

Judean Diaspora, Judean War

Class and Networks

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Introduction

When scholars ask about the ways in which ancient Jews interacted with the diversity of their cultural milieu, the bodies of evidence deployed often carry biases foregrounding the concerns and practices of particular groups—and sometimes particular classes—of Jews. There were multiple lines along which individuals understood themselves, multiple networks by means of which they constituted their lives economically, professionally, politically, in terms of cult, in terms of worship, in terms of marriage and family, death, and burial. There is also the issue of homeland and diaspora. Martin Goodman has treated these issues throughout his scholarship and with regards to the Judean War, most prominently in his 1987 classic work, *The Ruling Class of Judaea: The Origins of the Jewish Revolt against Rome, A.D. 66–70*.¹ Goodman argued that transformations in the ruling class left Judean society unable to functionally channel, process, or control its resistant strains and underserved by a class that was ideally brokering and mediating on behalf of the lower classes it was also exploiting. The role of class networks in the course of the war that Goodman explores is the concern this essay seeks to parallel in an examination of the diaspora and consideration of the conditions therein, as well as the long aftermath of the three wars of the 66–135 CE period for the Jews in the eastern Mediterranean diaspora.

For the diaspora we lack the historian Josephus (though he does touch lightly on diasporic Judaism a few times within his *Jewish War*). Instead, I propose to use two types of sources to found an examination of the patterns of integration and isolation (certainly partial, no matter how stridently articulated) among diaspora Jews. The first is the body of inscriptions left by Jews and others about their networks and associations.² The second source is the book of

1. See Goodman, *The Ruling Class of Judaea and Rome and Jerusalem*.

2. Kloppenborg and Ascough, *Greco-Roman Associations: Texts, Translations, and Commentary*—1. *Attica, Central Greece, Macedonia, Thrace*; Kloppenborg, Ascough, and Harland, *Greco-Roman Associations: Texts, Translations, and Commentary*—2. *North Coast of the Black Sea, Asia Minor*; Kloppenborg, Ascough, and Harland, *Associations in the Greco-Roman World: A Sourcebook*, abbreviated AGRW. My debt to the work of these colleagues is deep and wide.

Revelation and the apocalypse known as 6 Ezra. Here I bear a debt to my own earlier work.³ The following sketches recap briefly the arguments by which I see the book of Revelation as a direct source for Judaism in Asia Minor during the Judean war and 6 Ezra as a continuation of that tradition.

My understanding of Revelation as a Jewish text rather than a Christian one works along both methodological and exegetical lines. Methodologically, "Christian" is unjustifiable as an "emic" category for the context (I date Revelation to 69–70 CE), because the category has no witness before 1 Peter and Acts, both of which are likely from the very late first century or the early second.⁴ As an "etic" category, "Christian" is not sufficiently defined in a polythetic manner as a species of religion understood as a human polyadic phenomenon.⁵ Instead, Revelation is usually considered Christian on the basis of a Christian definition of Christianity such as a development of Rom 10:9: "if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." This is an insider rather than an academic definition of Christianity. Exegetically, pivoting to an understanding of Revelation as a Jewish text solves interpretive problems such as the condemnation of "those who say they are Jews and are not" (Rev 2:9; 3:9), the valorization of keeping the commandments of God (Rev 12:17; 14:2), the identity of the 144,000 from Israel or on Zion (Rev 7:4–8; 14:1–5), and the contrast of the Holy City and the Great City in Revelation 11. The result is that Revelation's calendrical and ritual practices, mythological heritage, and ethnic and political positioning⁶ all make sense as elements of a religious complex rightly understood as Jewish, even with a non-consensus view of Jesus as Messiah.

I have argued elsewhere that 6 Ezra, which has long been recognized as depending on Revelation,⁷ is also a Jewish text from Asia Minor.⁸ Theodore Bergren's identification of 6 Ezra as Christian depends on identifying Revelation as a Christian text.⁹ Moreover, 6 Ezra is not very Christian, having no Christ. From this point of view, James Davila's conclusion fails to persuade, indeed because of his insight: "6 Ezra is a Christian work, even though no explicitly Christian ideas appear in it."¹⁰ Given the dependence on a Jewish text, and the

3. Marshall, *Parables of War: Reading John's Jewish Apocalypse*; Marshall, "6 Ezra and Apocalyptic Judaism in Asia Minor," 427–45.

4. More substantially justified in Marshall, *Parables of War*, 69–75.

5. More substantially justified in Marshall, *Parables of War*, 45–54, on the basis of Jonathan Z. Smith, "Fences and Neighbors: Some Contours of Early Judaism," 1–18.

6. Marshall, "John's Jewish (Christian?) Apocalypse," 233–56.

7. Marshall, "6 Ezra and Apocalyptic Judaism in Asia Minor."

8. That 6 Ezra circulated in Greek independently of 4 Ezra, see Grenfell and Hunt, "6 Ezra," 11–15.

9. Bergren, *Sixth Ezra: The Text and Origin*, 15. Bergren's work on 6 Ezra remains the pinnacle work on the text, and I am immensely indebted to it.

10. Davila, "The Book of 6 Ezra (2 Esdras 15–16)," access date unknown, <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/divinity/rt/otp/abstracts/6ezra/>.

lack of any Christ, any specifically Christian ideas or (I would add) any specifically Christian practices, I draw a conclusion contrary to Davila's: 6 Ezra is not a Christian work.

Building upon these arguments, I seek first of all to dispute the narrative that the diaspora was unaffected by the Judean War. To the contrary, Paul Trebilco suggests, "It is clear, therefore, that the sizable Jewish communities in Asia Minor took no part in this revolt and that their position was not much altered by it."¹¹ This formulation does not treat adequately the effects of the war seen in Revelation and echoes in 6 Ezra. The "movement" I want to explore or perhaps the possibility that I want to test by sketching is that certain forms of Judaism such as those represented by Revelation and 6 Ezra are differentiated not simply by a penchant for apocalyptic visions or programmatic idealized resistance to Rome, but also by their disposition to networks of benefaction and civic participation. Their disposition—negative—may both proceed from and reinforce a class position that distinguishes them from those able to give benefaction or return public honor. More speculatively, I suggest that this also disposes them to a different trajectory of recovery from the wars of 66–136 CE.

The Judean War in the Diaspora

While the war in Judea raged or ambled, Jews in the diaspora lived on. The extent to which they heard news of the war in Judea and the extent to which they felt their lives constrained or conditioned by that war, without a direct source such as I understand Revelation to be, are discernable only in a faint outline in historical writings from the late first and early second centuries. For all his problems, Josephus is our prime source.¹²

Josephus' account of the role of the diaspora during the war is quite transparently interested in protecting the diaspora from suspicion, punishment, or reprisals from Rome. Reprisal came most universally in the *fiscus Judaicus*, which diverted the funds that had previously supported the temple to the support of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in Rome.¹³ Josephus mentions at the beginning of *Jewish War* that "Jews hoped that all their fellow-countrymen beyond the Euphrates would join them in revolt" (*J.W.* 1.6).¹⁴ This formulation of a potential force from the Jewish diaspora played on Roman fears of Parthian aggression while diverting attention from Jewish communities within the empire.

Agrippa's speech in *J.W.* 2.398–400 attempts to dissuade the revolutionaries by claiming that Jews in the "foreign cities" (by which he can only mean

11. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor*, 33.

12. This section depends substantially on Marshall, *Parables of War*, 98–121.

13. Heemstra, "The *Fiscus Judaicus*: Its Social and Legal Impact, and a Possible Relation with Josephus' Antiquities," 327.

14. See more examples in Marshall, *Parables of War*, 100–102.

cities of the Roman empire outside of Judea) will be “drenched with Jewish blood” due to pro-Roman violence against local Jews as proxies for revolting Judeans. Agrippa considers “such a massacre” to be “excusable.” Beyond the ancient historian’s creativity in composing speeches, Josephus also narrates specific conflicts in Caesarea and Syria. Conflicts over land usage precipitated conflicts between Jews and non-Jews exacerbated by Roman incompetence. Things got out of hand and Caesarea was “emptied of Jews” in a massacre of twenty thousand.¹⁵ Josephus’ exaggeration is to be expected and when possible compensated for, but the range of responses that Josephus narrates is worth considering. Conflict with gentiles is one. Josephus also describes Jews violently opposing the Jewish revolt, noting that the Jews in one district “ranged themselves on the side of the Scythopolitans and, regarding their own security as more important than ties of blood, met their own countrymen in battle.”¹⁶ Similarly, bodies of Jews in Alexandria and Damascus were attacked by Roman or pro-Roman forces.¹⁷ These cities were not as far from the theater of war as the cities of Asia, but the dynamics of living closely with gentiles during a revolt were foreseeable for other locations.

In the early course of the war, which coincided largely with the paroxysmic struggle to succeed Nero, Vespasian himself travelled overland from Greece to Syria through Asia and Anatolia, passing close to the region of Revelation on his way to meet his legions in Antioch.¹⁸ Later, in June 68 CE, the general, who had travelled from Greece to Judea just over a year before, suspended hostilities and left the city of Jerusalem surrounded and besieged but not attacked. Vespasian dispatched Titus to greet Galba, and the war stood nearly still. Just over a year later, Gaius Licinius Mucianus, the governor of Syria, led a group of almost eighteen thousand troops across Asia to Thrace, through Dacia and on to Rome.¹⁹ The exact route is unclear, and Syme notes that the troops may have been dispersed across more than one route. In the normally ungarrisoned province of Asia, such a movement would have been known. The very soldiers (to Jewish eyes) who had besieged the Temple of God were turned to destroy Rome, or so it seemed. The movement and/or knowledge of this movement must have intensified disagreements among Jews and between Jews and gentiles over the meaning, value, and progress of the revolt in Judea. Paul Trebilco is convinced that the Jewish War, as well as the diaspora rebellion of 115–117 CE and the Bar Kochba rebellion, did not have any effect in Asia Minor.²⁰ I approach the topic differently than he does and see the likelihood of significant ef-

15. J.W. 2.285ff.; 2.457.

16. J.W. 2.466.

17. J.W. 2.494–98, 560–61; cf. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 75.

18. Levick, *Vespasian*, 28–29.

19. Syme, “The March of Mucianus,” 78–92.

20. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor*, 33, 166.

fects in the character of Judaism and the development of Christianity somewhat along the lines of class and network that Martin Goodman saw as crucial to the precipitation of the Jewish War itself.

Associations and Networks in Revelation and 6 Ezra

Three locations in Revelation provide a means of understanding the functions of class, associations, and networks in the lives and ideals of its author and his audience. First, and positively, various assemblies (ἐκκλησία) show up primarily in the description of idealized groups devoted to Jesus in Revelation 1–3. Second, various professions come under criticism in Revelation 18. Third, Revelation 21 describes a civic paradise of great wealth as well as hierarchy and servitude.

The text itself is addressed to the seven assemblies of Asia (Rev 1:4), and the messages of Revelation 2–3 (commissioned in Rev 1:19) focus on a group of Jewish devotees to Jesus, praising and chastising, promising and warning. John denigrates rival groups—twice using the description “synagogue of Satan” to describe associations of people whose claim to be Jews he disputes (Rev 2:9; 3:9).²¹ It is possible, though not determinable, that the context of eating food sacrificed to idols decried in Rev 2:14 is an associational context; certainly the context is communal. Similar criticisms of eating food sacrificed to idols, and similar contextual ambiguities, attend to the criticism of those who follow the teaching of “Jezebel” in the message to the assembly at Thyatira (Rev 2:18–29; 20:20). The criticism of wealth in the message to the assembly at Laodicea (Rev 3:17) is plausibly a criticism of the activities and expressions of loyalty entailed in commercial networks and the associations that sustained those networks. Phil Harland has made this argument extensively and with substantial supporting evidence.²² The following and contrasting admonition to “buy” gold, garments, and salve from the revealing Christ emphasizes the criticism of commercial networks that Harland highlights.²³ The only associations that John portrays positively are those devoted to his God and his Christ.

Chapter 17 of Revelation endeavors to identify the villains of the text with the power of the Roman government; its strategies range from the complex counting of mountains and kings to the transparent explication of the woman riding the beast—“the woman that you saw is the great city which has dominion over the kings of the earth.” The entirety of the Apocalypse has built to this

21. Frankfurter, “Jews or Not? Reconstructing the ‘Other’ in Rev 2:9 and 3:9,” 403–25; Marshall, *Parables of War*, 124–34.

22. Harland, “Honouring the Emperor or Assailing the Beast,” 119–20.

23. Harland also notes the criticism of relations entailed by commercial trade under Roman rule in Rev 13:16–18, wherein only those with the mark of the beast can buy or sell.

point; what follows is judgment. Revelation 18 announces the fall of Babylon, criticizing first kings and merchants. Merchants are the object of critique in 18:3, 11–17, followed by the leaders and laborers of trade by sea—“all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea” (Rev 18:17). Both of these were highly networked professions. We see it in the inscriptions of their associations,²⁴ which cultivate their community of their profession and celebrate the integration of their profession with other networks of power in the city. In Nicomedia the association of shippers “honored P. Aelius Timotheos . . . high-priest and greatest leader, having been leader of the city twice and member of the Council twice. . . .”²⁵ Shipping, cult, and civic governance are tightly intertwined. With a wider purview than Harland, Dominic Rathbone has also outlined the highly complex networks of financial, cultic, and professional interaction that made the dense trade of the Mediterranean possible.²⁶ The text continues with criticisms of sailors and seafarers. These too were a key element of the networks facilitating trade of luxury products ranging from cinnamon to human slaves.²⁷ Trade associations commissioned substantial inscriptions offering honors to civic and political elites, such as PHI 288709, which celebrates the piety of Tryphaina, daughter of King Polemon, and Queen Pythodoris towards the cult of the emperor in which she was a priestess.²⁸ Similarly, sailor associations offered honors to patron gods,²⁹ as well as celebrating their professional solidarity and networks. The power of these networks to bring the trappings of luxury and power to the imperial center is the object of John’s wrath. The deployment of these trappings of luxury and power by John’s God is the object of his celebration.

As an addendum to the witness of the book of Revelation, one may, I argue, use 6 Ezra to obtain a further sense of the sort of Judaism alienated from key networks of civic power that we see in Revelation. Beyond the positive appropriation of the Apocalypse itself, two texts speak to the alienation from civic

24. See, e.g., Harland, PHI 272502, accessed Nov. 12, 2015, <http://www.philipharland.com/greco-roman-associations/?p=6111>. Phil Harland, trans., “Grave for a Leader of the Merchants (undated) | Apameia Kelainai - Phrygia,” *Associations in the Greco-Roman World: A Companion to the Sourcebook*, accessed Nov 12, 2015, <http://www.philipharland.com/greco-roman-associations/?p=1331>. My citation procedure for the rest of this paper will be AGRW number and PHI number when both exist and PHI number together with reference to the *Companion to the Sourcebook* when an AGRW number does not exist.

25. Harland, PHI 278853, access date unknown, <http://www.philipharland.com/greco-roman-associations/?p=13310>.

26. Rathbone, “Merchant Networks in the Greek World: The Impact of Rome,” 309–20.

27. Craig Koester sees John as in principle against slavery. This is no clearer than John being against iron, jewels, and harpists (all of which figure with positive use-value in the heavenly Jerusalem along with slaves). Koester, “Roman Slave Trade and the Critique of Babylon in Revelation 18,” 766–86.

28. Harland, PHI 288709, access date unknown, <http://www.philipharland.com/greco-roman-associations/?p=295>.

29. Harland, PHI 288418, access date unknown, <http://www.philipharland.com/greco-roman-associations/?p=7112>.

benefaction and network that the writer of 6 Ezra envisages. As 6 Ezra 16:47–48 runs:

“Those who conduct business, do it only to be plundered; the more they adorn their cities, their houses and possessions, and their persons, the more angry I will be with them for their sins,” says the Lord.

This differs from the general litany of laboring in vain in the face of imminent and catastrophic judgment that fills this section of 6 Ezra. When it comes to business and the adornment of cities, the text proclaims that more action generates harsher judgment. The adornment of cities signals the kind of context that would generate honors, crowns, inscriptions, etc. in response to patronage. The practice of civic benefaction and the networks that support it or honor those who undertake it are singled out for particular vilification in 6 Ezra. The subsequent prediction in 6 Ezra 16:70 of persecution in the cities against those who fear the Lord may also proceed from the conviction that fear of the Lord is contrary to the type of networks that might mitigate persecution. These are faint manifestations of the more general socially oppositional character of 6 Ezra. This reading of 6 Ezra as a Jewish text sees it making use of Revelation and thus witnessing to a *nachleben* of Revelation within Judaism in Asia Minor, a form of Judaism that had a principled hesitation about the kind of interethnic networking evident in the epigraphical witness.

Associations and Networks among Jews in Greece and Asia

In the last years of the reign of Claudius, three slaves—Karsandanos, Metroteimos, and Karagos—were set free by Psycharion and his sons Sogos and Anos. The obligation of the slaves was devotion to the prayer house (*προσευχήν*), and the guarantor of the manumission was the synagogue of the Jews; evidently *προσευχή* and *συνᾶγωγή* are used synonymously here.³⁰ The ethnic/religious identities of Psycharion and his sons are not determinable from the text inscription, but the position of the synagogue in the community is. It stood as a suitable public guarantor, a place where relations, rights, and obligations could be articulated and adjudicated. Several other manumission inscriptions from the Bosporean client kingdom attest to the role of the Jewish/Judean prayer house or synagogue as public guarantor of a slave’s manumission and recipient of the slave’s loyalty.³¹ Another pre-70 diaspora synagogue inscription that is reliably Jewish³² is a list of donors to the renovation of the Jewish

30. AGRW 89 = PHI 339520.

31. See Harland, PHI 183860, access date unknown, <http://www.philipharland.com/greco-roman-associations/?p=8043>. AGRW 83 = PHI 183859, AGRW 89 = PHI 183718. See also Gibson, *The Jewish Manumission Inscriptions of the Bosporus Kingdom*.

32. Contrast the professional synagogue of Sambathic synagogue, AGRW 289 = PHI 229333.

synagogue in Berenike, Cyrenaica.³³ The donors are both men and women, with mostly non-Jewish and occasionally Jewish names and patronyms. Similar to the Bosporan inscriptions, it is likely that not every individual contributing to the renovation was Jewish. This too attests to rich Jewish participation in the networks of euergetism and benefaction that lubricated the workings of the ancient polis. These examples are taken from the period before the Jewish War of 66–70 CE.

In the period of the wars, from 66–135 CE, manumission inscriptions from the Bosporan kingdom retain their character—Chreste frees Heraklas with the condition of devotion to, and under the guarantee of, the prayer house or synagogue of the Judeans.³⁴ The synagogue that is networked in the center of town continues to be networked in the center of town. The real jewel of this period is the inscription from Acmonia in the late first or early second century that praises Julia Severa and other contributors for the upkeep of the local synagogue.³⁵ Julia receives the first and most fulsome praise. She is well-born, well-connected, and well-heeled as a priestess of the imperial cult in Acmonia, a descendent of Galatian royalty, and mother of a senator.³⁶ The Jews of Acmonia in western Asia had as a patron one of the most powerful people of the region. Of course, Julia Severa distributed her patronage more widely than the Jewish community, and this is exactly what turns benefaction into networking. It is part of what makes a class a class. These two texts, coming as they do in the period between the wars, show at least some Jews continuing the rich participation in the networks that rule their cities.

After the wars, synagogues in Macedonia and western Asia Minor provide one source of inscriptional evidence about networks in which Jewish communities participated. The householder Claudius Tiberius Polycharmos donated the lower floors of a dwelling to the Jewish community having lived his whole life according to Judaism (κατὰ τὸν ἰουδαϊσμόν). Later, a Jewish synagogue was purposefully built on the place, and subsequently a Christian basilica.³⁷ On the west coast of Asia, near Kyme, one Tation constructed a building and gave it to the Jews. They in turn gave her a crown and the right to occupy a front row seat. Tation is not positioned as a member of the synagogue or one who lives according to Judaism, and the language of the inscription positions her as one who gives to the Jews and receives from the Jews.³⁸ While delineating authoritatively

33. AGRW 307 = PHI 324429.

34. AGRW 86 = PHI 182785.

35. AGRW 145 = PHI 270132.

36. See Harland, "Honouring the Emperor or Assailing the Beast," 114; Kloppenborg, et al., *Greco-Roman Associations: Texts, Translations, and Commentary. Volume II: North Coast of the Black Sea, Asia Minor*, 153.

37. Kloppenborg, et al., *Associations in the Greco-Roman World*, 46.

38. Contrast AGRW 46, 270, 283, 307, each of which implies religious participation in the synagogue receiving the donation. It is not clear, and perhaps not likely, that AGRW 283 = PHI 227184 is a Jewish synagogue.

her relation to the Jewish community is not possible, it may well be that her case is similar to Julia Severa's—an instance of benefaction that implied integration of the Jewish community in civic networks without implying participation by the donor. The promise of a seat and a crown is an offer to be recognized for benefaction rather than a mode of religious participation. Finally, a slab from Sardis from about 200 CE details water usage in the city by various urban institutions, comprising several associations and sanctuaries, including the "synagogue."³⁹ On the proposition that this synagogue is a predecessor of the great synagogue of Sardis, we see again a Jewish association literally hooked up to the mainline of civic society.⁴⁰ The Miletus theater inscriptions also set Jews among the guilds of the city and as fan participants in its competitive factions. With a different sort of focus on the individual, grave inscriptions also attest to the prominence of the Jewish community: tending or guarding the grave of a late second- or early third-century Ephesian physician,⁴¹ or the several inscriptions from late second-century Hierapolis where the Jewish synagogue guards the integrity of graves, enforces fines, and maintains accessible archives that corroborate the inscriptions.⁴² These examples are somewhat scattered, but they imply a type of civic integration that the wars have not broken.

The evidentiary status of the Aphrodisias inscription published initially by Joyce Reynolds and Robert Tannenbaum has become more complicated in later debate. If it is indeed from the early third century, as proposed by Reynolds and Tannenbaum, it may have more bearing on our question. In terms of networks, it attests to the participation of members of the civic elite as god-fearers contributing to the work of a Jewish association. The organization is of very substantial size and the god-fearing gentile participants are participating in relationship of benefaction that integrate the Jewish community into wider civic networks of power. Because the date of this text is the subject of such debate, it does not form firm witness to the generations after the war. But even if it is fourth or fifth century, it shows the type of civic integration and the web of patronage that maintains a community's position in urban life.⁴³

39. AGRW 127 = PHI 263128.

40. The literature on the Sardis synagogue is voluminous. See Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years*, 260–70; Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor*, 38–54.

41. AGRW 174 = PHI 250100.

42. AGRW 149, 150 = PHI 271826, 151, 152. AGRW 149, 151, 152 have no PHI numbers.

43. On dating the Aphrodisias inscriptions, see the early position of Reynolds and Tannenbaum, *Jews and God-Fearers at Aphrodisias: Greek Inscriptions with Commentary: Texts from the Excavations at Aphrodisias Conducted by Kenan T. Erim*. Later dates are argued for by Bonz, "The Jewish Donor Inscriptions from Aphrodisias: Are They Both Third-Century, and Who Are the Theosebeis?," 281–99; Chaniotis, "The Jews of Aphrodisias: New Evidence and Old Problems," 209–42; Gilbert, "Jews in Imperial Administration and Its Significance for Dating the Jewish Donor Inscription from Aphrodisias," 169–84; Koch, "The God-Fearers Between Facts and Fiction: Two Theosebeis Inscriptions from Aphrodisias and Their Bearing for the New Testament," 62–90.

Conclusion

At this point we have two divergent bodies of data and the task of making a single narrative to explain the difference. We have Jews participating in networks of mutual aid, patronage, and benefaction, seeking to participate in the (usually metaphorical) hydraulics of power, drawing from (and adding to) the best of their ability the conduits of influence, friendship, honor, and obligation. We also have Jews bitterly critical of the networks of wealth and benefaction that (eventually) subverted the destruction of their temple and left some of their people alienated in the Greco-Roman city. In the case of this latter group, their religious writings ended up in the hands of Christians, treated as Christian compositions by Christian saints and addressed to all Christians. The group of Jews that found a *modus vivendi* endured for centuries. The crossover of documents seen in Revelation and 6 Ezra, as well as Jewish literature, is, I think, the slightly more visible shadow of a movement of people. I suggest for discussion that apocalyptically oriented Christianity in the late second and early third centuries constituted a highly assimilable home for apocalyptic Jews looking for a change in their religious activities. What made particular forms of Christianity an attractive change? Rodney Stark's discussion of the "freerider" problem shows the attraction of high-cost religious groups to individuals who want to be reassured that they are "getting what they paid for."⁴⁴ Christianity's strident valorization of martyrdom and the empire-wide conflicts with Christianity in the third and early fourth allowed Christianity to position itself as a high-cost, high-benefit movement. This is not in any manner an endorsement of the historicity of any massive empire-wide persecution. The edict of Decius may have resulted in the death of some Christians and traumatized more, but it is proper for a scholar to distinguish its intention from both the practical effects on Christians and the Christian collective cognitive and narrative experience of it. The difficulties Christians faced under Diocletian were more substantial without being simply universal. Numbers were small to be sure, but voices were loud. Third-century Christianity may have excelled at narrating the benefits of a cost that certain Jews were already paying. It was not until the fourth century that Christianity could be seen frequently at the table of civic politics. In the period when Revelation and 6 Ezra found their transmission trajectory exclusively in Christian contexts, we may also posit some movement of Jews to apocalyptically oriented forms of Christianity. Simultaneously, the epigraphic record shows the continued power of resourced networks to bind groups into society. To the extent that these inferences are valid, the biases inherent in these distinct bodies of evidence have functioned as a path to knowledge about specific Jewish populations in the ancient Roman diaspora.

44. Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History*, 174–78. The quotation marks indicate a cliché rather than Stark's words.

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