Jewish Identities in Antiquity

Edited by
LEE I. LEVINE and
DANIEL R. SCHWARTZ

Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism
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Mohr Siebeck

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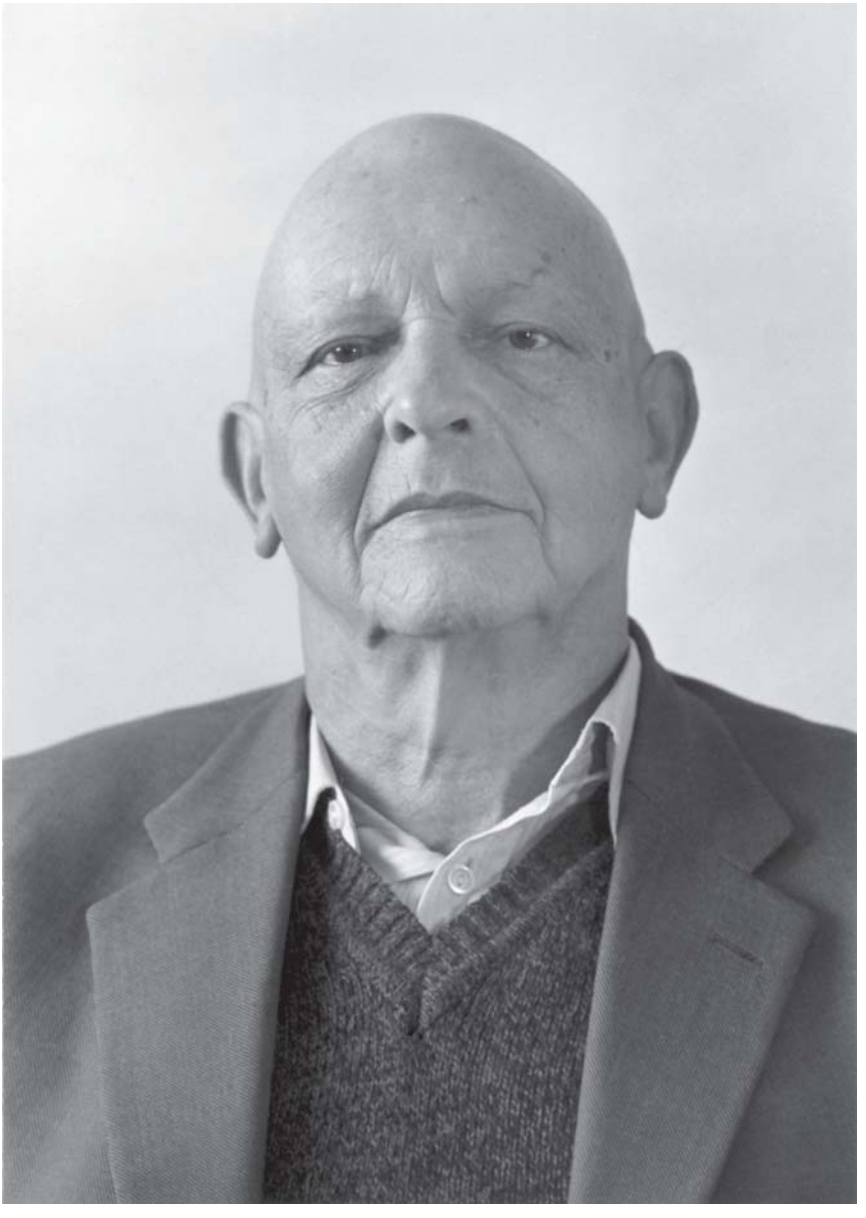

Menahem Stern
1925–1989

Jewish Identities in Antiquity

Studies in Memory of Menahem Stern

Edited by
Lee I. Levine and Daniel R. Schwartz

Mohr Siebeck

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Preface

Prof. Menahem Stern was tragically murdered in June 1989, on his way to the National Library in Jerusalem where he did much of his research. In 2006, his colleagues and former students who comprised the Ancient History section of the Jewish History Department at the Hebrew University (Isaiah Gafni, Oded Irshai, Lee Levine, and Daniel Schwartz) decided to organize a conference the following year to mark eighteen years (the numerical value of the Hebrew word חי, "living") since his demise. This tribute was intended not only for a teacher and mentor, but also for a person whose profound scholarship, humility, and commitment to all facets of the University community were legendary. It was decided to choose a broad topic, one which Prof. Stern himself addressed implicitly and explicitly throughout his writings and to which a broad spectrum of colleagues might contribute. The present volume is composed of papers submitted at the conference.

We wish to acknowledge with gratitude the following institutions, foundations, and individuals whose generosity made possible the organization and execution of the conference and the publication of this volume: The Hebrew University and, within it: The Dinur Center for Research in Jewish History and The Institute of Archaeology; Bar-Ilan University's Ingeborg Rennert Center for Jerusalem Studies; The Fredriksen Foundation; The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities; Dr. David and Jemima Jeselsohn; The Keshet Foundation; The Lucius N. Littauer Foundation; Yad Hanadiv; and Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi.

We would also express our sincere thanks to the scholars who contributed to the success of the conference and this volume. They have shown that not only the memory, but also the legacy, of Menahem Stern is alive and well.

We would also like to extend our profound thanks to Ḥani Davis for her outstanding professionalism at every stage of this undertaking – in organizing and running the administrative tasks associated with the conference, in coordinating the translation of many of the articles and editing them, and in seeing this volume through to its final publication.

Finally, we owe our gratitude to Mohr Siebeck GmbH & Co., its Editorial Director of Theology and Jewish Studies Dr. Henning Ziebritzki, and its capable staff for undertaking the publication of this volume and seeing

it through with their renowned reputation of friendliness, patience, and efficiency.

Lee I. Levine and Daniel R. Schwartz
Jerusalem, August 2009

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Abbreviations

AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
AB	Anchor Bible
AJSR	*Association for Jewish Studies Review*
Amm. Marc.	Ammianus Marcellinus
ANES	*Ancient Near Eastern Studies*
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*
Anth. Pal.	*Anthologia Palatina*
Apollod. *Bibl.*	Apollodorus mythographus, *Bibliotheca*
Aug. *Res Gest.*	Augustine, *Res Gestae*
B	Bavli, Babylonian Talmud
b.	ben, bar (son of)
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BASP	*Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*
BCH	*Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*
Bijdr	*Bijdragen: Tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie*
BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*
BO	*Bibliotheca orientalis*
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
C. Th.	*Codex Theodosianus*
CAH	*The Cambridge Ancient History*
Cass. Dio, *Hist. Rom.*	Cassius Dio, *Historia Romana*
CD	Codex Damascus
Cic. *Flac.*	Cicero, *Pro Flacco*
CJ	*Codex Justinianus*
CSBH	Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
Dio Chr.	Dio Chrysostomus
Diod.	Diodorus
Diod. Sic.	Diodorus Siculus
Diog. *Laert.*	Diogenes, *Laertius*
DJD	Discoveries of the Judaean Desert
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
EI	*Eretz-Israel*
EJ	*Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1st ed. (1971)
Epiph.	*De Mensuris et Ponderibus*

Euseb.	Eusebius
Dem. Ev.	*Demonstratio Evangelica*
Hist. Eccles.	*Historia Ecclesiastica*
Praep. Ev.	*Praeparatio Evangelica*
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte
GLAJJ	M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1976–84).
Heliod.	Heliodorus
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
IAA	Israel Antiquities Authority
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
ILS	*Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*
INJ	*Israel Numismatic Journal*
Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*	Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*
JAC	*Journal of Ancient Civilizations*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JEH	*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
Jer. *de Vir Ill.*	Jerome, *de Viris Illustribus*
JJA	*Journal of Jewish Art*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
Jos.	Josephus
Ag. Apion	*Against Apion*
Ant.	*Antiquities of the Jews*
War	*Jewish War*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JRA	*Journal of Roman Archaeology*
JRASup	Journal of Roman Archaeology, Supplemental Series
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism*
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism, Supplemental Series
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament, Supplement Series
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
JSP	*Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha, Supplement Series
JSQ	*Jewish Studies Quarterly*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*

JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
Julian, *Or.*	Julian, *Orationes*
Juv.	Juvenal
LA	*Liber Annuus*
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
Lib. *Or.*	Libanius, *Orationes*
LIMC	*Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, ed. H.C. Ackermann and J.-R. Gisler, 8 vols. (Zurich: Artemis, 1981–99)
Lucian, *Salt.*	Lucian, *de Saltatione*
M	Mishnah
Macrob. *Sat.*	Macrobius, *Saturnalia*
Mart.	Martial
NEA	*Near Eastern Archaeology*
NEAEHL	*New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, 4 vols., ed. E. Stern (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993)
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
Or.	*Orientalia* (Rome)
OrChrAn	Orientalia christiana analecta
OTS	*Old Testament Studies*
PAAJR	*Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research*
PG	Patrologia Graeca
Philo	Philo
Her.	*Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres Sit*
In Flacc.	*In Flaccum*
Leg.	*Legatio ad Gaium*
Mos.	*De Vita Moysis*
Spec.	*De Specialibus Legibus*
Philostr. *VS*	Philostratus, *Vita Sophistarum*
PL	Patrologia Latina
Plin. *NH*	Pliny, *Naturalis Historia*
Plut	Plutarch
Pyrrh.	*Pyrrhus*
Sert.	*Sertorius*
Vita Ant.	*Vita Antonii*
R.	Rabbi
RB	*Revue Biblique*
RCRFActa	*Rei Cretariae Romanae Fautorum Acta*
REJ	*Revue des Études Juives*

SC	Sources chrétiennes
SCI	*Scripta Classica Israelica*
SH	*Scripta Hierosolymitana*
SHA	*Scriptores Historiae Augustae*
Hadr.	*Hadrian*
Heliog.	*Heliogabalus*
Sev.	*Severus*
SIDIC	*Service International de Documentation Judéo-Chrétienne* (Rome)
Soz. *Eccl. Hist.*	Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*
Statius *Silv.*	Statius, *Silvae*
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
Strabo *Geog.*	Strabo, *Geography*
Suet.	Suetonius
Claud.	*Claudius*
Dom.	*Domitianus*
Tit.	*Titus*
T	Tosefta
Tac.	Tacitus
Ann.	*Annales*
Hist.	*Historiae*
TNDT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols., ed. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, trans. G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–76)
TSAJ	Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism / Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
TTH	Translated Texts for Historians
TWNT	*Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*
VCSup	Vigiliae Christianae, Supplements
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum, Supplements
Xen. *Resp. Ath.*	Xenophon, *Respublica Atheniensium*
Y	Yerushalmi, Jerusalem Talmud
ZAC	*Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum*
ZDPV	*Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

Introduction

The theme of this volume, *Jewish Identities in Antiquity: Studies in Memory of Menahem Stern*, stems from the recognition that Jewish life and society in the thousand-year period from Alexander's conquest in the fourth century BCE to the Arab conquest of the seventh century CE underwent countless changes, both sudden and gradual. As a result, numerous facets of Jewish life were drastically altered – its institutions, beliefs, and practices – which themselves defined many aspects of Jewish identity. Following Alexander's conquest, Jewish life was slowly but steadily affected by the advent of Hellenistic norms and models; to judge by a number of literary works and archaeological finds from the third and second centuries BCE, these influences were embraced by some while causing concern to others – but even the latter had to respond to the new challenges.

The emergence of an independent state under the Hasmoneans in the mid-second century BCE also heralded far-reaching changes in Jewish life. The continued penetration of Hellenism was paralleled by the creation and implementation of a series of Jewish boundary markers that found expression in art, purity concerns, political institutions, material culture, and literature. However, less than a century after the establishment of the Hasmonean state Rome conquered the East, and the incorporation of Judaea into its empire was distressing for some but a blessing for others. Once again, Jews were forced to redefine their political allegiances, cultural proclivities, and religious loyalties in light of this new reality.

The emergence of a far-flung Diaspora in the Hellenistic and Roman eras required each community to negotiate between its determination to preserve ancestral traditions and the desire to integrate as much as possible into its surroundings. Furthermore, the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem in 70 CE radically altered many foundations of Jewish life. The beginnings of rabbinic Judaism were one of the responses to this crisis, one that in the course of time became normative in Jewish life. Finally, the challenges and concerns posed in Late Antiquity by a triumphant Christianity spurred Jews to formulate an array of reactions that served to redefine and reassert their identity while countering the restrictions, religious polemics, and violence directed at them and their institutions.

It is the exploration of these many changes in Jewish life and the resultant challenges to understanding Jewish identity that this conference was devoted. It convened at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on June 25–27, 2007, with two public evening sessions held at Yad Izhak Ben Zvi in the center of the city.

This volume opens with a tribute to Prof. Stern by one of his students, Daniel Schwartz. Reviewing the many and varied areas of his research interests, the paper focuses on Stern's academic legacy, and particularly on his singular commitment to the philological-historical method. The emphasis on a solid grasp of a given text as the *sine qua non* of all historical scholarship guided him throughout his entire academic career. In addition, Stern was blessed with a sense of humility and sensitivity that endeared him to colleagues and students alike.

Lee Levine's introductory essay spells out in some detail the conference's basic theme, namely, the changing identities of the Jews over the course of antiquity and their responses to these challenges. The variations of identity resulting from a series of traumatic events forged a Jewish society whose political and religious institutions, practices and beliefs, as well as social frameworks changed dramatically, and not infrequently, some even more than once during this time frame. Concurrently, a web of common views, practices, and loyalties began crystallizing among Jews that gradually created a common foundation upon which Jewish cultural and communal creativity continued to develop, despite the ongoing challenges and vicissitudes.

Two lectures were devoted to the much-discussed topic of Hellenism's impact on Judaean society in the third to first centuries BCE. Doron Mendels examines the issue of Hellenization among the Jews in 1 and 2 Maccabees. As he states the case: "… the authors of 1 and 2 Maccabees did not perceive a concrete impact of Hellenism in particular and of Hellenization in general on the events before, during, and after the revolution." He calls for a minimalist approach to the question, and although many components of the wider Palestinian society were indeed significantly influenced by outside forces, the Jews themselves were less so. By analyzing the Hellenistic literary *topoi* and specific events recorded in these two books, Mendels attempts to demonstrate the marginality of Hellenistic inroads into Jewish society in the third and second centuries.

Oren Tal, basing himself on archaeological remains, similarly minimizes the Hellenistic impact on the Jews and others in the region under the Ptolemies and the Seleucids, limited as it was to the areas of administration, language, writing, coinage, and public offices. In daily life, such an influence was quite negligible. Tal contends that only under Hasmonean rule did Hellenism make significant inroads into Jewish society. Thus, while Hellenism had been largely restricted to the ruling classes of the two Hellenistic em-

pires beforehand, it was the Jewish elite together with the Hasmoneans that incorporated these influences into an overall cultural orientation in order to promote a cosmopolitism that would allow Jewish society to become a full member in the Hellenistic world. At the same time, the Hasmoneans themselves nurtured other features that constituted a continuation with First Temple traditions.

David Goodblatt broaches the issue of Jewish identity under Hasmonean rule from a very different perspective. He points to an anomaly whereby the Hasmoneans regularly used the name "Israel" when referring to the Jews, although they preferred the designation "Judaeans" in their official documents and formulations. Goodblatt suggests the following distinction; while writers in Hebrew preferred "Israelite," Greek authors favored "Judaeans." The issue is then twofold: why was the plural "Judaeans" used instead of the collective singular "Israel," and what explains the choice of a name deriving from "Judah" rather than "Israel?" Goodblatt explains the first issue in light of Greek usage ("Athenians" and not "of Athens"), while the second question, after thorough analysis, remains open. The use of "Israel" and "Israelite" in the Hebrew writings of the period (1 Maccabees, Ben Sira, and Judith) and the use of "Judaeans" in Hasmonean official documents (as was customary among Greek writers, Jewish and non-Jewish) are indicative of what the author refers to as "the conflicted identities of the Hasmonean state." Why this was so remains a conundrum.

Uriel Rappaport examines the relationships between the Diaspora and the Hasmonean state, concluding that both the literary sphere and the actual political and social events point to close and mutual ties. The former includes the letters at the beginning of 2 Maccabees, a number of documents preserved by Josephus, and the colophon of the Greek additions to Esther, as well as several Diaspora works that featured Judaea, Jerusalem, and its Temple (e.g., the Letter of Aristeas). Among the actual events attesting to this close relationship are the Jewish generals of the Ptolemaic army refusing to conquer Judaea at the time of Alexander Jannaeus, and the increase in pilgrimage and contributions to the Temple. Rappaport accounts for this common bond and shared identity between the Jews of Judaea and the Diaspora as due to the unique monotheistic character of Judaism that clearly distinguished them from the surrounding polytheism of the Hellenistic world.

Two very different types of issues are raised with regard to Diaspora Jewry, each questioning a common paradigm heretofore regnant in Diaspora studies. Erich Gruen sets out to challenge the popular assumption that Diaspora Jews chose a life of alienation and isolation, following a plethora of biblical sources, and that these attitudes characterized much of their life in the Hellenistic world. According to this perception, the Jews strove to

establish and maintain their identity through insistence on their ideological distinction from the "Other." He challenges and, in fact, subverts this widespread notion by pointing to many instances in which the Jews themselves claimed, accepted, or invented kinship relations between themselves and other nations or peoples. While this tendency can be found already in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Tamar and Ruth), it proliferated in the Hellenistic period with legends of Jewish blood connections to Heracles, the Spartans, and the Arabs, and with tales of hoary Jewish roots among a variety of Greek and Near Eastern peoples. These accounts question the idea that collective identity demanded a distinctive singularity, while confirming that Jewish self-perception also included the incorporation of elements from a broader cultural heritage.

Sylvie Honigman challenges the tendency in Diaspora studies to generalize about entire Diaspora communities from particular regions, events, or texts at our disposal. Focusing on the Egyptian community, she notes that although scholars have repeatedly pointed to discontinuities in both time and place within the documentary evidence, they have nevertheless continued to make generalizations regarding Egyptian Jewry from specific instances, especially those drawn from the Fayum area. In line with more recent scholarly attention to micro-history within Egypt that focuses on regional differences, Honigman suggests that the time has come to regionalize the study of Egyptian Jewry as well, and to refrain from talking about "the Jews of Egypt" as one homogeneous unit. Her paper surveys five communities in four regions, and while noting a variety of commonalities, it highlights the many nuances, differences, and permutations among them in almost every sphere of life – political, religious, social, and cultural.

The Roman conquest of Judaea ushered in a period of momentous events with far-reaching consequences, from Herodian rule through the quelling of two revolts. Pointing out that the concept "identity" was foreign to the ancient world, Joseph Geiger nevertheless notes that many people throughout the Roman empire, Jews included, *de facto* bore multiple identities, be they ethnic, linguistic, cultural, or geographic. Geiger cites a number of examples of multiple identities (including doubtful ones) and in particular the well-known accounts of Paul who variously identified himself as a Jew, the citizen of Tarsus, a circumcised Israelite, and a Roman citizen. Clearly in this case, and presumably in others as well, one's personal status was decisive in determining matters such as freedom, citizenship, or belonging to a specific class in society. Geiger also discusses related issues as to whether Jews were in any way different from others in this respect, whether it was possible to recognize a Jew, and what others thought about them. Only with the advent of Christianity was a distinct religious identity introduced as a distinguishing mark throughout the empire.

Albert Baumgarten tackles the issue of Romanization from an entirely different vantage point. How did the Romans try to integrate the Jews into their empire? The author suggests that they did this through a series of political experiments, some drawn from their own repertoire of models, others more creative and unique. Herod and his family were an example of the client-king model, and Agrippa II's elevation to power was a derivative of this category. Procuratorial rule was another well-attested attempt, and, finally, some time after 70, the creation of the Patriarchate was the final, and most long-lasting, such experiment. Baumgarten analyzes the successes and failures of this policy at each stage.

The next three articles were products of a symposium devoted to the normativity of rabbinic culture in Late Antiquity. Following a brief introduction by Isaiah Gafni, Hillel Newman analyzes the methodological considerations associated with this question in the aftermath of the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple, an issue that has become central in Jewish historiography of the post-70 era. In an attempt to understand why the debate refuses to subside and why agreement on many of the major questions continues to elude scholars, Newman suggests "unpacking" some of the more widespread arguments on all sides and examining their structure and logical underpinnings. What, in fact, are we measuring with regard to normativity? How do we choose criteria for justifying and evaluating our answers? How do our hermeneutical choices affect the way we address the problem, and how invested are we in contemporary ideologies and identities? Finally, how does semantic imprecision confuse and obscure an already thorny problem, and what assumptions do we make about the sociology of leadership and authority? While Newman acknowledges the need for a sophisticated reading of the sources (such as chronological and geographical distinctions), he also points out several terms used in Christian sources (*magistri*, δευτέρωσις), which he believes acknowledge a degree of rabbinic prominence. In short, Newman presents an approach that is less post-modern and more traditionally oriented.

Ze'ev and Chana Safrai[1] adopt a generally traditional stance, asserting that the rabbis were indeed the dominant force in post-70 Jewish society. Non-rabbinic sources, they claim, generally confirm what rabbinic literature itself claims, and we know of no other competing elite that might have held sway at the time. Interestingly, though, their article focuses on the opposite type of evidence. Rabbinic literature should be considered trustworthy since it does not hesitate to note a number of areas where rabbinic influence was partial, if not negligible. For instance, rabbinic

[1] We sadly acknowledge the passing of Chana Safrai in the course of preparing this volume for publication.

aspirations were often frustrated by the court system and the procedure of appointing judges, and they often did not have their way in a variety of halakhic areas. Moreover, priests continued to function as a religious elite in the second and third centuries CE, at least as regards purity issues. Even the acknowledged leadership of the Jewish community at the time, the Patriarchate, operated largely outside the rabbinic realm. The authors argue that such "admissions" in rabbinic literature serve to confirm these sources' reliability and the degree of rabbinic influence in most other areas of Jewish life at the time. They add two caveats to their argument: (1) the rabbis, as leaders in their communities, were in continuous dialogue with their constituents but did not always achieve their declared ends; and (2) a careful reading of rabbinic sources indicates in which areas their authority was recognized and where their discussions were entirely of a theoretical nature.

David Levine assesses the normativity of rabbinic Judaism in the first six centuries CE in the larger social and cultural context, which recognizes the existence of a pluralistic and diverse Jewish society in Late Antiquity. Advocating the abandonment of an all-or-nothing approach regarding rabbinic influence, Levine suggests asking such questions as what forces were at play in Jewish society at the time, what were the foci of power, and to what extent did the rabbis fit into this picture. Such a pluralistic approach *ipso facto* precludes viewing all expressions of religiosity at the time as part of a dominant rabbinic culture. For example, even when parallels exist between artistic remains and rabbinic sources, this fact should not necessarily be interpreted as the influence of one on the other, but rather the existence of a common Jewish tradition finding expression in several venues. Moreover, Levine cites examples within rabbinic literature itself of a wide range of practices and practitioners in both the judiciary and synagogue settings, which were outside rabbinic circles and indeed frequently criticized by the sages themselves. The communal fast ceremony is another case in point: the rabbis' role was often peripheral and / or contested, as this ceremony was, in reality, a joint endeavor of several leadership groups within the community. Finally, an enigmatic account relating to Caesarea's evolving halakhic status is cited, wherein a decision was first made and then changed without recourse to rabbinic authority.

Moshe David Herr addresses the longstanding question as to how severe the repercussions were of the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple as well as of the Bar Kokhba revolt. First, however, he discusses the division of scholars into a mainstream or traditionalist camp and that of revisionists, i. e., those who assume a degree of rabbinic authority and standing in the post-70 era, and those who question such an assumption. Herr argues for the former alternative, citing a number of instances and sources that relate

to the first centuries CE to support this position (the prominence of the Pharisees during the 66 revolt, documents from the Bar Kokhba era found in the Judaean Desert, and the office of the Patriarch which he associates with the rabbis). Herr then returns to the question of the degree to which Jewish life was affected between continuity vs. rupture before and after 70. Given his view of the reliability of rabbinic sources and of rabbinic leadership in the Jewish community, he maintains that the degree of continuity was significant and pervasive.

Steven Fraade's examination of continuity vs. change focuses on the centrality and importance of the Temple and its artifacts in Jewish life, consciousness, and memory before and after 70. While much changed with the destruction of the Temple and the virtual cessation of pilgrimage to the city, Fraade notes, on the basis of both literary and archaeological remains, that the Temple was transformed in the coming centuries into a central Jewish identity marker. Having ascertained that the menorah and other holy artifacts of the Temple were hidden from view to all but the officiating priests, he argues that the rabbinic tradition of the menorah being removed from the Temple building so that the pilgrims gathered in the Temple precincts could see it is, in reality, a late Babylonian rabbinic construct. Although the beginnings of such a tradition are somewhat adumbrated in several earlier Palestinian traditions, the Babylonian development of this tradition has no historical value with regard to what actually happened in Jerusalem's Temple centuries earlier. This conclusion, claims Fraade, is compatible with other archaeological and literary evidence, indicating the increased prominence of the Temple and related symbols under Byzantine Christianity as well as of visual symbols and representations in public pagan and Christians ceremonies of Late Antiquity.

Another special session, introduced by Lee Levine, was devoted to new developments in the study of settlement patterns in the Galilee. Having largely abandoned the older conception of decline and persecution in Byzantine Palestine, scholarship over the past decades has largely embraced the opposite view, namely that Jewish life flourished, materially, culturally, and religiously, during this period. Recently, however, Uzi Leibner has challenged this consensus with the findings of his systematic pottery survey of some 300 square kilometers in the eastern Galilee, in the heart of Jewish Galilee between Tiberias and Sepphoris. Some 10,000 identifiable fragments were discovered from fifty settlements, and these, according to Leibner, indicate a drastic decline in the settlement of this area from the late third to late fourth centuries. This crisis, whatever its cause(s), led to the abandonment of more than half of the settlements, some never to recover in subsequent centuries. Finally, Leibner discusses in some depth the coincidence and strong connection between this settlement decline and the end

of the amoraic period, the abrupt "completion" of the Yerushalmi, and the apparent disappearance of the sages from Byzantine Palestine.

Jodi Magness counters Leibner's suggested reconstruction of Galilean settlement patterns both on methodological grounds and on the basis of other, seemingly contradictory, evidence from elsewhere in the region. Regarding the former, Magness notes that pottery collected in surveys is often dated by accompanying coins. Since fourth-century coins were used throughout the fifth century and even into the sixth, it cannot be excluded that such finds indicate continued settlement in this later period as well. The same argument, *mutatis mutandis*, also applies to the local pottery, which she claims extended into the fifth century, too. Magness's article, however, deals primarily with three Galilean sites (Meiron, Jalame, and Sepphoris) that exhibit no evidence of such a decline; she also refers to the monumental Galilean synagogues that have now been generally dated to the Byzantine period and reflect flourishing Jewish communities throughout Late Antiquity.

Leibner argues, in his response to Magness, that her extensive discussion of other sites has little relevance to his thesis, which focuses on the rural eastern Galilee. Demonstrating that the sites she studied continued to exist past the fourth century in no way contradicts his findings, which show that that some rural settlements did so as well. Claiming that Magness never really comes to grips with his survey methods, the data collected, and his subsequent analyses, Leibner disputes two main claims made by Magness regarding chronology, emphasizing that (1) the assemblages collected in the survey were dated not only by coins (which everyone realizes is problematic) but also by oil lamps, imported vessels, and glassware; and that (2) in many of the surveyed sites, only late fourth-century local (and not imported) wares were found, although, in fact, he has demonstrated that imported vessels (Late Roman Red Ware) actually began to appear in significant numbers already in the last half of the fourth century. To illustrate his findings, Leibner compares two neighboring settlements studied in his survey, one that by all indications ended in the late fourth century while the other continued to exist well into the Byzantine period. As a confirmation of the accuracy of his survey, he notes that the archaeological evidence he has recently unearthed at the former site (Khirbet Ḥamam) entirely confirms this dating.

Turning to the Diaspora in the post-70 era, two articles address the Roman and Babylonian worlds. Tessa Rajak discusses the significance of biblical translations into Greek as a central element of Jewish self-definition in the Greek-speaking Roman Diaspora. Focusing on the second century CE and thereafter, when Jews and Christians shared the "old Greek" translation of Scripture (i.e., the Septuagint), Rajak suggests that the Christian appropriation was neither as abrupt nor as complete as the scholarly consensus has heretofore assumed. Greek-speaking Jews in the Diaspora continued to use

the Septuagint translation; they did not consider the translation of Aquila to be a replacement, but rather an alternative to it, and therefore epigraphic evidence, though slight, shows that the Jews used both. The production of new translations at this time (Aquila, Symmachus, and probably Theodotion) should be interpreted in terms of internal Jewish dynamics as well as the wider cultural world of the Greek cities in the eastern Mediterranean in which Diaspora Jews lived. It was in this cultural world that fine writing in Greek was highly prized and classicizing tendencies in these cities' elites were in full swing. Rajak argues that a new self-consciousness about the translation process, and a willingness to diversify and update, should be viewed as an integrative outcome of such trends rather than as the "parting of ways" between Judaism and Christianity.

In a different geographical venue, and with regard to another issue entirely, Isaiah Gafni addresses the question of identity among the Babylonian *amoraim* of the third to fifth centuries CE. How did these rabbis view their Diaspora society in relation to the traditional view of Eretz Israel as the center of the Jewish world? These sages were caught on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, as part of a rabbinic community they could not adopt the view that the Destruction signified the termination of Eretz Israel's centrality. On the other, their desire to gain a preferred status in the rabbinic and Jewish world required a rethinking of the concept "geographical center" in Jewish thought. Indeed, Babylonia itself now appears to have been identified as "Zion" on the basis of its perceived superiority in Torah study. Gafni proceeds to demonstrate the various steps taken by these Babylonian sages to bolster this belief, e.g., acknowledging the presence of the *Shekhinah* specifically in Babylonia. While proclaiming their ongoing loyalty to the role of "Eretz Israel" in Jewish consciousness, these sages (re) located the place and significance of "Zion" in Babylonia.

The final three papers in this volume deal with the rise to power of Christianity in the fourth century and its impact on Jewish life. The first of these contributions, however, moves in a somewhat counter-direction. Adiel Schremer takes issue with what has often been assumed in scholarly writing, namely, that rabbinic literature responded to this new reality. He cites three passages that are typically invoked in this regard: (1) one in Mishnah Sotah, which predicts that in the messianic age "the kingdom will turn to *minut*"; (2) a text ascribed to the *tanna* R. Nehemiah embedded in the Bavli and later *midrashim*; and (3) a statement attributed to R. Isaac, that "the son of David will not come until the kingdom turns entirely into *minut*." On this basis, he claims, scholars frequently cite late antique rabbinic references to Rome as targeting Christianity and being part of an anti-Christian rabbinic polemic. Schremer notes that the above assumption rests on the once-regnant premise that Christianity's takeover of the empire was rapid and total, and

thus that "Rome" can be equated with "Christendom" from the early fourth century. This assumption has been largely undermined of late, being taken as a historical and literary construct by triumphalist Christian authors of the fifth century and later. In reality, however, Christianity's takeover of the empire was a long and slow process culminating only in the sixth century, at best. In this light, there is no reason to assume that references in rabbinic literature to Rome as Israel's suppressor and enemy refer automatically to Christianity instead of pagan Rome. To illustrate the weakness of the common assumption that rabbinic sources often contain anti-Christian polemics, Schremer subjects one such source, in Pesiqta de Rav Kahana, to a thorough analysis.

The next two articles deal, nevertheless, with Jewish responses to Christian hegemony. Zeev Weiss focuses on the dramatic development of Jewish art in Late Antiquity, partly in conversation with earlier Roman art, such as the zodiac motif, and partly in a polemical dialogue with Christian art of the Byzantine era. He argues that the zodiac played a dual role for the Jews: on the one hand, it "symbolizes the agricultural calendar and the blessing inherent in the divine order of the universe" and, on the other, it represents the rule of the God of Israel as the real ruler of the universe (*cosmocrator*). Weiss views the frequent display of the *'Aqedah* story as a reaction to the new Christian environment and the ongoing polemic between Jew and Christian during this period. He points to two complementary trends in the development of this Jewish art – the borrowing of motifs and the appropriation of symbols, styles, and techniques from the Christian world, and the use of the resultant art for polemical purposes, to subvert Christian claims that challenged Jewish beliefs. Finally, Weiss asserts that the mosaic floors of Sepphoris and Bet Alpha were intended to express the Jewish communities' coherent and sustained programmatic polemical claim against Christianity regarding the continuing validity of God's promise to Abraham, God's sovereignty over history and the universe, and the final redemption of the Jewish people.

Oded Irshai suggests a very different type of Jewish reaction to Christianity's ascent in the fourth century. In contrast to the thundering silence in rabbinic literature regarding the rise of Christianity under Constantine and thereafter, even more surprising given the increased discrimination and pressure from imperial and ecclesiastical authorities, various Christian sources report on Jewish violence against Christians in the fourth and fifth centuries. This is also surprising given the relatively passive posture of Jews toward the Roman government in the second and third centuries, from the end of the Bar Kokhba revolt until the time of Constantine. Interestingly, this shift of behavior paralleled that of the Christians themselves, who likewise moved from a rather passive stance before the fourth century to a more

aggressive and violent one in the fourth and fifth. Thus, by the mid-fourth century, the religious climate in the empire had changed considerably, encompassing the Jewish communities of both Palestine and the Diaspora. Irshai analyzes these sources, taking into account the tendentious tenor of their transmitters as well as the immediate historical context of each. He also suggests that some of this political activity may have been motivated not only by specific and local provocation, but also by latent eschatological and messianic hopes that had begun to play a significant role in light of the far-reaching changes now affecting Jewish life.

It is evident from the above overview that the range of topics addressed at this conference was rich indeed, covering various aspects of Jewish life in Judaea / Palestine and the Diaspora during the one thousand years of the Graeco-Roman era. The discussions accompanying these lectures proved to be stimulating and enlightening not only to everyone gathered, but especially to each of the speakers, many of whom incorporated newly gained insights and ideas into the published papers appearing in this volume. We hope that these contributions do honor to the memory of a revered scholar and mentor, Menahem Stern.

Lee I. Levine

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Menahem Stern (1924–1989): His Place in Historical Scholarship

Daniel R. Schwartz

In 1960, a year after Menahem Stern submitted his doctoral dissertation and the year in which he was appointed to a full-time position at the Hebrew University, he accepted the invitation of the editorial board of *Tarbiz* and submitted a review essay of Abraham Schalit's recently published Hebrew monograph, *King Herod: The Man and His Work*. Stern opened his survey, which was published that same year, with a concise but sweeping overview of three trends in the study of ancient history in recent generations:

> While Mommsen's generation was interested, first and foremost, in political and constitutional history […], Rostovtzeff's generation placed economy and society at the center. Contemporary scholars, in contrast, invest much effort in understanding those ideas which served as the foundation or justification of the diverse activities of previous generations. Heightened interest in ideological aspects of the transitional period of Roman history (the Augustan Principate) led Schalit to devote a similar study to the parallel period of Jewish history.[1]

Indeed, each generation has its scholars, each generation has its trends – and Stern's survey of those of his predecessors invites us to attempt to characterize his. In attempting to do so, however, almost fifty years after he wrote that survey and almost twenty years since he was murdered, we must exercise great care. For although it is true that every individual is, to a certain extent, a product of his time, it is also true that every individual, and certainly every great and creative individual, is unique. Any attempt to classify such

[1] M. Stern, *Studies in Jewish History: The Second Temple Period*, ed. I. Gafni et al. (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1991), 587 (Hebrew). So as not to engage in what Stern termed "word-heaping," I will refer here and hereafter, where possible, not to the original publication venue of his articles, but only to the latter collection or the numbered list of publications appearing in the memorial volume, *The Jews in the Hellenistic-Roman World: Studies in Memory of Menahem Stern*, ed. A. Oppenheimer et al. (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 1996), 13–21 (Hebrew; hereafter, *Memorial Volume*). A version of his review of Schalit, quoted here, also appeared in *JJS* 11 (1960) 49–58, but without the section translated here from the Hebrew version.

a person's work will necessarily run the risk of schematizing, overlooking, or marginalizing characteristics and details that may be important and valuable, such that none of us wants to belittle or ignore.

It is truly difficult to classify the historical *oeuvre* of Menahem Stern.[2] He wrote his 1959 doctoral dissertation on the great families of the Second Temple period, thereby responding, apparently, to a challenge posed by his teacher Victor Tcherikover,[3] for whom Rostovtzeff's work had been of great formative importance.[4] Stern's dissertation, which later served as the foundation for a number of his important publications,[5] was, accordingly, devoted to social history. Particularly discernible is the influence of prosopographic research reminiscent of Gelzer, Münzer, and Syme,[6] who traced the development of Roman society by reconstructing the familial relationships of the nobility.

After completing his dissertation, however, Stern shifted to political and even administrative history. In the 1960s, he focused first on the Hasmonean period in a series of articles and in a book on the documents relating to the Hasmonean revolt and state.[7] He then turned to the Roman era, devoting a series of studies and detailed surveys to Roman provincial rule in Judaea, the Herodian dynasty and its various functions during the period of Ro-

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[2] For earlier surveys, see M.D. Herr, "Menahem Stern and his Scholarly Work," in *Studies*, 9–12; Oppenheimer et al., "Editors' Foreword," in *Memorial Volume*, 9–12; D. Gera, "Studies in the Second Temple Period," *Jewish Studies* 32 (1992), 75–81 (Hebrew).

[3] "A detailed study of the high-born families of Judaea in the Hellenistic-Roman era has yet to be written; it would be of great value for the investigation of the social life of the period"; V. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1959), 122. (Tcherikover passed away in early 1958; the fact that Stern was already well acquainted with the book is apparent in his words on his late teacher in *Studies*, 624.)

[4] As Stern wrote in memory of Tcherikover: *Studies*, 625.

[5] E.g., his articles on the death of Onias III (1960: *Studies*, 35–50), the story of Joseph the Tobiad (1963: ibid., 22–34), and Herod's social policies (1966: ibid., 180–98); and his chapter "Aspects of Jewish Society: The Priesthood and Other Classes" in the second volume of a comprehensive book which he co-edited (*The Jewish People in the First Century*, ed. S. Safrai and M. Stern, 2 vols. [Assen and Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1974], II, 561–630).

[6] M. Gelzer, *Die Nobilität der römischen Republik* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1912); F. Münzer, *Römische Adelsparteien und Adelsfamilien* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1920); R. Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1939). Regarding the last book, we should recall the years that Stern spent in Syme's company at Oxford University (1952–54).

[7] I.e., his articles on John Hyrcanus's treaties with Rome (1961: *Studies*, 77–98) and the political background to the wars of Alexander Jannaeus (1964: *Studies*, 128–50 is a Hebrew translation of a later English version: "Judaea and Her Neighbors in the Days of Alexander Jannaeus," in *The Jerusalem Cathedra*, I, ed. L.I. Levine [Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi and Wayne University Press, 1981], 22–46), and his book, *The Documents on the History of the Hasmonean Revolt* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1965; 2nd ed. 1972; 3rd ed. 1983 [Hebrew]).

man rule, and Jewish opposition to Roman rule.[8] Finally, in the 1980s, he returned with this orientation to several studies on the Hasmonean era,[9] which were to serve as *Vorarbeiten* for his book on this subject (which was to be published only posthumously)[10] and for his translation of and commentary on the Second Book of Maccabees; the two published fragments testify to the breadth and depth he contemplated for the latter project.[11]

But studies of ideology are also well represented throughout Stern's works – such as those concerning the anti-Roman resistance groups,[12] the significance of the Hasmonean revolt,[13] and the place of Hellenism in the Jewish life of ancient Palestine and in the background of the Hasmonean revolt.[14]

So what can we say about the character of his work? That he had his hand in everything, and thus it cannot be classified? First of all, yes. He was a man of great erudition and broad interests, an authority on many areas in the history of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple period who laid down numerous foundations that still exist and continue to enable and encourage further work. Yet there seems to be a fundamental characteristic to Stern's work, a core commitment from which he never strayed – the philological-historical method. This approach to history, according to which the study of ancient texts is the foundation for the reconstruction of ancient history, was the axiom that unites his *oeuvre*. This axiom has two fundamental components: a philological premise, according to which a reconstruction of the past must be grounded in the study of texts; and a historical premise, according to which the study of texts can indeed deliver the goods – it can, indeed, allow us to reconstruct the past responsibly and with a significant measure of security.

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[8] See the eleven studies collected in *Studies*, 165–343, to which we may add additional chapters from both Hebrew and foreign-language books listed in *Memorial Volume*, e. g., nos. 38, 39, 41, 47, and additional publications listed there.

[9] See his articles on Judas Maccabaeus' treaty with Rome (1986: *Studies*, 51–76), on Jannaeus's wars (1981: ibid., 128–50), and on the relationship between Hasmonean Judaea and the Ptolemaic state (1985: ibid., 99–124).

[10] M. Stern, *Hasmonaean Judaea in the Hellenistic World: Chapters in Political History*, ed. D. R. Schwartz (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 1995 [Hebrew]. This volume, which was published on the basis of handwritten manuscripts found in Stern's desk after his death, is the sole publication of what Stern hoped would be a comprehensive work on the Second Temple period, and even this volume is incomplete.

[11] See Stern's study of the establishment of Jason's innovations in Jerusalem mentioned in 2 Macc. 4:9–12 (*Zion* 57 [1992], 233–46 [Hebrew]) and his short discussion of the battle with the Galatians mentioned in 2 Macc. 8:20 (published in translation by D. R. Schwartz, *The Second Book of Maccabees* [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008], 546–48).

[12] See especially *Studies*, 313–43 (1982).

[13] Ibid., 151–61 (1968).

[14] Ibid., 3–21 (1989); 578–86 (1971: review of M. Hengel's *Judaism and Hellenism*).