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Antisemitism Studies, Volume 7, Number 2, Fall 2023, pp. 302-337 (Article)

ANTISEMITISM
STUDIES
VOLUME 7 NUMBER 2 FALL 2023

Published by Indiana University Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2979/ast.2023.a910234>

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Can Antisemitism Be Traced Back to Ancient Rome?

MIRIAM BEN ZEEV HOFMAN

The political context and the comments about Jews found in Latin literature indicate that no discrimination against them is attested to in Rome in the period between the second century BCE and the second century CE. The expulsions from the city applied also to other foreign groups, and the occasional negative comments made by Roman politicians, historians, and poets are not intrinsically different from those regarding other foreign population groups. Although Jewish separatism and cases of alleged attraction to Judaism aroused some hostility, this hostility never led to open conflict of the kind that transpired in other centers of the Mediterranean. However, some disparaging comments about the Jews did not disappear with time, as with other peoples slandered by the Romans, and were later redeployed forming the basis upon which anti-Judaism and antisemitism developed.

The term antisemitism applies to a modern phenomenon founded on a pseudo-scientific theory of race, which originated in Europe between the Franco-Prussian War and the Second World War,¹ and is inappropriate and misleading when applied to ancient times.² Judeophobia and anti-Judaism are also problematic terms as the former emphasizes psychological and irrational feelings,³ and the element of fear⁴ over that of enmity, while the latter is often reserved for the rather different early Christian phenomenon.⁵ In

any case, the question at stake is whether, in the period between the second century BCE and the beginning of the second century CE, manifestations of hostility occurred in Rome that were specifically directed toward the Jews. Or, as Zvi Yavetz puts it, the question is whether, though Jews were in many respects barbarians like all the others, they were in some respects “a little more so.”⁶

An answer may be sought by investigating the historical events transpiring in Rome at the time and by evaluating the remarks concerning Jews found in works written by Roman authors living in Rome,⁷ comparing these comments with those made about other foreign population groups. We should, however, be aware that conclusions remain necessarily speculative since what has survived the vagaries of transmission probably constitutes a minimal part of what may have been written, and, also, it is impossible to know how far the statements found in the Latin literature do, or do not, reflect prevailing general views.

The first thing we learn about the Jews of Rome is their expulsion from the city in 139 BCE. Was this an anti-Jewish measure? Probably not. One of the extant epitomes of Valerius Maximus' work states that they were found guilty of bringing new cults into public places without authorization, while another one has them guilty of attempting to infect Roman customs. The same ban also applied to astrologers, responsible for “offering for sale their foreign science” and/or “perturbing fickle and silly minds by a fallacious interpretation of the stars, thereby making profit out of their lies,” and this, perhaps, also applied to the worshippers of the Asian god Sabazius.⁸

Expulsions of foreigners from Rome were not a rare occurrence in the second century BCE. Some expulsions had political motives, as in the case of the visiting Macedonian envoys and of all Macedonians resident in Rome at the outbreak of the war against Macedon in 171 BCE.⁹ Other cases stemmed from a combination of political and cultural factors. The Roman victories in the Greek East in the second century BCE had set in motion a process by which a multitude of Orientals relocated to Rome, prompting a heightened exposure of the local inhabitants to Hellenistic culture,

mentality, and cults, which in turn was deemed to be responsible for real or alleged commotion and disturbances. Hence came the urge of the ruling class to strengthen surveillance and to assert their independence from cults and philosophies that were suspected of undermining traditional Roman religion.¹⁰ From this milieu originated the Bacchanalia affair in 186 BCE, when actions were taken against the worshippers of Dionysius,¹¹ and some years later the public burning of the philosophical doctrines of the Pythagoreans allegedly discovered in the coffin of Numa Pompilius.¹² Then a series of expulsions from Rome took place. In 161 BCE, a *senatus consultum* authorized the praetor to remove Greek philosophers and rhetors from the city.¹³ In 155 BCE, an embassy arrived from Athens, and the spokesmen, who were the heads of three major philosophical schools, offered public lectures and virtuoso performances expounding the doctrine of their respective schools. Cato pressed for—and seemingly achieved—a swift conclusion of the ambassadors’ business and their removal from Rome “before the younger generation became infected by Hellenic verbal chicanery.”¹⁴ Probably one year later, in 154, a *senatus consultum* decreed the ejection of two Epicurean philosophers¹⁵ and the demolition of the first stone theatre which was to be built in Rome.¹⁶ Then, the expulsions of the Jews and the astrologers mentioned above took place, and a wholesale expulsion of all *peregrini* is said by Cicero to have been enacted in 126.¹⁷ In 122, a bill of the consul C. Fannius is attested to, in 95, a law of the consuls L. Licinius Crassus and Q. Mucius Scaevola is recorded, and in 65, the *lex Papia de peregrinis*, which ordered the expulsion of all strangers from Rome.¹⁸

It therefore would appear that the expulsion of the Jews in 139 did not have a specific anti-Jewish purpose, but may be rather identified as one of several measures attested to in Rome that reflected the preoccupation of the governing class that the presence of foreigners in Rome might negatively influence traditional Roman religion, culture, and values, and hence the Roman state itself.¹⁹ The censors, however, seem to have had no effective means of enforcing their decisions, and it is difficult to see how the expulsion orders could have been carried out effectively. Foreigners had no passports and Romans no identity

cards so the state must have depended on informers.²⁰ Decrees and expulsion, therefore, seem to have carried a meaning more nominal and symbolic than factual, and their practical effects were apparently limited, so that the expelled groups were probably able to return to Rome soon afterwards.²¹ In the case of the Bacchanalia, for example, it has been suggested that the groups affected went underground and learned how to live without attracting further unwanted attention.²²

By the middle of the first century BCE, Jews are known to have been a well-known presence in Rome: they were allowed to follow their ancestral customs and were not troubled by the ban issued by the Roman senate in 64 BCE outlawing the *collegia* of the city.²³ Whether at the time Jewish rights were recognized *de facto* or *de jure* is not clear, but it is a fact that in his *Pro Flacco*, Cicero mentions, and does not question, the Jewish custom of sending money contributions to the Temple of Jerusalem.²⁴

Regarding the Jews, Cicero and Varro convey messages that are different but only seemingly contradictory. Cicero's remarks are certainly not complimentary. The Jews of Rome are presented as a potentially revolutionary element of local society—a statement not grounded in factual reality.²⁵ Those of Judea are displayed as enemies of the Roman Republic since they dared to oppose Pompey's conquest, and, moreover, the Jewish religion is defined as a “barbaric superstition, at variance with the glory of our empire, the dignity of our name, the customs of our ancestors.”²⁶ These statements, however, should be taken *cum grano salis*. The opposition of *religio* and *superstitio* was a classical dichotomy,²⁷ and the accusation of irreligion is one of Cicero's leitmotifs, cast on virtually all his enemies.²⁸ As Levy already warned us almost a century ago,²⁹ Cicero's statements about the Jews must be considered in their context, namely, the trial where Asian Jews acted as opposing witnesses to the client represented by Cicero, Lucius Valerius Flaccus, ex-governor of Asia, who had been accused of extortion and corruption by the inhabitants of the province. Following the well-known forensic technique of his time, Cicero accused all opposite witnesses, Jews, Asian Greeks and even Roman citizens, presenting them as enemies not only of his client but of the Roman state itself.³⁰

The same procedure is followed by Cicero in all his trials. In his speech in defence of Marcus Fonteius, accused of mismanagement of Transalpine Gaul, Gaulish opposing witnesses are presented as unjust, covetous, and impious, angry, and covetous, savage, and barbarous, inveterate enemies of Rome, who “wage war against all shrines and everything sacred and holy.”³¹ “The noblest of the Gauls,” Cicero points out,³² “does not rise to the level of the meanest Roman,” and the Gaulish cult, too, as the Jewish *superstitio* in the *Pro Flacco*, is called barbarian.³³ The same attitude is displayed towards the Sardinian witnesses during the extortion trial against Marcus Aemilius Scaurus, propraetor in Sardinia, where, instead of addressing the charges, Cicero attacks the witnesses arguing that they are not worthy of being believed since they have been brought to the courtroom “in a conspiracy, their perjuries pressured, solicited and compelled.”³⁴ Sardinians are said to hope to gain favor with the powerful or to pocket some profits,³⁵ and the whole nation is said to be so worthless that they equate freedom with nothing more than license for mendacity, while their protests of indignation are presented as a mask for hypocrisy.³⁶ No wonder, Cicero argues: they come from Phoenician stock, which is bad enough, and, worse still, Phoenicians themselves rejected them and abandoned them on that disagreeable island.³⁷ Greek witnesses from Alexandria do not get better treatment in Cicero’s speech in defense of C. Rabirius Postumus, who had been accused of having received monies extorted from the local inhabitants. Lacking more compelling reasons, Cicero reverts to a motive already found in the work of Aeschylus, which also shows up in Caesar’s *Alexandrian War*, namely, the fact that the Alexandrians are “a race extremely prone to treachery,”³⁸ and that in the comedy (*mimi*) the Alexandrians are stereotypical “tricksters and cheaters.”³⁹ Advocates’ defamation of witnesses, Erich Gruen warns, had become commonplace, an expected convention rather than authentic emotion, and its absence would have been surprising.⁴⁰

Negative views about the provincials, however, do not appear solely in forensic contexts. In his *De Provinciis Consularibus*, Cicero expresses the opinion that Jews and Syrians are born to be slaves,⁴¹

a statement which may be grounded in the reality of Rome at the time, when numerous Jewish slaves arrived in Rome as war-captives, not only in the immediate aftermath of Pompey's victory, but also as a consequence of continuing fighting in Judaea in the following years.⁴² In any case, the assumption that vanquished people were born to be slaves appears to be a cliché derived from the Greek literature that so deeply permeates Cicero's writings and his attitude of mind: the claim that members of a subject people are born slaves, according to the idea that assigns to specific groups of people an inferior place in society on the grounds that they are deficient in various ways and therefore need to be subordinated to their intellectual and moral superiors in a master/slave relationship.⁴³ The idea of collective, natural slavery, Isaac observes, served as a popular element in an ideology that justified the conquest and subjugation of foreign peoples. It was in fact a circular argument: once a people was vanquished, this showed that they were inferior and, being inferior, they were fit only to be subject to imperial power. This was reinforced in Rome by the belief that conquest and subjection by another power will rob a people over time of the qualities needed for independence.⁴⁴ Jews and Syrians are not the only people disparaged by Cicero. He contrasts Greek *levitas* with Roman *gravitas*,⁴⁵ and in a letter to his brother warns him against intimacies with the Greeks, since very many of them "are deceitful, and frivolous, and learned by excessive flattery and prolonged servitude . . . and they are not so loyal."⁴⁶ Gauls, Spaniards, and Africans are called "monstrous and barbaric nations,"⁴⁷ and the Taurians, the Egyptian king Busiris, the Gauls, and the Carthaginians are accused by Cicero to believe that human sacrifice "is pious and most pleasing to the immortal gods."⁴⁸ As for the Carthaginians, Cicero calls them "a fraudulent and lying nation . . . tempted to a fondness for deceiving by a desire for gain,"⁴⁹ recalls their inhumanity⁵⁰ and the fact that they violate treaties.⁵¹ As for the Egyptians, Cicero describes their practices as "the product of minds imbued with perverse delusions," and their beliefs as "*dementia*,"⁵² a term, Isaac observes, which represents *pravitas*, depravity, and is used by Cicero to mean something not just mistaken, but utterly wrong.⁵³ He also mentions

the fact that “a bull, which the Egyptians name Apis, is deemed a god, and many other monsters and beasts of every kind are held sacred as divine.”⁵⁴ In another of his works, he adds “who does not know of the custom of the Egyptians? Their minds are infected with degraded superstitions, and they would sooner submit to any torment than injure an ibis or asp or cat or dog or crocodile, and even if they have unwittingly done anything of the kind there is no penalty from which they would recoil.”⁵⁵

All in all, the Jews are not singled out more negatively than other foreign population groups,⁵⁶ and, moreover, we should also recall that Cicero’s attitude towards the provincials was no exception at the time. The Romans, Gruen observes, had a confident sense of their own distinctiveness and of their superiority over other nations and their place in the world, and framed their national character by contrasting it with the practices, behaviors, and qualities of other nations and peoples. The collective sense of Romanness, the values that defined Romans, were meant to emerge most sharply by setting them in opposition to non-Romans, by demonstrating the deficiencies and drawbacks of those who did not share Roman aspirations and ideals, by isolating the alien and insulating the integrity of *Romanitas*.⁵⁷

At one and the same time, however, we also find at work in Rome principles of inclusion and amalgamation, which may be somehow related to the fact that the Romans saw themselves as creating a mixed people composed of different ethnic identities, including the Etruscan, the Latin, and the Sabine.⁵⁸ No wonder, therefore, that, following a long tradition of stoic philosophical thought and censuring the cult of images, Varro praises the Jews for their aniconic cult, which, he claims, once also characterized the cult of the Romans themselves, and to which, he emphasizes, they should revert.⁵⁹ And yet, it is doubtful whether this passage should be taken as reflecting a particularly sympathetic attitude toward the Jewish people: Varro focuses on a negative aspect of contemporary Roman religion and compares it with its superior ancient features, which, by the way, happened to be the same as those of the Jewish cult. The impression arises that both Varro and Cicero mention the Jews only in passing, only to prove their point.

Jewish traditional rights receive formal recognition by Caesar and, after his death, by the so-called *senatus consultum Antonianus*, which appears to have applied not only to the Jews of Rome but, in a general way, to all the Jews of the Roman Empire, who were legally allowed to follow native Jewish customs, to assemble, to build sacred and profane buildings, to perform the Jewish cult, to observe the Sabbath and to have a certain amount of autonomous internal administration.⁶⁰

In Augustus' time, Jews were not affected by the ban issued in a moment of great scarcity by which all foreigners except doctors and teachers were expelled from Rome, along with the slaves who were for sale, as well as the schools of gladiators.⁶¹ Several synagogues are found to be active in Rome at the time, one of them bearing the name of Augustus and another that of Augustus' general and son-in law, Agrippa, and Jewish rights were confirmed in different places of the Jewish diaspora.⁶² Philo also tells us about a privilege bestowed on the Jews of Rome, that of having an alternative time for the distribution of money and corn when they happened to fall on the Sabbath.⁶³ Jews were not singled out in negative ways, which however does not mean that they were held in special esteem, as one may infer from a statement of Suetonius, which remarks that Augustus "commended his grandson Gaius for not offering prayers at Jerusalem as he passed by Judaea,"⁶⁴ which, William points out, reveals the limits of Augustus' open-mindedness.⁶⁵

In the time of Augustus, Jews are mentioned in passing by Roman poets, often in comic contexts. Horace alludes to the observation of the Sabbath,⁶⁶ to Jewish clannishness,⁶⁷ and to Jews' supposed credulity, a notorious negative stereotype about barbarian peoples,⁶⁸ where, it has been claimed, the Jew represents a form of popular superstition that Horace opposes to philosophical rationalism.⁶⁹ Tibullus calls the Sabbath "the accursed day of Saturn,"⁷⁰ probably referring to the negative influences commonly attributed to this planet,⁷¹ and Ovidius, confusing Judeans and Syrians, calls the Sabbath "the seventh rites sacred to the Syrian Jews"⁷² and shows some acquaintance with what the Sabbath observance entailed, since he knows that on the Sabbath Jews do not engage

in business⁷³ or travel.⁷⁴ The tone of these remarks is light and jocular, slightly mocking. With good reason they have been taken as kinds of jokes, gentle humor, comic allusions, passing jibes,⁷⁵ which reflect amused disdain⁷⁶ and a general mockery of foreigners.⁷⁷

An unbiased tone is also displayed by historians. In a passage admittedly handed down second-hand, Livy mentions the aniconic nature of their cult without further comment,⁷⁸ and Pompeius Trogus writes a long account of the land of Judaea, the origin of the Jewish people, and their history.⁷⁹ In an objective and balanced tone, he weaves together traditions probably originating in Syria, in Judaea, and in Egypt and presents in an abridged form both the Jewish and the Egyptian versions of the Exodus.⁸⁰ This last one, however, is very different from that of the Egyptian sources, which presents the expulsion of the Jews from Egypt in a hostile and malevolent fashion. No anti-Jewish bias, on the other hand, is found in the work of Trogus,⁸¹ but rather a rational and objective tone, similar to that displayed in his other excurses on foreign peoples.⁸² The reason for the expulsion of the Jews from Egypt, for example, is linked by Trogus not to the anger of the gods, as in the Egyptian works, but rather to the need to avoid the spread of epidemic,⁸³ and this is also presented as the reason why Jews keep apart from their Gentile neighbors.⁸⁴

A few years later, following a conspiracy, Augustus' successor Tiberius decreed the expulsion of the astrologers and magicians from Rome and Italy, and the death penalty for non-Romans and exile for Romans who were still practicing these arts in the city.⁸⁵ And then, in 19 CE, 4,000 Jews were conscripted for military service to serve and fight brigands in Sardinia, and the rest, apparently proselytes included, were expelled along with the devotees of Isis. Astrologers were banished too, "but were pardoned such as begged for indulgence and promised to give up their art."⁸⁶ Goodman stresses the coincidence of the expulsions in 19 CE with the crisis in the state following the traumatic death of Germanicus, attributed by ancient sources to poison. The expulsions of practitioners of foreign rites at a time when magic was believed to have brought about the sickness and death of the favourite general of the Roman

people was a symbolic statement of the purification of the city.⁸⁷ Dio, however, admittedly writing almost two centuries later, gives a different reason for the expulsion, and states that “when many Jews gathered in Rome and were turning the inhabitants to their ways of life, Tiberius banished most of them.”⁸⁸

One generation later, another expulsion of Jews is decreed by Claudius,⁸⁹ which Goodman links with other events that took place at the same time. Claudius, notorious for his pedantic antiquarianism, reinstated a raft of ancient Roman religious practices: the formal extension of the religious boundary of the city, the *pomerium*; celebration of the *salutis augurium*, a long-forgotten ritual which signaled the peace of the state, and expiatory sacrifices in the grove of Diana to win back divine favor by means dating back to the time of the Roman kings. Claudius also addressed to the senate a request to found a college of diviners, complaining that the art of divination “was done (now) more negligently through the public indifference to all liberal accomplishments, combined with the progress of alien superstitions (*externae superstitiones*),”⁹⁰ superstitions which may refer to Jewish and Egyptian cults.⁹¹ As for the expulsion of the Jews, Suetonius states that it followed the occurrence of disturbances,⁹² about which however no clue is offered,⁹³ while Dio mentions only Claudius’ order to the Jews, “while continuing their traditional mode of life, not to hold meetings.”⁹⁴

Why the Jews were chosen to be banished from Rome twice during the first century CE is difficult to ascertain, but it is doubtful that these expulsions should be taken as an example of a specific “anti-Jewish policy.” To maintain law and order in times of political turmoil it was quite common for the Roman authorities to expel easily identifiable groups from Rome, who were thought to threaten the boundaries of Roman society.⁹⁵ In banishing Jews from Rome, Rutgers claims, Roman officials did not display a systematic anti-Jewish ideology, but merely gave expression to general administrative concerns, while religious concerns played only a subordinate role.⁹⁶ Moreover, in absence of legislation that forbade their return to the city, the expelled people were able to return to Rome, and this, according to some scholars, happened very quickly.⁹⁷

It may, however, be no accident that in this period attitudes toward the Jews reflected in the Latin literature become more extreme. Remarks are still found that are cheerful and hilarious, as in the supposed sexual attributes ascribed to the Jews,⁹⁸ while other comments are more embittered, as in the scornful allusions to the low social position of the Jews mentioned as one of the nuisances of Rome by Martial⁹⁹ and by Juvenal, who portrays the Jews of Rome as paupers and beggars who interpret dreams “for the minutest of coins.”¹⁰⁰

Comments are still found, like those in previous literary works, but the tone is less jocular and more unfriendly. Such are the references to Jews’ circumcision,¹⁰¹ which Petronius mentions among the faults of one of his slaves,¹⁰² and to the observation of the Sabbath, which is sometimes said to have included fasting¹⁰³ and is portrayed by Seneca as a superstition that enslaves men and leads them to idleness.¹⁰⁴ The same opinion is found also in the work of Juvenal, who claims that Jews “give up every seventh day to idleness, keeping it apart from all concerns of life.”¹⁰⁵ Seneca also censures the custom of lighting candles as useless, since the gods do not need them¹⁰⁶—a statement that has been interpreted as a response to the Jewish claim that the Jewish monotheistic faith is an abstract form of divine worship in step with philosophy.¹⁰⁷ The observation of the Sabbath is also portrayed by Persius in unpleasant terms, with details, such as dirty windowsills, poor food, and cheap serving dishes, which emphasize a miserable environment.¹⁰⁸ Livy had claimed that the Jewish God is unknown.¹⁰⁹ One century later, Juvenal observes that the Jews “worship nothing but the clouds and the divinity of heaven,”¹¹⁰ emphasizing the nebulous nature of the god of heaven as opposed to the sharply defined outlines of the gods of Greece and Rome.¹¹¹ He calls “secret” the Book of Moses (the Pentateuch), casting on Judaism the disrepute that attached to esoteric religious societies.¹¹²

The fact that the statements of Martial and Juvenal show up in their satires demands caution as attention should be paid to the nature of the genre, which is meant to evoke laughter or anger and not to portray a historical reality. However, Yavetz points out

these statements should be taken seriously as a form of commentary on the opinions of their readers.¹¹³ In other words, Martial and Juvenal would not have written as they did if they had not confidently expected that this was an effective way of representing the feelings and reactions shared by their public.¹¹⁴ We cannot, however, ascribe to Juvenal a specific hostility against the Jews since he also complains about other foreign population groups. He speaks, for example, of “a Greek city of Rome,” meaning that Rome is no longer genuinely Roman because of the massive presence of Greeks, who are portrayed as faithless, swindlers, soft, degenerate, morally inferior, hostile, and influential, intellectually arrogant and inconstant (*leves*), treacherous and trained by a long servitude to show excessive flattery. Greeks are also described as dishonest, argumentative, and presumptuous in a city, Rome, which they would destroy if only they could.¹¹⁵ Aspersion is cast also on the Egyptians, who are portrayed as a demented folk devoted to monstrous animal deities, who pay reverence to crocodiles, ibises, monkeys, river fish, cats, and dogs.¹¹⁶ Juvenal accuses the Egyptians of cannibalism¹¹⁷ and denounces the cults of Isis, Osiris, and Anubis, which are said to attract hysterical Roman women, cults whose priests are said to secretly mock their followers and to take bribes, encouraging immoral behavior.¹¹⁸ Suetonius, too, does not cherish Oriental cults. He calls the Christians a *genus hominum superstitionis novae et maleficae*,¹¹⁹ and connects negative emperors such as Nero with *Dea Syria* and with the Magi¹²⁰ and of Otho with Isis.¹²¹

In the first century CE, we hear for the first time about Roman hostility toward Jewish proselytes. Seneca states that “the customs of this accursed race have gained such influence that they are now received throughout all the world. The vanquished have given laws to their victors,”¹²² where he repeats, referring to the Jews, the concern which is often displayed in Latin literature vis-à-vis foreign influences. The best-known case is the statement of Horace—“captive Greece took her savage victor captive and brought the arts to rustic Latium”¹²³—but similar claims also appear concerning Gauls, Syrians, and Easterners in general. The fear of being influenced by, or even in some way dominated by,

the vanquished, is a particularly sensitive topic for the Romans because of the tremendous influence exerted in Rome by Greek culture and by the Eastern cults.¹²⁴ Paradoxically, this concern had already appeared in Greek literature, which dealt with a golden past in which there was no need to travel and no foreigners disturbed the peace at home. Since pure lineage was regarded as better than mixed ancestry, ancient Greek literature stressed that any contact with other peoples, through seafaring, trade, and commerce, not only endangered safety, but might lead to moral decline through the influence of foreign languages, customs, and trade.¹²⁵ The same concern is displayed by Roman authors, lest the Roman people lose their ancestral physical and moral strength and be affected by the inferior cultures of the peoples of the countries they conquered. It was this anxiety about the decline of civilization which made outsiders responsible for disastrous developments.¹²⁶ The fear of being conquered by the vanquished, Isaac suggests, was part of the imperial mentality, and it typically had the characteristics of many forms of group hatred, satisfying both fantasies of superiority and fears of inferiority. Xenophobia, Noy points out, was combined with class prejudice.¹²⁷

Complaints about the presence of Jewish proselytes are also found in the work of Juvenal, who portrays a process by which people who have a father who observes the Sabbath “in time take to circumcision,” then flout “the laws of Rome and learn and practice and revere the Jewish law, and all that Moses handed down in his secret tome, forbidding to point out the way to any not worshipping the same rites.”¹²⁸ It must be no accident that the same grievance also shows up in the work of Tacitus, who points out that “those who are converted to their ways follow the same practice (i.e., circumcision), and the earliest lesson they receive is to despise the gods, to disown their country, and to regard their parents, children and brothers as of little account.”¹²⁹

The fact that the same claim appears in three different works, written by Seneca, Juvenal, and Tacitus, suggests that the phenomenon they mention was grounded in factual reality even if they may be referring to sympathy for Judaism¹³⁰ and not necessarily to actual

conversion.¹³¹ While there is no evidence of missionary activity on the part of Roman Jews,¹³² some people seem to have been attracted to Judaism and to have adopted some Jewish practices and beliefs. While possibly or probably exaggerated, the claims of Seneca, Juvenal, and Tacitus may be taken as another example of the fact that foreign cults practiced only in the provinces might have been ignored, but those that attracted attention in Roman society were seen differently.¹³³ Alleged sympathy for Judaism provoked suspicion, which in turn led to hostility and in fact the two attitudes, attraction and hostility, may be seen as two sides of the same coin. But it would be wrong to consider this a phenomenon only related to Judaism as it also happened with other cults. The best-known case is that of the Egyptian cults, as Benjamin Isaac points out:

If the Egyptian religion had merely been a remote aberration, it might have been regarded as mildly amusing or somewhat ridiculous and would not have stimulated such a particularly hostile response. There can be no doubt that this reaction was caused by the fact that Egyptian cults exerted some influence in Rome and attracted followers, possibly many of them, for Cicero did not really care what happened in far away countries, but was sensitive to the mood in Rome. Confirmation of this is found in the record of a series of measures taken in these years. In 58 BCE, altars for Serapis, Isis and Anubis were destroyed by order of the Senate and erected again through the influence of the *populares*. In 53 BCE, there followed a decree to tear down the temples of Serapis and Isis, which private individuals had built in Rome, although outside the pomerium, [but ten years later] new temples to the same gods were built again. Afterwards Augustus had his doubts on this matter. Among measures taken in 28 BCE for the benefit or pleasure of the urban population, Dio relates that Augustus “did not allow the Egyptian rites to be celebrated inside the pomerium—which would have implied the adoption of the Egyptian gods amongst the official Roman divinities. However, he made provision for the temples; those which had been built by private individuals he ordered their sons and descendants, if any survived, to repair, and the rest he restored himself.” Although Dio does not say so, this clearly means that Augustus

definitely rescinded the decree issued twenty-five years earlier. In the city of Rome the result of his policy was apparently a rapid flourishing of Egyptian cults, for in 21 BCE Agrippa took measures restricting their performance in the city, and later, in Tacitus' days, a temple of Isis was destroyed again, and the cult-statue was thrown in the Tiber.¹³⁴

In the case of Jewish proselytes, the exclusiveness of Judaism was an aggravating element. Juvenal accuses the Jews of “forbidding to point out the way to any not worshipping the same rites,”¹³⁵ where Jewish separatism, *amixia*,¹³⁶ is taken as *miso xenia*, not only in the social but also in the political domain. The statement that the Jewish proselytes “having been wont to flout the laws of Rome, they learn and practice and revere the Jewish law”¹³⁷ appears to mean that the two sets of laws were considered mutually exclusive.¹³⁸ In fact, it appears that individuals were free to subscribe independently to elective cults provided—and this is the point—that those cults did not forbid the worshiping of traditional deities in the time-honored fashion.¹³⁹ The exclusiveness of Jewish monotheism was therefore a stumbling block. To follow Judaism meant the abandonment of not only the Roman ancestral religion but also Roman customs. Conversion to Judaism, or even mere attraction to it, was seen as a change of cultic practice *and* ethnic identity and all that this entailed in the sphere of loyalties and obligations.¹⁴⁰

Negative statements about the Jews should also be considered in the context of the Judean War of 66–70 CE and the following Roman triumph, celebrated by Vespasian, that was made the centerpiece of Flavian dynastic propaganda, memorialized through demeaning images on both coins and public monuments.¹⁴¹ The tax that Jews paid to the Temple of Jerusalem was transformed into a tax to the Roman *fiscus* and was imposed not only on the Jews who fought against the Roman armies but on all the Jews of the Roman Empire, including those in Rome despite the fact that they did not participate in the war.¹⁴² All this certainly had an impact on people's attitudes in the city.

In Domitian's time, the *fiscus Judaicus* was rigorously extracted, and Dio Cassius writes that many who drifted into Jewish

ways were condemned on the charge of atheism. Doubts have been cast on the meaning of this statement. Leonard V. Rutgers, for example, suggests that even though it may have been an additional factor it is conceivable that the charge “Jewish ways” was a convenient excuse for Domitian to eliminate all those suspected of conspiracy.¹⁴³ Whether something like persecution did take place in Domitian’s time is unclear, but to say that the atmosphere in Rome was not favorable to the Jews at the time is certainly an understatement.¹⁴⁴

Linking the negative attitudes of Latin literature toward the Jews to the historical events taking place in the same period, Martin Goodman ascribes them to the Jewish-Roman wars and to the rise of Christianity.¹⁴⁵ Isaac, too, when commenting on Seneca’s remarks on the Jews, links them to what was happening in Rome at the time he was writing, near the end of his life, after the great fire took place in Rome for which the Christians were punished as scapegoats.¹⁴⁶

The most negative views about the Jews are those expressed by Tacitus. He calls them “the basest of all peoples”¹⁴⁷ “hateful to the gods,”¹⁴⁸ and defines their customs as “absurd and mean.”¹⁴⁹ His negative attitude is evident from the very beginning of his excursus about the Jews, where out of the six theories offered on the origins of the Jewish people he reserves a privileged place for the last, which presents the ancestors of the Jews as people disfigured by a plague, hated by the gods, and expelled from Egypt by the oracle of Ammon. Here, he endorses the Greco-Egyptian version of the Exodus known to us through the passages of Manetho, Lysimachus, and Chaeremon cited by Flavius Josephus,¹⁵⁰ which may have circulated in Rome through the teachings of Apion. A Hellenized Egyptian grammarian and sophist, head of the prestigious literary school of Alexandria, Apion, as leader of the embassy of Alexandrians, had come to Rome to present a formal charge of disloyalty against the Jews of Alexandria after the pogrom of 38 CE. In Rome, he opened a school of Greek language and literature, enjoying an extraordinary reputation for his extensive knowledge, which may be the reason why his disparaging remarks about the Jews were apparently influential enough in

Rome to prompt Josephus to refute them in his *Contra Apionem*.¹⁵¹ Tacitus is not the first Roman author to present the Egyptian version of the Exodus in Latin,¹⁵² but he is the first to display its hostile tones,¹⁵³ moreover, he makes use of its details in order to explain the origin of Jewish customs such as Jewish separatism in the areas of diet and marriage.¹⁵⁴ Following the Hellenistic tradition found in the works of Diodorus and Apollonius Molon,¹⁵⁵ Tacitus interprets Jewish *amixia* as misanthropy, asserting that Jewish customs are not only different but contrary to those of all other peoples.¹⁵⁶ Exceptionally learned about Jewish customs—he is acquainted with the sabbatical year, which he regards as due to “the charms of indolence,”¹⁵⁷ with the eating of unleavened bread,¹⁵⁸ with burial habits,¹⁵⁹ with faith issues¹⁶⁰ and with the willingness to raise all their children¹⁶¹—he considers these customs “base and abominable and owe their persistence to their depravity.”¹⁶² The Jews, he claims, feel only “hate and enmity” towards every other people, and he, like Juvenal, believes Jewish proselytes are encouraged “to despise the gods, to disown their country, and to regard their parents, children and brothers as of little account.”¹⁶³

These statements should be considered in context. Jews are not Tacitus’ only target. He also displays disparaging statements about the Germans¹⁶⁴ and the Egyptians,¹⁶⁵ and calls the Christians “a class hated for their abominations, a most mischievous superstition.”¹⁶⁶ Moreover, the custom of slandering provincial peoples was a common practice in Rome,¹⁶⁷ and Tacitus would not have written as he did if he had not confidently expected that this was an effective way of representing the feelings shared by many of his readers and representative of a broad section of Roman upper-class opinion.¹⁶⁸ His slanders of the Jews and of other peoples should be viewed with skepticism because, as René Bloch emphasizes while comparing the excursus of the Jews with those of the Germans and of the Britons, none of his excurses is pure ethnography for their own sake.¹⁶⁹ Gruen observes that:

Tacitus neither branded the Germans as “Other” nor propped them up as inspired primitives to contrast with the degenerate

Romans. The historian's nuanced, clever and often sardonic text points to the foibles of Germans as he did to those of Romans, employing each to reflect on the other. German restraint might contrast Roman indulgence, but Roman discipline contrasted with German impatience. When Tacitus singles out individual German tribes for praise, he casts indirect aspersion not only on Romans, but on other Germans. Compromise of principle occurs indiscriminately on both sides of the divide. . . . The historian serves up innuendos and imputations with balanced roguery. He aims not to underscore the "Otherness" of the Germans but to dissect and deconstruct it, to complicate and confuse it. For Tacitus, irony regularly trumps ideology.¹⁷⁰

His contradictions are exemplary. The bitter and offensive tone at the beginning of the excursus about the Jews changes abruptly when he reports on the history of Judean Jews under Roman governorship. He does not blame them for their mutinous conduct, nor does he impute to them the responsibility for the Jewish war against Rome; on the contrary, he emphasizes their patience¹⁷¹ and their courage,¹⁷² perhaps implying that the ones to blame are the Roman procurators.¹⁷³ The passage concerning the ass statue in the Temple of Jerusalem,¹⁷⁴ too, conflicts with the statement made in a paragraph below, that the Jews "set up no statues in their cities, still less in their temples," and that "it was a matter of common knowledge that there were no representations of the gods within (the Temple), but that the place was empty and the secret shrine contained nothing."¹⁷⁵ The contradiction, Yavetz suggests, was probably deliberate: "the implication was subtle and suggestive: no need for argument, let alone for reconciling contradiction. The irony exposed the fatuousness of those who imagined an Eselkult among a people who scorned both images and animals."¹⁷⁶ Tacitus, Yavetz observes, would not have minded if some of his readers believed in the ass story, but upon scrutiny he could show that he had made himself clear in a different passage.¹⁷⁷ Another example of implausibility may be found in the series of contradictory theories dealing with the origins of the Jewish people,¹⁷⁸ and in the indirect jabs against the Egyptians implicit in Tacitus' observations

about Jewish sacrifices, where he insinuates that the Jews sacrifice the ram as if to deliver a deliberate insult to Egyptian reverence for the ram-god Ammon and slay the ox as a further affront to Egyptian worshippers of the Apis bull.¹⁷⁹ Tacitus, Gruen observes, knew full well that the Jews sacrificed a variety of animals as did the Greeks and the Romans. That he should single out the ram and the ox and cast them as derisive of Egyptian religion suggests recourse to black humor. The remarks serve more as a snide commentary on Egyptian homage to animals than on the customs of the Jews.¹⁸⁰ Indirect swipes at the Caesars and the imperial cult are also to be found,¹⁸¹ as well as criticism of Roman procurators and Titus.¹⁸² We find here, Gruen remarks, the familiar Tacitus, the historian fond of paradox and antinomies, prone to irony and incongruity, who challenges his readers, forces them to pick apart the opinions and images set before them, offering solutions and then snatching them away, forever eluding their grasp. The digression on the Jews served to display the skills of the cunning and cynical writer who professed to inform his readers but in fact teased and toyed with them.¹⁸³ His slander of the Jews, therefore, as that of other peoples, should be taken *cum grano salis*.

In conclusion, attitudes toward the Jews in Rome were complex. On one hand, Jews were allowed to follow their ancestral laws and were not discriminated against vis-à-vis other foreign population groups. Their customs even seem to have attracted some sort of sympathy.¹⁸⁴ On the other hand, expressions of amused disdain toward Jews and Judaism are common in the Latin literature of the first century BCE, and more negative and disparaging attitudes appear in works written one century later. In particular, Jewish separatism¹⁸⁵ was understood as misanthropy, a misinterpretation which fueled further hostility, especially in the case of Roman citizens who were found to follow Jewish ways, whatever this expression may have meant.

In any case, the negative attitudes displayed in Latin literature cannot be taken as expressions of racism, since they do not refer to Jewish physical appearance, speech, descent, ethnic traits, or qualities ascribable to climate or hereditary lineage.¹⁸⁶ They were

rather tokens of xenophobia and of ethnic and cultural prejudice¹⁸⁷ not intrinsically different from those displayed toward other foreign population groups and cults. It was a hostility dictated by a strong sense of superiority on the part of the Roman people, based on pride in their own power and culture,¹⁸⁸ and was not found only in literature but also in everyday life. On a second century tombstone of an *equus singularis* from Arabia, for example, someone wrote in Greek “death to the Arabs.”¹⁸⁹ It is therefore difficult to draw a dividing line between the hostility specifically directed against the Jews and that aimed at other foreign peoples.¹⁹⁰ Moreover, it is significant that the hostility was only theoretical—there is no reference to conflict between the Jews and their neighbors, no pogrom as in Alexandria, no disputes, and no feuds as in Seleucia, Antioch and other Mediterranean countries.

Returning to the question addressed at the beginning of this article, whether antisemitism may be traced back to ancient Rome: the answer is both yes and no. It is clear that no sign of discriminatory policy is to be found in the period under discussion, but one cannot disregard the fact that the offensive views about the Jews which appear in the Latin literature did not disappear in later times, as happened in the case of other peoples such as Syrians, Egyptians, Gauls, and Dacians who were also slandered by Roman authors.

As Nicholas De Lange aptly points out, prejudices are infectious and sometimes they are transmitted from one generation to the next and from one country to another.¹⁹¹ The remarks by Manetho about Jews’ impiety and by Hecataeus about their misanthropy, which appear in the third century BCE, were later quoted by Diodorus in the first century BCE,¹⁹² then cited and refuted by Josephus in the first century CE,¹⁹³ only to re-emerge in the satires of Juvenal and the excursus of Tacitus at the beginning of the second century CE, and are found again in later periods.

Even if in ancient Rome the attitudes toward the Jews were no different than those toward other peoples, some of the negative stereotypes shaped by the Romans, Egyptians, and Greeks such as *gens contumelia numinum insignis*,¹⁹⁴ *perniciosa ceteris gens*,¹⁹⁵ *sceleratissima*,¹⁹⁶ *taeterrima*,¹⁹⁷ *impia*¹⁹⁸ *despectissima gens*,¹⁹⁹ and *genus*

hominum ut invisum deis,²⁰⁰ reappear in later times and form the basis upon which anti-Judaism and antisemitism developed.²⁰¹

Even if Christian antisemitism was a uniquely new phenomenon, Rosemary Radford Ruether observes, traces of the anti-Jewish motifs present in Hellenistic and Roman literature may be glimpsed within early Christian anti-Judaism and later antisemitism. Such, for example, is the notion that the Jews were a peculiarly degenerate people, which was echoed in works by the Church Fathers who gave a negative value to the giving of Mosaic laws and saw Jewish Sabbath observance as an excuse for laziness as found in the works of Seneca and Tacitus. Similarly, the imposition of the *fiſcus Judaicus*, the prohibition against circumcising non-Jews, and the exclusion of Jews from Jerusalem were to find their reaffirmation in Christian anti-Judaic legislation.²⁰² As David Nirenberg points out, “the characteristics of misanthropy, impiety, lawlessness and universal enmity would remain available to later millennia: a tradition made venerable by antiquity, to be forgotten, rediscovered, and put to new uses by later generations of apologists and historians.”²⁰³

NOTES

1. See Nicholas De Lange, “The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Ancient Evidence and Modern Interpretations,” in *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*, eds. Sander L. Gilman and Steven T. Katz (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 21–22; Zvi Yavetz, “Judeophobia in Classical Antiquity: A Different Approach,” *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 44 (1993), 1–4.

2. See, among others, Shaye J. D. Cohen, “Anti-Semitism in Antiquity: The Problem of Definition,” in *History and Hate: The Dimensions of Anti-Semitism*, ed. David Berger (Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1986), 43–45; Bruno Rochette, “Juifs et romains. Y a-t-il un antijudaïsme romain?” *Revue des études juives* 160 (2001), 27; Erich S. Gruen, “Was there Judeophobia in Classical Antiquity?” in Erich S. Gruen, *Constructs of Identity in Hellenistic Judaism: Essays on Early Jewish Literature and History* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 315.

3. Margaret H. Williams, "Review of Yavetz, *Judenfeindschaft* and Schafer, *Judeophobia*," *Journal of Roman Studies* 89 (1999), 213, points out that pagan dislike of Jews in the Greco-Roman world does not appear to have been particularly phobic, and that irrational fear of Jews is surely the product of a much later period.

4. See Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 442–444.

5. See Carlos Lévy, "L'antijudaïsme païen: Essai de synthèse" in *De l'antijudaïsme antique à l'antisémitisme contemporain*, ed. Valentin Nikiprowetzky (Lille: Presses Universitaires de Lille, 1979), 51–52; Yavetz, "Judeophobia," 18; Robert Chazan, *From Anti-Judaism to Anti-Semitism: Ancient and Medieval Christian Constructions of Jewish History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

6. Yavetz, "Judeophobia," 13.

7. The works of authors such as Diodorus Siculus, Timagenes, Nicolaus of Damascus, Strabo, Ptolemy the Historian, the Author of *De Sublimitate*, Apion and Plutarch, therefore, are not taken into account.

8. Valerius Maximus, "Facta et dicta memorabilia," 1.3.3, *Ex Epitoma Ianuarii Nepotiani* in Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974) (henceforth *GLAJJ*), I, no. 147 a, and *Ex Epitoma Iulii Paridis* in *GLAJJ*, I, 147 b. On the identification of the worshippers of Sabazius, see Eugene N. Lane, "Sabazius and the Jews in Valerius Maximus: A Re-Examination," *Journal of Roman Studies* 69 (1979), 35–38. According to John A. North, "Religious Toleration in Republican Rome," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 25 (1979), 99, note 15, this cult may have been a continuation of the Dionysiac worship.

9. See John P. V. D. Balsdon, *Romans and Aliens* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 98.

10. For the connection between the political and the religious domains, see Isaac, *The Invention*, 466.

11. From what we may gather from the account of Livy, which offers an understanding of contemporary senatorial propaganda more than a reconstruction of what actually happened (see North, "Religious Toleration," 87), it appears that there was no objection to the cult of Dionysos in principle, but rather suspicion about the nocturnal meetings, the initiation (and emasculation) of men of military age, and the initiation of masses of slaves who were already in a state of unrest. Richard A. Bauman,

“The Suppression of the Bacchanals: Five Questions,” *Historia* 39 (1990), 342–347, argues that what was objected to was the fact that the rite was no longer performed *more Romano*, which means under the supervision of the Roman government.

12. See North, “Religious Toleration,” 86–95, and Erich S. Gruen *Studies in Greek Culture and Roman Policy* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), 34–78.

13. Suetonius, *On Rhetoricians*, 1, 2.

14. See Gruen, *Studies*, 175, note 74.

15. See David Noy, *Foreigners at Rome: Citizens and Strangers* (London: Duckworth with the Classical Press of Wales, 2000), 52, note 92. On 154 as the date of this *senatus consultum*, see Gruen, *Studies*, 177.

16. See Gruen, *Studies*, 177–178.

17. Cicero, *De Officiis* (*De off.*), 3, 11, 47. See Noy, *Foreigners at Rome*, 37.

18. See Balsdon, *Romans and Aliens*, 100.

19. See Gruen, *Studies*, 77, and Isaac, *The Invention*, 238.

20. See Balsdon, *Romans and Aliens*, 98.

21. Gruen, *Studies*, 19.

22. North, “Religious Toleration,” 97.

23. Asconius, *In Pisonianam* 8 in Albertus C. Clark, ed., *Orationes* (Oxonii: E Typographeo Clarendoniano, 1907), 7.

24. See Miriam Pucci Ben Zeev, *Jewish Rights in the Roman World: The Greek and Roman Documents Quoted by Josephus Flavius* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 469–471.

25. See Pucci Ben Zeev, *Jewish Rights*, 9–24; Erich S. Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews Amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 23; Silvia Cappelletti, *The Jewish Community of Rome, From the Second Century B.C. to the Third Century C.E.* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2006), 44–48.

26. Cicero, *Pro Flacco*, 66–69.

27. See the works cited by Isaac, *The Invention*, 466, note 120.

28. See North, “Religious Toleration,” 98, note 2.

29. Hans Johanan Levy, “Cicero on the Jews in his Speech for the Defense of Flaccus” (Hebrew), *Zion* 7 (1941/2), 109–134.

30. *Pro Flacco*, 65. See Isaac, *The Invention*, 329.

31. Cicero, *Pro Fonteio*, 30, 43–44, 49.

32. *Pro Fonteio*, 26–27.

33. *Pro Fonteio*, 31.
34. Cicero, *Pro Scauro*, 20.
35. *Pro Scauro*, 36.
36. *Pro Scauro*, 38, 41.
37. *Pro Scauro*, 42.
38. Caesar, *Bellum Alexandrinum*, 7, 2.
39. Cicero, *Pro Rabirio Postumo*, 34–36.
40. This, Gruen points out (Erich S. Gruen, “Cicero and the Alien,” in *Roman Literature, Gender, and Reception: Domina Illustris*, eds. Donald Lateiner et al. [New York: Routledge, 2013], 18) should not be confused with racial prejudice.
41. Cicero, *De Provinciis Consularibus* 5, 10 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 70.
42. See Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, 204, and John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora from Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE-117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 289.
43. Isaac, *The Invention*, 463; Benjamin H. Isaac, “Proto-Racism in Graeco-Roman Antiquity,” *World Archaeology* 38 (2006), 42–43.
44. Isaac, *The Invention*, 511.
45. “the Athenians, a nation of Greeks, far removed from the serious wisdom of our ancestors” (Cicero, *Pro Sestio*, 141).
46. Cicero, *Ad Quintum fratrem*, 1, 5, 16.
47. *Ad Quintum fratrem*, 1, 9, 27.
48. Cicero, *De republica (De Rep.)*, 3, 15.
49. Cicero, *De legibus agraris*, 2, 95. Carthaginians’ treachery and cruelty are not regarded by Cicero as faults by nature, but as a result of the fact that Carthage was a port city.
50. Cicero, *Philippicae*, 14, 9.
51. *De officiis.*, 1, 38. On the old enmity between Rome and Carthage and their important role in the sea-trade, see also Gruen, “Cicero and the Alien,” 22.
52. Cicero, *De natura deorum*, 1, 43.
53. See Isaac, *The Invention*, 356.
54. *De republica.*, 3, 14.
55. Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes*, 5.78–79.
56. See Barclay, *Jews*, 287–288; Jacques-Emmanuel Bernard, “Philosophie politique et antijudaïsme chez Cicéron,” *Scripta Classica Israelica* 19 (2000), 120; Isaac, “Proto-Racism,” 42–43; Gruen, “Cicero and the Alien,” 17; Miriam Ben Zeev, “The Myth of Cicero’s Anti-Judaism,” in

Religio Licita? Rom und die Juden, eds. Görges K. Hasselhoff et al., *Studia Judaica* 84 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 124.

57. Gruen, "Cicero and the Alien," 13.

58. Erich S. Gruen, *Ethnicity in the Ancient World: Did it Matter?* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2020), 73–74.

59. Seneca, *De Superstitionibus*, apud Augustinus, *De Civitate Dei*, 4, 31 in Stern (1974), no. 72 a.

60. See Pucci Ben Zeev, *Jewish Rights*, 375–377, and Graeme Ward and Claude Eilers, "An Embedded Fragment in Josephus' *Caesarian Acta* (*AJ* 14. 196–212)," *Phoenix* 66 (2012), 414–427.

61. Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*, 42.

62. See Pucci Ben Zeev, *Jewish Rights*, 252–255.

63. Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium*, 158.

64. "[Augustus] not only omitted to make a slight detour to visit Apis when he was travelling through Egypt, but highly commended his grandson Gaius for not offering prayers at Jerusalem as he passed by Judaea" (*Divus Augustus*, 93 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, II, no. 304).

65. Margaret H. Williams, "Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism," in *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*, eds. John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans 2010), 873.

66. Horace, *Sermones*, I, 9, 60–72, in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 129.

67. "When I'm free, I toy with my writings. It's one of the minor failings I mentioned: and if it's something you can't accept, a vast crowd of poets will flock to my aid (for we are by far the majority), and just as the Jews do in Rome, we'll force you to join our congregation!" (*Sermones*, I, 4, ll. 138–143 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 127). The *concordia* of the Jews was already noted by Cicero, *Pro Flacco*, 68. See Isaac, *The Invention*, 455.

68. Describing a voyage to Brundisium, Horace mentions a place where local people tried to convince him that frankincense melts without fire at the temple's threshold. Horace concludes: "Apella, the Jews, may believe it, not I" (*Sermones*, I, 5, 96–101 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 128). See Isaac, *The Invention*, 367.

69. Rochette, "Juifs et romains," 22.

70. Tibullus, *Carmina*, I, 3, 17–18 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 126.

71. See Stern, *GLAJJ*, II, 38.

72. Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, I, 75–80 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 141. The identification of the Jews with the Syrians already appears in Herodotus and in Theophrastus. See the sources cited by Jan N. Sevenster, *The Root of Pagan Anti-Semitism in the Ancient World* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 47–48.

73. *Ars Amatoria*, 1, 416 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 142: “that day, less fit for business, whereon returns the seventh-day feast that the Syrian of Palestine observes.”

74. Ovid, *Remedia Amoris*, 219–220 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 143.

75. Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 273, and Dwora Gilula, “La satira degli ebrei nella letteratura latina” in *Gli ebrei nell’impero romano. Saggi vari*, ed. Ariel Lewin (Firenze: La Giuntina, 2001), 195–199.

76. Gruen, “Was there Judeophobia?” 319.

77. Rochette, “Juifs et romains,” 21.

78. Livy, *Scholia in Lucanum*, II, 593 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 133; Apud Lydus, *De Mensibus*, IV, 53 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 134.

79. Pompeius Trogus, Apud Justinus, *Historiae Philippicae, libri XXXVI Epitoma*, 2, 1–3 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 137.

80. Pompeius Trogus, *Historiae Philippicae Epitome*, 2, 12.

81. See Stephanie E. Binder, “La digression de Trogue Pompée-Justin (XXXVI, 1.9–3.8) sur le peuple juif et sa terre—Texte et commentaire,” in *Folia Electronica Classica 27* (janvier-juin 2014), 15.

82. See Klaus E. Müller, *Geschichte der antiken Ethnographie und ethnologischen Theoriebildung II* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1980), 65, and René S. Bloch, *Antike Vorstellungen vom Judentum. Der Judenexkurs des Tacitus im Rahmen der griechisch-römischen Ethnographie* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2002), 60.

83. *Historiae Philippicae Epitome*, 2, 12.

84. “And as they remembered that they had been driven from Egypt for fear of spreading infection, they took care, in order that they might not become odious from the same cause to their neighbors, to have no communication with strangers; a rule which, from having been adopted on that particular occasion, gradually became a religious institution” (*Historiae Philippicae Epitome*, 2, 15).

85. See Beard, North and Price, *Religions of Rome*, 231–232.

86. Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 36, 1 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, II, no. 306; Tacitus, *Annales*, 2, 85, 4 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, II, no. 284; Dio, 57, 18, 5 a in Stern, *GLAJJ*, II, no.419; Josephus, *Ant.* 18, 65–84. See Stern’s comments on pp. 69–73. Margaret H. Williams, “The Expulsion of the Jews from Rome in A.D. 19,” *Latomus* 48 (1989), 765–784 suggests that the real reason why the Roman Senate expelled Jews in 19 was to suppress an unrest caused by a deficiency in Rome’s corn supply in the same year.

87. Martin Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilizations* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 2007), 369.

88. Dio, 57, 18, 5a.

89. Suetonius, *Claudius*, 25, 4 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, II, no. 307; Acts 18, 2; Orosius 7, 6, 15–16. See Leonard V. Rutgers, “Roman Policy Towards the Jews: Expulsions from the City of Rome During the First Century C.E.” *Classical Antiquity* 13 (1994), 66; H. Dixon Slingerland, *Claudian Policymaking and the Early Imperial Repression of Judaism at Rome* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), and Noy, *Foreigners at Rome*, 42.

90. *Annales (Ann.)*, 11, 15.

91. A symbolic expulsion of Jews, Goodman points out (*Rome and Jerusalem*, 370), would fit nicely.

92. Suetonius, *Claudius*, 25, 4; Acts 18, 2.

93. Williams, “Latin Authors,” 874, suggests that these disturbances may be identified with infighting between Jews and Christians.

94. Dio, 60, 6, 6 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, II, no. 422. In the same passage, Dio mentions the fact that Claudius also disbanded the clubs and abolished the taverns.

95. See Rutgers, “Roman Policy,” 66.

96. Rutgers, “Roman Policy,” 74. See also Isaac, *The Invention*, 238, and Gruen, “Was There Judeophobia?,” 331.

97. See Noy, *Foreigners at Rome*, 45.

98. The strong sexual passions credited to barbarians, especially those of the East, were a common assumption in Rome. Martial mentions a girl who grants her favors to Parthians, to Germans, Dacians, Cilicians and Cappadocians, Egyptians and Indians, the circumcised Jews and the Sarmatians. “What is the reason,” Martial asks her, “that, although you are a Roman girl, no Roman lewdness has attraction for you?” (Martial, *Epigrammata*, 7, 30 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 240). This sexual variant of the ever-returning sense that the victors are defeated by the vanquished, Isaac observes (*The Invention*, 473), is to be seen as an ethnic prejudice, namely, a categorical generalization based on inadequate data and without sufficient regard for individual differences. See Isaac, *The Invention*, 25.

99. Martial, *Epigrammata*, 12, 57 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 246.

100. Juvenal, *Saturae*, 3, 12–14 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, II, no. 296. See also *Saturae*, 3, 290–296 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, II, no. 297 and *Saturae*, 6, 542–547 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, II, no. 299. Impoverished Jews, Isaac observes (*The Invention*, 465, 479), might have acted as fraudulent soothsayers

and exorcists. See also Ranon Katzoff, “Porta Capena, or the Jews at the Gate of Rome,” in Ranon Katzoff, *On Jews in the Roman World: Collected Studies* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 254–260. Sten Hidal, “The Jews as the Romans Saw Them,” in *The Synagogue of Ancient Ostia and the Jews of Rome: Interdisciplinary Studies*, eds., Birger Olsson et al. (Stockholm: Paul Astroems Foerlag, 2001), 143, points out that Juvenal portrays the Jews at the bottom of society, part of the Oriental rabble in Rome’s least fashionable quarters. On Juvenal’s comments about mendicant Jews in Rome, see Erich S. Gruen, “Roman Perspectives on the Jews in the Age of the Great Revolt” in *The First Jewish Revolt: Archaeology, History, and Ideology*, eds., Andrea M. Berlin and J. Andrew Overman (London: Routledge, 2002), 34, and Cinzia Achille, “Aspetti sociali e religiosi nelle satire di Giovenale contro i Giudei” in *Ricordo di Delfino Ambaglio*, ed., Maria Teresa Zambianchi (Como: New Press Edizioni, 2009), 96–100.

101. Petronius, *Satyricon*, 102, 14 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 194; Martial, *Epigrammata*, 7, 30 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 240; *Epigrammata*, 7, 35 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 241. In one of his epigrams (*Epigrammata*, 11, 94 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 245) Martial accuses a circumcised poet born in Jerusalem of plagiarizing his poems and having intercourse with his boy, calling him *verpe poeta*. The jibe of “*verpe*,” an epithet of extreme coarseness, alluding to erection of the penis, is aimed both at the poet being a Jew and at his being a lustful *pedicator*. The words *verpus* and *verpa*, which have been defined as “emotive and highly offensive word[s]” (see Gergő Gellérfi, “Obscenity or Taboo? Remarks on Profanities in Juvenal and Martial,” *Graeco-Latina Brunensia* 22 [1917], 160) are found elsewhere in contexts suggesting excessive lustfulness (Isaac, *The Invention*, 473). Circumcision is also mentioned by Juvenal (*Saturae*, 14, 99, 104, 106 in Stern *GLAJJ*, II, no. 301). On these passages, see Peter Schäfer, *Judeophobia: Attitudes Toward the Jews in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 100–102.

102. Petronius, *Satyricon*, 68, 8 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 193; *Epigrammata*, 7, 82 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 243.

103. “The fasts of Sabbath imposed by the law” are mentioned by Petronius (no. 37 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 195). The breath of women supposedly fasting on Sabbath is one of the worse types of stenches for Martial, *Epigrammata*, 4, 4 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 239, and Suetonius has Augustus mention the fast of the Jews on Sabbath (*Divus Augustus*, 76, 2 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, II, no. 303). On Sabbath as a fast day in Latin literature,

see Margaret H. Williams, "Being a Jew in Rome: Sabbath Fasting as an Expression of Romano-Jewish Identity," in *Negotiating Diaspora: Jewish Strategies in the Roman Empire*, ed., John M. G. Barclay (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 8–18, and Ranon Katzoff, "On Fasting on the Sabbath," in Katzoff, *On Jews in the Roman World*, 235–237.

104. "Along with other superstitions of civil theology, Seneca also censures the sacred institutions of the Jews, especially the Sabbath. He declares that their practice is inexpedient, because by introducing one day of rest in every seven they lose in idleness almost a seventh of their life" (*De Superstitionibus*, apud Augustinus, *De Civitate Dei*, 6, 11 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 186).

105. Juvenal, *Saturae*, 14, 105–106 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 301.

106. Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, 95, 47

107. Menahem Stern, "Antisemitism in Rome" in *Antisemitism through the Ages*, ed., Shmuel Almog (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1988), 22.

108. "But when the day of Herod arrives, and lamps entwined with violets are placed on the greasy window-sills spewing out heavy clouds of smoke, and when the tunny's tails swims, encircling the cheap red dish, and the white jar is bloated with wine, you move your lips in silence and blanch at the circumcised sabbath" (Persius, *Saturae* 5, 179–184 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 190).

109. *Scholia in Lucanum*, 2, 593 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 133, and Apud Lydus, *De Mensibus*, 4, 53 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 134. Lucanus, too, writes that Judaea "was given over to the worship of an unknown god" (*Pharsalia*, 2, 593 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 191).

110. Juvenal, *Saturae*, 14, 97 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, II, no. 301.

111. Isaak Heinemann, "The Attitude of the Ancient World Toward Judaism," *Review of Religion* 4 (1939/40), 395, observes that Juvenal's ridicule of the Jews who worship "the clouds" echoes Aristophanes' ridicule of the supposed god of Socrates.

112. *Saturae*, 14, 103 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, II, no. 301. Accusations of fraudulence and secrecy represent an old tradition: they are found already in Livy's report of the scandal concerning the Bacchanalia, which he calls "secret rites performed by night" (39, 8, 4). Secrecy made a foreign cult particularly dangerous because it raised associations with political conspiracy. See Isaac, *The Invention*, 476.

113. Zvi Yavetz, "Latin Authors on Jews and Dacians," *Historia* 47 (1998), 98.

114. Isaac, *The Invention*, 42. John G. Gager, "Judaism as Seen by Outsiders," in *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters*, eds., Robert A. Kraft and George W. E. Nickelsburg (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 110, argues that opposition to Judaism "stemmed primarily from a limited and interconnected circle of conservative *literati*, whose opinions were often at odds with the populace." While Isaac observes that the works of Juvenal and Martial belong to the mainstream of Latin literature and are representative of a broad section of Roman upper-class opinion. See Isaac, *The Invention*, 478.

115. See Isaac, *The Invention*, 497. On Juvenal's xenophobic attitude towards foreigners, see W. J. Watts, "Race Prejudice in the Satires of Juvenal," *Acta Classica* 19 (1976), 83–85; Stern, *GLAJJ*, II, 94, notes 1–2; Schäfer, *Judeophobia*, 184; and Isaac, *The Invention*, 339–340, 395–396, and 421.

116. *Saturae*, 5, 15, 1–13. See Gruen, "Roman Perspectives," 33.

117. *Saturae*, 15, 78–83.

118. *Saturae*, 6, 522–541.

119. Suetonius, *Nero*, 16.

120. *Nero*, 56 and 34.

121. Suetonius, *Otho*, 12.

122. Seneca, *De Superstitionibus*, apud Augustinus, *De Civitate Dei*, 6, 11 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 186.

123. *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artes intulit agresti Latio*. (Horace, *Epistulae*, 2, 1, 156–157). See Isaac, *The Invention*, 394, 405.

124. See Noy, *Foreigners at Rome*, 34–35.

125. Isaac, *The Invention*, 250.

126. Isaac, *The Invention*, 208, 306–307, 459, 507, and Pieter Botha, "Anti-Judaism and Anti-Semitism: Greco-Roman Antiquity," in *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*, vol. II, eds., Hans-Josef Klauck et al. (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2009), 208.

127. Noy, *Foreigners at Rome*, 35.

128. Juvenal, *Satires*, 14, 96–104 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, II, no. 301. See Achille (2009), 103–107.

129. Tacitus, *Historiae (Hist.)*, 5, 5, 2 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, II, no. 281.

130. On sympathy for Judaism in Rome, see Menahem Stern, "Sympathy for Judaism in Roman Senatorial Circles in the Period of the Early Empire," *Zion* 24 (1964), 155–167 (Hebrew); Louis H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from*

Alexander to Justinian (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 342–382, and Rutgers, “Roman Policy,” 62. Balsdon observes that this attraction may be related to the fact that the exposition of the Scriptures in the synagogue may have had the attraction of a philosophy lecture. Balsdon, *Romans and Aliens*, 67.

131. On the difference between mere sympathizers with Judaism and full converts, see Heinemann, “The Attitude,” 386, and Williams, “Latin Authors,” 93.

132. See among others Edouard Will and Claude Orrieux, “*Proselytisme juif*”? *Histoire d’une erreur* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1992); Martin Goodman, *Mission and Conversion: Proselytizing in the Religious History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 60–90; Wolf Liebeschuetz, “The Influence of Judaism among non-Jews in the Imperial Period,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 52 (2001), 235–252; Gruen, “Roman Perspectives,” 32; Louis H. Feldman, “Conversion to Judaism in Classical Antiquity,” in Louis Feldman, *Judaism and Hellenism Reconsidered* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 205–206 (against his own previous views), and Gruen, “Was There Judeophobia,” 324.

133. See Isaac, *The Invention*, 467.

134. Isaac, *The Invention*, 357–358; 362.

135. *Saturae*, 14, 103 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, II, no. 301.

136. For the positive views of *amixia* on the part of Plato, Philo, and Josephus, see Steve Mason, “Stranger Danger! Amixia among Judaeans and Others,” in *Intolerance, Polemics and Debate in Antiquity: Politico-Cultural, Philosophical and Religious Forms of Critical Conversation*, volume II, eds., George van Kooten and Jacques van Ruiten (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 232, 235–240.

137. *Saturae*, 14, 100 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, II, no. 301. On the contrast between *mos Judeorum* and *mos maiorum*, see Schäfer, *Judeophobia*, 186. Gruen, “Roman Perspectives,” 31, on the other hand, argues that the contrast between Roman *leges* and Jewish *ius* does not present a clash of competing legal constitutional systems, but is rather a satirist’s mode of expressing the absurdity of the Jews’ idiosyncratic customs.

138. Isaac, *The Invention*, 454.

139. Martin Goodman, “Trajan and the Origin of Roman Hostility to the Jews,” *Past & Present* (2004), 11.

140. Isaac, *The Invention*, 69, 479. The more Romans felt threatened by the foreign cultures with which they were forced to deal, Schwartz

claims, the more easily an ideology of “Romanism” developed in response. Daniel R. Schwartz, “Antisemitism and Other—Isms in the Greco-Roman World” in *Demonizing the Other: Antisemitism, Racism and Xenophobia*, ed., Robert S. Wistrich (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999), 78–79.

141. See Williams, “Latin Authors,” 871–872.

142. The imposition of this tax cannot be interpreted as a simple administrative measure—the conversion of the tax that had been paid to the Jewish Temple into one to be paid to the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus—since it involved significant changes. While the tax to the Temple was paid only by males over the age of 20, the Roman tax was imposed also on children from the age of 3, boys and girls, on women and also on proselytes and slaves. The rationale of the tax as war reparations, Goodman aptly observes (Goodman, “Trajan,” 19–20), was unique in Roman history in its victimization of Jews as a defeated people and must have seemed particularly malicious for those Jews in the city of Rome who had taken no part in the war. See also E. Mary Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule from Pompey to Diocletian: A Study in Political Relations*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 345.

143. Rutgers, “Roman Policy,” 67. Similarly, Goodman, “Trajan,” 18.

144. See Margaret H. Williams, “Domitian, the Jews and the ‘Judaizers’—a Simple Matter of *Cupiditas* and *Maiestas*?” (1990) in Margaret H. Williams, *Jews in a Greco-Roman Environment* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 110.

145. Goodman observes that while until the outbreak of the Jewish War in 66, the comments of Latin authors display amusement, indifference, and acceptance. Jews might be ridiculous, intriguing, mysterious or contemptible, but they were certainly not dangerous to the safety and prosperity of Rome. Towards the end of the century, they are portrayed as both dangerous and hostile. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 366, 374, 553, 555.

146. Isaac points out that Seneca may have treated all Jews as guilty by association of the crimes of which the Christians were accused, or, perhaps, he may have reflected a more general mood in Rome at his time of crisis that the “atheism” shared by Jews and Christians brought the state into danger. Isaac, *The Invention*, 373.

147. Tacitus, *Taeterrima gens* (*Hist.*, 5, 8, 2).

148. Tacitus, *Genus hominum ut invisum deis* (*Hist.*, 5, 3, 1).

149. Tacitus, *Mos absurdus sordidusque* (*Hist.*, 5, 5, 5). In the *Annals*, Tacitus calls the loss of Jewish life “a cheap damage,” *vile damnun*. Tacitus, *Annals*, 2, 85 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, II, no. 284.

150. See Miriam Ben Zeev Hofman, “Tacitus and the Origins of the Jewish People,” (Hebrew) in *A Work of Wisdom (Exod. 35:33): Studies in Honor of Professor Bezalel Bar-Kochva*, vol. I, eds., Stephanie Binder et al. (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2021), 249–251. On the anti-Jewish remarks of Manetho, Lysimachus, Chaeremon and Apion which found their way into Latin literature, see Maurilio Adriani, “Note sull’antisemitismo antico,” *Religione e Civiltà: Studi e Materiali di Storia della Religioni* 36 (1965), 93–94, and Rochette, “Juifs et romains,” 26, 28.

151. Pliny the Elder, who refers to him as Apion *grammaticus* and clearly also knows his *Aegyptiaca*, seems to have known him personally and Aulus Gellius characterizes him as a man of letters and also as an authority on the wonders of Egypt. See Pieter W. Van der Horst, “Who Was Apion?” in *Japheth in the Tents of Shem: Studies in Jewish Hellenism in Antiquity* (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 207–221, and John Dillery, “Putting Him Back Together Again: Apion Historian, Apion Grammatikos,” *Classical Philology* 98 (2003), 383–390.

152. See above, notes 80–84.

153. See Rochette, “Juifs et romains,” 26.

154. “They sit apart at meals and they sleep apart . . . they abstain from intercourse with foreign women” (*Hist.*, 5, 5, 2). See Solomon Zeitlin, “Anti-Semitism,” *Crozer Quarterly* 22 (1945), 134–136.

155. See Stern, *GLAJJ*, II, 39.

156. “The Jews regard as profane all that we hold sacred; on the other hand, they permit all that we abhor” (*Hist.*, 5, 4, 1).

157. *Hist.*, 5, 4, 3 in *GLAJJ*, II, no. 281.

158. *Hist.*, 5, 4, 3 in *GLAJJ*, II, no. 281.

159. *Hist.*, 5, 5, 3 in *GLAJJ*, II, no. 281.

160. “They conceive one God only, and that with the mind only; they regard as impious those who make from perishable materials representations of gods in man’s image; that supreme and eternal being is to them incapable of representation and without end. Therefore, they set up no statues in their cities, still less in their temples” (*Hist.*, 5, 5, 4 in *GLAJJ*, II, no. 281).

161. *Hist.*, 5, 5, 3 in *GLAJJ*, II, no. 281.

162. *Hist.*, 5, 5, 1 in *GLAJJ*, II, no. 281.

163. *Hist.*, 5, 5, 2 in *GLAJJ*, II, no. 281.

164. He accuses them of sacrificing human victims (*Germania*, 9, 1), and of loving violence: “the frequent quarrels that rise among them . . . seldom terminate in abusive language, but more frequently in blood” (*Germ.*, 22, 1, 3), and observes that “they think it base and spiritless to earn by sweat what they might purchase with blood” (*Germ.*, 14.2–3), and, moreover, “the same persons love indolence and hate tranquility (*Germ.*, 15).

165. Egypt is said to be “given to civil strife and sudden disturbances because of the fanaticism and superstition of its inhabitants” (*Hist.*, 1, 11, 1).

166. *Ann.*, 15, 44, 3–5.

167. See above, note 57.

168. See Stern, *GLAJJ*, II, 1; Isaac, *The Invention*, 42, 478; Goodman, “Trajan,” 24.

169. Bloch, *Antike Vorstellungen*, 143–166.

170. Erich S. Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 178. On Tacitus’ invectives toward other peoples, see Gruen, “Cicero and the Alien,” 13–27.

171. “Still the Jews’ patience lasted until Gessius Florus became procurator” (*Hist.*, 5, 10, 1 in *GLAJJ*, II, no. 281).

172. “Both men and women,” he observes, “exhibited tenacious resolve, reckoning death preferable to loss of their country” (*Hist.*, 5, 13, 3). See also Gruen, “Roman Perspectives,” 31.

173. *Ann.*, 12, 54. In *Hist.*, 5, 9, 3, he writes that “Antonius Felix practiced every kind of cruelty and lust, wielding the power of a king with all the instincts of a slave.” See Gruen, “Roman Perspectives,” 31.

174. *Hist.*, 5, 4, 2 in *GLAJJ*, II, no. 281.

175. *Hist.*, 5, 5, 4 in *GLAJJ*, II, no. 281; *Hist.*, 5, 9, 1 in *GLAJJ*, II, no. 281.

176. Yavetz, “Latin Authors,” 93, and Erich S. Gruen, “Tacitus and the Defamation of the Jews,” in *Israel’s Land: Papers Presented to Israel Shatzman on his Jubilee*, eds., Joseph Geiger et al. (Ra’anana: The Open University of Israel and Israel Exploration Society, 2009), 85.

177. Yavetz, “Latin Authors,” 93.

178. On these theories, see Ben Zeev Hofman, “Tacitus,” 252–256.

179. *Hist.*, 5, 4, 2 in *GLAJJ*, II, no. 281.

180. Gruen, “Tacitus,” 90. See also Schäfer, *Judeophobia*, 61–62.

181. Gruen, “Tacitus,” 90.

182. “Tacitus observes that ‘Antonius Felix practiced every kind of cruelty and lust, wielding the power of a king with all the instincts of a slave’ (*Hist.* 5, 9, 3), not out of compassion for the Jews but from malevolence toward ex-slaves appointed to the imperial service. Another instance of Tacitus’ criticism may be found in the statement that Titus preferred to assault Jerusalem rather than wait for its surrender since he already envisioned the wealth and pleasures he could enjoy in Rome, and, unless Jerusalem fell swiftly, he would have to delay his delights” (*Hist.*, 5, 11, 2). Gruen, “Tacitus,” 91–92.

183. Gruen, “Tacitus,” 94.

184. According to Rosemary Radford Ruether, the recognition of Jewish rights stemmed from Roman political practicality, that created cultural assimilation and administrative accommodation. Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1974), 27.

185. See note 30.

186. Isaac, *The Invention*, 24, 482.

187. See Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, 23.

188. Sevenster, *The Root*, 37–43. On page 40, he observes that the opinions of Roman writers about alien peoples was dictated by a strong sense of superiority, based not on racial consciousness, but on pride in their own power and their own culture.

189. See Noy, *Foreigners at Rome*, 49, note 32, and Rochette, “Juifs et romains,” 24.

190. See Hidal, “The Jews,” 142.

191. De Lange, “The Origins of Anti-Semitism,” 34.

192. “Moses, the founder of Jerusalem and organizer of the nation . . . had ordained for the Jews their misanthropic and lawless customs” (Diodorus, *Bibliotheca Historica*, 34–35, 1, 1–3 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 63).

193. *Aegyptiaca*, apud Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1, 228–252 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 21.

194. Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*, 13, 46 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 214. The expression is often translated as “a race renowned for its contempt for the divine powers” but the meaning may well be the opposite, namely, a race which is despised by the gods. The same concept, *genus hominum ut invisum deis*, appears in the excursus of Tacitus, *Hist.* 5, 3, 1 in *GLAJJ*, II, no. 281.

195. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 3, 7, 21 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 230. Isaac writes that the statement “founders of cities are hated for bringing together a people which is pernicious for others, such as the founder [Moses] of the Jewish superstition” combines hostility to the Jewish people and hostility to their religion. Isaac, *The Invention*, 467.
196. Seneca, *De Superstitionibus*, apud Augustinus, *De Civitate Dei*, 6, 11 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, I, no. 186.
197. Tacitus, *Hist.*, 5, 8, 2 in *GLAJJ*, II, no. 281.
198. Florus, *Epitoma*, 1, 40, 30 in Stern, *GLAJJ*, II, no. 321.
199. Tacitus, *Hist.*, 5, 8, 2 in *GLAJJ*, II, no. 281.
200. Tacitus, *Hist.*, 5, 3, 1.
201. Marcel Simon observes that “*les dispositions antisémite du monde païenne représentent, en tout état de cause, le substrat sur lequel s’est développé, avec des caractères en partie hérités, mais plus largement originaux, l’antisémitisme chrétien.*” Christian antisemitism, in turn, fertilized the soil of modern antisemitism. Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel: Etudes sur le relations entre Chrétiens et Juifs dans l’empire romain (135–425)* (Paris: Éditions E. De Boccard, 1948), 245. See also Yavetz, “Latin Authors,” 94, and Marvin Perry and Frederick M. Schweitzer, *Antisemitism: Myth and Hate from Antiquity to the Present* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 74.
202. Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, 29–30.
203. David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013), 46.

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