MARGARET H. WILLIAMS

Jews in a Graeco-Roman Environment

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
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Preface

Gathered together in this volume are twenty-two studies relating to Jewish inhabitants of the Graeco-Roman world between the first century B.C.E. and the early sixth century C.E. Written over a period of some twenty years or so, they have all been published before but in a variety of academic journals and essay-collections, some of the latter no longer in print. It was suggested to me on more than one occasion by Professor Richard Bauckham that the scholarly community would welcome their re-publication in a unified volume, a view fortunately shared by Dr. Henning Ziebritzki and the editors of Mohr Siebeck's *WUNT* series. Hence this volume which I hope will justify these expectations.

In putting this collection together I have left the main text of each study virtually unchanged. Hardly any alterations have been made other than those required in the interests of uniformity – *e.g.* replacing B.C. and A.D. where necessary with B.C.E. and C.E. The footnotes to the articles too remain unchanged except in these respects: firstly, I have standardised the terminology for the various epigraphic corpora that have entered the public domain over the past twenty years, using throughout the volume the now generally accepted acronyms for those collections – *viz. JIGRE, JIWE* and *IJO;* secondly, I have provided each of the older epigraphic references with its modern equivalent (*e.g. CIJ* I no. 120 = *JIWE* II no. 337), thereby extending to my earlier writings a practice I started to employ only after 1992 when the first of the new corpora (*JIGRE*) became available. I am aware, of course, that in applying this procedure throughout the volume I am guilty of anachronism. However, it seemed unreasonable to deprive the reader of access to newer and often better text-editions when it could be provided so easily. In contrast to the epigraphic referencing, the bibliographical material supplied in the footnotes remains for the most part unchanged. That may seem surprising, given the lively state of Jewish Diaspora studies during the last quarter of a century. However, it seemed to me that the introductory essay that I was asked to provide for the volume as a whole would be a better place for bringing to the reader's attention those recent publications that either challenge or supplement what I have written. Only in the handful of instances where that procedure was not appropriate have I added the new material to the footnote itself.

The studies themselves are presented not in the order in which they were written and published but have been arranged thematically. The first half of the

volume (Part One) consists of studies relating to the best-documented Diaspora community from Roman Imperial times – *viz*. the large Jewish community found in Rome itself. The contents of the second half have been divided into two categories: Part Two is comprised largely of papers about some of the Roman empire's less well known Jewish communities; Part Three is devoted to onomastic studies. Within each of these three groups, the broad arrangement is chronological with the earliest entries generally dating to the first century C.E. and the latest to Late Antiquity. The only paper which did not fit neatly into this schema was my study of the epigraphical uses of the term *Ioudaios*. Since the evidence on which that study is based is almost entirely Diasporan, I have placed it at the end of Part Two.

Finally, some words of thanks. In the quarter of a century during which I have been concerned with Jews in the Graeco-Roman world I have been touched by the friendly interest shown in my work by many of my fellow scholars. Two individuals, however, have been especially supportive of me and I would like to pay a special tribute to them here. The first is the late Professor John Crook of St John's College, Cambridge who taught me both as an undergraduate and as a postgraduate student. Thanks to his encouragement throughout my time away from academia when I was producing children and living abroad as a telescope-wife on the island of Hawaii, I was given the confidence in due course to resume my academic career. And thanks to the assiduity with which he read and commented upon my writings, my published work was undoubtedly better than it otherwise would have been. But the person to whom I owe the most is my husband Peredur. It was he who told me very firmly that I should start using my brains again and throughout the period when I have endeavoured to do so has been constant in his support. This has taken the form not only of frequently and desperately needed technical assistance as I wrestled with the problems of using computers but a readinessness to listen to my ideas and engage critically with them at all times. Without his help this book almost certainly would never have seen the light of day. I therefore dedicate it to him with gratitude and with love.

Edinburgh, December 2012 Margaret Williams

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Acknowledgements

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Chapter 18: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan
Chapter 22: The British Academy

Abbreviations

AE	*L'Année épigraphique*
Agric.	Philo, *De Agricultura = On Agriculture*
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
AJP	*American Journal of Philology*
AJSL	*American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*
b. + title	*Babylonian Talmud*
BAR	*Biblical Archaeological Review*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
B.C.E.	Before the Common Era
BE	*Bulletin Épigraphique* (to be found in *REG*)
BCH	*Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*
BGU	*Aegyptische Urkunden aus den Koeniglichen (Staatlichen) Museen zu Berlin, Griechische Urkunden*
BJGS	*Bulletin of Judaeo-Greek Studies*
BMCRE	*Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*, ed. by H. Mattingly
BS II	M. Schwabe and B. Lifshitz, *Beth She'arim II – The Greek Inscriptions*, New Brunswick, NJ 1974 (English version)
BS III	N. Avigad, *Beth She'arim III – Catacombs 12–23*, New Brunswick, NJ 1976 (English version)
CAH	*Cambridge Ancient History*
C.E.	Common Era
CIG	*Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*
CIJ I/II	*Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum*, ed. by J.-B. Frey, Rome 1936 and 1952
CIJ I^2 *proleg.*	B. Lifshitz' prologue to the 1975 reprint of *CIJ* I
CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*
CIRB	*Corpus Inscriptionum Regni Bosporani*
Confus.	Philo, *De Confusione Linguarum = On the Confusion of Tongues*
Contempl.	Philo, *De Vita Contemplativa = On the Contemplative Life*
Cowey and Maresch	*Urkunden des Politeuma der Juden von Herakleopolis*, ed. by J. M. S. Cowey and K. Maresch, Wiesbaden 2001
Cowley	*Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B. C.*, ed. by A. Cowley, Oxford 1923
CPh	*Classical Philology*
CPJ I–III	*Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, 3 vols., ed. by V. A. Tcherikover, A. Fuks and M. Stern, Cambridge, MA 1957–1964
CPR	*Corpus Papyrorum Raineri*

CR	*Classical Review*
CJZC	*Corpus jüdischer Zeugnisse aus der Cyrenaika*, ed. by G. Lüderitz, Wiesbaden 1983
CRIPEL	*Cahier de Recherches de l'Institut de Papyrologie et d'Égyptologie de Lille*
De Cons. Ev.	Augustine, *De Consensu Evangelistarum*
DJD II	*Discoveries in the Judaean Desert II: Les Grottes de Murabbaʿat*, ed. by P. Benoit, J. T. Milik and R. de Vaux, Oxford 1961
Ebr.	Philo, *De Ebrietate* = On Drunkenness
ed.	editor, edited
Enc. Jud.	*Encylopedia Judaica*
GRBS	*Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
ICret.	*Inscriptiones Creticae*
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae*
IGLS	*Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*
IGRR	*Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes*
IJO I	*Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis* I, ed. by D. Noy, A. Panayotov and H. Bloedhorn, Tübingen 2004
IJO II	*Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis* II, ed. by W. Ameling, Tübingen 2004
IJO III	*Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis* II, ed. by D. Noy and H. Bloedhorn, Tübingen 2004
IK	*Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien*
Ilan, *Women's Names*	T. Ilan, "Notes on the Distribution of Jewish Women's Names in Palestine in the Second Temple and Mishnaic Periods", *JJS* 40 (1989), 186–200
ILCV	*Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres*
ILLRP	*Inscriptiones Latinae Liberae Rei Publicae*
ILS	*Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*
IOSPE	*Inscriptiones Antiquae Orae Septentrionalis Ponti Euxini*
j. + *title*	*Jerusalem Talmud*
JAC	*Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JIGRE	*Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt*, ed. by W. Horbury and D. Noy, Cambridge 1992
JIWE I/II	*Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe*, ed. by D. Noy, Cambridge 1993 and 1995
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JNTS	*Journal of New Testament Studies*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism*
JSQ	*Jewish Studies Quarterly*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*

Kroll	J. H. Kroll, "The Greek Inscriptions of the Sardis Synagogue", *HTR* 94.1 (2001), 3–127
LGPN	*A Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*, 5 vols., ed. by P. M. Fraser, E. Matthews et al., 1987–2010
Lifshitz + no.	B. Lifshitz, *Donateurs et fondateurs dans les synagogues juives*, Paris 1967
LSJ	Liddell, Scott, Jones – *A Greek-English Lexicon*
LXX	Septuagint
m. + title	*Mishnah* + name of Tractate
MAAR	*Memoirs of the American Academy at Rome*
MAMA	*Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiquae*
MEFRA	*Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'École Française de Rome*
Miranda	E. Miranda, "La comunità giudaica di Hierapolis di Frigia", *Epigraphica Anatolica* 31 (1999), 109–156
Mos.	Philo, *De Vita Mosis = On the Life of Moses*
MUSJ	*Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph*
n./nn.	note/notes
Naveh	J. Naveh, *On Mosaic and Stone*, Jerusalem 1978 [Heb.]
NDIEC	*New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*
no.	number of inscription or papyrus, as in *JIGRE* no. 25; *CPJ* I no. 112
NT	*Novum Testamentum*
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
OCD^2	*Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 2nd edition, Oxford 1970
OCD^3	*Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd edition, Oxford 1996
OGIS	*Orientis Graecae Inscriptiones Selectae*
PBSR	*Papers of the British School at Rome*
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
PIR^2	*Prosopographia Imperii Romani*, 2nd edition
PG	J.-P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologia Graeca*
PL	J.-P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologia Latina*
Plant.	Philo, *De Plantatione = On Planting*
RB	*Revue Biblique*
RE	*Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (1894–)
REA	*Revue des Études Anciennes*
REG	*Revue des Études Grecques*
REJ	*Revue des Études Juives*
Rev. Phil.	*Revue de Philologie, de Littérature et d'Histoire Anciennes*
RIC	*Roman Imperial Coinage*
RivAC	*Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana*
Robert, *Hellenica*	L. Robert, *Hellenica. Recueil d'épigraphie, de numismatique et d'antiquités grecques*, 13 vols., Paris 1940–1965
Roueché	C. Roueché, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity*, London 1989
Schürer (revised)	*The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, 3 vols. in 4, revised by G. Vermes, F. Millar, M. Black and M. Goodman, Edinburgh 1973–1987
SCI	*Scripta Classica Israelica*
SEG	*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*

Stern, *GLAJJ* I/I/III	M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, 3 vols., Jerusalem 1974–1984
s. v./s. vv.	*sub voce, sub vocibus*
Symb.Osl.	*Symbolae Osloenses*
t. + *tractate*	*Tosefta*
TAM	*Tituli Asiae Minoris*
TAPA	*Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*
TLL	*Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*
trans.	translated, translator
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
ZNTW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

Introduction

Jews in a Graeco-Roman Environment – Context and Reception

In this introductory section I start by considering, first, the context in which my study of the Jewish Diaspora in the Graeco-Roman world began and then the resources, both primary and secondary, that subsequently became available to me and so facilitated my research. I follow this with a review of those papers included in this volume which have prompted significant scholarly debate. The focus will be primarily on Part I (Rome) and Part II (Diaspora communities other than Rome), as the papers in Part III (onomastics) have so far proved to be largely uncontroversial.

1. The State of Diaspora Studies in 1986 and their Subsequent Development

It surely is no exaggeration to describe the twenty years or so during which the papers assembled in this volume were written as a veritable Golden Age for the study of Diaspora Jews in the Graeco-Roman world. When I was first drawn to this subject on my return to academia in 1986, I could find little in the standard works relating to Jews in the Roman world that addressed the questions that interested me. For the previous six years I had been living in the small, ethnically-diverse Hawaiian town of Hilo. During that period I had had ample time to observe the various ways in which the different ethnic groups, originally brought in to labour in the sugarcane plantations, interacted with each other. It had been fascinating to watch the way in which members of one group, sometimes deliberately, at other times unconsciously, adopted the customs of another; to see how personal names were used to give expression to social aspirations and to observe how language-use had changed as former immigrant groups had become permament fixtures in the community. I began to wonder if I could document processes such as these in Roman antiquity. Since the Jews were a literate people and one which had retained its identity over the generations despite living for the most part among non-Jews, I thought that they would make a promising starting point. However, when I came to consulting the standard works about them, I found

that their focus was altogether different from the one I had in mind. Diaspora Judaism almost invariably was discussed in terms of legalisms, such as *religio licita* (= legally-permitted cult),[1] and the main emphasis was very much on its formal structures, most notably the *collegium*, the *politeuma* and, of course, the synagogue. There seemed to be little awareness that Diaspora communities with their different origins (some made up of slaves, some of voluntary immigrants, some of transferred subject populations) and their different social contexts (*e.g.* the Greek *polis* as opposed to the imperial Roman capital) quite possibly might not have been all alike, might have changed over the course of time and might even, like their modern counterparts, have contained individuals who did other things than assiduously attend the synagogue. In general, Diaspora Judaism was presented as static and monolithic and Diaspora communities as largely isolated from the Gentile mainstream. Dissentient opinions did exist, as I was later to discover, but at that time these were confined to academic journals and account had yet to be taken of them in books written for the non-specialist.[2] Besides that narrowness of vision, what also struck me about these standard works was the relatively limited space afforded the Diaspora: in all of them most of the discussion was concerned with the Jews of Judaea/Palestine. Fewer than a quarter of the twenty-one chapters in Smallwood's *Jews under Roman Rule*, for instance, are devoted to the Diaspora and in Schürer (revised) it is dealt with in a single, admittedly extremely dense, section.[3] Works aimed at a more popular readership showed the same bias: in D. S. Russell's overview of Jews in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods, those living outside Judaea/Palestine are disposed of in less than ten pages;[4] and not a single chapter-heading alludes to the Diaspora in M. Grant's survey of the Jews in the Roman World.[5] Indeed, the words Diaspora and Dispersion are not even listed in the index to that volume!

Another surprise for me was the paucity of monographs devoted to individual Diaspora communities. In this regard, Roman Jewry was a rare exception. The main reason that I became so interested in that particular section of the Diaspora was that it was one of the few Jewish communities in the Roman empire that had

[1] This status, it was often averred, had been established in perpetuity through Julius Caesar's so-called "charter of Jewish rights". See, for instance, E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule from Pompey to Diocletian*, Leiden 1976, 135. Not infrequently that 'charter' was referred to approvingly as "a veritable Magna Carta". See, for instance, M. Grant, *The Jews in the Roman World*, London 1973, 59.

[2] Two important, dissentient studies of that period were A. T. Kraabel, "The Roman Diaspora: Six Questionable Assumptions", *JSJ* 33 (1982), 445–477 = *Diaspora Jews and Judaism, Essays in Honor of, and in Dialogue with, A. Thomas Kraabel*, ed. by J. Andrew Overman and R. S. MacLennan, Atlanta, GA 1992, 1–20 and T. Rajak, "Was there a Roman Charter for the Jews?", *JRS* 74 (1984), 107–123.

[3] E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, vol. 3.1, revised by G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Goodman, Edinburgh 1986, section 31.

[4] D. S. Russell, *The Jews from Alexander to Herod*, Oxford 1967, 103–111.

[5] See n. 1 above.

been made the subject of a dedicated and easily accessible study.[6] H. J. Leon's work impressed me greatly with the clarity of its writing and the carefulness of its analysis of the epigraphic evidence, upon which the greater part of his monograph was based. But what also struck me forcibly about that study was the limited interest shown in the political and social context in which the Jews of Rome operated. They appeared to exist in a bubble, seemingly unaffected by any of the well-known changes and developments in the society of which they were part. Although the evidence used in the study covered several centuries, the picture drawn from it was of an essentially static community.

Such were my experiences in 1986. But if my foray into Diaspora Judaism in the Graeco-Roman world were to commence today, what a different situation would I encounter! There now are available so many works dealing with the Jewish Diaspora during that period that an innocent enquirer, such as I was in 1986, would find it hard to know where to start. Without effort I can think straightaway of at least half a dozen single-authored monographs that deal precisely with the sort of questions that prompted me to start investigating the Jewish Diaspora in antiquity in the first place. Works that spring immediately to mind are L. H. Feldman's *Jew and Gentile: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian*, J. M. G. Barclay's *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, I. Gafni's *Land, Center and Diaspora*, P. Schäfer's *Judeophobia: Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World*, and E. Gruen's two stimulating revisionist monographs, *Heritage and Hellenism* and *Diaspora*: *Jews amidst Greeks and Romans*.[7] Even more numerous are the volumes of collected studies dealing with various aspects of the Jewish Diaspora. While a few of these are by a single author,[8] most consist of individual contributions by a plethora of scholars drawn, more often than not, from a wide range of academic disciplines. A path-breaking work in this category was *The Jews among Pagans and Christians*, edited by J. Lieu, J. North and T. Rajak. Its contributors came from the fields of Semitic languages, Jewish Studies, New Testament Studies, Classics and Ancient History.[9] But many, equally valuable volumes of this type have been published since, their focus usually on a single theme or on a few closely related topics.[10] In ad-

[6] H. J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome*, Philadelphia, PN 1960; updated version, Peabody, MA 1995.

[7] Full bibliographical details for each of these works can be found in the consolidated bibliography towards the end of this volume.

[8] See, for instance, T. Rajak, *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome: Studies in Cultural and Social Interaction*, Leiden 2001; P. van der Horst, *Essays on the Jewish World of Early Christianity*, Freiburg/Göttingen 1990; idem, *Hellenism – Judaism – Christianity. Essays on their Interaction*[2], Leuven 1998.

[9] J. Lieu, J. North and T. Rajak (eds.), *The Jews among Pagans and Christians*, London 1992, vii.

[10] Such collections include S. J. D. Cohen and E. S. Frerichs (eds.), *Diasporas in Antiquity*, Atlanta, GA 1993; P. van Henten and P. van der Horst (eds.), *Studies in Early Jewish Epigraphy*, Leiden 1994; S. Jones and S. Pearce (eds.), *Jewish Local Patriotism and Self-Identification*,

dition to these generally rather compact collections, there are now the two very substantial, wide-ranging final volumes of *The Cambridge History of Judaism.*[11] Both contain much valuable material about the Diaspora in the Roman Imperial period. And several monographs devoted either to individual communities or to the Jewish inhabitants of a relatively circumscribed geographical area have also been written in recent years. Of particular note in this category are those by P. Trebilco (Asia Minor),[12] L. V. Rutgers (Rome)[13] and now K. Stern (Roman North Africa),[14] each of them concerned to view the Jews in their wider social context.

Given this tremendous burst of writing about the Jewish Diaspora in the Graeco-Roman period, the question as to its cause naturally arises. Part of the answer lies in the general growth of interest in ethnic communities and identity-issues that is such a marked feature of the post-colonial society in which so many of us now live. Academics do not operate in a vacuum. So it is hardly surprising that issues that concern society as a whole eventually come to affect the scholarly agenda also.[15] But in the case of the Jewish Diaspora in antiquity there has been an additional factor. In the period before the publication of the standard works mentioned above, several extremely important archaeological and epigraphic discoveries were made, the consequence of which was to heighten interest in the Jewish Diaspora in the Roman Imperial period and encourage a thorough reappraisal of it. In the archaeological sphere there was the discovery in the very heart of ancient Sardis in Lydia (now western Turkey) of the largest Diaspora synagogue from the Graeco-Roman world yet to be found. Opulently furnished, this centrally-placed edifice contained a mass of mainly Greek inscriptions which even in their unedited state revealed a Jewish community that was anything but isolated from the Gentile mainstream. For not only did many of its members enjoy Sardian citizenship but some were even city-councillors

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Sheffield 1998; M. Goodman (ed.), *Jews in a Graeco-Roman World*, Oxford 1998; K. P. Donfried and P. Richardson (eds.), *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome*, Grand Rapids, MI 1998; J. Bartlett (ed.), *Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman Cities*, London 2002; J. M. G. Barclay (ed.), *Negotiating Diaspora: Jewish Strategies in the Roman Empire*, London and New York 2004; J. Frey, D. R. Schwartz and S. Gripentrog (eds.), *Jewish Identity in the Greco-Roman World*, Leiden and Boston 2007.

[11] W. Horbury, W. D. Davies and J. Sturdy (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism, Volume Three, The Early Roman Period*, Cambridge 1999 and S. T. Katz (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism, Volume Four, The Late Roman – Rabbinic Period*, Cambridge 2006.

[12] P. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor*, Cambridge 1991.

[13] L. V. Rutgers, *The Jews in Late Ancient Rome: Evidence of Cultural Interaction in the Roman Diaspora*, Leiden 1995.

[14] K. B. Stern, *Inscribing Devotion and Death: Archaeological Evidence for Jewish Populations in North Africa*, Leiden and Boston 2008.

[15] The great interest shown in Jewish women in the Graeco-Roman world, for instance, is directly connected with the growth in Gender Studies. Without the the rise of the feminist tide in the USA, it is unlikely that B. Brooten's ground-breaking study, *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogues*, Chico CA 1982, would have been written.

and thus operating at the very heart of civic life![16] Nor was the Sardis synagogue the only discovery of huge significance. On a par with it was the chance find of the famous 'Jews and Godfearers' *stele* at Aphrodisias, also in western Turkey. Even before the Greek texts inscribed on it were edited and published,[17] it had become clear to scholars that these were probably among the most important Jewish inscriptions from antiquity ever to have been found. With their sharp categorization of Jews, proselytes and Godfearers, the last surprisingly numerous, it was obvious that these texts had the potential not only to settle once and for all the problem of the Godfearers, an issue that had long exercised New Testament scholars, but also to revolutionize understanding of relations between Jews and Gentiles in the Roman Imperial period. What these data-rich *stele*-inscriptions revealed was a degree of co-operation between those two groups across the social spectrum that was totally unexpected. Given these astonishing discoveries at Sardis and Aphrodisias, it is not surprising that in their immediate aftermath there was a great upsurge of interest in the Jewish Diaspora in general and Jewish epigraphy in particular. The huge potential of the latter to cast a bright light upon the interaction between *real* Gentiles and *real* Jews, a subject only dimly illuminated in the surviving literary and legal texts, now came to appreciated far more widely than hitherto.

2. The State of Jewish Epigraphy in 1986 and Subsequent Developments

However, these would-be exploiters of Jewish epigraphy were faced with two serious problems: many inscriptions in the public domain badly needed re-editing; others, though expertly edited, were often hard to access.[18] That there was a desperate need for a good new edition of all the Greek and Latin inscriptions

[16] For an early survey of the synagogue and its contents, see G. Hanfmann (ed.), *Sardis from Prehistoric to Roman Times*, Cambridge, MA and London 1983. It would be many more years, however, before a complete edition of the inscriptions from the site appeared. Publication problems prevented their appearance and it was not until the present century that they finally entered the public domain. See J. H. Kroll, "The Greek Inscriptions of the Sardis Synagogue", *HTR* 94.1 (2001), 3–127 and F. M. Cross, "The Hebrew Inscriptions from Sardis", *HTR* 95 (2002), 3–19. All these texts have now been re-edited by W. Ameling and are presented in *IJO* II, chapter 6. An early foretaste of the contents of this epigraphic treasure-house was provided by L. Robert's publication of a handful of donor texts from the synagogue and its forecourt in *Nouvelles Inscriptions de Sardes*, Paris 1964.

[17] That was by J. Reynolds and R. Tannenbaum in their monograph entitled *Jews and Godfearers at Aphrodisias*, Cambridge 1987.

[18] This is revealed very clearly by the bibliography cited by F. Millar in his geographical survey of the Diaspora in Schürer (revised), vol. 3.1, 3–86. Indeed, it was the scattered and not easily accessible nature of so much of this valuable epigraphic material that was to prompt me in due course to compile a sourcebook largely comprised of Jewish inscriptions. See M. H. Williams, *The Jews among the Greeks and Romans: A Diasporan Sourcebook*, London 1998.

relating to the Diaspora had long been recognised[19] but little had been done to produce one. Scholars in the second half of the 1980s still had to rely mainly on J.-B. Frey's *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaicarum (CIJ)*, the two volumes of which had been published as far back as 1936 and 1952 respectively. Although an attempt had been made by B. Lifshitz in 1975 to upgrade the first volume (Europe) by providing it with a prolegomenon containing numerous corrections and additions (*CIJ* I²), the second volume (Asia and Africa) remained unimproved. Published posthumously from Frey's working notes, this scrappy and unsatisfactory volume had been the object of sustained criticism from the moment that it had entered the public domain. Besides *CIJ*, there were a few other collections of inscriptions that could be consulted. Principal among these were (i) B. Lifshitz' *Donateurs et fondateurs dans les synagogues juives* (Paris 1967), a useful but already somewhat dated compilation of texts relating to benefactions to synagogues, the majority of them Diasporan; (ii) the dossier of Jewish and Judaizing inscriptions from North African compiled by Y. Le Bohec[20] and G. Lüderitz' *Corpus jüdischer Zeugnisse aus der Cyrenaika* (Wiesbaden 1983). But there were many parts of the Jewish world whose inscriptions had never been assembled in a corpus. Asia Minor, in particular, had been rather badly served. Although L. Robert had published and expertly commented upon many Jewish inscriptions from that area, the scattered nature of their publication tended to make consultation of them difficult. A single assemblage of Jewish inscriptions from the Black Sea area likewise had never been made. The same was the case with Syria. The only site in that whole area whose inscriptions had been systematically organized and thoroughly edited was the Jewish necropolis at Beth Sheʿarim in Galilee.[21]

Given the interest that had been stirred in Jewish epigraphy thanks to the major discoveries described above, it is not surprising that now at last serious efforts began to be made in a number of universities, most notably those of Cambridge and Tübingen, to redress this dire situation. It is largely on account of those initiatives that the epigraphy of the Jewish Diaspora in Graeco-Roman times has undergone such a transformation in the past twenty years. As a result of the

[19] Glued inside the cover of my copy of *CIJ* I, once the property of a very distinguished scholar in the field of Jewish studies, is a letter from the late Professor Morton Smith, written in 1978, which reads as follows: "We desperately need a good edition of the Jewish inscriptions. Frey ought to be redone practically from the ground up, and there is a great deal of material to be added." Sadly his plea fell on deaf ears.

[20] Y. Le Bohec, "Inscriptions juives et judaïsantes de l'Afrique romaine", *Antiquités Africaines* 17 (1981), 165–207.

[21] For the Greek inscriptions of Beth Sheʿarim, see M. Schwabe and B. Lifshitz, *Beth Sheʿarim II – The Greek Inscriptions*, New Brunswick, NJ 1974 (English version); for the Aramaic and Hebrew, see N. Avigad, *Beth Sheʿarim III – Catacombs 12–23*, New Brunswick, NJ 1976 (English version).

work of the Jewish Inscriptions Project at Cambridge[22] and particularly that of the final research assistant to that project, David Noy, we now have up-to-date corpora of the Jewish inscriptions from Egypt (*JIGRE*), Rome (*JIWE* II) and the rest of Western Europe (*JIWE* I).[23] Thanks in part to work begun in Tübingen in connection with the *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients*, inscriptions from other parts of the Diaspora which previously had been largely or wholly unmapped have now become accessible through the three volumes of the *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis*, all published by Mohr Siebeck in 2004. Thus for the first time we have corpora of the Jewish inscriptions of Eastern Europe and the Black Sea area (*IJO* I),[24] the whole of Asia Minor (*IJO* II)[25] and Northern Syria (*IJO* III).[26] The importance of these publications cannot be over-estimated. Without them many of the recent studies described above could not have been produced. They have also been invaluable to me in writing many of the papers concerned with the Jews of Italy and Asia Minor that are re-published in this volume. It is to their reception that I now will turn.

3. The Roman Diaspora

Although my research into the Jewish Diaspora in the Graeco-Roman period eventually was to become largely inscription-based, my very first papers (chapters 3–5 below) were stimulated by problems arising out of the literary sources. The first of these centred on Josephus' description at *Antiquities* 20.195 of the Roman empress Poppaea Sabina as θεοσεβής, an epithet capable of bearing more than one meaning and so the catalyst for a sharp debate about the precise nature of that lady's *theosebeia*. While several scholars were of the opinion that *theosebes* in this particular passage had a quasi-technical force and so had inferred that Poppaea enjoyed formal links with Judaism to the extent of being at least a Godfearer (some claimed that she might even have been a proselyte), E. M. Smallwood had interpreted the word very differently: in using this epithet Josephus had meant to imply nothing more than that Poppaea was "religious or, as we should say, superstitious". How could a woman as unrepentantly wicked

[22] The principal directors of this project were Graham Davies, William Horbury and Joyce Reynolds.

[23] For full bibliographical details of *JIGRE* and *JIWE* I and II, see List of Abbreviations.

[24] The bulk of this volume is comprised of the PhD thesis of Alexander Panayotov, the research for which was carried out at the University of St Andrews in Scotland. The remaining sections were written by David Noy, using materials gathered by H. Bloedhorn as part of the *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients* project.

[25] This volume was conceived independently by Walter Ameling, now at the University of Cologne, and so has a rather different format from that of *IJO* I and *IJO* III.

[26] The commentaries in this volume are entirely the work of David Noy who, at the invitation of Professor Martin Hengel, took over the project from H. Bloedhorn.

as Poppaea possibly have had "any leanings towards Judaism" given the latter's strict moral code?[27]

Given my desire to explore cross-cultural relations in the Graeco-Roman world by focussing on things Jewish, this debate over Poppaea's *theosebeia* immediately sparked my interest. Could evidence be uncovered to settle this dispute? Was it possible that none of the interpretations put forward so far was correct? Might Poppaea's relationship with the Jews, on behalf of whose priesthood she had, according to Josephus, exercised herself more than once, been of a rather different character? My researches, conducted primarily via a variety of first-century C.E. texts illustrating female interest in the Jews and Judaism, led me to the conclusion that Poppaea, a woman clearly attracted to everything *à la mode*, probably shared the fascination with Judaism and other eastern cults then very fashionable among women of the Roman élite.[28] Her undisputed immorality, I argued, was no bar to an interest in or even an attachment to Judaism, as the well-documented sexual and religious life of her contemporary, Agrippa II's sister, Queen Berenice, demonstrated all too clearly.[29]

So what has been the response to my paper? Until fairly recently scholars did no more than note its existence.[30] No attempt, as far as I know, was made to arbitrate between the case I had made and the views expressed by previous scholars. Now, however, new evidence has emerged which has been taken by the two scholars who have published it to vindicate my interpretation of Josephus' description of Poppaea as *theosebes*. The evidence in question takes the form of a sizeable Hebrew/Aramaic graffito from the luxurious villa at Oplontis generally believed to have been the property of Poppaea Sabina.[31] On the basis of this text, whose Hebrew nomenclature provides clear evidence for the presence of Jews at the villa, its editors reject Smallwood's arguments for the illusory nature of Poppaea's "Jewish tendencies" and draw the following conclusion: "… she was perhaps more interested in Jewish teachings and customs than one would assume based on other sources, and in her case being a *theosebes* also involved, beyond providing support to the Jewish cause on certain occasions, a willingness to know Judaism better."[32]

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[27] E. M. Smallwood, "The Alleged Jewish Tendencies of Poppaea Sabina", *JTS* N. S. 10 (1959), 329–335. For the two quotations from this article, see 332–333.

[28] A modern parallel is offered by the well-known interest shown by celebrities such as Madonna and Mick Jagger in the Kabbalah.

[29] For a brief résumé of Berenice's colourful life, see Smallwood, *Jews under Roman Rule*, 385–388.

[30] See, for instance, J. M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, Edinburgh 1996, 308, n. 64.

[31] T. Grüll and L. Benke, "A Hebrew/Aramaic Graffito and Poppaea's Alleged Jewish Sympathy", *JJS* 62 (2011), 37–55.

[32] Grüll and Benke, "A Hebrew/Aramaic Graffito", 55.

In contrast to the muted response to my Poppaea article, my second paper, a detailed analysis of the literary sources for the expulsion of the Jews from Rome in 19 C.E. (see chapter 4 below), has been given a much rougher reception. Aware of the fact that no consensus had ever been reached as to the cause of that spectacular break-down in Romano-Jewish relations, I decided that the principal sources for that episode, most notably Josephus, Tacitus and Suetonius, needed a thorough re-examination. Having carried that out, I concluded that the expulsion had come about not because the Jews had engaged in proselytism to an undesirable degree, the most common explanation for that notorious incident; consideration of the wider context suggested that it was their reputation for being a disruptive element in society that had made them a convenient scapegoat at a time of considerable economic, political and social difficulty for the emperor Tiberius, the relatively new and still rather insecure ruler of Rome. Few, however, seem to have been convinced by my arguments. Among the most common objections are these: (i) no source actually mentions the reason I had hypothesized, something I had never attempted to conceal, and (ii) the evidence I had adduced against the proselytism hypothesis and in support of my own interpretation was weak.[33] In the opinion of most of these critics, Jewish proselytising, attested as the reason for the expulsion only in a tiny fragment of Dio preserved by a very late Christian writer,[34] still offered the best explanation for Rome's actions.

Despite this wholesale rejection of my case, however, the issue has refused to go away. My arguments may have failed to convince but not all scholars are persuaded by the proselytism hypothesis either. Those who take a minimalist view of Jewish proselytism during the Early Roman Imperial Period naturally are disposed to discount it as the main cause of this particular incident.[35] So the search for a convincing explanation for this episode, the first large-scale expulsion of Jews in European history, has continued. This has resulted in two contributions of importance, one from L. V. Rutgers[36] and the other from E. S. Gruen.[37] While the former has argued from evidence relating to expulsions as a whole from Rome that the underlying cause always was a concern for 'law and order', a view not so very different from that offered in my own expulsion study, the lat-

[33] See, for instance, Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 302–303; L. V. Rutgers, "Roman Policy towards the Jews: Expulsions from the City of Rome during the First Century C. E.", *Classical Antiquity* 13 (1994), 64; Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 298, n. 42; J. Carleton Paget, "Jewish Proselytism at the Time of Christian Origins: Chimera or Reality?", *JSNT* 62 (1996), 65–103 [85] = *Jews, Christians and Jewish Christians in Antiquity,* Tübingen 2010, 149–183 [169]; E. S. Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans*, Cambridge, MA 2002, 31.

[34] For cogent criticisms of this passage (Dio, *Roman History* 57.18.5[a]), see Gruen, *Diaspora*, 31.

[35] See, for instance, M. Goodman, *Mission and Conversion*, Oxford 1994, 68 and 82–83.

[36] Rutgers, "Roman Policy towards the Jews", 60–65.

[37] Gruen, *Diaspora*, 29–36.

ter has claimed that all the known expulsions of Jews from Rome were, without exception, politically-driven, the authorities on each occasion acting in such a way as to burnish their public image or to divert attention from events that were causing them political damage; on none of the three occasions on which Jews were expelled from Rome had the Jews themselves done anything blameworthy; all expulsions, whether of Jews, astrologers or the worshippers of Sabazius and Isis, were no more than exercises in public relations.[38]

The main problem with both these hypotheses is that they rely, as did mine, on inferences from general context: none of the sources for the Tiberian expulsion itself so much as hints that these were the reasons for it. That disadvantage, regarded as crippling in my case, made me decide that the evidence should be scrutinized again. Perhaps it could be made to yield a more satisfactory explanation than any so far offered if it was looked at afresh. The result of this second enquiry has been a new article, the focus now widened to include all three attested expulsions of Jews from Rome, in which I revise my views about the usefulness of Josephus as a source for the expulsion of 19 C.E.[39] In my earlier study I had refused to attach much weight to his testimony for two reasons: (i) his treatment of the episode was too novelettish and (ii) his claim that the whole of Roman Jewry had been punished by the emperor Tiberius for a financial fraud perpetrated against a single member of the high Roman aristocracy by only four individuals seemed implausible. On further consideration neither of those objections appeared as serious as they once had done. While Josephus' treatment of this episode assuredly is novelettish, there is no reason to doubt the core facts of his account which in essentials is in agreement with that of Tacitus.[40] Besides that, the husband of the victim, whose name and identity are supplied only by Josephus among the writers to refer to the expulsion, is a genuine historical figure of high social status and political importance.[41] Consequently, Josephus' claim that the complaint made by the latter to the emperor formed the trigger for the imperial clampdown on the Jews is not implausible: Tiberius is known to have taken the dignity of the Roman aristocracy very seriously. Nor is that all that can be said in favour of Josephus' testimony. In a passage in Philo that I

[38] Gruen, *Diaspora*, 16–19; 29–41.

[39] M. H. Williams, "The Disciplining of the Jews of Ancient Rome – Pure Gesture Politics?", in *Collection Latomus, Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History XV*, ed. by C. Deroux, Brussels 2010, 79–102.

[40] That can be seen very easily by comparing Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.81–84 with Tacitus, *Annals* 2.85. Also supporting the inherent plausibility of Josephus' account is the extensive use made of it by Beard, North and Price in their discussion of the ways in which the Romans 'patrolled the unacceptable' in the area religious activity. See M. Beard, J. North, and S. Price, *Religions of Rome*, vol. 1, Cambridge 1998, 230–231.

[41] For this high-ranking courtier, G. Sentius Saturninus, and his illustrious relations, see J. Crook, *Concilium Principis: Imperial Councils and Counsellors from Augustus to Diocletian*, Cambridge 1955, 183, nos. 298–300.

overlooked in my previous study there is an allusion that appears to support to Josephus' version of events: in the *Embassy to Gaius* 161 reference is made to an occasion during Tiberius' reign when punishment was threatened against all the Jews, even though the guilty parties were few in number (ὀλίγοι δὲ ἦσαν). With Rutgers,[42] I take this significant admission on Philo's part (the *Embassy* is, after all, a very apologetic work) to be an allusion to the events of 19 C.E. As for the readiness of the Romans to punish an entire community for the crimes of a few, that too on further reflection seems entirely plausible. Several clear parallels present themselves, not least the universal punishment meted out to Jews after the First Jewish War. Jews of the Diaspora had, in the main, not participated in that revolt. Their abstention, however, did not earn them exemption from punishment. The Jewish tax, for example, was imposed by Vespasian upon all Jews everywhere,[43] its scope now far wider than that of the former half-shekel Temple levy for which it was in some sense a replacement.

Whether this, my second attempt at explaining this episode, will be found any more convincing than my first remains to be seen. It is not included in this volume as permission to re-publish was withheld on commercial grounds.

In my third article (chapter 5 below), I wrestled with another problem involving community relations at Rome that had long exercised scholars – precisely who had been the emperor Domitian's victims in his ruthless exaction of the Jewish tax. That he had collected it with greater rigour from those liable to pay was not in doubt (Suetonius, *Domitianus* 12.2). But had he extended its scope from being an ethnic impost (*imposita genti tributa*) and, if so, to whom and why? My answer to the first question was that there had been no officially sanctioned extension of the tax to new categories of people, as several scholars had claimed. What had happened rather was that large numbers of innocent people whose behaviour had caused them to be viewed as leading a 'Jewish life' (*e.g.* Christians, pagan Judaizers, individuals simply copying Jewish customs possibly without even grasping their meaning) had been wrongfully accused by informers (in official parlance, calumniated) and, on being found guilty, either had had their property confiscated by the state or, in a few instances, had even been put to death. The reforms of the new emperor Nerva, enacted in the immediate aftermath of Domitian's assassination, illustrated clearly both the nature of the abuses that had taken place during his predecessor's reign and their gravity. For it was with the utmost urgency that Nerva had moved, first, to quash those false convictions and, where possible, to compensate the victims (one of his earliest coin issues bore the proud legend *FISCI IVDAICI CALVMNIA SVBLATA*) and then to rule that in future no charges of 'Jewish life' were to be laid.[44]

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[42] Rutgers, "Roman Policy towards the Jews", 60, n. 20.
[43] Josephus, *War* 7.218.
[44] Dio, *Roman History* 68.1.2.

But what had caused those abuses to take place? Previously they had been put down simply to the emperor's greed (*cupiditas*) or to his determination to punish those whose behaviour had smacked of treason. For 'atheism', the crime allegedly committed by those who had 'drifted into Jewish ways' (Dio, *Roman History* 67.14.1–2), could easily have been construed by an emperor who insisted upon his divine status as an attack upon his majesty (*maiestas*) and therefore treasonable.[45] However, by considering the evidence more widely than hitherto (*i.e.* by taking into account the general tenor of the literature of the age in addition to the explicit references in the sources to the abusive administration of the Jewish tax and the malicious accusations of 'Jewish life'), I was able to suggest another, more sinister, motive for the veritable witch-hunt of Judaisers that had taken place under Domitian. A marked feature of the court literature of the age was its anti-Semitism. Insofar as the writers most guilty of this, Martial and Quintilian, were seeking either to gain (Martial) or to retain (Quintilian) imperial favour,[46] then it became hard to resist the conclusion that it was the emperor's own prejudices in respect of Jews and Judaism that had helped to foster the conditions in which "something very much like a persecution"[47] had been allowed to flourish.

On the whole, the reception of this paper has been positive and there can be no doubt that it has helped to carry forward the debate about the operation of the *Fiscus Iudaicus* under Domitian and Nerva. M. Heemstra, for instance, the author of a recent, full-length study of that institution,[48] has not only accepted my arguments in the main but taken the analysis of the relevant evidence to an entirely different level. Not only has he categorized the kinds of people caught up in the scandal with much greater precision than I managed to do and explored in far greater depth the question of who was and was not liable for the tax and why, but he has set out with admirable clarity the long-term consequences of Nerva's reforms, an issue that was beyond the scope of my paper.[49]

The only serious challenge to my hypothesis has been offered by Martin Goodman. In a number of publications that have come out over the last twenty years he has developed a radically different interpretation of the evidence from mine. On his understanding of it, only Jews were targeted by Domitian, 'Jewish life' was simply a charge brought for political reasons against high-ranking individuals who had fallen under imperial suspicion, and the *calumnia* removed

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[45] For Domitian's insistence on being addressed as *Dominus et Deus* (Master and God), see Suetonius, *Domitianus* 13 and Dio, *Roman History* 67.4.7.

[46] For a brief discussion of Quintilian and Martial, see M. H. Williams, "Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism", in *The Dictionary of Early Judaism*, ed. by J. J. Collins and D. Harlow, Grand Rapids, MI 2010, 872–873.

[47] For this description of what had happened in respect of the Jewish tax under Domitian, see R. Syme, "The Imperial Finances under Domitian, Nerva and Trajan", *JRS* 20 (1930), 67, n. 2.

[48] M. Heemstra, *The Fiscus Iudaicus and the Parting of the Ways*, Tübingen 2010.

[49] Heemstra, *Fiscus Iudaicus*, 24–84. For more on these consequences, see n. 109 below.

by Nerva was the Jewish tax itself. Abolished by Nerva, it remained in abeyance until its restoration by Trajan, whose less-than-friendly attitude towards the Jews had been inherited directly from his father who had served in Judaea under Vespasian during the First Jewish War.[50] This reading of the evidence has always struck me as unconvincing. In the first place, the meaning suggested for *calumnia* seems strained and implausible: that Nerva considered the post-rebellion tax imposed on the Jews by his respected predecessor Vespasian a calumny against them is hard to believe; given the general context in which Suetonius discusses the *Fiscus Iudaicus*, namely the upsurge in the activity of informers in response to the financial pressures being applied by an emperor faced with a rapidly deteriorating fiscal situation (Suetonius, *Domitianus* 12.1), it surely is far more likely that the word is being employed in its usual sense here – *viz*. false accusation/calumny. Nor are other aspects of Goodman's interpretation persuasive. The main 'evidence' on which Nerva's alleged abolition of the *Fiscus Iudaicus* is based is the absence of Jewish tax receipts at Edfu (Apollinopolis Magna) during his brief reign (96–98 C.E.). However, the body of Jewish tax receipts from that site, the only one from which such documentation has been recovered, is so lacunose that their absence during that short period (Nerva ruled only for sixteen months) need not signify anything. And the motives attributed to Trajan are pure speculation. Given these long-held misgivings on my part, it was pleasing to discover that I had in Heemstra such an eloquent fellow-sceptic.[51]

After these forays into relations between Romans and Jews in the Imperial capital, my attention for a time switched to other parts of the Diaspora, in particular the Jews of Aphrodisias, Corycus and Venusia. Before I consider those communities and my contribution to the study of each of them, it seems appropriate to continue and conclude this discussion of my research into the Jews of Rome. Of the various, mostly epigraphically-based papers I wrote in the period after my study of the *Fiscus Iudaicus* under Domitian, only two need to be considered here, as the contents of the remainder have so far proved to be uncontroversial.

Among the various pieces of research I conducted into the epigraphic evidence for the Jewish community at Rome (chapters 6–11 below), the earliest was concerned with the organization of its burials (chapter 10). H. J. Leon in his monograph on the Jews of Rome mentioned above had argued for a direct correlation between synagogue and cemetery: thus Transtiberine congregations had always buried their dead in the Monteverde catcomb situated across the Tiber

[50] For the most recent exposition of this interpretation, see M. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem. The Clash of Ancient Civilisations*, London 2007, 469–476. For the genesis of this interpretation, see idem, "Nerva, the *Fiscus Judaicus* and Jewish Identity", *JRS* 79 (1989), 40–44.

[51] For his arguments against Goodman, see Heemstra, *Fiscus Iudaicus*, 73–74 in particular. For another expression of disquiet with Goodman's thesis, see J. Carleton Paget's review of M. Goodman's *Rome and Jerusalem* in *BJGS* 40 (2007), 18–24.

on the Via Portuensis, those of the Suburra in the Nomentana catacomb to the north of the city (these days referred to as the Villa Torlonia catacomb complex), and those based in south of the city in the Vigna Randanini catacomb off the great highway to the south-east, the Via Appia Antica. However, by examining carefully the provenance of those sarcophagi and grave-markers on which the synagogal affiliation(s) of the deceased had been inscribed, I was able to demonstrate that that almost certainly had not been the case. Further, by surveying the evidence for Jewish burial practices generally in the Graeco-Roman world, I found that I could also show that the synagogues of Rome were no more likely than synagogues elsewhere in the Jewish world at that time to have taken any part in the organisation of burials. Influenced by local (*i.e.* mainstream Roman) practice, the various Jewish burial grounds of ancient Rome probably had been run on a commercial basis, with different funerary consortia running the different catcombs. That seemed to me to be the simplest explanation of the various dissimilarities that existed between them.

As far as I am aware, no one has challenged that hypothesis. Where my paper has come in for criticism is over the early date I had assumed for this system. Following Frey and Leon, I had suggested that the Monteverde catacomb probably came into use in the late first century B.C.E. and the other two main catacombs by the end of the second century C.E. at the very latest. However, according to one very influential school of thought in the 1990s, Jewish use of catacombs at Rome did not begin before the late second/early third century C.E.[52] So clearly the view I had taken of the matter must be mistaken.[53]

Recent research, however, has now clearly shown that the once widely assumed late start-date for the Jewish catacombs was incorrect. Radiocarbon analysis of fragments of charcoal embedded in the mortar used for sealing off graves (*loculi*) in the Nomentana/Villa Torlonia catacomb complex has demonstrated that at least parts of it go back at least to the first century C.E. and possibly even earlier (c. 50 B.C.E.).[54] From this it is now concluded that virtually from the start of their settlement in Rome in the Late Republican period, the Jews did, after all,

[52] For the clearest expositions of this view, see L. V. Rutgers, "Überlegungen zu den jüdischen Katakomben Roms", *JAC* 33 (1990), 140–157; idem, *The Jews in Late Ancient Rome: Evidence of Cultural Interaction in the Roman Diaspora*, Leiden 1995; idem, *The Hidden Heritage of Diaspora Judaism*, Leuven 1998, chapter 2 (Dating the Jewish Catacombs of Ancient Rome).

[53] See the discussion of D. Noy, "Where were the Jews of the Diaspora Buried?" in *Jews in a Graeco-Roman World*, ed. by M. Goodman, Oxford 1998, 79–81. My interpretation did, however, have the merit of providing an explanation for where Jews had been buried during the Late Republic and the Early Imperial period. Under the late dating proposed for catacomb-use that remained a mystery. Noy suggested (84) that they may have shared burial areas with pagans but evidence for that is completely lacking.

[54] L. V. Rutgers, A. F. M. de Jong, K. van der Borg, "Radiocarbon Dates from the Jewish Catacombs of Rome", *Radiocarbon* 44 (2002), 541–547; L. V. Rutgers, K. van der Borg, A. F. M. de Jong and I. Poole, "Radiocarbon Dating: Jewish Inspiration of Christian Catacombs", *Nature* 436 (2005), 339.

bury their dead in underground communal cemeteries, a practice clearly echoing the common cave-burials of that period in their former homeland, Judaea.

While consensus may now have been reached over the organization of Jewish burials at Rome, the organization of the Jewish community itself, *i.e.* whether it consisted purely of autonomous synagogues or whether it also possessed some kind of central council, remains a matter of dispute. When I first started to think about this subject after an invitation from Martin Goodman to contribute to a collection of studies designed to illustrate the diverse ways in which the Jews of the Graeco-Roman period had interacted with mainstream culture at that time, I found in the more recent scholarly literature a universal reluctance even to entertain the idea, once quite popular, that there might have been some sort of over-arching Jewish council at Rome. The general belief was that the synagogues there had been formally classified as *collegia – i.e.* independent, private associations of a type found in large numbers throughout the Roman world, whose existence was authorised and whose activities were strictly regulated by laws such as the *Lex Iulia de Collegiis*.[55] That being the case, the existence of a supra-synagogal body there of any kind was an impossibility. However, even a cursory examination of the evidence revealed that there was ample room for doubt: not only was the evidence for the collegiate status of the Roman synagogues remarkably weak but there were several references in the sources, both literary and epigraphic, that seemed to point to the existence of a central authority. Manifestly the subject deserved, at the very least, to be looked at afresh. From my subsequent re-examination of the evidence, the following conclusions emerged: (i) there was no clear evidence to support the synagogue/*collegium* equation (in the passages dealing with Roman legislation about the control of *collegia*, the Jews are never mentioned); (ii) while proof positive was lacking, the possibility still remained that the Jews of Rome did possess some sort of central authority.

Insofar as I was 'going against the flow' in this paper, resistance to these conclusions was only to be expected. Dissent there has been but at least one part of my paper has met with a surprising amount of support. S. Cappelletti, for example, shares my opinion that synagogues are unlikely to have been classed as *collegia*.[56] E. S. Gruen has gone even farther. Not only has he given a welcome endorsement to that part of my paper, but he has gone on, first, to spell out with admirable clarity the major differences that existed between *collegia* and synagogues and then to launch a formidable attack against the general tendency to view Romano-Jewish relations in strictly legalistic terms. The Romans, ever pragmatic, recognised that the Jews were a special case: that a formal exemption

[55] For the clearest exposition of this view, see Smallwood, *Jews under Roman Rule*, 134–135.

[56] S. Cappelletti, *The Jewish Community of Rome: From the Second Century B. C. to the Third Century C. E.*, Leiden and Boston 2006, 11.