

# ANCIENT JUDAISM

*New Visions and Views*

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## CHAPTER 1

### *Our Perception of Origins: New Perspectives on the Context of Christian Origins*

#### The Time and Place

There are periods of history as there are places on earth that played a particularly important role in the development of the religious and intellectual culture in which we live. Why these particular ages and these particular places were so fruitful is a mystery not yet resolved, but the fact itself is undisputable. Certain scholars would relate significant developments in religious and intellectual culture to particular stages of social and economic development. At such junctures of events, they maintain, intellectual classes developed in society, striving after the transcendent emerged, and value systems were structured in terms of realities outside the confines of the natural world. These crucial segments of time have been called “Axial Ages.”<sup>1</sup>

Fifth-century Athens was such a crucial place and time for human civilization; Renaissance Italy was another; a third was the eastern Mediterranean basin in the last pre-Christian centuries and the early years of the present era. Modern Western culture<sup>2</sup> is largely built on foundations laid

1. Some of the phrasing in the preceding paragraph is drawn from Stone, *Scriptures, Sects and Visions*, 1. The term “Axial Age” derives from Jaspers, *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte*. An interesting series of studies based on this concept may be found in Eisenstadt, *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations*. Arnaldo Momigliano makes brief, but incisive remarks on the Axial Age idea in *Alien Wisdom*, 8-10.

2. I am conscious, of course, of the complexity and polyvalency of the term “culture” and of the presuppositions lying behind the statement above. I am interested, however, in how modern scholarly views that became dominant were engendered and themselves both

in these and similar crucial periods, and here I shall consider the last of the periods and places mentioned, the eastern Mediterranean basin immediately following the turn of the era. Among the great events that took place there and then were the origin and spread of Christianity and the development of Rabbinic Judaism.

So, one may ask, why should these events be studied again? Has not two thousand years' diligent labour taught us almost all that there is to know about them? Is there not a consensus, still accepted by most scholars, on what happened then and how it all came about? The fact of the matter is that modern people have a great deal to learn from a reexamination of that time and that place. "The root of the word is not the root of the matter"; the study of origins does not necessarily explain the outcome. Yet, the outcome, the present day, cannot be comprehended in depth without seeking to understand the past as well.

Moreover, when we examine the time and the place in which those events happened, they turn out to be singularly interesting in their own right. These discoveries deserve reexamination, not least because a series of archaeological discoveries, particularly in the course of the last century, cast new light upon them.<sup>3</sup> They include new manuscript finds that impe-

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reflect and determine further presuppositions about culture and history. Whatever disclaimers we may wish to make about their lack of balance, their hegemonistic assumptions, etc., such presuppositions are still determinative in large part in scholarly discourse. Therefore, their origin is worth considering. Vered Hillel remarked to me that "scholars have a remarkable capacity to graft their own preoccupations onto the ancient world," and so we need to strive to know much about these preoccupations. This task is beyond our purpose in this chapter, but the issue is well formulated. For example, Marinus A. Wes points out the interplay in the historical writing of the great exile Russian historian Michael Rostovtzeff between his life in the situation following the Russian revolution and his historical writing. Wes remarks, "All history is contemporary history. This point also applies to the history of ancient Rome"; *Michael Rostovtzeff, Historian in Exile*, 59-78, citation from 61. This is partly illustrated below, in our remarks in note 39. E. P. Sanders has dealt with the same problem for New Testament scholarship in *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, ix-51. William G. Dever, *Did God Have a Wife?*, in a chapter entitled "The History of the History," presents an analysis along the same lines of scholars of ancient Israelite religion (32-62). It is to be hoped that further information may be found in Baumgarten, *Elias Bickerman as a Historian of the Jews*, forthcoming. From a quite other perspective, in *Alien Wisdom* Momigliano remarks that "[t]he triangle Greece-Rome-Judea is still at the centre and is likely to stay at the centre as long as Christianity remains the religion of the West" (11).

3. We are now seeing how not just the discoveries themselves, but the way they are interpreted, can revolutionize the study of ancient religion. A clear example relating to an earlier period of Israelite religion may be seen in Dever's recent book mentioned in the preced-

riously demand that assumptions sanctified by two millennia of learning and tradition be questioned. New material evidence requires us to reassess things we thought we knew. This is, on the whole, a healthy requirement. When time-hallowed assumptions and “beliefs” are set aside, the “old” evidence too speaks with a new and different voice and is heard with different ears.

If the twentieth century was the “century of the manuscripts,” the crown of all its manuscript discoveries was the sectarian library known as Dead Sea Scrolls.<sup>4</sup> The discovery of the sectarian scrolls, i.e., those reflecting the particular views and beliefs of the sectaries who lived at Qumran on the Dead Sea coast, has uncovered, or better recovered, a type of Judaism existing in the last pre-Christian centuries, at whose existence we would otherwise scarcely have guessed. Moreover, these scrolls give us insights into the preceding period, between 400 and 200 B.C.E., for which we have very little data. When we examine the textual basis of the history of ancient Israel and Judaism, it is both true and remarkable that virtually the only literary or historical works surviving from the thousand years or more of the history of Israel down to the conquest of Judah by Alexander the Great (332 B.C.E.) are those included in the Bible. Of course, the Hebrew Bible was not the sum total of the literature produced by ancient Israel, and it contains numerous references to other works, which are lost.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, during and after the fourth century B.C.E. the biblical evidence itself peters out (except for the book of Daniel). Obviously, this poses great problems for historians of Judaism, and the early dates of some of the Dead Sea Scrolls themselves, and the even

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ing note. Indeed, *mutatis mutandis*, the issue broached by Dever, i.e., the relation between the “book religion” familiar from the transmitted textual sources and “folk religion” evident from archaeological data and, I may add, “nonofficial” sources, impinges richly on the problematic I am discussing. Peter Brown also deals with this; see note 26 below. Arthur Darby Nock made extraordinarily fruitful use of inscriptional evidence to illuminate and indeed to uncover many dimensions of Greco-Roman religion, as may be observed in many of the papers in Nock, *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*.

4. See, for general introduction, VanderKam and Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, is still valuable.

5. In an interesting experiment, Gary Rendsburg assembled evidence for the history of ancient Israel from extrabiblical sources alone. The results were surprisingly rich; “Israel Without the Bible,” 3-23. Doron Mendels, studying the corpus of Greek historians, points out that once a given historian gains a firm, recognized position, his sources disappear and his transmission of the sources replaces them; *Memory in Jewish, Pagan and Christian Societies of the Graeco-Roman World*, 3-29.

earlier dates of some of the compositions they contain, cast an invaluable light on this obscure age.<sup>6</sup>

### Spectacles of Orthodoxy<sup>7</sup>

It is true that history is no “hard science,” a point much belaboured in recent times. We can know, so we are told, not secure facts but various narratives, telling of the past. Yet, I feel it necessary to emphasize, the historical enterprise cannot be reduced to rehearsal of a number of ancient (or modern) narratives with equal claims on our credulity. Nor does the historical enterprise release us from the obligation to apply what archaeological or other corroborative data we have to the ancient narratives and to assess them for verisimilitude, parsimony, and plausibility.<sup>8</sup> Modern sen-

6. Stone, *Scriptures, Sects and Visions*, 27-35. Elias Bickerman makes considerable use of late biblical works as evidence for his studies of the Hellenistic period; e.g., *The Jews in the Greek Age*.

7. I use the words “orthodox” and “orthodoxy” to designate the eventually dominant forms of Judaism and Christianity. In more terminologically sophisticated use, it may be maintained that the term “orthodoxy” is not really appropriate for description of Judaism in Late Antiquity (and perhaps later). Daniel Boyarin discusses this in *Border Lines*, particularly in his introductory section (7-15). Note also the conspectus by Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed in their important “Introduction” to the interesting book of essays on this subject that they edited; *The Ways That Never Parted*, 1-33. I intend, when I use “orthodoxy,” to describe forms of Judaism and of Christianity that eventually became dominant, and so am positing neither a contrast with “heresy” nor a complete sameness in kind of Judaism and Christianity. Boyarin’s distinctions are enlightening and significant, but for issues I am not really addressing here. I am less interested here in the modality of the differences between Judaism and Christianity (cf. Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 19-21) than in the result of their distinction for the transmission of texts. The types of likeness and unlikeness he limns do provide a series of contexts in which we might well find the material that interests us transmitted, again noting that the patterns of “Parting of the Ways” now being undermined in the history of Judaism and Christianity should not be perpetuated in the study of texts. The transmission channels may well have been different, but they were also not hermetically sealed from one another, even from Byzantine and later times, as is evident, *inter alia*, from the material discussed in Chapter 7 below.

8. John J. Collins gives a survey and critique of recent methodological approaches to ancient Israel in *The Bible after Babel*. John Barton, *Holy Writings, Sacred Text*, 16, cites the Austrian scholar Franz Stuhlhofer, who remarked, in connection with the New Testament canon, that “As with all processes that ended in an outcome which is still valid in the present, we historians are in danger of judging matters with too much regard to the present. . . . But in reality past times often had quite different questions to ask, and quite different goals,



sivities, indeed, bring us to pose new questions of the evidence.<sup>9</sup>

When Jews and Christians tell the story of the last pre-Christian centuries and the turn of the era, which is of the time of Christ and the founding of Christianity, those tellings are not dispassionate. The “baggage,” the cultural memory of the modern historians, affects the way they view and tell that story (see also note 2 above). When contemporary historians’ religious faith is also involved in this telling (and not infrequently their personal belief system<sup>10</sup> is grounded in a particular perception or interpretation of this piece of the past), the problem is compounded.<sup>11</sup> These factors, in some instances, have real implications for the way the history of that crucial age is written. Robin G. Collingwood, in *The Idea of History*, aptly remarked that history is in the present and not in the past.<sup>12</sup>

Two main factors, then, condition our understanding and view of the history of Judaism during the age of the Second Temple. One is the historians’ presuppositions, the “baggage” and assumptions that they bring to their task. The other factor is the character of the sources of information that are available and how we read them. These two factors are intimately related.

The selection of the source material transmitted by both the Jewish and Christian traditions was determined by the particular varieties of Judaism and Christianity that became “orthodox,” or in other words, that became dominant and survived.<sup>13</sup> I adhere in general to the view of

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from later ones, so that we fail to understand the past if we try to grasp historical sources by using modern categories of thought.” As far as he goes, Stuhlhofer is right, but he ignores the point that we can ascertain different goals of the past only from the vantage point of the present. *Mutatis mutandis*, this is true of the object of my remarks, but I would stress the necessity of “unpacking” the multilevel and complex influence of “orthodoxy” both on the transmission of and on the perception of the past, and this task will be discussed below.

9. Elizabeth A. Clark, *History, Theory, Text*, charts the methodological debate of the past half-century. In chapter 7 (156-85) she shows how some of the insights engendered by that debate affect the way ancient texts, in particular texts relevant to early Christianity, are to be read.

10. Or a rebellious reaction to it.

11. Natalie B. Dohrman writes very justly: “The methodological and confessional biases that inform the history of this period are, if not different in kind, then perhaps distinguished in degree from those that infl[i]ct all historical endeavours.” See Dohrman, “Name Calling,” 1-5, esp. 1. See the discussion of “Past and Present” and “Presentism” in Clark, *History, Theory, Text*, 18-21.

12. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, 154-55. See Clark, *History, Theory, Text*, 108-10.

13. My approach to this issue is resolutely nontheological. Survival is no proof of being “right” or “wrong.”

an initial diversity that developed into orthodoxy, and not of a pristine orthodoxy that degenerated into variety or diversity.<sup>14</sup> This is true both of Judaism and of Christianity. Observe that these Jewish and Christian orthodoxies only became established as such after the period that I am discussing.<sup>15</sup>

Now, once these later orthodoxies were established, of necessity they viewed the earlier ages through the prism or spectacles of their own self-perception. They cherished only such sources and such information relating to the earlier ages that agreed with their understanding of their past and of themselves. They had no “distance” from their own traditions. So, Judaism and Christianity preserved and transmitted Second Temple-period writings not because they were acceptable in the Second Temple period itself (though some of them may well have been) but because they were acceptable to the forms of Christianity and of Judaism that became dominant, sometimes considerably after the Second Temple period.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, because the later orthodoxies were regnant, they created or profoundly influenced the worldview that, even today, dominates how we see the past. Western culture is informed by the “orthodox” Christian understanding of this segment of antiquity, however politely in recent decades this has been called “Judeo-Christian.”<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, in historical writing, we must construct the “other” from a memory transmitted through

14. My position is far from being an innovation. See already Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*. Of course, the various orthodox readings of the past, for the most part, assume an original single orthodoxy (identical with themselves) that subsequently diversified. The perspectives arising from close examination of specific segments of the past have challenged and nuanced this statement. See, e.g., Lyman, “Hellenism and Heresy,” whose analysis of Christian variety in the culture of the second century shows that the structure I present above is too simplified. Yet, in looking at scholarly perceptions, her critique makes exactly the point I am stressing, that later orthodoxies, or, if you will, later concepts of orthodoxy, have (pre-)determined much of what historians have written. The bibliography she cites is helpful, and her chapter on the origins of heresiology is nicely nuanced to show how, at a somewhat later time, the discourse was positioned to be both exclusive and inclusive. It relates, of course, to the point of view of the dominant tradition; see Lyman, “Heresiology.”

15. See Stone, *Scriptures, Sects and Visions*, 49–56. This point of view is well forwarded by Kraft and Krodell in Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*.

16. In Rabbinic Judaism the factor of genre also came into play. See further, note 23 below.

17. Only some narrow segments of the scholarly world have in fact had Jewish “spectacles,” and in a deep way, those too are Judaeo-Christian spectacles, for the very scholarly endeavour in the study of the Second Temple period is itself motivated by Christian, particularly Protestant, religious concerns.

“oneself,” and oneself perceives things through the spectacles of tradition and cultural memory.<sup>18</sup>

First, let us consider in further detail the impact of the “spectacles of orthodoxy” on the survival and perceptions of the data. This may be discerned at a number of levels, and it impacted different types of data in different ways. As we said, religious writings were preserved and transmitted from antiquity because those forms of Christianity and Judaism that became dominant cherished them, or at least regarded them as acceptable. Other writings may have been lost either because they were rejected or due to other quite different (even random) causes. However, when a transmitted tradition preserves writings over time, this shows that they are acceptable to and accepted by that tradition.<sup>19</sup> Generally, “unorthodox” works were not preserved;<sup>20</sup> although some ancient religious groups kept material they regarded as unacceptable, predominantly for polemical purposes, i.e., in order to controvert it. In Late Antiquity, writings containing unacceptable views were often paraphrased or excerpted verbatim, and the polemical context in which they survived clearly reveals attitudes towards them.<sup>21</sup>

18. A complete relativism, as is said to typify certain “postmodern” approaches, is not the only possible outcome of this situation: in general, see Collins, *The Bible after Babel*; Clark, *History, Theory, Text*, 23-25 and her statement on 157. It might well be possible to go beyond it by specifying the perspective from which one speaks.

19. A collateral consideration, of course, is the great investment of labour and expense involved in producing and copying books (i.e., on scrolls and in codices). Book production was not trivial and, therefore, book survival within a tradition of transmission was not usually haphazard. As far as I know, on the whole, premodern traditions of Judaism and Christianity did not preserve writings with which they did not agree, for purposes, say, of research, documentation, curiosity, or the like. See the next note.

20. This statement should be modified to the extent that Christian heresiologists, and also Muslim ones, preserved data about “heresies” (groups with differing views); see note 21. See further on Christian heresiology in note 14. Such differing views were preserved primarily for purposes of refutation. At least, Mesopotamian libraries like Ashurbanipal’s and apparently the great library of Alexandria were intended to assemble or preserve knowledge or documents, an intention also evidenced by the Byzantine transmission of Classical Greek literature. But, these were not collections with a particular religious orientation and certainly not with an exclusivist one. See van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*, 240-41; and Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, 19, 195-96.

21. We have in mind polemical or heresiological writings like Josephus, *Contra Apionem*; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*; etc. Excerpted writings were very widespread in the Hellenistic period, with various functions. Cf., for philosophical doxography, Mansfeld, “Doxography of Ancient Philosophy,” and *Heresiography in Context*.

It follows, therefore, that Second Temple–period writings transmitted within the Christian (and Jewish) traditions were those acceptable, not in the Second Temple period itself, but to the forms of Christianity and of Judaism that came to dominate after the Second Temple period,<sup>22</sup> for the domination of these streams developed after the destruction of the Second Temple.<sup>23</sup>

If this general point of view is accepted, a further level of complication ensues. “The Second Temple period” actually designates half a millennium, and presumably a process of selection (deliberate or not) also went on during that half-millennium. In addition to ideological or theologically driven considerations, which were doubtless the weightiest, the expense and labour of hand-copying a book must also have served as a winnowing factor. Books that had to be hand-copied were presumably considered important and worthwhile enough (for content, for function, or for some

22. There has been much debate on the question of “normative” Judaism before the destruction: see, e.g., Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 124-73, esp. 134-37. Cohen points out that the term “normative” implies not just that it was the religion of most people. On 135 he remarks justly that “the term ‘normative’ conveys a notion of ‘rightness’ and is best avoided. (Appropriate substitutes are ‘popular’ and ‘dominant.’)”

23. In Rabbinic Judaism a further specific factor was at work, that of genre, which apparently became a filter (even passive) of acceptability. This may, of course, be an external expression of certain attitudes to authority and so have been dominated by “ideological” concerns. See Chapter 4 below on some aspects of this. The rabbis favoured crystallisations of exegetical and legal school traditions, and we have no books written by a single author within the mainstream Jewish-Rabbinic tradition until the Geonic period. Exceptions, such as the mystical texts and *Sefer Ha-Razim* (if indeed they are as old as some maintain), most likely come from outside the mainstream or from its fringes. These works, moreover, have a different view of their source of authority than the rabbinic school tradition. Here is not the place to make the detailed argument, but one can observe safely that language and culture divided the Eastern from the Greek-speaking Diasporas, with far-reaching results. Although there are some mentions of Sages visiting Rome, and the like, we do not know how far rabbinic influence extended into the Western Diasporas. Indeed, we have almost no works from the Greek-speaking (Western) Diaspora after the *de Iona* and *de Sampson*, on which see page 79 below. Alexander Kulik points to the background implied by some Slavonic writings, which is evidence of Jewish culture in Greek after the early second century C.E.; “Judeo-Greek Legacy in Medieval Rus.” As for Jewish-Latin writing, perhaps the *Epistle of “Annas” to Seneca* falls into this category: see Momigliano, “The New Letter by ‘Annas’ to ‘Seneca.’” See also *Collatio Legum Mosaicarum et Romanorum*, on which see Rutgers, “Jewish Literary Production in the Diaspora in Late Antiquity.” An overview of problems and pre-suppositions affecting the presentation of Jewish scholarship in Byzantium, and particularly Hebrew scholarship, may be found in de Lange, “Hebrew Scholarship in Byzantium.” See further, note 41 below.

other reason) to justify the expense and effort.<sup>24</sup> Thus, to take the criteria emerging from subsequent orthodoxies as those determining the preservation or production of manuscripts in the Second Temple period is an anachronism. Instead, the dynamics engendered by changes in society and religion must be taken into account.

Yet another layer of complexity may exist when we consider the character of Judaism in the Second Temple period. The difference between “official” and “popular” religion, graphically illustrated for ancient Israel by William G. Dever and others and for the Middle Ages by Carlo Ginzburg and others, should be borne in mind. Dever shows that the religion projected by the biblical books of the First Temple period is a “book” religion cultivated by certain (quite limited) groups in society, while the type of religion reflected by archaeological finds from many and varied sites and, indeed, implicit in certain statements in the biblical books as well when they are read in light of the archaeological data was very different. Ginzburg’s approach seeks to reconstruct popular religion, i.e., ancient beliefs still held by the peasant population, which were quite different from the views of the church that were cultivated in higher levels of society. Being interested in the time of the Reformation, he reconstructs these popular beliefs by sensitive reading of official records (particularly of the Inquisition). Ginzburg penetrates behind the structures of accepted doctrine and ideas, even when what he perceives was not understood by the Inquisitors, whose thoughts were themselves informed by official ideas and approved doctrines. So he traces the changes in popular religion coming about due to its conversation with the religion propagated by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. We are led to ask

24. New works were also written in that period, which, as we know from Qumran, was very fertile in literary production. The reasons for the preservation of the literary manuscripts at Qumran in the conditions in which they were found are unclear and have been much debated. The character and purpose of this assemblage or these assemblages of texts are still obscure. Was this a “library”? Norman Golb has proposed that the Scrolls were not the library of a single sect, but a library or libraries from Jerusalem that were transferred to Qumran. See most readily, Golb, *Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls?* VanderKam and Flint summarize the critique of this position in *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 253. See also on the character of the caves and the overall coherence of the collection, Stökl Ben Ezra, “Old Caves and Young Caves.” On libraries in Greco-Roman antiquity, see Stökl Ben Ezra, “Libraries in Greco-Roman Antiquity and New Testament.” A recent, detailed article reaching very complex conclusions about the Qumran caves and the groups of manuscripts in them is Pfann, “Reassessing the Judean Desert Caves.” See further discussion in Chapter 2, note 60.

whether such approaches might *mutatis mutandis* prove fruitful in the study of Second Temple–period Judaism. Might evidence be found for the existence of types of religion in the Second Temple period that are not explicit in the written record? Such evidence could come even from sensitive reading of textual sources, such as Tobit, or from archaeological and epigraphical discoveries.<sup>25</sup> Of course, such a search might prove to be in vain, and the written records, even before the emergence of rabbinic orthodoxy, might cohere and overlap with the religious practice and beliefs of most people. In this paragraph, I am entertaining a possibility, no more.<sup>26</sup>

Only certain varieties of Judaism and Christianity survived after the end of the first century C.E. (or rather, are known to us from the traditional literature). Certainly, the growth and probably increased dominance of certain streams of Judaism and the attrition of others must have been underway before the last quarter of the first century C.E.<sup>27</sup> I chose that time as a watershed because towards the end of the first century and in the early second century Rabbinic Judaism emerges fully into the light of day and Christianity grows into separateness.<sup>28</sup> The paramountcy of Rabbinic

25. Dever, *Did God Have a Wife?*; and Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*. It coheres with Ginzburg's demonstration in *The Night Battles* of how folk religion changed its view of itself as a result of the expectations and influence of a hegemonic orthodoxy.

26. Peter Brown in *The Cult of the Saints*, 1–22, critiques a static “two-tiered” model of “elite” and “popular” or “vulgar” religion, and would perceive, as Ginzburg did, a complex and changing religious reality only partly expressed by the formulations by the “elite.” He particularly calls on us to beware of assuming change only in the “upper tier” and to be conscious of various levels of religious dynamic.

27. Josephus's remarks on the Pharisees (*Ant.* 13:298) may reflect some such development, if they are not tendentious. On his views on the Pharisees, see Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees*.

28. As is frequently the case in other periods and, indeed, as is to be expected, the archaeological evidence and texts from outside the rabbinic tradition show more variety of types of Judaism during the first centuries C.E. than do the traditional texts. Consider the illuminations of the Dura Europos synagogue (extensive bibliography exists: see, e.g., Weitzmann and Kessler, *The Frescoes of the Dura Synagogue and Christian Art*); the Zodiac and other representations on synagogue floors in the Land of Israel (see Magness, “Heaven on Earth”); and Jewish Greek inscriptions (see note 50) and their implications for the character of Judaism in the Eastern Mediterranean basin and Asia Minor. Jewish elements have been discerned in the Greek magical papyri (see Betz, “Jewish Magic in the Greek Magical Papyri [PGM VII.260–71]”); and in Corpus Hermeticum 1 (see Pearson, “Jewish Elements in Corpus Hermeticum I [Poimandres]”); and for a general description of the Hermetic corpus, see, among other sources, “Hermetic Writings,” in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 5:875).

Judaism was the result of a long process. The consequent rise to dominance of the type of Christianity that became orthodox was also not a one-time event but a centuries-long process. Both processes were underway by the start of the second century C.E.

These dominant forms of Judaism and Christianity determined which sources were transmitted from antiquity, and thus they profoundly influenced the formative tradition of Western culture. For the historian of antiquity, this situation produces a closed circle in two respects:

- a. The actual textual corpus is “filtered.” What was transmitted to the present was for the most part such as reinforced the claims and position of the eventually dominant varieties of Christianity and Judaism.<sup>29</sup> Concepts like canon, apostolic authority, and oral Torah provided an ideological underpinning for this endeavour. The books that survived were those visible through the spectacles of orthodoxy, and they were often, through one strategy or another, provided with the *imprimatur* of divine authority.<sup>30</sup>
- b. The preserved data are themselves selected by the orthodoxies of a period later than that of their creation, and scholars perceive in them evidence that accords with and buttresses those orthodoxies. Indeed, it is those orthodoxies that have formed the cultural context of the scholars’ own days, for, to a great extent, the scholars’ contemporary cultural context determines what they perceive. Consequently, they tend to privilege the elements that are in focus through those particular “spectacles,” even if other phenomena are present in the same data. This selectivity is, for the most part, not deliberate.

There is here a vicious circle, and being conscious of it is an essential first stage of our historical research. In order to position ourselves as far as we can “outside the box” of the regnant tradition, it is helpful to think from perspectives other than those prescribed by that tradition itself. In this lies the value of the work of nonmainstream and dissenting scholars, who highlight phenomena that conflict with the consensus and thus force

29. Indeed, as I have explained above, it was doubly or multiply filtered: first during the Second Temple period itself and then subsequently in the course of the centuries.

30. Of course, groups and documents in the Second Temple period also arrogated such sublime authority to themselves. See Stone, “Apocalyptic — Vision or Hallucination?” = *Selected Studies in the Pseudepigrapha*, 419-28; and much of the modern debate on canon, which is discussed in Chapter 5 of the present work, and on visions, in Chapter 4.

“consensus” colleagues to take account of them.<sup>31</sup> I am not saying that these other perspectives should be adopted just because they lie outside the received orthodoxy, but that it is necessary to recognize our own inherited cultural complex<sup>32</sup> and to attempt to challenge it from varied perspectives and so achieve a more nuanced view of the past preceding the coming into being of our inherited orthodoxies.

Now is the time to consider this assertion in further detail. As I have said, many scholars engaged in the task of delineating Judaism of the “preorthodoxy” period are themselves working from the presuppositions of the later Jewish or Christian orthodoxies. So, they may tend to study and emphasize those aspects of Judaism of the period of the Second Temple that were important for the development of the later orthodoxies, Jewish or Christian, or for the exegesis of the Scriptures accepted by those later orthodoxies. Thus Jewish scholars tend to emphasize features of the Jewish literature and thought of the Second Temple period that resonate with rabbinic literature. Works by Jewish scholars have been devoted predominantly to the halachic (Jewish legal) aspects of the documents, to their exegetical methods and their relationship to later midrashic (homiletic) traditions and collections, and the like.

Christian treatments of these writings have been equally one-sided. In them, two factors were at work. First, as the Jewish scholars did with relation to rabbinic sources, so Christian scholars sought those features of the Second Temple-period Judaism which were directly relevant to the understanding of their own tradition, i.e., the New Testament, or of early Christianity. There are innumerable studies, for example, on Jewish messianism in the period of the Second Temple. Dozens of books and articles have been written on the term “Son of Man” in 1 Enoch, not because of the intrinsic importance of this concept in 1 Enoch, but because it is the closest

31. See Smith, *Palestinian Parties and Politics That Shaped the Old Testament*. Dipesh Chakrabarty poses analogous questions raised by postcolonial history and asks what happens when the hegemonic culture changes; *Provincializing Europe*. Dever’s challenge to the schools of Biblical Theology and Biblical Archaeology is similar; *Did God have a Wife?* 35-39, 60-62.

32. Eric R. Dodds in *The Greeks and the Irrational* calls this, following Gilbert Murray, an “Inherited Conglomerate,” and in chapter 6 (179-206) of that book, he looks at the impact of intellectual, social, and political change on the “Inherited Conglomerate.” Dodds does not ask our question, which is how, once the inherited conglomerate has formed, do we look at the period or situation or society before that happened, for the cultural conglomerate itself will affect, perhaps determine, how we view the anterior situation.



Jewish parallel to the designation of Jesus found in the Synoptic Gospels. Indeed, the subject is still under active discussion.<sup>33</sup>

This point should be clarified further. I am not denying that it is appropriate to study Judaism of the Second Temple period in order to find information to help elucidate this or that matter in the New Testament. This is quite proper and, indeed, absolutely necessary. The New Testament was written in the Second Temple period and, from one perspective can be regarded as an integral part of Jewish literature of its age. Indeed, the first body of literature with which earliest Christian literature should be compared and which can illuminate it is obviously the contemporaneous literature of other Jewish groups.

Problems arise when the exegetical task is confused with the historical. For example, it is quite appropriate to search out and indeed to find illuminating parallels to New Testament messianic expectations in contemporary Jewish writing. To use the sorts of questions that one might ask in the course of that task, or the sort of criteria it might lead one to apply to the sources, in order to describe overall Jewish eschatological hopes of the same period, may well be misleading. There is no particular reason to assume that the particular crystallization of Jewish messianism found in the New Testament was typical, normal, or widespread in Judaism. That might be the case, but it was not necessarily so; whether it was “typical, normal, or widespread” is one of the issues that must be investigated by a historical study.

In other words, to allow the New Testament to determine the categories according to which Judaism is to be described may lead to distortion.<sup>34</sup>

33. See, e.g., the substantial volume (xv + 537 pages) recently published by Boccaccini and von Ehrenkrook, *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man*. But a parade of earlier works precedes it. See, e.g., the vast majority of the studies on the *Similitudes of Enoch* listed by DiTommaso, *A Bibliography of Pseudepigrapha Research 1850-1999*, 401-9.

34. See Green, “Introduction: The Messiah in Judaism,” where he deals with the question of early Christian manipulation of the Messiah theme in the New Testament, making it look like a prominent and recognized category while it was probably, Green maintains, marginal and unimportant. He says (6), “The model [that the Messiah was an essential category of ancient Judaism MS] limned by an apologetic use of scripture was accepted by later scholarship as a literary fact and a historical reality, not only of scripture itself, but also of Israelite and Jewish religion.” See also Charlesworth, *The Messiah*, where there are several important studies which support the observation being made here. In his introduction to this book, Charlesworth valiantly defends the Judaism of Jesus and his disciples and raises issues that emerge from the paucity of messianic references in the literature of Second Temple Judaism (3-35). Observe that many of the anomalies to which he points are generated by the question

The use of categories derived from New Testament perceptions to describe Jewish ideas might be completely appropriate. It might equally be true, however, that, when seen from the overall perspective of contemporary Judaism, the views expressed by the New Testament were peripheral in the spectrum of Judaism. We cannot determine the status and position of one or another Jewish messianic view by its importance in the New Testament, even less by the importance of the New Testament for Christianity. For instance, we must discover the importance for ancient Judaism of a given eschatological view, concept, or idea by assembling and evaluating the evidence for Jewish eschatology of that age, of which the material contained in the New Testament is part. This is the task for the historian of Judaism. It would be equally misleading for a historian to work under assumptions that were determined by the character of Rabbinic Judaism in the second or third centuries C.E. Again, a later orthodoxy would determine how the material is assessed, the way the evidence is examined, and the questions posed to it. Once more, distortion would lurk at the doorway.

If I labour this point, it is because the task of the historian of religion of this period has all too often been abandoned for or confused with that of the biblical exegete or theologian. It is in this period, nonetheless, for the first time that historians of Judaism have at their disposal extensive textual information that comes from outside the received, authoritative tradition.

There are other factors that have affected Christian study of Judaism in the age under discussion. One has to do with certain Christians' attitudes towards Judaism, which have been determined by the idea of "supersessionism," the view that the church is the new Israel, replacing the old one. Another factor is that the canonical literature of Christianity, the New Testament, was written down at the time when Christianity was still very much involved in its polemic with and struggle for self-definition over against Judaism. This has led to a negative attitude of some Christian scholars towards Judaism, founded on theological grounds.

Judaism was seen by these scholars as a basically negative phenomenon, the stiff-necked perversity of a misguided people refusing in their obstinacy to recognize the quite evident correctness and illumination of Christianity. Such views obviously contributed little to the task of present-

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about Jewish views of the Messiah, which is itself determined by early Christian reading of the New Testament. An earlier article, dealing with many of these issues, but not as explicitly, was Smith, "What Is Implied by the Variety of Messianic Figures?"

ing the religious phenomena of Judaism as faithfully as possible. However, such attitudes have permeated much of the description of the religious history of the Jews from the time of the First Exile onwards. They are reflected in many influential and basic works of modern biblical and historical scholarship, such as the great multivolume history by Emil Schürer.<sup>35</sup> This is the case despite the fact that faithful presentation of Judaism is necessary to understand the context of Christian origins.

Needless to say, the nature of relations between Judaism and Christianity also affected the way in which Jewish scholars described Judaism. Apologetic themes permeate Jewish writing on the period and combine with the tendency to read later orthodoxy back into an earlier age. Thus, many Jewish scholars tended to discount those aspects of Judaism in the period of the Second Temple that seemed to run counter to the rather rationalistic religion of law that they wished to picture.<sup>36</sup> It suited this apologetic very well to read back a justified Rabbinic Judaism into the prerabbinic age. Many of the features of that earlier age which seemed most like Christianity as it had developed could thus be presented as aberrations. Typical of this attitude, which characterized nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century Jewish scholarship, is the following quotation from the *Jewish Encyclopaedia's* article on "Messiah":

As the future hopes of the Jews became Messianic in character the figure of the Messiah assumed a central and permanent place in apocalyptic literature; and as apocalyptic literature in general, so the Messiah-concept in particular, embodies a multitude of bizarre fantasies, which cannot possibly be reconciled or woven into anything like a connected picture. There are many factors, which contributed to this manifold and variegated imagery. Not only was all the Messianic and quasi-Messianic material of the Scriptures collected, and out of it, by means of subtle combinations, after the manner of the Midrash, a picture of the Messiah sedulously drawn, but everything poetical or figurative in the Prophets' descriptions of the future was taken in a literal sense and expounded

35. Attitudes to Judaism permeating New Testament scholarship are analyzed and set forth by Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, ix-59, who notes with approval the much earlier article by George Foot Moore published in 1922, which was then a voice crying out in the wilderness; Moore, "Christian Writers on Judaism?"

36. This is evident even if we discount extreme views, such as those of Yitzhak Baer in, say, "Israel, the Christian Church, and the Roman Empire." These views permeated Yehoshua Efron's works, such as *Christian Beginnings and Apocalyptic in the History of Israel*.

and dogmatized accordingly. Many foreign elements, moreover, crept in at this time and became part of the general potpourri of imagery relating to the Messiah.<sup>37</sup>

Such apologetic motives affected the way Judaism was viewed, and they functioned as criteria for selection and presentation of the evidence. This selected evidence was then used to serve ends other than the historian's tasks of attempting to present the situation in the past as straightforwardly as possible, which itself is no simple matter. Others have analyzed the motives that led scholars of Judaism in the nineteenth century (the founders of modern Jewish studies in the tradition of the "Science of Judaism") to present this kind of picture.<sup>38</sup>

### The Sources and Their Transmission

Instead of having the biblical literature as a dominant literary source, as is true of preexilic Israel,<sup>39</sup> the student of the period from 200 B.C.E. to the early second century C.E. is blessed with numerous and varied sources. The problem is not how to fill in gaping blanks by the most reasonable inference, although there are always gaps; instead, it is how the multiple, surviving sources are to be evaluated and what picture of Judaism and Christian origins emerges from them and, moreover, what can be inferred from what they do not say. There were many groups, sects, and trends within Judaism before the destruction of the Second Temple, such as Pharisees and Sadducees, Essenes and Zadokites. Of all of these groups only two survived — Pharisaic-Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity.

What information about this period did the continuous Jewish tradition preserve, that tradition which came down to us in the Hebrew and Ar-

37. Jacobs and Bittenwieser, "Messiah."

38. See, e.g., the value judgements underlying the articles "Cabbala" and "Zohar" in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* of 1905, which is a sort of epitome of predominantly Jewish scholarship of the nineteenth century. Interestingly, the article on "Apocalypse" was written by a non-Jew, Charles Cutler Torrey. Gershom G. Scholem presented the influence of nineteenth-century liberal and rationalizing apologetic in the early pages of *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 1-3. See also the discussion of this in Alexander, "Mysticism."

39. I am in sympathy with Dever's work championing the contribution of archaeology to the understanding of the religion of Israel in the First Temple period; *Did God Have a Wife?* Historians of Second Temple Judaism might well utilize the evidence from archaeology more effectively.

amaic writings of the rabbis of the centuries immediately following the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E.<sup>40</sup> The rabbinic tradition preserved little information concerning the overall picture of Judaism in the period preceding the destruction. We can discern that there were various and differing groups within the Jewish community, and that some of these differed from the “protorabbis.”<sup>41</sup> However, no realistic idea would emerge of the wealth, variety, and complexity of Judaism of which we learn only from sources other than Rabbinic Judaism.<sup>42</sup>

As I said, ancient religious groups did not preserve for scholarly purposes or for their own interest the opinions, much less the writings, of those from whom they differed. A far greater range of sources survives for history of Judaism in the period following 200 B.C.E. than for the preceding centuries, precisely because many of those sources were preserved outside the received Jewish tradition.<sup>43</sup>

The chief context in which such extracanonical Jewish writings survived was the Christian church. As Christianity spread throughout the East (and eventually the West), first sacred scriptures and then other writings of interest to the new Christians were translated into the languages they used, initially into Greek and Aramaic (or somewhat later, Syriac<sup>44</sup>), and subsequently into Latin, Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, Arabic, and other tongues. This development was very fortuitous, for different churches preserved in various languages ancient Jewish writings that were

40. For the moment I leave aside the tradition of the large Greek-speaking Jewish Diaspora. This tradition will be mentioned below, but it was only preserved in an episodic way: see de Lange, “Judeo-Greek Studies.” Évelyne Patlagean, “Remarques sur la diffusion et la production des apocryphes dans le monde byzantin,” touches on some of these issues. In any case, it was not dominant in Jewish consciousness through the centuries.

41. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 60-62, discusses the thorny issue of the relationship between the Pharisees and Rabbinic Judaism. Jacob Neusner also approaches the issue from a tradition-historical perspective: see *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70*, 1-7. These works are mentioned by way of example. The bibliography on the Pharisees is very extensive indeed.

42. Stone, *Scriptures, Sects and Visions*, 49-56.

43. The scholarly literature on these sources is extensive. A detailed bibliographic resource for many aspects of this period is DiTommaso, *Bibliography*. From a different perspective, rich, if not always well-organized information may be found in Denis and Haelewyck, *Introduction à la littérature religieuse judéo-hellénistique*.

44. Since Syriac is an Aramaic dialect, scholars have suggested that on occasion Syriac Christian literature absorbed Jewish traditions more or less directly, without a Christian Greek intermediary stage. A classic study of this is Brock, “Jewish Traditions in Syriac Sources.”

completely absent from the rabbinic tradition. As will be seen below, however, the Christian churches were not the only channels that preserved Second Temple Jewish writings and traditions.

One of the main collections of such writings are the books called the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. The Apocrypha were preserved (except for 4 Ezra = 2 Esdras) as part of the Greek Bible, while numerous cognate works, called in modern times Pseudepigrapha, survived as well.<sup>45</sup> Many of them were translated into Greek, and some even composed in that language. Even when its Greek text was lost, a work was often saved by a translation made from the Greek. We do not yet know why the Christian tradition preserved certain writings and not others; this remains to be studied. All these writings, however, were transmitted outside the Jewish tradition and must have been acceptable to the dominant tradition of Christianity.<sup>46</sup>

Writings were transmitted from antiquity in various and sometimes unusual fashions. While the content of some of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha might have been considered objectionable by the rabbis, in many other cases this was not so. Yet the rabbinic tradition preserved none of the extracanonical books in their Hebrew or Aramaic originals.<sup>47</sup> We do not know why they disappeared, but perhaps it was due to changes in the attitude to Scripture and in the genres of writing.<sup>48</sup> Yet, if we wish to understand the ground from which Christianity sprang and the soil that nurtured it, we must learn all we can about Judaism at the turn of the era. These books are the chief literary evidence.

Remember! If we were dependent on the rabbinic sources alone, we would know very little about the Maccabean revolt or about the war against the Romans in 68-70 C.E. A good deal is known about the former because of two books we have in Greek — the first two books of

45. See my article "Categorization and Classification of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha," and my discussion of the genre types in "Introduction" to *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*. Despite the growing number of new documents from Qumran, the issues remain unclear and no final consensus has been reached on how Jewish literature of the Second Temple period is to be categorized. See further, note 60 below.

46. Chief collections of such writings in English are Charles, ed., *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*; Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*; Sparks, *The Apocryphal Old Testament*. The range of works included in these collections varies.

47. Ben Sira might form an exception, for the rabbis knew it, at least in a florilegium of citations. Moshe H. Segal, *Sefer ben Sira Ha-Shalem*, 37-43, has assembled the rabbinic evidence. Most recent is the thorough reassessment by Wright, "B. Sanhedrin 100b and Rabbinic Knowledge of Ben Sira." See also Chapter 7, notes 5 and 47 below.

48. See note 23 above and 137, 154-55 below.

Maccabees. We know a great amount about the war against the Romans because Christians preserved the Greek writings of the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus. Without his histories, written in the last decades of the first century C.E., our knowledge of the first revolt would be as fragmentary and sketchy as our knowledge of the second revolt led by Bar Kokhba, half a century later. Again, had the Christian church not preserved the writings of the Alexandrian Jewish philosopher Philo (ca. 25 B.C.E.—ca. 45 C.E.), his major attempt to express Judaism theologically using the conceptual tools formulated by Greek philosophy would itself have remained unknown. Instead, we have inherited a shelf of his writings, because Philo showed the way to the Alexandrian school of Christian theologians and so the Christian tradition cherished his writings. Without the Christian churches, all the numerous and very variegated Jewish writings in Greek would have been lost, except for the knowledge of the fact that the Bible had been translated into Greek. Even the text of the Greek Bible translation was preserved by Christians, not Jews.<sup>49</sup>

Archaeology, too, has favoured the historian of Judaism of the period after the Maccabean revolt. The Dead Sea Scrolls, one major find, were discussed above. Studies of Jewish Greek inscriptions have yielded insights into Jewish communal organization, the role of women in Jewish Diaspora communities, the relationships between Jews, Christians, and pagans in Greek cities, as well as into religious life and eschatological expectation.<sup>50</sup>

Thus, the variety and multifaceted nature of Judaism in the age following the Maccabean revolt against Greek rule that broke out in 167 B.C.E. has been revealed thanks to sources preserved outside the tradition of rabbinic literature. As a result of these channels of transmission, only the literary sources uncovered by archaeologists, i.e., some inscriptions, as well as manuscripts such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, are in Hebrew or Aramaic. The other documents, preserved by Christianity, are all extant only in Greek (or sometimes Syriac) or in translations made from Greek.

49. Some Jewish Greek Bible fragments have survived among the Judean Desert finds, most notably the Minor Prophets scroll from Naḥal Ḥever: see Tov, *The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Naḥal Ḥever* (8HevXIIgr).

50. There exists a very considerable corpus of Jewish Greek inscriptions. They are not documented here, but some idea of their importance can be gained from van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs*; “Jews and Christians in Aphrodisias”; and Brooten, *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue*. See the catalogue being edited by David Noy, *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis*; and Horbury and Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt*. There are further volumes in this series.

So, to the usual problems that historians face in the interpretation of ancient documents are added those that arise from the fact that very many of the source documents are translations whose originals have perished. Particular problems arising in the study of translations include the following. First, the text of the translation must be recovered (or as much of it as possible) by application of textual criticism, the study of the manuscript variants. Next, the character of the translation itself must be determined. Is it accurate and faithful, or is it periphrastic? Is it literal or a polished literary production? Was the translation made from a sound, reliable copy of its original? The peculiarities of translation compound the difficulties of interpretation, and, if the text in the original language is missing, it is even more difficult to tell exactly what came from the pen of the author and what is a later embellishment, addition, or interpretation by a translator, scribe, or copyist.<sup>51</sup>

Despite these inherent problems, the variety of Jewish religious literature and expression preserved only outside the Jewish tradition is notable and important. These include complete works and also citations or references to works that did not survive whole.<sup>52</sup> Yet, it should immediately be observed that the selective preservation of sources was by no means the exclusive prerogative of the Jewish tradents. If all we knew of Judaism at the time of Christ was the information preserved in Christian sources, then major dimensions of Judaism would not be known at all and our view of other parts of it sadly distorted. The Christian tradition preserved nothing of the extraordinary breadth and richness of Rabbinic Judaism, and Christianity's view, of the Pharisees for example, was crystallized in the course of polemic and is partial and tendentious, to say the least.<sup>53</sup>

The data that scholars of the Second Temple period have at their disposal usually comprises three types: (1) contemporary writings transmitted from antiquity by the process of copying by hand and subsequently, sometimes by printing; (2) partial or whole writings, or traditions embed-

51. Of course, scribal intervention was not limited to copyists or readers of the translation, but could equally occur in copies of the original. Deliberate intervention did produce variants, but even more were generated by the dynamic of textual copying and transmission.

52. In a well-known book published almost a century ago (*The Lost Apocrypha of the Old Testament*), Montague Rhodes James collected references and quotations from ancient Jewish works that had not survived in full. See also Kraft, "Reviving (and Refurbishing) the Lost Apocrypha of M. R. James." There are other collections of these works, and the matter is discussed in detail below in Chapter 7, see esp. 188-89.

53. See note 36 above.



ded in later works, themselves transmitted by copying and printing; (3) writings and artefacts discovered archaeologically relating to the Land of Israel or adjoining cultures or the Jewish Diaspora. These data may challenge the position of the culture perceived by scholars as dominant or “hegemonic.”<sup>54</sup> In the perspective of “preorthodox” antiquity (as far as that can be ascertained), the subsequently dominant tradition or its protogenitor might have been minor.

Research into material now available from varied sources from the first millennium C.E. is forcing us to modify the picture of “the clean sweep.” We can no longer speak of the sudden disappearance of all Judaism but that of the rabbis (together, perhaps, with an associated mystical trend, of which people speak *in undertones*) on the one hand and the clear hegemony of “orthodox” Christianity at the expense of Gnosticism and other so-called “sectarian” trends on the other. Nonetheless, it is true that these two traditions that became regnant preserved and perpetuated the literary and religious complex that eventually came profoundly to influence the way modern people look at the past. This is the case, even if on the borders of Christian and Jewish communities varied divergent groups such as Gnostic and dualistic Christian circles on the one hand and Manichean, Islamic, Karaite, and further groups survived through the centuries, as I shall explain below. From my perspective, of course, it is quite possible that such groups preserved documents containing invaluable Second Temple material.

Examples of such liminal transmission are variegated. One instance is the knowledge of parts of the book of *Jubilees* in the Middle Ages. This knowledge survives, with a good deal of other curious material in the *Book of Asaph the Physician*, a medieval Hebrew medical treatise, probably written about the middle of the first millennium C.E. in Italy.<sup>55</sup> Knowledge of a variety of ancient texts and extracts from such texts was current in the circles of R. Moses the Preacher (*HaDaršan*) of Narbonne, though it is unclear how such material reached southwestern France in the eleventh century, whether directly or through a process of translation and subsequent retranslation.<sup>56</sup> Some ancient Jewish material was trans-

54. The perception of the “dominant” may actually be determined by the cultural tradition that survived, as I have observed in note 22 above.

55. See Stone, “The Book(s) Attributed to Noah”; Stone, Amihai, and Hillel, *Noah and His Book(s)*. Other documents embedded in *Asaph the Physician* are discussed by Pines, “The Oath of Asaph the Physician and Yohanan Ben Zabda.” The context of origin and date of the *Book of Asaph the Physician* are discussed in Chapter 7, 176-77.

56. See Stone, “The Genealogy of Bilhah [4QTNaph-4Q215]”; see also Himmelfarb,

mitted, sometimes reworked, in Moslem, Manichean, and other streams of “Abrahamic” discourse in the first millennium c.e. and is now being teased out of these later sources.<sup>57</sup> The number and variety of channels of transmission could be multiplied: so, compare the Piyyuṭim (synagogue hymns) from the Land of Israel in the latter part of the first millennium, which have not yet been mined thoroughly for their contribution to our undertaking.<sup>58</sup> Another example is to be seen in the nonmainstream sources, both Jewish and Christian, that absorbed and reworked traditions associated with Elijah.<sup>59</sup>

Above (in note 28), I have remarked on the extremely rich iconographic material that survived. Erwin R. Goodenough assembled a multi-volume corpus of such material<sup>60</sup> between 1953 and 1968, and, even if most scholars disagree with his interpretation of these data, the very existence of this corpus demands our attention. Among others, the eminent historian of ancient religion A. D. Nock wrote review articles of Good-

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“R. Moses the Preacher and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs”; “Some Echoes of *Jubilees* in Medieval Hebrew Literature.” James C. VanderKam, the uncontested expert on the text of *Jubilees*, remarks in personal correspondence that “I have worked through the text several times and thought, insofar as I am able to tell, that it was non-retroversion Hebrew” (17 June, 2005), i.e., it was transmitted from antiquity in Hebrew. If he is correct, then this supports our view that it reached the *Book of Asaph the Physician* in some context lying outside the “conventional” channels of transmission. See Chapter 2, 45, 167-69.

57. Such examples are discussed, in different dimensions, by John C. Reeves in a series of writings, such as *Tracing the Threads*; “Some Explorations of the Intertwining of Bible and Qur’ān”; his important book, *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony*; and others. Other extrarabbinic traditions are to be found, of course, in the sources cited in note 28 above; in material incorporated in the magical traditions, and not just of the magical bowls from Babylon; and even in such “exotic” transmission as Slavonic and Armenian; see Stone, “Jewish Apocryphal Literature in the Armenian Church”; “Jewish Tradition, the Pseudepigrapha and the Christian West”; “The Transmission and Reception of Biblical and Jewish Motifs in the Armenian Tradition.”

58. See, e.g., Yahalom, “Reflections of Greek Culture in the Early Hebrew Piyyuṭ?”; and Schirmann, “The Battle Between Behemoth and Leviathan According to an Ancient Hebrew Piyyuṭ.” In a significant article, Ophir Minz-Manor argues convincingly for the close relationship between Jewish and Christian (and Samaritan) hymnic compositions in Semitic languages in the fourth and fifth centuries; “Reflection of the Character of Jewish and Christian Poetry in Late Antiquity.”

59. Cf. the material gathered in Stone and Strugnell, *The Books of Elijah, Parts 1 and 2*, which shows clear evidence of such transmission. On the Elijah material, see Chapter 6, below.

60. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, 13 vols. An abbreviated version exists, abridged and edited by Jacob Neusner.

enough's opus.<sup>61</sup> He criticises Goodenough's interpretation of the symbolism at numerous points, but, at the end of one article, he remarks that "the abiding importance of the work is as a *Materialsammlung*. . . . [I]n its way, this work, with its superb array of texts and monuments . . . will take its place among the indispensable instruments of scholarship." Nor do I claim that Goodenough's corpus, and certainly not his reading of it, are to be accepted holus-bolus, and much has been discovered since his time. Undoubtedly, however, he poses a challenge and highlights another resource, iconography, which is still underexploited for the study of ancient Judaism.<sup>62</sup>

Fragments of Second Temple-period literature are preserved embedded in subsequent writings. This data is subject to many of the same problems as the whole books. On the Christian part, much is preserved in the writings of the church fathers and other sorts of less formal writings of Late Antiquity and the early middle ages.<sup>63</sup> Occasionally, writers somewhat outside the mainstream quote less normative texts and traditions that survived from antiquity, which witness to yet uncharted channels of transmission.<sup>64</sup> Clearly, however, on the whole, the "orthodox" sources preserved material consonant with their views, and indeed, they often quoted it as part of their reading of biblical antiquity or to support certain exegetical or theological ideas. This material, with which the regnant orthodoxies agreed, also served to reinforce them. Moreover, without understanding the perspectives given by the later orthodoxies, the contents of

61. Nock, *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, 2:877-907 (citation from 907).

62. Jacob Neusner's review of Goodenough makes some interesting remarks on the possible meaning of the symbolism in its historical context. Work has been done recently on iconography of the First Temple period; see, e.g., Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses and Images of God in Ancient Israel*, and further works by Keel.

63. A number of major collections of this material were made from the eighteenth century on. See James and Fabricius, cited in notes 52 above and 72 below, and also the works of Migne, Denis, and Haelewyck, all discussed in Chapter 7, note 59, as well as books dealing specifically with one or another text. Some of the better-known fragmentary works, such as *Pseudo-Ezekiel*, became part of the recognized corpus, even before the identification of 4QpsEzekiel (cf. Charlesworth, *OTP*, 1:487-96), while others have not, for reasons chiefly of scholarly tradition. In Chapter 3 we discuss certain fragments preserved in rabbinic literature, and in notes 50 above and 85 below some further pieces preserved in Hebrew tradition. The detailed investigation of these embedded fragments forms a separate, but rather neglected field of endeavour, as is discussed on p. 188-89 below.

64. One such is the *Epistula Titi* published by Donatien de Bruyne, "Epistula Titi, discipuli Pauli, de Dispositione sanctimonii," which contains many apocryphal fragments.

these transmitted documents cannot be used or even analyzed, because the way they were used in the later contexts was conditioned by cultural memory and culturally-conditioned propensities.<sup>65</sup>

As a result, we may rightly ask what it is that such data tell us about the period preceding the emergence of or the growth towards dominance of the orthodoxies, and even more tellingly, what it is that the data are not revealing to us. Moreover, what weight is to be given to the transmitted evidence when we come to assess the period before the orthodoxies?

One of the chief historical differences between the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha and the Dead Sea Scrolls is this. While the Scrolls can be clearly located in time, place, and apparently in society, we do not know by whom the vast majority of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha were written, or for whom, or often even when they were composed.<sup>66</sup> The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha were preserved by Christians, and, because of their literary character, they do not tell us about their historical context of origin. Occasionally, careful scholarly study and investigation can date them.<sup>67</sup> It is even more difficult to locate them within the variety of social groups and the complex society of whose existence we know from ancient sources. We have almost no clearly attributed writings with

65. In recent decades discussion has been devoted to the question of how documents transmitted by medieval sources should be used as part of or as evidence for ancient Jewish literature. Robert A. Kraft has pioneered this discussion; see "The Pseudepigrapha in Christianity," which is a fine formulation and documentation of the issues; see further, note 83 below. James R. Davila attempted fully to systematize Kraft's approach in *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha*. An unsatisfactory attempt, to my mind, to apply his thus systematized method is Davila's study, "Is the Prayer of Manasseh a Jewish Work?" Kraft has not written an expert system for diagnosis of these works, nor did he intend to. On a completely different wavelength, theoreticians in literary criticism, history, and social science, especially anthropology, have refined the tools to be used in reading ancient texts. See Clark, *History, Theory, Text*, 156-84 and *passim*.

66. With the assistance of datings emerging both from the Dead Sea manuscripts and from the books themselves, we can isolate a group of texts from the early second century B.C.E. These include (the latter chapters of) the biblical Daniel, parts of *1 Enoch* such as the Animal Apocalypse, perhaps *Jubilees*, Judith, and the older layer of the *Testament of Moses*. Likewise, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, the associated *Biblical Antiquities* of Pseudo-Philo, and perhaps *Apocalypse of Abraham* focus around the latter part of the first century C.E. This said, we still cannot place these works in known social loci or learn anything substantial about their context of composition, function, and purpose. Numerous other extracanonical writings remain even more mysterious.

67. George W. E. Nickelsburg has dealt adroitly with apocalypses as historical evidence in his article, "History and the Apocalypses."

which the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha can be compared. Nothing at all survives that we know assuredly was written by one of the two chief groups of Second Temple Judaism, the Sadducees. Some scattered traditions and teachings deriving from Pharisaic masters before the destruction of the Second Temple may survive in rabbinic sources.<sup>68</sup> These are, however, chiefly legal and do not provide comparative material that can help us place the various documents of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. One sole fragment of Samaritan literature of early date is preserved, and that only in Greek.<sup>69</sup> The Pharisees and Sadducees appear on the stage of history in the latter part of the second century B.C.E. Prior to that time, the books of Maccabees mention the Hasideans, but we have little information about them.<sup>70</sup>

So the problem of associating the books transmitted through Christian churches with specific ancient social groups remains. This affects historians of religion who approach the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, and despite certain recent advances, it remains acute. We have no idea of the roles their authors played in the society of Judea at the turn of the era. Precisely at this juncture, the dangers of seeing the phenomena through the spectacles of orthodoxy are redoubled, for we have no criteria for assessing the social significance of any given Apocryphon or Pseudepigraphon. Was it a work of central importance, affecting most people, or was it peripheral, of virtually no general influence at all?

### What Comes Next?

Archaeologists and philologists have uncovered new sources that have illuminated unexpected and exciting aspects of ancient Judaism. Yet, in a

68. See note 41 above on the Pharisees.

69. I refer to the Pseudo-Eupolemus fragment preserved by Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 9.17.2-9, 9.18.2 and translation in Wacholder, *Eupolemus*, 311-12. See on this fragment, Attridge, "Historiography." We also have a fragment of a Samaritan Torah translation; see Tov, "Pap. Giessen 13, 19, 22, 26."

70. There is much literature on the Jewish "sects" at that time. George W. E. Nickelsburg and Michael E. Stone, *Early Judaism: Texts and Documents on Faith and Piety*, 9-54, present the chief sources. Yet, it should be borne in mind that, even when we have some historical information about sects, we do have almost no surviving literary monuments *clearly attributed* to them. For my earlier views on this issue, see *Scriptures, Sects and Visions*, esp. 49-56.

generation in which the knowledge of ancient languages is waning and the historical study of ancient sources in their own context is under threat, the publication of additional ancient sources, their translation, and commentary upon them become an ever more pressing need. The newly available sources must be integrated into a balanced picture, avoiding viewing the past through the prism of today's orthodoxies while taking into account our own cultural "baggage" and biases.<sup>71</sup>

The first complete publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls has only now come to an end. Vast numbers of papyri are scattered around museums and libraries, which may contain treasures as yet unguessed.<sup>72</sup> Much material from the Cairo Geniza is still untapped, particularly (but not only) in the collection in the ex-Soviet Union but also those in other libraries.<sup>73</sup> Less romantic than the search after manuscript fragments in caves in the desert is the careful study of the whole of the manuscript tradition of texts that are already known. The very foundation of scholars' work is reliable texts of the source documents. Many of the writings of the period we are discussing are available only in very inaccurate editions, prepared a century or longer ago. Some progress is being made in this direction, and new editions of a number of works have appeared in recent years, but there remains an enormous amount to do.

71. The "view of the past" is always a present perception, and there is no past "out there" with which a view of the past may be compared and verified.

72. A good example is the rediscovery of the apocryphon named *Jannes and Mambres* in a papyrus in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin. See Pietersma, *The Apocryphon of Jannes and Mambres the Magicians*. James assembled previous knowledge of it in *Lost Apocrypha*, 31-38; and also cf. Fabricius, *Codex Pseudepigraphus Veteris Testamenti*, 813-25.

73. Recently, I have been informed of the discovery of a previously-unrecognized fragment of a known apocryphon among the Geniza fragments (a fragment of *Aramaic Levi Document*, discovered by Gideon Bohak, forthcoming in *Journal of Jewish Studies* under the title, "A New Genizah Fragment of the *Aramaic Levi Document*"), and, within recent months (May 2009), of Coptic fragments of an apocalypse previously unknown except in Old Church Slavonic by the Leiden papyrologist Joost van Hagen (*2 Enoch*). I am obliged to Prof. Bohak, who sent me a copy of his yet unpublished article. In neither case was the discovery the result of new archaeological finds but, instead, of recognition of the works in fragments that formed part of known collections. It is significant to note how much magical and other liminal material was preserved in the Cairo Geniza. This is a good corrective to the tendency to oversimplify a mainstream/liminal opposition. Just as the mainstream was in conversation with the fringes, so the fringe groups were with the "official," textual or book-based, dominant stream; see note 26 above. This medieval material lies outside our direct field of interest, but the problematic of the interplay of different levels of religious life and belief is shared throughout history.

There are some works of Philo of Alexandria, for example, that perished in Greek and only survived in Armenian translations made from the Greek. There are, furthermore, some works associated with the Philonic writings in Armenian, but which are not by him. These constitute the only non-Philonic Jewish Greek biblical homilies to have survived. These Jewish Greek homilies are important in their own right and surely illuminate the background of the extensive literature of early Christian homilies. They have been known for two hundred years without an English translation being made.<sup>74</sup> Philo is not the only case. We still await a critical edition of the book of *Enoch* (*1 Enoch*), possibly the most significant of all the Pseudepigrapha. It has been familiar to European scholars since the end of the eighteenth century, but still, down to today, we do not have a full, critical edition of it.<sup>75</sup>

In addition to the need for new editions of works that are already known, a search for still unknown texts is imperative. This search should be made in known libraries and collections as well as in unstudied manuscript traditions. Not long ago a major Palestinian Aramaic translation of the Bible was discovered in the Vatican Library in a manuscript with the wrong title stamped on the spine.<sup>76</sup> The manuscript traditions of many ancient churches have scarcely been explored. Numerous collections of manuscripts have not been catalogued, or else the catalogues or the collections themselves are not readily accessible. For seventy years or so, almost no serious study has been devoted to the subject of Jewish literature of the

74. For bibliography of Armenian Philo, see the Appendix by Terian in Constantine Zuckerman, "A Repertory of Published Armenian Translations of Classical Texts"; also published on the internet. See further, Thomson, *A Bibliography of Classical Armenian Literature to 1500 AD*, 75-76. Dr. Aram Topchyan and Dr. Gohar Muradyan of Erevan are currently translating the pseudo-Philonic writings into English for the Jewish Publication Society's forthcoming collection of ancient Jewish writings.

75. Michael Knibb's excellent work, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, is the transcription of a single, admittedly very good, Ethiopic manuscript, with translation and textual notes. George W. E. Nickelsburg also includes many notes on the text in his magisterial commentary, *1 Enoch 1*, and we eagerly await the promised second volume. Both these works are most useful, but, textually, they cannot really replace a full edition, the preparation of which would be a challenging task. When we consider the number of scholars writing on *1 Enoch* (DiTommaso, *A Bibliography of Pseudepigrapha Research 1850-1999*, lists works on *1 Enoch* for a span of over fifty pages — 354-407) or the tens of scholars who assemble biennially in the Enoch Seminar led by Gabriele Boccaccini, this lack of an edition is a sad reflection of scholarly priorities that often do not include working from the very best text possible.

76. On the Targum manuscripts, see Díez Merino, "Targum Manuscripts and Critical Editions."

period of the Second Temple preserved in Church Slavonic, a situation that is changing recently as a result of events in eastern Europe.<sup>77</sup> Armenian and Georgian and Slavonic doubtless sound very obscure, as perhaps they are. Still, the riches discovered in the Ethiopic tradition and the importance of the Armenian Philo should alert students to the fact that these “obscure” traditions may well preserve very significant ancient Jewish material, which has not survived in Greek and Latin.<sup>78</sup>

It is not difficult to catalogue in some detail certain of the types of Jewish religious expression that existed in antiquity. The names of sects are known, books have survived, archaeology has made its contribution, and the Jewish and Christian traditions have made their statements. Yet the character of the broader picture is hard to paint because of such unresolved issues as: How did these various forms of Judaism relate to one another, if at all? What was the sort of religious outlook of a given individual? What was the complexion of Judaism in a given area or at a specific time? Immediately, one of the chief features of the religious life of the Second Temple period comes to the fore. The Second Temple period was a time of great variety of religious expression. This was true of the Graeco-Roman world in general and of Judaism in particular. The most important historical source, Josephus, speaks of four “philosophies” — Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and Zealots.<sup>79</sup> The surviving writings, above all the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, evidence that there were very many varieties of religious thinking. If our remarks on popular religion, on the Western Diaspora, and other indications of complexity are taken into account, the situation becomes staggering.

When we consider named groups like Essenes and Pharisees, for example, we may ask how much variety of ideas could any group tolerate (i.e., what was its “factor of elasticity”)? Unless we have some insight into this, we cannot use the surviving, nonhistorical, literary sources to map a socio-religious landscape. Or, we may ponder which of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, if any, can be attributed to which named group. How did the different groups regard one another? In this complex of issues is hidden the key to a judicious presentation of the “balance of power” among religious ideas and groups within Judaism during the period of the Second

77. This is clear from the bibliography included in Orlov, *From Apocalypticism to Merkabah Mysticism*, 33-99; and *Selected Studies in the Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 203-434.

78. See, e.g., Stone, “Armenian, Early Jewish Literature Preserved in.”

79. In fact, Josephus calls the fourth group “the Fourth Philosophy” and does not use the name Zealots.



Temple.<sup>80</sup> We must aspire to an inclusive picture that is painted with all surviving evidence.

From consideration of this range of problems and with this approach it should be possible to achieve a different perspective on the place that earliest Christianity held within the range of Jewish religious expression. Clearly, Second Temple Judaism looks very different when it is described from as many sources as possible, and not merely delineated from the later perspectives of Christianity or of Rabbinic Judaism. The Christian sources form a valuable body of evidence about Judaism in the first century, but one should ask how far the interests of Christianity reflect a central type of Judaism, if indeed such a central type existed. For example, it seems to be very important for understanding the place of Christianity in Judaism to realise that a whole range of speculative interests, prominent in the Jewish apocalypses, is missing from the New Testament.<sup>81</sup> That realization is more significant when the role of these interests in Judaism is understood and properly evaluated and not played down. This is an example of a gap in information that transmits significance. The particular aspect of the New Testament, its noninclusion of speculative interests, thereby becomes the more striking.

The ramifications of this approach are rather far-reaching. The primary focus of the historian of Judaism should be to present as balanced and true a picture of what was going on as he/she can through a nuanced reading of the documentary and archaeological data. Later configurations of Judaism and Christianity may have only a peripheral importance in determining the actual situation that existed before they came into being.

### **Apocryphal Traditions and Their Transmission**

In the preceding I have written little about one of the areas in which scholarly interest is now awakening, namely, how these Jewish works were transmitted, used, and reworked by the various Christian churches. There is a large body of literature dealing with biblical figures and subjects that is partly created and partly transmitted by the various Christian churches.

80. The question is not often formulated in these terms. E. P. Sanders, for one, has grappled with a number of these issues in *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE–66 CE*.

81. Stone, "Lists of Revealed Things in the Apocalyptic Literature." See further below, 92, on this dimension of apocalyptic literature.

Certain of these writings have been found to be indubitably Jewish compositions, for instance, the Apocrypha and the generally recognized Pseudepigrapha.<sup>82</sup> Others are under greater debate, while still others are clearly Christian reworkings of writings based on Jewish traditional material, oral or written.<sup>83</sup>

The study of this kind of literature should commence from an examination of its use in the Christian churches that transmitted it, for only then can a sensitivity be developed which will enable us to evaluate it as material related to the history of Judaism. For an exhaustive study of this sort, cooperation is needed between those involved in working on the older Jewish texts and medievalists. Many of these traditions had wide circulation, not only in the East but through the various European languages and cultures as well. Much may well be learned by careful examination of the rich body of Irish apocryphal literature<sup>84</sup> or of popular tradition in Old French, and not just from those that circulated in the Islamicate realm.<sup>85</sup>

Just as it is necessary to investigate the way that the Christian churches transmitted these documents and traditions, so too, questions must be asked about their Jewish transmission. First, lines of contact between cultures can perhaps be traced by examining the sources of medieval Jewish reappropriation of some apocryphal traditions. Second, perhaps some measure of direct Jewish transmission from antiquity may be discovered. So, clearly, the mediaeval Jewish tradition should be examined scrupulously for its contribution.<sup>86</sup> The major part of this study awaits.

82. The category of "Pseudepigrapha" is much debated. Cf. my article written in the wake of the publication of Charlesworth's *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* entitled "Categorization and Classification" and note 45 above.

83. Robert Kraft has been a pacesetter in this undertaking: cf. his articles, "Jewish Greek Scriptures and Related Topics"; "Jewish Greek Scriptures and Related Topics, II"; "Scripture and Canon in Jewish Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha." See further, note 65 above. The bibliography on this subject is extensive.

84. McNamara, *The Apocrypha in the Irish Church*; Herbert and McNamara, *Irish Biblical Apocrypha*; McNamara, "Two Decades of Study on Irish Biblical Apocrypha."

85. On the "Islamicate" realm, as he calls it, in the first millennium C.E., cf. the traditions traced by John C. Reeves in many studies, e.g., *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic*.

86. Reeves has dealt with many aspects of this complex transmission. A clear summary is to be found in his forthcoming entry, "Gnosticism." I raised a number of these issues in "The Genealogy of Bilhah [4QTNaph-4Q215]"; "The Testament of Naphtali"; and "Why Naphtali?" Further works are referred to in those articles.