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includes a detailed catalog of individual pieces with special focus on jewelry from Etruscan tombs.

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Alexis Q. Castor

## JEWISH-GREEK LITERATURE

See Jews and Judaism.

## JEWES AND JUDAISM

The 850-year span of ancient Jewish history—from the return of some Israelite expatriates to Judaea in the late sixth century BCE, followed by the re-establishment of their Temple in Jerusalem with the permission and support of the Achaemenid Persian kings, to the ascendancy of Christianity as the imperial religion under Constantine in the 330s CE—witnessed considerable developments and transformations in Judaism. Politically, the Jewish nation emerged from its status as an exiled minority in the Assyrian and then Babylonian empires to

become a local, semi-independent state in the Hellenistic world—the Hasmonean dynasty (167–63 BCE)—and to extend its sway beyond the limited territories of Judaea and eventually encompassed a broad diaspora throughout the Mediterranean and Persia. Later, the Romans integrated this political entity into their growing empire as a vassal kingdom, first entrusting the reins to Herod and his sons (37 BCE–6 CE), and a generation and a half later stripping the state of its relative freedom and turning it into a regular province of the empire (6 CE), first called Judaea and then called Syria Palaestina.

Decades of unstable provincial rule in Judaea, accompanied by ethnic tensions between Jews and other national groups in the region (Samaritans, Nabataeans, the inhabitants of the Phoenician-Greek coastal cities, and others), erupted in a series of Jewish revolts, ranging from Palestine to far-flung regions of Egypt, North Africa, Cyprus, and Mesopotamia. The Roman army crushed these upheavals mercilessly, first in 66–70 CE under the leadership of the rising Flavians, when the Temple in and the city of Jerusalem were destroyed. The final blow was delivered by the emperor Hadrian in 132–135. Ironically, these severe defeats paved the way for two hundred years of relative peace and tranquility in the Jewish world, marked by new forms of leadership and self-government (such as the Jewish patriarchate) as well as communal thriving and cultural prosperity.

At the height of this period, in the decades around the turn of the first century BCE, informed estimates set the Jewish population at about 5 million. Somewhere between 10 and 20 percent of the Roman Empire's Jewish population lived in the area now called Israel or Palestine. The rest resided in cities and villages throughout the Mediterranean world, from Egypt and North Africa, through Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece, all the way to Rome and even to Gaul (modern-day France) and the Iberian Peninsula—the numerous and noncontiguous islands of Jewish habitation usually referred to as the Diaspora. These numbers, although approximate, and their geographical distribution, establish the Jews as the largest and most widely dispersed ethnic minority under Roman rule.

**Identity and Consciousness.** Defining Jewish identity in the ancient world involves more than a few uncertainties. Early on, the returning deportees from Persia during the sixth century BCE were met in Judaea by an assortment of tribes and families who had remained in the region, many of whom retained affiliation with the former Israelite and Judaeans kingdoms. Such encounters raised crucial matters of identity. These Judaeans needed to determine who they were and how they related to their new neighbors and to their past. Other forms of worshipping the God of Israel lurked in the background, the most documented being in the military colony in Elephantine, Egypt, in which people claiming to be “brothers” of the Judaeans venerated this same god and operated a temple for his worship that predated the Second Temple in Jerusalem. The Samaritans, a group occupying the regions north of Judaea, offered another closely related ethnic and religious system.

Much of the literary production in this early period grapples with matters of identity. Historiographical works like the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, as well as the contemporary books of Chronicles, a retrospective narrative about the old First Temple kingdoms, develop a cultural formula to delineate the contours of these confusing social groupings. This literature emphasized the centrality of the Temple in Jerusalem as the exclusive venue for the worship of the God of Israel, opposed close social bonds (such as marriage) with the neighbors, and endorsed a strict adherence to the laws of the Torah (the books that later came to be the first five in the Bible, also known as the Pentateuch).

The conquests of the Greeks under Alexander the Great in the late fourth century BCE, which set in motion the long cultural transformation of the East into what we call Hellenism, introduced a new set of identity challenges to Jews. The question of how to fit into the cultural landscape of Hellenism, which later evolved into *Romanitas* (the Roman way of life), and at the same time remain distinctively Jewish would remain a central issue for the centuries to come, propelling debates and disputes, and at times social unrest and conflict.

The rubric “Jewish” (*yehudi* in Hebrew; *Ioudaios* in Greek), which began as a geographical-tribal marker (referring to a person living in the territory called Judaea or belonging to the tribe of Judah), had by the second century BCE (2 Maccabees 2:21 offers the earliest testimony) developed into a signifier of cultural, religious, and national identity. Roman law (and before that, Hellenistic imperial correspondence), as well as many non-Jewish authors, used the term to refer to a group with unique characteristics and a venerable heritage. These sources confirm the existence of a definable Jewish identity, while at the same time attacking the peculiar, defining traits of Judaism. But the texture and content of that identity remained fluid for centuries more. Identifying marks such as dress and language, which later distinguished this group from others, had not yet crystallized. Identities were not exclusive in this cultural environment, and a person could be a good Jew, at least in his own eyes, and at the same time be an Idumaeon and a Roman (Herod, the Jewish king of the last part of the first century BCE, is a classic example). Later on, a Jew could simultaneously be a Christian and vice versa.

While certain clusters of ideas constitute the epistemological core of ancient Judaism, or at the very least denote a certain strand within it, beyond the superficial level no consensus has ever been reached as to what constitutes foundational Jewish ideas. Various groups and sects differed among themselves and within themselves about any number of principles. Even if all of them did acknowledge the importance of a given tenet in the world of Judaism, such as belief in the God of Israel and the scriptural account about him (that he created the world, brought Israel out of Egypt, gave the Torah, and so on), different people perceived the nature and essence of this God in contradictory ways. Philo of Alexandria’s philosophical divinity, for example, modeled on the high god of Greek *paideia* and his subordinate agent (the *logos*), was nothing like the concrete, almost flesh-and-blood God who, according to some rabbinic tales, nearly rubs shoulders with Bar Kokhba, the leader of the Jewish revolt in 132–135 CE (Philo *Quod Deus est*

*immutabilis*; Palestinian Talmud [Yerushalmi], Ta'aniot 68d).

And both stand far from the heavenly, sometimes dualistic God of many mystical and apocalyptic works. Nevertheless, the ancient Jews did share some beliefs. Most of all, ancient Judaism featured a shared historical heritage, based freely and without concrete obligation on the biblical ethos. Jews identified themselves and were perceived by their Gentile neighbors as the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, members of a nation that had been enslaved in Egypt, that had been taken out of bondage with signs and wonders, that had received the Torah at Sinai, and whose twelve tribes had inherited the land of Canaan.

**Religion.** At their core, the Israelite and subsequent Jewish religion of the Second Temple period consisted of cultic practices built on two basic features: (1) the existence of a Temple or Temples; (2) the worship of God through offerings—mainly animal sacrifices but also vegetarian offerings (called “meal offerings,” especially grain breads) and liquids (like oil and wine, named “libations”). In this respect, Judaism resembled all other religious systems in the ancient Near East and the Greco-Roman world. On the grounds of the Temple in Jerusalem, up to a hundred animals a week, and thousands during the major holidays, were butchered, skinned, and finally burned on a huge altar. Ancient texts tell us that the appearance of the smoke coiling up from the altar prompted the highest joy in the populace (Sirach 50:16–19), for it meant that God had accepted their sacrifice. In the ancient Mediterranean, where gods supplied the necessary safety net in an environment replete with agony and insecurity, this was no small achievement.

Ancient people in general, and Israelites and then Jews in particular, conceived of a temple as the house of a god, any god. Within this domestic conception of sacred space, sacrifices functioned as the lines of communication through which the public, standing outside the house (a gap representing the cosmological breach between the human and the divine), could connect with the godly entity who resided inside (e.g., Genesis Rabbah 68:12).

Accordingly, in those days it was commonly believed that God must dwell among his people. But Judaism differed from the other Roman Mediterranean religions in that the latter associated their gods with a human or semihuman figure and therefore placed the gods' images in the temples. The Torah insisted on the nonanthropomorphic nature of God, and thus the Temple in Jerusalem stood naked, devoid of statues. Instead, ancient Israelite thinkers formulated the elusive concept of *Shekhina* (“presence”), meaning that only the intangible essence of God inhabited the sanctuary. Beyond this

### Temples in Jerusalem

Sometime early in the first millennium BCE, the Judaeen kingdom, known as the House of David, established its worship center for the God of Israel on a hilltop located on the eastern ridge of the city of Jerusalem. This Temple would eventually become the focal point of Jewish religion as well as a crucial, almost irreplaceable, emblem of its national identity. The armies of the rising Babylonian kingdom destroyed this edifice in 586 BCE, and seventy years later, in 516, the returning deportees, now under the Persian Empire, rebuilt the sanctuary in the exact same location. The close association of the two establishments in Jewish consciousness is reflected in the names of these buildings—the First and Second Temples, respectively—as two links in the conceptual chain that represents the essence of Jewish tradition. Under King Herod I (r. 37–4 BCE) the Second Temple was almost completely rebuilt, although its name was unchanged. In 70 CE, at the height of the so-called Great Revolt, the Roman army—led by the future emperor Titus—sacked the entire city and burned the Second Temple to the ground. With only a short and unsuccessful attempt to rebuild the Temple in the days of the emperor Julian (r. 361–363 CE), as part of his pagan revival against rising Christianity, it has never been built again.

difference, however, all ancient religions shared common practices regarding the spatial organization of worship. The Jewish Temple in Jerusalem resembled a huge house, consisting of two main chambers: the Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Covenant stood and God's presence resided, and the outer chamber called *kodesh* or *heikhal* in Hebrew and *naos* in Greek, containing the sacred vessels (furnishings)—the menorah (a seven-branched candelabrum lit with oil), a golden table holding a dozen loaves of bread, and a small bronze altar for incense (analogous to domestic lighting, food storage, and a ventilation system—the smell was, after all, quite potent). The huge altar for sacrifice stood just outside the entrance to the building.

Another important aspect of the cultic religion involved the location of the masses while conducting worship. They were permitted neither to enter the Temple, which was considered sacred (i.e., extraterritorial, and off-limits), nor to participate in the sacrifice of their own offerings. These privileges were exclusively granted to the priests (Hebrew: *kohanim*), who were seen as God's servants and were in charge of the Temple and the entire sacrificial process. In the courts outside the building, the populace would hand their offerings to the priests and watch from a distance. The encounter with God remained indirect, with the individual separated from the core of religious activity.

Nevertheless, in the ancient world almost everyone seemed happy with this arrangement. Jews everywhere revered the Temple in Jerusalem, even if some of them—like Jesus, who according to the Gospel writers overturned the tables in the Temple's court (Mark 11:15–19 and parallels), or the people of Qumran, themselves priests who left Jerusalem when the management of the Temple was taken over by the Hasmonean family—criticized the priests who controlled it or disapproved of the corruption that developed around it. Notwithstanding these occasionally dissonant voices, by the first century CE the popularity of the Temple in Jerusalem reached an unprecedented peak. Hundreds of thousands thronged its compound during the Jewish pilgrimage holidays to be in the vicinity of God. From all

over the world Jews voluntarily raised a special annual levy, called the "half-shekel," for the maintenance of the Temple. This single building served as a fundamental and, in their minds, irreplaceable element of the encounter with God, the hub of the religious experience. Prayers were directed toward the Temple, sins were absolved through the offering of sacrifice, and in general the practice of Judaism depended on its existence. It is no surprise, therefore, that the Temple transcended its practical religious status and became the best-known emblem of the nation of Israel.

All this changed, although not instantly, after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. The Jews were without the institution that in their mind enabled their lives. It is no wonder, then, that many of them (although surely not all) concluded that Judaism had reached its end. With the eradication of the mechanism that had linked them with God, Israel's connection with its protector had surely been cut off and thus the way of life nourished by that union was now impossible (e.g., 2 Baruch 10, 44; Tosefta Sotah 15:10–15). The paucity of sources from this period does not allow us to fully estimate the circulation of such beliefs. But it is surely no coincidence that this is when Jewish believers in Jesus formulated their first comprehensive narratives about his teaching, later known as the Gospels. These accounts should be seen, at least in part, as responses to the vacuum left by the destruction. The gospel accounts offer a formula of redemption in place of the security the Temple had provided. The literature produced by the rabbis, a loosely associated group of legal scholars who operated in Palestine after the destruction of the Second Temple, also sought to determine what constituted a Jewish way of life in the Temple's absence.

In time, the synagogue came to fill the spatial void left by the Temple's destruction. The origins of this institution reach back to the centuries prior to the Temple's destruction, which explains why some stories about Jesus are set in synagogues. At that time, the synagogue was a gathering place for local Jewish communities throughout the Mediterranean world, mainly for the sake of reading the Torah

publicly on the Sabbath. But after 70 CE the synagogue's appearance and role changed dramatically. Although the stages of its development cannot be firmly dated, the synagogue gradually became, as it remains, the prime locus for the Jewish worship of God, and unquestionably the most important institution in Jewish life. Ancient synagogues emerged as diverse and multifunctional cultic and communal establishments. Alongside the worship of God through prayer and the housing of the Torah scroll in a special ark, some communities in the Bosphorus kingdom, for example, practiced and documented the manumission of slaves in this institution. Other synagogues held the public archives of the community and housed the local school. The synagogue's iconography, most of which, but not all, is posterior to the period discussed here, brought to life and perpetuated the memories of the shared past as communicated by the scriptures, and it housed various Jewish celebrations such as Sabbath and holiday prayers, marriages, and other local festivities. It was also the venue for the pronouncement of local hierarchy and power.

On the practical level, Jewish experience centered on a way of life, a long list of practices, minor and major, that shaped each day, weaving the individual (and the family), even if only very loosely, into a collective known as the Jewish people. Greek and Roman authors, as well as Hellenistic and then Roman legislators, recognized the unique law (the *nomos*) that set this group apart. Its central components were: (1) the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week on which labor was prohibited, a day devoted to prayer, to family feasts, and to rest; (2) dietary laws, which proscribed certain foods, in particular specific types of meat and especially pork, a common ingredient in the Roman diet; and (3) circumcision. The written sources frequently supplement these principal elements with references to burial practices, the sabbatical year, and annual festivals. Jewish writers of different tendencies obsessively try to encapsulate Judaism through its legal paradigms. The roots of this legal propensity reach back to the sacred writings that Second Temple Jews revered as their foundation texts—the Torah. At their core, these scriptures convey the

God of Israel's requirement that his subjects strictly observe his precepts (the *mitsvot*). The Torah communicates these guidelines as an intricate system of legal strictures. Through the *mitsvot* the Torah endeavors to shape the Jew's entire way of living—from his diet to his farming, from his family to the marketplace and economy, not to mention his army and its wars. Not surprisingly, the Torah also devotes much attention to the proper procedures for the sacrificial process of the Temple, the highest institution in the life of ancient Jews. It also specifies a series of annual festivals that created a link between agriculture and the changing seasons of the year on the one hand and the nation's mythological-historical heritage on the other, producing the Jewish calendar and a specifically Jewish vision of time. These holidays included commemorations of the exodus from Egypt (Passover) and the receiving of the Torah (Shavu'ot; Pentecost).

Many Jewish writers recognize the importance of the divine law. Philo endows the laws with allegorical-philosophical meaning; Josephus explains them in language comprehensible to his Greek-Roman readership; and other books, such as Jubilees, address a solely Jewish audience (Philo *De specialibus legibus*; Josephus *Antiquitates Judaicae* 4.196). The brevity and ambiguity with which the Torah formulates its laws stimulated Jewish groups to interpret and shape them in different ways, each disagreeing with and disputing the interpretations of the other. The Judaean desert ("Dead Sea") scrolls provide a lively example of such a legal-polemical discourse (e.g., 4Q394–399, also known as *Miktsat ma'ase ha-torah*). Many of the messages that the authors of the canonical Gospels put in the mouth of Jesus also express his disagreement with the legal interpretations of the Pharisees, one of the central groups at the end of the Second Temple period. Yet, at the same time, they confirm the centrality of legal behavior (the *mitsvot*) in his world. In the centuries following the destruction of the Temple, the rabbis built on and enhanced this legal tendency.

**Literature.** The role of writings in Jewish tradition transcends the ordinary function of texts in other cultures and religious systems. Because of the

ambivalent Jewish attitude toward visual representation, Judaism's lack of any noteworthy architectural achievements (aside from the Herodian Temple and then the synagogues), and the dispersal of Jewish communities throughout multiple geographical, ethnic, and political areas, Jews have invested great importance in their written tradition. Over the centuries, scrolls and then books—whether legal codes and discourses, exegetical treatises and prayer books, or a variety of other literary genres—have become the foremost expression of Jewish identity.

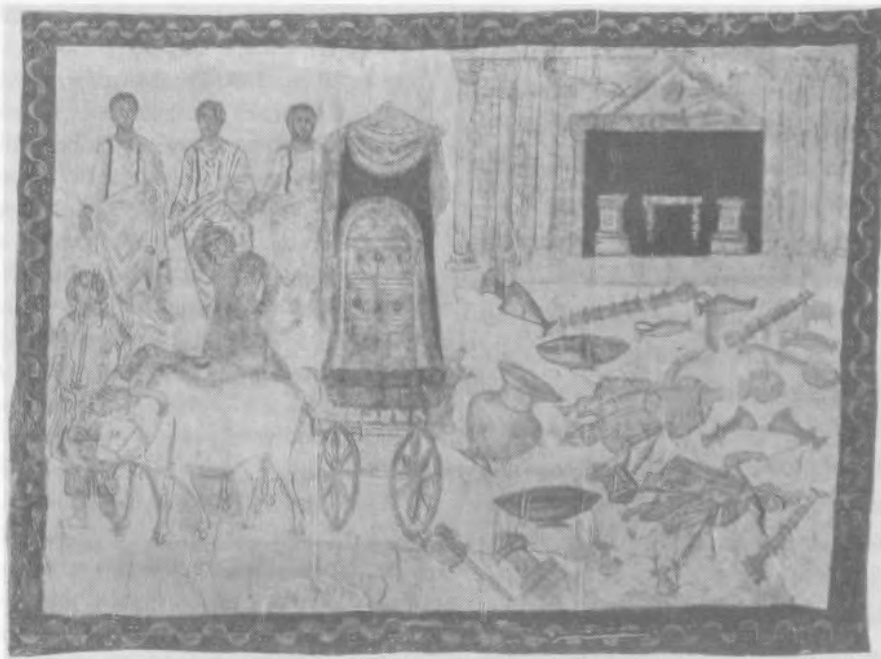
The literature from the Second Temple period is vast and diverse—including the corpora we now call the Bible, both New and Old Testaments, as well as a vast quantity of independent texts in multiple genres. Written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, many of these books achieved a foundational status among Jewish communities, including those followers of Jesus who later became known as Christians but who were then part and parcel of the Jewish world. Other texts were relegated to the periphery and went relatively unnoticed until they resurfaced in archaeological excavations (most notably the hundreds of texts found in the Judaean desert in the 1940–1950s and thereafter, known as the Dead Sea Scrolls) or in the libraries of remote Christian monasteries translated into languages such as Ethiopic and Slavonic.

The disparate, at times contradictory, perspectives of Second Temple texts on matters of theology—such as the nature of God, the role of the Torah, sin and repentance, and so forth—has led some modern intellectual historians to associate these literary works with distinct manifestations of Judaism and to anchor them in separate social and political strata. However, a more moderate reconstruction regards them as different strands of religious and cultural expression, which both share traits and differ from one another.

Most of these texts depend in one way or another on the Torah and in general on what later came to be known as the Hebrew Bible. The first stage of the Bible's development occurred during the days of the First Temple—including narratives that described the historical heritages of the Judaeans and Israelites, compositions conveying their ideologies,

values and ways of life, liturgical texts, and prophecies. The Judaeans deported in the Babylonian exile and then those who returned to Judaea had not forgotten the early texts of the people they saw as their ancestors. On the contrary, Jews of the Second Temple period endowed this early literature with a special aura and made it the basis of their lives. They revered these texts as sacred, saw them as the direct revelation of God, and preoccupied themselves with their meaning and read them at numerous occasions (on the Sabbath, during annual festivals, and on private and communal occasions). But most importantly, Second Temple Jews continued producing such texts. They did not see the ancient texts of the First Temple as a sealed corpus. Instead, they viewed themselves as the natural heirs of the Judaeans and Israelites. Consequently, they composed their own writings in a manner and style very similar to those of the ancient texts. To the untrained eye, early First Temple writings and Second Temple literature are indistinguishable. Second Temple Jews borrowed First Temple Hebrew vocabulary, adopted grammatical structures, and expressed their ideas based on the models of their predecessors. Alongside these Hebrew and Aramaic texts, Greek-speaking Jews, mostly in the Diaspora, produced a vast amount of literature in their native tongue—the Letter of Aristeas, the second book of the Maccabees, the multitude of writings of Philo, and the works of the Jewish historian Josephus are some of the most notable examples.

Another feature of the literary activity of the Second Temple period (although it began already during the exile in Babylonia) was the grouping together of certain books. One such collection came to be known as the Pentateuch or the Torah, a compilation of five books telling the story of the inception of the Israelite nation, interwoven with writings about the nation's theological conceptions and legal system. Other clusters of texts merged the stories of the Davidic kingdom into a series of books (now known as the books of Samuel and Kings). Another literary endeavor compiled the series of prophecies of a given prophetic figure into one book (such as the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc.).



**Judaism and Paganism.** The Ark of the Covenant overcomes paganism. Mural from the synagogue at Dura-Europos, c. 239 CE. PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS/ART RESOURCE, NY

At the same time an important development in the history of the Bible was taking place in the Diaspora. It was natural for these mainly Greek-speaking Jewish communities to seek a translation of the sacred Jewish texts, and over the next few centuries, Greek translations of most of the Jewish scriptures were produced in the Jewish Diaspora. The most popular of the Greek translations of the Bible is known as the Septuagint, “seventy” in Latin, short for *septuagint et duo*, meaning “seventy-two.” The number refers to a legend about the translation’s origin in the days of the Greek king Ptolemy II of Egypt (r. 283–246 BCE): seventy-two sages worked in separate rooms but produced identical versions of the Hebrew text. Just as their Hebrew-speaking brethren who composed the original Hebrew writings did not differentiate between their own texts and those that came to them from the ancient Israelites, the translators also did not make such a distinction. They translated both First and Second Temple texts and considered them equal in status. The Septuagint thus includes an expanded selection of Second Temple scriptures.

After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE the process of literary creativity in Jewish circles significantly altered. Imitation of the ancient books gradually declined, and with very few exceptions, from the end of the first century CE no further writings in this genre were produced. In addition, the gradual rise of Christianity significantly affected the formation of the Bible. In Greek-speaking Jewish communities of the Diaspora, the followers of Jesus embraced the Septuagint as their “foundation document,” eventually adding to it another component about the life and death of Jesus, known as the Gospels, as well as a new genre in which ideology was conveyed in the form of letters (the Epistles). Some of these texts found their way into the New Testament, but many others did not. In response, other Jews in what was by that time the Roman province of Palestine rejected this corpus and adopted a shorter Hebrew version of the sacred texts, which excluded most—though not all—of the more recent Second Temple books (the book of Daniel, for example, was included even though it was for the most part a Second Temple text and is partly in Aramaic). This shortened collection



became the Jewish Canon, also known as the Hebrew Bible. The Second Temple texts—included in the Septuagint but excluded from the Hebrew Bible—were later labeled “the Apocrypha”. Indeed, the presumed Hebrew original versions of these texts are no longer extant.

Other than texts relating to the followers of Jesus and a small number of other works, most of what has survived from the centuries after the destruction of the Second Temple is the corpus known today as rabbinic literature. This body of texts comprises some forty documents of various sizes, most of them of a legal nature (called *halakha*, from the Hebrew verb “to go”—in the sense of “the way in which we should live”). Some of these, labeled *midrash*, are homiletic commentaries on the scriptures; the other nonlegal material—stories, homilies, parables, proverbs, and other genres—are defined under the general heading of *aggadah* (telling). Through a long and convoluted process, about which much remains unknown, during the first centuries of the Common Era the figures known collectively as “the sages” (and later, “the rabbis”) produced, collected, and edited these works. It has been widely believed, by both academic scholars and the Jews themselves, that rabbinic literature contains within it the essence of Judaism after the destruction of the Temple, a way of life developed, refined, and led by the rabbis who wrote these works. While modern scholarship has shown that the Jews of the ancient world did not define themselves solely by the instructions of rabbinic literature—far from that—this corpus remains the richest and often sole literary source from the Jewish world of the post-Second Temple era.

[See also Bible, *subentry* Jewish Scripture and Other Writings; Christianity; Hellenism; Jerusalem; Josephus; Judaea; Judaism, Rabbinic; Philo; and Synagogues.]

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Yaron Z. Eliav

## JOSEPHUS

(37–c. 100 CE), priest, general, and historian. Josephus lived the first half of his life in Judaea. A priest by ancestry, he also claimed a connection to the famed Hasmoneans (*Life* 1–6). Josephus received an elite education and in his mid-twenties was an emissary to Nero’s Rome (63/4 CE). Soon after his return he found himself commanding Galilee in the first phase of the Judaeen (or Jewish) revolt of 66–67. After surrendering to Vespasian in June or July 67, he assisted Roman commanders with field intelligence. Following Titus’ conquest of Jerusalem in the late summer of 70, Josephus accompanied Titus to Rome and witnessed the Flavian triumph of 71. Apparently Josephus remained there, and he died sometime after 96. The name “Flavius Josephus” is attested in Christian texts and reflects the grant of citizenship by the Flavian Titus (*Life* 423).

Josephus wrote three known works, all in Greek: the seven-volume *Judaeen* (or *Jewish*) *War*, a history from Judaea’s first contacts with Rome until 75 CE; the twenty-volume *Judaeen* (or *Jewish*) *Antiquities*, from the creation until the revolt, with an appendix on Josephus’ life; and *Against Apion*, a two-volume defense of Judaeen antiquity.

*The Judaeen War*. Josephus positions *War* against other accounts of the conflict, accounts reportedly

flattering the Romans while disparaging the Judaeans—a claim that accords with Flavian material remains. A proud general in the fight against Rome, as well as one who was then forced to observe the conflict from the Romans’ side, Josephus claims to be uniquely qualified to present a corrective balance (1.1–8).

*War* interweaves at least four thematic clusters. First, it dwells on Judaeen courage and contempt for death, sometimes at the expense of the storied legionaries, who appear confused or timid. Second, it draws on commonplaces of polis diagnosis: the disease of civil discord (*stasis*) is a constant threat requiring preemption by statesmen. A crucial political thread concerns the true meaning of “freedom” and “slavery.” Third, *War* has a tragic ethos, presenting many scenes as if they were staged spectacles. Finally, cultic themes pervade the work: Jerusalem’s Temple becomes a place of both animal and human slaughter, creating a pollution that will require purification.

Josephus fits his narrative with the accoutrements of Hellenistic historiography: historical prologue, seven deliberative speeches, and various kinds of excursus—geographical, philosophical, and moral. In spite of its express disdain for “the Greeks,” *War* is a fashion statement. A fine example of the Atticizing program then coming into vogue, it avoids clashing vowels (“hiatus”) and adopts Attic spelling and word forms. Taken with indications that Josephus’ language had been criticized by certain pedants (1.13–16), this reveals an author in dialogue with contemporary Greek elites.

Although Josephus was an eyewitness, most of *War*’s content must have reached him at second hand: everything before the death of Claudius (to 2.253), when he was seventeen; whatever happened inside Jerusalem’s walls or in Rome while he was in the Roman camp (most of books 4–6); and whatever occurred after his departure (most of book 7). Known sources include Nicolaus of Damascus, the field notes (*commentarii*) of the generals, and exchanges with King Agrippa II. Josephus once mentions an earlier account that he had composed in Aramaic (*War* 1.3), though this appears to have had little effect on the very Greek *War*.