

Social History of the Jews in Antiquity

Edited by
MICHAL BAR-ASHER SIEGAL
and JONATHAN BEN-DOV

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Social History of the Jews in Antiquity

Studies in Dialogue with Albert Baumgarten

edited by

Michal Bar-Asher Siegal
and Jonathan Ben-Dov

Mohr Siebeck

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Albert Baumgarten: Contextualizing the Ancient Jewish Experience

Michal Bar-Asher Siegal, Jonathan Ben-Dov, and Eyal Regev

As we worked on preparing this volume, we asked Albert Baumgarten about his academic interests. His answer opened with the following statement: “Perhaps the most important major theme in my work has been the determination to contextualize ancient Jewish experience as a way of shedding more comprehensive light on ancient times.” This statement indeed reflects the various paths taken by Baumgarten in his career, and in fact provides an outline for the present volume, as a collection of studies that interact with his work.

Contextualization is the key word. From the earliest stages of his career, Baumgarten has been loyal to this aim, making the decision to enroll in doctoral studies in Greek and Roman history at Columbia University, rather than working in the field of Jewish history and maintaining his association with the Jewish Theological Seminary. This decision gave him the opportunity to benefit from the guidance of his two revered teachers Elias Bickerman and Morton Smith. In addition, it gave him a wider horizon for not only studying but also contextualizing Jewish antiquity. In his work, Baumgarten has been committed to contextualization in the strongest sense. As he regularly says, it is not enough to enrich our understanding of Jewish history by means of the wider Greco-Roman world; one should also strive to shed light on our understanding of the Greco-Roman world by means of Jewish evidence. It is this kind of contextualization, free of parochialism, that characterizes Baumgarten’s scholarship over the course of his rich career.

Contextualization can take a variety of paths under the rubric of “ancient Judaism and –,” and Baumgarten has followed nearly all of them: the ancient Near East; early Christianity; comparative religion; sociology of knowledge; Greco-Roman literature; anthropology; gender and kinship; ritual studies; modern Jewish history; and many more. In this respect, he is an excellent model for intellectual curiosity and for scholarly cross-fertilization, and has provided a model for the kind of activity that has led the many contributors to this volume to interact with him. In what follows, we will trace the general trends of some of these fields of study, connecting them with the articles that appear in this volume.

This review is based on the broad contours supplied by Baumgarten himself. In hindsight, it is possible to follow the map of his career by tracing his travels

along these academic paths, showing how they came to intersect in the production of his later scholarship on ancient Judaism from a social-scientific prism.

Under the instruction of Morton Smith, Baumgarten wrote his dissertation, which later became his first book, *The Phoenician History of Philo of Byblos* (1981). While he has never since explicitly returned to ancient Near Eastern studies, his background as an ancient historian, specializing in the encounter between the old traditions of the East and Roman intellectual activity, has left a significant mark on his later work in Jewish history.

Baumgarten's first area of study as an independent scholar was tannaitic literature, especially the patriarchate under R. Yehuda Hanasi. At this time, in the early 1980s, scholars of rabbinic literature were beginning to identify difficulties with a historical reading of rabbinic literature; in this context, Baumgarten abandoned this path and began focusing more closely on matters of society and religion. The methodology of reading for history in rabbinic texts is directly addressed in this volume by Adiel Schremer, who reads rabbinic traditions about several notable rabbis as "heretics," with recourse to the famous tradition on the four who entered the *pardes*. Jonathan Ben-Dov reads a number of statements in the Mishnah by Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi as reflecting special interest in Roman science and cosmology, and draws on other contemporary late tannaitic evidence that shows similar interests. Several other articles in this volume engage with tannaitic literature. Shaye Cohen discusses the term *adam* ("man, human") in the Mishnah, asking whether it includes women and gentiles; his findings bring attention to a variety of literary constructions in the Mishnah that reflect diverse attitudes towards the question. Finally, Steven Fraade explores another important aspect of rabbinic society: bilingualism. Fraade applies recent theory in the field of translation studies to the Targum literature. Highlighting some key differences between the public and private performances of targum, he views the Targumin as "internal translations," serving as both a buffer and a bridge between reading and interpretation.

Still in the 1980s, Baumgarten made use of his knowledge of Greek sources to shed light on ancient Jewish society. Important landmarks in this regard were his studies on "The Name of the Pharisees" (1983) and "The Pharisaic Paradosis" (1987). In these articles he studied the traits of the Pharisees, using the double meaning of their name (*prš*, meaning both "to interpret" and "to withdraw") as a window into their similarly doubled image in Second Temple society and religion: as exact interpreters of the Law and as those who withdraw from contact with other Jews. Both aspects would later play a significant role in Baumgarten's elucidation of ancient Jewish sectarianism. The perspective revealed in these studies was a synthesis of the three main sources on ancient Jewish sects: rabbinic literature, Greek literature by Jews and non-Jews alike, and the New Testament. The problem of how to synthesize these three sources – long a subject of debate and still a matter of disagreement among scholars – was one that Baumgarten

addressed by means of unique approaches that enabled not only his work on the Pharisees but similar work on John the Baptist and his followers (1997). Other examples of his early work explored “Justinian and the Jews” (1980), and, using similar methodology, his more recent work on “The Jew of Celsus” (2014).

Several authors in the present volume address Baumgarten’s methodology for studying Greco-Roman texts. His former student Samuele Rocca brings this approach to the study of the Jewish community in the city of Rome, applying to it the sociological models of Roman historian Paul Veyne. In his view, the Jewish communitarian leadership (“notables”) were part of the “middle ruling class” of Rome, as defined by Veyne. On an entirely different plane, Martin Goodman studies a polemic against “extreme allegorizers” by Philo of Alexandria; he argues that Philo’s words should be taken seriously as evidence for the existence in Philo’s time of Jews who observed the Torah only in the mind rather than through distinctive behavior. Stéphanie Binder revisits the historiographical treatise ascribed to the author known today as Pseudo-Hecataeus. She endorses the identification of this text as pseudonymous in light of an investigation of its purported audience, concluding that the document was aimed at a Jewish-Hellenistic audience rather than a Greek one. Steve Mason reconsiders two leaders of the Great Jewish Revolt against the Romans: John of Gischala and Simon Bar Giora. A critical examination of Flavius Josephus’s narrative about these figures leads Mason to propose that their personal backgrounds and concerns counter their image as part of a broad and deep national revolt, with shared grievances and aims.

Other authors address various facets of early Christianity. Adele Reinhartz studies the Gospel of John in the context of the first-century outreach of the Jesus movement to gentiles. Treating this tendency in the Gospel as a piece of historical imagination, she argues that reading the Gospel in this light can illuminate the process by which a Jewish movement eventually became a predominantly gentile church of Christ followers that separated from and was hostile toward Jews, while at the same time appropriating so much of what Jewishness had to offer. In direct dialogue with Baumgarten, Maren Niehoff explores Origen’s reactions to Celsus and the Jewish critique of Christianity he mentions, to investigate the implied addresses of the church father in third-century Caesarea. A close reading of key passages shows that Origen often raises issues that would be of little interest to a pagan audience, as one might have expected, but instead would have interested Jewish readers, who apparently took Celsus’s Jew seriously. Niehoff’s analysis contributes to our understanding of Greek-speaking Jews in the context of Christian and rabbinic culture in late antique Caesarea. Finally, Michal Bar-Asher Siegal turns to slightly later sources, studying the central religious concept and practice of confession, and illuminating the mutual discourse around this concept in the Babylonian Talmud and among contemporary church fathers.

Since his days in the Department of Religion at McMaster University, Baumgarten has actively embraced the methods and paradigms of comparative religion and the social-scientific study of ancient Judaism. Upon arriving in Israel, he shared with his students his new and still developing ideas for the use of social-scientific models in Second Temple Jewish history. This view of ancient Judaism characterized Baumgarten's work before his 1984 move to Israel and positioned him to fit intellectually into the Faculty of Jewish History at Bar-Ilan University. Baumgarten established an informal interdisciplinary graduate seminar, discussing social-scientific themes in order to enrich the students' qualifications as historians. As chair of the Joseph Taubes Minerva Center, he organized and led short seminars in which internationally acclaimed scholars from the social sciences and the study of religion interacted with young scholars from various universities in Israel. He was instrumental in arranging a series of scholarly meetings which later took the shape of programmatic edited volumes on major themes in religious studies: *Self, Soul, and Body in Religious Experience* (1998), *Apocalyptic Time* (2000), *Representation in Religion* (2001), and *Sacrifice in the Religious Experience* (2002). These volumes, some edited in cooperation with Guy Stroumsa and Jan Assmann, included significant essays by Baumgarten himself; they remain powerful examples of scholarship in the phenomenology of religion and the ways it can be used to enrich Jewish studies.

Baumgarten endorses this mode of work by regularly referring his students and other audiences to Marc Bloch's essay "The Idol of Origins." Historians, he argued, should not concentrate on asking "what came first" or "how it all began," but rather should describe (and explain) what they actually see in the ancient sources. Although trained and raised under the aegis of historical philology, Baumgarten is the first to admit that this kind of study sometimes fails to grasp the entire range of insights that can be extracted from ancient phenomena. In an article that reflects this scholarly spirit, Charlotte Hempel's study of self-fashioning in the Dead Sea Scrolls challenges prevalent readings of the Rule texts as reflecting homogenous elite communities motivated by elevated theological and intellectual concerns. Instead, drawing on Baumgarten's insights on economic drivers behind the appeal of ancient Jewish movements, Hempel makes a case for biological kinship dynamics among community members, in spite of the sparsity of references to such bonds in the dominant formal discourse fashioned by the ancient scribes responsible for the Rules.

The most significant transformation in Baumgarten's scholarship took place in the 1990s, when he was exposed to social-scientific theory and decided to place it at the focus of his study. A central element in that transformation was his encounter with Mary Douglas in London in 1995. This fruitful intellectual endeavor paved the way for his most influential book, *The Flourishing of the Jewish Sects in the Maccabean Era* (1997).

In this book, Baumgarten addressed the causes underlying the emergence of sects in Judea in the mid-second century BCE and discussed the socio-historical contexts that promote sectarian membership. He placed sectarianism in the context of the rapid social change of second-century BCE Judea, which included the urbanization of Jerusalem, an increase in literacy, the encounter with Hellenism, Hasmonean independence, and subsequent messianic hopes. He identified the key marker of a sect as boundary maintenance, including food, dress, marriage, commerce, and worship practices. In discussing these themes, he applied multiple social and anthropological theories and models and drew attention to analogies from the flourishing sectarianism of seventeenth-century England. Evidence of boundary maintenance among the Puritans, for example, served to illuminate the social significance of parallel phenomena among the Essenes and the Pharisees and in Qumran.

Baumgarten's new mode of thought led him to the position of a never-satisfied observer of Jewish sects in the Second Temple period, posing a steady stream of themes for study to the scholarly community. Many of these themes were taken up by a younger generation of scholars, active at a time when such phenomenological questions achieved center stage both in Israel and in the international sphere.

He was among the minority of scholars who rejected the identification of the Qumran sectarians with the Essenes, drawing attention to flaws in the methodology upon which that identification was based. He named his method of social comparisons "The Rule of the Martian," an unbiased method for examining ancient phenomena, regardless of previous conceptions. As Baumgarten aptly shows, such preconceptions arise not only from canonical and confessional restraints, but also from scientific fixations and fallacies. In "Who Cares and Why Does It Matter?" (2004), he challenged an enduring consensus among Qumran scholars that had argued for the identification of the local inhabitants of the site with the celibate Essenes, in spite of the discovery of skeletal remains of women at Khirbet Qumran. He also drew scholars' attention to questions regarding the food of the sectarians and their toileting practices; their alleged celibacy and the tension between sectarianism and kin relations; their perceptions of the past; their modes of information processing; the cemeteries at Qumran; and the analogy of Greco-Roman voluntary associations (1998). This rich array of new questions and methodological explorations left a prominent mark on the study of ancient Jewish sects and of sectarianism in general.

The field of Second Temple sectarianism constitutes the most fertile ground for discussion in the present volume, with authors directly engaging Baumgarten's work. Maxine Grossman addresses the Holy Grail of Qumran studies: the identification of the Yahad sectaries with the Essenes. Baumgarten himself avoided a direct identification of these two groups, and Grossman further problematizes the discussion. According to her, an understanding of the social world

of the Dead Sea Scrolls sectarians cannot begin with a fixed, Essene-framed picture if it is to make sense of the complexities and contestations expressed and hinted at in the scrolls themselves. Sylvie Honigman examines the economic, political, and societal circumstances that may have contributed to the emergence of sectarianism and the sectarian self in the period from a different angle entirely. Starting in early Hellenistic Judea, she traces a process of “de-traditionalization,” identifying deportations, the destruction and relocation of village communities, and individual flight from economic oppression as facilitating factors.

Two of Baumgarten’s former students address matters relating to the Qumran community. Hillel Newman presents a sociological approach to the link between religious conviction (“religion”) and ethical practice (“morality”) in Qumran, as manifested in direct references, labeling, and social seclusion, shedding light on the dynamics of religion and sectarianism in general. Shlomit Kendi-Harel presents a comprehensive study of the character of the Day of Atonement (Yom haKippurim) and its development into a Year of Atonement, characterized as a sabbatical year and a Jubilee with eschatological undertones. She demonstrates this move using sources from the Hebrew Bible, the Book of Jubilees, Qumran, and the New Testament. Finally, Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra dedicates a study to the provenance of the central halakhic-sectarian treatise *Miqṣat Ma’ase haTorah* (MMT). While most scholars today would view MMT as reflecting an early sectarian stance of the community that later became the Yahad, Stökl Ben Ezra points out that there is little continuity between MMT and other sectarian rule texts and suggests instead that it is simply a Sadducean text.

The encounter with Douglas’ particular way of posing questions, and the unique tools developed for answering them, served as a catalyst for a variety of new studies for Baumgarten. For example, it led to questions about the winding paths of impurity from an anthropological point of view, producing intriguing articles on such themes as the Red Heifer (1993), the Hatta’t sacrifice (1996), and the holy writings that defile the hands (2016). Other critical theories, not necessarily anthropological, led him to inquire about the “invention of tradition” as practiced by the Maccabees (1996), as well as to an innovative study on the school of the Massorettes as the inventors of traditions, co-authored with Marina Rustow (2011).

Throughout his career, Baumgarten has also been sensitive to the implications of contemporary culture and society for our understanding of ancient Judaism. After publishing a series of articles on the topic, he produced a full intellectual biography of his revered teacher Elias Bickerman (2010). Alongside Bickerman, he was also keen on introducing his students to the work of another prominent Jewish historian, Arnaldo Momigliano. Such historical approaches to scholarship are far from gossip or a mere collection of anecdotes. Rather, they provide an indispensable tool for us students of antiquity, helping to draw the intellectual map and clarifying where we stand on it and in relation to its history. Such

an attitude is evident in the work of two contributors to the present volume. Gabriele Boccaccini traces the history of the study of the Second Temple period, a field traditionally neglected by Jewish scholars, by those Jews who did study it, from the Renaissance up to the work of Albert Baumgarten. Daniel Schwartz dedicates an article to Bickerman. Excavating the latter's work in diachronic stages, Schwartz traces the origin of his idea, later expressed in *The God of the Maccabees*, that it was Jewish renegades who brought the Seleucid king Antiochus IV to persecute Judaism.

Albert Baumgarten, in his work as a self-reflective and ever-curious historian of antiquity, has been vigilant in reminding his students and other audiences of the need to contextualize their own work in the unfolding paths of history. Raising methodological awareness of how to utilize models and comparative evidence, he approaches these tools with the following questions: Does the use of external models or evidence lead us to a new understanding of the ancient text? Do we really read it differently now? Can we now understand other passages that we did not understand before? The present volume is an attempt to come to terms with this awareness, presented by the students and colleagues who have gratefully accepted Baumgarten's challenge.

In acknowledging the individuals who have enabled Albert Baumgarten's scholarship, it is of prime importance to thank the senior scholars who assisted in recruiting Baumgarten to the faculty of Bar-Ilan University, in this way facilitating his move to Israel. They are Moshe David Herr, Shaye Gafni, and the late Menachem Stern of the Hebrew University; Aharon Oppenheimer of Tel Aviv University; and the late Moshe Beer of Bar-Ilan University.

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Michal Bar-Asher Siegal,
Jonathan Ben-Dov, and Eyal Regev

I. Second Temple Studies

Jewish Scholarship on the Second Temple Period from the Renaissance to Albert I. Baumgarten

Gabriele Boccaccini

Albert I. Baumgarten is a distinguished colleague, a friend, and one of the leading contemporary Jewish scholars of Second Temple Judaism.¹ At the same time, he is among the few specialists in ancient Judaism who have paid particular attention to the history of research in the field.² I cannot find a better way to celebrate his accomplishments than to locate him in the long line of Jewish scholars who have contributed to Second Temple studies since the Renaissance.

It is somewhat disturbing to note that no study has been so far devoted to this issue. After the pioneering article by Harry M. Orlinsky in 1955,³ the subject of “Jewish Biblical Scholarship” has firmly entered the scholarly debate,⁴ and some relevant works have been produced on the attitude of Jewish scholars not only toward the Hebrew Bible but also toward Jesus, Paul, and Christian origins.⁵ In 2005, Niels Roemer authored a fundamental study in which he traced the “rediscovery” of ancient Jewish history by nineteenth-century Jewish-German scholarship after centuries of oblivion.⁶ Yet no study focuses specifically on Second Temple Judaism and its significance for Judaic Studies from a Jewish perspective. The call Lawrence Schiffman made so passionately in 1994

¹ Albert I. Baumgarten, *The Flourishing of Jewish Sects in the Maccabean Era: An Interpretation*, JSJSup 55 (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

² Albert I. Baumgarten, *Elias Bickerman as a Historian of the Jews*, TSAJ 131 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

³ Harry M. Orlinsky, “Jewish Biblical Scholarship in America,” *JQR* 45, no. 4 (1955): 374–412. An appendix was published in the same journal, issue 47, no. 4 (1957): 345–353.

⁴ Jonathan D. Sarna and Nahum M. Sarna, “Jewish Bible Scholarship and Translations in the United States,” in *The Bible and Bibles in America*, ed. Ernest S. Frerichs (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 83–116; S. David Sperling, *Students of the Covenant: A History of Jewish Biblical Scholarship in North America* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992); Edward Breuer, “Jewish Biblical Scholarship from the 17th to the 19th centuries,” in *The Jewish Study Bible*, ed. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler (2nd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁵ Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Matthew Hoffman, *From Rebel to Rabbi: Reclaiming Jesus and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007); Daniel R. Langton, *The Apostle Paul in the Jewish Imagination: A Study in Modern Jewish-Christian Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁶ Nils H. Roemer, *Jewish Scholarship and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Germany: Between History and Faith* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005).

(“reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls”) should be extended to the entire field.⁷ The status of Second Temple Judaism within Judaic Studies in fact remains uncertain – too late to be “biblical,” too early to be “rabbinic,” perhaps too “Christian” to be fully “Jewish.” And yet those centuries appear more and more to their interpreters to be a fundamental and distinctive stage in the formative history of Judaism.⁸ A survey of the way in which Jewish scholars have approached the period is a fascinating journey into the ever-changing boundaries of Jewish identity.

1. A Traditionally “Insignificant” Period

Medieval Jewish scholarship was not interested in the study of Second Temple Judaism and Christian origins, rather focusing on the Hebrew Bible and rabbinic literature. Both Christians and Jews stressed their continuity with the ancient Jewish Scriptures and ancient Israel, which the latter claimed to have faithfully maintained and the former to have faithfully fulfilled. None of them was particularly driven to examine later (post-biblical) developments, much less focus on Second Temple Jewish diversity. The decisive dramatic conflict between the Synagogue and the Church, each so well defined in their respective roles, certainly had no need of other, minor characters – the existence of whom was quickly forgotten. The complex conflicts among rival groups in the Second Temple period were turned into the lasting fight between two static and atemporal identities – the Christians of every time and every place against the Jews of every time and every place.⁹

If Christianity was the fulfillment and replacement of the “old” Mosaic covenant, and rabbinic Judaism the continuation of this covenant, then Second Temple Judaism was a theologically insignificant period. There were exceptions. The continuous fortune of Josephus (and his Christian and Jewish doubles, Hegeppus and Josippon), and the works of Epiphanius and Philastrius, Ibn Daud and Maimonides, kept alive the memory of ancient Jewish diversity up to the Middle Ages. However, the Second Temple period received no theological and scholarly attention. Not accidentally, the most comprehensive and original

⁷ Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: The History of Judaism, the Background of Christianity, the Lost Library of Qumran* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1994).

⁸ Alan F. Segal, *Rebecca's Children: Judaism and Christianity in the Roman World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986); Gabriele Boccaccini, *Middle Judaism: Jewish Thought, 300 BCE to 200 CE* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991); Shaye J.D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987; 2nd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006; 3rd ed., 2014).

⁹ Gabriele Boccaccini, *Portraits of Middle Judaism in Scholarship and Arts* (Turin: Zamorani, 1992).

treatment of Second Temple Judaism would be offered in the Middle Ages outside both the Christian and the rabbinic tradition by the Karaite leader Yusuf Yaqub al-Qirqisani at the beginning of the tenth century CE.¹⁰

2. The Rediscovery of Second Temple Judaism (Fifteenth–Sixteenth Centuries)

The revival of interest in Second Temple Judaism during the Renaissance was prepared by the movement of the Christian kabbalists, notably Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Johann Reuchlin, and Guillaume Postel. Their philosophical search for universal wisdom gave theological meaning and dignity to post-biblical Jewish literature, effectively defending it from the charge of “heresy.” But it was the “rediscovery” of Flavius Josephus, that made post-biblical Judaism historically significant, after centuries of oblivion, in the broader context of a renewed interest in Classical Studies.¹¹ In 1548, Paul Eber, Professor of Old Testament at Wittenberg and a leader of the Reformation, was the first to write a history of the Second Temple period in modern times, following the model of Josephus.¹² In the 1580s, Corneille Bonaventure Bertram and Carlo Sigonio offered the first reconstructions of Jewish political and religious institutions in post-biblical times.¹³

This interest in Classical Studies also penetrated Jewish culture. The chronicles of Abraham ben Samuel Zacuto¹⁴ and David ben Solomon Gans¹⁵ bridged the biblical period to the Renaissance, overcoming centuries of neglect. Following the first printed editions of the *Sefer Yosippon* by Abraham Conat in 1474–1476¹⁶ and Jacob Tam ibn Yahya in 1510,¹⁷ Samuel Usque revisited the events of the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple by Titus in the second part of his work, which was devoted to the major persecutions experienced by the Jewish people during

¹⁰ Bruno Chiesa and Wilfrid Lockwood, *Yaqub al-Qirqisani on Jewish Sects and Christianity* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1984).

¹¹ The *editio princeps* of the Latin text of Josephus appeared already in 1470, only fourteen years after the Gutenberg Bible; see Johannes Schüssler, ed., *De antiquitate Judaica. De bello Judaico* (Augsburg: 1470). After the first printed editions of the *Sefer Josippon* in 1474–1476 and the *Hegesippus* in 1510, the original Greek text of Josephus would eventually be published in 1544; see Arnoldus Arlenius, ed., *Flavii Iosephi opera* (Basel: Hieronymus Froben, 1544).

¹² Paul Eber, *Contexta populi Iudaici historia, a reditu ex Babylonico exilio, usqu' ad ultimum excidium Hierosolymae* (Wittenberg: Creutzer, 1548).

¹³ Corneille Bonaventure Bertram, *De politia judaica tam civili quam ecclesiastica* (Geneva: 1580); Carlo Sigonio, *De republica Hebraeorum* (Bologna: Rossi, 1582)

¹⁴ Abraham ben Samuel Zacuto, *Sefer yuhasin* (Constantinople, 1566) (Hebrew). That is the *editio princeps*, but the work was composed in Tunis in 1504.

¹⁵ David ben Solomon Gans, *Tsemaḥ david* (Prague: Solomon ha-Kohen, 1592).

¹⁶ Abraham Conat, *Sefer yōsifōn* (Mantua, 1474–1476) (Hebrew).

¹⁷ Jacob Tam ibn Yahya ben David, *Sefer yossipon* (Constantinople, 1510).

their history.¹⁸ Azariah de' Rossi was the first modern Jewish scholar to focus specifically on Second Temple Judaism and its history, archaeology, and literature (especially Aristaeus, Philo, and Josephus), and to use non-Jewish sources (secular and Christian) to supplement or check the data in talmudic literature.

The contribution of Jewish converts, such as Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada, Sisto da Siena, and Philip Ferdinand,¹⁹ is also not to be overlooked. Their linguistic expertise allowed them to familiarize Christian scholars with post-biblical Jewish writings hitherto inaccessible to the Christian world.

3. The Foundations of a Critical Approach (Seventeenth–Eighteenth Centuries)

In 1637, the *Historia de' riti hebraici* by the Venetian rabbi Leone Modena offered the first summary of post-biblical Jewish rituals and beliefs authored by a Jew for a non-Jewish audience.²⁰ Originally written in Italian, the work circulated widely throughout Europe, and was translated into English, French, and Dutch. Equally sensational was the 1642 treatise on the Jerusalem Temple by the Portuguese-Dutch rabbi Judah Leon Temple, which was originally published in Spanish and then translated into Dutch, French, Latin, and German.²¹ For the first time, works by Jewish scholars in the field became popular among non-Jews. Christian scholars such as John Lightfoot were thirsty to know more about post-biblical Jewish sources, which they now understood had the power to illustrate and clarify obscure passages in the New Testament.²²

A more critical approach to post-biblical literature emerged in the works of Uriel Acosta²³ and Baruch Spinoza.²⁴ They laid the foundations of biblical criticism by challenging the antiquity and authority of the rabbinic written and oral Torah. Although more traditional in their approach and conclusions, Abraham ben Joseph ha Levi's commentary on *Megillat Taanit* (1659) and Joseph Semah Arias's translation of Josephus's *Against Apion* (1687) are also

¹⁸ Samuel Usque, *Consolaçam ás tribulaçoens de Israel* (Ferrara, 1553).

¹⁹ Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada, *Commentarius in legem Mosis* (1486) <ms.>; Sisto da Siena, *Bibliotheca sancta* (8 vols.; Venice: Griffio, 1566); Philip Ferdinand, *Hæc sunt verba Dei* (Cambridge, 1597).

²⁰ Leone Modena, *Historia de' riti hebraici* (Paris, 1637).

²¹ Judah Leon Templo, *Retrato del templo de Selomo* (Middelburg: En casa de la Biuda y Heredeos de Symon Moulere, Imprimidor de los Estados de Zelanda, 1642).

²² John Lightfoot, *The Temple Service, as it Stood in the Dayes of Our Saviour* (London: Printed by R. Cotes for Andrevv Crooke, at the Greene Dragon in Pauls Church-yard, 1649); and idem, *Horæ Hebraicæ et Talmudicæ* (6 vols.; Cambridge, 1658–1674).

²³ Uriel Acosta, *Exame das tradições farisaicas* (Amsterdam, 1623).

²⁴ Baruch Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (Hamburg, 1670).

evidence of a growing interest among Jewish intellectuals in critically exploring a neglected period in Jewish history.²⁵

As a result of the new critical interest in history and philology, Christian theology began to admit that, to a certain extent, post-biblical Judaism had served to prepare for the coming of Jesus. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the clergyman and scholar Humphrey Prideaux, dean of Norwich, re-invented “Second Temple Judaism” as the “intertestamental” period.²⁶ His work dominated the field for more than a century, with numerous editions and translations into French, Italian, and German. It also prompted interest in the literature of the period. In the same years, Johann Albert Fabricius published the first collection of Old Testament pseudepigrapha.²⁷

The Jewish Haskalah was particularly attracted to the works of Philo and other Jewish-Hellenistic authors. Like them, Moses Mendelssohn saw the purpose of ceremonial laws as a pedagogical tool for moral and metaphysical instruction.²⁸ By the end of the eighteenth century, the early Haskalah movement had produced its first fruits for the study of Second Temple Judaism. The first Hebrew commentaries on the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon and Sirach were published, respectively, by Naphtali Herz Wessely in 1780²⁹ and Judah Leib Ben Ze’ev in 1798.³⁰

4. The Emergence of Second Temple Judaism as a Historiographical Unit

After the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Era, the emancipation of the Jews from their age-old segregation and their consciousness of being an oppressed people longing for freedom won the esteem of European liberals and patriots from Lord Byron to Giuseppe Verdi.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, as a direct consequence of the Emancipation, Jewish scholars gained a presence in European universities, where they actively promoted the scientific study of Judaism. In Austria, in 1808,

²⁵ Abraham ben Joseph ha-Levi, *Massechet Megillat Taanit* (Amsterdam: Immanuel Benveniste, 1659); Joseph Semah Arias, *Respuesta de Josepho contra Apion Alexandrino* (Amsterdam: Tartas, 1687).

²⁶ Humphrey Prideaux, *The Old and New Testament Connected in the History of the Jews, and Neighbouring Nations; from the Declension of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah to the Time of Christ* (2 vols.; London, 1716–1718).

²⁷ Johann Albert Fabricius, *Codes Pseudepigraphus Veteris Testamenti* (Hamburg, 1713–1723).

²⁸ Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem oder über religiöse Macht und Judentum* (Berlin: Friedrich Maurer, 1783).

²⁹ Naphtali Herz Wessely, *Hokhmat Shelomoh* (Berlin, 1780) (Hebrew).

³⁰ Judah Leib Ben Ze’ev, *Hokhmat Yehoshua ben Sira* (Breslau, 1798). (Hebrew).

Peter Beer wrote an Introduction to Second Temple Judaism in the form of a commentary on selected passages from Josephus.³¹ In Germany, Isaak Markus Jost translated the Mishnah into German; between 1820 and 1829, he published the first comprehensive history of “post-biblical” Jews, from the Maccabees to the present, written by a Jewish historian.³² A few decades later, in 1847, Levi Herzfeld would cover the early Second Temple period up to the Maccabees, paying particular attention to the economic aspects.³³ In France, Joseph Salvador authored the first major work on Jesus by a Jewish scholar, as well as a history of the Roman domination in Judea.³⁴ In Italy, Samuel David Luzzatto played a similar pioneering role for the development of Second Temple Studies in conversation with Aurelio Bianchi-Giovini.³⁵ In England, in 1845, Grace Aguilar was the first Jewish female scholar to enter the field and to address the history of the period from a female perspective. Her *The Women in Israel* offered a series of biographical essays on biblical, Second Temple, talmudic, and modern Jewish women.³⁶ In the United States, in 1855, Morris Jacob Raphall wrote the first critical introduction to the Second Temple period from a modern Jewish perspective, based primarily upon Josephus and the Talmud but also using classical sources.³⁷

By the mid-nineteenth century, Jewish scholars had built an established presence in the field of Second Temple Judaism. They were now as well-trained in Greek and Latin as in Hebrew, and their interests covered material far beyond traditional biblical and rabbinic sources, including the study of the OT apocrypha and pseudepigrapha (Adolph Jellinek, Lazarus Goldschmidt).³⁸ In the third volume of his monumental *Geschichte der Juden von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart*, Heinrich Hirsch Graetz dealt with the period from the death of Judas Maccabeus to the Jewish War, introducing Jesus as a Jewish religious

³¹ Peter Beer, *Geschichte der Juden, von der Rückkehr aus der babylonischen Gefangenschaft bis zur Zerstörung des zweiten Tempels* (Vienna, 1808).

³² Isaak Markus Jost, *Geschichte der Israeliten seit den Zeit der Maccabäer bis auf Unsere Tage* (9 vols.; Berlin, 1820–1829).

³³ Levi Herzfeld, *Geschichte des Volkes Jisrael, von der Zerstörung des ersten Tempels bis zur Einsetzung des Mackabäers Schimon* (3 vols.; Braunschweig: Westermann, 1847).

³⁴ Joseph Salvador, *Jésus-Christ et sa doctrine. Histoire de la naissance de l'église, de son organisation et de ses progrès pendant le premier siècle* (Paris: Guyot et Scribe, 1838); idem, *Histoire de la domination romaine en Judée et de la ruine de Jérusalem* (Paris: Guyot et Scribe, 1847).

³⁵ Samuel David Luzzatto, *Il giudaismo illustrato nella sua teorica, nella sua storia e nella sua letteratura* (2 vols.; Padua: Bianchi, 1848–1852).

³⁶ Grace Aguilar, *The Women of Israel* (New York: D. Appleton & Co.; Philadelphia: G. S. Appleton, 1845).

³⁷ Morris Jacob Raphall, *Post-Biblical History of the Jews: From the Close of the Old Testament, about the year 420 B.C.E., till the Destruction of the Second Temple in the Year 70 C.E.* (Philadelphia: Moss & Brother, 1855).

³⁸ Adolph Jellinek, *Ueber das Buch der Jubiläen und das Noah-Buch* (Leipzig: C. W. Vollrath, 1855); Lazarus Goldschmidt, *Sefer Hanokh: Das Buch Henoch* (Berlin: Heinrich, 1892) (Hebrew).

leader influenced by the Essenes.³⁹ Graetz's interest in the Essenes was shared by Elia Benamozegh, the author of one of the first monographs on the subject.⁴⁰ The topic of Jewish diversity was no longer a taboo, although the idea of rabbinic normativeness was not questioned.

5. Second Temple Studies in the Age of Antisemitism

The international success of Emil Schürer's *Die Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi* confirmed the growing interest by Christian scholars in the "age of Jesus Christ."⁴¹ Such an interest did not result, however, in a more appreciative approach to Judaism. On the contrary, the spread of anti-Semitic attitudes, which came to dominate European culture, particularly in the second half of the nineteenth century, was compounded with the legacy of medieval religious anti-Judaism to make most Christian scholars even harsher in their contempt for Second Temple Judaism. What was previously seen as a time of stagnation and insignificance, marked by the production of "non-canonical" literature, was increasingly labeled as an era of religious decadence. This view held that after the Babylonian exile and the end of prophecy, Judaism regressed from its biblical basis to become the legalistic and sanctimonious religion opposed by Christ, the superiority of which its followers in the present still maintained. The term *Spätjudentum* (Late Judaism) appeared the most appropriate – chronologically and morally – to denote this period. Anti-Semitic attitudes generated cultural myths that in the Nazi era would become political monsters: the Wandering Jew of Pierre Dupont and Gustave Doré; the perverted Salome of Oscar Wilde and Johannes Strauss; the infamous Judas of the first filmed Passion plays.

In contrast, the Jews now looked at Second Temple Judaism with pride, not only in scholarship but for the first time also in literature and the arts. Reform Judaism was especially eager to celebrate the greatness of the period as an important stage in the long, glorious, and not -yet -concluded history of the Jewish people, a narrative that did not identify with the history of rabbinic Judaism. As such, Second Temple Judaism occupied a significant role in the works of Abraham Geiger⁴² and Isaac Mayer Wise.⁴³ Wise in particular fully understood

³⁹ Heinrich Hirsch Graetz, *Geschichte der Israeliten: 3. Bis zum Untergang des jüdischen Staates* (Leipzig: Leiner, 1856).

⁴⁰ Elia Benamozegh, *Storia degli esseni* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1865).

⁴¹ Emil Schürer, *Die Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi* (3 vols.; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1886–1898).

⁴² Abraham Geiger, *Das Judentum und seine Gechichte* (3 vols.; Breslau: Schletter, 1864–1871).

⁴³ Isaac Mayer Wise, *History of the Hebrews' Second Commonwealth with Special Reference to Its Literature, Culture, and the Origin of Rabbinism and Christianity* (Cincinnati: Bloch Pub-

the potential of the period for strengthening Jewish communities' self-identity in the era of emancipation. He pursued his educational purposes by reaching out to his Jewish readers through both historical novels and scholarly works. Wise was also the first scholar to explicitly introduce the period as the cradle of both Christianity and rabbinic Judaism.

The rise and influence of Zionism added a political touch that largely compensated for the previous lack of theological motivations. The Second Temple period was the last glorious time of Jewish independence and self-government in the land of Israel – the time of the second Jewish Commonwealth. Dramas and operas were now performed as vehicles of political and national propaganda by playwrights like Abraham Goldfaden (in Yiddish)⁴⁴ and Judah Loeb Landau (in Hebrew).⁴⁵ The more that events in Second Temple Judaism were adopted by Jewish nationalism, however, the more they disappeared from European culture. They ceased to be mere historical exempla, evoked only to be applied to other contexts; they were now firmly linked to the political claims of the Jewish people to have their rights and national identity recognized and acknowledged.

Now that Second Temple Judaism was firmly established in Judaic Studies, Jewish scholarship expanded to all its subfields. Scholars such as Solomon Schill,⁴⁶ Theodore Reinach,⁴⁷ Meir Balaban,⁴⁸ Paul Krüger,⁴⁹ Norman Bentwick,⁵⁰ and Edmund Menahem Stein⁵¹ wrote extensively on Philo and Josephus. No less significant were the accomplishments in the field of OT pseudepigrapha. In 1910, Solomon Schechter published some *Fragments of a Zadokite Work* he had discovered at the Cairo Genizah;⁵² the text would be later identified as belonging to the Essene *Damascus Document*. Hanoch Albeck studied the relations

lishing Company, 1880). Before completing his scholarly introduction, Wise had already published two historical novels on the period: *The First of the Maccabees* (1855) and *The Combat of the People; or, Hillel and Herod* (1858).

⁴⁴ Abraham Goldfaden, *Bar Kokhba; oder, Di letzte Teg fun Jerusalamim* (1883); and *Judas Maccabaeus* (1892).

⁴⁵ Judah Loeb Landau, *Bar Kokhba* (1884); *The Destruction of Jerusalem* (1885); *Herod, King of the Jews* (1887); and *Alexander Jannaeus* (1897).

⁴⁶ Solomon Schill, *Alexandriai Philo Jelentése a Caius Caligulanál járt küldöttségről* (Budapest: 1896).

⁴⁷ Théodore Reinach, ed., *Oeuvres complètes de Flavius Josephus* (7 vols.; Paris: E. Leroux, 1900–1932).

⁴⁸ Meir Balaban, *Josephus Flavius: Charakterystyka czlowieka i historyka na tle wspolczesnych wypadkow* (Lwów: Żydowska Spółka wydawnicza “Kadimah,” 1904).

⁴⁹ Paul Krüger, *Philo und Josephus als Apologeten des Judentums* (Leipzig: Verlag der Durr'schen Buchhandlung, 1906).

⁵⁰ Norman Bentwick, *Philo-Judaus of Alexandria* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1910); idem, *Josephus* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1914).

⁵¹ Edmund Menahem Stein, *Die allegorische exegese des Philo aus Alexandria* (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1929); idem, *Philo und der Midrasch: Philos Schilderung der Gestalten des Pentateuch verglichen mit der des Midrasch* (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1931).

⁵² Solomon Schechter, *Fragments of a Zadokite Work* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910).

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