Provincial Reactions to Roman Imperialism: 
The Aftermath of the Jewish Revolt, A.D. 66-70

by

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Abstract

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This dissertation brings forth unique and hitherto under exploited evidence that can be used to reconstruct the attitude of one subject nation, that of the Jews, toward the Roman Empire. In so doing it offers a contribution to the study of both Roman imperial history and ancient Judaism.

The introductory chapter surveys various scholarly models of the way that the Roman Empire was viewed by its subjects in the provinces. Special attention is given to the nature, and shortcomings, of the evidence—literary, epigraphic and material—that underpins these models. While the works of many provincial authors are extant, what we lack is any provincial viewpoint rooted in indigenous tradition. To put it concretely, there is no surviving example of Punic, Gallic, British, Syrian, Cappadocian, or any other literature that expresses the thoughts or aspirations of a subject population using indigenous literary traditions or even native languages. There is, to be sure, Greek literature from the imperial period, but the Greeks were assimilated into the imperial system in an unprecedented way, especially in the East.

Jewish literature provides a unique entry into the mentality of one of Rome's subject populations. By the time that the Jews were brought under Roman control they were already heirs to a long literary tradition, much of it written under and in response to the dominance of a succession of eastern and Hellenistic empires. The canonical texts of
the Hebrew Bible provided the Jews of the Greco-Roman world with a wealth of images, traditions, and symbols through the adaptation and reuse of which they might comment on and understand their contemporary situation.

The examination of a variety of texts inspired by the harsh suppression of the Jewish Revolt of A.D. 66-70 offers a window into an ancient debate over the form that Jewish interaction with imperial Rome should take. This question has been the subject of modern examination in the corpus of the Greco-Jewish historian Josephus; it is the contribution of the present dissertation to expand the picture to include more traditionally Jewish texts: Fourth Ezra, the Second (Syriac) Apocalypse of Baruch, the Paraleipomena Jeremiae, and the Fourth Sibylline Oracle, which is a Jewish adaptation of the Greco-Roman prophetic tradition of the Sibyl. The authors of these texts have reshaped biblical traditions from the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. and the return during the Persian period. Through well-known biblical figures, such as Jeremiah, Baruch, and Ezra, the authors have crafted responses not only to the catastrophic loss of Jerusalem and its Temple, but even more to the need to negotiate with the continued Roman imperial presence in Judaea.

An important fact emerges from reading the texts. The notion that there was one single Jewish response to empire, even in the aftermath of what might seem a polarizing event, is belied by the multiplicity of reactions. Hopes for vengeance and restoration compete with studied indifference and universalizing tendencies that see sin not as the special preserve of Romans and gentiles, while reserving for the Jews alone a claim on righteousness. The Jewish response, or rather responses, replete with nuance and contradiction have important ramifications for discussions of provincial attitudes toward the Roman Empire suggesting that ambiguity and ambivalence must be taken into account when dealing with any subject population.
INTRODUCTION

It is an axiom of modern scholarship that any durability and effectiveness the Roman Empire could claim to possess was founded on the fruitful collaboration between the imperial center, personified in the emperor himself and located at least ideally, or we might say traditionally, in the city of Rome, and the provinces, manned by local elites residing in the principal cities of their various provinces; the point of contact, apart from direct links between locals and the emperor, was a small number of administrators comprising governors and their staffs sent out by the emperor. This arrangement has been repeatedly subjected to schematization and something of a scholarly consensus exists at least in so far as the mechanics of administration are concerned. The elements of superstructure and infrastructure, their formal interrelation, and, indeed, their successful and effective marriage do not provide grounds for debate. The ideas that underpin provincial administration, or one might even expand to say the Roman Empire itself, have been rather more elusive.

Over the course of the last century perceptions of and presumptions about imperial power have changed dramatically. Scholars at the beginning of the century lived in a world in large part distributed among a small number of imperial powers. Over the course of the century as western powers shed their empires, it became attractive to look at the Roman Empire from the point of view of the subject peoples. The current intellectual climate of a post-colonial world has caused many scholars to look at imperialism in a new and hardly flattering light. One need have no part in modern ideological debates,


2 These changed assumptions might be illustrated by one reviewer’s surprise at the understated qualification expressed by an author who referred to Roman imperial conquests as being "not...wholly
however, in order to recognize the importance attaching to the thoughts and attitudes of Roman provincials, especially the upper classes, who were the backbone of the imperial system. Our understanding of the Roman Empire would be immeasurably improved if we could see it, as it were, from the underside; discovering a vantage point from which to do this is not easy.3

Studies addressing the impact of imperialism on the provinces abound.4 The epiphenomenon of Romanization, so often bound up with this question, has been thoroughly studied.5 It has been noted that Romanization is a symptom; the underlying cause has proven difficult to diagnose.6 The results of these studies, though important, have been, nevertheless, disappointing to those who wish to understand provincial attitudes.

The elusiveness of provincial attitudes is a result of our evidence. Material remains, upon which reconstructions of western provincial attitudes must be based, are difficult to interpret. Epigraphic and literary evidence because of the public nature of both do not offer an unvarnished or frank view of empire. The epigraphic and literary testimony of provincials that survives was produced by those who bought into the benign"; see G. Woolf, "MacMullen's Romanization," JRA 14 (2001), 578-579; he quotes R. MacMullen, Romanization in the Time of Augustus, (New Haven, 2000), 51. He also draws attention to MacMullen's "un-ironical usage of the term 'civilization'" to describe what Romans brought to their subjects; ibid. 3 B. D. Shaw, "Josephus: Roman Power and Responses to It," Aeth. 83 (1995), 357-390, rightly emphasizes the benefits of the testimony of Josephus and Polybius, who provide a unique view of the empire from the perspective of an outsider.

4 Attention might be drawn to the essays in D. J. Mattingly (ed.), Dialogues in Roman Imperialism: Power, Discourse, and Discrepant Experience in the Roman Empire, JRA Suppl. 23, (Portsmouth, R.I., 1997); C. Ando, Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire, (Berkeley, 2000).


imperial ideal as articulated from the center, as such it ceases to provide an authentic provincial voice, but rather allows those who had “become Roman” to speak to moderns.

What has so far been missing is any compelling record of provincial attitudes towards Rome written from an alien vantage point. The transformation that provincials underwent to become participating members of the Roman imperial system was not instantaneous. Certain attitudes and behaviors were required before participation could be realized. It is unimaginable that there was no debate among provincials confronted with the demand, however kindly put, to adapt to Roman expectations. These debates would not have been carried out in Latin, nor always in Greek in the East. Neither the Aeneid nor Homer would provide frames of reference in these debates. Gauls, Egyptians, Spaniards, Britons, and Syrians would have to have looked, initially at least, to their own national traditions as they struggled to come to terms with their situation as subjects of a foreign power. It is doubtful that the debates in the West would have attained written form; though writing was well established in the East, nothing seems to have survived, if it ever existed.⁷

At the outset a distinction central to the thesis must be made clear, namely that between provincial literature and Greek or Latin literature written by provincials. Of the latter category there are many examples. Among others, Africa gave rise to Apuleius, Fronto, and Tertullian; Spain to Seneca, the geographer Pomponius Mela, Martial, and Lucan; Pompeius Trogus was a Gaul. Greek authors such as Dio of Prusa, Cassius Dio, the geographer Artemidorus, and Aelius Aristides hailed from Asia Minor; Syria contributed Lucian; while Judaea produced Josephus. For the Greeks, of course, the two categories are one, for the national literature of the Greeks in Greece proper and in the long established Greek cities in Asia was the literature descended from Homer and

⁷ The Greeks, of course, are an exception that will be returned to below.
Herodotus. This is not, however, the case for Syria, Cappadocia, Africa, Gaul, Egypt, and other lands and peoples, for whom we could consider Greek and Latin literature a transplantation.

It is not to be denied that the literature produced by provincials writing in the Greek and Latin literary traditions offers a trove of valuable information for reconstructing imperial and provincial society in the Roman period. The attitudes and aspirations of the provincial elite are admirably illuminated by these works. It becomes clear, however, that there is very little distinction between the attitudes, to take one example, of a Latin author of African extraction and one reared in Italy itself. Nor do we find in the works of a Hellenized Syrian anything inconsistent with a thoroughly Greek mentality. By the time that most of these provincial authors were writing, the indigenous elites were thoroughly saturated with a Greco-Roman education and had adopted the outlook consistent with such an education.

There is an exception to the almost universal silencing of traditional perspectives that descended over the peoples of East and West as they conformed province by

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8 Greek literature constitutes a special case as will be explained below. For the study of Greek authors and their attitudes towards Rome S. Swain, Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World, AD 50-230, (Oxford, 1996), provides an indispensable introduction.

9 Nor would it fall beyond the pale to suggest that much of Latin literature itself derived from Greek transplantations in the Italian soil.

10 To take the case of Apuleius, there is virtually no line of the Metamorphoses that could not have been composed by an Italian, or by a Greek, or Hellenized Egyptian, for that matter. Apart from the mention of Madauros near the end of the work, there is nothing that connects the tale with Africa at all; Apuleius, Metamorphoses, 11.27: Nam sibi visus est quies proxima, dum magno deo coronas exaptaret, de eius ore, quo singulorum fata dictat, audisse mitti sibi Madaurensem sed admodum pauperem, cui statim sua sacra debere ministriar; nam et illi studiorum gloriam et igitur grande compendium sua comparari providentia. Indeed, if we take the opening lines of the book at face-value, we are to understand that the author is a Greek; Metamorphoses, 1.1-2: Quis ille? Pauci accipe. Hymettos Attica et Isthmos Ephyrea et Taenaros Sporticae, glebæ felices aesternum libris felicioribus conditae, mea vetus prosapia est. Ibi linguum Attidem primis pueritiae stipendiis merui...Thessaliam—nam et illic originis maternae nostrae fundamenta a Plutarcho illo inculto ac mares Sextio philosopho nepote eius prodita gloriam nobis faciunt—eum Thessaliam ex negotio petebam. Apuleius appears in both the Metamorphoses and in his Apologia to exhibit what might be called a pan-Mediterranean sensibility, as is to be expected of a man educated in Carthage, Athens, and Rome, and a probable initiate into the mysteries of Isis.

11 This despite Lucian's frank acknowledgement of his Syrian birth and his barbarism; see the citations gathered by Swain, Hellenism and Empire, 299 n. 5. Even the most Syrian of his works, the de Syria dea, is Herodotean in language and presentation; see Swain, 304-305.
province to Roman standards. The national literature of the Jews withstood the creeping acculturation that obscures the indigenous cultures of other provinces. The Bible is only the beginning. As the Jews became subjects first of Assyria, then of Babylon, then of Persia, then of the Macedonians, and finally of the Romans, they continued to write. The Bible provided fertile ground for the Jewish imagination. The reuse, embellishment and transformation of biblical stories offered the Jews a medium for discussion and debate as they adapted to changes in their situation both at home in Palestine and abroad in the Diaspora.¹²

The search for Jewish attitudes toward Rome has often begun and ended with Josephus. The Jewish historian and Roman citizen, however, is already too much part of the Graeco-Roman intellectual world and a participant in the Roman imperial system. The investigation offered here delves deeper into the trove of Jewish literature. The works to be discussed come from that body of literature that does not find a place in the Bible though thematically and generically it is often quite similar to the books of the Bible; nor does it owe its preservation to the rabbis who labored over the Mishnah, Tosefta, Talmudim, and related bodies of literature. The so-called Pseudepigrapha provide the texts for this study, in particular four texts dealing with the destruction of the Second Temple by a Roman army under the command of the future emperor Titus in A.D. 70. One would expect to find in texts written in the wake of this national catastrophe that consternation over the loss of both Jerusalem and its Temple would predominate. Upon closer inspection, however, this theme melts away, to be replaced by vigorous debate over the future, especially the future of Jews under Roman rule. Nor is the debate monolithic. With the authors' attention focused on Rome, the destruction of

¹² For investigation along these lines see E. S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1998) and *idem, Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans*, (Cambridge, Mass., 2002).
the Temple and holy city fades into the background, becoming little more than a backdrop against which more pressing concerns are played out.

Empire and Subjects: Ancient and Modern Perceptions

It is claimed here that provincial attitudes to the Roman Empire are all but irrecoverable, and yet the attempt has been made many times. It is necessary to examine representatives of the various views that have been propounded. The questions before us are: What reaction did provincials have to the expectations placed upon them? How did provincials come to terms with their status as subjects of an empire, on their own terms, in light of their national traditions, history, and beliefs? Why did provincials adopt Roman traditions and customs? Did some provincials reject the empire and its demands and if so what form did their resistance take?

Two English scholars of the early twentieth century present similar appreciations of the Roman Empire. Francis Haverfield sought to confront the negative opinions about the Roman Empire that he saw prevailing in his day by drawing attention to what was in his mind the grandest achievement of that empire, namely the Roman genius for provincial administration. Romans labored to build an empire for the betterment and happiness of the world. The long peace that Roman arms ensured allowed the peoples under Roman control to acquire civilization, which consisted of adopting the Latin tongue, Roman manners, Roman citizenship, and city life. Through the acquisition of these elements the peoples of the provinces were assimilated into an orderly and coherent culture. Resistance was encountered among the Greeks, whose thoughts and traditions had already coalesced into a coherent culture; they did, nevertheless, conform politically and even came to consider themselves Roman. In the West Roman statesmen encouraged

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cultural and political assimilation with a view toward the more effective and easier control of men who are civilized. Yet Roman tolerance offered even greater results. Romans did not thrust their culture upon the uncivilized, and this made it all the more attractive. The conformity to Roman ways was, therefore, often voluntary. The persistence of indigenous elements, be they religious or political, is not seen as either un-Roman or anti-Roman resistance; rather a process of amalgamation has occurred whereby the empire, while Romanized, is not as a result homogenized. The spread of material culture created a uniform Italian or Roman fashion throughout central and western Europe. If traditional ways remained, they were preserved among the poor.

Hugh Last conceived of an empire based on *libertas*, though a liberty not incompatible with *principatus*. Roman provincial administration was characterized by tolerance for indigenous custom and inclusiveness manifested in the extension of the Roman citizenship. Provincials were inspired in their loyalty by the prestige of Rome and their own gratitude for the peace Rome brought. They responded to the Roman rejection of a cultural crusade by voluntarily adopting many aspects of Roman culture; in the east Rome stimulated the Hellenization process begun less successfully by the Seleucids. The adoption of Roman material culture is given very low significance. The profusion of Samian ware, concrete construction, and even the Latin language pales in comparison with the pride that provincials felt in their membership of the Roman Empire. Roman peace brought prosperity, which issued in cultural progress carried out mainly through urbanization. The aim was unity rather than uniformity. The strength of the empire rested on the devotion of its inhabitants, which was based on their gratitude for peace and ordered government and Rome’s liberal attitude to indigenous populations.

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14 Haverfield, *Romanization*, 13-14, citing Tac. *Agr.* 21; this is not the last time that appeal will be made to this famous passage.

P. A. Brunt in a classic paper declared that the provincials Romanized themselves.\textsuperscript{16} Local elites, to whose fortunes Brunt restricted his study, welcomed the benefits that belonging to the Roman Empire brought. Latin culture was appealing only to western provincials, but the gain that accompanied a share in the administration of their home provinces attracted elites of both East and West. The principle benefit of Roman rule was liberty, at least for provincial elites, as Roman conquest threw off the rule of kings and fostered a renaissance of oligarchic rule. The favor that Rome showed to oligarchs was a great boon to the wealthy provincial elites. Rome brought peace and security; perhaps more importantly Rome protected their property and underwrote their local dominance. The extension of the franchise removed the distinction between ruler and ruled allowing provincial elites to take their place in the administration of empire beyond the boundaries of their home province; the Roman citizenship became a tool in forging an empire-wide loyalty at least among aristocrats. By the time provincials were ready to take their place on the imperial stage, they had become thoroughly Roman in outlook and education.

It can be observed from the previous three examples that provincial attitudes toward the empire have often been closely related to the process dubbed Romanization, that is the political and cultural assimilation of provincials along Italo-Roman lines. Some more recent studies of provincial reactions to empire have focused on Romanization in the western provinces of Britain and Gaul. Martin Millett has further developed one of the themes present in Brunt’s conception.\textsuperscript{17} Starting from the decentralized nature of Roman administration, Millett argues that British assimilation to Roman ways was undertaken solely with a local audience in mind. British elites adopted Roman cultural norms in order to establish and maintain their social power vis-à-vis their

\textsuperscript{16} Brunt, “Romanization of the Local Ruling Classes,” 162.

\textsuperscript{17} Millett, \textit{Romanization of Britain}, passim; see also the perceptive review article by Freeman, “Romanisation,” 438-445.
fellow Britons. The competitive use of Roman cultural artefacts, for the study is almost entirely archaeological in nature, provided the means by which British elites vied with each other for prestige and status; the intended audience was other British aristocrats. On this model, the imperial view fades into the distance, as the empire becomes an intensely local affair.

Greg Woolf, in his study of the Gauls, has followed Millett in his view of the relationship between the Roman Empire and provincials. Again the focus is kept on the change of provincials under the influence of Roman culture, which was internalized to such a high degree that Gauls became Romans. The adoption of Roman culture came as Gauls were subjected to a new order complete with changing systems of social stratification. Roman cultural competence, the product of a classical education, became an avenue into new power relationships with Roman officials. Ultimately, however, the arena of change, its manifestation and intended audience were again provincial, that is to say, Gallic attention was trained inwards. Gauls adopted Roman cultural markers in order to advance their prestige and power within their own tribes. Whether Gauls built villas or used terra sigillata they did so to impress other Gauls. Regional variations in style illustrate the cultural competence Gauls acquired; slavish imitation gave way to feelings of cultural possession, wherein Gauls felt free to elaborate on Roman models in a particularly Gallic way. The lower classes picked up these fashions out of a desire to emulate Gallic nobles rather than Romans. Roman cultural markers ceased to serve to differentiate provincial from Roman and came to serve as status markers within Gallo-Roman culture distinguishing rich from poor or urbanite from rustic.

The previous models have presupposed a commitment to a laissez-faire attitude on the part of Romans to cultural assimilation on the part of provincials. All imagine that provincials primarily drew on internal motivations to join themselves into the imperial

18 Woolf, Becoming Roman, passim.
culture that became present in their lands in the person of the governor, Italian emigrants, and the legions. Whether provincials integrated into the imperial system as a means of attaining social prominence or local power, or so that they might ingratiate themselves with the conqueror, or, indeed, because the pull of Roman culture was so strong, the impetus came from the periphery rather than the center.

Quite a different model for the relationship between provincials and the imperial center has been recently proposed by Clifford Ando. The model presented is one of consensus between imperial center and the provinces. This consensus was focused on the person of the emperor, who was a charismatic leader in the Weberian sense. The image of the emperor was constantly before the eyes of provincials in coin portraits and statues. An ideological basis therefore underlay the relations between provincials and the emperor. Certain ritual expressions of obedience and loyalty were expected of provincials. These included oaths of loyalty administered by imperial officials, who also took them in the presence of provincials thus promoting a feeling of solidarity between provincial and Roman subjects of a common ruler, the emperor. Carefully orchestrated communications announcing imperial victories were sent to the provinces with the expectation that expressions of thanksgiving, often in the form of aurum coronarium, would result. Congratulations in the form of letters or embassies on the annual dies imperii were another regular expression of loyalty and unity. Subjects who internalized the principles of the ruling order thus became participants in their own subjugation. Unity and inclusiveness were the aims and they were largely achieved as the perception of Rome as imperial master shifted to that of communis patria.

Despite the authoritarian overtones of the last, these models of the Roman Empire are all positive. The Roman Empire relied upon the consent and participation of its subjects. Provincials led by various motives came to view themselves as integral parts of

19 Ando, Imperial Ideology, passim.
20 The words are those of the mid-third-century jurist Herennius Modestinus; Digest 27.1.6.11.
the empire. Rome and its emperor were not oppressive overlords, but focal points of provincial loyalty and admiration. In the West Roman culture was adopted; in the East it made more modest, but still important, gains. This rosy picture finds literary expression in the few works of ancient authors who record provincial appreciations of the empire under which they lived; they come entirely from the Greek East and provide a framework in which to understand the surviving material evidence, which otherwise is mute as to the intentions and attitudes of its users and creators. The positive picture pervades the ancient evidence to such a degree that those moderns who wish to see a darker side of Roman imperialism are often reduced to assertion, the employment of anachronistic analogy to modern colonial experiences, and cases built on tendentious interpretations of admittedly ambiguous material evidence.

The literary evidence underpinning modern perceptions of Roman rule in the provinces is extremely slight and entirely Greek. Reviewing every scrap here would be otiose; two will suffice, especially as they loom large in modern reconstructions. The first is the Roman oration of the second-century rhetor from Smyrna, Aelius Aristides. The speech, Εἰς Ἡράμην, was delivered about the middle of the second century during the reign of Antoninus Pius. Aristides dwells on the size of Rome’s territory and compares the administration of the empire to those of Persia, Alexander, his successors, Athens, and Sparta, much to their discredit. Rome, in contrast to Persia, is conspicuous for ruling over men who are free. In contrast to the Greeks, she is conspicuous for knowing how to rule. The great gifts of Rome to the world are peace and the Roman citizenship, the

21 The resistance of the Greek East to Romanization has often been urged; see Brunt, “Romanization of the Local Ruling Classes,” 162-163; G. W. Bowersock, Augustus and the Greek World, (Oxford, 1965), 71-72; R. MacMullen, Romanization, 1-29. While the Latin language was rejected in favor of Greek, certain cultural institutions were adopted including Roman law and citizenship, architectural features such as the bath and villa, gladiatorial spectacles, and perhaps most significantly a sense of Roman identity; see Woolf, “Becoming Roman, Staying Greek,” 116-143.


23 Aristides, 26.36.

24 Aristides, 26.51.
latter has caused the better sort of men to become kin of the Romans.25 Such are these
gifts that sending tribute to Rome fills her subject with more joy than they might attain if
the tribute were sent to them.26 Rome has no need of garrisons, for the men of wealth and
standing guard their home cities for Rome.27 Homer himself had prophesied the future
greatness of Rome; the prophecy stood fulfilled in Aristides’ own day.28

The flattery is patent. The Roman oration is a product of its age. To debate the
truth of the picture or the sincerity of the author is beside the point.29 More important are
the assumptions that underlie the speech and the audience before which it was spoken.
Any claim to presenting an independent provincial viewpoint is undercut by the fact that
Aristides delivered the speech before the emperor and his court. That the speech is full of
flattery is thereby to be expected.30 The form that the flattery took, however, provides a
window not into provincial attitudes, but into imperial expectations. Aristides delivered
his encomium of the Roman Empire in the presence of its head, the emperor. Surely he
appealed to those aspects of Roman rule that would most please his audience. The
excellence of Roman rule is the leading theme. The gratitude of Rome’s subjects is
played in counterpoint. The gratitude may be sincere, but it is expressed under the
assumption that it is expected; it does not stand outside the accepted lines of imperial
discourse. It is certainly not an independent provincial voice.

25 Aristides, 26.59-60.
26 Aristides, 26.68.
27 Aristides, 26.64.
28 Aristides, 26.106, referring to II. 20.307-308: μὴ δὲ Αἰλίαν βίον Τέσσαρον ἀκόμην | καὶ παῖδις παῖδος, τοῖς
κεραυνοῖς τέσσεραν.
29 See the careful attempt of Oliver, Ruling Power, 886-892, to parse the oration for what can and cannot be
used as historical evidence; the approach of Swain, Hellenism and Empire, 274-284, is better.
30 This is not to say that Aristides does not occasionally twit his imperial auditor. Apart from the
hyperbolic notion that Rome’s subjects would rather pay tribute to Rome than receive it themselves, there
are also similes that might raise imperial eyebrows. The comparison of the dependence of the provinces on
Rome to bats clinging together in a cave is hardly a positive appreciation of provincial allegiance; 26.68:
ἀλλ᾽ ὅλαν αἱ κυρτότηται ἐς τοῖς ἀκροαίς ἀκόμην τα καὶ λίθων ἐρυθάν προσπαράκλησα, όπως ἵλοι ἅπαντες
ἐξερχόμενα σὺν πάλαι ἄλλο δὲ καὶ προσφέρον μὲ τις ἀναπαράστασιν τούτων τοῦ ἀκροκάρπου, καὶ πρότερον ἂν ἔδωκεν μὴ ὕψων
καταλπικῶς οὐδὲ ἤν αὐτοῖς καταλπικῶς.
The contrast between Aristides' Roman panegyric and another often cited work is more apparent than real. At the request of Menemachus of Sardis, Plutarch composed his tract on participation in civic government; the work is generally known under its Latin title, *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae*. The book contains advice, illustrated by copious examples, concerning the possibility of pursuing a political career in the Greek city under Roman rule. Much of Plutarch's advice is general and makes no mention of Rome, itself suggestive of Plutarch's and Menemachus' chief concern. At about the midpoint in the treatise Plutarch discusses the limitations imposed upon the local politician by Rome. Plutarch advises the would-be politician to keep two thoughts in his mind: first, the words of Pericles to the effect that he is a free man ruling free men and, second, that he is a subject even while he governs, while the city he governs is also subject to the agents of Caesar, the proconsuls. More ominous is his advice not to have too much pride or confidence in his crown of office, since the governor's boots are poised above his head. The main role of the city politician is to steer a middle course encouraging the city's obedience to its masters while preventing its enslavement. The way to do so is to promote concord among the citizens and refrain from getting Roman officials too often involved in local affairs; indeed, the Romans themselves would prefer not to play the master. Plutarch does, moreover, stress the importance of patronage; the would-be politician must have a Roman sponsor. A Roman patron is indispensable as a support for one's career and a means for benefiting one's city.

31 Plut. Mor. 798a-827c; for discussion see Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, 161-186.  
32 Plut. Praecepta ger. reip. 17-19 (Mor. 813c-816a).  
34 Plut. Praecepta ger. reip. 17 (Mor. 813e): καὶ τῷ ἐπιφάνειῳ μὴ πολὺ φρουραὶ μὴδε πολίτευον, ἀριστάτου τῶν καλτῶν ἤπαιν τῆς καταλήξ. See C. P. Jones, *Plutarch and Rome*, (Oxford, 1971), 133, for discussion of this oft misinterpreted passage; see also Oliver, *Ruling Power*, 958 n. 27.  
35 Plut. Praecepta ger. reip. 19 (Mor. 814f).  
36 Plut. Praecepta ger. reip. 19 (Mor. 814f-815a).  
37 Plut. Praecepta ger. reip. 18 (Mor. 814c).
Plutarch was not in this tract addressing the emperor in Rome, but rather a man contemplating a political career in the polis of Sardis. The flattery of Aristides gives way to a more realistic appreciation of the position in which Greeks found themselves as members of the empire. The freedom they cherished is still in their grasp, but it is circumscribed by, in Menemachus’ case, the proconsular governor of Asia. There is still scope for a city politician to do valuable service for his city. Now, however, much of that consists in maintaining harmony among his fellow citizens, a difficult enough task in a Greek polis of any period, and especially at that time in Sardis, as Plutarch’s tract suggests. Keeping Rome and her officials out of the business of one’s community is the goal of civic leadership. This is hardly an expression of anti-Roman sentiments, but rather accords well with the Roman desire to allow local leaders autonomy. What strikes the reader is both how Greek Plutarch’s concerns are, with attention centered on the polis, and how Rome can be both an aid and a hindrance in local affairs. The appeal to Roman friends provided the boost a local politician needed, but too frequent intervention vexed Romans and Greeks alike. Plutarch’s concerns were more Greek than imperial, but his concerns are played out, without any noticeable regret or resentment, in the arena marked out by Rome.

This is not an uncommon emphasis among Greeks of the Roman Empire. There were Greeks, to be sure, who sought careers in the imperial administration, but there was a sizable number of Greeks, Plutarch included, which was content to restrict their political activities to Greece and their polis. Indeed, the polis could be seen as a sort of preserve for Greeks in the Roman Empire, a place where Greeks could be Greeks, which was entirely to the liking of both Greeks and Romans.38 Roman attitudes about Greeks could be patronizingly dismissive. The Greeks were, of course, scions of a proud people,

but the days of Greek glory were long over. The Greeks of the imperial period were held to be much inferior to the men of the classical period, but they were expected to stay charmingly Greek. It must be remembered, however, that the Greeks occupied a privileged position in the East; their autonomy was respected as was their culture, moreover, the eastern empire was established and administered largely along Greek lines. Greek remained the linguistic currency for Greeks and non-Greeks alike. Local oligarchs were confirmed in their traditional positions. Greeks could even continue to speak of democracy, though the imperial formulation was far removed from the classical. In short, in many important ways there was a high degree of continuity between the Greeks of the past and those of the imperial period, provided that Rome could be kept out of local affairs.

The empire in the East should be seen culturally and even politically as a Graeco-Roman Empire. Greeks could be comfortable with their place. Provincials not so highly esteemed by Rome, might not find the requirements and restrictions of imperial life as easily acceptable. The picture of provincial experience under the empire offered by Greek authors fails to provide a true outsider’s view. It has, however, consciously in older works and perhaps subconsciously in more modern works provided the lens through which to view other more ambiguous evidence and is largely responsible for the positive picture of provincial attitudes to the Roman Empire.

Other types of evidence for Roman provincial administration are too lacking in depth for our purposes. Inscriptions in the East and West often reflect the acceptance of imperial ideology. The sentiments expressed on stone or bronze are but the individual or communal reflections of imperial ideas. Loyalty and obedience are dominant themes. Where an individual is the subject of an inscription, the point is to advertise his success in fitting into the imperial system even if only at the local level. The medium and the
message are united by their reference to and origin in a sense of belonging to the empire; that is to say, those who inscribe have already become Roman in outlook and have, thereby, lost any value as authentically provincial witnesses.\(^{40}\)

Material evidence is mute and, therefore, open to subjective interpretation on the part of scholars. Questions as to the usefulness of material evidence have been raised in contexts where it is the sole surviving evidence, as in the western provinces.\(^{41}\) It is impossible to reconstruct the intention with which objects were used. Furthermore, even if we could understand the intention of provincials in their use of Roman goods, what does that tell us about their attitude to the empire?

While the models of the Roman Empire cited above have seen Rome’s tolerance of indigenous cultures, which led to a wide diversity of imperial culture, as a strength of Roman imperialism, others have seen the tenacity of certain indigenous traditions as an act of resistance to the empire. Marcel Bénabou in his study of Roman Africa has been a

\(^{40}\) The inscription set up in A.D. 238 by order of the Council of the Three Gauls honoring T. Sennius Sollemnis is a good example of this; *CIL* XIII 3162; see Millar, *Roman Empire and Its Neighbours*, 155-156; Woolf, *Becoming Roman*, 24-26. Sollemnis’ career in his hometown and his benefactions are recorded. So are his close relationships with previous Roman governors of Gaul. Ti. Claudius Paulinus and Aedinius Julianus who later became Praetorian Prefect. The former out of gratitude for Sollemnis’ services during his tenure in Gaul offered his friend a post in Britain when he was sent out to govern that province. A further example is provided by another inscription set up by order of the Council of the Three Gauls; *CIL* XIII 1695; see Woolf, *Becoming Roman*, 78-80. The honorand this time is Q. Iulius Severinus. Though the inscription is entirely concerned with local honors there is much that suggests a Gaul thoroughly at home with Roman conventions. The inscription is in Latin and filled with technical abbreviations. The nomen Iulii shows that his family achieved citizenship in the early days of the province. Severinus is being honored on the occasion of his becoming *Inquisitor Galliarum*, an official of the imperial cult. Although the inscription records the local connections of a man, who identified by his affiliation with the Sequani, many Roman elements intrude. The inscription was set up by men thoroughly conversant with Latin epigraphic conventions and intended for a similar audience.

\(^{41}\) Freeman, “Romanisation,” asks the fundamental question whether there exists such a thing as Roman material culture, that is a material culture that was viewed by ancients as distinctively Roman, rather than, e.g. Italian or Gallic. He uses the example of amphorae found in pre-conquest Britain. Does the use of wine among British elites necessarily suggest that they were trying to project a Roman identity? Might they not have been laying claim to status based on the use of wine by Gallic nobles? Did the ancients recognize as Roman material culture those things that moderns place in that category, e.g. villas? Or, as Macmullen, “Notes on Romanization,” suggests, might they not have merely recognized the superior pleasures wine offered over beer? That is, might provincials not have accepted the package of Roman material culture merely because it provided comforts, conveniences, and techniques superior to old ways?
prime champion of cultural resistance to Rome. He finds signs of this resistance in the conservatism of African religion and onomastics and the preservation of the Punic language. By maintaining such cultural and religious traditions, and resisting encroaching Romanization, the Africans are seen as pursuing a line of cultural resistance paralleling the overt, military resistance of the first-century rebel Tacfarinas.

The theory of cultural resistance as presented by Bétabou and others has proven susceptible to devastating criticism along two lines of attack. The notion of resistance to encroaching assimilation and cultural change falters on the fact that Roman provincial rule and the assimilation of provincial ruling classes were not carried out in the cultural realm. Romans, unlike later imperialists, were less concerned with spreading culture than with peacefully ruling the lands they conquered. With a few exceptions, such as Druidism and human sacrifice in Africa and elsewhere, the Romans were content to leave indigenous traditions intact while allowing local elites to absorb as much from the Romans as they wished, more in the West and less in the East.

A second objection to the notion of cultural resistance paralleling military resistance is that such overt acts as rebellions were often led by those local elites who were most thoroughly imbued with Roman culture. Tacfarinas, who led an African revolt (A.D. 17-24), was a Roman auxiliary. A series of revolts in first-century Gaul

44 This is certainly the implication of Agricola’s importation of Roman cultural institutions into Britain. He hoped that by introducing the finer products of Roman civilization, or fetters as Tacitus prefers to view them, the British nobles would learn to love peace; Tac. Agr. 21.
45 Even the more interventionist view of Ando does not preclude the continuance of indigenous cultural traditions provided that they did not interfere with the creation of a trans-imperial super-culture. This Roman tolerance, or even indifference, and the corresponding freedom of choice open to provincials will emerge in the Jewish texts that form the basis of the current work.
46 Woolf, Becoming Roman, 19-23. For the phenomenon of provincial revolts see S. L. Dyson, “Native Revolts in the Roman Empire,” Historia 20 (1971), 239-274, and idem, “Native Revolt Patterns in the Roman Empire,” ANRW 2.3 (1975), 138-175.
were led by men of distinguished Gallo-Roman pedigree: C. Julius Vindex was governor of Gallia Lugdunensis when he led a revolt in A.D. 68; Julius Classicus, scion of the Treveran royal family and Roman auxiliary commander, joined Julius Tutor and Julius Sabinus in the founding of a revolutionary Empire of the Gauls (*Imperium Gallicarum*) in A.D. 70; C. Julius Civilis, a Batavian, led a revolt closely associated with these Gallic Julii.

It must again be conceded, however, that the evidence for such cultural resistance is patchy at best; for most provinces it is non-existent. Where there is written evidence it comes almost exclusively from Roman sources that report it in the context of provincial unrest. This fact, of course, taints the evidence. Once rebellion has been set afoot, any non-military expression of that rebelliousness, be it religious or cultural, will necessarily present itself as resistance. To use an anachronistic term, one might call it the propaganda that underpins the cause of revolt. The case of the Druids might be examined in this connection.

The fullest and most often analyzed evidence for cultural resistance to Rome comes from Gaul and Britain and involves the Druids.\(^{47}\) Caesar records the power and status of the Druids, but assigns them no role in the Gallic resistance during the conquest.\(^{48}\) The Druids were the targets of Roman acts of restriction and suppression throughout the Julio-Claudian period; whether they were targeted for sedition or human sacrifice is unclear.\(^{49}\) They play a shadowy role in some of the disturbances of first-century Gaul and Britain. The governor of Britain, Suetonius Paullinus, attacked the

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\(^{48}\) Caes. *BG*, 6.13-16. Cicero, *de divinatione*, 1.41.90, records that the Aeduan noble, Diviciacus, was a Druid.

Druid stronghold on the island of Mona (Angelsey); the only reason given, however, is that he wished to equal Corbulo's recent recovery of Armenia. Political activity might be implied by Tacitus' branding them national enemies. No mention is made of Druidic involvement in the revolt of Boudicca that broke out while Suetonius Paullinus was thus engaged. The Druids were involved in the revolt of Civilis in 69 when they broadcast a prophecy proclaiming the burning of the Capitol in Rome during the civil war as a portent of Rome's imminent fall and the rise of Gaul to the possession of the world. One other item records an act of religious resistance to Rome on the part of the Gauls, though Druidical activity is not specified. In 69 an uprising gathered momentum under the leadership of a certain Boian of low status named Mariccus, who claimed to be a god and styled himself the liberator of the Gauls. He succeeded in winning over eight thousand Aeduans to his cause, which failed.

The hints of religious resistance to Rome on the part of British and Gallic Druids are tantalizing. Unfortunately, Tacitus' account is shorn of detail; perhaps little besides rumor reached him. Even if the Roman evidence were fuller, it would still fail to preserve authentic provincial attitudes. It is rendered even less useful for present purposes by its context, for the Druidical activity recorded by Tacitus is set against the backdrop of rebellion. It should be noted, however, that in the relations between Romans and their subjects, rebellion was the exception rather than the norm. Is it possible to speak of resistance during peacetime?

51 Tac. Hist. 4.54: Sed nihil aequus quam incendium Capitolii, ut finem imperio adesse crederent, impulerat. Captam olim a Gallis urbem, sed integra lovis sese manisse imperium: fatali mune igne signum caelestis iras datum et possessionem rerum humanarum Transalpinis genibus portendi superstitione vanam Druidae caneous.
52 Tac. Hist. 2.61: Mariccus quidam, e plebe Boiorum, inserere sese fortunae et provocare arma Romana simulacione numinum ausus est. Iamque adsertor Galliarum et deus (nam id sibi indieterat) concitis octo milibus hominum proximos Aeduorum pagos trahebat.
Again material evidence has usually provided the basis for discussions of peacetime resistance; and again the results have been disappointing. R. Hingley, the author of one such study, has correctly observed that the lack of indigenous voices causes severe difficulties in the recovery of provincial attitudes to Rome. The experience of more recent empires suggests that colonial subjects reacted in a variety of ways to imperial domination; this is a staple of post-colonial studies. There were positive reactions and negative reactions. Positive reactions tend to be public, negative to be private, or at least concealed from the imperial overlord. Historians of the Roman Empire are restricted to the public record of provincials, both epigraphic and literary. What is not available is a range of voices, or "alternative voices," that is the voices of those in resistance to Roman imperialism.

While we can agree with the sentiments expressed by Hingley, it bears noting that a few texts have been proposed as candidates to fill the void of provincial texts. A study by Arnaldo Momigliano shows both how important literary evidence of resistance can be and how disappointing the meager literary evidence that remains is. A handful of Egyptian and other Near Eastern texts, such as the Oracle of the Lamb, the Oracle of the Potter, the Asclepius in the Hermetic corpus, and the Oracle of Hystaspes (preserved in

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53 Two examples will suffice. Webster, "Negotiated Syncretism," interpreted Celtic representations of divine marriage between Mercury and the indigenous goddess Rosmerta as acts of religious resistance on the basis of the importance that the feminine principle held in Celtic religion. The argument is that Rosmerta would be seen by Gauls as the dominant partner in the marriage and would overshadow or hold the Roman Mercury in thrall. The argument breaks down with the identification of Mercury with the chief god of the Gaules, attested by Caes. BG, 6.17. This fact aside the argument is not terribly compelling as an example of resistance; the author is grasping at straws. R. Hingley, "Resistance and Domination: Social Change in Roman Britain," in D. J. Mattingly (ed.), Dialogues in Roman Imperialism: Power, Discourse, and Discrepant Experience in the Roman Empire, JRA Suppl. 23, (Portsmouth, R.I., 1997), 81-102, gives another example. He attributes the move away from the civitates and the continued use of pre-conquest roundhouses to resistance in the form of cultural retardation.

54 R. Hingley, "Resistance and Domination," 81-82.

55 Hingley, "Resistance and Domination," 81-82, rightly points out that the speech put into Calgacus' mouth by Tacitus hardly qualifies as an authentic provincial voice as the points of the Caledonian leader largely echo Tacitus' own reservations about Roman imperialism and the position of his own class under the emperor; Tac. Agr. 30-32.

56 Hingley supposes that resistance would be manifested among the poor, while the rich were receptive to Rome; this need not be the case as I hope to show in the present work.
fragments by Lactantius) offer glimpses of the kind of apocalyptic style literature outside
Judaism that might be construed as hostile to Rome. Most of these, however, seem
originally to have been composed with Macedonian rule, rather than Roman, in mind, and
are of little use in recapturing provincial resistance to the Roman Empire. Only the
*Asclepius* seems to come from a Roman context, but what that context is remains
unclear. It might perhaps be directed against the Jewish Revolt under Trajan, and
therefore reflect the blend of anti-Semitism and anti-Romanism of the *Acta
Alexandrinorum*. The apocalyptic portion is vague and concerned mainly with the
cessation of Egyptian religious practice brought about by the advent of a foreign rule that
causes the gods to flee the land.

These few works afford no clear picture of subject attitudes to Roman rule. The
dating of none of the texts is certain. All but the *Asclepius* seem to deal with
Macedonian, that is Seleucid or Ptolemaic, rule. If they were reused as criticisms of the
Roman Empire—a proposition by no means certain, they merely show that some subjects
did not like Rome, though no specific details are otherwise given. The meaning of the
*Asclepius* is impenetrable. Thus what little evidence that might give insight into the
provincial mindset is all but unusable.

Provincial literary remains are rather disappointing. They are few and what is
extant is generally too closely integrated into the imperial system and too deeply dyed

57 S. K. Eddy, *The King Is Dead: Studies in the Near Eastern Resistance to Hellenism 334-31 B.C.*, (Lincoln, 1961), 32-41, proposes an early second-century B.C. date for the *Oracles of Hystaspes*, with a translation from Persian and republication in Greek during the Mithridatic Wars. Much of the material in the oracle is general and could easily be shifted from an anti-Macedonian viewpoint to an anti-Roman one. The use of the oracle is rendered more difficult in that it is only preserved in fragments by Lactantius. The *Oracle of the Potter*, op. cit. 292-294, is a late third-century B.C. Egyptian text, extant in three Greek translations, the latest of which comes from the third century A.D. Its continuing popularity suggests that despite its original expression of Egyptian resentment towards the Ptolemies, it was pressed into service as anti-Roman propaganda. As such, it contains no material specifically Roman in orientation.


with its ideology to provide an independent outsider’s view of the empire. With the exception of a small handful of pagan apocalyptic texts, Persian and Egyptian, there is very little authentically provincial literature composed by Rome’s subjects in traditional forms. Again apart from the Greeks, who constitute a special class, the pre-conquest cultures of Rome’s subjects are lost to our view. Languages, legal traditions, and architectural features might have persisted into the imperial period, but any literature or sense of national history whether legendary or authentic, any mythological underpinnings of indigenous religious cults, any folktale, songs, poetry, in short any expression of ethnic identity on an intellectual level disappeared from the historical record along with full political freedom.

In the West the loss of any sense of integral cultural identity can be chalked up to the fact that the inhabitants of Gaul, Britain, and Spain were all but illiterate. Inscriptions might be found in the Gallic tongue inscribed in Greek or Latin letters it is true, but there is no hint of a Gallic literature.\textsuperscript{60} What existed of Gallic, or Spanish or British, historical memory must have been transmitted orally. In the literate East, however, this cultural amnesia does not yield to easy explanation.

The assimilation of the western provinces into an imperial Latin culture was mirrored in the East by the spread of the Greek language and culture. In the Near East, the area of closest concern for the present study, the Semitic languages of Syria and neighboring areas, namely Palmyrene, Nabataean, Phoenician and Aramaic, were gradually replaced over the course of the first few centuries of Roman rule by Greek.\textsuperscript{61} The first-century hodge-podge of kingdoms, temple cities, and provinces, under procurators and governors, gave way under the Flavians and Trajan to a more organized and thoroughly provincialized arrangement. Greek was the language of administration,

\textsuperscript{60} Woolf, \textit{Becoming Roman}, 94-96.

\textsuperscript{61} This is a major theme of the important study of F. Millar, \textit{The Roman Near East 31 BC-AD 337}, (Cambridge, Mass., 1993), which provides the basis for much of the discussion here and played an important role in the genesis of this project.
public record, and culture. There remains not a trace of any literature composed in the languages Greek supplanted. Whether such a literature had ever existed cannot be ascertained, though it seems unlikely that one could have and yet vanished so completely.

Rome and the Jews in the wake of the Jewish Revolt

In contrast to the absence of sources for the other subject peoples that comprise the Roman Empire, for the Jews an abundant national literature survives. In contrast to the works of Greek authors who lived under the empire, the Jewish authors provide a vantage point removed from the dominant Greek cultural and political orientation of the eastern empire. Jewish reflections on the empire are expressed in accordance with their national traditions and literature and directed to internal dialogue about Rome. That is to say, the Jewish authors do not write for Roman audiences or, indeed, declaim in the courts of emperors, as does Aristides; nor do they seem tainted by imperial ideology, but rather they write in response to it relying on the time-honored wisdom derived from their national history and embodied in their sacred book, the Bible. A large portion of this literature was written in the Jews' national language, Hebrew.

Many of the specifics of the literature are no longer recoverable. The provenance, whether a work was written in Palestine or in the Diaspora, is often unknown. The authors are unnamed, for the works are either pseudepigraphical or anonymous. The dates are usually uncertain. Historical references are often apocalyptic in form; any attempt to pin these items down to specific events is hazardous. The original language of many compositions is unknown. Many ingenious arguments have been offered on the bases of back-translations and the assertion that peculiar word usages can be explained as

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62 By the end of this period there was a growing body of Syriac literature. Though composed in a Semitic language, a dialect of Aramaic found in Edessa, Syriac literature is largely a derivative of Greek literature in form and content; Millar, *Roman Near East*, 507.

63 Millar, *Roman Near East*, 507, dismisses the notion of the survival of any traditionally Syrian culture in Syria that has left no trace in either literary or material evidence.
mistranslations from another language. In short, the literature is a minefield of conjectures and hypotheses, some sound, but many dubious in the extreme. It is best to sidestep as many of these pitfalls as possible without weakening the aim of one’s study. If an item from the above list must be confronted, a frank and humble confession of the tentativeness of one’s conjecture is the best policy.

For all the difficulties presented by these texts, they nevertheless offer an unparalleled and therefore invaluable glimpse into the mentality of a subject population of the Roman Empire. This unique body of literature has unfortunately languished virtually unexploited by Roman historians. The language barrier is often to blame, but even those texts written in or translated into Greek remain all but unread. When they are used, they generally receive no more than a passing comment. At the hands of scholars of Judaism and Christianity the texts have generally been subjected to theological study much more often than historical study; rarely are they read as evidence for Roman imperial, or perhaps provincial, history.

It would be a monumental task to attempt a thorough survey of this literature with a view to identifying the evidence pertinent to the study of the Roman Empire from the Jewish perspective. The aim of the present work is much more modest. This study will restrict its view to a handful of texts written in response to the destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of Titus and his legions in A.D. 70. Imposing such limits brings many benefits. First, the number of texts swept up in even such a small net is not inconsiderable. Four texts will form the basis of this study: Fourth Ezra, Second (Syriac) Baruch, the Paraleipomena Jeremiae, and the Fourth Sibylline Oracle. A second benefit comes from the near generic homogeneity of these texts allowing direct comparisons to be drawn among them. The only text that is not an apocalypse is the Paraleipomena Jeremiae, which is, nevertheless, closely related to Second Baruch in the traditions used by both. Two of these texts, namely Fourth Ezra and Second Baruch, are among the most studied Pseudepigrapha. They are two of the finest examples of Jewish apocalyptic writing. The
Paraleipomena Jeremiae has been among the least studied of the Pseudepigrapha. The treatment offered in the present work marks a radical departure from previous studies of these texts.

A third benefit is the precision with which these texts can be dated. They were almost certainly written in the decades after A.D. 70. While this might seem a rather vague dating, students familiar with the Pseudepigrapha know that even one terminus is a precious anchor for a text. It is likely that all the texts were penned before the revolt of Bar Kokhba during the reign of Hadrian. Perhaps even more valuable is the fact that all stem from the same event. This presents a unique opportunity to the scholar. It allows for the texts to be read in association with one another, thus providing the scholar the rare chance to reconstruct an historical event relying not on one or two sources in isolation, but on many interrelated sources. The scholar recaptures not an isolated point of view but many voices participating in an ancient debate. One of the more surprising discoveries of the present work is the lack of harmony in this choir. Nor is the matter as simple as separating pro- from anti-Roman voices. Many of the texts bear within themselves the deep conflict of the two positions as the authors struggle to come to terms with the tragedy inflicted by Rome and the continuing presence of the conqueror in the land of Judaea and the powerful allure of accommodation and cooperation if not collaboration.

This brings us to a fourth benefit. Hitherto Josephus' interpretation of the Jewish Revolt and its aftermath and ramifications for the Jews has dominated the scene. These texts complement and supplement the stand taken by the Jewish priest turned Roman citizen and Greek historian. While it cannot be demonstrated that the texts were written in response to Josephus' works, both Greek and Aramaic, the similarity in themes, but often strong divergence in treatment and interpretation offered by a synoptic reading of Josephus and these texts, is remarkable. Though they may not have been written with Josephus' texts in mind, they certainly were aware that men such as Josephus held the
opinions they held. Reading these texts alongside Josephus raises strong doubts that the latter’s reaction is in any way the most representative of Jewish opinion regarding the revolt or Rome.

Scholarly attention has focused primarily on the texts of Josephus to recapture Jewish opinion in the years after the failure and suppression of the first revolt which ended, excepting the reduction of a few fortresses, with the burning of the Temple and razing of Jerusalem. Above all the *Bellum Judaicum* has served as a basis for such discussion. It is not the purpose of this introduction to say anything new on the subject, but merely to examine briefly the historian’s reaction to the revolt and, more importantly, to the power that suppressed it. It is first necessary to set Josephus’ work in the context of the debate that raged in the decades following the failure of the revolt among Jewish leaders. For this purpose another Josephan work is essential, namely the historian’s autobiography.⁶⁴

A charge of warmongering leveled against Josephus compelled him, at least in part, to write the *Vita* defending his conduct of the war in Galilee. The charge was made by another erstwhile revolutionary turned deserter, Justus of Tiberias, who after the war became Agrippa II’s secretary and also wrote a history of the Jewish Revolt.⁶⁵ Justus charged Josephus with furthering the cause of the revolt by inducing the city of Tiberias

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⁶⁴ The dating of the *Vita* is a vexed question. The autobiography was clearly written as a postscript to the *Antiquitates Judaicae* and has, in conjunction with evidence for the date of the death of Agrippa II—another vexed question—which is alluded to in the *Vita*, been dated to the early 90’s A.D., ca. 93-94. Other evidence, notably a few ambiguous inscriptions, converge in support of the date given by the ninth-century Byzantine Patriarch Photius, who assigns the death of Agrippa to 100 on the testimony, he claims, of Justus of Tiberias; Photius, *Bibliotheca* 33. For the problem of dating the *Vita* and the death of Agrippa II see T. Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and His Society*, 2nd ed., (London, 2002), 237-238; N. Kokkinos, *The Herodian Dynasty: Origins, Role in Society, and Eclipse*, JSP Suppl. 30, (Sheffield, 1998), 396-399; S. Mason (ed.), *Flavius Josephus, Translation and Commentary*, vol. 9: *Life of Josephus*, (Leiden, 2001), xv-xix. Mason, *Life of Josephus*, 225, provides a translation of Photius’ discussion of the *Chronicle* of Justus of Tiberias.

to rebel. Josephus, however, turns the charge back onto Justus and his fellow Tiberians, claiming that they had engaged in hostilities before he set foot in Galilee. He contrasts the rebellious Tiberians with the citizens of Sepphoris, who remained loyal to Rome. To demonstrate the validity of his own account—and to bolster his own credentials as a Roman loyalist—Josephus appeals to Vespasian’s Commentarii on the war for evidence of Justus’ role in fomenting revolt in Tiberias.

The controversy surrounding Josephus and Justus offers a view into late first-century debates about the Jewish War. Josephus was eager to rid himself of any suspicion that he had devoted himself to the cause of revolt against Rome. To do so he countered Justus’ accusation with one of his own. Though Justus’ answer, as well as his history, is lost, we can assume that he was equally appalled by Josephus’ countercharge and sought to avoid it. Josephus and Justus might be taken as representatives of one class of survivors of the revolt. Josephus was a protégé of Jerusalem’s destroyer, Titus; Justus of Rome’s Jewish ally in the suppression of the Jewish Revolt, Agrippa II. These men, and others like them, were desperate to avoid the charge of warmongering. Surely this is understandable given their postwar situation. To whom were their apologies directed?

A seemingly obvious answer is that Josephus—the loss of Justus’ history prevents our including his aims in our analysis—had a Roman audience in mind. Josephus, now the client of the Flavians, sought to absolve his class from charges of disloyalty. Indeed, Josephus claims that he presented his Bellum to Vespasian and Titus and was rewarded with testimony to his accuracy. Titus even endorsed it and ordered that it be published. Neither of these statements proves that the emperors were the intended audience; Josephus does not claim that either Vespasian or Titus even read his history. Had they read it, we can be sure that they would have appreciated the flattering portraits

69 Jos. Vita, 361.
70 Jos. Vita, 363.
Josephus painted of his patrons, but would they have been won over by Josephus’ defense of Jewish elites? Even if they had been convinced that Josephus and his class were, if not secure in their innocence, at least mitigated in their guilt, what did Josephus expect them to do? Surely he did not look for a restoration of the Temple and reconstitution of the ruling class around the high priesthood; there is nothing in his works to suggest this. There was no reason to protest his own loyalty or Agrippa’s, both were amply rewarded for their participation; even Justus’ life was spared at Agrippa’s request.71

Though Josephus twice professes his intended audience to be Greeks and Romans in the preface to the Bellum, and once claims a more expansive audience, namely all those under Roman control, the more certain audience would have been other Jews.72 While Vespasian and Titus are not claimed as actual readers, Agrippa II is. Josephus sent portions of the work in progress to the king. Not only did Agrippa read them, but he even wrote sixty-two letters attesting to Josephus’ accuracy.73 Members of Agrippa’s family are claimed by Josephus as additional readers.74 Justus might also have read Josephus’ account, for according to Josephus, the Tiberian’s history did not appear until many years after the end of the war and the death of the principals.75 Josephus also says that he sold copies of the work to a certain Herod, whose identity is not known, and to Julius

72 Romans and Greeks are named as the intended audience at Jos. BJ 1.6, 16; the inhabitants of the Roman Empire at BJ 1.3: preδιδα δι’ αυτῶν τό τε τοῦ Ῥωμαίου θυγατέρας.
73 Elsewhere Josephus says that he presented copies to the emperors and other Romans who had participated in the war, though without any claim that the latter read or commented upon the volumes; Cf 1.50-51
Archelaus, Agrippa’s brother-in-law; both vouched for Josephus’ truthfulness.76
Josephus’ repeated appeals to Jewish readers, especially Herodians, for testimony to his accuracy probably would have carried more weight with a Jewish than a Roman audience. It is suggestive that Josephus does not name his claimed Roman readers for such testimony, apart from the emperors.

The evidence for Josephus’ audience is limited. A case can be made that the historian wrote with a primarily Jewish audience in mind. It is not entirely clear what aim Josephus would have had in mind in writing his account for Roman readers; what did he seek to gain? His tendencies point more clearly to a Jewish audience. Josephus did not produce a defense of Jews for Romans, but rather a defense of the Romans and their empire aimed at Jews. A reader such as Agrippa would find support for his position as a Roman collaborator from the beginning in such a work; this might explain the king’s enthusiastic support for the project. Josephus might also have penned his work with a more critical audience in mind, namely those for whom the contemplation of reconciliation with the destroyers of the Temple and holy city was a less welcome idea.77
Josephus’ histories do not, however, read as an explicit tract for Jewish cooperation with Rome, rather he subtly shapes the narrative, relying especially on certain programmatic speeches, to suggest a modus vivendi for Jewish elites as subjects of an empire that had just violently suppressed a revolt in which many had served as leaders.

76 Jos. CA, 1.51-52: παλαίς δὲ τοῖς ἐμφανῶς ἐπίπεδοις, ἠμβᾶν καὶ τὰς Ἑλληνικὰς σωφίας ματακεφώνον, ἀν ἐκεῖνο Θεός Ἀρχέλαος, Πρόδρομος ἐκ παιδείων, αὐτὸς καὶ θαυμαστότατος βασιλεὺς Αγρίππας, οὗτος μὲν εὖ ἀπετέχει ἡμιπρόσφατον ὅτι τῆς Ἑλλήνως πρώτης ἐκκλησίας, εἷς ὃν ἐπιστολάμανε καὶ συνεπότας, ἐπὶ τοὺς Ἴδους ἡ χειροθεμένη μετάβασιν τοὺς γεγονότων ἡ παράλειψις.
77 Jerusalem, it is true, no longer held the central position in Judaean society; there remained, however, many Jews in Judaea, Galilee, and the vicinity. There were still Jewish towns in these areas. It seems reasonable to suppose that Jewish elites were still necessary components of the administration of the province of Judaea, if not at the provincial level, as seems to be the case before the revolt, at least at the local level in the Jewish towns. It is to these elites that Josephus’ apology for the Roman Empire might have been directed in part.
Josephus makes his case for continued Jewish cooperation with Rome in the speech delivered by Agrippa on the eve of revolt. The argument has both a political and a religious aspect.

Agrippa begins by showing the injustice of going to war against Caesar, who is not to blame for the actions of his procurators. Nor is it any great dishonor to serve the rulers of the entire world, for the Romans rule over many including the Athenians, Lacedaemonians, and Macedonians, all great warriors in past times. Where do the Jews find the confidence to face the might of Rome, which has swept the world and even gone beyond the traditional boundaries of it by conquering Britain? Agrippa follows this with a list of Rome’s conquests; it is not that these countries willingly surrendered liberty, rather they were overawed by Rome’s might. The Jews should expect no allies to come to their aid from the East. Agrippa continues in a more religious vein, but our rehearsal must pause here to examine the political argument.

Josephus, through Agrippa, rests his case for accommodation to Rome on the might of the empire, the Roman genius for command and the consequent justice of their claim for loyalty, and the notion that the emperor rather than his subordinates is the proper focus of that loyalty.

The vastness of the Roman Empire was impressive to Josephus. Elsewhere, in a digression on the Roman army, Josephus attributes Rome’s large empire to her military might. They owed their military successes to their attention to detail and their making

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78 Jos. BJ 2.352-354: φάσε δ' ἀληθεία τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις ἱστορίας ἀναγράφεται ἀνακλητικῶς τῆς Ῥωμαίου πάντως ἁδύναμον Ἰωάννης Καίσαρ, πρὸς τὴν ἀνιμασίαν τοῦ πάλιννον ὀορέτῳ διὰ τὴν ποιήσεως ἀνέκαλλιν, οὐδὲ γε τοῖς ὑπὸ τὴν ἀνιμασίαν οὗ ἀνεκάλλιον ἁπλάτος ἁπλὰ ἀντικρίζεται ἀλλὰ ἐκδόσεις τε γεγονός τε ἐνιαυτην ἢ μηδε. ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ δή ἐνα πελώρην καὶ δὴ μακρὰς αὐτοῖς τρυπεσίων καὶ μὴ γινόμενον ὁ μισαλκάτος πολεμικός, καὶ τῶν μὲν ἑαυτῶν ἐγκαλομένων τιμηθάσχατον ἐν ὑπάρχουσιν ὅτι σαφὲς ὁ αὐτός ἐπιτρέπει μοι ναὴς ποιῆσαι, καὶ τῶν διαδεδομένων εἰςοὶ εἰσελθεῖν μεταδότους καυηθέντα δ' ἀπας τῶν πάλιμων ὀορέτῳ ἀποδέχεσθαι δόχος ἐνα μηδείς τοῦ ἐκλείσεως ὑπὸ μαχητηρίων ὑπό βοηθούς.

79 Jos. BJ 2.356-361.
80 Jos. BJ 2.362-364.
81 Jos. BJ 2.365-387: Greece, Macedonia, Asia, Thrace, Illyria, Dalmatia, Gaul, Spain, Germany, Britain, even Parthia sends hostages, Carthage, Cyrene, Africa, and Egypt.
82 Jos. BJ 2.388-389.
adequate preparation for all contingencies that might be met on campaign. Rome had earned her empire; it was not the gift of fortune. Because Rome had labored to acquire this empire, her subjects owed their allegiance.

The emperor was the paramount focus of provincial loyalty in Agrippa’s speech. That being the case, rebellion was an act of disloyalty to him, not the procurators. This lesson is demonstrated throughout Josephus’ account of the years under procuratorial rule that preceded the revolt. Throughout this history, Josephus is careful to distinguish the points of contact between Jews and Rome. Roman rule is arranged hierarchically with the emperor at the top, the procurators at the bottom, and the legates of Syria, who often had to intervene in procuratorial Judaea, occupying a position somewhere in the middle. The emperors are presented in a favorable light. Caligula is a notable exception, but even he was generous to his friend Agrippa I.

The procurators do not receive the same positive treatment. The best of them, such as Tiberius Julius Alexander and Porcius Festus, are praised for vigorously combating brigands and revolutionaries; the worst of them, such as Pontius Pilatus and Felix, connive with the brigands and offend Jewish religious sensibilities—seemingly on purpose—at every turn. Events in Judaea, especially when conflicts arose between the Jews and the Roman procurators, often required the intervention of the governors of Syria. These were men of senatorial rank, ex-praetors and occasionally ex-consuls. They possessed a status and refinement far superior to the procurators who were drawn from the equestrian class, though on one notorious occasion a freedman was appointed procurator.

84 Jos. BJ 3.71.
86 Pontius Pilatus: Jos. BJ 2.169-174, 175-177; Ant. 18.55-59, 60-62, 85-89; cf. Philo, Leg. ad Gaium, 299-306; Lk. 13.1; Mk. 15.7.
87 An excellent example of the high caliber of the Syrian legates is afforded by L. Vitellius (A.D. 35-39?; cos. 34), whose administration of the province is acclaimed by Tac. Ann. 6.32. Vitellius yielded to Jewish
Agrippa also appeals to the Jews' religious sentiments in his call for loyalty to Rome. The greatness of Rome's empire is sure proof that God is on the side of the Romans. The Jews can, therefore, have no hope of divine assistance in fighting the Romans.88 The divine sanctioning of the Roman Empire is more fully developed in another set piece: Josephus' speech to the rebels in Jerusalem.89 Josephus' argument here revolves around two main points: God is on the side of the Romans and has now deserted the Jews because of their impiety.

God's favor has come to rest on Rome in the cyclic rise and fall of empires. In Josephus' day the scepter of empire had come round to Italy. The ancestors of Josephus' contemporaries had recognized the law of might and had yielded to the Romans; there was no shame in this, for their ancestors, though lovers of freedom, had seen that God was on the side of the Romans.90 To fight against Rome was to fight against God.91

But now the Jews in fighting against Rome had unwittingly taken up arms against God. The conversion of the Temple into a fortress had further outraged God.92 Josephus calls to mind the similar occasion of the Babylonian capture of Jerusalem. The Jews

requests that his army bearing standards with images of the emperor not pass through Jewish territory en route to fight Aretas; Jos. Ant. 18.120-123. With this should be contrasted Pilatus' seemingly deliberate, in Josephus' account, provocation of the Jews when he ordered Roman soldiers to march into Jerusalem with such standards; Jos. BJ 2.169-174; Ant. 18.55-59. Vitellius also remitted the market toll introduced in Jerusalem by Herod and returned the high priest's vestments to Jewish custody; Ant. 18.90. Another remarkable Syrian legate, P. Petronius (397-41/2) famously risked his life opposing the mad scheme of Caligula to erect a statue in the Temple; BJ 2.192-203; Ant. 18.261-288, 302-309; cf. Philo, Leg. ad Gaium, 225-243.

88 Jos. BJ 2.390-394: λεπτὸν οὖν ἐπὶ τῆς ἡσυχίας συμμετοχῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν παρὰ Ρωμαίους τέκτονα ἢ δὲ γὰς ταιοῦτον τριλεπίους ζημιῶσαν ἅδησταν, σκέψατε ὃς ίδα τῆς ἑφευρέτης ἀκρατίαν, οἱ καὶ πρὸς εὐφημιστώς πολεμώντες, εἰσαγαγόντας, καὶ δ' ἢ μᾶλλον τὸν Ἱερών ἐπιστᾶντα σῶμαν, τὴν ἀναγνωσμένην παραδείγματος ἀποτρέψεσθαι...πάς δὲ ἐπικαλεῖτο τὸν Ἱερόν πρὸς τὴν ἁμαρτίαν οἱ παραδείγματα ἐκνεύσεως τῆς ὑπὸ αὐτὸ θεομάτων ἐπεισερέσθαι...ἐπεισερέσθαι δὲ ἐκατόν πάλαις τῇ δήμῳ τινῶν ἡ ἀδελφία ἡ ἀδυνατίσατα βοήθησα...ὅτας δὲ τὴν παρὰ λαμβάνω τοῦ εἰδώς ἀπάσκεπος, γεωργὸν ἀλλότριον ἐπολεμώμενοι αἰρέσθαι.

89 Jos. BJ 5.362-419.

90 Jos. BJ 5.367-368: μεταβαθοῦν γὰς πρὸς αὐτοῦς πάντων τὴν τύρφην, καὶ κατὰ ἐνακοινώσεως τῆς ἄρχον τοῦ Ἰουδαίας ἱεροῦ, ὅμως τὸ μὴ ἀφήσωμεν καὶ πρὸς ἱερούς ἱεροθεμένους καὶ τοῦ αἰσχροῦς, ἵνα τῆς ἀσκοπήσῃς καὶ τὰ ἐκείνα παρὰ τῆς ἱεροτροπίας ἱερού, καὶ τοῦ τούτου παρὰ τῆς ἱεροτροπίας ἱερού καὶ τῆς γεγομένης ἡτίς τι καὶ τοῦ ἐκείνου ἱεροτροπίας ἱερού. ἐπεισέγαγεν τῇ Ρωμαίοις, ὥσις δὲ ἢ μὴ τῶν Ἰωσήφων γὰς αὐτὸς τῷ ἔξω ἀπεισέγαγεν.

91 Jos. BJ 5.378: ἐγὼ μὲν φήσαμεν τὰ ἄρα τῆς Ἱεροτροπίας ἱεροῦ ἔσοι αὐτῶν ἱεροτρόποι τῷ ἐμοί, ὥσις τοῦτοι μὴ μᾶνης Ρωμαίοις παρασκευάσαντες ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ Ἱερῷ.

whom Josephus addressed were much worse than Zedekiah and the inhabitants at that time, for the latter did not put Jeremiah to death though he loudly proclaimed their sins; now Josephus was in danger of his life for doing the same thing.93

Josephus makes the final point that the Jews deserve their servitude under Rome. The stasis that broke out between Aristobulus and Hyrcanus was responsible for bringing Pompey against Jerusalem. God deprived the Jews of liberty because they were unworthy of it. Even the Jews of those days were less wicked than those listening to Pompey against Jerusalem. God deprived the Jews of liberty because they were now Josephus was in danger of his life for doing the same thing.

The height of the rebels' wickedness is the pollution of the Temple with bloodshed and sin. In a deft move Josephus contrasts Jewish impiety toward the Temple in the sack of Jerusalem by a Roman army.94

The point is made strikingly when Titus himself calls upon those besieged within the Temple to respect its holiness, promising Roman protection to the shrine; 1.10: "οὖν ἐκκένωσαν τὴν τάφρον τοῦ ἱεροῦ τοῦ ἀγγέλου αὐτοῦ ἐνδύσατο, τούτερον δὲ τὸν ναὸν ἔτακεν καὶ μὴ ἔδιώκετο (128). Josephus introduces this theme of Roman piety towards the Temple, given its highest expression by Titus, in the preface to his work; 1.10: οὗτος αὐτὸν στήτω ὁ θυσία καθέλει, καὶ τὰς ἤλειφας κεφαλὰς καὶ τῷ τῷ ἐπὶ τὸν ναὸν καὶ ἔδιώκεσαν ἔκλεισαν αὐτὸν κυκλώσαν, μέσῳ αὐτῶν ἄγνωστα χαλάζας. Καθὼς Καίσαρ, ἐν παρά τῷ πόλεμῳ τοῦ μὲν θύσιν ἐλέγον ἔνδυσαν τοῦ τῶν ἱερεὺς ἐκεῖνοι.
Josephus thus falls into a seeming contradiction. On the one hand he claims that God is on the Roman side irrespective of Jewish sin, but on the other he says that God has deserted his Temple and taken his stand with Rome because the Jews have polluted the sanctuary. This can be resolved by realizing that Josephus’ conception of Roman power and Jewish subjection need not be a zero-sum game. God can, in a sense, be on both sides at once, provided that the Jews do not alienate him. They must avoid conflict both internecine and against God’s favorite, Rome, in order to do so. The resolution is that reached by the ancestors of Josephus’ audience, who were able to combine piety with subjection to Rome.

Josephus takes pains in his history to find a *modus vivendi* for Jews in the wake of the Roman suppression of the revolt; he sketches out a way for Jews to come to terms with that Roman might so recently turned against them and to reconcile themselves to continued domination by Rome. Josephus was himself a collaborator during the revolt and after the war found patronage not from the Jewish king Agrippa but from the Flavians and above all Titus. Relying on both a pragmatic view of the politics of the day and reading the signs on a supernatural, that is to say divine level, Josephus comes to the conclusion that Rome cannot be resisted. The political argument boils down to a compulsion of might; Rome is strong and must be obeyed. The fact that God had bestowed his favor upon the Romans and their empire might have made subservience a bit more palatable. There was certainly no reason why the Jews might not also be in God’s favor. The Temple was destroyed because it had been polluted by the Jews; the Romans were not responsible. This explanation removed an obstacle to the resumption of cooperative relations between Jews and Rome.
As Josephus' *Vita* makes clear, there was still debate about the revolt years after its suppression. Josephus and Justus trade accusations of furthering the cause of revolt and warmongering. Josephus wrote his history of the revolt probably during the decade that followed it in an attempt to reconcile Jew and Roman. The debate, however, was much wider than Josephus and Justus, nor were all participants so ready to reconcile themselves to the destroyer of Jerusalem and its Temple. These other voices have lain silent to this point. They are recoverable though a serious attempt to do so has not been mounted.

These other voices are contained in the texts to be discussed in the chapters that follow. It is not the case that they have gone completely unnoticed. The two most prominent of them, Fourth Ezra and Second Baruch, have attracted the attention of scholars trying to piece together the aftermath of the revolt. On the basis of these texts something of the religious mood of post-bellum Judaea has been reconstructed.97 The apocalyptic nature of the texts and their emphasis on the time to come, when Israel would be restored and the nations punished, has obscured the value of the texts for their evidence of the situation current in Judaea. The Jews could not just sit and wait for the Messiah to come. They had to continue on in a world radically changed; change was not, however, total. The Temple was gone, but the Romans remained. The texts have been left largely to scholars who study Jewish and Christian literature; their studies have tended to concentrate on the theological and literary aspects of the texts rather than their use as evidence of the Jewish experience of Roman imperialism.98 Even these studies rarely range beyond the two grander texts of Fourth Ezra and Second Baruch.99


It is the purpose of this study to read these texts in their Roman imperial context. To divorce the texts from the world in which they were written is to ignore the impact that a contemporary political situation has on literary works. The Book of Daniel is a prime example of the intersection of religious and political concerns. Nor does such a reading do violence to the texts. Rather, as I hope to show, the texts can only be properly and most fully understood when read in light of the political environment that provided the matrix of their composition.

The present study, then, has two aims. The primary aim is to salvage authentic provincial reactions to the Roman Empire. That these texts are written in response to a violent imperial act, namely the suppression of a revolt, makes the need for reflection on the empire more acute. The texts are certainly not lacking in pathos or passion. The air of lament in the texts must not obscure what is perhaps the most surprising discovery of all. This is the polyphony of the voices to be heard. No text is quite as favorable to Rome as Josephus, but few of the texts deliver absolute condemnations of Rome either. The conflicting views of late first-century Jewish society regarding Rome are mirrored by the conflicts within individual texts. It is also significant that the texts seem often to

reserve their greatest ire for fellow Jews; in this they are like Josephus, though they concentrate their attacks on a different target from that chosen by the historian.

In contrast to Josephus, none of these texts suggests that God is on the side of the Romans. The corollary, that God is, therefore, on the side of the Jews, does not, however, follow. Another surprising element of the texts is the muting of any feeling of loss occasioned by the fall of the Temple. The notion that the Jews were expectantly awaiting a restoration finds very little support in the texts. If the Temple is mentioned at all, negative views are expressed as often, if not more often, than positive views. The ambivalence regarding the Temple only underscores more firmly that the perspective is turned towards Rome rather than towards the religious problems brought about by loss of Jerusalem and its Temple.
CHAPTER ONE

FOURTH EZRA

Introduction to the Text

The apocalypse known as Fourth Ezra exists in many manuscripts and versions. While scholarly consensus supports an original Hebrew text, the apocalypse is extant now only in translations into various languages of the East and West, made, it would seem, from a Greek intermediary text rather than from the Hebrew original; only a few fragments of the Greek text survive.¹

The most widely used version is the Latin text found as an appendix to the Vulgate.² The Latin text has also served as the source of later translations into Arabic, modern Greek, Armenian, Slavonic, Georgian, and Hebrew.³

A Syriac version also exists. It is closely related to the Latin version and probably stems from the same Greek manuscript tradition. The text is found in a lone sixth- or seventh-century manuscript of the Peshitta.⁴ The Syriac text served as the basis for a

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¹ For arguments supporting a Hebrew original see B. Violet, Die Apokalypsen des Ezra und des Baruch in deutscher Gestalt, GCS 32, (Leipzig, 1924), xxxi-xxxix; A. F. J. Klijn, Der lateinische Text der Apokalypse des Ezra, TD 131, (Berlin, 1983), 9-11, suggests that the Hebrew text may have contained Aramaic influences; M. E. Stone, Fourth Ezra: A Commentary on the Book of Fourth Ezra, (Minneapolis, 1990), 10-11, provides a list of supporters of the Hebrew original. For Greek fragments see A.-M. Denis, Fragmenta pseudepigraphorum quae supersunt graeco una cum Historicorum et Auctorium Judaeorum Hellenistarum Fragmentis, PVTG 3, (Leiden, 1970), 130-132; for commentary on the fragments see idem, Introduction aux Pseudepigraphes grecs d'Ancien Testament, SVTP 1, (Leiden, 1970), 194-200; Klijn, Apokalypse des Ezra, 11; Stone, Commentary, 1. Klijn, Apokalypse des Ezra, 11-12, provides a list of conjectured mistranslations in the versions that suggest a Greek text underlying the translations.


³ For these translations from the Latin see Stone, Commentary, 4-5.

⁴ This manuscript was first edited by A. M. Ceriani, Monumenta Sacra et Profana e codicibus praesertim Bibliothecae Ambrosianae, (Milan, 1861), 1-99-124; for a reproduction of the manuscript see idem, Translatio Syra Pescito Veteris Testamenti ex codice Ambrosiano sec. fere VI photolithographice edita,
translation into Arabic.\(^5\) There are also two Arabic translations dependent directly on a Greek original without a Syriac intermediary.\(^6\)

A second set of translations into Oriental languages arose from a Greek text that differed from the one that provided the basis for the above translations. This Greek tradition is now represented by translations into Ethiopic, Georgian, and Coptic.\(^7\)

An extensively reworked and supplemented version exists in an Armenian translation from the Greek. The additions and changes were likely in the Greek exemplar, though they do not seem to be original readings.\(^8\)

Earlier scholarship on the apocalypse was devoted to the isolation and identification of the sources from which the current text was cobbled together. As many as five separate sources were thought to make up the text; the boundaries between the sources were drawn on theological and eschatological lines.\(^9\) More recent scholarship

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\(^9\) The case for a composite work was made first by R. Kabisch, *Das vierte Buch Ezra auf seine Quellen untersucht*, (Göttingen, 1889); the theory was assured dominance among English speaking students by G. H. Box, *Esra-Apocalypse*; and *idem*, "4 Ezra," in *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, R. H. Charles (ed.), (Oxford, 1913), 2.542-624. The sources were the so-called "Salathiel Apocalypse" (S: Visions 1 through 4), the Eagle Vision (A: Vision 5), the Son of Man Vision (M: Vision 6), the Ezra Vision (E: Vision 7), and the eschatological material in the first four visions (E2: Visions 1 through 4). For a detailed account of the arguments for both the composite and the unified text see Stone, *Commentary*, 11-15; for a concise account see E. McE. Humphrey, *The Ladies and the Cities: Transformation and Apocalyptic Identity in Joseph and Asenath, 4 Ezra, the Apocalypse and The Shepherd of Hermas*, JSPSup 17 (Sheffield, 1995), 57-58.
has opposed this tendency and it is now almost universally accepted that the work is a
unified text, though, of course, various traditions and genres might be found in it that
predate the final text. Acceptance of a unified text has permitted scholars to devote
their analysis to the overall meaning of the text.

Summary of the Text

The apocalypse of Ezra (Fourth Ezra) consists of the central chapters (3-14) of the book
otherwise known in the English apocrypha as II Esdras. The text is divided into a series
of seven visions, though properly speaking only Visions 4-6 constitute true visions
received by the seer; one is a waking vision and two come in dreams. Visions 1-3 consist
of dialogues between Ezra and an angel, while Vision 7 describes the inspired dictation
of the books of the Bible by Ezra. The author paid great attention to the structure of the
visions.

Vision 1 (3.1-5.20) opens with the seer lying on his bed in Babylon, thirty years
after the destruction of Jerusalem. He is troubled by the felicity of Babylon while

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10 Opposition to Kabisch's source-critical theory came early from H. Gunkel, in a review of Kabisch's
book, TLZ 16.1 (1901), 5-11; followed by B. Violet, Die Ezra-Apokalypse; for a review of the various
expressions—not all, of course, in harmony with each other—of the now dominant theory of unity, see
Stone, Commentary, 14-21; cf. more concisely Humphrey, The Ladies and the Cities, 57-58. Three
important works that have attempted overall interpretations of the text should be mentioned; they are W.
Harnisch, Verhängnis und Verheissung der Geschichte: Untersuchungen zum Zeit- und
Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 97, (Göttingen, 1969); E. Brandenburger, Die Verborgenheit
Gottes im Weltgeschehen: Das literarische und theologische Problem des 4. Ersrabuches, Abhandlungen
zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments 68, (Zürich, 1981); E. Breech, "These Fragments I Have

11 The books associated with Ezra go under a confusing profusion of names and numbers, complicated by
the fact that in the different biblical traditions, viz. Vulgate, Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, English Bible,
Russian Bible, the same book might have different titles. For a convenient chart giving the various titles
Pseudepigrapha, 2 vols. (Garden City, 1985), 1.516; the same chart is available in B. M. Metzger and
R. E. Murphy (eds.), The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books,
Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus,
Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum 2:2, (Assen and Philadelphia, 1984), 157-158 n. 1,
provides another tabulation of the titles.

12 Stone, Commentary, 50-51 with tables, and passim, especially in the sections entitled "Form and
Structure," pays careful attention to the structure of the text.
Jerusalem lies desolate. After recounting the history of the nations and Israel from Adam, he asks whether Babylon is in some way better than Israel. An angel named Uriel appears and answers that Ezra cannot understand the ways of God. The conversation between Ezra and Uriel turns to eschatology. The seer asks how long a time remains until the end comes; the angel assures him that the end is hastening. The angel begins to open to Ezra the signs that will herald the last days.

In Vision 2 (5.21-6.34) Ezra meditates on the divine election of Israel, which was chosen from all the peoples to be God’s own. Now, however, this special relationship between God and Israel seems to have been voided by God’s handing over Israel to the nations. Again the angel appears and asks Ezra whether he could love Israel more than God does. Ezra and the angel discuss the timetable of the end of the world; the angel again assures Ezra that it is coming. Then a voice with a sound like the roar of many waters details the signs of the eschaton as the ground begins to rock.

Vision 3 (6.35-9.25) is by far the longest. After recounting the story of the creation of the world and Adam, Ezra repeats God’s claim that the world was created for his people. Ezra asks why Israel does not possess its inheritance, but is instead subjected to the domination of the nations. The angel answers by telling Ezra that there are two worlds, the present one full of trials and a future world of bliss that is reserved for the just. This opens a new topic of discussion, when Ezra comments on the paucity of those who will actually attain this blissful afterlife. He notes that most are destined for future torments as a result of their wickedness in this life. This leads the seer ultimately to beg God’s mercy for Israel, for not all Israel has sinned, and the whole ought to be saved through the righteousness of the few (8.24-36). The angel advises Ezra to cease to concern himself with the wicked and describes again the signs that will indicate that this world is coming to an end.

Vision 4 (9.26-10.59) marks a turning point in the text. The vision begins as did the preceding three. Ezra addresses a prayer to God in which he rehearses the history of
Israel’s sinfulness despite receipt of the Law. What would surely turn out to be a
repetition of the angelic dialogues of the earlier visions is interrupted when Ezra catches
sight of a woman who is mourning. He finds out that she is grief-stricken over the death
of her only son. Ezra remonstrates with her over her self-centered grief in the face of the
national grief inspired in all Israel by the humiliation of Zion. As Ezra continues to
rebuke the woman she suddenly turns into a city causing the seer in his terror at the
transformation to collapse in a swoon. The angel returns and interprets the vision that
Ezra has just seen. The woman is Zion. The symbolism of many other details of the
woman’s story are then explained, though the exact meaning of the son’s death is never
made clear. The angel invites Ezra to enter the city, which he does.

In Vision 5 (11.1-12.51), the Eagle Vision, Ezra dreams that he sees an eagle
come up from the sea. The eagle has twelve wings, eight smaller wings growing out of
and opposing the twelve, and three heads. Gradually the wings disappear one by one.
The first head then disappears and the third head devours the second one. A lion then
comes from the sea and rebukes the eagle for its wickedness. The remaining head
vanishes, the last two opposing wings follow it, and the eagle’s body is consumed in
flames. The angel interprets the vision. The eagle represents the fourth empire seen by
Daniel in a vision recorded in the biblical Book of Daniel. The wings and heads are
rulers. The lion is the Messiah.

Vision 6 (13.1-58) is another dream. A man emerges from the sea and flies over
the earth. The inhabitants are terrified and melt like wax when they hear his voice. Men
from all corners of the earth gather together to make war against the man. The man
carves a mountain from an unseen place and perches atop it to meet the onrush of those
gathered to attack him. He sends a stream of fire from his mouth, which reduces his
attackers to ashes. Then the man gathers together a more peaceful multitude. The angel
reveals the meaning. The man is the Messiah. The multitudes that gather against him are
the nations. The mountain is Zion. The peaceable multitude is the ten tribes that had been taken into captivity by Shalmaneser king of the Assyrians.

In Vision 7 (14.1-49) Ezra receives a commission from God to dictate the books of the Law in order to publish them for his people. Before this, however, Ezra addresses the people and tells them that they have been punished because they have wickedly departed from the Law. Mercy will be guaranteed only by disciplining themselves. Ezra then drinks a cup filled with a fiery liquid and dictates ninety-four books, twenty-four of which are to be published for all to read, while the remaining seventy are to be reserved only for the wise.

Date of Composition

There is very little external evidence for the dating of the composition of Fourth Ezra. Clement of Alexandria cites a passage from the text providing a terminus ante quem for the Greek translation around the end of the second century A.D.13 Any attempt to date the text more narrowly must rely on internal evidence. Two items have been pressed into service for this question, the opening lines of the apocalypse and the Eagle Vision. The seer claims the thirtieth year after the destruction of the city as the time of his visions.14 If this is taken at face value the composition date can be set at A.D. 100. The author of Fourth Ezra might, however, have been influenced by the opening lines of the biblical Book of Ezekiel, wherein the prophet finds himself in a similar situation, also in the thirtieth year.15 Fourth Ezra does not otherwise bear the

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13 Clem. Alex. Strom. 3.16 quotes 4 Ezra 5.35. Other quotations and allusions have been posited, e.g. Ep. Barn. 12.1 might quote 4 Ezra 5.5a; Tert. de praes. haeret. 3.7 might quote 4 Ezra 8.20; Cyprian, lib. ad Dem. 3 might quote 4 Ezra 5.54-55. These have provoked enough skepticism to render them all suspect. St. Ambrose certainly quotes from the text on more than one occasion. For proposed citations in both the Greek and Latin Fathers see Violet, Die Esra-Apocalypse, 433-438; for the Latin Fathers alone see Klijn, Apokalypse des Ezra, 93-97.


15 Ezek. 1.1: "In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the river Chebar, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God."
imprint of Ezekiel, which leads one to wonder what the significance of influence in the opening dating formula would be.

A more promising item comes from the Eagle Vision. Before dissecting the vision for historical evidence, however, it will be useful to give a detailed summary of the pertinent images and their angelic interpretation.

In a dream vision Ezra saw an eagle arise from the sea. It had twelve wings and three heads, which latter appendages were at rest; the middle head was greater than the other two. From its wings grew opposing wings, which became small; later their number is given as eight. A voice came from the eagle’s body telling the wings and heads that they should not all be awake at the same time, but rather each should be in turn; the heads are to come last. The first wing on the right side rose up and ruled, then it vanished. The next one rose up and ruled for a long time before it too vanished. Then the voice declared that no other would rule as long as the second wing, or even half as long. Then the third one arose and disappeared in turn. Thus it went for all the wings, each ruling in its turn before vanishing. There follows a summary statement to the effect that the wings each in its time rose up in order to rule; some achieved this goal and others did not.

It is not at all clear whether the statement summarizes what preceded it, viz. the record of the twelve wings, or what follows it, viz. the story of the eight winglets; see Stone, Commentary, 345 on 11.20, for discussion.

16 4 Ezra 11.1b: cui [sc. aquilae] erant duodecim alae pennarum et capita tria; 11.4 (heads at rest).
17 4 Ezra 11.3: Et vidi, et de pennis eius nascebantur contrariae pennae, et ipsae fiebant in pennaeculis minitis et modicis; 11.11: Et numeravi contrarias pennas eius, et ecce ipsae erant octo.
18 4 Ezra 11.7-10: Nolite omnes simul vigilare, dormite smasquique in loco suo et per tempus vigilate (8).
19 4 Ezra 11.12-14: Et vidi, et ecce ad dexteram partem surrexit una penna et regnavit super omnem terram. Et factum est cum regnaret, et venit et finit et non apparuit, ita ut non appararet locus eius. Et sequens exsurrexit et regnabat et ipsa multum tempus (12-13).
20 4 Ezra 11.15-17: Nemo post te tenebit tempus tuum, sed nec dimidium eius (17).
21 4 Ezra 11.18-19: Et sic contingebat omnibus alis singulatim principatum gerere et iterum nasquam comparare (19).
22 4 Ezra 11.20-21: Et vidi, et ecce in tempore sequentes pennae eriebantur et ipsae a dextera parte, ut tenerent et ipsae principat; et ex his erant quae tenebant, sed tamen statim non comparerebant. Nam et altigae ex eis eriebantur, sed non tenebant principatam. It is not at all clear whether the statement summarizes what preceded it, viz. the record of the twelve wings, or what follows it, viz. the story of the eight winglets; see Stone, Commentary, 345 on 11.20, for discussion.
23 4 Ezra 11.22: Et vidi post hoc, et ecce non compararent duodecim pennae et duo pennacula.
There remained only the three heads and six winglets. Two winglets separated from the other four and took up position under the head on the right. Then the four remaining winglets decided to rise up and rule. The first did, but immediately disappeared. The departure of the second was even faster. As the next two winglets contemplated ruling the middle head awoke and embraced the other two heads. Then the middle head turned and ate the winglets. After this it ruled the earth until it disappeared.

The two heads that remained ruled over the earth until the head on the right ate the one on the left. Then a lion appeared and rebuked the eagle. The final head vanished and the two remaining winglets rose up to rule; their reign was one of exile and tumult. Finally they both disappeared and the eagle burst into flames.

The angelic interpretation clarifies certain of the symbols, though many points of the dream’s interpretation remain obscure. The eagle is the fourth beast of the vision that Daniel had received in the biblical Book of Daniel; the interpretation given to Ezra by the angel, however, differs from that given to Daniel. The eagle represents a kingdom over which twelve kings will rule; the second will rule longer than any of his successors. This is the meaning of the twelve wings.

The voice that issued from the body of the eagle signifies that after the time of a certain reign, there will be disturbances that will almost cause the kingdom to fall. The

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24 4 Ezra 11.23-27.
26 4 Ezra 11.34-35: Et vidi et ecce devoravit caput a dextera parte illud quod est a laeva (35).
27 4 Ezra 11.36-12.3a.
28 4 Ezra 12.11-12: Aquilam quam vidisti ascendendam de mari, hoc est regnum quartum, quod visum est in visu Daniele fratri tuo, sed non est illi interpretatum, quomodo ego nunc tibi interpretor vel interpretavi.
29 4 Ezra 12.13-16: Regnabunt autem in ea XII reges, unus post unum (14).
30 4 Ezra 12.17-18: Et quomodo audisti vocem quae locuta est non de capitis eius existentem, sed de medio corpore eius, hoc est interpretatio: quoniam post tempus regni illius nascentur contentiones non modicas,
eight winglets represent eight kings who will rise up and whose times will be short; two of them will perish as the middle time approaches. The other four will be saved until the time when the end begins to approach; two will be saved until the end.\textsuperscript{31}

The three heads symbolize three reigns that the Most High will cause to rise up in the last times; they will rule over the earth. The disappearance of the large central head shows that one of these rulers will die in bed, though in great agony. The sword will devour the remaining two. One ruler will kill the other by the sword, and will in turn be dispatched by the sword in the last times.\textsuperscript{32} The last two winglets are those rulers whom the Most High has preserved for the very end; their reigns will be filled with tumult.\textsuperscript{33} The lion represents the Messiah, who will deliver his people.\textsuperscript{34}

The great detail of the vision and its interpretation suggest that the author had in mind a veiled review of the Roman Empire. Two considerations prompt the identification of the eagle with Rome. First, the eagle itself would be a potent symbol of Roman military might calling to mind the legionary standards which consisted of a metallic eagle mounted on a pole. Secondly, we have the angel’s explanation that the Eagle Vision represents the fourth kingdom of Daniel’s vision, but freshly interpreted.\textsuperscript{35} Josephus’ treatment of the Danielic prophecies shows that a shift in interpretation had
occurred by the late first century A.D. Indeed, even Josephus included Rome in the prophecies. The conjunction of this tendency in late first-century Jewish thought and the substitution of the Roman eagle for the unidentifiable fourth beast of Daniel suggests strongly that the Eagle Vision refers to the Roman Empire.

The historical interpretation of the eagle is not at all straightforward; no theory suggested is without difficulties. All attempts at decoding the vision center on the three heads. The most likely candidates for identification are the Flavian emperors—Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian—or the Severans—Septimius Severus, Caracalla, and Geta. The Flavian hypothesis has found more adherents and is also adopted here. The Severan hypothesis has recently found a strong defender, who has argued that the details of the vision better fit Septimius Severus and his sons than Vespasian and his. It is necessary to review the claims of both hypotheses.

First to be examined will be the evidence favoring the Severan hypothesis as advanced in the recent treatment. The deaths of the three heads accord well with the deaths of the Severans. Septimius Severus fell victim to illness and died in his bed; he also suffered from gout. This matches the death of the ruler signified by the first head.

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36 Jos. Ant. 10.209-210, interpreting Daniel’s other vision of the statue, seems to identify the feet of iron with Rome, though he demurs to explain the meaning of the stone that smashes the feet: ταύτην ἄλλη παίρνει τὴν λοξὴν ὅμως σιδών καὶ κρατᾶν ἵνα ἵππαν διὰ τῆς τῶν σιδών ὄμως εἶναι τὴν αὐτῆς σταυροῦσα τῆς τῶν χρυσῶν καὶ τῶν ἑρμῶν καὶ τῶν χάλεων. Ἀδέλφων δὲ καὶ πάντων τῶν Δαυίδων τῆς βασιλείας, ἄλλο ἄλλο μὲν τὸν Πέτρον ἤτρεκε καὶ τὰ γραπτά καὶ συγγράμματα συγγράφακεν αὐτῷ μάλιστα διδάχθηνεν. Josephus omits the vision of the beasts, though in summary, 10.276, he claims that Daniel foresaw that the Romans would lay Jerusalem waste: τῶν αὐτῶν δὲ τρέφοντας Δαυίδος καὶ πάντων Ἡρωδίους ἡμῖν ἁπαξ καὶ ἔτι τοῖς αὐτῶν θραύμασιν τὰ Ἰορδανίαν καὶ ἀνάμεσα ἠγελαδήνεται.


40 SHA, Sev. 19.1; Herodian 3.15.2; Dio 77.15.2; Eutrop. 8.19; Aurel. Vict. de Caes. 20.27. None of these texts, strictly speaking, speaks of agonies in death, commenting rather, if at all, on the prolonged nature of the disease. DiTommaso, 23, puts undue emphasis on the grievousness of the disease, an element that all but the author of the Historia Augusta (morbo gravissimo extinctus iam senes) ignored. It would seem then, that the final illness of Severus was not memorably torturous.
who died in his bed, though in agony.\textsuperscript{41} That the head on the right devoured the head on the left meant, according to the angelic interpreter, that one of the surviving three rulers would kill the other with a sword and would in turn fall prey to the sword.\textsuperscript{42} Caracalla did indeed have his brother Geta killed by a group of centurions and was in turn killed by a group of soldiers put up to the task by the praetorian prefect M. Opellius Macrinus, who became emperor and raised his son, Diadumenianus, to the same dignity.\textsuperscript{43}

The four winglets that precede the heads are taken as references to P. Helvius Pertinax, M. Didius Severus Julianus, C. Pescennius Niger, and D. Clodius Septimius Albinus.\textsuperscript{44} The first two had very brief reigns, 87 and 66 days respectively; the brevity accords well with the description of the first pair of winglets before the heads.\textsuperscript{45} The pair of winglets that immediately preceded the heads was devoured by the middle head. The vision records that as the winglets were contemplating the assumption of the rule, the middle head awoke and joined with the other two heads before eating the winglets.\textsuperscript{46} Septimius Severus, upon ascending the throne, had to deal with the two rivals, Pescennius Niger and Clodius Albinus, both of whom held provincial governorships at the time of Commodus’ death. In possession of sufficient troops to enforce their claim, both sought the throne. Pescennius Niger was defeated and killed first. To avoid fighting both pretenders at the same time, Septimius had granted Clodius Albinus the title of Caesar. After Niger’s death, however, Albinus was also defeated and killed.

\textsuperscript{41} 4 Ezra 12.26: \textit{Et quoniam vidisti caput maius non apparescentem, quoniam unus ex eis super lectum suum morietur et tamen cum tormentis.}

\textsuperscript{42} 4 Ezra 12.27-28: \textit{Nam duo qui superaverunt, gladius eos comedet. Unius enim gladius comedet qui cum eo, sed tamen et hic gladio in novissimis cadet.}

\textsuperscript{43} Geta: Dio epit. 78.2.1-6; Herodian 4.4.3; SHA, Carac. 2.4-6; Macrinus: SHA, 7.1-2; Dio epit. 79.5; Herodian 4.13. DiTommaso, “Eagle Vision,” 26-28, identifies the final pair of winglets with Macrinus and Diadumenianus.

\textsuperscript{44} DiTommaso, “Eagle Vision,” 18-21.

\textsuperscript{45} 4 Ezra 11.25-27: \textit{Et vidi, et ecce haec subalares cogitabant se erigere et tenere principatus. Et vidi, et ecce una erecta est sed statim non comparuit; et secunda et haec velocius quam prior non comparuit.}

\textsuperscript{46} 4 Ezra 11.28-31: \textit{Et vidi, et ecce duae quae superaverunt apud semelipsas cogitabant et ipsae regnare. Et in eo cum cogitarent, et ecce unam de quiescentium capitum, quod erat medium evigilabat, hoc enim erat duorum capitis maior. Et vidi quomodo compleura est duo capita secum, et ecce conversum est caput cum his qui cum ea erant et comedit duas subalares quae cogitabant regnare.}

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There are also difficulties that cannot be tidily explained by the Severan hypothesis, or indeed by the Flavian hypothesis either. If one were to add to the twelve wings the four winglets that precede the two winglets associated with Clodius Albinus and Pescennius Niger, the total of eighteen falls short of the twenty-one emperors from Julius Caesar through Didius Julianus, especially when one considers that the vision reports that not all of the men represented by the wings and winglets actually achieved the rule.\footnote{4 Ezra 11.20b-21: *Ex his erant quae tenebant, se tamen statim non comparabant. Nam et aliaeae ex eis erigebantur, sed non tenebant principatum.* It would seem that the vision reckons Caesar as a king based on the statement that the second wing would rule more than twice as long as any other. Augustus, if his reign is calculated from the death of Caesar would fit this criterion; if calculated from Actium (31 B.C.-A.D. 14) then it falls a little short of doubling the reigns of Tiberius (14-37) and Antoninus Pius (138-161). On this question see DiTommaso, “Eagle Vision,” 29-31.}

A further difficulty arises. It is not at all clear why the Severans would be singled out as targets of Jewish animosity. If the Severan hypothesis were adopted, it would point to an updating of the Eagle Vision, for Fourth Ezra must antedate the reign of Septimius Severus, as it was quoted by Clement of Alexandria. What special circumstances would lead a redactor to revive the Eagle Vision in the early third century? The reuse of such an anti-Roman tract as the Eagle Vision, or even Fourth Ezra, should arise during a period of anti-Roman sentiment. It is hard to imagine an early third-century context for such a revival. It must be admitted that the Severan hypothesis, especially in its recent formulation, does powerfully account for the evidence of the heads and counter-wings. The recent restatement of it was also accompanied by criticism of the Flavian hypothesis. The argument against the Flavian identification, however, is not as strong as it would seem.

The angelic interpreter says that the emperor signified by the middle head will die in his bed in agony. Vespasian’s death was peaceful. He died of an acute case of diarrhoea as part of a larger intestinal illness, which left him bedridden.\footnote{Suet. Vesp. 24: *Hic cum super urgentem valitudinem creberrimo frigidae aquae usu etiam intestina vitiasset nec eo minus muneriibus imperatorius ex constantudine fungeretur, ut etiam legationes audiret*} As he was
rising from the bed death came upon him. It has been argued that the figure in the Eagle Vision cannot be Vespasian because diarrhoea is not painful and the emperor did not die in his bed, but in the act of rising from it.\(^49\) This is certainly nitpicking.\(^50\) That no source explicitly mentions the agonies of the dying Vespasian need not prevent a man from imagining that such a death would be accompanied by torments.\(^51\)

Titus followed his father in dying peacefully; Domitian did not kill him. Yet the Eagle Vision contains the statement that of the two remaining kings, one would kill the other. Given Titus’ popularity and his brother’s bad reputation, it would not be surprising if rumors that Domitian killed the emperor proliferated. Suetonius says that Domitian plotted against Titus and ordered that he be left for dead in his final illness, while life yet remained in him. His memory was also assaulted in Domitian’s public utterances.\(^52\) This portrait of fraternal rivalry comes from a particularly well-informed near contemporary; there is no reason to doubt that rumor was rampant. Cassius Dio does record that people commonly suspected Domitian of assassinating his brother. He even preserves a report of the outlandish method of death: Domitian had the ailing Titus packed in a chest full of ice.\(^53\) Of certain relevance to the present question is the Twelfth Sibylline Oracle, which portrays Titus falling smitten by double-edged bronze, a clear reference to assassination

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\(^{50}\) If one wants to apply such rigor, it is worth noting that Caracalla was not killed by a sword, as the Eagle Vision would have it, but by a dagger. In an apocalyptic text one cannot expect that level of specificity. Another point should be noted. The fact that Suetonius, who had access to imperial archives and moved in high circles close to the emperor, knows of something, does not mean that every writer within the bounds of the empire would know it. Another point, just because Suetonius published some fact does not ensure that it will become common knowledge.

\(^{51}\) Especially so, if that author was indulging in wishful thinking while contemplating the death of a hated tyrant.

\(^{52}\) Suet. Tit. 9.3: Fretrem insidiari sibi non desinenterem, sed paene ex professo sollicitantem exercitus, meditantem fugam; Dom. 2.3: neque cessavit ex eo insidias struere fratri clam palamque, quoad corrupit gravi valitudine, prius quam plane efflaret animam, pro mortuo deseri iussit; defunctumque nullo praeterquam consecrationis honore dignatus, saepe etiam carpsit obliquis orationibus et edictis.

\(^{53}\) Dio epit. 66.26.2: αὐτῷ τὸν δὲ κατάσκοντα, ἢτοι τοῖς ἁμαρτούσις, πάντες τῶν τοῖς ἁμαρτωμένοις ἄνδρας κατάσκοντα θαύματος ἔφεσαν οἱ Δωμετίατοι εὐθὺς, ὡς τὴν τοῖς τούτοις παρεσχέτωσι, ὡς Ἰάσων ἤπειρων.
by the sword though not necessarily at the hands of Domitian.\textsuperscript{54} It is not improbable that rumors were circulating in the late first century to the effect that Domitian had been responsible for the death of his beloved brother and predecessor.\textsuperscript{55}

The case for the identification of the three heads with the Flavians is no less plausible than their identification with the Severans. There is, however, a further point that favors the Flavian identification. In the vision, the seer observes that the middle head takes the other two into alliance with itself before devouring the two winglets.\textsuperscript{56} This item surely fits the Flavians better than it does the Severans. Septimius Severus did not raise Geta to the imperial dignity until the closing years of his reign, long after the defeat of Pescennius Niger and Clodius Albinus. Caracalla was made Caesar only after the defeat of Niger and not made Augustus until 198, nearly a year after the defeat of Albinus; at the time he was made Augustus Caracalla was about nine years old.

Titus, on the other hand, was from the beginning of Vespasian’s reign and even before during the Jewish War a full-fledged partner in his father’s rule.\textsuperscript{57} Domitian, too, had taken part in the events of A.D. 69. He was in Rome when the war between Vespasian and Vitellius ended; after the defeat of Vitellius at Cremona he was hailed as Caesar and made praetor urbanus.\textsuperscript{58} The association of the sons in the father’s rule is much more a feature of Vespasian’s reign than Septimius Severus’.

The evidence thus inclines to the Flavian identification of the three heads. It remains to identify the four winglets that preceded the heads. The treatment of the two pairs by the author of Fourth Ezra differs. The first pair contemplated arising and holding

\textsuperscript{54} Sib. Or. 12.122-123: ἐστι τ' ἐὰν τοὺς ἐνδιδή καὶ κλάματος ἀνήκ. τὸν ὑπερ βελεστήν τιμάμενον· ἀνά ὅταν ἀποκέφαλων δολίων καὶ διὸ στρατηγὸν τιμαθείς. βοήθεις τ' ἐν διπλῆ Ῥώμης ἀκράντι χαλκῷ.

\textsuperscript{55} In this case, the truth of Titus’ death is entirely beside the point; all that matters is the perception or assumption of Domitian’s involvement in it.

\textsuperscript{56} 4 Ezra 11.30.

\textsuperscript{57} Suet. Tit. 6.1: Neque ex eo destitit partem atque etiam tuorem imperii agere. Triumphavit cum patre consuramque sessit una, eodem collega et in tribunicia potestate et in septem consulatibus fuit; receptaque ad se prope omnium officiorum cura, cum patris nomine et epistulas ipse dictaret et edicta conscriberet orationesque in senatu recitaret etiam quaestoris vice, praefecturam quoque praetori suscepit.

\textsuperscript{58} Suet. Dom. 1.3. Domitian was also made a partner in the administration of Titus; Suet. Tit. 9.3.
the rule, and did rise up in turn before vanishing. The second pair contemplated ruling, but were interrupted in their cogitations and swallowed by the head. This should perhaps be taken together with the author’s statement that some of the wings ruled and some did not, to indicate that of the four winglets the first two did rule and the second two did not, or, at least, were not recognized as ruling.

Might we then be able to identify the first two wings with Galba and Otho and the second two with Vitellius and the Batavian rebel Julius Civilis? From a Flavian point of view this is suitable. Galba and Otho seem to have been recognized as legitimate emperors. Vitellius and Civilis were necessarily viewed respectively as usurper and rebel. This would mean that the author of the Eagle Vision, writing under the Flavians,

59 There is some evidence that the Flavians capitalized on the overthrow of Galba in their propaganda war against Vitellius, who had raised rebellion against Galba, though Otho was more intimately involved in the killing of the emperor and his heir L. Calpurnius Piso Licinianus. The Flavian supporter and commander of Legio VII Galbiana restored the images of Galba that had been cast down in the Italian municipalities, Tac. Hist. 3.7: Deisordata die res interpretatione gloriaeque in mutua accipitur, postquam Galbae imaginex discordia temporum subversas in omnibus municipiis recoli iussit Antonius, decorum pro causa ratus, s1 placere Galbae principatus et pariter revivescere credentur. The first day that Domitian presided in the Senate after the Flavian victory he brought up the question of honors for Galba; Tac. Hist. 4.40: Quo die senatum ingressus est Domitianus...Referens Caesare de restituendis Galbae honoribus, consuelt Cuirius Montanus ut Pisonis quoque memoria celebraretur. Patres utrumque iussere: de Pisone inritum fuit. Vespasian, however, declined to follow through with a senatorial decree authorizing the erection of a statue to Galba on the site of his death; Suet. Galba 23. Titus reissued select coin types used by his predecessors. Those honored included Augustus, Tiberius, Claudius, and Galba; H. Mattingly et al. (ed.), Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum, 6 vols. (London, 1923-1962), 2.bxxv-bxxviii; C. Ando, Imperialism and Ideology, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2000), 36. Titus had been despatched from operations in Judea by Vespasian, in order that he might travel to Rome and congratulate Galba on his accession. When Titus heard the report that Galba was dead, he returned to Judea; Tac. Hist. 2.1; Suet. Tit. 5.1. Flavian recognition of Otho is demonstrated by the oath of loyalty to the new emperor that Vespasian administered to the legions in Judea and that Mucianus administered to his army in Syria; Tac. Hist. 1.76, but cf. 2.6; Plut. Otho 4.2. DiTommaso, “Eagle Vision,” 18, rejects the identification of the heads with the Flavians on the grounds that the middle head is depicted as devouring two winglets, when in fact there should be three, viz. Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. This was not, however, how the situation appeared to contemporaries, for Vespasian did not in any sense come out the winner in a four-way contest, having defeated the three other claimants. Galba, as has been shown, and perhaps even Otho were not seen as opponents of Vespasian; only Vitellius was of the three.

60 Especially eloquent is the erasure not only of Vitellius’ name, but also his brother’s, from the Acts of the Arval Brethren; CIL. 6.2051 = ILS 241 = M. McCrum and A. G. Woodhead (eds.), Select Documents of the Principates of the Flavian Emperors Including the Year of Revolution A.D. 68-69, (Cambridge, 1961), nos. 2-5. The names of Galba, Piso, and Otho are untouched. DiTommaso, “Eagle Vision,” 25, rejects the identification with Vitellius on the grounds that he was dead (20 December 69) before Vespasian took the throne. Vespasian, however, considered 1 July 69, the day on which the Egyptian legions under Tiberius Julius Alexander declared for him, his dies imperii, rather than 21 December, the date the Senate recognized his claim; Suet. Vesp. 6.3; Tac. Hist. 2.79; P. Fouad 18 = McCrum and Woodhead, Select Documents, 41.
would be prompted by the Flavian account of the year 69, which required Vitellius to be viewed as a usurper so as to justify Vespasian’s bid for empire. Civilis, who had started out as a supporter of Vespasian against Vitellius, began a revolt that came to include a Gallic component as well under Julius Classicus, Julius Tutor, and Julius Sabinus; the revolt was suppressed by Q. Petillius Cerialis.  

It seems reasonable to date the Eagle Vision broadly to the Flavian era. The three heads fit very well the perceptions entertained by contemporaries of the Flavians, though not always the historical facts, for example with the rumored murder of Titus by Domitian. The symbolical setting of the three heads in the midst of the winglets can also be explained with what small degree of plausibility the chaos of the years 69 and 70 permit. Is a narrower dating possible?  

The evidence of the vision suggests a date during the reign of Domitian (81-96). According to the vision, the leonine Messiah arose during the time of the last head. While the lion was rebuking the eagle, the third head disappeared; then the remaining two wings began their brief and tumultuous reign. The implication is that the Messiah would arise during the reign of Domitian. The vision would then present the reigns of Nerva and Trajan as the final act of the Roman Empire. The notion that this is an ex eventu prophecy falls flat, for the Messiah did not, in fact, arise during the reign of Domitian. This has, rather, to be wishful thinking on the part of our author, who hoped for the coming of the Messiah during the reign of Domitian. The two surviving winglets need not on this reckoning represent Nerva and Trajan; they might conceal some otherwise unknown apparent successors, or might be purely formulaic.

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61 For the revolt see the sources in PIR² nos. 264 (Iulius Civilis), 267 (Iulius Classicus), 535 (Iulius Sabinus), and 607 (Iulius Tutor).
64 Nor, on DiTommaso's Severan hypothesis, did the Messiah arise during Caracalla's reign.
When specifically in Domitian's reign the Eagle Vision and Fourth Ezra were composed is impossible to establish. If one wishes to credit the figure of thirty years at the beginning of the text, then a date near the end seems probable. On balance, a date earlier in the reign seems slightly more favorable, because it is closer to the disaster of A.D. 70.65

Analysis of the Text's Message

Fourth Ezra offers an extremely rich field for enquiry. The complicated psychological and theological development of the character of Ezra has been subjected to minute and indeed ingenious study for well over a century. Less attention has been paid to the historical value of the text as an expression of Jewish sentiments in the wake of the suppressed revolt of 66-70. This historical question will guide the present treatment.

Probably the most surprising feature of the text is the limited concern that the author shows for the actual destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple. To the modern observer this would seem to be the central religious and social problem of late first century Judaism. For the author of Fourth Ezra, however, this is not the case. To be sure, the loss of the city and Temple are important. Vision 4, the central vision of the apocalypse, includes a bitter lament over the destruction of the city, the Temple, the cult, the priesthood and other cultic personnel, but this is not a dominant theme of the text as a whole.66 The central concern of the author throughout most of the book is the meaning of Israel's subordination to Rome particularly and the nations generally. The chief difficulty the author faces is the reconciliation of this reality with the special relationship

65 It will be shown below, however, that the Flavian suppression of the Jewish revolt was not uppermost in the author's mind. Another consideration that might point to a date earlier in Domitian's reign is the dating of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle close to the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 during Titus' brief reign. If the texts in this study are to be seen in dialogue with each other, as seems called for by the similarity of their content, then a briefer compass for their composition would be likely.

66 The central importance of Vision 4 as a conversion experience of the seer has been explored by M. E. Stone, "Reactions to the Destructions of the Second Temple," JSJ 12 (1982), 195-204; idem, Commentary, 29-33, 334-342.
that Israel shares with God. In other words, the author's distress is caused by the continued domination of Israel by Rome, of which the destruction of Jerusalem and the suppression of the revolt is only one part.

This orientation of the text is made clear in the opening lines of and throughout the first vision. The text opens in the thirtieth year since the destruction of Jerusalem with Ezra lying on his bed in Babylon, where his mind is disturbed by the desolation of Zion and the felicity of those who inhabit Babylon.\footnote{4 Ezra 3.1-2: Anno tricesimo ruinae civitatis eram in Babilone, ego Salathiel, qui et Ezras, et conturbatus eram super cubili meo recumbens, et cogitationes meae ascendebant super cor meum, quoniam vidi desertionem Sion et habundantiam eorum qui habitabant in Babilone.} Two questions arise, namely the meaning of the thirtieth year and the significance of Babylon.

It is a staple of New Testament and Second Temple Judaic studies that Babylon is a trope for Rome; the acceptance of this identification is so widespread and common as to require no specific citation of its use. Though the identification is presented as self-evident and in no need of justification, the question of its propriety should nevertheless be raised. It must first be noticed that the appearance of Babylon in the texts of Second Temple Judaism is by no means as common as one would imagine. Among the Pseudepigrapha preserved in Latin it is found only in Fourth Ezra, Jubilees, and the Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum wrongly attributed to Philo.\footnote{4 Ezra 3.1, 2, 28, 31; LAB 6.1; Jub. 20.12. In the latter two works it clearly refers to Babylon and is not used in the context of the destruction of Jerusalem.} Among those preserved in Greek it is found in the Paraleipomena Jeremiae; Sibylline Oracles 3, 4, and 5; various books of the Vitae Prophetarum including the lives of Ezechiel, Daniel, Habakkuk, Haggai, and Zechariah (recension A); and a few fragmentary historians used by Eusebius, Hecataeus (apud Josephus), and Clement of Alexandria.\footnote{For citations see A.-M. Delitzsch, Concordance grecque des Pseudepigraphes d'Ancien Testament, (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1887), 202. For our purposes it is necessary to notice only that most of the references are not used in the context of the Babylonian sack of Jerusalem, wherein we might most expect the use of Babylon as a veiled reference to Rome; Sib. Or. 3.104, 160, 384; Sib. Or. 4.93; Sib. Or. 5.6, 23, 116, 434. Exceptions include Sib. Or. 3.301, 303, 307, which should probably be dated before A.D. 70 and therefore refer to the Babylonian sack of Jerusalem; J. Geffcken, Komposition und Entstehungszeit der Oracul...
It is in the texts written after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70 Babylon shows up with most frequency. These texts can all be plausibly dated to the Roman period and all treat the destruction of the Temple. It, therefore, seems extremely likely that the authors of the texts intended to represent Rome through the symbol of Babylon. By so doing the authors were able to locate the recent destruction of Jerusalem within the historical experience of the people of Israel. That is to say, it is an element of apocalyptic writing to view present events through the lens of the historical experience of Israel. Though the identification cannot be made with absolute certainty, the likelihood is so strong as to be unassailable.

The author of Fourth Ezra in contrast to the authors of Second Baruch and the Paralipomena Jeremiae does not provide a description of the actual destruction of Jerusalem. Rather he sets his story of Ezra's visions outside Palestine and thirty years after the event. One effect of the choice of setting is to draw the reader's attention away from the contemplation of the shocking act of destruction itself. Instead the author concentrates on the fact of Israel's continued domination by the Roman conqueror. It is the fact of Israel's subjection to the Rome that provides the central issue of Fourth Ezra. The problem is viewed from various angles through the first three visions.

Sibyllina, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur N.F. 8.1, (Leipzig, 1902), 6-7; J. Collins, The Sibyllic Oracles of Egyptian Judaism, SBL Dissertation Series 13, (Missoula, 1974), 24-33; idem, “The Sibylline Oracles, Book 3,” in J. H. Charlesworth, The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, 2 vols. (Garden City, 1983-1985), 1.354-355. Sib. Or. 5.143 clearly identifies Babylon with Rome as the place from which Nero will flee; as a result we might also be able to read Sib. Or. 5.159 in the same way. The occasions when Babylon is mentioned in the Vita Prophetarum are for the most part straightforward recollections of Old Testament events that happen to be associated with the city and devoid, it would seem, of symbolic meaning; 3.16; 12.7; but cf. 12.10-12; 14.1. Only Vit. Proph. 4.21 could conceivably raise the question of identity. It is, nevertheless, unclear whether the text was composed before or after 70. The texts include Fourth Ezra, Second Baruch, and the Paralipomena Jeremiae. The New Testament Apocalypse of St. John must also, of course, be added to this list.

71 The Paralipomena Jeremiae is not an apocalyptic text, but is closely related to the traditions found in Second Baruch. It is difficult to imagine, for instance, that authors of the Roman period following the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 would be concerned with the city of Babylon itself. It is worth pointing out that in texts prior to A.D. 70 the Romans generally appear as Kittim; Dan. 11.30: “For ships of the Kittim shall come against him and he shall lose heart and withdraw.” The texts from Qumran treat of Rome under the veil of the Kittim as well.
The author labors to construct a solution relevant to his own time and in the context of the late first-century debate over Roman-Jewish relations after 70. The revelations of the fifth and sixth vision also directly concern themselves with Rome, for it becomes clear in the dialogic visions in the first part of the text that the only true solution is an eschatological one. The final vision, concerning the republishing of the Law, lays the groundwork for salvation at the end of the present world.\(^73\)

The text opens with the seer lying on his bed in Babylon. He is stirred to distress by the contemplation of Rome's present felicity in contrast to the desolation of Zion.\(^74\)

The thirty-year interval between the fall of Jerusalem and the beginning of Ezra's visions allows the author to concentrate his attention on the fact of Rome's continued prosperity as opposed to the unhappiness of the Jews. Later in the first vision, the angel attempts through a parable to explain to Ezra that he cannot hope to understand the things of heaven.\(^75\) Ezra, however, declares that he does not seek to understand heavenly things, but the things that are part of the everyday experience of his people, namely that the Jews have been given over to the nations.\(^76\) This last statement demonstrates that the problem is not with the one-time destruction of Jerusalem, but that the situation that the Jews find themselves in, day in and day out, rankles the author. This point is made more elaborately in the second vision.

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\(^{73}\) Fourth Ezra is an extremely rich text. The present discussion cannot address all questions raised by it. An attempt is made here to trace out a neglected aspect of the author's presentation, one important for grounding both author and work in their historical context. The following exposition will proceed along thematic lines, rather than analyzing each vision in turn.\(^74\) 4 Ezra 3.2: *quoniam vidi desertionem Sion et habundantiam eorum qui habitabant in Babilone.* On the fairly secure supposition of the identity of Babylon and Rome, the latter term will be generally be substituted for the former in the present discussion.\(^75\) 4 Ezra 4.13-21. The parable tells of a war waged by the trees of the forest against the sea in an attempt to gain more land on which to expand. The waves of the sea also launched a war against the forest in order to expand their own territory. Both sides were stopped: the trees by fire and the waves by the immovable sand of the shore. The moral: *Quemadmodum enim terra silvae data est et mare fluctibus suis, sic et qui super terram habitant quae sunt super terram intelligere solummodo possunt, et qui super caelos super altitudinem caelorum (21).*\(^76\) 4 Ezra 4.23: *Non enim volui interrogare de superioribus viis, sed de his quae permaneunt per nos cotidie, proprie quod Israel datas est in obproprium gentibus, quem dilexisti populum datas est tribubus impio, et les patrum nostrorum in invitus deducta est, et dispositiones scriptae nusquam sunt.*
Ezra is again moved in his distress to lift up his voice to God seeking an answer for Israel’s present state. He contemplates the election of Israel and the contradiction he sees between the special place of Israel before God and its current status in the world. Babylon has now been replaced in the author’s discussion by the nations. Ezra recalls a catalogue of symbols for Israel’s election: out of the forests of the earth, God chose one vine; from the lands of the world, he has chosen one region; from all the world’s flowers, he has picked one lily; from the depths of the sea, he has filled one river; from the cities, he has consecrated to himself Zion; from the birds, he has taken one dove; from the flocks, he has selected one sheep; from the multitude of the peoples, he has chosen one and bestowed upon it the Law. If Israel was specially chosen by God, it seems inconceivable that the one people should be handed over to the many.

Again the point is that the Jews have a status inferior to the nations, or to Rome. The author raises questions based on the traditional understanding of the special relationship between God and Israel, for from the election of Abraham his descendants have been considered a chosen people. It is the current domination of the Jews by Rome, not the destruction of Jerusalem itself, though this event cast the fact of Jewish subjugation into high relief, that upsets the author. This is the crux of the issue facing Jews in the late first century.

The author treats the same question again in the beginning of the third vision. After recounting the traditional story of Creation, Ezra states that God declared that all had been created for his people, whereas the nations are to be reckoned as nothing. This

77 4 Ezra 5.23-27: et ex omnibus aedificatis civitatibus sanctificasti tibimetipsi Sion...et ex omnibus multiplicatis populis adquisisti tibi populum unum...Et nunc, Domine, ut quid dedisti unum pluribus et praeparasti unam radicem super aliam et dispersisti unicum tuum in multis (25b, 27a, 28). Stone, Commentary, 90, translates praeparasti unam radicem super aliam with “(Why hast thou) dishonored the one root beyond the others,” on the conjecture that the author misread ρειάκας for ρέιακας. Stone, Commentary, 126-132, demonstrates that the items chosen by the author are familiar symbols for Israel in both the Bible and extra-biblical Jewish literature.

78 Between Vision 1 and Vision 2 the author makes a transition from talking about Babylon (Rome) to talking about the nations. The nations, however, occupy the same place held by Rome in the author’s presentation, namely that of domination over Israel. The reason for this switch will be discussed below.
is in conflict with the current situation, wherein God's people have been given into the hands of the nations and therefore have been dispossessed of their inheritance. Here the author goes far beyond his earlier formulations. Not only is Israel's subjection to Rome a problem, but even more so Roman domination is preventing Israel from assuming its proper place as master of the world. In other words, the Roman Empire ought to be instead an empire ruled over by the Jews. Underlying Ezra's prayer in Vision 3 is the same issue of the Jews' current situation as a subject of Rome; this is incompatible with the special promises that God made.

The seriousness of the author's concern with the imperial domination of the Jew is strikingly illustrated in the fourth vision. This vision stands at the center of the text and it is the first true vision that comes to Ezra. Reflection on the destruction of Jerusalem leads Ezra to utter a moving lament documenting the many aspects of that catastrophe which befell the Jews. The seer enumerates the elements of the tragedy: the sanctuary was laid waste, the altar thrown down, the Temple destroyed, the holy things have been polluted, the priests have been burned to death, the Levites led into captivity, the virgins defiled, the righteous carried off, and the young men enslaved. The crowning sorrow, however, which moves Ezra most of all, is that Zion has been given over into the hands of those that hate the Jews. As great a loss as the Temple, its cult, and its priesthood were, it is the possession of Zion by the Romans that causes the greatest distress to the author.


Thus it becomes clear that whatever trauma was caused by the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple in 70, the author of Fourth Ezra tries to put that pain aside in order to draw his readers’ attention to the ongoing problem of the Roman presence in Judaea. Of course, Rome had been in Judaea before 70. During that period, however, the Jews had possessed their own rulers and leaders, whether kings or high priests and their associates. The Roman governors were in Caesarea and Jerusalem was free from overt Roman imperial oversight except on special occasions such as feasts.

After the suppression of the revolt the situation changed. With the Temple gone the main component of the ruling class, the priests, were gone. Jerusalem was, of course, no more; a legion was stationed almost atop its ruins. The Jews left in the land were faced with the need to make a great readjustment in religious as well as in political and social terms. Ezra, the great restorer after the return from Babylon in the sixth century B.C., was a fitting figure to stand at the center of a new apocalyptic text written in an attempt to sort out the conflicting viewpoints of late first-century Jews.

We have already seen Josephus’ take on the events of 70. It will be recalled that in his speech to the rebels besieged inside Jerusalem Josephus said that God was on the Roman side. Josephus specifically acquitted the Romans of wickedness by contrasting God’s treatment of Rome with his treatment of Assyria. Had the Romans been judged to be deserving of punishment, then God could certainly have inflicted it upon them on any number of occasions, whether during Pompey’s campaigns in Judaea, or during the war under Vespasian and Titus. The besieged could not expect that God would treat in the same way the just Romans and the unjust Assyrians, and perhaps by implication, the Jews in Jerusalem.

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82 See above, Introduction.
83 Jos. BJ 5.368; cf. 363, 378.
84 Jos. BJ 5.407-408: μαλα δὲ τὸν Ἰωάννην προδόταν ἐπὶ δυνάμεις οἷς ἐν τῇ ἐλεονίᾳ ἔβαζεν, καὶ παραρέμισα πτολεμαῖοι ἀδίκους οὓς ἦσαν ὑπάρχοντας τῷ Ἰωάννῃ κατὰ τὴν πρώτην παραστατικάδονος ἐξέστη ὅπῃ αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἔμετραν γενὸς ἐκλεηρινὰς ἐν Ρωμαίους κολάζους ἄξιον ἐχομεν, καὶ παραρέμισα παλαιάς τῷ Ἀπολλωνίου ἐκτόςσας, ὅπῃ τὸν Ἰωάννην ἤτοτον Παλαιόν, ἢ ὅτε μετ' αὐτῷ ἀναφέτην Διότι οὗτος ὁ Ἡρόπεναν ἐπάθη τὴν Γαλααίαν, τὰ τελευταῖα πάντα, ἢ ὅτι ἦγετής Τίτου τῇ πόλει.
The notion that Jews were being punished for their sins through the destruction of Jerusalem would not be a radical idea. Indeed, it was a widely held belief both before and after the earlier destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonians. The Josephean notion that Rome was favored by God, that fighting against Rome was tantamount to fighting against God, was an innovation. It would be easy to arrive at such an idea. Not only was the success of Roman arms an argument in itself for divine favor, but also the traditional Jewish view of Rome was favorable. The biblical Book of Daniel and the First Book of Maccabees enshrine a positive view of the Roman Empire as the friend and ally of the Jews in their struggles against Seleucid domination.

Rome became the object of Jewish observation during an earlier period of national tragedy, the persecution of the Jews under the Seleucid king Antiochus IV. A Roman delegation halted Antiochus’ successful invasion of Egypt during the Sixth Syrian War against King Ptolemy VI (171/0-168). The Seleucid monarch’s embarrassment is recorded in the Book of Daniel. When Antiochus entered Egypt it was the Kittim who force him to turn back. The act is recorded without comment or further detail.

The Romans appear under their proper name in another book originating in Antiochus’ persecution of the Jews. First Maccabees records that Judas Maccabees sent an embassy to Rome to form an alliance; the year was 161. Apart from the text of the treaty itself, the account goes into great detail about Judas’ impression of Rome and his motivation in seeking Rome’s friendship. The description offers a detailed picture, if not

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85 The embassy was headed by C. Popillius Laenas; see Polyb. 29.2.1-4, 27; Liv. 44.19.13, 29.1-5; 45.10-12.8, 13.1.
86 Dan. 11.29-30: “At the time appointed he shall return and come into the south, but this time it shall not be as it was before. For ships of Kittim shall come against him, and he shall lose heart and withdraw.”
87 The Kittim are strictly speaking the Cypriotes as the adjective derives from the city of Citium on Cyprus. It came to be applied to those coming from the West as though from the islands. Jos. 4.1, 1.128, says that the Jews use the term for all islands and many maritime countries. 1 Macc. 1.1 says that Alexander came from the land of Kittim and later, 8.5, styles Perseus the King of Kittim. The book of Daniel extends the term further west to describe Rome. The Vulgate and some manuscripts of the Septuagint supply Romans for Kittim. For the term see J. J. Collins, A Commentary on the Book of Daniel, (Minneapolis, 1993), 384.
88 1 Macc. 8. Renewals of the treaty are recorded under Jonathan in 144 (12.1-18) and Simon ca. 142 (14.16-19, 24; cf. 15.15-24).
of Judas’ true sentiments, then at least of the author’s. The primary observation is of Roman strength.\textsuperscript{89} The strength is manifested in Rome’s many military victories over the Gauls; Spain; the Macedonian kings Philip and Perseus and, more significantly to the Jews, Antiochus III; and many more islands and kingdoms besides. Roman might, moreover, is offset by their humility and loyalty to friends. There are no crowned heads in Rome, but rather a council directs their affairs. The council, obviously the senate, consists of 320 men who meet everyday to discuss how best to govern the people. They entrust supreme power every year to one man—in reality two—and thus avoid jealousy and envy; the limits of Jewish observation show themselves here.

The Jews gained very little from their alliance, but they may not have expected much.\textsuperscript{90} For our purposes it is enough to recognize the positive appreciation of Roman might twinned with humility. The concern for good government accords well with the panegyric of Aelius Aristides cited above. The Jews were, at the time of the writing of First Maccabees, still far outside Rome’s imperial orbit.

Even as Rome came closer, and the Jews could sharpen their focus, Roman imperialism might still be seen as beneficial. The annexation of Judaea as a Roman province was welcomed in some quarters. Though no contemporary source exists, Josephus recalls the event in both the \textit{Bellum Judaicum} and the \textit{Antiquitates Judaicae}. Upon the death of Herod, according to Josephus, a deputation of Jews sought from Augustus autonomy for their people. This liberation from the Herodian dynasty could be accomplished, they said, by incorporating Judaea into the province of Syria. Roman suzerainty would guaranty freedom.\textsuperscript{91}

To the author of Fourth Ezra, however, arguments such as those of Josephus suggesting that Rome was divinely favored fell flat. Josephus’ understanding of the

\textsuperscript{89} 1 Macc. 8.1, the author was so taken with Roman might that he mentions it twice in the same line.
\textsuperscript{90} See E. S. Gruen, \textit{The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome}, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1984), 748-751.
situation had a satisfying simplicity all the same. The Jews have displeased God and have been subjected to imperial Rome. The corollary that Rome is mistress of the world and must therefore be pleasing in God’s sight would be an inevitable view for some. Cyrus and the Persians, who had also been masters of Israel, enjoyed God’s favor; Isaiah even called Cyrus the Lord’s anointed (Messiah). The author of Fourth Ezra challenges this view through a reassessment of Rome’s place in God’s relationship with Israel.

The author sets out his solution in the first vision and expands on it in the third. When the contrast between Babylon’s and Zion’s present state fills the author with distress his prayer to God includes a brief history of mankind and Israel from Adam’s day to the handing over of Zion. It is the story of God’s attempts through various means to correct the sinfulness of men. Adam sinned and was punished with death, but from him sprang the numberless peoples and nations. These too went their own way and scorned God until the Flood destroyed them; thus they followed their father Adam in death. Only Noah was saved, from whom come the righteous. Once the remnant had begun to multiply, the peoples and nations became even more wicked than their ancestors. This prompted God to choose Abraham and to set apart Jacob. To Jacob’s descendants was given the Law. This also failed to curb acts of impiety even among the people of Israel.

92 Isa. 44.28; “(I am the Lord) who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd, and he shall carry out all my purpose’”; 45.1-7: “Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped to subdue nations before him and strip kings of their robes, to open doors before him—and the gates shall not be closed...For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, I surname you, though you do not know me” (1, 4). The biblical Book of Ezra also presented Cyrus in a flattering light; Ezra 1.1-4: “In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, in order that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of King Cyrus of Persia so that he sent a herald throughout all his kingdom, and also in a written edict declared: ‘Thus says King Cyrus of Persia: The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem in Judah’” (1-2); cf. 1.7-8; 3.7; 4.3; 5.13-14, 17; 6.3.
93 4 Ezra 3.4-27.
94 4 Ezra 3.7: Et ad hunc mandasti diligentiam unam tuam, et praeterivit eam, et statim instituisti in eum mortem et in nationibus eius. Et natae sunt ex eo gentes et tribus, populi et cognationes, quorum non est numeros.
95 4 Ezra 3.8-11: Et ambulavit unaquaeque gens in voluntate sua, et impie agebant coram te et spernebant et tu non prohibiisti eos...Et factum est in uno casus eorum, sicut Adae mors sit sic et his dilivium (8, 10).
96 4 Ezra 3.12-19: Et factum est cum coepissent multiplicari qui habitabant super terram, et multiplicaverunt filios et populos et gentes multas, et cooperunt iterato impietatem facere plus quam priores. Et factum est cum iniquitatem facerent coram te, elegisti tibi ex his unum, cui nomen erat
God commanded David to build a city in which sacrifices might be offered. The inhabitants of this city sinned, doing just as Adam and his descendants had done. Finally, God handed the city over to his enemies.97

The justice of God’s punishment of the Jews is not questioned. The people did sin and God handed over Jerusalem to the enemy. What does provoke complaint on the author’s part is the favor shown to Rome. The seer goes on to ask God whether the deeds of Babylon (Rome) are any better than Zion’s. He answers his own question by recalling the sinfulness of Rome that he has himself witnessed. God has destroyed his own people and spared his enemies who act wickedly. Ezra challenges God to weigh on a balance the iniquities of the Jews and the nations to see which way the scale inclines.98

The undermining of the Josephean interpretation, which must have been shared by others, proceeds by tracing both the nations and Israel back to Adam. The overview in Vision 1 is not of Jewish history alone, but of all the descendants of Adam. Sin is rooted in the father of all men and can be traced through the generations to which he gave rise. The problem that confronted God, in our author’s presentation, was human sin. Adam was the first to disobey the divine commandments. What followed then was a series of attempts to root this sin out. Adam was condemned to death and so were his descendants. Noah served as a bottleneck. When all the wicked were killed, he and his household, righteous men, offered a new starting point. When Noah’s descendants went bad, a new attempt was made to start with Abraham, though this time the other sinners were allowed

Abraham...Et transiit gloria tua portas quattuor, ignis et terrae motus et spiritus et gelus, ut dares semini Iacob legem et generationi Israel diligentiam (12-13, 19).


to live. The posterity of Abraham through Jacob fared no better because it had inherited the propensity to sin (cor malignum) from Adam.\footnote{4 Ezra 3.20-22: \textit{Et non abstulisti ab eis cor malignum, ut faceret lex tua in eis fructum. Cor enim malignum baiolans primus Adam transgressus et victus est, sed et omnes qui ex eo nati sunt. Et facta est permanens infirmitas et lex cum corde populi cum malignitate radicis, et discessit quod bonum est et mansit malignum.}}

Ezra describes Israel’s sin as doing as Adam and his descendants had done. In other words, the Jews had behaved just as had the nations. The Law had no effect because of the propensity to sin handed down by Adam. In this context, Ezra’s complaint at the end of his prayer can be understood. If the Jews were to be punished for behaving like the nations, was it not eminently suitable that the nations including Rome should be punished for behaving according to their proper nature? If any people had the least claim to God’s favor it was the Jews, for they knew God and had trusted in his covenants, even though they did sin.\footnote{100 \textit{4 Ezra 3.32: aut alia gens cognovit te praeter Israel? Ast quae tribus crediderunt testamentis tuis sicut hanc Jacob?}}

This then is one simple refutation of the Josephean claim that God had punished Israel for its unrighteousness, but was pleased with Rome and had therefore shown favor to the imperial people. The author also develops a more complicated response to the issue of Roman prosperity and Jewish misfortune, one that calls into question the notion of righteousness and wickedness at the national level, by placing it in tension with a more individualistic approach to righteousness. At the end of Ezra’s dialogues (Visions 1-3) with the angel the seer will attempt upon this fresh basis to reassert the traditional notion of national salvation.

After Ezra’s questions as to the relative merits of Babylon and Zion he casts doubt upon any national capacity for goodness. To sum up his prayer to God Ezra asks when those who inhabit the earth have not sinned before God, or which nation has observed the commandments. He declares that, while it is possible for individuals to do so, nations
cannot be found who can follow God’s commandments. If this is the case, it obviates the Josephean claim that the Roman Empire is now favored by God, while the Jewish people is being punished for sin, because it is not possible to classify nations as good or bad.

The author develops this notion at length in Vision 3. The sinfulness that the author traced from Adam through his descendants in Vision 1 has rendered it such that no man among the living has not sinned or transgressed the divine covenants. The breadth of the statement is demonstrated by the inclusion of Ezra himself, on his own admission, among the sinners. The author must, therefore, intend to indicate Jews and Gentiles. Adam is the coupling that joins Jews and Gentiles together, for it was his sin

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101 4 Ezra 3.35-36: *Aut quando non peccaverunt in conspectu tuo qui habitant terram, aut quae gens sic observavit mandata tua? Homines quidem per nomina invenies servasse mandata tua, gentes autem non invenies.* Stone, Commentary, 77, reads the first verse as applying only to the Gentiles; the statement then means that not only has Israel done better than Babylon (Rome), but better than all the nations. A. L. Thomson, *Responsibility for Evil in the Theodicy of IV Ezra*, SBL Dissertation Series 29, (Missoula, 1977), 171-176, understands the statement as a broader reference to all the peoples of the world, Gentiles and Jews. This sentiment is expressed at another place by the author; 4 Ezra 7.46. There is a textual difficulty with this interpretation, namely the precise significance of the word *sic*. It would seem to suggest a comparison if this part of the verse were translated: “Or what nation has kept thy commandments so well” (Stone, Commentary, 60). Does the author mean to ask what nation has kept the commandments so well as Israel, pace Stone? The author said above that Israel did not keep the commandments, but rather followed the behavior of Adam and the nations. Of the other versions, the Syriac and Ethiopic preserve the same text as the Latin, while the Arabic (Arab. Ew. and Arab. Gild.) and the Armenian do not have the sense conveyed by the Latin *sic*. It is worth noting that the author never again in the text suggests the possibility of a Gentile being saved.

102 No overall interpretation of this longest vision of Fourth Ezra can be assayed here; rather this one point—not, to be sure, a minor feature of the vision—will be examined.

103 4 Ezra 7.46-48: *quis enim est de praesentibus qui non peccavit, vel quis natorum qui on praeterivit sponsionem tuam? Et nunc video, quoniam adpaucos pertinebit futurum saeculum iocunditatem facere, multis autem tormenta. Increvit enim in nos cor malum, quod nos abalienavit ab his et deduxit nos in corruptionem et in anima mortis, ostendit nobis semitas perditionis, et longe fecit nos a vita; et hoc non paucos, sed paene omnes qui creati sunt.* Cf. 7.65-69: *Luceat hominum genus et agrestes bestiae laetentur; lugeant omnes qui nati sunt, quadrupedia vero et pecora iocundentur. Multum enim melius illis quam nobis. Non enim sperant iudicium, nec enim sciant cruciamenta nec salutem post mortem repromissam sibi... Omnes enim qui nati sunt commixti sunt iniquitatibus et pleni sunt peccatorum et gravati delictis (64-66, 68); 7.128-140: si non donaverit de bonitate sua, ut alleventur hi qui iniquitates fecerunt de suis iniquitatibus, non poterit diebus millenias pars hominum vivificari... si non ignoverit his qui creati sunt verbo eius et deleverit multitudinem contemptionum, non foris esset derelinguenter de innunmerabili multitudine nisi pauci valde.*

104 4 Ezra 8.47-49: *Tu autem frequenter te et ipsum proximasti iniustis: Numquam! Sed et in hoc mirabilis eris coram Altissimo, quoniam humiliasti te, sicut deceat te, et non iudicasti te inter iustos, ut plurimum glorificeris; cf. 7.76.*
that has doomed his descendants. For much of his dialogue with the angel in the third vision Ezra dispenses with the dichotomy between Israel and the nations in favor of one between the few and the many, wherein the few are the righteous who will be saved and the many are the wicked who will be punished.

At many places in Ezra's conversation with the angel the author sets the parameters for salvation and damnation in the world to come. A general catalogue of the sins meriting damnation includes disobedience to the Law, denial of the covenant, and denial of God's existence. The angel tells Ezra that on the day of judgement the nations will be judged and condemned according to these criteria. The same criteria seem to apply to the Jews as well, in so far as they apply to all men indiscriminately and regardless of national origin. The key factor in this explanation of righteousness and wickedness is the individual responsibility for choosing between good and evil.

The angel tells Ezra that the punishment is justified because men had understanding. They had received the commandments and the Law and yet had willingly transgressed them, thus opening the door for future torments. The angel speaks again in even clearer terms of justification. He says that every man born into the world must

105 4 Ezra 7.118: O tu quid fecisti, Adam? Si enim tu peccasti, non est factum solius tuus casus et nostrum qui es te advenimus.
108 4 Ezra 7.78-79: Nam de morte sermon: Quando profectus fuerit terminus sententiae ab Altissimo ut homo moriat, recedente inspirazione de corpore ut dimitiat iterum ad eum qui dedit, adorare gloriam Altissimi primum. Et si quidem esset eorum qui sperverunt et non servaverunt visum Altissimi et eorum qui contemperunt legem eius et eorum qui nderunt eos qui timuer Deum; 8.55-60: Noli ergo adhuc adicere inquirendo de multitudine eorum qui peruerunt. Nam et ipsi accipientes libertatem speraverunt Altissimum et legem eius contemserunt et vias eius dereliquerunt. Adux autem et iustos eius conculcerunt. Et dixerunt in corde suo non esse Deum, et quidem scientes quoniam moriuntur. Sicut enim vos suscipient quae praedicta sunt, sic eos sitis et cruciaturos quae praeparata sunt. Non enim Altissimus voluit hominem dispersi, sed ipsi qui creati sunt coguitaverunt nomen eius qui fecit eos, et ingreat fuerunt et qui praeparavit eis nunc vitam. 4 Ezra 8.15-19a, makes it clear that there are sinners among the Jews for whom the author is concerned; cf. 8.24-31.
109 4 Ezra 7.71-73: Et nunc de sermonibus tuos intellege, quoniam dixisti quia sensus nostri crescit. Quia ergo commorantes sunt in terra hinc cruciabuntur, quoniam sensum habentes inguitatatem fecerunt, et mandata accipientes non servaverunt ea, et legem consecutis fraudaverunt eam quam accoperunt. Et quid habebatis dicere in judicio vel quomodo respondebant in novissimis temporibus?
participate in this contest between good and evil. Moses himself had advised the people to choose life, but he and the prophets were ignored.\textsuperscript{110}

It will be immediately clear that the deck is stacked heavily in favor of the Jews. For the commandments of God and his Law have been set as the criteria for salvation. The world was given due warning through Moses and the prophets, but how likely was it that this message could have reached the nations?

The author has also provided the remedy whereby men might escape sin and the punishments attendant on it. Men need only return to the Law.\textsuperscript{111} Observance of the Law gives salvation, just as its neglect ensures punishment.\textsuperscript{112}

This is not a universal message of salvation. Whereas sinfulness and the \textit{cor malignum} do not distinguish according to nationality, but are both present in all Adam’s descendants, the Law is only available in any effective sense to the Jews. The author makes no mention of proselytes in Fourth Ezra, whether he envisioned the possibility of salvation for the Gentiles or not. If salvation were open to them it would only be through the Law. It becomes clear in Vision 3 that the author’s primary concern is for the Jews. He advances the individualistic responsibility for good and evil, for salvation and damnation, which might seem a universalizing tendency, but he brings the discussion at the end back to the nation of Israel, turning again to national salvation.

Once the author has hammered out the case for universal susceptibility to sin and the appearance of a universal means to overcome sin, the author builds a case for the saving of Israel; the nations receive no mention. Ezra professes his disinterest in mankind in general and restricts the discussion to God’s chosen people, whose situation

\textsuperscript{110} 4 Ezra 7.127-131: \textit{Et respondit et dixit: Hoc est cogitamentum certaminis, quem certavit qui super terram natus est homo, ut si victus fuerit patiatur quod dixisti, si autem vicerit recepiet quod dico, quoniam haec est via, quam Moyses dixit cum viveret ad populum dicens: Elige tibi vitam ut vivas. Non crediderunt autem et, sed nec post eum propheticum, sed nec mili qui locutus sum ad eos.}

\textsuperscript{111} 4 Ezra 7.133: \textit{Miseretur illis qui conversionem faciunt in lege eius.}

\textsuperscript{112} 4 Ezra 7.88-89, 94: \textit{Nam eorum qui vias servaverunt ordo est hic, quando separari incipient a vaso corruptibili. In eo tempore commoratae servaverunt sum labore Altissimo et omni hora sustinuerunt periculum, ut perfecte custodirent legislatoris legem...quoniam viventes servaverunt quae per fidem data est lex.}
causes him grief. He pleads with God that he center his attention on the righteousness practiced by some Jews rather than on the wickedness of the others. Indeed, Ezra admits that Israel is dependant on God’s mercy, as it has no store of good works that would justify God’s benevolence. Thus, the author is advancing the notion that Israel as Israel is a candidate for national salvation based on the good works of a few of its members, or even on the basis of God’s mercy alone.

It remains only to ask whether the author of Fourth Ezra expects the Jews to be saved as a nation. Three times the angel promises the salvation of those within the borders of God’s land, which must mean Judaea. God summarizes his dealings with the world by saying that he created the world for those who now exist, but when he found them to be corrupted by sin, he spared some with great difficulty, picking one grape from the cluster and one tree from the forest, which he then perfected for salvation.

It would, therefore, appear that the author does, in fact, expect an eschatological judgement wherein the nations will be punished and Israel will be saved.

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113 4 Ezra 8.15-19a: Et nunc dicens dicam: De omni homine tu magis scis, depopulo autem tuo quod mihi dolet, et de hereditate tua proprie quam lugeo, et de Israel propter quam tristis sum, et de semine Jacob proprie quod conturbor. Ideo incipiam orare coram te pro me et pro eis, quoniam video lapsos nostros qui inhabituas terram...Ideo audi meam vocem et intellege sermonum meorum, et loquar coram te.

114 4 Ezra 8.20-36: Ne aspicias populii tui delicto, sed qui tibi in veritate servierunt...Neque volueris perdere qui pecorum mores habuerunt, sed respicias eos qui legem tuam splendide docuerunt...Neque volueris perdere qui pecorem mores habuerunt, sed respicias eos qui legem tuam splendide docuerunt (26-27, 29).

115 4 Ezra 8.31-36: Quoniam nos et patres nostri mortalibus moribus egimus, tu autem propter nos peccatores miserorum vocatus es. Si enim desideraveris ut nostri miserarios, tune miserarios vocaberis, nobis enim non habentibus opera iusticiae, lustra enim, quisque sine peccato multae repositae apud te, ex propriis operibus recipien mercedem...In hoc enim adnuntiabitur iustitia tua et bonitas tuae...In hoc enim adnuntiabitur iustitia tua et bonitas tuae...Neque volueris perdere qui pecorum mores habuerunt, sed respicias eos qui legem tuam splendide docuerunt (31-33, 36); 8.45: Domine super nos, sed parce populo tuo et miserere haereditati tuae, tuae enim creaturae misereris.

116 4 Ezra 9.7-8: Erit ergo omnis, qui salvus factus fuerit et qui poterit effugere per opera sua vel per fidem in qua creditis, in reliquit de praedictis periculis et videbit salutare meum in terra mea et in finibus mei, quia sanctificavi mihi a saeculo; 12.34: Nam residuum populum meum liberabit cum misericordia, qui salvati sunt super fines meos, et locundabit eos, quos adulescentis venit finis, dies iudicii, de quo locuta sum tibi ab inicito; 13.47b-49: Propter hoc vidisti multitudinem collectam cum paccem, sed et qui derelicti sunt de populo tuo, qui inveniens intra terminum meum sanctum. Erat ergo quando incipiet perdere multitudinem eorum quae collectae sunt gentes, proteget qui superaverit populum.

If this interpretation is correct, it must be observed that the author of Fourth Ezra has taken a rather roundabout approach to the problem. He has expended great energy in laying the basis for an individualistic ethic of salvation, yet he has ended by reaffirming what is a traditional Jewish view, namely that Israel will be saved as a result of the special relationship that exists between the people and God.

The problem confronting the author of Fourth Ezra in the latter part of the first century A.D. after the victory of Roman arms over Jewish and the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple was one of continuity with the past. The Jews' understanding of their nation was founded upon the election of their father Abraham and the covenant between his descendants and their God. The events of 70 were traumatic, but they could be understood in the light of tradition, for the holy city and its Temple had also been destroyed by the Babylonians centuries before. The Babylonians had in turn been overthrown by the Persians.

Fourth Ezra—and indeed most of the texts treated in the present study—shows scant concern for the loss of the Temple and Jerusalem. What throws the author into despair is that Rome does not seem immediately bound to share the fate of Babylon. It might be argued that the author’s ancestors in the sixth century B.C. had to wait quite some time to be vindicated. This is true, but the vantage point of tradition, presented in the Bible, obscures the decades that passed between destruction and vindication. Rome, by the late first century, was still going strong; in the East Roman power was waxing.

Some contemporaries were evidently impressed by the image of Roman might. The growth of Roman prosperity and authority led some to the opinion, derived from observation, that Rome was divinely favored. Josephus is a representative of this view.

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118 It might be observed that in relation to the past moderns are generally possessed of an inability to appreciate the length of time between events. Events that were separated by decades in bygone eras seem to pass so quickly, when seen from the vantage point of the present.
The author of Fourth Ezra takes aim that this sort of thinking and delivers a carefully constructed rebuttal. In the apocalypse he must confront the unhappy situation of the Jewish people in his own day, oppressed by Rome and with no real hope of earthly deliverance in the shape of a modern-day Cyrus. The author had to explain how the Jews could be punished for their sins, while the Romans were not. Of course the simplest explanation is that the Romans would be punished for their sins, but were not now for some hidden reason. The dialogic visions lay the groundwork for justifying Rome’s coming punishment by demonstrating that it is merited and justified by analogy to the Jews’ experience as chastised sinners. It is the point of the eschatological visions to show how this punishment will be worked out.

The arguments advanced in the dialogic sections of Fourth Ezra offer no lasting solution to the present situation experienced by the Jews under Roman domination in their land. The angel refers Ezra’s hopes for resolution to the eschaton. Each of the first three visions ends with a revelation of the signs that will accompany the end of time and the day of judgement.119 These prefigure the text’s revelatory visions (4-6) that present in symbols the eschatological overthrow of Rome and the nations that will guarantee the restoration of Israel in the coming world, a theme that is also present occasionally in the dialogic visions. The final seventh vision deals with the reestablishment of the Law and of the scriptures more generally into the life of the Jews as the central mechanism to bring about the resolution of their present difficulties.

The angel’s response to Ezra’s questions and complaints in the first visions is two-fold. The angel points out Ezra’s incapacity to understand the things of the Most High.120 When Ezra continues to protest, the angel turns the discussion to the end times

119 4 Ezra 5.1-13 (Vision 1); 6.11-29 (Vision 2); 9.1-22 (Vision 3). The third vision also incorporates an eschatological section within the vision; 7.26-44. It should also be noted that before the revelatory sections of each of the first three visions there occurs a conversation between Ezra and the angel that turns on eschatological points; 4.26-52 (Vision 1); 5.41-6.10 (Vision 2); 7.73-115 (Vision 3). For an outline and overview of the book’s fairly uniform structure, see Stone, Commentary, 50-51, where he describes the different sections that occur in each vision.

120 4 Ezra 4.1-25; 5.34-40. The author drops this line of argument in the third vision.
and reveals to the seer the signs that will herald it. Much of what the angel reveals is very general: wars, the increase of unrighteousness, marvelous and monstrous portents, and cosmological and geological events. There are also embedded in the revelations items specific to the Jews' present difficulties occasioned by the collapse of the revolt and the continued subjection to Rome.

In the eschatological section of Vision 1 the angel foretells the destruction that will befall the current world power, Rome. Amidst terror and unrighteousness the nation which now rules will be laid waste and made desolate. This prophecy regarding the downfall of Rome touches precisely on the point of contention that began the seer's prayer earlier in Vision 1, namely the contrast between Zion's desolation and Babylon's (Rome's) prosperity. The future will reverse the situation for Rome, exchanging desolation for abundance. The future devastation of the Roman Empire is treated at length in Vision 5.

The future punishment of the nations is again promised in one of the eschatological sections of Vision 3. The day of judgement will see the rising up of the dead to appear before the throne of the Most High. Then God will reveal himself to the nations and level a three-part charge against them, namely that they denied him, refused to serve him, and despised his commandments. He will then show them the place of rest set aside for the righteous and the torments reserved for sinners.

Another item that is included in the eschatological predictions is the restoration of Zion; this event is presented as a sign of the times, however, rather than an end in itself. In Vision 2 the angel tells Ezra that God will visit the earth's inhabitants to punish the

121 4 Ezra 5.3: *Et erit incomposito vestigio quam manc vides regnare regionem, et videbunt eam desertam.* Stone, Commentary, 106, notes the obscurity of the Latin *incomposito vestigio,* and bases his translation on the Syriac and Georgian: “And the region which you now see ruling shall be waste and untrodden, and men shall see the land desolate.”

122 4 Ezra 3.2: *vidi desertionem Sion et habundantiam eorum qui habitation in Babilone.*

wicked when the humiliation of Zion is complete.\textsuperscript{124} Elsewhere the angel says that the day is coming when the signs of the end will appear, among which is the appearance of the city that is not presently seen and the land that is now hidden.\textsuperscript{125} Here, too, the appearance of the hidden city, most likely Jerusalem, is not an end in itself, but instead serves to herald the coming of the judgement.\textsuperscript{126}

This restoration of Jerusalem is developed at length in the fourth vision, wherein Ezra comes across a mourning woman in a field. She is mourning her deceased son; Ezra rebukes her for indulging in private grief, while everyone else is mourning for Zion. The woman turns out to be Zion, a fact that is revealed to Ezra when she takes on the appearance of an immense city. The angel explains the symbolism to Ezra, who is invited to enter and explore the city.\textsuperscript{127}

This is the first of the true visions, as opposed to the dialogues of the first three visions. It is of central importance for many reasons. It is located physically at the center of the work, as the fourth of seven visions. In the course of the vision Ezra undergoes a dramatic development, when he is confronted with the mourning of personified Zion, which he shares, though at first he fails to recognize the identity of the woman.\textsuperscript{128}

\textsuperscript{124} 4 Ezra 6.18-20: \textit{Et dixit: Ecce dies veniunt, et erit quando adpropinquare incipio, ut visitem habitantes in terram, et quando inquirere incipiam ab eis qui iniuste nocuerunt iniustitia sua, et quando suppleta fuerit humilitas Sion.}

\textsuperscript{125} 4 Ezra 7.26: \textit{Ecce enim tempus veniet, et erit quando venient signa quae praeedixi tibi, et apparebit sponsa apparescent civitas et ostendetur quae nunc subducitur terra.}

\textsuperscript{Stone, Commentary, 202, declares the state of the versions chaotic and translates: “For behold, the time will come, when the signs which I have foretold to you will come, that the city which now is not seen shall appear, and the land which now is hidden shall be disclosed.”}

\textsuperscript{126} It is not at all clear what the hidden land is. Usually the land is Israel, but that is not hidden. For discussion of the land and the city, see Stone, Commentary, 213-214. For the purpose of the present study, it is enough to notice that the restoration of Jerusalem does not appear as a goal of the eschaton, but as a sign. This downplaying of the holy city is fully compatible with the author’s preoccupation with Rome’s dominance over the Jewish people almost to the exclusion of concern with the destruction of the Temple and city.\textsuperscript{127} 4 Ezra 9.26-10.59.

\textsuperscript{127} The vision begins as the first three do with Ezra offering up a prayer that questions some aspect of the Jews’ present circumstances, in this case he muses on the indestructibility of the Law though the vessel that contains it, namely Israel, has been destroyed. The angel does not, as in the former visions, rise to the bait this time. Instead the mourning woman confronts the seer and drives his thoughts out of his head, as he himself declares; 4 Ezra 9.39: \textit{Et dimisi cogitatus in quibus eram cogitans et conversus sum ad eam; 10.5: Et derelinqui adhuc sermones in quibus eram et respondi cum tracundia ad eam.}
The importance for the eschatological visions to follow is that it lays the basis for them. As was already noted, the restoration of Zion was named as a sign of the end times. This is signified by the transfiguration of the woman into a city. The author can build from this to begin the investigation of themes that are more central to his concerns, namely the vindication of the Jews against the Romans (Vision 5) and the nations more generally (Vision 6).

Ezra's interaction with the woman is also intended to deflect the charge of insufficient concern for the loss of Jerusalem and the Temple. It is easy to imagine that in the years following 70 Jewish bitterness and sadness would center on the loss of their sanctuary and holy city, but this focus could become a handicap. The author of Fourth Ezra goes to greater lengths than the other authors treated in the present study to avoid reflection on the loss of the holy city. His concern is with the continued presence of Rome in Judaea and their domination of the Jews. The lament that Ezra delivers in the Fourth Vision establishes his credentials as one who mourns over Jerusalem, lest he seem to be blinded to the tragedy of 70 by his present antipathy to Rome, which—it should be emphasized—need not stem entirely from the destruction of Jerusalem. Thus the angel declares that God has recognized the depth and sincerity of Ezra's sorrow for his people and Zion.

129 This very problem is dealt with in the rabbinic literature. The story of R. Joshua and the ascetics recounted in b. Baba Bathra 60b is instructive. The loss of the Temple drove many in Israel to renounce the consumption of meat and wine. They explain to R. Joshua that they refrain from the two items because of their importance to the now discontinued sacrificial cult. R. Joshua then points out that they must also refrain from bread, fruit, and water for the same reason. Though they are prepared to do without the first two items, they cannot give up the use of water. R. Joshua then tells them that they must find a middle ground between insufficient and excessive mourning.

130 4 Ezra 10.39: *Vidit enim rectam viam tuam, quoniam sine intermissione contristrabaris pro populo tuo et valde lugebas propter Sion*; 10.50: *Et nunc videns Altissimus, quoniam ex animo contristatus es et quoniam ex toto corde pateris pro ea, ostendit tibi claritatem gloriae eius et pulchritudinem decoris eius.*

This completes a theme raised earlier when the angel asked Ezra whether he was upset over Israel; 5.33: *Valde in excessu mentis factus es in Israel?* It is not clear whether the angel is asking ironically or not, for the question is coupled with another: Does Ezra love Israel more than the One who created it does? The answer to this question is obviously negative; is the answer to the first one assumed by the angel to be negative as well. In other words does the angel ask the question as a challenge to the seer? Ezra does repeatedly declare his sorrow for Israel, e.g. 8.15-16. Whether the seer grieves or not for Israel, however, is not exactly the question. It is clear that Ezra—and the author—is concerned with the present situation of...
The fourth vision also provides the opportunity for a lament over the far-reaching effects of the catastrophe of 70. Not only were the Temple and its cult destroyed, but the entire national life of the Jews suffered, for the priests and Levites, the leaders of the people, were killed or otherwise removed. Likewise the men, women, virgins, and young were enslaved or outraged. As was noted before, however, the capstone on the tragedy was the subjugation of Zion to those that hate the Jews. To be sure the events of 70 were a calamity of the first order, but the sack of Jerusalem merely set the seal on the humiliation of the Jews. So long as the hated Romans continued to grind the Jews, and indeed the entire world, down this humiliation would continue to rankle. The author turned to this, his main concern, in two dream visions that appeared to Ezra.

The Eagle Vision (Vision 5) has been discussed at great length above, where it was argued that the vision was most likely a product of the Flavian years, probably composed during the reign of Domitian. It represents an updating of the vision of four beasts that appeared to Daniel in the days of the Babylonian Exile. As has already been noted, the notion that Daniel’s prophetic insights extended to include the Roman Empire and the destruction of the Second Temple by Roman legions was current in the late first century A.D. The author of Fourth Ezra, in order to make it relevant to his audience, has exchanged the horned monster of Daniel’s vision for the immediately recognizable Roman eagle, albeit with more wings and heads than the standard eagle has. The author’s treatment of the eagle and the Roman Empire through its symbolism is perhaps surprising.

the Jews, but where does the loss of Jerusalem fit into his grief? Vision 4 demonstrates that Ezra is griefstricken over the catastrophe that befell Zion in 70, a point that has not found clear expression up until the angel’s statement.

131 4 Ezra 10.19-23.
132 The standard identification of the fourth beast with the Seleucid monarchy with a particular relevance to the actions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes has a history stretching back at least to St. Jerome.
It might shock some observers that the vision takes no account of the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem. Given the author’s tendency described in the present work, however, this is understandable. The heads of the eagle, the Flavian emperors, are not themselves the main subject of the author’s ire, as the vision makes clear, rather it is the eagle itself and the eagle’s body that draw his fire.

The eagle appears from the sea. He spreads his wings and flies over the earth ruling it and striking terror into the earth’s inhabitants. The wings are, at most, the agents of the eagle itself, as is made clear when the eagle addresses commands to the wings. The wings and winglets come in for no criticism at all. The middle head is the only appendage that is singled out for a negative description. Ezra sees it gain control over the whole earth and oppress the inhabitants wielding more power than any of the wings had done; nevertheless it disappears. When the Messiah appears, in leonine form, it addresses the eagle itself, not the remaining head. The lion foretells the disappearance of the entire eagle: wings, winglets, heads, talons, and all. After a brief and tumultuous period under the authority of the two remaining winglets, the body of the eagle bursts into flames and is consumed.

The target of the author’s hostility is no particular emperor. It is neither Vespasian nor Titus, though these suppressed the Jewish revolt and destroyed Jerusalem.

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133 DiTommaso, “Eagle Vision,” 22, finds the author’s silence on this point difficult to reconcile with a Flavian composition date.

134 4 Ezra 11.1-6: Et vidi, et expandebat alas suas in omnem terram, et omnes venti coeli insufflabant ad eum et <nubes ad eam> colligebantur... Et vidi, et ecce aquila volavit in pennis suis ut regnaret super terram et super eos qui inhabitant in ea. Et vidi, quomodo subjecta erant ei omnia sub caelo, et nemo illi contradicebat, neque una de creatura quae est super terram (2, 5-6). The words in triangular brackets do not occur in the Latin, but are supplied from the Oriental versions; see Klijn, Apokalypse des Esra, 73 note on text; Stone, Commentary, 343.

135 4 Ezra 11.7-10: Et vidi, et ecce vox non exiabat de capitibus eius, sed de mediate corporis eius. The voice of command comes from the midst of the eagle’s body.


137 4 Ezra 11.37: Et vidi et ecce scit leo suscitasus de silva mugiens, et audivi quomodo emisit vocem hominis ad aquilam et dixit dicens.

138 4 Ezra 11.45: Propaterea non appares non appareas, tu aquila et alae tuae horribiles et pennacula tua pesima et capita tua maligna et angues tui pessimi et omne corpus tuum vanum.

139 4 Ezra 12.3a: Et vidi, et ecce ipsa non apparescebat, et omne corpus aquilae incendebatur.
It is the Roman Empire itself—the eagle—that excites the author’s animosity. Nor does the author betray any particularist orientation in his abhorrence of the empire; it is not any narrow Jewish complaint, though sufficient grounds existed, that motivates his portrayal of the empire’s demise.

The author of Fourth Ezra takes a broad view of the wickedness of the Roman Empire. Ezra witnesses the terror inspired by the eagle’s flight, when its wings encompass the entire world. All are subject to the eagle and none dares speak against it.140 The middle head merely exercised more power than his predecessors had done. This might reflect the perspective of a Judaean who witnessed the revolt and its aftermath, for he had seen up close the crushing strength of Roman imperial arms. From the perspective of Judaea Vespasian did exercise more power than any other emperor; he was also the first to have visited this corner of the world since Augustus.

It is in the leonine Messiah’s words to the eagle that we find the case against Rome most neatly stated. The fourth beast of Daniel’s vision had conquered all that came before. It held sway over the world through terror, oppression, and deceit. It judged the world, but not according to truth.141 Rome has afflicted the meek, harmed the peaceful, hated those who told the truth, loved liars, and overturned the walls of those who bore fruit and caused no harm to Rome.142 The principle sins of Rome are insolence and pride.143

The problem with Roman imperialism as formulated in Fourth Ezra was not that it had inflicted any particular injustice on the Jews. Rather the problem was with Rome’s

140 4 Ezra 11.5-6.
141 With this is implicitly contrasted the just judgement of God.
142 Perhaps this verse is drawn from the Jews’ own experience, for the words used, *fructificabant* and *humiliasti*, recall the fruit produced by the Law and the humiliation of Zion.
sinfulness, which was incompatible with its success. For Josephus imperial might was a demonstration of Rome’s possession of divine favor. It was precisely Roman success in war and the expansiveness of its conquests that impressed the author of First Maccabees. He records in obvious admiration the power of Rome that allowed it to enslave so many peoples and kingdoms; it was just this power coupled with the Roman contempt for kings that would make Rome such a useful ally against the Seleucid monarchs. What most impresses him is that despite all of this they are free from pride, placing their trust in a senate rather than a king.

Perspective is everything. For Judas Maccabee and the author of First Maccabees Rome was far away; the author of Fourth Ezra, however, experienced the suffering that Roman imperial might brought with it. This experience allows our author to empathize with his fellow subjects.

The problem of Roman sinfulness and Roman prosperity contrasted with Jewish sinfulness and Jewish misery led the author of Fourth Ezra to have recourse to the promise of a better tomorrow. Rome would be punished and the Jews would be vindicated. It is worth asking whether the punishment of Rome was anticipated with hopes of revenge or the knowledge that only in this way could the rewards promised for

144 1 Macc. 8.1-16: “Now Judas heard of the fame of the Romans, that they were very strong and were well disposed towards all who made an alliance with them, that they pledged friendship to those who came to them, and that they were very strong. He had been told of their wars and of the brave deeds that they were doing among the Gauls, how they had defeated them and forced them to pay tribute, and what they had done in the land of Spain to get control of the silver and gold mines there, and how they had gained control of the whole region by their planning and patience, even though the place was far distant from them. They also subdued the kings who came against them from the ends of the earth, until they crushed them and inflicted great disaster on them; the rest paid them tribute every year...The remaining kingdoms and islands, as many as ever opposed them, they destroyed and enslaved; but with their friends and those who rely on them they have kept friendship. They have subdued kings far and near, and as many as have heard of their fame have feared them. Those whom they wish to help and to make kings, they make kings, and those whom they wish they depose; and they have been greatly exalted” (1-4, 11-13).

145 1 Macc. 8.14-16: “Yet for all this not one of them has put on a crown or worn purple as a mark of pride, but they have built for themselves a senate chamber (συμφωνία), and every day three hundred and twenty senators constantly deliberate concerning the people, to govern them well. They trust one man each year to rule over them and to control all their land; they all heed the one man, and there is no envy or jealousy among them.”

146 This recalls the wisdom of the Greek proverb recorded by Einhard in his life of Charlemagne: τίνι Φώκαινος ωτίνα ἔχεις, γειτόνων ὁκ ἔχεις, Vita Karoli Magni 2.16.
righteousness be guaranteed; if sin was not punished, would righteousness be rewarded? If the latter is the case, then Rome served as an object lesson: let the people of Israel return to the Law lest the disaster impending for Rome befall them as well.

The main political point of Fourth Ezra is to controvert the positive portrait of Rome that finds expression in the works of Josephus. This is not to say that the author had the Jewish historian’s writings specifically in mind, though this is by no means outside the realm of possibility. Rather he sought to combat the notion that Roman prosperity was divinely granted.147

**Conclusion**

The upheaval caused by the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 leaves a heavy imprint on the Old Testament, as many of its books were written in response to this watershed event in the history of Israel and the history of Judaism.148 It is fitting that Jews of the late first century A.D. would turn back to these traditions when confronted with a similar catastrophe, the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. From this late first-century vantage point two things emerge with clarity from the experience of the sixth-century B.C., namely that Judah was then punished for its sins and that the Babylonians were punished for their pride. Jewish observers after 70 could readily understand and assimilate the first item. Nearly all the authors treated in this study including Josephus attribute the loss of Jerusalem to Jewish sin.149

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147 The sixth vision expands the view to encompass all the nations, which will fight against the Messiah in the last days. In this context, the people of Israel will be led to salvation by the victorious Messiah. The seventh vision provides a plan of action for the author’s late first-century audience: they must return to the Law and Israel’s sacred scriptures, for only in these writings will the antidote to wickedness be found. 148 Books that are immediately concerned with or touch upon the Babylonian action or its aftermath include 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, some of the Psalms, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Obadiah, Haggai, and Zechariah. For a study of the literature on this theme see P. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration: A Study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century BC*, (London, 1968); for the history of the period see now O. Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem: Judah under Babylonian Rule*, (Winona Lake, Indiana, 2005). 149 The exception is the author of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle.
The other foot had yet to fall. Rome appeared to be going strong. Flavian management of the Jewish War catapulted Vespasian and his sons onto the throne. The years after 70 saw the consolidation of Roman power in the East. The provincial status of Judaea itself was raised; it became home to a legion and its equestrian procurator was replaced with a senatorial governor. A scant 48 years elapsed between the fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar and the fall of Babylon to Cyrus.\textsuperscript{150} There was no Cyrus on the horizon in the late first century A.D.

Roman power and Roman oppression were facts of life that showed no signs of disappearing. We might imagine that every subject of the empire was confronted with the need to determine his attitude to his subject status. This is, of course, the type of thing that an academic would imagine. In fact, as will become clear in the present study, many subjects, or at least Jewish subjects, were little concerned with questions of imperial oppression and more anxious about their own everyday problems. The author of Fourth Ezra, however, is not one of these subjects. His mind was consumed with the Roman Question.

It is not an exaggeration to say that this question permeates the apocalypse from the beginning of the text which finds Ezra lying on his bed agonizing over Roman prosperity all the way through the dialogues with the angel and the visions of the eschaton. The author builds a case against the notion that Rome was a privileged nation, favored by God, and exemplary among empires for justice and fairness. In his assault he tears down both the contemporary notion promoted by Josephus and the traditional appreciation of Rome found in First Maccabees. The author uses everything at hand to advance his case including speculations about the fate of the just and the wicked, which seem on the face of it to have little to do with the response to imperial oppression.

\textsuperscript{150} Forty-eight years is a lifetime for those who live through it, but at a remove of six or seven hundred years it seems remarkably short.
It is important to note that the author's solution is out of the hands of mortals. The author announces an eschatological resolution in the hands of God and his Messiah. Nor is the Messiah a mortal king such as Cyrus. The tract is therefore not a plan for active resistance against Rome, nor even for passive resistance. The author's purpose is to change attitudes towards Rome. He detects in the Josephian hypothesis a weakening of appreciation for the special relationship that exists between God and his chosen people. The consequence of such thinking is the erosion of a healthy devotion to the Law and divine commandments. In the final analysis, then, even Fourth Ezra, despite the perhaps excessive attention paid to Rome, is really a tract about Jews who happen to be Roman subjects.

151 It should also be observed that the notion of inevitability regarding the uprising of Bar Kochbah finds little support in the many texts treated in the present study. If any text is close to the philosophy of the rebels of 135 it is Fourth Ezra, but even it does not advocate the taking up of arms.
CHAPTER TWO

SECOND BARUCH

Textual Versions and Language

Second Baruch is known from one Syriac and one Arabic manuscript; the latter is translated from a Syriac original that differs only slightly from the surviving Syriac text. According to the title given by the Syriac manuscript, the text was translated from a Greek text. Many scholars have argued for a Hebrew original behind the Greek; something of a consensus has developed on this point. Before proceeding to a discussion of the date and the analysis of the work, the contents must be summarized.


For although it is one of the finer examples of apocalyptic, it is, nevertheless, not a widely known text.\(^4\)

**Summary of the Text**

The word of the Lord came to Baruch and announced the imminent disaster to come upon Jerusalem in punishment for the sins of its inhabitants. Baruch in his distress questioned the divine plan but God was unmoved in his resolve to destroy the city for a time. The seer then gathered Jeremiah and other leaders of the people to inform them of what he had heard. The next day an army of Chaldaeans surrounded the city prompting Baruch to abandon it. While he sat under an oak tree grieving over Zion, a strong wind lifted him above the city wall. He saw angels holding burning torches posted at the four corners of the city; another angel removed the vessels from the Holy of Holies and commended them to the earth's keeping. Then at this angel's command the others overthrew the walls. A voice came from the Temple inviting the enemy to enter the city. Baruch left as the Chaldaeans entered the city, carried away the people, and sent King Zedekiah away to Babylon in chains. Baruch and Jeremiah, who were spared because of the purity of their hearts, lamented the fall of the city. God then announced to Jeremiah that he must accompany the captives to Babylon, whereas Baruch was to stay in Zion, so that he might be shown what would happen at the end of days. As Jeremiah went into captivity with the people Baruch delivered a long lament for Jerusalem; then in an address to Babylon he foretold its own future sorrow.\(^5\)


\(^5\) 2 Bar. 1-12.
Later Baruch found himself on Mount Zion, where the Lord spoke to him again. This time God told him that he would live until the end of times to serve as a witness when the Lord would bring retribution on the nations. Baruch took the opportunity to interrogate God on the value of righteousness. The seer confessed that the recent tragic experience of Zion, which had been righteous in comparison with the nations, made the answer to his question difficult to find. The divine answer advanced along two lines. First, the Law has made man culpable for his offenses; since he knows the Law, when he transgresses, he does so wittingly. He must, therefore, be punished. Secondly, God told Baruch that the righteous would find their reward in the coming world, having shown themselves worthy in the test of the present world. Baruch rejoined that man’s life was too short to prepare him for his inheritance in the next world. God demonstrated that the length of Adam’s life had not kept him from transgression, while the relative shortness of Moses’ life had not proven a like hindrance. Baruch observed that more men had followed Adam’s way than the light of Moses. God acknowledged the truth of this, but the Law existed to show men the right path; divine judgement must follow. Baruch was then told to go away and fast in preparation for further revelations.6

Baruch duly fasted in a cave in the valley of Kidron and then returned to the place of the first meeting with God. Baruch lifted his voice in prayer asking God how long corruption would remain. Would God now show that the destruction of Jerusalem was in agreement with his power? Would he now reprove the angel of death and seal his kingdom? Finally, Baruch asked that God show his glory soon and fulfill the promises he had made to his people. God answered and reassured Baruch that he would continue on with his plan until the end. For men had been numbered ere the day that Adam sinned and that number must be reached before the dead might live again. That day, however, was not far off. That day would come and the long-suffering of the Most High would be

6 2 Bar. 13-20.
made manifest. Again God informed Baruch that he would be preserved until the end. God then revealed to the seer the tribulations that would presage the end and the division of the times of the age. The coming of the Messiah would accompany the resurrection of the righteous dead.  

Baruch then called together the elders for the first of three speeches delivered to some segment of the people who remained in the land. He told them that the Temple would be rebuilt, but that it would be destroyed yet again, only to be renewed finally for eternity. When he prepared to depart, the people complained that he was leaving them as orphans in disobedience to Jeremiah’s command that he watch over the people. Baruch assured them that he would not abandon them. He was only going to consult God on their behalf and for the sake of Zion.  

Baruch went again to the ruins of the holy place and lamented the loss of Jerusalem. He fell asleep there and received an apocalyptic vision of a forest. A vine arose against the forest. Then a fountain sent out waves that engulfed the entire forest and the mountains that had surrounded it. One cedar alone remained, but even it eventually fell. The cedar was brought to the vine, which rebuked the tree for its wickedness. The vine promised that the tree would be tormented even more at the end of time. The cedar then burst into flames, while the vine grew. Around it the valley filled with unfading flowers. God then interpreted the vision to Baruch. The forest represented the kingdom that once overthrew Zion, but was in turn overthrown. Three kingdoms then succeeded this first, of which the last was the harshest. The cedar represents the last ruler of that last kingdom. The fountain and the vine represent the Messiah, who will punish the wicked ruler and protect God’s people. His dominion will last forever.

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7 2 Bar. 21-30.  
8 2 Bar. 31-34.  
9 2 Bar. 35-40.
The vision and its interpretation prompted Baruch to ask God about those of God’s people who had separated themselves from the Law. He also asked about those who had left behind their vanity and fled under God’s wings. God told him that the earlier states of both would be forgotten, but they would be rewarded or punished according to their later choices. God then told Baruch to address the people and then to return to this same place and fast, so that he might again speak with him.

Baruch summoned a select group of leaders from the people and enjoined them to admonish the people to adhere to the Law. He revealed to his listeners that Zion had to be destroyed and that the world would be as well. The coming world would be given to those who were obedient to the Law. When he announced that he would soon die, his listeners bewailed the loss. Were they to be left in darkness? Baruch assured them that the Lord would raise up a leader for them. He then went to Hebron, where he fasted.

Baruch lifted up his voice in prayer again, this time beseeching God to protect his elected people. God acknowledged that he had heard Baruch’s sincere prayer, but declared that his judgement stood. Only that which was evil would be destroyed. Then he described the confusion that would accompany the end times. Baruch bewailing the inheritance of Adam’s sin announced that he would no longer enquire about the wicked, but only about the righteous. In answer to a further query by Baruch, God revealed to him the glories and the torments that awaited those who followed the Law and those who ignored it respectively.

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10 This passage is not entirely clear; 2 Bar. 42.3-5, 7: "And as for that which you said with regard to those who have drawn near and to those who have withdrawn, this is the explanation. As for those who have first subjected themselves and have withdrawn later and who mingled themselves with the seed of the mingled nations, their first time will be considered as mountains. And those who first did not know life and who later knew it exactly and who mingled with the seed of the people who have separated themselves, their first time will be considered as mountains...Corruption will take away those who belong to it, and life those who belong to it."
11 2 Bar. 41-43.
12 2 Bar. 44-47.
13 2 Bar. 48-52.
When Baruch, exhausted from this interview, fell asleep, he had a vision of a
great cloud arising from the sea until it covered the earth. A succession of showers fell
from the cloud with alternating dark and bright waters. A final dark shower, blacker than
those that went before, rained down on the earth bringing destruction and devastation.
Then lightning pressed the cloud down against the earth and its flashes healed the world.
As the lightning began to rule over the earth, twelve rivers flowed from the sea and
surrounded the lightning, becoming its subjects. Baruch awoke in fear.14

Acceding once again to Baruch’s request for enlightenment, God sent the angel
Ramael to interpret the cloud vision.15 The vision concerned the history of the world
from the Creation until the end of time. The first black waters recalled the transgression
of Adam and the wickedness of the angels who mingled with mortal women; the first
bright waters were the fountain of Abraham which flowed through his progeny and
brought the promise of renewal and the life to come. The succeeding dark and bright
waters continue to illustrate the triumphs and failures of Israel. The eleventh black
waters represent the sufferings that Israel was experiencing in the destruction of the
Temple and city by the Babylonians.16 The twelfth bright waters foretell a future period
of great distress to come upon Israel, but their enemies would fall before them and Zion
would be rebuilt. The last, blackest, waters contain a message of significance to the
entire world, rather than just to Israel. These refer to the confusion to come over the
world at the end of time. A last shower of bright waters presage a Messianic age of
deliverance for the righteous who survive the time of confusion.17 In conclusion Baruch
offered a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the interpretation and received the command

14 2 Bar. 53.
15 The cloud vision and its interpretation are analyzed at length by A. C. B. Kolenkow, “An Introduction to
16 Though Second Baruch was written in response to the Roman destruction of A.D. 70, the earlier
destruction by the Babylonians serves as the dramatic date for the composition. The interrelationship of the
two acts of destruction is complicated in the author’s treatment. It is not always as simple as seeing the
Babylonians as a trope for the Romans, a point that will be discussed below.
17 The interpretation does not quite jibe with the vision, for the final act of the vision was the lightning bolt,
which in the interpretation has become another shower of bright waters.
to instruct the people so that they might not die in the last times. Baruch’s imminent departure was also announced to him.\textsuperscript{18}

Baruch’s final speech to the entire people that remained in the land exhorted them to make straight their ways to avoid the punishment that had befallen their brothers and Zion. The people implored Baruch to write a letter to inform the exiles in Babylon of the message delivered to him by God. Baruch wrote that letter and sent another to the exiles of the Northern Kingdom previously taken into captivity by the Assyrians.\textsuperscript{19} There is no further mention of the letter to the Babylonian exiles, but the work ends with the text of the letter sent to the nine and a half tribes of the Assyrian exile.

In this letter Baruch informed the exiles of the disaster that had befallen Zion. He then briefly recounted the consolation offered to him by the divine revelations regarding the future time. In order to console the addressees of the letter Baruch promised that they would have vengeance on both the nations and their own brothers who had acted wickedly. Baruch exhorted the exiles to preserve the traditions of the Law and to hand them down to their children, for in this would they find mercy on the last day. He closed with the warning and the promise that the end was not far from them. The letter was tied to the neck of an eagle to be carried to the nine and a half tribes.\textsuperscript{20}

Date of Composition

The dating of Second Baruch is uncertain. There are some items in the text that have been taken as evidence in computing a date.\textsuperscript{21} Some scholars have interpreted the opening line which dates Baruch’s first vision of God to the twenty-fifth year of Jeconiah (Jehoiachin) to suggest that the work was composed twenty-five years after the fall of

\textsuperscript{18} 2 Bar. 54-76.
\textsuperscript{19} 2 Bar. 77.
\textsuperscript{20} 2 Bar. 78-87.
\textsuperscript{21} Violet, \textit{Die Apokalypsen}, lxxvii-lxxx, interprets the mention of an earthquake, 2 Bar. 70.8, as referring to the earthquake that struck Antioch in 115; L. Gry, “La date de la fin des temps selon les révélations ou les calculs du Pseudo-Philon et de Baruch (Apocalypse syriaque),” \textit{RB} 48 (1939), 337-356, also argues for composition in 115.
Jerusalem, thus yielding a date of 95. This is not a very secure basis. Jehoiachin, king of Judah, succeeded his father in 598 B.C. and was taken into exile by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, in 597, when he was only eighteen years old; Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians in 587. Two things remain unclear. Jerusalem did not fall to the Babylonians in the twenty-fifth year of Jehoiachin’s reign. Why does the author of Second Baruch say that it did? This cannot be answered. Even if we accept the author’s claim, it is by no means the next logical step to take his dating of the destruction of Jerusalem in the twenty-fifth year of Jehoiachin as masking the date of composition twenty-five years after that date.

For the purposes of the present study it is necessary only to show that the text was written in the Roman period after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Two statements in the text show that this is the case. When Baruch speaks to the people he mentions that Zion will be destroyed twice. The author is careful to preserve the dramatic date of his narrative and therefore speaks of the rebuilding of the Temple under the Persians as still in the future. After that rebuilding, Jerusalem will be destroyed again, to be restored one final time for eternity. This must refer to the destruction of Jerusalem carried out by the Romans under Titus during the Jewish Revolt.

A second prophetic item suggests a Roman date. In the interpretation of the vision of the forest and the cedar God tells Baruch that the forest represents the kingdom that destroyed Zion once; this must refer to Babylon. That kingdom will be destroyed in its turn. The author sketches a succession of three kingdoms after Babylon, clearly drawing on the vision of four kingdoms beginning with Babylon found in the Book of Daniel. The fourth kingdom will be overthrown by the Messiah. It is probable that this

22 Bogaert, Apocalypse de Baruch, 1.291-295.
23 2 Kings 24.6-17; 2 Chron. 36.8-10.
24 2 Bar. 32.2-4: “For after a short time, the building of Zion will be shaken in order that it will be rebuilt. That building will not remain; but it will again be uprooted after some time and will remain desolate for a time. And after that it is necessary that it will be renewed in glory and that it will be perfected into eternity.”
25 Dan. 2; 7.
kingdom is Rome. The author of Fourth Ezra identified the fourth beast of the Danielic vision with Rome; Josephus also understood Daniel’s visions to refer to Rome, though his presentation is deliberately vague.26

On the basis of these two items a composition date in the Roman period after 70 can be assumed with security. There is no suggestion of the Hadrianic foundation of Aelia Capitolina on the ruins of Jerusalem. It is, therefore, safe to posit a terminus ante quem of 135. The text is to be dated sometime in the half-century following the end of the Jewish Revolt. In so far as Josephus and the authors of Fourth Ezra and the Fourth Sibylline Oracle were composing their works before 100, a late first-century date for Second Baruch seems most likely.

Analysis of the Text

Second Baruch ostensibly treats the first destruction to befall Jerusalem at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians in 587 B.C. The dramatis personae are drawn from that historical context: Jeremiah, Baruch, the Chaldaeans, and Gedaliah. Certain indications in the text, however, make clear that the author was responding to the later capture and destruction of the city at the hands of Titus and the Romans.27 The text is not, however, a case of straightforward symbolism wherein figures in the narrative serve as tropes for the author’s own contemporaries, at least, not all the time. The author carefully preserves the sixth-century setting of his story. Nevertheless, as has been shown above, the text was written in the aftermath of the Roman suppression of the Jewish Revolt. As with Fourth Ezra it is unlikely in the extreme that mention of Babylon

27 Mention has already been made of the prophecy concerning the destruction of the second Temple. In the vision of the cedar and the vine and its interpretation, 2 Bar. 36-40, the four kingdoms schema of Daniel 7, is employed. The first kingdom is Babylon, which first destroyed Jerusalem. Babylon is in turn destroyed and replaced by a kingdom, which falls prey to another. After this a fourth kingdom arises that is harsher and more oppressive than all that went before. The second kingdom must represent the Persians, the third the Graeco-Macedonian empire of the Seleucids. The fourth would, therefore, represent Rome. It is the fourth that is the true subject of the vision as will be discussed below.
and its actions against Jerusalem would not immediately call to mind the more recent Roman tragedy.

Rather than reading Second Baruch as an encoded text, taking each figure in it as a mask for some late first-century figure, it is better to read it as a reflection on the events of 70 as recast in a traditional mode. The vision of the forest and the cedar makes clear that Babylon itself is not the author’s concern, for the Messianic vindication falls on the fourth kingdom, Rome.

The method adopted in the present study will be to treat Babylon as a trope for Rome when Baruch is reacting to the destruction that he witnesses and speculating about the future punishment to fall upon the conqueror. When it is clear that the author is treating the Babylonians as Babylonians, above all in the Cloud Vision, this method will not be followed. Attention will also be paid to places in which the author’s presentation of the Babylonian conquest differs from the traditional accounts; it will be assumed in these cases that the author is addressing his own time, the late first century, in a particular way.

The most striking of such differences between the version of events as recounted in Second Baruch and the traditional biblical account is the perspective from which the aftermath is viewed. After the fall of Jerusalem in 587 little is known about the situation in Palestine. There are a few remarks in the book of Jeremiah, but following the murder of the Babylonian installed governor, Gedaliah, and the departure of Jeremiah into Egypt,

28 It is not uncommon in Jewish literature to find an assimilation of similar events and persons across the ages. This is done with the various assaults on Jerusalem, for example in the common tradition that they all occurred on the same day, the 9th of Ab. For this tradition see m. Taan. 4.6: “Five things befell our fathers on the 17th of Tammuz and five on the 9th of Ab. On the 17th of Tammuz the Tables were broken, and the Daily Whole-offering ceased, and the City was breached, and Apostomus burnt the Law, and an idol was set up in the sanctuary. On the 9th of Ab it was decreed against our fathers that they should not enter into the Land, and the Temple was destroyed the first and second time, and Beth-Tor was captured and the City was ploughed up. When Ab comes in, gladness must be diminished.” The capture of Beth-Tor refers to the final defeat of Bar-Kokhba at Bethar in A.D. 135; thus, even the action of Hadrian against the Jews is assimilated to the destructions of the city. This same principle is at work in the late fourth- or early fifth-century midrashic text on the Book of Lamentations, Ekhah Rabbati.

29 Babylon had, of course, already suffered for the insult inflicted upon Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.
nothing is known. Though some portion of Israel, probably the larger part of the people, continued on in their homeland, the captives taken to Babylonia became the standard bearers of Israel's history, culture, and religion. The narrative that ends in 2 Kings with the fall of Jerusalem is picked up again with the return of the exiles under Zerubbabel recorded in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. The restoration of the city and Temple and the reordering of religious life are in these books accomplished not in conjunction with those who remained in the land, but despite them.

The perspective of Second Baruch is that of those who remained in the land with Baruch. Baruch's actions are centered around Jerusalem, for it is there that he consults with God and receives some of his visions. In the course of the text he goes no further than Hebron. The collection of people that remain with Baruch is quite broad as is shown by his speeches. The addressees include the elders, Baruch's firstborn son, the Gedaliahs, seven of the elders of the people, and, for his final speech, the whole people from greatest to least.

This point of perspective is of the highest significance. The speeches of Second Baruch serve as an important vehicle for the teaching of the author, though they are not the only point of instruction in the work. The Palestinian setting and Baruch's addresses to the remnant left in the land position the work to serve as a tract aimed at those Jews remaining in Judaea in the wake of the destruction of Jerusalem by the

31 Baruch's continued presence in Palestine in the apocalypse is at odds with the tradition recorded in the deuto-canonical Book of Baruch, where he resides in Babylon; Bar 1.1.
32 2 Bar. 10.3: "You [Baruch], however, stay here in the desolation of Zion and I shall show you after these days what will happen at the end of days." Baruch on Mount Zion: 10.5; 13.1; 21.3 (implicit); 34; 35.1-3; 43.3 (implicit). Baruch in the valley of Kidron: 21.1; 31.2.
33 2 Bar. 47.
34 2 Bar. 31.1 (elders); 44.1 (son, Gedaliahs, seven elders); 77.1 (entire people, addressed as children of Israel).
35 A. F. J. Klijn, "The Sources and Redaction of the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch," JSJ 1 (1979), 65-76, notices the central place of the speeches, but overstates in this regard their importance to the neglect of other elements of the work.
Romans. The teaching of the book, as it will be argued here, is directed at Jewish concerns over the continuation of Roman rule after the suppression of the Great Revolt.

The author’s message to his people is conflicted. Denunciations of Rome expressed vividly in the eschatological visions and passionate laments of the seer are mitigated, or even undercut, by a remarkable sense of solidarity with men of all nations who struggle to live a good life in a world hostile to justice and righteousness since the days of Adam. While the pathos of the laments and the splendor of the apocalypses make a deep impression on the reader, it is ultimately the author’s repeated hearkening to the failings of our common humanity that seek to recall the reader from his desire for vengeance and to redirect his attention to the care of his own soul in the hope of the salvation promised to all who subject themselves to the Law, be they Jew or pagan.  

Before the author could proceed to his program, however, he first had to strip away any feelings of awe that might have adhered to the conqueror who had boldly and successfully undertaken to throw down the holy city and the dwelling place of the Most High located therein. The apocalypse opens with a divine announcement of impending punishment for the sins of Israel. After asking many questions regarding the future of Israel, Baruch laments the coming of those who hate God, for they will pollute the sanctuary, carry off God’s heritage into captivity, and rule over those whom God loves. Furthermore they will return to their land and their idols and boast before them. A divine reassurance, however, erases Baruch’s worries on this count: Baruch will see that the enemy will not destroy Zion and burn Jerusalem.  

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36 F. J. Murphy, “2 Baruch and the Romans,” JBL 104 (1985), 663-669, has devoted some attention to the treatment of the Romans in Second Baruch. He argues that Second Baruch counsels against renewing rebellion against Rome by reassuring Jews that Rome would be punished at the end of time by God. The relationship between Jews and Romans in the text is rather more complicated, as will be shown here. The notion that the Jews were meditating a renewal of hostilities anytime soon after 70 finds no support in any of the texts to be analyzed in the present work. The antecedents of the Bar Kokhba Revolt did not extend to the time immediately after the defeat of the first revolt. The history of Judea during the fifty years after 70 should not be seen as a period of simmering resentment and preparation for renewed attempts at freedom until some evidence of such sentiments is discovered.

37 2 Bar. 5.1.

38 2 Bar. 5.2-3.
The promise is made good the following day. Baruch is whisked above the walls of the city and beholds four angels preparing to cast down the city walls at the command of a fifth. When the fifth angel issues the command to overthrow the walls, he does so explicitly to forestall the boasts of the enemy that they had overthrown the wall of Zion and burned the place of the mighty God. When the angelic destruction had been wreaked, a voice was heard from the Temple inviting the enemy to enter the city, for the one who guarded the house had left.

In other accounts the voice from the Temple does not come on the eve of conquest and is merely a portent of the coming disaster. The author of Second Baruch, however, has the voice extend an invitation to the enemy army to enter into the city and the Temple; they would otherwise have been unable to do so had the guardian still resided therein. Josephus also tried to shift the blame for the destruction of the Temple from the Romans. In his account of the Temple’s burning, a Roman soldier is prompted by a divine impulse to cast a torch into the sanctuary. The aim of Josephus was quite different from that of the author of Second Baruch. Josephus was interested in exculpating the Romans and especially Titus from the heinous deed of destroying the Temple of God. This is one enormous obstacle that the historian had to overcome in order to present the conqueror of Jerusalem in a positive light to his Jewish audience. The author of Second Baruch did not seek to relieve the Romans of blame, but to rob them even of the power and ability of harming the dwelling place of God without the permission of the divine occupant and protector of Jerusalem. The conquerors of Jerusalem, the Romans in the guise of Babylonians, are thus weakened in this

39 2 Bar. 6.3-5.
40 2 Bar. 7.
41 2 Bar. 8.1-2. This occurrence is reported by Josephus, BJ, 6.300, and Tacitus, Hist. 5.13.
42 Jos. BJ 6.300: κατα δὲ τὴν οἰκημένην, ἀπερταίρετα καταλήπτει, νῦν δὲ ἐντὸς ἐπισκοπὴς ἀνέθη τῷ ἔδώρῳ ἐρήμων, ὑπὸ αὐτὴς ἔλθεν πρὸς τὰς ἡμερινὰς, παρὰ τὰς κόσμον κεφαλάδας καὶ τοὺς, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἀσιαὶ ἀκρόπολις "μεταβαλεῖν ένεωθεῖν"; Tac. Hist. 5.13: aperitae repente delubris et auditae maior humana vox excedere deos; simul ingens motus excedentium.
43 Jos. BJ 6.252: διαμάρτιμον ἀπεβίω τὴν χρεόαν.
44 See above, Introduction.
presentation. They were not sufficient in themselves to overcome God and to burn his Temple and city in defiance of his own wishes. Efficacy is restored to God in this way. The Romans merely served the judge in his judgement, as such they were not a force to be feared in their own right, rather fear was to be restored to God. 45 Indeed, Second Baruch does not even contain a description of the Roman destruction of the city; the Chaldaeans merely entered the city and seized the Temple. 46

What galls Baruch is the felicity of Rome at a time when Jerusalem has been destroyed; it would have been bad enough if Rome were happy and Zion were in its glory. 47 Baruch’s anguish prompts him to play the prophet and foretell Rome’s doom. The city that is now happy will not always be so, but will one day taste the wrath of God, whose long-suffering now holds vengeance back. 48 It is precisely this withholding of divine retribution that troubles Baruch when, later in the text, he raises his voice in prayer and calls upon God to visit the world with the judgement that he has promised. He is to do this in order, thereby, to demonstrate his power to those who equate his long-suffering with weakness. 49

The intended audience of this demonstration is not named though two can be imagined. The author may be concerned that the Romans were led by the absence of any

45 2 Bar. 5.2-3: “And you shall see with your eyes that the enemy shall not destroy Zion and burn Jerusalem, but that they shall serve the Judge for a time.”
46 2 Bar. 8.4.
47 2 Bar. 11.1-2. This was, as has been suggested above, the central concern of Fourth Ezra.
48 2 Bar. 12.1-4: “But I shall say as I think and I shall speak to you, O land, that which is happy. The afternoon will not always burn nor will the rays of the sun always give light. Do not think and do not expect that you will always have happiness and joy, and do not raise yourself too much and do not oppress. For surely wrath will arise against you in its own time, because long-suffering is now held back, as it were, by reins.”
49 2 Bar. 21.20-25: “Therefore, command mercifully and confirm all that you have said that you would do so that your power will be recognized by those who believe that your long-suffering means weakness. And now show it to them, those who do not know, but who have seen that which has befallen us and our city, up to now, that it is in agreement with the long-suffering of your power, because you called us a beloved people on account of your name. And now, show your glory soon and do not postpone that which was promised by you” (20-21, 25). It is not made explicit exactly what Baruch expected God to do. In the text up to this point no eschatological revelation has been given to Baruch. God promised that the times would hasten and the years would pass more quickly until the time when he would visit the world; 2 Bar. 20.1-2.

I take this to be the promise recalled in Baruch’s prayer.
divine retribution stemming from the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple to believe that the God of the Jews was too weak to protect his people and avenge the outrage against his dwelling place. The desperation in Baruch’s prayer, however, suggests that it is Baruch himself that is beginning to doubt the fulfillment of the prophecy he so rashly declaimed against Rome. Baruch’s badgering provokes God to rebuke him for worrying about things that are beyond his ability to know. It is clear from the divine response that it is Baruch himself who is troubled by the perceived failure of God to act.

Baruch’s frustration would surely have resonated with many Jews in Palestine in the years following the loss of their holy city. The prosperity of Rome jarred with the humiliation voiced by Baruch when he declared that even equality between Rome and Jerusalem would be scarcely bearable. But when would the longed-for vengeance fall upon the conqueror? The decades following the suppression of the Great Revolt saw a consolidation of Roman power in the East. Judaea was put on firmer footing as a praetorian province complete with its own legion. The kingdom of Commagene was reduced to provincial status very soon after the revolt. Following the death of Agrippa II in the early nineties his kingdom was split up and parceled out to neighboring provinces. The year 106, perhaps still in the future when Second Baruch was composed, would see the annexation of the Nabataean kingdom as the province of Arabia. The thirty to forty years after 70 witnessed a vigorous expansion of Roman control over Judaea and its neighbors.

In the face of this vigorous imperial expansion, it is understandable that some would begin to wonder when God would avenge himself on the destroyers of Jerusalem. Baruch vents the frustration that must have accompanied this delay. The complaints of Baruch, however, are not the last word on this subject, for the author proposes a solution

50 2 Bar. 23.2: “Why, then, are you disturbed about that which you do not know, and why are you restless about that of which you do not possess any knowledge?”
51 This may lie behind the charges leveled against Rome in the vision of the cedar and the vine; 2 Bar. 36.
to this difficulty and proffers a piece of advice to Baruch and to his late first-century audience.

The solution consists of a reorientation in the understanding of the catastrophe that had befallen the Jews; the advice involves a change of perspective. The two are interrelated.

The author draws a comparison between the punishment that is to come upon the Romans and that which had already fallen upon the Jews. On the basis of the parallel treatment of the chosen people and the nations, a sign of God’s impartiality as judge, the author shifts the audience’s attention to the individual nature of sin and away from the concept of national sin. The criterion of guilt is the Law, even, it appears, for the nations. Finally, the author calls on his readers to ignore the might of Rome and to focus instead on the state of their own souls. The last section in the form of a letter to exiles extends the author’s message to Jews in the Diaspora for whom the destruction of Jerusalem might not have been felt with the keenness of their brethren in Judaea thus also blunting the author’s call for introspection and rededication to the divine commandments.

After Baruch addressed the dire prophecy to Rome mentioned above, he fasted seven days, before God answered him. Baruch is told that he will be preserved as a witness to the punishment that will come upon the happy cities in the end of times. When the cities are puzzled by the divine retribution brought upon them, Baruch is to explain it based on the retribution that came upon his own nation, Israel. The Jews, though God’s own sons, were punished; so the nations would be punished. The balance

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52 2 Bar. 12.
53 2 Bar. 13.3: “Because you have been astonished at that which has befallen Zion, you will surely be preserved until the end of times to be for a testimony.” The designation of the cities to be punished as happy, 13.4, recalls Baruch’s description of Babylon/Rome in his prophesy; 11.2: “But now, behold, the grief is infinite and the lamentation is unmeasurable, because, behold, you are happy and Zion has been destroyed”; 12.1-4.
54 2 Bar. 13.4-5: “The means that if these happy cities will ever say, ‘Why has the might God brought upon us this retribution?’, you and those who are like you, those who have seen this evil and retribution coming over you and your nation in their own time, may say to them that the nations will be thoroughly punished.”
55 2 Bar 13.9: “Therefore, he did not spare his own sons first, but he afflicted them as his enemies because they sinned. Therefore, they were once punished, that they might be forgiven".

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of ideas is suggestive; the parallels in language are striking. The translator has used the same word for retribution in both cases.56 He has likewise indicated that both Jews and Gentiles will be punished using the same term.57 Furthermore, in labeling the Jews as enemies, the author employs a word elsewhere used of the nations.58

The author of Second Baruch thus sets the Jews on par with the Romans at least in regard to their deserving of judgement. It should be noted that the end of the punishment inflicted on the Jews is forgiveness, a notion not expressed in the case of Rome. The impartiality of God's judgement is an important message of Second Baruch. It comes up again when Baruch addresses the elders of the people gathered around him. To this group which includes his first born son, the Gedaliahs, his friends, and seven of the elders, he announces that God is both just and impartial. The destruction that befell Zion served to publicize this aspect of the judgement of God.59 By afflicting the Jews first, divine impartiality was guaranteed.60 Just as the author of Fourth Ezra had done, the author of Second Baruch sought to undermine the notion of national salvation by replacing it with a sense of individual responsibility.

He takes aim at another notion present in Fourth Ezra, namely that the Jews should be spared on the grounds that at least some of them are righteous, as opposed to the entirely corrupt nations. The author of Second Baruch does credit the notion that a leaven of righteousness can justify saving the whole.61 In the opening narrative of the text God declares that Jerusalem cannot be handed over to the Babylonians if Jeremiah, Baruch, and their like remain in the city, for their prayers and good works are like

58 Enemies: SN’; for use of the term to describe the Romans see 2 Bar. 3.5; 5.1.
59 2 Bar. 44.1-6: “For you see that he whom we serve is righteous and that our Creator is impartial. And see what has befallen Zion and what happened to Jerusalem, that the judgement of the Mighty One will be made known, as well as his ways which are inscrutable and right ” (4-6).
60 2 Bar. 13.8-9: “For the judgement of the Most High is impartial. Therefore, he did not spare his own sons first, but he afflicted them as his enemies because they sinned.”
61 Indeed, this message is derived from the biblical account of Abraham's pleas that God spare Sodom if a righteous minority be found; Gen. 18.16-33.
fortifications. God does not, however, spare Jerusalem on their account; rather he demands that they leave the city so as not to hinder his plans.62

The author raises the question explicitly in the conversation with God following God's declaration of parity of the punishments meted out to the Jews and the nations. Baruch asks what profit Israel's fidelity to God has gained it. It has not, after all, walked in the ways of the nations. Surely there were many among the Jews who were wicked, but the works of the righteous among them should have sufficed to obtain mercy for Zion.63

This line of reasoning is cut off by God's response. God declares that the existence of the Law serves to convict those who do not follow it. Because men have understanding they must adhere to the Law.64 In the passages immediately following this one, the author seems to limit the effectiveness of the Law to the Jews, for God declares that Moses brought the Law to the descendants of Jacob and the generation of Israel.65 Later, however, a more expansive view is presented, whereby all men are subject to the Law, irrespective of their inability, in the case of the nations, to know it; indeed, ignorance of the Law is a sign of invincible pride on the part of the unknowing.66

62 2 Bar. 2: “This, then, I have said to you that you may say to Jeremiah and all those who are like you that you may retire from this city. For your works are for this city like a firm pillar and your prayers like a strong wall.”
63 2 Bar. 14.2-8: “What have the profited who have knowledge before you, and who did not walk in vanity like the rest of the nations, and who did not say to the dead: 'Give life to us,' but always feared you and did not leave your ways? And, behold, they have been diligent and, nevertheless, you had no mercy on Zion on their account. And if there are others who did evil, Zion should have been forgiven on account of the works of those who did good works and should not have been overwhelmed because of the works of those who acted unrighteously” (5-7).
64 2 Bar. 15.2-6: “It is true that man would not have understood my judgement if he had not received the Law and if he were not instructed with understanding. But now, because he trespassed, having understanding, he will be punished because he has understanding” (5-6).
65 2 Bar. 17.4.
66 2 Bar. 48.38-40: “And it will happen in that time that a change of times will reveal itself openly for the eyes of everyone because they polluted themselves in all those times and caused oppression, and each one walked in his own works and did not remember the Law of the Mighty One. Therefore, a fire will consume their thoughts, and with a flame the meditations of their kidneys will be examined. For the Judge will come and will not hesitate. For each of the inhabitants of the earth knew when he acted unrighteously, and they did not know my Law because of their pride.”

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Two important lessons arise from this understanding of the grounds upon which
divine judgement rests. The first is that the Jews have no privileged position as a people.
This is made clear in the passage prior to the one just mentioned, a passage to which the
one above is given in answer. Baruch utters a heartfelt prayer to God pleading for mercy
on Israel as his chosen people. Because God has chosen Israel, he ought now to have
mercy on this nation. Because the Law is with Israel and because the Jews have put their
trust in God, they should be saved. Because Israel did not mingle with the nations it shall
always be blessed.67 The strenuous pleading leaves Baruch weak when he has finished,
but it is of no avail. God acknowledges the honesty of Baruch’s prayer, but he cannot
disregard the requirements of the Law, which demands judgement. Nothing will be
destroyed unless it was found to have acted wickedly, which is defined as acting without
remembering God’s goodness or accepting his long-suffering.68

Thus the notion of national salvation is dispensed with in Second Baruch. Each
individual must work out his salvation through adherence to the Law. Though by no
means as pervasive as in Fourth Ezra, the tracing of human sin back to Adam is also
present in Second Baruch. The author pithily summarizes his teaching of personal
responsibility when he declares that each of us is our own Adam.69 The author applies
this idea to the current situation of the Jews in the aftermath of the Jewish Revolt.

The notion that individuals are responsible for sin, which is defined as neglect of
the Law, or also more broadly as acting without acknowledging God’s goodness or long-

67 2 Bar. 48.18-24: “For these are the people whom you have elected, and this is the nation of which you
found no equal. But I shall speak to you now, and I shall say as my heart thinks. In you we have put our
trust, because, behold, your Law is with us, and we know that we do not fall as long as we keep your
statutes. We shall always be blessed; at least, we did not mingle with the nations. For we are all a people of
the Name; we, who received one Law from the One. And that Law that is among us will help us, and that
excellent wisdom which is in us will support us” (20-24).
68 2 Bar. 48.26-29: “But my judgement asks for its own, and my Law demands its right...Because it is as
follows: There is nothing that will be destroyed unless it acted wickedly, if it had been able to do something
without remembering my goodness and accepting my long-suffering” (27, 29).
69 2 Bar. 54.15, 19: “For, although Adam sinned first and has brought death upon all who were not in his
own time, yet each of them who has been born from him has prepared for himself the coming torment. And
further, each of them has chosen for himself the coming glory...Adam is, therefore, not the cause, except
only for himself, but each of us has become our own Adam.”
suffering, has an effect on the way that the Roman Empire is to be viewed according to the author. It is necessary to return to the prophecy that Baruch directed against the land that is happy. In it the seer foretold that wrath would come upon Rome. Though Baruch is not explicit, it is reasonable to assume, given the context of the prophecy, that the seer expects the punishment to be one of vengeance for the injury done to Jerusalem by Rome. God makes clear that the basis will be something different. He tells Baruch that the punishment to befall the nations will come as the result of their unrighteous use of creation and their denial of God's beneficence. The nations and Rome in particular are not to be punished because of their maltreatment of Israel, but rather because they have contravened the laws set by God. Taking this together with the notion that the Law applies to all men, we might conclude that it is on this basis that the nations will be punished.

Nor is the individuality of adherence to the Law neglected, for Second Baruch leaves open the possibility that certain gentiles will dedicate themselves to the Law and become proselytes. At one point Baruch asks God what will become of those who had once submitted to the Law, but later cast away its yoke; that is to say, what will happen to Jewish apostates, namely, those who have mingled themselves with the seed of the mingled nations? Conversely Baruch observes that there are those who have left behind their vanity and fled under God's wings. This group is further described as those who mingled with the seed of the people who have separated themselves, in other words, proselytes. The number of such proselytes cannot have been large, but it is noteworthy

70 2 Bar. 12.
71 2 Bar. 13.11-12: "But now, you nations and tribes, you are guilty, because you have trodden the earth all this time, and because you have used creation unrighteously. For I have always benefited you, and you have always denied the beneficence."
72 2 Bar. 41-43: "For behold, I see many of your people who separated themselves from your statutes and who have cast away from them the yoke of your Law. Further, I have seen others who left behind their vanity and who have fled under your wings" (41.3-4); "As for those who have first subjected themselves and have withdrawn later and who mingled themselves with the seed of the mingled nations, their first time will be considered as mountains. And those who first did not know life and who later knew it exactly and who mingled with the seed of the people who have separated themselves, their first time will be considered
that the author of Second Baruch allows for them in his vision of individual responsibility for sin and righteousness; the author of Fourth Ezra, by contrast, does not mention the possibility of the conversion of gentiles.

Though the author concedes the possibility of proselytism, the great majority of gentiles were unlikely to adopt the Law granted to Israel by God. The author of Second Baruch, therefore, does envision the ultimate judgement and punishment of the nations as involving large numbers of sinners. Among those to be punished the author singles out Rome. This is understandable given the imperial domination that Rome exercised over the Jews and over all nations. The future humbling of Rome is tackled explicitly in one of the few apocalyptic visions included in Second Baruch, a dream vision of a forest.

The dream came to Baruch in Jerusalem while he was sitting on the ruins of the Temple; his heart was moved to a teary lament in which he recalled the sacrifices that were once offered on that spot, but were no longer. Sleep came upon Baruch and he dreamed of a forested valley. A vine arose with a fountain flowing from underneath it. The waters of the fountain increased until the waves covered the trees of the forest. One cedar alone remained, but even it was cast down and the entire forest was uprooted and destroyed. The cedar was brought to the vine, which rebuked it for its wickedness. The cedar had possessed power over things that did not belong to it, nor did it have compassion on those things that did belong to it. Its power had extended over those living far from it, and had enmeshed in nets of wickedness those who lived close. The cedar then burst into flames as the vine grew and flowers sprung up throughout the valley.

God reveals the meaning of the symbols in the vision. The forest represents Babylon and the three kingdoms that succeed it and each other. The fourth kingdom,
though not named specifically, must be Rome. The cedar is the last ruler of Rome who
will be left alive when the Messiah has overcome the Roman host. The ruler will be
taken to Mount Zion; there the Messiah will convict him of his wicked deeds and those of
his hosts. He will then be killed. The Messiah will protect the people in the land of
Israel until the times have been fulfilled.  

It has been suggested that this vision was not composed by the author of Second
Baruch, but rather had an independent origin and was incorporated by the author into his
work. This conclusion rests on the fact that there is no mention in the vision of the
Roman destruction of Jerusalem. Rome is punished in the vision for general wickedness,
rather than the specific action against the Jews and their holy city. This should come as
no surprise given the tendency of the work already discussed above. Though certainty in
the matter is impossible, at least on this score there is no reason to doubt the integrity of
the Cedar Vision or its composition by our author.

The cedar and the forest offer the only picture of Rome unmediated through the
trope of Babylon in Second Baruch. This fourth kingdom is described as harsher and
more evil than all that went before it. It is not only wicked in itself, it provides a haven
for all who are polluted with unrighteousness. Like the evil beasts that creep in the
forest, the wicked will flee to Rome.

The grasping nature of Roman imperialism is dealt with in the vision proper.
Here is an inversion of the argument put into Agrippa II's mouth by Josephus. There
Roman might and the breadth of Rome's imperial possessions formed the basis of
Josephus' call for obedience to Rome. Indeed, the same principle can be seen at work in
First Maccabees. It was Rome's many conquests that excited Judas Maccabees' admiration and fired his eagerness for military alliance. The Romans had conquered the

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75 2 Bar. 39-40.
76 Charles, "The Apocalypse of Baruch," 61, labels it a Messiah Apocalypse written prior to 70.
77 If it was not composed by our author, it nevertheless fit well into the author's tendency regarding Roman
wickedness.
78 1 Macc. 8.1-16.
Gauls and forced them to pay tribute. They had through their planning and patience gotten control of Spain and its rich gold and silver mines; this feat was accomplished despite the distance that separated Spain from Italy. Greece as well was conquered and enslaved, as were the remaining kingdoms and islands. Most pertinent to Judas was the Roman humbling of the Seleucid Antiochus III; he was only one of the many Macedonian kings defeated by Rome.

Judas was also enticed by the loyalty that the Romans showed their friends. The Attalid King Eumenes serves the author as an example. After the Romans defeated Antiochus III, they stripped him of his best provinces, India, Media, and Lydia, and made them over to Eumenes; the geographical extent of the gifts to Eumenes is rather exaggerated. To crown all, despite their world domination, the Romans remained humble.

This positive appreciation of Rome’s might and empire that inspired Judas Maccabee to seek an alliance and provided the basis for Josephus’ call for continued loyalty on the part of the Jews after 70 in the hands of the apocalyptic author gives way to horror at Rome’s arrogance and avarice. Judas Maccabee was impressed that Rome could conquer Spain so far from Italy; the author of Second Baruch, on the other hand, thinks that Rome should refrain from meddling in far-off lands. It is an example of Roman wickedness that power was extended over those who did not live close to Rome. Rome’s arrogance is recalled in the image of the cedar lifting up its soul as one who could not be uprooted.\footnote{2 Bar. 36.8.} The vision of the cedar and the vine, taken on its own, provides a voice of opposition to those, such as Josephus, who saw in the irresistible imperial might of Rome a sign of God’s favor and a compelling argument for Jewish obedience even after 70. The vision in Second Baruch turns this argument on its head showing
rather that Rome’s might has led to arrogance and that grasping imperialism will bring God’s wrath upon the empire.

Through the inclusion of this vision the author is able to display in very vivid detail his understanding of Roman imperial sin. The sins of Rome are not its actions against the Jews, but the oppressiveness with which it dominates all peoples.

The argument should be reviewed. A reasonable reaction to the events of 70 and the continued presence of Rome in Judaea would be to hope for divine vengeance. Indeed, the wicked Babylonians, who had also sacked Jerusalem and destroyed its Temple, were ultimately chastised by God through the Persians and their exemplary king Cyrus. The Romans, as the Cedar Vision makes clear, were even wickeder than Babylon. The corollary to this argument is that the Jews as Israel are a privileged people in respect to their election by God; any insult to them will bring down divine wrath on the offender. A certain complacency could develop as late first-century Jews waited expectantly for God to vindicate them. This attitude in itself is dangerous in our author’s eyes.

Second Baruch undermines this attitude by demonstrating the parity between Jews and their conquerors at least in regard to sinfulness. To be sure the Romans were wicked, but so were the Jews. The destruction of Jerusalem made this latter fact clear. This is not, of course, a novel idea in Jewish historical thought. The Romans, however, were not going to be punished merely to satisfy Jewish desires for revenge. They had offended God in their own right through their refusal to acknowledge his beneficence. All of this shows God’s impartiality.

The impartiality of God is worth examining briefly. The author of Second Baruch says that God does not respect persons in judgement. This idea can be found in the

80 In marked contrast to Cyrus; Ezra 1.2: “Thus says King Cyrus of Persia: The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem in Judah.”

81 This is clearer in the rendering of Charles, “The Apocalypse of Baruch.” 13.8: “Thou wilt say to them: ‘Ye who have drunk the strained wine, drink ye also of its dregs, the judgment of the Lofty One who has no respect of persons (DL’ MSB B’P’ HW)’; 44.4: “For ye see that he whom we serve is just, and our Creator is no respecter of persons (WB’P’ L’ NSB).”
Hebrew Scriptures applied generally to human judges. The notion is picked up in the New Testament, especially by St. Paul. The most pertinent passage for our purposes is in the Epistle to the Romans. St. Paul says that the reward for good and the punishment for evil will fall on all alike, be they Jew or Greek. Those who do not have the Law and sin will perish; those who have sinned under the Law will be judged in accordance with the Law. Righteousness in God’s sight consists of doing what the Law requires. This applies to the nations as well, even though they do not know the Law but act instinctively.

The message of St. Paul in Romans and that of Second Baruch deal with the same situation, namely God’s impartiality of judgement regarding the nations and the Jews. Both hold the Law to be the criterion by which righteousness is measured. Paul, however, does not require explicit knowledge of the Law among the nations; gentiles can be saved irrespective of their knowing the Law, so long as they act in accordance with its requirements. The author of Second Baruch posits knowledge of the Law as the prerequisite for acting righteously; for this reason proselytism, which he describes as

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82 The greatest clarity of expression is found in the King James Version; Dt. 1.17: “Ye shall not respect persons in judgment”; Dt. 16.19: “Thou shalt not respect persons”; Prov. 24.23: “It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment”; Prov. 28.21: “To have respect of persons is not good.” All passages are variations on יְשַׁעֵל דּוֹרֹת. The Peshitta version of the Deuteronomy passages uses the same expression as the translator of Second Baruch, namely variations on NSB ב' ר'. The notion is applied to God in 2 Chron. 19.7: “For there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.” Here the expression is יְשַׁעֵל דּוֹרֹת. It is nevertheless in the context of instructions given to human judges by King Jehoshaphat. The point in the biblical passages is that human judges in Israel, when deciding cases between sons of Israel, ought not to have regard for the wealth or status of the plaintiffs. 84 Acts 10.34; Rom. 2.11; Eph. 6.9; Col. 3.25; Jas. 2.1, 9; 1 Pet. 1.17. The passages in Ephesians and Colossians deal with the impartiality of God regarding slaves and masters. The Epistle of St. James enjoins Christians to have no regard for wealth or poverty in their congregations. The passages in Acts and Romans have to do with God’s impartiality vis-à-vis Israel and the nations; that in the First Epistle of St. Peter is more general.

83 Acts 10.34; Rom. 2.11; Eph. 6.9; Col. 3.25; Jas. 2.1, 9; 1 Pet. 1.17. The passages in St. James enjoin Christians to have no regard for wealth or poverty in their congregations. The passages in Acts and Romans have to do with God’s impartiality vis-à-vis Israel and the nations; that in the First Epistle of St. Peter is more general.

84 Rom. 2.9-16: ἐλλείψας καὶ εκκενωμένη Ἑλλάντης ἐξοντάς τοὺς καταργημένους τοῦ κοινοῦ, ἀκούεις τοῖς προτέρους καὶ ἀνακοίτησεν: ἐλλείψας νομὸν καὶ τῆς ἐργαζόμενος τῷ ἀγαθῷ, ἀκούεις τοῖς προτέρους καὶ ἔλεγεν: οὐ γὰρ ἄστιν προσπαλαιμεθά τοῖς νόμοις, ὅτι γὰρ ἂν ἄνωθεν ἠμαρτον, ἄνωθεν καὶ ἀπολύεται, καὶ οὐκ ἐν νόμῳ ἠμαρτον, διὰ νόμου κυριεύεται: οὐ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἀναστάτατος νόμον δίνειν παρὰ τῷ θεῷ, ἀλλὰ ἐν ποιεῖται νόμων διδάσκοντας. Ἡμᾶς γὰρ θεὸς τῶν ἄνωθεν ἠμαρτον καὶ τῶν νόμων ποιεῖται, ὅτι ἐν νόμῳ μη ἀναστάτος τοῦτος εἶναι νόμος· οὕτως λαμβάνουμεν τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου ἀργατόν ἐν τοῖς παρθένοις αὐτῶν, συμμετρητικά αὐτῶν τῆς συνεκδοχής καὶ μεταξύ ἀλλήλων τῶν λογισμῶν καταργούμενον ἢ καὶ ἀπαλλαγμένον, ὡς ἐφεξήγη ἡ κρίνει ἡ ἡγεία τῶν κρίτων τῶν ἀνθρώπων κατὰ τὸ εἰςφυνακόν μοι διὰ Χριστοῦ Ιησοῦ τοῦ λόγου τοῦτον εἰς τὸν καταργούμενον καὶ ἀπαλλαγμένον δικαίωμα διεκκενώσαντος τοῦτος αὐτῷ κατάτεθεν.
mingling with the seed of the people who have separated, is necessary. The failure to comprehend the Law is not an accident of birth, but a sign of pride.\footnote{2 Bar. 48.40.}

The necessity of explicit knowledge of the Law and formal adherence to the people of Israel places the Jews at the center of salvation. In other words salvation comes through them as mediators of the Law. This powerful message would surely have been welcomed in the wake of the tragedy of 70 when Jewish morale must have reached a low. Roman arms may have triumphed over Jewish and Jews may have been subjects of the Roman Empire, but as a source of salvation, even to the nations, the Jews were unparalleled.

A final point must be made regarding the Romans. The tendency of Second Baruch is to undercut Roman imperial pretension. They are shorn of responsibility, or really the capacity, to have conquered the holy city relying on their own power. In view of future happiness, they are dependant upon the Law, which was given to the Jews. Due to their lack of knowledge of this Law they are destined for perdition. To be sure, Roman might in the world is without rival, but that power is abused. What then is the attitude to be adopted by the late first-century Jew toward this destroyer of Jerusalem?

At one point Baruch desires knowledge about the fate of the Romans. Baruch confesses that he knows what has befallen the Jews, but does not know what will happen to their enemies. God does not answer him.\footnote{2 Bar. 24.4: “For behold, I also know what has befallen us [the ms. reads “me,” but most editors change it to the homophonic form “us”]; but that which will happen with our enemies, I do not know, or when you will command your works.” The divine response to Baruch’s statement does not include an answer. It is not immediately clear where the answer to Baruch’s profession of ignorance is. Charles, “The Apocalypse of Baruch,” 47, assumed that the question as to the enemies’ fate was answered in 13.3b-12; if this is so, it is unclear why Baruch would say that he does not know their fate. If any passage answers Baruch’s query it is the Cedar Vision.} Later in the text it is made clear that concern for the fate of the enemy is not desirable. Baruch’s final response in his last conversation with God contains this advice.\footnote{The position of the declaration gives it a sense of finality.} When he reflects on the suffering to come at the end of time on the day of judgement, Baruch realizes that the present suffering is
very little by comparison. He indulges slightly in hyperbole when he enjoins his audience to enjoy themselves in their current suffering. In view of the horrors to come, he asks them why they are looking for the decline of their enemies when they should instead be preparing their souls for the reward that might be theirs.

Rome is to be ignored. This is a fitting culmination for the author’s tendency regarding Rome. The individual’s responsibility for sin and righteousness combined with the ultimate powerlessness of Rome and God’s refusal to exact vengeance for the empire’s treatment of the Jews leads the author to counsel a turning inward on the part of his readers. Let them not concern themselves with the imperial pride of Rome by constantly bemoaning the continued glory of the empire. Nor should they doubt God’s power when their expectations for vindication are not met. Rome will be punished, but only because most Romans refuse to acknowledge God, not because God wants to avenge his people.

The call of Second Baruch for introspection is understandable in the context of late first-century Jewish anxieties. They are variously expressed by Fourth Ezra and Josephus, as we have seen. The latter penned an apology for Roman power in the hope of reconciling his wounded co-religionists not only to the reality of Roman imperial might, but even to the justness of that power, which was held from God himself. The author of Fourth Ezra portrays his hero tossing and turning in bed tormented by the happiness enjoyed by Rome at a time when Jerusalem lay in ruins. We shall also see how

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88 This notion is also contained in Baruch’s speech to the people about the two destructions that will come upon Jerusalem; 2 Bar. 32.5-6: “We should not, therefore, be so sad regarding the evil which has come now, but much more (distressed) regarding that which is in the future. For greater than the two evils will be the trial when the Mighty One will renew his creation.” The two evils refer to the twin destructions of Jerusalem by the Babylonians and the Romans; the Babylonian setting is here maintained.

89 2 Bar. 52.3-7a: “The lamentations should be kept for the beginning of that coming torment; let the tears be laid down for the coming of that destruction which will then come. But with a view of these things, I shall also speak. And concerning the righteous ones, what will they do now? Enjoy yourselves in the suffering which you suffer now. For why do you look for the decline of your enemies? Prepare your souls for that which is kept for you, and make ready your souls for the reward which is preserved for you.” The sentiment finds an echo in the letter of Baruch to the dispersed tribes appended to the end of the apocalypse; 2 Bar. 83.5: “And we should not look upon the delights of the present nations, but let us think about that which has been promised to us regarding the end.”
Rome consumed the thoughts of the author of another tract, the *Paraleipomena Jeremiae*, closely related to Second Baruch in presentation, but poles apart in its solution to present problems.

The author of Second Baruch was not content to reserve his precepts for the local audience represented by the remnant left in the land under his guidance. The message needed to be spread to all Jews throughout the Roman Empire. To achieve this purpose the author appended a letter to the end of his text tailoring his message to the particular circumstances of the Diaspora community of Jews living in the midst of Romans and the nations, though far from the scene of national tragedy.

While the capture of Jerusalem provides the setting of Second Baruch, little is made of the destruction itself.\(^90\) The bulk of the attention paid to the destruction of the city comes in the opening narrative and in a recapitulation in the closing letter. Explicit reference to the destruction as a punishment is extremely rare.\(^91\) Much more common is the notion that exile and captivity are the punishment inflicted for the sins of Israel.\(^92\) The preoccupation with exile, while congruous to the early sixth-century B.C. setting, does not fit well with the circumstances of the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Many Jews, to be sure, were taken prisoner in the capture of the city, but they were mostly disposed of in the spectacles presented by Titus in his tour of the cities of Syria to celebrate his victory.\(^93\) Seven hundred Jews were taken to Rome to appear in the Flavian triumph;

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\(^90\) This has been observed by A. F. J. Klijn, "Recent Developments in the Study of the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch," *JSF* 4 (1989), 3-17, esp. 8-10. The importance placed on the Temple by F. J. Murphy, *The Structure and Meaning of Second Baruch*, SBL Dissertation Series 78, (Atlanta, 1985), 71-117; *idem,* "The Temple in the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch," *JBL* 106 (1987), 671-683, is entirely out of keeping with the limited role that it plays in the text.

\(^91\) 2 Bar. 77.9-10; 80.1-3. Even the implied suggestion that the destruction of the city is intended as punishment for Israel's sin is uncommon and almost entirely restricted to the opening narrative of the destruction and its later recapitulation: 1.4; 3.2-5; 4.1; 5.1, 3; 6.9; 8.4; 85.3. One exception comes in Baruch's final address to the people before the text of the closing epistle is given; 77.8-10. More often the punishment of Zion is only vaguely alluded to without mention of destruction; 6.2; 10.7; 13.3, 9-10; 14.6-7; 31.4; 35.3; 39.3; 44.5-6; 64.4; 79; 81.2-4.

\(^92\) 2 Bar. 1.4; 5.1; 6.2; 8.5; 10.16; 33.2; 62.5-6; 64.5; 67; 77.4; 78.4-6; 79.4; 80.4, 7; 83.8; 84.2-5. See Klijn, "Recent Developments," 9-10.

what became of these Jews, with the exception of Simon b. Giora and John of Gischala, is not recorded.

Despite the prevalence of the idea of exile and captivity as punishment for Israel’s sins, it must be noted that the exile to which the author of Second Baruch pays attention is not the Babylonian captivity, as we would expect from his choice of setting. Following from the dramatic date of this text in the aftermath of the Babylonian capture of Jerusalem, we would expect to find the Babylonian Captivity as the exile in question. To be sure the exile resulting from the Chaldaean capture of Jerusalem is mentioned, but once Jeremiah and the exiles are taken off to Babylon they play no further role in the text.\footnote{2 Bar. 6.2; 8.5; 10.2, 5; 33.1-2.} At the end of Second Baruch, the people request that Baruch send a letter to the exiles in Babylon. Baruch complies, but the text of the letter is not included.\footnote{2 Bar. 77.12, 17, 19.}

In contrast, a great deal of attention is paid to the exiles of the earlier Assyrian conquest of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722/1 B.C. According to the people’s request that a letter be sent to the Jews in Babylon, Baruch decides also to send one to the nine and a half tribes across the Euphrates.\footnote{2 Bar. 77.17, 19-26.} The text of this letter is appended to the end of the apocalypse.\footnote{2 Bar. 78-86. Unlike the text of the apocalypse (1-77), the letter to the Assyrian exiles is extant in many manuscripts including that which contains the apocalypse. Ceriani and Knoskô printed the text according to the Ambrosian manuscript. Charles, \textit{Apocalypse of Baruch}, provided an edition based on the Ambrosian and ten other manuscripts. Dederer did not include the text of the letter in his edition of Second Baruch and was prevented by his death from ever producing one. The letter is the subject of study in M. F. Whitters, \textit{The Epistle of Second Baruch: A Study in Form and Message}, ISP Suppl. 42, (Sheffield, 2003). Most scholars have accepted the letter as an integral part of Second Baruch; see especially, Bogaert, \textit{Apocalypse de Baruch}, I.67-78; Murphy, \textit{Structure and Meaning}, 25, 62, 114, 120-124; Whitters, 35-65. The arguments for the letter’s independence proposed by G. Sayler, \textit{Have the Promises Failed? A Literary Analysis of 2 Baruch}, SBL Dissertation Series 72, (Chico, 1984), 98-101, have been effectively met by Murphy and Whitters.} In this address the identification of Baruch’s audience with the remnant left in
Israel is strongest. Baruch first lays the blame for the disaster that has befallen them on the sins of their brothers. The fact that they were left in the land seems at first to be a sign that others had been guilty of sin, while they were innocent. Yet Baruch does apportion some of the guilt to their lot. He tells them that if they were to make their ways straight they would not go away as their brothers had, presumably into exile. Furthermore, he says that Zion was not itself guilty of evil, but rather those who had sinned were.

The letter addressed to the nine and a half tribes, if it was meant to resonate with a known and real audience of the first century, must have been directed to the Jews of the Diaspora. That it should not be read to refer to any group associated with the Great Revolt is suggested by the care with which the author distinguished the nine and a half tribes from the two and a half that were left in Palestine.

99 2 Bar. 77.4-5: “And because your brothers have transgressed the commandments of the Most High, he brought vengeance upon you and upon them and did not spare the ancestors, but he also gave the descendants into captivity and did not leave a remnant of them. And, behold, you are here, with me”; cf. 82.2

100 2 Bar. 77.6.

101 2 Bar. 77.9-10: “Or do you think that the place has sinned and that it has been destroyed for this reason, or that the country has done some crime and that it is delivered up for that reason? And do you not know that because of you who sinned the one who did not sin was destroyed, and that because of those who acted unrighteously, the one who has not gone astray has been delivered up to the enemies?”

102 The Epistle of St. James, 1.1, is addressed ῥατ αἴσθημα ῥατ ἡ ἡμείς ἅμα ῥατ. There the identification of the twelve tribes with the Diaspora communities is made explicit. Historically, the Jews of the dispersion came from the tribes of the southern kingdom: Judah, Benjamin, and Levi. The author of Second Baruch by adopting the fancy of writing to the exiles of the northern kingdom is able to draw attention to the chronological priority of the dispersion to the revolt and to the non-participation of the Diasporan Jewish communities in the revolt. Whitters, Epistle of Baruch, 66-112, finds the model for the Epistle of Baruch in letters of two different genres: the festal letter (Esther 9.20-32; 2 Macc. 1.1-9; 1.10-2.18) and the Diaspora letter (Baruch 6; 2 Macc. 1.1-9; 1.10-2.18; Paraleipomena Jeremiae 6.17-23; the Epistle of James). The former group is concerned above all with promoting non-Pentateuchal holy days, e.g. Purim and Hanukkah, and also with calling readers to regulate their lives according to the traditional understanding of the covenant. The latter group is directed at reinforcing Jewish identity in foreign, and perhaps hostile, surroundings. Klijn, “Recent Developments,” 9-10, sees the relationship between Palestine and the Diaspora as a central theme of the text.

103 2 Bar. 1.2, speaks of 2 and 10 tribes. For discussion see Bogaert, Apocalypsis de Baruch, 1.339-352; he provides a chart tabulating the frequency of the two tribal enumerations (10 + 2; 9 ⅔ + 2 ⅔) in various Pseudepigraphical texts and the Rabbinic tradition (p. 347). Only Second Baruch combines the two counts. It should be noted that there were two methods of counting the twelve. Both ways agree on the ten tribes of Reuben, Gad, Dan, Judah, Naphtali, Asher, Zebulun, Issachar, Simeon, and Benjamin. The remaining two might then be reckoned as Joseph and Levi (Gen. 35.22-26) or Joseph might be divided into Manasseh and Ephraim with Levi removed from the reckoning. On this see Noth, History of Israel, 85-86. The exile of the northern kingdom according to the second reckoning would have encompassed ten tribes, with only
The letter is written with three aims in mind. The author wished to convey to Diaspora Jews that the catastrophe that befell their co-religionists in Judaea in A.D. 70 also applied to them, though in a different way. It was their life in the Diaspora that was their punishment. The author seeks to impress upon them that such an existence was tantamount to exile, albeit voluntarily entered into. The third point the author makes is that their sojournning among the nations required increased vigilance on their part to live in accordance with the traditions of their fathers and the divine Law.

The most important point is to convince the Diaspora Jews that they are indeed in a grievous situation. It would be hard to swallow, for the Jews who lived among the nations had for the most part willingly emigrated from Palestine. The author attacks the problem from various angles. Most compelling is his appeal to Scripture. He recalls the testimony of Moses who threatened the twelve tribes while they were in the desert that if they trespassed the Law they would be dispersed, whereas if they kept it they would be planted. The fact that this Mosaic threat finds no exact parallel in Scripture highlights the tendency of Second Baruch regarding the exilic punishment to befall those who do not observe the Law. Now, the author of Second Baruch proclaims, the prophesy of Moses had been fulfilled, for the addressees of the letter were living in the dispersion.

Judah and Benjamin left in the southern kingdom; Levi having been removed entirely. According to the first method, however, the northern kingdom consisted of nine and a half tribes: Reuben, Gad, Dan, Naphtali, Asher, Zebulun, Issachar, Simeon, Joseph, and half the tribe of Levi; the southern kingdom would then consist of Judah, Benjamin, and the other half of Levi. It is possible that the author of Second Baruch preserves both traditions. The precise enumeration is not necessary for the analysis presented here, where the Assyrian exiles are understood as those Jews living in the Diaspora irrespective of tribal affiliation.

The notion that the Jews of the Diaspora lived in a perpetual state of hope, thwarted and deferred, of return to the homeland has been compellingly refuted by E. S. Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans*, (Cambridge, Mass., 2002), esp. 232-252.

Two biblical passages come close to the sentiment of the present passage. Deut. 4.25-27: “When you have had children and children’s children, and become complacent in the land, if you act corruptly by making an idol in the form of anything, thus doing what is evil in the sight of the Lord your God, and provoking him to anger, I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that you will soon utterly perish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to occupy; you will not live long on it, but will be utterly destroyed. The Lord will scatter you among the peoples; only a few of you will be left among the nations where the Lord will lead you”; and 30.19-20: “I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants
Lest Diaspora Jews feel complacent in their living situation, the author employs language designed to make their sojourn among the nations seem like an anomaly or worse. He compares the disaster that befell the Jews in the land through the loss of Jerusalem to the loss of their brothers; the latter caused greater suffering to the community around Baruch. The travails of the Jews in the dispersion can be meretricious helping them to avoid condemnation on the last day; this will be especially true if they remove that error that caused them to go away in the first place. The Jews of the dispersion are imagined to derive some happiness from the knowledge that their brethren are happily ensconced still in Palestine; of course, this has now changed because of the affliction that has come upon the Jews in the land. This suggests that dwelling in Judaea is the norm, a fact recognized, in the author’s conception, by those in the dispersion.

This last point is further developed by the author. The exile must end and the émigrés must return home. The dispersed are exhorted to prepare their hearts so that their current earthly exile is not commuted into an eternity of torments in the next world.

may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the Lord swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.” There is no notion in the biblical passages, or in Second Baruch’s paraphrase, that the Jews must be taken into exile by a foreign power.

This last point is further developed by the author. The exile must end and the émigrés must return home. The dispersed are exhorted to prepare their hearts so that their current earthly exile is not commuted into an eternity of torments in the next world.
The Diaspora audience is assured that God in his mercy will not forget them, but will again assemble all the dispersed.  

The message to Diaspora Jews echoes that delivered in the main body of the apocalypse: return to the Law. For the communities of the dispersion, however, the author puts the call in more complete detail. The dispersed must remember the commandments, Zion, the Law, the holy land, their brothers, the covenant, their fathers, the festivals, and the sabbath. In other words, the Jews of the Diaspora are called upon to keep close to the ancestral traditions that define Jewish life and belief. They must not, in their sojourn among the nations, neglect to keep their customs and observe the Law. The author also includes in the letter the strongest condemnation of the nations to appear in Second Baruch. He recites a highly metaphorical litany of the ultimate ruin that will come upon the nations. The vehemence of this denunciation perhaps indicates the susceptibility of the Jews who live outside of Judaea to an exaggerated admiration of the power of the nations in whose midst they find themselves.

The message of both apocalypse and letter are largely in agreement. The letter is specifically geared toward the particular problems that were sure to confront Jews living among gentiles. They would most likely have lived in Greek- or Italian-style cities around the Mediterranean and might be more easily overawed by the imperial might and

112 2 Bar. 78.7: “For if you do these things in this way, he shall continually remember you. He is the one who always promised on our behalf to those who are more excellent than we that he will not forever forget or forsake our offspring, but with much mercy assemble all those again who were dispersed.” The similar notion that salvation will only come to those in the land is twice expressed in the apocalypse proper; 2 Bar. 40.2; 71.1. On this theme see D. J. Harrington, “The ‘Holy Land’ in Pseudo-Philo, 4 Ezra, and 2 Baruch,” in S. M. Paul, R. A. Kraft, L. H. Schiffman, W. W. Fields (eds.), Emanuel: Studies in the Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov, VT Suppl. 94 (Leiden, 2003), 661-672.

114 2 Bar. 82.3-9: “For now we see the multitude of the happiness of the nations although they have acted wickedly; but they are like a vapor. And we behold the multitude of their power while they act impiously; but they will be made like a drop. And we see the strength of their power while they resist the Mighty One every hour; but they will be reckoned like spittle. And we will ponder about the glory of their majesty while they do not keep the statutes of the Most High; but as smoke they will pass away. And we think about the beauty of their gracefulness while they go down in impurities; but like grass which is withering, they will fade away. And we ponder about the strength of their cruelty while they themselves do not think about the end; but they will be broken like a passing wave. And we notice the pride of their power while they deny the goodness of God by whom it was given to them; but as a passing cloud they will vanish.”
majesty of their Roman, or more precisely for the East Greco-Roman, overlords. The
distance from Judaea and its concerns might also, at least from the vantage point of an
observer in the holy land, loosen the grip of the traditional religious customs and
practices of their fathers. Indeed, Baruch’s letter contains a command to his audience to
hand down both the letter itself and the traditions of their fathers to their own children.115
The Jews of the Diaspora may not have witnessed in person the destruction of Jerusalem
and did not feel its loss in their daily life, but the necessity of keeping the Law was every
bit as vital.

Conclusion
The decades after A.D. 70 were a time of imperial consolidation in the East under a new
dynasty. Flavian propaganda, if the term may be used, depicted the defeat of the
rebellious Jews as a major foundation of Flavian and Roman, for now the two were
linked, power. The triumphal procession upon the return of Titus to Rome was lavish. It
has left its impress on the account of Josephus, who wrote a Greek history that surely
found a wide audience among his co-religionists. While Flavian coin issues advertised
Judaea capta, the triumphal procession adorned by the venerable vessels and sacred
furniture of the Temple cult seemed to boast of victory over God himself. The holy land,
though it had long been under Roman supervision, was now more obviously subject,
especially with the loss of the Jewish metropolis and its ruling class, which had often
served as a mediator and a buffer between Jews in Judaea and their imperial masters.

Many reactions are imaginable; some find expression in the surviving testimony.
Josephus counseled accommodation based on the recognition that Roman success
indicated divine favor. As we shall see, the author of the Paraleipomena Jeremiae

115 2 Bar. 84.9: “And give this letter and the traditions of the Law to your children after you as also your
fathers handed down to you.” The many manuscripts of the letter, in contrast to the apocalypse proper,
show that it did indeed circulate independently.
advocated strict separation from all things Roman, a radical turning away from the empire, though not through rebellion. The author of Fourth Ezra constructed a complex response tracing Jewish and gentile sin back to their common origin in Adam. Out of sinful humanity God had chosen a people, the rest were destined for perdition. Even among this people there were sinners. The true solution was eschatological as was shown by the vision of the eagle. All three solutions betray a mode of thinking dominated by the Roman Question.

The author of Second Baruch was a participant in this late first-century debate, as can be seen from the similarity of themes and even specific details shared by many of the other works under discussion. Second Baruch attempts to set aside the all-consuming interest in Rome. He does so by drawing Jewish attention back to Jewish concerns. Rome is wicked, to be sure, but is through sin more closely akin to the Jews than comfort might allow. It is a classic case of discovering the mote in a neighbor’s eye, while ignoring the plank in one’s own. Accounts would be settled at the end of time; Rome would be duly punished, though not for destroying Jerusalem. The sobering thought of judgement day ought to occupy Jewish minds rather than the present felicity of their enemies. The Law is the key to future happiness and it was held by the Jews, through whom alone the nations, or at least individual gentiles, might escape the wrath to come. This would surely have boosted Jewish morale at a time when their earthly power and felicity were at low ebb.
CHAPTER THREE

PARALEIPOmenA JEREMIAE

Introduction to the Text

The Paraleipomena Jeremiae is a fanciful expansion of the biblical account of the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the city’s inhabitants; the second part of the text tells the story of the return of the exiles to the holy city under the leadership of Jeremiah, who is the central figure of the entire text. While the biblical book of Jeremiah serves as the basis for the narrative, many important themes are also borrowed from Ezra-Nehemiah. These biblical books and the history they contain merely serve as the starting-point for an imaginative author, who amplifies this material with elements of fantasy. The text is directed at an audience trying to come to terms not with the loss of the Temple that occurred in 587 BC, but with the more recent loss at the hands of Roman soldiers. The Paraleipomena has much to say to the Jews of its day, recommending a radical separation from the conquerors, while noting that there are many who have drifted under Roman influence. For the author there can be no common ground between Jew and Roman; the restoration of the people demands severing all ties with the conquerors. The restoration is not, however, to be understood in concrete terms. Rather the author of the Paraleipomena uses the historical return to Jerusalem, though in a significantly changed version, as a symbol for the return to a pure Jewish identity untainted by contact with Rome.

The Paraleipomena Jeremiae, once one of the more obscure of the Pseudepigrapha has enjoyed in recent years a surge in scholarly attention, much of which is extremely insightful.¹ There has yet to be, however, a serious attempt to understand

¹ The Paraleipomena Jeremiae was included in the collections of neither Charles nor Kautzsch. This absence has been remedied in the modern collections. S. E. Robinson prepared a translation under the title
the text in its historical setting, especially one analyzing the contribution the author has made to our understanding of Jewish attitudes toward the Roman Empire. The present study is offered as a remedy to this deficiency.

The Paraleipomena Jeremiae, despite increased attention in recent years, remains a little known text to many scholars; a brief summary of the story will be beneficial.

Summary of the Text

The tale begins with God announcing to Jeremiah that he is going to destroy Jerusalem on account of the sins of the inhabitants. Jeremiah fears that the king of the Chaldeans will have occasion to boast when he takes the holy city of God. God assures Jeremiah that he himself will destroy the city.2

"4 Baruch" in OTP II.413-426; R. Thornhill prepared the translation for H. F. D. Sparks (ed.), The Apocryphal Old Testament, (Oxford, 1984), 813-834; a German translation is offered by B. Schaller, "Paraleipomena Jeremiou," JSHRZ, vol. 1 part 8, (Göttingen, 1998); a French translation accompanies the Greek text of J. Rendel Harris in J. Riaud, Les Paralipomènes du Prophète Jérémie: Présentation, texte original, traduction et commentaires, Cahiers du Centre Interdisciplinaire de Recherches en Histoire, Lettres et Langues (CIRHILL) 14, (Angers, 1994). The Greek text was edited first by A. M. Ceriani, Paraleipomena Jeremiae Prophetae quae in Aethiopica Versione dicentur Reliqua Verborum Baruchi, Monumenta Sacra et Profana 5.1, (Milan, 1868), 10-17, based on one manuscript; J. Rendel Harris, The Rest of the Words of Baruch: A Christian Apocryphal of the Year 136 A.D., (London, 1889), based on six manuscripts and the Ethiopic version; R. A. Kraft and A.-E. Purinton, Paraleipomena Jeremiou, Texts and Translations 1: Pseudepigrapha Series 1, (Missoula, Montana, 1972), based on over sixty manuscripts with an English translation. This last edition serves as the basis for the text cited in this study and the verse numbers correspond to this edition; other studies use the numbering provided by Harris. The text has been recently re-edited and translated into English with a commentary by J. Herzer, 4 Baruch (Paralipomena Jeremiae), SBL Writings from the Greco-Roman World 22, (Atlanta, 2005). The Greek text comprises a critical analysis of Harris and Kraft-Purinton. I was only able to obtain a copy at a late stage of writing and have not, therefore, been able to make full use of this important addition to the study of the Paraleipomena. A critical edition based on all the manuscripts and versions is currently being prepared by B. Heininger of Würzburg. Two major works on the text were published in 1994: the translation and commentary of Riaud mentioned above and J. Herzer, Die Paralipomena Jeremiae: Studien zu Tradition und Redaktion einer Haggada des frühen Judentums, Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum 43, (Tübingen, 1994). It was also the subject of an issue of JSP 22 (2000), for which B. Schaller compiled a full bibliography of works devoted to the text; Herzer's translation also contains an updated bibliography. For a concise introduction to the text see A.-M. Denis, Introduction aux Pseudepigraphes grecs d'Ancien Testament, SVTP 1, (Leiden, 1970), 70-78; G. W. E. Nickelsburg, Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah, 1st ed. (Philadelphia, 1981), 313-318—the text does not appear in the revised edition; idem, in M. E. Stone (ed.), Jewish Writings of the Second Temple: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus, CRINT 2:2, (Assen and Philadelphia, 1984), 72-75; E. Schütz, The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ, G. Vermes, F. Millar, M. Black, and M. Goodman (rev. eds.), 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1973-1987), III/1.292-294.

2 Par. Jer. 1.
Jeremiah enters the Temple to mourn the impending destruction. He is met there by his associate Baruch, whom he informs of the divine declaration. Both weep and rend their garments.3

When night comes, the two mount the walls of the city just as God had commanded Jeremiah to do. From their perch they see angels descend from heaven bearing torches and taking up their positions on the city walls. Jeremiah begs the angels to allow him one last conversation with God before the city is destroyed. They consent and Jeremiah asks God what he should do with the Temple vessels. He is told to bury them. He also asks that Abimelech the Ethiopian be spared the grief of witnessing the city’s destruction. God then tells Jeremiah that he will go into exile with the people, but that Baruch will remain. Jeremiah and Baruch enter the sanctuary, gather up the vessels, and bury them. The next morning Jeremiah sends Abimelech to the vineyard of Agrippa on an errand to gather figs.4

Once the Chaldaean army has surrounded the city, the leader of the angels sounds his trumpet and invites the enemy into Jerusalem. Jeremiah leaves the city with the keys to the Temple and throws them up to the sun for safekeeping; this act is accompanied by an admission of false stewardship. The Chaldaeans enter the city and drag the people and Jeremiah off to Babylon. Baruch puts dust on his head and utters a short lament. He then leaves the city and sits in a tomb where angels minister to him.5

The story then turns its attention to the fate of Abimelech, who was sent by Jeremiah on an errand for figs. Figs duly collected, Abimelech, overcome by the day’s heat, rests under the shade of a tree, where he falls asleep for sixty-six years. Waking up from what he supposes was a short nap, Abimelech hastens back to Jerusalem fearing Jeremiah’s displeasure at his dawdling. When he returns to Jerusalem he does not

3 Par. Jer. 2.
4 Par. Jer. 3.
5 Par. Jer. 4.
recognize the city; all his neighbors and family have gone. He assumes that he is lost and exits the city. After careful scrutiny he recognizes the city's landmarks and reenters Jerusalem. When he still cannot find his way around inside the city he leaves and sits outside. Presently an old man approaches him and through their conversation it gradually dawns on Abimelech that he has slept much longer than he had imagined. The old man tells him of the exile of Jeremiah and the people. Abimelech is convinced of the miraculous nature of his nap by the fact that it is no longer fig season.\footnote{Par. Jer. 5.}

In answer to Abimelech's prayer an angel guides him to the tomb from which Baruch has not stirred through the sixty-six years. The sight of Abimelech and the basket of figs causes Baruch to offer up a prayer to God announcing his hope for the resurrection of the righteous. Baruch wants to inform Jeremiah of the miraculous preservation of Abimelech and the basket of figs. He asks God in prayer how he might get in touch with Jeremiah. God answers that he will send an eagle as intermediary and commands Baruch to write a letter to Jeremiah telling him that he must expel those who have become foreigners from the people in exile. Once this is done, God will lead them back to Jerusalem. Baruch writes the letter spelling out the conditions of the return: whoever listens to the commandments of the Lord through Jeremiah will return, whoever does not will become a stranger both to Jerusalem and to Babylon.\footnote{Par. Jer. 6.}

Baruch is met by the promised eagle to whom he gives the letter, fifteen figs, and instructions for their delivery to Jeremiah in Babylon. The eagle arrives just as Jeremiah and the exiled community prepare to bury one of their dead. When the eagle lands on the corpse it is restored to life. At the eagle's insistence Jeremiah reads the letter to the assembled people who weep, put dust on their heads, and ask Jeremiah what they must do to return to their city. Jeremiah exhorts them to follow the commandments and writes a
letter to Baruch telling him of the oppression that the exiled community has suffered and the apostasy that it has provoked. The eagle again serves as intermediary.  

When the day for departure arrives, God tells Jeremiah to address the returnees telling them to separate themselves from the works of Babylon; more specifically they are to put away Babylonian spouses. The people make their way to the Jordan River where those who do not listen to Jeremiah are not to cross. About half the people do not heed Jeremiah’s commands and cross over the river with Babylonian spouses in tow. When they arrive at the walls of Jerusalem they are prohibited entry by Jeremiah, Baruch, and Abimelech, whereupon they return to Babylon. The Babylonians, however, also refuse them entry and they are compelled to found a new city in a desert place some distance from Jerusalem; to this city they give the name Samaria.  

Upon their return the people spend nine days rejoicing and offering sacrifices. On the tenth day Jeremiah alone offers a sacrifice and beseeches Michael the Archangel to lead the righteous in through the gates of righteousness. At the end of his prayer Jeremiah falls dead. When the people try to bury him a voice tells them that he is still living. After three days he rises up and calls on the people to glorify God and the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who will come to choose twelve apostles to preach to the nations. The people become angry and plan to stone Jeremiah, whose life is spared by a stone divinely transformed and given the appearance of the prophet, which the people begin to stone. Meanwhile, Jeremiah teaches Baruch and Abimelech all the mysteries that he learned in heaven. When he has finished the stone cries out that it is not really Jeremiah and the people realizing the deception stone the real Jeremiah to death. The stone turned prophet is set up over Jeremiah’s tomb as a gravestone.

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8 Par. Jer. 7.  
9 Par. Jer. 8.  
10 Par. Jer. 9. Most scholars recognize the final part of the text as a Christian addition to an older Jewish text; this will be discussed below.
The original language of the *Paraleipomena Jeremiae* was once generally thought to be Semitic, either Hebrew or Aramaic. A Greek original has also found its champions. Advocates of either position have rarely based their arguments on exhaustive analysis of the text. Recently the text was subjected to just this sort of rigorous scrutiny and a very strong case was made for a Greek original.

The case for a Greek original is based on an accumulation of evidence coupled with the weakness of the case for a Hebrew original. What scholars once labeled Semitisms have been shown to be consistent with both the Greek of the Septuagint and everyday non-literary Greek. Arguments based on two supposed transliterations of Hebrew are inconclusive and susceptible of explanations other than positing a Hebrew original. There is a complete lack of demonstrable mistranslations, which often

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11 See especially G. Delling, *Jüdische Lehre und Frömmigkeit in den Paralipomena Jeremiae*, (Berlin, 1967), 72-74 (a Palestinian language, i.e. Hebrew or Aramaic); A.-M. Denis, *Introduction aux Pseudepitraphes*, 75, (Hebrew, though he entertains the possibility of Greek); S. E. Robinson, OTP 2.414 (Semitic, possibly Hebrew); Schröter, III/1.292 (Hebrew or Aramaic); for others see B. Schaller, “Is the Greek Version of the *Parallipomena Jeremiou* Original or a Translation?” *JSP* 22 (2000), 51-52.


14 Schaller, “Greek Version,” 54-56, 62-68

15 The most famous of these supposed transliterations is Jeremiah’s reference to the Jews in Babylon calling upon the god Zas (זאש; *Zaq*); Par. Jer. 7.29. G. D. Kilpatrick, “Acts 7:52: ‘Eleusis’,” *JJS* 46 (1945), 141, suggested that a translator simply transliterated the Hebrew formulation זאש (“foreign god”) mistaking it for a proper name; for the phrase see Ps. 44.21; 81.10. This explanation is highly unlikely as a few lines later the text of the *Paralipomena* has the phrase “foreign god” rendered into Greek (*ο θεός των ξένων*) thus demonstrating the author’s familiarity with the Greek expression; Par. Jer. 7.30; cf. 7.34: γῆς ξένων θεός. Schaller, “Greek Version,” 58-59. The second example of transliteration from a Hebrew original appears in the author’s use of the Hebrew spelling of Jerusalem (יוֹסֶפֶלָה נְו) as opposed to the Graecized form (Ἰερουσαλήμ). While the Hebraic form is often found in works translated into Greek from Hebrew originals, e.g. the Septuagint, it is also quite common in books composed originally in Greek, e.g. Rom. 15.19, 25, 26, 31; 1 Cor. 16.3; Gal. 4.25, 26; Lk. *passim* (twenty-seven times); Acts, *passim* (thirty-nine times).
characterize translations from Hebrew into Greek. The text is full of syntactic-stylistic elements characteristic of Greek and semantic usages peculiar to the same language. A final argument in favor of a Greek original is the verbal closeness of Biblical quotations and allusions in the Paraleipomena to the Septuagint as opposed to known Hebrew versions of the Old Testament.

Date of Composition

The question of composition date is, as usual, vexed. That the text was written in the Roman period, and more precisely in the first century A.D., is assured by the mention of the Vineyard of Agrippa, though the identity of the topographical reference remains unclear. Scholarly opinion has placed the composition in the early part of the second century, generally in some relation to the revolt of Bar Kokhba, on the basis of various arguments.

16 Schaller, “Greek Version,” 61-62; though cf. 81 for a possible mistranslation.
17 Schaller, “Greek Version,” 56-57. That is to say, those things that are, in the case of a Greek text, peculiarly Greek with no counterpart in other languages under consideration, should be taken into consideration in discerning a text’s compositional language; the more that specifically Greek elements occur, the higher is the likelihood that the text was originally composed in Greek. Examples of constructions peculiar to Greek and absent from Semitic languages such as Hebrew and Aramaic include the genitive absolute, substantivized infinitives, substantivized questions, the attraction of the relative, supplementary participles, the use of the particle $\alpha\nu$ in temporal and conditional clauses, and the use of the indefinite pronoun. A translator would be less likely to employ these particularly Greek, and specifically non-Semitic, constructions in rendering a Hebrew text into Greek. The author has also used idiomatic expressions typical of Greek or “Judaeo-Greek.” Schaller, “Greek Version,” 68-71, bases his argument on the statistical observations of R. A. Martin, Syntactical Evidence of Semitic Sources in Greek Documents, Septuagint and Cognate Studies 3, (Cambridge, Mass., 1974).
18 Schaller, “Greek Version,” 74-87, detects the following Biblical citations and allusions: Par. Jer. 1.2 = Jer. 1.18; Par. Jer. 1.5 = Jer. 39.3, 4 (LXX) = 52.3, 4 (M); Par. Jer. 2.5 = Joel 2.13; Par. Jer. 3.8 = Jer. 22.49; Par. Jer. 3.9 = Jer. 45.6-13 (LXX) = Jer. 38.6-13 (M); Par. Jer. 6.3a = Ps. 56.8 (LXX) = 57.8 (M)/107 (LXX) = 108.2 (M); Par. Jer. 6.3b = Jer. 38.13 (LXX) = 31.13 (M); Par. Jer. 6.13 = Jer. 3.14; Par. Jer. 6.20a = Jer. 37.4 (LXX) = 30.4 (M) + Jer. 32.15 (LXX) = 25.15 (M); Par. Jer. 6.20b = Jer. 11.4/Deut. 4.29; Par. Jer. 6.21 = Job 15.25; Par. Jer. 7.10 = Gen. 8.6-12; Par. Jer. 7.12 = Prov. 4.27; Par. Jer. 7.17 = Exod. 4.4-5; Par. Jer. 7.20 = Ps. 136.3, 4 (LXX) = 137.3, 4 (M); Par. Jer. 9.3 = Isa. 6.1. The only explicit quotation in the Paraleipomena is Par. Jer. 7.29 = Ps. 136.3, 4 (LXX) = 137.3, 4 (M). In only two of these cases is the evidence of our author’s dependence on the Septuagint inconclusive.
19 Par. Jer. 3.14: ἀπεράντων αὐτῶν ἐς τὸν ἀμαλκάτων τοῦ Ἀργίπτα; cf. 3.21: ἀπελπύ ἐς τὸ χωρίον τοῦ Ἀργίπτα.
20 For a summary of representative attempts at dating see Riaud, Les Paralipomènes, 127, 130-132; Herzer, 4 Baruch, xxx-xxxv.
J. Rendel Harris understood the work as a Jewish-Christian eirenicon directed at Jews in the wake of the Bar Kokhbah War and accordingly dated it to 136. In his analysis the author was capitalizing on the Hadrianic prohibition of Jews from entering Jerusalem to issue an invitation to his Jewish brethren to accept baptism that they might as Christians avoid this ban. There are many problems with this theory. One wonders whether Roman officials would have possessed the theological sophistication to distinguish Jews from Jewish-Christians. On Harris’s theory the crossing of the Jordan represented baptism, in so far as the returning exiles had to renounce Babylon and cross the river in order to enter Jerusalem. It should be noted, however, that many of the returnees do cross the river and are, nevertheless, refused admittance to Jerusalem.

Following the key to the text’s symbolism provided by Harris would require that the Jews who submitted to baptism were still denied entry to Jerusalem despite their Christian identity. Another problem raised by Harris’s understanding of the text’s symbolism is the need to identify non-converting Jews with Babylon. Earlier in the text the Babylonians sack Jerusalem and haul the Jews and Jeremiah off into exile; later they are to be understood as the Jews themselves. The confusion of the symbol’s meaning further weakens Harris’s theory.

While it is difficult to accept Harris’s interpretation of the Paradipomena as a Jewish-Christian eirenicon, another item has been understood as pointing to a Jewish identity. Par. Jer. 8.3: xai shev b xvgio; ngb; ‘Isgs/ilav dva/rvf$n, xai xai b Xab;, xai favrs sni TOV logbdvqv, xai sgsT; Aalf)- b SsAw TOV xvgiov xaraXsiij /DTM RD sgya TTJ BafivXmvo; xai TOV aggsva; TOV Xa/3ovra; IT; avrmv yvvatxa if, xai rd; yvvatxa; Tag ei; avrwv dvtiga;, biansgao-coo-iv ol dxovovrs; trov, xai igov avTov; si; ‘Tegovo’aXrit%• TOV; Se M dxovovrd; crov, FIY eitraydyy; avrov; exel Not  as clear is an earlier mention of the Jordan; 6.25: δικαίωσε δε αυτώς εκ τοι φιλος τοι φιλάσων· η μη λειμων ψάρεις γενήσεσαι· τούτο τη σώματι αυτώς της μεγάλης σφαγῆς. Here the Jordan seems to be symbolic, though of what is not certain. The later passage suggests that those who do not forsake Babylon ought not to cross over, but they do anyway. It seems difficult, therefore, to think of the Jordan as a sign of any initiatory rite, for all, literally, pass it; though not all are admitted into Jerusalem.

Most scholars have rejected Harris’s identification of the Jordan with baptism, opting instead to see it as a symbol of circumcision; Riaud, Les Paradipomenes, 29-30, 64 n. 18; Nickelsburg, Jewish Literature, 316; M. E. Stone, “Baruch, Rest of the Words of,” EncJud 4.276. Appeal is made to G. Fitzer, “σφαγή,” TDNT 7.947, for the term’s use to designate circumcision. It is not at all apparent that the question of circumcision is a concern of the author of the Paradipomena.

21 Harris, Rest of the Words of Baruch, 12-17.
22 Par. Jer. 8.3:
23 Most scholars have rejected Harris’s identification of the Jordan with baptism, opting instead to see it as a symbol of circumcision; Riaud, Les Paradipomenes, 29-30, 64 n. 18; Nickelsburg, Jewish Literature, 316; M. E. Stone, “Baruch, Rest of the Words of,” EncJud 4.276. Appeal is made to G. Fitzer, “σφαγή,” TDNT 7.947, for the term’s use to designate circumcision. It is not at all apparent that the question of circumcision is a concern of the author of the Paradipomena.
composition date of 136: the sixty-six years of Abimelech’s sleep. Adding the figure of sixty-six to the year 70 yields a composition date of 136. This simple calculation also raises difficulties. The disaster in the Paraleipomena is the destruction of Jerusalem. The waking of Abimelech is sixty-six years later. If the text was written in response to the suppression of the Bar Kochbah Revolt one would expect that event to stand behind the symbolic Babylonian assault on Jerusalem. If the destruction of 70 is symbolized by the Babylonian capture of the city in the text, it is difficult to see how the defeat inflicted by Hadrian on the Jews in 136 would be the sign of hope that represents the return of the people to the holy city.

Another item has been used to date the text: the founding of Samaria by the returnees who refused to hear Jeremiah’s call to put away Babylonian wives. Scholars have seen in this a reference to the Samaritans; the text has been read, on occasion, as an eirenicon directed at this group. After the group of Jews founds Samaria, Jeremiah calls upon the schismatics to repent, promising them that the angel of righteousness will lead them to their exalted place.

This theory calls for a compositional date in the first half of the second century, more precisely around 130, for at this time there appears to have been a thaw in Judaeo-Samaritan relations, which were particularly stormy during the first century A.D.

Evidence for improving relations is found in statements attributed to early Tannaitic

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24 Harris, Rest of the Words of Baruch, 13; Nickelsburg, Jewish Literature, 315, discusses the use of the figure of sixty-six year, but does not seem to commit to the dating. Par. Jer. 5.29: ἰδεὶ γὰρ ἄδειαν καὶ ἐξ ἕτη σώματος τῶν ἄρη’ αὐτής ἦλθεν οἱ λαὸς ἐς Βαβυλῶνα.

25 The literal use of the sixty-six years to calculate a composition date is rejected by Riaud, Les Paralipomènes, 130; Herzer, 4 Baruch, xxxi; already by E. Schürer in his review of Harris’s work, TLZ 15 (1890), 83.

26 Par. Jer. 8.7-12: καὶ ἐπηνύσατε ὑπάτερῶν καὶ ἔλεην αἰς τόπον ἐπεμείνα μικρόδοθη τῇ Ταρουτηγῇ, καὶ ἔστησαν δικαίου πόλιν, καὶ ἐπικωνίσας τὸ δομα αὐτῆς Σαμαριτάν (11).


28 Par. Jer. 8.12: μετανοήσατε ήρεται γὰρ ἀγγέλης τῆς δυσκολίας, καὶ σώσει ωμὲς αἰς τὸν τόπον ωμὸν τῶν ὀρθῶν.
authorities, notably Rabbi Aqiba (second generation of the Tannaim; ca. 90-130) and Rabbi Simeon ben Gamaliel (third generation of the Tannaim; ca. 130-160). The Talmud recounts a dispute between R. Aqiba and R. Ishmael over the sincerity of Samaritan conversion: where they true converts or opportunistic converts? R. Aqiba issued a decision favorable to the Samaritans, declaring them true converts. Problems of interpretation arise. The dispute is found only in the Talmud, compiled long after the deaths of the participants. There is no evidence that these sages held such opinions in the second century. It has been suggested that the dispute attributed to R. Aqiba and R. Ishmael reflects the concerns of the Amoraic era which saw the compilation of the Talmud. Even if the formulation attributed to Aqiba was based on an accurate recollection of the sage, it is still markedly different from the account in the Paraleipomena. Aqiba’s declaration that the Samaritans were true converts rests on the assumption that they were not of Jewish origin; the Paraleipomena portrays the founders of Samaria as a group separated from the main body of Jewish returnees.


30 B. Qid. 75a-b; P. Git. 1.4; Schiffinan, “Samaritans in the Tannaitic Halakah,” 327-328.


32 The same problem exists for another favorable judgement of the Tannaim vis-à-vis the Samaritans. Rabbi Simeon ben Gamaliel (third generation of the Tannaim; ca. 130-160) stated that the Samaritans were like Jews in all respects. The opposing view was taken by his son, R. Judah the Prince, who codified the Mishnah at the end of the second century; he declared the Samaritans to be like non-Jews; t. Ter. 4.12, 14. A comparison of the two opinions renders opaque the true status of the Samaritans. If they are like Jews, the suggestion is that they are not in fact Jews; the same goes, mutatis mutandis, for the opposing formulation. The biblical account of Samaritan origins has them as an mixed population imported by the Assyrians after the Northern Kingdom of Israel was taken into exile. These new inhabitants continued to worship their ancestral gods while also adopting elements of the Israelite religion, thus producing a syncretistic cult; 2 Kings 17; Jos. Ant. 9.279, 288-291, follows the biblical account though he dismisses the charge of syncretism. Though Josephus’ understanding of the Samaritans’ status is not entirely clear, he seems to favor the view that they were foreigners. Feldman, “Josephus’ Attitude toward the Samaritans,” 114-136, has collected the evidence from Josephus, which illustrates two tendencies in the author’s presentation, sometimes presenting the Samaritans as foreigners and sometimes as having a Jewish origin. A comparison of the evidence seems, at least to me, to come down with more certainty for the former proposition. The biblical account in 2 Kings, and other Old Testament evidence for the Samaritans, has
Apart from the difficulties inherent in the reconstruction of the views held by Rabbinic authorities of the second century, especially when these views are recorded in the Talmud, this theory falters on the unlikely assumption that the author of the Paraleipomena Jeremiae had the Samaritans in mind in the passage under discussion. In fact, certain considerations lead to the rejection of the Samaritan identification and quite a different understanding of the author’s symbolic use of the foundation of Samaria.

Despite the similarity of the name, the city of Samaria really had little to do with the Samaritans, whose metropolis was Shechem with their cult center on nearby Mount Gerizim. It was in Shechem that Rehoboam was crowned; Jeroboam made it his capital. The city was destroyed by the Assyrians in 724 B.C. and reoccupied in the years before Alexander’s advent. Josephus recounts the founding, with Alexander’s blessing, of the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim. The city became, according to Josephus, the metropolis of the Samaritans, whom he often calls Shechemites. Though both city and shrine were destroyed by the Hasmonaean John Hyrcanus I, the site continued to hold great importance for the Samaritans even up to the time of the revolt been subjected to criticism on the grounds that it does not really refer to the Samaritans at all; see esp. R. J. Coggins, “The Old Testament and Samaritan Origins,” ASTT 6 (1968), 35-48; idem, Samaritans and Jews: The Origins of Samaritanism Reconsidered, (Atlanta, 1975). For the purposes of the present study it is necessary only to point out that Jews of the first and second century A.D. accepted the biblical account as a true rendition of Samaritan origins; for this the testimony of Josephus is of primary importance. For a full account of the Samaritans see J. A. Montgomery, The Samaritans: The Earliest Jewish Sect, (New York, 1907); A. D. Crown (ed.), The Samaritans, (Tübingen, 1989).

33 Nowhere in the Paraleipomena is the group labeled as Samaritans; this is a significant omission.

34 1 Kings 12.1, 25.

35 The reoccupation of Shechem is clear from archaeological and numismatic evidence; see G. E. Wright, Shechem: The Biography of a Biblical City, (New York, 1964), 170-172.

36 Jos. Ant. 11.302-325. For the resettlement of Shechem by the Samaritans see Wright, “The Samaritans at Shechem,” HThR 55 (1962), 357-366; idem, Shechem, 172-181; Coggins, Samaritans and Jews, 105-111.

against Rome in A.D. 66.\textsuperscript{38} The city was refounded by Vespasian as Flavia Neapolis (Nablus). Thus it is Shechem that was associated with the Samaritans.

The history of Samaria is quite similar in many respects to that of Shechem.\textsuperscript{39} It, too, was built by a king of Israel, Omri, and served as the capital of the Northern Kingdom for a time, before being destroyed by the conquering Assyrians when they took the people of Israel into captivity.\textsuperscript{40} It recovered and became an important administrative center under both the Babylonians and the Persians, but was again destroyed when it rose up against Alexander and became the scene of the murder of Andromachus, the Macedonian governor of Coele-Syria.\textsuperscript{41} Either Alexander or Perdiccas resettled it with Macedonians and it became henceforth a Greek city.\textsuperscript{42} It was destroyed three more times by Ptolemy I, Demetrius Poliorcetes, and John Hyrcanus I before it was captured by Pompey and rebuilt by Gabinius. Finally Octavian granted the city to Herod after the defeat of Antony and Cleopatra.\textsuperscript{43}

Herod rebuilt the city along opulent lines and renamed it Sebaste in honor of Augustus. Sebaste had all the amenities of a Greco-Roman city with a theater, forum, colonnaded streets, and a stadium; the ruins of the old royal palace provided the foundation for a temple to Roma and Augustus.\textsuperscript{44} Settled with veterans Sebaste became a

\textsuperscript{38} For the destruction see Jos. Ant. 13.255-256; BJ 1.63; Coggins, Samaritans and Jews, 113-115; Wright, Shechem, 183-184; Schriver, I.207; II.18-19. The procurator Pontius Pilatus was sufficiently concerned about the intentions of a pilgrimage to the site that he ordered a massacre of the gathered Samaritans; many of the survivors were arrested and executed. Samaritan complaints to the governor of Syria led to the procurator’s removal; Jos. Ant. 18.85-89. During the early days of the revolt, the Samaritans again gathered at Mt. Gerizim to discuss joining the rebellion. Vespasian forestalled Samaritan participation by sending against them the commander of the fifth legion, Sextus Cerealis Vettulenus, who killed 11,600 of them; Jos. BJ 3.307-315.

\textsuperscript{39} For Samaria see A. Parrot, Samaria the Capital of the Kingdom of Israel, S. H. Hooke (trans.), Studies in Biblical Archaeology 7, (London, 1958); Schriver, II.160-164.

\textsuperscript{40} Founding: 1 Kings 16.23-24; destruction: 2 Kings 17.1-6.

\textsuperscript{41} Q. Curtius Rufus, 4.5.9.

\textsuperscript{42} Euseb. Chron. (Arm.) 2, pp. 114 and 118 (Schoene); Syncellus, I p. 496 (Dindorf); Wright, Shechem, 178; Schriver, II.160.

\textsuperscript{43} Ptolemy: Diod. 19.93.7; Demetrius: Euseb. Chron. (Arm.) 2, p. 118 (Schoene); Syncellus, 1, p. 519 (Dindorf); John Hyrcanus I: Jos. Ant. 13.275-283; BJ 1.64-65; Herod: Jos. Ant. 15.217; BJ 1.396.

pagan city and the recruiting ground for the military detachment of the Sebastenoi who saw much service under Roman commanders against the Jews. The city of Samaria-Sebaste was a strongly pagan city whose population and the soldiers drawn from it often sided with Rome and showed their hostility to the Jews in whose midst they lived, for Samaria was located between Galilee and Judaea. What must have galled is the fact that this hostile pagan city was a Herodian foundation.

It is the pagan and perhaps the Herodian connection that makes the city an important symbol for the author of the *Paraleipomena Jeremiae* as will be shown below; for the purposes of the present discussion of dating, the demonstration that the author was not concerned with the Samaritans is enough.

A third theory presents yet another argument for a composition date in the first part of the second century. Again the Bar Kokhbah Revolt comes into play. This time, it is claimed, certain features of the text reflect the mood of the Jews in Judaea in the years leading up to the revolt. According to this theory, after the failure of the Diaspora revolts of 115-117 the Jews were faced with the question of how to cope with Roman authority. The decision of Hadrian to refound Jerusalem as Aelia Capitolina on a visit to Palestine in 129-130 intensified the question. The refoundation of the city explains the failure of Abimelech to recognize Jerusalem upon his return. The main support of this theory is the strong eschatological component of the text, which places Jewish hopes for

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45 In the tumult following the death of Herod they did not side with the rebels, but fought alongside the Romans; *Jos. BJ* 2.52, 58, 63; cf. *Ant.* 15.266. Claudius nearly transferred the troops to Pontus when the citizens of Sebaste showed unseemly joy at the death of his friend, the Jewish king Herod Agrippa; *Ant.* 19.356-366. The procurator Cumanus led the Sebastenoi against the Jews after they avenged some Galilean pilgrims who had been killed while passing through Samaria; *BJ* 2.236; *Ant.* 20.122. When a disturbance broke out between the Jewish and gentile inhabitants of Caesarea, the latter relied upon the garrison which included the Sebastenoi; *Ant.* 20.176; *BJ* 3.66. The city of Sebaste was targeted by Jews at the outbreak of the revolt; *BJ* 2.460. After the war Vespasian fulfilled Claudius' plan of transferring the soldiers, though the location of their new station is not known; *Ant.* 19.366.

46 Herzer, *4 Baruch*, xxxi-xxxiv, places the composition in the years 117-132.

47 *Par. Jer.* 5.12; Herzer, *4 Baruch*, xxxiii, feels that the destruction of 70 would not account for this, though it is not clear why this should be the case.
the future in God and adherence to his Law. This is consonant with increased eschatological speculation that is thought to underlie the Bar Kokhbah Revolt.

The argument is rather circular. In fact, very little is known about Jewish thought in the years prior to the outbreak of the war under Hadrian. The texts under examination in the present study might all be taken as representatives of Jewish thought between the wars. In them, however, the eschatological elements which shift Jewish hopes onto God and his Messiah seem, if anything, to counsel against military action and the renewal of hostilities. Compared to Fourth Ezra and Second Baruch, the eschatological features of the Paraleipomena are much reduced in prominence; a key omission in this regard is any mention of the Messiah.

At the same time, the Paraleipomena is perhaps the least confrontational of all the texts vis-à-vis Rome. Fourth Ezra and Second Baruch are much more concerned with the fate of the conqueror than the Paraleipomena, in which there is not a single vision of the punishment to befall the destroyer of Jerusalem. In fact, as will be argued, the tendency of the Paraleipomena goes beyond Second Baruch in the call to separate from Rome. The author, through the use of symbols recalling the return from the Babylonian Captivity, calls upon his audience to avoid Rome and all things Roman.48

None of the theories positing a compositional date in the years around the Bar Kokhbah Revolt is convincing. Such precision is impossible to attain with the evidence of the text. For the purposes of the present discussion it is enough to show that the text is written during the Roman period and in response to the destruction of Jerusalem.

To anticipate the argument formulated below, a main concern of the Paraleipomena Jeremiae is the corrosive effect of contact with Rome on the Jewish people and the consequent need for radical separation from the conquerors in order to

48 Herzer, 4 Baruch, xxxiii, imagines that the failure of the revolts under Trajan raised the problem of coping with Rome, but surely this was a much graver concern in the wake of the tragedy of 70, with which event the symbolism of the text is a closer fit.
preserve the holiness of God's chosen people. As with Second Baruch, the recounting of
the events of 587 B.C. differs so markedly from the traditional accounts as preserved in
the biblical Books of Jeremiah, Second Kings and Second Chronicles, that it is likely that
the account has been used as a cipher for some other event. Unlike Second Baruch, the
Paraleipomena also draws upon and refashions traditions about the return from captivity
found in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. The call for separation from a conquering
power that forms the central message of the text includes it in that large body of Jewish
literature of the Second Temple period beginning with Daniel and concerned with
relations between the Jews and an imperial power.

Reflection on the situation of the Jews through employing the typology of the
Babylonian conquest is restricted to the texts under discussion in the present work.
Among these, Second Baruch shares many parallel traditions with the Paraleipomena.
Second Baruch is also one of the easiest to set in the Roman context based on internal
evidence. Whether the author of the Paraleipomena used Second Baruch as a source has
been a perennial question. 49 The shared material falls mostly at the beginning of both
works in the narrative of the Babylonian assault on Jerusalem and the preparations
befoerhand by Jeremiah and Baruch. Beyond these similarities, the aims of Second
Baruch and the Paraleipomena diverge. Second Baruch focuses on the remnant left in
Judaea, while the attention of the Paraleipomena is directed towards the exiles in their
preparations for the return and the return itself. Second Baruch tries to remove the
Roman question from the prominent place it held in the minds of postwar Jews; the

49 For an overview of the various solutions see Riaud, Les Paralipomènes, 40-48; Herzer, 4 Baruch, xvi-
xxiii. Arguing for dependence upon Second Baruch are P.-M. Bogaert, Apocalypse de Baruch, Sources
chretiennes 144-145, (Paris, 1969), I,177-221; and Herzer, Die Paralipomena Jeremiae, 33-77; idem, 4
Baruch, xvi-xix, xx. G. W. E. Nickelsburg, “Narrative Traditions in the Paralipomena of Jeremiah and 2
dependent-ils de Il Baruch?” Sileno 9 (1983), 105-128; and B. Schaller, Paralipomena Jeremiae, 670-676,
argue for independent reliance of both authors on a common tradition. The dependence of Second Baruch
on the Paralipomena, argued by K. Kohler, “The Pre-Talmudic Haggada,” JQR 5 (1893), 408; and L. Gry,
“La Ruine du Temple par Titus. Quelques traditions juives mais anciennes et primitives à base de la Pesikha
Rabbathi XXVI,” KB 55 (1948), 215-226, has found little acceptance.
Paraleipomena, as will be argued, is engrossed with the Roman Question. Baruch is the central figure of Second Baruch, with Jeremiah moved off stage early in the narrative; Jeremiah dominates the Paraleipomena even in the few chapters that tell of the fortunes of Baruch and Abimelech.

Deciding between direct dependence and shared traditions is scarcely possible and perhaps unnecessary. It is the contention of the present work that the texts being treated herein were all written in some sort of dialogue with each other. That is not to say that they were read round robin and written in response to one another, but the ideas contained in them must have been current among the rather limited number of thinkers and literary producers of late first century Palestine. If the Paraleipomena does not depend from Second Baruch, it certainly was written in the same literary and intellectual milieu.

The use of the Babylonian conquest as a starting point in union with the other texts of the present study and in contrast to other Second Temple discussions of the Jews’ relations with foreign overlords must have derived its resonance from the recent destruction of the city and Temple at the hands of the Romans. The especially close relationship between Second Baruch and the Paraleipomena increases the likelihood that the latter was composed after 70. Finally, there is the one piece of internal evidence discussed above: the location of Abimelech’s sixty-six year siesta in the Vineyard of Agrippa. This surely comes from a context in the first century A.D. or later and thus in the Roman period.

It would be hard to imagine that the author would exercise himself over the Babylonian capture of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.; the author must be concerned with contemporary events and contemporary conquerors. The return to Jerusalem, taken by many scholars to be symbolic, is dependent on the radical separation from the ways of the

\(^{50}\) Par. Jer. 3.14, 21; 5.22.
Babylonians (Romans). The paraenesis is meant to resonate with the readers of the Paraleipomena. Though there is no conclusive proof—a rare commodity, at any rate, when dealing with the Pseudepigrapha—that the text was written after 70 and that the Babylonians were intended as a trope for the Romans, probability inclines that way.

The most that can be said is that the questions addressed by the Paraleipomena, the images and symbols used in the text, and many of the themes treated suggest that it should be read closely with Fourth Ezra and Second Baruch. The complete absence of allusions to the situation under Hadrian and the suppression of circumcision incline toward acceptance of a date prior to the crisis during his reign. The pull of Josephus’ Bellum Judaicum and the Fourth Sibylline Oracle, both of which also treat these same things, makes a date in the later first century seem more likely. To this tendency can be added the Flavian concerns of Fourth Ezra. Certainty is impossible, but it would seem that the Paraleipomena is looking more towards the catastrophe of 70 than that of 135.

Analysis of the Text

While the Paraleipomena Jeremiae begins with the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the people of Israel, the main concern of the author is return. Nor is the author’s attention trained on the events of 587 B.C. and the return from Babylon. Rather the author writes a tract for his own times and his contemporaries who are struggling to cope with a new conqueror. The author’s counsel to his fellow Jews can be recovered through an examination of his many expansions on and reversals of the received traditions of the Babylonian Captivity as he fits the lessons of this event to his present circumstances. Three such reversals are of supreme importance for our study of Jewish reactions to Rome: the role of Jeremiah, the injunction against intermarriage with Babylonians, and the role of Babylon after the return from exile.
The centrality of the figure of Jeremiah in the *Paraleipomena Jeremiae* has been often commented upon. 51 When he is onstage his presence dominates; when he is off, he fills the thoughts of the other figures. 52 He is described as God’s chosen one. 53 He is both prophet and, apparently, high priest. 54 There is also in the Lord’s leading his people out of Babylon an Exodus motif with Jeremiah cast in the role of Moses. 55 Jeremiah

51 That Jeremiah plays the central role in the text is indicated by the title, which suggests that the pseudopigraphon is to be read as an addition to the biblical Book of Jeremiah. The Ethiopic version goes under the title “The Rest of the Words of Baruch” incorporating it into the literature gathered about the secretary of Jeremiah; for the Ethiopic text see A. Dillman, “Reliquia Verborum Baruchi,” in idem, *Chrestomathia Aethiopica*, (Leipzig, 1866), viii–ix, 1-15. It is becoming increasingly fashionable to follow the Ethiopic example and label the text 4 Baruch; it seems preferable to keep the Greek title of a Greek text, not least to avoid the sort of confusion that reigns in the corpus of Ezra texts. For the centrality of Jeremiah see Ch. Wolff, *Jeremia im Friihjudentum und Urchristentum*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 118, (Berlin, 1976), 46; J. Riaud, “La figure de Jérémie dans les Paralipomena Jeremiae,” *AOT* 212 (Mélanges Cazelles), (Göttingen, 1981), 373-385; idem, *Les Paralipomènes*, 94-97; idem, “The Figure of Jeremiah in the Paralipomena Jeremiae Prophetae: His Originality; His ‘Christianization’ by the Christian Author of the Conclusion (9.10-32),” *JSP* 22 (2000), 31-44.

52 Even when Jeremiah has departed with the captives to Babylon, he is foremost in the concerns of his followers Baruch and Abimelech; e.g. Abimelech’s anxiety over his master in Par. Jer. 5.5: ἀλλὰ οὐκ ἐπάθει, μήτε κομψοῦ καὶ βραδοῦ τῷ ἡμέρατι, καὶ ἐγκαθήθη Ιερουσαλημ ὁ πατὴρ μου; 5.17: πῶς ἐπὶ τῇ Ιερουσαλημ ἢ ἐφεξῆς; Jeremiah also looms large in Baruch’s thoughts; e.g. 6.11: ἀναστηθεὶς, καὶ εἰδώμεθα, ἵνα γνωρίσῃ οὖν ὁ κύριος πόσα δονομήσατε ἀποστείλῃ τὴν φάντασμα τῇ Ιερουσαλημ ἃς βαδισθήσατε διὰ τὴν οὐσίαν γενόμενον σοι ἐν τῇ ἀδιόξῃ; 6.15: angel to Baruch: ὁ σώματος τοῦ υἱοῦ, μη δικαιολογηθῆ πᾶς ἡ ἀπευθεῖα πρὸς Ιερουσαλημ ἔρχεται γὰρ πρὸς τὸ ὄνομα τούτου κυρίου αὐτοῦ, καὶ καταβαίνει πρὸς Ιερουσαλημ.


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56 He is called a prophet in only two mss.; Par. Jer. 1.1 (Harris). Despite this lack of official prophetic designation, he nevertheless functions as a prophet throughout the text, especially as an intercessor for Israel before God. Elsewhere he is called a servant of God; 6.24 (σειτία); 1.4 (δούλιος); 3.12 (δούλιος). On these terms see Riaud, “Figure of Jeremiah,” 35-36. He is designated as a priest; 5.17; 9.8; cf. Jer. 1.1: “The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin.” He appears to be the high priest as he offers the sacrifice upon the people’s return to Jerusalem. For nine days those who were with Jeremiah were offering sacrifices on the people’s behalf, but on the tenth day Jeremiah alone offered the sacrifice. This has usually been interpreted as the sacrifice on the 10th of Tishri, viz. Yom Kippur, which could only be offered by the high priest; Lev. 23.26-32; Num. 29.7-11; m. Yoma, 1.1-7. On this interpretation see Riaud, *Les Paralipomènes*, 56; idem, “Figure of Jeremiah,” 37; Herzer, *Die Paralipomena*, 145-146; idem, “Direction in Difficult Times: How God Is Understood in the Paralipomena Jeremiae,” *JSP* 22 (2000), 23-24.

57 Riaud, “Figure of Jeremiah,” 37; Herzer, “Direction in Difficult Times,” 22; for the link between Jeremiah and Moses, a common theme in post-biblical Jeremianic literature, see Wolff, *Jeremia im Friihjudentum*, 50, 79-83 (esp. 80). There are clear thematic indicators of the identification; Par. Jer. 6.23-24: ὅτι εἶ ἡ δόξα καὶ οἶκος τῆς Ἰσραήλ, ἢ δόξα γὰρ ἡ καρδία ιμάτιν ἡ ἑαυτοῦ ἡ οἵστοις ἐν τῇ παλαιᾷ ἡ οἵστοις τῆς Ἰσραήλ; παραλώκατος ἡ οἵστοις τῆς Ἰσραήλ, ἢ γὰρ ἁλλὰ ἐν τῇ παλαιᾷ ἡ οἵστοις τῆς Ἰσραήλ; ἢ ἡ παλαιᾷ ἡ ἁλλὰ τῆς Ἰσραήλ, ἢ τῆς Ἰσραήλ ἢ τῆς Ἰσραήλ. In the *Paraleipomena* the crossing of the Jordan River is an important precursor to entering Jerusalem, just as it was important to the wandering Israelites coming into the land.

58 Likewise the appearance of the eagle reminds the people of the Exodus; Par. Jer. 7.18-20: καὶ ἐφη δόξα ἡ νῦν ἡ δόξα καὶ ἤτοι ἡ δόξα ἐν τῷ τοπίῳ τοῦ νῦν, καὶ ἐλάχιστον γέγον ἡ τύπτει, ἢ τῷ σαλτανόντος, ἢ τῷ δ ἐν τῇ ἐξέδρας.
indeed cuts an impressive figure in our author’s presentation. What has escaped notice, however, is that the author also dishes out a fair amount of criticism of the great prophet. This criticism of the Jeremiac program for Jewish relations with foreign imperial powers, as laid out in the biblical Book of Jeremiah, is of profound significance both for our understanding of Roman-Jewish relations after 70 and in recovering the debate over involvement with the Romans within the Jewish community.

It will be useful before proceeding to outline the biblical Jeremiah’s policy vis-à-vis the Babylonians both before and after the capture of Jerusalem. Jeremiah, relying on divine instructions, counseled Zedekiah, the king of Judah, to pursue a policy of loyalty to Babylon. As is well known, Jeremiah’s prophetic utterances provoked a great deal of opposition that brought down on his head the charge of treason and often imperiled the prophet’s life. Zedekiah emerges from the narrative of the Book of Jeremiah as a rather weak king; he secretly consults with the prophet, but cannot bring himself to follow Jeremiah’s advice, nor even lift a finger to save him from his enemies. In the event,

56 Jer. 27.8-11: “But if any nation or kingdom will not serve this king, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, then I will punish that nation with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence, says the LORD, until I have completed its destruction by his hand” (8).

57 Jer. 37.17-21: “Then King Zedekiah sent for him, and received him. The king questioned him secretly in his house, and said, ‘Is there any word from the LORD?’” (17).

58 Jer. 37.11-16: “When he reached the Benjamin Gate, a sentinel there named Irijah son of Shelemiah son of Hananiah arrested the prophet Jeremiah, saying, ‘You are deserting to the Chaldeans.’ And Jeremiah said, ‘That is a lie; I am not deserting to the Chaldeans.’ But Irijah would not listen to him, and arrested Jeremiah and brought him to the officials. The officials were enraged at Jeremiah, and they beat him and imprisoned him in the house of the secretary Jonathan, for it had been made a prison. Thus Jeremiah was put in the cistern house, in the cells, and remained there for many days” (13-16).
Jeremiah’s prudent policy is rejected and Nebuchadnezzar advances on Jerusalem. Zedekiah and his advisors pay for their errors as Jeremiah’s policy is vindicated. The vindication, however, is bitter as it encompasses the prophesied destruction of Jerusalem.59

Jeremiah’s Babylonian policy of accommodation could, *mutatis mutandis*, be applied to the situation in first-century A.D. Roman Judaea. The similarity of the situations was not lost on one participant: Josephus. The historian adopted a Jeremianic policy of accommodation and loyalty to Rome and promoted it as the only path to peace even as Jerusalem lay besieged. Josephus pleaded with those who were holding Jerusalem against Titus’ army to surrender and thereby save both themselves and the holy city and its Temple.60 In his rehearsal of previous catastrophes to befall the Jewish nation and their holy city, Josephus calls to mind Jeremiah’s attempts to sway Zedekiah. Josephus compares his present listeners unfavorably to the Jews of Jeremiah’s day, for while the latter refrained from putting the unpopular prophet to death, the former assault Josephus with missiles as he tries to instruct them.61 Josephus is thus cast in the role of the prophet of Anathoth. The recognition of the timeliness of Jeremiah’s message could be expected even if we did not possess the confirmation given by Josephus.

As was said above, the treatment of Jeremiah in the *Paraleipomena* is not uniformly positive. Jeremiah’s failure as guardian of the people is emphasized on two separate occasions. As the Chaldaeans enter the city, Jeremiah takes the keys of the...
Temple and throws them away in the face of the sun. When he does so he confesses a corporate unworthiness to keep them and describes those who had charge of the keys as false guardians; Jeremiah presents himself, it seems, as a representative of this otherwise undesignated group. This is in contrast to the tradition of the Temple keys as presented in Second Baruch. There it is the priests who toss away the keys declaring their failed stewardship. How exactly Jeremiah has failed is not made clear. It is certainly no failure of personal holiness, for God commands Jeremiah to leave Jerusalem precisely because his prayers prevent the divine punishment from falling on the sinners in the holy city. It is the sins of the people that bring down God’s wrath; Jeremiah’s confession of false stewardship inculpates the prophet as well. The author’s subsequent treatment of Jeremiah points the way toward a solution.

God commands Jeremiah to accompany the people into exile and to be their teacher. Jeremiah’s mission is not a resounding success. In a letter written to Baruch Jeremiah tells him of the disaster that has befallen the exilic community in Babylon. Jeremiah assures Baruch that it is proof of his righteousness that God has not allowed him a sight of the affliction that the exiles suffer at the hands of the Babylonians. As a result of their difficult situation the people have begun to invoke the aid of a foreign

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62 Par. Jer. 4.4-5: Ἰερεμιᾶς δὲ ἔρως τὸς κλήσις τοῦ καυτὸς, ἐξέθεσεν ἐνὶ τῷ πάλαις, καὶ ἔφησεν αὐτῷ ἀνάπνοια τοῦ φίλου, λέγων τινὶ λέγω, θύλλα τῆς κλήσις τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ ἰδίου, καὶ σώζεσθαι αὐτῷ δὲς ἡμῖν, τὸ δὲ ἠφάντασκεν σε κόρος πρὸς αὐτόν. θέτει γὰρ ὃς εὐρίσκεται ἐμί τοῦ φυλάξει αὐτός, ὅτι ἐπηγάζετο τοῦ βασιλέα ἱεροτροπίας. It is not at all made clear the group for whom Jeremiah speaks. It could possibly be the priests, this would accord with the parallel passage in Second Baruch (for which see the next note). On the other hand, Jeremiah could be speaking for all Israel. It is, nevertheless, a striking admission of guilt, even if it is shared with others.

63 2 Bar. 10.18: “You, priests, take the keys of the sanctuary, and cast them to the highest heaven, and give them to the Lord and say, ‘Guard your house yourself, because, behold, we have been found to be false stewards.'” On the tradition see Nickelsburg, “Narrative Traditions,” 61-66; R. Nir, The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Idea of Redemption in the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch, Early Judaism and Its Literature 20, (Atlanta, 2003), 83-99.

64 Par. Jer. 1.1-3.

65 Par. Jer. 3.15: τοῦ Ἰερουσαλήμ, ἐπειδὴ μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ σου εἰς Βαβυλῶνα, καὶ μεῖναι μετ’ αὐτῶν εἰσελθόμενος αὐτῶς δὶς ὁ ἐπιστρέφων αὐτῶς εἰς τὴν πόλιν, cf. 4.6; 5.19; Ἰερουσαλήμ γὰρ το Βαβυλῶνι ἐπτε μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ ἠφανερώθησαν γὰρ ὑπὸ Ναβουχοδόντη τοῦ βασιλέα, καὶ μετ’ αὐτῶν δὲν ἤρθεν Ἰερουσαλήμ εἰσελθόμενος αὐτῶς καὶ κατηρίζει αὐτῶς τοῦ λαοῦ.
god. Later it becomes clear that many of the exiles have contracted marriages with Babylonians despite Jeremiah’s instructions to abstain from the pollutions of the gentiles of Babylon. The letter of our Jeremiah calls to mind another letter penned by the biblical Jeremiah in rather different circumstances; indeed, the situation of the pseudepigraphical letter’s composition contrasts pointedly with the biblical letter, as does its message. After the Babylonians had taken the young King Jehoiachin into exile, but before the capture and destruction of the holy city in 587, Jeremiah sent a letter to the exiles in Babylon. In this letter he proposed a *modus vivendi* for the exiles in a foreign land. They were to set to work building up a life in exile: planting gardens, building houses, taking wives, having children and arranging marriages for their children. They must also, advised Jeremiah, come to terms with their new masters. Their fortunes were tied to those of their new home. They were instructed, therefore, to pray for the city of their exile: Babylon.

This letter of advice to the exiles in Babylon has been seen as a formative document not only for subsequent Diaspora Judaism, but for all Jews during the Second Temple period. Jewish independence ended really long before the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem. Jewish life in the Second Temple period is marked by the
dominance of a succession of empires culminating with the Romans who destroyed the
Second Temple. The Jews had to learn to adapt to their subordinate status both in the
Diaspora and in Palestine. Jeremiah’s letter provides a blueprint for such adaptation.\textsuperscript{70}

It is precisely this letter and the biblical prophet’s policy of accommodation that
the author of the \textit{Paraleipomena Jeremiae} has in mind in his presentation of Jeremiah in
Babylon. Jeremiah’s assignment as exilarch for the deported Jews is a signal failure as
his charges are found praying to a foreign god in their affliction.\textsuperscript{71} The reversal is
illustrated by his letter to Baruch. The biblical Jeremiah, located in Jerusalem, the
prophet of God and covert adviser of the king, wrote a letter to the unfortunate exiles in
Babylon grouped around the deposed Jehoiachin; his letter was full of optimistic advice
designed to make the best of a bad situation. For the Jeremiah of our pseudepigraphon
the tables have been turned. The prophet finds himself in exile. The news from Babylon,
the subject of a letter to Baruch left alone in Jerusalem, is bad. The Jewish community is
being ground down under the heel of Nebuchadnezzar. In their despair they have
forsaken their God and turned to a foreign one. They have followed the counsel of the
biblical Jeremiah and contracted marriages, but with Babylonians! It is difficult for the

\textsuperscript{70} E. S. Gruen, \textit{Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans}, (Cambridge, Mass., 2002), 135, explores the
implication for diaspora Jews; S. J. D. Cohen, \textit{From the Maccabees to the Mishnah}, (Philadelphia, 1987),
28-34, takes a broader view, arguing for a Jeremianic policy of political cooperation both in the Diaspora
and in Palestine. Indeed, this program was largely successful as there were only four major rebellions: that
of the Maccabees, the Great Revolt, the diasporan uprising under Trajan, and the revolt of Bar Kokhba
under Hadrian.

\textsuperscript{71} Riaud, “Figure of Jeremiah,” 37-38, seems to view his tenure as exilarch as a success on the strength of
his continued instruction of the exiles and his negotiations with Nebuchadnezzar to secure a Jewish
cemetery; \textit{Par. Jer.} 7.14: ἐγέρθη γὰρ Ἰερουσαλήμ παρὰ τοῦ βασιλέα Ναβουχωδόντα, λέγει δὲ μοι τὸν ποὺ
Σάδεο νεκρὸς τὸ λαόν μου καὶ δίκαιος αὐτὸ ὅ δε βασιλεὺς. This does demonstrate Jeremiah’s successful
dealings with the king of Babylon, but it is a minor victory in the face of the apostasy of his charges despite
his preaching separation from the Babylonians. Jeremiah’s influence with the Babylonian king falls short
of providing security for his community, as is shown by the harsh treatment meted out to the Jews and the
crucifixion of some of their number. Riaud’s view is rather sunnier than that of the author of the
\textit{Paraleipomena}. This is not to impute to Jeremiah himself any of the failings of his charges. He is not,
after all, without authority, for when at the Jordan he tells the Jews to put away their Babylonian spouses
half of the offenders do listen to him; \textit{Par. Jer.} 8.5. Jeremiah’s authority did not, however, suffice to
prevent their contracting the marriages in the first place.
reader to come to any conclusion other than that Jeremiah has not been a resounding success as exilarch.

It is now possible to speculate about Jeremiah’s failure as a steward that caused him to turn over the keys of the Temple to the sun. In so doing, we might then set the Paraleipomena Jeremiae in its late first-century context as a response to the Roman destruction of Jerusalem. The narrative of the destruction of Jerusalem both presents Jeremiah as the protector of the city and convicts him of failure as steward of the Temple. This ambiguity reflects that of the Jeremianic policy. Accommodation, of the sort practiced by the Jewish leadership in the decades preceding the outbreak of revolt in A.D. 66, could claim a certain amount of success in mediating between the demands of Roman officials and the grievances of Jewish subjects; it led ultimately, however, to failure. A particular example of noteworthy success was the pressure put on the Syrian legate Petronius to resist the plan of the emperor Gaius to dedicate a statue in the Jerusalem Temple. In the final analysis, the mediating role of the Jewish ruling class, of which the high priests formed the kernel and perhaps even constituted the majority, failed to stave off revolt and its violent suppression.

The author’s rejection of this policy of accommodation does not rest only, or even mainly, on its failure to prevent the loss of Jerusalem. Turning to the main theme of the Paraleipomena, the return of the Jews from exile, it becomes clear that the author is keenly aware of the danger of accommodation with the Romans, namely the weakening or even loss of Jewish identity. The author contends that radical separation from Rome is

72 Par. Jer. 1.1-2: Ισραήλ, ὁ ἐκλεκτὸς μου, ἀμώτα, καὶ ἐξῆλθε ἐκ τῆς πόλεως ταύτης, ὥσπερ καὶ Ἰσραήλ ἐκ τῆς πόλεως τοῦ Ἰσραήλ, τοῦ ὕπερ αὐτῶν ἐποίησε ἡ θεοῦ, ἐν ἡμῖν ἐμπερήγετο ὁ θεὸς τοῦ οὐράνου· ἦσαν ἀπόφασις ἐν τῷ πόλεμῳ τούτῳ, γιὰ τοῦτο ἔσται ἐν τῇ Μεσοποταμίᾳ τῆς ἡμέρας τῆς ἔρημου. 4.4-5: Ισραήλ ἔτει ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τῆς πόλεως, καὶ ἀποκάλυψεν τὸν τόπον τοῦ ναοῦ, λέγων· σε λέγω, ήταν, λάθη τὰς κληρονομίας τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ σαυρίτου, καὶ καλλίστην αὐτῶν δοκιμάσει, ἵνα δεικνύσῃ σε ἡμᾶς πώς αὐτῶν. 73 For a persuasive presentation of this argument, see M. Goodman, The Ruling Class of Judaea: The Origins of the Jewish Revolt against Rome A.D. 66-70, (Cambridge, 1987).
74 Jeremiah’s priestly status is emphasized by the author of the Paraleipomena, 5.17, in contrast to the biblical Book of Jeremiah where it is only stated in the opening verse; even there he is merely accorded priestly ancestry with no mention made of his actually holding any priestly office.
the only path open to recovery of this lost identity. The author’s message is not, of course, presented in such straightforward terms, but rather through the use of symbols drawn from the Jews’ previous experience of exile under the Babylonians and their return from Babylon. By taking up these familiar events and reshaping them to conform to the contours of the more recent experience of national tragedy, the author rejects the notion of Jeremianic accommodation or cooperation and substitutes a policy of isolation.

The return from the captivity in Babylon was a formative event for Second Temple Judaism. The magnanimity of the Persian conqueror, Cyrus, as he sent the Jews back to their land; the order to rebuild the Temple and resettle Jerusalem; the opposition provoked among the people of the land; the missions of Ezra and Nehemiah; their shock at finding the returnees intermingling with these outsiders; all these events are recorded in the biblical Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. For the author of these books and Chronicles, commonly known as the Chronicler, Israel is identified with the exilic community. It was they, on the banks of Euphrates, who kept alive the traditions and wisdom of their people, with them was the covenant preserved. Only the residue of Israel remained in Palestine. Repatriation was the necessary first step to reestablishment of the national cult.

The restoration did not, however, proceed without incident. Not only did the neighboring peoples attempt to sabotage the Jews in their reconstruction, but the Jews themselves were guilty of mingling with the peoples of the land. It comes as a shock to Ezra when, upon his arrival in Palestine, he finds that the Jews have not separated themselves from the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. Indeed, the returnees have gone so far as to take wives from among these peoples. Ezra is appalled and views the relations

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75 For an overview of this period see Noth, History of Israel, 300-336.
76 The biblical Book of Malachi preserves a record of cultic abuses; Mal. 1.6-2.9; 2.10-16; 3.6-12, 13-21.
77 Ezra 9-10; Neh. 13.23-31.
between Israel and the peoples of the land as a forsaking of God's commandments. He immediately sets about remedying the situation by commanding an obedient people to put away their foreign wives. Nehemiah is confronted with the same problem when he finds that certain Jews have taken wives from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab; their children cannot even speak Hebrew. He spares no pains in cleansing the Jews of these foreign elements even beating and pulling the hair of recalcitrants.

The author of the Paraleipomena Jeremiae is in his retelling of the exile more traditional than the author of Second Baruch. The latter trains his focus on the remnant left in Palestine. It was this group that carried the banner for Judaism. The remnant were the faithful, while the exiles were the sinners. In the Paraleipomena there is no remnant left in the land. The fact is emphasized by the figure of Baruch, who was the central figure of Second Baruch, but in the Paraleipomena is reduced to his proper subordinate status as Jeremiah's scribe. After a perfunctory lament he withdraws to a tomb to wait

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78 Ezra 9.1-4, 10-12: "After these things had been done, the officials approached me and said, 'The people of Israel, the priests, and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands with their abominations, from the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons. Thus the holy seed has mixed itself with the peoples of the lands, and in this faithlessness the officials and leaders have led the way.' When I heard this, I tore my garment and my mantle, and pulled hair from my head and beard, and sat appalled. Then all who trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the faithlessness of the returned exiles, gathered around me while I sat appalled until the evening sacrifice—And now, our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken your commandments, which you commanded by your servants the prophets, saying, 'The land that you are entering to possess is a land unclean with the pollutions of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations. They have filled it from end to end with their uncleanness. Therefore do not give your daughters to their sons, neither take their daughters for your sons, and never seek their peace or prosperity, so that you may be strong and eat the good of the land and leave it for an inheritance to your children forever.'"

79 Ezra 10; cf. Neh. 9.2.
80 Neh. 13.23-30: "In those days also I saw Jews how had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab; and half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and they could not speak the language of Judah, but spoke the language of various peoples. And I contended with them and cursed them and beat some of them and pulled out their hair; and I made them take an oath in the name of God, saying, 'You shall not give your daughters to their sons, or take their daughters for your sons or for yourselves'...Thus I cleansed them from everything foreign" (23-25, 30).
out the period of desolation. When the period of 66 years has passed, Abimelech returns to find Jerusalem a ghost town.

The author of the Paraleipomena departs from tradition when he tackles the question of intermarriage. In the biblical account the intermingling of Israel with the people of the land occurs after the return. In the Paraleipomena the mingling occurs while the Jews are still in Babylon. The difference is paramount. In the biblical account the Jewish returnees are guilty of pollution when they intermarry with those of inferior status who are found in the land. In the Paraleipomena the Jews are guilty of mingling with their conquerors, with those very ones who have humiliated Zion. It is made a condition of their return that those Jews who have taken Babylonian spouses abandon them. The intermarriage is merely one item singled out from a general tendency to follow the lead of Babylon in other matters. The Jews are to forsake the works of Babylon. They must cease calling upon foreign gods. The intimacy of the Jewish adoption of Babylonian practices is symbolized by the intermarriage with Babylonian women and men.

The break with tradition as presented by Ezra-Nehemiah casts light on the historical situation of the author of the Paraleipomena. To take the issue of intermarriage first, it is striking that the Jews are marrying Babylonians. It is remarkable that the

81 Par. Jer. 4.7-12: παῦτα αἰτῶν Βαβυλών ζήλεψε ἔξω τῆς πόλεως κλαίοντας καὶ λέγοντας ἃν λυπῶμαις διὰ σέ, Ἰερουσαλήμ, ζήλεψεν εἰς σέ, καὶ ίδεν οἱ μητήρες κουβαλομένους τῶν αὐτοῦ, καὶ καθηγομένους αὐτῶν παρὰ πάντων ἵνα ἐκ τοῦ ἔχων ἔχουν αὐτός ἃ αὐτῶν (11-12); cf. 6.2.

82 Par. Jer. 5.7: ἦγαθής οὖν ἐκ τῆς κάρφου τῶν σώματος, καὶ ἐπόθηκαν ἐκ τῶν ἄρων αὐτοῦ, καὶ εἰσῆλθεν ἐς Ἰερουσαλήμ, καὶ εἰς ἐπάγων αὐτόν, ὡς τὴν αἰκαίς ὡς τὸν τάφον θαυμάτω, ὡς τῷ γάμῳ θαυμάτῳ ὡς τοις τῶν γυναικῶν αὐτοίς; 5.12: καὶ πάλιν ὑπάνεμεν ἐς τὴν πόλιν, καὶ ἔπνευσαν ἐς τὸν δωμάς; 5.17: καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ Αδωνίας: ποι ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ ἐκ ποιεῖς, καὶ Βαβυλών ἀναγινώσκεις, καὶ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς τῆς πόλεως ταύτῃς, ὃν σὺς ἔχεις αὐτοὺς; cf. 5.19, 21, 25, 28-29.

83 Par. Jer. 8.3-5.

84 Par. Jer. 8.1-3: ἔγινεν δὲ ἡ ἡμέρα, καὶ ἦν ἡ ζήλευσις κρίτων τὸν λαὸν ἐν Βαβυλώνας, καὶ ἐγένετο ἡ καρδίας πρὸς Ἰσραήλ ἀναστήνυ, καὶ τὸ ἄλογον καὶ τὸ ἄνθρωπον ἐν τῷ Ἰσραήλ, καὶ ἐγένετο ἡ καρδίας; καὶ ἐδόθην τῷ κύρῳ καταλαμβάνον τὰ ἱερὰ τῆς Βαβυλώνας, καὶ τοῖς ἄρα τοῖς λαόν τοὺς καθήκετε αὐτῶν γυναικας, καὶ ταῖς γυναικας τῆς λαοτάσσες τὸ ἀρχέν αὐτοὺς εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀδελφοὺς, καὶ ἐδοκεῖ τοῖς ἀδέλφοις τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῖς ἵνα διαφέρανται προς αὐτοὺς, μὴ ἀναφέρωντο αὐτοὺς ἴχθυς. The basis of Jeremiah’s command seems to be the letter of Baruch. The text of the letter, 6.18-25, makes no mention of this separation, but merely calls upon the exiles to listen to Jeremiah.
Babylonians are even included in a story of the return from exile. In the biblical account
the return is a direct result of Cyrus' overthrow of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. It is the
Persian king who issues the decree of return. In the Paraleipomena there is not a whiff of
any change in the status of the Babylonian conquerors. This mirrors the situation of
post-70 Judaea. Rome had not been overthrown by any foreign power and was
consequently still a presence that had to be negotiated by any work dealing with the
situation after 70. Any hope the Jews might have of changing their situation could not
rely on help from a foreign power.

In Ezra-Nehemiah one suspects that it is precisely the residue of Israel that
comprises at least some part of the peoples of the land. The returnees do not hesitate,
therefore, to intermarry with this group, especially as it would be in possession of the
land that the exiles left behind. Intermarriage with the conquering power is another
matter entirely. The Paraleipomena suggests that a significant number of the exiles had
taken Babylonian spouses. It seems incredible that the Jews should have intermarried
with the Romans after 70; there is no hint of this in other texts. For this reason, the
intermarriage ought to be viewed as a symbol of other acts of Jewish allegiance to Rome.
That the author should choose to represent these acts through the symbol of intermarriage
was suggested by the tradition of Ezra-Nehemiah, which he employed, albeit in altered
form.

The author is taking aim at Jews who have chosen a policy of accommodation.
This interpretation brings together the author's reuse both of the figure of Jeremiah and
the motif of intermarriage taken from Ezra-Nehemiah. The flaw that disfigures the

85 Cyrus did not, of course, destroy Babylon when he conquered the Neo-Babylonian Empire in 539 and the
city continued to be an important center long into the Macedonian period and beyond. The impression
given by the author of the Paraleipomena, however, is one of continued Babylonian authority. The Persian
conquest of Babylon was the earthly condition for the return from exile. Cyrus is the proximate cause of
the Jews' return to their land, though he is acting as God's agent. The Paraleipomena eschews human
agency and the return is entirely dependent on God; in this it is more closely parallel to the Exodus, as is
made clear in the text.

86 It was certainly a number large enough to found the city of Samaria; Par. Jer. 8.11.
Jeremianic policy of cooperation is exposed by Jeremiah's failure as exilarch of the Jews in Babylon. The collapse of the Jewish community as it begins to call upon foreign gods and intermarry with Babylonians is the end to which the Jeremianic policy tends, in the view of our author. The rejection of such a policy must be complete. In the *Paraleipomena* this rejection is commanded by God and passed on to the people through Jeremiah, who is presented as overturning the very policy that the biblical Jeremiah enjoined upon the exiles. The author of the *Paraleipomena* reverses the program of the great prophet of the fall of Jerusalem and the beginning of captivity. Instead of advancing a program of accommodation and cooperation, the prophet of Anathoth has become the spokesman for radical separation and isolation, thereby usurping the message of Ezra and Nehemiah. In the process of this usurpation, the author of the *Paraleipomena* has redirected the call for separation to the Babylonians (Romans) rather than the people of the land.

A corollary of this reading of the *Paraleipomena* is that there must have been a group of Jews in the aftermath of 70 that was working to bridge the gap between Roman overlord and Jewish subject. Josephus would fit the ticket. So too would Agrippa and other Jews who sought to put the disaster of 70 behind them and concentrate instead on the realities of a provincial Judaea still under the control of the Romans. Agrippa's loyalty to Rome had prompted him to take up arms against his co-religionists during the revolt. Josephus had served the Flavians well during the war and continued as a Flavian apologist vis-à-vis the Jews after the war. A particularly striking parallel to the situation as illustrated by the *Paraleipomena* is the relationship that developed between Berenice and Titus. The sister of Agrippa had an affair with the conqueror of Jerusalem—there
was even talk of marriage—that was only ended upon the latter’s accession to the imperial purple.87

It is this group that finds itself in the Paraleipomena cut off from Jerusalem and forced to build Samaria. This group considers itself equally at home with Jews and with Romans. When Jeremiah calls upon the people to put away their Babylonian spouses, this group rejects the command and determines to take their wives with them to Jerusalem, which they call their city.88 When Jeremiah bars their entry into the holy city, they respond by returning to Babylon, which they call their place.89 This group evidently viewed both Babylon and Jerusalem as its home. The author has invented a most apt symbol for the dual allegiances of the Jewish accommodationists of his own time, for Josephus and the Herodians were equally at home both in Rome and Jerusalem, not only metaphorically, in that they moved with equal comfort among both Jews and Romans, but even literally, maintaining residences in both Rome and Judaea.

Such divided loyalty cannot be maintained according to the author of the Paraleipomena. The group that refuses to put away Babylonian wives and turns with nonchalance to retrace its steps back to Babylon finds itself barred from that city as well.90 Finding itself unexpectedly homeless, the group is forced to build Samaria, far from Jerusalem. The implication is clear and chilling. The author warns the accommodation party that it will find itself cut off from both Rome and Jerusalem. It cannot find a place among the Jews because of its attachment to foreign ways and ideas. It will be equally shunned by the Romans for desiring to keep its Jewish identity integral.

87 Dio, 66.15.3-4, 18.1; Suet. Div. Ti. 7; Tac. Hist. 2.2; Epit. de Caes. 10. It might have been an allusion to the affair between Titus and Berenice that led the author of the Paraleipomena to include marriages of Jewish women to Babylonian men, an otherwise unusual relationship to emphasize.
88 Par. Jer. 8.5: οἱ μὴ καταλήφθησαι τὸν γυναῖκας ἡμῶν αὐτὸς καὶ τούτων ἄλλη ὑποτήρισαν αὐτὸς καὶ ἡμῶν αὐτὸς τῆς τόπως ἡμῶν.
89 Par. Jer. 8.8: καὶ ἢπειρά τοῖς ἀνακάθαντις ὑποτήρισαν τοῖς Βαβυλῶνοι τοῖς τόπως ἡμῶν καὶ ἑποτήρισαν.
90 Par. Jer. 8.9: ἠλέουσα δὲ αὐτῶν ψέπω ἡ Βαβυλώνα, ἔθελαν αὐτῶν Βαβυλώνας ἐς τοὺς συνάντησαν αὐτῶν, λέγεται δὲ μὴ κατάληθας της τούς πόλεως ἡμῶν, ὥστε ἡμῶν τοὺς ἑποτήρισαν καὶ καλῆς ἔσθεντο αὐτές ἡμῶν διὰ τοῦτο αὐτοῖς οὐκ ἑποτήρισαν πρὸς ἡμᾶς.
In other words a compromise existence is ultimately untenable. The author, however, holds out hope to Jews in this unfortunate situation. If they repent they will be led by the angel of righteousness to their exalted place.

For this group of Jews cut off equally from their own people and from their imperial masters, the city of Samaria is a fitting symbolic residence. It was founded by a king of Judaea whose Jewish identity was itself sometimes questioned. Herod often sought favor with the Romans and neighboring gentiles through means that estranged certain of his co-religionists. He was also of mixed ancestry, for his antecedents were Idumaeans. Sebaste was thus both a Jewish and a gentile foundation. The founder was a Jewish king, but the inhabitants were mostly gentiles. It was founded upon the ruins of a former capital of the kingdom of Israel, but it contained a temple dedicated to Roma and Augustus. For all the loyalty shown to Rome by the city’s inhabitants, the Sebastenoi were transferred by Vespasian after the Jewish War, as had been threatened by Claudius. Sebaste lay somewhere between Rome and Jerusalem, but as the author makes clear, it was in a deserted place far from the latter.

While the call for separation from Rome is clear, the end to which the Paraleipomena tends requires investigation, in order to discover what the aim of this radical separation is. The twin notion of exile and return suits the sixth-century B.C. context of the Babylonian Captivity with the return of Israel and restoration of Jerusalem quite well; it does not, however, fit the context of A.D. 70 and must be understood symbolically. There was no significant exile following the fall of Jerusalem to Flavian arms. Many of the Pseudepigrapha that deal with this catastrophe do, nevertheless, speak of exile and return. Second Baruch quickly marginalizes the exile from Jerusalem in

91 Herod’s opponent Antigonus called him a half-Jew (ἡμι-Ιουδαίος); Jos. Ant. 14.403. His efforts to win favor with Augustus and Rome led him to engage in behavior that was often at odds with the expectations of his Jewish subjects, though he was generally careful to restrict that activity to his non-Jewish possessions. For a succinct overview of Herod and this aspect of his policy with the opposition that it created see Schürer, I,296-316.

92 Par. Jer. 8.11: Ιερουσαλήμων καὶ ἑλλῆνις αἷς τίτων ἡγμανύσαν μακράντοι τῆς Ἰερουσαλήμ, καὶ ἴσως, καὶ κατ' εἰσοδίαν τῆς ἐν Ἰερουσαλήμ, ἐποιήσαντο τῆς ἐν Ἰερουσαλήμ ἣν ἦπερ ἖ν τῇ ἐποχῇ Ἱεροσολύμων.
favor of the earlier removal of the northern tribes by the Assyrians. This, I have argued, is to be seen as a reference to the “exiles” of the Diaspora, which antedated the failure of the revolt ending in 70, just as the Assyrian exile antedated the fall of Jerusalem in 587. 93 Second Baruch, unlike the Paraleipomena, divided the Jews into groups by location: exiles (Diaspora) and the remnant in Palestine with Baruch (Judaean Jews).

The author of the Paraleipomena also writes of an exilic community; it is, however, the only community. There is no remnant in Jerusalem; Baruch alone remains, but in a tomb. Abimelech is in the Vineyard of Agrippa. The community is with Jeremiah in Babylon. The reward for their putting away Babylonian spouses and rejecting the ways of the Babylonians will be the return to Jerusalem. The return to the holy city comes as such an anti-climax in the text itself, that the reader suspects the author has in mind something other than an actual return or even an earthly restoration of Jerusalem.

Return concerns the author from the beginning of the text. Before the Chaldaeans have even entered Jerusalem the idea of return has already been planted. God orders Jeremiah to bury the vessels of the Temple service until the time of the gathering of the beloved. 94 God instructs Jeremiah to stay with the people in Babylon until he brings them back to the city. 95 Baruch, in his short lament over the fall of Jerusalem, demonstrates his confidence in the people’s return. 96 Thus even in the narrative of the conquest of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, the author raises the expectation of return.

93 Fourth Ezra also looks forward to the return of the exiles from across the Euphrates, another reference to the Assyrian captivity.
94 Par. Jer. 3.11: πολεμίζω τά σπήλαια τῆς λατρείας διὰ τῆς συνελήφθης τῶν ἡσυχασμῶν. The description elsewhere, 4.6, of the people as beloved has led commentators to understand the use of ἡσυχασμῶν in this context to refer to the people; see Herzer, 4 Baruch, 63; see Riaud, Les Paralipomènes, 173 n. 8, for parallels.
95 Par. Jer. 3.15: καὶ τὰ ἱδία παραγοντέοις παρακάτω και παρακάτω τῶν ἡσυχασμῶν αὐτῶν διὰ τὴν ἐπιστροφήν αὐτῶν ἐς τὴν πόλιν.
96 Par. Jer. 4.9: ἐκ τῆς ἡμέρας συνελήφθης ἡμᾶς, καὶ ἐπιστρέφθη ἡμᾶς ἐς τὴν πόλιν ἡμῶν ἢ ἡμᾶς ἢ διὰ βουλήν ἢ δὲ ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ. The prophecy of destruction is directed toward the Babylonians/Romans.
The return itself, however, is no triumphal entry. The people with Jeremiah are led across the Jordan and approach the holy city. There, those who have married Babylonians are denied entry by Jeremiah, Baruch, and Abimelech. The attention then shifts to the fortunes of those who have been turned away. When the returnees again appear, they are sacrificing with Jeremiah. It can only be assumed that they have even entered Jerusalem; no mention is made of this event.

We are faced with a seeming contradiction. On the one hand, the importance of the return is repeatedly underlined in the text; on the other hand, the return itself is accompanied by no fanfare and is only implied, at most, at the end of the text. Other details increase the tension between what the reader expects and what he finds. As was mentioned, the Temple vessels are hidden in the ground until the coming together of the beloved people. This is surely an allusion to the restoration of the Temple cult. It comes as a great surprise at the end of the book, therefore, when Jeremiah offers sacrifices, that there is no mention of the Temple vessels or, indeed, of the Temple itself.

The conclusion that the author is not dealing with any actual return to Jerusalem or anticipating an earthly restoration of the Temple is inescapable. The return has, consequently, been interpreted in symbolic terms. The return to Jerusalem has been seen to foreshadow the Jews’ entrance into the heavenly Jerusalem. Pointers in the text, it is alleged, tend toward this conclusion. The middle span of the text, which recounts the tale of Abimelech, introduces the expectation of the heavenly Jerusalem. The figs, in particular, become a sign of this hope. The figs are still as fresh after Abimelech’s sixty-

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97 Par. Jer. 8.4-12: ἕπαραν ὧν τῖν ἤπατον καὶ Ἡλέκτρον εἰς Ἰερουσαλήμ, καὶ ἦσαν Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ Βαβυλωνοί καὶ Ἀβιμλής ἡγομένες ἃτι, πάντες ἐξερχόμενοι καταφυλάττομεν καὶ μὴ εἴσελθον εἰς τὸν πάλιν ταύταν (8-7).
98 Par. Jer. 3.11.
99 Par. Jer. 9.7, does record that Jeremiah, Baruch, and Abimelech were standing at the altar. This merely throws into relief the author’s disinterest with the Temple and its cult, the restoration of which is otherwise unacknowledged.
100 This interpretation was first suggested in an influential article by Ch. Wolff, “Irdisches und himmlisches Jerusalem—Die Heilshoffnung in den Paralipomena Jeremiae,” ZNW 82 (1991), 147-158.
six year sleep as they were when he picked them.\textsuperscript{101} To reward the old man who revealed the truth of the exile to Abimelech, the latter gives him some figs with the wish that God may reveal to him the way to the heavenly Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{102} On the basis of the figs’ preservation, though not Abimelech’s, Baruch wishes to write to Jeremiah among the exiles.\textsuperscript{103} Through an angel God directs Baruch to announce to Jeremiah by letter the time of the return.\textsuperscript{104}

The hope for the heavenly Jerusalem is also expressed in Jeremiah’s prayer at the end of the text. Jeremiah mentions the archangel Michael as the one who will lead the people in.\textsuperscript{105} This is, however, after they have already entered Jerusalem, and appears to point beyond this event. This further goal is clarified by an earlier statement, when Jeremiah urged those who founded Samaria to repent, for if they did so, the angel of righteousness would lead them to their exalted place.\textsuperscript{106} Though Michael is not named here, the epithet “angel of righteousness” is given to him also in Jeremiah’s prayer in Jerusalem. Upon the combination of Abimelech’s words to the old man, the promise of an exalted place to the founders of Samaria, and the notion that Michael will in the future lead the righteous in, is constructed the case for the eschatological expectation of the heavenly Jerusalem found in the \textit{Paraleipomena Jeremiae}.

The case is not altogether very strong. The most compelling piece is Abimelech’s pious wish for the old man. The weakest link is the mention of Michael in Jeremiah’s prayer. The most that can be said is that eschatological speculation makes an appearance in the \textit{Paraleipomena}; it is a theme, but by no means the dominant one. Even if

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{101} \textit{Par. Jer.} 5.24-26.
\item \textsuperscript{102} \textit{Par. Jer.} 5.35: καὶ ἤπαθο ἐν τοῖς σίκου, ἡμέρα τῷ γαμαίῳ ἄγχωσίν, καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· δὲ δὲς φανταγγέληται σε ἐν τῇ δυναμῇ Ἰερουσαλήμ.
\item \textsuperscript{103} \textit{Par. Jer.} 6.4-11: ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ σώματος τοῦ σώματος, αὐτής πάλιν φυλάξει σε ἐν τῇ δυνάμει αὐτοῦ, τάσιν αἰώνιον ἦν Βαβοῦρ. ἔλεγε τῷ Αβίμεληκι· ἀναστήσα, καὶ ἀνεμόι αὐτόν καὶ τοὺς τεκνίας τὰς δυνάμεις αὐτοῦ· ἐπεστείλα τῷ αὐτῷ τῷ Ἰεραμίᾳ τῷ Βαβυλώνα διὰ τοῦ εὐτύχου γενομένου σου ἐν τῇ δυναμείᾳ ταύτῃ (10-11).
\item \textsuperscript{104} \textit{Par. Jer.} 6.15-17.
\item \textsuperscript{105} \textit{Par. Jer.} 9.5: καὶ ἡ μελέτη Μιχαήλ ὁ ἀρχάγγελος τῆς δυναστείας, ὁ ἀνέστη αὐτῶν τᾶς πύλας τῆς δυναστείας, ὡς ἐν εἰκόνῃ τῆς δυναστείας.
\item \textsuperscript{106} \textit{Par. Jer.} 8.12: ἀποστείλε δὲ πρὸς αὐτοὺς Ἰεραμίας, λέγων· μετανοήσατε· ἐχετεῖν γὰρ ἄγγελος τῆς δυναστείας, καὶ ἀνέστη αὐτῶν καὶ τοῖς πάντες ὀνόμα τῶν οἰκείων.
\end{itemize}
Jeremiah’s prayer looks forward to Michael’s leading the righteous into the heavenly Jerusalem, it must be noted that the theme of return has already been accomplished, albeit without fanfare. The return is a basis upon which might be founded the eschatological hope for the heavenly Jerusalem; it may even be a symbol of that future hope. The two must not, however, be confounded.

The return to Jerusalem is, indeed, symbolic, but the resolution of Paraleipomena is mundane. The author’s concern, right up to the walls of Jerusalem, is with those who will not separate themselves from the Babylonians. When the reader expects to find a description of the triumphant reentry into the holy city, he is instead treated to an account of the tribulations of the recusant Jews, rejected at both Jerusalem and Babylon. The return is encompassed in the rejection of the things of Babylon. That is to say, the return is a matter of means; it is not an end. Rejecting Babylon, understood symbolically, is the return from exile.

Once the recalcitrant Jews have been sloughed off, the author avoids any mention of a real return to Jerusalem. Instead attention is turned to the ten days of sacrifice. The sacrifice has often been identified with the holy day of Yom Kippur based on the length of the festivities. It is precisely the festive nature of these sacrifices—the Jews are said to be rejoicing—that raises questions about the identification. The festival that closes the book recalls a passage from Jeremiah’s letter to Baruch. In it, after noting the apostasy of the exiles, Jeremiah reminisces about the festivals that were such a part of life in Jerusalem before the captivity. The memory is bittersweet and draws a groan and tears from the prophet.

The attention given to the absence of religious festivals is not paralleled in the Paraleipomena by any other suggestion of disrupted Jewish life. Of particular note,

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107 Par. Jer. 9.1: ἐξαιρεῖται δὲ οἱ τοῦ Ιερουσαλήμ χαράστες καὶ ἀνασάλλουσοι ἡσύχας ὑπὲρ τῆς λαοῦ ἐκάθε ἡμέρας.
108 Par. Jer. 7.31: ἡμελέσθαι δὲ θανάτης δεδεμένου τοῦ Ἰερουσαλήμ παρὰ τοῦ θανὸς αἰματοσωλήναν καὶ μυρμικίους ιεταίρους, καὶ ἐπάστρεψαν ἐκ τῶν ὀφελον ἀθολίσκως καὶ κλήσεων.
especially by comparison with Second Baruch and Fourth Ezra, is the lack of concern for the Law. Nowhere in the text is the Law explicitly mentioned; nor is there any injunction to obey the commandments. God does command the Jews to listen to Jeremiah. The prophet’s message, however, is not obedience to the Law, but separation from the Babylonians. The author’s reticence in clarifying the sins that caused God to bring the Babylonians against Jerusalem coupled with the almost total silence regarding the Jews’ need to rededicate themselves to observance of the Law leaves the adoption of Babylonian ways and spouses as the only obstacle between the Jews and return. This then must be viewed as the central message of the Paraleipomena Jeremiae.

Conclusion

The Paraleipomena Jeremiae is an optimistic text. The author does not torture himself with the wrenching question of theodicy, as does the author of Fourth Ezra. Nor does the gloomy disposition of the author of Second Baruch, with his dim view of Diaspora life and the sinfulness of the Jews, cloud his vision of the future. The catastrophe of 70 came

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109 Herzer, Baruch, 93 n. 57, notes that the term nomos is missing; he seems to suggest, however, that “holding to the commandments” and “hearing the voice” of God function as substitutes. It is true that the Jews are convicted of not keeping the Lord’s commandments, 6.23-24: ἀλλὰ ἐξελέξατε τὰ δικαίωμα μου, ἀλλὰ ἐξελέξασθε τὰ δικαίωμα μου, καὶ ἐξελέξατε τὰ δικαίωμα μου, καὶ ἐξελέξασθε τὰ δικαίωμα μου, καὶ ἐξελέξασθε τὰ δικαίωμα μου μου, καὶ ἐξελέξασθε τὰ δικαίωμα μου. The author’s reticence in clarifying the sins that caused God to bring the Babylonians against Jerusalem coupled with the almost total silence regarding the Jews’ need to rededicate themselves to observance of the Law leaves the adoption of Babylonian ways and spouses as the only obstacle between the Jews and return. This then must be viewed as the central message of the Paraleipomena Jeremiae.

Herzer, Baruch, 98, 110, uncovers hidden references to the Law in the image of light (φῶς) found twice in the text: 5.35: ἄρα ἐνοπτήρες αἰωνίων τῆς καταφύγίας, καὶ ἐνὸς αἰωνίων τῆς καταφύγίας, καὶ ἐνὸς αἰωνίων τῆς καταφύγίας, καὶ ἐνὸς αἰωνίων τῆς καταφύγίας, καὶ ἐνὸς αἰωνίων τῆς καταφύγίας. These few references do not, however, render obedience to the Law as central a theme as he claims, nor do they have anything to do with Jeremiah or the exiles, referring rather to Baruch and the figs. The dominance of the theme of separation and clarity with which it is expressed show that this theme was uppermost in the author’s mind. This can be illustrated in the command given to Jeremiah to declare to the exiles the good news (εὐαγγελίζωμαι); Par. Jer. 3.15. Herzer, Baruch, 70-71, reads this in conjunction with the statement that Jeremiah kept teaching (διδάσκων) the people in Babylon (7.37) to mean that Jeremiah is teaching the people to preserve the Law. The latter text, however, is concerned with keeping the people apart from the Babylonians: θέρμανδες διὰ αἰώνιος τὰ διδάκτα τῶν μαθητῶν τοῦ λόγου, καὶ διδάξαντι αὐτοῖς τὸ διδάκτα ἐκ τῶν ἀλληγοριῶν τῶν ἑλπίδων τῆς Ἑβραίων. If the author is concerned with observance of the Law, he seems to have distilled it to the separation from the nations. Nowhere is obedience to the Law connected to the hope of return. Nowhere is Torah observance made a requirement for the audience of the Paraleipomena. The marked contrast to Fourth Ezra and Second Baruch in this regard underscores this omission.
upon the Jews for the usual reason: they sinned. This explanation is so deeply embedded in tradition that the author of the Paraleipomena could hardly avoid it; he need not, however, agonize over it. There is no notion in the text that any deep-seated flaw, stretching back to Adam, has disfigured the relationship between God and his chosen people. From the beginning of the text the theme of punishment is muted. Even before Israel has gone into exile, its return is promised. The period of exile, sixty-six years, passes literally like a dream. The return is not contingent upon the Jews cleaning up their act; no strictures regarding Torah observance recall the Jews to their proper devotion to holiness and justice.

A shadow does hang over this sunny picture: Rome. Even contemplating Jerusalem’s conqueror does not provoke our author to issue ringing denunciations of this wicked empire. No images of an eschatological chastisement to befall the destroyers console the vanquished. Rather the author is concerned with those Jews who persist even after the humiliation of the holy city and the chosen people in their policy of accommodation and cooperation with the imperial masters. Separation is required. If the Jews are guilty of any sin it lies in their being to cozy with the Romans.

The author advances his case through the reuse of the biblical traditions concerning the fall and restoration of Jerusalem in the sixth century B.C. He draws his cast of characters from the Book of Jeremiah. He culls his themes and images from the Books of Jeremiah, Second Kings, Second Chronicles, and Ezra-Nehemiah. Through a series of inversions he fits the rather different circumstances of the sixth century B.C. to the situation of the first century A.D. Jeremiah, the prophet of accommodation, becomes the voice of isolation. The nuptials between returnees and the people of the land, which so excited the ire of Ezra and Nehemiah, are celebrated in Babylon: the conqueror

110 The Romans will not survive, according to the lament of Baruch, but the theme is dropped as soon as it is picked up; Par. Jer. 4.8-9: ἐμπέρασεν λαθραὶ τὴν πόλιν τοῦ Ἰορδανίου καὶ τὴν δύναμιν ἡμῶν ἀλλὰ διὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν παρεδόθη ἡμῖν. ὅ δ᾿ Ἰορδανίων ἐκτίθητο ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐπετρεψεν ἡμῖν αἷς τὴν πόλιν ἡμῶν ἵνα δοθῇ τοῖς ἔβερεν ἔξω.
marries the conquered. The impetus to return, which in the Bible was attributed to the magnanimity of the Great King, is in the Paraleipomena contingent upon the Jews rejecting the ways of Rome. The return to Jerusalem and the work required to reestablish Jewish life there dominates the traditional account of Ezra and Nehemiah. The author of the Paraleipomena brings us right to the point of recovery of the holy city, but does not dwell on the reentry. It seems that the return is accomplished merely by removing the elements that refuse to separate themselves from Babylon.

The message is separation. Other considerations are excluded. It is in this way that the book is optimistic. The only thing that is keeping the Jews from true adherence to their traditions, represented by Jerusalem, is their entanglement with Rome. Once that problem is resolved, the return to a normal existence is effected. There is no need to wait for an eschatological solution. Rome does not have to be cast into the fire to free the Jews. Nor is hope fastened onto a Messiah, who must come to punish Rome before he may restore the Jews to their proper place. Not even a Cyrus is needed; Rome is still thriving even as the Jews reach the walls of Jerusalem. It is merely necessary for the Jews to resist Jeremiah's call, echoing across the centuries and recently reiterated by Josephus, encouraging them to seek their welfare in the welfare of the city where they have been sent into exile.
CHAPTER FOUR

FOURTH SYBIYLINE ORACLE

Introduction to the Text

The approach taken by the author of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle differs in form from the works treated so far; in theme, the author betrays many of the same concerns that exercised the authors of the traditional Jewish apocalypses discussed above. The Old Testament—and more particularly the events of the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem and the Exile—does not provide a starting point for the author of this book. Ezra, Jeremiah, Baruch, and Nebuchadnezzar are nowhere to be found; indeed, that bane of the Jews, the Neo-Babylonian Empire, is conspicuously ignored. The author shows no awareness of the Book of Daniel, which is surprising given certain superficial similarities between the two works.

The point of departure is rather to be found in the Greco-Roman religious tradition. The Fourth Sibylline Oracle is one of a body of twelve oracles written, or at least redacted by Jews and Christians, but supposedly deriving their prophetic authority from the Sibyl. The Sibyl is a woman who delivers oracles in an ecstatic state. The oracles are numbered 1-8 and 11-14; for the complicated manuscript tradition see A. Rzach, ΧΡΗΣΜΟΙ ΣΙΒΥΛΛΙΑΚΟΙ—Oracula Sibyllina, (Prague, Vienna, Leipzig, 1891), iii-xvi; J. Gefcken, Die Oracula Sibyllina, GCS 8, (Leipzig, 1902), xxi-liii; more briefly, E. Schürer, The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ, G. Vermes, F. Millar, M. Black, and M. Goodman (rev. eds.), 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1973-1987), III/1.630-632; and A.-M. Denis, Introduction aux pseudipigraphes grecs d’Ancien Testament, SVTP 1, (Leiden, 1970), 115-117.


2 The oldest testimony, coming from the fifth century B.C., suggests that there was one Sibyl; see Heraclitus apud Plut. de Pythiae oraculis, 6 (Mor. 397a). Later Greeks and Romans expanded the conception of the Sibyl to include varying numbers of locally situated prophetic women. Though many lists exist, one of the more influential was that of Varro, Antiquitates rerum divinarum, apud Lactantius, Div. Inst. 1.6, who recorded a Persian, Libyan, Delphic, Cimmerian (in Italy), Erythraean, Samian, Cumaean, Hellespontian, Phrygian, and Tibutine Sibyl. Pausanias, 10.12.9, provides a list of four: Libyan, Herophile of Marpessos or Erythrae (in Asia Minor), Demo in Cumae, and Sabbe of the Hebrews (also identified with the Babylonian or Egyptian Sibyl). The most famous, indeed one of the few, literary accounts of the consultation of the Sibyl comes from the Aeneid, Book 6, when Aeneas seeks entrance to the Underworld.

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oracles usually consist of dire predictions of disasters to befall cities and nations; they are often political in nature. For the student of Roman history, the work of the Sibyl is most well known from the Sibylline Books that were kept in the Capitoline Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus and were consulted in case of an emergency threatening the state; a decree of the Senate was required to authorize such consultation. Apart from this official use of the Sibylline prophecies, they were also widely distributed throughout the Greco-Roman world, especially in the East, where they often found their way into literary works and provided models for pseudo-oracles attributed to the Sibyl.

Summary of the Text
The text begins with a proclamation that the prophetess does not utter the oracles of false Apollo, but rather derives her authority from the great God, who has not been fashioned into an idol by the hands of men. There follows an extended denunciation of idolatry and magnification of God’s greatness (1-17). The Sibyl declares that she will proclaim the things that are now and the things that will be from the first generation until the tenth (18-23). Before beginning her record of the events to befall the generations, she contrasts the behavior of the righteous and the wicked. The former love and bless the great God; they reject all temples, altars, and animal sacrifice. The wicked are those who deride the just and attribute to them their own foul deeds. God will, however, bring judgement upon the world, upon the pious and the impious. The latter will be sent into the fire; the pious will

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3 For this Roman use of the Sibylline prophecies see H. W. Parke, Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy in Classical Antiquity, B. C. McGing (ed.), (London and New York, 1988), 136-151. According to tradition the books were purchased from the Sibyl herself by Tarquinius Priscus; Dion. Hal. Ant. 4.62. When the Temple of Jupiter burned down in 83 B.C. the books were destroyed. The consul of 76, C. Scribonius Curio, sent a delegation to Erythrae and other prophetic centers to gather a replacement collection.

4 All references to line numbers in the notes within the text refer to the Fourth Sibylline Oracle, unless otherwise noted. Sib. Or. 4.4: οὐ ἀδελφός Φθείως χρησιμοτήτος cf. IGRR IV.1540.1-2: ἕ Φθείος πολύτικος
χρησιμοτήτος τότε Σφίλλω. This inscription was found in the cave of the Erythraean Sibyl. The word χρησιμοτήτος is not at all common; see LSJ s.v. χρησιμοτήτος.
remain in a blessed state on the earth. These things are to happen in the tenth generation
(24-48).

The central part of the book contains a review of the history of the imperial
powers that dominated the Near East in the form of prophecy; the empires are fit into a
framework of ten generations. First the Assyrians will rule over all mortals for six
generations from the time of the Flood (49-53). Then will arise the Medes to destroy
them and reign for two generations. During this time there will be an eclipse, an
earthquake, and a war with the Persians (54-64). The Persians will then possess the
greatest power of the whole world; they will rule for one prosperous generation. It will
be marred by the disastrous advent of the Greeks in Asia. The Nile will hide for twenty
years causing drought and famine in Egypt. But a king (certainly a reference to Xerxes)
will come against Europe from Asia, only to be received back as a fugitive from war.
Strife will bring the ruin of many cities and the death of many men in Greece. Then as
man enters into the tenth generation the yoke of slavery will come to Persia (65-87).

The Macedonians will then boast of scepters. Various disasters—military,
geological, seismic—will befall Thebes, Tyre, Samos, Delos, Babylon, Baris, Cyzicus,
and Rhodes; Bactria will be colonized (88-101). The might of Macedon is not destined to
last; war will come from Italy in the West. The world will bear the yoke of slavery for
the benefit of Italy. Ruin will come to Corinth and Carthage. Earthquakes will lay
Laodicea and Lycian Myra prostrate. Armenia will be enslaved (102-114).

War will also come to Jerusalem from Italy. The Temple of God will be sacked.
A great king (certainly a reference to Nero) will flee from Italy across the Euphrates.
After his departure civil war will break out. A Roman commander will burn the Temple
of Jerusalem and fill the land of the Jews with slaughter and ruin. These events will be
accompanied by an earthquake on Cyprus. Then a torch from a crack in the earth

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5 A coalition of the Babylonians and the Medes sacked Nineveh in 612 B.C., thus putting an end to
Assyrian dominance in Asia.
(probably a reference to the eruption of Mount Vesuvius) will rain fire down on cities in Italy. War will come to the West. The fugitive king (Nero) will recross the Euphrates at the head of a great army. Antioch and Cyprus will fall victim to war. The wealth that Rome had plundered will return to Asia. Famine will destroy the cities of Caria when the Maeander dries up (115-151).

The remainder of the text concerns the eschaton. Impiety will be in the ascendant; piety will be held in low regard, thus provoking God's wrath and prompting him to destroy the race of men by fire. The Sibyl then exhorts men to put aside murders and outrages and to cleanse their bodies in rivers. Only through prayer and repentance will God be placated in his wrath. If the Sibyl's exhortation goes unheard, then fire will fill the world consuming it and all the cities, rivers, and seas that cover its face; all will be reduced to ash, including the entire race of men. From the dust, however, God will refashion the frames of men for judgement. The wicked will be buried in Tartarus and Gehenna. The pious will live on the earth in God's favor (152-192).

Date of Composition

The date generally assigned to the Fourth Sibylline Oracle rests on two pieces of internal evidence. The first is the prophecy of a torch that will arise from a cleft in the earth in Italy and will burn many cities and men. This event is placed after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. The author is generally careful in his chronology. It seems reasonable, therefore, to take this as a reference to the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in A.D. 79, nine years after the destruction of Jerusalem. This gives us a terminus post quem.

The second item used for dating the text is the use of the legendary return of Nero. Prior to a civil war and the coming of the Romans to burn the Temple, the author

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6 Sib. Or. 4.130-134: ἀλλ' ὡσποὺς κηδεμόνας ἀπὸ κηρύξας Ἱππάλτου τῆς πασσίας ἀπεκτέθη εἰς οὐρανὸν ἔχον ἐνεμα, πολὺς δὲ θάλασσας πέλας καὶ ἄκρας ἀλέας, πολλὴ δ' αὐξάνεσθαι τόπην μέγαν αὐτήν πλήρην, καὶ ἀπόλτοις πᾶσινα ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ αὐτὸ τὰ μέταλα.
records that a great king will flee from Italy. He is described as being under a curse for the murder of his mother. This royal matricide whose disappearance provokes a civil war can be none other than Nero. After the eruption of Vesuvius this fugitive king reappears in the East leading an army from over the Euphrates.

There are in the Fourth Sibyl's account none of the mythical elements of the Nero redivivus legend associated with later Jewish and Christian literature. Indeed, according to the Fourth Sibyl Nero is not even dead, thus precluding his return to life. The author seems rather to be drawing on the appearances of a false Nero in the East recorded by Roman and Greek historians.

The first such appeared in 69 almost immediately after Nero’s death. He was according to Tacitus either a slave from Pontus or a freedman from Italy, who was driven by a storm to the island of Cythnus, where he collected an army of deserters and soldiers on leave from the eastern legions. He was arrested and put to death by Calpurnius Asprenas who had been sent by Galba to govern Galatia and Pamphylia.

The second supposed Nero arose during the reign of Titus. His name was Terentius Maximus and he gained a fairly large following in Asia Minor, apparently his homeland. With his followers he marched to the Euphrates where he found refuge with

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8 Nero, of course, had committed suicide in 68. The circumstances surrounding his demise were mysterious. Death came to him at the suburban villa of a freedman, in the presence of only a few witnesses; Suet. Nero 49.
11 Tac. Hist. 2.8-9; see also Dio, Epit. 63.9 (Xiphilinus); Zonaras 11.15, records that this false Nero threw Greece into confusion before attempting to reach the Syrian legions.
the Parthian Artabanus, who prepared to restore him to Rome. The plans came to naught and the pretender was killed.  

There is perhaps a third pretender during the reign of Domitian. Suetonius says that twenty years after Nero's death, when he himself was a young man, there appeared a man claiming to be Nero, who found a certain following among the Parthians. A passage in the Histories suggests that Tacitus also knew of at least three false Neros.  

None of these Neros fits the description of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle in all its details. The Fourth Sibyl places Nero's flight to the Euphrates in 69, but the false Nero of 69 stopped at Cythnus and never reached the Euphrates. Terentius Maximus, the false Nero during the reign of Titus, crossed the Euphrates and entered Parthia. The movements of this false Nero thus agree with the Fourth Sibyl, but the chronology is wrong. The third pretender, according to Suetonius, also made it to Parthia; this accords with the account in the Fourth Sibyl. Suetonius' tale is otherwise too devoid of detail to make an effective comparison.  

What then can be said about the flight and return of Nero in the Fourth Sibylline Oracle? There is no need, perhaps, to ascertain precisely which of these false Neros might underlie the prophecy of the Fourth Sibyl. The reappearance of Nero during the reign of Titus would accord well with the eruption of Vesuvius. Our author, however, often telescopes events, so there is no reason that a period of time might not elapse between items placed together in the order of the prophecy. A date between 79 and about

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12 Dio, Epit. 66.19.3 = Zonaras, 11.18: οἱ τοῦτος Τίτου καὶ οἱ Φρουδουχοὶ ἔρανεν, οἱ Αυτοί δὲ ἔκκελετο διὰ Ταχέστος Μάξιμος, προσεόντος δὲ τῷ Νέρων καὶ τῷ Μάξῳ καὶ τῇ συνεργίᾳ καὶ τῷ καιρῷ καὶ τῷ μισθῷ. Εἰ τῷ δὲ Αέτος τινας προσέφερε τοις οἳ εἰς τὸν Βορράντα προερχόμενον παλιὺ πλέονς ἀναφέρομεν, καὶ τῆς ἤπειρος λεγάθου τῶν πλατών καταλύοντας ἄρχετον, ὡς καὶ δὲ ἄρχετος τῶν Τίτου ποιήμασι καὶ ἤδη ὑπὸ τοῦτον καὶ καταγεγέντος ἐς Ρώμην παρακάλεσαν. John of Antioch, fr. 104 (Mueller, FHG), adds the note about his death.  

13 Suet. Nero 67.2: Denique cum post viginti annos adolescens me exstitisset condicionis incerta quae se Neronem esse incertaret, tam favorebilem censisse consecutam condicionem incertam qui se Nero non esse incertaret.  

14 Tac. Hist. 2.8.1: Ceterorum causam conatusque in contextu operis diximus. He says this before introducing the false Nero of 69, thus excluding him from the count.
90 would allow for either of the appearances of Nero during the Flavian period to serve as the inspiration for the author of the Fourth Sibyl.15

A more important consideration arises from the accounts of Nero in the Greek and Roman historiographical tradition, namely the connection between the return of Nero and Parthia. Dio records that Terentius Maximus, who appeared during the reign of Titus, found refuge with the Parthian pretender Artabanus, who planned to restore him to his throne. Suetonius recalls the high level of popularity that the Nero of Domitian’s reign enjoyed among the Parthians, though they ultimately surrendered him. Tacitus, too, claims that the Parthians were nearly moved to arms by the coming of a false Nero, though he does not say which had this effect.16

Analysis of the Text

Scholarship on the Fourth Sibylline Oracle has long been founded on the assertion that the work in its present form is a composite text. A later redactor, working after A.D. 70, is assumed to have taken an earlier example of Near Eastern political propaganda cast in the form of an oracle and added certain elements. The common view holds that the kernel of the text is an anti-Seleucid tract that employs traditional themes to foretell a future reassertion of eastern dominance over the Macedonian interloper from the West (49-101).17 A later redactor is supposed to have somewhat clumsily added the oracular material concerning the advent of Rome in the East (102-151). Finally the lengthened

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15 It is, of course, well within the realm of possibility that the picture of Nero in the Fourth Sibyl is a composite drawn from all of these occurrences.

16 Tac. Hist. 1.2: mota prope etiam Parthorum arma falsi Neronis ludibrio. For the relationship between the return of Nero and Parthia, see below.

17 D. Flusser, “The Four Empires in the Fourth Sibyl and in the Book of Daniel,” Israel Oriental Studies 2 (1972), 150-153, sees between the composition of the anti-Seleucid oracle and the final text an intermediate stage in which the Roman material (lines 102-151) was added; J. J. Collins, “The Place of the Fourth Sibyl in the Development of the Jewish Sibyllina,” JJS 25 (1974), 373-375, would also add the eschatological predictions in lines 174-192. J. Geffcken, Komposition und Entstehungszeit der Oracula Sibyllina, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur N.F. 8, (Leipzig, 1902), 18-19, also suggested an originally pagan oracle at the center of the text.
oracle has been framed with the eschatological material at the end (152-192) and the polemic against idolatry at the beginning of the text (1-48).

A close reading of the text, however, suggests a greater degree of unity among the various parts. It is time to reexamine the arguments upon which the composite hypothesis is founded. It will be argued here that one author is responsible for the entire text; that the Roman material is integral to the author’s conception of the interplay between East and West. The notion of mortal combat between the powers of the West and the East is ultimately discarded by the author of the Fourth Sibyl. This becomes clear both in the central political oracle and in the framing material. As such, the Fourth Sibylline Oracle provides another example of the thoughtful rejection of traditional modes of understanding the relationship between Jews and Rome at work in the texts presently under discussion.

First the case for the composite hypothesis must be examined. According to this theory, the author of the central oracle has used two historical schemata in his interpretation of history. He has divided the history of the world after the Flood into ten generations. These ten generations have then been fitted into the framework of a succession of four world empires: Assyria, Media, Persia, Macedonia (Seleucid). Assyrian might lasted six generations until it was replaced by the Medes, who held sway for two generations; the Persians and Macedonians followed with a generation each. Into this carefully combined presentation of history is inserted the Roman material; the addition has the feel of an afterthought. Not only does the inclusion of Rome upset the four kingdom pattern, but the intruder is not assigned a place in the ten-generational scheme; instead it crowds Macedonia in the final generation. Thus the argument goes for rejecting the integrity of the text.

18 Sib. Or. 4.49-50 (Assyria), 54-55 (Media), 65-66 (Persia), 86-87 (Macedonia): ἀλλ’ ἦν ἢ δεικτὴν γιάνη μικρόν γένος ἔλησεν καὶ τέτοιον γένος δέδηλα καὶ φήσες ἐπικρινεῖ.
The periodization of world history using the succession of ages or kingdoms is well known from ancient literature; examples can be found in Greek, Latin, Jewish, and Persian literature. The oldest known use of such a division of history is in Hesiod’s *Works and Days*. Here the various ages of man are represented by types of metal recording in symbolic terms the descent from the excellence of the golden age through the silver and bronze to the baseness of the current age of iron.\(^{19}\) The Book of Daniel provides another famous example combining the metallic descent with a succession of world empires. In this text the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar dreams of a statue with a head of gold, silver torso, brazen legs, and feet of iron and iron mixed with clay. The prophet Daniel interprets the dream to signify the succession of world empires beginning with Nebuchadnezzar himself as ruler of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. The symbolic meaning of the subsequent metals is not spelled out, but usually assumed to represent the empires of the Medes, the Persians, and the Macedonians (Seleucids).\(^{20}\) A fifth kingdom destroys the final member of the sequence and lasts forever after. This is symbolized by a large stone that smashes the feet of iron and clay; the statue is destroyed and the stone grows into a mountain that fills the earth. This last kingdom is God’s.

The succession of empires was a common Greek historiographical convention, also adopted by the Romans. The roots lie in the history of Herodotus. In his first book Herodotus traces the rise of the Persian Empire. The story begins with the Assyrians, who controlled Asia for 520 years. The Medes revolted from them and established themselves as the rulers of Asia east of the Halys River in Asia Minor. These in turn

\(^{19}\) Hes. *Op.* 106-201, departs from this scheme by inserting the non-metallic race of heroes between the bronze and iron age.

\(^{20}\) Dan. 2:31-45; cf. 7:1-14. Flusser, “The Four Empires,” 155; J. W. Swain, “The Theory of the Four Monarchies Opposition History under the Roman Empire,” *CP* 35 (1940), 1-2. There are problems with this interpretation, for the Median Empire was contemporaneous with the Neo-Babylonian; both fell to Cyrus the Persian. For a discussion of the difficulty see Swain, 10. For the use of the succession of empires in political propaganda see also D. Mendels, “The Five Empires: A Note on a Propagandistic Topos,” *AJPh* 102 (1981), 330-337.
were overthrown by the Persians under Cyrus.\footnote{Hdt. 1.95.2: Αντίοχος ἄρχοντας τῆς δυναστείας ἐπ᾿ ἑκατέρα και παντακόσια, πρώτω ἀπ᾿ αὐτῶν Μέθοδος ἤρετο ἀπόστασεν· καὶ πρὸς ἐκεῖ περὶ τῆς θεώρησις παρασκεύασων τὸν Ασσυρίαν ἤγετον ἄγαλμα καὶ ἀπεισόδιον τῷ βασιλείῳ ἐπισκέφθησθαι. Οὔ τι Λεβαδός, τὸν Αχαμένιδα καὶ τὸ κάστρο τῆς Παρθανώνας, ἀποκάλυπται.} This same succession was followed by Ctesias of Cnidus in his history of Persia.\footnote{Ctesias of Cnidus was court physician to the Persian king Artaxerxes II (404-358 B.C.) and took part in the battle of Cunaxa. Though no longer extant, his \textit{Persica} served as a main source for Diodorus Siculus' \textit{History of the Ancient Near East; Diod. 2.1-34. The succession is recorded at Diod. 2.21.8: ἠν τοῦτον (scil. Σαρδαπάλλαν) γὰρ ἔτοι τῶν Ασσυρίων ἡγεμονία μετέτειχεν ἐς Μέθοδος, ἔτοι δημοκράτισσα πληθύν τῶν χιλίων καὶ τρισεκατομμυρίων, κατὴπα γενετηρίας Κτεσίας ἐς Κίδις ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ ΔΕΥΔΩΣ 28.8: ὥς εἴδε τῶν ἡγεμόνων τῶν Ασσυρίων ἀπὸ Νίνου δημοκράτισσα προτέρα μὲν γενετηρίας, ἔτοι δὲ πληθύν τῶν χιλίων καὶ τρισεκατομμυρίων, ἐπὶ Μέθοδος κατεύθυνον τοὺς παραχόμενοι τρόπους 32.4-5: οὕτως (scil. Κτεσίας ἐς Κίδις) ὥς εἴδε τῶν βασιλείων δυναμικῶν, ἐν ἀλήθεια Πέρας τὸν πολεμίον προμαχεῖται κατὰ τον ὀμοῦ ἐν τῷ εὐπρεπῶς πολεμικῶς ἐν τῷ τῶν Εὐφρατέων ἐν Πέρας τὰ πολεμικὰ πρᾶξει κατὰ τὰν ὄντα ἐν τῷ συνταγματικῷ, πολεμικῶς παρατηροῦσθαι καὶ ἐν τῷ ναῷ προσέγγισθαι τῷ ἑσπερινῷ ἀνθρώπει.} Historical circumstances, of course, prevented either Herodotus or Ctesias from advancing past a succession of three kingdoms.

The current of Greek historiography swept on into the Roman period. By then the succession theory had grown to embrace five world powers: Assyria, Media, Persia, Macedonia (Seleucid), and Rome. Polybius records that P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus, as he beheld the destruction of Carthage, wept and reflected upon the fates of the great empires: Assyria, Media, Persia, and Macedon. He was moved to quote Hector's words to Andromache presaging the fall of sacred Troy. Polybius asked him what consideration brought these words to his lips; Scipio confessed his fear that one day fate would consider such a change upon Rome.\footnote{Hector's words are quoted from II. 6.448-449.} Thus as early as 146 B.C. the notion of the Median Empire was subsequently assimilated into the Persian by Cyrus, himself of mixed Median and Persian ancestry.

21 Hdt. 1.95.2: Λαον τῶν ἀρχόντων τῆς δυναστείας ἐπ᾿ ἑκατέρα καὶ παντακόσια, πρώτω ἀπ᾿ αὐτῶν Μέθοδος ἤρετο ἀπόστασεν· καὶ πρὸς ἐκεῖ περὶ τῆς ἐκτεταρτικής παρασκεύασμον τὴν Ασσυρίαν ἄγαλμα καὶ ἀπεισόδιον τῷ βασιλείῳ ἐπισκέφθησθαι. Οὔ τι Λεβαδός, τὸν Αχαμένιδα καὶ τὸ κάστρο τῆς Παρθανώνας, ἀποκάλυπται. Οὔ τι Λεβαδός, τὸν Αχαμένιδα καὶ τὸ κάστρο τῆς Παρθανώνας, ἀποκάλυπται. Polyb. apud Appian, \textit{Pun.} 19.132: καὶ τοιοῦτο ἐνὶ καὶ πολέμῃ καὶ ἠδύνατη ἀρχή διαμανόν ὕστερα ἁγίωτα βασιλεία, καὶ τοὺς ἐπέδεικεν μὲν 'Ελληνας, ἀπετέλεσεν καὶ πλείον ἐπὶ τῇ Ασσυρίᾳ καὶ Μέθοδος καὶ Περσῶν ἐπὶ τῇ Αχαμένειδι καὶ μεγάλη τῇ χρυσῇ νικήτῃ, καὶ ἡ μάλιστα ἐναρξία πολεμικάς Μακεδόνων...φανεν τὸ αὐτοκράτορες ἔναντι τῆς πατρίδος σωρίζει, ἐπὶ ἑκατέρα καὶ τῇ ἀκροτέραις ἁφερέιοι, ἱδίδει. Hector's words come from II. 6.448-449.
succession of world empires was sufficiently well known not only for the Greek historian to record it, but also for the philhellenic Roman commander to refer to it. Rome was seen as the fifth empire, fourth to succeed Assyria.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, writing in the Augustan age, also mentioned the sequence of five empires in his work on Roman antiquities. In his preface he magnifies the glory of Rome by comparing it favorably to the might of Assyria, Media, Persia, and Macedonia; none of these powers equaled Rome in either territorial extent or duration of rule. Appian, the Alexandrian historian writing during the age of the Antonines, also made use of the succession of empires in order to highlight the superiority of Rome to those that had come before. The theme was also known in the Latin historiographical tradition. An otherwise unknown historian Aemilius Sura, who is mentioned in a gloss inserted into the history of Velleius Paterculus, recorded that after the Assyrians, Medes, Persians, and Macedonians had ruled over all the peoples, the supreme power passed to Rome in the days of the Macedonian kings Philip V and Antiochus III.

24 Dion. Hal. Ant. 1.2: ὅ μὲν γὰς Ἀσσυρίων ἀρχή πολιά ἡ τοῦτο καὶ ὡς τῶν μετὰ τοὺς διοικητὰς χρόνους ἔληλυν τὸν διότι ἄρχετο τῷ Ἀσσυρία μέρος. ὡς δὲ Μεδία καθαύνεται τῷ Ἀσσυρία καὶ μέκρια δυναστεία παραδόθη ἄριστον ὡς καὶ Περσίας. ὡς τὰ δὲ πολλὰ πλὴν πολὶ ποιήσαντες ἐστίν ἐμπιστεύοντας τῷ Ἐρατοσθένει ἔναντι ἐνδοτικῆς ἀρχῆς ὡς τῷ Ἀσσυρίαν ἕπειτα δὲ Ἐρατοσθένει δύνασθαι τῇ τῶν Ἀσσυρίων. Ἐρατοσθένης δὲ Εὐρωπίας ὕπατος ὥστε ἐξ ἄρχεις ἥν ἐδίδετο ἄρχουσαν ἐξ ἄρχοντας ἄρχοντας. Διονυσίου ἄρχετο τῷ Ἀσσυρίαν ἀρχὴν τῷ Ἐρατοσθένη ὑποτασσόμενον. ὡς δέ τῇ τῆς Ἀσσυρίας ἀρχῇ ἄρχετο τῷ Ἑρατοσθένη ὑποτασσόμενον. ὡς δὲ τῇ τῆς Ἀσσυρίας ἀρχῇ ἄρχετο τῷ Ἐρατοσθένη ὑποτασσόμενον. ὡς δὲ τῇ τῆς Ἀσσυρίας ἀρχῇ ἄρχετο τῷ Ἐρατοσθένη ὑποτασσόμενον.


26 Aemilius Sura apud Vell. Pat. 1.6.6: Aemilii Surae de annis populi Romani: Assyrii principes omnium gentium rerum potitum sunt, deinde Medi, postea Persae, deinde Macedones: exinde duobus regionibus Philippo et Antiocho, qui a Macedonibus oriundus erant, bauit multo post Carthaginem subactam devictis summis imparti ad populum Romanum pervenit. Inter hoc tempus et ininuit regis Nini Assyriorum, qui princeps rerum potitus est, interius annis MDCCCCXCV. Swain, “Four Monarchies,” 2-3, dated the foundation of Assyria in 190 B.C. as a starting point. Ctesias, apud Diod. 2.22.2, dated the foundation of Assyria one thousand years before the Trojan War, which according to Eratosthenes ended in 1184 B.C. Both sets of calculations arrive at the foundation of Assyrian power in 2184 B.C. Of course, Sura may have derived all of this from Ctesias, who may have included Eratosthenes’ date for the Trojan War in his discussion in the Persica. Swain has taken Sura’s silence on the Third Macedonian War and the Third Punic War to indicate a date between 189 and 171 for the historian. Mendels, “Five Empires,” 331-332, rejects this early date preferring one in the first century B.C.
The Greek and Latin historiographical traditions thus give us many examples of a theory of imperial succession. Herodotus and Ctesias record the passing of power from Assyria to Media and then to Persia. Polybius, Aemilius Sura, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Appian present a series of five powers, adding Macedonia and Rome to the list of Herodotus. What we do not glimpse often in the wild, however, is that creature so often on view in the scholarly preserve, namely the four-empire schema. There are, to be sure, a fair number of examples of the succession of kingdoms as an interpretive tool, but there is little reason to set four as the normative number as it is so often assumed to be by scholars. The Book of Daniel, of course, has enshrined the number four, but it is precisely Daniel’s interpretation of the four kingdoms beginning with Babylon that the author of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle has ignored. This should call into question the notion that our author has taken up a text dealing with the supposedly canonical four-kingdom schema and then added Rome.

There is nothing in the Fourth Sibylline Oracle that suggests the author was concerned with a succession of four empires. He does not number the kingdoms. He does not make reference to Daniel. In short, there is no reason that interpreters of the text take up a text dealing with the supposed fourth kingdom schema and then added Rome.

27 Sib. Or. 3.158-161, records five kingdoms: 1) Egypt, 2) Persians, Medes, Ethiopians, and Assyrian Babylon, 3) Macedonians, 4) Egypt again, 5) Rome. Sib. Or. 8.4-11 offers a rather confused list. First comes Egypt; then (second) the Persians, Medes, Ethiopians, and Assyrian Babylon; then (third) Macedonia; finally (fifth) the Italians. J. J. Collins, “The Sibylline Oracles,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols., J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), (Garden City, 1983-1998), 1.418 n. a, seems to take the kingdom of Babylon as distinguished from the Persian Empire, perhaps making it the third empire with Macedonia fourth; the Greek, however, does not seem to warrant such an interpretation: οὐκ ἔνα Ἀγγίστω βασιλέως, οὐτα τῷ Περσῶν Μέθοι Αἰθίων τα καὶ Ασσρίας Βαβυλώνων, οὕτω Μακεδόνης, τῶν μεγάλων αἰγόπτων, πέμπτον ἐκ’ Τιτανῶν ἀληθείᾳ δόξῃ. Ὁτάτων πάντων δὲ τὸν τέλειον καὶ πάλιν τοὺς τελείος ἄλλους μέρων διατείχον. 28 It is worth pointing out that Hesiod, despite his assigning four ages of man to symbolic metals, nevertheless actually divides the race of men into five ages.

29 That four has been taken as the normative number of kingdoms derives from Daniel. So much is clear from the centrality of the biblical text to modern treatments of the question; see Swain, “Four Monarchies,” 1-2, 9-10, 16; Flusser, “Four Empires,” 148, 155-159. Some of the texts dealt with in the present work have adopted this four kingdom schema from Daniel, with Rome as the fourth kingdom; 4 Ezra 12.11-12; 2 Bar. 39.3-7. Josephus, *Ant.* 10.209-210, 276-277, repeats Daniel’s statement that the golden head is Nebuchadnezzar, but he explains the feet of iron as a reference to Rome; he leaves the stone that smashes the feet unexplained, suggesting that the interested reader should consult the Book of Daniel. It is worth noting, moreover, that even the Book of Daniel envisions a five-kingdom schema, the last being the kingdom of God.
should continue to force the Sibyl’s account of five kingdoms into the Procrustean theory of four monarchies, itself suspect, and then relying on this hermeneutical tool to declare that the Roman material is an addition. The only model according to which the author of the Fourth Sibyl divides world history is the sequence of ten generations. The author’s employment of this second scheme demonstrates the integrity of the Roman material to the whole presentation of world history, rather than its later addition, as will now be argued.

The division of history into ten generations, while it does not have quite as illustrious a pedigree as the theory of imperial succession, was used by ancient authors as a tool to carve world history into manageable and understandable pieces.\(^{30}\) The fifth-century Virgilian commentator Servius reports that the Cumaean Sibyl divided history into ten periods, over the tenth and last of which the Sun would reign.\(^{31}\) The “Apocalypse of Weeks”, contained in the apocalypse preserved in Ethiopic and known as First Enoch also divides history into ten periods, each a week long.\(^{32}\)

The author of the Fourth Sibyl explicitly records that he is using this schema to divide history; a tally of the generations allotted to each empire confirms this.\(^{33}\) The crowding of the Macedonian and Roman Empires into the tenth generation, when taken together with the supposed schema of four empires, has been advanced as a reason for assigning the Roman material to a later redactor of an earlier Hellenistic oracle.\(^{34}\) The

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32 1 Enoch 93.1-10 and 91.12-17 are commonly read together as a unit that has been broken up in the extant text of the apocalypse; see R. H. Charles, “Book of Enoch,” The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, 2 vols., (Oxford, 1913), 2.262-265.
33 Sib. Or. 4.20: ἐκ πρῶτης γενός ἀρχής ἐκ δεκάτῳ ἀριθμῷ, 47-48: ἄλλα τὰ μὲν δεκάτῳ γενός μᾶλλα πάντα τελεύτα; εὖ δὲ ἀπὸ πρῶτης γενός ἐστιν, τάδε λέξις 86: ἄλλα ἀπὸ ἐκ δεκάτῳ γενός μᾶλλον γένος ἔστω. Assyria has six generations (line 50); Media has two (55); Persia one (66); Macedon and Rome come in the tenth generation (86).
34 That both the Macedonians and the Romans occupy the tenth generation is not explicitly stated by the author. It follows, however, from the Sibyl’s claim to narrate the things to come from the first generation
appeal to the four kingdom theory has been shown to be inadequate. A better understanding of the meaning of the two European empires will show that, far from arguing for the subsequent inclusion of the Roman material, the grouping of Rome together with Macedonia in the tenth generation actually underscores the integral place of Rome in the text.

The structure of the Roman material features strong parallels to that of the Sibyl’s prophecy regarding Macedonia, Persia, and Greece. The Macedonians and Romans are spoken of in terms far different from the various Oriental monarchies that precede them. Assyria is mentioned in colorless terms devoid of any judgement. Its power is merely stated to last six generations and to extend over all men. The Medes are described as exulting in thrones, presumably a reference to pride. Otherwise there is little criticism and no praise. The Persians are even given a partially favorable presentation, when they are lauded as possessing the greatest power of the whole world; the generation of their rule will be a time of great prosperity. Macedonia and Rome, however, are treated in wholly negative terms. At the approach of the tenth generation and the coming of Macedon, the yoke of slavery and terror would fall upon the Persians. The power of

to the tenth. In the tenth generation, after the advent of Rome, the world will be judged: 4.40-48: ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν δεκάτη γενεὰ μᾶλλα πάντα τελέσθαι (47). The tenth generation will also see the enslavement of the Persians by the Macedonians; 4.86-87. Thus into the tenth generation are crowded the domination of the Macedonians, their defeat by Rome, Roman domination, and the judgement.

35 It should be noted that a fair amount of the prophecy concerning the Persian period is actually taken up with affairs in Greece; Sib. Or. 4.67-71, 83-85, or about one-third of the total lines.

36 Sib. Or. 4.49-50: ἀπὸ τῶν Ασσυρίων ὁ θάνατος ὑπάρχει διὰ τῶν ἰδιωτῶν ἐκ γενεὰς ἑκάστης διαφανέστης ἐκ μέσον.

37 Sib. Or. 4.54: εἰς Μέδοι καυσάμας ἐπαρχήσεσθαι θρόνους.

38 Sib. Or. 4.65-66: Περσῶν ἔστιν ἐν μέσῳ ἡ πόλις μεγάλη, εἰς γενέσθαι ἡ οὐκοπαράστης πολιτεία.

The narrative of the disasters that befall the world during the Persian period do not, however, reflect the rosy description given here. To be sure, many of the troubles come with the Greeks when they invade Asia, but not all can be ascribed to this source; the portrait of Xerxes is also marred by the king’s weakness and defeat. These questions will be addressed below.

39 Sib. Or. 4.86-87: ἀλλ’ ἔτων ἐς δεκάτην γενεὰν μερίδας γένος ἐλήφθη, καὶ τούτω Περσηφόνη θυσία δεξίως καὶ θόριος ἔστω.
Rome would also bring slavery. The reign of each empire was begun with the capture of a great city.

Of a different order, but significant as proof of the integrity of the Roman material is the strong parallel between Rome and Persia in the persons of the two unnamed, but identifiable, kings of Rome and Persia. In the section on Persia there is a prophecy of a king who will come from Asia wielding a great spear and accompanied by ships without number. He will walk over the sea and cut through a mountain. Despite his strength, however, he will return to Asia as a fugitive from war.

This is a reference to the Persian king Xerxes who led an expedition against Greece in 480 B.C. It was claimed that Xerxes' army was the largest that had ever been marshaled, indeed, it dwarfed all previous armies combined and was drawn from all the nations of Asia. The army, according to Herodotus, numbered 1,700,000; the fleet consisted of 3,000 fighting and transport ships. Xerxes and his army marched across the Hellespont on a pontoon bridge constructed atop hundreds of triremes and penteconters moored in the strait. This feat surely gave rise to the Sibyl's words that he walked upon the deep. That the king will cut through a mountain refers to the digging of the canal through Mount Athos recorded by Herodotus and ascribed to Xerxes' desire for ostentatious display. Despite all of this, Xerxes was compelled to withdraw from Greece after the Persian defeat at Salamis, though his commander Mardonius stayed on till the defeat at Plataea. Xerxes' retreat could with justice be described as the flight of a

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40 Sib. Or. 4.102-104: οὐδὲ Μακεδονίας ἦταν κράτος: ἀλλ' ἄνω δυσμόι Ταλάς ἀνέθησα πᾶλα χέρας, ὡς ἂν κύρις λατρεύσαι δυσμόν ἄραν γένοι Ταλάδομοι, 114: Ἀργαύας, καὶ σὲ δὲ μένει δυσμόν ἄνεχος.
41 Sib. Or. 4.89 (Macedon—Thebes): ἦταν καὶ θαύμα καὶ μετάπτευσα αἵλος; 105 (Rome—Corinth): καὶ σὲ, τάλανα Καρκίνα, πέντε πνε' ἀπόθε εἰκόνα.
42 Sib. Or. 4.76-79: ἦκι δ' ἦκι Λατώς Βασιλείας μέγας ἦταν λίθος μνημονεύουσα τά μένω διὰ τὸ παιδόφυλου παῖδον, πλατάνες δὲ περιοίσκεται ἀντίθεν ημέρας τοιαύτης ἀλλ' ἀπὸ παλαιοῦ διδού ἱερόπλοιον Λατώς.
43 Hdt. 7.20-21: τί γὰρ ἄρα ἤγεται ἐκ τῆς Λατως ἔνος ἐπὶ τῷ Ἑλλάδα ἅγεσι; see the detailed and wildly exaggerated catalogue of Hdt. 7.60-100.
44 Hdt. 7.33-37, 54-56.
45 Hdt. 7.22-25, says that the canal was cut to allow ships to sail through the isthmus of Athos to prevent a recurrence of the disaster that had befallen the Persian fleet under Mardonius some years before when a storm blew up as the ships were rounding the promontory; for the shipwreck see Hdt. 6.44.
fugitive. For want of food the soldiers were forced to eat grass and treebark. They were subjected to plague and dysentery. When they arrived at the Hellespont they found that the bridges had been destroyed by storms. Only a remnant of the army reached Sardis with Xerxes. Herodotus’ picture of the Great King is hardly flattering. Nor is that in the Fourth Sibyl, which likens Xerxes to a fugitive in flight.

The Sibyl’s picture of Nero is similar in many details to that of Xerxes. He will come as a fugitive from the West into Asia; indeed, his flight will take him across the Euphrates. Then war will come into the West and the Roman fugitive, wielding a great spear, will cross the Euphrates with many thousands. Thus Nero is Xerxes in reverse, as it were. He begins as a fugitive from the West and ends as an invader from the East; Xerxes began as an invader from the East and ended as a fugitive from the West. The verbal parallels, especially the detail about the great spear, are also striking.

Structurally the Roman material is tied in closely with the Persian and Macedonian portions of the political oracle that stands at the center of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle. The structure, however, provides merely the foundation upon which is erected a carefully crafted thematic unity. The Sibyl’s predictions regarding Persia, Macedonia, and Rome play upon yet another common topos from the Greek literary and historiographical tradition: the conflict of East and West.

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47 Hdt. 8.113-120; cf. 7.57, where Herodotus records a portent that greeted Xerxes after his army had set foot in Europe: a mare gave birth to a hare. The interpretation, says Herodotus, is easy enough to understand: Xerxes would lead an army against Greece in great pomp, but would return to the place from which he had set out, running for his life. The Herodotean portrait of Xerxes is hardly flattering. Some of the weakness noted by Herodotus is also present in the briefer account of the Fourth Sibyl, in which Xerxes the fugitive cuts a far from heroic figure.

48 Sib. Or. 4.119-124: καὶ τότ' ἀπ’ Ἰταλίας βασιλείας μέγας αὖ τὸ ἱστός τοῦ ἀυτοῦ ἐπιστρέφει· ἅρματος ἐπιστρέφει ἀπὸ τῆς πόλεως. Ἔπειτα δὲ μετεξής ἄργος στυγνόν ἀφοῦ τῆς τελευταίας ἀλλὰ τη διαλύει, καὶ ἵνα σύνεξεν πίθασαν, πολλοὶ δὲ ἄροι ἀδήμοι τῆς τελευταίας ἐκείνου ἀκούοντες ἀπὸ τῆς ἔπειτας γαῖας. 137-139: ἐγὼ δέ τότε νέας ἑρμημερίας πολέμου ἔφυγα, καὶ τῆς ἅρματος αὐτῆς, μέχρι τῆς ἀληθείας, Εὐερήμου δικά μεῖζας ἐδώμεθαν. 49 His flight will be followed by a civil war in Rome, just as Xerxes’ flight is followed by strife among the Greeks, a reference to the Peloponnesian War; Sib. Or. 4.83-85: ἓνων δὲ ἔλλαθε νεῖας: ἡ ἄλλης δὲ μαντήτως πολλὰς προφητεύει πάλαις, πολλοῖς δὲ ἅλεκεν μακρὰς ἀναστήσει τέ θεοῖς ἀνθρωποῖς ἄλλης. 50 This was a common theme in the political thinking of the eastern Mediterranean more broadly. It seems prudent, however, given the state of our evidence to look to Greek thinkers for the genesis of this idea; a case for this will be presented here, though space prohibits as full a treatment as this important topic.
traditional use of this theme as he looks at the events of his own time from his own Jewish vantage point. In the political oracle the author blunts the radical separation of East and West. In the framing material at the beginning and end of the Fourth Sibyl he further undermines this common interpretation of history offering in the process another view.

The contest between East and West finds its earliest discussion in the first book of Herodotus’ history. Attempting to trace the animosity that found expression in the wars fought between Greece and Persia, Herodotus says that Persian accounts blame the Phoenicians who kidnapped Io the daughter of Inachus, King of Argos. The Greeks—probably the Cretans, Herodotus suggests—answered by carrying off Europa, the daughter of the King of Tyre. The Greeks, led by Jason, then abducted Medea from Colchis; inspired by their daring, and success, Paris led Helen away from Sparta. The Greeks then took the fateful step of invading Asia to recover Helen, a reaction the Persians deemed to be rather excessive. This chain of events laid the basis for enmity between East and West according to the Persians.  

The origin of this perceived rivalry between East and West is thus found in the Greek historian Herodotus. It should be viewed as a Greek interpretation of history, Herodotus’ ascription of it to the Persians notwithstanding. It is important to note that the Persian account is couched completely in Greek mythological terms. If this is in fact derived from Persians, it is significant that the mode of presentation is entirely Greek.

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51 Hdt. 1.1-5.1: ἄπε τοῦτο τοῦτο ἐγκατέστη τοῖς Ἑλληνικοῖς εὐθεῖα ἐνεργεῖ καὶ τὰ ἱστορία ἔστησε ναὸς ἐν Πέρσαις, τὴν τὴν ἰδίαν διὰ τὸ Ἑλληνικόν ἐγκατέστηκαν ἐνὶ τῆς Ἱππολίτης τω τοῖς Ἱππολίτης τῆς εἰς τοὺς Ἑλληνας. 52 It should be noted that the Persian account lays the blame on an eastern nation, namely the Phoenicians, rather than on the Greeks. This does not undermine the conflict between East and West. 53 Greek awareness of Persian mythology and their use of it for political ends is illustrated by the story current in Greece in Herodotus’ day that Xerxes had attempted to win Argive neutrality on the grounds of kinship, for the Persians were descended from Perses the son of the Argive hero Perseus; Hdt. 7.150.
Whatever the source, the pattern was reused, expanded, and brought up to date by later Greek authors.

Among later treatments, the poetical *Alexandra* is noteworthy for incorporating the Romans into this scheme. Although nearly everything concerning this difficult poem is disputed—the date, authorship, and the meaning of much of it—it is commonly attributed to the tragic poet Lycophron active in Alexandria during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-246 B.C.). The *Alexandra* is a dramatic monologue wherein a slave reports to Priam the prophetic words of his daughter Cassandra (*Alexandra*). The poem is a masterpiece of Alexandrian obscurity and pedantry. The last section of the poem treats at great length the mutual antagonism of East and West (1283-1450).

Incorporating the list of mutual outrages contained in Herodotus’ account, the *Alexandra* adds many more examples culled from mythology and history to the catalogue. Xerxes heads the historical list with attention drawn to the same things that attracted the author of the Fourth Sibyl, namely the bridging of the Hellespont and the canal through Mount Athos. The last item in the catalogue has often been interpreted as

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53 The main difficulty with accepting Lycophron is the prominence assigned to Rome, which had yet to make an entry into eastern affairs. The Romans had by that time defeated the Epirote king and adventurer, Pyrrhus, who had withdrawn from Italy after the battle of Beneventum in 275. This military success impressed Ptolemy Philadelphus sufficiently to lead the king in 273 to establish diplomatic relations with Rome; Livy, *Per.* 14; Dio, *fr.* 41 = Zon. 8.6.11; App. *Sic.* 1; Eutrop. 2.15. These two things have been pressed into service to explain the inclusion of the Romans in the poem. The language used to describe Rome, however, seems extravagant for the first part of the third century: γένος δὲ πάπτων τῶν ἡμῶν ἀδῆς κλέας μέγας αἰτήτως δραμαιεί ποτα, αληθεὶς τὸ προστάθιον δραστεί στίγμα, γῆς καὶ ἐκλάτουσιν σκήπτρο καὶ μοναρχίον λαβόντας (1226-1230). Rome had made a good showing against Pyrrhus, but this hardly made her a world power. It seems most prudent to accept a later date in the second century B.C., i.e. after the defeat of the Macedonian king Philip V at Cynoscephalae in 197. For a later date see K. Ziegler, “Lykophron,” *RE* XIII:2, cols. 2354-2381; E. S. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1984), 320 n. 18. A. D. Momigliano, “Terra Marique,” *JRS* 32 (1942), 53-64, argued in support of Lycophron’s authorship in the third century. P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1972), II.1066-1067, also supports the authorship of Lycophron but views the passages under discussion as later interpolations. For present purposes is suffices to note only the opinion contained in the lines irrespective of authorship or date; a later date, nevertheless, seems more likely.

54 *Alexandra*, 1283-1284: η γὰς παλαικη μητριν τῆς Πρωνέοις ἑσύνεν πέρασε καὶ ἐφωρίσαν Σαραπάδος.

55 *Alexandra*, 1412-1416: οἱ μὲν ἠπείρην γἐ ἀνεμοίς παντι, ἄλλι' ἣντι πλάτος Περσῶν ἑκατοκρινὶ στελεῖ γίγας; τῷ δὲ θάλασσα μὲν βατὰ περὶ παν ἔπεται, τῇ δὲ ναῦδοι δοσκέται βρύσαντι νυκτὸς χρόνον.
the establishment of Roman ascendancy over Macedon.  

Six generations after Alexander has wrested the scepter from the Persians (Argives in the poem), Cassandra’s kinsman (thus a Roman) will fight and receive the fruit of his spear-won spoils.

The ending of the poem promises that the East will have revenge on Greece. For after Alexander compels the ancient monarchy to yield its scepter, Macedonian power will itself fall prey to Rome. The ending, however, has a clever twist. The Romans are described as the kinsmen of the Trojan Cassandra. In their victory, therefore, the destruction brought upon Troy by the Greeks will also be avenged. The victory of the western power is really a victory for the East.

Another author is worthy of mention. A freedman of Hadrian, Phlegon of Tralles, composed among other things a book of wonders. In this work are preserved excerpts from a history written by the Peripatetic philosopher Antisthenes of Rhodes, a contemporary of Polybius. Phlegon recounts some miraculous occurrences that Antisthenes ascribed to the time of the Antiochene War (192-188 B.C.). After the defeat

56 *Alexandra*, 1439-1450: Ἐκ δὲ ἀἷμα εἰνάδῃ βαρὺν κλέον, ὡς Ἀλεξάνδρος διὰ όμοίας θεσμοῦ δύναμιν καὶ Χαλκοτροφός λέον, προφήτης ἰδιώτης πάντα κυπάνας δώμαν ἀναγκασάς πτέρνας Αρχάγγελος πέμπονς σήμερα Γαλαθαῖς τὸν σταυρόλαεκόν λέον καὶ σκόπες ἱέρας τῆς πάλαι μνημοσύνης, οὐ δὲ μεθ᾽ ἄκτεν γένος αἰτίμασιν δύνας εἰς τὰ παλαιότερα, γεμάτοι κλεψάμοι διὰ καμήλας λαοῦ, προέδρος εἰς φόλον ἀμφίβιντα, εἶπε τοὺς ἄνθροπος τός δοκιμήσεως λαοῖς.

57 The use of Argives as a trope for the Persians must stem from the Herodotean passage cited above n. 52, wherein Xerxes claimed that the Persians descended from the Argive Perseus’ son Perseus. This is just one of the many examples of the confounding of any clear distinction between East and West; for others see the next note.

58 Nor does that exhaust the stores of our author’s cleverness. He alludes to Alexander by his ancestry. On his mother’s side Alexander claimed descent from Aeacus through Neoptolemus, and thus through Achilles. The poem also claims that he descended from Dardanus, the grandfather of Tros, who was the great-grandfather of Priam and of Anachis, the father of Aeneas. Thus in Alexander are combined two of the principal antagonists of the Trojan War. In making war on Asia, Alexander must overturn the house of his Dardanian kindred (line 1442). This further blunts the sharp distinction between East and West in the poem. The use of the lion as a symbol for Alexander might derive from the dream of Philip that he had sealed the womb of Olympias with a seal bearing the image of a lion; Plut. *Alex. 2*. The fact that the Romans, descended from Dardanian Aeneas, will defeat the successors of Alexander further tangles the skeins of East and West.

59 Suda s.v. Φλέγων Τραλλαῖος gives the title as παρὰ μακρόδου καὶ θυμωνίος. For the testimonia and fragments see F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, (Leiden, 1962), 2B no. 257.

of Antiochus III at Thermopylae in 191 the corpse of a certain Syrian cavalry officer named Bouplagos rose up from the field of battle to prophesy against Rome. He warned that Zeus would send an army against Rome; these dire words were confirmed by the priestess at Delphi. Later a divine madness came upon a Roman commander, whose name is given simply as Publius. Under this inspiration he uttered prophecies concerning the defeat of Antiochus and the subsequent disasters to befall the Romans after their return to Italy. Namely an army would arise in the East and invade Europe bringing destruction to Rome. Even after Publius is eaten by a wolf, his head remains and continues to prophesy, foretelling that the armies of Asia would plunder the Romans and drive the booty back to Asia. The inspiration for these forecasts is Apollo, as Publius declares.

Thus the concept of a rivalry between East and West has a distinguished Greek pedigree. Arising in the history of Herodotus, it is used as an explanation for the Persian War. Herodotus claims to borrow this notion from the Persians, but it is quite clear from the mythological terms of the conflict that it is even in the fifth century a Greek interpretive model. With the intrusion of Rome into eastern affairs, we see a shift wherein the Romans supplant the Greeks as the Westerners, and the Greeks, or at least the Greco-Macedonian Seleucid Empire, replace the Persians as the Easterners. The evidence for this shift is found in a prophetic context: the oracles preserved by Antisthenes and the pseudo-oracular Alexandra.
The author of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle has taken up this tradition of rivalry between East and West, but has returned to its roots in Herodotus. For in this text, Persia is counterposed not only to Rome, but to the Greeks and Macedonians as well. The author is not, however, enthusiastic in his espousal of the eastern cause, while he also softens the starkness of the dichotomy of East and West. Indeed, the author distances himself from both East and West and prefers his own Jewish standpoint from which to view recent events. Ultimately he takes a longer view substituting an eschatological solution to the purely political solution offered by the hope of an eastern victory and the return of Asia to world supremacy.

As noted above, the author has mixed feelings about the Persian period. On the one hand he calls the Persian Empire the strongest the world will know and says that the Persians are destined to enjoy a prosperous rule. After this promise of felicity the prediction in the next line is jarring: During the generation of Persia’s rule, all evils that men pray to be spared will come to pass.66 The catalogue of evils includes battles, murders, dissensions, exiles, the ruin of towers and the overthrow of cities. It is true that for many of these catastrophes Persia is not to blame; the blame rests with the Greeks, who will sail to the Hellespont and bring doom to Phrygia and Asia.67 There are some, nevertheless, that are unrelated to the Greeks: a famine in Egypt brought on by the drying up of the Nile, the burning of Sicily by the eruption of Mount Aetna, and the falling of Croton into a deep stream.68 The portrait of Persia is also marred by the unprepossessing figure of its king and champion against the Greek invaders, Xerxes, who sets off...

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66 Sib. Or. 4.65-67: Περσῶι δ’ ἐκάτος ἐστιν ὄλοις κόσμους μάγους, οὐ γανεῖ μία κεῖται ἀνακτορίας πολύτιμου.
67 Sib. Or. 4.67-71: Ἐκαίς δ’ ἐστίν κυρίας ἀνεύρονται, κακά ἄγα, φυλήνδης τι φέει τό ἄρμον το θερμανότως τι μοιραῖ τό πάγων τε περισσαὶ ἀνακτορίας τι παλμοῦν. Ἐλλάς ὅτι μεγάλαις ἐπὶ πλατῖν Ἐλλήνων τὸ πλῆθος Φειδίας δ’ ἀνήμυχα χάρα πάνω. The prominence of Ἐλλάς, which begins a new line, should be noted. The disasters to befall men during the Persian period are clearly ascribed to the Greeks, for all are contingent upon the temporal clause beginning with ἐκαίς; what comes after is separated by the conjunction ἀνεύρονται.
68 Sib. Or. 4.72-75, 80-82.
magnificently shaking his dread spear, yet slinks back to miserable Asia, a fugitive from war.69

The author’s recollection of the Greek invasion of Asia recorded here has been interpreted plausibly to refer to Athenian assistance to the Greek cities of Asia Minor during the Ionian Revolt (499-494 B.C.).70 The Greeks did indeed wreak havoc culminating in the sack of the Persian capital of Asia Minor at Sardis.71 It was this intrusion into Persian affairs that provoked the anger of the Persian king Darius I against Athens; it was the burning of the Temple of Cybele in Sardis, that prompted the revenge burning of temples in Athens by Xerxes.72 If the author of the Fourth Sibyl is referring to the Ionian Revolt, as seems probable, then there is a slight telescoping of events, in which Darius’ unsuccessful invasion of Greece is passed over in favor of Xerxes’ unsuccessful, but more magnificent, invasion.

Despite the many troubles predicted by the Sibyl for the generation under Persian rule, the advent of Macedon, in the tenth generation causes Persia’s fortunes to plummet further still. For the tenth generation of men will see the yoke of servitude come upon the Persians. Nor is the period of Macedonian ascendancy presented in terms of a stark contrast between East and West. The siege of Tyre and the destruction of its inhabitants is perpetrated by the Carians, rather than the Macedonians.73 Bactria is colonized by the Macedonians and the people of Bactria and Susa flee to Greece.74 What exactly is meant by this transfer of populations is unclear. It does have the effect, however, of rendering permeable the conceptual opposition of East and West, for Macedonians will live far in

69 Sib. Or. 4.76-79: ἴτην θ' ἀτίς θάνατος μέγαν ΄ήχος άλος γενόν ἀμερήττονην, τα μὲν δεδομένα ἤταν ἄλλα ἀσχήματα. 61οῦτος ἀληθές ἡ παραβολὴ περί τοῦ τρίτου, ὃ ἐπηγγέλθη οἱ ἀνάμνησις τοῦ νῦν ὅτι μὴ πάντως ἐπιθέται άσιά.
70 Collins, OTP 1.386 n. line 71.
71 For the Ionian Revolt see Hdt. 5.28-54, 97-126; 6.1-32; burning of Sardis: 5.100-102.
72 Burning of Temple of Cybele: Hdt. 5.102; Darius vows to punish Athens: 5.105-106.
73 Sib. Or. 4.90: Καὶ τοὺς τῆς Μακεδονίας ὅπως τὸν Καρίων ἀκούσας Ἰταλία τοῦ Χαρὰτον ἀπελεύσεται.
74 Sib. Or. 4.95-96: Βάκτρα κατακαίνοντων Μακεδονίας ὅπως ὁν Βάκτρας καὶ Σωκράτος ἔσωσας ἐς Ἑλλάδα γαῖαν ἀμπελίς.
the East and Bactrians and Persians will dwell in Greece. The image is of cultural amalgamation rather than strict separation.

The stage is set for the final empire, that of Rome. Although Rome puts an end to Macedonian power, the author is especially hostile to it as a result of the assaults on Jerusalem. It is also through Rome, however, that the East will finally avenge itself on the West for the many outrages endured since the Persian period. In this there is a paradox of the sort also offered by the author of the *Alexandra*, for the victory of the East is won by the fugitive Roman emperor, Nero.

The Romans are generally indicted for enslaving the world, but more specifically the author trains his focus on the Romans' ill-treatment of the Jews. Twice the author records Roman aggression against the Temple of God in Jerusalem. It is generally assumed that both refer to the Roman capture in 70. A case, however, can be made for the two references recording two different Roman assaults on the Temple: Pompey's and Titus'. The first consideration in favor of this is the author's careful attention to chronology. In his treatment of Greek history during the Persian period he traces the events in their proper order: the Ionian Revolt, Xerxes' invasion and retreat, and the Peloponnesian War. In his record of Alexander's reign and conquests he also follows the proper sequence: Thebes, Tyre, Babylon, Bactria. His account of Rome begins with the fall of Corinth and Carthage (both in 146 B.C.). Then, slavery comes to Armenia. Why would he depart from his usual careful attention to chronology when he came to treat Rome's activities in Jerusalem?

Putting aside for the moment the statement under discussion, namely that the Italian war comes upon Jerusalem (115-118), the rest of the section on Rome proceeds in the correct order: the disappearance of Nero, civil war, the burning of the Temple, the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, and the return of Nero (ca. A.D. 80 or later). It is better to

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understand the first item placed in its proper chronological position as a reference to Pompey’s assault on Jerusalem. The enslavement of Armenia would then be Pompey’s humiliating of Tigranes, who, though confirmed in his kingdom, nevertheless saw his territory reduced and had to pay a hefty indemnity; Pompey’s triumph included Armenia.  

Pompey took possession of Jerusalem as a result of the war between Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II. The Temple mount was held by those resisting Pompey’s attempt to capture the city. After besieging the Temple for three months, Pompey took it; a massacre followed. Though he broke into the Holy of Holies, he did not plunder the Temple according to Josephus.  

The author of the Fourth Sibyl recalls the incident as a storm of war that will come upon Jerusalem from Italy; it will result in the sack of the Temple (115-118). The author says that this will happen when the Jews trust in folly, cast off piety, and commit murders in front of the Temple. This would admirably fit the circumstances of the civil
war between the brothers Aristobulus and Hyrcanus. Josephus recounts the siege of Aristobulus' supporters in the Temple by Hyrcanus. During the siege Josephus calls attention to two particularly memorable acts: the stoning of Onias and the refusal of Hyrcanus' army to sell sacrificial animals to the priests in the Temple with Aristobulus. Indeed, it was the murder of Onias, a man dear to God, and the impiety regarding the sacrificial animals that led to the divine retribution of a famine falling upon the land.

One difficulty remains in identifying the first assault on the Temple in the Fourth Sibyl with Pompey's capture of Jerusalem, but it is not insurmountable. Josephus says emphatically that Pompey did not plunder the Temple; the Fourth Sibyl says that the Italians did sack it. Despite Josephus' certainty in the matter, another tradition is preserved by Cassius Dio, who claims that Pompey did plunder the Temple. The so-called Psalms of Solomon, which scholars assign to the mid-first century B.C., also seem to suggest that the Romans pillaged the Temple on this occasion. It is likely that the

Jerusalem (Hierosolyma) and saw in them the origins of the Jewish people; Tac. Hist. 5.2: Clara alli Iudaeorum initia: Solymos, carminibus Homeri celebratum gentem, conditae urbi Hierosolyma nomen e suo fecisse. It should cause little surprise that the author of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle has adopted this Homeric—and Herodotean—usage given the epic and Homeric coloring of the entire poem. A second consideration rests on the author's syntax. Greek usage normally requires a preposition after verbs of motion when indicating motion towards. When a verb of motion is followed by the dative, indicating motion towards, the noun in the dative is usually a person; see H. W. Smyth, Greek Grammar, rev. ed. G. M. Messing, (Cambridge, Mass. 1956), §§ 1475 (Dative of Interest), 1485 (Dative of Advantage), 1532 (Locative Dative; Dative of Place). Comparisons within the text of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle show that the author's practice conforms to this standard; 4.101: ἔσεν καὶ Ρωμαίων μακαύ (people—dative); 125: εἰς Σπηλαίον ἐξελεύσεται Ρωμαίων πόλις (place—preposition followed by accusative); 145: ἐξελεύσει ἀφίην πλάτος (place—preposition followed by accusative). It seems best, therefore, to read Σκύλωμα as referring to the people called by Homer the Solymi; here, of course, the author has taken them for the Jews.

Jos. Ant. 14.19-28. The story of the sacrificial animals was sufficiently well known to find inclusion in the rabbinic literature; b. Sot. 496; b. Men. 646; b. B.K. 82b. When Pompey captured the Temple, many of the defenders, including the priests who were in the middle of conducting sacrifices, were killed by their co-religionists; Jos. Ant. 14.70; BJ 1.150. It is to the impiety of the Jews accompanying the stasis between Aristobulus and Hyrcanus that Josephus attributes the subjection of his people to Rome; Jos. BJ 5.395-397; καὶ ἔσεν τόλλα ἔλησεν ἄλλα Ῥωμαίων τῆς ἀνθρωπολογίας κατὰ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς ἢ τῆς ἀνθρωπολογίας ἄνθρωπον ἐξελεύσει κυβερνέσθαι τῆς πόλεως καὶ τῆς Ῥωμαίως ὑποταγής ὅμοιος τῷ ἄνθρωπῳ ἄνθρωπον. It seems best, therefore, to read Σκύλωμα as referring to the people called by Homer the Solymi; here, of course, the author has taken them for the Jews.


Pss. Sol. 2.2, 3, 19, 24.
author of the Fourth Sibyl also followed this tradition. Thus it seems reasonable to take the first notice of Roman aggression against Jerusalem and its Temple to be that perpetrated by Pompey. Nero departs from Italy after this, but before the second attack on the Temple, during which it is destroyed by Titus (119-127).

Vengeance, however, will come upon Rome in two forms. First, there will be a volcanic eruption in Italy that will burn cities and kill many men, a clear reference to the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in A.D. 79. This punishment does not fall upon Italy as a result of the destruction of Jerusalem. Rather God is stirred to wrath because the Romans have killed the innocent tribe of the pious.

Then the author turns to the traditional notion of the rivalry of East and West, which ends with the final victory of the East over its antagonist. The ending of the political oracle is capped with a twist reminiscent of the Alexandra, for the champion of the East is none other than Nero, the Roman emperor. This is accomplished through a war, which arises in the East and breaks upon the West. The leader of the Eastern forces will be that same fugitive who fled from the West before the fall of Jerusalem, namely

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83 The author’s choice of vocabulary is interesting. The verb (ἐξελασθένη) used is rarely found in authors of the classical period, but is a favorite of Homer. It is used twelve times in the Iliad and Odyssey. Nine times it refers to the sack of Troy by the Achaeans: II. 1.129; 4.33; 8.241, 288; 20.30; Od. 3.85; 8.495. II. 5.642; 14.251, refer to Heracles’ earlier sack of the city. The Odyssey preserves another suggestive use. Menelaus tells Telemachus that had Odysseus returned to Sparta with him, he would have emptied one of his towns of its people so that Odysseus could settle it with his own people transplanted from Ithaca; Od. 4.174-176: καὶ αἷς ἄριστος πόλις καὶ δῆμον τεύκτης, ὅτι Ἰθακηναῖον πόλιν καὶ τόπον ἄντικα μὲν πόλιν Ἴθακην αἵτινες ἀπεκκαθάρισαν, ἀκωπάτως δὲ ἱκεῖν αὐτῷ. Here the verb clearly means to depopulate. The author of the Fourth Sibyl, reflecting on the slaughter that accompanied the taking of the Temple, might have chosen that Homeric term most closely associated with the taking of Troy, memorable also for its scenes of carnage; the plundering of wealth may not have been uppermost in his mind when selecting the word.

84 This would leave a large chronological gap between the sack of the Temple by Pompey and the flight of Nero; Sib. Or. 4.118-119. This is not an insurmountable problem as the nature of the oracle leads the author often to move swiftly from event to event. For example the narrative jumps from the sack of Corinth and Carthage in 146 B.C. to Pompey’s eastern campaigns in the first century. Before that the author moves from Alexander’s conquests to the establishment of Roman power in the East with destruction of Macedonian power. In the Median and Persian periods the Persian Wars follow immediately on Cyrus’ defeat of the Medes.

85 Sib. Or. 4.130-134: ἀλλ’ ἔπειτα ὅτι τούτο ἄρρητον ἤτοι ἄρρητον Ταῦτας γὰρ πολλὰς ἀποστηματίδις εἰς ὀρφανόν εὖρον ἔπτω, πολλὰς ἂν ἄλλας πόλεως καὶ ἀθάνατος ἄλλης, πολλὰς δὲ αἰτιολογίας πάντως μὲν αἰθάρα πλήρη, καὶ ἄφθαρτος πᾶσιν ἀπ’ ὀρφανοῦ ἂν τὸ μέλλον.

86 Sib. Or. 4.135-136: γονέως τότε μὲν ἐπομένως ἔστω, οὐκ ἐβαθὲν νῦν ἐν δικαίῳ ἐξελασθέναι.
Nero. In terms resembling the description of Xerxes, the fugitive will brandish a great spear and will cross the water, in this case the Euphrates, at the head of tens of thousands.87

In the author’s presentation, the figure is to be seen not so much as a Nero redivivus, for according to the Fourth Sibyl Nero is not dead; rather the Roman fugitive is Xerxes redux. As Xerxes invaded Greece in answer to the intrusion of the Greeks into Asian affairs, so now Nero will lead an eastern army against the Romans in answer to their assault on the Jews. Xerxes’ attempt ended in failure and he, too, returned as a fugitive to the East; following his return power was transferred from the Persians to the Macedonians and Romans. The war that is now launched will meet with success according to the prophecy of the Sibyl. In it, Asia will not only recover the wealth that has been lost to Rome, but will gain more besides.88 This should not be read in a way favorable to the peoples of the East. It is surely suggestive that the Roman emperor Nero succeeded where the Great King had failed. Indeed, Nero picked up where Xerxes had left off after slinking back to Asia humiliated by defeat at the hands of the Greeks. While not as dizzyingly clever as the poet of the Alexandra the author of the Fourth Sibyl puts a fine point on his prophecy, one that emphasizes the Roman capacity for achievement against Persian failure. If the East is to triumph over the West, it is only with a Roman emperor at their head. Nor does the victory of East over West offer a final resolution to the problems faced by the Jews. It is only an eschatological solution that will fully satisfy the author. This fact renders the political solution favored by the eastern victory of secondary importance.

Three questions arise. How has our Jewish author writing in the decade following the destruction of Jerusalem made use of these various Greek literary traditions in his

87 Sib. Or. 4.137-139: ἡ δὲ δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ ἀνθρώπων πολέμου ἦσσε καὶ Ρώμης φυγής, μέγα ἤρχης ἀνάφες, ἔφερεν διὰ τοῖς πολλάξὶ ἄνω μικράζεται.
88 Sib. Or. 4.145-148: δὲ καὶ ἦς ἡ διόρισσα πλεῖον μέγας, ἵνα ἡ Ῥώμη αὐτὴ συλλέγῃ πολυτέλειαν κατὰ δύνα ἔρικτος καὶ ἦς ἄναρχα παρατάς καὶ ἄλλη ἀποδότης ἐς Ἀδνόν. See also Sib. Or. 3.350-353.
polemic against Rome? In what historical context might he have been writing? And a more basic question: why would a Jew choose these traditions at all, or can we even be sure of a Jewish author? We shall then turn to our last point of investigation, namely the means by which the author subverted the central message of the oracle of the empires, both in the political oracle itself and in the framing material.

To take the last of the three questions first: can we even be sure that a Jewish author is responsible for the political oracle at the heart of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle? Those who favor splitting the political oracle up into different recension layers were more troubled by this question than we are. In the material up through the description of the Macedonian Empire there is very little that could be identified as Jewish. Even much of the Roman material could easily have come from the pen of a non-Jew. The concern with the Roman assaults on Jerusalem, however, suggest a Jewish author. Since it was argued above that the political oracle forms an integral text, the author of the Jerusalem material must be the author of the other material, as well. This leads us to raise the question of the historical context of this Jewish composition.

The Jewish author composed the Fourth Sibylline Oracle to oppose a tendency among his co-religionists who sought a political solution to their humiliation by Rome. The value of the Greek historiographical convention of a struggle between East and West for propaganda purposes is illustrated by its employment in support of the Seleucids as they faced the increasing involvement of Rome in eastern affairs. This finds expression in the accounts of the prophetic words recorded in the history of Antisthenes. It is entirely likely that Jews also picked up this theme and refashioned it to fit their own hopes for revenge on the imperial aggressor from the West that had recently destroyed their holy city and crushed the revolt stirred up by previous oppression. Persia would be an eminently suitable symbolic figure on which to fasten hope. It was Persia, after all,

89 Flusser, “Four Empires,” 152-153, 172-173, argues that the anti-Seleucid oracle that he claims stands at the center of the text was not written by a Jew, but by a Persian.
that had liberated the Jews from Babylon. Nor is the use of Persia entirely symbolic, for memories of Persia combined with the reports of Nero returning from the East perhaps reflect the hopes of certain Jews that Parthia might serve as a possible candidate for the position of liberator. The Fourth Sibylline Oracle deflates these hopes and turns the reader’s attention to a more thorough and lasting solution.

The Jewish view of the Persians was traditionally favorable. Indeed, the Jews had been well served by the Persians and the positive picture of the Persian Empire and kings had entered into their sacred writings. The Persians were above all the conquerors of the hated Neo-Babylonian Empire and the authors of the Jewish restoration from exile. Cyrus, the founder of Persian might, is lauded in extravagant terms in the book of the prophet Isaiah. There the Lord calls Cyrus his shepherd and even his anointed (Messiah in the Hebrew text). It is by Cyrus that the initial order to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem is proclaimed according to Ezra. The successors of Cyrus are also instrumental in the rebuilding and resettling of Jerusalem. A last example might be taken from the biblical book of Esther, in which the Persian king Ahasuerus (Xerxes) is led by his Jewish wife Esther to thwart an anti-Jewish plot concocted by his servant Haman.

90 Isa. 44.28: “(I am the Lord) who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd, and he shall carry out all my purpose’”; 45.1-7: “Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped to subdue nations before him and strip kings of their robes, to open doors before him—and the gates shall not be closed...For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, I surname you, though you do not know me” (1, 4).

91 Ezra 1.1-4: “In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, in order that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of King Cyrus of Persia so that he sent a herald throughout all his kingdom, and also in a written edict declared: ‘Thus says King Cyrus of Persia: The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem in Judah’” (1-2); cf. 1.7-8; 3.7; 4.3; 5.13-14, 17; 6.3.

92 Ezra 6.14: “They finished their building by command of the God of Israel and by decree of Cyrus, Darius, and King Artaxerxes of Persia.” Ezra also preserves royal letters and decrees ascribed to Darius (6.1-13) and Artaxerxes (4.17-23; 7.11-26). Artaxerxes is also assigned responsibility for the sending of Nehemiah; Neh. 2.1-8.

93 E. S. Gruen, “Persia Through the Jewish Looking-Glass,” in idem (ed.), Cultural Borrowings and Ethnic Appropriations in Antiquity, Oriens et Occidens Bd. 8, (Stuttgart, 2005), 90-104, cautions against discerning an overly rosy view of the Persians in the Old Testament. While many of his observations are well founded, especially for the Book of Esther, 1 Esdras, and the Danielic addition Bel et Draco, the portrait in Isaiah and Ezra-Nehemiah does seem less susceptible to a subversive reading. To notice, as
It must also be remembered that the Persians were the only people who ruled over the Jews without committing some great outrage against them. The Assyrians destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel. The Babylonians razed Jerusalem and its Temple. The Macedonians under Antiochus IV assaulted the Temple and attempted to stamp out Jewish religious practices. The Romans razed Jerusalem and its Temple a second time.

For a Jew of the later first century A.D. to have looked back with fondness to the days of Persian ascendancy, he need only have read his sacred books. The author of the Fourth Sibyl, however, has not taken these books as his starting point as had the authors of Second Baruch, Fourth Ezra, and the Paraleipomena Jeremiae. Instead, he has taken up certain Greek ideas and refashioned them to suit his own needs. He has done so by employing various traditional modes of eastern political propaganda, namely the Sibylline oracle and the hope of an eastern victory over the West.

The Persians mean nothing in themselves. Their importance stems from the good service they performed for the Jews in the sixth century B.C. By using the East-West motif, however, the author is able to showcase Persian failure in the chaos caused in Asia by the Greeks and Xerxes' vain attempt to avenge Asia on the invaders. It is possible that the author had an eye on Parthia in his treatment of Persia, for as was mentioned above, the sources that document the appearances of false Neros often comment on the close connection between these pretenders and Parthia.94 The contradictory portrait of Persia might have had something to do with Parthian pretensions to be the heirs of Persia, as the Arsacids claimed political descent from the Achaemenids.95

Gruen does, that in Isaiah Cyrus acts as the agent of God in no way lessens the majesty of the Persian monarch, rather it is ennobling. The confusion of Persian royal decrees in Ezra-Nehemiah is at least partly the result of the confusion of the two books themselves. If any message is derived from reading between the lines it is that Jewish affairs were of considerably less importance to the Persian kings than the author presents them as being, which fact causes little surprise.

94 Dio, Epit. 66.19.2 = Zonaras, 11.18; John of Antioch, fr. 104 (Mueller, FHG); Suet. Nero 67.2; Tac. Hist. 1.2.
95 One Parthian king, Artabanus III (A.D. 12-ca. 38), boasted of restoring his kingdom to the boundaries of the Persian and Macedonian empires as they had been established by Cyrus and Alexander respectively; Tac. Ann. 6.31: simul veteres Persarum ac Macedonum terminos, seque invasurum possessa primum Cyro et post Alexandre per vanilloquentiam ac minas tacebat.
We might now reconstruct an historical context for the political oracle that lies at the heart of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle. In the wake of the suppression of the Jewish Revolt, many Jews were looking for some sign of restoration and revenge. This is clear from the texts that have been the subject of discussion in this dissertation. Many of these Jews turned to the events of the Babylonian conquest and Persian restoration for a framework in which to understand their current plight. The texts inspired by the biblical account of these events tend to focus attention on the need for Jews to rededicate themselves to the Law and to traditional observances of their ancestral faith. The response advocated is one of reaffirmation of Jewish identity in the face of the tragedy of 70. This event surely led many Jews to question their faith and the strength of the God who led them out of Egypt and Babylon. Where was he now? The authors of Fourth Ezra, Second Baruch, and the Paraleipomena Jeremiae tried to confront Jewish concerns by appealing to the symbols and themes of their national literature. The desire for revenge was put off to the future and placed in God’s hands. In the meantime the authors counseled introspection; the Jews were to turn their attention to the state of their own people and their own souls.

The tendency of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle accords in most points with the other texts, but attacks the central problems from another angle. The author turned for inspiration to the Greco-Roman genre of Sibylline prophecy instead of the Bible. Sibylline prophecies were common coin for political propaganda throughout the eastern Mediterranean. It is understandable that they would turn up in the wake of the crushing defeat inflicted upon the Jews. The unanimity of the biblically inspired texts in their demands that readers sit tight and wait for an eschatological solution for their present troubles strongly suggests that there were at least some Jews advocating a more earthly solution. If Persia had liberated them from Babylon, what prevented a similar deliverance from Rome? The Fourth Sibylline Oracle treats the prospect of an earthly
liberation most forthrightly. Indeed, the other texts do not breathe a hint of such a possibility.

The likelihood of a Jewish hero leading the fight against Rome was a remote idea in the years immediately following the end of the revolt. There was, however, a restlessness in the East after 70. This can be seen in the rise of various men claiming to be Nero returned from hiding. These figures were able to enlist some support from among the population of the eastern provinces and some form of patronage from Parthia. The Parthian Empire was in many ways heir to the Persia of the Achaemenids, might this not be a source of salvation for the Jews ground under the heel of Rome? The author of the Fourth Sibyl takes up the Sibylline traditions and fashions a political oracle of his own. He does so in order to bring the notion of a political and earthly settlement of the Jews into doubt. He turns attention to the eschaton and the moral life in a way that accords well with the other authors presently under study. The Jews were not to pin their hopes on a human conqueror such as Nero even at the head of Parthian hordes; rather they must look to God for vengeance and salvation.

The central political oracle, a tale of revenge against the Romans, raises difficulties. The author shows the disparity that exists between eastern hopes and the reality of the situation in his look back on the Persian period, where he declared that Persia enjoyed a generation of prosperity, but went on to list the many evils that men faced under Persian rule. The hopes for eastern victory are brought into further disrepute by the mode in which they are ultimately effected, namely through the return of the Roman emperor, and a matricidal one at that. The framing material reinforces this tendency while also supplying an alternative to the hope of an earthly and political restoration.

In the political section of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle, Rome’s aggression against the Jews is put in terms of the outrages committed against the Temple, both the sack by Pompey and the burning by Titus. Yet the author seems less concerned with the Temple
than he does with the deaths of the pious. This accords with his introductory remarks where the author completely dismisses the validity of temple worship; no distinction is made between the Jewish sacrificial cult and those of the pagans.

The Sibyl claims inspiration not from Apollo, but from the great God, who is characterized as having no manmade idol. There is nothing surprising in this, for the Jewish religion was aniconic. The author, however, goes on to declare that the great God does not have a house, a stone set up as a temple; rather he lives in a place that cannot be seen from the earth. After A.D. 70 this statement had the full ring of truth, for the Temple had ceased to exist and God no longer had a house made by men. But the statement in the oracle seems rather to be laying down a general claim, namely that the great God is characterized as one who has neither idol nor manmade house on earth. Since the great God is one who has no temple, the pious are those who reject all temples. The author delivers a strong condemnation of all temple worship and cultic sacrifice; happy are those who trust in piety rather than in temples, altars, and bloody sacrifices.

This is no mere condemnation of pagan idolatry as some have been tempted to read it. On another interpretation it is claimed that the author is not here issuing a deliberate attack on the Jewish Temple, rather his attitude is to be seen as one of neglect in which he fails to distinguish it from pagan temples. This is, of course, still an attack, but an indirect one. The notion, as some would have it, that the outrages perpetrated

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96 Sib. Or. 4.135-136: γινόσχεοι τότε μήπως παραφαινό οιδοί, ανεστίνου ὅτι αὐτῶν ἀνατίνω θελόνοντο. The text seems to suggest that the punishment to befall Rome in the eruption of Vesuvius and return of Nero does not come in answer to the treatment of the Temple, rather it is for the killing of the pious, presumably the Jews. The conflict between the righteous and the wicked is an important part of the Sibyl's message. It, rather than the conflict between East and West, characterizes the eschatological thinking of the text, as will be discussed below.

97 Sib. Or. 4.8-11: οὐδὲ γὰρ ἔχει τότε ἡ λαός μητέρα, κυρράστε τούτω τοι, γεγονοῖς ποιλοχλήνα λάθηνα, ἀλλ' ἐστιν αὑτὸς ἄλλως ἀλλ' ἐστιν ἰδιωτικός ἀλλ' ἐστιν τοῦ λαοῦ ἀλλ' ἐστιν συνόφρυος, αὐτὸς ἔξω ἂν ἀνθρώπους καὶ ἔξω ἄνθρωπος. The manuscript tradition preserves three variants for this line. The reading here followed is the one adopted by Collins, OTP 1.384.

98 Sib. Or. 4.24-30a: οἱ μὲν οὖν αὐτοὺς ἀπαφήνεσθαι ἄλογά τας καὶ δυσαγοράσχω καθὼς, ἑνώπιον λίθων ἀρθρώματα κακῶν, ἀλλ' ἔξω ἀγάπη σωματικῶν καὶ ἕξω ἀγάπη πνευμάτων (27-30a).

99 B. Noack, "Are the Essenes Referred to in the Sibylline Oracles?" Studia Theologica 17 (1963), 97-98.

100 This is the interpretation of Collins, "Place of the Fourth Sibyl," 366-369.
against the Temple are of little importance to the author of the Fourth Sibyl fails to convince.

The high importance of these acts is demonstrated by the very fact that the author includes them at all. The Fourth Sibylline Oracle is a short text; the author has practiced extreme economy in the inclusion of details. Out of a great number of violent acts committed by the western imperial powers against the East the author selects only a handful of the more well known. For the Macedonians he recalls only the sack of Thebes and the capture of Tyre. The account of Roman atrocities is limited to the capture of Corinth, the destruction of Carthage, the enslavement of Armenia, and the two attacks on the Temple. Of these, the author devotes more lines to the assaults on Jerusalem than to the other items together. The assault on Jerusalem parallels the intrusion of the Greeks into Persian affairs. It is this intrusion that provokes Xerxes to invade Europe, though he is defeated. It is following the Roman attacks on Jerusalem that Nero returns and wreaks havoc on the West.

The Roman actions against the Temple are central to the Fourth Sibylline Oracle. For this reason the author’s rejection of the Temple cult is also of significance. Though more radical an expression of anti-Temple sentiment than in the other texts that have been discussed above, the author’s attitude is consistent with the tendency of these other texts to downplay the importance of the Temple’s loss. Our author like the authors of some of the other works under discussion realized that fixation on the loss of the Temple, tragedy though it was, and the strong desire for revenge that it bred could only be stumbling blocks for the Jews as they sought to readjust themselves to their circumstances in post-war Judaea. The challenge was two-fold. They had to feel their

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101 Sib. Or. 4.89 (Thebes—one line), 90 (Tyre—one line), 105 (Corinth—one line), 106 (Carthage—one line), 114 (Armenia—one line), 115-118 and 125-127 (Jerusalem—seven lines).
102 Though the return of Nero is not provoked by the burning of the Temple, but rather by the slaughter of the pious Jews.
103 For the author of the Fourth Sibyl the assaults on Jerusalem were an important demonstration of Roman imperial aggression. The fact of the Temple’s loss in itself, however, was less significant.
way forward in a religion changed by the removal of one of its central pillars. They also
had to come to terms with the continued presence of Rome among them.

The obscuring of the dichotomy between East and West that was a feature of the
political oracle finds expression also in the framing material. In the first line of the book
the Sibyl addresses the people of boastful Asia and Europe, thereby distancing the
following prophecy from any partisanship on one side or the other.\textsuperscript{104} This theme of
boastfulness is touched upon throughout the text. In the introduction both Asia and
Europe are labeled boastful. The Medes will boast on their thrones.\textsuperscript{105} Boastful Greece
will sail to the Hellespont.\textsuperscript{106} The Macedonians will boast of scepters.\textsuperscript{107} The tag is
applied to nations of both East and West. This pride or boastfulness besets the men of
both Europe and Asia in a way that would be incompatible with a thoroughgoing
chauvinism in favor of the East.

The fullest expression of this withdrawal from the dichotomy required by the
contest of East and West comes in the vision of the eschaton. In the Sibyl’s description
of the end of time there is neither East nor West, neither Jew nor gentile, there is only
pious and impious. In contrast to Fourth Ezra and Second Baruch there is no call to
return to the Law, which is never mentioned in the Fourth Sibyl; in this the author is more
akin to the thought of the \textit{Paraleipomena Jeremiae}. The code of the Sibyl is simpler.
The pious are those who love the great God, who bless him before meals, and trust in
piety. They will neither commit murder, nor seek unlawful gain. They will not lust after
their neighbor’s wife nor indulge in wicked acts with other men (24-34).\textsuperscript{108} The wicked
are those who mock the pious and despise their example (35-39). When judgement

\textsuperscript{104} Sib. Or. 4.1: αἰώνά, λαοὶ Ἀσίας μεγαλαιτέρες, εἰρήνας τε.
\textsuperscript{105} Sib. Or. 4.54: ἀς Μῆδων καθιλότες ἐπιφυλάχθωσιν δεώσωσι.
\textsuperscript{106} Sib. Or. 4.70: Ἐλλας ὅπως μεγαλαιτέρες ἐπί πλατάν Εὐληστευόντων.
\textsuperscript{107} Sib. Or. 4.88: αὐτάκ ἐπὶ εὐφραείας Μακεδόνις αἰρεθήσωσί.
\textsuperscript{108} Sib. Or. 4.24-26, 30-34. It is true that these requirements are found in the Law, but the Law as such
goes unmentioned in the Fourth Sibyl.
comes upon the world the impious will be sent into the fire, while the pious will enjoy
life upon the bountiful earth (40-46).

This appears to be the ideal. When the Sibyl reintroduces the topic of the
eschaton at the close of the text the picture is more dire. The end of the world will be a
time of wickedness when the impious will destroy the pious. God in his wrath will
consume all mankind in a conflagration (152-161). There is still hope of repentance by
which God’s designs might be warded off (162-170). The prophecy ends on a note that
suggests the unlikelihood that the Sibyl’s words will be heeded, in which case God will
destroy the entire race of men and even the whole world will be engulfed in flames. All
will be burned and nothing but dust will remain (171-178). From the dust God will
refashion the men who were destroyed and then subject them to judgement, punishing the
wicked and rewarding the just (179-192).

The Fourth Sibylline Oracle like Second Baruch advances the idea that all men
will be judged according to the same divine criterion, though the standard for each author
is different. The author of Second Baruch subjects all men to the Law, even those who
might not know it due to their pride. The author of the Fourth Sibyl adopts a broader rule
of general moral principles that are not restricted to Jews or to the Jewish experience in
the text. Even though many of the specific items mentioned by the author are found in
the Law, they are not limited to the Jews by being designated as the Law. In doing this,
the Fourth Sibyl extends salvation in a more open way to the people of the world in that
proselytism and conversion are not necessary preconditions of salvation. Absent also is
the notion that the eschaton will provide a time for the settling of scores against the
Romans for their rough treatment of the Jews. Nor will the end of time become an
occasion for the triumph of East over West. Indeed the juxtaposition of the triumph of
East over West in the war stirred up upon Nero’s return from across the Euphrates with
the beginning of the end times in which the rival factions will be the just and the wicked,
makes the purely temporal concerns of those who hope to see the return of Asia's material wealth paltry indeed.

The author of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle is calling his readers to contemplate the more cosmically significant division that exists among men, which is not geographical but moral.

**Conclusion**

The author of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle has much in common with the authors of the other texts under discussion in the present work. In the aftermath of the disastrous Jewish Revolt he, like his contemporaries, had to come to terms with two facts, one of termination and one of extension. The suppression of the revolt incorporated in the defeat of the Jewish combatants the destruction of their holy city and Temple. Whether all recognized then that this event would bring to a close the sacrificial cult of the Jewish religion is another question. Drawing on their historical memory, hearkening back to the restoration of the Temple and cult during the Persian period, many Jews must have expected, or at least hoped for, rebuilding and renewal of the cult. This notion certainly finds expression in modern speculations on the reactions to the loss of the Temple in A.D. 70. It is hardly met with in the ancient evidence. It is there, to be sure, but more often implied than stated.

Beneath the surface of the texts under discussion in the present work one can discern a current of hope for the restoration of the Temple and the resumption of the special status of the Jewish nation thought to be lost, or at least interrupted, by God's allowance of the destruction. In regard to the former item, this is not the attitude adopted by any of the authors currently under examination. There is no strong desire for restoration of the Temple. If mentioned at all, it is only done in passing as in Fourth Ezra and Second Baruch. The author of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle makes the strongest statement against this hope.
It is not that the Temple was devoid of importance for our author. Roman aggression was illustrated to the full in the assaults against the Temple perpetrated by the Roman commanders Pompey and Titus. The author is surely echoing his coreligionists' hopes for vengeance when he calls up in prophetic tones the return of the matricidal Roman emperor Nero to avenge the Jews upon the Romans. The Fourth Sibyl, however, seeks to shift Jewish resentment away from the destruction of the Temple. In the political oracle that lies at the heart of the Fourth Sibyl he ascribes the eruption of Mount Vesuvius and the return of Nero to divine retribution for the killing of the pious rather than the destruction of the Temple. In the material that prefaces the political oracle the author rejects entirely the notion of temple worship and the sacrificial cult centered on the Temple.

Thus the author has placed the Fourth Sibylline Oracle in that group of texts—Fourth Ezra, Second Baruch, Paraleipomena Jeremiae—that attempts to displace the Temple as a focus for Jewish resentment against Rome giving rise to the desire for revenge. Like the authors of these texts, our author calls his fellow Jews to turn inwards. For him as for the others it is the life of the soul that matters. The dichotomy between East and West or Jew and Roman is not nearly as significant as that between pious and impious or righteous and wicked.

The termination of the Temple cult opened a new period for the Jews, one in which new boundaries needed to be set. Many authors that we have examined in eschewing the Temple turned instead to the Law as a centralizing focus of their faith. Adherence to the Law served as the distinguishing marker for righteous and wicked. Even in those authors of broader views that could encompass the salvation of proselytes from among the gentiles the Law provided the touchstone for piety and for judgement. The Fourth Sibylline Oracle completely ignores the Law. For this author a moral code equally accessible to Jews and gentiles is the criterion for righteousness. Felicity is promised to those who love God, bless him, reject temples, commit no murder, refrain...
from unlawful gain, turn their eyes away from their neighbor's wife, and preserve
themselves from impure relations with men. This moral code is within the grasp of any
and the author of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle seeks in no way to restrict it to the Jews.

The razing of Jerusalem, a momentous change to be sure, was played out against a
backdrop of white togas and red military cloaks. When the Temple and holy city were
removed from the scene, the conquerors remained; indeed, their presence increased. This
was a new problem for the Jews as they sought to interpret the fall of Jerusalem in
traditional terms, for the exile that characterized the fall of Solomon's Temple was played
out in reverse after 70. The Jews did not go into exile among a foreign people, rather the
land itself saw an influx from the conquering nation, especially in the form of a legion
occupying the land once reserved as God's footstool.

Many authors were led by contemplation of this reality to adopt an apocalyptic
worldview with its promises of a supernatural punishment to be visited on the imperial
masters of the Jews in their land. The author of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle departs from
the company of his fellow authors and explores other avenues of political salvation.
Perhaps taking his cue from the excitement that surrounded rumors of a return from the
East of that larger than life figure the Roman emperor Nero, the author essayed to fit the
events of his current world into a double-framework of historical interpretation as old as
the writing of history itself. The return of Nero from Parthia recalled to his mind and to
that of his contemporaries the abortive attempt of Xerxes to punish the troublesome
Greeks who had—by the late first century—nearly six hundred years previously intruded
into the affairs of the eastern empires and peoples. The return of Nero, with the backing
of various Parthian patrons, stirred up hopes of finally restoring the scepter to Asia that
had been lost to Alexander. These hopes turned out to be ill-founded.

Drawing on two Greek historigraphical traditions, namely the succession of
e Empires and the conflict between East and West, the author composed an oracle
describing the upheaval, both political and even natural—to be caused by the intrusion of
European powers into the Near East. These historical models had served the Greeks of Asia in the days when Rome began to take a more active role in the affairs of the Greco-Macedonian kingdoms of the eastern Mediterranean. The author of the Fourth Sibyl, however, borrows the sentiments from the Asian Greeks and them lumps them together with the invading Romans. Far from balancing western malignity against the benign rule of the earlier eastern powers culminating in Persia, the author has instead offered a more critical view of both sides.

The Macedonians are not the protagonists as they were in the prophecies recorded by Antisthenes. Rather the harm brought to Asia by Alexander and his successors was equated to that brought by Rome. For those who wished to look back to a Persian golden age, the author has composed a corrective by juxtaposing the prediction of Persian prosperity and might to a catalogue of the most grievous disasters that might befall men. The portrait of Persia is capped by the failure of Xerxes to avenge Persia on the marauding Greeks. It is Xerxes who provides the template for the awaited savior of the East, the imperial runaway from Rome. The Sibyl prophesies that Nero will succeed where Xerxes failed. Is it to be considered as a victory for Asia that a Roman triumphs where the Great King met with humiliating defeat?

Our author shows his dissatisfaction with the political revenge to be accomplished by Nero as Xerxes redux. Just as the East is to taste the fruits of victory and the flow of wealth from East to West is reversed, the author departs from his description of a temporal and political solution and turns to an eschatological one that will prove to be permanent and thorough. In the description of the end of times the Sibyl proclaims that God will destroy the entire world and the race of men. By comparison the political and economic aspirations of the East appear insignificant.

Again our author substitutes the moral dichotomy of piety and impiety for the political one of East and West. The destruction to be wrought by God casts a shadow over even the greatest feats of imperial destruction perpetrated by Rome and Macedon.
Out of this divine destruction, moreover, a greater hope arises. After the ruin of the world and the annihilation of men, God will refashion their frames and subject them to a proper judgement, in which the just will be separated from the wicked. The former are destined for a new earth where they will bask in the warm light of the sun and the favor of God. The wicked are destined for the darkness of Tartarus and Gehenna, wherein the deficit of light will be made good by a superabundance of heat.
The suppression of the Jewish Revolt in A.D. 70 has been seen in retrospect as a watershed event in the religious life of the Jews. With the loss of the Temple, its priesthood and cult came a crisis that resulted in a new emphasis in Judaism. The Judaism of the rabbis embodied in the Mishnah and expanded in the Talmudim and other works rose from the ashes of Jerusalem. As rabbinic tradition has it the destruction of the holy city brought the foundation of a new religious and scholarly center in Jamnia (Yavneh). Permission to found the school at Jamnia was reportedly given by Vespasian himself to R. Johanan ben Zakkai, who had escaped from Jerusalem and, according to rabbinic tradition, proclaimed the prophesy that Vespasian would be emperor.\(^1\)

The loss of the Temple and the holy city was bitterly felt. The lament penned by the author of Second Baruch compares for pathos with any found in the Old Testament canon. The absence of Zion, according to the author, rendered all the actions of man and nature irrelevant as the point to which they tended, namely the sacrificial cult of the Temple, had ceased to require them. Let the farmers refrain from sowing and reaping as the first fruits will no longer be offered in the Temple. Let the vine no longer produce grapes as the offering of wine will not continue. Indeed, all the happiness of brides and bridegrooms had come to an end; nor need they bring forth children, for the barren had greater claim to rejoice now.\(^2\)

Yet for all the sorrow of this lament and others like it in the literature presently under study, there is very little indication of the solution to the supposed religious crisis inspired by the Roman action against Jerusalem. The origins of the destruction are sought along traditional lines and conventional answers are provided. It was Jewish sin that caused this catastrophe; the solution lies in adherence to the Law. Suggestions that

\(^1\) B. Gitt. 56a-b; Midr. Lament. R. 1.5.31; ARN 4 (Goldin, 36).
\(^2\) 2 Bar. 10.6-19.
the Temple must be restored find only rare expression in the authors’ speculation on the future of the Jews. Another question claims priority in the attention of our authors, namely the continued presence of Rome in Palestine. It is natural that many Jews in confronting this problem turned to the wisdom of experience found in the Jewish scriptures.

These venerable books did not, however, provide a direct answer. When the Babylonians had destroyed Jerusalem in the sixth century the remnant of Israel was taken into exile; at least this is the story presented in the exilic books of the Bible. Restoration was accomplished with the Persian overthrow of the Neo-Babylonian Empire and the permission granted by Cyrus for the Jews to return to their land. The period of captivity in Babylon remains opaque. Only scraps might be culled from the Old Testament books that offer any advice for establishing a modus vivendi with the conqueror.

For the most part the record of the Babylonian conquest and captivity could only provide inventive authors of the Roman period with images and themes to be refashioned and reapplied to the questions that confronted the Jews of the late first and early second centuries. Relying on mostly the same material the authors reworked it in an effort that produced a variety of responses to the question before them.

The authors of Fourth Ezra, Second Baruch, and the Paraleipomenae Jeremiae all drew on the books intimately associated with the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians and the restoration under the Persians, namely Second Kings, Jeremiah, Ezra, and Nehemiah. The response of the last author is the simplest. Following Jeremiah into exile in Babylon, the author offers a critique of a common response to life under foreign conquerors, that of accommodation. The biblical prophet Jeremiah, active in the years leading up to the fall of Jerusalem, counseled the king of Judah to remain loyal to Babylon. To a group of Jewish elites taken into exile in Babylon before the fall of the city, he had advised uniting their hopes for the future to those of the city in which they were dwelling.
The author of the *Paraleipomena* rejects this notion wholesale, viewing it as a disaster that leads to the loss of Jewish identity. Through the symbol of the founders of Samaria the author warns accommodationist Jews of his own day that their betrayal of their own nation will not endear them to Rome. This can be seen as an argument against the policy advocated by Josephus, who in one memorable passage of the *Bellum Judaicum* dons briefly the prophetic mantle of Jeremiah as he calls on his besieged coreligionists within the walls of Jerusalem to submit to the foreign power marked out for rule by God himself. The author of the *Paraleipomena* rejects this Jeremianic policy in favor of radical separation. Other than viewing the Romans as an object from which the Jews must isolate themselves, the author demonstrates very little further concern with the fate of the empire.

A quite different response is offered by the author of Fourth Ezra, who is consumed with resentment at the felicity of Rome in contrast with the sorrows that befell Zion. Through a complicated argument the author reasserts the notion of national salvation for the Jews based on adherence to God’s commandments as embodied in the Law given to Moses at Sinai. The argument rests on the observation that all men inherit the propensity to sin from Adam. The nations apart from the Jews are subject to the Law, but will not be saved by it as they do not know it in their pride. Despite the fact that the Jews have also inherited the Adamic *cor malignum* they need only rededicate themselves to legal observance in order to find happiness in the next world. The division between this world and the next is important to the author of Fourth Ezra. As it appeared unlikely that the Jews in the Roman period could hope for an earthly restoration, a lasting solution to their present humiliation was sought in the end of this world and the beginning of the next. The Romans and, indeed, all the gentiles are apparently excluded from this happy fate as is made strikingly clear in the Eagle Vision.

The Eagle Vision presents the author’s understanding of Rome’s fate. Taking a cue from the vision of the four beasts in the Book of Daniel, our author reinterprets the
fourth beast as a reference to Rome, in the process changing the image of the beast into the immediately recognizable Roman eagle. The cruelty of this empire would ultimately provoke God to send his Messiah to destroy it. Through a complicated description of the many wings, winglets, and heads of the eagle, the author portrays in prophetic terms the upheaval to be experienced by the Roman Empire under the emperors. The vision ends with three heads that rule over all men in turn, a tolerably clear reference to the Flavian Dynasty. It is not, however, clear that the Roman Empire is to suffer only for its actions against the Jews; rather it seems that the very might of the empire and its oppression of all peoples is the cause of its demise. The Messiah will cast Rome down in the days of the last head, namely Domitian, after whose fall the empire will be convulsed in a short period of chaos, before its final destruction.

The resentment that fires the imagination and indignation of the author of Fourth Ezra finds an antidote in Second Baruch. In many ways the interpretation of events is the same. Man has inherited sin from Adam and all nations are subject to the Law. The author of Second Baruch has softened the corners a bit. He has allowed for the possibility of salvation for the nations, provided they become Jews. The corollary is that membership in the nation of Israel does not suffice for salvation. Just as gentiles can become proselytes, so too can Jews become apostates. Rejecting the hardnosed fatalism of Fourth Ezra, the author proclaims that in the final analysis Adam only caused his own fall; his descendants have the opportunity to follow him or to follow the Law of Moses. A more striking feature of this apocalypse is the author’s rejection of Fourth Ezra’s nearly obsessive anxiety over the fate to befall the Roman conqueror.

The author advises his readers to turn inwards. He urges that they cease to look for the decline of their enemies and instead take stock of their own circumstances. He admonishes them to prepare their souls for the reward that awaits them. Furthermore, the author puts the present suffering into perspective, twice declaring that the trials
accompanying both destructions of Jerusalem, the Babylonian and the Roman, will seem like nothing compared to those that will attend the closing of this age.

The final text examined in this thesis departs entirely from traditional Jewish material in its attempt to come to terms with the events of 70. The author of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle follows another venerable, albeit pagan, tradition. He presents his views in the form of a prophecy uttered by the Sibylline prophetess, famed throughout the Greco-Roman world especially for prophecies of a political nature. In this mode, the author examines two common themes that figure prominently in the Greco-Roman view of world history, namely the theory of a succession of empires and the rivalry between Asia and Europe. The latter was especially common as an anti-Roman propaganda device in the Greek East. It should cause little surprise that it was taken up in the years after the destruction of Jerusalem. The preoccupation of the author with Achaemenid Persia and the series of false Neros that sprang up in the years following the death of the emperor Nero might point to the hopes of some Jews for an earthly vengeance on Rome at the hands of Parthia.

The author of the Fourth Sibyl aims at deflating these hopes. He does so by confounding the dichotomy between East and West in a way reminiscent of, if not quite so tortuous as, the Alexandra, a prophetic poem of the Hellenistic age. Beyond showing the unlikelihood of a temporal solution, the author draws the reader's attention to a more significant dichotomy, that which exists between the righteous and the wicked. There is no notion that the breakdown occurs along racial lines; that is to say, the Fourth Sibyl does not restrict righteousness or salvation to the Jews, nor does the Law stand as the criterion. Rather the author lays down a moral code that does, to be sure, derive many of its commandments from the Jewish Law, but without naming the source. In this the Sibyl might seem to follow a trajectory already visible in Second Baruch, one that envisions the possibility of salvation for all, or damnation for all, on the basis of a moral code accessible to all.
The texts examined in this thesis were composed after the suppression of the Jewish Revolt. The end of the revolt coincided with the end of Jerusalem and the sacrificial cult. Yet, Rome remained. It was this fact that stimulated the authors of these various works. Josephus was not the only one to wonder how he and his fellow Jews were to respond to their changed, and yet unchanged, circumstances. It was not, of course, a new problem, for Rome had been present in Judaea and the wider Near East for well over a hundred years before the fall of Jerusalem. The disaster of 70 did make the question more immediate. In the face of such a horrendous act, could a Jew still work with Rome? Josephus thought he could; Agrippa and others agreed. None of the other authors treated here had such a forgiving attitude. They did not, however, have a uniform response to the question, either.

In seeking to confront the Roman Question each author, though in different ways, drew on the traditions of his forefathers. This turn to tradition does not in itself constitute an act of resistance, for Josephus, who sought to reconcile Jew and Roman, did so by appealing to these same traditions, albeit in a Greek historiographical form. This is a significant point, for clinging to tradition is not itself an indication of resistance. The contrast between Josephus’ use of the Jeremianic traditions and that found in the Paraleipomena Jeremiae demonstrates this.

The author of the Paraleipomena appeals to the biblical prophet Jeremiah in order to refute his message of accommodation to Rome. In so doing the author might be seen as a resistance figure, for he is calling for separation from Rome. It is clear, however, from the picture he paints of the Jews who do not heed his warning, cast in terms of putting away Babylonian wives, that his attention is trained on Jews rather than on Rome itself. In the Paraleipomena there are no revelations of impending doom for Rome, rather there is the call for Jews to return to their ancestral customs and beliefs, which requires a turning away from Rome. Josephus uses the Jeremianic traditions to make
exactly the opposite point; in this he is in some ways truer to the message of Jeremiah than the author of the *Paraleipomena*.

Amid the varying messages of the Jewish texts written in response to Roman imperial power in the wake of the destruction of Jerusalem, there is one point of unity that holds true for all but Fourth Ezra. It is the premium put on local Jewish concerns rather than attention paid to the wider problem of Roman imperialism. The authors of these works seek to locate themselves within the empire and hold fast to their traditions at a time when many were likely to have questioned them. It should be stressed that Josephus accords with this point of view. In suggesting a *modus vivendi* with Rome his attention is trained inwards. The author of Second Baruch gives this point its most explicit expression, when he tells his fellow Jews to cease waiting for Rome to fall and to turn to their spiritual life instead.

This is not a message of resistance. Jewish traditions and customs are not to be held in order to resist Rome. The case is rather the opposite. It seems that the authors of these works were anxious lest their co-religionists lose sight of their customs and traditions. Whether there was any danger of this is unclear from our vantage point. Josephus appears to have been able to reconcile his religion with his politics, but, to take another well known example, the nephew of Philo and Roman official Tiberius Julius Alexander does not seem to have, or perhaps did not desire to do so. To say that the Romans did not expect apostasy in order to demonstrate loyalty is beside the point. The lengths that Herod went to in courting Roman favor did not sit well with the more devout of his fellow Jews. It is not that Rome compelled or even expected such behavior, rather it is the case that Rome rewarded it and therefore, perhaps unintentionally, made it attractive.

We see then in most of the works under discussion a call for the Jews to stand fast in the beliefs and practices of their forefathers. It is convenient, if not necessary, to define a group by way of opposing it to another alien group. This principle can be seen at
work in late first-century Jewish circles in relation to the Romans. The Romans thus serve as a touchstone upon which might be tested the authenticity of Jewish devotion to their ancestral God and his divine commandments embodied in the Law. In reaction to Rome and its empire the authors of these pieces turn their gaze inwards and concern themselves with local problems.

This inward turning finds expression also in the work from Plutarch discussed in the Introduction. In the *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae* Plutarch advises his addressee Menemachus that success in politics requires the narrowing of the politician’s focus to his own city and civic duties. Though Plutarch does not champion the strict separation favored by the Jewish authors under discussion, he certainly underscores the value of keeping one’s ambitions local.

The Jewish texts of the late first century under discussion also provide some support for recent theories of provincial attitudes that stress the local aspirations of many provincial elites. Incorporation into the Roman Empire brought with it new opportunities for establishing local ascendancy. In many societies this was done by jettisoning much of what marked one out as being alien to the new imperial culture. The adoption of Roman attitudes, outlook, architecture, and luxury goods might boost the claims of provincial elites on leadership of their communities.

Proponents of this theory have had to rely mostly on material evidence that is open to many interpretations. Modern observers can never fully know what precise cause, or combination of considerations, prompted provincials to take up Roman habits and attitudes. The complete absence of literary evidence makes perilous any attempt to understand provincial intentions in this regard.

The texts studied here offer some confirmation for the notion that attitudes toward the Roman Empire and its culture might have been adopted with an eye on local concerns. In Josephus’ opinion it was accommodation to the conqueror that provided the greatest benefit. He and others who reconciled with Rome were amply rewarded with
titles, wealth, and access to the new imperial dynasty. In his dispute with Justus of Tiberias Josephus appeals to his own intimacy with Titus to refute his challenger’s claims. Justus in turn tried to bolster his position by claiming that he opposed the revolt against Rome from its inception.

For the other Jewish authors reflecting on the Roman Empire it is the other side of the coin that shows, thus providing negative confirmation of the local potency of the posture taken vis-à-vis Rome. In the wake of a brutal imperial act like the destruction of Jerusalem, one might find one’s position secured in the rejection of the lures of accommodation. This might then constitute an act of resistance. The testimony of the works examined in the present thesis, however, suggest that even a stance against accommodation might have more impact in internal power struggles. That is to say, the rejection of accommodation is also the shunning of accommodationists. When separatism is the aim, those pursuing a policy of accommodation can be seen as greater enemies than the outsiders being accommodated.

The evidence of this late first-century Jewish debate about the proper stance to be taken towards Rome can be applied more broadly. This is not to say that the Jewish situation or their reaction to their circumstances is typical; the Jews were not a typical people. The notion of typicality among subjects of the Roman Empire is problematic to begin with. Are the Jews to be considered any less typical than the Gauls, or Greeks, or Cilicians, or Egyptians? If so, on what grounds? It is surely significant that the ambivalence on view in their texts finds echo in Plutarch’s own ambivalence regarding Rome and her imperial agents.

An appreciation of this ambiguous attitude towards Rome must be taken into account when we attempt to uncover the mentality of Rome’s subject populations. It is not a question of pro- or anti-Roman sentiments. Nor is it a question of resistance or Romanization. Any theory wedded to these simplistic dichotomies will break down.
when one tries to understand, for instance, the rebellions of the thoroughly Romanized Gallic Julii.

The issue is much more intricate and involves the interplay of local concerns and the realization that one lives in an imperial society. The former consideration receives more weight in the small body of provincial literature that has come down to us. An awareness of this ambivalence, which can at once embrace both the eagerly sought status markers that come with accommodation to an imperial power even on a local level and the legitimate anxiety that in so doing one's own traditional identity might be eroded, is an indispensable guide as we investigate the Roman Empire, or indeed any empire, and should not be put aside even as we contemplate the situation of our own contemporary world.
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The following abbreviations have been used in the text.


CIL = Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, (Berlin, 1863-)


JSHRG = Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit


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