

ERWIN R. ^{Rome}GOODENOUGH

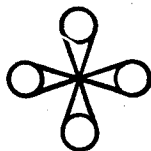
JEWISH SYMBOLS

in the

Greco-Roman Period

VOLUME ONE

THE ARCHEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FROM PALESTINE



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The Problem

THE PROBLEM in the origin of Christianity to which this study hopes to contribute is that of its rapid hellenization. Christianity began, as far as we know, with a simple Galilean peasant, who, like Amos of old, spoke moving words to an audience which as a whole little understood or liked his message. As to details of Jesus' message we are in almost constant difficulty, but his way of thinking seems to have been so genuinely a product of the Judaism of his environment that strongly as he denounced aspects of that Judaism, any real departure from it has usually seemed foreign to his mind. The Fourth Gospel has been taken to be an interpretation of Jesus in terms recognizably hellenistic: but how could such a transformation of Jesus' teaching so early have begun in the Christian community, so early indeed that the documents most generally dated as the earliest, that is the letters of Paul, seem to me completely oriented to Hellenism? Could Paul have met Peter and James and Andrew and Bartholomew, have heard their burning messianism as he led them and their followers to persecution, and then, miraculously converted, have looked about him to borrow this from Platonism, that from Mithra, the other from Isis, so as to construct a new religion of salvation about the risen Lord? Or did someone else do so, and Paul follow him? One has to admit such possibilities, but deny categorically their remote probability. It seems incredible that early Christianity could ever out of hand have borrowed the sacred cup from Dionysus, the Virgin Mother from any one of a dozen stories of the miraculous impregnation of a human mother by the god to produce the saving infant, baptismal regeneration from, again, one of a number of sources, and a Savior who had conquered death from the hellenized Egyptian-Roman-Syrian world in general, while it continued its Jewish detestation of all these religions, and its refusal, at the price of martyrdom, to have any truck with them whatever. Paul himself certainly did not "found" such a hellenized Christianity, for subsequent but early hellenized documents of Christianity use surprisingly little the phrases which distinguish Paul's own thought.

How then could Christianity so early and quickly have been hellenized? Only two answers to the problem are possible. The first is the traditional position of the Church, that divine revelation continued throughout the Apostolic Age and was institutionalized by God himself in the Church. So Jesus himself founded the Eucharist and the Church; Paul, "John," and the author of the Letter to the Hebrews got by direct revelation from God

himself the theology of original sin, baptismal regeneration, the theory of atonement, and the incarnate Logos, all of which were implicit in Jesus' own teaching; and the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection, with the Descent into Hell, happened as truly as the Crucifixion itself. Traditional Christian faith has no important problem. Conceiving the origin of Christianity in this way, Catholic theologians have denied any essential development or evolution in Christian doctrine. That early Christians changed the form of presenting their message, Catholic theologians admit, but they hold this change to represent a divine unfolding of ideas already implicit in the teaching of Jesus himself, who of course taught all that is ascribed to him in the Fourth Gospel. Hellenistic religiosity never brought into Christianity anything essentially foreign to the thought of Jesus and his disciples. Catholics admit that Christians learned to speak and write in Greek, and came to express themselves in words which have an ancient history in paganism. But into these words, it is believed, the early Christians, Jesus himself, put a new content. The old words *charis* (grace), *pistis* (faith), *agape* (love), *soteria* (salvation), took on new meanings under divine revelation, meanings which we learn from Christian sources, not from the previous usages of these words in Plato or the Stoics or the papyri.

This is the position of traditional faith, but faith alone can hold it. Liberal Christian scholars on the other hand have been so busy minimizing the importance of theology and the sacraments in order to throw into relief the Jesus of Matthew, Mark, and Luke (well expurgated), that they have essentially ignored the historical problem of how what they admit to be the hellenized version of Christianity can have begun. They have called the change "hellenization" without facing the problem such a word implies. Theology and sacrament seemed to them in one way or another false growths on a tree whose *Wesen*, as Harnack liked to call the inner core of its being, was the ethics of Jesus. But Jews hated paganism, especially pagan worship and mythology, and Christians learned this lesson well from Judaism. The wall of prejudice against paganism could not have been suddenly broken down, or scaled, so that Christianity could be hellenized while it continued, as it did in all its writings, to show only deep hatred for paganism. Indeed a sudden collapse of resistance to paganism would have meant a complete fusion with it in the suction of contemporary syncretism. For Judaism and Christianity to keep their integrity, any appropriations from paganism had to be very gradual. In three centuries Christianity might have made its eclectic borrowings, but not in three decades, or less. It has taken Christianity centuries even partially to accept the modern world of empirical knowledge, yet liberal historians of Christianity would have us believe that Christianity had begun in a quarter of a century to adopt the pagan thoughtways it professed to hate, and that by the time another fifty years had passed, the Church was united in a largely pagan point of view and cultus.

It is this problem of the speed with which the transition was made, without any one thinker actually "founding" a new hellenistic Christianity, which has seemed to me for many years not adequately to have been faced. No master mind set the character of hellenized Christianity as Plato set the character of the thinking of his disciples. From the letters of Paul, the Fourth Gospel, and the Letter to the Hebrews we have three ap-

proaches to the problem which, for all they have in common, seem independent expressions of a similar tendency toward hellenized thinking rather than developments of any two of them from the third. Liberals like Frank Porter¹ tried to solve the problem by minimizing the differences in point of view between Paul and Jesus, making the "mind of Christ," as presented in the first three Gospels, the "mind of Paul." With Paul thus in the "Palestinian" tradition, the Fourth Gospel and Hebrews could be dated as much later as one pleased, and so time would be gained, at least a little time, for the transition. But Porter seems to me to have obscured the essential interest of Paul, which was to experience what in Greek tradition we should call the Orphic escape from the body or flesh to the soul or spirit, a dream of escape which is nowhere in the synoptic tradition ascribed to Jesus. Only time, and much time, could have made possible such a change in the value of Jesus to his disciples as the bringing in of this pagan notion represents. A single individual like Paul could have done it, but if he had done it all alone, subsequent writings would have been "Pauline" as the letters to Timothy are Pauline, and the Fourth Gospel is not.

We must then, with the Catholics, give up any reality in the word "hellenization," explain Christianity as a divinely inspired flowering of ideas with a verbal, but no essential debt to the pagan world, or else see where there might have been time for a leisurely fusion of thinking. If that leisurely fusion with paganism did not take place in Christianity, then it must have been antecedently prepared for the early Christians in a Judaism (not *all* Judaism) which had in a gradual way come to be hellenized. The fusion of Jewish and pagan attitudes in Christianity, already beginning to be adapted to Christianity in Paul and "John" and Hebrews, could not have occurred *de novo* in those early Christian decades, and so must have been made antecedently ready for that adaptation within Judaism itself, or some type of Judaism. So if we had no evidence for a hellenized Judaism at all we should have had to invent it, I early concluded, to make the origin of Christianity historically conceivable. Or else we should have to admit with the Catholics that for all that the beginning of Christianity occurred in a period of history as an actual phenomenon of the past, it was never in its character subject to the criteria or developments of historical movements, was never itself an historical movement at all, but something which came revealed as a totality from God. The dilemma has not been properly faced because liberal Christians, to whom the mass of students of Christian origin and history for the last century have belonged, have wanted, like Harnack, to make Christianity *almost* an historical movement, but to discover, as its *Wesen*, a core which is essentially superhuman and beyond the vicissitudes of human origin and development. So they would talk of the "development" of theology and its hellenization, but speak of the ethical teachings of Jesus as though these were transcendent ultimates. These scholars were so dedicated to the task of demonstrating the dominance, especially through the New Testament literature, of the divine *Wesen*, the ethics of Jesus, that they ignored the difficulties which their recognition of Christian theology as a hellenization implied.

To the problem as I saw it, students of the New Testament during the last thirty

1. *The Mind of Christ in Paul*, New York, 1932.

years have not essentially contributed. *Formgeschichte* has suggested many interesting details, and studies from the point of view of the history of religion have taught us still more. But without stopping to analyze the advances of New Testament scholarship since I began my work, I may say simply that I have seen no attempt basically to explain the hellenization of Christianity.

This is the problem, accordingly, which has been before me all my life. I was spared the difficulty of "inventing" hellenistic Judaism by early discovering it as an actuality, and as a vital influence in early Christianity. My doctor's dissertation, *The Theology of Justin Martyr*, gained point by having as its thesis the obvious fact that Justin's Old Testament allegory was in large part a patent adaptation for Christian purposes of allegories known to have been Jewish because they appear in Philo. That Justin, in the way dear to philological fancy, was writing with the text of Philo in mind did not at all appear: but that he was writing with a very similar tradition in mind was indisputable, and was much more important than his having the text of Philo before him, for it indicated a widespread Judaism similar to that of Philo on which Justin could draw, a tradition which turned the Old Testament stories into revelations of the nature of the Logos, and made the pattern of religion the pagan one of appropriation of and union with this Logos rather than the typical Jewish one of obedience. So I suggested at the end of the dissertation that the hellenization of Christianity had been made possible because Jews in the pagan world had opened doors through which pagan notions had come into their Judaism; that when such Jews became Christians these notions were already at home in their minds as a part of their Judaism itself, and so at once became a part of their Christianity.

To investigate the possibilities of this hypothesis has been the concern of all my subsequent investigations. Actually, direct evidence for a hellenized Judaism does exist and can be studied. Philo, of course, is the chief source, and in studying his writings the important thing seemed to me to study and reconstruct the sort of thinking he revealed. How had his Judaism modified what he took from paganism, and how did paganism affect his Judaism? Still more important was it to come to appreciate the fusion of the two into a unit, the unit that all Philo's writings passionately try to present. To pull the two apart and keep them apart, to insist that Philo was essentially a normative or Pharisaic Jew, expressing Pharisaism in a Greek terminology which never really changed the Pharisaism, is to miss Philo himself altogether.² I am sure it is to miss hellenized Judaism just as completely. That all Jews in Alexandria (or Rome or Ephesus) were as mystical as Philo, Philo himself assures us over and over again was not the case. The question of the relevance of Philo for understanding the background of early Christian hellenization hangs squarely upon this: How typical was Philo? It is easy to demonstrate the hellenization of Philo—even G. F. Moore admitted this; but he insisted that Philo was a unique phenomenon, and concerned with Greek points of view in a way that other Jews even in Alexandria could not have been; thus Philo, except as one could find that his writings were actually used by a later writer, could not be considered important to explain anything else, either in early Christianity or Judaism.

2. See my essay "Wolfson's *Philo*," *JBL*, LXVII (1948), 87-109.

On this I think Moore was demonstrably wrong from the evidence of Philo himself. Philo was not unique in his thinking. He speaks to and of a group of mystic Jews, and contrasts their point of view frequently with that of the ordinary Jew, who could not "cross the Jordan," as he called it, that is, get beyond (while still observing) the legal requirements, to come into the metaphysical reality that Philo found implicit in the Torah. But direct evidence outside Philo's writings for such a group is almost negligible. There are, to name only the most important works, the Wisdom of Solomon, the Letter of Aristeas, the Jewish Sibylline Books, the three last books of Maccabees, especially Fourth Maccabees, the strange fragments quoted by Eusebius, the pseudo-Justinian *Oratio ad Graecos*, the Mystic Liturgy, and the little Jewish apology in the Clementine Homilies.³ None of this, or all of it added together, justified my a priori, namely that there must have been a general movement of hellenized Judaism, not just a few stray hellenized Jews, since the hellenization of Christianity seemed to me to imply a general tradition on which Paul and the authors of the Fourth Gospel and of Hebrews could have drawn for their ideas, and which could have produced an audience capable of understanding them. The Letter to the Hebrews, for example, very probably is actually that, a letter to Jews. It would, so far as we know, have been utter nonsense to Hillel: Philo would have understood it very well, though he probably would have rejected its Christian novelties. But who were the Jews who could read it with understanding and sympathy? Still we have no evidence for a hellenized Judaism as a general and popular movement such as it seems to me much of the New Testament presupposes.

To assume a general and widespread hellenized Judaism from the evidence of Philo and the rest of the surviving miscellany is so much the harder because all literary records of such a hellenized Judaism disappear shortly after the beginning of Christianity. If there was a widespread and deeply established hellenized Judaism, why is it that we have no body of documents from such a Judaism after Philo? This point has often been raised. Used against the existence of such a Judaism in the Roman world, it is an argument from silence, but at first a telling one. Actually from the period after Philo we have an increasingly large body of Jewish literature. There is Josephus (only slightly hellenized), and there is the growing body of rabbinical tradition gradually getting itself formed and written through the centuries. In the rabbinic writings, especially in the Midrash, are a few oddments which seem hellenistic, such as a rabbinic tradition, like that of Aristophanes in Plato's *Symposium*, that man was originally created a monster with both sexes, and then split to form male and female.⁴ These traces of hellenistic influence, if such they be, occur so rarely in rabbinic writings, however, that they do not affect the total rabbinic point of view which Wolfson calls "native," and which shows in general a strong antipathy toward hellenistic civilization, and a strikingly different way of thinking.

3. These have frequently been reviewed. See my *By Light, Light*, 265-358, where all are discussed except the last. For this see below, p. 42.

4. The passages are collected in G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, I, 453. This idea is not expressed in any

extant passage in Philo, but, found primarily in the *MR, Gen.*, VIII, 1 (ET, I, 54), it is a sample of the sort of thing which made even Moore (*Judaism*, I, 165) say: "It is highly probable that some of the contributors [to this midrash] were acquainted with Philo."

Further, it appears that in time there may be available an increasing body of apocalyptic-mystical writing from the Judaism of the first centuries of the present era, writings on which Scholem drew largely in manuscript for his fascinating account of the development of Jewish mysticism.⁵ But Scholem treats these with little reference to Philo or possible hellenistic or gnostic influence: they too are "native" as he expounds them, though he does not use that unfortunate term, and we shall have to wait for the actual publication of the texts and further study to see whether they do show traces of hellenization.⁶ Solomon Grayzel has recently published *A History of the Jews* in a single volume which I shall quote several times because it gives the best results of Jewish scholarship, the "typical" attitude toward our problems, in such brief and excellent expression. As an example in point here, he has proposed several explanations of why the rabbis allowed the apocryphal books to perish from Jewish memory and, we understand, many other books with them. "Some of them were written in Greek and therefore could not become popular among the masses of the Jews, especially in Palestine," he says, forgetting that in the early Christian centuries in the Roman world the "masses of Jews" who could read at all were reading Greek and Latin, not Hebrew and Aramaic,⁷ while even in Palestine Greek inscriptions are more common than Semitic on Jewish graves. He goes on to point out the shifting of population, the fact that these books were "not well written" (it seems to me Sirach, written in Hebrew, and the Wisdom of Solomon, in Greek, are superior in literary form as well as thought to the canonical Canticles, Esther, or Ecclesiastes), and the fact that "many of these books advocated religious laws which differed from the legislation favored by the Pharisees and the rabbis." It was for this last reason, I believe, that the books were rejected, as appears in the discussion of Sirach in the Talmud.⁸ "Finally," Grayzel concludes,

5. Scholem, *Jewish Mysticism*. See especially the early chapters.

6. In view of the quotation from Moore above, p. 7, n. 4, a study of the opening sections of the *Genesis Rabbah* might well be extremely rewarding for this problem. It can be done only by a competently trained rabbinical scholar, and by one, may I add, who would not see every resemblance to Philo as *prima facie* evidence that Philo's thought was rabbinic, but whose mind would actually be open to the possibility of hellenistic influence in the mystical thinking prohibited, but practised, by certain rabbis. Even the reconstruction of such thinking, however, would not detract from its general contrast to the usual rabbinic thought forms.

7. *A History of the Jews*, 1947, 203. Not a single case of the transliteration of Aramaic into Latin characters appears in a recognizably Jewish inscription, of the sort described by W. R. Newbold, "Five Transliterated Aramaic Inscriptions," *AJA*, Ser. II, Vol. XXX, 288-329. As this volume went to press I first saw Louis Finkelstein's *The Jews*,

1949, where the essay of Judah Goldin, "The Period of the Talmud," I, 115-215, is especially important for this section. It seemed much in line with other traditional histories of the subject. How entirely dependent he is upon literary (rabbinic) sources appears from his representing the Jews of Palestine in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries as being terribly oppressed and impoverished, when it is precisely in those centuries that they seem to have done their most expensive (and extensive) building.

8. *BT, Sanhedrin*, 90a, 100b (ET, II, 602, 680-682). See esp. the note by Freedman in ET, II, 602, n. 2. In the Gemara here a tanna is quoted as saying that Akiba was referring to the "books of the Sadducees." This seems direct evidence of books which are otherwise unknown because the rabbis suppressed them. Abaye goes on to a quotation, apparently ascribed to Sirach, but very likely from the "Sadducean" books. Freedman's suggestion (p. 680, n. 9) that this is a reference to the New Testament has no justification whatever.

"these books were hard to distinguish from Christian works which soon appeared, written in the same languages and propagating the same ideas. To avoid confusion it was considered best to discourage the reading of the entire literature." So "the entire literature," including everything that was presumably produced in the diaspora, is lost (for since it was not read it was not copied) except as Christians preserved bits from pre-Christian Jewish writings. It is only through Christians that Philo, Josephus, and the Jewish Apocrypha have survived, all of them earlier than Christianity or contemporary with its beginnings. The silence, therefore, is complete: we have no convincing literary evidence of a hellenized Judaism after Philo and Josephus. A possible exception is the tradition of a dialogue between Antoninus and Rabbi Judah I, from which a few questions and answers have been preserved in various treatises of the Talmud. Wallach⁹ has recently argued that these go back to a lost apocryphon telling of such a dialogue, perhaps something like the Letter of Aristeas, and that it was thoroughly Stoic in inspiration, that is a hellenistic Jewish document. But of the document, if it ever existed, we have only these traces, so that the silence is really not broken.

If the silence is complete, however, argument from it is still extremely dangerous. For our evidence of post-Christian Judaism comes almost entirely through rabbinic channels. If we had only the traditions of the Jews themselves as they have survived through the ages, we should hardly have suspected the existence of the whole body of apocryphal and pseudepigraphical literature,¹⁰ for these, I repeat, have survived thanks only to Christian copyists. Some passage in rabbinic literature may refer to Josephus, but I have never seen an allusion to such a reference. Finkelstein's¹¹ attempt to demonstrate a rabbinic allusion to Philo only showed that no one would have suspected Philo's existence merely from rabbinic sources. If without the text of Philo and the references to him and his predecessors in Christian writings anyone had a priori said such a Judaism as Philo's had ever existed, he would have been laughed out of all scholarly company. We are then in a strange position. Only by grace of the rabbis have we literary evidence of Judaism as it developed after the beginnings of Christianity; and it is only through the Christians that we know any of the developments of Judaism (except the development of the rabbinic tradition itself) between "Old Testament times" and the beginnings of Christianity. The rabbis preserved their Bible and the traditions of their own group; but they preserved nothing else except what we get from scattered casual allusions to external events. We know of hellenized Judaism, indeed of all non-rabbinic Judaism, only from Christian sources.

The early Christians, however, and this is of the greatest importance, preserved and even alluded to hellenized Jewish literature only if it was pre-Christian, or written in the first or second century after Christ. Christian traditions of the first centuries as taken from the Christian writers refer to the contemporary writings of not a single Jew. It is

9. "The Colloquy of Marcus Aurelius with the Patriarch Judah I," *JQR*, XXXI (1940/1), 259-286.

10. A few works, such as that of Sirach, are

named by the rabbis, only to curse those who read them: *BT, Sanhedrin*, 100b (ET, II, 680). See below, p. 42.

11. Louis Finkelstein, "Is Philo Mentioned in Rabbinic Literature?" *JBL*, LIII (1934), 142-149.

conspicuous that Christian tradition made Philo into a Christian saint. His and the other writings of pre-Christian hellenized Jews seem to have been preserved as part of what Eusebius called the "preparation" for Christianity. Josephus seems the latest Jewish writer the Christians wanted. Such rabbis as Akiba and Johanan could hardly be represented, even by Christian imagination, as saints or predecessors of the new faith: and no more could other Jews, of the sort represented by Trypho in Justin's *Dialogue*. Writings produced by Jews who denounced Christianity, and continued to live the life of the Law (whatever that may have meant to them), to build synagogues, and put menorahs on their graves, would not have commended themselves to Christian study and copying. If Jews had no use for Philo or other hellenists, Christians had no use for Johanan ben Zakkai, or Rabbi Meir, or for loyal Jews of Rome or any other place who were opposing the Christian movement. So if hellenized Jews did exist and write books in the early Christian centuries, neither Christians nor the rabbinic Jews who ultimately dominated Judaism would have cared to preserve their writings. The Jews of the first Christian centuries who lived in the various centers of Greek and Latin civilization, if they wrote books must have written them as Philo did, in Greek (or later, in Latin), since the grave inscriptions of Rome in the period are all in Greek or Latin; and we know that the Jews had to have a succession of Greek translations of their Bible. There is no indication that Jews of the diaspora, for many centuries, could read Hebrew or Aramaic; even in Palestine and Dura, Greek is more common than Hebrew. It would indeed be a large argument from silence to assert that no Jew who spoke only Greek (there were apparently several million such Jews at any one time) ever wrote a book on his faith after Philo. There may have been very extensive writing done by Jews of the Roman world in the Christian centuries, but since if books were written in Greek by Jews neither Christians nor rabbis would have cared to preserve them, they would have perished. That we have no writings from these Jews simply indicates that if they did write, as we must presume some of them did, they wrote books of a kind displeasing to the rabbis, and, of course, to the Christians.

The one thing most dangerous to argue from this silence is that the Jews of the Roman empire were actively and acceptably rabbinic. To write the history of Judaism as has usually been done, on the assumption that the Judaism of all Jews in the period of the Roman empire can be reconstructed from rabbinic writings, and not to stress our ignorance of what Jews of the time in general believed, is indeed to go a long way on just no evidence at all.

It seems strange to me, then, that even though scholars have known Philo and the Apocrypha now for a century or more, their conceptions of Jewish history have not basically altered from the traditional one built up on the literature of medieval Judaism, where Philo, the Apocrypha, and hellenized Judaism were never mentioned.¹² In that tradition it was assumed that all Jews thought always as medieval Jews had finally (more or less) come to unite in thinking.

12. "The chief source for the history of the talmudic, post-talmudic, and geonic periods," says J. Z. Lauterbach, *JE*, XI, 284, is the "Historical Letter" of R. Sherira b. Hanina, Gaon, of the

tenth century. See the French translation by L. Landau, Thesis (Univ. of Paris), Antwerp, 1904. This is certainly true.

The circumstances of the rise and development of rabbinism, with which we must stop for a moment, hardly justify the usual assumption that it set the norm for all Jews everywhere. That assumption is expressed for example by Grayzel, who describes how Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai got permission from Vespasian at the time of the siege of Jerusalem to retreat to Jamnia and found a Jewish academy of study. With the fall of Jerusalem this new academy soon proclaimed itself the new Sanhedrin or *Bet Din*, instituted the rabbinate, with the title "rabbi" formally conferred on a man adequately trained in rabbinic tradition, and in course of time the Romans even allowed the group some measure of power to enforce their decisions. But Grayzel goes completely beyond his evidence when he says:

Actually, the powers of the *Bet Din* and the *Nasi* were much greater than those officially granted them, since they had not only legal authority over the Jews in Palestine but also their voluntary allegiance wherever they lived, both in the Roman empire and in Parthia. The Jews recognized their religious authority, and gladly sent contributions for their maintenance. Jewish unity was again established.¹³

Just before that ¹⁴ he says, apparently of Judaism in general: "Any man refusing to follow the decisions of the *Bet Din* as to what was or was not traditionally Jewish weakened Jewish life by loosening the ties which bound him to the group." He goes on to describe ¹⁵ the completion of the first part of the Talmud, the Mishnah, and says: "The Mishnah became a companion to the Bible. More than ever before the Jews now became the 'People of the Book.'" There is no evidence at all that Jewish life was ever generally unified in the *Bet Din* at Jamnia, or, in these centuries, by any rabbinic tradition. We can agree with Grayzel completely when he says: "The stubborn adherence of the Jewish people to their religious laws and customs overcame, in the course of years, Rome's efforts to destroy them."¹⁶ But even the rabbis, as he recognizes, had to admit that the study of the Law was more important than its observance, and that "there are only three fundamentals of Judaism for which a man or a woman must prefer death to transgression—the worship of idols, adultery, and the shedding of innocent blood."¹⁷ Most Jews, if we may rely upon Philo as typical, would have died rather than break not only these but many other laws, yet the question is not what points of law were necessary, but whether the rabbinic-halachic, or legalistic, point of view in Judaism was generally accepted, "normative," for Jews in the period.

The authority of the Patriarch, Ethnarch, or Nasi has seemed to Jewish scholars in general to have stabilized all Judaism under the rabbinic point of view. Studies of the authority of this official ¹⁸ appear to me greatly to exaggerate his powers, though into the details of the evidence we cannot go here. Appointed, or at least recognized, as Ethnarch or Patriarch by the Roman emperors from the second to the fifth century, the

13. Op. cit., 199.

14. Ibid., 197.

15. Ibid., 209.

16. Ibid., 202.

17. Ibid., 201.

18. See especially Juster, *Juifs*, I, 391-399; Hans Zucker, *Untersuchungen zur Organisation der Juden vom babylonischen Exil bis zum Ende des Patriarchats*, Diss., Leipzig, 1936, 142-166; Solomon Zeitlin, *Religious and Secular Leadership*, I, 1943, 7-15; Simon, *Verus Israel*, 82-86.

Patriarch exercised, at least sporadically, great influence. He had the right to collect for himself and the Jewish scholars of Palestine general Jewish tribute; he was recognized as the head of all the Jews, "souverain sans pouvoir territorial, chef, en quelque sorte, spirituel de *tous les Juifs de l'Empire*." ¹⁹ The italics are Juster's but seem to me to be misplaced: they should have emphasized the vagueness of "en quelque sorte." For while the Patriarch had legally the power to appoint the rulers in the synagogues, a power which he sometimes used for his own enrichment by selling the offices, the places named where his power was exercised are all in the near-by regions, not in the Roman world in general. Legally, the Theodosian Code recognized him as having supreme jurisdiction in religious matters, but there is little or nothing to show that in practice, except in problems of the calendar, this extended to an actual supervision of Jewish thought in general. He had by this code, and probably before, the right to set up legal courts, but again the right seems to have been quite locally exercised. The decisive point is the organization of "apostles," men said to be of rank second only to the Patriarch's own, who are mentioned in several scattered passages as envoys of the Patriarch to collect the money, oversee the local organizations, and fight such heresies as Christianity. ²⁰ All modern discussions of these passages seem to me quite unrealistic. For the Patriarch to have had enough apostles to canvass every year the entire Roman world, or even just the great centers, would have meant a large organization indeed, especially since the apostles seem usually to have traveled at least in pairs. Since until Christianity became the official religion of the Empire there were probably as many Jewish centers as there were Christian, an organization at least as elaborate as that of the Christian clergy would have been necessary to create that Jewish unanimity which is usually presented as far more complete than even the Christian. That apostles were sent out from Palestine, that the Jews in Ephesus, Rome, Carthage, and Cilicia (I am not so sure about Jews in smaller towns) often saw them, talked with them, gave them money, I do not doubt. That they effected a sense of loyal cohesion throughout world Jewry seems quite likely. But the supervision of the contents and range of Jewish thought would have required a tremendous organization indeed. A recent scholar has said that the Patriarch and his apostles caused "the permeation of world-Judaism, including the Babylonian Jews, with the form of life worked out in Palestine whose charter (*Dokument*) is the Mishnah and Gemara." ²¹ Even the elaborate organization of the Christian clergy, however, found that to keep Christian thought unified it had to have its sacred books available in the vernacular. Very early the Bible had to be translated for Christians into Latin. But so far as we know, no rabbi ever suggested translating the Mishnah to go with the Greek Bible for the Jews in the diaspora. "The Mishnah became a companion to the Bible" only for scholarly rabbis who could read Hebrew. Those who could not read Hebrew got along, as Philo's group had done, without

19. Juster, *op. cit.*, 393.

20. Discussion of the "apostles" appears very widely. The two articles in *JE*, II, 19-21 give the best brief presentation. The article by Krauss, "Die jüdischen Apostel," *JQR*, XVII (1904/5),

370-383 seems still the best. Considerable bibliography is given in Schürer, *Jüd. Volk*, III, 1909, n. 77.

21. Zucker, *op. cit.*, 166.

a Mishnah. We cannot a priori fill with rabbinism the silence of the Judaism of the Roman diaspora in this period.

In contrast to Jewish practice in the Greco-Roman world, Jews of Babylonia were early organized in schools by their rabbis and taught rabbinic Judaism. The movement began in certain places in the early third century. "When Rav first returned [to Babylonia] from his studies in Palestine (around 220)," writes Grayzel,²² "and undertook a journey through the Jewish settlements in Babylonia, he was shocked at the ignorance of the Jews about matters of Jewish observance." So he and others began a program of popular education in the principles of rabbinic Judaism which after a century or two showed great results. It is interesting that the synagogue of Dura, of which we shall have much to say, was in a provincial city destroyed in 256; the synagogue, decorated probably a decade earlier, presumably represents Judaism still untouched by this halachic reform. To assume that the traditions of the Babylonian school of rabbis must lie behind the Dura paintings is to go directly against what little evidence we have for the region.

We know that the rabbinate faded out in its influence even in Palestine after the middle of the fourth century, faded out indeed in Palestine itself to the point that the Jerusalem Talmud, which the rabbis then were composing, was never completed. Apparently the Jews within Palestine were not inclined to support a rabbinical academy, and we do not know to what extent the rabbis in Palestine actually controlled Jewish thought and practice even when they were flourishing. Occasional anecdotes of the exercise of such authority have traditionally, and to my mind unwarrantably, been generalized as typical of common practice. By the third century Greek was predominantly the language of Jews in Palestine itself, and we shall see that the invasion of Jewish art by hellenistic ornament was no less striking in Palestine than in Rome or Dura. Even in the time of Christ, Greek names are nearly as common as Hebrew and Aramaic together on Jewish tombs of Palestine, while by the third century Greek overwhelmingly predominates. This Schwabe admits, but concludes: "Although epigraphic evidence results in a somewhat different picture from that based on talmudic literature, both express the same fundamental Jewish attitude and tradition."²³ Actually Schwabe's own epigraphical and iconographic evidence from Palestine affords no basis for supposing that most Jews even in Palestine were living "normative" lives under the guidance of those who were forming talmudic tradition in Hebrew.

As we have said, we know that from the third to the sixth centuries a great popular movement toward rabbinic Judaism flourished in Babylonia, and that it supported the Babylonian scholars after those in Palestine had ceased to exist, supported them so that the greatest monuments of rabbinism came from Babylonia, or were based upon the work of the Babylonian rabbis. It is interesting that to reconstruct the system of education

22. Op. cit., 229.

23. *JJPES*, IV (1945), p. xxv. See below, p. 90. We should have expected from talmudic literature, *BT, Gittin*, 11b (ET, 39), that Jews in the diaspora would have had "heathen" names, but that no Jew

even there would have been named Lucus (Lucius) or Lus (Gaius): "Most Jews in foreign parts bear heathen names." See Berliner, *Juden in Rom*, I, 54. But both Lucius and Gaius were common names for Jews in Rome: Frey *CIJ*, 621, 623.

which most scholars put back into the time of Jesus, but which G. F. Moore himself claimed to apply only to the later "Age of the Tannaim," Moore²⁴ had to draw chiefly on passages from the Babylonian Talmud, whose applicability to Palestine and the diaspora in general, to say nothing of the problem of its applicability to the time of Jesus, is not demonstrated at all. I do not doubt that there were attempts by the rabbis to found such schools in Palestine also, but that they were so successful that the rabbis throughout Palestine actually guided and dominated all men's thinking, and all the synagogues, even in the rabbis' prime, is by no means certified by the evidence.

For the rest of the diaspora, that is for the Jews in the Roman empire, there is no trace of any movement, comparable to the popular reform in Babylonia, to bring them rabbinism. Samuel Krauss²⁵ has recently said: "The Judaism of the diaspora, we know, was regulated by the Babylonian Talmud," but Jews of the Roman empire could not read the Mishnah, and, as has been said, no one tried, so far as we know, to teach them Hebrew or to translate the Mishnah into a language they understood.²⁶ No one presents this linguistic dichotomy more sharply than G. F. Moore himself.²⁷ He first tries by implication to suggest that the schools of Alexandria in Philo's day were dominated by the rabbis, and were teaching rabbinism, but then goes on to show that there is no trace of any real knowledge or use of Hebrew among hellenistic Jews. He concludes: "It is likely . . . that in Philo's time knowledge of Greek was more common among the upper classes in Jerusalem than of Hebrew in Alexandria." Had Rab visited the Jews in Rome, Malta, or Dura, as we have seen he did the Jews in the East, he would probably have been just as "shocked at the ignorance of the Jews about matters of Jewish observance" as he was when he traveled in Babylonia; that is, he would have found them doing and thinking the wrong things. The story is told in the Talmud²⁸ of how indignant an Eastern rabbi became in the period of Hadrian. He had heard that a Jew in Rome with the conspicuously Greek name of Theodosius (or Theudas) had allowed the Jews to roast a whole lamb for the Passover in Rome itself, that is without going to Palestine to do so. The rabbi, Joseph, wrote him a protest and said that if he were not Theodosius he would be excommunicated for allowing such a thing. Theodosius may, indeed, have known that he was introducing a novelty contrary to rabbinic teachings, but there is no indication

24. *Judaism*, I, 77-82.

25. In *REJ*, XCVII (1934), 2.

26. After reading the above my friend Morton Smith suggested the following emendation: "The effort to make the teaching of the Palestinian rabbis available to Greek-speaking Jews seems to have been greater at the time of Akiba, if we may trust the traditional dating of Aquila's translation, which unquestionably was intended to produce a Greek text preserving those Hebraic peculiarities on which so much contemporary Palestinian exegesis was based. The production of such a translation argues the existence of preachers who followed Palestinian methods in their exegesis and therefore

found themselves embarrassed by the absence, from previous Greek versions, of the details on which those methods relied." To which I add only that the implications cannot safely be pushed further.

27. *Op. cit.*, I, 321 f.

28. *BT, Berakoth*, 19a (ET, 115); cf. *BT, Betzah*, 23a (ET, 118 f.), where the story is told in the Gemara to comment on a ruling in the Mishnah (*ibid.*, 22b, ET, 116) ascribed to Gamaliel permitting the same license. See further references in H. Vogelstein and P. Rieger, *Geschichte der Juden in Rom*, 1896, I, 30, n. 4, and 108-110; H. Vogelstein, *Rome*, 1941, 81-87.

that he or his fellows changed back to rabbinic practices because of Joseph's protest. If Joseph had thought they would change, he would not have made this despairing allusion to excommunication. Yet this incident has been quoted²⁹ as the only one from the diaspora to justify the statement, "Throughout Palestine, and indeed even in the diaspora, in Babylonia, as well as in Egypt and in Rome, the words of the Pharisaic scholars were accepted as authoritative interpretations of the Laws of Moses." Rabbi Joseph in fact did not excommunicate Theodosius, and he and his followers presumably continued to adjust the Jewish Festivals and the laws to life in the diaspora in the same way as best they could, without reference to rabbinic feeling.³⁰

How scanty the evidence is for rabbinic influence in ancient Rome appears from those who have tried most to magnify it. It is told that under Domitian, Gamaliel II went to Rome with Eleazar b. Azariah, Joshua b. Hananiah, and Akiba, "and it is related," says Moore,³¹ "that they discoursed in the synagogues and schoolhouses, and discussed religious subjects with heathen and Christians." This is to rely on a small body of tradition, most of which is openly fantastic, as that the Emperor wanted a rabbi to step on his (the Emperor's) back when the rabbi got into bed, and the like.³²

According to a statement of unknown date in the Gemara of the Babylonian Talmud,³³ a number of scholars went out to found "academies" or "courts" in various places. The rabbis listed are all quite early, and there is no reason to dispute the statement that one of them, R. Mathia b. Heresh, went to found an "academy" or "court" at Rome. Tradition mentions this rabbi several times, and tells that he was a contemporary of pupils of R. Ishmael, therefore probably born in the first quarter of the second century, and perhaps himself also a pupil of Ishmael. Several of his opinions are recorded, one on medical treatment on the Sabbath,³⁴ one on marital relations,³⁵ and others.³⁶ But of an active rabbinic school or "court" at Rome there is no trace. When R. Simeon b. Yohai and R. Eleazar b. Azariah went to Rome, R. Mathia asked them questions on various

29. Louis Finkelstein, *The Pharisees*, 1938, II, 621.

30. Finkelstein continues in the passage to refer to an incident where Palestinian rabbis "suppressed without difficulty" a similar move for independence on the part of a Babylonian rabbi. Actually the source (*BT, Berakoth*, 63a, ET, 398 f.) tells only of the independent act of the Babylonian, and the protest and argument that followed. But the Babylonian in the record also did not yield an inch, and the compiler of the Gemara goes on (63b) to comment that one group was giving a stricter, the other a laxer view, the former protesting "so that the people might not be led by" the Babylonian rabbi. It is perfectly clear that the Babylonians continued to be led by their own rabbis. The Babylonian rabbis, or their power of decision, were not "suppressed" for a moment.

31. *Judaism*, I, 106. It is noteworthy that Gress-

mann, "Jewish Life," 170-191, makes no allusion at all to this tal mudic tradition.

32. *BT, Abodah Zarah*, 10a-11a (ET, 49-56); cf. *MR, Gen.*, XX, 4 (ET, I, 161); *Exod.*, XXX, 9 (ET, 355); *Leut.*, II, 24 (ET, 51 f.); *Derek Eretz Rabbah*, see the edition of M. Higger, 1935, 65. The classic study of this material is that of H. Graetz, "Die Reise der vier Tannaiten nach Rom," *MGWJ*, I (1852), 192-202. See also W. Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, I, 1903, 79 f.; H. L. Strack, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 1931, 111.

33. *BT, Sanhedrin*, 32b (ET, I, 204).

34. *BT, Yoma*, 83a (ET, 407) in the Mishnah, disputed below in the Gemara; so in *JT, Yoma*, VIII, 5 (ET, 252).

35. *BT, Yebamoth*, 61b (ET, I, 409).

36. These are collected by Vogelstein and Rieger, *op. cit.*, I, 111 f., and Bacher, *op. cit.*, 380-384.

points.³⁷ We may then conclude that he stayed at Rome for some time. But that the "academy" at Rome was a "regular rabbinical school," whose relation with the schools in Palestine "tended to bring the Jews in the diaspora into line with those of the homeland"³⁸ there is not a particle of evidence to substantiate. A few lines below this Moore says: "About the relations of the Palestinian schools to the Greek-speaking part of the Jewish world comparatively little is known," and with this, if we might change the "comparatively little" to "nothing important whatever," we could heartily agree. Moore goes on to point out that there is no way to ascertain the relation of earlier Alexandrian halacha to contemporary Palestinian teaching, and concludes that "on the whole . . . it seems probable that Alexandrian scholars of his [Philo's] day did not feel themselves bound by the authority of their Palestinian colleagues." He should have admitted that the combined effort of many scholars has unearthed no evidence that the situation was different in Rome or Ephesus, or that Greek-speaking Jews were "bound" by rabbinic traditions for centuries to come.

That is, we must consider the rabbis as a group of Jewish scholars who aspired to much power in regulating the lives of Jews, and eventually got it, but who for centuries even in Palestine fought a hard battle for popular prestige and support. We know that the rabbis in Palestine were held in high esteem by Jews to the east in Babylonia, where the seat of rabbinic Judaism soon had to move, and where, when this was done, popular education under rabbinic direction at last can be seen definitely to have created "normative" Judaism, i.e., a way of life generally regarded by the Jews (in Babylonia) as standard. But nothing indicates that Jews in the Roman world, while they knew of the rabbis, occasionally contributed to their support, and respected them, ever came under their in-

37. The chief passages are *BT, Megillah*, 17a (GT, XII, 277) and *BT, Yoma*, 53b (ET, 253) for Simeon b. Yohai; and *BT, Yoma*, 86a (ET, 426) for R. Eleazar ben Azariah. In *JT, Yoma*, VIII, 8 (FT, 256) Mathia asks the same question in the "academy," but there is no mention of Rome. It is generally supposed that it is the academy at Rome referred to in all these cases, which, if the incident is genuine at all, may quite well be true. Judah Goldin speaks of the academy in Rome similarly in his "The Period of the Talmud," in Louis Finkelstein, *The Jews*, I, 145.

38. Moore, *Judaism*, I, 107. On the issue La Piana seems to blow cold and hot. He appears to exaggerate even Moore's position when he says: "In the communities of hellenized Jews, or at least in the larger ones, advanced schools existed in which scholarly traditions and rabbinical learning were perpetuated." But on the same page he goes on to say: "Rome never became a centre of Jewish learning, never created a Roman Jewish school which played any part in the great work of Jewish

legal exegesis, in the codification and explanation of the unwritten tradition, or in the development of Jewish scholarship": "Foreign Groups in Rome," *HTR*, XX (1927), 371. The presumption is that La Piana rightly concluded that no rabbinic scholarship came out of Rome or the rabbis would probably have mentioned it, but that Roman Judaism "contributed little or nothing to speculative thought" is not at all certain. All we know is that Roman Jews contributed nothing which later rabbis or Christians wanted to preserve. When he then says (*ibid.*, 372, n.) that the Jewish "patriarch" was appointed by Antoninus Pius to be the "spiritual head of all the Jews of the empire" I must agree with Frey (*CIJ*, pp. cii-cv) that if that was the intention, there is no evidence that the patriarch ever became so in fact. Frey is on this whole question much closer to my position: *ibid.*, pp. xcii-xciv. In this introduction to the *CIJ* Frey restates the arguments of earlier publications which he lists on pp. xxix f.

fluence to any appreciable extent. I do not say that this in itself implies that the Jews in Rome or Ephesus were therefore all Philonic Jews. I shall discuss below³⁹ what little we actually know of diaspora Judaism from literature. All we have learned thus far is that there is no evidence to show that the Jews of the imperial diaspora were led by rabbinic thinkers, or were "normative" or "halachic" Jews.⁴⁰

The one attempt to control Greek Jews which I know to have come out of the rabbinic schools was Aquila's translation of the Old Testament to replace the Septuagint. The Septuagint had often opened the way for hellenistic interpretations of the Bible, and in many passages used words which had proved most useful to Christian interpretation. To counterbalance this, the rabbis had Aquila make a more literal version, one which avoided Greek words which Christians had found useful. The translation survives only in fragments, and we have no information as to how widely Jews used it.⁴¹ For example, in an extraordinary Jewish liturgy preserved in slightly Christianized form in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, there are a great number of Old Testament quotations, all from the Septuagint except two which are in the translation of Aquila.⁴² These very passages from Aquila, however, are in this liturgy made the basis of extreme hellenistic speculation, so that the implications of their being from Aquila are quite problematic. Certainly they do not remotely justify Simon⁴³ in concluding from the mere presence of the quotation of Aquila, that "among the Jews of the diaspora there was an increasing docility toward the Palestinian rabbis."

It is time to stop and define "normative" Judaism, or the *Wesen* of rabbinic Judaism, as it is essentially to be contrasted with what we know of hellenized Judaism. The achievement of rabbinic Judaism was to work out a religion which was basically "halachic," to use its own term, that is, basically legal. One not a Jew who speaks of Jewish legalism is always suspect, since Christian scholars have for so many centuries thought they made their own religion more attractive by vilifying the religion of the Jews, especially of the rabbis. Any religious point of view carried to its logical conclusion reduces itself to absurdity, as the medieval scholastics, to cite only a single instance, abundantly exemplify. One problem suggests another, until the mind tends to lose touch with religion as a way of life and begins simply to play an intellectual game. But to judge scholasticism, or medieval Christianity, by the extremists in this game is, to say the least, unfair. Similarly to judge Jewish legalism by some of its more detailed expositions is just as far from reality.

39. See chap. II.

40. It is perhaps enough simply to refer to the elaboration of the myth of rabbinic influence in ancient Rome: Cecil Roth, *The History of the Jews of Italy*, 1946, 15-18.

41. On Aquila and the translation the articles of F. C. Burkitt and Louis Ginzberg in *JE*, II, 34-38, are still the most convenient. Origen (*Ad Africanum*, 2) tells us that among Jews of his day who could

not read Hebrew it was the preferred version.

42. This liturgy was first isolated and published by Bousset, "Eine jüdische Gebetssammlung im siebenten Buch der apostolischen Konstitutionen," *Nachrichten von der K. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, Philologische-historische Klasse, 1915 (1916), 435-485. It is translated and discussed in my *By Light, Light*, 306-358.

43. *Verus Israel*, 81 f. Apparently Simon did not read my study of the liturgy.

What I mean by halachic rabbinism in its true character has been beautifully put into a small paragraph by Grayzel ⁴⁴ in the excellent book we have found so illuminating, where he describes what it was that the rabbis tried to teach in the new Babylonian schools:

The ultimate aim of education was not merely to acquire information, but what was more important, to establish good habits of life. They studied the laws which regulated man's relations to God, and also those which guided man's relations to his fellow man. Philanthropy and business, wages and the rules of common politeness, morality and ethics were as much part of their religious studies as were synagogue regulations and the rules of penitence for sins committed. The attitudes towards one another were as much a subject for discussion as the observance of the Sabbath. There was no difference in their attitude towards Law, Ethics and Morals; all were part of Religion.

And, he might have added, all were part of the Law in its broadest sense, for this is what he means when he himself entitles the paragraph "Law and Life." Here is a religion good and true. Believing actively in a God who made men that they might live a certain type of life, a God who was pleased when men did so and pained or angry when they did not, the business of the devotee was to study the tradition in which that way of life had been revealed, and to try as best he could to live according to it. Such Judaism was a religion of what I have elsewhere called the horizontal path. Man walked through this life along the road God had put before him, a road which was itself the light and law of God, and God above rewarded him for doing so. Man was concerned with proper observances to show respect to God, and with proper attitudes and acts toward his fellow men, but apart from honoring God, he looked to God only for the divine rod and staff to guide him and help him when he was weak, while he said to himself: "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" For "all flesh is grass." This seems to me the *Wesen* of halachic or rabbinic or talmudic or Pharisaic Judaism (I use the adjectives quite synonymously). For the Jew the way of God implied a kosher table, exact observances of Sabbaths and Festivals, the most abstemious recoil from any suggestion of idolatry or any tendency to "syncretize" Judaism by recognizing other religions, myths, or types of worship as valid alternative approaches to God. Those who walked the Jewish path were not to intermarry with outsiders, and even their social relations with gentiles were to be as restricted as possible. The gentiles have often resented this, and retaliated, God knows. As Christians have looked back over the wall of exclusion which their own spiritual forefathers once scaled to run away, they have rarely appreciated the depths of satisfaction (and what else do any of us seek?) which Jews within the walls have found in practising their "life under the Law"; and outsiders have as little understood the social cohesiveness and ripeness which the common life gave to the People among themselves.

I write this deeply sincere tribute to rabbinic Judaism that I may not be taken to disparage it when I record the simple fact that many Jews themselves have found it inadequate. Alongside rabbinic Judaism in Palestine in the century or so before the fall of Jerusalem there sprang up a rash of other sects. The Essenes we know by name, but we have only external and inadequate reports of their views. Then we have documents, like

44. Op. cit., 230.

the strange apocalypses of Enoch and Baruch, Noah, Adam, and the rest, whose interest seems to be in a hero who had trod not a horizontal path but a vertical one up to the throne of God, and had returned to tell men of another world. Grayzel again represents the point of view of most Jewish historians when he says that the lure of early Christianity was its offering to a discouraged world the "shining vision of life beyond the grave,"⁴⁵ but he fails to mention the mystical and apocalyptic movements within Judaism itself which offered men exactly the same thing. The vertical path of mysticism during this life the halachic rabbis have in general opposed. It has been mentioned how the early documents of apocalyptic Judaism exist today only because the Christians found them congenial to their own "shining visions." Later teachers of this tradition developed a "secret teaching" (I dare not say Mystery) explaining the chariot of Ezekiel and creation in a way which apparently gave the believer hope for an escape to a life beyond the grave, one characterized by a succession of heavens, thrones of triumph, blessed meals with the Messiah, and by a whole new array of figures (Metatron was one of the most conspicuous), who seemed to occupy these thrones, or the chief of them. These secret teachings were called *ma'asim*, and the documents in which such teaching now survives are scattered and rare manuscripts, for the most part of the eighth century or later, though they seem to be based upon a continuous tradition which goes back to the early apocalypses of the Apocrypha. While some of the rabbis were acquainted with this material, it is apparently this tradition which they denounced when they said that a man had better not have been born than to learn a *ma'aseh*.⁴⁶ From these obscure beginnings, of whose relation, if any, with the Philonic tradition we have no knowledge whatever, grew the mystic tradition of Judaism which has always challenged the rabbis in their claim to speak adequately for all Jews.

It is not for me to attempt a history of Judaism. But when one reads the wonders of this mysticism as reported in consecutive order for the first time by Scholem,⁴⁷ one seems to go from rabbinism into a new world. I have given this book to some of my Jewish students well established in rabbinic tradition, only to have them come back in utter incredulity that such a Judaism ever existed.⁴⁸ The struggle of rabbinism against the Hasidim of Poland and Russia in the eighteenth century was only a single instance of a tension which seems to have been perennial in Judaism—an opposition first to the *ma'asim*, then the Cabbala, then Hasidism. It was essentially the tension between the two basic types of religious experience everywhere, the religion of the vertical path by which man climbs to

45. Op. cit., 213.

46. *BT, Megillah*, Mishnah, IV, 10 (Danby, *Mishnah*, 207); *Hagigah*, 11b, 13a (ET, 59-61, 73-78). It is interesting that in the account of the four rabbis who learned these secrets as found in the *MR, Song of Songs*, I, iv, 1 (ET, 46 f.) R. Akiba alone was not destroyed by the knowledge because he came out "in peace" as he went in, and declared that his hope of heaven was in "deeds," that is in halachic correctness, and not, we infer,

in what he had learned in the secret doctrine. This is of course a later elaboration of the earlier account in *BT, Hagigah*, 14b (ET, 90 f.), but shows the general rabbinic estimate of such doctrine. See, for most concise discussion, "Maaseh Bereshit; Maaseh Merkabah," and "Merkabah," in the *JE*.

47. Scholem, *Jewish Mysticism*.

48. One orthodox Jewish pupil who had read a great deal of Talmud wanted to know why he had had to come to a gentile to hear of, and be told to read, the Books of Maccabees.

God and even to a share in divine nature, as over against the legal religion where man walks a horizontal path through this world according to God's instructions. All great religions offer men both types of experience, and there are few individuals who could be found to exemplify one type to the complete exclusion of the other. Judaism as a great religion has offered these and other types of religious experience. But the rabbis as a group have never liked the *ma'asim* or their cabbalistic descendants. The mystics have usually been legally observant (to a point) as a matter of course. Indeed they have made legal observances themselves into mystic means, as when the white-robed Cabbalists of Safed ceremoniously each week welcomed the Sabbath as a mystic Bride, and so perpetuated in their experience the age-old values of the mystic marriage. Rabbinism in turn could come to tolerate this, and allow the poem which this rite produced, *L'chah Dodi*, with its refrain, "Go forth, my beloved, to meet the Bride; let us welcome the Sabbath," to become a part of the service of Sabbath eve. In orthodox synagogues the congregation still turns to the door as it recites the last stanza of the hymn.⁴⁹ But few if any congregations are taught by their rabbis the mystic origin and meaning of the little rite. It has become halacha for them.

Rabbinism has been able to absorb a great deal of such mystic liturgy by the simple process of failing to keep alive the mystic explanations, until only antiquarian research discovers what the rite originally meant. Unfortunately most of the rites of Judaism in which I feel mystic significance cannot now be traced with documentary proof to their origin. When, for example, Jews first began to use the wine cup in ritual as they still do in such a variety of connections, and what it originally meant to them, we can only guess. Perhaps at the beginning these rituals were as devoid of meaning as they now seem to be in the minds of most Jews whom I have asked about them. But I doubt it. The point I am making here is that rabbinism has fought against its old mystical antithesis through the ages by finally allowing popular mystic rites to come in, but by teaching the boys of each generation only the rabbinic point of view, so that the new rite seemed to have its chief value as being part of the horizontal path of conformity to the will of God. Inevitably this process in time obscured the mystic implications of the rites.

The fact is that while rabbinical Judaism can adjust itself to mystic rites in the way described, it would never have originated them. Rabbinic Judaism, with its horizontal path, finds its delight in the Law as laws, revelations of God's will each one of which is itself sacred even to its "jots and tittles."⁵⁰ In deepest contrast, while hellenistic Judaism kept the complete normative reverence for the words of the Torah as divinely given and to be obeyed in literal act, it regarded the verbal laws (οἱ ῥητοὶ νόμοι) as being only the body, but their inner meanings as the soul. Philo explains this and lists a number of such inner meanings: The Seventh Day represents the power of the One without beginning as over against those beings who have a beginning (τὸ ἀγένητον vs. τὸ γένητον). The Festivals are symbols of rejoicing and thanksgiving (εὐφροσύνη and εὐχαριστία, I am not sure of the translation here). Circumcision is the excision not only of pleasure but of the mind's conception of itself as in any sense "sufficient" (ικανός) to produce anything of merit. The

49. Grayzel, op. cit., 471.

50. Moore, *Judaism*, III, 83.

"inner meaning" by no means alters the fact that all these laws must be scrupulously observed in practice. "It follows that, exactly as we have to take thought for the body, because it is the abode of the soul, so we must pay heed to the verbal laws. If we keep and observe these, we shall gain a clearer conception of those things of which these are the symbols (σύμβολα)." ⁵¹ This was said to rebuke Jews who proposed to live by the "soul" of the laws and abandon the "body." Yet Philo feels even here so strongly the immeasurable superiority of the "soul" of the laws that he goes on at once to compare the inner meaning of the laws to the laws of nature, the outer body to laws made by imposition, and to say that the heritage of the true sons of Abraham is the former, that of his bastards the latter. Jewish mystics of all ages would have read this passage with sympathy, rabbinic Jews with detestation. By this I do not mean that no rabbi properly to be classed on the whole with rabbinic Judaism would have understood this contrast, but that the whole force of rabbinic Judaism as a movement aimed not, like Philo, at discovering the soul of the laws, but at making workable and sound the literal commands, what was to Philo their body. This is rabbinic Judaism, and rabbinic Judaism has won its victory. Mystic Judaism is now largely an historical or local curiosity. "Reform Jews" went back from rabbinism to what they thought was the religion of the Prophets, that is they Judaized nineteenth-century liberalism; the Orthodox today try to keep to the laws as such, while the Conservatives tend to try to find and live by a *Wesen* of rabbinism which is popularly called "normative" Judaism.⁵² But none of these has any use for the mystic Jew, or would make a place on any faculty for a Cabbalist who believes in and would teach Cabbalism literally as truth. The final victory of rabbinic Judaism over its ancient mystic rival makes it hard to convince modern Jews of the reality of Jewish mystical tradition.

We seem to have got off the point, but not far. What I am saying is that as a young man trying to work out hellenistic Judaism I seemed to meet a stone wall in "normative" Judaism. Myself fortunately a student for a time under Moore, I had not only to face the great learning of his *Judaism*, a learning, and a set of conclusions from that learning, which my generation of Jewish scholars who could read talmudics have regarded as final, but I had also to overcome the sense of helplessness to disagree with him which any pupil of his I have ever known so deeply felt. He was indeed a scholar beyond scholars. In his own generation a few people like Frank Porter protested,⁵³ but for the most part it has ever since been taken for granted that rabbinic Judaism was always and universally normative for all Jews. However we may explain Philo himself, the movement which Philo represented (if indeed he was not, as Moore thought, simply a unique individual) was thought to have collapsed before Christianity. Those Jews who had been most hellenized became Christians, it was said, while the rest returned to the normative Judaism

51. *Migr.* 89-94. Baron, *History*, I, 174, properly makes this passage central in discussing Jewish Hellenism. Simon likewise emphasizes the stabilizing power of the legal observances, in discussing IV Maccabees: *Verus Israel*, 67-70. Cf. André Dupont-Sommer, *Le Quatrième livre des Machabées*,

1939, 33-38.

52. In this G. F. Moore was in a sense only a gentile spokesman of the movement whose Jewish exponents were Schechter, Ginzberg, and many other famous scholars of a generation ago.

53. F. C. Porter, "Judaism in New Testament Times," *The Journal of Religion*, VIII (1928), 30-62.

from which they had at most only superficially departed. Again Judaism was, in Grayzel's word, "united," united in the normative, the rabbinic.

Simon⁵⁴ has recently seemed to face the problem of Jewish art, and the relation of the Judaism of the diaspora with that of the rabbis. He gives a review of the art, only in the end, however, to see in it an exhibition of "rabbinic liberalism." His analysis of the statements of the rabbis on Jewish art we shall discuss when we come to that material in the fourth volume. But it is clear that for him "Palestinian Judaism," by which he means the rabbis, was in unison with the Judaism of the diaspora, and the attitude of all Jews of the period toward Greco-Roman civilization was identical. That is, he seems one more scholar primarily interested in explaining the art away by minimizing its importance in the interest of the all-absorbing rabbinic Judaism.

Of all recent scholars who have reviewed Jewish history, Baron seems to me most nearly to have recognized at least the existence of the problem. He nowhere says that Jews of the diaspora were united in rabbinic Judaism, as do Moore, Finkelstein, Grayzel,⁵⁵ and indeed gives some space, as these do not, to the only remains we have of Judaism in the Roman world after the beginnings of Christianity, that is, remains of art in synagogues and graves; and he discusses the possibilities of syncretism with Sabazius as revealed in certain local inscriptions. He admits that the large population of Jews in Syria, Asia Minor, the Balkans, Italy, Carthage, and Armenia were probably more subject to gentile influences than even the Jews of Egypt. "The influence of Greek culture . . . must have been stronger in Asia Minor and Europe than on the Nile, except perhaps in Alexandria.⁵⁶ . . . Millions of Jews [in the diaspora] were drawn into the whirl of religious syncretism," he says.⁵⁷ He contrasts very well the prohibitions against attending Greek theaters and games which the rabbis imposed, with Philo's obvious fondness for them; and he recalls that according to an inscription in Miletus the Jews later had a section reserved for them in the municipal theater, not to segregate them but because they as a group had keen "interest . . . in the dramatic arts."⁵⁸

Baron leaves us quite confused, however, as well he might in view of the paucity of evidence. Admitting that Jews of the diaspora must have gone into the syncretistic "whirl" in large numbers, how far did Hellenism affect the Jews who hung on to their Judaism in these countries? Is it true, as he says, that "Greek art impressed itself upon the mind of the Jew more than Greek philosophy"?⁵⁹ Although Baron gives in a note one of the best bibliographies of Jewish art for the period, he nowhere seriously examines its evidence.⁶⁰

If we cannot here go into the problem of the attitude of the rabbis to images, let me

54. *Verus Israel*, 34-46. The words quoted are from p. 34.

55. Although he seems to imply this when he says (I, 189) of the Jews in the Roman diaspora that they "lived a full Jewish life among themselves without outside interference. They were governed by Palestinian law."

56. *Ibid.*, I, 206.

57. *Ibid.*, 208.

58. *Ibid.*, 209; the inscription is in A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 1927, 451 f. See also the Jewish inscription from the amphitheater in Berenice, below, II, 143. See *BT, Abodah Zarah*, 18b (ET, 94-96). Baron, *History*, I, 209, and Radin, *Jews*, 331 (409, n. 5), both refer to *Tosefta, Abod. Zar.*, II, 5, 6.

59. *Op. cit.*, 209.

60. *Ibid.*, III, 51-53, n. 15.

beg the question for the moment and say that the art seems to me definitely a part of Judaism, but to have no real place in rabbinic Judaism. By that token it would fall into what is generally called hellenistic Judaism. Hellenistic Judaism, if my hypothesis is right, is altogether too important a movement for us to scamp the slightest evidence which might illuminate it. Both the later mystic movements in Judaism, and the hellenization of Christianity, seem to me to have flowed out from this largely hidden source. It may be of interest then to record how I came to regard these remains as important sources for our purposes. For the very circumstances by which I was attracted to them seem to me significant for their meaning.

In the early nineteen-twenties I was working out at Oxford the thesis of my dissertation that in his allegories Justin largely offered Christianized versions of older allegories of the sort found in Philo. One of my fellow students, whose name I have sadly forgotten, heard of my interest. He was an insatiable traveler in his vacations (which at Oxford cover more than half the year), and had got interested for some reason in the early mosaics of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, where scenes are depicted from the Old Testament. He told me about them and about the book by Richter and Taylor⁶¹ in which it is suggested that these mosaics were inspired by Justin's allegories of the Old Testament. Fig. 1⁶² shows a sample scene. Soon afterwards in Rome I studied the mosaics carefully, and came to the conclusion that they were indeed closely akin to Justin's allegories. But Justin, who lived in the second century, must have been little known in Rome of the fifth century, when the mosaics were presumably executed, so that I could not imagine how it could have been his writings which inspired the artist. I had been working to show that Justin's allegories themselves were based upon a hellenistic Jewish tradition, and so I asked myself whether this art had not been originally devised in hellenistic Judaism, and had not been taken over by the early Christians as part of their heritage from Judaism, along with the allegories of the Old Testament in literary form.

A very small amount of investigation showed that Christian art had not begun with representations of the Christian message directly. The mosaic designs in Santa Maria Maggiore which represented scenes from the Old Testament, for example, appeared to be older than those which represented specifically Christian scenes or figures; that is, the designs themselves were older, if not these particular representations of the designs. A slight study of the paintings in the catacombs showed similarly that representations inspired by the Old Testament antedated, and were adapted to depict, scenes from the New Testament. For example one of the scenes most used shows Jesus raising Lazarus as a parallel to Moses striking the rock (fig. 2).⁶³ With these go scenes of Jesus turning water

61. Jean Paul Richter and A. Cameron Taylor, *The Golden Age of Classic Christian Art*, 1904, see Index, s.v. "Justin Martyr."

62. From Wilpert, *Mosaiken und Malereien*, III, plate 10.

63. From Wilpert, *Pittura*, II (Plates), plate 248, a painting from the catacomb of Domitilla. In this volume the two appear in definite conjunction in

plates 46, 55, 58, 108, 143(a, b), 147, 164 (where, as in 166 and 181, they are framed together), 168, 190, 192, 198, 219, 227, 240. Moses striking the rock appears without Lazarus in plates 13, 27, 59(?), 60, 87(?), 98, 101, 119, 120, 171, 173, 186, 200, 205, 229, 234, 237, 244; the scene of Jesus raising Lazarus appears by itself in plates 62, 65, 87(?), 93, 128, 137, 159, 222, 230, 231, 232, 234, 239, 250.

to wine (fig. 3)⁶⁴ or, more often, multiplying the loaves (fig. 4).⁶⁵ Sometimes, as here, the miracle of the loaves is shown in balance with the raising of Lazarus.⁶⁶ It more often balances Moses at the rock,⁶⁷ while in two paintings all three appear together.⁶⁸ What is common in all these is the central figure in a white Greek dress⁶⁹ which has stripes on the chiton, and a mark of some kind, called a gamma, on the corner of the himation. The figure always holds a rod. It is clearly the same figure, but which of them is the original? To this, in view of the total evidence, we must answer categorically that the Moses figure was original, and that the figure of Jesus was an adaptation of it. Had the Christians first invented this figure for Christ, they would not have used it later for Moses. What seems decisive is the rod. Nothing in Christian literary tradition suggests that Jesus used a rod in performing his miracles, while the rod was the prime attribute of Moses. The figure of Moses striking the rock with his rod shows the rod in a natural setting. When Christians adapted the figure of Moses as the figure of Christ the rod came over by inadvertence, and became a conventional attribute of Jesus himself.

A further glance through the early Christian paintings shows that Christian art began with a number of types from the Old Testament such as Noah in the ark, the sacrifice of Abraham, a figure pointing to a star whom Wilpert identifies with Balaam, Daniel in the lions' den, the three boys in the furnace, Adam and Eve, Jonah under the vine or in the mouth of the fish. In contrast, the few scenes from the New Testament either definitely derive from these, or appear only rarely—such as the paralytic carrying his bed, the coming of the Wise Men, the baptism of Jesus.

That Christian art had begun in large part by adapting conventional representations had long been taken for granted by scholars of every sort. It has been proverbial that, along with a host of other symbols, Christians borrowed from pagan art the Good Shepherd and Orpheus to represent Jesus, as well as the banquet scene at a bolster around a table on which the most important food is fish. It will seem likely as we go on that Christians took at least the last two of these from the Jews: the point is here that no one has ever thought that Christians invented these pagan figures anew, however deeply they came to express Christian ideas. It is not strange then, since we know that Christian art was so largely adaptive, that if a hellenistic Jewish art had devised types for scenes from the Old Testament, Christians should have taken these also. Did Christian art not begin with Old Testament scenes and figures precisely because they were ready at hand along with the "pagan" figures? If we may suppose that such a Jewish art existed, it would most naturally have been produced under hellenistic inspiration, since if our records in Josephus and the Gospels can be trusted at all, let alone the stories of the statue of Gaius and rabbinic references, the "native" protest against pictorial representation was steady. The character of the art itself suggested a hellenized Jewish origin, for all remains of the

64. From *ibid.*, plate 57; cf. plate 265.

65. From *ibid.*, plate 45(1); cf. plates 68, 74, 115, 120, 139, 144(2), 165, 186 (where Moses' rock still stands beside the scene of the Christian miracle), 226, 237, 240.

66. See also *ibid.*, plate 228.

67. *Ibid.*, plates 142, 158, 196, 199, 216.

68. *Ibid.*, plates 181(2), 212.

69. It has often been called a Roman toga, but it is quite unlike the toga, which was a much more elaborate costume.

art that I could then find were perhaps orientalized, but belonged clearly, by their techniques and the dress of the heroes, to hellenistic tradition.⁷⁰

In those early years I had by no means come to understand Philo's mysticism as I hope I have come to do since that time, and the way in which that mysticism was integrated into Judaism through allegory of the Old Testament. But I asked myself with increasing insistence: Does not the art of the catacombs and of Santa Maria Maggiore reflect a hellenized Jewish original? The white robe of Moses came to be the uniform of the Christian saint, his almost invariable symbol. But that robe, while recognizably Greek, was very unusual in pagan art, and the usage in early Christian art is almost wholly without pagan counterpart, especially the way in which the figure with the white robe is contrasted with those in other dress. There are exceptions and ramifications to this problem which will be treated extensively later.⁷¹ Here I am talking of the robe as it impressed me on my first acquaintance with it. Only the chief figure in a scene would wear it, an Abraham, Moses, or a heavenly being such as the three who appeared to Abraham at Mamre. It seemed to correspond to Philo's references to the Robe of the Light-Stream, which, when put on literally in an initiation, as by the hero of Lucian in his initiation,⁷² or when donned figuratively in mystical experience, indicated the culmination of sanctity. When Abraham reached the final stage of mystic achievement⁷³ marked by his getting a new name, he came into true Wisdom, became the traditional *Sophos*, became pure "intellect," which is a "virtue more perfect than that which is allotted to mankind." In token of this he was surrounded by light which knows no shadow. The same light, "an immaterial beam purer than ether," finally shone upon Jacob.⁷⁴ But that Philo like the followers of Osiris thought of this beam as properly typified in a white linen garment appears very clearly in his remarks about the white linen robe in which the priest entered the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur, for this robe "is a symbol of vigor (or life), of incorruption, and of the most brilliant light." It represents the fact that the wearer "is illumined by the unshadowed and brilliant light of truth." We too, after we have been purified by the mystic teaching (ὁ ἱερὸς λόγος), are led into what is "conspicuous [ἐπιφανής, perhaps "manifesting"] and shining."⁷⁵

With such statements in mind it became increasingly clear to me that if hellenized Jews of the Philonic sort had taken to representing their great heroes in art they would almost certainly have represented them in white garments to symbolize their "luminous"

70. Carl Maria Kaufmann, *Handbuch der christlichen Archäologie*, second edition, 1913, 260, had suggested that the predominance of Old Testament scenes in Christian art had come from "Jewish Christian influence." In the third edition, 1922, 298, he said that this phenomenon was to be "explained not merely on the ground of the Jewish basis of early Christian prayers, but it justifies also the assumption of a specifically Jewish art, which was already familiar with these cycles." No one I knew was familiar with this idea of Kaufmann's,

or with the highly important study of it by Ludwig Blau, "Early Christian Archeology from the Jewish Point of View," *HUCA*, III (1926), 157-214, from which, p. 192, the above translation of Kaufmann is taken.

71. In the last volume of this study.

72. See my *By Light, Light*, 162 f.

73. *QG*, iii, 43.

74. *Praem.* 37.

75. *Som.* 1, 216-218, 226. See my *By Light, Light*, 174 f.

nature in contrast to the rabble. Why they should so uniformly have selected just this robe as a symbol of sanctity I did not then stop to consider.

Another striking element in the mosaics of Santa Maria Maggiore is the great prominence of groups of three figures, usually in this dress. In the scenes of Abraham and the three men discussed above,⁷⁶ and of Moses lifting his hands at the battle of Rephidim,⁷⁷ this emphasis upon the number three might seem to imply simply a literal illustration of the text; but in the group of three in the scene of the capturing of the quails,⁷⁸ in the meeting of Moses with Amalek,⁷⁹ in the stoning of Moses, Joshua, and Caleb,⁸⁰ and in the carrying of the Ark,⁸¹ the choice of three was arbitrary, and the total number of scenes which represent a group of three seemed quite beyond coincidence.

The grouping in threes, however, seemed to me again conspicuously to harmonize with Philonic allegory. Philo brings out his conception of the transcendent "three" most importantly in connection with the visit of the three men to Abraham. The material is so important for our purpose here that I must repeat it from my *By Light, Light*.⁸²

Philo quotes the verse, "He looked and behold three men stood over against him," and comments:

Very naturally, to those who can perceive, this represents that it is possible both for one to be three and three one in so far as they are one in the Logos above them.⁸³ But this Logos is numbered along with the primary Powers, the Creative and Royal, and produces a three-fold apparition upon the human mind. For the human mind is denied so acute a vision that it can see as a distinct God him who transcends the Powers assisting him. So in order that mind may perceive God, the ministering Powers appear to be existing along with him, and as it were they make an apparition of three instead of one. For when the mind begins to receive a sure apprehension of Being, it understands itself as penetrating to that stage: mind is itself reduced to monadity, and itself appears as primal and supreme; as I said just above, [the mind] can perceive Being only by means of its association with those primal Powers which exist directly with him, the Creative Power which is called God, and the Royal Power, which is called Lord.⁸⁴

Then after explaining that the eyes raised are the eyes of the soul, Philo continues:

The eye so raised begins by seeing the Rulership, a holy and divine vision, in such a way that a single vision appears to him as a triad, and triad as unity.

For in the highest experience and clearest vision the triad disappears in the One—which makes itself appear without the assisting Powers; and

so the intellect perceives most clearly a unity although previously it had learned to apprehend it under the similitude of a trinity.⁸⁵ . . . So speaking truly and accurately, the

76. See above, p. 25, and fig. 1.

77. Wilpert, *Mosaiken und Malereien*, III, plate 20.

78. *Ibid.*, III, plate 19, 1b.

79. *Ibid.*, III, plate 19, 2b.

80. *Ibid.*, III, plate 21, b.

81. *Ibid.*, III, plate 22, b.

82. P. 33.

83. The Latin of Aucher reads "eo quod unum

sunt secundum rationem supernam," which might mean "they are one by a higher explanation," or "they are unified in the Logos who is above them." The next sentence, where the "ratio" is connected with the two to make a third, shows that the original Greek must have carried the latter sense.

84. *QG*, iv, 2.

85. *Ibid.*, 4.

measure of all things, intelligible as well as sensible, is one God, who in himself is unity, yet appears in the likeness of the triad on account of the weakness of those who would see him.⁸⁶

In *By Light, Light* I have quoted at greater length,⁸⁷ but enough is here to show that Philo himself made the vision of the "three men" into a vision of the essential nature of God, the typical vision of the mystic, and that to show three figures, especially three in the dress of heavenly light, alone or in contrast to others not so clothed, would be indeed a natural convention to arise if hellenized Jews of the Philonic type took to artistic representations of their faith. To select incidents, or to interpret incidents, in such a way that they could be made to show the "vision of the three" would be quite a natural development of hellenized Jewish art. But to do this in terms of the Old Testament would be much more natural for Jews than for Christians. Christians might well have begun with the three in Jesus' transfiguration, or with the easy adaptation of a scene of Jesus' baptism, where another figure could have been put in to balance John the Baptist, or with the "two men in dazzling apparel" standing on either side of the risen Jesus, from the story of the Resurrection in Luke. But no, the Christians seem for centuries not to have come to such adaptations of their material: the early representations of the Three had to be in terms of the Old Testament.

While I by no means had all this material in mind in those early years, and indeed cannot now say how much of it I did have, still I had enough of it so that I came away from Rome convinced that I had been studying a group of pictures that Christians had borrowed, with very little necessity of change, from hellenized Jewish predecessors. When I returned to Oxford I told several of the dons my idea, and was by all of them gently told that it had no possible foundation. Jewish Scripture and tradition alike forbade the making of images, and so long as a group was loyal to Judaism at all it would have had nothing to do with art. So I abandoned the notion, did not mention it at all in my dissertation, and went on to follow the literature into a closer study of Philo to see what I could find further in hellenized Judaism which might help to explain early hellenized Christianity.

It was some seven or eight years later that I returned to the art. One incident alone had recalled it. My senior colleague, Professor Paul Baur, published⁸⁸ a study of an odd little lamp in the Yale collection, showing, over a row of seven wick-holes, David stoning Goliath.⁸⁹ This he published as "an early Christian lamp" and said (p. 45): "We may safely date it to the third century," though on the next page he said: "In fact the letters [which name the two protagonists] are very similar in shape to an inscription of the first century A.D. published by Edgar." I asked him one day why he did not then date the

86. *Ibid.*, 8: "Qui in ipsa unitate trinitati similis apparet ob videntium infirmitatem." Yet one has to be quite advanced as a mystic to get a vision even of the three. One who is still struggling along in semiobscurity (*ὁ προκόπτων*) sees only a dyad, a disconnected thing, divided in itself. The man who has completed the mystical journey (*ὁ τέλειος*) sees

the triad, in unclouded light, its center filled out and complete in nature: *QG*, iv, 30; Harris, *Fragments*, p. 32.

87. Pp. 34-47; see also pp. 140 f., 147 f.

88. In *Yale Classical Studies*, I (1928), 41-51.

89. I show the lamp in fig. 959, and discuss it at length below, II, 105 f.

lamp in the first century, since that was what the lettering indicated, and he said that the lamp must be Christian since it had an Old Testament scene on it, and that he would not dare, without the most explicit evidence, to date a Christian artifact earlier than the third century. When I asked him if it might not be Jewish he answered, with the same kindness as the dons at Oxford had shown six years before, that there was no such thing as Jewish art, and such a suggestion about the lamp would be nonsense.

It was unconvincing, but I was working at other things, and again let it go. In fact I was working on Philo's doctrine of law, which led me in two years directly back to art. For in the same volume with Baur's article I had published my "Political Theory of Hellenistic Kingship," a study of the conception of "incarnate laws" to which the terminology of Philo for the Patriarchs had driven me.⁹⁰ This essay closed with a promise that I would supplement it with a further study in which Philo's treatment of the "incarnate laws" would be examined. But another aspect of Philo's law delayed me; I wrote the *Jurisprudence of the Jewish Courts in Egypt* first. It was not until the early nineteen-thirties that I began systematically to study the Patriarchs whom Philo represented as "incarnate laws," and this clarified a great deal for me. The Patriarchs advanced to the spiritual stage where they assumed the garment of light, and became the "saviors" of Judaism, the figures through whom the divine light of the Logos revealed itself, made itself available to men. I came to see that for Philo no one Patriarch was transcendently important: Philo expressed himself in superlative terms about each, though of course he had more to say about Moses than about any other. The important thing was the revelation of the saving nature of God, the leadership that God gave to men through certain people who by their holiness could guide men out of the darkness of sin, out of the material nature of variegated flesh, into the pure luminosity of immaterial reality. A single Old Testament figure in the robe of light, or the revelation of the sacred Three, seemed no longer to be merely interesting details in Philo's thinking, but the very core of his religious life. So I returned with fresh eyes to the mosaics and the catacombs, and to the newly discovered paintings in the catacomb of the Viale Manzoni in Rome.⁹¹ I must be right, I felt: these

90. The material has recently had two fresh studies. Louis Delatte, *Les Traités de la royauté d'Ephante, Diotogène et Sthénidas*, 1942 (*Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Liège*, Fasc. XCVII), has published an excellent critical edition of the texts, with translations, commentaries, and various critical studies. He concludes that the fragments are in general to be dated in the second century after Christ, and that therefore I am wrong in dating them in the hellenistic period. A date for the documents themselves I was careful throughout my study not to suggest. I was trying to show that the fragments were ringing the changes upon a hellenistic theory of kingship which survived into the Roman empire. When the fragments which we have were themselves written, I felt I could not say without

such stylistic analysis as Delatte has made. This I did not attempt, so I avoided the question of date altogether, and now am quite ready to accept Delatte's date for the finished compositions. *But we cannot date the origin of ideas by the documents in which we first find them.* This is the basic fallacy of much philological study, and it seems Delatte has fallen into it.

91. See especially G. Bendinelli, "Il monumento sepolcrale degli Aureli al viale Manzoni in Roma," *Mon. Ant.*, XXVIII (1923), 289-510, with plates; G. Wilpert, "Le pitture dell' Ipogeo di Aurelio Felicissimo presso il viale Manzoni in Roma," *Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia*, Ser. III, *Memorie*, I, ii (1924), 1-43; M. Rostovtzeff, *Mystic Italy*, 1927, 148-155, and further bibliography, p. 175, n. 15.

were surely Christian adaptations of Jewish archetypes.⁹² One day in December, 1932, I got some of this material together and took it to Professor Rostovtzeff. He knew little about Philo and his Patriarchs, but listened while I told him that I believed there must have been a Jewish art inspired by the sort of allegory to be found in Philo's text.⁹³ This Jewish art, I said, would have presented Old Testament scenes in allegorized form; and conspicuous in the art would have been a figure in the white robe, abstracted or leading other people not so clothed, as well as groups of three in the robe. Especially prominent would be the Patriarchs, and particularly Moses. Rostovtzeff heard me through, and then asked:

"But have you not heard about our cable from Dura?"

No, I had not. So he told me that he had had a cable two weeks before from Dura saying that the excavators had found a synagogue whose walls were covered with paintings. He had no particulars. Six weeks later the first photographs arrived, and there was my Jewish art almost exactly as I had described it. Moses dominated most of the early scenes which reached us, Moses in exactly the same robe, leading the Israelites out of Egypt. The scene of the crossing of the Red Sea differed in important details from that in Santa Maria Maggiore, but a single glance at the water, the drowning of Pharaoh, and Moses on the bank with his rod showed that there was a common ancestor of both pictures. There were quite unexpected elements in the Dura art, especially the large number of figures in Persian dress, which had apparently been added to the Greek basis as the art convention moved toward the east. But these accretions could not conceal the basic hellenistic element which Dura showed in common with early Christian representations of Old Testament scenes. This element was now indisputably Jewish.

The confirmation of my guess filled me with the "wild surmise" of Balboa. Through following up the implications of mystic Judaism, I had prophesied the existence of an art and had described its essential features, and now my prophecy had been fulfilled. But I quickly found that these pictures, while to me they so obviously expressed a mystic and hellenized Judaism, were being explained in every sort of way by others. One man said that since Dura was in Mesopotamia, interpretation of the art must hold to the tradition of the Babylonian Talmud. Others took great comfort in the fact that the discovery showed paintings, not carvings in the round, and so were convinced that, incredible as the paintings were, the Dura Jews were still good halachic Jews. Indeed most of the effort at explanation went into trying to show that there was nothing here basically against the spirit of rabbinic Judaism, rather than attempting to discover what the pictures said in themselves. The assumption that rabbinic Judaism had always and everywhere been normative Judaism still dominated all minds.

It soon became clear that if I were to convince others of the mystic character of these

92. The figure with the staff appears with striking frequency in the new catacomb of the Viale Manzoni: see Bendinelli, *op. cit.*, 403, fig. 48; 406, fig. 49; plates XIV, XV, XVI; Wilpert, *op. cit.*, plates III, IV, VIII, IX, X, XXII (the central figure in the court at upper left).

93. Another parallel which much impressed me were the early Christian representations of Noah emerging from the ark as though the ark were a sarcophagus, which seemed to me very close to Philo's making the ark the body from which Noah was at last saved. See fig. 701.

pictures, and of the Judaism they seemed to me to represent, I could do so only by following out a very long road. Obviously I must first publish what the literary sources seemed to me to tell of the character of hellenized Judaism. So I began at once to write *By Light, Light*, which I put forward as the first installment of a series of studies, the next of which would consider the Dura art. By 1934 *By Light, Light* had gone to press, and late that year I began seriously to study the problem of the art.

First there was the problem of finding a technique for approaching the art to ascertain what an artist had intended to say. Nothing is so dangerous as to reconstruct the purpose of an artist, especially of one with an unknown background. Usually a work of art is to be explained, at least partially, in terms of its setting: but here was an art from which I proposed to extract its language, only then to use the language to find the meaning of the art. In such a circle subjectivism seemed unavoidable, and certainly in those early years my colleagues at Yale, though they judged me with all the kindness in the world, thought my interpretations of various scenes purely subjective. Because of the way I had approached the art in the first place I was convinced that I was not merely projecting, but how was I to convey my conviction of objectivity to others?

While this problem was still unsettled the task expanded enormously when now for the first time I settled down thoroughly to investigate Jewish art. It became at once apparent that those who had assured me that Jewish art had never existed had simply not known the facts. Actually, by a study of the art forms of early Christian manuscript illumination, Strzygowski,⁹⁴ followed by von Sybel,⁹⁵ Erich Becker,⁹⁶ Charles Morey,⁹⁷ and others, had some years before come to the conclusion that hellenized Jews had developed an elaborate art to illustrate their Bibles. It had begun at Alexandria, this school of historians of art said, and was there adopted by Christianity, especially for the great Hexateuch traditions. Inspection of this material showed again the same central features: the symbolic white robe, and the allegorical approach to the problem of illustration. These scholars were interested in the matter exclusively from the point of view of art forms, and asked no questions about why Jews should have developed the conventions they did, or what they meant, if anything, as religious symbols. But at least it became apparent that the whole range of that sort of art in both Judaism and Christianity would have to be studied, along with any traces to be found of it in paganism.

At the same time I discovered that Jewish art of another kind had flourished everywhere in the ancient world. Only two more Old Testament scenes had appeared in Jewish synagogues, but it was plain that we had a great amount of Jewish art from the period, and that this art was elaborately Dionysiac, had indeed the same vocabulary of Dionysiac borrowing as that used by the early Christians. Wine symbols were most prominent of any one kind, that is, the vine, bunches of grapes, the wine cup or the cup as a fountain, vintage scenes, birds or animals like the rabbit in the vine. But with these went a great

94. In his study with Ad. Bauer, "Eine alexandrinische Weltchronik," *Denkschriften der Wiener Akademie der Wissenschaften*, LI (1906), 183-185.

95. *Christliche Antike*, 1909, II, 109.

96. *Malta sotterranea*, 1913, 86.

97. See *inter alia* his *Early Christian Art*, 1942, 71, 76.

number of other figures: lions, eagles, masks, the tree, the crown of Victory, the cock, and astronomical symbols, along with a number of figures of Greek deities, painted or carved in deep relief (sometimes in the full round) on Jewish synagogues, or on Jewish graves in the communal cemeteries of Jewish groups. This material had never been collected, and so its cumulative force had never been felt. It was a big task in itself to get this material together from the nooks and crannies where it had been published, but with that I had to begin. That I have succeeded in finding everything I cannot hope, but the material proved to be everywhere so similar that what bits are not included in the general collection below will, I suspect, be more of the same kind rather than anything radically different.

Again I had a problem of meaning. Almost universally these objects had been published by people who blandly asserted that they meant nothing, were merely decorative, or who tried to explain the objects by stray proof texts from the Bible or Talmud. This could be done quite satisfactorily by those who had only an isolated lamp or cemetery to publish. It became increasingly difficult as the material appeared in greater abundance, until finally I was driven to feel that this art as well as the Old Testament art had been actively symbolic to the Jews who borrowed it, and indeed that the Christians at the outset used a vocabulary from pagan art so much like the Jewish borrowings precisely because the Christians had taken the pagan motifs, as they had taken the Old Testament art, directly from the Jews. Again hellenized Christianity seemed based upon a hellenized Judaism. The problem of objective demonstration, however, had only become the more complicated. What could be done with what we shall see was the chorus of assertions that these pagan motifs were "purely decorative" in Judaism, statements which seemed to me indeed to be subjective, and for which proof was never offered, but which gained conviction with repetition? Dura presented its Old Testament scenes clustered about a great vine over the Torah shrine, a vine in which Orpheus played his lyre to the animals, while numerous other pagan symbols appeared in various parts of the room. The two, the pagan symbols and the Old Testament illustrations, could not be separated. It became clear that one must try to discover a way objectively to interpret the symbols as well as the Old Testament scenes.

This is the task of the volumes which follow. Long as they are, they cut so many corners in discussing the numerous problems they attack that I shall much more often have to apologize for brevity than for expansion. The theories I have evolved to meet the problems have no way of direct proof—or disproof. Conviction can be imparted only by accumulation. A certain method will be tried with symbol after symbol. That it leads to mystic Judaism in the case of a single symbol or Old Testament allegorical picture proves nothing. That the same method leads to the same conclusion in scores of cases still *proves* nothing, but does establish a probability, so that the burden of proof steadily shifts to the shoulders of those who would continue to call the art "merely decorative." All I can hope to have accomplished is to have made my hypothesis more probable than other hypotheses. Such a book, like all historical reconstruction, should properly be written in the subjunctive mood: what I say *may* be the case. It would be so written except that the subjunctive mood is rhetorically tiresome. I have tried to relapse into it often enough to

keep the reader aware that I feel throughout the hypothetical character of what I am proposing. Of only one thing I am certain: that those who reject my thesis cannot do so simply by protest and assertion, but must offer a better hypothesis than mine for the mass of material here presented, one more illuminating than mine for that material as a whole. Perhaps the real service of this work will be to provoke such a hypothesis. In that case the years will have been well spent.

My hypothesis and method will best be presented after the material itself is before the reader. But first I must summarize in greater detail what is actually known from literary sources of the character of Judaism in the Roman empire.