theological solution has been to seek a point within the canon—usually Jesus, sometimes Paul—from which to develop a more acceptable Christian view of Israel and Judaism. All share a commitment (perhaps more of a hope) that true Christianity must be entirely free of anti-Semitism. Authentic Christianity cannot serve to justify later anti-Semitism. Instead it must allow for the full religious autonomy and authenticity of Judaism alongside Christianity. This commitment has taken shape in efforts to reinterpret various New Testament texts so as to demonstrate that traditional interpretations, not just within classical Western Christianity but among modern biblical scholars as well, are profoundly mistaken. Obviously this is an enormously difficult task. At the very least, assumptions about the meaning of New Testament texts have been challenged, and it has been demonstrated that new approaches inevitably produce new meanings.

Whatever the long-term theological results of these efforts—and we should not forget that the real issue for most of these scholars is theological—we must remember that the hermeneutical problems are fundamentally the same whether we are dealing with Christian or pagan texts. The experience of World War II has engendered a new appreciation of how these texts have influenced subsequent Western history and has caused scholars to return to the texts themselves with a new set of questions.

**PART II**

Judaism and Judaizing

Among Gentiles

Attractions and Reactions

Whenever we see a man baiting between two faiths, we are in the habit of saying, "He is not a Jew, he is only acting the part." But when he adopts the attitude of mind of the man who has been baptized and has made his choice, then he both is a Jew in fact and is also called one.

Epicurus, *Diog. 19.10*

The first known contacts between Greeks and Jews date back as far as the sixth century B.C.E., when refugees from the Babylonian conquest of Judea settled in Sepharad (Sardis) in Asia Minor, then known as Lydia. The first literary evidence does not appear until more than two hundred and fifty years later, still some three hundred years before the birth of Christianity.

For reasons quite independent of the Christian movement, relations between Jews and Gentiles reached their nadir in the one hundred years between the death of Jesus (30 C.E.) and the final Jewish revolt against Rome (132-135 C.E.). This is also the period during which Christian antipathy toward Judaism moved toward their classic formulation. Students of early Christianity, many of whom are unfamiliar with pagan-Jewish relations in preceding centuries, have tended not only to suppose that the circumstances of the first century prevailed in earlier times, but to project them onto later times as well.

Students of Christian anti-Judaism have given little attention to pagan
attitudes in the Hellenistic era (the third through first centuries B.C.E.). It has been customary to assume that this earlier period differs little from the first century C.E., and since many of these same students have been unfamiliar with the background and setting of the encounter between Judaism and Greco-Roman civilization, they have tended to take certain famous authors—Cicero, Apion, Tacitus, Seneca, and Juvenal—as typical for the period as a whole. Consequently the study of pagan views of Judaism is commonly thought of as tantamount to the study of ancient anti-Semitism.

Only on the basis of this assumption is it possible to contend that early Christian attitudes toward Judaism were influenced negatively by the pagan environment. Only so is it possible to account for such a statement, written in response to Ruerer, as "Antiquity, on the whole, disliked Jews." This remark does a disservice to its intended apologetic aim and is untrue to the facts. For all of this, however, it reflects a widespread point of view among scholars whose primary focus is early Christianity. More recently, J. N. Sweeney, in *The Roots of Pagan Anti-Semitism in the Ancient World*, defines the subject as "anti-Semitism" and treats non-conforming evidence only briefly in a final chapter entitled "Diversity of opinions regarding Jews."

The following chapters will offer a different hypothesis regarding the period most directly relevant to early Christianity, the first century C.E. This hypothesis, which has its origins with the Israeli scholars, M. Stern and Shimon Appelbaum, has directly challenged the inherited view of this century as a time of unprecedented and unmitigated animosity toward Jews and Judaism. Their work has shown that there existed among many Greeks and Romans of this period a remarkable degree of sympathy for Judaism. The relevance of this work for students of early Christianity can no longer go unnoticed.

We will divide the topic along chronological lines, paying attention to geographical and cultural variations along the way. The first period reaches from the late fourth century to the mid-first century B.C.E., that is, the Hellenistic era. The second era begins with the arrival of Rome as the new political force and ends around 140 C.E. This period is punctuated by a series of wars and wars involving Jews and pagans in Alexandria,
The Greek and Roman Encounter with Judaism *Philosophy and Politics*

**The Hellenistic Era (c. 300 B.C.E.)**

In the Greco-Roman world, the earliest and most abiding view of the Jews was as a nation of philosophers. Theophrastus (c. 300 B.C.E.), Megasthenes (c. 300 B.C.E.), Clearchus of Soli (c. 300 B.C.E.), Hermippus of Smyrna (c. 200 B.C.E.), and Occles Lucasus (second century B.C.E.) all associate Judaism with the traditions of ancient philosophy. A similar image appears among Hellenistic ethnographers. Herodotus of Abdera (c. 300 B.C.E.) as well as numerous authors cited by Josephus in his *Against Apion* indicate a strong and appreciative interest in Jewish history and culture throughout the Hellenistic period. In short, there is considerable evidence to substantiate Martin Hengel's observation that "down to Posidonius (c. 50 B.C.E.) . . . the authors Greek witnesses, for all their variety, present a relatively uniform picture: they portray the Jews as a people of philosophers."  

Beyond these authors, mention must be made of various other writers on Jewish history and culture who are known only by name—for example, Hieronymus of Caria, Xenophon, Polybius, Timarchus, and Agatharchides of Cnidus. Undoubtedly the most significant of these was Alexander Polyhistor, whose work *On the Jews*, preserved in Eusebius's *Praeparatio Evangelica*, was an anthology of Jewish Hellenistic writings.

**Palestine**

During the period of Seleucid control in Palestine, under Antiochus IV Epiphanes and the successful Jewish revolt under the Maccabees (c. 168–
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(40 B.C.E.), the tradition of good relations was interrupted. Nonetheless, the traditional view that Antiochus' invasion of Jerusalem was prompted by his own anti-Semitic sentiments has been called into question. Although it seems almost certain that Antiochus himself was not motivated by anything but political factors, there is evidence to suggest that these conflicts mark the beginnings of pagan anti-Semitism. Diodorus of Sicily portrays certain advisors of the later Antiochus VII Sidetes as urging the king to punish the Jews for their "misanthropic and impious customs." Although Antiochus rejects their advice, the speech of the advisors reads like a script for much of the subsequent anti-Semitism in Greek and Latin authors. The specific anti-Semitic accusations in the speeches are not unrelated to the accounts of the earlier Hellenistic ethnographers, Hecataeus in particular, following the conventions of ancient historiography and ethnography, had noted certain distinctive and peculiar elements of Jewish culture, including a way of life he described as "somewhat unsocial and hostile to foreigners." As I have argued elsewhere, such comments presuppose no negative judgment whatsoever and must be read as part of Hecataeus' overall presentation of Moses' legislation as a political and religious utopia. But when century later arose between Jewish revolutionaries and various political and military opponents, these originally disinterested observations served as the starting point for unmistakably anti-Semitic statements.

There is no better illustration of this transformation than the many pagan stories about the Jews' departure from Egypt under Moses. Versions which in Hecataeus and even later writers like Strabo are reported in a straightforward and noncondemnatory fashion are appropriated by others—Aphi, Lysimachus, the advisor of Antiochus VII, and Tacitus—to vilify the Jews by depicting their ignominious origins as polluted Egyptian exile.

Apart from this period of Jewish-Seleucid conflict in the mid-second century B.C.E., there is little information on pagan views of Judaism in Palestine before the Roman occupation. The sole exceptions are Masses of Patar (C. 200 B.C.E.) and Pseudo-Dionysius (C. 100 B.C.E.). Maneanus, who is the first to recount the story that the Jews worshipped the head of an ox in the Jerusalem temple, reports this libel in the context of a military struggle between the Jews and the Idumeans—a typical occasion for the

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invention or transmission of slanderous about one's enemy. Poseidonius remains a shadowy figure, although much has been written about him. Some are inclined to credit Josephus' words about "the author who supplied him [Antiochus] with his materials, I mean Poseidonius and Malos" and to conclude that he was unfriendly towards Judaism. Others have argued that because of the imprecision of Josephus' reference as well as the more general difficulty of ascertaining Poseidonius' views on any matter, "we must pronounce a non loco on the question of Poseidonius' real views on the Jews and their religion." In fact, there is no text anywhere that can be taken as reflecting Poseidonius' knowledge or opinion of Judaism.

Rome

The Macabean struggle marks the beginning of official dealings between Rome and Judea as the Jewish leaders sought and found support for their cause in Rome. From this point onward, Roman attitudes toward Judaism flow in three separate channels: (1) the official policy of the Roman government; (2) the views of Roman literati; and (3) the popular attitudes in Rome and other cities and towns of the Empire.

(1) Recent studies have indicated that official Roman policy toward Judaism was laid down as early as the mid-second century B.C.E. and continued in effect, with occasional exceptions, until the early fifth century C.E. This policy applied everywhere in the Empire. Its basic premise was the right of Jews to live according to their ancestral customs. It gave them the privilege of making annual donations to the temple in Jerusalem, of settling most disputes within the community, and of freedom from civic obligations on the Sabbath. It did not, as a matter of course, grant them citizenship. In return, the community was expected to maintain its own internal order and not to engage in proselytism among non-Jews.

(2) It has been customary to assert that Roman literary circles were uniformly hostile toward Jews and Judaism. In large part this is due to the writings of Cicero. Cicero's unfriendly remarks and the incorrect assumption that they remained normative for later times have been the point of departure for surveying later Roman views of Judaism. The case of Cicero's contemporary Varro (C. 50 B.C.E.) is instructive. In his work on ancient religious customs, Varro sought to identify the god
of the Jews with Jupiter and praised the Jewish cult for its prohibition of images. In his effort to fit the Jewish deity into the pagan pantheon, he is but one among many—pagans and Jews—to use the technique of theokratia, that is, the identification of different national deities as a single, universal god.

3 What little evidence there is for popular attitudes toward Judaism suggests that some felt an attraction to Judaism and showed a willingness to embrace certain Jewish practices. This pattern of Judaism emerges strongly during the Empire and will play an important role in Christianity.

Egypt
In many respects, the reception of Judaism in Ptolemaic Egypt is reminiscent of Hellenistic Palestine and Syria. Jewish settlers and mercenaries figured prominently in the affairs of the early Ptolemies, particularly during the reign of Ptolemy Philometer (181–145 B.C.E.). From that time onward, the ambiguities and potential dangers of this involvement became increasingly apparent in the internal dynastic struggles of the Ptolemies and later still with the intervention of Rome. For by making friends with one side, the Jewish mercenaries automatically made enemies of the other. In particular, the Greek population seems to have resented the role played by Jewish military advisors. This resentment exploded into violence when the Jews of Alexandria later placed their full weight behind the Romans.

There is general agreement, however, that in Egypt “during the whole Hellenistic period anti-Semitism does not pass beyond the limits of the literary.” Simply put, anti-Semitism is a minor theme. Nonetheless, the sudden turn of events in the 30s of the first century B.C.E. was not entirely without antecedent causes. The much-debated texts attributed by Josephus to Manetho, a Greco-Egyptian priest of high standing in early Ptolemaic Egypt (c. 300 B.C.E.), are relevant here. Whether these texts are authentic or later fabrications, their hostile version of the Jewish exodus from Egypt demonstrates the potential for an anti-Semitism whose form and roots are religious as well as political. In any case, whether the sentiments attributed to Manetho go back to his time or were created at a later date, this literary expression of hostility toward Judaism could have exercised little influence outside priestly circles. Only in the early

decades of the first century B.C.E., with important public figures like Lysimachus, Chaeremon, and Apion does it begin to exert a broader influence. Beyond this, tensions between Jews and Gentiles in Egypt before the arrival of Christianity provide the essential background for understanding later tensions between Jews and Christians in Egypt in the fourth century C.E. and after.

We may now speak of a new consensus on the nature of relations between Jews and Gentiles during most of the Hellenistic period. As Hengel comments, not even the bitterness arising from the Maccabean revolt failed to dampen the sense of “amazement at the founder of the Jewish religion and the original teaching of Moses.” When contrasted with the years 30 B.C.E. to 135 C.E., the Hellenistic period is striking not just for the absence of anti-Semitic actions and the low level of anti-Semitic beliefs but for the indications of active interest in Jewish history and religion. Those who would assess this period differently must do so on shaky grounds. The cultural exchange between Jews and Greeks from the Hellenistic side was, by and large, open and appreciative. As we shall see, the images and traditions established in the Hellenistic era will persist to the very end of pagan culture and continue to manifest themselves even during the turbulence of the Roman Empire.

The Early Roman Empire 30 B.C.E.–140 C.E.

Anti-Semitism and Anti-Romanism in Egypt

The emperor Augustus changed the course of history for all nations and peoples in the ancient world. His consolidation of power reached its climax with the defeat of Antony in 31 B.C.E. and his immediate annexation of Egypt. From that moment on, Roman power was the basic fact for all inhabitants of the Mediterranean basin. Ironically, it was precisely this Roman power, together with the policy of protecting the special status of Judaism, that created the conditions in which Alexandrian anti-Semitism came to life.

The Jews of Egypt were quick to embrace the Roman cause. As non-citizens (non-Greek) and non-indigenous (non-Egyptian), their well-being must have seemed best assured by a strong Roman government. On
the Roman side, there are strong indications that Augustus officially confirmed the rights and privileges of all Jewish communities. In line with past practice, Rome established herself as a protector of the Jewish community in Egypt.

At this point, however, the Roman policy toward Judaism began to reveal its fragile and contradictory character. Shortly after gaining control of the country, Augustus imposed a new tax, the *laeagraphia*, on all non-citizens in Egypt. Full exemptions were granted only to full Greek citizens of Alexandria. The tax fell not only on the native Egyptian population but on all non-citizen residents, including the large majority of Jews. The impact on certain segments of the Jewish community in Alexandria was considerable. While the imposition of the *laeagraphia* was entirely consistent with Rome's earlier support for the Jewish community, it meant not only that Jews—including those who were wealthy, well-educated, and long-established in the city—were subject to a heavy tax, but that they were classified publicly with native Egyptians. This new set of circumstances led to new efforts by individual Jews to obtain full Greek citizenship.

These two Roman actions, the one designed to protect Jewish privileges and the other to tax Jews among non-citizens, set the scene for the wave of anti-Semitism that was to engulf Roman Egypt beginning with the riots of 38–41 C.E. In other words, the two basic sources of the violence were (1) the fervent anti-Romanism of a group described by Tcherikover as "hot-headed Alexandrian patriots," a group which could hardly confront Rome directly but which "could make indirect attacks on Rome through her protégés the Jews, who were at hand and far more vulnerable," and (2) the efforts of numerous Jews to obtain citizenship by enrolling as students in the gymnasiuim, efforts which met with strenuous resistance from Alexandrians as well as Roman officials.

The radical Alexandrians made use of Judaism's special status to attack the Jews and through them to express their resentment of Rome's presence in Egypt.

While there can be no doubt that the events of 38–41 were preceded by a period of mutual frustration, there is little evidence for incidents of any kind during the early years of Roman control. Apart from lysianus, whose dates are unknown, the only direct testimonies derive from participants in the riots themselves. Chaeremon, whom Josephus cites in his *Against Apion*, was a Greek-Egyptian priest (hierogrammatês), a member of the rabidly anti-Semitic faction, a teacher of Nero, and the author of a *History of Egypt*. In all likelihood he is identical with the Chaeremon mentioned in the emperor Claudius's Letter to the Alexandrians as a member of the Alexandrian delegation to Rome in 41 C.E. In the course of his *History*, Chaeremon included an anti-Jewish account of the exodus: the Jews, numbering 150,000 polluted persons, were driven from Egypt together with their leaders, Moses and Joseph, who were reagrade Egyptian priests; with help from allies, they returned to Egypt; finally, they were driven into Syria by Rames. Lysianus's story is altogether different, showing no dependence on Chaeremon; in response to an oracle, the King (Boecchus) purified the land by expelling all unclean persons; one group was under the sole leadership of Moses; Moses exhorted them to show laissez-faire to no one, to offer the worst rather than the best advice and to overthrow the temples and altars of the gods; after crossing the desert, they reached Judea where they maltreated the population and plundered and set fire to the temples; the town where they settled was originally called Hieropolis ("sacred city"), after the people themselves, but later changed to Hieropolys in order to cover up this disgrace.

Apion the grammarian, at whose invocation Josephus produced his apologetic treatise *Against Apion*, was also a Greek-Egyptian who achieved citizenship in Alexandria and came to occupy an important academic post in the city, probably as head of the great Alexandrian library. Like Chaeremon, he was also a member of the delegation which pleaded its anti-Jewish case before the emperor Galus Caligula. He also authored a *History of Egypt* (Cogypagiana), in the course of which he incorporated numerous pieces of anti-Semitic polemic.

Josephus divides Apion's material into several categories: (1) passages relating to the departure of the Jews from Egypt; (2) those in which he deals with the civic status of Jews in Alexandria; (3) slanderous remarks about Jewish religious practices; and (4) references to the role of Jews in Ptolemaic Egypt. Throughout Apion manifests the implacable hostility that filled the air in the late 30s and early 40s of the first century C.E. His account of the ancient exodus drew on a variety of sources. One of them
derived the Jewish Sabbath from the Egyptian word for a disease of the grain, stating that the Jews developed this disease during their flight from Egypt. But unlike his predecessors, Apion may well have possessed first-hand knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures, for he notes that Moses went up into the mountain called Sinai, which lies between Egypt and Arabia, remained in concealment there for forty days, and then descended in order to give the Jews their laws.  

When it came to Jewish religious observances, however, Apion was dependent on traditional material: Jewish laws are unjust and their religious ceremonies mistaken; circumcision and abstinence from pork are ridiculous. He repeats the earlier tale of Masseus about the golden head of an ox in the Jerusalem temple and adds that Jews worship that animal. As if this were not enough, he reports that when Antiochus IV Epiphanes entered the temple in Jerusalem he discovered a Greek man whom the attendants were fattening in preparation for their annual sacrifice of a Gentile.

On the matter of the Jews' civic status in Alexandria, he used a variety of arguments to buttress his contention that the Jews held no legitimate claim to citizenship: the Jews are outsiders from Syria and occupied an undesirable part of the city; he rejects the Jews' designation of themselves as Alexandrians, that is, citizens; he points to actions taken against the Jews by various Ptolemaic rulers; he points to the exclusion of the Jews from the grain dole under Cleopatra and Germanicus as proof that they were not citizens; and finally he objects that the Jews fail to erect statues of the emperors or to worship the same gods as the Alexandrians.

In Apion and his compatriots the intensity of the situation in Alexandria before, during or after the riots of 38 can be clearly seen. Given their beliefs and feelings, it is not difficult to comprehend the actions that arose from them. Apion and Clearenton were prominent leaders in Alexandria. Their words would have carried considerable weight, particularly among the Greek-Egyptian population of non-citizens. But beneath all of their inflammatory rhetoric about religion and history, there is good reason to believe that the issue of citizenship was the primary irritant. In his famous letter to the Alexandrians, the emperor Claudius makes this quite explicit when he warns the Jews "not to aim at more than they have previously had... and not to intrude themselves into the games presided over by the gymnasiarch..." For Apion, opposition to Jewish attempts to obtain full civic status was clearly an important matter, not least because he had had to earn the honor himself. As for his followers among the Greek-Egyptian populace, their opposition was undoubtedly founded on their own ineligibility. Once emotions reached a fever pitch, however, the question of citizenship quickly blended into the miasm of inflammatory words and actions.

At the center of this inflammatory rhetoric, it will be remembered, stood anti-Semitic accounts of the exodus. In the past the purpose of these stories has never been quite clear. Perhaps these too should be interpreted with reference to the issue of citizenship. Just as Apion used the Jews' Syrian origins as proof that they could not be citizens, so one function of the exodus stories may have been to demonstrate that the Jews, whose ancestors had been expelled from Egypt as sacrilegious and polluted renegades, were even less deserving of full civic status than the native Egyptian population.

Philo, the Acts of the Pagan Martyrs, and the Events of 38-41

The causes behind the outbreak of violence in 38 c.e.—the disturbances and rioting, or rather, to speak the truth, the war, against the Jews—Claudius himself puts it—were numerous. Some of them had little to do with local matters; for example, the Roman governor Flaccus's fear that the new emperor, Gaius Caligula, would retaliate for Flaccus's open support of his rivals. What makes this important for us is that the governor's fear for his position made him more susceptible to the Alexandrian anti-Semitic lobby. There were also other factors. At about this time, Herod's grandson, Julius Agrippa I, passed through Alexandria on his way to his new kingdom in northern Galilee. His public appearances in Alexandria as the defender of the Jewish cause and a favorite of the Roman emperor further inflamed the anti-Roman, anti-Semitic sentiment of the nationalist political clubs.

Under these circumstances, according to Philo's account, the anti-Semitic lobby persuaded Flaccus to issue a series of rulings regarding the civic status of the Jews. Most of his subsequent actions are to be seen as consistent with efforts to redefine that status in a restrictive manner; the
seizure of the synagogues, the declaration that the Jews were "strangers," no doubt based on the anti-Semitic Exod. stories; the resettlement of the Jewish population in a single section of one residential quarter; the arrest of members of the Jewish council of elders; and the administration of punishments normally reserved for non-citizen Egyptians. In other words, the issue of citizenship was foremost in the program of the anti-Semitic leaders, and it was in order to "clarify" this issue, at the urging of these leaders, that Flaccus seized the initiative. Simultaneously, and perhaps with his blessing, the anti-Semitic clubs undertook a campaign of pillaging, destruction, beatings, torture, and murder. Eventually, after a period of perhaps two or three months, order was restored, and Flaccus was arrested and returned to Rome for trial. Rival delegations from the Greeks and Jews of Alexandria went to plead their case before the emperor Caligula. Fortunately for the Jewish side, Caligula was murdered in January of 41 and succeeded by Claudius, whose disposition of the outstanding issues is contained in his letter of 41, in which he cautioned the Alexandrians "to behave gently and kindly toward the Jews ... and not to dishonor any of their customs in their worship of their god." To the Jews he restored the privileges guaranteed earlier by Augustus but warned them "not to aim at more than they have previously had" and not "to bring in or invite Jews coming from Syria or Egypt.

In discussing the attitudes and motives of the Alexandrian rioters, we must distinguish at least three separate categories: Flaccus himself, the leaders of the riots and later of the delegation, and finally the "mob" as Philo calls them. Flaccus had governed Egypt peaceably for several years before the difficulties of 36. There is no reason to believe that he was an anti-Semite before that date—or after. Certainly Philo gives no indication that this was the case. His change of heart was motivated instead by his fear of the new emperor Caligula, for Flaccus had earlier played an active role in opposing Caligula and in having his mother sent into exile. Thus when Caligula suddenly and unexpectedly came to power in Rome, Flaccus's fear of reprisal created a situation which Dionysius and Lampo were quick to exploit for their own ends. They offered to intercede with Caligula on Flaccus's behalf in return for a change of policy on the status of Jews in the city. When Flaccus accepted their offer, the Roman barrier was removed and the troubles began.

It is clear from all of the accounts—Philo as well as the notorious Acts of the Alexandrian Martyrs—that the key forces were Dionysius, Lampo, and Isidorus. To them Flaccus delegated the task of implementing his new policies regarding the Jews. Apion and Chrestemon were also involved, as members of the Alexandrian delegation to Claudius, but almost certainly at a higher level. Indeed, Philo mentions neither of them in the Against Flaccus or the Embassy to Claudius. Of the others, however, Philo presents a vivid, though not altogether unbiased portrait—"demagogues like Dionysius, record-porters like Lampo, sedition-leaders like Isidorus, busy bodies, devisers of evil, city trouble-makers." We know little of their particular attitudes—though they are not difficult to imagine—but what we know of their social and political roles suggests that their own anti-Semitism had its roots not in hatred of Jews as such but in nationalism and violent anti-Romanism. Thus the Jews were not the direct targets but rather the immediate victims, Isidorus and Lampo were both leaders of the Alexandrian gymnasia. Since the gymnasia was the central institution in determining citizenship, it is hardly coincidental that its leaders should turn out to be the primary opponents of Jewish attempts to secure citizenship.

In one of the fragments of the Acts of the Alexandrian Martyrs, Isidorus argues against Agrippa that the Jews are not qualified for citizenship because they pay the same poll-tax as the Egyptians. For the most part, Isidorus and Lampo were notorious in the city for their anti-Roman activities. Lampo, reports Philo, had been put on trial for disloyalty to the emperor Tiberius. Isidorus had mounted an unsuccessful campaign against Flaccus during his early years as governor. A similar picture of Isidorus and Lampo emerges elsewhere in the Acts of the Alexandrian Martyrs. In a series of fictitious hearings before various emperors (Caligula, Claudius, Trajan, Hadrian, and Commodus), Isidorus, Lampo, and others are depicted as heroes and martyrs for defending the cause of Alexandria against Rome. In the course of their defense, they reveal the anti-Roman thrust of their anti-Semitism, for the basic recurrent charge against the emperors was that they were friends of the Jews. In one fragment, dealing with a case of Isidorus against Agrippa, Claudius warns Isidorus to say nothing against his friend. The same fragment has Isidorus refer to Agrippa as "a two-penny-halfpenny Jew," to Claudius...
as "the cast-off son of the Jewish Salome" and, in an aside of Lampo, to the empress herself as "crazy". The embassy to Trajan which included a number of gymnasiarchs arrives in Rome only to find that the emperor's wife, Plotina, had turned the senate and the emperor against the Alexandrians. This leads one of their spokesmen to complain to the emperor that his council is filled with "insipid Jews." Ultimately, Claudius executed both Lampo and Isidorus for their role as enemies of Agrrippa.

A final element in the picture concerns the role played by local political clubs, the cliousi, synodes, or koinai as Philo calls them. Isidorus in particular appears to have served as their spokesman and was able to muster their support whenever it was needed. In contrast to his customary references to Isidorus's followers as a disorganized mob, Philo is probably closer to the truth when he states that Isidorus organized them "into sections after the fashion of committees." Thus, Philo concludes, "whenever he wants them to perpetrate some unprofitable act, at one signal they come together in a body and say and do what they are bidden." These clubs had already carried out a successful campaign early in Flaccus's prefecture. They were undoubtedly behind the insulting parody of Agrrippa's newly acquired kingship in the latter's disastrous visit to Alexandria in 38. And they must have taken a leading hand in the riots themselves. To what extent these clubs and their members were motivated by the anti-Semitic sentiments of their leaders is impossible to determine.

In all likelihood, however, they must have heard and rehearsed the catalogue of calamities created by Apion and others. Their anti-Semitism, like Apion's, took its origins in local political conditions peculiar to Alexandria.

In Alexandria and Egypt following the "war" of 38-41, one fact of utmost importance emerges: from that point on, we begin to hear different voices from both sides. The period of cordial relations between Rome and the Jews of Alexandria was over. On the pagan side, there is no more Apion or Manetho. On the Jewish side, the voice of Philo is heard no more. Instead we hear from Josephus that "the Jews" greeted the news of Caligula's death by taking arms against the Alexandrians. Josephus omits to say, whether or not intentionally, who among the Jews of Alexandria took arms, but they surely have represented groups and interests different from those of Philo and his social class.

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Were these insurges newcomers to Alexandria? This seems unlikely, although both Philo's report that Flaccus's people found no arms in their search of Jewish homes and Claudius's warning, written after the event, against invading Jews from Syria or Egypt might be taken as evidence to the contrary. More likely, Philo's account of the events in the 30s quite deliberately ignored all other voices. There is much evidence to support Tcherikover's claim that a new group "captured the leadership of the Jewish community in Alexandria." In all likelihood, these new leaders rejected Alexandrian citizenship as undesirable, abolished the pagan cults, and were not reluctant to take arms to defend their cause. In any case, from this time forward, relations between Jews and pagans in Alexandria and Egypt were punctuated by a series of bloody conflicts.

Josephus's statement that there had been incessant strife between the native inhabitants and the Jewish settlers since the time of Alexander, while exaggerated for the Hellenistic period, is not inaccurate for the remainder of the first century and the early decades of the second. The uprising in 41 was quickly put down and a period of quiet followed under Claudius's reign. In 66 c.e. a riot again broke out between Greeks and Jews. When the Roman prefect failed to pacify the rioters by peaceful means, he unleashed two Roman legions to do the job. According to Josephus, who is the sole source for the events, the soldiers, aided by the Alexandrian populace, fell upon the Jews in order to teach them a "severe lesson." These reprisals resulted in a significant number of casualties, though Josephus's figure of 50,000 dead is perhaps exaggerated.

Little is heard from Egypt in connection with the revolt in Palestine of 66-73. Of far greater significance was the influx of Jewish radicals—Josephus's sicarii—from Palestine following the collapse of the revolt and their attempts to generate support for their cause among the Jews of Egypt and Cyrene. According to Josephus, whose account terminates shortly after 73 c.e., they met with no limited success. But the outbreak of a new revolt, with centers in Egypt, Cyrene, and Cyprus, merely indicates the degree to which Josephus's own interests as a member of the political and social establishment blinded him to what was happening at other levels of Jewish society in the Diaspora.

The revolt of 115-117 was, if anything, the most violent and costly of all. A battle (maccab) between Jews and Romans broke out in the
city in 115—perhaps inspired by an earlier uprising in Cyrene—and was quickly put down by the prefect. Sometime thereafter the struggle expanded to the Egyptian countryside and intensified. The various sources speak of violent confrontations, numerous atrocities on both sides, and widespread disruption of normal activities in a variety of Egyptian locations—nor to mention Cyprus and Cyrene. By the time the revolts were finally put down in 117, the results were calamitous: the Jewish revolutionaries, in their messianic fervor, destroyed several pagan temples, including the Temple of Nectanebo and the Sanctuary of Serapis in Alexandria; the great synagogue of Alexandria was itself destroyed; Dio Cassius, no doubt exaggerating, reports that the Jewish forces killed 210,000 persons in Cyrene and 120,000 in Cyprus; and the eventual suppression of the revolt by the Roman army "amounted to the almost total extermination of the Egyptian Jews."

Numerous questions arise in connection with the recurrent conflicts between 66 and 117 C.E. For our purposes the relevant ones are the extent to which they were prompted by, or in turn contributed to the tradition of Greek anti-Semitism in Egypt, and whether the reactions of successive Roman emperors, governors, and generals betray a systematic enmity toward Judaism, that is, whether the cultural environment in Egypt brought about fundamental changes in the traditional Roman policy regarding Judaism.

On the matter of Roman policy, it is difficult to find any major shifts from the time of Claudius onward. His letter to the Alexandrians clearly treats the riots under Flaccus and Gaius Caligula as aberrations. At the same time, the events which preceded Claudius' letter just as clearly led the emperor to issue a harsh warning against Jewish revolutionary activities: "If they disobey, I shall proceed against them as fomenting a common plague for the whole world." This warning, and the suspicions which underlay it, no doubt explain the extreme measures taken in the process of suppressing the later uprisings.

As to the views of non-Roman circles, we are reasonably well-informed. Josephus remarks, almost in passing, that in 66 C.E. the Roman troops pulled back as soon as the general issued the order to do so. "But," he continues, "the Alexandrian populace in the intensity of their hate were not easily called off and were with difficulty torn from the corpses." Here, once again, we are almost certainly dealing with the same base of opposition, rooted in the political clubs, as earlier in 58-51. Beyond this, however, the influx of Jewish messianic revolutionaries from Palestine added a new element to the struggle. Not only did they bring a willingness to take arms, but they added a strong religious dimension.

The destruction of pagan temples was part of their messianic campaign. Their assaults on religious sites gave rise in turn to the widespread use of the phrase "impious (amazos) Jews" throughout this period. In one of the Acts of the Apostles, placed under the reign of Trajan, a certain Hermakion twice accuses Trajan of favoring the "impious Jews." A second fragment, this one placed under Hadrian and depicting a discussion between rival delegations during the revolt in 115-117, again refers to the "impious Jews." One of the references occurs in a speech protesting the prefect's decision to settle the Jews of Alexandria in a new location from which "they could easily attack and ravage our well-guarded city." Even if we cannot accept the view put forward by the Acts that the emperors were consistently pro-Jewish in their attitudes, there is no concrete evidence to suggest that Rome ever abandoned its fundamental policy, that is, to protect the rights and privileges of Jewish communities as long as they lived peaceably amongst themselves and with their Gentile neighbors. At the same time, there is no reason to imagine a basic change in the conditions that precipitated the events of 38-41, viz., that the leaders of the Alexandrian anti-Semitic movement sought every opportunity to influence local Roman officials against the Jews. Throughout this period anti-Semitism was firmly embedded in the structure of anti-Romanism; both were hallmarks of Alexandrian patriotism.

The fact that the Acts of the Apostles were still being copied in the third century C.E. indicates not only that these sentiments remained alive long after Judaism had been eliminated as a meaningful social and religious force in Roman Egypt, but also that their primary and enduring motivation lay on the anti-Roman rather than the anti-Jewish side. Apart from the continued transcription of the Acts, we hear nothing further of pagan anti-Semitism in Egypt. Not coincidentally, the voice of Judaism itself fades out after 117. It is important to realize, however, that it does not disappear altogether. As noted earlier, a new
settlement of Jews is attested at the outskirts of Alexandria, and isolated Jewish names appear in scattered villages and towns in the countryside. Only at the end of the third century do Jewish names begin to occur with greater frequency.

But this gradual reawakening took place within a significantly changed cultural context. To the extent that Judaism once again encountered hostility from the religious and political establishment, the source of that hostility was now Christian rather than pagan. While even in Alexandria the basis of Christian hostility was fundamentally different from that of earlier paganism, there is no mistaking certain lines of continuity, especially in Alexandria. As pagan Alexandrians began to embrace Christianity, they brought with them the residue of traditional Alexandrian anti-Semitism.

The other important change in the cultural environment was Judaism itself. The rabbis speak of the period after 137 as a time in which Egyptian Jewry sought "to accommodate itself to the new epoch." A prominent feature of this process was cultural assimilation. Of course, this element had long been present in figures like Arrian, Tiberius Julius Alexander, and the extreme allegorists attacked by Philo; one need only mention Philo himself. What is different about this later period is that the voice of assimilation grows louder and that we hear of no Philo rising to challenge it. The evidence for the process of assimilation lies not just in names—the use of Egyptian names by Jews and the more unusual occurrence among non-Jews of Jewish names—but the active participation of Jews in the syncretic circles of Greco-Egyptian magic, alchemy, and astrology. This, too, may have been present all along, but it comes to light for the first time in the papyri of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries.

4

The Later Roman Encounter with Judaism

The Politics of Sympathy and Conversion

Our examination of Judaism in Roman Egypt has emphasized the importance of making a distinction between official policy and personal attitudes: on the one hand, the generally protective policy of Rome; on the other, the personal policy of Judaism, as well as the discussion relating to Roman self-interest. This policy appears as pro-Jewish only in the anti-Roman acts of the Alexandrian martyrs where it was used to defame Rome itself. In reality, it is no more appropriate to designate official Roman policy as pro-Jewish than it is for Hellenism in the Acts to call the emperor Claudius "the custos of the Jews Salome." On the other hand, the policy did have the effect of setting limits to anti-Semitic words and actions wherever they might arise. Until the Jewish revolutionaries sought to repudiate this policy with force, Rome saw the protection of Jewish rights and privileges as important to its own well-being. And even here, once the revolutionaries were removed from the stage, the traditional policies were quickly re-established.

Cicero's passing lines against the Jewish people cannot be taken to represent widely held views in the first century A.D. Nor do they reveal any special knowledge of Judaism. Still, the very fact that he was able to borrow or invent phrases like "barbaric superstition" and "a nation born to slavery" shows the potential for the eminence that would materialize in later writers. In Rome as in Alexandria and elsewhere, this potential resided in two closely related factors: the peculiarity of certain Jewish observances and Rome's policy of protecting these observances. Under certain conditions a combination of these factors might give rise to anti-