

**ITALIAN STUDIES ON
PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA**

Francesca Calabi
Editor

BRILL ACADEMIC PUBLISHERS, INC.

ITALIAN STUDIES ON PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA

ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN AND MEDIEVAL TEXTS AND CONTEXTS

GENERAL EDITORS

Jacob Neusner

Robert Berchman

STUDIES IN PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA AND
MEDITERRANEAN ANTIQUITY

EDITED BY

Robert Berchman, Dowling College, Oakdale, NY

Francesca Calabi, Università di Pavia, Pavia, Italy

VOLUME I



EDITORIAL BOARD

K. Corrigan, Emory University, Atlanta, USA

L. H. Feldman, Yeshiva University, New York, NY, USA

M. Hadas-Lebel, La Sorbonne, Paris, France

C. Lévy, La Sorbonne, Paris, France

T. Rajak, University of Reading, United Kingdom

E. Starobinski-Safran, Université de Genève, Switzerland

L. Troiani, Università di Pavia, Pavia, Italy

ITALIAN STUDIES ON PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA

EDITED BY

FRANCESCA CALABI



BRILL ACADEMIC PUBLISHERS, INC.

BOSTON • LEIDEN

2003

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Italian studies on Philo of Alexandria / edited by Francesca Calabi.
p. cm. — (Studies in Philo of Alexandria and Mediterranean antiquity,
ISSN 1543-995X ; v. 1) Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

ISBN 0-391-04189-4 (hardcover)

1. Philo, of Alexandria. I. Calabi, Francesca, 1948- II. Series: Studies
in Philo of Alexandria and Mediterranean antiquity (Brill Academic Publishers);
v. 1.

B689.Z7185 2003

181'.06—dc21

2003002081

ISSN 1543-995X

ISBN 0-391-04189-4

© Copyright 2003 by Brill Academic Publishers, Inc., Boston

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored
in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic,
mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written
permission from the publisher.

Authorization to photocopy item for internal or personal
use is granted by Brill provided that
the appropriate fees are paid directly to The Copyright
Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Suite 910
Danvers, MA 01923, USA.
Fees are subject to change.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
<i>Francesca Calabi</i>	
Chapter One: Philo of Alexandria and Christianity at Its Origins	9
<i>Lucio Troiani</i>	
Chapter Two: Upon Philo's Biblical Text and the Septuagint	25
<i>Anna Passoni Dell'Acqua</i>	
Chapter Three: The Image of Israel in the Writings of Philo of Alexandria	53
<i>Liliana Rosso Ubigli</i>	
Chapter Four: Between Pindar and Philo: The <i>Delos</i> Quotation (<i>Aet.</i> 120–122)	75
<i>Enrica Salvaneschi</i>	
Chapter Five: Theatrical Language in Philo's <i>In Flaccum</i>	91
<i>Francesca Calabi</i>	
Chapter Six: The "Mysteries" in Philo of Alexandria	117
<i>Angela Maria Mazzanti</i>	
Chapter Seven: The Stability of Perfection: The Image of the Scales in Philo of Alexandria	131
<i>Paola Graffigna</i>	
Chapter Eight: Philo and the Nazirite	147
<i>Antonio Cacciari</i>	
Chapter Nine: The "Nameless Principle" from Philo to Plotinus. An Outline of Research	167
<i>Roberto Radice</i>	
Index of Philonic Passages	183
Index of Modern Scholars	189

This page intentionally left blank

INTRODUCTION

FRANCESCA CALABI

This collection of essays aims to give an outline of the Italian research on Philo of Alexandria. It does not claim to be complete nor exhaustive. There are other Italian scholars besides the contributors to this volume who are conducting important studies, but I would say that the main trends of current research are here represented. I think that a presentation of Italian scholarship on Philo in an American series is required as there are thorough and important works which are not read for language reasons. Of course, I know very well that in this book there will be expressions which will sound odd or funny to English speaking people and there will probably be also real linguistic mistakes. I apologize for this, but I think however, that it is worthwhile to take these risks and to introduce Italian research to a wider public.

Over the past few years the research on Philo in Italy has had a new lease of life. The studies on the subject already have a sound tradition in books such as C. Kraus Reggiani's *Filone alessandrino e un'ora tragica della storia ebraica*, Napoli, 1967 which is an analysis and a translation of the *In Flaccum* and of the *Legatio ad Caium*, A. Maddalena's *Filone alessandrino*, Milano, 1970 which aims to give a comprehensive picture of Philo, R. Radice's *Platonismo e creazionismo in Filone di Alessandria*, Milano, 1989, A. Mazzanti's *L'uomo nella cultura religiosa del tardo-antico tra etica e ontologia*, Bologna, 1990, F. Calabi's *Linguaggio e legge di Dio. Interpretazione e politica in Filone di Alessandria*, Ferrara, 1998 (transl. *The Language and the law of God. Interpretation and Politics in Philo of Alexandria*, Atlanta, GA, 1998).

R. Radice's *Filone di Alessandria. Bibliografia generale 1937-1982*, Napoli, 1983, which was updated in R. Radice and D. T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria. An annotated Bibliography 1937-1988*, Leiden, 1988 is an important bibliographical tool and is a model for the *Bibliography of Philonic Studies* of "Studia Philonica Annual."

Translations and commentaries were conducted by G. Reale and his school in the *Commentario allegorico*, a translation of many of the

works of Philo made from 1986 to 1994. The translations, accompanied by notes and commentaries, are by C. Kraus Reggiani, R. Radice, C. Mazzarelli, G. Calvetti, R. Bigatti. Other translations are edited by P. Graffigna: *La vita contemplativa* (Genova, 1992) and *La vita di Mosè* (Milano, 1999).

Moreover, many studies were published in journals or are included in general works on the history of ancient philosophy. A reference to these works can be found in the review of A. Mazzanti (*Ricerche su Filone alessandrino*, "Adamantius. Notiziario del Gruppo italiano di ricerca su 'Origene e la tradizione alessandrina'" 3, 1997, pp. 8–12).

Looking at the dates of composition of the quoted works we can easily see that many of them were written in the last ten-fifteen years and the more recent the date, the larger the number of works produced. In fact, the interest in Philo is growing and he is now being studied from different points of view and from different perspectives by scholars belonging to different disciplines. Thus, also the articles in the present book are conducted with various approaches: historical, linguistic, philological, philosophical, as the contributors work within different fields of study. The complexity of Philo requires a multifaceted study and our aim in writing this book was exactly this: to give an analysis which tried to trace Philo's thought in its different components and implications.

Troiani's "Philo of Alexandria and Christianity" is a historical analysis. It stresses that the evidence given us by Philo on the Judaism of his time seems to be important in order to correct some commonly-held beliefs regarding the historical genesis of Christianity. Troiani discusses the notion of Christianity as "religion" in relation with the conceptions of the Graeco-Roman world. He speaks of the relations between Jewish culture and pagan writers, stressing in particular the late and slight diffusion of the *Bible* in the Roman world and the knowledge that the Latin authors had of Jewish tradition: they knew the Jewish way of life rather than Moses' law. The paper deals with the impact of Jesus' preaching on Jewish communities. "Could faith in the miraculous resurrection put an end to the long season of hate, of tensions and division in the practice of the law? Had the past opposing positions on the law, with their respective anathemas, been for ever overcome by faith? Can we better understand the spirit of Paul's letters in the light of these prospective possibilities? We can observe that the large and progressive city of Alexandria, which was the home of a consistent and heterogeneous

Jewish community, is never mentioned amongst the various stages of Paul's journeys. We can only think that those Judaic environments that had most distanced themselves from the regime of the scribes, the Pharisees and the high priests, acted as propagative centres for the new Christian proclamation."

A. Passoni examines the biblical text used by Philo, who considers the Septuagint as authoritative as the original Hebrew text. The problem of biblical quotations in Philo's works has been studied since the end of the seventeenth century. Many of these works were based on critical editions previous to the ones which are now commonly used. The present paper gives a short account of these works and deals with many questions which are still open such as, for example, the problem of how the *Bible* was quoted in the first century. Other unanswered questions concern the influence of the Midrashic tradition on the transmission and the exegesis of the biblical text, the textual tradition of the *Septuagint* and of Philo's works. A comparison is made between the biblical quotations in the first book of the *Legum Allegoriae* and in the Göttingen *Septuagint*.

The essay by L. Rosso Ubigli aims to show the historical and religious conception of Israel in the writings of Philo of Alexandria with special attention to *On the Special Laws*. Reference is also made to *Against Flaccus* and *On the Embassy to Gaius*.

In the first part of her article, the authoress examines the terminology referring to Jews (or Israel) in Philo's writings. She then gives a quick outline of Israel's historical tradition and the Exodus (in relation to which the theme of *polyanthropia* comes to light) and moves on to discuss Moses and the corpus of Scriptures attributed to him. Subsequently, she sketches a historical-political picture of Judaism in Philo's time and illustrates the new notion of Israel which is defined in his writings and which is notably founded on the Law and monotheism. Finally, she focuses her attention on the religious conception of Israel. In this section, the importance of the Decalogue emerges. It is seen as the summa of general principles within which the totality of the Law is reorganized. It is interesting to note the procedure used in reinterpreting the purity rules, which are linked to this or that item of the Decalogue. In conclusion, Rosso Ubigli highlights the intermediary role taken on by Israel with respect to the other populations.

E. Salvaneschi's paper examines in detail one of the three Philonic quotations of Pindar: *Aet.* 120–122 (fr. 33c Snell-Maehler), concerning

the transformation of Delos from a wandering to a steady island. After a survey both of the Pindaric (and extra-Pindaric) sources of the same myth and of the peculiarity of Philo's interpretation, it checks and commentates the Philonian occurrences of *ainittesthai* (and cognate words); they appear to be a key to an interpretative theory of the textual meaning, where heathen poetical tradition sometimes merges into biblical authority. As a consequence, the philological inquiry suggests a possible perspective on the history of ideas and a tantalizing question is put to the reader: Pindar as Moses?

F. Calabi's paper analyzes Philo's use of the theatrical metaphors used to trace the portrait of the emperor and of some political characters such as Flaccus. Philo often uses terms like actor, mime and stage, showing a negative conception of theatre. These terms are not used just as poetical images, they reflect a special point of view which is particularly significant, as theatre and circus performances are very important in Hellenistic and Roman life. In the background we have the classical Athenian conception of political life as public life before the assembly, the notion of theatre as rousing emotions, the Stoic idea of human life as a show on the stage of the world, the Jewish distrust of performances seen as occasions of idolatry and the Platonic idea of a double level of reality and of knowledge: the sphere of truth and virtue and the sphere of falsehood, appearances and simulation.

A. M. Mazzanti deals with some Philonic passages in which a terminology typical of the mysteries is used. Scholars widely differ in their interpretation, ranging from the claim that Jewish Mysteries do exist to the consideration of the use of certain terms only as literary formulae. Philo expresses a negative evaluation of the pagan rituals. On the other hand, the mysteries of God acquire their value in that they lead to the knowledge of the divine, which is not only theoretical but also historical. The setting of an ontological relationship is also considered. An ethical perfection emerges, determined by the formation of a harmonious ordering of the components of the human nature. The perspective is that of a happiness open to all those that seek it. The connection with recurrent basic philonic theses is evident. It is therefore worth pointing out the singularity of the use of aforesaid terminology.

P. Graffigna's work is primarily a lexical analysis of the image of scales in Philo's work and is part of more extensive research on the ethical value of stability in Philo. The image of scales is customary in the author's work and expresses the instability of the human intel-

lect and its useless search for equilibrium. The image of a ship tossed without respite in stormy seas and unable to find tranquillity is often added: according to Philo, human intellect, as the two images suggest, is continuously subject to uncertainty and wavering. Thus, it must act through its willpower in order to steer this movement towards the stillness of contemplation, typical only of God himself. True stability is, according to Philo, to reach God and therefore to proceed to a high level of contemplation, while abandoning the low level: sensation. Hence the human intellect will be able to enjoy stability and peace, virtues of perfection, which can be reached only by those who have God as their model—as in the case of Abraham. Next to these we have people who, like Lot and Cain, yield to the weight of sensation, the wavering of which ends up with the final withdrawal from God. A number of threads intertwine in the unfolding of Philo's thought around the image of the scales: first of all Plato in *Phaedrus*, the Aristotelian notion of immobility, attributed to God and the concept of *mesotes*, the Stoic meditation on stability which is endowed upon the soul. Notwithstanding possible philosophical influences, Philo plainly stresses the capability of human intellect to move freely towards God with an action that expresses its search for happiness. Happiness is peace and unity before God, plus lack of passion and impulses, and thus stability or, even better, the stability of perfection.

A. Cacciari maintains that the treatment of naziriteship within Philo's writings is no doubt important; it is attested by several passages of his works and seems to be a noteworthy example of his method of survey on biblical texts. As a matter of fact, while expounding Numbers 6—the text of reference about naziriteship—Philo apparently follows the same path of rabbinical literature, with two main differences: a) he introduces the categories of Greek philosophy—chiefly Stoicism—in order to explain the nazirite's peculiarity; 2) he puts the stress on the special character of the nazirite's vow, which consists in offering himself.

For R. Radice the inversion in the meaning given to the 'namelessness' of the Principle between Plato and Plotinus does not flow only from their conceptions of the expressive power of a name. That did not change greatly. Rather, it follows from a profound change in the overall understanding of the Principle, which is no longer posited in the ontological sphere, but in the henological. It therefore requires a new theory of naming, and specifically a negative

characterization which can be described as being ‘above words.’ “This has ethical and existential consequences in that it opens up the spiritual conditions for the intuition of God and for contact with him, though it does not reveal his nature and essence. Hence, this is a way that is always open and never concluded. At this point, Radice wonders when this transformation came about. A first point of reference could be Philo of Alexandria together with the Middle Pythagoreanism, the Middle Platonism, Numenius and the Gnostics.”

Contributors

A. Cacciari specialized in Latin Language and Literature. He has chiefly studied ancient Christianity in connection with both Classical and Jewish thought, and in particular: Justin Martyr. Since 1989 he has been taking part in a research project directed by Prof. U. Matitioli about “Old Age in the Classical, Jewish and Christian World.” He is studying also the Greek Bible and joins in a research project which aims at a complete translation into Italian of the *Septuagint* (*Numeri LXX*. Intr., trad. e note a c. di A.C., in: AA.VV., *La Bibbia greca dei LXX*, vol. I, *Pentateuco*, a c. di L. Mortari, Roma, Ed. Dehoniane, 1999; *Siracide LXX*. Intr., trad. e note a c. di A.C., in: AA.VV., *La Bibbia greca dei LXX*, vol. III, *Libri Sapienziali* [work in progress]).

F. Calabi teaches Philosophy in Late Antiquity at the University of Pavia. She studied with M. Dal Pra and M. Vegetti. She works on Philo, on whom she has written many papers and a monograph (*The Language and the Law of God. Interpretation and Politics in Philo of Alexandria*, Atlanta Georgia, Scholars Press, 1998). She has also studied the Greek political thought, writing in particular about Aristotle (*La città dell'oikos. La 'Politia' di Aristotele*, Lucca, Pacini Pazzi, 1984) and collaborating in a new translation and commentary of Plato's *Republic*. She has also edited an Italian translation with commentary of the *Letter of Aristeas* and of Josephus' *Contra Apionem*.

P. Graffigna teaches Greek and Latin at Genova. Since many years she is studying Philo and she has written many essays on the works of the Alexandrian. She translated with introduction and commentary *De vita contemplativa* and *De vita Mosis*. She is also interested in late antiquity literature and philosophy, in particular the neoplatonic bishop Synesius of Cyrene, whose treatise *De regno* she has recently translated.

A. M. Mazzanti teaches History of religions at the University of Bologna. She specializes in anthropological research in the sources of the Hellenistic period, in particular with reference to the Judaic authors of the Diaspora, the Middle-platonic philosophers, and the treatises of the *Corpus Hermeticum*. Her main subjects of research are the genesis of man, his ontology (also in relation to the presence of evil) and soteriological perspectives. The adopted religious-historical methodology (freely drawing on comparative approaches) includes not only the survey of connections clearly attested in a context in which differentiated cultural matrixes meet, but also, and in particular, examination of original data.

A. Passoni Dell'Acqua teaches biblical Philology at the Università Cattolica di Milano. She studied with E. R. Galbiati and O. Montevocchi. She works on the philological and literary study of the biblical Text and the apocryphal literature of the Old Testament. She has published an introduction to the textual criticism of the New Testament (*Il testo del Nuovo Testamento*, ElleDiCi, Torino-Leumann 1994), and an Italian translation with introduction and commentary of the Third Book of Maccabees (in *Apocrifi dell'Antico Testamento IV*, Paideia, Brescia, 2000). The main field of her research is the LXX version. She specialized in lexical surveys in biblical Greek in comparison with Hellenistic Greek and in particular with the language of Egyptian Greek papyri. She is also interested in the legal-political issues of Jewish communities in Egyptian Diaspora.

R. Radice teaches History of Ancient Philosophy at the Università Cattolica di Milano. He worked on Philo, translating into Italian and writing commentaries on many of the author's works. He has written many essays and a monograph on the theme of the creation of the world. He has also worked on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, on Aristobolus, on Stoic thought. He prepared a commentary on Philo's *Legum Allegoriae* (*Paradigmi morali e allegoria in Filone di Alessandria. Commentario al Legum allegoriae*, Introduction by C. Kraus Reggiani, Milano, 2000).

L. Rosso Ubigli teaches Jewish Hellenistic Literature at the University of Torino. She studied with P. Sacchi. Her interests concern Judaism in the Hellenistic-Roman Age in its multiple literary and linguistic manifestations (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek). In particular she works on the writings of the Qumran community and the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. She has edited the Italian translation, with introduction and commentary, of the Aramaic fragments of Enoch's book discovered in Qumran and the translation with introduction and

commentary of the Life of Adam and Eve in Greek—also known as The Apocalypse of Moses—, and The Life of Adam and Eve in Latin, as well as the two Greek recensions of The Testament of Abraham and The Sibylline Oracles (Book Three).

E. Salvaneschi is Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Genova. In her critical activity she is chiefly interested in this subject, especially from the point of view of semantic analysis. She is the author of monographs and essays concerning ancient (Greek, Latin, biblical Hebrew), medieval (Latin, Italian, middle Irish) and modern (Italian, English) texts. In particular, she has translated into Italian with interpretative essays the *Song of Songs* and an Irish text concerning the legend of Enoch. She is also author of a short commentary to the fragments of Aristobulos and of an essay on Colum Cille. Two monographies concern the idea of “crumb” (*Briciola. Storia fantastica di un’idea*) and some important words (and “catch-words”) in different literary traditions (*Ritorno di parole*).

L. Troiani is Professor of Roman History at the University of Pavia. For many years he has been studying the historical literature in Greek of Oriental-Greek origin, produced during the Hellenistic and Roman period. In particular he works on Josephus. He gained his background training at the school of historians such as Elias J. Bickerman, Arnaldo Momigliano and Emilio Gabba, and has particularly analyzed the historical and cultural outline of Graeco-Roman Judaism and of the Christianity at its origins. On these themes he has written many monographs and essays, such as a book on Philo of Byblos and one on Christian forgiveness, a historical commentary to Josephus’ *Against Apion*, plus an Italian translation of the writings of Judaic literature in Greek.

CHAPTER ONE

PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA AND CHRISTIANITY AT ITS ORIGINS

LUCIO TROIANI

I would like to begin with a proverb I know from Pliny the Elder (*nat. hist.* 35,85): *ne supra crepidam sutor* ("shoemaker, do not raise your head above your sandal). Indeed, dealing with the early development of Christianity obliges one to make a rigorous distinction between levels and roles. I shall confine myself here to the typical reasoning of the historian who, by training and owing to the tools he uses, does not know and does not wish to penetrate the meaning of events in a subject in which there is a shared and consolidated tradition of faith. The common heritage of believers must be kept apart from the historical reconstruction. By definition, the latter must confine itself to patiently seeking and collecting, on the basis of the ancient sources utilized, information that throws a glimmer of light on the darkness in which the first decades of the spread of the Christian doctrine are shrouded: specifically, the period running from the crucifixion and resurrection to the travels of St. Paul.

Historical investigation analyses the surface manifestation of past events, which thus appear perpetually changeful. However, the level of theological reflection on the subject of New Testament writings is very different. As Philo of Alexandria would say, the former investigates luck, which "is the most inconstant thing in the world"; the second investigates nature, which is "the most constant thing in the world".¹ Now, precisely such an author as Philo and, in particular, the work conventionally entitled *Embassy to Gaius*, appears to have been little exploited in order to reconstruct the decades in question. Yet, the historic references made by this author to Judaism were contemporaneous to the early spread of the *kerygma*.

Abbreviations: *GLAJJ* = M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, vols. I–III, Jerusalem 1976–1984.

¹ Philo of Alexandria, *Embassy to Gaius* §§1–2.

1. Despite the interesting nature of this subject and the large numbers of studies available (even the most exhaustive), there are some fundamental questions that remain unresolved in the modern studies on the origins of Christianity. The historical answers given to basic questions, such as the primitive identity and spread of Christianity, seem to be relatively straightforward. For example, in both school books and monographs, it is repeated that Christianity is a religion. Now, the fact that it is such for us does not mean that it was so for the contemporaries of Domitian Caesar or Tacitus. We would first have to ascertain whether the Christian movement had, at the time of its foundation, the necessary attributes to be numbered as one of the (many) “religions” in the Greek and Roman world (and this evaluation must be carried out independently of the meaning that the word started to assume after the propagation of the movement). Again, we can say that, with the apostle Paul, the Christian doctrine apparently spread amongst the peoples, in other words, amongst the pagans, without weighing up the objections of a historical and textual nature raised by this point of view. It would have been extremely unlikely that Paul’s theological speculations, so complex and sophisticated, so rich in references and allusions to the sacred text, which are constantly based on specific passages taken from the scriptures, would find supporters or involve “gentiles” who, even if they were not totally ignorant of the contents of the Bible, could scarcely decipher the values required to understand Paul’s exegesis, brought up as they were on the texts of the classics.

On the other hand, recognition of Jesus as the Christ, as the Messiah and son of God, his role as the final product of a divine plan to save Israel, which had already been revealed to the prophets—as is theorized, although with a different perspective, by the New Testament writers—is the fruit of in-depth speculations on the writings that cannot but derive from the complexities and multi-faceted nature of Greek and Roman Judaism. In the long list of Greek and Latin writers who have dealt with Judaism, we do not find any explicit evidence of Bible reading and speculation on this work. A writer with a sincerely irenic approach, such as the anonymous author of the *Letter of Aristaeas*, actually had to justify the lack of mention of the texts of the scriptures in the Greek historians with an argument which was unanswerable: the fact that they were sacred.

We have to wait until the so-called *Anonymous Author of De Sublimitate* (perhaps the first century C.E.) to find a (very short) quotation from

the Bible in Greek and Roman authors. The quotation actually gives the impression of having been taken from a manual on style.² Josephus Flavius, again at the end of the first century c.e., laments the fact that the educated people who informed public opinion were largely ignorant of the traditional Jewish writings and, in the monumental *summa* of ancient thought contained in Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the Philosophers*, there is no mention of the Jewish philosophical tradition. Plutarch discusses some details of Jewish worship, on the basis, perhaps, of direct observation, but fails to give any information whatsoever on the scriptural traditions. Writers of the calibre of Tacitus and Juvenal stress the esoteric nature of the Jewish culture; the former offers six versions of the origins of the Jews, although at no point does he openly draw on or show that he knows of the existence of a Jewish historic tradition. Juvenal (60–130 c.e.), perhaps from his observation of a Jewish family from the capital, condenses his information on the transmission of the law of Moses with the phrase “everything that Moses bequeathed in an arcane book”.³

This difficulty is usually overcome by postulating the existence of a group of people who sympathised with Jewish and monotheistic practices, which had, for some time, been associated with the world of Abraham and Moses. It is a fact that texts of various origins, coming from different sources—from rabbinical literature to the classical and New Testament texts—provide evidence as to the existence of this class.⁴ Now these “God-fearing persons” have been determinedly excluded from the world of Judaism, in the backwash of an interpretation of the New Testament that confines the Jewish identity to a restricted circle of “authorized personnel,” as one might say, and likewise in the wake of the Mishnaic treatises that compound the error of identifying the whole of Judaism during the early centuries of Christianity with the regulatory, rabbinical variety.

However, as clearly emerges from the evidence of Philo of Alexandria, Greek-Roman Judaism was cosmopolitan and international, deep-rooted through generations in the life and institutions of the individual cities to which those who practised it belonged. In *Embassy*

² *Letter of Aristaeas* §§312–317, *GLAJJ* no. 148.

³ Cf. Plutarch, *Quaestiones Convivales* 669C–672B = *GLAJJ* no. 281. Tacitus, *Historiae* 5,2 = *GLAJJ* no. 281. Juvenal, *Saturae* 14,96–106 = *GLAJJ* no. 301.

⁴ In my opinion, the best and most fully documented discussion of the question is provided by Stern, *GLAJJ* no. 301.

to *Gaius*, the Jewish community in Alexandria is presented as “a part of the Alexandrians.” *Gaius Caesar* was able to show *Agrippa I* his astonished censure of the scruples of Jewish life that his friend was supposedly enamoured of (§182; cf. §157 and 350; §268). The Jewish citizens of the infinite cities of the Greek and Roman world, from Egypt to Phoenicia, from Syria to Coelesyria, from Pamphylia to Cicilia, from Bithynia to Pontus, from Thessaly to Boeotia, from Macedonia to Aetolia, from Attica to Peloponnesus, from Euboea to Cyprus and Crete—to say it with the words of *Philo*—had been “cohabiting” for generations in the city with the other citizens. Again, following the words of *Philo*, they were defined, within the individual cities, not as “Jews,” but as “those who boasted that they followed the practices of the Jews” (§370). The Alexandrian author knows full well that, for the Jews in Rome, “Jewish citizenship” did not mean that they could not be “Roman” citizens (§157).

In particular, starting from the fundamental research carried out by *Jean Juster*, the juridical aspects of the “citizenship” required by the Jews in the ancient cities began to be studied: from *Ephesus* to *Sardis*, from *Cyrene* to *Alexandria*. One wonders whether they had equal rights and status to all the other citizens. The discussion ends up obscuring another aspect, which is perhaps not of lesser importance: the communities wanted and felt themselves to be an integral part of public life and of the institutions. This circumstance allows us to consider the cultural and historical milieu of the *Epistles of St. Paul* in a different way. Indeed, there are indications (in *Paul’s Letters*, and in the *Acts of the Apostles*) that those who heard the Christian message were neither simple nor neophytes. The citizens of *Beroea* are described as having directly checked the truth of *Paul’s* declarations in the text of the Bible;⁵ *Paul* is presented as an arbiter in scriptural disputes and has to constantly reconfirm the divine origin of his authority.⁶

On the other hand, the class of sympathisers, who were particularly in vogue during the years following the fundamental research studies of *Jacob Bernays* and *Emil Schürer*, is now given less credit (a circumstance that recurs with great regularity in the history of our studies, with its cyclical rituals of acceptance and rejection).

⁵ Acts of the Apostles 17,11.

⁶ Cf. especially 1 Corinthians 1,10–17; 2 Corinthians 3; Galatians 1,11–14.

Thomas Kraabel entitled an article published in the journal "Numen" in 1981 "The disappearance of the God-fearing".⁷ Evidence of the rise in number of pagan sympathisers attracted to Judaism was sought (and found) in the contemporary Greek and Latin literature, when it speaks of Jews and Jewish practices. The Graeco-Latin authors, voicing the traditional worries of the conformists and patriots with regard to beliefs and ideologies that they believed could compromise the values of society and thus its stability, came to the aid of this conception. Their presumed worries are interpreted as a sign of the spread of Jewish practices and beliefs. These interpretations are, at times, rather forced. For example, Horace's comparison of the flock of poets—who could come to his aid—to the Jews, who would oblige people to enter the group, does not necessarily show that there was any wish to acquire proselytes but, as seen by an outside observer, rather a desire to maintain the compactness and cohesion of the community.⁸ Moreover, the historian must distinguish between times and places. The worries of Tacitus about the dangers presented by international Judaism and by those who were converted to its practices must be set in the context of the psychological climate that was created following the ripples caused by the recent war with Rome.

2. "To proclaim," for the first Christian missionaries, meant to make known a doctrine based on the sacred scriptures. These contain—as Josephus says—history, prophets and precepts (*Against Apion* I,39–40). As Philo testifies, the Judaism of the Diaspora, which co-existed with Jesus and his life, defined the comment on the sacred scriptures as education in the "philosophy of the fatherland." The doctrine of Paul appears to be the product of long familiarity and assiduous study of the scriptures, made up of debates and disputes amongst the followers of the law of Moses: "when, meeting in the synagogues, especially on the sacred seventh day, they are publicly instructed in the philosophy of their fatherland" (*Embassy to Gaius* §156). Now, the ancient Greek and Roman contemporaries of Jesus who left us the memory of their religious sentiments provide evidence that the Christian faith, which centred on the kerygma, in other words, the proclamation—making known in public a message of redemption and liberation, (the "good news")—did not belong to

⁷ Ed. Will-Cl. Orrieux, "Proselytisme Juif"? *Histoire d'une erreur*, Paris 1992.

⁸ *GLAJF* no. 127.