

Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum

38

David Goodblatt

The Monarchic Principle



Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum

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Martin Hengel und Peter Schäfer

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The Monarchic Principle

Studies in Jewish Self-Government in Antiquity

by

David Goodblatt



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To My Wife
Sona

Preface

This book has had a rather long gestation period. Its origins were in research I did while teaching at the University of Haifa in the early 1980's. I continued to work on these themes while at the University of Maryland. The final stages of research and the writing took place at the University of California, San Diego. The manuscript was essentially completed by the early spring of 1992. Finally, during a stay as a Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1992–93, I took the opportunity to revise and update the manuscript. Thanks are due to many colleagues, librarians, and support staff at all these institutions, as well as to those at the Hebrew Division of the Library of Congress, for their invaluable help during these years.

A number of publications came to my attention only after the book was in press. Among them is J. J. Price, *Jerusalem Under Siege. The Collapse of the Jewish State 66–70 C.E.* (Leiden, New York and Köln, 1992), which offers a detailed treatment of the Judean government during the first revolt against Rome. However, nothing I have seen so far affects my main arguments.

Readers familiar with semitic languages will probably cringe at the informal system of transliteration that I have used. This resulted from limitations of the word processing program and the (undersigned) word processor. Those same readers, however, should have no trouble identifying most words, especially since Hebrew letters are used frequently. For the record, I use *v* for spirant **ו**, *kh* for spirant **כ**, *f* or *ph* for spirant **פ**, *s* for **ש** as well as **ס**, and *sh* for **שׁ**. Not all **ס**'s are indicated, ' may indicate **ס** or **שׂ**, and *h* **ה** or **הּ**. Vowel quantities are not indicated. I have failed still more egregiously to achieve consistency in rendering Hebrew names. Generally, when common English equivalents were available, I used them, e.g., Judah and Gamaliel. But sometimes I vacillated, e.g., Eleazar/El'azar.

This book is dedicated to my wife, Sasona, who made many sacrifices during the past quarter century so that I could pursue my academic career. Thanks are also due to our children, Keren, Michael and Grace, who made sacrifices of their own.

La Jolla, California
September, 1993/Tishre, 5754

David Goodblatt

Table of Contents

| | | |
|---|---|-----|
| | <i>Abbreviations</i> | XI |
| | <i>Introduction</i> | 1 |
| 1 | The Practice of Priestly Monarchy | 6 |
| 2 | The Ideology of Priestly Monarchy | 30 |
| 3 | The Doctrine of the Diarchy | 57 |
| 4 | The Problem of the Council Before 70 | 77 |
| 5 | The Gamalielian Patriarchate: A Lay Monarchy | 131 |
| 6 | From Priestly to Lay Monarchy: The Origins of the Gamalielian Patriarchate | 176 |
| 7 | The Problem of the Council after 70 | 232 |
| 8 | Diaspora Lay Monarchy: The Babylonian Exilarchate | 277 |
| | <i>Indexes</i> | 312 |

Abbreviations

| | |
|--------|---|
| AA | <i>Against Apion of Josephus</i> |
| AJP | <i>American Journal of Philology</i> |
| AJSR | <i>Association for Jewish Studies Review</i> |
| ANRW | <i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt.</i> Ed. H. Temporini and W. Haase |
| BA | <i>Biblical Archaeologist</i> |
| BASOR | <i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i> |
| B.C.E. | Before the Common Era |
| BSOAS | <i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i> |
| CBQ | <i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i> |
| CCSL | <i>Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina</i> |
| C.E. | Common Era |
| CRINT | <i>Corpus Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum</i> |
| DCB | <i>Dictionary of Christian Biography</i> |
| DJD | <i>Discoveries in the Judaean Desert</i> |
| EJ | <i>Encyclopedia Judaica</i> |
| GCS | <i>Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller</i> |
| GLAJJ | <i>Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism.</i> Ed. M. Stern |
| HSCP | <i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i> |
| HTR | <i>Harvard Theological Review</i> |
| HUCA | <i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i> |
| IEJ | <i>Israel Exploration Journal</i> |
| JA | <i>Jewish Antiquities of Josephus</i> |
| JBL | <i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i> |
| JEA | <i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i> |
| JH | <i>Jewish History</i> |
| JJS | <i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i> |
| JR | <i>Journal of Religion</i> |
| JQR | <i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i> |
| JRH | <i>Journal of Religious History</i> |
| JRS | <i>Journal of Roman Studies</i> |
| JSJ | <i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian Hellenistic and Roman Period</i> |
| JSNT | <i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i> |
| JSOT | <i>Journal of the Society for the Old Testament</i> |
| JTS | <i>Journal of Theological Studies</i> |
| JW | <i>Jewish War of Josephus</i> |
| LCL | Loeb Classical Library |
| MGWJ | <i>Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums</i> |
| MS | Manuscript |
| PAAJR | <i>Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research</i> |
| PEQ | <i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i> |

| | |
|-------------|---|
| <i>PG</i> | <i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca.</i> Ed. P. Migne |
| <i>PL</i> | <i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina.</i> Ed. P. Migne |
| <i>PWRE</i> | <i>Pauly-Wissowa Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> |
| <i>RB</i> | <i>Revue Biblique</i> |
| <i>REJ</i> | <i>Revue des Études Juives</i> |
| <i>RQ</i> | <i>Revue de Qumran</i> |
| <i>SCI</i> | <i>Scripta Classica Israelica</i> |
| <i>VT</i> | <i>Vetus Testamentum</i> |
| <i>ZAW</i> | <i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i> |
| <i>ZDMG</i> | <i>Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i> |
| <i>ZDPV</i> | <i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i> |
| <i>ZNW</i> | <i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i> |

Introduction

During the past generation a growing body of literature has emerged treating what Daniel Elazar calls “the Jewish political tradition.” Certainly the creation of the state of Israel has helped stimulate an interest in the political thought reflected in earlier Jewish sources and institutions. Whatever the source of inspiration, from 1983 to 1991 at least nine books dealing with this subject appeared. Five of these works concentrate on political thought reflected in rabbinic-halakhic literature. In chronological order they are Gordon M. Freeman, *The Heavenly Kingdom. Aspects of Political Thought in the Talmud and Midrash* (University Press of America: Lanham, 1986); Sol Roth, *Halakhah and Politics. The Jewish Idea of the State* (Yeshiva University Press: New York, 1988); Martin Sicker, *The Judaic State. A Study in Rabbinic Political Theory* (Praeger: New York, 1988); Stuart A. Cohen, *The Three Crowns. Structures of Communal Politics in Early Rabbinic Jewry* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1990); and Jacob Neusner, *Rabbinic Political Theory* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1991). This focus is understandable given the great influence the rabbinic literary corpus has had on medieval, early modern, and contemporary Jewish communities and Jewish thought. And certainly the extrapolation of the political theories contained in this vast body of literature is a legitimate subject of inquiry. On the other hand, the period which produced rabbinic literature was not one during which there was an independent Jewish state. Such was the case during at least part of what is known in Jewish historiography as the Second Temple period. From around 142 B.C.E. to 6 C.E., and again in 41–44, Judah was (at least nominally) independent under the Hasmonean and Herodian dynasties, while part of the land of Israel remained nominally independent principalities under Herodians throughout the first century. And earlier, under Persian and Macedonian suzerainty, Judah retained much of its character as an ethnic state. Surely, the Second Temple period should be as fruitful a subject for those studying the Jewish political tradition as the rabbinic period. So I find it surprising that even more comprehensive studies tend to ignore the political traditions of second temple Judah. This is the case with two collective works which claim a broader scope than the works cited above, which focus on rabbinic thought. I refer to *Kinship and Consent. The Jewish Political Tradition and Its Contemporary Uses*, ed. Dan-

iel J. Elazar (University Press of America: Lanham, 1983), based on a 1975 colloquium sponsored by the Institute for Judaism and Contemporary Thought, and *Politique et Religion Dans Le Judaïsme Ancien et Médiéval*, ed. D. Tollet (Desclée: Paris, 1989), the proceedings of a 1987 colloquium of the Centre d'Études Juives of the Sorbonne. The former has chapters on biblical and rabbinic topics, but nothing to do with the Second Temple period. The latter book includes essays on subjects such as the Septuagint, Jewish communities in Rome, Philo on the biblical Joseph, the Jewish revolts against Rome, and political messiahs in first century Judah. Herod is discussed only in connection with the Psalms of Solomon, while the Hasmoneans are hardly mentioned. Again, the topics covered are all worthy ones. But surely there is more to say about the politics of the six centuries of the Second Temple era, including the century and a half of Judean independence. Only Daniel Elazar and Stuart Cohen, *The Jewish Polity. Jewish Political Organization from Biblical Times to the Present* (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1985), treat this entire period, and their treatment (by design) is schematic. Cohen, in his *Three Crowns*, does devote a chapter to the period 135 B.C.E.–100 C.E., but his main focus is rabbinic political thought. J.S. McLaren, *Power and Politics in Palestine. The Jews and the Governing of their Land, 100 BC–AD 70* (Sheffield, 1991 [JSNT Supplement Series 63]) is more or less alone in his concentration on (a part of) Second Temple times. However, McLaren concentrates on the actual mechanisms of government rather than the theory or ideology behind them. Even when we come to what is often called the rabbinic era, more remains to be done. This sounds surprising when we recall the five monographs listed above. But the rabbinic materials are only part of the picture. It is increasingly recognized that the rabbis did not have a monopoly of leadership in either Roman-Byzantine Palestine or in Sasanian Babylonia, nor did their thinking exhaust the ideas of the Jewish communities of the ancient world. In other words, there were sources of political thought in addition to and outside of rabbinic circles.¹ So even with regard to the post second temple era there remains work to be done on the Jewish political tradition. The present study intends to rectify this state of affairs by focussing on institutions

¹ For pioneering studies regarding Roman-Byzantine Palestine, see A. Büchler, *The Political and Social Leaders of the Jewish Community of Sepphoris in the Second and Third Centuries* (Oxford, 1909); and G. Alon, "Ilen Demitmanyin Biksaf," *Zion* 12 (1947), pp. 101–135. More recently see Martin A. Goodman, *State and Society in Roman Galilee, A.D. 132–212* (Totowa, N.J., 1983); and Lee I. Levine, *The Rabbinic Class of Roman Palestine in Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem, 1989). For Babylonia see J. Neusner, *A History of the Jews in Babylonia*, 5 Vols., (Leiden, 1965–70). S.A. Cohen's *The Three Crowns*, *op. cit.*, is one of the rare studies of rabbinic political thought which takes the actual historical realities into account.

and ideas from the second temple period and, in the post second temple era, by examining some of the traditions which originated outside the rabbinic circles.

A related goal is to select the traditions to be studied not on the basis of their subsequent influence, but on the basis of their influence in the ancient period. Specifically, I am most interested in those institutions which actually exercised dominant powers in Jewish societies. What ideologies did they adduce to defend or justify their role? Thus my approach is two fold, historical and theoretical. The historical aspect is the establishment of the persons or institutions actually in power. The theoretical is the search for the ideas those person and institutions used to support their power. I should emphasize here that my focus on a given ideology should not be taken to imply that no other ideologies circulated in Jewish societies at that time. Thus my focus on the ideologies supporting priestly rule does not imply that Davidic royalism was absent from the consciousness of all contemporaries. Obviously, the hope for a king from the House of David remained alive in some circles, as literary sources attest. All I am arguing, and I believe proving, is that the ideologies I discuss were (also) present in ancient Jewish society.

The present book falls into two parts. Chapters 1–4 treat the Second Temple era, while 5–8 treat what is often called “the period of the Mishnah and Talmud.” By the latter phrase I refer to the period from 70 C.E. till the conquest of the middle east by the Arabs in the seventh century. Chapters 1 and 4 deal with the historical question. In the first of these chapters I present the case for the existence of priestly monarchy throughout most of the Second Temple period. The word “monarchy” is used in the purely etymological sense to mean the rule of one person. That person may or may not bear the title “king.” In the case at hand the latter title was usually not used. When I refer to regimes or ideologies which used the title “king,” I shall refer to “kingship” or “royalism.” The point here is that it is no refutation of my arguments about priestly monarchy to allude to the non-use of the title “king.” That the high priests served as the supreme native rulers of Judah is essentially the consensus view. However, in view of certain dissents from this consensus, a review of the evidence is in order. Complementing Chapter 1 and supporting it with a negative argument is Chapter 4. Here I discuss the question of a national council in Second Temple times. Many scholars argue that such a council played a major, indeed predominant role, in the Judean polity. In fact, the assumption of a dominant council is the basis of the challenge to the view that the high priests ruled. In the chapter mentioned I review the evidence and come to the conclusion that there was no dominant national council. Councils of one kind or another may have existed. But if they did, their roles were decidedly secondary and did not challenge the priestly supremacy sketched in the first chapter. Chapters 2 and 3 then discuss two distinct theories capable of justifying priestly monarchy. Chapter 2 treats the relatively abundant materials from

Second Temple times which argue that rule by the high priest is traditional and divinely ordained. Significant portions of this evidence are pre-Hasmonean in origin, as we shall see. This reinforces our view that priestly monarchy was not an innovation of the Hasmonean dynasty. Chapter 3 discusses the theory of a diarchy of priest and prince. This theory assigns greater significance to the high priests than is apparent in materials relating to the First Temple era. Moreover, given the departure of the Davidic dynasty from the public stage, the upshot of this theory was to allow priestly supremacy. Hence I believe many of the diarchic theories in fact justified priestly rule.

The second half of the book concerns the post 70 era. I concentrate here on what are commonly recognized to have been the dominant institutions in the two large Jewish communities which have left us literary evidence: Israel and Babylonia. The importance of the Palestinian patriarchate and the Babylonian exilarchate is widely acknowledged. Yet, as the five monographs on rabbinic political thought demonstrate, it is not to these institutions that students of the Jewish political tradition usually turn. This book hopes to correct this oversight. Chapter 5 is a survey of the powers and ideology of the Palestinian patriarchate. Chapter 6 seeks to uncover the origins of this institution. This is especially important in view of the following fact. If I am right that Second Temple Judah was ruled by a priestly monarchy, then the patriarchate represents a significant innovation: the move from priestly to lay rule. This move seems to me to be part of a general transformation of Jewish civilization from a priestly to a non-priestly character, a move which was decisive in the development of rabbinic Judaism. That such a move took place is widely recognized, but it is usually dated earlier than I shall put it. Chapter 7 supplements the discussion of the patriarchate by arguing that no council played a major role after 70 – any more than before 70. The final chapter treats the Babylonian exilarchate and its ideology. To be sure, no one doubts that both the patriarchate and the exilarchate relied on an attenuated Davidic royalism to justify their rule. I call it attenuated because neither institution arrogated to itself use of the royal title – though such might be implied by use of the Hebrew title *nasi*. What Chapters 5 and 8 try to offer are comprehensiveness and perspective. First, I hope these chapters will provide the most comprehensive survey and thorough examination of the evidence for the Davidic claims of both the patriarchs and exilarchs in pre-Islamic times. Second, I try to show that our sources reflect a tendency to downplay the importance of the patriarchate and exilarchate, and I try to compensate for that bias. Especially in the case of the Palestinian patriarchs, I think it is possible to see what their Davidic claims looked like before they were filtered through the perspective of the rabbis.

Finally, a note about usage. Until the last chapter, I have generally preferred to use the term “Judean” rather than “Jew” or “Jewish.” Unlike modern English (and French), ancient languages did not distinguish between the first word

and the latter two. The Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek and Latin terms commonly translated “Jew” or “Jewish” seem to me to have stronger territorial and ethnic connotations than the latter English terms, which are often understood to refer above all to religious affiliation. Even in the diaspora, these terms often meant people who originated in the province or state of Judah, rather than (just) devotees of the religion of the torah of Moses.² Certainly when we refer to the government and politics of the Persian province of Yehud, of Yehudah/Ioudaia of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid periods, of the Hasmonean “*Hever* [if this means ‘commonwealth’] of the *Yehudim*” and of Roman Iudaea, “Judean” seems more appropriate. I reserve “Judahite” to refer to affiliation with the tribe of Judah.

² I follow here A.T. Kraabel, “The Roman Diaspora. Six Questionable Assumptions,” *JJS* 33 (1982), pp. 454–455. R.S. Kraemer, “On the Meaning of the Term ‘Jew’ in Greco-Roman Inscriptions,” *HTR* 82 (1989), pp. 35–53, argues that the terms can also refer to adherents to the Jewish religion. But she does not dispute Kraabel’s conclusion that at least in certain contexts the Greek and Latin terms refer to geographical origin.

The Practice of Priestly Monarchy

The salient characteristic of the Jewish constitution in the post-exilic era is that the High Priest was also the political leader of the nation. At the beginning of the Persian rule, this was not yet the case. But it indisputably became so from the second half of that period until the Roman-Herodian domination. The High Priests of the pre-Maccabean as well as the Hasmonean age were not merely priests but also princes.¹

[This view,] docilely accepted by modern scholars, is anachronistic. The High Priest of Jerusalem was neither the head of the state ... nor even the master of the Sanctuary. The most important lacuna in our knowledge of the Jewish polity under the Ptolemies and the Seleucids ... is our ignorance of the political role of the High Priest.²

The first quote, retained from the original text of Schürer in the recent revision by Vermes and Millar, represents the most common position. In fact, the author of the second passage, Bickerman, had himself been among the modern scholars who “docilely accepted” this view. In one of his important publications he even assembled the evidence for the emergence of the high priest, in the course of the fourth century B.C.E., as a “priest-prince” at the head of the hierocratic regime which ruled the Judean nation.³ In any event, the disagreement attested by the above quotations requires us to begin by reviewing the evidence for the role of the high priests in the Judean polity during the Second Temple period. The pre-Hasmonean era is especially important, since everyone, including Bickerman, acknowledges the supremacy of the high priest during the Hasmonean regime.⁴ We shall examine the evidence for what I shall call priestly monarchy, i.e., the possession of the highest office within

¹ E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*. A New English Version Revised and Edited by G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Black, Volume II (Edinburgh, 1979), p. 227. For the original see E. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi*, Vol. I, (Third-Fourth Edition: Leipzig, 1901), p. 181.

² E. J. Bickerman, *The Jews in the Greek Age* (Cambridge, MA, 1988), p. 143.

³ *Idem*, *The God of the Maccabees*, Trans., H. R. Moehring (Leiden, 1979), pp. 37–38. The German original was published in 1937. More recent examples of scholars who agree with the Schürer position include H. D. Mantel, “The Development of the Oral Law During the Second Temple Period,” in M. Avi-Yonah and Z. Baras, eds., *Society and Religion in the Second Temple Period* [The World History of the Jewish People. First Series, Volume 8] (Jerusalem, 1977), p. 42 (with references to older literature); and M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, Trans., J. Bowden (Philadelphia, 1974), Vol. I, p. 24.

⁴ Bickerman, *Jews in the Greek Age*, p. 143. *Idem*, *Institutions des Séleucides* (Paris, 1938), p. 165.

the Judean polity by the high priest. It should be stressed that such a regime excludes neither a state of vassalship to a foreign suzerain (who might be represented by a resident governor) nor the existence of other centers of power within Judah (whether “behind the throne” or alongside it). What counts is formal recognition of the supremacy of the high priest by the Judeans themselves and by outside powers.

The Persian Period. From the Judean perspective this period begins with the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C.E. and ends with the surrender of the province of Yehud to the forces of Alexander of Macedon in 332 B.C.E. Very little is known of the history of Persian Judah, for no connected narrative history has survived.⁵ This is unfortunate for the question at hand. As the quote from Schürer-Vermes-Millar cited above shows, many believe that this era saw the emergence of the priestly regime in Jerusalem. Certainly by the end of the Persian period, as we shall see below, priestly monarchy was so well established that an outside observer could be led to believe that the Judeans had never had a king (i.e., a non-priestly monarch). In any event, certain steps in the evolution of this form of government can be discerned. Contemporary sources from the late sixth century indicate that the high priest occupied an important place in Judean society, but apparently not the supreme position.⁶ For our purposes here we may ignore the Persian governor of the province. Although he might be of Judean descent, the governor was a Persian official. His power did not come from within, but was imposed upon, Judean society. Its sources of legitimation were external.⁷ Our concern here is with the native authorities whose

⁵ Even the first century of Persian rule, for which we have a variety of biblical sources, is problematic. So great are the difficulties that P. Ackroyd refrained from reconstructing a connected history in his survey “The Jewish Community in Palestine in the Persian Period,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, ed. W. D. Davies and L. Finkelstein, Vol. I (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 130–161. See especially his comments on pp. 135–136. Contrast, in the same volume, the greater willingness to produce a narrative history on the part of E. Stern, “The Persian empire and the political and social history of Palestine in the Persian Period,” *ibid.*, pp. 70–87. The attempt to compensate for the paucity of sources by using comparative material and theoretical constructs does not always convince. See the attempts and the critiques collected in P.R. Davies, ed., *Second Temple Studies. 1. The Persian Period* (Sheffield, 1991) [*JOT* Supplement Series 117].

⁶ See the books of Haggai and Zechariah, and the early chapters of the book of Ezra. For discussion see Ackroyd, “The Jewish Community,” *op. cit.*, pp. 136–143; S. Japhet, “Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel Against the Background of the Historical and Religious Tendencies of Ezra-Nehemiah,” *ZAW* 94 (1982), pp. 66–98; and the material cited below, Chapter III, n. 4.

⁷ There is considerable debate concerning the status of the territory of Judah within the Persian empire and, analogously, the status of the chief Persian official in Jerusalem. See the discussion of this issue and references to literature in Stern, “The Persian empire,” *op. cit.*, pp. 72, 82–87; Ackroyd, “Jewish Community,” pp. 156–158; S. E. McEvenue, “The Political Structure in Judah from Cyrus to Nehemiah,” *CBQ* 43 (1981), pp. 353–364;

power came from within Judean society. These were diverse. Our sources mention heads of clans, “nobles,” “princes of Judah,” and elders. We are probably safe in thinking of a landed aristocracy.⁸ Then there was the high priest, who presumably was in charge of the temple precincts. Some indications of the increasing political power of the high priests begin to appear from the middle of the fifth century. It is significant that the hereditary governors of the neighboring provinces of Samaria and Ammon both felt it worthwhile to establish ties with the family of the Jerusalem high priest. Granted, the families of those governors, those of Sanballat and Tobiah, were both Yahwistic, but the ties seem to be for political rather than cultic reasons.⁹ By the end of the fifth century there is clearer evidence that the high priests now enjoyed considerable political power. This evidence comes from the petitions of the Judean military colonists at Elephantine in Upper Egypt. In November 407 the priests of the temple of Yahweh in Elephantine, which had been destroyed in an attack, addressed a petition to Bagohi, the governor of the Persian province of Yehud, asking his help in having their temple rebuilt. The petitioners mention that they addressed a similar request to Delaiah and Shelemiah, sons of Sanballat governor of the province of Samaria. A memorandum of the reply of Bagohi and Delaiah is also preserved. But what is of note for us is that the fact that the petitioners had first written for help to “our lord Yehohanan the high priest [כהן רבא] and his colleagues the priests who are in Jerusalem, to Ostanes the brother of ‘Anani and to the nobles [חרי] of the Judeans.” One imagines that the Judeans in Elephantine first turned to the native Judean authorities, and only when the latter failed to respond did they turn for help to the Persian authorities in Judah and Samaria. The identity of Ostanes brother of ‘Anani is not known.¹⁰ Still, the passage does suggest that the leadership of Judean society consisted of the priests and a lay aristocracy. And the mention of “our lord the high priest” in first place could indicate that he stood at the

Japhet, “Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel,” *op. cit.*, pp. 81–82. The Persian governor might be a native and might even have some independent standing within the native community. Still, he owed his position at the apex of local power to Persian appointment.

⁸ See G. Widengren, “The Persian Period,” in J. H. Hayes and J. M. Miller, eds., *Israelite and Judean History* (Philadelphia, 1977), pp. 522–523.

⁹ Nehemiah 13:4, 28. See Ackroyd, “Jewish Community,” p. 151. Also note Josephus, *JA* 11: 302–303.

¹⁰ For the text and date of the letter, originally published by Cowley, and further literature see the recent edition by B. Porten and J. C. Greenfield, *Jews of Elephantine and Aramaeans of Syene. Aramaic Texts with Translations* (Jerusalem, 1974), pp. 90–93. The passage quoted is Cowley 30, ll. 18–19. The reference to the letter sent to Delaiah and Shelemiah sons of Sanballat is at l. 29. For a memorandum of the reply of Bagohi and Delaiah see Cowley 32, edited by Porten and Greenfield, *ibid.*, pp. 98–99. F. M. Cross, “A Reconstruction of the Judean Restoration,” *JBL* 94 (1975), p. 10, suggests that ‘Anani might be the Davidide mentioned at I Chronicles 3:17–24. He admits, however, that no Ostanes is mentioned among the six brothers of ‘Anani listed there.

apex of the internal Judean leadership.¹¹ This suggestion is given added probability by the fourth century evidence. A small silver coin recently deciphered bears the Hebrew inscription “Yohanan the Priest.” The coin has been dated to the middle third of the fourth century. Speculation about the circumstances in which the coin was minted continues.¹² At the very least, this coin suggests that Yohanan enjoyed a status similar to that of Yehizqiyyah the Governor, who appears on apparently somewhat earlier coins. The difference between the two is that the governor owed his authority to external powers, while the priest, presumably the high priest, was legitimated by internal Judean sources.¹³

The middle third of the fourth century brings us to the eve of the Macedonian conquest. At this chronological juncture Josephus relates the story of the marriage between Nikaso, daughter of Sanballat governor of Samaria, and Menasheh, the brother of the high priest in Jerusalem. Faced with the choice of divorcing Nikaso or giving up his “sharing of the high priesthood” (μετέχειν τῆς ἀρχιερωσύνης – *JA* 11:306), Menasheh explains to his father-in-law that “the priestly office was the highest in the nation” (τῆς μέντοι γέ ἱερατικῆς τιμῆς

¹¹ Bickerman, *Jews in Greek Age*, pp. 141–142 sees the letter as evidence of a “collective priestly leadership.” However, the special mention by name of Yehohanan and the use of the title “our lord” suggest that the latter was at least first among equals, and probably much more than that. Cf. the address in the letters from Sparta to the Hasmoneans Jonathan and Simeon at I Maccabees 12:6 and 14:20.

¹² See D. P. Barag, “Some Notes on a Silver Coin of Johanan the High Priest,” *BA* 48 (1985), pp. 166–168 and J. W. Betlyon, “The Provincial Government of Persian Period Judea and the Yehud Coins,” *JBL* 105 (1986), pp. 633–642. The former dates the coin to 360–340 and wonders if its issue had any connection with the Tennes rebellion. The latter connects other Yehud coins with Judean participation in anti-Persian activity while dating the Yohanan coin to 335–331 on the basis of comparisons with Phoenician coinage of the period.

¹³ For use of the title “priest” to refer to the official usually called the “high priest” in Second Temple sources, note the following. Aaron, understood to be the first high priest, is never designated by the latter title in the Bible. Most commonly he is simply referred to by his name. In a number of other instances he is called “Aaron the priest,” e.g., at Exodus 31:10; 35:19, 39, 41; Leviticus 1:7; 7:34; 13:2; 21:21; Numbers 3:6; 18:28; 33:38; Joshua 21:4, 13. Similarly, Aaron’s son and successor Eleazar, when he is given a title, is called simply “the priest.” See for example Numbers 17:4; 19:3,4; 27:2,19,21,22; 31:12,21; 32:2,28; 34:17; Joshua 14:1; 17:4; 19:51; 21:1. Note also how Numbers 25:13, which promises Phinehas and his descendants a covenant of eternal priesthood, is modified by Ben Sira 45:24 into a promise of eternal high priesthood. On the other hand, the Hebrew text at Ben Sira 50:1 calls Simeon son of Yohanan simply “the priest.” So too at IQSa, II, 19 (and restored at II, 12) “the priest” is generally understood to be the chief or high priest. See D. Barthelemy and J. T. Milik, *DJD* I (Oxford, 1955), notes *ad loc.*, p. 118; Y. Licht, *The Rule Scroll* (Jerusalem, 1965), p. 266. In sum, both the titles “high priest” and “chief priest” are later developments, which become common in the Second Temple period. At the same time, some archaizing post-exilic authors might prefer to use the older form, “the priest,” when referring to the high priest. In any event, both Barag and Betlyon assume that the Yohanan of the coin was not just a priest, but the high priest.

μεγίστης οὔσης ἐν ἔθνει – *ibid.*, 309). Unfortunately, it is not possible to date the source of this account.¹⁴ Even more problematic is Josephus' account of the meeting between Alexander and the Judeans. These materials clearly portray the high priest as the supreme official of the Judean polity. For example, while engaged in the siege of Tyre, Alexander writes "to the high priest of the Judeans requesting him to send him assistance and supply his army with provisions and send him the gifts which they had formerly sent as tribute to Darius" (*JA* 11:317). But since these materials are almost unanimously believed to be later legends, they cannot serve as evidence for the state of affairs at the time of the Macedonian conquest.¹⁵ Equally problematic is accepting the testimony of the Book of Judith on the political supremacy of the high priest. For example, in 4:6–7 the high priest Joakim organizes the defence of the country. While 4:8 and 15:8 also mention "the senate [γερονσία] of the people [ἄμμος]/ sons of Israel," the high priest is mentioned first. One could argue that, even though not historical, the book attests the constitutional structure in Judah at the time of its composition. And there are some who attribute the book to the Persian period. However, the common view dates Judith to a later period.¹⁶

As it turns out, the best evidence for the political supremacy of the high priest by the end of the Persian period comes from an early hellenistic source, Hecataeus of Abdera. In a well known and much discussed passage, excerpted by the first century B.C.E. historian Diodorus of Sicily, Hecataeus of Abdera describes the origins of the Judeans. Hecataeus wrote his account towards the end of the fourth century.¹⁷ The passage is important for the ideology of priestly monarchy, but here I cite it only for the historical reality it may reflect. The relevant lines are as follows.

¹⁴ See M. Mor, "Samaritan History: The Persian, Hellenistic and Hasmonean Period," in A. D. Crown, ed., *The Samaritans* (Tübingen, 1989), pp. 4–6 and the literature cited there.

¹⁵ See S. J. D. Cohen, "Alexander the Great and Jaddus the High Priest According to Josephus," *AJSR* 7–8 (1982–83), pp. 41–68. Cohen distinguishes two sources in Josephus' account: an "adventus story" and an "epiphany story." The former he dates to pre-Hasmonean times. If this is correct, then we have further evidence for the political power of the high priest in the Ptolemaic or Seleucid era. For a recent attempt to defend the historicity of Alexander's meeting with the high priest and visit to Jerusalem see D. Golan, "Josephus, Alexander's Visit to Jerusalem, and Modern Historiography," in U. Rappaport, ed., *Josephus Flavius. Historian of Eretz-Israel in the Hellenistic-Roman Period* (Jerusalem, 1982), pp. 29–55.

¹⁶ See the survey in G. W. E. Nickelsburg, "Stories of Biblical and Early Post-Biblical Times," in M. E. Stone, ed., *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period [CRINT, Section Two, Volume II]* (Assen, 1984), pp. 50–51. Nickelsburg himself suggests that a story originating in the Persian period was rewritten in Hasmonean times.

¹⁷ See M. Stern and O. Murray, "Hecataeus of Abdera and Theophrastus on Jews and Egyptians," *JEA* 59 (1973), pp. 159–168. Stern dates the account to 305 at the earliest; Murray argues for 320–315. See also the survey and bibliography in M. Stern, *GLAJJ*, Vol. I

Index of Sources

The books of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament and the tractates of talmudic literature are listed according to the traditional order, not in alphabetical order.

I Hebrew Bible

| | | | |
|---------------|--|-------------------|--------------|
| Genesis | | 19:10 | 242–243 |
| 14:18–20 | 52–53, 55 | 22:7 | 93 |
| 32:28 | 279 | 24:17 | 67–68 |
| 49:10 | 82, 148, 152, 154, 157–160, 170–171, 173–174, 181, 281–282 | 25:13 | 9 |
| | | 26:22, 38 | 153 |
| | | 26:46 | 12 |
| | | 27:2 | 9, 59 |
| Exodus | | 27:19, 22 | 9 |
| 3:16 | 93 | 27:21 | 9, 59 |
| 12:21 | 90, 94 | 27:34 | 12 |
| 18:12 | 93–94 | 31:12, 21 | 9 |
| 24:9 | 93, 204–205 | 31:13, 31, 51, 54 | 59 |
| 31:10 | 9 | 32:2 | 9, 59 |
| 34:17, 18 | 259 | 32:28 | 9 |
| 35:19, 39, 41 | 9 | 33:38 | 9 |
| | | 34:16–18 | 59 |
| Leviticus | | 34:17 | 9 |
| 1:7 | 9 | 36:13 | 12 |
| 4:22–26 | 157 | | |
| 7:34 | 9 | Deuteronomy | |
| 13:2 | 9 | 17:8–9 | 114 |
| 20:4–5 | 233–234 | 17:9 | 95, 206, 239 |
| 21:21 | 9 | 17:10 | 239 |
| 23:4 | 204 | 17:14–20 | 95 |
| Numbers | | 17:15 | 69 |
| 1:27, 37 | 153 | 17:20 | 96 |
| 3:6 | 9 | 18:18–19 | 67 |
| 11:16 | 115, 248 | 21:2–6 | 95 |
| 11:24–29 | 201 | 25:7–9 | 95 |
| 13:12 | 144 | 28:69 | 12 |
| 17:4 | 9 | 29:7 | 12 |
| 18:28 | 9 | 33:10 | 47 |
| 19:3,4 | 9 | | |

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------|--------------|------------------|
| Joshua | | 33:15 | 68 |
| 6:9 | 96 | 34:5 | 142, 188 |
| 9:18–19 | 96 | Ezekiel | |
| 14:1 | 9, 59 | 34:24 | 159, 290 |
| 17:4 | 9, 59 | 37:25 | 290 |
| 18:11–20 | 153 | 38:17 | 201 |
| 19:35 | 165 | 40–48 | 58 |
| 19:51 | 9, 59, 96 | Hosea | |
| 21:1 | 9 | 3:4 | 170, 181 |
| 21:4, 13 | 9 | 5:1 | 142 |
| 22:14 | 96 | Amos | |
| 23:2 | 93, 95 | 8:11–12 | 241 |
| 24:1 | 95 | Micah | |
| Judges | | 3:11 | 142 |
| 1:26 | 166 | Haggai | |
| 2:7 | 97 | 1:1 | 58 |
| 2:11–23 | 96 | 2:20–23 | 58 |
| 12:13, 15 | 146 | Zechariah | |
| I Samuel | | 3:8 | 68 |
| 1:1 | 118 | 4:1–5, 10–14 | 57, 59 |
| 4:3 | 95 | 6:9–15 | 59, 68 |
| 9:21 | 153 | Malachi | |
| 17:47 | 46 | 2:4 | 48 |
| 18:17 | 46 | 2:7 | 12 |
| 25:28 | 46 | Psalms | |
| II Samuel | | 32:10 | 160 |
| 1:11–12 | 290 | 89:4–5 | 171 |
| 3:4 | 149 | 89:38 | 165 |
| 7:11–14 | 68 | 110:4 | 52 |
| 12:9 | 148 | 129:6 | 257 |
| 21:2 | 96 | Proverbs | |
| I Kings | | 21:3 | 284 |
| 4:7, 19 | 165 | Ruth | |
| II Kings | | 4:2 | 95 |
| 25:5–6 | 161 | 4:18–22 | 167 |
| Isaiah | | Ecclesiastes | |
| 3:4 | 142 | 7:2 | 234 |
| 5:1 | 259 | 11:6 | 262 |
| 9:5–6 | 45 | 12:11 | 165, 167 |
| 10:26 | 69 | Lamentations | |
| 11:1–5 | 68 | 4:20 | 160–161, 163–164 |
| 24:9 | 233 | Esther | |
| 33:17 | 142 | 1:14 | 142 |
| 46:1, 3 | 167 | 2:5 | 153 |
| 53:4 | 162–163 | | |
| Jeremiah | | | |
| 21:12 | 285 | | |
| 23:5 | 68 | | |
| 31:15 | 118 | | |

| | | | |
|----------|---------|---------------|-------|
| Daniel | | 13:4 | 8 |
| 2:37 | 45 | 13:28 | 8 |
| 7:14 | 45 | | |
| Ezra | | I Chronicles | |
| 1:2–4 | 18 | 2:5–15 | 167 |
| 6:6–12 | 18 | 3:3 | 149 |
| 7:12–26 | 17 | 3:17 | 298 |
| Nehemiah | | 3:17–24 | 8, 58 |
| 2:7–8 | 18 | 9:11 | 79 |
| 4:11 | 167 | 24:17 | 144 |
| 7:7 | 249 | II Chronicles | |
| 10:1–2 | 249 | 19:11 | 60 |
| 10:2–28 | 248–249 | 31:13 | 79 |
| 11:11 | 79 | 35:8 | 79 |
| | | 35:25 | 161 |

II Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran

| | | | |
|----------------------|-------|--------------------|--------|
| Assumption of Moses | | 20:1 | 66 |
| 6:1 | 55 | I Esdras | |
| Ben Sira | | 7:2 | 79 |
| 7:14 [Greek] | 91–92 | 8:19 | 17 |
| 7:15 [Hebrew] | 92 | Jubilees | |
| 23:14 | 92 | 30:18–29 | 47 |
| 32:9 [Greek] | 91 | 31:13 | 61 |
| 32:12 [Hebrew] | 91 | 31:13–17 | 48 |
| 33:19 [Greek] | 92 | 31:14 | 46 |
| 33:22 [Hebrew] | 92 | 31:15 | 47 |
| 33:27 | 91 | 31:18 | 47 |
| 38:33 [Greek] | 92 | 31:18–20 | 48 |
| 38:43 [Hebrew] | 92 | 31:31–32 | 61 |
| 45:6–22 | 20 | 32:1–15 | 47, 55 |
| 45:24 | 9 | 45:16 | 47 |
| 46:13 | 52 | Judith | |
| 47:13 | 20 | 4:6–7 | 10 |
| 47:31 | 61 | 4:8 | 10, 79 |
| 49:12 | 20 | 11:14 | 79 |
| 50:1 | 9 | 15:8 | 10, 79 |
| 50:1–4 | 19–20 | Letter of Aristeas | |
| 50:1–24 | 20 | 35 | 17 |
| Covenant of Damascus | | 46 | 83 |
| 5:1 | 69 | 121–122 | 83 |
| 7:13–8:1 | 66 | I Maccabees | |
| 7:18–21 | 67–70 | 1:26 | 88 |
| 12:8 | 102 | 7:20–22 | 21 |
| 12:23–13:1 | 66 | 7:25 | 22 |
| 13:15, 14:16 | 102 | 7:33 | 88 |
| 14:19 | 66 | | |
| 19:10–11 | 66 | | |

| | | | |
|---------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| 8:14–16 | 85–86, 128 | 1Q 22 | |
| 10 | 22 | I, 11–12 | 70 |
| 11:23 | 88 | 4QFlor | |
| 12:2, 5 | 22 | 1:10–13 | 67–69, 70 |
| 12:6 | 9, 18, 87–88, 97–98 | 4QPatr | |
| 12:20–23 | 84 | 3–4 | 68–70 |
| 12:35 | 88 | 4QpGen | |
| 13:36 | 22, 88 | 1, I, 6 | 82 |
| 13:41 | 22 | 4QpIsa A [161] | |
| 13:41–42 | 53–54 | 5–6:3 | 69 |
| 14:20 | 9, 18, 22, 88, 98 | 8–10:7 | 68 |
| 14:23 | 22 | 4QTest | |
| 14:27 | 22, 80 | 9–13 | 67 |
| 14:28 | 88 | 4Q 169 | |
| 14:27–45 | 54, 88 | 3, III, 7 | 82 |
| 14:41 | 75 | 4Q 376 | |
| 15:2, 15, 21 | 22 | I, i:1 | 69–71 |
| | | I, iii:1 | 69–71 |
| II Maccabees | | 4Q 429 | |
| 1:10 | 89 | 11–12 | 70 |
| 1:10–2:18 | 99 | 11QT | |
| 3:1 | 21 | 57:11–15 | 95 |
| 3:4 | 153 | Testament of Dan | |
| 3:4–7 | 21 | 5:4, 10 | 63 |
| 3:9 | 21 | Testament of Gad | |
| 4:1–6 | 21 | 8:1 | 63 |
| 4:9 | 21 | Testament of Issachar | |
| 4:9–11 | 17 | 5:7–8 | 62 |
| 4:11 | 16, 86 | Testament of Joseph | |
| 4:22 | 21 | 19:6 | 63 |
| 4:40 | 21 | Testament of Judah | |
| 4:44 | 18, 21, 89–90 | 21:1–6 | 64 |
| 5:1–10 | 21 | Testament of Levi | |
| 11:27–33 | 17, 89–90, 98 | 2:11 | 63 |
| 13:13, 14:27 | 90 | 9:1–2 | 48, 64 |
| | | 11:4–6 | 44 |
| III Maccabees | | 18:3–4 | 44 |
| 1:8 | 17, 84, 94 | Testament of Naphtali | |
| 1:11 | 84 | 5–6 [+ Heb 2–6] | 64 |
| 1:23 | 94 | 8:2 | 63 |
| 1QM | | | |
| 11:6 | 67 | | |
| 19:1–14 | 70 | | |
| 1QS | | | |
| 9:11 | 66–67 | | |
| 1QSa | | | |
| II, 11–22 | 69–70 | | |
| II, 19 | 9 | | |
| 1Q Sb | | | |
| 5:20 | 69–70 | | |
| 1QTestLevi | 45 | | |

Testament of Reuben

| | |
|--------|----|
| 6:5–12 | 46 |
| 6:7 | 44 |

Testament of Simeon

| | |
|-------|-------|
| 5:4–5 | 45–46 |
| 7:1–2 | 62–63 |

III Josephus

Against Apion

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| I, 5 | 34 |
| I, 183–204 | 12 |
| II, 164–165 | 33 |
| II, 184–187 | 33–34 |

Jewish Antiquities

| | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| 4:186 | 96–97 |
| 4:214–218 | 114 |
| 4:218 | 95, 97 |
| 4:220–222 | 94–96 |
| 4:224 | 95, 97, 114 |
| 4:255–246 | 95–96 |
| 4:324–325 | 96–97 |
| 5:15, 23, 55, | |
| 57, 80, 103, | |
| 135, 151, 170 | 96–97 |
| 5:115, 332, | |
| 335, 353 | 95–96 |
| 7:294 | 96 |
| 11:11, 73, 81, | |
| 83, 84, 86, | |
| 89, 101, 105 | 79 |
| 11:111 | 30 |
| 11:117, 142, 144, | |
| 146, 148–150 | 79 |
| 11:302–303 | 8 |
| 11:306 | 9, 79 |
| 11:309 | 9–10 |
| 11:313–339 | 10, 79 |
| 11:329 | 79 |
| 12:45 | 17 |
| 12:138–144 | 15–16, 85, 87 |
| 12:158 | 14 |
| 12:161 | 14 |
| 12:164 | 83 |
| 12:166 | 97 |
| 12:167 | 14 |
| 12:224 | 15 |
| 12:226–227 | 84 |
| 12:228–229 | 83, 86 |
| 13:166 | 87 |
| 13:288–298 | 75 |
| 13:320 | 24 |
| 14:41 | 37–38 |

| | |
|-------------|----------|
| 14:77–78 | 25, 228 |
| 14:91 | 110 |
| 14:117 | 131, 277 |
| 14:148 | 54 |
| 14:157 | 24 |
| 14:158–184 | 111 |
| 14:171–176 | 112 |
| 14:172 | 24, 73 |
| 14:404 | 25 |
| 15:3 | 73, 112 |
| 15:3–4 | 111 |
| 15:6 | 111 |
| 15:161–171 | 109 |
| 15:173 | 109 |
| 15:229–231 | 109 |
| 15:370 | 73, 112 |
| 16:162–165 | 52–53 |
| 16:356–372 | 109 |
| 16:393 | 115 |
| 17:46–51 | 109 |
| 17:93–133 | 109 |
| 17:161 | 115 |
| 17:300–314 | 39 |
| 18:261–304 | 91 |
| 19:354–366 | 222 |
| 20:11–14 | 116 |
| 20:197–203, | |
| 216–218 | 110 |
| 20:213, 223 | 145 |
| 20:251 | 27, 215 |

Jewish War

| | |
|-------------|-----|
| 1:85 | 24 |
| 1:170 | 110 |
| 1:203 | 24 |
| 1:204–215 | 111 |
| 1:433 | 109 |
| 1:534–551 | 109 |
| 1:550 | 115 |
| 1:571 | 109 |
| 1:620–640 | 109 |
| 1:654 | 115 |
| 2:185–203 | 91 |
| 2:220 | 222 |
| 2:273, 331, | |
| 336, 405 | 116 |

| | | | |
|------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| 2:482 | 115 | <i>Life</i> | |
| 2:563 | 71 | 28 | 110 |
| 2:569–571 | 114 | 56 | 115 |
| 3:138 | 110 | 62, 65, 72 | 110 |
| 4:159 | 71, 145, 213 | 79 | 114 |
| 4:160 | 145 | 190 | 110, 145 |
| 4:213 | 110 | 190–196 | 213–214 |
| 4:325–326 | 145 | 193, 204 | 145 |
| 4:334–354 | 115 | 236 | 109 |
| 4:358 | 71 | 254 | 110 |
| 5:144, 532 | 116 | 266 | 115 |
| 6:354 | 116 | 309 | 110, 145, 213 |
| 7:412 | 87 | 368 | 109 |
| | | 422, 425 | 41 |

IV New Testament

| | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Matthew | | 23:50 | 117 |
| 5:22 | 119, 127, 274 | John | |
| 10:17 | 119, 127, 274 | 11:47 | 120, 127 |
| 20:18 | 121 | 18:12–28, 31, 35 | 122 |
| 22:62–66 | 27 | 19:38 | 117 |
| 23:35 | 115 | Acts | |
| 26:57 | 120 | 4:5–7 | 27, 123 |
| 26:59 | 120, 123, 127 | 4:8, 15 | 123 |
| 27:1 | 121, 123 | 5:21 | 27, 90, 98, 123, 212 |
| 27:57 | 117 | 5:27 | 27, 124, 127 |
| Mark | | 5:34–39 | 143, 212 |
| 10:33 | 121 | 6:12, 15 | 124 |
| 13:9 | 119, 127, 274 | 7:1 | 27 |
| 14:53 | 120 | 9:1–2 | 121 |
| 14:55 | 120, 123 | 22:3 | 213 |
| 14:60–63 | 27 | 22:5 | 121 |
| 14:64 | 120–121 | 22:30 | 124 |
| 15:1 | 121, 123, 127 | 23:2–5 | 27 |
| 15:43 | 117 | 23:6 | 127 |
| Luke | | 24:1 | 27 |
| 9:51 | 115 | Romans | |
| 22:66 | 121 | 11:1 | 153 |
| 22:66–67 | 27 | Philippians | |
| 23:1 | 121 | 3:5 | 153 |
| 23:2, 4, 5, 10, 13, 24 | 122 | | |

V Rabbinic Literature

Mishnah

| | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| Berakhot | |
| 1:1 | 234 |
| 4:4 | 203 |
| Terumot | |
| 11:10 | 234 |
| Ma'aser Sheni | |
| 5:15 | 53 |
| Shabbat | |
| 2:1 | 301 |
| Eruvin | |
| 3:4 | 243 |
| 8:1 | 234 |
| Sheqalim | |
| 1:4 | 240 |
| Yoma | |
| 3:9 | 145 |
| 7:1 | 283 |
| Besah | |
| 3:5 | 243 |
| Rosh Hashanah | |
| 1:8 | 196 |
| 2:8–9 | 194, 203–207, 253–254 |
| 4:1–2 | 237–238 |
| 4:4 | 240 |
| Ta'anit | |
| 2:1 | 296 |
| 4:3 | 241 |
| 4:5 | 153–154 |
| Megillah | |
| 1:3 | 241 |
| Hagigah | |
| 2:2 | 72, 184, 187 |
| Yevamot | |
| 4:6 | 145 |
| 16:7 | 200 |
| Ketuvot | |
| 4:1 | 239 |
| 4:6 | 241–242 |
| 7:5 | 234 |

Sotah

| | |
|--------|--------------|
| 1:3–4 | 106 |
| 7:7, 8 | 283–284 |
| 9:1 | 106 |
| 9:5 | 234 |
| 9:11 | 105, 233–236 |
| 9:14 | 233, 235 |
| 9:15 | 193 |

Gittin

| | |
|--------|-----|
| 1:5 | 254 |
| 4:4, 6 | 266 |
| 6:7 | 106 |

Qiddushin

| | |
|-----|---------|
| 4:5 | 105–106 |
|-----|---------|

Sanhedrin

| | |
|-------|----------|
| 1:2 | 261 |
| 1:3 | 245 |
| 1:4 | 189, 234 |
| 1:5–6 | 106, 248 |
| 1:6 | 105, 189 |
| 4:3–4 | 105, 189 |
| 4:5 | 155 |
| 11:2 | 106 |
| 11:3 | 106 |
| 11:4 | 106, 239 |

Makkot

| | |
|------|--------------|
| 1:9 | 105–106 |
| 1:10 | 105–106, 236 |
| 3:15 | 144 |

Shevu'ot

| | |
|-----|---------|
| 2:2 | 105–106 |
|-----|---------|

Eduyot

| | |
|-----|--------------|
| 2:4 | 241 |
| 7:7 | 191, 197–200 |

Avot

| | |
|----------|-----|
| 1:4–15 | 72 |
| 1:16–2:4 | 152 |
| 2:2 | 184 |
| 2:8–9 | 246 |
| 4:13, 15 | 212 |

Horayot

| | |
|-----|-----|
| 1:5 | 106 |
| 3:3 | 157 |

| | | | |
|----------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| Zevahim | | Rosh Hashanah | |
| 1:3 | 244 | 1:16; 2:11 | 265, 267 |
| Tamid | | 2:18 | 205–206 |
| 3:4 | 249 | Ta'anivot | |
| Middot | | 2:10 | 161 |
| 5:4 | 105–106 | 3:6 | 153 |
| Kelim | | Mo'ed Qattan | |
| 20:3 | 246 | 2:15–16 | 144 |
| Parah | | Hagigah | |
| 9:5 | 242 | 2:8 | 72, 185 |
| Tohorot | | 2:9 | 106 |
| 4:5 | 266 | Yevamot | |
| Yadayim | | 6:6 | 241 |
| 3:5; 4:2 | 244 | 12:9 | 245 |
| <i>Tosefta</i> | | Sotah | |
| Berakhot | | 3:16 | 184 |
| 2:6 | 203, 254 | 7:9 | 244 |
| 4:18 | 247 | 9:1 | 106 |
| Shevi'it | | 15:3–5 | 193 |
| 1:1 | 254 | 15:6 | 235 |
| 4:20 | 243 | 15:7 | 233, 236 |
| 4:21 | 265 | 15:8–9 | 233 |
| 6:27 | 266 | 15:17 | 105 |
| Kilayim | | Bava Mesi'a | |
| 4:1 | 254 | 6:14 | 293 |
| Hallah | | 9:29 | 257 |
| 2:7–10 | 138 | Sanhedrin | |
| Shabbat | | 1:1 | 202, 245 |
| 1:22 | 190 | 2:1 | 202, 261 |
| 7:17 | 144 | 2:5 | 211–212 |
| 7:18 | 142, 188–189 | 2:6 | 211, 279 |
| Eruvin | | 2:7 | 200 |
| 4:16 | 197 | 2:13 | 166, 200 |
| 6:25 | 254 | 2:15 | 105 |
| Pisha | | 3:3, 7, 9 | 105–106 |
| 3:12 | 190 | 3:4 | 106 |
| 4:13–14 | 151, 185 | 4:3 | 188 |
| 10:12 | 245 | 4:7 | 106 |
| Sukkah | | 7:8–9 | 192, 267 |
| 2:2 | 190 | 8:1–2 | 105, 189–190 |
| Besah | | Makkot | |
| 2:16 | 190 | 3:7 | 106 |
| | | Shevu'ot | |
| | | 3:8 | 245 |
| | | Eduyot | |
| | | 1:1 | 241, 258 |

| | | | |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Horayot | | 124, p. 158 | 241–242, 244, 247 |
| 1:4 | 106 | 131, p. 172 | 105–106 |
| Kelim Bava Mesi'a | | Sifre Zutta (Horovitz) | |
| 11:2 | 254 | 19:21, p. 314 | 243 |
| Kelim Bava Batra | | 35:22, p. 334 | 236 |
| 2:2 | 246–247 | Sifre Deuteronomy (Finkelstein) | |
| 2:4 | 244–245, 254 | 16, p. 26 | 245 |
| Ahilot | | 32, pp. 57–58 | 246 |
| 16:12 | 144 | 41, p. 86 | 105 |
| 18:18 | 106, 268–271 | 144, p. 198 | 105–106 |
| Niddah | | 152, p. 206 | 106 |
| 5:15 | 244, 254 | 153–154, | |
| Miqva'ot | | pp. 206–207 | 239 |
| 7:10 | 243 | 154, p. 207 | 106 |
| 7:11 | 241–244, 247 | 294, p. 313 | 293 |
| Toharot | | 317, p. 360 | 198 |
| 9:14 | 243 | 346, p. 103 | 245 |
| Zavim | | 356, p. 423 | 148 |
| 5:11 | 244 | 357, p. 429 | 193 |
| Yadayim | | Midrash Tanna'im (Hoffman) | |
| 2:16 | 244 | to Deuteronomy | |
| | | 26:13, pp. 175–176 | 211–212 |

Tannaitic Midrashim

Mekhilta deRabbi Yishma'el (Horovitz–Rabin)

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Pisha 2, p. 9 | 106 |
| Vayassa' 6, p. 175 | 106 |
| Bahodesh 11, p. 245 | 105 |
| Neziqin 4, p. 264 | 105 |

Mekhilta deRashbi (Epstein–Melammed) to 18:27, pp. 135–136

Sifra (Weiss)

| | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Vayiqra 4:2, p. 19 a | 105–106 |
| Vayiqra 5:1, p. 19 c | 157 |
| Qedoshim 6, p. 90 b | 105 |
| Qedoshim 8:8, p. 90 b | 293 |
| Qedoshim 8:11, p. 91 c | 105–106, 233 |

Sifre Numbers (Horovitz)

| | |
|---------------|---------|
| 78, p. 73 | 105 |
| 80, p. 77 | 105 |
| 92, p. 92 | 105 |
| 95, pp. 95–96 | 201 |
| 111, p. 117 | 105–106 |
| 118, p. 141 | 241 |

Palestinian Talmud

Berakhot

| | |
|----------|----------|
| 2, 4 d | 247–248 |
| 4, 7 c–d | 251–252 |
| 4, 7 d | 242, 245 |

Pe'ah

| | |
|---------|-----|
| 1, 15 a | 265 |
|---------|-----|

Demai

| | |
|-----------|-----|
| 2:1, 22 c | 269 |
|-----------|-----|

Kilayim

| | |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| 9:4, 32 a–b | 141, 149–150, 162, 168, 280, 284 |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|

Shevi'it

| | |
|-----------|---------|
| 1:1, 33 a | 188 |
| 6:1, 36 c | 269–270 |

Bikkurim

| | |
|-----------|-----|
| 3:3, 65 c | 267 |
|-----------|-----|

Shabbat

| | |
|------------|----------|
| 12:3, 13 c | 142, 295 |
| 16:1, 15 c | 160–161 |

Pesahim

| | |
|-----------|---------------|
| 1, 27 d | 266 |
| 6:1, 33 a | 151, 185, 252 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|--|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Yoma | | | Qiddushin | |
| 1:2, 39 a | 139–140 | | 3:4, 64 a | 140 |
| 7:1, 44 a | 283 | | Bava Batra | |
| 8:1, 44 d | 142 | | 5:11, 15 a–b | 293–294 |
| Sheqalim | | | 10:14, 17 d | 266 |
| 5, 48 d | 256 | | Sanhedrin | |
| Rosh Hashanah | | | 1, 18 a | 234 |
| 1:6, 57 b | 196–197 | | 1:2, 18 c | 167, 201, 260–261 |
| 2:1, 57 d | 267 | | 1, 18 d | 211 |
| 2:8–9, 58 a | 205–206 | | 1, 19 a | 245 |
| 3:1, 58 c | 206 | | 1:7, 19 c | 201 |
| Yom Tov | | | 2:6, 20 c–d | 138, 142 |
| 3:6, 62 a | 243 | | 10:2, 21 a | 270 |
| Ta'anit/Ta'anivot | | | 14:2, 24 b | 234–235 |
| 2:1, 65 a | 296 | | 17:1, 28 a | 167 |
| 4:1, 67 d | 245, 251–252 | | 18:4, 30 a | 239 |
| 4:2, 68 a | 148–149, 294–295 | | Horayot | |
| 4, 68 d | 256 | | 1:1, 45 d | 239 |
| Megillah | | | 3, 48 c | 142, 295 |
| 1:1, 70 a | 166 | | Niddah | |
| 1:6, 70 d | 248 | | 3:3, 50 d | 284 |
| 1:7, 70 d | 247 | | | |
| 3:2, 74 a | 163 | | <i>Babylonian Talmud</i> | |
| Hagigah | | | Berakhot | |
| 3:1, 78 d | 167, 259–262 | | 27 b–28 a | 251–252 |
| 3:8, 79 d | 248–249 | | 63 b | 258 |
| Mo'ed Qattan | | | Shabbat | |
| 3:1, 81 d | 265–266 | | 11 a | 203 |
| Yevamot | | | 15 a | 187, 211, 230, 234–235 |
| 1:6, 3 a | 270 | | 20 b | 301 |
| 4:11, 6 b | 264 | | 31 a | 186 |
| 7:2, 8 a | 269–270 | | 55 a | 284, 286–287, 289–290 |
| 16, 15 d | 247–248 | | 55 b–56 b | 147–148 |
| Sotah | | | 56 b | 303 |
| 7:6, 22 a | 283 | | 60 a | 257–258 |
| 9:1, 23 c | 245 | | 118 b, 156 a | 163 |
| 9:12, 24 b | 233 | | Eruvin | |
| 9:17, 24 c | 193 | | 65 a | 155–156 |
| Ketuvot | | | 65 b | 276 |
| 4:5, 28 d | 265 | | Pesachim | |
| 10:5, 34 a | 139 | | 66 a | 151, 185, 252 |
| 12:3, 34 d–35b | 150 | | 115 b | 301 |
| 12:3, 35 a | 141, 280 | | Sukkah | |
| Gittin | | | 20 a | 193 |
| 1:6, 43 d | 140 | | Besah | |
| | | | 29 a | 301 |

| | | | |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| Rosh Hashanah | | 66 a | 75 |
| 18 b | 53 | 70 a-b | 292 |
| 22 a | 197 | 71 a | 156 |
| 25 a | 164-165, 260 | Bava Qamma | |
| 25 a-b | 205 | 59 b | 286 |
| 29 b | 151, 238 | 80 a-b | 295 |
| 31 a-b | 237 | 112 b | 271 |
| Ta'anit | | 117 a-b | 271-272 |
| 22 b | 161 | Bava Mesi'a | |
| 28 a | 154 | 64 a | 276 |
| Megillah | | 84 b-85 a | 151, 162 |
| 2 a | 249 | 86 a | 306 |
| 6 a | 165-166 | 91 b | 302 |
| Mo'ed Qattan | | Bava Batra | |
| 16 b | 285-286 | 3 b | 112 |
| 17 a | 266 | 8 a | 138-140 |
| 20 a | 247 | 21 a | 145 |
| 22 b | 292, 296 | 23 a | 263 |
| 25 b | 165-166 | 51 b | 301 |
| 26 a | 289-290 | 55 a | 302-303 |
| 28 b | 246 | 65 a | 287-288, 292 |
| Yevamot | | 89 a | 293 |
| 62 b | 246, 262-263 | 143 a | 139-140 |
| 66 b | 276 | 165 b | 275 |
| 77 a | 286 | Sanhedrin | |
| 82 b | 264 | 5 a | 158-159, 300 |
| 115 b | 279, 300 | 10 b-11 a | 202, 261 |
| 116 b | 258 | 11 a | 187, 190-191, 193, 198, 200, 202 |
| Ketuvot | | 12 a | 165-167 |
| 30 a-b | 234-236 | 13 b-14 a | 246, 263 |
| 49 b-50a | 265 | 17 a | 201 |
| 62 b-63a | 154-155 | 17 b | 256 |
| 103 a | 141, 144 | 19 a-b | 112 |
| Nazir | | 22 b | 142 |
| 44 a | 247 | 31 b | 271 |
| Sotah | | 36 a | 193 |
| 8 b | 236 | 37 b | 155, 236 |
| 46 b | 166 | 38 a | 155-157, 282-283, 299 |
| 49 b | 193 | 86 a | 264 |
| Gittin | | 98 a-b | 156 |
| 14 b | 140, 192 | 98 b | 161-164 |
| 14 b-15 a | 291-292, 296 | Avodah Zarah | |
| 31 b | 293 | 8 b | 263 |
| 59 a | 193 | Horayot | |
| Qiddushin | | 11 a | 157 |
| 33 b | 292 | 11 b | 152, 157-160, 280, 297 |
| 44 a, 44 b | 286 | 13 b | 192, 289 |
| | | 13 b-14 a | 267 |

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|---------|
| Zevahim | | Ruth Rabbah | |
| 57 a | 241 | 4:4 | 142 |
| Hullin | | 4:5 | 247–249 |
| 92 a | 279, 301 | Song of Songs Rabbah | |
| 124 a | 292 | 2:5 | 257–258 |
| Niddah | | Ecclesiastes Rabbah | |
| 67 b–68 a | 300 | 11:1 | 262–263 |
| <i>Other Documents</i> | | Midrash Tehillim (Buber) | |
| Megillat Ta'anit | | 57:2, p. 149 a | 249 |
| 3 Tishre | 53 | Pesikta deRav Kahana | |
| 28 Tevet | 81–82 | (Mandelbaum) | |
| Seder Olam Rabbah | | Shuvah 11, p. 368 | 298 |
| 24 | 161 | Tanhuma | |
| Semahot | | Hayye Sarah 6 | |
| 8:6 | 188–189 | [Buber: 8] | 262 |
| 12:2 | 247 | Beha'alotkha 12 | 201 |
| Sofrim | | Aggadat Bereshit | |
| 6:4 | 148 | 83 | 159 |
| Avot deRabbi Natan | | Yalqut Shim'oni | |
| 3[A], 4[B] | 262 | #1074, to I Chron. 4:21 | 290 |
| 18[A] | 246 | Targum Pseudo-Jonathan | |
| 46 | 148 | Genesis 29:35, 38:29 | 154 |
| Bereshit (Genesis) Rabbah | | Deuteronomy 33:11 | 53 |
| (Theodor–Albeck) | | Targum Onkelos | |
| 33, pp. 305–307 | 150, 280 | Numbers 12:9 | 162 |
| 61:3, p. 660 | 262 | Targums, Palestinian | |
| 78, pp. 931–932 | 141 | Numbers 11:26 | 201 |
| 80:1, pp. 950–953 | 138 | Targum Song of Songs | |
| 80, p. 951 | 142 | 7:3 | 249 |
| 97, p. 1219 | 158 | Tosafot | |
| 97, pp. 1220–1221 | 237 | Mo'ed Qattan 25 a, | |
| 98, p. 1259 | 148–149, 158 | s.v. <i>veR. Hiyya</i> | 169 |
| 100, pp. 1284–1285 | 141 | Ketuvot 105 a, | |
| Leviticus Rabbah (Margulies) | | s.v. <i>dehashiv</i> | 246 |
| 10:5, pp. 207–209 | 299 | Bava Batra 162 a, | |
| 15:4, pp. 328–329 | 160–161 | s.v. <i>lefi</i> | 53 |
| Numbers Rabbah | | Avodah Zarah 45 a, | |
| 14:6 | 236 | s.v. <i>amar R. Aqiva</i> | 246 |
| Lamentations Rabbah | | | |
| 2:2 | 256 | | |
| 4:23 | 160–161 | | |

VI Other Ancient Literature

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Cassius Dio, <i>Hist. Rom.</i> | | John Chrysostom | |
| XXXVII.15.2 | 26 | <i>Ag. Jews and Gent.</i> 16 | 137 |
| LXVI.6.2 | 117 | Julian | |
| Codex Justinianus | | Ep. 204 | 136–137 |
| 3.13.3 | 133, 178 | Justinian, Novella 146 | 275 |
| Codex Theodosianus | | Origen | |
| 2.1.10 | 133 | <i>Ep. Afr.</i> 14 | 131 |
| 16.8.2 | 134, 178 | <i>First Princ.</i> IV.1.3 | 170–172 |
| 16.8.8 | 134, 180 | Palladius | |
| 16.8.11 | 180 | <i>Life of John Chrys.</i> 15 | 135, 142 |
| 16.8.13 | 134, 180 | Philo | |
| 16.8.14 | 137 | <i>Against Flaccus</i> | |
| 16.8.15 | 134, 180 | 74 | 87, 91, 277 |
| 16.8.17 | 137 | <i>Embassy to Gaius</i> | |
| 16.8.22 | 133 | 229 | 97–98 |
| 16.8.29 | 137, 273 | 278 | 51, 65 |
| Cyril of Jerusalem | | <i>Life of Moses</i> | |
| <i>Cat. Lect.</i> XII, 17 | 170–172 | II, 3 | 51 |
| Diodorus of Sicily, <i>Bib. Hist.</i> | | II, 5 | 50 |
| XIII, 111, 1 | 120 | <i>On the Virtues</i> | |
| XL, 2 | 36–37 | IX, 53 | 51 |
| XL, 3, 4–6 | 11, 32–34 | <i>Questions in Exodus</i> | |
| Epiphanius, <i>Panarion</i> | | II, 105 | 50 |
| 30.4.2 | 140, 255 | Pompeius Trogus, <i>Hist. Phil.</i> | |
| 30.4.3–4 | 143 | XXXVI. 2.16 | 25, 36 |
| 30.7–8 | 172 | Procopius of Gaza | |
| 30.11.4 | 134–135 | <i>Comm. Isa.</i> 18:1–7 | 135 |
| 30.4.1–30.12.10 | 134 | Strabo, <i>Geog.</i> | |
| Eusebius | | XVI.2.46 | 25 |
| <i>Comm. Isa.</i> to 3:4 | 142 | Tacitus | |
| <i>Comm. Isa.</i> to 18:1 | 135 | <i>Ann.</i> 45.32.2 | 110 |
| Isidore of Seville | | <i>Hist.</i> 5.8.3 | 25 |
| <i>Ag. Jews</i> 1.8.2 | 282 | Theodoret | |
| Jerome | | <i>Eran. Dial.</i> I | 171 |
| <i>Comm. Dan.</i> 11:15–16 | 20 | | |
| <i>Comm. Gal.</i> 1:1 | 135 | | |
| <i>Hom.</i> 66 | 171–172 | | |
| <i>On Isaiah</i> , II to 3:4 | 142 | | |

Index of Authors Cited

- Abel, F.-M. 210
 Aberbach, M. 159, 164
 Abramson, S. 288
 Ackroyd, P. 7–8, 59
 Aggoula, B. 82
 Al-Abbadi, M. A. H. 80
 Albeck, H. [Ch.] 109, 138, 141,
 148–149, 152, 157–159, 166,
 188–189, 203, 206, 212, 233,
 239–241, 254–255, 262, 270,
 284, 291–292, 298, 301, 304, 309
 Albright, W. F. 123
 Alexander, P. S. 104
 Allegro, J. M. 68, 82
 Alon, G. 2, 139, 144, 153, 165, 182,
 187, 197, 199–200, 207, 209, 212,
 218, 221, 234, 247, 250, 253–254
 Altaner, B. 170–171, 282
 Amir, Y. 34, 43
 Anderson, H. 17
 Applebaum, S. 115, 194
 Aptowitzer, V. 288
 Arndt, W. 120
 Attridge, H. W. 34, 42
 Avigad, N. 145, 305
 Avi-Yonah, M. 166, 180, 199
- Baarda, T. 44
 Bacher, W. 272
 Baillet, M. 70,
 Barag, D. P. 9, 305
 Baras, Z. 110
 Bar-Ilan, M. 53
 Bar-Kochva, B. 37, 39–40
 Baron, S. 207
 Barraclough, R. 50
 Barthelemy, D. 9, 45, 69
 Bashan, E. 288–289
 Bauer, W. 120
 Baumgarten, A. I. 149, 169, 173–174,
 182, 206, 208, 218, 257, 259–261,
 268, 275
- Beer, M. 139–140, 155–160, 183, 195,
 278–280, 284–286, 288–289, 291–292,
 295–296, 299–300, 302, 306–309
 Ben-Haim (Trifon), D. 189–190, 194,
 196–197, 199–200, 203–204, 206–209,
 221–223, 228, 254
 Ben-Hayyim, Z. 225
 Ben-Sasson, M. 272
 Benoit, P. 146
 Bertinelli, A. M. G. 126
 Betlyon, J. W. 9
 Betz, O. 119
 Beyer, K. 53
 Bickerman, E. J. 6, 9, 15–23, 85,
 88–90, 93–94, 138
 Bietenhard, H. 194
 Black, M. 6
 Bokser, B. M. 246
 Bowden, J. 6
 Boyarin, D. 303
 Braund, D. 40
 Brin, H. 102
 Brockelman, C. 126
 Brooke, G. J. 66, 68
 Brown, R. 120–122
 Brüll, N. 287–288
 Büchler, A. 2, 107
- Callaway, P. R. 35
 Chajes, H. P. 286
 Charles, R. H. 48
 Charlesworth, M. P. 221
 Coggins, R. J. 60
 Cohen, B. 290
 Cohen, G. M. 115
 Cohen, S. A. 1, 2, 20, 23, 31, 38, 218
 Cohen, S. J. D. 10, 20, 28, 41, 72, 114,
 116, 132–135, 137–138, 221
 Collins, J. J. 70
 Colson, F. H. 50–51, 91
 Crombie, F. 170
 Cross, F. M. 8, 60

- Dalman, G. 118
 Danker, F. 120
 Davenport, G. L. 47–49, 61
 Davies, P. R. 7, 66–67,
 de Jonge, M. 44–46, 48–49, 62–64
 Delcor, M. 52
 Derenbourg, J. 113, 210, 217–219
 de Vaux, R. 30, 146
 Di Lella, A. 52, 92
 Dion, P. 95
 Donner, H. 56
 Dothan, M. 179–180,
 Dupont-Sommer, A. 38

 Efron, Y. 39–40, 75, 78, 81–83, 94, 104,
 107–110, 112, 117, 128
 Elazar, D. 1–2
 Endres, J. C. 61
 Ephrathi, J. E. 147, 275
 Ephron, I. See Efron, Y.
 Eppenstein, S. 288
 Epstein, J. [Y.] N. 145, 152–153, 157,
 160, 166, 185, 188, 191, 205, 207–208,
 210–212, 235–236, 238–244, 252–253,
 257, 264, 266, 270, 276, 283, 285, 292,
 301, 303–304
 Ewald, M.L. 171

 Feldblum, M. S. 293
 Feldman, L. H. 110, 113
 Feliks, Y. 269
 Finegan, J. 118
 Finkelstein, L. 81, 150–151, 185, 216, 250
 Fischel, H. A. 186, 195
 Fischer, T. 16, 37, 87, 89–90
 Fitzmyer, J. A. 27, 45, 52–53, 58, 82,
 117–118, 120–124, 145
 Flusser, D. 305
 Fraenkel, J. 185–186
 Freedman, H. 159
 Freeman, G. M. 1
 Freyne, S. 115
 Friedkin, E. 268
 Friedman, S. 169
 Fuks, A. 42

 Gabba, E. 12
 Gafni, I. [Y] 88, 147, 169, 244, 252–253,
 272, 278, 280, 287, 290, 295, 298–299
 Gager, J. G. 11
 Gartner, B. 103
 Gaster, M. 303
 Gauger, J.-D. 34

 Geller, M. J. 81
 Gera, D. 13
 Gereboff, J. 195
 Gil, M. 288
 Gingrich, F. 120
 Ginzberg, L. 187, 246, 248, 252, 272,
 288, 290
 Gluska, Y. 203
 Golan, D. 10
 Goldberg, A. 230
 Goldenberg, R.G. 206, 208, 251–253,
 Goldschmidt, E.D. 246
 Goldstein, J. 13, 21, 48, 53–55, 84, 86,
 88–90, 99
 Goldziher, J. 310
 Goodblatt, D. 38, 41, 69, 72–73, 104,
 144–145, 147, 162, 183, 192, 203,
 209–210, 216, 218, 220, 224, 226,
 228–229, 232, 244, 252–253, 256,
 263, 267, 272, 275–276, 287, 289,
 295, 303, 306
 Goodenough, E. R. 50–51
 Goodman, M. A. 2, 24, 26–28, 38, 41,
 49, 55, 62, 72, 109, 113, 116–117,
 130, 132–133, 176–183, 192–193,
 195, 199, 207, 209, 221
 Graetz, H. 143–144, 210
 Green, W. S. 205
 Greenfield, J. C. 8, 44–45, 48
 Grossberg, M. 275
 Grossfeld, B. 159
 Grossman, A. 278, 281, 284, 298, 307,
 310
 Gutman, Y. 11

 Habicht, C. 90
 Hachlili, R. 146, 305
 Hadas, M. 13
 Haenchen, E. 90
 Halevy, Y. I. 210, 252
 Hammerschmidt, E. 49
 Hanson, P. D. 58
 Harkavy, A. 285, 288
 Harrington, D. J. 45, 53, 82, 145
 Harvey, S. A. 127
 Hatch, E. 92–94, 108
 Haupt, D. 48
 Hengel, M. 6, 11, 14, 37, 78, 80, 83,
 91, 102
 Herr, M. D. 164, 167, 199, 207, 230
 Hershman, A. M. 277
 Hildesheimer, E. 271
 Hirschler, M. 235

- Hoenig, S. 107–108, 248
 Hoffmann, D. 286–287
 Hoftijzer, J. 126, 198, 291
 Holladay, C. R. 34
 Hollander, H. W. 44–46, 48–49, 62–64
 Horsley, R. A. 28
 Horton, F. L. Jr. 52
 Huffmon, H. B. 291
 Hultgård, A. 19, 43–49, 61–65, 74–75
 Hyman, A. M. 171, 190, 194, 212, 247

 Isaac, B. 41, 220

 Jacobs, L. 35
 Jaeger, W. 11–12
 Japhet, S. 7–8, 59
 Jastrow, M. 138
 Jean, C.-F. 126, 198,
 Jeremias, J. 28, 153, 169, 173
 Jeselsohn, J. 101–102
 Jost, J. M. 287, 306
 Juster, J. 131, 135–137, 140–141, 217,
 219, 282

 Kahan, K. 144, 152,
 Kaminka, A. 173
 Kanter, S. 190–191, 194, 197, 200–205,
 246
 Kasher, A. 277
 Kasher, M. M. 246
 Kasovsky [Kasowski], C. Y. [J.] 234, 275,
 286–287, 291, 299–300
 Kasowski, B. 275, 291
 Kee, H. C. 62
 Kennard, J. S. 110
 Kindler, A. 100–102
 Kister, M. J. 52, 61
 Klausner, J. [Y.] 78, 81, 213, 216
 Klein, S. 164, 173, 194
 Knibb, M. A. 66
 Kobelski, P. J. 52
 Korteweg, Th. 64
 Kraabel, A. T. 5
 Kraemer, R. S. 5
 Krauss, S. 103, 126, 136, 242, 288
 Kruse, C. G. 71
 Kümmel, W. G. 120

 Lange, Y. 286
 Lazarus, F. 274, 286–287, 300–301, 304,
 307
 Lebram, J. C. H. 11, 20, 22–23, 32,
 34, 38

 Le Moyne, J. 54
 Leon, H. J. 277
 Leslau, W. 48
 Levenson, J. D. 58
 Lévi, I. 172–173, 210, 213,
 Levine, L. I. 2, 131–133, 135–136,
 138–140, 142, 144, 169, 181, 194–195,
 199, 208, 232, 235, 237, 255, 257–258,
 272–273, 295
 Lewin, B. M. 149–150, 158, 246, 286,
 288–289, 295, 307
 Lewis, N. 198
 Lewy, H. 12
 Licht, J. [Y.] 9, 69–71
 Lichtenstein, H. 53
 Liddell, H. G. 79
 Lieberman, S. 126, 139, 141–142, 160,
 163, 166–167, 184–185, 188, 190,
 194–195, 206, 231, 233, 238, 243–244,
 246–247, 257, 266, 268–269, 283,
 293–294
 Lifshitz, B. 145–146, 180
 Linder, A. 133–134, 178, 273–275
 Liver, Y. 173, 298
 Lohse, E. 104
 Lubbe, J. 67

 Maier, J. 74, 95–96
 Mann, C. S. 120, 123
 Mann, J. 136, 275–276, 288
 Manns, F. 134
 Mantel, H. D. 6, 79, 81, 104, 107, 126,
 132–136, 138, 140, 144, 152, 162, 164,
 166–167, 173, 182–189, 191–193, 199,
 210, 249, 254, 258, 266, 268–269, 287,
 291–292, 294–295
 Marcus, R. 14–16, 21, 24–25, 30, 38, 50,
 53–55, 79, 85, 112, 131
 Margoliouth, J. P. 126–127
 Margulies, M. 160, 299
 Mason, H. J. 108, 128, 180, 198
 Mason, S. 214–216, 226–227
 McCauley, L. 170
 McEvenue, S. E. 7
 McLaren, J. S. 2, 27, 29, 41, 75, 90–91,
 110, 112, 115, 117, 123–124, 213
 Meier, J. M. 27
 Meir, O. 141, 150
 Melammed, E. Z. 159
 Mendels, D. 12, 24, 27, 32, 34, 64
 Meshorer, Y. 13, 24, 75, 99–102
 Mettinger, T. N. D. 30
 Meyers, C. L. 59

- Meyers, E. M. 59
 Middendorp, Th. 19
 Milik, J. T. 9, 45, 69–70, 146
 Millar, F. 6, 24, 26, 28, 37, 41, 49, 55–56, 62, 77, 87–88, 104, 109–110, 121–122, 126, 213, 227
 Miller, J. 80
 Mirsky, A. 165
 Moehring, H. R. 6
 Mor, M. 10, 119
 Morris, L. 120
 Munck, J. 90, 121, 123
 Murray, O. 10–12
- Naeh, S. 294
 Naveh, J. 304–305
 Neubauer, A. 272, 298
 Neusner, J. 1, 2, 73, 140, 148–149, 151, 155–157, 168, 173–174, 183, 185–187, 195, 207, 210, 212, 217, 221, 238, 240, 246, 268, 274, 278–279, 284–285, 293, 295, 299–300, 302, 306–310
 Newsom, C. 69
 Nickelsburg, G. W. E. 10, 13, 17, 48–49
 Niditch, S. 13
 Niese, B. 145
- Oehler, J. 116
 Olyan, S. M. 61
 Oppenheimer, A. 136, 139–140, 162, 164, 203, 244, 257–258, 268–269, 279
 Orrieux, C. 11–12, 19–20, 37–38, 85
- Payne Smith, R. 126–127
 Petersen, D. L. 59
 Pharr, C. 273
 Poland, F. 108
 Porten, B. 8
 Priest, J. 55
 Puech, E. 56
- Qimron, E. 82, 102–103
 Quasten, J. 131, 170–171
- Rabinovicz, R. 53, 164, 275, 286
 Rabello, A. M. 132, 282
 Rabin, C. 66–67, 102
 Rabinowitz, Z. W. 243, 247, 249, 269
 Rajak, T. 115
 Rappaport, S. J. 287
 Rappaport, U. 13, 24, 26, 28–29, 40, 74, 80, 100–102, 119, 213
- Redpath, H. 92–94
 Rengstorf, K. 25, 87, 109
 Reynolds, J. 136
 Rivkin, E. 106–107, 109, 117
 Rofé, A. 76
 Roll, I. 220
 Röllig, W. 56
 Rosenfeld, B.-Z. 132
 Rosenthal, E. S. 294–295
 Rosenthal, J. M. 298
 Roth, S. 1
 Roth-Gerson, L. 180
 Rubin, Z. 134
- Sachs, M. Y. L. 286
 Safrai, S. 35, 77, 88, 104, 139–140, 143, 164, 166–167, 183, 197–199, 206, 209–210, 260, 272
 Saldarini, A. 195, 216
 Sanders, E. P. 28, 78, 112
 Sandmel, S. 50
 Schäfer, P. 67, 183, 227
 Schalit, A. 26, 38, 145
 Schatzman, I. 37–38, 40
 Schiffer, I. 81
 Schiffman, L. 102–103
 Schlesinger, M. 286
 Schoedel, W. R. 51
 Schultess, F. 127, 258
 Schürer, E. 6, 24, 26, 28, 37, 41, 49, 55–56, 62, 67, 77–78, 80, 86–88, 104, 110, 126, 136, 213, 227
 Schwabe, M. 134, 145–146, 178, 180
 Schwartz, D. R. 12, 14, 24, 30, 40, 42–43, 49, 51–52, 75, 91, 215–216, 220, 222, 226–228, 230
 Schwartz, J. J. 197, 242, 244, 246, 250, 268–269
 Schwartz, S. 27–28, 176, 215, 218–226, 228
 Scott, R. 79
 Scullion, J. J. 159
 Segal, M. S. 20, 52, 92
 Sherk, R. 116
 Sicker, M. 1
 Sievers, J. 24, 54, 89
 Silberman, L. P. 57
 Skehan, P. 52, 92
 Smallwood, E. M. 28, 51, 91, 97, 110
 Smith, M. 219
 Sokoloff, M. 192, 259, 269, 275
 Sophocles, E.A. 94, 97
 Sperber, D. 81, 103, 139, 272

- Starcky, J. 66
 Stegemann, H. 74
 Stemberger, G. 104, 132, 136, 144,
 179–180, 273
 Sterling, G. E. 11–12, 34
 Stern, E. 7
 Stern, M. 10–12, 16–20, 26, 28, 33,
 36, 42, 79, 85–86, 90, 117–118,
 131, 134–137, 178, 199, 277
 Stone, M. E. 44, 45, 49
 Strack, H. 104, 264
 Strickert, F. M. 66, 68
 Strugnell, J. 69
 Sullivan, R. D. 56

 Talmon, S. 207
 Tannenbaum, R. 135–137
 Taubes, H. Z. 149
 Tcherikover, V. 11, 13–14, 17–19, 42,
 71, 85–86, 102, 109–110, 117–118
 Telfer, W. 171
 Thackeray, H. St. J. 33–34, 115,
 213–214
 Theodor, J. 141, 149, 158, 262
 Thornton, T. C. G. 134
 Tollet, D. 2
 Trifon, D. See Ben-Haim (Trifon), D.
 Trigg, J. W. 170
 Twersky, I. 278

 Urbach, E. E. 151–152, 161, 163–165,
 186–187, 195, 210, 213, 234, 306

 VanderKam, J. C. 47–49, 61, 74
 van der Kooij, G. 291
 van der Spek, R. J. 81

 Vermes, G. 6, 24, 26, 28, 37, 41, 49,
 55–56, 62, 77, 87–88, 104, 110, 126,
 213, 227
 Villalón, J. R. 71
 von Soden, W. 81

 Wacholder, B. Z. 34, 89, 99
 Walton, F. R. 11–12, 32, 37
 Weinfeld, M. 81
 Weiss, I. H. 210
 Westerman, C. 159
 Wewers, G. A. 293
 Whitehorne, J. E. G. 41
 Widengren, G. 8, 56
 Will, E. 11–12, 19–20, 37–38, 85
 Williams, F. 134, 143, 255
 Williams, M. H. 136
 Williamson, H. G. M. 35
 Winter, P. 110
 Wintermute, O. S. 47, 49
 Wise, M. O. 74
 Wolfson, H. A. 50–51, 183
 Worrell, J. 103
 Wright, W. 126–127, 137

 Yadin, Y. 95
 Yalon, H. 103
 Yavetz, W. 210

 Zahavy, T. 208, 247
 Zeitlin, S. 109, 153
 Zlotnick, D. 230
 Zucker, H. 105, 109, 210
 Zuntz, Y. L. 159, 298
 Zuri, Y. S. 288
 Zussman, Y. 230

Index of Names

R. = *rav* or *rabbi*. Names may appear in the text without the patronymic, e.g., Judah son of Il'ai often appears simply as Judah.

- Aaron, Aaronid 9, 20, 26, 36, 59, 61
- Abaye 301
- Abba son of Mar 'Uqban 300
- Abba Mari the exilarch 300–301, 305–306
- Abba Yosi son of Dostai 251, 253
- Abbahu 266
- Abtalyon 72
- R. Adda 300, 304
- R. Adda son of Ahava 203–204
- Africanus 131, 181
- Agrippa I 27, 29, 51, 65, 215, 219, 222, 227–228
- Agrippa II 109–110, 116, 118, 215, 219, 222–226, 228
- R. Aha 293
- Albinus 116
- Alexander of Macedon (“the Great”) 7, 10, 16, 19–20, 42, 79, 84
- Alexander son of Herod 109
- Alexander Balas 22
- Alexander Jonathan/Janneus/Yannai 23–24, 55, 74, 100–101, 112
- Alexander Severus 139
- Alexander, T. Iulius Iulianus 198
- Alexandria, Alexandrian, Alexandrians 40, 42–43, 50, 87, 91, 97, 131, 170, 220, 259, 277
- Alkimos 21–22
- Amariah the chief priest 60
- R. Ammi 292
- Ammon 8
- Amwas 118
- Annas the high priest 122–123
- Antioch at Jerusalem 18
- Antioch on the Orontes 97, 134
- Antiochus III 15–20, 85–87, 89, 97–98, 116
- Antiochus IV 17–18, 89, 91, 97–98
- Antiochus V 21, 91, 97–98
- Antipater father of Herod 113
- Antipater son of Herod 109
- Antipatris 262
- Antoninus 199
- Antoninus Pius 217
- Aphrodisias 136
- 'Aqavyah son of Nehemiah 304
- Aqiva 193, 197, 200, 204–205, 236, 239, 241–246, 259–264
- Aquila/Onkelos 82, 142, 188–189
- 'Aqva Mar 307
- Arcadius 134
- Archelaus 26, 29, 215, 219, 227
- Areus 84
- Arimathea 118
- Aristeas 13
- Aristeus of Emmaus 116, 118
- Aristobulus I/II See Judah Aristobulus I/II
- Aristobulus son of Herod 109
- Aristobulus the teacher of Ptolemy the King 89
- Artaxerxes 17–18
- Arruas 25, 36
- Asaph 18
- R. Ashi 302, 307–308
- Ashkelon 268–269
- R. Assi 295
- R. Assi/Yosi/Yosah 271, 296
- Assur 82
- Athens, Athenians 54, 116
- Augustus 39, 54, 219–220, 227, 277
- Avtolmos 243
- Babylon 7, 81
- Babylonia, Babylonian 2, 4, 30, 73, 81–83, 86, 108, 115, 140, 157–161, 180, 193, 203, 272, 277–311

- Bacchides [Seleucid official] 21
 Bagothi 8
 Bar Bahlul 127
 Bar Kokhb/va See Simeon son of Kosiba
 Batanea, Batanean, Bateneans 115
 Batera(h), Baterans 150–151, 185–186, 238
 Benjamin, Tribe of 149–150, 153–154, 280
 Benai Beraq 245
 Ben Sira 9, 19–20, 23, 60, 91–92
 Betar 256
 Bethel 55, 166
 Bethlehem 118
 Bet She'arim 145–146, 237
 al-Biruni 281
 Boaz 95
 Boethus son of Zonin 245
 Bukhri, Son of 240
 Bustanai 288, 297–298

 Caesarea 170, 198–199
 Caiaphas 122–123
 Cassius Dio 26, 117–118
 Cestius Gallus 71
 Chalcis 56
 Cilicia 134–136, 179
 Claudius 42, 116–117, 125, 219, 222
 Constantine 134, 138, 178, 180
 Cutha 81
 Cyril of Jerusalem 154, 170–172, 180–181
 Cyrus 18, 30

 Damascus 36–37, 42
 Dan [tribal eponym] 46
 Darius I 18, 30, 60
 Darius II 10
 R. Darosa 141
 David, Davidides, Davidic, House of
 David *passim*
 Delaiah 8
 Demetrius I 21–22
 Demetrius II 88
 Diocletian 133, 180, 199
 Diodorus of Sicily 10–11, 32, 34, 36–42, 79, 120, 128
 Domitian 219, 224
 R. Dosa 141
 R. Dosa son of Harkinas 194, 204–205
 R. Dostai son of Yannai 140–141, 212

 Egypt, Egyptian 8, 11, 13, 16, 32, 36, 41–42, 81, 83, 85, 90, 277

 Ein Tav 164
 Eldad 201
 Eleazar the high priest [Letter of
 Aristeas] 13
 Eleazar the priest [Second Revolt] 72
 Eleazar son of Aaron 9, 52, 59, 70, 96–97
 R. Eleazar/El'azar son of Azaryah 151, 195, 236, 241, 244–248, 250–253
 Eleazar son of Hanan 28
 R. Eleazar/El'azar son of Harsom 195
 R. Eleazar/El'azar son of Pedat 237, 270–271
 R. Eleazar/El'azar son of R. Saddoq 153, 189–190, 203
 R. Eleazar/El'azar son of Shammu'a 237–239, 262–263
 R. Eleazar/El'azar son of R. Simeon son
 of Yohai 261
 Eleazar/El'azar Hisma 244–245,
 Elephantine 8, 16, 42, 60, 78–80
 R. Eliezer [son of] Haqappar 268–270
 R. Eliezer son of Hyrcanus 195, 245–246
 R. Eliezer son of Jacob 257, 259, 262–263
 R. Eliezer son of R. Yosi the Galilean
 257–258, 263
 Emmaus 118
 Epiphanius 134–135, 140, 143, 172, 178–179, 212, 255, 273
 Essenes 38
 Esther 247–249
 Euphrates 203
 Eusebius 135, 142, 172, 179
 Ezekias the chief priest 12
 Ezekiel 58–59, 72
 Ezra 16, 18, 59, 193, 231

 Flavians 219–220
 Florus 116–117

 Gabinius 26, 110, 113, 119, 125, 127, 219
 Gader 196–197, 207
 Gaius Caligula 51, 65, 91, 219
 Galatia 135
 Galil/Galilee, Galilean 97, 109, 111, 114–115, 118–119, 133, 177, 182, 209, 213–214, 218, 222, 256–257, 260
 Gamali/Gemalli father of Ami'el 144
 Gamaliel I 143, 145, 152, 172, 187–188, 194, 210–214, 216, 229–230
 Gamaliel II 135, 142–143, 145, 151, 172, 174, 176–177, 182–183, 187–191, 193–213, 215–220, 222–227, 229–230, 236–245, 248–256, 260–261, 266

- Gamaliel III 136, 143–145, 152, 184, 188, 192, 266
 Gamaliel IV 143
 Gamaliel V 143
 Gamaliel VI 133, 143
 Gamaliel VII 133
 Gamalielean, Gamalieleans, Gamaliel, House of 131, 134, 138, 142–144, 146–147, 149, 152–153, 158, 164, 167–168, 172, 174–177, 182–187, 192–194, 205, 210, 218, 227–231, 278, 280–282, 294, 310
 R. Gamaliel son of R. Eliezer 146
 R. Gamaliel son of Nehemiah and father of R. Judah 146
 Gamaliel son of Pedahsur 144
 Gamla/Gamala 145
 Gamla/Gamala/Gamaliel father of Joshua 144–145
 Gamla/Gamala father of Shelamsiyyon 145
 Gamul 144
 Gaza 12
 Gevat 262
 Gezer 197, 207
 Gibeah 96
 Gischala 218
 Gorion son of Joseph 71, 213
 Gourion 71

 Haggai 58–59
 R. Haggai 248
 Hagrunya 203–204
 Hai son of Sherira 289, 300
 R. Halafta 247
 R. Hama son of Hanina 156
 Hamat 165
 Hammath Tiberias 179
 Hanan son of Hanan 28, 71, 109–110, 213–214, 225
 R. Hanan son of Rava 292
 R. Hananyah son of Hakinai 262–263, Hananyah son of Jonathan the nazirite 305
 R. Hanina(h) 156, 161, 243
 R. Hanina son of Gamaliel 145
 Hasdai son of Natronai 288–289
 Hasmonean, Hasmoneans 1–2, 4–6, 10, 15, 17, 22–26, 32, 36–37, 40, 47, 49, 51–55, 65, 73–75, 84, 88, 99–100, 103, 107, 112–113, 125, 128, 183, 185, 222, 227–228
 R. Hasub son of R. Pinhas 297–298
 Hatra 83

 Hecataeus of Abdera 10–12, 16, 23, 32–36, 38–43, 48–49, 78–80, 83
 Hegesippus 172
 Herod 23–24, 26–27, 29, 39, 51, 55, 65, 76, 109, 111–113, 116, 119, 125, 128, 171, 187, 215, 219, 222, 227–228, 282
 Herod of Chalcis 215
 Herodians 1, 6, 28–29, 73, 99, 112, 125, 128, 185, 215–216, 222–223, 227–228
 Hezekiah king of Judah 164
 Hilfai 269–270
 Hillel 72, 148–149, 151–153, 157–158, 168, 172, 174, 183–187, 193, 210–211, 217, 229, 241, 270, 281
 Hillel II 137, 143–144, 146
 Hillel father of Avdon 146
 R. Hillel father of R. Joshua 146
 Hillel son of Gamaliel III 152
 R. Hillel son of R. Levi 146
 R. Hinena of Sura 300
 R. Hisda 234, 292, 301–302
 R. Hiyya(h)/Hiyyah Rabbah/Hiyya the Elder 148–150, 154–157, 159–161, 164, 168–169, 173–174, 235–236, 280–281, 284, 297
 R. Hiyya son of Abba 164, 259–260, 264
 R. Hiyya son of Papa 164
 R. Hizqiyah 141, 235
 Hizqiyah son of R. Hiyya 150, 155–156, 159, 166, 282, 299
 R. Honeh 248–249
 Honorius 137
 R. Hosha'yah 248
 R. Huna 292
 Huna/Huneh the exilarch 149–150, 154, 168–169, 280, 284
 Huna son of Nathan 307–308
 R. Huspit (the “translator”) 247, 251
 Hyrcanus I/II see John Hyrcanus I/II
 Hyrcanus son of Joseph son of Tobiah 13, 15, 83, 86

 R. Il'ai/Il'a/La 151, 186, 252, 265, 271
 Isaac [the patriarch] 46–49, 55, 61, 64
 Isaac the exilarch 300, 305–306
 R. Isaac 265
 Ishmael son of Simeon son of Palata 305
 Isidore of Seville 282
 Italy 137
 Iudaea See Judah
 Iulus 137
 R. Ivya 263

- Jacob [the patriarch] 46, 48, 55, 61–62, 279
 R. Jacob son of Abaye 265
 R. Jacob son of Qorshai 194, 291
 R. Jacob son of Sisi 251
 James the brother of Jesus 109–110
 Janneus See Alexander Jonathan
 Jason/Joshua 17–18, 20–21, 98
 Jehoshaphat 60
 Jericho 115
 Jerome 135, 142, 171–172, 174
 Jerusalem *passim*
 Jesus 27, 120–122, 124–125, 172, 282
 Jezreel 41
 Joakim the high priest 10
 Johanna granddaughter of Theophilus 305
 John of Ephesus 126–127
 John of Gischala 213–214, 225
 John father of Eupolemus 16, 86
 John son of Zebedee 123
 John Chrysostom 137
 John Hyrcanus I 23–24, 53–55, 75, 100–101
 John Hyrcanus II 23–26, 36–37, 52–55, 100–101, 109–111, 113–114, 128, 219, 228
 R. Jonathan 247–248
 Jonathan son of Mattathias the Has-monean 9, 16, 20, 22, 87–89, 97–98
 Joseph [son of the patriarch Jacob] 2, 46
 R. Joseph 303
 Joseph the *comes* 134–136, 172, 178–179, 196, 255, 273
 Joseph of Arimathea 117–118, 124
 Joseph son of Gorion 71
 Joseph son of Tobiah 13–15, 20, 40, 42, 83
 Josephus Flavius 8–10, 23, 25, 27–28, 30–31, 33–43, 49, 54, 71, 73, 78–79, 83, 86–89, 91–92, 94–95, 97, 101, 108–119, 124–125, 129, 145, 213–216, 218, 221–223, 225–226, 248
 R. Joshua son of Elisha 247
 Joshua son of Gamla/Gamala/Gamaliel 145, 213–214, 225, 263
 R. Joshua son of Hananyah/Hananiah 191, 194, 198, 200, 204–208, 211–212, 244–247, 251, 253, 270
 R. Joshua son of Levi 248
 Joshua son of Nun 52, 59, 70, 95–97
 Joshua son of Perahyah 72
 R. Joshua son of Qorhah 240
 Joshua son of Yehosadaq 58–59, 74
 Josiah 161, 303
 Judah [tribal eponym] 44–48, 55, 61–64, 66
 Judah [territory] *passim*
 Judah I 133, 135–136, 139–145, 147–164, 167–169, 172–175, 177–178, 183–184, 186–195, 199–200, 206–208, 210, 212, 229–232, 239, 243, 245–246, 260, 266, 268–269, 271, 280–281, 284, 291, 295, 297
 Judah II 135–136, 139–140, 141–143, 146, 149, 192, 266, 295
 Judah III 133, 140, 143, 149, 192, 199, 266, 295
 Judah IV 133, 143
 Judah, Mar 307–308
 R. Judah the Baker 199–197, 207
 Judah the Maccabee 22, 89
 R. Judah [grand]son of Pazzi 206
 R. Judah son of Bava 246, 263
 R. Judah son of Hanina 265
 Judah son of R. Hiyya 150, 154–156, 159, 166, 282, 299
 R. Judah son of Il'ai 154, 185, 187, 197, 207, 211–212, 229, 240, 242, 245, 257–259, 262–264
 Judah son of Tabbai 72
 R. Judah son of Yehezqel 165, 167, 186, 263, 271, 284, 292
 Judah Aristobulus I 23–24, 55, 100
 Judah Aristobulus II 25–26, 36–37, 100–101, 219, 228
 Julian 136, 178–180
 Julius Caesar 26, 110, 219
 Justin II 127
 Justinian 275
 R. Kahana 271–272, 290
 Kehath/Qehat 44–45
 Kinneret 165
 R. La See R. Il'ai
 ibn Lahi'a 310
 Larsa 81
 R. Leazar son of Yoseh 141
 Levi [tribal eponym] 44–49, 55, 61–64, 66
 R. Levi 148–149, 164, 169
 Libanius 134–135, 178–179
 Livy 110
 Lod/Lyddā 118, 164, 197, 241–245, 247, 250
 Luz 165–166
 Lysimachus brother of Menelaus 21

- Macedonia, Macedonian, Macedonians 1,
 9–10, 12, 16, 18, 54, 110
 Maimonides 189, 246, 277–278, 281
 Maremar 307
 Mariamme/Miriam 109, 222
 Mark Antony 219
 Mattathias Antigonus 23–25, 100, 111,
 113, 219
 Medad 201
 Media 279
 R. Me'ir 154, 185, 187, 190, 192, 194,
 229, 257, 259, 261–264
 Melchizedek 24, 50, 52, 55
 Menasheh brother of the high priest 9
 Menahem 72
 Menelaus 17–18, 20–21, 89–90, 98
 Midian 93
 Moab 93
 Mordecai 247–250,
 59–61, 67, 70, 93, 96, 108, 114,
 128, 144, 193, 201, 204, 248, 279
 Murabba'at 146

 R. Nahman son of Isaac 300
 R. Nahman son of Jacob 163, 165, 167,
 292–293
 Nahshon 165, 167–168,
 R. Natan 192, 194, 289, 291
 Nathan of *susita* 303
 Nebi Samwil 118
 Nehardea 203, 292
 Nehemiah 5, 249
 R. Nehemiah 148–149, 257–259,
 262–264
 Nehemiah the exilarch 301–306
 Nehora, Mar 307–308
 R. Nehorai 267
 Nero 219
 Nicolaus of Damascus 128
 Nikaso 9
 Nisibis 304
 Nittai of Arbel 72

 Octavian 219
 Onias I 84
 Onias II 14–15, 20, 42, 84
 Onias III 15, 20–21
 Onias IV 13
 Onkelos See Aquila/Onkelos
 Origen 131, 138, 141, 160, 170–174,
 181–182, 281
 Ostanos brother of 'Anani 8, 16, 60

 Palatya from Jerusalem 307
 Palladius 135, 142
 R. Papa 156
 R. Pappias 191, 198, 200
 Parthia, Parthian, Parthians 24, 299
 Paul 121, 124, 135, 153, 213
 Pazzi 268, 270
 Peroz 306
 Peretz 167
 Persia, Persian, Persians 1, 5–10, 18,
 26, 29–31, 35, 39, 56, 58–60, 74–83,
 99, 128, 227, 249–250, 274
 Peter 123–124, 212
 Petronius 91
 Pharisee, Pharisees, Pharisaic 24, 28,
 38, 74–75, 106–107, 112–113, 120,
 123–124, 127–128, 195, 212–214,
 216–217, 223, 225–228
 Pherora 109
 Philo 2, 50–52, 65, 87, 91, 97, 108, 220,
 277
 Phinehas 9
 Phoenicia 9, 15, 17, 21, 91
 Pilate 121, 122
 R. Pinhas son of Ya'ir 268–270
 Pollion 73, 111–113
 Pompeius Trogus 25–26, 35–36
 Pompey 36–40, 42, 65, 74, 108, 219
 Porphyry 20, 86
 Posidonius 128
 Priscianus 134, 178
 Ptolemies, Ptolemaic 5–6, 10, 12–15,
 19–20, 23, 41, 83–87, 99, 128, 277
 Ptolemy I 12, 42
 Ptolemy II Philadelphus 13, 17, 51,
 83
 Ptolemy III or IV 14
 Ptolemy IV 84
 Ptolemy son of Thraseas 15, 85, 87
 Pumbedita 272, 285, 288–289

 Qarna 293–294
 el-Qubeibeh 118
 Qumran 43–44, 52, 57, 61, 66–72, 76,
 82, 102, 221

 Rabbah 166, 279, 302–304, 306
 ar-Ram 118
 Ramathaim 118
 Raphia 84
 Raqat 165–166
 Rashi 82, 155, 162–163, 165, 189, 258,
 285

- Rav [Abba Arikha] 147–148, 150, 156,
 161–164, 168–169, 174, 186, 246,
 263–264, 284, 294–295, 301–303
 Rava 165–166, 279, 300, 302–304
 Rava son of Sheva 290
 Ravin 301
 Ravina 300
 Raymund Martini 163
 Reuben [tribal eponym] 46
 Rimmon valley 256, 259–260, 263–264
 Rome, Roman, Romans *passim*
 Rufinus 170
 Ruth 95
- Sa'adyah 246
 Sadducees 38, 124, 227
 R. Safra 159, 281
 Salem 52
 Salome wife of Hananyah 305
 Salome Alexandra 24, 26, 128, 216
 Samaia 24, 73, 111–113
 Samaria 8–9, 15, 17
 Samaritans 221
 Samuel [the *amora*] 243–244, 257, 271,
 284–287, 293–295, 302–303, 306
 R. Samuel 266
 Samuel, Mar 308
 Samuel the Small 201–202,
 R. Samuel son of Nahmani 147–148
 Sanballat 8–9
 Sasanian, Sasanians 290, 297, 299, 306,
 310
 Saul 30
 Seleucid, Seleucids 5–6, 10, 12, 15–16,
 19–22, 37, 81, 83–87, 98–99, 128
 Semah son of Solomon 288–289
 Sepphoris 180, 218, 237, 247, 270
 Severus disciple of the patriarchs 179–181
 Shammai 72, 152, 184–185, 210, 241
 Shapur I 306
 Shapur II 304, 306
 Shefar'am 237, 263
 Shefatyah son of Avital 148, 155, 168
 Shelemiah 8
 Shemayah 72
 Sherira 150, 154, 272, 276, 285–286,
 288–289, 300, 306–309
 R. Sheshet 265
 Shila 295
 Shiqmona 180
 R. Shizbi 301
 Shizpar 197, 200
 Silo 24
- Sidon 56
 Simeon the Temple Administrator 21, 153
 Simeon son of Azzai 244–245
 Simeon son of Gamaliel I 143, 145, 152,
 172, 187–188, 194, 210–216, 225, 229
 Simeon son of Gamaliel II 143, 151,
 172–175, 177, 182–183, 188, 192–197,
 202, 206–207, 210, 212, 229–230, 233,
 235–237, 256, 259–261, 265–267, 289,
 292
 Simeon son of Giora 29, 117
 Simeon son of Judah [son of Rabbi] 144
 Simeon son of Kosiba (Bar Kokhb/va)
 72–73, 174, 183, 185, 192, 218,
 228–229, 232, 235, 256, 258–259
 R. Simeon son of Laqish (Resh Laqish)
 141, 193, 248, 264–265
 Simeon son of Mattathias the Hasmo-
 nean 9, 22, 53–54, 75, 88, 99, 101
 R. Simeon son of Nanas 243–244
 R. Simeon son of Pazzi 269–270
 Simeon son of Shetah 72, 112
 R. Simeon son of Yohai 235, 245, 257,
 259, 261–264
 Simeon son of Yohanan/Onias II 9, 15,
 19–20
 R. Simlai 156
 Sinai 35
 Sparta, Spartans 9, 80, 84, 87–89, 92,
 97–98
 Stephen 124
 Stobi 137
 Strabo 25–26, 131, 277
 Syria, Syrian Syrians 12, 15, 17, 19–21,
 25, 86, 91, 110, 191, 197–200, 207–208,
 220, 240
- Tabnit 56
 Tacitus 25
 R. Tanhum son of Jeremiah 299
 R. Tarfon 195, 236, 241–246
 Tarsus 153
 Tattenai 18
 Tennes 9
 Theodore 171
 Theodosius I 133–134
 Theodosius II 137
 Theophanes of Mytilene 42
 Tiberias, Tiberians 138–139, 144,
 165–166, 218, 237, 270–271, 297
 Tiro 115
 Titus 117, 224
 Tobiah 8

- Trans–Euphrates satrapy 17–18,
Tyre 10, 89
- Ulla 266
- ‘Uqba, Mar 272, 284–290, 308
- ‘Uqba, Rabbana 301–302
- ‘Uqban son of Nehemiah 302–306
- Uruk 81
- Usha 237, 256–257, 261–267
- Yaddua/Jaddua/Jaddus the high priest
19–20
- Yannai the King See Alexander Jonathan
- R. Yannai 148–149, 154, 162, 211–212
- Yannai father of R. Dostai 212, 229
- Yavneh [Jamnia] 116, 118, 189–190,
197, 203–204, 208, 217, 223, 226,
237–242, 246–247, 249–251, 253–256,
258, 264–265, 269
- Yazdagird I 306
- Yehi’el of Rome, author of the *‘Arukha*
162, 165, 258
- Yehizqiyah the Governor 9
- Yeho’ezer son of Qallon 145
- Yehohanan the high priest 8, 60
- Yehoyakhin 73, 297–299
- R. Yehudah See R. Judah son of Yehezqel
- R. Yeshevav 247
- R. Yirmiyah 166, 247
- R. Yishaq son of Yosef 139
- R. Yishma’el 241, 246
- R. Yishma’el son of R. Yohanan son of
Baroqa 241
- R. Yishma’el son of R. Yosi 160, 169,
234, 268–271
- Yohana, Mar 307–308
- Yohanan the Priest 9, 12
- R. Yohanan Hasandlar 259, 262–263
- R. Yohanan son of Baroqa 244
- R. Yohanan son of Joshua 244
- R. Yohanan son of Nappaha 156, 192,
237, 249, 251, 256, 264, 266, 271–272
- R. Yohanan son of Nuri 204, 243,
245–247
- Yohanan son of Zakkai 151–152, 193,
211, 221, 224–225, 237–240, 246, 250
- R. Yonah 259
- R. Yonatan 147–148
- R. Yosi the Galilean 206, 241–244, 246
- R. Yosi son of R. (A)bun 150, 251, 280,
283
- R. Yosi son of the Damascene 244
- R. Yosi son of Halaftha 107, 148–149, 206,
235, 257–259, 262–265
- R. Yosi son of Hanina 265
- R. Yosi son of Judah 243
- R. Yosi son of Kipper 140
- Yosi son of Yoezer 72
- Yosi son of Yohanan 72
- R. Yosi/Yosah son of Zavida 206, 296
- R. Yosi son of Zimra 155
- R. Yudan See R. Judah son of Il’ai
- Zachariah son of Baris 115, 123
- Zealot, Zealots 71, 115, 203
- Zechariah 58–60
- Zedekiah 161
- R. Ze’ira 239
- Zenon 13
- Zenon the “attendant” 251
- R. Zera 164, 166, 270
- Zerubbabel 58–60, 74, 298–299
- Zutra, Mar [a master] 300
- Zutra, Mar [fifth century exilarch] 307
- Zutra, Mar [sixth century exilarch] 274,
297–298
- Zutra, Mar [son of the above] 274–276,
297–298