Religion and Society in Roman Palestine

OLD QUESTIONS, NEW APPROACHES

Edited by

Douglas R. Edwards

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For Eric M. Meyers, whose work as
teacher, colleague, administrator, and scholar has
inspired a generation of students, challenged his
fellow colleagues, and set impeccable standards
for archaeological research and historical
reconstruction.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Mordechai Aviam, Institute for Galilean Archaeology, University of Rochester, New York.

Dina Avshalom-Gorni of the Israel Antiquities Authority has an MA in Archaeology from Bar Ilan University, Tel Aviv.

Cynthia M. Baker is Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Santa Clara University, California.

Magen Broshi is Curator Emeritus, Shrine of the Book, Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

Mark A. Chancey is Assistant Professor in the Department of Religious Studies, Southern Methodist University, Texas.

Douglas R. Edwards is Professor of Archaeology and Religion at the University of Puget Sound, Washington.

Esther Eshel is Assistant Professor of Hebrew Martze Bakir, Bible Department, Bar Ilan University, Tel Aviv.

Hanan Eshel is Professor of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology, Bar Ilan University, Tel Aviv.

Sean Freyne is Director, Programme for Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies, Trinity College, Dublin.

Martin Goodman is Professor of Jewish Studies at Oxford University.

Lee I. Levine is Rev. Moses Bernard Lauterman Family Chair in Classical Archaeology, Departments of Jewish History and Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Jodi Magness is Kenan Distinguished Professor for Teaching Excellence in Early Judaism, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Milton Moreland is Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Rhodes College, Tennessee.

Miriam Peskowitz is Associate Professor at Temple University and Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, Pennsylvania.

Idan Shaked has an MA in Archaeology from Bar Ilan University, Tel Aviv.

Jürgen Zangenberg is Assistant Professor of New Testament at Bergische Universität, Wuppertal, Germany.

FOREWORD

Martin Goodman

The proliferation over recent years of studies throwing light on the history of the Roman provinces has been stimulated above all by advances in the quantity and quality of archaeological research. New techniques, including not least the capacity to process large amounts of data through the use of computers, have permitted sophisticated study not only of individual provinces but of smaller sub-divisions within them. Historians have become increasingly aware of the dangers of generalizing about the cultures, economies, societies and religions of regions as vast and variegated as the Mediterranean world (see Hordern and Purcell 2000) or the Roman Near East (Millar 1993). The clarification of a new picture of this world, in which wider trends induced by state policy or inter-regional trade overlay considerable continuing diversity at many levels, must necessarily rely on numerous local studies such as are presented in this collection: the essays in this book represent the research of an international coterie of historians and archaeologists united by an interest in the realia of Roman Palestine and a common debt to Eric Meyers, whose work has for many years inspired investigation into this field.

Study of Roman Palestine can never be carried out in quite the same way as that of other provinces, and not only because, as Douglas Edwards emphasizes in the first contribution in this volume, the impact of events in this region and period have been so decisive for the later history of Judaism and Christianity, so that few scholars can approach the field without subscribing, overtly or tacitly, to some modern agenda which may threaten to dictate the nature of their interpretation. Of no less importance, and unique to this province, is the survival through those religious traditions of a huge mass of literary material, originally composed in Roman Palestine, copied in antiquity and preserved continuously through the Middle Ages down to modern times.

Jews preserved through the rabbinic academies and synagogue liturgy a great corpus of late-antique writings in Hebrew and Aramaic. Christians preserved a rather different corpus, since all the Jewish writings they retained were either in Greek or translations from the Greek: because Christians had

their own distinctive literature from the early second century CE, the only Jewish works they treasured were all written before *c.*100 CE. One of the latest Jewish texts preserved and copied by Christians was the oeuvre of the first-century Jerusalemite priest Josephus, whose accounts of the political history of the Jews down to his own time make it possible to write a coherent narrative of the politics of Roman Palestine of a type unimaginable for other provinces and not feasible for Jewish history in late antiquity after 70 CE when the narrative of Josephus is lacking.

Precisely the fullness and coherence of these literary sources makes it tempting to rely upon them to write the history of Palestine at least to the time of the First Revolt of 66–70 CE, but the arbitrariness of the preservation of the material should provoke caution. It is all too clear that much of the evidence preserved by the rabbis was ignored by the Christians, and vice versa. Both later traditions extracted from a much larger body of literature composed by Jews in Roman Palestine only what was of religious value to them. Some literature was shared by Jews and Christians, most obviously the Hebrew Bible (which Christians knew only in its Greek translation) but most was found only in one of the two traditions. It is very unlikely that between them the two traditions preserved a representative sample of this much larger body of literature so that the two traditions combined can reveal what life in Roman Palestine was really like. We do not know how big the gap in the literary evidence is likely to have been, but we can posit its existence. This gap will have to be filled, as far as possible, with the findings of archaeology.

Such findings have proliferated over the past half century. To some extent this has been the product of a local form of nationalist archaeology, such as has encouraged excavations of Roman Britain, Roman Germany or Roman Gaul since the nineteenth century, although in the case of the state of Israel 'nationalist' has more specific connotations: in Israel, public enthusiasm for archaeology has been closely linked to the Zionist axiom of the historic relationship of the land to the Jewish people. Of more methodological complexity has been the question of how to relate archaeological finds to the voluminous textual remains just discussed. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most archaeological investigation in Palestine was intent not on new discoveries for their own sake but on elucidating texts, specifically those of the Bible, while material finds dated too late for the New Testament were pressed into service for clarification of the Talmud.

Neither 'Biblical Archaeology' nor 'Talmudic Archaeology' has fully ended in the current climate, but among the most eloquent advocates of a more sophisticated relationship between text and archaeology has been Eric Meyers, the impact of whose work is to be found throughout this volume. His achievement has been not just to encourage a change in terminology (although that is not unimportant, cf. especially Meyers 1997) but, more significantly, the use of many of the techniques which are standard in the

archaeological investigation of other Roman provinces but have only gradually been imported into excavation and survey work in Israel, such as dating of buildings by cautious stratigraphy rather than architectural style, or using surface pottery surveys to establish settlement patterns and possible connections between scattered sites. The ubiquity of such techniques in the current generation of archaeologists specialising in the study of the late-Roman period in Israel owes more than a little to advocacy by Eric in the 1970s and 1980s, when it required much determination to insist on their validity: such techniques came under strong attack when they upset long-cherished theories, particularly on the dating of late-Roman synagogues (cf. Meyers 1981; Meyers *et al.* 1990). Over the past three decades a series of studies by Eric, and by others influenced by him, have relied on purely archaeological methods to reconstruct those elements of ancient society least revealed in the literary sources, such as the lives of the poor in Galilean villages and the roles of women.

But, to revert to the theme of the present volume. Eric's insistence that some aspects of the ancient world can be known only from archaeological evidence, and that such evidence should be taken seriously even if it apparently contradicts assertions in or deductions from literary texts, has not led him to abandon altogether as useless the evidence of the surviving writings. On the contrary, he has contributed himself to the elucidation of biblical texts (Meyers and Meyers 1987, 1993) and has consistently advocated since his earliest work on ossuaries (Meyers 1971) what Miriam Peskowitz describes in this volume as '"the Meyers' Method": the dual interpretation of canonical texts with epigraphic materials and archaeological materials'. In short, every type of evidence is to be used, each type being carefully and critically assessed, none being preferred above the other. The project is more easily described than carried out: the correct judicious balance is inevitably hard to find (cf. Meyers and Strange 1981).

The studies in this volume illustrate well these principles and Eric's abiding influence. The religion and society of Roman Palestine need to be appreciated both at local and regional level (cf. Meyers 1999), and against the background of the rest of the Ancient Near East (cf. Meyers 1971), and in the light of the Mediterranean world as a whole. The significance of Jewish adoption of a material culture similar to that of their gentile neighbours, and contrariwise the significance of Jews' insistence on using distinctively different material goods and buildings, long studied by Eric particularly in connection with the important excavations at Sepphoris (Meyers *et al.* 1992), receive further attention here and go to the heart of difficult issues about assimilation, acculturation and the preservation of difference in a multicultural society.

The extent to which Jews differed from other people in the Roman world in their lifestyles, their self-perception, and as perceived by others, remains a fraught issue (cf. Goodman 1998). Much of the historical tradition about

the uniqueness of the Jews can be explained away as the product of the exceptional survival of literary evidence described above, which ensures that this province is so much better known than any other except Egypt (whose history is illuminated by the preservation of papyri). But here too material evidence may provide a key: the unique coinage produced by the Jewish leaders in 66–70 and 132–135 CE demonstrates better than anything the self-presentation of the rebels and suggests that Jews maintained a distinct national cultural identity far longer and with greater intensity than other peoples in the Levant (Goodman, forthcoming 2004).

Thus, even if the literary evidence was totally ignored and historians relied on archaeology alone, they still might describe the Jews of Roman Palestine as a highly unusual ethnic group. The corollary may also stand, that the absence of distinctively Jewish cultural markers in the archaeological record of Roman Palestine from Bar Kochba to the fourth century may suggest a diminution in the assertion of their Jewish identity by the population following the crushing of the second revolt against Rome, in which case the literary evidence from this period preserved by the rabbis, above all the Mishnah and Tosefta, will have been the product of a minority ginger group with little influence in wider society (Schwartz 2001). Such an argument from silence cannot of course be wholly safe and naturally runs the risk of contradiction through new archaeological discoveries, but the fact that it can be mooted at all is testimony to the impact of archaeological research on current rethinking of the history of late-Roman Palestine.

The essays in this book are a tribute to the contributions over many years of Eric Meyers, both in the chapters which apply his methods to related fields, such as the significance of coin images and current debates about the archaeology of Qumran, and in the regional studies which complement more directly his work in Galilee, on Sepphoris, on synagogues, and on the social history of ordinary people in the villages of late-Roman Palestine.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BCE	Before the Common Era
CE	Common Era
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
INJ	*Israel Numismatic Journal*
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JRA	*Journal of Roman Archaeology*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
LIMC	*Lexicon Iconigraphicum Mythologiae Classicae*
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
OEANE	*The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*
PCPS	*Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
QC	*The Qumran Chronicle*
RB	*Revue biblique*
RQ	*Revue de Qumran*
SCI	*Scripta Classica Israelica*
ZDPV	*Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

1

CONSTRUCTING THE WORLD OF ROMAN PALESTINE

An introduction

Douglas R. Edwards

> Mersaeus had eight sons, all of whom occupied the territory extending from Gaza to Egypt; but Phylistinus is the only one whose country has preserved the founder's name, for the Greeks call his portion Palestine.
>
> (Jos. *Ant*. I. 136)

Pompey's conquest of the Near East in 63 BCE made it official. Rome controlled Palestine for the next 350 years with periodic interruptions (Millar 1993). The region had military import situated as it was between Egypt, Rome's breadbasket, and Syria/Mesopotamia. At times those from the region even played an inordinate role in Roman history. In Egypt Julius Caesar received last minute support in his battle for power from a Jewish contingent led by Antipater, father of Herod the Great (Jos. *Ant*. XIV. 127–136). Caesar and his adopted son, Octavian, rewarded such allegiance with unique privileges to Jews that were to play an important part in Jewish participation in the Roman Empire for the next three centuries (Jos. *Ant*. XIV. 200–212; XVI. 161–166, 171; XIX. 282–283, 289, 302, 318). The Flavians, notably Vespasian and Titus, drew on their victory over the Jews in the first Jewish revolt, using images of the victory to bolster their power and prestige. Hadrian did as well after the second Jewish revolt in 132–135 CE and gave the official Roman imprimatur of Palestine to the region previously known to Josephus as Palestine and Judaea. But Palestine was generally off the world stage, simply one more territory, albeit at times troublesome, controlled by the Romans or those affiliated with them.

Yet Palestine became the locus of movements that were to have an impact in ways no one at the time could have foreseen. From a small Galilean village, a charismatic figure set the stage for movements that ultimately would make the Roman Empire Christian. Not far away at Sepphoris, and two centuries later, the rabbi Judah ha-Nasi (Judah the Prince) pulled together rabbinic

sayings, which were to serve as crucial texts for Judaism to the present day. And from a series of small caves along the Dead Sea, manuscripts would emerge that shed light on elements of Judaism lost from view for almost 2,000 years. The import of these events is obvious from the collection of essays contained in this book. Most in the Roman Empire would wonder what all the current fuss is about. Our readership, I hope, will have no such difficulty.

Constructing history of any sort begins with key questions, many of which may have modern cultural and social overtones as Baker astutely notes in her essay. This need not cause alarm, but it should caution one to maintain the historical wariness so evident in the best of modern historians. Archaeology has played an increasing role in the construction of Roman Palestine. It provides a wider and ever-expanding array of information than the relatively fixed, largely elite perspectives of ancient writers. Gone certainly are the days when one could claim acute objectivity when using archaeological data to reconstruct the past. The accidental character of finds and the 'framework of meaning' employed by the interpreter mean that such material must be used with care. Yet archaeology offers material often mundane, sometimes extraordinary, that is not easily obtainable otherwise. Texts may discuss ritual; archaeology appears to have found evidence of its character. Texts may portray gendered relations; archaeology can provide concrete expressions of its practice. Texts may depict a village as a narrative construct; archaeology finds the stones and bones and ceramics that show a village's cluttered social and cultural character.

The majority of contributors to this volume bring a wealth of archaeological experience to their analysis; several have directed excavations in Roman Palestine (Aviam, Avshalom-Gorni, Broshi, Edwards, H. Eshel, Levine, Magness). Some of the most recent archaeological evidence is incorporated into their essays, which give them an important and often unique archaeological slant. Yet contributors integrate the narrative world with its own peculiar problems and possibilities into her or his analysis. This is a delicate dance. Some have argued that interpretation of archaeological data and texts should involve two separate enterprises (Strange 1997). Moreover, the specialists needed to interpret the epigraphy, numismatic, and ceramics, not to mention the important anthropological contributions of late, make archaeology a much more multi-faceted enterprise than ever before. The same can be said with the various 'criticisms' that have arisen in the studies of ancient texts (sociological, genre, anthropological, social historical, reader response, to name a few). Indeed one must recognize the complexity involved, which these respective approaches bring to the construction of the past. Contributors to this volume are aware of this disjuncture. Indeed most have adeptly moved from archaeology to text and back for much of their academic career. What becomes clear in the essays is that little point is gained by creating an artificial edifice where text experts stand on one side and the archaeologists on the other.

Using a variety of interpretive frameworks, the following essays balance archaeology and texts to discern intriguing and complex aspects of religion and society in Roman Palestine. The book does not intend to be nor could it be comprehensive. Roman Palestine was simply too complex for a modest book of this sort to attempt that. But collectively the essays address key issues relevant to Roman historians, interpreters of the historical Jesus and subsequent Jesus movements, and those interested in the development of Judaism from Qumran to the rabbis. Each essay addresses one or more of the following themes: the nature of ethnicity and ritual (especially Jewish) and its key indicators; the role of boundaries, especially as they involve the character of public and private space (e.g. the nature of synagogues, the role of gender); the relation between differing ethnic, cultural, social, and political groups; the role of peasants in Roman Palestine; the impact of Roman rule; and the ritual and the regional framework of the Qumran site and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Since Eric Meyers' seminal work brought Galilee to the forefront of archaeological research, Galilee and its environs have played an increasing role in constructions of Roman Palestine (Meyers 1978, 1979, 1988). More regional studies have been done of late in large measure, as Fergus Millar has often remarked, because they elucidate the complex character of the Roman Empire and the many negotiations of power specific to particular regions (e.g. Millar 1983, 1987, 1993).

What constitutes a boundary, whether political, social, cultural, or ethnic has become central in understanding ancient societies. Avshalom-Gorni and Shaked present an intriguing look at the region initially under the control of Herod Philip through an analysis of ceramics and stone vessels found in the course of surveys. They further demarcate boundaries between Jews and non-Jews, work already begun in several other studies (cf. Adan-Bayewitz (1993) and Berlin (2002)) and make clearer than ever how culturally distinctive first century Galilee and its environs were. When Jesus and the early Jesus group crossed from Galilee into non-Jewish territory, they crossed a real cultural boundary. Aviam also uses pottery, a unique ware he calls GCW (Galilean coarse ware), to locate an unknown Gentile population, which if true offers a rare glimpse of a non-Jewish group for whom we have little information. Moreover, it appears that Jewish populations replaced this group in Galilee, providing important insight into the oft-debated question of when Jewish presence came in the pre-Hasmonaean period. But interactions within Galilee were complicated. Aviam argues that neat distinctions between the villages and cities fail to account for elite structures that existed in village and city alike, as do such Jewish features as miqvaot (ritual bathing pools), stone vessels, and the continued circulation of Hasmonaean coins. Moreland also addresses the village character of Galilee but draws heavily on the work of the anthropologist James Scott; his goal is to discern how peasants would react in Galilee of Antipas to the radical dictates of the Jesus movement associated by some scholars with the hypothetical document(s) Q. He challenges

the popular perception that Q portrays Jesus as a peasant and argues that the message of Q would not have resonated with agrarian-based peasants who in fact rejected the movement.

Language invariably plays a role in understanding the question of boundaries (Millard 2000). The degree of literacy and the question of language (Greek, Aramaic, Hebrew) that circulated in villages of the first century have received additional although not conclusive evidence. Eshel and Edwards draw on the recent discovery of an Early Roman abecedary found at the village site of Khirbet Qana (Cana) to discuss the language field and literacy of artisans such as potters, lending credence to the argument that Jesus, some of his disciples and those of the artisan class were capable of a modicum of literacy.

Sepphoris, the capital of Antipas' Galilee, has played a significant role in the constructions of Galilee in recent years. Numerous articles have made it an important linchpin for understanding the character of Galilee as an ancient provincial city (e.g. Meyers 1987, 1999; Meyers *et al.* 1986; Nagy *et al.* 1996; Strange 1992). Moreover, its close association with the rabbinic movement of the second and subsequent centuries lends it a stature not necessarily given cities of comparable size. Sepphoris serves as the starting point to address a difficult and provocative issue, the third century CE appearance and influence of pagan elements in a part of the city generally considered Jewish. Freyne discusses one of the well-known Sepphoris mosaics, which displays a cultic scene with Dionysos as the central character and a drunken Heracles as part of a bacchic revelry and ceremony. Some have suggested that the mosaic, dated to the Severan period, provides clear evidence for a strong pagan presence, if not pagan practice at Sepphoris at the very time the rabbis were holding court just 40 or so meters away. Freyne challenges this view, instead seeing the presentation as an effort by one or more local elites to curry favor with the Severans who closely associated themselves with both Dionysos and Heracles. The scene, Freyne argues, does not provide support for pagan practices nor is there direct evidence of such activity found at Sepphoris for this period. Rather, the mosaic becomes a vehicle to negotiate with Roman power (notably Severan power) and not an expression of ritual activity.

Chancey also addresses the intersection of Roman and local and regional power in his examination of the changing depictions on coins. The coins demonstrate the decreasing autonomy of the Jewish rulers as Roman portraiture, initially avoided on Herodian coins, becomes integral on Herod Agrippa II's presentations and thus exemplifies the increasing role taken by Roman officials in the governance of this troublesome province.

Levine broadens the geographical arena as he examines the evidence for and the character of first century synagogues throughout Palestine. In minute detail, he stresses how the synagogue became a physical presence for local communities and not simply a literary construct for later periods. Moreover, the character of the synagogue evolved on the local level without close ties to any central structure. It served as a key religious and social institution

throughout the first century, establishing a pattern that played a crucial role in subsequent periods. Baker addresses the issue of public space in somewhat different fashion. She argues that neat separations between public and private space and between female and male activity were not as apparent in Roman Palestine as many suppose. Indeed, she proposes that constructs that depict women staying in the home and only men performing public acts reflect nineteenth century western notions rather than ancient ideas of reality. 'Privacy' in architectural remains or in the discourse of the rabbis regarding appropriate 'female' activity indicates that the 'private' was often quite public in character. Peskowitz argues somewhat differently that gendered activity existed, especially in weaving. Both rabbinic traditions and archaeological remains indicate that women were expected to use an out-moded form of weaving using a single beam and loom weights while men could use the new two-beam loom developed in the second century CE as well as the older form. The rabbinic comments are particularly intriguing since they appear to be made after archaeological evidence suggests the old style of weaving had been discontinued a half century earlier.

The debate over ritual and on the appropriate use of archaeological and textual sources for understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls rages on. It finds clear expression in three diverse articles on Qumran and its relation to those scrolls. Magness, who has argued forcefully elsewhere for the association of the archaeological remains at Qumran with the Dead Sea Scrolls, continues her examination of the ritual character of the sect (Magness 2002). She reflects what must still be acknowledged the prevailing view of scholarship regarding the Dead Sea Scrolls and their provenance. Her essay builds on the association of text with site by examining the ritual character of the jars used to hold the Scrolls. The jars, she posits, were created for purposes of purity and thus were fitting containers to hold the most sacred of texts associated with the community. Eshel and Broshi also adhere to the standard argument that the Qumran community were Essenes. They examine briefly alternative views and conclude that the Essene hypothesis remains the best explanation for the evidence at hand. Zangenberg argues that constructs that associate the texts and the site before establishing the regional character of the site misunderstand the character of both. Taking a page from Eric Meyers, he argues that a regional approach is a necessary starting point. He concludes that although the community could have been Essene, trading associations and the ceramic evidence indicate a settlement integrated into the regional trade network, making its location not especially conducive for the secretive, monastic-style community often proposed for the Essenes. His position, sure to generate further debate, is that the common ground between the settlement and those who brought the Scrolls was a concern for Jewish practice and a desire to protect the Scrolls from the Romans.

Collectively, the articles add to our growing understanding of the complex world of Roman Palestine. The character of religion in the various societies that made up Roman Palestine often had intimate links with the political,

social, and cultural concerns of the day. No longer can one neatly separate religious symbols and ideas from the environment in which they operated. Archaeology, anthropology, and close textual analysis all play their part in bringing alive once again a world so far removed from our own.

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2

FIRST CENTURY JEWISH GALILEE

An archaeological perspective

Mordechai Aviam

Not long ago, James Strange drew on archaeological data of the first century CE, to build a virtual scene of Galilee as viewed through the eyes of a first century foreigner (Strange 1997). Like Strange, I examine both recent and long-known finds to shed light on Jewish Galilee in the first century CE. First century Jewish Galilee has attracted the attention of many historians who have only a rudimentary understanding of the archaeological data (e.g. Horsley 1996). More problematic are scholars who use incorrectly the archaeological data, leading them to create a false image of daily life in first century Galilee.[1]

Two brief historical and archaeological discussions preface this chapter: the first addresses the Hasmonaean occupation of Galilee, and the second examines the period of Herod the Great. The chapter pays particular attention to the days of Herod Antipas and the urban transformation of Galilee as well as archaeological finds such as pottery, stone vessels, burial customs, and coins.

The Hasmonaean Revolution

Archaeological evidence over the last decade has demonstrated that ethnic and religious changes occurred in Galilee at the end of the second century BCE. One instance of such change was the identification of "Galilean coarse ware" (GCW) (Figure 2.1), a type of vessel that was probably produced by the pagan population in Galilee during the Persian and Hellenistic periods (Aviam 1993: 453, 1995: 257–258; Frankel *et al.* 2001; Aviam and Amitai 2002). This group of ceramic ware has been found (although not yet thoroughly analyzed) in a large number of sites in mountainous Galilee, mainly in Upper Galilee but also in the northern part of Lower Galilee, as far south as the Tur'an ridge (Figure 2.2). It is found at large sites such as Beer Sheba of Galilee (about 50 dunams), located at the border valley between

Figure 2.1 Galilean coarse ware (GCW) shards from Gush-Halav.

Lower and Upper Galilee, and in tiny sites like the one on the peak of Mount Hod in Upper Galilee (about 0.5 dunam). By the end of the second century BCE, most of the small sites were abandoned and GCW did not continue in use into the next period.

Of particular interest are the finds from Mount Mizpe HaYamim. The preliminary report shows that a temple on the summit of the mountain probably functioned as a regional cult-center. Late Phoenician stone and bronze figurines were found (Figure 2.3), as well as a large quantity of GCW, all belonging to the Late Persian and Hellenistic periods. According to the excavator, the site was abandoned at the end of the second century BCE as a result of a violent act, during which the statues and figurines were desecrated (Frankel 1997: 53). Frankel suggests that the destruction happened during the Hasmonaean conquest.

Equally important were a large amount of GCW and three bronze figurines found during the survey of Beer Sheba of Galilee. A half of a rectangular base of Apis (5 × 3 cm) was identified by the front hoof of the bull. Around the base, there are three inscriptions in three languages. On the front, the inscription in Aramaic reads "קדב" or "sacrifice" (Figure 2.4). On one long side is a hieroglyphic inscription that according to its engraving style looks original. The third inscription is unreadable but looks as if someone

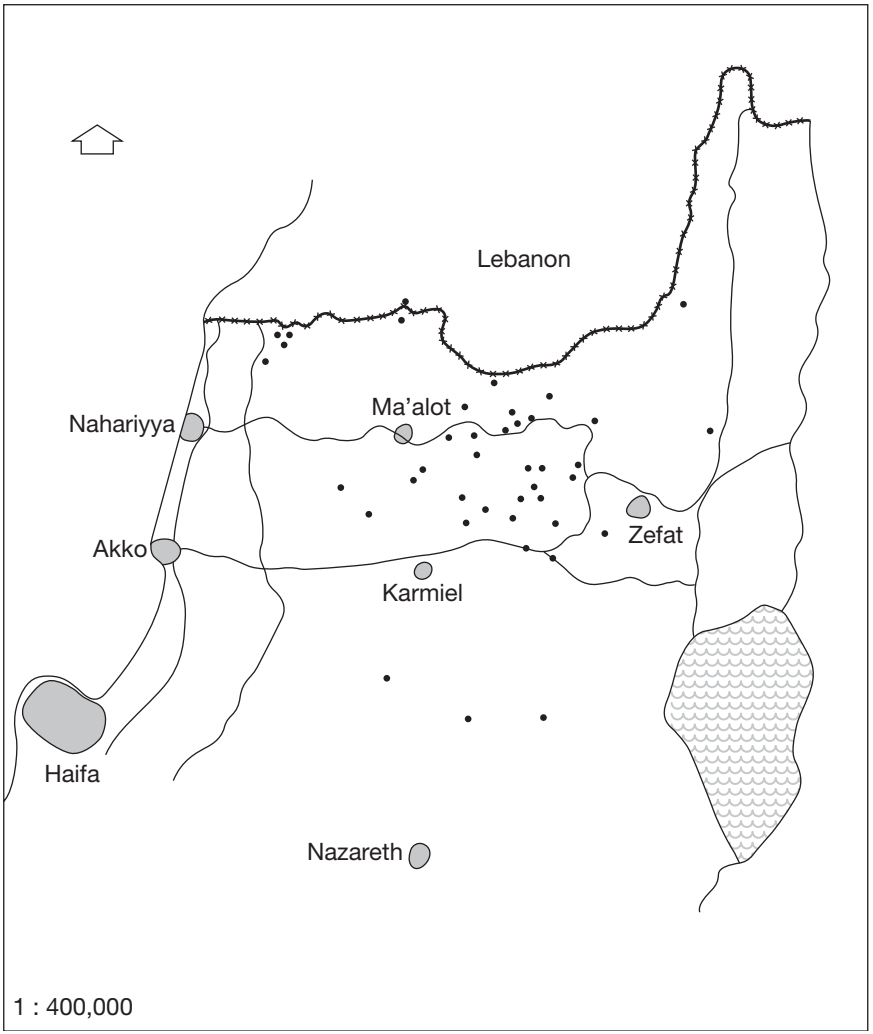

Figure 2.2 Map of GCW site distribution.

copied Greek letters without knowing the language. This object, which originally had only the hieroglyphic inscription, was probably imported from Egypt; the two other inscriptions were probably added at Beer Sheba. The date of the piece is probably Hellenistic because of the Greek inscription. Based on the Aramaic inscription, the figurine was brought to a temple as sacrifice.

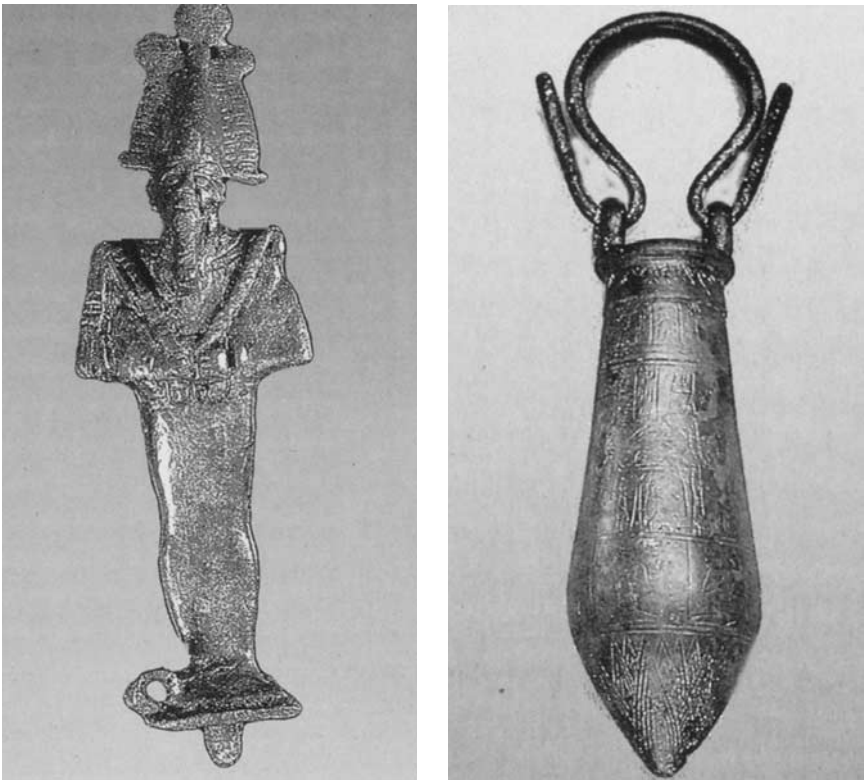

Figure 2.3 (a) Bronze figurine of Osiris; (b) Inscribed *situla* from the temple at Mizpe HaYamim.

The second figurine found in the survey is a bronze torso (5 cm) of a nude woman, possibly Aphrodite (Figure 2.5). It also appears to date to the Hellenistic period, as this type of a nude female is not typical to the Persian period.

The third small figurine (2 cm) depicts Horus the infant (Figure 2.6). This figurine could be worn as a pendant as it has a small loop on its back. It could also be placed upright as suggested by its bottom, which is designed to stick into a base. It is almost identical to a Horus figurine found at Gamla (Gutman 1994: 48), where no Persian period pottery was ever found. Thus, this Beer Sheba figurine also dates to the Hellenistic period. The assemblage of these figurines points to the existence of a sacred place in this fortified settlement during the Hellenistic period.

In the excavations at Yodefat, remains of the earliest settlement were discovered in three different areas. The most important one is located in the

Figure 2.4 Inscribed base of Apis' bull from Beer Sheba of Galilee.

Figure 2.5 Bronze figurine of Aphrodite from Beer Sheba of Galilee.

Figure 2.6 Bronze pendant of Horus "the infant" from Beer Sheba of Galilee.

northwest side of the hill, covered by a massive wall (Figure 2.7). Here are two or three rooms, probably basements, where two complete GCW pithoi and imported, stamped amphora were found together on the floor. The date of the amphora is the second half of the second century BCE.[2] In an associated locus as well as on the bedrock nearby, two typical Hellenistic period

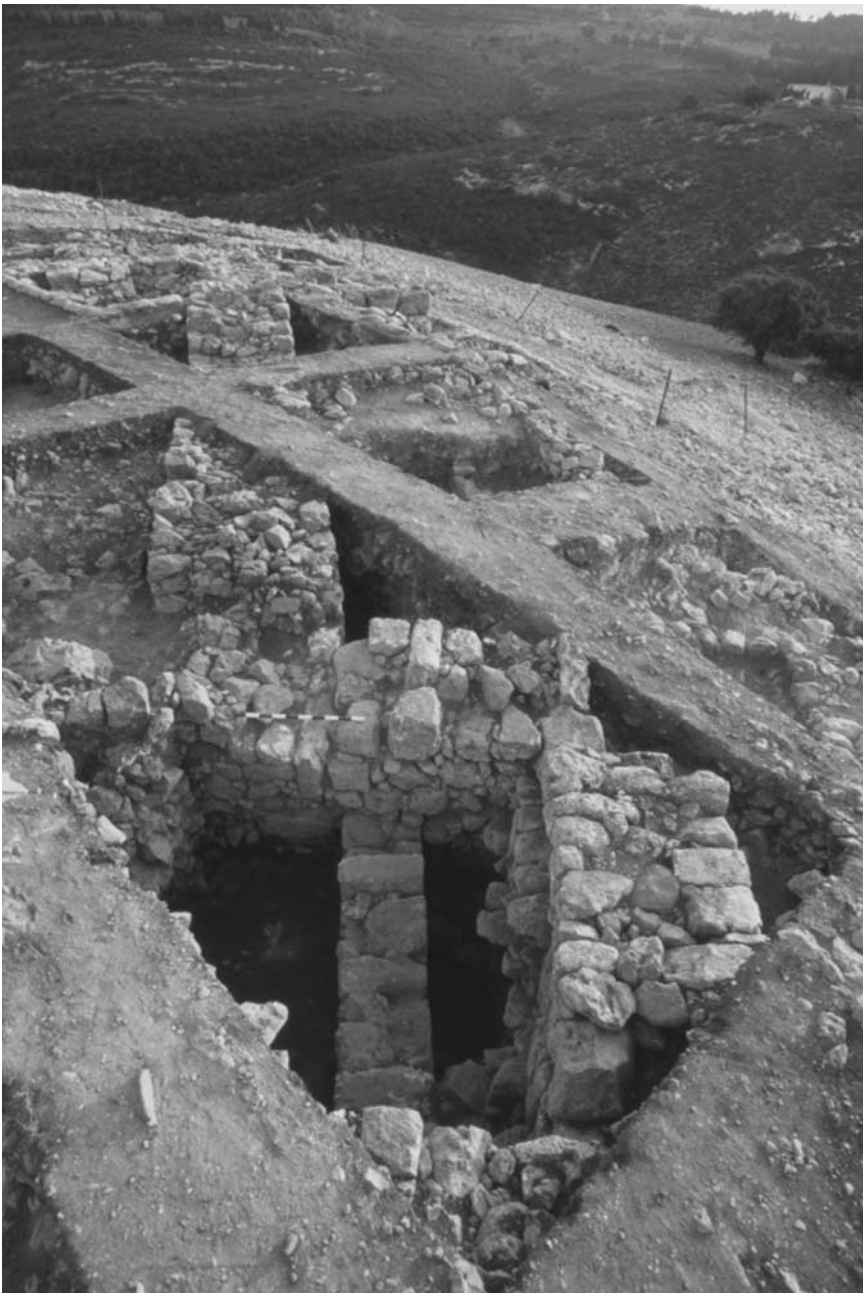

Figure 2.7 Yodefat: the Hasmonaean wall above the early pagan site walls (photograph: H. Smithline).

oil-lamps were found, decorated with erotic figures. These were probably not used by Jews in the Second Temple Period.

A Hellenistic period farmstead was discovered during the excavations at Esh-Shuhara, on the Northern Road of Israel. On one of the floors, a complete GCW pithos was found, as well as many potsherds, coins, and two arrowheads. Some of the coins are from the Hasmonaean dynasty. This site was probably conquered during the Hasmonaean conquest of Galilee (Aviam and Amitai 2002; Syon (2002b) in his report developed a different understanding of the site).

These finds from the various sites are clear evidence of the destruction and abandonment of Late Hellenistic period sites. Further, some demonstrate clear evidence for pagan presence. Three of the sites (Mizpe Yamim, Yodefat, and Esh-Shuhara) were destroyed at the end of the second century BCE, probably during the Hasmonaean conquest of Galilee. Two sites had Hasmonaean coins in the destruction layers or in the superimposed layers.

There are also hints that the knowledge of the industrial olive-press was exported to Galilee at this time (as reflected in the finds of many oil-press installations from the Late Hellenistic period that were found at Marissa). This process probably coincided with immigration of people from crowded Judea to the new territories in the north (Aviam 1994). The newest evidence that supports the conquest and the resettlement of Jews in Galilee is a numismatic survey of Hasmonaean coins. This survey identified many of these coins

Figure 2.8 A Hasmonaean miqveh from Qeren Naftali (photograph: R. Rabinowitz).

in areas that are known in later periods to be Jewish according to remains of synagogues. In contrast, there is almost a total lack of these coins in areas known to be inhabited by gentiles, like Akko. Additional evidence for ethnic change is the identification of four Hasmonaean period miqvaot in the north. Two were uncovered at Gamla (Gutman 1994: 118–122), one at Sepphoris, and one at Qeren Naftali (Figure 2.8).[3]

The time of King Herod: the neglected region of Galilee

At the decline of the Hasmonaean kingdom, loyal Galileans, supporters of the Hasmonaean family, rose up against Herod's attempt to conquer and rule Galilee. According to Josephus, there were battles at Arbel (*War* 1.307–313), and Sepphoris (*War* 1.303), as well as a battle on a fortress in northern Galilee (*War* 1.17.3) in which alien forces were involved. The evidence points to the fortress of Qeren Naftali as the one mentioned by Josephus (Aviam 1997a). A siege complex, found around the mountain, provides evidence for the battle and the conquest of the Hasmonaean garrison's fortress. Moreover, the miqveh at the site was intentionally filled and possibly desecrated when it was used as a dump pit for pigs and other hunted animal bones. The finds of many oil-lamps, decorated with figurative art, as well as the evidence of the "non-kosher" animal bones, and the reuse of the miqveh as a dump, all point to non-Jewish occupation of the fortress at the first century BCE. According to Josephus, Herod used Roman legions as well as "mountaineers" from Lebanon in his campaign against the Galileans, and they, I believe, took over this fortress.

Herod never forgot the Galileans' attitude towards him. During his long reign, according to Josephus, as well as to the absence of any archaeological remains, he never conducted a building project in Galilee.[4] Even the "Royal Palace" mentioned by Josephus (*Ant.* 17.271), is not necessarily a palace built by Herod; it was rather the "Old Palace" of the Hasmonaeans, used by young Herod when he was the King of Galilee. The closest Herodian investment to Galilee was the temple dedicated to Augustus at Paneas, which was not built for Jews. Although Sepphoris was the capital of Galilee and an administration center, no historical or archaeological evidence exists for any Herodian official building there.

Herod Antipas: ethnarch of Galilee

A great change took place in Galilee in the first century CE. Herod Antipas built "Hellenistic-Roman"-style cities in the tradition of his father's activities. According to Josephus (*Ant.* 18.27) Antipas reconstructed Sepphoris and made it a glorious place. At the end of the second decade, he established the new city of Tiberias (*Ant.* 18.27). These huge building activities possibly

included theaters at Sepphoris and Tiberias, even though debate continues as to the date of the Sepphoris theater (either first or second century) and the Tiberias theater has yet to be dated. It is possible that they were both founded in the first century as part of the "Hellenistic-Roman"-style cities established by Herod Antipas in the tradition of his father's activities. Archaeological excavations have uncovered significant remains from the first century CE in both capitals of Galilee. At Tiberias, a monumental, ceremonial gate with two round towers was found at the southern edge of the town (Figure 2.9). From the gate, the *cardo* is leading to the north. Although the *cardo* was dated to the second century CE (in the excavation near the bathhouse), it seems that its beginning, near the gate, is from the first century. The remains of a lavish, first century building were found near the *basilica* (excavated by Y. Hirschfeld, personal communication).

At Sepphoris, although no final reports are yet published, it seems as if the course and foundation for the *cardo* were outlined in the first century, probably at the time of Antipas (McCollough and Edwards 1997). The first stage of the aqueduct to Sepphoris was dated by Tsuk to the first century CE (Tsuk 1985: 61, e).

The Yodefat excavations[5] reveal the entire formation of a first century Galilean rural town. The area of the town is about 47 dunams (13 acres), a place for about 2,000 inhabitants. The houses are simple – almost no ashlars were used as building materials, and most of the floors are made of packed

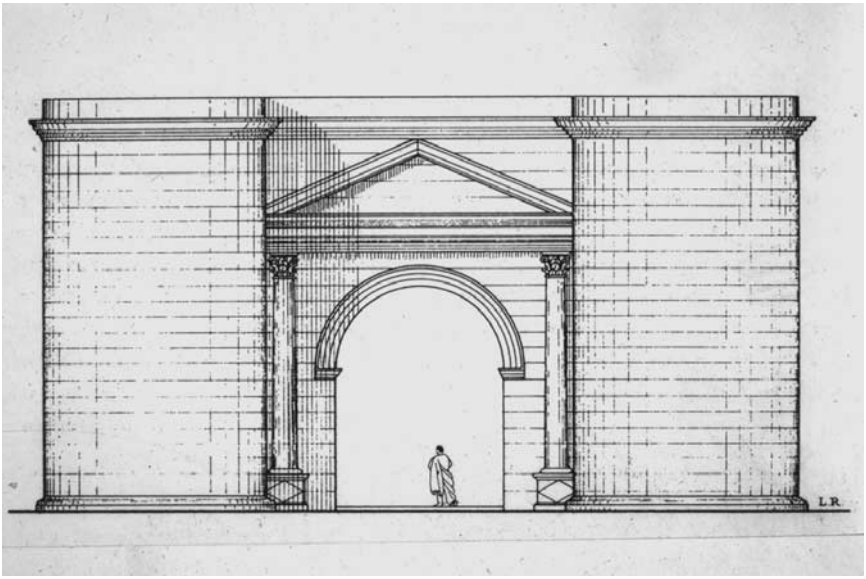

Figure 2.9 A reconstruction of the first century CE gate at Tiberias.

soil, with only one or two made of natural pavers. Two houses include small, simple miqvaot (Adan-Bayewitz and Aviam 1997). A small elite community probably occupied the higher eastern slope of the town's hill, where they lived in large, beautifully decorated mansions. We excavated a portion of one of these buildings. The walls are covered with beautiful frescoes of the "Second Pompean" style and beautifully designed stucco (Figure 2.10). A unique phenomenon was uncovered: the floor was covered with frescoes designed as "*opus sectile*" (Aviam 2000). As a result of the 1999 season I became convinced that Yodefat was an unwalled town, although it is possible that the acropolis was surrounded with the earlier Hasmonaean wall. There is evidence of local industries such as olive oil production (remains of two oil presses), wool weaving (hundreds of clay loom-weights), and a potters' quarter (see p. 18).

By way of comparison, the discussion will include Gamla in Golan. Although Gamla was in the territory of Herod Philip, there is no doubt that it was more connected to Jewish Galilee than to the gentile-populated kingdom of Philip. The finds from Gamla are very similar to those from Yodefat. It was an unwalled town until the war, most of the houses are modest (although they are using mainly draught basalt stones), there is evidence of local industry (olive presses, flour mill), and there is an elite quarter with evidence for frescoes and stucco (although not *in situ*). Pottery, stone vessels, coins (excluding the "Gamla coins"), and miqvaot illustrating

Figure 2.10 Yodefat: the fresco walls from the eastern slope, displayed in the Knesset.

daily life are similar to Yodefat but in larger numbers and from a larger excavated area.

"Walled" cities and towns

There is disagreement between the descriptions of Josephus Flavius and the archaeological data on the issue of the walled cities and towns. Josephus, when discussing the arrangements and activities of the First Revolt in Galilee, portrays some cities and towns as fortified. He speaks about Tiberias, Sepphoris, Jafa (Yafi'a), Giscala (Gush-Halav), and Tarichaeae (Migdal) as places that were walled before he started his own fortifying operation. Yet, excavations at Tiberias, Sepphoris, Giscala, and Tarichaeae reveal no remains of such walls. In his description of his acts in Galilee, he tells how he fortified other small towns and reinforced the walls of the cities. In five sites from this list of "fortified towns", remains of walls were found in surveys or excavations and these are: Gamla, Yodefat, Beer Sheba of Galilee, Mount Tabor, and Arbel (for a detailed discussion, see Aviam and Richardson 2001).

Josephus' historical evidence tells us that there were few fortified towns and cities in Galilee while most of the settlements were unwalled. His acts of fortifying other cities, towns, and villages show a kind of social organization, order, and arrangement in unsafe times as reflected by the walling of Gamla and Yodefat. The current lack of any walls at Tiberias and Sepphoris probably reflects the accidental character of archaeological excavations.

"Made in Galilee" pottery

Information on pottery production in the first century CE in Galilee comes largely from the important research at Kefar Hananya, where mainly cooking pots, cooking bowls, and jugs were produced (Adan-Bayewitz 1993), and at Shikhin, where mainly storage jars were made (Adan-Bayewitz *et al.* 1995). Now finds from Yodefat, where three pottery kilns were uncovered, in what looks to be a "potters' quarter" (Figure 2.11), as well as the discovery of another storage jar production center at Yavor (Avshalom-Gorni 1998: 28) show that there were many more pottery production centers in Galilee than previously known. Cooking pots of similar types to those from Kefar Hananya were produced at Yodefat and probably at other sites as well. Yodefat potters produced at least one type of storage jar, different from the Shikhin storage jar; the potters of Yavor, however, produced jars similar to those from Shikhin.[6] Differences in clay can be distinguished via NAA (neutron activation analysis) or XRF (X-ray fluorescence) tests (Adan-Bayewitz *et al.* 1999), but conclusions about a vessel's provenance and its relationship to local trade can no more be based on a vessel's shape or color only.

Results of NAA from Gamla indicate that most knife-pared oil-lamps were imported from Jerusalem. A similar result was achieved at Yodefat from

Figure 2.11 Yodefat: pottery kilns in the southern part of the town, the eastern one covered by the town wall erected for the First Jewish Revolt (photograph: H. Smithline).

analyses of the same type of oil-lamp.[7] Another type of oil-lamp that was used by Galileans and probably manufactured in some Galilean villages was a boot-shape oil-lamp, sometimes called by scholars "the boat lamp" as it was found in the Kinneret or Sea of Galilee (Sussman 1990). Sussman identified the oil-lamp as a "northern" type. Many fragments of this type were excavated at Gamla and Yodefat as well as in other Galilean, first century sites (Sussman 1990: fn. 8). Very few fragments of typical Roman period "discus" oil lamps were found at Yodefat and at Gamla.

At Yodefat there is a total absence of Early Roman period ETS (eastern *terra sigillata*), while at Gamla there is a small amount of it. In comparison, the finds from the fill of the miqveh at Qeren Naftali (although about 80 years earlier) contained a large amount of ETS as well as many figurative discus oil-lamps, dated to the end of the first century BCE.

Stone vessels

The importance of the provenance and distribution of stone vessels and their correlation to Jewish sites is now well known in the research of first century Judaism (Kahill 1992; Magen 2002). The usage of stone vessels in Galilee is already mentioned in the New Testament in the miracle of changing the

Figure 2.12 Yodefat: a chalk-made pitcher (photograph: R. Rabinowitz).

water to wine at the wedding at Cana (John 2:6). The stone vessels appear in Galilee at the end of the first century BCE and continue to the second century CE. It is further proof of the distribution of Jewish villages in Galilee and the impact Jerusalem had on Galilean life.

Stone vessels were found in many Galilean excavations and surveys. At Sepphoris, Capernaum, and Nabratein, among others, this type of vessel is correlated with first century CE levels. At Gamla and Yodefat, the two first century towns, many vessels (Figure 2.12) and hundreds of shards were found, some on first century destruction level floors. They were made by chisels, lathes, or both. The survey find of a Galilean stone-vessel workshop, north-east of Nazareth, proves that at least some of the stone vessels were produced in Galilee.[8] Up until now, there are very few shards of large stone-footed basins; most are cups and bowls. As in Judea, the usage of stone vessels did not disappear after the destruction of the temple but continued to the second century CE, as proved lately by a new excavation at Arbel.[9]

Burials

Few first century tombs have been found in Galilee and none in the Jewish area. A possible gentile tomb was excavated at HaGoshrim near Paneas with the possible origin of the deceased at Tel Tanim a mile to the southwest (Ovadiah 1999). Others were excavated at Mishmar Ha'Emeq or Gaba

(Siegelman 1990) and another at Kabri in coastal Western Galilee (Stern and Gorin-Rosen 1997; Aviam 1997b). Rock-cut tombs that were found in Jewish Galilean territories contained some first century material but mostly second–fifth century artifacts. The testimony of the finds in these tombs is not sufficient to analyze the burial customs of first century Galilean Jews (see Aviam 2002). Until now, not one Jewish tomb, solely dated to the first century, was excavated in Galilee. The 50 or more stone or clay ossuaries so far located, scientifically excavated in tombs or registered in collections, were found together with first–second century CE material. The ossuaries are very different from the first century Judean ones. This evidence suggests that they should be dated to the second century (Aviam and Syon 2002). Secondary burial in stone or clay ossuaries does not appear in Galilee during the Second Temple period and was brought there only after the destruction of the temple and perhaps only after the Second Revolt (Figure 2.13).

Coins

Jews in Galilee used all kinds of coins that were in circulation – city-coins, Tyrian tetradrachms, Roman dinars, and Jewish coins – as reflected in both first century excavated towns, Yodefat and Gamla. At Gamla the percentage of Antipas' coins is higher than those of Philip although Gamla is located in Philip's territory. This reflects a stronger connection of the Jewish citizens of Gamla to the Jewish Galilee rather than to the gentile territory of Philip.

Another important point is the huge numbers of Hasmonaean coins that were discovered in these two towns. At Gamla, more than 60 percent of the coins are Hasmonaean (Syon 1992–1993) and approximately the same percentage was found at Yodefat. Hasmonaean coins were found in large numbers on the floors of the houses and in the destruction layers. In both towns, the coins were also found in areas that were settled and developed in the mid-first century CE, and not only in earlier quarters from the Hasmonean time. It is impossible to ignore this piece of evidence. It seems highly probable that, in local Galilean commerce and within the Jewish territories, Jews continued to use these old Jewish nationalistic coins.

Summary

The foundations for first century CE Jewish Galilee were laid in the days of the Hasmonaean dynasty. Herod's attitude towards the Galileans and his relationship with them during his 35 years of governing should be characterized as that of neglect, probably as a result of the extreme resistance of the Galileans against him and their support of the Hasmonaeans. Galilee developed into a small, prosperous Jewish kingdom under Herod Antipas. Those were almost 40 years of growing and flourishing, probably with almost no domestic turmoil. The development and expansion of the town of Yodefat to

Figure 2.13 A clay ossuary from a second century tomb at Kabul in Western Galilee (photograph: D. Shalem).

Figure 2.14 Yodefat: a private miqveh in the residential area.

the southern plateau probably dates to the years of Antipas' reign. During these years, Sepphoris and Tiberias grew and developed as "Roman-style" cities of the Jewish Galilee, including the lay-out of the gridded roads, aqueducts, gates, theaters (?), and other public buildings and spaces. As such, they became centers for Jewish economy and autonomy. There are a number of archaeological elements that show differences between Jewish and non-Jewish sites. Strange rightly concludes that "we can detect certain items of Jewish identity in private space" (1997: 47). The massive usage of miqvaot (Figure 2.14) from the first stages of Judaization of Galilee in the Late Hellenistic period to the Late Byzantine period clearly reflects such private use.[10] In addition, the exclusiveness of stone vessels to Jewish territories is illuminated by their distribution. Stone vessels were found in cities, towns, and villages known to be Jewish according to historical sources and archaeological finds. A similar distribution can be found in the circulation of Jewish coins. Archaeology shows a very homogeneous world of daily life all over the Jewish region of Galilee and Golan. This included daily connections to Jerusalem as reflected by the oil-lamp and stone-vessel production. However, there were also local traditions as reflected by the lack of ossuaries.

The rich mansions decorated with frescoes as well as the Roman city-coins point to daily connection to the gentiles around the Jewish territory. At the same time, there is a distinctive phenomenon of avoiding figurative art on walls as well as on oil-lamps and coins, and an avoidance of imported vessels (almost all kinds of vessels). The usage of Hasmonaean coins (and, in Gamla,

the locally minted Revolt coins) also restricted interior frameworks of meanings. The unusual find of the mansion with the frescoes at Yodefat is one of the first and the best pieces of evidence for the existence of upper classes of which we know only from written sources. They existed not only in the cities but also in the rural towns and villages. The normal tension that existed between classes occurred even in a small town like Yodefat and not only between urban and rural areas. Against that backdrop, one must understand the development of the Jesus movement as merely tension between rural and urban societies.

Notes

1 For example, Sawicki's book *Crossing Galilee* (2000) could have made an important contribution to the field of social anthropology, or religion. Unfortunately, her use of archaeology is lamentable. For instance, on p. 25, hazy philosophical ideas of "heaven illumination" and "water from heaven" are mixed with reputed "evidence" from "first century Galilean synagogues". The only structure suggested as a synagogue from the first century in Galilee is the one at Magdala. The excavators characterized it as a "mini-synagogue", hinting at its problematic identification. Netzer more convincingly suggested identifying the building as a *nympheum* or a spring-house. If the identity of the building at Magdala is doubted, there are no more first century Galilean synagogues! There is one at Gamla but that was not used. Other "philosophical" ideas around such things as "light" or "water" detract from an appropriate reading of the evidence and their connection to structures. For an archaeologist, there are also important differences between steps and benches (Sawicki failed in the same place the excavators of Magdala did). Steps were built to climb up or down while benches were used as seats. Each had a very precise function. Similarly, with a miqveh and a synagogue – the buildings have different purposes. The miqveh contains water but I do not think that the synagogue contained light. It contained people. It could contain people during day and night but it could contain light only during the day.

2 The stamp was read by D.T. Ariel.

3 The site was excavated in the summer of 2000 on behalf of the University of Rochester and the Israel Antiquities Authority, directed by M. Aviam with the help of W.S. Green.

4 Richardson expresses a bit of hesitation while discussing Herod's building activities in Galilee (Richardson 1996: 175–176). In my opinion, Herod avoided serious investments in Galilee.

5 The Yodefat excavations were conducted during seven seasons from 1992 to 1997 and in 1999, directed by M. Aviam with the help of W.S. Green. In the season of 1992 D. Edwards from the University of Puget Sound was a co-director. In the seasons of 1992–1994 D. Adan-Bayewitz from Bar Ilan University was a co-director. The first preliminary report was published (Adan-Bayewitz and Aviam 1997). A summary of the seven seasons was later published (Aviam 2000).

6 Recently, another "Kefar Hananya-like" production center was discovered in the survey of Golan. I would like to thank the surveyor, M. Hartal, for his permission to mention it here.

7 The petrography analysis was made by A. Shapiro. NAA was made on this type of oil-lamp from three different places (Jerusalem, Ovdat, and Meiron), and the results showed that they were all produced in Jerusalem (Gunneweg and Perlman 1985).

8 In December 2001 a large factory-cave of stone vessels was discovered and excavated in Galilee, south of Nazareth. The date of this production center is not clear but is either first or second century CE. While comparing the types of vessels from the cave to those found at Yodefat, the excavator said that it seems to him that the vessels from Yodefat are different, which points to at least one other production center in Galilee and maybe many more. I would like to thank D. Amit, the excavator, for the permission to mention it here.

9 The excavations at Arbel were conducted by M. Aviam with the help of D. Shalem on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority. A series of rooms on the western edge of the ancient village were uncovered and dated to the end of the Byzantine period. In one place, an earlier floor was found that included some complete clay vessels as well as stone vessels and a coin. They were dated to the second century.

10 Two Late Byzantine period miqvaot were uncovered during my recent excavation at the ancient Jewish village of Arbel (see note 9). They belong to only a few datable miqvaot from that period.

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3

JEWISH SETTLEMENT IN THE SOUTHEASTERN HULA VALLEY IN THE FIRST CENTURY CE

Idan Shaked and Dina Avshalom-Gorni

The Hula valley, situated between the Golan and Upper Galilee, forms the geographical element linking the two regions. Its position lends a special meaning to any information concerning settlement patterns in the valley in different periods.

Clear delineation of the material culture of the various inhabitants of the valley provides an important means to define settlement boundaries in the first century CE. Josephus had in mind such boundaries when describing the extent of Jewish Galilee. The following analysis of the results of a recent Hula Valley archaeological survey will provide the data that shows such demarcations. Moreover, it provides important new evidence that identifies the location of 'Thella on the Jordan', the Jewish village which, according to Josephus, formed the northeastern limit of Jewish Galilee.

During the last decade an archaeological survey was conducted in the Hula valley, which included the slopes of the Naftali range on the west and the slopes of the Golan Heights.[1] A large amount of data was collected on ancient settlements of many periods and some 70 sites were identified that were settled in the various phases of the Roman and Byzantine periods.[2] This chapter focuses on the pottery and Jewish limestone vessels found during the survey.

Pottery

Pottery is the most abundant class of artifact at all archaeological sites, and easily analyzed. Its relatively short life span and rapid evolution allow for observations concerning the social and economic organization of the society that created the pottery vessels, most notably displaying the existence of local traditions as evident in the geographical distribution of pottery types. In the present survey 644 rim shards dated to the Early Roman period were counted

and classified typologically,[3] as well as 16 Jewish limestone vessel fragments. This database was divided into four groups of vessels (Table 3.1):

- *First group*: Imported *terra sigillata* bowls (ETSA), made of finely levigated clay and covered by a thick, red slip. Their appearance in the region is dated to the middle of the second century BCE (Slane 1997: 264).
- *Second group*: Iturean pithoi.[4] These are large storage vessels, with a thickened, outfolded rim, decorated with piecrust-like thumb impressions or with rope decoration. The neck is short, the body baggy and two handles attach to the shoulder. These pithoi are hand-made; only the rim and base are wheel-made. The base is pointed, with marks showing the turning of the potter's wheel. These pithoi are commonly found at sites in the northern Golan and on Mt Hermon (Hartal 2001: 88–89, fig. 140: 1–6). S. Gutmann (1973a: 204–245; 1973b) proposed to identify these vessels as Iturean. Such vessels appear at Tel 'Anafa already in the first century BCE (Berlin 1997: 157, Pl. 59: 488–491).
- *Third group*: Consists of two families of vessels, typologically similar to vessels with known provenance in Galilee.

  The first family contains four vessels of types similar to the early types manufactured at Kefar Hananya (Adan-Bayewitz 1993):

  1 Open bowls with a rounded rim with a single groove, dated from the end of the first century BCE to the end of the third century CE (Adan-Bayewitz 1993: pl. 1A).
  2 Round cooking bowls with a flat, out-turned rim and two handles attached from the rim with the body, dated from the middle of the first century BCE to the middle of the first century CE (Adan-Bayewitz 1993: pl. 3A).
  3 Round cooking pots with a neck, simple rims with a groove on the inner side and two handles attached from the rim to the shoulder, dated from the middle of the first century BCE to the middle of the first century CE (Adan-Bayewitz 1993: pl. 4A).
  4 Round cooking pots with a tall neck, flat rim with two grooves and handles attached from the rim to the shoulder, dated from the middle of the first to the middle of the second century CE (Adan-Bayewitz 1993: pl. 4B).

  The second family consists of bag-shaped storage jars with a stepped rim, and a round or flat shoulder with dense ribbing. At the juncture of the shoulder and body there is at times a ridge, and this is also where two small, rounded handles with two ridges are attached. These jars are similar in shape and fabric to the jars that were manufactured at Shikhin (Adan-Bayewitz and Wieder 1992: fig. 5.5). They are also known from Capernaum, where they are dated from 63 BCE to 135 CE (Loffreda 1974: fig. 1.1) and see also the discussion by Avshalom-Gorni (1998: 53–55).

Table 3.1 List of sites in Hula Valley survey

Name of the site	*Site number*	*X*	*Y*	*Jewish pottery*	*Lamp*	*Stone vessel*	*Eastern* terra sigillata	*Iturean pithoi*
Kh. Maqbarat Banat Yaqub	1	2091	2708	39		10	13	
Kh. Ed Dureijat	2	2096	2705	5		1	3	
Almaniya	3	2051	2755				9	
Tel Reamim	4	2048	2780	2			15	
Kh. El Harrawi	5	2029	2773	9			44	
Kh. Jalabine	6	2109	2719			1		
Kh. Ein Tina	7	2104	2759	26		2	1	
Darbashiya-South	8	2111	2762	1			3	4
Kh. Zahmul	9	2098	2781	15				
Ureifiya	10	2110	2792	23		3	3	
Tel Sh. Mahmud	11	2108	2816	4	1			
Lehavot Habashan	12	2108	2827	1				
Kh. Khiyam El Walid	13	2113	2831	2				
Kh. Samman	14	2121	2869		2			
Zomet Gome	15	2032	2856	5	1		15	
Kh. Nezer	16	2024	2869				3	
Korperativ Galil Elyon	17	2034	2888	2			10	6
Tel Wawiyat	18	2055	2909	4			17	2
Tel Wawiyat	19	2055	2909					1
Tel Sh. Yusuf	20	2080	2874	5			16	
Zuk Margalyot	21	2019	2902	6			28	1
Kh. Zbiv	22	2025	2903					1
Givat Shkhumit	23	2042	2896	10			25	6
Tel Barom	24	2043	2921	1			13	
Hunin	25	2011	1291				10	6
Tel Beit Ahu	26	2059	2923	1			6	2
Kh. Ruweihina	27	2033	2949	9			14	4
Tel Hanapakh	28	2088	2898				1	
Qeitiya	29	2078	2893	4			24	2
Khisass	30	2082	2922				6	3
Dan-Hazbani	31	2084	2931				1	2
Three Trees	32	2086	2928	4			10	3
Kh. Sharf Ed Din	33	2033	2940	1			2	3
Kh. Nuha	34	2026	1295				7	
Zuk Al Fauqani	35	2055	2942				14	
Kh. Meidan-West	36	2081	2938				4	
Har Zfiya	37	2037	1297				4	1
Metulla	38	2043	2977					1
Rag'r	39	2085	2969	1			2	
Tel Kalil	40	2110	2887				6	
Kh. Ein Zagh	41	2115	2882	1			9	2
Zuk Zakef	42	2122	2884				6	6
Sheikh Ranem	43	2112	2893				3	1
Tel Sakharaj	44	2106	2893				4	
Dafna West	45	2096	2930				12	
Nebi Huda West	46	2114	2916				1	1
Tel Azaziyat	47	2126	2929				6	2
Kh. Omrit	48	2123	2915					2
Dafna North	49	2100	2934					9
Shuka Takhta	50	2099	2937					
Kh. Nukheila	51	2111	2957				1	5

- *Fourth group*: Includes the knife-pared lamps. These are wheel-made clay lamps, on which the hand-made nozzle was attached to the body and the juncture pared with a knife. These lamps are dated to the first century CE, up to 70 CE, and they appear mainly in areas inhabited by Jews (Barag and Hershkovitz 1995: 46–47).

Pottery vessels of the first group are commonly found at Phoenician sites, such as in western Galilee (Frankel *et al.* 2001: 113). The pithoi from the second group are commonly found at sites of the northern Golan and Hermon (Hartal 2001: 88–89). Vessels of the third group are usually held to be material culture characteristic of Jewish settlement in the first century CE. Frankel *et al.* (2001: 113, 132) equate these vessels with Jewish territories in Galilee in the Early Roman period. Jewish Halakha demanded a strict observance of the ritual purity of pottery (Vitto 1986: 47–64). Thus, a prospective buyer of a pottery vessel to be brought as an offering was advised to spend the night near the kiln to ensure no stranger touched the vessel and contaminated it (M. Para 5: 1). The same source also recommends from which row in the kiln to choose a vessel to ensure its purity.

Jewish stone vessels from the survey

These are cups and bowls made of soft chalk. They appear in the Rabbinical literature as vessels incapable of becoming impure (M. Kelim 10: 1; Beiza 2: 9; Para 3: 1) and are regarded as material culture characteristic of Jewish settlement in the first century CE (Cahill 1992: 198–236, plan 63 on p. 230; Itah 2002: 81).

A distribution map of pottery vessels and lamps (Figure 3.1) at survey sites in the southeastern Hula valley[5] shows a predominance of the third and fourth groups, i.e. the Jewish vessels, which form over 50 percent of the finds. In contrast, at sites distant only a few kilometers in the northeastern part of the valley, the share of ETSA wares and Iturean pithoi rises to over 50 percent. The distribution limit of the Kefar Hananya-like pottery vessels in the southeastern Hula valley matches that of the chalk vessels. Such vessels were found at five sites located close together,[6] a sequence that appears not to be coincidental.[7] Thus, the border between the ethnic groups in the Hula valley should be drawn near present day Kibbutz Gonen (Figure 3.1),[8] throwing fresh light on the question of the limits of the Jewish settlement in the southeastern Hula valley in the first century CE. This boundary is part of the northern limit of Jewish settlement in all of Galilee, for which there is only scant historical evidence.

On the identification of 'Thella near to Jordan'

The drawing of the limits of the Jewish settlement in the southern Hula valley in the first century CE, as it appears from the evidence of material

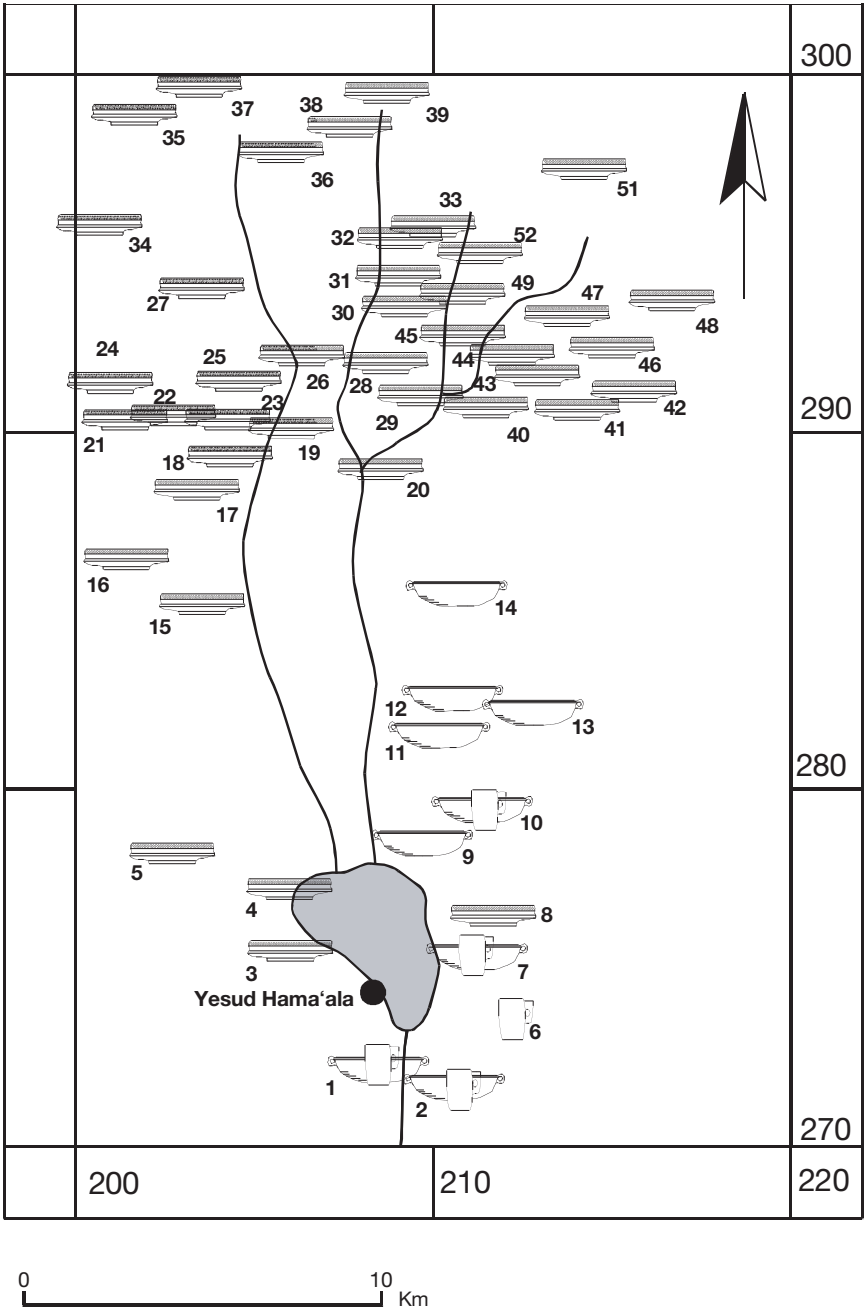

Figure 3.1 Map of pottery vessel and lamp distribution in the southeastern Hula valley.

culture, matches well the description of Jewish Galilee by Josephus (*War* 3:3:1). Detailing the borders of Upper and Lower Galilee, Josephus mentions that the northern boundary of Galilee extends 'from Meloth (Meroth) to Thella, a village near to Jordan', and adds that '[the boundary] divides the land of the Tyrians from [Galilee]'. Meroth is now securely identified at Kh. Marus (map ref. 1998–2707), *c.*4.5 km northwest of Kibbutz Ayyelet Hashahar (Ilan and Damati 1987: 11–16). At the site were found Jewish chalk vessels (Damati, personal communication), miqvaot (ritual baths), hiding complexes and a synagogue dated to the fourth century, all evidence of a continued Jewish settlement throughout the Roman period.

The presently accepted identification of 'Thella near to Jordan' is at Tel Talil, on the shores of the Hula lake (Lake Semechonitis of the Roman period), or, more precisely, at the site of 'the synagogue' on the eastern edges of the modern settlement of Yesud Hama'ala, *c.*700 m south of the tel. This identification is based mainly on the results of an excavation conducted by A. Biran (Biran and Shoham 1987: 199–207), in which a public building that was discovered was identified as a fourth or fifth century CE synagogue. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries CE the building served as a sugar factory. The identification as a synagogue relied on the building's plan, architectural elements made of basalt found within, which originated in a Roman-Byzantine period synagogue, and on historical reports from the late nineteenth century, mentioning an Aramaic dedicatory inscription found at the site when Yesud Hama'ala was being built. The identification of the building as a synagogue was the principal reason for suggesting that the site was a Jewish settlement in the time of Josephus. However, during the excavation no pottery, coins or any other artifact was found to support such a dating (Biran and Shoham 1987: 202). Furthermore, during infrastructure works and surveys throughout Yesud Hama'ala in recent years, the 'synagogue' site and its vicinity were investigated and, again, no finds datable to the first century CE were found. Thus, a re-evaluation of the finds suggests that the architectural elements found at the site, which were assigned by the excavators to a 'synagogue', were in fact not *in situ* and were brought as part of the building project of the medieval sugar factory, constructed in the late twelfth or thirteenth century. The row of basalt columns assigned to the 'synagogue' stand on limestone bases dressed with raised bosses that bear diagonal chisel marks. The workmanship on these stones is identical to stones found at the Crusader castle of Vadum Jacob (Chastelet, Mezad 'Ateret) that was destroyed in 1180 CE. The dressed basalt elements also appear to have been building stones collected from ruins that existed in various periods. This effort was for the construction of a sugar factory in the Ayyubid or early Mamluk period, at a site situated at the edge of an alluvial plain, far from any source of rock suitable for quarrying building stone (Shaked 1998: 44–46; 1999: 143–145). The identification of the site with Thella is also doubtful because it is located on the shore of Lake Semechonitis, rather than on the Jordan, as implied by Josephus.

We propose a new identification for 'Thella near to Jordan' based on the results of the archaeological survey conducted at Kh. Makbarat Banat Yakub. The size of the tel is *c.*15 dunams (4 acres) and it is situated on the west bank of the Jordan river, near its outlet from the historical Lake Semechonitis. At the foot of the mound there is a group of fords on the river of strategic value, being the nearest group of fords to the outlet of the lake. In the ancient world borders usually occurred at points where main roads crossed them (Frankel and Getzov 1997: 20*–21*). The survey finds indicate an almost continuous occupation of the tel from the Iron Age through the late Hellenistic and Roman periods to the Byzantine and medieval periods. The site is particularly rich in finds from the Early and Late Roman periods, with *c.*70 percent of the pottery similar to the early types of Kefar Hananya and Shikhin wares (Early Roman period). The site yielded also the largest and most diverse assemblage of Jewish chalk vessels in the region.

The characteristically Jewish material culture at the site in the Early Roman period, its size in relation to other sites of the period and its strategic location on the Jordan River, near the fords and on a road, are the basis for the new identification proposed here for 'Thella near to Jordan' of Josephus.

Summary

Though the Hula valley archaeological survey is modest in scope and sample size, its results, coupled with extant historical sources, allow us to discern the ethnic character of settlements in the first century CE, and to identify Jewish settlements. The characterization of material culture in the southeastern Hula valley as belonging to a Jewish population allows further refinement of the boundary of the Jewish settlement in the region during the first century CE; it passes south of Kibbutz Gonen. This boundary line conforms very well with a new identification proposed for 'Thella near to Jordan' of Josephus. In short, the study assists in bridging the existing gap between historical and archaeological research concerning the Jewish settlement in the Hula valley, especially between the Golan and the Jewish Galilee.

Notes

1 The survey was conducted by Idan Shaked on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA), as part of his superintendent duties in the years 1990–2001. It began with the Dan and Metulla maps in the framework of the Survey of Israel project and eventually encompassed all the Hula valley in an effort led by the IAA to identify, demarcate and legally affirm the status of antiquity sites in the region.

2 In the survey 62 sites yielded Early Roman period finds, 56 sites yielded Late Roman period finds and 30 sites yielded Byzantine period finds.

3 In the course of the survey an effort was made to collect the largest possible sample at each site, in the assumption that a greater database would better reflect the processes on the site.

4 These pithoi are also known as the Golan Pithoi. See detailed discussion in Hartal (2001: 88–89; 2002: 93–103).
5 In the northwestern Hula valley no sites were identified that were occupied in the Early Roman period.
6 In the early stages of the survey no such Jewish chalk vessels were identified, but following the finding of such vessels at the site of Kh. Makbarat Banat Yakub special effort was made to search for them. Subsequently more vessels were found at other sites in the southern Hula valley, and a re-examination of the Korazim plateau survey collection (Yosef Stepansky, personal communication) yielded such vessels as well. The fact that chalk vessels were found in surveys of Galilee, Korazim plateau and southern Hula valley is in stark contrast to the absence of such vessels in the Golan surveys, and especially in the group of settlements of the first century CE identified around the Jewish city of Gamla. See recently Ben David (2000). In our opinion, further research in the Golan will eventually yield such vessels.
7 The place of manufacture of the chalk vessels found in the southern Hula valley and the Korazim plateau is uncertain, and local manufacture cannot be ruled out. One such manufacturing center was identified in the Lower Galilee, near the village of Reine (Gal 1991).
8 We wish to thank Nimrod Getzov for drawing the map and for his contribution to this chapter.

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4

THE GALILEAN RESPONSE TO EARLIEST CHRISTIANITY

A cross-cultural study of the subsistence ethic

Milton Moreland

This essay focuses on analogical method and its application in the reconstruction of ancient societies and groups with special attention to the description of the culture and lifestyles of ancient rural populations. With a sparse, though expanding, collection of data from the field of archaeology, and with limited literary information about the majority rural population of ancient Galilee, several scholars have recently turned to ethnographic and anthropological studies of modern agrarian-based groups in order to facilitate the process of describing the rural population of subsistence farmers and village peasants of Early Roman (ER) Galilee. This essay incorporates this type of comparative research to answer an often neglected issue from the field of Christian origins: why Christianity so quickly became part of the ER urban setting (Jerusalem, Antioch, Damascus, Caesarea, etc.), while our evidence suggests that the movement was virtually unknown in the rural context of Galilee (Taylor 1993).[1] I first examine the idea of a protective "moral economy" among modern peasant groups, and illustrate how the same ideological agenda could be relevant in the village settings of ER Galilee. The eventual failure of Christianity to establish a viable community in Galilee in the first century, I suggest, can be found in the intense opposition among peasant populations to disruptions in their protective social fabric. If Christianity was seen as a threat to the essential safety mechanisms of the peasant subsistence ethic, this helps explain why the movement did not attract a membership among the majority of the ancient Galileans.

The common explanation for the rapid shift toward urban centers derives from an understanding that the urban milieu is more conducive to Christianity due to four advantages: (1) an openness to change and acceptance of new ideas and movements; (2) greater economic potential, in particular the access to a more extensive patronage system; (3) a higher density of disconnected individuals or people removed from traditional kin-groups; and (4)

previously established group structures (associations and clubs, besides the synagogue network) that could be used as models for an early Christian movement (Meeks 1983; MacMullen 1974). Can the same conclusions be reached from the opposite end of the spectrum? That is, can it be shown through an analysis of agrarian populations that rural settings were disadvantageous to a movement like early Christianity? Thus, were rural populations: (1) socially closed and unreceptive to new ideas and groups; (2) unable to provide the necessary financial opportunities needed by a new movement; (3) less inhabited by people removed from traditional social relations; and (4) lacking preexistent associations or clubs that the urban sites provided?

Modern peasant groups and their responses to social and political movements offer analogies similar to those encountered in ER Galilee – the primary setting of Jesus and his followers – and may help explain both the rise and eventual departure of Jesus' followers from the region. Appropriate cross-cultural comparisons depend primarily on finding groups that have similar cultural, economic, administrative, and social conditions to those found in the typical reconstructions of life in ER Galilee. No comparative group is perfect; the key factor is to identify similar modern communities that have been carefully studied in order to establish a credible hypothesis about certain social or economic factors in the life of ancient people.[2]

A general consensus exists among archaeologists that early first century Galilee was an agrarian society facing new socio-economic challenges with the establishment of a colonial administration. The rise of the Herodian administrative centers of Sepphoris and Tiberias affected the residents of the extensive network of small agriculturally based villages in a variety of ways. Cross-cultural studies that focus on pre-capitalist agrarian groups facing the rise of new urban centers and more stringent administrative structures provide a basis for comparison and inductive inferences about what life was like for the peasant population of ER Galilee during this period of Herodian administrative control. James C. Scott's (1976) detailed analysis of peasant ideologies and peasant struggles in the midst of colonial administrative pressures is one of several helpful anthropological studies.[3] While ER Galilee is not entirely equivalent to any one particular social setting studied by Scott, whose ethnographic work was primarily in the village contexts of Asia during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, several key similarities exist. Both ER Galilee and Scott's Asian villages include pre-capitalist financial systems, an agriculturally based economy, people living under a colonial power, and the construction of new urban centers in the midst of a predominant agrarian village context.

Scott offers an expansive, cross-cultural model that describes how agrarian people (especially rural peasants) typically act and think when faced with the power structures of the elites (usually operating from an urban setting). Scott's anthropological study of peasant life deals specifically with the *ideology* of peasant groups and a detailed model for how agrarian villagers might reject a religious movement like early Christianity in ER Galilee.

Key elements of peasant ideology

Four key elements of peasant culture, ideology, and ethics are important to this discussion: (1) an overarching desire for safety; (2) a need for risk-sharing measures; (3) a generally negative impact of administrative urban centers on their agrarian villages; and (4) a common lack of overt resistance measures against the new administrative controls. Peasant life, according to these anthropological studies, views as foundational that agrarian peasants are primarily interested in maintaining a stable economic and social environment. The key to their continued existence is a subsistence ethic motivated by survival, rather than altruism or radical egalitarianism (Scott 1976: 5–6).

Agrarian peasants tend to live at a subsistence level where there is a tangible need to apply the principle of "safety-first."[4] Agrarian peasants survive through the production of food "mostly for their own consumption, direct or indirect, and for the fulfillment of obligations to holders of political and economic power" (Shanin 1987: 3). To guarantee survival most peasants limit risk-taking. Scott notes: "There is a defensive perimeter around subsistence routines within which risks are avoided as potentially catastrophic and outside of which a more bourgeois calculus of profit prevails" (1976: 24). Thus, peasants have very different approaches to economic and social decision making than the capitalist entrepreneur. Again, Scott suggests:

> [A peasant] works close enough to the margin that he has a great deal to lose by miscalculating; his limited techniques and the whims of weather expose him, more than most producers, to unavoidable risks; the relative absence of alternatives for gainful employment offer him precious little in the way of economic insurance.
>
> (1976: 25)

Thus, the need for safety and conservation is of primary importance.

The second element of peasant life is the development of redistributive norms and risk-sharing measures that provide a limited degree of security in a peasant society. By living in small village settings, peasants have access to regional trade and manufacturing jobs that exist in these communities. The peasant village is also the central locale for the redistributive norms that are at the heart of peasant ideology. In order to buffer themselves against the precarious nature of their subsistence lifestyles, peasants depend heavily on the "risk-sharing value of the village and kin-group" (Scott 1976: 57). This "subsistence security" is the core goal of the "village redistributive norms" in which "the position of the better-off appears to be legitimized only to the extent that their resources are employed in ways which meet the broadly defined welfare needs of villagers" (Scott 1976: 41).

Peasants depend heavily for their security on the relationships they have within the village structure. Shared labor and resources among the village kin-group is a key component of subsistence living. But it only extends so

far: "Kinsmen normally feel obliged to do what they can for a close relative in trouble, but they can offer no more than the pool of resources at their command" (Scott 1976: 27). For all types of peasants (smallholders, tenant farmers, agricultural laborers, and poor urban wage laborers) the relationship with the large landowner is a key source of risk insurance. As long as the landowners maintain their side of the tenancy/contract agreement a peasant is assured some security. The ideal landlord is obligated in the patron–client relationship to provide security from poor harvests, and limit risks to the subsistence lifestyle of the peasant (Scott 1976: 51). In the peasant's subsistence ethic there is no demand for what capitalists might consider "fair" distribution practices. The peasant, who provides the majority of the labor in the society, is willing to remain "poor" as the elites become wealthy, as long as the elites maintain the basic safeguards that are needed to insure the peasant's survival.[5] There is also no necessity for altruism or radical egalitarianism. Typically, the redistributive norms are the peasants' subsistence insurance; their survival is not based on charity or philanthropy (Scott 1976: 5).

The third element of peasant life is that peasants suffer in a variety of ways with "the growth of the colonial state and the commercialization of agriculture."[6] The rise of urban centers generally results in an increase in risk, and thus a decrease in stability for rural populations in the immediate context. The power shift that occurs when the elites are able to stabilize and grow their incomes by enforcing economic structures of taxation and rent collection – even during poor harvest years, and when the conventional village structure is in flux – removes many of the peasant's socio-economic insurance channels that are traditionally found in the village context. With the establishment of new urban sites as central administrative centers, the landlords become further removed, economically and physically, from the village setting, often moving to the new cities where they are more protected (Scott 1976: 76). By military force, taxation (especially fixed taxes), and monopolies on necessary nourishment items, the elites put a choke hold on the peasants.

In direct correlation to the gains for the elites, peasants are faced with fewer and fewer choices as they attempt to maintain their traditional lifestyles while encountering "violations of traditional obligations" (Scott 1976: 180). The tenants are often unable to count on the village structure to defend the patron–client relationship, since the landlords have either moved away or are no longer within the kin-group. Additionally, with the increasing need to pay taxes and rents to the elites – which usually is conjoined to a rise in the monetization of the economy – peasants also have fewer choices with regard to what crops to grow and how to grow them; they are pressed to raise cash-crops rather than traditional crops that aid their subsistence lifestyle. This exploitation of the peasant is not only to be understood as a physically debilitating economic violation, but primarily as a breach in the moral relationship between the peasant, the kin-group, and the landowners.

The final element of peasant society relates to the diversity of reactions peasants have when faced with severe exploitation and the upheaval of their traditional subsistence ethic. Rather than revolution, violent resistance, or significant changes in ideology and belief, peasants normally turn to subtle forms of resistance, "calculated conformity," and/or desperate types of self-reliance in order to survive (Kautsky 1982: 273–78). For instance, Scott's conceptions of the "arts of resistance" and the "weapons of the weak" stress not only how seldom peasants resort to public or violent revolt, but also that peasant resistance is not ordinarily concerned with utopian ideals or ideological agendas. For peasants, resistance is based on self-interest and stability. The goal of resistance is not to raise their status from peasant to elite; it is not even intended to bring long-term relief from poverty. The goal is simply to maintain or restore the very basic parameters of the peasant's subsistence ethic. As Scott so forcefully illustrates, resistance customarily comes in the form of "foot dragging and evasion," rather than public resistance and revolt (1985: xvii).

Peasant ideology in the setting of Early Roman Galilee

The setting of ER Galilee suggests that "safety-first" was completely applicable. Like many of the locales examined by Scott, Galilee had a healthy and stable economy and a mild climate. Galilean peasants also had limited outlets beyond their normal farming practices to insure their safety. These alternative means of survival were not evenly distributed among all the regions of Galilee; there is a diversity of regional settings in Galilee that would have offered the peasants distinct survival options (Horsley 1995: 240–55). The peasant living in any of the E–W valleys that cut across lower Galilee experienced a fertile agricultural environment where it would have been possible to have small family plots around the rural villages that could provide additional produce. They might also have supplemented their income by working in one of the several activities associated with the production of olive oil or wine, and they had some forested areas good for limited hunting and wood collection. The peasant farmers around Lake Kinneret had less land immediately available for small family plots – maintained in addition to the regular farming practices. Instead, the lake offered opportunities for fishing and limited participation in the industries associated with the fishing industry that would not have been available to peasants living outside of the lake region (Hanson 1997). In upper Galilee opportunities existed for participation in the activities associated with olive oil production, and there was a more substantial forested area available for wood collection and some hunting. This list of opportunities in each regional area of Galilee could be greatly expanded yet suffices to show the availability of several "safety-valves" for the inhabitants of Galilee.

The "safety-first" element of peasant ideology was also aided by an extensive village network that was spread throughout Galilee, especially in the

valleys of lower Galilee and the region of the lake. Thus, in all likelihood, as a meager means of supplementing the family's existence, the peasant could participate in limited artisan trades typical of village settings: pottery, weaving, glass manufacturing, etc. While certainly not risk-free, the Galilean peasant had several options available during times of extreme conditions that would have provided a very basic safety net.[7]

The element of peasant life referred to as "redistributive norms and risk-sharing measures" seems highly appropriate to the Galilean setting. Galilee was organized around a large network of minor villages. Even with the establishment of the larger urban centers of Sepphoris and Tiberias in the early first century, the village structure was maintained and even expanded in Galilee. Thus, villages could have provided insurance against extreme conditions.[8] Regarding the existence of small landholders, tenancy arrangements, and peasant-landowner relationships in Galilee, we have very little evidence outside of the literary sources. As has often been noted, these literary examples (particularly the parables from the NT gospels) suggest quite normal peasant/tenant struggles, as well as landowner abuses. As Fiensy and Freyne have suggested, except for the absence of royal estates in the immediate region of Galilee (the closest being just to the south in the "Great Plain"), there were similar peasant conditions to what Scott examined in Asia: small to large estates, many small agricultural villages, an increasing absentee landlord structure with "bailiffs" paid to run their estates, and a long pattern of elites maintaining control of the region, passing on the estates to each successive administrator (Fiensy 1991: 55–60; Freyne 1980: 164–65). Within this similar context there is no reason to doubt the existence of the basic elements of redistributive norms and risk-sharing measures in the villages of ER Galilee.[9]

The increase in taxation, administrative structures, absentee landlordism, a gradual monetization of the economy, and shifts in the traditional forms of peasant farming (introduction of new crops and technology as illustrated by Safrai [1994]), most likely had essentially the same effects in ER Galilee as they had in the locales studied by Scott. Because we have clear literary and archaeological data that depicts the establishment of the Herodian cities of Sepphoris and Tiberias in Galilee during the first half of the first century, Scott's model of colonial influences on peasant settings seems well suited to help in the general reconstruction of life during the time of the formation of the early Jesus movement. Despite the rapid shifts brought on by the Herodian building projects, there are signs that suggest a substantial amount of stability prevailed in the region, at least from the late 20s to the late 50s CE. For instance, there were no major fortresses built in the region by the Herodian administration. Unlike the surrounding regions of Herod's empire, Fiensy has illustrated the fact that Galilee was negligibly populated by military personnel or fortress structures.[10] Sepphoris in the ER period was not a fortress, though it was a well-positioned administrative center probably

responsible for tax collection in the surrounding region. Eric Meyers has shown that even the old Hasmonean "castra" on the site was no longer being used as a fortress in the first century, and was completely destroyed and filled in prior to 66 CE (1999: 114, 120–22). From the extant archaeological evidence, it appears that the ER administrative structure in lower Galilee did not employ a complex urban military organization – typical of most agrarian societies – to keep the peace in the rural settings. Nor did any known major natural disasters or extreme environmental conditions occur that would have driven the peasants into deeper poverty during the years projected for the earliest Christian community in Galilee.

In addition to a relatively stable setting – in spite of the urbanization of Galilee – the archaeological data show no signs of extreme wealth among the urban residents of Sepphoris (Reed 1999: 93–96). Moreover, there are reasons to conjecture that the relationships between the new urban contexts and the traditional villages was not as utterly exploitative as has been imagined by some scholars (in agreement with Edwards 1988; 1992).

Thus, one must avoid overstating the types and extent of exploitation of new administrative structures in ER Galilee. No doubt peasants were oppressed, but to claim that they were pressed to the limits of survival is not supportable. The example of Galilee – while not an extreme case – fits well with the majority of Scott's presentation of the wide variety of exploitative conditions that gradually impinge on the subsistence ethic and economic safety-valves of the peasants.

Scott's pattern of peasant resistance measures holds up well for ER Galilee. Peasant revolts in ER Galilee were very rare. Prior to the open revolts of the late 60s, growing tensions existed between elites and non-elites, but the evidence does not support the view that the peasants were threatened by extreme conditions. No major peasant revolts are recorded for the time period, and the extent of social banditry and rural unrest was limited during the time when Jesus' followers formed a community in Galilee. Further, literary evidence (Mishnaic) exists for several of the forms of "foot dragging and evasion" mentioned by Scott. Fiensy has observed that many peasants avoided paying tithes and temple taxes in ER Galilee (1991: 51). The peasants of Galilee appear to fit Scott's evidence for patterns of resistance: although faced with the economic difficulties brought on by the new administrative centers, there was little public rebellion for several generations, and, whenever possible, the peasants avoided participating in the additional layers of taxation that the administration attempted to enforce.

Scott notes that urbanization, at least in the short run, is generally a condition of more prosperous economic times. The first half of the first century was relatively stable with no disastrous natural conditions. But the taxes and labor/land contracts inflicted on the peasants in times of growth do not disappear during economic downturns due to drought, natural disasters, or other conditions of economic or military affliction. Scott observes:

> A period of commercial growth produces a substantial landholding and trading elite whose power is roughly proportional to its size and wealth. To the extent that it has grown robust, to that extent is it in a position to impose its will (either directly or through the state) in lean years.
>
> (1976: 199)

This may provide another insight into the factors that eventually led to public revolt in Palestine in the late 60s CE.

Conclusion

Clear differences exist between subsistence farmers in Asia during the nineteenth through the mid twentieth century and their ancient counterparts in ER Galilee. Colonizing practices were different between the first and twentieth centuries, risk-sharing measures were not exactly the same between the two cultures, the structure of the village context was in some respects dissimilar, and the types of crops available to each group of peasants differed. Nevertheless, key similarities in the basic living conditions, administrative structures, and colonial practices that involved tax collection and the development of new urban centers make studies like that of Scott and other modern anthropologists useful to a historian or archaeologist who is interested in ancient Galilee. This type of analogical inquiry produces inductive hypotheses that allow at least a thumbnail sketch of the life of the rural peasant farmer. As we excavate more village sites in Galilee, a more detailed database will allow greater refinements to this type of research.

But why did Christianity maintain no long-term community in Galilee until after Christian pilgrimages began in the fourth century? The four elements of peasant life and ideology outlined above provide the clues. Any movement that promoted a transformation of the traditional kin-based, social, and economic structures of a peasant village would find it difficult to maintain a long-term involvement in that context. The evidence from first century Galilee suggests that the economic conditions, while altered by the establishment of a more stringent administrative structure, did not reach a point where the majority agrarian population rose in a major rebellion or significantly shifted their belief system to counter the oppressive elites. Rather, a relatively stable transition appears to have occurred during the time when Sepphoris and Tiberias became more prominent urban centers in the midst of the village network. Various forms of Judaism remained as the major religion of the region, and those espousing Christianity apparently moved on to more fertile soil.

The expansion of the administrative centers does help us explain the basic socio-economic system against which many of the sayings of Jesus could have been originally targeted. Jesus and his first followers responded to the

economic shifts that were taking place as more social power and economic controls were shifted to the elites. Peasants in turn struggled to find ways to modify their subsistence lifestyles. But peasants are slow to change their basic routines and ideology. The peasant population of ER Galilee had adequate resources to maintain and even expand the village network at the same time that the urban centers were established. Furthermore, the relatively mild climate, available natural resources, and potential means of supplementing the agrarian-based income with other forms of labor indicate that the Galileans would not have been pushed to an unbearable level of economic pressure very quickly.

Nevertheless, based on the extant sayings of Jesus, especially those from the sayings source Q (a source that is often attributed to a community of Jesus' followers in pre-70 CE Galilee), some residents of Galilee were attracted to a Jewish movement that espoused a critique of wealth and an idea of the "kingdom of God" as a more egalitarian realm. Peasants, especially under extreme conditions, join religious or political movements that give more "social and symbolic meaning" to their subsistence lifestyle and that oppose the ideology of the elites (their "great tradition") who are judged to have rejected the moral regulations of the peasant's existence (Scott 1976: 238). The founding members of the "Jesus movement" were a type of sociopolitical group that critiqued the new Herodian administration as one of its initial purposes. Not all of the sayings attributed to Jesus in Q run counter to the peasant moral economy. Many sayings suggest a desire to support economically destitute members of society by critiquing the elites. Sayings like the blessing on the poor, hungry, mourning, and persecuted (Q/Luke 6:20–23), the guarantee of an answer to prayer (Q/Luke 11:9–13), and the rebuke of the Pharisees and the exegetes of the Law (Q/Luke 11:39–48, 52) could have appealed to peasant populations in the region.

Yet, several prevalent themes in the extant sayings of Jesus run counter to the basic tenets of the moral economy of the peasant. Followers of Jesus who went to a small agricultural village in ER Galilee and who promoted an ideology that challenged kin-group obligations could well have been turned away. Peasant farmers were unlikely to react positively to sayings like Q/Luke 12:53: "For I have come to divide son against father, daughter against her mother, daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law," or Q/Luke 14:26: "If you do not hate your father and mother you cannot be my disciple." Jesus' reply to the person who asked to bury his own father in Q/Luke 9:60: "leave the dead to bury their own dead," is difficult to grasp in any familial context, especially in that of a small agrarian village. Many of these sayings can be understood as part of a plan to establish a fictive kinship group among the followers of Jesus. Mark 3:35, "Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother," stresses prioritizing the new "family" over the physical family. Yet, such fictive kinship was probably viewed skeptically among the subsistence farmers, if it was not rejected outright.

These sayings have a more extreme counter-cultural message than most of the sayings attributed to Jesus. Yet, even many of the sayings promoting altruism and love of neighbor would not necessarily have been easily received in a peasant context (Q/Luke 6:27–31, 36–38). Q/Luke 6:30 is a particular case in point: "Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again." The adoption of this ethic would appear to violate a fundamental tenet of the survival techniques of subsistence farmers.

The transition of earliest Christianity from the villages of Galilee to the more urban centers of the Roman world can be explained in part by paying careful attention to the subsistence ethic of the agrarian peasant. Based on what we can learn about peasant ideology and survival techniques from modern anthropologists, divine security and action promised by the early Christians did not compensate for the required ideological and social shifts in peasant village norms. Early Christian notions of fictive kinship alliances in the "kingdom of God," critiques of those who abuse their social or economic power, and sayings about a coming reversal of fortunes appealed to some members of ancient Galilean society, but the majority peasant population would not have joined the movement.

Notes

1 While the debate about how long the followers of Jesus sustained a community in the area of Galilee has a long and varied history, there are many reasons now to think that Christians were essentially not a significant population, and probably not residents of the region at all, by at least the time of the second war with Rome (135 CE).

2 As Wylie has observed in several key articles on the use of analogy in archaeology and social sciences, a research strategy that involves theorizing based on analogy is at work in any scholarly reconstruction of ancient cultures and communities (Wylie 1982, 1985). Similarly, the recent analysis of the history, theoretical grounding, and scholarly achievements of ethnoarchaeology by David and Kramer (2001) illustrates a variety of ways that analogy is used by modern scholars to reconstruct ancient cultures, both in the area of ethnoarchaeology, as well as in cross-cultural anthropology and ethnography.

3 The studies of Polynyi (1957) and Wolf (1969) were influential for Scott, and are still useful for this discussion.

4 See Scott's full discussion (Scott 1976: 15–26). I refer to "most peasants" because there may be peasants who have "high incomes, abundant land, small families, reliable crop yields, and outside employment opportunities," for whom his argument does not apply (Scott 1976: 25). On the variety of peasant lifestyles see Scott (1985: 244).

5 "That is, differences in status are not illegitimate per se; their moral standing is contingent on how closely would-be patrons conform to the moral expectations of the community at large" (Scott 1976: 170).

6 For Scott's detailed description of the impact of economic and political change on the peasant, see Scott (1976: 56–156).

7 The most useful and thorough studies of these conditions are Fiensy (1991) and Safrai (1994).
8 Among several studies that have surveyed the village settings in Galilee, two basic references are Freyne (1988: 145–66) and Horsley (1996: 88–130).
9 A further element of life in ER Galilee that is difficult to factor into the peasant equation is the sabbatical year tradition. If the sabbatical year was consistently practiced, this would have the potential to increase the stress on the peasants as they would have been forced to make additional preparations in the year prior to the sabbatical year (see Richardson 1996: 236–37). On the limited availability of any of the positive aspects of sabbatical year regulations, see the assessment of Fiensy: "The Sabbatical year legislation regarding cancellation of debts and perhaps release of slaves was largely ignored or abrogated in the late Second Temple period. What had stood as a legal safeguard against impoverishment in perpetuity was now largely removed" (1991: 6).
10 Compare the expansive number of fortress structures built by the Hasmoneans and Herod that are known in Judea and Samaria and their relative paucity in Galilee (Fiensy 1991: 21–60).

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5

LANGUAGE AND WRITING IN EARLY ROMAN GALILEE

Social location of a potter's abecedary from Khirbet Qana

Esther Eshel and Douglas R. Edwards

Language reflects the environment in which persons construct reality. It conveys a variety of meanings depending on context, persons using it, mode of presentation, or type of medium. The language of Galilee in the Early Roman period (63 BCE–135 CE) has been a matter of some debate. What language or languages did the general Jewish public speak and write in the first century? How literate were people in this period? How likely would it be that someone like Jesus, the son of a techton (carpenter? stone mason?), in other words a member of the artisan class, be able to take a scroll of Isaiah and read from it (Luke 4:16–20)? Most constructions of the language fields in which Jesus and Galilean Jews operated come from analysis of texts, all of which were written in Greek (notably Josephus and the New Testament) and parallels drawn from the large corpus of manuscripts in Judaea and surrounding areas (Millard 2000). Josephus of course says that he had an earlier version of his work in his native tongue (*War* I:3), which most suppose to be Aramaic.

Recent archaeological discoveries in Galilee and its environs now provide new evidence for the importance of Aramaic among persons at the same social level as Jesus' family. Moreover, they indicate that writing amongst the artisan class was not out of the ordinary. In 2000, a small fragment of a cooking pot was discovered near a miqveh at Khirbet Qana, one of the traditional sites later associated with Jesus' miracle of changing water to wine (John 2:1–11) (Edwards 2002). On the rim the remains of three letters were incised with a pin prior to putting the cooking pot into the kiln (Figure 5.1).[1] The inscription reads as follows:

]BGD[

Figure 5.1 Ostracon from Khirbet Qana.

Alphabets or part of them were inscribed in various combinations: some include the whole alphabet, while others have only part of it. Thus, we reconstruct]BGD[(Figure 5.2). It seems probable that the inscription included more letters that were preserved on the broken rim.

The letter *beth*, of which the 'roof' and the down-stroke can be seen, as well as the left side of a horizontal base, is missing its 'tail' at the right of the break in the sherd. The second letter is clearly a *gimel* with a top banded backward (Yardeni 2000: 172, type 2b1). This type of *gimel* can be found in P. Mur. 43 (Milik 1961: 159–161, pl. XLVI), which is a letter of Bar Kokhba, and P. XHev/Se 9, which is an Aramaic deed of sale from the first century CE (Yardeni 1997: 38–40, pl. IV, figs 7–8). In these parallels the top and the right stroke were written in one stroke and the top is very short, while in our inscription it was written in two strokes. The top starts a little lower from the meeting point, and is much longer and arched in shape. These differences point to an unskilled scribe. The third letter is a *daleth*. It has a

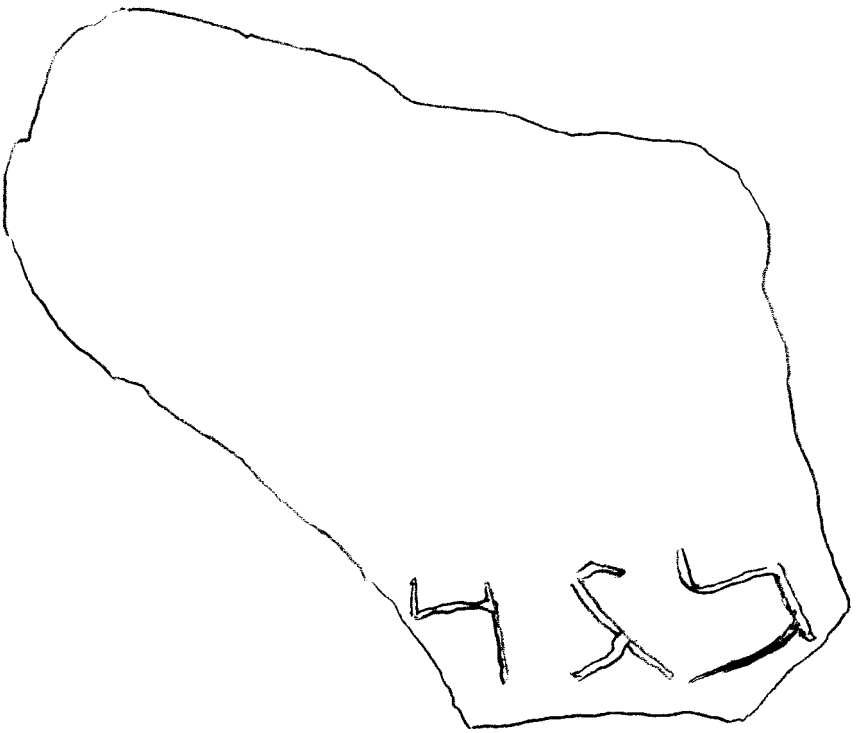

Figure 5.2 Line drawing of ostracon from Khirbet Qana.

serif. The down stroke starts a little before the 'roof'. In short, the Kh. Qana inscription is written in the Jewish formal script.

Based on paleographic analysis, the inscription should be dated to the end of the first century CE or to the beginning of the second century CE. The rim, which is used in dating the sherd, was unfortunately broken in antiquity. The three letters of the Jewish alphabet (Aramaic or Hebrew) – *beth*, *gimel*, and *daleth* – create an abecedary. Someone was probably practicing their ABCs or it was done for apotropaic purposes.

A number of abecedaries have been found in or near Israel (Lemaire 1978: 221–235). Early examples include part of the alphabet written on a jar before it was put into the kiln that was found in Shiqmona. Written in Phoenician script of the fifth–fourth centuries BCE, it includes the letters from *zayin* to *lamed* (Elgavish 1994: 92). Another early ostracon written in Aramaic had the entire alphabet. Found at Elephantine, it dated to the fifth century BCE (Lemaire and Lozachmeur 1997: 99–103).

Most important are abecedary inscriptions written around the turn of the era. In 1953 R. de Vaux discovered an ostracon with abecedary during his excavation in an area located 30 m north of the community center of Qumran. The writing in Aramaic or Hebrew script occurs on the outer part of a jar with remnants of a handle on the lower left side (de Vaux 1954: 29, pl. Xa). This ostracon suggests scribal practice because the alphabet is not written in the ordinary way and some letters were written more than once. The ostracon is associated with Level I, which places its date before 31 BCE (Eshel 2000).

Allegro published a fragment from Cave 4 at Qumran, which he understood as a medical document, thus labeling it 4QTherapeia (1979: 235–240). Later, Naveh identified it as an abecedary, created as a result of scribal practice (1986: 52–55). On it a few nonsense-words appear, followed by a series of letters, some of which appear in alphabetic order. Lines 4–5 list six personal names beginning with *mem*, and lines 6–7 include a list of names in alphabetic order.

An ostracon, which was bought in the Antiquity market by the École Biblique and published by E. Puech, was presumably found in Herodion (Puech 1980). The ostracon includes the letters *aleph–samekh* (line 1) and *'ayin–taw* (line 2), followed by six lines of names in alphabetic order of the letters *aleph–'ayin* (lines 3–8).

At Masada, two fragments of an abecedary written by an unskilled writer were found. The first (no. 606) has the remains of the letters *heh-ḥet* and *mem-zadi*; the second (no. 607) has the first five letters of the alphabet (Yadin and Naveh 1989: 61, pl. 51). In addition, two series of personal names, in alphabetic order, were found (nos. 608–609).[2] The ostracon published by Puech and the two from Masada follow a fixed formula (Yadin and Naveh 1989: 62).

In Murabba'at, two fragments of parchment were discovered, the first with two lines of the alphabet: one with the letters *waw–zadi*, with the addition of another *zadi* and three *kophs* in the following line, and the letters *aleph–resh* below. The second has remains of the letter *ḥet*, and the letters *mem–samekh* (Milik 1961: 91–92, nos. 10b and 11, pls XXVI–XXVII).

Part of the Hebrew alphabet was engraved on ossuaries found in West Jerusalem (Misgav 1996: *47–*49). On this ossuary the letters *ṭet–yod–kaph* (medial and final) were written three times, followed by three *bets* (Milik 1961: 91–92, pls XXVI–XXVII). This inscription was probably used for magical purposes. Another was found in the confluence of the Kidron and Hinnom Valleys (Avni and Greenhut 1996: 12–13, fig. 1.21). The first seven letters of the Hebrew alphabet were written on the covering slabs of the trough. A series of parallels from the Greek world and non-funerary Jewish Greek abecedaries found at Masada probably had magical properties or were efforts to obtain prosperity (Bij De Vaate 1994; and see Hachlili 1999: 145).

Some Greek abecedaries written on ossuaries were also found in Israel. One of them found in Jericho was written in charcoal on a lid, which was probably a part of an ossuary (Hachlili 1999: 145, no. 14, fig. IV.2). It includes nine letters from *alpha* to *zeta*, followed by *eta* and *theta*, and after a horizontal line, the letter *phi* or *psi* was written. This inscription probably had magical significance.

What makes the Kh. Qana find especially significant is the way the letters were written. Most ostraca have writing on them, usually after they are broken. That makes it difficult to determine when they were written and who wrote them, unless the information provides the answer (e.g. so and so paid so and so x amount for y product). Because the letters on the cooking pot were incised into the clay prior to firing, we have the hand of the potter or his assistant. That places the inscription within a particular and identifiable social location, that is the place of manufacture of the artisan creating the pottery. Whether incised by the potter or an assistant the ostracon provides evidence for the language (spoken and written) of someone who was part of or associated with the artisan class in Galilee. Where was the residence for the potter? Almost certainly in Galilee. The fabric is the same as pottery manufactured at Kefar Hananya and it is likely to have come from there.

In sum, the unskilled scribe who wrote the inscription found at Kh. Qana nevertheless shows a familiarity with writing. The writing occurred prior to firing the vessel in the kiln, suggesting that one of the potters or an assistant was familiar enough with writing to practice the alphabet on the clay of a vessel waiting to be fired or to create an abecedary for magical purposes. This abecedary is the first found in a Jewish village in Galilee. Finding such an inscription is evidence for the knowledge of reading and writing in a small village in Galilee in the Early Roman period.

Incisions of ceramic vessels prior to firing were not infrequent in antiquity,[3] although few such finds have occurred in Galilee or surrounding areas. One example comes from an inscribed jar handle from Jalame at the foot of Mt Carmel, dated to the Early Roman period, which has eight Jewish (Aramaic?) characters that read 'Hanania, witness'. This may indicate ownership of the jar or represent some sort of legal designation, perhaps a verification that the jar was of appropriate size (Weinberg 1988: 255–256). Whatever its function, it provides yet one more piece of evidence of the role literacy played in the ceramic trade.

Additional material evidence for the language fields in Early Roman Galilee comes from an ostracon found at Yodefat (Josephus' Jotapata) (Adan-Bayewitz and Aviam 1997: 152, fig. 23; Edwards 1997: 251–252). The ostracon appears to be Aramaic and comes from a context clearly preceding the Jewish revolt in 66 CE against the Romans. The reason for the inscription on the sherd is uncertain but it provides clear evidence for one language field in which Jews operated at this first century village.

The finds from Yodefat, Jalame, and Kh. Qana suggest the importance of Aramaic (or Hebrew) in Galilee. Thus there seems no doubt, if there ever was, as to its significance in Galilean village society. Are these Jews? Such script is not unique to Jews. Aramaic, for example, has been found as part of the dedication to the god Pan (Goodman 2000: 66–68). The dedicants could of course have been Jews as well. The inscription simply does not tell us one way or the other. Yet even though use of Aramaic was not limited to Jews, in Galilee they were the most likely users in this period (Millar 1993: 503). It provides additional evidence to a small corpus in Galilee and Palestine as a whole that Aramaic, and perhaps Hebrew, was part of the lingua franca of the common people in the Early Roman period. It also suggests a modicum of literacy by a craftsman or at least the desire to achieve it on a rudimentary level (cf. Harris 1989), thus making it probable that an artisan like Jesus had some literary training and ability.

Notes

1 Research on the inscription was supported by Jeselsohn Epigraphic Center of Jewish History, Bar Ilan University.

2 In Herodion two complete alphabets were copied on the recto of an ostracon, followed by the name 'ḤYHW. In the recto, the letters *aleph–samekh* were written (with *lamed*). See Testa (1972: 77–80, photo. 28, fig. 53).

3 Cf. similar Latin abecedaries in Britain cut into coarse pottery or tiles prior to firing; for pottery see RIB 2502.6–8; for tiles see RIB 2491.135–145.

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6

DIONYSOS AND HERAKLES IN GALILEE

The Sepphoris mosaic in context

Sean Freyne

The discovery of the now famous Dionysos mosaic from Sepphoris in 1987 is undoubtedly the jewel in the crown of Eric Meyers and his teams' discoveries in Galilee (Meyers *et al.* 1987). This elaborately conceived mosaic, adorning the floor of what must have been the triclinium in a large atrium-style villa, has been rightly acclaimed for the detail of its conception and the superb level of the craftsmanship. Josephus' description of the city as 'the ornament of all Galilee' comes readily to mind in describing the design, colouring and thematic richness of the mosaic. Yet for all the brilliant execution of the work, it has not featured as prominently as one might have expected in subsequent discussions of Galilean culture and society. It seems as though scholars have been so impressed by its brilliance that they have simply continued to admire it, considering it too precious to be questioned in the messy task of piecing together the fabric of social and cultural life in Galilee. So complete and exquisite is the work in its own right (despite some inevitable ravages of time), that it seems to call for the finely tuned skills of art historians to highlight its details rather than the multi-varied competencies with which historians must necessarily operate.

Yet, my own first reaction on hearing of the discovery was to reflect on the cities of Scythopolis and Tyre, cities with which the two deities at the centre of the mosaic – Dionysos and Herakles – had been associated for centuries. Was the mosaic a kind of symbolic meeting of the spheres of influence of these two Greek cities in the heartland of lower Galilee? At least its discovery suggested a re-opening of that question. Did my own resistance to the many portrayals of Galilean life of the first century, which sought to represent it as a cross-roads of cultural interchange, thereby seriously calling into question its Jewish ethos, need to be revised? These issues cannot be dealt with again here, but hopefully I can contribute to such a wider discussion by situating the mosaic in the context of Galilee of the Severan period

(late second to early third century CE), the likely date of the villa's construction. Then I will discuss the possible ideological associations of the mosaic and its representation in the context of Roman policy in the east in the second and third centuries CE.

The familiarity of the designers (and presumably, also, the commissioners) of the mosaic with the Dionysiac mysteries is obvious. The location of the villa, in close proximity to the theatre at Sepphoris, raises the issue of links between the users of the two buildings, in view of the long-standing association of the god with the theatre.[1] Of greater significance still is the detailed knowledge of various aspects of the Dionysiac mythology portrayed in the panels surrounding the central scene, with Greek labels attached to each (Meyers *et al.* 1992: 34–59; Netzer and Weiss 1994; Talgam and Weiss 2004). Furthermore, the procession, partially preserved in an outer panel, has all the hallmarks of a ritual celebration, with the gift-bearers, flute-players and the flora and fauna associated with the god of the vine and vegetation.[2] The medallion of the beautiful lady recalls the popularity of the cult of the god with female devotees, possibly suggesting that the matron of the house was herself an initiate of the Dionysiac mysteries and that the villa may have been the centre for one group of devotees of the god.

The central panel, consisting of Dionysos and Herakles in a drinking scene, is of particular significance. While these two gods are often portrayed together on vases from the classical period, the number of depictions of them engaged in a symposion is rare in the extant artistic remains.[3] It may be significant that there are three mosaic representations of the theme from Syria, two from Antioch and one from Apamea on the Orontes. Of the Antiochian exemplars one is dated to the immediate post-Hadrianic period and the other to the Severan, while the Apamean one is tentatively dated to the fourth century, despite its rather fragmentary condition (Balty 1981: 336–429, esp. 362, 375ff., pls VII, XIV; 1970: 83, fig. 4; Levi 1947: 15ff., 156–159, pls XXX, XXXII). Thus, the dating of the Sepphoris villa to the early third century CE raises the possibility of some more direct links between it and the later of the two Antiochian exemplars. These could be purely formal based on the repertoire of conventional themes, but there may be deeper connections, especially in view of the historical circumstances and religious ideology of the Severan era (192–234 CE).[4]

The historical context

The murder of Commodus, son of Marcus Aurelius, in 192 CE, marked the end of the Antonines and the beginning of a new dynasty in the Imperial house. The desire for supremacy of the Roman world gave rise to a bitter civil war between the African-born general Septimius Severus and Pescennius Niger, the legate of Syria. This latter proclaimed himself emperor at Antioch, while his rival took control in Rome and Europe. Septimius had previously

also been legate of Syria, and was aware of its strategic importance, if Rome was to realise its ambition to control Mesopotamia, as it had done briefly under Trajan. Septimius' victory over Niger at the battle of the Cilician Gates was to prove highly significant, since it marked the beginning of intense imperial interest in the region. The symbolism of the location of the victorious battle, because of its association with Alexander the Great's victory over the Persian ruler Darius, was also quite important as, according to Fergus Millar, it was 'a period, when, at least on the surface, the Near East became "Roman" in a way of which there had been little trace before' (Millar 1993: 124). The effects of this change of policy were felt in Syria itself. Not merely was it divided into two separate provinces, but two new ones, Osrohoene and Mesopotamia, were also established, east of the Euphrates. Of greater significance still was the treatment of the various cities. Those that had supported Niger, including Antioch itself, suffered a loss of status, whereas others, such as Tyre, Laodicea and Heliopolis (Baalbeck), which had been loyal to Septimius, were suitably rewarded with the rank of *colonia*, the privilege of the *ius Italicum*, and in some instances the additional designation of *metropolis* as well. Such a policy of honouring various cities led to intense local rivalries between cities, as well as the desire to outdo each other in honouring suitably their imperial benefactors. This may have been a factor also in the disputes between Sepphoris and Tiberias that are reflected in various rabbinic writings (Miller 1987). Septimius' son, Caracalla, continued this policy after he came to power in 211 CE, with particular significance for Sepphoris as we shall see (Millar 1993: 121ff.; 1990: 7–58, esp. 31–45; Balty 1977: 103–134, esp. 128–132; Rey-Coquais 1975: 44–73, esp. 53–57).

The province of Syria had played an important, overseeing role in terms of Rome's treatment of the Jews in Palestine, from the time of Pompey's intervention in the mid-first century BCE. Inevitably, the two revolts (66–73 and 132–135 CE) increased the strategic significance of that role, in addition to the measures that were taken in Palestine itself to insure no further rebellion. Hadrian had already initiated the process of upgrading the status of the towns, and Sepphoris in particular received an increase of population and a new name, Diocaesarea, thus confirming its continued pro-Roman stance already displayed in the first revolt. In Jones' estimation this meant that it now administered the whole of western lower Galilee, as the policy was to replace the old toparchic system of administration by one based on the cities whose loyalty could be presumed (Jones 1931: 79–85). This inevitably meant the introduction of new elements into the population, no matter how much native aristocracies might be courted, as seems to have been the case with the Rabbinic authority in Galilee (Levine 1989: 38–42; Goodman 1983: 135–154; Schäfer 1998: 203–218, 313–326). Despite these measures, there is some evidence of further unrest in Palestine under Marcus Aurelius, necessitating a visit to the region in 175 CE, and a possible journey

from Antioch to Alexandria through Palestine. There was further disturbance among 'Jews and Samaritans' (Orosius) (Smallwood 1981: 488ff.) in 194 CE following the defeat of Niger; it remains unclear whether this was a continuation of the conflict locally between the two rival claimants to the Principate or was another expression of Jewish nationalist aspirations (Ammianus Marcellinus) (Stern 1980, II: 606).

Against that background rested the fate of the cities in Palestine and their surroundings in the Severan period. Septimius passed through Palestine on the way to Egypt after the second Parthian war in 199 CE. Based on the coins, it was during this visit that city status was granted to Eleutheropolis (Beth Guvrin) and Diospolis (Lydda). Some 20 years later, under Elagabalus, Nicopolis (Emmaus) received similar status. Of the older cities, Neapolis (Shechem), founded by Vespasian, and Aelia, founded by Hadrian, received renewed honours, even though the former had sided originally with Niger. Nearby Sebaste (Samaria) was rewarded for its loyalty with the status of a *colonia* and a renewed building programme. Later, Caesarea too was honoured with the epithet *metropolis*, probably in the reign of Severus Alexander (222–235 CE) (Smallwood 1981: 490ff.). Tyre had received this additional title as well as the status of *colonia* for siding with Septimius already in 194 CE, whereas the older colony of Beyretus was deprived of some of its territory with the raising of Heliopolis (Baalbeck) to colonial status. The title of *metropolis* implied a predominance over neighbouring cities of colonial status, and in the case of Tyre this honour may well have had its basis in the fact that Septimius was a native of Lepcis Magna, a Phoenician colony, in North Africa, which regarded Tyre as its mother-city, according to an inscription in this latter city (Millar 1983: 55–71, esp. 66ff.; cf. Millar 1990: 37).

Scythopolis is described as belonging to the Ἑλληνίδων πόλεων (Greek cities) of Coele Syria in an inscription probably dated to the reign of Marcus Aurelius, as well as on some city coins of the same period (Foerster and Tsafrir 1986/87: 53–58, pls 16, 17). This is quite an unusual self-designation for the period and Foerster and Tsafrir think that it may indicate that the pagan inhabitants of the city were alarmed by the presence of a strong Jewish community there and sought to distance themselves aggressively from this development. It could also be seen as a distancing of themselves from the 'Romanisation' of Palestine associated with the second century emperors, a policy that was pursued by the Severans in terms of the granting of colonial status and the privilege of the *ius Italicum*, especially in view of the favouring of the city's near neighbours, Sebaste and Neapolis, and the establishment of a strong military presence at Legio in the Jezreel plain. Yet, the fact that several milestones dated to the reign of Caracalla have been found in the vicinity of the city suggests that the emperor visited it, probably during his journey to Egypt in 215 CE (Lifshitz 1977: 279; Smallwood 1981: 495). In addition, a recently discovered inscription on an altar from Scythopolis, dated to the reign of Antoninus Pius (i.e. 141/2 CE),

is addressed: Θεῷ Διονύσῳ κτίστῃ τω κυρίῳ ('To the Lord Dionysos the Founder'). According to Leah Di Segni the idea of a founder cult in various cities is particularly associated with the second and third centuries, 'often with imperial intervention'. At Nicaea, where Dionysos and Herakles together are celebrated as ancestral gods of the city, the cult may have gone back to the reign of Nero, and they were honoured also by Hadrian in pursuit of his eastern policy (Di Segni 1997: 139–161, esp. 160ff.; Di Segni *et al.* 1999). This may well have influenced the choice of Nicea as a wintering station for Septimius on one of his journeys to the east (Cassius Dio LXXVI. 15, 3). It can be presumed that such a cult of their favourite deities would have endeared Scythopolis to the Severans; all members of the family, including Geta and Julia Domna are included in the repertoire of the city's coins (Spijkerman 1978: 194–204).

How did Sepphoris fare in this programme of intense urbanisation of Palestine by the Severans? At one level nothing specific seems to have occurred in terms of the city's status or extension of territory. This had already been taken care of by Hadrian (or possibly by Antoninus Pius) after the second revolt. The change of the name to Diocaesarea took place then, as can be seen by its appearance on the coins of Antoninus, where the new name appears for the first time on the coins, and the images are all of pagan deities (Meshorer 1985: 36–38, nos. 87–95; 1996: 195–198). In all probability the city territory was extended at that time to cover all of western lower Galilee (Avi Yonah 1966: 135–138). Thus the Severans did not have to concentrate on Galilee in terms of their reorganisation policy, and it is noteworthy that most of the new *coloniae* appear in the south, with a strong pagan influence, as can be seen from the coins of the various cities. Diocaesarea, on the other hand, was a more complicated case, in that it had become the centre of the rabbinic movement in Galilee and the seat of the Sanhedrin by the end of the second century. A number of stories in the Rabbinic corpus describing friendly relations between a certain Antoninus and Rabbi (usually identified with Rabbi Judah, the editor of the Mishnah), though clearly legendary in character, may reflect a situation of trust and mutual respect, irrespective of which emperor is referred to by the name Antoninus (Cohen 1998: 141–172).

A series of coins minted at Sepphoris during the years 211–217 CE provide more solid evidence for such a claim. The obverse has a portrait bust of Caracalla (laureate) surrounded with the legend 'Augustus Caesar Antoninus, son of Marcus Aurelius, Sebastos'. Septimius Severus had already inserted himself into the Antonine house, calling himself the son of Marcus Aurelius and the brother of Commodus (Cassius Dio LXXV, 7. 3–4; Millar 1964: 142). Instead of the representation of Roman divinities on the reverse, as in the earlier coins, a four-lined legend reads: 'Diocaesarea the Holy, City of Shelter, Autonomous, Loyal [a treaty of] Friendship and Alliance with the Romans'. A slightly different version of the same legend on a similar coin

speaks of 'the Loyal [a treaty of] Friendship and Alliance between the Holy Council and the Senate and the Roman People'. While the designations ἱερός, αὐτόνομος and ἄσυλος appear earlier on the coins of the city in the reign of Antonius Pius (*c.*140 CE) together with images of pagan deities, the reference to the Holy Council (ἱερὸς βουλή) may refer to the Jewish Sanhedrin, which, according to Meshorer, may have been recognised as the city council also by Caracalla (Meshorer 1996: 198; cf. Goodman 1983: 128ff.).[5] Further support for such special treatment may be garnered from Jerome's commentary on Daniel (11:24) when he writes that the Hebrews relate this verse (which promises support in trouble) to the emperors Severus and Antoninus (i.e. Septimius and Caracalla) because 'they loved the Jews a lot' (Smallwood 1981: 496). A third piece of evidence supporting a special relationship between the Jews and the Severans is the inscription from Kaisun in upper Galilee which offers prayers from the Jews (Ἰουδάῖοι) for the safety (σωτηρία) of the emperor Septimius Severus and his sons Geta and Caracalla. The tablet bearing the inscription was found in the remains of a building which may have been a synagogue, but more probably was a pagan temple, something that makes the explicit mention of the Jews more remarkable still (Smallwood 1981: 497).

Ideological claims

This historical background does not of course explain the presence of the Dionysiac mosaic in Sepphoris. However, it does provide an historical context in which the symbolism of the mosaic might be considered to have had a particular resonance. If a special relationship between the Severans and Sepphoris can be postulated on the basis of the evidence, fragmentary though it is, then it is more probable that some wealthy citizen, even a wealthy Jewish citizen, might wish to honour the imperial house in their residence. Such an hypothesis presupposes that both Herakles and Dionysos had significant symbolic meaning for the Severans and their rule, and it is to this aspect of the question that we must now turn. What is the evidence for Severan rule in the east being supported by claims that linked them with Dionysos and Herakles? How might such links have an important bearing on their policy there?

Even though Dionysos and Herakles are never linked together in myth, they are often found as a pair in Archaic and early Greek iconography, either feasting together in a wholly Dionysiac setting, or with Dionysos present on Olympian occasions where Herakles is the more prominent.[6] While each retains their separate identity in the Hellenistic and Roman periods and is represented individually or with other characters from their respective mythological pasts, when depicted together, Herakles' role tends to be that of the drunken guest at a cult gathering or in the triumphal procession. According to Boardman, there is no evidence to suggest that the scene

which represents the two drinking at a feast, as in the Sepphoris mosaic, should be designated a 'drinking contest'. Rather, Herakles seems to be more prone to yielding to the effects of wine and needs to be supported by satyrs, as is depicted in a separate scene of the Sepphoris mosaic which carries the description μέθη, 'drunk'. This development may reflect a softening of the images of both characters, with the increased popularity of the Dionysiac mysteries within the Hellenistic world generally.[7] Yet, occasionally, Herakles is represented as an equal or companion of Dionysos, standing side by side with him or sharing his triumphal chariot.[8]

There was sufficient convergence of roles ascribed to both deities to warrant their being paired together, especially in the changed environment of the Hellenistic age. Both were more recent additions to the pantheon than the original Olympians, and took on a more personal character, therefore. Dionysos, unlike Herakles, had divine parentage from Zeus, but an earthly mother, Semele, whereas Herakles was a mortal who had been apotheosised after his death through his association with Hebe. They therefore answered the need for more accessible and benign images of god that was a feature of Greco-Roman religiosity generally. However, it was their ascribed roles as founders of cities and bringers of civilisation through their travels that gave them their special political significance in the later period, providing ideal types for rulers with universal aspirations from Alexander onwards.

It was this aspect of their role that made them the patrons of the Severan house, as can be seen from the arch of Septimius at his birthplace, Lepcis Magna. They have been described on some Severan coins as the *DII PATRII* or patronal gods, Herakles underlining the link with Tyre, the mother city, and Dionysos (Liber) identified with the Punic god, Shadrapa (Charles-Picard 1954: 94ff.). On the right-hand side of the Lepcis arch the imperial family is represented together with Roma and Silvanus. Septimius is engaged in a *iunctio dextrarum* with his eldest son Caracalla, with Geta standing between them and Julia Domna, his wife, looking on approvingly. Behind is the figure of Herakles with his club and a youthful Dionysos (probably) standing on either side of Tyche. A similar image decorates the chariot of Septimius on the arch, again accompanied by his two sons, with Herakles and Dionysos presenting wreaths and a *thyrsos* to the Tyche of Lepcis (*LIMC* IV, i, 157, no. 3247; Birley 1971: 144, 192, figs 7, 8, 9). Significantly, in the light of other representations of the two gods, which depict Herakles as a devotee of Dionysos, they are both standing and offering gifts to Tyche on the Lepcis arch. Several coins, both of Septimius himself and of Caracalla, likewise present the gods as standing together with their traditional implements or assisting the emperor in sacrifice, with legends such as *DIS AUSPICIBUS* or *DI PATRII* (*LIMC* IV, i, 157, nos. 3249–3252; IV, ii, 146).

A long tradition lies behind this presentation of Dionysos and Herakles as the patron gods of the Severan emperors. It had crystallised around Alexander the Great's campaigns in the east, especially to India. A fragment

of the historian Megasthenes, preserved by several later historians, relates how the god had taught the Indians agro- and viticulture, founded cities, given them laws and taught them how to worship the gods, especially Dionysos himself, in a manner typical of Dionysiac celebrations, with music, dancing and distinctive dress (Arr. *Ind.* 9. 2–9; Dio. Sic. 2. 38, 2–6). Later Roman biographers drew on these early Alexander historians, who were certainly conscious of the Dionysiac character of his career and persona, irrespective of whether it reflected his own self-presentation in terms of older mythical stories about the gods, or was the creation of his immediate biographers after his death.

Plutarch declares that Alexander was descended from Herakles on his father's side. He reports various legends about his mother Olympia's devotion to Dionysos, which gave rise to the story that he was the son of the god (Pl. *Alex.* 2ff.). The Dionysiac theme recurs at crucial points of both Plutarch's and Arrian's accounts, despite their quite different perspectives on the main character: the Dionysiac celebrations (κωμός) after the capture of Persepolis, the capital of the Persian empire (Pl. *Alex.* 38.8; Curt. Ruf. *Hist.* 5. 1, 5–7); the visit to Nysa, the place of nurture of the god and Alexander's sacrifice to him on Mount Meros (Pl. *Alex.* 58. 6–9; Arr. *Anab.* 5. 1, 5–7); the suggestion of Dionysos' revenge in Alexander's remorse at the murder of Cleitus, because of failure to offer sacrifice (Arr. *Anab.* 4. 9, 2; Pl. *Alex.* 51. 11; Curt. Ruf. *Hist.* 8.1, 48–51); and the acceptance by the Indian tribes of a governor appointed by Alexander, who, they acknowledged, was, like Dionysos, also of divine descent (Arr. *Anab.* 6. 14, 2–3; Curt. Ruf. *Hist.* 5. 7, 11).

Thus, the motivation for the campaign to the east and its outcome was clearly envisaged as an imitation and emulation of Dionysos.[9] Yet Herakles was not ignored either as a suitable type for Alexander's exploits. In describing his desire to visit the shrine of the god Ammon at Siwah, Arrian says that Alexander was motivated by the fact that Herakles has also consulted the god, and he longed to equal the fame of his illustrious ancestor since he felt that the blood of the god was in his veins, as 'they were both descended from Zeus' (Arr. *Anab.* 3. 3, 2; cf. Pl. *Alex.* 2). It was natural, therefore, for Alexander to want to offer sacrifice to the god during the siege of Tyre, since Herakles had been identified with Melqart, the god of the Tyrians, long before the Hellenistic age (Freyne 2001: 184–217, esp. 184–188). Thwarted at first, he was able to fulfil his wish after the successful siege, and he sacrificed again on his return from Egypt later (Arr. *Anab.* 2. 24, 5–6; 3. 6, 1). The Herakles motif continued on the eastern campaigns also, even if Arrian is somewhat suspicious of them as legends intended to flatter Alexander by stressing how difficult certain exploits were, especially in connection with the campaign to India (Arr. *Anab.* 4. 28, 1–4; 5. 3–4; *Ind.* 5. 8–12; cf. Strabo *Geog.* 15. 1, 8–9; Dio. Sic. *Hist.* 2. 39, 1).

The combination of the Heraklean and Dionysiac motifs in the accounts of Alexander's eastern campaigns, even if in some instances somewhat

sceptically received by the later Roman historians, was obviously etched in the popular memory about Alexander, and it retained an important propaganda role in the imperial period (Cf. Vergil *Aen*. VI. 789–805). Thus Pliny mentions altars marking the limits of the travels of Hercules (Herakles), Liber Pater (Dionysos) and Alexander (*His. Nat*. 6. 49; cf. Curt. Ruf. *Hist.* 8. 10, 1). All the Roman military figures who sought to expand the imperial boundaries in the east seem to have availed of both deities for aspects of their self-presentation, with Alexander providing the ideal type in the composite picture. Pompey, for example, was said by Plutarch to have been thought to resemble Alexander in his looks (*Pom.* 2. 1). This may well explain Cassius Dio's account of Septimius Severus offering sacrifice to his spirit as he passed through Palestine on his way to Egypt (*Rom. Hist*. LXXVI. 13, 1), as Hadrian also did on his travels in Egypt earlier, where he found the great general's tomb in disrepair (Cassius Dio *Rom. Hist.* LXIX). In Appian's account of the battle of Pharsalis, Pompey, as he rushed to meet the enemy, called on Hercules, the Invincible, whereas Caesar relied on Venus Victrix, who, ironically, guarded the statue of his opponent in Rome (*Bell. Civ.* 2, 79). Mark Anthony's Dionysian illusions are well documented by Plutarch (*Ant*. 24; 75), but he also claimed a physical likeness to the statues of Herakles, and appealed to the tradition that his family was descended from the god. (Pl. *Ant.* 4). Trajan was the most successful in terms of the eastern thrust, winning for himself the name *Parthicus*, and he too aspired to emulating Alexander in going to India, were he a younger man, while at the same time claiming that he had in fact already gone farther east than his Macedonian precursor (Cassius Dio LXIII. 29, 1–4).

The Severans concentrated on expansion in the east, and it is altogether in keeping with this that they too should draw on the Alexander tradition and its association with the two deities, as we have seen. Indeed Commodus, the last of the Antonines, whom Septimius succeeded, was so obsessed with Herakles that he was regarded as an embarrassment by some of the Roman nobility including Cassius Dio himself (Cassius Dio LXXIII. 15, 1–6; 16, 1; 20. 1–3). Septimius was more discreet in his appeal to the Alexander lineage and the divine status that accompanied it, yet his coins show that he too saw himself and his exploits supported by both deities. In addition to the iconography of the arch at Lepcis, a dedication from that city to Septimius' son Geta when he was Caesar (i.e. between 198 and 209 CE) reads: [*P. Septimio Getae nobilissimo Caesari*] *Septimia Tyros Colonia, Metropolis Phoenicies et aliarum civitatium*. This is a clear reference to Septimius' grant of the status of *colonia* to Tyre, which the citizens gratefully acknowledge, recognising at the same time the Phoenician colonisation of the North African city (Millar 1983: 66ff.; 1990: 34).

Several inscriptions from Tyre itself underline the close links with Septimius and with Herakles. One is dedicated to a certain Septimius Diodoros, 'priest of Good Fortune . . . high-priest of the gods, the Lord Herakles

(κυρίου Ἡρακλέους) and the goddess Leukotheka'. The dedication comes from his co-priests of the goddess, Ἀγαθῇ Τύχῃ, 'because of his piety to the gods'. Significantly, the high priest of the god of the city, Herakles, has taken the name of the emperor. It appears again on another inscription to 'Septimius Odeynath, the most illustrious one (λαμπρότατος)' from the 'Septimian colony of Tyre, the metropolis'. The name Odeynath is known as governor of the province of Syria and the description 'most illustrious' refers to his senatorial status. The city, which proudly identifies itself as having received colonial status from the emperor, wishes also to acknowledge this further honour to one of its citizens (Chébab 1963: 17–20). Both inscriptions underline the numerous privileges, including the *jus italicum*, bestowed on the city by the emperor, and suggest that it gratefully acknowledge those favours. This special treatment of Tyre, despite its initial support for Niger in the civil war (Herodian II. ch. XXXVII), must be seen in the context of its long-standing devotion to Herakles/Melqart and the emperor's attachment to that god as exemplified by the many images on the coins of the city from this period (cf. Hanson 1980: 42–48).

If Septimius sets the tone by his special devotion to Tyre, his son, Caracalla, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, to give him his full name (cf. Cassius Dio LXXIX, 9. 1–3) carried the devotion to new lengths. This manifested itself in a pathological self-proclamation as a new Alexander. A fourth century anonymous epitomiser writes:

> After he (Caracalla) had inspected the body of Alexander of Macedon (in Egypt) he ordered that he himself should be called 'Great' and 'Alexander,' for he was led on by the lies of his flatterers to the point where, adopting the ferocious brow and neck tilted towards the left shoulder that he had noted in Alexander's countenance, he persuaded himself that he was truly similar.
>
> (Stewart 1993: 348, fig. 3)

Once again, as in the case of Pompey earlier, a claim to physical likeness was presumed to mean identification with Alexander and the deities from whom he was deemed to have been descended. Cassius Dio calls him φιλαλεξανδρότατος Ἀντωνίνος, describing his passion for the army and his lavish treatment of his soldiers (LXXVIII, 9). This delusion extended to the use of weapons and cups that supposedly belonged to Alexander, the forming of a phalanx of Macedonians within his army and persecution of the peripatetic philosophers on the grounds that they had taken part in the death of Alexander (Millar 1964: 151). Cassius Dio, it must be said, paints a negative picture of the emperor's excesses, and on one occasion when pretending to defend his tutor Cilo, whose death he had plotted, he is reported as having pleaded with the mob: 'do not call me Herakles or any other god', not, Cassius Dio adds rather caustically, because he did not wish to be

acknowledged as a god, but 'because he did not wish to do anything worthy of a god' (LXXVIII, 5. 1–2). Such was his mania for Alexander, according to Cassius Dio, that he wrote to the Senate on one occasion informing them that he believed that Alexander had come to life again in his person. The presence of elephants in his permanent retinue was part of this continuing illusion of being Alexander *redivivus*, or as Cassius Dio rather wryly remarks, 'perhaps Dionysos' (LXXVIII, 7. 1–4). Fergus Millar suggests that the account of a pseudo-Alexander's journey from the region of the Danube to Chalcedon in the year 221 CE should be understood in the light of Caracalla's similar journey in 214 CE. In that event, the Dionysiac celebrations that accompanied the pseudo-Alexander's travels make good sense in the light of Caracalla's behaviour, as Millar cautiously notes (1964: 214–218).

Conclusion

This trawl through the available evidence suggests that the early Severan emperors saw themselves standing within the Alexander tradition, as this had been developed over centuries, even when not all Roman rulers were so inclined (Stewart 1993: 25ff.). The historical context of the Severan policy in the east, including Palestine, could have given rise to a situation in which some sought to impress by acknowledging imperial whims. In view of its 'special relationship' with Caracalla as expressed on its coins, Sepphoris would have been a likely place for such adulation. It must be acknowledged that the particular portrayal of Dionysos and Herakles, in which the latter is depicted as an initiate rather than an equal of his partner, is different from that of both the Lepcis arch and the Severan coins, where both characters are standing as equals. Yet the fact that more than one such mosaic is found in the Syro-Palestinian area is more than mere coincidence. More suggestive is the description by Cassius Dio of preparations that had to be made for Caracalla's travels. He writes:

> Apart from all these burdens [i.e. expenses incurred in various 'crowning ceremonies' for the emperor in various cities] we were also compelled to build at our own expense all sorts of houses for him whenever he set out from Rome, and costly lodgings [οἰκείοις δαπανήμασι] in the middle of even the shortest journeys; yet he not only never lived in them, but in some cases was not even destined to see them.
>
> (LXXXVIII. 9, 6)

Both Septimius and Caracalla certainly travelled through Palestine on their way to Alexandria. They may even have tarried at Sepphoris, if the Antoninus and the Rabbi stories have any underlying credibility. Or somebody might even have been preparing for such an expected visit, which may never have materialised!

Both gods – Dionysos and Herakles – had a long history in the northern region of Palestine, the one at Scythopolis and the other at Tyre, though there is no direct evidence for their cult in Galilee itself before the discovery of the Sepphoris mosaic. Both gods feature in the second century BCE effort to 'hellenise' the Yahweh cult by Antiochus IV, Epiphanes (2 Macc. 4, 18–20 – Herakles, and 6, 7–11 – Dionysos). For those modern scholars who have supported a thoroughly hellenised Galilee through the centuries, the Sepphoris mosaic would fit neatly into a context of ongoing syncretisation of Yahweh and Dionysos dating from that earlier period at least, or alternatively, into a thoroughly hellenised environment of 'Galilee of the nations' (cf. Smith 1975: 815–829). Yet, the exploration of the context for the mosaic supports the idea that the Severan period works best for interpreting its symbolic and cultural significance. That hypothesis resonates with the available evidence far better than the claim of an ongoing Dionysiac cult in Galilee through the intervening centuries.

Notes

1 At Scythopolis a fragment of an altar dedicated to Dionysos was discovered in the theatre, which B. Lifshitz dates to the Severan period on the basis of the writing style (*ZPE* 6 (1970): 62, pl. Va; (1977): 262–294, esp. 276).

2 Dunbabin discusses the issue of identifying between representations of the god with definite cultic associations and mere ornamental use of his image, with reference to North African mosaics of the Roman period (1978: 174–181).

3 In the scarce number of portrayals of the scene it has never formally been identified as a drinking contest, as is noted by Boardman in *LIMC* (IV, ii, 160). Levi suggests that the genre represents a fusion of the depiction of the two gods as companions from the archaic period and the very popular motif from the Old Comedy of Hercules Bibax taking part in a Dionysiac festival, which became popular in the Hellenistic Age (1947: 21).

4 Dunbabin draws an interesting contrast between the two Antiochian exemplars of the genre (1999: 161–164). While the poses of the main characters are derived from the same models, the depictions differ in terms of the use of light and colouring. Both are also rendered as pictures within a spatial setting, especially in the one from the Severan period, where the two deities are set in an architectural frame, giving a three-dimensional effect. They both differ from the Sepphoris exemplar, however, with its lively and realistic depictions of the two deities as well as the attendant maenads and nymphs. In addition, the framing of the central scene with a panel of mythological and cultic depictions, together with Greek labels, differs from the geometrical patterns which frame both the Antiochian exemplars which have no Greek legends.

5 Cf. Goodman (1983: 128ff.), who sees third century rescripts of Septimius and Caracalla as formal recognition of earlier practice that Jews could be members of the city councils.

6 See articles on Dionysos and Herakles in *LIMC* (III, i, 471ff., 526ff. and III, iii, 364–366 (Dionysos); IV, i, 151–157 and IV, ii, 144–149 (Herakles)).

7 Boardman in *LIMC* (IV, i, 160). According to the *Historia Augusta* (*Hadrian*, 13, 1–2), the emperor Hadrian, following the example of Philip and Herakles, had himself initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries.

8 *LIMC* (IV, i, 159ff. and IV, ii), for a selection of corresponding coin and vase images.
9 Cf. Arrian's comment on the visit to Nysa: 'He had already reached the point that the god reached and would go even further' (*Anab*. 5. 1, 1; and 5–7). A similar sibling rivalry is involved in the story of Alexander's capture of the rock of Aornos, that Herakles had failed to take (*Anab.* 5, 26).

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7

THE FIRST-CENTURY SYNAGOGUE

Critical reassessments and assessments of the critical

Lee I. Levine

Interest in the ancient synagogue has grown dramatically over the last several decades. Since the 1980s, more than ten monographs, over twenty volumes of studies, and hundreds of journal articles have been published on a wide range of synagogue-related topics, including synagogue art and architecture, epigraphy, liturgy, social and institutional dimensions, leadership positions, the role of women, and regional studies. The result is a rapidly growing corpus of material and scholarly reflections that has enriched our understanding of this central Jewish institution.

If this is true of synagogue studies generally, it is particularly evident with regard to first-century Judaea and the Diaspora, owing primarily to the appeal of this subject to Christian scholars. The gospels often place Jesus in a synagogue setting (see Luke 4:16–30), and Paul regularly visited synagogues during his peregrinations throughout Asia Minor and Greece (Acts 13–18). Interest in the synagogue also stems, at least in part, from an appreciation of the Jewish heritage of early Christianity. A series of events in the mid-twentieth century (the Holocaust, the founding of the State of Israel, Vatican II) has undoubtedly contributed to this development as well.

Study of the first-century synagogue has also attracted scholars because of the dramatically heightened interest in late Second Temple Jewish religious life generally, in no small measure due to the increased preoccupation with the study of the Qumran scrolls and community as well as the contemporary literature (i.e. the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha), all of which attest to the varieties of Judaism at this time. The connection between the inhabitants of Qumran, usually identified with the Essenes, and the different types of literature discovered there on the one hand, and early Christianity on the other, has been recognized since the earliest discoveries of these documents in the late 1940s and continues to attract the attention of many (Cross 1961: 195–243).

Interest in the first-century synagogue has also been facilitated by the accessibility of literary sources such as Josephus, Philo, and the New Testament, and the availability of recently published synagogue inscriptions from this period that contain fascinating historical information about the institution. To appreciate this heightened interest, as well as the place of Christian scholarship, one has but to compare it with the state of affairs regarding synagogue research in Late Antiquity (third–seventh centuries). Although the quantity of literary and archeological evidence for the latter period is far greater, much of this material is less accessible to the wider scholarly world. The literary evidence stems largely from rabbinic sources, and the corpora of inscriptions, especially those relating to Byzantine Palestine, have generally been published only in Hebrew (Naveh 1978; Roth-Gerson 1987). While the archeological and artistic remains are particularly engaging, the degree of scholarly synthesis and integration for this period is far more limited than for the earlier era.

The impressive volume of material relating to the first-century synagogue, while at times offering contradictory theories, has challenged commonly held notions in some cases, and broken new ground in relatively neglected areas in others. We address here some of the more provocative theories recently proposed. Although we offer an assessment – at times critical – of each, we should point out that all these theories are creative treatments of the material by thoughtful scholars attempting to deal with some of the most basic issues regarding this first-century institution. Nevertheless, the evidence at hand and the assumptions required for drawing a larger picture allow for no more than tentative and often speculative suggestions. In the second part of this chapter, we discuss some of the fundamental methodological issues at the core of this research and then suggest a different approach to understanding the first-century synagogue.

An Egyptian origin for the synagogue

M. Hengel's pioneering study (1971) of the early synagogue and *proseuche* three decades ago was the first to address seriously the claim of an Egyptian origin for the ancient synagogue. His approach is based on the fact that the earliest evidence for the existence of a synagogue comes from Ptolemaic Egypt, and on the influence that the Ptolemaic setting had on shaping the Egyptian Jewish institution. P.E. Dion extended the connection further when he drew attention to many architectural and other features of the Egyptian *proseuche* that were apparently borrowed from neighboring models (Dion 1977: 45–75; cf. also Grabbe 1988: 401–10 and Flesher 1995: 27–39).

J.G. Griffiths, who has argued most comprehensively for an Egyptian origin (1987: 1–15), notes the limitations of invoking certain Hellenistic models such as the religious association and zeroes in on one native Egyptian institution – the *Per Ankh* – which influenced what he considers

the essence of Egyptian synagogue practice, i.e. the combination of prayer and study:

> In Alexandria and in the *chôra* the Egyptians associated education with the temples, and this was a long-standing tradition. . . . Instruction and worship were especially combined in the institution called the Per Ankh, "House of Life," an adjunct of the temple which functioned both as a library and as a center of special rites. It seems that the library was devoted to religious knowledge, but its scope included wider fields as well. Questions of cult and ritual were dealt with, so that a spiritual ministry in a comprehensive sense was conducted by the priestly leaders. Copies of the Book of the Dead were probably produced there, and an Osirian ritual which bestowed life in the afterworld was enacted in the Per Ankh. Of basic import in such rites was the reading of sacred texts.
>
> (Griffiths 1987: 12)

Although the idea of a native Egyptian source of inspiration for the origin of the synagogue is new, Griffiths regrettably does not elaborate on this suggestion; the development of his thesis is laudable; however his treatment is too limited to make a convincing case.

Nevertheless, a place for prayer and the study of texts existed in an Egyptian setting (Gardiner 1938: 157–79); yet the differences between the *Per Ankh* and the local Jewish *proseuche* are quite pronounced. The former was limited to priests, the latter was open to the entire community; the *Per Ankh* was the work-setting of the priestly elite, the *proseuche* was the communal institution of every Jewish community, where regular Sabbath and holiday worship was conducted. Whereas the content of the recitation in the *Per Ankh* was connected to funerary and death rites over which the participating priests had charge, it was the Torah, the story of Israel's early history and its collection of laws, that was publicly recited in the *proseuche*. As its name attests, the Egyptian *proseuche* in particular – in contrast, perhaps, to the synagogue in other parts of the Diaspora and certainly to the Judaean institution – had public prayer. This component seems to have been unknown or, at best, of negligible significance in the *Per Ankh* setting.

Beyond worship, the Egyptian *proseuche* also had other communal functions, such as serving as a school, court, asylum, and place of assembly for Jewish associations (Levine 2000: 75–89; see generally *Ant*. 14.10, 17, 235; 24, 259–61). Thus, the type of text recited in the *proseuche*, the purpose of the recitation (religious and moral edification as against technical ritual skills for priests), and the communal setting clearly distinguished the *proseuche* from the *Per Ankh*.

In an attempt to bolster his theory, Griffiths ostensibly quotes Goodenough (1953–68 IV: 142), claiming that Jews followed Egyptian custom when burying Torah scrolls along with their dead. Alas, Goodenough never made

such a claim. Rather, he was referring to artistic representations of Jewish symbols, including the Torah ark and scrolls, in funerary contexts, and not the scrolls themselves!

We must conclude, therefore, that there is no compelling proof that the synagogue originated in the Diaspora, more specifically in Egypt. The fact that the Egyptian *proseuche* finds parallels in Egyptian pagan models, an assertion often invoked to substantiate the claim of origin, is far from unique for any Diaspora synagogue. Having no architectural tradition of their own, Jews everywhere (Palestine included) borrowed heavily from outside models. This was the case in Delos, Sardis, Ostia, and Dura Europos, as with the Galilean- and basilica-type synagogues of Late Antique Palestine. This phenomenon would undoubtedly be attested elsewhere were evidence available. The existence of such data from a surrounding culture invariably points to a significant degree of cultural interaction and cross-fertilization. The Egyptian situation is far from uncommon, even though the relative wealth of material from there has proven compelling to many scholars in their quest for the origins of the synagogue.

Greco-Roman institutions as models for the synagogue

Spearheaded by the studies of E. Schürer (1879: 15ff.), J. Juster (1914 I: 413–24), and J.-B. Frey (1975 I: lxxxii–cxi), scholars have often sought to classify the synagogue under one or another Greco-Roman institutional rubric. Referred to in first-century sources as, inter alia, a *collegium*, *thiasos*, or *synodos* (as well as *proseuche* and *synagoge*, terms likewise borrowed from the larger Greco-Roman world), the synagogue has been associated in varying degrees with one or another of these Hellenistic frameworks.

P. Richardson, for example, claims that the synagogue should be defined as a *collegium* based on two considerations: (1) the use of the term in several Roman documents referring to the Jewish community; and (2) the fact that the synagogue functioned as a social and religious association in much the same way as the *collegium*.[1]

Yet, we might ask whether Roman invocations of such terminology with reference to the synagogue were meant as a precise definition of the institution or whether they were merely a question of convenience. Perhaps the Roman authorities only used a term familiar to them and applied it on occasion to the Jewish community without attempting to be precise.[2] If the use of the term *collegium* was indeed deliberate, did it, in fact, reflect the actual legal status of the synagogue? The Romans certainly did not use it exclusively, as other terms referring to this Jewish institution also appear in our sources (e.g. *thiasos*, *synodos*).[3]

The synagogue, however, differed from these pagan frameworks in significant ways. The Romans appear to have been more tolerant of the synagogue association, be it a *collegium* or *thiasos*; at times such pagan associations were

banned by the authorities while the Jewish community remained unaffected (*Ant*. 14.10, 8, 215; Smallwood 1976: 224–30). The Jewish community had far greater activities and privileges than the Roman *collegium*. In most places, the Jews apparently had the right to maintain their own courts, attend to their own food requirements, send monies to Jerusalem, and conduct a wide range of communal affairs, as well as not worship the civic deities, not appear in municipal courts on their Sabbath and festivals, and not assume certain civic duties. On occasion, the Jews' exemption from army service is noted, although it is not clear how widespread this privilege was.[4] Given these differences, the use of the term *collegium* with reference to the synagogue did not reflect a defined legal framework. The Jews themselves never referred to their synagogue or community by this term, and *collegium* never appears in any Jewish document or inscription.[5]

The Greco-Roman Jew had little option other than to remain within the framework of the local community or synagogue. A Jew's rights and privileges within a particular city, or the Roman world generally, were conferred because he was part of the recognized Jewish communal structure. Thus, we are dealing with corporate – not individual – rights. Without that legal umbrella, a Jew had no recourse to a protective framework (unless, like Paul, he was a Roman citizen) and could not benefit from the rights enjoyed by other Jews. Josephus articulates clearly this unique corporate status:

> It was also at this time, when they (Herod and Agrippa) were in Ionia, that a great multitude of Jews who lived in its cities took advantage of their opportunity to speak out freely, and came to them and told them of the mistreatment which they had suffered in not being allowed to observe their own laws and in being forced to appear in court on their holy days because of the inconsiderateness of the examining judges. And they told how they had been deprived of the monies sent as offerings to Jerusalem and of being forced to participate in military service and civic duties and to spend their sacred monies for those things, although they had been exempted from these duties because the Romans had always permitted them to live in accordance with their own laws.
>
> (*Ant.* 16.2, 3, 27–8)

Thus, to understand the Jewish community and its synagogue as a type of Roman voluntary association is inappropriate.[6] A non-Jew could choose to be associated with a specific professional, religious, or social grouping, whereas a Jew's community of reference was virtually a given (unless he opted out entirely, which seems to have been rare) and thus was not, in a real sense, voluntary at all.[7] Advocating anything else ignores the basic status of the Jews in Judaea and the Diaspora at this time and imposes a questionable rubric on what was, in fact, a fairly well-structured social situation.[8]

P.V.M. Flesher takes a different approach in the search for Greco-Roman models of the synagogue. Beginning with the assumption that the synagogue originated in the Diaspora, he suggests categorizing the institution as a type of Greco-Roman temple:

> the Graeco-Romans saw the synagogue as belonging to the *genus* of "temple," *even though it was not a perfect fit* [emphasis mine – L.L.]. This should not be surprising since scholars have long noted similarities between synagogues and Graeco-Roman temples in terms of architecture, artwork, and activities practiced in the buildings. These similarities appear in matters we think of as specifically Graeco-Roman as well as in matters we usually associate with Judaism but which were also practiced in Graeco-Roman temples. When analyzed in taxonomic terms, it becomes clear that the similarities between synagogues and Graeco-Roman temples are not random and *ad hoc*, but indicate that the synagogue belonged to the *genus* of "Graeco-Roman temple."
>
> (Flesher 2001: 121–53)

Non-Jews and Jews viewed the synagogue this way, he argues, and both institutions had many activities in common. Flesher divides his argument into four:

1 *Primary activities of both institutions*. Prayer and votive offerings were part and parcel of temples and synagogues, and even sacrifices had some connection with the latter: "the Jews themselves led those around them to believe they practice sacrifice, whether through intentional presentation or unintentional performance.[9] The synagogue's conformity to these main forms of Graeco-Roman worship shows that the Graeco-Roman world saw the synagogue as a Graeco-Roman temple" (Flesher 2001: 130).
2 *Secondary activities of temples and synagogues*. These include council and court meetings, taxes and banking, dedicatory inscriptions, purification, asylum, and manumissions.
3 *Terminology*. Synagogues are sometimes referred to as temples (*hiera*); other terms, such as *hieros peribolos* (sacred precincts), *naos* (the inner sanctum of a temple), and *hierosylos* (a temple robber), are also used with reference to a synagogue.
4 *Differences between temples and synagogues*. The former featured sacrifices, the latter the reading of sacred texts. The synagogue had no altar, libations, fire offerings, or images.[10]

While Flesher is not the first to notice a connection between synagogue and pagan temple (see Levine 2000: 124–5), he has carried the comparison much further than others by assuming that the synagogue was primarily

viewed as such by Jew and non-Jew alike.[11] How compelling is this claim that the synagogue belonged to the *genus* of a Greco-Roman temple? Diaspora synagogues that featured prayer were termed *proseuchai* (houses of prayer); however, not all Diaspora synagogues were so called and thus the role of prayer in them is an open question. *Proseuchai* are attested in Egypt, Delos, and the Bosphorus Kingdom; the term was not used with regard to the synagogues in Cyrene, Rome, Asia Minor, or Syria. While the synagogue in Tiberias was called a *proseuche* (and perhaps the same meaning held for Qumran, where the phrase "house of prostration" appears), this was *sui generis* for Palestine; those in Caesarea, Dor, Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Capernaum are all referred to as synagogues. Moreover, the basis for assuming sacrificial activity in the synagogue rests solely on the extremely problematic text of Josephus (*Ant*. 14.10, 24, 260). Scholars have debated the reference to sacrifices for generations, and it is truly a conundrum (Levine 2000: 130 n. 31). To extrapolate from this one questionable text and apply it as a primary activity in all other synagogues seems unwarranted.

The same holds true of other comparisons. One of the primary activities cited above involves votive offerings. The only clear-cut instance is that of Antiochus IV's successors depositing Temple spoils in an Antioch synagogue (*War* 7.3, 3, 44). Might this be the exception rather than the rule? Similarly, the manumission decrees are attested only for first-century Bosphoran synagogues (a manumission ceremony is also recorded for third-century CE Egypt but no specific context is mentioned). The asylum privilege is noted once, in Ptolemaic Egypt. Indeed, generalizing from meager evidence for all synagogues is questionable.

However, the pivotal activity of each institution was strikingly different. The focus of one institution may not have found any expression whatsoever in the other. For the temple, it was the sacrificial act under priestly control; for synagogues it was the reading of Scriptures that invoked congregational participation. Sacrifice was unknown in a synagogue setting (the problematic Sardis evidence aside), as was the public reading of a holy text in a Greco-Roman temple. Furthermore, most activities that the synagogue had in common with the temple probably evolved independently; there is little reason to assume that the former was influenced by the latter. Did the Diaspora synagogue need the pagan temple to account for its prayer ritual or to serve as a meeting place for communal councils and courts, the collection of donations, or purification rites (to the extent that such existed throughout the Diaspora)? The few persuasive instances of influence (e.g. manumissions and asylum) are so meagerly attested for synagogues as to make any generalization risky.

Attempts to find common denominators in the houses of worship of Jews and their Greco-Roman neighbors, or in any other aspect of their communal life, are legitimate, as there was a great deal of similarity between

Greco-Roman and Jewish practices. Yet, the differences are equally important. Not everything can or should be homogenized. The communal organization and legal standing of the Jewish community, despite all the similarities to their surroundings, were quite different, perhaps decisively so.

Dating the synagogue and synagogue worship

H. Kee claims that a distinctive synagogue building never existed in Palestine until the third century CE (1990: 1–24; 1992: 3–22; 1994: 381–3; 1999: 7–26).[12] He interprets the term *synagoge* exclusively as a congregation or assembly of people, and not a building, acknowledging only the single exception in Luke 7:5. Kee never entertains the possibility that the term might have had several parallel meanings in the first century.

Kee posits the historical unreliability of New Testament and rabbinic evidence in relation to first-century Palestine and dismisses all attestations for the existence of synagogue buildings at this time. New Testament references to Jesus' appearance in synagogues do not reflect a Galilean setting around the year 30 and, at most, he opines, are an indication of what transpired at the time of each gospel's writing. Mark, therefore, is an example of a gospel reflecting the circumstances from the time of the Temple's destruction (Kee 1990: 14), and the story of Jesus preaching in the synagogue of Nazareth (Mark 4:16–30) is interpreted as a reflection of a Diaspora situation in the late first century (Kee 1990: 18).

Kee notes but ignores explicit evidence in Josephus' writings for first-century synagogue buildings (e.g. a synagogue building at Dor – Josephus [*Ant*. 19.6, 3, 299–311]) or explains it away as reflecting conditions in the late first-century Diaspora, where Josephus, residing in Rome, was writing his historical annals (e.g. the synagogue in Caesarea [*War* 2.14, 4–5, 284–92]). Kee also ignores a clear-cut reference by Philo to Essene synagogues; on the Sabbath "they abstain from all other work and proceed to sacred spots (τόπους) which they call synagogues (συναγωγαί)" (*Every Good Man is Free* 81). Moreover, he dismisses the *proseuche* building of Tiberias used by residents of the city as a meeting place in 66 CE (*Life* 280, 293) because this reference is to a *proseuche* and not a *synagoge* – even though both buildings, despite their different nomenclature, are generally considered to have had the same functions.

Kee's most far-reaching and provocative claim concerns the Theodotos inscription, found in Jerusalem in 1913–14 and assigned by almost all scholars to the first century CE (Figure 7.1). The inscription is of cardinal importance, as it clearly and unequivocally notes the existence of a synagogue building in the city:

> Theodotos, son of Vettenos, priest and *archisynagogos*, son of an *archisynagogos*, grandson of an *archisynagogos*, built this synagogue

Figure 7.1 Theodotos inscription. Courtesy of the archives of the Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

> [Τὴν συναγωγήν] for the reading of the Law and the study (or teaching) of the commandments, and the guest chambers, the rooms, and water installations for an inn for those in need from foreign lands [i.e. the Diaspora], which [i.e. the synagogue] his fathers founded together with the elders and Simonides.

Kee rejects the consensus regarding its first-century date, claiming instead that the inscription derives from the third or even fourth century on paleographical grounds (1994: 383) and that the institution itself dates from the second century since two earlier generations are noted therein.[13] He claims to have consulted "informally" with several epigraphists, who confirmed the late dating of the inscription. Unfortunately, he cites neither his sources nor the reasoning and considerations behind this determination (1999: 8).[14] Kee also dismisses a first-century dating on the assumption that a distinctive Roman name such as Vettenos would not have been used by a "devout" first-century Jew in light of the unwelcome Roman conquest of Judaea (1999: 20). This last claim is rather strange. In the first place, not all first-century Jews (wealthy and others) viewed Roman rule with hostility, just as not all Jews who bore Greco-Roman names necessarily advocated pro-Roman sentiments.[15] Even if Kee's assessment that a "devout" first-century Jew might have avoided using a Roman name is correct, would

it not have been even less likely for this same "devout" Jew of the second and third centuries to have used such a name, especially after the Romans had destroyed the Temple, turned Jerusalem into the pagan city of Aelia Capitolina, and prohibited Jews from living in the city and its environs?

The very assumption of such a Jewish institution functioning in the deserted City of David in second- and third-century Jerusalem while catering to Jewish pilgrims from abroad contradicts the accepted (and, in my opinion, correct) historical picture of Jerusalem at this time. Jewish life disappeared almost entirely from the city's scene after 70 and 135. The only exceptions to this rule were occasional visits by individuals to the destroyed Temple Mount and the rather brief existence of some sort of pietistic group ("The Holy Community of Jerusalem") that seems to have resided somewhere in the city for a short while around the turn of the third century (Safrai 1973: 62–78). Kee's suggestion, that there was a synagogue in the city from the mid-second century on and that it conducted a range of communal activities, including hosting pilgrims from abroad, stretches the limits of credulity.

If Kee's treatment of the Theodotos inscription leaves much to be desired, then his rejection of other archeological evidence is likewise flawed. He ignores the 55 CE inscription from Berenice, Cyrene that refers explicitly to a synagogue building (Levine 2000: 95–6), and misrepresents the Gamla building, referring to it as a private home, an assertion that simply defies the archeological remains (Kee 1990: 8). Kee also refuses to consider any archeological remains as a synagogue unless it can be identified unequivocally as a "religious" building. Thus, much material is not judged on its own merits, but is negated a priori as being relevant to the discussion.

The obvious example of the Masada structure between the years 66 and 74, with its religiously motivated population and adjacent room probably used to store Torah scrolls used in synagogue worship, is a case in point; Kee disqualifies it, too, as a synagogue candidate. While he is correct that no inscriptions or artistic evidence point explicitly to the identification of any of these early structures (Masada, Herodium, Delos, or Gamla) as synagogues, a more reasonable approach might be to acknowledge the public nature of these buildings and consider the possibility that a (if not *the*) key role of a synagogue in the first century was its communal function, with the religious component being ancillary – at least as reflected in the building's architectural plan and physical appearance (see pp. 93–5).

Kee refers to H. McKay's study on synagogue worship, wherein she claims that formal synagogue worship did not exist in the first century, but only crystallized by the turn of the third century CE (McKay 1994). Such a conclusion, of course, fits nicely with Kee's own late dating of the origins of the synagogue building. However, McKay's analysis is questionable.[16] She dismisses or is forced to explain away evidence from the Second Temple period that apparently refers to Jewish Sabbath worship. For instance, 2

Macc. 8, 27 and Pseudo-Philo 11, 8 seem to indicate some sort of communal worship (she herself defines it as "public prayer"); and a worship framework is found at Qumran and among the Therapeutae of Alexandria.[17] The evidence of Agatharchides of Cnidus, while somewhat confusing, nevertheless indicates a Sabbath worship setting either in the Jerusalem Temple or in (Diaspora?) synagogues (Agatharchides refers to them as "temples").[18]

More problematic, however, is McKay's conception of what constituted Jewish worship at the time. As stated at the outset of her book:

> Prayer to the deity and singing of psalms to or about the deity, exhortations to follow the commands of the deity as understood by the believing community – all these count for me as worship. Community business, discipline sessions and political arguments do not. Reading, studying and explaining sacred texts I do not necessarily regard as worship, *unless* given a place in a planned session of worship. Otherwise I regard these activities as educational, or as serving the purpose of preserving and strengthening group identity, and not *necessarily* implying worship; the group's understanding of the god as *addressee* of the worship is vital in my definition.
>
> (1994: 3–4)[19]

McKay dismisses the relevance of the term *proseuche* (house of prayer) used in many Diaspora communities, since it is never mentioned explicitly in connection with worship.[20] As noted earlier, the term appears in Egypt, Delos, and the Bosphorus Kingdom, as well as with regard to the first-century Tiberias synagogue. Although we have no idea as to what prayers were recited, the fact that many institutions bore the name *proseuche* would seem to indicate that prayer worship constituted an important component of synagogue religious life.[21]

However, even were we to disregard this evidence and assume that organized Jewish communal prayer is clearly attested only after 70, at least for Judaean synagogues (Zeitlin 1973: 92–133; Fleischer 1990: 402–25; Levine 2000: 151–8), such a conclusion does not necessarily mean that there had not been a worship framework beforehand. Jewish worship need not refer to prayer, although this has become the central component in the Judeo-Christian tradition over the past two thousand years. In Jewish tradition, then and now, God was addressed through study as well, and thus McKay's basic definition of first-century Jewish worship simply falls short (McKay 1998: 103–42).

A wide range of sources indicate that Jewish communities met regularly on Sabbaths and holidays and that the service featured the reading of the Torah and the Prophets, often including a translation of the biblical text (*targum*). Moreover, pious acts of reading sacred Scriptures (see, e.g., the *Testament of Levi* 13) were often accompanied by some sort of instruction, whether in the form

of a sermon or a more formalized study session. The Qumran scrolls (1QS 6, 6–8), Philo (see p. 80 and n. 17), and M Avot (e.g. 2, 16; 3, 6) attest to the religious significance of study and its worship dimension. McKay, however, makes a clear-cut yet problematic dichotomy; such gatherings were educational frameworks and do not fall under the rubric of worship.

The theses put forth by Kee and McKay – if accepted – are revolutionary and would push the dating of the earliest synagogues to the third century CE. For Kee, the appearance of monumental synagogue remains in the third century indicates the creation of a new institution. The implication of these studies, of course, is that the first century was bereft of the synagogue despite the considerable amount of archeological and literary evidence at hand. To make their point, both Kee and McKay have adopted restrictive definitions of what to look for (an assembly of people, a particular type of worship), and this has prevented them from appreciating the multifaceted forms of synagogue life, both material and spiritual, that existed in the first century.[22]

The relationship between the first-century synagogue and the Jerusalem Temple

For generations scholars have assumed that the Second Temple synagogue stood in competition with the Temple (Levine 2000: 37 n. 67). The Temple focused on sacrifices, the synagogue on prayer and study; one was led by priests, the other by Pharisees; one was hierarchical, the other more participatory; one was restricted to Jerusalem, the other had universal dimensions. This sharp dichotomy has been rejected in recent decades. Most now agree that the Pharisees had nothing to do with the early synagogue nor did the synagogue per se figure into the traditions attributed to them in later rabbinic literature (Cohen 1999: 89–105). Moreover, the institution did not evolve in competition with the Temple, but rather served other functions and fulfilled different needs of the diverse and far-flung Jewish communities of the late Second Temple period.

Recent studies posit that not only did no inherent tension exist between the Temple and synagogue, but the former had a significant degree of influence on the latter. A. Kasher has raised this possibility with regard to Egyptian *proseuchai*, as has J. Strange with respect to Galilee (Kasher 1995: 205–20; Strange 1995: 75–6; 1999: 27–45). Kasher claims that the First Temple's liturgy included prayer and Torah-reading, which subsequently influenced Jewish practice in Egypt, a view without substantive basis. Equally problematic is his suggestion that the Septuagint's inaugural reading (*Letter of Aristeas* 305) played a role in shaping local Jewish practice. Strange, for his part, proposes that the arrangement of columns separating synagogue benches from the building's central space where the liturgy took place imitated Temple courts, especially that of the Women (Strange 1999: 45).

The evidence, however, is nonexistent. Strange's citation of *War* (5.5, 2, 199) does not relate to columns but rather to a full-fledged partition wall (τὸ διατείχισμα) bordering the Women's Court.[23] Furthermore, he assumes that a prayer service and Torah-reading ceremony dominated synagogue liturgy (an assumption that, at least with regard to prayer, is questionable) and required special architectural arrangements, and that the Temple provided the model.[24] Such assumptions are totally gratuitous.[25]

The most comprehensive presentation of this line of argument has been offered by D. Binder in his detailed survey of first-century synagogues (1999). He claims that the synagogue, in fact, constituted an extension of the Temple, asserting that the latter's functions, officials, liturgy, architecture, sanctity, and art were adopted by the synagogue. Binder attempts to show that (1) synagogues of the first century were considered sacred institutions; and (2) these synagogues were indeed patterned after the Temple. The evidence for the former is, at best, partial. Synagogue sanctity is indicated for only a handful of Diaspora sites (Goodman 1996: 1–16) and is never clearly attested for any Palestinian ones. Moreover, his efforts to interpret a number of passages from Josephus (e.g. *War* 4.7, 2, 406–9) that mention *hiera* as referring to Judaean synagogues, and therefore as evidence for the existence of synagogue sanctity, are unconvincing (Binder 1999: 123–6, 481).

Binder's second claim, however, is far more revolutionary, namely, that synagogues everywhere were patterned after the Temple:

> the hypothesis naturally emerges that the synagogues should not be viewed as being in opposition to the Temple, but rather as extensions of it. Specifically, I will argue that the synagogues in both Palestine and the diaspora served as subsidiary sacred precincts that extended spatially the sacrality of the Temple shrine and allowed Jews everywhere participation within the central cult.
>
> (1999: 31–2)

Regrettably, Binder finds it difficult to substantiate this claim, as solid supporting evidence is almost nonexistent. These two institutions were very different in essence, function, and organization: One embodied the quintessence of holiness in Judaism, the other was, at the very most several centuries later, a "diminished sanctuary" (B Megillah 29a); one focused on sacrifice as against Torah-reading and prayer, silence in the cultic ritual as against public recitations, priestly leadership in contrast to lay leadership, and a sacral hierarchical framework in contradistinction to a communal one. The fact that the Torah was read in the Temple once a year on Yom Kippur and once every seven years at the *Haqhel* ceremony during the Sukkot festival, or even the fact that sages of all stripes taught on the Temple Mount, has little to do with contemporary synagogue practice and certainly cannot be invoked as a model for the latter. The sanctity universally associated with the Temple was

of an entirely different order than the scattered references to sanctity in some first-century synagogues, and it should be noted that no evidence of synagogue sanctity exists from any contemporary halakhic or exegetical source. Thus, other than his own assertions and vague claims regarding similarities, the paucity of material weakens Binder's or anyone else's attempt to marshal enough evidence to substantiate his sweeping theory.[26]

In contrast, Flesher argues that the synagogue and Temple were diametrically opposed religious institutions:

> The Temple cult was a system of holiness and purity mediated through sacrifices offered by a holy caste of people, the priests. . . . The synagogue, by contrast, arose in a region without access to the Temple cult (i.e., in Egypt) and in a sense comprised a substitute for it. It served as a gathering place for all Israelites – priests and commoners – where they took part in worship. That worship seems to have consisted of prayers and Scripture reading, as far as the limited evidence indicates. From the perspective of the common Israelite, the non-priest, there were thus really two different Judaisms: the Temple cult from which he was generally excluded from meaningful participation, and the Judaism of the synagogue in which he was a full participant.
>
> (Flesher 1995 I: 28–9)

Flesher accepts the theory of an Egyptian origin for the synagogue, as it was geographically distant from the Temple, and that the institution was later imported into Judaea. He notes that synagogues in Palestine are attested only in literary and archeological sources for Galilee, but not for Jerusalem or Judaea. The synagogue was not able to strike roots there because of the Temple's overwhelming presence and domination in this region, and owing to the fact that the "Judaisms" of these religious institutions were diametrically opposed. In fact, the only Jerusalem synagogues that we know of by name were those founded by, or catering to, Diaspora communities that brought these institutions with them from abroad.[27] The phenomenon of our sources' associating only Diaspora-related synagogues with Jerusalem is worthy of consideration. A basic methodological concern, discussed on p. 91, is whether the paucity of sources should caution us against drawing far-reaching conclusions. Flesher's assumption that the Temple and synagogue represented two Judaisms is certainly questionable. If they were indeed so different, it is surprising that no source bothered to note this clash. Philo, Jesus, Paul, and Josephus do not seem to have been aware of these two Judaisms, suggesting that no such dichotomy existed in antiquity.

Flesher's attempt to mobilize archeological evidence, and especially explain the Masada building as something other than a synagogue, falls short. His arguments regarding its orientation are confusing, as he assumes that a

building needed a Jerusalem orientation in order to be called a synagogue. This was not the case for Second Temple Judaean synagogues, which most likely had no public prayer component that might have required a Jerusalem orientation. Reading the Torah, which was the primary – if not exclusive – worship activity at this time, demanded no orientation other than toward the place of reading, i.e. the center of the hall (Levine 2000: 124–59). Imposing the workings of the synagogue drawn from a later period (e.g. assuming the existence of communal prayer) may not be the best way to understand the functions and role of an earlier structure.

Some of the criteria invoked for rejecting the identification of the Masada building as a synagogue, i.e. that the site had been used as a stable beforehand or the fact that Qumran had no analogous room, are far from compelling. Rather than conclude that the scrolls at Masada, which were found in a cavity below floor level, are irrelevant to identifying the structure, these finds are best interpreted as some sort of *genizah* (archive) in a room otherwise used to house scrolls. If, indeed, the Masada room served as a synagogue, as is universally presumed, it was probably refashioned by revolutionaries hailing from Jerusalem and its environs who wished to establish for themselves an institution with which they were familiar; the Masada building indeed constitutes evidence for a synagogue in first-century Judaea.

The recent excavations at Qiryat Sefer and Modi'in (and perhaps Jericho and Horvat Etri as well) have brought to light first-century village synagogues; these discoveries also undermine Flesher's basic premise that no synagogue existed in the Jerusalem–Judaea region.

The archeological dimension

Over the last decade, a number of intriguing pre-70 Judaean sites were unearthed, an already-excavated Diaspora synagogue was accorded renewed scrutiny, and a heretofore relatively unknown corpus of epigraphic material was made accessible. All this has stimulated discussion of the finds themselves and their implications for understanding the first-century synagogue and Jewish community. The recently excavated Judaean synagogues are a case in point (see pp. 84–9). The Diaspora synagogue in Ostia, first excavated in 1961, has merited further study of its remains and has led to a vigorous debate regarding its earliest stage, dating, and plan. Furthermore, the published material from the Bosphorus Kingdom has shed new light on this region north of the Black Sea generally and on a heretofore little-known dimension of the first-century synagogue in particular.

Qiryat Sefer

In the course of building the new town of Qiryat Sefer (located between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, north of Modi'in), an ancient village was discovered

in the summer of 1995 (Magen *et al.* 1999: 25–32). Two clusters of buildings were found containing residential quarters, storerooms, and an olive press. Between these clusters and separated by an open space was a small square building measuring 9.6 m on each side (Figure 7.2). Unique to the site in terms of its size, location, plan, and type of stone used, the building was oriented on a northwest–southeast axis, with its entrance facing northwest. The facade of the building was built of hewn stones with margins typical of the Herodian building style of the late Second Temple period. The floor of the hall was paved with large, well-fitted flagstones, and along three sides was an elevation also paved with flagstones that presumably served as benches, with an aisle possibly behind them, as at Gamla. Four columns with Doric capitals stood in the hall, and four pilasters against the northwestern and southeastern walls of the building continued the line of the columns. Potsherds and coins indicate that the site first developed in the Hellenistic period, grew considerably in the first century CE, and continued into the second; it was abandoned some time during the first half of the second century, quite likely in the wake of the Bar-Kokhba revolt.

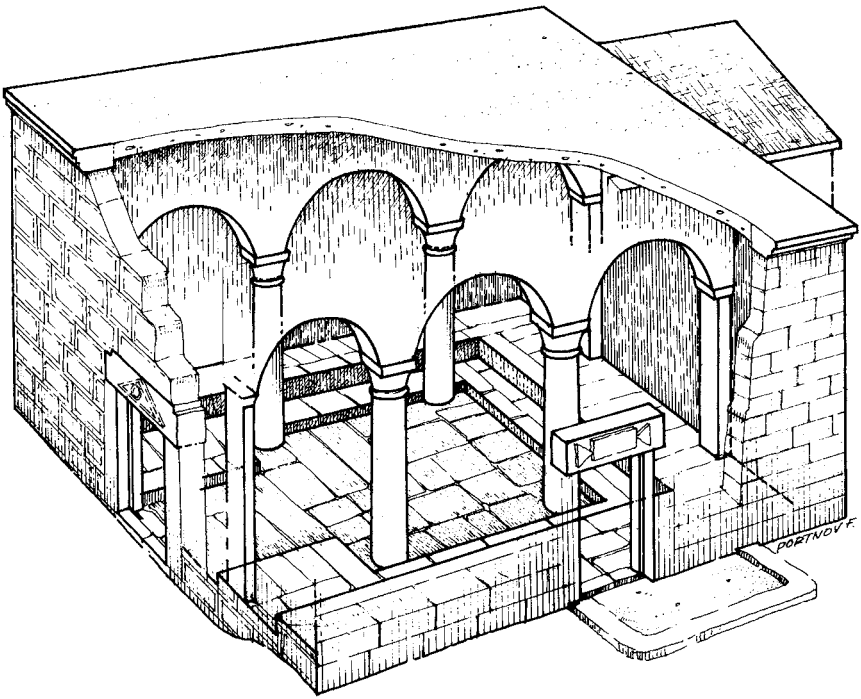

Figure 7.2 Proposed reconstruction of the synagogue at Qiryat Sefer. Courtesy of Yitzhak Magen, Israel Antiquities Authority.

Although a final report has not yet been published, it seems certain that this building was a small synagogue that served the village and its immediate area. Given its central location in the settlement, its careful construction, and public character, as well as its overall similarity to the Gamla structure (albeit of considerably smaller proportions), this building seems to be a credible candidate as the first village synagogue ever found in Judaea.

Modi'in (Khirbet Umm el-'Umdan)

Discovered in excavations undertaken in 2000–1 by A. Onn and others, this village existed from the Persian period onwards, with the main stratum dating to the Roman era (Onn *et al.* 2002: 64*–8*). Residential homes, alleys, a miqveh (ritual bath), and remnants of a bath were found, in addition to a public building identified as a synagogue (Figure 7.3). The first phase of this building, a well-built rectangular structure (7 × 12 m), dates to the Hasmonean era. The building was partitioned into three rooms, yet exactly how they functioned is unclear.

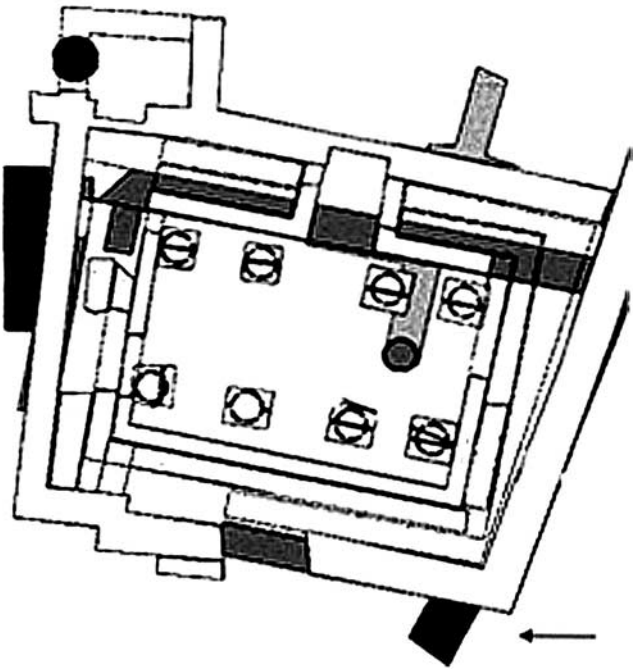

Figure 7.3 Synagogue at Modi'in. Courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority, after Alexander Onn, Shlomit Wexler-Bdolah, Yehuda Rapuano, and Tzah Kanias, *Hadashot Arkheologiyot* 114/75 (2002).

In the second phase, dated to the Herodian period, the building was expanded in an irregular fashion, its walls measuring 9.5, 10, 11.5, and 13.5 meters. The main entrance to the synagogue, preceded by a courtyard with a surrounding stone bench, was approached from the east, and another entrance from the north. A stone-paved floor was surrounded by a raised stone surface (a bench?); remains of seven column bases were found embedded in the floor (the eighth was clearly removed), forming two rows of four columns each to support the roof. Fragments of painted plaster (red, white, and yellow) were found in the fill above the stone pavement.

The final phase of this building dates to the period between the Jewish revolts (70–135 CE). The important modifications include a new floor of thick gray plaster as well as stepped benches along the walls. A small square room (2.5 × 2.0 m) with a connecting passageway was built just northeast of this hall. It is thus quite clear that this was a village synagogue, the earliest attested for the southern region of Judaea and more or less contemporaneous with that of Gamla and the earlier structure noted in the Theodotos inscription, if indeed this structure existed in Jerusalem and not in Rome (see pp. 77–8).

Jericho

In the winter of 1998–9, E. Netzer announced the discovery of a synagogue in Jericho dating to the first half of the first century BCE (*c.*75–70 BCE) (Netzer 1999: 203–21). The building (28 × 20 m in its final stage) is located just east of the Hasmonean palace (Figure 7.4). The eastern part of the complex consisted of seven rooms and a small courtyard; to its west was a large hall (16.2 × 11.1 m) lying on an east–west axis and containing twelve pillars with benches between them, aisles along each side of the room between the pillars and walls, and a channel that conveyed water from an aqueduct in the north to a basin in the room, and then to a miqveh in the south. In the last stage of the building, a *triclinium* was added on the western side of the hall, and a niche in its northeastern corner was identified as a storage place for Torah scrolls and other books. The building, which has been compared with that of Gamla (thus establishing its identification as a synagogue), is said to have served the palace staff living in the buildings to the east.

If authentic, this site would constitute the earliest synagogue ever found in Judaea. Unfortunately, however, this identification is problematic. Little hard evidence exists on which to base such a conclusion. The addition of a *triclinium* in the last stage cannot be considered a decisive factor for such an identification, even though we know that some ancient synagogues featured *triclinia*. Roman villas often had such rooms, very similar, in fact, to the Jericho building, but there is no known synagogue that parallels the plan of the Jericho building. Neither is there any basis (or parallel) for the

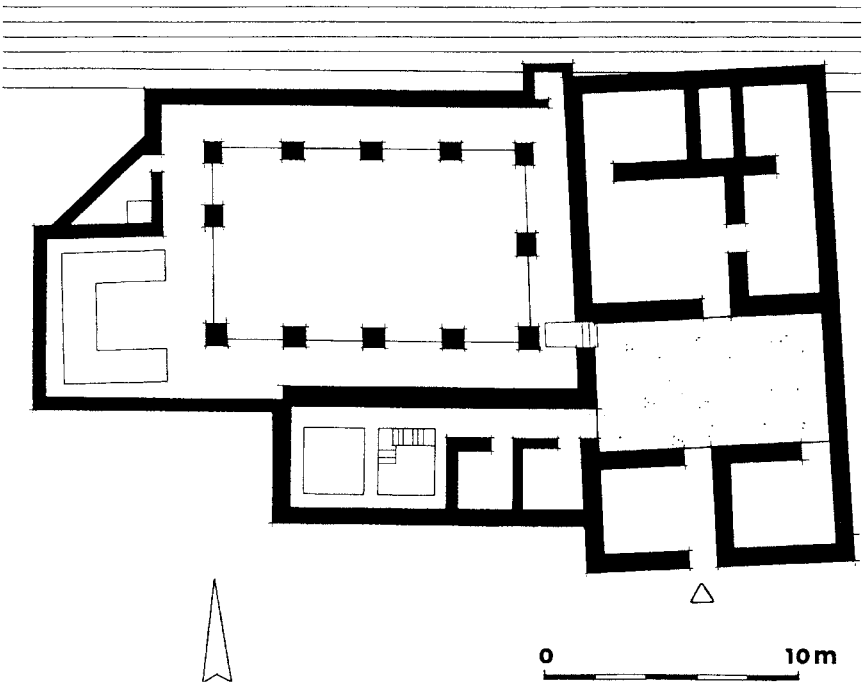

Figure 7.4 Plan of synagogue at Jericho, final stage. Courtesy of Ehud Netzer.

suggestion that the niche, tucked away in the northeastern corner of the hall, served as a storage area for Torah scrolls and other books. The presence of a miqveh is interesting but, again, of limited value as a basis for identification. As the nearby palace complex – and the city of Jericho in general – served as an important center for priests who were obliged to use such ritual baths regularly, the discovery of a miqveh is not uncommon and cannot be used as evidence for the existence of a synagogue.

The claim that this building resembled the Gamla synagogue, a point considered by the excavator to be of prime importance, is likewise unconvincing; the few similarities (i.e. four rows of columns, benches, and a water channel) are far outweighed by many significant differences, such as the overall plan of each, the number and nature of adjacent rooms, the location and arrangement of the benches, and the absence of a *triclinium* in Gamla.

Moreover, the location of this proposed synagogue is curious. Whom exactly did it serve? There was no community in the immediate area that lay on the periphery of the palace complex other than several possible villas – as yet not fully excavated – lying further east, along the same ridge. The claim that such a synagogue might have served the palace staff is not

particularly persuasive. We have noted that the plan of this building, including the *triclinium*, is similar to many Hellenistic-Roman villas;[28] thus, it is quite possible that this large central space might have been part of such a villa and might have served as a garden surrounded by a portico with a *triclinium* at one end.[29] The claim that this first-century BCE Jericho building is the earliest synagogue ever found in Judaea should, for the moment, be held in abeyance.

Horvat Etri

In an excavation carried out by B. Zissu and A. Ganor in 1999–2000, a village dating from the Persian to Late Roman periods was discovered south of Bet Shemesh and northeast of Bet Guvrin (Zissu and Ganor 2002: 18–27; see also Ma'oz 2003: 55). The village flourished in the first centuries CE, although it suffered serious destruction in each of the revolts (66–74 and 132–5). The most prominent structure was a public building located on the northeastern outskirts of the village. Measuring 13 × 7 m, the building was entered from one of its long walls (and thus it was termed a broadhouse-type building by its excavators); inside were remains of three columns across the width of the hall that were meant to support the roof. In front of the entrance was a courtyard with a stepped pool off to one side, identified as a miqveh. The building itself is dated to the period between the two revolts and is included here since it appears to be similar to the nearby Judaean village synagogues discussed on pp. 84–7.

At first glance, it would seem that this public building is as good a candidate as any to be considered a first-century synagogue. The building is clearly of a different order than those surrounding it, and the entranceway is a further indication of its public nature. Our main reservations involve the meager finds within the building itself. In contrast to the other Judaean village synagogues from this time, the building has no benches or stone-paved floor, nor is the deployment of its columns (three in a single row in the middle of the hall) evidenced elsewhere, where two to four columns surround an open space in the middle. In sum, this building may well be a village synagogue but, as yet, there remains an element of doubt.

Ostia

Although the Ostia synagogue was first excavated some forty years ago, a final report of the excavations has never been published; only a brief preliminary report has been available until recently (Squarciapino 1963: 194–203). Thus, while the final, fourth-century stage of the building is fairly well known, its earlier stages are now in dispute. Specifically, two major issues lie at the heart of the engaging scholarly interchange between L.M. White and A. Runesson: (1) When was the synagogue first built? and (2) Were the

premises originally a private home or a public structure? The excavator, F. Squarciapino, initially suggested that the building was first constructed as a synagogue in the latter part of the first century CE. However, in a series of publications throughout the 1990s, White has argued that the Ostia building (and other Diaspora synagogues as well) was first constructed as a private dwelling in the late first century and only transformed into a public Jewish building toward the end of the second or beginning of the third century (White 1997a: 379–91; 1997b: 23–53). Runesson has challenged White's reconstruction; having access to the original excavation reports, he claims that Squarciapino's theory is indeed correct and that the original structure was a monumental public building dating to the late first century CE (Runesson 1999: 409–33; 2001: 29–99). In response, White has called attention to the problematics of dating masonry and brickstamps, and has focused on the chronological context of the floors and benches, claiming that originally there was a second story and that this had been a private dwelling. He has also emphasized the relevance and importance of comparing this synagogue structure to nearby buildings (White 1999: 435–64).[30]

In such cases, it is common to conclude with the desideratum that the excavation's final report will clarify many of these issues. No such report, however, will be forthcoming from the excavator herself, but perhaps the recent publication of the architectural history of the building by Runesson, and the current excavations being conducted by White, will clarify many of the issues in dispute.

Bosphorus inscriptions

During the last decade of the twentieth century, the relatively inaccessible inscriptions from the Bosphorus Kingdom have been made available to the Western world (Nadel 1976: 197–233; Levinskaya 1996: 227–46 [see also pp. 105–16]; Gibson 1999; Overman 1999: 141–57; Levine 2000: 113–15). These inscriptions, dating from the first four centuries of the Common Era, are of several different types: a dedicatory inscription, several inscriptions relating to a religious association, and a number dealing with manumissions. We focus on the last category, which includes seven inscriptions from the first and early second centuries that are specifically associated with the synagogue. While some of the information in the Bosphorus inscriptions confirms what we know about other Diaspora communities (e.g. the use of the Greek language and Greek names, references to the *synagoge* as a community and the *proseuche* as a building), they nevertheless focus on manumissions, an activity almost never attested in other Jewish communities. To date, only a third-century CE papyrus from Egypt tells of a similar ceremony; the setting, however, is not noted (Tcherikover *et al.* 1964: 33–6, no. 473).

The Bosphorus manumission ceremonies in the *proseuche* often obliged the freed slave, under a *paramone* clause stipulating future ties and obligations,

to serve the synagogue and attend it regularly (although for how long and for what purpose is unclear).[31] Moreover, the community, as an official body, served on occasion as guardian and guarantor of the agreement. According to A. Caldarini's taxonomy of Greek manumission inscriptions (1965: 90–5), the Bosphorus evidence might well be designated as sacral manumissions (1965: 96–124; Gibson 1999: 36–49). This type of ceremony is well known in pagan contexts; at Delphi, for example, some 1,300 inscriptions bear testimony to such a procedure. What is unusual about the Jewish evidence from Bosphorus is not only the concentration of so many similar inscriptions in the same region and at the same time, which would seem to indicate an oft-repeated phenomenon (for whatever reason), but also that the role of the Jewish community as a corporate body and the synagogue building as the *mise en scène* were important components in this type of arrangement.[32]

Methodological issues

Clearly, a great deal of ferment characterizes the study of the first-century synagogue. One might be kind and describe the state of synagogue studies in the first century as flourishing, dynamic, and creative. Alternatively, one might be less generous and describe it as being in a fluid and muddled state, where all sorts of theories – from the interesting to the outlandish – are espoused. Why is it, given the relatively limited amount of material, that different types of theories, often contradictory, can be proposed? It is precisely the large number of often conflicting theories that alerts us to the problems and challenges of this topic. Despite its flourishing state, the study of the Second Temple synagogue is fraught with a series of challenging methodological issues, and these are in large measure responsible for much of the diversity:

1 *A paucity of evidence*. References to the synagogue in the New Testament, Josephus, Philo, and elsewhere number but several score for the entire Jewish world! The archeological material is likewise meager, especially when compared to the enormous quantity dating from Late Antiquity. No more than half a dozen buildings can be placed securely in the first century, although a significant yet modest number of inscriptions and papyri exist for Egypt, Cyrene, Rome, and the Bosphorus Kingdom. Given this paucity, how much and what sort of evidence is required to credibly propose an all-encompassing theory such as Binder's suggestion regarding the relationship between the Jerusalem Temple and the synagogue?

2 *Defining the synagogue*. Given the fact that the first century is the earliest period for which we have widespread evidence for the synagogue, how are we to define the term "synagogue" in this time frame? As a building? A gathering of people for any number of purposes? A recognized communal

framework? Or perhaps a combination of the above? And what sort of information is required to substantiate such an assessment? Moreover, assuming that we may be dealing with a structure, what archeological or literary evidence should be marshaled to validate the identification of a particular site as a synagogue?

3 *The nature of the institution*. Was the essence of the synagogue institution distinctively religious in nature (as it clearly was later on), or did it basically serve as a communal center with an important religious component? If the latter, then what was the religious function and how was it served? If the former, then what evidence is needed to prove its sacred character, and is such evidence, in fact, available? Too little attention has been paid to the apparent dichotomy between the archeological and literary evidence. Archeology tends to emphasize the communal dimension of the building, with little indication of its religious character – via art, inscriptions, or orientation – that was to become so prominent later on. Most literary sources emphasize the religious aspects of the institution – Torah-reading on Sabbaths and other religious practices. Do these written sources offer a complete picture or do they focus on a particular component that is of especial interest to their authors? How, then, does one deal with the proclivities of these two types of sources, and how does one incorporate this conflicting evidence?

4 *The question of origins*. Are we to assume a correlation between the earliest mention of a synagogue and the fact that it originated at that particular time and place? Based on such an assumption, as noted earlier, some have concluded that the synagogue began in Hellenistic Egypt, where it is first mentioned.[33] However, is this not investing too much significance in what can be construed as merely chance finds? This line of reasoning would lead us to ascribe the beginnings of many institutions, beliefs, and practices – Jewish and non-Jewish – to Egypt because its climate is so conducive to preservation. What additional evidence or arguments are needed to bolster the premise that the earliest dated evidence does, in fact, reflect the time of origin?

Whatever the value of identifying origins with the earliest evidence, its application requires prudence. Such a rule may be more appropriate in some contexts than in others. For example, when we know a great deal about a particular society and its institutions and a new framework appears, one may be justified in assuming that it crystallized at this time. In other instances, however, as with respect to the Hellenistic era, when there is a definite paucity of data from both Judaea and the Diaspora, drawing such a far-reaching conclusion on the basis of a first appearance would appear to be more problematic.

5 *Historical reliability of literary sources*. How reliable are written sources with regard to the first century? Of late, there has been a resurgence of skepticism vis-à-vis their accuracy; our age of "post-modernity" has engendered a

widespread sense of doubt and distrust. Some assume that things are not what they seem to be, and certainly are not what they are claimed to be. Not only is this true of contemporary political and social realms, but such skepticism has penetrated the academic world as well and assessments are often made on the basis of a hermeneutics of suspicion and doubt. Thus, with regard to the first-century synagogue, the reliability of traditions concerning the synagogue as recorded in Luke-Acts or Josephus has been questioned, as has that of rabbinic sources. As noted earlier, even the almost universal acceptance of a first-century setting for the Theodotos inscription has been questioned.

6 *The challenges of parallelism*. The institution of the synagogue, as well as many aspects of Jewish society at the time, are undeniably indebted to non-Jewish models. The borrowing of ideas, practices, and institutional frameworks was ubiquitous in the Hellenistic-Roman world. The issue, however, is to hone carefully crafted criteria as to what should be required for assessing the actual influence of one setting on another: geographical propinquity, common terminology, and identical (or similar) activities. For example, what is necessary to demonstrate that the Egyptian or Greco-Roman temples, or Roman voluntary associations, constitute a compelling model for the first-century synagogue?

7 *The synagogue and Second Temple society*. How do synagogue studies treat other well-known Second Temple phenomena, such as: (a) Pharisaic involvement and influence on this institution – did the Pharisees play a role and, if so, was it peripheral or central? (b) The relationship between the Temple and the synagogue – were they competing, complementary, or totally unrelated institutions? (c) The origin of the synagogue – when and where did it begin, in Judaea or the Diaspora? To paraphrase Isa. 2:4, did the synagogue "come out of Zion" or was it brought into Zion?

Defining the first-century synagogue: a communal institution with a religious dimension

The fundamental nature and function of the first-century synagogue that I propose is at variance with many of the notions advanced above. The first-century synagogue was primarily a communal institution serving the many and varied needs of the local community, including the religious ones (Levine 2000: 19–41). First-century sources – Josephus, the New Testament, rabbinic literature, and epigraphy – note a wide range of activities and services that took place there: political and social gatherings, judicial proceedings (including meting out punishment), a hostel, collecting monies for both local and Temple needs, a local archive, communal meals, religious instruction, and worship – be it prayer or Torah-reading (Levine 2000: 124–59).

Given the wide scope of activity in first-century synagogues, it has been opined that the biblical antecedent of the synagogue was the biblical city-gate, where almost all of the above activities once transpired. However, we are unable to trace satisfactorily the evolution of this communal setting through the ensuing centuries of the Persian and Hellenistic periods; the evidence, be it archeological or literary, is simply inadequate. Nevertheless, we suggest that the transition from the city-gate to an actual synagogue setting took place some time in the late Persian or, more probably, Hellenistic period, when the gate area underwent a radical physical change owing to the introduction of new and more effective offensive weaponry. Instead of being a large open area with adjacent rooms housing various activities, the city-gate area became strictly functional for entry into and exit from the city. As a result, a new venue had to be found for many of the activities formerly conducted there, and what evolved eventually became known as the synagogue. This process coincided with the predilection of the Hellenistic world to house activities in separate and often elaborate buildings, and took place over time, undoubtedly at a different pace from one community to the next. In the many villages and towns of Jewish Palestine that had no gates, an open plaza or square would have served such purposes, and eventually these places evolved into a synagogue building. No precise date can be given for the emergence of the synagogue, and there is no way to trace systematically this process owing to the dearth of information from Hellenistic Palestine generally and from Jewish Palestine in particular.

Origins aside, the implications of this emphasis on the synagogue's communal dimension are far-reaching and affect most of the issues raised above. The first-century synagogue should not be viewed as a quintessentially religious institution – certainly not in Judaea, and perhaps not even in much of the Diaspora – as was to become the case in Late Antiquity. The search for a Jerusalem orientation, religious symbols, and other appurtenances in these buildings that are typical of a later age (such as a niche or chest for Torah scrolls) is fundamentally misguided, and any attempt to disqualify buildings as synagogues because they did not bear distinctively religious signs is unwarranted.

Similarly unjustified are efforts to define the early synagogue building as sacred. If the synagogue evolved in some fashion from the local city-gate, it was intended to meet very different needs from those addressed by the Temple. It did acquire a new religious component at some point during the Second Temple period (i.e. Scriptural reading), but when and how is unknown; in any case, this component seems to have played a role in synagogue affairs only on Sabbaths and holidays. While it is true that a few Diaspora synagogues acquired a sacred dimension, this was not necessarily because sacredness was inherent in the synagogue setting, but rather because some Diaspora communities felt the need for a more pronounced religious designation and profile, whether for purely religious reasons or for social and political considerations as well.[34]

By viewing the synagogue as having evolved from an earlier city-gate or village-square setting, other aspects of the early history of the institution also become clearer. Thus, the issue of precisely where and when the synagogue first emerged becomes somewhat superfluous. In Palestine, the evolution of the synagogue extended over the course of the Hellenistic period (third to first centuries BCE); during this period, the synagogue or proto-synagogue framework was not singled out in literary sources such as 1 and 2 Maccabees because the functions it fulfilled and the status it enjoyed were not exceptional. Moreover, the newly developing Diaspora at this time had no specific model to emulate for its communal framework. Obviously, the city-gate or village-square setting was irrelevant for a small Jewish community living in a pagan city. Thus, each Diaspora community fended for itself, adopting and adapting indigenous local institutional frameworks to answer its communal needs. This would account for the diversity of architecture, titles of communal officials, names, and types of communal activities between one Diaspora community and the next. It would also account for the different terms used by Romans and Jews alike in referring to the synagogue (e.g. amphitheater, *didaskaleion*, *sabbateion*, *proseuche*, and *synagoge*). Both local and Roman Imperial usage influenced the choice of terminology.

The implications of this suggested understanding of the synagogue reach beyond the first-century institution and characterize the synagogue for centuries to come. The synagogue remained first and foremost a communal framework down to the end of antiquity. It is the only Jewish public building we know of from this period, both in Roman-Byzantine Palestine and in the Diaspora. While it is true that the synagogue's religious profile grew dramatically in Late Antiquity, particularly as expressed in its main hall, which had become – in the words of one sage – a "diminished sanctuary" (B Megillah 29a), the synagogue complex as a whole continued to function as a community center. It remained a multifunctional institution, answering the needs of an often multifaceted community. The synagogue belonged to the local community that built and maintained it. There was never a higher authority that determined its policies – how it should be built, decorated, or administered, what activities would take place there, or even what sort of liturgy was to be used. This local focus of the synagogue guaranteed that the diversity so evident in the first century remained a hallmark of the institution.

The last years of the twentieth century have presented us with a rich trove of stimulating studies regarding the first-century synagogue. Despite the relative paucity of sources and other methodological issues, this topic has proven, and undoubtedly will continue, to be a source of creative scholarship. If the vibrancy of a field is measured by the rich, contrasting, and often conflicting theories proposed, and by the vigorous debate they fostered, then the first century and its synagogues are in a healthy state indeed.

Notes

1 Richardson (1996: 104): "The architectural model for synagogues was the *collegium*, though a more cautious way of putting it is that the development of synagogue buildings before 70 ce cohered with their social character and legal definition in the same period. Early synagogues, both in the Diaspora and Palestine, were *collegia*." Even more pointed is the summary offered by one of the editors of the volume, S.G. Wilson (1996: 4): "P. Richardson (chapter 6) has now fully and persuasively made the case that pre-70 synagogues were in all respects analogous to *collegia*, while enjoying greater imperial protection."

2 This may have been the case with regard to the right of the Jews to offer sacrifices appearing in an edict to the Jewish community of Sardis (Josephus, *Ant*. 14.10, 24, 261). Did Sardis Jews, in fact, sacrifice, or were the Romans merely repeating an oft-invoked privilege that, in this case at least, was not applicable?

3 See, for example, *Ant*. 14.10, 8, 215–16. On the various terms used in Roman documents with regarding to the Jewish community, see Schürer (1973–87 III/1: 87–98, 107–25) and Pucci Ben Zeev (1998: 112–13). In certain places (e.g. Alexandria and Berenice), the Jewish community referred to itself as a *politeuma*, a well-attested civic framework. See Levine (2000: 90 and bibliography).

4 *Ant*. 14.10, 12, 227; 10, 13, 228 and 230; 10, 14, 231–2; 10, 18, 237. On some of the social ramifications of these privileges, particularly with respect to the Jews of Asia, see Barclay (1996: 259–81).

5 See Burtchaell (1992: 208):

> It was only natural as the Jews went about organizing their communities in ways they considered appropriate, that no matter how traditional or separatist they imagined themselves to be, their exposure to Greco-Roman society would inevitably draw them somewhat in its direction. This held true whether it was simply an assimilation of vocabulary (as when Philo describes the Essenes as a club, or Hellenistic association = *thiasos*); or presenting themselves to outsiders in ways familiar to them (the patriotic tract, 2 Maccabees, is itself written in a very stylized Hellenistic Greek); or even adopting gentile customs outright (the gymnasium became an avenue of access to Greek and, in rare cases, possible Roman citizenship for those enrolled). The Mishnah uses about 200 loan-words from Greek and Latin; the Talmuds, 4,000. The Jews, despite themselves, absorbed Hellenism. They cross-bred their ancestral polity with such international forms as seemed to be harmonious and, to boot, publicly appealing. There was no lack of models.

6 Although many parallels have been drawn between Jewish rights and those found in the Greco-Roman world generally (Greek cities, professional and religious associations, ethnic groups, etc. [Pucci Ben Zeev 1998: 451–68]), in most cases these privileges were localized and applied to specific places and cases. The rights repeatedly granted the Jews throughout the Roman world were clearly based on the precedents set by Caesar and, as time passed, this tradition assumed ever-greater weight, especially when combined with Roman interests in each instance.

7 Wilson (1996: 1–15), attempting to explain the term "voluntary" as used in this volume raises a series of issues that should lead to a serious refinement and nuancing of the term, and vitiates its effectiveness in the Jewish context.

8 One can find voluntary frameworks among Jews with respect to the various Second Temple sects, as well as specific associations within the Jewish communities; see, for example, Josephus (*Life* 2, 10–12), Baumgarten (1997: 6–7), and Levine (2000: 80–1).

9 Flesher bases these remarks on Josephus' report concerning Sardis Jews "offering prayers and sacrifices to God" (*Ant.* 14.10, 24, 260).

10 Flesher adds a "theoretical model" to this historical presentation, namely that a temple or synagogue reflects or symbolizes its community. Given the fact that a minority community (the Jews) erected the building in Greco-Roman society, the Jews

> had to bring in the symbols and categories of the surrounding society, and use them to shape their display – i.e., the building and the activities carried out in it. The synagogue thus becomes a means by which Jews negotiate their place in the Graeco-Roman world . . . fitting themselves into the pre-existing, Graeco-Roman categories. . . . Once the synagogue enters that category, the category begins to redefine the synagogue; the two-way dialectic has begun.
>
> (2001: 142)

11 See his suggestion that the setting up of statues in the synagogues of Dor and Alexandria stemmed from the pagan view that the synagogue was likened to a temple and thus required images (Flesher 2001: 138).

12 Horsley (1999: 46–69) acknowledges the existence of synagogues in the Hellenistic cities of Palestine (Caesarea, Dor) and beyond (Antioch), but not in Galilee.

13 For earlier critiques of Kee's thesis, see Sanders (1990: 341–3), Oster (1993: 178–208), Riesner (1995: 192–200), Atkinson (1997: 491–502), van der Horst (1999: 18–23), and most exhaustively Kloppenborg-Verbin (2000: 243–80).

14 While true that several early commentators suggested a post-70 date for this inscription, they soon retracted their assessment once the inscription's *editio princeps* had been published. See Vincent (1921: 247–77) and Dalman (1922: 30). For a listing of those who have adopted a pre-70 date, see Kloppenborg-Verbin (2000: 253 n. 38 and appendix 2).

15 See, for example, the breakdown of the Tiberias population into contending factions on the eve of the revolt in 66 (Josephus, *Life* 9, 32–42).

16 For earlier critiques of this thesis, see Reif (1995: 611–12) and van der Horst (1999: 23–37).

17 See Philo (*Vita Contemplativa* 30–3; *Hypothetica* 11) and the Qumran scroll 4Q *Shirot 'Olat Ha-Shabbat* (see Newsom 1985).

18 Josephus (*Against Apion* 1.22, 209–10, in Stern 1974–84 I: 107):

> The people known as Jews, who inhabit the most strongly fortified of cities, called by the natives Jerusalem, have a custom of abstaining from work *every seventh day* [emphasis mine – L.L.]; on those occasions they neither bear arms nor take any agricultural operations in hand, nor engage in any other form of public service, but pray with outstretched hands in the temples until the evening.

19 See also McKay (1994: 73) with respect to Philo's descriptions of Sabbath activities: "But study and contemplation are by no means the same as worship."

20 Similarly irrelevant to McKay is Josephus' report (*Life* 57, 295) that prayer was conducted in the Tiberias *proseuche*, since this report related to a weekday and not the Sabbath!

21 See Philo (*Special Laws* 2.32, 198–9), which may preserve a Yom Kippur prayer that was recited in Egyptian *proseuchai*. My thanks to Daniel Stoekl for this reference.

22 An almost diametrically opposed approach was taken by Burtchaell (1992), who assumed the existence of a full-blown synagogue institution in the first century

that heavily influenced the development of the early church. However, in attempting to show this synagogue's organization, he drew extensively on much later sources, both literary and epigraphical, which, of course, seriously weakens his argument.

23 Perhaps, however, Strange had intended to refer to the following paragraph (200) that describes porticoes surrounding the inner court of the Temple, between its various gates; but this passage, then, has nothing to do with the Women's Court.

24 A. Grossberg has gone even further in this comparison of the synagogue and the Temple, although with respect to later buildings, especially those in Galilee. See Grossberg (1994: 237–54; 1995: 461–88). This comparison is likewise speculative and unconvincing.

25 For example, having pointed out that the author of 1 Esdras (9, 38) set the Torah-reading ceremony of Ezra in the Temple precincts (instead of by the Water Gate, as noted in Neh. 8:1), Strange claims: "This placement in 1 Esdras suggests that the Hasmonean author regarded the temple courts as appropriate venues for this type of event, which in turn suggests that the temple porches and courts can form a kind of architectural template for such activities in the synagogue" (1999: 45 n. 47).

26 It is ironic that the one rabbinic source indicating possible Temple architectural patterns being used in a synagogue is completely overlooked by Binder; he makes no reference to T Sukkah 4, 6, which speaks of a large Alexandrian synagogue with a plan and certain arrangements reminiscent of the Temple. Questions arise as to whether the description of an Alexandrian synagogue is historically accurate or whether it is a literary creation of a second-century Palestinian rabbi. Even if one concludes in favor of historicity in this case, it would apply to one Alexandrian building only and not to Diaspora buildings generally.

27 Flesher is forced to dismiss the evidence of several New Testament references that speak of synagogues in Jerusalem generally; see, for example, Luke 4:44; Acts 22:24, 26.

28 See, for example, de Franciscis (1969: nos. 49 and 73), Wallace-Hadrill (1994: 40–3, 81, 107), and Zanker (1998: 36 [House of the Faun], 170 [House of the Golden Cupids]).

29 See Ma'oz (1999: 120–1) and the response in Netzer (2000: 69–70).

30 The fullest presentations are to be found in White (1997a: 379–91; 1997b: 23–53).

31 On the meaning of this term in its Greek context, see Westermann (1948: 9–50).

32 For other intriguing features in these inscriptions, such as the invocation of pagan deities or the possible indications of God-fearers in these communities, see Goodenough (1957: 221–45), Levinskaya (1996: 105–16), and Levine (2000: 114–15).

33 Grabbe (1988: 410):

> By way of conclusion, I will say that I fully recognize the dangers of some of the proposals here. The data are meager, and an archaeological find tomorrow could falsify some or all of what I have argued. Nevertheless, the correct scientific approach is one which proceeds from the extant evidence, even when there is not very much and even when the argument most [*sic!*] be one from silence. This may have its hazards, but it is much preferable to the approach which proceeds on the basis of "what everyone knows" or "what must have been."

34 The most explicit attribution of sacredness to a Diaspora synagogue, i.e. Josephus' reference to the Antioch building as a *hieron* (*War* 7.3, 3, 44–5), may have been due to the presence there, past or present, of Temple artifacts donated by the Seleucids. See Levine (1987: 22).

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8

CITY COINS AND ROMAN POWER IN PALESTINE

From Pompey to the Great Revolt

Mark A. Chancey

Coins are significant sources for understanding attitudes of civic governments, at least as publicly displayed, toward imperial power. Civic coinage illustrates how the cities' elites expressed both local identity and subordination to Rome. Indeed, for some cities in Palestine, coins are our only source of information on these issues, especially in the early phases of the region's Romanization. This chapter provides an overview of the ways in which city coins reflect the recognition of Roman domination in Palestine, beginning with Pompey's conquest in 63 BCE and ending with the first Jewish Revolt (66–70 CE).[1] It focuses on how deference to the Romans is reflected in the portraiture (or lack thereof) on coins' obverses, the symbols on coins' reverses, and the content of numismatic inscriptions. The discussion is limited to civic coinage, although one can observe similar attempts to balance royal power with respect for the Romans on the coins of the Herodian and Nabatean client kings (Meshorer 1975, 1982, 1990–1991). Procuratorial coinage is not discussed, since it was a fundamentally different phenomenon, with Roman officials themselves supervising its minting.

Challenges in using coins for historical reconstruction

Interpreting numismatic evidence is not without its difficulties. As A.H.M. Jones noted in a classic essay, ancient literary sources are largely silent on the subject of currency, leaving a host of fundamental questions unanswered (1974: 61–81). For example, we know little about how the minting of coins was authorized. Cities sometimes sought permission from the emperor or from Roman officials to issue coins (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 1–5; Burnett 1987a: 16; Howgego 1985: 87–89; Levick 1999: 47). Lucian refers to this practice in his second-century CE satire *Alexander* (58), in which Alexander of Abonoteichus appeals to the emperor to allow his city to mint a coin

depicting Alexander's deity, Glycon, and himself. Further evidence of this procedure may be found on the coinage of cities in the western empire in the time of Augustus and Tiberius, some of which minted coins with Latin inscriptions of PERM and the name of the emperor or a Roman proconsul. Coins minted at the Roman colony of Berytus *c.*12–14 CE provide a rare eastern example of this phenomenon (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 2). On coins with Greek inscriptions, the preposition ΕΠΙ and a name might indicate the official who had authorized the production of the coinage, though, as discussed on p. 109, other interpretations of such phrases are also possible. Despite these examples, however, we do not know that cities always had to seek such permission whenever they wished to mint currency. Appeals to the emperor might just as easily be interpreted as attempts to flatter him (Millar 1977: 394–447), not an indication that his approval was actually required. Given the dearth of evidence, it is entirely imaginable that cities acted occasionally on their own volition. Information from the cities of Palestine is so limited that, at present, the normal practice is simply unknown.

Nor do we know the processes by which images and legends on coins were chosen (Burnett 1987a: 16–17; Crawford 1985: 66–67). Kenneth Harl has persuasively argued that the designs on civic coins reflect the values of local elites (Harl 1987: 31). Though Harl's study is based primarily on coins from later centuries, his observations on this point probably hold true for coins of this period. But when a city issued currency, did its *boule* approve or suggest designs and inscriptions? Did it relegate that responsibility to a group of officials? A single bureaucrat? The coin makers? The process for design selection may have varied from city to city, or, within a city from one *boule* to the next or even from one series of coins to another.

Also unclear is the degree to which designs and legends were chosen specifically to communicate to the masses. Though some scholars have been skeptical about the role of coins in disseminating governmental messages (Jones 1974: 63–64; Crawford 1985: 63–64; Levick 1982: 104–116; 1999: 41–60), on some level coins were obviously "organs of information" (Sutherland 1959: 54). The majority of a city's population might not have been able to read numismatic (and other) inscriptions, but some would have discovered at least the general sense of those inscriptions' meanings. The significance of some designs would also have been clear. Two ancient literary references illustrate awareness of the political import of the emperor's image: the story of Jesus' request of a coin bearing the emperor's portrait when asked whether one should pay taxes to Caesar (Mark 12:1–17/Matthew 22:15–22/Luke 20:20–26), and Suetonius's characterization as a crime the carrying of a coin with the image of Tiberius into a brothel (*Tiberius* 58) (Burnett 1987a: 66–67). Similarly, the political message of Roman domination conveyed by the depiction of the emperor on a city's coinage was unmistakable. On the other hand, the public may have been oblivious to the meaning of more obscure images. One group, however, had no trouble

discerning the political significance of inscriptions honoring Roman officials, the name and image of the emperor, and references to cities' annexation by Rome: the Romans themselves. Every issue of civic coinage provided the elites with the opportunity to demonstrate publicly to Roman officials, administrators, and soldiers their loyalty to Rome, and this was the case regardless of whether an actual Roman presence existed in their city or not.

The city coins of Palestine

It did not take long after Pompey's conquest of the area in 63 BCE for some civic authorities to demonstrate their loyalty to their newfound rulers. The coins of Antioch bore the monogram of Gabinius, the Roman *strategos* appointed by Pompey to oversee Syria (Josephus, *War* 1.161ff.) (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 612, no. 4124). Some cities renamed themselves after the *strategos* soon after his arrival. On six different coins minted between 57 and 45 BCE, Nysa-Scythopolis proclaimed itself "Gabinia." Each coin depicted the bust of the current Roman governor (Gabinius, Crassus, or Bassus, depending on the year of issue) (Barkay 1994–1999: 54–62; 1990–1991: 72–76). Marisa issued coins *c.*58–57 BCE that bore the abbreviation ΓΑ, suggesting that it, too, took his name (Qedar 1992–1993: 27–33).[2] The name "Gabinia" is also found on coins issued by Canatha in the second and third centuries (Barkay 1994–1999, 1990–1991).

Other cities followed suit in honoring Roman officials. Gaba, from the time of Claudius (41–54 CE) to that of Hadrian (117–138 CE), struck coins with the name Philippeia, presumably reflecting its naming after Marcius Philippus, proconsul of Syria *c.*61/60 BCE. One coin's inscription suggests that the city had a composite name honoring both Philippus and Emperor Claudius (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 672, no. 4857). Second- and third- century CE coins show that Pella was also called Philippeia and Gadara was known as Pompeia (Barkay 1994–1999, 1990–1991). Whether these cities had gone by these names for the decades (sometimes centuries) since the named official had ruled, or had adopted these names at a later date to honor the municipalities' earliest Roman history is unclear (Barkay 1994–1999, 1990–1991).[3]

Though a few cities, like Tyre, Sidon, and Ascalon, continued minting coins with a dating system marking the years since their presumed foundation, many used chronological notations reflecting the beginning of Roman rule. The inscriptions of Gadara's coins from 64/63 BCE are the clearest examples of this dating schema, reading ΛΑΡΩΜΗΣ – "Year One of Rome" (Spijkerman 1978: 128–129, nos. 1–2). Mid-first-century BCE coins of Nysa-Scythopolis and Marisa also attest to the early usage of this dating. Numerous other cities – Hippos, Philadelphia, Pella, Abila, Dium, Gerasa, Canatha, Gaba, Gaza, Dora, and, further north, Apamea and probably Byblos – used eras beginning with Pompey's arrival, though most of our numismatic evidence for this phenomenon dates to later centuries (Burnett *et al.* 1992:

672, 660–661, 676–677, 632, 647; Qedar 1992–1993: 27; Spijkerman 1978: 316–317). Ptolemais used a calendar commemorating not Pompey's conquest but the visit by Caesar *c.*47 BCE (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 658–659). For some of these cities, adopting the date of the Romans' arrival as their symbolic foundation date may have reflected, at least originally, their gratitude for deliverance from Hasmonean rule. Others may have adopted the practice much later simply to demonstrate pro-Roman sentiments. Each such inscription carried the clear message that Rome's arrival in the area marked a new phase in the city's history, and that the city should be understood as part of the larger network of the Roman Empire.

Some cities went beyond naming themselves after Roman officials; they named themselves after the emperor himself. During the reign of Claudius (41–54 CE), Gaba and, in Syria, Apamea honored the emperor in this way (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 672, no. 4856; 634, nos. 4376–4378). The ethnic legends on coins of Ptolemais identified its inhabitants as Germans, presumably in reference to Claudius's title Germanicus (Meshorer 1985: 12; Burnett *et al.* 1992: 660, nos. 4746–4748). Tiberias' coins from the early second century CE show that it, too, took Claudius' name at some point, demonstrating that a city originally named for one emperor might choose also to honor another (Kindler 1961: 55–56, nos. 3–5). This practice of flattering the emperor by naming a city after him was common, as seen in the nearby Herodian territories, where both the emperor and members of his families were honored by the client kings. Herod the Great founded Caesarea Maritima and Sebaste; Herod Philip founded Caesarea Philippi and Julia; and Antipas founded Livia, Tiberias, and Autocratoris (Sepphoris) (Braund 1984: 106, 113).

Though some of Palestine's cities may have been quick to honor the Romans with their official calendars or by naming themselves after officials, most were somewhat slow to depict the emperor. In other parts of the empire, Augustus' image began appearing on coins after the Battle of Actium, *c.*31 BCE (King 1999: 123–136), but in Syria and Palestine things were different. Only Gadara and Damascus fit into this pattern, depicting the emperor in 31/30 BCE and 30/29 BCE, respectively (Spijkerman 1978: 130–131, nos. 9–10; Burnett *et al.* 1992: 664, nos. 4786, 4788). Otherwise, his portrait didn't appear in this area until the last decade before the Common Era (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 39–40) and, even then, it didn't appear everywhere. The following examples of when cities first placed the imperial portrait on their coins are representative: at Dora, 7/6 BCE (not appearing again until *c.*68 CE) (Meshorer 1986/1987: 59–72); at Ascalon, 4/3 BCE (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 634, nos. 4372–4374); at Apamea 4/3 BCE (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 675, nos. 4877–4879); at Seleucia, 6 CE (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 631, nos. 4328–4329). At Antioch, when coinage resumed in 7/6 BCE after a cessation since 17/16 BCE, issues of the first two years did not depict Augustus, though later ones did (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 615, nos. 4150–4160;

624–626, nos. 4242–4269). Ptolemais refrained from depicting the emperor on its coins until the mid-first century CE (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 659–660, nos. 4743–4748). While the emperor ultimately became a common image on civic coins, particularly after the Revolt, he never appeared on the coins of Tyre (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 655–658) and, while his portrait was imprinted on the bronze coins of Sidon beginning in 10/9 BCE, it was never put on the city's silver coins (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 651–652, nos. 4548–4561; 654, nos. 4604–4611).

Such delays in depicting the emperor are difficult to explain, especially in light of the fact that several cities slow to portray Augustus (e.g. Ptolemais, Dora, Antioch, Ascalon) had minted earlier coins depicting Antony and/or Cleopatra (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 732). Civic coins without an emperor's bust have traditionally been called "pseudo-autonomous coinage," with the implication that the freedom not to portray the emperor reflected some level of autonomy for the city, but this linkage is highly questionable. The title "autonomous" was very common on city coinage, and its use was not limited to coins without the imperial image (Kindler 1982–1983: 79–87; Head 1967: 927).

At times, the reluctance to put the emperor on coins may reflect Jewish sentiments against images. Thus, the series of three coins of Tiberias minted 53/54 CE may have refrained from portraying him in deference to the city's Jewish majority (Chancey, 2002: 88–95), though the coins did have the inscription ΚΛΑΥΔΙΟΥ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΟΣ (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 671–672, nos. 4851–4853).[4] Likewise, when Sepphoris, also a Jewish city, minted coins during the first Jewish Revolt (see pp. 108–109), it, too, chose images other than the emperor.

Once a city did introduce the emperor's portrait onto its coins, that image usually appeared on most of its subsequent issues. Perhaps civic authorities feared that not depicting the emperor, having done so earlier, might be considered by provincial authorities as disrespectful. Coins that did depict the emperor usually identified him with an inscription, though there were exceptions to this pattern, such as some issues of Canatha (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 668–669, nos. 4836–4838). This identifying inscription might vary in length from a series of official imperial titles to the briefest of abbreviations. On coins of Ascalon, for example, the imperial image was accompanied with just the two letters ΣΕ, presumably for *Sebastos* (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 675–676, nos. 4877–4881, 4884, 4893). If a city issued a series of different denominations in a single year, the smaller-sized denominations might not depict the emperor, as seen at Scythopolis (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 668, nos. 4832, 4833).

Aside from depictions of the emperor, distinctly Roman symbols were rare on the reverses of city coins struck in the first centuries BCE and CE, though they are not uncommon in the second and third centuries CE (Harl 1987: 38–72). Most currency from this period bore standard Mediterranean

numismatic images, sometimes highlighting aspects of local culture, such as the primary gods worshipped. Indeed, deities (e.g. Nike, Dionysus, Doros, Phanebal, or, especially, Tyche) were very common, though other symbols might also appear, such as the double cornucopia or the cadeucus, as on coins of Gadara (Burnett *et al.* 1982: 666–667, nos. 4813–4814).

This absence of unambiguous Roman imagery holds true in Palestine even for most of the coins issued during the Jewish Revolt. This lack of Roman symbolism contrasts sharply with the vivid pro-Jerusalem and pro-Temple designs found on the rebel coinage coming out of Judea and, in Golan, at Gamla (Meshorer 1982: 96–131; Syon 1992–1993: 34–55). On revolt-era civic coins, explicitly pro-Roman symbols and legends are generally limited to the emperor's image and title, as at Ascalon, Hippos, and Gadara (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 676, nos. 4889–4892; 666, nos. 4807–4808; 667, nos. 4822–4824). Gerasa and Scythopolis each issued a series of coins, the largest denominations of which named and depicted Nero (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 669, nos. 4839–4841; 668, nos. 4834–4835). Militaristic, if not explicitly pro-Roman, imagery – a shield and two spears in a wreath – appeared on the smallest denomination at Scythopolis (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 668, no. 4835).

Cities with strong Roman identities, such as Caesarea Maritima and Ptolemais, minted coins during the war that reflected the military backgrounds of the veterans who lived there. Caesarea Maritima had served as a center for Roman administration since Rome had annexed Judea as a province (Chancey 2002: 144–148). It issued four coins *c.*68 CE, depicting Nero on the three largest denominations. The reverse of one coin has an inscription enclosed in a wreath honoring Vespasian: ΕΠΙ ΟΥΕΣΠΑΣΙΑΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΕ. The reverses of two others have a symbol of a male figure holding a human bust and a legionary standard, possibly a reference to the military service of the settlers there (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 673, nos. 4862–4865; Hamburger 1970: 81–91).

Ptolemais had received a colony of Roman veterans in the mid-first century CE. It had not minted coins since 6/5 BCE (Applebaum 1989: 70–96), but in the midst of the Revolt, it struck new issues. Those from 66–68 CE show Nero on the obverse and the colony's foundation ceremony – the emperor ritualistically determining the boundaries by plowing with an ox – on the reverse. Four different legionary standards, probably identifying the legions from which the settlers were drawn, are visible in the background of the foundation scene (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 659). Unlike the overwhelming majority of coins from the Roman east, these coins bore Latin inscriptions, reflecting the city's new, distinctively Roman identity. Another coin, depicting Victory, may also have come from Ptolemais in this period (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 659–660, nos. 4749–4751).

Cities could make their pro-Roman position in the revolt quite clear through inscriptions alone, without portraying the emperor, as the Galilean city Sepphoris did with its two coins of *c.*68 CE (Chancey and Meyers

2000: 18–33, 61; Chancey 2001: 127–145; 2002: 69–83; Meshorer 1996: 195–196; 1979: 159–171; Seyrig 1950: 284–289; 1955: 157–159). Sepphoris, though predominantly Jewish, refused to revolt against the Romans (Josephus, *Life* 30, 37, 39, 104, 124, 232, 346–347, 373, 394) and even admitted Roman garrisons (Josephus, *War* 3.30–34, 59–61; *Life* 346, 411). The obverses of both its coins had the inscription ΛΔΙΝΕΡΩΝΟΚ-ΛΑΥΔΙΟΥΚΑΙΣΑΡΟΣ, surrounded by a wreath, and the reverses read ΕΠΙ ΟΥΕΣΠΑΣΙΑΝΟΥ ΕΙΡΗΝΟΠΟΛΙ ΝΕΡΩΝΙΑ ΣΕΠΦΩ ("Under Vespasian, Eirenopolis-Neronias-Sepphoris"). The coins' inscriptions thus honored both Nero and his general, and soon to be emperor, Vespasian. They also demonstrated that the city had taken two new names, one in honor of Nero, and the other as a "City of Peace" (*Eirenopolis*). The phrase ΕΠΙ ΟΥΕΣΠΑΣΙΑΝΟΥ can be interpreted in multiple ways: solely honorific toward Vespasian, as a chronological notation, or as an indication that Vespasian authorized the city to mint coins (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 1–5). Neither coin depicts the emperor, probably in deference to the aniconic sensibilities of the city's Jewish population. As for the reverses of the coins, one depicts a double cornucopia and cadeucus, a design quite similar to the symbol appearing on one of the coins minted *c.*66–67 CE by Agrippa II at Caesarea Philippi, which had also been renamed in honor of Nero (Meshorer 1982: 250, no. 5).

The reverse of the other coin has the Latin letters SC in its center. The appearance of these letters in this context is somewhat surprising. An abbreviation for *senatus consulto*, these letters appear on coins minted at both Rome itself and at imperial provincial mints. The exact meaning of the phrase *senatus consulto* is hotly debated. The significance of its appearance on coins at Rome is not entirely clear, and its function on coinage from the provinces is even less understood (Burnett 1987a: 18–19; Levick 1999: 49–50; Harl 1987: 128, n. 2; Meshorer 1979: 162). Of the numerous specimens that have this Latin inscription (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 755), the closest and most relevant parallels are the contemporary coins of the imperial mint at Antioch (Burnett *et al.* 1992: 628, nos. 4297–4298). The letters SC on the coins of Sepphoris are thus imitative of the nearest imperial coinage. They may have functioned as flattery to the Romans: while other Galileans had revolted against Rome, this city had minted coins honoring not only the emperor and his general, but also the Senate.

Conclusion

It did not take long after Rome's arrival in the region for cities to acknowledge their new rulers on their coins. For some cities, this acknowledgment took the form of adopting a new dating system commemorating Rome's advent. Coins from the mid-first century BCE show that Nysa-Scythopolis, Gadara, and Marisa did this very early on. Other cities adopted the practice at some point, and it is reflected frequently on coins from the first three

centuries CE. Within a decade after Pompey's conquest, a few cities renamed themselves after Roman officials. The image of the emperor was surprisingly slow to appear, though it became more common around the turn of the eras and throughout the first century. This initial reluctance to mint coins with the emperor's portrait contrasts with the practice of the second and third centuries, when depictions of the emperor and accompanying inscriptions were the norm.

It is worth emphasizing the chronological dimension of these patterns. While pro-Roman inscriptions and images appeared on the coins of some cities as early as the mid-first century BCE, they did not appear on all civic coins everywhere. It took time for them to become widespread on the currency of the cities of Palestine. As the years progressed and Rome's presence became more established, numismatic expressions of subordination to the Romans increased. Civic coins thus reflect the process of Romanization in the region, a process that would speed up all the more with the heightened Roman military presence of the second and third centuries.

Notes

1 For a recent review of the history of this period, see Millar (1993) and Gabba (1999: 94–167).

2 Qedar argues that the helmeted portrait on the obverse of Marisa's coin is Gabinius, but others have noted its dissimilarity from the governor's image on Nysa's coins and its strong resemblance to portraits of Athena (Barkay 1994–1999; Burnett *et al.* 1992: 46–47).

3 Meshorer (1985: 92) suggests that Pella renamed itself after Alexander the Great's father, but Barkay's argument that the name reflects the Roman governor is more likely, in light of other cities' similar actions.

4 Burnett *et al.* rightly suggest that these are probably civic coins, rather than issues of Agrippa II (as suggested by Meshorer 1982: 279), since Tiberias was not a possession of Agrippa until the reign of Nero (Josephus, *Ant.* 20.159; *War* 2.252; *Life* 37–38).

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9

IMAGINED HOUSEHOLDS

Cynthia M. Baker

> While historians became much more guarded in their belief in the authority of science, they nevertheless worked with the conviction that the historian dealt with a real and not an imagined past.
>
> (Iggers 1997: 15)

> Epistemologically speaking, a historian's meanings and her representation of the past are both imaginary and self-referential: They refer primarily to the historian's own meaning-making discourses.
>
> (Burnett 2000: 110)

Benedict Anderson describes a "nation" as "an imagined political community . . . *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (1983: 6). He offers, as comparable to his own, descriptions by two other scholars of nationalism: "'Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* nations where they do not exist'"; and "'A nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation, or behave as if they formed one'" (1983: 6, quoting Ernest Gellner and Hugh Seton-Watson, respectively). In keeping with his general thesis, Anderson suggests "imagines" as a substitute for "invents" in the former quotation, noting that "all communities are imagined [and] . . . are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (1983: 6).

Here I do not take on directly the prickly question of whether ancient Jews – or, more specifically, those in the earliest rabbinic movement – imagined themselves a "nation" (a term that Anderson reserves exclusively for modernity). Rather, I undertake an exploration of the "imagined political communities" of ancient rabbinic Jews, and of their subsequent historiographers, through the styles in which each has imagined a much smaller

"political community": the ancient Palestinian Jewish "household."[1] In what follows, I sketch some outlines of, and connections between, these imagined ancient households and three larger imagined and imagining communities, each with its respective mode of historical imagination: "the West" and its modern historicism, earliest rabbinic Judaism in Roman Palestine and its halakhic traditions, and the state of Israel and Zionist historiography. Finally, I consider how these distinct communities might be imagined through a "postmodern" historiography.

Modern domestic science

The majority of scholarly works from the past century (including many recent publications) imagined ancient Jewish households – with little variation – along the following lines: Jewish families, comprising a man, his wife, their children, and perhaps one generation of relations older and/or younger than this nuclear grouping, with perhaps an odd uncle or aunt on the side, formed the core of a Jewish "household," along with their servants or slaves, in a residential dwelling in which they ate together and slept together in groupings spatially, socially, and economically demarcated from other such "household" groupings. Jewish men frequently left the "household space" for public occupations (laboring, governing, worshiping, studying) for most of every day, returning to the privacy and private space of home and family at the end of each day. Jewish women, by contrast, remained secluded for most of their lives in private "household" spaces (cooking, cleaning, rearing children, and engaging in handicrafts) in the closed company of their female relatives and neighbors (Archer 1990; Ilan 1995; Jeremias 1969; Safrai 1994; Small 1987; Stern 1994; Swidler 1976; Wegner 1988; Witherington 1984). Women had little or no part in religious, economic, political, or other "high" cultural spheres inasmuch as these spheres corresponded to public spaces, by definition outside the realm of the "household" (Ilan 1995: 176–204). In instances in which women were clearly involved in income-producing trades, their involvement "prove[d] that these labors were undertaken for the most part in the local household, since women were not wont to seek employment too often outside the house" (Safrai 1994: 194–5), and such trades or labors, in any case, were merely extensions of their routine housework within the household (Ilan 1995: 186–7). Men held authority over the household and were the primary, if not exclusive, "bread-winners," while the day-to-day oversight and accomplishment of household tasks fell to women and girls, whose chores and severe codes of modesty confined them to the household. The few observed exceptions to this scheme merely proved the general rule, although the possibility existed that females at different stages of life might have been subject to different restraints on movement beyond household bounds, with virgins suffering the most restraints and older widows the fewest (Archer 1990: 116, 240–50; cf.

Wegner 1988: 173ff.). Indeed, male members of a household were responsible for guarding its privacy and controlling the behavior, movements, and interpersonal relationships of the household's female members (Archer 1990: 116).

This familiar, even hackneyed, tableau is arguably more a function of modern Western discourses and self-imaginings than it is an extrapolation from ancient literary and archaeological evidence (Baker 2002: 15ff.; Peskowitz 1993: 9ff.). At play in such descriptions are clear elements of the nineteenth century's petite-bourgeoise "angel in the house" and her middle-class, suburban American descendants; social forms of late capitalism with its own particular conceptions of "public" and "private" spheres and spaces; and Orientalist romances of "women's quarters" and the stifling rigors of family honor. This latter element is well illustrated by Leonard Swidler's reference to women's "quasi-harem existence in Palestinian Judaism of the 1st century C.E." (1976: 121). As part of a "history of Jews," this narrative portrait of the "everyday life" of ancient Jewish households owes much to the normalizing impulse of the modern "science of Judaism" movement (itself part of a far-reaching professionalization of historical study bound up with the modern consolidation of nation-states and colonialism and its aftermath), whereby "Jewishness" (and therefore "Jewish households") could be rendered familiar and assimilable to reigning paradigms and emerging cultural narratives. Moreover, aspects of this quaint tableau served well as foils for some Christian feminist scholarship that imagined sexually and socially egalitarian early-Christian "households" as revolutionary antitheses to patriarchally oppressive Jewish models (Collins 1974; Faxon 1973; Mollenkott 1977; Parvey 1974; Swidler 1971; Witherington 1984; cf. Plaskow 1978). Ben Witherington, for example, imagines a Jesus who "not only countered the negative [Jewish] evaluations of women but also endorsed and extended women's rights" (1984: 10). In imagining our own "political communities" in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century "West," we (writers of such narratives), not surprisingly, have discovered familiar ancestors and cultural precursors – or foils – in the millennia-long histories we have supplied for those communities.

That we write ourselves through our histories – at least, to a certain extent – is a commonplace. What is striking about the ancient Palestinian Jewish example, however, is the extent to which the received modern scholarly narrative radically misapprehends the evidence available for its reconstruction. For example, in neither Palestinian Jewish texts nor the material built environment (both urban and rural) do we find anything resembling clear delineations between "public" economic and political spheres or spaces and "private" residential ones. Neither do we find indication of the exclusion or seclusion of women as a cultural practice – indeed, the built environments found throughout Roman Palestine appear, unlike those of mid-twentieth-century suburbia, profoundly ill-suited to such practices, and prescriptions

for them are entirely absent from the extensive prescriptive literature of the period. The so-called female modesty codes extant in rabbinic Jewish traditions emphasize dress and comportment practices that call, almost exclusively, for the exhibition of widely visible identity markers – markers treated as irrelevant within closed or enclosed spaces. Finally, the ubiquitous "courtyard" style of architecture found throughout the region – and discussed in rabbinic traditions – militates against any assumption or easy assertion of distinct single-householder-households as a useful description of the dwelling practices of Jews in ancient Palestine.

Public and private

"Public space" and "private/domestic space," except for a few notable exceptions, such as civic or cultic *buildings*, were not clearly demarcated (much less gendered) in the towns, villages, and urban neighborhoods where most Jews lived in Roman Palestine. Rather, residential or "household" spaces often housed sites of manufacture, commerce, and education, while "market streets" and industrial-processing or storage sites were tightly integrated with residential spaces and "household" utilities (Meyers *et al*. 1981: 33ff.; Weiss and Netzer 1996: 32–3).

Furthermore, although the concepts "public" and "private" were in currency in the Jewish literature of Roman Palestine (the bulk of which comes from earliest rabbinic Judaism), they were not used, in any discernible sense, as corresponding to "masculine" versus "feminine" subjects, tasks, and traits, nor to "political" versus "personal" or domestic enterprises. Instead, "public" and "private" were treated as inherently fluid or elastic designations such that the same space, according to rabbinic traditions, might be termed "public" for the purposes of one halakhic/cultic practice or activity, "private" for another, both or neither for still others, and malleable through ritual interventions associated with changing spatial and temporal conditions. For example: "A [thoroughfare] courtyard that the public enters by one entrance and leaves by another is private domain in what concerns Sabbath and public domain in what concerns cultic impurity" (Mishnah Tohorot 6:9). However, if the local residents cooperated in constructing an *erub* and/or *shituf* before the onset of the Sabbath, they could thereby render the courtyard "private" space of a significantly different sort (a more "public" sort) than it would otherwise be (Mishnah Erubin). And, in any case, neither of these rabbinically contrived "private" designations would have applied on a weekday, nor would they have altered the traffic patterns through that space. The residents of such spaces would likely have routinely treated their shared space in a variety of ways (as more "public," or more "private," or neither/both) with regard to different tasks or activities they might have performed or refrained from performing at different times of day or night.

Clearly, the categories "public space/domain" and "private space/domain" do not always mean the same things in their architectural, textual, or "lived" expressions – much less across both nonindustrial/noncapitalist and industrial/capitalist contexts. The categories "public" and "private" were meaningful and perceptible in *some* aspects of the ancient Palestinian built environment and some ancient Jewish texts, but they were, in that environment, quite flexible categories of space and are, therefore, of limited use as categories for analyzing or describing the ways in which Jewish households might have "worked" in antiquity.

Seclusion and exclusion of women

The concept and practice of the seclusion of women is predicated on precisely that sort of gendering and division of space – public from private, male from female – that is demonstrably absent from the ancient Palestinian evidence. Notwithstanding the fact that the built environment yields no substantiation for practices of female seclusion, many scholars have continued to insist that rabbinic texts demonstrate "the ideal . . . that a woman would remain concealed in the house" and that she "never be found in the marketplace" (Ilan 1995: 128–9; cf. Archer 1990: 100; Safrai 1994: 194–5; Stern 1994: 241–2; Wegner 1988: 173ff.). They cite as evidence rabbinic dicta like the following: "If she goes out with her head uncovered, or goes out and her clothes are disheveled . . . or she goes out and spins in the marketplace, or bathes in the public bath with everyone, then she is divorced without her marriage settlement because she has not behaved with [her husband] in accord with the law of Moses and Israel" (Tosefta Ketubbot 7:6). Yet reading such texts as evidence for confinement and seclusion makes sense only if one brings to the rabbinic passage the prior expectation that the domestic seclusion of women, or the absence of women from the marketplace, is a cultural ideal. Read as written, the words convey no such sense – on the contrary, they legislate a code of *explicitly visible* behavior, dress, and comportment of married "Israelite" women (Baker 2002: 19ff.). Although it is not appropriate to read such rabbinic prescriptions as either simple descriptions of common practice or expressions of benevolent concern over women's "modesty," neither is it appropriate to exaggerate them into a cultural ideal demanding the confinement of women or their banishment from public places.

Likewise, in case after case, one finds that rabbinic discussions presume the presence of women, as well as men, in every manner of space in the ancient built environment. Women and men are commonly depicted both within and outside their own and others' houses and courtyards. Both sexes are assumed to be involved in field work and vending, in the production of goods for use and sale. Women are imagined as moving freely (if not always unaccosted) through the thoroughfares and marketplaces of village and city

– and beyond (Mishnah Yebamot 15:2; Mishnah Eduyot 1:2; Mishnah Ketubbot 1:8–10, 9:4, 13:10–11; Mishnah Baba Kama 8:6; Mishnah Baba Metzia 7:6; Tosefta Niddah 6:17; Tosefta Ketubbot 4:9). Very rarely is a woman imagined as imprisoned in a locked house (a phenomenon not unfamiliar in modern-day accounts of domestic violence), and such an unusual situation is marked by disapproval in the rabbinic texts (Tosefta Sotah 5:9; Mishnah Ketubbot 7:4–5).

"Modesty codes"

Rabbinic legislation of women's dress and comportment does not imply an assumption by the legislators that women are "out of place" in communal, political, or market settings but implies, conversely, women's prominent *emplacement* as signs and markers in such spaces. Thus, the question becomes: What sorts of things might be signed and marked on women's bodies? What kinds of "information" might be encoded in the dress and carriage of members of communities where such codes are extant or widespread? Head-coverings of Jewish women, as stipulated in the above-cited rabbinic tradition, would likely have broadcast marital status or implied marital fidelity (Baker 2002: 62ff.). Their ornamentation or costliness might have conveyed socioeconomic class, while different styles or patterns or ways of tying up the hair might have signaled one's ties to a particular region, village, clan, or other "imagined community." In all cases, the visibility of such markers is fundamental to their purposes.

Most rabbinic traditions calling for female head-covering ascribe it to *dat Yehudit*, "Jewish law" or "the law of a Jewess" (the Hebrew phrase can mean both). The absence of this phrase from any other aspect of rabbinic tradition, and its inclusion of the peculiarly ethnic/national/political designation "Jew" (a designation that the early rabbinic traditions do not otherwise invoke in describing their envisioned community to itself, preferring the term "Israelites" instead), leads me to wonder whether the demand that married Jewish women display certain public marks of "Jewish" identification ought to be read as a form of Jewish identity politics: women's headgear – in this case, as in so many others throughout history – is called upon to encode, among other things, an ethnic-political affiliation of sorts (Baker 2002: 139ff.). When we look at prescribed practices like this one and see only a call for feminine "modesty" and seclusion, it is likely our own well-learned distinctions and ambivalences regarding "women's place" and female comportment that keep us from inquiring further. Yet, as Deniz Kandiyoti reminds us, "the place and conduct of women has been and remains a metaphor for deeper concerns about cultural authenticity and integrity," and this is so "[w]hether these concerns center around the encroachments of an imperialistic [regime] . . . or the internal threats posed by religious or ethnic diversity and class cleavages" (1992: 256).

Courtyard practices and householder-households

Most Jews in ancient Palestine lived in "simple" or "complex" houses with outer or semienclosed, shared, or nondemarcated courtyards (Hirschfeld 1995: 21–2). Although, on occasion, "outer courtyard" houses appear to have had high walls with doors and locking mechanisms, the majority of ancient Palestinian dwellings would have had courtyards with very low, partial, or nonexistent walls and no evidence of doors or locks.[2] It is rarely possible to determine anything about the relationships – familial or otherwise – that might have obtained among occupants of multiple dwelling units sharing or abutting a yard or courtyard. Indeed, rabbinic discussions and other ancient documents assume a multiplicity of possible arrangements and relationships in and around courtyards. Nonetheless, scholarly treatments of courtyard dwellings generally offer only two explanations for multiple dwelling units' sharing of a courtyard: "a growing extended family" or "the enlargement of [a single] owner's property" (Hirschfeld 1995: 44–50). The stated assumption here is that all such structures were inhabited by members of a single family with a corporate concern for "privacy" (Hirschfeld 1995: 273; Guijarro 1997: 52).

Yet the residential courtyards of ancient Palestine, in their myriad configurations, suggest a far more variegated image of "households" and their potential compositions and patterns of organization. Courtyards like those at Meron (Meyers *et al*. 1981), Capernaum (Corbo 1975), Chorazin (Yeivin 1987), and Sepphoris (Nagy *et al*. 1996), among many others, suggest a good deal about the ways in which people lived *together* in ancient Palestine, and they confound our attempts to divide them up into the discrete "family household" units familiar to modern Western historiography. Moreover, the place of "privacy" as a central principle in household design and organization is, again, one that resonates far more with modern Western sensibilities than it does with the cheek-by-jowl nature of shared-courtyard dwelling practices apparent in the material and literary remains of ancient Palestine.

Thus, the ways in which we have tended to imagine "ancient Jewish households" fit uneasily with the very evidence to which we have tended to appeal and the categories we have employed in crafting our images. We have seen the modern West's own imagined communities and cultural conversations showing through – palimpsest fashion – in the pictures its scholarship has drawn and the histories its scholarship has told.

Rabinically imagined household(s) of Israel

A "mismatch" similar to that described above, between "households" imagined in different contexts, appears within the earliest rabbinic traditions themselves, as Jacob Neusner has insisted:

> That "household" as the building block of the village (the two fundamental units of Israelite society) is an abstraction, not a concrete physical or social entity, e.g., a house separate from other houses, a family distinct from other families, is easy to demonstrate. It simply is not a concrete description of how people really lived, for instance, of the spatial arrangements of houses, or of the social units made up of distinct household-houses (or families as equivalent to households). . . . The premise of the household as an autonomous unit and building block of society contradicts the realities described by the Mishnah's framers. The social unit of the courtyard has numerous cultic implications, but it is not an economic unit and it is not recognized as such. . . . This again shows us the precision in use of the terms "household" and "householder" – the precision, but also the utter abstraction of the conception.
>
> (1990: 51–2)

The earliest collected traditions of rabbinic Judaism, as Neusner observes, proffer a coherent and wide-ranging vision of an imagined political/economic community – from its microcosmic expression in Jewish "households," through the larger entity of the village, to the macrocosm of an imagined "Israelite society" – that, nonetheless, stands in sharp contrast to the "concrete . . . realities described" elsewhere in these same rabbinic traditions, as well as to those suggested by the building and dwelling practices fossilized in the material remains of the ancient communities of Palestine. While I am not as willing as Neusner to credit some rabbinic traditions with veracity, in contrast to others viewed as "utter abstraction," I find compelling an analysis that understands the Jewish households described in rabbinic traditions to be component parts of a larger "imagined political community" peculiar to early rabbinism, and indeed an aspect of its self-fashioning within Roman Palestine. "'The household' is a technical term" in earliest rabbinic usage, according to Neusner, invoked within an "amazingly narrow" political/economic vision that "omitted reference to most of the Jews" of Palestine, and to how they lived and made their living (1990: 52). This does not, however, render the rabbinic vision "false"; rather, it serves to illustrate Anderson's insight that, while "all communities are imagined," there can be significant differences and designs implicit in "the style[s] in which they are imagined."

The halakhic traditions of early rabbinic Judaism describe/prescribe an imagined community wherein the male-householder-led household is the smallest, and defining, constituent part of an Israelite political economy. Modern scholarship, as noted earlier, has usually mistaken this abstracted economic model as descriptive of widespread, common practice. All other economic agents are defined, and their rights and responsibilities are determined, by their relationship to a "householder." Wives, minor children,

servants, artisans, and day laborers are all treated in this fashion, and kinship ties are not assumed, in and of themselves, to ensure shared economic interest or activity in a household. For example, while all of these "secondary household members" are recognized as laborers, producers, and even market vendors, none are to be treated as honest agents, according to some rabbinic traditions, expressly because they cannot be assumed to recognize a "head of household" and his right to all income acquired by household members; instead, they might actually treat the income from their labors as their own (Mishnah Baba Kama 10:9; Tosefta Baba Kama 11:5–9; Baker 2002: 83ff.). Halakhic prescriptions, therefore, are generated to institutionalize such economic relations between kin or non-kin service providers and householders. The generation and adjudication of Halakha is the purview of the very rabbis whose imagined community this process defines and who, thus, become the overseers or "householders" of the larger "household of Israel" thereby imagined.

Once again, what is so striking about this imagined household is the extent to which it fails to match up with other elements in the very texts and traditions in which it is articulated, as well as with elements of the material landscape in which it takes shape. Courtyards, as previously observed, appear to be elementary units of social and economic organization. In addition, individual "household" units as distinct from others in these ubiquitous, shared, integrated living spaces are difficult to discern. Nonetheless, early rabbinic traditions disregard the socioeconomic implications of courtyard communities in favor of imagining a society comprised of discrete "householder-households." Indeed, for cultic purposes rabbinic tradition offers the rituals of *erub* and *shituf* to create temporary "imagined households" out of courtyards and other units that that same body of tradition has insisted are comprised of separate households to begin with – that is, single-householder-households that remain distinct and discrete in the absence of such ritual interventions, regardless of whatever social or economic integration is practiced within and among the courtyards or compounds they comprise. Even so, whether distinct or integrated, such rabbinically imagined households lack any clear division between a "public sphere" and a "private sphere" (much less the gendering of such "spheres"). They lack, as well, any sense whatsoever of the "quasi-harem existence" of women so familiar from our modern reconstructions.

The rabbinic vision of a macrocosmic "house of Israel" is, likewise, a political community wherein, recalling Seton-Watson, "a significant number of people . . . consider themselves to form a nation, or behave as if they formed one" (Seton-Watson in Anderson 1983: 6). Members of this imagined community pay tithes, symbolically or otherwise, household by household, to a central, governing institution. They follow "Jewish" and "Israelite" laws to which they alone, as "Jews" or "Israelites," are subject. Wives of householders mark themselves as members of households (indeed, as embodied

"houses" or "households" themselves, in rabbinic parlance (Baker 2002: 48ff.; Fonrobert 2000: ch. 2)) through enacting a politically "Jewish" practice of head-covering and through releasing all products and income from "the work of their hands" to their householder husbands. Israelite households can even point to and ritually mark, through tithes (owed by households on produce grown within "the land of Israel") and Sabbatical abstinences (again, from produce grown within "the land of Israel"), the borders of their national land – this notwithstanding the imperial boundaries and political entities that otherwise mark and "misname" the same landscape (Mishnah Demai 1:3, 6:11; Mishnah Shebiit 5:7, 6:1–2, 9:2–3; Mishnah Maaser Sheni 4:3–4, 5:8).

This vision of a "household of Israel" as a self-sustaining, bounded, political/economic entity comprising a standard unit, the Israelite household, in symbiotic relationship with other such units, is a patently utopian/nostalgic vision that likely suggests more about its articulators than it does about socioeconomic patterns characterizing Roman-period Palestine (Lapin 2001). Earliest rabbinic Judaism built itself as it built its visions of the household of Israel, and sustained itself and claimed its "national" jurisdiction through the development and halakhic maintenance of its imagined community.

Within a colonial situation in which Rome and its empire administered the larger geopolitical landscape, rabbinic traditions constructed a discourse of "Jewish peoplehood" and developed a particular rabbinic reading or negotiation of that landscape on both micro and macro levels. In a rabbinically imagined "household of Israel," rabbis, their Torah, their Halakha, and their traditions occupied the center and provided the patterns by which meaning was given to and drawn from the national landscape. Their biblical midrash and traditions of tithing and Sabbatical abstinence delineated their territorial domestic boundaries, while spatialized codes of dwelling, dress, comportment, and the like circumscribed and gave shape to the more intimate geographies of the "household(s) of Israel" that they imagined. Although the earliest rabbis rarely articulated an *explicitly* "nationalist" narrative, a number of their traditions concerning "households" were involved, in a very real sense, in just such discursive construction of that style of imagined political community. Such a rabbinic vision stands both within and over against the changing socioeconomic and political landscape of Roman-ruled Palestine of the period. It stands, as well, in dialogue with other visions and imagined communities – "national" or otherwise, "Jewish" or otherwise – embraced and enacted by those whom modern historians term "Jews" and ancient rabbinic traditions termed "sons and daughters of Israel."

Housing a Jewish nation

This brings us to another "imagined political community" – one far more in keeping with Anderson's original use of the phrase – that must be brought into the present consideration of imagined Jewish households of

antiquity: the modern nation-state of Israel, a creation that brings home (as it were) the high stakes involved in imagining Jewish households of antiquity in a land that currently houses the Jewish state. The challenges posed by these "facts on the ground" bear far deeper reflection, but some rudimentary observations are possible in the present context.

In a strikingly unselfconscious statement, one (non-Jewish, American) scholar of ancient Jewish and Christian households in Palestine insists that "the quest to uncover the national past is a powerful and praiseworthy motivation driving archaeology in Israel. One wants to discover Jewish cities, Jewish architectural forms, Jewish artworks and artifacts" (Sawicki 1997: 9). Another (non-Jewish, American) scholar, more critically reflective, echoes this recognition (although not the valuation) when she argues that "aspects of the practice of Jewish/Israeli archaeology [and historiography] . . . helped to *create* a particular national identity rooted and embodied in the land, and thereby helped to fashion a collective self which was situated in a particular space whose own identity was likewise created anew" (Abu El-Haj 1995: i, emphasis in original). To the extent that these are valid observations, I restate and reformulate a proposition I offered earlier: In imagining a Jewish "political community" – a sovereign, territorialized Jewish nation in twentieth-century Palestine/Israel – scholars of Jewish history, not surprisingly, have discovered familiar ancestors and cultural precursors (and foils) as they (we) have participated, critically or uncritically, in supplying this new imagined political community with a millennia-long history.

What I have called the "normalizing impulse" of the modern science of Judaism and its later modes of formulating "Jewish social history" not only constructs as familiar and assimilable the gender, sexual, economic, and other social structures of the "households" it imagines, but does the same thing to "Jewishness" and its "home" in Palestine/Israel. This naturalizing and regularizing of the imagined community of "ancient Jews in their homeland" is, in part, accomplished through the writing of historical narratives wherein these terms are treated as self-evidently meaningful. Yet, in fact, they have received their meanings largely in relation to the development of Zionism and the creation of the state of Israel; prior to these modern events, "Jews" entered historical narratives (post-Josephus) in the form of the necessary but unassimilable "other" within a universal (European, Christian, or Enlightenment) salvation history. "Jewish memory," according to Yosef Yerushalmi's formulation, served, in place of historiography, as the means by which "the shared faith, cohesiveness, and will" of the premodern Jewish community was imagined (1982: 94). Such "memory," however, stands in contradistinction to "historiography," which, Yerushalmi argues, has had a disruptive and fragmenting effect on that imagined community (1982: 94). This problematic effect has been somewhat ameliorated with the advent of Zionism, which, as David N. Myers, among others, has argued, succeeded in wedding "Jewish memory" to modern historiography through Israeli

nationalist scholarship. The prime exemplar of this movement remains the "Jerusalem school" of Zionist historians who undertook "to scour the past for themes or subjects that form a coherent, linear chain of historical development . . . from Second Temple Palestine to medieval Ashkenaz . . . [to] the creation of the state of Israel" (Myers 1998: 96–7).

Zionism's effects on modern historiography are by no means confined to this school of Israeli nationalist scholarship. As Laurence Silberstein observes, "Like other discourses, zionism produces what Foucault calls a 'regime of truth,' a set of codes, practices, apparatuses, and discursive processes that have the effect of rendering the knowledge it produces true" (1999: 19). Such practices and processes are part and parcel of the writing of "Jewish history" today, regardless of where, for whom, and under what auspices such writing is carried out. In a discussion of current historiographical practices regarding Jews and Judaism in ancient Palestine, Hayim Lapin remarks on (and challenges) this "effect of truth" – albeit with only implicit reference to Zionism as a crucial factor:

> In the case of ancient Palestine, where the autonomy and naturalness of ancient Jews and Judaism as historical entities, as well as the presence of both on the landscape, are too easily taken for granted, a focus on ways in which ethnicity and territoriality are the products of a history and not its motors is a desideratum. In fact, even the notion of a history of Palestine, or of the land of Israel, or of the Holy Land, or of Eretz Israel, is already embedded in a series of competing claims on the identity of a geographical territory, as the variety of names by which one may name that territory illustrates. (2001: 11)

Insights like Silberstein's and Lapin's force me, in turn, to interrogate my own proffered reading of "ancient Jewish evidence" and, more specifically, of the ancient rabbinic imagined "household of Israel" as, in part, an act of resistance to Roman imperial hegemony: Is my characterization of this aspect of the rabbinic project as a form of "nationalist narrative" itself more a function of a Zionist-shaped historiography of collective Jewish resistance and vision than it is a postcolonial privileging of the subversive discourses of (a sector of) a subject population? Can it be both at the same time? Must it be?

Imagining history in a "postmodern" age

Imagining Jewish households in ancient Palestine is a project that, like countless others, is as inextricable from contemporary politics of ethnicity, territoriality, and nationalism as it is from politics of gender, sexuality, and other contested sites of identity and power. Whether or not academic historiography has any "necessary or general impact on political discourse"

(Thurman 2000: 180), choices made with regard to language, analytical models, subject categories, and the like *do* play a part in the histories by which imagined communities are (to some extent) created, sustained, and challenged. These choices, therefore, bear real ethical weight. We can continue to imagine ourselves and our histories according to patterns and principles that, in Lapin's words, "are too easily taken for granted" and thereby participate, unreflectively, in sustaining contemporary master narratives and (patriarchal and/or patriotic) "regimes of truth." Or, on the other hand, we can write ourselves and our histories in ways that carefully and critically take account not only of the imagined political communities that shaped and were shaped by our "sources" – primary and secondary – but of the present and future imagined communities we might envision, for which we write our histories, as well.

Working within such a "hermeneutic of imagination," then, what kinds of things can we know about Jewish households in ancient Palestine? First, that "households" *are* imagined, politically significant communities – imagined differently in different cultures and times by differently positioned cultural agents and enacted, perhaps, with great variety even within a single (imagined) culture. Thus, "Jewishness" or "Jewish culture" is, itself, a variously imagined community – imagined within and across space and time and cultures and societies – again, with great variety, by people who come to "consider themselves to form . . . [such a community, a people, *am Yisrael*, *beit Yisrael*], or behave as if they formed one." Second, we can know that there are *histories*, no single "history," that every generalization is an act of imagining that admits of multiple assumptions, exceptions, and political implications. We can know, as well, that modern attempts to impose categorical oppositions like "public" versus "private/domestic" or "male space" versus "female space" – or "Jewish" versus "Gentile," for that matter – on this ancient landscape are, at best, problematic; at worst, acts of cultural imperialism. Finally, we can know that larger cultural forms and discourses are constantly created, re-created, and negotiated, and that such negotiations are often played out in the microcosm of "the household" (and in the microhistories we write about "it"). Nor are these propositions about what we can know merely vague, abstract principles of one kind of historical inquiry, for it is possible to marshal and review specific, quantifiable, detailed data on "ancient households" from Palestine in such a way as to demonstrate every one of these observations – should that be the historical narrative one chooses to write.

The foregoing propositions – and, indeed, the entire foregoing analysis – are also, of course, as much a part of writing the history and telling the story of *my* "postmodern" age, with its imagined communities of multiplicity, multivocality, fluidity, and postcolonial/feminist interrogation of master narratives, as modern historiographic and rabbinic/halakhic accounts are part of theirs. Thus, our modern and "postmodern" historiographic

representations share a similar dynamic, in this respect, with the narratives of the ancient rabbinic traditions. While our respective genres are different, we all, it seems, have engaged in writing ourselves, and a place and history for ourselves, into the world as we imagine it:

> Because there is no necessary relationship between the past and historical narratives, there is no one correct account to which all other histories must refer . . . *any* historical account could be written otherwise by historians who are inscribed in different power and socioeconomic relationships. For historical practice the question has finally become an ethical and political one: Why is any history constructed as it is? Whose interests are served by any historical account? What material effects does this historical account have on people's lives and what effects does it continue to have?
>
> (Burnett 2000: 111)

Why write historical narratives in the "postmodern" fashion intimated here? Perhaps because historical narratives – about households or anything else – that privilege diversity over homogeneity and cultural negotiation over hegemony or secure identity lend themselves less easily to the crafting of the kinds of master narratives that support oppressive regimes of power. Perhaps because the power to organize challenges and countervisions to such regimes resides, most fully, in the very heterogeneity of "postmodern" imagined communities and the multivocal narratives – historiographic or otherwise – that help to create and sustain them. And perhaps because, surely, historical narratives that more closely resemble the messy multiplicities and slippery dynamics of lived (and represented) cultural identities and interactions are, indeed, "truer" historiographies, "truer" historical narratives than those that do not. Thus, while there may be no "one correct account" of history, some accounts, like some imagined communities, are undoubtedly more humane and some more "true" than others.

Notes

1 Elements of the present essay are found, in more fully developed form, in Baker (2002). This chapter represents a synthesis of, and metareflections on, issues and arguments that form one strand among others in that book.

2 This surmise derives from an economic analysis that suggests that most inhabitants of Palestine in this period would not have possessed sufficient economic means to afford dressed-stone, high-walled courtyard houses, even had they desired them. Hirschfeld includes in his study multiple photographs of current "traditional" Palestinian courtyard dwellings (which he presents as analogues to ancient dwelling practices in the region), almost all of which feature low, field-stone perimeter walls without locked gates; see, e.g., Hirschfeld (1995: 134, 145, 154).

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10

GENDER, DIFFERENCE, AND EVERYDAY LIFE

The case of weaving and its tools

Miriam Peskowitz[1]

Recent archaeological and historical approaches have taught us to admire and analyze the large objects of public architecture and art, and to take seriously the small objects that emerge from excavations everywhere. Among the "small objects" excavated throughout Roman Palestine in the second and third centuries CE we find loom weights and other objects related to the technology of weaving textiles. Textile production was one of the top three industries of Roman Palestine, standing beside the production of oil and wine. As its artifactual trail of weaving and other aspects of this production have become clearer, we have gained insight into an extraordinary set of social practices and beliefs. This is true in part because weaving and spinning were such important parts of the textual legacy from this historic period.

Textual images of weaving were used to convey all sorts of ideas about men, women, and the category of gender that was to set them apart. These images were used throughout a broader span of antiquity to convey a sense of group difference. In the fifth century BCE, Herodotus offered a remarkable list of "differences" that were to separate Greeks from Egyptians and to claim the superiority of the former. Among this is the claim that in contrast to Greeks, Egyptian men stay home and weave, and when they do, they use looms in which they must push the woof downward. This, Herodotus claims, contrasts with the Greeks, who putatively always push the woof upward. Here, the trope of weaving is used to encode the differences of gender and group. Furthermore, both the gender assignment of weaving work and the very technology used play a role in his ability to describe difference (Herodotus *History* 2.35). Once set, the trope of weaving had a long, rich, and varied history in Greek, Hellenistic, Roman, Jewish, and Christian culture.

This essay examines the archaeological record of loom technology in second- and third-century Roman Palestine. I turn especially to the evidence of loom weights to help designate the point at which weaving innovations

took hold in Palestine. Dating the change from the older warp-weighted loom to the newer two-beam loom becomes an important way to evaluate the early rabbinic texts about women and men who weave, and to make sense of the specific references in these passages. In doing so we learn something about how textiles were produced in this period and place, how their production was embedded in notions of gender, and how to conceptualize our interests in the category of "everyday life."

Throughout the Roman Empire, stories about weavers and spinners had a certain flair. They drew from and added to a vocabulary of love, sex, betrayal, boredom, and tedium. They have bequeathed us a plethora of clues about textures of everyday life. These stories seem mundane, perhaps, in their attention to the minutiae of daily life. Yet under close examination, the minutiae become metaphoric.

From Rome in the first century CE, hearing of Cerinthus's affair with another woman, Sulpicia proclaims:

> For you, toga and strumpet loaded with a wool-basket may be worthier of your preference than Sulpicia, Servius's daughter. But they are distressed on my behalf, to whom this is the greatest cause of pain, that I may yield my place to an ignoble rival.

Unlike the aristocratic Sulpicia, Cerinthus's lover – the "ignoble rival" – is of a lower class, and the wool-basket is proof (Sulpicia *Elegies* 3.16). Sometimes these stories exhibit the heroism of the ordinary, as in Tobit's Anna, written somewhat earlier in Palestine, about an imagined Assyria. One night after subversively burying murdered Jews, Tobit sleeps outside. Bird droppings fall into his eyes and cause a four-year blindness that doctors cannot cure. During that time, his wife, Anna, keeps the family alive through her "women's work" (*ergois tois gunaikeiois*). One day she finishes her labors. She removes the web from the loom. Upon delivering it to her usual buyer, she receives not only her usual wage, but the added bonus of a goat. Anna's dedication and hard work pays off. She and the family are aptly rewarded (Tobit 2.11–12).

In a story from the late second century, Artemidorus of Ephesus in Asia Minor offers interpretations for looms that appear in one's dreams. His dream readings combine the fantastical with the mundane. Implements attached to the loom signify anxieties, complications that will be resolved but at great length and with difficulty. If a woman moves to and fro at the loom, this signifies trips abroad. A loom resembles life itself. Dreaming about a loom with a web ready to be cut indicates a short life ahead (Artemidorus Daldianus *Oneirokritica* 3.36).

From northern Africa in the mid-second century comes a similar tale, but with a twist. In his *Metamorphosis*, Apuleius recounts a story heard at an inn

about a woman and two men (Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 9.5–7). One day, the husband, a construction worker, returns home unexpectedly early. Discovering the door bolted shut, the husband congratulates himself upon his wife's supposed chastity and self-protection. He knocks and whistles to gain her attention. Behind the locked door, the wife trysts with her lover. Hearing her husband outside, the wife quickly hides her lover in a half-buried storage jar. She opens the door and shouts angrily to her husband. Why was he not at work, she wants to know. They were so poor, and had barely enough to eat. He walks around idly while she stays home, her days and her nights spent wearing her fingers to the bone spinning wool so that they could afford at least one lamp inside their tiny home. The husband counters: to their fortune, he has just sold the storage jar for six denarii. The wife responds that she has already sold the jar, for seven denarii. In fact the new owner is inside, checking it for cracks. Invoking her spinning, the wife uses this work task, this symbol, to demonstrate her marital chastity and fidelity to her husband. Of these things the spindle was a widely understood symbol. Apuleius twists the image into ambivalence. Instead of serving the ideal of a woman's loyalty to her husband, the spindle becomes a poor woman's tool to cover up her extramarital sexuality. In this tale, the spindle and her place at home cannot insure a wife's fidelity. In Apuleius's hand, the spindle is not sexual truth, but trick.

Despite these tales of playfulness, piety, and pain, the repetitive tasks of the quotidian were not nearly as exciting as they were ubiquitous. Stories such as these mask the tales of tedium that can also be recounted about weaving, spinning, and other tasks of textile production. The *Naturalis Historia* of Pliny the Elder (23/24–79 CE) provides a different kind of guide and presents a different kind of challenge for making visible how gender worked:

> With us the ripeness of flax is ascertained by two indications, the swelling of the seed or its assuming a yellowish color. It is then plucked up and tied together in little bundles each about the size of a handful, hung up in the sun to dry for one day with the roots turned upward, and then for five more days with the heads of the bundles turned inward towards each other so that the seeds may fall into the middle. Linseed makes a potent medicine; it is also popular in a rustic porridge with an extremely sweet taste, made in Italy north of the Po, but now for a long time only used for sacrifices.
>
> When the wheat-harvest is over the actual stalks of the flax are plunged in water that has been left to get warm in the sun, and a weight is put on them to press them down, as flax floats very readily. The outer coat becoming looser is a sign that they are completely soaked, and they are again dried in the sun, turned head downwards as before, and afterwards when thoroughly dry they are pounded on a

> stone with a tow-hammer. The part that was nearest the skin is called oakum – it is flax of an inferior quality, and mostly more fit for lampwicks; nevertheless this too is combed with iron spikes until all the outer skin is scraped off. The pith has several grades of whiteness and softness, and the discarded skin is useful for heating ovens and furnaces. There is an art of combing out and separating flax; it is a fair amount for fifteen [. . .] to be carded out from fifty pounds' weight of bundles; and spinning flax is a respectable occupation for men.
>
> Then it is polished in the thread a second time, after being soaked in water and repeatedly beaten out against a stone, and it is woven into a fabric and then again beaten with clubs, as it is always better for rough treatment.
>
> (Pliny *Naturalis Historia* 19.16–18)

The task is twofold: to find the everyday, and to find gender in the tedium, in what is ordinary, apparently insignificant, or difficult to see. In the words of Virginia Woolf, "Let us not take it for granted that life exists more fully in what is commonly thought big than in what is commonly thought small."[2] Pliny's account marks neither romantic betrayal, care of the family, nor the pursuit of dreams. It pays homage to picking flax stalks and bundling them together to dry, removing the seeds, plunging the stalks into warm stagnant water, breaking the dried stalks with wooden mallets, skutching them with a heavy blade, separating the outer layer from the inner pith, combing the inner pith, and manufacturing it into fibers to be spun.

Embedded in the chatty tedium of Italian flax production lies a remarkable statement about men and gender. Part and parcel of Pliny's description is a concern with who will do this work, and concerns with "who" are always gendered. Buried in an account of technique and tools that seems otherwise divorced from social relations is a fragment that argues that men can spin flax, and moreover, they can spin flax and still be respectable as men (*linumque nere et viris decorum est*).

Pliny's sentence should be read as a polemic that recuperates flax spinning as a possibility for male workers. This recovery was no small matter. Although men dominated the production of flax and linen, in the culture Pliny knew, spinning was feminized. Pliny intervenes into a gender culture that attributed spinning and wool work to women, girls, and effeminate men. His culture was marked as much by the princess Lucretia's decorous wool work as by Juvenal's accusations that effeminate men spin more deftly than Penelope and by the division of labor at Pompeii between male weavers and female spinners. Text after text and image after image made spinning and other kinds of wool work into work for women, and into metaphors for womanhood and femininity.

The second-century tract by Hierocles, "On Economics," provides a vivid statement about spinning's disreputable associations, the suspect reputation

of men who spin, and spinning as a physical mark of men who are already unrespectable:

> For such men as pay great attention to neatness and cleanliness will not conceive the spinning of wool to be their business; since, for the most part, vile diminutive men, and the tribe of such as are delicate and effeminate apply themselves to the elaboration of wool, through an emulation of feminine softness.[3]

These fragments evoke the culture into which Pliny offered his words.

The culture Pliny knew used work to formulate notions of gender and sex, and used gender and sex as ways to talk about work. Practical labors were separated into what were considered gender-appropriate divisions. Gendered work tasks demonstrated what men were and what women were. They showed a clear distinction between the two. Pliny's text seeks to modify these gender divisions of labor, in at least one small but significant way. In the case of delegating spinning to women, the logic of gender difference had not worked in the best economic interests of men. One result was that, in flax production, men would have to compromise the proprieties of masculinity by spinning. That Pliny recovers and seeks to defeminize flax, and not wool, is important. Flax and linen were more highly valued than wool. By reassigning flax spinning to men, Pliny intervenes in a gender culture that might deny a lucrative work task to some men. Linen commanded higher prices than comparable types of wool. Workers who specialized in flax and linen were paid more than workers of wool. According to Diocletian's *Price Edict*, published in 301, linen weavers were to earn 20–40 denarii for a day's work, in contrast to the lower wage (15–40 denarii) to be paid to weavers of wool (Diocletian *Price Edict* 26). Pliny seeks to modify gender culture so that men can participate in the productive economy with greater privilege and ease, and without transgressing gender respectability. To do so he foregoes distinctions between trades, tools, or technologies, and focuses on the difference of fibers, by letting rest the traditional association of women and wool, and retrieving flax for men.

This concern from Italy appears in writings from other parts of the Roman Empire, including rabbis from Palestine. In Palestine, if textile production was not the top industry, it was one of the top three, along with the manufacture of grapes into wine and olives into oil. Textile production occupied the time and energy of women and men, girls, and boys. This was especially so as trades tended to be done by whole families together. The production of cloth was commonly seen and commonly known. The tools that these workers used – looms, spindles, whorls, combs, shuttles, baskets – were similarly common and commonplace. Cultural commitments to gender had to be naturalized into the ordinary and everyday. In myriad and minute ways gender and its differences were made part of the repetitive world of work

and production. The idea of gender was embedded in things used daily, in things that were background and commonplace, in acts that were so boring that, in the terms proferred by Walter Benjamin, the retelling of their meanings is not conscious, but comes "all by itself" (Benjamin 1968).

Early rabbinic texts attend to details. Within these attentions and their tensions, work was a site for the construction of gender. In the case of weaving, this was no easy or simple task. Metaphorically speaking, weaving was "women's work," despite the fact that both women and men used looms to weave cloth. When human bodies could no longer convey gender differences, the mark of difference was placed somewhere else. Where both women and men wove, tools and technology replaced the human body as a means for sustaining the idea of gender. The bodies of textile workers were sites for the production of gender. So too were the tools of textile production crafted into tactile signs of women, men, and the distinction of gender.

A search through some often ignored corners of rabbinic literature and the records of excavated loom parts yields something that seems peripheral and small. As it turns out, when we set about interpreting the obscure references of eighteen-century-old texts and setting these texts into conversation with clay and stone loom parts excavated after centuries of burial beneath layers of sand and dirt, these peripheries have quite a story to add. In Roman Palestine, both women and men wove cloth, and the technology they used to do so was the loom. The looms they used were part of the gender culture in which they lived.

Three passages in early rabbinic literature mention both the gender of the weaver(s) and offer clues to the type of loom being used. I read these three passages alongside other information about the technology of weaving and looms in the Roman period. Then I read the archaeological remains: loom weights that were hung to keep the vertical warp threads tense and straight. I offer my conclusion now in order to help the reader follow a series of rather intricate arguments: in representing weavers at their looms, early rabbinic texts sequester women to a specific type of loom. This association segregates women to an older form of loom that was possibly extinct by the time these rabbinic texts were circulated as the Mishnah, Tosefta, and later commentaries. Men, on the other hand, were represented as weaving at both kinds of loom. The journey wends through diverse kinds of evidence – ancient texts reprinted as published books, excavated artifacts stored in wood flats and cardboard boxes, illustrations from antiquarian journals – things that are shelved in libraries and stored in museums, and somehow can be used to compose histories which history did not see fit to transmit.

The historical juncture is crucial. The first and second centuries CE saw a change in loom technology that predated by only a few decades the production of the rabbinic texts in question. Around the Mediterranean, the technology of weaving shifted from the warp-weighted loom to the two-beam loom. Some information about looms and the technologies of weaving in

Roman Palestine is necessary to decode the three rabbinic passages. Roman-period looms were bulky, space-consuming machines. The warp-weighted loom had been available for centuries. This loom was vertical, but probably not freestanding. It was leaned against a wall or tied to a building or tree for support. On this loom, the warp, or vertical threads, were held in place by weights – loom weights – attached at the bottom. Attaching weights to the vertical warp threads sustained the tension in the yarn; this allowed a weaver to move the woof thread in and out in various combinations.

During the Roman period, the warp-weighted loom was slowly replaced by a loom without weights. This latter loom – the two-beam loom – stretched the warp threads from the top bar down to a stationary beam at the bottom of the loom. The weights that hung at the bottom of the early loom were replaced by a beam across the loom's bottom. This innovation held the warp threads in place more tightly, and without the bulk and unwieldiness of the attached loom weights (see Peskowitz 1997: 190–191).

Generally speaking, this shift from the warp-weighted to the two-beam loom can be dated to the first century CE, although the specific times of change would have differed from region to region. The evidence comes from various places. By the mid-first century, Seneca (died 65 CE) contrasted Poseidonius's reference (*c.*50 BCE) to the warpweighted loom with the newer and more complicated weaving arts (*subtillius genus*) of Seneca's own time. Written in the first decade of the first century CE, Ovid's description of the contest between Pallas and Arachne places both weavers at the two-beam loom. And in the late second century, a text closest in date to the early rabbinic writings, Pollux (*floruit* 180–192 CE) classified the Greek words for loom weights (*agnuthes* and *leiai*) as archaic.

In early rabbinic texts, only the newer two-beam loom is described in full. In fact these texts contain no term for "loom weights," a significant absence given that rabbis refer in great detail to many other loom parts and textile production tools (Peskowitz 1997: 191). The technical innovation made it easier to produce tightly woven cloth that became more highly valued. Furthermore, the new two-beam loom was more comfortable for weavers to use. On the older warp-weighted loom, the weaver wove the fabric upward, pushing each new line of woof thread upward into the already woven web. Working at this loom meant standing with arms raised for long periods of time, and constantly pushing one's arms upward against the warp. In contrast, on the new two-beam loom, cloth is woven from the middle of the loom into the bottom, and the already woven web is wrapped around a rotating bottom beam. The weaver does not have to stand with arms constantly raised. Weaving could be done either standing or sitting on a bench or stool, a much more comfortable position to endure for the long hours necessary to produce even a small piece of woven cloth. And rather than expending one's energy pushing the web upward and away from one's body, the new thread is pulled toward the body, down into the already woven

web, a far easier motion. At the two-beam loom a weaver works with arms more comfortably stretched in front of the body. The weaver had more consistent control over the tension in the warp threads and, hence, had greater control over the quality of the woven product. By most ancient accounts, the new loom enabled weavers to produce better quality cloth more efficiently and more comfortably.

In Palestine, the end of this technological shift can be dated quite specifically to the mid-second century. The wood that comprised the side and horizontal bars of the Roman-period looms deteriorates with time. Accordingly, the two-beam looms leave no actual remains. Archaeologically speaking, only warp-weighted looms are visible. Clay was an important material used to make loom weights. These nondisintegrating clay weights show up both as sets (a warp-weighted loom might use twenty or so weights) and individually. Records of excavations at Palestinian sites with levels that date to the middle and late Roman periods – roughly the second through fourth centuries CE – show a nearly total absence of loom weights. This suggests that the technological change from warp-weighted loom to two-beam loom was complete by that time. The two looms had coexisted during the first century. The archaeological evidence shows that this coexistence ended by the mid-second century when the evidence of loom weights disappears. This information about loom technology and the completed change from one form to another by the mid-second century forms the starting point for evaluating three rabbinic passages that refer to these looms and the weavers who used them.

All three passages come from the Mishnah or Tosefta, rabbinic writings that were completed and promulgated after this technological shift, at a time when the warp-weighted loom was no longer used in Palestine. The first passage – mNegaim 2.4 – sketches the procedure for examining leprous spots in places on male and female bodies that this rabbinic passage deems private and hidden. In this exam, both women and men are asked to position their bodies as if they were doing common work tasks. Men's poses are related to outdoor agricultural production. A man should stand as if hoeing, with his legs spread somewhat apart, to provide visual access to the area around his genitals. And, so that the examiner may view his underarm, a man should stand as if harvesting olives, with both arms raised and extended as if he were picking fruit off the tree. A woman is inspected in different positions and more of them. Standing as if she were kneading dough for bread or cakes allows the examiner to inspect between her legs. Positioned as if she were nursing a child, her breasts are lifted so that the inspector can see their underneath sides. To look for leprous spots in her armpits, she is positioned as if she were weaving at a loom *be'ômdîn*. To look for spots in her left armpit, she is to mime spinning flax. She poses with her left arm held high, as if holding the distaff, from which fibers are pulled as the spindle drops to the floor.[4] The loom that guides the woman's body position for the physical exam can be inferred from the term *be'ômdîn*. Built from the root "to stand," the

term refers to the position of the weaver, who stands. A weaver who typically stands is at work at the warp-weighted loom. Hence the term *ômdîn* refers to a weaver using this loom. This is the older loom that was replaced historically by the two-beam loom. At the warp-weighted loom, the weavers stood with their arms raised, as they pushed new cloth upward into the web. This introduces a curiosity. This passage likely refers to a traditional exam much older than the second century. The positions are common and familiar labors. But this tradition is rewritten in a text that was promulgated and distributed in the early third century. If the exam was to function actively as halakah, then these instructions required both the inspector and the woman being examined to remember a technology that was not only antiquated, but, in all likelihood, extinct. In this rabbinic vision of the examination, the woman is made to represent a certain nostalgia and recollection of a past. Posing as if weaving on an antiquated loom, the examined woman simultaneously conveys a manufactured memory of an earlier time.

This first passage links women weavers to the warp-weighted loom. Through the physical positions assumed to accomplish the exam, fantasies of work are inscribed onto Jewish bodies that are the subject of the exam. *Nega'im* (leprosy) is associated with "sexual" organs – genitalia and breasts – and the examination for this disease makes use of work-related positions. These work positions provide the vantage point for access to parts of the body that are not usually seen, parts that were deemed private, sexual, and hidden from view. Different positions are assigned to men and to women. Specific tasks are associated exclusively with one of two gendered bodies: agricultural hoeing and olive gathering for men; and bread-making, nursing, weaving, and spinning for women. Although they may seem like natural divisions of work done by women and men, the gendering of these tasks is in fact quite peculiar. The peculiarity becomes evident by considering other possible ways that rabbinic writers could have described this inspection, as they recast it from the domain of Temple priests to their own.

These tasks and their gender associations may seem familiar and natural to some. They are better understood as rabbinic fantasies of what Jewish men and women should do. The realities (or even the representations of realities) of the labors of men and women were much more complicated. The rabbis knew well that men could bake bread, and that women could harvest olives. They wrote about them doing so in their own texts. They knew that men worked as weavers and would be familiar with how to position one's arms at the loom. They also knew that most bread was bought at market, especially in towns and cities, and that many households – and women – did not prepare bread at home. They probably knew that wet nurses were used widely, and not just by upper-class women, and that this limited the degree to which mothers might nurse their own children.[5] Despite their knowledge of a variety of overlapping tasks done by women and men, the passage marks out a clear distinction of tasks and their locations. Men are outdoors doing

agricultural tasks, and women are in domestic settings where they nurse children, knead bread, weave, and spin.

Writing about the leprosy exam became another site at which to make notions of gender and work seem ordinary and natural. The passage could have listed a single set of common positions for both women and men, and then supplied additional positions where necessary, say for the examination of women's breasts. Furthermore, rabbinic writers did not need to describe the exam through the language of labor. That they did should be our primary curiosity. Gender divisions of labor are exacted in a passage that seemingly has nothing to do with labor. The inspection is precisely a time when a worker has stopped working in order to be examined. Instead, description of this exam became an opportunity to make distinctions of gender and to represent them as part of daily life and its labors.

A second passage, from tractate Zabim, lists situations in which *zav* impurity might be transmitted from one man to another. Each example sports two men. One – the *zav* – is in the impure state caused by a genital discharge. The second – the *tahor* – is in a state of purity but is in danger of receiving the impurity through contact with the *zav*. The text imagines these two men together in positions where, at the moment, they are near each other but not touching. However, their support is unsteady, perhaps a bridge, board, or bed frame, and at any moment they might slip and slide, thus transmitting a secondary, or derivative, impurity from the *zav* to the *tahor*.

In the list of these situations in mZabim 3.2, two men are near each other, but only one is in a state of purity. They close or open doors, lift one another out of a pit, and knot ropes together. Two weavers work together. They use either one kind of loom – the *'ômdîn* – or another – the *yôsbîn*. And, according to the halakah, no matter which loom is used, the impurity will not be transmitted. The passage imagines the men working at both the newer loom and at the older loom. The *'ômdîn* is the older, warp-weighted loom associated with female weavers in mNegaim 2.4; a second loom, the *yôsbîn*, can be identified as the newer two-beam loom. The name derives from the weaver's position while working at the loom. As already described, instead of weaving up toward the top, on this new loom the web is woven down near the bottom. The weaver sits rather than stands. The terminology coincides with the loom's own form of physical support. Unlike warp-weighted looms that lean against walls, the two-beam loom rests on its own base.[6] The significant piece of information for our inquiry is that the passage considers that men might work at both the newer and the older type of loom.

In the third passage, tKelim Baba Batra 1.2, one woman has been weaving with another woman. While they were weaving, the first woman was in a state of purity. She also knew that the cloth on the loom had not contracted any impurities. This toseftan passage expands upon mKelim 21.1, which had already placed the loom into a matrix of impurity and its transmission, and asserted the principle that only loom parts that are directly connected to the

woven cloth can transmit impurities to the weaver. To make this point, the mishnaic passage mentions various loom parts. The loom's beams, upper or lower, its heddle bars, and its shed bars do not transmit impurity. Nor are impurities transmitted by touching the unspun yarn on the distaff or on the weighing tray. Impurities can be transmitted by touching the already woven web, the unwoven warp threads that hang vertically, or the yarn spool that is thrown back and forth through the shed. Impurities are also transmitted by the spindle's spun yarn (which had not yet been rewound into a skein or onto a shuttle), yarn that is in the process of being rewound onto a spool or into a skein, or impure yarn that is already woven into the cloth.

The passage considers loom parts, spindle, and other accouterments in great detail. It demonstrates rabbinic knowledge of these minutiae. The loom described by mKelim 21.1 has an upper beam and a lower beam. The transmission of impurities is illustrated with the example of the two-beam loom. To this illustration the Tosefta adds another kind of loom. In further contrast to the Mishnah's description, the Tosefta locates its loom next to the bodies of women. In tKelim Baba Batra 1.2, the first woman approaches Rabbi Ishmael for a purity inspection. Although initially both she and the cloth on the loom had been in a state of purity, she had not been very particular about guarding it. Ishmael presses her on this point, and the woman reports that, while the cloth was on the loom, another woman who had been menstruating – a *niddah* – had come to help her weave and had "pulled the rope" on the loom with her.

For Rabbi Ishmael and the Tosefta this contact becomes the crucial information for assessing whether the loom, cloth, and woman are now in a condition of impurity. For us, it provides additional information about gender and technology. A loom in which a second weaver would "pull the rope" provides the key. The pulled rope identifies the loom as the warp-weighted loom. The rope maneuvers the shed that separates the vertical warp threads so that the shuttle of woof yarn can be passed through to form another row of web. The pulled rope refers most likely to the rope used to keep the weights steady as the shed was moved back and forth, and, secondarily, the rope refers to the woof yarn attached to the shuttle, which would be thrown and pulled through the hanging warp threads. While the two-beam loom also had warp threads, they were tightly secured by the bottom beam and thus did not require someone to "pull the rope" to keep the weighted warp threads in place. Accounts of more recent warp-weighted weaving show that two weavers greatly facilitated weaving on this type of loom (Hoffmann 1984). Attending to the warp-weighted loom is the Tosefta's contribution to the mishnaic text. Since mKelim 21.1 had located the two-beam loom on a map of ritual purity, tKelim Baba Batra 1.2 enacts a similar mapping, but of another type of loom. In these two passages, the loom that is not explicitly linked with men or with women is the two-beam loom. The mishnaic version presented the two-beam loom without any reference to a human

weaver and without directly invoking gender. In tKelim Baba Batra 1.2, the warp-weighted loom is described vividly with female weavers – and with a male rabbinic authority. The loom associated with women is the older technology – the more difficult to use warp-weighted loom.

There were many different ways to form gender and display its details in everyday life. Sometimes gender is established as an absolute difference, sometimes as a segregation in which one group has access to a full range of possibilities, while access for another group is more limited. These passages about weavers and looms illustrate the latter attempt at gender formation. This strategy does not demand a total difference and separation. Men and women need not always use distinct looms with no overlap. Rather, these three passages confer a segregation or sequestering of technology. Men are pictured with both the new and the old technology. Women are represented using the warp-weighted loom alone. In these rabbinic representations of weavers at their looms, men have the freedom to move from technology to technology. Women are restricted to one. This is not merely a separation (with its suggestion that the differences are equal), but a segregation that imparts unequal values and hierarchy. The loom to which women are restricted is the old-fashioned loom, the one that produced cloth more slowly and with less ease. Placing women at this older loom marks their lower status in the economy of production, just as it marks men's higher station. If these representations were true depictions of how weavers worked, then women would be placed at a technical disadvantage, making it more difficult for them to compete with male weavers in the production of cloth.

Setting these early rabbinic passages into conversation with other, material texts about looms make another element of gender immediately visible. These rabbinic passages were promulgated from the beginning of the third century and onward. They represent a segregation of technology that would have been historically impossible. In most instances where technology changes, there is a period of overlap in which old and new technologies coexist. But for those who heard and read them from the early third century on, these rabbinic texts present a warp-weighted loom that had disappeared in Palestine by the mid-second century. The evidence for the end of the overlap and the end of warp-weighted weaving in Palestine is archaeological. The telltale sign of the warp-weighted loom is its weights. Loom weights are the only loom parts that are archaeologically visible. Excavations from Masada included large amounts of loom weights that can be dated to the mid- to late first century.[7] Beginning in the second century, excavation reports show an absence of loom weights in places where they should have been found. For example, despite evidence of human habitation and although all sorts of textiles and tools were found there – including masses of unspun yarn, spindle whorls, skeins of spun yarn, and a hooked needle with a wooden handle used as a weaving shuttle – the excavated caves from the Dead Sea region, just south of Palestine, contain no loom weights.

This suggests that by the mid-130s another loom was in use, one that left no archaeological traces.[8] To the north, reports from Galilean sites with both workshop and domestic buildings used during the second to fourth centuries either show no loom weights, or list an occasional single loom weight. Since objects that look like loom weights must be found in sets or in rows in order to ascertain their function as loom weights, these single artifacts cannot attest to the use of warp-weighted looms past the mid-second century. My surveys of unpublished materials from archaeological archives buttress the argument that the warp-weighted loom disappeared from use by the mid-second century. The Rockefeller Museum in East Jerusalem holds materials excavated before the Israeli state's existence. It lists no loom weights from the first century or later in its collections. The Romema storeroom of the Israel Antiquities Authority holds the materials excavated after 1948 from certain regions of Israel and Palestine. Its files for published and unpublished minor objects show vividly the dwindling of loom weights and, hence, warp-weighted looms, by the second century. Rabbinic descriptions of realia seem so real, but this equation is precisely what needs to be questioned. The warp-weighted loom vanished from Palestine by the mid-second century. The Mishnah was promulgated in the early third century, the Tosefta a few decades later. The distance between the technology and the text places us readers into the realm of rabbinic fantasy, even when the tools of its imagination are the mundanities of how looms worked and how weavers wove. The disjuncture that disallows us to equate rabbinic descriptions of realia to any actual material reality is this: the early rabbinic texts from the third century associate with women a loom that had been extinct since the mid-second century. Almost a century after the warp-weighted loom's disappearance, these texts present for their posterity the picture of a woman positioned to work at an antiquated loom. Thus, calling this situation a sequestering or a segregation allows us to believe in some ways that all this was real, that it was lived out, embodied, performed, seen. It lets us analyze these representations as if they were transparent and unmediated comments on daily life, mere details on the way to discussions of more "substantive" halakic topics of the transmission of bodily impurities of genital discharges and menstrual blood.

In rabbinic texts details matter. Consider how this disjuncture between realia and reality enables rabbinic texts to embed gender into something as ordinary and ubiquitous as weaving. In the passage from tractate Negaim, the pose for women to assume at a purity examination was a mode of weaving that was no longer practiced and no longer available. Nonetheless it will be remembered by examined women, by the examining inspectors, and most of all by the rabbis and students who in their academies – far from female bodies and lesions – will learn and repeat the text. That rabbinic texts should refer to something extinct or ancient is not in itself surprising. The Mishnah and Tosefta refer constantly to things that no longer exist. References to the

ritual of the destroyed Temple and the priesthood fill tractate upon tractate. Yet, rabbis had reasons for narrating details of Temple life and priestly practice as they did.

What then were the desires behind, and the cultural effects of, these legal stories of technology and gender? What did rabbis gain by entangling working bodies, gendered tasks, and concerns for ritual purity? First, this was not a separation on equal terms. Men could use and were represented using both looms. Women were linked with only one. The loom with which women were linked was older, less efficient, and less physically comfortable to use. It did not produce textiles of the quality and at the pace that was possible with the newer two-beam loom. A second effect was to invest gender into specific technologies. Through vivid passages that place the warp-weighted loom near the bodies of women, the warp-weighted loom itself is feminized and technology itself becomes gendered. As the newer technology was associated with men, the concepts of newness and innovation were masculinized.

Third, apart from the association of a specific technology with a specific gender, weaving technology became another of many sites for the performance and reiteration of gender. Through this reiteration the very idea of gender as a significant difference starts to seem like a natural way for the world to be, as if gender were a matter of course and not a practice whose outlines and details and divisions needed to be carefully tended.

Fourth, the "women's" loom was not just outmoded but obsolete. This suggests another mundane economic violence. If the material effects of such representations can no longer be proven directly from the fragments that remain from Jewish life in Roman Palestine, they can be imagined without much historical contradiction. In effect, women were separated from viable and profitable technology. Women were removed from realms where their labors could become a viable part of production, trade, and profit. And this removal yields another effect – one that becomes clear when we see how the material and the metaphoric combine. As time progresses and technology changes, a small slice of the past is presented in gendered terms. These passages use women and femininity to represent the old, the antique, the nostalgic. Women are linked with the past.

Whether with images of a warp-weighted or two-beam loom, wool fibers or flax, in these microdifferences work and gender were embedded into the ordinary, into what was repetitive, mundane and unthought, and into what was ritualized. The familiar and often unnoticed quotidian became a powerful mechanism for the reproduction of gender and other differences.

Pliny, Apuleius, the rabbis, and others who wrote about or listened for or lived or knew or saw these signs of difference can be thought about from another frame of reference. Already by the period of the Roman Empire and the production of early rabbinic texts, spinning, weaving, and other ordinary types of work had long histories as ways to express cultural differences.

More than five centuries before, Herodotus (born 484 BCE) had tendered the notion that labors are naturally divided and assigned to either men or women, and that such divisions are a necessary part of a society. He then used his distinctions to express cultural differences between "Greeks" and "Egyptians":

> As the Egyptians have a climate peculiar to themselves, and their river is different in its nature from all other rivers, so they have made all their customs and laws of a kind contrary for the most part to those of all other men. Among them, the women buy and sell, the men abide at home and weave; and whereas in weaving all others push the woof upwards, the Egyptians push it downwards.
>
> (Herodotus *History* 2.35)

Herodotus invoked difference through a series of references, first to climate and rivers, then to the divided labors of women and men. Each of these was a site of ordinary, repeated activity. Thus, differences between Greeks and Egyptians are found in nature. Their Egyptian climate is peculiar, their northern-flowing river is as different from Greek rivers as it is unique. The differences of river and climate set up the next two examples – gendered labors and technologies of weaving – to be understood as similarly "natural." Technology and gender-based divisions of labor are used to show essential cultural differences. If Greek men belong in public places and Greek women stay at home, by doing so they demonstrate their very Greekness. In contrast and opposition, Egyptian men stay indoors and weave, while Egyptian women navigate the worlds of commerce, and the Greek Herodotus clearly devalues this anomaly from his own culture.

And finally, if Greek weavers wove woof thread into warp from the bottom of the loom, and then pushed the new woof upward into the already woven web, Herodotus used variations in these technologies of weaving to describe the cultural differences of Egyptians. Weavers in Egypt, he claims, enter woof threads into warp from the top of the looms, and push the new woof down, adding it to the web that sits below it on the loom.

At issue, of course, is not whether these claims were "true," that is, whether or not Herodotus's comparison of the weaving techniques of Greeks and Egyptians is accurate. In any case, several formats for weaving were available in both Greece and Egypt. Rather, at issue is how Herodotus – and his readers in the Roman period and later – used ordinary motions and movements to write about differences between people, and how they used these differences to forge people into distinct and regionally-based "peoples." Within this standard, one demonstrates the correctness of one's society through the ways in which work and space are allotted to women and to men. One's identity and place among the world's regions are indicated through the mundane, even thoughtless repetitions that interlace woof

threads in and out of an already strung warp thread stretched vertically on a loom.

This instance would be just one of many in the Mediterranean of antiquity. That various writers, workers, groups, and collections of texts found different resolutions to the problems and possibilities of gender, labor, tools, and techniques is not surprising. That they used these resolutions to effect different kinds of cultural distinctions is, similarly, unsurprising, although these arrangements were neither essentially necessary, nor were they inevitable.

These attempts, then, would be unremarkable, pertinent only to their times and neighbors. Except, Herodotus had a Roman-period readership. The images he used were learned repeatedly by young men, generation after generation. Similarly, early rabbinic texts were read and studied and commented upon for generations that include the present. Centuries later, the use of loom technology and weaving techniques remained a small but potent way to express difference and its values. The twelfth-century Jewish commentator Rashi used loom technology once again to distinguish men from women, remarking that men weave with their feet, while women use a cane that moves up and down.[9] An eleventh-century Christian commentary on the New Testament Gospel of John sought to explain how Jesus's seamless cloak was produced. One Theophylactus, a bishop in Bulgaria, writes, "Others say that in Palestine they weave their fabrics not as with us, having the warp threads above and weaving below with the bobbin and thus mounting; but on the contrary, the warp threads are below and the web is woven from above" (Theophylactus *Ad Johan* XIX, 23). As expressions of several kinds of difference, these technologies, tools, and labors remained familiar, for centuries.

Notes

1 I dedicate this article to Eric Meyers, my doctoral advisor as I prepared "'The Work of Her Hands': Gendering the Everyday in Roman Palestine (70–250 CE)" (1993). From this work came the much more conceptually driven *Spinning Fantasies: Rabbis, Gender and History* (1997). Neither of these could have been written without Eric Meyers' enthusiasm for new directions in research, nor without his intellectual innovations in the field of Roman-period Judaism. Eric Meyers trained a record number of female PhD's – something quite remarkable in this field. What we might call "the Meyers' Method" – the dual interpretation of canonical texts with epigraphic materials and archaeological materials – paved the way for some of the most important work in women's history and feminist studies in this field.

2 Woolf (1966, vol. 2: 107).

3 Hierocles, preserved in Stobaeus. See Hense and Wachsmuth (1958, vol. 3). Similarly, Eusebius (*De Vita Constantini* 11.34).

4 mNegaim 2.4, based on Lev (13.47–59, 14.34–57 and Ex 4.6). See also tNegaim 1.8, Sifra Leviticus, parshat Nashim Pereq 4 for a repetition of mNegaim 2.4.

5 Rabbinic texts mention many a time women at a variety of tasks. For citations see Peskowitz (1997: 193, n. 19).

6 For philological argument see Peskowitz (1997: 194 n. 21).

7 Building XI, Locus 1108 in Yadin (1963).
8 Yadin (1963: 130). Hall C was designated as the site of a "household textile industry."
9 Rashi on bShabbat 105a.

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11

WHY SCROLL JARS?[1]

Jodi Magness

There is perhaps no more distinctive artifact associated with Qumran than the cylindrical jars which reportedly contained the first scrolls discovered in Cave 1 (and which are therefore sometimes called "scroll jars"). According to one account of the initial discovery, when the Bedouins first entered Cave 1, they discovered a row of these jars covered with bowl-shaped lids. Most of the jars were empty, but one contained three scrolls, two of which were wrapped in linen (VanderKam 1994: 3). The cylindrical jars in which the first scrolls discovered in Cave 1 were reportedly stored are virtually unique to Qumran and the nearby caves. In this chapter, I suggest that these jars were designed for the purpose of storing the pure food and drink of the sect and other objects with a high degree of ritual purity (such as scrolls).

Two of the intact jars removed from the cave by the Bedouins were purchased by E.L. Sukenik for the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (de Vaux 1949: 587). In February–March 1949, G. Lankester Harding and R. de Vaux conducted excavations in Cave 1. In addition to fragments of scrolls and linen, they recovered sherds representing at least fifty examples of cylindrical jars and the bowl-shaped lids that covered them (de Vaux 1949: 591). Two years later (November–December 1951), Harding and de Vaux conducted the first season of excavations at Qumran (they had surveyed the site and excavated a few graves in the cemetery in 1949; see Harding 1952: 104 and de Vaux 1953: 83). Sunk into the floor of one of the rooms (Locus 2), they found an intact but empty cylindrical jar covered with a limestone slab (de Vaux 1953: 94). On the floor beside it was a coin of the Roman procurators dated about 10 CE. The excavators noted that the jar was identical with those found in Cave 1, and concluded, "We thus, even in the small area so far excavated, have a direct connection with the Scrolls" (Harding 1952: 105; see also de Vaux 1953: 94).

From 1953–6, Harding and de Vaux conducted four more seasons of excavations at Qumran. The excavations at the site and in the caves yielded many more examples of cylindrical jars.[2] Some of the jars at the site were sunk into the floors and were covered with round stone slabs or plaques, like the one from Locus 2.[3] According to de Vaux, cylindrical jars were found in

Period Ib and Period II contexts at Qumran (de Vaux 1962: 13–14). However, most of the published examples come from Period II contexts.[4] Although cylindrical jars are represented in the post-31 BCE phase of Period Ib (that is, between 31 and *c.*9/8 BCE), no examples are published from contexts that clearly antedate 31 BCE.[5] This accords with Bar-Nathan's observation that cylindrical jars (her Types 2b and 2c) first appear at Jericho in contexts dating to the reign of Herod the Great (Bar-Nathan 2002: 26–7, pl. 2: 8–9).

The chronology of the cylindrical jars (and their distribution outside Qumran) depends on how the type is defined. In his first report on Cave 1, de Vaux described these jars as follows:

> Regarding the jars, the most constant type is a cylindrical vase that is about 60 cm. tall and only about 25 to 28 cm. in diameter. The base, very flattened, is carried on a thin disc and is slightly concave. There are no handles. The shoulder is well marked, sometimes sharply carinated, but it is always narrow, as all of the jars have a very large mouth, with a very low and plain vertical neck.[6]
>
> (de Vaux 1949: 589)

This corresponds with Bar-Nathan's Types 2b and 2c (see Figure 11.1, left). Some have four small horizontal ledge handles on the shoulder (de Vaux 1949: 589). These jars were covered with bowl-shaped lids, which de Vaux noted were designed to serve not as bowls but as lids for the cylindrical jars (de Vaux 1949: 589, "All of these objects were manufactured to serve specifically as lids and are not cups that people would have used for this purpose"[7]) (see Figure 11.1, upper left).

Not all of the jars described by de Vaux as cylindrical correspond with the above description. One variant differs in having a wider, bag-shaped body, sometimes with an everted rim and/or two large vertical ring handles on the sloping shoulder (see, for example, de Vaux 1953: fig. 2: 7; 1962: 10, 11). Sometimes de Vaux referred to these as "ovoid jars" (or "large jars"; see, for example, de Vaux 1954: figs 1: 3; 5: 2, 8; 1962: fig. 6: 5, 12; 1977: fig. 5: 1, 2).[8] Unlike the "classic" cylindrical jars, ovoid jars are attested in pre-31 BCE contexts (as indicated by the presence of examples in Locus 10A in the tower and the pantry in Locus 86, which were destroyed in the earthquake of 31; see de Vaux 1954: fig. 1: 3; 1956: fig. 2: 10). In fact, de Vaux noted that ovoid jars are characteristic of Period Ib (1977: 15; fig. 5: 1). This accords with Bar-Nathan's dating of this variant (her Type 2a) at Jericho to the Hasmonean period (at Jericho, from *c.*100–31 BCE) and Herodian period (Bar-Nathan 2002: 26–7; pls 1: 2–5; 2: 6–7).

Cylindrical and ovoid jars are common at Qumran and in the nearby caves, but are rare or unattested at other sites in the region (de Vaux [1962: 14] observed that "As already [noted] in Cave 1Q, the [cylindrical] jars and the

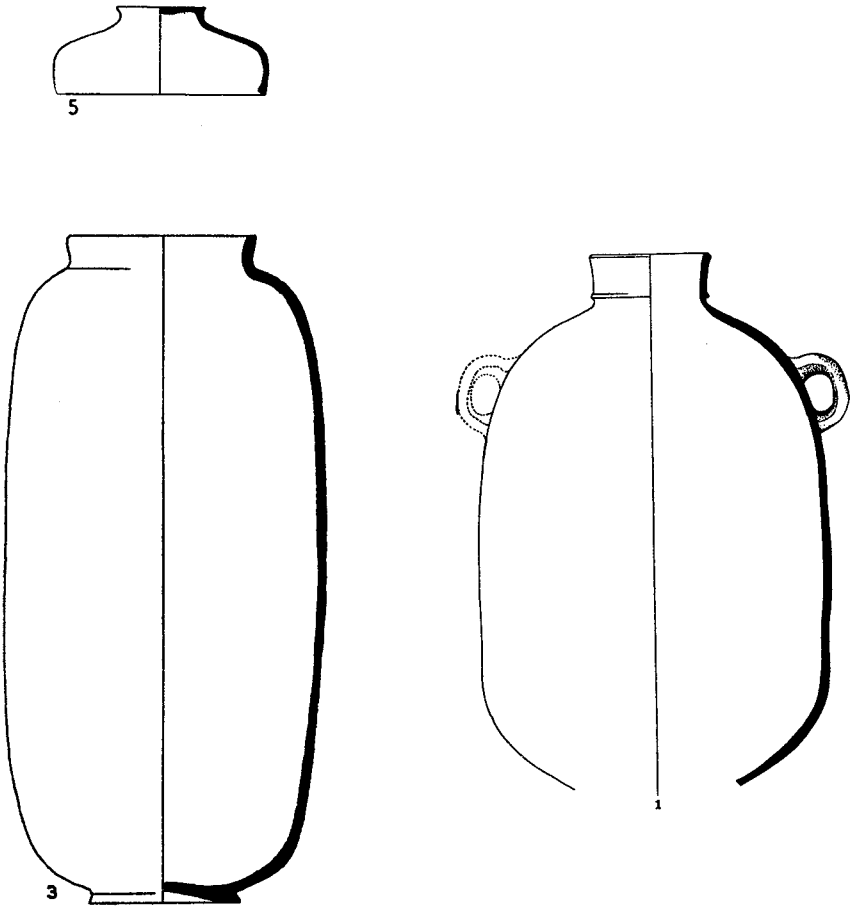

Figure 11.1 Examples of a cylindrical jar and a bowl-shaped lid (left; from de Vaux 1962: figs 2.3, 4.5), and a bag-shaped storage jar (right; from Netzer 1981: fig. 1.1).

lids constitute nearly the entire corpus of pottery collected in the caves").[9] The largest number of examples outside Qumran published to date comes from Herodian Jericho (Tulul Abu al-'Alayiq), though even there they do not seem to be common. Both the ovoid and cylindrical variants are represented (Bar-Nathan 2002: pls 1, 2: 6–9; Kelso and Baramki 1955: pl. 23: A115 [Type 4a]). Bar-Nathan also included a small, handleless variant with an oval body (her Type 2d), but noted that it probably represents a different type (Bar-Nathan 2002: 26; pl. 2: 10–11; for an example from Qumran see de Vaux 1956: fig. 5: 14). At Herodian Jericho, most of these jars (her Types 2a, b, c) come from an industrial area dating to the time of Herod, including

a structure with miqva'ot. Four examples (three of Type 2a and one of Type 2b) were embedded in the wall of an adjacent storeroom. Another six examples of her Type 2d were found in a storeroom for liquids (Bar-Nathan 2002: 69). Bowl-shaped lids are also attested at Herodian Jericho, but are "uncommon" (Bar-Nathan 2002: 91; pl. 15: 246–7). One complete ovoid jar with a bowl-shaped lid was found in the corner of an entrance room to one of the twin palaces at Jericho (Bar-Nathan 2002: 24).

Cylindrical and ovoid jars are virtually unattested elsewhere.[10] A cylindrical jar was reportedly found in a second century CE tomb at Quailba (ancient Abila) in Jordan, though unfortunately it is not illustrated (Ma'ayeh 1960: 116, "The most interesting finds were that of an inkwell and a cylindrical jar which are closely paralleled by similar objects discovered at Qumran"). Bar-Nathan mentioned that examples of her Types 2a, 2b, and 2d were found in "Zealot" contexts at Masada (Bar-Nathan 2002: 23; none is illustrated, and they are otherwise unpublished). According to de Vaux, no examples of cylindrical jars were found at Ein Feshkha (de Vaux 1973: 64, "none of the cylindrical jars of Khirbet Qumran and the caves has been found here"). However, using a broad definition of the type, one ovoid jar and one small cylindrical jar with an everted rim (close to Bar-Nathan's Type 2d) are illustrated from Ein Feshkha (see de Vaux 1959: figs. 1: 4; 3: 20).[11] Otherwise, no examples of cylindrical jars and no bowl-shaped lids are attested from Ein Feshkha, and there is none from Ein el-Ghuweir (see Bar-Adon 1977). The only other examples of published ovoid jars consist of one from the first century CE villa at Ein ez-Zara (see Clamer 1997: pl. 12: 15), and another from Ein Boqeq (see Fischer *et al.* 2000: fig. 2.7: 1).

To understand why these jars and their bowl-shaped lids are common at Qumran but virtually unattested elsewhere, we must compare them with the usual Judean storage jars of the first century BCE and first century CE. The latter are characterized by the following features: a broad, bag-shaped body with sloping, rounded shoulders, which widens towards the bottom; a rounded or slightly pointed base; two vertical ring handles on the shoulders; and a narrow, medium-high to tall, vertical neck, often with a slightly everted or thickened rim (for examples see Lapp 1961: 144, 147, 149, 152) (see Figure 11.1, right, on p. 148). With minor variations, this remained the dominant type of storage jar in Palestine through the Byzantine period and later. Bag-shaped jars are not uncommon at Qumran, although no examples are published from the scroll caves (see de Vaux 1953: fig. 2: 1–3, 5, 6; 1954: figs 1: 1, 3; 5: 1, 6; Humbert and Chambon 1994: photos 19, 20, 263, 264, 281, 286, 289; Broshi and Eshel 1999: 336, no. 1; 340, no. 3; Patrich 1994: 83, fig. 8 [from Cave 24]; 87, fig. 13 [from Cave 13]). Bag-shaped jars are also attested at Ein Feshkha, and they represent the only type of storage jar found at Ein el-Ghuweir (see de Vaux 1956: fig. 1: 1–3; Bar-Adon 1977: figs 10, 21 [from the graves]).

The form of the bag-shaped jars reflects their function. The broad bodies

and rounded bases indicate that they were used for storage in basements or storerooms. Bag-shaped jars were bulky and awkward to carry or transport for long distances, especially when full. They would have stood on soft, sandy or dirt floors, or were placed on stands. Liquids and grain brought in other containers (such as amphoras or animal skins) would have been emptied into the bag-shaped jars for storage. Their relatively tall, narrow necks helped prevent spillage (when tipping or pouring), and were easily corked or sealed. The ring handles on the shoulders were used to grasp the jars when pouring out their contents. In contrast, amphoras, which were used as transport containers (especially by means of ships), have cylindrical bodies, a pointed base, and large handles. This design enabled amphoras to be easily grasped and lifted (with one hand holding a handle and the other the pointed base).

The cylindrical and ovoid jars differ fundamentally from the bag-shaped jars. Instead of a rounded base, the cylindrical and ovoid jars have a disc or ring base. Although the ovoid jars are bag-shaped, the body is wider at the top (towards the shoulder) than at the bottom (in contrast to bag-shaped jars). They either have small (pierced) ledge handles on the shoulder, or no handles at all (except for the ovoid variant with ring handles on the shoulder). The cylindrical jars have a carinated shoulder. The most distinctive feature of these jars (aside from the cylindrical body) is the short neck and wide mouth. In other words, the cylindrical and ovoid jars are essentially hole-mouth jars. As de Vaux noted, the bowl-shaped lids were designed to be placed over the wide mouths of these jars, fitting snugly on the narrow ledge created by the carinated shoulder. Some of the bowls and jars have matching pierced ledge handles which could be fastened together (see Humbert and Chambon 1994: photo 359). The ring or disc bases enabled the cylindrical and ovoid jars to stand on their own and provided a stability that the bag-shaped jars, with their rounded bases lacked. On the other hand, the very short necks and wide mouths of the cylindrical and ovoid jars would not have prevented spillage and could not have been easily sealed.

These differences can perhaps be understood in light of the purity regulations of the community at Qumran, especially those governing the storage and pouring of food and drink. The first relevant regulation appears in the Sabbath code in the Damascus Document (CDC11: 9): "Let him not open a plastered vessel on the Sabbath" (see Schiffman 1975: 115). Schiffman has noted that, in antiquity, jars were normally sealed with clay after filling. The clay would then harden, forming an airtight seal. To open the jar, the clay seal had to be broken. Gal has distinguished three types of ancient clay stoppers (Gal 1989: 282). Conical-shaped stoppers were apparently placed inside the jar's mouth. Since they did not hermetically seal the mouth, Gal has suggested that conical-shaped stoppers were used for jars containing olive oil. The second type of stopper is mushroom-shaped. These were made during the sealing process by using wet clay, which was molded directly on top of the jar's mouth, hermetically sealing it. Gal believes this type of stopper was

used for jars containing grain, which would have needed to be hermetically sealed. The third type of stopper is doughnut-shaped, with a hole in the center (these have often been identified as loom weights). Gal has suggested that this type was used for sealing wine jars (Gal 1989: 283). The sectarians apparently forbade the breaking of clay stoppers that sealed jars on the Sabbath (Schiffman 1975: 115–16). Clay stoppers would have been used to seal the narrow necks and mouths of bag-shaped jars. However, because of their wide mouths and short necks, cylindrical and ovoid jars could not easily have been sealed in this way. Instead, these jars were covered with stone slabs (especially when they were embedded in floors), or were fitted with bowl-shaped lids. In addition, some of the linen cloths from Cave 1 were used as jar covers (Crowfoot 1956: 24; for linen fragments from Cave 11, see de Vaux 1956: 572). This feature of the cylindrical and ovoid jars allowed them to be opened on the Sabbath, thereby circumventing the Sabbath prohibition against the breaking of clay seals.

Another sectarian regulation might help explain the design of these jars. This regulation appears in 4QMMT (*Miqsat Ma'aseh ha-Torah*):

> [And even] regarding (poured out) liquid streams, we sa[y] that they do not have [pu]rity. And even the liquid streams do not separate between the impure [and the] pure. For the moisture of the liquid streams and (the vessel) which receives from them are both considered one identical moisture.
>
> (4QMMT: B56–8; from Schiffman 1994: 86; see also Vermes 1998: 225)

This passage means that, when liquid is poured from a pure (upper) vessel into an impure (lower) vessel, the liquid stream links the two vessels and transmits impurity "upstream" to the pure (upper) vessel. This contrasts with the Pharisaic ruling that the liquid did not impart impurity to the vessel from which it was being poured (Schiffman 1994: 86–7). To empty a bag-shaped jar, it was necessary to grasp it by the handles, tilt it, and pour the contents out through the narrow opening. If the pure liquid contents of such a jar were poured into an impure container, the jar and its contents would have been rendered impure according to the sectarian regulations. Although cylindrical and ovoid jars could have been picked up and their contents poured out, their wide mouths would have caused considerable spillage. Spillage could have been reduced by pouring the contents of the jar into a funnel, two examples of which are published from Qumran (see de Vaux 1956: fig. 5: 11 [from Locus 92], 12 [from the pantry in Locus 86]). However, the short necks and wide mouths of the cylindrical and ovoid jars allowed the contents to be scooped out using another utensil such as a cup, bowl, or dipper (for a dipper from Qumran, see de Vaux 1954: fig. 3: 15; also see de Vaux 1956: fig. 5: 9). That this is the way these jars functioned

is suggested by their ring and disc bases, which provided them with a stability that bag-shaped jars did not possess, and prevented them from tipping over easily. Removing liquids from the cylindrical and ovoid jars with a cup or dipper circumvented the risk of contaminating the contents by pouring them into another vessel. This feature of their design also made it easy to remove the contents of cylindrical jars embedded in floors, a common phenomenon in the settlement at Qumran. In contrast, it would be almost impossible to empty the contents of a bag-shaped jar embedded in a floor. Finally, the wide mouths of cylindrical and ovoid jars would have allowed their contents to be easily viewed and inspected.

Bar-Nathan correctly noted that the distribution of the cylindrical and ovoid jars indicates they represent a regional type (Bar-Nathan 2002: 27). However, the fact that these jars are much more common at Qumran and the caves than at Jericho, combined with their virtual absence from Ein Feshkha and their complete absence from Ein el-Ghuweir, suggests that they are not simply a regional phenomenon. The community at Qumran obviously preferred the cylindrical and ovoid jars over the usual bag-shaped jars, apparently because of their unique concerns with ritual purity.[12] These jars therefore must have been used to store goods that had a high degree of ritual purity, such as the pure food and drink of the sect, as well as scrolls (and perhaps other goods). Various scrolls document the sectarians' concern that no impurity come into contact with their pure (solid) food and drink (liquids). For this reason, new members were allowed to partake of the pure food only after more than a year had passed, and with the pure drink only after a second year (because liquids render foods susceptible to impurity, the regulations regarding drink were stricter) (see Schiffman 1983: 194). The relevant passage from the Community Rule (6: 16–21) reads as follows: "And when he draws near to the council of the community he shall not come in contact with the pure food of the community . . . until he completes one full year. . . . Let him not come into contact with the liquid food of the community until he completes a second year" (from Schiffman 1983: 162). Members who had violated the penal code were denied access to and contact with the pure food and drink for various lengths of time, depending on the infraction (see Schiffman 1983: 159–73). Similarly, in 4QMMT we read, "And furthermore concerning the lepers, we s[ay that they shall not c]ome (into contact) with the sacred pure food" (see Vermes 1998: 226, 4Q394).[13]

I believe that not only were the cylindrical and ovoid jars preferred because of the sect's unique halakhic concerns, but because their distinctive shape came to signify contents having a high degree of ritual purity. In other words, because their shape was easily identifiable, these jars served as markers to those who were allowed or denied contact with the pure food or drink (or other ritually pure goods) of the sect. Distinctively shaped containers have been used throughout history to signal their contents. For example, in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, wine from different parts of the

Mediterranean was shipped in distinctively shaped amphoras. Even today, Coca-Cola bottles have a special shape that we all recognize.

It is difficult to determine whether the presence of cylindrical and ovoid jars at Herodian Jericho and Masada, and their absence from Ein Feshkha and Ein el-Ghuweir reflect the presence or absence of sectarians. Perhaps these jars are found at Jericho and Masada because they are a regional type. On the other hand, the fact that at least some of the examples from Jericho were associated with bowl-shaped lids suggests a sectarian-like concern with ritual purity. Thus, the discovery of these jars at Jericho could attest to sectarian presence, or at least a group with similar purity concerns. Similarly, the appearance of cylindrical and ovoid jars in Zealot contexts at Masada might support Yadin's suggestion that members of the Qumran community joined the rebels there after their own settlement fell to the Romans in 68 CE (see Yadin 1966: 173–4; Cross 1995: 50–1).[14] However, the absence of cylindrical and ovoid jars from Ein Feshkha and Ein el-Ghuweir does not prove that these settlements were non-sectarian or had no connections with Qumran, though this is a possibility. Instead, their absence indicates that the pure food and drink (and other pure goods) of the sect were not stored at these sites (perhaps because the communal meals were held at Qumran?).

The large numbers of cylindrical and ovoid jars in the caves around Qumran indicate that the sectarians stored substantial provisions of pure food and drink (in addition to scrolls) in the caves. The popularity of the cylindrical jars in the caves can be explained by the fact that this variant was much easier to lift and carry (especially when full) than the ovoid jars. The presence of ovoid jars (which appeared before 31 BCE), Hellenistic type oil lamps (which date to the reign of Herod; see Magness 1998: 64), and cylindrical jars and wheelmade ("Herodian") oil lamps (which date to the first century CE) indicates that these jars were deposited in the caves throughout Qumran's sectarian occupation (in the pre-31 BCE phase of Period Ib; the post-31 BCE phase of Period Ib; and Period II). Although some of the jars might have been placed in the caves for safekeeping on the eve of the destructions in *c.*9/8 BCE and in 68 CE, their large numbers and the presence of types that antedate 31 BCE suggest this was an ongoing process. In other words, the sectarians apparently hoarded stores of pure food and drink in the caves. One text that might shed light on this phenomenon is 4Q274 3 ii, also designated 4QTohorot A because it deals with purity. Fragment 3, column ii reads as follows:

line 2: . . . those whose impurity [extends over days . . .]
line 3: and any (vessel) which has a seal . . . [shall be unclean]
line 4: for a more pure person. Any herb [which has no]
line 5: dew moisture on it may be eaten. If it is n[ot eaten, let him put it]
line 6: into the water. For if one [were to put it on]
line 7: the ground and [water] wetted it [when]

line 8: the rain [falls] upon it, if an [unclean person] touches it, let him by no means [eat it]
line 9: in the field during the period [of his purification]
line 10: Any earthen vessel which [has no seal,]
line 11: [whatever] is in it [becomes unclean] . . . [all]
line 12: liquids [become unclean . . .].

(from Baumgarten 1994: 97–8)

This text reflects the sectarians' concern with the role of liquids as transmitters of impurity (Baumgarten 1994: 91). As a consequence, food stored in open ceramic vessels in a house that is unclean (through corpse-impurity, for example) becomes unclean. For the more scrupulous, even sealed vessels were not effective barriers against impurity (Baumgarten 1994: 99). In addition, food that was moistened with liquids was rendered susceptible to impurity, as indicated by a passage in the Temple Scroll:

> If a man dies in your cities, the house in which the dead man has died shall be unclean for seven days. Whatever is in the house and whoever enters the house shall be unclean for seven days. Any food on which water has been poured shall be unclean, anything moistened shall be unclean. Earthenware vessels shall be unclean and whatever they contain shall be unclean for every clean man. The open (vessels) shall be unclean for every Israelite (with) whatever is moistened in them.
>
> (11QT 49: 5–10; from Vermes 1998: 207)

The text 4Q274 indicates that even falling rain and dew could make food (or at least fruits and vegetables) susceptible to impurity. According to Baumgarten, "It is likely that Qumran exegesis considered fruits which had been wetted to be susceptible even after the moisture had dried" (Baumgarten 1994: 99).

These texts suggest that the community at Qumran hoarded stores of pure food and drink in the caves to guard against contact with ritual impurity. This is because they considered even sealed vessels to be susceptible to ritual impurity. This means that pure food and drink stored in sealed vessels in a house or building that became impure would have been rendered impure. Storing the pure food and drink in the caves (instead of in the settlement) reduced the risk of contamination through contact with impurity (corpse-impurity and other kinds of impurity). The dry conditions inside the caves – the same conditions which preserved the scrolls for 2,000 years – also reduced the risk that moisture (such as rain or dew) would come into contact with and contaminate the pure food and drink. This accounts for the design of the bowl-shaped lids, which completely covered the mouths of the jars, fitting snugly over the neck and resting on the shoulder. Any moisture (rain,

dew, bird and bat droppings, etc.) that happened to fall on cylindrical jars covered with these lids would have rolled off, down the sides of the jars and onto the ground. In other words, the lids were designed to prevent moisture from entering the jars. In fact, it could be that the use of bowl-shaped lids not only circumvented the Sabbath prohibition against breaking clay seals, but developed out of the sectarians' concern with the transmission of impurity by moisture. As noted above, bag-shaped jars were usually sealed with wet clay that was molded over the mouth and dried in place. The moisture in the wet clay would presumably have contaminated the contents of jars sealed in this way. Perhaps this is one of the reasons that the cylindrical and ovoid jars and bowl-shaped lids were preferred by the community at Qumran.

As Schiffman has noted:

> To a great extent, the sect defined itself as a group maintaining the ritual purity of its food. . . . Indeed, the right to approach the pure food was a step in the process of being accepted as a full member of the sect. But the exclusion from the pure food [for those who violated the ordinances] is even more. It is a consequence of the belief that the offender will defile it, for to the sect, ritual impurity goes hand in hand with moral impurity.
>
> (Schiffman 1983: 173)

The design of the cylindrical and ovoid jars and bowl-shaped lids can be understood as a physical expression of the sect's concern with the ritual purity of food and drink. The hoarding of food and drink in the caves was apparently due to the sectarians' desire to reduce the risk of contamination through contact with impurity and moisture, although some of these stores (and perhaps the scrolls) could have been deposited on the eve of the site's destruction in 68 CE.

A pseudepigraphical work called the *Assumption of Moses* describes the storing of scrolls in jars that were apparently placed in caves. At the beginning of the work, Moses tells Joshua that he is about to die, and delivers to him certain books of prophecies which Joshua is supposed to treat with oil and store in jars in a place appointed by God:

> And receive thou this writing that thou mayest know how to preserve the books which I shall deliver unto thee: and thou shalt set these in order and anoint them with oil of cedar and put them away in earthen vessels in the place which He made from the beginning of the creation of the world, that His name should be called upon until the day of repentance in the visitation wherewith the Lord will visit them in the consummation of the end of the days.
>
> (1.16–18; from Charles 1913: 415)

Although oil presumably would have been employed to soften and preserve the parchment, the use of the term "anoint" suggests a ritual aspect to its application. What kind of "earthen vessels" were used to store these scrolls? As we have seen, the narrow openings of bag-shaped jars means they could not have held scrolls. Scrolls could have been placed in other vessels, such as large cooking pots (although their globular bodies were not well suited for this purpose), or in broken amphoras or bag-shaped jars. However, the design of the ovoid and cylindrical jars makes them ideally suited for the storage of scrolls as described in the *Assumption of Moses*. The date of this composition (which might have undergone two redactions) is disputed, but the latest identifiable historical allusions suggest that it attained its final form between the years 4 BCE and 48 CE (Schürer 1986: 281–2, n. 9; Charles [1913: 411] dated it between 7 and 30 CE). Although scholars have noted that the work displays a number of affinities with the Qumran writings, such as a priestly stand and a peculiar eschatological outlook, its apparent absence among the Dead Sea Scrolls suggests that it is not an Essene composition (Schürer 1986: 283). According to Schürer, "The furthest one can go is to suggest that it derives from a writer sympathetic to Essene ideology" (1986: 284). Because ovoid and cylindrical jars are found mostly in the vicinity of Qumran, I believe it is likely that the author (or redactor) of the *Assumption of Moses* was familiar with and might even have been describing the sectarians' practice of storing scrolls in jars placed in caves. This is admittedly an argument from silence (based on the accident of preservation), since there are no analogous manuscript finds from other sites in Roman Palestine. On the other hand, scrolls from contemporary sites in the region (such as Masada and the Judean Desert caves occupied during the Bar Kokhba Revolt) were not found inside jars and were not associated with ovoid or cylindrical jars (although, as noted above, unpublished cylindrical jars are apparently represented at Masada). Even at Qumran the only scrolls that were actually found inside jars are apparently those from Cave 1. Nevertheless, these examples provide our only archaeological evidence for the practice described in the *Assumption of Moses*. There are other ancient reports of scrolls stored inside jars in caves near Jericho. Origen (185–254 CE) mentioned that the sixth Greek version of the Psalms that he presented in his Hexapla had been found in a jar near Jericho (VanderKam 1994: 1). In describing the same text, Eusebius (*c.*260–340 CE) added that a Greek version of the Psalms and other Greek and Hebrew manuscripts had been found in jar at Jericho during the reign of Caracalla (*Ecclesiastical History* 6.16.1; VanderKam 1994: 1). In about 800 CE, Timotheus I, the Nestorian patriarch of Seleucia, reported that books of the Old Testament had been found in a cave near Jericho (VanderKam 1994: 2). Of course, we do not know whether these manuscripts were related to the Dead Sea Scrolls. But the nature of the manuscripts (biblical scrolls), the references to locations "near Jericho," and the descriptions of scrolls deposited in jars stored in caves suggest these might represent earlier finds of Dead Sea Scrolls.

If the passage in the *Assumption of Moses* refers to the practice at Qumran, some of the scrolls could have been deposited in the caves before the destruction in 68 CE. This means that the community at Qumran might have been storing or hoarding scrolls as well as pure food and drink in some of the caves over the course of many years. A passage in Jeremiah 32:14 indicates that the storage of scrolls in ceramic jars was an ancient practice going back to Biblical times:

> And I charged Baruch before them saying, Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Take these documents, this deed of purchase, both that which is sealed, and this open deed; and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may last for many days.

This might explain why the community at Qumran, which showed a preference for other Biblical Jewish practices such as dining while seated instead of reclining, also adopted this practice (see Schiffman 1983: 199; Magness 2002: 202–6). It also means that cylindrical jars might originally have been designed or adapted by the sect for the purpose of holding scrolls (see Magness 1994: 41), and then became the preferred containers for storing their pure food and drink as well.

Notes

1 It is an honor to dedicate this paper to Eric Meyers, the most prominent American scholar specializing in the archaeology of Roman and Byzantine Palestine. I have long admired the scope of his research, and appreciate his support of younger scholars and students. I wish to thank Hanan Eshel and Magen Broshi for their comments on this paper. I am grateful to Oxford University Press and the Israel Exploration Society for their permission to reproduce the illustrations in Figure 11.1.

2 For examples of cylindrical jars and bowl-shaped lids from the caves, see de Vaux (1955: figs 2; 3: 6–11; 1962: figs 2; 3; 4; 6: 1, 2, 5, 7, 9–12; 1977: figs 5: 2–3; 6: 12, 15–17).

3 Cylindrical jars (usually intact) sunk into floors were found in the following loci (I only include jars described by de Vaux as cylindrical):

Locus 2: One cylindrical jar covered by a nicely cut limestone slab, sunk into the floor up to its rim. Two bronze coins lay on the floor nearby, and two more were found in the earth that covered it (Humbert and Chambon 1994: 292).

Locus 13: Three cylindrical jars were set into the niche (beneath a chimney) in the north wall of the locus, one of which had a broken base when it was installed. Four bronze coins were found in the fill of the first jar, and another three inside the third one (Humbert and Chambon 1994: 297).

Locus 34: A cylindrical jar bearing a Hebrew name crudely painted in red on the shoulder was sunk into one of the small basins in this locus (de Vaux 1954: 208; Humbert and Chambon 1994: 303–4; photos 66–70).

Locus 61: A cylindrical jar embedded in the southwest corner of the room rested on a cylinder of unbaked earth which resembled a silo (Humbert and Chambon 1994: 312).

Locus 80: A small cylindrical jar was embedded up to its rim in the floor. It was still covered by a bowl-shaped lid that had four ledge handles, each pierced by two tiny holes. These corresponded with the four ledge handles on the shoulder, each of which was also pierced by two holes (Humbert and Chambon 1994: 317; photo 359).

Locus 81: Two cylindrical jars (one large, one small) were embedded to half their height in the gravel of this locus (but only one cylindrical jar is visible in the photographs; the others are not cylindrical; see Humbert and Chambon 1994: 317; photos 315–18).

Locus 110?: A medium-sized jar without handles (not specifically described as cylindrical) was found in the southwest corner of the locus. It was covered by a stone slab (Humbert and Chambon 1994: 326).

Locus 120: An incomplete cylindrical jar with small (ledge?) handles ("oreilletes") with an incomplete cover with similar handles was found (apparently embedded in the floor) next to and in association with the jars that contained the hoard of Tyrian tetradrachmas (Humbert and Chambon 1994: 330).

4 For examples of published cylindrical jars from Qumran see de Vaux (1953: figs 2: 4 [Locus 2], 7 [Locus 1]; 4: 17 [Locus 2]; 1954: figs 1: 3 [Locus 10A]; 5: 2 [Locus 28], 3 [Locus 45], 4 [Locus 13], 7 [Locus 17], 8 [Locus 45], 9 [Locus 44]; pl. 12: a [a jar with a red dipinto from Locus 34]; 1956: fig. 5: 14 [Locus 126], 15 [Locus 61] [the two last are small vases, about 20 cm high; de Vaux described the first as a "vase en cone allongé"]); see also Humbert and Chambon (1994: photo 356 [Locus 45]). For other (unillustrated) examples see n. 1 above. For an example from Cave 24, see Patrich (1994: 83; fig. 7).

5 For the pre-31 and post-31 BCE phases of Period Ib at Qumran, see Magness (1995). Cylindrical jars seem to be represented in Period Ib contexts in Locus 80 and Locus 120. In Locus 80, a cylindrical jar embedded in the floor is described as having been associated with the lower of two floor levels; see Humbert and Chambon (1994: 317; photograph 359 [it is not clear whether this earlier floor level represents the pre-31 or post-31 BCE phase of Period Ib]). The discovery of a cylindrical jar in Locus 120 in association with the hoard of Tyrian tetradrachmas proves that this type existed by the post-31 BCE phase of Period Ib; see Humbert and Chambon (1994: 330). For the jar from Locus 89/86 (de Vaux 1956: 10), see p. 148. An intact cylindrical jar with a red dipinto on the shoulder was set into one of the basins in Locus 34, and a stone disc that covered it lay on the ground nearby (see Humbert and Chambon 1994: photos 66–70). If this jar belongs with the basins, it would provide an example of a cylindrical jar of pre-31 BCE date, since these basins went out of use after the earthquake. However, I believe that this jar should be associated with Period II, for it was embedded in the Period II floor that covered the basins (that is, its rim was flush with the floor) – as indicated by the position of the stone disc and burnt wood roof beams lying on this floor nearby. The beams are from the burning of the roof at the end of Period II, since this area was open before the earthquake of 31 BCE, when the basins stood here (Locus 34).

6 Translated from French to English by Magness.

7 Translated from French to English by Magness.

8 Ovoid jars are visible in Humbert and Chambon (1994: photos 200 [from Locus 82, with the round stone disc that covered it], 314–18 [from Locus 81], 333 [from Locus 86], 354 [from Locus 61], 356 [from Locus 45a], 391 [two intact jars and a bowl from the southern trench]).

9 In Humbert and Chambon (1994: 346), a cylindrical jar is described as coming from the fill of Tomb 4 in the cemetery. However, in de Vaux's preliminary report, the jar from this grave is described as bag-shaped; see de Vaux (1954: 215)

(described as being of the same type as fig. 1: 4 on the same page). Translated from French to English by Magness.

10 Lapp (1961: 153–4) listed parallels from Tell el-Ful (Biblical Gibeah) to the ovoid and cylindrical jars. An examination of these parallels (Lapp 1961: 129–30, n. 188) reveals that they might represent ovoid jars (see Sinclair [1960: pls 24: 17; 25: 8, 11], which Lapp cited as examples of his Corpus 13 [ovoid] jars). However, although Lapp listed parallels to the cylindrical jars (his Corpus 14 type) from Tell el-Ful (Lapp 1961: 154), he did not include any examples in his discussion of Tell el-Ful (Lapp 1961: 130, n. 188), and no examples are illustrated among the pottery published from the site (see Sinclair 1960).

11 De Vaux (1959: 252) stated that the ovoid jar illustrated in figure 1: 4 comes from a Period III context at Ein Feshkha, but represents the same type found in Period II contexts at Qumran.

12 The clay from which some of the Qumran vessels were manufactured has been subjected to Neutron Activation Analysis (NAA), with surprisingly different results. Analyses by J. Gunneweg have indicated that the source of the clay he tested is located in the vicinity of Qumran (Gunneweg presented his results at the 1999 Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Boston). However, the clay of the vessels analyzed by J. Yellin belongs to two different chemical groups: one group is a Jerusalem clay, and the other is a non-Jerusalem group that is presumed to be local to Qumran (although there is no chemical evidence that the latter is indeed local to Qumran; see Yellin *et al.* 2001). Vessels made of the non-Jerusalem (presumably Qumran) clay include a cup and a bowl from the pottery annex next to the dining room in L77 (Yellin *et al.* 2001: table 1, KHQ 19–20). Vessels made of the Jerusalem clay include an inkwell from Locus 30 (the "scriptorium"), a double-mouthed jar inscribed with a Hebrew name from Locus 34 (the basins in the central courtyard of the main building), and cylindrical jars and lids from the caves (Yellin *et al.* 2001: table 1, KHQ 21, 26, 23, 27, 28). Although about half of the vessels analyzed were of Jerusalem clay, and the other half were of non-Jerusalem clay, the four cylindrical jars and three lids that were tested all belong to the former group (Yellin *et al.* 2001: 77). The best explanation for these results might be that the clay was brought to Qumran from Jerusalem, and the vessels were then manufactured at Qumran. This would make sense not only in light of the absence of cylindrical jars from Jerusalem, but also because the cost of transporting these vessels overland to Qumran would have been prohibitive. Perhaps the Jerusalem clay was preferred because of its better quality, or because of considerations of ritual purity. Zeuner's analyses indicated that sediments washed into the pools at Qumran and the Lisan marls found nearby would have been unsuitable for the manufacture of pottery (Zeuner 1960: 33). Yellin's analysis has also indicated that the ceramic vessels from Qumran and from Ein el-Ghuweir are made of unrelated clays (Yellin *et al.* 2001: 65, 76).

13 For similar testimony from Josephus concerning the purity of the food and drink of the Essenes, see Josephus' *War* 2.138–9 (admission to the sect); 2.143 (expulsion from the sect).

14 For the suggestion that the non-biblical texts from Masada originated at Qumran, see Tov (2000). For the view that the discovery of documents similar to those from Qumran does not reflect the presence of sectarians at Masada, but instead indicates that these writings circulated generally among the Jews of Judea in the Second Temple period, see Eshel (1991: 129, n. 9). In this case, the cylindrical and ovoid jars found at Masada might suggest the presence of non-sectarians who had similar concerns regarding the ritual purity of food and drink. Brooke (1988: 234–6) has noted that the overall interests and concerns of the documents from Cave 11 at Qumran are reflected in those found at Masada. This suggests a connection between the two communities, although their composition is probably complex.

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12

QUMRAN AND THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

The contention of twelve theories

Magen Broshi and Hanan Eshel

From the very beginning the Dead Sea Scrolls and their place of origin, Qumran, have not fared well. Shortly after the discovery numerous interpretations were offered to explain the finds. Even now, over half a century after the publication of the first Scrolls, when all the 900 manuscripts are available in their original languages, and most of them in excellent translations, there are at least twelve mutually exclusive theories.

Qumran as an Essene monastery

We start with what we, along with the majority of the scholars in the field, view as the correct one; Qumran was an Essene monastery and the Scrolls belonged to an Essene community. The identification of the owners of the newly found manuscripts with the Essenes was first suggested by E.L. Sukenik, then professor of archaeology at the Hebrew University and an authority on ancient Jewish Scripts.[1] Let us enumerate briefly the reasons for this position, not necessarily in the order of their importance (Broshi 2001: 259–273).

Contemporary Jewish historians, Philo and Flavius Josephus provide us with rich data that agrees with what the Scrolls tell about their owners. Flavius, who is amazingly knowledgeable about Essenes when he describes the three major movements, devotes to the Essenes disproportionately 42 out of 47 paragraphs (*War* II, 119–161 on the Essenes and 162–166 on the other two movements). The data runs the gamut, from the sublime (e.g. the belief in predestination) to the utter trivial (in a gathering, the prohibition on spitting into the circle). The latter appears also in the Community Rule (1QS 7.3): 'the man who spits into the midst of the assembly of the Many shall be punished thirty days' (i.e. cutting the rations). Both Philo and Josephus tell us about Essenes leading celibate lives, though Josephus knows also of Essenes leading regular family lives.

Pliny the Elder, also a contemporary, tells us that the Essenes lived on the north-west coast of the Dead Sea (this is the interpretation shared by almost all scholars) and that the 'solitary tribe of the Essenes . . . has no women and has renounced all sexual desire, has no money and has only palm trees for company' (*Naturalis Historia* V, 73). As Qumran was the first monastery in the Western World the term monastery was not available to Pliny, otherwise he might have used it.

The compound of Qumran, 4,500 square meters in size, is like many other ruins in Palestine's arid areas, relatively well preserved.[2] In the nineteen centuries since it was abandoned, it has not been disturbed by human hands. This is exactly what one would expect from a monastery: ascetism and communal organization. The poorly constructed walls are not plastered and have almost a complete lack of interior decoration. The pottery which was locally produced is utilitarian, dull and of limited repertory (Magness 2002: 73–90). The communal character is attested by the existence of one kitchen and one dining hall for some 120–150 members at the most.

The miqvaot (immersion pools) are the strongest argument for defining Qumran as a religious establishment. Nowhere do we find such big miqvaot and such density – ten in an area slightly bigger than an acre. These cisterns have distinct features in which one cannot err: staircases with symbolic partition walls meant to demarcate the division between those who descend impure and those who ascend pure, a stipulation mentioned in several ancient sources (Reich 1988; 2000). The concern for ritual bathing was common to all religious parties in Second Commonwealth Palestine, but nowhere do we find such a rabid concern as in Qumran.

The tripartite division

Ancient historians, especially Josephus, tell that at the end of the Second Commonwealth Judaism had three religious movements (or parties): Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes. Doubts were raised about the accuracy of Josephus' report; after all he was writing to a pagan audience and he might have oversimplified the case. However, some of the Scrolls, in particular the Nahum Commentary, have also the same tripartite division; the movements, however, are not called by their familiar names but by appellations: Ephraim, Manasseh and Judah (Amoussine 1963: 386–396; Flusser 1981: 121–166). The Nahum Commentary is rare in the Qumran library for it speaks about an historical incident known to us from Josephus. Qumran's huge collection of manuscripts is composed exclusively of religious texts and does not include historical compositions. The incident referred to in this commentary is a horrible revenge taken by the Hasmonean king Alexander Janneus on the Pharisees, his adversaries, in 88 BCE when he crucified 800 of their leaders. Thus we know that Ephraim are the Pharisees, Manasseh the Sadducees and Judah the Essenes, the authors of this text. This alone is sufficient reason to identify the residents of Qumran with the Essenes.

Predestination

Shortly after the discovery of the Scrolls Prof. Gershom Scholem told young David Flusser that he was not sure about the identification of their owners. Flusser retorted with one word: 'predestination' and Scholem said 'this is enough'.[3] Josephus tells us that the Essenes adhered to predestination. They were not only the sole upholders of predestination, they were also the first in world history. Most probably they bequeathed it to Christianity, through St Paul, St Augustine and the reformation leaders – mainly Calvin (Broshi 2001).

The cemetery

East of the Qumran compound lies a huge cemetery with some 1,200 graves (Eshel *et al.* 2000). Almost all the skeletons excavated are male. The few women and children that were found buried in a different manner – in east–west orientation (the men are oriented north–south) – J. Zias has shown convincingly to be recent Bedouin, typically Palestinian Moslems who bury their dead facing Mecca, in an east–west orientation (Zias 2000). These seven arguments form the basis for asserting that Qumran was an Essene monastery. In the following we discuss schematically eleven other proposals, some based on the texts and some based on the archaeology of Qumran.

Christians

Several scholars in the past half-century have suggested that the residents of Qumran were Christian, but there are significant differences between their theories. R. Eisenman is of the opinion that the Teacher of Righteousness is James the Less (Eisenman 1998). According to Barbara Thiering, John the Baptist was the Teacher of Righteousness and Jesus the Evil Priest (Thiering 1992). J.L. Teicher was of the opinion that the Qumranites belonged to the Jewish-Christian sect of the Ebionites (Teicher 1951). There are many reasons to repudiate these theories, the most important of which is chronological: both paleographical and physical evidence (i.e. carbon dating) place the principal Scrolls much earlier than the entrance of Christianity.

Forgery

This is an absurd and invidious idea. Is it really reasonable to assume that such a large group of distinguished scholars would produce such fakes? The author of this accusation, Prof. Solomon Zeitlin, published a series of vitriolic attacks on the Dead Sea scholarship of that period using words such as 'falsification', 'fiction' and 'hoax' (Zeitlin 1952). This 'theory' does not deserve long scrutiny; again both paleography and radiocarbon tests have shown that the Scrolls are some 2,000 years old.

Pharisees

As every possible and impossible candidate was proposed for the residents of Qumran and the owners of the Scrolls, the Pharisees' candidacy was also forwarded (Rabin 1957). As noted earlier, the Nahum Commentary calls the Pharisees by a code name Ephraim, quite distinct from the Essenes who are called Judah. In other scrolls the Pharisees are alluded to by the derogatory appellation 'Seekers after Smooth Things'. The important polemic text Miqtsat Maasei ha-Torah ascribes to their adversaries laws that later talmudic sources ascribe to their predecessors, undoubtedly the Pharisees (Baumgarten 2000).

Qaraites

As an alternative to the forgery claim, Solomon Zeitlin suggested that the book known as the Zadokite Fragments (a.k.a. the Damascus Document) belongs to this medieval sect (Zeitlin 1952). This is impossible, if only for chronological reasons. There is a sizable gap of at least seven or eight centuries between the time that Qumran exemplars were copied (of which Zeitlin did not know at the time), let alone composed, and the rise of Qaraism. Indeed there are undeniable similarities between the Scrolls and the Qaraites into the Middle Ages. A more likely possibility is that the Essene manuscripts found in Qumran in the ninth century had a marked influence on the Qaraite community in Jerusalem (Astern 2000: 462–465).

Sadducees

The Sadducees have also been suggested as candidates (North 1955). As noted earlier, the Sadducees are referred to in the Qumran Commentaries as a distinct group under the code name Manasseh. There are additional considerations to refute the identification of the Sadducees with the Qumranites. The Sadducees as described by Josephus were an aristocratic party (*Ant.* 18,16), which stands in sharp contrast to the Scrolls' theology which elevated poverty – the first time in history – to a level of a desired value. The Sadducees denied the existence of angels (Acts 23:8) while angels play in the Scrolls a significant role (Mach 2000: 24–27). The Sadducees did not believe in resurrection (Luke 29:27–38) in contradistinction to the Qumran texts (Nickelsburg 2000: 764–767).

The above-mentioned Miqtsat Maasei ha-Torah deals with some twenty halakhot (religious rules) on which the author disagrees with his unnamed opponents. Two or three of the letter's halakhot agree with Sadducean halakhot mentioned in the Talmud. This does not make Qumran Sadducean. Three out of twenty are not enough for such an identification; moreover, different schools do not have to disagree on 100 percent of the laws (Schiffman

2002: 170). However it is quite likely, though far from certain, that the Essene movement started in a split among the Sadducees.

Zealots

Two Oxford dons suggested independently of one another that the Scrolls belonged to the First Jewish Revolt and that the Qumranites were none other than the Zealots – anti-Roman revolutionaries (Driver 1965; Roth 1958). Again, paleographic and radiocarbon evidence make that theory untenable.

Six of the seven theories discussed above are based on textual material (the first, the Essene position, takes into consideration both the texts and the archaeological remains). The following discussion addresses four theories that rely primarily on archaeology.

An agricultural establishment

Most of the theories above, with the exception of the Essene theory, have a single proponent. Half a dozen scholars have proposed that the Qumran complex represents an agricultural school. Each proponent has his own version but most share two things in common: the compound was a villa rustica (or manor house); and balsam, the most valuable product of Palestinian agriculture, was an integral component for the economic life of the compound. The villa theory has difficulties. Why should one wish to live in this area with its harsh climate and lack of water? The compound itself is jerrybuilt, lacks decorations, is devoid of all the amenities required of a villa rustica, has plain vessels and has no bedrooms (Magness 1994: 397–419).

The growing of balsam in the area also has its difficulties. The Donceels believe the grove was on the triangular terrace south of the Qumran compound. This area lacks any irrigation installations, making this unlikely. Balsam cannot survive in this dry region (with evaporation up to 2,600 mm annually) without irrigation. In addition, what the Donceels took to be 'flower-pots' meant for the balsam bushes are rather Iron Age silos. Hirschfeld, in turn, places the balsam groves in the nearby oasis of Ein Feshkha. This is also implausible, since the springs of this place are too salty for balsam and practically for almost any cultivated plant, except for date palms. Palm groves were almost certainly grown here by the Qumranites, but such groves did not need to be looked after by a compound 4,500 square meters in area (for a fuller treatment of the subject see Broshi and Eshel (forthcoming)).

A caravanserai and a commercial entrepot

A.D. Crown and his student L. Cansdale are of the opinion that Qumran lies on what was a major trade route and hence it was erected for commercial

purposes (Crown and Cansdale 1994: 24–36; 73–78). In fact no major route exists here, neither south–east nor east–west. As the water level at Qumran's heyday was 395 m below sea level the water reached the cliffs to its south and no road could have existed there – the case also for the first two-thirds of the twentieth century (Broshi 1999: 273–276).

A fort

N. Golb, who believes the scrolls originated in Jerusalem (cf. Rengstorf 1960 and Hutchesson 2000: 33) is of the opinion that the relation of the Scrolls to the Qumran compound is just accidental and the place never served as an Essene monastery. He calls Qumran a fort, part of a circle of forts surrounding Jerusalem, the best known of them Masada (Golb 1995). Likening Qumran to Masada is absurd; no archaeological evidence exists for such a circle of fortifications. Qumran is clearly not a fort: its walls are built of dry masonry with undressed ill-fitting field stones, which are too narrow (60–70 cm) to serve any defense. The entrances to the compound are undefended and its location is not where one would locate a fort.

Papyrus processing plants

This idea forwarded by S. Shapiro solves none of the problems and constitutes a problem in itself (Shapiro 1997: 91–116, 215–223). Why should such a processing plant be built so far from where the papyrus grow? And in a place that does not have a regular supply of water? The Huleh marshes are some 200 km to the north as the crow flies. If someone insisted on the production of papyrus on the shores of the Dead Sea, the long trek to bring material would have caused the papyrus to rot before arrival.

Agnostics

We have surveyed eleven theories but now turn to an important category we have dubbed the agnostics (cf. Tromf 2002: 136–139). The members of this group are generally first class savants with significant scholarly contributions to their credit (e.g. Schiffman 1975: 136; Talmon 1989: 184; Goodman 1995: 161–166). Their main argument is that the data available to us is insufficient for establishing a safe identification for the authors and owners of the Scrolls. This is a puzzling attitude in view of the 900 manuscripts comprising some 150,000 words,[4] detailed information by contemporary writers and rich, relatively well-preserved and eloquent archaeological remains. Most students of the past would count themselves lucky were they offered such a wealth of material. If the laws of evidence required by this school were adopted internationally most world prisons would be half empty.[5]

Notes

1 Sukenik reached his conclusion (in his diary entry of February 6, 1948) just two months after the purchase of the first three scrolls and their identification as Second Commonwealth manuscripts (see Yadin 1967). He published this identification in *Hidden Scrolls: First Report* (1948: 16). Two years later similar conclusions came from Brownlee (1950: 54–76) and Dupont-Sommer (1950).
2 The best introduction to Qumran is Magness (2002).
3 As told by the much lamented David Flusser.
4 We would like to thank Martin Abegg for this piece of information.
5 The best argued work against the texts as Essene (by an agnostic of course) is Goodman (2002).

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13

OPENING UP OUR VIEW

Khirbet Qumran in a regional perspective

Jürgen Zangenberg

Archaeological work on regionalism in Galilee (notably Meyers, 1975, 1977, 1985; Meyers and Strange 1981: 31–42; Meyers *et al.* 1978) has demonstrated that settlements must be understood within their regional context. Growing archaeological data provide a new basis for taking a regional approach to Khirbet Qumran and its surroundings. Contrary to the traditional characterization of Qumran as "isolated" and "unique", a view dependent on particular readings of classical literature and texts found in caves near Qumran (cf. Ullmann-Margalit 1998), the regional approach clearly indicates that Qumran was not isolated, and that its inhabitants engaged in limited, regional trade and functioned within the specialized economy of the Dead Sea region.

The scrolls themselves evoke a regional connection because of the close proximity between the site of Qumran and the caves in which the scrolls were found (e.g. de Vaux 1973: 53–57; Broshi and Eshel 1999b). Proponents of the traditional "Qumran-Essene-Hypothesis" rightly state that anyone reconstructing the site through archaeology must take the close association of site and scrolls into consideration. Yet, clear motives for the deposition of the scrolls are difficult to reconstruct and the approach of using the *contents* of the scrolls as a blueprint for the history and archaeology of Khirbet Qumran remains problematic. Multiple possibilities exist for the scrolls' deposition; a regional perspective provides clues from outside the texts in reconstructing the character of Khirbet Qumran.

The Dead Sea area as regional context for Qumran

A peculiar climate, geography and a similar economy place the southern Jordan valley with the Jericho oasis, the territory around the Dead Sea and the northern Ghor as "region" within the wider framework of Palestine (Aharoni 1979: 34–35; Walker 1993: 99; Niemi *et al.* 1997; Zangenberg 1998, 2000b). Modern constructions of the Dead Sea area in antiquity often

presume the area's barrenness, its relative distance from major centers of human habitation and its extreme climate. The Dead Sea region becomes an archetypical desert, an ideal habitat for a self-contained, isolated and ascetic community. That perception, often based on current conditions in the area, has been largely discredited (Farmer 1955; de Vaux 1973: 84–87; Zangenberg 2000b: 129–133). While certainly a "marginal environment" (MacDonald 1992: 15) with extreme living conditions, the Dead Sea region has never been a "desert" in the sense of an uninhabited and uncultivated region. Surveys demonstrate how the whole region witnessed a building boom, especially in the late Hellenistic and Early Roman period, when most of the territory came under Hasmonean control, and later when the old rivalry between Nabateans and Hasmoneans was quelled as a result of the Pax Romana (Bar-Adon 1981; Kasher 1988: 44–45, 108–125; Humbert 1994: 163–175; Zangenberg 2000b: 149–151; Hirschfeld 2000b: 142–143).

Ancient Jewish, Greek and Roman authors demonstrate the Dead Sea area's strategic importance, an increasing number of settlements and the growing interest in the region. No other area in Palestine is as often mentioned in reports, rumors and stories as the Dead Sea area whose very name goes back as early as the third century BCE (Zangenberg 2000b: 134; cf. Pompeius Trogus 36,3,6: *mare mortuum*). Despite frequent references to its untamed and inhospitable environment, ancient authors were well aware of the great riches and opportunities of the region (Zangenberg 1998; 2000b: 133–135).

The terrain surrounding the Dead Sea concentrated settlement in natural pockets, where water was available and the steep cliffs west and east of the rift valley receded and provided space for building and farming. Habitation was possible on the flat shore plain, especially at the northern and southern end of the Dead Sea and in the Lisan region, on marl terraces, particularly on the northern and southern end of the Dead Sea, and to a lesser extent on the eastern side in scattered valleys running perpendicular to the Dead Sea shore. The best places for settlement were the oases dotting the western and eastern shores, because they provided the necessary supply of water (e.g. En Feshkha, En Gedi, En Boqeq, En ez-Zara) (Röhrer-Ertl *et al.* 2000: 233–245).

Paleobotanical research has shown that vegetation in antiquity was more varied than today. Apart from tamarisks, cypresses and acacias which are resistent to drought, other species (poplars, sycamores, willows, capers, figs and oaks) are attested that need a different, more humid environment or slightly salty water. Archaeological evidence indicates that remains of the indigenous savanna and hardwood forest zones must still have existed between the first century BCE and the third century CE in the Judean hill country and on the slopes to the west of the Dead Sea. These areas were used for stationary and semi-nomadic animal husbandry, the collection of building material and, probably to a lesser extent, for collecting wood as fuel (apart from animal dung; cf. de Vaux 1973: 85; Röhrer-Ertl *et al.* 2000: 260).

Archaeological data, literary texts and papyri from the region provide ample evidence of a well-developed and highly adapted, agriculture-based economy in the late Hellenistic and Early Roman periods (de Vaux 1973: 84–86; Röhrer-Ertl *et al.* 2000: 248–261; Zangenberg 2000b: 137–142).

Economy

The backbone of the regional economy was the date palm, which is indigenous to the region and copes very well with extreme climatic conditions and the brackish water from the aquifer. Dates were cultivated on both sides of the rift valley from north of Jericho to south of Zoara (Keel and Küchler 1982: 492–497; Mishna Yebamoth 16:7 has Zoara as the "city of palms"). The Babatha archive allows reconstruction of local agriculture around two villages named Mahoz Eglatain in the district of Zoara (Broshi 1992; Cotton and Yardeni 1997: 163–165). Several types of dates are mentioned in the papyri, each occupying a particular niche within what seems to have been a sophisticated and specialized market. The papyri also indicate that around Mahoza intensive systems of irrigation sustained the large plantations (Cotton and Yardeni 1997: 215). Irrigated palm orchards were not monocultures. Since date palms filtered much salt from the water and provided shade, they offered ample opportunity to grow other crops as well. PXHev/Se 26 mentions "good barley" which might have been grown in the space between the palm trees, as were vegetables or other fruit trees like figs (de Vaux 1973: 75 on vegetable gardens near En Feshkha; on barley see Broshi 1986: 43–44). Date pits and wood fragments come from excavations on the Qumran esplanade (de Vaux 1973: 53, 73–74; Roitman 1997: 33–39); a fragmentary ostracon, an apparent draft of a deed probably mentions "figs, palms and any other kind of trees" (Yardeni 1997; contra Cross and Eshel 1997, 2000; on the discovery see Callaway 1998: 35–37).

Apart from date palms, balsam was extensively cultivated in the region and promised even higher revenues (Patrich and Arubas 1989; Crocker 1989; Gichon 1993: 396–397; Cotton and Eck 1997; Donceel-Voûte 1998; Fischer *et al.* 2002: 93–126). Galenos, for example, praised the balsam from En Gedi as surpassing any other from Palestine (*De Antidotis* 1,4).

While date palms and balsam dominated the regional economy, natural bitumen (an indigenous resource) was in constant demand, promising high revenue for low efforts and connecting the Dead Sea region to interregional trade with Egypt (Hammond 1959; de Vaux 1973: 85; Har-El 1978; MacDonald 1992: 20; Zangenberg 2000b: 135–137). Salt was also highly valued (Amar 1998).

A variety of subsidiary industries and activities using local resources clustered around dates, balsam, salt and asphalt and supplied the population with necessary goods. With few exceptions, the ropes, strings, baskets and mats found by Yadin and others in the caves west of the Dead Sea were

fabricated from local palm fibers. Remains of wood and basketry from Masada and the En Gedi cemetery provide a similar picture. Qumran also adds to it: "Objects made of wood and other vegetable substances, such as palm leaf work or wicker-work (. . .), large mats found in some of the rooms" of the settlement and mats and wooden coffins in some of the graves of Qumran (Donceel and Donceel-Voûte 1994: 14; cf. de Vaux 1973: 85). Wood was used for building roofs and sheds. Many of these goods were produced "at home", while some of them, e.g. coffins and boats, required higher specialization and were certainly made in workshops. These finds indicate that local industry used material supplied by the immediate environment, skillfully working it into all sorts of implements and serving a thriving regional market (Zangenberg 2000b: 140).

Leather items found in caves close to Qumran, as well as numerous sheep, goat and cattle bones found during de Vaux's excavations in the settlement, suggest at least some sites were engaged in animal husbandry (bones: de Vaux 1973: 12–15; leather: de Vaux 1973: 53; Cansdale 1997: 153). The wooded areas on the western plateaus, especially the Buqea, provided more suitable pasturage than the Dead Sea plain (Schulz 1960: 65–69; de Vaux 1973: 85; Stager 1975; Cross 1993; Röhrer-Ertl *et al.* 2000: 238–239). The vulnerable vegetation made it necessary that sheep and goats were moved around over a larger area. Therefore, at least some of the caves in the cliffs might have been used by herdsmen for seasonal habitation (on cave habitation see Walker and Eisenman 1992; Walker 1993; Broshi and Eshel 1999a, 1999b; Patrich 2000 with references to earlier, still unpublished work). Cattle were usually kept closer to home. Some of the animals were slaughtered and consumed on the premises, while others were sold for income.

Metal tools like hoes, knives, sickle blades, pruning hooks and sheep-shearing scissors found in Qumran fit into the specific agricultural setting of the Dead Sea area. None of them, including the "famous" mattock from 11Q differ notably from tools that were in use throughout the Roman period (Donceel and Donceel-Voûte 1994: 13; Zangenberg 2000b: 140–141; cf. the photographs in Roitman 1997: 33–34 [English section] and 31–35 [Hebrew section]). A small workshop in Qumran might have contained a furnace for producing and repairing metal tools (Locus 125, cf. Cansdale 1997: 152–153).

Two sites with strong royal connections flanked the most fertile sections of the western Dead Sea shore: En Gedi and Jericho (Zangenberg 2000b: 138). Some of the territory between these centers probably also belonged to the crown. If this is true, Qumran would have occupied a prominent position. It was the most complex structure between Jericho and En Gedi, dominating the southern end of the Jericho plain (Walker 1993: 98ff.) and supplying it with items and services necessary for administering and working a large agricultural region (Hirschfeld 2000a: 139–143; Eisenman 2000). Is it a coincidence that Jericho and En Gedi are mentioned in two ostraca found

in Qumran (cf. Callaway 1999)? Given the high profits to be gained from balsam and date production and the traffic between Jericho and En Gedi, it is unlikely that Qumran was inhabited by a community seeking a quiet and secluded life. Anybody who inhabited Qumran is more likely to have been a part of this social and economic network than separate from it (Davies 1988: 207; 1994: 135–138).

Moreover, by its very specialization, the economy in the Dead Sea region in general (Qumran in particular) was *not* self-sufficient. While the region offered products that were hardly available anywhere else in the region and in high demand even in areas outside Palestine, it lacked others like oil and wine that were considered an integral part of any diet in antiquity (Broshi 1986; Dar 1995). Thus, economic contacts were essential for the survival of the region. The important question to ask is: Is this situation reflected in Qumran?

Roads and harbors

Qumran's "isolation" is often presumed based on its lack of accessibility. The geographical "isolation" of the settlement, such proponents claim, has its equivalent in the sectarian mindset of its inhabitants. "Isolation" in terms of a location in a supposedly remote area in the "desert" is deliberate and a direct result of the sectarian and non-conformist stance of its inhabitants (most emphatically Broshi 1998, 1999). When Crown and Cansdale argued that Qumran was accessible and connected with neighboring settlements and served as an entrepot, custom house and trading post (Crown and Cansdale 1994; Cansdale 1997: 114–124), Broshi rejected this claim, stating:

> No major roads passed by Qumran, let alone it being situated at a crossroads. Only narrow trails connected Qumran to the rest of the world. No north–south route passed by it and east–west routes were *at considerable distance* to its north and south.
>
> (Broshi 1999: 273, my emphasis)

Broshi's critique, however, no doubt influenced by his assertion that Qumran was "an Essene monastery" (Broshi 1998, 1999: 275), needs qualification.

Broshi rightly notes that no major routes directly linked up with Qumran. Apart from the difficult terrain, no settlements around the Dead Sea (apart from En Gedi) were large enough to justify a wide, Roman-style road around the Sea. Yet, in Jericho anybody coming from Qumran could connect to an important trans-regional route that connected Jerusalem via Jericho, Livias (Tell er-Rame) and Esbus (Hesban) with Philadelphia (Amman) (Piccirillo 1987, 1998). Surveys have found footpaths leading west and north from Qumran (Roitman 1997: 24–25 [English section]; Broshi and Eshel 1999b: 339–340; Patrich 2000: 726). Other surveys clearly demonstrate that the

marl terrace around Qumran was connected by tracks to settlements further south, like Khirbet Mazin and En el-Ghuweir (Walker and Eisenman 1992; Walker 1993; Eisenman 2000). Even though no survey has yet shown that the path leading north from Qumran eventually linked up with the Jericho–Livias road (but see Golb 1994: 53), any track suitable for donkeys would ensure sufficient accessibility to the settlement. Thus, Qumran was not inaccessible on land.

Broshi also points out that the water level of the Dead Sea was not low enough to provide room for a road along the western shore of the Dead Sea. Ironically, to prove his point, he mentions three sites that served as *harbors* in Hellenistic and Roman Times: Rujm el-Bahr (Maaganit ha-Melah) at the northern end of the Sea, Qasr el-Yahud (Khirbet Mazin) and En Gedi, drawing our attention to another element in a sophisticated local traffic network: harbors. Wherever possible, transportation by boat was much more convenient than overland transport, as amply attested by the presence of numerous harbors: Rujm el-Bahr, attested by architecture (Schneller 1963; Schult 1966: 139–144; Bar-Adon 1977: 3–14, 4*–5*; Keel and Küchler 1982: 471; Hadas 1993: 44; Zangenberg 2000b: 144–145); Khirbet Mazin/Qasr el-Yahud, suggested by architecture (Stutchbury and Nicholl 1962/3; Bar-Adon 1977: 18–29, 5*; Netzer 1990: 42–43; Hadas 1993: 46; Zangenberg 2000b: 146); En Gedi, attested by stone anchors (Hadas 1992, 1993: 47–49; Zangenberg 2000b: 146); Mahoza, attested by papyri (Cotton and Greenfield 1995; Cotton and Yardeni 1997: 163–165); and Ez-Zara/Callirhoe, attested by architecture and literary texts (Donner 1963: 79–82; Schult 1966: 144–148; Strobel 1966; Strobel and Clamer 1986; Clamer 1986, 1997; Lichtenberger 1999: 48–50; Zangenberg 2000b: 145). Masada (Hadas 1993: 45; Zangenberg 2000b: 146) and En Boqeq (Gichon 1993; Fischer *et al.* 2002) probably had some kind of mooring installation. No anchorage has been found at Qumran or En Feshkha yet, but both sites could be reached from Rujm el-Bahr in less than two hours. Thus, all sites on the Dead Sea could be reached by boat, and the Dead Sea served as a significant substitute for any built road (Nissenbaum 1991; Cansdale 1997: 114–124; Zangenberg 2000b: 144–148).

Clearly, a complex network of local and regional transportation emerges that connects all inhabited areas around the Dead Sea with each other *and* the whole region with the Judean hill country to the west and Peraea and the Decapolis to the east. The entire region, not only Qumran, formed a compartmentalized, but closely connected *local network* of pockets of habitation that relied upon specialized agriculture and easy connections provided by the Dead Sea. Accessibility does not in itself speak against a use of the settlement by sectarians, but, again, it is hard to conceive how any group could have chosen this particular site if it really intended to disconnect itself from the outside world. A look at the pottery assemblage strengthens the point.

Pots and pans

A thorough assessment of the Qumran pottery assemblage is still hampered by the incompleteness of published data. Despite this fact, the profile of the pottery has always played a major role in the assessment of the character of its inhabitants. Against the traditional claim that the ceramic assemblage of Qumran was "suggestive of a deliberate and selective policy of isolation on the part of its inhabitants" (Magness 1994: 46; cf. Strange and Strange 2001: 55) and that the "plainness of the pottery and absence of fine wares lends an air of austerity to the corpus which contrasts sharply with contemporary assemblages from Jericho, Jerusalem and Herodion" (Magness 1994: 46; cf. Broshi 1998: 23–24; cf. now Magness 2002: 73–104), others like Donceel and Donceel-Voûte (cf. Cansdale 1997: 156) have argued that no type of pottery is completely absent from Qumran, including: mold made lamps (Donceel and Donceel-Voûte 1994: 6–7, fig. 1; Kapera 1996: 103; Donceel and Donceel-Voûte 1998); Eastern Terra Sigillata A ("less than a dozen" fragments according to Donceel and Donceel-Voûte 1994: 10; cf. Magness 1998b: 62); "Pseudo-Nabatean" ware (Donceel and Donceel-Voûte 1994: 10); and decorated common ware (Bar-Nathan 1981: 57). New excavations in Qumran by the Israel Antiquities Authority have substantiated this position and refute the view that the ceramic profile of Qumran was a result of the sectarian theology or way of life of its inhabitants (Magen and Peleg forthcoming). The pottery profile from Qumran can much better be understood as a particular type of regionalism, the result of regional manufacturing traditions, regional trade and regional resources (already suggested by Magness [1998b: 62–67; 2002: 73–79], but never reconciled with her primary assertion that the assemblage is "sectarian" [Magness 1998b: esp. 153–183; 2000]).

Three features of pottery manufacture and trade demonstrate that Qumran was not isolated, but engaged in local trade across the Dead Sea to the extent that even ethnic boundaries were crossed:

1 *Local* workshops supplied the surrounding "market(s)" on the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea, including the users of the caves in the vicinity of Qumran, the inhabitants of En Feshkha, En el-Ghuweir, Rujm el-Bahr and others with common ware. Lacking detailed provenance analyses, it presently is still impossible to say if sites as far south as En Gedi or on the east coast were supplied with pottery made of the same clay deposits as the Qumran ware. But "clay strata around the site and upstream from the Wadi Qumran" at least show that raw materials were readily available locally (Donceel and Donceel-Voûte 1994: 10; cf. already de Vaux 1973: 16, 85–86 [on fuel]; contrary to Yellin *et al.* 2001: 73; Broshi 1998: 25). Typological peculiarities in the Qumran assemblage, such as the imitation of certain fine ware types, variations in drip or slip decoration and the apparent lack or frequency of certain vessel types, are characteristics of a local pottery

tradition on the northwestern Dead Sea shore area. Magness points out that in the course of time this local tradition assimilated into the surrounding patterns (Magness 1998a: 59–60). Such developments in the production of specific types reflect the history of this particular local pottery tradition and are as such not unusual (Bar-Nathan 1981: 69; 2002: 195–196, 203–204).

2 *Regional* trade developed in at least two identifiable directions. First, trade across the Dead Sea is attested by the presence of "cream ware", documenting that Nabatean trade interest extended across the Dead Sea and found customers there (Magness 1994: 44–45; cf. 'Amr 1987: 7–10; Clamer 1997: 73–79). Second, trade with Jerusalem is indicated by common ware found in Qumran which was made with Jerusalem clay (Yellin *et al.* 2001; cf. Magness 1994: 40 fn. 1; Gunneweg and Balla 2001). Apparently, the local workshops in Qumran (or Qumran/Jericho) did not possess a monopoly on the production of common ware for the surrounding region. A considerable amount of common ware found at Qumran and el-Ghuweir shows a Jerusalem clay composition and must have come from there (cf. Gibson 1984). The data, though small and random, demonstrate that kilns in Qumran (or Qumran/Jericho) supplied only part of a local market, the rest coming from non-Qumranic wares. The presence of two kilns in Qumran running "for a century or a century and a half" (Broshi 1998: 24–25) and the storage of large numbers of locally produced vessels in the "pantry" apparently for sale (Donceel and Donceel-Voûte 1994: 10 fn. 32; Cansdale 1997: 154–155 as opposed to de Vaux 1973: 12) attest that local production *was* effective and economical. Nevertheless, as Qumran is only 25 km away from Jerusalem, it seems conceivable that the site and its surroundings in fact were regularly supplied from Jerusalem's manufacturing centers, leaving room only for supplementary local production in Qumran and Jericho.[1]

"Imports" from Jerusalem are not confined to pottery. Almost 200 pieces of different examples of stone ware found in Qumran and an additional 74 from En Feshkha come from outside, since there is no soft limestone in the Qumran area to be worked into such objects. The most likely source of these vessels is Jerusalem (Magen 1994; Donceel and Donceel-Voûte 1994: 10–13; Cansdale 1997: 157–158; Amit *et al.* 2000a, 2000b). In addition, Jerusalem is the most likely place of origin for the "Pseudo-Nabatean" ware found in Qumran (Bar-Nathan 1981: 91–92; Pearlman *et al.* 1986; Donceel and Donceel-Voûte 1994: 10).

Thus, both relatively inexpensive goods like common ware (*including* its contents, of course) *and* goods of higher value, which generally indicate higher-class customers (notably the "Pseudo-Nabatean" ware and large stone craters, whose closest parallels are found in the Herodian quarter [see de Vaux 1973: pl. XXXIV; Donceel and Donceel-Voûte 1994: 11–12]), originated in Jerusalem. This indicates trade between the Qumran area and Jerusalem going beyond the exchange of basic goods. *These* facts (and not Josephus'

remarks on Essenes in Jerusalem) provide the appropriate context for the presence of "Qumranite" ceramics in Jerusalem. There is no reason to reduce the contacts between Jerusalem and Qumran only to the "Essene community" (contra the circular argument in Yellin *et al.* 2001: 76). Were these vessels, which were from the same clay and manufactured by the same workshops as most of the common ware in Jerusalem, exclusively produced and used by Essenes? Or is it conceivable that Essenes with their apparent strict purity regulations bought their utensils from the same potters as everybody else? Traditional parameters based on religious differences are too narrow to explain the archaeological record of Khirbet Qumran.

3 Besides local and regional spheres of pottery manufacture and economic activity, there is ample evidence for segments of *trade contacts that transcend the local/regional range*. Some Eastern Sigillata A, most likely produced in Syria, appears in Palestine during the time of Herod and attests to the availability and use of Levantine goods of high quality at Qumran (Gunneweg *et al.* 1983; Gunneweg 1987; Hayes 1997: 52–59; Magness 1998a: 56 fn. 14; 1998b: 62). The typology of glass found at Qumran "indicated imports from Italy with both bottle shapes and a type of surface ornamentation that match the local glass of Herculaneum, near Pompeii" (Fontaine in Donceel-Voûte 1994: 28–29; Donceel and Donceel-Voûte 1994: 7–8; Kapera 1996: 101; Cansdale 1997: 158–159; Wouters *et al.* 2002). Other indicators of trade, like amphorae, are missing in Qumran or have as yet remained unnoticed or unpublished (Magness 1998a: 56; 1998b: 62). In spite of the often poor information available on the stratigraphic context of these finds, one should not relegate these goods only to a post-destruction phase nor marginalize them. There is no archaeological reason to claim they belonged to the community, not to individuals (cf. Kapera 1996: 111–112). The evidence for local glass production in Qumran adds an interesting element to this picture (Donceel and Donceel-Voûte 1994: 8), as it suggests that the site was not only engaged in the production of common pottery, but at times also supplied more elaborate goods that required complex technological skills and constant import of raw materials.

In sum: new data and a new view to published material leave little doubt that Qumran was an "open site" (Donceel and Donceel-Voûte 1994: 9). Qumran's pottery profile does not notably differ from other sites whose ceramic repertoire also consists of a majority of locally produced common ware with limited circulation, a smaller number of regional types that seem to have been used beyond the local area and an often quite limited range of meta-regional types (cf. Fellmann Brogli 1996: 238–240 for late antique Petra; Magness 1993 for late antique Jerusalem). Certainly, the "openness" of Qumran does not mean it must show an *identical* pottery profile to Jerusalem, Jericho or Herodion (Fassbeck 2000: 118–125). It is more

important that Qumran pottery is not *different* enough to isolate it from the region on religious grounds. Masada, Jericho, the Herodian Quarter of Jerusalem and Herodion served different purposes and were inhabited by different people, but apart from a more varied corpus of "imported" wares, most of the common ware at these sites is the same as in Qumran. The similarity of their pottery profile is even more pronounced when we compare Qumran with rural sites such as En Feshkha, En el-Ghuweir or Rujm el-Bahr. The composition of these assemblages (especially regarding the lack of fine wares) is not a result of their common Essene character, but of their common position within regional ceramic traditions and the regional settlement network operating within a compartmentalized local economy.

Qumran and the Essenes

Pliny the Elder places the Essenes on the Western Shore of the Dead Sea: *ab occidente litora Esseni fugiunt usque qua nocent . . . infra hos Engada oppidum fuit* (*Naturalis Historia* 5,73), a phrase that has caused no little confusion and debate. While there is no reason to doubt that Essenes might indeed have lived where Pliny places them with his famous phrase *infra hos Engada*, there is no compelling reason to interpret Qumran or any other single site as their central settlement.[2] Pliny does not say the Essenes lived in *one particular* place like Qumran, but he names a *region*, the western shore of the Dead Sea where other sites may qualify for being "Essene". Furthermore, Pliny does *not* say that *only* Essenes lived in this region. They might well have existed in the same area with other people, yet remained separate in their habits and beliefs. No matter how the often conflicting information from the classical sources can be interpreted, the fundamental problem is that the identity of a religiously defined group of Judaism at that early time is hard to trace *archaeologically* – a fact that often compromises our attempts to bring literary and archaeological data to converge. What Pliny says about the distinctive Essene way of life (agriculture, celibacy, novices) does not help to identify them archaeologically in the material record (contra Strange and Strange 2001), especially now since many of the traditional "Essene diagnostics" like the cemetery have become less convincing (Zangenberg 1999, 2000a, 2002: 94–286). Martin Goodman's well-argued demurrer, that "the logical response of scholars to the chance discovery of texts in the Judean desert should not have been to try to fit the information from them into what was already known through the texts preserved by Jews and Christians by regular copying since antiquity", still carries much weight indeed (Goodman 1995: 165; cf. Davies 1995). The archaeology of Qumran cannot refine "aspects of Judaism previously unknown" any further than by pointing out that the site was certainly inhabited by Jews.

We have to face the paradoxical situation that we can "trust" Pliny *and* still may not be able to detect Essenes physically. Proponents of the

traditional theory presume a genetic relation between site and scrolls, both allegedly going back to the same group of people. Our regional approach makes the genetic relationship problematic. Granted, the textual finds from Qumran represent an intentional collection of texts with a distinct theological and literary profile (Dimant 1995). Yet, the archaeological data from Qumran neither contradict nor affirm Dimant's claims and cannot help determine which of the scrolls were Essene in accordance with Josephus and Pliny and which were not. The evident correlations between many texts found in the caves might be best explained as a "library". Yet the corpus does not need to have been written by the inhabitants of Qumran. Archaeologically, it is equally impossible to confirm that all scrolls were in fact deposited in caves 1–11 at one and the same time. Cave 4 was found pillaged by bedouins beyond any possibility to reconstruct a stratigraphy and could well have contained texts that were not part of the cache of religious documents (cf. the texts discussed in Eshel 2001); cave 7 stands out by its large number of fragmented Greek manuscripts; and 3Q might have contained two separate caches of text deposits (3Q 15 and the rest). The lack of conclusive chronological data from the cave material in general (which documents a time *range* of activity, not a single event) should caution us against reconstructing the specific history of what led to the deposition of the scrolls and who performed this job.

If the religious texts were not written at Qumran, where did they come from? Jerusalem may still be an option (as Rengstorf and Golb proposed), but in-depth analysis of this theory requires a separate discussion. No matter how we decide to answer the question of how the scrolls ended up in the caves, the proximity of scrolls and site should not obscure the factors that tie the site to the region and to a complex network of trade and agriculture (Davies 1994: 139). Any theory about the function and the character of the inhabitants of Khirbet Qumran must address the following: the site was not isolated and its inhabitants were engaged in agriculture, regional trade and local pottery manufacture.

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Notes

1 Note that the pottery production center at Kfar Hananya supplied both Sepphoris (27 km away) and Hammat Tiberias (23 km away). These distances might indicate the average range of pottery merchants marketing their products (Adan-Bayewitz 1993: 219).

2 Contra Hirschfeld (2000a: 144–150), who denies that Qumran was the Essene center and instead proposes a cluster of square stone huts in En Gedi as an Essene settlement. While Hirschfeld is correct in challenging the Essene identity of Qumran, his archaeological arguments in favor of En Gedi are weak (cf. Amit and Magness 2000; their attempt to defend the traditional view on Qumran, however, is equally unconvincing, cf. Hirschfeld's reply in 2000c). There are no features at En Gedi that can be called "Essene", especially not on the basis of the size of the houses. As Zeitler (1990) shows, such simple square houses are also attested in first-century BCE Petra and therefore cannot be per se communitarian or ascetic. Instead, the cluster of huts in En Gedi very likely was inhabited by people of low status who worked in the oasis.

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