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Jews in Ancient Civic Life

GARY GILBERT¹

WRITING IN THE EARLY SECOND CENTURY CE, THE ROMAN HISTORIAN Tacitus sets pen to parchment to chronicle the history of the empire in the second half of the first century CE. Along the way he recounts the events of the First Jewish Revolt against Rome (66–73 CE). Book five of his *Histories* begins at the point where the Roman general and later emperor Titus has pitched his camp outside the walls of Jerusalem. In order that his readers might gain a better appreciation of the people about to be conquered, Tacitus embarks upon a lengthy digression in which he discusses the origins of the Jewish people, their rites and customs, the topography of their land, and finally a brief primer on the political history of Judea, starting with Macedonian conquest in the fourth century BCE down to the outbreak of the war and the initial Roman successes under the leadership of Vespasian. Following his review, Tacitus returns to the narrative of the battle itself, noting in particular the robust defensive features of the city, the composition of the rebel forces, and a series of prodigies that foretold doom for the people and their city (*Hist.* 5.1–13). The digression in his narrative of Roman history offers one of the most sustained surviving presentations about Jews proffered by a non-Jewish author.²

Throughout this passage, Tacitus has little good to say about Jews as a people. Their capital, Jerusalem, may have been famous and their land fertile, but their character garners only contempt. Jews are a people hateful [*invisum*] to the gods (*Hist.* 5.3.1). Their religious practices are contrary to the accepted sacred and valued norms (*Hist.* 5.4.1). Their customs are base and repulsive [*sinistra foeda*], and they themselves are prone to lust [*libidinem*] (*Hist.* 5.5.1–2). The ways of the Jews are absurd and sordid [*absurdus sordidusque*] (*Hist.* 5.5.5). In the midst of this account, Tacitus takes pains to point out how Jews keep to themselves and apart from non-Jews. They do not dine with others, nor do they marry persons outside their ranks. The practice of circumcision exists only to provide a visual means to distinguish between themselves and others. Based on these qualities, Tacitus concludes that, “Jews are extremely loyal toward one another, and always ready to show compassion, but toward every other people they feel only hate and enmity” (*Hist.* 5.5.1).

Tacitus is hardly the first or the last ancient author to present Jews in such a light. Greek and Latin writers had long characterized Jews as unsocial and intolerant. This was particularly the case for authors living in Rome or associated with its political and social elite. Early in the first century BCE, the rhetorician Apollonius Molon, a native of Rhodes but highly respected in Roman society, is said to have lambasted the Jews, “for declining to associate with those who have chosen to adopt a different mode of life.”³ A short time later, Pompeius Trogus, a Roman citizen originally from Gaul (France), attributes to Jews a rule that they will have no communication with strangers.⁴ Juvenal, a contemporary of Tacitus, offers a satiric take on the theme of unsociability when he says that such customs even prevent Jews from pointing “out the way to any person not worshipping the same rites.”⁵

Similar caricatures continued in the following centuries. Philostratus, writing in the third century CE, recounts a speech attributed by the philosopher Euphrates who rebukes Vespasian, at the time a Roman general, for not using the resources at his disposal to overthrow Nero, but rather for squandering his military power to fight against the Jews, who “cut themselves off long ago, not only from the Romans, but from all humankind,” a people who “have devised an unsociable way of life, with no meals, libations, prayers, or sacrifices in common with others.”⁶ Writing around the same time, Cassius Dio describes Jews as being “distinguished from the rest of humankind in practically every detail of life, and especially by the fact that they do not honor any of the usual gods.”⁷ Indeed, the depiction of Jews as people noted for their unsociability and often antagonism toward others is a common thread woven throughout the Greek and Latin writings from antiquity.⁸

While Tacitus’s comments place him in good company, it is the vehemence with which he ties together the themes of unsociability and enmity against others that sets him apart.⁹ Scholars have attempted to understand and explain the reasons and purpose for this presentation. Most have concluded that Tacitus writes out of his own ignorance, prejudice, and hostility toward Jews.¹⁰ Tacitus may have disliked Jews because they, particularly those living in Rome, were of a lowly class, slaves or only recently manumitted, or because they attempted to bring undue influence into Roman society or just because their practices were strange, illogical, or perverse.¹¹ A different assessment of Tacitus’s intent has been proposed by Erich Gruen, who argues that while Tacitus “undoubtedly shared the preconceptions and misgivings of many Romans before, during, and after his time [he] did not compose the excursus on the Jews to effect a denunciation and intellectual demolition of that people.”¹² Rather, Gruen posits, Tacitus deployed his oft-used literary device of irony to “put on display the skills of the cunning and cynical writer, who professed to inform his readers but in fact teased and toyed with them.”¹³

I am not sure ironic is the best way to describe Tacitus's presentation of Jews. I do acknowledge, however, that much of what Tacitus has to say about Jews is neither inaccurate nor necessarily anti-Jewish. When Tacitus describes Jews as setting themselves apart from others and having a tendency to worship differently, dine separately, and marry amongst themselves, he is being neither false nor disparaging nor even ironic. Jews themselves not only acknowledged, but in some instances celebrated such practices.¹⁴ In the words of the second-century BCE Jewish writer Pseudo-Aristeas, Jews have created unbreakable barriers and iron walls to prevent their mixing with any other peoples.¹⁵ Josephus, the Jewish historian who lived in Rome and who may or may not have crossed paths with Tacitus, admits that Jews will often avoid dealings with others, but contextualizes such exclusivity by noting that self-isolation is unexceptional, indeed it is "common to all, and shared not only by Greeks, but by Greeks of the highest reputation."¹⁶

Philo, the Jewish philosopher and a leader in the Alexandrian Jewish community in the early part of the first century CE, offers a different type of response. He rejects the accusation and turns the charge of misanthropy on its head, arguing that what appear as distinctive Jewish practices are in fact the epitome of theological and social universalism: "And therefore it astonishes me to see that some people venture to accuse of inhumanity [*apantropian*] the nation [i.e., Jews] which has shown so profound a sense of fellowship and goodwill to all men everywhere, by using its prayers and festivals and first-fruit offerings as a means of supplication for the human race in general and of making its homage to the truly existent God in the name of those who have evaded the service which it was their duty to give, as well as of itself."¹⁷

Tacitus was not wrong, although his opinions and the language he uses to express them are often harsh and derogatory. His portrait of Jewish lifestyles, however, is incomplete. By focusing on the ways in which Jews separate themselves from and avoid certain types of activities with non-Jews, he presents a highly selective description of their behavior and in so doing has created a misleading and as a result disparaging image of Jews. While the literary record produced in antiquity by writers such as Tacitus frequently contain images of Jews as detached from the larger society and even misanthropic, a different sort of record, namely material remains mostly obtained through archaeological fieldwork, offers a strikingly different perspective. This vast corpus of information, most notably in the form of inscriptions, shows us Jews, particularly in urban settings, who neither set themselves apart nor expressed any hostility toward the social and cultural norms of their times.

To the contrary, these Jews were deeply engaged with the various institutions that were central to affairs in an ancient city. In the remainder of this paper I wish to review the side of Jewish life that Tacitus omits, a side that was equally as representative

of Jewish life and identity as the more distinctive practices cited in the literary record. I focus largely on Jewish life in the Diaspora, although some of the same points could be made about Jews in Roman Palestine, as is suggested by the famous story of Rabban Gamliel visiting the public bathhouse in the city of Akko (m. Abod. Zar. 3.1).¹⁸ I end by bringing together both the literary and material record for what I hope to present a more nuanced presentation of Jewish life in the Roman period.

JEWS IN CIVIC LIFE

Any study of Jews and Jewish life in the Roman period, from approximately 100 to 400 CE, immediately encounters a puzzling reality. Jews living outside Roman Palestine produced no literary works, with only a few possible exceptions, at least none that have survived from antiquity.¹⁹ This dearth of literary output becomes all the more recognizable and poignant when one remembers that in the centuries leading up to this period Jews living in the Diaspora had been rather prolific, producing a sizeable corpus of writings.²⁰ I will leave it to others to explain this development.

Whatever the reasons, Jews during this period did produce a considerable amount of material objects, from large architectural structures to small, personal items. Among this body of material are over 1,500 inscriptions, supplemented by hundreds of documents written on papyrus. These materials have been found at ancient sites that were once home to thriving Jewish communities. The texts, composed overwhelmingly in Greek and Latin, provide us with invaluable information about Jews living in various regions of the Roman Empire, and particularly in urban settings. At the same time, they also come with significant limitations and pose serious methodological challenges. These texts were written over the course of several centuries, mostly 100–400 CE, strewn across the Mediterranean region, from Spain to Syria, and often exist today as the result of chance survival and serendipitous discovery. The information they provide is largely anecdotal, a snapshot in time. Most of them were written at one of two moments in a person's life, when they died and when they donated money. Some texts offer insight into a person's family, deeds, thoughts, or values, but in most instances we know very little about the individuals or the communities in which they lived.

On occasion, we cannot even be absolutely sure that the person mentioned in a particular inscription was actually a Jew.²¹ This paper is not the place to address these substantive issues. Knowing full well the limitations involved, I will nonetheless proceed to draw on this material to develop a portrait of Jewish life that shows Jews actively engaged in civic life during the Roman period. The types of activities in which Jews participated were themselves varied, and no doubt varied somewhat based on time and location. Jews could be found on the battlefield, frequenting theaters and other

entertainment venues as spectators, supporters, and performers, serving as members or supporters of craft guilds, being educated in the gymnasia, the institution where young men prepared for demands of civic life, and on occasion participating in civic religious institutions and festivals. While each one of these forms of civic engagement deserves attention, I will focus on those instances where Jews served as civic officials and in other ways made actual or presumed contributions to the life and welfare of the cities in which they lived.²²

One of the common, if perhaps unexpected, ways in which Jews participated in civic life was through the holding of municipal or imperial offices. Although in most cases we cannot know the precise activities that these individuals performed, it stands to reason that these Jews worked alongside non-Jews, aided both individuals and the broader communities, and in general contributed to the functioning of the cities and empire.²³ We possess a few examples of this type of activity already in the Hellenistic and early imperial periods (roughly 300 BCE–100 CE). Papyri from Egypt supplemented by a few literary references reveal Jews who functioned as official tax collectors, police officers, and secretaries, and possibly even advisors to the Ptolemaic kings, all part of the state apparatus.²⁴ In the late Ptolemaic period, which ended with the reign of Cleopatra VII (d. 30 BCE), one Onias served as secretary or scribe in the royal court.²⁵ In the city of Alexandria, one of the largest urban centers of its time, two wealthy and notable Jews, Alexander, the brother of famous philosopher Philo, and Demetrius, served as *alabarch* or customs superintendent,²⁶ while other Jews served as river guardians.²⁷ In Cyrene, a city in North Africa, Eleazar the son of Jason was one of the city's *nomophulakes* and thus was responsible for the recording and proper administration of the city's laws.²⁸

As we move into the third century CE and later, the recorded instances of Jews who assumed civic posts increases significantly. This rise in numbers can be explained in part by Emperor Caracalla's decision in 212 CE to grant citizenship to all free men of the empire, and legislation adopted around this same time permitted Jews to hold public office in a manner such that they "would not transgress their religion [*superstitionem*]."²⁹ This latter privilege was critical, since serving in an official post often required participation in local religious activities, including rituals associated with pagan cults.³⁰ Whatever the cause, the more frequent mention of Jews in public office occurs at a time when there was an overall decline in epigraphic production, part of the "epigraphic habit" of Roman antiquity, and thus reflects a real change in Jewish life.³¹

Jews, particularly those living in the urban sites of Asia Minor, took advantage of these opportunities to climb "through the ranks of municipal service to become municipal magistrates . . . and even *defensores civitatis* and patrons of their cities."³² By the middle of the third century, we begin to find Jews serving in a variety of municipal and also imperial positions. In the mid-third century CE, a Jew served as the *praepositus*

stationis, an official in charge of a custom's post, in the province of Pannonia, located roughly in the present regions of eastern Austria and western Hungary.³³ Jews served as an *archiatros*, official municipal doctor, one in second-century Ephesus and fifth-century Italian city of Venosa.³⁴ In the late fourth or early fifth century, two Jews of Side in the south-central region of Asia Minor known as Pamphylia held the post of *zugostates* and so were responsible for ensuring the value of the coinage used there.³⁵ In Sardis, a Jew served as an assistant in the record office.³⁶ In the first half of the third century, two persons from Acmonia, in the Phrygian region of Asia Minor, Aurelius Phrourgianus and Tiberius Flavius Alexander, assumed various magistracies, including the *agoranomia* [oversight of the market], *sitionia* [supervision of the grain supply], and *strategia* [civic administrator]; the titles place these two men among the elite members of the city.³⁷

Other possible Diaspora cases include Jews in the city of Apollonia in Pisidia, in central Asia Minor, who may have held various although here unspecified magistracies.³⁸ Finally, we find several Jews serving as the leading officers in their respective cities.³⁹ We have examples from several cities in Asia Minor, particularly the major western Anatolian city of Sardis where nine persons who donated funds to the synagogue served as city councilors.⁴⁰ I will have more to say about these individuals at the end of this chapter. Finally, in the southern Italian city of Venosa, several Jews were identified as father or patron of the city, or *maiores civitatis*, the latter often serving as an honorary title of the highest order designating the most prominent notables of a city or a community.⁴¹

Jews assumed important positions not only in cities, but also in the administration of the empire itself, and here I will expand my scope to include several examples of Jews living in late Roman Palestine. Elite and often well-connected Jews attained equestrian and senatorial status, in the latter case most famously bestowed on the patriarch, the Jewish leader who supervised the appointing of judges, collecting of taxes, and other official duties in Jewish communities mostly in Roman Palestine but perhaps beyond.⁴² As examples of actual posts rather than honorary titles we find a Jew in Sardis who served as an assistant in the imperial archives.⁴³ Jews appear to have held the post of executive agent [*agentes in rebus*], and in this position would have carried out a variety of responsibilities in the imperial administration.⁴⁴ Jews who held the title of *comes* appear in Sardis and also locations in Roman Palestine, such as Haifa, Hammath Gader, and possibly Sepphoris.⁴⁵ Two Jews held the title of *palatinus*, including Julianus buried in Beth Shearim, and Theodotos, a member of the Jewish community of the city of Aphrodisias in Asia Minor.⁴⁶ On rare occasion, Jews may have been appointed as prefect or procurator, the chief provincial administrator. Certainly, the most famous example of a Jew to occupy such an office was Tiberius Julius Alexander, who served as prefect of both Judea and Egypt, although whether or not he still identified himself as

a Jew is open to question.⁴⁷ In one last example, one of the donors to the Sardis synagogue, Aurelius Basileides, served as a former procurator [*apo epitropon*], which might reference an actual office but could also be an honorary title.⁴⁸

JEWS IN APHRODISIAS

In addition to serving in official positions, Jews also served their communities in other ways. One example comes from Aphrodisias, a city that had a well-established and active Jewish community. We do not know when Jews first came to Aphrodisias, although this region of Asia Minor had been a home to many Jews at least since the second century BCE.⁴⁹ The record of this community includes several short inscriptions and graffiti, and one very important inscription discovered in 1976. A rectangular stone, three meters in height, presents writing in Greek on two sides. One side contains a list of eighteen names of persons who appear to have been members of a group referring to itself as the *dekania*. Most of those individuals bear recognizable Jewish names, such as Jael, Samuel, Benjamin, and Judah. The other side consists of two lists of names, a group of Jews in the upper portion⁵⁰ and after a short break a list headed by the designation “those who are God-fearers.” It then proceeds to record the names of fifty-two persons, almost certainly non-Jews given that none bears a biblical name and only one carries a name also frequently used by Jews. At the head of this list are nine men identified as city councilors [*bouletes*].⁵¹

Like many Jewish inscriptions from this period, the Aphrodisias inscription is both fascinating and frustrating. Many questions remain, the answers to which are unknown or uncertain. When was it written? What is the relation between writing found on the different sides of the stone? Where was the inscription displayed? The following discussion focuses on the first side of the stone and thus avoids the complicated and ultimately uncertain interpretation of the relationship between the two sides. While acknowledging the difficulties in establishing how this text came to be and what activities it references, I include it here as an example of Jewish participation in civic life.⁵² Here is what I believe we might glean from this text. At some time, perhaps in late fourth or early fifth centuries, the Jewish community, led by its *prostates* Jael, formed a *dekania* to provide relief from suffering [*apenthesia*].⁵³ Among those listed as members of the group are two non-Jews, designated by the term *theosebēs*. It is also worthy of note that there are also three persons who are identified as converts [*proselutos*]. The relatively large number of converts suggests a Jewish community that is attractive to non-Jews and open to their inclusion. Further investigation on this suggestion, however, is the subject of another paper.

The text does not explain what type of suffering was involved or precisely how the *dekania* addressed it. Based both on internal indicators and also the general context of alimentary programs of the period, the most likely explanation would be that this Jewish organization provided food aid, most probably in the form of grain, the most common and important food staple in antiquity, and particularly in times of shortage.⁵⁴ Even less certain, however, are the intended recipients of this aid. The inscription identifies them only as a *plethos*, which can best be translated as the *masses* or the *people*.⁵⁵ The term could be meant as a reference to the Jewish people of Aphrodisias, as argued by Joyce Reynolds and Robert Tannenbaum, who published the inscription.⁵⁶ It could equally be the case, and I believe even more likely, that the *dekania* had in mind the broader community of Aphrodisias, both Jews and non-Jews.⁵⁷ In short, the *dekania* did not restrict its relief activities to members of the Jewish community, but offered its assistance to all inhabitants of Aphrodisias.

The Jewish association's decision to offer food aid to the community may have been motivated by the ethical values they learned from the Bible and also promoted among contemporary rabbis.⁵⁸ Two early rabbinic collections, the Mishnah and Tosefta compiled in the third century CE, record traditions that promote assistance to the poor, including food relief, performed without regard to ethnic or religious boundaries. The Tosefta in particular instructs that Jews who find themselves "in a city where there are Jews and gentiles, the administrators of the charity collect from Jews and from gentiles for the sake of peace; they distribute to the poor of the gentiles along with the poor of the Jews for the sake of peace."⁵⁹ This is not to say that the Jews of Aphrodisias were in contact with the rabbinic community in Roman Palestine or knew of the specific teachings recorded in their collections, only that providing food assistance to those beyond the Jewish community was an accepted, even honored, social convention among Jews at the time. Whatever the motivation, the Jewish propensity for providing food relief was apparently sufficiently widespread by the fourth century CE to prompt the Roman Emperor Julian to comment that "no Jew ever has to beg (for food)."⁶⁰

Ensuring an adequate supply of food or addressing the problems created by shortages when they invariably occurred was oftentimes the responsibility of specific civic officials, such as those who oversaw the *sitionia*.⁶¹ It may have been the case that the *dekania* in Aphrodisias was attempting to augment such public efforts or may even have been established to compensate for the lack of a municipally administered system of food relief in Aphrodisias.⁶² While this conclusion is admittedly speculative, it does help to explain why two non-Jews would have participated in this association and also possibly why, now turning to the second side of the inscription, a very large number of non-Jews, also identified as *thesebes*, including several members of the city council, joined with the *dekania* by supporting and perhaps contributing financially to its activities.⁶³ If I am correct, then we have a case in which a Jewish organization,

supported by non-Jews, provided a much-needed civic program that benefited the entire community of Aphrodisias.

The *dekania's* actions are in some respects unexceptional. Private individuals and associations, such as the *dekania*, often contributed to civic projects. For instance, an association of tailors in the Lydian city of Thyatira paid for the construction of the city's gate and porticos,⁶⁴ while the silversmiths in Smyrna repaired the statue of Athena.⁶⁵ In a vein more befitting an act of charity, a college of purple dyers from Hierapolis in Phrygia established a program to aid poor children.⁶⁶ Another society, this one in Amisus in Pontus, appears to have acted at times in support of the indigent.⁶⁷

Moreover, individual Jews as well are known to have contributed to civic projects. From the ruins of the theater in Iasos come numerous inscriptions listing donations made for the festival of Dionysus. The list of donors includes a Jew, Niketas, who donated one hundred drachmas, the standard amount contributed by other resident aliens in the city.⁶⁸ In another example from the first half of the second century CE, a group of Jews presented the Ionian city of Smyrna with a gift of one thousand drachmas for a building program.⁶⁹ These Jews kept good company; several of the city's leading men and women, such as local administrators and organizers of religious and athletic institutions, made similar contributions. All of these examples come from Asia Minor and thus in relative geographic proximity to Aphrodisias. With this as the context in which to place the actions of the Jewish community of Aphrodisias, we can reasonably conclude that the *dekenia*, like other private associations and individual Jews elsewhere, sought to benefit their community, and in this instance created an alimentary program, funded by Jews and non-Jews, that provided assistance to the people of their city, both Jews and non-Jews.

CONCLUSION

As should be clear by now, the examples drawn from the material record at the very least complicate if not dispel the otherwise largely one-sided depictions found in many literary presentations, such as in the writings of Tacitus. Rather than witnessing a people who were aloof, prone to separation, or even misanthropic, we find Jews who not only spoke the language of their communities, in most cases Greek, but lived alongside and in the company of non-Jews by participating in various forms of civic life, including the holding of public office and performing other actions that contributed to the well-being of their cities.

I return for a moment to the city of Sardis. As previously mentioned, the epigraphic record contains the names of nine Jews who were leaders or active participants in the Jewish community and who also held key municipal positions. When making their

donations to the synagogue, eight of those nine also proudly identified themselves as a *Sardianos*, or a citizen of Sardis. At least this group of Jews appears to have been at home equally in the synagogue and the city, among both Jews and non-Jews. While Sardis may possess more examples of this type of engagement than in any other ancient city, I believe the situation in this particular location is hardly unique. Kaikilianos, a resident of Volubilis in North Africa, is described as father of the synagogue and a leading citizen, *protopolis*.⁷⁰ Two Jews from the town of Magona on the Balearic island of Minorca, Theodorus and Caecilianus, were not only leaders of the Jewish community, but also served as *patronus*, a title assumed by persons responsible for municipal duties.⁷¹ In the same town, Theodorus served as *defensor*, a position established in the middle of the fourth century to protect the weak from ruinously expensive and protracted litigation against the “outrages of the powerful.”⁷²

The embrace of civic duty certainly did not stop Jews from participating in activities and other social practices particular to themselves as Jews. Many Jews adhered to some distinctive dietary habits. Most Jews, probably, married one another. Jews regularly built their own, separate spaces in which they gathered, studied, and worshiped their God.⁷³ Moreover, Jews, with probably only rare exceptions, regularly refrained from participating in the worship of civic deities.

But these aspects of Jewish life tell only part of the story. The Jews who distinguished themselves in these ways were the same people who also joined with non-Jews in participating in and contributing to the life of the cities in which they lived. They sat next to non-Jews in the theater, they were schooled alongside non-Jews in the gymnasium, they served alongside non-Jews in the city councils, and they cooperated with non-Jews to provide relief to the inhabitants of the cities in which they both lived. Jews could be proud of their identity as Jews and hold fast to many of their traditional practices, and at the same time feel at home and desire to contribute to their communities, both Jewish and civic.⁷⁴

These examples of Jewish engagement in civic life suggest that for many Jews, how they lived their lives as public officials, citizens, and benefactors was no less important to them, at least not significantly so, than observing the Sabbath or marrying other Jews. While scholarly discussion of Jews in the ancient world regularly speak about religious competition, the examples reviewed here depict Jews with a strong sense of self-identity as Jews engaging in what might be described as religious or perhaps better civic cooperation. The model of Jewish life that I am suggesting moves away from trying to understand Jewish identity as one pitting resistance versus assimilation or reciprocity versus solidarity.⁷⁵ Rather, we would be better served to think of Jews performing a type of cultural hybridity, in which Jews maintained a sense of “cultural integrity as well as the movement to become an integral part of a larger societal framework.”⁷⁶ Jews very much wanted to be a part of the societies in which they

lived, but as Jews. They were eager to participate in the local society and its culture, but on their own terms.⁷⁷

Consider the conclusion of Angelos Chaniotis, who excavated the site of Aphrodisias. In commenting on the Aphrodisias inscription he noted that the “Jews in Aphrodisias used their [biblical] names as a means of identity and separation.”⁷⁸ That is true. It is equally true, however, that they used their euergetism as a means of solidarity with their non-Jewish neighbors in the city they both called home.

Two images of Jewish life in the Diaspora emerge from the historical record, both literary and material. The one sees Jews in the Diaspora as “inherently tension-filled” and finds “severe constraints on the Jews’ ability to develop institutions that could help guarantee their survival.”⁷⁹ Jews lived in communities where they were seen with suspicion and often contempt, and lived a largely powerless existence, on the margins of society. The other vision sees Jewish life during the Roman period as “hardly retreat[ing] into isolation or separatism. Nor, on the other hand, did they resort to wholesale assimilation.”⁸⁰ Which image prevails depends in part on where you look and to whom you listen. Ancient authors, such as Tacitus, who focus on the internal loyalty and modes of separation present only one aspect of Jewish life, and in so doing offer a misleading presentation of various ways in Jews conducted themselves. Jews were in many respects the product of their traditions, but they were much more than that.

NOTES

1. Abbreviations for ancient Jewish and classical texts follow the conventions of the Society of Biblical Literature. The following abbreviations are used for standard corpora of texts, inscriptions, papyri, and Roman laws:

CIJ=Jean-Baptist Frey, *Corpus Inscriptionem Iudaicarum* (2 vols.; Vatican: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1936 [1975] and 1952).

CPJ=Victor Tcherikover and Alexander Fuks, eds., *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum* (3 vols.; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957–1964).

CJZC=Gert Lüderlitz, *Corpus jüdischer Zeugnisse aus der Cyrenaika* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1983).

IJO=*Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis*, 3 vols. Vol 1: Eastern Europe, eds. David Noy, Alexander Panayotov, and Hansulf Bloedhorn (TSAJ 101; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004); Vol 2: Kleinasien, ed. Walter Ameling (TSAJ 99; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004); Vol 3: Syrian and Cyprus, eds. David Noy and Hanswulf Bloedhorn (TSAJ 102; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).

JJWE=David Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993–1995).

- Kroll=John H. Kroll, "The Greek Inscriptions of the Sardis Synagogue," *Harvard Theological Review* 94 (2001): 5–55.
- Linder=Amnon Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987).
- GLAJJ=Menachem Stern, ed., *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (3 vols.; Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1976–1984).
2. See Rene S. Bloch, *Antike Vorstellungen vom Judentum: Der Judernexkurs des Tacitus im Rahmen der griechisch-römischen Ethnographie* (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 2002). Other ancient writers, such as Apollonius Molon or Alexander Polyhistor, both writing in the first century BCE, are said to have composed entire treatises on Jews, but their works have not survived intact.
 3. Quoted by Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.258 (GLAJJ #50). On Josephus's presentation of Greek writers, see Eric Gruen, "Greeks and Jews: Mutual Misperception in Josephus' *Contra Apionem*," in *Ancient Judaism in Its Hellenistic Context* (ed. Carol Bakhos; JSJ Supp. 95; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 31–51. Gruen points to the ways Josephus used, "exaggeration, embellishment, and contrivance" to enhance his efforts in defending the Jews against abuse (49).
 4. Pompeius Trogus, *Philippic History* 2.6 (GLAJJ #137).
 5. *Sat.* 14.96–106 (GLAJJ #301).
 6. Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 5.33 (GLAJJ #403).
 7. Dio Cassius 37.17.2 (GLAJJ #406).
 8. Louis H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 125–31; Peter Schäfer, *Judeophobia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 173–79.
 9. For instance, Tacitus is one of the only ancient authors to note that every seventh year involves a period of inactivity for Jews, a seemingly somewhat garbled reference to the sabbatical year (*Hist.* 5.4.3; cf. Lev 25.1–7).
 10. For a review of previous treatments of Tacitus's view of Jews, see Erich S. Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 180, and the bibliography cited there. A slightly different version of the same paper appears as "Tacitus and the Defamation of the Jews," in *The Construct of Identity in Hellenistic Judaism* (Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies 29; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 265–80.
 11. We cannot be sure of the basis for Tacitus's remarks. He may have based at least part of his description on his own observations of Jews who were living in the city of Rome. By the early second century CE, the city possessed a large Jewish community, recently augmented with the arrival of prisoners and slaves stemming from the Jewish revolt. This community seems to have held fast to the types of practices described by Tactius. Philo, for instance, notes that the members of this community "were not forced to

- violate any of their native institutions” (Philo, *Legit.* 155). This does not necessarily mean that the Jews living in Rome would have agreed with Tacitus’s assessment of their conduct, only that it may well have been common for them not to marry non-Jews and to refrain from dining with them as well, and on this basis Tacitus composed his comments. For a general survey of the Jewish community in the city of Rome, see Leonard V. Rutgers, *The Jews in Late Ancient Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).
12. Gruen, *Rethinking the Other*, 195–96.
 13. *Ibid.*, 196.
 14. On diet: Daniel 1.5–8; Tobit 1.10–12; 3 Maccabees 3.4; Judith 12.1–4, 9; Additions to Esther C28; *Jubilees* 22.16; *Let. Aris.* 180–84; *Jos. Asen.* 7.1. See David Freidenreich, *Foreigners and Their Food: Constructions of Otherness in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Law* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 31–46. On marriage: Joshua 23.12; Ezra 9–10; Nehemiah 13; Tobit 4.12–13; 6.11–13; 6.16–18; *Jubilees* 20.4; 22.16–20; *T. Levi* 9.10; 14.6; *T. Job* 45.1–3; *Jos. Asen.* 8; Philo, *Spec.* 3.29; Philo, *Mos.* 1.296–298. See Michael L. Satlow, *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), esp. 133–61.
 15. *Let. Aris.* 139.
 16. Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.259. Elsewhere Josephus presents circumcision as having been instituted to keep Jews from mixing with others (*Ant.* 1.192). For a more detailed summary of the ways in which Josephus responded to the accusation of misanthropy, see Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 133–49. On the contacts, or lack thereof, between Josephus and Roman elites, see Hannah M. Cotton and Werner Eck, “Josephus’ Roman Audience: Josephus and the Roman Elites,” *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome* (ed. Jonathan Edmondson, Steve Mason, and James Rives; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 37–52. It is our misfortune that Josephus died about a decade before Tacitus wrote his *Histories*. One imagines that his literary work *Against Apion* would have included references to Tacitus in his effort “to convict our detractors of malignity and deliberate falsehood, to correct the ignorance of others” (*Ag. Ap.* 1.1).
 17. *Spec.* 2.167.
 18. For such an approach, see Martin Goodman, “Jews and Judaism in the Mediterranean Diaspora in the Late-Roman Period: the Limitations of Evidence,” in *Ancient Judaism in its Hellenistic Context* (ed. Carol Bakhos; Supp. JSJ 95; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 177.
 19. Two possible exceptions are the *Collatio Legum Mosaicarum et Romanorum* and *Epistola Anne ad Senecum*. Both works are written in Latin, most likely in the late fourth or early fifth centuries. On their possible Jewish authorship, see Leonard V. Rutgers, *The Hidden Heritage of Diaspora Judaism* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 20; Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 235–84. For a different appraisal of the *Collatio* as a product of imperial Christianity, see Andrew S. Jacobs, “‘Papian Commands One Thing, Our Paul Another,’ Roman Christians and Jewish Law in the *Collatio Legum Mosaicarum et*

- Romanarum*,” in *Religion and Law in Classical and Christian Rome* (ed. Pedro Barceló, Peter Riemer, Jörg Rüpke, and John Scheid; Potsdamer Altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge 15; Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 2006), 85–99.
20. On Diaspora Jewish writings from the Second Temple period, see John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing, 2000).
 21. On Jewish inscriptions from this period, see Margaret Williams, “The Contribution of Jewish Inscriptions to the Study of Judaism,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism, Volume Three: The Early Roman Period* (ed. William Horbury, W. D. Davies, and John Sturdy; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 75–93.
 22. For Jews in military service, see Raul Gonzalez Salinero, *Military Service and the Integration of Jews into the Roman Empire* (BRLJ 72; Leiden: Brill, 2022). For Jews and their connection to entertainment venues, see Zeev Weiss, *Public Spectacles in Roman and Late Antique Palestine* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 195–226. For Jews and the gymnasium, see Robert Doran, “Paideia and the Gymnasium,” in *Pedagogy in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (Early Judaism and Its Literature 41; ed. Karina Martin Hogan, Matthew Goff, and Emma Wasserman; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017), 135–51. For a different review of the material presented in this paper, see Erich S. Gruen, “Hellenism and Judaism: Fluid Boundaries,” in *The Construct of Identity in Hellenistic Judaism* (Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies 29; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 113–31.
 23. As far as we know no Jew attained the highest levels of Roman office, such as questor or consul. Agrippa I was made honorary consul by Claudius (Suetonius, *Claud.* 6; Tacitus *Ann.* 12.21; Dio Cassius 60.8.23). Q. Caecilius Niger served as questor, but is probably not the same as the Jewish rhetor Caecilius, although both men came from Sicily. See Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (rev. and ed. Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, and Martin Goodman; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 3.701–703.
 24. Tax collectors: *CPJ* 1.17–19, 194–226. Police officers: *CPJ* 12 (Fayyum, third century BCE); *CPJ* 25 (Fayum, 173 BCE); and, *CIJ* 14.43 (Athribis, mid-second century BCE; unclear whether Ptolemy the son of Epikudos is Jewish); *Ag. Ap.* 2.64; *J. W.* 1.175; b. Sanh. 25b. Secretary: *CPJ* 137 (Herakleopolites; 50 BCE). Royal advisor: 2 Macc 1.10 (Aristobulus, teacher of Ptolemy VI Philometor, d. 145 BCE). A possible, but unlikely example comes from a bilingual (Latin and Greek) inscription from Lanuvium in Italy (*CJZC* 36). It records the honor paid to a Roman patron by two men sent on an official mission from Ptolemais in Cyrene. One of the pair, Simon son of Simon, may have been a Jew, although the name Simon is common among both Jews and non-Jews. Applebaum’s argument, that the other man, Itthallammon the son of Apellas, was also a Jew, is based on Horace’s use of the name Apella “as sufficiently characteristic of

- Jews to be a synonym for any Jew.” See Shimon Applebaum *Jews and Greeks in Ancient Cyrene* (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 168. The problems with the argument have been noted by Lüderitz in *CJZC*, 57.
25. *CPJ* 137.
 26. Alexander: *Ant.* 18.159; 19.276; 20.100. Demetrius: *Ant.* 20.147.
 27. *Ag. Ap.* 2.64; *JW* 1.175; b. Sanh 25b.
 28. *CJZC* 8. Applebaum, *Jews and Greeks*, 186–90. This text offers insight into the situation Jews often found themselves in participating in civic administration. The inscription contains a dedication to a deity (the name is lost). Similar texts are dedicated to Apollo, Homonoia, and Aphrodite, and it is possible these deities appeared in this inscription as well.
 29. *Digest* 50.2.3.3 (Linder #2).
 30. While some Jewish office holders may have been willing to participate in civic religious life, the permission to be exempted from such activities certainly facilitated the entrance of Jews into public office. Capucine Nemo-Pekelman, “The Involvement of Jews in Municipal Life During the Late Roman Empire,” in *In the Crucible of Empire The Impact of Roman Citizenship Upon Greeks, Jews and Christians* (ed. Katell Berthelot and Jonathan Price; Leuven: Peeters, 2019), 255.
 31. On the concept of the “epigraphic habit,” see Ramsey MacMullen, “The Epigraphic Habit in the Roman Empire,” *American Journal of Philology* 103 (1982): 233–46. For its application in Jewish epigraphy, see W. Ameling, “The Epigraphic Habit and the Jewish Diasporas of Asia Minor and Syria,” in *From Hellenism to Islam: Cultural and Linguistic Change in the Roman Near East* (ed. H. Cotton, R. Hoyland, J. Price, and D. Wasserstein; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 203–34.
 32. Nemo-Pekelman, “Involvement,” 252. On Jewish involvement in civic life in Asia Minor, see Paul Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor* (SNTSMS 69; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 173–83.
 33. *CIJ* 677=*IJO* 1.Pan3.
 34. Ephesus: *CIJ* 745=*IJO* 2.32. Julius’ (?) identity as a Jew seems likely although it rests on his wish that the Jewish community protect his tomb. Venosa: *CIJ* 600=*JJWE* 1.76. The title and its attendant responsibilities are well known from inscriptions and legal sources. Such persons received public salary and immunity from *munera*, offices that entailed financial obligations. Vivian Nutton, “Archiatri and the Medical Profession in Antiquity,” *Papers of the British School at Rome* 45 (1977): 191–226.
 35. *IJO* 2.220. Louis Robert, “Inscriptions grecques de Sidè en Pamphylie (époque impériale et Bas-Empire),” *Revue Philologique* 3rd ser., 32 (1958): 38–47.
 36. Kroll 13-14b=*IJO* 2.76.
 37. *CIJ* 760=*IJO* 2.173 (attributed by Frey to Blaundos, but assigned to Acmonia by Robert and others, see J. H. M. Strubbe, “The Sitonia in the Cities of Asia Minor under the

- Principate (I),” *Epigraphica Anatolica* 10 [1987]: 70), and *CIJ* 770=*IJO* 2.172). On the social status of persons holding these offices, see J. H. M. Strubbe, “The Sitonia in the Cities of Asia Minor under the Principate (II),” *Epigraphica Anatolica* 13 (1989): 103. The Jewish identity of both men is widely assumed, although not certain. See the comments of Tessa Rajak, “Jews and Christians as Groups in the Pagan World,” in *To See Ourselves as Others See Us* (eds. Jacob Neusner and Ernest Frerichs; Chico: Scholars Press, 1985), 257; Alice J. Bij de Vaate and Jan Willem van Henten, “Jewish or Non-Jewish? Some Remarks on the Identification of Jewish Inscriptions from Asia Minor,” *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 53 (1996): 16–28. Josephus records the presence of Jews who attended court and conducted business deals (*Ant.* 14.262–264; 16.27, 45), and, more directly relevant to these inscriptions, were liable to perform liturgies (*Ant.* 16.28).
38. *CIJ* 772=*IJO* 2.180. See also J. H. M. Strubbe, “Joden en Grieken: onverzoenlijke vijanden?,” *Lampas* 22 (1989): 193.
39. Acmonia in Phrygia: *CIJ* 770=*IJO* 2.172; Corycos in Cilicia: *CIJ* 788=*IJO* 2.236, with corrections by J. and L. Robert, *Bulletin Épigraphique* (1954): 103, #22.
40. Kroll 3, 13, 16, 17, 24, 25, 26, 31, 34, 37, 67=*IJO* 2.62, 72, 77, 78, 83, 84, 85, 92, 96, 133; On Jews as city councilors in general, see Louis Roberts, *Nouvelles Inscriptions de Sardes I* (Archaeological Exploration of Sardis; Paris: Librairie d’Amérique et d’Orient, 1964), 54–56, #13–18; *Bulletin Épigraphique*. (1968): 517–18, #478; Andrew R. Seager, “The Synagogue and the Jewish Community,” in *Sardis from Prehistoric to Roman Times* (ed. George M. A. Hanfman; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 171; Marianne Bonz, “The Jewish Community of Ancient Sardis: Deconstruction and Reconstruction,” in *Evolution of the Synagogue* (eds. Howard Clark Kee and Lynn H. Cohick; Harrisburg: Trinity International Press, 1999), 106–22; Tessa Rajak, “Jews, Pagans, and Christians in Late Antique Sardis: Models of Interaction,” in *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome* (AGAJU 48; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 447–62.
41. *Pater/Patron/Patronos poleos*: *CIJ* 619b–d=*JIWE* 1.114–116. On the meaning of the title, see Charlotte Rouché, “New Inscriptions from Aphrodisias and the Title *Pater tes Poleos*,” in *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 20 (1979): 173–85. *Maiores civitatis*: *CIJ* 611=*JIWE* 1.86. See P. W. van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 2; Kampen: Kos Pharos Publishing House, 1991), 100.
42. Equestrian rank: *J. W.* 2.305–308. Senatorial rank: Jerome: *Commentary on Isaiah* 66.20 (PL 24.698); Pope Gelasius (495–495 CE) recommends to become a bishop the *vir clarissimus Telesinus...Judaicae credulitatis* (PL 59.146). On the Patriarch as *vir classissimus*, see *Codex Theodosianus* 16.8.22=Linder #41. On the office of patriarch, see Lee I. Levine, “The Status of the Patriarch in the Third and Fourth Centuries,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 47 (1996): 1–32; and, Alan Applebaum, *The Dynasty of the Jewish Patriarchs* (TSAJ 156; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013).
43. Kroll 13–14b=*IJO* 2.76.

44. On the office of *agentes in rebus*, see *Codex Theodosianus* 16.8.16=Linder #33.
45. Sardis: Kroll 5=*IJO* 2.64; Sepphoris: *CIJ* 991; Haifa: *CIJ* 883; Hammath Gadar: Joseph Naveh, *On Stone and Mosaic* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1978), #32. One additional example may come from the island of Minorca. We learn from the letter of Severus that a Jewish woman named Artemisia was married to Meletius, the younger brother of Theodorus, the leader of the community. Her father, Litorius, recently governed the province of the Balearics and when Severus wrote around 420 was *comes* (*Letter* 2.4.2). Severus does not say, however, whether Litorius was a Jew or not. If not, then his daughter would most likely be a convert.
46. On the office of *palatinus*, see *Codex Theodosianus* 16.8.24=Linder #45.
47. *Ant.* 18.8.1; 20.5.2. *J. W.* 2.15.1; 2.18.7; 4.10.6; Tacitus, *Hist.* 1.11; 2.74, 79; Suetonius, *Vesp.* 6.
48. Kroll 70: *IJO* 3.136. On the position, see A. H. M. Jones *The Later Roman Empire, 284–602* (3 vols.; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964), 615ff; 790ff. Another possible case is that of Flavius Eusbeius known from an inscription discovered in Aphrodisias (*IJO* 2.19). He is identified as an *ex-primipilaris*. The title, perhaps honorary, was given to imperial officials. His Jewish identity is suggested by the phrase “from the gifts of god”; the phrase is characteristic of Jewish donative inscriptions such as those found in Sardis. The opening invocation “to the god that hears,” however, carries strong pagan associations.
49. On Jews in this region, see Paul Trebilco, “The Jews in Asia Minor, 66-c. 235 CE,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism, Volume Four: The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period* (ed. Steven T. Katz; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 75–82.
50. Although the upper line of the stone is damaged, the names themselves are distinctively Jewish or known to have been frequently used by Jews. There is Manasee and Judas, Jacob and Joseph, Benjamin and Reuben, and five men named Eusabbathios.
51. *IJO* 2.14. See the original publication and commentary Joyce Reynolds and Robert Tannenbaum, *Jews and Godfearers at Aphrodisias: Greek Inscriptions with Commentary* (PCPS 12; Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1987).
52. For a more extended discussion, see Gary Gilbert, “Jewish Involvement in Ancient Civic Life: The Case of Aphrodisias,” *Revue Biblique* 113 (2006): 18–36.
53. The original publication dated the inscription to the third century CE. Subsequent studies place its writing much later. On the dating, see Angelos Chaniotis, “The Jews of Aphrodisias: New Evidence and Old Problems,” *Scripta Classica Israelica* 21 (2002): 209–18.
54. The type of suffering addressed by the *dekania* may be identified from the opening of the text, where the organization uses the term *patella*. Originally a Latin word, *patella* passed into Greek and also Hebrew and carries the basic meaning of “dish” or “plate” used for domestic or religious purposes. On the possible meaning of the term,

- see Reynolds and Tannenbaum, *Jews and Godfearers*, 26–27. The *mnema* referred to in the inscription could have designated a building where the grain was stored or distributed. On the meaning of *mnema*, see Reynolds and Tannenbaum, *Jews and Godfearers*, 38–40. For a discussion of parallel rabbinic institutions, see Yael Wilfand, *Poverty, Charity, and the Image of the Poor in Rabbinic Texts from the Land of Israel* (The Social World of Biblical Antiquity, 2nd ser. 9; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014), 159–70. On the importance of food relief in general in antiquity, see Peter Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); and, Gildas Hamel, *Poverty and Charity in Roman Palestine, First Three Centuries CE* (Near Eastern Studies 23; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 8–56. Margaret Williams proposes an alternative explanation for the *dekania*'s activity. According to Williams, the *dekania* functioned as a burial society, established to offer eulogies and to alleviate the grief and suffering of mourners. Its members were responsible for the construction of a communal building [*mnema*], most likely a synagogal *triclinium* where the community enjoyed its festive meals. See Margaret Williams, “The Jews and Godfearers Inscription from Aphrodisias: A Case of Patriarchal Interference in Early 3rd Century Caria?,” *Historia* 41 (1992): 302–8. Peter van Minnen has argued that the inscription refers to an “Imbißhaber” or association of cooks and reconstructs line one of the text as *patellados* or *patelladon*. See Peter van Minnen. “Drei Bemerkungen zur Geschichte des Judentums in der griechisch-römischen Welt,” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 100 (1994): 255–57.
55. The Greek word *plethos* often designates an undefined multitude of people. H. G. Liddel and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (rev. H. S. Jones; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940), s.v., πλῆθος.
56. Reynolds and Tannenbaum, *Jews and Godfearers*, 41. They appeal to the use of the term in the New Testament, where *plethos* designates the “community of the faithful” (e.g., Acts 4:32), and understand the term as being synonymous with other, more common terms for collegial organizations, such as *koinon*. On the latter term, see Franz Poland, *Geschichte des griechischen Vereinswesens* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1909), 168–333; and, Jean-Pierre Waltzing, *Étude historique sur les corporations professionnelles chez les romains* (reprint. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1970), 4.240.
57. When used to describe a particular group as opposed to a large body in general, *plethos* usually is accompanied by a genitival modifier that specifies the intended community. The examples cited by Reynolds and Tannenbaum follow this pattern. The Jewish community in Leontopolis refers to itself as “the community of the Jews.” Ilasios, who donated funds for a mosaic in Apamea, describes the Jewish community there as “our sanctified community.” A similar syntactic arrangement exists in non-Jewish inscriptions. For instance, an organization on Rhodes bestowed various honors on individuals for

- their support. It referred to itself a dozen times as a *koinon*; *plethos* appears only once, and then only as *plethos to baliadan kai baliastan* (“the community of the Haliadai and Haliastai”; *IG* 12.1, #155). If the donor inscription meant to designate a limited body, such as the Jewish community, we should expect similar grammatical specification. The unmodified use of *plethos*, therefore, suggests that the term refers to more than just the Jewish community, but to the civic populace in general. A similar conclusion has been reached by Bernadette Brooten, “Iael προστάτης in the Jewish Donative Inscription from Aphrodisias,” in *The Future of Early Christianity: Essays in Honor of Helmut Koester* (ed. Birger A. Pearson; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 161; Pieter van der Horst, “Jews and Christians in Aphrodisias in the Light of Their Relations in Other Cities in Asia Minor,” in *Essays on the Jewish World of Early Christianity* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag/Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 166–181; and Louis H. Feldman, “Proselytes and ‘Sympathizers,’ in the Light of the New Inscription from Aphrodisias,” *Revue des Études Juives* 148 (1989): 287–88.
58. J. David Pliens, “Poor, Poverty,” *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (6 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 5.402–14. A succinct presentation of the ethical perspective behind these entitlements appears in Deuteronomy 15.7–11, which commands Israelites to give gladly and generously to the poor. Prophetic and wisdom writers also advocate for the charitable provision of food. Isaiah 58:7 announces that God desires people to share their bread with the hungry, and Ezekiel identifies the giving of food to the hungry as a mark of righteousness (Ezek 18:7, 16). See other expressions extolling those who feed the poor. (Ps 41:1; Prov 14:21, 31; 19:17; 28:27; 31:20; Job 31:16–17). On the rabbis and their understanding of the ethical dimensions of charity, see Alyssa M. Gray, *Charity in Rabbinic Judaism* (London: Routledge, 2019).
59. t. Git. 3.18 (where the words “and with the poor of Israel” appear only in some manuscripts); cf. m. Git. 5.8 (where the biblical activities of gleaning, forgotten sheaf, and *peah* are extended to the poor among the gentiles); y. Demai 4.6 (2.4a); y. Abod. Zar. 1.3 (39c). On this topic, see Wilfand, *Poverty, Charity, and the Image of the Poor*, 199–207.
60. *Ad Arsacium Archiereum Galatae*, #84a, 430B-D=GLAJJ #482.
61. On the *sitionia* in Asia Minor, see J. H. M. Strubbe, “The Sitionia in the Cities of Asia Minor under the Principate (I),” *Epigraphica Anatolica* 10 (1987): 45–81; and “The Sitionia in the Cities of Asia Minor under the Principate (II),” *Epigraphica Anatolica* 13 (1989): 99–122.
62. Strubbe’s extensive collection of references to the office of *sitionia* (see previous note) does not mention the existence of such a position in Aphrodisias.
63. I recognize that this interpretation involves positing some connection between the writings on the two sides of the stone. See the detailed analysis on this issue by Chaniotis, “The Jews of Aphrodisias,” 211–13. While the two texts may well have been written at different times, I hold that they in some way relate to the activity of the *dekania*. One

- point in favor of this connection is the designation of two persons on side A as *theosebes*, the same term used on side B to designate the long list of non-Jews recognized alongside members of the Jewish community.
64. *CIG* #3480.
 65. *CIG* ##3154 and 3480.
 66. Waltzing, *Étude historique sur les corporations professionnelles chez les romains*, 1.300–21, especially 307.
 67. Pliny *Eps.* 92 and 93. See Waltzing, *Étude historique sur les corporations professionnelles chez les romains*, 1.313–14.
 68. *CIJ* 749=*IJO* 2.21.
 69. *CIJ* 742=*IJO* 2.40. See Georg Patzel, *Die Inschriften von Smyrna* (Bonn: Habelt, 1987), 2.1, 191–97, #697 for the full inscription and notes. The inscription bears the phrase, *hoi pote Ioudaioi*, which has sometimes been interpreted as “the former Jews” (i.e., apostates), but more likely indicates those who came from Judea. See Trebilco, *Jewish Communities*, 175; 259–60, n. 30.
 70. Yann Le Bohec, “Inscriptions juives et judaïsantes de l’Afrique romaine,” *Antiquités Africaines* 17 (1981): #79 (Volubilis; third century CE). It is not clear if the title refers to function in the Jewish or civic community. In favor of the former, see Baruch Lifshitz, “Une inscription bilingue des environs de Hébron,” *Epigraphica* 36 (1974): 99. A similar title (*protopolēites*) is used for Kunoros son of Diodotos from Hébron. See L. Y. Rahmani, “A Bilingual Ossuary Inscription from Khirbet Zif,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 22 (1972): 113–16.
 71. *Letter of Severus of Minorca* 6.3; 19.6. Scott Bradbury, ed., *Severus of Minorca, Letter on the Conversion of the Jews* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 39–40.
 72. It is not known exactly when Theodorus served as *defensor*. In 409 the Emperors Honorius and Theodosius decreed that *defensores* should be men “imbued with the sacred mysteries of orthodox religion” (*Corpus Juris Civilis* 1.55.8). Bradbury notes, “they were to be appointed by the praetorian prefect after nomination by a council composed of the local bishop and clergy, the principal landowners, and the deucrions.” (*Severus*, 33).
 73. On the synagogue, see Lee I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), esp. 232–87.
 74. For a very different, less sanguine, appraisal of Jewish life in the Roman period see Seth Schwartz, “Jewish Communities in the Roman Diaspora: Why Salo Baron Still Matters?” in *Jewish and Christian Communal Identities in the Roman World* (ed. Yair Furstenberg; Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 94; Leiden: Brill, 2016), 225–42. He has argued that the, “experience of the Jews in the Roman Diaspora can be profitably considered as structurally similar, in important respects, to their experiences in the (often) better-attested historical circumstances of the medieval and early modern

- periods" (241). It was probably only in the fifth century when Jewish life in the Diaspora began to change. By then Roman, now Christian, rulers restricted Jewish admission to public offices. Jews began to revert more often to the use of Hebrew. On the transition from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages, see Aron Sterk, "Latino-Romanites: The Continuity of Jewish Communities in the Western Diaspora, 400-700 CE," *Melilah* 9 (2012): 21-49.
75. On reciprocity versus solidarity, see Seth Schwartz, *Were the Jews a Mediterranean Society?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).
76. John W. Berry, "Acculturation as Varieties of Adaptation," *Acculturation: Theory, Models and Some New Findings* (ed. Amado M. Padilla; AAAS Selected Symposium 39; Boulder: Westview Press, 1980), 13. On the application of the concept of hybridity to Jewish identity in the ancient world, see Steven Weitzman, *The Origin of the Jews* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 207-44.
77. A similar conclusion focusing on an earlier period was reached by Erich Gruen. He concluded that, "Jews formed stable communities in the diaspora, entered into the social, economic, and political life of the nations they joined, aspired to and often obtained citizen privileges in the cities of the Hellenistic world. Adequate evidence attests to Jewish striving for full and acknowledged membership and a genuine sense of belonging." See Erich S. Gruen "Diaspora and Homeland," *The Construct of Identity in Hellenistic Judaism* (Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies 29; Berlin: De Gruyter, 201), 299.
78. Angelos Chaniotis, "Memory, Commemoration & Identity in an Ancient City: The Case of Aphrodisias," *Daedalus* 145 (2016): 98.
79. Schwartz, "Jewish Communities in the Roman Diaspora: Why Salo Baron Still Matters?" 225.
80. Erich S. Gruen, "Diaspora and the 'Assimilated' Jew," *Early Judaism: New Insights and Scholarship* (ed. Frederick Greenspahn; New York: New York University Press, 2018), 66.

