Berlin 1969), p. 515ff.; S.W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. 1^2 (New York 1966), p. 237. Sundry variations and divergences have not shaken the foundations of the prevalent conception and method up to now, such as: M.A. Cohen, "The Hasmonean Revolution Politically Considered," *S.W. Baron Jubilee Volume* (Jerusalem 1974), p. 263ff.; P. Davies, "Hasidim in the Maccabean Period", *JJS* 28 (1977): 127ff.; Thomas Fischer, *Seleukiden und Makkabäer* (Bochum 1980).

[50] I Maccabees provides a comprehensive, clear, continuous historical picture of the events of the Revolt up to Simeon b. Mattathias' death and John Hyrcanus' rise to power. Despite transparent tendentiousness and the use of biblical examples, it is generally accurate in regard to the basic facts

adherent of the rebels whose thoughts and ways were familiar to him as were the ridges surrounding Jerusalem, the slopes of Bet Horon and the recesses of the Ayalon valley. His words and phrases are scriptural, formed of his native earth. The spirit of martial pietism and zealotry pervades his writing. The rebel camp is reflected in a vivid variegated mirror. Before doing battle, they purify themselves, unfurl Torah scrolls, gather first fruits and tithes, fulfill the Nazirite vows, comply meticulously with Torah laws, and pray to the Almighty: "See how the Gentiles have gathered against us to destroy us... how shall we be able to withstand them if You do not aid us?" They trust the Allpowerful and constantly justify His verdict: "Whatever be the will in Heaven, thus shall He do" (I Maccabees III 46ff.). Judas Maccabaeus encourages his soldiers: "It is easy for many to be delivered into the hands of the few, and there is no difference before Heaven to save by many or by few (cf. I Sam. 14:6) for victory in war is not dependent on multitudes of soldiers but rather on strength from Heaven; they come upon us with great pride, arrogance and lawlessness, to destroy us... and we fight for our lives and our laws" (I Macc. III 18ff.).

The pious rebels draw strength and consolation from miracles wrought in the past, such as the division of the Red Sea (IV 9), the exploits of David and Jonathan (IV 30), the pestilence in Sennacherib's camp (VII 41). They look forward to divine grace, without which there is no redemption (IX 46; XII 15ff.). They gird for battle, while their lips whisper prayers. After their victory they laud their savior with hymns of thanks: "And upon their return they sang and gave thanks to Heaven, for He is good, His grace is everlasting" (IV 24).[51]

In his will, Mattathias gives expression to their ardent faith: "And now, sons, be zealous for the Law and give your lives for the covenant of your forefathers. Remember the deeds of our forefathers, which they did in their generations... Abraham in the trial was found faithful... Joseph in time of distress observed precepts... Phinehas our father in demonstrating his zeal received the covenant of eternal priesthood. Joshua in fulfilling the word of God... Caleb in testifying

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with the exception of some isolated administrative formal details. The at times exaggerated estimate of enemy strength compared with rebel weakness apparently derives here and there from rumors and wishful thinking. The interwoven documents have been carefully analyzed and found fundamentally authentic, though reworded and edited by the author. They are collected and explained by M. Stern, *Ha-Teudot le-Mered ha-Ḥashmonaim* (Tel Aviv 1965).

[51] A Hebrew version with commentary, in an attempt to reconstruct the original text, was made by Abraham Kahana, *Ha-Sefarim ha-Ḥitzonim,* vol. 2 (Tel Aviv 1937); a Hebrew version was also provided by E.S. Hartom, *Ha-Sefarim ha-Ḥitzonim, Ḥashmonaim* (Tel Aviv 1958). The prayers, slogans, orations (not empty fabrications as imagined by Neuhaus, n. 61 below) and even some of the descriptions are ordered and cast in a biblical mould, but express the aspirations of that generation and the spirit of the fighters. The picture of the few against the many, which is indicated and verified in the light of actual circumstances, is stressed in I Maccabees (III 18) and II Maccabees (II 21) and in Genesis Rabbah XCIX 2, p. 1274 in the J. Theodor-Ch. Albeck edition: *Midrash Bereshit Rabbah* (Jerusalem 1965).

in the congregation... David in his mercy inherited the royal throne for eternity. Elijah, because of his zeal for the Torah was elevated to Heaven. The faithful Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were saved from the flame. Daniel in his innocence was saved from the mouths of lions. And thus consider generation after generation, for all who put their trust in Him shall not fail... be strong my sons and be encouraged in the Torah"... (II 49ff.).

The eye of Providence is open on the universe and the Lord spins the threads of events in the lower world. The author is careful not to pronounce His holy names, and is in no hurry to provide examples of His intervention in garish prodigious phenomena. Miracles occurred in the distant past, and signs of such have not yet reappeared in full splendor. Prophecy vanished generations ago and has not yet been restored to the Jewish people (I Macc. IV 46; IX 27; XIV 41).[52] The Hasmoneans repelled enemies, gained victories but not by their own strength and wisdom; Providence placed "the salvation of Israel in their hands" (V 62). Their success granted the people redemption for a time. Great perils have not passed. Evil wickedness has not ceased. Idolatry has not disappeared nor malice faded away. Final redemption tarries. The awaited end is still hidden in the upper firmament.

The spiritual tenor of that book is close to those of Ezra and Nehemiah. Those books too paint a realistic picture replete with profound religiosity; the people cling to the glory of ancient days, recall distant wonders, keep the ancestral covenant, and entrust their destiny to Heaven. No less clear is the close spiritual affinity with Daniel's visions: the messianic expectation, the hatred of Greek domination, hints of the imminent realization of ancient prophecies and identical terms like "holy alliance," or "abomination of desolation." The figures of Daniel and his friends are known to the author, and their deeds are cited as examples by Mattathias.[53]

In contrast, the second book (II Maccabees) represents an obvious product of the Hellenistic Jewish Diaspora, abounding in rhetoric, flavored with pathetic, dramatic and artistic features characteristic of the style and a certain type of Greek historiography. The Eretz Israel landscape is meager, the scenes of the battle area faded, although the Syrian political background is clearer and the picture of the vicissitudes of the Hellenization era is more detailed. The personality of the author is openly presented to the reader and his purpose is declared at the outset. His intention is merely to offer a condensation of an earlier history of broad dimensions written by Jason of Cyrene, selecting from it suitable chapters, drawing out lovely pearls for the pleasure and profit of his readers (II 19ff.), diluting the wine of heroic deeds with water (XV 39) for

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[52] This awareness corresponds perfectly to the talmudic tradition: ySotah IX 24b; bSotah 48b; tSotah XIII 2ff.; etc. See n. 14 to Preface.

[53] The connections with the Book of Daniel and with the ancient zealotistic tradition contrary to II Maccabees, are discussed also below, Chapter 2, Section C.

rhetorical purposes. Events are fragmented, their natural order moved and sometimes exchanged (IX 29 vs. X 9; XIII 23) so as to adapt them to the didactic plan (V 20; VI 12ff.).

The ideological inclinations overshadow the historical canvas and are manifested in miracles: the wicked are frequently punished by penalties commensurate with their sins (II Macc. IV 16, 26, 38; V 9; VIII 33; XIII 8; XV 32), heavenly angels appear as horsemen striking blows at the enemy (III 25 ff; X 29; XI 8). That religiosity, parading in loud colors and thundering sounds, does not bear the imprint of the early pietism of Eretz Israel. Instances of militant zealotry such as the destruction of impure shrines, the smashing of pagan altars (II Macc. XII 26 vs. I Macc. V 44) and the forceful imposition of Torah laws (like extermination of sin and forced circumcision in I Macc. II 44ff.)—are deleted. In regard to the alien world the author dissipates the tension of contrasts, seeks bits of admiration, collects isolated cases of Gentile sympathy or generosity (II Macc. IV 35ff., 49; IX 19; X 12; XII 30; XIV 23ff.) and extols the champions of the Seleucid kingdom before the storm which Jewish Hellenizing sinners incited broke (II Macc. III 1ff.).[54]

How did Geiger wrap Book I in Sadduceeism and Book II in Phariseeism? Let us examine his main points. The question of permission to fight on the Sabbath constitutes in his opinion a significant difference. Sabbath fighting was permitted in the rebel camp after much hesitation and many victims, according to the author of the first, but the author of the second omits that decision and only stresses the sanctity of the Sabbath. Geiger's claim is obviously totally invalid. First of all, there is no mention of a dispute between Pharisees and Sadducees in regard to this problem. Secondly, no real contradiction emerges in the matter. The second author disregards the beginning of the Revolt in Mattathias' day, not only the decision noted, never once denying the right to

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[54] The value of this source should be neither exaggerated nor disparaged, given its moral objectives and artistic quality. Divinely ordered knights who come down to strike the foe are more reminiscent of the miracles (epiphanies) in Greek mythology, e.g. in Herodotus VIII 36ff., ed. C. Hude (Oxford 1970; R. Pfister, "Epiphanie," *PW-RE*, Supplement 4 (1924): 277ff., than of angels in biblical stories. The author or epitomist omits episodes (see nn. 59, 80 below) in accordance with his purpose. Fighting on the Sabbath was deleted (see n. 55) as was Mattathias' accomplishment in Modi'in in raising the standard of militant zealotry. The death of Antiochus Epiphanes precedes the rededication of the Temple (contrary to I Maccabees) and the chronology is confused probably for didactic reasons. The rededication of the Temple would not be fully justified and rightly celebrated if the terrible evil foe is not punished and a just sentence carried out by God, as Nicanor Day (XV 36) was announced after Nicanor's punishment and death. Cf. Esth. 9: 20ff. There are however hints (X 9-10) and signs (in the story of Philippus' fate: IX 29 versus XIII 23) that the change in the order of events is not based on an accurate, reliable chronology. An obvious divergence from the established path, in order to describe Jason's fate (V 6ff.) resulted in an optical illusion (V. Tcherikover, op. cit. in nn. 43, 44 above) that an extensive well-organized rebellion erupted before the edicts prohibiting the laws of the Torah. No firm conclusions can be drawn from dubious or muddled letters: II Macc. I 1ff.; IX 19ff.; XI 16ff. See also n. 4 to Chapter 4 below.

self-defense on the Sabbath, and in one case referring to a Sabbath attack (II Macc. XV 1 ff.) which was apparently repulsed by Judas Maccabaeus and ended in victory. Thirdly, unequivocal talmudic Halakhot rulings correspond very well to the version in the first book (y Shabbat I 4a; y Eruvin IV 21d; b Shabbat 19a; b Yoma 84b; b Eruvin 45a). Josephus, too, confirms that self-defense on the Sabbath was practiced in Mattathias' time and up to his own (*Jewish Antiquities* XII 277).[55]

Another argument of Geiger's concerns the belief in resurrection which is stressed in the second book (VII 9 ff; XII 43 ff; XIV 46) and not mentioned in the first. But, mention of this belief is almost completely absent from the Bible and various other purely Jewish works (such as III Maccabees) which were not suspected of Sadducee bias. The question of the emergence and development of that notion, hinted at in the Book of Daniel (12:2) has not yet been properly investigated. The lack of reference in I Maccabees to it is not at all conclusive, for the author does not provide a total and comprehensive view of the mysteries of the universe.[56]

Thanks to faulty views, exegeses were distorted. Eyes were too dimmed to see the obvious similarity to the talmudic, originally Pharisaic reminiscences in the first book, such as the purification of the Temple and the Hanukkah festival (I Macc. IV 36 ff.–m Middot I 6), the vengeance against Nicanor (I Macc. VII 47 ff.–yTa'anit II 66a; yMegillah I 70c; bTa'anit 18b) or sermons and prayers (m Sotah VIII).[57] The parallel descriptions in the second book are much further removed from the talmudic Pharisaic tradition (II Macc. X 1 ff.; XV 30 ff.), like the praise of absolute righteousness of Onias III, the high priest (II Macc. III

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[55] The author of II Maccabees puts particular stress on the importance of the Sabbath (V 25, VIII 25 ff. versus I Macc. I 30, IV 16 ff.) and deletes the fighting on the holy day in order not to dim his naive faith (VIII 36) that the Jews cannot possibly be harmed so long as they observe the precepts. Perhaps he was cautious also because of the demands of the Jews in Hellenistic countries, on the basis of special privileges (Josephus, *Antiquities* XIV 223 ff.; I Macc. X 34, etc.) to be entirely exempt from mobilizations and other civic obligations on Sabbaths and holidays. That is why self-defense on the Sabbath was not mentioned in an ambiguous episode, and the wrong impression might be (II Macc. XV 1 ff) that the Jews escaped the foe or were saved by some miracle. II Maccabees does not however deny the princple (see n. 63 below) and the custom, attested by Josephus, of fighting on the Sabbath. See n. 83 below on Josephus.

[56] While II Maccabees does express belief in resurrection (Ulrich Kellermann, *Auferstanden in den Himmel,* [Stuttgart 1979]) there has been no lack of skepticism or controversy regarding the eternity of the soul (as in IV Maccabees versus the silence in III Maccabees, see chapter 2, n. 40 below) or corporeal resurrection. Even the first apparent announcement in the Book of Daniel (see the end of Chapter 4 below) leaves room for various different interpretations. The author of I Maccabees does not deny eschatological expectations (IV 46; IX 27; XIV 41) but is cautious and restrained.

[57] To the talmudic connections must be added the holiday set for the day the citadel (the "Akra") was captured (I Macc. XIII 52) which accords with the holiday list (nn. 90-91 below) in the Scroll of Fasting (23 Iyyar), and the notion of "prophets' deed" (I Macc. IX 54) as in the Mishnah (mYadayim IV 3).

1ff.; XV 12, versus yYoma VI 43d; bMenaḥot 109b). The sacrificial ceremony and prayer for the souls of the dead and the expiation of their sins is astonishingly strange, lacking any support in ancient internal sources (II Macc. XII 42ff.).

The second book gives prominence to the acts of a number of martyrs from the time of the persecutions (II Macc. VI 12ff.). Although presented against a different background, some of these martyrology stories are known in talmudic legend (bGittin 57b; Lamentations Rabbah I 53),[58] but that is not surprising, for the author's artistic project does not flower on air. The chapters describing the rise of the Hellenizers and the victims of the persecutions are shortened in the first book, in accordance with the author's method, for the Revolt is his main focus and principal aim. Nevertheless the Eretz Israel author reveals the powers of Providence and the moral sense of its leadership during the days of wrath too: the sins of the wicked brought on disaster and "there was great anger on Israel." The rise of zealotry and the elimination of sins calmed divine ire and blazed a path to salvation (I Macc. I 64; III 8) entrusted to all the Hasmoneans, as the popular legend has it. The second author restricts the bravery and redemption to Judas Maccabaeus, minimizing his brothers' contribution (II Macc. VIII 5; X 21; XIII 15; XIV 17), in order to avoid complications and to enhance the artistic impression, pandering to the taste of Hellenistic readers. Amazingly, that modification serves as evidence of enmity to the Hasmonean dynasty, in Geiger's distorted method.[59]

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[58] *Midrash Eikhah Rabbah,* (on 1:16), p. 84ff., ed. S. Buber (Vilna 1899). The origin and vicissitudes of these legends are not clear. The story of old Eleazar is not mentioned, that of the mother and her seven sons is moved to the Roman period, as older troubles recede in the face of more recent ones. The legitimized ceremony of prayers for the dead (without sacrifice) did not become part of normative Judaism until many generations after the Hasmonean period. See Israel Lévi, "La commémoration des âmes dans le Judaïsme," *REJ* 29 (1894): 43ff.; Salomon Reinach, "De l'origine des prières pour les morts," *REJ* 41 (1900): 161ff.; G. Alon, *Meḥkarim* (see n. 47 above), vol. 2 (1958), p. 176.

[59] Contrary to talmudic tradition (mMiddot I 6 e.g.) which gives all the Hasmoneans credit for the salvation, the author of II Maccabees exalts the single hero and obscures the other brothers. Even the exploit of Eleazar, who attacked an elephant (I Maccabees VI 43ff.) is made to adorn and enrich (II Macc. XIII 15) the deeds of Judas Maccabaeus, but this manipulation does not embody any enmity to the dynasty, for there was no rift or opposition between Judas Maccabaeus and his family. Opinions to the contrary are groundless. There was no alternative leadership to the Hasmoneans. The rebels fought not only for the laws of the Torah and the Temple but also to liberate their "ancestral land" and State (or polis — the city in Greek terms), that is, for political purposes (II Macc. II 22, XIII 14, XV 37) and the freedom of the nation. The restriction of the picture and concentration of the happenings around Judas Maccabaeus are probably necessary for artistic and dramatic unity, but primarily in order to omit confusing episodes like that of Mattathias calling for zealotry at Modi'in. Judas Maccabaeus alone is the instrument of divine grace (II Macc. VIII 5) and an exemplary heroic leader in a holy war. Concluding with his last victory shortly before his death obviates the need to dim his image and justify a bitter failure by means of a theological moralistic end. There are no grounds for attributing to Pharisee circles this book which is remote from the atmosphere of ancient Hasidism and from the land of Israel. The topographical errors and strange versions (as in II Macc. XII 9 and XV 30-35) and the legends on the holy fire in Nehemiah's time (II

Misconceived suppositions prevented reasonable evaluations. The Books of the Maccabees do not emit echoes of rifts among parties or sects. Both of them resound with frank admiration of the rebels and their leaders, though with different approaches and emphasis. These patent features were clouded by Geiger's perverted theory, which gained many supporters and fit in well with the approach of the dominant school.[60] Some dissenters objected, but even they did not eliminate all its ramifications and accretions.[61] We must now uncover the central point according to which the supposed internal rift in the Revolt, arising from the withdrawal of the Hasids, is revealed and explained. Its proof lies in the Books of the Maccabees.

G. *Hasids in the Revolt*

"A congregation of Hasids (substitute and inferior version: Jews),[62] valiant men from Israel, every one offering himself for the Torah" rallied to Mattathias'

Macc. I 20ff.) or on the concealment of the holy Covenant Ark by Jeremiah (II Macc. II 1ff., in contrast to mShekalim VI 1; yShekalim VI 49c) indicate its disconnection and remoteness. It contains no ideas, figures or themes drawn from Daniel. These ideological aspects were not properly clarified in the many special studies devoted to the analysis of II Maccabees and its sources, its complex models, literary nature, place within Hellenistic literature, and historiographic definition: A. Schlatter, *Jason von Kyrene* (Munich 1891); B. Niese, *Kritik der beiden Makkabäerbücher* (Berlin 1900); R. Laqueur, *'Kritische Untersuchungen zum zweiten Makkabäerbuch'* (Strasbourg 1904); idem, "Griechische Urkunden in der jüdisch-hellenistischen Literatur," *HZ* 136 (1927): 229ff.; M. Zambelli, "La composizione del secondo libro dei Maccabei," *Miscellanea Greca e Romana* I (Rome 1965): 195ff.; W. Richnow, *Untersuchungen zu Sprache und Stil des zweiten Makkabäerbuches* (Göttingen 1966); H. Cancik, *Mythische und historische Wahrheit* (Stuttgart 1970); J.G. Bunge, *Untersuchungen zum 2. Makkabäerbuch* (Bonn 1971); A. Momigliano, "The Second Book of the Maccabees," *ClPh* 70 (1975): 81ff.; C. Habicht, *2 Makkabäerbuch, JSHRZ* I (Gütersloh 1976); B.Z. Wacholder, "The Letter from Judah Maccabee," *HUCA* 49 (1978): 89ff.; R. Doran, *Temple Propaganda: The Purpose and Character of 2 Maccabees (CBQ* Monog. Series 12, Washington, DC 1981); idem, "2 Maccabees and Tragic History," *HUCA* 50 (1979): 107ff.

[60] E. Kautzsch, "Das 1 Buch der Makkabäer," in E. Kautzsch (ed.), *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments,* vol. 1 (Tübingen 1900), p. 24ff.; A. Kamphausen, "Das 2 Buch der Makkabäer," ibid. p. 81ff.; J. Moffatt, "2 Maccabees," in *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English,* vol. 1, ed. by R.H. Charles (Oxford 1913), p. 125ff.; W.O.E. Oesterley, "1 Maccabees," ibid. p. 59ff.; A. Lods, *Histoire de la Littérature Hébraïque et Juive* (Paris 1950), p. 774ff.; F.M. Abel, *Les Livres des Maccabées* (Paris 1949); J.C. Dancy, *A Commentary on 1 Maccabees* (Oxford 1954).

[61] C. Gutberlet, *Das 1 Buch der Makkabäer* (Münster 1920); idem, *Das 2 Buch der Makkabäer* (Münster 1927); A. Momigliano, *Prime linee di storia della tradizione maccabaica* (Turin 1931); M. Granclaudon, *Les livres des Maccabées* (Paris 1951); A. Penna, *Libri dei Maccabei* (Rome 1953); K.D. Schunck, *Die Quellen des 1 und 2 Makkabäerbuches* (Halle 1954), p. 60ff.; S. Zeitlin-Tedesche, *The First Book* (see n. 41 above), p. 24ff.; idem, *The Second Book of Maccabees* (New York 1954), p. 20ff.; D. Arenhoevel, *Die Theokratie nach dem 1 und 2 Makkabäerbuch* (Mainz 1967); G.O. Neuhaus, *Studien zu den poetischen Stücken im I Makkabäerbuch* (Würzburg 1974); J.A. Goldstein, *I Maccabees, AB* 41 (Garden City N.Y. 1976); idem, *II Maccabees, AB* 41 A (Garden City N.Y. 1983); K.D. Schunck, *1 Makkabäerbuch, JSHRZ* I (Gütersloh 1980).

[62] W. Kappler, *Maccabaeorum liber 1* (Göttingen 1967), p. 59. See n. 67 below.

colors..." and all those fleeing the troubles joined them... and they smote the sinners in their wrath... and they destroyed the (impure) altars, and circumcized the children... and they redeemed the Torah from the hand of the Gentiles and the hand of the kings and did not leave any might to the wicked" (I Macc. II 42ff.).

Bands of refugees fled because of the terror of the persecutions, roamed the wasteland, hid in caves, and in crevices. Here and there they were impelled to fight. Streams of resistance burst forth and watered the country, but did not yet flow into a single channel. The daring act at Modi'in symbolized the slogan of an aggressive, planned rebellion. In Mattathias' camp isolated groups were tempered and united into a spearhead that embarked upon an offensive war. The slaughter of a group of refugees who did not defend themselves because of the sanctity of the Sabbath tipped the scales on the question of going to war, and fighting even on the Sabbath according to the Halakhah established for generations.[63] It was not the anonymous group slain on the Sabbath, nor some other faction that were called "Hasids" but the volunteers for the Torah, those devoted to the ancestral covenant, who flocked to Mattathias and his sons. The

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[63] The prevailing (since Geiger's time) and widespread theory that Sabbath combat was not permitted earlier under any circumstances until a new ruling was adopted, is correctly disputed by Isaac Halevy, *Dorot,* vol. 1 (see n. 45 above), p. 338ff.; S. Goren, "Lehima be-Shabbat," *Sinai Jubilee Book* (1958), p. 149ff.; M.Z. Neria, *Milḥamot Shabbat* (Jerusalem 1959). From the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, Jews repelled attackers on the Sabbath and did not fear they were defiling the day of rest (Neh. 4; 6: 15). No solid internal testimony mentions any prohibition against self-defense on the Sabbath. Such absolute abstention cannot be assumed for that period when the Jews were surrounded by enemies or unfriendly neighbors. At the time of the coercive decrees, Hasidim were called upon to observe the precepts strictly, and fulfill those stipulating martyrdom so long as they did not dare confront the authorities. At the start of the Revolt the matter of fighting on the Sabbath was settled, without calling any ancient principle into question. Hesitations arose merely from reluctance to undertake a direct armed confrontation with the entire might of the Seleucid Empire. When the die was cast there were no longer any doubts in the course of the battles (I Maccabees IX 42ff.) or during the Hasmonean kingdom with all its wars. The silence on this point of II Maccabees (see n. 55) does not contradict this conclusion. The talmudic tradition on the House of Shammai, as shown by Israel Ben Shalom (see n. 16 of the Preface above), p. 217 of his dissertation, confirms the antiquity of the rulings on Sabbath combat. No reliance should be placed on suspect pseudepigraphic works (Book of Jubilees L 12-13 in R.H. Charles, *Apocrypha,* op. cit. above n. 60), or on descriptions by unsympathetic Gentiles such as Agatharchides cited by Josephus (*Contra Apionem* I 205ff.; *Ant.* XII 3ff. — combined with another, apparently Jewish, version). See also Philo, *De Somniis* II (18) 123ff.; *Philo (LCL),* ed. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, vol. 5 (London 1949). Foreign observers used to wonder at and even ridicule Sabbath customs and reservations which sometimes made things easier for surprise attackers, but sometimes only seemed to (Cassius Dio XXXVII 16, [*LCL*], ed. E. Cary, vol. 3 [London 1954]; Josephus, *Bell.* I 146; *Ant.* XIV 63ff.) in wars, in assaults and in surprise raids. Consequently even in the Roman period, after the destruction of the Second Temple, there were false rumors of Jews failing to repel enemies on the Sabbath, e.g. in Frontinus, *Strategemata* II 1, 17; in Stern, *Greek and Latin. Authors* (see n. 2 above), vol. 1, p. 510. Vague or ambiguous statements in Josephus, because of either his reliance on non-Jewish sources or his apologetic intentions (as in *Bell.* II 392ff.; II 456, 517; *Ant.* XVIII 319ff., 354ff.; *Vita* 161) added and nourished false impressions.

term clearly applies to the steadfast, stable core in the rebel camp. It does not denote or connote any separatist faction hovering entirely in visionary clouds and prejudiced notions.

What happened in the rebel ranks after the first victories? The Temple Mount was purified, the rebels celebrated the dedication of the altar, Antiochus Epiphanes died far away, and the governor Lysias with the boy king Eupator undertook a campaign to subdue Judaea. After bitter fighting and a heavy siege, a compromise was achieved: the coercive decrees were rescinded; Menelaus, the high priest appointed by the king, was deposed and executed, and the Temple was restored to the people. But vital questions were not yet decided, autonomous governmental institutions were not defined, and evidently the high priest was not officially appointed (despite Josephus in *Jewish Antiquities* XII 385). The accord was limited, and its provisions were not completely clarified. At any rate, the truce was maintained for a few months, and the battles stopped.[64] It may very well be that internal discussions were held and negotiations with the Seleucid government conducted to settle serious problems (plundered property, confiscated estates, priestly offices, administrative arrangements) that arose in the wake of the oppression and war.

In the meantime, a sudden political change occurred in Syria: the forceful Demetrius Soter assumed the crown and took energetic measures to strengthen the enfeebled realm.[65] The delegation of "all the lawless and irreligious men" called on him and complained that they were being dispossessed and mercilessly destroyed. They were representatives of groups loyal to the kingdom during the Revolt, Hellenizers of all types and their kin, among them certainly the formerly wealthy and influential who had been persecuted by their foes and now sought to regain their former status and possessions (I Macc. VI 24; Daniel 11:39).[66] They succeeded in convincing Demetrius that their demands fit in with his political goals, and that he should break the backbone of the nationalist rebellion. Their leader Alcimus was appointed high priest, and an army headed by Bacchides was despatched to impose their rule and punish the dissenters.

The invaders issued conciliatory declarations, proclaimed peaceful intentions and invited the community heads to talks, in order to trap and destroy them.

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[64] Josephus here mixes up persons and times in his treatment dealing with upheavals in the upper echelons of the high priesthood and the fate of the House of Onias (*Ant.* XII 237 ff.). The information was drawn from an unknown source and woven into the main foundation based on I Maccabees in the form of a paraphrase. Josephus' earlier version in *Bell.* (I 31 ff.) is even weaker. He is certainly not to be preferred to the primary testimony. See n. 83 below.

[65] E. Will, *Histoire politique du monde hellénistique,* vol. 2 (Nancy 1967), p. 302 ff.; H. Volkmann, "Demetrios I und Alexander I von Syrien," *Klio* 19 (1925): 373 ff.; E.R. Bevan, *The House of Seleucus,* vol. 2 (London 1902, repr. 1966), 178 ff.; F.W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius,* vol. 3 (Oxford 1979), p. 478 ff.

[66] This appears to an extent from II Maccabees (XIV 3 ff.). The verse from Daniel is quoted in Chapter 2, n. 34.

Judas Maccabaeus and his brothers were suspicious of the great army, rejected the polite invitation and refused to appear. But Bacchides and Alcimus were joined by a "congregation of scribes" wishing to seek justice, and "the Hasids (Asidaeans) were the first among the people of Israel, and they requested peace of them"[67] in the hope that "a priest of Aaron's seed" would not do them harm. However, the enemy was not willing to listen to claims or negotiate and conclude a peace pact. Their solemn vow promising the delegates immunity was violated, sixty Hasids were seized and killed. "And their fear and terror fell on the whole people; for they said, There is no truth or justice in them." The sad surprise caused confusion, and the cruel blows momentarily blocked any reaction. But Judas Maccabaeus mobilized forces, the rebels recovered, and the fight was resumed in full strength. Alcimus was pushed into an impasse and forced to summon help from Syria (I Macc. VII 1ff.).

The scholars latched on to that episode and attributed to it a groundless interpretation in order to prove that a profound internal rift had developed in the ranks of the faithful. At first the prevailing version was a moderate one according to which it was claimed (by Grimm, Ewald, Hitzig, Derenbourg, and Graetz) that due to their love of peace, their serene temperament or their indifference to the trappings of government, the Hasids dissociated themseves from the military leadership.[68] In the second stage, an abysmal opposition between the proponents of pure, detached religiosity and those favoring secular sovereignty was invented by Wellhausen and his disciples.[69] Thus imaginative views were piled up and grafted on to the clear explicit written text. All obstacles to the denial of facts and the violation of sources were removed, forming a picture of a cordial alliance between Alcimus and the Hasids who hastened in his direction, rejoiced to bow to him and admit the validity of his high priestly appointment. Only wicked vengefulness or some covert pretext put an end to the idyll. What do you do if the description in the Book of the Maccabees disrupts that lovely picture? You remove the obstacle and declare categorically that the book is insufficiently precise. With that rationale it is possible to fabricate a whole series of quaint and curious tales: Perhaps Judas Maccabaeus conspired with Bacchides to liquidate the Hasids? Or on the contrary, perhaps he assigned those delegated in order to sabotage the effort to achieve an accord? And who can guarantee that the whole story of the killing is not a lie for propaganda purposes?

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[67] The Greek reads (I Macc. VII 12-13, ed. W. Kappler): καὶ ἐπισυνήχθησαν... συναγωγὴ γραμματέων ἐκζητῆσαι δίκαια. Καὶ πρῶτοι οἱ Ασιδαῖοι ἦσαν ἐν υἱοῖς Ισραηλ καὶ ἐπεζήτουν παρ' αὐτῶν εἰρήνην.
Cf. I Macc. II 42: τότε συνήχθησαν πρὸς αὐτοὺς συναγωγὴ Ασιδαίων, ἰσχυροὶ δυνάμει ἀπὸ Ισραηλ, πᾶς ὁ ἑκουσιαζόμενος τῷ νόμῳ.

[68] See nn. 18, 22, 23 above.

[69] See n. 28 etc. above.

These conjectures and fancies are based on nothing at all. They all crumble and evaporate when examined lucidly. An internal rift is neither evidenced nor suggested in the sole original source. The course of events is clearly shown in it, and there is no reason to impugn its reliability. When Bacchides' campaign started there had been quite a protracted truce. The war had stopped and discussions between the parties may have persisted.

Military alertness relaxed. There is room for doubt as to whether there were forces ready for battle and capable of confronting the invading army at once. The intentions and plans of Demetrius, the new king, were not yet clear. His envoys spread about reassuring declarations, stretched forth their hands in peace, and proposed colloquia. No wonder a response was forthcoming. The meeting was attended by the "congregation of scribes," a prominent body of leaders and educators. To elucidate their status and importance the passage adds "and the Hasids were the first among the children of Israel and they requested peace of them," meaning that the community leaders and dignitaries were Hasids and they sought peace.[70] That meaning was properly understood in the ancient translations, such as the Syriac: "There were assembled before Alcimus and Bacchides a congregation of scribes to order and seek justice and the first were the praiseworthy among the children of Israel and they requested peace of them."[71] Another Syriac version has: "to seek justice and the heads of the Hasids were in Israel and they requested that peace be made with them."[72] A similar explanation is implied by the Latin translation[73] and early exegetes,[74] but recent scholars grasped and adapted the verse in accordance with their conception. With no justification at all, they proffered the interpretation that "the first were the Hasids among the children of Israel, who sought peace." That is, the Hasids were the first to hasten and give themselves up to the enemy. Thus they reinforced the desired impression that the Hasids rushed to surrender at all costs.[75]

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[70] Hasidim are not a sect, but simply outstanding in virtues and faith, as in the Bible (Ps. 79:2; 149:1, etc.) and in the talmudic sources (mBerakhot V 1; mSotah IX 15, etc.). The scribes are the sages (Jer. 8:8-9; mSanhedrin XI 3), teachers and instructors. The epithet "Hasid in the priesthood" is applied to Yose b. Yoezer (in mḤagigah II 2), one of the early *Zugot* "Pairs" and fathers of the Pharisees who during the persecutions (see n. 85 below) was slain for his faith. The question of Hasids and scribes is dealt with in Chapter 2, n. 33 below.

[71] *Biblia Polyglotta,* ed. B. Walton, vol. 4 (London 1657): I Maccabees, VII 12f.; P.A. De Lagarde, *Libri Veteris Testamenti Apocryphi Syriace* (London 1861), p. 183.

[72] A.M. Ceriani, *Translatio Syra Pescitto Veteris Testamenti,* vol. 1 (Milan 1876), p. 602.

[73] T. Heyse & C. Tischendorf, *Biblia Sacra Latina* (Leipzig 1873), p. 951: Et convenerunt... congregatio scribarum, requirere quae justa sunt. Et primi Assidaei qui erant in filiis Israel, et exquirebant ab eis pacem; D. De Bruyne, *Les anciennes traductions latines des Machabées* (Abbaye De Maredsous 1932); *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem,* ed. R. Weber, vol. 2 (Stuttgart 1969).

[74] G. Syncellus, *Chronographia,* ed. W. Dindorf, *CSHB* (Bonn 1829), vol. 1, p. 534; Z. Frankel, "Die Essäer nach talmudischen Quellen," *MGWJ* 2 (1853): 70.

[75] F.M. Abel, *Les livres des Maccabées* (see n. 60 above), p. 133.

However, the Hasids and scribes entered Bacchides' camp not in order to humble themselves but to submit conditions and demands ("just rights"), after a sworn promise of immunity. There is no indication that they were concerned solely with freedom of worship. There were serious religious, legal, material and governmental problems that had not yet been solved. The Revolt caused a profound spiritual and social revolution in the life of the people, and there was no simple way to erase its traces and return to the status quo ante. No information is available on the list of demands, the degree of insistence or the limits of concession of those representatives, but the outcome should suffice to refute the usual claims. No tenuous excuses can explain the terrible crime, the murder of the respected teachers, which might have enraged the entire Jewish community. Given the circumstances, the slaughter could only have resulted from their stand and their obduracy.

Since Geiger's time, through the passage noted, the faultseekers burrowed and invented the derogation of the Hasids, for joining the traitor Alcimus in spite of the Hasmoneans. In this passage, however, the Hasids are enveloped in admiration, and their intentions are pure. They endangered themselves in order to "seek justice" and establish peace, were slain in their naiveté, and are eulogized (VII 17) in the words of the Psalms (79:2f.) "...the flesh of Your devotees (Hasids) and their blood was shed around Jerusalem; and there was none to bury them." Where is there the slightest hint of a hostile reaction or negative note? Not the shadow of a blemish tarnishes the image of the holy Hasids here. Only perverse casuistry could turn white into black and praise into censure.

Judas Maccabaeus and his brothers, thanks to their caution, were not trapped in the enemy snare. They refused to participate in the meeting because they were suspicious, not because they rejected it or protested against it. They did not then mobilize their warriors, but awaited the outcome of the talks. After the slaughter and the enemy strikes, they gathered their strength, unified the rebel ranks, and embarked upon an offensive war which succeeded and forced Alcimus to request increased help from Syria. Troops were despatched, and Nicanor was put in command. The enemy suggested a meeting, and this time Judas Maccabaeus was prepared to comply, but took precautions and avoided capture in the trap set for him.

According to the dubious story in II Maccabees (XIV 20ff.) a provisional accord was achieved, and a brief amity developed.[76] Alcimus' machinations and Demetrius' harsh order polluted the atmosphere and led to the outbreak of fighting. This is not the place to analyze the various aspects of that episode. At

[76] Although this version is inferior and even defective in presenting an exaggeratedly idyllic artistic picture, it does contain probably a grain of support regarding the convening of the meeting. W. Kappler & R. Hanhart, *Maccabaeorum Liber II,* Septuaginta-Gottingensis, vol. IX (Göttingen 1959).

any rate, it indicates the stand taken by the leader of the Revolt. Judas Maccabaeus was not an irresponsible hasty chief of adventurers, desirous only of military glory and national renown. Depending on the circumstances and needs, he was prepared to negotiate, and acted no differently from the scribes and Hasids in the earlier instance. The Hasmoneans did not negate occasional agreements with the enemy or necessary compromises. Jonathan and Simeon too operated in the same spirit (I Macc. IX 70ff.).[77]

Judas Maccabaeus' defeat in the last battle (not his only failure) proves nothing at all in regard to the absence or withdrawal of the Hasids and their supporters. There is no justification for blaming them for that, or holding them responsible for the military defeat which can and must be explained by the actual circumstances.[78]

The chapter that covers Bacchides' expedition and the slaughter of the Hasids is missing from II Maccabees. That deletion is not the only one in the book, all of which follows the pattern of an abridgement.[79] Its stated aim, both educational and apologetic, probably prevented the mention of the catastrophe at that point, when the sins of the nation had been atoned for and divine grace was protecting it. The story begins with Alcimus' appearance before Demetrius, inveighing against "the Jews called Hasids (Asidaeans), headed by Judas Maccabaeus" (II Macc. XIV 6) for they were the ones "inciting the war, rioting and not allowing stability to be restored to the kingdom." It was actually in the bosom of the Hasids that the fire of rebellion burned. Their alliance with the Hasmoneans was firm and abiding. No partitions broke up its body and organs.

In the entire narrative of the second book, there is not the slightest trace of

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[77] The author of I Maccabees identifies completely with the Revolt and admires its leaders, and softens defeats, but he does not omit the failures or present the heroes as spotless. His ideological position and aim go far beyond simple pro-Hasmonean propaganda. His views resemble those of the early Pharisee-talmudic tradition, as noted by the scholars listed in nn. 45, 46 above. His viewpoint should however be defined on the basis of historico-evolutionary distinctions, not in mistaken theses (as per Laqueur, Momigliano and Schunck — see n. 61) which propose supposed redactions, several layers, or marginal, partial Pharisee inclinations. The work in question does not exactly or entirely express the complete Pharisee ideological entity reflected later, but rather pietist zealotist aspirations of the main original movement, in the course of whose development the Essene and Pharisee fellowships evolved.

[78] The military aspects were studied and thoroughly clarified by Bezalel Bar-Kochva, *The Hasmonean Wars—The Times of Judas Maccabaeus* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem 1980). For noteworthy earlier research see M. Avi-Yonah, "The Hasmonean Revolt and Judah Maccabee's War against the Syrians" in *The World History of the Jewish People,* series 1 vol. 6, *The Hellenistic Age,* ed. A. Schalit (New Brunswick, N.J. 1972), p. 147ff.; O. Plöger, "Die Feldzüge der Seleukiden gegen den Makkabäer Judas," *ZDPV* 74 (1958): 158ff.; F.M. Abel, "Topographie des campagnes maccabéennes," *RB* 32 (1923): 495ff.; 33 (1924): 201ff., 371ff.

[79] With no proper justification or convincing reason, a number of scholars have sought to grant preference to the faulty version in II Maccabees on the basis of contrived and speculative assumptions: W. Mölleken, "Geschichtsklitterung im I Makkabäerbuch," *ZAW* 65 (1953): 205ff.; J.G. Bunge, *Untersuchungen,* p. 254ff.; C. Habicht, *2 Makkabäerbuch* pp. 185, 269: see n. 59 above.

internal rifts in the rebel ranks, though disloyal Jews who joined the enemy camp are not ignored. Priests and dignitaries did not assist Nicanor in his plots against Judas Maccabaeus despite the former's warnings and threatened revenge. Most illuminating is the heroism of Razis, the admirable elder described as "father of the Jews" (II Macc. XIV 37ff.); Nicanor despatched a regiment to arrest him, but Razis preferred to die and killed himself. Judging by his appearance and virtues, he must have been an adherent of popular Hasidism. Razis and his group were not compelled to suffer and sacrifice their lives for the sake of fulfilling purely ritual precepts. The law of the Torah had long been reinstated, and there was no immediate danger of forced conversion. Then why did they resist? Why did they refrain from openly denouncing the Hasmoneans and their supporters, as the modern scholars wishfully thought? The modern type of theological liberal creed which would have limited their struggle to "religious freedom" or "freedom of conscience" provided no inspiration for them.[80]

H. *Historical Sources, Daniel and Talmudic Recollections*

The two main primary sources do not reveal the chasm that was supposedly opened between the Hasidic fellowships and the Hasmonean leadership and tore the Revolt away from its popular roots. Internal differences did perhaps arise because of complex questions — political and economic, tactical and military, legal and moral—that emerged in the throes of the war and the search for peace. Nor is there any denying the likelihood of various opinions and diverse inclinations, conflicts between the moderates and the extremists, the hesitant and the adamant. No clear information has survived, so that there is no sense in indulging in vain speculation. In any case an artificial wall cannot be erected between religious Hasidism and the proponents of political independence in the absence of tested grounds. Judas Maccabaeus and his brothers, along with their allies, fought first and foremost for the Torah and the ancestral covenant. Pagan territorial enclaves and a foreign yoke affected the purity and perfect rule of the ideal Law in the Holy Land. The rebel zealot movement that emerged at the time of peril and persecution did not exact sacrifice and suffering and did not rally the people to extended struggle in order to bow to a tyrannical empire and sanctify

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[80] The martyrdom of Razis is needed here in order to atone for the people's sin (the acts of Alcimus and his supporters) and ensure divine help in the defeat of Nicanor who was menacing the Temple in Jerusalem. According to that same schematic theological conception, Antiochus Epiphanes succeeded in breaking into Jerusalem and defiling the Temple (II Macc. V 11ff.) because of the sins of the Hellenizers. On the other hand Heliodorus failed earlier (II Macc. III 13ff.) in his attempt to enter the Temple, for God's mercy would protect His sanctuary as long as His precepts were observed. However in the story on Heliodorus the author omits the absolute prohibition (see Chapter 7, n. 148) that forbids foreigners to enter the sancturary, because of a typical tendency to minimize, so far as possible, evidence of the profound differences between Israel and the other nations.

despicable enslavement. Serious material factors as well encouraged the ejection of foreign masters.[81] The road to salvation proved to be long, however. The rebels intermittently advanced and retreated, and in the meantime strove to achieve temporary immediate goals. The prevailing conditions bounded their arena and compelled them to compromise. Narrow secular aspirations, shallow ambitions and worldly impulses were doubtless present in the rushing whirlpool, but they did not determine the path or the purpose of the stormy popular revolution.

Daniel's visions embodied the thoughts and yearnings of the Hasids, the "holy ones of the Most High," burned in the furnace of torment and struggle, and purified to enter the kingdom of heaven. In antiquity the symbolic meaning and connection with the period of persecution and revolt were well understood. Daniel watched the ruin of the monstrous Greek empire, the worst and last of a series of dreadful kingdoms (7:7ff.; 8:21ff.; 11:2ff.). Antiochus Epiphanes declared war on the Holy Covenant, and for a moment prevailed: "I looked on as that horn made war with the holy ones and overcame them; until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was rendered in favor of the saints of the Most High; for the time had come and the holy ones took possession of the kingdom" (7:21, 22). The first triumphs already sparkle: "And the wise among the people will make the many understand, and for a while they shall fall by sword, by flame... In defeat they will receive a little help and many will join them in slippery ways" (11:33, 34). Daniel's entire being, his anger at the dreadful kingdoms and their frightening horns, the scope of his vision and his wide horizons, all contradict and destroy the false picture of a withered sectarian Hasidism. The imminent defeat of the Greek empire will, in his belief, precede the collapse of paganism and blaze a road for the saints of the Most High to their total redemption. The voices of Daniel and his comrades cry out against the adherents of the European schools who interred their souls.[82]

What does Josephus teach us in this matter? His first book *Jewish War—De Bello Judaico* allots a narrow framework to the Hasmonean period which is designed only to serve as an introduction to the main topic (I 31ff.). Its representation indicates no internal rift in the rebel camp, and no withdrawal of Hasidic groups from the fight. In the second, expanded version offered in *Jewish Antiquities — Antiquitates Judaicae* the chapters on the Revolt are based on I Maccabees, rendered in flowery, stylized paraphrases, with incidental notes and

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[81] The Return to Zion was restricted and occupied a small territory. The burden of pagan sovereignty (Ezra 9:8-9; Neh. 9:36-37) was detrimental to many generations. Jewish settlement broke the confining frontiers due to economic-demographic pressures (increased population and limited land area), and not simply because of national-religious slogans. Struggle for expanded settlement throughout the country began during the Revolt and continued (I Maccabees XV 33-34) in accordance with Hasmonean policy, to achieve Jewish sovereignty throughout the Promised Land.

[82] The Book of Daniel is dealt with below in Chapters 2 (Section B), 3, 4.

omissions or additions (XII 265ff.). The description of Bacchides' campaign and Alcimus' machinations refers not to a congregation of scribes and Hasids but to "some of the citizens" who responded to the enemy declarations, were seized and slaughtered (XII 393ff.). Josephus apparently decided to avoid becoming entangled in Jewish concepts, complicating his wording, and making things difficult for his readers. In his view of the event itself, he does not depart from the original source. He found no discrepancy in it between religious Hasidism and the proponents of national independence. It was the irreligious and wicked rather than the "pious" or Hasids (*Ant.* XII 398ff.) who were friends of Alcimus. Throughout the Revolt and in the first stages of the Commonwealth no conflict between Hasmoneans and Hasids was known. John Hyrcanus was the favorite disciple of the Pharisees, and it was only at the end of his reign that a bitter dispute erupted which led to the Pharisees being excluded from any participation in government (*Ant.* XIII 288ff.). After the death of Jannaeus they recovered their lofty status and guided the realm for a time. Nowhere in Josephus is there any support for the perverted view that the Pharisees rejected the independent state's right to exist from start to finish.[83]

Not only Jewish sources lead to that conclusion. Gentile sources provide no shadow of a suggestion either that might reinforce the prevailing approach. They contain not the tiniest thread by which to hang the flourishing towers of basic disagreements in the rebel camp. Such an element is totally absent from the versions of pagan writers, who denounced Jewish zealotry, rained reproaches on it and spared no effort to find flaws in it. The Church Fathers and theologians, who sanctified the heritage of the Maccabees and endeavored to illuminate and explain it, reflected no rumor or echo indicating a serious rift in the Revolt, or burning hatred on the part of the Hasids at the start of the Hasmonean realm.

Talmudic literature did not escape the touch of the prevailing method either. It was saddled with alien intentions, and heaped with contrived interpretations. The patent meaning of legends and memories was twisted. Its authors were charged with trying to conceal the achievements of the Revolt, efface the glory of the Hasmoneans, and dim the splendor of the Hanukkah festival.[84] Thus the internal tradition was supposed to support the conventional view that the Pharisees had adopted a hostile principled and consistent position in regard to the Hasmonean Kingdom. These baseless claims have already been refuted by Gedalyahu Alon, and only a few additional points need to be stressed.

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[83] *Josephus (LCL),* 9 vols. eds., H. St. J. Thackeray, R. Marcus, A. Wikgren, L.H. Feldman (London 1961–1965). The versions and testimonies of Josephus are treated below in Chapters 5 (Section D) and 6 (Section B).

[84] S. Krauss, "La fête de Hanoucca," *REJ* 30 (1895): 24ff.; S. Hochfeld, "Die Entstehung des Hanukkafestes," *ZAW* 22 (1902): 264ff.; R. Leszynsky, "Das Laubhüttenfest Chanukka," *MGWJ* 55 (1911): 400ff.; L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews,* vol. 6 (Philadelphia 1968), p. 156.

By nature, the Talmud treasures were not designed to serve as pure historical evidence in the narrow sense, nor to ensure the commemoration of military heroism, nor to extol individuals in the political field, nor to unfold the history of the people in a complete logical sequence, nor to paint an accurate picture of a naturally ephemeral reality. The talmudic works contain only isolated memories from the Second Temple period, solitary bits from the vanished past. Not a single episode from those lively eras is recorded systematically. Countless assets of a rich patrimony were lost. Oblivion enveloped the remote generations and only scattered sparks break out of the darkness. Reports were diminished and weakened before they were absorbed and fixed in talmudic literature. The value of those remnants was not measured by the goals of modern historical thinking. Their quantity and quality were not weighed by the improved scale of scholarly pedantry. Their paucity does not justify censorious suspicion and casuistic conclusions. The Hasmoneans' impact on that tradition is not inferior, and their part is not reduced in comparison with the Pharisees of their time. After all, only a few fragments have survived about ways of life and deeds of Yose b. Yoḥanan and Yose b. Yoezer, Joshua b. Peraḥia and Nittai ha-Arbeli, the first praiseworthy *Zugot* ("Pairs"), leaders and successors of the early Hasids,[85] whose virtues were highly valued by their disciples. The fragmentary references certainly do not prove that their followers sought to minimize the stature of their revered teachers.[86]

The glory of the Hasmonean dynasty is not belittled. Praise of it echoes in all parts of talmudic literature. The Mishnah notes its merit in purifying the Temple and dedicating the altar (Middot I 6; II 3). The Jerusalem Talmud (Megillah I 70c), the Babylonian Talmud (Megillah 11a, Sanhedrin 82a, Rosh Ha-Shanah 24b) and midrash collections include threads of its annals.[87] An early Eretz Israel midrash extols it and sounds a note resembling the style of I Maccabees: "Levi against the kingdom of Greece. It is the third tribe and that is the third kingdom... Many came and fell to the few. By what merit? By the blessing of Moses... To whom does the kingdom of Greece fall? To the Hasmoneans"

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[85] mAvot I 4-7; mḤagigah II 2; See also Chapter 7, nn. 26-28, and n. 14 to Preface.

[86] While Ephraim E. Urbach concluded (in "Askezis ve-Yisurim," *Yitzḥak F. Baer Jubilee Volume,* Jerusalem 1960, p. 58) that even tales of martyrdom were fated to be forgotten in the wake of an imagined Pharisee ruling decreeing oblivion for the Hasmonean exploits, in fact the burning enmity that led to interment of the Hasidic paragons only began to rage in modern Europe. Legends included in II Maccabees (referred to in n. 58) that were not canonized were shifted about and adapted to the stresses and atmosphere of the Roman period, for natural, understandable reasons. Memories of those days grew weaker and sparser, but did not entirely vanish. A story on the death of Yose b. Yoezer actually hints at martyrdom in an early midrash (Genesis Rabbah LXV 22—*Midrash Bereshit Rabbah,* p. 742/3 in the J. Theodor-Ch. Albeck edition, see n. 51 above) which mentions the coercive decrees of the "Greek" (Seleucid) king as well (ibid., II 4, p. 16) and the defeat of the "Greek" (Seleucid) monarch through the Hasmonean victories (ibid., XCIX 2, p. 1274). Thus there was not a total blockout of memories with malicious intent.

[87] e.g. Exodus Rabbah XV 6, *Shemot Rabbah* in *Midrash Rabbah,* Romm ed. (Vilna 1921).

(Genesis Rabbah XCIX 2 p. 1274 in the Theodor-Albeck ed.; see n. 51 above). John Hyrcanus is always enveloped in appreciation and crowned with a halo, for a divine voice informed him of the triumph of his sons, and only his deviation at the end of his days somewhat clouds his image.[88] Censure is heaped only on King Jannaeus (notably in the Babylonian Talmud) but his wife is praised.[89] The Hasmonean dynasty as a whole is referred to only in praise and gratitude.

In the convoluted recesses of the prevailing approach, the primary importance of an ancient scroll was lost. It is known as Megillat Ta'anit (Scroll of Fasting) and is introduced in the Talmud by the following explantory passage: "There are days it is forbidden to fast on, and a few it is forbidden to mourn on... days when miracles were wrought for Israel" (yTa'anit II 66a; yMegillah I 70c: cf. bTa'anit 17bff.). Holidays commemorating victories of the Hasmonean era occupy a prominent place in it. Among these are Nicanor Day (13 Adar), the capture of the Akra in Simeon's time (23 Iyyar — also in I Macc. XIII 51), the retreat of Antiochus (28 Shevat), the conquest of Bet She'an (15 Sivan) and Samaria (25 Marheshvan) in John Hyrcanus' day, and also Mount Gerizim Day (21 Kislev), the capture of Migdal Zur (14 Sivan) and so on. It was not freedom of worship alone that cheered the hearts and brought joy to Jewish dwellings. The sages and teachers of that time too refrained from seeking refuge in detached theology or mummified sectarianism. Rather, they preserved their fresh faith, and were devoted to their Torah, which implanted a natural love for their people and country.[90]

This series is enough to shatter the dross with which the Hasmonean annals were polluted. The antiquity and great authority of that scroll are beyond any doubt. Its holidays and purpose are clear, and already dealt with in the Mishnah (Ta'anit II 8). The Scroll was neglected after persecutions and catastrophes when days of joy turned into mourning and lamentation. Only the Hanukkah festival remained, deeply carved in the hearts of the people, the focus of vibrant memories, of yearning and of hopes.[91] There are no grounds for the claim that it was ever forgotten or neglected. The Hanukkah customs are not based on Torah laws and consequently did not at first serve as an abundant source of homilies

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[88] mParah III 5; mYadayim IV 6; mMa'aser Sheni V 15; ySotah IX 24b; bSotah 33a, 47b–48a; bYoma 9a; bBerakhot 29a; etc.

[89] bKiddushin 66a; bBerakhot 48a; bSotah 22b; bSanhedrin 107b. The superior Eretz Israel talmudic tradition presents a different, more moderate version: yBerakhot VII 11b; yNazir V 54b; Genesis Rabbah XCI 4, p. 1115ff. in the Theodor-Albeck ed. (see n. 51 above); etc. See also Chapter 5.

[90] H. Lichtenstein, "Die Fastenrolle," *HUCA* 8-9 (1931/32): 257ff.

[91] Amazingly, scholars have so far disregarded the fundamental historical significance deriving from that Scroll which is rooted in an ancient Pharisee tradition. The Scroll completely destroys the basis for the prevailing view that the Pharisees objected to nationalist goals, rejected independent statehood, and on principle opposed Hasmonean policy, the wars and conquests aimed at territorial expansion and the solidification of Jewish sovereignty throughout the Promised Land. Explanations and problems of the Scroll are considered below in Chapter 5, Section H.

and prescriptions. The impress of the holiday is felt in all branches of talmudic literature.[92] A legend of Eretz Israel relates how heedless of danger Jews lit Hanukkah candles during the reign of Emperor Trajan, and aroused the wrath of the government.[93] The glory of the holiday was not dimmed. Prayers and poems crowned it, and its meaning was elucidated in sermons and scrolls. Its original import was not diminished by the course of time.[94]

Not a single piece of ancient solid original testimony has been found either Jewish or Gentile, to which to attach the prevailing view, of divisive opposition among the Hasmonean rebels. The generator of that view was the modern climate, and it was born in Christian Europe. Its various incarnations reflect the succession of trends within a circumscribed reality, far from the earthly and spiritual homeland of the Hasmonean rebels. The scholarly methods of recent times, planted in western culture, have supplied us with treasures of expertise and precision, research techniques and critical tools. But they harbor a biased foreignness and a priori approach to the Second Temple history. The time has come to discard them and turn to the sources of that wonderful epic without opaque screens and clouds of vapor. The events and motivations of the Hasmonean Revolt must be restored to their native soil by means of a fresh new look, adapted to the spirit of its initiators and in harmony with ancient sources.

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[92] e.g. mRosh Ha-Shanah I 3; mTa'anit II 10; IV 5; mMegillah III 6; mMo'ed Katan III 9; mBikkurim I 6; mBava Kama VI 6; yTa'anit IV 67c; yMegillah III 74b; ySukkah III 53d; IV 54c; yShabbat II 4 c; yBerakhot VII 11c; yTerumot XI 48b; bShabbat 21bff.; bSukkah 46a; bRosh Ha-Shanah 18b; bYoma 29a; *Masekhet Sofrim* XX 1ff.; M. Higger ed. (New York 1937).

[93] ySukkah V 55b; Lamentations Rabbah (on 1:16) I 48 — *Midrash Eikhah Rabbah* in the S. Buber ed. (Vilna 1899), p. 83.

[94] e.g. *Pesikta Rabbati,* chapter II, p. 4bff. in M. Ish Shalom (Friedmann) ed. (Vienna 1880); Maimonides (R-a-m-b-a-m), *Mishneh Torah,* 3, Sefer Zemanim; Hilkhot Megillah ve-Hanukkah, chapter 3-4, El ha-Mekorot ed. (Jerusalem 1954).

CHAPTER TWO

HOLY WAR AND VISIONS OF REDEMPTION IN THE HASMONEAN PERIOD

A. *Introduction*

The defective method which posited an irreconcilable rift between national political secular goals and purely religious ones in the rebel camp during the Hasmonean Revolt is supported by contrived interpretations of excerpts from sources and a muddled mixture of nebulous pseudepigraphic works that were ascribed to the period and problems with excessive alacrity. We shall briefly clarify some further aspects relating to concepts of redemption and messianic ideology, adding some remarks regarding the complex problems of pseudepigraphic literature from whose dim recesses the modern theories of Jewish apocalyptic revelations in Hasmonean times germinated and sprouted. We shall also briefly survey the basic sources in order to show how their simple meaning was distorted, confounding the whole picture, due to foreign a priori assumptions and an erroneous approach.[1]

B. *Daniel's Visions*

The Book of Daniel was finally sealed at the time of the conversion decrees and the start of the Hasmonean Revolt.[2] It embodies the thinking of that Hasidism which according to prevailing opinions was concerned with the niceties of the Torah and its precepts, exacted total devotion in body and soul to the faith, but adopted a passive stance during the period of oppression and persecution, remaining submerged in its prayers and yearning for miraculous salvation from on High. Its way of life was fundamentally different from, even supposedly conflicting with, the stormy, vigorous activism of the Hasmoneans and their followers.

Such an opposition between two separate trends among the faithful seems at first glance to be discernible. Daniel and his faction represent extreme orthodoxy in their customs and deeds, disdain the Gentile delicacies and do not

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[1] This lecture, complementing the one in Chapter One, was delivered at the 11th Convention of the Israel Historical Society, and published in *Holy War and Martyrology* (Hebrew), Israel Historical Society (Jerusalem 1967).

[2] The dating is clarified at the beginning of Chapter 4 below. A short explanation of the Book of Daniel in Hebrew (including translations of the Aramaic passages) is provided by M. Zer-Kavod (Tel Aviv 1970). A selected bibliography is given in n. 1 of Chapter 3.

taste of the king's food, comply with the laws of the Torah, trust only in their Rock of Ages, and do not abandon it even in the face of danger and the threat of death. Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah scorn Nebuchadnezzar's order, and unlike all the nations that bend and kowtow do not bow to his image, but appear erect and proud, prepared to sacrifice their lives and be consumed in the fiery furnace (Chapter 3). Daniel himself does not fail to pray at the stipulated times, despite the prohibition of Darius the Mede and his scheming courtiers, is not afraid of the anticipated punishment or deterred by the horrors of the lions' den (Chapter 6). The noble bravery of the quartet does not however impel them to assault their enemies and oppressors. In time of distress they do not move and bestir themselves to fight and rebel, but subdued and suffering before their tyrants, always await the help of their father in Heaven, who neither disappoints nor abandons his devotees.

However, the series of legends in the first six chapters of the book is not an artistic exact literary reflection of the troubles and persecutions of the Revolt and conversion period. It is not reasonable to identify the isolated select group of Diaspora Jews, living in an alien environment, being educated and appointed to high positions in the palaces of the foreign kingdom, with the mass of oppressed and persecuted on their native soil at the time of the coercive decrees, who fight the authorities and clash with their Hellenizing brothers. In appearance and conduct, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar and Darius, with whom Daniel and his friends abide, are not hollow theatrical shadows merely concealing the wrathful figure of Antiochus Epiphanes.

The series of colorful pictures stretching from the entrance into Jerusalem of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon up to the ascension of Cyrus is an integrated unit with particular shading and content: the arrogance and remorse of Nebuchadnezzar deprived of his palace and authority prowling about like a wild animal for seven years (Chapter 4); Belshazzar's feast and the judgment passed on magnificent Babylonia and carried out that night (Chapter 5); Darius seduced by his advisors' intrigues but respecting Daniel and taking the trouble to save him from the death penalty (Chapter 6). On the other hand, the same chapters contain motifs that are typical of the time of Antiochus' persecutions, and cannot be explained in any other historical context: the religious uniformity required by stupid arbitrary orders (in the ridiculous picture of peoples bowing to an immense image erected by Nebuchadnezzar, Darius' prohibition of petitions and pleas to any man or god), the collapse of Babylonia due to the defilement of holy objects from Jerusalem (parallel to I Macc. I 21 ff; VI 12; II Macc V 16; IX 16), and the exaggerated strictness in regard to Gentile foods (compared with I Macc. I 62; II Macc. VI 18 ff) which was not likely under the circumstances described.[3]

[3] See Chapter 4, Section C below. On the Books of the Maccabees see Chapter 1, Section, F, and nn. 50-62 above.

Thus the attempts to rend asunder the artistic integrity of the Book of Daniel and insert in it separate tales from other times seem feeble and mistaken. The story perhaps incorporates threads of legends, fragments of reports and memories from earlier generations, but it is impossible to detach and reconstruct them so as to view them as finished works of the Persian period (as Yeḥezkel Kaufmann claims)[4] or the Hellenistic period prior to Antiochus Epiphanes' time (as per H.L. Ginsberg's assumptions).[5] The initial unity of the book revealed and confirmed in many investigations, is, despite linguistic and stylistic transitions,[6] solid and firm, due to the single ideological concept that unifies all its parts: Omnipotent Providence guides the destiny of the cosmos and mankind, great powers rule the world and are replaced according to a plan inscribed in Heaven, the guardians of the Torah who are tortured and killed for their faith will inherit and ensure their people of the future blessings. Nebuchadnezzar breaks into Jerusalem and steals holy objects "in the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim" (1:1) so that the measure of the reign of Babylonia should be completed "in the first year of Darius, son of Ahasuerus of the seed of the Medes" (9:1) and the secret of "seventy weeks," which contains the key to the calculation of the times in Daniel's visions, should be revealed (7:25; 8:14; 9:24ff.; 12:7ff.), on the threshold of "seventy years" since Jeremiah's prophecy (25:12; 29:10), through complicated but precise calculations (Lev. 26:18ff.; II Chron. 36:5ff.). The inherent chronological framework based on the interpretation of the prophecy and the mysteries of the end embracing all parts of the work, and also the coordinated structure of the chapters with their shared ideas and interrelation, obviate the possibility of their separation into independent literary units.[7]

The primary base of ancient story and landscape was elaborated by a visionary pageant. A hidden boundary divides the legends set in the Babylonian, Median and Persian periods from the series of pictures that emerge in a dream or vision, against the background of the Hellenistic period. The visions and their accompanying solutions present the course of events from Alexander the Great to the outbreak of the Hasmonean Revolt, in a concrete detailed though

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[4] Y. Kaufmann, *Toldot ha-Emunah ha-Yisr'elit,* vol. 4 (Jerusalem 1956), p. 418f., and M.A. Beek, *Das Danielbuch* (Leiden 1935).

[5] H.L. Ginsberg, "Daniel," *Entziklopedia Mikra'it* (henceforth *EM*), vol. 2 (Jerusalem 1965), p. 686ff.; idem, *Studies in Daniel* (New York 1948); idem, "The Composition of the Book of Daniel," *VT* 4 (1954): 246ff.; and a group of commentators among those listed in Chapter 3, n. 1, such as J.A. Montgomery, J.J. Collins, L.F. Hartman and A.A. Di Lella, etc.

[6] A. von Gall, *Die Einheitlichkeit des Buches Daniel* (Giessen 1895); H.H. Rowley, *Darius the Mede and the Four World Empires in the Book of Daniel* (Cardiff 1935); idem, "The Unity of the Book of Daniel," *HUCA* 23 I (1959/51): 233ff.; O. Plöger, *Das Buch Daniel, KAT,* vol. 18 (Gütersloh 1965); N. Porteous, *Daniel, OTL* (London 1965).

[7] The evidence for the unity of the book, the discussion of the chronological framework, and the analysis of the chief problems are covered in the following two chapters.

allegorical picture, in contrast to the haziness of the legends relating to the time of Belshazzar son of Nebuchadnezzar or Darius son of Ahasuerus. The survey ends with the defeat of Antiochus Epiphanes, but the circumstances of his death and the dedication of the Temple are not known (end of Chapter 11). It thus appears that the composition was completed during the first stage of the Revolt before its significant victories and glorious achievements, and antedates the Books of the Maccabees. It can therefore be considered a source close to the actual time of the gestation and birth of the rebel movment. The familiarity and accuracy displayed in the description of political developments, diplomatic scheming, and military campaigns of the Ptolemies and Seleucids do not indicate imperviousness or indifference to the genuine material and political factors in the environment from which the work emerged.[8] The mysterious sights are coupled with alert and sober observation of reality.

In contrast to Daniel's time in the remote misty past, no miracles took place in the period of persecution and struggle. When "trouble such as never was" beset the nation (12:1), signs of prophecy do not recur. There is no outstanding personality, no separate leadership and no separatist tendencies among the Hasids. No docile submission to the cruel oppressor is sounded as a moral imperative. There is no sign of discrimination or division between those who suffer meekly and those who resist bravely. There is no dispute with arms bearers and warriors. On the contrary. A genuine military confrontation is discernible. Antiochus Epiphanes overwhelmed the "holy ones" in the throes of his war. His power was not yet broken and the battle was unabated until redemption should dawn and the "holy ones" would inherit the realm. "I looked on as that same horn made war with the holy ones and overcame them; until the Ancient of Days came, and judgement was rendered in favor of the holy ones of the Most High; for the time had come and the holy ones took possession of the kingdom" (7:21–22). In the meantime the tyrant grew fierce and strewed destruction in his war: "And the army of a leader who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary, but its end will come through a flood. Desolation is decreed until the end of the war" (9:26). Such "warlike" phases recur in the Septuagint and the Greek translation of Theodotion[9] as well as in Josephus' paraphrase (*Antiquities* X 275 f.; see n. 24 below).

The enemy is aided in the fight by "those who forsake the holy covenant" (11:30) and "those who violate the covenant" (11:32), Hellenizers and traitors.

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[8] The survey of the events is selective, enveloped in a veil of mystery, and indicates in hints the fluctuations in the confrontation of the two rivals (the southern kings versus the northern ones, that is, the Ptolemies against the Seleucids) and the vicissitudes in the government of Eretz Israel, up to the confrontation with Antiochus Epiphanes' persecutions. The author did not intend to make a complete historical survey. The names of countries and peoples (such as Egypt, Edom, Moab and Ammon) appear only in the eschatological epilogue of the Chapter 11:41 ff.

[9] J. Ziegler, *Susanna, Daniel, Bel et Draco-Septuaginta* (Göttingen 1954); A. Rahlfs, *Septuaginta*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart 1950); A. Geissen, *Der Septuaginta-Text Des Buches Daniel* 5-12 (Bonn 1968).

Against them are those loyal to the covenant and defenders of the Torah. And "the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits"; thus they grow stronger (that is the meaning in the Greek translations as well) and even take action, apparently participating in certain operations, and they are not compelled to bend their back to blows, and refrain from all response. The term "do" here denotes aggressive action, as it does elsewhere in the same chapter (11:28, 30) in reference to Antiochus' deeds. The Hasids inspire courage, enlighten and guide the common people, do not abandon their posts, fall and are killed by the foe: "And the wise among the people will make the many understand; for a while they shall fall by the sword and flame, suffer captivity and spoliation" (11:33).

The oppression has not yet passed, and the blows are heavy, but rays of light and hope are already appearing; "in defeat they will receive a little help; and many will join them in slippery ways" (*ḥalaqlaqot* 11:34). The same expression appears in Jeremiah (23:12)—"Their way shall become like slippery ways in the darkness"—and in Psalms (35:6)—"Let their path be dark and slippery." All three verses suggest a mine-infested, dangerous, tortuous path, and certainly fit the situation of those streaming to the camps of the Hasids.

The intention of the verse is quite clear and was properly understood by Hippolytus Romanus,[10] a writer of the early Christian Church (start of the third century C.E.), and by the neo-Platonic Porphyry[11] (as quoted by Jerome).[12] Some modern exegetes, however, because of their a priori view, seek some latent anti-Hasmonean sting.[13] As a result of their exaggerated suspicions, they discern derogation in the word *ḥalaqlaqot,* interpreting it as in Daniel 11:21 where Antiochus is described as obtaining "the kingdom by flatteries" and reinforcing their view with Daniel 11:32 which states that "those who violate the covenant will fawn with flatteries" (here *ḥalaqot,* a cognate).

Even if we agree to the tenuous interpretation and accept some muffled note of caution regarding the later joiners, who are not sincere ("with flatteries"—smoothly, hypocritically, fawningly), such Hasid antagonism to the rebels and their leaders is not likely, for thanks to them the pressure decreased and a feeling of relief prevailed, as stressed in the body of the verse in question.

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[10] Hippolyte, *Commentaire sur Daniel,* ed. M. Lefèvre (Paris 1947).

[11] Porphyry was a writer and philosopher of the neo-Platonic school who disputed with the Christians. According to him Daniel's visions contain not real prophecies, but descriptions of events after they occurred in the rign of Antiochus Epiphanes and the Hasmonean Revolt. His claims, known through Jerome's discussions of them, re-emerged in modern criticism. See P.M. Casey, "Porphyry and the Origin of the Book of Daniel," *JTS* 27 (1976): 15ff.; R. Beutler, "Porphyrios," *PW-RE* 22 (1953): 275ff.; F. Jacoby, *FGH,* vol. 2 B (1962), no. 260, p. 1197ff.

[12] Jerome, *Commentaria in Danielem, PL* 25, col. 595ff.; J. Braverman, *Rabbinic and Patristic Tradition in Jerome's Commentary on Daniel,* Yeshiva Univ. Ph.D. dissertation (New York 1970); J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome* (London 1975), p. 298 ff.

[13] Porteous, *Daniel,* p. 15, 168; O. Plöger, *Das Buch Daniel,* p. 29f., 165; see n. 6 above.

The phrase "a little help" does not diminish the value of the early victories or express derogation or reservations, but defines the positive effects which were limited and temporary before the outcome of the main battle was certain. The persecuted and rebellious had already received a little help, for the enemy was repulsed and withdrew from a particular area of Jewish settlements after the first victories in the Hasmonean Revolt. In the meantime it was just a partial rescue. Jerusalem was still plundered, preyed on and desolate. The idol was defiling its sanctuary, the enemy had not left, and horror had not departed, the anguish of peril and persecution had not passed. Evidently for Judas Maccabaeus too, his achievements at that stage, before the rededication of the Temple and purification of Mount Zion, were no more than "a little help," in contrast to the anticipated deliverance. Don Isaac Abrabanel in *Ma'ayanei ha-Yeshuah* (Fountains of Salvation) explains in a florid interpretation: "And in their failure they were helped a little help, for the bravery of the Hasmoneans was help and comfort to them, and it did not say a little help to belittle the help of the Hasmoneans, for it was a great help to Israel, but because their help was by few people" (XI 4).[14]

Until the erroneous theories on Hasidism took root,[15] that is, until the middle of the nineteenth century, commentators did not imagine that the wording indicated a negative attitude to the Hasmoneans and the rebel camp.[16]

From the recesses of classical prophecy Daniel draws comfort and hope for his afflicted generation, uncovering in its treasures miracles of redemption and the timing of the end. Jeremiah's seventy years (25:11ff.; 29:10) is the model for "seventy weeks... until the measure of transgression is filled, and that of sin complete, until iniquity is expiated and eternal righteousness ushered in, and prophetic vision ratified, and the Holy of Holies anointed" (9:24). The ancient predictions were to be fulfilled as the troubles passed, according to a regular antipated order of time. The sins of the people are atoned for in their torment and struggle. Antiochus Epiphanes, the last offshoot of the wicked kingdom rising to heaven in his boastfulness, like the Babylonian king, symbolized by the shining "son of dawn" or Lucifer (Is. 14:4ff.), who desires to put his mansion in the firmament as a supreme deity, dares to fell and trample the stars above (Dan. 8:10), in other words brings down to earth and utterly humbles Israel, which is represented as both stars and earth (Gen. 13:16; 15:5; 22:17; 26:4; Num. 23:10; Deut. 1:10, e.g.).

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[14] Abrabanel's commentary (noted in Chapter 3, n. 1 below) of course represents a simple naive approach that did not depart from the basic traditional one. The expression *ezer me'at* ('a little help") is dealt with again in Chapter 4, n. 5 below.

[15] The change took place very slowly from the middle of the nineteenth century on, as shown by Ferdinand Hitzig in contrast to his predecessors (in the note below) as a result of influences and inclinations outside the domain of studies on the Daniel problems.

[16] Leonhard Bertholdt, *Daniel* (Erlangen 1806-1808); Caesar von Lengerke, *Das Buch Daniel* (Königsberg 1835); contrary to F. Hitzig, *Das Buch Daniel* (Leipzig 1850) — ad loc. (11;34).

The wicked Antiochus tyrannizes and raves "till the indignation is spent and what has been decreed is accomplished" (Dan. 11:36), and in the end "shall overflow and pass over" countries (11:40), like the king of Assyria who "overflowed and passed over Judah," brandishes "wrath" like a rod at Israel, "for the Lord... will accomplish as decreed, in the midst of all the earth" (Is. 8:8; 10:5; 10:23). In retreating from the invasion of Egypt, because of Roman pressure (Josephus, *Antiquities* XII 244),[17] when he was deterred, "for the ships from Kittim shall come against him" (Dan. 11:30) proving the truth of Balaam's words: "And ships shall come from the quarter of Kittim and shall afflict Asshur" (Num. 24:24). The fall of the tyrant "between the seas and the beautiful holy mountain" (Dan. 11:45) does not accord with the historical facts (I Macc. VI 16; II Macc. IX 28; II Macc. I 11ff.; Josephus *Ant.* XII 355ff.) but is apparently derived from earlier authoritative and sanctified prophecies.[18]

In the glow of redemption those persecuted and slain for the sake of the Torah will attain resurrection and compensation as opposed to the punishment awaiting the criminals: "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to eternal life and some to reproaches and everlasting abhorrence. And the wise will be radiant as the brightness of the firmament; and those who lead the many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever" (Dan. 12:2-3). That vision is nurtured by Isaiah's prophecy on the fate of the wicked: "They shall go out and gaze at the corpses of the men who have rebelled against me; for their worms shall not die, nor their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh" (Is. 66:24). As to the fate of the righteous, "let your men revive, let corpses arise. Awake and shout for joy, you who dwell in the dust; for Your dew is like the dew of fresh growth and the earth shall cast out the shades of the dead" (Is. 26:19).

Those faithful to the holy covenant who safeguard it, are the "wise," those "who lead the many to righteousness," acquire the likeness of the famous "Servant of God: "...by his knowledge shall my righteous servant lead the many to righteousness... because he exposed himself to death... and he bore the sin of many..." (Is. 53:11–12). Thus the righteous will arise, in the vision above, "and the wise will be radiant as the brightness of the firmament" among the stars above. In time of trouble they were condemned to agony in order "to be refined

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[17] Polybius XXIX 27 (*LCL*), ed. W.R. Paton, vol. 6 (London 1927); on Josephus see n. 24 below.

[18] On the death of Antiochus Epiphanes in Iran, upon being prevented from robbing a temple in Elam: Polybius XXXI 9 (see n. 17 above); Appian, *Roman History,* XI 66, (*LCL*), ed. H. White, vol. 2 (London 1955) and the studies listed in Chapter 4, n. 3 below. The fall of the tyrant in Daniel's vision (as shown below in Chapter 4, Section B, n. 17) is based on Isaiah's prophecy (14:25; 31:8) regarding the defeat of the king of Assyria, but the interweaving of artistic threads and additional models is probable as well. The location "between seas and the beautiful holy mountain" (Dan. 11:45) perhaps depicts a certain typological and associative connection with Ezekiel's vision that extols Daniel (28:3) and in a poetic metaphoric picture describes the fall of the governor of Tyre "in the heart of the seas" (28:8) after his defeat and removal from the lofty seat "on God's holy mountain" (28:14).

and purged and whitened until the time of the end" (Dan. 11:35).[19] After absolution, Israel will shake off its dust, thrive and rise to Heaven. "There a star rises from Jacob (Num. 24:17)... and the stars are none other than the righteous, as is said, Those who lead the many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever" (yNedarim III 38 a). And in the same vein, "Rabbi Judah b. Elai preached, This people resembles dust and resembles stars. When they go down, they go down to dust, and when they rise, they rise to the stars" (bMegillah 16a).

The destruction of the Greek kingdom will precede and pave the way for full redemption. In two parallel scenes Daniel proffers his ideas on the changes in rule and on the end of days. First a lofty figure composed of four metals symbolizes the four powers ruling the world successively (Dan. 2:31ff.). The times of their rise and decline is limited and determined by divine decree. The shining splendor and might of Babylonia, Media, Persia and Greece are reflected by the glittering gold, silver, copper and iron. Despite boundaries and oppositions, they are all merged in the same image symbolizing the idolatry prevailing in the world, which for the Jewish righteous and faithful Hasid is the root of evils and catastrophes.

The last and worst of those kingdoms is represented by iron, but is divided and mixed with clay, for "they shall mingle with the seed of men but they shall not cling together just as iron does not mix with clay" (Dan. 2:43). The strange mixture of iron and clay, accompanying the split and decline of the government, apparently represents the mixture of peoples in the Hellenistic empire and the attempts to unite them into an integrated group that proved unavailing. The grand figure cracks suddenly and shatters, for a stone hewn from the mountain by a supernatural hand was thrown fracturing the composite stumbling feet. All that was left of it was some dust flying that scattered like chaff from the summer threshing floor and vanished. Opposite it the crushing stone grew into a great mountain that filled the whole earth.

The meaning of the event in the vision is explained by Daniel himself. The swing of the stone is the instrument that crumbles the last power and is destined by the Creator to found a new and stable government on earth that will never come to harm or to an end. What is that force that emerges in the days of the pagan rulers, destroys and sweeps them away in order to take their place forever? "And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, a kingdom that shall not be transferred to another people. It will crush and wipe out all these kingdoms but shall itself last forever" (Dan. 2:44). The desired kingdom will not vanish, will not be abandoned, will not pass to "another people," but remain the property of the dedicated people forever.

The old Jewish interpretation, adopted by Porphyry as well, discerning the

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[19] On the notion of eternal life and resurrection see the end of Chapter 4 and nn. 80-85.

people of Israel in the stone, seems solid in the context and preferable to the old Christian view relating the stone to the personality of the Messiah, asserted by Jerome and supported by the New Testament (Matt. 21:42 & paral.; Acts 4:11; Rom. 9:32–33; I Pet. 2:4ff.). The idea is extracted from Scriptures and evokes many associations such as "the shepherd, the stone of Israel" (Gen. 49:24); "And in that day I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people" (Zech. 12:3); "I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone," etc. (Is. 28.16); "The stone which the builders refused has become the head stone of the corner" (Ps. 118:22). The stone detached "from the mountain" that crumbles the figure returns and itself grows into a gigantic mountain covering the entire world like the holy mountain rising high in Daniel's visions (9:16, 20; 11:45) and representing the loftiness and exaltation of the Torah, which will overcome the paganism prevailing throughout the world (Is. 2:2; 56:7; Ps. 2:6; 99:9; etc.).[20]

In the second scene Daniel compares the empires succeeding each other in pagan despotic reincarnations to beasts of prey: "In my vision at night I saw the four winds of the heaven stirring up the great sea. Four mighty beasts different from each other emerged from the sea..." (Dan. 7:2-3). Superficial mythological features were absorbed into that vision but stripped of the pagan and alien wrapping. Four beasts came up from the depths and the abyss, the habitat of the crocodile or the Leviathan known from the Bible and mentioned in Isaiah: "In that day the Lord with his cruel, mighty sword will punish Leviathan the elusive serpent, even Leviathan that twisting serpent; and he will slay the dragon of the sea" (27:1). The end of the days, it is true, is sometimes painted in the legendary lines of the Creation and in the erupting colors of a cosmic upheaval. But the ancient myth was detached from its roots, gave up its idolatrous soul, leaving only a colorful metaphoric setting. In Daniel's dream the dragon vanishes to be replaced by four frightening beasts as a pure parable, in contrast to Christian apocalypses (Revelation of John, 12:7ff.) and pseudepigraphical works (like the *Psalms of Solomon* II 25ff.; see n. 50 below) in which the dragon recurs and represents demonic forces in metaphysical struggle.

The fourth monster terrifies and destroys, gorges itself and grinds up everything with its iron teeth (like the iron in the idol scene), and tramples the residue with its feet. It depicts the fourth power, the Hellenistic one, which envelops nations and peoples in its pall and casts them into the crucible of its culture. It has ten horns on its head (paralleling the ten fingers of the idol) which represent ten kings, evidently from Alexander the Great to Antiochus Epiphanes. The last tyrant projects like a little horn on the monster, boasting and running wild, declaring war on "the holy ones of the Most High" to the end of the atrocities. In Heaven chairs are placed for the trial, the Lord appears with

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[20] Also below, Chapter 4, nn. 24-27.

his retinue, the death sentence is passed on the monster, its body is destroyed and cast into the fire, the other beasts remain "for a time and a season," but bereft of dominion (Dan. 7:12). The collapse of the evil kingdom, the fall of Antiochus and the removal of the despised yoke forever herald the triumph of Israel and the start of redemption.

On the heavenly altar of the vision, the monster was slain, the cruel tyranny was subdued, and the representative of the future kingdom "with the clouds of heaven like a son of man" arrives and approaches God who sits in lofty secrecy. He is entrusted with the governments of all nations forever. His identity is revealed by the herald angel: "These great beasts, four in number, [mean] four kingdoms which shall arise out of the earth, But the holy ones of the Most High will receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever" (Dan. 7:17–18). The malicious, wicked, iniquitous governments are represented by predatory beasts, compared with the saintly and innocent, symbolized by a human being. For the beasts originate in the abyss, in darkness, in contrast to the saintly, whose souls abide in Heaven.

The menace of the beasts also hovers over the lions' den in the previous contiguous story (6:8ff.), while the fire awaits the fourth monster and abhorrence awaits all transgressors (Is. 66:24, Dan. 12:2) in the fiery furnace which Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah escape from but their enemies are burnt in (Dan. 3:6ff.). The one "like a son of man" that ascends to the clouds is the House of Jacob, demeaned and humbled, shaking off the dust, rising and shining among the stars. The Servant of God, so marred was his appearance unlike that of man, his form beyond human semblance (Is. 52:14) reacquires the image of God the Creator. The comparison is not unusual. Among other things, Israel is likened to a human being: "For you, my flock, the flock that I tend, are man" (Ez. 34:31); "Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, upon the son of man whom you have taken as your own" (Ps. 80:18). Christianity replaced the collective meaning with christological individuality. The Gospels (Mark 14:62 and parallels) and the apocalyptic Christian or Christianized books (I Enoch XLVI 1ff.; Fourth Ezra XIII 3ff.) present the "son of man" as the divine Messiah from above, that is, as Christ. Interpreting the Book of Daniel through these texts is tantamount to injecting Christian intentions into it.[21]

The secrets confined in the complicated, intertwined symbolism of the idol and the metals, the stone and the mountain, the monsters and their horns, the earth and the stars, the human being and the "holy ones of the Most High," are explainable in the light of the immanent meaning of the entire work and according to the sources in the ancient scriptural heritage. The exaggeration or magnification of the alien elements, hypothetical and dubious, Babylonian or

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[21] See further clarifications in Chapter 3 (nn. 241, 252) and Chapter 4, Section D. I Enoch and IV Ezra are included in the collection of R.H. Charles, listed below in n. 61.

Iranian, Oriental or Greek, lead to the blurring of the particular intentions, to the dulling of the singularity in the vision, and even to a certain remythologization, because of apocalyptic Christian tendencies, in place of total demythologization, in the pure monotheistic spirit characteristic of this pietistic work.[22]

In his dream, Daniel observes the fall of Antiochus Epiphanes and the collapse of his evil kingdom as the first decisive step toward the desired redemption. The principal eschatological ideas are identical and congruent in the two parallel scenes, despite external differences deriving more from the artistic means than from their ideological content. Through the fabric of the vision sprouts the lively, stormy reality of the days of the persecution and Revolt. The real background is so clearly and transparently drawn that it provoked no doubt, as shown by Josephus, the Christian Hippolytus, the neo-Platonic Porphyry, or Jerome.[23] In the course of time when hopes were disappointed, salvation was delayed and troubles abounded, the meaning of the dreams and the timing of the end was removed to a remote period. The fourth kingdom was identified with the Roman Empire which seized political control in the Hellenistic expanse and was to end the era of wicked government. This reinterpretation is already suggested in Josephus' version,[24] appears in the talmudic tradition (yTa'anit II 65d; Genesis Rabbah II 4; XVI 4; XCIX 2; bAvodah Zarah 2b; etc.), is widespread in the Middle Ages (R-a-sh-i, Nahmanides, etc.) with attempts to include even Ishmael (Arab rule) among the four kingdoms (so Saadia Gaon, Abraham Ibn Ezra, Levi b. Gershon).[25]

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[22] So, e.g., A. Bentzen, *Daniel, HAT* (Tübingen 1952), p. 56ff., discerns in *"bar enash,"* ("Son of man" tikenes) the features of a divine-mythological figure that was swallowed up and merged in an Israelite kingly messianic personage raised to a heavenly rank. Daniel's visionary book supposedly grafts on to that individual transcendental figure a collectivist cloak, but the original significance is revealed in the apocalyptic books (such as the Ethiopic Enoch or the Forth Ezra) and in the Gospels. These flexible methods obscure and distort Daniel's intentions, equate him with suspect apocalyptic writings and alien mythology and, by confusing and removing differences, make possible and justify, the christological view of Daniel's vision. Such tendencies are discernible also in attempts to see the angel of God in the figure of the "son of man" (Chapter 4, n. 57 below), while according to early Christian tradition and interpretation Christ sometimes appears in the image of the lofty angel, as Michael, chief angel or angel of the covenant (Malachi 3:1), that is, the Messiah is marked by angelological features. Again authority was dug out (as I Enoch XLVI etc.) of apocalyptic writings in order to "Judaize" the doctrine. See J. Barbel, *Christos Angelos* (Bonn 1941); H.J. Schoeps, *Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums* (Tübingen 1949), p. 78ff.; M. Werner, *The Formation of Christian Dogma* (London 1957), p. 100ff.; G.H. Tavard, *Die Engel* (Freiburg 1968), p. 23.

[23] In nn. 10-12 above.

[24] As usual Josephus provides a stylized subjective paraphrase (*Ant.* X 186ff.) and deletes dangerous revolutionary intentions, but his version shows that in the past Daniel was explained in part as prophecy about the future, and the fourth kingdom was identified with the Roman Empire. The Book of Daniel is also mentioned incidentally in *Ant.* (XI 337; XII 322); *(LCL) Josephus,* ed. H. St.J. Thackeray-R. Marcus-L.H. Feldman, vol. 1-9 (London 1961–1965). See also end of n. 28 below.

[25] See Genesis Rabbah in n. 60 below and the traditional Jewish commentaries in Chapter 3, n. 1 below. See also talmudic sources in n. 14 to Preface.

The mysterious sights and descriptions of times in the chapters of the Book of Daniel contain no debate between those favoring a sublime messianic personage and those opposing it, or between those acting against tyrants and persecutors and those doing nothing but praying for miracles. There is no echo of a division or internal rift among the guardians of the covenant and Torah. There is no basis for the claim that Daniel promotes and orders a passive stance at the time of the persecutions and struggles, rejects active measures, and discourages military operations. The fates of kingdoms and peoples is of course decided in Heaven, as is all human history, in justice, not arbitrarily. Even if extreme faith in divine predestined ordinations is discernible there, it does not paralyze the will of the individual or the initiative of the group, as shown by the course and history of deterministic ideologies like Islam, Calvinism, Puritanism or Marxism. Daniel's dreams express the longings and yearnings of the Hasids in time of trial and distress. The Hasmonean Revolt was in full swing. The first achievements aroused dormant hankerings and awakened hopes. Signs of the end and portents of redemption were not yet visible on the horizon. Prophecy too remained caged and sealed since its suspension at the time of the Return to Zion. The tense expectation of a total defeat of the iniquitous regime, a defeat which would further the realization of the longed-for vision, produced not weakness, but strength and courage in the hearts of the combatants.

C. *The Books of the Maccabees*

Let us briefly re-examine the Books of the Maccabees. Although their different approaches are evident in their presentations, both heap praise on the leaders and supporters of the Revolt. Nevertheless neither contains a trace of the supposed internal antagonism stressed by modern historical schools as an almost dogmatic truth requiring no real proof. Neither reveals any sundering opposition between the proponents of pure religion and strict piety with their abstract messianic dreams, and the rebels with their commanders and with their military actions and realistic plans. The reference is not to temporary passing individual and factional differences, always possible in any human society, but to a deep ideological contradiction creating a chasm between groups and between aspirations.

The first of these books, both as generally referred to and in order of importance, I Maccabees, covers the Revolt up to the solidification of independence and the death of Simeon, son of Mattathias. Its rich and lucid canvas is a compendium of recollections, poems and documents set in the pattern of a scriptural work, but having no claim or pretension to inclusion in the Bible.[26] Its character exhibits signs of similarity to the Books of Ezra and

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[26] Three times the absence of prophecy is mentioned there (IV 46; IX 27; XIV 41). According to

Nehemiah: a chronological structure, the incorporation of letters and documents, a combination of a realistic view of a religious atmosphere, veneration of the glorious past and aspirations for national renascence. Despite the difference in tone, time, circumstances and purpose, it has points of contact and ideological similarity with Daniel's philosophy and world. Disregarding for a moment the problems of canonization, the distance between the two is no greater fundamentally than that between the historical writings of the Bible and the classic prophetic ones.[27] Tenuous speculations on its supposedly Sadducee departures, and the emphasis of its excessive ostensible secularism obscured its true virtues and relation to the internal popular tradition of those generations, fragmentary memories of which remain in talmudic sources. But the distance in time, quality and character between I Maccabees and adjacent sources must not be forgotten.

Its nature and purposes are evidenced by the assessments and observations of the course of events. For I Maccabees Antiochus Epiphanes is not an isolated aberrant despot, in a cultured dynasty but, just as for Daniel, a contemptible scion of the nefarious race of the predatory malicious Greek realm, whose authority was divinely ordained (I 1ff.). The closeness to the circles within which Daniel's visions evolved is discernible also in the terms and concepts such as "Kittim" (I1—Dan. 11:30; Num. 24:24), "holy covenant" (below), "the abomination of desolation"[28] (I 54; IV 43; VI 7—Dan. 8:13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11), and in the steps taken to avoid expressing the name of God by using a

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the notion accepted since the Return to Zion (Chapter 1, n. 52 above) the holy spirit had long since departed and no longer hovered. No ancient Jewish testimony calls for the canonization of the apocryphal books such as I Maccabees, Judith, Tobit, Ben Sira, etc. Their inclusion in or exclusion from the Bible was not discussed. While they could be read in private they could not serve liturgical purposes or constitute the basis for sermons and rulings (mSanhedrin X 1) according to the apt explanation in the Jerusalem Talmud (ySanhedrin X 28a), and they should not be classed with the heretical (*minim*) writings (as in the Babylonian Talmud version; bSanhedrin 100b) or connected with the apocalyptic and pseudepigraphic works.

[27] S.Z. Leiman, *The Canonization of Hebrew Scripture* (Hamden, Conn., 1976); A.C. Sundberg, *The Old Testament of the Early Church* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964). See also Chapter 1, Section F.

[28] The abomination is described as "of desolation" because it carries out the curses of the desolation voiced in the prophecies of reproof and consolation (Jer. 25:8ff.; Lev. 26:31ff.) which embody the basis of Daniel's vision (see Chapter 3, Section A below) and the notion of "seventy weeks" (of years). This was properly understood by past commentators like Levi Herzfeld, Geschichte des Volkes Israel, vol. I^2 (Leipzig 1863), p. 430ff. and Yitzḥak (I.F.) Baer, "Redifat ha-Dat ha-Monoteistit" etc., *Zion* 33 (1968): 108ff., in our time. No oriental divinity (such as Ba'al-Shamem) is implied in the title, and awkward speculations, based on this error, are refuted. II Maccabees (VI 2) reveals that the Jerusalem Temple was desecrated in the name of Zeus Olympius, but I Maccabees adheres to the Daniel version and like Hasidim does not defile itself by uttering the name of the pagan god. In his presentation (*Ant.* XII 253ff.) Josephus (see n. 24 above) bypasses the phrase that would be difficult for his non-Jewish readers to understand. His versions are treated below in Chapters 5 (Section D) and 6 (Section B).

circumlocution (II 57, 61; VII 41; XVI 3) or the term "Heavens" (III 18ff.; IV 10ff.; IX 46; XII 15—Dan. 4:23; mAvot I 3).[29]

The denunciation of the Hellenizers, the definition of their crimes, the description of the outbreak and progress of the Revolt all display the author's particular approach: "In those days some scoundrels came out of Israel and seduced many" to make a "covenant with the Gentiles" and remove the segregating walls. They obtained a permit from Antiochus to follow the "ordinances of the Gentiles." They built a gymnasium in Jerusalem, undergoing uncircumcision and abandoned the holy covenant, desired foreign customs "and attached themselves to the Gentiles" (I 11ff.).[30]

The affair of sin and rebellion is solidly based on biblical verses, selected and arranged in logical order. The people straying from the ancestral paths are the ones Daniel calls "those who forsake the holy covenant" (11:30), who were drawn to forbidden practices and failed to heed the warning: "Nor shall you follow their ordinances" (Lev. 18:3). The omission of the precept of circumcision exemplifies the disobedience to the Torah and abandonment of the divine covenant (Gen. 17:10). In that spirit the Jerusalem Talmud (Sanhedrin X 27c) rules: "He commits a breach of this covenant by practicing uncircumcision." The sentence of the law breakers is passed, such as the punishments for a "seduced (apostate) city" and for those adhering to Baal-Peor. The first law stipulates "If you hear it said of one of the towns... that some scoundrels have come out and seduced the inhabitants of their town saying, Come, let us worship other gods... put the inhabitants of that town to the sword... that the Lord may turn from his blazing anger and show you mercy" (Deut. 13:13, 14, 16, 18). The second example teaches "And Israel attached itself to Baal-Peor and the Lord was incensed against Israel. And the Lord said... Take all the ringleaders of the people and have them publicly impaled... so the Lord's wrath may turn away from Israel. And Moses said... Each of you slay those of his men who attached themselves to Baal-Peor... The Lord spoke... Phinehas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my wrath from the Israelites by displaying among them his zeal for my sake... And it shall be for him and his descendants after him the covenant of an everlasting priesthood" (Num. 25:3, 4, 5, 10–11, 13).[31]

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[29] Antigonus of Sokho, whose location in that talmudic tradition corresponds to the Hellenization period, adopts in his saying (in mAvot I 3) the expression "fear of Heaven." According to his place in that Mishnah, Antigonus precedes the first "Pair" (among the Zugot) that is, Antiochus Epiphanes' persecutions and the start of the Revolt, as indicated below, Chapter 7, n. 25.

[30] I Macc. I 15: καὶ ἐζευγίσθησαν τοῖς ἔθνεσι κτλ.; W. Kappler ed.; see n. 62 to Chapter 1. The Vulgate Latin version has: et juncti sunt nationibus; see n. 73 to Chapter 1.

[31] The connection with the Baal-Peor episode in the verse is obvious, in view of Mattathias' later slogan and the mention of Phinehas. Among the Pharisee fellowships a similar zealotist trend emerged and became salient, as is indicated by the legendary report of Simeon b. Shataḥ's activity in Ashkelon (see Chapter 5, n. 352 belov). These tendencies persisted for generations till the destruction

The disloyal Hellenizers sinned and inveigled Israel like those scoundrels inciting to idolatry and attaching themselves to Baal-Peor. Because of them apostasy flourished and the nation was subjected to a terrible calamity. It is true that many Jews fulfilled the precepts, adhering to their Torah despite the persecution and danger, circumcised their infants, refused to eat forbidden foods, and were killed, in order not to "violate the holy covenant." But their sacrifice did not appease the wrath, and the divine anger did not subside (I Macc. I 60ff.). The sin was not yet expiated by suffering. The change came only when the Hasmoneans and their faction undertook to gather the faithful, eradicate the evil by force, properly punish the offenders and destroy them. That action purified the people and removed the furious anger.

Mattathias, son of Yoḥanan, the founding father of the Hasmoneans, not only firmly adheres to his faith, refuses to comply with the despot's orders, and rejects enticements; he also puts the Jewish traitor to death, kills the royal official, destroys the abominable shrine at Modi'in: "And he was zealous for the Law as was Phinehas." He calls on "all who are zealous for the Torah and maintain the covenant" to bestir themselves and join (I Macc. II 15ff.). The slogan of aggressive zealotry is inspired by Phinehas' deed. So the Jerusalem Talmud derived the zealots' rulings from it (Sanhedrin IX 27b; X 28d) while the Babylonian Talmud includes "a Hasmonean court" in treating the same problem, on the basis of quite vague memories (Sanhedrin 82a; Avodah Zarah 36b). Philo too lauds Phinehas and justifies such zealous action in regard to the lawless and inciters to idolatry.[32]

The author of I Maccabees identifies unreservedly with the rebels and their leaders. The basing of their path and deeds on the biblical sermons noted is not a matter of theoretical personal opinions but a proclamation emphasizing the prevailing ideology that determined the policy of the Hasmoneans. Mattathias appears as the heir and disciple of Phinehas. The holy war blazed forth thanks to him. Upon his death, Judas Maccabaeus undertook to carry out the mission, and scoured the towns and villages of Judaea to root out the traitors. He "annihilates the wicked" and "turns away wrath." In similar terms the Mishnah concludes the rulings on a "seduced (apostate) city," based on the same biblical foundation cited, which serves as authority for that chapter: "For so long as the wicked are in the world, wrath is in the world; when the wicked disappear from the world, wrath departs form the world" (Sanhedrin X 6).

"A company of Hasids, valiant men of Israel" rally to the flag of the Hasmoneans to assault the offenders within their people, smash shrines and

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of the Second Temple. The matter was investigated by Israel Ben Shalom in his dissertation, *The Shammai School* etc., indicated above: Preface, n. 16.

[32] Philo, *De Vita Mosis* I (55) 300ff.; *De Posteritate Caini* (54) 182; *De Confusione Linguarum* (13) 57; *De Virtutibus* (7) 34ff.; *De Specialibus Legibus* I (9) 54ff.; *Philo (LCL),* ed. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, vol. 1-10 (London 1949–1962).

idols, circumcise infants and reinstate the laws of the Torah (II 42ff.). These Hasidic zealots are not a hardened segregated sect whose religion imposes rigidity and a fossilized ideology, but a community that fights and pulls the nation into bold confrontation. The extensive offensive operations begin with their organization by the Hasmonean leadership. Other different groups of Hasids are not known, and nothing hints at any difference of opinion between contradictory trends among them, although variations and possible controversies were likely in regard to then current problems.

Mattathias' last speech expresses their faith well. "Be zealous for the Law and give your souls for the covenant of your fathers. Remember the deeds of our ancestors which they did in their generations" (II 49ff.). In his oration he held up as models Abraham, Joseph, Phinehas, Joshua, Caleb, David, Elijah and Daniel and his comrades, all of whom are distinguished by their devotion, self-sacrifice, zeal (stressed in Phinehas and Elijah), and their absolute loyalty even though alone. No discrimination is evident in this array between types of faith, or levels of martyrdom, no distinction is made between victims and warriors. There is no debate with passive religiosity, although the call for rebellion and active zeal is clear and emphatic.

Force was initially directed against the Hellenizers and their aides. In the second stage victories were achieved on the battlefield, enemy troops were repulsed, and the area purified and controlled by the rebels was enlarged. The spirit of adamant zeal and fighting Hasidism did not weaken, but strengthened in the presence of Judas Maccabaeus. His orations encouraged and excited the volunteers with the memories of glorious past miracles (such as the parting of the Red Sea, the heroic deeds of David and Jonathan, or the plague in Sennacherib's army) whose glory had not yet been repeated in the present. His camp was meticulous in obeying the laws of the Torah, gathered first fruits and tithes, went forth to battle prayers, and returned with songs of thanksgiving, for there is no redemption without faith, and salvation is entirely dependent on divine will (III 1ff.).

The fighting did not stop after the dedication of the Temple, the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, the official repeal of the conversion edicts, and the compromise attempts. The motive for its persistence was not only hollow ambition on the part of the Hasmoneans and their adventure-seeking supporters. The opinions prevailing in the historical schools—that the Hasids left the combatants in droves after the religious persecutions ended and totally discredited the aspirations and plans for achieving political independence—are devoid of any basis in contemporary reports, as explained above, and emerged from modern systems and theories that are alien to the period in question. Nor is there any evidence for the revised assessment in Tcherikover's version, which asserts that the Hasids and scribes claimed "the monopoly in interpreting the Torah"; in exchange for that right they were prepared to reconcile themselves to

Alcimus, the high priest appointed by Demetrius, but the compromise attempt failed "for some reason that is not clear." Contrived solutions and bizarre inventions cannot save the weak and fundamentally invalid method.[33]

Weighty factors prevented the fight from subsiding and coming to an end. The persecution and rebellion was followed by a profound revolution and it was not easy to restore the status quo ante even in an atmosphere of a lull. The Hellenizers and their supporters lost social positions and possessions, but not all of them vanished or renounced their efforts and machinations. Their power was not insignificant even in the time of Jonathan and Simeon, as noted in I Maccabees (IX 23, 58ff.; X 61; XI 21; XIII 21ff.; XV 21). A fierce confrontation ensued, alternately waxing and waning, between the two streams in the nation, not only between the Hasmonean camp and the armies of the Seleucid kingdom. Still in the balance was the fate of Jerusalem and the future of the people's constitution, not just religious and spiritual assets, but plundered property, confiscated lands (VI 24; VII 6; Dan. 11:39), priestly and administrative posts (II Macc. XI 3; XIV 6-7).[34] On the other hand, the ideals of militant Hasidism were not discarded or blunted. The fierce zealotry of the troubled time was not suddenly extinguished. The sentence of the wicked was not entirely carried out yet, the sin was not entirely eradicated, and the abomination of idolatry was not swept away from the Holy Land. The messianic yearning inscribed in Daniel's visions still enflamed hearts, although the final tolling was delayed. The weakness and corruption of the Seleucid kingdom, indicated by the series of frequent fluctuations and upheavals within it, undoubtedly encouraged and fed the hidden hopes of true redemption.

In the course of the years and the progress of the Hasmonean Revolt, with temporary advances and withdrawals, certain changes apparently took place in the status and composition of the rebel camps (farmers returning to their land in

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[33] V. Tcherikover (*Ha-Yehudim ve-ha-Yevanim ba-Tekufa ha-Helenistit* [Tel Aviv 1963], pp. 184–85), changed his original conception (see Chapter 1, nn. 43, 44 above) but adopted shaky hypotheses and concluded that the Hasids and scribes deserted Judas Maccabaeus and streamed to Alcimus' camp, hoping to regain the monopolistic status and exclusive authority to interpret ancestral laws and scriptural precepts, which had been theirs before the changes and coercive decrees. This theory is based entirely on a confusion of terms. Torah sages are sometimes called "scribes" (Chapter 1, n. 70 above; Chapter 7, n. 80 and n. 189 below) but they are not to be identified with officials, clerks, or supervisors (see Neh. 13:13; Josephus, *Ant.* XII 142) who are likewise called "scribes." Criticism of such mistaken opinions (as in L.[E.] Finkelstein, *Ha-Perushim ve-Anshei Keneset ha-Gedola* [New York 1950], pp. 56f.; 67ff.) on these "scribes" was already voiced by Yeḥezkel Kaufmann, *Toldot ha-Emunah ha-Yisr'elit,* vol. 4 (Jerusalem 1956), p. 481ff.

[34] That honors, government posts and land were distributed to supporters of the monarchy, the Hellenizing upper class and its followers, is clearly attested by Daniel (11:39): "He will heap honor on those who acknowledge him, and will make them master over many; he will distribute land for a price." The struggle is therefore not only on the ideological-religious plane, but revolves also around material possessions, and political and social status. The Revolt engendered a profound, stormy internal revolution (see Chapter 1, n. 66 above).

the busy seasons, fatigue and casualties, departures for personal and material reasons, etc.); similarly their supporters cannot be described in permanent static terms. There may also have been certain internal divisions at least theoretically and various contradictory trends, some moderate and some more extreme. But these processes, if they did transpire, are not clearly visible. At any rate, there is no real evidence of a divisive rift, stormy debates or ideological clash, of segregative Hasids contemptuous of the aims and means adopted in the Revolt and antagonistic to the military leadership.

Jonathan and Simeon did not diverge from the path of Judas Maccabaeus and their father Mattathias: they find their help and salvation in Heaven (XI 71; XII 15; XVI 3), pursue and slay the sinners in Israel, destroy pagan shrines and their impurities (V 44, 68; X 84). The spirit of zealotry did not vanish although it sounded somewhat less, in the course of events, the circumstances of the establishment of independent rule, the organization of a regular army, diplomatic overtures, and realistic policies. Conquered territories like Jaffa and Gezer and the Jerusalem citadel were purified of the defilement of idolatry, the "abominations" were removed from them so that the defenders of the faith could be settled there (XIII 11, 47ff.; XIV 33ff.; XV 33).

Uprooting idolatry from hallowed land, according to biblical precepts (Ex. 23:24; 34:13; Num. 33:52; Deut. 7:2ff.; etc.) involves also the removal of pagan Gentiles or their conversion to Judaism. Concessions to neighbors and to the imposed regime since the Return to Zion,[35] like the moderation in relations with the Gentile population during the Hellenistic period, were exacted by circumstances. The "liberal" approach changed to the contrary during the persecutions and Revolt with the rise in militant zealotry. Yose b. Yoezer and Yose b. Yoḥanan decreed impurity on the country of Gentiles (yShabbat I 3d; yPesaḥim I 27d; yKetubbot VIII 32c; bShabbat 14b; bAvodah Zarah 8b) referring mainly to the contamination of idolatry.[36] Later, under the force of circumstances, there was a reversal, and a growing tendency to blunt the sting and moderate the strictures against the forbidden rites and Gentile residence in the Holy Land (yBerakhot IX 13b; yAvodah Zarah I 40a; etc.), that is, the very demands that were insisted on and implemented during the stormy days of rebellious Hasidism.[37]

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[35] The people who made the Return to Zion were compelled to carry the yoke of foreign rule (yShevi'it V 36b) in contrast to the settlers of Joshua Bin Nun's time. That is why the rulings of Ezra and Nehemiah do not include all the Torah precepts in exact and full form. The gap between the actual limited possibilities and the desire to implement the Torah precisely is evident also in the analysis of the talmudic Sanhedrin (Chapter 7, Sectin B).

[36] G. Alon, *Meḥkarim be-Toldot Yisrael,* vol. 1 (Tel Aviv 1957), p. 144ff.

[37] The last Hasmonean rulers apparently back away from extreme zealotist demands, as indicated by the outcome of Pompey's invasion (Josephus, *Bell.* I 155ff.; *Ant.* XIV 74ff.) and the basic testimonies. But this matter and the question of forced conversions require further investigation. See Chapter 6, n. 61 below.

The slogan of national independence was not proclaimed suddenly in the style of secular ideology as a departure from the religious movement. The release from "the yoke of the Gentiles" in the words of I Maccabees (XIII 41), and not merely political freedom in foreign terms or in a remote modernistic conception, is what in the time of Simeon b. Mattathias the Hasmonean characterized the decisive step and epitome of the long and bitter confrontation to cleanse the nation of its sins, purify its homeland and courageously carry out the precepts of the Torah. National aspirations were not a separate domain in the consciousness of those generations, but flowed from the fountain of religious faith and fervor, although there were of course secular and material elements involved that cannot be dealt with and scrutinized here.

It is not jubilation over political freedom or merry-making over an independent Jewish regime, but the Hanukkah festival that commemorated the Hasmonean Revolt in the fresh memories and the generations close to the events, when along with it were instituted Nicanor Day and the Day of the Conquest of the Citadel—the last stronghold of idolatry in Jerusalem (I Macc. IV 36ff.; VII 33ff.; XIII 49ff.; II Macc. I 10ff..; X 1ff..; XV 36) among the consecrated holidays included in the Scroll of Fasting.[38] However, the salvation supplied by the Hasmoneans was limited, even in the opinion of their admirers and supporters. Their reign was defined and restricted in the famous covenant document of Simeon's time (I Macc. XIV 41) "until a true prophet shall arise." A profound feeling prevails (IV 46; IX 27), as in the Book of Daniel, that prophecy was not yet restored since the spirit of God departed from Israel. The signs and portents of the yearned for end had not yet appeared.

The results of this examination are confirmed also in the light of II Maccabees, which describes the Revolt from the apologetic viewpoint of a Jewish intellectual in the Hellenistic Diaspora, but not of authentic Phariseeism clashing with the supposed Sadduceeism of the author of I Macc. The work is constructed in the taste and with the embellishments of foreign art, abounding in rhetoric and preaching, pathetic and dramatic scenes. Aggressive and extreme zealotry is discarded. The Greek kingdom is not the epitome of the wicked government as it is in the Hasidic Eretz Israel visions of Daniel and of the I Maccabees chapters. Consequently the Seleucid rule is not fundamentally rejected, but sheds love and grace on Jerusalem, which is almost drenched in a serene idyll and enjoying its tranquillity. The storm arises suddenly when the schemes, transgressions and evil deeds of the Hellenizers lead to the terrible troubles and persecutions (III 1ff.).

For didactic purposes (IV 12ff.) the list of the Hellenizers' crimes and sins are emphasized, and greater detail is supplied about the suffering and courage of the

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[38] The Scroll of Fasting and the talmudic recollections are discussed at the end of Chapter 1 above.

martyrs including the celebrated examples of old Eleazar and the woman with seven sons. When the full measure of punishment is reached, and the sin is cleansed, the Maccabee goes to war and advances from triumph to triumph without even a minor failure (e.g., in the "improved" description of Chapter 13 in contrast to I Macc. VI 28ff.), for "the anger of the Lord turned into mercy" (VIII 5), and salvation is entrusted to the revered hero, whose glory casts his family and environment into the shade. Contrary to the I Maccabees version, no stress is laid on the awakened zeal of Mattathias and his group to eradicate sinners and destroy pagan shrines, which resulted in the wrath being removed from Israel. That event is eliminated. The condensed treatment of the Revolt is confined to the battles of Judas Maccabaeus, and ends just before his defeat and death, so that the splendor of his heroic personality should not be dimmed, the smooth moralism should not be marred by any superfluous fact, and the joyful picture should not be spoiled by a gloomy epilogue.[39]

Despite the omissions, abbreviations, didactic sermonizing, some outward appeasement and conciliatory attitude, weakening of enmity and diminution of the validity of militant zealotry, the factors and slogans in the battles are not basically different. The glory of the Revolt and its halo of sanctity are hardly reduced. Hasids are not set against Hasmoneans, and religious trends are not separated from secular ones. Judas Maccabaeus himself is called the leader of the Hasids (XIV 6) by Alcimus, the high priest appointed by Demetrius, the son of Seleucus. Instead of "release from the yoke of the Gentiles" typical of I Maccabees, II Maccabees ends in a style more befitting the work and the taste of his readers: "From those days on the city has been in the hands of the Hebrews, and I will end my words here" (XV 37). It was not the repeal of the coercive decrees and cessation of the religious persecutions, but the ejection of the oppressor (II 22) and the liberation of Jerusalem—that is, national political achievements, which though not yet true in those days the writer advanced and stressed in order to end the Judas Maccabaeus' story with them — that brought the rebels nearer to their goal and heralded divine favor after the period of wrath and reproof. Even that improved and elaborated picture, unshadowed by calamity or defeat, however, contains no signs of the desired ultimate redemption (II 18) inherent in ancient prophecies.

In connection with the present problem the book known as IV Maccabees merits attention.[40] Its purpose is to glorify and extol the divine wisdom in the heritage of Israel; its main narrative is based on the II Maccabees chapters on

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[39] On II Macc. see above: Chapter 1, nn. 54, 55, 59.

[40] M. Hadas, *The Third and Fourth Books of the Maccabees* (New York 1953); A. Dupont-Sommer, *Le Quatrième Livre des Machabées* (Paris 1939); R.L. Bensly, *The Fourth Book of Maccabees* — etc. (Cambridge 1895); H. Dörrie, *Passio SS. Machabaeorum* (Göttingen 1938); U. Breitenstein, *Beobachtungen zu Sprache, Stil und Gedankengut des vierten Makkabäerbuchs* (Basel 1976).

martyrdom, in artistic variation, with changes and deletions, flowery orations and sermons. It displays the characteristics of Jewish thinking, typical of the Hellenistic Diaspora combining faithfulness to the Torah and its precepts with the features and concepts of Greek philosphy. Gross errors reduce its value for historical research to zero (e.g., Seleucus IV is called Nicanor, and Antiochus Epiphanes is represented as his son—III 20; IV 15ff.) but it is illuminating in regard to the evolution of memories and views of the events.[41]

From the distant perspective of the Roman period before the destruction of the Temple, against a fading historical background but in a dramatic setting full of pathos, the heroic play of old Eleazar and the woman with seven children is presented in a unified coordinated pattern. By their self sacrifice, the heroes frustrate the designs of the cruel tyrant. The description of their contribution and fate embodies lines from Daniel's visions. Their souls rise to Heaven and resemble stars in their light (XVII 5), for they suffered torments till they died for the vindication of the people (XVII 10) like "the wise" who "will be radiant as the brightness of the firmament; and those who lead the many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever" (Dan. 12:3). Accordingly they stand by the heavenly throne and are granted everlasting life with all the "holy ones" (XVII 18–19), as the "holy ones of the Most High" who appear "with the clouds of heaven like a son of man" and reach "the Ancient of Days" (Dan. 7:13ff.) in order to remain in the bosom of the deity. "Thanks to them the foes did not overcome our nation." Because of them "the tyrant was punished and the homeland purified." Their sacrifice was like "ransom for the sins of the nation." For "through the blood of these pious people and through the expiation of their death, divine Providence rescued Israel" from distress (XVII 20ff.). The famous heroes restored peace to the people, reinstituted obedience to the laws of the homeland and defeated the foe (XVIII 4).

In that same artistic mirror, refined and airy, detached from the fertile and effervescent soil of the period of the Revolt, the spirit of militant zealotry subsided, the yearning for the collapse of the wicked regimes and the elimination of idolatry vanished, with the victory of the Torah and enthronement of its observers throughout the world. The Revolt itself was deleted, in order not to disturb the literary and ideological program. And yet, despite its distillation and adaptation to Hellenistic concepts, the image of the Hasids of Eretz Israel remained essentially undistorted. The one-sided emphasis on martyrdom in suffering does not mean the negation of armed combat, and there is no trace of the version stipulating that salvation was accomplished solely by supernatural means and miracles. Redemption was not attributed to an exalted personage from Heaven. The nationalist aspiration was not torn out of the people's hearts

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[41] A Hebrew translation by Alexander Schor with explanations appears in A. Kahana, *Ha-Sefarim ha-Ḥitzonim*, vol. 2 (Tel Aviv 1937).

and the value of the political outcome was not diminished as the persecutions and Revolt ended. The Hasids' song of victory trilled not for religious freedom alone, but in the wake of the crushing of tyranny, the liberation of the nation and the purification of the homeland.

The Talmudic tradition contains the notion the "the death of the righteous atones for Israel" (yYoma I 38b) which is reiterated in various terms (bMo'ed Katan 28a; bShabbat 33b; Leviticus Rabbah II 1; *Midrash Va-Yikra Rabbah* in M. Margaliot ed., Jerusalem 1953–1960; Exodus Rabbah XXXV 4—*Shemot Rabbah* in *Midrash Rabbah,* Romm ed., Vilna 1921), but does not prescribe ritual or magical devotion to the victims of the sacrifice. The story of the heroism of the woman and her seven sons roamed through the popular memory, changing its garb repeatedly until it was implanted in the distant reality of the Roman Empire (Lamentations Rabbah — *Midrash Eikhah Rabbah* I 53, p. 84 in the Buber ed. [Vilna 1899], on Lam. 1:16; bGittin 57b) and its roots were severed.[42]

Early Christianity preserved the sources of the legend (II Macc. and IV Macc.), drew inspiration from them, included the Maccabees in its company of saints, presented them as models of martyrdom, and assigned them commemorative days in the calendar. The Christian tradition also evolved the rumor about the church in Antioch erected in place of a synagogue on the tombs of the Maccabees.[43] Modern scholars tried to verify the rumor despite its thinness and contradictions, as in the confused version of Malalas, the author of an Antiochian chronicle of the sixth century C.E.[44] The story was not known before the fourth century C.E. and cannot be confirmed by any clear reliable document.[45] The erection of sanctuaries and shrines with public religious rites on the graves and remains of canonized personages, which was common in early Christianity, was evidently absorbed from pagan and Hellenistic customs, as the church expanded and spread.[46] It is alien to the spirit and contrary to the way of

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[42] Yehoshua Gutman, "Ha-Em ve-Shiv'at Baneha ba-Agada u-ve-Sifrei ha-Ḥashmona'im II, IV, *Sefer Yoḥanan (Hans) Lewy,* Memorial Volume (Jerusalem 1949), p. 25ff.; G.D Cohen, "Ma'aseh Ḥana ve-Shiv'at Baneha ba-Sifrut ha-Ivrit," *M.M. Kaplan Jubilee Volume* (New York 1953), Hebrew Section, p. 109ff.

[43] M. Rampolla del Tindaro, *Martyre et Sépulture des Machabées* (Lille 1899); M. Maas, "Die Maccabäer als christliche Heilige", *MGWJ* 44 (1900): 145ff.; J. Obermann, "The Sepulchre of the Maccabean Martyrs," *JBL* 50 (1931): 250ff.

[44] Joannes Malalas, *Chronographia,* ed. L. Dindorf, *CSHB* (Bonn 1831), p. 207; E. Bikerman, "Les Maccabées de Malalas," *Byzantion* 21 (1951): 63ff.

[45] The Church Fathers, like Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom and Augustine (listed above in Chapter 1, n. 8) are no earlier than the fourth century; before them there is no clear testimony. According to Malalas, by entreaties Judas Maccabaeus obtained the Temple from King Demetrius as well as the bones of the tortured "Maccabees," and built the tomb in Antioch. His version is strewn with strange mistakes and firm conclusions cannot be drawn from it.

[46] B. Kötting, *Der frühchristliche Reliquienkult und die Bestattung im Kirchengebäude* (Cologne 1965); M.P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion,* vol. 1^2 (Munich 1955), p. 184ff.; F. Pfister, *Der Reliquienkult im Altertum,* vol. 1 (Giessen 1909); E. Lucius, *Die Anfänge des Heiligenkults in der christlichen Kirche* (Tübingen 1904); H. Delahaye, *Les origines du culte des martyrs* (Brussels 1933).

ancient Judaism (Is. 65:4; Lev. 21:1ff.; Num. 6:6ff.; 19: 11f.; Deut. 18:9ff.; 26:14; bMegillah 26b; etc.) which did, however, foster the care of ancestral graves as token of respect.[47]

D. *Pseudepigraphic Works*

The clear solid testimony of the period, both internal and external, does not report any Eretz Israel Jewish pietism attracted by a resigned martyrdom, developing a cult of torment and tortured saints,[48] despising military and political measures, contemptuous of national independence, and only praying for miraculous salvation from Heaven. There is no firm basis, aside from casuistic, arbitrary interpretations, for the various shaky views on the pretensions of the Hasmoneans to assume the crown of messianic redemption predicted for the end of days in prophetic visions. Such claims are not made even by their confirmed supporters and mouthpieces. Nor has any definite concrete evidence yet been found of the rise in that period of a suffering and persecuted messianic movement, glorifying a noble personage that was to deliver those believing in him and sentence the rest to destruction. These misconceptions derive from optical illusions, whereby outlines of events and manifestations from the Hasmonean period are supposedly discerned in certain pseudepigraphic works which follow superficially a scriptural pattern and have been preserved on the margins of the Christian Bible.[49]

An example is the so-called *Psalms of Solomon*, all impregnated and embellished with the style of the biblical Psalms. Out of a group of lamentations and prayers come echoes of a terrible catastrophe that befell Jerusalem because of its sins (*Psalms* I-II). Its evil inhabitants, whoring and fornicating, pillage and defile sanctities "as if there were no redeemer heir," trample the altar, and eschew no sin, but offend more than the Gentiles (*Psalm* VIII). The Lord sends the "wicked one who smites hard," who suddenly appears on the horizon and approaches Jerusalem. "The sound of the ram's horn proclaims slaughter and death," but the "princes of the country" amazingly rejoice and greet him happily, open the gates of Jerusalem, straighten ridges for him, and decorate the city walls until "he entered like a father into his sons' home safely." All at once

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[47] J. Jeremias, *Heiligengräber in Jesu Umwelt* (Göttingen 1958).

[48] H.W: Surkau, *Martyrien in jüdischer und frühchristlicher Zeit* (Göttingen 1938); E. Lohse, *Märtyrer und Gottesknecht* (Göttingen 1955); N. Brox, *Zeuge und Märtyrer* (Munich 1961).

[49] Like V. Aptowitzer, who puts together a patchwork composed of pseudepigraphic scraps and pieces of talmudic legends in order to produce a fictional dispute between the propagandists for the Hasmonean messianic pretensions (represented by the enemies of David such as Shime'i b. Gerä and Ahitophel) and their opponents (who find fault with Elijah or Phinehas meaning Hasmonean messianism), the defendants of the House of David. See V. Aptowitzer, *Parteipolitik der Hasmonäerzeit* (Vienna 1927). Strange intentions and distortions were inserted into the talmudic tradition by such sophistic arbitrary interpretations as considered also below, Chapter 5, n. 354.

the joy is shattered, and the jubilation turns into wailing. The "stranger" or "wicked one" and "enemy" scatters killing in the impure city, annihilating mercilessly, leaving only wasteland, and moves the survivors westward (*Psalm* XVII). The astonishing punishment was visited on the Jerusalem sinners because they "destroyed the throne of David," oppressed those loyal to him and even usurped divine "promises." After the holocaust there remained only groups of pietists living in the Diaspora, and wandering in the deserts, as pure "in their innocence as lambs" and yearning for their savior.[50]

Since the nineteenth century the notion has taken root that these *Psalms* emit sounds of Jewish pietist opposition to the rot in the Hasmonean kingdom, and the catastrophe of the Roman invasion of Pompey's time. A careful analysis, however, refutes this view totally. The descriptions of the catastrophe in the *Psalms* do not accord with the circumstances and outcome of Pompey's campaign. Pompey entered Jerusalem not in a relaxed, festive procession, but in a tense and inimical atmosphere. A bloody war had taken place and the siege of Temple Mount had already lasted three months. Jerusalem was not destroyed at the time of his victory, and its population was not exiled. The poet's accusation condemns all Jerusalem, not just its rulers. There is no patent suggestion of any personage or event of the Hasmonean period. From the Jewish viewpoint there is no sense to the strange charge that the Jerusalemites "destroyed the throne of David," oppressed those loyal to him and usurped divine "promises."

The point of departure for the prevailing view was the description of the death of some "wicked one" in the *Psalms* (II 21ff.), who is likened to the dragon, falls ignominiously stabbed on the hills of Egypt; the corpse is not buried but drifts on the waves. At first glance there seems a faint resemblance to Pompey who after his flight from the battlefield of Pharsalus was slain near the Egyptian coast (according to Plutarch, Appian, Cassius Dio and others),[51] but the momentary impression quickly vanishes. Pompey's body did not fall on mountains, was not left unburied and consigned to the waves. The epithet "dragon" cannot be explained nor can the meaning of the triumphant hurrah at the sight of his downfall.

A definite accurate historical background is not provided in these *Psalms;* mysterious visions are reflected in an imaginary mirror, and the key to the secrets lies in Christian eschatology, which relies on scriptural verses and phrases. The dragon that falls on the mountains of Egypt and drifts on the waves is drawn according to Ezekiel's prophecy (29:3: "The great dragon that sprawls within his waterways" and 32:2ff.: "...intone a dirge over Pharaoh king of Egypt... like the dragon in the seas... and I will cast your carcass upon the

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[50] On the *Psalms of Solomon,* bibliographical notes, as well as a detailed discussion and analysis see Chapter 6 below.

[51] The testimonies are indicated in Chapter 6, n. 73 below.

mountains... and the watercourses shall be filled with your [gore]," etc.). He who "smites mightily" is the "the one who smote the peoples in wrath," that is, the enemy king compared to "Lucifer" in Isaiah's famous parable (Chapter 14). His serene entrance into Jerusalem and his wild rampage are orchestrated like "a king... impudent and versed in intrigue... he will have great strength but not through his own strength... by his cunning he will use deceit successfully; and shall magnify himself in his heart, and in tranquillity shall destroy many" (Dan. 8:23–25). Some resemblance appears as well to the defeat of the despot according to Daniel, "between the sea and the beautiful holy mountain" (Dan. 11:45).[52]

All these features combine in the demonic figure of the Antichrist, familiar from the pages of the New Testament and the writings of the Church Fathers. All these epithets and appellations—son of the sea monster and dragon, Lucifer (Son of Dawn), the "wicked one" or "the stranger" and "enemy"—are applied to him. His arrogant conceit, his domination of the holy city and his shameful downfall are envisaged in the end of days and precede the redeeming victory. The Jerusalemites cheer his coming and welcome him in a messianic procession, for in the past they despised and persecuted the true savior. That is why they will crown as king the deceitful Antichrist who will drag them to destruction. He came unto them "like a father to his son's house," for the godless Jews are sons of the devil (John 8:42ff.). His defeat on the mountains of Egypt is tied fast to his doings in Jerusalem (*Psalm* VIII) for in the Christian apocalypse Jerusalem is also called Sodom and Egypt (Rev. 11:8). The ridiculous picture of Jerusalem in its madness and blindness and of the evil dragon in his delusions, with all the accessories and hallmarks, is comprehensible only with the aid of typological and allegorical methods that transpose and modify the Old Testament text in the spirit of the New Testament.[53]

The odd claims of the destruction of David's throne and the expulsion of his followers are now explainable as the malice of those usurping the divine "promises." David's throne symbolizes the kingship of the Messiah which the Jews conspired to destroy by ill-treating the savior. They harassed those believing in the descendent of David, and stole the "promises," in Paul's word, destined for Abraham's seed according to "spirit" and faith, and not according to "flesh" and corporality (Rom. 4:13ff.; Gal. 3:16ff.).[54] Because of the sin toward the redeemer and his congregation they were penalized by annihilation

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[52] The vision of Daniel apparently includes glimmerings (as noted in n. 18 above) of Ezekiel's prophecy as well.

[53] Details are provided in Chapter 6, Sections C-D below

[54] These "promises" include all the blessings extended to the seed of Abraham, not just the priesthood and kingship, that is, they relate to the entire people, so that the interpretation stipulating only the Hasmoneans is refuted.

and the destruction of their country, as is customarily claimed in the Christian debate with the Jews.

The list of Jerusalem's sins, in the nightmarish vision of these *Psalms,* is merely a long-winded mixture of scriptural reproofs and preachments of the Christian message, such as attacks against the dissembling and hypocritical (*Psalm* IV) in the style of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 6:2ff.; 23:2ff.). Salvation will be attained only by a flock of pietists, innocent as lambs (in the language of the Gospels; Matt. 10:16; 25:32; etc.), accustomed to present their backs for blows, to fast and to pray (*Ps. Sol.* X 2; III 8; etc.), and even bearing the sign of divinity on their brows (XV 9) suggesting the indubitable sign of Christianity, the cross. Their morality fits the customs of the church, without the ritual ceremonies deviating from the archaistic picture. In conformity to the New Testament, essential Old Testament practical precepts are lacking in their religion: There is no Sabbath, no traditional holidays, no circumcision, no sacrificial offerings. In the Jerusalem of the future, the sanctuary has disappeared and all Jewish national character has evaporated.

The artistic and conceptual world of that collection of poems suits Christian theology perfectly. Two opposing poles stand at its extremities: Contaminated Jerusalem versus the renascent city, evil versus goodness, deceit versus innocence, darkness versus light, the abominable Antichrist versus the adored savior. A hymn glorifying the Messiah terminates the series, presenting the exalted figure of the son of David (*Ps. Sol.* XVII 21ff.). The "Lord Messiah" taught by God and not man (like the Christian "teacher": Mark 1:22; John 8:28; etc.) and pure of all sin (faultless like Jesus, the slaughtered lamb, according to Isaiah, Chapter 53; John 1:29; Heb. 4:15; etc.). His sayings are repeated by "saints" (who broadcast his proverbs and orations!) to whom miraculous redemption will come on the day of "grace" and "election" (in the terms of the Gospel). The "redeemer heir" carries out prophecies, crowned with the glory of divine promises, and acquires the sanctities of God (*Ps. Sol.* VIII 11), that is, the destined kingship, spiritual temple and priesthood, for the praying pietists desiring and expecting his coming.[55]

A false Israelite mantle gave rise to delusions and they in turn produced the prevailing opinions on the hidden meanings, Jewish and Pharisee, of these poems, and their connection with the period of Hasmonean decline. Fortunately

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[55] The christological epithets and titles (such as the "redeemer heir") do not fit the Hasmonean age at all. The House of David disappeared during the period of Persian rule (J. Liver, *Toldot Bet David* [Jerusalem 1959], p. 23ff.) and until the development of Christianity, or until the time of the Yavneh sages, no one is known to have claimed to be descended from it. The accusation that the Hasmoneans seized what belonged to the House of David is not sounded (see Chapter 6, Section B, nn. 53–56) until the Middle Ages. The Hasmonean government was deemed legitimate by the Pharisees as was the priestly crown. There are no grounds for the view that they disqualified the Hasmoneans for the priesthood because it was reserved exclusively for descendents of Zadok (see Chapter 5, n. 354).

many pseudepigraphic works of similar patterns and styles enveloped in a sheath of antiquity have survived, transparently Christian in their basic tenets, despite the haze concealing their origin, the elimination of the identity and name of the savior they exalt, and the mystery surrounding their background. Among them are the *Odes of Solomon* (sometimes attached to the *Psalms of Solomon*) which are saturated with Christian atmosphere and symbols such as the cross, the Holy Trinity, a deceitful Antichrist, a "divine son" who appears "in the perfection of his father" and saves souls from oblivion, when both cast down and exalted.[56] This example is neither isolated nor accidental. The fertile field of pseudepigraphic works yielded a bumper crop. The New Testament books already display the system, so readily discernible in the Church Fathers, of grafting scriptural verses with emendations and corruptions and even dubious additions in order to create ancient authority with which to support a strengthened faith, and increase the propaganda value.[57]

In this category are the works of I Enoch, in the Ethiopic version (parts of which are also extant in Greek) and the Slavonic.[58] The personage of the righteous man of the time of the Creation—one of the forefathers of mankind, but not of the seed of Israel or adherent to the Jewish Torah, whose disappearance from the world was ordered in an obscure manner (Gen. 5:24) so that it could be viewed as rising to Heaven—was an attraction for early Christianity and a point of departure for philosophizing about the secrets and destiny of mankind.[59] That was the reason for the sharp warnings and reservations in the Jewish tradition, close to the debate with the young church at the time of its evolution and triumph (Genesis Rabbah XXV 1, pp. 238–239 in the J. Theodor & Ch. Albeck ed.) but that stand was forgotten in later Judaism and neglected.[60] In scholarly circles many tend to ascribe the chapters of the Ethiopic I Enoch (while distinguishing among various of their strata) to the Hasmonean period, although there is disagreement on the question of their classification and affinity with a particular definite religious trend in Judaism. A cursory glance is enough to show the weakness of the conclusions and the method as a whole.[61]

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[56] For further discussion on the *Odes of Solomon* see Chapter 6, nn. 210–212 below.

[57] J. Daniélou, *Théologie du Judéo-Christianisme* (Tournai 1958); R. Harris, *Testimonies*, vols. 1-2 (Cambridge 1916–1920).

[58] The anthology of A. Kahana, *Ha-Sefarim ha-Ḥitzonim*, vols. I-II (Tel Aviv 1937) which contains such pseudepigraphic writings, is arranged in accordance with the prevailing theses and dominant methods, as is E.S. Hartom, *Ha-Sefarim ha-Ḥitzonim* (Tel Aviv 1958 ff.).

[59] Epistle of Jude 14; Epistle of Barnabas 4; 16, *The Apostolic Fathers, (LCL)*, vol. 1, ed. K. Lake (London 1965), p. 348, 396; Irenaeus, *Contra Haereses*, IV 16.2, *PG* 7; Origen, *Contra Celsum* V 54, *PG* 11; Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* XV 23, *PL* 41; ibid., XVIII 38; etc.

[60] Genesis Rabbah — *Midrash Bereshit Rabbah*, ed. J. Theodor and Ch. Albeck (Jerusalem 1965). See also H. Odeberg, *3 Enoch or the Hebrew Book of Enoch* (New York 1973).

[61] R.H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, vol. 2 (Oxford 1913); idem, *The Book of Enoch* (London 1917); H.L. Jansen, *Die Henochgestalt* (Oslo 1939); E. Sjöberg,

In a tour of the upper firmament (according to the Ethiopic version) there appears before Enoch the figure of the noble Messiah, the "most righteous" and a light unto the "righteous" and the "chosen" (XXXVIII 1ff.) the "son of man" ("like a son of man" according to Dan. [7:13] as above but interpreted as a person), dwelling under divine protection and seated on a seat of honor hidden in the heavens before the creation of the world, "a light unto the nations" and a fountain of knowledge, his mouth producing pearls of wisdom, his identity and majesty obvious to the saintly (XLVI 1ff.). On the day of judgment he will judge and decree utter destruction for the wicked and unbelieving, for they denied "the Lord of the spirits and his Messiah." His sanctuaries are suppressed, his faithful persecuted and killed, but they are "saved in his name" at the end when he overcomes the devil (Satan or Azazel) with his armies (LII 4ff.) and annihilates the sinners and offenders with his words.

The congregation of the righteous is redeemed "and the Lord of the spirits will abide with them, and with that son of man they will eat and lie down and rise forever and ever" (LXII 14) just as the believers in Jesus of Nazareth participate in his meals (I Cor. 10:16ff.; Luke 22:19, plus parallels) and join him in death and resurrection (John 11:25; Rom. 6:3ff.). The history of mankind and of Israel are reviewed in a complicated zoological symbolism (LXXXIX 1ff.) which indicates that the altar in the Second Temple was impure from the outset, the flock of sheep (the people of Israel) were blinded, and murdered the divine messengers, but they gave birth to innocent lambs (the young church) suffering and preyed upon, with a "big horn" leading them that grows into salvation on Judgement Day when annihilation and disgrace beset the blind (LXXXIX 72ff.; XC 1ff.).

Despite the obscure details, the main intentions are clear. Enoch expresses the thoughts and hopes of an isolated separatist community which assumes the crowns of sanctity and selection, stigmatizes and condemns the old dissenting house of Israel, absorbs agony and blows but trusts and longs for its salvation, and carries the name of an exalted Messiah who abides with God and sits on his honored throne in Heaven. These fundamental beliefs and facts point to the circles of early Christianity with the sects and factions deriving from it and surrounding it. In this area, another special corner must be reserved for the Slavonic Enoch,[62] in which the holy nativity (XXIII 1ff.) is presented as the birth

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Der Menschensohn im äthiopishcen Henochbuch (Lund 1946); J.T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch* (Oxford 1978); F. Dexinger, *Henochs Zehnwochenapokalypse* etc. (Leiden 1977); M.E. Stone, "The Book of Enoch and Judaism," *CBQ* 40 (1978): 479ff.; M.A: Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch* (Oxford 1976); idem, "The Date of the Parables of Enoch," *NTS* 25 (1979): 345ff.; M. Delcor, "Le Livre Des Paraboles D'Hénoch Éthiopien," *Estudios Biblicos* 38 (1979/80): 5ff. The initial section of Enoch (Chapters I-XXXVI) is essentially irrelevant here and consequently disregarded.

[62] A. Vaillant, *Le Livre des Secrets d'Henoch* (Paris 1952); Ulrich Fischer, *Eschatologie und Jenseitserwartung im hellenistischen Diasporajudentum* (Berlin 1978), p. 37ff.

of Melchizedek, that is, Christ in a prefiguration or previous incarnation.[63] We shall not attempt to propose precise definitions with detailed deciphering and dates. In general terms, the correct conclusion was already drawn many years ago in regard to the Ethiopic and Slavonic versions.[64] Still, contrived and tortuous exegesis customarily drew from the odd scenes voices and echoes of Hasmonean times, even extracting the shadows of figures (the big horn was identified with Judas Maccabaeus or John Hyrcanus). Vain dreams emerged from the confusion.

In the close vicinity of the Ethiopic Enoch chapters lies the world of notions, problems and riddles in the Twelve Testaments of the Sons of Jacob, also called the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.[65] At the core of its sermonizing orations gleams the same sublime personage, shining like the sun and sparkling like the stars, the miraculous redeemer, wearing the crown of the everlasting kingdom (of the seed of Judah) with the crown of the peerless revived priesthood (or the seed of Levi) without flaw or evil, all unadulterated spiritually, spreading the light of knowledge to the nations. Wisdom streams and divine proverbs spray out of his mouth. In the end of days he bestows salvation on the righteous, opens the gates of Paradise and eternal life for them, destroys the devil (Beliar) and crushes the dragon's head on the water.[66]

The ancient Israelite nation became defiled and contaminated, marked by hellish sins, depravity and vice, by the profanation of the Temple and its sanctities. Annihilation was decreed for its people, and destruction for its home. Divine blessing and the treasures of redemption are in store only for the loyal remnant of the house of Jacob and for the attached Gentiles who are saved, for the company of the innocent, submissive and oppressed righteous who choose the "light," despise the "darkness," and condemn the devil's law and the errors

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[63] Melchizedek represents prefiguration and constitutes a prototype of Jesus Heb. 7:1ff.; Mark 12:36ff.). The Melchizedek Scroll found in the Qumran area, is also written in the same clearly christological spirit despite all the sophistic meanderings in the erroneous prevalent methods. See D. Flusser, *Yahadut u-Mekorot ha-Natzrut* (Tel Aviv 1979), p. 275ff.; A.R. Carmona, "La Figura de Melquisedec," *Estudios Biblicos* 37 (1978): 79ff.; F.L. Horton, *The Melchizedek Tradition* (Cambridge 1976); J.T. Milik, "Milkisedeq," *JJS* 23 (1972): 95ff.; idem, "4 Q Visions de 'Amram," *RB* 79 (1972): 77ff.; J.D. Amusin, "Novyi Eschatologicheski Tekst," *VDI* 3 (1967): 45ff.; M. de Jonge & A.S. von der Woude, "11Q Melchizedek," *NTS* 12 (1965/66): 301ff.; P.J. Kobelski, *Melchizedek and Melchireša, CBQ,* Monograph Series 10 (Washington D.C. 1981).

[64] J.C.K. Hofmann, "Über die Entstehungszeit des Buches Henoch," *ZDMG* 6 (1852): 87ff.; C.H. Weisse, *Die Evangelienfrage* (Leipzig 1856), p. 212f.; F. Philippi, *Das Buch Henoch* (Stuttgart 1868); H. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden,* vol. 3[3] (1878), p. 662, n. 11; A. Vaillant, *Le Livre des Secrets d'Hénoch* (see n. 62 above).

[65] R.H. Charles, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (London 1908); idem, *The Greek Versions of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Oxford 1908).

[66] In A. Kahana's anthology (see n. 58 above) the reader can see and judge how the commentator (J. Ostersetzer) indulges in acrobatic exercise in order to mutilate what is written, "discover" in it signs of Hasmonean messianism and place against them in the work itself contradictory views and even Christian interpolations.

of his cohorts (Reuben VI 6ff.; Simeon VI 5ff.; VII 2; Levi VIII 3ff.; X 2ff.; XIV 1 ff–XIX 1; Judah XXIV 1ff.; Issachar V 8; Zebulon IX 8; Dan V 4ff.; VI 1ff.; Naphtali V 1ff.; VIII 1ff.; Gad VIII 1; Asher VII 3; Joseph XIX 7ff.; Benjamin III 8; IX 2; X 7ff.; XI 2), according to the typical concepts and beliefs of the New Testament.

The Christian features of these "Testaments" have been clarified and stressed by several researchers,[67] but most tend to delete a certain number of verses and excerpts whose nature and origin in that Church are indubitable, and eliminate them as interpolations. These include ideas such as: God personified in man; God assuming flesh and eating with human beings; the redeemer of nations who is truth; a virgin born of Judah wearing a garment of fine linen and bearing an innocent lamb; the lamb of God and the savior of the world; he will die in the blood of the covenant to save the nations and Israel; God will first judge Israel for when God appeared in the flesh they did not believe in him; they will raise their hands against the heavenly redeemer; etc.[68] Even if we agree to accept the deletions and emendations, some based on variants and some completely arbitrary, but flexible and ever increasing,[69] the remaining body of material will suffice to display the true character and tone of the work.

This is not the place to consider the ramified problems of the "apocryphal" works (in Catholic terminology) or the "pseudepigraphic" ones (in Protestant terminology) that have been attached to the Christian Bible, here and there in various editions and forms.[70] Lately these have been supplemented by the complicated problem of the Dead Sea Scrolls and finds of the Qumran area,[71]

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[67] R. Sinker, *Testamenta XII Patriarcharum* (Cambridge 1869); A. Kayser, *Die Testamente der XII Patriarchen* (Jena 1851); A. Ritschl, *Die Entstehung der altkatholischen Kirche*[2] (Bonn 1857), p. 172ff.; M. de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Assen 1953).

[68] J.E. Grabius, *Spicilegium SS. Patrum* (Oxford 1714), p. 130ff.; F. Schnapp, *Die Testamente der zwölf Patriarchen* (Halle 1884); R.H. Charles, *The Testaments* (see n. 65 above); R. Eppel, *Le Piétisme Juif dans les Testaments des Douze Patriarches* (Paris 1930); M. Philonenko, *Les Interpolations Chrétiennes des Testaments des Douze Patriarches* (Paris 1960).

[69] W. Eltester & Chr. Burchard, *Studien zu den Testamenten der Zwölf Patriarchen* (Berlin 1969); A. Hultgård, *Croyances messianiques des Testaments des XII Patriarches* (Uppsala 1971); J. Becker, "Die Testamente der zwölf Patriarchen"," *JSHRZ* III 1 (Gütersloh 1974); M. de Jonge (ed.), *Studies on the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Missoula 1977); H.W. Hollander, *Joseph as an Ethical Model in the Testaments* (Leiden 1981).

[70] The "external books" (so defined in talmudic terminology) included in the canon of the Catholic Church (such as the Books of the Maccabees, Ben Sira, Judith, etc.) were rejected by the Protestants who classify them as apocryphal. The books dealt with here (*Enoch, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, The Psalms of Solomon,* etc.) left outside the Holy Bible of the Catholics (and Greek Orthodox) are considered pseudepigraphic by the Protestants and apocryphal by the Catholics. The problems of canonization are dealt with in the studies listed in n. 27, and in A. Loisy, *Histoire du Canon de l'Ancien Testament* (Paris 1890); E. Preuschen, *Analecta* (Freiburg-Leipzig 1893).

[71] R. De Vaux, *L'Archéologie et les Manuscrits de la Mer Morte* (London 1961); J.T. Milik, *Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judaea* (London 1959, repr. 1963); H. Stegemann, *Die Entstehung der Qumrangemeinde* (Bonn 1971); J. Daniélou, *Les Manuscrits de la Mer Morte et les*

which exhibit features related to and resembling the apocalyptic literature, that is, the same fields of creativity and enigmatic beliefs. Sectors and enclaves of clearly Jewish tradition are discernible in these literary groups as they are in the New Testament and its offshoots. But derivation and influences do not determine the crucial intentions nor the overall meaning of the works.[72]

Through defective exegesis and perverted assumptions a Jewish apocalyptic literature was implanted and has been ramifying unrestrainedly since the formation of Daniel's visions on up to the canonical Christian apocalypses (that is, Revelation of John and Mark 13:1ff., plus parallels) with numerous branches and offshoots. A web of delusions has created a hostile apocalyptic pietism instead of a firmly Jewish one. The Book of Daniel, however, does not express heretical trends, does not represent a separatist sect shunning and detesting its heredity, but rather expresses the dreams and desires of Hasids-Pietists suffering and fighting for their people and Torah. The background of the period too is quite clear in his visions despite the cloak of symbols and mysteries. This is in striking contrast to the vague, nebulous, detached and alien nature of those apocalyptic works that blazed paths to Christian salvation, adorned with a scriptural stage set and covered with a camouflage of ancient Israelitishness.[73]

Origines du Christianisme (Paris 1974); E.M. Laperrousaz, *Qoumrân* (Paris 1976); K.E. Grözinger, *Qumran* (Darmstadt 1981); G. Vermes, "The Essenes and History," *JJS* 32 (1981): 18ff. A multitude of studies and texts in Hebrew have been published (by J.M. Grintz, A.M. Habermann, Yigael Yadin, J. Licht, D. Flusser) and it is impossible to list them here. Of these it is worth noting Y. Yadin, *Megillat ha-Mikdash* (Jerusalem 1977); D. Flusser, *Yahadut u-Mekorot ha-Natzrut* (Tel-Aviv 1979), p. 81ff.

[72] Christian elements and signs have already been discovered in the scrolls in abundance, revealed by various aspects such as indicated by K. Stendahl (ed.), *The Scrolls and the New Testament* (New York 1957); H. Kosmala, *Hebräer-Essener-Christen* (Leiden 1959); H. Braun, *Qumran und das Neue Testament* (Tübingen 1966); G. Klinzig, *Die Umdeutung des Kultus in der Qumrangemeinde und im Neuen Testament* (Göttingen 1971). See also n. 63 above. For the most part the scholars tend to attribute these features to the Essenes who according to that same dominant view, had great influence on the formulation of Christian theology. Objecting to these prevailing opinions, Yitzhak (I.F.) Baer claims a Christian or Judeo-Christian nature for the Qumran sect and opposes the common identification with the Essenes. Earlier Teicher had made similar suggestions in a series of articles, but his conclusions are too hasty and require fundamental revision. See J.L. Teicher, "The Dead Sea Scrolls," *JJS* 2-5 (1951-1954); idem, *VT* 5 (1955): 189ff.; idem, "The Essenes," *Studia Patristica* 1, *TUGAL* 63 (1957): 540ff. Y. Baer, "Serekh ha-Yaḥad," *Zion* 29 (1964): 1ff.; idem, "Pesher Habakkuk u-Tekufato," *Zion* 34 (1969): 1ff. The obvious connections between these scrolls, and the pseudepigraphic writtings, related to early Christianity, rather than to the true Essenes reflected in classical sources, have been stressed above in the Preface (nn. 8-9) and still require comprehensive thorough investigation.

[73] F. Lücke, *Versuch einer vollständigen Einleitung in die Offenbarung Johannis und die gesamte apokalyptische Literatur* (Bonn 1832); A. Hilgenfeld, *Die jüdische Apokalyptik* (Jena 1857); H.H. Rowley, *The Relevance of Apocalyptic* (London 1963); D.S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (London 1964); J.M. Schmidt, *Die jüdische Apokalyptik* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1969); J. Schreiner, *Alttestamentlich-jüdische Apokalyptik* (Munich 1969); P. von der Osten-Sacken, *Die Apokalyptik im Verhältnis zu Prophetie und Weisheit* (Munich 1969); K. Koch, *Ratlos vor der Apokalyptik* (Gütersloh 1970); U.B. Müller, *Messias und Menschensohn in jüdischen Apokalypsen und in der Offenbarung des Johannes* (Gütersloh 1972); W. Schmithals, *Die Apokalyptik* (Göttingen

Storms and tribulations did not bypass the Hasmonean kingdom. There was no lack of complaints and criticisms in regard to its rulers, its population and its policy. Its faults and shadows, genuine or magnified, were not ignored, nor were internal controversy or dissension between streams and factions. But only empty visions and speculative opinions created in the Hasmonean period an apocalyptic pietist movement bearing a Christological message, uprooted from the soil of its homeland,[74] steeped in hatred for the masses of its people, abominating Jerusalem and despising its Temple, belittling and distorting the precepts of the Torah, detesting national aspirations and worshiping a divine redeemer dwelling with God in a heavenly abode.[75]

No real historical fact or solid testimony from these generations suggests such an element, and no such ideology is indicated either in foreign sources (Greek and Latin), nor in the talmudic tradition, or even by the Church Fathers who exalted and sanctified the Maccabees and spared no effort to glorify early groups and individuals worthy of being counted among the pathfinders and heralds of Christianity.[76] There is no justification for implanting trends and slogans of extremist divergence and detachment from the mainstream of ancient Judaism, in Pharisee or even Essene fellowships who observed the biblical precepts meticulously, revered the Jerusalem Temple, were involved with their people, and were lauded and admired by Philo and Josephus.

There is no solid basis in clear and firm testimony for the theses and claims that the Essenes completely discredited the Jerusalem or Hasmonean priesthood, the Temple and its rituals. The enthusiastic view of the Essenes in the descriptions of Philo and Josephus,[77] who esteemed and glorified the sanctities

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1973); J. Coppens, "L'Apocalyptique," *ETL* 53 (1977): 1ff.; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah* (Philadelphia 1981); J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,* vol. 1, *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (London 1983).

[74] M. Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus* (Tübingen 1969), p. 369; "die apokalyptischen Chasidim..."; idem, *Juden, Griechen und Barbaren* (Stuttgart 1976), p. 172ff.; K. Müller, "Die Propheten sind schlafen gegangen," *BZ,* N.S 26 (1982): 179ff., ibid. p. 201: "die asidäische Apokalyptik" — etc.

[75] This apocalyptic Hasidism dispossesses authentic Jewish Hasidism, pushes aside Pharisee circles as if they were deviant, and leads along the highway to the Christian message. Thus the pseudepigraphic and apocalyptic literature now fulfills the precise function its authors designed it for.

[76] See Chapter 1, Section B and nn. 8-9 above.

[77] Philo does not attribute to the Essenes the rejection of sacrifices as many commentators mistakenly suppose, but explains that they are so called because of their piety, for they are noteworthy servants of God, not in the usual ceremonial functions carried out by the priests, "not by offering sacrifices of animals, but by resolving to sanctify their minds": *Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit* XII 75ff.; *Philo (LCL),* ed. by F.H. Colson, vol. IX (London 1954), p. 52ff. He meant to make clear that their particular piety was expressed not by rituals but by spiritual exaltation and moral sanctification. Similarly another Philo passage on the Essenes does not indicate any divergence from pure, typical Jewish religiosity: *Hypothetica-Apologia Pro Judaeis,* ibid., p. 436ff. According to Josephus (*Ant.* XVIII 18ff.) the Essenes send votive offerings and perform sacrifices while keeping various purification customs, and that is why they stay out of the common Temple court and

of Judaism, do not explain or fit a hostile sectarian apocalyptic pietism worshiping a Christological figure, occupied with scriptural corruptions, pronouncing annihilation for the Israelite masses, and decreeing destruction for Jerusalem and its Temple because they were consistently impure, forbidden and contemptible from their original construction and inception.[78] Defective methods prevailing in modern historiographic schools have contributed to the blackening and distortion of the image of the Jewish pietism reflected in the visions of Daniel and the Books of the Maccabees, with its deep root in its national soil and in ancestral heritage.

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perform their sacrifices by themselves. While the passage is somewhat vague, it makes clear that the Essenes honored the sanctuary and did not reject the practice of sacrifices but applied certain reservation and strictness. In his earlier more extensive description too (*Bell.* II 119ff.) Josephus presents them as Jewish pietists punctilious about purification and Sabbath precepts, and faithful to the Law of Moses with no deviation. Cf. Bell. I 78; Ant. XIII 311. See also n. 24 above on Josephus.

[78] The Temple, the ritual, and Jerusalem as a whole are completely disqualified and defiled to begin with, both according to the Qumran literature, like the Temple Scroll, and the pseudepigraphic works like the Books of Enoch. This fact itself refutes the prevailing view that these works are an expression of an internal opposition objecting to the Hasmonean dynasty and calling for the return of a "legitimate" priesthood (see n. 55 above and n. 15 in the Preface). For the works do not reflect hostility to a family, dynasty or clique, or to a specific set of halakhic rulings, but extreme total rejection of Jerusalem and its sanctuary, as they were established and maintained in historical reality throughout the entire Second Temple period.

CHAPTER THREE

DANIEL AND HIS THREE FRIENDS IN EXILE

A. *The Beginning of Calamity in Jehoiakim's Third Regnal Year*

The story of Daniel begins with the expedition of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia, who besieged Jerusalem at the time noted, overcame King Jehoiakim of Judah, exiled a group of Israelite children "with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought the vessels... to the treasure house of his god" (Dan. 1:1f.). This sets off a series of happenings in a series of stories and visions which ends in "the third year of King Cyrus of Persia" (Dan. 10:1). The event described at the start of the book and taking place in "the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim of Judah" arouses difficulties and doubts as it is not completely verified or properly confirmed by solid testimony either biblical or external.[1]

For II Kings counts eleven years of Jehoiachin's reign (23:36) and says that "in his days King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years; then he turned and rebelled against him. And the Lord let loose against him bands of the Chaldeans, and bands of the Arameans and bands of the Moabites and bands of the Ammonites and let them loose against

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[1] This chapter was published in *Bet Mikra,* vol. 4, no. 59 (1974): 466ff. The traditional Hebrew commentaries are cited from *Mikraot Gedolot*: R-a-sh-i, Abraham Ibn Ezra, R-a-d-a-k, R-a-m-b-a-n i.e. Nachmanides, R-a-l-b-a-g i.e. Gersonides, (Pseudo-) Saadia Gaon, etc. (Tel Aviv 1954); *Midrash Daniel u-Midrash Ezra,* of R. Samuel Masnuth (Jerusalem 1968): *Yalkut Shim'oni* (New York–Berlin 1926); Don Isaac Abrabanel, *Peirush* (Commentary on Prophets and Writings) — *Sefer Ma'ayanei ha-Yeshuah* on the Book of Daniel (Tel Aviv 1960). See also talmudic sources in Preface, n. 14. Of the extensive scholarly bibliography, in both commentary and research, we shall list here (as also above, in nn. 4-6 and 16 of Chapter 2, and in the notes below) a limited selection: J.A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel, ICC* (Edinburgh, 1927, repr. 1959); R.H. Charles, *Daniel* (Oxford 1929); M.A: Beek, *Das Danielbuch* (Leiden 1935); H.H. Rowley, *Darius the Mede* (Cardiff 1935); idem, "The Unity of the Book of Daniel," *HUCA* 23 I (1950/51): 233ff.; J. Linder, *Commentarius in Librum Daniel* (Paris 1939); C. Lattey, *The Book of Daniel* (Dublin 1948); H.L. Ginsberg, *Studies in Daniel* (New York 1948); E.J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel* (Grand Rapids 1949–1966); J. Steinmann, *Daniel* (Paris 1950); P.G. Rinaldi, *Daniele* (Turin–Rome 1952); A. Bentzen, *Daniel, HAT* (Tübingen 1952); F. Nötscher, *Das Buch Daniel, "Echter Bibel"* (Würzburg 1958); O. Plöger, *Das Buch Daniel* (Gütersloh 1965); N.W. Porteous, *Daniel, OTL* (London 1965); E. Bickerman, *Four Strange Books of the Bible* (New York 1967); F. Dexinger, *Das Buch Daniel und seine Probleme* (Stuttgart 1969); M. Delcor, *Le Livre de Daniel* (Paris 1971); B.W. Jones, *Ideas of History in the Book of Daniel* (Berkeley Cal. 1972); J.C.H. Lebram "Perspektiven der gegenwärtigen Danielforschung," *JSJ* 5 (1974): 1ff.; A. Lacocque, *Le Livre de Daniel,* (Neuchâtel–Paris 1976); R. Hammer, *The Book of Daniel, CBC* (Cambridge 1976); J.J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel* (Missoula Mont. 1977); L.F. Hartman & A.A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel, AB* 23 (Garden City, N.Y. 1978); K. Koch, *Das Buch Daniel* (Darmstadt 1980).

Judah to destroy it... So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers; and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead" (24:1–2,6); Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem, looted the Temple of its treasures, took to Babylon a large population together with Jehoiakim's young heir, three months after Jehoiakim's death and the start of Jehoiachin's reign (24:8ff.). The author of that report knew nothing of deportations in Jehoiakim's time.

Even worse is the second contradiction. Contrary to the dating of the Babylonian invasion in Jehoiakim's third regnal year, Jeremiah gives his oration "in the fourth year of King Jehoiakim son of Josiah of Judah, that was the first year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon," in order to caution and prophesy the subjection of his people, the destruction of the country and Babylonian rule for seventy years (Jer. 25:1ff.).[2] The threatened calamity did not occur in the past, and is not happening at the present moment, but is projected into the future for the defiant people. And yet in "the fifth year of Jehoiakim," a fast was proclaimed to counter the evil effect of the divine decree (Jer. 36:9ff.) but Jehoiakim deliberately burned the scroll that had been read in public, that the prophet had written and that had warned, "the king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land" (36:29).

A well-known Babylonian chronicle verifies and clarifies the basic facts contained in these chapters of II Kings and Jeremiah.[3] According to it, while still just heir to the throne, Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptian troops in the battle of Carchemish on the banks of the Euphrates (605 B.C.E.), pursued the fleeing remnants of the enemy up to the Hamath region, then because of the death of his father Nabopolassar returned to Babylon and mounted the throne.[4] Jeremiah's oration sets the battle of Carchemish and the downfall of Egypt in "the fourth year of King Jehoiakim son of Josiah of Judah" (46:2). A short time later, according to the chronicle, in his first regnal year, Nebuchadnezzar once more set out for the districts of Syria and Eretz Israel, subdued their rulers, and conquered and destroyed Ashkelon. He conducted expeditions to these districts in his second and third regnal years as well. In view of the circumstances and his achievements, the subjugation of Judah was accomplished then, although there is a difference of opinion as to whether it took place in his first or second regnal year.[5] After three years of docile subjection, Jehoiakim rebelled, apparently

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[2] This prophecy (as well as Jeremiah 29:10) contains the secret of the mysterious chronology, as becomes clear below.

[3] D.J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings* (London 1961).

[4] I. Eph'al, *Entziklopedia Mikra'it* (henceforth *EM*), vol. 5 (1968): 733ff., s.v. "Nebuchadnezzar"; J. Liver, *EM,* vol. 3 (1965): 522ff., s.v. "Jehoiakim-Jehoiachin".

[5] In Eph'al's view, in his first year, and in Liver's, Jehoiakim's fifth year. A. Malamat posits Nebuchadnezzar's second year and Jehoiakim's sixth: *Yerushalayim le-Doroteha,* ed. J. Aviram (Jerusalem 1968), p. 32ff. In his view the text "in the third year" (Dan. 1:1) should be corrected, according to the estimated time Judaea was subjugated, to "in the sixth year." See John Bright, *A History of Israel* (London 1966), p. 302ff.

exploiting the temporary weakness of Babylonia whose armies had fought the Egyptians and suffered heavy casualties. Nebuchadnezzar did not recover quickly, and only embarked upon his aggressive expeditions in his sixth regnal year. In the seventh, he invaded Judah and besieged Jerusalem. In the meantime Jehoiakim had died, and the city was captured in the third month of Jehoiachin's reign (in Adar of 597 B.C.E.).[6] How does this fit in with the first verse in Daniel that describes the siege of Jerusalem, the deportation of its inhabitants and the plunder of its holy vessels "in the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim"?

Some very frail support appears in the report of Berossus, the Babylonian author and priest of the Hellenistic period, who wrote a history of Babylonia in the first half of the third century B.C.E., of which only fragments have survived.[7] In describing the devastation of Jerusalem by the Babylonian forces Josephus twice relies on him, first in *Jewish Antiquities* (X 219ff.) and second in *Against Apion* I (19) 128ff. According to him, in his survey of Nabopolassar's final days, Berossus reports that on the latter's orders, his son Nebuchadnezzar heads an expedition against a mutinous governor in charge of Egypt and the districts of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia, gains a victory and re-establishes Babylonian control of those areas, returns to his country because of his father's death to assume control, orders the deportation of captives (Jews, Phoenicians, Syrians and Egyptians) and their settlement in the suitable parts of Babylonia.

Thus at first glance Berossus seems to confirm the problematic version of a Nebuchadnezzar expedition and the deportation of the Jews "in the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim" (Dan. 1:1). The Berossus excerpt cited is, however, basically unsound, for it is based on the mistaken premise that Babylonia already ruled Syria, Eretz Israel and Egypt before the battle of Carchemish, contrary to the reliable Babylonian chronicle and to Jeremiah's oration (46:2). The Berossus excerpts are very fragmented, and may not have been preserved unadulterated. Nor is it certain whether they were known at first hand or second, perhaps through some intermediate channel like Alexander Polyhistor.[8]

At any rate, Josephus connects them with the destruction of Jerusalem in Zedekiah's time (586 B.C.E.) and produces a chronological mix-up, either due to a garbled source, or in the wake of a faulty correspondence and erroneous

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[6] In view of the above studies; II Kings 24:1ff.; II Chron. 36:5ff.; Jer. 52:28.

[7] S.M. Burstein, *The Babyloniaca of Berossus* (Malibu, Cal. 1978); M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism,* vol. 1 (Jerusalem 1974), p. 55ff.; P. Schnabel, *Berossos und die Babylonisch-hellenistische Literatur* (Leipzig–Berlin 1923); J. Freudenthal, *Alexander Polyhistor* (Breslau 1875), p. 26ff.

[8] He was a well-known productive compiler of the first century B.C.E. Contrary to Freudenthal, Schnabel believes that Josephus cites Berossus only from Polyhistor's collection, and that view is widely held by scholars.

conclusions.[9] That shaky foundation cannot in any case provide the basis for a solution contradictory to verified reliable testimony.

The version attributed to Eupolemus,[10] the Jewish writer of mid-second century B.C.E., does not support the historical truth of the event the Book of Daniel begins with, despite the arguments and attempts to make use of it. Only isolated fragments have survived of Eupolemus' book *On the Kings of Judah,* written in Greek. The Christian bishop and scholar Eusebius of Caesarea quotes most of them, not directly, but from the lost anthology of Alexander Polyhistor. Some of them were quoted earlier by Clement of Alexandria.[11] That section contains a mixture of vague rumors, legendary themes, chronologies, and names of the kings of Judah, as a perusal of the meager contents shows.

In the days of King Jonachim, as the Jewish people sacrifice before the golden statue of Baal and prepare to burn Jeremiah at stake, the prophet predicts that with the heaped wood they will cook food for the Babylonian conquerors, and that they will work as captives in digging the channels of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Nebuchadnezzar hears of the prophecies and prepares for his expedition, makes a covenant with Astibaras king of Media, mobilizes Babylonian and Median troops until a mighty camp is gathered (400,000), conquers the districts of Samaria and Galilee, Scythopolis (Bet She'an) and Gilead, seizes Jerusalem and captures Jonachim, plunders the holy treasures and sends them to Babylonia, except the ark and the tablets which remained with Jeremiah.[12]

Eupolemus combined sundry motifs, wove a mixed tissue of stories from the times of Jehoiakim or Jehoiachin up to the destruction of the Temple and coupled Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin in the figure of "Jonachim." The threat to slay Jeremiah is jumbled with the burning of his scroll.[13] The author is familiar with Greek sources, from which it is well known (on the basis of Ctesias in Diodorus) that in the generation preceding the defeat of Media by Cyrus, its

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[9] In *Against Apion* Josephus prefaces the cited passage with a paraphrase on Berossus, according to whom Nebuchadnezzar was sent by his father, burnt the Jerusalem Temple, deported its residents, and the place remained deserted for seventy years, until the appearance of King Cyrus of Persia. In *Jewish Antiquities* the passage was shifted to after the destruction of Jerusalem and the stories of the four Daniel chapters (1-4), that is, after the conclusion of all the Nebuchadnezzar affairs. The opening date (Dan. 1:1) of these stories is completely disregarded. See n. 29 below and also n. 83 of Chapter 5 on editions of Josephus.

[10] Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* IX 39.2-5; *PG* 21; (*GCS* 43,1), K. Mras ed., vol. 1 (Berlin 1954); A.M. Denis, *Fragmenta Pseudepigraphorum Quae supersunt Graeca* (Leiden 1970), p. 185; B.Z. Wacholder, *Eupolemus—A Study of Judaeo-Greek Literature* (Cincinnati 1974).

[11] J. Freudenthal, op. cit. in n. 7, p. 105ff.; E. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*[4], vol. 3 (Leipzig 1909), p. 474ff.; F. Jacoby, *FGH,* III C (Leiden 1958), No. 723; N. Walter, "Fragmente jüdisch-hellenistischer Historiker," *JSHRZ,* vol. I, 2 (Gütersloh 1976), p. 93ff.

[12] Yehoshua Gutman, *Ha-Sifrut ha-Yehudit ha-Helenistit,* vol. 2 (Jerusalem 1963), pp. 75ff., 155ff.

[13] Jer. 26:8ff.; 36:23.

ruler was Astibaras, Astyages' father.[14] The concealment by Jeremiah of the ark fits a Jewish-Hellenistic legend, and not the talmudic tradition of Eretz Israel.[15] The confused passage is totally devoid of any chronological framework, and it would be difficult to find there any signs of historical accuracy or particular antiquity. There is no reason or evidence either for dating it prior to the sealing of the Daniel passages, and there is no sense in trying to extract grounds or support for verifying the event that took place "in the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim" (Dan. 1:1).

In contrast to these disappointments and delusions in the non-biblical sources, there is clear scriptural authority for the baffling event that ushers in the Daniel story. The last chapter of II Chronicles says: "Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he began to reign and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem, and he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord his God. Against him came up King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and bound him in fetters to convey him to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar brought some of the vessels of the House of the Lord to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim and his abominations which he did, and what was found against him, are written in the book of the Kings of Israel and Judah; and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead" (36:5-8).[16]

The Septuagint and the parallel version of the Greek apocryphal Book of Esdras[17] as well as the Latin Vulgate say that Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiakim to Babylon.[18] But the masoretic text does not recount his deportation; and thus does not contradict the II Kings statement that "...Jehoiakim slept with his fathers," apparently in Eretz Israel, not in exile.[19]

The silence enveloping Jehoiakim's fate and death in II Chronicles perhaps

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[14] F. Jacoby, *FGH* III C, No. 688 F 8; Diodorus Siculus II 34.1; II 34.6; (*LCL*), ed. C.H. Oldfather, vol. 1 (London 1933).

[15] II Macc. II 5 versus yShekalim VI 49c; ySotah VIII 22c; bYoma 52b; bHorayot 12a; bKeritot 5b; tSotah XIII 1. On the Books of Maccabees see nn. 212–214 below.

[16] Chronicles was apparently written at the end of the Persian period. See B. Mazar, *EM,* vol. 2 (1965): 596ff. s.v. "Divrei ha-Yamim;" Sara Japhet, *Emunot ve-Dei'ot be-Sefer Divrei ha-Yamim* (Jerusalem 1977); W. Rudolph, *Chronikbücher, HAT* (Tübingen 1955); E.L. Curtis & A.A. Madsen,*The Books of Chronicles, ICC* (Edinburgh 1910–1965); J.M. Myers, *II Chronicles, AB* 13 (Garden City, N.Y. 1965); F. Michaeli, *Les Livres des Chroniques* (Neuchâtel 1967); Th. Willi, *Die Chronik als Auslegung* (Göttingen 1972); P. Welten, *Geschichte und Geschichtsdarstellung in den Chronikbüchern* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1973); P.R. Ackroyd, *I and II Chronicles* (London 1973); R.J. Coggins, *The First and Second Books of the Chronicles, CBC* (Cambridge 1976).

[17] *Septuaginta,* ed. A. Rahlfs (Stuttgart 1950); II Paralipomenon 36:6 (–I Esdras I 38) — καὶ ἀπήγαγεν αὐτὸν εἰς Βαβυλῶνα.

[18] *Biblia Sacra Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem,* ed. R. Weber (Stuttgart 1969) ad loc.: "et vinctum catenis duxit in Babylonem."

[19] That is the view of Rudolph, *Chronikbücher* (see n. 16 above), p. 335, in contrast to Liver (see n. 4 above), *EM,* vol. 3:529. The text of the Syriac Peshitta (ed. London 1954, repr. of 1852 ed.) accords with the masoretic text. The text should be compared with what is said about Zedekiah in Jer. 39:7 and II Kings 25:7.

derives from the necessity to have the iniquitous sinful king's end accord with the oration of the prophet whose imprint is quite obvious in the affair, and whose name sometimes appears in it.[20] For Jeremiah threatens the king and warns him that rather than with a eulogy, "he shall have the burial of an ass, dragged out and left lying beyond the gates of Jerusalem" (22:18f.); "He shall not have any [of his line] sitting on the throne of David; and his corpse shall be exposed to the heat by day and the frost by night" (36:30). As he is captured, chained and removed from his capital, Jehoiakim's tragedy can be viewed as the beginning of a prophecy fulfilled and the signs of the curse being realized. While there is no explicit scriptural report on the circumstances of his death and degrading burial, the omission is redressed in legends and sermons, and Jeremiah's warning is substantiated. According to Josephus, Nebuchadnezzar committed murder in Jerusalem despite the surrender agreement, killed Johoiakim and ordered his body thrown outside the city walls.[21] A talmudic legend too describes his death in captivity and the desecration of his body.[22] Christian exegetes rely on the ancient translations and claim that he was deported to Babylonia, fulfilling there Jeremiah's prophecy.[23]

The prologue of the Book of Daniel thus accords nicely with the final chapter of II Chronicles.[24] Jeremiah's prophecy evidently projects over the description of the event in its two versions. Jehoiakim was humbled and handed over to the vengeful foe as he had been previously cautioned in public warnings and wrathful censure. He incurred the anticipated and deserved punishment for his refusal to see and believe that "the king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land" (Jer. 36:29).[25] The dreadful disintegration began to occur without delay or impediment, according to Jeremiah's prophecy. The beat of the approaching catastrophe did not tarry or stop. "In the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim of Judah King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and laid siege to it. And the Lord gave King Jehoiakim of Judah into his hand with some of the vessels of the House of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar to the house of his god" (Dan. 1:1f.). The malediction promising destruction and death is fulfilled to the letter in Zedekiah's reign when "King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and his whole army came against Jerusalem and

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[20] II Chron. 35:25; 36:12, 21–22.

[21] Josephus (see n. 9 above), *Ant.* X 96ff. Josephus like the sages, connects with this event the exile "in Nebuchadnezzar's seventh year" (Jer. 52:28) which actually took place in Jehoiachin's time (J. Liver, *EM,* vol. 3:523; see n. 4 above).

[22] Leviticus Rabbah XIX 6; *Midrash Va-Yikra Rabbah,* M. Margaliot ed. (Jerusalem 1953ff.); *Seder Olam Rabbah* 25 (B. Ratner ed. New York 1966), p. 110f. R-a-sh-i and R-a-d-a-k on II Chron. 36; see n. 1 above.

[23] Jerome, *Commentaria in Jeremiam* 22: 18-19, *PL* 24.

[24] The same chapter of Chronicles provided the cornerstone for the chronological framework of the Daniel chapters, as will become clear below.

[25] Also Jer. 25:9, etc.

laid siege to it" (Jer. 39:1).[26] The transparent stylistic parallelism in the two reports in which Jeremiah's prophecy is realized step by step points up the fixed order in the course of events and the continuity in the implementation of the divine decree. The beginning of the calamity in Jehoiakim's reign already signals its final results at the time of the destruction of the Temple: the siege of Jerusalem, the downfall of the kingdom, the deportation of its sons and the pillage of its sacred vessels.

There still remains the question of why the sad event with which the Book of Daniel opens should have occurred "in the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim." For that date is not confirmed by any external chronology and does not accord with Jeremiah's prophecy which equates Jehoiakim's fourth regnal year with "the first year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon" (Jer. 25:1). This question has perplexed, troubled and preoccupied commentators since antiquity. Josephus avoids the dilemma, erases the troublesome date and removes the obstacle in a harmonistic arbitrary chronological method. In Jehoiakim's fourth regnal year Nebuchadnezzar conquered Syria up to Pelusium, but excluding Judah;[27] in Jehoiakim's eighth regnal year Jerusalem was captured by the Babylonian king. Three years later Jehoiakim rebelled, and Jeremiah's propehcy was fulfilled with his death.[28] The start of the Book of Daniel is missing in Josephus who eliminates and conceals the difficult date of that event in Jehoiakim's time to move it to after the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the great calamity.[29]

In the Jewish tradition the most common method is that of *Seder Olam Rabbah* (25).[30] On that basis R-a-sh-i teaches as does the *Midrash Daniel*[31] that the time "in the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim" refers not to his third regnal year but "the third year of his rebellion, for it is stated the Jehoiakim was a vassal to him for three years and turned and rebelled against him (II Kings 24:1) for three years and in the third year he came up to him and it was the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar." Abraham Ibn Ezra rejects that explanation and notes that Nebuchadnezzar's task was only begun in the third year and completed in the fourth: "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim... Nebuchadnezzar came

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[26] Jer. 52:4ff.; II Kings 25:1ff.

[27] *Ant.* X 84ff.; see n. 9 above. In the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon defeats the Egyptians at the battle of Carchemish (Jer. 46:2), conquers Syria (as per Berossus) up to the Egyptian border (Pelusium), but not Judah, according to the chronology explained.

[28] *Ant.* X 88ff. That was when Jeremiah's prophecy on the defilement of Jehoiakim's body was fulfilled, and three thousand people were exiled (Jer. 52:28) among them the prophet Ezekiel.

[29] *Ant.* X 186ff. Following the destruction of Jerusalem and the murder of Gedalyahu (586 B.C.E.), Daniel and his companions were among those exiled. See n. 9 above and n. 137 below.

[30] Ratner ed., p. 110 (op. cit. in n. 22).

[31] On Dan. 1:1. See also R-a-sh-i's commentary on bMegillah 11b; *Yalkut Shim'oni* on II Kings 24 (mark 248), etc.; see n. 1 above.

to him and besieged Jerusalem, and took it at the beginning of the fourth year of Jehoiakim... which was Nebuchadnezzar's first year," etc. On the other hand, according to Levi b. Gershon (R-a-l-b-a-g) "in the third year" is at the end of the third and start of the fourth: "In the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim... means after three years of Jehoiakim's reign had passed and the fourth year began, for so it is written in the book of Jeremiah that the fourth year of Jehoiakim is the first year of Nebuchadnezzar."[32] Don Isaac Abrabanel supplies a similar explanation: "For upon the completion of three years of Jehoiakim's reign, at the start of the fourth year, which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign according to Jeremiah, he went up to Jerusalem and God gave Jehoiakim into his hand as mentioned here, and took him to Babylonia in chains as mentioned in Chronicles."[33]

Among the Church Fathers and their disciples concerned with the visions of Daniel and their mysteries, this problem was never elucidated; in fact it was further confused as they did not properly distinguish between Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin[34] sometimes merging the two into one figure.[35] Due to the complete confusion of the kings' names (Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah), Hippolytus Romanus identifies Jehoiakim's three years with Jehoiachin's three months' reign before being captured and deported to Babylonia.[36] A related notion flickered much later in the mind of a Catholic scholar, Paul Riessler, who proposed amending the text so that the event took place "in the third month of the reign of King Jehoiachin" rather than in "the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim" on the assumption that the wording had been garbled by the copyists.[37] This strange solution remained unique, but there has been no lack of astounding inventions, which cannot be specified here. For the most part, Christian exegetes from the Middle Ages on have utilized Jewish tradition and drawn from it its methods in order to solve the difficulty.[38] The modern defenders of the orthodox faith and the partisans of the authenticity of the Daniel prophecies have had recourse to Josephus and Greek sources, the ancient

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[32] Ibn Ezra and R-a-l-b-a-g on Dan. 1:1, according to *Mikraot Gedolot* (see n. 1 above).

[33] *Sefer Ma'ayanei ha-Yeshuah* V 1 (see n. 1).

[34] The confusion of the two, already discernible in Eupolemus (see above nn. 10–12), is integrated into the Septuagint (II Kings 24:6-8) and becomes rooted in the Church Fathers, apparently as a result as well of the mistake in the gospel genealogical list according to Matthew 1:11; E. Klostermann, *Das Matthäusevangelium* (Tübingen 1971), ad loc.; K. Aland (ed.), *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum*[3] (Stuttgart 1965), p. 8.

[35] Hippolytus ad. loc., ed. M. Lefèvre, *Commentaire sur Daniel* (Paris 1947); idem, (*GCS* 1) ed. G.N. Bonwetsch & H. Achelis (Leipzig 1937); Jerome, *PL* 25, *Commentaria in Danielem* 1:1; Theodoretus, *Commentarius in Visiones Danielis Prophetae, PG* 81, ad. loc.

[36] Hippolytus in the excerpt noted above (n. 35).

[37] P. Riessler, *Das Buch Daniel* (Vienna 1902), p. XIII.

[38] Albertus Magnus, *Opera,* vol. 8 (Lyons 1651); Nicolaus Lyranus, *Biblia Sacra,* vol. 4 (Venice 1688); Cornelius a Lapide, *Commentaria in Quattuor Prophetas Maiores* (Paris 1622), In Danielem ad loc.

works of Berossus and Eupolemus, as well as the Babylonian chronicle version.[39] However, all their exhausting assiduous labor did not help to repulse the waves of criticism and bridge the gap between the salient contradictions.

The validity of the prevalent explanations was totally undermined in the course of time, for it is not possible to view Jehoiakim's third regnal year as the third year of his rebellion, or as the start of his fourth regnal year, or as the start of Nebuchadnezzar's expedition which achieved its goal in the fourth year. Consequently conservative schools of thought have proffered the thesis that the problem is the result of different counts, as two different systems of figuring regnal years were employed in the ancient East.[40] The first (antedating) system relates the year of the change of rule (up to New Year's Day) both to the outgoing king and to his successor. The second (postdating) system relates the transitional year only to the outgoing king, and subtracts it from the reign of the incoming one.[41] Those favoring this latter thesis claim that the time in the Book of Daniel is set according to the second system, and does not contradict the one in the Book of Jeremiah which is figured according to the first. Nebuchadnezzar's invasion thus took place "in the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim" (Dan. 1:1) which was also "the fourth of King Jehoiakim... that is the first year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon" (Jer. 25:1). A careful examination, however, immediately shows the weakness of the proposed solution, despite its ostensible reasonability. In the later generations of the Kingdom of Judah, the second system was applied, in the opinion prevailing among students of biblical chronology.[42] Why the Book of Jeremiah returns to the discarded system is incomprehensible. It is even more astonishing that the author of Daniel departed from the prophecy of Jeremiah which was his inspiration.[43]

Contrary to the guardians of tradition, the proponents of the critical

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[39] J. Chr. Harenberg, *Aufklärung des Buchs Daniel* (Blankenburg 1773); C.F: Keil, *Biblischer Commentar über den Propheten Daniel* (Leipzig 1869); J. Fabre d'Envieu, *Le Livre du Prophète Daniel* (Paris 1888); E.B. Pusey, *Daniel the Prophet* (Oxford 1864); J. Knabenbauer, *Commentarius in Danielem Prophetam* (Paris 1891); B. Alfrink, "Die Gadd'sche Chronik und die Heilige Schrift," *Bibl.* 8 (1927): 385ff.; J.T. Nelis, "Note sur la Date de la sujétion de Joiaqim par Nabuchodonosor," *RB* 61 (1954): 387ff.; G. Larsson, "When Did the Babylonian Captivity Begin?" *JTS* n.s. 18 (1967): 417ff.

[40] R.D. Wilson, *Studies in the Book of Daniel* (New York 1917), p. 60ff.; J. Linder, *Commentarius in Librum Daniel* (see n. 1 above), ad. loc.; P.G. Rinaldi, *Daniele* (see n. 1); E.J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel* (see n. 1); D.J. Wiseman et al., *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel* (London 1965), p. 16ff.

[41] That is, his first regnal year is counted only from the new year after his accession to the throne. However some scholars suggest another possible reason for the different count, that there were two systems, the year beginning in Tishri by one, and in Nisan by the other. See, e.g. E.R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Exeter 1966), pp. 166, 192.

[42] H. Tadmor, "Khronologia," *EM,* vol. 4 (1962): 268.

[43] Its obvious dependence on Jeremiah has already been stressed and will be fully elucidated below.

rationalistic approach as usual find the deviant puzzling date to be merely a symptomatic error which, like other flaws and mistakes,[44] is characteristic of the incomplete information and vague historical elements in the Daniel legends.[45] On that basis many scholars have come to believe that the perplexing date is the outcome of a forced combination by the author[46] who joined the three years of submission of the rebellious Jehoiakim (as per II Kings, Chap. 24) with the reaction of Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Judah (as per II Chron., Chap. 36) and concludes from this that Jehoiakim's punishment and captivity took place "in the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim" (Dan. 1:1).[47] This view has now been adopted even among Catholic scholars.[48] Otto Plöger of Germany has even gone so far as to speculate that "in the third year" was set according to a triple stereotypical pattern that recurs in those events, and not merely because of Jehoiakim's three years of subjugation.[49] Hasty exaggerated criticism has led exegetes to an illogical conclusion. Even if we agree to impute mistakes and folly, defective understanding and illiterate juggling to the poor stupid author of the Daniel chapters,[50] there is still no answer to the main question: How was it that he disregarded the overt suitable chronology in Jeremiah's oration upon which his visions were based, and preferred a unsustainable hypothetical combination?

The twists and turns of many exegetical and scholarly schools yielded little, and did nothing to help decipher the riddle, for it was not considered in organic relation to the chronological substructure peculiar to the Daniel chapters and bound to its philosophy. A careful examination reveals that the date given at the outset marks the point of departure of a hidden inclusive path defining the historical eras in the work and tracing its events, in legends and visions, toward the expected end. The "third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim" began the

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[44] Such as mistakes in connection with Nebuchadnezzar's son Belshazzar (Dan., Chapter 5) and Darius the Mede (Chapter 6).

[45] G.F. Griesinger, *Neue Ansicht der Aufsaeze im Buche Daniel* (Stuttgart 1815), p. 38ff.; E.F.C. Rosenmüller, *Scholia in Vetus Testamentum,* Pars Decima, Daniel (Leipzig 1832), ad. loc.

[46] F. Bleek, "Ueber Verfasser und Zweck des Buches Daniel," *Theologiche Zeitschrift,* Berlin, 3 (1822): 283; C.v. Lengerke, *Das Buch Daniel* (Königsberg 1835), ad. loc.; F. Hitzig, *Das Buch Daniel* (Leipzig 1850); A.A. Bevan, *A Short Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Cambridge 1892); K. Marti, *Das Buch Daniel* (Tübingen & Leipzig 1901); F.W. Farrar, *The Book of Daniel* (London 1904); J.A: Montgomery, *The Book of Daniel* (see n. 1 above); R.H. Charles, *Daniel* (see n. 1 above), ad loc.; S. Bernfeld, "Daniel," *EJ,* vol. 5 (Berlin 1930): 765.

[47] The idea for that tortuous combination came from the explanations of the Jewish tradition (*Seder Olam Rabbah,* R-a-sh-i etc.) mentioned above, nn. 30-31.

[48] M. Delcor, *Le Livre de Daniel* (see n. 1 above), ad loc.

[49] O. Plöger, *Das Buch Daniel* (see n. 1 above), ad loc.

[50] H.L. Ginsberg, "Daniel," *EM,* vol. 2 (1965): 689; "The legendary pictures and muddled chronology (besides what was said above about Belshazzar and Darius the Mede, the exile in Jehoiakim's third regnal year stated in Daniel 1:1 does not accord with history) show that the stories in the first part could not be historical". It is not only the chronology that is muddled but also the inherent logic and notional complex of the whole work, when it is disassembled and dismembered in the Ginsberg system (H.L. Ginsberg, *Studies in Daniel*) and in the systems of many other scholars.

seventy years of subjection and also the "seventy weeks" of years (Dan. 9:24) in order to fulfill Jeremiah's prophecy (25:12; 29:10) described below, and the destiny of redemption. Talmudic tradition already explained in principle, though not with complete accuracy, the meaning of the count starting with Jehoiakim's surrender, in "the third year," and ending after the downfall of Babylonia,[51] for "in the first year of Darius son of Ahasuerus of Median descent" (Dan. 9:1) the seventy years ended, but the secret of the "seventy weeks" of years was not properly revealed. The root of the hidden calculation became clear slowly to a few Christian commentators, in the wake of modern scholarship, but its gradual disclosure ceased and was not completed.

In mid-seventeenth century the English archbishop, James Ussher, noted that the schematic arithmetical pattern of the seventy years corresponds to the actual chronology from Nebuchadnezzar's ascent to the throne in Jehoiakim's fourth regnal year until the defeat of Babylonia by the armies of the Medes and Persians.[52] A further contribution was made somewhat later in England by John Marsham, who revived forgotten opinions of antiquity,[53] refuted the Christological interpretation of the "seventy weeks" of years which to his mind end with the dedication of the Temple by Judas Maccabaeus and his camp, but figured them in complicated combinations rather than in a sequence.[54] Another step forward was taken at the start of the eighteenth century by the Jesuit scholar, Jean Hardouin, in France, who published his logical method whereby the "third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim" is the start not just of the seventy years up to the Return to Zion, but also of the "seventy weeks" of years up to the time of the Hasmonean Revolt.[55] That well formulated thesis blazed a trail in the right direction, and Johann Gottfried Eichhorn based his revised version on it,[56] but the thesis had few supporters. Its limited reverberations diminished and weakened greatly in the course of time. In contrast to the majority who negated and ignored it, few and sporadic voices were raised in favor of these explanations which merged and changed and they made little progress toward an acceptable solution, even withdrawing further from one because of a hesitant approach and garbling muddles.[57] Consequently there was no proper elucidation of the date

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[51] bMegillah 11b–12a; *Seder Olam Rabbah* 28, Ratner ed. (see n. 22 above), p. 128.

[52] J. Ussher (Usserius) *The Annals of the World* (London 1658), p. 101.

[53] Q. Julius Hilarianus, *Chronologia, PL* 13, col. 1103/4.

[54] J. Marsham, *Chronicus Canon* (London 1672), p. 568ff.

[55] J. Harduinus (Hardouin), *Chronologia Veteris Testamenti* (Paris 1700), pp. 108, 186ff.; A. Calmet, *Commentaire Litteral sur tous les Livres de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament,* vol. 6 (Paris 1726), p. 614ff.

[56] J.G. Eichhorn, *Allgemeine Bibliothek der Biblischen Litteratur,* vol. 3 (Leipzig 1790), p. 761ff.; idem, *Die Hebräischen Propheten,* vol. 3 (Göttingen 1819), p. 464ff.

[57] C. Wieseler, *Die 70 Wochen und die 63 Jahrwochen des Propheten Daniel* (Göttingen 1839), p. 11ff.; F. Fraidl, *Die Exegese der siebzig Wochen Daniels* (Graz 1883; C.v. Lengerke, *Das Buch Daniel* (see n. 46 above), ad loc.; G. Behrmann, *Das Buch Daniel, HKAT* (Göttingen 1894); M. Thilo, *Die Chronologie des Danielbuches* (Bonn 1926); N.W. Porteous, *Daniel* (see n. 1 above), ad loc.

which is actually based on a solid considered pattern, and is not the result of error, negligence, or arbitrarity. It will be easily understood if we link it to the main overall count that is discernible throughout its essence and basic purposes, in the breadth of its horizons and depth of its philosophical significance.

The timing given at the start of the Book of Daniel provides the edge of the chronological net that envelops and unifies all the chapters and rings of that artistic work. The same time calculation is inherent in the eras of the destruction and the redemption; in the moments of finality and expiation. The root is planted in the recesses of classical prophecy, but the trunk branches out and encompasses the period of Antiochus Epiphanes' decrees and the Hasmonean Revolt. "In the fourth year of King Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, that was the first year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon," Jeremiah proclaims calamity and desolation on Jerusalem, surrender, and the subjugation of the nations to the kingdom of Babylonia, until it cracks and collapses at the appointed time: "I will send and take all the families of the north... and King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land and against its inhabitants and against all those nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them a desolation, and an object of hissing, and ruins for all time... And this whole land shall be a ruin and a desolation; and those nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. When seventy years are over, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, says the Lord, and the land of the Chaldeans for their sins, and I will make it a desolation for all time" (Jer. 25:1-12). During the downfall of Babylonia the light of salvation and renascence will shine on the Jews in exile: "When seventy years of Babylon are over, I will take note of you, and fulfill to you my promise of favor, to bring you back to this place" (Jer. 29:10).[58]

The date at the beginning of the Book of Daniel does not conflict, but rather accords with the prophecy cited, if only its intention is clarified in view of the principles of the chronology adopted and its logical implications. Nebuchadnezzar conquers and subdues Jerusalem "in the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim of Judah" because it was then that the independent kingdom of Israel came to an end. "In the fourth year of King Jehoiakim... that was the first year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon," the calculation of the seventy-years' era of Babylonian rule had already begun, precisely according to Jeremiah's oration (25:1). Nebuchadnezzar's assault on Judah and Jerusalem therefore precedes his first year as king and sovereignty in the sacred city, in order to complete seventy years by the time of the Return to Zion, and properly separate

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[58] W. Rudolph, *Jeremia, HAT* (Tübingen 1958), ad loc.; P.R. Ackroyd, "The 'Seventy Year' Period," *JNES*, 17 (1958): 23ff.; R. Borger, "An Additional Remark," *JNES* 18 (1959): 74; J. Bright, *Jeremiah, AB* 21 (New York 1965), ad loc.; Ch. Wolff, *Jeremia im Frühjudentum und Urchristentum* (Berlin 1976), p. 100ff.

the fixed eras of kingships.[59] That count is anchored in the central purposes of the entire book, feeds on its firm belief in the veracity of the prophecy, and is supported by the customary chronological system that assigns the transitional year to the outgoing king and subtracts it from the incoming reign.[60] Nebuchadnezzar already bears the title of "King of Babylon" in the "third year" of Jehoiakim's reign because of his presumed status in his homeland, but his government does not yet control the Israelite nation.[61] It is not a splendid capital in the heartland of a great power, nor extensive territory, but hegemony in Judah and Jerusalem, the center of the world, that bestows cosmic sovereignty upon Babylonia, designated by the Creator to subjugate and rule with force until its end at the appointed time.

Between Nebuchadnezzar's invasion "in the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim" and the collapse of Babylonian sovereignty, heralding the Israelite renascence in the days of the Return to Zion, lay seventy years. The count begins "in the fourth year of King Jehoiakim... that was the first of King Nebuchadnezzar" (Jer. 25:1) and ends with the downfall of Nebuchadnezzar's son Belshazzar (Dan. 5:30), the defeat of Babylonia and the rise of Darius the Mede (Dan. 6:1). The calamity of the destruction is realized in entirety, as stated in Jeremiah's oration, when Jerusalem is ruined and its Temple burned, in the eleventh year of King Zedekiah.[62] The period decreed for the Babylonian government is divided in the count into two continuous stages. The first is defined in the list concluding II Chronicles, that the Book of Daniel obviously relies on, which gives details of the kings of Judah from Jehoiakim's fourth year up to the destruction of Jerusalem in Zedekiah's reign.[63] The curse of devastation is fulfilled in the second stage, and Jerusalem remains abandoned for forty-nine years according to Daniel's vision which states "seven weeks" of

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[59] A similar interpretation on the seventy years is already indicated at the end of II Chron. and Ezra 1:1, though the basis and specification of the calculation is not given there. Cf. in contrast Zechariah 1:12.

[60] The method cited above is not useful for finding the root of the differences between Jeremiah and the Daniel chapters but rather the basic common pattern.

[61] The author's knowledge of Babylonian history is not sufficiently precise. Nebuchadnezzar did not become king before Jehoiakim's fourth year, but, as noted above, after the battle of Carchemish and the death of his father, Nabopolassar, according to the Babylonian Chronicle. However the epithet "king of Babylonia," used before it applied, might be explained by his later status already predicted in Jeremiah's prophecy.

[62] II Kings 25:2ff.; II Chron. 36:11ff.; Jer. 39:1ff.

[63] Eight years were left to Jehoiakim, a truncated year to Jehoiachin (three months and ten days) and eleven to Zedekiah. Apparently because of the text which sets Jehoiachin's exile "at the turn of the year" (II Chron. 36:10), that is, indicates "evidently the start of the new year" (H. Tadmor, *EM*, vol. 4: 276; see n. 42 above), a whole year was credited to Jehoiachin, making up the twenty, but according to the other version in II Kings (24:5ff.) he was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar "in the eighth year of his reign" (24:12) and Jerusalem was destroyed in Nebuchadnezzar's nineteenth regnal year (25:8).

years (9:25) for the same period.[64] The merger of the two stages, twenty years plus forty-nine, produces a total of sixty-nine. Babylonia was thus defeated in the seventieth year, when its throne was seized by Darius the Mede whose single regnal year constitutes a bridge and transition to the Return of Zion.[65]

Jeremiah's prophecy was accomplished. Babylonian sovereignty came to an end seventy years after Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah and Jerusalem "in the first year of Darius son of Ahasuerus of Median descent" (Dan. 9:1) when Babylonia was defeated. Nebuchadnezzar's son Belshazzar was killed, but the yearned for salvation did not yet appear to the Israelite exiles. On the threshold of the Return to Zion, the angel of God reveals to Daniel the latent meaning and hidden secret of that prophecy: Not merely seventy years of exile and Babylonian rule are inflicted on Israel, but the distressed nation being punished for its sins is sentenced to subjection to despotic foreign empires for a lengthy period of "seventy weeks" of years, that is, 490 years.[66] At the conclusion of the eras of pagan maleficent governments there is a danger of annihilation and a cruel foe (Antiochus Epiphanes) pollutes the holy Temple. The light of perfect redemption will shine at the end of the horrors of frightful wretchedness, and persecutions by the Hellenistic empire and its warriors.[67]

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[64] "From the issuance of the word" at the destruction of the Temple (586 B.C.E.) until "an anointed leader," that is, Joshua b. Jehozadak who appears following the Return to Zion (538 B.C.E.). If the period is inclusive of both years cited, it adds up to forty-nine.

[65] According to this a priori formula that always figures whole years, seventy years elapsed between Nebuchadnezzar's accession to the throne (605 B.C.E.) after the battle of Carchemish in Jehoiakim's fourth regnal year (Jer. 46:2) and the beginning of the Return to Zion (538 B.C.E.). The count is based on actual chronology and corresponds to it approximately but not perfectly, because of a whole year credited to Jehoiachin, and also because the personality of Darius the Mede (as indicated below in Chapter 4, nn. 35-40) and his single regnal year are not based on historical facts but inserted for ideological reasons. The text itself suggests the calculation: "Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old" (Daniel 6:1) so that he was born sixty-two years before the fall of Babylon or eight years after Nebuchadnezzar's invasion "in the third year" (1:1) of Jehoiakim. Jewish tradition already understood very well that the age noted points to a particular end: "The day Nebuchadnezzar entered the sanctuary in the days of Jehoiachin — his foe (namely Darius the Mede) was born" (*Seder Olam Rabbah,* 28, p. 128 in the Ratner ed. — see n. 22 above), but by this interpretation (nn. 30-31 above) Nebuchadnezzar invaded at the end of Jehoiakim's reign ("in the third year" of his rebellion) and took Jerusalem already in the reign of Jehoiachin.

[66] The count includes sixty-two "weeks" (of years) in addition to the initial seven up to the time when an "anointed" is "cut off", that is, High Priest Onias III, who was deposed and murdered under the Hellenizers' government, and a last week of calamity in the Holy City and Temple until the end of torments and the dawn of redemption. Sixty-two weeks (Dan. 9:25) correspond exactly to analogous sixty-two years (Dan. 6:1) of Darius the Mede.

[67] Transparent references to Hellenistic hegemony and the coercive decrees of Antiochus Epiphanes are discernible in Chapters 7-12. The Greek kingdom figures clearly: 8:21 ff.; 10:20 ff. Its defeat ends the chain of the four subjugating kingdoms (Babylonia, Media, Persia and Greece) at the end of the days of wrath.

B. *Shades of Destruction and Exile*

The exact chronological pattern embracing the Daniel chapters from beginning to end is not a purely arithmetic, abstract and external framework. It fixes the skeleton and columns of the principal ideological concept that sparkles and throbs throughout the entire work which was born of the faith and philosophy of partisans of the Torah and its warriors against Hellenistic despotism.[68] This theoretical method, well-constructed and considered in all branches, classifies and dresses the stones of history in accordance with its own purposes and measures the order of time in accordance with its aims.[69] It is supported on the pedestal of sacred prophecy and backed by the lists in II Chronicles. It draws on the pearls of hidden popular folk tradition, and directs the course of events toward the final confrontation in the Hasmonean Revolt.[70] In this dominant perspective, the intentions, sense and symbolism reflecting the period of the destruction of the Temple and Babylonian exile is comprehensible, it being drawn in thin delicate lines into which are entwined splinters of memories and wondrous legends. These typical features are already well imprinted even in the body of Chapter I of the Book of Daniel.

"In the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim" (Dan. 1:1) the great calamity began to evolve, inflicting upon Israel servitude, loss of independence the ruin of its homeland, the dispersion of its people in foreign parts, and the sovereignty of pagan empires in the holy city and heart of the universe. The Return to Zion does not completely heal the nation's wounds nor bear with it the message of glorious redemption with all its lofty purposes. The path of torment and agony extends up to the ultimate distress of Antiochus Epiphanes' terrible deeds, until salvation in the Hasmonean Revolt. The date at the beginning of the book marks the start of the era of wrath and atonement and at its end the grace of God is in the offing. The prophecy of Jeremiah, which encompassed not only the secret of partial renascence in the wake of the Babylonian downfall seventy years hence but also the intimations of the absolute magnificent end after "seventy weeks" of years is realized. That is why the event that takes place "in the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim" introduces and determines the nature, timing and outcome of that decreed, inevitable historical course of events. In order to point up and emphasize that basic outlook forcefully, the

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[68] For details of the overall count see Chapter 4, n. 13 below.

[69] The book of Daniel provides no support for the view that posits a rift between passive, religious Hasidism and the rebel fighting camp adhering to the Hasmoneans. For objections to that view see Chapter 2, Section B above, and Chapter 4, nn. 5, 77 below.

[70] The actual Revolt is reflected only dimly (Dan. 7:21; 11:34), but the atmosphere of the persecutions and uprising hovers throughout as indicated in the picture of the stone (Israel) shattering the statue representing the pagan kingdom (2:44 ff.). The Revolt is not stressed because the chapters were written at its start when the persecutions and instances of martyrdom still persisted.

declining moments of the kingdom in Jerusalem were deleted, the death throes of Jewish independence were not mentioned, the failure and shame of Jehoiachin's and Zedekiah's days were concealed,[71] the mass deportations and blows of the foe were ignored, the demolition of Jerusalem and burning of the Temple were completely omitted.[72]

The dilution and truncation of the historic picture, the bizarre choice of facts, the omission of crucial personages and events, as much as the enigmatic unusual chronology, are not the result of oblivion, errors, or ignorance due to the passage of generations, but the result of the observation, viewpoint and purpose of a spectator, philosopher and author living at the time of the Hasmonean Revolt. At the beginning of the story, the shadow of the catastrophe already seems to be reflected in miniature. Jerusalem was taken and the Jewish king was captive, the Jews were exiled and the holy vessels plundered and defiled. The event "in the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim" that initiates the era of servitude and dispersion is indeed based on II Chronicles (36:5-8), but is depicted according to the pattern of Jeremiah's oration as the start of the destruction. Then "King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and laid siege to it" (Dan. 1:1), for in the last days of the Temple too and before the complete destruction "King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and his whole army came to Jerusalem and laid siege to it" (Jer. 39:1),[73] in order to fulfill the prophecy that the "king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land" (Jer. 36:29). Coordinated terminological parallelism thereafter describes Antiochus Epiphanes' invasion of Jerusalem, and the doings of his troops there: "And the army of a leader that is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary" (Dan. 9:26). From Jeremiah's oration and Nebuchadnezzar's invasion to the end of "seventy weeks" of years and the defeat of Greek hegemony disaster was recurrent continuously.[74]

The real history of the period of the destruction of Jerusalem is diluted and wrapped in a mist because of the ideological symbolism and artistic fabric. The common people as a whole vanish supposedly to hide somewhere in the dark backgound. The victims of the tragedy evaporate and melt away outside the lines

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[71] Their names and those of their descendants are not mentioned. Even the fate of Jehoiakim is completely ignored.

[72] The author omits the central events for other than purely artistic reasons. If he intended to maintain an integrated picture and not stray from the stories of Daniel and his group, he could have interwoven echoes of the stormy episodes, as in Ezekiel's orations (33:21 ff.; 40:1 ff.) on the basis of rumors spread by displaced persons and refugees.

[73] See also Jer. 52:4; II Kings 25:1.

[74] That is, the anonymous leader heading his army is Antiochus Epiphanes who destroys "the city and the sanctuary" who sows destruction like Nebuchadnezzar, defiles a temple with his "abomination of desolation" and "desolation is decreed until the end of the war" when at the end of the seventy weeks (of years) "the decreed destruction will be poured down" (Dan. 9:26-27) upon this abomination.

of sight. A small cast appears on the stage: Daniel and his friends confronting the pagan kingdom and its servitors. Consequently cryptic language is required and applied to the Nebuchadnezzar expedition and the results of the conquest: "And the Lord delivered King Jehoiakim of Judah into his hand with some of the vessels of the House of God;[75] which he brought to the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels to the treasure house of his god" (Dan. 1:2). Even the fate of Jerusalem is wrapped in mystery.[76] The obscure wording allows room for doubts and questions. Aside from the holy vessels, who was taken to "the land of Shinar to the house of his god," Jehoiakim or additional captives, or perhaps Daniel and his friends who appear later in the story and at Nebuchadnezzar's orders were supposed to be educated and serve in "the palace of the king?"[77] If the deportees were not yet counted or hinted at, why does the verse repeat and note separately the vessels that were brought "to the treasure house of his god?"

According to R-a-sh-i Nebuchadnezzar brought everything captured, even the people, to the house of his god to glorify his cult, and he brought the vessels "to the treasure house" but Jehoiakim died before being uprooted from his land. *Midrash Daniel* (1:2) notes that Nebuchadnezzar brought "Israelites who were with Jehoiakim and the vessels, for Jehoiakim had already died in Eretz Israel near Jerusalem and had not been buried, to fulfill what was said about being buried like an ass" etc.[78] Other Jewish commentators are of the opinion that Jehoiakim was then exiled to Babylonia for a limited time, not permanently.[79] Among modern schools, too, opinions are divided. One group of scholars claims[80] that the verse suggests that Jehoiakim was exiled with his retinue and perhaps dragged to Babylon to take part in the victory celebration.[81] A second group[82] negates that conclusion and learns from the ancient

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[75] Septuagint, *Der Septuaginta-Text des Buches Daniel* (Kap. 1-2), W. Hamm ed. (Bonn 1969); J. Ziegler ed., *Susanna-Daniel-Bel et Draco* (Göttingen 1954): καὶ παρέδωκεν αὐτὴν κύριος εἰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ καὶ Ιωακιμ τὸν βασιλέα κτλ.

[76] The Septuagint as well as the Syriac Peshitta "improve" the text and add, "And God gave her (scil. Jerusalem) into his hands and Jehoiakim." Theodotion's translation and the Vulgate leave the unclear text as in the masoretic version. Consequently there is no sense in the dispute conducted on the question of whether Jerusalem was conquered then or not. The author keeps depictions of events to a minimum, in order not to muddle the main point, not to descend to vain imaginings, and not to risk historical contradictions. On the Peshitta and Latin Vulgate see below nn. 169-170.

[77] Dan. 1:3ff.

[78] According to Jeremiah's prophecy (22:18ff.) cited above.

[79] Abraham Ibn Ezra, Levi b. Gershon (R-a-l-b-a-g), the commentary ascribed to Saadia Gaon, and Isaac Abrabanel; see n. 1 above. Jehoiakim was exiled to Babylonia and returned to Jerusalem, but rebelled some years later and was punished. The difference of opinion is connected with the date that begins the chapter which, in the opinion of these commentators, does not mark the event at the end of Jehoiakim's reign.

[80] See Hitzig, Bevan, Marti, Montgomery, Charles, Bentzen, and Young (see n. 1 and n. 46 above), ad loc.

[81] D.J. Wiseman, *Notes* (see n. 40), p. 17.

[82] See Lengerke, Rosenmüller and Keil (nn. 39, 45, 46 above), ad loc.

translations[83] that Nebuchadnezzar brought only the vessels to "the house of his god." These approaches, however, both ignore the nature of the verse, which avoids all detail, is imprecise in describing events, and even omits mention of the fate of Jehoiakim himself, not by chance or negligence. In its muffled style, the chapter as a whole creates the impression and atmosphere of the dissolution of the kingdom of Judah and the start of exile. It does not draw a full realistic historical picture, but strives to focus immediately on the heroes, Daniel and his three friends who represent the Diaspora and the nation subjugated by the kingdom of the Gentiles.

Nebuchadnezzar brought the caravan of exiles and the holy vessels to "the land of Shinar to the house of his god." The "house of his god" is attached to "the Land of Shinar" and not identified, but its anonymity is not sufficient reason to deny its separate existence and consider it, as a minority of commentators do,[84] just a modifier or appositive of "the land of Shinar." A more widespread view[85] among scholars suggests correcting the text by erasing "the house of his god" (in contrast to the view suggesting the erasure of the second part of the verse: "and he brought the vessels" etc.) in order to avoid redundancy in the location of the vessels, for further on the verse says that "he brought the vessels to the treasure house of his god" (1:2),[86] and these scholars cannot envisage a gathering of captives in the shrine. Some slight support for this notion is provided by the Septuagint,[87] where "the house of his god" is deleted, along with that oddity, "land of Shinar" which in order to appeal to the ear of the Greek reader,[88] is replaced by "Babylonia" which is real and familiar. Thus, as a result of the habitual hasty tendency to correct supposed imaginary errors and improve the wording by amputation of limbs, the sense and intent of the text was lost. The "land of Shinar" was not inserted in the description to provide an archaic decor, nor is it an antiquated hollow phrase; it expresses an idea woven into the main ideological fabric. The ancient image is planted deep in early scriptural heritage, from which its meaning emerges, explaining the secret of its being coupled with the "house of his god" of the king of Babylonia.

The land of Shinar was after the flood the site of Nimrod's kingdom and cradle of the proud Babylonian kingdom (Gen. 10:10). The people of the Tower of Babel generation found "a valley in the land of Shinar" (Gen. 11:2) to build there "a city and a tower with its top in the sky" (11:4). But the Lord scattered

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[83] The Septuagint, Theodotion, and the Vulgate. See n. 87, 88 below.

[84] See Hitzig (n. 46); J. Meinhold, *Das Buch Daniel* (Nordlingen 1889), ad loc.

[85] G. Behrmann (see n. 57 above), ad loc.

[86] S.R. Driver, *The Book of Daniel* (Cambridge 1912); Marti, Montgomery, Charles (see nn. 1, 46 above), ad loc.

[87] Septuagint, Dan. 1:2 (see n. 75) — καὶ ἀπήνεγκεν αὐτὰ εἰς Βαβυλῶνα καὶ ἀπηρείσατο αὐτὰ ἐν τῷ εἰδωλείῳ αὐτοῦ. See n. 75 above.

[88] The other ancient translations (Theodotion, the Peshitta and the Vulgate), however, correspond to the masoretic text here. See n. 18 above and n. 169 below.

them and "confounded" their language, and thereafter the scene of their deeds is called "Babel" (Babylonia). This biblical episode ridicules and denounces, in a satirical parody, the arrogance embodied in the celebrated Babylonian city,[89] and the splendor of the famous shrine of the god Bel-Marduk[90] that reaches heavenward with its tall stories and steps.[91] It is in the land of Shinar that is located the cradle of crime and rebellion against the Almighty, because of which evil spreads through the universe, and the human race is separated into languages and nations.[92] The prophet Zechariah too (5:11) sees the seat of evil "in the land of Shinar."[93]

As viewed in Jewish tradition, already discernible in Philo[94] and Josephus,[95] Nimrod incited his contemporaries to rebel against the true God, and established "in the land of Shinar" a cult of lust and worldliness. The father of the Babylonian dynasty founded the "house of Nimrod," a nest of idolatry, and represented haughty despotism that adorns itself with heavenly virtues.[96] A talmudic legend makes him the model for Nebuchadnezzar, "the son of evil Nimrod's son," who conducted himself arrogantly in the manner of the first of his early ancestors,[97] dared to appear as the highest in the firmament and order the partisans of God to be thrown into the fiery furnace, as Nimrod in his day behaved to Abraham.[98] Thus "the land of Assyria" is also called "the land of Nimrod" (Mic. 5:5), because the land of Shinar sent forth Asshur (Gen. 10:11), founding father of Assyria, the rod of anger wielded against Israel by God (Is. 10:5ff.), and the prototype of despicable conceit, providing the model, in Daniel's visions, for the description of Hellenistic tyranny that crumbles with the downfall of Antiochus Epiphanes. The "land of Shinar" is the site of the germination and growth of the malevolent government that imposes its authority in the world and challenges the exclusive lordship of the Rock of

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89 M.D. Cassuto, *Peirush al Sefer Bereshit,* Part II, *Mi-Noaḥ ad Avraham* (Jerusalem 1965), p. 154ff.

90 Who heads the Babylonian pantheon, Jer. 50:2; Is. 46:1; P. Artzi "Bel," *EM,* vol. 2(1965): 130; idem ibid., vol. 5 (1968): 442ff., s.v. "Merodach"—"Marduk".

91 In the talmudic tradition (bSanhedrin 109a) it is associated with the temple of Borsippa, a cult center for Nebo or Nabu (bAvodah Zarah 11b) near Babylon. See J.B. Pritchard, *ANET* (Princeton N.J. 1969), pp. 303, 306, 317, etc.

92 Y. Kaufmann, *Toldot ha-Emunah ha-Yisr'elit,* vol. 2 (Jerusalem 1953), p. 412ff.

93 B. Uffenheimer, *Ḥazonot Zechariah* (Jerusalem 1961), p. 115. The term "Shinar" recurs in the Bible: Gen. 14:1, 9; Josh. 7:21; Is. 11:11.

94 Philo, *De Gigantibus* (15) 65ff.; *Philo (LCL),* ed. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, vol. 2 (London 1950), p. 476ff.

95 Josephus, *Ant.* I 113ff. Editions of Josephus are listed in Chapter 5, n. 83.

96 bAvodah Zarah 53b; Genesis Rabbah—*Midrash Bereshit Rabbah* XXXVIII 6, J. Theodor-Ch. Albeck ed. (Jerusalem 1965), p. 353ff.; etc.

97 bPesaḥim 94a-b; bḤagigah 13a; bḤullin 89a.

98 bPesaḥim 118a; bEruvin 53a; Genesis Rabbah XLI (XLII) 4, p. 408 in Theodor-Albeck ed. (See n. 96); Canticles Rabbah—*Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 8:8, in *Midrash Rabbah,* Romm ed. (Vilna 1921).

Israel. The ancient epithet reveals the core of the human and cosmic drama embodied in the Book of Daniel, which opened at the moment Babylonian sovereignty was established,[99] and was to end with the defeat of the entire pagan tyranny in the world and the triumph of the monotheistic faith.[100]

Nebuchadnezzar captures the capital of Israel, and takes the captives and the plunder from Jerusalem "to the land of Shinar to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels to the treasure house of his god" (Dan. 1:2).[101] The temporary display of the fruits of his victory in the house of his god is evidently designed to underscore the imposition of despotic pagan authority, whose motherland has been the "land of Shinar" since antiquity, over the Jewish nation and its faith, its members and its sanctities. For the sake of the transparent parallelism, "the house of his god" remains mysteriously anonymous and is coupled with "the land of Shinar," like the Tower of Babel, erected by the generation of disunion and implanted in the "land of Shinar." Indeed the unidentified "house of his god" is none other than the famous tower, that is, the temple of Bel-Marduk, as suggested further on (Dan. 4:5) by Nebuchadnezzar's remark that "Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god."[102] This symbolic meaning emerges as well in the scene of the image set up "in the plain of Dura" (Dan. 3:1) which in form and dimensions resembled a tower more than a statue.[103] Furthermore the captain of the guard (2:14ff.) is called Arioch, like the ally of "Amraphel king of Shinar" (Gen. 14:1), and in legend Amraphel is identified with Nimrod, the founder of the pagan kingdom "in the land of Shinar."[104]

The verse veils and does not specify what happend in Nebuchadnezzar's temple when the holy objects were displayed there. R-a-sh-i speculates that the procedure was very similar to that of the Philistines when they "took the Ark of

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[99] The Jerusalem Talmud version (Berakhot IV 7b) says: "Shinar — that set an enemy and oppressor to the Holy One blessed be He, and who is it, the evil Nebuchadnezzar"; Genesis Rabbah XXXVII 4 (p. 346). The concept embodies an image of evil pagan hegemony from the time of Nebuchadnezzar till its downfall.

[100] A similar geographical symbolism glimmers below in the mention of "the big river which is the Tigris" (Dan. 10:4) and also "the river" (*ha-yeor* — usually denoting the Nile; 12:5ff.). Patterned after the prophecies on Assyria (such as Is. 8:8; 10:5, 22) are the actions of the despotic Antiochus Epiphanes (Dan. 8:19; 11:36, 40; etc.).

[101] In the abbreviated style the preposition "to" (*el*) was deleted twice. The Syriac translation and the Vulgate retained the preposition twice. The Septuagint deleted "the house of his god" (as noted above) and states "to the treasure house of his idol" at the end of the verse.

[102] This etymology is considered false by many commentators (such as Montgomery, p. 123; see n. 1 above), but the claim, even if justified, does not change the conclusion about the intention of the story in the slightest degree.

[103] The statue, sixty cubits high and six cubits wide, nameless and faceless (Dan. 3:1ff.), seems to be the reflection of the tower which looms above "a valley in the land of Shinar" (Gen. 11:2) which was the first settlement (–"and settled there") after the deluge. Accordingly the statue was placed "in the valley of Dura, because "Dura" means (in Aramaic) "settlement."

[104] bEruvin 53a; Genesis Rabbah XLI (XLII) 4, p. 408 in Theodor-Albeck (see n. 96) ed.

God" and "brought it into the house of Dagon" (I Sam. 5:2) to glorify their idol. That does seem logical. Several Christian exegetes proffered a parallel explanation,[105] although stranger and more contrived, that Nebuchadnezzar meant to honor the sacred vessels by placing them before his god. Only imagination, however, can visualize a ceremony of thanksgiving or praise in the Babel-Shinar temple. The text does not indicate or even suggest any particular ritual, adding immediately that the vessels were transferred to the "treasury house of his god." The concise and inexplicit version is based on a fact noted in II Chronicles (36:7): "Nebuchadnezzar also brought some vessels of the House of the Lord to Babylon,[106] and put them in his palace at Babylon," after Jehoiakim the king was bound in "fetters" by the conqueror, "to convey him to Babylon" (ibid, 36:6).

Sacred vessels have accompanied the Jewish Diaspora from the time the nation was uprooted from its soil up to the moment of its salvation. Their retention in the treasure house of Nebuchadnezzar's god underscores the humiliation and disgrace visited on the sanctities of the Jewish faith throughout the period of Babylonian hegemony and pagan sovereignty. The appropriation of the vessels and their removal abroad together with the caravan of captives initiated the calamity of the destruction of the Temple, and gradually fulfilled Jeremiah's prophecy that was to be realized in entirety in the future at the behest of the Almighty. For "the vessels that remain... shall be brought to Babylon and there they shall be until the day that I take note of them, says the Lord and I will bring them up and restore them to this place" (Jer. 27:21-22). Their liberation from foreign control and their return to the purified Temple in Jerusalem completes the anticipated redemption. That is why a place is reserved for them in the final retribution and secrets of redemption devised in the Book of Daniel. The pagan empire is required to deal with the vessels as with the Jewish subject people,[107] with a modicum of respect and caution, for they were turned over to the Gentiles just for the period of ire and wrath. The sin of rough treatment exacerbates the measure of malice and brings calamity to the foe who abuses and boasts of his strength. Belshazzar, son of Nebuchadnezzar, defiles them and by his sin brings on his own death and the downfall of Babylonia.[108] His act and its

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[105] Theodoretus, *Commentarius in Visiones Danielis Prophetae* 1:2, *PG* 81; Ephraem Syrus, *In Danielem Prophetam Explanatio* (1:2), *Opera,* vol. II 2 (Rome 1740).

[106] The Septuagint has: "And part of the vessels of the House of the Lord." There is a parallel version in the apocryphal I Esdras (I 39): "And of the holy vessels." On the Septuagint editions see n. 17 and n. 75 above.

[107] That explains the advice Daniel gives Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:24) to befriend the poor, that is, humiliated, impoverished, dispossessed Israel. See Is. 41:17; 49:13, and also n. 34 of Chapter 4 below.

[108] Daniel, Chapter 5. This cause for the collapse of Babylonia (and not the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportations) does not correspond to any historical period, but only reflects the perspective characterizing Antiochus Epiphanes' reign and the years of his coercive decrees.

results are a precedent and sign of the sins of Antiochus Epiphanes, who defiles the sanctities of Israel and is punished by a decisive defeat[109] that will sweep the last pagan kingdom to the depths of ruin.

C. *The Remnant of Israel — The Faithful Survivors*

It is in the perspective of the tormented, struggling generation at the time of the Hasmonean Revolt that the artistic canvas of the Book of Daniel is explainable, and its essential meaning comprehensible. Consequently, the historical picture preceding the period of national catastrophe and fixing the start of the destruction as early as "the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim," but ignoring the great calamity that sealed the fate of Jerusalem, is quite abstract. There is no sense then in describing the vicissitudes of the Jewish state in the course of its decline, the shock of the terrible disasters and their victims, the myriads of captives led away, and the hardships on the paths of their dispersion.[110] Except for Belshazzar, none of Nebuchadnezzar's successors on the throne of Babylonia are listed, their deeds are not recounted nor their relations with the subjugated Jewish nation.[111] The link with current history and with external changes and successive governments has weakened and almost vanished. The nature of the period appears to have been obscured, the pulse of its existence stopped, and even the march of the Return to Zion stilled.[112]

Daniel and his trio do not appear among many exiles, or within their family circles; they are not involved in the life of their compatriots or in the experience of their scattered brothers. Rather, they appear on stage, detached from the surrounding reality and the course of events, in order to represent the remnant of the house of Jacob and the Jewish survivors[113] (as stated in the Restoration prophecies and according to the poems of the Servant of God in Isaiah's orations), that is, the remaining stable and healthy core that is faithful to the

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[109] Dan. 8:11ff.; 9:26f.; 11:31ff.

[110] An echo of "the desolations of Jerusalem" and of its sanctities is embodied only in Daniel's prayer (9:2ff.) after which comes the revelation of the count of "seventy weeks" (of years) which extends up to the Hasmonean Revolt.

[111] Nebuchadnezzar's son Belshazzar ends the Babylonian monarchy and its seventy years (Dan. 5:1ff.). The sages wondered about that and sought to explain the disappearance of Evil-Merodach (Genesis Rabbah LXXXV 2, p. 1032 in Ch. Albeck ed.; see n. 96 above); *Midrash Daniel* 5:1; *Yalkut Shim'oni* To Genesis 38, mark 144; on editions see n. 1 above. But it is quite possible that the author meant to present Belshazzar as Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, as Isaac Abrabanel (VII 1) surmised in the wake of R-a-l-b-a-g and Jerome (see nn. 1, 35 above) in their commentaries on Dan. 5:1-2.

[112] Although the Daniel adventures (10:1) end "in the third year of King Cyrus of Persia" (as noted at the end of this chapter and in nn. 263-265).

[113] Is. 4:2ff.; 10:20ff.; Jer. 23:3ff. The remnants of Israel are also the hope for the future for mankind purified after the day of judgement, following the conception rooted deep in biblical philosophy. See G.F. Hasel, *The Remnant* (Berrien Springs Mich. 1974); W.E. Müller & H.D. Preuss, *Die Vorstellung vom Rest im Alten Testament* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1973).

ancestral Torah, and whose existence embodies the future of the oppressed nation.[114] Their appearance, their conduct and demeanor clearly constitute a pure and ideal image of pietism which at a time of rage and pagan tyranny embodies the mission of prophecy and the message of the desired redemption in the throes of the Revolt led by the Hasmoneans.

Nebuchadnezzar's order admits the select group into his palace and sets the handful of Jews against the rule of foreign sovereignty. "And the king told Ashpenaz,[115] his master eunuch, to bring some Israelites of royal descent and of the nobility; youths without blemish,[116] handsome, proficient in all wisdom, knowledgeable and intelligent, and capable of serving[117] in the king's palace, and teach them the writings and the language of the Chaldeans"[118] (Dan. 1:3-4).

The Jewish boys were chosen for qualities of body and soul, the perfection of their physical and spiritual virtues, fine outward appearance and superior wisdom so that they would be fit to fulfil their tasks and serve the king. They were to become proficient in the language and writings of the Chaldeans,[119] that celebrated ancient lore of the Babylonian priests and astrologers referred to by Greek and Roman authors since the historiographic work of Herodotus (fifth century B.C.E.).[120]

Nebuchadnezzar undertakes to support and raise the children gathered for him throughout their education until they begin their work in his service. "The king allotted[121] a daily ration to them from the king's food and the wine which he drank. They were to be educated for three years and at the end of that time[122] they were to enter the king's service. Now among these were the Judahites Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah" (Dan. 1:5-6). At Nebuchadnezzar's

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[114] The notion embodied in the figure of the Servant of God debased and then rising to a glorious revival is salient and well integrated in the Book of Daniel as shown below and in Chapter 4.

[115] The origin of the name is not clear. The Septuagint (see n. 75 above) calls him Abiesdri like the guard (1:11). The Hebrew name Ashpenaz may indicate his function, that is, the man in charge of hosting the children, because of a possible linguistic connection between the term and *ushpiza* (=guest) in talmudic Aramaic (bGittin 44b; bMegillah 26a; bYoma 12a; etc.).

[116] The *qere* has *"mum"* while the *kethib* has *me'um* (Job 31:7). The former is preferable also in the light of the ancient translations and the talmudic evidence (bSanhedrin 93b).

[117] The "strength to stand" (as below in 8:7, 24; 10:8; etc.) means the capacity if God wills it.

[118] The verse refers to their celebrated wisdom and cuneiform writing.

[119] "Chaldean"—in the ancient translations and in Josephus, *Ant.* X 187ff. The concept took root in Greek in Herodotus' time, that is, already in the Persian period, and spread throughout the Hellenistic culture. The Babylonian monarchy was also called "the Chaldean Kingdom" (Dan. 9:1).

[120] Herodotus I 181, 183, ed. C. Hude (Oxford 1927); Strabo, *Geography* XVI 1.6 (739), *(LCL),* ed. H.L. Jones, vol. 7 (London 1954); Arrianus, *Anabasis of Alexander* VII 17.1ff. (*LCL*), ed. E.I. Robson, vol. 2 (London 1958).

[121] The same biblical Hebrew expression (*va-yiman*) appears in Jonah 2:1; 4:6-8.

[122] *U-miktzatam*—and from the end of the defined time (according to most of the translations and commentaries) or within the defined time (as below in n. 129) and not in the sense of a few of the boys, as in the Septuagint and according to an alternative view. The correct explanation is suggested also by later verses (15, 18).

orders they were allotted three years to acquire the knowledge needed, absorb fine manners, and properly prepare for their service. Upon the completion of their education, they would begin serving the king and join his entourage.

A group of commentators has found proof of a three-year course of study in ancient Persian education[123] in the light of Persian holy scriptures written several centuries after the Book of Daniel,[124] and also through a contrived combination of vague and disparate reports. According to Plato, sons of the Persian kings were turned over at fourteen to teachers,[125] and according to Xenophon, Persian youths, like Greek ones, were admitted at the age of sixteen or seventeen to the ephebes.[126] However, these indications do not justify a conclusion regarding the Persian practice, especially since three-year programs are known in the educational curricula of famous Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle.[127] At any rate, Herodotus does not confirm this supposed accepted practice in Persian education in his time, nor does Strabo.[128] The three-year period in the chapter under discussion seems more like a unit adapted to the overall chronological framework and suiting the typological arithmetic designed to complete three years "in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar" (Dan. 2:1)[129] and conclude "in the third year of the reign of King Cyrus of Persia" (Dan. 10:1) Daniel's term of service, exactly seventy years after he was fit to "enter the king's service."[130]

The boys growing up and being educated under the king's aegis have their

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[123] Montgomery, Porteous, Delcor, (see n. 1 above), ad loc.

[124] G. Widengren, *Die Religionen Irans* (Stuttgart 1965), p. 4ff.; 245ff.

[125] Plato, *Alcibiades,* I 121e; (*LCL*), ed. W.R.M. Lamb (London 1927).

[126] Xenophon, *Cyropaedia,* I 2.1 (*LCL*), ed. W. Miller (London 1960).

[127] Plato, *Laws,* VII 793e, 810a (*LCL*), ed. R.G. Bury, vol. 2 (London 1968); Aristotle, *Politics* VIII 1339a; (*LCL*), ed. H. Rackham (London 1932).

[128] Herodotus, I 136; Strabo, *Geography,* XV 3.18 (733); see n. 120 above.

[129] Not three full years, but already when the third started. The expression *u-le-miktzat ha-yamim* (1:18) can be understood like "in (*miketz*) the seventh year" (Jer. 34:14; Deut. 15:1; 31:10), that is, at the beginning of the seventh year. "In the year two of Nebuchadnezzar's reign" (Dan. 2:1) comes at the end of three calendar years, the first of which begins in Jehoiakim's last regnal year (1:1), for Nebuchadnezzar's first official regnal year, which carries his name only from the new year on, is actually the second year by that calculation. There is no need to change the meaning of the text through contrived explanations (such as those of Josephus, Jerome, R-a-sh-i, and most of the traditional commentators; see nn. 1, 21, 35 above) or to propose textual corrections such as "the year six" (Montgomery; see n. 1) although the correction to "the year twelve" appears in a single manuscript (967) of the Septuagint: W. Hamm, *Der Septuaginta-Text des Buches Daniel* (see n. 75 above), ad loc.

[130] The date "in the year two" (2:1) like other features in the chapter (the king's dream, his excitement, the failure of the exorcists and sorcerers, the Hebrew lad's successful deciphering and his elevation) are drawn according to the pattern of the Joseph stories (Gen. 41:1ff.). The three years of education are needed to bridge the time between Daniel's deportation "in the third year of Jehoiakim's reign" (Dan. 1:1), that is, a year before Nebuchadnezzar's reign, and the second year "of Nebuchadnezzar's reign" (in the calculation mentioned), according to the chronological system explained above. The combination adapted to the overall pattern is clarified at the end of this chapter (and in n. 268) in view of a typological arithmetical model.

food properly provided, "a daily provision of the king's food and of the wine which he drank" that is, fixed daily rations (according to the Persian term *patibaga*)[131] from the delicacies of the kings meals and table. In contiguous historical circumstances very close in time Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim, captive and exile at the Babylonian court, was similarly treated "a regular allotment of food was given him by the king of Babylon, daily rations for each day to the day of his death, all the days of his life" (Jer. 52:34; see also II Kings 25:30). The obvious parallelity represented by the identical final phrase suggests a similar situation.[132] Jehoiachin was exiled to Babylonia about eight years after Daniel and his friends entered Nebuchadnezzar's palace.[133] According to that version Evil-Merodach (Amel-Marduk) Nebuchadnezzar's son and heir, released Jehoiachin from prison, raised "his throne above those of the kings with him in Babylonia" and generously allocated to him regular daily nourishment.[134]

Babylonian documents confirm the practice adopted by Nebuchadnezzar of housing and supporting the sons of kings and nobles under his protection. They list allocations of food to Jehoiachin and his five sons as well as to the sons of the King of Ashkelon and many other exiles.[135] That being the case, it is possible to imagine among them Daniel and his friends who were chosen during that time among the "Israelites of royal descent and of the nobility." There is not the thinnest thread, however, connecting Jehoiachin and his circle with that group of captive youths, despite the conjunction of time and place, the racial kinship and living conditions in the same Babylonian capital. There is no bridge spanning the separate scriptural versions. The mutual disregard of each other in the two episodes is absolute, for a sealed and opaque border divides real history from the areas of imagination and artistic creation. The evolution of events in the final days of Jewish independence reflected in the earlier sources supplied only cornerstones and a foundation upon which the legends and visions of the Book of Daniel were constructed.

The group of Jewish boys destined to serve in Nebuchadnezzar's palace included only Daniel and his three friends.[136] They are placed on the stage without any introductions or retrospective surveys, without the slightest

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[131] Bevan, Montgomery and Delcor (see nn. 1, 46 above) ad loc.; M. Ellenbogen, *Foreign Words in the Old Testament* (London 1962), p. 141; L. Kohler & W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* (Leiden 1958).

[132] The same expression occurs in the Bible (Ex. 5:13, 19; 16:4; Lev. 23:37; I Kings 8:59; Neh. 11:23; 12:47; I Chron. 16:37; II Chron. 31:16), although lacking any substantive relation to this problem.

[133] According to the chronology described above (n. 63).

[134] B. Mazar, "Evil-Merodach," *EM,* vol. 1 (1965): 138.

[135] J. Liver, "Jehoiachin," *EM,* vol. 3 (1965): 524; J.B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*[3] (Princeton N.J. 1969), p. 308.

[136] Despite the text which may make the impression that they are only part of a large fellowship: "Among them were the Judahites"... etc. (1:6).

reference to their past history, without a single grain of information about their families, their homes, or the places they came from. This rare omission in regard to prominent people in biblical literature, the absence of any mention of their genealogy or place of birth, underscores their remoteness and detachment from the domain of the real history of their period. It is not surprising that later traditions, already discernible in Josephus,[137] Jewish as well as Christian,[138] mobilize imaginative powers and exegetical means to fill the gap and add biographical legends and stories.[139]

How and where the boys were selected for future service to the Babylonian king is unclear as well. Their relatives and friends did not accompany them. The dim picture shows also other youths "that eat of the king's food"(Dan. 1:13) but they are not identified or clearly defined. There are questions regarding how the selection was made of the" Israelites of royal descent and of the nobility."[140] There is neither a triple classification nor a real distinction between separate groups, as the three conditions for selection are evidently correlated, interdependent, and applying to the group of Jewish youths. The use of the term *partemim* for "nobility" (or "notables"), derived from Persian,[141] as is *patibaga* for the king's food, adds an element of the atmosphere of an ancient Oriental kingdom and sprinkles drops of color from the specific palette of the Book of Esther from which isolated lines were drawn and merged into the Daniel stories.[142]

An early Jewish tradition considers the quartet of captive youths as descendants of the House of David, for their fate seems to fulfill Isaiah's

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[137] *Ant.* X 186ff.; Josephus offers a paraphrase, as usual in his work. See above nn. 9, 29 and below nn. 144, 219, 264.

[138] B. Fischer, *Daniel und seine drei Gefährten in Talmud und Midrasch* (Temesvar 1906); L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews,* vol. 4, (Philadelphia 1968), p. 326ff.; ibid., vol. 6 (1959), p. 413ff.; Th. Schermann, *Propheten und Apostellegenden, TUGAL* 31.3 (Leipzig 1907), p. 93ff.; C.C. Torrey, *The Lives of the Prophets* (Philadelphia 1946), p. 24f. See also n. 264 below.

[139] Just a few of the legendary additions scattered through the ramified tradition and extensive exegesis are cited here in various notes. The apocryphal additions to the Book of Daniel in the early Greek and Latin translations were created outside the organic ideological and artistic framework of the original Daniel chapters. According to their content and style these additions are typical of Hellenistic Jewish literature and not properly the subject of discussion here. See C.A. Moore, *Daniel, Esther and Jeremiah—The Additions, AB* 44 (Garden City, N.Y. 1977); R.H. Pfeiffer, *History of the New Testament Times with an Introduction to the Apocrypha* (New York 1949), p. 433ff. Even more remote, basically different and alien in spirit are similar apocalyptic visions and pseudepigraphic motifs in the Qumran scrolls; see A. Mertens, *Das Buch Daniel im Lichte der Texte vom Toten Meer* (Stuttgart 1971).

[140] *Midrash Daniel* (see n. 1 above) explains (1:3): "*ve-min ha-partemim* in the Persian tongue they are the princes and nobles, that is, of the children of David and the children of Judah."

[141] M. Ellenbogen, *Foreign Words,* p. 140; L. Koehler & W. Baumgarten, *Lexicon;* see n. 131 above.

[142] The word *partemim* does not appear in the Bible except in the Book of Esther (1:3; 6:9) from which it, along with other features, was absorbed into the Book of Daniel (see nn. 166-167 below).

prophecy to Hezekiah: "And some of your sons, your own issue, they shall take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."[143] In Josephus' view Daniel and his friends were already considered relatives of King Zedekiah sentenced by Nebuchadnezzar to castration and service in his palace.[144] The Jerusalem Talmud opines "that they were eunuchs and were healed" when the miracle happened to them in the fiery furnace.[145] The prevalent Jewish tradition was adopted by the Christian church, and is mentioned by Origen, Jerome, Theodoretus and their disciples and followers.[146] The Babylonian Talmud records a difference of opinion as to whether Daniel alone was of "the children of Judah," while "Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were from the other tribes," or whether they were all of royal blood. There was disagreement as well as to whether they were "real eunuchs," or whether "idolatry was mutilated in their day,"[147] that is, their wondrous signs and deeds demonstrated the helplessness and shameful, embarrassing futility of paganism. This accounts for the identification of Daniel with Hathach, "of the king's eunuchs,"[148] or with Memucan, advisor to King Ahasuerus (Est. 1:16; 4:5).[149] At any rate, one way or another, the eunuchization decreed for the sons of Zedekiah is fulfilled in the fate of Daniel and his friends.

Similar views are scattered through midrashic literature,[150] spread through the ancient explications,[151] and common in a broad colorful spectrum. The eunuchization of the boys may well have a metaphoric rather than a literal meaning. Abraham Ibn Ezra already correctly noted that "eunuchs" were often royal officials[152] in the language of the Bible and ancient customs, and not always physically eunuchs.[153] The intent of the wording is clarified by the

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143 Is. 39:7; II Kings 20:18.

144 Josephus, *Ant.* X 186. The paraphrase deviates from biblical chronology. See nn. 9, 29, 137 above.

145 yShabbat VI 8d.

146 Origen, *Commentaria in Evangelium secundum Matthaeum* XV 5 (on 19:12), *PG* 13; idem, *In Ezechielem Homiliae* IV 5, *PG* 13; Jerome, *Commentaria in Danielem* I (1:3), *PL* 25; idem, *Commentaria in Isaiam Prophetam* 39:3ff., *PL* 24; Theodoretus, *Commentarius in Visiones Danielis Prophetae* 1:3 *PG* 81; Ephraem Syrus, *Opera* II 2 (see n. 105 above), ad loc.; Symeon Logothetes, *Commentarius de Sancto Propheta Daniele,* cap. I, *PG* 115, col. 372; Joannes Zonaras, *Annales* III 2 *CSHB* (Bonn 1841), p. 208ff.; Nicolaus Lyranus, *Biblia Sacra,* vol. 4 (Venice 1688), In Danielem 1:1; A. Calmet, *Commentaire* (see n. 55 above) ad loc., vol. 6 (Paris 1726), p. 609ff.

147 bSanhedrin 93b.

148 bMegillah 15a; bBava Batra 4a; *Midrash Daniel* (see n. 1 above) 2:49.

149 The second Targum of the Book of Esther 1:16, *Mikraot Gedolot* ed. see n. 1 above.

150 *Esther Rabbah* VIII 4 in *Midrash Rabbah,* Romm ed. (Vilna 1921); *Agadat Esther,* S. Buber ed. (Vilna 1925), p. 42; *Seder Eliahu Rabbah,* Chapter 24, M. Friedmann-Ish. Shalom ed. (Jerusalem 1960), p. 131; *Yalkut Shim'oni* (see n. 1) to II Kings, Chapter 20, mark 245; *Agadat Agadot,* Ch.M. Horowitz, ed. (Berlin 1881), p. 70; *Midrash Daniel* (see n. 1) 1:6; etc.

151 R-a-sh-i to Is. 39:7; R-a-d-a-k to II Kings 20:18; see n. 1 above.

152 Ibn Ezra (see n. 1 above) on Dan. 1:3; S.D. Luzzatto, *Peirush Al Sefer Yesha'yahu* (Tel Aviv 1970), p. 300.

153 T.L. Fenton, "Saris," *EM,* vol. 5 (1968): 1126f.

obvious resemblance between "the head of the eunuchs" and the similar figures of the master eunuch in Nebuchadnezzar's camp (Jer. 39:3) and "Potiphar, a eunuch (officer) of Pharaoh, captain of the guard" (Gen. 39:1).[154] These two instances, as well as the many "eunuchs of the king" in the Book of Esther (1:12ff.), have an obvious affinity with the Daniel chapters. But surprisingly, it was a dubious "rabbinical tradition," vulgar, tasteless and unimportant that became well known, in the wake of Louis (Levi) Ginzberg[155] and through a scholarly English edition of Josephus.[156] The tradition cited is drawn from a *Midrash Megillah,* of obscure authorship and medieval origin.[157] According to its odd contents and quite nauseating tastelessness, Daniel and his friends hastened to castrate themselves in order to avoid charges of licentiousness and lechery, demonstrate their utter chastity and please Nebuchadnezzar with the sight of their mutilated bodies.[158]

Except for a few voices,[159] in recent generations, explanations about the descent of the youths from Hezekiah and about their eunuchization have been abandoned.[160] Modern scholars display a growing inclination to take issue with them or completely ignore the problem[161] While the Bible does not clarify the boys' family tree or clearly note their affiliation to the king's eunuchs,[162] the relevant chapter is based on the classic prophecy that is fulfilled at the time of the fall of Jerusalem and the exile of its people. Consequently, the head of the eunuchs bearing a definite title, repeatedly appearing "in the palace of the king of Babylon" (Is. 39:7; II Kings 20:18), in charge of and supervising the select group of "Israelites of royal descent" arouses a natural association, and posits a logical link to that Isaiah oration.[163] The special title that is stressed suggests,

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[154] Here too is to be found "captain of the royal guard" (*rav ha-tabaḥim*) near Nebuchadnezzar during the destruction of Jerusalem (Jer. 39:9ff.; II Kings 25:8ff.) and near Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel's story (2:14ff.) but the former is based on true history and the latter is intertwined in a symbolic allegory patterned after Arioch (Gen. 14:1).

[155] L. Ginzberg, *The Legends,* vol. 4 (see n. 138 above), p. 326.

[156] Josephus, *Ant.* X 186 (*LCL*) ed. & trans. by R. Marcus, vol. 6 (1951), p. 261; "Rabbinic tradition adds that Daniel and his companions mutilated themselves to prove their chastity."

[157] M. Gaster, *Studies and Texts,* vol. 3 (New York 1971, repr. of 1928 ed.), p. 47.

[158] Moshe Gaster ascribed importance and antiquity to the bizarre, unusual story. Levi Ginzberg included it in his compilation of legends and Ralph Marcus presented it to the world as an example of "rabbinical tradition." The gruesome legend was unknown before the Middle Ages and is found in a ninth or tenth century manuscript. The greatest Jewish commentators were not familar with it.

[159] F.W: Farrar, *Daniel* (see n. 46); E.J. Young, *Daniel* (see n. 1 above) ad loc.

[160] Omitted also by the modern Hebrew commentators: M. Lambert, *Sefer Daniel,* in *Tanakh* with commentary by A. Kahana (Kiev 1906); E.S. Hartom, *Sefer Daniel* (Tel Aviv 1962); M. Zer-Kavod, *Sefer Daniel* (Tel Aviv 1970).

[161] See Bevan, Montgomery, Charles, Bentzen, Porteous, Plöer and Delcor, ad loc.

[162] Nebuchadnezzar's order to select "youths without blemish, handsome" (1:4) does not obviate their being eunuchized after entering the king's service, although the picture remains vague.

[163] The "chief eunuch" or "head eunuch" figures only here, and recurs many times (1:3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 18) in a few verses. A title so stressed is not likely to be accidental. Eunuchs do appear in the

along with the other expression, the fulfillment of the prophecies of catastrophe, with their warnings and consolations.

It is no wonder that a heavy fog envelops the heroes of the story, the hidden origin of the captive youths, the unknown past, and the latent future. The veil of mysterious secrecy is spread over the work and wrapped around all its lots and lanes. The murky opening of the book contains only crumbs of historical facts and sketches of a faded background seen from a distant observation point and dim angle of sight, without fresh clear memories, without substantive documentation and genealogies.[164] That opening cannot provide realistic information, taken from the archives and annals of the House of David, that are above and beyond the lucid lists in the earlier biblical sources.[165]

Daniel and his friends come into view and remain frequently isolated and solitary in the poetic, philosophical and allegorical picture. Consequently not the slightest trace of their forefathers, friends or relatives is referred to. Their combined personality symbolizes the heritage of the Jewish monarchy in the Babylonian dispersion, and wears the crown of its stolen independence. Their fate and status seems like a view in miniature of the survivors of the troubled nation, bending its back to the pagan sovereignty and humbled by the despotic foe; but looking forward to the end of the catastrophe and refusing to betray its faith. In their annals and service for the Babylonian king are woven gems of legend and picturesque threads extracted from similar episodes in like circumstances — such as Joseph in Egypt and Mordecai with Esther,[166]

Bible. A "head eunuch" is mentioned only once, during the destruction of the Temple (Jer. 39:3) at Nebuchadnezzar's side, that is, in an episode adjacent to this chapter.

[164] The author does not however go beyond or diverge from the clear historical reality of the period described, which is why illusions of the ancient background and recollections are well preserved.

[165] Despite the connection with the royal family (1:3) there is nothing here on the fate of the House of David, on Jehoiachin and his offspring (I Chron. 3:16ff.). Nor is there any real information on the exiles. The names of Daniel and his companions appear in the lists of the Return to Zion (Ezra 8:2; Neh. 8:4, 7; 10:7, 24) and that may be a slight point of departure for the evolution of the series of stories, but there are no clear, significant, genuine connections. Ezekiel (14:14; 28:3) lists, along with Noah and Job, an authoritative figure called Daniel pertaining to early generations. Such a figure appears in the remnants of Ugaritic literature, and certain of characteristic features were drawn on it for describing Daniel. See Ch. Virolleaud, *La légende phénicienne de Danel* (Paris 1936); J.B. Pritchard, *ANET* (see n. 135 above) p. 149ff.; J. Day, "The Daniel of Ugarit and Ezekiel and the Hero of the Book of Daniel," *VT* 30 (1980): 174ff. versus H.H.P. Dressler, "The Identification of the Ugaritic Dnil with the Daniel of Ezekiel," *VT* 29 (1979): 152-161. In any case there is no external testimony, just as there is no internal evidence, on the existence of the Book of Daniel, or the Daniel stories and visions, before the Hasmonean Revolt.

[166] Joseph in the service of Pharaoh, as well as Mordecai and Esther at the court in Shushan, are precedents and archetypes for Daniel and his companions who like them were in exile in an alien environment. Influences from the Joseph stories are indicated above (n. 130) and are discernible also in later episodes such as Dan. 4:6 (Gen. 41:38), 5:29 (Gen. 41:42), etc. The Book of Esther itself already shows signs of derivations from the stories of Joseph in Egypt. See Moshe Gan, "Megillat Esther be-Aspaklariat Korot Yosef be-Mitzraim," *Tarbiz* 31 (1962): 144ff.; L.A. Rosenthal, "Die

descendants of the captives headed by Jehoiachin "whom King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had driven into exile" (Est. 2:6)[167]—in order to materialize the subjugation and hopes of redemption, in connection with the image of the Servant of God and the consolations in classic prophecy. However, in the warp and woof of the artistic fabric emerge the main notions and motifs that sprouted on the soil of Jewish Hasidism in the period of the Hasmonean Revolt.

D. *The Stringencies of Hasidism and the Time of Antiochus' Decrees*

Daniel and his three friends live among Gentiles, learn the language and literature of the Chaldeans, and breathe alien air in their exile. Even their Hebrew names are replaced by foreign ones which at least in their sounds, if not their literal meaning, have a pagan air. "The head of the eunuchs gave them new names. He named Daniel Belteshazzar, Hananiah Shadrach, Mishael Meshach and Azariah Abednego" (Dan. 1:7). Daniel bears the name Belteshazzar, explained further on as the name of Nebuchadnezzar's god (Dan. 4:5). In other words, he is named after Bel-Marduk, the most famous and powerful in the Babylonian pantheon.[168] In the Greek and Latin translations, the name "Belteshazzar" merged with the similar name "Belshazzar,"[169] which was that

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Josephsgeschichte mit den Büchern Ester und Daniel verglichen," *ZAW* 15 (1895): 278ff.; idem, *ZAW* 17 (1897): 125ff.

[167] The imprints of the Book of Esther (such as *"ha-partemim"* above in n. 142) are more apparent in the later chapters, such as 2:49 (Daniel at the king's gate), 5:1ff. (Belshazzar's feast), 6:1ff. (the plot to kill Daniel at the decree of Darius the Mede, and the downfall of the foe). The last point, in which motifs borrowed from the Book of Esther are obvious, is dealt with also in Chapter 4, Section C and n. 42. On the other hand there are no signs of any influence wielded by the figure of Nehemiah, who does not antedate the background of the Daniel chapters, nor by apocryphal and extrabiblical versions about Jewish ministers at foreign courts, as in the Book of Tobit (noted in nn. 205, 206 below) or by the tales of Ahikar the Wise: B. Klar, "Aḥikar," *EM,* vol. 1 (1965): 221ff. Comparisons with similar stories and motifs, according to category and nature, by no means justify speculative opinions and hasty conclusions on the formation of the first chapters in Daniel, their origin and the stages of their early literary evolution even before the Hasmonean Revolt, contrary to W.L. Humphreys, "A Life-Style for Diaspora — A Study of the Tales of Esther and Daniel," *JBL* 92 (1973): 211ff.; J.J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Visions of the Book of Daniel* (op. cit in n. 1), p. 1ff.; J.G. Gammie, "The Classification, Stages of Growth and Changing Intentions in the Book of Daniel," *JBL* 95 (1976): 191ff.; idem, "On the Intention and Sources of Daniel I-VI," *VT* 31 (1981): 282ff.

[168] That is also the understanding of the traditional commentators (R-a-sh-i, *Midrash Daniel,* etc.) as opposed to modern scholars (see n. 1 and 102 above). It should be noted that in the prophets the fall of Babylonia appears as the defeat of Bel (Jer. 51:44; Is. 46:1). The form of his famous sanctuary, reflected in the Tower of Babel, is symbolized by Nebuchadnezzar's golden statue (as stated in n. 103). The slaying of Belshazzar thus makes properly palpable the collapse of Babylonia (Dan. 5:30).

[169] The muddle also figures in the Peshitta and in Syriac Christian literature, although the form "Belteshazzar" is most common. See A.M. Ceriani, *Translatio Syra Peshitto,* Part 3 (Milan 1879), p. 424ff.; M.J. Wyngarden, *The Syriac Version of the Book of Daniel* (Leipzig 1923); A.G. Kallarakkal, *The Peshitto Version of Daniel* (Hamburg 1973).

of Nebuchadnezzar's son and heir (Dan. 5:1ff.), and became "Baltassar."[170] This merger gave rise to the Christian legend that as a mark of favor Nebuchadnezzar gave Daniel the name of his son.[171] There is indeed some pagan meaning in those names, though their derivation and etymology is disputed.[172]

At first glance the name change fits the age of Babylonian sovereignty and the destruction of Jerusalem. After the wanderings of the Jewish exiles in the various dispersions, they adopted many different Babylonian names such as Sharezer, Shenazzar, Sheshbazzar, Zerubbabel, Esther and Mordecai.[173] A very early example is perhaps that of Joseph, whom the Egyptian Pharaoh named Zaphenath-paneah.[174] By analogy to these cases it could be argued that the change of names was not unusual, not contrary to ancestral custom, and not an infraction against the prohibitions of the Torah. In the Daniel context, however, the change of names is neither voluntary nor the result of personal favor,[175] but an act deriving from the crucial order which forces upon the Jewish captives the reigning culture, the education and food of the Gentiles, their Chaldean tongue, their life style and their lore. That combined compulsion which imperils the spiritual independence and Jewish entity of the boys is not typical of the Babylonian or Persian periods,[176] but reflects the problems resulting from the deluge of Hellenistic culture, the Hellenization trends in Jerusalem, and the oppressive decrees of Antiochus Epiphanes.

Through his refined, restrained and wise artistic means, the author draws, selects, sifts and filters from the historical situation elements that suit the remote picture sketched against the background of the Babylonian exile yet accurate and even typical of his own stormy era, when compulsory Hellenization agitated his compatriots and aroused the guardians and defenders of the Torah against the Seleucid empire and the Hellenizers who supported it. Naturally, no detail was inserted that disturbed the given chronological framework.[177] The little

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[170] The Septuagint (see n. 75) and the Latin Vulgate Bible (see n. 18 above) ad loc.

[171] Th. Schermann, *Propheten,* p. 96; C.C. Torrey, *The Lives,* p. 25; see n. 138 above.

[172] See (n. 1) Montgomery, Charles, Bentzen, Young, and Delcor, ad loc.; L. Koehler & W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon* (n. 131 above).

[173] Shenazzar (I Chron. 3:18), Sheshbazzar (Ezra 1:8), Sharezer (Zech. 7:2), Zerubbabel (Hag. 1:1ff.; Zech. 4:9; Ezra 2:2; 3:2ff.), Mordecai and Esther (Est. 2:5ff.; Ezra 2:2). Other non-Hebrew names are found in the Return to Zion lists in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

[174] Gen. 41:45.

[175] As in the case of Joseph at Pharaoh's court in Egypt. There is no resemblance here either to the Abram-Abraham change or to a change like Elyakim-Jehoiakim (II Kings 23:34), Mattaniah-Zedekiah (II Kings 24:17).

[176] No testimony of the time, either biblical or external, describes a similar case of concerted coercion in regard to foreign names, food, language and customs. The situation is absolutely unique and should be compared with testimony on Jehoiachin.

[177] To the great surprise and confusion of the naive scholars who do not understand why these matters should be connected with the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, and tend to break the book down into separate sections.

group of captive, exiled youths in the "land of Shinar" represents surviving Israel caught and held in the vice of aggressive pagan despotism, yet refusing to ignore its destiny in time of stress. The proud culture prevailing, spread by the tyrannical government, its various branches and servants, embodies a threat of their being absorbed and mixed with the Gentiles.[178] The boys do not abandon their faith, despite the enticement, pressure and isolation. They are firm as a rock, and constitute a steadfast opposite pole to the godless, disloyal Hellenizers who despise their ancestral heritage, hasten to the gymnasium, and strive to adopt heathen customs, drop their Hebrew names, adorn themselves with the alien feathers of fasionable Hellenism.[179] The crux of loyalty to the holy Torah was not however the aversion to foreign languages, studies, names and manners, which were common among Jews, despite certain reservations, in both the Hellenistic and Roman periods.[180] The test for loyalty as well as the reason for the torments of the Hasids at the time of the decrees and the start of the Hasmonean Revolt was the matter of food.

The exiled Jewish boys' devotion to the precepts of their faith, disregarding Nebuchadnezzar's explicit order and the danger threatening those disobeying it, is tested by their refusal to taste and savor all the delicacies of the king's table. Daniel decides to be wary of defilement by the king's food or wine and makes his wish known to the "head of the eunuchs" asking "permission not to defile himself" (Dan. 1:8).[181] As he is personally responsible, the official fears he himself will be severely punished if the king's order is not carried out and the children in his care appear undernourished.[182] Although his fear prevents him from consenting, he does not condemn or denounce the boys who dare to disdain the king's food. "Now God disposed the head of the eunuchs to be kind and compassionate toward Daniel.[183] And the head of the eunuchs said to Daniel, I fear that my lord the king, who allotted the food and drink to you will

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[178] In this allegorical, miniature picture adapted to the landscape of antiquity, it is not to be expected that the coercion should take the form of an inclusive decree covering the entire nation who are here systematically ignored for obvious reasons.

[179] I Macc. I 11ff.; II Macc. IV 7ff.; Josephus (see n. 95 above), *Ant.* XII 237ff. See nn. 212-214 on the Books of Maccabees.

[180] yGittin I 43b; bGittin 11b; tGittin VIII 4; Leviticus Rabbah (see n. 22 above) XXXII 5; Canticles Rabbah on 4:12, in *Midrash Rabbah,* Romm ed. (see n. 98). Many non-Hebrew names figure not only in literary, historical, papyrological and epigraphical sources, but also among talmudic scholars, from the time of Antigonus of Sokho on (mAvot I 3). There were people with Greek names even among the Hasmonean rebels, as in I Macc. VIII 17; XII 16; II Macc. IV 11; XII 19; XII 35.

[181] The root of the Hebrew term with the spelling here (גאל instead of געל) recurs frequently in the Bible. Is. 59:3; 63:3; Zeph. 3:1; Mal. 1:7, 12; Ezra 2:62; Neh. 7:64.

[182] Daniel appears here in the name of his whole group.

[183] *Midrash Daniel* 1:9 (see n. 1): "Because he kept silent and said nothing bad about it, and because he was the chief eunuch who could punish them for the request, and do them great harm..." A similar interpretation is proposed by Ibn Ezra in the name of Saadia Gaon.

notice that you look out of sorts, unlike the other youths of your age, and you will endanger my head with the king" (Dan. 1:9-10).[184] Thus came the fulfillment of the psalmist's verse: "He made all their captors pity them" (Ps. 106:46).[185]

God delivered the children from their straits and aroused the compassion of the chief eunuch. In the wake of his restrained response and moderate answer, Daniel makes a second application to "the guard whom the head of the eunuchs had put in charge"... (Dan. 1:11), that is, the servant in direct charge of the children's food,[186] requesting water and seeds[187] instead of the normal rations, for a trial period of ten days. That would give the servant enough time to check the results, comparing the appearance of the Jewish boys with that of "the youths who eat of the king's food"[188] and then easily decide what to do thereafter. The guard agrees unhesitatingly, evidently tempted by the chance for private gain from the surplus food (Dan. 1:11-14). The trial ended on schedule, "and when the ten days were over, they looked better and healthier than all the youths who were eating the king's food. So the guard kept on removing their food and the wine that they were supposed to drink and gave them seeds" (Dan. 1:15-16). Thus he regularly took their portions for himself, circumventing the king's order.[189] By the grace of God the guardians of the Torah obtained their recompense and the miracle was complete.

Extreme avoidance of all Gentile foods, without compromise or distinction, including bread and wine, was not the actual practice in the Babylonian period, did not preoccupy the Jewish Diaspora when first established, nor trouble those who returned to rebuild the Temple. Biblical sources and certain historical testimonies of those days[190] include not the slightest tinge of such strict prohibitions and punctiliousness. Differences in customs and manners in regard to food, eating and drinking, even though bearing the seal of religion, did not then give rise to total negation, or erect a divisive unscalable wall.

The exiled Jehoiachim receives a regular allotment "from Nebuchadnezzar

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184 R-a-sh-i (see n. 1): "You will cause me to be sentenced to have my head cut off." The same in the early translations and other exegeses.

185 Similar expressions appear in I Kings 8:50; II Chron. 30:9; Neh. 1:11.

186 That is the explanation in most of the commentaries and dictionaries cited above. The Septuagint and Josephus (*Ant.* X 190) do not distinguish between him and the head eunuch (see n. 115 and n. 137 above).

187 Dan. 1:12, 16. The Hebrew word used, *zer'onim,* is known from the Mishnah (mShabbat IX 2, 7; mKil'ayim II 2) and is very close to the biblical term *zeruim* derived from the same root (Lev. 11:37; Is. 61:11), as is the variant *zeroim.* According to the translations and commentaries the reference is to various types of edible seeds such as legumes (peas, pulse, etc.). Josephus in his paraphrase (*Ant.* X 190) says "pulse and dates." See n. 137 above.

188 Other children are referred to vaguely (1:13, 15) with no identification or specification.

189 This emerges also in the early translations and traditional commentaries.

190 The prophecies of Isaiah (Chapter 40ff.), Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi; the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

king of Babylonia, accepting fixed daily portions of food from the table of his foreign sovereign (like Daniel and his friends—"daily rations for each day"—in the same period and the same Diaspora under similar conditions), and no trace of criticism or objection is voiced.[191] Furthermore, the measures and regulations adopted by Ezra and Nehemiah, which stress segregation from the Gentiles[192] in the wake of which the purchase of their merchandise on the Sabbath was stopped, do not include any edict totally forbidding their food and drink (aside from seeds and water) as abomination and defilement.[193] The silence regarding this problem within those basic reforms is extremely significant and relevant, for their objective was to impose the laws of the Torah[194] and apply them forcefully and unhesitatingly in order to guard and protect the sanctity of Israel against the hostile environment and the idolatry prevalent the world over.[195]

The command that compels Daniel and his friends to eat the abominated food recalls Ezekiel's prophecy: "Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their bread unclean among the Gentiles" (4:13). Hosea, too, in speaking of the disadvantages of the Diaspora, says "And they shall not dwell in the Lord's land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt and shall eat unclean food in Assyria. They will offer no libations of wine to the Lord and no sacrifices of theirs will be pleasing to him. It shall be for them like the food of mourners; all who eat it shall be defiled" (9:3-4). Such warnings and phrases are not imperatives, and do not constitute a declared intention to disallow the bread and wine of aliens. They simply embody a sense of the profound chasm between the pure faith confined to the holy land, on the one hand, and impure idolatry that defiles all its surroundings and contacts,[196] emanates from the despised ritual and adheres to its native soil.[197] That basic conception produced practical laws, in the course of time, as the trends to separation from the hostile world and to self-segregation increased among the Jews. That is why Daniel illegitimizes Nebuchadnezzar's food, and disdains it as an "abhorrence." That harsh expression used here figures prominently as well in the well-known biblical reproof that is discernible in the main elements of

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[191] Jeremiah (52:33f.) and II Kings 25:29f. Jehoiachin's connection with that chapter was already noted above.

[192] Especially the prohibition of mixed marriage, a central problem in these reforms.

[193] Ezra 9:1ff., Neh. 9:2ff.; 10:31f.; 13:15ff. See the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah edited by M. Zer-Kavod (Jerusalem 1948); Wilhelm Rudolph, *Ezra und Nehemia, HAT* (Tübingen 1949); J.M. Myers, *Ezra-Nehemiah, AB* 14 (Garden City, N.Y. 1965); R.J. Coggins, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, CBC* (Cambridge 1976).

[194] Yeḥezkel Kaufmann, *Toldot ha-Emunah ha-Yisr'elit,* vol. 4 (Tel Aviv 1956), p. 275ff.

[195] These problems and concerns do not of course arise in the Joseph stories or Book of Esther whose influences on the Daniel chapters are evident.

[196] Ezek. 14:11; 20:7ff.; 22:3ff.; Jer. 2:23; Ezra 6:21; II Chron. 36:14; etc.

[197] Amos 7:17; Josh. 22:19; I Sam. 26:19; Y. Kaufmann, *Toldot ha-Emunah ha-Yisr'elit,* vol. 1 (Tel Aviv 1953), p. 606ff.

Daniel's thinking.[198] It indicates the depth of the feeling of polarity and remoteness from detestable idolatry.

Gentile food and drink was forbidden for fear that it might be mixed with some pagan offering, however infinitesimal or fortuitous. Daniel is extremely cautious, abstaining from all Gentile food, apparently including fruits and vegetables, while permitting only seeds and water. There is no historical counterpart for his stand in the period of the Babylonian exile and the Return to Zion. It cannot be explained on the basis of other ritual limitations,[199] or particular inclinations to abstinence and asceticism. Such excessive strictness was designed to extend and solidify the walls separating the dangerous prevalent idolatry from Judaism.

Similar rules appear in the Mishnah.[200] They are clear and common in the time of Josephus,[201] who discovers signs of them from the start of the Seleucid dynasty, as reflected in official documents.[202] Since the Hasmonean Revolt, the foes of Israel have accused the Jews of manifesting xenophobia and misanthropy because of their refusal to take food with non-Jews.[203] Aversion to Gentile foods crops up in the Greek apocryphal supplements to the Book of Esther[204] (but not in the original biblical scroll), as in the novels about Judith, daughter of Simeon, and about Tobit of the tribe of Naphtali,[205] whose time of composition has been disputed, but for the most part correctly placed in the Hellenistic and Hasmonean periods by the vast majority of critical scholars.[206]

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198 Lev. 26:11ff. This chapter is the basis for the notion of "seventy weeks (of years)" in Daniel 9:24 as it states "...I will discipline you sevenfold for your sins. Your land shall become a desolation... Then shall the land make up for its sabbath years..." (Lev. 26:28ff.; II Chron. 36:21).

199 J.L. Katzenelson, "Ha-Religia ve-ha-Politika be-Divrei Yemei ha-Ivrim ha-Kadmonim," *Ha-Tekufa,* vol. 25 (Tel Aviv 1929), p. 363ff.; Y.M. Grintz, *Perakim be-toldot Bayit Sheni* (Jerusalem 1969), p. 51. The prohibition is not explained by Lev. 11:34ff. (as seeds too should be disqualified if contamination is suspected), but by the desire "to keep a distance from the idolaters" as Maimonides states it in *Mishneh Torah,* Sefer Kedushah (5), Hilkhot Maakhalot Asurot 17.9 (ed. Jerusalem 1955); so also Isaac Halevy, *Dorot ha-Rishonim,* vol. 2 (Jerusalem 1967), p. 592ff.

200 mAvodah Zarah II 3, and ad loc. in both Talmuds.

201 *Vita Josephi* (3) 14. On editions of Josephus see n. 83 of Chapter 5 below.

202 Josephus, *Vita* (13) 74; *Bell.* II 591; *Ant.* XII 120; XIV 226. The observance of dietary restrictions in order to preserve the purity of the monotheistic faith in the pagan world is noted also in the *Letter of Aristeas* (128ff.) which reinforces the relevant biblical precepts but adds no stricter injunctions. See *Aristeas to Philocrates,* ed. by M. Hadas (New York 1951), p. 152ff.

203 Diodorus Siculus, XXXIV 1.2, (*LCL*), F.R. Walton ed. (London 1967); Strabo, *Geography* XVI 2.37 (see n. 120); Tacitus, *Histories* V 5, (*LCL*), C.H. Moore ed. (London 1951).

204 Septuagint Esther 4:17 (Rahlfs ed., see n. 205 below); C.A. Moore, *Daniel, Esther and Jeremiah — the Additions, AB* 44 (Garden City, N.Y. 1977).

205 *The Book of Judith* X 5; XII 2; Hebrew edition by Y.M. Grintz (Jerusalem 1957); Tobit I 10f., ed. in Hebrew by D. Heller in A. Kahana (ed.), *Ha-Sefarim ha-Ḥitzonim,* vol. 2/2 (Tel Aviv 1937); *Septuaginta,* ed. A. Rahlfs, vol. I^4 (Stuttgart 1950).

206 M. Delcor, "Le livre de Judith et l'époque grecque," *Klio* 49 (1967): 151ff.; F. Zimmermann, *The Book of Tobit* (New York 1958); L. Rost, *Einleitung in die alttestamentlichen Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen* (Heidelberg 1971), p. 38ff.; R.H. Pfeiffer, *History* (see n. 139 above), p. 258ff.; M.S.

Even if one of these sources[207] should prove to be ancient and impeccable, they all still lack the crucial element that is characteristic of and exlcusive to the presentation of the problem in the Book of Daniel: the dread of the explicit order of the ruling despot versus the courage of a small group of Jews to disobey it because of their loyalty to the heritage of Israel. The basic outcome of the story is well illuminated in midrashic tradition, which usually takes on the style of legend:[208] "And thus you find in Daniel and his friends, when they were exiled the Holy One blessed be He decreed that they should eat polluted bread, as it is said, 'Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their bread unclean among the Gentiles to which I will drive them' (Ezek. 4:13). Nebuchadnezzar came and fulfilled the word and said, I decree that they should eat of my food, as it is said (Dan 1:5ff.), 'and the king allotted daily rations to them...' Daniel did not accept but said, Even though the Holy One blessed be He decreed, he will do what he must and he began to say to the chief guard, Please try your servant for ten days..."[209] Daniel and his friends were held prisoner by their Babylonian captors. Under pressure they were forced to follow Gentile customs, as Theodoretus too understood.[210] They lived in an atmosphere of compulsion. If they did not obey and dared to circumvent the king's order by refusing his food and wine, they could expect severe punishment, probably death. Only a miracle could save them. Their firm stand embodies a glimmer of the notion of martyrdom which is fully developed in their later experiences.[211]

The wonderfully encouraging story, focusing on the dramatic tension and relaxation around Nebuchadnezzar's order, fits the vicissitudes of the Jewish people at the time of their struggle against Antiochus Epiphanes. At no previous historical period did a conquering tyrant enact a similar decree, imposing on the Jews the foods, language and culture of Gentiles in one fell swoop. Abstention from Gentile delicacies because of their pagan uncleanness, and the extreme care not to be defiled by their food is quite striking and logical during the Seleucid oppression and persecutions as a criterion and demonstration of absolute devotion to the Law of Israel. Government officials at the time were in the habit of patrolling Judaea, investigating, and forcing the population to participate in

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Enslin & S. Zeitlin, *The Book of Judith* (Leiden 1972); H.Y. Priebatsch, "Das Buch Judith," *ZDPV* 90 (1974): 50ff.; P. Deselaers, *Das Buch Tobit* (Göttingen 1982).

[207] Such can be found also in pseudepigraphic literature like in the Book of Jubilees XXII 16; R.H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament,* vol. 2 (Oxford 1966, repr. of 1913 ed.); and in the New Testament (Acts 11:3; Galatians 2:12); etc.

[208] *Midrash Tanḥuma,* section *va-yira* 43, S. Buber ed. (New York 1946), p. 110.

[209] The excerpt is quoted in *Midrash Daniel* 1:12 (see n. 1 above).

[210] Theodoretus, *Commentarius in Visiones Danielis Prophetae* 1:8 (*PG* 81): ὑπὸ νόμοις ἑτέροις ἀναγκαζόμενοι ζῆν, τὴν πατρῴαν εὐσέβειαν φυλάττειν σπουδάζουσι κτλ.

[211] The miracle in the fiery furnace (Chapter 3) and Daniel in the lions' den (6). Religious and cultic coercion in both episodes, and the firm stand of the Jews there, few as they are, who are ready to sacrifice their lives for their faith, fit the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes.

pagan sacrificial rites, as reported in I Maccabees:[212] "And many in Israel took courage not to eat any unclean food, and they chose to die rather than be defiled by foods and desecrate the holy covenant, and they died" (I 62-63).[213] Legends and memories of those days depict the figures of the tortured who preferred to suffer awful torment and sacrifice themselves rather than taste forbidden abominated food.[214] That is the reason the Daniel story stresses that point which characterizes Jewish faith in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes even more than any explicit biblical precept (such as keeping the Sabbath and holidays, or circumcision) and which merges perfectly into the artistic canvas.[215]

Daniel represents a lofty early model of absolute devoutness in moments of profound distress, for the people victimized and struggling for the sake of the Torah. He is properly set on the remote artistic stage of the Babylonian Diaspora. The author had no intention of working sketchily in pale colors in a vacuum. Consequently it is not surprising that only a small faint shadow of the coercive decrees of Antiochus appear in a reduced reflection, with details completely changed.[216] Daily rations of the king's food and wine evidently suggest participation of a sort in some abominated ritual, as appears from Chapter 5 which describes Belshazzar's banquet as a great feast, the wine drunk from the holy vessels and the worship of idols in great merriment.[217] It was not a personal penchant for asceticism, not a love of puritanism,[218] not abstinence that despises corporal pleasures, as Josephus would have it,[219] as well as several

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[212] The problems and bibliography for the Books of the Maccabees are dealt with above in Chapter 1, Section F; Chapter 2, Section C.

[213] W. Kappler ed., *Maccabeaorum Liber I,* Septuaginta Gottingensis IX, (Göttingen 1967), p. 55.

[214] The stories of old Eleazar and of the courageous mother and her seven children (II Macc. VI 18ff.; IV Macc. V 1ff.). See W. Kappler & R. Hanhart, *Maccabaeorum Liber II,* Septuaginta Gottingensis IX, (Göttingen 1959), p. 72ff.; M. Hadas ed., *The Third & Fourth Books of the Maccabees* (New York 1953), p. 168ff.

[215] Sabbath and circumcision laws are also mentioned in the coercive decrees (I Macc. I 60; II 32ff.; II Macc. VI 6ff.; IV Macc. IV 25) but stressed less, because they could not serve to test the obedience of the population in an immediate swift public act. The aspect tested (forbidden foods) may have been selected also because of the analogy of Jehoiachin (n. 191 above) and because it merged organically into the plot and the background.

[216] The nature of the artistic picture, as explained above (nn. 177-178) is consistently maintained, and refutes the argument that separates the first six Daniel chapters from the work completed during the Hasmonean Revolt, because of failure to mention "the masses of the Jewish people," in the opinion of Yeḥezkel Kaufmann, *Toldot ha-Emunah ha-Yisr'elit,* vol. 4 (see n. 194 above), p. 421. If his conclusion is adopted and the stories relegated to the Persian period, how is it possible to explain the astonishing disregard of events of that period, the strange omission of the outcome of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Return to Zion with all its hopes and troubles?

[217] The defilement of the Temple was the ultimate offense and the collapse of Babylonian rule was ordained, as noted above (nn. 108, 111).

[218] The erroneous impression is produced by comparison with Dan. 10:2ff. There are no grounds for pairing the two problems. Daniel mourns and eschews wine and meat for very different reason, "in the third year of King Cyrus of Persia" (10:1) as emerges at the end of this chapter.

[219] *Ant.* X 190. Josephus obscures the zealotistic significance because of his transparent

Christian commentators,[220] but pious zeal typical of the Hasids in the Hasmonean period that inspires Daniel's actions. Through its demands and in the spirit of its stand, Yose b. Yoezer of Zeredah and Yose b. Yoḥanan of Jerusalem proclaimed "impurity of the country of the Gentiles."[221] Daniel's strictness, which rejected the king's food and wine, led the talmudic tradition to derive a stringent halakhic ruling regarding Gentile food.[222] In the Roman period this zealot ideology gave rise to "the eighteen decrees"[223] when Shammai's disciples prevailed and a series of prohibitions was placed "on the bread of Gentiles and their cheese and their oil and their daughters... and on the laws of the country of the Gentiles... and on their wine... and on their language and on their testimony and on their gifts" (etc.),[224] according to extreme and militant Hasidic doctrines and aspirations.

E. *Perfection of Mind and Body in the Portrait of the Servant of God*

Thanks to their devotion and faith, the Lord shed his grace on the small group of Jewish boys in the Babylonian Diaspora and endowed them with precious qualities. Thus "they looked better and healthier[225] than all the youths who were

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tendentiousness, just as he avoided explaining the stone of Israel (X 210) destined to shatter Roman sovereignty (see n. 137 above).

[220] Ephraem Syrus, *Opera* (see n. 105 above), vol. II 2, p. 203; Albertus Magnus, *Opera* (see n. 38), *Commentarii in Librum Danielis Prophetae,* ad loc.; J. Knabenbauer (see n. 39), *Commentarius in Danielem Prophetam,* ad loc.

[221] yKetubbot VIII 32c; yPesaḥim I 27d; yShabbat I 3d; bShabbat 14b; bAvodah Zarah 8b. Yose b. Yoezer was apparently a victim of the persecutions of Antiochus and according to a naive legend (Genesis Rabbah LXV 22; see n. 96 above) died a martyr. See Z. Frankel, *Darkhei ha-Mishnah,* (Tel Aviv 1959), p. 31ff.; I.H. Weiss, *Dor Dor ve-Dorshav,* vol. 1 (Jerusalem 1964), p. 98ff. This extreme decree in its true, original absolute sense in effect obviates any possibility of living in an alien environment. In later generations tradition moderated and softened the strictness of the prohibition. Erroneous exegesis and muddled modern theories too obscured the zealotry of the early pure Hasidism reflected in the Book of Daniel and in the deeper layers of the talmudic Eretz Israel sources.

[222] yShabbat I 3d; yAvodah Zarah II 41d; bAvodah Zarah 36a.

[223] yShabbat I 3cff.; bShabbat 13bff. These Halakhot are based on the same principle and the same ancient roots, that is, awareness of the contamination of idolatry and the demand to keep apart from it, as laid down by the first Ḥasids. See G. Alon, *Meḥkarim be-Toldot Yisrael,* vol. 1 (Tel Aviv 1957), p. 121ff.; J. Klausner, *Historia shel ha-Bayit ha-Sheni,* vol. 5 (Jerusalem 1951), p. 156ff.; I.H. Weiss, *Dor Dor* (see n. 221), vol. 1, p. 175; I. Halevy, *Dorot ha-Rishonim* (see n. 199), vol. 2, p. 580ff.

[224] H. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden,* vol. 3^3 (Leipzig 1878), n. 26, p. 685ff.; M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten* (Leiden 1961), p. 204ff.; S.B. Hoenig, "Oil and Pagan Defilement," *JQR,* n.s. 61 (1970/71): 63ff.; Israel Ben Shalom, *The Shammai School* etc., p. 562ff.; see Preface, n. 16 above.

[225] That is, they surpassed in these virtues "all the children." The early translations have "were stronger in body," according to the Septuagint and Theodotion, or fatter, according to the Syriac Peshitta and the Latin Vulgate. See nn. 18, 75, 169 above. The ancient notion of health is exemplified by a fat body. So also R-a-l-b-a-g (see n. 1) on Dan. 1:15.

eating the king's food" (Dan. 1:15). To their health and fine appearance was added their mental superiority for "God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom;[226] and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams" (1:17).

The outstanding member of the group is Daniel, the hero of the book and the herald of redemption, who is destined to solve dreams and reveal the secrets of the future.[227] His three friends accompany him only a short distance, and Daniel remains solitary and lonely with his visions and adventures. At the end of the three years allotted for the education of the boys, they were presented to the king, and their surprising advantages had not disappeared. "When the time the king had set for their presentation came,[228] the head of the eunuchs presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. The king spoke with them and of them all none was equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,[229] so these entered the king's service" (1:18-19).[230] From the moment they entered the palace, it was obvious that they were vastly superior to the king's other advisors, great in knowledge and wisdom: "And in all matters of wisdom's understanding[231] that the king

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226 Spiritual superiorities as in 1:4 are comparable to Jer. 3:15, "knowledge and skill."

227 Daniel interprets dreams and miraculous visions (2:4ff.), himself sees visions (7:2ff.), but his friends disappear almost at the start of his progress (end of Chapter 3) when they no longer have any place in his adventures. Daniel delivers no orations in God's name, does not address his generation directly, or preach morality, for Daniel is rooted in a distant period, is covered by a pseudonym, and is not a prophet sent to his people by heavenly command like Isaiah, Jeremiah or Ezekiel. This lower status is not determined by his defects, for he is an almost ideal personality, but because of the notion prevailing when the book was written — evident also in I Macc. and the talmudic sources (see Chapter 7, nn. 11-12 below)—that the spirit of God had vanished after the Return of Zion. That notion surrounds all sections of the work and is further clear evidence of the period when it was written and of its integrity. The Book of Daniel was thus rightly included in Writings (see n. 6 of Chapter 4), for Daniel is not a prophet in the classic sense, but in a broader one which includes such biblical figures as the patriarchs, David, Solomon, etc.: bMegillah 3a, 15a; bSanhedrin 93b; Genesis Rabbah XXVII 1, p. 256 in Theodor-Albeck ed. (see n. 96). Thanks to the extended popular concept, Daniel wears a prophet's crown in Josephus' version (*Ant.* X 266ff.), Qumran (*DJD* V, Oxford 1968, p. 54), in the New Testament (Matt. 24:15) and in Christian tradition. There are no grounds for the contention of Christian exegetes and scholars that the Jews at one time lowered Daniel's status in order to minimize his value. See Theodoretus, *Commentarius in Visiones Danielis Prophetae,* Praefatio, *PG* 81 col. 1260; J.G. Carpzov, *Introductio ad Libros Propheticos Bibliorum Veteris Testamenti* (Leipzig 1731), pp. 230, 242; J. Wellhausen, *Die Pharisäer und die Sadduzäer* (Göttingen 1967), p. 23; W. Schmithals, *Die Apokalyptik* (Göttingen 1973), p. 54.

228 At the end of the appointed time, as explained in n. 129 above.

229 "There was no one like him among the sages" (Septuagint), and "there were none (such) of them all (among them all) resembling Daniel" (Theodotion, Peshitta and Vulgate). See nn. 18, 75, 169 above.

230 They reported ("to serve") to assume their functions, as in 1:4: "and capable of serving," etc.

231 A similar phrase is used in praising Joseph: "There is none so discerning and wise as you" (Gen. 41:39). The combination of "wisdom's understanding" serves to emphasize. In the translations the two concepts were separated: "wisdom and understanding" (Theodotion, the Peshitta and the Vulgate); "and in everything, in wisdom and learning (education)... he found them wiser..." (Septuagint).

inquired of them, he found them ten times better[232] than all the magicians and exorcists that were in all his realm" (1:20).

Nebuchadnezzar's palace shelters a glittering entourage that is colorful and multinational: erudite Chaldeans, Babylonian sorcerers, Egyptian exorcists[232a] and a group of young educated Jews. Such a variegated, cosmopolitan mixture of intellectual elite[233] was not impossible in Babylonia, or in the Persian royal palace,[234] and the probability provides the literary picture with some historical realism. But it is far more symptomatic of the Hellenistic period which brought together the scholarly and religious notables of various peoples and countries in an encompassing ethnic and linguistic whirlpool.[235] An indication of that climate perhaps emerges from the characterization of the group of young Jews that excels all the rest. The splendor of their physical and spiritual qualities which blend beautifully emit an echo of a camouflaged dispute with proponents of Hellenization who avidly imbibed the delicacies of the Greek language and the treasures of Greek learning, hastened to the gymnasium and the playing fields to develop their muscles and frequent the athletic competitions.[236] The Greek teacher aspires to perfect harmony in the development of physical and mental qualities, according to the classical ideals, in an integration of noble beauty and human wisdom.[237] Its acme is attained by Jewish youths, "youths without blemish, handsome, proficient in all wisdom, knowledgeable and intelligent" (Dan. 1:4). The superiority of their gifts and knowledge, their sturdy health and fine appearance at the end of their period of self-denial and abstinence demonstrate and materialize the superiority of the Jewish Torah and

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[232] Tenfold, as in Gen. 43:34; 47:24 (again the Joseph stories). This corresponds to the ten days of their experiment (1:13-15), apparently not by chance, but in order to award the commensurate prize and the compensation fitting their merit.

[232a] Wizards (P. Artzi, "Keshafim," *EM,* vol. 4:356) and magicians (Gen. 41:8, 24; Ex. 7:11, 22; 8:3ff.; 9:11) are priests and experts in magic. Consequently in the early translations and Josephus (*Ant.* X 195ff.; See n. 137 above) they are called sorcerers and wonderworkers. The Septuagint improves the variegated picture a bit and states "teachers of wisdom (sophists) and philosophers."

[233] Chaldeans and sorcerers and magicians recur in the subsequent chapters (2:2ff.; 4:4ff.; 5:7ff.) sometimes with the addition of diviners (2:27; 4:4; 5:7, 11), that is, another type of soothsayers. All of them together are called "wise men" or wizards of Babylonia (2:13ff.; 4:15; 5:8, 15). Daniel himself is appointed head of this group (2:48; 4:6; 5:11).

[234] M. Delcor, *Daniel* (see n. 1 above), p. 73: "Nous croyons plutôt que ce terme égyptien souligne réellement un fait dont l'auteur de Daniel a eu certainement connaissance: la présence d'Égyptiens comme interprètes des songes à la cour du roi de Babylone..."

[235] W. Tarn & G.T. Griffith, *Hellenistic Civilisation*[3] (London 1959), pp. 1ff., p. 268ff.; M. Cary, *A History of the Greek World*[2] (London 1965), p. 322ff.

[236] I Macc., I 13ff.; II Macc. IV 12ff. See n. 212 above.

[237] H.I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'Éducation dans l'Antiquité* (Paris 1948), p. 77ff.; W. Jaeger, *Paideia,* vol. 1 (Oxford 1954), pp. 287, 416; Plato, *Protagoras,* 325ff., *Plato (LCL),* ed. W.R.M. Lamb (London 1967); idem, *Republic* II (17) 376e, III (13) 403d; VII (6) 521dff. (*LCL*) ed. P. Shorey (London 1953-1956); idem, *Laws,* VII 795ff.; Aristotle, *Politics* VIII (2) 1337bff., *Aristotelis Politica,* W.D. Ross ed. (Oxford 1967).

precepts compared to the pretensions, charms and perfections of the ruling culture.

However, the merger of their erudition and their physical beauty is important not only in regard to these intentions. It also contains the notion lying at the core of the work and pervading its entire multicolored fabric. The Jewish group, select and isolated, represents the remnant of Israel that survived the destruction of the Temple, and fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah (the second):[238] "Indeed, my Servant shall be wise (successful),[239] exalted and raised to great heights. Just as the many were appalled at him, so marred was his appearance unlike that of man, his form beyond human semblance." (Is. 52:13-14).[240] Before he has recovered and grown by God's favor, "like a tree-crown, like a tree trunk out of arid ground," the Servant, "who had no form or beauty that we should look at him, no charm that we should find him pleasing... despised, shunned by men, a man of suffering, familiar with disease" (Is. 53:2-3), is debased. His miserable tormented figure is analogous to the subjugated oppressed nation which is destined to revive and climb to the pinnacle of its mission and human dreams, like "the son of man" who approaches the divine throne "with the clouds of heaven" and assumes the controlling reins of the universe according to Daniel's vision (7:13).[241]

The anticipated and desired change is already heralded in the fate of Daniel and his friends, the children without blemish, "handsome and proficient in all wisdom" (1:4).[242] The combination of physical and mental superiority is properly stressed in a clear parallelity, both substantive and terminological, with

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[238] M.Z. Segal, "Yeshayahu," *EM,* vol. 3 (1965): 927ff. The orations of the anonymous prophet from the days of the Return to Zion serve as an organic consolidated unit for the author of the Book of Daniel.

[239] The word *yaskil* is generally interpreted as "will succeed" but is also explained as "wise" or "intelligent" as in the old translations (the Septuagint, the Peshitta and the Vulgate). In any case it is from this that the notion of *maskilim* in the Daniel chapters should be derived and explained. The notion does not refer to closed esoteric groups or prove the origin of the book in circles fostering detached academic "wisdom" literature. Such theories derive from total misunderstanding and distorted view, expressed by Gerhard von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments,* vol. 2^2 (Munich 1961), p. 314ff.; J.C.H. Lebram, "Apokalyptik und Hellenismus im Buche Daniel," *VT* 20 (1970): 518ff.; idem, "Perspektiven der gegenwärtigen Danielforschung," *JSJ* 5 (1974): 18ff.

[240] The notion of survivors and the remnant of Israel was clarified above (n. 113).

[241] It is the prophecy cited and other authority (Ezek. 34:31; Ps. 80:18) that is the basis for the image of the human being who symbolizes Israel, against the monsters who represent the pagan kingdoms. Christianity totally uproots this original intention and injects a christological purpose in it (Mark 14:62; Matt. 26:64; Luke 22:69; Acts 7:56; etc.). Even in the rabbinical tradition and commentaries (see n. 1 above) a personal messianic meaning was grafted on to it (R-a-sh-i on Dan. 7:13; Nahmanides i.e. R-a-m-b-a-n on Num. 24:17; etc.) in the wake of the Babylonian Talmud (bSanhedrin 98a) but Ibn Ezra (on Dan. 7:13) and Don Isaac Abrabanel (*Ma'ayanei ha-Yeshuah* VIII 5) repeatedly noted the original intention. See Chapter 4, Section D.

[242] The term *"tovat mar'eh"* (=beautiful) is the one used in the Book of Esther too (1:11; 2:2-3) and in Gen. 24:16; 26:7.

the splendor of the Servant who will be wise as he rises, will remake his physical appearance in full natural health, and will be crowned with the fine epithet of a person who is perfect in the qualities of mind. Their asceticism and abstinence did not detract from, but rather reinforced their particular virtues. For "they looked better and healthier" (Dan. 1:15)[243] in comparison with the abased Servant of "marred" appearance, who writhes in affliction, wounded and ill. Daniel and his friends who are "proficient in all wisdom and knowledgeable and intelligent" succeeded in learning the lore and tongue of the Chaldeans. (Dan. 1:4) because "God made all four of these young men intelligent in all, proficient in all writings and wisdom" (1:17). Their ability to learn languages and their capacity to acquire knowledge fit Isaiah's oration regarding the Servant, with certain stylistically determined paraphrasing: "The Lord God gave me the tongue of the learned" (Is. 50:4).[244]

Their prudence and learning ability is accompanied by wisdom and understanding. The figure of the Servant in this sketch of their portrait and deeds absorbs additional motifs and expands in order to express a particular meaning. They excel in matters of "wisdom and understanding." (1:20) because of their faithfulness to the Torah and its precepts, as it is written "for this is your wisdom and your understanding" (Deut. 4:6), and therefore Daniel is grateful and prays to God, for "he gives the wise their wisdom and knowledge to those that know" (Dan. 2:21). The "spirit of wisdom and understanding" was granted them as it was to "the stump of Jesse" in Isaiah's oration (11:1-2)[245] in contrast to the boastful speech of the Assyrian king, from whose violent shadow emerges the form of the despotic foe who tramples Israel during the days of distress and persecution: "By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am understanding" (Is. 10:13).[246] In their superiorities they resemble Joseph, who was "well built and handsome" (Gen. 39:6), "a man of understanding and wisdom,"[247] the Servant who rises from his degradation and overshadows all the Gentile sages in his wisdom.[248] The miracle of their definite physical and mental advantage is a far-reaching signal demonstrating the ascendancy of the divine

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[243] A stylistic associative connection here emerges to the Joseph stories: "seven cows that were '*yefot to'ar*'" (Gen. 41:18).

[244] The exact literal meaning is not important here. The interpretation is confirmed by the continuation of the prophecy: "and all your children shall be disciples of the Lord" (Is. 54:13).

[245] That they were "Israelites of royal descent" should be borne in mind, as indicated above, and that in their fate they represented Jewish sovereignty.

[246] The delineation of Antiochus Epiphanes' image embodies aspects of the king of Assyria, according to Isaiah (see n. 100 above), and even a degree of wisdom, supposedly destructive, figures in his personality "impudent and versed in intrigue" (8:23), "by his cunning he will use deceit successfully" (8:25).

[247] Also Gen. 41:39. Joseph is a kind of archetype.

[248] The terms "understanding" and "wisdom" are stressed and recur many times in the Book of Daniel: "the wise will understand" (12:10; 11:33) during the persecutions and Hasmonean Revolt, as Daniel and his companions did generations earlier (1:4, 17; 8:5, 15ff.; 9:22ff.; 10:1, 11; etc.).

Torah, encouraging their descendants and successors, the protectors and defenders of the sacred covenant in the days of the persecutions and the struggle against Hellenization.

The notion based on the prophecy cited, that is, on the verses regarding the Servant of God and the adjacent biblical themes, burgeons in the first chapter of Daniel, is embellished and enriched by lines borrowed from the story of Joseph in Egypt and the Book of Esther which are the classic instances of Jewish servitude, is interwoven intermittently in the course of his vision, and comes to full flower before the end of the work. In his last vision Daniel—called *ish ḥamudot* (that is, charming, in contrast to the debased person "with no form or beauty" in Is. 53:2),[249] the archetype of Hasids and "learned"—sees and hears the wonders of renascence in the end of days: "And the wise will be radiant as the brightness of the firmament; and those who lead the many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever" (Dan. 12:3).[250] Isaiah's prophecy is thus fulfilled in entirety: The suffering downtrodden Servant will be of astounding appearance, "will be wise," and like the "righteous" Servant, make "the many righteous" (Is. 53:11). This passage explains the prevailing conception, during the Hasmonean period, of this poetic figure.[251] It is not a single exalted personage, not a redeeming Messiah, but the healthy loyal remnant of Israel (symbolized by the small group of captive children) trampled under foot and struggling during the persecutions by Antiochus Epipanes, that inherits the destiny and mission of the Servant of God, according to the oration of Isaiah the second.[252]

F. *The End in "the First Year of the Reign of King Cyrus."*

The epilogue closes the chronological circle that the first verse of this chapter opened: "And Daniel was until the first year of the reign of King Cyrus" (1:21), according to a combination of Jeremiah's prophecies with Chronicles as shown above.[253] The ordained calamity comes to an end after seventy years, the period

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[249] "Charming man": 10:11, 19 and 9:23. This could be interpreted literally of course (as in 10:3; 11:43) but in the present context it appears logically as an antithesis to the debased figure described in Chapter 53 of Isaiah.

[250] The elevation to heaven and stars is analogous to the vision of Dan. 7:13, versus 8:10. See also above n. 241 and nn. 83-84 of Chater 4.

[251] Y. Kaufmann, *Toldot ha-Emunah,* vol. 4 (see n. 194 above), p. 108ff. It is surprising that in the disputes and discussions on the matter, attention was not directed to the basic fact that the Daniel chapters contain the illuminating ancient interpretation of the "Servant of God" verses.

[252] Despite the centrality of yearnings for redemption and latter day thought, the Book of Daniel (like the other historical sources from the Hasmonean period) contains no hint of fostering faith in an individual, noble, messianic personage who would dispense salvation through his wonderful virtues. Longings for a lofty redeemer from heaven are strewn through apocalyptic works (pseudepigraphic books and Qumran Scrolls) replete with veiled Christology. In many modern schools, these were merged with the Daniel visions and incorrectly ascribed to Jewish Hasidism of that time. These theses are refuted above (Chapter 2, Section D) and below (Chapter 6).

[253] In the first and opening paragraph of the chapter.

designated by Jeremiah: "In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, when the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah was fulfilled, the Lord roused the spirit of King Cyrus of Persia, to issue a proclamation throughout his realm" (Ezra 1:1; II Chron. 36:22).[254] Daniel has thus served the oppressive government since the time of Nebuchadnezzar, and does so until Cyrus' proclamation of national renascence, which roused masses of Jews to return to their homeland, reclaim its ruins, build Jerusalem and the Temple.[255]

Thus also at the end of the first six chapters, the series of stories ends and once again the time limit is noted: "Thus Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and during the reign of Cyrus the Persian" (6:29).[256] His official task ended with the institution of Persian domination. He has no function and not the slightest connection with the great chance in the initiation of the Return to Zion, for his exploits are not anchored in the real events of his period.

However, the date introducing the vision that closes the work seems to contradict and go beyond the chronological framework discussed. For "in the third year of the reign of King Cyrus of Persia" (10:1ff.) Daniel was not yet released from his exile, but wandered about lamenting "on the bank of the great river—the Tigris,"[257] as he does not know the end of his nation's woes. The strange contradiction between the delimitation "to the first year of King Cyrus" (1:21), which was at the brink of the Return to Zion, and "in the third year of King Cyrus of Persia" (10:1) sowed perplexity among scholars.[258] Quite a few hastened to revise the text which they deemed faulty, deleting the verse that concludes the first chapter[259] as well as the preceding one, or correcting it to

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[254] The date is thus included in the same testimony (Chronicles) upon which the Book of Daniel is based.

[255] The Return to Zion is hinted at only in the vision (9:25) that calculates and specifies the "seventy weeks (of years)" pattern.

[256] Darius the Mede is separate from and anterior to Cyrus, despite the mist that envelops the relationship between the two reigns. Media defeats Babylonia in order to fulfill the well known prophecies (Is. 13:17; 21:2; Jer. 51:11). Persia inherits the Median throne, following a completely obscure change. Greece, the fourth and last of the subjugating regimes, seizes the crown of sovereignty from Persia, bringing an end to the series of pagan governments.

[257] As opposed to "the great river, the Euphrates" (Gen. 15:18; Deut. 1:7; Josh. 1:4), which marks the border of the Holy Land in divine promises. The river is also called *ha-ye'or* (Dan. 12:5ff.) like the Nile, in the symbolic picture that includes also features taken from the story of the exile to Egypt (as stated in n. 100 above). Daniel thus remains in exile, and does not walk the road of the Return to Zion. Many commentators (Charles, Montgomery, Plöger, Porteous — see n. 1 above) did not distinguish (as the Syriac Peshitta already had not) the contrastive intention, and wrongly corrected the text, that is, substituted the Euphrates for the Tigris. On the Peshitta see n. 169 above.

[258] The Septuagint already solved the difficulty and introduced the correction: "In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia." Some commentators attached themselves to the revised version and imagined they found a solution in it: M.Z. Segal, *Mavo ha-Mikra* (Jerusalem 1967), p. 750. On the Septuagint see above n. 75 and also A. Geissen, *Der Septuaginta-Text des Buches Daniel* 5-12 (Bonn 1968).

[259] F. Hitzig, K. Marti, F.W. Farrar, R.H. Charles, all (see nn. 1, 46) ad loc.

read:[260] "And Daniel was at the king's court till the first year" etc.[261] Proponents of the pluralistic and fragmentation theory, who divide the book into separate units, point to the chronological cracks with their supposed contradictions seeking signs of incompetent editing and in any case support for their methods.[262] However, their ripping and stitching are here completely superfluous and contribute only errors. The R-a-sh-i commentary seems much more to the point: "And Daniel was prominent in Babylonia till the first year of Cyrus the king..."[263]

Daniel then left the royal palace, following Cyrus' victory and the establishment of Persian hegemony. Yet there is no mention or suggestion of his joining the returnees.[264] He does not figure among them despite his qualities and status, because the message he brings is not aimed at the era he is placed in, but at a distant time implicit in his visions. "In the third year of King Cyrus of Persia" (Dan. 10:1) the construction of the House of God had already begun in Jerusalem and been suspended because of the excesses of the enemies (Ezra 3:8ff.).[265] Ostensibly, however, Daniel does not intervene or even react to those troubles and developments, but tarries and mortifies himself "on the bank of the great river—the Tigris" (10:4) in order to fulfill the truth of his visions: The seventy years of Babylonian exile does indeed end in Cyrus' first regnal year, but the final perfect salvation is not yet attained. Jeremiah's prophecy contains the secret of subjugation by successive realms for many generations until the end of "seventy weeks" of years when misery will have reached its utmost depths with

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[260] Otto Eissfeldt, *Kleine Schriften,* vol. 3 (Tübingen 1966), p. 513ff.

[261] The correction was contrived by the shift of the verse concluding Chapter 2 to final position in Chapter 1.

[262] J.A. Montgomery (see n. 1 above), p. 137: "The editor of the whole book, or composer of cc. 7-12, did not observe the clash between the dates..."

[263] Ibn Ezra (see n. 1) explains: "The meaning is that he was in Babylon until the first year of Cyrus." From here his emigration to Eretz Israel could be imagined. This was R-a-l-b-a-g's (see n. 1) conclusion, apparently because of prevalent legends (see n. 264 below): "And then evidently he went to Jerusalem."

[264] Many generations later, legends emerged relating that Daniel and his companions went back to Eretz Israel: Genesis Rabbah LVI 11, p. 611f. in Theodor-Albeck ed. (see n. 96 above). bSanhedrin 93a ff.; Canticles Rabbah on 5:3, in *Midrash Rabbah,* Romm ed. (see n. 98 above); *Pesikta* Rabbati VI, p. 23b in the M. Ish Shalom-Friedmann ed. (Vienna 1880); *Yalkut Shim'oni* (see n. 1) on Ezra, mark 1068 ("Sheshbazzar... is Daniel"), etc. But a different tradition which emerged in the Middle Ages perhaps in the wake of Josephus (*Ant.* X 264ff.; see n. 137 above) has Daniel buried in Shushan: *Josippon,* edited by D. Flusser (Jerusalem 1978), p. 36; *Sefer Masaot Rabbi Binjamin — The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela,* p. 49 in the M.N. Adler ed. (London 1907); *Sibuv Rabbi Petahya mi-Regenshpurg,* p. 20f. in the L. Grünhut ed. (Frankfurt 1905); etc. Don Isaac Abrabanel (see n. 1), *Sefer Ma'ayanei ha-Yeshuah* XI 1, relies on that story and disallows Daniel's return to Jerusalem.

[265] The text (Dan. 10:1ff.) is explained against the background of these events and troubles by R-a-sh-i, R-a-l-b-a-g and *Midrash Daniel* (see n. 1 above). Such a harmonization is of course possible. Daniel mourns "three weeks of days" (10:2), following a pattern analagous to three years, that is, the time elapsed since the start of the Return to Zion, during which not all the hoped-for blessings and salvation were attained. See Ezra 3:8; 4:1ff.

the persecution decrees of Antiochus Epiphanes, and the Hasmonean Revolt will erupt.[266]

The timing of Cyrus' "third year" is not incongruous and represents no contradiction, if the principal chronological system of the book is considered, with its separate rings and inherent intentions. The three years between Cyrus' ascension to the throne and Daniel's final appearance are equivalent to his three years of study before entering the king's service. His public mission and position started three years after his exile and ended three years after Cyrus' proclamation and the start of the Return to Zion.[267] The period of his activity and visions thus lasted exactly seventy years, like the pattern suggested in Jeremiah's prophecy for the nation's period of calamity. In deliberate parallelity the reigns of the foreign kings likewise add up to seventy years, based on an identical typological model.[268] With similar arithmetic symmetry the Jewish quartet (Daniel and his three friends) represents the remnant of Jewry in confrontation with four leaders of pagan despotism: Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius the Mede, and Cyrus the Persian.[269] Planned and constructed with consistent logic, the chronology reflects clear ideological symbolism. Full harmony prevails which unifies the entire work, its chapters and dates. On his way, Daniel represents the remnant of the nation which spreads the message of the redemption that is to come in "seventy weeks" of years after Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Jerusalem, and is directed at the fighters and insurgents of the Hasmonean Revolt period.[270]

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[266] The first successes of the Revolt (11:34) thanks to the "help" of heaven were hinted at, and his importance was not in the least impugned, contrary to the prevailing distorted view (see n. 69 above).

[267] Calendar years, not full ones (as stated in n. 129 above).

[268] Sixty-two were ascribed to Darius the Mede (6:1) because of the point of departure since Jehoiachin's exile (n. 65) including his single year as well (9:1). Nebuchadnezzar's two years (2:1) were added because of the Joseph stories (Gen. 41:1), as were Cyrus's three (10:1) to complete the period of Daniel's experiences (n. 265), plus three more of Belshazzar's (8:1) to make up the seventy. See Chapter 4, nn. 13, 70.

[269] The parallel presentation is not accidental. The four regimes too match the four corners of the universe (7:2ff.; 2:36ff.).

[270] Not only the integrated harmonized chronology, but the entire artistic canvas with its mosaic of similes and wealth of ideas, is unified in a single congruous conception, in order to express the fervent belief that the sacred prophecy is proven in history with no reservations or divergence, that the calamities occur till the end of the allotted periods, that the end of the fateful confrontation is approaching, and salvation will come when the kingdom of Greece is defeated and pagan despotism shattered.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE IDEA OF THE SERVANT OF GOD IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL

A. *The Essence of the Work and the Background of Its Formation*

The Book of Daniel provides a clue to the thoughts and desires of the faithful to the Torah and partisans of the holy covenant during the days of Antiochus Epiphanes' coercive decrees and the start of the Hasmonean Revolt.[1] The time of its composition becomes clear from the historical survey wrapped in a cloak of mystery and surrounded by secrets and symbols that are however sufficiently thin and transparent. The survey presents episodes in this history of the "Kingdom of Greece," starting from Alexander the Great's invasion (Dan. 11:2ff.) and terminating with the downfall of the despotic oppressor and last ruler on the throne of the Hellenistic power; through the portrait of that evil, contemptible tyrant, erecter of the "abomination of desolation" (11:21ff.), the persecutor of the pious and flatterer of those who violate the covenant, who stopped the regular offering and defiled the sanctuary, projects the well known figure of Antiochus Epiphanes.[2] The circumstances of his death, "between the seas and the beautiful holy mountain" (11:45) do not accord with the historical facts. Thus here is a visionary expectation or prediction, recorded before the event took place (at the end of 164 B.C.E.).[3] This is the reason for the critical conclusion regarding the sealing of the Daniel chapters. In the final vision the Temple is still polluted, with no sign of purification. The completion of the work must then be set before the rededication of the Temple which took place in Kislev of 148 in the Seleucid era.[4]

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[1] This chapter appeared in the anthology *Ha-Tzevi Israel,* in memory of Israel and Tzevi Broide (Tel Aviv Univ. 1976), p. 23ff.

[2] Bibliography on the Book of Daniel is listed in n. 1 of Chapter 3.

[3] F.M. Abel, *Les Livres des Maccabées,* (Paris 1949), p. 108ff.; E.R. Bevan, *The House of Seleucus* (London 1966, repr. of 1902 ed.), vol. 2, p. 158ff.; O. Mørkholm, *Antiochus IV of Syria* (Copenhagen 1966), p. 166ff.; E. Will, *Histoire Politique du Monde Hellénistique,* vol. 2 (Nancy 1967), p. 296ff.; F.W: Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius,* vol. 3 (Oxford 1979), p. 473f. See also Chapter 2, n. 18 above.

[4] That is, at the end of 165 B.C.E., according to I Macc. (IV 52) which orders the dates systematically, and adheres to the Macedonian calendar. The same is indicated by synchronic comparisons with external testimonies. On the other hand, II Macc. does not have an orderly chronological framework and shifts the rededication of the Temple (X 1ff.) to after Antiochus Epiphanes' death, as noted above (n. 54 of Chapter 1) because of its didactic-artistic purpose, not because of any more reliable or accurate information. Yet most scholars prefer a forced harmonization and set the dedication of the Temple in the winter of 164 B.C.E. on the basis of a widely held shaky hypothesis that two chronological systems (the external-Macedonian and the internal-Babylonian) were confused in regard to the Seleucid era in I Macc. That is the view of E.

The stormy armed uprising headed by the Hasmoneans is hinted at in the description, the first victories having already been achieved (11:33–34): "The wise among the people will make the many understand; for a while they shall fall by sword and flame, suffer captivity and spoliation. In defeat they will receive a little help, but many will join them in slippery ways". The expression adopted, "a little help," does not indicate any intention to disparage and minimize the value of the Hasmoneans' military operations and victories, as many commentators were misled to assert.[5] Just this wording exactly fits the situation that prevailed before the dedication of the Temple, and the hopes for extensive divine help. As the Psalms put it "He is our help and shield" (33:20), "Oh Israel, trust in the Lord; he is their help and shield" (115:9). In a clearly parallel style, the downfall of the evil tyrant is anticipated, by the will of God, "with no one to help him" (Dan. 11:45). The country is caught in the enemy's vice, Jerusalem is still wallowing in pollution, and the danger is not past, the military rebellion has just begun and its achievements are very modest, but the light of redemption is already glimmering, and it is hoped that "a little help" will grow into great and glorious salvation.

In an overall comprehensive look at the Daniel chapters it is possible to discern a sequence of interpretations of the classic prophecies, intertwined in the arteries and branches of the work. Daniel himself is not a prophet sent to his people: he does not castigate and reprove his generation in the name of his God. He is rather a model of piety, full of wisdom and understanding, who interprets dreams, observes wonders, and understands them only with the help of heavenly angels.[6] His actions and visions contain no revelation of the Holy Spirit or the

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Bickermann, *Der Gott der Makkabäer* (Berlin 1937), p. 155ff.; J. Schaumberger, "Die neue Seleukidenliste BM 35603 und die makkabäische Chronologie," *Bibl.* 36 (1955): 423ff.; R. Hanhart, "Zur Zeitrechung des I und II Makkabäerbuches," in A. Jepsen & R. Hanhart, *Untersuchungen zur israelitisch-jüdischen Chronologie, BZAW* (Berlin 1964), and many more. In any case, given the ending of the Daniel visions, it may be concluded that the information that Antiochus advanced toward the eastern countries (early 165 B.C.E.) and was not heading for Egypt had not yet been disseminated and absorbed, although such intentions were perhaps vaguely (Dan. 8:9; 11:44) envisaged. At the time, then, the rebels had still gained only a few limited victories which were far from decisive in the Revolt.

[5] The prevailing opinions have already been refuted above, Chapter 2, Section B. Divine help made the victories possible, and such a statement belittling that help is not likely. In that spirit Judas Maccabaeus prays to heaven (I Macc. III 50-53) that without the help of God they would not have the strength to withstand the foe and triumph. In the meantime divine help had been extended only a little. Ezra too (9:8) thanks the Lord in his prayer for "a little sustenance in our bondage."

[6] That is why the Jewish tradition (unlike the Christian) designated its place to be among the Writings rather than the Prophets. Rabbinical commentaries are listed above in Chapter 3, n. 1. See also talmudic sources in Preface, n. 14. On bMegillah 3a R-a-sh-i says: "He is not among the prophets sent to Israel on a divine mission, he was not sent to Israel in any prophecy;" in *Talmud Bavli,* Romm ed. (rep. Jerusalem 1963). See also Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed* II 46, translated by S. Pines (Chicago 1963); R-a-d-a-k, in the introduction to his commentary on Psalms, in *Mikraot Gedolot* (Tel Aviv 1954); Don Isaac Abrabanel, *Sefer Ma'ayanei ha-Yeshuah* III 1, in *Peirush* — Commentary on Prophets and Writings (Tel Aviv 1960). See also Chapter 3, n. 227 above.

word of God. Discernible in them is the awareness that prophecy is sealed and in abeyance, as in I Maccabees which is closest to the Daniel chapters in time and spirit.[7] In the face of the calamity, distress and struggle in his generation, the author draws encouragement and solace from the wells of sacred prophecy and early biblical tradition. A new interpretation of Scriptures, in the light of the agitated present, the exploration of the secrets of the sources, a relevant exposition from a historiosophic perspective, with the aid of subtle symbolism and audacious typology helps him in his thinking and seeking to find the full hidden significance regarding the present and future.

According to its artistic pattern, the Book of Daniel is composed of and divided into two linked blocs. The first half consists of a colorful series of legends, correlated and well ensnared in the threads of the happenings. On this unit as though on a lower story rests the upper story of visions. Despite their differences, the two sections constitute an organic unity and a conceptual fabric bound to its fundamental immanent nature. The pluralistic and fragmenting theories whereby the work disassembles into separate pieces and is even sentenced to have its body crushed and organs amputated misdirect exegesis to secondary paths and befog proper observation. In this present consideration, we shall skip over that complex problem, and shall not pretend to solve it entirely. We shall not contradict or examine possibilities or views that the work is an arrangement of separate independent units, or that it was preceded by hypothetical redactors or redaction stages. At any rate, the examination of the problem of the Servant of God in these chapters confirms the conception of integrality and demolishes the particularistic methods. Let us now turn to the finished sealed book, in its present form, where analysis of its transparently suggestive contents and the circumstances of its formation point to the period of the Hasmonean Revolt.[8]

The Daniel stories, circle and environment are planted in the era of the Babylonian exile and the Return to Zion. The historic canvas is unfurled in the time of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 1:1ff.), his son (*sic*!) Belshazzar (5:1ff.), Darius the Mede (6:1ff.) and finally Cyrus the Persian (1:21; 6:29; 10:1). However, the reflection of the period revealed and the chronological framework are quite surprising. Consequently arguments and refutations arose regarding strange mistakes, and speculations regarding mixed sources, textual emendations and combinations, and the like. Daniel and his friends are uprooted from the land of their forefathers and sent into exile when Jerusalem is captured by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia, "in the third year of the reign of King

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[7] I Macc. IV 46; IX 27; XIV 41. Critical editions of the Books of Maccabees are listed above: nn. 62, 76 to Chapter 1, and n. 40 to Chapter 2. On editions of Josephus see Chapter 5, n. 83 below.

[8] The grounds for our conclusion are scattered throughout the discussion, and the summary appears at the end of Chapter 3, but it is not our intention to refute all opposing claims and clarify all aspects of the ramified problem completely.

Jehoiakim" (Dan. 1:1). That date is unusual and at first glance does not accord with clear scriptural testimony.[9] In contrast to the Jeremiah prophecy (25:1ff.) whose influence is clearly discernible in the Book of Daniel, the perplexing contradiction stands out. Moreover, there is no real connection between the actions and experiences of the Jewish boys and the contemporary Jewish people, its troubles and vicissitudes. Daniel and his three friends seem to be on an isolated theatre stage, detached from the surrounding reality. No echoes of banishments and catastrophes reach them, of the Jehoiachin affair that occurred near them in time and place, of political changes and the decline of the kingdom of Judah. Even the Return to Zion, already approaching and beginning to be realized — for Daniel continues in his post until "the third year of King Cyrus of Persia" (10:1)—leaves no scrap of reaction or impression.[10] These oddities and questions are not errors and flaws, but fundamental aspects of the main conceptual and artistic fabric.

The starting date of the Daniel adventures is set in "the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim," for the measure of seventy years of exile and subjugation, according to Jeremiah's oration (25:12; 29:10) is fulfilled in the first year of Darius the Mede, that is, immediately after the downfall of Babylonia. In an accurate calculation the twenty remaining years between Jehoiakim's third regnal year and the destruction of Jerusalem (based on the list at the end of II Chron. 36:5ff.) are added to the forty-nine years of the destruction (586-538 B.C.E.).[11] Therefore, Daniel prays in Darius the Mede's first regnal year (Dan. 9:1ff.) when Babylonia is defeated and the seventy years of his exile are over, at the end of "seven weeks" of years (9:25) after Jerusalem is devastated, on the threshold of the Return to Zion, in order to request grace and pity for the holy city in its ruins.[12] In answer to his prayer, the angel Gabriel is sent to him. From the angel Daniel learns that Jeremiah's oration has a hidden meaning: "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people..." (9:24ff.). It is for a period of 490 years (and not just seventy) that exile and servitude are visited upon Israel because of its great sins. The multiplication of seventy is drawn from Scriptures: "And I, for my part, will chastise you sevenfold for your sins... and I will bring the land into desolation... Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths as long as it lies desolate..." (Lev. 26:28, 32, 34), "to fulfill the word of the Lord spoken by

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[9] II Kings, 24:1ff.; II Chron. 36:5ff. See Chapter 3, Section A for the explanation.

[10] Daniel stays "on the bank of the great river the Tigris" (10:4) and laments that true and final redemption has not yet been attained. That is why he no longer lives in the royal palace (1:21) but is still in exile and does not cross "the great river," the Euphrates, to enter the promised land. See also n. 257 in Chapter 3 above.

[11] H. Tadmor, "Khronologia," *EM*, vol. 4 (1962), pp. 275, 303; J. Liver, "Koresh," *EM*, vol. 4, p. 59ff.

[12] The reign of Darius the Mede (6:1ff.), limited to a single year (9:1), is not known in any historical testimony and is designed to fulfill a particular prophecy (Is. 13:17; 21:2; Jer. 51:28), and to complete the count of seventy. See nn. 40-41 below, and nn. 64-66 in Chapter 3.

Jeremiah, until the land has enjoyed her sabbaths; for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath to fulfill seventy years" (II Chron. 36:21), that is, until the defeat of Babylonia and the ascendency of King Cyrus of Persia.

In the days of the Return to Zion, the goal of redemption was not completely attained. Diasporas were not totally ingathered, the yoke of foreigners was not removed from Israel, the Creator's anger did not subside, and divine grace did not rain down. The seventy year pattern contains the secret of the definitive end in "seventy weeks" of years, and the date of the redemption. By a complicated but precise arithmetic, the allotted "weeks" of years and the eras of subjugation end at the time of Judas Maccabaeus' victories, not long after the rededication of the Temple.[13] The surprising revelation of that chronology, hidden in prophecy, led to waves of faith in imminent salvation, and was perhaps the point of departure and the key to the formation of these marvelous visions (based on legends, rumors, and ancient memories) in which the conception and birth of the Book of Daniel are anchored. Jeremiah envisions seventy years of exile and servitude under Babylonian authority. But in the expanse of "seventy weeks," in the distant perspective, the Babylonian exile is only the start and a part of Israel's

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[13] To the "seven weeks" (of years) are added sixty-two starting with the outset of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (after his capture of Jerusalem) and ending when "the anointed one shall be cut off" (9:26), that is, at the time of the high priest's (Onias III) death. According to II Macc. (IV 23-34) Onias was killed around 171 or 170 B.C.E. (three or four years after Antiochus Epiphanes' accession). Counting sixty-two weeks (434 years) back, we get to 605 or 604 B.C.E., very close to the right chronological point. A last week of oppression remained in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, "and half a week he will put a stop to the sacrifice and the meal offering" (9:27); the Jerusalem Temple was defiled and the ceremonies stopped (I Macc. I 54) in the month of Kislev, 168 B.C.E., that is, "half a week" or about three and a half years after Onias' death. Consequently it is possible to understand the tense expectation of the fulfillment of the vision of redemption at the end of another half week when the full seventy weeks are completed. The dedication of the Temple was however celebrated three years after its defilement (I Macc. IV 52ff., versus II Macc. X 3ff.; Josephus, *Ant.* XII 320ff., versus *Bell.* I 32ff.; see n. 7 above) that is, six months before the expected time. The count of the seventy weeks of years (Dan. 9:24ff.) is clarified solely by a complicated formula based on real, genuinely historical chronological grounds. There are no errors caused by ignorance or confusion, nor any mistake in arithmetic if the count of the sixty-two weeks of years is figured not continuously after the seven weeks of years but from the point of departure of the entire sequence, that is, from the time Babylonian rule was imposed on Israel (Dan. 1:1) and Jeremiah's prophecy began to be fulfilled. The verse in question itself (25) suggests its intention, for it does not (as in verse 26) say after seven weeks, but rather in the course of sixty-two weeks of years Jerusalem will be built up and remain oppressed. The period of subjugation and exile also includes the seven weeks (of years) although they were already counted separately, for at the time the people of Israel were given a double punishment, both the destruction of the Temple and the subjugation with dispersion. No solution is supplied for the problem of the count of the days in the later visions (8:14; 12:11-12) which perhaps suggest some obscure phases in the path to salvation. In any case, there is no justification or basis for the views that the author meant the time of the rededication of the Temple or even later events, as proposed by scholars such as C. Schedl, "Mystische Arithmetik," *BZ*, n.s. 8 (1964): 101ff.; idem, *Geschichte des Alten Testaments*, vol. 5 (Innsbruck 1964), p. 378ff.; B.Z. Wacholder, "Chronomessanism—the Timing of Messianic Movements and the Calendar of Sabbatical Cycles," *HUCA* 46 (1975): 204ff.; Th. Fischer, *Seleukiden und Makkabäer* (Bochum 1980), p. 140ff.

via dolorosa. The subjugating Babylonian kingdom represents only the first link in the chain of the four despotic pagan empires, succeeding each other in the universe, by divine decree. The chain is closed and the yoke of servitude snapped with the defeat of the Grecian kingdom—the Hellenistic power, the last and worst of them all. During the period of Antiochus Epiphanes' oppressions and persecutions, the eras of wrath reach their apogee and end. The light of true redemption will shine with the downfall of the despised despot.

Jeremiah's prophecy thus serves as a main axis and cornerstone of Daniel's philosophy. Further layers of stone were quarried from the treasures of the rich, variegated biblical sources. That fact was not ignored by critical scholarship, but not sufficiently considered. Even the contribution of Isaiah's orations to the formation of the Daniel chapters was long recognized, but lacked complete and adequate evaluation. Here and there a scholar noted roots in Isaiah's prophecies and their sporadic influence, but did not realize that they were a component of the foundation in the magnificent structure on which the mysterious allegorical figure of the Servant of God (or Servant of the Lord) is carved.[14] The passages defined as the Servant of God poetry by modern exegetical schools[15] are not a separate unit for the author of the Daniel chapters. For him there is no division in the Isaiah prophecies from which he draws his inspiration and nurtures his creative spirit.

B. *Portrait of the Servant versus Pagan Despotism*

The notion of the Servant of God appears in an expanded and special sense in the fabric of the work as a whole. On the verses of Isaiah mainly is constructed a crucial drama, with many branches, historic and cosmic, Israelite nationalist and also universally human, which sets up the last representative of despised pagan despotism in confrontation with the guardians of the Torah and the heirs of the holy covenant. The head of the Grecian kingdom in its latter days confronts the oppressed nation, and assaults a small community of Hasids, until the divine sentence to annihilate the evil government is implemented. The portrait of Antiochus Epiphanes and his deeds displays features taken from Isaiah's oration on the king of Assyria or Babylonia. Antiochus grew "as high as the Host of Heaven" and trampled the stars (Dan. 8:10) in his arrogance, but in

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[14] H.L. Ginsberg, "The Oldest Interpretation of the Suffering Servant," *VT* 3 (1953): 400ff.; W.H. Brownlee, "The Suffering Servant in the Book of Daniel," *BASOR* 132 (1953): 12ff.

[15] Yeḥezkel Kaufmann, *Toldot ha-Emunah ha-Yisre'elit* (Jerusalem 1956), vol. 4, p. 108ff.; M.Z. Segal, *Mavo ha-Mikra* (Jerusalem 1967), p. 330ff., O. Kaiser, *Der Königliche Knecht* (Göttingen 1962); C.R. North, *The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah* (Oxford 1963); H.M. Orlinsky & N.H. Snaith, *Studies on the Second Part of the Book of Isaiah,* Suppl. to *VT*, vol. 14 (Leiden 1967); C. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66; A Commentary* (London 1969); P.E. Bonnard, *Le Second Isaïe* (Paris 1972); H.D. Preuss, *Deuterojesaja* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1976); T.N.D. Mettinger, *A Farewell to the Servant Songs* (Lund 1983).

the end he will fall, as in the derisive lament that curses and lashes, scoffs and wails, in the Lucifer parable (Is. 14:13ff.): "Once you thought in your heart, I will climb to the sky, higher than the stars of God;... I will mount the back of a cloud; I will match the Most High. Instead you are brought down to Sheol, to the bottom of the Pit..." Antiochus burst "sweeping through like a flood" in his campaigns and blows struck (Dan. 11:40) "till fury is spent and what has been decreed is carried out" (11:36). The same thread running through the images of the flood, the wrath and the destruction figures also in Isaiah's description of Assyria, which shall "sweep through Judah like a flash flood" (8:8): "Ha! Assyria, rod of My anger, in whose hand as a staff is My fury" (10:5), "for my Lord God of Hosts is carrying out a decree of destruction opon all the land" (10:23).

Divine wrath reaches its pinnacle and last stage in the period of Antiochus Epiphanes. Evil is sentenced to be wiped out, and redemption is bestowed upon "the remnant of Israel and the escaped of the House of Jacob" as stated in the same chapter of Isaiah (10:20). Antiochus falls "not by [human] hands" (Dan. 8:25) like the more ancient prototype: "Then shall Assyria fall not by the sword of man; a sword, not of humans, shall devour him" (Is. 31:8).[16] The defeat of Antiochus takes place "between the seas and the beautiful holy mountain" (Dan. 11:45) paralleling the prophecy of Isaiah "to break Assyria in My land, to crush him on My mountain" (14:25).[17]

Against the wicked evil tyrant, the whip of God's wrath that torments and lashes, stands the people struggling in its distress and fleeing from the calamity. Of the surviving remnant Isaiah prophesizes: "In that day, the radiance of the Lord will lend beauty and glory, and the splendor of the land dignity and majesty, to the survivors of Israel. And those who remain in Zion and are left in Jerusalem—all who are inscribed for life in Jerusalem shall be called holy" (4:2-3). It is not by chance that Hasids and guardians of the holy covenant in the Book of Daniel are called saints or the "holy ones of the most High" (Dan. 7:18),[18] and their domain "beautiful," or "the beautiful land," and the Temple

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[16] That is also the function of the stone (Israel) cut from a mountain "not by hands" (Dan. 2:34, 45) which shatters the statue of pagan tyranny (see n. 26 below). A similar phrase appears in Job. 34:20: "Even great men are removed—not by human hands."

[17] See also n. 18 in Chapter 2. Comparable are similar prophetic visions (such as Ezek. 39:17 and Zech. 14:3ff.) but most remarkable are the characteristic features taken from Isaiah's orations. Like the king of Assyria (Is. 10:5-15), Antiochus Epiphanes relies on his power and cleverness (Dan. 8:23ff.), conquers peoples and gathers booty (Dan. 11:24ff.), exalts himself (Dan. 11:36) above all gods until his fall before the Almighty.

[18] The defenders of the Torah are called saints, holy ones (7:18ff.) like heavenly angels. Sanctity encompasses the divinity (4:5, 6, 15; 5:11) and His entourage, His city and Temple (8:11-14; 9:20; 11:45), His people (8:24; 12:7), sharers of the "holy covenant" (11:28ff.), those tormented and struggling for His sake, who will inherit the future Kingdom. The "holy ones" fighting the oppressor king (7:21ff.) who are also called "the holy ones of the Most High" are not heavenly creatures as proposed by some scholars such as M. Noth, *Gesammelte Studien* (Munich 1960), p. 274ff.; Gerhard

Mount "the beautiful holy mountain" (Dan. 11:45). The saints will enjoy a splendid revival, "all who are found inscribed in the book" (12:1), as noted above in the excerpt from Isaiah. They are purified through hardships, persecutions and torture in order to "be refined and purged and whitened until the time of the end" (Dan. 11:35; 12:10), again like Isaiah's oration (Is. 1:18): "Be your sins like crimson, they can turn snow white; be they red as dyed wool, they can become like fleece."

On the basis of these images, in his vision Daniel sees the ideal of perfect purity, the revelation of God himself, the Ancient of Days and Lord of heaven, whose raiment "was like white snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool" (Dan. 7:9). The keepers of his covenant ascend and approach him, in the shape of an image appearing like a "son of man" (7:13), after they are properly purged and purified in the refining fire of disaster.[19]

The keystone of the philosophical and artistic structure lies in the figure of the Servant of God which symbolizes the loyal remnant, oppressed and persecuted but also prepared to act when called upon (instead of remaining always in passive anticipation), harboring the seed of the magnificent renascence and future exaltation. Antiochus Epiphanes is still conducting a "war with the holy ones" (Dan. 7:21), attacking and threatening those scorning his religion and disobeying his orders. Compensation and salvation are assured to the victims who fall meanwhile "by sword and flame, suffer captivity and spoliation" (11:33). The conclusion of Daniel's visions describes the revival, according to the features of the despised servant who is a surprise in his wondrous ascent: "And the wise will be radiant as the brightness of the firmament; and those who lead the many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever" (12:3).

The encouraging picture contains expressions taken from the verses of Isaiah: "Indeed, my servant shall be wise (successful), exalted and raised to great heights' (52:13)... "by his knowledge shall my righteous servant make the many righteous" (53:11). "Holy ones", and Hasids embody the Servant who will make the many righteous, be wise, and rise to the stars.[20] Those devoted to the

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von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments,*[2] vol. 2 (Munich 1961), p. 325f.; versus G.F. Hasel, "The Identity of the Saints of the Most High in Daniel 7," *Bibl.* 56 (1975): 173ff. In the wake of their distorted interpretation, the symbolization of the holy ones in the form of the "son of man" becomes a heavenly-transcendant figure of a Christological-apocalyptic type. See n. 57 below.

[19] The "Ancient of Days" precedes time, the time of His world and His creations. No mythological significance should be sought in his splendor, or in the depiction of a "son of man"; see A.J. Ferch, "Daniel 7 and Ugarit," *JBL* 99 (1980): 75ff. versus J.J. Collins, *The Apocalylptic Vision of the Book of Daniel* (Missoula Mont. 1977), p. 123ff.; idem, "The Son of Man and the Saints of the Most High," *JBL* 93 (1974): 50ff.; J.A. Emerton, "The Origin of the Son of Man Imagery," *JTS,* n.s. 9 (1958): 225ff. The mythologization and apocalyptization converge, distort and obscure the original true meaning.

[20] See similar language: "Then the sanctuary shall be righted (=*nitzdak*"; 8:14) and "eternal righteousness (=*tzedek*) ushered in (9:24)."

ancestral heritage now stand up to the boastful foe, who "grew as high as the Host of heaven" and trampled the stars above (Dan. 8:10).

C. *The Figure of the Servant in the Daniel Legends (Chapters 1-6)*

The prototype of the wise men depicted according to the Servant of God verses already appears in the person of Daniel, who with his triumvirate represents the remnant of Israel, and the loyal survivors in historical retrospect, from the start of the exile and subjugation by foreign kingdoms. Their adventures are planted in the landscape of "the land of Shinar" (1:2), that is, in the land of rebellion and idolatry (Gen. 11:2ff.) in the soil of profound antagonism at the inception of the cosmic drama.[21] Daniel and his friends are "youths without blemish, handsome, proficient in all wisdom and knowledgeable and intelligent" (Dan. 1:4) who were selected "Israelites of royal descent" (1:3), remnants of the captured kingdom and survivors of the independent Israel, uprooted and exiled, cast into an alien environment under conditions of servitude, compelled to learn the Chaldean language and lore to serve the oppressive regime and even eat its food. However, they do not hesitate to court danger by refusing to taste "of the king's food and of the wine which he drank" (Dan. 1:5) like the guardians of the Torah at the time of Antiochus Epiphanes' coercive decrees, who preferred to die rather than be defiled by forbidden foods.[22] The imposition of a foreign language and culture, education and food, in a combined command issued by the foreign tyrant, and especially the dominant point, the stress on maintaining alimentary taboos as a criterion of faith, are not based on the reality of the remote Babylonian exile but evocative of the period when these legends and visions were composed.

Daniel along with his friends represents the ideal and perfect type of absolute piety of the period of persecutions, as it was conceived and carried out by the understanding "wise" men (11:35; 12:10). Despite rejecting delicacies and abstaining from food, the Jewish boys in the Babylonian exile "looked better and healthier than all the youths who were eating of the king's food" (1:15ff.), and they were gifted with "intelligence and proficiency in all writings and wisdom." The combination of these concepts and manifestations, that is, pleasant appearance, physical health, and superior intelligence, recalls a motif that comes from the Servant of God verses: "Indeed, my servant shall be wise (successful), exalted and raised to great heights, just as the many were appalled at him so marred was his appearance unlike that of man and his form beyond human semblance" (Is. 52:13-14). The lowly Servant "has no form or beauty that we should look at him, no charm that we should find him pleasing. He is

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21 These problems were explained in Chapter 3.

22 I Macc. I 62-63; II Macc. VI 8ff.; IV Macc. V 1ff. See n. 7 above on the Books of Maccabees.

despised and shunned by men, a man of suffering, familiar with disease" (Is. 53:2-3). The learned Daniel, outstanding in appearance and glowing in physical health (compared with the Hellenizers dashing to the gymnasia and drinking from the well of foreign culture), heralds in his well-being the future change in the fate of the despised Servant, of uncomely appearance and afflicted with ailments. Perhaps even the epithet "a charming man" that characterizes Daniel can be explained in contrast to Isaiah's "no charm, that we should find him pleasing" (Is. 53:2).[23]

The image of the Servant of God in the legends surrounding Daniel and his group is enriched and varied by biblical memories and elements that help depict the background of those early Babylonian and Persian periods. In the blend of the component elements and colors, motifs drawn from the Joseph (in Egypt) and Esther (in Susa) stories are clearly discernible, for both exemplify life in exile and the subjugation of the nation to a foreign kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar is alarmed and his spirit is troubled (Dan. 2:1ff.) as Pharaoh was troubled by his dreams (Gen. 41:1ff.). Daniel solves the riddle of the dream, in contrast to the unsuccessful wizards and magicians, as Joseph surpassed the Egyptian ones. In both cases, the solution comes from God and brings the Jewish lad respect and a position of authority. The contents and outcome of Nebuchadnezzar's dream are totally different, however, for it embodies the notion which is the core of the work. Four kingdoms succeed each other in ruling the world (Babylonian, Median, Persian and Greek) until pagan authority collapses entirely and redemption comes for the Jewish nation and the universe.[24]

In the dream a great frightening idol composed of four metals (gold, silver, copper, iron mixed with clay) represents pagan sovereignty divided among the kingdoms,[25] and spread in the period of wrath corresponding to the "seventy

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[23] Dan. 10:11, 19; 9:23. The epithet can be taken literally (as in 10:3; 11:43), but in the given context the connection with the image of the Servant seems probable and even reasonable.

[24] The identity of the kingdoms is indicated in the work itself: before the redemption of Israel, the mighty coercive rulers are the Babylonian kings (Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar), Darius the Mede, Cyrus of Persia, and the anonymous rulers on the Greek throne. When the hopes for the realization of Daniel's visions were dashed, following the decline of the Hasmonean kingdom, Jewish tradition, already emerging in Josephus (nn. 24-25 in Chapter 2) reinterpreted the vision to fit the times: The last kingdom was identified with Rome, the third with the Greeks, the second with the Medes and Persians. Modern exegesis gradually abandoned that traditional Judeo-Christian view, returned to the position of Porphyry and properly understood the Daniel chapters (see Chapter 2, Section B) in the light of the Hasmonean Revolt. The divisive systems however obscured proper observation and produced the illusion that Nebuchadnezzar's dream could be interpreted, like the adjacent legends, against the background of the Persian or early Hellenistic period. With vain efforts and the help of quite fruitful imaginations many scholars (see nn. 4-5 in Chapter 2) tried to uncover various strata and redactions in the chapter. That approach led to a astonishingly arbitrary extremism almost to the point of absurdity: E. Bickerman, *Four Strange Books of the Bible* (New York 1967), p. 61ff. Favoring divisive theories and various strata is also P.R. Davies, "Daniel Chapter Two," *JTS* 27 (1976): 392ff.

[25] The metals are classified according to the scale of values prevalent and adopted in Scriptures; as in Jos. 6:24; 22:8; Num. 31:22ff. Totally different intentions are inherent in the symbolization of

weeks" of years: stone quarried from the mountain by Heaven, symbolizing Israel (on the basis of a motif taken from earlier biblical sources)[26] suddenly, with a surprise blow, shatters the awful statue leaving only dust that scatters and disappears "like the chaff of the summer threshing floors" (Dan. 2:35).[27] Daniel uncovers the secrets of the vision and of the mysterious changes "in the end of days" (2:28). He consequently obtains compensation from the king. The end of the chapter makes clear the superiority that will be attained by captive Jewry. The epilogue again plays a tune on the Servant of God. Nebuchadnezzar bows to

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the human generations by metals in the Greek poem of Hesiod, *Works and Days,* 106ff., ed. M.L. West (Oxford 1978). See also Ovid, *Metamorphoses,* I 89ff., ed. F.J. Miller, *LCL* (London 1960); H. Schwabl, "Weltalter," *PW-RE* Supplement, vol. 15 (1978), p. 783ff. While there may have been contacts with similar notions and motifs in the Hellenistic environment there is no ground for suggesting Persian influences, on the basis of remote sources composed hundreds of years after the sealing of the Book of Daniel, despite E. Meyer, *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums,* vol. 2 (Stuttgart 1921), p. 189ff.; S.K. Eddy, *The King is Dead* (Univ. of Nebraska, Lincoln 1961), p. 16ff.; D. Flusser, "The Four Empires," *Israel Oriental Studies,* vol. 2 (1972): 148ff. A similar framework of successive kingdoms is known in Greek and Roman historiography; it is not however because of blind dependence on it that the kingdom of Media was included in the Book of Daniel (supposedly by mistake) after Babylonia, as appears in the discussion below, but in order to fulfill specific Scriptural prophecies. See J.W. Swain, "The Theory of the Four Monarchies," *ClPh* 35 (1940): 1ff.; Velleius Paterculus, *Historia Romana* I 6, (LCL), ed. F.W. Shipley (London 1961); Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *The Roman Antiquities,* I 2.1ff., (*LCL*), ed. E. Cary, vol. 1 (London 1960); Herodotus I 95ff., C. Hude ed. (Oxford 1927); Diodorus Siculus II 32ff., (*LCL*), ed. C.H. Oldfather, vol. 1 (London 1946).

[26] Is. 28:16; Ps. 118:22; Zech. 12:3; Gen. 49:24. Associations are evoked as well to the sling stone hurled by David (I Sam. 17:49). The stone grows into a great mountain, a holy mountain, a representation of the Torah of Israel (Is. 2:2ff.; Dan. 9:20; 11:45) and reflects the spread of monotheism and its victory throughout the world. *Midrash Daniel* (see n. 1 of Chapter 3 above) explains (ad loc.) the contrast between the man-made statue, and the plain simple stone made by the Creator. Jerome's debate with Prophyry (*Commentaria in Danielem,* ad loc., *PL 25*) makes clear beyond a doubt that at the time the Jews understood the symbolism and discerned Israel in the stone, contrary to the later messianic-personal interpretation. See E.F. Siegman, "The Stone Hewn from the Mountain," *CBQ* 18 (1956): 364ff.

[27] "Like chaff whirled away from the threshing floor" (Hos. 13:3)—"Driven like chaff before winds in the hills" (Is. 17:13)—"The worm of Jacob" will be "a threshing board, a new thresher, with many spikes; you shall thresh mountains to dust, and make hills like chaff" (Is. 41:14-15). The last verse is intertwined in the chapters containing the "Servant of God" poems. Already in Isaiah's prophecies the Servant suffers and bends his back only when subjugated, but in the future will strike and overcome ultimately the foe. In the Book of Daniel too martyrdom is required till the end of the days of wrath, but when they are over the people will rise and, like the stone, crush the hated regime. It is the will of Heaven that endows the stone with its projectile power. Redemption does not come from Heaven without struggle and combat. The Jewish warriors are the instrument wielded by Heaven to defeat Hellenistic sovereignty at which time the pagan statue will be shattered as well, that is, begin to disappear from the world. The idol will collapse when the stone damages its legs, made of iron and clay. That combination is a weak point for (Dan. 2:43) "they shall intermingle with the offspring of men but shall not hold together." The weakness of the kingdom results from the internal ethnic and social disparity where the subject peoples differ from the ruling Greek-Macedonian elite. The parable does not refer to dynastic marriages (Ptolemaic Berenike married to Antiochus II or the Syrian Cleopatra to Ptolemy V) and speculations of the composition of the chapter before the Hasmonean Revolt are obviously inadmissible. See commentaries: Chapter 3, n. 1, above.

Daniel and offers him an oblation as a sign of respect and gratitude (2:46). His bow fulfills the prophecy: "Thus said the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One, to the despised being, to the abhorred nation, to the slave of rulers: Kings shall see and stand up; Nobles, and they shall prostrate themselves — to the honor of the Lord who is faithful, to the Holy One of Israel, who chose you" (Is. 49:7).[28] The king kneels before the Servant who represents Israel in its servitude. And Daniel sat at "the gate of the king" (2:49) just as Mordecai "sat at the king's gate" (Est. 2:19, 21; 5:9, 13; 6:10).

Martyrdom and extreme devotion, following the example of the tortured, faithful Servant, are represented by Daniel's three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, who preferred to be burned to death and suffer excruciating torment rather than deny the Torah and worship the golden image, as ordered by King Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 3:1ff.).[29] The atmosphere of oppression and spirit of Hasidism of the period of Antiochus Epiphanes and the rebellion waxing in the Jewish nation is evident in the arbitrary decree that enforces religious uniformity in an organized ceremony initiated by the despotic government; in the insistence on total obedience, accompanied by threats of capital punishment, addressed to all the nations and peoples, and on mass worship of the image that represents the reigning pagan cult; in the three Jewish men prepared to sacrifice their lives and stand up against the myriad of peoples who do bow (as per the slogan of Mattathias at Modi'in: "If all the peoples obey him... I and my sons and my brothers will go in the covenant of our forefathers"); and in the other notes resounding through the story.[30] Hananiah,

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[28] Also Is. 60:14; Ps. 72:10-11. See also B.A. Mastin, "Daniel 2:46 and the Hellenistic World," *ZAW* 85 (1973): 80ff.

[29] The statue is made of gold, as per the golden head (the Babylonian monarchy) of the complex statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. There is an association between the order to worship and Nebuchadnezzar's genuflection before Daniel. Artistic threads tie the chapter closely to the main story, and there is no justification for isolating it as if it were a separate unit. The Jewish people as a whole do not figure in these matters at all, and there is no sense in wondering why they suddenly disappeared. The absence of Daniel himself is explained (bSanhedrin 93a) by the attempt to avoid problems and contradictions (for Nebuchadnezzar bows to him) in order to eliminate complications from the plot and reserve for him a separate instance as a lofty model of martyrdom (Chapter 6) representing the highest level. The statue of strange dimensions and no face suggests the Tower of Babel, and the valley of Dura is the valley of Shinar (so understood already by Abraham Ibn Ezra). To the birthplace of idolatry depicted (see n. 103 in Chapter 3) are thus attached the main elements of the story of the statue and the ceremony of its dedication which takes place in a cosmopolitan artistic atmosphere.

[30] I Macc. II 19ff. Absolute correspondence should not be sought in this story, but rather a model and precedent against a more ancient background. According to Greek testimonies (Diodorus Siculus II 9, [*LCL*], ed. C.H. Oldfather, vol. 1 [London 1946]; Herodotus I 183, ed. C. Hude, vol. 1 [Oxford 1927]) there was an enormous gold statue in the temple of Bel-Marduk in Babylon, but there is also mention of a great statue of the Olympian Zeus which Antiochus Epiphanes commissioned. See Ammianus Marcellinus, XXII 13.1 (LCL), ed. J.C. Rolfe, vol. 2 (London 1972); M.J. Justinus, *Historiarum Philippicarum Pompeii Trogi Epitoma* XXXIX 2.5, ed. O. Seel (Stuttgart 1972); E.R. Bevan, *The House of Seleucus,* vol. 2 (see n. 1 above), p. 150. The Greek

Mishael, and Azariah stride fearlessly toward self-sacrifice and the fate of the downtrodden Servant, who is "like a sheep being led to slaughter" (Is. 53:7). By the grace of God they are saved from the fiery furnace, and the flame does not touch them. Their salvation fulfills the prophecy: "When you walk through the fire, you shall not be scorched; through flame, it shall not burn you" (Is. 43:2).[31] The wondrous miracle is based on a verse from those chapters (in the second Isaiah) to which the poems of the Servant of God are linked in immanent and organic unity.

The story of Nebuchadnezzar—boasting in hollow arrogance, despite previous experiences and warnings, punished and declining to his lowest point, but resuming his rank and thanking God for his favor, when he repents and is forgiven for his sin — is connected by indirect threads to the Servant of God (Dan. 4:1ff.). Nebuchadnezzar is ejected from his palace and roams about with the animals for "seven seasons" (years), loses his honor and human shape, becomes bestialized and is reduced to the level of an animal because of his conceit and pretensions in regard to the Lord.[32] His banishment from all human

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terms in the list of musical instruments (3:5, 7, 10, 15) that played at the obligatory ceremony, although not impossible for the Babylonian era, fit the Hellenistic period better.

[31] Death by burning is carried out in Nebuchadnezzar's time according to the prophecy (Jer. 29:22) embodied in the substructure of the Book of Daniel. However, Nebuchadnezzar sins in disregarding the solution of his dream in the previous chapter (2), when he is warned that his monarchy (a golden head) has been entrusted to him for only a limited period by divine decree. In his criminal haughtiness he dares to place a statue entirely of gold to suggest and celebrate the eternal nature of his divine sovereignty. Usurping the authority of the Supreme Judge, Nebuchadnezzar sets up a fiery furnace (Gen. 19:28) and decrees death by fire for all who disobey him, like the sentence awaiting the evil (Dan. 7:11; 12:2; Is. 30:33; 31:9; 66:24; Mal. 3:19) at the hands of the Lord. However those observing the true divine law are not harmed by the fire, but purified by it (Mal. 3:2; Dan. 12:10), for only their enemies are slain by it. Nebuchadnezzar has a fitting punishment imposed on him (Chapter 4 below) because of his iniquity. There is no sense in detaching the story and explaining it as an independent unit as is mostly done, e.g. U. Steffen, *Feuerprobe des Glaubens* (Göttingen 1969).

[32] Whether or not it has an ancient Babylonian root, the purpose and sense of the legend are properly explained from the Book of Daniel itself. The seven years of his debarment from the palace and people are set in conformity to the count of the weeks (of years). The other elements in the chapter too are easily explainable from the biblical work. Nebuchadnezzar repents and returns to his palace to fulfill Jeremiah's prophecy (27:7) which promised his kingdom to his son and grandson. Consequently he is succeeded by Belshazzar, who is perhaps presented instead of his grandson, and no mention is made of his son Evil-Merodach (Jer. 52:31ff.; II Kings 25:27ff.), it being the author's practice to omit superfluous historical events and figures who might confuse or complicate the plot. Fragments and echoes of ancient legends woven around the figure and fate of Nebuchadnezzar (information provided by Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* IX 41, *PG* 21; F. Jacoby, *FGH* III C, no. 685, F 6) was perhaps absorbed into Jewish soil, but cannot serve to prove a solid foreign basis for the essence of the chapter. There have also been some widespread unfounded forced speculations that the depiction of Nebuchadnezzar embodies features of Nabonidus who was Belshazzar's father according to the findings. Some feeble support is evoked from an excerpt called "Nabonidus' Prayer" which belongs to the Qumran Scrolls. But that prayer was composed under the influence of the Book of Daniel and cannot provide an earlier, original version for the Daniel stories. See J.T. Milik, "Prière de Nabonide" etc. *RB* 63 (1956): 407ff.; Rudolf Meyer, *Das Gebet des Nabonid* (Berlin

society stops at the end of the seven years decreed when he lifts his eyes to Heaven, in order to approach and beseech the Dweller on High. By the grace of God Nebuchadnezzar is released from the curse of bestiality, resumes human form, reoccupies his throne and in gratitude praises the supreme judge, for "he is able to humble those who behave arrogantly" (4:34). On his travels the boastful despot learns the lesson from Daniel that "the Most High is sovereign over the realm of man, and gives it to whom He wishes, and He may set over it even the lowest of men" (Dan. 4:14).

The arrogant, despotic regime is the exact antithesis of the down-trodden oppressed people symbolized by the derided and scorned Servant of God. On the day of judgment the reverse will be true: "I will put an end to the pride of the arrogant, and humble the haughtiness of tyrants" (Is. 13:11). The hope for the miserable and dispossessed is expressed in Psalms: "It is you who deliver lowly folk, but haughty eyes you humble (18:28); "He raises the poor from the dust, and lifts up the needy from the refuse heap" (113:7); "The Lord gives courage to the lowly and brings the wicked down to the dust" (147:6). These associational concepts make clear the advice Daniel gives Nebuchadnezzar: to redeem his sins through charity and compassion for the poor (Dan. 4:24).[33] Daniel does not mean paupers in social material sense, nor charity in gifts and monetary alms, as many commentators have thought. The people of Israel, exiled and enslaved, are called "the poor and the needy" in the prophecies of the second Isaiah (41:17) and the verses of the faithful Servant. As evil pagan authority is destroyed, the Servant will rise and become "a light to the nations" (49:6). Princes and kings will bow to him (49:7), the whole world will sing joyfully, "for the Lord has comforted his people, and will have pity upon the poor" (49:13).[34] Nebuchadnezzar's faith and gratitude embody a glimmer of what is latent in Daniel's philosophy and springs from the fundamental prophecies that include and sound the poems of the Servant of God.

In the last two legendary episodes — Belshazzar's feast (Chap. 5) and Daniel in the lion's den (Chap. 6) — the figure of the Servant of God is not openly displayed on the surface but remains concealed and combined with the dramatic motifs of the Book of Esther, and the Joseph stories. The chapter describing Belshazzar's feast is detached from the clear facts and real historical background

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1962); W. Dommershausen, *Nabonid im Buche Daniel* (Mayence 1964); A. Mertens, *Das Buch Daniel im Lichte der Texte vom Toten Meer* (Würzburg-Stuttgart 1971), p. 34ff.

[33] These are the poor of Israel, according to R-a-sh-i (to Dan. 4:24), *Midrash Daniel* (ibid.), *Yalkut Shim'oni* to Daniel (mark 1063) etc.; see rabbinical commentaries, Chapter 3, n. 1. But the text refers to justice and mercy for the people abandoned to foreign rule. Any harm to subjugated Israel will elicit a suitable response: Is. 47:6ff.

[34] Is. 14:32; 26:6; 29:19; 48:10; 54:11; 61:1; Zeph. 3:12. The humble and poor type evident in Psalms (9:19; 37:11; 74:21; etc.) fits the Hasidim and faithful to the covenant during the period of tyranny and struggle, but the Psalms were composed well before the Hasmonean Revolt. See N.M. Sarna, "Tehilim", *EM,* vol. 8 (1982): 437ff.

(according to which Belshazzar's father, Nabonidus, was defeated when Babylon was captured by Cyrus of Persia, and not at the time of Median rule),[35] in order to fulfill the explicit prophecy on the downfall of Babylonia due to the assault of the kings, troops and allies of the Medes (Is. 13:17ff.; Jer. 51:11ff., 28ff.). Isaiah's vision of Babylonia, "the desert of the sea" here acquires skin and muscle: "A harsh prophecy has been announced to me; 'The betrayer is betraying, the ravager ravaging. Advance, Elam! Lay siege, Media! I have put an end to all her sighing.' Therefore my loins are seized with trembling; I am gripped by pangs like a woman in travail, too anguished to hear, too frightened to see. My mind is confused, I shudder in panic. My night of pleasure has turned to terror: 'Set the table!' To 'Let the watchman watch!' 'Eat and drink!' To 'Up, officers! Grease the shield!'" (Is. 21:2-5). It is along these lines, together with the accessories of Ahasuerus' celebrated feast in Susa, that the gay party takes place in Belshazzar's palace.

A gay riotous party, intoxicated with wine and resounding with songs of praise for pagan gods, overflowing and sparkling with crowds of nobles and courtiers, rejoicing in the charms of concubines and wives, stops suddenly when a hand stretches out and writes a mysterious inscription on the wall. Horror descends on the palace, silences the jubilation and stops the noisy company. Daniel solves the riddle, revealing its gloomy meaning. That very night Belshazzar is killed and Darius the Mede assumes the crown of the kingdom. The prophecies that were announced are fulfilled: "Fallen, fallen is Babylon" (Is. 21:9); "The Lord has roused the spirit of the kings of Media, for His plan against Babylon is to destroy it. This is the vengeance of the Lord, vengeance for His Temple" (Jer. 51:11).[36] The "vengeance for His Temple" is carried out, but for different reasons. Babylonia collapses because of the profanation of the sacred objects in a festival seasoned with songs of pagan ritual, not for burning the Temple and destroying Jerusalem, the exile and maltreatment of the Jewish prisoners, in other words, not for its worst crimes. This odd causation is however

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[35] J.B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton N.J. 1969), p. 305ff.; J. Bright, *A History of Israel* (London 1966), p. 334ff.; G. Walser (ed.), *Beiträge zur Achämenidengeschichte* (Wiesbaden 1972), p. 15ff.; H.H. Rowley, *Darius the Mede and the Four World Empires in the Book of Daniel* (Cardiff 1935); A.T. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire* (Chicago 1948), p. 49ff.

[36] So also Jer. 50:28. The holy vessels symbolize divine grace (Jer. 27:19ff.) which accompanies the exiles and feeds their hopes of salvation. The defilement of the vessels, due to divine decree, leads to the end of the Babylonian empire and clearly connects the finale with the start of Babylonian rule (Chapter 3, Section B) when Nebuchadnezzar brings to the "land of Shinar" (Dan. 1:2) the vessels stolen from Jerusalem. Once again the internal unity of the series of chapters is exhibited, and any weak justification for separation into isolated units (such as the riddle of the inscription on the wall that may have been taken from a proverb or fable) refuted. Belshazzar's feast displays certain similarities to Ahasuerus" (Est. 1:3ff.) as already noted by talmudic sages (bMegillah 11b), but the atmosphere of Belshazzar's feast is different (pagan ritual merges with the defilement of the holy vessels) and the event takes place in accordance with the main purpose of the work as a whole.

understandable, given that the sense and purpose of the story are linked to the period of Antiochus Epiphanes and not the period actually described.

The cause and justification of the calamity that befalls Babylonia, which are not explainable by the prophecies and exact events, constitute a remote precedent and warning to the tyrant defiling Jewish sanctities under Hellenistic sovereignty.[37] Through the "spirit of God" that grants extraordinary wisdom (5:14) Daniel solves mysteries, and is consequently attired in "purple," like Mordecai in Shushan,[38] with "a chain of gold" about his neck, like Joseph in Egypt, "in whom the spirit of God is."[39] Again, his portrait displays the typological features characterizing the Hebrew Servant of God, subject to pagan despotism, and astounding in his glorious exaltation, for the sake of his nation and its mission.

Darius the Mede acquires the throne in order to fulfill explicit prophecies and represent the kingdom that succeeds Babylonia (6:1ff.) His image fits into the same artistic fabric that envelops all the stories. His person is not implanted, and his adventures are not inscribed in documented history.[40] The age given for him

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[37] A similar story exhibiting obvious features of legend about the fall of Babylonia is preserved in Greek tradition: Herodotus (see n. 25 above) I 188ff.; Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* VII 5.15ff. (*LCL*), ed. W. Miller (London 1961); H.R. Breitenbach, "Xenophon," *PW-RE* IX A (1967): 1707ff. The surprise conquest during the nocturnal revelry and the murder of the king (according to Xenophon) occur almost as in the chapter concerned, but do not accord with the historical facts. Describing the fall of Babylonia and rise of Media on the basis of biblical prophecies, the author of the Book of Daniel evidently found some support for his story in the historical rumors then prevalent which are discernible in Greek historiography as well. Thus Josephus (*Ant.* X 231ff.; 248ff.; see n. 7 above) already solves the riddle of Belshazzar (i.e. Nabonidus) and Darius (son of Astyages) on the basis of the non-Jewish Greek versions. Jewish and Christian commentators learned from Josephus, directly or indirectly, throughout many ages on up to modern times, until it became clear that Belshazzar was Nabonidus' son, and that there was no truth in Xenophon's version that Cyaxares son of Astyages was Cyrus' uncle, and when Babylonia was conquered bequeathed the kingdom to Cyrus (his nephew and son-in-law).

[38] Est. 8:15. Ahasuerus' kingdom is generally called "Persia and Media" (Est. 1:3, 14, 18, 19 in contrast to 10:2) while that of Darius is always termed "Media and Persia" (Dan. 5:28; 6:9, 13, 16) to indicate Median rather than Persian sovereignty.

[39] Gen. 41:38, 42. Daniel and his companions are the elite remnant and the prototype of the guardians of the Torah at the time of the Revolt, but they should not be considered a complete and artificial facsimile of the persecuted fighting Hasids. Similarly the heads of the monarchies are not depicted as mechanically perfect replicas of Antiochus Epiphanes. There is consequently no reason to be surprised at the portrait of Nebuchadnezzar, who blesses God in heaven for returning him to his kingdom, or at the picture of Darius' friendly feelings for Daniel and praise of God (in his letter) for the miracle. The author does not create flat, hollow figures or mix up remote periods, but with superior artistry, understanding and faithfulness to biblical tradition, on the basis of recollections and stories, proves the truth of the classic prophecies, some already fulfilled, and some expected to be fulfilled in the future. For his role, Darius is presented on the model of Ahasuerus who is neither inimical to the Jews nor evil, but merely carried away by an evil advisor, and in the end expresses his admiration for and dispenses mercy to the Jews. Darius is called "son of Ahasuerus" (9:1) perhaps to indicate that basic similarity. The paternity of Ahasuerus may be merely spiritual and allegorical.

[40] There developed in the wake of unfounded opinions attempts to identify him with various rulers such as the Median kings (Cyaxares II or his father Astyages), the Persian kings (Darius,

is linked to the overall chronological framework, and connected with the main conceptual basis: His age of sixty-two points to the start of the calamity "in the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim" (Dan. 1:1) so as to maintain the pattern of seventy, and parallels sixty-two "weeks" from the establishment of Babylonian sovereignty to the oppressions by Antiochus Epiphanes.[41] His Median government is ordered according to Persian patterns (e.g. a hundred and twenty satraps) and the event that occurs under his aegis flows in a channel close to those of the Book of Esther. The conspiracy at his court and its outcome resembles those of the court of Ahasuerus: The supreme governors are jealous of Daniel, scheme against and challenge his Judaism. The king succumbs to the temptation of their persuasion, imposing on his subjects an arbitrary malicious order "unalterable as a law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be abrogated" (6:9, 13, 16) but he is surprised and astonished when it turns out that because of it the Jew he is fond of will be slain. At night he cannot sleep, just as happened to Ahasuerus, and the change occurs. Daniel is extricated from the danger in the lions' den, and his denouncers are caught in the murderous trap they set for him.

At the crucial point, however, the parallel falls apart, and the connection between the two stories dissolves.[42] Darius does not order the Jews to be attacked and exterminated, but cancels requests and prayers for thirty days, except for petitions and pleas submitted to him. His decree forbidding religious observance and disallowing any object of worship besides himself is comprehensible only as a precedent for Antiochus Epiphanes' persecutions, and suggests apotheostic ceremonies for the sake of the divine pretensions of the despot who will "magnify himself above every god" (Dan. 11:36ff.). Daniel does not hesitate to contravene the king and sacrifice himself. He exemplifies total

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Cambyses, Cyrus), or the Persian governors of Babylonia (Gobryas, Gubaru), etc. The reasons and refutations are given by Rowley (see n. 35 above) who properly clarified the problem. There remained however the question of Darius' name, absorbed perhaps from the tales about Median rulers. The name Darius was evidently not unusual in the Hasmonean period, for Appian in *Roman History,* Book XII, The Mithridatic Wars (16) 106, (*LCL*), ed. H. White, vol. 2 (London 1955), mentions "Darius the Mede" (!) among the rulers that Pompey defeated.

[41] Jewish tradition understood that the age cited for Darius is adjusted for the pattern of seventy, as noted above in n. 65 of Chapter 3, but its entire purpose becomes clear in view of the obvious analogy to the sixty-two "weeks" of years. Most commentators did not understand why the exact age is given and hastened to correct the text. Such an emendation already appears in the Septuagint and is included in the corrections and additions which generally contribute little to and even interfere with a proper understanding of the source. See A. Geissen, *Der Septuaginta-Text des Buches Daniel 5-12* (Bonn 1968); J. Ziegler, *Septuaginta, Susanna-Daniel-Bel et Draco* (Göttingen 1954).

[42] Signs of the influence of the Book of Esther appear in the Book of Daniel, but not vice versa. The Book of Esther contains no echo of coercive decrees about the Torah or the stormy events of the Hasmonean period. There is no logical reason then for not setting its composition earlier than that of the Daniel chapters. See Y. Kaufmann, *Toldot ha-Emunah ha-Yisr'elit,* vol. 4 (Jerusalem 1956), p. 440ff.; M.Z. Segal, *Mavo ha-Mikra* (Jerusalem 1967), p. 718ff.; E.S. Hartom, "Esther," *EM,* vol. 1 (1965), p. 486ff.; C.A. Moore, *Esther, AB* 7 B (Garden City, N.Y. 1971); W. Dommershausen, *Die Estherrolle* (Stuttgart 1968).

adherence to the precepts of his faith and manifests unreserved willingness to be a martyr. A miracle is wrought in the den, Daniel emerges unharmed, and his persecutors are all torn to pieces, so that no vestige of them remains. The recesses of the wonderful story contain hidden symbolic meanings. The pit marks a prison, the hell of destruction, the darkness of the netherworld, in biblical terminology.[43] The lions that prowl there are the powers of ruin and devastation.[44] The evil-doers and plotters are consigned to oblivion, and are swallowed up in the blackness of nothingness. For them there is no hope and no revival.[45] Daniel flees the nightmarish area, as his three friends do from the fiery furnace, announces the redemption of his people and the renascence of the guardians of the sacred covenant, emerges from the pit and strides toward the pinnacle of glory, like Joseph, the prototype of the Hebrew slave at the dawn of the history of Israel.[46]

D. *The Ascent of the Servant in Daniel's Visions (Chapters 7–12)*

The notion of the Servant of God is intertwined quite obviously in the series of visions made up of four units and constructed upon the previous legends. His face already peers out of the first vision: Confronting four ferocious dangerous animals representing the subjugating kingdoms succeeding each other in wrathful epochs is the image of man (7:1 ff.).[47] Wild bestiality here characterizes the crushing pagan tyranny, like the horror of the stunning figure of mixed metals in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (2:31 ff.). The two stories parallel and complement each other. Hellenistic hegemony is represented by the fourth monster, that grinds with iron teeth and tramples with its legs, as the hard iron in the statue's legs shatters and crumbles everything. The monster's ten horns protrude in symmetrical harmony with the ten toes of the gigantic idol. The

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[43] Jer. 37:15 ff.; Zech. 9:11; Lam. 3:53 ff.; Ps. 28:1; 143:7; 30:2 ff.; 115:17; Is. 14:15; Ezek. 26:20.

[44] Similar themes appear in Ps. 57:1 ff.; 22:14 ff.; 7:3; 10:9; Jer. 50:17 has "Israel are scattered sheep" as opposed to "lions."

[45] Therefore their "sons and wives" (6:25) were also killed in the pit. The darkness of the pit in contrast to the morning light (when Daniel was saved) may also, as the Christian tradition puts it, symbolize perdition in hell that awaits the iniquitous in contrast to resurrection for the just. See E. Cassin, "Daniel dans la fosse aux lions," *RHR* 70 (1951): 129 ff.

[46] Gen. 37:22 ff.; 41:14. Daniel represents the highest type and model of martyrdom, higher than his three friends (Chapter 3), for he was not asked to contravene a specific precept from the Torah but only to refrain for thirty days from public prayer. The association to Antiochus Epiphanes' persecutions is suggested, for his edicts required that his birthday be celebrated monthly—I Macc. (see n. 7 above) I 58; II Macc. VI 7; Polybius XXX 26, (*LCL*), ed. W.R. Paton, vol. 6 (London 1927). The figure is perhaps hinted at by the thirty days of Darius.

[47] Through the lion motif, the vision is linked to the preceding chapter. The notion of bestiality as opposed to humanity is already discernible in Nebuchadnezzar's incarnations and the astonishing changes in his personality (Chapter 4). This can be viewed as still another sign of the integral internal unity of the entire work.

pattern adopted defines the number of rulers in the fourth (the Grecian) kingdom, before the crisis and the turning point.[48] In their wake comes the last despot, that is, Antiochus Epiphanes, as a small horn, spewing arrogance and empty words, initiating "war with the holy ones" (7:21), attacking and overcoming them, until he is routed in a confrontation and crushed.

The stone of Israel lands on the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and shatters it into smithereens, but is cast by a divine hand (2:34ff.). The divine judgement is described in the seventh chapter and is depicted in a bold artistic picture: "the Ancient of Days" is seated on the judge's bench, around him is gathered his great splendid entourage (7:9ff.), the die is cast and the verdict is to destroy the rampant monster; its body is burned, on the basis of what is said about the king of Assyria (archetype of the tyrant in the present), and according to the fate of the wicked, an "abhorrence" when burned (Is. 30:33; 66:24). Tyranny is defeated and uprooted. Suddenly there appears and advances "one like a son of man... with the clouds of heaven; he reached the Ancient of Days, and was presented to Him (Dan. 7:13-14), to be entrusted with everlasting universal sovereignty encompassing all nations.

The mystery play overlies allegorical meanings, and presents cryptic elements in the cosmic arena. The appearance of the "son of man", escorted by heavenly clouds is not reality but metaphor, like imaginary strange animals, in a transcendental mirror.[49] For a herald angel makes clear to Daniel that the holy ones, now attacked and battling, will receive the eternal kingdom, that is, in them will be realized the portrait of the son of man, who acquires control of the world, when the despicable monster falls and vanishes.[50] The original meaning was obscured and distorted by an erroneous interpretation grafted on the symbolical "son of man" image in the spirit of messianic ideology, which developed in subsequent generations and was sanctified in Christianity. The New Testament envisages the exalted Messiah, the "Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Mark 14:62),[51] that is, Jesus who suffers and is tormented in his first incarnation, so that he is the realization of the Servant of God, and will appear again "upon the throne of his glory" (Matt. 25:31ff.) surrounded by angels, in order to judge mankind, like the Creator himself. Such Christological views raise the expected savior to a divine

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[48] The representation is veiled in anonymity, and encompassed Alexander the Great and his ten successors, up to Antiochus Epiphanes. The specification and identifications remain obscure, but the problem can be solved, as it is by commentators, in a reasonable, hypothetical way.

[49] The simile of "a son of man" or "like a human being" echoes the adjacent "like a lion," "like a bear," "like a leopard," "eyes... like... a man" (7:4ff.).

[50] Dan. 7:18, 22, 27. The collective meaning is obvious and definite in the vision itself. Again there is no reason to dismantle verses and mutilate a clear text in order to justify a remote individualistic messianic interpretation.

[51] Parallel versions: Matt. 26:64; Luke 22:69; Acts 7:56.

height. They are alien to the spirit of the Daniel chapters, as well as to the fundamental ancient Jewish tradition which Jerome hints at in his debate with Porphyry, the pagan opponent and philosopher: Those who deny the message of Christianity identify the allegorical stone that shattered the statue, like the splendid appearance of the "son of man", with the Jewish people.[52]

There is no sign at all of a redeemer, a unique, divine personage in the Book of Daniel in any of its parts, nor in any of the other clear and verified Jewish sources from the Hellenistic and Hasmonean period.[53] The term "son of man" applied to a miraculous savior is not current in ordinary language, and even in the Gospels raises questions and problems.[54] But in the course of time the concept became befogged and its purport changed. In the Babylonian Talmud and medieval Jewish exegetes, with isolated exceptions, the term was extended to the Messiah King.[55] Modern Bible criticism uncovered the error, and it has been clarified by many scholars,[56] both Christian and Jewish, that the term does not refer to a messianic individual; nevertheless, the erroneous explanation is still current in some schools, because of a tendency to mythologize, that is, to seek some mysterious divine shading in the sketch of the "son of man." Also, the apocalyptic theories involved in the problem pseudepigraphic works detached from the nation and its history, redolent of enmity to its people, saturated with elements of Christology, replete with a sectarian atmosphere, diverging from the normative national path, and deviant in their fundamental abberations.[57] The

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[52] Jerome, *Commentaria in Danielem* 11:45; 7:13-14; 2:40 (*PL* 25).

[53] The number of these sources is not negligible (Books of the Maccabees, Ben Sira, Judith, Tobit, The Wisdom of Solomon, etc.). The absence of such a celestial savior should therefore not be considered accidental. These works (apocryphal in the Protestant terminology) should be clearly distinguished form the pseudepigraphic ones which include (see n. 67 below) apocalyptic visions.

[54] Matt. 16:13ff.; A.J.B. Higgins, *The Son of Man in the Teaching of Jesus* (Cambridge 1980); J. Coppens, "Où en est le problème de Jésus Fils de l'Homme," *ETL* 56 (1980): 282ff.; G. Vermes, "The Present State of the Son of Man Debate," *JJS* 29 (1978): 123ff.; P.M. Casey, "The Son of Man Problem," *ZNW* 67 (1976): 147ff.; idem, *NT* 18 (1976): 167ff.; W.O. Walker, "The Origin of the Son of Man Concept," *JBL* 91 (1972): 482ff.; R. Leivestad, "Der apokalyptische Menschensohn," *ASTI* 6 (1968): 49ff.

[55] bSanhedrin 98a; Likewise R-a-sh-i to Dan. 7:13; Nahmanides to Num. 24:17; among others. But Ibn Ezra (on Dan. 7:13) and Don Isaac Abrabanel (*Sefer Ma'ayanei ha-Yeshuah* VIII 5) interpret it as the Israelite nation. See commentaries in Chapter 3, n. 1. Contrary to the remoteness of the Babylonian Talmud from the original meaning, stress must be placed on the Jerusalem Talmud (yTa'anit II 65b) which attacks the Christian conception of the image of the "son of man" who has pretensions of being a human and god rising heavenward.

[56] Such as with many of the ones included in the bibliographical list in Chapter 3, n. 1.

[57] The question was dealt with in Chapter 2, Section D. The prevailing inclinations gave rise to the strange explanation (see nn. 18-19 above, and n. 22 in Chapter 2) that transformed the Hasidsholy men into heavenly creatures and their leader and representative, "like a son of man," into a celestial angel. See J.J. Collins, "The Son of Man" etc., *JBL* 93 (1974): 50ff.; U.B. Müller, *Messias und Menschensohn in jüdischen Apokalypsen und in der Offenbarung des Johannes* (Gütersloh 1972), p. 19ff.; Z. Zevit, "The Structure and Individual Elements of Daniel 7," *ZAW* 80 (1968): 396; A. Lacocque, *Le Livre de Daniel* (Neuchâtel-Paris 1976), ad loc.; J. Coppens, "Le Chapitre VII de Daniel," *ETL* 54 (1978): 301ff.; idem, *Le Fils de l'Homme et les Saints du Très Haut en Daniel VII, dans*

Book of Daniel, however, shows no signs of segregative sectarianism, no religious apostasy, no trace of ritual or smell of incense for the sake of a messianism crowned with a divine halo being realized in a human figure.

The symbolization of Israel by a human image is not unfounded, but is evidently based on known biblical texts from which a route actually leads to the poems of the Servant of God. Ezekiel represents Israel as a flock of sheep facing predatory animals, and even uses the term "man": "For you, my flock, flock that I tend, are man, and I am your God" (Ez. 34:31). The expression was considered suspect because it looks like an insertion and does not appear in the Septuagint.[58] But it is part of the talmudic tradition, and the basis there of Rabbi Simeon b. Yoḥai's saying: "You are called man, and idolaters are not called man" (bYevamot 61a). Philo, too, discerns both Israel and the man created in the form of God in the essence of the exalted logos.[59] Even clearer and more illuminating is the metaphor in Psalms comparing the nation to a grapevine, and to a son of man: "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel... you plucked up a vine from Egypt... why did you breach its wall... look down from heaven and see, take note, wild boars gnaw at it... of that vine... Grant your help to the man at your right hand, the son of man you have taken as your own" (Ps. 80: passim).[60] In a metaphoric analogy to Daniel's vision, the foe, like a predatory animal (a wild boar) attacks and tramples Israel described as a "son of man".[61] Jerome clearly testifies that the Jews in his time interpreted the destructive boar as applying to the Roman Empire.[62] That explanation is confirmed by an early midrashic tradition as well, whereby the Jewish people is depicted as a "son of man" in contrast to the empire that exploits, strikes and maltreats it.[63]

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les Apocryphes et dans le Nouveau Testament (Bruges–Paris 1961). No less strange is the specification that proposes Judas Maccabaeus as the "son of man"; H. Sahlin, "Antiochus Epiphanes und Judas Mackabäus," *Studia Theologica* 23 (1969): 41ff.; G.W. Buchanan, *To the Hebrews, AB* 36 (Garden City, N.Y. 1972), p. 38ff.; Thomas Fischer, *Seleukiden und Makkabäer* (see n. 13 above), p. 154ff. The confusion is further shown in the attempt to discern some features of Daniel's own personality in the figure of the "son of man." See H. Schmid, "Daniel der Menschensohn," *Judaica* 27 (1971): 192ff.; O. Plöger, *Das Buch Daniel* (Gütersloh 1965), p. 113.

[58] G.A. Cooke, *The Book of Ezekiel, ICC* (Edinburgh 1960); G. Fohrer, *Ezekiel, HAT* (Tübingen 1955); W. Eichrodt, *Ezekiel* (London 1970).

[59] Philo, *De Confusione Linguarum,* (28) 146; *Philo (LCL),* ed. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, vol. 4 (London 1949).

[60] F. Baethgen, *Die Psalmen, HAT* (Göttingen 1904); R. Kittel, *Die Psalmen, KAT* (Leipzig 1929); H. Gunkel, *Die Psalmen, HKAT* (Göttingen 1968); W.S. McCullough, "The Book of Psalms", *Interpreter's Bible,* vol. 4 (New York 1955).

[61] Similarly R-a-d-a-k on Psalm 80 in *Mikraot Gedolot* (Tel Aviv 1954); Menahem Hameiri, *Peirush le-Sefer Tehilim* (Jerusalem 1936), as opposed to the erroneous interpretation on the savior king, etc. Cf. also Ezek. 36:37f.

[62] Jerome, *Commentaria in Danielem* 7:7 (*PL* 25).

[63] Genesis Rabbah LXV 1, p. 713 in the J. Theodor–Ch. Albeck ed., *Bereshit Rabbah* (Jerusalem 1965); *Leviticus Rabbah* (on 11:2) XIII 5 (see n. 22 to Chapt. 3); *Yalkut Shim'oni* to Ps. 80, mark 829 (New York–Berlin 1926); etc. In this matter it must be kept in mind that the Israelites were considered God's children: Ex. 4:22; Deut. 14:1; 32:6; Hos. 11:1; Jer. 31:8. Daniel's symbolic-

Further crucial biblical authority for the figure symbolizing Israel is found in Isaiah's Servant of God poems. It is rooted in a verse reflected also in the chapter (12:3) terminating Daniel's visions: "Indeed, my servant shall be wise (successful), exalted and raised to great heights. Just as the many were appalled at him, so marred was his appearance unlike that of any man, and his form beyond human ("sons of man") semblance" (Is. 52:13-14). The downtrodden despised Servant who grovels in the earth and writhes in torment, who represents Israel in distress, who has been deprived of his human appearance and reviled, will extricate himself from the oppressor's fetters, shake off his profound humiliation, and rise to his full height. In close philosophical connection to Isaiah's prophecy, Daniel's vision contains the image of a worn and depressed people which "like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven" (7:13) and approaches the "Ancient of Days," when the times of wrath and oppression are over, once again assumes the glory of the Creator's form, and rises to the greatness of a man who controls the purified world. Thus, the figure of the man who climbs to the height of the Lord and returns to his origin is identified with the people sanctified in its Torah. But he is not a sublime Messiah, not a divine mythological entity, and not a shadow representing cosmopolitan humanity in a detached and abstract being. Israel is symbolized by a person who is exalted and climbs to the clouds in the sky, who reflects the future awaiting the Servant of God at the end of the road, when his yearnings have been fulfilled.[64]

The hidden purpose in the symbolic depiction is discernible also in *Wisdom of Solomon (Book of Wisdom)* written close to the Hasmonean period.[65] There the same typical lines and a group of similar motifs depict the wondrous metamorphosis in the fate of the Servant, who rises to a supreme height in human existence so that the redemption of the sick, despoiled and dispossessed

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visionary figure is called "like a son of man" (with no definite article) in a general sense, and not to signify an individual personage.

[64] Don Isaac Abrabanel (*Sefer Ma'ayanei ha-Yeshuah* VIII 5-8; see n. 1 of Chapt. 3 above) already understood very well the connection with the "Servant of God" chapters and refuted the Christian claims still proffered in various forms: "...and you already know that Israel was distinguished by the name of man and human, as the prophet said (Ezek. 34:31): 'For you, My flock, flock that I tend, are man,' and our sages interpreted, you are called man, and the nations of the world are not called man, and thus Daniel (7:13) said of Israel: 'One like a son of man came with the clouds of heaven' for he depicted the Israelite nation as a son of man... This shows that he ascended from below to above and that is why they said 'He reached the Ancient of Days'... This shows that this son of man was a litigant and came to court, and not to be the judge... and he meant by this that he would come in humility and misery... as the prophet (Is. 52:14) said, 'So marred was his appearance unlike that of man, his form beyond human semblance,' and also (53:3) 'despised, shunned by man.'"

[65] E. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes* etc., vol. 3[4] (Leipzig 1909), p. 508; R.H. Pfeiffer, *History of New Testament Times* (New York 1949), p. 326ff.; J. Reider, *The Book of Wisdom* (New York 1957); C. Larcher, *Études sur le Livre de la Sagesse* (Paris 1969); J.M. Reese, *Hellenistic Influence on the Book of Wisdom* (Rome 1970); D. Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon, AB* 43 (Garden City, N.Y. 1979); D. Georgi, *Weisheit Salomos, JSHRZ* (Gütersloh 1980).

people should take place. In the wake of the main prophecy (Is. 52:15), the splendor of his salvation is surprising and astounds his oppressors, who fed him bitterness, shame and derision (*Book of Wisdom* V 1ff.); in their blindness they saw but did not comprehend that his place was "among the sons of God and... among saints" (V 5); for "the kingdom of splendor and the diadem of beauty from the Lord's hand" are reserved for the righteous (V 16). Their souls are "in the hand of God... and in the time of their visitation they shall shine forth... they shall judge nations and have dominion over peoples and their Lord shall reign over them forever" (*Book of Wisdom* III 1, 7, 8), like the "holy ones" that acquire "the kingdom" in Daniel's vision (Dan. 7:22, 27), portrayed by the "son of man" to whom was entrusted "dominion and glory and a kingdom; all peoples and nations of every language must serve him... an everlasting dominion that will not end" (Dan. 7:14).[66]

Contrary to the Christian doctrine and the apocalyptic writings,[67] there is no other celestial savior besides the Almighty in His heaven. The features of the faithful Servant, according to Isaiah's prophecy, were etched on the visage of the "son of man," to indicate not an individual phenomenon, but a social and collective one in symbolic guise. This view engenders conclusions regarding the commonly held interpretations in the criticism and study of the New Testament. For it is not the Gospels that originated the synthesis merging the image of the Servant of God with that of the "son of man" who ascends and soars through the heavens.[68] The notion is already inherent in the Daniel ideology. The original meaning was discarded and changed to admit a personal Christological one by the Church professing a crucified Messiah who redeems mankind through the blood of his torment. The guardians of the Torah and its warriors in the Hasmonean Revolt believed that by themselves and their deeds the missions of the "son of man" and the Servant of God are realized. For Christianity, Christ displaces them, assumes their mission, acquires their features and inherits the crowns of the Jewish people.

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[66] Hebrew translations by E.S. Hartom, *Sefarim Ḥitzonim, Ketuvim Aḥaronim* (Tel Aviv 1962); M. Stein in A. Kahana, *Ha-Sefarim ha-Ḥitzonim,* vol. 1 (Tel Aviv 1937).

[67] Such as the Ethiopic I Enoch, Chapter 38ff.; IV Ezra, Chapter 13, etc.: R.H. Charles (ed.), *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English,* vol. II (Oxford 1913, repr. 1966). Many commentators construct their interpretations of Daniel's visions on syncretistic, apocalyptic and even mythological and gnostic mixtures with no distinction of time, roots, provenance or climate, in order to insert in them a miraculous savior (as indicated above in n. 57) as a transcendent supernatural figure. See K. Müller, "Menschensohn und Messias," *BZ,* n.s. 16 (1972): 161ff.; idem, *BZ,* n.s. 17 (1973): 52ff.; F.H. Borsch, *The Son of Man in Myth and History* (London 1967); J. Morgenstern, "The Son of Man," *JBL* 80 (1961): 65ff.; J. Muilenburg, "The Son of Man," *JBL* 79 (1960): 197ff.; S. Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* (Oxford 1959), p. 347ff.; A. Bentzen, *King and Messiah* (London 1955), p. 74ff.; C.H. Kraeling, *Anthropos and Son of Man* (New York 1927), p. 128ff.

[68] T.W. Manson, "The Son of Man in Daniel, Enoch and the Gospels," *BJRL* 32, 2 (1950): 171ff.; M.D. Hooker, *The Son of Man in Mark* (London 1967), p. 182ff.; idem, *Jesus and the Servant* (London 1959).

In the second vision Daniel sees (8:1ff.) the artistic canvas is enriched and clarified. The Grecian kingdom is referred to explicitly but is obscure in most of its developments, and always disguised by the anonymity of its rulers. Daniel sees it in the shape of a he-goat striking down a two-horned ram, in other words defeating "the kings of Media and Persia" endowed with strength and growing horns. Like "another small horn" arrogantly reaching toward heaven in the earlier chapter,[69] a final and offensive "small horn" protrudes from the animal and rises to the stars and to the dwelling place of the Most High. The horn defiles His Temple, stops His service and the regular sacrifice. It represents "a king... impudent and versed in intrigue" (Dan. 8:23) who challenges and threatens the Rock of Israel and the people of "holy ones."[70] The scene is self-explanatory and leaves no room for doubt. Since antiquity, according to Josephus, commentators had no trouble identifying Antiochus Epiphanes in the figure of the wicked criminal king.[71]

The description characterizing his iniquity abounds in expressions from the Servant of God poems, and not because of blind chance or stylistic play: "He will have great might... and destroy the mighty and the holy ones... By his wisdom (cunning) he... will use deceit successfully... will destroy many" (Dan. 8:24–25). The collection was gathered in order to present the tyrant who crushes and plots to destroy the dwellings of the God of Israel, in the face of the

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[69] Cf. "a small horn" (Dan. 8:9ff.) like "another small horn" (7:8ff.). In his allegorical zoological pictures, the author relied on biblical foundations (mainly Ezek. 34:11ff.), but he may have derived some elements from similes current in the world around him where a deer symbolized Persia and a goat Syria. See F. Cumont, "La plus ancienne géographie astrologique," *Klio* 9 (1909): 263ff.; Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* XIX 1.3 (*LCL*), ed. J.C. Rolfe, vol. 1 (London 1971). Of the deer's two horns, the first shorter one represents Media while the second longer one represents Persia, in the characteristic symbolism throughout the Book of Daniel: 8:3, 20; 2:39; 5:28; 6:1 ff; 9:1ff. The goat with a conspicuous horn, which suddenly emerges and downs the deer, reflects the rise of the Greek-Macedonian empire, through Alexander and his rapid conquests. The chapter is linked to the main body of the work by fundamental motifs and notions. Certain difficulties do remain (verse 14 and the count of the days; see n. 13 above), but there is insufficient reason for detaching the chapter from the rest of the work; contrary to B. Hasslberger, *Hoffnung in der Bedrängnis* (St. Ottilien–Munich 1977), pp. 385ff., 408ff.

[70] Dan. 8:23. A king who is *"az panim"* (impudent) like a nation that is *"az panim"* (Deut. 28:50) leads to calamity and destruction by God's will. This vicious king is "versed in intrigue" like the arrogant instrument of wrath boasting "By the might of my hand have I wrought it, By my skill for I am clever" (Is. 10:13). In contrast to him Daniel is endowed with wisdom, intelligence and knowledge of riddles (5:12) by the "spirit of the God" (5:14; 4:6, 15). The king arrogantly elevates himself to heaven and tramples the stars (Dan. 8:10) and falls "not by hands" (8:25; 11:45; 2:45) like the King of Assyria (Is. 10:5ff.; 14:12ff.; 31:8) who is an archetype for Antiochus Epiphanes veiled in anonymity. "In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar" Daniel's vision appears in "Shushan (Susa) in the province of Elam" (8:1ff.) according to the precedent in the time of King Ahasuerus (Est. 1:2-3) and the chronological framework that encompasses (n. 268 in Chapter 3) all of the Daniel chapters. Elam too is mentioned because of Isaiah's prophecy (21:2ff.) that the troops of Elam and Media would attack in order to defeat Babylonia.

[71] Josephus, *Ant.* X 275–276 (see n. 7 above); Jerome, *Commentaria in Danielem,* ad loc., *PL* 25.

sanctified community analogous to the Servant of God, as is written: "Indeed, my servant shall be wise (successful)... so marred was his appearance, unlike that of man... he had spoken no deceit... I will divide him a portion with the many and he shall divide the spoil with the mighty" (Is. 52:13–14; 53:9, 12).

Consequently, the antagonism between the rival contending camps is stressed here in parallel lines. The foe grows stronger in the days of wrath, and "has great might" against "the mighty and the holy ones"; he relied on "his wisdom" (cunning) against "the wise," endowed with superior intelligence, because of the true Torah. There is "deceit" as against "no deceit." Also, he will "destroy (mar) many" in contrast to the suffering victim, whose appearance is "so marred," in his distress, but who will recover at the time of his salvation and assume the form of an exalted human being. The image of the Servant brings to life the contrast of the despotism and evil.

The secret of the chronology, encompassing the periods of servitude and the date of its end, is revealed in the third vision (Dan. 9:1ff.). Its basis is concealed in the prophecy positing seventy years of exile (Jer. 25:12; 29:10), which points out the road leading to the gates of redemption.[72] The days of wrath are mounting up and about to end. The angel Gabriel tells Daniel, "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, until the measure of transgression is filled and that of sin complete... and eternal righteousness ushered in" (Dan. 9:24).[73]

[72] "In the first year of Darius son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent" (9:1), that is, before Cyrus' succession and his declaration in favor of the Jewish exiles, it became clear to Daniel that full redemption would not be attained during the historical period of the partial Return to Zion (see nn. 12-13 above), but in the remote eschatological Return to Zion. Gabriel's appearance is preceded by the prayer of Daniel, who pleads and confesses like Ezra did (Chapter 9) and Nehemiah (Chapter 1 as well as 9) in order to obtain divine mercy for his people, his capital and the "desolate Temple." The prayer is linked to Gabriel's oration in its ideas, its expressions (such as *titakh* in both verses 11 and 27) and especially in the central purpose of the desolation curse that is stressed (verses 17-18) which will reach its climax in the realization of the "abomination of desolation" (see Chapter 2, n. 28), a salient image here (9:27) as it is in the adjacent visions (8:13; 11:31; 12:11). There is no logical justification for considering the prayer, as have many commentators—recently L.F. Hartman and A.A. Di Lella (see n. 1 in Chapter 3 above)—a separate unit or interpolation only superficially connected with the chapter itself.

[73] The text continues: "and prophetic vision ratified, and the holy of holies anointed" (9:24), that is, to complete the fulfillment of the prophecies and celebrate the rededication of the Jerusalem Temple and its sanctification with the hidden oil (yHorayot III 47c; yMakkot II 32a; yShekalim VI 49c; yTa'anit II 65a; ySotah VIII 22c; bYoma 52b; 21b; bHorayot 12a; bKeritot 5b; tSotah XIII 1) which was concealed before the destruction of the Temple and disappeared (together with the holy spirit, the ark of the covenant, the holy flame, *urim and thummim*) and did not reappear during the Return to Zion. The renovation of the house of God in its full splendor will underline the fulfillment of the prophecies and complete salvation. The changes in the history of the nation and its hopes focus on the fate of the Temple. The high priest, called "the anointed," is presented only in order to mark the relevant points in the chronological pattern: the initial construction of Jerusalem (9:25) and the death of Onias III (9:26) at the end of the sixty-two "weeks" (of years). There are no special priestly views or trends (despite J.C.H. Lebram's claim in two articles listed in n. 239 of Chapter 3, and A. Lacocque, *Le Livre de Daniel* [Neuchâtel–Paris 1976], p. 144) in the emphasis on the centrality of the

That verse embodies the poetry extolling the Servant of God: "...he was wounded for our transgressions, he was crushed because of our sins... my righteous servant makes the many righteous,[74] and he bears their sins" (Is. 53:5, 11). Justice will dawn and shine forever, when the sin is atoned for, and iniquity is completely cleansed through the suffering of those who fall and are hurt for the sake of the Torah of their forefathers. Their suffering and writhing, as well as their splendid future, reflect the fate of the Servant faithful to his Creator.

The affinity with the sketch of the Servant does not presuppose martyrdom that blocks the natural inclination to repel the harasser, quenches the desire to self-defense, and unconditionally decrees passive waiting. The blood of the dead and tortured does not bring immediate salvation from heaven without human exertion and effort, but purifies the sin-burdened people.[75] Atonement just paves the way for victory in the struggle with enemy forces. For the sound of armed conflict echoes in Gabriel's oration: "...and to the end of the war desolation is decreed" (Dan. 9:26). A militant note is sounded in earlier episodes as well (8:10, 12),[76] which hint at the rampage of the royal enemy, in a "war with the holy ones" (7:21) who meanwhile receive only "a little help" (11:34). The ultimate results, however, are predetermined by the Lord's decree, and explained in Nebuchadnezzar's dream: The image of pagan tyranny sags and shatters when its legs are destroyed by the blows of the stone symbolizing Israel, and the Grecian kingdom is annihilated. The fist of the awakening people is

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Temple represented by the high priest. The epithet "the anointed" (as in Lev. 4:3 ff.), applied to the high priest, is used in a metaphorical rather than a real sense, for the anointment ceremony with holy oil had not been resumed following the Return to Zion, as indicated above. In their silence the historical sources confirm the talmudic tradition, and there is no logical reason to contradict it, despite E. Schürer, *Geschichte* (see n. 65 above), vol. 2^4, p. 285, following Wellhausen.

[74] Also "the sanctuary shall be righted" in the same vein (see n. 20 above). There is no need to correct the text here or other verses (like 9:27 or 12:3) on the basis of speculative assumptions that the Hebrew chapters in the visions (8-12) were translated from a vanished Aramaic source, as proposed by F. Zimmermann, *Biblical Books Translated from the Aramaic* (New York 1975), p. 7ff.; H.L. Ginsberg, *Studies in Daniel* (New York 1948), p. 38ff. Any dubious and superfluous textual changes only confound the original meaning.

[75] I Macc. I 60ff.; II Macc. VI 12ff.; IV Macc. V 1ff. See n. 7 above.

[76] The "princes (angels) of the nations" do fight in heaven (Dan. 10:12ff.) but their clash is by litigation in the divine judgements. The visions for the first time present the notion that each nation is represented by an angel in a trial being held in heaven that decides the fate of mankind. That is why the "prince of the Persian kingdom" and the "prince of Greece" appear against Michael who is the prince of Israel (10:21; 12:1). They fight and contend in that "courtroom on high", "not with a sword or spear," as the correct explanation in *Midrash Daniel* (see n. 1 of Chapter 3), notes (10:20), "but these prosecute... and these speak in defense" as in a regular legal proceeding: ySanhedrin I 18a; Canticles Rabbah (see n. 98 of Chapter 3 above) on 1:9; 2:1; 3:6; bYoma 77a. Before the Book of Daniel was written there was no explicit expression of that notion. See Y.M. Grintz, "Bein Ugarit le-Qumran," *Eshkolot,* vol. 4 (Jerusalem 1962), p. 146ff. The Daniel visions contain no physical or mythological confrontation between angels, no struggle resulting in destruction of demonic forces, no annihilation of any dragon or Satan or Antichrist facing the deity or savior in the end of days.

wielded by the Almighty in order to carry out the judgment. This then refutes the theories holding that the Book of Daniel reflects a Jewish Hasidism that insisted on constant passivity during the period of oppression, abstained from any active initiative, vetoed the incipient rebellion, shrank from military action, rejected the battle cries and political aspirations of those streaming to the Hasmonean camp.[77]

In the fourth and final vision, which occupies three chapters (10-12), the veil of mystery becomes sheerer, almost transparent. The image of the Hellenistic period and events is given in almost straightforward terms, although the shroud of secrecy is not removed and the curtain separating the covert from the overt does not vanish. The machinations of Antiochus Epiphanes, his frenzy and iniquity are treated in considerable detail. The defeat of the foe is imminent (Dan. 11:44-45), and in its wake comes the glimmer of redemption elucidating the epilogue of the work. The poet and visionary expresses the heartfelt wishes and desires of his generation. The yearned for renascence is not just Jewish-national and universalist-human, but also individual-personal: "...and at that time your people will be rescued, all who are inscribed in the book. And many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to eternal life, and some to reproaches and everlasting abhorrence" (Dan. 12:1-2). The verse expresses belief in everlasting resurrection, on the basis of a combination of authoritative quotations from the prophecies of Isaiah: "Oh let your dead revive, let corpses arise. Awake and shout for joy who dwell in the dust; for your dew is like the dew on fresh growth; You make the land of the shades come to life" (Is. 26:19); "They shall go out and gaze on the corpses of the men who rebelled against Me; their worms shall not die, nor their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh" (Is. 66:24).[78] The wicked and maleficent are sentenced to

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[77] The problem was treated above, in n. 5, as well as in n. 70 of Chapter 3. The Daniel chapters were shaped in an atmosphere of persecution and martyrdom when the armed revolt had just started and was far from its goal. Daniel addresses the suffering, struggling Hasids not with bellicose slogans or with moral reprimands for he himself is not part of their generation, but located in the Babylonian exile and observing the distant future through a veil of mist and mystery. There is therefore no sense in the strange assessments on the lack of moral motivation and on the dominant pessimism in regard to the world on the part of the author, supposedly sunk in contemplation of the imminent end and awaiting a cosmic catastrophe. The mythologization and apocalyptization distorted the authentic intentions. In a pure monotheistic spirit, Daniel expresses profound faith that the prophecies of salvation will be fulfilled in the Hasmonean Revolt. The triumph of the guardians of the Torah also embodies the hope of mankind when the eclipse of paganism begins. Israel (like the stone) is the instrument of the divine decree that operates on the basis of fair judgement. No fatalistic elements, no blind predestination and no mechanistic laws based on rigid mathematical patterns restrict the exalted sovereign divine wisdom or excuse nations and individuals from full moral responsibility.

[78] The term *"deraon"* (=abhorrence) does not appear elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible and links the two verses noted. The concept of hell of the later tradition, is derived from the Isaiah passage (Y. Kaufmann, *Toldot-ha-Emunah ha-Yisr'elit* [see n. 42 above], vol. 4, p. 153), but the biblical text does not yet provide a clear notion or full picture as the talmudic sources do: bEruvin 19a; bPesaḥim 54a; bRosh Ha-Shanah 17a, etc.

"abhorrence" in the fires of hell, like the monster representing the Grecian kingdom (Dan. 7:11) that was consumed by fires. In contrast the righteous are saved and overcome the terrors of destruction, just as Daniel and his friends were extricated (Dan. 3:24ff.; 6:22ff.) from the fiery furnance and the open pit, the brink of oblivion.

The partisans of the ancestral covenant, the guardians of the Torah, its defenders and warriors during the insurgence and revolt, will receive the wonders of salvation destined for them: "And the wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and those that lead the many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3). In a pure, perfect and idealistic mirror, Daniel expresses and represents the "wise" and those that "lead the many to righteousness" who will attain eternal life and resemble the stars in the sky.[79] Evident in them is the reflection of the Servant of God who "shall be wise (sucessful), exalted and raised to great heaights..." (Is 52:13); "for he shall grow up before him as a tender plant... [though] he was cut off from the land of the living... my righteous servant makes the many righteous" (Is. 53, passim).[80]

The vexation of the stormy era, and the delving into the secrets of the prophecies apparently gave rise to the hopes for the resurrection of the soul, the full implementation of the sentence of reward and punishment after death. The origin of this faith has already been considered from various viewpoints and aspects, in the light of the circumstances and presumed external influences,[81] and cannot be scrutinized here. An examination of the portrait of the Servant,

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[79] Dan. 1:4ff. "...Those who forsake the holy covenant"... and "those who violate the covenant"... confront "the wise of the people" (11:30-33). See Chapter 3, Section E and n. 239 there.

[80] The prophet's oration contains the notion of suffering and death, burial and resurrecton but with metaphoric and symbolic intent. Such a notion occurs also in Ezekiel (Chapter 37) and Isaiah (26:19) without any sense of personal individual resurrection from the dead.

[81] R. Martin-Achard, *De la Mort à la Résurrection* (Neuchâtel-Paris 1956); B.J. Alfrink, "L'idée de résurrection d'après Daniel XII 1-2", *Bibl.* 40 (1959): 355ff.; S.G.F. Brandon, *The Judgement of the Dead* (London 1967); G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism* (Cambridge, Mass. 1972). A large number of commentators and students of this matter imagined they discerned Persian influence on this point. See R.C. Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism* (London 1961), p. 58. However neither this verse nor any of the Daniel visions on redemption disclose any clear direct connection with Persian tenets. See F. König, *Zarathustras Jenseitsvorstellungen und das Alte Testament* (Vienna 1964), pp. 8ff.; 180ff.; I. Scheftelowitz, *Die altpersische Religion und das Judentum* (Giessen 1920), p. 195ff. Clearer and even more obvious are points resembling and paralleling Greek concepts on the ascension of pure souls to heaven, and the descent of the bad ones to hell or oblivion; see Plato, *The Laws,* X 904–905 (*LCL*), ed. R.G. Bury (London 1968); Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* VIII 31 (*LCL*), ed. R.D. Hicks (London 1950). Thus also heroes like Hercules rise to heaven and select souls among the stars, almost like "the wise" devoted to their God in Daniel's vision. See Diodorus Siculus (op. cit. in n. 25 above), IV 38; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* IX 271–272 (*LCL*), ed. F.J. Miller (London 1958); F. Cumont, *After Life in Roman Paganism* (New York 1959); W. Jaeger, "The Greek Ideas of Immortality," *HTR* 52 (1959): 135ff. The faith emerging from the Book of Daniel can be understood as confrontation with the world around rather than as passive absorption of its beliefs.

however, blended here with clearly biblical motifs, reveals internal connections with the main organic fabric, and illuminates the immanent significance of this vision. A deep polar gap separates the pietist Jewish Torah from the Hellenistic royalist ideology, the heir to pagan sovereignty, whose foundation is located in "the land of Shinar." That is why Israel the Servant is set against the oppressive tyrant who inflates himself "to the host of heaven" in his malevolence, "cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground" and trampled them,[82] that is, kicks and stamps and abases the people, dragging it down. For "this nation is likened to dust and likened to the stars."[83] Antiochus Epiphanes deifies and aggrandizes himself, according to the concepts of apotheosis current among Hellenistic kings which raises them in ritual and ceremony to the rank of sons of gods.[84] Countering that hollow arrogance and groundless pretension, Daniel announces the downfall of pagan despotism, and the redemption of the oppressed and the downtrodden Hasids who will attain everlasting life and dominion in the world, and will reach the heavens. An eternal halo will crown them "like the brightness of the firmament" (Dan. 12:3) and the glory of the stars.[85] In the face of the defeated tyrant's conceit and the shattered vanities of

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[82] Dan. 8:9ff. The contrast that is emphasized was elucidated in Section B above.

[83] bMegillah 16a; yNedarim III 38a; Gen. 22:17; Deut. 1:10; etc.

[84] L. Cerfaux & J. Tondriau, *Le Culte des Souverains dans la Civilisation Gréco-Romaine* (Tournai 1957); F. Taeger, *Charisma, Studien zur Geschichte des antiken Herrscherkultes,* vols. 1 & 2 (Stuttgart 1957–1960); W. den Boer, ed., *Le Culte des Souverains dans l'Empire Romain, Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique* XIX (Geneva 1973); C.H. Talbert, "The Concept of Immortals in Mediterranean Antiquity," *JBL* 94 (1975): 419ff.

[85] The rise of the Servant to the eternal firmament in the vision symbolizes resurrection that is not only collective and national but also personal and individual. The expression is not entirely unequivocal and, like the prophecies it is based on, allows for another construction, a metaphoric one, that is, the elevation of the nation from its degradation. This was Porphyry's interpretation, as appears from Jerome, *Commentaria in Danielem* (12:1ff.), and also that of a small group of Christian writers such as Polychronius, *In Danielem* (ad loc.), ed. Angelo Mai, *Scriptorum Veterum Nova Collectio,* vol. 1 (Rome 1825). The exceptional explanation was also taken over by a few marginal medieval Jewish exegetes according to Abraham Ibn Ezra (ad loc.—see n. 1 of Chapter 3 above) and Joseph Albo, *Sefer ha-Ikarim* IV 35, p. 807 in the Maḥbarot le-Sifrut edition (Tel Aviv 1964). The interpretation, now abandoned, was also adopted by some European scholars such as Hugo Grotius, *Annotationes ad Vetus Testamentum* on Daniel 12:2, *Opera Omnia Theologica,* vol. I (Amsterdam 1679), p. 484; C.F. Houbigant, *Biblia Hebraica,* IV (Paris 1753), p. 586; J.S. Semler, *Apparatus Ad Liberalem Veteris Testamenti Interpretationem* (Halle 1773), p. 259f. However, the ambiguous verse differentiating the ultimate fate of the righteous from that of the iniquitous after their awakening, according to God's judgement, suggests that the text refers to personal individual resurrection, not only to the national collective kind. The nature of the resurrection (restricted to an indefinite number) is not specified and need not be of the flesh. The Wisdom of Solomon (Chapter III; see n. 65 above) and IV Maccabees (XVII 4ff.; see Chapter II, n. 40 above) explain it as immortality of the soul, on the basis of concepts prevalent in Greek philosophy. Although III Macc. (VI 6-7) displays familiarity with the Daniel stories it includes no reference at all to those beliefs. Consequently it is not surprising that I Macc., closely related to the Book of Daniel (see Chapter 1, n. 56 above), ignores them entirely. That disregard may have been motivated by doubts or differences of opinion on the interpretation, or reluctance to remove the aura of mystery surrounding the Daniel visions.

his cult, the Servant rises and ascends to the height of the existence of man, created in the shape of his God, and approaches (Dan. 7:13) the throne of his Father in heaven.

CHAPTER FIVE

SIMEON BEN SHATAḤ AND ALEXANDER JANNAEUS

A. *Critical Method for Talmudic Sources*

The range of links and relations between Simeon b. Shataḥ with his fellowship and Alexander Jannaeus, king and high priest, in all its aspects and with all its problems, has already been dealt with in a long series of studies, for it has obvious and crucial importance in connection with the attitude of the Pharisees to the Hasmonean kingdom as reflected by internal tradition.[1] Various groups of scholars labored hard in an effort to analyze and classify the fragmentary testimonies from those days, and the recollections preserved in the recesses and scattered through the sections of the talmudic works, which flowed in the hidden channels of generation-long heritage until they were solidified in its literary patterns.[2] The critical chisel was efficiently wielded to strip legends of their artistic cloak and scrape out the imaginary features, uncover the old core, blend vague fragments of rumors into a logical picture, harmonize them with

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[1] The first version of this chapter appeared in the Gedalyahu Alon Memorial Volume (Tel Aviv 1970, p. 69ff.) in honor of a great teacher who introduced me to the treasures of the Talmud. Section D of the chapter represents a partial summary of my doctoral dissertation, submitted to the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, in 1962, under the supervision of Prof. Y. (I.F.) Baer, who provided methodological guidance, knowledge and inspiration. Heartfelt thanks are insufficient compensation for his generosity and labor. I alone, however, am responsible for the opinions and conclusions here expressed. The subject was presented in various classes and public lectures, and published in the Hebrew edition (1980) of this book. See talmudic sources in Preface, n. 14.

[2] Z. Frankel, *Darkhei ha-Mishnah* (repr. Tel Aviv 1959); I.H. Weiss, *Dor Dor ve-Dorshav,* vols. 1-2 (repr. Jerusalem 1964); I. Halevy, *Dorot ha-Rishonim,* 5 vols. (repr. Jerusalem 1967); Z. Yavetz, *Toldot Yisrael,* vol. 4 (Tel Aviv 1936); J. Klausner, *Historia shel ha-Bayit ha-Sheni,* vol. 3[2] (Jerusalem 1950); B.Z. Luria, *Yanai ha-Melekh* (Jerusalem 1961); G. Alon, *Meḥkarim be-Toldot Yisrael,* vol. 1 (Tel Aviv 1957; idem, English trans., *Jews, Judaism and the Classical World* (Jerusalem 1977); E.E. Urbach, *Ḥazal* (Jerusalem 1969); L. Herzfeld, "Chronologische Ansetzung der Schriftgelehrten," *MGWJ* 3 (1854): 221ff.; I.M. Jost, *Geschichte des Judenthums und seiner Secten,* vol. 1 (Leipzig 1857); J. Derenbourg, *Essai sur l'Histoire et la Géographie de la Palestine* (Paris 1867); J. Wellhausen, *Die Pharisäer und die Sadducäer* (Greifswald 1874—Hanover 1924); H. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden,* vol. 3[3] (Leipzig 1878); Isr. Lévi, "Les Sources Talmudiques De l'Histoire Juive," *REJ* 35 (1897): 213ff.; E. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes,* vols. 1-3[4] (Leipzig 1901–1909); idem, A New English Version by G. Vermes–F. Millar–M. Black, vols. 1-2 (Edinburgh 1973–1979); R. Leszynski, "Simon Ben Schétah," *REJ* 63 (1912): 216ff.; A. Schlatter, *Geschichte Israels von Alexander dem Grossen bis Hadrian*[3] (repr. Stuttgart 1925–1972); G.F. Moore, *in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim,* vols. 1-3 (Cambridge, Mass. 1932); S. Zeitlin, *The Rise and Fall of the Judean State,* 3 vols. (Philadelphia 1962–1978); J. Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70,* vols. 1-3 (Leiden 1971); E.E. Halevy, *Ha-Agada ha-Historit-Biografit* (Tel Aviv 1975).

Josephus' descriptions, and find suitable correlative links to the clear background of the period. Some basic problems, however, have not yet been solved, some crucial questions have not been answered definitively, and there remains an open, though dimensionally restricted field for additional study.

The method adopted here utilizes the varied achievements and tools of previous research but diverges from the usual path in distinguishing between the Eretz Israel and Babylonian branches of talmudic literature. The main basis and the sources are to a large extent common to both, and the topics are mostly analagous and similar, so that the distinction seems at first glance artificial and superfluous. A careful examination, however, uncovers deep substantive differences between the two talmudic units which already emerged at the time of their evolution.[3] Historical criticism with aspirations to completeness that ignores these contrasts and disegards the temporal and spatial distance, which separates those sources, is unthinkable. Legends, adages and even tannaitic extra-mishnaic tradition (called Baraita) might very well be garbled from moving to another climate in the course of redaction and copying.[4] The greater antiquity of the Jerusalem Talmud, which was sealed several generations before the Babylonian, and the fact that it is rooted in the earth of its homeland and draws directly on recollections of the past, endow it in advance with superiority in the retention of the purely Eretz Israel tradition.[5] In contrast the Babylonian Talmud is saturated with and sometimes gives off an atmosphere of distant Diaspora. The additional midrashic literature close to the Jerusalem Talmud (such as Genesis Rabbah, Leviticus Rabbah, etc.), should be differentiated, by the same criteria, from the later collections which incorporated various supplements and absorbed the influence of the Babylonian Talmud.[6]

The particular virtues of the Jerusalem Talmud have been explained by scholars, and comments have even been made on its superiority in regard to certain matters. Its version has been given preference more than once but

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[3] bSanhedrin 24a; bBava Metzia 85a; b Yoma 57a. Striking diferences are already discernible in the basic sources themselves between the characteristic approaches of the Jewish Babylonian sages and those of Eretz Israel. See also M.A. Tennenblatt, *Perakim Ḥadashim le-Toldot Eretz Yisrael u-Vavel bi-Tekufat ha-Talmud* (Tel Aviv 1966).

[4] I.H. Weiss, *Dor Dor ve-Dorshav* (see n. 2 above), vol. 2, p. 216ff.

[5] Z. Frankel, *Mavo ha-Yerushalmi* (Breslau 1870); L. Ginzberg, *Perushim ve-Ḥidushim ba-Yerushalmi,* vol. 1 (New York 1941).

[6] L. Zunz, *Ha-Derashot be-Yisrael,* Hebrew version completed and edited by Albeck (Jerusalem 1947); Ch. Albeck, *Mavo le-Bereshit Rabbah* (Berlin 1931–Jerusalem 1965); Ch. Albeck, "Midrash Va-Yikra Rabbah," *Louis (Levi) Ginzberg Jubilee Volume* (New York 1946), Hebrew Section, p. 25ff.; M. Margaliot, *Midrash Va-Yikra Rabbah,* vol. 5 (Jerusalem 1960), p. IXff. Lamentations Rabbah too-*Midrash Eikhah Rabbah* (S. Buber ed., Vilna 1899) is based on a solid Eretz Israel foundation, and apparently this is true also of other midrashic works, e.g. Canticles Rabbah or *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* in *Midrash Rabbah,* Romm ed. (Vilna 1921), but there is an absence of comprehensive research and careful critical editions making it possible to separate the original authentic foundation from the secondary layers. See Z.M. Rabinowitz, *Ginzei Midrash* (Tel Aviv Univ. 1976).

without any comprehensive explanation or conclusions.[7] Its primacy has not been sufficiently stressed, and not heretofore defined as a solid methodical assumption according to the prevailing accepted principles of critical historical thought for the evaluation and ranking of sources. A superficial survey of several typical chapters will illustrate the inferiority of the Babylonian Talmud in respect to the preservation of ancient recollections, and show that the isolated differences should not be regarded as blind chance.

If we look, for instance, into the Babylonian treatment of the *Takkanot* (ordinances) of Yoḥanan (John), the Hasmonean ruler and high priest, we find that the Baraita discriminates between *ḥaver* and *am ha-aretz,* a distinction that does not appear in the Jerusalem Talmud, and does not fit the circumstances.[8] Rabban Gamaliel, who met with elders "on the top of Temple Mount" is incorrectly identified by the Babylonian Talmud with Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh.[9] The battle of Bethar is described in the Jerusalem Talmud against a real background (though not devoid of a cloak of legend)—without any hostile tinge or fundamental negation — with the well-known figures of Emperor Hadrian, Bar Koziva (Bar Kokhva), Rabbi Akiva, and Rabbi Eleazar Hamoda'i; in the erroneous Babylonian version, however, Bethar was taken by Vespasian, Bar-Koziva was slain by order of the rabbis after the refutation of his messianic status, Rabbi Akiva's support of the rebel leader was rescinded, and the latter's exploits were inherited by his double, "Bar-Daroma," whose independent existence rests on nothing at all.[10] Confusion reigns also in the contiguous Babylonian sections on the persecutions under the Roman Empire.[11] The Jerusalem Talmud mentions the calamity that overtook the Jews of Alexandria in the uprising in Trajan's time, while the Babylonian shifts the event to the period of Alexander the Great, and in another version to Emperor Hadrian's time.[12] The advantage of the Jerusalem Talmud is obvious in the story

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[7] Z. Frankel, *Vorstudien zu der Septuaginta* (Leipzig 1841), p. 29; idem, "Über den Lapidarstyl der talmudischen Historik," *MGWJ* 1 (1852): 412; A. Geiger, *Urschrift und Übersetzungen der Bibel* (Frankfurt 1857, repr. 1928), p. 158; idem, "Die Jerusalemische Gemara," *Jüdische Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft und Leben* 8 (Breslau 1870): 291ff.; H.L. Strack, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* Cleveland & New York 1963), p. 69.

[8] ySotah IX 24a; yMa'aser Sheni V 56d; bSotah 47bf.; tSotah XIII 10; A. Büchler, *Der galiläische Am-Haarez des zweiten Jahrhunderts* (Vienna 1906), p. 16ff.; idem, *Am ha-Aretz ha-Gelili* (Jerusalem 1964), p. 19f.

[9] ySanhedrin I 18a; bSanhedrin 11b; I.H. Weiss, *Dor Dor ve-Dorshav* (see n. 2 above), vol. 1, p. 178; G. Alon, *Toldot ha-Yehudim be-Eretz Yisrael bi-Tekufat ha-Mishnah ve-ha-Talmud,* vol. 1 (Tel Aviv 1952), p. 150; A. Büchler, *Das Synedrion in Jerusalem* (Vienna 1902), p. 118; H. Mantel, *Studies in the History of the Sanhedrin* (Cambridge, Mass. 1961), p. 26.

[10] yTa'anit IV 68d; Lamentations Rabbah (on 2:2), p. 100ff. in the S. Büber ed. (see n. 6 above); bGittin 57a-b; bSanhedrin 93b, 97b; A. Oppenheimer ed., *Mered Bar Kokhva* (Jerusalem 1980).

[11] bGittin 55b; bRosh Ha-Shanah 19a; bMe'ilah 17a; G. Alon, *Toldot ha-Yehudim,* vol. 2 (Tel Aviv 1955), pp. 61, 70.

[12] ySukkah V 55b; bSukkah 51b; bGittin 57b.

of the appointment of the celebrated Hillel as *Nasi* (president) by the "elders of Bathyra"[13] as well as in the full text of the "eighteen decrees" that were proclaimed by sages assembled in "the attic of Hananiah b. Hezekiah b. Gorion."[14] Aquila, the proselyte, who translated the Bible into Greek, at the time of Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Joshua and Rabbi Akiva,[15] was praised by the sages of Eretz Israel and attested to by the Church Fathers.[16] In the Babylonian talmudic tradition he turned into the proselyte Onkelos, who did the Aramaic Targum-translation, and the times were confused as well as the names.[17] In contrast to the virtues of the Jerusalem Talmud, the Babylonian at times manifests anti-revolt Diaspora features, such the distortion of the Bar Koziva story noted above, the story of Rabbi Yoḥanan b. Zakkai's flight from besieged Jerusalem (Gittin 56a-b in contrast to Lamentations Rabbah on 1:5, S. Buber ed., p. 65ff.; see n. 6 above) or the oaths that God supposedly demanded of Israel (bKetubbot 111a; also Canticles Rabbah on 2:7), "that Israel should not scale the wall... should not rebel against the Gentiles" etc.[18]

The marked superiority of the recollections and tales of antiquity contained in

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[13] yPesaḥim VI 33a; bPesaḥim 66a; tPesaḥim IV 1.

[14] yShabbat I 3c; bShabbat 13b. These matters have been thoroughly clarified by Israel Ben Shalom in his (Hebrew) dissertation, *The Shammai School and Its Place in the Political and Social History of Eretz Israel in the First Century,* Tel Aviv University 1980).

[15] yMegillah I 71c; ySukkah III 53d; yShabbat VI 8b, etc.

[16] Origen, *Epistola ad Africanum* 2, *PG* 11; Epiphanius, *De mensuris et ponderibus,* 14-15, *PG* 43; Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History,* V 8. 10 (*LCL*), ed. K. Lake, vol. 1 (London 1958); E. Schürer, *Geschichte* (see n. 2 above), vol. 3[4], p. 435ff.

[17] *Igrot Sh-a-d-a-l* (S.D. Luzzatto), Part 2 (Przemysl 1882), p. 213ff.; Z. Frankel, *Darkhei ha-Mishnah* (see n. 2 above), p. 106; M.Z. Segal, *Mavo ha-Mikra,* vol. 4 (Jerusalem 1950), p. 959f. Attempts (such as A.E. Silverstone, *Aquila and Onkelos* [Manchester 1931]) to explain away the contradictions between the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds have failed. The mere examination of parallel versions (yMegillah I 71c and bMegillah 3a) and the muddled stories in the Babylonian (such as Gittin 56b, Avodah Zarah 11a) shows how totally preferable the Eretz Israel traditions is. According to the Babylonian version Onkelos appears also in the Tosefta (such as in Ḥagigah III 3 or Mikva'ot VI 3), and in view of that correlation as well as of other signs, the Tosefta cannot be considered a pure bloc of perfect tannaitic Eretz Israel tradition without Babylonian changes and influences. On editions of the Tosefta see Preface, n. 14.

[18] Canticles Rabbah or *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* presents probably an earlier version. See n. 6 above. Discussions in the Babylonian Talmud contain some opinions that enhance the value of the Babylonian Diaspora (bKetubbot 110b–111a) in clear opposition to Eretz Israel views such as yKetubbot XII 35b, yKil'ayim IX 32c-d, Genesis Rabbah (Vatican MS; Chapter 96, p. 1240 in the Theodor-Albeck ed.; see n. 44 below). The analytic explanations here as well as in the next chapter will consistently and continuously prove the essential difference between the two talmudic branches, and the absolute superiority of the Eretz Israel talmudic sources in regard to the history of the nation in its country. Well established methodological principles require the definition of the time of composition, the nature and the location of the diversified growth of the completed and recorded sources, despite their complexity and the obscurity surrounding their development. Any attempt to separate them into distinct units detached from the collective literary work is a departure from objective criteria and leads to arbitrary, confused, erroneous conclusions. My method is exemplified in a study on "The Bar Kokhva War in the Light of the Talmudic Tradition" (Hebrew — see n. 276 below) which appeared recently.

the Jerusalem Talmud, in comparison with parallel versions in the Babylonian, is evident from these examples and will be further confirmed in the treatment of the present matter. Care must be taken however to avoid going to extremes, for there are flaws in the Jerusalem Talmud as well, historical accuracy not having been the principal aim of its compilers. Each passage requires meticulous analytical examination of its intrinsic qualitative composition, and its affinity with the reality of the period concerned. But these reservations are not a reason for confusing categories, disregarding the dimensions of the basic distinction, or questioning the criteria of historical criticism. In the history of the Jewish people on its soil, the superiority of Eretz Israel sources is firm and abiding, they being close to the scene of the events, and probably surrounded by still unsubsided echoes of the events which happened in the time of the Hasmonean kingdom.

B. *Simeon Ben Shataḥ and King Jannaeus in Eretz Israel Legend*

"It is taught, three hundred Nazirites came up [to Jerusalem] in the days of Simeon b. Shataḥ.[19] A hundred and fifty found a release for themselves, and a hundred and fifty did not find a release for themselves.[20] He came to Jannaeus the King and said to him, There are three hundred Nazirites here and they need nine hundred offerings. You give half from yours, and I give half from mine. He [Jannaeus] sent four hundred and fifty. An informer went and said to him, He [Simeon] did not give from his.[21] King Jannaeus heard and was angry. Simeon b. Shataḥ heard and fled. Some days later respected persons of the kingdom of Persia came up to King Jannaeus. When they sat and ate, they said to him, We remember that there was an elder here who used to say words of wisdom before us. He told them the story. They said, Send and bring him. He sent and gave him his word and brought him. He [Simeon] came up and seated himself between the king and the queen. He (Jannaeus) said to him, Why did you deceive me? He [Simeon] said, I did not deceive you. You have your money and I have my Torah, for it is written 'To be in the shelter of wisdom is to be also in the shelter

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[19] The story appears twice in the Jerusalem Talmud, in yBerakhot VII 11b and yNazir V 54b. Examination of the text according to the first edition (Venice 1523/24); *Sefer ha-Mafte'aḥ* of Rabbi Nissim (Vienna 1847), p. 22; L. Ginzberg, *Seridei ha-Yerushalmi min ha-Geniza* (New York 1909), p. 294; Samuel Yaffe Ashkenazi, *Sefer Yefeh Mar'eh* (Venice 1590), p. 32b–33a; *The Palestinian Talmud,* a Facsimile of the Leiden MS. Cod. Scal. 3 (Jerusalem 1970); B. Ratner, *Ahavat Zion ve-Yerushalayim,* to Tractate Berakhot (Vilna 1901), ad loc. The first verse starts, like a Baraita, in mishnaic Hebrew. It procedes thereafter in amoraic Aramaic. Only important textual variants have been noted below.

[20] A different and evidently more correct version says that he (Simeon b. Shataḥ) "found them an opening" (=release). In other words, thanks to his expertise and authority, he could release them.

[21] Every *Nazir* had to make three offerings at the end of his sworn period of abstinence but when 150 *Nazir*s were released from their oath only 450 were required, that is, three each for 150. In his wisdom Simeon b. Shataḥ thus saved his entire share.

of money' (Ecc. 7:12). He [Jannaeus] said to him. Why did you flee? He [Simeon] said to him, I heard my master was angry, and I carried out the saying 'Hide but a little moment, until the indignation passes' (Is. 26:20). And he called out to him, 'The advantage of intelligence is that wisdom preserves the life of him who possesses it' (Ecc. 7:12). He [Jannaeus] said to him, Why did you sit between the king and queen? He said to him, In Ben-Sira's book it says, Cherish her [i.e. wisdom] and she will exalt you, she will seat you among the notables.' He said (to him give a glass and we will say grace), Give him a glass to bless. He took (they gave and poured him) and he said. Let us say grace for the food that Jannaeus and his friends ate. He [Jannaeus] said to him, Are you still in your stubbornness? He [Simeon] said to him, What shall we say (bless) on food we did not eat? He [Jannaeus] said, Give him to eat.[22] He ate and said, Let us say grace for the food we ate. Rabbi Yoḥanan said, There are those who disagree with Simeon b. Shataḥ..."[23]

Companies of Nazirites go up to Jerusalem and need financial help in order to fulfill the biblical precepts and offer sacrifices at the end of the term of their vows. The value of Nazirism was high in the scale of piety and of enhanced divine worship.[24] The custom was widespread in the Second Temple period, and there is no sense in limiting its proliferation to the last generation immediately preceding the destruction of the Temple simply for lack of information, as Büchler does.[25] The Talmud testifies to the inclination of "the first Hasids" to maintain it.[26] Nazirites gathered in Judas Maccabaeus' camp during times of stress and rebellion, as described by I Maccabees (III 49). From the time of Yose b. Yoezer up to that of Simeon b. Shataḥ the yearning for sanctification did not stop, and bands of Nazirites, as in the quoted legend, were doubtless a common occurrence. Ben Shataḥ was concerned about poor ones, and sought help for them. Some of them were rid of their obligations and released when their vows were found to be defective. For the rest, Jannaeus was asked for help, he agreed to contribute from the royal treasury, but was hurt and enraged by Simeon b. Shataḥ's strategem. Agrippa I is credited with a similar deed,[27] having ordered many Nazirites to be shaved, and apparently made a donation for their offerings. However, the present legend is not based on that event, for its main basis and features are missing.[28] There is no reason to distort and deny its

[22] The required correct blessing cannot be said unless the person saying it takes part in the banquet.

[23] The story forms part of the discussions on practices regarding blessings.

[24] mNazir III 6; V 4; VI 11; Josephus (see n. 83 below), *Bell.* II 313; Philo, *De Specialibus Legibus* I (45) 247ff.; (*LCL*), *Philo,* ed. F.H. Colson, vol. 7 (London 1950); Acts of the Apostles: 21:23.

[25] A. Büchler, *Studies in Sin and Atonement* (Oxford 1928), p. 420.

[26] yNedarim I 36d; bNedarim 9b-10a; tNedarim I 1; yNazir I 51c; bNazir 4b; tNazir IV 7.

[27] Josephus (see n. 83 below), *Ant.* XIX 294.

[28] Contrary to the view of J. Klausner, *Historia shel ha-Bayit ha-Sheni,* vol. 4[2] (Jerusalem 1950), p. 291; A. Büchler, "The Fore-Court of Women and the Brass Gate in the Temple," *JQR* X (1898): 700ff.

contents because of groundless speculation. Unlike the rulers of the Herodian dynasty, Agrippa I was known for his efforts to be esteemed by the Jewish people, and for his assiduity in keeping the laws of the Torah.[29] It is therefore not surprising that he should have acted in this case as did his predecessors, the Hasmoneans.

A delegation of prominent Persians visits Jannaeus. For their sake he foregoes his anger and indignation and sends an invitation to Ben Shataḥ. There is not the slightest suggestion of their Jewishness. They came to hear words of wisdom from Ben Shataḥ, not words of the Torah.[30] They are high-ranking envoys sent "from the kingdom of Persia" and King Jannaeus delights to honor them. The kingdom of Persia in that period was the kingdom of the Parthians, who had dealt the Seleucids a serious blow and in 129 B.C. defeated Antiochus VII Sidetes. In the wake of that victory, Jannaeus' father, John Hyrcanus, severed his last ties with the Seleucid government. Thereafter, the Hasmoneans embarked upon a vigorous campaign of conquests to restore Jewish rule to the country.[31] The Parthian victory had an important supportive effect on the progress of the Jewish state. During the reign of Mithridates II, the Parthian kingdom attained the height of its power and external influence.[32] Its borders stretched from the Euphrates to India. Even in Syria itself, the Parthians intervened frequently and sometimes penetrated deeply.

The foreign policy of the Hasmonean kingdom is not completely clear in all directions and aspects, but it may be assumed that the inclination to establish close relations with the Parthians was natural and logical. No conflict of interests divided the two countries, for the Parthians worked consistently to weaken and break up the Seleucid kingdom, and that certainly corresponded to the aspirations of the Hasmoneans. In some points the aims of the two states were identical or nearly so. Demetrius Eucaerus, Jannaeus' foe, who conducted an expedition against Judaea and retreated, was routed and captured by the Parthians.[33] Mattathias Antigonus, Jannaeus' grandson, made a military pact with the Parthians to preserve liberty and restore the Hasmonean kingdom. Adequate reasons clarify Jannaeus' desire to foster friendship with the

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[29] Josephus (see n. 83 below), *Ant.* XIX 292ff.; Acts of the Apostles 12:1ff.; mSotah VII 8; mBikkurim III 4ff.

[30] Also S. Krauss, *Paras ve-Romi ba-Talmud u-va-Midrashim* (Jerusalem 1948), p. 145, contrary to A. Schlatter (see n. 2 above), *Geschichte Israels*[3], p. 156; S.W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews,* vol. 1[2] (New York 1966), p. 221.

[31] Josephus (see n. 83 below), *Ant.* XIII 254ff.; *Bell.,* I 62ff.

[32] E.R. Bevan, *The House of Seleucus,* vol. 2 (London 1902), p. 243ff.; N.C. Debevoise, *A Political History of Parthia* (Chicago 1938), p. 33ff.; W.W. Tarn, "Parthia," *CAH,* vol. 9 (1932), p. 574ff.; P.J. Junge & W. Schur, "Parthia," *PW-RE,* vol. 18 (1949): 1968ff.; M.M. Dyakonov, *Ocherki Istorii Drevnego Irana* (Moscow 1961); A.G. Bokshchanin, *Parfiya i Rim,* vol. 2 (Moscow 1966).

[33] Josephus (see n. 83 below), *Ant.,* XIII 384ff.

Parthians.[34] According to the legend their envoys appeared in his palace several times and met with Ben Shataḥ. The lofty status and influential position of Pharisee sages were perhaps not entirely strange for the guests, because their country, too, according to Strabo, had a council (Synedrion) of "sages and magi" among the highest institutions of the kingdom.[35] Groups of Nazirites and Persian-Parthian notables are part of the genuine landscape of the period.

Single strands were drawn out of ancient memories of the events and personages of the Hasmonean kingdom and woven into an artistic fabric of legends. The main core was swallowed up in the tissue of a folk tale, spiced with adages, polished with witty sayings and arranged within halakhic discussions. Another clear sign of its early base is the proverb of Ben Sira (XI 1), the Jewish writer of the Hellenizing period before the Hasmonean Revolt, quoted by Ben Shataḥ. The original saying was abridged and combined with a part of a verse in Proverbs (4:8), but that mixture, possibly a scribal error, does not detract from the importance of the quotation, for such mergers and substitutions are not unusual in the transmissions of Ben Sira's sayings.[36]

A number of scholars hastened to deny the legend any historical value at all, and did not bother to examine it properly. Some found it an excuse to cast aspersions at the Talmud.[37] A few disqualified it indulgently explaining it away as a conglomeration of odd jests, imaginative stories and naive drollery.[38] In contrast, there were many who in various ways confirmed the main content of the legend.[39] Some dubious hypotheses too were proposed on how to blend it in with the events of the time and describe the development of relations between Jannaeus and the Pharisees by mixed combinations of sources that are fundamentally different. The merger of the various types blurred the special character of that legend and its uniqueness. There is no possibility of extracting additional solid facts from it, except for bits of recollections: companies of poor Nazirites, Simeon b. Shataḥ and Persian envoys with Jannaeus. It is not clear whether that took place at the beginning or at the end of Jannaeus' reign. No basic controversy emerged, not on the question of the authority to release from

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[34] Josephus (see n. 83 below), *Bell.* I 248ff.; *Ant.* XIV 330ff.; J. Neusner, *A History of the Jews in Babylonia,* vol. 1 (Leiden 1965), p. 25ff..

[35] Strabo, *Geography* XI 9.3 (515), (*LCL*), ed. H.L. Jones, vol. 5 (London 1954): συνέδριον....σόφων καὶ μάγων.

[36] M.Z. Segal, *Sefer Ben Sira ha-Shalem* (Jerusalem 1953), p. 67.

[37] E. Schürer (see n. 2 above), *Geschichte,* vol. 1^4, p. 279ff. Basically the same view though expressed in more restrained terms appears in the new revised English version, vol. 1 (Edinburgh 1973), p. 221ff.

[38] I. Lévi, "Les Sources Talmudiques" etc. (see n. 2 above), p. 213; see also J. Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions* (n. 2 above), vol. 1, p. 96ff.

[39] J. Derenbourg, *Essai,* p. 97; H. Graetz, *Geschichte,* vol. 3^3, p. 125ff.; see n. 2 above.

vows (as some scholars believe),[40] not on other Halakhot problems, not on questions of the constitution and treasury of the kingdom.

No ideological discussion, political or religious, took place between Ben Shataḥ and Jannaeus. There is no use making vain attempts to find covert intentions and cryptic hints in the legend. Nor is there any sense in examining every serif and trill as if they figure in a meticulous document. Its preservers and editors did not pretend to present a detailed historical episode in entirety adhering closely to facts and the course of events. On the other hand the patent significance of the tradition should not be underestimated or obscured, as it is based on a Baraita already dealt with by Rabbi Yoḥanan b. Nappaḥa and its basic elements accord with the background and circumstances of the period, with no divergence or contradiction.

The illuminating legend is etched in early memories and expresses a deep-seated outlook among the sages of Eretz Israel. Simeon b. Shataḥ comes frequently to Jannaeus' house, participates in meetings and parties with high-ranking visitors and foreign ambassadors. Jannaeus is not an evil tyrant, but a forceful ruler who observes religious ceremony, heeds the Pharisees' ideology and responds to their leaders' demands. His anger is quickly aroused, and could have serious results, but it is justified, for he is misled by Ben Shataḥ's ploy. His hasty and menacing reaction is not a result of venomous enmity. In the delineation of Jannaeus it might be possible, with many doubts and hesitations, to discern some reservations about his character, but he is not vilified and does not have a plethora of sins imputed to him.

The moderate tone will become clearer if we compare some examples from the Jerusalem Talmud on amoraic times. Resh Lakish once offended the Nasi (Patriarch-president) maintaining that he could be tried by a court of three and sentenced to flogging if he sinned and was found guilty. "Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi heard and was angry, sent Goths to seize Resh Lakish, who fled."[41] Resh Lakish was frightened and hid from the irate Patriarch until peace was restored and he was returned to the study house. Another time Yose Maoni did not spare the Patriarch's dignity and aroused his anger. "Rabbi Judan (Judah II Nesi'a) heard and was angry, (the other) was afraid and fled. Rabbi Yoḥanan and Resh Lakish came to conciliate."[42] Jannaeus' sharp reaction is no worse than that of Rabbi Judah-Judan the Nasi. The momentary clash with Ben Shataḥ, which was not actually Jannaeus' fault, ends in reconciliation.

Genesis Rabbah, which in time, origin, and place is close to the Jerusalem

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[40] R. Leszynski (see n. 2 above), "Simon Ben Schétah," p. 230; S. Belkin, *Philo and the Oral Law* (Cambridge Mass. 1940), p. 167.

[41] ySanhedrin II 19d.

[42] ySanhedirn II 20d.

Talmud,[43] contains the same legend with few differences.[44] Here and there are some added explanations and improvements, mostly secondary and marginal. Only one point exhibits an important variation, which is that Ben Shataḥ is invited to return at the request of the Persian guests not by Jannaeus himself but through his wife.[45] That version suggests that the queen was friendly with Ben Shataḥ, and knew where he had taken refuge, a fact which Jannaeus was aware of. That midrashic addition fits in with other testimonies in the talmudic tradition.[46] Thus Josephus too notes the queen's admiration for and loyalty to the Pharisee fellowships.[47]

The legend in the Midrash gives the impression that Jannaeus' wife was Ben Shataḥ's sister. The only authority for that is a single word: Jannaeus "said to his sister, Send to fetch him," that is, he told his sister to summon Ben Shataḥ. Whose sister? The structure of the phrase makes it possible to understand that Jannaeus' sister is meant. What does this flawed editing mean? Why wasn't the identity of the sister clearly indicated? Suspicion grows with the examination of the variants. According to the first printing, Jannaeus addresses "Shlomzo" rather that "his sister." That version seems reasonable and preferable. the reference being to Jannaeus' wife who is known as Shlomzo or Shlomzi (Shlomzion). How did a sister take her place? Well, in one version "to Shlomzi" is replaced by the word לאתתיה "to his wife,"[48] which is identical with לאחתיה "his sister" except for one letter. The Hebrew-Aramaic similar letters, *Tav* (ת) and *Ḥet* (ח) differ in one small line, which a copyist could easily have overlooked. That was the basis for the mistake that was quickly "naturalized."

Thus the change took place by chance, although it may have been supported or even caused by an erroneous explanation, to clarify the queen's close relations with Simeon Ben Shataḥ. Those relations were stressed by the addition of the kinship element,[49] but that seems to have depended on a tiny line in one letter, omitted by an anonymous copyist. In any case the legend contains no hint of a family connection. On the contrary, in the Midrash as well as the Jerusalem Talmud, Jannaeus is astonished at Ben Shataḥ's audacity in sitting between the king and queen, and Ben Shataḥ justifies himself by citing the ascendency of the Torah, not his personal status. Jannaeus' question and Ben Shataḥ's answer

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[43] See nn. 5-6 above.

[44] Genesis Rabbah XCI 4, p. 1115ff. in the J. Theodor and Ch. Albeck edition *Midrash Bereshit Rabbah* (Jerusalem 1965); *Yalkut Shim'oni* on the Torah, mark 148 (New York–Berlin 1926).

[45] "He said to Shlomzo (to his sister), Send (after him) to fetch him.
She said to him. Give him a word (and send him your ring) and he'll come. He (the king) gave him a word and he came." In parentheses are indicated only some significant variants.

[46] Below in notes 201–202.

[47] Josephus, *Bell.* I 107ff.; *Ant.* XIII 407ff.; see n. 83 below.

[48] For detailed variants see the J. Theodor–Ch. Albeck edition, n. 44 above.

[49] According to D. Hoffmann, "Simon ben Schetach und seine Zeit," *Jüdische Presse,* Literaturblatt (Berlin 1877), 1/3, p. 6.

show that no consanguinity was known between the royal couple and the Pharisee leader.

There is a parallel version in Ecclesiastes Rabbah, in which Jannaeus says "to Shlomto his sister and Jannaeus' wife."[50] But the double definition of the queen's relationship to both Jannaeus and Ben Shataḥ testifies only to the commentator's eagerness to elucidate an obscure point. There being as yet no critical edition, it is impossible for the time being to ascertain the correctness and acceptability of that version. Anyhow that Midrash is not one of the early ones that reflect a pure Eretz Israel tradition; rather it contains various sources and some elements taken from the Babylonian Talmud.[51] Historically, it has little value in respect to the events of Second Temple days, and is inferior to Genesis Rabbah.[52] Thus, it does not refute our negative conclusion, which will be further confirmed in the forthcoming analysis of other testimony on Simeon Ben Shataḥ and Queen Shlomzion Alexandra.

C. *Jannaeus as the Wicked King in the Babylonian Talmud*

The episode described in the legend in the Jerusalem Talmud recurs in the Babylonian, but in different form.[53] "King Jannaeus and the queen arranged a meal together. And since he killed the sages he had nobody to say grace for them. He said (to his wife), who will give us a person to say grace for us? She said to him (What can I do since you killed the sages), Swear to me that if I bring you a (respected) person, you won't do him harm. He swore to her. (She sent) She brought Simeon Ben Shataḥ (her brother). He [Jannaeus] seated him between him and her. He [Jannaeus] said to him. Did you see how much honor I do you? He [Ben Shataḥ] said to him, It is not you that honors me, but the Torah that honors me. For it is written, 'Cherish her and she will exalt you; she will bring you honor if you embrace her'. He said to her (Jannaeus to his wife), Here you

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[50] *Midrash Rabbah,* in the Romm edition (Vilna 1921), *Kohelet Rabbah* (on 7:12) VII 24.

[51] Zunz-Albeck, *Ha-Derashot be-Yisrael,* p. 128; see n. 6 above.

[52] It embodies clear signs of secondary editing and the influence of the Babylonian Talmud. Ben Shataḥ justifies his flight in that "I heard you are angry at me and feared you lest you kill me and I fled." To Jannaeus' query as to why he seated himself "between king and queen" he answers with a quotation from Ben Sira: "Cherish her and she will exalt you," etc. The Midrash however repeats the quotation and in terms resembling those of the Babylonian Talmud (see n. 53 below) adds for no reason another verse "He [Jannaeus] said to him, 'You saw how I respect you?' He [Ben Shataḥ] said to him, It is not you who do me honor, but the Torah that did, for it is written, Cherish her and she will exalt you:" Similarly at the end Ben Shataḥ does not utter the faulty blessing, but voices it in a wondering tone, somewhat adapted to the Babylonian version.

[53] bBerakhot 48a; *Dikdukei Sofrim* to Berakhot, by R. Rabbinovicz (repr. Jerusalem 1960); Munich MS in H.L. Strack ed. (Leiden 1912), p. 152b; Florence MS Facsimile, Makor ed. (Jerusalem 1972); *Or Zarua* by Rabbi Yitzḥak of Vienna, vol. 1, 198 (Zhitomir 1862), p. 60; *Ein Ya'akov,* First Printing (Salonika 1516), p. 40; Naḥman Natan Coronel, *Beit Natan* (Vienna 1854), p. 29. Only a few variants are given here, in parentheses, for they are generally unimportant.

saw that he does not acknowledge authority. They gave him a glass to say grace over. He [Ben Shataḥ] said, Shall I say grace, Blessed is He of whose sustenance Jannaeus and his friends have eaten? He drank from that glass. They gave him another glass and he said grace."

The Babylonian Talmud version clearly demonstrates how an Eretz Israel legend is deformed in its migration to the Diaspora. The companies of poor Nazirites disappeared, as did the Persian delegation. The lines reflecting the real background of the period evaporated. Ben Sira's name was deleted, and the saying was completed in some versions with a quotation from Proverbs.[54] The witticisms and play on words of folk wisdom were erased. The basic sense of the original legend was destroyed and its intention reversed. Jannaeus is not a generous and forceful ruler, but an evil murderer who deliberately does away with sages and suddenly feels their absence, amazingly when he needs them during a meal, because there is nobody there capable of making the blessing on food. Riddles and questions arise at every point. When and why were sages killed on Jannaeus' orders? Ben Shataḥ is invited to the palace upon the advice of the queen, joins the party, makes the blessing, and the conversation develops as if no crimes were committed and the king's hands are not stained with Pharisee blood. Did Ben Shataḥ put Jannaeus' awful crimes out of mind, or absolve him of them?

The superiority of the Jerusalem Talmud version of this episode is obvious. Many scholars have long agreed, but without actually studying the discrepancies or drawing conclusions.[55] Generally, they have adopted the convenient methods of merging and harmonizing the two versions in order to remove contradictions and iron out difficulties. Examination shows, however, that the Babylonian Talmud detracts from the main contents, garbles the original picture, and adds nothing except lethal persecution by Jannaeus. Even the question of the queen's kinship with Ben Shataḥ is not properly clarified. While the majority of the versions (including the Florence Manuscript) have "He sent to Simeon her brother" that form is by no means uniform and solidly established. The word "sister" is missing in the Munich MS, and its absence cannot be attributed to scribal errors only.[56]

In total contrast to the Eretz Israel tradition, in the Babylonian, Jannaeus assumes the odious shape of a cruel tyrant who slays a multitude of sages. His serious crimes and hatred are not explained at all, but serve as a point of departure for the story. The a priori assumption of persecutions and murders

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[54] On the variants of this verse, see B.M. Lewin, *Otzar ha-Geonim,* vol. 1 (Haifa 1928), p. 113 (Hai Gaon); M-a-h-a-r-sh-a, *Ḥidushei Halakhot ve-Agadot* to bBerakhot, Romm ed. of the Talmud (repr. Jerusalem 1963) ad loc.

[55] Such as Derenbourg, Weiss, Graetz, etc.; see n. 2 above.

[56] This deletion cannot be explained as a simple error, or chance, in view of comparisons with the text in the Jerusalem Talmud and in Genesis Rabbah.

was based, according to R-a-sh-i's accurate explanation, on the well known Baraita in Kiddushin 66a that deals with the bitter controversy in Jannaeus' reign and its consequences.[57]

Simeon b. Shataḥ's flight from anticipated danger was here linked to horrible persecutions and detached from the original legendary base. Thus the episode of the Nazirites was deleted in the Babylonian redaction. It was not a passing temporary grievance that led to the conflict but furious animosity to the Pharisees and a satanic plot to annihilate them totally without leaving a trace. In the wake of his murderous order, Jannaeus hoped not a single one of them survived. But to his surprise, his wife discovered the secret of Ben Shataḥ's survival. The logic of the muddled version required the extirpation of the Persian delegation which intervened for the return of Ben Shataḥ. The focal point remained the grace over food, which was important for the main problem dealt with in the tractate. Therefore it is to say grace that Jannaeus summons the leader of his foes and victims, who escaped slaughter by a miracle, while disobeying the royal decree.[58] The abridgement of the original legend, based on a different foundation, and its mixture with additional heterogeneous elements results in the artificial combinations[59] and Ben Shataḥ's astonishing behavior, accepting the invitation of an evil murderous tyrant, dining at his table and calmly saying the grace for food, with no objection or reaction to the horrible crimes against his faction, his friends and followers.[60]

The same catastrophe, murder of the Pharisees and distressed victims of persecution, is depicted in another Babylonian Talmud legend.[61] "The rabbis taught, let your left always thrust away and your right draw near. Not like Elisha who thrust away Gehazi with two hands, and not like Joshua b. Peraḥia who thrust away Jeshu ha-Notzri (Jesus the Nazarene) with his two hands... Joshua b. Peraḥia, what is the case? When Jannaeus the king put to death the sages, Rabbi Joshua b. Peraḥia (and Jesus) fled to Alexandria in Egypt. (Simeon b.

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[57] R-a-sh-i on bBerakhot 48a (Romm ed. — n. 54 above), "King Jannaeus was a king of the Hasmonean family, and killed sages of Israel who came to disqualify him from the priesthood, in Kiddushin" (66a). This Baraita is discussed in Section E below.

[58] For ignorance was rampant and the world was desolate "until Simeon Ben Shataḥ came and returned the Torah to its former status" (bKiddushin 66a) and therefore there was no one in Jannaeus' vicinity who knew how to say the blessing for food properly.

[59] For no logical reason Jannaeus displays surprising respect for the leader of the hated Pharisees who were ordered to be slain.

[60] On the preferability of the Jerusalem Talmud concerning the halakhic topic, see Z. Dor, "Ha-Mekorot ha-Eretzyisraeliim be-Veit Midrasho shel Rava," *Sinai* 27 (1963): 131ff.

[61] bSanhedrin 107b; bSotah 47a. In the later printed versions the legend was deleted because of censorship; verification of text according to *Dikdukei Sofrim* to Sanhedrin by R. Rabbinovicz (repr. Jerusalem 1960); Munich MS in the Strack edition 257a, 355b; see n. 53 above; *Midrash ha-Gadol* to Exodus, M. Margaliot edition (Jerusalem 1957), p. 355ff.; *Hagadot ha-Talmud* (Jerusalem 1961, Facsimile of the first Constantinople 1511 ed.), pp. 796, 119d; *Ein Ya'akov,* First Printing (see n. 53 above), pp. 111, 310. The few variants of importance appear in parentheses.

Shataḥ—his sister hid). When there was peace Simeon b. Shataḥ sent to him, From me the Holy City to you Alexandria of Egypt, my sister. My husband dwells within you and I am sitting desolate. He [Joshua] said, that means he had peace. When he arose and went (departed), they happened to be in one inn, where they paid him great honor (He sat and was praised). He said, How fine the inn (keeper) is. He [Jesus] said to him, Rabbi, her eyes are bleary. He [Joshua] said, You wicked man, is that what preoccupies you? He took out 400 ram's horns and excommunicated him. He [Jesus] came before him several times. He said to him, Receive me, but he [Joshua] did not heed him. One day he recited the Shema, he [Jesus] came before him and he [Joshua] intended to receive him, gestured to him with his hand. He [Jesus] thought he was rejecting him. So, Jesus went, set up a brick and worshiped it. He [Joshua] said to him, Repent. He [Jesus] said, that's how I received it [a dictum] from you, that everyone who sins and causes others to sin is not allowed by heaven to repent. A master said, Jeshu ha-Notzri [Jesus the Nazarene] practiced magic and incited and misled Israel."[62]

A similar event was recorded in a parallel version of the Jerusalem Talmud.[63] "We are taught that Judah b. Tabai was Nasi (president) and Simeon b. Shataḥ, Av Bet Din (head of the court), but a Tanna teaches and reverses (this tradition). Whoever says Judah b. Tabai was Nasi, the incident in Alexandria supports him. Judah b. Tabai, when the people of Jerusalem wanted to appoint him Nasi in Jerusalem, he fled and left for Alexandria. The people of Jerusalem wrote, From great Jerusalem to small Alexandria, until when will my betrothed[64] stay with you and I remain grieving for him. He [Judah] departed and took ship and said,

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[62] In the same words another Babylonian Talmud Baraita accuses Jesus who was sentenced to hanging "on Passover eve for practicing magic and inciting and misleading Israel" (bSanhedrin 43a), *Dikdukei Sofrim* to Sanhedrin (see n. 61 above). The time of Jesus' hanging (Passover eve as per the Gospel of John 18:24ff.) and the names of his disciples ("Mathai" etc.) in an adjacent Baraita indicate the absorption of Christian reports into the Babylonian Talmud. The censure of the Jews who present Jesus as a deceiver and sorcerer appears in Justin Martyr, *Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo* 69, *PG* 6; ibid. 108; idem. ed. G. Archambault (Paris 1909). Likewise in Origen, *Contra Celsum* I 28, *PG* 11; idem, (*GCS* 2), ed. Koetschau (Leipzig 1899). It is in fact already hinted at in the Gospels (Mark 3:22; Matt 12:24; Luke 11:15). The Christian testimony reveals the root of the shared motif and does not prove that the core of the story in the Babylonian Talmud legend was an early one. Joshua b. Peraḥia's name, thanks to the spread of the story from the Babylonian Talmud, appears among syncretistic and gnostic exorcisms against demons on incantation bowls found in the neighborhood of Nippur, See J.N. Epstein, "Gloses Babylo-Araméennes," *REJ* 74 (1922): 44. But these mixed and late (sixth or seventh century C.E.) inscriptions provide no basis for an imaginative view of Ben Peraḥia, as proposed by J. Neusner, *A History of the Jews in Babylonia,* vol. 5 (Leiden 1970), p. 241: "...Joshua was remembered, in material the editors of the Talmuds and Midrashim did not choose to preserve, as the great magician. Jesus therefore was attached to him," in order to present him as a student of a famed Jewish teacher of magic!

[63] yḤagigah II 77a; ySanhedrin VI 23c; *Sefer Yefeh Mar'eh* (see n. 19 above), p. 220; B. Ratner, *Ahavat Zion ve-Yerushalayim* on Ḥagigah (Vilna 1914), ad loc; Tosafot on bḤagigah 16b; see Romm ed. of the Babylonian Talmud (repr. Jerusalem 1963).

[64] A variant has "my husband" like the parallel story in the Babylonian Talmud.

Deborah the mistress of the house who received us, what was she missing (she was wonderful). And one of his students said to him, Rabbi, her eye was damaged. He said to him, This is double (sin) behind you, one that you suspected me, and the other that you looked at her. What I said that she is fine, I meant only her actions. So he [Judah] was angry at him and departed. Whoever says Simeon b. Shataḥ was Nasi, the incident in Ashkelon supports him."[65]

Judah b. Tabai fled to Egypt, according to the story in the Jerusalem Talmud, when the Nasi office was offered to him, because he did not want the appointment and the respective authority. The people of Jerusalem urged him and convinced him. They sent him a florid letter until he returned to his homeland in order to assume the yoke of public responsibility. The legend injects a moral tone into a remote event, all enveloped in a mist, and in an incidental manner inserts the story about the nice mistress of an inn and the gullible student.[66] The early form of the legend was changed and its meaning altered in the Babylonian version. Joshua b. Peraḥia takes the place of Ben Tabai. It was not reluctance to accept the position of Nasi, but the slaughter and persecution carried out by Jannaeus that impelled him to Egypt, and when the danger was past the people of Jerusalem sent him a similar cordial letter and his exile came to an end.

A superficial glance at the series of differences between the two versions might lead to the mistaken conclusion that they were two separate legends independent of each other. Joshua b. Peraḥia perhaps fled during the reign of John Hyrcanus, as some scholars believe, and Judah b. Tabai did so at the time of Jannaeus' tyranny.[67] A careful analysis completely refutes that conclusion. The Babylonian version adds no clear solid information revealing any new fact or indicating an old, independent tradition. The gloomy picture of Jannaeus' excesses serves as a dim tableau, as in the previous passage, without any elucidation of the reasons and background of the events. Jannaeus does not appear in the main story after the opening and no explanation is given of how peace was established in the country or of when and why the disturbances ceased. The contents of Ben Shataḥ's letter corresponds exactly to the parallel version of the Jerusalem Talmud, and contains not the faintest echo of persecutions, clashes with the authorities or feelings of relief after a politically stormy period.

The Babylonian Talmud legend does not elucidate why Ben Tabai's role was handed over to Joshua b. Peraḥia. His flight to Egypt is not confirmed by his

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[65] This incident is discussed below in n. 352.

[66] There is no possibility of identifying the anonymous disciple and of uncovering hidden meanings.

[67] In the opinion of I. Halevy, *Dorot* (see n. 2 above), vol. 2, pp. 462, 474ff.; A. Hyman, *Sefer Toldot Tana'im ve-Amora'im* (London 1910, repr. Jerusalem 1964), p. 1213ff.

claim in Makhshirin (III 4) of the Tosefta that "wheat that comes from Alexandria is unclean because of its water pump."[68] Neither is Ben Shataḥ's supposed kinship with the queen definitely supported here. The story contains a mention of "his sister," unnamed and untitled, who hid him in time of danger, but the text is evidently dubious. In the Munich MS, for instance, the verse is entirely missing in Sotah and noted only marginally in Sanhedrin, indicating that it was appended after the main redaction.[69] Thus, the Ben Peraḥia episode solves no riddles and casts no light on any corner of history.

The garbled, muddled nature of the Babylonian version is evident in the strange story of Ben Peraḥia's rebellious pupil. The anonymous fool of the Jerusalem Talmud legend is identified with Jesus of Nazareth. Because of a silly slip of the tongue, his rabbi bans him, and because of an accidental difficulty, he is not pardoned, and therefore abandons his faith. Joshua b. Peraḥia proclaims a ban with the blowing of four hundred rams' horns according to the Babylonian Talmud model.[70] The erection of a brick, too, for pagan worship, was apparently usual in the environment of the Babylonian Amora'im.[71] The insertion of the Christian Messiah's name and the peculiar identification with the dissident pupil in Ben Peraḥia's company led to a confusion of chronological conceptions and great difficulties for medieval defenders of Judaism, who were obliged to refute hostile accusations and disown the talmudic vilifications of the Christian savior.[72]

Nevertheless, there is no lack of modern attempts to uncover an ancient core in that report that identifies Jesus of Nazareth with Joshua b. Peraḥia's pupil, relying on the support of Epiphanius, who sets the birth of Jesus in the reign of Alexander (Jannaeus) and Alexandra, that is, in the time of Ben Peraḥia or Ben Tabai. All these attempts, however, are based on pure delusion.[73] Epiphanius

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[68] As claimed by S.J. Rapoport, *Erekh Milin* s.v. "Alexandria" (Prague 1852), p. 101. Ostensibly it is even possible to find in the Tosefta a hint of some connection between Joshua b. Peraḥia with Egypt, and from that an early basis for the legend of the Babylonian Talmud. The Tosefta version however is not confirmed by any other testimony and does not accord with the Mishnah (Ḥagigah II 2) which says that there were no halakhic controversies in those days except on one isolated different question. See above n. 17 on the Tosefta.

[69] According to H.L. Strack (ed. of the Munich MS) and *Dikdukei Sofrim* (see n. 61 above) this verse is missing as well in the early printed versions and in the MSS.

[70] bMo'ed Katan 16a; bShevuot 36a; *Yalkut Shim'oni* on Prophets (see n. 44 above), mark 54.

[71] bAvodah Zarah 46a; 53b. The attempt to discern the Christian cross in that brick or correct the text to find a sign of Christianity yielded no definite results. See H.J. Zimmels, "Jesus and Putting up a Brick," *JQR* n.s. 43 (1952/3): 225ff.; S.T. Lachs, "A Jesus Passage in the Talmud Re-examined," *JQR* n.s. 59 (1968/9): 244ff.

[72] Y. Baer, "Le-Vikoret ha-Vikuḥim" etc. *Tarbiẓ* 2 (1931): 175; J.D. Eisenstein, *Otzar Vikuḥim* (New York 1928), pp. 84, 116, 128, 171; *Sefer ha-Kabbala* of Rabbi Abraham b. David, in A. Neubauer, *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles,* vol. 1 (Oxford 1887), p. 53; Don Isaac Abrabanel, *Naḥalat Avot* (Venice 1544/5, repr. New York 1953), p. 31.

[73] In the wake of the medieval defenders of Judaism (n. 72) even modern scholars claimed that the talmudic legend presents some other personage of Jannaeus' period in the guise of Jesus. See

does not contradict the doctrine of the Church and does not, in opposition to deep-seated belief, bring forward the birth of Jesus (the Christian Messiah or some other Jesus). He simply reiterates the claim made by the Church Fathers (e.g. Hippolytus, Eusebius, Jerome) that after the decline of the Hasmonean kingdom, Jacob's blessing of Judah was fulfilled ("The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come"; Gen. 49:10) as was the count of "seventy weeks" of years according to Daniel (9:24ff.). In their view the redeeming mission of Jesus was thus confirmed.

For Epiphanius, Jannaeus represents the last appearance of a Jewish prince, a true independent ruler wearing a double crown of kingship and priesthood. Upon his death the single rule was divided, quarrels and disturbances split the country until the rise of Herod, who was not of Jewish descent, that is, until the realization of the vision in the biblical prophecies. According to this viewpoint, Jerome, too, sees Jannaeus as the priest king, the last legally anointed head of the Jewish people, before "the sceptre" departs "from Judah" and the Christian salvation comes, at the end of the "seventy weeks" as foreseen by Daniel. Intending to stress the theological notion, Epiphanius skips the period between the death of Jannaeus and the gospel of Jesus, in order to connect Jannaeus and his offspring with the Herodian era. His entire exegesis contains no trace of a tradition, Jewish or Christian, regarding an unknown Jesus at the time of Joshua b. Peraḥia.[74]

This error of the Babylonian Amora'im is not unique in the various stories collected and authored in their vicinity about Jesus of Nazareth.[75] Considerable

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Leopold Löw, *Gesammelte Schriften,* vol. 1 (Szegedin 1889), p. 447; G.A. Wells, *The Jesus of the Early Christians* (London 1971), pp. 201, 247. At first glance Epiphanius seems to support these views: M. Guttmann, "Die wissenschaftliche Talmudpflege der neueren Zeit," *MGWJ* 75 (1931): 253ff. However, there is no possibility of imagining or creating another figure called Jesus in the Hasmonean period. Nor can the chronology of the New Testament be changed to place Jesus' time earlier because of this muddled legend, as was proposed by G.R.S. Mead, *Did Jesus Live 100 B.C.?* (London 1903), p. 388ff. The mistakes and confusion in Epiphanius were pointed out long ago: D. Petavius, *Animadversiones in Epiphanium* (Cologne 1682), p. 51.

[74] Epiphanius, *Panarion Adversus Haereses* LI 22, *PG* 41; idem, (*GCS* 31), ed. K. Holl (Leipzig 1922): Γεννᾶται οὖν ὁ Σωτὴρ...ληξάντων τῶν ἀπὸ Ἰούδα ἀρχόντων καὶ Ἡρῴδου ἐξ ἐθνῶν κατασταθέντος...ληξάντων τῶν ἀπὸ Ἰούδα καὶ Ἀαρὼν χριστῶν ἡγουμένων, διαρκέσαντων ἕως Ἀλεξάνδρου χριστοῦ ἡγουμένου καὶ Σαλίνας τῆς καὶ Ἀλεξάνδρας, ἐφ' οἷς ἐπληρώθη ἡ προφητεία τοῦ Ἰακώβ. See also *Panarion* XXIX 1, ibid. *PG* 41; (*GCS* 25), ed. K. Holl (1915). Jesus was born during the reign of Augustus Caesar, according to New Testament chronology, and the lapse of time between that time and the Jannaeus period does not disturb Epiphanius. The Church Fathers voiced similar views before Epiphanius and contemporaneously with him: Hippolytus, *Die Chronik (GCS* 36), eds. A. Bauer–R. Helm (Berlin 1955), p. 190; Eusebius, *Demonstratio Evangelica* VIII 2, PG 22; idem *(GCS* 23), ed. I.A. Heikel (Leipzig 1913); Jerome, *Commentaria in Danielem* 9:24, *PL* 25.

[75] R.T. Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash* (London 1903); W. Bacher, "R.T. Herford's Christianity" etc., *JQR* 17 (1905): 171ff.; J. Klausner, *Yeshu ha-Notzri,* vol. 1 (Tel Aviv 1954), p. 25ff.; K. Hruby, *Die Stellung der jüdischen Gesetzeslehrer zur werdenden Kirche* (Zurich 1971); J.Z.

research has been done on the confusion prevailing in them, such as the identification of Jesus with the criminal sinner named Ben Stada, who "took witchcraft out of Egypt in a scratch on his flesh" and was punished accordingly.[76]

The temporary move to Egypt, which figures also in the Ben Peraḥia story, has a point of contact with the evangelical tradition.[77] Such errors do not occur in the Jerusalem Talmud. Jesus is mentioned as "Ben Pandira" (Pantira or Panthera) the pejorative known to the Church Fathers, but he is not confused with the troublesome Ben Stada whom our sages secretly stationed witnesses against in Lydda, sentenced and stoned.[78] No testimony derived purely from the Eretz Israel sources moves Jesus to the reign of Jannaeus or implants him in Ben Peraḥia's circle.

The inferiority of the Babylonian version in this story of Ben Peraḥia's flight and return, in contrast to the Ben Tabai episode in the parallel Eretz Israel testimony, is clearly evident. In the past few favored it,[79] and a large number of scholars more or less preferred the legend in the Jerusalem Talmud.[80] Many, however, tend to draw a tepid, compromise conclusion, the mixed product of the two versions.[81] The flight and return they attribute to Judah b. Tabai, according to the Jerusalem Talmud story, but the motive they give for his flight is Jannaeus' persecution, as is usual in the Babylonian. Such harmonizing devices

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Lauterbach, *Rabbinic Essays* (Cincinnati 1951), p. 473ff.; J. Maier, *Jesus von Nazareth in der talmudischen Überlieferung* (Darmstadt 1978).

[76] bShabbat 104b; bSanhedrin 67a. Jesus was also accused and tried as sorcerer and inciter: bSanhedrin 43a. The talmudic passages on Jesus were deleted in most of the printed versions, but can be found in *Dikdukei Sofrim*; see n. 61 above.

[77] Matt. 2:13ff. Early Christian sources attest as well (n. 62 above) that the Jews accused Jesus of being a deceiver and sorcerer. According to bKiddushin 49b Egypt was the nest of sorcery in the world.

[78] yShabbat XIV 14d; yAvodah Zarah II 40d; tḤullin II 22ff. Ben Stada (or Stara or Sotra) "brought magic from Egypt" as well, according to yShabbat XII 13d and tShabbat XI 14. That may be the basis for the error in the Babylonian Talmud which identifies him as Jesus b. Pandera, confusing him also vaguely with Jesus the Nazarene, who goes as a disciple to Egypt (n. 61 above) with Ben Peraḥia. Ben Stada's trial is referred to in ySanhedrin VII 25d and tSanhedrin X 11, but the texts have no resemblance to or connection with the trial of Jesus. It was not Ben Stada but Ben Pandera or Ben Panthera as a pejorative term the Jews applied to Jesus that was already mentioned by Origen, who here confirms the truth and greater antiquity of the Eretz Israel independent talmudic tradition: Origen, *Contra Celsum* I 28; I 32; see n. 62 above.

[79] I.H. Weiss, *Dor Dor ve-Dorshav* (see n. 2 above), vol. 1, p. 128; I.M. Jost, *Geschichte des Judenthums* (see n. 2), vol. 1, p. 232; Recently also E. Bammel, "Christian Origins in Jewish Tradition," *NTS* 13 (1967): 320ff.; J. Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions,* vol. 1, p. 102; see n. 2 above.

[80] Z. Frankel, "Über den Lapidarstyl der talmudischen Historik," *MGWJ* 1 (1852): 412; L. Herzfeld, "Chronologische Ansetzung der Schriftgelehrten," *MGWJ* 3 (1854): 276; A. Geiger, *Nachgelassene Schriften,* vol. 4 (Berlin 1876), p. 289; H. Stourdzé, "La fuite en Égypte de Josué Ben Perahya," *REJ* 82 (1926): 133ff.

[81] H. Graetz, *Geschichte,* vol. 3^3, pp. 146, 153; J. Klausner, *Historia shel ha-Bayit ha-Sheni,* vol. 3, pp. 154, 168; see n. 2 above.

only help to mask the deep contradictions and prevent a full and incisive criticism of the different basic testimonies. We must seek to clarify the roots of the notion that vilifies Jannaeus and is evident in the Babylonian Talmud, but does not suit the moderate outlook and conciliatory approach of the Eretz Israel legend.

D. *The Rift in the Hasmonean Kingdom according to Josephus*

A catastrophic internal controversy during the reign of Jannaeus led, according to the Babylonian Talmud, to the cruel persecution and slaughter of the Pharisees.[82] For the analysis of that tradition, a prior look at Josephus' writings is in order,[83] since they describe that rift and its stages in a continuous historical context and fix the onset in the period of John (Yoḥanan) Hyrcanus I, the son of Simeon—the Hasmonean high priest and ruler. In *Jewish War,* a single tenuous passage explains the reasons for the dispute:[84] "Envy of the success of John and his sons provoked a sedition among his countrymen" and many joined the agitation, incessantly in opposition, "until they were aroused to an open war and suffered defeat." John overcame his foes, and after the eruption of the storm, the poisonous, odious product of corrupting envy, peace returned to the country. John Hyrcanus' life and government ended in an atmosphere of an absolute idyll and abounding happiness.

The alien style and strange excuse for the sudden outbreak apparently came from Josephus' non-Jewish sources. Their imprint is clear on the chapters containing the stories of the Hasmonean kingdom. Not only policies and external wars, but also Jewish religious and social phenomena are reflected in faint, cold and sometimes even hostile mirror. John and his family seem to represent some separate remote dynasty whose successes do not warm any hearts, and which is not wanted by or beneficial to the nation and its citizens. On the contrary, its prosperity leads to short-sighted, petty, destructive envy. Providing a similar motivation in almost identical wording, *Jewish War,* in describing the first steps of the young Herod as he climbs the ladder of authority, explains how the people's anger was aroused, for "in successes there is no avoiding envy."[85] The oppressive measures and budding tyranny of Herod, governor of Galilee, agitated the Jewish community. Josephus, however, drew

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[82] The problem is treated in Section E below.

[83] *Flavii Josephi Opera,* 7 vols., ed. B. Niese (repr. 1955, Berlin 1888–1895); *Josephus, (LCL),* 9 vols., eds. H. St.J. Thackeray, R. Marcus, A. Wikgren, L.H. Feldman (London 1961–1965); Flavius Josephus, *De Bello Judaico,* ed. O. Michel & O. Bauernfeind, vols. 1-3 (Munich 1962–1969); *Oeuvres Complètes de Flavius Josèphe,* ed. Th. Reinach, vols. 1-7 (Paris 1900–1929).

[84] *Bell.* I 67: Πρὸς δὲ τὰς εὐπραγίας αὐτοῦ τε Ἰωάννου καὶ τῶν παίδων φθόνος ἐγείρει στάσιν τῶν ἐπιχωρίων κτλ.

[85] *Bell.* I 208: Ἀμήχανον δ' ἐν εὐπραγίαις φθόνον διαφυγεῖν.

on the hero's friend and defender, Nicolaus of Damascus, who recorded his deeds, exalted his name, and vilified his enemies. As many studies have previously stressed, a clearly Herodian history seeps forth from these chapters, casting its shadow over the annals of Israel.[86] In view of its pagan approach, which also explains the source of the mysterious "envy," disturbances beset Herod at the height of his glory, for his great successes attract the vengeance of the "fortune."[87] The hand of the same Hellenistic writer evidently recorded the hollow feeble excuse for the surprising uprising during John Hyrcanus I's reign.

Generally in *Jewish Antiquities* additions and corrections were made to the previous version.[88] There Josephus provides an expanded and amended treatment of the controversy. "The success of John and his sons aroused envy among the Jews and especially the Pharisees were hostile to him."[89] As their influence was tremendous among the people, they were immediately believed when they said things even "against a king or high priest. Hyrcanus was their disciple and much loved by them." Once he invited them to a meal, and during it asked their advice and guidance, in case he strayed from the path of righteousness, for he wished to direct his deeds in the spirit of God and to earn their approval. The Pharisees praised him, but one of the guests, Eleazar, "a man of malicious and contentious character,"[90] inveighed against him and demanded

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[86] E. Schürer, *Geschichte* (see n. 2 above), vol. 1[4], p. 82ff.; G. Hölscher, "Josephus," *PW-RE*, vol. 9 (1916): 1944ff.; R. Laqueur, *Der jüdische Historiker Flavius Josephus* (Giessen 1920), p. 129ff.; H. St.J. Thackeray, *Josephus the Man and the Historian* (New York 1967), pp. 40ff.; 61ff.; R.J.H. Shutt, *Studies in Josephus* (London 1961), p. 84ff.; B.Z. Wacholder, *Nicolaus of Damascus* (Berkeley & Los Angeles 1962), p. 5ff.

[87] *Bell.* I 431: Τάς γε μὴν ὑπαίθρους εὐπραγίας ἡ τύχη τοῖς κατ'οἶκον ἀνιαροῖς ἐνεμέσησεν.

[88] These additions include excerpts from Greek writers (mainly Strabo) and a few folk tales, such as the legend on the echo in the Temple that informs John Hyrcanus of his sons' victory (*Ant.* XIII 282 — ySotah IX 24b; bSotah 33a; tSotah XIII 5), the story dealt with here (on the circumstances of the controversy) and passages comprising stories noted in n. 142 below. Josephus' treatment, however, in the corrected version, is based this time too on the work which focuses on Herod's reign, and consequently diminishes and distorts the image of the Hasmonean state, that is, on Nicolaus of Damascus. Still, Josephus sometimes has reservations (*Ant.* XIV 9ff.) and attacks the former's predilection for Herod and animosity to the Hasmoneans (*Ant.* XVI 183ff.), glories in his kinship to the Hasmonean dynasty (in his autobiography, *Vita* [1]2 as well) and is sometimes critical of Herod and his state (*Ant.* XV 267ff.; XVI 1ff., 158ff.; XVII 167ff.; XIX 328ff.). *Antiquitates* was aimed at a Hellenistic readership (I 5) and its apologetic Jewish approach is obvious. To counter the accusations of Nicolaus, who was Herod's friend and assistant (*Bell.* I 574, 629ff.; *Ant.* XVI 29ff., 299ff.; XVII 54, 99ff., 219ff.) Josephus takes the trouble to say a few words of praise for the nation and its leaders, with the help of some quotations from Strabo and a group of scattered popular legends, but his main source remained the same, as our analysis shows. The quality and character of the sources are dealt with also in nn. 106, 112, 131, 139, 140–142 below.

[89] *Ant.* XIII 288: Ὑρκανῷ δὲ φθόνον ἐκίνησε παρὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥ τε αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν υἱῶν εὐπραγία, μάλιστα δὲ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι κακῶς πρὸς αὐτὸν εἶχον κτλ.
The envy motif recurs as above (n. 85) in the earlier version, in the tragic story of King Aristobulus (*Ant.* XIII 310), and in Jannaeus' testamentary address (n. 128 below).

[90] *Ant.* XIII 291: κακοήθης ὢν φύσει καὶ στάσει χαίρων, κτλ.

that he leave the high priesthood and content himself with the government of the nation. To justify the bold demand he said, "We have heard from our elders that your mother was a captive during Antiochus Epiphanes' reign." That claim was false, however, making Hyrcanus irate and the other Pharisees furious with the troublemaker. One of the Sadducees, Jonathan, a friend of Hyrcanus', exhorted him and said the slanderous report had been made with the consent of the Pharisees, and if they said what the suitable punishment was for the libeler, their secret would be revealed. The Pharisees were asked and ruled "lashes and chains," for in their view death was not required, and by nature they inclined to leniency in punishments. Hyrcanus became enraged, believing they approved the libel, went over to the Sadducees and abandoned the Pharisees, canceled their rulings (regulations or customs) which were established among the people and penalized anyone who abided by them. From then on, "hatred to him and his sons appeared among the people." Hyrcanus eventually "put an end to the outbreak" and ended his life and reign in peace.

In order to explain the religious scission and the problem arising from the Pharisee rulings that were canceled and forbidden by the high priest and sovereign ruler, a note was appended to the story of the event: The Pharisees insisted on observing certain regulations, based on the "ancestral tradition," which are not included in the written Law of Moses.[91] That is why the Sadducees disqualified them and claimed that only the written laws should be obeyed and not those derived from the "ancestral tradition." Only the rich support the Sadducees while ordinary people follow the Pharisees. Josephus does not specify or elaborate, preferring to direct the reader to the description of the parties and schools in his earlier book.[92] John's edict remained in force until Shlomzion (Salome, Salina)—Alexandra became queen, according to the chapter on her reign in *Antiquities,* when after Janneus' death she restored the authority of the Pharisees and reinstituted the laws based on the "ancestral tradition."[93]

The *Antiquities* version depicts the great controversy of John Hyrcanus' time in a complex whose strata display a variety of elements. The first and last parts retain the story framework of the earlier version: disturbances (outbreaks or sedition) due to "envy" and John's eventual complete victory. Between the two ends is a bloc entirely absent in *Jewish War* and obviously purely Jewish in inspiration. The Pharisee leaders are fond of John, dine at his table, advise and guide him in his way of life, judge and issue verdicts on the basis of religious

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[91] *Ant.* XIII 297: νόμιμά τινα παρέδοσαν τῷ δήμῳ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι ἐκ πατέρων διαδοχῆς, ἅπερ οὐκ ἀναγέγραπται ἐν τοῖς Μωυσέως νόμοις....ἐκ παραδόσεως τῶν πατέρων...

[92] *Ant.* XIII 298: *Bell.* II 119ff.

[93] *Ant.* XIII 408: καὶ πάντα τοῖς Φαρισαίοις ἐπιτρέπει ποιεῖν, οἷς καὶ τὸ πλῆθος ἐκέλευσε πειθαρχεῖν, καὶ εἴ τι δὲ καὶ τῶν νομίμων Ὑρκανὸς ὁ πενθερὸς αὐτῆς κατέλυσεν ὧν εἰσήνεγκαν οἱ Φαρισαῖοι κατὰ τὴν πατρῴαν παράδοσιν, τοῦτο πάλιν ἀποκατέστησεν.

principles. The decision disqualifying a priest whose mother was a captive[94] is based on a solid Halakha, as is the punishment of flogging.[95] John is not a confirmed enemy and not a malicious sinner, but a favorite and pupil of the Pharisees who was trapped by a criminal plot and tripped up by a regrettable accident. The main responsibility for the conflict and grave iniquities is attributable to a mischief-maker among the Pharisees and to a Sadducee inciter.

Despite the serious consequences of the quarrel, the fatal dissension and the removal of the Pharisees from the leadership of the state, John in that picture is surrounded by an aura of conciliation and even admiration. There is a discernible tendency to minimize his liability for the tragic clash, somewhat like the tendency in the Jerusalem Talmud legend about Ben Shataḥ, and his deception of Jannaeus in connection with the Nazirites. According to its contents and essence that story was doubtless taken from a genuine internal tradition rather than external testimony, in contrast to the alien version retained in *Jewish War,* and after a softened rewording included as well in the amended chapter of *Antiquities,* which stresses envy and hatred, sudden outbreaks and rupture.[96]

Naturally Josephus tried to combine the various parts into an integrated unit, and interweave suitable comments here and there. An intermediate passage serves as a sort of transition from the opening, which fits in with the first version, to the central part. The motif of envy is coupled with the rancor of the Pharisees who with their tremendous influence are able to induce adverse opinions "against a king and against a high priest" in the people. *Jewish War* does not name the Pharisees when the "envy" erupted, but criticizes their wily domination of the country in the chapter on the reign of Queen Alexandra.[97] Possibly then, their grudge against John was in the original testimony upon which Josephus' first version was based. The passage that stresses the Pharisees' power to rouse the nation against the country's leaders contains the term "king" which does not fit the Hyrcanus' period.[98] A similar condemnation, but much

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[94] mKetubbot II 9; Josephus, *Against Apion* I 35; *Ant.* III 276.

[95] mMakkot I 1; bKiddushin 28a.

[96] The "open war" of the rebels vanished in the *Antiquities* version, leaving only some vague information on the cessation of the outbreak (XIII 299). In fact there is no clear picture on the development of this outbreak or its consequences, on the continuation of the unrest or steps toward reconciliation, until the upsurge in Jannaeus' time. All of John Hyrcanus' activities are dealt with briefly, and only by chance is he mentioned once more in *Ant.* XVIII 91.

[97] *Bell.* I 110ff. Up to the time of Shlomzion Alexandra, the *Bell.* version makes no mention of parties or internal factions. The respected, outstandingly religious Pharisees appear for the first time after Jannaeus' death but, as transpires below, their activities are described in a definitely hostile tone. Despite their great influence they vanish for a long period, and are mentioned in the same unfriendly tone during Herod's reign (I 571), after which they again disappear for many years (II 119, 162ff., 411).

[98] There is no solid basis for believing that John Hyrcanus had already taken over the royal throne, as claimed by V. Aptowitzer, *Parteipolitik der Hasmonäerzeit* (Vienna 1927), p. 13ff. His

sharper, in the opinion of many[99] taken from Nicolaus, that is inserted in *Antiquities* among the events of King Herod's reign, censures the arrogance of the Pharisees in boasting of their punctiliousness in regard to the biblical precepts, and their alacrity in acting "against king" without restraint and even "openly, fighting and causing harm."[100] Such an abusive tone appears also in Jannaeus' testamentary advice discussed below, which attributes to the Pharisees the ability to hurt their rivals and tremendous influence, for the masses of people generally believe them and listen when they revile others "even out of envy."[101] The harmful propaganda, the rancor and the envy of the Pharisee teachers were apparently drawn from the same murky well, in contrast to the folk tale which presents the Pharisees at John Hyrcanus' side in a clearly favorable light.

The rift in the Hasmonean kingdom did not subside for an entire generation, and persisted to the end of Jannaeus' reign. For those years, Josephus records no fluctuations, no moments of reconciliation, and no attempts at rapprochement or contact between the Hasmonean government and the Pharisee circles. Still, there is no denying such possibilities of overtures or certain shifts, and no justification for hasty conclusions because of Josephus' silence on the point. For his duplicate survey in the two versions of the history of the Hasmonean dynasty, in the period of its splendor and prosperity, is enveloped in a foreign aura, is not planted in solid Jewish earth, nor nourished by internal tradition, except very marginally. His presentation hardly mentions spiritual trends and streams, sects and factions, folk institutions and social organization, outside the narrow area of the ruling groups.

This historical survey contains not even an echo of an incisive debate, or trace of a public reaction to the horrible crimes of Judas Aristobulus I, who forced his way to tyranny by contemptible methods, with no moral inhibitions, usurped and transformed into a monarchy the government, which his father John Hyrcanus had bequeathed to his widow. Aristobulus arbitrarily assumed the royal crown, imprisoned his brothers and starved his mother to death. His reign is described in the dramatic terms of Hellenistic art:[102] a tragic hero, ridden by various desires, fluctuates between the lust for power, love and envy, toward his inevitable fate, is caught in a net of intrigue, accidentally causes the murder of

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conclusion derives from his method (see Chapter 2, n. 49 above) which abounds in contrived combinations and finds some dubious support in Christian tradition (e.g. Jerome, *Commentaria in Ezechielem Prophetam* 21:31f.; *PL* 25) and in the Arabic Book of the Maccabees (see n. 185 below), that is, in the medieval version of Josippon. See J. Wellhausen, *Der arabische Josippus* (Berlin 1897), pp. 3, 17. The main version is the Hebrew Josippon: *Sefer Josifon,* ed. by David Flusser (Jerusalem 1978), vol. 1, p. 119ff.

99 Such as Schürer, Th. Reinach, R. Marcus, listed above: nn. 83, 86.

100 *Ant.* XVII 41ff. Cf. *Bell.* I 571.

101 See n. 128 below.

102 *Bell.* I 70ff.; *Ant.* XIII 301ff.; XX 240–241.

Antigonus, his beloved brother; he suffers the torments of a fatal disease, his dying soul flutters between the claws of his brother's spirits ("demons") for whose appeasement, in the pagan-Greek conception, he pours out his blood in atonement as he expires.[103] The fear of gloomy fate is represented by the fortune-teller, Judah the Essene, the skillful soothsayer, who predicts the tragedy of Antigonus, feels no obligation to lift a finger or issue a warning to avert the disaster, knowing its date and place, but wails for fear his prediction will not be fulfilled and the anticipated murder is not committed.[104] The voice from heaven speaks to him in Greek and misleads him with an ambiguous hint (Straton's Tower as a double-meaning name of the fixed location) in the manner of the famous oracles at Delphi and similar pagan prophecies.[105] The dark drama exhibits no spark of Jewish religious conscience. The version in *Antiquities* has, in addition to the chapter noted, only a fragmented quotation from Strabo, with some weak praise for Aristobulus because of his conquests in the north of the country, but not a crumb of genuine folk recollections.[106]

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[103] Blood offerings and libations to placate and calm menacing demons of the dead and frightening spirits of the murdered that call for vengeance figure among pagan Greek concepts and in Greek tragedies such as Aeschylus' *The Libation Bearers, (LCL),* ed. H.W. Smyth, vol. 2 (London 1957), lines 566, 576 ff. This non-Jewish motif subsequently recurs several times, such as in the story of King Herod's period (see n. 136 below).

[104] His foreign image is obvious as is that of Menaḥem the Essene beside Herod (*Ant.* XV 373) and Simeon the Essene beside Archelaus (*Ant.* XVII 346; *Bell.* II 113). Their wondrous features are not pietist Jewish but defined in the alien terminology of divination ("mantis") as in *Ant.* IV 104, 157; XVIII 217; *Bell.* IV 625; A. Schlatter, *Die Theologie des Judentums nach dem Bericht des Josefus* (Gütersloh 1932), p. 67. Josephus does not present such people in his own or adjacent generations, although he expresses his admiration for the Essenes in a lengthy description and attributes to them the ability to foretell the future, thanks to their profound knowledge of Holy Scriptures, to their study of the prophets, and to their various purifications (*Bell.* II 159). In classic tragedy, soothsayers have important roles, to stress the inevitability of inexorable fate. See J.C. Kamerbeek, "Prophecy and Tragedy," *Mnemosyne,* series 4, vol. 18 (1965): 29 ff.

[105] Herodotus, I 53 ff., ed. C. Hude (Oxford 1967–1927); idem, III 64 f.; Appian, *Roman History,* XI (10), 63 (*LCL*), ed. H. White, vol. 2 (London 1955); Plutarch's *Lives,* Lysander 29; idem, Titus Flamininus 20, (*LCL*), ed. B. Perrin (London 1914 etc.); Cassius Dio XLII 5, (*LCL*), ed. E. Cary, vol. 4 (London 1954); H. Klees, *Die Eigenart des griechischen Glaubens an Orakel und Seher* (Stuttgart 1965), p. 51 ff.

[106] *Ant.* XIII 318 f. Josephus inserts a ray of light into the gloomy picture. Citing Timagenes, Strabo testifies to Aristobulus' amenable character and his fine service to his country when he annexed additional territory and attached some of the Ituraean nation to the Jews by the bond of circumcision. Josephus adds another line clarifying that Aristobulus, called Philhellene, conquered part of the land of the Ituraeans and coerced the population to undergo circumcision and live according to the laws of the Jews if they wanted to remain on their land. In a similar manner Josephus describes how after John Hyrcanus conquered their country, the Idumaeans complied with his demand that they be circumcised and follow a Jewish way of life, and so were allowed to remain in their own country. Strabo in *Geography* XVI 2.34 (760), p. 280 in vol. 7 of the (*LCL*), Jones ed. (see n. 35 above) confirms the voluntary conversion to Judaism of the Idumaeans, although he is wrong in calling them Nabataeans, and says evidently mistakenly that Alexander (Jannaeus) was the first to declare himself king. Josephus does not clarify the borders of the conquered area (Galilee is mentioned in *Bell.* I 76) by Aristobulus or the reason he was dubbed Philhellene. No ancient historiographic, epigraphic or numismatic testimony attributes such a title to any Hasmonean, for in

The story of Jannaeus and the events of his period occur, almost ceaselessly, on the same non-Jewish historiographic stage.[107] A typical pagan story, illustrating the supremacy of predetermined fate, starts the narrative and reveals the meaning of the hate that is attached to Jannaeus from the outset, and the curse that threatens him before his birth. His father, John Hyrcanus, is informed by a supposedly divine revelation that he will be succeeded not by his beloved sons but by another son about to be born, whose countenance is shown him in a dream. That is why he removes the newborn child from his palace and orders him to be brought up in Galilee, but fails in the attempt to circumvent the divine decree.[108] In Greek literature Astyages, king of the Medes[109] and Oedipus' father, Laios, king of Thebes, failed in similar attempts to defy destiny.[110]

Jannaeus' reign is overwhelmed with hatred and evil. Not a shadow of moral justification is found for his expeditions and wars, nor any religious or national reason. His campaigns abound in terrible defeats and humiliating downfalls. The few victories on his adventurous path are generally gained by chance or through cunning.[111] He is credited with no meritorious achievements, neither construction nor settlements. Shame characterizes his people, and admiration is publicly directed at their enemies, such as in the astonishing description of the battle and siege of Gaza. A miserable Jewish army faces the noble Gazaeans who proudly and bravely defend their homeland.[112] Among the troops of Israel, there

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contrast to Herod, they were accused of destroying rather than building or enhancing Greek cities (see Chapter 6, n. 61 below) and centers of Hellenistic culture.

[107] Josephus, *Bell.* I 85ff.; *Ant.* XIII 320ff.

[108] *Ant.* XIII 322.

[109] Herodotus I 107; see n. 105 above.

[110] Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus,* line 711ff.; (*LCL*); Sophocles, ed. F. Storr, vol. 1 (London 1962); Euripides, *Phoenissae,* line 12ff.; (*LCL*), Euripides, ed. A.S. Way, vol. 3 (London 1962). Just as about Oedipus, many similar legends arose about the birth of Paris, the son of Priam or about Perseus. See H.J. Rose, *A Handbook of Greek Mythology* (London 1950), pp. 187ff., 233ff., 272ff.

[111] M. Stern, "Ha-Reka ha-Medini le-Milḥamotav shel Alexander Yanai," *Tarbiẓ* 33 (1964): 325ff. A somewhat different though rather meager description is provided by the Byzantine writer, Georgius Syncellus, *Chronographia,* ed. W. Dindorf, *CSHB,* vol. 1 (Bonn 1829), p. 558f. There are differences in the list of conquered cities and also in regard to the expeditions of Jannaeus who once attacked and won (over Antiochus XII Dionysus) and was not always defeated, as Josephus (based on Nicolaus) reports. Jannaeus' military operations against Tyre, and the despatch of his army under Digaeus Galilaeus against Nabataeans and Ituraeans are also mentioned by Syncellus alone. The hypothetical possibility has been proposed that an ancient source (Justus of Tiberias) is interwoven in Syncellus' version, but its mixed character, mistakes, and remoteness (it was sealed at the start of the ninth century) raise doubts as to its value. See H. Gelzer, *Sextus Julius Africanus* (Leipzig 1880), p. 257ff., 264ff.; T. Rajak, "Justus of Tiberias," *ClQ* 23 (1973): 366.

[112] *Ant.* XIII 358ff. The courage of the Gazaeans and their proud character depicted are based on an image well-established in Greek historiography; see Polybius XVI 22a (40), (*LCL*), ed. W.R. Paton, vol. 5 (London 1926); F.W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius,* vol. 2 (Oxford 1967), p. 527f. A cold hostile spirit hovers over all the expeditions and wars of King Jannaeus. The only exception is a passage (*Ant.* XIII 348ff.) on the Jewish commanders in Cleopatra's army, the descendants of Onias who founded in Egypt the Temple of Onias. A Jewish tone resounds in the story of their appearance when Onias' son Ananias takes a stand against plots to disregard the treaty

is no mention of a single act of bravery or personal sacrifice, no exhortatory oration, no inspirational slogan, no declared national intention or praiseworthy goal.[113]

A sudden rebellion shakes Janneus' kingdom. In what way? "The Jews rebelled during a holiday, for mostly during their festivities a riot erupts."[114] No additional reason is noted in *Jewish War*. There is no need to look far for the source of that derogatory version. Pilgrimages to Jerusalem as a rule worried Herod and the Roman authorities. Every holiday was a nightmare involving the danger that rebellious inclinations might be intensified.[115] Those circumstances were retrojected from the later reality back to the Hasmonean period. Nor is the style of this section a mystery. Such castigation of stormy, stubborn Israel, throwing off all constraint and avid for sedition and revolt appears in the oration of Nicolaus of Damascus when debating with a Jewish delegation before Augustus Caesar, in order to defend the Herodian family.[116] The slanderous caricature of the Jewish rabble going wild, for no rhyme or reason, was created in that same artistic workshop that forged the wondrous motive of vacuous "envy" for the ferment at the time of John Hyrcanus.

In *Antiquities* Josephus plucked out the offensive excuse and altered it. This time the event is explained against a Jewish background. The disturbances erupted during the Feast of the Tabernacles. While Jannaeus was fulfilling a

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with Jannaeus, and in the name of all the Jews expresses complete solidarity with the Jewish Hasmonean king. That passage comes perhaps from some records or annals of the Onias temple, and the contents suggest (as does a fragment of Strabo included) that they stem from Hellenistic-Jewish circles close to the Onias family; see *Ant.* XII 385ff.; XIII 62ff., 284ff.; *Contra Apionem* II (5) 49ff. Except for this story, in all Jannaeus' operations and wars, there is not a single Jewish commander, officer or leader outside the royal family. That means that Josephus had no Jewish Eretz Israel source. Schalit's attempts to uncover some Hasmonean source in the list of Jannaeus' conquests, through textual changes and extensive speculation is a vain, totally unfounded exercise. See A. Schalit, *König Herodes* (Berlin 1969), p. 199; idem, "Die Eroberungen des Alexander Jannäus in Moab," *Theokratia,* vol. 1 (Leiden 1970): 3ff.; W. Schottroff, "Horonaim Nimrim Luhith," *ZDPV* 82 (1966): 163ff.

[113] In complete contrast to Herod's exaggerated exploits. The alien perspective is not confined to Jannaeus' time but discernible in regard to the entire period of the Hasmonean kingdom (*Bell.* I 61ff.; *Ant.* XIII 230ff.). Thus, even in *Antiquitates,* aside from special additions (see nn. 88 above and 142 below) and isolated deviant passages the transition from the chapters covering the Hasmonean Revolt (XII 248ff.) based mainly on I Maccabees to those describing the period of the Hasmonean kingdom is quite obvious.

[114] *Bell.* I 88: ἐπανίσταται τὸ Ἰουδαϊκὸν ἐν ἑορτῇ· μάλιστα γὰρ ἐν ταῖς εὐωχίαις αὐτῶν στάσις ἅπτεται.

[115] *Bell.* I 253; II 42, 224; *Ant.* XIV 337; XVII 254; XX 106ff.

[116] In both parallel versions Josephus reports the oration. *Bell.* II 92 (trans. by H. St.J. Thackeray): "Nicolas then rose and... retorted by an accusation of the national character, impatient of all authority and insubordinate towards their sovereigns." In *Ant.* XVII 316 (trans. by R. Marcus & A. Wikgren): "He also complained of their revolutionary activity and their delight in sedition that was due to their not having been trained to submit to justice and law and to their desire to have their own way in all things." See n. 83 above.

function in the Temple and was about to make a sacrifice, "the nation rose against him." The mob stoned him with citrons and derided him as born of captives (or a captive mother) and therefore unfit to be a priest.[117] That accusation is quite suspect as it was already hurled at his father and refuted. It would have been possible to question Jannaeus' fitness for the priesthood if John Hyrcanus had been disqualified in his day, but not after the vilification had been disproven. Who suddenly spread the defamation after so many years, and how did he succeed in persuading and arousing the people? It appears likely that the dissension of John Hyrcanus' time and the quarrels of Jannaeus' were merged, that Josephus wove several threads together and on the basis of a vague rumor inserted the stoning with citrons. In order to extricate the matter from the impasse, many scholars[118] relate the inexplicable section in Josephus to the sin of an anonymous priest who did not properly carry out the precept of the water libation on a holiday, as stated in Tractate Sukkah and "the whole people pelted him with their citrons," but that identification is based on a broken reed, for there is nothing in the story of that priest or in the rest of the details about him that suggests Jannaeus' period or personality.[119] There is no genuine proof that Jannaeus was attacked because of his demonstrative Sadducee act and his omission of the water libation on a holiday.

The suppression of the riot did not relax the severe tension or stop the ferment. Some time later, after a military failure, the rebellion was rekindled, even more intensely according to *Jewish War.*[120] Jannaeus crushed and defeated his foes, caused thousands of casualties, and in the end stretched his hand forth in reconciliation, but met with a wall of hatred. The rebels appealed for help to Demetrius Eucaerus (or ironically—Acaerus), reigning in Damascus, and the forces met in the Shechem area. Before the battle each of the rivals issued propaganda proclamations in order to split the enemy's united front. Demetrius hoped to divert the Greek mercenaries to his camp, while Jannaeus sought to persuade the Jewish rebels to leave their allies. These efforts were vain, for "the Jews did not cease their anger, nor the Greeks their loyalty" to Jannaeus. Demetrius won the battle despite the wonderful bravery of the Greek warriors on Jannaeus' side who confronted him. But suddenly most of the Jews betrayed their alliance with Demetrius and left him for they pitied Jannaeus in his distress. When he fled to the hills, he was joined by six thousand Jews. The Syrian monarch withdrew, fearing his rival would recover and the whole people would

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[117] *Ant.* XIII 372: προσεξελοιδόρησαν δ' αὐτὸν ὡς ἐξ αἰχμαλώτων (Lat.: de captiva) γεγονότα καὶ τῆς τιμῆς καὶ τοῦ θύειν ἀνάξιον.

[118] H. Graetz, *Geschichte,* vol. 3^3, pp. 142ff., 664ff.; J. Derenbourg, *Essai,* p. 98ff.; I.H. Weiss, *Dor Dor,* vol. 1, p. 129; I. Halevy, *Dorot,* vol. 2, p. 480ff.; J. Klausner, *Historia,* vol. 3, p. 150; see n. 2 above.

[119] mSukkah IV 9; tSukkah III 16; bSukkah 48b; ySukkah IV 54d; yYoma I 39a.

[120] *Bell.* I 90ff.

hasten to him. The abating revolt was marked by rivers of blood. The surviving rebels were overcome.

Jannaeus took his revenge, ordering mass crucifixions within Jerusalem, and the slaughter of their wives and children in full view of the dying rebels. He feasted joyfully in the midst of the city with his concubines while drinking and watching the shocking scene. In horror, thousands of his opponents fled the country to return only after his death. Sharp aspersions and a clearly unsympathetic approach characterize the *Jewish War* version. The tents of Israel shelter only a mob of dissenting, inflexible, unbridled mischief-makers, savagely infighting, bearing grudges unrestrainedly, deceiving their friend and abandoning their ally. Bravery and wisdom, nobility and loyalty are virtues reserved for the Greek combatants. Demetrius achieves his victory, the foreign mercenaries fight bravely and sacrifice their lives for Jannaeus, but the treacherous Jews do not eschew perfidy, and their despotic king slakes his thirst for revenge with predatory cruelty.[121]

The melancholy picture was transferred to *Antiquities* without any fundamental change but polished up with small deletions, a few additions and some burnishing. With the aid of improved statistics no less suspect, the outward impression is somewhat altered in favor of the Jews, although no new testimony is revealed. In contrast to the earlier version, this time Jannaeus is supported by twice as many compatriots, the number of foreign mercenaries is reduced, and the enemy troops are greatly increased, so that he was defeated by an apparently numerically superior force.[122] The stress on the wild fury of the rebellious Jews compared with the pure nobility of the Greek mercenaries is omitted, and the outcome of the battle near Shechem is reported in almost neutral terms: "Demetrius was victorious while all of Alexander's mercenaries who had proved their loyalty and bravery died, and also many of Demetrius' soldiers fell."

There is no explanation of when the Jewish warriors on both sides disappeared or where to. The author is not troubled by their fate, how they suddenly vanished, whether they died on the battlefield or managed to flee in time. No solution is offered for the riddle of why Demetrius panicked and hastily retreated when his Jewish allies departed, if their contributions were so

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[121] The gloomy description does not contain even a spark of sympathy for any Jewish faction or personage. There is consequently no reason to look here for traces of any Pharisee or Sadducee sources, or those of other factions.

[122] *Ant.* XIII 375 ff. Jannaeus recruited 6,200 mercenaries and about 20,000 Jews as against 3,000 cavalry and 40,000 infantry (including Jews) of the enemy. But according to *Bellum,* Jannaeus recruited 9,000 mercenaries and 10,000 Jews, while the enemy had 3,000 horsemen plus 14,000 foot soldiers (including Jews). The statistics thus seem to vary at the author's discretion. Stereotypical associational patterns are discernible in them. No less then five thousand Jewish rebels were killed within six years. Six thousand Jews joined Jannaeus after his defeat. See also Ant. XVII 42. About eight hundred rebels were crucified and about eight thousand refugees fled abroad.

minimal.[123] The abandonment of the alliance with Demetrius is mentioned once without any reproachful tone, but there is no indication at all of what group of Jews invited the invader to come, or whether a pact was signed or at least an agreement reached before their joint assault against Jannaeus. To the horrifying picture of the crucifixion of the rebels the author appends a tepid comment, a hesitant mixture of censure and conventional justification: Jannaeus punished them for all their iniquities, hostility and the danger they presented to his life and his throne. They had attracted the interest of the Arabian king whom Jannaeus could placate only by strongholds and conquered territory in Moab and Gileaditis. But he was excessively cruel and that is why he was called "Thrakidas" by the Jews.[124] By stylistic juggling Josephus somewhat lightened the weight of his people's sins, removed a few shortcomings from the startling debit balance but did not in his amended version solve the troublesome problems, nor deepen his furrow or widen his horizon.

The development of the internal conflict in the Hasmonean kingdom, its reasons and course, are sketched on a turbid, watery surface. The crucial public factors are steeped in darkness hidden behind the curtain of strange shadows and shallow descriptions. *Jewish War* does not describe any definite factions, identify social aspirations or religious creeds from the time of the Antiochus Epiphanes decrees until Jannaeus' last days. It is only after his death, in the reign of his widow, Alexandra (Salina or Salome-Shlomzion), that the Pharisees first

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[123] Demetrius failed in Syria and remained a captive of the Parthians all his life (*Ant.* XIII 384 ff.). That explains (see Section B above) Jannaeus' friendly relations with the Parthians. In view of that danger, the speed of Demetrius' withdrawal from Judaea is explainable. See A.R. Bellinger, *The End of the Seleucids* (New Haven, Conn. 1949), p. 77. Josephus, however, reports that after withdrawing, Demetrius himself attacked his brother Philippus, leading the Parthians and Arabs to become involved, was defeated and captured by the Parthians, That testimony does not confirm any immediate need to withdraw from Judaea, in order to repel an enemy on a different front.

[124] The offensive pejorative epithet evidently refers to the stereotype of the Thracians in the Hellenistic world as wild, barbaric mercenaries and warriors, sometimes horrifyingly cruel. That image has no roots in Jewish sources, however, and has an alien origin. See Polybius XXVII 12 (*LCL*), ed. W.R. Paton, vol. 5 (London 1926); Diodorus Siculus XXXIII 14; XXXIV/XXXV 12 (*LCL*), ed. F.R. Walton, vol. 12 (London 1967); M. Launey, *Recherches sur les armées hellénistiques* (Paris 1949/50), p. 366 ff.; G.T. Griffith, *The Mercenaries of the Hellenistic World* (Cambridge 1935), p. 252; B. Bar Kochva, *The Seleucid Army* (Cambridge 1976), p. 33 ff. See also n. 174 below. Nicolaus (through Josephus) expresses the animosity of his Damascene birthplace, a center of hostility to Jannaeus, and of the other Greek cities which were foci of hatred during the Hasmonean wars and campaigns of conquest. No Thracians are listed in Jannaeus' armies, but they are mentioned among the Seleucid troops (II Maccabees XII 35) and Herod's mercenaries (*Bell.* I 672; *Ant.* XVII 198). Among the passages from Nicolaus is a scene of a killing during a Roman banquet; F. Jacoby, *FGH* II A, No. 90 (Leiden 1961), F 78. The picture of the atrocity committed by King Jannaeus was drawn along the same lines. It should be borne in mind that Nicolaus belonged to a respected Damascus family and in his childhood (born ca. 69 B.C.E.) absorbed hostile reactions to the Hasmonean military operations in the area and to the menace of Aristobulus II, the son of Jannaeus and Shlomzion (*Bell.* I 115; *Ant.* XIII 418) who advanced with his army almost to the gates of Damascus. See also M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors,* XLI, vol. 1 (Jerusalem 1974), p. 227 ff.

appear, and not in a favorable light. Jannaeus bequeathed the kingdom to her, according to that version, in the hope that the Jews would willingly accept her government, for she "kept aloof from his brutality," objected to his crimes, and gained the admiration of the people. And, indeed, his hopes were realized.[125] The queen succeeded in her mission, observed ancestral customs, and removed from power those who sinned against holy precepts. Because of her piety she heeded the teachings of the Pharisees and raised to power their group of Jews "who were considered preferable to the rest in fear of God, and interpret the laws with greater meticulousness."[126] They gradually took advantage of her obedience and naïveté, took over all authority, passed judgement as they wished, banished and repatriated, fettered and freed, enjoyed all the pleasures of dominion leaving its costs and burdens to be borne by the queen. On their orders, Jannaeus' advisers who were responsible for the crucifixion of the rebels were brought to trial and sentenced to death, and the blood bath was stopped only by the intervention of Jannaeus' son, Aristobulus.

Thus, the bequest of the kingdom to the devout widow, which brought the Pharisees to power, was not the result of a moral or social change, but a deliberate scheme of the cruel and wily king. This view is repeated with greater detail and forcefulness in *Antiquities.*[127] According to it, on his deathbed Jannaeus advised his wife how to behave in order to ensure the future of her reign: She was to yield a certain amount of power to the Pharisees in the government and then turn over his body to them, to leave unburied, defile or maltreat as they wished, and repay him for their torment. "Their strength is great — he explained — among the Jews to injure their enemies and help their friends, for the masses believe them implicitly when they denounce others even out of envy." That was "why in hurting them he fell into conflict with the nation."[128] When the conditions he advised were met, Jannaeus anticipated, he would be buried with due pomp and the queen would achieve stable rule. Events occurred in perfect correspondence with his forecast. The widow followed his advice without diverging a hair's breadth, and turned the Pharisees into friends. They spoke publicly in Jannaeus' favor, lauded his accomplishments and lamented "that a righteous king was lost to them." Their praise roused the

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[125] *Bell.* I 107ff.

[126] *Bell.* I 110: σύνταγμά τι Ἰουδαίων δοκοῦν εὐσεβέστερον εἶναι τῶν ἄλλων καὶ τοὺς νόμους ἀκριβέστερον ἀφηγεῖσθαι.

[127] *Ant.* XIII 398ff. The queen's opposition to Jannaeus' crimes is omitted, probably to strengthen the impression of the following scene.

[128] *Ant.* XIII 401–402: δύνασθαι δὲ πολὺ παρὰ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις τούτους ἔφασκε βλάψαι τε μισοῦντας καὶ φιλίως διακειμένους ὠφελῆσαι: μάλιστα γὰρ πιστεύεσθαι παρὰ τῷ πλήθει περὶ ὧν κἂν φθονοῦντές τι χαλεπὸν λέγωσιν, αὐτόν τε προσκροῦσαι τῷ ἔθνει διὰ τούτους ἔλεγεν ὑβρισθέντας ὑπ' αὐτοῦ.

people to mourn and eulogize to the point that Jannaeus' funeral was more splendid than that of any earlier king.[129]

At first glance, we have here a true Jewish folk tale embodying perhaps a historical core: The wicked king repents of his sins on his deathbed, his griefstricken wife redresses his wrongs and merciful sages open the gates of heaven for his wretched soul. But a thorough examination quickly dispels the clouds of delusion. Jannaeus does not repent and purify his soul as he faces the horrors of hell, but remains to the end a master of intrigue who knows how to extricate his ship from the straits, as he did previously, bequeathe the kingship to his family unhindered, and even elicit high praise from his enemies. The Pharisees are far from models of religious idealism. Neither honesty nor innocence nor purity of faith moves them, but rather envy and the lust for power. In their wrath they are not slowed by inhibitions and may even desecrate the corpses of their foes. To attain authority they manifest hypocrisy, stage a moving eulogy for their cruel enemy, award him the crown of righteousness, and sway the public with their deceitful lamentation.[130] And what is the nature of the Jewish people in that unsavory drama? It is a shapeless mass, without form or comeliness, dull and stupid, victimized by despots and scoundrels, listening avidly to the preaching of its mentors and drawn like a herd to their perversities and vanities.

That story was not invented by Sadducees or born of any Jewish conception, sect, or sectarian view, but created in the same Damascene work that heaped abuse upon the entire people of Israel, their Hasmonean leaders and their spiritual mentors. Such aspersions were cast throughout the whole Hasmonean period, and the poison comes from the same Herodian historiography. The vast chasm between a Jewish legend and an alien hostile version can be seen in a comparison of this presentation of the Pharisees with their appearance in the dispute of John Hyrcanus' time noted above, according to the characteristic well-known story in *Antiquities*.[131] There the Pharisees are wise, instructive,

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[129] The picture of a sumptuous funeral compared with that of other kings, accompanied by the lamentations and mourning of the whole people, according to the dying despot's will, is repeated for Herod (*Ant.* XVII 177; *Bell.* I 660). The obvious similarity suggests here too the literary workshop of Nicolaus of Damascus.

[130] A negative attitude to the Pharisees emerges from another excerpt on Herod referred to in n. 100 above. See also nn. 134–136, 141 below.

[131] In passages he himself composed Josephus presents the Pharisees in generally a favorable light (*Ant.* XVIII 12ff.; XIII 171ff.; *Bell.* II 162ff.) in contrast to the Sadducees (see n. 139 below) about whom he sounds not a single admiring note. In his autobiography too he declares (*Vita* 10ff., 21, 191, 197) his appreciation of and identification with the Pharisees. Josephus' attitude and declaration contribute to the impression that he is an authority in regard to the Law of Israel and the history of the nation, but he never mentions the sages of Yavneh and Rabban Yoḥanan b. Zakkai who were his contemporaries or most of the spiritual leaders (see n. 142 below) of earlier generations. The quality of his descriptions too fails to indicate any genuine personal links or close connections with the Pharisees. On the other hand he cannot be considered their enemy, given his apologetic tone

moderate in judgement, zealous for the truth and human values, complying with the biblical precepts and principles of their religion. Here they are credited with wiliness, prevarication, hypocrisy, power-hunger, rancor and envy.

The turning point in the Hasmonean kingdom that took place at the end of Jannaeus' reign, the rise of the Pharisees to key positions and the restoration of their influence in the upper echelons of the country were thus presented in an adverse light. Such discordant notes generally accompany Queen Alexandra Shlomzion on her way in *Antiquities.* As usual Josephus expanded and renovated his story but hardly strayed from his previous path.[132] The only exceptions are a few verses such as a short note that serves as a link to the start of the division in John Hyrcanus' time, and explains the restoration of the legitimacy and validity of the rulings "that the Pharisees instituted according to ancestral tradition" and had been canceled when the storm erupted.[133]

However, no information is given in connection with the Pharisees or their supporters on any commendable activity, or plans, or laws, or personages. There is no record of any leader, thinker, teacher, or lawgiver among them. Rather they are blamed for furious vengefulness and the incitement of hatred in a people thirsty for peace: "The whole country was quiet except for the Pharisees."[134] It was their fault that there were vengeful trials and the queen was caught in their net. A halo adorns their victims, who were Jannaeus' cohorts.[135] Chivalry, nobility and loyalty shine forth from them. Crowned with laurel wreaths, they bear the responsibility for the existence and greatness of the country. Their fate is presented in a touching drama and their complaints when persecuted pull at the heartstrings. In their distress, they appeal to the spirits, as in the Judas Aristobulus' tragedy, call forth the "demons" of Alexander (Jannaeus) and threaten to serve neighboring countries as mercenaries.[136] Their outward appearance, their pagan style, the essence of their arguments, as well as the few of their names cited (Diogenes, Galaestes or Palaestes),[137] contain no trace of anything Jewish. Their characters exhibit the typical features of the Gentile mercenaries of Jannaeus' time. There is no sign of Sadduceeism in them.

A logical view common among scholars assumes a Sadducee opposition

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and his negative relationships to the Sadducees. The complicated nature of his writing (see n. 88 above) is explainable by its aims and sources.

[132] *Ant.* XIII 405ff. See also n. 127 above.

[133] The passage is quoted in n. 93 above.

[134] *Ant.* XIII 410: ἠρέμει δὲ ἡ χώρα πᾶσα πάρεξ τῶν Φαρισαίων· οὗτοι γὰρ ἐπετάραττον τὴν βασίλισσαν κτλ.

[135] The basic approach is identical in the *Antiquitates* version and the one in *Bellum* (see n. 97 above) despite the differences and corrections.

[136] The fear of demons and terror of the spirits of the dead, as in the fate of Judas Aristobulus I (nn. 102–103 above), recur in the story about King Herod and point to the same alien Hellenistic work. See *Bell.* I 556, 596, 599, 628.

[137] *Ant.* XIII 410, 424 (Galaestes—Palaestes).

coalition against the Pharisee government.[138] Josephus' treatment, however, leaves the matter vague and does not clarify the nature of the internal struggle. Sadducees were involved only once in the description of the conflict in John Hyrcanus' time, according to a folk-tale, and thereafter they vanished completely. They are mentioned no more in all the happenings and changes of the Hasmonean period.[139] Josephus' chief sources record neither their representatives, their ideas, or their aspirations.[140] The vilification of the queen and the Pharisees is drawn not from the Sadducees but from that same Hellenistic Herodian work whose distortions are etched in every corner of that historical work, steeped in foreignness and enmity.[141] Its narrow confines had no room for Simeon b. Shataḥ or Judah b. Tabai and their company, way of life, philosophy, memories and heritage.[142]

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[138] H. Graetz, *Geschichte* (see n. 2 above), vol. 3^3, p. 163; E. Schürer, *Geschichte* (see n. 2), vol. 1^4, p. 288; F.M. Abel, *Histoire de la Palestine,* vol. 1 (Paris 1952), p. 240; J. Klausner, *Historia* (see n. 2), vol. 3^2, p. 169.

[139] The *Bellum* version does not present any true "Sadducee" figure, at all. *Antiquitates* has Jonathan (XIII 293ff.), the Sadducee representative who aggravates the controversy during John Hyrcanus' reign (as indicated above). Hanan b. Hanan, the high priest of the Roman period, is labeled Sadducee in a dubious suspect testimony (*Ant.* XX 199ff.) apparently interwoven (see grounds at end of Chapter 7 below) in the wake of a Christian interpolation. No Sadducee contribution or important activity is treated favorably nor is any admirable Sadducee noted.

[140] Because of the alien approach, the chapters under discussion contain no national or religious motivation at all for the Hasmonean policy, the wars, the conquests, the dissemination of Judaism and the Torah throughout Eretz Israel. Direct external testimonies of Greek and Roman writers on the Hasmonean monarchy (see Chapter 1, nn. 2-4 above) are not dealt with in our analyses. While Strabo is not enamored of the Hasmoneans and their wars, he is less biased than Nicolaus. Consequently Josephus draws on Strabo (see n. 88 above) and includes excerpts from him, sometimes quoted or paraphrased in the *Antiquitates* version, such as in the chapter on Judas Aristobolus (see n. 106 above) or on the death of the last Hasmonean king, Mattathias Antigonus (*Ant.* XV 9). Strabo may have been the basis for other passages besides those specified but it is hard to identify them (see Chapter 6, n. 45 below) and distinguish clearly between the various sources in Josephus' treatment. Sometimes Josephus even indicates that he combined separate versions as in *Antiquitates* XIV 68, 104. The many variations and changes of wording in parallel versions show that Josephus did not reproduce exactly, but paraphrased and polished what he found elsewhere. Cf. Diodorus Siculus XXXIV–XXXV 1 (*LCL*), ed. F.R. Walton, vol. 12 (London 1967), p. 52ff. and *Ant.* XIII 242ff. On Strabo see M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors,* XLII, vol. 1, p. 261ff.; see n. 124 above.

[141] A negative view of the Pharisees and of Shlomzion's reign is again discernible in the description of its end: *Ant.* XIII 423, 430ff.

[142] Of all the Zugot ("Pairs") and Pharisee leaders, Josephus mentions (*Ant.* XIV 172ff.; XV 3ff., 370) only Samaias and Pollion, who can be identified with Shemaiah and Avtalyon. The figure of Ḥoni (Ha-Me'aggel), the Circle-Drawer, emerges from the characteristic pietist-Hasid fellowship (*Ant.* XIV 22ff.); see n. 28 of Chapter 6 below. These episodes are drawn from internal folk tradition as above (n. 88). They are few, discontinuous and lack the earmarks of any written source. Josephus did not need to make great efforts, nor was it especially difficult in the years after the destruction of the Temple, to get together a collection of tales and memories of the kind that characterizes the talmudic tradition. There are no grounds for the theory that Josephus befriended the sages of Yavneh (see n. 131 above), and therefore supposedly wrote *Antiquitates,* changing the historical picture to the point of distortion, and exaggerating the power and influence the Pharisees had among the people, in order to enhance their authority and official status while mediating between them and

E. *The Rift in Jannaeus' Time in the Babylonian Talmud*

A Baraita in Kiddushin 66a deals with the controversy during Jannaeus' reign and its sorry consequences:[143] "Abbaye said... it was taught, it once happened that King Jannaeus went to Koḥalit in the desert and conquered sixty towns there. And when he returned he rejoiced greatly and he summoned all the sages of Israel. He said to them, Our forefathers used to eat salt plants when they were engaged in building the Temple, (so) we too will eat salt plants in memory of our forefathers.[144] And they set salt plants on golden tables and ate. And there was one frivolous evil-hearted and worthless man there, Eleazar b. Poïra was his name. And Eleazar b. Poïra said to King Jannaeus, King Jannaeus, (in) the hearts of the Pharisees are against you. And what shall I do? Set up a frontlet for them between your eyes. He set up a frontlet for them between his eyes. There was an elder there named Judah b. Gerera.[145] And Ben Gerera said to Jannaeus the king: King Jannaeus, the royal crown is enough for you. Leave the crown of priesthood to the seed of Aaron, for they said his mother was a captive in Modi'in. The matter was investigated and not found. And the sages of Israel departed in anger. And Eleazar b. Poïra said to Jannaeus the king, King Jannaeus, a common person in Israel, that is his law, but you are king and high priest, shall that be your law too? (He said to him), What shall I do? If you take my advice, trample them. And the Torah, what will happen, with it? (He said to him), It is bound and laid in a corner. Anyone who wishes to learn will come and learn. Abbaye said (and some say Rav Naḥman b. Isaac), Heresy was just then injected in him, for he should have replied, that is all right for the Written Law. What about the Oral Law? Immediately the evil deed burst forth through Eleazar b. Poïra (and Judah b. Gerera) and all the sages of Israel were killed. And the whole world was desolate, until Simeon b. Shataḥ came and restored the Torah to its original condition."[146]

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the Romans. See Morton Smith, "Palestinian Judaism in the First Century," Moshe Davis, ed., *Israel: Its Role in Civilization* (New York 1956), p. 75ff.; J. Neusner, *From Politics to Piety* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1973), p. 53ff.; idem, *The Rabbinic Traditions* (see n. 2 above), vol. 1, p. 137ff. See also n. 42 of Chapter 7 below. The repudiation of the historical value and negation of the intrinsic antiquity of the talmudic tradition without distinguishing various strata led certain other scholars (e.g., R. Laqueur, n. 86 above and 211 below) to generally prefer the *Bellum* to the *Antiquitates* version where serious differences occur, that is, to ascribe superiority to the historiographic approach linked to an alien-external viewpoint.

[143] bKiddushin 66a. Text verified according to Munich MS in H.L. Strack ed., p. 212a; *Ein Ya'akov,* First Printing, p. 127; *Sefer ha-Mafte'aḥ* of Rabbi Nissim, p. 22; see nn. 19, 53 above. A few variants are given in parentheses.

[144] These salt plants are vegetables (Job 30:4) as already stated by Rabbi Ḥanan'el, *Otzar ha-Geonim,* vol. 9, ed. Lewin (Jerusalem 1940), p. 47.

[145] Gerera (also in the Munich MS) or Gedidya (in the printed editions, in Rabbi Nissim, etc.) or Gedidim (*Seder ha-Dorot* of Rabbi Yeḥiel Heilprin, vol. 1 [Jerusalem 1956], p. 147) or Godgeda (in the R-a-sh-b-a, see n. 165 below) and the like.

[146] The Baraita was included in the compilation called *Hagadot ha-Talmud* (see n. 61 above), p.

The skeleton and basic lines of the Baraita correspond to Josephus' version in *Antiquities,* that was dealt with above, and is based on a folk-tale describing the rupture and disturbances in the reign of John Hyrcanus. But there are differences, deletions and additions. First of all, in the Talmud Jannaeus is substituted for Hyrcanus. While in Josephus, too, the slander on Jannaeus' flawed descent is repeated,[147] the root of the event is placed in John Hyrcanus' time. Even the Baraita actually points to John Hyrcanus, for it is suspected that "his mother was a captive in Modi'in," and that claim could not be made about Jannaeus. The secret of the substitution is revealed in the Babylonian Talmud itself: "It is taught, Do not believe in yourself till the day of your death, for the high priest John (Yoḥanan) served in the high priesthood eighty years and in the end became a Sadducee. Abbaye said, It is Jannaeus who is the same as John. Rava said, Jannaeus and John are different, Jannaeus was originally wicked and John was originally righteous."[148] The Baraita is propounded by Abbaye and apparently already edited according to his method which posits "Jannaeus is John." From another viewpoint, the unreservedly great admiration for John and the favorable talmudic assessments of his priesthood, with no questioning of his status, may have encouraged the tendency to eliminate his name from the miserable affair.[149] At any rate, the earlier talmudic Eretz Israel sources do not contain that odd merger even once, and Jannaeus is not identified with John. Some scholars have preferred to accept the Baraita as a basis for the view that the controversy erupted in Jannaeus' reign, not John's.[150] The vast majority, however, set the event properly in the reign of John Hyrcanus I, but tend to harmonize the two parallel descriptions and discern ancient roots in the

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55d ff., in quite garbled form: "A story of King Jannaeus, who went to Keḥolit in the desert... and Eleazar b. Poïra said to King Jannaeus... an elder and his name is Judah b. Gargeria... and Torah what will be with it? It will be written and laid aside" and so on, but E.E. Urbach (*Tarbiẓ* 27 [1958]: 181) prefers this defective version and finds in it backing for his view opposing all the clear testimonies (with the single exception of one, in the shaky scholia to the Scroll of Fasting, as stated in n. 341 below) that the main controversy between Pharisees and Sadducees revolved around whether or not it was permissible to put in writing laws which were not part of the sealed Mosaic Torah. There is no lack of garbles in *Hagadot ha-Talmud* (see a few examples in n. 258 below).

147 See n. 117 above.

148 bBerakhot 29a, in contrast to *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana,* XI 1, ed. B. Mandelbaum (New York 1962), p. 176.

149 mParah III 5; mYadayim IV 6; mMa'aser Sheni V 15; mSotah IX 10 (and on it, in the Tosefta, Jerusalem Talmud and Babylonian Talmud); bYoma 9a; bRosh Ha-Shanah 18b. Also the legend listed in n. 88, and so on.

150 J. Bondi, "Der Hohepriester Jochanan," *Jahrbuch der Jüdisch-Literarischen Gesellschaft,* vol. 6 (Frankfurt 1908), p. 396 ff.; I. Friedlaender, "The Rupture between Alexander Jannai and the Pharisees," *JQR* n.s. 4 (1913/14): 443 ff.; G. Alon, *Meḥkarim be-Toldot Yisrael,* vol. 1 (Tel Aviv 1957), pp. 19, 32; S.B. Hoenig, *The Great Sanhedrin* (Philadelphia 1953), p. 35; J. Le Moyne, *Les Sadducéens* (Paris 1972), p. 54 ff.; M.J. Geller, "Alexander Jannaeus and the Pharisee Rift," *JJS* 30 (1979): 202 ff.

talmudic legend.[151] To elucidate the matter let us take apart the Baraita, analyze its parts, and compare them with the Josephus version.

Like Josephus, the Talmud begins the story in an atmosphere of amity and gaiety. The leading Pharisees were invited to a royal feast, in the course of which a dispute developed. To explain the background of the fateful banquet the Baraita adds some details that Josephus does not have. The custom of eating salt plants "in memory of our forefathers" belongs to marginal folkloristic accessories, but the expedition to "Koḥalit in the desert" and the conquest of "sixty towns" constitutes a new fact. If that testimony is correct, then the Baraita contains an independent tradition of particular historical importance. Where is "Koḥalit in the desert" located, with sixty towns in its area? Commentators have exhausted themselves seeking it, and have proposed a variety of places: Ḥolath of Antioch,"[152] Chalcis in the Lebanon valley,[153] Coele Syria,[154] Cilicia or the "valley of the Cilicians."[155] All these efforts were vain, for the proposals are all based on mutilation of the wording and disregard of its significance. The traditional Koḥalit is in a desert region. The phrase "Koḥalit in the desert" does not appear except in the Baraita, and does not figure on any actual verified geographical map, but was formed by the common adjacency in the Halakha: "hyssop koḥali (blue)... hyssop of the desert."[156] The "sixty towns" are likewise a known quantity in the Babylonian Talmud, and are evidently based on the biblical passage—"We captured all his towns... sixty towns, the whole district of Argob" (Deut. 3:4).[157] Even assuming that this obscure passage contains fragmentary references to Jannaeus' campaigns in Transjordan, no original, definite or clear information can be deduced from it.[158]

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[151] N. Krochmal, *Moreh Nevukhei ha-Zeman* (London 1961), p. 77ff.; S.D. Luzzatto, *Lezioni di storia giudaica* (Padua 1852), p. 144; L. Herzfeld, "Chronologische Ansetzung," (see n. 2 above), p. 275; I.M. Jost, *Geschichte des Judenthums,* vol. 1, p. 234; J. Derenbourg, *Essai* (see n. 2), p. 80; H. Graetz, *Geschichte* (see n. 2), vol. 3^3, pp. 127ff., 645ff.; I. Lévi, "Les Sources Talmudiques" (see n. 2), p. 219ff.; E. Schürer, *Geschichte* (see n. 2), vol. 1^4, p. 271ff.; ibid., New English Version, vol. 1, p. 213ff.; I.H. Weiss, *Dor Dor* (see n. 2), vol. 1, p. 126; I. Halevy, *Dorot* (see n. 2), vol. 1, p. 311ff.; J. Klausner, *Historia* (see n. 2 above), vol. 3^2, p. 136ff.; V. Tcherikover, *Ha-Yehudim ve-ha-Yevanim ba-Tekufa ha-Helenistit*^{2} (Tel Aviv 1963), p. 204ff. See also nn. 172–174 below.

[152] A. Neubauer, *La Géographie du Talmud* (Paris 1868), p. 393; "L'identification est plus que douteuse."

[153] B.Z. Lurie, *Yanai ha-Melekh,* p. 25; see n. 2 above.

[154] Cossmann Werner, *Johann Hyrkan* (Wernigerode 1877), p. 44.

[155] A. Kohut, *Aruch Completum,* vol. 4 (New York 1955), p. 215. The Cilicians are mentioned by Josephus: *Ant.* XIII 374, 397.

[156] mNega'im XIV 6; mParah XI 7; bSukkah 13a;bḤullin 62b; *Sifrei* on Numbers, marks 124, 129, ed. H.S. Horovitz (Jerusalem 1966), pp. 156, 166; *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael,* Section Bo 11, ed. H.S. Horovitz–I.A. Rabin (Jerusalem 1960), p. 37. Koḥalit is probably not a real geographical term, but a misconceived variation of "koḥali" (blue) similar to "koḥala" (bGittin 69a, bKiddushin 12a; bBerakhot 18b).

[157] Such as bArakhin 32b; bShevuot 16a; bMegillah 10a.

[158] Contrary to S. Klein, *Ever ha-Yarden ha-Yehudi, Meḥkarim Eretzyisr'elim,* no. 3 (Vienna 1925), p. 8.

The development of the rupture in the legend is replete with questions that are not properly clarified. According to Josephus, John Hyrcanus was a pupil and favorite of the Pharisees, heedful of their advice, generally extolled by them, and hurt when one of them, Eleazar, disqualified him for the priesthood on the grounds that his mother was a captive. The slander was refuted and the Pharisees expressed their anger, but John Hyrcanus was enticed by the Sadducee Jonathan to suspect that they actually agreed with the slanderer since they decreed too light a punishment for him. The Baraita, too, berates Eleazar, an "evil and worthless" fellow (in wording similar to Josephus') who kindled the flame of animosity, but removes him from the Pharisee group and ascribes to him the sorry function of their enemy, Jonathan. The legend calls him "Eleazar b. Poïra" (the patronymic is missing in Josephus) and sets against him. "Judah b. Gerera" of the Pharisees, who casts doubt on John's descent and questions his fitness for the priesthood. This pair of names figures, as has long been realized, in the passages of the Jerusalem Talmud in regard to the rulings of high priest Yoḥanan (John): "In the words of Rabbi Joshua b. Levi, It is said, Some of them were to be reproached and some to be praised... At first the tithe was made into three parts, a third to acquaintances of the priesthood and Levites, and a third to the treasury and a third to the poor and the *ḥaverim* who were in Jerusalem... then came Eleazar b. Peḥora and Judah b. Peḥora and took them by force." John did not prevent the wrong "and abolished the confession of the tithe, and that is to be reproached."[159]

This story thus condemns violent, greedy priests and even rebukes John Hyrcanus who failed to stop them or object to their iniquities. The story itself is not mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud, but its echo evidently resounded in the ears of the legend's author, and produced the pair of names, Eleazar b. Peḥora and his partner Judah. The sin of John ("this is Jannaeus") in the matter of tithes might be explained as resulting from his Sadducee divergence, according to the above testimony, at the end of his lengthy priesthood.[160] Consequently, in the Baraita cited, Eleazar the provocateur is identified with Eleazar b. Poïra[161] (Peḥora? The difference in the Hebrew spelling is very slight) contrary to Josephus. It is not clear why Judah b. Peḥora became Judah b. Gerera. Was the name garbled by accident, or was he nicknamed by the epithet "gerera" (satellite, hanger-on) because he was drawn into Eleazar's intrigues and contributed to the outbreak of the riots.[162] These combinations are

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[159] ySotah IX 24a; yMa'aser Sheni V 56d; Levi Ginzberg, *Seridei ha-Yerushalmi,* p. 222; see n. 19 above.

[160] In n. 148 above.

[161] The variants in the Jerusalem Talmud—Peḥora, Pekhora, Pethora—parallel the "Poïra" in the Babylonian.

[162] Such terms (*gerur, gerir, geririm, geririn*) are common in the Talmud: bBava Kamma 18b; bBava Metzia 85a; bSanhedrin 61b, 112a; bAvodah Zarah 24a.

interwoven into the early basis of the legend and support our assumption that its reference is fundamentally to John Hyrcanus and not King Jannaeus.

Contrary to the Josephus version, the scheme is initiated by Eleazar b. Poïra who is well aware of the Pharisees' disgruntlement, and warns Jannaeus and advises him how to test their loyalty: "Set up a frontlet between your eyes." Jannaeus complies, "sets up a frontlet between his eyes," and then the insult is hurled at him. The display of the frontlet, a first simple reading seems to indicate, is designed to test how the Pharisees will react to the majesty of the high priesthood, for they were suspected of objecting to the priestly, rather than the kingly role of Jannaeus (or John). The actual stratagem adopted is not however obvious. Its sense and meaning has troubled eminent exegetes since the Middle Ages. R-a-sh-i explains the advice as follows: "Raise up the frontlet for them... put the holy frontlet on your brow and they will rise, since the name of God is written on it, and they will reveal their hearts although it is not the hour of worship as it is said in bKiddushin 54a, the priestly robes were given for use." Rabbenu Tam, according to the Tosafot, corrects and explains as follows: "Purposely a frontlet — because it is written on it (in Ex. 28) and it shall be always upon his forehead, meaning it was allowed when not at worship, but the other clothes were not, and Jannaeus was a priest of the Hasmonean seed."[163] Nahmanides (R-a-m-b-a-n) rejects that view and claims[164] that priestly vestments could not be worn "deliberately when not at worship," or the frontlet placed on the head outside the Temple, and is therefore surprised "that sages did not question his priesthood up to now. And it is possible they knew there were witnesses to his fitness but according to what he did that was not right, placing the frontlet outside the Temple and that is forbidden by the rabbis as we proved, and he did not heed the rabbis, and besides it was while eating and drinking, so that sage was strict with him and told him to take off the priestly crown."

R-a-sh-b-a[165] cites Nahmanides and adds, "What did they now see to be strict about and question his priesthood more than they were strict for the eighty years that he served as high priest?...[166] and if Judah b. Godgeda (=Gerera) had known that there were witnesses qualifying him, he would have had nothing to question him about his priesthood, and mock him for what he was not. And if he had not known at the outset, what did he imagine when he kept silent, and ultimately what did he think when he protested. But it appears that until now since none objected because the matter was not clear to them and as it is said, let the matter be investigated, and it was not found so, and now that they saw that he raised the

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[163] R-a-sh-i, and Tosefot on bKiddushin 66a (in Romm ed. — see n. 168 below). Cf. Josephus *Bell.* V 235 ff.; *Ant.* XVIII 91 ff.

[164] *Ḥidushei ha-Ramban al Talmud Bavli,* Part 1 (Bnei Brak 1959), p. 318.

[165] *Sefer Ḥidushei ha-Rashba,* Part 2 (Jerusalem 1963), p. 159.

[166] R-a-sh-ba, like R-i-t-b-a (below), properly identifies the Jannaeus of the present Baraita with John Hyrcanus, as does Abbaye in bBerakhot 29a.

frontlet improperly, and it was during the hour of gratitude for the miracle, that elder thought that all his deeds were accidental and if they object he will accept, and it was objected and he did not accept."

That was the view as well of R-i-t-b-a "for sages would not want to discredit him on the basis of doubt, and when they now saw that he acted improperly, they said there was a basis for the rumor and they told him to set aside the crown of priesthood... he was just then injected with heresy, and that is heresy which occurred at the end of Jannaeus. That is the person mentioned in bBerakhot, Yoḥanan (John) the high priest, who served in the high priesthood forty years and at the end became a Sadducee, and he was of the Hasmonean dynasty."[167]

M-a-h-a-r-sh-a totally rejects the view that the Pharisees disqualified Jannaeus for the high priesthood, and removes the obstacles in a nice interpretation:[168] "...three crowns are (involved), the crown of kingship and the crown of priesthood and the crown of the Torah... that is the phylacteries on every man's head... and that Eleazar was of the Sadducee sect... and now that heretic came to mislead the king and he said to him, through this their intention of reducing your glory will be tested, for he already had the crown of kingship on his head, put on the frontlet for them, etc. Put the crown of priesthood too on your head, and see what they will do. He did so, and Judah said, ... the kingly crown already on your head is enough, leave the priestly crown for Aaron's seed. If not, the crown of the Torah, the phylacteries, will be taken away, for three crowns cannot be on your head at one time... They said, that is, the Sadducee sect said that it was Judah's intention to disparage the king who is not fit for the priesthood because his mother was a captive, etc."

Gedaliahu Alon and Saul Lieberman believe[169] that the obscure expression "put up the frontlet for them" is to be explained otherwise, namely, that it means to have the Pharisees swear by the sacred frontlet in order to uncover their secret enmity. There are however no verified actual examples of such an oath sworn by the high priest's "frontlet." Even if their solution is correct, there still remains the incisive problem that preoccupied earlier commentators as well: Why was the matter of Jannaeus' (John) qualifications hushed up and only brought into the open under pressure of the rival and his effective ploy? How was it that the Pharisees ignored such a serious suspicion of unfitness and even became friends with the accused? And, if the accusers' claim was dubious, why did they fail to conduct a proper investigation rather than hastily spread a malicious slander?

The twists, turns and hesitations of the traditional exegesis demonstrate the

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[167] *Sefer Ḥidushei ha-Ritba,* vol. 4 (Tel Aviv 1958), p. 137.

[168] M-a-h-a-r-sh-a, *Ḥidushei Halakhot ve-Agadot,* on bKiddushin, ad loc. Romm ed. of the Talmud (repr. Jerusalem 1963).

[169] S. Lieberman, "Mashehu al Hashbaot be-Yisrael," *Tarbiẓ* 27 (1958): 185; G. Alon, *Meḥkarim* (see n. 2 above), vol. 1, p. 189. The monarchy here takes the place of the "people's government" in Josephus (*Ant.* XIII 291) who assigns the event to the reign of John Hyrcanus.

weaknesses embodied in the Baraita whose dubious points are obvious in comparison with the corresponding chapter in Josephus. The scheme of the inciter, Eleazar, presented in place of Jonathan, the Sadducee, was moved to the beginning of the episode. His deed is not a middle link joined to the result of the slander during the banquet, but rather the primary reason for the calamity. Because of it, and by means of the sacred frontlet, there arises among the Pharisees the demand, expressed by one of the sages, and his name is Judah b. Gerera, to remove Jannaeus from the priesthood and leave him only the kingship. In contrast to the Josephus version, here the Pharisees were not asked to guide their king, and they did not extol him, the accuser was not an exception and was not censured. The person who accused the high priest of unfitness was not "a man of vices and fond of quarrels,"[170] as Josephus put it, but the Sadducee provocateur himself, alone, to whom were transferred, along with the name Eleazar, the shortcomings of a person "frivolous, evil hearted and worthless." The impression then is that the Pharisee fellowship was united in wishing Jannaeus to be removed from the priesthood, as R-a-sh-i believed: "Therefore they protested against him, for the Pharisees said of him that his mother was a captive at Modi'in." But the description of the event is not logically lucid or consistent, for the legend says "the matter was investigated and not found. And the sages of Israel departed in anger," probably at the slanderer, whose false accusation aroused hatred. This meaning is evident in Josephus but in the Baraita the essence of the reaction and its provenance is obscured. R-a-sh-i voices the dilemma and seeks a solution. In his view the Pharisees were a party to the slander and they departed because "the king's wrath was on them." Such interpretation is definitely unacceptable, for it is the anger of the sages that is meant rather than that of Jannaeus.[171]

The confusion grows as the story proceeds. Eleazar b. Poïra enflames and accuses: "King Jannaeus, a common person in Israel, that is his law, but you are king and high priest, shall that be your law too?" What law is meant, and what is the sense of the enigmatic comparison with a common person's sentence? The solution can be found only in Josephus: The Pharisees meted out a light punishment and did not make it more severe despite the victim's high rank. The moderate punishment aroused dissatisfaction and, due to the incitement of the Sadducee advisor, served as misleading evidence of their identification with the initiator of the defamation. The Baraita omits the crucial point of the verdict as in its presentation the Pharisees' stand had already been ascertained and their hostility revealed earlier. That omission leaves a breach making it impossible to deduce from this legend alone why Jannaeus was angry, when his law was

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[170] In n. 90 above. The obvious tendency to exonerate the Pharisees involved inconsistency and contradictions.

[171] I.H. Weiss, "Hagaha ba-Talmud," *Ha-Shaḥar*, vol. 2 (Vienna 1871): 115.

equated with that of "a common person in Israel" which was not fitting for a king and high priest. R-a-sh-i's tenuous interpretation is: "that is his law—to suffer his disgrace, and is that your law—(in wonder) that you do not avenge yourself on them?"

The original legend was evidently deformed before being solidified in the mould of the Babylonian Talmud Baraita, which was intended to show that the Pharisees did not initiate the dispute. Its earlier forms are not known and there is no sense in speculating. Its core fits and in the main corresponds to the parallel Josephus version whose preferability and primacy are clear. Abridgements, digressions and omissions detract from the body, the integrity and the logic of the Baraita. The additions drawn from marginal rumors, the questionable combinations and the changes in names and details do nothing to help clarify the event, but only muddle and obscure the original story. Consequently, no success was achieved in the attempts to extract from the legend reliable information that does not figure elsewhere, or to attach to its obscurities dubious conclusions, such as on the imagined wily stratagems of the Pharisees in their efforts to discredit and topple the Hasmonean government,[172] or on their supposed objections to the royal title,[173] or on their being strangely labeled as "separatists" or "dissidents" after the uprising and their ejection from the Sanhedrin.[174]

Numerous scholars have pointed to the biblical style, not very common in the Talmud, as an indication of the antiquity of the legend and perhaps of its derivation from some lost source. The language of the Baraita, however, is by no means homogeneous but displays a mixture, and an archaic cloak is not an exclusive feature and decisive proof of great antiquity, the more so if the threads of the fabric seem variegated, such as "sages of Israel" identified with "Pharisees" and so designated in fact by their enemies, or "heresy" (*Minut*) instead of Sadduceeism. The low degree of clarity and accuracy in the legend does not support the hypothesis that it is derived from a historical chronicle of a time close to the Hasmonean period. And even if that hypothesis is accepted, there is no way of determining the quality and nature of that unspecified hypothetical source.

The secondary redaction and complex structure of the Baraita are evident in

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[172] V. Tcherikover in his Hebrew book (see n. 151) and in the English version: *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (New York 1979), p. 254ff.

[173] S. Zeitlin, *The Rise and Fall,* vol. 1, p. 168ff.; see n. 2 above.

[174] J.Z. Lauterbach, *Rabbinic Essays* (see n. 75 above), p. 46. The question of the Sanhedrin is dealt with in Chapter 7. Among the imaginative and bizarre speculations is the proposal of A. Schalit, "Die frühchristliche Überlieferung über die Herkunft der Familie des Herodes," *ASTI* 1 (1962): 109ff., who suggests that the talmudic legend is connected with Josephus' version and clarified by the pejorative *Thrakidas* applied to Jannaeus: the Pharisees spread the falsehood in order to counter the Hasmoneans, and said Jannaeus' father was illegitimate because a Thracian soldier had raped his mother when she was a captive. On the pejorative see n. 124 above.

its conclusion as well. According to Josephus, John Hyrcanus suppresses the outbreak, joins the Sadducees and forbids compliance with the Pharisee rulings based on the "ancestral tradition" and not on the written Mosaic Law. His decree was in force for many years, and was rescinded only in the reign of Alexandra-Shlomzion, who restored the authority of the Pharisees, as described in the chapter on her reign.[175] The talmudic legend delineates the outcome of the rupture and quarrel along similar lines: the provocateur Eleazar persuaded Jannaues (John) to subdue the Pharisees and calmed his fears regarding the Written Law. "Heresy (*Minut*) was just then injected in him," meaning, that Jannaeus strayed to the wayward path of the Sadducees, for he abandoned Oral Law and caused it to be forgotten,[176] "and the evil erupted...[177] and they killed the sages of Israel, and the world was desolate till Simeon b. Shataḥ came and restored the Torah to its former condition." Josephus, too, reports the renewal of Pharisee public instruction and religious authority in the days of Queen Alexandra, when the end came to the tyranny of Jannaeus. The Pharisee leadership at the time is represented by Simeon b. Shataḥ whose image is anchored in the talmudic recollections of the Jannaeus-Alexandra period, but did not up to now figure in the course of the controversy according to the Baraita (for the event actually took place in John's reign!) or according to Josephus. The legend admits him for a moment, following its practice of variegating the tale with elements drawn from collateral traditions, and glorifies his actions with the customary rhetoric.[178]

A nightmarish picture of rabbis slaughtered emerges at the end of the Baraita. That terrible calamity is attested exclusively by that obscure fragmented stub of a verse. In other Babylonian Talmud legends dealt with above,[179] Jannaeus is found guilty of their total annihilation, evidently on the exclusive authority of the single Baraita concerned. The terrible crime, however, is never described in detail and the circumstances are not clarified at all; none of the multitude of victims is actually named, but all the known Pharisee leaders of the time (Simeon

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[175] In n. 93 above. Josephus himself links the two chapters and explains the difference of opinion on "ancestral tradition." The expression is repeated, and indicates precisely the disagreement. The Pharisees wish to endow with the force of law the code of precepts, customs and regulations which they had inherited or evolved within their fellowships, developed and expounded in a dialectic, dynamic, historical process.

[176] The verse attributed to Rav Naḥman b. Isaac or Abbaye was somehow inserted in the body of the Baraita.

[177] According to the Munich MS (see n. 53 above) the calamity was caused not only by Eleazar b. Poïra, but also by Judah b. Gerera of the Pharisees. This text is closer to Josephus' version and does not fit the traditional commentaries, for then Ben Gerera bears the blame and cannot be considered the spokesman for "the sages of Israel."

[178] A similar tone is adopted in the Babylonian Talmud: bYevamot 62b ("And the world was desolate till Rabbi Akiva came"); bYoma 69b ("The people of the Great Synagogue who restored the pristine splendor"); bSukkah 20a ("When the Torah was forgotten by Israel"); etc.

[179] Section C.

b. Shataḥ and Judah b. Tabai or Joshua b. Peraḥia) figure among the survivors. Such a vague and generalized accusation lacking even one real supporting fact arouses skepticism and suspicion. How did it come about? The description of the controversy in Josephus contains, at the end, a short statement that John Hyrcanus managed to stop the disturbance. In his first version Josephus speaks of an open war, John's triumph and the defeat of his enemies, but there is no mention of the slaying of Pharisees.[180] The mass killing of rebels was ascribed to Jannaeus' cruel despotism. Pharisees were not listed among the insurgents, but by logical deduction and Jannaeus testamentary advice they, or at least their intimates and admirers, could very well be considered as victims of the riots.[181]

In some indirect fashion the story on the terrible slaughter infiltrated into the Babylonian Talmud and merged with the Baraita that confuses Jannaeus and Hyrcanus. Its vagueness and artificial link with the main internal fundamental early tradition reveal its external derivation. In similar style and like exaggeration the Babylonian Talmud reports the crime of the murder of numerous rabbis by King Herod,[182] who spewed his anger and vengeance against his judges and according to Josephus destroyed his rivals upon ascending the throne and some time later killed Pharisees for they supported conspiracies to demolish his throne.[183] The two stories display a linguistic and substantive resemblance that points to a certain mutual influence. Consequently, a vague image of Jannaeus surfaces in the Babylonian Talmud and murderous cruelty to the Pharisees is ascribed to it. This conception left its mark on simple folk memories of the Hasmonean period and obscured their original meaning. Because of it a change took place in the original stories of Eretz Israel which had not included such horrors at all. That conception also affected post-talmudic authors like the Hebrew Josippon[184] and the Arabic Josippon[185] and writers of Jewish chronicles from the Middle Ages to modern times.[186] It is the basis also of European research since its inception, because it already managed to achieve a deceptive harmony between talmudic sources and

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180 *Bell.* I 67 in contrast to the *Antiquitates* version; see n. 96 above.

181 *Ant.* XIII 401.

182 bBava Batra 3b: "Herod a slave of the Hasmonean dynasty... rose and killed all the rabbis" etc.

183 *Ant.* XV 4; XVII 44, 149ff.

184 According to Josippon, pp. 119ff., 134ff. in the Flusser ed.; see n. 98 above.

185 J. Wellhausen, *Der arabische Josippus* (Berlin 1897), p. 17ff.; *Biblia Polyglotta,* ed. B. Walton, vol. 4 (London 1657, repr. Graz 1964), *Liber Machabaeorum Secundus,* Arabic version, Chapters 25 (p. 129), 29 (p. 131).

186 Abraham ben David of Toledo, *Sefer ha-Kabbalah,* in *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles,* ed. A. Neubauer, vol. 1 (Oxford 1887), p. 53; Abraham Zacut, *Sefer Yuḥassin ha-Shalem,* Ma'amar Rishon (Jerusalem 1963), p. 14f.; David Gans, *Sefer Tzemaḥ David,* ed. M. Breuer (Jerusalem 1983), p. 73; Gedalia b. Yaḥya, *Shalshelet ha-Kabbala* (Jerusalem 1962), p. 55; Yeḥiel Heilprin, *Seder ha-Dorot,* vol. 1 (Jerusalem 1956), p. 147. The tradition prevalent in the literature since the Middle Ages seemed at first purely Jewish in origin and was absorbed into the early modern studies.

external testimonies. The slaying of the Pharisees and the flight of their remnants, the difficult straits and rescue of Ben Shataḥ and his company seem to be explainable in its wake against the background of the political upheavals, revolts and persecutions in the reign of Jannaeus.

The Baraita in question is not isolated or unique. Examination of the other relevant subjects dealt with will confirm the critical conclusion and reveal further examples of contact or close parallellity to Josephus' stories, and the absorption of tales of dubious character and origin into the Babylonian Talmud. Here, Jannaeus' testamentary advice which blemishes the Pharisees and is connected with the upsetting controversy, echoes in a saying cited by the Babylonian Talmud and added to a well known Baraita:[187] "The rabbis taught, there are seven (types of) Pharisees: the 'shikhmi' Pharisee, the 'nikpi' Pharisee, the 'kizai' Pharisee, the 'pestle' Pharisee,[188] the Pharisee (who asks) what is my duty that I may carry out, the Pharisee from love, the Pharisee from fear...[189] Abbaye and Rava said,... A man should always engage in Torah and the commandments though it be not for their own sake... R. Naḥman b. Isaac said, What is hidden is hidden, and what is revealed is revealed. The great Bet Din (Tribunal) will punish those who wrap themselves in (hypocritical) cloaks. King Jannaeus said to his wife,[190] Fear not the Pharisees and not the non-Pharisees, but the hypocrites who simulate the Pharisees, whose deeds are like the deed of Zimri (Num. 25:6ff.) and they seek a reward like Phinehas."

The Jannaeus saying is not an integral part of the Baraita but was appended to it and inserted in the words of the Babylonian Amora'im. This amoraitic addition to the Baraita is entirely missing in the parallel of the Jerusalem Talmud which is as usual an earlier and preferable version:[191] ..."The Scripture (Deut. 6:5, 13) says, 'You shall love the Lord your God'... and... 'You shall fear the Lord your God and you shall worship Him.' Do it from love and do it from

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[187] bSotah 22b; *Talmud Bavli — The Babylonian Talmud with Variant Readings,* Tractate Sotah (1), ed. A. Liss (Jerusalem 1977).

[188] The negative types were supposed to stress and censure the distortion of true ideal Phariseeism. The epithets are applied to the types and explained in the Gemara of the Babylonian Talmud, but the explanations are problematic and dubious compared with the parallel version in the Jerusalem Talmud, cited below.

[189] The Pharisee who asks "What is my duty and I will do it" is boasting that he has fulfilled all his obligations and therefore deserves to be censured. Pharisees "for love (that is, for some benefit) or from fear," not because of genuine piety and willingness to observe the Torah for its own sake, are all presented as negative types.

[190] "His daughter" was inserted in place of "his wife" in an inferior version of the *Midrash ha-Gadol* on Genesis (34:24), p. 588 f. in M. Margaliot ed. (Jerusalem 1947): "King Jannaeus said to his daughter..." etc. That Midrash, which has obviously compilational features, was edited in the Middle Ages and has no value as a historical source for the Second Temple period, as noted also below, n. 193 and Chapter 7, n. 34.

[191] ySotah V 20c; yBerakhot IX 14b; *Sefer Yefeh Mar'eh* (see n. 19 above), p. 46b; quotation from the Jerusalem Talmud in the Tosafot to bSotah 22b; also in *Yalkut ha-Makhiri* to Psalm 109, p. 180 ff. in Part 2 of the Buber ed. (Jerusalem 1964).

fear... There are seven (types of) Pharisees, the 'shikhmi' Pharisee, the 'nikpi' Pharisee, the 'kizai' Pharisee, the Pharisee from 'hankaia,' the Pharisee (who asks) what is my duty that I may carry it out, the Pharisee from fear like Job, the Pharisee from love like Abraham, and the most lovable of all is the Pharisee from love like Abraham."[192]

The Jerusalem Talmud includes admirable types as well in its list of "seven Pharisees."[193] Its approach differs pointedly from that of the Babylonian, which considering them a purely negative manifestation, puts them all together with the "Pharisee plagues" in order to castigate instances of Phariseeism that are stupid and perverted or insincere and hypocritical. Jannaeus' saying in the Babylonian Talmud passage joins the register of defects and flaws revealed in the shameful image of the "Pharisees" who exhibit a distorted religiosity.[194] What is the meaning of this linkage of "those who wrap themselves in cloaks" and the Pharisees, genuine or imaginary, who frighten Jannaeus' wife and wear a pious guise? What is the sense of the strange saying which actually has a not very admiring tone about the Pharisees but does not appear and is not even hinted at in the Jerusalem Talmud sources? Where did the Babylonian Amora'im get it?

The astonishing saying was taken from some unknown episode. It has no beginning or end. It is not uniform throughout, but part Aramaic and part Hebrew. The linguistic variety and fragmentary nature indicate that the passage changed character as it was copied and redacted. There is no possibility of learning from the saying itself its reasons and result, or why Jannaeus' wife (not

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[192] The explanations in the Jerusalem Talmud are undoubtedly preferable. To check the appellations *nikpi, kizai* and *shikhmi,* see M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York 1950). The Babylonian Talmud substituted *medukhia* (pestle Pharisee) for *hankaia* in the Baraita. The striking difference and the definite superiority of the Jerusalem Talmud are clearly evident at the end. "Pharisee for love" and "Pharisee for fear" are both presented as positive types (as in mSotah V 5, and see n. 194) contrary to the Babylonian Talmud version.

[193] Other variants of "Seven Pharisees" are secondary (see n. 190) and inferior: *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan,* ed. S. Schechter (New York 1945): Version A, Chapter 37, p. 109; Version B, Chapter 45, p. 124. See also *Midrash ha-Gadol* on Numbers (5:27), p. 70 in Z.M. Rabinowitz ed. (Jerusalem 1978).

[194] On the basis of mSotah III 4 it appears in view of the Babylonian Talmud that the term Pharisee seems to have a basically negative connotation. However the Jerusalem Talmud connects the list with mSotah V 5 and mBerakhot IX 5. Fundamentally "Pharisee" (=*parush*) has a positive connotation, meaning isolation from ritual impurity and pollution, for the purpose of sanctification, as indicate clearly the basic talmudic sources: mḤagigah II 7; mSotah IX 9; yShabbat I 3c; tShabbat I 15; bShabbat 13a; *Sifra,* Shemini X, p. 57a, Kedoshim I, p. 86, in the I.H. Weiss ed. (New York 1946); *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael,* Yitro, II, p. 209 in the H.S. Horovitz–I.A. Rabin ed. (Jerusalem 1960). Many scholars tend to base themselves on the Baraita in the Babylonian Talmud, ignoring the different version in the Jerusalem Talmud, and explain the concept of Pharisee in a negative sense, after a mistaken, superficial impression which also accords with the New Testament attacks against hypocritical corrupt Pharisees (as in Chapter 23 of Matthew). There is no reason to blend these opposite explanations into an artificially harmonious unity. The talmudic sages, by criticizing distortions, meant to improve the practices of Jewish Phariseeism, while the New Testament seeks to undermine and discredit them.

mentioned by name there) should fear the Pharisees and their counterparts. The contents and intention can only be clarified with the help of Josephus, who describes Jannaeus' last address and deathbed advice to his wife on how to placate his Pharisee foes. R-a-sh-i, too, explains the passage: "Do not fear the Pharisees, as the Pharisees hated him because he killed many of the sages and became a Sadducee as stated in Kiddushin (66a) and when he died his wife was afraid of them that they might take the kingship away from her sons and she told him to ask them for her, and he said to her, do not fear the Pharisees for they are righteous and will do no harm to you or the sons that did not sin against them and (fear) not those who are not Pharisees who are fond of me, but the hypocrites..." R-a-sh-i evidently made use of Josippon or some similar version, drawn from Josephus to clarify the obscure saying, as he did from time to time, following the method of many medieval commentators.[195]

Jannaeus' saying in the Babylonian Talmud was given the form of a parable designed to teach a moral, and was reduced to the proper pattern. The solitary truncated passage is denuded of any historical significance. It retains not a vestige of a substantive reflection of the stormy events of the period. Jannaeus calms his wife's fears: She has no reason to worry about the Pharisees, nor about those who are "non-Pharisees," but only about the plague of "hypocrites," resembling the Pharisees who act "like Zimri" and seek compensation "like Phinehas." The pairing of those who are non-Pharisees with Pharisees detaches the saying from all definite facts and gives it an abstract form. The stress is placed on the censure of the "hypocrites" who are harmful and dangerous, in the context of Rav Naḥman b. Isaac's injunction concerning dissemblers ("those who wrap themselves in cloaks") of piety and in accordance with the body of the Baraita which inveighed against deceitful perverted Phariseeism. The castigation of the "hypocrites" is not limited to a historical situation and does not derive from any political or ideological genuine distinction between various factions among the Pharisees or within the Hasmonean kingdom.

The "deed of Zimri" opposed to Phinehas' merit is not an indication of a secret event, but a common expression among preachers as in the story of Achan b. Carmi (Jos. 7:1 ff.) who committed an "act of Zimri" and dared to dispute the godliness of Joshua and Phinehas.[196] Rabbi Ḥanina, too, scolds the people because of the sin of Zimri in his oration before the people of Sepphoris who complained about a serious plague: "There was one Zimri in his generation and twenty-four thousand of Israel fell, and we, how many Zimris are there in our generation?"[197] "Zimri" became the symbol of a clandestine sinner in the

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[195] R-a-sh-i on bSotah 22b. On the distribution of Josippon in the Middle Ages see D. Flusser, *Sefer Yosifon,* vol. 2 (Jerusalem 1980), p. 63 ff.

[196] ySanhedrin VI 23b.

[197] yTa'anit III 66c.

community, who leads to a mass calamity. The legend lauds the zeal of Phinehas who broke into the hut of the Midianite woman in order to kill her along with Zimri (Num: 25:1ff.), but when he entered there was talk in the camp that perhaps "the Pharisees allowed the matter," that is, to fornicate and become defiled like Zimri.[198] Thus Phinehas was supposedly suspected of intending to carry out an "act of Zimri" with Pharisee permission. It is the threads of that original story that made up the fabric of Jannaeus' saying, which also includes the typical triple image, with Zimri set opposite Phinehas who has the Pharisees at his side.

The abstract Babylonian talmudic version of Jannaeus' advice does not fundamentally deviate from that of Josephus in which the despised dying king reassures his frightened wife regarding the threatening hatred of the people and their Pharisee leaders. That conception does not accord with the solidly established tradition about the queen's friendship with the Pharisees or her confirmed loyalty and total obedience to their Law.[199] The legends present a veritable idyll. "It happened at the time of Simeon b. Shataḥ and Queen Shlomzion[200] when it rained from Saturday eve to Saturday eve until the wheat became like kidneys and the barley like olive pits, and lentils like golden dinars, and sages gathered some of them and left for future generations to declare how much sin causes to fulfill what was said. It is your iniquities that have diverted these things; Your sins that have withheld the bounty from you' (Jer. 5:25)."[201] And also "a story of Queen Shalzi (Shlomzion) who made a banquet for her son, and all the dishes were polluted, and she broke them and gave them to the smith, and he melted them (made new dishes of them) and the sages said, They should return to their prior uncleaness."[202] Not the slightest cloud darkens the atmosphere of mutual understanding.

Nowhere is there a single trace of an enmity preceding the friendship or a sudden change in the queen's attitude to the Pharisees. On the contrary, Josephus reports (in *Jewish War*) her objection to her husband's transgressions, and her success in gaining popular sympathy. According to the Babylonian

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198 ySanhedrin X 28d; bSanhedrin 82b; *Sifrei* on Numbers (see n. 156 above), mark 131, Horovitz ed., p. 172.

199 Even in the version of Josephus who is not particularly admiring of the alliance between Shlomzion and the Pharisees (*Bell.* I 107ff.; *Ant.* XIII 398ff.). But the wife of Jannaeus in the Babylonian Talmud is not explicitly identified with Queen Shlomzion.

200 The name Shlomzion appears in many forms: Shlomzi, Shlomzu, Shlomza, Shalzi, Shalzion.

201 Leviticus Rabbah XXXV 10 (on 26:4), *Midrash Va-Yikra Rabbah* in the M. Margaliot ed., vol. 4 (Jerusalem 1958), p. 828f.; *Sifra,* Be-Ḥukotai I, I.H. Weiss ed. (see n. 194 above), p. 110; *Midrash ha-Gadol* on Leviticus, A. Steinsaltz ed. (Jerusalem 1975), p. 731. The Babylonian Talmud has "In the days of Simeon b. Shataḥ when they had rain..." with no mention of Shlomzion (bTa'anit 23a; *Dikdukei Sofrim* on Ta'anit, by R. Rabbinovicz, see n. 61); But the Tosafot to bShabbat 16b has "In the days of Rabbi Simeon b. Shataḥ and Queen Shalzion." *Yalkut Shim'oni* (see n. 44) does not mention Shlomzion in mark 671 on the Torah or marks 276 and 497 on Prophets.

202 bShabbat 16b; *Dikdukei Sofrim* to Shabbat by R. Rabbinovicz (see n. 61): Shlomzion.

Talmud itself, as well as parallel Midrashim, she extended her protection to Simeon b. Shataḥ at the time of her husband's wrath.[203] Why then should the righteous, admirable lady fear the threat of the Pharisees, since she committed no offense and even gave their leader help in his trouble? What need is there of Jannaeus' encouragement to reassure her and urge a reconciliation? There is no sense in inventing laborious excuses and disregarding the patent contradiction. The main internal tradition contains a solid conception totally opposing the spirit of Jannaeus' dubious testamentary advice and in any case does not fit in with the strange saying in the Babylonian Talmud version.

Neither the contents nor style of the detached saying reveals a shred of original historical testimony. It lacks the features of a pure independent legend preserved in ancient memory. Crucial lines have been erased from it, among them Jannaeus' trick and the Pharisee vicissitudes, for the meager passage is completely uprooted from any factual or circumstantial background. Thanks to those deletions, the sharpness of the basic version, essentially hostile and disputacious, was dulled. Consequently, some Jewish scholars have exaggerated the importance of the questionable saying and preferred it to Josephus' detailed description,[204] but a careful examination refutes their untenable opinion. The isolated talmudic saying attributed to Jannaeus solves no problems and contributes no information, unravels no mysteries of the period, and provides no point of departure, even the faintest, for a special view of upsets in the Hasmonean kingdom.[205] The difficulties and weakness show its dependence on Josephus and the images are borrowed from a known legend. Despite its artistic form, the peculiar phrases, and its attachment to the "seven Pharisees," there is still discernible in it a connection, apparently indirect, such as in the Kiddushin Baraita, with Josephus' work and its derivations.

F. *Jannaeus and His Slave before Ben Shataḥ's Court*

The Babylonian Talmud in Tractate Sanhedrin describes the clash between Jannaeus and Simeon b. Shataḥ in a way that seems to echo the controversy of Hasmonean times:[206] "A king does not judge and is not judged, does not testify and is not testified against. Rav Joseph said, This refers only to the kings of Israel, but the kings of the House of David judge and are judged, as it is written, 'House of David, thus said the Lord, Render just verdicts morning by morning'

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[203] In legends on Simeon b. Shataḥ and Jannaeus, Sections B and C above. On Josephus' version see nn. 125, 127.

[204] H. Graetz, *Geschichte,* vol. 3[3], p. 150; I.H. Weiss, *Dor Dor,* vol. 1, p. 129ff.; J. Klausner, *Historia,* vol. 3, p. 158; see n. 2 above.

[205] Like Josephus it contains no sign of atonement or remorse on Jannaeus' part.

[206] bSanhedrin 19a-b, *Dikdukei Sofrim* to Sanhedrin by R. Rabbinovicz (see n. 61 above); *Yalkut Shim'oni* (see n. 44) on the Torah, mark 340; on Prophets, mark 302.

(Jer. 21:12), and if they are not judged how can they judge? But why don't the kings of Israel judge? Because of an incident which occurred with King Jannaeus' slave who killed a man. Simeon B. Shataḥ said to the sages, Set your eyes upon him and let us judge him. So they sent [a declaration] to the king, Your slave has killed a man. Thereupon he sent him [the slave] to them. But they sent to the king [saying], You must also come here, for the Torah says (Ex. 21:29) the owner should be warned, so let the owner of the ox come and stand by his ox. The king came and sat down. Then Simeon b. Shataḥ said to him, Stand on your feet, King Jannaeus, and let the witnesses testify against you, because you are standing not before us but before Him who spoke and the world came into existence. As it is written (Deut. 19:17) 'the two parties to the dispute shall stand before the Lord.' I shall not act, answered Jannaeus, in accordance with what you say, but in accordance with what your colleagues say. Then [Simeon] first turned to his right and after to his left, but all of them (fearing) bowed their faces to the ground. Therefore said Simeon b. Shataḥ to them, You are masters of [dubious] thoughts, let the Master of thoughts come and call you to account. Instantly Gabriel came and smote them to the ground and they died. At this hour it was enacted, a king [of Israel but not of David's descent] may neither judge nor be judged, neither testify nor be testified against."[207]

However, beneath the legendary wrapping is concealed the famous trial of the young Herod before Hyrcanus II, Jannaeus' son. The origin of the story was revealed in earlier generations. M-a-h-a-r-sh-a already knew the solution: "It appears from Josippon that the murderous slave was Herod and the king wanted to save him."[208] From the outset of scholarly research a skeptical critical view of the talmudic report prevailed, and most researchers adopted it.[209] A minority had reservations about the unfavorable conclusion and did not negate the independent value of the legend, some because of a naive, unhesitant approach, and some on the basis of considerable substantive differences between the Talmud version and Josephus'.[210] There has also been an attempt to claim the

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[207] A polished edited version of the legend but inferior from the historical standpoint appears in *Midrash Tanḥuma* to Deuteronomy, Shoftim, mark 6, p. 30 in the S. Buber ed. (New York 1946).

[208] *Ḥidushei Halakhot ve-Agadot* (see n. 168) to Sanhedrin. On Josippon and his influence see n. 195 above.

[209] I.M. Jost, *Geschichte der Israeliten,* vol. 3 (Berlin 1822), p. 147; Z. Frankel, *Der gerichtliche Beweis nach mosaisch-talmudischem Rechte* (Berlin 1846), p. 159; S.D. Luzzatto, *Lezioni di storia giudaica* (Padua 1852), p. 200; A. Geiger, *Urschrift und Übersetzungen* (see n. 7 above), p. 145; J. Derenbourg, *Essai* (see n. 2), p. 146ff.; H. Graetz, *Geschichte* (see n. 2), vol. 3^3, p. 672; E. Schürer, *Geschichte* (see n. 2), vol. 1^4, p. 349; J.N. Epstein, *Mevo'ot le-Sifrut ha-Tana'im* (Jerusalem 1957), p. 55; G. Alon, *Meḥkarim* (see n. 2), vol. 1, p. 91; S.B. Hoenig, *The Great Sanhedrin* (Philadelphia 1953), p. 186; L. Finkelstein, *The Pharisees,* vol. 2^3 (Philadelphia 1962), p. 856f.

[210] I.H. Weiss, *Dor Dor* (see n. 2 above), vol. 1, p. 132; A. Hyman, *Sefer Toldot Tana'im ve-Amora'im* (Jerusalem 1964), p. 1214; J. Klausner, *Historia* (see n. 2), vol. 3, p. 174; A. Schalit, *Hordus ha-Melekh* (Jerusalem 1960), p. 358, n. 152; idem, *König Herodes* (Berlin 1969), p. 46; E.E. Urbach, "Hilkhot Avadim" etc., *Zion* 25 (1960): 163.

opposite, that it is the Josephus version in *Antiquities* that was distorted, for the author took the popular legend, cut it away from its true roots and its natural connection with the remote event in order to compose a false picture and stage Herod's imaginary trial.[211] All these views and claims, however, are based on shaky grounds. Their proponents in the main lightly disregard the fundamental problems and critical conclusions. A careful examination supports the M-a-h-ar-sh-a's remark as well as the inferiority and secondary nature of the Babylonian Talmud version.

The young Herod, who was appointed governor of Galilee on the initiative of Antipater, under the nominal rule of Hyrcanus II, executed rebels and was put on trial for murder. In *Jewish War* Josephus, apparently adhering to the Nicolaus of Damascus version, envelops Herod in admiration and castigates his enemies and prosecutors. The latter grumbled and slandered out of narrow-minded envy, and incited Hyrcanus to try Herod for the crime of killing without permission in contravention of ancestral law, but a sharp Roman warning prevented the implementation of the scheme and the Idumaean hero was extricated from the danger.[212] Changes were made in the corrected version in *Antiquities* without altering the basic story. The episode of the trial was added and some tones inimical to Herod and his family.[213] The people complaining about him were not rivals and despicable informers but the "leading Jews," prominent people who were shocked by the arrogance of the Idumaean dynasty and the danger of its tyranny, objected to the violation of Torah laws and insisted on a vigorous response. Due to their persuasions and the pressing entreaties of the victims' mothers, Hyrcanus was convinced and summoned Herod to trial. In the meantime an epistle from the Roman governor in Syria warned Hyrcanus to acquit his rebellious favorite whom he supposedly loved most devotedly.

Herod appeared before the *Synedrion* (or Sanhedrin—in talmudic traditional terminology) audacious and overbearing, with a military escort. At the sight of his terrorizing arrogance the judges were overawed and silenced. Confusion reigned, for nobody dared to open his mouth to prosecute. The oppressive silence was cut by the voice of the eminent Samaias (Shemaiah). In a bold oration of reproof to "the councillors and the king," he censured Herod's disrespectful behavior to the judges, his failure to wear a black garment, let his hair grow and refrain from combing it, which indicted persons were expected to do when they were summoned, accused and pleading for mercy. Instead, he

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[211] R Laqueur, *Der jüdische Historiker Flavius Josephus* (see n. 86 above), p. 176; H. Dessau, *Geschichte der römischen Kaiserzeit,* vol. II b (Berlin 1930), p. 755.

[212] *Bell.* I 208 ff. The motif of envy is involved here, as indicated in the analysis of the Josephus version, Section D, and nn. 85, 89, 128 above.

[213] *Ant.* XIV 163 ff. Hyrcanus is called "king" in popular language, but recognized only as "Ethnarch" by the Romans: *Ant* XIV 157, 165, 166, 168, 172, 191 ff.

came decorated and wrapped in purple, escorted by an armed guard to frighten his accusers and escape after perverting judgment. Samaias placed the responsibility on the judges and the king. As they have been humiliated and grossly insulted, they will be overtaken by divine retribution and the revenge of Herod whom they now wish to dismiss for Hyrcanus' sake. Following this rebuke, the *Synedrion,* evidently after the judges' recovered their courage, prepared to sentence Herod to death. But Hyrcanus postponed the trial for one day to allow the accused to escape. On his advice Herod fled from Jerusalem to Damascus and decided not to comply with a legal summons. The members of the *Synedrion* expressed their discontent and tried to convince Hyrcanus that Herod's actions would endanger him, but the miserable high priest and "King" (Ethnarch), due to faintness of heart and mind, was unable to do anything.

The scene of the trial embodies a folk legend and a Jewish aura in contrast to the contiguous chapters redolent with foreignness.[214] Hyrcanus is censured and castigated for he circumvents and sabotages the proceedings of the *Synedrion,* prevents a fair trial, and in fear and stupidity helps the dangerous villain to escape. The glory of Herod, whose imminent tyranny threatens the nation, is dimmed. With Samaias' appearance there emerges a proud figure of a sage and pious leader who observes the law and the precepts of his faith, is not biased and is not deflected by violence or corruption. His couragous voice scourges the judges who bow and grovel before the powerful, and warns of the lash of future retribution. His censure perhaps awakens dormant consciences for a moment but does not suffice to breach the impenetrable walls. The criminal surrender to the wicked tyrant eventually brings disaster on the nation. That outcome is rooted in the course of events and is the basis of the moral conception of the legend. Eventually Samaias' prediction was realized. Herod became king and killed the members of the *Synedrion* as well as Hyrcanus himself. Samaias himself was not slain,[215] but obtained the victor's mercy because of his righteousness and his advice to open the gates of Jerusalem to Herod when the latter's troops besieged it heavily along with their Roman allies. He admonished his people to stop hopeless resistance. "Because of their sins they are not able to escape" Herod's yoke, he declared at the time; the punishment was divinely decreed and there was no way of evading Herod's revenge or the ills of the despised tyranny. This conclusion indicates the religious and educational purpose of the edifying story.

Josephus, of course, takes care to incorporate and blend the story into his, in order to maintain continuity and artistic unity and avoid divisive separations. While the features distinguishing it have not entirely disappeared, the boundaries between the areas have been erased and the transitions removed.

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[214] The tendentiousness and qualities of the legend do not justify its being entirely disparaged as in the method of W. Otto, "Herodes," *PW-RE* Supplement 2 (1913): 18.

[215] *Ant.* XIV 175ff. and see nn. 225, 226 below.

Here and there some traces of contradictions and alien sounds remain. The *Synedrion* meets on the exclusive decision of "King" Hyrcanus, operates under his constant supervision and disperses to his decree. Perhaps its composition too depended on his decision. The external coercion and faulty practices do not accord with the basic principles of criminal law in Israel which are defined in mishnaic rules and whose foundations probably were already fixed in Simeon b. Shataḥ's time.[216] "His judgement is deferred to the next day," if the accused is not acquitted,[217] but there is no sudden postponement of the verdict on the basis of an arbitrary order. "Capital cases must be opened with reasons for acquittal, but not for condemnation," after a series of interrogations and examinations of witnesses.[218] In Herod's trial there is no trace of any interrogation of witnesses, and the opening is delayed for the accusers' mouths were shut.[219] The court reflected here operating under public pressure and dependent on the favor of the "king" does not exactly depict the talmudic Sanhedrin, nor any definite and attested administrative or aristocratic council. The term *Synedrion* which was common all around, is applied to various institutions, and has a variety of meanings in Jewish sources as well, including Philo and Josephus himself.[220]

Samaias' oration is marked by rhetorical devices, in the way Josephus generally ornaments and edits Jewish homilies.[221] The black clothes and unkempt heads mentioned are known from rules on mourning, or faithless wives, sinners and the ostracized.[222] Such a humiliating appearance of the accused, appealing to the mercy of the judge, crouching and negligently dressed, was normal among other peoples,[223] such as shown in Greek ceremonies and Roman law, so that the practice might have been adopted in antiquity even though it lacked the specific authority of the Halakha.[224] The figure and actions

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[216] mAvot I 8-9; ySanhedrin IV 22b; bSanhedrin 37b; ySanhedrin VI 23b; bḤagigah 16b; etc.

[217] mSanhedrin V 5.

[218] mSanhedrin IV 1. The formulation and redaction in the Mishnah are of course posterior.

[219] Josephus' complicated fragmented description does not clarify where the witnesses are and why the death sentence was expected after Samaias' speech.

[220] Chapter 7 below deals with this problem.

[221] His method is reflected in the biblical chapters of *Antiquitates* and in the paraphrase of I Macc. (*Ant.* XII 248 ff.).

[222] mSotah I 6; mMiddot V 4; mMo'ed Katan III 1; like the sinners and guilt-ridden (Zech. 3:4) who lament and implore, sack-wearers and wallowers in misery in the ancient Near East and the Bible. See B. Uffenheimer, *Ḥazonot Zechariah* (Jerusalem 1961), p. 99; J.B. Pritchard, *ANET* (Princeton N.J. 1969), p. 101.

[223] yRosh Ha-Shanah I 57b: "In the custom in the world, a man knowing he has a trial wears black, wraps himself in black, lets his beard grow, for he doesn't know how his trial will come out," etc. Also Josephus, *Vita* 138; *Bell.* I 506; *Ant.* XVI 267, 287.

[224] J. Ostrow, "Tannaitic and Roman Procedure in Homicide," *JQR* n.s. 52 (1962): 250; Th. Mommsen, *Römisches Strafrecht* (Leipzig 1899), p. 391; *Corpus Juris Civilis,* ed. Th. Mommsen (Berlin 1954), Digesta XLVII 10.39: Vestem sordidam rei nomine in publico habere capillumve summittere...; Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* III 4 (*LCL*), ed. J.C. Rolfe (London 1954): — ... cum esset reus, neque barbam desisse radi neque candida veste uti...; Diodorus Siculus XXXVI 16 (*LCL*), ed. F.R. Walton, vol. 12 (London 1967), p. 180.

of Samaias are wrapped in obscurity. In his description of Herod's victory, Josephus introduces Pollion the Pharisee and his disciple Samaias "who advised the besieged Jerusalemites to receive" the victor and were not among the victims of his vengeance. Stress is therefore placed on the earlier warning as it proves true.[225] Another statement informs us that years later the same "Pair" and their associates refused to obey Herod's order and swear loyalty, as all citizens were required to do, but were not punished, "because of Pollion."[226] The exceeding virtue of Pollion, who is not mentioned in connection with the trial or any other events until Herod became king, and his pairing with the disciple Samaias, have raised questions and perplexities in regard to their identity and status. Given the phonetic similarity of the names and the chronology,[227] it seems possible to identify them with Shemaiah and Avtalion, rather than Shammai and Avtalion or Hillel and Shammai.[228]

The story in the talmudic legend is basically close to the Josephus version, despite obvious divergences. Because of murder, "the slave of King Jannaeus," that is, Herod, who was a royal appointee actually called "slave of the Hasmonean dynasty" in the Talmud,[229] was summoned to court. The king gives

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[225] *Ant.* XV 3-4. Pollion and Samaias are not in the enemy camp or in neutral territory but in Jerusalem that is defending itself and already surrounded by the troops of Sossius and Herod, actually in the dying moments of the struggle and the end of hopes for salvation. These circumstances and Samaias' encouragement at the time of the trial contradict the prevailing view of the Wellhausen school and its branches, that the Pharisees leaders took a hostile stand toward the war which the last Hasmoneans waged to preserve freedom and political independence.

[226] *Ant.* XV 370. The event occurred close to the time of Augustus Caesar's visit to Syria (ca. 20 B.C.E.), that is about twenty-six years after Herod's flight from justice in the middle of his trial. The activities of the "Pair," Samaias and Pollion, can be set in the time of Hyrcanus II and during Herod's reign, at least to its midpoint. The names are sometimes interchanged and the details confused in Josephus.

[227] Rabban Yoḥanan b. Zakkai was a disciple of Hillel's (yNedarim V 39b; bSukkah 28a) and accepted the tradition of the Torah directly (mAvot II 8) from Hillel and Shammai. Among the Yavneh sages there is also mention (ySotah IX 24b) of "little" Samuel as a disciple of Hillel's, but his connection remains abstract and can be understood as indirect and exclusively spiritual. In contrast, Rabban Yoḥanan b. Zakkai's contact with Hillel was personal and real. Shammai appears in his generation and linked to Hillel (mAvot I 12; mḤagigah II 2; mEduyot I 1 ff.) as the fifth and last (see Chapter 7, n. 25) in the list of the famous "Zugot" or "Pairs." There are no grounds for doubting the testimonies already rooted in the Mishnah, and they have support in the Jerusalem Talmud. Hillel and Shammai could not occupy a prominent public position at the time of Herod's trial nearly 120 years before the establishment of the Yavneh center. But they were quite likely active at the end of his reign and after his death. In the previous generation, during the decline of the Hasmonean monarchy and the appointment of Herod, Shemaiah and Avtalion were active, and in view of the chronological framework, they are Samaias and Pollion. Many scholars have preferred to identify them with Hillel and Shammai because of the latter's importance and under the influence of Josippon (ed. D. Flusser, I, pp. 173, 197, 224) which at the start of modern research was thought to be a reliable ancient source.

[228] E. Schürer, *Geschichte* (see n. 2), vol. 2[4], p. 423; L.H. Feldman, "The Identity of Pollio the Pharisee," *JQR*, n.s. 49 (1958): 53 ff.; S.D. Luzzatto, *Lezioni di storia guidaica* (see n. 151), p. 198.

[229] bBava Batra 3b. The legend bears the hallmarks of Babylonian Talmud legends, and relates that the slave Herod who murdered his master's whole family in order to marry the heiress daughter, also carried out a massacre among the sages and in the end rebuilt the Temple to atone for his sins.

his permission to hold a trial, just as in Josephus, and supports the accused. Instead of Hyrcanus, the "king," here is Jannaeus, representing the typical undisciplined Hasmonean type of ruler as depicted in the Babylonian Talmud. The whole thing is designed to provide a reason for the separation of the king's authority from the judicial body. For his presence casts a pall and prevents the proper conduct of the trial. Because of this design, the stress is placed on fear of the king rather than of his servant's threats. The external circumstances and background are deleted, and reason suitable to the problem inserted. Jannaeus is required to rise in respect for the court: "You do not stand before us but before the One who spoke and the world came into existence, as it is written, 'The two parties of the dispute shall stand''...'' etc. But the judges were afraid, as in the Josephus version, and did not protest the blatant audacity. They "bowed their faces to the ground" and were silent. Simeon b. Shataḥ, Jannaeus' famous rival, fulfills the function of Samaias and whips the judges with the lash of his anger for becoming frightened and bowing their heads to the tyrant. "May the Master of thoughts come and call you to account." His wish was speedily granted. "The angel Gabriel came immediately, and struck them to the ground, and they died."[230]

The concepts and expressions woven into the legend and absent in Josephus are taken from the treasure house of the Sanhedrin tractate and contain similar images. "Rabbi Yose bar Ḥalafta, two people came before him to be judged... He said to them, the Master of thoughts will call them to account... Rabbi Akiva, when a person came before him to be judged, used to say to him, You must know before whom you are standing, before Him who spoke and the world came into existence, as it is written, 'The two parties to the dispute shall stand'..."[231] The scolded judges who evade the rebuke resemble King Ahaz, who "used to bow his face... when the prophet came to rebuke him."[232] On another occasion, too, Ben Shataḥ, in similar terms, calls for divine help as he is unable to conduct a fair trial. "Simeon b. Shataḥ said... the Master of thoughts will call that man to account. He had not managed to leave before a serpent bit him and he died."[233] Samaias' warning proved right years later, but Ben Shatah's curse on the judges, in the legend, brings immediate retribution, so the continuity is maintained and the outcome is not detached from the deed. This time the sentence is carried out not by a snake but by an angel on earth. Gabriel quickly attacks and strikes. Such a punishment is familiar in legend, such as in the case of the Egyptian maidens who tried to prevent the rescue of Moses from the river, and "Gabriel came and smote them down."[234]

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230 See n. 206 above.

231 ySanhedrin I 18a.

232 ySanhedrin X 27d; bSanhedrin 104a.

233 ySanhedrin IV 22b; bSanhedrin 37b; tSanhedrin VIII 3; *Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael,* Mishpatim 20, Horovitz-Rabin ed. (Jerusalem 1960), p. 327.

234 bSotah 12b; *Yalkut Shim'oni* (see n. 44 above), to the Torah, mark 166.

The separation of the elements in the legend reveals its complicated structure and assembled phrases. No earlier version appears in talmudic literature, so its evolution is a mystery. Its mixed language points to its having been edited by the Babylonian Amora'im. It was based on a distant report on Herod's trial, which was evidently modified and altered until it was included in the body of this section whose purpose is to explain the reason for the cancelation of the king's right to judge. Jannaeus' intimidation spoiled the strict justice, his recalcitrance led to a clash which resulted in the separation of the kingship from the judiciary in regard to "the kings of Israel," for "at that time they said a king does not judge and is not judged," etc. The actual details of the decisive step, the course and outcome of the trial are obscure and beset with difficulties. The comparison of the felonious slave to a harmful beast does not elucidate the former's exact status, degree of personal responsibility, or function in the king's service. Simeon b. Shataḥ wishes to admonish his master as though the slave was really subject to the same law that applied to an ox declared dangerous.[235]

Jannaeus is required to rise and stand, as witnesses or litigants do although his part and place in the trial are by no means clear. Commentators have tried to explain the presumptuous demand that debased the prestige of the kingship and is not supported by any additional testimony.[236] They also were troubled about when and where to set the event in Jannaeus' reign. For none of the speculations is support available, however. Neither the Jerusalem Talmud nor the early Midrashim contain any echo of the fact or hypothesis that the Halakha on that question was modified in Jannaeus' time so that thereafter it was forbidden to involve the king in judicial procedures. The distinction and discrimination between the "Kings of Israel" and those of the House of David rest as usual on a scriptural and theoretical base.[237] Considering all these omissions and flaws, the detachment, and the erroneous framework, the story is bereft of any historical importance at all.[238]

G. *A Collection of Errors*

1. An examination of the other recollections about Jannaeus in the Babylonian Talmud reveals a long line of errors, shows the considerable degree of confusion in the chapters and substantiates our critical conclusions. To the personages represented as Jannaeus, like Hyrcanus I and II, is added Agrippa II

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[235] In contrast to mYadayim IV 7. The contrast does not however prove, despite Geiger (see n. 7 above), that the legend presents a Sadducee version: *Urschrift,* p. 145.

[236] Rabbi Menahem Ha-Meiri, *Bet Ha-Beḥira* on Sanhedrin, ed. A. Sofer (Jerusalem 1965), p. 65ff.

[237] ySanhedrin II 19dff.

[238] Although of course similar problems may have preoccupied the Hasmonean authorities, such as the authority of the government according to the laws of the Torah and the Pharisee ideology.

as well. The Mishnah testifies[239] to "an occurrence with Joshua b. Gamla, who betrothed Boethus' daughter Martha[240] and the king appointed him to be the high priest and he married her." The Babylonian Talmud adds:[241] "Rav Joseph said, I see a conspiracy here, for Rav Assi said, Three *kab*s of dinars Martha b. Boethus gave to King Jannaeus to place Joshua b. Gamla among the high priests (in the high priesthood)". When and why did Jannaeus resign from the high priesthood and appoint another candidate in his place? The authors of the Tosafot already adopted a skeptical approach to the identity of the Jannaeus who left the high priesthood and explained the surprising version by saying: "It is not the same King Jannaeus... (bKiddushin 66a) who killed the sages of Israel, for that one there was a high priest who was told to raise the frontlet between his eyes, and would not appoint another in his place."[242] But no information is available on any other Jannaeus who wore the royal crown and bestowed the priestly crown on someone else. The high priesthood was never held by anyone other than the leading Hasmoneans as long as they governed, and such an appointment in Jannaeus' reign is inconceivable.[243]

Joshua b. Gamla (or Gamala, Gamaliel) is no mystery. According to quite

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[239] mYevamot VI 4; *Sifra,* Emor, II, I.H. Weiss edition (New York 1946), p. 95a.

[240] "Martha b. Baitos" (Boethus) according to the Kaufmann MS: *Mischnacodex Kaufmann,* ed. G. Beer (The Hague 1929), ad loc.

[241] bYevamot 61a; bYoma 18a; *Dikdukei Sofrim* to Yoma by R. Rabbinovicz ad loc.; Munich MS in the Strack ed. (see n. 53 above), p. 168b; *Lekaḥ Tov—Pesikta Zutarta* to Leviticus, Emor, S. Buber ed. (Jerusalem 1960), p. 118.

[242] Tosafot to bYoma 18a (in Romm ed. of the Talmud, repr. Jerusalem 1963); to bYevamot 61a; to bBava Batra 21a; and see also n. 163 above. Martha was the famous rich woman in Jerusalem: bGittin 56a.

[243] The error was used to explain another error. bBava Batra 21a attributes an educational regulation to Joshua b. Gamla, but the Jerusalem Talmud says nothing of that and ascribes a basic educational regulation to Simeon b. Shataḥ (yKetubbot VIII 32c). Rabbi David Frankel, *Shirei Korban* to the Jerusalem Talmud, ad loc. (in Gilead Press ed., New York 1949), already proposed a harmonization of the two stories with the help of the error in the Babylonian Talmud referred to above: "Simeon b. Shataḥ ruled that the infants should go to school, and yet in the Babylonian Talmud, Bava Batra, Joshua b. Gamla ruled that the infants should go to school, so it should be said that they both ruled, for they lived at one time, at the time of King Jannaeus." The same method is adopted by I. Halevy, *Dorot ha-Rishonim* (see n. 2 above), vol. 2, p. 465ff.; A. Hyman, *Toldot Tana'im ve-Amora'im* (see n. 67), p. 621ff., 1214. As far as they are concerned there were two people with the same name in two periods. However the ruling by Joshua b. Gamla is considered doubtful; see N. Morris, *Toldot ha-Ḥinukh shel Am Yisrael*[2] (Tel Aviv 1960), p. 69ff. Ben Shataḥ's ruling fits the circumstances of his period perfectly, it being necessary then to stop the advance of alien Hellenistic influence, and also accords with the popular reformist inclinations of the Pharisee leaders. Ben Gamla on the other hand belonged to the aristocratic higher priesthood circle which was steeped in corruption and far from inclined to disseminate the Torah among the people. There is no need to produce a convenient synthesis or equality between the contradictory versions, and there are no grounds for rejecting the value and obvious superiority of the Jerusalem Talmud tradition, as has been done by a number of scholars such as J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Traditions* (see n. 2 above), vol. 1, p. 111; D. Goodblatt, "Ha-Mekorot shel Reshito shel ha-Ḥinukh ha-Yehudi ha-Me'urgan be-Eretz Yisrael," *Meḥkarim be-Toldot Am Yisrael ve-Eretz Yisrael,* vol. 5, vol. 5, Haifa Univ. ed. (Haifa 1980), p. 83ff.

certain testimony, he obtained the high priesthood from Agrippa II, was a member of the distinguished Jerusalemite group along with his famous wife née Boethus, was a friend of Josephus, cooperated during the Great Revolt with the heads of the moderate faction, and was killed when militant zealots became predominant.[244] The Babylonian Talmud lists him among the unworthy priests of the Second Temple whose appointments were purchased.[245] The Jerusalem Talmud, too, in a parallel section, censures the corruption of the high priesthood in those times:[246] "In the First (Temple) he, his son and his son's son served. And then eighteen priests served. In the Second, because it was acquired with money, and some say that they used to kill each other with magic, eighty priests served... Rabbi Aha said, 'The fear of the Lord prolongs life' are the priests who served in the First Temple, 'while the years of the wicked will be shortened' are those who served in the Second Temple. There was a case of a man who sent with his son two silver measures full of silver and their silver leveling rods. And another came and sent with his son two golden measures full of gold and their gold leveling rods." And the gold overcame the silver. The general example of the purchase of the high priesthood by bribery was in the Babylonian Talmud attached to Ben Gamla, evidently on the basis of a similar report, and perhaps because of the popular legend on the great wealth of his wife, Martha b. Boethus, "the rich Jerusalemite," who perished at the time of the destruction of the Temple.[247] "Two measures of silver" became "three *kab*s of silver" in the Babylonian Talmud.[248] The anonymous king who sells the high priesthood, whose identity with Agrippa II is indubitable, was altered and is presented as Jannaeus.[249]

2. The measure of Jannaeus' sins is not yet full. The Babylonian Talmud says: "Our Rabbis taught, four cries the Temple court shouted, once it shouted, Go away, the sons of Eli, who defiled the Temple of God, and again it shouted, Go away, Issachar of Kefar Barkai, who honors himself while desecrating heavenly sacrifices, for he used to wrap his hands with silks and perform the (sacrificial) service... What was the fate of Issachar... It was related, once (at a meal) the king and his queen were sitting. The king said, goat (flesh) is best, but the queen said, lamb (flesh) is best. They said, who shall decide? The high priest

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244 Josephus, *Ant.* XX 213ff.; *Bell.* IV 160, 238ff.; 316; *Vita* 193, 204.

245 bYoma 8b; 9a; 18a.

246 yYoma I 38c; Leviticus Rabbah XXI 9, M. Margaliot ed. (see n. 201 above), vol. 3 (1953), p. 488/9.

247 bGittin 56a, bSukkah 52b; yKetubbot V 30b-c; *Sifrei* to Deut. 281; Lamentations Rabbah I (on 1:16), p. 86 in the Buber ed., *Midrash Eikhah-Rabbah* (Vilna 1899). Martha b. Boethus became a typical model of the rich Boethusians and Sadducees in a later and secondary tradition: see n. 25 to Chapter 7.

248 This measurement is common and stereotypical as in bAvodah Zarah 18a. Joshua b. Gamla is also mentioned in mYoma III 9; bYoma 37a; tYoma II 2. Some critical views are voiced byAzariah dei Rossi, n. 265 below.

249 J. Derenbourg, *Essai* (see n. 2 above), p. 248ff.

who offers sacrifices every day. He (Issachar) came and waved his hands contemptuously. If a goat were best, it would be offered for the daily sacrifice. Then the king said, Since he had no fear of the royal dignity let his right hand be cut off. He gave a bribe and they cut off his left hand. When the king heard (he said) and they cut off his right hand. Rav Joseph said, Blessed be the Merciful who paid to Issachar of Kefar Barkai his due in this world."[250]

Issachar of Kefar Barkai is mentioned in no other testimony, talmudic or external, but evidently belongs with the sinful priests of the end of the Second Temple era. The same tractate contains a similar picture of an unnamed king and queen, who are not competent to decide on two sacrifices, for their servants slaughter for them a goat and a lamb together, they applied for a ruling to Rabban Gamaliel.[251] Scholars have indicated Agrippa[252] (I or II) who is mentioned in nearby sections[253] as the identity of the king in both stories. But the odd legend is repeated in another Babylonian Talmud version, and this time Jannaeus appears instead of the anonymous king who arbitrarily ordered the hands of the high priest to be cut off:[254] "King Jannaeus and his queen were sitting, the king said, The goat is best, but the queen said, The lamb is best. They said, Let us ask Issachar of Kefar Barkai... They asked and he said to them, If goat (flesh) were best it would be offered for the daily sacrifice. As he spoke he waved his hand contemptuously. So the king said, Since he waved his hand, let his right hand be cut off. He gave a bribe and they cut off his left hand. When the king heard, he said to cut off also his right hand. Rav Joseph said, Blessed be the Merciful..." etc. Who can be blamed for such a ferocious outburst with the dreadful arbitrary punishment of amputating limbs without justification or trial? The disgusting deed is added to Jannaeus' imputed crimes, for he personally symbolizes the evil, contemptible rule of a Jewish king during the Second Temple period, as pictured by the Babylonian Talmud.

3. Yose b. Yoezer of Zeredah figured among the celebrated Eshkolot ("grape clusters") and Zugot ("Pairs"),[255] was exceedingly pious, and died a martyr,

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[250] bPesaḥim 57a-b; *Dikdukei Sofrim* on Pesaḥim, by R. Rabbinovicz (see n. 53); *Yalkut Shim'oni* (see n. 44) on the Torah, mark 469.

[251] bPesaḥim 88b.

[252] J. Derenbourg, *Essai* (see n. 2 above), p. 213; A. Büchler, *Das Synedrion in Jerusalem* (see n. 9 above), p. 129; J. Klausner, *Historia* (see n. 2 above), vol. 4, p. 292.

[253] bPesaḥim 64b, 107b.

[254] bKeritot 28b; p. 495b in the Strack ed. of the Munich MS (see n. 53 above). The contents differs only in minor details from the previous version. The name "Jannaeus" is missing in the Oxford MS which might suggest that the identification was inserted by a copyist and not in the original version, but the latter MS does not appear right and preferable in general: *Talmudical Fragments in the Bodleian Library,* Fragment of the Talmud Babli Tractate Kerithot of the year 1123, the oldest dated MS of the Talmud... Edited by S. Schechter and S. Singer, Cambridge Univ. Press 1896.

[255] mAvot I 4; mḤagigah II 2, 7; mSotah IX 9; tBava Kamma VIII 13; bTemurah 15b; yPesaḥim I 27d; yShabbat I 3d; yKetubbot VIII 32c; bShabbat 14 b; bAvodah Zarah 8b; etc.

apparently at the time of Antiochus Epiphanes' persecutions. A genuine legend of Eretz Israel[256] records his devotion to his faith on pain of death, in the face of looters of Temple sanctities and violaters of covenants; his trust and courage effect a change of heart in his nephew Yakim, a former apostate and rejecter of ancestral law, who repents and in atonement inflicts on himself the four judicial deaths. This tradition does not figure in the Babylonian Talmud, which however contains quite a different one in connection with Yose and his rebellious son, during Jannaeus' reign:[257] "Joseph b. Yoezer had a son who did not behave properly. He had a loft (full) of dinars, and he went and consecrated it (to Heaven). His son went, married a daughter of King Jannaeus' wreath-maker. His wife gave birth. He bought her a fish. He tore it and found a pearl in it. She said to him, Don't offer it to the king who will take it for a little money, go and offer it to the treasurers [of the Temple], and don't you evaluate it, since making an offer to the Most High is as [binding as actual] delivery to an ordinary person, but let them evaluate it. He went and offered it. They evaluated it at thirteen lofts of dinars. They said to him, There are seven [lofts] here, six are not. He said to them, Give me seven, six are hereby consecrated to Heaven. They went and wrote, Joseph b. Yoezer brought in one [loft], and his son brought in six. Others say Joseph b. Yoezer brought in one and his son took out seven."[258]

The traces of the Babylonian redaction of the legend are discernible both in its language and in its surprise-filled complicated contents. Its structure is adapted to the subject of to what extent a person may, by distributing gifts, deprive his offspring of their inheritance, "if his sons did not behave properly."[259] The main subject is also shown in the adjacent Baraita: "The rabbis taught, in a case of a man whose sons did not behave properly, he rose and wrote his property to Jonathan b. Uziel... (Jonathan) sold a third, consecrated a third, and returned a third to his sons." Similarly Yose b. Yoezer handed his money over to the Temple because "he had a son who did not behave properly."[260] The rebellious

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[256] Genesis Rabbah LXV 22, Theodor-Albeck ed. (see n. 44), p. 741; *Yalkut Shim'oni* (see n. 44) on the Torah, mark 115; *Midrash ha-Gadol* on Genesis, M. Margaliot ed. (Jerusalem 1947), p. 476f.; *Yalkut ha-Makhiri* to Psalms 11, mark 18, Buber ed. (Berdichev 1899), p. 70; *Midrash Tehilim—Shoḥer Tov* on Ps. 11:7, S. Buber ed. (New York 1947), p. 103f.

[257] bBava Batra 133b; *Dikdukei Sofrim* to Bava Batra by R. Rabbinovicz (see n. 53); Strack ed. of the Munich MS (see n. 53), p. 329a; *Der Traktat Nezikin, Cod. Heb. XIX Bibl. Hamb.*, ed. L. Goldschmidt (Berlin 1913), p. 410.

[258] The garbled text of *Hagadot ha-Talmud*, p. 98a says: "Joseph b. Yoezer put his son in and put six in; some say Joseph b. Yoezer put his son in, took out seven." Mistakes are not rare in that collection, such as (on p. 64) "he sent to them Lindon Caesar" instead of "Nero Caesar." Such examples show how faulty the redaction (or printing) is, and how unsuitable as a basis for any far-reaching conclusions, as stated in n. 146 above.

[259] mBava Batra VIII 5.

[260] bBava Batra 133b. The original Eretz Israel version of the Baraita is as usual in the Jerusalem Talmud (Nedarim V 39b) and according to it Jonathan b. Uziel's father canceled his son's inheritance and transfered it to Shammai, but through the same legal gambit, Shammai dedicated part, sold part, and returned what was left to Jonathan. In the Babylonian Talmud versions, the roles

son marries a servant girl from Jannaeus' court, that is, "the daughter of one who makes wreathes for King Jannaeus."[261] Yose, however, precedes Simeon B. Shataḥ by two generations, and is quite far from the Jannaeus period. The job of wreath making at the Hasmoneans' is not mentioned in any early testimony, but the craft and term were known to the Babylonian sages.[262] Jannaeus and the wreath-maker serve only as window-dressing. Yose b. Yoezer donates his treasure to Heaven in order to deprive his wayward son of his property, and here the disloyal son is the one who finds the marvelous pearl, donates a six-fold sum to the Temple, and also acquires property seven times larger than his lost inheritance. The Gemara itself contains opposing views of the story whose intention remains unclear. The wonder fish appears in another Babylonian Talmud legend: The commendable "Joseph, the Sabbath reverer," because he takes care to buy fish on Sabbath eves, receives the compensation due to his virtue and finds in a fish's entrails a precious pearl valued at "thirteen lofts of dinars," exactly like the pearl of Yose's son.[263] But there is sense and justice in the reward of the Sabbath reverer, while the valuable find is inexplicable in the case of the rebellious son.

The confusion in the legend derives from the conglomeration of sundry disparate elements. It perhaps contains fragments of the story of the sinful Yakim, Yose's nephew, who here becomes his son.[264] If so, there is a suggestion of the robbing of the Temple, in contrast to Yose's piety. But the early core, even if we assume it exists, is swallowed up in the general mixture. There is no use replacing Jannaeus with John Hyrcanus[265] or Jonathan the Hasmonean[266] and renovating the story in order to fit it into a clear historical setting. A fragile contrived interpretation was proffered by A. Büchler,[267] who goes very far,

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are reversed. The father and son are unnamed, Jonathan returns the property he was given, and Shammai is angry at the pity displayed for the son. In mAvot I 15 Shammai says everyone should be "approached with kindness" but his personality changes in the Babylonian Talmud and he becomes hard-hearted as in bShabbat 31a as well. The alteration and distortion of Shammai's personality in the Babylonian Talmud was thoroughly studied by Israel Ben Shalom in his dissertation, *The Shammai School* (see n. 14 above), p. 222f. See also n. 33 to Chapter 7 below.

[261] According to the commentary ascribed to R-a-sh-i (Romm ed. of the Bab. Talmud, repr. Jerusalem 1963); Rabenu Gershom (ibid. ad loc.) explains the craft as making crowns for Jannaeus.

[262] bGittin 7a; bAvodah Zarah 41a.

[263] bShabbat 119a.

[264] A. Geiger, *Urschrift* (see n. 7 above), p. 64ff.

[265] Z. Frankel, *Darkhei ha-Mishna* (see n. 2), p. 34. The chronological confusion and changeable character of Jannaeus in the Babylonian Talmud already made Azariah dei Rossi (*Me'or Einayim,* Chapter 21, Romm ed., Vilna 1866, p. 243f.) wonder if there were two or three people in the Second Temple period called Jannaeus, that is, one at the time of Yose b. Yoezer, a second in Ben Shataḥ's time, and a third at the time the Temple was destroyed who appointed Ben Gamla high priest, as already mentioned in the discussion above and in n. 248. In the end Azariah is satisfied with two, for according to him the third is King Agrippa.

[266] I.H. Weiss, *Dor Dor* (see n. 2 above), vol. 1, p. 102.

[267] *A. Büchler Memorial Volume, Studies in Jewish History* (Oxford 1956), Part 2, Hebrew Section, p. 15ff.

moves the event to the time of the Destruction, inserts Agrippa in Jannaeus' place, and installs Jose b. Yoezer II at his side. At any rate, the whole affair has no connection with Jannaeus.

4. The Babylonian Talmud lists thousands of towns in King Jannaeus' domain.[268] "When Rav Dimmi[269] came he said, King Jannaeus had one town in King's Mountain from which they used to take sixty myriads of cups of salted fish between Sabbath eve and Sabbath eve out to the men cutting down fig trees. When Ravin came he said, King Jannaeus had one tree on King's Mountain from which they used to take down forty *seah* of young pigeons from three broods every month. When Rav Isaac came he said, There was one town in Eretz Israel called Gofnith, where there were eighty pairs of priestly brothers married to eighty pairs of priestly sisters," etc.[270] Similarly a homily states:[271] "'The Lord has laid waste without pity all the habitations of Jacob.[272] When Ravin came he said in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan, Those are the sixty myriads of towns which King Jannaeus had in the King's Mountain, as Rav Judah said in the name of Rav Assi. King Jannaeus had sixty myriads of towns in the King's mountain and in each of them was a population as large as that of the exodus from Egypt, save in three of them which had double as many. These were Kefar Bish, Kefar Shiḥlayim and Kefar Dikhraya. Kefar Bish (village of the wicked) because they (i.e., the inhabitants) were not hospitable to visitors, Kefar Shiḥlayim because they (i.e., the inhabitants) made their living from *shiḥlayim* (=watercress), Kefar Dikhraya (village of the males) according to R. Yoḥanan, because women used to bear males first and finally a girl and then stop. Ulla said, I have seen that place, and it would not hold even sixty myriads of reeds."

However, all these enormous properties of Jannaeus' existed only in the Babylonian Talmud error. The picture was derived from the story of the Destruction and its earlier form appears in the Jerusalem Talmud:[273] "Two cedars were on the Mount of Olives. Under one of them four stores sold pure food. From (under) the other they took out forty *seah* of pigeons monthly, and

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[268] bBerakhot 44a; *Dikdukei Sofrim* to Berakhot by R. Rabbinovicz; Strack ed. of the Munich MS, p. 151b.; see n. 53 above.

[269] Rav Dimmi (Avdimmi in the Jerusalem Talmud, or Avudma) is one of the traveling sages who used to carry reports and instructions from Eretz Israel to Babylonia. So were Ravin (Rav Avin in the Jerusalem Talmud — or Rav Bun) and Rav Isaac (bar Joseph) below. See A. Hyman, *Sefer Toldot Tana'im ve-Amora'im* (London 1910, repr. Jerusalem 1964).

[270] Gofnit or Gofnin is Gofna in the correct version in the Jerusalem Talmud below: M. Avi-Yonah, *Geografia Historit shel Eretz Yisrael* (Jerusalem 1962), pp. 52, 62, 66, 70, 100.

[271] bGittin 57a; Strack ed. of the Munich MS, p. 223a (see n. 53): *Dikdukei Sofrim* to Gittin, by M.S. Feldblum (New York 1966); *Midrash ha-Gadol* on Exodus, M. Margaliot ed. (Jerusalem 1956), p. 51.

[272] Lamentations 2:2.

[273] yTa'anit IV 69a-b; yMegillah I 70a; a similar version appears in Lamentations Rabbah (see n. 6 above), II 4 (on 2:2), Buber ed., p. 105ff.

of them they supplied pigeon offerings for all Israel. Simeon's Mountain gave out three hundred measures of thin cakes to gleaners every Sabbath eve... Ten thousand towns were on King's Mountain, and Rabbi Eleazar b. Ḥarsum had a thousand of them, along with a thousand ships in the sea, and they were all destroyed... Three villages were there, each of them used to produce twice as many as the exodus from Egypt—Kefar Bish, Kefar Shiḥlayim, Kefar Dikhraya. Why is it called Kefar Bish, Because they did not welcome wayfarers, and why is it called Kefar Shiḥlayim, Because they multiply like watercress. Why is it called Kefar Dikhraya, Because the women bear only males. And if one of them didn't leave, she wouldn't bear a female. Rabbi Yoḥanan said, Eighty pairs of priests married eighty pairs of priests' sisters, in one night in that Gofna... From Gabath to Antipatris there were sixty myriads of towns, and Bet Shemesh was the smallest of them... And now if you insert reeds, there is no room..." etc.

The story of the Destruction reveals a picture of desolation and depression after the catastrophe in contrast to the plenty and prosperity before it. In the Babylonian Talmud passages quoted, verses were deleted and details muddled. Sixty thousand towns scattered in the area "from Gabath up to Antipatris" (an exaggeration, of course) were moved and crammed into "King's Mountain." Added to them were the three villages as well—Kefar Bish, Kefar Shiḥlayim and Kefar Dikhraya—which lie south of King's Mountain and not actually in it.[274] The extolled cedar so productive of pigeons was uprooted from the Mount of Olives and planted in that same King's Mountain whose location was not clear to the Babylonian sages. The fine yield of "Simeon's Mountain" was ascribed to "one town... on King's Mountain." The Jerusalem Talmud mentions a thousand towns owned by Eliezer b. Ḥarsum, a wealthy priest of the time of the Destruction,[275] but the Babylonian Talmud attributes the sixty myriads of towns on King's Mountain to Jannaeus, rather than the modest number of Ben Ḥarsum.

In the original Eretz Israel talmudic tradition Jannaeus was not inserted into the stories of the Destructon. His towns certainly did not survive to the end of the Second Temple period, and there is no basis for proposing, as A. Büchler, did to replace Jannaeus with Agrippa II[276] whose domain did not include King's

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[274] S. Klein, *Eretz Yehuda* (Tel Aviv 1939), p. 99ff.; M. Avi-Yonah, *Geografia Historit* (see n. 270), pp. 62, 70, 113.

[275] yYoma III 40d; tYoma I 22; bKiddushin 49b; bYoma 9a.

[276] A. Büchler, "Die Schauplätze des Bar-Kochba Krieges," *JQR* 16 (1904), p. 187. Expertise and wasted efforts were invested in this research in a vain embarrassing attempt to prove the Babylonian Talmud version superior in this matter, contrary to critical consistency and historical logic. I have devoted to these problems a special study: "Milḥemet Bar Kokhva le-Or ha-Masoret ha-Talmudit ha-Eretz Yisr'elit ke-neged ha-Bavlit," which has been published recently in *Mered Bar-Kokhva, Meḥkarim Ḥadashim,* ed. Yad Izḥak Ben Ẓvi (Jerusalem 1984).

Mountain or the southern regions of Judaea. Jannaeus was evidently attached to King's Mountain because of a misinterpretation identifying him as owner of the mountain, or because of a slip of the pen. The erroneous version contains no independent testimony, and in any case no evidence exists of estates owned by the Hasmoneans in the King's Mountain area.[277]

5. In addition to his towns, Jannaeus' house is incidentally noted in the Babylonian Talmud as having been destroyed.[278] "The house of King Jannaeus was destroyed. Strangers (Gentiles) came, set up within it a Mercurius and worshiped it.[279] Subsequently other strangers came, who do not worship Mercurius, removed the stones with which they paved roads and streets. Some rabbis abstained (from walking on them) while others did not abstain." How did Jannaeus get involved in that section? One speculation suggests that the story related to the palace of Herod Antipas in Tiberias[280] which was destroyed following the eruption of zealotry during the Great Revolt.[281] Another proposal,[282] based on Epiphanius, suggests the unfinished Hadrian temple[283] in Tiberias whose residents later tried to complete it and use it as a bath-house, but clear facts cannot be derived from the verse, nor the slightest connection with the Jannaeus period.

6. The "Torah of Alexandrus" figures in one of the Minor Tractates and some scholars attribute it to Jannaeus.[284] The testimony appears in the rulings of Tractate Sofrim (I 9): "One does not write in gold. A case regarding the Torah of Alexandrus in which all the Divine Names were written in gold, the case came before the sages, and they said, Conceal it."[285] Which Alexander does the verse refer to? Throughout the entire talmudic literature, Jannaeus is never called Alexandrus, so that this Greek form of the name itself arouses suspicion. The correct wording is preserved in the manuscripts of that tractate,[286] in the Vitry

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277 In the opinion of A. Schalit, *Hordus ha-Melekh* (see n. 210 above), p. 136; also B.Z. Lurie, *Yanai ha-Melekh* (see n. 2), pp. 9, 49 ff.; S. Applebaum, "Judaea as a Roman Province," *ANRW* II 8 (1977): 359 f.

278 bAvodah Zarah 50a; *Dikdukei Sofrim* to Avodah Zarah; *Tractate Avodah Zarah,* Jewish Theological Seminary MS, S. Abramson ed. (New York 1957), p. 89 f.

279 S. Lieberman, *Yevanit ve-Yavnut be-Eretz Yisrael* (Jerusalem 1962), p. 248: The god who represents the Graeco-Roman pantheon in talmudic literature is Mercury or (in the language of the Talmud) "Mercules."

280 S. Klein, *Neue Beiträge zur Geschichte und Geographie Galiläas, Palästinastudien* I (Vienna 1923), p. 2.

281 Josephus, *Vita* (12) 65/66.

282 S. Lieberman, "Palestine in the Third and Fourth Centuries," *JQR,* n.s. 36 (1945/46): 367 ff.

283 Epiphanius, *Panarion Adversus Haereses,* 30. 12. 2/3 (*GCS* 31), ed. K. Holl; idem, *PG* 41 ad loc.; *Sefer ha-Yishuv* I, 1, ed. S. Klein (Jerusalem 1939), p. 70.

284 J. Derenbourg, *Essai* (see n. 2), p. 102; J. Klausner, *Historia* (see n. 2 above), vol. 3, p. 158; B.Z. Luria, *Yanai ha-Melekh* (see n. 2), p. 79; M. Weinfeld, "Megillat Mikdash o Parashat Melekh," *Shenaton le-Mikra u-le-Ḥeker ha-Mizraḥ ha-Kadum,* vol. 3 (Jerusalem–Tel Aviv 1979), p. 231.

285 M. Higger, *Masekhet Sofrim* I, 8 (New York 1937), p. 105 f.; J. Müller, *Masekhet Sofrim,* I, 10 (Leipzig 1878), p. 17.

286 Contrary to the printed version and a group of MSS, in the light of the critical editions above.

prayer book,[287] and in a parallel part in Sefer Torah Tractate (I 7): "A case regarding the Torah of the Alexandrians," not of Alexandrus.[288] An examination of the context dispels all further doubts. For the verse is preceded in Tractate Sofrim (I 8) by the well-known tale regarding the translation into Greek of the Pentateuch by seventy-two elders, commissioned by Ptolemy II Philadelphus.[289] Thus immediately after the description of the project, which was accomplished in Egypt, there is reference to the Torah of the "Alexandrians," that is, of the Jews of Alexandria.[290] Its Divine Names were written in gold, like the letters of the beautiful Torah which according to the ancient Letter of Aristeas the translators presented to Ptolemy in Alexandria.[291] No peg remains, therefore, on which to hang a splendid Torah belonging to Jannaeus.[292]

H. *Jannaeus and Ben Shataḥ Reflected in the Scholia-Commentaries on Megillat Ta'anit (Scroll of Fasting)*

The Scroll of Fasting[293] which is of earlier redaction than the Mishnah itself[294] contains: "These are the days not to fast on, and some of them not to mourn on... days on which miracles were wrought for Israel."[295] In other words, the Scroll

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[287] *Maḥzor Vitry,* A. Hurwitz ed. (Nuremberg 1923), p. 688.

[288] R. Kirchheim, *Sheva Masekhtot Ketanot* (Frankfurt 1851), p. 1ff.; M. Higger, *Sheva Masekhtot Ketanot* (New York 1930), p. 24, and in his introduction—p. 10–11: "There is no doubt that Sofrim is later than Sefer Torah... The version in Sefer Torah fits the version on the Jerusalem Talmud, and the version in Sofrim is closer to the Babylonian Talmud version."

[289] In Sefer Torah too this legend precedes the Halakha under discussion, and its version is preferable, in contrast to Sofrim.

[290] The second, reworked, later Sofrim contains an inferior version with no independent value: "A book whose divine names are hung in gold you shall not read it, and it happened with Alexander's book that his divine names were hung in gold. And the case came before sages and they forbade it" (Higger, *Masekhet Sofrim,* p. 376; see n. 285 above).

[291] Aristeas 176: ἡ νομοθεσία γεγραμμένη χρυσογραφίᾳ τοῖς Ἰουδαϊκοῖς γράμμασι. M. Hadas, *Aristeas to Philocrates* (New York 1951), pp. 82, 168; Josephus, *Ant.* XII 89.

[292] The correct conclusion was already reached by Joel Müller (n. 285) and Graetz, *Geschichte* (see n. 2 above), vol. 3^3, p. 150.

[293] H. Lichtenstein, "Die Fastenrolle," *HUCA* 8/9 (1931/32): 257ff.; S. Zeitlin, *Megillat Ta'anit as a Source for Jewish Chronology and History in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods* (Philadelphia 1922); idem, "Nennt Megillat Taanit Antisadduzäische Gedenktage?" *MGWJ* 81 (1937): 351ff.; J. Schmilg, *Über Entstehung und historischen Werth des Siegeskalenders Megillath Taanith* (Leipzig 1874); M. Brann, "Entstehung und Wert der Megillat Taanit," *MGWJ* 25 (1876), p. 375ff.; H. Graetz, *Geschichte* (see n. 2 above), vol. 3^3, note 1, p. 597ff.; J. Derenbourg, *Essai* (see n. 2), p. 439ff.; B.Z. Lurie, *Megillat Ta'anit* (Jerusalem 1964). The term "Gemara" for the group of scholia explanations is entirely mistaken and misleading, as the analysis shows.

[294] mTa'anit II 8. This Mishnah is already based on the days noted in the Scroll. Its value and historical significance are explained at the end of Chapter 1 above.

[295] yTa'anit II 66a; yMegillah I 70c; yNedarim VIII 40d. That is why in later generation the name of the Scroll is shortened to Megillat Ta'anit.

commemorates the miracles of salvation, the moments of joy and gratitude. The dates etched on the ancient calendar cover the period of the Second Temple, and among them the triumphs and accomplishments of the Hasmoneans are salient.[296] No shadow overcasts their glory. Intertwined are also territorial conquests (Bet She'an, Samaria, Mount Gerizim, etc.), that is, the expansionist measures of the Hasmonean kingdom throughout the country. For in their generations the Pharisees did not raise the banner of sterile theology imputed by modern theories or of an enslaving, alien, anti-nationalist theocracy contemptuous of vital, natural aspirations for the free continued existence of the nation in its land. The concise list, however, is couched in abbreviated terms, mostly scanty, and therefore its meaning is only partially comprehensible. No commentary was needed while memories were still fresh in the nation's hearts as it was later when they faded and were covered with a veil of oblivion.

The Jerusalem Talmud elucidates the meaning of the Scroll very little but impeccably.[297] In contrast, the Babylonian Talmud explains some events according to mistaken assumptions.[298] Additional explanations sprouting from these were not finally sealed till well into the Middle Ages. The series of constructions added to the Scroll in the scholium form do not constitute a uniform commentary. Conspicuous divergences are evident between the manuscripts and the different versions.[299] Varied, and sometimes contradictory, elements appear among the explanations. Their minimum value, usually very close to zero, is conditioned by the concepts and knowledge of the commentators, limited by the horizons of their time, and dependent in respect to quality on sparse and dubious authority.[300] Without external help, there is no

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[296] Such as Hanukkah, Nicanor Day (13 Adar), the capture of the Akra (23 Iyyar) the retreat of Antiochus (28 Shevat); the conquest of Bet She'an (15 Sivan), Samaria (25 Marheshvan) and Mount Gerizim (21 Kislev). Among the obscure paragraphs of the Scroll are apparently other holidays of the Hasmonean period, but problems and doubts arose concerning them which cannot be specified or clarified here. Even Jannaeus' military victories were sometimes celebrated, as evidenced by Josephus (Ant. XIII 394, 401) and the Baraita discussed in Section E above.

[297] A logical outcome and even a sign of the antiquity of its version and its preferability over later talmudic sources. For instance the explanation of Nicanor Day in the Jerusalem Talmud (yTa'anit II 66a; yMegillah I 70c) is superior to that in the Babylonian (bTa'anit 18b) and closer to the original Eretz Israel testimony in I Maccabees VII 47ff. compared with II Maccabees XV 30ff.

[298] E.g., bYoma 69a; bTa'anit 18b; bSanhedrin 91a. See n. 330 below.

[299] Hans Lichtenstein's precise comprehensive investigation (see n. 293) leads to that conclusion. The Parma MS seems to represent a relatively early stage in the development of the versions, but in order to find an ancient shared presumptive core, Lichtenstein attempted to evolve a blended version, instead of seeking to make a full, consistent differentiation. An erroneous assumption and incorrect method blocked the way to complete critical conclusions. There is no ancient source and no independent value in the scholia versions aside from the Parma MS which is itself based on explanations of the Talmud and embodies also combinations, opinions and faulty information composed in the Middle Ages.

[300] G.F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (Cambridge, Mass. 1932), vol. 2, p. 54; vol. 3, pp. 27, 45f.

sense in quarrying historical testimony from them. The ancient Scroll, sanctifying festive heart-warming events, had no room for the controversies that becloud and rend the Hasmonean kingdom, but the interpretative accretions in the commentaries harbor sounds of the internal debates and conflicts of the period of Jannaeus and Simeon b. Shataḥ, as shown below.

1. "On the seventeenth of it (Adar) Gentiles arose against the surviving scribes in the country of Chalcis and Bet Zabdi(n) and there was salvation." This sentence from the Scroll is cited without any addition in the Jerusalem Talmud.[301] A group of escaped "scribes" or sages was attacked, and saved from the danger. The combination of "country of Chalcis" and "Bet Zabdi(n)" points to a series of incidents rather than an isolated instance in one place. The rescue took place in districts close to the northern border of Eretz Israel. Chalcis was the capital of the Ituraeans, and its ruins can be seen in the Beka area of Lebanon.[302] There is a Kafr Zebad north of it and a Zebedani region to the east. These topographical names are traces left by the Zabadaean Arabs, and Bet Zabdi(n) was doubtless located in that area.[303] As Jonathan the Hasmonean fought the Zabadaeans[304] here the hypothesis that the unclear event might be connected with Jonathan's victory was proposed.[305] While such a solution is by no means certain, it is quite reasonable.[306]

The Hebrew scholium explanation of the Scroll in the Parma manuscript describes how the scribes escaped the foe: "Because Gentiles sought to slay the sages of Israel, and they went to Bet Zabdi and sat there till dark and fled from there. Rabbi Judah says, A horse was tethered to the entrance; whoever saw the horse imagined that there is no Jew there. And they sat there till dark and fled from there. The day they fled from there they made a holiday." The explanation may indicate the extent to which its author did not know or understand the real reason for the holiday. Clear facts and the historical background are sought here in vain. The circumstances of the event escaped him totally, as did the names of the respected sages for whose sake the holiday was established. The actual contents are confined to a story that is by no means rare in Jewish history, and does not require any great expertise or imagination: Anonymous Gentiles plan evil against anonymous Jews who flee and hide. Bet Zabdi provides a refuge, and seems to be the private house of some unknown Zabdi. The horse at the entrance helpes to camouflage and save the Jews as it seems an identifying mark exclusive

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301 The Jerusalem Talmud, as above (in Ta'anit and Megillah) in n. 295. In the variants the names Chalcis and Bet Zabdi(n) were garbled. See Lichtenstein (n. 293 above), pp. 322, 347f.

302 E. Schürer, *Geschichte*[4], vol. 1, p. 712: idem, New English Version, vol. 1, p. 563; see n. 2 above.

303 F.M. Abel, *Les Livres des Maccabées* (Paris 1949), p. 226; A. Neubauer, *La Géographie du Talmud* (Paris 1868), p. 295f.

304 I Maccabees XII 31; ed. W. Kappler, *Maccabaeorum liber I* (Göttingen 1967).

305 J. Derenbourg, *Essai* (see n. 2), p. 100; J. Wellhausen, *Die Pharisäer und die Sadducäer* (see n. 2), p. 58.

306 Other speculations seem very contrived, see Lichtenstein, p. 293.

to Gentiles. The medieval exegete finds that remote episode merely a reflection of ordinary occurrences in his own world.

Another version of that scholium commentary, common in the manuscripts and printed editions, inserts Jannaeus into the affair and seemingly clarifies and expands the canvas: "When King Jannaeus sent (or descended) to kill the sages, they fled from him and went to Syria and stayed in the country of Coslicus.[307] And the Gentiles in that place combined against them and surrounded them to kill them, and they caused them to quake greatly, and struck them a mighty blow and left a remnant of them. And they went to Bet Zabdi and sat there till dark and fled from there. Rabbi Judah says, A horse was tethered at the entrance, etc..."[308] This expanded version in the explanation contains no original testimony, and the tasteless rind falls away under careful scrutiny. Chalcis is garbled to Coslicus, possibly according to the name of King Seleucus, and the event is set in Syria, apparently on the basis of widely known chronicles and information.[309] The calamity is blamed on Jannaeus. The commentator did not go very far, or make any great efforts to invent a reason for the sages' flight. The Babylonian Talmud provided Jannaeus' order to kill "the sages of Israel,"[310] and the expression "Jannaeus... sent to them...."[311] The connection with Jannaeus' persecutions is not deep-rooted, is not suggested in the Parma manuscript which generally presents the basic version, and does not appear in the quotation of *Tzedah la-Derekh.*[312] This supplement was grafted on the main base and not properly integrated, because the holiday that was established celebrated the rescue of the scribes from the Gentiles, not from Jannaeus. No detail is given of the members of the group or where they fled to. Jannaeus' guilt disappeared and his person vanished at the end of the explanation, which explains nothing from the historical viewpoint, but only confuses events and periods.

The third version of the scholium explanation, preserved in the Oxford manuscript, says:[313] "When King Jannaeus saw, he killed Bukinus and his

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307 "Coslicus" and "Calicus" in two different MSS; see Lichtenstein, p. 348.

308 The end is like the previous version, with one verse added: "Rabbi Ḥidka says, A day Gentiles sought to kill the sages of Israel, the sea rose and destroyed a third of the population."

309 *Seder Olam Rabbah,* 30, D.B. Ratner ed. (New York 1966), p. 144; *Seder Olam Zuta,* in *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles,* ed. A. Neubauer, vol. 2 (Oxfrod 1895), p. 71; *Midrash Tehilim—Shoḥer Tov,* Ps. 9, mark 8, S. Buber ed. (New York 1947), p. 85: "Seleucus built Seleucia"; *Yalkut Shim'oni* (see n. 44) to Psalms 9, mark 643.

310 bKiddushin 66a; bBerakhot 48a; bSotah 47a; bSanhedrin 107b.

311 bSanhedrin 19a. The scholars who accept the versions of the Babylonian Talmud as historical testimony on the massacre of sages by Jannaeus tend also to rely on the confused scholia explanation, e.g., E.E. Urbach, "Ha-Derasha ke-Yesod ha-Halakha u-Vaayot ha-Sofrim," *Tarbiẓ* 27 (1958): 175.

312 Menahem b. Zerah, *Tzedah la-Derekh,* Levi Moshe Labin ed. (Lemberg 1859), p. 137; a fourteenth century work.

313 Lichtenstein (see n. 293), p. 347.

brother Bukius, and they fled from him and went to Syria, and in the country of Belecus all the local people gathered to kill them, and the Holy One blessed be He sent a great earthquake on them, and there was a great blow among them." The surviving sages are not identified here either, nor is their fate at all clarified, but the mysterious Bukinus and Bukius are introduced, with no indication of why or from where. The pair were perhaps pulled out of the company of "Bukion-Mukion," well-known clowns,[314] simply to variegate the pallid play. It is only useful to exemplify the quality of the commentary with its variable forms worked over and reversed by its redactors.

2. Another link in the chain of such scholia explanations enlarges even more on the hatred for Jannaeus. The Scroll notes two holidays that are completely obscure: "on the seventh of it (Kislev)" and "on the second of Shevat a holiday and no mourning." The commentary couples them.[315] According to it, the first is "the day Herod died, for Herod hated Israel." The second is related to Jannaeus' death: "And why did they differ from each other, that in the first it is not written "no mourning' and in this one it is? For on the first Herod died, and on this one King Jannaeus died... They said when King Jannaeus fell ill he sent to seize seventy elders of the elders of Israel. He had them taken and fettered in prison and ordered the prison warden, With my death kill those elders, so when Israel is happy they will mourn their masters. They said he had a good wife, named Shalminon.[316] When he died she removed his ring from his hand and sent it to the prison warden. She said to him, Your master in a dream released those elders. He released them and they went to their homes. And afterwards she said King Jannaeus was dead. The day when King Jannaeus died they made a holiday."

The monstrous deed is mentioned in Josephus, but there credited to Herod rather than Jannaeus.[317] Surrounded by hatred King Herod feared toward the end of his life that the Jews would rejoice at the news of his death and gaily celebrate the day. He therefore ordered the notables from all corners of the land to be gathered in the Jericho hippodrome, imprisoned, and slain immediately after his death, but before it was announced, in order to spread sorrow and anguish in the land and cause lamentations to be heard at the time of his funeral. His sister Salome and her husband, the executors of his will, prevented the implementation of the deed by claiming that the king had changed his mind.

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[314] bAvodah Zarah 18b.

[315] Lichtenstein (see n. 293), pp. 271f., 293f.; 339, 343. According to the usual version (but not the Parma MS) both have the addition: "It is a joy before God when the iniquitous depart from the world," etc.

[316] The Parma MS has "Queen Shlomenzon," evidently a garble of "Shlomzion." This version lacks the affair of the ring. The Oxford MS skips the whole episode, and has: (The day) "when King Jannaeus died, there was joy before God in the destruction of the iniquitous." The rest of the versions, minor ones, contain no meaningful differences.

[317] *Bell.* I 659ff.; I 666; II 28; *Ant.* XVII 173ff.; XVII 193f.; XVII 233.

They released the prisoners and only then announced his death. That story was widely told in the atmosphere of tension, anxiety and intrigue toward the end of Herod's reign. It evidently embodies an actual fact: the imprisonment of notables in Jericho, for punishment and vengeance, or to hold hostages and prevent future uprisings.[318]

From that the author of the description drew the story, perhaps via some version of Josippon, merged two holidays noted in the Scroll and assigned the horror to Jannaeus since he was coupled with Herod.[319] The "seventy elders" were probably meant to evoke the Great Sanhedrin.[320] Instead of Herod's sister Salome, Shalminon-Shlomzion was inserted and the king's ring confided to her, as in the legend about Ben Shataḥ and Jannaeus[321] with his wife. The criminal command has no connection with Jannaeus and does not fit the circumstances of his death, even in Josephus' hostile description.[322] The explanation of the seventh of Kislev does not fit either, for Herod died a short time before Passover.[323] Consequently researchers have decided almost unanimously that the original version of the story was preserved by Josephus.[324] And yet there are many wasting their time trying to extract a grain of historical truth from the total collapse of the refuted commentary.[325]

3. "On the twenty-eighth of Tevet the assembly ("Kenishta") sat in judgement."[326] The Scroll does not explain the nature and operations of the

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[318] W. Otto, "Herodes," *PW-RE,* Suppl. II (1913), p. 144; J. Wellhausen, *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte*[9], (Berlin 1958), p. 325; E. Schürer, New English Version (see n. 2 above), vol. 1, p. 325ff.

[319] According to the Book of Josippon (Flusser ed., p. 261; see n. 98 above), "Shlomit" releases the prisoners. Then a mass meeting takes place at which "Ptolemy the King's slave" exhibits Herod's ring in order to carry out the latter's wishes in regard to the inheritance. The idea of holiday and joy at the despot's death is perhaps rooted in Herod's words, as he fears "the Jews will celebrate my death" (*Bell.* I 660). The story was possibly publicized through Josippon, written in the tenth century, and since then widely distributed throughout the Jewish world, or through some similar version.

[320] mSanhedrin I 6.

[321] In nn. 44, 45, 50 above.

[322] The story does not really fit the atmosphere of Shlomzion's rule, as noted above at the end of Sections D and E.

[323] Josephus, *Bell.* II 10; *Ant.* XVII 213.

[324] But A. Schalit (*Hordus ha-Melekh,* p. 319) believes that "the historical value of the two stories is about equal." He mistakenly asserts that the explanation is "in the Talmud" without providing any examination or analysis. In the revised German edition of his book Schalit again equates Josephus' version with the medieval one as though the latter were written and sealed in the Talmud. See A. Schalit, *König Herodes,* p. 641: "was der Talmud über den König Jannäus berichtet"; see n. 210 above.

[325] E. Schürer, *Geschichte* (see n. 2 above), vol. 1^4, p. 417; H. Graetz, *Geschichte* (see n. 2), vol. 3^3, pp. 606, 609; J. Derenbourg, *Essai* (see n. 2), p. 101; H. Lichtenstein, "Die Fastenrolle," pp. 271f., 293ff.

[326] H. Lichtenstein (see n. 293), pp. 297f., 321, 342f. In the Aramaic original (and in Aramaic translations of the Bible), *Kenishta* corresponds to Hebrew *edah,* "community" or "congregation." Variants are as usual listed in parentheses and slight differences ignored.

assembly. The scholium for this festive date has Jannaeus and his wife confronting Simeon b. Shataḥ at a session of the Sanhedrin: "When the Sadducees sat in the Sanhedrin, King Jannaeus and Queen Shalminon sitting with him, and no one of Israel sitting with them except Simeon b. Shataḥ, and they asked responses and Halakhot and they did not know how to bring proof from the Torah. Simeon b. Shataḥ said to them, Whoever knows how to bring proof from the Torah is fit to sit in the Sanhedrin (and whoever does not know to bring proof from the Torah is not worthy to sit in the Sanhedrin). Once some matter was put to them and they did not know how to bring proof from the Torah, except one elder who prattled and said, Give me time and tomorrow I will reply. He gave him time, he went and sat by himself, and as he saw that he did not know how to bring proof from the Torah was ashamed to come and sit in the Sanhedrin. And Simeon b. Shataḥ placed one of the pupils in his place. He said to them, there are no less than seventy-one in the Sanhedrin. And he did this to them every day until all of them left (and a Sanhedrin of Israel sat). And the day that the Sanhedrin of Sadducees left (and the Sanhedrin of Israel sat) they made a holiday."

This amusing comedy is uncontaminated by any bit of historical fact. The Parma manuscript does not involve Jannaeus and his wife in that assembly,[327] while the Oxford manuscript reduces its importance to that of a Small Sanhedrin,[328] but the main contents remain unchanged. Simeon b. Shataḥ sits solitary in a Sanhedrin of Sadducees, uncovers their disgraceful ignorance, lightly removes them in order to seat his pupils there unhindered. And there is no outburst or protest. There are no facts in the entertaining story, nor any genuine elements. The author made little use of his fertile imagination. The sorry picture of "one elder who prattled" representing the ignorance and stupidity of the Sadducees was dug out of the Babylonian Talmud, and recurs in a series of explanations: "Rabban Yoḥanan b. Zakkai attacked them and said, Fools, where do you get this from, and there was nobody who answered him except one elder who prattled at him"[329] Ben Shataḥ overcomes the Sadducees as Ben Zakkai does, but no definite argument is mentioned and the subject of the controversy remains floating in the air. This, pale, hollow copy is recognizably empty. The shameful flight of the shamed rivals unable to find proof from the

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[327] He has "Because the Sadducees always sat in the Sanhedrin and did not know how to bring proof..." etc. The verses (in parentheses above) describing as "the Sanhedrin of Israel" only the Sanhedrin that was purged of Sadducees are also missing in the Parma MS.

[328] "For in the days of King Jannaeus and Queen Shalzion they sat and there was only Simeon b. Shataḥ with them and he brought (some) of his disciples until it filled up, and they asked questions and Halakhot and they didn't know what to answer. They sent and brought Simeon b. Shataḥ and he brought of his disciples till the Sanhedrin was filled with twenty-three." See above n. 320.

[329] bMenaḥot 65a; bBava Batra 115b versus yBava Batra VIII 16a; see also in bMenaḥot 64b a similar misleading "elder."

Torah was also extracted from a Babylonian Talmud story which provides an erroneous explanation for another holiday in the Scroll of Fasting:[330] "Gaviha b. Pesisa... said to them, where are you bringing proof from? They said to him, From the Torah... They said to him, Give us three days time. He gave them time, they checked and did not find an answer, and immediately fled." That mixture in this commentary describing a Sadducee Sanhedrin with Ben Shataḥ in it thus contains not the thinnest thread of any firm historical testimony.[331]

4. A series of several scholia explanations was cast in the same mould borrowed from the Babylonian Talmud. In a discussion on the Feast of Weeks, on the inheritance of "the son with the son's daughter," and on a meal offering in addition to the animal sacrifice, there always appears "one elder" as a prattling spokesman for stupid Sadducees to demonstrate their ignorance, for they have no idea of the Torah and Rabbi Yoḥanan b. Zakkai quickly defeats them with little effort.[332] A similar style, though with some variation and without Ben Zakkai or the garrulous elder, is evident in the explanation of a festive date: "On the fourth of Tammuz the book of decrees was canceled.[333] Because a book of decrees was written and laid before the Sadducees, those who are to be stoned, and those who are to be burned, and those who are to be killed (by the sword) and those who are to be strangled. And when they wrote (sat) and a person asked and he was shown (and went and saw) in the book, he said to them, From where (do you know) that this one deserves stoning, and that one burning, and that killing, and that one requires strangling? And they did not know how to bring proof from the Torah...[334] The day it was canceled they made a holiday."

This imaginary "book of decrees" was "written and laid down," in the words of the Babylonian Talmud, "as the Scroll of Fasting was written and laid

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330 "On the twenty-fifth (of Sivan) the tax collectors left Judaea and Jerusalem." The Babylonian Talmud (Sanhedrin 91a) links the erroneous explanation to that occasion, as does *Yalkut Shim'oni* (see n. 44 above), to the Torah, mark 110. Without this mistake, and unconnected to the Scroll of Fasting, Genesis Rabbah LXI 7, p. 666ff., in the Theodor-Albeck ed. (see n. 44), presents the legend from the time of Alexander the Great according to an earlier Eretz Israel version.

331 The participation of Pharisee sages in a Sadducee Sanhedrin is not mentioned in any ancient talmudic testimony, but only in the New Testament (Acts 5:34; 23:6). The Babylonian Talmud does have a "court of Sadducees" (bSanhedrin 52b) noted by Rav Joseph, but the Jerusalem Talmud (ySanhedrin VII 24b) does not have any mention of it.

332 H. Lichtenstein, "Fastenrolle" (see n. 293 above), pp. 276, 298, 324f., 334 (two explanations), 338. The references are listed in n. 329 above. Contrary to the Babylonian Talmud (Bava Batra 115b), the Jerusalem Talmud says nothing about a garrulous prattling "elder" nor does it list the date of the Pharisee victory over the Sadducees in the dispute on the daughter's inheritance (yBava Batra VIII 16a). Again here, the superiority of the Eretz Israel talmudic tradition is clear.

333 H. Lichtenstein, "Fastenrolle" (see n. 293), pp. 295ff., 319, 331. In the MSS the text was evidently garbled or changed: "on the fourteenth" or "on the tenth" of Tammuz. A large part of the scholium explanation is missing in the Parma MS.

334 The Parma MS ends: "But a book of decrees was written and laid before them." The Oxford MS omits the list of the four types of execution and says. "For the Boethusians wrote Halakhot in a book and (when) a person asked they showed him the book."

down."[335] Four kinds of death sentences were listed in it exactly according to the clear, explicit mishnaic Halakhot.[336] The commentator did not hesitate to build a Sadducee criminal code on the pure talmudic foundation. He was not disturbed by the question of how it was that the Sadducees operated according to their rivals' system, including even death by strangling which was based on the Oral Law and therefore invalid in their view.[337] In the prevailing version, with the exception of the Parma manuscript, the scholium explanation includes two further points: "Sages said to them, As it is written,[338] you shall act according to the instructions given you[339]... this shows that Halakhot should not be written in a book. Another view, (on) the book of decrees, that the Boethusians used to say, 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth... spread out the cloth before the elders of the town,' should be taken as written,"[340] However, the writing of Halakhot is forbidden in the Talmud without any relation to Sadducee objections to such practice.[341] The arguments that "an eye for an eye literally" and "spread out the cloth," or spitting in face, "should be taken as written," according to the Talmud, are not stated by Sadducees or Boethusians.[342] The commentator took them from there to base upon them his unfounded contention that the vanished "book of decrees" was the Sadducee code of laws, and that its abolition was the reason for consecrating the holiday in the Scroll.[343]

That series of scholia explanations was produced according to hackneyed models and conventional reasons. Their sparse content combines a mosaic of mixed passages taken from the Babylonian Talmud or composed following their patterns, mostly mingled in an artificial compound, and arranged for the sake of

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335 bEruvin 62b. See n. 146 above.

336 mSanhedrin VII 1ff.

337 Ch. Albeck, *Shishah Sidrei Mishnah, Seder Nezikin* (Jerusalem 1953), p. 456; A. Büchler, "Die Todesstrafen der Bibel und der jüdisch-nachbiblischen Zeit," *MGWJ* 50 (1906): 539ff.

338 Oxford MS: "For it is already said (Ex. 34:27) that according to those things I made a convenant with you and Israel..."

339 Deut. 17:11.

340 Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 22:17. In addition, "She will spit in his face (Deut. 25:9), "that she should spit in his face..." Minor differences between versions have been ignored.

341 bGittin 60b; bTemurah 14b; yMegillah IV 74d; yḤagigah I 76d; yPe'ah II 17a; J.N. Epstein, *Mavo le-Nusaḥ ha-Mishnah* (Jerusalem 1948), p. 695ff.; idem, *Mevo'ot le-Sifrut ha-Tana'im* (Jerusalem 1957), p. 17. The confused scholium explanation provides no grounds for the assumption (in n. 146 above) that the question of writing down the Halakhot was the main bone of contention between Pharisees and Sadducees.

342 bBava Kamma 84a; bKetubbot 46a; yKetubbot IV 28c; *Sifrei* to Deut., mark 237, Ish-Shalom (M. Friedmann, New York 1948). The debate on spitting involved in *ḥalitza* (see n. 340 above) is indicated in bYevamot 106b, *Sifrei* to Deut., mark 291.

343 Opinions and conclusions based on these hollow explanations are unfounded, empty and valueless, despite the various assumptions and speculations regarding the legal codex of the Sadducees in the Hasmonean period, e.g., H. Lichtenstein, "Fastenrolle" (see n. 293 above), p. 297f.; L. Finkelstein, *The Pharisees,* vol. 2^3 (Philadelphia 1962), p. 814ff.; E. Schürer (see n. 2), New English Version, vol. 1, p. 77.

infirm interpretation and empty assumptions. Not a single excerpt or paragraph contains any independent testimony that is historically genuine and original in nature. To the talmudic reports were attached only imaginative additions and faulty combinations. We may take the liberty of doubting whether there were ever holidays celebrating victory over the Sadducees and the eradication of their ways, since none were recorded in the talmudic tradition of Eretz Israel. In any case, no confirmation and no support exists for the theories that attribute a series of such holidays to the Hasmonean period. The ancient Scroll itself contains no echo of any internal controversy and no sound of any dispute with Boethusians or Sadducees. It reports only the achievements and successes of the time, with no reservations or suggestions of dissension. Only unfounded fancies gave rise to the strange notion of holidays to perpetuate feelings of hostility and revenge against King Jannaeus and celebrate times of discord in the life of the nation. The additional scholia commentaries abound in signs of their remoteness and detachment from the realities of Second Temple days. They exhibit a high degree of confusion while their contribution to the clarification of the events and problems during the period of Simeon b. Shataḥ and King Jannaeus, which prima facie seems quite insignificant, is actually nothing at all.

I. *Conclusion*

The demarcation line dividing the Scroll of Fasting, notable for its antiquity and inherent value, from the collection of scholia commentaries appended to it, almost approximates the line dividing the main areas of the talmudic works. These units are not isolated and detached for their basic components generally intermesh. Yet even in a brief cursory survey from the historical point of view a conspicuous difference is discernible between the various talmudic branches depending on their habitat and the soil they are rooted in. The ancestral heritage of the Hasids and Pharisee fellowships, evolving from the Second Temple days until it was cast in a finished artistic pattern, ultimately bifurcated and flowed into two main channels. Memories and stories from the Ben Shataḥ era and from the generations near him, though not always completed and unadulterated, still retained their freshness in the land of birth of the Zugot ("Pairs") and the other revered teachers, among the latter's disciples and successors.

That Eretz Israel tradition culminating in the Mishnah, the Jerusalem Talmud, and related midrashic works, is not alien or hostile to the Hasmoneans, notwithstanding the erroneous opinions disseminated by various exegetic schools. It harbors no suggestion of basic antagonism or a wide gap between the Pharisee leadership and the Hasmonean government.[344] On the contrary, the Hasmoneans are generally admired, and John Hyrcanus I is respected. Even

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[344] The problem is dealt with in Chapter 1 above.

Jannaeus, the dangerous despot, is accorded a ray of light and favor by the Eretz Israel legends, devoid of gloom or venom.[345] Simeon b. Shataḥ frequents his palace, dines at his table and attends his parties. Jannaeus listens to his pronouncements, complies with his demands, does not despise the Torah or neglect its precepts. A passing dispute is set aside in a conciliatory atmosphere. The straightforward naive style and genuine background, as well as the delineation of the figures and deeds in the illuminating story which has no external parallel and remains unique, all these point to its having been drawn from the ancient fountain of popular, genuine and deep-rooted tradition.

The stories and legends about Ben Shataḥ and King Jannaeus were expanded in the Babylonian Talmud.[346] The depiction of the period was ostensibly varied and enriched, but a careful examination reveals the inferior worth, defects and weaknesses of the Babylonian Talmud version. The memories of the Hasmonean period were damaged in their travels from Eretz Israel to Babylonia, along hidden paths in the various stages of Babylonian redaction. Later strata were piled on and versions with dubious suppositions and superfluous additions were grafted on. At times external influences were absorbed which obscured and flawed the original foundation. Tales were diluted and cut. Testimonies were confused and mutilated, at times to the point where their meanings were distorted. The mixture is discernible in the presentation of the personages and the garbling of events. The fate and conduct of Ben Shataḥ and his fellows with their dilemmas and perplexities were not clarified any more than in earlier versions. Evil, unrestrained tyranny was exemplified by Jannaeus. The murder of masses of Pharisees and the sins of others were attached to his crimes. All these horrors and nightmares do not appear in the internal main, pure talmudic tradition of Eretz Israel.[347] But neither does the Babylonian Talmud itself show unequivocal censure, extreme negation or total animosity to the rule of the Hasmoneans, or their political or priestly prerogatives and authority.

Many scholars are inclined in this matter to prefer the Babylonian Talmud because of its transparent, relative connection to near and similar descriptions in Josephus, for in that case many opportunities emerge to stress points of contact and base on them a synthesized, coordinated method for solving the

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[345] The explanation is in Section B above, However, there should be no belittling of the significance of the internal controversy between the aristocratic Sadducees, aspiring to limit Torah laws to a restricted area, and the Pharisees, successors to the Hasids of the Hasmonean Revolt period, who desire legislative and judicial authority for their leadership regarding Torah laws which in their view included also the oral tradition in popular, democratic, broad and dynamic sense.

[346] The analysis is in Section C and E above.

[347] This is not of course primary historical testimony, complete and accurate, arranged and already sealed in the Hasmonean period, but there is no reason to disparage its significance and the essence of its memories. In Chapter 7 we return to the fundamental questions and the conclusions deriving from basic methodological distinctions between the main branches of talmudic traditions.

fundamental questions of the period. After a careful detailed analysis, however, the illusion that the Babylonian Talmud actually presents an original testimony in confirmation of Josephus collapses. The Babylonian Talmud does not provide independent authority drawn from ancient tradition, but in fact actually absorbed some sporadic fragments from Josephus' work, though apparently indirectly. Its version displays signs of being secondary, as becomes evident when its components are disassembled. Its weaknesses and flaws reveal the mixture of supplements inserted and forced into it, and the extent of its dependence on and subservience to external sources.

Josephus' double presentation, in his two great works, is uniform neither in composition nor contents.[348] It is based primarily on foreign historiography, abounding in hatred for the Hasmonean government, and hostile to the zealous religiosity of Jewish Hasidism. This results in an indifference to and alienation from crucial movements and trends in the history of the nation, and consequently the accomplishments and way of life of Judah b. Tabai and Simeon b. Shataḥ are completely missing. Josephus generally restricts his observations to the narrow confines of developments in the political arena. A comparison of his two versions, however, shows that *Antiquities* does contain a scattered group of a few typical genuine folk tales, clearly different from the adjacent chapters, which in appearance and nature resemble and follow the early talmudic tradition. Among them is the story of the rift during John Hyrcanus' reign, for instance, with the conciliatory spirit enveloping the distressing occurrence, as in the Jerusalem Talmud story about Ben Shataḥ and his clash with Jannaeus, despite the stormy controversy whose echoes had not yet faded.

Historical criticism in the study of talmudic sources, based on a systematic discrimination of its branches and types according to their provenance and time and requiring a particular methodic approach and suitable means, proceeds along a distinct path and leads to new results. In its wake, however, comes even more resolute confirmation of the viewpoint of the late Gedalyahu Alon and his objections to the regnant view of Phariseeism and Jewish Hasidism during the Hasmonean period.[349] Ben Shataḥ and his group did not entrench themselves behind blind walls of petrified religious sectarianism, breathing enmity to their country and hoping for its collapse, praying for humiliating subjection and groveling at the feet of a foreign conqueror. The great Pharisee leader, faithful son of the early Hasids, was part and parcel of his people,[350] implementing

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[348] The Josephus versions are discussed in Section D above.

[349] G. Alon, *Meḥkarim be-Toldot Yisrael,* vol. 1 (Tel Aviv 1957), p. 15ff.

[350] Simeon b. Shataḥ worked with linen according to the Eretz Israel legend (yBava Metzia II 8c). His ancestor's craft is perhaps hinted at in the name "Ben Shataḥ" derived from the root שטח (=to spread) as flax is spread out to dry. The term in other contexts occurs also elsewhere in the talmudic

criminal law and determining its principles according to the Torah and justice.[351] He unhesitatingly removes a den of iniquity from his country,[352] issues rulings in favor of strengthening marriage ties, and for the wider dissemination of education in the nation.[353] His proud figure emerges from an anthology of sayings, tales, and authoritative ordinances, including legislative or judicial acts. His ramified energetic activity exemplifies the true favorable attitude of the Pharisees in his generation.[354] Their hidden world, with the reflection of their deeds and remnants of their thoughts, is all compressed into a modest legacy of early memories which their heirs and disciples preserved in their homeland, where the venerated forefathers and teachers were born and raised.

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literature (mTohorot VIII 3; mMegillah III 3; yShabbat VII 10a). The word שטיח (=rug) also derives from that root (mKelim XXIV 12; XXVI 5). Simeon b. Shataḥ portrays an ideal figure of the Pharisee-Hasidic leadership which emerged from extensive strata of the people, mostly simple farmers or craftsmen in villages and townlets, since the Hasmonean Revolt. It is not by chance that Shemaiah, who learned Torah from him, teaches love of labor (mAvot I 10). Craftsmen are mentioned also among the disciples of Shemaiah and Avtalion (mEduyot I 3). This continuous chain show the type and social character of these Pharisee leaders, as opposed to the aristocratic scribes typical of earlier times, as described in Ben Sira XXXVIII 24ff., ed. M.Z. Segal (Jerusalem 1953).

[351] mAvot I 9; ySanhedrin IV 22b; ySanhedrin VI 23b; bḤagigah 16b; bMakkot 5b; bSanhedrin 37b; bShevuot 34a; tSanhedrin VI 6, VIII 3; *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael,* Mishpatim, 20 (Horovitz-Rabin ed., Jerusalem 1960), p. 327. See Chapter 7, n. 30 below.

[352] mSanhedrin VI 4; yḤagigah II 77d ff.; ySanhedrin VI 23c. Ashkelon was the cradle of the cult of Ashtoret-Astarte, the goddess of fertility, since antiquity: Herodotus (see n. 105 above) I 105; Diodorus Siculus II 4 (*LCL*), ed. C.H. Oldfather, vol. 1 (London 1946). This is the background of Ben Shataḥ's aggressive action, impelled by the zealotist piety that characterizes early Phariseeism of the Hasmonean period. Ben Shataḥ's action and its purposes are hinted at in the Jerusalem Talmud legend (yḤagigah II 77bff.; ySanhedrin VI 23c) despite folkloristic and imaginary features. The fact that the city of Ashkelon was not conquered by the Jews and remained an enclave surrounded by Jewish territory explains Ben Shataḥ's adamant desire to uproot the potentially dangerous nest of idolatry there, although the circumstances, nature and consequences cannot be defined exactly.

[353] yKetubbot VIII 32c; bKetubbot 82b (Shabbat 14b, 16b); tKetubbot XII 1. The preferability of the Eretz Israel tradition is here once again apparent, in comparison with the parallel versions. The ruling for the formulation of the law on the marriage contract (ketubba) like that on compulsory education (see n. 243 above) fit in with the reform tendencies of the Pharisees in that period, and there is no reason or justification for doubting its veracity.

[354] Study of the early talmudic sources contradicts and completely refutes (as does the study of the Daniel visions and the Books of the Maccabees) the prevalent theories adopted in many modern schools. The Pharisees sometimes took an opposing position in internal controversy in clashes and quarrels around religious, political and social questions. But they did not deny the legitimacy of the state, its security and the rule of the Hasmoneans. No ancient verified historical testimony disqualifies the Hasmoneans from serving in the high priesthood (see n. 15 in the Preface) or from reigning because of an exclusive right reserved for the House of David. Nothing is said against them in favor of the sons of Zadok or any other priestly dynasty, aside from apocalyptic delusions and hollow speculative opinions. John Hyrcanus himself was suspect, because his mother was falsely rumored to have been a captive making his lineage therefore defective, but the accusation does not question the fitness of his entire family to serve as priests. A discussion of the questions connected with the declining period of the Hasmonean government and the hypotheses based on pseudepigraphic writings will provide further clarification.

CHAPTER SIX

THE PSALMS OF SOLOMON, THE HASMONEAN DECLINE AND CHRISTIANITY

A. *The Roots and Solution of the Problem*

Only a small number of reports and testimonies have come down from the latter days of the Hasmonean kingdom. The store has seemingly been enriched because of the tendency to ascribe various pseudepigraphic writings to that period. Among those books, which were discovered from Christian treasures, the *Psalms of Solomon* is of outstanding importance.[1] More than a century ago, there was established a scholarly method that explains this collection of poems against the background of the Roman invasion of Eretz Israel and the end of Jewish independence. According to that conception, the *Psalms* sound the emotional response of Jewish pietists to the corruption and death agony of the Hasmonean kingdom, to Pompey's campaign in the country and his death on the Egyptian shore. The anonymous poet himself supposedly observes the stormy events, mourns the tragedy of his people and expresses the thoughts of sincere believers. His remonstrance berates his generation of sinners and justifies the judgement against ailing Jerusalem, his wrath strikes the leaders and masses of the nation, and his prayer pleads for the grace of God and swift salvation. This interpretation has prevailed to the present day with hardly any objections.[2] In its wake, the meager collection has been raised to the rank of primary, original, Eretz Israel testimony, of great value for the history of the Second Temple period. Although there are differences between various schools and individual scholars, the basic approach setting the time, provenance and significance of

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[1] The first version of this study was published in *Ẓion* 30 (1965): 1–46, and dedicated to my teacher and mentor Professor Yitzḥak (I.F.) Baer. A verified critical edition of the Greek source was published by Oscar v. Gebhardt, *Die Psalmen Salomo's TUGAL* XIII 2 (Leipzig 1895); A. Rahlfs, *Septuaginta,* vol. 2 (Stuttgart 1950), p. 471ff. See also R.R. Hann, *The Manuscript History of the Psalms of Solomon* (Chico Calif. 1982).

[2] M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten* (Leiden 1961), p. 20ff.; E. Bickerman, *From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees* (New York 1962), p. 176f.; A. Jaubert, *La Notion d'Alliance dans le Judaïsme* (Paris 1963), p. 253ff.; D.S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (London 1964), pp. 26, 57ff.; R. Meyer, *Tradition und Neuschöpfung im antiken Judentum* (Berlin 1965), p. 73; J. Schüpphaus, *Die Psalmen Salomos* (Leiden 1977); S. Holm-Nielsen, "Die Psalmen Salomos," *JSHRZ* IV 2, p. 51ff. (Gütersloh 1977); G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah* (Philadelphia 1981), p. 203ff. This stand has been adopted also by Soviet scholars such as J.A. Lentzman, *Proiskhozhdenie Khristianstva* (Moscow 1960), p. 104; G.M. Lifshitz, *Proiskhozhdenie Khristianstva v Svete Rukopisei Mertvogo Morya* (Minsk 1967), p. 116ff.

these *Psalms* in the late Hasmonean period has not been contradicted. A reexamination of the subject from the critical historical viewpoint, however, reveals the vulnerability of the prevalent method to the point of invalidating its conclusions.

A superficial survey of the work shows it to consist of eighteen poems, constructed and arranged in the style and rhythm of biblical psalms. They are titled, as the biblical psalms are, and ascribed to King Solomon. The concepts and idioms are rooted in the biblical period with no deviation or divergence. The poetry is enveloped in ancient Hebrew features and wrapped in mystery. The series of lamentations, entreaties and thanksgivings emit echoes of a cryptic happening, replete with riddles and wonders, which is not described in full or in logical order but in broken lines on a darkened stage. Its development is strange, its heroes anonymous and its meanings veiled. Some tyrant, whose identity is unknown, invades the country, enters Jerusalem. A tranquil, complacent but immoral city welcomes him joyfully and suddenly suffers a cruel blow. It fills up with killings and destruction, its people are dragged into exile and its territory becomes a wasteland. A terrible calamity was decreed because of its iniquities, for in it crimes were committed by the wicked and perverse, the sacrilegious and licentious, who usurped the glory of the kingdom, ruined the throne of David and expelled its adherents. A remnant of the pious escape the holocaust, roam about, wander in the desert and await salvation. The end of the enemy ruler is already on the horizon, like a defeated dragon on the mountains of Egypt.

Woven into a purely biblical fabric, these scenes lack clear chronological dimensions and genuine background delineations. The order and the connections between the poems seem tenuous. Isolated pictures emerge, are cut off, and resumed. The stream of prayers, hopes, lamentations and exhortations flows in a sinuous channel abounding in fluctutations, reversals, breaches and omissions. Yet the artistic and ideological unity of the work is not shattered. Its beginning, middle and end express the main point: the destruction of Jerusalem and the fate of its inhabitants. It is around this central theme that its poems revolve, overflowing with faith, heralding restoration for the righteous and annihilation for the wicked. The drama ends with a hymn to the Messiah of the House of David, miraculous and noble, purified of all sin and taught by God, who will destroy all evil, exterminate the wicked with his word, have compassion for the accompanying nations, and implant the tribes of his sanctified people in his territory.

The patent contents of the *Psalms of Solomon* evinces no definite or particular signs of the Hasmonean period. Nor did they in antiquity acquire any testimony on belonging to a Hebrew work, or being connected with the Second Temple period. Not the slightest hint of their existence appears in Jewish heritage. They were preserved on the edges of the Christian tradition, among the dubious apocryphal books composed in the form of biblical literature, and so classified

in the catalogues of the Greek Bibles.[3] At the end of the index of the Codex Alexandrinus (the fifth-century manuscript of the Septuagint) they were listed after the New Testament and the Clementine letters.[4] The early famous Church Fathers (such as Origen and Eusebius) did not record them, although others mentioned apocryphal books attributed to Solomon, without indicating their nature. The church synod in Laodicea (about 360 C.E.) forbade the public reading of psalms that were not admitted into the canon and, according to the attached explanation, among them were the *Psalms of Solomon.*[5] They were not widely distributed with the eastern church, and only a limited quantity of copies remain in partial manuscripts of the Greek Bible.

They were not known in western countries until modern times. The first edition based on a single manuscript, was printed in 1626 by Juan Luis De La Cerda, a Spanish Jesuit scholar, who provided explanations and a translation in Latin.[6] That version, with notes added, was published in 1713 by Johann Albert Fabricius as part of a comprehensive pseudepigraphic series.[7] The discovery aroused immediate speculations and dilemmas. The first editor, while eager to believe that the poems were original and ancient, did not conceal his doubts. It was possible, he argued, that some anonymous scribe wished to get King Solomon talking and compile his lyrics, but this should not be considered a deception, nor the work of a heretic or of a Jew (leaving only a Christian) for these psalms support the Christian faith against the Jews.[8]

The skeptical attitude waxed already in the seventeenth century as a few scholars, like the first editor, discerned a Christian tone in the *Psalms of Solomon.* At least two even suggested a definite Christian origin but gained no support.[9] Petrus Daniel Huetius denied their antiquity and Solomon's authorship. They were written, in his view, by an educated Hellenistic Jew, originally in Greek, incorporating idioms and phrases from the Septuagint. Many elements were drawn from the Bible, particularly from Psalms, Isaiah and

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[3] Athanasius (Dubia), *Synopsis Scripturae Sacrae, PG* 28, col. 432; Nicephorus Patriarcha, *Chronographia Brevis, PG* 100, col. 1057.

[4] H.B. Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek,* vol. 3 (Cambridge 1894), p. 282.

[5] W. Beveregius, *Synodikon* (Oxford 1672), p. 480f.; Th. Balsamon et J. Zonaras, *Canones Synodi Laodicenae, PG* 137, col. 1420; M. Blastares, *Syntagma Alphabeticum, PG* 144, col. 1144.

[6] J.L. De La Cerda, S.J., *Adversaria Sacra* (Lyons 1626).

[7] J.A. Fabricius, *Codex Pseudepigraphus Veteris Testamenti* (Hamburg & Leipzig 1713), 914ff., 917ff.

[8] De La Cerda, p. 16: "Non credo fuisse otium alicuius haeretici meditantis, ut solent, corruptionem alicuius dogmatis, neque Judaei, cum potius quae de Christo canit, nostram religionem adversus Judaeos firment." Negative conclusions were presented by L. Ferrandus, *Liber Psalmorum* (Paris 1683), p. 112ff.

[9] J.E. Nierembergius, *De Origine Sacrae Scripturae* IX 38 (Lyons 1641), p. 339ff.; G. Janenskius, *De Psalterio Salomonis,* a dissertation published in 1687 and printed in J.G. Neumannus, *Primitiae Dissertationum Academicarum,* No. 8 (Wittenberg 1700), p. 274ff.

Ezekiel. They were not composed before the first century C.E. because the Church Fathers had no knowledge of them. Their Messianism is in harmony with the Israelite prophets and Jewish beliefs, and does not bear the stamp of Christianity. Thereafter, the prevailing view rejected the authorship of King Solomon or a Christian poet, and confirmed the Jewish nature of these *Psalms*. There was a growing inclination to date their composition to the time of the destruction of the Second Temple and later.[10]

Signs of the Hasmonean period were not discerned in the *Psalms* till the middle of the nineteenth century. The turning point came in 1847 when the German scholar F.K.(C.) Movers proposed explaining them against the background of the events around Pompey's invasion and the rise of the Herodian dynasty. The cruel foe bursting calmly into Jerusalem is identified with Pompey, whose miserable death years later on the Egyptian coast is described in the metaphor of the dragon, who expires "on the mountains of Egypt." The poet expresses the feelings of a faithful Jew of that time and censures the alien Herod who usurped the kingdom. The Hebrew work was translated into Greek, and mistakenly attributed to King Solomon.[11]

The new solution gained vigorous support.[12] Gradually, the voices denying a Hebrew origin faded out entirely. At the same time an inclination developed to confine the composition of the collection to Pompey's time and not extend it to the accession of Herod, since the author was thought to be referring to the Hasmoneans when he condemned the coveters of kingship and destroyers of the throne of David.[13] There was a small dissenting group that preferred to explain the poems against the background of Antiochus Epiphanes' persecutions and the Hasmonean Revolt. The last vehement representative of that group, Wilhelm Frankenberg, pointed out some weaknesses in the Pompeian identification and dating: the foe's entrance into Jerusalem in a joyful atmosphere accords better with the circumstances of Antiochus' arrival than with Pompey's. Also sacrilege and the defilement of the altar are characteristic

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[10] P.D. Huetius, *Demonstratio Evangelica*[4] (Leipzig 1694), p. 397ff.; J.H.G. Carpzov, *Introductio ad Libros Canonicos Bibliorum Veteris Testamenti Omnes*, vol. 1[2] (Leipzig 1727), p. 124ff.; R. Ceillier, *Histoire Générale des Auteurs Sacrés et Ecclésiastiques*, vol. 1 (Paris 1729), p. 233f.; A. Calmet, *Prolegomena et dissertationes in omnes et singulos Sacrae Scripturae libros*, vol. 1 (Venice 1734), p. 276; K.G. Bretschneider, *Die historisch-dogmatische Auslegung des Neuen Testaments* (Leipzig 1806), p. 121; E.T. Bengel, *Opuscula Academica* (Hamburg 1834), p. 394ff.

[11] F.C. Movers, "Apokryphen-Literatur," *Kirchenlexikon*, ed. H.J. Wetzer & B. Welte (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1847), vol. 1, p. 340; ibid., vol. 1[2] (1882), p. 1060ff.

[12] F. Delitzsch, *Commentar über den Psalter*, vol. 2 (Leipzig 1860), p. 381; Th. Keim, *Geschichte Jesu von Nazara*, vol. 1 (Zurich 1867), p. 243.

[13] J. Langen, *Das Judenthum in Palästina zur Zeit Christi* (Freiburg 1866), p. 64ff.; A. Hilgenfeld, *Messias Judaeorum* (Leipzig 1869), p. XIff.; A. Carrière, *De Psalterio Salomonis* (Strasbourg 1870); O.F. Fritzsche, *Libri Apocryphi Veteris Testamenti-Graece* (Leipzig 1871), Praefatio, p. XXV; E.E. Geiger, *Der Psalter Salomo's* (Augsburg 1871); M. Vernes, *Histoire des idées messianiques* (Paris 1874), p. 122ff.

of the Hellenizers rather than of the Hasmoneans. But these conclusions and reservations went unheeded.[14]

The victorious method was refined by Julius Wellhausen, and in his *Die Pharisäer und die Sadducäer* was presented as one of the basic points of his thesis.[15] The *Psalms of Solomon* for him had great importance for they encompassed a genuine ancient expression of Jewish Phariseeism from the time of Pompey's campaigns. Talmudic recollections of the period, on the other hand, reflect only a flawed post-Destruction rabbinical tradition. The nature of the Pharisees is indicated in Josephus, the New Testament and certain apocryphal books. That religious movement, in Wellhausen's view, had no inclination for Jewish political independence, objected to the very existence of the Hasmonean kingdom, and adopted a hostile stand on it from start to finish.[16] The movement did not even hesitate to demand and strive for subjugation, as it contended that only foreign rule made possible the introduction of a proper theocratic constitution. During the Hasmonean Revolt itself the Hasids supposedly left Judas Maccabaeus' camp when freedom of religion had been attained and the struggle then focused on political independence.[17] Their Pharisee successors did not relax their hostility until the hated kingdom was destroyed. They welcomed the Roman conqueror joyfully, and it is their philosophy that inspires the *Psalms of Solomon.* With these conclusions, Wellhausen refined the work of his predecessors into a firm method. A few years earlier, Ferdinand Hitzig had still maintained that the *Psalms* bore signs of Sadduceeism[18] because of their harsh criticism of "flatterers" and hypocrites (*Ps. Sol.* IV) which had a stylistic resemblance to the censure of "Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites" in the New Testament (Matt. 23:23), but all doubts and perplexities quickly vanished under Wellhausen's influence and authority.

The *Psalms of Solomon* were thus deemed qualified to serve as a reliable source providing a view of the inner world of the Pharisees during the Hasmonean period. That notion was implanted in scholarly thinking and became an established scholarly thesis. A tremendous number of scholars and researchers accepted it and spread it throughout the world.[19] Ryle and James contributed

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[14] H. Ewald, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel,* vol. 4[2] (Göttingen 1864), p. 343ff; K.L.W. Grimm, *Das erste Buch der Maccabäer* (Leipzig 1853), p. XXVII; W. Frankenberg, *Die Datierung der Psalmen Salomos, BZAW* 1 (Giessen 1896).

[15] J. Wellhausen, *Die Pharisäer und die Sadducäer*[2] (Hanover, 1924—first ed. Greifswald 1874), pp. 112ff.; 131ff.

[16] Opposed to this view is G. Alon, *Meḥkarim be-Toldot Yisrael,* vol. 1 (Tel Aviv 1957), p. 26ff.

[17] Criticism of these views and conclusions appears above in Chapter 1.

[18] F. Hitzig, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel,* vol. 2 (Leipzig 1869), p. 502.

[19] J. Drummond, *The Jewish Messiah* (London 1877), p. 133ff.; W.J. Deane, *Pseudepigrapha* (Edinburgh 1891), p. 25ff.; R. Kittel, "Die Psalmen Salomos," in *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments,* ed. E. Kautzsch, vol. 2 (Tübingen 1900), p. 127ff.; A. Bertholet, "Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen," in K. Budde, *Geschichte der althebräischen*

greatly to its establishment through their accurate, annotated edition which they entitled *The Pharisee Psalms.* Although they discerned and even stressed that the Messianism supposedly intoned by Solomon was very close to the Christian faith, that proximity evoked not the shadow of a doubt.[20] Some help in studying the *Psalms* was provided by the discovery and printing of a Syriac version, apparently translated from the Greek,[21] which is combined with an additional group of *Odes of Solomon* which are clearly Christian in character. Hopes of finding a Hebrew substructure in the Syriac were dashed.[22] These facts did not, however, produce any astonishment or change. The prevailing view gained the support of Emil Schürer's expertise. It also had the concurrence of Robert Henry Charles, that great scholar of pseudepigraphic and apocalyptic literature.[23] The same spirit breathes in the French Catholic edition, abounding in exegesis, by Viteau, who completed the work of Ryle and James, pointed out many parallels between the cryptic *Psalms* and the New Testament, and showed how broad the plane of kinship between their two spheres was.[24]

Jewish scholars generally followed the lead of their Christian colleagues. The lone voice of Heinrich Graetz protested at first and noted the Christian nature of the pseudo-Solomonic *Psalms* but his stand weakened and his objections to the regnant view receded. In the third edition of his great work he retreated and inserted these *Psalms* among the apocrypha like the Books of Judith and Tobit where there is no way to decide whether the source was Hebrew or Greek.[25] Evidently his skepticism did not entirely disappear, for he did not include the collection in his historical review. Abraham Geiger minimized its value and avoided dating it, although he agreed it was a Hebrew source from the Second

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Literatur (Leipzig 1906), p. 363ff.; E.E. Renan, *Histoire du peuple d'Israël,* vol. 5 (Paris 1907/1909), pp. 151, 317; A. Smirnov, *Messianskiya ozhidania i verovania Iudeev okolo vremen Iisusa Khrista* (Kazan 1899), p. 66ff.

[20] H.E. Ryle & M.R. James, Ψαλμοὶ Σολομῶντος — *Psalms of the Pharisees* (Cambridge 1891).

[21] J.R. Harris & A. Mingana, *The Odes and Psalms of Solomon,* 2 vols. (Manchester 1916/1920 — first ed. Cambridge 1909). A new revised version of the Syriac text is provided by W. Baars, "Psalms of Solomon," *The Old Testament in Syriac,* Part IV 6, ed. The Peshitta Institute (Leiden 1972). For technical reasons the quotations from the Syriac given below appear in Hebrew transliteration.

[22] J. Begrich, "Der Text der Psalmen Salomos," *ZNW* 38 (1939): 131ff. versus K.G. Kuhn, *Die älteste Textgestalt der Psalmen Salomos* (Stuttgart 1937). See also J.L. Trafton, *A Critical Evaluation of the Syriac Version of the Psalms of Solomon,* Duke Univ. (Durham N.C. 1981).

[23] E. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi,* vol. 3⁴ (Leipzig 1909), p. 205ff.; R.H. Charles, *Eschatology*² (New York 1963, repr. of 1913 ed.), p. 267ff.; G.B. Gray, "The Psalms of Solomon," in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English,* ed. R.H. Charles, vol. 2 (Oxford 1913), p. 625ff.

[24] J. Viteau, *Les Psaumes de Salomon* (Paris 1911). In the wake of Ryle-James, Viteau too finds in these psalms praiseworthy Jewish Pharisaic pietism that paves the way for Christianity, sounding notes very similar to those of gospel hymns (e.g. Luke 1:46ff., 68ff.; 2:29ff.) or to John's Revelation, and is marked by profound conceptual and notional connection with the New Testament.

[25] H. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden,* vol. 3 (Leipzig 1856), p. 489; vol. 3² (Leipzig 1863), p. 439; vol. 3³ (Leipzig 1878), p. 621.

Temple period expressing loyalty to the aims of the Davidian dynasty and estrangement from the ruling priesthood.[26]

Israel Lévi enthusiastically seconded Wellhausen's method, and supported his contention that the poet was familiar with synagogue prayers, by a comparison with the eighteen blessings, though he minimized the virtues of the Torah and the praiseworthiness of those studying it because he belonged to a particular group of lay Pharisees that was inimical to the higher priesthood and avoided all "rabbinical scholastics." Israel Abrahams concurred in this approach and added his conjecture that the ancient source was forgotten when the eighteen blessings took its place.[27] The *Psalms* played a vital role in Adolf-Abraham Büchler's study, which purported to depict the nature of Hasidism in the Eretz Israel of the time, and refuted the Christian claims that it fostered only ceremonial rituals and not pure morality, for the anonymous poet, a contemporary of Ḥoni Ha-Me'aggel (the Circle-Drawer), stresses the obligation of pure-heartedness, prayer and fasting, rather than offerings and detailed precepts.[28] These views were well-absorbed into the consciousness of Jewish scholars;[29] fine explicated Hebrew translations designed to reconstruct the lost original spread the dominant conception quite widely.[30] Only the representatives of religious conservatism (like Isaac Halevy and Zeev Yavetz) disregarded them completely. A very few others expressed tentative reservations or strayed a bit off the path.[31]

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[26] A. Geiger, "Aus Briefen," *Jüdische Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft und Leben* VI (Breslau 1868), p. 240.

[27] I. Lévi, "Les dix-huit bénédictions et les Psaumes de Salomon," *REJ* 32 (1896): 161ff.; I. Abrahams, "The Psalms of Solomon," *JQR* IX (1897): 539ff; idem, *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels,* vol. 1 (Cambridge 1917), p. 136.

[28] A. Büchler, *Types of Jewish Palestinian Piety* (London 1922), p. 128ff.; idem, "Sphragis in Psalm Salomo's II 6," *JQR* XV (1903): 115ff.; idem, "Eine eigentümliche Einzelheit des Astartedienstes in den Psalmen Salomos," *Vierteljahrschrift für Bibelkunde,* I (1903/1904), p. 1ff. On Honi's piety see in mTa'anit III 8. The Babylonian Talmud (ad loc.) legend is of course inferior to the Jerusalem Talmud (ad loc.) version. Josephus (*Antiquities* XIV 22ff.) refers to this ancient popular legend about Onias (Ḥoni), who was renowned as a godly and righteous man, because in a time of severe drought he implored God to send rain and his request was immediately granted; see n. 39 and the end of n. 41 below. See also Chapter 5, n. 142.

[29] V. Aptowitzer, *Parteipolitik der Hasmonäerzeit* (Vienna 1927), p. 43ff.; U. Cassuto, *Storia della letteratura ebraica postbiblica* (Florence 1938), p. 12; M. Aberbach, "The Historical Allusions of Chapters IV, XI and XIII of the Psalms of Solomon," *JQR* n.s. 41 (1950/51): 379ff.; J. Klausner, *Historia shel-ha-Bayit ha-Sheni,* vol. 3 (Jerusalem 1950), p. 228ff.; G. Alon, *Meḥkarim* (see n. 16 above), vol. 1, p. 30; Y.(J.) Kaufmann, "Ben-David ha-Nigleh u-ven-David ha-Nistar," *Molad* 16 (1958): 201ff.; J. Liver, *Toldot Bet David* (Jerusalem 1959), p. 141ff.; A. Schalit, *Hordus ha-Melekh* (Jerusalem 1960), pp. 61, 160, 228ff.; idem, *König Herodes* (Berlin 1969), pp. 37, 100, 270, 463, 471, 541, 681, 738f.; B.Z. Lurie, *Megillat Ta'anit* (Jerusalem 1964), p. 29.

[30] A.S. Kamenetzky, "Tehilot Shelomoh", *Ha-Shiloaḥ* 13 (1904): 43ff.; 149ff.; M. Stein, "Mizmorei Shelomoh" in A. Kahana, *Ha-Sefarim ha-Ḥitzonim,* vol. 1 (Tel Aviv 1937), p. 431ff.; E.S. Hartom, *Ha-Sefarim ha-Ḥitzonim, Ketuvim Aḥaronim* (Tel Aviv 1962), p. 131ff.

[31] P. Churgin, *Meḥkarim bi-Tekufat Bayit Sheni* (New York 1949), p. 68ff.; B.Z. Katz, *Perushim, Tzedukim, Kana'im, Notzrim* (Tel Aviv 1947), p. 93ff.; Ch. Tchernowitz-Rav Tza'ir, *Toldot ha-*

The *Psalms of Solomon* thus became a firm basis for the study of the Hasmonean period with all its aspects and manifestations. That notion has taken root in recent generations and is still widely predominant.[32] Some differences have arisen here and there on collateral and even substantive problems, such as in repeated attempts to ascribe certain verses to Herod's time for the purpose of dealing with some troublesome questions,[33] or to propose a combined redaction of the collection,[34] or to seek its origin within a particular group of pietists or zealots rather than define it only as a Pharisee work.[35] The tendency to pinpoint its origin more specifically grew in the wake of the considerations of and speculations about the Dead Sea Scrolls which were found to embody some points of contact and kinship with the *Psalms*. These were construed to prove a common development from the base of a Jewish Hasidism that retired in Hasmonean times from the political arena and was steeped in abstract messianic expectations.[36] It has even been proposed that the *Psalms of Solomon* along with other apocryphal or pseudepigraphic works (e.g. the Books of Enoch and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs) should be added to the treasury of the Judaean Desert or Qumran Sect.[37] These proposals have not however effected any fundamental change or undermined the base of the regnant method.

Halakha, vol. 4 (New York 1950), p. 133; S. Zeitlin, *The Rise and Fall of the Judaean State,* vol. 2 (Philadelphia 1967), p. 346; vol. 3 (1978), pp. 133, 330.

[32] F.C. Burkitt, *Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (London 1914), p. 37; E. Meyer, *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums,* vol. 2 (Berlin 1921), p. 315; J.B. Frey, *De Libris Apocryphis* (Rome 1925), p. 90; W. Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums* (Tübingen 1926), p. 57ff.; M.J. Lagrange, *Le Judaïsme avant Jésus* (Paris 1931), p. 149ff.; G.F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era,* vol. 1 (Cambridge, Mass. 1932), p. 180ff.; H.L. Jansen, *Die Spätjüdische Psalmendichtung* (Oslo 1937), p. 4ff.; F.M. Abel, *Histoire de la Palestine,* vol. 1 (Paris 1952), p. 258ff.; H.H. Rowley, *The Relevance of Apocalyptic*[2] (London 1950), p. 71ff.; idem, *Jewish Apocalyptic and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London 1957), p. 15ff.; E. Stauffer, *Jerusalem und Rom im Zeitalter Jesu Christi* (Bern 1957), p. 79; A.S. van der Woude, *Die messianischen Vorstellungen der Gemeinde von Qumran* (Assen 1957), p. 231ff.; A. Penna, *La religione di Israele* (Brescia 1958), p. 244.

[33] A. Schlatter, *Geschichte Israels*[3] (Stuttgart 1925), pp. 144, 245ff.; M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten* (Leiden 1961), p. 328.

[34] P. Volz, *Die Eschatologie der jüdischen Gemeinde im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* (Tübingen 1934), p. 26f.

[35] A. Causse, *Les Pauvres d'Israël* (Strasbourg 1922), p. 147ff.; A. v. Gall, Βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ (Heidelberg 1926), pp. 265, 353; R.T. Herford, *Talmud and Apocrypha* (London 1933), p. 260; A. Bentzen, *Introduction to the Old Testament,* vol. 2 (Copenhagen 1948), p. 239.

[36] O. Eissfeldt, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*[2] (Tübingen 1956), p. 754ff.; D. Howlett, *The Essenes and Christianity* (New York 1957), p. 98; J. O'Dell, "The Religious Background of the Psalms of Solomon," *RQ* v. 3 (1961): 241ff. Already many years ago it was suggested that the author of the Psalms of Solomon belonged to a pietist group not of the Pharisees but of the first Essenes: J. Girbal, *Essai sur les Psaumes de Salomon* (Toulouse 1887). He was completely identified with the Essenes by J.E.H. Thomson, *Books Which Influenced Our Lord* (Edinburgh 1891), pp. 268ff., 423ff.

[37] A. Dupont-Sommer, *Nouveaux aperçus sur les manuscrits de la Mer Morte* (Paris 1953), p. 63; M. Philonenko, *Pseudépigraphes de l'Ancien Testament et Manuscrits de la Mer Morte* (Paris 1967), p. 17ff.

B. *Pompey's Campaign in Eretz Israel*

To what extent is the story in the *Psalms of Solomon* explicable, and how are its riddles solved in the light of the supposed background of the Hasmonean decline and Pompey's expeditions? An affirmative answer constitutes the basic hypothesis of the prevalent conception; a denial destroys the foundation and collapses the whole structure. Before making a decision let us review the circumstances and consequences of the Roman invasion as reflected in lucid historical testimony.

Greek and Roman reports retain only a few sentences about Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem, incidental to his expeditions to the east and his victories.[38] In general, their tone is admiring of the Roman general and hostile to his foes. Although errors and contradictions sometimes crept in, the historical facts remained clear and firm: Pompey invaded Eretz Israel at the time of an internal disagreement, met with strong opposition, laid a heavy siege on the Temple Mount, took advantage of the religious restrictions of his opponents and captured their citadel on the Sabbath ("a fast day" in Strabo's mistaken view), entered the Temple area but did not harm the inner sanctum or the treasures (contrary to Cassius Dio), destroyed the city walls, exiled Aristobulus and entrusted the government to John Hyrcanus II, imposed Roman rule on the Jewish state and diminished its territory. Josephus alone reports the course of events in detail. His first version appears in *Jewish War* and his second, expanded and amended, in *Jewish Antiquities*.[39] The double presentation makes it possible to clarify additional necessary aspects.

A civil war had split and agitated the Hasmonean kingdom some time before the Roman troops overran the country. At first the younger Aristobulus vanquished the first-born Hyrcanus and took over the kingdom, but his enemies neither despaired nor relaxed. Antipater the Idumaean fanned the flame, exhorting Hyrcanus to flee to Aretas the Arab Nabataean prince and ask his help. Under the pressure of Nabataean forces Aristobulus was compelled to entrench himself in Jerusalem. By then Pompey had already overcome

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[38] Cicero, *Speeches,* "Pro Flacco", 67 (*LCL*), ed. L.E. Lord (London 1964); Tacitus, *Histories,* V 9 (*LCL*), ed. C.H. Moore, vol. 2 (London 1951); Appian, *Roman History* XI (8), 50; XII (16) 106, (17) 117 (*LCL*), ed. H. White, vol. 2 (London 1955); Livy, *Periochae* 102 (*LCL*), ed. A.C. Schlesinger (London 1959); Florus, *Epitoma* I 40. 30 (*LCL*), ed. E.S. Forster (London 1960); Pliny, *Natural History,* VII (26) 98 (*LCL*), ed. H. Rackham (London 1961); Plutarch, *Lives,* Pompey 39; 45 (*LCL*), ed. B. Perrin, vol. 5 (London 1961); Strabo, *Geography* XVI 2.28 ff. (*LCL*), ed. H.L. Jones, vol. 7 (London 1954); Pompeius Trogus, *Historiae Philippicae,* Prologus Libri 39; Justinus, *Historiarum Philippicarum Epitoma* XL 2, ed. O. Seel (Stuttgart 1972); Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 37. 15 ff. (*LCL*), ed. E. Cary, vol. 3 (London 1954); E. Schürer, *Geschichte* (see n. 23 above), vol. 1^4 (1901), p. 291 ff.; idem, New English Version, by G. Vermes and F. Millar, vol. 1 (Edinburgh 1973), p. 233 ff.

[39] *Bell.* I 120 ff.; *Ant.* XIV 4 ff. See n. 83 of Chapter 5 above on editions of Josephus.

Mithridates of Pontus and defeated the Armenian Tigranes. Scaurus was assigned to command the army in Syria, and the two rival factions appealed to him for help. Scaurus decided in favor of Aristobulus and his menacing warning persuaded the Nabataeans to retreat. Jerusalem breathed easy and Aristobulus defeated his foes.

In the meantime Pompey arrived in Damascus. Both John Hyrcanus and Aristobulus looked to him for support. Aristobulus wasted no time and hastened to buy his favor with a costly present. On orders of the Roman general, the rivals reported to him and a disputation took place. Aristobulus exhibited excessive pride and gained no success. Pompey censured the violence Aristobulus' foes had accused him of, but refrained from making a clear choice, demanded restraint and expressed a desire to proceed to Eretz Israel after his actions against the Nabataeans, and reach a decision in situ. Aristobulus was distrustful and disobeyed, left the Roman camp apparently in order to prepare for the possible confrontation. Pompey was angry and swiftly crossed the frontier of Judaea with his legions and auxiliary troops. Friends convinced Aristobulus not to risk war, but to go forth to meet Pompey. Following exhausting negotiations he was obliged to abandon citadels and retreat to Jerusalem in order to repel the invader. Pompey pursued him swiftly, without delay. In the end Aristobulus became alarmed, appeared before the Roman general, promised to provide money and to surrender the capital, but his people refused to implement his undertakings. Pompey was enraged, imprisoned Aristobulus, and prepared his troops for an assault.

In turbulent Jerusalem the population split and confusion ensued. The threat of the great foe increased the strength of those favoring surrender, adherents of Hyrcanus' faction. Aristobulus' followers entrenched themselves on Temple Mount, and their rivals opened the city gates for the conqueror. Bitter fighting broke out around the mountain citadel and Hyrcanus' supporters extended help to the enemy. Of even greater help were the Sabbath restrictions for, according to Josephus (who relied on a dubious non-Jewish version), the practice then was only to repulse attacks, and the defenders did not prevent the enemy from raising a battery, erecting towers, and bringing up weapons. In the third month of the siege the walls were breached and the Jewish stronghold crumbled. The conqueror burst into the Temple area, his troops slaughtered cruelly and had no mercy for the priests serving in their sanctuary who did not cease their worship in the face of death. Pompey advanced into the Holy of Holies with his retinue, paying no attention to the law prohibiting the entrance of foreigners, but refrained from sacking or touching the treasures. The next day he generously ordered the purification of the Temple and the resumption of rituals. The men responsible for the defense were executed, and outstanding Roman warriors were rewarded with gifts. Aristobulus and his family were exiled to Italy, and Hyrcanus was given the high priesthood, but not the royal crown, and ruled

henceforth as a Roman vassal. The Jewish state, humbled and clipped, bereft of large chunks of its territory, was now under Roman sovereignty.

In the relevant chapter, Josephus reveals his sources and bases himself on Strabo, Nicolaus and Livy. The fundamental substrucure is the same in his two versions, and in the opinion of many scholars rests mainly on the work of Nicolaus of Damascus, who was friendly with Herod's family. On this, in the expanded *Jewish Antiquities* version, were grafted corrections, marginal testimonies and various additions.[40] Although their exact provenance cannot always be defined, they too generally bear a foreign stamp. The nature of the picture in Josephus in thus obvious. The struggle for the existence of the Jewish state is enveloped in a frosty atmosphere. No flaw is found in Roman intervention and the suppression of Jewish independence. In the battles for Jerusalem the memory of the Jewish warriors is not perpetuated nor their names mentioned, while outstanding Roman officers are listed. Aristobulus and his faction are presented in a negative light, but Hyrcanus is not given much love or admiration. An aura of nobility surrounds Pompey, Antipater is characterized as wise and resourceful, while Hyrcanus is weak and despicable and Aristobulus arrogant and rash. Inner divisions, folk institutions, or national and religious aspirations within the Jewish people are almost entirely disregarded.

A common view couples the Pharisees with Hyrcanus against Aristobulus' Sadducee front. However, the Pharisees were never mentioned even once in debates, discussions and clashes. No historical testimony states that they fully supported Hyrcanus after he fell into the trap of Antipater the Idumaean who promoted the Nabataean attack on Jerusalem and paved the way for Roman intervention. In fact, a single precious vestige of popular tradition totally contradicts that view, as several scholars have noted. The illuminating tale included in *Jewish Antiquities* (XIV 19 ff.), describes the great distress at the time of the Nabataean incursion and assault on Jerusalem, presents the admirable figure of Onias, the talmudic Ḥoni Ha-Me'aggel (the Circle-Drawer), inscribed in early memories, castigates Hyrcanus' people who murdered the said saint (because he refused to curse their Jewish opponents) and added insult to injury through a blatant violation of a treaty with the besieged and the appropriation of money allotted for offerings. Aristobulus' cohorts were not accused of such iniquities, but described as including priests concerned with the precepts and religious duties. The representative par excellence of Jewish pietism at the time,

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[40] E. Schürer, *Geschichte* (see n. 38), vol. 1^4, p. 82ff.; G. Hölscher, "Josephus," *PW-RE,* vol. 9 (1916), p. 1944ff.; R. Laqueur, *Der jüdische Historiker Flavius Josephus* (Giessen 1920), p. 129ff.; H. St.J. Thackeray, *Josephus the Man and the Historian* (New York 1967—repr. of 1929 ed.), p. 40ff.; R.J.H. Shutt, *Studies in Josephus* (London 1961), p. 84ff.; B.Z. Wacholder, *Nicolaus of Damascus* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1962). See Section D in Chapter 5 above for an analysis of Josephus' sources and his two versions.

Ḥoni, refuses to curse them, and under the pressure of threats voices a prayer for the well-being of his divided people. A pejorative tone regarding the Hyrcanus faction echoes as well in a related Babylonian Talmud legend.[41]

A sharp declaration against the Hasmonean kingdom's right to exist was supposedly voiced by the "nation" in the course of the proceedings before Pompey in Damascus. According to Josephus the "nation" itself inveighs against the two vying brothers and demands the cancelation of royal rule since ancestral tradition requires obedience to the priests, and these two rivals, although offspring of priests, aspire to alter the government and subjugate the people. The "nation" appears and disappears with equal suddenness. It is not clear how it made its voice heard in Damascus and what anonymous entity spoke in its name. The solitary verse was suddenly inserted and remained without any reasonable sequel or additional elucidation. Why is the irate "nation" wrapped in a thick fog? Where was this detached report absorbed, and what channels did it advance through?

The same information emerges also from testimony in Diodorus Siculus (first century B.C.) that was preserved in a copied, fragmented form.[42] According to him, a large delegation of more than two hundred notables applied to Pompey in Damascus when Hyrcanus and Aristobolus were litigating before him, and complained about them both. The forefathers of the two, the complaint stated, dispatched a mission to the Senate and obtained "the leadership of the Jews, free and autonomous, without royal status, not a king, but a high priest ruling the people." Their descendants violated the ancestral laws and with violence, murders, by means of mercenaries, enslaved the citizens. Pompey postponed his

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[41] bSotah 49b; bBava Kamma 82b; bMenaḥot 64b; G. Alon, *Meḥkarim* (see n. 29 above), vol. 1, p. 34. Original testimony was not preserved in that legend. Hyrcanus' men did not send fit animals to the altar but put a pig on top of the city wall, according to that story, and the whole country was shocked. In an Eretz Israel version (yBerakhot IV 7b; yTa'anit IV 68c) the Romans put a pig on top of the Jerusalem wall (similar circumstances), and consequently the daily sacrifices, during the siege before the destruction of the Temple, ceased. In view of solid clear testimony, both non-Jewish and Jewish, the pig symbolized Rome in the generation around the time of the destruction; see E. Schürer, *Geschichte,* vol. 1^4 (see n. 38), p. 700, n. 150; idem, New English Version (ibid.), vol. 1, p. 554, n. 185; S. Krauss, *Paras ve-Romi ba-Talmud u-va-Midrashim* (Jerusalem 1948), p. 178; Genesis Rabbah LXV 1, *Midrash Bereshit Rabbah,* p. 713 in the Theodor-Albeck ed. (Jerusalem 1965), etc. The Babylonian Talmud pulls the pig story up by its roots and shifts it to the siege (known directly or indirectly from Josephus) in the war of the Hasmonean brothers. Rulings on forbidding "Greek wisdom" (in contrast to mSotah IX 14; ySotah IX 24c), on the raising of pigs (mBava Kamma VII 7), and on the precept of the *omer* (mMenaḥot X 2; yShekalim V 48d) are erroneously attached to the event and indicate the confusion in the Babylonian Talmud version. Its dubious quality and absorption of external elements is shown also by the Greek names (Aristobulus and Hyrcanus), of the rival brothers, compared to the purely Hebrew ones Yoḥanan/John, Yannai/Jannaeus and Shlomẓion, usual for the Hasmoneans in the principal talmudic tradition. Onias-Ḥoni (see n. 28 above) presented by Josephus is not mentioned in this talmudic legend.

[42] Josephus, *Ant.* XIV 41; Diodorus Siculus XL 2 (*LCL*), ed. F.R. Walton, vol. 12 (London 1967); F.R. Walton, "Notes on Diodorus," *AJPh* 77 (1956): 408ff.; Th. Fischer, "Zum jüdischen Verfassungsstreit vor Pompeius," *ZDPV* 91 (1975): 46ff.

decision on the actual controversy, but scolded Hyrcanus and his followers because of the "iniquities of the Jews and the transgressions against the Romans." Although he deemed them deserving of harsh punishment, he pardoned them with traditional Roman clemency on the condition that thenceforth they mended their ways, and were obedient.

The oration of the Jewish delegation reeks of foreign elements, as does the incense that perfumes Roman justice. The complaint presents the Hasmonean government as though from its inception it was wholly and exclusively dependent on the grace and permission of Rome which was entrusted also with maintaining its internal code of laws. Pompey rebukes its rebellious rulers with mild reprimand, repairs the damage they caused, and expects to restore the legitimate order. His moderate rebuke evokes a number of questions. Why was the docile Hyrcanus scolded and blamed for deeds that did not take place under his rule? And why was obedient behavior demanded of him even before any decision was reached and it was decided to deprive his rival of authority?

Even if gaps are plugged and questions answered, no arrangements will suffice to obscure the obvious intention of this faulty version and remove its alien trappings. A Jewish leadership whose identity and powers are a mystery gives full moral backing to Pompey's actions and decrees in Eretz Israel. Its arguments are based on an ancient code which sanctifies priestly government and opposes a kingly one. Diodorus also notes that before dealing with Pompey's war and victory against the Jews, he wishes to explain the establishment and nature of that code:[43] After the exodus from Egypt, Moses led his people to settle in the land of Judaea, planted his Law there, founded Jerusalem and the Temple, instituted rituals and state regulations, assigned justice and government to priests. "Consequently the Jews never have a king," and the authority is always given to the high priest. Diodorus took his survey from Hecataeus of Abdera's book[44] in order to explain the Jewish institutions and way of life at the time of Pompey's campaigns.

An ancient Jewish code stipulating an exclusively priestly government and absolutely forbidding a kingdom was thus the product of superficial external observation or narrow tendentiousness. A similar picture of a Jewish state in which priestly rule persisted since Moses' period is drawn by Strabo as well.[45]

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[43] Diodorus Siculus XL 3; Th. Reinach, *Textes d'auteurs grecs et romains relatifs au Judaïsme* (Paris 1895—repr. 1963), pp. 14ff.; 76f.; M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism,* vol. 1 (Jerusalem 1974), pp. 26ff.; 185ff.

[44] Yoḥanan (Hans) Levy, *Olamot Nifgashim* (Jerusalem 1960), p. 44ff.; Yehoshua Gutman, *Ha-Sifrut ha-Yehudit ha-Helenistit,* vol. 1 (Jerusalem 1958), p. 39ff. See also B. Bar-Kochva, "Manpower, Economics and Internal Strife in the Hasmonean State," *Armées et Fiscalité dans le Monde Antique,* Colloque National CNRS, no. 936, ed. H. van Effenterre (Paris 1977): 179–181.

[45] This view, which denies the legitimacy of monarchy in Israel from its start, fits Strabo's description exactly (as in n. 38 above). It does not fit the stand of Nicolaus of Damascus, King Herod's friend and advisor, who takes his position against a Jewish delegation (n. 51 below) before

According to him, in the course of time, the priestly elite became decadent, superstitious and corrupt and deteriorated into tyranny. At that point the sinful, predatory Hasmonean kingdom was set up, until it was crushed by Pompey, who swept away the nests of despotism and established justice. It was from these sources that Josephus apparently drew the "nation" whose voice was heard in Damascus, demanding the restoration of priestly government according to its ancestral precepts, and the repudiation of the kingdom. While a certain group of Jews may have issued some such declaration with or without Roman inspiration and assumed the pretentious guise of a national representation, the contents of the declaration obviously flowed through the channels of Roman propaganda, and the grounds it cites are faulty from the Jewish viewpoint.[46] Even if hesitations are set aside and the dubious story accepted, what point is there in blaming the Pharisees? When and where were they enjoined to foster a purely priestly theocracy, as Wellhausen believed, and fight bitterly against any monarchic government in Israel?

The total rejection of monarchy on principle is not supported by authentic internal tradition. According to the laws of the Torah, temporal power is not entrusted to the priests. Biblical literature does not abolish monarchy though there are some fleeting reservations, and the generally favorable attitude to it did not change after the Return to Zion and the spread of Hellenism.[47] In all of talmudic literature there is no illegitimization of monarchy. On the contrary, an important central constitutional role is assigned to monarchy by rabbinical halakhic rulings.[48] Philo sets a king at the head of the ideal state.[49] Nor does

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Augustus Caesar as defender of Archelaus son of Herod who claims the throne. In the same chapter Josephus quotes Strabo but sometimes couples him (*Ant.* XIV 35, 68, 104) with Nicolaus. Because of Josephus' style of paraphrase and his tendency to merge his sources (as above, Chapter 5, n. 140) it is very hard to demarcate a precise line and, in the absence of a specific attribution, determine to what extent Strabo's version is combined with the excerpt discussed.

[46] M. Gelzer, *Pompeius*[2] (Munich 1949), p. 112ff.; A. Ormerod & M. Cary, "Rome and the East," *CAH,* vol. IX (1951): 382; F. Miltner, "Pompeius," *PW-RE,* vol. 21 (1952): 2062ff.; J. van Ooteghem, *Pompée le Grand Bâtisseur d'Empire* (Brussels 1954), p. 231ff.; E. Bammel, "Die Neuordnung des Pompeius," *ZDPV* 75 (1959): 76ff.; V. Burr, "Rom und Judäa im ersten Jahrhundert v. Chr.," *ANRW* I, 1 (1972): 878ff.; R. Seager, *Pompey* (Oxford 1979), p. 50ff.; P. Greenhalgh, *Pompey — The Roman Alexander* (London 1980), p. 133ff.

[47] Y. Kaufmann, *Toldot ha-Emunah ha-Yisr'elit,* vol. 1 (Jerusalem 1953), pp. 138ff, 686ff.; vol. 2, pp. 159ff.; 371ff.; J. Liver, "Melekh," *EM,* vol. 4 (1962), p. 1080ff.; S. Japhet, *Emunot ve-Dei'ot be-Sefer Divrei ha-Yamim* (Jerusalem 1977), p. 334ff.; *Ecclesiasticus-Ben Sira* XLVI 13, ed. M.Z. Segal, *Sefer Ben-Sira* (Jerusalem 1953).

[48] mSanhedrin II 2ff.; mSotah VII 8; mShevuot II 2; mHorayot II 5ff.; III 3; mYoma VII 5, etc. This favorable approach figures also in the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds on the same Halakhot. The same is true of *Sifrei* to Deuteronomy, mark 156ff.; M. Ish Shalom (M. Friedmann) ed. (New York 1948).

[49] Philo, *De Specialibus Legibus* IV (30) 157ff., *Philo* (*LCL*), ed. F.H. Colson, vol. 6 (London 1950); ibid. *Vita Mosis* II (1) 2ff., (6) 31ff.; *Legatio ad Gaium* (36) 278, ed. F.H. Colson, vol. 10 (London 1962); J. Heinemann, *Philons griechische und jüdische Bildung* (Breslau 1932), p. 182ff.; S. Belkin, *Philo and the Oral Law* (Cambridge, Mass. 1940), p. 86; H.A. Wolfson, *Philo,* vol. 2 (Cambridge, Mass. 1962), p. 325ff.

Josephus deny the value of monarchy despite various declarations, extolling aristocratic or theocratic regimes, made for apologetic purposes or due to personal inclination.[50] Authority for rejecting monarchy and a close link to the attack on it made in Damascus by the representatives of the "nation" is sometimes seen in the Jewish delegation which appeared before Emperor Augustus, in Rome after Herod's death, in order to deprive the latter's heirs of the succession.[51] But that argument is unfounded, for the delegation in Rome did not claim that monarchy was forbidden and the Jews were required to have a priestly government, but only censured Herod's crimes and his heir's deeds in order to request the dismissal of the Idumaean dynasty. Its complaint does not recall or resemble in the slightest those of the "nation" in the Damascus discussions.

A widely-held view is that opposition to the Hasmonean monarchy developed from loyalty to the mission of the dynasty of David and its exclusive right to wear the royal crown. While that argument is theoretically admissible from the national and religious point of view, it does not fit the contents of the complaint in Damascus, for if monarchy has been disqualified since Moses, and the people is commanded to obey only priestly government, the lofty status of the dynasty of David is nullified. It is possible to imagine various reasons for the anger and ferment aroused at times by the Hasmonean monarchy: its merger with the priesthod, its tyranny and disregard of folk institutions, its adoption of some foreign ceremonials and Hellenistic customs, etc. It is not clear what reactions or differences developed when the Hasmoneans proclaimed the monarchy. In any case, the Hasmoneans were not accused in ancient memories of seeking to replace the House of David and assume the crown of its messianic glory. The book closest to them and extremely admiring, I Maccabees, stresses faith in the eternal mission of the Davidian dynasty.[52] The talmudic tradition does not even once accuse the Hasmoneans of usurpring the throne of David and desecrating his mission. Such a claim was never explicit until the Middle Ages.[53] In the

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[50] *Contra Apionem* II 164ff.; 185ff.; *Ant.* IV 223ff.; VI 36; VI 83ff., 157; VIII 124ff.; IX 106; XI 111; XIII 301; XX 229, 234. On editions of Josephus see Chapter 5, n. 83.

[51] Josephus, *Bell.*, II 80ff.; *Ant.* XVII 300ff., 314. Similar delegations demanding the dissolution of national monarchies and the annexation of their countries to Rome are known from the period and help to give the subjugation by Rome a legitimate, voluntary air, such as: *Ant.* XVIII 53; Tacitus, *Annals* II 42 (*LCL*), ed. J. Jackson (London 1951); D. Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor*, vol. 1, p. 320 (Princeton 1950). Such a delegation appearing in the name of the nation is not entirely impossible before Pompey either, but there is no basis for describing it as Pharisee or as some authorized national representation. No theories can be based on the dubious detached passage that sounds a non-Jewish tone and does not fit in with biblical or talmudic Judaism.

[52] I Macc. II 57, IV 30, ed. W. Kappler, *Maccabaeorum Liber* I (Göttingen 1967); F.M. Abel, *Les Livres des Maccabées* (Paris 1949).

[53] Nahmanides (R-a-m-b-a-n) in his commentary on the Pentateuch in Gen. 49:10, ed. *Mikra'ot Gedolot* (Jerusalem 1955). Cf. also his commentary on Num. 8:2. With no reservations at all, a favorable stand is taken by Maimonides (R-a-m-b-a-m) in *Mishneh Torah*, Sefer Zemanim (3),

talmudic conception, evidently the expectation that the kingdom of David will be re-established does not exclude the formation of a temporary non-Davidic kingdom that may be needed. The Hasmonean kings are sometimes praised and sometimes condemned but the maintenance of their rule or their right to the crown is never questioned.[54] Herod is disqualified because he was "a slave of the Hasmonean dynasty" and not of Israelite descent.[55] Agrippa I succeeded in gaining popular respect, even of the Pharisees, and his position was questioned only because there was some doubt about the purity of his Jewish descent.[56] None of the recollections state or even hint that the Hasmonean monarchy was forbidden in principle because of the exclusive privilege of descendants of David.

This conclusion is confirmed in the relevant passages of Josephus despite the many faults in his versions.[57] The Jewish state which the Hasmoneans were appointed to head was established and built up with the help of the whole people. Nothing is known of any Hasidic movement launching a holy war against its very existence and aspiring to destroy national freedom. The Pharisees figure not as a separatist, exclusive movement but as teachers and guides rooted in the land and fused with the people. For many years John Hyrcanus was their pupil and favorite until he parted from them because of a sorry rift. Even King Jannaeus, cruel and despotic in Josephus' version, orders a rapprochement with the Pharisees at the end of his life and does not fear they will endanger his heir's succession. Queen Alexandra rules with their counsel and leadership. Even in stormy times of protest and unrest they never produced an overt slogan or declaration aiming to destroy the kingdom and undermine its foundations. Their concern and conduct at the time of Pompey's campaigns are not known. One fact is however clear: No historical testimony lists Pharisees and Hasids among Antipater's satellites who defamed their government or were eager to welcome the Roman conqueror.[58]

Hilkhot Megillah ve-Hanukkah III 1; Sefer Shoftim (14), Hilkhot Melakhim I 9, ed. El ha-Mekorot (Jerusalem 1954/57). Nahmanides' basic position, is, however, fundamentally sympathetic towards the Hasmoneans, and apparently related to his dispute with Christianity: see Y. Baer, "Le-Vikoret ha-Vikuḥim" (etc.), *Tarbiẓ* 2 (1931): 175ff.

[54] yBerakhot VII 11b; yNazir V 54b; bBerakhot 48a; bKiddushin 66a; bSanhedrin 19a-b; bGittin 57a; bSotah 49b; bRosh Ha-Shanah 24b; bTa'anit 18b; bMegillah 6a, etc. Priests should not be anointed as kings (yShekalim VI 49d) but this prohibition is purely theoretical and has no connection with Hasmonean rulers, because anointing oil was concealed and all such ceremonies were suspended before the destruction of the First Temple: see Chapter 4, n. 73 and Chapter 7, n. 34.

[55] bBava Batra 3b; bKiddushin 70b. That epithet clarifies (see Chapter 5, Section E) the story about Jannaeus' slave, that is, Herod and his trial.

[56] mSotah VII 8; mBikkurim III 4; yShekalim V 48d; ySotah VII 22a; bSotah 41b; bPesaḥim 64b, 88b, 107b, etc.

[57] *Bell.* I 36ff.; *Ant.* XII 265ff.

[58] Talmudic remembrances and the totality of historical testimonies by no means justify the prevailing claims that on the basis of exclusive rights for descendants of Zadok or David (Chapter 2,

The outcome of the Roman invasion also needs to be clarified. Numerous casualties resulted from the heavy siege and the battles on Temple Mount. Josephus estimated twelve thousand dead. The men in charge of the defense were executed. Aristobulus and his family were ordered into exile, and may have been accompanied by an entourage of captives. No description reports hordes of captives and, in view of the known circumstances, their number should not be exaggerated. Contrived assumptions on a torrent of Jewish captives in the wake of Pompey's campaign are based only on an erroneous construction of the *Psalms of Solomon* and are not verified by an analysis of the facts. Cicero's 59 B.C.E. oration "Pro Flacco",[59] with the rhetorical exaggerations removed, attests only to the presence of a Jewish congregation in Rome. In the same oration he mentions contributions sent to Jerusalem by the Jews of Italy, an indication that the Jewish community had grown there quite a bit earlier. Philo reports that many Jewish captives sold in Rome gained their freedom, but does not say when they left Eretz Israel.[60] Scattered information in Josephus elucidates the circumstances. For decades between Pompey's campaign and the era of Emperor Augustus, Eretz Israel was afflicted by almost continual unrest, rebellions and persecutions, in the wake of which thousands of people were uprooted from their land and sold into slavery. Nowhere, however, is there a mention of any such calamity at the time of Pompey himself.[61]

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n. 55 and Chapter 5, n. 354) Pharisee and Hasid groups denied the legitimacy of the Hasmonean priesthood or monarchy. Refuted above as well are the mistaken views on Pharisee opposition to national goals and Jewish sovereignty in the country. Talmudic warnings against conversions to Judaism for impure or insincere reasons (yKiddushin IV 65b; bYevamot 24b; bAvodah Zarah 3b) contain no reference to the Hasmonean conversion policy. There are no complaints against them either in regard to tendencies toward Hellenization or fondness for the Greeks (see Chapter 5, n. 106). While it is true that the Hasmoneans adopted some Greek names (as did occasionally even the Pharisees like many Jews in the Diaspora) and perhaps some alien manners, they did not build any Greek city (while Herod did) or establish Greek institutions, but rather destroyed them. There is no reason to invent contrived reasons for Pharisee opposition, aside from the reasons for the controversy in Hyrcanus' time when the rulers made a pact with the Sadducee aristocracy so that judicial and public prerogatives of Pharisee teachers and leaders were withdrawn (as clarified in Chapter 7 below).

[59] See n. 38 above; Y.H. Levy, *Olamot Nifgashim* (see n. 44), p. 79ff.; M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors* (see n. 43), vol. 1, p. 193ff.

[60] Philo (see n. 49 above), *Legatio ad Gaium* (23) 155; A. Berliner, *Geschichte der Juden in Rom,* vol. 1 (Frankfurt 1893), 5ff.; H. Vogelstein & P. Rieger, *Geschichte der Juden in Rom,* vol. 1 (Berlin 1896), p. 6; Schürer, *Geschichte* (see n. 23), vol. 3^4, p. 59; H.J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome* (Philadelphia 1960), p. 4ff.; E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule from Pompey to Diocletian* (Leiden 1976), p. 10ff.

[61] Josephus, *Bell.* I 148ff.; 160ff.; *Ant.* XIV 66ff., 82ff.; Pompey as well as Gabinius after him sought to weaken the power of the Jews and restored Hellenistic cities. The ease and speed of the large scale renovation indicate that after their conquests the Hasmoneans had not totally destroyed the cities, but only their autonomous institutions, character and prosperity. The analysis of the testimonies shows that the citizens had no trouble returning to their cities, so that there had not been any mass annihilations or even exiles to distant regions. Neither was the entire Gentile population

Roman sovereignty was imposed on the fragmented and diminished Jewish state. The High Priest Hyrcanus II was granted limited authority, subject to the supervision of the Roman governor in Syria, and to taxation. At his side was Antipater, the influential Idumaean assistant and counselor. Roman troops intermittently overran the country and harassed the population, but no permanent Roman army, officials or guards were stationed in Jerusalem. This fact is clearly brought out by the course of events. In the storm of rebellions and wars that Aristobulus and his sons fought with their supporters, Roman forces with their commanders were summoned from nearby bases. There was no fixed Roman military camp within the Jewish state and no permanent foreign garrison in Jerusalem. The capital did not lose its glory and did not stop being a Jewish center. The Temple stood high on its hill and the ceremonies in it continued. A large Jewish population remained settled throughout the country, and was swept into constant bold uprisings when the banner of freedom was unfurled.

C. *The Mysterious Calamity*

How is the presumed period reflected in the *Psalms of Solomon* and where do indications of it appear? Echoes of a terrible calamity veiled in mystery resound from those lyrics. A holocaust besets Jerusalem and hurls the nation into strange circumstances. Without a clear background, or complete description, or identification of individuals, or specification of time, there emerges a cryptic story, full of secrets and riddles, whose threads intermittently interweave and disappear in the different poems of the series. The various links are not joined in any reasonable discernible order, so that dealing with the poems successively will not avail. Let us therefore first put together the scattered fragments so as to establish the main points of the happening.

In the first *Psalm* Jerusalem speaks, crying in distress to heaven, that "sinners" mistreated it, destroying its illusions that justice reigned within it. Its serenity was abruptly violated because of the crimes of its iniquitous sons: "Their wealth spread to the whole earth and their glory to the end of the earth. They exalted themselves to the stars. They said they would never fall." They committed "their sins in secret.... Their transgressions went beyond those of the heathen before them; they utterly polluted the sanctities of the Lord...."

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forced to convert to Judaism, although in the wake of Judas Maccabaeus and the zealotistic Hasids, the Hasmoneans imposed the Law of the Torah throughout the country, and removed strongholds of idolatry. Still there were evidently conquered areas where the Gentiles were left to their own way of life. A realistic, moderate, cautious policy promoting both colonization and conversion of the local population (see Chapter 5, n. 106) led to the expansion of Jewish settlement. Such a picture emerges from the sources, though vague as to details, and by no means accords with the conclusions prevalent among scholars or the imaginary background shown in the *Psalms of Solomon.*

Psalm II continues describing the catastrophe: "When the sinner waxed proud, with a battering ram he cast down fortified walls" unhindered. "Alien nations ascended Your altar. They trampled it proudly with their shoes because the sons of Jerusalem defiled the sanctities of God, defiled offerings with abominations." Consequently "sons and daughters" were dragged into grievous captivity." "Young and old and their children together" deserved their punishment. Even "the heavens were angry and the earth abhorred them for no man upon it had done what they did." "The enemy set the sons of Jerusalem to be mocked at because of the harlots within it." Prostitution spread in it openly. A just judgement was decreed by heaven. "You have rendered to the sinners according to their deeds... uncovered their sins that Your judgement might be manifest. You have wiped out their memory from the earth."[62] God responds to his entreaties and the poet envisages the eventual end of the wickedness.

Psalm VIII also describes the disaster: "Distress and the sound of war has my ear heard, the sound of a trumpet announcing slaughter and calamity." Jerusalem's sins were revealed, and the judgement vindicated. Every man committed adultery with his neighbor's wife. "They made sworn alliances" to promote such abominations. "A son with his mother and a father with his daughter" befouled themselves in cohabitation. "They plundered the sanctities of God as though there was no redeemer heir, trampled the altar of God with all contamination... left no sin in which they did not surpass the heathen." That was why "he who smites mightily" was sent to burst into Jerusalem" from the edge of the country." "The leaders of the country" went to meet him with joy, greet and make way for him. They "made the rough ways even before his entrance, opened the gates of Jerusalem, crowned its walls." He entered "like a father to his son's home in peace," for God "poured into them a spirit of distortion" and muddled their thoughts. Suddenly the anonymous tyrant struck, seized walls and towers, filled the city with slaughter, "destroyed their leaders and every one wise in counsel," spilled the inhabitants' blood "like libation water, exiled their sons and daughters whom they had borne in defilement." After the storm "pious servants of God" were left among the Gentiles "like innocent lambs." They voiced praise of the Creator and expectation of his favor, that he would gather "the dispersed of Israel." The next *Psalm (IX)* laments the departure of "Israel in exile to a foreign land. In leaving the Lord their redeemer they were ejected from the land that God gave them. The dispersed of Israel are among every people" but divine mercy will not be disappointing.

Psalm XVII censures "the wicked" who "set kingship in place of their haughtiness, destroyed the throne of David," rejected those faithful to him and seized what God had not promised to them. Therefore they were sentenced to

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[62] *Psalms of Solomon* II 17: εξήλειψας τὸ μνημόσυνον αὐτῶν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς. In Syriac: ועטית דוכרנהון מן ארעא. This verse echoes Ex. 17:14 and Deut. 25:19, as does the Syriac version.

humiliation and the eradication "of their seed from the land," by being assaulted by an "alien" person. They were all hunted without mercy "and not one was let alone," when "the wicked one laid waste our land so that none inhabited it,[63] destroying young and old and their children together. In the heat of his anger he sent them away to the west." In Jerusalem itself there was no one "merciful or truthful." Its inhabitants are severely blamed, "for among them there was no one fair or just," neither leaders nor the common people, for "the king was in iniquity and the judge in revolt and the people in sin." The true "lovers of congregations of the pious fled from them," wandered "in the deserts to save their lives," were scattered "over the whole earth" by the "wicked one." The gloomy picture ends with a prayer for the restoration of the son of David, to rule Israel, drive the sinners out of the patrimony, purify Jerusalem "of the heathen trampling" it and gather together "the holy people."

It is in these verses that the prevailing method finds the clear signs of the period of Hasmonean decline and Pompey's campaigns in the country. The Jewish poet, spokesman of the pious, recorded his thoughts at the time of the Roman invasion (in the opinion of some, from the period of Jannaeus on), completing his work after Pompey's death. These delusions, however, evaporate in a careful analysis. Jerusalem did not nap complacently when the fateful battle began. The campaign was preceded by internal quarrels, wars and serious controversies, a Nabataean invasion, a heavy siege of Jerusalem and the intervention of Scaurus. All the "leaders of the country" did not cheer the coming of the Roman general. In the wake of the meeting in Damascus, the danger of a military confrontation already hovered in the air, and Aristobulus prepared to repel the invader. In his advance in Israelite territory, Pompey encountered not calm serenity but a tense and antagonistic attitude that finally erupted into hostilities. The people neither "made the rough ways even before his entrance," nor "crowned walls" or "opened the gates of Jerusalem" when he appeared; part of the city was surrendered to him after an internal struggle and riots. At the same time bitter battles were fought, Jewish forces entrenched themselves on the Temple Mount, and their citadel was taken only three months later. The *Psalms of Solomon* contain not the slightest echo of that cruel war in the heart of Jerusalem, of brave defensive action, or of the devoted priests who died at their posts; they imply that the conqueror entered the city unopposed in a joyous procession.

The aftermath of the calamity as depicted in the pseudonymous *Psalms* does not correspond to the facts either. Pompey neither slayed the leaders and "every one wise in counsels," nor devastated the country nor emptied it of its inhabitants to send them westward. It is true that Aristobulus and his family and

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[63] *Psalms of Solomon* XVII 11-12: Ἠρήμωσεν ὁ ἄνομος τὴν γῆν ἡμῶν ἀπὸ ἐνοικούντων αὐτὴν κτλ. — and the same in the Syriac version.

perhaps a convoy of captives as well were sent to Italy, but no mass deportation was carried out at the time, and outside of Jerusalem no district was harmed. The people of Israel were not "cast away from the inheritance" or led away "into a strange land." That lamentation (*Psalm IX*) is attached to the catastrophe described in the preceding *Psalm*. There is no excuse for detaching it and linking it to the remote Babylonian exile in order to explain a perplexing problem. The expulsion, dispersion, wandering, and expectation of reunion are woven into the same story.

The *Psalms of Solomon* do not reflect Pompey's deeds and behavior: not his position or status, not his political or military measures, not his actual decrees or his real progress. The anonymous "wicked one" or "enemy" does not invade from the near, known Syrian north, but arises from the "end of the earth." Neither his campaigns nor his troops are identified. After his invasion he displays only wild frenzy and perverted arrogance. "His heart was alien to our God, and everything he did in Jerusalem he did like the Gentiles in their cities to their gods."[64] As another version has "like the Gentiles their gods in their cities," Gebhardt, in order to extricate the predominant method from its difficulties, proposed a contrived and superfluous reading; "like the heathen in their cities of strength."[65] According to the Syriac translation Jerusalem itself was accused of doing everything "like the Gentiles in their cities to their gods."[66]

Despite the dubiousness of the version, practices similar to idolatrous customs are suggested. The inscrutable verse is usually construed as condemning Pompey for behavior suitable to a heathen temple and for the audacity to penetrate the Holy of Holies. His entrance there, however, was momentary, and had no serious consequences. The Temple treasures and accessories were not touched, the building was purified the next day and was able to function. How can an isolated sin of the sort be described as "everything he did in Jerusalem?" Why would such unclear generalized terms be applied to a single act? The verse evidently refers to alien religious customs, suggesting that a ritual resembling heathen ceremonies was instituted in Jerusalem. Nothing however is known of such a manifestation, which was in fact impossible during the period in question. The Roman troops bursting into the Temple are indicated, the prevailing view posits, by the "alien nations" who trampled the altar with their shoes (II 2), but this point too is refutable. For while Pompey's troops perhaps desecrated the

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[64] *Psalms of Solomon* XVII 13–14: ...καὶ πάντα, ὅσα ἐποίησεν ἐν Ἰερουσαλήμ, καθὼς καὶ τὰ ἔθνη ἐν ταῖς πόλεσι τοῖς θεοῖς αὐτῶν.

[65] τοὺς θεοὺς—τοῦ σθένους αὐτῶν. O. Gebhardt, *Die Psalmen Salomo's* (see n. 1 above), p. 85. The correction seems to make possible the Pompeian dating and identification, but is not confirmed in any manuscript: W. Baars, "A New Fragment of the Greek Version of the Psalms of Solomon," *VT* 11 (1961): 442.

[66] בנוכריתא משתבהר בעלדבבא ולבה נוכרי הו מן אלהן. וכלמדם עבדת אורשלם איך דאף עממא עבדו במדינתהון לאלהיהון.

altar, they left after a very short time. For the poet there was no end to the flood of heathen enemies (II 22), who trampled (VII 2) the holy land, and only the redeeming Messiah was in the future to purify "Jerusalem of the heathens trampling it to destruction" (XVII 22).[67] What sense was there to such an expectation in Pompey's time? After his departure, Jerusalem continued for many years to be a purely Jewish capital, the center of an autonomous state, unhampered by any permanent foreign garrison or any civilian Roman administrative apparatus.

The absence of any mention of the destruction of the Temple in these poems proves, according to numerous scholars, their Pompeian background, for a pious Jew would not fail to note such an event if it already happened. That evidence seems at first glance convincing and can exemplify the method as a whole. The scholars felt the absence of any mention of the destruction of the Temple, and did not realize that the actual Temple as such occupied no place in the poet's consciousness and did not interest him at all. Desecrated sanctities and a trampled altar figure only in a few generalities (II 2; VIII 11-12, 22), but the Temple itself vanishes in the present and plays no part at all in the future redeemed Jerusalem (XVII 21 ff.). There is no yearning or expectation for its restoration. Astonishingly, priests and Levites have also disappeared entirely. Nor do the poems contain the slightest reference to holidays, or to people crowding the Temple Mount. What explanation is there for the disregard of such focal points of Jewish religious observance?

The regnant interpretation would have it that the unknown poet expresses the thoughts and reactions of pure Eretz Israel piety, censures the iniquities of his nefarious generation, directs his wrath at the Hasmonean government and the Sadducee leadership. An unbiased examination of the work, however, fails to uncover any basis or support for these views. The Jerusalemites to his mind all wallow in sin. All walks of life and strata, all ages, indiscriminately, king and judge, leaders and the lowest classes behaved atrociously. There is nobody sound in the defiled city. What are they accused of? The faults specified are lechery, the defiling and plunder of sanctities, the amassing of wealth and arrogance. Such a list seemingly fits almost all periods, allowing for a few degrees of exaggeration. The list does not, however, include the flaws that were likely to arouse the ire of a Jewish pietist at the time of Pompey's campaigns, in particular the malignant plague of internal dispute and civil war. Why is there no mention of the main reason for the controversy within the kingdom which was the chief basis also for the series of flaws? For the quarrels had not yet ended and internal dissension had not vanished. A comparison with the legend of Onias the Circle-Drawer and his prayer, etched in the consciousness of the people, is

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[67] *Psalms of Solomon* XVII 22: καθάρισον Ἰηρουσαλὴμ ἀπὸ ἐθνῶν καταπατούντων ἐν ἀπωλείᾳ.

enough to highlight the wide chasm between the *Psalms* author and the world of true Eretz Israel pietism in that generation.

What indicates the supposed Pharisee approach of the poet to the questions and troubles of the time? Where is he hiding the hated Hasmoneans? Where are the objections to the rival Sadducees? We search the length and breadth of the work in vain to seek some real link with the Hasmonean period, its events and personalities, its particular problems and characteristic manifestations. There is no clear sign of the existence of Pharisees and Sadducees or of any institutions such as the high priesthood, or some representative body.

The frightful picture emerging from the *Psalms of Solomon* does not accord with the fate of the nation at the time of the Roman invasion. The mysterious calamity overtakes the population regardless of status or faction. The catastrophe rained destruction on Jerusalem and its land. Its inhabitants were dragged off to death or exile. Their traces have already been erased from the earth (II 17). Their stock was uprooted leaving no surviving remnant (XVII 9). The earth abhorred the iniquitous sons (II 9) for "their transgressions went beyond those of the heathen before them" (I 8; VIII 13) and they forfeited their inheritance (IX 1).[68] The only ones saved from destruction were the fellowships of pious men, spread throughout the country, wandering among heathens, roaming in the deserts (VIII 23; XVII 15–18) and looking forward to salvation from on high.

Such a situation did not occur in Pompey's time. Israel did not lose its inheritance, nor was the population dragged into exile. Even if the text is distorted and has a contrived interpretation grafted on to it whereby the catastrophe affected only the Hasmoneans and Sadducees but not the entire people, it will not be possible to eliminate the contradictions and solve the problems. Traces of the Sadducees were not effaced and the seed of the Hasmoneans was not uprooted from the country. And what is the explanation of the wanderings in the desert or among the Gentiles? Fellowships of Pharisees and pious men were not compelled to wander through the wasteland or roam far and wide after the Roman invasion. Why is there no intimation of reaction to the fundamental changes, no scrap of information on Jewish Jerusalem at the end of the battles and after the departure of the Roman troops?

One more crucial point remains to be analyzed in regard to the presumed background of the *Psalms*. The point of departure for the prevailing view of their nature and origin was the discovery that the anonymous conqueror's life ended very much as Pompey's had. The authority is included in *Psalm II* which depicts the entry into Jerusalem of the anonymous "sinner" or "wicked one," the

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[68] *Psalms of Solomon* IX 1-2: 'Εν τῷ ἀπαχθῆναι 'Ισραὴλ ἐν ἀποικεσίᾳ εἰς γῆν ἀλλοτρίαν... ἀπερρίφησαν ἀπὸ κληρονομίας ἧς ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς κύριος. ἐν παντὶ ἔθνει ἡ διασπορὰ τοῦ 'Ισραὴλ κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦ θεοῦ κτλ.

rampage of his troops, extermination and plunder within. The stunned poet prays to heaven and implores pity for Israel, the cessation of the killing before the survivors are slain (II 22 ff.). "Delay not, O God, to recompense them on their heads, cast down (humble) the pride of the dragon. And I had not long to wait before God showed the insolence (the insolent one) stabbed on the mountains of Egypt, esteemed of less account than the least, on land and sea; his body too borne hither and thither on the billows with much disgrace, with none to bury him because He had rejected him with dishonor. He reflected not that he was man, and reflected not on the latter end. He said, I will be lord of land and sea. And he recognized not that it is God who is great, mighty in His great strength. He is king over the heavens, and judges kings and kingdoms. It is He who sets me up in glory and brings down the proud to eternal destruction in dishonor." A eulogy ends the cryptic play with an appeal to the world leaders to observe the supreme justice which His worshipers desire.[69]

The vague, awkward style led to substitutions and certain differences in the text and two questions, relating to the dragon's fate, need elucidation. According to the Greek manuscripts, the poet prays: "To say the dragon's pride in shame." Commentators agreed that the first verb must have been garbled, as it makes no sense, and suggested various alternatives, such as "see" (Fabricius), "turn" (Hilgenfeld), "break" (לשבר instead of לדבר, a translator's error — E.E. Geiger), "change" (Wellhausen, based on Hosea 4:7), "humble" (Perles), "cast down" (Viteau).[70] The main Syriac translation supports the last proposal, although one manuscript agrees with the Greek version.[71] Another problem arises from the adjacent verse describing the defeat of the stabbed dragon. Some scholars contented themselves with a slight polish: "the insolent one stabbed" and so on (Wellhausen, Ryle and James). Perles assumed a mistake in the translation of a Hebrew idiom and read "his stabbed corpse."[72] Another view (e.g., Viteau) prefers the Syriac version, although there too the expression seems odd: "Its disgrace was smitten on the mountains of Egypt." But these emendations are not needed, nor are assumptions of an original Hebrew version. Despite the difficulties presented by the murky style, the meaning of the picture emerges: Malice is annihilated and displayed to its shame. Cruel iniquity is

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[69] *Psalms of Solomon* II 25 ff.: μὴ χρονίσῃς, ὁ θεός, τοῦ ἀποδοῦναι αὐτοῖς εἰς κεφαλάς, τοῦ εἰπεῖν τὴν ὑπερηφανίαν τοῦ δράκοντος ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ. Καὶ οὐκ ἐχρόνισα ἕως ἔδειξέν μοι ὁ θεὸς τὴν ὕβριν αὐτοῦ, ἐκκεκεντημένον ἐπὶ τῶν ὀρέων Αἰγύπτου.... Τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ διαφερόμενον επὶ κυμάτων ἐν ὕβρει πολλῇ, καὶ οὐκ ἦν ὁ θάπθων.

[70] εἰπεῖν—ἰδεῖν-ταπεινοῦν—ῥίπτειν etc. On the commentators cited see nn. 7, 13, 15, 24 above, and 72 below.

[71] אנת דין מריא לא תוחר תפרוע אנון ברישהון למרמיה (למאמר) שובהרה דתנינא בצערה. ולא אשתוחרת עדמא דחוי לי מריא צערה כד ממחי על טורא דמצרין... ופגרה דין כד אתא על גללא בצערא סגיאא ולית דקבר.

[72] F. Perles, *Zur Erklärung der Psalmen Salomos* (Berlin 1902), p. 17.

portrayed as the dragon, the wicked sinner and bellicose foe. His contemptible death is decreed in heaven. His defeat occurred suddenly. His corpse fell "on the mountains of Egypt," was carried "on waves," debased and not buried. Does that scenario fit Pompey's end? Let us examine the basic facts.

After the battle of Pharsalus, Pompey fled to Egypt hoping to obtain help. He was caught in the net of the Ptolemaic policy, that had no moral inhibitions and hastened to buy the friendship of the victorious Julius Caesar with Pompey's blood. When the latter's modest fleet approached Pelusium, a boat set out to meet him. In the name of the government, the commander was invited to board it. Egyptian ships and troops on the nearby shore prevented him from retreating, so Pompey obeyed, boarded the boat, and was killed by the sword when he prepared to land. He was decapitated and his head and ring were sent to Julius Caesar. His bare corpse was thrown on shore in full view of curious onlookers. His companion, a freed slave named Philippus, waited till they left, then washed the body with water, wrapped it in his robe, found a broken boat on the sand and used the wood to build a ceremonial fire. An old Roman citizen, a veteran of Pompey's army, requested the honor of helping in the cremation and burial of the great general. Arriving in Egypt a few days later, Julius Caesar did not express pleasure, but rather lamented the death of his rival and punished the men responsible for the murder. That is Plutarch's version, confirmed by other descriptions.

Appian reports a monument and bronze images of Pompey placed on the shore where he was buried, near Mount Cassius. In the course of time, the monument was covered with sand and the images removed after being desanctified. But Hadrian ordered them cleaned and restored to their pristine splendor. Pompey's severed head was buried at the order of Julius Caesar in a special estate close to Alexandria, where a temple was dedicated to Nemesis and later destroyed by Jews during the rebellion in Trajan's reign. Cassius Dio too testifies on the circumstances of Pompey's death and reports that Hadrian sacrificed to Pompey and restored his neglected monument in Egypt. On Pompey's death, he includes a story about an oracle that warned him to beware of Cassius. Thinking that the oracle had named a person, Pompey did not know the fate that awaited him till he was slaughtered on the boat, like the lowliest Egyptian, died and was buried in the Mount Cassius area.[73]

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[73] Plutarch, *Lives* (see n. 38 above), Pompey 77ff.; Appian, *Roman History — The Civil Wars* II (12) 84ff. (*LCL*), ed. H. White, vol. 3 (London 1933); Cassius Dio, *Roman History*; LXIX 11 (*LCL*), ed. E. Cary, vol. 4 (London 1954); Julius Caesar, *De Bello Civili* III 104 (*LCL*), ed. A.G. Peskett (London 1961); Cicero, *De Divinatione* II (9) 22 (*LCL*), ed. W.A. Falconer (London 1960); M. Velleius Paterculus, *Roman History* II 53.2 (*LCL*), ed. F.W. Shipley (London 1961); M. Annaeus Lucanus, *De Bello Civili — Pharsalia* VIII 560ff. (*LCL*), ed. J.D. Duff (London 1957); M. Gelzer, *Pompeius*[2] (Munich 1949), p. 258; F. Miltner, "Pompeius," *PW-RE,* vol. 21 (1952): 2202; F.E. Adcock, "The Civil War," *CAH,* vol. 9 (1951): 668.

A careful detailed comparison dispels the illusion of the resemblance between the destruction of the dragon in the poem and the death of Pompey in the clear historical testimonies. At first glance, the two pictures seem to correspond. The dragon fell "on the mountains of Egypt" and Pompey too was killed near Mount Cassius on the Egyptian coast. That impression grows stronger in view of the description of that mountain in Strabo's *Geography*: a dry sand dune in the area of Pelusium and Lake Sirbonis rises near the sea where Pompey was buried and a temple in honor of Zeus Cassius. Pompey was killed near the hill, but Strabo is not sufficiently clear, does not specify the slaying and its location, makes mistakes, and confuses the Dead Sea with Lake Sirbonis (today Lake Bardawil, on the northern coast of Sinai). Both ancient writers and modern investigators place Mount Cassius in the neighborhood of the lake, at a certain distance from the Mediterranean shore, although doubts are not entirely dispelled and the place has not been definitely identified.[74]

It has not been ascertained, therefore, exactly where Pompey was murdered and buried, but all the witnesses agree on the circumstances of his death. The plot was carried out when the boat was close to shore and already running aground; the body was thrown on to the beach, not placed on any height or dragged to the nearby hill. Even if we agree to the proposed identification of Mount Cassius with a mountain that rises on a headland, that still does not explain the plural. Why did the poet exalt a series of dunes to the point of calling them "the mountains of Egypt?" Hilgenfeld and Wellhausen after him eliminated the difficulty by an easy stratagem of having the dragon fall not "on the mountains of Egypt" but "on the borders." But "border" too is surprising and confusing, and Schürer consequently further corrected to "the coast" of Egypt.[75] That adapts the verse nicely to the actual event, but such a contrived reading has no basis or support in any manuscript or ancient translation. That difficulty is not unique. In the mysterious play the dragon falls "stabbed on the mountains of Egypt" and again his corpse carried "on the waves in great shame and there was none to bury him." Pompey's body was not cast down on mountains, or abandoned to the billows or left unburied. According to Plutarch, its cremation was merely deferred for a few minutes. Such a short delay was not

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[74] Strabo, *Geography* I 3. 4 (50), (*LCL*), ed. H.L. Jones (London 1960); XVI 2.32/33 (760); 2.42 (763); XVII 1.11 (796); Herodotus II 158, III 5, ed. C. Hude (Oxford 1927); Pliny, *Natural History* (see n. 38 above) V 12.65; H. Kees, "Kasion," *PW-RE,* vol. 10 (1919): 2264; F. Hommel, *Ethnologie und Geographie des alten Orients, HAW* (Munich 1926), p. 964; E.G. Kraeling, *Bible Atlas* (New York 1956), p. 105; M. Dotan, "Seker Arkheologi be-Har Kasius," *Eretz Israel,* vol. 9, W.F. Albright volume (Jerusalem 1969): 47ff. However, the entire region is not within Egyptian territory according to the story of the exodus from Egypt and the basic biblical concepts: J. Liver, "Midyan," *EM,* vol. 4 (Jerusalem 1962): 690; Josephus, *Contra Apionem* II 25 (see n. 39 above). Consequently the term "the mountains of Egypt" in that poetry that is wrapped in an archaic-Israelite cloak is to be understood in a metaphoric and spiritual sense rather than in a realistic literal one.

[75] τῶν ὀρέων—ὀρίων. E. Schürer, *Geschichte,* vol. 3[4] (see n. 23 above), p. 207.

unusual or contrary to Roman custom.[76] His burial was neither forbidden nor impeded.

No less strange is the reaction of a Hebrew observer to the whole affair. The report of it reached Eretz Israel some time later, if the poet did not view the event with his own eyes or through divine inspiration, and had no fast couriers of his own. Doubtless the victory and activity of Julius Caesar overshadowed Pompey's death. The future of the country was in the balance. Great political changes took place within a short time. Jewish military reinforcements set out for Egypt to help Julius Caesar, Mattathias Antigonus submitted his demands, Hyrcanus and Antipater obtained a decision in their favor. Roman orders defined the status of the Jewish state. That entire development has left not a single trace in the strange *Psalms.* Furthermore, fifteen stormy years of serious troubles and rebellions elapsed between Pompey's invasion and his death. How could a pious Jew of Eretz Israel so completely disregard the distress of his people, ignore the plunder of the Temple by Crassus, and overlook the bitter struggle of the time?

The fall of the dragon in the *Psalm of Solomon* is not at all like Pompey's death and the events of his period. The dragon's pretensions do not in the least resemble Pompey's personality and manners. Pompey did not scorn religious faith, was not defeated on the mountains of Egypt, and his body did not sink to the bottom of the sea. The presumed historical background is not reflected in the pseudonymous *Psalms* and does not elucidate their meaning.

The poet does not describe or intend to describe events that happened in the recent or distant past. A careful perusal of the relevant *Psalm* shows that the appearance of the dragon is intertwined in the fabric of a prayer. In the face of the enemy's horrors the poet calls for divine vengeance and help. Jerusalem is still steeped in its blood, wounded and quivering in the claws of the cruel sinner. The poet pleads persuasively for the rescue of the survivors, and lives to see the downfall of the dragon on the mountains of Egypt and its corpse consigned unburied to the waves. The picture is revealed to him on the spot as he regards oppressed Jerusalem and hears its groans. He then envisages the terrible end of the enemy, not long thereafter. As a result the *Psalm* ends with thanks and praise to the heavenly judge who decrees death for the malicious and has mercy on the righteous. There is no reason to divide the *Psalm* by an artificial divider, and separate the first part from the last by fifteen years. Such a prayer was not likely in Pompey's day, either before or after his death. Nor does the prayer disclose any clear historical background. Its style is permeated with visionary features, and its contents present an imaginary picture. What does it mean? Why was the hidden riddle poetized?

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[76] A. Mau, "Bestattung," *PW-RE,* vol. 3 (1897): 349. Plutarch relates that Pompey's ashes were carried to his wife who deposited them according to Roman tradition, e.g., Suetonius, *Lives of the Ceasars,* Caius Caligula 15 (*LCL*), ed. J.C. Rolfe (London 1964).

D. *The Wicked Dragon and the Jerusalem Catastrophe*

The appearance of the dragon, its vicissitudes and downfall embody the secret of the mystery. Its miraculous fate is not merely a figurative entertaining metaphor but an essential, crucial link in the chain of secrets. The scenes it appears in are inscribed with a series of particular epithets and similes selected not for artistic purposes but to symbolize the covert purposes of the work. The anonymous conqueror who entered Jerusalem in a solemn procession and sowed destruction throughout the country is called "the sinner" or "the wicked" and "stranger" (II 1; XVII 7, 11), "the enemy" (XVII 13), "the mighty smiter" (VIII 15), and identified with the dragon who mounted to a divine height and was defeated in dishonor (II 25, etc.). The people of Jerusalem, too, who went forth joyfully to welcome him (VIII 16), are calumniated as lawless, "wicked" or "sinners" (I 1; II 16; XVII 5, 8) and follow him to perdition. The "pride of the wicked one" will not vanish entirely except through the messianic redemption of the House of David (XVII 23). This conceptual fabric bears the imprint of the ideological patterns of a visionary eschatological drama. The revelation of their origin, common basis and fundamental meanings will make it possible to find the keys to the mystery of the poem.

The fall of the dragon is depicted according to the prophecy of Ezekiel: "I am going to deal with you, O Pharaoh King of Egypt, mighty monster sprawling in your streams... I will haul you up from your streams... you shall be left lying in the open ungathered... (29:3, 4, 5). You are like the dragon in the seas... I will cast My net over you in an assembly of many peoples, and you shall be hauled up in My toils. And I will fling you to the ground, hurl you upon the open field... I will cast your carcass upon the mountains, and fill the valleys with your rotting flesh. I will drench the earth with your oozing blood upon the mountains, and the water courses shall be filled with your [gore]" (32:2, 3, 4, 5, 6). The prophet warns the prince of Tyre in similar terms: "Because you have been so haughty and said, I am a god,... I will bring against you strangers, the most ruthless of nations... they shall bring you down to the Pit, in the heart of the sea you shall die the death of the slain" (28: 2, 7, 8). The idolatrous arrogance is represented by the frightful dragon, which by divine decree is snared in his streams. His carcass is discarded on mountains, unburied. His corpse and blood fill gulleys and rivers. His terrible end heralds the end of perverse evil. The prophetic picture is made up of ancient mythological elements absorbed into biblical literature and refined in the crucible of monotheistic faith.[77] The dragon depicts demonic forces lurking in the depths, inimical to the good and darkening the light in the

[77] Y. Kaufmann, *Toldot ha-Emunah* (see n. 47 above), vol. 1, pp. 265, 424; M.D. Cassuto, *Ha-Elah Anat* (Jerusalem 1951), pp. 55ff.; 67 ff.; H. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos* (Göttingen 1895); J.B. Pritchard, *Near Eastern Texts*[3] (Princeton 1969), pp. 6ff., 11ff.; S.E. Loewenstamm, *Comparative Studies in Biblical and Ancient Oriental Literatures* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1980), pp. 91f., 179, n. 12.

universe.[78] The power symbolizing darkness and evil collapses in confrontation with the Lord of Heaven. It was the hand of God that "hacked Rahab in pieces, that pierced the dragon" (Is. 51:9). That mighty struggle constant since the creation will cease in the end of days: "In that day the Lord will punish with His great, cruel, mighty sword Leviathan... He will slay the dragon of the sea" (Is. 27:1).

The action depicted in the *Psalms of Solomon* was transferred from those prophecies. Further lines to enhance the portrait of the unnamed tyrant and define his features also come from Isaiah (14:4ff.): "How is the task master vanished, how is oppression ended. The Lord has broken the staff of the wicked, the rod of tyrants that smote peoples in wrath with stroke unceasing, that belabored nations in fury in relentless pursuit. All the earth is calm, untroubled. Loudly it cheers... How are you fallen from heaven, O Shining One, son of Dawn (Lucifer); how are you felled to earth, O vanquisher of nations; once you thought in your heart, I will climb to the sky, higher than the stars of God will I set my throne... Instead you are brought down to Sheol, to the bottom of the Pit... you were left lying unburied, like loathsome carrion, like a trampled corpse (in) the clothing of slain gashed by the sword, who sink to the very stones of the Pit." The Septuagint here diverges from the Hebrew and resembles the dragon fable more closely: "You will be cast on mountains as a carcass with many who are slain stabbed with swords, who go down to Sheol... for you destroyed my country, murdered my people."[79]

The tyrant's corpse is thrown shamefully on the mountains, according to the mysterious poem, like the carcass of the Egyptian dragon.[80] Compared to the "Shining One, son of Dawn" (Lucifer), the despot climbed to the stars, annihilated a people and ruined its country, "smote peoples in wrath" and is called "the rod of the wicked" (also Is. 10:5, 20; 30:31). Now the provenance of the anonymous invader who "smites mightily" is obvious as is its connection with the "wicked" and the "dragon" in these pseudo-Solomonic *Psalms*.

The defeat of malevolence, the triumph of justice and the dawn of redemption merges in the final visions. The base for such apocalyptic scenes was established in the eschatological tissue of the Daniel stories from the period of the Hasmonean Revolt. There the role of the demythologized dragon, the god of the abyss and hatred, is played by allegorical horrible monsters. Among them is the last scion of the cursed race of enemies of God (Dan. 7:8ff.) who opens "an arrogant mouth" toward Heaven and plots to destroy the "holy covenant." The

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[78] Is. 30:7; Jer. 51:34; Amos 9:3; Ps. 74:13–14; 87:4; 89:11; Job 7:12; 9:13; 26:12–13.

[79] Septuagint, Is. 14:19–20: σὺ δὲ ῥιφήσῃ ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν ὡς νεκρὸς ἐβδελυγμένος μετὰ πολλῶν τεθνηκότων ἐκκεκεντημένων μαχαίραις.... διότι τὴν γῆν μου ἀπώλεσας καὶ τὸν λαόν μου ἀπέκτεινας; I.L. Seeligman, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah* (Leiden 1948), p. 83f. Cf. n. 69 above and the same Greek expression (ἐκκεκεντημένον) describing the defeat of the stabbed dragon.

[80] P. Grelot, "Isaïe XIV 12–15 et son arrière-plan mythologique," *RHR* 149 (1956): 18ff.

tyrant rises to the firmament like Lucifer, tramples the stars, and his sudden fall paves the way for salvation. "When their kingdoms are at an end, when the measure of transgressors has been filled, then a king will arise, impudent... and destroy the mighty and the people of the holy ones... he will make great plans, will destroy many, serenely taking them unawares, and will rise up against the chief of chiefs, but will be broken, not by (human) hands" (Dan. 8:23–25). The cruel oppressor seizes control "serenely" and uninhibitedly, spreads his net by trickery and is aided by forsakers of the covenant (Dan. 11:21ff.). He defiles the "mighty Temple" and desecrates it. "He will flatter with smooth words those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people devoted to their God will stand firm" (Dan. 11:32). Before divine anger subsides he will succeed in his machinations, trample "the beautiful land" and "lay his hands" even on Egypt. Eventually, he will fall "between the sea and the beautiful holy mountain and meet his doom with no one to help him." The idolatrous arrogance was uprooted and the "time of trouble" and distress ended. The "holy ones of the Most High" take the kingdom and acquire their inheritance forever.[81]

The "impudent king" contributes salient features to the picture of the wicked sinner of the *Psalms of Solomon*: The invasion of Jerusalem with no hindrance or opposition, the treachery of "the wicked" and their help to the enemy, the "serene" atmosphere and deceitful tricks, a terrible slaughter and the persecution of holy men. His sudden fall between seas and mountains takes place in a manner similar to the defeat of the dragon. According to the Daniel visions, however, the entire people is not contaminated by sins. Jerusalem was not condemned to destruction or the country to ruin, the population was not uprooted and exiled, fellowships of pious men were not scattered among Gentiles to wander abroad. Such developments were remote from the days of Antiochus Epiphanes' coercive decrees and the Hasmonean Revolt. Daniel's visions do not even include a dragon, or a "redeemer heir," or a "Lord Messiah" descended from David. The confrontation in them is historical rather than metaphysical. Thus, a fitting background for the *Psalms* cannot be found in that period (contrary to Frankenberg) nor in any period of Jewish history. A complete picture encompassing the main elements embedded in the cryptic scenes of the poems (that is, the Jerusalem calamity, the annihilation of its rebellious inhabitants and the fall of the dragon, with the redemption by a scion of the House of David for the sake of the scattered pious devoted congregations) has been part of Christian belief since its inception. To understand its nature and possible connection with the pseudo-Solomonic *Psalms,* a short examination of the New Testament and the writings of the Church Fathers is in order.

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[81] See Chapter 3, n. 1 for a bibliography on the Book of Daniel. The fall of the last despot in Chapter 11 of the Book of Daniel is explained in Chapter 4, Section B and n. 17. The end of the evil is pictured on the basis of the classic authoritative prophecies (Isaiah and Ezekiel) like the fall of the dragon in the *Psalms of Solomon* version.

The Revelation presents the horrible dragon that prevails and rampages over the land of Israel in scenes of a messianic drama.[82] Judaic prophecies and mythological features were transferred to new patterns and injected with Christian content.[83] The figure of the "huge dragon" is assumed by the fearful Satan who incites and beguiles the world, persecutes holy people, challenges the heavenly host, and plots to destroy the Messiah that was born (12:1ff.). Its demonic might and qualities are handed over to monsters, and the world hastens to bow to the dragon and its emissary. In the end of days Satan is cut down and perishes with his retinue and myriad followers. The last confrontation takes place around the holy city (20:9). Before the defeat, Satan's kingship prevails in the capital, Jerusalem. Gentiles trample Israel's land and Temple. Holy men are then persecuted and killed in it. So it is a city "which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified" (11:8). A sinful Jerusalem was sometimes stigmatized as "Sodom" (never "Egypt") in scriptural rebukes, but Israel was also cautioned to beware of the plagues and diseases of Egypt (Deut. 28:60). The strange epithet is not a simple simile but involves an important mythological comparison.[84] Satan appears in the guise of the dragon, and is identical, according to this vision, with the Egyptian abomination. That is why his capital, Jerusalem, became Egyptian too. In the "spiritual"-metaphoric language of the analogy, the Jerusalem mountains could be christened "the mountains of Egypt." The prophecies predicting the defeat of the terrible foe in the end of days on "the mountains of Israel" do not therefore contradict the dragon's fall which according to Ezekiel was to take place on "the mountains of Egypt."[85]

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[82] R. H. Charles, *Lectures on the Apocalypse* (London 1922); idem, *The Revelation of St. John, ICC* (Edinburgh 1920, repr. 1956); A. Loisy, *L'Apocalypse de Jean* (Paris 1923); E. Lohmeyer, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (Tübingen 1927); A. Feuillet, *L'Apocalypse* (Paris 1963); T.F. Glasson, *The Revelation of John, CBC* (Cambridge 1965); E. Lohse, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (Göttingen 1966); H. Kraft, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes, HNT* (Tübingen 1974); O. Böcher, *Die Johannesapokalypse* (Darmstadt 1975); G.R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation* (London 1981); P. Prigent, *L'Apocalypse de Saint Jean* (Lausanne–Paris 1981).

[83] W. Bousset, *The Antichrist Legend* (London 1896); M. Friedländer, *Der Antichrist in den vorchristlichen jüdischen Quellen* (Göttingen 1901); B. Rigaux, *L'Antéchrist et l'Opposition au Royaume Messianique dans l'Ancien et le Nouveau Testament* (Paris 1932); J. Ernst, *Die eschatologischen Gegenspieler in den Schriften des Neuen Testaments* (Regensburg 1967).

[84] There is no textual basis or logical justification for negating the meaning of this verse in order to remove the crown of "Egyptianism" from Jerusalem, and extracting the verse as an interpolation, as suggested by M.E. Boismard, *L'Apocalypse* (Paris 1953), p. 55. The image of the dragon is linked to its habitat in Egypt, according to Ezekiel which is the basis for the vision. Jewish Jerusalem, steeped in sin, is compared to Egypt (see Gal. 4:25 where Hagar, the Egyptian bondswoman is a metaphor for Jerusalem) and follows Satan to perdition, in contrast to the pure heavenly Jerusalem of Jesus' church. That is why horrors occur even before the end of days (Rev. 8:7ff.; 9:1ff.) and before the Antichrist is defeated, like the Egyptian plagues and curses (Deut. 28:27, 60). See also Jerome, *Commentaria in Isaiam* 31:1, *PL* 24, col. 355.

[85] Ezek. 29:2ff.; 30:2ff.; 31:2ff.; 32:2ff.; 39:3; Is. 14:25; Zech. 14:4; Dan. 11:45.

This apocalyptic mirror reflects a Jerusalem that is abominated, Sodomite, and Egyptian, in which evil flourishes. Satan set up there his realm, placed his idol and established his cult. The misled inhabitants stream to his temple. The population as a whole, faithful to their religion and nation, do not deserve the title of "Jews" and are called "the synagogue of Satan" (Rev. 2:9; 3:9). The Gospel according to John also condemns them as the offspring of their "father the devil" who is the source of all sin. They rejected the true redeemer, and will therefore receive "another" who misleads and seduces his followers.[86] The Jerusalemites will welcome the reign of the false Messiah, emissary of the devil.[87] That is why extermination was decreed for the defiled city and its residents. Some select, pure, pious men, loyal to the divine savior of the "stock of David," will bask in the glory of his spirit and settle in the new Jerusalem which will descend shining from Heaven (Rev. 21–22).

The false Messiah crowned in contumacious Jerusalem is called Antichrist, that is, the rival and foe of the true Messiah. That epithet figures in the epistles of John,[88] but the secrets of his magic and his dangers are hinted at in other parts of the New Testament. Paul's second epistle to the Thessalonians warns against "that man of sin (or wickedness or lawlessness), the son of perdition who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he as God sits in the Temple of God showing himself that he is God (II Thess. 2:3-4)... and then shall that wicked one (or "sinner") be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth" (ibid. 2:8). Before his end, the sinner (or "the wicked one") will astonish all with satanic signs and wonders. All the impious who are doomed to perdition because they did not accept the love of the truth and rejected salvation will be caught in the trap of deceit, and believe in lies.[89] According to the tenets of the New Testament, Satan himself is personified

[86] John 5:43; 8:44; Cyrillus Alexandrinus, *Expositio in Joannis Evangelium* 8:44, *PG* 73, col. 892f.; W. Bauer, *Das Johannesevangelium*[2], *HNT* (Tübingen 1925); J.H. Bernard, *The Gospel according to St. John, ICC* (Edinburgh 1928, repr. 1958); R. Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (Göttingen 1950); R.E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John,* 2 vols., *AB* 29, 29 A (Garden City N.Y. 1966, 1970); E. Haenchen, *Das Johannesevangelium,* (Tübingen 1980). On the "stranger" or "another" see n. 118 below.

[87] Sanctus Victorinus, *Scholia in Apocalypsin, PL* 5, col. 335; "Sodomam autem et Aegyptum dicit Hierosolymam..."; ibid., col. 338: "Deus mittet regem dignum... ut sic eum tamquam Christum excipiant Judaei." Andreas, Archiepiscopus Caesareae Cappadociae, *Commentarius in Apocalypsin, PG* 106, col. 313; Aretas, Episcopus Caesareae Cappadociae, *Commentarius in Apocalypsin, PG* 106, col. 652; *Oecumenius,* ed. H.C. Hoskier (Ann Arbor 1928), p. 130ff.

[88] 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7; see A.E. Brooke, *The Johannine Epistles ICC* (Edinburgh 1912, repr. 1957); H. Windisch & H. Preisker, *Die Katholischen Briefe, HNT* (Tübingen 1951); R.E. Brown, *The Epistles of John, AB* 30 (London 1982).

[89] II Thess. 2:3-4... ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας, ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας, ὁ ἀντικείμενος καὶ ὑπεραιρόμενος ἐπὶ πάντα λεγόμενον θεόν κτλ. Ibid. 2:8 — καὶ τότε ἀποκαλυφθήσεται ὁ ἄνομος, ὃν ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς ἀνελεῖ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ κτλ. Ibid. 2:11 — καὶ διὰ τοῦτο πέμπει αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς ἐνέργειαν πλάνης εἰς τὸ πιστεῦσαι αὐτοὺς τῷ ψεύδει κτλ. J.E. Frame, *Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, ICC* (Edinburgh 1960, repr. of 1912 ed.); W. Trilling, *Der zweite Brief an die Thessalonicher, EKK* 14 (Zurich–Neukirchen Vluyn 1980).

in the delusive Messiah just as God is personified in the human figure of the compassionate redeemer. There is no division or separation between the prince of darkness and his deceitful messenger. The tyrannical "wicked one" or "sinner" who overcomes Jerusalem is linked to his satanic father and master, the "enemy" or "adversary" who falls like lightning from the sky as Lucifer does, and assumes the guise of the dragon and the Egyptian monster.[90]

The calamity overtaking sinful Jerusalem and its godless population, the wiles of Satan's emissaries, the troubles and rescue of selected pious men, are all merged in an evangelical oration repeated in three parallel versions and revealing a bit of the eschatological mysteries.[91] Without going into detail or specifying the differences, let us sum up the main points so important for our investigation: The Jerusalem Temple is doomed to destruction, wars and catastrophes will shake the world, the faithful will suffer persecution and torment; at the expected time, "in the holy place" will appear the abomination of desolation, as said by the prophet Daniel... "the people of Judah will flee to the mountains" for "there will be a great tribulation the like of which never was." False Messiahs and lying prophets will try to lead the chosen people astray. When the distress is over, the glory of the redeemer will shine and his angels will gather his elect with the ram's horn from all parts of the world. Luke's version differs to some extent, reiterating and stressing the results of the destruction of Jerusalem: troops will surround it during the days of wrath, vengeance and ire will visit the people, and many "shall fall by the edge of the sword and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:24).[92]

The Antichrist's tricks and devilish atrocities are the focus of the stirring drama of the end of days, whose scenes and heroes are veiled in mystery. Its course, details and sense allow for various interpretations. The Church writers took care to explain the problem according to Scriptures. Consequently Origen connects the "wicked" of Paul's epistle, and the enemy confronting the Messiah of Christian doctrine, with the arrogant tyrant in Daniel and the satanic sinner who emerges from Ezekiel's prophecies on the Egyptian Pharaoh (dragon) and the prince of Tyre, as well as from Isaiah's parable on Lucifer.[93]

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[90] Matt. 4:1ff.; 13:28 (ἐχθρός)ff.; 25:41; Mark 4:15; Luke 10:18; John 5:43; 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Acts 26:18; Rom. 16:20; 2 Cor. 6:15; 11:14; 1 John 3:8; 1 Pet. 5:8, etc.

[91] Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; 19:41ff.

[92] Luke 21:24; G. Braumann, "Die lukanische Interpretation der Zerstörung Jerusalems," *NT* 6 (1963): 120ff.; G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Future* (London 1954); idem, *A Commentary on Mark Thirteen* (London 1957); L. Hartman, *Prophecy Interpreted* (Lund 1966); N. Walter, "Tempelzerstörung und synoptische Apokalypse," *ZNW* 57 (1966): 38ff.; L. Gaston, *No Stone on Another,* Suppl. to *NT* 23 (Leiden 1970).

[93] Origen, *Contra Celsum,* II 50; VI 43ff., *PG* 11; *(GCS* 2-3), ed. P. Koetschau (Leipzig 1899); idem, *Homiliae XIV in Jeremiam,* Translatio Latina Hieronymi, *PL* 25, col. 622ff.; idem, *Homiliae XIV in Ezechielem, PL* 25, col. 729, 770ff.

That is the way the Old Testament was generally explained by the Church Fathers. The "dragon" or the "wicked" or the "enemy," in the particular borrowed terms, is identified with the Messiah's great rival, the dreadful Antichrist.[94]

These beliefs were rooted in early Christianity, and in their light Hippolytus interprets the Book of Daniel in which the basis for the whole plot is embodied. The cruel tyrant, last representative of the satanic monster that reviles God and kills holy men, is simply the cursed Antichrist. The "abomination of desolation" standing in the Temple and defiling it is that same archenemy whose exploits are described in the New Testament and connected traditions. The Jews will hasten to him and sanctify his ritual for he will promise to rebuild Jerusalem and gather in the exiles. Scorners of truth and "forsakers of the covenant" (referring in Daniel to Hellenizers) are the unbelieving Jews. Gentiles, too, will be blinded by the devil's deceptions, but those faithful to God will not abandon their fortress. They will suffer troubles and torments during "the time of trouble (Dan. 12:1) such as never was" until the end of the evil. A special book of Hippolytus about Antichrist against Christ completes the threads of his ideas.[95] The image of the terrible foe is reflected, to his mind, in Isaiah's lament over Lucifer ("who smites peoples in wrath") who is thrown on the mountains like the degraded carcass in Ezekiel's prophecy. The dragon in Christian vision is identified with the last monster in Daniel. Its slaves and servants will be the treacherous Jews who scorned true redemption, crucified the Messiah, murdered prophets and holy men. Because of their crimes they will be afflicted with blindness and the Antichrist will seduce them and lead to perdition.

Like Hippolytus, Jerome wrote an extensive interpretation of the Book of Daniel. Opposing the criticism of the anti-Christian Porphyry, he did not deny the background and memories deriving from the period of the Hasmonean Revolt in the book, but discovered also shadows of the future in the mysterious figures and visions, according to allegorical-typological exegesis. The Books of the Maccabees were of help in understanding the events, and details were drawn from them to complete the eschatological picture. Antiochus Epiphanes' coercive decrees, the persecutions, the rampages of that evil king representing the archetype of the Antichrist, the sins of the "forsakers of the covenant," the flight and brave loyalty of the "holy ones of the Most High," all presage the dramatic events at the end of days.[96]

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[94] Athanasius, *Expositiones in Psalmos* VII, *PG* 27, col. 80; idem in Ps. IX, ibid., col. 84f.; idem in Ps. CVIII, ibid, col. 456; Cyrillus Alexandrinus, *Explanatio in Psalmos* VIII, PG 69, col. 757; idem in Ps. XXXVI, ibid., col. 932; idem in Ps. XC, ibid., col. 1224.

[95] Hippolytus, *De Antichristo (GCS* 1), ed. G.N. Bonwetsch & H. Achelis (Leipzig 1937); Hippolyte, *Commentaire sur Daniel,* par M. Lefèvre (Paris 1947).

[96] Jerome, *Commentaria in Danielem* 11:21ff., *PL* 25, col. 591ff.: Irenaeus, *Contra Haereses* V 25ff.; PG 7, col. 1188ff.

The complex of epithets, similes, concepts and notions embedded in the *Psalms of Solomon* is entirely steeped in early Christianity and understandable only in the light of its beliefs. The obscure lexicon of the poems is easily explainable according to the theological terminology of the Church. All the signs and adjectives attest to the identity and function of the conqueror: "wicked, dragon, mighty smiter, enemy." The characteristic names refer to the same abhorrent despot, and are normally applied to the Antichrist. Thus the mystery of his strange appearance, his astonishing habits, his might and deceit, his terrible crimes and miraculous defeat is solved. The key to the decipherment of the cryptic plots, the riddles and mysteries is hidden in those eschatological beliefs and visions.

Their roots and patterns spring from the Hebrew Bible. Their various elements, separate notions and units do not seem to deviate from Judaism. The question is why must then the origin of the stories be sought in Christianity which assumed the heritage of the Old Testament. Perhaps that entire visionary fabric reflected in the *Psalms* developed on purely Jewish soil. The travail of the end, the "wars of the dragons" and the campaigns of Gog and Magog along with the other troubles of messianic times are known in talmudic tradition as well.[97] Daniel's visions were thought to refer to the Roman period as early as Josephus, and the realization of their messianic expectations was moved to the distant future.[98] An early Eretz Israel homily identifies the fourth monster in Daniel (Chapter 7) with the Roman Empire: "Terror is Edom, for it is written 'There was a fourth beast, fearsome, dreadful and very powerful.'"[99] There is no lack either of borrowed typological use of biblical names such as "All the empires were called Assyria (אשור) because they enriched themselves (מתעשרות) from Israel... etc. All the empires were called Egypt (מצרים) because they distress (מצירות) Israel."[100]

Such authority, even if others are added, is limited to partial comparisons, isolated sections, and the parallelity stops when the total picture is surveyed. The main protagonist and central figure of the plot—the Antichrist with all his dramatic exploits—is missing. That figure never appeared in the traditions of the talmudic sages, the Tanna'im and Amora'im. Its Jewish counterpart, known as Armilus son of Satan, does not predate the Byzantine and Arab periods, does not seem to be free of external influences, and lacks the main features of the

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[97] bSanhedrin 97a-b.

[98] Josephus, *Ant.* X 210. See n. 39 above.

[99] Genesis Rabbah XLIV 17 — *Midrash Bereshit Rabbah,* J. Theodor and Ch. Albeck ed. (Jerusalem 1965), p. 440.

[100] Genesis Rabbah XVI 4, p. 148 in the Theodor-Albeck ed.; Leviticus Rabbah XIII 5 — *Midrash Va-Yikra Rabbah,* M. Margaliot ed. (Jerusalem 1960), p. 283; This interpretation is made possible by the replacement of the letter א by an ע, to denote "wealth."

prototype.[101] The set of epithets and similes characteristic of it as noted above remain in the exclusive domain of Christianity. No evidence has been found to support the contention that a Jewish writer of Pompey's time meant to present him in the guise of the dragon with features of the enemy of God and rival of the Messiah. Furthermore, where and when could we imagine a Jewish poet depicting in his lyrics such a nightmare of the destruction of Jerusalem, the ruin of the country, the annihilation and uprooting of the population, after it had foolishly followed an anonymous tyrant, who darts in on the horizon like lightning, overruns the country, breaks into its capital unrestrainedly, and is cut down by no human hand?

The defeat of the dragon in the mystic drama of the *Psalms of Solomon* (II) is depicted according to biblical prophecies, close to the catastrophe that afflicted Jerusalem, and woven into the body of a prayer. The event is a focal and turning point in the drama of the end of days. The insolent figure grows haughty and rises to the divine level, is crushed and disgraced. His perforated body is thrown on the mountains of Egypt and waves carry it along. Ezekiel, too (Chapters 29, 32) so envisages the death of the dragon, who is drawn out of his rivers, abandoned to beast of prey, and left in the field. His carcass and blood fill valleys and gulleys. A similar punishment is decreed for the prince of Tyre, who arrogantly makes himself a god, and falls dead "in the heart of seas" (ibid. 28:8). The perforated body of the dragon lies on the hills in dishonor, like the tyrant in the well-known Lucifer parable. It is worth noting that the wording of the pseudonymous *Psalm* (II 26) approximates that of the Isaiah chapter (14) in the Septuagint, but not the Hebrew Bible.[102]

This mixture of verses serves in these poems, as in the early Christianity, to point up the death of the Antichrist. His annihilation envelops all sinners, and blazes the road of the righteous to renascence and glory. The downfall of the dragon sweeps with it his helpers and followers. The vengeance of God is completed and judgement is carried out. The poet's prayer—"to recompense them (the 'wicked' and his company) on their heads, to turn the pride of the dragon into dishonor" (II 25)—has been answered, and the surviving pious have apparently escaped the holocaust. The combination and contents of these

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[101] J. Klausner, *Ha-Ra'yon ha-Meshiḥi be-Yisrael* (Tel Aviv 1956), vol. 2, p. 146; Y. Even-Shmuel, *Midrashei Geula* (Jerusalem 1954), introd. p. 51ff. The very name Armilus indicates a non-Jewish origin, and the legends that developed around him in the Middle Ages show the Christian influence. Because of their unimportance, there is no basis for comparing them with the Christian eschatological dramas already anchored in the New Testament and in the patristic literature. There is no Antichrist and war of the redeemer Messiah (against the troops of Satan) deriving from ancient Jewish tradition, but only optical illusions, mistaken opinions (in n. 83 above) and tortuous speculations, in the wake of which alien pseudepigraphic writings were transformed into genuine Jewish apocalypses.

[102] Above in n. 79 and (the stabbed corpse) in n. 69. A clear link to the Septuagint is evident also in nn. 112, 113, 118, 163.

verses is not clarified by any real historical circumstances. The death of the dragon heralds the end of distress and trouble. Thus the *Psalm* ends with thanks to the supreme judge who "sets up" his worshipers "in glory and brings down the arrogant to eternal destruction in disgrace" (II 31).

The proposed solution elucidates the obscure drama in the pseudonymous *Psalms.*[103] But they cannot be expected to produce an orderly, continuous and complete story that is integrated and logical and has all the features of purely eschatological visions. The *Psalms of Solomon* were not written with the aim and according to the pattern of such works, but in the style and forms of biblical psalms. The poet speaks the prayers of Solomon in their ancient wrapping and injects his own meanings into them. The artistic cloak and poetic form disguise the covert intentions and ideas. Given these assumptions, it is possible to understand the meaning of the terrible catastrophe that the anonymous tyrant inflicts on Jerusalem, with its shadows and riddles, its abrupt beginning, and its astonishing happenings already outlined at the beginning of the work.

The first *Psalm* sounds Jerusalem's shout of agony ("when I was in distress") when the wicked sinner assailed it (I 1), the "blare of war" cuts through the quiet atmosphere and the calamity shocks a serene city that is secure and overflowing with transgressions. In the second *Psalm,* the "wicked one" suddenly appears as if taking shape in a moment, and shatters "fortified walls." The Jerusalem "wicked ones" resemble the archetypical wicked one not only because of the symbolic epithet but also because of their main transgression. Like him they sinned in arrogance, "exalted (themselves) to the stars, and said they would never fall" (I 5) and fell in dishonor.

These typical features of similarity between the "wicked" invader and the sinful Jerusalem and of the unexpected calamity are described with greater detail and emphasis in the eighth *Psalm*: "Distress and the sound of war has my ear heard, the sound of a trumpet announcing slaughter and calamity, the sound of much people as of an exceeding high wind, as a tempest with mighty fire sweeping through the wilderness. And I said in my heart, where shall God judge him? A sound I hear, In Jerusalem, the holy city. My loins were broken at what I heard, my knees tottered. My heart was afraid, my bones were dismayed like flax" (VIII 1-6). The poet censures the iniquities of Jerusalem, justifies the judgement and describes the entrance of the "wicked one" into the capital. "Therefore God mingled for them a spirit of distortion, and gave them a cup of undiluted wine to drink to intoxication. He brought from the end of the earth the

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[103] The guardians of these *Psalms* and their copyists of the Middle Ages already knew the secret of the "dragon." One of them (according to O. Gebhardt, *Die Psalmen Solomo's,* p. 96; see n. 1 above), noted his simple understandable explanation on the margin: δράκοντα λέγει τὸν ἀποστάτην διάβολον, πολλαχοῦ γὰρ ἡ θεία γραφὴ δράκοντα τοῦτον ἐπονομάζει.

one that smites mightily, decreed war against Jerusalem and its land. The princes of the land went to meet him with joy. They said to him, Blessed be your way. Come enter in peace. Rough ways were made even, before his coming; they opened the gates of Jerusalem, decorated its walls. He came like a father to his sons' house in peace, placed his feet (there) in great safety, captured its towers and the wall of Jerusalem. For God led him in safety while they strayed." But the cruel "wicked one" rained destruction, slaughter and exile on Jerusalem.

The terrible calamity is not the reflection of an historical event, but "the awesome, fearful day of the Lord" (Mal. 3:23), that is, "a day of trouble and distress... a day of horn blasts and alarms" (Zeph. 1:15f.) At the appointed time the bitter clashes and prophetic warnings are carried out, "for the day of the Lord is near; it shall come like havoc from Shaddai" (Joel 1:15). The disaster surprised its victims, spreads panic and fear: "Hark! a tumult on the mountains — as of a mighty force... they come from a distant land, from the end of the sky... Howl! For the day of the Lord is near; it shall come like havoc from the Almighty Shaddai. Therefore all hands shall grow limp and all men's hearts shall sink" (Is. 13:4, 6, 7). The enemy breaks in "like the gales that race through the Negev; it comes from the desert, the terrible land" (Is. 21:1).

Jerusalem amuses itself in vain delusions, and sleeps peacefully till the calamity strikes like a thunderbolt. "Surely you have deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, It shall be well with you, yet the sword threatens the very life!... Lo, he ascends like clouds, his chariots are like a whirlwind... My heart moans within me, I cannot be silent; for I hear the blare of horns, alarms of war" (Jer. 4:10, 13, 19). The scriptural prophecies blend into the Christian conception: ... "The day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction will come upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape."[104] Among the portents of the end were "battles," "sounds" of war, "great trouble such as never was," distress, and the blowing of the ram's horn.[105]

The emissary of perdition hastens from afar: "...at the end of the earth there it comes with lightning speed" (Is. 5:26); "...from the remotest parts of the earth" (Jer. 6:22); "from the end of the earth he will swoop down like the eagle, a ruthless nation that will show the old no regard and the young no mercy... and shut you up in all your towns throughout your land until every mighty, towering wall in which you trust has come down" (Deut. 28:49, 52). "...When wrath is at an end... then a king will arise, impudent... and destroy the mighty and the people of holy ones" (Dan. 8:19, 24). In the mysterious plot line of the pseudo-Solomonic *Psalms,* too, "the wicked one cast down fortified walls" (II 1),

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[104] I Thess. 5:2-3.

[105] *Psalms of Solomon* VIII 1ff.: Θλῖψιν καὶ φωνὴν πολέμου ἤκουσεν τὸ οὖς μου... Matt. 24:6ff... μελλήσετε δὲ ἀκούειν πολέμους καὶ ἀκοὰς πολέμων... ἔσται γὰρ τότε θλῖψις μεγάλη, οἵα οὐ γέγονεν απ'ἀρχῆς κόσμου...; Mark 13:7ff.; Luke 21:9ff.

trampled and slew, "laid waste our land of its inhabitants... destroyed young and old and their children together" (XVII 11). To the accompaniment of the signs and omens of "trouble and war alarm," the "sound of the ram's horn," and the noise of many people, the cruel tyrant, the impudent "wicked one," the "enemy" of God, presses onward to the fateful campaign on earth.

Jerusalem welcomes him joyfully, festive and jubilant (*Psalm* VIII 15 ff.). Its leaders hasten eagerly to meet him, greet him respectfully, invite him to enter, level rough ways, decorate walls, open gates. The polluted city gleefully celebrates the appearance of the false Messiah.[106] The splendid vision of redemption glorifies his entrance: "A voice rings out: Clear in the desert a road for the Lord! Level in the wilderness a highway for our God!... Let the rugged ground become level and the ridges become a plain... opening doors before him and letting no gate stay shut... heralding good fortune, announcing victory, telling Zion Your God is king!" (Is. 40:3f.; 45:1f.; 52:7). It is in such terms that the New Testament ornaments the Christian Messiah,[107] and the pseudo-Solomonic *Psalm* uses them to turn the entrance of the anonymous enemy into Jerusalem into a sharp caricature of messianic enthusiasm. As the Jews rejected the Christian redeemer, labeling him as "deceptive," they were compelled to accept "another," and were caught in the magic net of the terrible "deceiver," the prince of darkness,[108] and all who deny the true salvation are party to his tricks. The mass of the impious are seduced into believing the lie and are dragged to perdition. The New Testament warns against the wiles and tricks of the devil which will increase in the latter days. For toward the end he (or his emissary) will become king and exalted in Jerusalem until his demeaning defeat.[109]

The Antichrist is honored and saluted at the gates of the sinful city. The nightmare is poetized in this Psalm according to biblical tunes. The heads of the nation blaze a path to the false savior, decorate his dwelling to glorify his kingship, for "he came like a father to his sons' house in peace" (VIII 18).[110] Here the covert purpose emerges, revealing the venomous sting in the metaphor derived from the New Testament. The impious Jews are denounced as the "synagogue of Satan" and their father is Satan himself.[111] The Antichrist enters his "sons' house," which serves as his sanctuary, against the Christian

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[106] *Psalms of Solomon* VIII 16ff.: ἀπήντησαν αὐτῷ οἱ ἄρχοντες τῆς γῆς μετὰ χαρᾶς, εἶπαν αυτῷ Ἐπευκτὴ ἡ ὁδός σου, δεῦτε εἰσέλθατε μετ' εἰρήνης. ὠμάλισαν ὁδοὺς τραχείας ἀπὸ εἰσόδου αὐτοῦ, ἤνοιξαν πύλας ἐπὶ Ἰερουσαλήμ, ἐστεφάνωσαν τείχη αὐτῆς. In Syriac:
וארעוהי דיניה דארעא בחדותא ואמרו לה. תתקני אורחך. תא עול בשלמא. ואשויו אורחתא (דערמא) דערמן למעלנותה. פתחו תרעא על אורשלם וכללו שוריה.

[107] Matt. 3:3; Luke 3:4ff.

[108] Matt. 27:63 (ὁ πλάνος); John 5:43.

[109] 1 Tim. 4:1ff.; 2 Thess. 2:3ff.; Rev. 12:9ff.; Mark 13:5ff.; Matt. 24:4ff.; Luke 21:8ff.

[110] *Psalms of Solomon* VIII 18: Εἰσῆλθεν ὡς πατὴρ εἰς οἶκον υἱῶν αὐτοῦ μετ' εἰρήνης. In Syriac:
ועל איך אבא לביתא דבנוהי בשלמא

[111] Rev. 2:9; 3:9; John 8:44.

Messiah, whose abode is exclusively in the hearts of his congregation. Led astray, the Jews bless and extol this "enemy" who "smites mightily" for "the Lord has mixed within them a spirit of distortion, gave them undiluted wine, to the point of intoxication." The simile is not simply rhetorical, but is drawn from the Bible: "The Lord has mixed within her a spirit of distortion which shall lead Egypt astray in all her undertakings as a vomiting drunkard goes astray" (Is. 19:14). The verse in the *Psalm* approximates the translation in the Septuagint: "God poured a spirit of deception into them."[112] The "deceptive" spirit characterizes the work of the devil who muddles human brains and poisons hearts. In the usual cryptic terms of the apocalyptic allegory Egypt is Jerusalem. The same mad spirit is exuded by Chapter 4 of Jeremiah, cited above, whose influence is discernible in this *Psalm,* following the pattern of the Septuagint: "Surely you have deceived this people and Jerusalem saying: It shall be well with you... a spirit of error in the desert... not for the pure and not for the holy."[113] In contrast, the Hebrew source has "a searing wind from the bare heights of the desert will not (serve to) winnow or to fan" (Jer. 4:11). The "spirit of error" is expressed in the deeds of the powerful "deceiver" and destroyer.

Insanity drew Jerusalem to the depths of defilement. Its sons drank to the point of intoxication, according to the usual analogy (Jer. 13:13; 51:57), and also "Take from My hand this cup of wine-of wrath let them drink... Jerusalem and the towns of Judah... to make them a desolate ruin" (Jer. 25:15ff.) as well as "There is a cup in the Lord's hand with foaming wine... all the wicked of the earth drink" (Ps. 75:9). The *Psalm of Solomon*, however, has "undiluted wine," like the Septuagint, rather than "wine of wrath" or "foaming wine" as per the Hebrew. The similarity is not there just to embellish the poem. The metaphor of the delusive wine that drags the wicked to perdition is repeated and stressed in Revelation.[114] Furthermore, in early Christianity its teachers based the Antichrist episode on these verses. Hippolytus uses the Septuagint translation of Chapter 4 of Jeremiah to prove that a "spirit of error" would spread through Jerusalem and its inhabitants would worship that same son of Satan. In his view, Moses too foresaw their errors and predicted them in the Deuteronomy poem: "Their wine is the venom of dragons, the pitiless poison of vipers, Lo, I have it all put away, sealed up in My storehouses, to be My vengeance and recompense (Septuagint: "on the day of vengeance I will recompense") at the time that their foot falters" (Deut. 32:33–35). The venom of dragons is the wine that poisons

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[112] *Psalms of Solomon* VIII 14: ἐκέρασεν αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς πνεῦμα πλανήσεως... Septuagint, Is. 19:14 — κύριος γὰρ ἐκέρασεν αὐτοῖς πνεῦμα πλανήσεως...

[113] Septuagint, Jer. 4:11 — Πνεῦμα πλανήσεως ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ...οὐκ εἰς καθαρὸν οὐδ' εἰς ἅγιον. — 1 John 4:6:...τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πλάνης.

[114] Septuagint — Jer. 32:15 (Jer. 25:15 in the masoretic version); *Psalms of Solomon* VIII 14; Rev. 14:8 ff.; 16:19; 17:2; 18:6.

and dooms them on judgement day. According to this Christian interpretation, the enemy of God and and the king of defiled Jerusalem is again suggested in the image of the dragon.[115]

A mosaic of biblical prophecies and phrases adorns both Satan's path to his Jerusalem stronghold and his cohorts' deeds. Despite this ancient artistic covering, the inner meaning and fundamental link to the Christian tenets is discernible. Its imaginary nature is revealed through an analysis of the calamity depicted. A return to the start of *Psalm VIII* produces additional evidence. The poet hears the sounds of war, the thunder of approaching catastrophe, and wonders (VIII 3f.): "Where will God judge him?" and is answered by a hidden voice: "In Jerusalem the holy city." The fact that some manuscripts have "to Jerusalem" makes no difference. One version even has a dubious "judge her (it)," which makes no sense, and has no support in most of the manuscripts or in the Syriac translation.[116] The question itself, even if it is rhetorical, shows it does not refer to historical events. The mysterious reply indicates that the site of the fateful confrontation was set in polluted Jerusalem. God "will judge him," meaning "the one who smites mightily," the main protagonist. When he is defeated the evil will cease and the world will become fit for the redemption of the holy people.

These verses do not accord very well with the prevailing interpretation and presented considerable difficulty. Scholars therefore made great efforts to adapt them to the presumed background. Their proposals are based on dubious readings of the contents. There is no logical justification or basis in the existing text for reading "Where will He judge us" or "He will therefore judge us." All such exegetical strategies simply impede a clear-headed study, and in any case cannot save the faulty method in entirety. It is true that the poet himself contributes to the best of his ability to the confusion, for in *Psalm II* the dragon's defeat ends "on the mountains of Egypt," and in *Psalm VIII* the site of the judgement is queried. However, he was not referring to the geographic land of Egypt, but to defiled Jerusalem which, according to the spirit of Revelation, bears the symbolic name of Egypt, for it was in Jerusalem, as was commonly believed, that the action was to unfold. The obscuring of the background, blurring of the concepts, redundancy in ramified similes, and the insertion of biblical phrases in an allegorical-metaphoric spirit all serve the poet's purpose.

The clouds enveloping the mysterious *Psalms* apparently absorbed a few splinters of genuine events. Visionary apocalyptic pictures are generally drawn in lines partially borrowed from reality, but pinpointing them remains in the

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[115] Hippolytus, *De Antichristo* (see n. 95 above), 57–58; Jerome, *Commentaria in Jeremiam*, 4:7ff., *PL* 24, col. 707ff.

[116] *Psalms of Solomon* VIII 3-4: καὶ εἶπα (ἐν) τῇ καρδίᾳ μου, Ποῦ ἄρα κρινεῖ αὐτὸν (αὐτὴν) ὁ θεός, φωνὴν ἤκουσα ἐν (εἰς) Ἰηρουσαλὴμ πόλιν ἁγιάσματος. In Syriac: ואמרת ללבי דאיכא כי דאן לה. קלא שמעת באורשלם מדינתא קדישתא.

realm of hypothesis. Jerusalem conquered by Gentiles, the annihilation, humiliation and exile of its inhabitants, seem to be absolute facts. These deeds of "the wicked one" are probably adapted to the background of the Roman period after the destruction of the Temple. The inclination to find in the facts the partial realization of those visions is quite clear in the Fathers of the Church.[117] The real foundation supports the eschatological structure. They sensed no contradictions in the mixture of imagination and reality. After all, the devil and his messengers assume various guises, and penetrate many souls. For Christianity, Roman emperors such as Nero or Domitian seemed the personification of Antichrist. Sometimes they even suggested that the statues of the emperor in Jerusalem were the "abomination of desolation." According to this typological art, features of the "impudent king" of Daniel, biblical examples (the kings of Assyria, Egypt, etc.), Antiochus Epiphanes, a Roman despot, and imaginary shadows evidently merged into the picture of the "wicked one." The pre-messianic tribulations had supposedly already started, and the first stages ensure the completion of the vision. Destruction, killing, dispersal, torment, and also "Jerusalem trampled by the feet of Gentiles" precede the end of the calamities, before ultimate salvation.[118]

E. *Son of the House of David, the Redeemer Heir and His Adherents*

The mysterious calamity and the dragon adventures open the *Psalms of Solomon.* Praise of the scion of the House of David closes them. Between those extremities stretches the hidden axis around which the poems and their philosophy turn. Antichrist is opposed to Christ, the evil, false pole to the just

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[117] Jerome, *Commentaria in Evangelium Matthaei* 24:15, *PL* 26, col. 184ff.; J. Reuss, *Matthäus-Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche, TUGAL* 61 (Berlin 1957), p. 132, where Theodorus of Mopsuestia is quoted.

[118] *Psalms of Solomon* II 2; VII 2; XVII 22: καθάρισον Ἰηρουσαλὴμ ἀπὸ ἐθνῶν καταπατούντων ἐν ἀπωλείᾳ ;Luke 21:24: καὶ Ἰερουσαλὴμ ἔσται πατουμένη ὑπὸ ἐθνῶν.
The depiction of the Gentiles trampling Jerusalem corresponds exactly to the scenario in Luke and is taken from the Septuagint version of Zech. 12:3. The destruction of the country and massacre of the people too is an image based on the Septuagint of Is. 14 (see n. 79 above) which, as already noted, is the foundation and main component of the description of the Antichrist's rampages. Along with the typical epithets of "enemy" and "wicked" (nn. 89–90 above and 128 below) or "son of evil," in the *Psalms of Solomon* the Antichrist is also called a "stranger" (XVII 7ff.) who kills and destroys and conducts himself as a formidable adversary in Jerusalem. He cannot be identified with Herod or Pompey as many have proposed, or any other historical personage. That epithet, like the others, is taken from the Bible (Deut. 17:15; 31:16; Dan. 11:39) and is extended in early Christianity to the son of Satan or Satan himself. See John 10:5 and *Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum,* ed. F.X. Funk, vol. 1 (Paderborn 1905), pp. 386, 482. The Greek term used (*allotrios*-stranger) derives from the root *allos* (=another), the specific meaning of which in the Gospels (John 5:43) is Antichrist. See also n. 86 and n. 102 (the stabbed corpse of the enemy) above. The mixture of the description of the latter days and the destruction of Jerusalem as in the Gospel apocalypse (nn. 91–92 above) creates the illusion that the author is referring to historical events.

and true one. Such a basic opposition as is indicated and hinted at in the poems has been imprinted in the foundations of Christianity since its inception and blended into its prayers. The appearance of the redeemer and his complete triumph over the wicked forces end the latter day visions. A hymn to the Messiah thus concludes the pseudonymous *Psalms,* stresses at the outset the eternal nature of the kingship promised to the seed of David in a divine vow, censures the sins of "the wicked" who devastated the throne of David and rejected those faithful to it. Their iniquity brought calamity on the people and destruction on the country through the tyrannic "wicked one."

"You, O Lord, chose David to be king over Israel, and swore to him on his offspring forever, that his kingship would never fail before You; but for our sins, wicked ones rose up against us, assailed us and thrust us out. What you did not promise they took by force and did not respect Your honorable name. They set kingship in place of their haughtiness, and laid waste the throne of David in their arrogance of exchange."[119] Consequently they were punished and their seed was cut off from their land. "The wicked one laid waste the land of its inhabitants," displayed hatred of and estrangement from God. A remnant of pious men looks forward to the restoration of "their king, descendant of David" who will purify Jerusalem and impart the grace of salvation.

A number of linguistic problems need to be clarified before the contents of the chapter are dealt with. Firstly, all the original copies have "they set kingship in place of their haughtiness" and the meaning of the prepositional phrase (the word "instead" — "in place of") is clear, and in view of its use both in the biblical Psalms and in the Septuagint[120] there is no reason to interpret it to mean "for the sake of" or "because of." Another problem arose because of the awkward phrase "in their arrogance of exchange," referring to their malicious substitution. Because of the unusual phrase and grating expression, apparently some copyist erred and influenced by a similar Greek word (ἀλλάγμα—ἀλάλαγμα) wrote "in blaring arrogance." That version was included in a number of inferior manuscripts, misleading the first editor and a whole series of scholars, so that Delitzsch, Perles and Menahem Stein assumed that the proper reading was "in the blaring clamor." Gebhardt's critical examination proved that the correct version was in fact the difficult "in the arrogance of exchange," and this conclusion is borne out by the Syriac translation.[121]

What does that wrathful complaint mean? When did the "wicked" manage to

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[119] *Psalms of Solomon* XVII 4ff. — ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἡμῶν ἐπανέστησαν ἡμῖν ἁμαρτωλοί, ἐπέθεντο ἡμῖν καὶ ἔξωσαν ἡμᾶς, οἷς οὐκ ἐπηγγείλω μετὰ βίας ἀφείλαντο... ἐν δόξῃ ἔθεντο βασιλείον ἀντὶ ὕψους αὐτῶν, ἠρήμωσαν τὸν θρόνον Δαυὶδ ἐν ὑπερηφανίᾳ ἀλλάγματος.

[120] ἀντί — *Psalms of Solomon* II 3, 11, 13, 20, 35; XVII 6; Septuagint Gen. 2:21; 4:25; 22:13; Ex. 21:23ff.; Lev. 14:42; Num. 3:12; Deut. 2:12; 10:6; Josh. 2:14; Jud. 15:2; Ps. 34 (35):12; 44 (45):17; etc.

[121] וסמו מלכותא חלף רומהון. אחרבו כורסיה דדויד בשובהרא דשוחלפהון.

destroy the throne of David, banish his faithful followers, trample his honor, steal divine promises, replace their arrogance with kingship, rain destruction and desolation on their country? Modern exegetes have found the complaint to embody a Jewish viewpoint, pietist or even Pharisee, that disqualifies the Hasmonean kingdom whose very existence challenges messianic faith and constituted a public denial of prophecies regarding the descendants of David. The *Psalm,* according to them, reflects the ire of the guardians of the Law and precepts, which burst forth because the Hasmoneans stole the sacred crown. This speculation is generally accompanied by a reference to the well-known demand that the people's representatives submitted to Pompey in Damascus asking for the monarchy to be canceled and priestly government to be restored. The foreign nature of this information has already been discussed above. Such a demand would in any case counter the monarchic rights of David's descendants as well, and have no connecton with Phariseeism or true Jewish Hasidism. The talmudic tradition provides no support either, for its early memories include no such denunciation of the Hasmoneans. As to the background, only a distortion of the facts could point to the destruction of the country and its inhabitants in Pompey's time.

The prevalent view could not serve to explain those passages even if it were adopted unreservedly and the other troublesome questions were disregarded. Theoretically the Hasmoneans could be accused of unlawfully seizing the crown and perhaps of usurping the right or desecrating the mission of the House of David. But how did they manage to destroy the lofty throne? Did David's dynasty continue openly or covertly until the Roman period? What ruined throne does the poet envision, a real or symbolic one? After all, the anticipation of the kingdom and the messianic longing could not be uprooted from the people's hearts. And if the reference is to a political revolution, where is there the slightest trace of one?[122] Why was there no mention of the priestly posts of the crown-lovers and their lofty functions in the Temple? What pious congregation included the exclusive adherents of the Davidian dynasty, that fled from Jerusalem and was scattered when the city was destroyed?

The answer is to be found in the sources of the enigmatic poem. Its content is based on well-known scriptural promises favoring the House of David, as expressed in Psalm 89: "I will sing of the Lord's steadfast love forever;... 'I have made a covenant with My chosen one; I have sworn to My servant David I will establish your offspring forever, I will confirm your throne for all generations...' Your faithfulness, too, in the assembly of holy beings... then You spoke to Your

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[122] "Haughtiness" does not represent the priesthood (*Psalms of Solomon* XVII 6) in any sort of code, despite A. Büchler (see n. 28 above), *Types,* p. 173. Nor can the destruction of David's throne be explained, as Ryle and James (see n. 20 above) wish, as a reference to the decline of the Hasmonean kingdom, because of a wrong policy. No descendant of David is ascertained in that period (see Chapter 2, n. 55).

faithful ones in a vision and said: '... I have found David, My servant; anointed him with my sacred oil... No enemy shall oppress him, no vile man afflict him... He shall say to me, You are my father... I will appoint him first born, highest of the kings of the earth. I will maintain my steadfast love for him always; My covenant with him shall endure. His line shall continue forever, his throne, as the sun before me '....Yet you have rejected, spurned, and become enraged at Your anointed; You have repudiated the covenant with Your servant, You have dragged his dignity in the dust... All who pass by plunder him; he has become the butt of his neighbors... You have... hurled his throne to the ground... Oh Lord where is Your steadfast love of old which You swore to David in Your faithfulness? Remember, O Lord, the abuse flung at Your servants... how Your enemies, O Lord, have flung abuse, abuse at Your anointed at every step....."

The biblical psalm laments the repudiation of the divine covenant, the abandonment of the House of David, the destruction of his throne, his downfall at enemy hands, and his exposure to abuse, and urges a resumption of celestial favor.[123] In the present pseudo-Solomonic *Psalm,* it was not God who violated the covenent, but the wicked who stole his promise, destroyed the throne of David and banished those faithful to it. From a Jewish point of view, the complaint against these wicked men within the nation is incomprehensible. The Jewish belief is that the kingship was granted to the House of David conditionally, and set aside when the First Temple was destroyed with hope for the future restoration.[124] Generations later, in the Hasmonean or Roman period, no individual could, nor did any authoritative body dare, destroy the revered throne. During what period could the people of Jerusalem possibly have been accused of such a crime, and perished for their sins, or been exiled, and their land desolated?

These *Psalm XVII* verses are based on the biblical psalm cited, which is a cornerstone of Christology and also part of the Catholic liturgy.[125] The

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[123] H. Gunkel, *Die Psalmen* (Göttingen 1968) ad loc.; C.A. Briggs, *Book of Psalms, ICC* (Edinburgh 1906/7, repr. 1927); H. Herkenne, *Buch der Psalmen* (Bonn 1936); H. Schmidt, *Die Psalmen* (Tübingen 1934); G.W. Ahlström, *Psalm 89* (Lund 1959); N.M. Sarna, "Psalm 89," *Biblical and Other Studies,* ed. A. Altmann (Brandeis Univ. & Harvard Univ. 1963): 43ff.; A. Weiser, *Die Psalmen* (Göttingen 1950); M. Dahood, *Psalms,* vol. 2, *AB* 17 (Garden City, N.Y. 1968); R.J. Clifford, "Psalm 89," *HTR* 73 (1980): 35ff.

[124] II Sam. 7:12ff.; 23:5; I Kings 9:4ff.; I Chr. 17:11ff.; 22:7ff.; 28:9; II Chr. 7:12ff.; Ps. 132; *Midrash Tehilim — Shoher Tov* to Ps. 132, S. Buber ed. (New York 1947); *Yalkut Shim'oni* to Ps. 132, mark 881 (New York–Berlin 1926); *Yalkut ha-Makhiri* to Ps. 132, S. Buber ed. (Berdichev 1899).

[125] P. de Puniet, *Le Psautier Liturgique* (Bruges 1935), p. 233; M. Lepin, *Le Psautier Logique* (Paris 1937), p. 290f.; A. Miller, *Die Psalmen* (Freiburg im Breisgau 1949), p. 529; E. Pannier & H. Renard, *Les Psaumes* (Paris 1950), p. 481ff.; H.J. Kraus, *Die Psalmen* (Neukirchen–Vluyn 1961), p. 625; D. Rimaud & J. Gelineau, *Le Guide du Psautier* (Paris 1962), pp. 102, 205ff. That biblical psalm (89) was already extended to cover Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection in the early Christian sources such as *Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum,* ed. F.X. Funk, p. 276 (see n. 118 above). Its imprint is recognizable from the New Testament, such as Acts 2:30; 13:22; Heb. 11:26; Rev. 1:5; 3:14. Most illuminating is the inclusion of a similar expression (Ps. 89:11) in the hymns of Luke 1:51 in

Christian Messiah bears the exalted title of "son of David," inherits the throne of David, becomes king forever. His glory constitutes the fulfillment of the ancient prophecies, the continuation of the sacred covenant, and the realization of the eternal kingship promised to David.[126] The Fathers of the Church interpreted this biblical psalm as reflecting the mission, torment and death of their savior. His enemies scorned him, desecrated his crown, crucified him and abused his congregation. His throne symbolizes his body, his kingdom, and also the church devoted to him whose enemies supposedly shattered (according to both the Septuagint and the Vulgate)[127] and plotted to annihilate it entirely. His heavenly father did not abandon him, but the crime was committed by divine decree. The main responsibility is the Jews', as they rejected his messianism, handed him over to executioners and persecuted his congregation. Consequently their people were doomed to destruction, their country to devastation, and their survivors abroad to dispersion.[128]

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which the notion of the throne of David is also salient (see n. 126) as in the biblical psalm. The same Luke hymns contain the epithet "Lord (anointed) Messiah" (see n. 200 below) that appears in the *Psalms of Solomon* XVII 32.

[126] Luke 1:32f.: καὶ δώσει αὐτῷ κύριος ὁ θεὸς τὸν θρόνον Δαυὶδ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ, καὶ βασιλεύσει ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον Ἰακὼβ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, καὶ τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔσται τέλος. — Luke 1:27, 69; Mark 11:10; Matt. 1:1, 6, 20; 9:27; 12:23; 21:9; 22:42f.; John 7:42; Acts 2:30; 13:23, 34; Rom. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:8; Rev. 5:5; 22:16.

[127] Septuagint, Ps. (89) 88:45 — τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν γῆν κατέρραξας. Vulgate (89:44) — et sedem eius in terram collisisti.

[128] Origen, *Selecta in Psalmos* 88 (89), *PG* 12, col. 1548ff.; idem, *Commentaria in Evangelium secundum Matthaeum* 27:46, *PG* 13, col. 1786: Eusebius, *Demonstratio Evangelica* IV 16, *PG* 22, col. 313; idem, *Commentaria in Psalmos* 88 (89), *PG* 23, col. 1072: ὁ δὲ πᾶς λόγος τὴν ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ γένεσιν τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ θεσπίζει... ibid., col. 1113: τὰ μὲν οὖν περὶ τὸ πάθος αὐτῷ συμβάντα ἀκριβῶς ἐδηλοῦτο... Athanasius, *Expositiones in Psalmos* 88 (89), *PG* 27, col. 384ff.; ibid., col. 388: ...Οὐκ ὠφελήσει ἐχθρὸς ἐν αὐτῷ. Εἰ καὶ εἰρήκασι· Δεῦτε ἀποκτείνωμεν αὐτὸν καὶ σχῶμεν (αὐτοῖς) τὴν κληρονομίαν αὐτοῦ (Mat. 21:38) ἀλλ' ἦν ἀνόνητος τῷ Σατανᾷ καὶ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ἡ σκέψις; ibid. col. 389: καὶ συγκόψω ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς αὐτοῦ. Παραδέδονται γὰρ τῇ Ῥωμαίων στρατείᾳ καὶ διολώλασι παντελῶς; ibid. col. 392f.: Θρόνον Χριστοῦ ἐννόει τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν... οὐ γὰρ ὁ Πατὴρ ἀπώσατο... Ἰουδαῖοι δὲ μᾶλλον τοῦτο πεπράχασι... ἐσταύρωσαν αὐτὸν Ἰουδαῖοι... Τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν γῆν κατέρραξας... διὰ τοῦτο τὰς τῶν σταυρωσάντων ὑπονοίας διερμηνεύει. — Cyrillus Alexandrinus, *Explanatio in Psalmos* 88 (89), *PG* 69, col. 1212ff.: μετὰ γὰρ τὸν τοῦ Σωτῆρος σταυρὸν δειναῖς καὶ ἀφύκτοις περιπέπτωκε συμφοραῖς ἡ τῶν Ἰουδαίων συναγωγή. Παρεδόθησαν γὰρ εἰς χεῖρας ἐχθρῶν, οἳ καὶ πᾶσαν αὐτῶν ἠρήμωσαν τὴν χώραν, καὶ διεσκορπίσθησαν...κτλ. Jerome, *Breviarium in Psalmos* 88 (89), *PL* 26, col. 1087ff.: David servo meo, id est Christo Domino... Et conscindam a facie ipsius inimicos eius, Judaeos utique... Quod exprobraverunt inimici tui, Domine, Judaei Pharisaei, Sadducaeique," etc. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* XVII, Cap. 8ff., *CCSL* 48; *PL* 41, col. 542: Quae omnia de Domine Jesu intelliguntur, quando recte intelliguntur, sub nomine David," etc. These exegeses of the Church Fathers show the crucial role of Psalm 89 in the Christian contention against Judaism. In the same spirit is the verse before the last (89:52) interpreted according to the Septuagint and the Vulgate (ἀντάλλαγμα — commutatio Christi) but not according to the masoretic text. The same psalm (89:23) contains the epithets "enemy" and "wicked" (Lam. 4:12; Is. 11:4) normally used to denote Satan or the Antichrist, son of Satan (see n. 118 above), heading the cohorts of darkness. The Christian interpretation of Psalm 89 clearly illuminates the inherent meaning, the main intentions and concepts of *Psalms of Solomon* XVII.

Christian exegesis reveals the secrets of the mysterious poem and clarifies its intention. The notions of the biblical psalm were altered according to the Christian spirit and purpose.[129] Wicked Jerusalemites destroyed the throne of David, oppressed its partisans, violated the divine covenant, usurped sacred promises by force, altered the eternal mission of David's line in arrogant malevolence. The poet himself belongs to the distressed suppressed church that abuses the faithless city, and advocates the eminence of the son of David. The main line of his biting censure corresponds exactly to the classic argument clearly stressed in early Christian sources, that it was because of their crime against the Messiah of the House of David, and their contempt for his kingdom, that the Jews brought a catastrophe upon their home and country.[130]

The wicked Jerusalemites not only appropriated promises and rejected the Davidian dynasty but also "plundered the sanctuary of God as if there was no redeemer heir" (VIII 11).[131] Who was the poet referring to? This unique combination of concepts was not properly interpreted according to the prevailing method which construed it as suggesting the lawful candidate for the post of high priest which the Hasmonean government seized, who was entrusted with the inheritance and redemption of the stolen sanctities. There are, however, no grounds for such an interpretation, for there is no testimony on or evidence of such a candidate, nor of that priesthood, nor of a king, neither of David's line nor of Aaron's. Nor is it possible that Hyrcanus II earned such appreciation from the author, who envelops all of Jerusalem, from its leaders to its lowliest citizen, in a veil of contamination and evil. A careful examination of the text of the pseudo-Solomonic *Psalm* shows that the title of redeemer is not applied to an ordinary governor or priest, for his adherents pray to heaven: "Overlook us not, O our God, lest the nations swallow us up as though there were no redeemer" (VIII 30).[132] Obviously the cryptic figure of the "redeemer" or "deliverer" (as denoted by this word in the Septuagint vocabulary) has features characterizing heavenly salvation. Furthermore, the following poem says (IX I) that "when they fell away from the Lord who redeemed them"[133] Israel was "cast away from

[129] Although the author is careful not to reveal the sin of crucifixion, in order not to dispel the illusion of authenticity of the *Psalms of Solomon*. As in the pseudepigraphic works (see Chapter 2, Section D above), these *Psalms* do not contain entire apocalyptic visions or continuous plots, but poetical lyrical reactions and personal prayers, because of their artistic form and style that are faithful to the models of the biblical psalms.

[130] Matt. 23:37f.; Luke 13:34f.; I Thess. 2:14; Justin Martyr, *Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo* 72, *PG* 6; *Dialogue avec Tryphon,* ed. G. Archambault (Paris 1909); Origen, *Contra Celsum* II 13, ed. Koetschau (see n. 93 above), p. 143; idem. *PG* 11; Hippolytus, *Commentaire sur Daniel,* IV 58, ed. Lefèvre (see n. 95 above), p. 380; Tertullianus, *Adversus Judaeos* 11-13, ed. H. Tränkle (Wiesbaden 1964), p. 30ff.; Jerome, *In Sophoniam Prophetam* 1:15, *PL* 25, col. 1418ff.

[131] *Psalms of Solomon* VIII 11: τὰ ἅγια τοῦ θεοῦ διηρπάζοσαν, ὡς μὴ ὄντος κληρονόμου λυτρουμένου. In Syriac: בית קודשה דאלהא מחטפין הוו איך הו דלית דירת ופרק

[132] *Psalms of Solomon* VIII 30: ...ὡς μὴ ὄντος λυτρουμένου.

[133] *Psalms of Solomon* IX 1: ἐν τῷ ἀποστῆναι αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ κυρίου τοῦ λυτρωσαμένου αὐτοὺς κτλ. In Syriac: — כד ארחקו מן מריא פרוקהון

the inheritance." Thus the "redeemer" is aggrandized and merges with the Most High, so that his personality is clearly steeped in Christian theology.

The "redeemer heir" is thus the divine Messiah of David's dynasty who is extolled at the end of the series. The Jerusalemite covenant violaters plotted to steal his inheritance, which combines sanctities, that is, priesthood and eternal kingship, and to dispossess his congregation. How? A significant Gospel parable solves the riddle and shows its intention. A man planted a vineyard and handed it over to tenants. At harvest time he despatched servants to pick the grapes, but the tenants beat them and killed them. In the end he sent his son (that is, Christ, the Son of God—the "heir and redeemer"), and hoped they would respect and they would not dare to harm him. The criminals however were undaunted and murdered him, in order to remove "the heir" and steal the "inheritance." In revenge the vineyard owner will annihilate the treacherous tenants and entrust his vineyard to others. The parable chastises the leaders of the Jewish people and ends with a warning (according to Matthew) that because of their iniquities they will lose the kingdom of God to another loyal nation. The wicked tenants in the gospel parable are the wicked Jerusalemites of the pseudo-Solomonic *Psalms* — the murderers of the prophets, destroyers of the throne of David, plunderers of sanctities — who were not afraid of the "redeemer heir" and wantonly stole his inheritance.[134]

This complex of characteristics applied to the person of the mysterious redeemer in their definite combined significance is incised in Christology and inscribed in the pages of the New Testament, and alien to Jewish beliefs. The Christian savior himself "inherits" the whole sanctified patrimony, fulfills the divine "promises" announced to the forefathers, "redeems" his oppressed congregation and endows it with the treasures of his combined priesthood and kingship. "Deliverance" is implicit in his mission, for he "should redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21).[135] It is not the entire nation that acquires "promises" with the possessions of the "inheritance," but the Christian Messiah alone with his congregation. "Now to Abraham and his offspring were the promises made. It does not say 'And to offsprings' referring to many, but referring to one: 'And to your offspring' which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16). Those loyal to him are partners in his inheritance; they are "Abraham's offspring" and "heirs according to the

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[134] Matt. 21:33ff.; Mark 12:1ff.; Luke 20:9ff.; Origen, *In Matthaeum* 21, *PG* 13, col. 1488ff.; Ambrosius, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam* 20, *PL* 15, col. 1800; Jerome, *Commentaria in Evangelium Matthaei* 21; *PL* 26, col. 182; W. Foerster, "Die Wortgruppe Kleronomos im Neuen Testament," *ThWNT,* vol. 3 (Stuttgart 1957): 781ff. The Jews accused of murdering the prophets (Acts 7:52) crowned their iniquities with evil toward the Christian Messiah, the son of God, the only "heir" and redeemer. The plundering of the sanctuary too echoes Jesus' charge that the Temple had become a "den of robbers" (Matt. 21:13, and parallels).

[135] Luke 1:68; 2:38; 21:28; 24:21 — ὁ μέλλων λυτροῦσθαι τὸν Ἰσραήλ; Rom. 3:24.

promise" (Gal. 3:29).[136] The heavenly father destined his savior son to be the "heir of everything" and to achieve the "everlasting redemption" through his suffering. "Deliverance" was realized through his expiation and prepared his congregation to receive the "promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb. 9:15).[137] His adherents bear the seal of "that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13) which embodies "the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption" (Eph. 1:14) of the possession.[138] These characteristic messianic notions ("heir", "redeemer," "promises") with their particular combinations and content (including divine sanctities and celestial kingdom) are rooted exclusively in the Christian faith and have no logical import outside it that accords with the poem's intention.

A justified calamity was decreed against recalcitrant Jerusalem, according to the *Psalms of Solomon,* for its inhabitants schemed against the sacred patrimony of the "redeemer heir" and conspired to remove the descendant of David and his supporters. "In the arrogance of exchange" they destroyed "the throne of David" (XVII 6), maliciously replaced his kingship as prophecied: "But My people has exchanged its glory for what can do no good" (Jer. 2:11; Ps. 106:20). The wicked stole promises and the glory of the kingship from David's offspring. And with whom did they replace him? Instead of the true savior, they were persuaded to bless and worship a false Messiah, as the previous analysis (Section D above) indicated. Their sin against the redeemer led them to follow the Antichrist and brought on a calamity. That is the explanation of the internal ideological unity in the religious conception of the *Psalms of Solomon.*

Thus, also, the sins of the "wicked" Jerusalemites are not ordered haphazardly but arranged to show how they fulfilled biblical reproaches and warnings. In their arrogance the Jerusalemites "exalted themselves to the stars" like the devil and his angels. (I 5ff.). Sin completely permeated their wealth and glory. "Their houses are full of guile; that is why they have grown so wealthy; they have become fat and sleek; they pass beyond the bounds of wickedness" (Jer. 5:27f.). "So Jeshurun grew fat and kicked... He forsook the God who made him and spurned the Rock of his salvation" (Deut. 32:15). Because of robbery

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[136] Gal. 3:16ff.; 3:29 — κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν κληρονόμοι; 4:7; Rom. 4:13; 8:17; 9:5ff.; Acts 2:39; Col. 3:24; 2 Pet. 1:4.

[137] Heb. 1:2 (κληρονόμον πάντων); 6:12; 9:12 (αἰωνίαν λύτρωσιν εὑράμενος); 9:15 — οἱ κεκλημένοι τῆς αἰωνίου κληρονομίας.
H. Windisch, *Der Hebräerbrief*[2], *HNT* (Tübingen 1931); J. Moffatt, *Epistle to the Hebrews, ICC* (Edinburgh 1963, repr. of 1924 ed.); G.W. Buchanan, *To the Hebrews, AB* 36 (Garden City, N.Y. 1972).

[138] Eph. 1:13f.: ἐσφραγίσθητε τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ, ὅ ἐστιν ἀρραβὼν τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως... 2:12; Ambrosius, *Commentaria in Epistolam ad Ephesios, PL* 17, col. 375 (ad loc.); Jerome, *Commentaria in Epistolam ad Ephesios* 1:13f.; *PL* 26, col. 456ff.; Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Commentaria in Epistolam Pauli ad Ephesios* 1:13f., *PG* 66, col. 913ff.; T.K. Abbott, *Epistle to the Ephesians,* ICC (Edinburgh 1964, repr. of 1897 ed.); M. Barth, *Ephesians, AB* 34 (Garden City, N.Y. 1974).

and profanation their sanctities were befouled and they were disgusting to the Creator (II 2ff.; VIII 11ff.), as noted by the prophets (Is. 1; Jer. 7; Amos 5; etc.). "The earth abhorred them" (II 9ff.) because of their sins of profanation, lechery and fornication. "Their transgressions (even went) beyond the Gentiles before them" (I 8; VIII 8ff.).

The poet does not arbitrarily exaggerate, but bases his conception on the Bible which he adapts to his purpose. "Do not defile yourselves in those ways, for it is by such that the nations which I am casting out before you defiled themselves... and the land spewed out its inhabitants... and you must not do any of those abhorrent things... So let not the land spew you out for defiling it, as it spewed out the nation that came before you" (Lev. 18:24, 25, 26, 28). That rebuke is directed against the entire Jewish people. The land spewed them out, for they were worse than the Gentiles they had dispossessed, and "did according to their uncleanness even as their fathers" (VIII 22).[139] The New Testament too indiscriminately accuses the Jews of constantly violating the Torah and its precepts, with no differentiation of periods. That is why they were uprooted from their country and lost their heritage to the "redeemer heir" and his cohorts.[140]

What is the fate of the survivors of the calamity according to the *Psalms of Solomon*? Fleeing captured Jerusalem and taking with it the message of deliverance, a remnant is entrusted with the mission of redemption and the future of Israel. The defiled city no longer harbors a single person who "acts with compassion and truth." While the "children of the covenant" dispersed "among mingled peoples"... "they that love the congregations of the pious" migrated... ..."wandered in the desert to save their lives from evil, and precious in the eyes of the Dispersion (paroecia) was any escaped alive from them. Over the whole earth they were scattered by the wicked" (XVII 15ff.). "God showed Himself righteous in His judgements upon the nations of the earth, and the pious (servants) of God are like innocent lambs in their midst" (VIII 23). These "children of the covenant" do not return to Jerusalem in the present or dream of renewing the observance of the customs of the Old Testament, but rather scatter among the nations and yearn for their savior, for only they "are Israelites to whom (pertains) the adoption, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of

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[139] See Jer. 7:26; Lev. 26:39.

[140] Acts 7:51ff.; John 7:19; Matt. 23:31. The redeemer-heir takes over not only the earthly patrimony and the national goals but also the sanctities, that is, he wears the priestly crown (without any material temple) as well as the royal one, in exact conformity to Christian theology (e.g., Heb. 3:1ff.; 4:14ff.; 7:1ff.) and in contrast to Jewish messianism. The people of Jerusalem deserved to lose their city, country and sanctities for they stole the divine promises and destroyed the throne of David in "arrogance of exchange." The term ἄλλαγμα which creates difficulties (see nn. 119 and 121 above) is clarified by scriptural verses (Jer. 2:11; Ps. 106:20, etc.) and its connection with Psalm 89 (see n. 128) in the Septuagint version. That term refers to the blindness of those who deny Christ and arrogantly pretend to take his place and his inheritance.

the Law" (Rom. 9:4), as Paul declared.[141] Very similar is the picture in Acts (Chapter 8, etc.) of the first Christian community which fled Jerusalem and began carrying its message to the nations. The name "paroecia"—dispersion, sojourn or alien residence — was applied to the scattered congregations (and the term was adopted by most European languages),[142] for its members abide "like strangers and sojourners" in the world until their hope is fulfilled and they gather together in the new Jerusalem.[143] Wandering in the desert is a typical eschatological feature,[144] and the mixture of peoples among whom the pious are cast exemplifies the Christian view of the Roman empire, the fourth and last (according to Daniel 2:43) before the latter days.[145]

These pious men of the *Psalms of Solomon,* heirs to the covenant and guardians of the throne of David, "will inherit the promises" (XII 6) because of their savior, and pray for "mercy to the House of Jacob on the day You promised" (VII 10). The epithets applying to the pious[146] — Israel, the House of Jacob, the offspring of Abraham (IX 9; XVIII 3) — define in terms of the New Testament the chosen congregation of the Christian Messiah which inherits the patrimony of the nation and its future mission.[147] The faithful are granted affection like "a beloved son" (XIII 9) or "a first-born only-begotten son" (XVIII 4). These concepts are known in Judaism (Ps. 89:27; Ex. 4:22; mAvot. III 14) but not in the unique combination and intention, characteristic style and context of these *Psalms.* The phrase "first-born and only son" (Zech. 12:10) or "beloved and first-born son" (ibid. in the Septuagint) is based on prophecy which is a cornerstone of Christology.[148] The pious congregation of the *Psalms of Solomon* is endowed with the virtues of the "redeemer heir" like the Christian church within whose body the savior abides.[149]

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[141] Gal. 4:24ff.; 1 Cor. 11:25; Luke 22:20.

[142] παροικία — I Pet. 1:17; 2:11; 1 Epistle of Clement, salutation; 2 Epistle of Clement V 1, 5, in *Apostolic Fathers (LCL),* ed. K. Lake, vol. 1 (London 1965), pp. 8, 134; Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* IV 23.1ff.; V 18.9; V 24.14 (*LCL*), ed. K. Lake, vol. 1 (London 1953).

[143] Heb. 11:9ff.; 13:14; Eph. 2:19; Philo, *De Cherubim* (34) 120, *Philo (LCL),* ed. F.H. Colson & G.H. Whitaker, vol. 2 (London 1950); idem, *De Confusione Linguarum* (17) 77ff., ibid. vol. 4 (London 1949).

[144] Heb. 11:38; Rev. 12:6; Jerome, *Commentaria in Danielem* 11:41; *PL* 25, col. 599; Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones,* VII 17, *PL* 6, col. 794.

[145] *Psalms of Solomon* XVII 15: ...ἐν μέσῳ ἐθνῶν συμμίκτων, — Hippolyte, *Commentaire sur Daniel* IV, p. 274ff., ed. M. Lefèvre (Paris 1947): ...συμμιγεῖς μὲν ἔσονται...οὐκ ἔστιν ἓν ἔθνος ἀλλ' ἐκ πασῶν τῶν γλωσσῶν...κτλ. Rev. 17:15; R.H. Charles, *Revelation* (see n. 82 above), vol. 2, p. 72.

[146] ὅσιος — Acts 2:27; 13:34f.; Rev. 15:4; 16:5; Heb. 7:26; I Thess. 2:10; I Tim. 2:8; Tit. 1:8; Eph. 4:24; Luke 1:75; 1 Clement XIV 1 in *Apostolic Fathers* (see n. 142 above), 2 Clement I 3; VI 9; XV 3.

[147] Matt. 3:9; Luke 1:73; 3:8; 16:22ff.; 19:9; John 1:49; 8:33ff.; 12:13; Acts 3:13; 7:2ff.; Rom. 4:1ff.; 9:3ff.; 11:1ff.; 2 Cor. 11:22; Gal. 3:6ff.; 4:21ff.; Heb. 6:12ff.; 7:1ff.; Phil. 3:5.

[148] *Psalms of Solomon* XIII 9: ὡς υἱὸν ἀγαπήσεως; XVIII 4: ὡς υἱὸν πρωτότοκον μονογενῆ; John 1:14, 18 (μονογενής); 19:37; Matt. 3:17; 17:5 (ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός); Col. 1:13–15; Heb. 1:6; 1 John 4:9; Rev. 1:5-7; Justin Martyr, 1 *Apologia* 21, 33, *PG* 6; idem, *Apologies,* ed. L. Pautigny (Paris 1904); Origen, *Contra Celsum* (see n. 130 above), II 25.

[149] Rom. 8:29; 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 1:5; Col. 1:18; Heb. 12:23.

Actual historical Jewry is not destined for the next world. The gap between Israel and the nations, in these poems, corresponds to the divider between the righteous and the wicked without racial or national distinction. The value of actual ancestry and historical national provenance is denied, as within Christianity, and only the pious inherit the heritage of "Israel" and will achieve resurrection. "The destruction of the sinner is forever" (III 11) as opposed to the righteous who will arise to "the light of the Lord" (III 12). On judgement day the righteous will escape the hurtful horrors: the sword, famine, pestilence and evil beasts (XIII).[150] "The mark of God is on the righteous for their salvation" (XV 6) and calamity will lie far from them but will mercilessly destroy the sinners, "for the mark of destruction is on their forehead" (XV 9). These terrible evils were listed by Ezekiel (14:21) as was a mark on pious foreheads to ensure their rescue (9:4).

A talmudic legend relates that Gabriel was ordered "to mark the foreheads of the righteous with ink, so that the destructive angels would not overcome them, and the foreheads of the wicked with blood so that the destructive angels would overcome them." In the end severe divine justice overruled mercy and even the righteous did not escape the destroying power (bShabbat 55a). In any case, the talmudic story was not transferred from the time of the destruction of the First Temple and was not related to the end of days. On the other hand, the idea implicit in this *Psalm* evidently resembles the one in Revelation: the sword, famine, pestilence and evil beasts are ramptant during the calamity but are delayed to allow the separation of the redeemed, who have "the seal (mark) of God" on their forehead. In contrast, the unbelievers and the godless who follow the devil and support the false Messiah have "the mark of the beast" on forehead and hand, that is, the sign of the monster, which drags them to the abyss and perdition, in a rage of fire and brimstone.[151] These symbols appear in this poem: the list of afflictions in the throes of the calamity, and the "seal (mark) of God" versus the devil's "mark of destruction." Note should be taken, also, of the high value of the divine "seal" on the foreheads of the faithful symbolizing salvation in the Christian ceremony, that is, the sign of the cross, for which the Jewish religion has no analogue of equivalent prominence.[152]

The "wicked" of the *Psalms of Solomon* are the people of old, defiled Jerusalem, steeped in pollution and abominations, who desecrated the heritage

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[150] The list of calamities is here arranged according to biblical prophecies (Ezek. 14:21; 5:12ff.; Lev. 26:14ff.) and is clearly eschatological in nature. For many scholars, however, (among them Wellhausen, Ryle and James, Viteau; see nn. 15, 20, 24 above) in these *Psalms* the Roman troops assumed animal guise.

[151] Rev. 6:8; 7:3; 9:4; 13:16; 14:9ff.; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4; A. Vanhoye, "L'utilisation du livre d'Ézéchiel dans l'Apocalypse," *Bibl.* 43 (1962): 436ff.

[152] J. Daniélou, *Bible et Liturgie* (Paris 1958), p. 76ff.; F.J. Dölger, *Sphragis* (Paderborn 1911); Jerome, *Commentaria in Ezechielem* 9:4ff., *PL* 25, col. 90ff.

of David. Using the terms of the Book of Psalms, the poet sketches their disgusting portrait, like Christian exegetes who attached to the godless Jews the flaws and iniquities of the wicked in the biblical psalms: hypocrisy, deceit, robbery, money-grubbing, the perversion of laws and more.[153] A cutting instance of that tendency appears in *Psalm IV* which is subtitled "Solomon's Conversation with the Sycophants (the menpleasers)": The "unclean" man sits "in the council (assembly) of the pious" secretly plotting, his "heart is far from God, extravagant in speech, extravagant in (outward seeming) signs beyond all,"[154] that is, abounding in outward signs of deceitful false piety. He is "stern of speech in condemning sinners in judgement, and his hand is first upon him as though in zeal,"[155] but he himself is "guilty of manifold sins and wantonness. His eyes are upon every woman without distinction, his tongue lies when he makes a pact with an oath," sins in secret, is "swift to enter every house... as though guileless." The judge in heaven will discover the deeds of the "sycophants," destroy those "that live in hypocrisy in the company of the pious," and the "sycophant who speaks the Law guilefully,"[156] that insinuate themselves and "like a wily serpent, destroy the wisdom of others with corrupt words", that hasten to sin in order to "accomplish wicked desire, scattering their victims as orphans, and lay waste many houses shamefully." In the end, "let the flesh of the sycophants be rent by wild beasts, and the bones of the lawless be dishonored in the sun... God will remove them from off the earth, because with deceit they beguiled the souls of the flawless... Blessed are they that fear the Lord in their flawlessness. The Lord shall deliver them from men of deceit and wickedness."

The well of hatred flows in this *Psalm* as it does in the sermons of the New Testament. Chapter 23 of Matthew, for example, has a sermon on hypocrites: "...Scribes and Pharisees... they say and do not do... but all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the fringes of their garments... woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites because you shut the kingdom of Heaven against men... you outwardly appear righteous to men but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.... You serpents, you generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of hell?" (passim). The same hypocrites violate the laws of the Torah and figure in Isaiah's prophecy (29:13, as per the Septuagint): "This people honor me with its lips and its heart is far from me." They are "covetous" (Luke 16:14), "devour widows' houses and for a show make long prayers" (Luke 20:47). They resemble the misleaders who

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153 Athanasius, *Expositiones in Psalmos,* 34ff., *PG* 27, col. 169ff.; Jerome, *Breviarium in Psalmos* 21ff., 34ff.: *PL* 26, col. 931ff., 979ff.

154 *Psalms of Solomon* IV 2: περισσὸς ἐν σημειώσει — Sept. Ps. 59 (60): 6.

155 In Syriac: — יתיראית במליך ויתיראית באתותך יתיר מן כל אנש. הו דקשא במלוהי למחיבו לחטיא בדינא. ואידה לוקדם עלוהי איך דבטננא. והו מחיב בסוגאא דשריחותא דחטיא.

156 *Psalms of Solomon* IV 8: λαλοῦντα νόμον μετὰ δόλου; XIV 2: ἐν νόμῳ ᾧ ἐνετείλατο ἡμῖν κτλ. In Syriac (IV 8): — נסב באפא דממלל נמוסא בנכלא

"subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Titus 1:11). Also, "in the last days... men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, despisers of good, defilers of sanctities... treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasures... having a form of godliness... creep into houses and lead captive silly women laden with sins..." (II Timothy 3:1-6).[157]

Such sins were included in the portrait of the "sycophants" of the pseudo-Solomonic *Psalms* evidently for a similar purpose.[158] Scholars have sought a proper candidate to set this crown of thorns on. Most have indicated Jannaeus, as proposed by Wellhausen, for he deserves to be described as "unclean," wallowing in sin, judging cruelly and frequently robbing. Others have preferred Aristobulus II or Antipater the Idumaean. In their view the indictment is an expression of Pharisee censure of Sadducees and Hasmoneans. The "council of the pious" was interpreted as the assembly of the Great Sanhedrin, because the Greek translation uses the term "Synedrion." There are no grounds for such proposals as the *Psalms* do not contain even a trace of Sadduceeism or any Hasmonean personage. The poet was not dreaming of a talmudic Sanhedrin but used the Septuagint term generally used to render "council" or "assembly" or "tribunal."[159] The "sycophant" wears a mask of piety and aspires to join a pious fellowship, which is why he "sits in the council (assembly) of the pious." The rest of his behavior accords with the evangelical sermons cited. He displays the hypocrisy of deceitful sycophantic "Scribes and Pharisees," like them talks a lot of sanctimonious vain talk, and prays a lot, puts on display many outward "signs" such as the fringes, derides sin and is himself guilty of licentious and extortionate acts; he violates oaths, his heart is far from God; he is wily and seductive as a serpent, pursues wealth and desires, snares the innocent in his net, breaks down fences, and destroys houses, distorts Torah laws in order to mislead people.

The unclean "sycophant" wraps himself in a cloak of piety and glorifies his zeal. According to *Psalm IV*, he hastens "to condemn sinners in judgement, and his hand is first upon him" (2-3). The Torah commands stoning, and says "let the hands of the witnesses be the first against him to put him to death, and the hands of the rest of the people thereafter" (Deut. 17:7), and the same is true in the talmudic Halakha (In mSanhedrin VI 4). But what perverted law instructs

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[157] Ambrosius, *Commentaria in Epistolam ad Timotheum Secundam, PL* 17, col. 493; M. Dibelius, *Die Pastoralbriefe*[2], *HNT* (Tübingen 1931); W. Lock, *The Pastoral Epistles, ICC* (Edinburgh 1924, repr. 1959); A.T. Hanson, *Studies in the Pastoral Epistles* (London 1968).

[158] Several scholars (Hitzig, Viteau — see nn. 18, 24 above) noted this resemblance but failed to draw the proper conclusions. About such sketchy and stereotyped lists, their provenance and nature see S. Wibbing, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge im Neuen Testament* (Berlin 1959).

[159] συνέδριον — E. Hatch & H.A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint,* vol. 2 (Oxford 1897, repr. 1954), p. 1313. The problems of the Sanhedrin are clarified in Chapter 7 below.

the judge himself to attack the accused as a witness is enjoined to? The answer is given in the well-known story preserved in early Christian tradition and inserted in the Gospel according to John (8:3ff.).[160] The "Scribes and Pharisees," wishing to test and provoke Jesus, brought him a woman caught engaging in adultery and asked, "Moses in the Law commanded us that such should be stoned; but what do you say?" And the answer was, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," and his questioners left ashamed and reprimanded.[161] As in this story, the author of the *Psalms* castigates the sinful hypocrites evincing zeal for the Law, hastening to judge their fellows and cast the first stone.

An illuminating stylistic link between this *Psalm* and early Christian literature is revealed by the rare term "sycophants" or "men-pleasers."[162] The word appears only once in the Septuagint (Ps. 52:6) — "The Lord scattered the bones of sycophancy" (חנף) where the Hebrew has "the bones of your besieger" (חנך).[163] The Fathers of the Church note the difference, apply to the Lord's enemies and to the Jews the pejorative "sycophants" and the attendant curse.[164] The poet follows a not dissimilar path, for the word is used (IV 19) in a phrase derived from the biblical verse (in the Septuagint translation): "the bones of the sycophants." The term is uncommon in Greek literature, but quite common in the New Testament epistles of Paul, particularly in Chapter 2 of I Thessalonians in the course of a venomous attack on the Jews.[165] The apostle stresses the moral contrast with his foes, impure, deceitful, hypocritical, who use flattery to gain wealth and honor. In the end he rages against the wicked Jews whom wrath has already attained for eternity.

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[160] See above (n. 86) commentaries to St. John's Gospel.

[161] Augustine, *Tractatus in Joannis Evangelium* 8:1ff., *PL* 35, col. 1649: "Foris enim calumniabantur, seipsos intrinsecus non perscrutabantur, adulteram videbant se non perspiciebant. Praevaricatores Legis Legem impleri cupiebant, et hoc calumniando, non vere, tamquam adulteria castitate damnando. Audistis Judaei, audistis Pharisaei," etc. T.W. Manson, "The Pericope de Adultera," *ZNW* 44 (1952/3): 255ff.; U. Becker, *Jesus und die Ehebrecherin, BZNW* 28 (Berlin 1963); J.D.M. Derrett, Law in the New Testament (London 1970), p. 156ff.

[162] *Psalms of Solomon* IV, title: Διαλογὴ τοῦ Σαλωμὼν τοῖς ἀνθρωπαρέσκοις.

[163] *Psalms of Solomon* IV 19: Σκορπισθείησαν σάρκες ἀνθρωπαρέσκων... Septuagint, Psalm 52 (53):6 — ὁ θεὸς διεσκόρπισεν ὀστᾶ ἀνθρωπαρέσκων.

[164] Eusebius, *Commentaria in Psalmos* 52 (53):6, *PG* 23, col. 460: ὁ Σύμμαχος τοῦτον ἡρμήνευσε τὸν τρόπον 'Ο γὰρ θεὸς διεσκόρπισεν ὀστᾶ τῶν παρεμβαλλόντων περὶ σέ... καὶ ὁ 'Ακύλας... Jerome, *Breviarium in Psalmos* 52 (53):6, *PL* 26, col. 978: "Dixit insipiens, populus Judaicus, sive diabolus... Deus dissipavit ossa eorum, qui hominibus placent." Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 52 (53):6, *PL* 36, col. 618: "Quoniam Deus dissipavit ossa hominibus placentium. Volentes placere hominibus, timuerunt perdere locum... In quo loco crucifixerunt Dominum, quem ideo crucifixerunt ne perderent et locum et regnum, non ibi sunt Judaei, Deus ergo sprevit eos."

[165] Gal. 1:10; Eph. 6:6; Col. 3:22; 1 Thess. 2:4ff.; Joannes Chrysostomus, *Homiliae in Epistolam Primam ad Thessalonicenses* 2:4ff.; *PG* 62, col. 408; 2 Clement XIII 1, in *Apostolic Fathers* (see n. 142 above); J.E. Frame, *Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians* (see n. 89 above).

Against the "sycophants", the poet of the *Psalms of Solomon* sets the "flawless" for whom the wicked have laid a trap of deceit (IV 5, 22). Their Lord will save those "that fear the Lord in their flawlessness" (IV 23), "remove far from the innocent the lips of transgressors" (XII 4) and scatter the latters' bones before the pious who will "inherit the promises of the Lord" (XII 6). The "innocent" are not the ordinary Jews, but the "pious" who escaped from polluted Jerusalem and remain dispersed among the nations "like innocent lambs" (VIII 23) until the redeemer "shepherd" will gather them together and guide their flock (XVII 26, 40). This set of epithets adorns Christendom as well. Paul warns against scoundrels likely to mislead the innocent (Romans 16:18). The devotees of the Church are purified and flawless, achieve sublime perfection (Rev 14:5) and "there was no lie found in their mouths for they are without blemishes."[166] Their savior is the "good shepherd" who "gives his life for his lambs" (John 10:11) sends his disciples to "the lost sheep of the House of Israel" (Matt, 10:6) to spread his word "like sheep among wolves" (Matt, 10:16). In the end of days he will gather the sheep "to inherit the kingdom" (Matt, 25:31ff).[167]

The morality and devoutness of the pious in the *Psalms of Solomon* correspond very well to the main original Jewish elements of the Christian faith. The righteous man "makes atonement for (sins of) ignorance by fasting and afflicting his soul" (III 8) and humbly awaits mercy. His Lord will cleanse "from sins a soul when it makes confession, when it makes acknowledgement... and to whom does He forgive sins, except to those who have sinned" (IX 6-7).[168] "He that makes ready his back for strokes" (X 2) is blessed, for his sins will be cleansed through his torment.[169] These ethical dicta do not seem to deviate from Judaism but their religious core, conjunction, and exclusivity betoken Christian piety requiring fasting, prayer, confession and readiness for submitting to flagellation.[170] The righteous man of the *Psalms* does not offer sacrifices, maintain Sabbath and holiday customs, study the Torah, or practice any of the other traditions typical of pious Jews of the Second Temple period. He is exempt from all the ceremonials and precepts, which the New Testament canceled.

These *Psalms* have no lack of praise for the Law. "Faithful is the Lord to them that love Him in truth, to them that endure His chastening, to them that walk in the righteousness of His commandments, in the law which He commanded us

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166 Eph. 1:4; Phil. 2:15; Col. 1:22; 1 Clement L 2; Ignatius to the Trallians, XIII 3, in the *Apostolic Fathers,* vol. 1, ed. K. Lake (see n. 142 above). Jesus himself is a model for the innocent and blameless pure: Heb. 7:26. Cf. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History,* III 5.3 (see n. 142 above).

167 Luke 10:3; 1 Clement XVI 1ff.; 2 Clement V 3, in *Apostolic Fathers,* vol. 1 (see n. 142 above).

168 Matt. 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32; 2 Clement II 4ff., in *Apostolic Fathers,* vol. 1 (see n. 142 above).

169 Septuagint, Is. 50:6; Ps. 37 (38): 18; Prov. 3:12 — Heb. 12:6; Matt. 10:17; 20:19; 27:30; Mark 15:19.

170 1 Clement LII 1ff.; LIII 1ff.; Ignatius to the Romans VI 3, in *Apostolic Fathers,* vol. 1 (see n. 142 above).

that we might live" (XIV 1-2). The poet is not expressing a Pharisee viewpoint, as many scholars have suggested, but stresses the love of truth and sincere devotion to the Torah, as opposed to the hypocrites who utter "the law guilefully" whom he castigated in *Psalm IV*. The first epistle of John cautions in similar terms: "He that says, I know him, and keeps not his commandment, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected" (2:4-5). Those faithful to him love him "not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (ibid. 3:18) and keep the commandments scrupulously. Devout Christians keep the divine commandments and the faith of Jesus "righteous before God, walking blameless in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord" (Luke 1:6). Righteousness and commandments are required in the Church not in their pristine biblical sense. According to Paul (Rom. 10:3ff.), godless Jews "did not submit to God's righteousness, for Christ is the end (purpose) of the Law, so that righteousness (justification) may come to all who believe in him." Consequently, "righteousness based on the Law" which man will do and live by (according to Lev. 18:5) was fulfilled in the Christian faith. The Sermon on the Mount too supports the Law and requires the fulfillment of its detailed precepts (in the Matt. 5:17 version) as interpreted by the New Testament.[171]

In these pseudo-Solomonic *Psalms* how is man's fate decided between salvation and perdition? "Our works are subject to our own choice and power to do right or wrong in the works of our hands... he that does righteousness lays up life for himself with the Lord, and he that does wrong forfeits his life to destruction." Compensation is meted out to the individual according to his behavior and man cannot hide from the eye of Providence (IX 3ff.). The stress on the free will of every person and his freedom to choose his path between good and bad expresses, in the view of many scholars, a Pharisee outlook such as is evident in many talmudic passages (e.g., mAvot III 15). These conclusions disregard very similar declarations of ecclesiastical writers which in almost identical language emphasize the responsibility of the individual and the choice submitted for his individual decision.[172] For everyone determines his own path, and sins and errors should not be blamed on divine decree. The poet's faith does

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[171] W.D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (Cambridge 1963); II Cor. 3:12ff.; 1 Clement III 4, in *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. 1 (see n. 142): ἡ δικαιοσύνη... ἐν τοῖς νομίμοις τῶν προσταγμάτων αυτοῦ πορεύεσθαι — *Psalms of Solomon* XIV 2: τοῖς πορευομένοις ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ προσταγμάτων αὐτου...κτλ.

[172] *Psalms of Solomon* IX 4: τὰ ἔργα ἡμῶν ἐν ἐκλογῇ καὶ ἐξουσίᾳ τῆς ψυχῆς ἡμῶν...κτλ. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* I 17, *PG* 8; idem (*GCS* 52), ed. O. Stählin & L. Früchtel, vol. 2 (Berlin 1960), p. 54: ...τῆς ψυχῆς ἐχούσης τὴν ἐξουσίαν τῆς ὁρμῆς καὶ ἀφορμῆς...; Justin Martyr, 1 *Apologia* 10, 43, *PG* 6; idem, *Dialogus* 88 (see n. 130 above); Tertullianus, *Adversus Marcionem* II 6, *PL* 2; Irenaeus, *Contra Haereses* IV 37, *PG* 7; Origen, *De Principiis*, I Praefatio 5, *PG* 11; ibid. II 9.2; ibid. III 1.6; idem (*GCS* 22), ed. P. Koetschau (Leipzig 1913).

not differ from theirs. The *Psalms* do not embody a one-sided inclination favoring free choice above a deterministic philosophy. As far as they are concerned, God "knows the secrets of the heart before they come to pass" (XIV 8). His compassion prevents sin (XVI 3ff.), his followers pray to him not to press them "lest through necessity we sin" (V 6). The *Psalms* do not resolve the contradiction between predestination and human choice. Such a chasm between two poles occurs also in the New Testament: Discrimination between the redeemed and the rejected before their creation coexists with calls for repentance that is dependent on free individual will and paves the way to salvation.[173]

The portrait of the anointed redeemer is drawn in the flowery hymn glorifying him that concludes these pseudonymous *Psalms* (its initial verses have already been dealt with above[174]). "A psalm of Solomon with a song to the king", who is expected on the day of deliverance, first of all scourges and curses the Jerusalemite "wicked" who destroyed the throne of David, usurped the "promises," despised sanctity and produced calamity. After the complaint and the lamentation for the catastrophe, the poem develops into a prayer for the emergence of the miraculous redeemer (XVII 21ff.): "Behold, O Lord, and raise up unto them their king, the son of David, at the time in which You see, O God, that he may reign over Israel, Your servant... purge Jerusalem from nations that trample it down to destruction... thrust out sinners from the inheritance... destroy the pride of the sinner as a potter's vessel, with a rod of iron he shall break" their existence, "destroy the godless nations with the word of his mouth... and he shall gather together a holy people whom he shall lead in righteousness, and he shall judge the tribes of the people that has been sanctified... he shall not suffer unrighteousness to lodge any more in their midst, nor shall there dwell with them any man that knows wickedness" but all "are sons of their God... and neither sojourner nor alien shall sojourn with them any more."

The savior will have "the (Gentile) nations to serve him under his yoke, and he shall glorify the Lord before the whole earth and purge Jerusalem, making it holy as of old. Nations shall come from the ends of the earth to see his glory, bringing as gifts its ailing sons, and to see the glory of the Lord with which God glorified it. And he, the righteous king, taught of God" will rule them impeccably, for all are "holy and their king the anointed—Lord. He shall not put his trust in horse and rider and bow, nor shall he multiply for himself gold and silver for war...." ... He will have mercy on all the nations" who will bow "in fear before him, for he will smite the earth with the word of his mouth forever. He will bless the people of the Lord with wisdom and gladness, and he himself (will be) pure from sin, so that he may rule a great people, chastise rulers

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[173] Matt. 3:8; Acts 8:22; I Tim. 2:4; Rom. 9:11; Eph. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13.

[174] At the beginning of Section E.

and exterminate sinners by the might of his word.... God will make him mighty by means of His holy spirit, and wise by means of the spirit of understanding, with strength and righteousness.... He will be shepherding the flock of the Lord faithfully and righteously." None of his people will be left weak (or ill) for "he will lead them all equally and there will be no malice among them to oppress" each other. "This is the majesty of the King of Israel whom God knew to raise over the house of Israel... His words are more refined than costly gold. In the assemblies he will judge the tribes of the sanctified people; his words are like the words of the holy ones in the midst of sanctified peoples."

The prayer ends in the last poem, *Psalm XVIII.* "A psalm of Solomon on the anointed (of the) Lord" expresses the hope that the merciful one who loves Abraham's offspring, like his "first born, only son, will cleanse Israel against the day of mercy and blessing, against the day of choice when He brings back His anointed. Blessed are those born in those days to see the goodness of the Lord which He shall perform for the generation to come, under the chastening rod of the Lord's anointed... a good generation in fear of God in the days of mercy."

The miracles of redemption are reflected in an Old Testament mirror, but rooted in Christianity, their signs and portents inscribed on New Testament tablets. The Christian savior is to exclude wicked nations from the inheritance, and "no unclean or vicious person shall come into it," the feet of sinners and idolators shall not tread there, for they have no share in His kingdom. Isaiah's prophecy (52:1) forbids the entry of the "uncircumcised and unclean," but this *Psalm,* like Revelation, avoids disqualifying the uncircumcised, for circumcision has lost all value.[175] The Christian Messiah will shatter wicked forces like "clay vessels,"[176] exactly as in the *Psalm,* will judge all the nations, destroy the wicked "with the word of his mouth,"[177] glorify the name of God and himself be glorified,[178] gather the tribes of Israel,[179] and have mercy on all the nations.[180] His faithful will assume the "yoke" of his rule.[181] He himself, like God's first

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[175] Rev. 21:27; 22:15; Rom. 2:25 ff.; The Epistle of Barnabas IX 4 in *Apostolic Fathers,* vol. 1 (see n. 142). While there are biblical instances (e.g., Joel 4:17) in which "strangers" are not coupled with "uncircumcized" who will not tread the Jerusalem of the future, the omission in the *Psalms of Solomon* is not accidental in view of their total systematic disregard of all Jewish ritual. Cf. Is. 35:8; Ez. 44:9.

[176] *Psalms of Solomon* XVII 23 — Septuagint, Ps. 2:9; Rev. 2:27.

[177] The verse quoted from *Psalms of Solomon* (XVII 24) combines the image of the "rod of iron" wielded by the Messiah (Ps. 2:9) with the decisive blow of "the word of his mouth" (Is. 11:4 in the Septuagint) in order to describe his triumph and rule as in Rev. 19:15. Such total harmony cannot possibly be attributed to pure coincidence.

[178] *Psalms of Solomon* XVII 30—John 17:1 ff.; 13:31; Phil. 2:11; 1 Pet. 4:11.

[179] *Psalms of Solomon* XVII 26, 28, 43—Rev. 7:4 ff.; 21:12; James 1:1; Matt. 10:1 ff.; 19:28; Mark 6:7 ff.; Luke 9:1 ff.; 22:30.

[180] *Psalms of Solomon* XVII 34—Rev. 5:9; 7:9; Rom. 9:30–32.

[181] *Psalms of Solomon* XVII 30—Septuagint, Soph. 3:9; Matt. 11:29f.; Didache VI 2, in *Apostolic Fathers,* vol. 1 (see n. 142 above).

born, only son, Abraham's only offspring, is the perfect shepherd who will tend his flock, deliver his congregation from all harm or sickness. He will not allow the slightest evil in it, and purify it to be his chosen people.[182]

The messianic picture in *Psalm XVII* does not include even the minutest detail that does not fit the picture of the Christian savior. All the Old Testament lines and labels merge into evangelical Christology. While most are ostensibly congruous with and planted in Judaism, their precise correspondence with the principles and terminology of the New Testament indicate their covert intention. Furthermore, the *Psalm* exhibits a number of salient points typical of a clearly Christian conception. The savior does not destroy his enemies and establish his supremacy through military and material means, but operates in the manner of Christian salvation.[183] His perfect knowledge and wisdom come "from God" and not from man, as claimed by the great Christian "teacher" who spreads his faith and teaches it by virtue of his sovereign authority.[184] The noble redeemer in the *Psalm* is free of all sin, like the Christian, who was blameless,[185] without iniquity or falsehood (according to Isaiah, Chapter 53). Equality prevails in his kingdom, and oppression is forbidden, just as Jesus discourages arrogance in his presence, and requires modesty, humility and fraternity.[186]

"His words are more refined than costly gold,"[187] says the pseudo-Solomonic *Psalm,* while the biblical Psalm 12:7 says: "The words of the Lord are pure words, silver purged in an earthen crucible, refined sevenfold." For early Christianity, God ("The Lord" — *Kyrios* in the Septuagint) is the heavenly

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[182] *Psalms of Solomon* XVII 31, 37ff. Jesus Christ is the shepherd and perfect healer of his flock, who immediately makes affliction disappear and, as in the *Psalms of Solomon* (XVII 40), leaves no room for diseases or ailments: Mark 6:34, 56; Matt. 8:14ff.; 9:35ff.; Luke 5:12ff.; John 5:3ff.; 10:11ff. This meaning is verified by the Syriac version, *Psalms of Solomon* XVII 40: רעא מרעיתה דמריא בזדיקותא ובהימנותא ולא נשבוק דאנש נתכרה במרעיתה.

[183] Christian messianism, which is based on the notion of the "Servant of God" who suffers and is tormented for the sake of many, totally opposes ultimate redemption through military or other physical means; see Matt. 8:17; 26:28; Mark 8:31; 14:24; John 1:29; 18:36; Acts 8:32ff.; Rev. 5:6ff.; 7:9ff.; 12:11; 19:6ff.; etc. Ancient Judaism, however, rejected that idea and believed in national renascence that would be achieved through practical political and even military means as is shown by the Bar Kokhva revolt (yTa'anit IV 68dff.) which was supported by the ordinary people as well as the spiritual leadership. The Church Fathers testify to the character of Jewish messianic belief opposed to the Christian: Hippolytus, *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium* IX 30 (*GCS* 26), ed. P. Wendland (Leipzig 1916); Origen, *Contra Celsum* I 54, ed. P. Koetschau (n. 93 above); Jerome, *Commentaria in Michaeam Prophetam* 4:11ff., *PL* 25.

[184] *Psalms of Solomon* XVII 32—Matt. 7:29; 13:54; 22:16; John 7:14ff.; 8:28; Mark 1:22; 12:14; Luke 18:18; etc.

[185] *Psalms of Solomon* XVII 36: καθαρὸς ἀπὸ ἁμαρτίας; John 1:29; 8:46; 2 Cor. 5:21—τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:19; 2:22.

[186] *Psalms of Solomon* XVII 41—Matt. 20:26f.; 23:8; Luke 22:26; Acts 2:44; Rom. 8:29; Eph. 4:4; 1 Clement XVI 1ff., in *Apostolic Fathers,* vol. 1 (see n. 142 above).

[187] *Psalms of Solomon* XVII 43: τὰ ῥήματα αὐτοῦ πεπυρωμένα ὑπὲρ χρυσίον τὸ πρῶτον τίμιον.

savior,[188] and his words were exalted as the purest and most sublime.[189] This metaphor already appears in the New Testament[190] and by the same token the Messiah's words in the *Psalm* are elevated to divine rank[191] and equated with God's. The poet adds, "His words are like the words of the holy ones in the midst of sanctified peoples,"[192] and the Syriac translation has exactly the same version. What is the meaning of this surprising identification of the Messiah's words and those of the "holy ones?" The covert intention becomes clear in the light of his refined words, and again attains the Christian target. The sayings of the Christian savior are spread among his congregations and planted among the nations. The "holy ones" are not heavenly angels, but rather the "innocent" pious dispersed among the nations and faithful to their savior. "Sanctified peoples" here recall the "tribes of the sanctified people" (in XVII 26, 43) but the plurality of nations is stressed here. The Christian church calls its adherents "holy ones," and also "the sanctified in Christ," meaning by the Lord anointed, sanctified in his spirit, who are destined to be gathered together in his inheritance.[193] In what other religion are there "holy ones" scattered among "sanctified peoples," speaking messianic words as lofty and refined as divine voices, praying for the salvation of "the son of David" and inheriting the patrimony of Israel?

A Christian tone again emerges in the concluding verses of this hymn to the savior. In the last *Psalm* the poet expresses his longing for "the day of mercy and blessing... the day of choice when He brings back His anointed."[194] Both the

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[188] Matt. 7:21; 22:45; Mark 12:37; Luke 20:44; Acts 1:21; Rom. 1:4; 1 Pet. 3:15, etc.

[189] Origen, *Selecta in Psalmos* 11 (12):7, *PG* 12: τὰ λόγια κυρίου λόγια ἁγνά, ἀργύριον πεπυρωμένον... λόγια παρὰ τοῖς οὐκ ἐκ τῆς μερίδος τοῦ Χριστοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν ἁγνά. Jerome, *Breviarium in Psalmos* 11 (12):7, *PL* 26; Cyrillus Alexandrinus, *Explanatio in Psalmos* 11 (12):7, *PG* 69: ...τοῦ Σωτῆρος τὰ λόγια.

[190] As in this *Psalm*, the New Testament has "purified gold" (in Rev. 3:18; 1 Pet. 1:7) to symbolize the faith in Christ, rather than "purified silver" of the biblical psalm. Close stylistic links (as in n. 177 above) as well as notional ones point to the essential interdependence of these *Psalms* attributed to Solomon and New Testament texts.

[191] The Christian versions should be compared with the ancient Jewish commentaries—ySanhedrin IV 22a; bRosh Ha-Shanah 21b; *Midrash Tehilim—Shoḥer Tov* to Ps. 12, Buber ed. (see n. 124 above); *Yalkut Shim'oni* to Ps. 12, mark 658 (see n. 124); Leviticus Rabbah XXVI 1, Margaliot ed. (see n. 100 above); *Yalkut ha-Makhiri* to Ps. 12, mark 19ff., Buber ed. (see n. 124 above).

[192] *Psalms of Solomon* XVII 43: οἱ λόγοι αὐτοῦ ὡς λόγοι ἁγίων ἐν μέσῳ λαῶν ἡγιασμένων.

[193] 1 Cor. 1:1f.: Παῦλος κλητὸς ἀπόστολος...ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, κλητοῖς ἁγίοις...; ibid. 6:11; 7:14; Heb. 2:11; 10:10, 14, 29; 13:12; Eph. 5:26; Acts 20:32; 26:18; I Clement, salutation, in *Apostolic Fathers,* vol. 1 (see n. 142 above); Didache X 5 ibid.; Athanasius, *Expositiones in Psalmos* 15 (16); *PG* 27, col. 101: ἁγίους εἶναί φησι τοὺς ἡγιασμένους ἐν πνεύματι.

[194] *Psalms of Solomon* XVIII 5: εἰς ἡμέραν ἐλέους ἐν εὐλογίᾳ, εἰς ἡμέραν ἐκλογῆς ἐν ἀνάξει χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ. The combination of the concepts of heavenly grace and truth with a covenant for the elect (plural) appears in the Septuagint and Vulgate versions of Ps. 89:3-4, in contrast to the Hebrew (89:4) "I have made a covenant with my chosen one. I have sworn to my servant David." Septuagint, Ps. (89) 88:3-4: ὅτι εἶπας Εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἔλεος οἰκοδομηθήσεται ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς ἑτοιμασθήσεται

concept and wording of the verse indicate a Christian source. Those favoring the Church are the "chosen," destined to enter and enjoy the kingdom of heaven, for the "choice" of mercy distinguishes between the delivered and those doomed to perdition.[195] The *Psalm* links the "day of choice" to the great miracle of the return of "His anointed." The noun here probably denotes the action of raising, elevating or bringing back, as in classical Greek literature the related verb was already used in connection with the raising of the dead from the depths of Hades.[196] The New Testament uses it to describe the miracle of the resurrection of the Christian (anointed=) Messiah, whose father sent him to suffering and miserable mankind to anounce his redemption and die in torment, in order to "raise" him from the abyss of destruction and complete everlasting deliverance.[197] The combination of "choice" with "the return of the anointed" in the *Psalm* corresponds perfectly to Christian principles.

And yet scholars have labored to explain "the return of the anointed" in their accustomed way, so as not to diverge from the prevailing method. One group finds in the concept the suggestion of a hidden Messiah antedating the Creation, and appearing only at the end of days. The Creator will then elevate (Viteau) or return and present (Ryle and James, Gray, Hartom) or bring out (Kamenetzky) His anointed from his hiding place. Another group (Wellhausen, Kittel) proposes the rise of the anointed to power. A third opinion (Menahem Stein) tampers with the text to obtain "the kingdom of the anointed" instead of "the rise (return) of the anointed."[198] All these attempts to circumvent or skip over the obstacle cut the expression out of its true ground. There is no sense in or reason for blurring the linguistic and ideational connection with the world of the

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ἡ ἀλήθειά σου, Διεθέμην διαθήκην τοῖς ἐκλεκτοῖς μου, ὤμοσα Δαυὶδ τῷ δούλῳ μου. Vulgate, Ps. 89:2-3: "Quoniam dixisti, in aeternum misericordia aedificabitur in coelis, praeparabitur veritas tua in eis. Disposui testamentum electis meis, juravi David servo meo." The Septuagint and Vulgate text fits the Christian versions (see the note below) and the conception figuring in these so-called Solomonic psalms.

[195] Rom. 9:11ff.: ἡ κατ' ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις; 1 Thess. 1:4; 2 Pet. 1:10; Matt. 22:14: Πολλοὶ γάρ εἰσιν κλητοί, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοί. Matt. 24:22; Mark 13:20, 22, 27; Luke 18:7; 23:35; Rom. 8:33; 16:13; Col. 3:12; 1 Tim. 5:21; 2 Tim. 2:10; Tit. 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:1; 2:4, 6, 9; 2 John 1:13; Rev. 17:14.

[196] Hesiod, *Theogony* 626 (*LCL*), ed. H.G. Evelyn White (London 1959); Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1023 (τῶν φθιμένων ἀνάγειν), (*LCL*), ed. H.W. Smyth, vol. 2 (London 1957); Euripides, *Alcestis,* 985ff. (*LCL*), ed. A.S. Way, vol. 4 (London 1964): οὐ γὰρ ἀνάξεις ποτ' ἔνερθεν κλαίων τοὺς φθιμένους ἄνω. Plato, *The Republic* VII (6) 521 c, (*LCL*) ed. P. Schorey, vol. 1 (London 1956): πῶς τις ἀνάξει αὐτοὺς εἰς φῶς, ὥσπερ ἐξ "Αιδου λέγονται δή τινες εἰς θεοὺς ἀνελθεῖν.

[197] Rom. 10:7 — Χριστὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναγαγεῖν; Heb. 13:20 — ὁ ἀναγαγὼν ἐκ νεκρῶν τὸν ποιμένα...κτλ. Such a meaning is inherent also in Ezekiel's vision (37:12) as per the Septuagint: καὶ ἀνάξω ὑμᾶς ἐκ τῶν μνημάτων ὑμῶν...κτλ.

[198] The exegeses noted above (nn. 15, 19, 20, 23, 24, 30) contain proposals for emendations of the text (n. 194) to adapt it to prevailing theories. Listing all these proposals here is neither useful nor helpful. The specific meaning of this unique ambiguous expression is well understood, despite tortuous explanations as e.g. in T.W. Manson, "Miscellanea Apocalyptica," *JTS* 46 (1945): 41f.; E. Sjöberg, *Der verborgene Menschensohn in den Evangelien* (Lund 1955), p. 41ff.

New Testament. Talmudic tradition includes a colorful array of opinions and stories on the Messiah—God's anointed, his nature, and era,[199] but the rise of "the son of David" from the depth of the netherworld, linked to the choice of mercy by those faithful to him, indicates a Christian theological substructure.

The savior and redeemer in these *Psalms*—the one who "inherits" divine "promises," a "son of David" who disdains all corporeality and exudes only pure spirituality, takes possession of the sacred patrimony, inherits and redeems the treasures of kingship and priesthood, gathers the flock of the "innocent" and those dispersed since the "throne of David" was destroyed, the "shepherd" who saves and protects his chosen lambs from all danger, weakness or illness, who demonstrates divine wisdom and unblemished righteousness, purifies his inheritance of the contamination by the wicked, and extends his mercy to all the nations, who produces lofty sayings adopted by "holy ones," returns from the netherworld to deliver his chosen congregation—does wear an Israelite cloak and Old Testament prophecies, but the heart of the church beats in him.

For a moment the mask concealing his personality is removed, and the poet applies a divine epithet as per the Christian view: "the anointed (Messiah) Lord" (XVII 32).[200] As the expression presents difficulties to the prevailing method exegetes generally deny its importance and suggest that it was a Christian slip of the pen or correction, such as occur in the Septuagint. The expression accords very well, however, with the tone and content of the poetry, figures identically in all the Greek manuscripts and the Syriac translation, and shows no signs of any deviation or omission. There was no mistake in the redaction or copying, but only in modern research. "The anointed Lord" is not here by chance. The strange dualism appears in the previous verse as well (XVII 31): "And to see the glory of the Lord which God has glorified."[201] The last *Psalm* (XVIII) too repeats the phrase twice, once in the title ' "the anointed (of the) Lord"—and once in verse 7—"the chastening rod of the Lord's anointed."[202] In fact, the

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[199] J. Klausner, *Ha-Ra'yon ha-Meshiḥi,* vol. 2 (see n. 101 above), p. 129ff.

[200] *Psalms of Solomon* XVII 32: βασιλεὺς αὐτῶν χριστὸς κύριος. In Syriac: — ומלכהון משיחא מריא; Luke 2:11 — σωτήρ, ὅς ἐστιν χριστὸς κύριος... The linkage of the epithets is planted in Luke (see n. 125 above) whose hymns sound a tune resembling that of these *Psalms.* The paired epithets figure among the biblical supports known in early Christianity (Justin Martyr, 1 *Apologia* 55, *PG* 6) and is based on the distortion of the text (Lam. 4:20): "The breath of our life, the Lord (Messiah) anointed." The desired textual change in the spirit of Christianity (instead of the Lord's anointed) was inserted in the manuscripts of the Septuagint and also appears in early Christian sources. J. Daniélou, "Christos Kyrios," *Recherches de Science Religieuse,* vol. 39, *Mélanges Jules Lebreton* I (Paris 1951): 338ff.; idem, *Études d'Exegèse Judéo-Chrétienne* (Paris 1966), p. 7: "En ajoutant des mots qui rendaient plus précise l'application des textes au Christ, les judéo-chrétiens n'avaient pas le sentiment de fausser l'Écriture."

[201] *Psalms of Solomon* XVII 31: καὶ ἰδεῖν τὴν δόξαν κυρίου, ἣν ἐδόξασεν αὐτὴν ὁ θεός. In Syriac: — ולמחזא תשבוחתה דמריא הי דשבחה אלהא. The commentators as usual maintain that the glory applies to Jerusalem and not to the Lord.

[202] ἔτι τοῦ χριστοῦ κυρίου — (v. 7) ὑπὸ ῥάβδον παιδείας χριστοῦ κυρίου...

grammatical form, with both nouns in the genitive, can be construed as either "the anointed of the Lord" or "the anointed Lord." The same sort of dualism in the features of the anointed and the deity already appears in the expression "redeemer heir" (VIII 30) as noted above, which fuses with the supreme "redeemer" in heaven (IX 1). His double nature emerges from the obscurities of the *Psalms* and derives from the well-known Christian theological conception which glorifies and elevates the savior son to the level of his heavenly Father.

The landscape of the redeemed inheritance is bereft of all Jewish features that do not suit Christianity. The "Psalm of Solomon to expectation" (XI) extols new Jerusalem, radiant and jubilant, watching her sons gather from all parts of the world. The inspiring picture is crowned with celestial clouds, and adorned with prophecies and consolations. But the Temple has vanished and is completely obliterated. There is no trace of altars and offerings or services of priests and Levites. Scholars have noted a similar passage, small and fragmentary, in the apocryphal *Book of Baruch* (IV 36 ff.). That book, however, is not mentioned in the Jewish heritage, its time and provenance have not been adequately clarified, and in any case it can be of little help in the present matter.[203] In contrast to those shaky hypotheses, the obvious resemblance between that description and the picture of the messianic kingdom in the Christian version has not been properly demonstrated and stressed. In Revelation, New Jerusalem descends from heaven, opens its gates to the tribes of Israel and to many nations who worship the redeemer son. No temple is built there, for its temple is God and His anointed (21:22). The old Temple is doomed to destruction, and is not to be rebuilt in any physical sense.[204]

In the dream of the poet who wrote these *Psalms,* the future Jerusalem is reflected according to Christian visions. The absence of the Temple, in complete

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[203] A Rahlfs, *Septuaginta* (see n. 1 above), vol. 2, p. 748 ff.; E. Schürer, *Geschichte* (see n. 23), vol. 3[4], p. 460 ff.; R.H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha* (see n. 23), vol. 1, *The Book of Baruch* (by O.S. Whitehouse), p. 569 ff.; R.H. Pfeiffer, *History of the New Testament Times with an Introduction to Apocrypha* (New York 1949), p. 409 ff.; W. Pesch, "Die Abhängigkeit des 11. salomonischen Psalmes vom letzten Kapitel des Buches Baruch," *ZAW* 67 (1955): 251 ff.; B.N. Wambacq, "L'unité du livre de Baruch," *Bibl.* 47 (1966): 574 ff.; C.A. Moore, "Toward the Dating of the Book of Baruch," *CBQ* 36 (1974): 312 ff.; H. Schmid, "Baruch und die ihm zugeschriebene Apokryphe und Pseudepigraphische Literatur," *Judaica* (Zurich 1974): 54 ff.; A.H. Gunneweg, "Das Buch Baruch," *JSHRZ* III 2 (Gütersloh 1975), p. 165 ff.; D.G. Burke, *The Poetry of Baruch* (Chico Calif. 1982).

[204] Joannes Chrysostomus, *Adversus Judaeos,* V 1 ff.; *PG* 48, col. 884 ff.; Acts 7:48; *Epistle of Barnabas* XVI 1 ff., in *Apostolic Fathers,* vol. 1 (see n. 142 above). This negative attitude toward the existence of a physical temple in the future Jerusalem, an attitude clearly evident in pseudepigraphic literature and the Qumran scrolls (see Chapter 2, nn. 77–78), is essential and typical of the Christian faith, according to which the church of Jesus, where his body is reflected, and Christ himself are the only true temple. John 2:21; 4:21; 1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 1:18 ff.; 2:18 ff.; 1 Pet. 2:4 ff. Consequently the author of the *Psalms of Solomon* only hints ambiguously and cryptically how the savior, the "redeemer-heir," acquires sanctities including priesthood (see nn. 131, 140) associated with the royal divine authority.

opposition to the established Jewish tradition, is not an accidental or isolated detail.[205] In the city shining in heavenly splendor, the seat of the old Torah and its precepts has been totally eradicated. The Land of Israel is not rejuvenated for the purpose of real Jewish renascence, but only for the purified and chosen "holy ones" who have abandoned unclean Jerusalem, rid themselves of the burden of its ancient laws, and now settle in the kingdom of their savior, and behave as stipulated by the New Testament.

The examination of all aspects of the *Psalms of Solomon* thus lead to a single firm conclusion. The work's inner nature and hidden meaning become clear and its riddles are solved as its symbols, concepts, notions and expressions all combine in a tissue of Christian theology. The mysterious wicked dragon, the calamity of defiled Jerusalem, its licentious population, the destruction of the throne of David and the flight of its partisans, the flock of innocent pious men against their hypocritical foes, a Jerusalem that is restored with no Jewish national feature, the resurrection of the son of David and the lofty attributes of the redeemer heir, all join in forming a visionary drama and religious production which embody the beliefs and symbols of the Church. The *Psalms* were composed according to Hebrew models and cast in the mold of Old Testament psalms. The style of ancient Hebrew prayer is carefully preserved. No patently Christian elements are included, nor are the typical apocalyptical and eschatological features. The poet is very careful not to go outside the artistic framework, not to sound any tones that might counter the imaginary atmosphere. No real names are given and no real events described that are outside the boundaries of the Old Testament background. But this ancient covering of dilute and shallow Jewishness suits the hidden purpose perfectly. King Solomon's melodies sound like gospel songs.

The ramified psudepigraphical literature demonstrates how widespread is the method of artificial disguise to raise the value of a work and provide it with the aura of sanctity, wrap it in pretty clothes and crown it with the name of a famous person. These means were adopted by Christian propaganda. For its representatives and spokesmen the biblical forefathers and heads of the nation of olden times were chosen. Justin Martyr of the second century, for example, accuses the Jews (in the course of his debate) of deleting parts of the Scriptures and quotes fictitious verses from Ezra and Jeremiah.[206] Apocryphal prophecies and visions that are based on the Bible and are transparently tendentious were retained in the recesses and branches of the Church.[207] Among the saints who

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[205] E. Lohmeyer, *Lord of the Temple* (Edinburgh & London 1961), p. 20ff.; T. Holtz, *Die Christologie der Apokalypse des Johannes*, *TUGAL* 85 (Berlin 1962), p. 195.

[206] Justin Martyr, *Dialogus* 72, *PG* 6; see n. 130 above.

[207] J. Daniélou, *Théologie du Judéo-Christianisme* (Tournai 1958), p. 21: "...un certain nombre d'apocryphes de l'Ancien Testament où il est difficile de ne pas reconnaître des traits chrétiens." See

anticipated and heralded Christian salvation was King Solomon, son of King David. His image is a kind of prefiguration or archetype and implies the glory of the redeemer heir. Divine promises in his favor are fulfilled in the kingdom of the anointed savior. A Christological explanation was grafted on to the psalms relating to Solomon in the Book of Psalms. It is not surprising then that sermons and poems adapted to Christianity were provided with the support of his authority. Lactantius cites in Solomon's name a prophecy on the destruction of the Temple and the uprooting of Israel from its land because of the sins of godlessness and crucifixion.[208]

In the Christian tradition, sometimes a parallel group of *Odes of Solomon* is attached to the *Psalms of Solomon.* This second collection differs in character and provenance, but makes a certain contribution to the present problem.[209] Fragments of those *Odes* are included in a Gnostic-Coptic book entitled *Pistis Sophia,* apparently of the third century. The author bases himself on them, for the prophecy of Solomon is expressed in them, and marks the first one XIX. That indicates that he had the eighteen *Psalms of Solomon* to which he joined the second group.[210] The full collection, whose Christian nature is obvious, was found in a Syriac version to which the eighteen *Psalms of Solomon* were linked with nothing separating them. The definition of its place in the church or among its branches and Gnostic deviations aroused a series of discussions and speculations. Its religious identity is however completely clear and transparent,

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also Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel* (Paris 1964), p. 185ff.; W. Speyer, *Die literarische Fälschung im heidnischen und christlichen Altertum, HAW* (Munich 1971), p. 232ff.; N. Brox ed. *Pseudepigraphie in der heidmischen und jüdisch-christlichen Antike* (Darmstadt 1977), p. 163ff. The existence of pseudo-biblical writings composed in Christian spirit and for Christian purposes (see n. 216 below) was clear at the start of modern criticism, but since the theories on apocalyptic-pseudepigraphic pre-Christian Jewish works were born (see Chapter 2, Section D), the tendencies to plant them in Judaism grew. There still remain a considerable quantity of such writings, however, whose Christian character is generally recognized, such as C.C. Torrey, *The Lives of the Prophets* (Philadelphia 1946); E. Hennecke & W. Schneemelcher, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen,* vol. 2 (Tübingen 1964), p. 405ff.; J.M. Rosenstiehl, *L'Apocalypse d'Élie* (Paris 1972).

[208] Justin Martyr, *Dialogus* 34; 36 (see n. 130 above); Eusebius, *Demonstratio Evangelica* VII 3.1ff.; *PG* 22, col. 552ff.; Iraenaeus, *Contra Haereses* IV 27 (1), *PG* 7, col. 1057ff.; Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones* IV 18, *PL* 6, col. 507ff.

[209] The complete critical edition of Harris & Mingana is referred to in n. 21 above. New editions were published by M. Lattke, *Die Oden Salomos in ihrer Bedeutung für Neues Testament und Gnosis,* 2 vols. (Göttingen 1979); J.H. Charlesworth, *The Odes of Solomon — The Syriac Texts* (Missoula Mont. 1977).

[210] *Pistis Sophia* 59, in (*GCS* 45) C. Schmidt & W. Till, *Koptisch Gnostische Schriften,* vol. 1 (Berlin 1954), p. 75. From the quotation the ancient link of these *Psalms* to King Solomon is confirmed. The title page and headings are missing in the main Syriac manuscript, but an additional passage according to Harris-Mingana (see n. 21 above), vol. 1, p. XI, notes the name "Solomon son of David." There are also headings ("of Solomon") in all the Greek manuscripts except a damaged one (the Muscovite), which is not divided into chapters (Viteau, p. 151, see n. 24 above), but there too the *Psalms* are linked to writings attributed to Solomon.

though there were attempts to find Jewish strata in it.[211] The *Odes of Solomon* abound in Christian beliefs such as the trinity, the symbol of the cross and the delusive Antichrist. The redeemer overcomes the monstrous dragon and rescues souls from perdition. But there is no identification of the "Lord anointed" (Messiah) whose admirers accord him praise and adulation. No names are listed and no actual lines given that might reveal a bit of external historical reality. The same respected authority that covers the *Psalms of Solomon* covers the mists of mystery in the *Odes.*[212] It is now possible to deduce how and where poems of this sort extolling a supposedly Davidian celestial redeemer son came to be attributed to David's actual son.

Christian liturgy was originally based on the Book of Psalms[213] to which were added other biblical and apocryphal poems. The reigning tendency at first disqualified ceremonial verses that were not grounded on ancient sacred authority. In the pattern of biblical psalms, lyrics were composed for prayer, thanksgiving, encouragement, and the dissemination of the gospel.[214] The secrets of redemption and latter-day visions mainly served as their focus. It is in the vicinity of such works that the *Psalms of Solomon* developed. Their parentage and birth lie in Christianity. The determination of their exact date and connection with a particular group or stage in the history of the Church requires additional special research. We have no pretensions at the moment regarding the solution to the question of their original language, whether it was Hebrew or not. The answer would in any case not affect the conclusions proposed, for

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[211] A. Harnack & J. Flemming, *Ein jüdisch-christliches Psalmbuch, TUGAL* 35 (Leipzig 1910); H. Grimme, *Die Oden Salomos* (Heidelberg 1911); G. Diettrich, *Die Oden Salomos* (Berlin 1911); Z.P. Chajes, "Sefer Shirei Shelomoh," *Hagoren* 8 (1912): 24ff.

[212] H. Gunkel, "Die Oden Salomos," *ZNW* 11 (1910): 291ff.; J. Labourt & P. Batiffol, *Les Odes de Salomon* (Paris 1911); E.A. Abbott, *Light on the Gospel from an Ancient Poet* (Cambridge 1912); R. Abramowski, "Der Christus der Salomonoden," *ZNW* 35 (1936): 44ff.; R.M. Grant, "Odes of Solomon and the Church of Antioch," *JBL* 63 (1944): 363ff.; A. Omodeo, "Le Odi di Salomone," *La Parola del Passato* 1 (1946): 84ff.; K. Rudolph, "War der Verfasser der Oden Salomos ein Qumran-Christ?" *RQ* 16 v. 4 (1964): 523ff. versus J. Carmignac, "Les affinités qumraniennes de la onzième Ode de Salomon," *RQ* 9 v. 3 (1961): 71ff.; J.A. Emerton, "Text and Language in the Odes of Solomon," *JTS* 18 (1967): 372ff.; J.H. Charlesworth, "The Odes of Solomon not Gnostic," *CBQ* 31 (1969): 357ff.; J.H. Charlesworth & R.A. Culpepper, "The Odes of Solomon and the Gospel of John," *CBQ* 35 (1973): 298ff.; H.J.W. Drijvers, "The 19th Ode of Solomon," *JTS* 31 (1980): 337ff.; M. Lattke, "The Apocryphal Odes of Solomon and the New Testament Writings," *ZNT* 73 (1982): 294ff.

[213] Ambrosius, *Enarrationes in XII Psalmos Davidicos,* Praefatio, *PL* 14, col. 921ff.; Alcuinus, *Liturgica* II, De Psalmorum usu, *PL* 101, col. 465ff.

[214] Luke 1:46ff.; 1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* (see n. 142 above) V 28.6; H. Schneider, "Die biblischen Oden im christlichen Altertum," *Bibl.* 30 (1949): 28ff.; L. Eisenhofer & J. Lechner, *Grundriss der Liturgik des römischen Ritus*[5] (Freiburg 1950), p. 39ff.; O. Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship* (London 1953); J. Beckmann, *Quellen zur Geschichte des* christlichen Gottesdienstes (Gütersloh 1956); A.A. King, *Liturgy of the Roman Church* (London 1957), p. 43; R. de Langhe (ed.), *Le Psautier* (Louvain 1962), p. 297ff.

Christian teachings were disseminated in Hebrew as well.[215] Since the middle of the past century, research has strayed into the wrong lane, due to a false Jewish wrapping, and the cryptic poetry has been explained against the background of the Hasmonean period. Heaps of opinions were built on the tottering base of the prevailing method: the result was the creation of a strange Jewish pious movement, detached, alienated from its homeland and uprooted from its soil. Imaginary historical substance was drawn from pseudepigraphical visions. However, the pseudo-Solomonic *Psalms* do not describe events in any recognizable period and do not give expression to any authentic Jewish religiosity. They were conceived and born among those "heretical books that spread enmity and strife and dissension between Israel and their Father in Heaven."[216] That heresy defined by talmudic sources poisoned the wells of modern learning. As a result a fateful epoch in the history of Israel was distorted, and the Hasmonean kingdom was blackened in the vicissitudes and agony of its decline.

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[215] M.J. Lagrange, "L'Évangile selon les Hébreux," *RB* 31 (1922): 161ff. However the possibility of a Hebrew source seems very unlikely in view of the many referrals to the Septuagint (n. 102) which the author generally prefers to the masoretic text. As to the dating, the work cannot have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem, as shown in the analysis above, but this difficult problem requires additional extensive investigation.

[216] yShabbat XVI 15c; bShabbat 116a; tShabbat XIII (XIV) 5. Apparently biblical addenda and mutilated texts were scattered throughout those "heretical books" which might have misled the unintelligent and naive. Thus the talmudic warnings and prohibitions are understandable. Those writings (see also Chapter 2, Section D) do not contain any pre-Christian teachings or faith. Such Christian works wrapped in ancient biblical cloaks were already pointed out at the start of modern historical criticism by a number of European scholars: David Blondel, *Des Sibylles* (Paris 1649), p. 23ff.; W. Cave, *Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Historia Literaria,* vol. 2 (London 1698), p. 28ff.; Augustin Calmet, *Nouvelles Dissertations Importantes et Curieuses* (Paris 1720), p. 385ff.: "Livres Apocryphes, composez sous le nom des plus grands hommes de la Synagogue, de l'Église, ou même du Paganisme, pour attirer à la Religion Chrétienne les Juifs et les Payens" etc. The time has come to revive and refresh old verities that have been forgotten or obscured in recent generations because of the prevalent systems which engender pseudo-historical delusions.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE GREAT SANHEDRIN IN VISION AND REALITY

A. *Historical Criticism and Point of Departure*

Any comprehensive historical scenario of Second Temple times involves the question of the nature and status of the Great Sanhedrin, its central functions and its branches that reached out to all parts of the country and encompassed the life of the nation.[1] The talmudic tradition describes its high authority and prestige, its practices and customs, the majesty of its leadership, and the appointment of members according to the distinguished virtues of sage and Hasid, its assembly in the Chamber of Hewn Stones in order to pass ordinances and rule on Halakhot and spread the Torah among the people. External testimonies, however, do not mention a supreme Sanhedrin of that type, the exclusive domain of Pharisee circles, but public councils ensconced in the national and political higher echelons, with judicial and administrative powers, whose membership included a variety of elements and representatives.

The problem emerged from the moment rational criticism began to deal with historical research on ancient Judaism. Attempts to clarify the circumstances of the establishment and progress of the Great Sanhedrin have joined with historiosophic studies and scholarly research into the history of the period, comprising the talmudic area as well.[2] The preliminary explorations and first steps are as usual still cautious, naturally tending to compromise among the separate categories of information and sources.[3] In the course of time doubt

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[1] This topic is crucial to the study of the Hasmonean period, but the subject, its dimensions and ramifications require broadening the limits of the discussion to include all aspects of the Second Temple times. The first version of this chapter appeared in *Doron,* an anthology dedicated to the late Prof. Ben-Zion Katz (Tel Aviv 1967), p. 167ff.

[2] The first studies in the area of the questions relating to the Great Sanhedrin or the Great Synagogue (Keneset) already expressed various judgements regarding the reliability and quality of the talmudic sources. E.g., J. Morinus, *Exercitationes Ecclesiasticae et Biblicae* (Paris 1669), p. 273ff.; J. Lightfoot, *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae* (Leipzig 1684), p. 455ff.; J. Selden, *De Synedriis et Praefecturis Juridicis Veterum Ebraeorum*[2] (Frankfurt 1696), p. 566ff.; J. Basnage, *Antiquitez Judaïques* (Amsterdam 1713), p. 72ff.; H. Prideaux, *The Old and New Testament Connected in the History of the Jews,* vol. 1[4] (London 1718), p. 326ff.; J.E. Rau, *Diatribe de Synagoga Magna* (Utrecht 1727), p. 25ff.

[3] H. Ewald, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel,* vol. 3 II[2] (Göttingen 1852), p. 189ff.; I.M. Jost, *Geschichte des Judenthums und seine Secten,* vol. 1 (Leipzig 1857), p. 123ff.; L. Herzfeld, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel,* vol. 2[2] (Leipzig 1863), p. 264ff.; L. Zunz, *Ha-Derashot be-Yisrael,* with supplements by Ch. Albeck (Jerusalem 1947), p. 22ff.; idem, first German edition: *Die Gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden* (Berlin 1832); Z. Frankel, *Darkhei ha-Mishnah* (Tel Aviv 1959—repr. of 1859

increases and there is a certain inclination to make sharp distinctions and decisions. A considerable contribution toward undermining the reliability of the ancient Jewish tradition, for historians and the enlightened world in general, was made by Abraham Geiger in his bold highly casuistic system whereby the Sadducee priesthood was deemed the architect of religious law and national institutions during Second Temple times.[4] As a result the degree of relativity in the value and truth of talmudic testimonies was stressed. Criticism was furthered also by Joseph Derenbourg in revealing the evolution and alteration of historical stories and memories in the various ramifications of talmudic literature.[5]

This led to the emergence and entrenchment in many modern schools of the prevailing conception, first published by Kuenen, tempered in the scholarly workshop of Julius Wellhausen, and approved and disseminated by Emil Schürer.[6] Its spokesmen deny the antiquity of the main talmudic testimony, claiming it is not worthy of serving as historical authority and does not fit the reality of Second Temple times because it was redacted and shaped only after the Destruction. It may provide isolated details on certain religious matters, selected with care and reservations. According to them, the Sanhedrin depicted based on pure Pharisee ideology is only a refined theoretical depiction of the study houses in Yavneh and Usha with their practices and aspirations. In contrast, the real Sanhedrin had an aristocratic leadership and priestly hegemony as reflected in Josephus and in the New Testament. Pharisees sometimes participated in it, but not in its leadership, and did not leave their imprint on it. The Sanhedrin according to that view was no different in nature from the Jerusalem council, which was called the *Boule* in Roman times, replacing the earlier council of elders, that is, the *Gerousia* of the Hellenistic period.

This viewpoint was absorbed and became rooted in extensive circles; identical and similar opinions are still voiced by many scholars.[7] They were opposed by the defenders of the talmudic tradition impelled to uphold its reliability. Their complicated solutions are not uniform, but spread along a most multi-colored

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ed.), p. 11ff.; Nachman Krochmal, *Moreh Nevukhei ha-Zeman*[2] (London–Waltham, Mass. 1961; first edition Lemberg–Lvov 1851), pp. 62ff., 218.

[4] A. Geiger, *Urschrift und Übersetzungen der Bibel*[2] (Frankfurt am Main 1928; first printing, Breslau 1857). A criticism of his method appears in Chapter 1, Section C above.

[5] J. Derenbourg, *Essai sur l'histoire et la géographie de la Palestine* (Paris 1867).

[6] A. Kuenen, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen* (Freiburg im Breisgau & Leipzig 1894), p. 49ff.; J. Wellhausen, *Die Pharisäer und die Sadducäer*[2] (Hanover 1924; first edition Greifswald 1874), p. 27ff.; E. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes,* vol. 2[4] (Leipzig 1907), p. 237ff.; idem, A New English Version revised and edited by G. Vermes, F. Millar & M. Black, vol. 2 (Edinburgh 1979), p. 199ff.

[7] W.O.E., Oesterley, *A History of Israel* (Oxford 1948, repr. of 1932 ed.), pp. 296ff.; 436ff.; Ch. Guignebert, *Le monde Juif vers le temps de Jésus* (Paris 1950), p. 67ff.; J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem zur Zeit Jesu*[3] (Göttingen 1962), p. 253ff.; B. Reicke, *Neutestamentliche Zeitgeschichte* (Berlin 1965), p. 105ff.; M. Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus* (Tübingen 1969), p. 48ff.; J. Maier, *Geschichte der jüdischen Religion* (Berlin 1972), pp. 36ff., 109ff.

range. Disregarding for a moment individual differences, mixed methods and far-reaching speculations, the apologetical complex divides into two main directions.[8]

The first group inclines toward the moderate approach characteristic of the early stage in the study of this question, and seeks to find a compromise between the contradictory testimonies by combining and interweaving them closely. The talmudic and the N.T. Sanhedrins can abide together if the proper separators, chronological or functional, are established. In other words, both pictures are correct for different times or functions. Quite likely the crucial public elements in that supreme institution, such as the leading priests and Pharisees, did not give up an independent organizational framework but supposed subcommittees may have been appointed for specific tasks and perhaps changes took place in it in the course of the generations. It is not surprising therefore if there are differences in the depictions of the Sanhedrin according to descriptions that were not written down at the same time or from the same viewpoint.

A second stream among the defendants of the talmudic tradition prefers to make peace between the rival images of Sanhedrins and councils by positing separate parallel bodies. Adolf-Abraham Büchler outlined a model allocating authority (before the Destruction) to three simultaneous institutions: the High Court in the Chamber of Hewn Stones for religious instructions and ritual questions (representing Pharisee leadership), a judicial Sanhedrin headed by a high priest (as stated in the New Testament), and the Jerusalem Council (*Boule*) known from Josephus. In the wake of this hypothesis came a series of variations and proposals for the improvement of the constitutional plan, which was not referred to even once or discovered until modern times.[9]

These compromise methods are all founded on a tottery base. Their assumptions are faulty and their conclusions contrived. No solid testimony of

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[8] H. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden,* vol. 3[3] (Leipzig 1878), p. 110ff.; D. Hoffmann, "Der oberste Gerichtshof in der Stadt des Heiligtums," *Jahresbericht des Rabbinerseminars für das orthodoxe Judenthum* (Berlin 1878); idem, "Über die Männer der grossen Versammlung," MWJ 10 (1883): 45ff.; idem, "Bemerkungen zur Geschichte des Synhedrion," *JJLG* 5 (1907): 224ff.; I. Jelski, *Die innere Einrichtung des grossen Synedrions zu Jerusalem* (Breslau 1894); I.H. Weiss, *Dor Dor ve-Dorshav* (Jerusalem 1964, repr. of 1871 ed.), vol. 1, p. 184ff.; I. Halevy, *Dorot ha-Rishonim,* vol. 2 (Jerusalem 1967, repr. of 1906 ed.), p. 607ff.; H. Zucker, *Studien zur jüdischen Selbstverwaltung im Altertum* (Berlin 1936); Ch. Albeck, "Ha-Sanhedrin u-Nesia," *Zion* 8 (1943): 165ff.; J. Klausner, *Historia shel ha-Bayit ha-Sheni,* vol. 3 (Jerusalem 1950), pp. 79, 97, 143, 167, 237, 241, 255; L. Finkelstein, *Ha-Perushim ve-Anshei Keneset ha-Gedola* (New York 1950), p. 18ff.; G. Alon, *Toldot ha-Yehudim be-Eretz Yisrael bi-Tekufat ha-Mishnah ve-ha-Talmud,* vol. 1 (Tel Aviv 1952), pp. 27f., 114ff.; E.E. Urbach, "Maamad ve-Hanhaga be-Olamam shel Ḥakhmei Eretz Yisrael," *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences,* vol. 2, part 4 (1965): 31ff.

[9] A. Büchler, *Das Synedrion in Jerusalem und das grosse Beth-Din in der Quaderkammer des jerusalemischen Tempels* (Vienna 1902); S. Zeitlin, "The Political Synedrion and the Religious Sanhedrin," *JQR* 36 (1945/6): 109ff.; S. Hoenig, *The Great Sanhedrin* (Philadelphia 1953); H. Mantel, *Studies in the History of the Sanhedrin* (Cambridge, Mass. 1961); E. Rivkin, "Beth Din, Boule, Sanhedrin — A Tragedy of Errors," *HUCA* 46 (1975): 181ff.

the period in question makes any mention of a double or triple Great Sanhedrin. In principle, it would be extremely difficult to detach judicial decisions from legislative acts and halakhic rulings in the circumstances then prevailing. The hazy picture of a united Sanhedrin with subcommittees branching off from it is likewise contrived in ethereal threads and is not clear in any real datum. Is it possible then, that the schools denying the talmudic tradition on the Sanhedrin are right?

Let us return to the point of departure of the problem. Modern theories revolve around the same point and derive from a common arch-hypothesis. All the external testimonies on the Great Sanhedrin absolutely contradict the talmudic portrait of it. But that axiomatic assumption is wrong. There is no inner harmony and coherent unity in the talmudic version. On the other hand, Josephus does not confirm the existence of the New Testament type Sanhedrin but of the differently constituted councils known as *Gerousia* or *Boule.* These points will be proven through analytic criticism and examination of the basic testimonies by their separation into categories in order to test and weigh their inherent meaning. No attempt will be made to achieve a synthesis through artificial combinations.

B. *The Talmudic Sanhedrin*

Talmudic literature is not a monolithic creation as regards the stages of its development, the soil it sprouted in, or its evolutionary phases. Serious historical criticism must distinguish between the old trunk and branches planted on native soil, its Babylonian extensions and its top boughs that spread far and wide. The talmudic sources compiled and ordered in Eretz Israel were nurtured by memories, albeit not always clear or fresh, of the generations close to the periods of the Second Temple. Nobody denies the primacy and high value of the Mishnah. But in comparing historical episodes in the annals of the nation in its land, too, the absolute superiority of the Jerusalem Talmud to the Babylonian is obvious at every turn. Stories, reports, sayings and even tannaitic extra-mishnaic (Baraita) tradition, deriving from study houses in Eretz Israel, changed form and tone and sometimes meaning in their travels abroad and in their Babylonian redaction.[10] To an extent, the Jerusalem Talmud was supplemented by midrashic collections which were not far from it in time and provenance (such as Genesis Rabbah, Leviticus Rabbah, etc.). A consistent, methodical differentiation of the types of talmudic sources, legitimate and logical in scholarly research, is likely to cast new light on the present problem and further our investigation toward a solution.

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[10] The basis of the method and its reasons are explained in Chapter 5. See also Preface, n. 14.

In the talmudic heritage of Eretz Israel, the Great Sanhedrin appears as one of the central components of an ideal code which was realized in the period of the Second Temple only in a fragmentary and defective form. It embodies the awareness, glimmers of which already appear in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Ben-Sira, I Maccabees and the visions of Daniel,[11] that true prophecy ceased at the Return to Zion, and divine grace that surrounded the earlier generations no longer emanated.[12] "In five things the last Temple was more deficient than the first, and they are: (heavenly) fire, and (holy) ark, and *urim* and *thummim,* and anointing oil, and the holy spirit."[13] The splendor of the national kingdom and the high priesthood was not completely restored, the dispersions did not come together and uprooted tribes did not return to their patrimony, idolatry and pagan hostility were not eliminated from Eretz Israel. Consequently, basic precepts required of the nation attached to its homeland—such as jubilee and sabbatical years—were fulfilled only partially on the basis of postulated necessary ordinances, as defined later and shaped like the rulings of the sages.[14] Even the *terumah* and the *tithe* was required of the Returnees to Zion not by the Torah, according to a view rooted in an early tradition, but by the provisions of the covenant in the Book of Nehemiah (Chapter 10), because the second settlement in the country was not like the first and the ideal Torah could not be fulfilled completely.[15]

The halakhic rulings on the Sanhedrin are interwoven in the legislative and judicial system, based on the Torah, but were not meant or designed to describe exactly a permanent institution in the Second Temple period, despite the realistic features borrowed here and there from the recent past. The main passages on the matter, in their overall significance, do not reflect the actual reality of that period and are not confined to it. Their nature will immediately become clear from the first chapter of Tractate Sanhedrin which notes a triple ranking in the scale of status and authority: courts of three judges for monetary

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[11] Ezra 2:63; Neh. 7:65; Ben-Sira XXXVI 5 (M.Z. Segal ed., Jerusalem 1953); I Macc. IV 46; IX 27; XIV 41 (ed. by W. Kappler, Göttingen 1967). The visions of Daniel are discussed in Chapter 3 and 4 above.

[12] mSotah IX 12; ySotah IX 24b; yKiddushin IV 65b; bSotah 48b; bYoma 9b; bSanhedrin 11a; tSotah XIII 2; According to that tradition, Levite cities and cities of refuge required by specific precepts were not established either. The political subordination and incomplete Return to Zion prevented the total implementation of the Torah laws. See also Josephus (n. 77 below), *Contra Apionem* I (8) 40–41.

[13] yTa'anit II 65a; yMakkot II 32a; yHorayot III 47c; yShekalim VI 49c; bHorayot 12a; bKeritot 5b; bYoma 21b; 52b, etc.

[14] yShevi'it X 39c; yGittin IV 45d; bArakhin 32b–33b; bGittin 36a; Maimonides (R-a-m-b-a-m), *Mishneh Torah,* Sefer Zera'im (7), Hilkhot Shemitah ve-Yovel, X (El Ha-Mekorot ed., Jerusalem 1956).

[15] yShevi'it VI 36b; yKiddushin I 61c; yYoma VIII 45b; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah* (see n. 14 above), Sefer Zera'im, Hilkhot Terumot, I 26.

cases, a small Sanhedrin of twenty-three members for capital offenses, and a Great Sanhedrin of seventy-one members.[16]

Only the Great Sanhedrin is empowered to judge the tribe, false prophet, the high priest and the "seduced (apostate) city," declare a "war of free choice," establish small "Sanhedrins for the tribes" and add to the sanctified areas of "the city and the Temple courtyards." Tractate mShevuot (II 2) notes that the addition to the "city and courtyard" area can only be properly done "with a king and prophet and *urim* and *thummim* and a seventy-one man Sanhedrin and two thanks-offerings and singing." The abstract nature of these rulings is even more obvious in mHorayot (I 5ff.) which presents twelve tribes with their courts, the Great Sanhedrin, the high priest anointed with anointing oil beside the ruler king. The tribal organization, *urim* and *thummim,* prophets, and anointing oil were all suspended after the Return to Zion and never resumed, according to the deeply rooted tradition, stressed in the Talmud itself.

The Great Sanhedrin was planted in a distant landscape, and appears as the crowning glory of a finely designed structure. Its functioning depends on laws whose brilliance was already dimmed at the start of the Second Temple period. This basic assumption is confirmed by Rabbi Yose credited in the Jerusalem Talmud with an illuminating Baraita: "At first there was no dispute in Israel, but a Sanhedrin of seventy-one used to sit in the Chamber of Hewn Stones, and two tribunals of three each used to sit one within the Ḥel and the other on Temple Mount, and courts of twenty-three used to sit in all the towns of the Land of Israel." Every problem in Halakha would be clarified in the courts in order of rank, and if no answer was found it was elucidated in the Chamber of Hewn Stones, for "from there the Law issues and spreads to all of Israel... and from there they used to send to all towns in the Land of Israel and everybody that they found to be wise, modest, sensible, discerning, humble, etc.... they would seat him in the court on Temple Mount, and afterwards in the court within the Ḥel and afterwards in the great court in the Chamber of Hewn Stones."[17] The three courts on Temple Mount are described in the Mishnah as well (Sanhedrin XI 2) and in the Babylonian Talmud and the Tosefta in a purely theoretical way without chronological limitations or reference to any concrete events.[18]

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[16] mSanhedrin I 1ff. See also the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmud and the Tosefta in the corresponding sections.

[17] ySanhedrin I 19c; bSanhedrin 88b: "At the outset there was not much controversy in Israel..." but this version is inferior as appears from an examination of *Dikdukei Sofrim* to Sanhedrin, by R. Rabbinovicz (Jerusalem 1960, repr. of 1878 ed.). See also tSanhedrin VII 1; tḤagigah II 9, S. Lieberman ed., *The Tosefta, Seder Moed* (New York 1962); Genesis Rabbah LXX 8, *Midrash Bereshit Rabbah,* ed. J. Theodor and Ch. Albeck (Jerusalem 1965), p. 806ff.; *Sifrei* on Deut. mark 152, Ish. Shalom (M. Friedmann) ed. (New York 1948, repr. of 1864 ed.); *Yalkut Shim'oni* on the Torah, mark 910, Horev printing (New York–Berlin 1926).

[18] Separate Halakhot state: "The high priest judges and is judged... the king does not judge and is not judged... (mSanhedrin II 1-2).

When did this idyllic situation prevail, abounding in pure innocence, without the slightest disagreement, without flaws or rift, with the Sanhedrin's authority in the Chamber of Hewn Stones and judges appointed on the basis of folk piety and Pharisee wisdom? Another Jerusalem Talmud Baraita, closely connected to the previous one, completes the picture and dispels all doubt: "At first there was no dispute in Israel except about the laying on (of hands on sacrifices) and Shammai and Hillel arose and made them four, when the disciples of the House of Shammai and the disciples of the House of Hillel multiplied and did not minister sufficiently to their masters, and the disputes in Israel multiplied and split into two factions, these declaring unclean and those declaring clean, and it (the unity of the Torah) is not destined to return to its place until the son of David comes."[19]

The laudable perfect system preventing any "controversy in Israel" or dispute was not maintained in entirety and was not fulfilled in practice when the Zugot ("Pairs") first appeared, that is, already before the Hasmonean period when the controversy around the question of "laying on" arose.[20] During the Shammai and Hillel period, there were four controversies.[21] In the wake of their pupils the area of dissension expanded tremendously, as noted in the Baraita cited, resulting in what was nearly "two Torahs." The debates between the disciples of the two Houses continued for several generations and the dismal breach was not healed until the Yavneh period.[22] And yet there is no hint of application to or decision by the famous, supreme, instructional and judicial institution, i.e. the Great Sanhedrin.

The early talmudic tradition exhibits a clear stable view of the Great Sanhedrin, which appears on the distant horizon in an idealized picture exclusively against the background of biblical episodes.[23] It evaporates at the time the First Temple was destroyed, and thereafter makes no substantive appearance in legends or recollections. During the Ezra and Nehemiah period, responsibility for safeguarding the Torah is assumed by "the people of the Great Synagogue," represented by the signatories of the covenant cited in the Book of Nehemiah (Chapter 10).[24] They should not be considered members of some

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19 yḤagigah II 77d; bSanhderin 88b;tḤagigah II 9.

20 mḤagigah II 2. The chronology is explained in n. 25 below.

21 mEduyot I 1ff.; yḤagigah II 77d.

22 yBerakhot I 3b; yYevamot I 3b; ySotah III 19a; yKiddushin I 58d; bEruvin 13b.

23 ySanhedrin I 18b etc.; yMakkot II 31d; yShekalim VI 50a; bSanhedrin 16b, 49a; bBerakhot 3b; bSotah 43a; bGittin 57b. The Sanhedrin is also depicted in many talmudic and midrashic legends.

24 "Eighty-five elders" gathered at that assembly according to yMegillah I 70d. The signatories to the covenant in Nehemiah's day numbered 85 (in the Peshitta) or 84 (in the masoretic text) or 83 (in yḤagigah III 79d). The text was evidently altered: M. Zer-Kavod, *Sifrei Ezra u-Nehemiah* (Jerusalem 1948). It is also possible that the Talmud adds one or two leaders (perhaps Ezra and the high priest) that are missing to complete the count. All mentions of the Great Synagogue (Keneset ha-Gedolah) members refer to a single meeting, at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah (Neh. Chapters 8–10) or to their generation (yMegillah III 74c; yBerakhot I 4a; VII 11c; yShekalim V 48c;

institution persisting for several generations and perhaps antedating the Great Sanhedrin, but only the participants in that one-time assembly. After Simeon the Righteous ("of the remnants of the Great Synagogue") and Antigonus of Sokho, Tractate mAvot (I 2ff.) lists their successors in the religious leadership: five consecutive Zugot ("Pairs") whose activity started at the beginning of the Hasmonean Revolt and continued up to Herodian times and Roman rule.[25]

The status of these Zugot ("Pairs") and the secret of their linking is revealed in mḤagigah II 2: "The first ones were presidents (Nasi) and the second ones were heads of courts (Av Bet Din)."[26] Their descriptions do not actually indicate their posts in the Chamber of Hewn Stones and despite the suspicion that they reflect a projection backwards, there is insufficient reason to consider them purely anachronistic definitions. The foundations of society were shaken in the Hasmonean Revolt and a domestic revolution doubtless took place. A vibrant,

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bBerakhot 33b; bMegillah 2a, 7a, 17b, 25a; bYoma 69b; bBava Batra 15a; bSanhedrin 104b; bPesaḥim 50b; Genesis Rabbah VI 6, XLVI 8, pp. 45, 465 in the Theodor–Albeck ed. — see n. 17 above. There is no talmudic testiomony that justifies assuming some appearance or action of the Great Synagogue outside the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. Simeon the Righteous ("of the last members of the Great Synagogue") is the hero of legends in which various persons and times are merged: yYoma VI 43c-d; ySotah IX 24b; bYoma 69a; bSotah 33a; bMenaḥot 109b. Those legends contain no direct reference to the Great Synagogue. Because of the distance, historic concepts were blurred, chronological dimensions shortened, and the period of Persian rule from the Return to Zion to the end reduced to one generation: bAvodah Zarah 9a; *Seder Olam Rabbah,* Chapter 30, p. 141 in the D.B. Ratner ed. (New York 1966, repr. of the 1894 ed.). There was no difficulty, for traditional commentators, to attach Simeon the Righteous to the Ezra and Nehemiah period. Thus no proof remained of the existence of a permanent institution or association called the Great Synagogue as stated by scholars such as L. Finkelstein (see n. 8) or H. Mantel, "The Nature of the Great Synagogue," *HTR* 60 (1967): 69ff. On the calling of sporadic meetings as in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, see n. 38 below.

[25] Yose b. Yoezer was killed during the persecutions decreed by Antiochus Epiphanes: Genesis Rabbah LXV 22, Theodor–Albeck ed. (see n. 17), p. 742ff. From there it was five generations to the start of the first century C.E. The main tradition, as shown in the following notes, regarding these Zugot-"Pairs" and the chronological framework is proven absolutely by direct or indirect external testimony and on the basis of the analysis of the talmudic sources. Consequently the early talmudic tradition makes an independent, particular and important contribution to the investigation of crucial historical problems from the Hasmonean Revolt on, but care must be taken to distinguish between the various categories of sources. Before the Hasmonean period there are almost no real independent recollections in the talmudic tradition. For only from then on were Hasidic-Pharisaic fellowships organized which developed and preserved that tradition. Before the first "Pair," mAvot I 3 has Antigonus of Sokho whose location in the Mishnah and Greek name indicate the years shortly preceding the Hasmonean Revolt, but there is no further information available on him. The version in *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan* (S. Schechter ed., New York 1945, p. 26) stating that his pupils were Zadok and Boethus, who were the founders of the Sadducees and Boethusians is devoid of any original historical information (see n. 247 to Chapter 5) and completely valuelees. This tractate was composed after the Babylonian Talmud, made up (as in n. 33 below) of mixed talmudic and midrashic elements. In cannot be considered a genuine Eretz Israel source of tannaitic times. The reasons for this conclusion are included in my recent study mentioned in Chapter 5, n. 18 and n. 276.

[26] The titles of Nasi (president) as well as Av Bet Din (head of the court) are used in the Mishnah and are not necessarily always connected with the Great Sanhedrin; mHorayot II 5ff.; III 1ff. mNedarim V 5; mTa'anit II 1; mMegillah III 6; mEduyot V 6.

vigorous religious-national movement arousing folk piety (Hasidism) formed, whose echoes resound in Daniel's visions and the Books of the Maccabees. That movement was the nursery for the principles of faith, for practices and customs which Pharisee Judaism was nourished by and developed from. Its ranks produced a new popular leadership with spiritual and religious authority, that insisted on extensive influence on the life of the nation and discipline in matters of law and justice. The traces of its status and power are discernible in John Hyrcanus' time, and the meaning of the storms and internal fluctuations in the Hasmonean kingdom cannot be understood without it.[27]

Evidently Hasidic and Pharisee fellowships founded committees and courts for instruction, guidance and judgement, though no clear information survives on their character and organization, number and name. Through them edicts were issued, rulings promulgated, sentences passed and Halakhot elucidated. That institutional framework provided for the Pharisee leadership—though without permanent official authorization by the government and without constant dependence on external bodies—that bravely took a stand against its rivals in the Hasmonean kingdom. Their public status and the extent of their influence, the weight of their authority and validity of their judgements varied according to the changing times and the balance of power in the political arena. These assumptions operate to clarify the real background to the deeds and status of Yose b. Yoezer and Yose b. Yoḥanan,[28] of Joshua b. Peraḥia and Nittai ha-Arbeli[29] and the rest of those Zugot—"Pairs." That is why the titles of court head (Av Bet Din) and president (Nasi) are possible for them. On the other hand it becomes clear why no original testimony in talmudic recollection places them at the head of the Great Sanhedrin.

Beginning with the third "Pair" the thin stream of stories swells and the wells of tradition yield more. Simeon b. Shataḥ judged capital offenses, as did Judah b. Tabai, established patterns and principles for judging crimes, issued rulings on education and marriage contracts, and yet the Great Sanhedrin is not

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[27] Section C below treats the Josephus versions and external testimony.

[28] yKetubbot VIII 32c; yPesaḥim I 27d; yShabbat I 3d. The Jerusalem Talmud correctly reveals a connection between the activity of the first "Pair" who decreed impurity on the land of the Gentiles and the tendency to zealotist Hasidism in the Book of Daniel (Chapter 3, Section D above) and the regulations forbidding contact with Gentiles that were adopted in the spirit of the School of Shammai when the Great Revolt (66C.E.) broke out. The versions in the Babylonian Talmud (Shabbat 14b) are already garbled, such as the placement of Yose b. Yoezer in the period of King Jannaeus (Chapter 5 above, Section G, Item 3). The Mishnah stresses the eminence of the first "Pair" and the piety of Yose b. Yoezer (mḤagigah II 7; mSotah IX 9) but there is room for doubt about whether he is identical with Rabbi Yose b. Yoezer in mEduyot VIII 4.

[29] mAvot I 6-7; tMakhshirin III 4; bMenaḥot 109b. Errors and distortions recur in the various versions of the Babylonian Talmud, e.g. the story that links Joshua b. Peraḥia to Jesus in Jannaeus' time (see nn. 61–62 in Chapter 5). No genuine historical memories have survived on the second "Pair," who judging by their time and place were evidently active at the time of John Hyrcanus I.

included in his activities.[30] Nor does it figure in connection with Shemaiah and Avtalion.[31] Ben Tabai was invited to be Nasi (president) by "the sons of Jerusalem," but of the Sanhedrin there is no mention.[32] Hillel was appointed by the "elders of Bathyra" (according to the Jerusalem Talmud) to be Nasi (president) over them, but not necessarily in the Sanhedrin.[33]

At the end of the Zugot-"Pairs" series, as well as in the Roman times and close to the destruction of the Temple, the Sanhedrin left no traces of its existence or activity. Rabban Gamaliel I and the sages used to assemble on Temple Mount

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[30] mAvot I 8-9; mSanhedrin VI 4; yḤagigah II 77d–78a; ySanhedrin VI 23b-c; IV 22b; yKetubbot VIII 32c; yShabbat I 3d; yPesaḥim I 27d; bḤagigah 16b; bSanhedrin 37b, 46a; bMakkot 5b; bShevuot 34a; bKetubbot 82b; bShabbat 14b; 16b; tKetubbot XII 1; tSanhedrin VI 6; VIII 3. Simeon b. Shataḥ's regulations regarding marriage, or in the area of compulsory education, as well as his drastic action in Ashkelon (nn. 352 and 353 in Chapter 5 above) become clear in view of their background in the period of King Jannaeus and Queen Shlomzion. Similarly the implementation of capital punishment and the principles established in the Pharisee spirit regarding criminal law, according to Ben Shataḥ's statements and deeds, fit the time very well. This group of testimonies which are neither dependent on nor found in Josephus show the independence and reliability of the basic and early talmudic tradition.

[31] mAvot I 10–11; mEduyot I 3; V 6; mḤagigah II 2; ySotah II 18b; yMoed Katan III 81d; bYevamot 67a; bBetzah 25a; bYoma 35b, 71b; bGittin 57b; bSanhedrin 96b. The differences and divergences in the Babylonian Talmud regarding Shemaiah and Avtalion whereby they were both offspring of converts suggest as usual a very dubious and evidently garbled version. This fourth "Pair" appears in Josephus (see nn. 225–227 in Chapter 5 above) and belongs to the period of Herod's accession and his early regnal years.

[32] yḤagigah II 77d, in contrast to the incorrect, confused version in the Babylonian Talmud; see nn. 61–62 in Chapter 5.

[33] yPesaḥim VI 33a; bPesaḥim 66a; tPesaḥim IV 1-2. In the legends of the Babylonian Talmud (Shabbat 31a) Hillel is called the "Nasi of Israel" but there is no connection with the Sanhedrin. However, we must stress here the absolute superiority and preferability of the Eretz Israel version embodied in the Jerusalem Talmud to the Babylonian Talmud and Tosefta. These matters have been carefully considered in Israel Ben Shalom's study (see n. 16 in our Preface). The image of Shammai and the character of his school were considerably distorted (see n. 260 in Chapter 5) in the Babylonian Talmud. On the basis of the Babylonian Talmud version (Berakhot 27b etc.) regarding Rabban Gamaliel's strictness and its consequences, *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan* (p. 14 in the Schechter ed.; see end of n. 25 above), ascribes to the Shammai school the demand to restrict the right to higher learning exclusively to the scions of wealthy, well-born families, in total contradiction of the spirit of popular Hasidism characteristic of the Shammai school which remained faithful to the zealotist, pietist trends of the Pharisees of the early generations. Hillel and his disciples adopted a more moderate stand, calling for adjustment to and compromise with the social and political situation that developed as the Hasmonean kingdom declined and national independence receded. The time of the fifth "Pair" fits in with these internal changes and their results in the last years of Herod's reign. The appointment of Hillel by the "elders of Bathyra" fits this dating as well in view of the Josephus statement (*Ant.* XVII 26) on the settlement of Babylonian Jews around a place called Bathyra. Some obscure change in the funciton of the fifth "Pair" is indicated in mḤagigah II 2; see also G. Alon, *Meḥkarim be-Toldot Yisrael,* vol. 1 (Tel Aviv 1957), p. 263ff. The uproar and ferment following Herod's death and the consolidation of direct Roman rule constitute a comprehensible background for the rift between the two Pharisee factions, for the end of the "Pairs," for the development of a zealotist ideology in the Shammai school, and for the sharp internal controversy up until the Great Revolt and the destruction of the Second Temple. These processes are described and analyzed in the Israel Ben Shalom study noted above.

and dispatch epistles regarding the removal of tithes and the intercalation of the leap year, and there is no mention of the Sanhedrin in these matters.[34] Rabbi Simeon of Mizpah went up with Rabban Gamaliel to ask a question in the Chamber of Hewn Stones and solve a problem connected with a portion of the crop left for the poor, and he was answered by Nahum the clerk, and not by the supreme instructional authority.[35] The question was not addressed to the great court or to the two lesser ones on Temple Mount that the perfect graduated judicial organization proposed would require. Rabbi Zadok testifies vaguely to questions "before the sages," and to "a case before the Chamber of Hewn Stones" but without any clear link to the Great Sanhedrin in his time.[36]

The Chamber of Hewn Stones is well known and served a number of purposes such as casting lots for assignments and conducting priestly prayer services.[37] There, too, the sages gathered, evidently intermittently, to clarify and issue rulings, but not in the perfect proper framework of the Great Sanhedrin. The Temple Mount was the natural center for streaming multitudes, a crossroads for public and organizational activity. Mass meetings "in the street of the Lord's house" were common from the time of the Return to Zion up to the destruction of the Second Temple.[38] No wonder then that the Pharisee leaders, as their

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[34] ySanhedrin I 18d; yMa'aser Sheni V 56c; bSanhedrin 11b; tSanhedrin II 6. In contrast to the Jerusalem Talmud, the Babylonian confuses the first Rabban Gamaliel with the second. On the basis of a saying of Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel in the Babylonian Talmud, a similar epistle attributed to him and Rabban Yoḥanan b. Zakkai is included in the *Midrash ha-Gadol* to Deut. 26:13, p. 597ff. in the S. Fisch ed. (Jerusalem 1972). The epistle contains some strange and anachronistic elements, such as insistence on "confession of the tithes" which was in fact abolished during John Hyrcanus' time (mMa'aser Sheni V 15; mSotah IX 10) and never reinstituted until the end of the Second Temple period. The author evidently revised traditional data on the basis of Maimonides, who called for confession of the tithes. He did the same with his story on Agrippa (ibid. p. 398, to Deut. 17:15) "whom Israel anointed king" (cf. mSotah VII 8) although anointing oil was not used from the start of the Second Temple period on. See n. 13 above; Chapter 6, n. 54; see also Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah,* Sefer Shoftim (14), Hilkhot Melakhim I 7; Sefer Zera'im (7), Hilkhot Ma'aser Sheni XI 4. Some passages of this Midrash, first published as *Midrash Tana'im,* ed. by D. Hoffmann (Berlin 1908/9), gave the impression that they were an early source and led to a chain of errors. Critical historiography can assign no value at all to midrashic compilations produced after the Babylonian Talmud, such as *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan* (see n. 25 above), or even later in the Middle Ages, such as the 14th century *Midrash ha-Gadol.*

[35] mPe'ah II 6. Rabban Gamaliel, who is listed after the "Pairs" (mAvot I 16), was the son or grandson (bShabbat 15a) of Hillel, and his dating is clarified by the New Testament (see n. 199 below) as the thirties and forties of the first century. His son Simeon b. Gamaliel is mentioned among the prominent Pharisees and community leaders in the Great Revolt by Josephus (*Bell.* IV 159; *Vita* 190ff., 216, 309). In their time there is no reference to leadership by "Pairs" or the supreme ideal Sanhedrin in the Chamber of Hewn Stones (see A. Hyman, *Toldot Tana'im ve-Amora'm,* Jerusalem 1964, pp. 305ff.; 1162ff.), a verification of the main points of the early Eretz Israel talmudic tradition and the chronological framework.

[36] mEduyot VII 3-4; mMikva'ot V 5.

[37] mTamid II 5, IV 3; bYoma 25a; tSukkah IV 16; tKippurim I 10; bSotah 11a; bMegillah 13b (versus yMegillah I 70d); bTa'anit 23a (versus yTa'anit III 67a).

[38] Ezra 10:9; Josephus (see n. 77 below), *Ant.* XII 164, XIII 181, 197; *Bell.* II 411, 562. The meeting place of such assemblies is not always mentioned (see Neh. 5:7 and nn. 91–93 below). They

means and influence allowed, used to assemble and locate their institutions, study houses or councils in the Temple Mount area.[39] Although hazy, these stories and recollections reveal the substantive substructure beneath the polished idealized picture of a series of judicial institutions on Temple Mount.

Tractate Middot requires "the Great Sanhedrin of Israel" in the Chamber of Hewn Stones to check the qualifications of priests, but that Halakha is one of those abstractions detached from any definite background. No historical validity can be attributed to such theoretical Halakhot without concrete evidence.[40] Others of the same type stipulate that the Great Sanhedrin is required for trials for adultery, unsolved murders, and towns accused of idolatry, as well as to proclaim a leap year and carry out the sentence on a rebellious scholar, etc.[41] At the height of their influence, the Pharisees, according to Josephus, succeeded in gaining control over rivals and dissenters, the priesthood, and community leaders.[42] A court manned by Pharisee sages, or a similar body, under certain circumstances at a particular time, perhaps attained some supervisory role in regard to religious rites and ceremonies, as noted in Tractates Yoma, Menaḥot, Shekalim, Parah, Sukkah, etc.[43] But this court was nowhere identified with the Great Sanhedrin in all its etiquette, authority and splendor.

Throughout all those generations, from the Zugot ("Pairs") to the end of the Second Temple, there is not one mention of a specific act of the Great Sanhedrin meeting in the Chamber of Hewn Stones. Its actual appearance is not interwoven in the variegated memories stored in the Eretz Israel talmudic tradition of that long productive period abounding in spiritual and social ferment. Its authority is not exemplified in any clear, solid fact out of all the

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obviously are supposed to deal with important legal questions and vital matters, but they are by no means to be considered as being of the Great Synagogue type, as clarified above (in n. 24).

[39] Such as Rabbi Yoḥanan b. Zakkai who sat and preached "in the shadow of the sanctuary" (yAvodah Zarah III 43b; bPesaḥim 26a).

[40] mMiddot V 4 and also mGittin VI 7; mKiddushin IV 5. The Jerusalem Talmud version (yKiddushin IV 65a) contains no reference to the Sanhedrin.

[41] mSotah I 4, IX 9; mYoma III 10; mEduyot V 6; yMo'ed Katan III 81d; bBerakhot 19a; mSotah IX 1.
In the light of the first noted Mishnah (mSotah I 4), it may be possible to assume (according to mYoma III 10 as well) that a substitute law was operative for an adulterous woman, as for other laws that were not implemented in entirety: mSanhedrin I 5, XI 2 etc.; tSanhedrin III 4; *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael* on Ex. 12:2, p. 9 in the I.A. Rabin & H.S. Horovitz ed. (Jerusalem 1960); *Yalkut Shim'oni* (see n. 17 above) to the Torah, mark 189.

[42] Josephus, *Ant.* XVIII 15ff. There is no reason to doubt this immense strength (see n. 142 in Chapter 5) of the Pharisee influence on the people as a whole, which is reported by all the New Testament Gospels (Matt. 23:2ff.; Mark 7:1ff.; Luke 11:42ff.; John 11:47, etc.). See also nn. 187–189 below.

[43] mYoma I 3ff.; II 2; yYoma I 39a, II 39d; bYoma 4a, 19b, 23a; tYoma I 8, 12; mShekalim I 1ff.; tShekalim I 1ff.; yShekalim IV 48a; VII 50d; mMenaḥot X 3ff.; bMenaḥot 65a; tMenaḥot X 23; mParah III 1ff.; tParah III 8; tSanhedrin III 4; mSukkah IV 4; tSukkah IV 1; mBikkurim III 7; mTa'anit III 6; yTa'anit IV 68b.

events. No explanation can be contrived to explain why there was no appeal to it in the many disputes between the disciples of Shammai and those of Hillel[44] despite the dangerous rift in the life of the nation, and why its intervention was eschewed in the troublesome matter of the controversial eighteen prohibitive decrees,[45] when the banner of zealotry was waved in the face of sharp opposition.

No rule is reported for the Great Sanhedrin or any shadow of its presence in the various debates and trials, in the sharp censure of the insubordinate priesthood, in the demands or complaints of priests or the "court of priests" against the Pharisee sages, or in the quarrel between the "sons of the high priests" and "the judges of civil law in Jerusalem."[46] Its existence is not recognized or implied in the duties or activities of the Pharisee leaders, in the conduct or dicta of Rabban Gamaliel, the elder, and his son,[47] nor in the company of Rabban Yoḥanan b. Zakkai and his disciples.[48] Such a total void cannot be filled by contrived excuses, nor can its significance be ignored. The firm, logical conclusion is that the Great Sanhedrin in the Chamber of Hewn Stones in perfect form with all its ramifications does not appear in Eretz Israel talmudic sources as a real institution of Second Temple days.

The earlier conception was forgotten and replaced in the course of time. Contrary to the original tradition the Babylonian Talmud in a Baraita notes that "forty years before the Temple was destroyed, the Sanhedrin was banished (from its Chamber) and sat in the Ḥanuth (bazaar?)."[49] To this is closely connected another Baraita with a very dubious version, which lists the ten places of the Sanhedrin's wanderings "from the Chamber of Hewn Stones to Ḥanuth and from Ḥanuth to Jerusalem and from Jerusalem to Yavneh and from Yavneh to Usha," etc., until it came to rest in Tiberias.[50] This implies that the Sanhedrin

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[44] mEduyot I 1ff.; mYevamot I 4; bBetzah 20a; tḤagigah II 11, etc. Z. Frankel, *Darkhei ha-Mishnah* (see n. 3 above), p. 47ff.; I.H. Weiss, *Dor Dor ve-Dorshav* (see n. 8), vol. 1, p. 167ff.; I. Halevy, *Dorot ha-Rishonim* (see n. 8), vol. 2, p. 548ff.

[45] mShabbat I 4, yShabbat I 3c-d; bShabbat 13bff.; tShabbat I 16ff.

[46] mKetubbot I 5, XIII 1-2; mRosh Ha-Shanah I 7; mYoma VI 3; mPesaḥim V 8; bPesaḥim 57a, 90b; mOholot XVII 5.

[47] mOrlah II 12; mPe'ah II 6; mRosh Ha-Shanah II 5; mYevamot XVI 7; mGittin IV 2-3; mKeritot I 7; mEruvin VI 2; mAvot I 16–18; yShabbat XVI 15c; bShabbat 115a; yAvodah Zarah I 40a; bAvodah Zarah 20a; bKetubbot 10b; bBekhorot 38a, etc.

[48] Z. Frankel, *Darkhei ha-Mishnah* (see n. 8 above), p. 66ff.; G. Alon, *Toldot ha-Yehudim*, vol. 1 (see n. 8), p. 53ff.; A. Hyman, *Toldot Tana'im ve-Amora'im* (see n. 35), p. 674ff.

[49] bSanhedrin 41a; bAvodah Zarah 8b; bShabbat 15a.

[50] bRosh Ha-Shanah, 31a-b; *Yalkut Shim'oni* (see n. 17 above), to Isaiah, mark 429; *Dikdukei Sofrim* to Rosh Ha-Shanah by R. Rabbinovicz (repr. Jerusalem 1960); J.N. Epstein, *Mavo le-Nusaḥ ha-Mishnah* (Jerusalem 1948), p. 1198; G. Alon, *Toldot ha-Yehudim* (see n. 8), vol. 1, p. 292; vol. 2 (Tel Aviv 1955), p. 70. This is not an accidental and unusual mistake, for the Babylonian Talmud states that after the Bar Kokhva revolt sages again assembled at Yavneh: bBerakhot 48b, 63b. The Eretz Israel talmudic sources do not contain such errors — yBerakhot I 3d; yTa'anit IV 69a; yḤagigah III 78d; Canticles Rabbah (on 2:5) II 16, *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* in the Romm edition of *Midrash Rabbah* (Vilna 1921).

sat in the Chamber of Hewn Stones and was removed from there and changed locations in the talmudic period. The Jerusalem Talmud, however, provides a contradictory and evidently preferable Baraita, with no Sanhedrin involved: "It is taught that more than forty years before the destruction of the Temple, capital punishment was removed from Israel."[51]

The Eretz Israel talmudic sources do not mention the eviction of the Sanhedrin from the Chamber of Hewn Stones. No information is given on its strange, surprising seat in some *"Ḥanuth"* (or plural *"Ḥanuyoth"*) nor is the route of its wanderings before and after the destruction of the Temple revealed.[52] For these sources the true and perfect Great Sanhedrin supposedly disappears at the end of the idealized biblical epoch, and thereafter they refer to undefined tribunals which sometimes functioned and only partially resembled the pattern of a Small Sanhedrin, in a restricted sense and more modest scale, so far as they were courts authorized to deal also with capital crimes according to the laws of the Torah. About them only sporadic pieces of information are given. In any case, their activity was certainly neither continuous nor uniform, affected as they were by political changes and government policies.[53]

The Roman imperial government did not allow the Jews to judge capital offenses and in effect eliminated every form of the genuine Sanhedrin. The date of "forty years" is not based on any accurate chronology but is in the nature of a formula[54] and stereotype. The substance of the information seems confirmed by the circumstances and testimonies. Jewish courts were not entirely abolished but their authority was diminished, and criminal cases were judged mainly by the Roman governor, as appears below. Origen claims in his letter to Julius Africanus that the Jews of his time (until the middle of the third century C.E.) carry out sentences, even death penalties.[55] He was, however, referring not to regular official judgements, but to clandestine ones without legal backing, although tolerated by the authorities.[56] In any case, the claim itself is somewhat

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[51] ySanhedrin I 18a; VII 24b. Here the Jerusalem Talmud adds the cancelation of civil cases in the time of R. Simeon b. Yoḥai, because of Hadrian's edicts, but the first version (in Chapter 1) was garbled because of a copyist's error, which had Simeon b. Shataḥ instead of Simeon b. Yoḥai. Chapter 7 has the correct version.

[52] The Genesis Rabbah version, to Gen. 49:13 (p. 1220f. in the Theodor–Albeck ed., see n. 17 above) is not part of the text of the original Midrash but comes from the *Midrash Tanḥuma* and is missing in the early manuscripts and first printing.

[53] Capital cases are mentioned in Simeon b. Shataḥ's days (see n. 30 above) and other times; see mSanhedrin VII 2; ySanhedrin VII 24b, 25d; bSanhedrin 52b; tSanhedrin IX 11. Independent criminal judgement was perhaps temporarily retained under the Herodian princes, Agrippa I and II, as noted below, nn. 144–148.

[54] yYoma VI 43c; yTa'anit IV 69b; bYoma 39b.

[55] Origen, *Epistola ad Africanum,* 14; *PG* 11, col. 81ff.

[56] G. Alon, *Toldot ha-Yehudim* (see n. 50 above), vol. 2, p. 112. Origen himself, in *Contra Celsum* VII 26, *PG* 11, col. 1457, says that in the wake of the sin against Jesus the Jews lost Jerusalem, their laws are no longer valid, and they can no longer judge capital cases.

suspect for it is not supported by actual facts and was designed to reinforce the dubious authenticity of the "Susanna" story (one of the apocryphal additions to the Book of Daniel).

However, *Synedria* of the Jews of Eretz Israel are mentioned in the famous 429 C.E. order of Theodosius II, and Jean Juster considers that to be proof of the existence of the talmudic Sanhedrin up to the post-talmudic times of the Ge'onim, as it was not abolished after the destruction of the Temple but merely reduced in status, and when the patriarchate ended, again rose to prominence.[57] That view, however, is fundamentally wrong. The Theodosian order stipulates that the *aurum coronarium* (coronation tax) theretofore allocated to the Jewish patriarch, was to be diverted to the royal treasury, and its collection was to continue. The tax was to be paid by all "synagogues" annually, and the responsibility was placed on "the heads of the Jews nominated by the *Synedria* of both parts of Palestine or that reside in other provinces."[58] Thus, it is not one central Sanhedrin that figures in the order but many. The Christian legislator does not directly employ the concepts of Jewish tradition, but rather the typical ecclesiastical terms the New Testament uses for Jewish institutions like *"Synedria"* or "synagogues."[59] John Chrysostom in his venomous orations "Against the Jews," for instance, castigates the Christians that enter Jewish synagogues and apply to the *"Synedria* of the Hebrews." His reference is certainly not to a central Sanhedrin in Eretz Israel, but to local courts of Antiochian Jews at the end of the fourth century C.E. which obviously did not have the status or authority of a Small or Great Sanhedrin.[60]

No Sanhedrin in the talmudic sense, either great or small, survived in Eretz Israel after the destruction of the Temple, except perhaps in deviant episodes like the Bar-Kokhva rebellion. The terminology prevalent in many studies adheres to the garbled version in the Babylonian Talmud, which is contrary to the original clear tradition.[61] Explicit mishnaic passages remove all possible doubt: "When the Sanhedrin was abolished singing was abolished in feasting places" (mSotah IX 11) and there is no hint at its restoration. Furthermore, as "Rabbi Tarfon and Rabbi Akiva say, If we were in the Sanhedrin no man would ever be put to death" (mMakkot I 10), obviously there was no Sanhedrin. Even the Babylonian Talmud has an explicit Baraita: "From the day the Temple was

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57 J. Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire Romain,* vol. 1 (Paris 1914), p. 400ff.

58 Codex Theodosianus, XVI.8.29, ed. Th. Mommsen & P.M. Meyer, *Theodosiani Libri* XVI (Berlin 1962)... Judaeorum primates, qui in utriusque Palaestinae synedriis nominantur, vel in aliis provinciis degunt... etc.

59 See n. 158 below.

60 Joannes Chrysostomus, *Adversus Judaeos,* I 3 *PG* 48, col. 848: ἠρώτων τὴν αἰτίαν, δι' ἣν τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν ἀφεὶς, ἐπὶ τὰ τῶν Ἑβραίων εἵλκε συνέδρια.

61 Proof of the existence of the Sanhedrin cannot be derived from theoretical comparisons or notations on "The High (Great) Court" as in ySanhedrin III 21a; bBava Kamma 112b; tAhilot XVIII 18, but there is a different version in the Jerusalem Talmud, Shevi'it VI 36c.

destroyed, although the Sanhedrin was abolished the four modes of execution were not abolished" for the guilty get their punishment from heaven.[62]

The term Sanhedrin does not fit and is not anchored in the basic stratum of the internal tradition regarding the councils and courts of Yavneh and Usha, etc. The name was not applied to the court of Rabban Yoḥanan b. Zakkai's time, nor that of Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi.[63] Although those tribunals in partial and limited fashion inherited the place, functions and sometimes patterns of the Sanhedrin, they never attained its full status, authority and splendor. "The court of Rabban Gamaliel II" is a link in the chain of courts "since the days of Moses" (mRosh Ha-Shanah II 9). "The Sanhedrin was like a semi-circle and the president used to sit in the middle so that they would see him and hear his voice," says the Jerusalem Talmud, and Rabbi Eleazar b. Rabbi Zadok adds: "When Rabban Gamaliel used to sit in Yavneh my father and his brother used to sit to his right and elders to his left left" etc.[64] Also, "seventy-two elders" gather "on the day they seated (elected) Rabbi Eleazar b. Azariah at the academy."[65] In the "rebellious elder" passages (mSanhedrin XI 4) the Yavneh court is compared with the Great Sanhedrin in a juridical deliberation and in a purely theoretical manner, but not on the level of simultaneous historical reality. Similarly study houses of various periods are combined and juxtaposed with the Chamber of Hewn Stones and its sages, in a Babylonian Talmud Baraita.[66] The central council houses of the mishnaic period can be paralleled with the ancient Sanhedrin, as the patriarchate with the monarchy, if attention is paid to reservations and divergent historical aspects.[67]

This basic distinction was likely to become muddled as a dynamic tradition progressed. A naive all-embracing viewpoint stipulating the continuous existence of the Great Sanhedrin from Second Temple days to its establishment in Tiberias apparently originated among the Amora'im, was absorbed into the Babylonian Talmud little by little, was properly formulated in the times of the Ge'onim, and thereafter spread and took root in Jewish thought. Rav Sherira Gaon, in his celebrated tenth century letter, has "the heads of the Sanhedrin, such as Simeon the Righteous and Antigonus of Sokho and the rest of those Zugot" ("Pairs"), in a single integrated list with "the presidents who are the heads of the Sanhedrin in Eretz Israel, as explained in Avot up to Hillel and Shammai, and afterwards Simeon his son and afterwards Rabban Gamaliel the

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[62] bSanhedrin 37b; bSotah 8b; bKetubbot 30a. This version is not exactly consistent with versions noted above (nn. 49–51) neither that of the Jerusalem Talmud nor that of the Babylonian.

[63] mRosh Ha-Shanah IV 1-4; mAvodah Zarah II 6; mOholot XVIII 9, etc.

[64] ySanhedrin I 19c.

[65] mZevaḥim I 3; mYadayim III 5, IV 2.

[66] bSanhedrin 32b. Also Canticles Rabbah (on 8:9), VIII 11 (see n. 50 above), etc.

[67] yShekalim V 48d (Shekalim Treatise as per Bodleian MS in A. Schreiber-Sofer ed., New York 1954, p. 57); bSanhedrin 17b; tSanhedrin VIII 1; yHorayot III 47a; ySanhedrin II 19d, 20d.

elder," etc.[68] That smooth and harmonized picture, bearing an authoritative seal, has prevailed from the Middle Ages to modern times, become a cornerstone of research, and appeared to scholars to be the true original form of the talmudic Sanhedrin.

As a result, confusion spread and strange accretions were added that obscured clear, historical examination. Among these is the composite scholium commentary to the Scroll of Fasting[69] which places Simeon b. Shataḥ and Jannaeus and his wife in a Sadducee Sanhedrin in order to stage a ridiculous tasteless show: the Sadducees only display astounding ignorance, are gradually banished from the Sanhedrin and flee in disgrace, in a regular order and tempo (one each day), for they include only garrulous elders who are never able "to bring proof from the Torah." Ben Shataḥ and his disciples celebrate their victory when all their rivals leave, and in memory of the happy event a holiday was set in the festival calendar. The baseless amusing story is made entirely of patchwork sewn with threads taken from talmudic legends.[70] Its author did not strain his imagination to invent any actual question that could have excluded the Sadducees from the Sanhedrin. The explanation is not unique but is a link in a chain of supplementary scholia commentaries to the ancient Scroll of Fasting, most of them just as confused and worthless. Still, it serves a purpose its author probably never dreamed of: it exemplifies beautifully the distance between the later misleading conception and the original picture of the Sanhedrin presented in the early talmudic tradition of Eretz Israel.

C. *Sanhedrin–Gerousia–Boule*

The great, central talmudic Sanhedrin, meeting in the Chamber of Hewn Stones in the Jerusalem Temple, is not really ascertained in any ancient testimony, Jewish or non-Jewish. In contrast, from antiquity on, there appears in Israel the *Gerousia* which in the Greek world generally refers to councils and commissions of respected elders for various public and political functions.[71] Consequently, some scholars consider it an earlier incarnation of the Sanhedrin in the making. While the term is used in the Septuagint for "elders," of the people in general and of individual cities, it is often replaced by the ordinary

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[68] *Igeret Rav Sherira Gaon,* B.M. Lewin ed. (Jerusalem 1972, repr. of 1921 ed.), p. 73ff. From the time of the Ge'onim on, the term "Sanhedrin" had a vague symbolic meaning, as in R. Amram Gaon, *Teshuvot ha-Ge'onim,* ed. Jacob Musafia (Lyck 1864), mark 56, or in *Seder Olam Zuta* in A. Neubauer, *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles,* vol. 2 (Oxford 1895), pp. 73, 87.

[69] H. Lichtenstein, "Die Fastenrolle," *HUCA* 8/9 (1931/32): 342f.

[70] bMenaḥot 65a (a prattling elder); bSanhedrin 91a (evidence from the Torah), etc. For criticism of the explanations in these scholia, see Chapter 5, Section H, and nn. 326–331 there.

[71] J. Miller, "Gerontes, Gerusia," *PW-RE,* vol. 7 (1910): 1264ff.

word for "elders" (*presbyteroi*) indiscriminately.[72] A similar extended meaning is applied to *Gerousia* by Philo[73] and Josephus Flavius in his stylized paraphrase of biblical history, included in *Antiquitates Judaicae.*

In reviewing the laws of the Torah Josephus explains the judicial system stipulated: Seven judges are appointed for each town, and if any doubt arises they are obliged to apply to the holy city where the sentence is passed by "the high priest and prophet and *Gerousia.*"[74] The supreme judicial authority is defined on the basis of "If the case is too baffling for you to decide..." (Deut. 17:8) which serves also as the authority on which the talmudic Halakha bases the operation of the high court (the Great Sanhedrin) and the two lower courts on Temple Mount.[75] The similarity of the two versions is obvious, but does not justify contrived efforts to ignore fundamental differences and impose a harmonization in order to produce a Sanhedrin-*Gerousia* blend.

Josephus does not suggest a Great Sanhedrin in the Chamber of Hewn Stones, nor any Small Sanhedrin, nor a chain of courts, according to the talmudic pattern. The seven judges in his version resemble the seven prominent citizens who left a faint impression in the Talmud, but are not necessarily judges.[76] The external resemblance apparently stems from the accepted practice at the end of the Second Temple period, since Josephus himself appointed seven judges for every town in Galilee.[77] The whole picture of the judicial system (including prophets) described in Josephus is not a real portrait, although sporadic threads were spun from the adjacent reality. The supreme *Gerousia* and separate local councils combine into an ideal instrument carrying out the biblical commandments, but the sovereignty of the priesthood gives it a distinctly hierocratic character.

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[72] Many examples (such as Septuagint Ex. 3:16) can be found in E. Hatch & H.A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint* (Oxford 1897).

[73] Philo, *De Specialibus Legibus,* III (14) 80; *Philo (LCL*, ed. F.H. Colson, vol. 7 (London 1950); idem, *In Flaccum* (10) 80, vol. 9 (1954). The Jews of Alexandria had a special *Gerousia* (see n. 155 below) and other Jewish communities had similar councils. See Arieh Kasher, *Yehudei Mitzrayim ha-Helenistit ve-ha-Romit* (Tel Aviv 1978), pp. 230–231, 274; J.B. Frey, *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum*, vol. 1 (Rome 1936), nos. 106, 353, 368, 511, etc.

[74] Josephus (see n. 77 below), *Ant.* IV 214ff. The judge is replaced by a prophet, evidently Moses' successor, according to a code required by the Torah. Josephus often injects the *Gerousia* into his commentary on scriptural chapters, such as in *Ant.* IV 222, following the Septuagint version of Deut. 21:6. Also in *Ant.* IV 186, 218ff. and V 15ff.

[75] mSanhedrin XI 2; Philo explains the verse and attributes the right to judge to the deserving priests, headed by their leader because they are gifted for that role, and the true priest is necessarily a prophet: *De Specialibus Legibus,* IV (36) 190ff.; *Philo (LCL),* ed. F.H. Colson, vol. 8 (London 1954). Cf. also the action of Jehoshaphat, the king faithful to the Torah, who, according to II Chron. 19:5ff., organized a judicial system in the country and set up a central court in Jerusalem of "Levites and priests and heads of the clans of Israelites." The story is not, however, pure historical fact. See I.L. Seeligmann, "Nitzanei Midrash be-Sefer Divrei ha-Yamim," *Tarbiz* 49 (1979/1980): 16ff.

[76] bMegillah 26a; yMegillah III 74a.

[77] Josephus, *Bell.* II 571; *Ant.* IV 287. See Chapter 5, n. 83 on editions of Josephus.

In contrast to the aspirations of the folk pietism which emerge from the depth of the talmudic tradition, Josephus derives from the Torah slogans on theocracy with priestly hegemony that to some extent was realized during Second Temple days. His emphatic declarations in favor of aristocracy are evidently not merely loyalty to his forebears and adherence to his class, wishes and desires, but also an expression of demands and pretensions prevailing in his social environment. Judicial, legislative and instructional functions along with ceremonial duties, were, in his view, assigned to the priests. The Torah itself supposedly commends the institution of aristocracy under divine protection as the ideal form of government. Monarchy is permissible, if the people want it, but remains inferior and restrained, for the king is not allowed to do anything "without the advice of the high priest and the members of the *Gerousia.*"[78] The desirable and sanctified regime shines through the Bible and dulls a bit in the monarchic period. The aristocratic *Gerousia,* which is almost the antithesis of the original talmudic Sanhedrin, appears in that literary pageant depicted by Josephus.

A genuine Jerusalem *Gerousia* arises in the Hellenistic period in place of the administrative body heading the autonomous Jewish community of the Persian period which had various names such as "the heads of families," "the elders of the Jews," "the chiefs of the priests and Levites and chiefs of the clans of Israel," etc.[79] The unclear information suggests a patriarchal character, but its structure and composition are so obscure that there is no point in speculating. The change of name does nothing to remove the veil of mystery or reveal the basic changes. After all, the Septuagint already displays the natural tendency to define Jewish concepts in Greek terms. Consequently, there is no justification for the conclusion that a *Gerousia* set up in Jerusalem at the time was modeled exactly after some oligarchic or aristocratic Greek council.

After the Seleucid conquest of Eretz Israel and the Ptolemaic retreat, the Jerusalem *Gerousia* welcomed Antiochus III and obtained tax exemptions from him for itself and for the Temple priests, Temple scribes and Temple singers according to the royal letter quoted by Josephus.[80] The high priest is not mentioned in it just as he is not mentioned in the official documents of the Persian kings,[81] and that fact imposes the application of caution and the avoidance of exaggeration in the evaluation of his political status and governmental authority. His personality is more prominent and somewhat

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[78] *Ant.* IV 223ff. See also n. 50 to Chaper 6 above.

[79] Ezra 1:5; 2:68; 3:12; 4:3; 5:9; 6:7-8; 8:29; 9:1; 10:5, 8, 14; Neh. 2:16; 4:8; 5;7, 17; 7:5, 70; 10:1ff.; 11:1, 3; 12:40; 13:11, 17. See also Josephus, *Ant.* XI 105, 148–149; etc.

[80] *Ant.* XII 138ff. The "Temple scribes" were among the religious classes, evidently Levites, also in *Ant.* XI 128, in the wake of the apocryphal I Esdras VIII 22. They are not to be considered the type of scribe and teacher like Ezra and his successors (see Chapter 2, n. 33): A. Büchler, *Die Priester und der Cultus im letzten Jahrzehnt des jerusalemischen Tempels* (Vienna 1895), p. 119.

[81] In the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, such as Ezra 6:1ff.; 7:11ff.

overshadows the *Gerousia* in literary descriptions with apologetic tendencies, such as the Letter of Aristeas[82] (in which the translators of the Torah are called "elders") and the series of stories about the sons of Tobias, and also in foreign reports like that of Hecataeus of Abdera. In the legend of Alexander the Great and his ascent to Jerusalem the high priest is prominent, the *Gerousia* is missing but "the Jerusalem elders" are mentioned at the beginning of the episode that precedes the Macedonian invasion.[83] In the stories of the Book of Judith (IV 6-8; XI 14; XV 8)[84] and III Maccabees (I 8ff.) there is a *Gerousia* (or elders) at the high priest's side,[85] against a historic legendary background without full clarification of the network of relations between the two authorities.[86]

The Jerusalem *Gerousia,* according to the Books of the Maccabees, was several times involved in the course of the events from the ascendancy of the Hellenizers and the outbreak of the rebellion up to the establishment of an independent state.[87] However, that appearance is rare and sporadic. Its three delegates apply to Antiochus Epiphanes, complain of Menelaus' offenses, and are punished by death (II Macc. IV 44). After a series of battles and victories the *Gerousia* entered upon negotiations with the Seleucid monarchy (II Macc. XI 27). This body is mentioned also in a dubious and confused letter, which reports the miracle of salvation to the Jews of Egypt and urges them to celebrate the purification and rededication of the Temple (II Macc. I 10).

The upheaval of the Hasmonean Revolt affected social institutions and disrupted their organization. Under such conditions, temporary bodies with no permanent status took the place of the regular stable leadership. The Hasmonean commanders were helped by improvised assemblies and mass consultations with their warriors. "Elders" are sometimes mentioned in Jerusalem and in Judas Maccabaeus' camp.[88] The figures of teachers and religious leaders emerge in the tragic affair of the slaughter of pietist Hasidic scribes, who died because they responded to the peace overtures of a wily cruel

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[82] *Aristeas to Philocrates,* 32ff., ed. M. Hadas (New York 1951); Josephus, *Ant.* XII 40ff.

[83] Josephus, *Ant.* XI 306ff.; XII 154ff.; cf. also *Ant.* XI 297ff.

[84] I.M. Grintz, *Sefer Yehudith* (Jerusalem 1957); M.S. Enslin, *The Book of Judith* (Leiden 1972).

[85] M. Hadas, *The Third and Fourth Book of Maccabees* (New York 1953).

[86] For foreign observers like Hecataeus, the high priest seems like a leader at the head of the people. See Diodorus Siculus XL 3 (*LCL*), ed. F.R. Walton, vol. 12 (London 1967). The same is true in the passages of Hecataeus quoted by Josephus, the authenticity of which is suspect; see Th. Reinach, *Textes d'Auteurs Grecs et Romains Relatifs au Judaïsme* (Paris 1895), pp. 14ff.; 227ff.; M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism,* vol. 1 (Jerusalem 1974), p. 20ff.; N. Walter, "Fragmente jüdisch-hellenistischer Historiker," *JSHRZ,* vol. 1 (Gütersloh 1976): 144ff.; J.D. Gauger, "Zitate in der jüdischen Apologetik" etc., *JSJ* 13 (1982): 6ff.

[87] W. Kappler, *Maccabaeorum Liber I,* Septuaginta Gottingensis IX (Göttingen 1967); R. Hanhart, *Maccabaeorum Liber II,* Septuaginta Gottingensis IX 2 (Göttingen 1959); F.M. Abel, *Les Livres des Maccabées* (Paris 1949).

[88] II Macc. XIII 13, XIV 37; I Macc. VII 33; Josephus, *Ant.* XII 406. See n. 77 above.

foe. According to talmudic tradition, in that generation Yose b. Yoezer and Yose b. Yoḥanan functioned as the first prominent "Pair."[89] They apparently had a valuable role in the guidance and spiritual encouragement of the Hasidic rebel movement, but in the absence of detailed clear information, only pure conjecture is possible.[90]

From the time Jonathan, son of Mattathias, the Hasmonean, set up his government and assumed the high priesthood, organizational patterns were restored and stabilized. His letter to the Spartans mentions the *Gerousia.* His political measures are taken in concert with "the elders of Israel and of the priests," and in consultations on fortifications he is helped by "the elders of the people."[91] After Jonathan's capture, his brother Simeon inherits his post with the approval of a mass meeting, and in his diplomatic contacts the "elders" and "the nation of the Jews" are at his side.[92] "The great assembly (or "congregation-synagogue") of priests and people and leaders of the nation and elders of the country" defines and specifies the governmental authority and titles of Simeon, the chief of the nation or ethnarch, high priest and commander.[93] The decision of this assembly is illuminating, casting light on the problem concerned, for the areas of authority enumerated do not include legislative and judicial powers and religious instruction. In view of the indirect testimony examined below, according to which problems of judgement and religious guidance were the points of dispute in the kingdom, it appears that their omission is not fortuitous but deliberate in order to withhold them from the government and assign them to an autonomous authority, in accordance with the ideological principles and demands of pietist Hasids and Pharisees.[94]

The Hasmonean leadership does not have a messianic mission and does not effect latter-day redemption. Consequently, as the document noted states, it will go on "until a true prophet arises," because it was not established for eternity by divine revelation, but only by a national consensus for the needs of the hour. Its rights and time are limited, although the limitation is not intended to detract from its glory or question its fitness for both the high priesthood and political leadership. These constitutional principles accord very well with the early

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[89] See n. 25 above.

[90] This was discussed in Chapter 1, Section G above.

[91] I Macc. XI 23, XII 6, 35; Josephus, *Ant.* XIII 166, 169.

[92] I Macc. XIII 2 (Josephus, *Ant.* XIII 197ff.); I Macc. XIII 36, XIV 20.

[93] I Macc. XIV 27ff. — ἐπὶ συναγωγῆς μεγάλης...κτλ.

[94] Such reservations do not negate specific judicial actions and disciplinary ruling by the government. Cf. I Macc. XIV 44. Presumably some limited necessary authority was agreed on, at least in the area of military justice or in times of emergency, in mobilization for war, and suppression of revolts, but there are no direct and specific testimonies except for sparse fragments of discussions on late and remote Halakhot such as mSotah VIII 6; Maimonides (see n. 14 above), *Mishneh Torah,* Sefer Shoftim (14), Hilkhot Melakhim III 8.

talmudic tradition which consistently distinguishes between the ideal constitution and the temporary inferior reality of Second Temple days, and which exalts the sovereignty of the Torah and the independence of the legislative and judicial system. Consequently "the great assembly" which fully authorized the position of Simeon, the Hasmonean, exemplifies the well-known type of public gathering which was convened from time to time, from the Return to Zion period on, to participate in fateful decision making, but has no direct connection with or close resemblance to "the men of the Great Synagogue"[95] in mAvot or to the talmudic Sanhedrin.

The faint picture of the Hasmonean kingdom and its history that is reflected in Josephus' two parallel treatments and drawn mainly from non-Jewish historical surveys, does not depict public institutions and facets of internal life except very marginally.[96] The "elders of the people" are mentioned only once toward the end of Shlomzion-Alexandra's reign.[97] The vagueness of the information notwithstanding, it is possible to assume alongside the monarchy the existence of a council changing form and color in the wake of the storms and fluctuations that beset the Jewish state. Many have been inclined to identify that council with the *Ḥever ha-Yehudim* that figures on Hasmonean coins together with the high priest, but that identification is not certain, and denied by some.[98] At any rate, in its early phase the kingdom was conducted with strict adherence to the authoritative law, and the influence of Pharisee sages is discernible in the upper governmental echelons, evidently in the supreme council.

John Hyrcanus was the disciple and favorite of the Pharisees, in Josephus' amplified and improved version.[99] They clashed because his descent and fitness to serve as high priest were questioned by a quarrelsome provocateur. The Pharisees were not just guides, instructors and advisors; they were also judges. That is why Hyrcanus asked them about the punishment of a slanderer and calumniator, and they decreed flogging according to Halakha. The incitement of a Sadducee, however, leads to the eruption of dissension. These facts indirectly support the talmudic tradition on the Pharisee courts and their high rank at the time of the Zugot-"Pairs" (but not the existence of the Sanhedrin) and John Hyrcanus' close association with those circles. It was thanks to this association that he continued to be respected and admired in talmudic tradition, despite the

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[95] Above, nn. 24 and 38. The full privileges that go with monarchy were not given to the Hasmonean rulers according to this document.

[96] *Bell.* I 54ff.; *Ant.* XIII 230ff. See n. 77 above.

[97] *Ant.* XIII 428.

[98] A. Kindler, "The Coinage of the Hasmonean Dynasty," *Publications of the Israel Numismatic Society* 2 (Jerusalem 1958): 10ff.; E. Schürer, *Geschichte* (see n. 6 above), vol. I^4, p. 269; U. Rappaport, "Le-Mashma'ut 'Ḥever ha-Yehudim,'" *Meḥkarim be-Toldot Am Israel ve-Eretz Israel,* vol. 3 (Haifa 1974), p. 59ff.

[99] *Ant.* XIII 288ff.; see also Chapter 5, Section D above.

dismal rift, and that some authoritative ordinances ascribed to him have survived.[100]

After a period of splits and quarrels, the Pharisees completely recovered their influence during Shlomzion-Alexandra's reign, assumed positions of power, conducted trials and passed death sentences. Not a single leader or teacher of the Pharisee community is named or described in Josephus' version which is to such a degree alienated from them that it is sometimes actually hostile.[101] And yet it clarifies and confirms the background for the talmudic recollections around the figures of the third "Pair": legends and sayings, death sentences and rulings, the echoes of the generation and accomplishments of Simeon b. Shataḥ and Judah b. Tabai. It was on their initiative that the foundations of criminal law based on the Torah were forged, and to a certain extent the principal Halakhot of Tractate Sanhedrin were carried out and realized.[102]

Despite the vital crucial role of the Pharisee leadership in the country and judicial system, as shown by both internal and external testimonies, not the faintest reference to the existence of the ideal Great Sanhedrin is made in that context. Public and religious institutions do not figure in the events around the time of Queen Shlomzion's death, in the clash between her successors, or during the Roman invasion. A strange declaration to Pompey, totally negating the monarchy supposedly on the basis of ancestral customs, and demanding an exclusively priestly government in the name of the "nation" that appears in mysterious circumstances, was drawn from a clearly foreign version in order to support and justify the arbitrary intervention of the Roman commander in Jerusalem; there is no reason to connect that "nation" with Pharisee circles and seek in it some non-existent link to the talmudic Sanhedrin.[103]

At the end of the Hasmonean period the Jerusalem council of elders in its former guises and forms disappears in Josephus. Thereafter, here and there, public bodies appear defined as *Synedrion* or *Boule.* What did the former mean in our sources? Many scholars have proposed variously that it was a modified form of *Gerousia,* or that it should be identified with the talmudic Sanhedrin, or that it was parallel to it, but these hypotheses collapse upon careful investigation. The term itself was borrowed from abroad, it having been widely used in the Hellenistic and Roman world for sundry bodies, so that it could mean "committee," "session," "conference," "council," "tribunal" and so forth.[104]

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[100] mYadayim IV 6; mParah III 5; mMa'aser Sheni V 15; mSotah IX 10; yMa'aser Sheni V 56d; ySotah IX 24a-b; bSotah 47b–48a, 33a; bYoma 9a; bRosh Ha-Shanah 18b; bBerakhot 29a; tSotah XIII 5, 9–10.

[101] *Bell.* I 107ff.; *Ant.* XIII 398ff.

[102] See n. 30 above.

[103] *Ant.* XIV 41. For the analysis of the testimony and the related problems, see Chapter 6, Section B.

[104] U. Kahrstedt, F. Poland, "Synedrion," *PW-RE,* vol. 4 A (1932): 1333ff.

The term *Synedrion* itself as used in the Septuagint already denoted various concepts such as "court," "council," or "gathering."[105] In the Letter of Aristeas it is applied to the sessions of the translators of the Torah.[106] Philo uses it in its general meaning of "session," "council," or "tribunal."[107] In II Maccabees it denotes the Seleucid king's council, and in the Book of Judith (VI 1, 17; XI 9), the council of the enemy commander.[108] None of these sources contain any suggestions of a central institution called Sanhedrin in Jewish life, and the silence of the Books of the Maccabees on this point is significant because of their particular importance. Josephus too employs the term in a many-faceted meaning, not hesitating to apply it to Emperor Augustus' advisory council,[109] the commanders' conference in Titus' camp, and non-Jewish tribunals.[110]

The first evidence for the existence of a Sanhedrin, the supposed successor to the *Gerousia,* is widely considered to lie in the actions of Gabinius, the Roman proconsul, governor in Syria, who split the country into five separate districts, in order to dissipate the nation's power of resistance. Supervision of the Temple remained in the hands of Hyrcanus II, the high priest, but special administrative authorities, whose nature and organization are not clear, were established in the separate districts. In his usual favorable tone, Josephus stresses the aristocratic character of those authorities which he terms first *Synodos* and then *Synedrion.*[111] Gabinius' measures were not unique: After the battle of Pydna, Roman policy required the division of the Macedonian kingdom into four independent units, each headed by senators called *Synhedri.*[112] The names and functions of these district authorities are similar in the two countries. Scholars labored in vain to find in the five administrative bodies appointed by Gabinius some features of the Great Sanhedrin, but it is not mentioned at all in the report of events or in Julius Caesar's orders, some years later, concerning the status and government of the Jewish state.[113]

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[105] According to the concordance listed in n. 72.

[106] *Aristeas to Philocrates* (see n. 82 above), 301–303.

[107] Philo, *De Confusione Linguarum* (18) 86; *De Somniis* I (34) 193; *De Ebrietate* (40) 165; *De Praemiis* (5) 28; *Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit* (2) 11; *De Vita Contemplativa* (3) 27; *De Legatione ad Gaium* (31) 213; (*LCL*), ed. F.H. Colson, vol. 3-5, 8-10 (London 1954–1962).

[108] II Maccabees (see n. 87), XIV 5; IV Maccabees V 1; XVII 17, ed. M. Hadas (see n. 85 above); G. Corradi, *Studi Ellenistici* (Turin 1929), p. 231 ff.; E. Bickermann, *Institutions des Séleucides* (Paris 1938), p. 189. On the Book of Judith see n. 84 above.

[109] *Bell.* II 25, 38, 81, 93; *Ant.* XV 358; XVI 30; XVII 301, 317.

[110] *Bell.* VI 243. Also the Parthian council, in *Ant.* XX 61.

[111] U. Kahrstedt, F. Poland, "Synodos," *PW-RE* vol. 4 A (1933): 1415 ff.; *Bell.* I 170: διεῖλεν δὲ πᾶν τὸ ἔθνος εἰς πέντε συνόδους-κτλ.; *Ant.* XIV 91: πέντε δὲ συνέδρια καταστήσας εἰς ἴσας μοίρας διένειμε τὸ ἔθνος-κτλ.

[112] Livy XLV 29.5 (*LCL*), ed. A.C. Schlesinger, vol. 13 (London 1951): Deinde in quattuor regiones dividi Macedoniam etc. XLV 32. 1-2: His rerum externarum cognitionibus interpositis Macedonum rursus advocatum concilium; pronuntiatum quod ad statum Macedoniae pertinebat, senatores, quos synhedros vocant, legendos esse, quorum consilio res publica administraretur.

[113] Josephus, *Ant.* XIV 143 ff.; A. Momigliano, "Ricerche sull' organizzazione della Giudea

Another "authority" for the existence of the Sanhedrin, seemingly more solid and convincing, appears in the trial of the younger Herod,[114] who, as governor (*strategos*) of Galilee unlawfully executed rebels and was tried for murder. The terms *Synedrion* or Sanhedrin and even figures with names of prominent Pharisee sages appear in this corrected and expanded exposition of Josephus', according to which Herod came to his trial with a military escort and threw the judges into a panic. Samaias (Shemaiah) warned the "*Synedrion* (Sanhedrin) and the king" of the impending calamity and encouraged them to do their duty, but Hyrcanus postponed the trial for a day, enabling the accused to flee and so averting the ire of his Roman patrons. Samaias' warning was fulfilled years later, Herod became king, took his revenge, had the members of the *Synedrion*-Sanhedrin and eventually Hyrcanus, too, killed. The brave Samaias was not slain, claiming when Herod triumphed that there was no escaping the tyrant "due to the sins," and advising the besieged Jerusalemites to surrender. Samaias and Pollion (Avtalion) the Pharisee recur twice more in Josephus as very influential teachers and leaders.[115]

These depictions of the *Synedrion*-Sanhedrin and Pharisee sages embody features resembling the talmudic tradition, which were evidently drawn from legends and folk tales. The aura of Jewish legend hovers over the favorable presentation of Samaias, the censure of Herod's tyranny, and the moral outcome of the story. The *Synedrion*-Sanhedrin in that chapter does not, however, correspond to the talmudic model, does not properly execute judicial functions, but is entirely dependent on the will of "king" Hyrcanus, convenes at his discretion, conducts its deliberations under his supervision, and disperses in accordance with his decree. There is no way of knowing how much Josephus, as was his practice, polished and stylized the original tale so as to blend it into his work. In any case, neither its body, its circumstances nor its outcome constitute any proof of the existence of the Great Sanhedrin as a permanent stable body, structured and administered according to its independent regulations. What is again made clear is the fact that during the Hasmonean period there were similar courts operating and that Halakhot of the Tractate Sanhedrin were partially carried out under the guidance of Pharisee sages. The parallel talmudic story, according to the inferior Babylonian Talmud version which moves the event to the time of Simeon b. Shataḥ and King Jannaeus, does not include the Great Sanhedrin either.[116]

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sotto il dominio romano"; *Atti della Reale Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa* (Lettere, Storia e Filosofia), Series 2, vol. 3, fasc. 2, 3 (Bologna 1934), p. 183ff.; Schürer, New English Version (see n. 6 above), vol. 1 (1973), p. 267ff.; E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule* (Leiden 1976), p. 30ff.

[114] Josephus, *Ant.* XIV 163ff.; *Bell.* I 208ff.

[115] Josephus, *Ant.* XV 3-4, 370. From the chronological point of view, the identification with Shemaiah and Avtalion (the fourth "Pair") is preferable to that with Hillel and Shammai, although the Josephus version does not make this clear, as noted in Chapter 5, nn. 225–228 above.

[116] bSanhedrin 19a-b. Herod is called a "slave" since in the Babylonian Talmud he is described

Harsh tribunals, whether called *Synedrion* or not, prospered in Herod's kingdom. They were arbitrary, effective instruments of the cruel tyrant, designed to legitimize his gory crimes and plots against rivals even in his own family and the remnants of the Hasmoneans (although he did not always worry about a legalistic pretext in destroying his many victims). Let us note the principal episodes: a) He accused his father-in-law, old Hyrcanus, of a treacherous conspiracy with the Nabataean king. In order to convict him he submitted an exchange of letters to the *Synedrion* and had him executed, according to the memoirs cited by Josephus who himself has reservation about them and provides a contradictory version.[117] The judgement of his sons by his Hasmonean wife — Alexander and Aristobulus — Herod entrusted to a *Synedrion* of high Roman officials and of his foreign followers whom he assembled in Beirut.[118] He delegated the judgement of Pherora's wife to a *Synedrion* of friends, and that of his son Antipater to a *Synedrion* of courtiers with the Roman governor (*Legatus Augusti* of Syria) Varus as head.[119] Without any legal proceedings at all, he decreed annihilation for a group of Pharisees and their supporters who predicted the collapse of his kingdom, and for the fellowship of students and their teachers, Judah, the son of Sariphaeus (or Sepphoraeus) and Mattathias, the son of Margaloth, who were outstanding among the Jewish sages and interpreters of ancestral laws.[120] All those Herodian *Synedria* have no roots in the Torah, and none of their procedures contain the minutest trace of the Great Sanhedrin, resembling even slightly the talmudic model.

There is not the faintest suggestion of a central Jerusalem Sanhedrin in any of the events after Herod's death,[121] not in the resulting riots and altercations following the disclosure of his will, not in the division of the kingdom between his heirs, not in the assumption of power by the Roman governors, procurators or prefects, not in the opposition to a population census, not in the controversies among internal factions, not in the growth of the militant zealot movement, not in the frequent alternation among the high priests and the corruption in their vocation. There is not a trace of information or story on such an institution even

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as "a slave of the House of the Hasmoneans" (bBava Batra 3b). Hyrcanus is depicted in the image of King Jannaeus who generally represents, in the Babylonian Talmud, an evil Jewish king. The other divergences are explained by halakhic excerpts and pieces of legends, as indicated above in Chapter 5, Section F.

[117] Josephus, *Ant.* XV 161ff.; *Bell.* I 433ff.

[118] *Ant.* XVI 356ff.; *Bell.* I 534ff. The council beside Augustus Caesar is called *Synedrion* like the one beside Herod: *Ant.* XV 358; *Bell.* I 559.

[119] *Ant.* XVII 46ff., 93ff.; *Bell.* I 571ff., 620ff.

[120] *Ant.* XVII 167; *Bell.* I 655. Also a group of Pharisees was slain with no reported trial — *Ant.* XVII 44; Cf. *Bell.* I 571ff.

[121] *Ant.* XVII 188ff.; *Bell.* II 1ff.

from the time of Agrippa I, who observed Torah precepts faithfully, gained his people's respect, and also had close contacts with the Pharisees.[122]

While Agrippa II did assemble an anonymous *Synedrion* for the sake of the Levite singers in order to allow them white linen robes, that is, priestly garments, and swelled their ranks by joining to them another unit of Levites, it was only a one-time committee or session, initiated and directed by the king, like the other temporary bodies noted above which were at times described as *Synedria.*[123] Josephus censures the act he felt to be contradictory to "ancestral laws" and conducive to sin, but does not ascribe the misdeed to a particular institution and does not bother to attack the offending *Synedrion* or Sanhedrin that encroached upon the priesthood's exclusive domain, although he was close enough in time to the responsible people to be able to obtain details and clarifications.

No testimony supports Adolf-Abraham Büchler's suggestion that the improved status of the Levites was connected with a far-reaching reform that ensured Pharisee control in the ceremonial area and the removal of the Sadducee priests from the High Court in the Chamber of Hewn Stones.[124] The absence of any reaction on Josephus' part can neither be understood nor justified, if in his generation so close at hand there had been an upheaval so prejudicial to priestly prestige and so destructive of the foundations of the constitutional order he revered. However carefully we search in every corner, we shall find no signs of the hypothetical revolution, nor of the Sadducee Sanhedrin, nor of the reformed Pharisee one. The earlier conflict as well—between Agrippa and the priests, because they built a high wall to prevent supervision of Temple practices from the royal palace which they felt was contrary to ancestral custom—was not presented or decided by any authorized, religious, judicial body.[125] Agrippa himself initiated and convened a *Synedrion*-Sanhedrin precisely because in his time there was no independent supreme Sanhedrin for law and the guidance of the nation.

At the end of the Second Temple period there emerged a Jerusalem council with the Greek name *Boule,* the third incarnation in the *Gerousia*-Sanhedrin annals, according to the monistic theory, or a parallel body coexisting with the High Court, in the view of the various pluralistic theoreticians. The Greek term generally denotes city and state councils of the Athenian type, or of the type common in the Hellenistic and Roman world.[126] A *Boule* usually headed by

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122 *Ant.* XVIII 238ff.; *Bell.* II 181ff.

123 *Ant.* XX 216ff.

124 A. Büchler, Die Priester und der Cultus (see n. 80 above), p. 57ff.; idem, Das Synedrion in Jerusalem (see n. 9 above), p. 193.

125 Josephus, *Ant.* XX 189ff.

126 A.H.M. Jones, *The Greek City* (Oxford 1966, repr. of 1940 ed.), p. 164ff.; G. Glotz, *La Cité Grecque* (Paris 1953), p. 213ff.

Archontes is known not only in Gentile Gaza,[127] but also in Jewish Tiberias.[128] Emperor Claudius addresses "the *Archontes, Boule* and *Demos* of the Jerusalemites and the entire Jewish nation," granting them permission to retain the high priest's vestments and crown.[129] Such a formula was usual in official documents sent to autonomous cities where Hellenistic customs obtained, as well as in those cities' own resolutions and proclamations. Like those municipal organizations, Jerusalem, too, had a *Boule*-building, a *Boule*-scribe and a committee of the "ten foremost."[130] For that reason many scholars believe that an administration of the polis type was set up in Jerusalem though they do not always agree on its dating.

This view is questioned by Victor Tcherikover who distinguishes between the outwardly Greek nature of Jerusalem institutions and their inner Jewishness.[131] His arguments are plentiful and weighty: the *Boule*-council is not restricted to the territorial borders of Jerusalem and its area, but operates as a national and religious representation; there is no distinction made between officials and notables, including high priests; there is no replacement of councillors nor election of *Archontes* at regular intervals; there are no permanent, regular assemblies of the citizenry (*Demos*); there is no gymnasium and ephebic training without which an educated urban community of the Greek type is impossible. The conclusion is that the Greek dressing and terminology can cover and hide the main body, "ancient Jewish institutions, the fruit of the inner development of the Jewish people throughout many generations."[132] The vague terminology prevalent in the East influenced even the Roman authorities and imperial offices, as Claudius' letter shows. But behind the fine façade of the *Boule,* in Tcherikover's opinion, lies the Sanhedrin known in Jewish and Christian sources, the successor to the ancient *Gerousia.*

The institutions and practices of the Greek polis were indeed not preserved in pristine form in Oriental cities and there was a growing tendency to develop heterogeneous bodies in Hellenistic clothing. In regard to many cities in Eretz Israel, both Jewish and non-Jewish, it is very difficult to decide to what extent they had the attributes and features prescribed by a true polis constituton.[133] The vague terminology is the outcome of the mixed reality, and a formal, judicial overprecision would be of little use at the moment. Even Josephus is not careful of his words, and not sufficiently clear in his terminology. A variety of councils

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[127] Josephus, *Ant.* XIII 364. Cf. *Ant.* XIII 164f.; XIV 384; XVIII 1; XIX 238f.; *Bell.* I 284.

[128] Josephus, *Bell.* II 641; *Vita* (12) 64ff.

[129] *Ant.* XX 11ff. There is a similar formula in official letters: *Ant.* XIV 190, 213; XVI 167, and so on.

[130] Josephus, *Bell.* V 144, 532; VI 354; *Ant.* XX 194.

[131] V. Tcherikover, *Ha-Yehudim ba-Olam ha-Yevani ve-ha-Romi* (Tel Aviv 1961), p. 199ff.

[132] Ibid., p. 212.

[133] E. Schürer, *Geschichte* (see n. 6 above), vol. 2[4] (1907), p. 94ff.; idem, New English Version, vol. 2 (1979), p. 86ff.

(*Boule*), apparently local ones, appear suddenly in his text, incidentally, without any information making it possible to define them and ascertain their nature.[134] He applies the term *Boule* not only to the Roman senate, as did other writers,[135] but also to the Samaritan council in Pontius Pilate's time, and even in the Return to Zion period (according to the apocryphal Book of Esdras II 13).[136] There is thus room for doubt, as Tcherikover found, about whether the Jerusalem council was organized exactly like the Greek *Boule,* the external similarities notwithstanding. The rejection of the Greek model, however, does not lead directly to the identification of the council with the Sanhedrin. The problem is still unsolved, and the principal testimonies must again be consulted.

A *Boule*-council and *Archontes* are mentioned in connection with Jerusalem from the days of Emperor Claudius on, with no indication of when they started. During the growing ferment, in the frequent disturbances before and while the Great Revolt erupted, that leadership, together with the conservative upper classes in the Jewish community, took a stand against the surging torrent of militant zealotism in order to choke off the yearning for armed confrontation and revolution. Josephus describes the events in his generation, which he sometimes observed at close quarters and sometimes even took part in. The titles of national leaders and representatives are not unambiguous, however, but vary as in his earlier chapters.[137] The procurator Fadus summons "the chief priests and the heads of the Jerusalemites."[138] During the incumbencies of the governor Cumanus and his successors there is intermittent mention of "the heads of the Jerusalemites," "the heads of the Jews," "the *Archontes* of the Jerusalemites," the "notables" or the "most eminent," etc.[139]

The procurator Florus demands that the "chief priests and notables and the most eminent citizens" turn over those responsible for hostile demonstrations, and is refused. It is "the chief priests" who calm and dispel the growing wrath, seek to mollify Florus, and assemble the people in the Temple. When the procurator quits Jerusalem, "the chief priests and *Boule''* are left, and promise to keep the peace and order. "The *Archontes* of Jerusalem" despatch a complaint to Cestius Gallus, the governor (imperial legate) in Syria. "The chief priests with the notables and the *Boule''* set out to meet Agrippa at Yavneh (Jamnia) and call for his help. "The chief priests" help him in propagandizing for peace. His flowery oration to the people has momentary influence, and on his advice "the *Archontes* and *Boule* members" scatter to the villages to collect the tax for the

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[134] Josephus, *Bell.* II 273.

[135] *Bell.* I 284ff., II 209ff.; VII 65; *Ant.* XIII 164ff., XIV 384ff., XVIII 1, 181; XIX 239ff.; Dionysius of Halicarnassus VI 69 (see p. 123, no. 25 above), vol. 4 (1962).

[136] *Ant.* XVIII 88; XI 22, 117; I Esdras II 13, ed. A. Rahlfs, *Septuaginta,* vol. 1 (Stuttgart 1950), p. 878.

[137] *Ant.* XVII 342; XVIII 121, 273; XX 180; *Bell.* II 199, etc.

[138] *Ant.* XX 6. See also *Ant.* XX 53.

[139] *Ant.* XX 123, 132, 135, 191; *Bell.* II 233, 237, 240, 243, 245.

government. "*Archontes* and notables" are also sent to Florus so that he may appoint some of them as tax collectors.[140]

The preaching did not, however, succeed in stopping the revolutionary aspirations. The insurgent movement grew stronger, and announced the end of the Gentile sacrifices, including offerings in the emperor's honor, despite the entreaties of "the chief priests and dignitaries." Consequently, "the notables with the high priests and with the most important Pharisees" convene for consultations, and conduct a mass meeting in the Temple, utilizing the declarations by priests well-versed in ancestral customs to prove and persuade that the prevention of sacrifices by Gentiles is forbidden. The efforts of "the notables and chief priests" were in vain, and the reins of leadership were taken out of their hands.[141] Josephus, himself, keeps company with "the high priests and the leading Pharisees" in those fateful hours when the revolt was ignited.[142]

All these facts serve to illuminate slightly the nature of the Jerusalem council representing a public leadership and upper social class, responsible somehow to the ruling power, but concerned with Jewish autonomy and the rights of the nation. Its officials are chosen from the ranks of the aristocracy and the higher priesthood by a method that is not clear, but certainly not democratic. To some extent, it took the place of the advisory bodies of earlier times that flanked the political government. Its activities, functions, appearance and character do not resemble those of the Great Sanhedrin. There is no connection in the Talmud either between the Sanhedrin and the concepts of *Boule* or "*Boule* members." The *Boule* building, the "*Boule* members' chamber," and the Chamber of Hewn Stones are in various, entirely separate places.[143]

The function of the Jerusalem council (*Boule*) evidently included, in a narrow clearly-defined area, the preservation of public order using very limited means of enforcement, but not full independent jurisdiction. Josephus in hazy wording obscures information on arrests made by local councils,[144] but criminal trials remained essentially in the province of the Roman government, though sometimes temporarily delegated to the later Herodian princes who perhaps made use here and there of ad hoc *Synedria.*[145] Thus the *Archontes* arrested Jesus

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[140] *Bell.* II 301ff., 316ff., 331, 336ff., 342ff., 405ff.

[141] *Bell.* II 410ff., 417ff., 422ff., 428ff.

[142] *Vita* (5) 21.

[143] yYoma I 38c; bYoma 8b; yTa'anit IV 69a; mMiddot V 4. Reference to the *Boule* building, according to Josephus, appears in *Bell.* V 144.

[144] *Bell.* II 273.

[145] *Bell.* II 117; *Ant.* XVIII 107, 119. However this latter testimony on John the Baptist (see n. 218 below) is rather suspect. See also *Ant.* XIX 325. Consequently reports of judgement before the destruction of the Temple are understandable, as in ySanhedrin VII 24b; bSanhedrin 52b. See also n. 53. The Jerusalem council and the parallel ones in other cities were assigned certain administrative and police functions, connected as well with their obligations to the government and to the maintenance of public order, but only the Roman governor could deal with capital cases. Josephus' descriptions are very clear and accord with the judicial practice throughout the empire. See A.N.

son of Ananias, a rude peasant who shouted in the Temple and streets of Jerusalem, warning of the coming destruction, and they delivered him to the procurator Albinus, who ordered him flogged.[146] Thus too Florus applied to the Jewish representatives for the extradiction of the offending protesters.[147] The remarkable and extraordinary right stressed by both Philo and Josephus and confirmed by inscriptions, authorizing the Jews to kill any non-Jew who entered the Temple and its courtyards, was not in the province of the council (*Boule*) or even an ordinary tribunal, but was in a category of the special zealotist justice (such as in mSanhedrin IX 6) required in instances of drastic transgressions.[148]

The controversy concerning Gentile sacrifices which, according to Josephus, was the object of a fierce debate at the outbreak of the rebellion, clearly elucidates that, unlike the Great Sanhedrin, the council (*Boule*) was not considered by the people to be the highest and exclusive authority in halakhic rulings and religious instruction, although at times it may have had to deal with such matters. While their names and status are not given, Pharisees took part in that debate represented perhaps only partially in some scholarly or judicial body; it was priests, however, who gave expert testimony on the ancient custom. In any case, that basic question was not clarified in the Chamber of Hewn Stones or decided before the Great Sanhedrin as required by the ideal talmudic code of laws.

These conclusions are confirmed also in a survey of the course of the Great Revolt. After the defeat of Cestius Gallus and the retreat of the Roman troops, the institutions of the fighting people were reorganized.[149] A government operated in Jerusalem that tried hard to achieve control of the commanders and of the dissenting factions. There was no longer an institution called *Boule*; the term was used only in the sense of consultation.[150] Josephus calls the central government and its representatives by various names, without explaining its structure: functionaries, councillors, notables, the heads of the Jerusalemites, the *Koinon* (perhaps referring to an expanded body), as well as *Synedrion.*[151] This leadership includes Simeon b. Gamaliel, of the Pharisee fellowships and heads of

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Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford 1965), p. 1ff.; E. Schürer, New English Version (see n. 6 above), vol. 1 (1973), p. 367ff.; vol. 2 (1979), p. 218ff.

146 *Bell.* VI 300ff.

147 *Bell.* II 301ff.

148 G. Alon, *Meḥkarim be-Toldot Yisrael,* vol. 1 (Tel Aviv 1957), pp. 101, 133; M. Schwabe, "Ha-Ketovot ha-Yevaniot shel Yerushalayim," *Sefer Yerushalayim,* vol. 1 (1956), p. 358ff.; J.B. Frey, *CIJ,* vol. 2 (Rome 1952), no. 1400; E. Gabba, *Iscrizioni greche e latine per lo studio della Bibbia,* no. 24 (Turin 1958); *OGIS* II, no. 598, ed. W. Dittenberger (Leipzig 1903, repr. 1960); Josephus, *Ant.* XV 417; *Bell.* V 194; VI 124ff.; Philo (see n. 107 above), *De Legatione ad Gaium* (31) 212, (39) 307; see also Acts of the Apostles (n. 156 below) 21:28; see also n. 205 below.

149 Josephus, *Bell.* II 562ff.; *Vita* (7), 28ff.

150 *Vita* (41) 204.

151 *Bell.* III 138; IV 213; *Vita* (7) 28; (12) 62; (12) 65; (13) 72; (38) 190; (41) 204; (49) 254; (52) 267; (60) 309, etc.

the House of Hillel, along with Ananus son of Ananus and Jesus (Joshua) son of Gamalas (Gamla or Gamaliel) and others, but there is no justification for assuming that they were placed at the head of the talmudic Great Sanhedrin.[152] Josephus here uses the term *Synedrion,* among various others, in its multiple meanings, as he always does, having no compunction, for example, about applying it to Titus' headquarters which decided the fate of Jerusalem and its Temple.[153]

It is not purely terminological details but facts that prove the non-existence of the Great Sanhedrin at the end of the Second Temple period. Here Josephus appointed at his side in Galilee a high council of seventy in exercising his authority to judge criminal cases, and the zealots in Jerusalem set up a tribunal of seventy for capital cases.[154] In these two salient cases there is no indication of any coordination or contact or of conflict with the sacred rights of the Great Sanhedrin in the Chamber of Hewn Stones which alone was supposed to have seventy members. A *Gerousia* of the Jewish community of Alexandria, mentioned by both Philo and Josephus, had "seventy elders" in it according to the talmudic legend, with no reference at all to the supreme institution in Jerusalem.[155] All these testimonies lead to the solid conclusion that from the time of the Return to Zion up to the destruction of the Second Temple there were representative, administrative, public bodies, intermittently appearing and disappearing as *Gerousia,* and *Synedrion* and *Boule,* but they were never identifiable with the talmudic Great Sanhedrin at the head of the judicial system that defines the law and disseminates the Torah among the people of Israel.

D. *The New Testament Sanhedrin*

The New Testament[156] reflects a portrait of the Jewish Sanhedrin or *Synedrion* that is contrary to the one in the talmudic tradition, and provided the base upon

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[152] J. Klausner (see n. 8 above), *Historia,* vol. 5 (1951), p. 163.

[153] *Bell.* VI 243. Josephus applies the term *Synedrion* to councils of his rivals as well as his friends: *Vita* (46) 236; (66) 368.

[154] *Bell.* IV 336; II 571; *Vita* (14) 79.

[155] *Bell.* VII 412. Members of the Jewish *Gerousia* in Alexandria called a general assembly and, according to Josephus, convinced the public to turn over to the Romans the revolutionary extremists called *sicarii,* who escaped to Egypt, as they were dangerous and were inciting to rebellion. In the previous generation Philo (see n. 73) too mentioned the Gerousia. Seventy elders in the Alexandria community are mentioned in the Jerusalem Talmud (Sukkah V 55a) compared with seventy-one referred to in the inferior Babylonian Talmud version (Sukkah 51b). Furthermore, the Jews of Batanaea in Transjordan are represented by seventy elders as well; *Bell.* II 482; *Vita* (11) 56. These facts indicate that it was the practice to compose prestigious institutions in the time-honored pattern (Num. 11:16) with no connection to or contradiction of the status of the Great Sanhedrin in the Chamber of Hewn Stones.

[156] E. Nestle (etc.), *Novum Testamentum Graece*[26] (Stuttgart 1979); K. Aland, *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum* (Stuttgart 1964).

which many modern schools of thought constructed the supposed real historical Sanhedrin of the Second Temple period. The debate, the compromise attempts and the various syntheses proposed all revolved around the axis of these two polar conceptions.

In the New Testament, *Synedrion*-"Sanhedrin" denotes "court." The Sermon on the Mount destines it for those who rage at and insult their fellows.[157] The particular sense of the term is stressed in the Christian savior's speech to his disciples and apostles, warning them of persecution and opposition as he sends them forth: "They will deliver you up to the courts (*Synedria*) and they will scourge you in their synagogues."[158] Christian communities were not in fact spared troubles and blows. The Jewish Sanhedrin as reflected there brandished the whip of torment and carried out the crimes of the iniquitous nation which rejected the crucified savior and persecuted his adherents. The function of the Sanhedrin as an instrument of oppression and injustice is manifest in the series of judgements scattered through the pages of the New Testament. Let us look at the scroll of tears and sorrow mixed with biting censure, starting with the crucial episode of Christ's trial. In the wake of critical scholarship, four versions are discernible, three of them synoptic (first Mark's, then Matthew's and Luke's) and the fourth in John.[159]

The trial and crucifixion of Christ are not detached surprising events, but the last act in a soteriological cosmic drama, originating in a supreme heavenly decree, progressing at a predetermined pace, and ending in accordance with an anticipated plan in order to bestow miraculous redemption on an ailing mankind. From his first appearance Jesus was confronted by a blank wall of folly and obduracy, as it were, in his nation and native land. Except for a small group of elect, the recalcitrant people did not heed his message. The rebellious people became blind and their hearts befuddled. Their multitudes did not understand the glory of Christ's revelation, the truth of his teachings, and the meaning of the shining miracles he performed. His wonders by which the secrets of the end of days and the treasures of salvation were somewhat ambiguously revealed were rejected as perverse satanic delusions. His lashing hurtful reprimand, his non-compliance with precepts and disparagement of accepted tradition, his non-orthodox teaching of the Torah and forgiveness of sins, because of his implied divinity, aroused the ire of the national leaders and spiritual guides, although seemingly the miserable and oppressed, the despised and ostracised streamed to his side.

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[157] Matt. 5:22.

[158] Mark 13:9; Matt. 10:17 — παραδώσουσιν γὰρ ὑμᾶς εἰς συνέδρια, καὶ ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς αὐτῶν μαστιγώσουσιν ὑμᾶς.

[159] P. Feine, J. Behm, W.G. Kümmel, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* [13](Heidelberg 1964); W. Marxsen, *Das Neue Testament als Buch der Kirche* (Gütersloh 1968); R.M. Grant, *A Historical Introduction to the New Testament* (New York 1972); E. Lohse, *Die Einheit des Neuen Testaments* (Göttingen 1973).

The wicked conspiracy to exterminate him and destroy his mission was devised first of all by the "Pharisees" in close cooperation with the "Herodians," that is, the Pharisee sages of the people joined by representatives of the Herodian dynasty were the initiators of the terrible crime.[160] However, his via dolorosa was paved and predestined beforehand, for Jesus announced to his disciples that "the elders and chief priests and scribes" would reject him so that he would die and come to life again three days later.[161] The atonement of his death was necessary for the salvation of mankind, and Peter's attempt to deter him and spare him agony was only the temptation of the devil.

On the road to Jerusalem Jesus again declared to his followers that he would be "betrayed to the chief priests and scribes" who would condemn him to death and "deliver him to the Gentiles."[162] In the wake of his entry into the capital, accompanied by his retinue and a royal messianic decor, his demonstration and scandalous conduct in the Temple, the "chief priests and scribes" conspired to destroy him. Because of his provocative sermon their intention solidified but fear of his crowds of admirers restrained them. "The Pharisees" and "the Herodians" again laid a trap for him in order to invent a pretext and accuse him of rebelling against the government, but were disappointed.[163]

Before Passover the "chief priests and scribes" contrive a scheme for capturing him by trickery and killing him.[164] It is decided not to carry it out on the holiday in case "a riot in the people" should develop. Judas Iscariot volunteers, for money, to serve the "chief priests." An armed unit sent by the "chief priests and scribes and elders" arrests Jesus on Passover eve and takes him to the high priest's house. All the "chief priests and elders and scribes" are assembled there. The "chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin" in that assembly only seeking a pretext to destroy him in vain mobilize false testimony, until the high priest turns and asks, "Are you the Messiah (Christ) son of the Blessed"? (or "son of God?") Jesus answers, "I am and you will see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of (Divine) Power and coming with the clouds of heaven," meaning that after his resurrection his exalted presence will shine in the firmament and complete his mission of redemption in the future. On hearing this

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[160] Only Mark (3:6) mentions "Herodians" versus Matt. 12:14; Luke 6:7ff. But contrary to Mark and Matthew, Luke omits the Herodians (see n. 163 below) entirely, perhaps because of his tendency to improve an earlier tradition in a more moderate, conciliatory, and convenient spirit in regard to authority. His particular position is apparently shown in the story of Jesus' birth (2:1ff. versus Matt. 2:1ff.) and in the report on the circumstances of the death of John the Baptist (3:19f.; 9:9 versus Mark 6:16ff.; Matt. 14:1ff.). The tendency is characteristic also of Acts which is a continuation of Luke. See n. 208 below.

[161] Mark 8:31; 9:31; Matt. 16:21; 17:22–23; Luke 9:22, 44.

[162] Mark 10:33; Matt. 20:18–19; Luke 18:31ff.

[163] Mark 11:18, 27ff.; 12:13ff.; Matt. 21:15, 23, 45–46; 22:15ff.; Luke 19:47; 20:1, 19ff. Luke has "the scribes and the chief priests" instead of the Pharisees and the Herodians. See also n. 160 above.

[164] Mark 14:1ff.; Matt. 26:1ff.; Luke 22:1-2.

"blasphemy" the high priest rends his vestments and those present convict Jesus and his sentence is death.[165]

At dawn, the "chief priests with the elders and scribes and the whole *Synedrion* (Sanhedrin)" consulted, and then chained Jesus and carried him to Pilate.[166] The Roman procurator hears their torrent of accusations in contrast to the serenity and nobility of the accused, finds nothing wrong, and is inclined to exonerate him. But the Jewish leaders insist on his crucifixion and an incited crowd supports them with shouting. Pilate bows to their will, under pressure of the mob, and consigns to brutality, torment and crucifixion the man known as "King of the Jews" or the "Messiah (Christ)." In his dying moments, he is ridiculed and abused by the "chief priests with the scribes and the elders" too.[167] In Matthew, Pilate washes his hands and denies any responsibility for the death of "this righteous person" in contrast to the malice of the Jewish people shouting madly, "His blood be on us and on our children," meaning that the Jews faithful to their Law and denying Jesus will bear the stigma of their crime for all generations.[168] The tendency to absolve Pilate of all sin is just as evident in the other Gospels (Luke, John) as in the early Christian literature.[169]

The spectacle of Christ's judgement, death and resurrection is carefully planned and staged in all detail. Consistent direction, heavenly or earthly, shapes his progress toward the fateful end. The trial was timed for Passover, the

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[165] Mark 14:53: πάντες οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς; Mark 14:55: οἱ δὲ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ ὅλον τὸ συνέδριον-κτλ.; Matt. 26:57ff.; Luke 22:54ff. This strange practice reflects some procedural rules usual in Roman trials. See Y. Baer, "Le-Va'ayat Demuta shel ha-Yahadut ba-Evangelionim ha-Sinoptyim," *Zion* 31 (1966): 135ff. Jesus was interrogated and found guilty on the basis of his own admission (like the martyrs such as Stephen in Acts, Chapter 7), in contrast to the judicial principles of the Bible and Talmud. The testimony against him (his threat to destroy the Temple) is not intrinsically false, but so deemed because of mistaken Jewish interpretation, as indicated in John 2:19ff. See also Acts 6:14; Mark 15:29; Matt. 27:40.

[166] Mark 15:1; οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς μετὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ γραμματέων καὶ ὅλον τὸ συνέδριον; Matt. 27:1ff.; Luke 22:66ff.

[167] Mark 15:31; Matt. 27:41; Luke 23:35.

[168] Matt. 27:24, based on the ceremony of the heifer (Deut. 21:6ff.); also Ps. 26:6; 73:13. Matthew's tone is sharper and more inimical to the Jews, but in the main follows Mark, about whose primacy there is no room for doubt. See G.D. Kilpatrick, *The Origins of the Gospel according to St. Matthew* (Oxford 1946); W.C. Allen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to of St. Matthew, ICC* (Edinburgh 1957, repr. of 1912 ed.); W. Marxsen, *Der Evangelist Markus* (Göttingen 1959); E. Haenchen, *Der Weg Jesu* (Berlin 1966); V. Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*[2] (London–New York 1966); R. Hummel, *Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Kirche und* Judentum im Matthäusevangelium (Munich 1963); E. Klostermann, *Das Matthäusevangelium*[4], *HNT* (Tübingen 1971); idem, *Das Markusevangelum*[5], *HNT* (Tübingen 1971); W.F. Albright & C.S. Mann, *Matthew, AB* 26 (Garden City N.Y. 1971).

[169] E. Hennecke & W. Schneemelcher, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen,* vol. 1[3] (Tübingen 1959), p. 330ff.; P. Winter, "A Letter from Pontius Pilate," *NT* 7 (1964): 37ff.; J.P. Lémonon, *Pilate et le Gouvernement de la Judée* (Paris 1981), p. 249ff.

festival of joyous deliverance, for that is when redemption is expected. On Friday the first man was created and sinned; on that day the original sin was cleansed by the blood of Christ, and those sanctified by him gain expiation and eternal life.[170] The three days in the tomb, until his resurrection, are decreed by "the sign of the prophet Jonah" and the prophecy of Hosea (6:2). The portrait of the Messiah suffering and tortured for the sins of mankind, led "like a lamb to slaughter" without saying a word in his own defense, taken "by oppressive judgement," for "he exposed himself to death, and numbered among the sinners whereas he bore the guilt of many," is drawn from an interpretation of Isaiah's prophecy (Chapter 53). The ridicule and teasing of his enemies were taken from the same source (Is. 50:6ff.) and from Psalms (22 and 69), and so forth. His future splendid appearance "in the clouds of heaven" is based on the vision of Daniel (7:13) and his sitting "on the right hand of (Divine) Power" on Psalms (110:1). His last supper is stripped of all Jewish national content and constitutes the archetype, ideological basis and model of the central ceremony in Christian ritual: the sacrifice of the Messiah's body symbolized by bread and wine. The Christological purpose and symbolism which constitute the heart and soul of the whole drama is even more obvious in the Gospel according to John, who shifts the crucifixion to the holiday eve so that it coincides with the Passover sacrifice ceremony, portraying the sublime, ideal and ultimate Passover offering.[171]

The Sanhedrin or *Synedrion* of the Gospels is not drawn in any purely juridical or historical document but appliquéed on to that same theological, ritual and notional fabric. For the Gospels contain sacred beliefs and legends cast in literary molds and sealed by ecclesiastical approval, rather than a collection of realistic, naive and fresh recollections of those events.[172] The atmosphere of the bitter controversy, the efforts to penetrate the world around, and the missionary propaganda among the other nations hover over the evangelical drama. The manner of Jesus' execution, the crucifixion and its declared reason, like the rest of the circumstances and the testimony of Cornelius Tacitus, together indicate

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[170] Irenaeus, *Contra Haereses,* V 23; *PG* 7, col. 1185: Manifestum est itaque, quoniam in illa die mortem sustinuit Dominus obediens Patri, in qua mortuus est Adam inobediens Deo; Rom. 5:12ff.; I Cor. 15:20ff.

[171] John 18:28. On the difference in the timing of the Last Supper and the symbolism of the paschal sacrifice, see J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (London 1966). On the fourth Gospel, see n. 178 below. The sign of the prophet Jonah (2:1) is referred in Matt. 12:39ff.; 16:4; Luke 11:29–30. The figure of the "son of man" according to Daniel's vision, as explained above (Chapter 4, Section D) represents a new phase in the destiny of the humiliated and suffering Servant of the Lord, when he rises in the heavenly clouds to the Creator. Instead of the original national-collective meaning, the New Testament injected a clearly Christological one. The addition of another fragmented verse (from Ps. 110:1) points to the loftiness of the heavenly personality and the divine savior.

[172] E. Lohmeyer, *Lord of the Temple* (Edinburgh & London 1961); R. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (Oxford 1963); W. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*[5] (Gottingen 1965).

only one possible historical fact: the punishment was decreed by Pontius Pilate.[173] From Josephus' information it is quite clear that the Roman authorities neither awaited nor needed judgements and trials by Jewish institutions in order to persecute and destroy false prophets and saviors who aroused the Jewish public and posed a threat to the regime.[174] Even in the versions of Mark and Matthew, the Jewish leaders achieved their purpose by persuasion and under pressure by an aroused crowd, but did not base their demand on a particular law or on an official trial, for Pilate was not informed of any sentence or any juridical act.

The third Gospel, according to Luke, is the product of a secondary version as its opening says and a comparison with preceeding versions confirms, and is not free of gross errors.[175] Its author belonged to the Gentiles and thus was even more remote from a Jewish background. In this matter he diverges from Mark and Matthew, deletes the nocturnal session of the *Synedrion* (Sanhedrin) and shortens the negotiations it conducted. According to him, in the morning the "elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes" assemble, place Jesus "before the Sanhedrin." They ask the main decisive question and receive an affirmative answer from the accused.[176] Luke changes the wording of the inquiry and the answer, omits the ostensibly useless false witnesses, and ends not with the accused being found guilty, but with the council members saying "What need we any further testimony? For we ourselves have heard from his own mouth." Because of these omissions and alterations, a number of scholars are

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[173] Tacitus, *The Annals* XV 44 (*LCL*), ed. J. Jackson (London 1951); S. Zeitlin, "The Trial of Jesus," *JQR* 53 (1962/3): 77ff.

[174] Josephus, *Bell.* II 258ff.; *Ant.* XX 97ff., 167ff., 188. Possibly some help was provided of course, by Jewish circles or official bodies, because the councils appointed and representing the public were responsible for maintaining order and would turn over, or were required to turn over Jewish offenders to the authorities (see nn. 144, 146, 147) for punishment. Josephus' detailed descriptions are clear and decisive. The Roman authorities did not implement sentences passed by Jewish courts. Consequently the Gospel interpretation is that Jesus was "handed over" to the Gentiles or to Pilate; Matt. 17:22; 20:18–19; 26:2; 27:2; and parallels. The term used fits Isaiah's prophecy according to the Septuagint (Is. 53:12), that is, the notion of the tortured Servant of God represented by the figure of Jesus: παρεδόθη εἰς θάνατον ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ. Cf.: Acts 3:13; 1 Cor. 11:23; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 5:2; Rom. 4:25; 8:32.

[175] Especially the error (see nn. 199, 200 as well) on the date of Jesus' birth which according to Luke (2:1ff.) took place during the census of Quirinius; see E. Schürer, *Geschichte* (see n. 6 above), vol. 1^4, p. 510ff.; idem, New English Version, vol. 1, p. 400ff.; A. Loisy, *L'Évangile selon Luc* (Paris 1924); A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Luke*^{5} *ICC* (Edinburgh 1956, repr. of 1922 ed.); G.H.P. Thompson, *The Gospel according to Luke, New Clarendon Bible* (Oxford 1972); G. Braumann (ed.), *Das Lukasevangelium* (Darmstadt 1974); W. Schmithals, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (Zurich 1980); E. Schweizer, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (Göttingen 1982); J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke, AB* 28 (Garden City N.Y. 1981).

[176] Luke 22:66ff. Luke deletes details that seem to him superfluous and disturbing, but adds the interrogation of Jesus by Herod Antipas in a very dubious scene. Cf. Acts 4:24ff. See A.N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (see n. 145 above), p. 26; H.W. Hoehner, *Herod Antipas* (Cambridge 1972), p. 233ff.

inclined to prefer Luke's version, in order to deny that there was a trial and consider the action of the Sanhedrin a preliminary investigation.[177] This hypothesis is not sufficiently well-founded, however, because Luke contains no traces of an independent primary tradition. His corrections and modifications had artistic or theological motives. However, that arbitrariness that allows the selection of different and sundry variations derives from the weakness or looseness of the basic concepts regarding the function of the *Synedrion*-Sanhedrin.

In the Gospel according to John, which differs in tone and style[178] and is not especially early compared with the synoptic parallels, or very fond of Judaism, the Sanhedrin trial on the night of Jesus' arrest vanishes entirely. The Jews lurk and plot to destroy the Christian savior, the "chief priests and the Pharisees" conspire against him, until the "chief priests and the Pharisees" assemble a *Synedrion* (Sanhedrin) and decide to ruin him, because of his wonders and signs, in order to avert a calamity and Roman intervention.[179] Judas Iscariot with a military detachment and "the servants of the Jews" arrest Jesus at night after the last supper and bring him to the chief priests for interrogation.[180] Early in the morning they hand him over to Pilate, but at first the Roman procurator is reluctant and responds, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your own Law," and the Jews replied "It is unlawful for us to put any man to death." Pilate found no fault in Jesus and wished to release him, but ultimately agreed to have him put to death after threats and warnings that "If you release this man you are not Caesar's friend, for whoever makes himself a king sets himself against Caesar." The Roman government does not carry out the sentence of a Jewish institution, but decrees crucifixion for a rebel against the empire. One of the cruelest and toughest governors is here turned into a mild, weak and hesitant character whom the Jews frighten and force to kill the victim of their false accusation.[181] Thus John expresses clearly the true, verified fact, suggested in the other versions, that in those years the Jews had no jurisdiction in capital cases. Many scholarly attempts to contradict this have failed completely.[182]

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[177] P. Winter, *On the Trial of Jesus* (Berlin 1961), p. 20ff.

[178] W. Bauer, *Das Johannesevangelium*[2], *HNT* (Tübingen 1925); J.H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John,* 2 vols, *ICC* (Edinburgh 1958, repr. of 1928 ed.); R. Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (Göttingen 1950); A. Jaubert, *Approches de l'Évangile de Jean* (Paris 1976); E. Haenchen, *Das Johannesevangelium* (Tübingen 1980); R.E. Brown, *The Gospel according to St. John,* vols. 1-2, *AB* 29, 29A (Garden City N.Y. 1966, 1970).

[179] John 5:18; 7:1, 32ff.; 11:47: Συνήγαγον οὖν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι συνέδριον, κτλ.–

[180] John 18:1ff.

[181] Philo (see n. 107 above), *De Legatione ad Gaium* (38) 299ff.; Josephus, *Ant.* XVIII 55ff., *Bell.* II 169ff.

[182] J. Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire Romain,* vol. 2 (Paris 1914), p. 132ff.; H. Lietzmann, *Geschichte der alten Kirche,* vol. 1[4] (Berlin 1961), p. 50; P. Winter, *On the Trial of Jesus* (see n. 177 above), p. 75ff. But despite various and sundry approaches, all other attempts failed to eliminate the

The ramified Gospel mirror reflects a Jewish Sanhedrin representing a three-level leadership, probably comparable to the three biblical orders (e.g. II Chron. 19:8; Neh. 8:13; etc.): "the chief priests" on the highest level, influential "scribes," and finally "elders" or "elders of the people." The pretty pattern is marred here and there, as in Luke's version, or in John, who inserts "Pharisees" instead of "scribes" and deletes "elders." That model with the triple hierarchy is not apparent in the descriptions of the *Gerousia,* the real *Synedria,* the various councils, and the other known public institutions of the Second Temple generations. In connection with the Jerusalem council (the *Boule*), mention is made of chief priests and *Archontes,* notables and at times also Pharisees, but it did not have such a constitutional division with a class of "scribes" alongside "elders." The New Testament Sanhedrin does not correspond in composition or functions to the Jerusalem *Boule,* despite a few external similarities. The Gospels have the story of Joseph of Arimathaea who buried Jesus and is described as a member of the *Boule* (*Bouleutēs*) in Mark and Luke, but there are no grounds for including this "righteous man" in the nocturnal session of the denounced and stigmatized Sanhedrin.[183]

The *Synedrion*-Sanhedrin thus portrayed plays a vital role in the Christological drama. Through it the nation judges the Christian savior, scorns his redemption and doctrine, abandons him to shame and destruction. Its leaders and the masses of their people reject his heavenly kingship and prefer a political and earthly Messiah, symbolized by Barabbas, rebel, murderer and robber.[184] The accuracy in the depiction of the Sanhedrin is equivalent to that in the depiction of Passover, which is detached from and empty of any tangible

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contradictions and serious difficulties that undermine the credibility of Jesus' interrogation and trial in the Great Sanhedrin or some similar and parallel body: See G.D. Kilpatrick, *The Trial of Jesus* (London 1953); A. Jaubert, "Les séances du Sanhedrin et les récits de la passion," *RHR,* vol. 166 (1964): 143ff.; vol. 167 (1965): 1ff.; S.G.F. Brandon, *The Trial of Jesus of Nazareth* (London 1968); J. Blinzler, *Der Prozess Jesu*[4] (Regensburg 1969); E. Bammel, *The Trial of Jesus* (London 1971); D. Juel, *Messiah and Temple, The Trial of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark* (Missoula Mont. 1977); O. Betz, "Probleme des Prozesses Jesu," *ANRW* II 25.1 (1982): 580ff.

[183] Mark 15:43ff.; Matt. 27:57ff.; Luke 23:50ff.; John 19:38ff.

[184] Mark 15:7ff.; Matt. 27:16ff.; Luke 23:18ff.; John 18:38ff. The figure of Barabbas was designed to be the complete opposite of Jesus. He does not reflect the particular traits of any authentic historical personage and bears no relation to any historical facts. The intentions underlying his presentation are indicated by his name, meaning "son of the father" in Aramaic, as like Jesus (Cf. "Abba" in the prayer of Jesus according to Mark 14:36) he claims to be the son of the heavenly Father. In a certain group of manuscripts, Matthew contains an early version, "Jesus Barabbas" which is attested also by Origen, *Commentariorum Series* (in Matt. 27:16ff.) 121; *PG* 13, col. 1772/3; E. Klostermann, *Matthäusevangelium* (see n. 168 above), p. 220. This ancient version unequivocally shows the contrastive analogy. Christian redemption is opposed to national Jewish messianism, which embodies revolutionary insurgent aspirations. Unconnected with the figure of Barabbas but deriving from the same theological ideology are two anonymous criminals crucified beside Jesus in order to fulfill exactly Isaiah's prophecy (53:12) on the fate of the tortured Servant of God.

connection with the historical exodus from Egypt or national memories, and which only served as a suitable timing (required by the Scriptures) and convenient opportunity to capture Jesus. The unreliability of the Sanhedrin episode is revealed by the apparently absurd question, even attributed to the high priest at a public session, of whether the accused is the Messiah, the son of God.[185]

The iniquitous Sanhedrin seeks a legal pretext to carry out its plot, tramples underfoot the most elementary principles of a fair trial, and violates established practices in capital cases, which "must begin with reasons for acquittal but not for conviction"; "must be tried by day and concluded by day" (not at night!); "may be concluded on the same day with acquittal but only on the next day with conviction"; "therefore trials are not held on the day before a Sabbath or the day before a holiday." Thus there could certainly be no court sessions on Sabbath or holidays themselves.[186] Documents from the Hasmonean and Roman periods explicitly indicate Jewish concern to avoid all political and civil obligations on the Sabbath and holidays.[187]

There is absolutely no basis for the contention that the Sanhedrin was a Sadducee one which did not operate according to Pharisee principles. There are no grounds for attributing decisive influence to the Sadducees nor for

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[185] It reflects the main point of the controversy with Judaism on the heavenly nature of the redeemer. Such a sudden naive question with no pejorative tone or reservations could not be voiced by a Jewish leader, because the concept "son of God," in this definite particular meaning, is essentially opposed to Jewish theosophy and is never applied to the future Messiah King. There is no sense either in solving the difficulty by claiming that the high preist is only using Jesus' normal appellation, for in fact the nature of Jesus' celestial messianism and his divinity were not publicly declared but rather kept absolutely secret by a very restricted group of disciples in accordance with his own request (Mark 8:30; 9:9). Those mysteries were indeed hinted at vaguely (Mark 12:6ff.), but deliberately enveloped in enigmatic parables (Mark 4:11). The question asked by the high priest (unnamed in Mark) parallels the miraculous spontaneous reactions of Satan's demonic emissaries (Mark 3:11; 5:7) or of the Roman centurion (Mark 15:39) in charge of the crucifixion. See H. Räisänen, *Das "Messiasgeheimnis" im Markusevangelium* (Helsinki 1976).

[186] mSanhedrin IV 1; mBetzah V 2; Philo, *De Migratione Abrahami* (16) 91; *De Vita Mosis* II (39) 214; *Philo (LCL)*, ed. F.H. Colson, vol. 4 (1949), vol. 6 (1950); idem, vol. 8 (1954), *De Specialibus Legibus* IV (2), 8-9. Philo confirms the early dating of these rules.

[187] I Macc. X 34; Josephus, *Ant.* XVI 163, 168. Like the Gospels, the talmudic tradition and Josephus report the dominant position and spiritual-religious leadership of the Pharisees. See also n. 42 above. It is no accident that the Sadducees are mentioned only once by Mark (12:18ff.) and Luke (20:27ff.), a few times in Matthew (3:7; 16:1ff.; 22:23ff.) and not at all in John. There is no evidence or suggestion that the Sadducees did not strictly observe the holidays, as stipulated by the Torah. It was customary not only in Israel, but also in Classical Athens and Ancient Rome to suspend judicial activity during holidays. See G. Glotz, *La Cité Grecque* (Paris 1953), p. 282; Pseudo-Xenophon, *Constitution of the Athenians* III 8, ed. G.W. Bowersock, in *Xenophon* (*LCL*), ed. E.C. Marchant (London 1971); Cicero, *De Legibus* II (8) 19, (12) 29 (*LCL*), ed. C.W. Keyes (London 1977). There was no particular reason for trying Jesus on a holiday, except to base the New Testament on the Old, the sacrifice of Jesus on the paschal sacrifice, and Christian redemption on the salvaton of Israel through the exodus from Egypt.

representing them as desecrating holidays in public.[188] Elders and scribes were in the same Sanhedrin, and they were not fundamentally different from the Pharisees. According to the main version noted above, the initiative against Jesus was taken not by Sadducees but by the Pharisees. It was against the latter that venomous hatred was directed in the Gospel orations, for at first the church-in-the-making considered them its most dangerous enemies.[189] A supposed Sadducee or "political" (as opposed to religious) Sanhedrin that judges the Messiah on the eve of the redemption festival is not supported by any firm testimony and was created by vain, tortuous attempts to base an abstract picture, full of contradictions and enveloped in a mist, on an illusionary foundation. The conception and birth of the trial scene lies in the mysteries of the Christian faith, which assigned to the leaders of the Jewish people the sin and stigma of having condemned the savior, the son of heaven.[190] But the trial is no trial just as the Passover is no Passover and the Sanhedrin is no Sanhedrin.

Acts of the Apostles tells the story of the persecutions and judgements against the apostles and their congregation. Its opening, tendency, style and overall conception show its connection and continuity with the third Gospel, which in Christian tradition was composed by Luke, Paul's disciple. Modern criticism, however, has led to the questioning of accepted hypotheses and evaluations. A series of studies has shaken naive certainty about the reliability of Luke, uncovered its many weaknesses, some historical and some logical. A flowing, unrestrained, narrative style, smooth rhetoric and transparent tendentiousness drown the factual kernels and obscure a remote genuine backgound.[191]

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[188] Josephus, *Ant.* XVIII 17; yYoma I 39a; bYoma 19b; tYoma I 8, etc.

[189] Sharp attacks of the kind leveled at the Pharisees are directed at the scribes as well (Mark 12:38ff.; Matt. 23:1ff.; Luke 11:37ff.; 20:46ff.). The scribes are the Pharisee sages (Mark 2:16) and according to the Gospels (Mark 7:1ff.; Mark 15:1ff.; Luke 5:30; 6:7, etc.) are associated with the Pharisees. Likewise Acts 23:9. John does not recognize scribes (aside from the interpolated 8:3ff.) but only Pharisees. No Sadducee scribes appear in New Testament sources or in Jewish tradition (see also n. 80 above).

[190] I Thess. 2:15; Acts 2:23; 4:10, 5:30. The collective accusation is already suggested in the Parable of the Vineyard (Mark 12:1ff.; Matt. 21:33ff.; Luke 20:9ff.). There is no justification for beclouding the lucid versions of the Gospels in order to blame the Sadducees for the persecution of Jesus, his trial or interrogation, the strange procedure, and the perversion of justice, as do commentators and many scholars by various methods, such as A. Büchler, *Das Synedrion* (see n. 9 above), pp. 36ff.; 99ff.; 235ff.; J. Klausner, *Yeshu ha-Notzri,* vol. 2 (Tel Aviv 1954), p. 164ff.; Paul Winter, *On the Trial of Jesus* (see n. 177 above), p. 111ff.; D. Flusser, *Yehadut u-Mekorot ha-Natzrut* (Tel Aviv 1979), p. 133ff.

[191] A. Loisy, *Les Actes des Apôtres* (Paris 1920); F.J. Foakes Jackson & Kirsopp Lake, eds., *The Beginnings of Christianity,* Part I, The Acts of the Apostles, vol. 2 (London 1922); F.F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*[2] (London 1956); E. Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Göttingen 1961); H. Conzelmann, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Tübingen 1963); J. Kremer (ed.), *Les Actes des Apôtres, BETL* 48 (Leeven–Louvain 1979); O. Bauernfeind, *Kommentar und Studien zur Apostelgeschichte, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 22 (Tübingen 1980).

The author writes from the viewpoint of a predetermined outlook, that "to the Gentiles was sent the salvation of the Lord" and the likelihood of spreading the Gospel among the Jews vanished.[192] The story begins with the growth of the Jerusalem congregation after the resurrection of Jesus, and ends with the dissemination of Christianity by Paul throughout the empire. Internal differences within the church taking shape and groping for its path are minimized and shrouded in order to stress the prevailing, victorious stream. Paul wears the crown of acknowledged full apostolic hegemony. The extent of his authority and erudition is emphasized by a skeletal biography according to which he once studied with the famous (Rabban) Gamaliel and was attracted by Pharisee zealotry until the Messiah was revealed to him and the light of his salvation shone.[193] Christian faith sprouts from pure Pharisee doctrines, such as the resurrection of the dead. The Sadducees actually initiate acts of oppression and persecution in order to suppress Jesus' community. The bizarre picture of hesitant, half-hearted Pharisees in contrast to the ruling Sadducees who energetically persecute the Christians does not accord with the main Gospel version, raises questions and contradictions and appears only in that work that is detached and remote from the reality of Eretz Israel. Its purpose is to represent Christianity to the enlightened world as a legitimate sequel to fundamental Judaism, despite the betrayal and denial of the majority of Jews. Due to the Jewish disavowal of the "true" Torah, the Christian mission to the Gentiles prospers. These apologetic and propagandistic designs explain the *Synedrion*-Sanhedrin's function and reflection in Acts.

The story of the apostles Peter and John (Zebedaeus) is the first link in the chain. "The priests and the captain of the Temple and the Sadducees" arrested them[194] simply because they declared "the resurrection of the dead through Jesus" which enraged the Sadducees. The next day "the rulers and elders and scribes in Jerusalem gathered with Annas, the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander and all who were of the high-priestly family," to ask them the secret of the miracles they wrought and overlook the main reason for their arrest. Peter replied with an attack on "the rulers of the people and the elders"[195] for they rejected and crucified the Messiah, in whose name his disciples provided cures for the incurable. The judges were astonished and amazed. The accused were taken away "from the *Synedrion* (Sanhedrin)", and after consultations were dismissed with a reprimand and a warning that they should no longer teach in Jesus' name. They refused to obey and the leaders of the Sanhedrin were not courageous enough to penalize them because of the "people" who did not lift a

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[192] Acts 13:46; 18:6; 28:25 ff.

[193] The author is apparently referring to the first Rabban Gamaliel (see nn. 35, 47 above) but the precise historical truth of this affair is quite doubtful (see nn. 199, 206) below).

[194] Acts 4:1: ἐπέστησαν αὐτοῖς οἱ ἱερεῖς καὶ ὁ στρατηγὸς τοῦ ἱεροῦ καὶ οἱ Σαδδουκαῖοι-κτλ.

[195] Acts 4:8: Ἄρχοντες τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ πρεσβύτεροι-κτλ.

finger when their revered teachers were seized. The secrets of the miracles are still wrapped in mystery. But there are enough illogical elements in the story for an assessment of its historical value: The Sadducees who make arrests, as though the Temple police force was in their charge; the *Synedrion*-Sanhedrin composed (in part?) on the basis of family membership; and the bizarre reactions of the judges.

The apostles were again arrested a short time later by the high priest and his companions, that is, the "party of the Sadducees."[196] At dawn they convened "the *Synedrion* (Sanhedrin) and the entire *Gerousia* of the children of Israel."[197] They now learned to their surprise that the prisoners had escaped, for the angel of God opened the doors of the prison for them at night. The "captain of the temple and the chief priests" were embarrassed, but the accused were discovered teaching their doctrine and taken for trial. Because of their non-compliance the court prepared to sentence them to death. However, there stood up "in the *Synedrion* (Sanhedrin) a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law,"[198] appealed to "the men of Israel" and convinced them to free the accused, for the word of God is not to be gainsaid, and if their activity is not divine, it "will come to nought" in any case. In support Gamaliel cited the case of Theudas, who exalted himself, attracted about four hundred followers and was slain, and also afterwards Judas the Galilean who had many adherents and yet perished. The anger of the Sadducees with the *Synedrion* (Sanhedrin) and the entire *Gerousia* subsided instantly, and they obeyed the voice of moderation and forgiveness.[199] The apostles now left the *Synedrion* (Sanhedrin) with joy, and left the critics with a respectable crop of gross errors and mixed concepts which help them decide on the nature of this testimony. Theudas caused a commotion when the procurator was Fadus, in 44–46 C.E., about ten years after this oration of Gamaliel's, and Judas launched his revolutionary movement not "after" Theudas but forty years before him.[200] The ancient Jerusalem *Gerousia* (or the archaic biblical

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[196] Acts 5:17: 'Αναστὰς δὲ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς καὶ πάντες οἱ σὺν αὐτῷ, ἡ οὖσα αἵρεσις τῶν Σαδδουκαίων-κτλ.

[197] Acts 5:21: συνεκάλεσαν τὸ συνέδριον καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γερουσίαν τῶν υἱῶν 'Ισραήλ. This verse and combination derive from the Septuagint, Ex. 12:21: 'Εκάλεσεν δὲ Μωυσῆς πᾶσαν γερουσίαν υἱῶν 'Ισραήλ-κτλ.

[198] Acts. 5:34: 'Αναστὰς δέ τις ἐν τῷ συνεδρίῳ Φαρισαῖος ὀνόματι Γαμαλιήλ, νομοδιδάσκαλος τίμιος παντὶ τῷ λαῷ-κτλ.

[199] Gamaliel anticipates his disciple Paul, so that wise pure Phariseeism, representing true Judaism, should herald the Christian faith. Like the other Gospels (see n. 189 above) Luke (18:9 ff.; 19:39) attacks the Pharisees, but a chosen minority among the Jews (Rom. 11:1 ff.) earns the salvation of Jesus. Consequently isolated individuals among the scribes and Pharisees (John 3:1 ff.; Mark 12:28 ff.; Matt. 22:34 ff.; Luke 10:25 ff.; 20:39 ff.) listen to Jesus and do not reject his message in advance. Gamaliel represents only a limited positive possibility of this sort, contrary to the vast majority of Pharisees. His attitude is stressed because of his connection with Paul. But the scribes who are connected with the Pharisees generally take a hostile stand in Acts (4:5; 6:12; 23:9), as well as in the Gospels, to the belief in Jesus. On Gamaliel I see n. 193 above.

[200] Josephus, *Bell.* II 118 ff.; *Ant.* XVIII 4 ff.; 23 ff.; XX 97 ff.; versus Acts 5:36 ff. See n. 175 above for historical errors in Luke.

assembly of elders) is joined to the *Synedrion* (Sanhedrin), and their anachronistic coupling reflects the artificial mixed nature of the picture.

The glaring iniquity of the Sanhedrin also led to the death of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. The masses of people together with "the elders and the scribes" seize him and drag him "before the *Synedrion* (Sanhedrin)" because of his blasphemous vilification of "Moses and God."[201] False witnesses accuse him of speaking "against the Holy Place and the Law" because he declared that the Christian Messiah "would destroy this place and change the customs" handed down by Moses. Those "sitting in the *Synedrion* (Sanhedrin)" look at him and see "his face like the face of an angel." To the high priest's question the accused answers in a long sermon seasoned with duly adapted biblical verses on the history of Israel. The judges listen unmoved to his oration, absorb his offensive statements, reacting only by grinding their teeth, until Stephen looks heavenward and suddenly sees the glory of God with Jesus revealed to him: the "son of man standing on the right hand of God." Then all the assembled men are aroused, burst out and assail him, push him out of town, and stone him to death.[202]

In order to construct the first martyrdom episode, salient features from Jesus' trial before the *Synedrion* (Sanhedrin) were transferred to it: the false testimony and the accusation of the destruction of the Temple, the questioning by the high priest, and the incriminating answer about the "son of man" to the right of the Lord, which determines the sentence because it constitutes blasphemy. But Stephen was not turned over to the governor and he was not crucified. The author does not diverge from his path or abandon his attitude of appeasement toward the Roman authorities, lightly skips over the problem of the implementation of the sentence and injects into this trial-mistrial elements of wild outbursts lacking normal procedure. Even Christian commentators have difficulty explaining the story.[203] The stoning described is carried out on the basis of the Torah (Deut. 17:5) and the author provides no real independent information on such executions during Second Temple days. At the proper moment, the moderate Gamaliel disappears, tolerant Phariseeism vanishes completely when the young church suffers persecution. "At that time King Herod," that is, Agrippa I, known for his faithfulness to Judaism and the admiration of his people, orders the execution by sword of John Zebedaeus' brother James and the imprisonment of Peter, later miraculously rescued by an angel. This time the author prefers to disregard obstacles and difficulties, so there is no Sanhedrin and no trial.[204]

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[201] Acts. 6:11ff.

[202] Acts. 7:1ff., 54ff.

[203] M. Goguel, *La Naissance du christianisme* (Paris 1955), p. 193ff. See also the commentaries and studies in n. 191 above.

[204] Acts 12:1ff.; Schürer, *Geschichte* (see n. 6 above), vol. 1^4, p. 557ff.; idem, New English Version, vol. 1, p. 448ff.

The final act on the stage of the unjust trials of the Jewish Sanhedrin glorifies Paul. The prologue begins with a violent assault on the apostle. A crowd attacks him in the Temple as he is suspected of defiling the holy place by bringing foreigners into the forbidden area and of inciting against the Torah, nation and the Law. The "whole city" is aroused and in a ferment, the "people" gather, drag Paul from the Temple, take vengeance on him, beating and attempting to kill him. The Roman commander in charge of the city fears an uprising, hastens there with his troops and rescues him from his persecutors[205] but takes him away in fetters. Paul denies any connection with rebellion, and with the officer's kind permission addresses the tumultuous "people" and calms them with a wave of his hand as though with a magical wand. The crowd listens silently to the apostle's oration, which describes his history, his education at Gamaliel's feet, his zealotry and persecution of the Christians, the miracle of the savior's revelation to him, and his services in spreading the Gospel among the Gentiles.[206] At the proper moment the calm is dispelled and the roaring crowd bursts out toward him. Paul is taken to the barracks and the commander orders him to be flogged so as to force him to admit the reason for the disturbance, but the order is rescinded when Paul declares that he is a Roman citizen.

The next day the Roman commander summons the "chief priests and the whole *Synedrion* (Sanhedrin)" to a meeting, and places Paul before them, in order to ascertain why they consider him guilty.[207] The *Synedrion* (Sanhedrin) convenes at his order with amazing docility. Paul appears and hardly opens his mouth when the high priest orders his companions to strike him on his mouth. The offended apostle curses and insults his opponent, but apologizes upon learning his identity and rank: "I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest." The accused does not see who the court president is! Evasively Paul employs a shrewd trick in declaring his absolute Pharisseeism ("I am a Pharisee son of Pharisees"), claiming that he was brought to trial because of his belief in the resurrection of the dead. The tactics are completely successful, because the judges apparently did not understand up to then how to start the trial. A controversy develops between the Sadducees and Pharisees in the *Synedrion* (Sanhedrin), for the former denied and the latter affirmed the belief in the resurrection of the dead and in angels. "Some of the scribes of the Pharisee

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205 Acts 21:27ff. On the forbidden area see mKelim I 8; mMiddot II 3 and n. 148 above.

206 A biographical sketch of Paul appears three times in Acts 9:1ff., 22:1ff. and 26:1ff. According to Gal. (1:13ff.) and Phil. (3:5ff.) he once persecuted Christians, but these epistles do not prove conclusively all his activities in Jerusalem before his conversion or the claim of his education by Gamaliel. Also very strange is his being sent to Damascus by the high priest to arrest some Christians and bring them to Jerusalem. These details are very suspect and raise doubts. The dubious aspects of this work have already been clarified in critical commentaries such as H. Conzelmann, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (see n. 191 above), pp. 57, 59, 84ff.

207 Acts 22:30ff.

party" argue and say they find no fault in the accused, if an angel or spirit spoke to him. The quarrel becomes fiercer, and as the Roman commander becomes concerned about Paul, lest he be torn to pieces in the fray, he extricates him from among the quarreling judges and returns him to the barracks. The Jews do not despair. They conceive a plot to arrange an opportunity for another interrogation before the Sanhedrin and to murder Paul at a suitable moment, but the plot is discovered and the commander turns him over to the procurator Felix, with a report of the events and the Sanhedrin session. The efforts of the Jews and their overtures to Felix and to his successor, Festus, are to no avail. Paul is sent to Rome and there spreads the blessings of the Gospel "quite openly and unhindered."[208]

The travesty of the Sanhedrin in Paul's trial surpasses those in the earlier New Testament presentations, and reaches artistic heights. There is no set procedure in that Sanhedrin, no fixed regulations except manipulations and tricks, in accordance with the author's tortuous direction. A Roman officer convenes it on his initiative, attends and supervises its discussions, and dismisses it at his own discretion. In the reigning confusion, even Paul's absurd excuse, that he did not recognize the high priest, may be justified, for it was obviously impossible to tell who was chairing the assembly. In appearance and behavior the judges were like a bewildered flock, ignorant of why it was gathered together. Paul lures them to the desired point, splits them with questions of principle, as though they had no prior occasions on which to discuss them. The Pharisees and their scribes were not clever enough to know the vast difference between their expectation of the resurrection of the dead in the end of days, and the Christian belief in the resurrection of the Messiah and his ascent to heaven, to blaze the pathway for the redemption of mankind. The Sadducees too display amazing ignorance here in denying the existence of angels which the Written Law itself testifies to.[209] The knowledge that the Pharisees and Sadducees have of their own doctrines here approximates the author's knowledge of Sanhedrin procedures. The logic of his version corresponds to its reliability. And with that tragic-comic scene the New Testament ends the dramatic performances of the Sanhedrin.

No report of such a strange Sanhedrin and its uproarious doings filtered into the neighborhood of Josephus, or reached his ears, or was incorporated into the events of the period or recorded in his work.[210] Sanhedrin activity and authority was not known to procurators like Albinus, when he ordered the flogging of a

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[208] While probably hinting at Paul's bitter end (20:25, 38; 23:11; 27:24), the author prefers to overlook it completely for apologetic and conciliatory reasons. That is why his book terminates on an appeasing note (28:30) stressing that the Gospel was preached in Rome, "with no inhibitions." See commentaries and studies listed in n. 191 above.

[209] His view that the Sadducees denied spirits and angels is devoid of all sense and has no basis. The Sadducees did not negate the authority of Scriptures and did not reject beliefs based on them.

[210] It should be kept in mind that these events took place in his youth and in his vicinity.

villager who predicted the destruction of the Temple, and had not checked whether such declarations were forbidden or allowed; or like Florus, when he required the Jerusalem leadership to turn over and punish the organizers of hostile demonstrations. Even during the stormy controversy about Gentile sacrifices on the eve of the Great Revolt, there is no trace of a Great Sanhedrin with supreme judicial and religious authority.[211]

Josephus does, in *Jewish Antiquities,* have two passages on the emergence of Christianity and the persecution of its followers, involving Jewish jurisdiction, but both are suspected of being interpolations. The first describes "Jesus a wise man if one ought to call him a man," for "he was the Messiah (Christ)" a "teacher" to the seekers of the "truth," attracting masses of Jews and Greeks, sentenced to crucifixion by Pilate because of the accusations of the heads of the Jews but resurrected on the third day and revealed to those that loved him, so that God's prophecies were fulfilled and countless miracles occurred, and since then his congregation ("the tribe of the Christians") has not disappeared. Most scholars rightly consider this surprising testimony a confession and declaration of Christian faith. If we accept it as stated, there is no avoiding the conclusion that Josephus himself became an enthusiastic Christian, in direct contradiction to his overt views and his emphatic defense of Judaism and its doctrines.[212] This concise passage which is a moderate rendering of the New Testament version, is quoted by Eusebius, but was not yet incorporated in Josephus' text in Origen's time. Various proposals, speculations and attempts to reconstruct from it some authentic core have produced only dubious hypotheses.[213] Classic examples of the practices of Christian copyists and editors in transposing suitable additions and adding them to Josephus can be found in the Slavonic version of *Jewish War.*[214]

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[211] See nn. 141, 146, 147 above.

[212] *Ant.* XVIII 63ff. (see n. 77 above). The principal reasons were not refuted even following the publication of a medieval Arabic version: S. Pines, *An Arabic Version of the Testimonium Flavianum* (Jerusalem 1971). Similar versions appear in a Syriac Christian Chronicle and in Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus,* Caput 13, *PL* 23; *Chronique de Michel le Syrien,* ed. J.B. Chabot (Paris 1899), I, p. 144f. All these versions, which seem slightly milder, are based on the Gospels, with no additions or deviations that might indicate derivation from non-Christian sources. See F. Parente, "Alcune Osservazioni sul Cosidetto Testimonium Flavianum," *Rivista di Filologia e di Istruzione Classica* 101 (1973): 125ff.

[213] Origen and Eusebius are discussed below and listed in n. 223. We do not intend here to clarify all the problems involved which evoked a controversy that has lasted for generations. Evidence of inauthenticity is specified and evaluated by Schürer (see n. 6 above), *Geschichte,* vol. I^4, p. 544ff. Likewise Ed. Norden, *Kleine Schriften* (Berlin 1966), p. 241ff. The scholars positing authenticity (complete, partial or emended) have recourse to casuistic speculations or arbitrary textual alterations. See R. Laqueur, *Der jüdische Historiker Flavius Josephus* (Giessen 1920), p. 274ff.; H.St.J. Thackeray, *Josephus the Man and the Historian* (New York 1967, repr. of 1929 ed.), p. 125ff.; F. Dornseiff, "Zum Testimonium Flavianum," *ZNW* 46 (1955): 245ff.; A. Pelletier, "Ce que Josèphe a dit de Jésus," *REJ* 124 (1965): 9ff.; D. Flusser (see n. 190), *Yahadut u-Mekorot ha-Natzrut,* p. 72ff.; F.F. Bruce, *Jesus and Christian Origins Outside the New Testament* (Gr. Rapids Mich. 1974), p. 32ff.

[214] M. Goguel, *Jésus* (Paris 1950), p. 63ff.; E. Bickermann, "Sur la version vieux-russe de Flavius

The second passage pictures an evil, harsh Sanhedrin, very similar to the one in the New Testament. The younger Ananus (or Annas), the high priest, son of the elder Ananus, was extremely bold and brazen, belonged to the Sadducees, who were severe ("savage") in trial more than any Jews, took advantage of Festus' death and before the arrival of the new procurator Albinus, "seated a *Synedrion* (Sanhedrin) of judges,"[215] brought to trial James the brother of Jesus, "called the Messiah (Christ)," and also "certain others," accused them of violating the law "and delivered them to be stoned." However, circles among the residents of the capital considered "the most fair-minded and most strictly law-abiding" did not wish to tolerate such an injustice and applied secretly to King Agrippa to obtain his order preventing such deeds, for Ananus did not act properly to begin with. Some of them set out to meet Albinus and explained that Ananus did not have the authority "to seat a Sanhedrin" without the procurator's consent. "Albinus was convinced" and angrily wrote an irate and threatening letter to Ananus. That is why Agrippa also took the high priestly crown away from him. So ends the episode, which at first glance seems free of weaknesses and faults. And yet a careful examination collapses this naive testimony.

First of all, the unfavorable portrait of Ananus is in polar opposition to the admirable personage which Josephus, in *Jewish War* overwhelms with praise, and devotes an emotional eulogy to, with not the slightest hint of religious deviance or Sadduceeism. It is true that opinions and evaluations sometimes change in Josephus' second and more critical version. Thus, in his apologetic autobiography, Josephus in self defense somewhat dims Ananus' lustre, but there is no trace of a diametrically opposite view of him.[216] Acts of the Apostles, however, in a picture resembling the dubious episode outlined above, stresses the unfavorable aspects of Ananus (Annas) the high priest,[217] and his Sadducee retinue, avidly persecuting the Christians without pity.[218]

Josèphe," *Mélanges F. Cumont* (Brussels 1936), p. 53ff.; V. Istrin & A. Vaillant, *La Prise de Jérusalem de Josèphe le Juif, Texte Vieux-Russe* (Paris 1934). N.A. Meschcherski, *Istoriya iudeiskoi voiny Iosifa Flaviya v drevneruskom perevode* (Moscow–Leningrad 1958). Selective detached quotations from Josephus, flexible tendentious paraphrases, and even total or partial forgeries, were common from the time of the Church Fathers, and did not stop in the Middle Ages, as many examples show. See H. Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition in Antike und Mittelalter* (Leiden 1972), p. 75ff.

[215] Josephus, *Ant.* XX 199ff.

[216] *Bell.* II 563, 648, 651, 653; IV 151ff., 162ff., 193ff., 208ff., 288ff., 316ff.; *Vita* (38) 193ff.; (44) 216, (60) 309.

[217] His father was Ananus (Annas-Hanan) son of Sethi–*Ant.* XVIII 26; XX 197f.; *Bell.* V 506. His family was very prominent among the high priestly oligarchy. See E. Schürer, *Geschichte* (see n. 6 above), vol. 2[4] (1907), p. 270ff.; idem, New English Version (ibid.), vol. 2, p. 230ff.; J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem zur Zeit Jesu*[3] (see n. 7), p. 178ff.; bPesaḥim 57a; tMenaḥot XIII 21.

[218] Acts 4:6ff.; 5:17ff.; Luke 3:2; John 18:13ff. To the two forged passages should be added the extremely suspect testimony in Josephus (*Ant.* XVIII 116ff.) on John the Baptist carrying out a baptismal ceremony in the Christian spirit to atone for sins, without a sacrifical offering and without the Temple, contrary to the Torah. The term "the Baptist" and the man, unknown in Jewish tradition, as is baptism to obtain forgiveness for sins through purification of the body after

Secondly, the vague expressions in the passage regarding respectable, strictly observant Jews disgusted by the persecution of the Christians, hint obscurely at an anonymous group of typical Pharisees. Here again is an astounding connection with that chapter of Acts featuring the stand of the supposedly restrained and forgiving among the Pharisees (with Gamaliel, the "teacher of the Law") who subdue and stop the erupting enmity, in contrast to the malice of the Sadducee leadership headed by Ananus. Another point of contact between the two descriptions is the punishment by stoning to which Stephen is sentenced in Acts, and which is not explained in the suspect testimony of pseudo-Josephus.

Thirdly, there was no administrative vacuum or disorder from the point of view of the Roman authorities between the death of the procurator and the arrival of his successor. After all, the country was not abandoned by all the imperial officials and officers, and the legate-governor in Syria did not withdraw his supervision. How then could Ananus have carried out his plot despite internal opposition and without external support? Why, too, did Ananus' critics apply to both Agrippa and Albinus? Perhaps it was not clear to them (or to the author) who was directly in charge and responsible. Did the procurator need the clarification and guidance of the Jewish delegation so as to recognize his own full authority and exercise it? And why wasn't Ananus properly punished for his terrible crime?

Fourthly, despite Josephus' patent inclination to glorify the high priesthood, he does not make the slightest mention, except in this "Christian" passage, of the convening of the Sanhedrin by the high priest subject to the governor's approval, and there was no lack of opportunity in the years close to the Great Revolt, the events of which Josephus records. Indeed the "aristocracy" then ruled, in his view, "and the leadership of the people was entrusted to the high (chief) priests."[219] But his reference is not to the single high priest serving in the Temple, who is replaced very frequently and does not appear as a leader of the nation, but rather in a manner usual with him, to groups of chief priests (also called "high priests") heading the Jerusalem council (*Boule*). It was Agrippa II who convened a Sanhedrin and not the high priest in his day. Similarly Hyrcanus II in his time convened a *Synedrion* or Sanhedrin as "king," as noted in the above affair, but not as a high priest.[220]

Fifthly, the admiring neutrality in this questionable testimony regarding the mysterious figure of Jesus "called the Messiah (Christ)" with no explanation of

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purification of the soul (as in Heb. 10:22) show this to be a Christian version. A number of scholars came to this conclusion long ago: D. Blondel, *Des Sibylles* (Paris 1649), p. 28ff.; Richard Simon (Mr. de Sainjore), *Bibliothèque Critique,* vol. 2 (Paris 1708), p. 26ff.; H. Graetz, *Geschichte* (see n. 8 above), vol. 3³, p. 293ff. Origen (n. 223 below) already knew the dubious passage: *Contra Celsum* I 47.

[219] Josephus, *Ant.* XX 251 — ἀριστοκρατία μὲν ἦν ἡ πολιτεία, τὴν δὲ προστασίαν τοῦ ἔθνους οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς ἐπεπίστευντο.

[220] See nn. 114, 123 above.

the unusual epithet (as in the previous passage), and without the least reservations, is most astonishing. Pilate too, compassionate and good-hearted, according to Matthew, adopts a similar ambiguous expression about the one "called the Messiah (Christ)" as does Matthew himself.[221] Such a strange, tolerant, ambiguous definition is absolutely opposed to Josephus' consistent position and his demonstrative hostility to fermenting dangerous messianic aspirations and the many dangerous movements of various misleading saviors and false prophets.[222] What is the reason for his surprising deviance? Christianity was then illegal, abominated by the authorities, and widely disliked in Rome. Not only from the fundamental Jewish point of view but also because of the apologetic purpose embedded in Josephus' work, there was no good reason to express fondness or compassionate understanding for the invidious inimical church.

Sixthly, an early Christian testimony tips the scales further to the negative side. The great scholar among the Church Fathers, Origen, quotes the passage in question three times, in a different version. According to him, Josephus explicitly wrote that because of the slaying of "James the righteous" calamity was decreed for the Jews, Jerusalem was captured and its Temple destroyed. Consequently, Origen is amazed that Josephus could admit the righteousness of the Messiah's brother while he did not believe in the Messiah himself! The deviant version cited has not survived in any manuscript, but Eusebius copied it in his *Ecclesiastical History,* added a legend told by Hegesippus about the circumstances of James' death, and also the version generally found today of the Josephus passage.[223] The vicissitudes and textual changes of the suspect chapter suggest arbitrary false corrections in it, since it became a tool of Christian propaganda. External evidence thus complements and strengthens the findings of internal criticism. This passage is an insertion, and by its contents and style can only be a Christian interpolation.[224]

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[221] Josephus, *Ant.* XX 200: τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ κτλ.; Matt. 1:16 — ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Χριστός; Matt. 27:22—Ἰησοῦν τὸν λεγόμενον Χριστόν.

[222] See n. 174 above.

[223] Origen, *Contra Celsum,* I 47, II 13, *PG* 11; idem, *Commentarii in Matthaeum* (13:55) X 17, *PG* 13; Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* II 23 (*LCL*), ed. K. Lake, vol. 1 (London 1953); Schürer, *Geschichte* (see n. 6), vol. 1^4, p. 581f. However, Schürer's critical conclusion was reversed in the New English Version (by an excursus of Paul Winter), vol. 1 (ibid.), p. 428ff. The authenticity of the passage is defended by numerous scholars such as M. Goguel, *La Naissance du Christianisme* (see n. 203 above), p. 144ff.

[224] Josephus obviously totally disregarded the young Christian congregations in their first stages of development, despite his extensive detailed descriptions of the period before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Great Revolt. As a historian and writer addressing non-Jewish readers, defending Judaism and aspiring to gain appreciation for it, he preferred to delete sensitive, inconvenient manifestations likely to arouse a negative reaction and controversy. The three "Christian" passages — the crucifixion of Jesus, the death of his brother James and John the Baptist's death — are exceptional in spirit as well as in their artificial contextual interpolation. Similarly Josephus' contemporary and rival, Justus of Tiberias, author of a Jewish history in Greek, who did not

Having surveyed the basic testimonies let us review the main conclusions. A careful analysis using the tools of historical criticism shatters the basis upon which the predominant methods of modern academic schools are built, as well as the various syntheses. We do not presume to propose in their place any comprehensive outlook that could solve the whole complex of problems in this domain. Josephus and the other external sources (apocryphal and Hellenistic) do not confirm or support the genuineness in their time of the New Testament *Synedrion* (Sanhedrin) led by the high priest and organized according to a triple system (chief priests, scribes and elders). Its operations are not verified and its nature is not reflected by the historical sources. On the other hand, the various descriptions of similar councils (*Boule* or *Gerousia* or *Synedrion*) in those sources do not embody oppositions and contradictions to the original talmudic tradition of Eretz Israel, which stipulates a Great Sanhedrin in the Chamber of Hewn Stones and its branches woven into the fabric of an ideal code that was never fully realized after the Return to Zion. Such a Sanhedrin is not anchored at all in factual history except in fragmentary and defective form. The basic early conception was muddled in the Babylonian Talmud and its influential ramifications which suggested continuity in the existence of the Great Sanhedrin up to the Byzantine times. As a result there emerged a mistaken impression and illusion of a single uniform tradition in an imaginary picture that mixes concepts and ignores boundaries and differences between far-removed periods.

The original talmudic Great Sanhedrin with its branches is therefore not an exact reflection of any real historical entity. In the drawing up of its image, accomplishments and plans, halakhic rulings, ordinances and experience, customs and manners, the products of the Hasidic and Pharisee circles were intertwined and engulfed. Their initiative was responsible for the founding of courts and colleges, for judgement and instruction which had salient positions and considerable authority in the events of the time, between the Hasmonean Revolt and the destruction of the Temple, alongside official governmental institutions. The New Testament *Synedrion* (Sanhedrin) too absorbed some rumors and recollections, though faint and shallow, of the recent history and destiny of the Jewish people. Even some points of resemblance to the Jerusalem council (*Boule*) appear there, but in an abstract artistic blend, uprooted from the soil it sprang from and exuding foreignness. The New Testament *Synedrion* (Sanhedrin) was created in the bosom of Christian theology, nurtured by its characteristic tenets and trends in order to provide a concrete, albeit artificial,

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however renounce his people, made not the slightest mention of Jesus or the miracles he wrought, as noted in Byzantine Christian testimony of Photius, *Bibliotheca,* Codex 33, *PG* 103; Photius, *Bibliothèque,* ed. R. Henry, vol. 1 (Collection Budé–Paris 1959), p. 18f.: τῆς Χριστοῦ παρουσίας καὶ τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν τελεσθέντων καὶ τῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τερατουργηθέντων οὐδὲν ὅλως μνήμην ἐποιήσατο. See also T. Rajak, "Justus of Tiberias," *CIQ* 23 (1973): 345ff. Philo's complete silence is equally significant.

representation of Jewish leadership that denies and contemns the wondrous heavenly savior. In contrast, the talmudic Sanhedrin is firmly planted in the philosophy and actions of the Pharisees and their successors who seek to reform their world. Its roots reach down to the reality and sublime visions of the Second Temple generations.[225]

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[225] In the original early talmudic tradition of Eretz Israel, the glorious, idealized, Great Sanhedrin reflects the notions, memories and aspirations of the Hasid-Pharisee folk movement that arose at the start of the Hasmonean period, continued to develop and ramify till the destruction of the Second Temple, and left its everlasting heritage to the ages.

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