

# POVERTY AND CHARITY IN ROMAN PALESTINE

Gildas Hamel

## **Abstract**

The present book reformats the text, notes, and appendices of the original 1990 publication by the University of California Press. Its pagination is different. There is no index.



D'ur vamm ha d'ur breur  
aet d'an Anaon re abred  
A.M.G. 31 Meurzh 1975  
Y.M.H. 12 Geñver 1986

# Contents

<b>Contents</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>List of Tables</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>1 Daily bread</b>	<b>I</b>
1.1 Food items . . . . .	2
1.2 Diets . . . . .	20
1.3 Diseases and death . . . . .	58
1.4 Conclusion . . . . .	60
<b>2 Poverty in clothing</b>	<b>63</b>
2.1 Common articles of clothing . . . . .	63
2.2 Lack of clothing . . . . .	72
2.3 Clothing and social status . . . . .	83
2.4 Conclusion . . . . .	107
<b>3 Causes of poverty</b>	<b>III</b>
3.1 Discourse of the ancients on yields . . . . .	III
3.2 Aspects of agriculture: climate and soil . . . . .	120
3.3 Work and technical standards . . . . .	130
3.4 Yields . . . . .	150
3.5 Population of Palestine . . . . .	165
3.6 Conclusion . . . . .	169
<b>4 Taxes and rents</b>	<b>171</b>

4.1	Roman taxes . . . . .	174
4.2	Jewish taxes and history of tax burden . . . . .	179
4.3	Labor and ground rents . . . . .	182
4.4	Conclusion . . . . .	196
<b>5</b>	<b>The vocabulary of poverty</b>	<b>199</b>
5.1	Explicit vocabulary: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek . . . . .	202
5.2	Explicit vocabulary: self-designations . . . . .	215
5.3	Greek and Jewish views on poverty and wealth . . . . .	235
5.4	Implicit vocabulary . . . . .	246
5.5	Conclusion . . . . .	256
<b>6</b>	<b>Charity in Roman Palestine</b>	<b>259</b>
6.1	Discourses on charity . . . . .	259
6.2	Jewish charity . . . . .	265
6.3	Greek charity . . . . .	268
6.4	Christian charity . . . . .	269
6.5	Conclusion . . . . .	270
<b>7</b>	<b>Views on poverty and wealth in the Gentile Church</b>	<b>273</b>
7.1	Poverty in the Greco-Roman world . . . . .	273
7.2	The Church Fathers as men of their time . . . . .	275
7.3	The Church Fathers as pioneers of a new society . . . . .	282
7.4	Conclusion . . . . .	291
	<b>Epilogue</b>	<b>295</b>
	<b>Appendices</b>	<b>299</b>
	<b>Weights and Measures</b>	<b>301</b>
	<b>Minimum daily bread</b>	<b>305</b>
	<b>List of Palestinian sages</b>	<b>307</b>
	<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>310</b>
	Books of the Bible . . . . .	310
	Qumran literature . . . . .	311
	Other ancient Jewish literature . . . . .	311
	Other literatures, ancient and modern . . . . .	313

<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>317</b>
Ancient sources . . . . .	317
Modern literature . . . . .	325

## List of Figures

3.1	Religious and agricultural calendar . . . . .	131
4.1	Herod's Kingdom at His Death (4 B.C.E.) . . . . .	178
4.2	City Creation in Roman Palestine . . . . .	181

## List of Tables

1	Weights and Measures . . . . .	302
---	--------------------------------	-----

## Acknowledgements

My immediate thanks go to the readers of what started all too obviously as a doctoral thesis, for their trust in me, their encouragement, patience, and help. Donald Nicholl guided my steps as a historian, through his own example as well as his kind and honest judgments. Noel King was a watchful sponsor, always willing to discuss problems and suggest references, comments, and improvements. Mishael Caspi saved me from many a pitfall in the interpretation of Hebrew and Aramaic sources. I had useful conversations and discussions of the arguments with Gary Lease, who drew my attention to pertinent literature. I also take this opportunity to thank teachers of the past: Guillaume Prat (†), Yves Thomas, Mgr Francis Barbu, Pierre Benoit (†), and Roland de Vaux (†).

The faculty, staff, and students of Cowell College, at the University of California at Santa Cruz, gave constant support and stimulation. To all, especially John Lynch, Provost of Cowell, I am very grateful. Joan Hodgson, Elizabeth Rentz, the Interlibrary Loan staff, Billie Harris in the History of Consciousness Program, and the various agencies of the University of California at Santa Cruz provided me with exceptional means of research. The typing was skillfully done at different stages by Eric Mills and Wallie Romig, neither of whom seemed to mind the challenge of a difficult manuscript. I am also grateful to Rose Anne White and Brian R. MacDonald for their patience and care in editing the book. Much of the credit for any virtue that the book may possess is due to all of those mentioned, as well as to the many scholars whose writings I have used. The responsibility for any shortcomings and blemishes that remain is mine.

Finally, I wish to thank my family: my loved ones in Brittany; Dr. Benjamin Kleinstein, who has been a source of strength and wisdom; and above all, Amy.



## Note on Quotations and Transliteration

The Bible text in this publication is from the Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1946, 1952, 1971 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, and used by permission. Quotations from the Pseudepigrapha usually are from J. H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983–85). Quotations from the Mishnah are from H. Danby, *The Mishnah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933). Quotations from the Babylonian Talmud are from the Soncino edition: I. Epstein, ed., *The Babylonian Talmud*, 35 vols. (London: Soncino, 1935–52). Translations of classical Greek or Latin texts come usually from the Loeb Classical Library. The epigraph on the first page of the Introduction is reprinted by permission of Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., Publishers.

Talmudic literature is quoted in the following fashion: *mKil. 2.1* = *Mishnah*, tractate *Kil'aim*, chapter 2, halakhah 1; or *pKil. 2.1.27c* = Palestinian (or Yerushalmi) Talmud, tractate *Kil'aim*, chapter 2, halakhah 1, folio 27 in the Krotoschin edition, third column. For other abbreviations, see the list provided before the Bibliography.

Consistency in the transliteration of Hebrew and Aramaic names and words proved to be impossible, given the disparity encountered in the quotations from other authors. In most cases, I have adopted the spelling of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1972). For other names of people or things, I have used the following system of transliteration: 'a, b/v, g, d, h, w/u/o, z, h, t, y/i, k/kh, l, m, n, s, ' , p/f, s, q, r, s, s, t/th.



# Introduction

No one knows what others eat, or what others suffer. That is not the sort of thing that can be set down in black and white. If someone were to read what you've written, he'd make nothing of it. He'd have to come and spend a night or two, in order to understand.

---

M. Makal, *Village in Anatolia*

Twenty years ago, Momigliano regretted that, whereas much research about the decline of the Roman Empire concerned structural changes, little effort was devoted to evaluating the impact of Christianity and its triumph.<sup>1</sup> Since then, much work has been done to show how “Christianity produced a new style of life, created new loyalties, gave people new ambitions and new satisfactions.”<sup>2</sup> The present essay started as an inquiry on the role of charity and social aid in Roman Palestine,<sup>3</sup> where the transition from a church of Jews to a church of Gentiles meant changes of beliefs, attitudes, and even languages.

<sup>1</sup>A. Momigliano, “Christianity and the Decline of the Roman Empire,” in *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 5–6.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. See also L. E. Keck, “On the Ethos of Early Christianity,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 42 (1974) 435–52. The works of E. R. Dodds, P. R. L. Brown, W. H. C. Frend, R. MacMullen, and R. L. Fox come to mind.

<sup>3</sup>The word Palestine, applied to Jewish territory, translates *Palaestina* (strictly speaking, *Syria Palaestina*). By Roman Palestine is meant an area including Judaea, Samaria, Galilee, the coastal zone, and Idumaea. I use it for the whole period, although it became the name of the province only after 135 C.E. See E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), I, n. 1.

I focused on charity because it is often assumed that Christian charity entailed a radical departure from traditional, Jewish or Pagan, social attitudes. It seemed feasible to test the validity of this thesis by studying the situation of poor people in Roman Palestine during the first three centuries C.E. Was there poverty, and how widespread was it? What were its causes? What were the meanings of the various words for “poor” in Greek and Hebrew-Aramaic? In calling someone poor, how was his or her situation perceived? Finally, did the perception of poverty, as well as attitudes to the poor, change as a result of conversion to Christianity? If there was social change, can one ascribe it to Christianity rather than to other causes?

In the course of the work, it became apparent that it would be very difficult either to corroborate or to invalidate the initial thesis. One reason is that the interpretation of sources on the situation and composition of the early Church in Roman Palestine, as well as on its beliefs and practices, is a very arduous task, with few assured results. The historical interpretation of the synoptic Gospels and other texts of the New Testament requires one to make thorny choices in source and tradition criticism. Another challenge is that much information about the early Jewish Church is scattered in later Christian authors, whose motivations are not easily ascertained. To search for evidence of Jewish Christianity in the Rabbinic literature and in archaeological reports is even more delicate. In other words, the fully informed comparison of Jewish, Jewish-Christian, and non-Jewish discourses on charity and its practices in Roman Palestine is a task yet to be done. Chapter 6 is no more than a foray in the topic, while Chapter 7 extends the scope of the comparison to the Greco-Roman world.

I have not abandoned the initial goal, but, for the time being, its pursuit has yielded an unexpected result, namely a partial description of the social world of Roman Palestine. A comparison of the various practices of social aid requires a knowledge of standards of life, an examination of some of the causes of poverty, and a study of the ways in which the people of Roman Palestine viewed themselves and their own society. Since most of my efforts have been spent on this preparatory work, the enterprise has become a description of people's lives. If it may claim some originality, by comparison with the various detailed works of S. Krauss, G. Dalman, J. Jeremias, Y. Feliks, A. Ben-David, D. Sperber, S. Safrai, S. Applebaum, S. Freyne, and M. Goodman,<sup>4</sup> it is due to the kind of questions asked from the documents, or to the peculiar stress put on some of these questions. I have been greatly helped

<sup>4</sup>See Chapter 1, n. 1, and Chapter 3, n. 104.

in this regard by modern sociological and anthropological observations or issues.<sup>5</sup> But I have refrained from using complex concepts and words, in the belief that closeness to the sources, despite the risk of merely repeating the documents, was a better choice than theory building.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, I had to translate certain aspects of the lives of the past into modern categories. The readers will judge if my own mix of modern and ancient words and concepts is illuminating.

Any attempt to describe poverty must grapple with the major objection that it is a relative notion. Poverty is absolute when lack of food and shelter means danger to life. But most often it is a less threatening insufficiency of goods and services relative to the standard of a given society at a given time.<sup>7</sup> An additional danger is that scattered bits of information about poverty cannot easily be fitted into a general, composite picture of poverty because they come from sources for which a clear social context has not yet been established, or cannot be established. Nevertheless, I assume that the sources that speak of poverty merit credence, and that their notion of it had some basis. I take as my guide the following remarks by an old Breton worker, in a recent book of recollections called *The Poor Man's Wealth*: "When I say 'the poor,' I mean those I have known, since among the poor there always is one who is poorer, or less rich, than the others. Indeed, every poor person had his own poverty, but one thing was common to all: they were ill housed, ill dressed, and ill fed."<sup>8</sup>

Chapters 1 and 2 of the present book describe the situation of the poor in respect to food and clothing since the immediate concern of poor people

<sup>5</sup>See R. Scroggs, "The Sociological Interpretation of the New Testament: The Present State of Research," *NTS* 26 (1980) 164–79. I have found the following works particularly helpful: J. Weulersse, *Paysans de Syrie et du Proche-Orient* (Paris: Gallimard, 1946); M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1966); A. B. Diop, *La Société Wôlof; tradition et changement; les systèmes d'inégalité et de domination* (Paris: Ed. Karthala, 1981); C. O'Brien, *Saints and Politicians: Essays in the Organization of a Senegalese Peasant Society* (Cambridge: bridge University Press, 1975); C. Coulon, *Le marabout et le Prince (Islam et pouvoir au Sénégal)* (Paris: Institut d'études politiques de Bordeaux, 1981).

<sup>6</sup>The systematic and coherent use of sociology has been advocated recently by many exegetes among whom G. Theissen, B. Malina, and J. Elliott (see bibliography). A more eclectic approach is that of W. Meeks, e.g. in *The First Urban Christians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

<sup>7</sup>Art. "Poverty," in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1983), 14:935.

<sup>8</sup>G. Jacq, *Pinvidigezh ar paour* (Brest: Al Lm, 1977), 7.

was to secure enough of both for themselves and their families.<sup>9</sup> In each case, the items available to everyone, rich and poor, are first listed and described. After this preliminary survey, the description of different levels of consumption and differences in status can then proceed. Such a survey does not shed any light on the situation of those people so poor that they were reduced to the last extremities. But for most people, poverty was a matter of degree, degrees, and these two chapters present the variation in their situations. In this respect, it has been thought essential to watch for two things: not only the quantity allotted to an individual, or considered in our sources as suitable for a certain category of people, but also the details of a social code that advertised people's different statuses and reinforced them.

What were some of the causes of poverty? In this search for causes, two extreme attitudes are possible. One might assign everything to nature—for instance, to the climate and its evolution—and consequently dilute all human responsibility. Or one might focus exclusively on human reasons, specifically on the actions of some individuals, in order to circumscribe responsibilities, or be, as narrowly as possible.<sup>10</sup> In the present work, I have attempted to avoid both extremes and assign a proper place to both nature and human freedom.

If poverty is a notion dependent upon human responsibility and consequently moral judgment, one cannot look for its causes in nature itself. Any society has a culture, a system of beliefs held in common. A culture may encourage the faith, hopes, and sense of belonging of a peasant, craftsman, servant, or soldier. Or it may lead a person to become distrustful, despairing, fearful. The quality of a man or woman's daily work will be affected by the quality of their culture, and vice versa. If poverty cannot be assigned

<sup>9</sup>In this respect, the reader will note that my frequent use of the pronoun "he" is simply in accordance with the usage of Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek sources, which most often consider the poor *man*. It has seemed more accurate to describe women's poverty in various passages dealing with particular issues. See, e.g., pp. 40–42, 62–63, 65–67, 87–88, III–12.

<sup>10</sup>Some of the candidates for the villain's role have been Herod the Great, or various groups of "Bourgeois" of the time, such as the Sadducees. F. Belo's book on Mark, for instance, challenges and stimulates the reader, but at the cost of oversimplification: *A Materialist Reading of the Gospel of Mark* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1981). See also M. Clévenot, *Approches matérialistes de la Bible* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1976), which is now in English: *Materialist Approaches to the Bible* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1986). More nuanced: F. Châtelet and G. Mairet, eds., *Histoire des idéologies*, vol. 1: *Les mondes divins jusqu'au VIIIe siècle de notre ère* (Paris: Hachette, 1978), 224–25. Marxist concepts are also the framework of the important works by H. Kreissig, e.g. "Die sozialen Zusammenhang des jüdischen Krieges" (Ph.D. Thesis, Humboldt-Universität, 1965).

to nature itself, it seems nevertheless legitimate to study the natural milieu of Roman Palestine and the level of technical development achieved by its population, so as to understand the constraints in food production and distribution (Chapter 3).

This rough evaluation of the weaknesses or strengths of the economy leads directly in Chapter 4, to consideration of the social structure. Although the *bulk* of goods produced (especially agricultural goods) may have sufficed to cover the basic needs of the population *as a whole*, the critical issue is how fairly it was distributed. Shortages, even chronic, might conceivably have been equally shared by everyone, or they might not. The same was true of surpluses. How was the distribution of work and revenue organized in Roman Palestine? The produce obviously went in part to landowners and in part to renters, sharecroppers, or laborers (slaves included). Some of the produce went to pay various taxes: How much revenue was thus collected, in what way, and what was it used for? The major factor here concerns the burden caused by Roman occupation, taxes, extortions, wars. In all of these instances, one must not forget that some of these levies or revenues may have been returned to the original producers in the form of a certain level of security (in food matters, for instance), community undertakings such as charity, the administration of justice, religious institutions, public works, or even amusements.

Throughout the first four chapters, an attempt is made to expose the sort of justifications that were offered for a given distribution of work and revenue. What would appear to us as violent inequities were not necessarily seen as such at the time. What were the facts of the case? If the right to the produce of the land and to labor needed a divine justification, what form did this take? To answer this question, it was necessary to examine the ambiguities of a vocabulary of poverty that is so prominent in the Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek sources. In Chapter 5, a study of the explicit mentions of the poor as well as other more oblique ways of referring to them helps not so much in identifying the poor—though the vocabulary is a pointer—but more in gaining an idea of the social concepts current in various groups of Roman Palestine.

The sources used are the New Testament, some of the Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha, Qumran texts, early patristic literature, Josephus, Targums, Talmudic literature, inscriptions, and archaeological reports. Interpreting these documents makes one aware of the existence of many obstacles, all of which I cannot claim to have avoided.

In the case of Talmudic literature, I have relied mainly on texts or pas-

sages of texts dated to the first three centuries C.E. that concern the situation in Palestine: the Mishnah, Tosefta, halakic Midrash, and tannaitic traditions preserved in the Palestinian and Babylonian Gemaras. For any passage from both Talmuds, however, it is difficult to give an assured date that is earlier than the date commonly accepted for the final redaction/compilation of the whole work.<sup>11</sup> To rely on the dates of authorities quoted is unsafe, because a saying, or story, may reflect a recent idea or solution to a situation attributed to an earlier authority for a variety of reasons.<sup>12</sup> The first approach is to decipher whether the saying is “falsely” attributed, what may have been its real intention and context, and then, as a corollary, why it is attributed to a particular authority. Is there a pattern? The second approach, to be undertaken in parallel with the first, is to examine the social and economic context of the saying in light of other literary and non-literary evidence.<sup>13</sup> An important question at this stage is: Does it concern but a narrow group’s views of the world, if at all? Or could it be a partly religious, partly intellectual exercise without any connection to the outside world? Much has been made of the absence of “history” from Talmudic literature.<sup>14</sup> The Talmudic sources do not provide a history of events, particularly those contemporary events that one would expect to find in it, concerning Judaism and Israel. But “they [the rabbis] had learned from the Bible that the true pulse of history often beat beneath its manifest surfaces, an invisible history that was more real than what the world [. . .] could recognize.”<sup>15</sup> Some of the tractates are wholly concerned with questions that only recently have drawn the

<sup>11</sup>See H. L. Strack and G. Stemberger, *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1982<sup>7</sup>), 66–68.

<sup>12</sup>On the impossibility of using logical sequences of the Mishnah to describe the Judaism preceding the period of its redaction, even though they may have been ascribed to authorities from the earlier period, see J. Neusner, “The Use of the Mishnah for the History of Judaism Prior to the Time of the Mishnah. A Methodological Note,” *JSJ* 11 (1980) 177–85.

<sup>13</sup>See works by S. Lieberman: *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1962<sup>2</sup>); *Greek in Jewish Palestine* (New York: Feldheim, 1965<sup>2</sup>); *Texts and Studies* (New York: KTAV, 1974); and the notes to *Tosefta Ki-Fshutah* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1955–73).

<sup>14</sup>But see remarks by J. Neusner, “Is the Talmud a Historical Document?” in *Formative Judaism: Religious, Historical, and Literary Studies. Fourth Series: Problems of Classification and Composition*, Brown Judaic Studies, 76 (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1984), 73–82. For explanations of the absence of historiography in the modern sense from Rabbinic tradition, see L. Kochan, *The Jew and His History* (New York: Schocken, 1977; repr., Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1985), 7–18, and Y. H. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1982), 16–26.

<sup>15</sup>Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 21.

attention of historians. This is the case especially with the *Zera'im* Order, which is full of information on agriculture in Roman Palestine. By comparing the other evidence (Qumran, Josephus, Murabba'at, other Hellenistic documentation, even Egyptian sources), one begins to understand something of the daily activities, concerns, and mentalities of this world. The Rabbinic literature reflects the perspective of large and small landowners, with strong beliefs in the meaning of an invisible history once and for all mapped out by the Scriptures, and paramount interest in all the things of daily life that maintained or activated this history.<sup>16</sup>

The difficulty is due to the nature of the literature, most obvious in the Mishnah and Tosefta. In a large measure, these texts are a systematic development of rational principles and methods, as well as a collection of exegetical and legal sayings. Far from being a "repetition," as is sometimes said, or the continuous interpretation of legal texts from Scripture, these texts were actually a daring creation in answer to completely new challenges. Many passages strike one as a logic or algebra, in which the system of symbols used has not yet been fully separated from other, non-mathematical meanings. If this is true, then the historian has to keep alert and be ready to discriminate between the operation itself, datable only to the period of redaction, and the material used for the operation. This material, *realia*, is often of great use. Fortunately, the logical form is less developed in the passages of the Mishnah and Tosefta concerning the laws of agriculture; also, I concerned with aspects of life that did not evolve very quickly and for which it is often possible to control the evidence provided by Rabbinic literature with the help of other evidence—literary, archaeological, or epigraphic.

The dating and origin of the Targums are also uncertain matters. Occasionally, especially for those aspects of agricultural life that could have evolved but slowly, I have used the Pseudo-Jonathan and *Neofiti 1* Targums, as well as the so-called Fragmentary Targum, which are of Palestinian origin. *Neofiti 1*, as it stands, probably dates from the third century C.E.<sup>17</sup> Some of the passages may be much earlier first century C.E.). But no date for the corpus may be given, as any attempt to date passages from this literature should

<sup>16</sup>See remarks by Neusner in art. quoted above, "Is the Talmud a Historical Document?"

<sup>17</sup>See review by J. H. Charlesworth of *Targum du Pentateuque*, by R. Le Déaut, *Religious Studies Review* 8 (1982) 85. See E. Levine, "Neofiti 1: A Study of Exodus 15," *Biblica* 54 (1973) 301–30, n. 3, on dating Targums in general. Levine argues against the view that *Neofiti* is late. R. Le Déaut also thinks that it represents a tradition at least as early as the second or third century C.E., and preserves a much earlier oral tradition: *Targum du Pentateuque* (Paris: Le Cerf, 1978), 1:40.

apply only to limited circumscribed passages.<sup>18</sup> Pseudo-Jonathan is very late in its present form and “may come from any period of Jewish exegesis.”<sup>19</sup> According to R. Le Déaut, much of it predates the Mishnah (second century C.E. therefore), and some passages are very early.<sup>20</sup> But the desire to have a Jewish literary background for purposes of elucidation of the New Testament literature is certainly not a sufficient basis for early dating. I have not made extensive use of the Onqelos Targum: its date is also in dispute, as well as the history of its redaction. Its origin is probably Palestinian, with dates ranging from 132–35 C.E. to the fourth century C.E.<sup>21</sup>

No apology is needed nowadays, after much inspired spadework by K. D. White, R. MacMullen, M. I. Finley, and others, to choose to focus this essay on agriculture, “the major industry on which this [Greco-Roman] splendid edifice of culture depended for its survival.”<sup>22</sup> The texts themselves are quite clear: “The civil law of Palestine in Talmudic times mirrors an exclusively agricultural society.”<sup>23</sup> This does not mean that the poor were all rural and not urban. In fact, the words “rural” and “urban” confuse matters, because they conjure up the image of an agricultural population

<sup>18</sup>Charlesworth, *Religious Studies Review* 8 (1982) 85; the e opinion is found in R. Le Déaut’s introduction to the last volume of *Targum du Pentateuque* (Paris: Le Cerf, 1981), 5:22. Levine provides a good instance of this kind of approach in the article cited in the previous note. For comparison of Targumic literature with the Qumran Targums, see A. Angerstorfer, “Ist 4QTgLev das Menetekel der neueren Targumforschung?” *Biblischen Notizen* 15 (1981) 55–75.

<sup>19</sup>J. Bowker, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature* (bridge: bridge University Press, 1969).

<sup>20</sup>*Targum du Pentateuque*, 1:36.

<sup>21</sup>Le Déaut, *Targum du Pentateuque*, 1:21. It is also formal, as compared with *Neofiti 1*, “a folk translation,” according to Levine, *Biblica* 54 (1973) 324.

<sup>22</sup>K. D. White, *Roman Farming* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1970), 10. See bibliography under M. Rostovtzeff, R. MacMullen, M. I. Finley, A. H. M. Jones, and A. R. Hands. For Soviet historiography, long preoccupied with a description of social classes, see, e.g., *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii*, many articles of which may be found translated in *Soviet Studies in History*, a publication of International Arts and Sciences Press, New York. Soviet historiography is reviewed in Paul Petit, “L’historiographie soviétique,” in *Actes du colloque d’histoire sociale 1970*, Centre de recherches d’histoire ancienne, Annales littéraires de l’Université de Besançon (Paris: Les Belles-Lettres, 1972), 9–27; M. Raskolnikoff, *La recherche en Union Soviétique et l’histoire économique et sociale du monde hellénistique et romain* (Strasbourg: A.E.C.R., 1975).

<sup>23</sup>L. Ginzberg, *Introductory Essay: The Palestinian Talmud* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1941), xxiv. G. Alon also insisted on the importance of agriculture, *The Jews in Their Land in the Talmudic Age (70–640 C.E.)* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1980), 1:153–55. Cf. Ch. Primus, *Akiva’s Contribution to the Law of Zera’im* (Leiden: Brill, 1977).

scattered throughout the country and separated economically and socially from the world of cities. Everyone in Palestine had to live in some form of village or town: there were lets, villages, bigger villages, and towns, or cities. In addition, an ancient city was not what we think of as a city in the modern world—that is, an urban center involved in specialized production, opposed to the countryside—but rather consisted of this center together with the rural territory and villages attributed to it. In Roman Palestine, the number of these cities and their status changed during the period we are considering.<sup>24</sup> The physical center of a city could harbor rural workers, as well as craftsmen, soldiers, scribes, and landowners with leisure.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, people in specialized crafts, including soldiers, had some form of access to land, however limited. The sources give the impression that indifference was the most common attitude regarding people involved in agricultural occupations. When such people are mentioned, it is often disparagingly. But it is well to remember that villages and towns were very crowded places where much energy was spent advertising differences of social rank, however minimal, precisely because of the proximity. To speak of an opposition between city and city territory (villages of the *χωρά*) seems accurate, but the nature of this opposition requires specification.

<sup>24</sup>See Chapter 4, and Map 2.

<sup>25</sup>For an entertaining passage on the variegated population of a first-century C.E. city, see Dio Chrysostomus, *Orationes* 7.105ff.



# 1

## Daily bread

Before describing the various levels of consumption and the details of a social code that used food to advertise and reinforce people's status, we must consider the food items available to the inhabitants of Palestine. As noted in the Introduction, the nature of the sources does not make it easy to ascertain what was considered important or secondary. Even less do the texts lend themselves to quantitative analysis. Nevertheless, it is possible to glean information about a great number of food elements used by Jews, Samaritans, and Greeks alike. In this regard, the present work is very much in the debt of S. Krauss who long ago, in his wide-ranging *Talmudische Archäologie*, provided the fundamental study of food production and consumption in Talmudic times.<sup>1</sup> Comparisons with what is known of other ancient Mediter-

<sup>1</sup>*TA*, 1:78–126, and 417–516 (notes); idem, *Qadmoniot ha-talmud* (Odessa: Moriah, 1914–23), 2:93–276. On the types of food used in Hellenistic and Roman Palestine, see A. Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1974), 1:306–10 (focusing on subsistence level); G. Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina*, vols. 3 and 4 (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1933–35) for cereals and bread, oil, wine; H. Gaubert has given a short and interesting summary of activities and customs pertaining to food in chap. 6 of his *La vie familiale en Israël* (Toulouse: Mame, 1971), 119–73; valuable comments also in A. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1900), 2:206, 208–09. Abundant information on the flora of Israel and its various uses in Talmudic times can be found in Y. Feliks, *Agriculture in Palestine in the Period of the Mishna and Talmud* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1963); idem, *Nature and Man in the Bible: Chapters in Biblical Ecology* (London and New York: Soncino Press, 1981); idem, *Mixed Sowing, Breeding and Grafting* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1967); idem, art. “Plants”, in *EJ*, 13:614–27, which gives a listing of identifications for all the plants found in the Bible and in the Mishnah; M. Zohary is a renowned botanist who has also written on the plants in the Bible: art. “Flora”, in *IDB* 2:284–302; idem, *Plants of the Bible* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982); see also H. N. Moldenke and A. L. Moldenke, *Plants of the Bible* (Waltham, Mass.: Chronica Botanica Co., 1952); I. Low laid the foundation of modern research in his monumental *Die Flora der Juden*, 4 vols. (Vienna and Leipzig: R. Löwit, 1924–34).

ranean societies are also very useful.<sup>2</sup> The first part of my inquiry, therefore, consists of a presentation of the types of food and preparations in use in Roman Palestine.

Evidently, a simple display of what was accessible must be completed by a study of the real fare. But it is characteristic of the sources that extreme attention is paid to certain parts of the diet, often precisely those difficult to procure. A knowledge of what were considered ideal foods and why will help us to understand what the differences between the actual meals of various groups of people could mean to the individuals concerned. Richer people could approximate this ideal, but whether their habits would have pleased a modern nutritionist is doubtful.

## 1.1 FOOD ITEMS

Only a few elements were of decisive importance in everyone's real diet: cereals, legumes, olives, water, and salt. An arrangement of the most important elements by decreasing order of simple caloric value would put meats and dairy products at the top and cereals at the bottom. But the nutritional reality of the period under consideration was that most people, most of the time, seldom had a chance to eat proteins from animal sources. Their relative absence does not necessarily mean that the population could not balance a proper meal and thus avoid the consequences of malnutrition. Meat figures prominently in the sources as something deeply craved, and the pas-

<sup>2</sup>An important series of articles is that by J. K. Evans, "Plebs Rustica. The Peasantry of Classical Italy," *AJAH* 5 (1980) 19-47; 134-73. A very detailed account of Roman types of food, preparations, uses, and other customs, is given by J. André, *L'alimentation et la cuisine à Rome* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1981<sup>2</sup>). See also the elaborate article *Cibaria* in *DAGR* 1/2:1141-69 (by E. Fournier). J. M. Frayn's picture of small Roman peasantry gives an excellent idea of ordinary food, its production and preparation: *Subsistence Farming in Roman Italy* (London: Centaur, 1979). A. Rousselle, *Porneia: On Desire and the Body in Antiquity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 160-78, is a study of the diets of fourth- and fifth-century C.E. Egyptian monks. R. J. Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology* (Leiden: Brill, 1965<sup>2</sup>) 3:11ff., gives an overview of technical possibilities and limitations, while often considering the social aspects of food. More general are D. Brothwell and P. Brothwell, *Food in Antiquity: A Survey of the Diet of Early Peoples* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1969); A. Maurizio, *Histoire de l'alimentation végétale depuis la Préhistoire jusqu'à nos jours*, transl. from Italian by F. Gidon (Paris: Payot, 1932). For comparison with contemporary problems, see the important book by C. Clark and M. Haswell, *The Economics of Subsistence Agriculture* (London: Macmillan, 1970<sup>4</sup>).

sion surrounding it had political overtones.<sup>3</sup>

Many fruits, which were also desirable, have been left out, but the olive, a staple food, has been included as a fruit. Vegetables, on the contrary, were despised and do not seem to have been used as a source of calories or proteins. But they were in great use, especially beets, cabbages, and squashes. So were spices, which are only mentioned. subsection

## FRUITS

Olives, grapes, figs, and dates were the most important fruits. Other fruits were pomegranates, caperbush berries, plums, and ethrogs (lemons). Dates were abundant, especially in the valleys of southern Palestine, around Jericho and in small oases along the Dead Sea (‘Ein Feshkha near Qumran, ‘Ein Geddi). They were eaten fresh, pressed into cakes for storage and later consumption, or boiled to make honey—a sweet and thick jam.<sup>4</sup> Pliny knew of four species of dates,<sup>5</sup> which means that they were “exported.”

Figs, a more common fruit, were eaten raw or dried and also pressed into cakes.<sup>6</sup> They were gathered continuously, whenever ripe, beginning in summer, with the rare but prized first fruits appearing in June, and lasting until winter. They were the object of much envy and protection, as illustrated by the following story of a group of presumably young rabbis who had made it their habit to come to study under a certain fig tree:

But the master of the fig tree came to collect (fruit) every day. They said: “Perhaps he mistrusts us”; and they changed place. The next day, the owner came toward them and told them: “Masters, why do you deprive me of the good deed that you were doing on my property?” They answered him: “Perhaps, we were saying he mistrusts us.” He explained to them that he came in the morning, when the sun was raising, and the figs beginning to decay. The owners of fig trees know that this is the time to gather the fruit.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup>See M. Detienne and J. P. Vernant, eds., *La cuisine du sacrifice en pays grec* (Paris: Gallimard, 1979).

<sup>4</sup>*mPe’ab* 4.1; *mShab.* 14.3.

<sup>5</sup>*Natural History* 13.45.

<sup>6</sup>*pTa’an.* 4.4.

<sup>7</sup>*pBer.* 2.7.5c, attributed to second-century C.E. rabbis. The rabbis’ names are disputed: Ḥiyya b. Abba, ca. 190–220 C.E.? Yose b. Ḥalafta, ca. 130–160? or Aqiva, died 135? The story cannot be dated earlier than the beginning of the fifth century C.E.

Traditionally, the shade provided by fig trees and vines was available only to their owners and dependents and all other beneficiaries were suspected of coming to steal the fruit.<sup>8</sup>

Grapes were cultivated throughout Palestine. They were eaten fresh at harvest time and were also dried.<sup>9</sup> The majority of the crop, however, was pressed to make wine, which tended to be a thick, spicy syrup.<sup>10</sup>

Last of the fruit is the olive: it was the “bread and butter” of the Palestinian fellah.<sup>11</sup> The various types of olives<sup>12</sup> could be eaten either raw (fresh with bread) or as preserves (for instance, sliced and salted after the stones had been removed).<sup>13</sup> Most important, they were pressed to give oil.<sup>14</sup> Most of the harvest was used for this purpose. An olive tree in full production could give from 8 to 10 liters of oil per year. In the quasi-total absence of animal fat, olive oil was the fat used in the common thick porridges or on bread.<sup>15</sup> Gruels mixed with oil included such dishes as *elaiogaron* and *oxygaron*, which were strong soups made with garum, water from boiled vegetables, and perhaps some flour.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Curiously enough, E. Grant reports that the milky liquid falling from fig branches and leaves may cause skin or eye sores, making the fig tree a less than desirable shade tree: *The People of Palestine* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1921), 40–41. A modern folk story destined to keep everyone away from fig trees?

<sup>9</sup>See below, p. 42. [check]

<sup>10</sup>On wine, see below, pp. 24–25. [check]

<sup>11</sup>Krauss, *TA*, 1:113–15. Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte*, 4:153–290.

<sup>12</sup>*mPe'ah* 7:1; *mTer.* 1.9; 2.6; *mBikk.* 1.3, 10; *pTer.* 1.9.41a, lines 18ff.; *pBikk.* 1.3.63d, lines 50–54.

<sup>13</sup>*mTer.* 1.9; 2.6.

<sup>14</sup>*mMa'as.* 4.1; *mTev.Y.* 3.6. Numerous remains of elaborate installations for pressing oil dating from the Hellenistic and Roman periods have been discovered in Israel. On the production of olive oil in antiquity, see Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology*, 3:104–07.

<sup>15</sup>*t'Eduy.* 2.2.457.

<sup>16</sup>For *elaiogaron*, see *RE*, VII/1:844, bottom; on *garum*, see below, p. 20. [check]

## GRAINS

Cereals are discussed at great length in the sources.<sup>17</sup> The ancients ate cereals primarily as porridge and bread. The cereals under cultivation were barley and fox-tail,<sup>18</sup> wheat,<sup>19</sup> spelt,<sup>20</sup> emmer,<sup>21</sup> emphdurra,<sup>22</sup> millet,<sup>23</sup> and rice.<sup>24</sup> The inhabitants of Palestine did not always wait for the harvest to be stored to taste it. They often ate cereals raw when they traveled or when they had exhausted their seasonal supply. In keeping with one of the oldest ways to eat, they plucked kernels directly from the fields, crushed them between their palms, blew the husks away, and chewed them at length.<sup>25</sup> Rice and barley were masticated in like manner.<sup>26</sup> Another technique was to roast the kernels, perhaps on a perforated grill.<sup>27</sup> It was a delicacy in its own right, eaten as a dessert, on festive occasions.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>17</sup> See Krauss, *TA*, 1:94–108; Feliks, *Agriculture*, 175–78. General reading in C. B. Heiser, Jr., *Seed to Civilization, The Story of Food* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman & Co., 1981<sup>2</sup>), 71–91. On cereals in Greco-Roman culture, see Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology*, 3:86–94; N. Jasny, *The Wheats of Classical Antiquity* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1944); idem, “The Daily Bread of the Ancient Greeks and Romans,” *Osiris* 9 (1950) 227–53; A. Jardé, *Les céréales dans l’antiquité grecque* (Paris: Boccard, 1925); arts. *Pistor*, in *DAGR* 4/1:494–502 (by M. Besnier); *Cibaria*, in *DAGR* 1/2:1141–69.

<sup>18</sup> *Hordeum sativum* (*se’orah*) and *Hordeum distichum* (*shurah* or *shibbolet shu’al*, i.e., fox-tail).

<sup>19</sup> *Triticum durum* (*Hittah*).

<sup>20</sup> *Triticum spelta* (*shifon*): *mKil.* 1.1; *mHall.* 1.1. For spelt, perhaps a misleading translation, see L. A. Moritz, *Grain-Mills and Flour in Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), index.

<sup>21</sup> *Triticum dicoccum* (heb. *kusemet*, ar. *kusmim*, *kusmin*), a very common winter cereal.

<sup>22</sup> *Sorghum cernuum* (*dohān*), a summer cereal: *mShev.* 2.7. But this cereal was perhaps millet; see M. Zohary, “Flora,” in *IDB*, 2:286.

<sup>23</sup> *Panicum miliaceum* (*peragim*), a summer cereal: *mHall.* 1.4; *mShev.* 2.7. In translating *peragim* as millet, I follow Feliks, *Agriculture*, 46, against Jastrow, *Dictionary*, who follows Low, *Flora der Juden*, who translates as poppy, *papaver* (cf. Maimonides at *mShev.* 2.7).

<sup>24</sup> *Oryza sativa* (*’orez*), an annual summer cereal grass: *mDem.* 2.1; *mShev.* 2.7.

<sup>25</sup> Lk 6.1: ψώχοντες [τοὺς πάρχυνας] ταῖς χερσίν (cf. Mt 12.1; Mk 2.23); on this passage, see the interesting article by E. Delebecque, “Les épis «égrenés» dans les synoptiques,” *REG* 88 (1975) 133–42. Mentions of chewing wheat: *tBer.* 4.6.9; *pBer.* 6.1.10b, line 5.

<sup>26</sup> Rice was introduced in Israel during the Second Temple period. For barley chewing: *mMa’as.* 4.5.

<sup>27</sup> *mTer.* 5.1–3; *tTer.* 3.18.30 (on the hearth within the house). Perforated grill: *mKel.* 2.3.

<sup>28</sup> Roasted kernels were still greatly appreciated in modern times: H. J. Van Lennep, *Bible Lands: Their Modern Customs and Manners Illustrative of Scripture* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1875), 91.

The roasting had actually another major purpose; it was often used to facilitate the removal of the husks before and during grinding, thereby greatly simplifying a very long and painful task always performed by women or (women) slaves. If it made the pounding easier, it also caused a loss of gluten in the cereals and consequently prevented any dough made of such flour from rising well, if at all.<sup>29</sup> The cereals thus roasted were in fact treated like legumes, and both were made into porridges.<sup>30</sup> Grains or legumes used to make such dishes were not always roasted. Women could also let them soak in water for a while. Or they parboiled the seeds lightly, which softened the grains and also facilitated removal of the husks; dry peas, beans, and even wheat were prepared in such a way. One cannot emphasize too much how demanding this work was for women.<sup>31</sup> Yet, even though they spent their early morning at the mill or at the mortar, they could not imitate the modern engine-powered roller mills. The result was of necessity a coarse product.

Talmudic sources have numerous names for porridges and gruels.<sup>32</sup> They were probably prepared in fairly large “holemouth” cooking pots, a very common ware during the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E.<sup>33</sup> These dishes, however, were in fact varied combinations of the following elements: a liquid such as water, “bouillon,” and more rarely milk or wine; a good amount of cereals or legumes, which were mixed in as coarse flour, bread, or parboiled unhusked grains; a measure of oil; and salt. Vegetables were sometimes added<sup>34</sup> and, more rarely, honey. The generic name of this basic

<sup>29</sup>See below, p. 13. [check]

<sup>30</sup>Legumes, called *qetanyyot* (i.e., the “small ones”), were inferior in one respect: thick porridges or galettes made of these were more difficult to preserve than those made of cereals. Porridge made with cereals: wheat: *mMakhsb.* 6.2; barley: *pShab.* 7.10a, line 46. Gruels made with legumes, such as peas and lentils: *tDem.* 1.24.46, line 25; beans: *mPe'ah* 8.3, *mMakhsb.* 5.9; a mixture of lentils and beans: *m'Orl.* 2.7; cf. also *tBer.* 4.6.9. line 5; *bar.* *bBer.* 37a.

<sup>31</sup>To compare with similar labor demands made in another part of the Mediterranean area, see the chapter on “The Making of Bread,” in Frayn, *Subsistence Farming in Roman Italy*, 104ff.

<sup>32</sup>This abundance of epithets is due to variations in flours, places of origin, preparations, as well as to variations in time and place. The sages occasionally behaved like the *Deipnosophistae* of Athenaeus. It also reflects the considerable importance of such dishes.

<sup>33</sup>It replaced the Hellenistic pot, which had a high, straight neck: see for instance A. Kloner, “A Tomb of the Second Temple Period at French Hill, Jerusalem,” *IEJ* 30 (1980) 106 and pl. 11D. Cf. P. Lapp, *Palestinian Ceramic Chronology, 200 B.C. – A.D. 70* (New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1961).

<sup>34</sup>Onions, *mTev.* Y. 2.3; oil floating on the pot, *mTev.* Y. 2.4.

food was *miqpeh*, “a stiff mass of grist, oil and onions.”<sup>35</sup> It consisted of a pxxx perhaps resembling *polenta*<sup>36</sup> and was often so thick that one could eat it without spoons (or, of course, other utensils, which were not in use). Diners scooped it out with pieces of bread, which were at the same time the spoon, the plate, and the basic food of the meal. The absence of vessels is not the only reason for this custom. The bread was dry and most often hard, so that a topping of gruel, soup, or simply oil humidified and softened the bread. These dishes were probably very spicy, as were the *oxygarum*, *elaiogarum*, or *garilaium*, to which reference has already been made. There existed also very light porridges similar to our “farinas” or hot cereals. They were obtained by either pouring hot water on flour or the flour into the water.<sup>37</sup> Such dumplings were considered very good, at least by the following gourmet: “He ate his porridge [. . .] and said: ‘I have not known how to taste until this day.’”<sup>38</sup> These dessert delicacies belonged to the “category of sweets,” as did the fancier breads and pastries that will be considered in the following pages.<sup>39</sup>

If the sources deserve any trust, it appears that bread was the most important kind of food, even more important than gruels. It was made of flours obtained from all sorts of cereals and legumes,<sup>40</sup> baked in various ways and forms, and eaten also in different ways. The plants at the disposal of the population had neither the same nutritional value nor the same cultural and religious importance. Of the eight cereals listed at the beginning of the present section, Talmudic tradition deemed five capable of fermentation: wheat, barley, fox-tail, emmer, and spelt.<sup>41</sup> These five cereals were consequently subject to the obligation of *Hallah* and deemed fit for Passover festivities. But the Palestinian Gemara presented spelt, emmer, and fox-tail as inferior grains, a fact recognized in the ritual: wheat and barley played a prominent role at the ‘omer festival and in the Passover meal.<sup>42</sup> In so doing, the religious reasoning espoused the reality, for wheat and barley not only bore the biggest grains and yielded the most flour but also were the most

<sup>35</sup>Jastrow, *Dictionary*. From the verb *qefy*, to coagulate, to curdle, to be stiff. See *mNed.* 6.10; *mTev.* Y. 2.3.

<sup>36</sup>Krauss, *TA*, 1:95 and 106–7.

<sup>37</sup>*me‘isab* and *HaliTab* respectively: *mHall.* 1.4,6; *tHall.* 1.1.97, line 16.

<sup>38</sup>*p‘Er.* 3.1.20d, line 31.

<sup>39</sup>Called *miney metuqah* or sometimes simply *metiqah*: *tBer.* 5.12.12, line 11.

<sup>40</sup>*pHall.* 1.1. For the production of flour and bread in antiquity, see Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology*, 3:94–98.

<sup>41</sup>*pHall.* 1.1.57c, line 56.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, a tradition attributed to Yoḥanan b. Baroqa, Tannaite (ca. 110 C.E.).

suitable for bread. It was difficult, however, to remove the barley glumes without roasting the grains, an operation that destroyed most of the gluten content and thereby prevented the dough from reaching a satisfactory level of elasticity. This is true also of *Triticum spelta* and *Triticum dicoccum*.<sup>43</sup> Naked wheat, on the other hand, was and is actually superior to all other cereals when it comes to making bread, because its gluten content is higher and the grain could be unhusked easily enough on the threshing floor without resorting to roasting.<sup>44</sup>

The species not subjected to the obligation of *ḥallah* because they did not ferment, or at least did not keep well at all, included the summer cereals: *durra*,<sup>45</sup> millet, and rice; they also comprised legumes, which were collected at different times in the summer.<sup>46</sup> There was some discussion as to whether *Ḥallah* was due on such a cereal as cow wheat, called *qeremit*.<sup>47</sup> All these second-class cereals and legumes were used nonetheless to make bread, or rather different kinds of “galettes,” that is, hard, unleavened *μᾶζαι*. In general, fermentation and baking could not be achieved very well, except for special occasions or in some rare houses. Bread was not always made with pure flour from one given cereal; rather, legumes or “inferior” cereals were mixed to the more noble ones.<sup>48</sup>

The flours themselves were classified according to their degree of purity and to their origin. A legend about the quality of past harvests and fruits reports that a *se'ab* of wheat from Arbela in Galilee, northwest of Tiberias, was reputed to give five measures respectively of fine flour, regular flour, bran flour (cibarium), bran, and chaff.<sup>49</sup> This text should not be interpreted

<sup>43</sup>Flour and bread made with slightly roasted kernels of wheat: *pHall.* 1.6; see Krauss, *TA*, 1:104. This difficulty is one of the reasons for the sustained importance of gruels, the oldest way to prepare cereals.

<sup>44</sup>See Moritz, *Grain-Mills and Flour in Classical Antiquity*, xx–xxii.

<sup>45</sup>*mShev* 2.7, perhaps a kind of millet. One reads in the Babylonian Talmud that it gives a less tasty bread: *b'Er.* 81a. Cf. also *bPes.* 35a; *bBer.* 37a.

<sup>46</sup>*mShev.* 2.7.

<sup>47</sup>Or *qarmit*, *qeremit* = μελάμπυρος or μελάμπυρον, a parasite of cereals, with deep red grains. A coarse bread was made of it: *tHall.* 1.1.97, line 15, and *tPes.* 1(2).29.157, line 16; *pHall.* 1.1.57a, lines 62ff., where the opinion that it is liable to *Ḥallah* is attributed to Yoḥanan b. Nuri, against the Sages.

<sup>48</sup>See Krauss, *TA*, 1:468, n. 404. Legumes mixed to other cereals: *pHall.* 1.1; wheat and rice: *mHall.* 3.7; wheat and spelt, barley and others: *mHall.* 4.2. See below, pp. 43, 51. [check] Similar practices described in the *Geoponica* 2.39. It was a general practice according to Jasny, “The Daily Bread of the Ancient Greeks and Romans,” *Osiris* 9 (1950).

<sup>49</sup>*pPe'ab* 7.4.20a, bott.; *pSoT.* 1.8.17b, line 26; 1.9.24b, bott.; cf. *bKeth.* 112a. See Chapter 3, pp. 142–143, for a discussion of this tradition. [check]

as a source for yield ratios. Rather it simply tells us that the wheat grown in the valley of Arbel was considered to be of the first quality.<sup>50</sup> More important, one may infer from it that the grade of flour obtained at home or at the miller's shop was no small matter of concern. In fact, at the time it was difficult to obtain various grades of flour. It could only be done with special mills and after long hours of work had been spent grinding and sifting, provided of course that the grain was of excellent quality. Pliny, for instance, speaks of three grades of flour.<sup>51</sup> Most flour, however, was very coarse, and very little of the cereal was deemed unfit for human consumption.<sup>52</sup>

Baking, or "cooking," took place in various ways, from the simple drying of thin galettes in the sun or in a hole full of ashes in the ground, to the use of small portable stoves or very large clay furnaces.<sup>53</sup> There was apparently a profusion of types of bread, due in part to the variety of cereals and preparations, in part to the relative isolation of villages and economic areas. More will be said on this subject in our discussion of the diets of various social classes.<sup>54</sup>

Salt and water were the necessary companions of bread.<sup>55</sup> One ate bread also with olives and sometimes fish.<sup>56</sup> Everyone relished it fresh from the oven, but it was not the custom to bake bread every day, at least in the villages or in the private homes. When it was not fresh, it became hard to break and was then soaked or reduced to crumbs in a soup, brine, wine,

<sup>50</sup> Areas producing first-quality grain, according to *mMen.* 8.1, were Mišmas and Zanuḥah in the Shefelah; Ḥafarayim in southern Galilee; 'Ein Soker in Samaria; Arbel, Capernaum and Chorazin in Galilee. See Yalon-Albeck's notes in their Mishnah edition.

<sup>51</sup> *Natural History* 9.86–87; 10.89.

<sup>52</sup> Jasny, "The Daily Bread of the Ancient Greeks and Romans," *Osiris* 9 (1950) 229; Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology*, 3:94.

<sup>53</sup> For the various ovens, see Krauss, *TA*, 1:103; Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte*, 4:39–141; pls. 7–32; A. Jaussen, *Coutumes des Arabes au pays de Moab* (Paris: Gabalda, 1908), 63–64; see also the *Geoponica*, 2.47.10, as quoted by Ibn al-Awam, in J. J. Clément-Mullet, *Le livre de l'agriculture d'Ibn Al-Awam* (Paris: A. Franck, 1866), 2, 1: 37; K. D. White, *Roman Farming* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1970), 361. Arts. *Furnus*, in *DAGR* 2/2:1420–21 (by H. Théderat); *Clibanus*, in *DAGR* 1/2:1246 (by E. Saglio). Bread was sometimes burned: *mTev.Y.* 1.4; the dough did not remain glued to the wall of the *Tannur*: *tShab.* 6(7).14.17, line 27; *tBQ* 10.9.367, line 15. Examples of ovens found at Masada: Y. Yadin, *The Excavation of Masada 1963/4: Preliminary Report* (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society, 1965), pl. 13A, 15A.

<sup>54</sup> Pp. 33ff. [check]

<sup>55</sup> Mt 5.13 = Mk 9.50.

<sup>56</sup> Called *ḥṣov*. With olives, in normal conditions: *tSukk.* 2.3.193–94 (reportedly when Eleazar b. Sadoq, who lived ca. 100–50 C.E., was young).

fruit juices,<sup>57</sup> or milk.<sup>58</sup> It could also be humidified with some milk and baked in the sun.<sup>59</sup> If the dough or the bread did not keep well and became moldy, it was eaten nonetheless.<sup>60</sup> Those fortunate enough to afford the “sweet kinds” offered them for dessert, after the meal.<sup>61</sup>

## LEGUMES

Legumes,<sup>62</sup> which included pulses and peas, were called junior, or inferior, cereals. All these were stored in large earthen vessels inside the houses.<sup>63</sup> They were also stored in the granaries of cities, the Roman army, or the emperor.<sup>64</sup> Because they are relatively easy to measure, transport, and store, both cereals and legumes were highly susceptible to being taxed.<sup>65</sup> Lentils (‘*adašim*, φακός) were roasted and pounded and then cooked with honey and oil, either in the form of a gruel or of pancakes.<sup>66</sup> Chickpeas received

<sup>57</sup> *mNaz.* 6.1.

<sup>58</sup> The hard “spit cakes” (*raqiqin*) were perhaps always soaked, *tPes.* 1(2).31.157, line 18.

<sup>59</sup> *pHall.* 1.5.57d.

<sup>60</sup> *tShev.* 6.2.69, line 10.

<sup>61</sup> *mHall.* 1.5.

<sup>62</sup> Krauss, *TA*, 1115. For a general history of legumes, see C. B. Heiser, Jr., *Seed to Civilization*, 127–43. Legumes were the “poor man’s meat” (cf. Dan 1.2). Rich in proteins and easy to store, they also have their beneficial effects on the soil.

<sup>63</sup> Storage in *πιθολ* or *siri* is mentioned by Pliny, *Natural History* 18.73, 306. Chickpeas were the easiest to keep: *ibid.*, 308.

<sup>64</sup> An instance in .I Vita 71, where Josephus explains that John of Gischala (rather than he himself) wished to seize “the imperial corn stored in the villages of Upper Galilee” and sell it to arm and fortify his area of Galilee.

<sup>65</sup> They are important items in the lists of tax revenues found in the Wadi Murabba‘at caves: wheat or its equivalents, barley, lentils, and vetch. See comments by Benoit, *DJD* 2:213–15; Greek documents *Mur.* 90, 91, 96, 97; and Aramaic *Mur.* 8 (barley and lentils). Wheat is not mentioned but is the basic standard to which all other cereals and legumes were reduced. At Murabba‘at, 1 unit of wheat = 1.15 units of lentils, 1.33 units of vetch (ἄροβος), and 2 units of barley. The ratio varied within Roman Palestine: *mBM* 9.8; see also P. Benoit, *DJD* 2:219. In times of famine, the wheat-to-barley ratio of 1:3 seems to have been traditional (Rev 6.6; cf. 2 Kgs 7.1). The wheat-to-barley ratio of 1:2 seems to have obtained in areas less rich in wheat, where its cultivation was riskier than that of barley. For comparison: at the end of the eighteenth century C.E., the normal equivalence in wheat-producing Egypt was 1 measure of wheat = 1 1/2 measures of barley. See L. Reynier, *De l'économie publique et rurale des Arabes et des Juifs* (Geneva: J. J. Paschoud, 1820), 427; Reynier knew the subject well, since he had been responsible for the collection of taxes in kind in Egypt, under Napoleon Bonaparte.

<sup>66</sup> *pNed.* 5.14.40a, line 66; *mNed.* 6.10 (‘*aššim*, pancakes?).

the same treatment.<sup>67</sup> Beans were sometimes eaten raw when half ripe, but were normally roasted, or pounded and mixed to prepare a dish called *emphgarisim*.<sup>68</sup> These “lesser grains” could also be made into some kind of bread if necessary.<sup>69</sup>

Various kinds of vetch were consumed, but only when circumstances were very strained. Such were bitter vetch, or “horsebean,” and French vetch.<sup>70</sup> *Kersenneh*, or bitter vetch, was ground to make flour and made into a dough,<sup>71</sup> which was thought to be very poor food. This legume was fodder in normal times, but had been declared subject to *terumah* in periods of famine,<sup>72</sup> when it became a substitute cereal. Concerning *kersenneh*, the *Book of Agriculture* by Ibn Al-Awam summarizes what was written in the treatise known as *Nabataean Agriculture*, a work probably composed at the beginning of our era that described conditions and customs not unlike those of Roman Palestine:

According to *Nabataean Agriculture*, one grinds the *kersenneh* and makes from it an edible bread; but it is bad for the stomach and no one uses it without first mixing it with some lentil flour and wheat flour washed once. One eats this bread with fat meats, butter, oil, or milk, freshly milked or not.<sup>73</sup>

Two main homogeneous species of lupines were also available—one cultivated, and the other wild.<sup>74</sup> Lupine being a bitter plant, it was necessary to

<sup>67</sup> Called *ʿafon* (*mKil.* 3.2; *mPeʿah* 3.3; *pPeʿah* 8.5) and *ḥimeṣaʿ* in Aramaic. Thoroughly cooked: *pShabb.* 3.1.5d, line 26; *pTer.* 2.3.41c, line 51.

<sup>68</sup> *mTer.* 5.1–3; beans were of several kinds: white, large, Egyptian, common (*mKil.* 1.1–2; *pShabb.* 7.10b, line 24).

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Clément-Mullet, *Le livre de l'agriculture d'Ibn Al-Awam*, 94, n. 1.

<sup>70</sup> *karšinah* = *vicia ervilia*, in *mTer.* 11.9, and *sappir* = *vicia narbonensis*, in *mKil.* 1.1; *pKil.* 1.1.27a top. Cf. the ὀροβός listed in the Murabbaʿat documents.

<sup>71</sup> *pMaʿas.* 2.53c.

<sup>72</sup> *mMaʿas.Sh.* 2.4; *tosefta*, *ibid.*, 2.1.88, lines 7–11; *pHall.* 4.10.60b. Shimʿon b. Eliezer was reputed to have freed it of the duties of *demai*, *tDem.* 1.24.46, line 25. See also *tTer.* 10.5.42, line 25. *Kersenneh* was not frequently used as human food, according to *mTer.* 11.6(9).

<sup>73</sup> Clément-Mullet, *Le livre de l'agriculture d'Ibn Al-Awam*, 95–96.

<sup>74</sup> Cultivated: *turmos* in *mKil.* 1.3 (= θέρμος, *lupinus termis*); wild: *palaslos* or *peloslos* in the same Mishnah. The name of the wild variety comes from *pulsaʿ* = *puls* in Latin. This wild *lupinus lutens* appears also in *tKil.* 1.2.73, line 26 and *pKil.* 1.3.27a.

“sweeten” or “soften” it by boiling: “cooked seven times in a pot and eaten as dessert.”<sup>75</sup> At times, it was also mixed with a dish of pounded grains.<sup>76</sup>

Carobs appear here among legumes on account of their aspect (pod) and of their importance as a food. Under the name *Haruv* were included the fruits of both the grafted and the wild, ungrafted, carob tree.<sup>77</sup> The cultivated carob tree was of great economic importance, for *pe'ah* was applied to it and it was tithed.<sup>78</sup> Some legends describe the extraordinary sweetness of its fruits.<sup>79</sup> These carobs were preserved in sweet juices or in old wine.<sup>80</sup> But the wild trees produced fruits of inferior quality that were not liable to the priestly offering.<sup>81</sup> These fruits were actually used as fodder<sup>82</sup> and were thought to be the most typical poor man's food; to eat carobs was synonymous with “living in poverty.” It is this wild variety that is meant in the story of the prodigal son who could not relieve his hunger with carobs.<sup>83</sup> That such wild carobs could not sustain people for a long period of time can also be inferred, by contradistinction, from some legends. Thus, the holy and extraordinarily poor R. Hanina b. Dosa was reputed to be able to do with a *qab* of carobs from one sabbath to another.<sup>84</sup> Another late story tells us that Simeon b. Yohai and his son (ca. 150 C.E.) lived on carobs only for twelve years while hiding from the Romans.<sup>85</sup> Only extraordinary individuals could subsist on so meager a food.

<sup>75</sup>*mNed.* 6.10. “Sweetened,” *t'Uqts.* 3.9.689, line 13; or “softened” like mustard or the Solomon's lily, *mShab.* 18.1. This repeated boiling leached out the alkaloids. Cattle (present-day, well-fed cattle?) will not eat this lupine, most common in Galilee, Samaria, and Judaea.

<sup>76</sup>*tShab.* 3(4).1.113, line 18; *pTa'an.* 2.15.66b (end of chap.). Honey was added, according to Abu Al-Khair: Clément-Mullet, *Le livre de l'agriculture d'Ibn Al-Awam*, 97.

<sup>77</sup>Sale of the two kinds mentioned in *mBB* 4.8; carob trees were planted and grafted, *mPe'ah* 2.4; *pPe'ah* 17a, line 25. See Strack-Billerbeck, 2:213–15.

<sup>78</sup>*mPe'ah* 1.5; *mMa'as.* 1.3.

<sup>79</sup>*pPe'ah* 7.20a, line 58, concerning R. Hanina (lived ca. early third century C.E.).

<sup>80</sup>*tMa'as.Sb.* 1.13.87, lines 10–11; *mShev.* 7.7.

<sup>81</sup>*tTer.* 5.6–7.

<sup>82</sup>*mShab.* 24.2; *pYom.* 8.45c; *pMa'as.* 3.1.50b.

<sup>83</sup>Lk 15.16: καὶ ἐπεθύμει γεμίσει τὴν κοιλίαν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν κερατίων = he wanted to *but* could not have his fill; the “Egyptian” text and some important Syriac mss. replace γεμίσει by χορτάσθηναι = to satiate. These oriental versions understand that the son was in fact eating carobs, but that it was not enough to sustain him. See the discussion in K. E. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1976), 172.

<sup>84</sup>*bTa'an.* 24b, bottom. A *qab* is about 2 liters of carobs.

<sup>85</sup>*bShab.* 33b.

## VEGETABLES

The most important of the vegetables<sup>86</sup> were onions, garlic and leeks, squashes, cabbages, radishes, and beets. Many of these were reaped wild as well as cultivated.<sup>87</sup> All vegetables could be eaten raw, steamed, or cooked. Some were dried, preserved, or roasted. The onion was one of the most common, either under its cultivated form or as the wild “dwarf onion,” or shallot.<sup>88</sup> Garlic was used as a condiment, pounded and ground, or boiled in water.<sup>89</sup> Jews were apparently great consumers of garlic, onions and leeks and were called “garlic eaters.”<sup>90</sup> They were derided for this, although it is difficult to believe that, in the Mediterranean area, only Jews liked onions or garlic.

Squashes were also a significant source of food. Gourds or cucumber, melons, chate melons, and watermelons were under cultivation.<sup>91</sup> A kind of wild cucumber was also gathered.<sup>92</sup> One ate gourds either raw or boiled and sometimes roasted.<sup>93</sup> Cabbage, at least the headless hardy cabbage, was very much in demand and was eaten raw or boiled.<sup>94</sup> Radish was common.<sup>95</sup> Parsnips were grown in some areas.<sup>96</sup> Beets were also common and their roots and leaves were usually cooked to make a soup.<sup>97</sup> They were eaten raw at times, with or without salt, as is shown by the following story ascribed to some disciples of R. Tarfon, reputed to be a very wealthy man who survived the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.:

R. Judah was sitting before R. Tarfon, who remarked to him, ‘Your face shines to-day.’ He replied, ‘Your servants went out to the fields

<sup>86</sup>Krauss, *TA*, 1:116–18.

<sup>87</sup>Wild plants, *λαχναίετα*, in Josephus, *BJ* 4.541; Justin, *Dialogue*, 20.2–3. Wild vegetables opposed to cultivated species: *yeraqot sadeb* and *yeraqot ginah* in *m’Uqts.* 1.2. For the importance of wild plants in the diet of Roman antiquity, see Frayn, *Subsistence Farming in Roman Italy*, 57ff; Evans, “*Plebs Rustica*”, *AJAH* 5 (1980) 138–39.

<sup>88</sup>*mKil.* 1.3.

<sup>89</sup>*mTev.Y.* 1.3; *mMakhsb.* 1.5.

<sup>90</sup>Leeks in *mKil.* 1.2; *mBer.* 1.2); wild leek in *mKil.* 1.2; “garlic eaters” in *mNed.* 8.6; 3.10. Mention of leeks in Juvenal, *Saturae* 3.293 = M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1980), 2:99.

<sup>91</sup>*mKil.* 1.2; *mMa’as.* 1.5; *mTer.* 2.6.

<sup>92</sup>*mShab.* 2.2: *paqu’ot* (a gourd, bitter apple, according to Jastrow).

<sup>93</sup>Gourds roasted in ashes, *mKil.* 1.2; *tKil.* 1.5.73, line 31.

<sup>94</sup>*pR.Sh.* 1.4.57b = *pHall.* 1.57c (line 20).

<sup>95</sup>*mKil.* 1.5; *mMa’as.* 5.2; *pPe’ah* 7.3.20b, line 8. Its leaves were considered deadly.

<sup>96</sup>*pHall.* 4.6. Turnip in *mKil.* 1.3; 1.9; *pTer.* 2.41c bottom; *pBer.* 6.1.10a (line 46).

<sup>97</sup>*mKil.* 1.3; *mTer.* 10.11.

yesterday and brought us beets, which we ate unsalted; had we salted them, my face would have shone even more'.<sup>98</sup>

Less important vegetables were artichokes, mushrooms, and lettuce.<sup>99</sup> There was a cultivated species of lettuce and a bitter, wild kind.<sup>100</sup> Other plants used by the inhabitants of Palestine in “salads” or in a boiled dish included: celery;<sup>101</sup> chicory, of which there was a wild variety;<sup>102</sup> cress, which was eaten with oil and vinegar or pounded;<sup>103</sup> garden sorrel;<sup>104</sup> eryngo;<sup>105</sup> wild purslane;<sup>106</sup> and fenogreek.<sup>107</sup> Many kinds of bulbs were also eaten: one pulled the edible roots of the colocasia,<sup>108</sup> wild Solomon’s lily,<sup>109</sup> wild ginger,<sup>110</sup> and orchid.<sup>111</sup>

Many wild species of plants are recorded in the sources. Poor people, especially women and children, combed forests, hills, desert, or roadsides searching for fruit, mushrooms, grasses, and edible roots. They were a very important supplement for their diet, providing energy, vitamins, and minerals.<sup>112</sup> They could be preserved, which also was very important, since many plants and fruits were available only during short periods of the

<sup>98</sup>*bNed.* 49b; R. Tarfon lived ca. 110 C.E. in Lydda. See A. Büchler, *The Economic Condition of Judea After the Destruction of the Second Temple*, repr. in *Understanding the Talmud*, ed. Alain Corré, (New York: KTAV, 1975), 96.

<sup>99</sup>Artichokes, cultivated (*mKil.* 5.8, *m’Uqts.* 1.6) or wild (cardo, a kind of edible thistle, *tBets.* 3.19.207, lines 2–3. On these thistles, see the comments by Galen in his *De Alimentorum Facultatibus* (LCL, 135). Truffles in *m’Uqts.* 3.2.

<sup>100</sup>Cf. *mKil.* 1.2: *ḥazeret* (aram. *ḥasa*) and *ḥazeret galim*.

<sup>101</sup>*mShev.* 9.1: *karpas*.

<sup>102</sup>*mShev.* 7.1; *mPes.* 2.6: *’ulšîn*; wild kind (*’ulšîn šadeh*) in *mKil.* 1.2.

<sup>103</sup>*m’Uqts.* 3.4 (*’adal*); *mMa’as.* 4.5 (*šihelayyim*); with oil and vinegar, *tShab.* 14(15).13.132, line 7; pounded, *tMa’as.* 3.2.84, line 17.

<sup>104</sup>*mKil.* 1.3.

<sup>105</sup>*mPes.* 2.6.

<sup>106</sup>*mShev.* 9.1.

<sup>107</sup>Eaten in extreme hardship, see p. 51. [check] Fenogreek seeds were otherwise relished as a condiment, especially in bread and sauces: see Feliks, *Mixed Sowing*, 231. Prosper Alpini reports that sprouts of fenogreek were eaten by common people in sixteenth-century Egypt: *De plantis aegypti liber* (1640), 135.

<sup>108</sup>*mMa’as.* 5.8. It has starchy tubercles.

<sup>109</sup>*mPe’ab.* 6.10: *luf* (*arum palaestinum*); probably cooked by people pressed by hunger. Cf. Clément-Mullet, *Le livre de l’agriculture d’Ibn Al-Awam*, 263.

<sup>110</sup>*mShev.* 7.1–2.

<sup>111</sup>*mShev.* 7.1–2.

<sup>112</sup>Details of their respective nutritional value in Evans, “*Plebs Rustica*,” *AJAH* 5 (1980) 147–59.

year.<sup>113</sup> Famines forced more people to resort to this kind of gathering.<sup>114</sup> It has been shown that the same was true of the small farmer in Roman Italy.<sup>115</sup> Also, “wild” did not mean that such plants were not protected: in fact, their growth was encouraged to some degree, short of transplantation into an adequately prepared soil. Textual references to “guarded” produce often suppose contexts in which watch is kept over plants not necessarily replanted or sown.<sup>116</sup> Repeated boiling or pounding, when feasible, reduced the toughness or bitterness of these plants to some extent.<sup>117</sup>

#### MEAT AND ANIMAL PRODUCTS

Meat was not abundant, although many kinds of domesticated and wild animals were at the disposal of the population: cows, oxen, lambs, goats, asses, camels, pigs for Greeks and Romans, wild deer, or gazelles.<sup>118</sup> As discussed below in more detail, meat of domesticated animals was used almost exclusively at religious celebrations. However, the products of hunting or fishing generally escaped the religious taxing system. Among birds, pigeons and doves were seen as fit for sacrifices.<sup>119</sup> Yet, there were also chickens, geese, pheasants, and other birds whose status as food demanded clarification.<sup>120</sup> Grasshoppers and locusts were a relatively common item.<sup>121</sup> Caught early in the morning, when paralyzed by a cold night and the dew, they were either roasted or boiled.<sup>122</sup> Another method was to salt them and make a brine in the *garum* style. One could find such preparations in the streets.<sup>123</sup> Mark 1.6

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., 149–50.

<sup>114</sup>Josephus, *BJ* 4.541 and 5.437. See below, pp. 50–51. [check]

<sup>115</sup>Frayn, *Subsistence Farming in Roman Italy*, 57–72, a chapter previously published as an article in *JRS* 65 (1975). References in Roman literature gathered in Evans, *AJAH* 5 (1980) 138–39.

<sup>116</sup>*mMa'as.* 1.1; *pMa'as.* 1.1.48d.

<sup>117</sup>Frayn, *Subsistence Farming in Roman Italy*, 68.

<sup>118</sup>Pigs: Mk 5.11–14; Lk 15.15–16; see the various categories listed in Krauss, *TA*, 1:109ff.

<sup>119</sup>*pTa'an.* 4.8.69b.

<sup>120</sup>Various birds: *mHull.* 8.1,3.

<sup>121</sup>*mBer.* 6.3. Krauss, *TA*, 1:112–13. They were still eaten around the turn of the century: Jaussen, *Coutumes des Arabes au pays de Moab*, 250. See also art. “Locust”, in *IDB*, 3:145–46 (by Y. Palmoni) for identifications and use as food. Cf. Pliny, *Natural History* 6.35; 7.2.

<sup>122</sup>*tShab.* 13.5; *Damascus Document* 12.14.

<sup>123</sup>*m'Av.Zar.* 2.7.

reports that they were part of the diet of John the Baptist.<sup>124</sup> Not everyone appreciated them, and R. Juda thought “that the cursed things like locusts, do not require a blessing.”<sup>125</sup> These insects had presented a problem of classification, resolved long ago. Because they belonged to none of the clearly defined traditional categories of food, they should have been deemed impure and unfit for human consumption. Indeed, all insects were forbidden, following Dt 14.19, except certain types of grasshoppers, transformed into (clean) birds by virtue of need.<sup>126</sup>

Meat was sometimes eaten raw, surprisingly,<sup>127</sup> but it was more usually prepared in one of a variety of ways: smoked,<sup>128</sup> salted,<sup>129</sup> pickled, roasted, cooked with something else such as turnips,<sup>130</sup> or boiled. Jews devised various techniques to keep it hidden and warm for Sabbath. As for the prohibition concerning the kid boiled in his mother’s milk, it was interpreted as applying to pure beasts cooked in milk from pure beasts. This allowed people to prepare birds, fish, locusts, wild or other undomesticated beasts in the old, tested, and probably fairly common way.<sup>131</sup>

Fish may have been more common than meat as an everyday food, but only on the banks of rivers, the Sea of Galilee, or on the coast. Even its salted form was mostly consumed in cities bordering the sea or Gennesareth.<sup>132</sup>

<sup>124</sup>καὶ ἐσθίων ἀκρίδας καὶ μέλι ἄγριον. Mt 3.4 implies that this was all his food. Justin Martyr makes it more emphatic (*Dial.* 88.7).

<sup>125</sup>*pBer.* 6.2.10c; cf. *mBer.* 6.3

<sup>126</sup>Lev 11.20–23; *Sifre* reinterprets the prohibition of Dt 14.19 in the light of Lev 11.20–23: “Rabbi Simeon says, *You may eat all clean birds*, these are clean grasshoppers; *And all winged insects are unclean for you; they shall not be eaten*. These are unclean grasshoppers” (Finkelstein, 163, no. 103). So also *T. Jo.* Dt 14.20 (*Add.* 27031), reading “clean grasshopper” for “clean bird.” The same difference between clean and unclean grasshoppers is found in *mShab.* 9.7; *bHull.* 63b. Discussion on permitted kinds also in *mHull.* 3.7; *bHull.* 65–66, *passim*.

<sup>127</sup>Unless it was a Roman custom applied in derision to Babylonians: *pPe’ab* 8.5.21a, lines 2–3, where Rabbi Yudan is said to see in this “raw flesh” some kind of fish *χαλκίς*, a sardine? (The reading is not assured) eaten raw by “Kutim.” The Kutim here may have been those Romans who were anxious to eat certain kinds of fish so fresh that they wanted to see it dying in the dining room: see art. *Cibaria*, in *DAGR*, 1:1163a. Another possibility is that the text alludes to a certain type of *garum* preparation.

<sup>128</sup>*pShab.* 7.10b, line 58.

<sup>129</sup>*mNed.* 2.4.

<sup>130</sup>To enhance the flavor, *mHull.* 7.4.

<sup>131</sup>*mHull.* 8.1, 4.

<sup>132</sup>On fish in Roman Palestine, see Krauss, *TA*, 1:110–12. See *T. Jo.* at Dt 33.19: “For they dwell on the coast of the Great Sea and they will feast on salted fish”; cf. R. Le Déaut, *Targum du Pentateuque* (Paris: Le Cerf, 1980), 4:293; cf. *Sifre Dt* (Finkelstein, 417). No

But it could be dried before being transported to cities such as Jerusalem, where there was a “fish-Gate.” It was often eaten fresh, roasted, or cooked in milk, with honey or in oil.<sup>133</sup> It was also salted and preserved in brine. With this latter technique, one obtained a strong sauce called *garum* or *muries*, which resembled our anchovy sauces; it was made of intestines and viscera of various kinds of fishes mixed with whole fishes dried, salted, and ground together. Wine and spices were often added. The *garum* was mixed with water, vinegar, or oil to create different kinds of soup: *hydro-*, *oxy-* and *elaiogaron*.<sup>134</sup> A common way to dine was to dip bread in the brine.<sup>135</sup> The brine itself was used as a drink.<sup>136</sup>

Hunting was as common as fishing. The Sages frowned upon the practice, but legal prohibitions concerned only the Sabbath or festival days.<sup>137</sup> The reason for disapproval was not simply of a moral nature, as sometimes argued.<sup>138</sup> It was considered reprehensible to hunt for pleasure, but this reluctance happened to contrast with the customs of Greeks and Romans, who were avid hunters.<sup>139</sup> There were doubts also concerning the cleanliness of the animals caught<sup>140</sup> and the way in which they were killed. Furthermore, it was an activity that tended to escape the religious framework. Nonetheless, it was an important source of food for people, and a variety of animals, mainly birds, could thus be caught with nets or slings.<sup>141</sup>

If the New Testament had been the only surviving text of the period, one would think that eggs were rare in Palestine. The Gospel of Luke, which originated in the Diaspora, is the only one to mention them.<sup>142</sup> But

---

precepts had to be observed in the case of fish: *T. Jo.*, at Num 11.5 (*Add.* 27031).

<sup>133</sup> Mk 8.5–7; Lk 24.42; Jo 21.9–13; *pQidd.* 2.1.62b, line 13.

<sup>134</sup> Krauss, *TA*; art. *Garum*, in *DAGR* 2/2:1459; *RE*, 7/1:841–49; P. Grimal and Th. Monod, “Sur la véritable nature du *garum*,” *REL* 54 (1952) 27–38.

<sup>135</sup> *mShab.* 14.2.

<sup>136</sup> *tTer.* 7.12.3, line 1.

<sup>137</sup> *mShab.* 1.6; *tShab.* 13.2–5; *mBets.* 3.1–2.

<sup>138</sup> E.g., in art. “Hunting,” in *EJ* 8:110–12.

<sup>139</sup> Herod as hunter in Josephus, *BJ* 1.429; *AJ* 15.244; 16.315. Nimrod and Esau, whose association with the color red lent itself to his being used as a symbol of Roman troops, were regarded as “rebels against God.” Moses could not have been a hunter, according to *bHull.* 60b.

<sup>140</sup> *mShev.* 7.4: sale of unclean fishes or birds.

<sup>141</sup> *mBets.* 3.2–3; *mBQ* 8.16; *mShab.* 1.6.

<sup>142</sup> Lk 11.12. For Luke’s possible ethnic and social origin, and the place of composition of his Gospel, see J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981), 1:35–57.

other sources show that they existed and were actually relished.<sup>143</sup> They were among the seven foods thought to build up strength: milk, eggs, cheeses, fat meat, old wine, groats of beans, and *muries*—that is, the ingredients of a good meal.<sup>144</sup> As nowadays, people ate eggs in various ways: sucked up raw, hard boiled, or roasted.<sup>145</sup> They also liked to dip eggs in milk or wine with honey. It was common to add eggs to other dishes, as a filling, in stews, and in doughs to make a sort of noodle.

Milk products apparently were not abundant.<sup>146</sup> Milk itself does not seem to have elicited great interest, something also observed about Roman Italy.<sup>147</sup> Cow milk was certainly rare because cows were above all draught animals and had just enough milk to support their calves. Milk came from ewes and goats, she-asses, and camels.<sup>148</sup> It was more abundant in the spring, when grass was still tender, but much of it was destined to feed the young animals reserved for festivities or the tables of the rich.<sup>149</sup> Milk was also conserved in the form of leben, hard cheeses,<sup>150</sup> and butter.<sup>151</sup> Cheese was especially important for those people who had little or no access to olives.

## SPICES

Salt was the main condiment.<sup>152</sup> Salt and bread alone constituted a meal, and salt and brine were apparently consumed in great quantities.<sup>153</sup> There were many other spices, of which the following list gives only a taste: pepper

<sup>143</sup>*tTer.* 9.5.41, lines 14–15; *bar. bHull.* 64b.

<sup>144</sup>*tZav.* 2.5.677, line 35, in the name of Yehudah b. Bathryah, ca. 110 C.E.

<sup>145</sup>Krauss, *TA*, 1:125.

<sup>146</sup>On milk products, see Krauss, *TA*, 1:108.

<sup>147</sup>Frayn, *Subsistence Farming in Roman Italy*, 41.

<sup>148</sup>Josephus boasted that the cattle of Judaea and Samaria yielded “more milk than in other districts”: *BJ* 3.50.

<sup>149</sup>The “fatted calf” reserved for special occasions. See p. 34 below. [check]

<sup>150</sup>*tShev.* 5.9.68, line 10; *mNed.* 6.5; *m’Av.Zar.* 2.4 (Bithynian cheese); hard cheese mentioned in Origen’s commentary on Ps 118(119), vv. 69–70: see M. Harl, *La chaîne palestinienne sur le psaume 118* (Paris: Le Cerf, 1972), 296. Coagulation was obtained by various methods: *mHull.* 8.5; *m’Av.Zar.* 2.5; see Frayn, *Subsistence Farming in Roman Italy*, 41.

<sup>151</sup>If *hem’ah* was butter (clarified butter?): *t’Arakh.* 4.27.549, lines 3–4. According to *Jub.* 29.15, milk, butter, and cheese are among the products sent to his parents by Jacob, a properly dutiful son, who is pasturing his sheep on the other side of the Jordan river: “clothing, and food, and meat, and drink, and milk, and butter, and cheese, and some dates of the valley” (ET by O. S. Wintermute, *OTP* 2:112).

<sup>152</sup>Krauss, *TA*, 1:118–20.

<sup>153</sup>*bar. bBer.* 36a.

and ginger, which were both chewed; mustard, which was pounded;<sup>154</sup> caper buds and fruits, cumin, rue, saffron, coriander, mint, dill, “jeezer” (wild rosemary), and aniseed.<sup>155</sup>

## DRINKS

Water was the most important drink, but not everyone could readily have access to it, except in normal times in the cities, where there were public wells.<sup>156</sup> Others had to rely upon private wells, which were protected by locked doors,<sup>157</sup> particularly in times of drought when a jug of water became very dear. It was a sign of calamity to buy water.<sup>158</sup> Other liquids included certain kinds of soups and the liquids used to cook legumes. The most appreciated drink was wine, to which a great deal of thought and energy was devoted.<sup>159</sup> Much of the wine was probably light and did not keep very long. Sour wine, usually mixed with water, was the standard drink of Roman soldiers and field workers.<sup>160</sup> But some wine was well made, though heavily sweetened and spiced. Wine was on the table, when there was a table, for every important festivity, especially for wedding feasts.<sup>161</sup> Wine was considered to have medicinal properties, something recommended in 1 Tim 5.23. It was also thought to be good for nursing mothers, at least in some areas of Palestine:

Behold, it has been taught: If she were nursing, one diminishes her handywork and one augments her food allowance. What is to be in-

<sup>154</sup> *pMa'as*. 4.51b, line 12.

<sup>155</sup> *m'Uqts*. 3.4; *mMa'as*. 4.5.

<sup>156</sup> Krauss, *TA*, 1:78–83. Nor surprisingly, one liked water cool: *m'Er*. 10.14; *t'Er*. 11.22.154, line 12.

<sup>157</sup> *t'Er*. 10.4.151, lines 11–13.

<sup>158</sup> Already Lam 5.4.

<sup>159</sup> On wine, see J. L. Albright, “Wine in the Biblical World: Its Economic, Social, and Religious Implications for New Testament Interpretation” (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1981), a work I have not been able to see: chap. 8 is on the types of wines, the custom of mixing with water; chap. 9 on various uses of wine. On the preparation of wine and vinegar, see Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology* 3:72–80, IIIff.

<sup>160</sup> This is the vinegar offered to Jesus, Mt 27.48 (bystanders) and Lk 23.36 (soldiers). *LevR*. 34.8 in reference to Ruth 2.14: “for that is the way of the harvesters, to dip their bread in vinegar at the hot time of the day.” Water in which has been mixed a small quantity of vinegar makes a good drink: cf. Italian *posca*.

<sup>161</sup> Story of wedding feast at Cana, Jn 2.1–11; wine at the wedding of R. Aqiva's son: *tShab*. 7.9.118, lines 14–15. The Qumran meal included wine.

creased? Rabbi Yehoshuah b. Levi [Palestinian, ca. 250 C.E.] said: wine, because it increases the milk.<sup>162</sup>

## 1.2 DIETS

### DESIRES AND REALITY

Concerning the reality of food consumption in general in Roman Palestine, one may adopt what R. J. Forbes says of classical antiquity:

roughly speaking, classical diet consisted mainly of bread and porridge made from wheat or barley supplemented by vegetables, fish and spices and not much else.<sup>163</sup>

One should add legumes and olive oil as major elements, whereas the “not much else” should include the main fruits when in season. Curiously enough, although bread clearly was the essential food, especially barley bread, it is not always mentioned in texts speaking of a desirable meal.<sup>164</sup> The same was true of legumes. The reason for these omissions must simply be that bread was taken for granted. People’s desires normally did not concern bread itself but its whiteness, sweetness, puffiness, and so on. In this regard, one must not forget that any farinaceous food was actually called “bread,” although Talmudic tradition tended to reserve the term for the five sorts of cereal flours subject to *ḥallah*: “in spite of all the places where all farinaceous food is called bread, one gives that name only to the five species.”<sup>165</sup>

The vocabulary alone is sufficient proof that bread reigned supreme. The word *leḥem* meant bread but also more generally food. Aramaic *lahma*’ meant also meat. Usually, bread was not eaten (or broken)<sup>166</sup> by itself and more than salt and water fortunately accompanied it. All the other foods, however, such as onions, vegetables, and fruits in a salad or a hash, were only peripheral.<sup>167</sup> This was also true of meat or fish, which

<sup>162</sup> *pKeth.* 5.13.30b, bottom.

<sup>163</sup> *Studies in Ancient Technology*, 3:86; on diets in antiquity, *ibid.*, 98–104.

<sup>164</sup> For instance *t’Arakh.* 4.27.548, lines 37ff, a text which is quoted in the following page, n. 172. See already in the Bible: Num 11.4–5.

<sup>165</sup> A saying in *pHall.* 1.2 attributed to R. Yose, *Tanna* who flourished ca. 150 C.E.

<sup>166</sup> Breaking the bread: Acts 20.7; Mt 14.19; 15.36; 26.26; Mk 6.41; 8.6; 14.22; Lk 9.16; 22.19; 1 Cor 10.16; 11.23–24; *mBer.* 6.5ff.

<sup>167</sup> They were called *parperet*, *mBer.* 6.5, for instance. The word came from *περιφορά*, according to Krauss.

for most people were less frequently available and constituted the ὄψον or ὀψώνιον.<sup>168</sup> Women in charge of food preparation understood it to be so, paying more attention “to the bread than to the dish.”<sup>169</sup>

Great respect was displayed in manners and habits concerning bread: λαμβάνειν, (κατα-)κλᾶν and (δια- or ἐπι-)διδόναι τὸν ἄρτον were expressions describing the head of the house who at the beginning of the meal took bread, gave thanks, broke the loaf, and distributed it.<sup>170</sup> Jesus prayed for it: “Give us today our daily bread” (Mt 6.11, Lk 11.3). It seems awkward to attempt to tell in what measure the anguish of hunger was mixed with spiritual hope in the heart of a person repeating this prayer.<sup>171</sup>

If bread and legumes were the main element, other foods were especially relished. What was considered a good meal would not pale in comparison with our festive meals. Thus, R. Eleazar b. Azariah (Tannaite, ca. 100 C.E., at Yavneh) reputedly offered his idea of how much luxury a given level of fortune could afford: “Whoever has ten *minas* may arrange to have vegetables in the pot everyday. Twenty *minas*, vegetables in the pot and a stew. Fifty *minas*, a *litra* of meat from one Sabbath’s eve to another. One hundred

<sup>168</sup>See art. *Cibaria*, in *DAGR* 1/2:1142.

<sup>169</sup>*pShab.* 1.6.4b, line 31.

<sup>170</sup>Lk 24.30; Mk 6.41; 8.19; Jn 6.11; 21.13; Acts 27.35. See *TDNT*, 1:477–78; also Strack-Billerbeck, 4:621. (One never cuts bread with a knife in modern Middle East: this is “killing the bread.”)

<sup>171</sup>There are comments in both directions. Some scholars rightly insist that the demand for bread was not a metonymia: Paul Veyne, *Comment on écrit l’histoire, un essai d’épistémologie* (Paris: Seuil, 1971), 260–62. But the prayer for the earthly bread was also an all-encompassing hope for an unspecified better life, and both elements are undistinguishable. J. Jeremias travels the middle road and thinks that “this is not a spiritualization of the petition for bread,” *New Testament Theology* (New York: Scribner, 1971), 200; his Aramaic version of the Lukan text is found on page 196. For Jeremias, earthly bread is at the same time bread of life and bread of salvation. See the rabbinic parallels for the expression in Strack-Billerbeck, 1:420–21. The meaning of ἐπιούσιος is discussed by W. Foerster in *TDNT*, 2:590–99, and more recently by C. Spicq, *NLNT*, 3:292–95; Spicq is inclined to translate ἐπιούσιος as “necessary” or “essential” bread, and cautions against one-sided metaphysical renderings (p. 294, n. 5). Origen did spiritualize the petition because he found it dangerous and irreligious to use prayer for obtaining temporal benefits of any sort, *De oratione*, 27 (*GCS*, 2:363–75) quoted by de Ste. Croix, “Early Christian Attitudes to Property,” in *Church, Society and Politics*, ed. D. Baker (Oxford: Blackwell, 1975), 29, n. 99. Origen was expressing a feeling very common in antiquity: see for instance Josephus’s comment in *Contra Apionem* 2.197 and the reservations that the rabbinic Sages had regarding the miraculous feats of a Ḥoni ha-me’aggel. Jesus’ demand must have seemed bold and extraordinary to some, impertinent even, and childlike to others.

*minas*, a *litra* of meat everyday.”<sup>172</sup> The greatest food luxury, apparently, was to have meat every day, the relation of meat to money being like that of butter to milk.<sup>173</sup> The text does not mention bread, oil, or legumes but concerns itself with the extras that wealthy people were able to, and perhaps had to, afford to ascertain their social rank. The extras were usually white bread, wine, and meat.<sup>174</sup> Such a meal was reputed healthier than bread and beets alone: “Two men enter an inn; one says: ‘Bring a roast of lamb-tail, white bread and good wine;’ the other: ‘Bring bread and beets [common beets].’ The latter eats and suffers, the former eats and does not suffer.”<sup>175</sup>

We shall study in a moment the place of meat in people’s minds. Let us first consider briefly their opinion of other extras, namely vegetables and fruits. Vegetables were more easily accessible than meats but do not seem to have been much appreciated, although they stand prominently in R. Eleazar b. Azariah’s statement. They were considered food for the weak, an opinion repeated by Paul and Galen.<sup>176</sup> It was common experience that vegetables did not give the lasting impression of satiety that poorer people secured with thick heavy bread or gruels, and the more fortunate with fat meat: “R. Hisda also said: I ate vegetables neither when poor nor when rich. When poor, because it whets [the appetite]; when rich, because I say, Where the vegetables are to enter, let fish and meat enter!”<sup>177</sup> One actually feared the dietetic qualities of vegetables, because there was too little to follow. Yet, necessity commanded. Most people ate many vegetables because they were among the easiest plants to grow, and some even ate only vegetables: “R. Aqiva said: ‘If one ate only boiled vegetables and that is his meal ...’”<sup>178</sup> This dish of “boiled greens” could contain oil, flour, and eventually honey; or it was eaten with oil, salt, and bread. The greens were most probably

<sup>172</sup> *t’Arakh*. 4.27.548, lines 37ff.: וכן היה ר’ אלעזר בן עזריה אומר מי שיש לו עשרה מנה מתעסק וכן היה ר’ בירק בקדורה בכל יום עשרים מנה מתעסק ירק בקדורה ואלפס חמשים מנה ליטרא בשר מערב שבת לערב ...a *litra* of meat being a little less than a pound.

<sup>173</sup> *t’Arakh*., *ibid.*; cf. *mPe’ah* 8.8–9.

<sup>174</sup> *pMa’as*. *Sh*. 2.7.53c, line 45.

<sup>175</sup> *pTer*. 8.46a, line 27 (the lamb tail is called *qufda*, from Greek κοπάδιον, piece).

<sup>176</sup> Food for the poor (vegetables and legumes): *Sifre Dt* 11.10 (Finkelstein, 71); Paul in Rom 14.2: “One believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables.” This “anything” implied meat, cf. 14.21. Galen also had a low opinion of vegetables (*De Victu Attenuante* 9.72, quoted by Frayn, *Subsistence Farming in Roman Italy*, 67).

<sup>177</sup> *bShab*. 14ob (R. Hisda lived at the end of the third century C.E.). It was very widespread to express distaste for vegetables: *pBer*. 6.1.10a (line 46).

<sup>178</sup> *mBer*. 6.7; *bBer*. 44a.

squashes, cabbages, or beets, which were preferred.

Fruits and nuts were also very appreciated as extras: they made “the eyes shine.”<sup>179</sup> But they were available only in season. Together with parched ears of wheat, they were the craze of children and adults. At Passover, Jerusalem was full of the smell of roasted kernels and greedy children found it difficult to sleep the following night because of overindulgence.<sup>180</sup>

#### DESIRE FOR MEAT

All the sources convey the impression that meat was both the most desired and rarest of foods. To a lesser degree, this was also true of fish. Meat was certainly not an everyday dish and was relatively common only on the wealthier people’s tables, although not in the proportions to which Westerners are accustomed.<sup>181</sup> Meat for those living in Palestine was most often eaten in connection with religious celebrations and festivals, as for the ancient Romans.<sup>182</sup> Even when the Temple was standing, however, meat could be eaten in all the land, provided that the animal was killed in accordance with customs.<sup>183</sup> The fatted calf of Lk 15.23 provided an extraordinary festive meal that everyone in the village would enjoy and remember; it canceled any reservations that the fellow villagers of the rich father might have felt about the overextension of his love and disposed of their animosity against the young culprit. The more usual festive meat was goat meat, as the elder son’s demand indicates.<sup>184</sup> Likewise, a Sabbath day was better celebrated with some meat.<sup>185</sup> An Edenic quality attached to these festive meals, for it

<sup>179</sup> *bSanh.* 17b. They could be the only food of certain individuals, for religious reasons: the priests sent to Rome by Felix in 58 C.E. ate only figs and nuts to avoid defilement, according to Josephus, in *Vita* 14.

<sup>180</sup> See *mBM* 4.12; cf. *bPes.* 109a, top.

<sup>181</sup> Krauss, *TA*, 1:108–10. In modern times (1960), calories from animal origin accounted for approximately 2 percent of all the caloric intake in the Middle East, Israel excepted, as compared with about 20 percent in the United States. Data for year 1960 in Jacques M. May, *The Ecology of Malnutrition in the Far and Near East* (New York: Hafner, 1961), 349. It is easy for visitors and tourists in the Middle East to believe otherwise because, as a guest, one is given the best things available in the community, whatever the cost.

<sup>182</sup> *mHull.* 5.12; *t’Arakh.* 4.26–28.548f.; cf. *bHull.* 84a; Frayn, *Subsistence Farming in Roman Italy*, 39.

<sup>183</sup> The Targums of *Dt* 12.15 (Pseudo-Jonathan, *Neofiti* 1, the so-called Fragmentary) make it clear. See Le Déaut, *Targum du Pentateuque*, 4:116–19; *Sifre Dt* 12.15 (Finkelstein, 134–36, no. 71). See also A. B. Ehrlich, *Mikrâ ki-Pheschutô* (Berlin: Poppelauer, 1899), 1:330.

<sup>184</sup> Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, 186, 198.

<sup>185</sup> See art. “Food”, in *EJ*, 6:1415.

was thought that angels prepared roasted meat for Adam and filtered wine for him.<sup>186</sup>

Yet, it was generally lacking even on joyous occasions, if one interprets the following text as a regret: “Whenever the Temple is in existence, there is no rejoicing without meat.”<sup>187</sup> Similarly, many Aggadas speak of the merit of consuming fish on Sabbath, which indicates that fish was also a luxury and not easily obtainable.<sup>188</sup> A Mishnah on the formulation of vows may also be interpreted as an indication of meat’s rarity: if someone vowed to abstain from (unspecified) boiled dishes, he was only supposed to abstain from boiled meat.<sup>189</sup> The point of the text was to insist upon precision. If the terms of a vow were too imprecise and loose, it lost its significance. The wording did not prohibit the more usual dishes but only the rarer and unnecessary ones.

When there was meat or fish, however, one liked it fat, as already noted. One also liked it young, because the meat from older animals usually had a much less pleasing taste, particularly in the case of draught animals, which tended to be lean.<sup>190</sup> But to kill young animals was seen as a great drain on the resources of the community, a sacrifice for which very good reasons were to be given. A variety of Jewish groups and individuals shared a reluctance toward meat, believing it to be a concession to the evil disposition in mankind.<sup>191</sup> This reluctance does not agree with the belief that meat was

<sup>186</sup>*bSanh.* 59b. Note that such roasted meat was prepared by men only, Krauss, *TA*, 1:121.

<sup>187</sup>*bPes.* 109a, bottom, a saying attributed to Judah b. Bathyra (ca. 150 C.E.).

<sup>188</sup>Krauss, *TA*, 1:483, n. 514. This in spite of the fact that there were numerous representations of fish and nets in the art of the time: cf. E. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1956), 5: pl. 48, for instance. A net was found in the caves of the Judean desert, Y. Yadin, *The Finds from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters* (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society, 1963), pls. 101–02.

<sup>189</sup>*mNed.* 6.3, 6.

<sup>190</sup>*mPes.* 7.11, where young cattle are preferred to old; three years old in *bShab.* 11a.

<sup>191</sup>*mNed.* 6.3, 6. A strand very clear in the Targums, e.g., *T.Jo.Num* 11.33 (*Add.* 27031), or the Targums at Dt 1.1, for which *Neofiti 1* has: “and because of the manna (of) which you said ‘Our soul is afflicted from this bread, the nourishment of which is little’ . . . “and because of the flesh for which you craved and by reason of the calf which you made . . .” (ET by M. McNamara and M. Maher, in A. Diez-Macho, *Neophyti 1* [Madrid: C.S.I.C., 1978], 5:439–40). Targum Pseudo-Jonathan (*Add.* 27031) insists on the whiteness of the manna as if to say that it was a wonderful bread that should have sufficed to fulfill a normal desire: see Le Déaut, *Le Targum du Pentateuque*, 4:16–17.

The Essenes of Qumran used meat for at least some of their meals. Numerous bones of lambs, kids, calves, cows, and oxen were discovered in stratum Ib: R. de Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 12–14. De Vaux speaks

an ideal symbol for religious festivities and with its use as an instrument to propitiate fellow humans.

What was at stake in the discussions concerning sacrifices and the consumption of meat was the peaceful and therefore just organization of society.<sup>192</sup> How is one to encourage action and yet make sure it is not destructive? Or, if one puts the question in more psychological, yet traditional, terms, how is one at once to encourage desire and keep it within bounds? Translated into economic concepts, the question becomes: What is, at any given time for the group, or for any given individual, the proper equilibrium of production and consumption? In a semiarid region like Palestine, the question was asked most acutely in relation to animals. Being necessary to agriculture in many respects but also requiring great care and a complex organization, animals were the focus of various issues: sharing of labor; use of land; property boundaries; and authority to define or settle disputes on all of these.

In answer to this fundamental problem, two extreme solutions were possible. One tendency, to which we have already alluded, was simply to discourage desire, thereby solving the problem of sharing, at least temporarily, and avoiding the need for sacrifices. It was preached and remembered

---

of a “religious intention,” because of the obvious care taken in making the bone deposits, but stops short of saying that they were sacrifices, because there were no altars. The question of whether these meals were sacrificial, i.e., replaced the Temple cult, or were simply cultic meals, is a disputed one. They are sacrificial in character for A. Jaubert, *La notion d’alliance dans le Judaïsme aux abords de l’ère chrétienne* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1963), 206; M. Delcor, “Repas cultuels esséniens et thérapeutes, thiasés et ḥaburoth,” *RQ* 6 (1968), reprinted in his *Religion d’Israël et Proche-Orient ancien* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 320–44. L. H. Schiffman, on the contrary, thinks that these meals were not a substitute for the sacrificial cult, as were the meals of the Therapeutes and the Passover Seder, but something “related to Messianic yearnings and expectations”: “Communal Meals at Qumran,” *RQ* 10 (1979) 45–56. The more important Qumran texts in regard to this question are: *1QS* 2.11–22 (the Messianic banquet) and *1QS* 6.4–5. They do not mention meat or sacrifices.

The Babylonian Talmud contains elements of the same tradition of reluctance toward meat consumption, e.g., *bYom.* 74a, bot.: “On Ex 16.8: *When Yahweh will give you tonight meat to eat ...*, a tanna teaches in the name of R. Yehoshua’ b. Qarḥa [Tannaite, ca. 150 C.E.]: The meat that they asked for against all decency was given to them against decency; what they asked for decently was given in a suitable manner. Hence the Torah teaches us the manners: One must eat meat only at night.” Cf. *bHull.* 16b; *GenR* 34.

<sup>192</sup>For a discussion of animal sacrifices as the focal point for the distribution of political power in Greek society, see Detienne and Vernant, *La cuisine du sacrifice en pays grec*, reviewed by N. Loraux, “La cité comme cuisine et comme partage,” *Annales, E.S.C.* (1980) 613–22. More recently: G. Berthiaume, *Les rôles du mâgeiros: études sur la boucherie, la cuisine et le sacrifice dans la Grèce ancienne* (Leiden: Brill, 1982).

throughout Jewish society, but only sporadically followed as a practical solution.<sup>193</sup> The other extreme was to unbridle desires, precisely where they should be kept in check. The picture drawn by Josephus of an extreme factionalization of Jewish society going together with a revolting consumption of meat leading to cannibalism may be inaccurate in the detail, given the author's purposes.<sup>194</sup> But it is an excellent witness to the fact that sacrifices—and, one may add, any meal with meat—were at the center of the political debate.<sup>195</sup>

The common answer, given of old by the founders of the Temple and adapted by the Sages after the destruction of the second Temple, was in the middle. It could pretend to regular, even absolute, status only when set in contrast with the other two extreme tendencies. In a passage of the Babylonian Talmud, Rabbi Joshua b. Ḥananiah is shown correcting the views of a group of Jews who would fast and refrain from eating meat and wine because sacrifices had ceased at the Temple.<sup>196</sup> By this same logic, he argues, they should refrain from every food because the Shew-Bread and the Wave-Loaf had also ceased. Their attitude separated them from other members of the community. One must note that meat and wine, which were proposed as objects of fast by this group, were not ordinarily consumed by poorer people. Their fast concerned a certain community of people with richer tables, with foods that were only an ideal for a considerable part of the population.

The answer to the problem of action versus order was given in Judaism in the form of purity laws. We have already alluded to their nature and will return to it when discussing the social importance of the Temple and the Torah.<sup>197</sup> The view of the world offered in the Bible was that of categories neatly delimited by simple criteria. Things found to belong to each of these categories by virtue of these criteria were deemed pure. Things found to be on the margins or, even worse, straddling limits between categories were deemed impure,<sup>198</sup> liquids being eminently prone to transgress limits and

<sup>193</sup>See note 191 above. The same tendency, limited in practice to marginal people or groups, existed in Greco-Roman society.

<sup>194</sup>E.g., *BJ* 4.326; 4.541; 5.17–19 (“converting the sanctuary into a charnel house of civil war”); 6.199–213 (the extreme limits of civil war unveiled to the rebels themselves); 6.372–73.

<sup>195</sup>A son was accounted “rebellious” on account of his overconsumption of meat and old wine: *mSanb.* 8.2; cf. *bHull.* 84a. This rebellion often had to do with inheritance, as the story of the prodigal son in Luke’s Gospel makes clear. See Bailey’s commentary on this power struggle in his *Poet and Peasant*, 198.

<sup>196</sup>*bBB* 60b. Compare *Midrash Tehillim* 137.6.

<sup>197</sup>Chapter 5, 199–200, 204–205. [check]

<sup>198</sup>I follow M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1966), 41–57.

therefore bring, as well as carry away, impurities. Such a framework was necessarily incorrect to some degree because one could not know in advance all that it was going to bring to consciousness. The problem of this view of the world, therefore, was that limits were to be constantly defined, re-defined, adjusted, or abandoned while yet preserving at all costs the general logic—that is, the possibility to design categories and limits.<sup>199</sup> The solution of this perennial problem was to design special places and times where and when limits could be elaborated under very controlled (i.e., sacred) conditions—hence the Temple, where otherwise prohibited actions were to be performed in purity, such as wearing Mixed Kinds, pronouncing the Name, working even on Sabbaths (i.e., “serving”), killing animals, and spilling blood.<sup>200</sup> Hence also the service of the Torah, replacing that of the Temple.<sup>201</sup>

In the case of animal meat, the issue of sharing labor and pain and of keeping at bay the dangers caused by greed was most pressing because it took more time and energy to raise animals than any other agricultural product. Animals were more readily accessible as items of the representational system. They could be moved and exchanged in small or large quantities. Consequently, they could be used to summarize the fluxes of wealth within the larger economic organization and become the basis, or one of the bases, of the tithing system. Greeks and Romans found it difficult to penetrate this system of representation, which was too religiously determined. They could not tap it, or simply juxtapose to it their own representational system. Their attempts to do this led to catastrophic confrontations.

---

See also her short comment in J. Neusner, *The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 137–42.

<sup>199</sup>The system is necessarily and perhaps even fortunately ill-adapted to its purposes. It brings up the unexpected to the community’s attention, but handles it with great caution.

<sup>200</sup>See Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 159–79, who compares the activities in the Temple to composting, in which “dirt is ploughed back for a renewal of life,” thereby avoiding the impoverishment or even sterility that strict adherence to a given order would bring about. I would add that something else was at stake, and that was the partial satisfaction by the Temple of human desires. But these desires could not have come about without the prohibitions spelled out by the system of purity rules. The choice of location for the Temple already displayed this dynamic. The ground of the Temple itself was originally on the border between territories. Jerusalem, situated between the territories of the Rachel and Leah tribes and between Judah and Benjamin, had not yet been incorporated (see the discussion in *bMeg.* 26a). At the origin of the Temple, therefore, a ground that should have been impure, according to the system of purity laws, was considered most pure.

<sup>201</sup>As well as the Christian churches, inasmuch as they still offered a representation of sacrifice.

The Bible provides a record of the way in which limits were elaborated regarding meat.<sup>202</sup> The Paradise was vegetarian, and meat had henceforth a negative connotation. To eat meat was to kill a beast that had in it the principle of life, an attribution reserved to God. To kill was to risk competition with God, and a peace offering was required for any such action (Lev 17.10). Only after the Deluge did God tolerate meat consumption, provided that blood was set apart and disposed of religiously (Gen 9.4). It was as if the divine principle of life had lost its identification with the totality of the living animals and been confined to their blood. Its locus was reduced even further, to the blood of those animals defined as pure (Lv 20.24). The authors of the Old Testament experienced this reduction as a fall, a transgression of God's nature and powers: therefore, the ideal food of the Exodus was purely vegetal. That God had no locus of that sort was a strong tradition within Judaism: the prophets, Jesus, rabbinic and Targumic teachings.

In a sense, purity laws translated a material poverty. Domesticated animals were simply too important alive. Meat could not easily become a regular food item for the reason that the stock of animals could be very quickly depleted, and no one knew exactly what level of consumption could be safely achieved. The system of purity laws and sacrifices, however, was not only a way of accepting a given economic situation. On the contrary, it was progressive in the sense that the laws gave shape and tone to human desires and, consequently, promoted a level of economic production that could (ideally) fulfill these desires.

Clearly, the consumption of meat was the subject of great ambiguity. It had been granted as a concession to sin, the story went. It was ideally accessible to everyone but was in fact mostly reserved to the rich and powerful, among whom priestly families were the most important. The suspicion of sin therefore attached to the rich in priority. Yet, the poorer people too desired meat. Accommodations were made to make sure that everyone (all *men*) "discharged his duty" by consuming a modicum of meat, particularly at Passover time or even for Sabbaths. But the nobler pieces, such as the fatter meat of younger, clean animals, did not go to the poor, as shall be seen.

To have meat for a meal was a clear sign of political power. Political power was shared by hosts in the same ratio as the dish of meat. This is

<sup>202</sup>I partly follow J. Soler, "Sémiotique de la nourriture dans la Bible," *Annales, E.S.C.* 28 (1973) 944–48. See also F. Martens, "Diététique ou la cuisine de Dieu," *Communications* 26 (1977) 16–45; J. Bahloul, "Nourritures de l'altérité: le double langage des juifs algériens en France," *Annales, E.S.C.* 38 (1983) 325–40 (about the modern situation).

how Ben Zoma (Tanna, second century C.E.) is said to have distributed the blessings for hosts:

What does one say for a good host? ‘Keep the house-master in good memory! How many sorts of wines he brought before us! How many sorts of meat cuts he brought before us! How many sorts of sweet cakes he brought before us! What he did, he did only for me.’ But for a bad host, what does one say? ‘What have I got to eat from him? One piece of bread I got to eat from him. One piece of meat I got to eat from him. One glass I got to drink from him. Whatever he did, he only did for his wife and children.’<sup>203</sup>

The elevation of social status went according to the kind of animals consumed, their quantity, their age, the quality of the cuts offered, the way of cooking. Not to eat meat was a clear sign of poverty because it implied a lack of social relationships. The various situations are discussed in the following pages.

#### VARIATIONS IN DIETS

As we shall see at a later point, crop yields were better in some areas, particularly the coastal and small inland plains.<sup>204</sup> In the south, which was less well endowed than other regions, diets were of a lower quality. In a statement attributed to R. Jose (ca. 70–135 C.E.), barley as everyday food was permitted only by R. Ishmael, who lived near Idumaea.<sup>205</sup> Neither did Judaea fare well when contrasted with Galilee.<sup>206</sup> But the major differences were of a social nature and not simply due to climate or soil variations.<sup>207</sup>

#### *Cities and Countryside*

Cities were better provided with almost everything; city dwellers had a freer access to water and could buy better breads baked by professionals whose

<sup>203</sup> *tBer.* 7(6).2.14–15.

<sup>204</sup> Chapter 3.

<sup>205</sup> *mKeth.* 5.8.

<sup>206</sup> *pSot.* 1.17b, line 26; *pPe’ah* 7.3.20a, line 70.

<sup>207</sup> For comparison, see K. D. White, “Food Requirements and Food Supplies in Classical Times in Relation to the Diet of the Various Classes,” *Progress in Food and Nutrition Science* 2 (1976) 143–91 (I have not been able to use this article that came to my attention only recently).

shops were concentrated in given streets.<sup>208</sup> They also could buy warm dishes from the *thermopolus*, such as *muries*, dried fruit and honey. Even the onions used by city people were reputed to be of superior quality.<sup>209</sup> Furthermore, honey was mixed more generously in the urban porridges. Above all, cities had storage facilities and the power to drain the best products from their surrounding territories. This power could manifest itself most ruthlessly in times of famine.<sup>210</sup> Although not everyone within a city had adequate means, to be in a city normally meant a measure of security.

Meat consumption was more common in cities. The Babylonian Talmud reports a discussion that centers on the pound of meat given daily as charity to a man from Sepphoris in Galilee who had lost his wealth and status.<sup>211</sup> This was a great expense for the community, but followed the theoretical principle that charity must be provided according to a person's former station.<sup>212</sup> Nevertheless, the later Babylonian commentators pretended to find the amount very small. In response to them, other rabbis attempted to show that, in fact, the amount of meat represented a very significant gift. Rabbi Ashi in particular said that the village in question was small (!) and that, consequently, a whole animal had to be sacrificed to satisfy the principle of feeding a poor man according to his former status. This, indeed, was to be regarded as a great demonstration of generosity because there would be no buyers in a small place for all the surplus meat.

Cities, on the contrary, had the means to buy meat, with butchers to distribute it. This capacity was severely denounced by Porphyry in the third century C.E., in a passage of his *De Abstinencia* in which he says that cities transgress divine laws by encouraging meat consumption. Indeed, Porphyry says, cities encourage meat consumption, through sacrifices, because animals are not easy to get there.<sup>213</sup> The story of the prodigal son

<sup>208</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 15.309, describing how Herod put bakers to work. *tPes.* 1.13.156, line 9; *mKel.* 5.4.

<sup>209</sup> *mTer.* 2.5.

<sup>210</sup> See below, at the end of this chapter.

<sup>211</sup> *bKeth.* 67b.

<sup>212</sup> See *pPe'ab* 8.8 where poultry is provided to a poor man who formerly enjoyed an honored social position.

<sup>213</sup> 2.14 and 2.25: sacrifices of domestic animals for people's enjoyment. Porphyry was careful not to attack city cults directly and require vegetarianism from everyone. In 2.3, he declares that his book concerns philosophers alone. For translations, see J. Bouffartigue and M. Patillon, *Porphyre: De l'abstinence*, tome 2, books 2 and 3, collection G. Budé (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1979), 83; T. Taylor, *On Abstinence from Animal Food* (London: Centaur, 1965).

in Lk 15 also shows that the eating of a fattened calf was an exceptional event in a village. It had been kept to be used at a wedding, or perhaps for sale to a city market, where it would be worth good money. But it was being offered to the whole village because the previous unsettling events needed such exceptional means of propitiation.<sup>214</sup>

### *Rich People*

Most people usually took two meals a day, one early in the morning in the fourth hour (approximately 10:00 a.m.) and the other in the early evening. To have three meals, though, was the ideal on Sabbath. The king, rich among the rich, could presumably afford anything. Legends focusing on King Agrippa II report that his one meal of the day was an extraordinary event, consisting of desserts after desserts “to prolong the meal.”<sup>215</sup> Talmudic scholars delighted in showing the amount of meat consumed by kings, partly in admiration and partly to demonstrate their impious behavior: pheasants, heads of fattened fowl and heads of calves, the head of a peacock in milk!<sup>216</sup> But kings were shown to be more reasonable sometimes, eating meat and fish with good old wine.<sup>217</sup>

Richer people also had better diets. These people included the large landowners, such as Rabbi (died 217 C.E.) who lived in Galilee and owned pieces of land in Transjordan; the holders of higher offices (Jewish or Roman); and some merchants. They were able to enjoy a ceremonious meal frequently, inviting friends, companions, disciples and clients—a lifestyle that distinguished them from the rest of the population. One paid great attention to manners at such hosted dinners; everything was orderly, from seating prerogatives to ablutions, benedictions, and the succession of dishes.<sup>218</sup> The “hors d’oeuvre” came first, possibly served in a separate room, then the main course, consisting of bread dipped in various dishes. One knew that some other dish would follow what had already been served as long as there were broken pieces of bread on the table. But to be served a large unbroken loaf of bread accompanied by a dish of legumes meant that there would not be any other dish, A practice that was probably typical in

<sup>214</sup> On all this, see Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, 186.

<sup>215</sup> *bSukk.* 27a: desserts or side dishes.

<sup>216</sup> *bShab.* 130a; see *Midrash Teh.* 4.11; cf. *Yalqut Teh.* 891.

<sup>217</sup> *Sifre Dt* 10.10 (Finkelstein, 71, no. 37), as distinct from the common man, who eats vegetables and legumes, and drinks “new wine” (*ibid.*).

<sup>218</sup> Cf. Strack-Billerbeck, 4/2:611–39 (“Ein alt-jüdisches Gastmahl”).

poorer houses.<sup>219</sup> A dessert—perhaps roasted ears of wheat prepared with almonds, honey, and spices—was normally served afterwards.

The best bread in the house was taken for the blessing at the beginning of the meal: in rich houses, the small white bread; in common houses, the large, unrefined house bread; in poorer families, a piece of white bread, or even barley bread.<sup>220</sup> Rich people had access to fancy breads of various shapes, made of finer wheat flour, enhanced in various ways, and eaten fresh.<sup>221</sup> Wheat bread, to distinguish it from barley bread, was called “clean bread,” partly because it was whiter, partly because it was ground and sifted more carefully with better results.<sup>222</sup> The dough could be enriched by kneading it with one or more of the following ingredients: wine, honey, milk, oil, “egg water,” and spices.<sup>223</sup> There are avalanches of epithets in the sources to describe numerous “cakes” among which it is difficult to discriminate between what was truly a delicacy or a simple galette, what was cooked or baked, and what was bread, pudding, or noodles.<sup>224</sup> There was a taste for sweets, condemned by those inclined to asceticism.<sup>225</sup> Sweeter cakes were included in the “sweet kinds,” along with fruit juices and sweetened porridges, and offered for dessert. But this category was not as separate from common breads as it is at the present time.<sup>226</sup> Some were just one step above the more regular bread: there was a long pronged unleavened bread, cooked perhaps in a pot in the ground.<sup>227</sup> There was also a sort of dough cooked in water and salt, or in oil and salt.<sup>228</sup> Gladiators received special treatment, and their diet included a richer bread called *ludiyot*, which had passed into more general use.<sup>229</sup> The truly relished delicacies were white and soft breads and pastries. The *glusqa’ot*,

<sup>219</sup>Ibid., 625–26. See *tBer.* 4.14.9, lines 25–27, a tradition attributed to Simeon b. Gamaliel, who flourished ca. 140 C.E.

<sup>220</sup>*mBer.* 6.1; *pBer.* 10b; *tBer.* 4.15.9, lines 27ff.

<sup>221</sup>*p’Av.Zar.* 4.44b, line 23; *pShev.* 5.36a, line 57; see Krauss, *TA*, 1:94 and 446, n. 240.

<sup>222</sup>*pHall.* 1.57c, line 56; cf. *b’Er.* 62b. *Pat neqiyyah* = ἀφτὸς καθαρὸς, *panis candidus*, *cena pura*; see Krauss, *TA*, 1:467–68, n. 401.

<sup>223</sup>Krauss, *TA*, 1:100, and n. 341.

<sup>224</sup>For cakes, *ibid.*, nn. 342–43; 104, and n. 414. Compare the compendious listings in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 3.108ff.

<sup>225</sup>For instance Epiphanius, mocking the Ebionites’ vegetarianism, *Panarion* 30.13.4–5, quoted in full below, n. 311. [check]

<sup>226</sup>See art. *Cibaria*, in *DAGR*, 1:2:1143.

<sup>227</sup>*tHall.* 1.7.97, line 27.

<sup>228</sup>Pancakes: *mHall.* 1.4; *pHall.* 1.57d, line 43.

<sup>229</sup>*bBets.* 14a; 14b; the word came from *ludus*.

for instance, were white and delicate buns whose name itself carried the idea of pure luxury, as opposed to house bread.<sup>230</sup> Other savory foods were sponge cakes, “small breads,” and noodle like dishes of various origins.<sup>231</sup> Honey was liberally added to pancakes,<sup>232</sup> breads,<sup>233</sup> and cookies or cakes.<sup>234</sup>

As for meat, only the very rich enjoyed it regularly as the most attractive and showy item of their open table. A tosefta already quoted gives an idea of how rich one had to be to afford it:

Whoever has ten *minas* may arrange to have vegetables in the pot every day. Twenty *minas*, vegetables in the pot and a stew. Fifty *minas*, a *litra* of meat from one Sabbath’s eve to another. One hundred *minas*, a *litra* of meat every day.<sup>235</sup>

One *minah* was equal to 100 *denarii*, and 1 *denarius* often was the daily salary of a workman from the first to the second centuries C.E.<sup>236</sup> A loaf of bread usually cost 1/24 of a *denarius* during the same period.<sup>237</sup> To have 100 *minahs*, then, was to have a great fortune, enough to pay thirty workers for a whole year. Only the rich could indeed afford to kill a calf occasionally or a lamb more frequently. Kings especially were expected to be extremely generous. Herod the Great, for instance, at the completion of the temple in 18 B.C.E., had three hundred oxen sacrificed in Jerusalem.<sup>238</sup> To be wealthy was to own livestock enough to provide the needed traction *and* meat. Meat

<sup>230</sup>The word may come from γλυκύς, sweet, rather than from κόλλιξ, loaf of (coarse) bread; or from λεσβιακά (*LSJ, Suppl.* [1968], 92), i.e., luxuries from, or associated with, Lesbos: *tPes.* 1(2).31.157, line 24 (Vienna codex and printed ed.). It is opposed to the “bread of the houseowner” in *tBer.* 4.15.9, line 28. It is opposed as bread to barley, *ibid.*, lines 29–30.

<sup>231</sup>Sponge cakes (*sufjanin*, from σπόγγος or ἄρτος σπογγίτις, *tPes.* 1(2).31.157, line 19; *ibid.*, line 24; *mHall.* 1.4. Noodles or “pasta”: *tPes.*, *ibid.*, line 20. These “sponge” breads, on which see Pliny, *Natural History* 18.105, were probably the equivalent of modern bread.

<sup>232</sup>*m’Uqts.* 3.11; *t’Uqts.* 3.15; *mMakhsb.* 5.9. Also to the ἑσχαρίτος, a small loaf prepared with oil and honey and cooked in a pan: *mHall.* 1.4; *Mekh. Ex.* 16.31; also *Targum Onqelos* at *Ex* 16.31; with oil in *pHall.* 1.57d, line 43.

<sup>233</sup>Honey breads called *qanobika’ot*, from Greek κανωπικά, luxurious breads associated with Canopus, in Lower Egypt: *mHall.* 1.5.

<sup>234</sup>*dušanim* in *tPes.* 1(2).32.157, line 24.

<sup>235</sup>*t’Arakh.* 4.27.548, lines 37ff.; see p. 26 above. [check] A *litra* equaled the Roman *libra* and weighed about 337 grams.

<sup>236</sup>On salaries, see D. Sperber, *Roman Palestine, 200–400. Money and Prices* (Ramat-Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan University, 1974). An important fact to remember concerning salaries is that the round figures often given in sources may have been ideal figures. Reality was less rounded.

<sup>237</sup>D. Sperber, “Costs of Living in Roman Palestine,” *JESHO* 8 (1965) 250–51.

<sup>238</sup>Josephus, *AJ* 15.422, who adds: “Others did similarly, each according to his means.”

was probably more common on Greek and Roman tables, with pig meat common on the latter. Pigs were raised in fairly large foraging herds in the northern, non-Jewish area, in Transjordan, and along the Mediterranean coast.

The tables of the wealthy also saw a great variety and abundance of vegetables. These came from well-cultivated and irrigated gardens. Babylonian sources tell us that Rabbi (died 217 C.E.) had radish, lettuce, and squash on his table in winter as well as in summer.<sup>239</sup> These greens were grown year round in his gardens and excited much envy, if only among animals.<sup>240</sup> They were cooked with oil and sometimes served with eggs.<sup>241</sup> We have already seen that wine, namely old wine, was usual only in wealthy households.<sup>242</sup> The legendarily wealthy R. Gamaliel and his companion drank wine on their way from Akko to Ekdippa.<sup>243</sup> Members of the Sanhedrin apparently used to drink wine, except when barred by special circumstances.<sup>244</sup> There were abuses, apparently, which were taken to be one of the symptoms of a rebellious son.<sup>245</sup> Caution was also recommended to the disciples of the Sages.<sup>246</sup>

### *Common People*

Bread, legumes, oil, salt, and occasional fish or meat were the normal meal for most people in the cities and in the countryside: soldiers, craftspeople, servants, farmers, and other laborers.<sup>247</sup>

Within cities and villages, the situation was most uncertain for those people who could not store reserves of cereals. Inhabitants with sufficient property or money could acquire enough reserves and not have to borrow grains. But people with minuscule plots of land, small incomes, or without a family were completely dependent upon merchants—either shopkeepers

<sup>239</sup>*bBer.* 57b; *b'Av.Zar.* 11a. Midrashic tradition reports that he took great interest in his gardens and orchards: *GenR.* 67.6 (Theodor-Albeck, ed., 761–62).

<sup>240</sup>Story about the scattering of his purslanes, *pShev.* 9.1.38c, line 55; *bR.Sh.* 26b; *bMeg.* 18a.

<sup>241</sup>*tDem.* 5.13.54, line 26; *m'Eduy.* 2.4.

<sup>242</sup>*mBer.* 8.1; *pBer.* 6.10c, lines 76ff.

<sup>243</sup>*b'Er.* 64b and parallels.

<sup>244</sup>*mSanh.* 5.5.

<sup>245</sup>*mSanh.* 8.2.

<sup>246</sup>*DEZ* 5.3: *The Minor Tractates of the Talmud* (London: Soncino, 1965), 2:581.

<sup>247</sup>Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology*, 3:92; Jasny, "The Daily Bread of the Ancient Greeks and Romans," *Osiris* 9 (1950) 231.

who sold and gave advances of relatively large quantities of cereals or street vendors who sold prepared food. To have to buy from the latter was considered to be the worst situation. It was the most symptomatic of poverty, implying a lack of property, of regular employment, or of service in the houses of rich landowners. A tradition of the Palestinian Talmud, attributed to a late third–early fourth century C.E. rabbi, illustrates the variety of situations:

As R. Hanin said: *Your life shall hang in doubt before you* [Dt 28.66]. This is he who acquires wheat for the year. *Night and day you shall be in dread*. This is he who buys from the wheat retailer. *And have no assurance of your life*. This is he who buys from the street vendor.<sup>248</sup>

Bread was so important for daily life that bakers were constantly under suspicion as to the quality of their dough; those forced to buy bread from them often felt cheated.<sup>249</sup> If bread was made of wheat it was full of bran. It was more usually made with barley flour, containing more or less bran.<sup>250</sup> Barley bread, *cibarium*, was the mark of the common man, the slave and the poor.<sup>251</sup>

Soldiers too ate barley bread, which they liked fresh, a wish that was not often fulfilled.<sup>252</sup> This standard bread, in various shapes, was sold by bakeries.<sup>253</sup> Barley was not very well accepted, and reference to barley was used to disparage people of low status. For instance, having to comment on the rule that barley flour be offered to the priest in the case of an adulteress

<sup>248</sup> *pSheq.* 8.1.51a (cf. *pShab.* 8.1.11a, bottom): דאמר רבי חנין והיו חייד תלויים לך מנגד זה: זהו לוקח מן הסידיקי ולא תאמין בחייד זה שהוא פלטר. See also *mSheq.* 3.2; *bMen.* 103b. See Rashi's commentary at Dt 28.66, who refers to the preceding interpretation, but speaks of two situations only: he who has to buy produce from the market and he who depends on the street vendor. The word סידיקי, which comes from *σιτοδόκη*, granary, is translated as "wheat retailer." The word פלטר comes from *πωλητής*, shopkeeper.

<sup>249</sup> *Yalq. Dt* 808.

<sup>250</sup> See *tShab.* 13(14).7.129, line 20, for flour full of bran. On *cibarium* and other grades of flour, see above, 15–16. [check]. See D. Sperber, "Cibar Bread," *Tarbiz* 36 (1966) 199–201 (in Hebrew).

<sup>251</sup> *mMakhsb.* 2.8: slaves and poor men eat *pat qibar*. cf. *bShab.* 140b; cf. *Midrash hagadol*, *Gen* 2.9, p. 76: "He who is able to eat barley bread and eats wheat bread transgresses the interdiction of extravagance."

<sup>252</sup> Krauss, *TA*, 1:468, n. 406; p. 471, n. 419. *pSanh.* 3.21b, line 22; *pShev.* 4.2.35a, line 56; *Sifre Dt* 1.4 (Finkelstein, ed., p. 11); *Yalq. Dt* 808.

<sup>253</sup> For shapes, see Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols* quoted in n. 259 below. [check]

(Num 5.15), the rabbis wondered why God demanded barley and not wheat as in other sacrifices. R. Simon b. Gamaliel (ca. 140 C.E.) in some texts, or Rabban Gamaliel (ca. 90 C.E.) in others, reportedly offered the following explanation: “Allow me, scribes, to explain it allegorically. As her art was similar to that of a beast, so is her offering cattle fodder.”<sup>254</sup> The Palestinian Aramaic version of Num 5.15 also makes the same point.<sup>255</sup> In the same vein as the carefree pronouncement attributed to the great ancestors of the Patriarchate, it was also said that whereas “lentils are a food fit for men, barley is cattle fodder.”<sup>256</sup> The saying may be explained by the fact that legumes were still of first necessity to wheat-bread eaters, and therefore deemed to be worthy enough. Another instance of the low esteem in which barley-bread eaters were held comes from Origen. When discussing Jesus’ miraculous feeding of the crowd, he suggests that the disciples were ashamed to have only barley breads. This, according to Origen, would explain not only why the breads are not mentioned by Matthew, Mark, or Luke, but also why they are attributed to a young boy by John (6.9).<sup>257</sup> Origen understood the social class of a boy to be irrelevant. One may suppose that Origen imagined the cause of the disciples’ shame to be the fact that they could not behave toward Jesus as toward a true lord. He probably thought that their normal food was indeed barley loaves and fishes.<sup>258</sup>

The daily bread, therefore, was normally a barley pancake, a *μᾶζα*. But there were various degrees even among the rougher sorts of bread. Some were very coarse, being simply baked in a hole in the ground, similar to the *qorṣ* of the Moab Beduins or the *tarmûs* of Mossul.<sup>259</sup> Another more re-

<sup>254</sup> *Sifre Num 5.15*, No. 8 (4a) has R. Simon b. Gamaliel. But *mSot.* 2.1; *NumR.* 5.27 (155a), and *bar. bSot.* 15b attribute the saying to Rabban Gamaliel; cf. Philo, *Spec.* 3.57. The text in *Sifre* is: ת”ל א”ר שמעון בן גמליאל הניחו לי סופרים ואומר כמין חומר כשם שמעשיה מעשה בהמה: כך קרבנה מאכל בהמה.

<sup>255</sup> *T.Jo.Num 5.15* (*Add.* 27031) where, as in *bBer.* 63a and *Sifre Num.*, the infidelity is explained by the [man’s] nonremittance of tithes to priests. Quantity of flour due: about 4 pounds (1.8 kg).

<sup>256</sup> *RuthR.* 2.9 (131b).

<sup>257</sup> *Comment. in Ev. sec. Matthaeum* 11.2, at Mt 14.17.

<sup>258</sup> Representations of fish and bread were traditional in synagogues, as can be seen in Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols*, 5: ill. 48 (Tabha mosaic with fish and bread) and ill. 75 (frieze in the Chorazin synagogue, showing round breads).

<sup>259</sup> See Jaussen, *Coutumes des Arabes au pays de Moab*, 63, 65; Krauss, *TA*, 1:106; Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte*, 4: pl. 8. These breads baked on coals were barley breads, according to *Mekh. Ex 12.39*: “Cakes (*‘ugot*). *‘Ugot* merely means cakes baked on coal, as it is said: ‘and thou shalt eat it as barley cakes’ (Ezek 4.12)” (Lauterbach’s translation). Text: עוגות אין עוגות: אלא חררה שנאמר ועוגות שעורים תאכלנה.

finer variety was *tarita*, which consisted of a dough poured over the hearth and shaped into flat and thick fritters.<sup>260</sup> It was kneaded perhaps with some egg and thus could keep longer. *Rifta* was a flat bread, the farmer's loaf, also baked under ashes in a hole or perhaps in a small oven after coals and ashes had been carefully removed.<sup>261</sup> The names given to some of the "cakes" describe their appearance: some were called "spit cakes," "club-like wafers," or "shingle cakes."<sup>262</sup> These breads were not subject to *ḥallah*. Oil, or eggs and oil, when available, were used to smear all these breads.

As already indicated, one ate bread with salt, olives or oil, grapes or other fruit when in season,<sup>263</sup> onions, and water. Salt may often have been replaced by fish brine. The setting apart of salt, in our sources, means that most bread did not contain any. In fact, it may have been difficult to procure, and only if one had some money.<sup>264</sup>

Festive occasions and Sabbaths were for many the only days when there was an attempt to prepare more luxurious breads; some women borrowed other women's ovens for that purpose.<sup>265</sup> Husbands cheered up their wives with what was appropriate for them—for example, doves and roasted ears.<sup>266</sup> It was not easy for everyone to follow the religious prescriptions for the Passover meal, especially that concerning the lamb. "[It was] as difficult to procure man's meals as to divide the Red Sea," according to R. Eleazar b. Azariah (ca. 100 C.E.).<sup>267</sup> This was true in Babylonia as well as in Palestine. In consequence, one adapted to the circumstances: "Bitter herbs, unleavened bread and a victim were a duty on the first day of the feast, but facultative on the other days. R. Shimon [b. Yoḥai, ca. 150]: A duty

<sup>260</sup> *pH*all. 1.6; *bBer.* 37b; translated as *vermicelli* by Jastrow.

<sup>261</sup> Laborer's bread: *rifta* 'ikkaryata' in *b'Er.* 82b, following the common reading. On the meaning of *ikkar* as some kind of land worker, see G. Alon, *The Jews in Their Land in the Talmudic Age* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1980), 1157. Preparation: *bBets.* 32b, "See to it that you remove the ashes carefully, for I want fine bread."

<sup>262</sup> *tH*all. 1.6.97, line 24; 1.7.97, line 27. An indication that there was a tendency to offer more luxurious breads in the cult is found in *Targum Onqelos* to Lev 2.5: Hebrew *reqiqin* ("spit cakes") has been translated as *isfugin*, "sponge cakes," because the latter were deemed more fitting for the altar.

<sup>263</sup> Grapes: *mShev.* 4.7; *tBM* 8.3.387, line 227.

<sup>264</sup> See Frayn's remarks in *Subsistence Farming in Roman Italy*, III. Barley bread, lupines, and fish brine were typical of the poor man, according to Lucian, *Fugitivi* 14, 31; cf. below, p. 47. [check]

<sup>265</sup> *bPes.* 36a; cf. the story of Ḥaninah b. Dosa in whose oven some beautiful loaves miraculously appeared, thereby saving his wife's reputation, *bTa'an.* 19.

<sup>266</sup> *pPes.* 10.37b; cf. *bPes.* 108b.

<sup>267</sup> *bPes.* 118a.

for men, facultative for women.”<sup>268</sup> Meat was available in cities,<sup>269</sup> but people of small means ate the lower-quality pieces.<sup>270</sup> They also bought the not very well liked locusts from merchants in the streets.<sup>271</sup> Meat was too expensive for people of average means, not only in Palestine but in the Roman Empire at large. The *Edictum de pretiis* published by Diocletian in 301 was probably a wishful attempt to contain prices and wages within ideal limits. Nevertheless, these ideal figures afford us a view of what was thought to be a normal ratio between wages and the price of various products. Whereas a laborer was not to receive more than 25 *denarii* per day, the ceiling price for a pound of pork was 12 *denarii*, and for an egg 1 *denarius*.<sup>272</sup> The whole salary of a man with family would have to be spent on food.

### *Fieldworkers*

The workers in the fields ate bread dipped in brine,<sup>273</sup> with a salty soup of oil and flour, or with pulse.<sup>274</sup> Their food was actually all, or a great part, of their salary.<sup>275</sup> Understandably, there was constant tension between the employers and their hired hands to determine what was the just salary and what was a reasonable amount of work. The workers, on one side, came to their work in a constant state of undernourishment. If they came with their cow, the same was true of the animal. The employers, on the other

<sup>268</sup> *tPes.* 1.34.158, lines 3–4.

<sup>269</sup> *mMakhsb.* 2.9; cf. above, pp. 33–34. [check]

<sup>270</sup> An interesting article by P. Wapnish, B. Hesse, and A. Ogilvy attempts to use social factors to explain the variations in the samples of bones found in two areas of Tell Dan: “The 1974 Collection of Faunal Remains from Tell Dan,” *BASOR* 227 (1977) 35–62 (I thank Prof. G. Lease for this reference). A greater proportion of young animals and of front bones alone were found in area T than in area B, where skeletons were more complete and animals were older, having been used therefore for their milk and other products. These remains show that the wealthy of area T (where for instance the Roman Fountain House is located) had more choice than the “producers” of area B. The problem with this excellent idea is that it is applied to samples coming from two different periods: Israelite and Hellenistic-Roman. One must leave open the question of the origin of these variations.

<sup>271</sup> *mBer.* 6.3.

<sup>272</sup> P. Petit, *Histoire générale de l'Empire romain* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1974), 3:34–35. See E. R. Graser, in Frank, *ESAR*, 5:305–421. Diocletian’s edict applied to the whole empire and not only to the East as previously thought.

<sup>273</sup> *tBM* 8.3.387, line 27.

<sup>274</sup> Bread with pulse reputed to be the workers’ standard meal in *mBM* 7.1.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.* Laborers paid in weekly or yearly allowances of flour, *bar. bTa’an.* 19b.

side, had carefully to husband the small quantities of food in their possession and could not be generous. They tended to attribute to the worker himself the reasons for his poor level of work and his cow's asthenia. For example, they could accuse him of "illegal" double work, as evidenced by a Tosefta stipulating that "the worker may not do his work at night and then hire himself for the day; neither may he plow with his cow in the evening and let her in the morning."<sup>276</sup> The situation seems to refer to landowners contracting with their tenant farmers for work on their own exploitation. The employers could also accuse a worker of badly misusing his salary by giving it away inconsiderately, and thereby again risking to diminish the quantity of work owed to the master. The text just quoted continues: "[the worker] may not hunger and extenuate himself by providing his children with his foods, on account of the fraud it causes to the owner's work."<sup>277</sup> The restriction chosen to illustrate the principle of strict accounting in contracts is striking. One must imagine children following their father and receiving from him part of his food, which constituted much of his salary.

The fare was better for everyone at harvest times, although many texts, such as those just quoted, attest to the chronic insufficiency that existed even at the best of times. When the hired hands worked in the vineyards or among other fruit trees at harvest time, they certainly welcomed the addition of sweet fruits to their bread routine. It was a customary right to eat one's fill from the harvest at which one worked, a variation on "Muzzle not the ox"<sup>278</sup> This right troubled priests and rabbis to a great extent: How could one eat fruits for a meal without having redeemed them first? But then, how could one force the harvesters to redeem when there was so little space and time between the branch and a hungry mouth? The solution found was the following: if a formal convention with the employer prohibited the workers from eating fruits, then no fruits could be eaten without preliminary tithing. If there was no such convention, then one could eat untithed fruits, provided that there was no appearance of meal—that is, if one ate the fruits one by one from the trees.<sup>279</sup> It may well be that all this concern was religious, although the workers must have experienced great

<sup>276</sup> *tBM* 8.2.387, lines 25–26. For undernourishment of animals, especially those used for traction, see Chapter 3 below, p. 122. [check]

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, lines 26–27: ולא יהא מרעיב ומסגיף את עצמו ומאכיל מזונותיו לבניו מפני גזל מלאכתו של בעל הבית.

<sup>278</sup> *Dt* 23.24: "When you go into your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes, as many as you wish, but you shall not put any in your vessel."

<sup>279</sup> *mMa'as.* 3.1–3; *pMa'as.* 4.1.

difficulty in practicing such exercises or in allaying the mistrust of the tithing authorities.

There was also a definite economic concern. Owners did not care to see too many of their grapes or dates disappear on the spot. Their fieldworkers not only shared the general taste for sweets, but also were in a constant state of undernourishment. They suddenly had within their reach fruits that they most likely would not eat for the rest of the year. This, of course, was likely to worry the owners, the more so because harvesters used a great deal of salt with their meal of bread or legumes. Talmudic sources even report debates in which it was discussed whether fieldworkers could eat more salt or brine than usual for the purpose of becoming thirsty, and therefore eat a great quantity of the juicy bunches, while remaining at peace with the requirements of the law.<sup>280</sup> Some authorities authorized the practice. Trick for trick, the landowner could retaliate by giving wine at will to his workers in order to cut their appetite.<sup>281</sup> Other texts left the decision with the landowner:

Workers who are hoeing among figtrees, cutting dates or harvesting olives eat and the Torah does not obtain for them [i.e., it is not a formal meal]. He does not use salt and eat unless he has been given permission to do so by the landowner.<sup>282</sup>

### *Shepherds*

In other people's judgment, shepherds were living like animals, and their food was reputed fit for dogs:

Dough-for-dogs,<sup>283</sup> as long as [it is such as] shepherds partake thereof, is subject to *Hallah* . . . and it may be cooked on a festival,

<sup>280</sup>Perhaps field hands sometimes wished to inflict some punishment on their employers by taking full advantage of Dt 23.24. See *tBM* 8.3.387, line 27: "Workers may eat their bread with brine with a view to eat many grapes." רשאין פעלין לאכול פיתן בציר כדי שיאכלו ענבים הרבה. One might also translate: "even though it will make them eat many grapes." But there was a limit: "the worker should not eat more than his salary," according to Eleazar b. Ḥisma (ca. 110), *pMa'as*. 2.8. There were very few leftovers: "It is gluttony to eat only the middle of figs or suck only the juice of grapes," *ibid*.

<sup>281</sup>*tMa'as*. 2.14.83, line 24; *pMa'as*. 2.8.

<sup>282</sup>*tMa'as*., *ibid*., lines 51–53 of Lieberman's edition (*The Tosefta. The order of Zera'im*. New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 2d ed., 1992, pp. 234–5): פועלין לא יהיו עודרין בתאנים, וגודרין בתמרים, ומוסקין בוחים, אוכלין ופטורין, שהתורה נתנה להם רשות. לא יספית במלח ויאכל, אלא אם כן נתן לו בעל הבית רשות.

<sup>283</sup>Flour and coarse bran, *tHall*. 1.7.97, lines 26ff.

and a person discharges therewith one's obligation on the Passover; but if [the dough be such as] shepherds do not partake thereof, it is not subject to *Hallah*.<sup>284</sup>

The shepherds, who often were slaves, consumed such bread because they were poor in terms of exchange and, being relatively removed from the inhabited centers, could not properly grind their grain. They were in a position, however, to supplement their diet with milk, cheeses, and wild roots. The text just quoted actually speaks of those people who were not shepherds but who could afford only this miserable kind of bread, even on festivals, and who were lucky when they had flour and bran. We have seen how poor people baked their "bread of affliction" in a cavity in the ground and ate it with some oil and salt.<sup>285</sup> Often enough, there was no oil or olives and they ate their bread dry with salt.<sup>286</sup> Some could not properly pound their cereals to make groats or bread.<sup>287</sup> Their dough was often full of impurities. When there was no barley flour at hand, one used legumes, a mixture of cereals and pulses, or worse even, such seeds or cereals as cow wheat.<sup>288</sup>

#### QUANTITIES ALLOTTED TO THE POOR

Certain categories of poor people were entitled to regular help, as will be seen in more detail later. But there were also beggars who went from house to house asking for small change or bread. A text dating back to the first half of the second century C.E. fixed the daily level of subsistence for these poor people at "one loaf worth a *pundion*, at the rate of four *se'ah* for a *sel'a*"<sup>289</sup> —The equivalent of 1/12 *denarius* worth of bread per day, when the "market price" of grains was at 1 *se'ah* for 1 *denarius*. A poor person was therefore supposed to receive two loaves of bread, enough for two meals.<sup>290</sup> Because this amount of bread was clearly considered to be the basic mini-

<sup>284</sup> *mHall.* 1.8; *pal.* *ibid.*, 58d; *Sifre Zutta* (S. Lieberman, ed., 13–14).

<sup>285</sup> With oil: *mMa'as.* 1.7. Bread of misery, *bPes.* 36b; *bBer.* 38a.

<sup>286</sup> *t'Edwy.* 2.2.457, line 14 = *tSukk.* 2.3.193, line 27: *pat ḥaribah*, i.e., the bread of famine times; *bar. bYev.* 15b; cf. *bBer.* 2b: "From the time when the poor man goes in to eat his bread with salt" (late in the evening).

<sup>287</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 15.309 (quoted in full below, p. 46). *bar. bShabb.* 73b–74a.

<sup>288</sup> A mixture, *tTer.* 6.6.35, line 24; legumes, *bBM* 87a. For cow wheat, see above, p. 15, n. 47; [check] *pHall.* 1.57a, lines 62ff.; *pPes.* 2.3.29b, line 15.

<sup>289</sup> *mPe'ah* 8.7. Cf. *tPe'ah* 4.8.23, line 20; *pPe'ah* 8.7.21a, line 12.

<sup>290</sup> See above, p. 36, n. 238: [check] a loaf of bread normally cost 1/24 *denarius*.

imum for a day,<sup>291</sup> calculating its weight is of interest. The Mishnah, through R. Simeon (ca. 150 C.E.), held that there were eighteen loaves of bread to 1 *se'ab*.<sup>292</sup> The same number of loaves is implied in the text we are presently considering, for it is not a coincidence that the selling price of one such loaf (1/12 *denarius*) was greater than the buying price of the cereals needed for this loaf (1/18 *denarius* of necessity) by exactly one-third. This rate of profit was considered to be just.

In Appendix B, it has been determined that, given a mean *se'ab* of 13 liters (Jerusalem *se'ab*), a loaf could weigh between 500 and 600 grams. This average loaf of whole wheat bread was deemed to be the minimum fare for one day.<sup>293</sup> It was just enough to survive. There were some who at times did not get even that much and who, “black” from starvation,<sup>294</sup> could only hope to be saved *in extremis* from obvious danger to their life. In such cases, the duty to preserve human life took precedence over purity rules: “one feeds him immediately even impure food, until his eyes become clear again.”<sup>295</sup>

The total value of food to be granted, through a trustee, to the temporarily separated wife of a common Jew was superior to what was considered minimal for a poor wanderer or for a *shittuf*:

If a husband maintained his wife at the hands of a third person, he may not grant her less than two *kabs* of wheat or four *kabs* of barley [every week]. R. Jose said: Only R. Ishmael provided her with barley [at such an estimation] because he lived near Edom. He must also give her half a *kab* of pulse and half a *log* of oil and a *kab* of dried figs or a *mina* of fig-cake; and if he has none of these, he must provide her with other produce in their stead.<sup>296</sup>

<sup>291</sup> *m'Er.* 8.2: in an opinion attributed to Yoḥanan b. Baroqa (ca. 110 C.E.), the minimum amount for two meals destined to serve as *shittuf* was “one loaf worth a *pundion* from wheat costing one *sel'a* for four *se'abs*.”

<sup>292</sup> *m'Er.* 8.2, three loaves to a *qab* (= 1/6 *se'ab*). See Sperber, *JESHO* 8 (1965) 259–60.

<sup>293</sup> See J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 122–23, with comparable results (1 1/4 pounds, or about 570 grams), confirmed by accounts of the feeding of the five thousand (Mk 6.37–44).

<sup>294</sup> Targum on Job 5.11.

<sup>295</sup> *m'Yom.* 8.6; cf. *p'Pe'ab* 8.7.

<sup>296</sup> *m'Keth.* 5.8: המשרה את אשתו על ידי שלישי, לא יפחת לה משני קבין חטין, או מארבעה קבין, וענתן לה חצי קב שעורים. אמר רבי יוסי: לא פסק לה שעורים אלא רבי ישמעאל, שהיה סמוך לאדום. ונותן לה חצי קב The קטנית, וחצי לג שמן, וקב גרוגרות, או מנה דבלה. ואם אין לו – פוסק לעמתן פרות ממקום אחר The Tosefta, in *t'Keth.* 5.8.267, lines 3–6, and *p'Keth.* 5.8, add other situations and expand on some of the details. Translation of Tosefta: “Whoever takes care of his wife through a trustee, all

The basic element of the diet that husbands were to give to their wives per week was defined as a minimum of 2 *qabs* of wheat or 4 *qabs* of barley. The wheat-barley equivalence obtaining in the text was fairly common in Mediterranean taxation systems but is associated here with Idumaea, where it was easier to grow barley than wheat, given the low rainfalls in the area.<sup>297</sup> We may leave aside the dispute over the seemingly low quality of barley and simply calculate the number and weight of loaves that were available as a minimum, to the isolated woman. On the basis of our mean *se'ah* (a Jerusalem *se'ah*, ca. 13 liters), we may reckon that 2 *qab* would produce about six loaves of 600 grams each of wheat *cibarium*.<sup>298</sup> But because this is the basic food for one week, one may infer that the basis for the rabbinical computation was twenty-one loaves per *se'ah*, with one loaf weighing about 550 grams. The wife of a common Jew should therefore have received weekly seven such loaves of wheat bread (*cibarium*), or about the double of barley bread. As we have indicated above, she received barley as often as not. She was also to receive, per day, a few other items that are given here in grams: about 100 grams of legumes; 40 grams of oil; 200 to 300 grams of dried figs.

The diet above seems more than adequate for one person and is well balanced if not varied. In the absence of milk, calcium could have come essentially from vegetables.<sup>299</sup> We do not know, however, whether the woman was considered to be alone. It is most likely that a woman in this situation would have small children in her care. Little children, especially daughters, hardly appear in the sources. Jewish marriage contracts did occasionally stipulate that the husband was to provide care for his daughters, whose right to maintenance was not clearly established.<sup>300</sup> In contrast, children are rarely

---

[of the foods are given] in Italic measure [*modius italicus*]. [This also obtains] if a woman is menstruant, sick, or waiting for the *yabam*. One gives her a jug, a larger vessel, and a cooking pot; a lamp and a wick; no wine for her because the wives of the poor do not drink wine; no mattress for her because the wives of the poor do not sleep on such mattresses". Text of Tosefta from S. Lieberman's edition (*The order of Nashim*, 1995, p. 74): המשרא את אשתו על ידי שלישי, כולם במדה האיטלקי. אפילו נדה, אפילו חולה, ואפילו שומרת יבם. נתן לה כוס, חבית, וקדירה, פך, נר, ופתילה. יין אין לה, שאין נשותיהן של עניים שותות יין. כר אין לה, שאין נשותיהן של עניים ישינות על הכר.

<sup>297</sup> Same equivalence in Murabba'at documents, but *mBM* 9.8 speaks of variations in the estimation: see above, n. 65. [check]

<sup>298</sup> There were 6 *qab* in a *se'ah*. On the basis of eighteen loaves of 600 grams per *se'ah*, 2 *qab* give six loaves.

<sup>299</sup> Parsley and turnips especially, radishes, chard, fennel. Less important sources would have been dried almonds and a variety of nuts: see Evans, "Plebs Rustica," *AJAH* 5 (1980) 153–54 (Tab. 2); 158 (Tab. 4).

<sup>300</sup> Care during the husband's lifetime, before stipulations concerning the situation after

mentioned in Greek marriage contracts and inheritance clauses that come from other areas of the Mediterranean.<sup>301</sup>

The food to be given as Poorman's Tithe, representing a minimum of two meals, was more abundant:<sup>302</sup> about 900 grams of wheat bread (or substitutes), 1 liter of dried figs (or substitute), about 40 grams of wine, and 20 grams of oil. But these were traditional gifts, and the spirit of Dt 26.12 commanded to be generous, "that they may eat within your towns and be filled."<sup>303</sup> Also, this tithe was mostly meant for men. It is interesting to note that the bread allotment to the woman whose husband was away was exactly one-half of what Cato was prepared to give to a fieldhand<sup>304</sup> and one-half

---

the death of either husband or wife: *Mur.* 115.9, in Greek, dated 124 C.E., specifies that "sons or daughters [...] will be fed and clothed from the property of said Elaios"; see *DJD*, 2:249–50, 253. Other Murabba'at contracts: *Mur.* 116 (Greek, fragmentary, similar to 115), 20–21 (Aramaic, with stipulations in a different order). Cf. *mKeth.* 4.6; *tKeth.* 4.8.264, lines 28–29: "It is a religious command to feed daughters and, needless to say, sons. R. Yohanan ben Baroqa [lived ca. 90–130 C.E.] says: It is a legal responsibility to feed daughters." מצוה לזון את הבנות ואין צריך לומר את הבנים ר' יוחנן בן ברוקא אומר חובה לזון את הבנות For the evolution of the Palestinian marriage contract on this point, see M. A. Friedman, *Jewish Marriage in Palestine. A Cairo Geniza Study* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1980), 356–79, esp. 366–73. In the archives of Babatha found in Naḥal Ḥever (Wadi Ḥabra), there is a copy of a receipt in Greek and Aramaic which Babatha gave to the Jewish guardian of her orphan son Jesus. Her son receives 6 *denarii*, about three months' worth of clothing and food. The receipt was written in the Nabataean country: see J. A. Fitzmyer and D. J. Harrington, *A Manual of Palestinian Aramaic Texts* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1978), 162–63, no. 62, and 217.

<sup>301</sup>Children are not mentioned in the marriage contracts of Hellenistic Egypt, except rarely in the inheritance clause: S. B. Pomeroy, *Women in Hellenistic Egypt From Alexander to Cleopatra* (New York: Schocken, 1984), 96. On the exposure of unwanted Greek children, especially girls, *ibid.*, 136, and *idem*: "Infanticide in Hellenistic Greece," in *Images of Women in Antiquity*, ed. A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt (London: Croom Helm, 1983), 207–22.

<sup>302</sup>*mPe'ah* 8.5.

<sup>303</sup>Calculations on the basis of our "mean" *se'ah* of 13 liters. Reductions of the quantities of fig cake, wine, and oil, however, are attributed to R. Aqiva (an attempt to cover a less generous attitude with the authority of a great rabbi, himself supposedly an ex-poor?). *pPe'ah* 8.7 introduces rice as one of the gifts and draws equivalences between various fruits.

<sup>304</sup>*De Agri Cultura* 56; see White, *Roman Farming*, 360: 4 *modii* of grain per winter month and 4.5 *modii* per summer month, which was about 34.8 and 39 liters per month, i.e., 20 percent larger than a soldier's ration. Cato's ration was most probably meant for the farmhand's family as well, though sources are silent on this. As condiment, a farm steward was to receive salted, fallen olives, *parcito*, and, once these had been used up, fish pickle and vinegar (sour wine). Hands were also to receive a *sextarius* of oil per month (about 0.5 liter), a *modius* of salt per year (8.7 liters), and a large quantity of poor quality wine, made from grape skins (*De Agri Cultura* 57–58).

to one-third of the daily ration distributed at Rome in the third and fourth centuries C.E.<sup>305</sup> Allotments of food to orphans in medieval Islam speak of two pounds (900 grams) of bread per day,<sup>306</sup> which is considerably more than what was considered the minimum for a wanderer and the woman seen above, but equal to the minimal Poorman's Tithe and greatly inferior to food rations in the Medieval West.<sup>307</sup>

### VOLUNTARY POVERTY

Some individuals had chosen to live in poverty. As already noted, Ḥanina b. Dosa (ca. 60–90 C.E.) reportedly lived on 1 *qab* of carobs a week, which was quite a feat in light of the preceding paragraphs. Mark (1.6) reports that John the Baptist ate locusts and wild honey.<sup>308</sup> At Qumran, the Essenes ate two meals a day in very ceremonious fashion. "Sweet wine" and one extra dish were served at those meals, but the basis was bread, distributed

<sup>305</sup>Two *librae* (654 grams) of *panis siligineus* per citizen, free, under Aurelian (270–275 C.E.); 4 *librae* (1308 grams) of *panis plebeius* sold cheaply, from 306 to 369; 3 *librae* (981 grams) of *panis siligineus* per person under Valentinian. See G. Rickman, *The Corn Supply of Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 207; art. *Pistor*, in *DAGR*, 4:501b, and D. Van Berchem, *Les distributions de blé et d'argent à la plèbe romaine sous l'Empire* (Geneva: Georg and Co., 1939).

<sup>306</sup>N. A. Stillman, "Charity and Social Service in Medieval Islam," *Societas* 5 (1975) 112 (a school for orphans established by the Sultan Al-Manṣūr Qalā'un—"In addition, each received a winter and a summer garment"). The author considers it "rather unlikely that each orphan consumed such a quantity of bread every day." It is not at all impossible on the contrary, because, in the quasi-absence of other foods, even greater quantities of bread were often allotted to individuals (adults, it is true).

<sup>307</sup>See J. L. Goglin, *Les misérables dans l'Occident médiéval* (Paris: Seuil, 1976), 37ff., on the basis of an article by M. Rouche, "La faim à l'époque carolingienne: essai sur quelques types de rations alimentaires," *Revue Historique* 508 (1973) 295–320: 1,700 to 2,000 grams of bread daily to certain ninth century monks; 1,308 grams to cart drivers at Corbie. The same monks also received (daily): 1.55 liters of beer or wine; about 100 grams of cheese; 230 grams of dry legumes; 23–27 grams of salt; 1 gram of honey; 33 grams of fat. Vegetables were consumed but not named because thought to be of little nourishment, as in antiquity.

<sup>308</sup>Cf. Mt 3.4, which the Ebionites, apparently vegetarian, read as referring to ἔγκρις (pancake) rather than ἀκρίς (locust). See Epiphanius, *Panarion* 30.13.4–5, giving their text, with hostile comments: "And John had a garment of camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his food, as it saith, was wild honey, the taste of which was that of manna, as a cake dipped in oil. Thus they were resolved to pervert the word of truth into a lie and to put a cake in the place of locusts." (ET in Hennecke and Schneemelcher, *NTA*, 1:157). In reality, these Ebionites may have been practicing extreme forms of asceticism. There is a new ET of the *Panarion* by F. Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis. Book 1, Sect. 1–46* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987).

to each.<sup>309</sup> The Essenes were not given to any excess and severely punished transgressions. Anyone found to disguise his fortune received only three-quarters of his bread portion;<sup>310</sup> a person convicted of a more serious crime was thrown out and faced starvation before being again accepted “in the last stage of exhaustion” and presumably ready to accept the discipline.<sup>311</sup>

Again for comparison, we may see what was expected to be the food of a voluntarily poor man from Lucian’s derogatory comments about the Cynics. He asserts that the Cynics had abandoned their virtuous ways and what could be found in their purse was not poor man’s fare:

Bread, too, is no longer scanty or, as before, limited to bannocks of barley; and what goes with it is not salt fish or thyme but meat of all sorts and wine of the sweetest, and money from whomsoever they will.<sup>312</sup>

Another point of comparison is Athanasius’s *The Life of Antony*.<sup>313</sup> Antony normally lived on bread and water, with occasional dates. In his old age, he was brought “olives and pulse and oil, for he was at this point an old man.”<sup>314</sup> Hilarion too, whose life near Gaza was told by Jerome ca. 380 C.E., about ten years after the hermit’s death,<sup>315</sup> followed a very strict diet: bread, salt, and lentils soaked in cold water in his twenties; dry vegetables in his thirties (plus some bread, presumably). At thirty-six years of age, when his skin began to peel and his eyesight to deteriorate, he added oil to his vegetables. At sixty-four, he gave up bread and ate crushed vegetables for the next sixteen years.<sup>316</sup> Earlier and not far from Palestine, the *Acts of Thomas*, produced in the Syrian Church at the beginning of the third century C.E., present their hero as eating only bread with salt and water

<sup>309</sup>Josephus, *BJ* 2.130–33; *IQS* 6.4–5; *IQSa* 2.17–19.

<sup>310</sup>*IQS* 6.24–25.

<sup>311</sup>Josephus, *BJ* 2.143–44.

<sup>312</sup>*Fugitivi* 14; cf. *ibid.*, 31.

<sup>313</sup>Translation and introduction by R. C. Gregg (New York: Paulist Press, 1980).

<sup>314</sup>Chapters 50–51, p. 69 of Gregg’s translation. He had dates in the Mār Antonios, where he also planted vegetables for visitors.

<sup>315</sup>J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome* (London: Duckworth, 1975), 172–74.

<sup>316</sup>Greek translation (and edition) of the Latin original discussed by E. Fisher, “Greek translations of Latin literature in the fourth century A.D.,” *YCS* 27 (1982) 193–200. Evans, “*Plebs Rustica*,” *AJAH* 5 (1980) 159, discusses the effects of a diet poor in grains and fats (olive oil and cheese, even nuts): a turnip diet would provide more than adequate amounts of ascorbic acid, calcium, and riboflavin, enough iron and protein, but far from enough food energy and thiamine. Resistance to illness would decrease, even though one could live for many years on such a diet.

and wearing (only) one garment.<sup>317</sup> In Jerome's opinion, Hilarion's diet was exceptional and heroic. Indeed, it must have taken courage to live such a life, which was the lot of many poor people.<sup>318</sup>

## FAMINES

Times of famine plunged a greater number of people into the daily struggle of the very poor. Food shortages could be more or less intense, their causes ranging from high prices to more general and repeated droughts that brought about "extermination."<sup>319</sup> It is difficult to establish the frequency and scope of the droughts hinted at in our sources.<sup>320</sup> Given the vagaries of the weather, locusts, epidemics, armies, the difficulties of overland transportation, and the political structure of a country in which the countryside was split into territories attached to one or another city, a shortage could occur in one city and territory while the surrounding areas would be untouched.<sup>321</sup> The hoarding of grains by landowners and the cities in which they lived, lack of money currencies among the poor, and wars were additional causes of hardship.

Some authors have either argued or accepted the notion that the practice of letting the land fallow during the sabbatical year was also a burden that could prove disastrous in years of drought.<sup>322</sup> Until very recent times,

<sup>317</sup> *NTA*, 2:453.

<sup>318</sup> See Rousselle, *Porneia*, 160–78, especially 163–64: Fourth- and fifth-century Egyptian monks lived like "half-starved day workers." They would hire themselves at harvest time to ensure their daily ration—which was very low, at ca. one Roman pound (=327 grams)—and give the surplus to the poor. The reason that Rousselle gives for the monks' severe fasts, namely the desire to achieve complete self-control, could very well go with other considerations such as solidarity with the poor and appeal to the rich landowners.

<sup>319</sup> *m.Av.* 5.8, three types of famine: "Seven kinds of retribution come upon the world for seven classes of transgression. If some give tithe and some do not give tithe, there comes famine from drought: some suffer hunger while some have enough. If [all] resolved that they would not give tithe there comes famine from tumult and drought. And if they will not set apart Dough-offering there comes an all-consuming famine." C. Virlouvet reconstructs a similar gradation in the severity of droughts on the basis of Greek and Latin word usage: *Famines et émeutes à Rome des origines de la République à la mort de Néron* (Rome: Ecole française, 1986), 25–31.

<sup>320</sup> For their frequency, see R. MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966), 253.

<sup>321</sup> Cf. the discussion in *bTa'an.* 19a–b.

<sup>322</sup> For instance art. "Sabbatical Year," in *EJ*, 14:579, 583; art. "Famine and Drought," *EJ*, 6:1173, which mentions "three historical references to famine caused by the observance of the sabbatical year": *AJ* 12.378 (cf. 1 Mac. 6.49–54) concerning the years 163–62 B.C.E.; *AJ*

however, any land had to be let fallow anyway at frequent intervals; if it were to bear any grain at all, it is not obvious that the sabbatical year was injurious in the long run.<sup>323</sup> The hardship, if any, was of a social nature—that is, means taken to store or distribute sufficiently ample provisions of dry goods

---

14.475; 15.7. See Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, 142, concerning the 46–48 C.E. famine in Judaea; E. Schürer, *History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.–A.D. 135)* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1973), 1:457, n. 8. As for Josephus's mentions (reduced to two, since *AJ* 14.475 and 15.7 concern the same period—add *AJ* 13.234, with reference to sabbatical year, but no mention of famine), they imply that the practice of the sabbatical year made it much more difficult for Jerusalem to withstand a siege (cf. 1 Macc 6.49–54), but not that it increased the danger of famine in any other circumstance. Furthermore, Josephus's dates occasion difficult problems, on which see R. Marcus in LCL, at *AJ* 12.378 and 14.475. I do not think they are slips in Josephus' arithmetic. I rather suspect an exaggeration purporting to show that Jews, unlike other nations, were prepared to suffer deprivation in order to obey their laws. Cf. *LamR.* 1.17, accepted by S. Safrai as proof that the sabbatical year occasioned hardship: see *The Jewish People in the First Century* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 2:826. The general theme is also found in *Contra Apionem* 2.232–5. The rabbis, on the contrary, thought the practice advantageous, even from the economic point of view, though they express themselves in religious language: continued dwelling on the land, and wealth, were dependent upon the observance of the sabbatical year (*bShab.* 33a; *LevR.* 1.1).

<sup>323</sup>The difficulty thought to be involved in the practice of the year of release and the difficulties in the texts (Ex 23.10–11; Lev 25.1–7; Dt 25.1–11) have led scholars to deem it an ideal hardly realized in preexilic Israel: R. de Vaux, *Institutions de l'Ancien Testament* (Paris: Seuil, 1958), 1:266–67. In any case, its existence is amply demonstrated for the Second Temple period, even after Romans began to tax sabbatical year produce in the second century C.E. See the review of the evidence by S. Safrai, “The Practical Implementation of the Sabbatical Year After the Destruction of the Second Temple,” *Tarbiz* 35 (1966) 304–28; and 36 (1967) 1–21 (in Hebrew); idem, art. “Sabbatical Year,” in *EJ*, 14:578–85; idem, *The Jewish People in the First Century*, 2:825–27. L. Newman minimizes this evidence, *The Sanctity of the Seventh Year* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983), 19–20. He does not quote *AJ* 14.202 (concerning 46 B.C.E.) or *Mur.* 18 (55–56 C.E.), which is strong evidence of a sustained and widespread practice. True, through their systematic intellectual exploration of this topic, the framers of the Mishnah provided additional strength to the community after 135 C.E. in their new political situation. In spite of encroachments by the Roman powers, the practice endured and probably became a symbol of faith and cultural difference. There is evidence for its continuation at a much later period, in the fourth century (three epitaphs from Zoar/Ghoros-Safieh in which the sabbatical year is used as reference date, see K. Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984], 369–70), and as late as the sixth century C.E.: a Talmudic inscription concerning the sabbatical year, the areas not subjected to *halakbah* but whose products were considered *demai*, etc., was found recently at Rehov (Beth Shean): see J. Sussmann, “The Inscription in the Synagogue at Rehov,” in *Ancient Synagogues Revealed*, ed. L. I. Levine (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1981), 146–53. Assessment of the evidence and calendar of sabbatical cycles for the Second Temple and early rabbinic periods in B. Z. Wacholder, “The Calendar of Sabbatical Cycles during the Second Temple and the Early Rabbinic Period,” *HUCA* 44 (1973) 153–96.

could be unfair. In fact, the sabbatical year provided limited assurance that very small tenants and landholders who sold land, tools, clothing, and even themselves in difficult times, especially during famines, could regain them from lenders.<sup>324</sup> It was a check put on the concentration of land and power in a few hands.

The major reason for famines was the failure of rains. If fasts were of no avail, and prayers or reliance upon holymen's powers had also failed, then death was at the door for many. It was in such circumstances that a story portrays R. Eliezer (90–130 C.E., school at Lydda) as asking his congregation: "Have you prepared graves for yourself?"<sup>325</sup> Famine itself was considered the worst evil of the triad: "pestilence, sword, famine."<sup>326</sup> In his description of a famine occurring during the years 25/24 B.C.E. (thirteenth year of Herod the Great), Josephus gives us a glimpse of the terrible chain of events following a drought:

For in the first place, there were continual droughts, and as a result the earth was unproductive even of such fruits as it usually brought forth by itself. In the second place, because of the change of diet brought about by the lack of cereals, bodily illnesses and eventually the plague prevailed...<sup>327</sup> The death of those who perished in this manner deprived the survivors of their courage also...And since, too, the fruits of that year were destroyed and those which had been stored up had been consumed, there was no hope of relief left...And it was not only for that year that they had nothing left, but the seed of the crops that survived was also lost when the earth yielded nothing the second year. So their necessity made them find new ways of sustaining themselves...<sup>328</sup> [Though he lost his normal tax revenues, the king bought grains from Egypt for distribution.] For in the first place, to those who were able to provide food for

<sup>324</sup>It was originally a year of release of *all* bonds, e.g., for plants, animals, and people. See S. Safrai, articles cited in preceding note.

<sup>325</sup>*bTa'an.* 25b, top: "Thereupon the people sobbed loudly and rain fell."

<sup>326</sup>*m.Av.* 5.8; see art. "Famine and Drought," in *EJ*, 6:1173.

<sup>327</sup>Not necessarily the plague whose outbreak in 541–42 C.E. is the first clearly documented in the Mediterranean: J. N. Biraben, *Les hommes et la peste en France et dans les pays européens et méditerranéens* (Paris: Mouton, 1975), 1:23ff.

<sup>328</sup>Josephus does not describe these "new ways." Famine and hunger did not stop the tax collectors from taking their dues. For the peasant, to see the "bailiffs in the field, tax-collectors in the field, and sons and daughters stretched out in hunger [was] as though a snake had bitten him," *bSanh.* 98b. Farmers then ate their crops unripe: "A man plucks from his field and eats while it is still green and unripe," *GnR.* 20.10 (early fourth century C.E.).

themselves by their own labour he distributed grain in very exact proportions. Then, since there were many who because of old age or some other attendant infirmity were unable to prepare the grain for themselves, he provided for them by putting bakers to work and furnishing them food already prepared. He also took care that they should go through the winter without danger (to health), including that of being in need of clothing, for their flocks had been destroyed and completely consumed, so that they had no wool to use or any other material for covering themselves.<sup>329</sup>

When rain failed to fall during the winter, cereals could not grow and neither could the summer crops (i.e., the especially important legumes). Many trees eventually died. The weakest animals also disappeared because they had no access to water or food and were more susceptible to diseases. Wild animals such as dogs and wolves, themselves hungry, became a threat to life.<sup>330</sup> The population relied at first on their storage of grains and fruits, if any, or on the most powerful philanthropists, especially the king, who was expected to fulfill his duties as divine representative. But it was impossible for most tenant farmers to store food for more than a year, if for that long.<sup>331</sup> To make reserves last longer, one mixed cereals and legumes, a practice common among poor people in normal times. Rations of bread and water were progressively decreased, public fasts being one major means. One began to

<sup>329</sup> *AJ* 15.300–10. See also *BJ* 5.512–18; 548–52; cf. the graphic descriptions of famine in the Bible (Dt 28.49–57: cannibalism). The Palestinian Targum emphasizes some of these horrors but minimizes others; see Le Déaut, *Le Targum du Pentateuque*, 4:233–37. The whole of *Lamentations*, which was recited on the 9th of Av, has influenced Josephus and the rabbis; see Lam 2.20; Ezek 4.9–17; Joel 1.16–20; a similar text, giving various degrees of horror, in *bTa'an*. 5a (saying attributed to R. Yoḥanan); cf. Galen's description, below, concerning a climatic accident. The worst situation came about when movements of troops occurred, with constant raids, sieges, and other exactions. The little that had been stored in case of famines suddenly vanished in the most brutal manner. In *BJ* 2.528, for instance, Josephus reports that Cestius sent troops to collect grain in the villages around Jerusalem. Descriptions of famines in modern times help fill the gaps of ancient sources: see, e.g., D. G. Carlson, "Famine in History: With a Comparison of Two Modern Ethiopian Diasters," in *Famine*, ed. K. M. Cahill (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1982), 5–16.

<sup>330</sup> *mTa'an*. 3.6.

<sup>331</sup> *pSheq.* 8.1, quoted by D. Sperber, *Roman Palestine, 200–400: Crisis and Change in Agrarian Society as Reflected in Rabbinic Sources. The Land* (Ramat-Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan University, 1978), 125, n. 23. The very common existence of debts in grain meant that they were at the threshold of subsistence. The landowner's interest was to provide sharecroppers with seeds and minimum subsistence, but no more. This was also Herod's interest when, in a time of famine, he provided seeds, "in very exact proportions," to the inhabitants of his realm: *AJ* 15.309, 311 (Syria).

rely more on wild plants, some of which were unpalatable and even toxic if not properly cooked: various roots and bulbs, wild carobs. Young bud-dings of fenugreek and vetches were eaten at such times, or even plants for which rules of purity could not obtain anymore.<sup>332</sup>

One came to various desperate means. A late legend tells how R. Yoḥanan b. Zakkai, after seeing the famished Jews of besieged Jerusalem boiling straw in water and drinking it in the public places (69 C.E.), decided to flee.<sup>333</sup> After the war, according to other stories, he saw a starving Jewish girl picking up grains of barley from horse dung.<sup>334</sup> It is difficult to ascertain whether the scene was familiar. The story makes this case particularly striking by claiming that the girl was the daughter of Naqdimon ben Gurion, who had been one of the wealthiest men of Jerusalem before its destruction.<sup>335</sup> She was a famous example indeed, for R. Eleazar b. Sadoq (ca. 100 C.E.), perhaps in an older variant of the story, is reported to have met her in Akko in abject poverty.<sup>336</sup> This sort of story, regardless of its factual basis, was an old theme of Hebrew as well as Greek literature, a variation on “the noble man fallen from riches.”<sup>337</sup>

Poor people were the hardest hit because they had little saved either as grains or valuables. The families of tenant farmers and fieldworkers of

<sup>332</sup>The status of these plants as consecrated food is discussed in *mMa'as.Sb.* 2.3–4 and *tMa'as.Sb.* 2.1.88, lines 4ff., on the basis of their predominant or intended use: human food or cattle fodder? See P. J. Haas, *A History of the Mishnaic Law of Agriculture* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1980), 46–52. For the impossibility to follow purity rules in times of famine, cf. *bTa'an.* 5a, a text which, as noted in n. 331 above, [check] keeps with scriptural tradition (Ezek 4, for instance). All “table manners” disappeared, as Josephus remarked, *BJ* 5.427: people trapped in Jerusalem ate in the dark recesses of houses; the grain was sometimes unground; there was no table; food was snatched half-cooked, torn in pieces.

<sup>333</sup>*ARN* 6.

<sup>334</sup>*Mekh. Ex* 19.1; *Sifre Dt* 31.14; *pKeth.* 5.13. Compare Josephus’s description in *BJ* 5.571: “Some were reduced to such straits that they searched the sewers and for old cow dung and ate the offal therefrom.” The Greek text has two rare words, Homeric (Thackeray, in the LCL edition of Josephus, 3:376, n. d, ad loc.). The theme may therefore have been expected in any text describing the horrors of famine and polished to accommodate delicate, civilized, ears.

<sup>335</sup>Cf. A. Büchler, *The Economic Condition of Judaea After the Destruction of the Second Temple* (1912), repr. in *Understanding the Talmud*, ed. A. Corré (New York: KTAV, 1975).

<sup>336</sup>*tKeth.* 5.10.267, lines 7–9; *pKeth.* 5.13.30c, top; *bKeth.* 67a. See Finkelstein’s note in his edition of *Sifre Dt* 31.14, p. 325.

<sup>337</sup>*Lam* 4.5 could be the direct inspiration. On the Greek side also, stories of war atrocities included the theme of women being put to shame; see, e.g., Isocrates, *Epistle* 9, 8–11 (to Archidamus; the authenticity of the letter is questioned).



store, and protect it, in view of not only their own consumption but also speculation. In reaction to overtaxation and hoarding, peasants could resort to banditry and attack convoys and granaries, especially when the sowing for the following year had not been done.<sup>343</sup> In cities, prices shot up as long as those hungry had money (or other valuables) to buy it. If the drought persisted, however, all money disappeared, especially copper coins, which poor people could manage to have.<sup>344</sup> Prices would then fall but many people could not find money and would be “swollen from hunger,” as R. Yoḥanan reportedly said concerning a famine in the Tiberias of his youth.<sup>345</sup> Then, cities could function as refuges no more. To insist on the horror of the war and famine in besieged Jerusalem, the apocalyptic discourse of Lk 21 recommends that those who are inside the city should leave it (ἐνχωρεῖτωσαν) and those who are in the country should not enter it (21.21).

The society at large was not without defense against this familiar danger.<sup>346</sup> The main responses were to lower everyone’s consumption, keep production as steady as possible, and unrest at a minimum. The last goal was achieved through storage and distributions of grain and the use of force.

---

*nomie Condition of Judaea, 57–59*). It was obviously a better situation to be able to live in, or enter, a fortified city: see *T. Jo.* at Dt 3.5, speaking of “city-fortresses, surrounded with high walls, closed in with locked gates...” Cities gathered the produce of their territory: *Jub.* 40.13; *T. Jo.* at Gen 41.48 (*Neofiti 1* speaks of “territory”). Not everyone could enter the city and buy wheat, as *T. Jo.* Gen 42.6 shows: “Now Joseph was governor over the land. Since he knew that his brothers were coming to buy, he had placed guards at the city gates to register all those who would enter that day—their name and that of their father—he it was who sold wheat to all the people of the land.” (The explanations given by the Targum are italicized.) For a description of the numerous fortified cities of Peraea, see Josephus, *BJ* 4.410–18. A full-scale study of Roman grain storage has been done by G. Rickman, *Roman Granaries and Store Buildings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971). The same author details the military policies relating to the collection of grain in *The Corn Supply of Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).

<sup>343</sup>Josephus, *AJ* 20.5: banditry associated with famine at the end of the forties C.E. In war circumstances, not directly famine, *BJ* 2.587–89 (supposedly involving “fugitives from the region of Tyre and the villages in that neighbourhood.”) and *Vita* 71. See R. A. Horsley and J. S. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets and Messiahs* (Minneapolis: Winston, 1985), 48–87 (chap. 2). Compare M. Jameson, “Famine in the Greek World,” in *Trade and Famine in Classical Antiquity*, ed. P. Garnsey and C. R. Whittaker (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1983), 8.

<sup>344</sup>Any money in the hands of hamlet and village residents made its way back into the pockets (belts, rather) of landowners living in fortified cities: *Jub.* 42.3.

<sup>345</sup>Full quote below.

<sup>346</sup>For a discussion of the range of responses available in the ancient world, see P. Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World: Responses to Risk and Crisis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), part 2, “Survival Strategies.”

Grain inventories were a very important aspect of city politics in the ancient world, and there were attempts at the local and imperial levels—ad hoc measures rather than a systematic approach—to solve the problems caused by speculation and hoarding of grains.<sup>347</sup> The second goal, a steady production, could be achieved first by ensuring that crops would be planted and tended. For this, the cooperation of tenant farmers was necessary.<sup>348</sup> The spreading of risks and labor needs throughout the year and across a wide territory by encouraging production of a variety of cereal, legumes, and animal products, also minimized the danger of famine.<sup>349</sup> Religious measures had various effects. Individual and collective fasts, prayers, even the idea that a drought was a collective punishment inflicted by God, tended to encourage social cohesion while lowering consumption. Furthermore, compassion and philanthropy were demanded from the rich, particularly from the king or prince.

Famines characterized by widespread starvation and an increased mortality rate were rare. Temporary and localized food shortages of various origins seem to have been quite frequent. Josephus alluded to the cyclical occurrence of famines as an alternative to the religious explanation that held that they were punishments decreed by God for specific transgressions of his laws.<sup>350</sup> His remark points out the fair regularity of a phenomenon observed from one generation to another. The very tentative survey that follows indicates that severe droughts happened perhaps as often as every twenty years.<sup>351</sup>

<sup>347</sup>See one instance regarding Pisidian Antioch, ca. 93 C.E., in F. F. Abbott and A. C. Johnson, *Municipal Administration in the Roman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1926), 381–82, text 65a. ET in N. Lewis, *Greek Historical Documents. The Roman Principate 27 B.C.–285 A.D.* (Toronto: Hakkert, 1974), 44–45. Fraud was a permanent feature: Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* 1.15; see also *Digest* 47.11; 48.12.

<sup>348</sup>In this regard, it would be interesting to know what Herod, in *AJ* 15.300–10, a text quoted above, asked from those able to work in return for their rations: the sowing of their fields?

<sup>349</sup>See Chapter 3. Important landowners were in a better position to have a steady income by having holdings in different areas. It was naturally in their interest to provide minimal security to their tenant farmers in difficulty by providing seeds and food from their own reserves. But in return, the rents they charged were set just high enough to maintain tenants at subsistence level.

<sup>350</sup>Josephus, *AJ* 15.299: κατὰ περιόδους. Drought as punishment for the failure to give the tithes or dues, *m.Av.* 5.8, *bShab.* 32b; on the contrary, abundance was at hand if one paid the dues; see below, Chapter 3.

<sup>351</sup>List of famines in Schürer, *History*, 1:457, n. 8. The Talmuds are full of indications, but it is usually impossible to date the situation being alluded to and say how generalized

1. 38–39 C.E.: According to Josephus, a drought beset the country.<sup>352</sup>
2. 45 or 46–48 C.E.:

It was in the administration of Tiberius Alexander that the great famine occurred in Judea, during which Queen Helena brought grain from Egypt for large sums and distributed it to the needy.<sup>353</sup>

Both the date of this famine and its extent are under dispute. This translation follows the reading of the epitome and implies the dates 46–48 C.E. for the famine.<sup>354</sup> One may understand the reading of *AJ* 20.101, however, as referring to both procurators Cuspius Fadus and Tiberius Alexander, meaning that the drought had possibly begun in 45.<sup>355</sup> The Acts of the Apostles may also refer to the same event. Acts 11.28–30 places it under Claudius (41–54 C.E.). Relief was sent to Judaea only, and it is hardly likely that the whole *oikumene* was affected.<sup>356</sup> This generalization of Acts was “as unhistorical as the similar expression used of the census under Quirinus.”<sup>357</sup> Those same events may also be the object of another passage in Josephus’s *Antiquities*:

Shortly before the recent war, Claudius being ruler of the Romans and Ishmael our high priest, when our country was in the grip of a famine so severe that an *assarôn* was sold for four drachms [...] not one of the priests ventured to consume

---

and severe it was. Very few droughts are well attested by independent sources. Most of these catastrophes left small imprints, such as memories of long public fasts, relaxation of tithing laws concerning produce used only by the poor or in difficult times, and the munificence of princes or kings. On the incidence of famines in the Roman Empire, see MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order*, 249–54.

<sup>352</sup> *AJ* 18.285.

<sup>353</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 20.101; 20.51–53; 18.8; Eusebius, *HE* 2.3, 8, 12.

<sup>354</sup> ἐπὶ τοῦτου δε καὶ τὸν μέγαν λιμὸν κατὰ τὴν Ἰουδαίαν συνέβη γενέσθαι.... (Niese, ed., 352).

It is also more in agreement with Josephus’s style, see Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 142, who suggests that the sabbatical year of 47–48 C.E. may have been an additional hardship.

<sup>355</sup> ἐπὶ τούτοις: this reading is in better agreement with the context and the Latin translation (*horum temporibus*), Jeremias, *ibid.* See also Schürer, *History*, 1:457, n. 8.

<sup>356</sup> Orosius, *Hist.* 7.6.12, extends the famine to Syria. In his discussion of this famine, K. S. Gapp concludes that it was general: “The Universal Famine Under Claudius,” *HTR* 28 (1935) 258–65; but his reasoning relies heavily on the presupposed existence of a responsive international market, not to mention quick and accurate communications between officials. See also M. Hengel, *Victory Over Violence* (London: SPCK, 1975), 64, 83; *idem*, *Die Zeloten* (Leiden: Brill, 1961), 348, 352.

<sup>357</sup> Schürer, *History*, 1:457, n. 8.

a crumb [or a loaf of the leavened bread presented to the Temple], albeit such dearth prevailed throughout the country, from fear of the law...<sup>358</sup>

Rabbinical literature may also have kept the memory of the same famine: the elder Eleazar b. Sadoq (ca. 100 C.E.) saw in his youth R. Yoḥanan b. Ḥauranit eat his bread dry, “when there were years of dearths.”<sup>359</sup> The stories on the Adiabanan house’s generosity in years of dearth, better documented, probably refer back also to the middle of the first century C.E.<sup>360</sup>

3. Ca. the first Jewish War: in 69 C.E., springs failed in the Jerusalem area, the Siloah spring included, “insomuch that water was sold by the amphora.”<sup>361</sup> In 69–70 C.E., there was a famine in Jerusalem on account of the siege.<sup>362</sup> Allusions to the same events may have been preserved in Talmudic literature. Water failed at Jerusalem, not long before the First Jewish War, and Naqdemon b. Gorion, a rich “out-standing man,” went and asked for twelve wells from the Roman

<sup>358</sup> *AJ* 3,320–21. Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 142–43, thinks that Josephus may have given the wrong name for the high-priest of the moment and would refer this text to the same famine. If one follows Thackeray (LCL edition of Josephus, 4:474–75, ad loc.) who sees a mistake in the name of the emperors (Claudius instead of Nero) one would have here a second famine, dated to 59–61 C.E. T. Rajak similarly argues that Josephus might have alluded to Claudius in confusion with the first famine, and is inclined to date this second famine in the 60s: *Josephus: The Historian and His Society* (London: Duckworth, 1983), 125.

<sup>359</sup> *tSukk.* 2.3.193–94; *tEduy.* 2.2.457; cf. *bYev.* 15b. Jeremias thinks that “it is more likely to refer to the famine under Claudius, than to the shortage during the siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70,” *Jerusalem*, 143. It may refer to neither, since we do not know the source of the dearths. One may infer from the context that only part of the population suffered, perhaps on account of periods of dear money and spells of drought, and that others had enough food stored.

<sup>360</sup> *tPe’ab* 4.18.24; *pPe’ab* 1.1.15b, bottom; *bBB* 11a. On the generosity of Helen of Adiabene and her son Monobaz, both converted to Judaism (Josephus, *AJ* 20.51–53), see E. Urbach, “Treasures Above,” in *Hommage à Georges Vajda. Etudes d’histoire et de pensée juives*, ed. G. Nahon and Ch. Touati (Louvain: Peeters, 1980), 117–24. Because of the resemblance of his name with the verb “to waste” (*levazbez*), Monobaz seems to have been the victim of ironic comments regarding his profligacy. It was a necessity, and therefore a duty, that rich people, especially princes, be charitable. But it was felt that there ought to be a limit on charity in normal situations lest patrimonies be endangered. In the case of proselytes, however, this limit was not considered essential, and the demand for their gifts was very pressing.

<sup>361</sup> *BJ* 5.409–10.

<sup>362</sup> *BJ* 5.571.

commander.<sup>363</sup> Yoḥanan b. Zakkai (end of the first century C.E.) reportedly saw a similar failure of rainfall.<sup>364</sup>

4. A number of texts from the end of the second century C.E. refer to situations that cannot be dated with any precision. For instance, the Mishnah reports that a fast connected with a drought was prescribed in Lydda, but rain came before noon. “Go, said R. Tarfon [ca. 100–130 C.E.] to the congregation, eat and drink, make merry.”<sup>365</sup> Indications of droughts, or at least of severe local problems, may also be seen in the relaxation of impurity laws concerning such poor foods as *kersenneh*. These regulations, which were enacted in days of famine, may well go back in time, but no precision is possible. The Sages mentioned are: Aqiva (before 135 C.E.), Simeon b. Yohai (ca. 150), and Simeon b. Eliezer (ca. 190).<sup>366</sup>
5. There is more evidence on droughts in the Amoraic period (200–400 C.E.): it is adduced from Talmudic recollections of fasts ordered when in danger of famine.<sup>367</sup> The longer and stricter the fast, the more severe the drought. But the sources listed below are undatable and do not prove that any drought lasted a whole season. There are stories concerning R. Levi,<sup>368</sup> Rabbi,<sup>369</sup> R. Ḥanina b. Ḥama,<sup>370</sup> and R. Yoḥanan, who refers to a famine in his youth during a discussion on the criteria permitting a distinction between drought and famines:

R. Hanina said: if a *seah* of grain costs one *sela* and is obtainable, it is drought; but if four *seahs* cost a *sela* but are not easily obtainable, then it is a famine. R. Johanan: this holds good only when money is cheap and food dear, but if money is dear and food cheap then the alarm is sounded at once. For R. Johanan said: I remember well (the time) when four *seahs* cost one *sela* and yet there were many in Tiberias swollen from hunger be-

<sup>363</sup> *Bar. bTa’an.* 19b–20a; see Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 143–44.

<sup>364</sup> *pTa’an.* 3.13,67a, line 40.

<sup>365</sup> *mTa’an.* 3.11.

<sup>366</sup> See above, p. 50. [check] *mMa’as. Sh.* 2.4; *tMa’as. Sh.* 2.1; *pHall.* 4.60b; *pMa’as. Sh.*

2.53c.

<sup>367</sup> Most are collected “in rough chronological order” in D. Sperber: “Drought, Famine and Pestilence in Amoraic Palestine,” *JESHO* 17 (1974) 275–79.

<sup>368</sup> *bTa’an.* 25a: “Levi ordered a fast, prayed for rain. . . .”

<sup>369</sup> *bBB* 8a: “Rabbi opened his store-houses in years of drought.”

<sup>370</sup> *pTa’an.* 3.4; cf. *bTa’an.* 25a.

cause there was not a coin to be had.<sup>371</sup>

6. Other texts report famine, pestilence, and fasts or series of fasts ordered by the patriarchs.<sup>372</sup>

### 1.3 DISEASES AND DEATH

In regard to diseases, Flavius Josephus simply mentions that “the change of diet brought about . . . bodily illnesses.” A text resulting from the technical interest of Galen of Pergamum is much more precise and revealing. Galen writes in the second century C.E. and is referring to conditions observed in the center of the Roman Empire. His remarks also apply to Roman Palestine:

The continuous famines throughout many of the provinces which have followed each other for some years demonstrated clearly—except to utter blockheads—that unhealthy food tends to generate disease. The city-dwellers, as it was their practice to gather and store immediately after harvest corn sufficient for all the next year, lifted all the wheat together with the barley and beans and lentils, and left the remainder for the rustics—that is pulses of various kinds (and a good deal even of those they took to the city). The country people during the winter finished the pulses, and so during the spring had to fall back on unhealthy foods; they ate twigs and shoots of trees and bushes, bulbs and roots of indigestible plants, they even filled themselves with wild herbs . . . or cooked fresh grass [...] You could see some of them at the end of spring and practically all at the beginning of the summer attacked by various ulcers springing up on the skin; these ulcers took different forms...<sup>373</sup>

<sup>371</sup>*bTa’an.* 19b, top: .

<sup>372</sup>*bTa’an.* 8b; fasts ordered by R. Judah Nesiah and by the house of the patriarchs: *bTa’an.* 24a. Series of thirteen fasts, without result, ordered by R. Judah Nesiah II: *bTa’an.* 14 a–b.

<sup>373</sup>*De Rebus Boni Malique Suci* 1.1–3; text in G. Helmreich, *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum* (Leipzig and Berlin: Teubner, 1923), 4/2:389; ET in M. P. Charlesworth, *The Roman Empire* (London: Oxford, 1968), 48. Shorter description by Eusebius of similar phenomena during a famine in 312 C.E. in the East under Maximinus: “while the rest of the inhabitants of the cities under his rule were so terribly wasted by both the famine [*limós*] and the pestilence, that two thousand five hundred Attic drachmas were given for a single measure of wheat. Countless was the number of those who were dying in the cities, and still larger of those in the country parts and villages, with the result that the registers, which formerly contained the names of a numerous population, were now all but entirely wiped out; for one might almost say that the entire population perished all at once through lack of food

Galen's text puts in perspective the interest shown by classical Jewish texts for such foods as vetch or *kersenneh*, bulbs and roots. All of these were used as foods by the poorest people in normal times and in times of famine by larger segments of the population. The text also illustrates the desperate situation of country people. It may well be, however, that inhabitants of mountainous areas such as Judaea and Galilee fell victim less easily to such catastrophes because of their relative isolation.<sup>374</sup>

Malnutrition meant that poor people were also more prone to diseases,<sup>375</sup> often skin diseases brought about by a lack of vitamins in their diets. In Judaism, a number of skin diseases, not all contagious (according to modern medicine), were deemed leprosy.<sup>376</sup> Any person so affected was considered unfit for any social contact, except with his or her own kind, as long as the condition persisted.<sup>377</sup> There was a direct link in this case between poverty and impurity, a subject explored in the following chapter. Purity laws affected the poor more deeply and could effectively eliminate them from normal social intercourse. Mortality rates, especially postnatal infant mortality, tended to be high in the ancient world,<sup>378</sup> without any

---

and through plague" (*HE* 9.8.4–5). There is another description of plague in *HE* 3.6.

<sup>374</sup> See Josephus' difficulties in dealing with the Galileans.

<sup>375</sup> Story of Lazarus in Lk 16.19ff. See also n. 319 above. [check]

<sup>376</sup> Lev 13–14; *mNeg.*, passim. Jesus cured "lepers": Lk 5.12–14; 17.12; cf. Mt 10.8; Lk 7.22. The *sara'at* of the Bible was not the leprosy known to modern medicine: E. V. Hulst, "The Nature of Biblical 'Leprosy' and the Use of Alternative Medical Terms in Modern Translations of the Bible," *PEQ* 107 (1975) 87–105. See bibliography in Bauer, *Lexicon*, 471 (λέπρα).

<sup>377</sup> Lev 13.45–46; Lk 17; Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 1.281: "He (Moses) has, in fact, forbidden lepers either to stay in a town or to make their abode in a village; they must go about in solitude, with their garments rent. Anyone who touches them or lives under the same roof with them he considers unclean." Cf. *AJ* 3.261–69. *mNeg* 13.11–12; 14.2–3; see Strack–Billerbeck, 4:745–63. Perhaps the segregation was no longer a legal requirement in Talmudic times (art. "Leprosy", in *EJ*, 11:38), but only "the result of popular feeling."

<sup>378</sup> An expectation of life at birth of thirty years is the figure envisioned by Ulpian in a law on the beneficiaries of *alimenta* (*lex Falcidia*, fragment incorporated in *Digesta* 35.2.68, in a law on the twentieth of inheritances). The figures given in this text, though not based on a scientific analysis, represented an accurate empirical assessment of the demography of the time: see F. Jacques, *Le privilège de liberté* (Rome: Ecole française, 1984), 497–500; also B. Frier, "Roman Life Expectancy: Ulpian's Evidence," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 86 (1982) 213–51. Studies of the demographic structure of the Roman population were conducted long ago by A. Harkness on the basis of the *CIL* and have recently been resumed by R. P. Saller, B. Shaw and others: See A. Harkness, "Age at Marriage and at Death in the Roman Empire," *TAPA* 27 (1896) 35–72; R. P. Saller, "Men's Age at Marriage and Its Consequences in the Roman Family," *Classical Philology* 82 (1987) 21–34, on a wider epigraphic basis, with recent bibliography. P. Salmon has studied the consequences of malnutrition

noticeable difference between rich and poor people.<sup>379</sup> There is some evidence that the same was true in Roman Palestine.<sup>380</sup>

#### 1.4 CONCLUSION

Wealthier people seemed to have secured a good living, although they were subject to catastrophes, mainly of a political type. They were the only people regularly eating good meat, old wine, excellent bread, varied vegetables,

---

in the Roman Empire: *Population et dépopulation dans l'Empire romain* (Bruxelles: Latomus, 1974), 76–113.

<sup>379</sup>Harkness, *TAPA* 27 (1896) 66–67, was puzzled to discover that there was no significant difference between the ages at death of upper and lower classes. His explanation in terms of the “immorality” and “excesses of the wealthy” is unnecessary: the difference came into being in the modern period.

<sup>380</sup>Recent archaeological evidence pointing toward very high infant and child mortality rates, comparable with “that of nineteenth century Bedouin,” has been gathered by P. Smith and J. Zias, “Skeletal Remains from French Hill Tomb,” *IEJ* 30 (1980) 113. Their article presents in table form, p. 111, the results from burial grounds discovered at French Hill (Late Hellenistic Period), Jericho (10–70 C.E.), Jerusalem (Roman), and Meiron in Upper Galilee (fourth century C.E., for comparison purposes). At French Hill, Jericho, and Jerusalem, respectively 27 percent, 33 percent, and 32 percent of skeletal remains belong to individuals less than twelve years of age (from among respectively 33, 31, and 65 individuals). At Meiron, however, 41 percent of skeletal remains (108 individuals) belong to individuals less than twelve years of age. The authors think that the lower child mortality at the first three sites may be due to the fact that these cemeteries were accessible only to better off families, which alone could afford to own and have such expensive tombs prepared. But “middle and upper classes” (the authors’ concepts) are known to enjoy lower mortality rates only in the modern periods. The figures given in the table quoted could be interpreted to mean an expectation of life at birth of about thirty years. But it would be rash to consider these skeletal remains to be proper samples of the population, rich or poor. On the hazardousness of statistical calculations, see P. Guillaume and J. P. Poussou, *Démographie historique* (Paris: A. Colin, 1970), 36–42.

M. Broshi has suggested that life expectancy may have been higher in the Jewish population because infanticide was discouraged within Judaism: “The Role of the Temple in the Herodian Economy,” *JJS* 38 (1987) 37. To evaluate this claim, one would have to know more about the actual practices of various communities.

There is some literary evidence for a short life expectancy. For instance the following saying: “When do you have the privilege to see your sons’ sons? If you marry your sons young” (*Mekh. Ex* 21.10, my translation). Text in Lauterbach, 3:27. Parallel passages in *pQidd.* 1.2.59c; 1.7.61a; *bQidd.* 19a; 30b; *bYev.* 62b. If “young” in this text meant adolescence, then one could hope to be grandfather before age forty. This sort of advice would not be surprising if average life expectancy at birth was about thirty years. But more in line with Roman habits, the *Rule of the Community* at Qumran demanded that no sexual relation take place before age twenty: *IQS* 1.4–11. The Mishnah gives eighteen as a good age for marriage: *mAv.* 5.21.

fruit, and nuts. Most people ate bread or porridges made of barley, various cereals and legumes, or more rarely wheat. They supplemented them usually with salt and oil or olives, occasionally a strong sauce, honey, or sweet fruit juices. They also secured very small quantities of milk and cheese. They had vegetables and fresh fruits when in season, dried fruits otherwise, which were very important sources of calcium, vitamins, and riboflavin. They could not afford “noble” meat, except for festivities, and even then in small quantity. Greater poverty meant having a worse bread, full of bran and impurities, accompanied by salt and little oil. It also meant no meat and no vegetables, except roots and wild edible plants. The only respite for the very poor was at harvest times when they could obtain better cereals and fruits, provided they had the necessary familial or tribal relationships. As for the beggars and vagabonds, they had only as little as 500 grams or less of bread per day, and not much else.

500 or 700 grams of whole wheat bread perhaps contain enough protein for a day but do not give sufficient calories. Someone eating only whole wheat or barley bread, especially in limited quantity, would lack essential aminoacids and minerals. The very poor could not subsist on such a diet without developing diseases. The rich alone could afford a perfect diet, but they seemed to focus on richer bread, fat meats, old wines, and honey—that is, on more fats and sweets. They did not necessarily obtain the correct combination of food any more than the rest of the population, but they had a much better chance to do so.

The real difference between rich and poor people was in terms of security. Richer people had a wide margin of safety because in times of trouble they could resort to lower-quality meats, barley, and more legumes. They had possession of, or access to, larger and militarily safer stores. The main characteristic of the poor, on the contrary, was to be so dependent on barley, legumes (of the less desirable quality), and wild plants that when any catastrophe struck, death was at the door. The Midrash on Lamentations puts it tersely: “While the fat one becomes lean, the lean one is dead.”<sup>381</sup>

Food was used to advertise and reinforce the social hierarchy. Wealth was recognized through positive as well as negative signs: positive signs included consumption of choice meat, white wheat bread, and wine; negative, the avoidance of barley bread, certain legumes, wild plants, certain types of meat. The kind of meat one ate was the clearest sign of status. Poor people could not eat meat or wheat. They were recognized by their consumption of

<sup>381</sup> *LamR.* 3.10.

barley bread and lower-quality meat or wine (vinegar). They tried to avoid the use of poorer cereals, bitter pulses, and other “wild herbs” or roots on which they counted as a supplement or even as the only things left in times of drought. Salt, oil, and legumes seem to have been left without clear social connotation, perhaps because of their fundamental importance in everyone’s diet. Yet these products too, especially oil, came in various degrees of quality.

This social code was clothed in religious terms. Jewish purity rules, even when variously interpreted, had the result of clearly marking out certain kinds of food as especially desirable: the meat of some animals, cereals that could raise or give a flour abundant and white like manna, wine. It was therefore more difficult for poor people to fulfill purity rules. They had to use certain kinds of food whose status was not quite as “clear”: for example, a flour that was less pure or white and came from grains or legumes also used by animals; meat from less noble origin (locusts; fish brine; meat from older domesticated animals that had perhaps been improperly prepared). Poor, in that sense, meant having enough to eat, but little dignity and security. Among these poor, there were the needy who, for one reason or another, lost the little security they had and were reduced to beggary.

A very important aspect of food is that it brought together families, neighbors, brotherhoods, and, during the great festivities, even the whole nation. After the fall of the Second Temple, this communion continued in other forms. Religious authorities made allowances that enabled men and women to discharge their religious obligations with a minimum of decency, especially on Passover and Sabbaths, and feel at one with the rest of the people. Furthermore, a great stress was put on humility, requiring the wealthy normally to restrain themselves in various ways. But food often brought together people who separated themselves from others through their distinctive observance of purity rules. The fellowship signified by the breaking of bread involved strict social limitations formulated in religious language.

# Poverty <sup>2</sup> in clothing

Poverty in clothing meant lack of adequate protection against the elements. On this point our sources are generally clear, if brief, as the second part of this chapter will show. It also meant lack of human dignity, something much more difficult to understand and define fully, let alone trace. The word “dignity” conveniently expresses a number of values that are open to constant religious and philosophical reformulation. The third part of the chapter is devoted to the study of coats, shoes, and other articles of clothing as well as features such as quality of fabric, size, and color. Our goal is to discover the spiritual or social values attached to any of those elements, and also to appreciate the significance of their absence. Before considering what the sources may reveal of poverty so conceived, we begin with a description of the most common articles of clothing.

## 2.1 COMMON ARTICLES OF CLOTHING

This description, based on a fresh reading of the sources, takes into account the detailed information that can be obtained elsewhere: in the general monographs on ancient dress;<sup>1</sup> the previous studies of dress in Mishnaic

<sup>1</sup>Dictionary articles include: *Vestis*, in *DAGR*, 5:764ff.; art. “Cloth,” in *IDB*, 1:650–55, by L. Bellinger; “Tracht,” in *Der Kleine Pauly*, 5:905–6; art. *Chiton* and *Himation* in Pauly-Wissowa’s *RE* (by Amelung); “Costume,” in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., 7:232–36 (“Aegean, Greek and Roman Costume” by H. S. Jones; “Ancient and Oriental Costume” by S. A. Cook); “Dress,” in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 364–65, and the *EJ*, 6:214–15. Standard works on Greek dress are: M. Bieber, *Griechische Kleidung* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter and Co., 1928); idem, *Entwicklungsgeschichte der griechischen Tracht von der vorgriechischen Zeit bis zum Ausgang der Antike* (Berlin: Mann, 1967<sup>2</sup>). For Roman dress, a good summary is J. Carcopino, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome*, transl. E. O. Lorimer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), 153–56; H. W. Johnston, *The Private Life of the Romans* (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1932<sup>2</sup>), 176–202. A good overview is also to be found in M. Beaulieu, *Le costume antique et médiéval* (Paris: P.U.F., 1961), 42–65.

and Talmudic times;<sup>2</sup> and, more importantly, the reports on recent archaeological discoveries.<sup>3</sup>

The two standard garments were the tunic and the mantle or coat. The tunic was most often belted and it seems that most people also wore some sort of head covering and sandals, or sometimes shoes. Everyone wore such clothing, differences notwithstanding (about which more will be said later): men and women alike,<sup>4</sup> members of all social groups, people of substance and people of modest means, the latter inasmuch as they could afford them.

#### GARMENTS IN ANTIQUITY

All garments were made of either square or rectangular pieces of cloth, almost as they came out of the horizontal or vertical looms of the time,<sup>5</sup> and

---

Useful notes on techniques and historical developments are given by R. J. Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology* (Leiden: Brill, 1964<sup>2</sup>), 4:9–10, 31–32, 49, 58–59, 92 (concerning Roman Palestine). L. Friedländer, *Roman Life and Manners under the Early Empire* (New York: Dutton, 1909), 2:173–85 (transl. from the 7th ed.), is concerned with luxury dress. For notes, see German 10th ed. (rev. by G. Wissowa): *Darstellungen aus der Sittengeschichte Roms* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1922<sup>10</sup>), 2:315–30.

<sup>2</sup>Krauss, *TA*, 1:127–207 (esp. 130–36); G. Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina* (Güterloh: Bertelsmann, 1937), 5:199ff.; A. Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1974), 310–12; S. Schemel, *Die Kleidung der Juden im Zeitalter der Mischna* (Berlin: H. Itzkowski, 1912); A. Rosenzweig, *Kleidung und Schmuck im biblischen und talmudischen Schrifttum* (Berlin: Poppelauer, 1905); A. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (New York: Herrick, 1886), 1:620–25, based on the monograph by A. Brüll, *Trachten der Juden im nachbiblischen Alterthume*, pt. 1 (Frankfurt: I. St. Goar, 1873).

<sup>3</sup>Especially Y. Yadin, *The Finds from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters* (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society, 1963), chapt. 10, 11 and 12; for comparisons with Dura-Europos: C. H. Kraeling, *The Synagogue (The Excavations at Dura-Europos, Final Report VIII/1)* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956; New York: KTAV, 1979<sup>2</sup>). Many illustrations have been conveniently collected in: E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Graeco-Roman World* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1953–65), esp. vols. 1–3 and 11. See also E. Schürer, *History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.–A.D. 135)* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1986<sup>2</sup>), 3/110–13.

<sup>4</sup>There is little documentation on women's clothing proper, because it was not structurally different from men's. *Chiton* and *himation* (tunic and cloak, on which see below) were used for everyone, "save children, servants, or the like" (Kraeling, *The Synagogue*, 71). But there is much information to be gathered on cosmetics: see, e.g., Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte*, 5:267ff. On the nature of the difference between men's and women's clothing, see below, 94–96. [check]

<sup>5</sup>The looms in existence were probably of two types: the ancient warp-weighted loom and a two-beamed loom (the second particularly for wool). See the discussion in G. M. Crowfoot, "Linen Textiles from the Cave of Ain Feshka in the Jordan Valley," *PEQ* (1950–51) 5–31; *DJD*, 1:22–3; E. Crowfoot, in P. W. Lapp and N. L. Lapp, *Discoveries in the Wādi*

they could be used for various purposes.<sup>6</sup>

The cloth was not adapted to a person's size by cutting. This would have made the preparation time of the cloth longer and more costly. It also would have precluded its use for other purposes and made it less versatile as a garment proper, more difficult to pass on to others, or to lend.

Cutting and fitting began in some Mediterranean areas only during the late Roman Empire and continued to expand during the Byzantine and Islamic periods.<sup>7</sup> The sewn tunic is normally attested in Egypt after 250 C.E., coming from Asia through Persia and Syria. Together with the Celtic and Germanic costumes, it slowly imposed itself on the Roman world. Until then, clothes were not fitted as in our modern everyday attire, but were either wrapped around the body or slipped on,<sup>8</sup> and the overall effect could be quite elegant, as Greek statues abundantly demonstrate, and as still can be admired in several present-day cultures.

The materials in common use were wools of various kinds, linen, and cotton. Silk existed, but as a luxury. Linen had been cultivated since ancient times in Egypt and Palestine.<sup>9</sup> The use of cotton was already spreading from India through the Roman Empire, including Palestine, during the first cen-

---

*Ed-Dāliyah*, *AASOR* 41 (1974) 61. For photographs of traditional looms in modern rural Palestine, ca. 1900–20, see Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte*, 5: ill. 19–32, esp. 26–27; for a review on looms in antiquity, see Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology*, vol. 4.

<sup>6</sup>*bege*d meant something “woven,” “cloth,” and “clothing.” *Ḥaluq* was mainly used for the long shirt or tunic, but also for a piece of smooth linen. *šimlah* could be a sheet, a garment, or any type of covering (cf. *mBM* 2.5). *sadin* (= σινδών could be a linen sheet or a cloak. Another good example is the *sudarium* (σουδάριον, *sudar*, *sudara*, *sudra*). In *Jn* 11.44 and 20.7, as in *mKel.* 29.1, it is a piece of cloth used to cover head and neck (a turban, according to Jastrow's *Dictionary*); but it is used to keep one's money, in *Lk* 19.20; it is wrapped around the arms in *pShab.* 14d (and therefore a *bimation*?); in *Acts* 19.12 it is a piece of cloth to be applied to the sick after having touched Paul. More examples are given in Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte*, 239, 259.

<sup>7</sup>For the late Roman Empire, see the illustrations in the art. *Vestis* and *Cingulum*, in *DAGR*, 5:764–71 (by A. Boulanger) and 1/2:1174–82 (by E. Saglio); also H. I. Marrou, *Décadence romaine ou Antiquité tardive? IIIe–VIe siècle* (Paris: Seuil, 1977), 19. For the Islamic period, see Ibn Khaldun's remark in his *Prolegomena* (De Slane, ed., 2:327).

<sup>8</sup>*mShab.* 16.4: *lilboš* and *la'atof* (see complete text below, following page). [check]

<sup>9</sup>See Y. Feliks, *Mixed Sowing, Breeding, and Grafting* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1967), 198 (Heb.). Linen was used for the wrappers on the jars found at 'Ain Feshka: G. M. Crowfoot *PEQ* (1950–1) 5–31 (with photographs). Flax from Palestine was in high repute in the ancient world: Pausanias, 5.5.2; Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* 2.10; see J. A. O. Larsen, in Frank, *ESAR*, 4:485, n. 3; Krauss, *TA*, 1:536, n. 119.

turies of our era.<sup>10</sup> In early rabbinic literature, it was called “tree-wool”.<sup>11</sup> These materials were not always used in their purity and one often mixed fibers of various origins: for example, wools or hair of sheep, goats, and camels were woven with linen, cotton, or hemp. Only the mixing of pure sheep’s wool with linen was severely forbidden.<sup>12</sup> The quality of the cloth depended a great deal, of course, on the special care taken during spinning, weaving and any subsequent costlier operations, such as bleaching, mordanting, and dyeing.

In the Talmudic literature, the great variety of words for clothes relate more to place of origin, type of weaving and fabric, size, fineness, type of decoration, and ways to wear than strictly to function.<sup>13</sup> All these numerous variations did not particularly affect the basic design, which answered to

<sup>10</sup>Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology*, 4:48–49; a first attempt at acclimatization had been made by Sennacherib in the early seventh century B.C.E., but it did not last: G. Gossens, “Le coton en Assyrie,” *Annuaire de l’Institut de philologie et d’histoire slaves et orientales*, Brussels, 12 (1952) 169. Rediscovered by the Greeks in the wake of Alexander’s expeditions, cotton remained an imported luxury in the Near East during the Hellenistic period (*ibid.*, 174–76). A variety of indigenous cotton apparently existed in the south of Egypt: M. Daumas, “Les origines de la civilisation technique,” in *Histoire générale des techniques* (Paris: P.U.F., 1962), 1:169; perhaps also in Pamphylia: Philostratus, *Vita Apoll.* 3.15.4. See T. R. S. Broughton, in Frank, *ESAR*, 4:823.

<sup>11</sup>*šemer gofen*: *mKil.* 7.2; *pKil.* 27d; *b’Av. Zar.* 38b. See Feliks, *Mixed Sowing*, 214, n. 2, going against M. Lombard, *Les textiles dans le monde musulman: VIIe – XIIIe siècles* (Paris: Mouton, 1978), 62, 67ff., who writes that “L’Iran et le Proche-Orient ancien ne le cultivèrent pas, semble-t-il, avant les premiers siècles de l’Hégire.” Lombard bases his views on R. Pfister, *Bulletin d’Etudes Orientales* 11 (1945) 6. See also R. Pfister, *Textiles de Palmyre* (Paris: les Editions d’art et d’histoire, 1937), 2:20–21: the cotton found in Palmyra came from India. The word *kutonot* in Talmudic literature is but another word for flax: see Feliks, *Agriculture in Palestine in the Period of the Mishna and Talmud* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1963, in Hebrew), 153 and n. 300, 197 and n. 75.

<sup>12</sup>*mKil.* 9.1 (cf. *Sifre Dt* 22.11, Finkelstein, ed., p. 265); *mKil.* 8.1 and 9.1–10 mention wool from sheep, hair from goats or camels; linen; imported cloth made with hemp. It was permitted to mix cotton with wool: *pQidd.* 3.64c, bottom. No mixed kinds were found in the Judean desert (Yadin, *The Finds*, 170, 204, n. 1; tunics and mantles were in wool), presumably because Bar Kokhba’s followers adhered strictly to the customs. No mixed kinds either among the Roman period textiles were found in the Wadi Ed-Daliyeh (second century C.E.): Crowfoot, *AASOR* 41 (1974) 60. These were mostly linen fragments; two wool pieces showed Roman *clavi* (p. 65).

More details on this question of Mixed Kinds may be found in Y. Brand, “Clothing in the Talmudic Period,” in *Jubilee Volume in Honor of R. Israel Alpenbeim*, (Jerusalem: Mossad ha-Rav Kook, 1962), 44–45 (in Hebrew; I thank Prof. M. Caspi for this reference). On wool, see J. Burnley, *The History of Wool and Wool Combing* (London: Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1889; repr., New York: A. M. Kelley, 1969).

<sup>13</sup>See *mKel.* 29.1.

the following needs: adequate protection from the sun, cold, and winds; possibility of multiple uses (or simplicity of usage); simplicity of fabrication and repair at home or in the craftsman's shop.

## CLOAK AND TUNIC

The sources often present the cloak and the tunic together, called respectively *ἱμάτιον* and *χιτῶν* in the New Testament and *ḥalith* and *ḥaluq* (or *kuttonet/kituna*, a general term for undergarments) in Talmudic literature.<sup>14</sup> The cloak was wrapped, whereas the tunic was put on and belted, and both gestures also appear together in our sources, for example in a Mishnah passage discussing what objects may be saved without desecration from a house that has taken fire on the Sabbath: "He may put on him (*lobeš*) all the clothes that he can put on (*lilboš*) and wrap himself (*otef*) with whatsoever he can wrap himself (*la'atof*)."<sup>15</sup> "To wrap oneself" usually meant "to put one's cloak on," in Greek as well as in Mishnaic Hebrew and in Aramaic, whereas "to gird oneself" meant either to put one's tunic and belt on, or, more commonly, the belt alone, since the tunic was ordinarily kept on night and day.<sup>16</sup>

The cloak was a large sleeveless garment made of square pieces of thick material, usually wool.<sup>17</sup> It would be worn in several ways: for example, in the Roman fashion, thrown on the left shoulder, passing around the back and under the right arm to come to rest on the left arm, where it was

<sup>14</sup> Mt 5.40 esp.: καὶ τῷ θέλοντί σοι κριθῆναι καὶ τὸν χιτῶνά σου λαβεῖν, ἄφες αὐτῷ καὶ τὸ ἱμάτιον. See also Jn 19.23; ἱμάτια may also be a collective for "vestments," "habit," i.e., tunic and cloak: on this, see H. Buzy, "Pagne ou ceinture," *RSR* 23 (1933) 589ff. For a list of various solutions given to Jn 19.23, see R. E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John XIII-XXI* (New York: Doubleday, 1970), 902–3. For the Hebrew words, see, e.g., *Mekh. Ex* 22.26 (Lauterbach, ed., 3:151) and *mKel.* 28.7.

<sup>15</sup> *mShab.* 16.4; cf. also *tTob.* 8.13.669, line 29.

<sup>16</sup> περιβάλλειν in Mt 6.29, 31 = Lk 12.27; Mt 25.36; Mk 14.51; Acts 12.8. Ἐνδύειν meant "to put on" anything, even shoes, and ἔνδυμα referred to all vestments.

<sup>17</sup> For illustrations and discussion, see Yadin, *The Finds*, 219ff., pl. 80; the mantle is called *kesut* and *ḥalith* in *Mekh. Ex* 22.26; *ḥalith* in *mKel.* 28.7; 29.1–2; *mMe'el.* 5.1; ἱμάτιον in Mt 9.20; 17.2; 21.7 = Mk 11.7; Mt 27.31, 35 = Mk 15.20, 24; Mk 5.28; 9.3; Jn 13.4, 12; 19.23 (and more quotations in Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte*, 5:211). Other names for mantles were: *me'el* (*mShab.*, 16.4; Josephus, *AJ* 3.159–61, describing the high priest's clothes); *gulta'* (*pTa'an.* 3.66d, top; 4.67c); *ma'aforet* = "duster," "short cloak with a hood" (Jastrow), i.e., a sheet wrapped around the head and the body [*tMeg.* 4(3)30; *Sifre Dt* 22.12, p. 267, with a list of words for cloaks; *pTer.* 7.4.4d; *mShab.* 16.5]; *sadin* = σινδών, a sheet of fine linen wrapped around the body.

rolled. But it could also fall straight and in this case covered both shoulders. Women had more elaborate ways of folding their mantles, which generally covered their heads and shoulders. Such cloaks were long and thick enough to be used as blankets.<sup>18</sup>

The tunic was essentially composed of two rectangular pieces of material, front and back, normally reaching somewhat below the knees.<sup>19</sup> It generally did not have any sleeves,<sup>20</sup> but the front and back pieces, sewn together at the top, allowing for the neckhole, were simply gathered around the body by means of a belt and sometimes sewing.<sup>21</sup> Partial and complete woolen tunics, dating from the Bar Kokhba period, have been discovered in the Judean desert.<sup>22</sup> One other example can also be seen on a wall at Beth She‘arim, dating from ca. the third century C.E.<sup>23</sup> Shorter and lighter tunics, made of finer fabric such as linen or cotton, were used as an undergarment, or as our modern shirt.<sup>24</sup> It was a common habit, throughout the Roman Empire, to wear two tunics, the one worn underneath being called *tunica interior* or *subucula*. This tunic was worn alone, in the intimacy of home, when the weather was hot.<sup>25</sup> In Roman Palestine, it was apparently a common habit to wear several tunics, one on top of the other, either be-

<sup>18</sup>See Yadin, *The Finds*, 238.

<sup>19</sup>See the art. *χιτών*, in *RE* 3/2 (1894) 2309–35 and Suppl. 1 (1903) 288–94 (by Amelung); Brand, “Clothing,” 47–49; Strack–Billerbeck, 1:343–44, 565–66; Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte*, 4:214. The *χιτών* is found, e.g., in Jn 19.23 (Jesus’ cloak was divided into four shares because cloaks were probably made of four pieces of wool, whereas his tunic “was without seam, woven from top to bottom.”); Mt 5.40, 10.10 = Mk 6.9 and Lk 9.3. It is called *haluq* in *Mekh. Ex* 22.26, already quoted, and in *mKel.* 29.1–2. It is also called *kutonet* in Hebrew, or *kituna’*, *kitmita’* in Aramaic (from *kitan*, flax), e.g., in *pSanh.* 2.20c, bottom.

<sup>20</sup>Sleeves are represented at Dura–Europos (ca. 250–56 C.E.) and at Beth Alpha (fifth and sixth centuries C.E.), but not in the Cave of Letters in the Judean desert: was the use of sleeves becoming more widespread in this period? See n. 7 above. [check]

<sup>21</sup>See the child’s shirt in Yadin, *The Finds*, pl. 89. Cf. *mShab.* 15.2; *mKel.* 29.1. The tunics found in the Judean desert had a width ranging from 80 centimeters to over 1 meter (Yadin, *The Finds*, 205–6, 212): once tucked in at the waist with a belt or with the mantle, both top sides would fall on the upper arms like wide sleeves.

<sup>22</sup>Yadin, *The Finds*, 204–19.

<sup>23</sup>B. Mazar, *Beth She‘arim* (Jerusalem: Massada Press, 1973) 1: pl. XXXVI, 2 and p. 109: Avi-Yonah thought it is a “Roman soldier.” Cf. representation of Daniel in the lion’s den uncovered at Lohamei Getaot.

<sup>24</sup>For example the child’s shirt already referred to in n. 21. These lighter tunics are discussed in Brand, “Clothing,” 44–45. On the *ἐπικάρσιον* = *‘afiqarsin*, which was a light striped tunic, see *mKel.* 29.1; *pBer.* 2.4c, line 12; *pMQ* 3.83d, end; *tBer.* 2.15.4, lines 26ff. The *naqli* (= *ἀνάκωλος*) was also a shorter tunic: *pShab.* 16.4.15d, lines 18ff.

<sup>25</sup>Art. *Vestis*, in *DAGR*, 5:768.

cause there was no room to store them, to show one's wealth, or simply to fight off the cold.<sup>26</sup>

In preparation for any sort of action, the wide tunics were belted with a long and narrow multifold strip of cloth, which also served as a purse.<sup>27</sup> "To gird oneself" was synonymous with "to prepare oneself."<sup>28</sup> Women also wore belts, and we are told that one of Ezra's ordinances was "that a woman must gird herself with a *sinar*" in order to be chaste.<sup>29</sup> This *sinar* presumably was not a loincloth, as the commentaries intimate, but rather a Greek mantle: women were expected to drape their tunic in the Greek fashion, meaning that the belt gathered the folds of the tunic in such a way as to form around the waist a sort of useful pocket called *κόλπος*.<sup>30</sup>

People at work or at home, away from public, did not wear a cloak, but a simple tunic. If the tunic was too long, it was taken up by the belt, as much as was necessary. To be dressed in a tunic only, especially the *tunica interior*, was to be "naked," *γυμνός*. So was Peter at work in his boat, before he put his cloak back on, *ἔπενδύτη*, to show more respect to Jesus.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps he wore a kind of tunic special to sailors. Similarly, the slave described by the Gospel as being back from the field, perhaps dressed in a short *exomis*, was asked by his master to gird himself—that is, to put on a second tunic and belt, to be ready to serve.<sup>32</sup> This relative "nudity" is also reflected in a text from the Tosefta describing what should be the proper attitude of men working "naked" in the fields, probably at harvest time, come the moment to recite the *shema*<sup>4</sup>:

<sup>26</sup>Krauss, *TA*, 1:133, n. 47; two tunics in *tKil.* 5.6.79, line 30 and 5.15.80, line 15; women are said to wear three tunics in *Bar. bNidd.* 58b, top; five in *tNidd.* 7.2.648, line 36 and 3.5.643, line 26; seven in *bGitf.* 58a; ten in *bMQ* 22b. Cf. Mk 6.9, the mission requirement not to wear two tunics. Augustus is reported to have worn four tunics in cold weather: Suetonius, *Augustus* 82.

<sup>27</sup>Yadin, *The Finds*, 267 and pl. 99. The belt was called *ḥagorab*, *ḥagor* in Hebrew: *pShab.* 16.5(4).15d, lines 18ff.; & *ʿezor* in *tShev.* 5.12 or *ʿezora* in Aramaic: *pPeʿah* 7.20a, bottom. Another name was *zonar*= *ζώνιον*: cf. the *ζώναι* of Mt 10.9 and Mk 6.8 (*μὴ εἰς τὴν ζώνην χαλκόν*); it was also called *punda* (a hollow belt, from Latin *funda*): *mShab.* 10.3; *pShab.* 15d. See the art. "*Cingulum*," in *DAGR*, 1/2:1174ff.

<sup>28</sup>Bauer, *Lexicon*, s.v. *περιζώνυμι*.

<sup>29</sup>*pMeg.* 4.1.75a, line 29: .sp

<sup>30</sup>See art. *Vestis*, in *DAGR*, 5:764. The existence of this article of fashion explains the text of *mShab.* 10.4, where a woman is forbidden to take anything out in her *sinar*, since what she carried was likely to move around her waist.

<sup>31</sup>Jn 21.7: Peter is portrayed as ready to ruin a good cloak on this occasion.

<sup>32</sup>Lk 17.8.

If a man was standing naked in a field or if he was doing his work naked, such a person may cover himself with straw or stubble or with anything [available] and he may recite [the *shema*'], for they [the Sages] said: 'It is not honorable for a man to stand naked [. . .].'<sup>35</sup> If a man wore a piece of cloth or leather as a girding for his loins, such a man may recite [the *shema*']. In both cases, he may not pray before covering his bosom.<sup>33</sup>

The field laborers mentioned in this text were wearing either loincloths or short tunics, such as were clasped only on one shoulder or even folded and tucked around the hips.<sup>34</sup>

#### OTHER GARMENTS

Our information on what kind of pants, if any, were customary is limited. According to some texts, such as the Tosefta passage just quoted, some sort of loincloth may have been common. But this "piece of cloth or leather as a girding for his loins" may simply have been a belt, implying that the laborer wore a more decent sort of tunic. One may infer from other passages from the Talmud that people in their everyday activities did not necessarily have a loincloth.<sup>35</sup> John the Baptist must be understood to have been wearing "a garment around his waist" of camel's hair, and a leather belt, rather than a "leather loin-cloth."<sup>36</sup> As for the *feminalia* referred to in later rabbinic texts, they are not women's drawers, but some sort of bandage protecting legs or thighs.<sup>37</sup> They were used by the populations of northern Europe and were subsequently adopted by the Roman soldiers in contact with them. This new fashion spread very slowly, and perhaps especially under the Severi, who themselves were of "barbarian" extraction. The *braccae* and *subbraccae* of our rabbinic sources also were adopted from the barbarians, probably not before the end of the second century C.E.<sup>38</sup>

Everyone normally kept his or her head covered: a Mishnah enumerates four types of headdresses, ranging from caps to more enveloping veils

<sup>33</sup>*tBer.* 2.14.4, lines 21–26: [Hebrew text, about 5 lines]

<sup>34</sup>For comparison, see the two laborers represented hoeing in K. D. White, *Roman Farming* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1970), pl. 26 (from the Great Palace, Istanbul).

<sup>35</sup>*mHall.* 2.3.

<sup>36</sup>Mt 3.4 and Mk 1.6, on which see D. Buzy, "Pagne ou ceinture?" *RSR* 23 (1933) 589–98.

<sup>37</sup>*fimlanya'* (= *feminalia*): *mKel.* 27.6 (*femulinya'*); *tKel.* BB. 5.11.595, line 26.

<sup>38</sup>See art. *Braccae*, in *DAGR*, 1:746–47. See *mShab.* 16.5: *avraqin* and *suveqin*.

or turbans.<sup>39</sup> Women covered their heads with a fold of their coat, especially for religious occasions.<sup>40</sup> A statue representing the head of such a veiled woman was found at Beth She‘arim.<sup>41</sup> In some Greek cities, women went about veiled.<sup>42</sup> On the contrary, the marks of a prostitute were to go out bareheaded, to spin in the street, to have her clothing open on both sides, and to bathe with men.<sup>43</sup> The apostle Paul, on the strength of Jewish habits, demanded that Corinthian women keep their heads covered during services.<sup>44</sup> Men also had their heads covered, at least in public occasions. Abraham, for instance, is shown wearing some sort of head covering in the mosaic of the Beth Alpha synagogue (fifth century C.E.).

Sandals and shoes were the common footwear. Sandals would seem to have been more common, on the strength of archaeological discoveries alone,<sup>45</sup> but shoes are mentioned as frequently as sandals in rabbinic writings.<sup>46</sup> Shoes were apparently not very strong and wore out very quickly:<sup>47</sup> they were more akin to leather slippers. Soldiers wore heavier and stronger

<sup>39</sup> *pilyon*, a cap made of felt or wool (= *πίλιον*, *pileus*); *kova‘*, also a cap; larger cloaks could be used as headdresses or hoods: *sudar* and *ma‘foret* (see n. 6 and 17). One reads also of a *sivna‘* (or *sivnita‘*, *sivni*, *suwni*) = *σάβανον*, *sabanum*, a sort of veil falling on the shoulders: *pShab.* 6.8a; *pYev.* 12.12d, top.

<sup>40</sup> *AJ* 3.270: *καὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς τὸ ἰμάτιον ἀφελών*. See, e.g., the widow of Zarephath with her head completely covered by her *himation* and cap in Kraeling, *The Synagogue*, 144 and pl. LXIII.

<sup>41</sup> Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols*, 3: no. 65.

<sup>42</sup> L. Robert, *Hellenica* (Limoges: Bontemps, 1948), 5:66ff. See also R. MacMullen, "Women in Public in the Roman Empire," *Historia* 29 (1980) 208.

<sup>43</sup> *tSoṭa* 5.9. Cf. Palestinian Targum in R. Le Déaut, *Targum du Pentateuque* (Paris: Le Cerf, 1978), 1:380n. Cf. *Prov* 7.10–12.

<sup>44</sup> *I Cor* 11.4, 7.

<sup>45</sup> See the remains found at Masada in Y. Yadin, *The Excavation of Masada, 1963/4, Preliminary Report* (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society, 1965), pl. 22 B; other remains in the Cave of Letters in Yadin, *The Finds*, 157, 165, 168, pl. 57; see also *‘Atiqot* 3 (1961) pl. XXIII. Other sandal soles at Nahal Mishmar: *IEJ* 11 (1961) pl. 15A; and at Murabba‘at: *DJD*, 2: pl. XI; also *IEJ* 12 (1962) pls. 19.4–6 and 28 B–D. Most of the characters in Hellenistic garb on the walls of the Dura Europos synagogue are represented wearing sandals: e.g., Moses (Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols*, 11: color pl. XIV). The word for sandals was *sandal* = *σανδάλιον*: *mKel.* 26.4; *Mk* 6.9; *Acts* 12.8.

<sup>46</sup> Shoes were found in the Wadi Ed-Daliyeh caves: Lapp, *AASOR* 41 (1974). Shoes were called *mine‘alim*: *mShab.* 10.3; 16.5; *mKel.* 26.4 (in contradistinction to sandals); *mYev.* 12.1; *tYev.* 12.10.255, line 22. The shoes of Dt 29.4 are translated as sandals by the Palestinian Targum (*Add.* 27031, British Museum).

<sup>47</sup> *mKel.* 26.4: *solyias* = *solea(s)*, slippers without heels, according to Jastrow’s *Dictionary*. There were heavier shoes: cf. Origen’s comment, quoted in n. 72 below. [check]

sandals, with nail-studded, thicker soles,<sup>48</sup> which made a loud noise on the roads<sup>49</sup> and could be slippery on pavement.<sup>50</sup>

Some of the small variations in dress (according to sex, ethnic ties, profession, geographical origin, and historical period) will be described in the following pages. But the basic elements remained stable, especially for the common people, and a convenient summary is provided by the account found in Acts of Peter's miraculous escape from jail. Peter had only his tunic on and was in shackles when an angel appeared and told him:

‘Get up quickly,’ and the chains fell off his hands. And the angel said to him, ‘dress yourself [gird yourself] and put on your sandals.’ And he did so. And he said to him, ‘wrap your mantle around you and follow me.’<sup>51</sup>

## 2.2 LACK OF CLOTHING

To evaluate the lack of clothing, one must bear in mind that clothing was a very rare commodity in the ancient world, particularly in those areas without the more sophisticated looms already in use. This is obvious from the care with which one treated clothes. Worn out garments were mended, kept, sold, treasured. New and especially more luxurious clothes were kept in treasuries.<sup>52</sup>

The Gospel of Luke introduces the two extremes of wealth and poverty in the story of Lazarus and the Rich Man by contrasting their dress and food:

There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.<sup>53</sup>

At one end stands a certain man dressed with the greatest of refinements for his time, in clothes which were so costly that normally only kings could

<sup>48</sup> *caliga(s)*. See Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology*, 5:39–40 for Palestine, 58–60 for Greek footwear, 60–63 for Roman footwear. This sort of reinforced sandal is discussed in *mShab.* 6.2, *pShab.* 8a, and *bShab.* 60a. See nn. 72–74 below. [check]

<sup>49</sup> *mSot.* 8.1: “Fear not at the clashing of shields and the rushing of trampling shoes.”

<sup>50</sup> A soldier slipped on the Temple pavement during the Jewish war: Josephus, *BJ* 6.85.

<sup>51</sup> Acts 12.7–8.

<sup>52</sup> *BJ* 6.282.

<sup>53</sup> Lk 16.19–21.

afford them.<sup>54</sup> True Tyrian purple, made with great care from a variety of mollusks, fetched extraordinary prices.<sup>55</sup> Likewise, the very fine linen called *byssus* was a costly item. The implied mixture of wool (purple) and linen may conceal an attack on the impurity of the rich man.<sup>56</sup> And this man was said to have every day the kind of feast that is given for an extraordinary occasion by the prodigal son's father.<sup>57</sup> At the other extreme, Lazarus has no clothes on worthy of mention, and is afflicted with sores. Furthermore, he is so hungry that scraps from the table would satisfy him,<sup>58</sup> and so sick and weak that he does not have the strength or will to drive off the dogs.

#### LEGAL MINIMA

The story of Lazarus, partly built upon traditional folk materials, reads as an indictment of a terribly contrasted social situation. But what was the real situation? A few texts help us answer this question for the first three centuries C.E. Let us begin with the anonymous tradition in *Mishnah Kethuboth* 5.8–9, which has already been quoted. In the absence of definite indications, it is to be dated to some time during the second century C.E.<sup>59</sup> This text explicitly concerns a poor man's wife whose husband must leave during the week (for instance, as a laborer), and who is therefore entrusted to a guardian.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>54</sup>Luke uses a biblical expression found in Prov 31.22. See J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985), 2:1130.

<sup>55</sup>See art. *Purpura*, in *DAGR*, 4/1:769–78 (by M. Besnier).

<sup>56</sup>Unless it represents the high priesthood, which had to wear this kind of vestments for ceremonies in the Temple.

<sup>57</sup>Lk 15.23–24, with the same verb *εὐφραίνομαι* or *εὐφραίνεσθαι*.

<sup>58</sup>*χορτασθῆναι*: the same verb is used in Lk 15.16, which K. E. Bailey translates as “longing to fill his belly,” in *Poet and Peasant* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1976), 171. Cf. J. Jeremias, *Rediscovering the Parables* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1966), 145. See Syriac version, which insists on this passage.

<sup>59</sup>See Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie*, 1:310–11. Most of the rabbis quoted in both gemaras as discussing this Mishnah belong to the end of the third century C.E., but some of the rulings found in this text were discussed from the beginning of the early second century (e.g., on the quantity of bread to be provided).

<sup>60</sup>It envisions the case of men who hire themselves on estates far away from their village, but who have kept all their ties there and return periodically, normally every week. Husbands could be away for long periods of time, as seasonal workers, and as ass drivers, camel drivers, or mariners: see *mKeth.* 5.6 and *tKeth.* 5.6.266, line 27. Cf. *pKeth* 5.7, *bKeth.* 61b.

If a husband maintained his wife at the hands of a third person . . . He must also give her a bed and a bed-cover and if he has no bed-cover he must give her a rush mat. He must also give her a cap for her head and a girdle for her loins, and shoes at each of the [three] Feasts, and clothing to the value of 50 *zuz* every year. They may not give her new clothes for summer or worn-out clothes for winter; but he should give her clothes to the value of 50 *zuz* for winter, and she may clothe herself with the rags thereof in the summer time; and the discarded garments belong to her ... This applies to the poorest in Israel, but with folk of the better sort all should be according to the honour due to him.<sup>61</sup>

Supposing that the trustee honestly discharged his functions,<sup>62</sup> what amount of clothing did the woman receive? The text speaks first of the head covering, belt, and shoes: beyond their simple usefulness, these three elements also were adornments thought to be so essential for a woman that they are singled out and contrasted with the regular clothes that she was to receive. As for “clothes worth fifty *zuz*,” it means a tunic, or tunics, a cloak (?), and undergarments. What could one acquire for such a sum?

Indications can be gleaned in the list of prices for second-century C.E. Palestine, compiled by Daniel Sperber.<sup>63</sup> A review of the prices quoted and of their contexts shows that one could purchase a good tunic for anywhere from 12 to 25 *denarii*, and a good cloak for anywhere from 20 to 50 *denarii*, at least during the first and second centuries C.E.<sup>64</sup> Fifty *zuz* would therefore buy one or two tunics and a cloak of modest quality, or tunics and undergarments. This was not much. The text makes it clear that the woman had to wear one set continuously during the year. A hard-working woman<sup>65</sup> would certainly find it difficult to keep her unique set of clothing from wear

<sup>61</sup>The text is found also with some changes in the Tosefta: *tKeth.* 5.8–9.267. The Palestinian Talmud (*pKeth.* 5.10–13.30b–c) closely follows the text of the Tosefta. Text of the Mishnah: [supply Hebrew text]

<sup>62</sup>He apparently was not always inclined to do so, e.g., in the special case of a husband who went overseas (*bNed.* 33b, attributed to Sages of the first century C.E.). But one must remember that to go aboard a ship was an adventure in ancient times, and one was not at all sure to return.

<sup>63</sup>“Costs of Living in Roman Palestine,” *JESHO* 8 (1965) 252. During this period, the currencies contained a stable proportion of precious metal.

<sup>64</sup>Esp. *mMe'il.* 6.4 (cf. *tMe'il.* 2.10.560, lines 15ff.); *m'Arakh.* 6.5; *t'Arakh.* 4.3.546, line 38 (a *talith* for 5 *sela'im*); *tSheq.* 2.8.176, lines 10–11 (cf. *tMe'il.* 1.23.558, line 28); *tBM* 3.16.377, line 16: a *haluq* for 5 to 6 *sela'im*, i.e., 20 to 24 *denarii*.

<sup>65</sup>*mKeth.* 5.5 gives a list of the activities expected from women, depending upon their standing and their own fortune.

and tear (e.g., sitting for long hours at the milling stones). It becomes more understandable that poor people were forced to borrow clothing, especially for special occasions, as will be seen below.

The woman was also to receive “shoes for each major festival,” meaning for the three traditional pilgrimages (Passover, Weeks, Tents). The number of pairs of shoes allocated to the woman seems disproportionate when compared to the meagerness of the rest. This discrepancy was noted by R. Papa of Babylonia (fourth century C.E.) who quoted a proverb: “This *Tanna* [expects a person to be] ’stripped naked and wear shoes!’”<sup>66</sup> It has already been seen above that shoes were not strongly built and that they had to survive long daily walks on rocky ground and lanes,<sup>67</sup> as noted by Abbaye in his answer to R. Papa: The Mishnah was composed for a mountainous country. But technical reasons cannot have been the only consideration, since among the three great festivals, Passover and Shavuoth were at fifty days distance but Sukkoth a long time away. The husband therefore was to give shoes for these festivals because shoes were eminent marks of dignity and freedom, not only because they protected the feet. Abbaye also noted in the same passage that the Mishnah was teaching Jews “to honor their wives.”

This text suggests that in the second century C.E., minimum clothing for a woman among the poor of Israel consisted of a tunic (or tunics) and a cloak, a belt and a headdress, and three pairs of shoes, all this per annum. This is twice as much as Cato the Elder was prepared to allow to farm hands in *De Agri Cultura* (mid-second century B.C.E.):

Clothing allowance for the hands: A tunic 3 1/2 feet long and a blanket every other year. When you issue the tunic or the blanket, first take up the old one back and have patchwork made of it. A stout pair of wooden shoes should be issued every other year.<sup>68</sup>

The spirit of this Mishnah, however, may have been very far from the reality. Even though it should not be taken to mean that the situation in Roman Palestine was better than in the Italy of Cato—a penny pincher—it gives an indication of what was being sought. The Early Church also encouraged its wealthier believers to give proper clothing to their slaves or servants. One of the interesting solutions that the *Didascalia Apostolorum* in Syriac brings to the difficult readings of Prov 31.21–22, on the valiant woman, is to show

<sup>66</sup> *bKeth.* 65b, top.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*; see also Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology*, 5:39–40.

<sup>68</sup> *De Agri Cultura* 59: the blanket, *sagum*, was also the family cloak.

that her household is clothed “with a double garment.”<sup>69</sup> Does this mean a thicker tunic than usual? Or a tunic and cloak of wool, presumably short, as some of the Syriac manuscripts read?<sup>70</sup> In any case, it points to a “double garment” as an ideal for a North Syrian household in the third century C.E.<sup>71</sup>

#### REAL STANDARDS

Practice could not always follow preaching and legal pronouncements. The early second century C.E., at least, may have been a period when it must have been difficult to procure shoes, if one is to follow Lieberman’s interpretation of *mShab.* 6.2, which says that it is forbidden to go out with nail-shod shoes on Sabbath. Lieberman thought that this prohibition was concerned not only with Sabbath; but since most people could only afford one pair, and would not risk having shoes unfit for Sabbath, the rabbis did not have to explain the exact reasons.<sup>72</sup> Yadin, on the other hand, thought that a security concern, as often in the Talmud, was the real reason of this prohibition. The restriction would have made Roman soldiers easily identifiable by the noise of their nail-shod sandals.<sup>73</sup> But religious reasons for the prohibition are more likely. The wearing of metallic nails may have caused forbidden work in two ways: the necessity to clean the sole (a difficult task, with nails); and the greater likelihood of having to repair or retie the laces of such heavier sandals.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>69</sup>A. Vööbus, *The Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac* (Louvain: CSCO, *Scriptores Syri*, no. 176, 1979), 22. The Masoretic text, Septuagint, and Peshiṭto, have variant readings.

<sup>70</sup>*Ibid.*, n. 28: “with wool above their garment.”

<sup>71</sup>In a region having cold winters. The original Greek may have been the *δισσὰς στολάς* of *The Apostolic Constitutions*: see *ibid.* On the date of the various stages of the *Didascalia*, see *ibid.*

<sup>72</sup>*Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1962<sup>2</sup>), 139–40. See *pShab.* 8a; *bShab.* 60a. Origen used this prohibition to show that it was impossible to keep the letter of the Law unless one was prepared to be illogical: *De Principiis* 4.3.2 = ed. P. Koetschau, *GCS*, 22:326–27; cf. N.R.M. de Lange, *Origen and the Jews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 40. See also D. Sperber, “Concerning the Nail-shod shoes of Mishnah Shabbat 6.2,” *Sinai* 61 (1967) 69–73.

<sup>73</sup>*The Finds*, 166.

<sup>74</sup>Compare *bShab.* 112a, a discussion on the lacing of shoes and sandals, but without mention of nail-shod sandals. See *tShab.* 5.8 on nail-shod shoes: this text seems to imply that one should not lift nails that have fallen. Another possibility is that metal could not be worn or used in holy places or times: no metal was used to build the altar, according to Josephus, *BJ* 5.225; see also *mMidd.* 3.4.

We may also gain some idea of the material standards of the times by reading the testimonies emanating from groups that had chosen to live in poverty. Not surprisingly, these testimonies vary in nature, but they afford us a fairly clear picture of what was understood to be a life of poverty. The recommendations attributed to Jesus in sending out his disciples on their mission concern an amount of clothing somewhat inferior to the one already discussed. There were competing interpretations of these recommendations, Matthew being closer to Jewish concerns, and Luke and Mark less so or not at all.<sup>75</sup> Matthew (10.9–10) reports Jesus to have said: “Provide yourself with neither gold, nor silver, nor coppers for your purses, nor scrip for the journey, nor two tunics or footwear or a staff, for the workman deserves his keep.”<sup>76</sup> Not only are food and the means to buy or keep food proscribed because the early sympathizing communities were to take care of the itinerant preachers,<sup>77</sup> but also an extra tunic, shoes, and the staff needed to protect oneself in unsafe areas.<sup>78</sup> Luke (9.3) does not mention footwear, adds bread, and mentions only silver. Mark (6.8–9) also forbids food, money, and the second tunic, but recommends a staff and sandals: “And he instructed them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no scrip, no coppers in their purses—but [to be] wearing sandals, and [he said]: ‘do not wear two tunics.’”

According to these recommendations, therefore, Jesus’ disciples were expected to wear one tunic only, a belt, and no shoes or sandals. They probably had a cloak, unless it was provided under the laws of hospitality; although it is not mentioned, it was certainly essential, if only to spend the night in relative comfort. To ask the disciples to be without a second tunic or shoes was physically demanding. It was also, and perhaps more important, a demand of a social nature. A second tunic allowed one to change, while the first was being washed, in order to have ritually pure garments.

<sup>75</sup>The Gospel of Matthew could well have been following its own tradition here, rather than conflating Mk and Q (against Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 2:842).

<sup>76</sup>Parallel texts: Mk 6.8–9; Lk 9.3 and doublet 10.4.

<sup>77</sup>See G. Theissen, *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 13, 21, 38; see *Didache* 11.3ff.; 13.1–7; the Essenes were organized in such a way: *BJ* 2.124; see also M. Hengel, *Property and Riches in the Early Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 51–52.

<sup>78</sup>Theissen, *Sociology*, 14; on the contrary, the Essenes, according to Josephus in *BJ* 2.125, would bring weapons when they were on a journey “to defend themselves against bandits.” In this case, they would agree with the recommendation in *mR.Sb.* 1.9: “And if they are in any fear, they make take staves in their hands,” even on Sabbath, cf. *pR.Sb.* 1.10.57c, lines 26ff.

To have only one tunic, on the contrary, was to risk impurity through spots of various origins, and the impossibility to wash it without being put to shame. Similarly, a lack of shoes primarily meant a lack of status. Only the very poor were in the same situation, and Jesus, according to Matthew's version, was asking his disciples to identify with these. The sandals in Mk (6.9) were probably a concession to social mores: the disciples with shoes would be less the object of mockery and insults. The spirit of detachment of these verses therefore concerned both the material and social values of various objects.

These recommendations to the disciples, particularly in their Markan form, are also reminiscent of the way in which the wandering Cynics appeared to the public. Cynics, who were numerous in the first century C.E., according to Dio Chrysostomus,<sup>79</sup> fasted, begged for food, wore a dark-colored short and worn cloak, and carried only a wallet and staff.<sup>80</sup> The wandering beggars of the Hellenistic world, however, seem more individualistic and detached from local communities than Jesus' disciples.<sup>81</sup> The latter may have simply adopted, or been part of, the patterns of itinerant laborers in the area.<sup>82</sup>

An important aspect of these rules, especially as formulated by Matthew, is of a religious nature. Comparable demands were made on the Temple pilgrims.<sup>83</sup> Carrying money in one's belt and a staff, wearing sandals, and having dust on the feet were strictly forbidden on the Temple mount.<sup>84</sup> The reason for these prohibitions is that the Temple was a ritually pure place: no sandals were needed to protect one from impurities, for instance. It appears, then, that the disciples were asked not only to be poor, completely dependent upon hospitality, but also to travel like Temple pilgrims, the purity of the Temple being now that of the whole

<sup>79</sup>*Orationes* 32.9–10 (Discourse to the People of Alexandria).

<sup>80</sup>Lucian, *Peregrinus* 15–16. *Τρίβωνα πιναρόν*, writes Lucian: i.e., a dark cloak, typical of poor people or slaves. On these wandering philosophers, see R. MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order: Treason, Unrest, and Alienation in the Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966); and *Roman Social Relations, 50 B.C. to A.D. 284* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 83–84.

<sup>81</sup>See R. A. Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987), 228–31, who criticizes G. Theissen's reliance on the Cynics' model.

<sup>82</sup>See n. 60 above.

<sup>83</sup>See D. L. Mealand, *Poverty and Expectation in the Gospels* (London: SPCK, 1980), 65–69.

<sup>84</sup>*mBer.* 9.5; *tBer.* 7.19(17); *pBer.* 9.8; cf. *bBer.* 62b.

land.<sup>85</sup> The spirit of the laws concerning the Temple was kept even after its destruction in the restrictions pertaining to the Sabbath. The “do not bear a burden on the sabbath day” of Jer 17.21 was also strictly interpreted to exclude the carrying or wearing of money, staves, certain types of sandals, and extra clothing, among other things.<sup>86</sup> In that sense, disciples were actually required to consider every day a Sabbath.

We do not know how well these itinerant preachers were treated in the villages or cities where they tried their luck or where they were already known. The *Didache* at least kept a tradition of severity: the preacher was not to prolong his stay and was to receive the strict minimum.<sup>87</sup> The Essenes described by Josephus also went on the roads very poorly dressed: “They renew their clothes and shoes but when they fall completely in rags or are worn out to the thread by prolonged usage.”<sup>88</sup> Even more extreme was the case of John the Baptist, who wore only one tunic, with a leather belt, and a cloak made with camel’s hair, which must have been very rough.<sup>89</sup> To have one tunic probably meant that he had no smooth undershirt, and the same thing was demanded of Jesus’ disciples.

It seems that the poverty chosen by the various groups described above was more severe than that imposed on the wife of *Mishnah Kethuboth* 5.8–9. But it must be remembered that these religious wanderers could rely upon a number of friendly communities and their strong sense of hospitality. The wife in the Mishnah also could benefit from such protection, but she did not always receive what was her due and could become completely abandoned if her husband died.

Did such religious wanderers differ in their physical appearance from the other poor people who went along the roads and the lanes of the country or who sat at the entrances of cities, temples, villages, synagogues, and

<sup>85</sup> Mealand’s suggestion seems appropriate: “The approach of the Kingdom makes the time a holy season, and the whole land a holy place” (p. 69). It does not seem necessary to appeal to Hellenistic formulations, at least in Matthew’s case.

<sup>86</sup> *mShab.* 6.4; 24.1; *tShab.* 1.10; 9(8).15.

<sup>87</sup> *Didache* 11–12.

<sup>88</sup> *BJ* 2.126. This passage is in apparent contradiction with other sources showing that the Essenes had great concern for the whiteness and cleanliness of their clothes. Philo has other concerns: he reports that they had thick coats for the winter and cheap tunics for the summer: *Apologia* 12, in Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*. According to the context, this would be the ideal behavior for people “frugal, hating luxury” (*ibid.*, 11). One may suppose that this should also be the ideal, in Philo’s view, for a master having to provide the strict necessities to a household of slaves and servants.

<sup>89</sup> See n. 36 above.

rich people's courts? Because all beggary had religious aspects, distinguishing real needs was difficult. It is impossible to know how widespread the situation was, and whether it was restricted to some periods or some areas. One can only gather glimpses of a wide lack of clothing in an indirect way.

In poor families, women of marriageable age were in a particularly dire situation if their fathers were not in a position to strike an advantageous marriage contract. The same was true of orphan women. A *halakhah* was issued to protect the rights of poor women and ensure that they indeed received clothing from the husband at the time of marriage:

If he [the father] made it a condition that the bridegroom should take her in naked, the bridegroom may not say: 'After I have taken her into my house I will clothe her with clothing of mine,' but he must clothe her while she is yet in her father's house.<sup>90</sup>

In other words, he gives her clothes that constitute part, perhaps the major part, of her marriage contract, when she is still under her father's authority. One may imagine that in reality some husbands would not give proper clothing to their wives but would force them to wear their original clothing for a very long time. And the text continues, concerning any orphan girl who has been placed under the care of alms collectors:

So, too, if any orphan was given in marriage, she shall be assigned not less than fifty *zuz*; if there was more in the poor-funds, they should provide for her according to the honor due to her.

We have seen above that 50 *zuz* bought a pair of tunics and a cloak. The last sentence mentions the "honor due" to the girl—that is, her social standing as measured by the status of her family, especially of her deceased father. For people worse off, begging was the only solution. Indeed, one learns that the men in charge of the synagogal charity fund were not to "investigate [i.e., examine] in the case of a poor man asking for clothes."<sup>91</sup> They were to give clothes to the poor man without questioning his circumstances, since his seminakedness was sufficient proof of his destituteness. An examination would only have made him feel even more acutely his wretched state.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>90</sup>*mKeth.* 6.5.

<sup>91</sup>See *pPe'ab* 8.6; *bBB* 9a (Abramson, ed., 1950, lines 552ff.).

<sup>92</sup>*bBM* 46a.

The cloak was the most prized possession of many a man, and it could be taken away from him in payment of debt, or as a guarantee.<sup>93</sup> It was the sort of object that bandits would steal.<sup>94</sup> To own one cloak could often mean that it was the only one in the household.<sup>95</sup> Naturally, to be without it for one reason or another meant to be cold at night, since the day cloak was also the night blanket. This large cloak became a common blanket for two or more people, especially for parents with little children.<sup>96</sup>

Poor people remedied the lack by sharing their clothing. R. Judah b. Ilai (mid-second century C.E.) and his wife were said to share the same cloak.<sup>97</sup> This legend is obviously based on common observation. R. Meir and R. Yoḥanan the sandal maker (both mid-second century C.E.), are said to have cut one cloak into two smaller cloaks.<sup>98</sup> This was easy, if it was the kind of mantle discovered in the caves of the Judean desert, which was made of four pieces sewn together.<sup>99</sup> Another indication of the scarcity of clothes is that people borrowed garments from each other.<sup>100</sup> The Talmud says it was especially done for certain occasions, such as before journeys and festivals, when one was to look one's best. The borrower's tunic or coat probably was

<sup>93</sup>Coats were possible objects of court dispute: *mBM* 1.1. Cf. late midrash *ExR.* 31.15: "He who removes his cloak from him . . ." This is the situation envisioned in Mt 5.40, but the order of tunic and cloak is odd: "If anyone would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well" (read tunic for the "coat" of the Revised Standard Version): και τῷ θελοντί σοι κριθῆναι και τὸν χιτῶνά σοι λαβεῖν, ἄφες αὐτῷ και τὸ ἱμάτιον. [check] Lk 6.29 has a more satisfactory order: "from him who takes away your cloak do not withhold your coat as well:" και ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀίροντός σου τὸ ἱμάτιον και τὸν χιτῶνα μὴ κωλύσης. [check]

Luke may be concerned with a wider variety of situations, see Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 1:639. Lk 6.29 is followed by *Didache* 1.4; Justin, *Apol.* 1.16.1, solves the difficulty: και τὸν ἀίροντά σου τὸν χιτῶνα ἢ τὸ ἱμάτιον μὴ κωλύσης.

<sup>94</sup>For instance from the man who "fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him," in the story of the Good Samaritan, Lk 10.30. The situation is also echoed in *mBQ* 10.2: "If robbers robbed a man of his coat . . ."

<sup>95</sup>Rabbis with one cloak only: *pPe'ah* 8.7.21b, line 7; *bShab.* 113b.

<sup>96</sup>*tBer.* 2.17.M, line 6; cf. *mQidd.* 4.12.14, which is concerned with rules of decency. The necessity of sharing the cloak may be one of the reasons for the reluctance of the neighbor in the story of the man who wants to borrow three loaves in the middle of the night (Lk 11.5-8): "Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything." He could not come out because his cloak served as a cover. Unless he disturbed his children and wife, he would have had to come out improperly dressed.

<sup>97</sup>*bNed.* 49b-50a; women and men were not to wear the same clothes, Dt 22.5; six students of R. Judah b. 'Ilai are said to use the same cloak, each in his turn, in *bSanh.* 20a.

<sup>98</sup>*pHag.* 2.1.78d, line 23: the cloak is called *gulta*'.

<sup>99</sup>See n. 17 above. It was frowned upon, see Brüll, *Trachten*, 9, n. 3, quoting *bBer.* 62b.

<sup>100</sup>E.g., women in *mNidd.* 9.3.

too dirty or patched up, or of too rough a material, or even more impure,<sup>101</sup> and it would have been shameful to wear: “If a man borrows a tunic from his neighbor on the eve of a festival-day, [it is restricted to the same limits] as the borrower’s feet; if on a festival-day, as the lender’s feet.”<sup>102</sup> This practice even became the focus of legal discussions, as in the standard case of someone who borrowed a tunic or cloak from his neighbor to go and visit his sick father but rent it in sign of grief, his father having died in the meantime.<sup>103</sup>

Student scholars themselves often were poor and had but the bare minimum. The Palestinian Talmud relates a story in which R. Simlai’s students (mid-third century C.E.) had to put on their old everyday mantles even on Sabbath, against the recommendation of R. Ḥanina (floruit in the early third century C.E.):

Rabbi Ḥanina said: Every man must own two mantles, one for everyday and one for Sabbath. . . . when R. Simlai taught this in the congregation, the scholars cried [on account of the difficulty] of practicing it. They told him: ‘Rabbi, our everyday mantle is also our Sabbath mantle.’<sup>104</sup>

This demand, that everyone be able to change his garments for Sabbath,<sup>105</sup> could obviously not be met by all, scholars or commoners, and remained an ideal reflected in late stories.

A ruling echoing the same concerns was attributed to R. Yoḥanan and R. Assi, authorities in the late third century C.E. It was meant to make poor people’s lives easier and more dignified during religious festivities. Many tasks were forbidden during the intermediate days of Passover and Sukkoth, but an exception was made (in the name of R. Yoḥanan) for the washing of clothing to allow those without change of clothes to have clean garments: “Anybody who has but one tunic is allowed to wash it during the festival week.”<sup>106</sup> Those who owned very few pieces of clothing were forced to make

<sup>101</sup>An *‘am ha-areṣ* could not be accepted in a *ḥaver*’s house with his own clothing: *mDem.* 2.3. For an analysis of these two terms, see chapter 5.

<sup>102</sup>*tBets.* 4.6.207, lines 24ff:

On the extent of borrowing: *tBM* 8.28.390, lines 15f. See also *bBets.* 37b; *bYom.* 23a; *bNed.* 32b.

<sup>103</sup>*tBM* 8.28 (just quoted) and *bMQ* 26b; also *bMakhsh.* 26b.

<sup>104</sup>*pPe’ah* 8.8.21b, top: [Hebrew text]

<sup>105</sup>*bShab.* 114a, top.

<sup>106</sup>*bMQ* 14a. To those thinking that such a ruling could be abused, Mar son of Rav Ashi, a later commentator (Babylonian, ca. 450 C.E.), answered: “His girdle proves his plight.” Ps.-Rashi, commenting on this passage, explained this expression as follows: “Whoever has

it last as long as possible. Poor folk kept mending and patching coats and tunics, which added to the risk of becoming impure: “The pieces of cloth [in the garments] of poor folk, even if none measures three fingerbreadths square, are susceptible to *midras*-uncleanness.”<sup>107</sup>

Such a tunic, with three patches on the shoulder, has been found in the Cave of Letters in the Judean desert.<sup>108</sup> The Essenes, according to Josephus, renewed their clothes only when they had become mere rags.<sup>109</sup> The Gospels also drew upon this common occurrence.<sup>110</sup> As we have seen, worn-out clothes remained a valuable item.<sup>111</sup>

### 2.3 CLOTHING AND SOCIAL STATUS

“Men are the glory of God and their clothes are the glory of men,” says the late Minor Tractate *Derekh Erets Zuta*.<sup>112</sup> A man marked his status through his speech, his walk, and other manners, but especially through his food and clothing.<sup>113</sup> For this reason, if there was a justifiable claim on a man’s property, it was not regarded as acceptable among Jews to dishonor him by forcing him to sell his present clothing and go and buy simpler garments to pay the difference.<sup>114</sup> Neither was it proper to examine a man applying to a charity fund for clothes, since being without proper dress was in itself shameful. Ideally, even if one had lost the means to procure such marks of dignity and fallen into poverty, they were still to be provided out of personal or public charity funds.<sup>115</sup> To lack clothes, or a certain kind of clothing, was to be without all of the qualities associated with them. The story of Lazarus and the Rich Man again provides a good beginning. Luke in fact was keen on

---

only a tunic takes it off [to wash it], wraps himself in his coat (*amictorium*) and girds it with his belt. He thus washes his tunic, letting everyone know that he has but one tunic.” About the importance of cleanliness and whiteness, see below.

<sup>107</sup> *mKel.* 28.8. See also *mShab.* 10.4; for rags: *bSukk.* 16a; *bShab.* 134a; *bHull.* 8b. See Krauss, *TA*, 1:528, nn. 73–75. Text of Mishnah: [Hebrew text]

<sup>108</sup> Yadin, *The Finds*, 213 and pl. 76. Yadin thinks that perhaps “the tunic was torn during movement through the narrow passages between the several halls of the cave.” Another tunic has patches; *ibid.* and pl. 75. But most of these pieces of cloth seem to have been in very good condition in antiquity: they were not poor people’s garments.

<sup>109</sup> *BJ* 2.126.

<sup>110</sup> Mt 9.16 = Mk 2.21; Lk 5.36: old must be mended with old.

<sup>111</sup> *mKeth.* 5.8 end; see p. 71, above. [check]

<sup>112</sup> Chap. 10.

<sup>113</sup> Mt 11.8; Mk 12.38 (cf. Lk 20.45; Mt 23.5).

<sup>114</sup> *Mekh. Ex.* 22.26.

<sup>115</sup> Remarks attributed to Hillel in *tPe’ah* 4.10–11; *pPe’ah* 8.7.

providing when necessary the sort of details, especially of dress, denoting an honorable person.<sup>116</sup> Our aim is indirectly to comment on this text by throwing light on the different marks of status or degradation: nudity versus an abundance of clothing; the presence or absence of a headdress, shoes, or a cloak; cleanliness, fineness, and dyes.

#### NAKEDNESS

In Jewish eyes, especially since the time they had been exposed to Greek mores, to be naked was to lack human status.<sup>117</sup> Either complete or relative nakedness indicated a very low status: it was utterly unacceptable, especially in a woman.<sup>118</sup> We have already seen that one was not supposed to say the *shema* if he was not covered. Yet baths were certainly in great favor in all the cities of Palestine, as sources and archaeology abundantly show, and many stories picture the problems of decency encountered there by some teachers. In fact, some people could not be seen naked even there. Concerning the Essenes, as Josephus noted: “At the bath, women are enveloped in a cloth, men have a loin-cloth [an undershirt?].”<sup>119</sup> Except for the baths, where strict rules were followed, nudity in public places was completely out of the question for Jews, and most especially for women. It was severely castigated, for example, in this later commentary on Dt 32.21:<sup>120</sup>

...“so I will stir them to jealousy with those who are no people”  
...Don’t read “with those who are no people” but “fragments of people” (rags?) ...Another interpretation: those are they who come from Berberia and from Mauritania and who go about naked in public places. No one is more *contemptible and vile* in the world than he who goes naked in public.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>116</sup>See J. Dupont, *Les béatitudes* (Paris: Gabalda, 1973<sup>2</sup>), 3:93, 174.

<sup>117</sup>Jub 3.3: “they should cover their shame and they should not be uncovered as the Gentiles are uncovered” (ET by O. S. Wintermute, in *OTP*, 2:60).

<sup>118</sup>For nudity as shameful, see Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte*, 5:200–01. Ideally, wives had priority in matters of clothing: *pHor.* 3.4.

<sup>119</sup>*BJ* 2.161.

<sup>120</sup>Beginning of early third century according to S. Lieberman, *Texts and Studies* (New York: KTAV, 1974), 138.

<sup>121</sup>*Sifre Dt* 32.21 (Finkelstein, ed., 367) has: [Hebrew text] The Palestinian Targum refers also to Berberia and the “son of Mauritanus”: *TJo*, *Gn* 10.7. Variant of the Sifre text in *bYev.* 63b: see Brüll, *Trachten*, 4–5 (n. 3).

The italicized words express a strong idea of shame and social inferiority. Nudity, at least in the fields, was much more common in northern Africa.<sup>122</sup> Of course, nudity was only relative: we have already seen that *gymnos* was said of anyone wearing a tunic, especially a light one, without a mantle. To be naked even implied madness. Luke (8.27) notes that the Gerasene demoniac was not, or had not been, wearing a *himation*. The word here is usually translated as unspecified “clothes” or “garment,” meaning that the poor fellow was stark naked.<sup>123</sup> But it may well be also that the lack of a mantle was the Gospel’s respectful way to indicate that this “man from the city” was out of his mind: reputable men were to wear a mantle, and so did the man once the demons were driven away.<sup>124</sup> Epiphanius of Salamis repeats a similar story that he heard told by Josephus, an important Jew from Tiberias who converted to Christian orthodoxy at the beginning of the fourth century: “There was a mad man in the city who roamed the town, I mean Tiberias, naked. If he was dressed he would often tear his clothing apart, as such people will.”<sup>125</sup> Relative nudity caused one to be disqualified from performing certain religious functions, and hence lose one’s status in the community. An instance of this is a Mishnah saying that “he whose clothes are ragged may recite the *Shema*’ with its Benedictions and interpret, but he may not read in the Law or go before the Ark or lift up his hands.”<sup>126</sup> In other words, such a man could accomplish the minimal devotions together with the community, but he could not discharge the functions considered to be more honorable, namely, reading the Hebrew Pentateuch or giving a blessing (if he was a priest). Interestingly, a poor man (a priest?) with very worn-out clothes still could recite the Aramaic version.

Nudity was the mark of subjection to a master. In the late Hellenistic tradition, one signified one’s respect for civil authorities by standing up and baring one’s head. Jews distanced themselves from the Greeks by picturing

<sup>122</sup> See for instance White, *Roman Farming*, pl. 32: a threshing scene from Zliten in Tripolitania. See also S. Gsell, *Histoire ancienne de l’Afrique du Nord* (Paris: Courtois, 1951<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>123</sup> See Bauer, *Lexicon*, s.v. ἱμάτιον.

<sup>124</sup> Lk 8.35 and Mk 5.15. See Dupont, *Les béatitudes*, 3:94. Luke was perhaps simply suggesting that the Gerasene was naked by saying that he had not been properly dressed for a long time.

<sup>125</sup> *Panarion* 30.10.3 (PG 41.422): Μαινόμενος δέ τις ἦν ἐν τῇ πόλει, ὅς γυμνὸς τὴν πόλιν περιήει, φημί δὲ ἐν Τιβεριάδι, καὶ πολλάκις ἐνδιδυσκόμενος τὴν ἐσθῆτα διερρήγγυσεν, ὡς ἔθος τοῖς τοιούτοις. [check] ET by F. Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis: Book I (Sects 1–46)* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 127.

<sup>126</sup> *mMeg.* 4.6.

their God as much less formal and terrorizing:

This is like to a king who dispatched his edict (πρόσταγμα) to the province. What did the inhabitants do? They stood on their feet and bared their heads and read it in dread and fear, in terror and trembling. So spoke the Holy One, blessed be He, to Israel: I have not imposed my edict upon you, and I have not told you that you should read the *Shema* standing on your feet and bareheaded.<sup>127</sup>

#### BAREFOOTEDNESS

To be without footwear was also to lack standing. The Talmud says that a man of good repute was to procure shoes for his feet.<sup>128</sup> Luke's Gospel gives the same impression: shoes appear together with the father's festive cloak and signet ring in the story of the prodigal son. It was not only that the son's barefootedness was a sad reflection on the state of affairs at home, but the *ὑποδήματα*, in the context of the two other objects, were a sign of freedom, authority, and wealth wholly regained.<sup>129</sup>

To be barefoot was reserved for the most dramatic events of life. It was a sign of deep mourning and of severe fasting.<sup>130</sup> It was required of the priests in their service of the Temple, while it was standing,<sup>131</sup> and in the synagogues, when they blessed the people.<sup>132</sup> Some people felt that the service of the Torah in the synagogue demanded that one be barefooted, but these were considered heretics by the rabbis.<sup>133</sup> In the two last instances, the sacredness of the ground implied the absence of impurities and therefore the necessity of direct contact.<sup>134</sup> The customary avoidance of impurities afforded

<sup>127</sup> *LevR.* 27.

<sup>128</sup> *bShab* 129a: Rab Judah said in Rab's name: one should always sell [even] the beams of his house and buy shoes for his feet. [But if one is sick, a meal is more important than shoes.]

<sup>129</sup> Lk 15.22. See J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1963), 130; Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, 185, and his very instructive note 200.

<sup>130</sup> Mourning: *mMq* 3.7; fasting: *mTa'an.* 1.4, 6; *mYoma* 8.1; *tYoma* 5.1.189; *pSanh.* 10.28b, bottom.

<sup>131</sup> *mSheq.* 5.1 and *pSheq.* 5.2.48d, mid-column, explaining the "bowel sickness" of *mSheq.* 5.1 by the fact that priests walked barefoot on the floor of the Temple, ate meat (in quantity, adds Bertinoro at *mSheq.* 5.1), and drank water.

<sup>132</sup> Priests untied their sandals before reciting the blessing.

<sup>133</sup> *mMeg.* 4.9; *pMeg.* 4.9; *bMeg.* 24b; *bPes.* 113b.

<sup>134</sup> To be barefoot may have been a metonymia for complete nudity, in the spirit of David's story, 2 Sam 6.14ff, and Talmudic stories about the high priest's magnificently transparent clothing.

by soles was not needed here but actually was dangerous because impurities could be brought in from the outside. The demand by Jesus that his disciples go barefoot may have contained the idea that the whole land was as sacred as the Temple and required the same degree of humility before God.<sup>135</sup>

To be without shoes in everyday life, however, was to be something less than honorable. Implying immediate contact with impure things, it meant dire poverty or slavery.<sup>136</sup> In a dispute with R. Yoshua b. Qarḥah (ca. 150 C.E.), a certain “eunuch-Sadducee” (perhaps a Christian?) seized upon this fact to crush his opponent:

Now, he saw that he (R. Joshua) was not wearing shoes, (whereupon) he remarked: He (who rides) on a horse is a king, upon an ass, is a free man, and he who has shoes on his feet is a human being; but he who has none of these, one who is dead and buried is better off.<sup>137</sup>

Such was the horror of nakedness that the plain words of Isaiah (20.3) had to be accommodated to taste:

R. Ḥiyya b. Abba [ca. 280 C.E.] also said in R. Yoḥanan’s name: ‘what is meant by the verse, *Like as my servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot?* ‘Naked’ means in worn-garments; ‘barefoot’ in patched shoes.’<sup>138</sup>

Indeed, everyone, even a poor man’s wife, was expected to wear a pair of good shoes or sandals, at least for the main festivals. One may well imagine that shoes were put on only when necessary so that they might last as long as possible, and that nails were an improvement in that respect, though unacceptable in the synagogues.<sup>139</sup>

## QUANTITY AND LENGTH

We have already seen that to have only one set of clothes was also a sign of wretchedness. Specifically, to wear only one tunic was considered misery, which is precisely the kind of life that Jesus asked his disciples to lead.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>135</sup>See p. 69 above. [check] Note that the Essenes had shoes on, when traveling: Josephus, *BJ* 2.126.

<sup>136</sup>See Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 130. Cf. *bShab.* 114a, top (a disgrace for a scholar), R. Aqiva advised his son to wear shoes: *bPes.* 112a.

<sup>137</sup>*bShab.* 152a.

<sup>138</sup>*bShab.* 114a: [Hebrew text] See also *bYoma* 77a (on 2 Sam 15.30).

<sup>139</sup>See above, p. 74. [check]

<sup>140</sup>Mt 10.10; Mk 6.9; Lk 9.3.

It is also what struck the faithful in the third century C.E. Syrian tradition concerning Thomas: “he wears (only) one garment.”<sup>141</sup> One of the frescoes on the walls of the Dura Europos synagogue, painted ca. 250 C.E., may be a hieratic example of an imagined situation of poverty. It shows the Israelites clad in long-sleeved *chitons* reaching to the knees, girded, and with sandals. Some tunics have broad *clavi* (discussed on pp. 100–1). [check] Others, perhaps for children, are solid red or green. The fact that they wear only tunics was perhaps meant to reflect their situation of poverty when they fled Egypt.<sup>142</sup>

An abundance of clothes, shown specifically by the length and size of the cloak and tunic, was a sign of wealth. Roman citizens usually wore long tunics and very long mantles, and this style perhaps influenced Greek and specifically Palestinian habits. But common people wore shorter clothing, which was cheaper to make or to buy and more convenient to use at work. One may imagine that a person who owned a tunic and cloak would handle them very carefully if he wanted to participate in any religious functions, which were the major occasions of public life. Most work activities demanded that one be without a cloak, and with the bottom hem of the tunic temporarily taken up in order to keep it clean for Sabbath, when it was dropped.<sup>143</sup> Slaves too had much shorter clothing, for the similar reason that their function was to serve and that a *pallium*, a *talith*, or a long tunic would have impeded their movements. Beyond this practical motive, however, there was also an institutional one. In the Roman Empire, slaves could not wear the *toga*. When they needed a coat, they wore a short cape such as the *paenula*, which was so practical that it became widely used in Europe. During meals, the mark of a slave was to wear his short tunic belted, in contrast to the seated guests, who perhaps did not wear a belt but kept their mantles wrapped around them (their right arm alone being unencumbered).<sup>144</sup> The contrast is obvious on the South Wall painting of the Dura Europos synagogue, which represents Elijah humiliating the prophets of Baal with his successful sacrifice. In describing the four water carriers on the right, Kraeling notes that they “are dressed in short-sleeved, knee-length tunics girded up at the waist by a belt, but they apparently wear no sandals.”

<sup>141</sup> *Acts of Thomas* 20 (*NTA*, 2:453.)

<sup>142</sup> Kraeling, *The Synagogue*, 79, pl. LII.

<sup>143</sup> *bShab.* 113a: “If one has a change [of garments], he should change [them], but if he has nothing to change into, he should lower his garments.”

<sup>144</sup> Mt 11.29; Lk 12.37; Jn 13.4f.; *T. Jo.* of Gen 21.14: “He bound her loins to make it known that she was a servant.” Le Déaut, *Targum du Pentateuque*, 1:211; cf. *PRE* 30.216.

As we have seen above, the “short sleeves” were probably the wide shoulders of the tunics falling on the upper arms.<sup>145</sup> Kraeling further notes that “in the top row the tunics are gray and pink respectively and have reddish brown and black vertical *clavi*...In the bottom row the tunics are reddish brown.”<sup>146</sup>

The significance of colors and dyes will be studied later. Suffice it to say here that the “gray” and “brown” mean that the tunics had not been dyed. These four people, in Kraeling’s opinion, are “servants, or possibly pupils, of Elijah.”<sup>147</sup> I think they are servants, more precisely, slaves. One can still note the contrast much later, in the fifth century C.E., in the mosaic discovered on the floor of the Beth Alpha synagogue: Abraham wears a long tunic decorated with two vertical stripes and belted (?), whereas his servants have short, undecorated tunics (also belted?).<sup>148</sup> There were probably differences between the clothing of free poor people and slaves, perhaps in the quality of the fabric or in the absence of a proper cloak for slaves. One perceptible sign of a difference is the total absence of decorations on the tunics of slaves or of people having occupations considered to be very low, such as those carrying burdens.<sup>149</sup>

The difference between those who work and those who do not served also to mark the scholar. Scholarly endeavors often went with wealth and a dignity that was expressed institutionally. The Gospels relate that Jesus warned against the scribes and the Pharisees who “make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long”<sup>150</sup> and against the “scribes, who like to go about in long robes.”<sup>151</sup> A story involving scholars of the third century C.E. relates that they were expected to wear a long tunic that covered the entire

<sup>145</sup>Note 21, p. 66. [check]

<sup>146</sup>*The Synagogue*, 142 and n. 509, pl. LXII. See Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols*, II: color pl. XVI.

<sup>147</sup>*The Synagogue*, against R. Du Mesnil du Buisson, *Les peintures de la synagogue de Doura-Europos, 254–56 après J.C.* (Paris: Ed. Universitaires, 1939), pl. XLVIII.

<sup>148</sup>E. L. Sukenik, *The Ancient Synagogue of Beth Alpha* (Jerusalem: The University Press, 1932). The same difference is expressed in a fifth century C.E. mosaic found at Daphne-Yakto, a suburb of Antioch, reproduced in E. Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique et pauvreté sociale à Byzance* (Paris: Mouton, 1977), pl. 2.

<sup>149</sup>E.g., at Dura-Europos. Also in the fifth century C.E. mosaic of Daphne-Yakto mentioned in preceding note, the carrier in the middle has a brown tunic without stripes. See pl. 10 in Patlagean, *Pauvreté*: the man carrying a heavy and bulky load has no vertical stripes on his tunic, only a belt. His tunic seems darker too.

<sup>150</sup>Mt 23.5.

<sup>151</sup>Lk 20.46 and Mk 12.38.

body and a cloak that almost covered it:

R. Yohanan asked R. Banna'a [*Tanna*, ca. 220 C.E.], 'What is a scholar's tunic?' Such as it does not let his flesh under it. 'What is a scholar's cloak?' A cloak under which his tunic does not show more than a handbreadth.<sup>152</sup>

This description suits the kind of Greek-style clothes worn by Biblical figures on the frescoes of the third century Dura Europos synagogue: the tunics come to the ankles and the cloak is wrapped in such a way as to show the bottom of the tunic.<sup>153</sup> It also suits the allusions to the Pharisees' long robes found in the Gospels.<sup>154</sup> Yet we know of scholars who could not afford a mantle or who went around in rags and barefoot. But students and rabbis were normally required to wear spotless garments and patchless shoes.<sup>155</sup> Rabbi Yohanan was given the reputation of being particularly demanding in these matters.<sup>156</sup>

### QUALITY

Another important way of marking differences of condition was the quality of the fabric. Not everyone could afford, or was entitled to, fabrics of high quality, and the color of the tunics of the water carriers seen above indicates that they were made of some rough, undyed material. The most desired fabrics were good wool, pure linen, and of course the much rarer silk.<sup>157</sup> The tunics and mantles found in the caves of the Judean desert were also in wool.<sup>158</sup> Were they part of a war treasury? Made of good cloth and nicely decorated, they do not strike one as poor people's clothes.

<sup>152</sup> *bBB* 57b (Abramson, ed. [1958] 71, lines 65–67). See Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte*, 5:251.

<sup>153</sup> Kraeling, *The Synagogue*, pls. LXI (Prophets of Baal), LXXVI (Moses), LXXVII (Ezra); *chiton* and *himation* were used "for all males save children, servants and the like" (p. 71); for a woman's arrangement of the same basic elements, see pl. LXIII and p. 146: the widow of Zarephath, after revivification of her child, is clothed in bright-colored garments, gray *chiton* with *clavi* and a yellow *himation*. See also Du Mesnil du Buisson, *Les peintures de la synagogue de Doura-Europos*, 35–36, pls. XV, L.

<sup>154</sup> *Mk* 12.38; *Lk* 20.45.

<sup>155</sup> *bShab.* 114a; *bBer.* 43b.

<sup>156</sup> Brüll, *Trachten*, 7.

<sup>157</sup> See above, nn. 9–12. According to *bPes.* 109a, which concerns women's desires, dyed wool garments were the most expensive clothes in Babylonia, whereas white linen was so regarded in Palestine.

<sup>158</sup> Yadin, *The Finds*, 170 and 204, n. 1.

An interesting text in the Palestinian Talmud describes how one expected a prince such as Rabbi Yehuda II (mid-third century C.E.) to dress himself:

*On your eyes will behold the King in his splendor* (Is 33.17). Rabbi Ḥanina went up to Rabbi Yehuda the Prince; he (Yehuda) went out to him dressed in his linen garments. Rabbi Ḥanina told him: go back and put on your woolen garments, because *your eyes will behold the King in his splendor*. Rabbi Yoḥanan went up to Rabbi Yehuda, the Prince; he (Yehuda) went out to him in a linen tunic. Rabbi Yoḥanan told him: go back and put on your woolen tunic, because *your eyes will behold the King in his splendor*.<sup>159</sup>

Wool garments were obviously regarded as being of better quality, denoting dignity, at least according to traditionalists. The two supposed visitors of Rabbi named by the Palestinian Talmud were very influential themselves. One might think that they were rebuking Rabbi for the modesty of his attire and encouraging him to receive even them, his colleagues, with all the regalia befitting the Patriarch that he was.

The theme of royal modesty was a common one throughout the Roman Empire and was often expressed in terms of vestimentary simplicity. For instance, the *Historia Augusta*, dating to the fourth or fifth century C.E., reports about Antoninus Pius (138–161 C.E.) that “he often received his friends without the robes of state and even in the performance of domestic duties.”<sup>160</sup> This same Antoninus Pius and his successors appear in several Talmudic stories in which they are put on an equal footing with Rabbi and his successors.<sup>161</sup> The present story may be one more parallel.<sup>162</sup>

But linen by itself did not particularly denote modesty. On the contrary, one may wonder if there is not a point of criticism in the Talmudic text, which, under the real or assumed authority of R. Ḥanina and R. Yoḥanan, saw in linen something improper or unfit for a prince of Rabbi’s stature. One possible explanation is that linen was a material of predilection

<sup>159</sup> *pSanh.* 2.5.20c, bottom: [Hebrew text]

<sup>160</sup> *Historia Augusta*, Antoninus Pius 6.12: *visus est sane ab amicis et cum privatis vestibus et domestica quaedam gerens* [check]. Cf. Severus 19.7. This is a common theme of the *Historia Augusta* and may have been a disguised attack on the luxury and portentousness of the fourth century Christian court.

<sup>161</sup> E.g., *pMeg.* 1.10.72b (fourth century stories also?). On the status of the third-century Patriarchs, see L. I. Levine, “The Jewish Patriarch (Nasi) in Third-Century Palestine,” *ANRW* II/19.2 (1979) 649ff.

<sup>162</sup> Other passages are: *b’Av. Zar.* 10a (concerning Tiberias); *bSanh.* 91b.

for rich people,<sup>163</sup> especially Romans, or Jews influenced by foreign ways. Still, the story may be even more pointed: fine linen had normally been reserved for the vestments of priests in their duty at the Temple and especially for the High Priest's garments on Yom Kippur.<sup>164</sup> To wear linen, even at a much later period, was to expose oneself to grave dangers with regard to purity: one thread of wool mixed with linen was enough for this.<sup>165</sup> The converse was not true: there was little danger of Mixed Kinds in wearing wool. It is the presence of this high risk that had made it reserved for priests, just as sacrifices, "work" (cultic work) on Sabbath, the use of sacred places and times, and the reading of the Name of God had been their duty.<sup>166</sup> In view of this, the story before us could be not so much a veiled attack against the luxury of the Prince's house in the third and fourth centuries C.E.<sup>167</sup> as a demand that Rabbi Yehuda behave like a king or prince, not like a high priest.

This concern for the correct attribution of the high priesthood was also shared by the Jewish followers of Jesus in the first century and perhaps even more so in the second century, as evidenced by Hegesippus's description of James's position in Jerusalem. Perhaps a majority of Jewish Christians reconstructed a high priesthood of sorts in which James was made an heir to Jesus' high priesthood because he belonged to Jesus' family and was a direct recipient of his spiritual teachings. Consequently, "he alone was allowed to enter the sacred precincts; for he did not wear woolen garments but linen."<sup>168</sup> This seemingly spiritual interest for the high priesthood hid

<sup>163</sup>As in the story of Lazarus, Lk 16.19. Linen is part of the satiric description of Sabinian in Jerome's *Letter* 147.8 (to Sabinian): *Amiciris linteis, digitos anulis oneras, dentes pulvere teris*.

<sup>164</sup>Josephus, *BJ* 5.229; *mYoma* 7.3,5; *tYoma* 1.21.

<sup>165</sup>*mKil.* 9.1; *pKil.* 9.1.31d–32a.

<sup>166</sup>The social advantages (authority and rights to material well-being) that a priest could gain from taking this "risk" explain Josephus's reaction to the demand made by Levites who requested the privilege to wear linen: Josephus, *AJ* 20.216.

<sup>167</sup>See the story involving Yose of Ma'on in a criticism of the Patriarchal house: *pSanh.* 2.20d, lines 2–13. The criticism was perhaps adopted and amplified by John Chrysostom, for his own purposes, in his *Adversus Iudaeos* 6.7. For other attacks against the patriarchal house, especially its hereditary transmission of power, see G. Alon, *The Jews in Their Land in the Talmudic Age (70–640 C.E.)* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press/Hebrew University, 1984), 2:722–25.

<sup>168</sup>Apud Eusebius, *H.E.* 2.23.6: τοῦτω μόνω ἐσῆν εἰς τὰ ἅγια εἰσιέναι οὐδὲ γὰρ ἑρεοῦν ἐφόρει, ἀλλὰ σινδόνας. [check] See analysis by S. G. F. Brandon, *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church* (London: SPCK, 1957<sup>2</sup>), 52–53. *Martyrdom of Isaiah* 3.25 refers to a change of dress among first Christians, an episode which may reflect a similar situation in the Pales-

material interests, first among which was the allotment of tithes.<sup>169</sup>

The end of the Second Temple period had seen the joining of both functions, kingship and high priesthood.<sup>170</sup> This new form of kingship had caused quarrels because it implied the gathering of religious and civil taxing—including being the broker for the Romans—in the same hands. It is possible that the preceding story about R. Yehudah represents the same old concerns revived by authorities in the third and fourth centuries C.E. who were at odds with the house of Rabbi. Several sources, unfortunately of a later date for most, point to this tension.<sup>171</sup> The claim of the Patriarchate to traditional rights, as well as its policies, ran counter to the priests' interests, particularly in Galilee.

### COLORS AND PATTERNS

For all sorts of fabrics, but particularly for wool, the care taken during the operations of spinning, weaving, fulling, and dyeing provided an opportunity to assert one's standing. The most obvious results of such care showed in the color of the garments and their decorations.

There were three basic stages during the technical process when one could produce a vestment that advertised one's social status [rephrase]. The cloth might be left unfulled—that is, in its natural color, which was grey for linen and “black” (i.e., dark), brown, or greyish to white for other materials, especially wool.<sup>172</sup> Or it might be “fulled” in a basin containing a special clay to be rendered as white as possible,<sup>173</sup> a long and costly process.<sup>174</sup> Last,

---

tinian church in the second century C.E.

<sup>169</sup>The tradition that is reported in the name of Heseqippus may not go back further than the second century C.E. According to Brandon, its reaching back to the first leader may simply have been an attempt to justify the socioeconomic position achieved by the Jerusalem Church. But it is notable that James has already been given a similar role in Acts, though in a different language. The difference of language is understandable: it was not possible for the earliest community surrounding James to claim tithes as going to a new high priesthood. One could only hope for gifts. The expectation of gifts became something organized rather quickly, and it was sanctified in various ways.

<sup>170</sup>See Schürer, *History*, 2:227–36.

<sup>171</sup>See Chapter 4 on the role of the Patriarchate in the collection of taxes.

<sup>172</sup>In spite of the saying given in n. 194 below. [check]

<sup>173</sup>The technique is described in Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology*, 4:83ff. There is a reference to it in the Syriac translation of Mk 9:3: “his clothing became brilliant white like snow, such as men [able] to bleach it with clay cannot be found.” Cf. the Roman *toga splendens* taken by the *candidati* for office.

<sup>174</sup>A description of the technique in Babylonia is given by Rabbi Ḥisda (died in 309 C.E.)

it might be entirely dyed after proper preparation, or dyed stripes might be woven in it or sewn onto it. This was an extraordinary luxury if true Tyrian purple was used,<sup>175</sup> and only the very rich could afford the labor needed to make such luxuries. Of course, there were other more common dyes available to the majority of the population, including saffron, indigo, or woad, and madder.<sup>176</sup>

Lucien Gerschel has attempted to relate the three ranges of colors obtained at these three stages of preparation to the social structure of various Indo-European populations and especially to that of the Romans:<sup>177</sup> “black,” the non-cleaned cloth, would have been for slaves and common people; “white,” a thoroughly washed and fulled material, would have been the prerogative of priests and for contacts with the gods in general; and “red,” the main color applied in dyeing, would have been the exclusive right of warriors and kings (when associated with war).<sup>178</sup>

Things do not appear to be so clear in Roman Palestine. A good point of departure for the deciphering of the color code is a story told about R. Yoḥanan, who had the reputation of being an elegant man and quite exacting in matters of dress. In this story, R. Yoḥanan is shown *in articulo mortis*, giving his disciples or sons his last recommendations concerning the color of his clothing for his burial.<sup>179</sup> The legend apparently had considerable success and came to us in at least five versions edited at different times, probably between the third and seventh centuries C.E. The version in the Babylonian Talmud goes as follows:

---

in *bShab.* 14ob. See *tShab.* 1.22 (implying that it was more difficult to wash white clothes than dyed ones).

<sup>175</sup>Article *Purpura*, in *DAGR*, 4/1:769–78 (by M. Besnier); J. Doumet, *Etude sur la couleur pourpre ancienne* (Leiden: Brill, 1980). There were several other dyes available, see article “Dyes,” in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 4:308. A description of the process can also be found in: Pfister, *Textiles de Palmyre*, 2:11. For a full account, see Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology*, 4:99–150; a shorter and excellent sketch in A. Neuburger, *The Technical Arts and Sciences of the Ancients* (New York: Macmillan, 1930), 186–91.

<sup>176</sup>Yadin, *The Finds*, 207. The natural color of wool being quite varied, a dyer using basic colors could obtain results covering the whole spectrum: see art. “Cloth,” *IDB*, 1:652 (by L. Bellinger).

<sup>177</sup>“Couleur et teinture chez divers peuples indo-européens,” *Annales E.S.C.* (1966) 608–31. The problem is recalled in D. Briquel, “Initiations grecques et idéologie indo-européenne,” *Annales E.S.C.* 37 (1982) 454–64.

<sup>178</sup>Gerschel, *Annales E.S.C.* (1966) 609–10, 618, 621.

<sup>179</sup>Burials were as luxurious as means allowed. But the luxury of the ceremony, vestments, and tombs called for some questioning. See n. 200 below. [check]

R. Simon b. Laqish said: “These are the clothes of *oulayirin* which come from the coastal province.” Does this mean to say that they are white? But about this didn’t R. Yannai (read R. Yoḥanan) say to his sons: “My sons, do not bury me in white clothes or in black clothes. Not white, lest I be found unworthy and be like a bridegroom among mourners; not black, lest I be found worthy and be like a mourner among the bridegrooms. But in the clothes of *oulayirin* which come from the coastal province.” Consequently they were colored.<sup>180</sup>

### *Black and white*

Black and white were apparently the two extremities of the color code, at least on the religious plane. R. Yoḥanan is represented as wanting to avoid taking the risk of wearing the wrong color at the time of judgment and he therefore chose a type of clothing that could fit both situations. What could this have been? Various explanations have been proposed for *oulayirin*, yielding the meaning of “grey,” “multicolored,” or “green”—that is, dyed one way or another.<sup>181</sup> Jastrow’s translation as “court robes” is followed by the Soncino edition.<sup>182</sup> The original story may have described R. Yoḥanan as wanting unfulled clothing, a piece of wool cloth left in its original color. It would have been a woolen material rather gray in appearance.<sup>183</sup> Provided it were clean, it could pass either as “white” if made of white sheep’s wool or as “black” or dark, because it was unfulled. An argument in favor of this view is that men normally could not wear fully dyed clothes, at least in the first centuries C.E.<sup>184</sup> Another argument is provided by a version of the same story found in the Yerushalmi:

R. Yoḥanan commands: “Dress me in *burdiqa* (?), neither in white nor in black. If I stand among the righteous, I shall not be ashamed and if I stand among the wicked, I shall not be ashamed!” Rabbi Ya’shiah commands: “Dress me in white, bosomed, garments.” They told him: “Are you better than your master?” He told them: “Should I be with slaves?”<sup>185</sup>

<sup>180</sup> *bShab.* 114a (my translation): [Hebrew text]

<sup>181</sup> See Brüll, *Trachten*, 16–18, n. 3.

<sup>182</sup> Rashi understood some expensive sheet used by rich people at the baths.

<sup>183</sup> Could *oulayirin* be the same as *ὀλίριος*, given as “woolly” by LSJ, quoting a *dubia lectio* in *P. Oxy.* 109–17 (third to fourth century C.E.)? Perhaps the origin of the word is Latin: *velarius*, a slave in charge of curtains and screens (*velarium*). The screens stretched above theaters to keep off the sun were dyed in bright colors.

<sup>184</sup> See below, pp. 96–97. [check]

<sup>185</sup> *pKeth.* 12.3.35a, top (cf. *pKil.* 9.3.32b, top): [Hebrew text]

The type of clothing chosen by R. Yoḥanan was apparently typical of slaves and would have been undyed.<sup>186</sup> To avoid using the traditional code—that is, black and white—R. Yoḥanan chose something in between, apparently characteristic of a social class. The absence or presence of color dyes was also a code using marks other than black and white and based on different concepts.<sup>187</sup> We shall presently study the meaning of these two codes before drawing conclusions concerning the poor.

Let us begin with white. The basic principle here was religious, in Greek as in Jewish tradition. A major concept for the Jews in their attempt to specify the nature of the relationship between the people and their God, as well as within the people, was that of purity. Whatever its origin, purity, also called “clarity,”<sup>188</sup> was the major attribute of God’s world and meant especially the absence of sin: innocence and the state of joy went with it. Darkness, on the contrary, was the mark of a sinful state.

Regarding clothing, purity was expressed in terms of whiteness. A great stress was put on white garments, and dirt was absolutely unacceptable.<sup>189</sup> White clothes were demanded of anyone having some sort of contact with God: Moses, the priests at the Temple, the Essenes, Jesus in the Transfiguration scene, the angels at the sepulcher after his death,<sup>190</sup> the crowd of the elect in the book of Revelation.<sup>191</sup> This demand to keep one’s garments clean, or white, was interpreted as being synonymous with doing God’s commandments.<sup>192</sup> Josephus expresses it about the priests as follows: “They must see to it also that their private life be beyond reproach. That is why

<sup>186</sup>These garments are called *burdiqa* in the Palestinian Talmud, but *davriqa* in other, later (?), texts: Midrash *GenR.* 96 and 100. *GenR.* 96 specifies the word by adding “colored,” perhaps because taken alone it meant undyed clothes? *Burdiqa* may have come from *burdo* (mule), and meant a shaggy, brown garment (cf. the rough “horse cloth,” *burde’ānā*, that gave his surname to Jacob Burdaneus, the founder of the Jacobite Church in Asia).

<sup>187</sup>Rev 6.1–7 gives the complete range, in progressive order: white (victory, kingship); red (war, bloodshed); black (limited drought and famine); pale (= *χλωρός*), yellowish? It represents war, famine and pestilence combined; death).

<sup>188</sup>See Chapter 5, pp. 213–14. [check]

<sup>189</sup>E.g., *tBer.* 7.18.

<sup>190</sup>On Moses’ white vestment during the seven days of consecration, see *b’Av. Zar.* 34a; the high priest was also arrayed in white when reading for Yom Kippur: *mYom.* 7.3; *pYom.* 7.3.44b; Essenes in Josephus, *BJ* 2.123, 131, 137; transfiguration: Mk 9.3; Mt 17.2; Lk 9.29; the angels at the sepulcher: Mt 28.3; Mk 16.5; *Evangelium sec. Petrum* 55: “they saw a young man περιβεβλημένον στολήν λαμπροτάτην.”

<sup>191</sup>Rev 7.13–15; 19.8.

<sup>192</sup>To be ready at all times with a clean garment and not to calculate that there will always be enough time to prepare oneself: Mt 22.11; cf. Rev 22.14; *mAv.* 2.10.

wearers of the priestly robes are spotless, immaculately pure.”<sup>193</sup> The occasions were normally religious. Everyone was expected to wear clean clothes for Sabbath, festival days, and other festive gatherings,<sup>194</sup> —thus, the expression “clean clothing.”<sup>195</sup>

But as in the case of bread, “clean” actually meant white, and, as we shall see, as brilliantly white as possible.<sup>196</sup> The whiter the garments were, the easier the detection of spots, of “impurities.” To wear white was to indicate one’s willingness to be recognized immediately in case of defilement—for instance, by the dust of the road, spit in a crowded street,<sup>197</sup> soiling from one’s work or from one’s contact with others.<sup>198</sup>

In preparing themselves for all their ceremonies, some people could meet their obligations better than others: their clothing could be made whiter and they had the change of clothes that could be dutifully prepared

<sup>193</sup> *AJ* 3.278–79: ἄμωμοι τέ εἰσι καὶ περὶ πάντα καθαροὶ καὶ νηφάλιοι. They wore linen only when officiating: *BJ* 5.228–29.

<sup>194</sup> Clean/white clothes for Sabbath: see *Pap. Ox.* 840, trans. J. Jeremias, *NTA*, 1:94. Also *pMeg.* 4.1.75a, line 25 (among the ordinances attributed to Ezra, there is the rule that washing of clothes for Sabbaths should take place on Thursdays). Other material quoted in L.H. Schiffman, *The Halakhah at Qumran* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 108–9.

<sup>195</sup> *kesut neqiyah*: *Mekh. Ex* 12.16; *bShab.* 25b; *bTa’an.* 11b; *b’Av. Zar.* 34a (Moses with white tunic); see Krauss, *TA*, 1:134. Cf. the wedding scene of Mt 22.11–12 (ἐνδύμα γάμου). The Damascus Document gives a few details on the Essene preparation for Sabbath: “No one shall put on filthy garments or (those) put in storage unless they have been washed with water or are rubbed with frankincense” (CD 11.3ff., trans. Schiffman, *The Halakhah at Qumran*, 106). Text: [Hebrew text] Schiffman explains the use of frankincense as a form of “deodorization.” But it must be noted that frankincense gives off a white dust upon friction (cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*). Its purpose was to give a quick bleach to clothes, smoothen the fabric, as well as give it a good smell. Frankincense also had the reputation in antiquity of being efficacious against boils, sores, and similar affections, all possibly developing into a “leprosy.” This virtue would have been highly appreciated at Qumran. Josephus also reports that the Essenes had great concern for white: *BJ* 2.123, 131, 137.

<sup>196</sup> Chapter 1, p. 35. [check]

<sup>197</sup> Numerous stories recount the impurity caused by spitting; see for instance *tYom.* 4.20.189, line 14; *pYom.* 1.38d, top; *pMeg.* 1.72a, bottom. These three passages concern Ishmael b. Qimhit, whose clothing was rendered impure by spitting, which prevented him from performing his duties as a high priest.

<sup>198</sup> Only white clothes, considered to be in their natural state, could be rendered impure by contact, cf. *pKil.* 9.1.31d, bottom: “As linen is (naturally) white, so is (sheep) wool white; we have been taught two rules which are not analogous. We have been taught that only wool and linen were subject to Mixed Kinds, whether dyed or white. We have been taught that only wool and linen render impure by contact, and only if white.” Text (cf. *bShab.* 27a for parallel text): [Hebrew text]

in time.<sup>199</sup> Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel (ca. 140 C.E.), for example, is reported to have said that in his father's house "they used to give white clothes to a gentile washerwoman three days before Sabbath."<sup>200</sup> It would have been a large house, and the washerwoman (-women?) probably needed that time to prepare numerous tunics and mantles. It was also a rich house, and only wealthy families could afford to take their soiled garments to the *fullones*. This was not the most common situation. We have already seen that many people probably had only one set of clothes, and that they were forced to borrow a tunic or a cloak from their neighbors.

To be forced to borrow, especially for religious festivals, was an occasion of shame. An oft expressed concern of religious leaders was the attempt to minimize this shame. It was considered important that everyone, particularly in Jerusalem, be able to celebrate feast days on an equal footing and have the means to fulfill the minimal requirements of the Law.<sup>201</sup> The Mishnah reports the same Rabban Simeon Gamaliel as saying that in Jerusalem everyone in the past—that is, even the well-to-do—borrowed white clothes on the 15th of Av and on the Day of Atonement, which were days of sadness, in order not to put to shame whoever had none.<sup>202</sup> One is left to wonder whether this solicitude and imitative poverty did put to rest the feelings of shame of those who had no choice but to borrow.<sup>203</sup> Borrowing itself

<sup>199</sup>See above, p. 89.

<sup>200</sup>*mShab.* 1.9; cf. *bar. bShab.* 113a (about *mShab.* 15.3).

<sup>201</sup>See the regulations concerning the sacrifices of the poor, and the lamb to be sacrificed for Passover: Chapter 1, pp. 36–37.

<sup>202</sup>*mTa'an.* 4.8; cf. Palestinian Talmud.

<sup>203</sup>A story in the same vein is told about Rabban Gamaliel (which of the two having that name is not certain). He is said to have asked to be buried in a plain linen cloth in order to relieve poor people of the burden of feeling forced to ruin themselves for the burial of their loved ones: *tNid.* 9.17; *bKeth.* 8b; *bMQ* 27b. But linen, even "plain," was not cheap. Concern for a simple burial—meaning simpler than that customary for kings—is also expressed in the *Testament of Judah* 26.3; cf. S. Safrai, in S. Safrai and M. Stern, eds., *The Jewish People in the First Century* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 2:777; the Greek text is found in M. de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 79. A similar simplicity of burial clothes was reportedly R. Judah ha-Nasi's wish, *in articulo mortis*: *pKil.* 9.4.32a–b and parallel passages. One may wonder why the concern for simpler burials was attributed to some of the most famous ancestors of the Patriarchate. Was it to alleviate poor people's feelings of inadequacy and shame, an explanation offered in some of the sources? Or was it to show that the Nasi was not a king, at least in the Gentile sense of the word, and make people believe that the Patriarch lived a modest life, in spite of appearances to the contrary? Some of the mausoleums discovered in the Beth-She'arim necropolis were not modest at all. Regarding the importance of proper burial, it has been shown that Matthew's and Mark's accounts of Jesus' burial also wished to ward off

was shameful, but if a person could not borrow clothing because they were caught at short notice, or for whatever reason, they could only try to wash the clothes they were wearing as best and discreetly as they could.

White and dark were also used in judicial proceedings. People accused of a crime were sent away in white if found innocent. Somber clothes (black) signified guilt and impurity.<sup>204</sup> Josephus reports that it was the custom for people who came to trial before the Jerusalem Sanhedrin to show their humility and assume “the manner of one who is fearful and seeks mercy from you [the Sanhedrin members] by letting his hair grow long and wearing a black garment.”<sup>205</sup> By putting on the color of the guilty and accepting the shame in advance, the accused avoided a public degradation.<sup>206</sup> He also hoped, presumably, to stir the compassion of the judges.<sup>207</sup> Priests suspected, on genealogical grounds, of being unfit to serve also submitted to the same code. If disqualified, they were made to wear black, but if they qualified, they wore white.<sup>208</sup> It was also the case for Jesus who was given a bright white cloak, on Herod’s orders, to signify his innocence (in derision?) before being sent to Pilate.<sup>209</sup>

The demand to wear white was difficult to fulfill. Those able to afford brightly bleached garments could command more consideration from their fellow Jews, whereas those not able to demonstrate their purity and piety

---

any suggestion of shame: Mk 15.46; Mt 27.59; compare Lk 23.53; Jn 19.40. On this concern, see D. Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: University of London / The Athlone Press, 1956), 311–12.

<sup>204</sup> *pSof.* 1.6; *bSof.* 7a; 8b; *bMQ* 15a; *bHag.* 16a (cf. *bOidd.* 40a; *bMQ* 17a).

<sup>205</sup> *AJ* 14.172.

<sup>206</sup> *pR.Sh.* 1.3.47b, lines 8ff.: “According to worldly custom, a man who knows he is going to be judged puts on black tunics, a black cloak, and grows a beard, since he does not know what the sentence will be.” Text: [Hebrew text] A similar custom existed at Rome. Those accused of capital crimes were to *mutare vestem* and *deprecari* the people: Suetonius, *Tiberius* 2.8. The text of *pR.Sh.* continues with an affirmation of God’s benevolence, contrasting with human justice: “But Israelites do not do that. Rather they put on white tunics, wrap themselves in white cloaks, shave their beards, eat, drink, and make merry” (the Rosh ha-Shanah festivities were days of judgment and forgiveness, also of celebration).

<sup>207</sup> As in Josephus’s stratagem in *Vita* 138: he comes to the people in black clothing and with his sword hanging from his neck. The same attitude is also found in mourning and fasting, i.e., when it was felt that God was putting the people on trial: e.g., *bBQ* 59b.

<sup>208</sup> *mMidd.* 5.4: tunic and mantle were black or white, as the case might have been. Cf. Josephus, *AJ* 14.172. On this genealogical examination, see Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, 172.

<sup>209</sup> Lk 23.11: “arraying him in gorgeous apparel,” in fact bright white, on which see P. Joüon, “Luc XXIII, 11 ‘ἐσθῆτα λαμπράν,’” *RSR* 26 (1936) 80–85. But Spicq thinks that λαμπρός means “splendid,” not necessarily white: *NLNT* 2:461.

so obviously also had to do without such marks of respect. As we have said before, it was the willingness to expose a bright white surface to impurity that earned a man (not a woman) social credit and honor. But white garments were not only expensive; they were also impractical in the case of workers because they would immediately become dirty. Wealthy people, on the contrary, were in a position to diminish the risk they supposedly took of becoming impure. They certainly did so by not doing any sort of soiling work and by avoiding contacts with impure people. White clothing, therefore, not only symbolized the joy and purity expected on religious occasions, but also distinguished social status.<sup>210</sup> The Hebrew and Aramaic languages kept a trace of this with the word *hor*, *hora'*, which conveyed the ideas both of whiteness and freedom. It was used equally for white clothes and white bread or flour.<sup>211</sup> Free men of good standing normally wore white garments. For example, a late legend makes Simeon the Just appear before Alexander of Macedon at Antipatris, dressed in priestly garments and accompanied by the Jerusalem headman and a thousand councillors clothed in white.<sup>212</sup>

### *Slaves' and women's clothing*

Poor people or slaves, in contrast, wore clothing that was less than white: they had to be content with nuances of grey and brown.<sup>213</sup> This means of discrimination seems to have been widely used in the Roman Empire. The widow of Zarephath is also represented at Dura Europos as wearing a brown

<sup>210</sup>Krauss, *TA*, 1:145. As a curiosity, one notes that black or dark hues, chosen as a sign of poverty by early Christian monks (Jerome felt he had to improvise a spirited defense on this subject, *Epistulae* 38.3–4), would in time become a sign of luxury. In the Middle Ages, white friars chose white (or rather grey) cloth, i.e., undyed fabric, as a sign of poverty that contradicted the luxury of the dyed cloth worn by black friars. They could do so only because white did not connote the same social brilliance it once did in Mediterranean societies, especially in the East.

<sup>211</sup>A. Kohut, *Aruch Completum*, 1:353–54.

<sup>212</sup>*Commentary on Megillah Ta'anit*, ed. Lichtenstein, *HUCA* 8–9 (1931–32) 339. See V. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1959), 46–47. The legend must have circulated in the first centuries C.E., since Antipatris was an important city during the first four centuries C.E.: Schürer, *History*, 2:167–68; cf. *bYoma* 69a and *LevR.* 13.5. In 14 B.C.E., Marcus Agrippa was also received in Jerusalem by all the people dressed in festive attire: *AJ* 16.14.

<sup>213</sup>See above, pp. 85, 89–91 [check]. This was true also of Roman society. The *pulla vestis*, dark grey or undyed wool, was the dress of mourners and of the lower orders: see, e.g., Cicero, *Verr.* 2.4.24, 54. This *pulla vestis* was adopted by philosophers (some of them Cynic) and would eventually become the garb of Christian monks.

*himation*: this was perhaps the customary dress for widows, and it may have helped Elijah to recognize her.<sup>214</sup> The same widow, however, is represented as wearing very bright-colored garments after her son's resurrection.<sup>215</sup> As we have seen at the beginning of the chapter, the basic outfit was identical for both men and women. But women's appearance differed from men's in various ways: the use of a more colorful belt (or belts) and clothes; a special way to gird the tunic and wrap the mantle; the use of cosmetics and jewelry. These particularities were at the same time encouraged and frowned upon.<sup>216</sup> The important fact to be emphasized is that women were discouraged from wearing white and encouraged to wear dyed clothes. Such a *halakhah* appears in *Sifre Dt*, where the law of Dt 22.5 ("A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment") is interpreted to mean "that a woman shall not wear white garments, and that a man shall not cover himself with colored garments."<sup>217</sup> This *ha-*

<sup>214</sup> Du Mesnil du Buisson, *Les peintures de la synagogue de Doura-Europos*, 109 and pl. XLVI. Kraeling, *The Synagogue*, pl. XXXI (p. 136) and pl. LXIII (pp. 143–46); pl. XXI represents her in an odd posture at her door, with a "short-sleeved white chiton with a red border at the hem, and a reddish-brown over-garment that covers the chiton from the armpits to the calves and is gathered about her hips in a wide fold." (p. 136). In pl. LXIII, "somber clothing," no *chiton* (her chest is bare); the end of the *himation* is on her head, held by a cap; she has no shoes (pp. 143–44).

<sup>215</sup> Kraeling, *The Synagogue*, pl. LXIII, at right, and p. 146: she wears a gray *chiton* with *clavi* and a yellow *himation*.

<sup>216</sup> See for instance the quote concerning women in *4QEn b 1.2* (= *Enoch 8.1*), an Aramaic fragmen; see *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4*, ed. and trans. J. T. Milik (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 167–68. The context is that of the fall of angels, concomitant with the development of culture: "he (Aśa'el) [showed to women] concerning antinomy, and concerning eye-shadow, [and concerning all precious stones, and concerning dye-stuffs]." The legend also appears in a later Midrash, quoted in Milik, *The Books of Enoch*, 327–28 (text p. 324a): "and 'Aza'el was appointed chief over all kinds of dyes and over all kinds of women's ornaments by which they entice men to unclean thoughts of sin" (ET by Gaster of Bodleian Ms. Heb. d. 11). Cf. the extremist Tertullian, *De Cultu Feminarum* 1.2; 2.10; 8 (chapter on dyes: one ought not to use dyes but be content with "natural colors").

<sup>217</sup> Ed. Finkelstein, 258: [Hebrew text] *bShab*. 64b has a tradition that makeup and dyed clothing had formerly been forbidden to menstruating women. But R. Aqiva is reported to be the authority who gave a lenient ruling and allowed it, lest "thou shalt become hateful to your husband and he will repudiate you." Presumably, women were formerly supposed to wear undyed clothes at those times. The *halakhah* concerning men's and women's clothing was perhaps not strictly kept: Yadin, *The Finds*, 229, quoting *bShab*. 147a, top; *b'Er*. 53b. Women may have dressed in white for Passover: see *bPes*. 109a: "R. Jose taught: in Babylonia, (women rejoice) with colored garments; in Israel, with polished white linen." Text: [Hebrew text] The last word means "bright," "polished," as with frankincense perhaps (cf. n. 191 above). [check] The commentary on Dt 22.5 found at Qumran does not mention

*lakhah* must reflect an old habit because one of the ways used by Josephus to discredit the Zealots is to portray them as affecting feminine customs, such as wearing a coat of fine cloth and dyed in bright colors.<sup>218</sup> The origin of the rule is to be sought in the respective status of men and women. To be able to wear white implied that only men of good standing were afforded the opportunity to be completely, undoubtedly pure. But slaves of both sexes, poor men unable to acquire pure white wool or linen, and especially women of all social groups were under the constant suspicion of being impure, even though they might be strictly adhering to the *halakhah*.

### *Purple and red dyes*

Although indicating high social status and being restricted to men, white garments still remained modest when compared with clothes dyed in purple. This color had traditionally been associated with royal power in the East and more recently with the Roman armies.<sup>219</sup> It was also the color associated with sin,<sup>220</sup> because it was the color of blood. For example, on the Day of Atonement, a crimson strap of cloth was attached to the scapegoat in Jerusalem, and one expected it to turn white, which meant that the sins of the people had been remitted.<sup>221</sup>

The most impressive and rich clothing was a white tunic and a cloak in solid purple. This is how Simon bar Gioras, who had royal claims, arrayed himself in the hope of saving his life: one was not to touch a Messiah king.<sup>222</sup> It did surprise those who saw him standing in the Temple courts, but not sufficiently to avert his terrible end. It is also the rich man's garb in Lk 16.19:

---

dyes, but interprets the text of Dt 22.5, which speaks of "a woman's garment", as a plural: a man shall not "be covered with a woman's mantle, nor wear a woman's tunic" (*4Q 159*, lines 6–7, ed. by J.M. Allegro and A. A. Anderson, in *DJD*, 5:8; see J. Strugnell, "Notes en marge du volume V des *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert of Jordan*," *RQ* 7 (1970) 175–79).

<sup>218</sup> *BJ* 4.563.

<sup>219</sup> Allusion to the Roman armies, e.g., in Midrash *GenR.* 75.4: "He was red, his foot red, his warriors were red, his garments were red, his avenger will be red, clad in red." (Soncino, ET, 692; Theodor-Albeck, ed., 882).

<sup>220</sup> *mShab.* 9.3, on Is 1.18: sins are like purple.

<sup>221</sup> *mShab.* 9.3; *pShab.* 9.12a (cf. *bYoma* 39b): in older times, red strips of cloth were attached to each house.

<sup>222</sup> *BJ* 7.29; cf. the description of Herod's royal (and arrogant) demeanor in *AJ* 14.173. A Palestinian Targum to Num 16.1–2 suggests Qorah's hubris by the same means: his cloak was solid purple. Concerning the "gorgeous apparel" given to Jesus by Herod, see above, note 207. [check]

he wears tunics of byssus—extremely fine white linen—and a mantle of the best purple-dyed wool.<sup>223</sup>

Dyeing, meaning “red” dyeing, was prohibitively expensive if one used materials of the highest quality, but certain dyes were not too inaccessible. For example, the blues and reds obtained from woad and madder cannot have been expensive,<sup>224</sup> and the same is true of the dark hues obtained with nutshells.<sup>225</sup> Understandably, black dye was not as prized as red.<sup>226</sup> The dyes found in the Judean desert and at Dura Europos were of the cheaper kind: saffron, indigo, madder, and a little carminic acid.<sup>227</sup>

The “red” cloaks found in various texts may have been dyed solid red. But they may also simply have borne red marks of the type found in the Judean desert or seen at Dura Europos. In fact, noblemen’s clothes were not solid white but had various red markings. One such mark on the tunic was something called *‘imra*’ in several Talmudic texts.<sup>228</sup> Jastrow translated the word as “(1) *fringe, border, skirt*; trnsf. *the bordered garment (toga praetexta), state garment*; ...2) trnsf. *object of distinction, decoration*.” Clearly, it was something conspicuous, distinctive, but what was its exact nature? Still, in 1962, Brand thought that it was a sort of wide hem, variously colored, but did not wish to equate the tunic so decorated with the *lati-*, or *angusticlava tunica*, and definitely not with the *toga praetexta*.<sup>229</sup> However, the discoveries made in 1961–62 in the so-called Cave of Letters in the Judean desert suggest a possible solution. The tunic pieces exhibit two colored stripes of variable width, usually narrow, running from each shoulder to the bottom hem on both flaps of the tunic. Yadin thinks that these parallel stripes, usually purple, are the marks spoken of, and this appears to suit the Talmudic

<sup>223</sup> Though probably not of solid purple, which was reserved to kings. This is also the description of the valiant woman’s husband of Prov 31.22 in the Syriac *Didascalia*: A. Vööbus, in *CSCO*, *Scriptores Syri*, no. 176, 22. The byssus was not necessarily Egyptian linen, as thought by Jeremias, *Rediscovering the Parables*, 145. It could have come from Beth-Shean (Scythopolis), which was reputed for it. The fine linen of Beth-Shean was forbidden to a woman who had vowed not to wear dyed clothes (*pKeth.* 7.31c). On βύσσοϛ, see art. in *RE* 3/2:1108–1114.

<sup>224</sup> *mMeg.* 4.7; see Pfister, *Textiles de Palmyre*, 1:22.

<sup>225</sup> *m’Orl.* 3.1, see note in H. Albeck’s ed.; cf. *mShev.* 7.2–3.

<sup>226</sup> *pBQ* 9.4.6d, bottom; cf. *mBQ* 9.4.

<sup>227</sup> Yadin, *The Finds*, 207 and 182–83, 185 for an imitation of Tyrian purple (indigo plus traces of carminic acid); Pfister, *Textiles de Palmyre*, 1:22, and 12, 15 about Palmyra, where real purple was found in the more sumptuous graves.

<sup>228</sup> See texts quoted in Brand, “Clothing,” 50–51.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, and p. 53.

references.<sup>230</sup>

Did these stripes mean the same thing in Roman Palestine as in other parts of the Roman Empire? Were they insignia for various classes or orders of citizens? The stripes found on the frescoes or in the Judaeian desert are usually narrow and therefore remind one of the *angusticlava tunica* worn by Roman knights.<sup>231</sup> In Rome itself, however, it began to be worn by all those who, though not knights, could nonetheless afford it. They had also become common in Palestine. Yet, they obviously underlined people's importance, being the mark of landowners and officials. Their significance can be inferred, for example, from the fact that not to show them appears to have been an act of modesty that was duly rewarded in good time.

A story in the Palestinian Talmud relates how the mother of ben Qimhit, who saw two of her sons become high priests in one day, answered the sages who wondered what sort of good deeds brought both such blessings: "May [evil] befall me if my children ever saw the hair of my head and the stripes of my tunic."<sup>232</sup> Rabbi Jose (ca. 150 C.E.) is also quoted as repeating the same proverb: "Never did the beams of my house [my children] see the stripes of my tunic."<sup>233</sup> The modesty implied by these sentences is in definite contrast with the scenes of Dura Europos where the stripes are carefully shown. Because being dressed only in a tunic was tantamount to being naked, one must understand these stories as encouraging well-mannered people to keep their mantle on at all times, even in the privacy of their homes and in spite of the discomfort. The concern may have been to show that it was not enough to wear stripes to be decorous.<sup>234</sup> No humility was meant, but a studied modesty, for the

<sup>230</sup>Yadin, *The Finds*, 207–11. Two other instances of wool tunics with red *clavi* dating to the second century C.E. were found in the Wadi ed-Daliyeh: E. Crowfoot, in *AASOR* 41 (1974) 65, and pl. 88b.

<sup>231</sup>Art. *clavus latus, angustus*, in *DAGR*, 1/2:1242–46. The *latus clavus* was reserved to senators or people with senatorial rank. In Greek: *σημεῖα, πλατύσημος, στενόσημος*. Arsinoe, in Egypt, produced such striped tunics: *CPJ*, 2:185–86, no. 415, a papyrus dated 24/25 C.E.

<sup>232</sup>*pMeg.* 1.72a, bottom (cf. *pYoma* 1.38d, top): [Hebrew text] The "beams of the house" (here an expression for her sons) were witnesses to the most private acts: cf. *Hab* 2.11; *1QpHab* 9.15; *Lk* 19.40.

<sup>233</sup>*bShab.* 118b:

<sup>234</sup>Declarations of modesty were common. The language of Greek inscriptions makes clear that modesty, decency, and piety were qualities of domestic life that were highly regarded in women. This is seemingly in contradiction with the remarkable public role that wealthy women could play: see Riet Van Bremen, "Women and Wealth," in *Images of Women in Antiquity*, ed. A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt (London: Croom Helms, 1983),

presence of stripes on their tunics could easily be guessed.<sup>235</sup> In any case, the behavior of these most honorable and modest people was possible only because they were served, since the mantle was especially cumbersome for any day-to-day activity.

If we return for a moment to the Dura Europos frescoes, we can see how the stripes were used as a hierarchical symbol. The first case is that of Moses who reportedly used “a white tunic without *clavi* on it” for the seven whole days that he performed the service in the Tabernacle (Lev 8.33).<sup>236</sup> As we have seen, one had to be dressed in white for any contact with God. But Moses is represented with stripes larger than those of other characters in the scene of the watering at Dura Europos.<sup>237</sup> Similarly, a character who could be either Abraham or Moses is shown wearing a *talith* wrapped around both upper arms, but leaving the shoulders uncovered so that the stripes of the tunic show at the neck and at the bottom.<sup>238</sup> The pose is identical to that of David when anointed by Samuel. In these frescoes, both

234. For studied imperial modesty in clothing, see *Historia Augusta, Severus* 19.7: plain clothes, i.e., with little purple (the emperor was normally reserved the right to wear an all-purple mantle), shaggy cloak over tunic (shaggy, i.e., wool, rather than silk?), therefore not showing the purple *clavi*.

<sup>235</sup> A decorous man kept on his cloak the entire day: *pDem.* 6.25d; *bMen.* 43a. Cf. *bShab.* 14ob (“be reserved even in the presence of your husbands”). The absence of *clavi* could also signify mourning, if we accept S. Lieberman’s solution for the difficult passage in *pMQ* 3.7.83c, lines 17ff: “Achievements and Aspirations of Modern Jewish Scholarship,” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 46–47 (1979–80) 377–79. The story is about R. Tanḥum bar Ḥinna (end of the third to the beginning of the fourth century C.E.) who, during a period of mourning, went out to meet his friend R. Ḥinna bar Pappa dressed in *sanṭeyrayyah*. This garment, according to Lieberman, would have been a (*vestis*) *senatoria*, but without *clavi*, which one was not to wear during mourning (see art. *Funus*, in *DAGR*, 2:1401b). Another possible solution is to read (*vestis*) *cenatoria*, hypothesizing that the initial consonant was softened at a very early date. There is no written evidence of this phenomenon before the fifth century C.E., however, according to W. S. Allen, *Vox Latina* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978<sup>2</sup>), 14. The question in the Talmud, *mahu sanṭeyrayyah*, could then be normally read as “what does *sanṭeyrayyah* mean?” The *cenatoria* was an ample tunic worn inside the house, especially for meals. Being without *clavi* and unbelted, hence without the characteristic folds of normal dress (see art. “*Clavus latus, angustus*,” in *DAGR*, 1/2:1242–46, by L. Heuzey), it could not be worn outside by respectable people: see *Derekh Erets Rabbah* 11.15 (57b); Suetonius, *De vita Caesarum, Nero* 51 (concerning a *synthesis*, similar garment). The *cenatoria* might therefore have been thought to be severe enough for mourning periods.

<sup>236</sup> *bʿAv. Zar.* 34a (cf. *bTaʿan.* 11b): ‘*imra*’ is in the singular, but it does not imply that the tunic could only have one stripe.

<sup>237</sup> Kraeling, *The Synagogue*, pl. LIX; Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols*, II: color pl. XII.

<sup>238</sup> Kraeling, *The Synagogue*, pl. LXXVIII; cf. *EJ*, 6:283.

Abraham and Moses wear wide stripes, whereas the Philistine chiefs have only *angusticlavi*.<sup>239</sup>

Only kings could wear mantles that had been dyed in solid purple. The only completely dyed mantle at Dura Europos is that of David during his consecration: its color is a splendid violet, a possible nuance of royal purple. But he is represented in an attitude of modesty, or perhaps submission: the cloak covers his shoulders, arms, and crossed hands. Kraeling, commenting on this scene, refers to *bShab.* 10a, where the same attitude is described as that of a “slave in prayer.”<sup>240</sup> This scene was located right behind and above the community president’s seat. His name was Samuel at the time of the foundation of the synagogue, and he greatly contributed to it. He resided in one part of the synagogue complex.<sup>241</sup> One may safely assume that he was paid at least part of the honor that went to the great figures behind him, whether he expected it or not.

The stripes may have become common in the second or third centuries C.E., although a later saying attributed to R. Jose ben Hanina<sup>242</sup> shows that their correct application was long taken to be a sign of the dominant hierarchical spirit. He reportedly defined a commoner as “anyone who does not match the (two) *clavi*.”<sup>243</sup> Indeed, the matching of stripes on the front and back flaps of tunics was perhaps difficult in practice.<sup>244</sup> In any case, the basic contrast between those able to wear stripes and those unable to do so still existed in the fifth century C.E.—for instance, in a mosaic of a suburb of Antioch that depicts a series of characters placed under a portico.<sup>245</sup> Some of the merchants standing before their shops have long white robes with vertical stripes and belt. The carrier in the middle of the scene, however, wears a short brownish tunic without stripes.

<sup>239</sup>Du Mesnil du Buisson, *Les peintures de la synagogue de Doura-Europos*, Moses in pls. XV and XIX; Abraham in pl. XXIV; the Philistine chiefs in pls. XXI.2 and XXXIV.

<sup>240</sup>*The Synagogue*, pl. LXVI and p. 166: the crossing of hands is an old gesture of adoration and submission.

<sup>241</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 11 (house H): the archon Samuel gave his property, which became the synagogue complex.

<sup>242</sup>The saying cannot be dated to his life (ca. end of third century C.E.), and cannot be shown to be earlier than the closure of the Palestinian Talmud.

<sup>243</sup>*pMQ* 1.8.80d, bottom:

See *bMQ* 10a, top, for a different version.

<sup>244</sup>See Varro, *De lingua latina* 9.79.

<sup>245</sup>Mosaic of Daphne-Yakto, Patlagean, *Pauvreté*, pl. 2. See also D. Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements* (Princeton: University Press, 1947).

There were repeated attempts to tone down the most visible signs of hierarchization. Josephus, for instance, writes that every postulant among the first-century C.E. Essenes was asked “that, should he himself bear rule, he will never abuse his authority nor, either in dress or by other outward marks of superiority, outshine his subjects.”<sup>246</sup> Another example is that in a suit brought to court, the witnesses on both sides were to wear the same attire—that is, of equal social worth, so as not to influence the judges’ decision.<sup>247</sup> The wealthier party was asked either to dress humbly like his opponent or provide the latter with his own kind of clothes. This sort of decision, even if fully respected, could not help be but a dent in the spirit of the time. As for the Essenes, they had their own “marks of superiority,” as will be shown in Chapter 5.

## 2.4 CONCLUSION

The distinction made in antiquity between the “needy” (those in a desperate situation) and the “poor” is confirmed by an investigation of the situation in regard to clothing. There were people who lacked clothing altogether and were without sufficient protection at night or in the winter. The evidence for this is indirect: stories such as that of Lazarus; Herod’s distribution of clothes before the winter; numerous references to lack of shoes, mantles, or adequate tunics. The importance given to mending, the value retained by second-hand clothes, and the need to borrow show that it was difficult to procure adequate clothing. It is impossible to say how numerous these “naked” people were.

The possession of, or access to, a mantle, which also served as a blanket, constituted the main difference between extreme need and poverty. In Roman Italy too, a poor man owned a *toga*, along with a hearth, a bug-ridden bed, a rush-mat, a lock and key, and a cup.<sup>248</sup> Poor people had the basic items but found it difficult to renew them, to keep them from the reach of creditors, and to provide them to their families. Furthermore, even though they had enough clothing in good condition, they nevertheless lacked a variety of markers denoting higher social status: better-quality wool; “bright

<sup>246</sup> *BJ* 2.140: [Greek text: *κὰν αὐτὸς ἀρχῆ, μηδέποτε ἐξυβρίσειν εἰς τὴν ἐξουσίαν, μηδ’ ἐσθῆτί ἢ τινι πλείονι κόσμῳ ὑποτεταγμένους ὑπερλαμπρυνεῖσθαι.*] This phrase, however, seems to be tailored on Greco-Roman discourse (not practice). The same desire for equality, concerning all Jews, is expressed in *bShab.* 128a.

<sup>247</sup> *pSanh.* 3.9.21c; *pShevu.* 4.1.35b.

<sup>248</sup> J. M. Frayn, *Subsistence Farming in Roman Italy* (London: Centaur, 1979), 131.

white” linen; abundance and length of tunics and cloaks; red or other quality dyes; vertical stripes and other decorations; jewelry. On the contrary, they had to be content with a set of shorter tunic and cloak, made with a rougher and darker material and often patched.

One’s style of clothing was not a matter of choice except for the wealthy who might adopt the poor man’s dress for a period of time (more rarely for a whole life). It was imposed by economic necessity, social mores, and sometimes the law (in the case of slaves). By economic necessity, I do not mean simply the immediate limits on buying exerted by one’s available resources, but also its social consequences. A rich man did not work and could therefore wrap himself in an elaborate mantle all day long. A poor man, on the contrary, was essentially defined by his need to do manual labor, which implied also a certain kind of dress, shorter and rougher.

The color code combined two major oppositions. White was contrasted with black or dark, as purity, innocence, and joy were contrasted with impurity, guilt, and mourning. Red or purple markings expressed a social distinction that, in the last resort, was of economic and military origin. It would be tempting to assign the values expressed by these two pairs of terms respectively to Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures. But it seems to me that they cannot be separated and that together they constituted one system of reference in Roman Palestine.

The inability to acquire perfectly white clothing and red or purple ornaments was taken to mean that one lacked valor and piety. Not to have red markings, or dyed clothing in general, was a sign of slavery or economic misery. Colors other than red were primarily used by women to distinguish them from men, slaves, or poor people in general.

From the Jewish point of view, the major contrast was between white and black (dark). A poor man was usually dressed in “natural” (i.e., unfulled) clothes, except for religious occasions, when he tried to have clothing as white as feasible. He therefore could not demonstrate his purity with sufficient clarity. A woman, whatever her social status, was put in a similar situation because she was to wear colorful dress. The inability to buy linen produced the same effect because a man could not prove that he avoided Mixed Kinds if he wore only wool, the cheaper, most natural thing to do in Palestine. One must note that the use of white linen was formally restricted to priests on certain occasions. Josephus reports that Levites obtained the same privilege under Agrippa.<sup>249</sup> It was in fact restricted to wealthy peo-

<sup>249</sup> *AJ* 20.216.

ple, who could therefore elect to practice the religious law to the fullest and enjoy the honor due to the pious.

Within his community, a person's feelings of shame may have sprung up from the smallest details: a slightly older cloak, a tear impossible to hide, or a patch that would occasion impurity. These shortcomings were reinforced by other signs of indignity, for instance the use of barley bread. Poverty in this sense—namely, the possession of a bare minimum and the inability to draw full advantage from the cultural code—was widespread and varied. Our sources mostly speak of this kind of poverty. The concern for social status most often overshadowed the concern for a purely material poverty. If undoubtedly it was considered a duty to give immediate relief to the naked, the major efforts of charity nevertheless went toward correcting losses of social status that were less immediately threatening.



# 3

## Causes of Poverty: Physical environment and human labor

The aim of this chapter is to give an idea of the difficulties and limitations encountered in daily life. One important question is whether the agricultural product, if one supposes an ideally perfect sharing of resources, was sufficient to feed the population of the time. Two points must be considered in this regard. First, what was the amount of produce available? How intensive was the cultivation of the land (how much land, how well cultivated) and how much could it theoretically yield? Second, what was the maximum density of population that could be supported by the land? What was the real density? In giving answers to these questions, one cannot pretend to great accuracy, but to reach an order of magnitude.

Many ancient texts report that the country was rich in produce. This is often accepted as a statement of fact by modern commentators who simply tone down the exaggerations. But what can the yields have been in reality? We are interested here in the main crops, chief among which were wheat and barley. And if, as we suspect, the yields of cereals were very low, at least by modern standards, how can one then account for the ancient authors' exaggerations?

### 3.1 DISCOURSE OF THE ANCIENTS ON YIELDS

#### A LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY

The above expression describing the promised land appears twenty-one times in the Old Testament.<sup>1</sup> Milk and honey were those foods of the time that made one salivate, especially if one lived in the desert. They were deemed fit to describe the beloved's kisses in Song of Songs (4.11): "honey and milk under your tongue." A passage in Deuteronomy (8.7–9,

<sup>1</sup>See especially Ex 3.8; Num 16.13.

especially v. 8) is less stereotypical, however, and closer to the agricultural reality of Palestine: “a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey.” The Targums of Palestinian origin are likewise more practical. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, at Dt 8.8, is even more specific and paraphrases the end of the verse as “a land *whose* olives *serve to make* oil and *palm-trees to make* honey.”<sup>2</sup> *Neofiti 1* and the so-called Fragmentary Targum paraphrase the expression “milk and honey” of Dt 31.20 as “a country that produces beautiful fruits, pure like milk, sweet and tasty like honey.”<sup>3</sup>

In his description of Galilee, Flavius Josephus gives a Greek form to this feeling of abundance: “The land is so rich in soil and pasturage and produces such a variety of trees, that even the most indolent are tempted by these facilities to devote themselves to agriculture.”<sup>4</sup> We shall see that many rabbinic texts also exaggerate the fruitfulness of the land, although they emphasize that it comes about under certain conditions and do not suggest that agriculture is all easy sport. Josephus has borrowed his fanciful vision of agriculture from the leisured Greco-Roman aristocracy.<sup>5</sup> He gives as proof of the wealth of Galilee that the whole area is under cultivation and densely populated:

In fact, every inch of soil has been cultivated by the inhabitants; there is not a parcel of wasteland. The towns, too, are thickly distributed and even the villages, thanks to the fertility of the soil, are all so densely populated that the smallest of them contains above fifteen thousand inhabitants.

Archaeological evidence in fact seems to support the notion that there was

<sup>2</sup> *Add. 27031*, British Museum (additions to the Masoretic text are italicized). Cf. R. Le Déaut, *Targum du Pentateuque* (Paris: Le Cerf, 1978), 4:89. Same idea in Fragmentary Targum (Dt 8.8), in Mss. Vatican Ebr. 440: see M. Klein, *The Fragment-Targums of the Pentateuch According to Their Extant Sources* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1980), 1:214 (text), and 2:172 (translation).

<sup>3</sup> Targum Dt 31.20 (*Neofiti 1*).

<sup>4</sup> *BJ* 3.42–3.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. R. MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations, 50 B.C. to A.D. 284* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 28–29, 48; W. E. Heitland, *Agricola: A Study of Agriculture and Rustic Life in the Greco-Roman World from the Point of View of Labour* (Cambridge: University Press, 1921), 200–1, 226; the same impression is given by Virgil in *Georgics* 2.458ff.; Virgil, however, was aware of the effort that farmers must provide: *Georgics* 2.60–61; see also J. M. Frayn, *Subsistence Farming in Roman Italy* (London: Centaur, 1979), 43–44; K. D. White, *Country Life in Classical Times* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977), 5.

not “a parcel of wasteland.”<sup>6</sup> But it does not follow from this that the country was wealthy. Josephus likewise praises Samaria, Judea, and Jericho, but he is less enthusiastic about Peraea.<sup>7</sup>

In the Talmud also, the wealth of the people of Israel is described as immense, whenever the people accomplish the will of God. Third- and fourth-century C.E. stories, for instance, describe how vines could be thick like oxen, mustard plants tall like trees, cabbages large enough to give shelter to foxes. Other stories tell how the juice of figs, dates, or carobs was found to be superior to bee honey and so abundant that one could hardly reach the fruits behind the juice.<sup>8</sup> One could literally wade up to the knees in honey, and one marveled that a goat that had grazed under a fig tree could be found later to give a mixture of milk and honey. All this could happen only when the land or a particular individual was blessed on account of piety, especially Torah study, which had replaced the Temple service after the destruction of the Second Temple. The rabbis, as many a *laudator temporis acti*, tended to tell these Edenic stories as events of the past. There had been more abundance and sweetness in their youth, some believed, than in their old age. The Palestinian Talmud, for instance, has Rabbi Yoḥanan (third century C.E.) declare: “The late-fruits we ate in our childhood were better than the peaches we ate in our old age.” And an anonymous editor continued, adding: *Because the world changed in his days*.<sup>9</sup> The saying attributed to Rabbi Yoḥanan and cast in proverbial form did not refer to a real change in his lifetime—even supposing he or someone belonging to his generation actually said it—but rather to the fondness generally felt for one’s lost childhood, a fondness that makes one think that the world is not what it used to be. One cannot help but notice how characteristic it was to imagine the Edenic abundance of an unreachable past, or future. It was believed that

<sup>6</sup>Pp. 126–127. [check]

<sup>7</sup>Samaria and Judaea; *BJ* 3.48–50; Jericho: *BJ* 4.464–75; Peraea: *BJ* 3.44–45. For advantageous descriptions of Jericho date palms and balsam, see, e.g., Pliny, *Natural History* 13.9.44; 12.54.III–23.

<sup>8</sup>*pPe’ah* 7.4.20a–b; cf. *bKeth.* 11b, 112a; wheat grains large like the kidneys of an ox (!): *T. Jo.* Dt 32.13–14; *bGitt.* 57a; *Sifre Dt* 32.13 (Finkelstein, ed., 358–59) and 33.24 (*ibid.*, 420–21) on the wealth in oil of Galilee; *Sifra Lev* 26.4 (I. H. Weiss, ed., 110b): abundant rains at the proper time brought forth extraordinary crops in Temple times. See also A. Büchler, *Minim of Sepphoris and Tiberias*, pp. 252–53; Strack–Billerbeck, at Mt 13.8.

<sup>9</sup>*pPe’ah* 7.4.20a, lines 69–70: [line in Hebrew] The last words are in Aramaic, added by another hand. A slightly different version is found in *pSot’a* 9.14.24b, bottom, and 1.8.17b, top, where we have R. Jonathan (beginning of third century C.E.) instead of R. Yoḥanan and “apricots” in lieu of “peaches.”

there had been only hardships and famines since the fall of the Temple.<sup>10</sup> Or conversely, one expected such abundance to come in future times, when the righteousness of God would rule over the land.<sup>11</sup>

Several modern commentators and historians have also thought that Roman Palestine, except when directly under the boot of Roman soldiers, was a comparatively well-to-do country.<sup>12</sup> One reason given for this judgment is that, despite the high level of taxes, the country was nevertheless able to export some of its produce.<sup>13</sup> But it is somewhat misleading to use the term *export*, which implies political independence.<sup>14</sup> Others have suggested that only a strong economy could produce the variety of goods attested in the sources,<sup>15</sup> but polyculture and polycraftsmanship are not by themselves

<sup>10</sup>For lack of blessings since the destruction of the Temple, see for instance *mSoṭa* 9.12–13 and *tSoṭa* 15.2.321, which are texts mourning the loss of taste and fragrance, as well as of abundance.

<sup>11</sup>See 2 (*Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch* 29. ET in *OTP*, 1:630 (by A. F. J. Klijn) or *The Apocryphal Old Testament*, ed. H. F. D. Sparks (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 856–57. Another example of abundance in the Apocalyptic future: “of every seed . . . every single seah shall produce a thousand seahs.” = *Book of Enoch* 10.19, in J. Milik, *The Books of Enoch, Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 190. On this particular way of looking at the world, see the illuminating comments by V. Jankélévitch, *Le pur et l’impur* (Paris: Flammarion, 1960), 18–26.

<sup>12</sup>S. W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952<sup>2</sup>), 1:251, 264, who at the same time speaks of “utter misery.” Cf. J. Klausner, “The Economy of Judea in the Period of the Second Temple,” in *The World History of the Jewish People*, 1st ser., vol. 7: *The Herodian Period*, ed. M. Avi-Yonah (Jerusalem: Massada, 1975), 180; art. “Israel,” in *EJ*, 9:245, which speaks of an economic progress after the first revolt. Also S. Zeitlin, who exaggerates the importance of balsam and dates, in *The Rise and Fall of the Judaean State* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962–78), 1:306; 2:266ff.; 3:239.

<sup>13</sup>Baron, *History of the Jews* (also 1:192, 1937 ed.); Klausner, “Economy,” 200; Zeitlin, *Judaean State*, 3:239.

<sup>14</sup>For instance, one cannot speak of “export” concerning a passage in Josephus, *AJ* 14.206, in which 20,675 *modii* of grain (= 150 tons) are due as tribute. The same is true of the old and famous balsam and date plantations of the Jericho area. These plantations, as well as other extensive domains owned by the Roman emperor, members of his family, or other absentee owners, did not “export,” but saw as much of their product as was technically feasible carried off to the residence of the lord, i.e., usually to cities, and sometimes to considerable distances (to Rome, even). The same criticism of the use of the word “export” may be applied to M. Hengel’s account of the economic relationship between Palestine and Egypt in the third century B.C.E.: *Judaism and Hellenism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974) 1:42. Following these authors’ line of thought, the produce taken by cities from their territories, sometimes as “gifts,” or even the taxes imposed on land and produce by Rome, could be called “exports.”

<sup>15</sup>E.g., Klausner, “Economy”; M. Avi-Yonah, art. *Palaestina*, in *RE*, suppl. 13:430–36.

proofs of economic strength. A third reason is that the technical level of farmers and craftsmen was high: we shall have to study this argument carefully. Yet, it is certainly true that the taxing power of the Roman Empire, not to mention the passage of its armies, was a major cause of misery, as we shall see at a later point.

It is remarkable that our texts, especially the Talmud, speak very little of what is called today “lack of resources” or “finite resources.” This fact, together with the exaggerations already quoted, allow great variations in the modern evaluations of the economic level of the country. This apparent optimism, or oversight, of ancient sources should be put in its proper context.

#### ECONOMIC CONCEPTS OF ANTIQUITY

If yields were in fact very low, how can one account then for the glowing stories or descriptions? It has been recently pointed out by several authors that the ancient authors’ attitudes regarding what we call economic matters were different in many respects from ours.<sup>16</sup> They were interested in economic matters such as the cost of labor, taxes, coinage, the respective advantages of trade and agriculture, as well as in corrective measures to certain social ills, but they did not develop the kind of economic analysis that has been standard in modern times.<sup>17</sup> They could not, for instance, see in our terms a basic concern of modern economics, namely the equation of natural resources versus human needs. In modern economic parlance, one considers the finiteness of resources and the unlimited nature of human needs as solid facts. This point of departure allows one to set off dwindling or finite

<sup>16</sup>On the novelty of economics in the widely accepted modern sense and on the danger of misapplying recent concepts to old materials and altogether different societies, see M. I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (London: Hogarth Press, 1985<sup>2</sup>), 17–34, esp. 20–27, and 110–1, 191–92 (in a response to critics: “Further Thoughts”). Also P. Veyne, *Le pain et le cirque* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1976), 135–37. On the low level of “investments,” the existence or nonexistence of a “surplus,” and the type of growth (if any), Veyne, *Le pain et le cirque*, 141–53. The movement to find more adequate categories of explanation for non-European and ancient societies was initiated by M. Weber, J. Hasebroek, and more recently K. Polanyi. See the latter’s *Primitive, Archaic and Modern Economies*, ed. G. Dalton, (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1968). Following the insights of M. I. Finley, K. Hopkins provides a brief and convenient sketch of Greco-Roman economy in the introduction to: P. Garnsey, K. Hopkins, and C. R. Whittaker, eds., *Trade in the Ancient Economy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), x–xiv.

<sup>17</sup>Contra H. Grasl, *Sozialökonomische Vorstellungen in der kaiserzeitlichen griechischen Literatur (1.–3. Jh. n. Chr.)* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1982), who argues that the economic knowledge and solutions of the ancient world are not sufficiently appreciated.

resources against a background of rapidly growing needs and consequently establish a theory of prices.

The ancients did exactly the opposite: they were inclined to consider resources as infinite,<sup>18</sup> or at least very adequate, but needs as limited in number and intent, at least among proper people. Aristotle, for instance, saw scarcity, or the lack of self-sufficiency, as the result of misconceptions of what a good life truly should be.<sup>19</sup> These misconceptions could be corrected, in his opinion, by reinforcing the proper institutions: in other words, a correct sense of one's needs had to be encouraged and sometimes enforced by a variety of means. If this was accomplished, then sustenance was readily available, as "nature is not niggardly."<sup>20</sup> Many would now call such views "normative" and quickly dismiss them.<sup>21</sup> Yet these views were widely held in the past, and all antiquity, or at least its educated and wealthier elite, could subscribe to Maimonides's statement that "the more necessary a thing is for living beings, the more easily it is found and the cheaper it is; the less necessary it is, the rarer and dearer it is."<sup>22</sup>

One would expect rich modern societies to consider resources as boundless, whereas poor or ancient societies, which have much in common, would regard them as meager and inadequate. Yet the opposite is true. In fact, it was only when productive capacities had sufficiently multiplied that it became possible to consider the resources of nature as rare.<sup>23</sup> The ancient attitude appears to stem from the fact that people lacking basic commodities and constantly threatened by dearth did not want to confront this situation straight in the eye but simply chose instead to magnify the better aspects of

<sup>18</sup>Consider for instance Xenophon's remarks on the unexhaustiveness of the Laurion mines in *Ways and Means* 4.1–3.

<sup>19</sup>For instance Aristotle, *Politics* 1258a; cf. Polanyi, *Primitive, Archaic and Modern Economies*, 97–100. Basic needs are few: Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.10.9; 2.16.2; Plato, *Laws* 11.918c–d; all other needs are licentiousness, extravagance.

<sup>20</sup>*Politics* 1256a–b; cf. Josephus in *Contra Apionem* 2.197: "We should beseech God not to give us blessings, for He has given them spontaneously."

<sup>21</sup>For instance the critics of J. K. Galbraith who wish to reject the point he makes in his *The Affluent Society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984<sup>4</sup>), 147–49, that too many needs are created by modern advertisement. A history of needs is called for. For an appeal to Third World nations not to evaluate needs according to prevailing Western usage but to return to a more reasoned assessment, shown itself to be an old tradition of Western thought, see A. Tévoédjrè, *Poverty: Wealth of Mankind* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1979).

<sup>22</sup>*Guide for the Perplexed*, ET by M. Friedländer (New York: Dover, 1956), 271 (pt. 3, chap. 12, "On Evils").

<sup>23</sup>M. Godelier See art. "Economie (Anthropologie)," in *Encyclopaedia Universalis*, 5:938.

their predicament. By so doing, they tried to minimize the paralyzing effects of fear and foster hope.

One of the points of knowing the exact input and output of a modern economy, at all levels, is to compare and isolate factors that impede or foster quality. In ancient times, however, these “factors” were little, or not at all, amenable to change, at least in the short run: the quality and quantity of soil, seeds, and labor could not easily be improved, and taxes and tithes were a heavy burden, regardless of the year. Of course there were great and sudden changes such as those concerning the amount and timeliness of rains and the presence or absence of diseases or pests. But the only hope of having any kind of influence on natural causes was religious in character. These changes were thought to be the exclusive province of God, or the gods.

This is not to say that peasants of ancient times did not use measurements. Obviously, they could not avoid seeing the difference from year to year, if only in their jars and baskets at home after the harvest. But they avoided dwelling on their misery if the year had been particularly bad and hoped that their own generosity to the poor and their good relations with their neighbors, family, and God(s) would be reciprocated in times of need. There were also good years during which one could truly rejoice and perhaps expect the tax collector to be less exacting than usual. Nonetheless, heavy taxes were to be remitted, rents and debts to be paid, vows to be accomplished, perhaps a feast to be given, seeds and store to be kept in case of bad years. Even in the absence of troop billeting or of extraordinary extortions of one sort or another, the attempt to accumulate a “surplus,” as the word is nowadays understood, would have been lost in advance. This is not to say that a “surplus” was not extracted, *manu militari*, which went partly to erect brilliant cultures.<sup>24</sup> But, on the whole, it was a world where a number of necessities were lacking for most people.

In such conditions, it would have been vain to calculate what was lacking. From a position of relative safety, the present generations may judge such an attitude as superstitious. But one cannot fault the ancients for not having created a science of economy as it is now understood. The modern world can afford a theory of economy only because its material growth has been tremendous in the last four or five centuries.<sup>25</sup> It can speak of a

<sup>24</sup>See Veyne, *Le pain et le cirque*, 142, on the existence of a surplus and its distribution. Also Pearson, in *Trade and Market in the Early Empires* ed. K. Polanyi et al. (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1957), 320ff. See Chapter 1, pp. 52–53, 57, [check] on relations between cities and countryside: the city took whatever was needed for its subsistence.

<sup>25</sup>The first treatise of political economy appeared in 1615 (A. de Montchrestien), the

lack of surplus, under different guises such as lack of capital, investment, or labor, only because it disposes of a surplus in the first place. Economic science is concerned with something that has a positive value.<sup>26</sup> It began as a science of wealth, the wealth of nations. But it would have made little sense to have a "science" of a lack in the ancient world. In fact, it would have meant to confront disaster, and this attitude was thought to be a sure way to bring it about.<sup>27</sup> Even more, to do so would have appeared sacrilegious at the time, since it would have implied measuring God's liberalities: it would have been tantamount to keeping records of what God gives or does not give. For someone inescapably confronted with shortages, it was more sensible—indeed required—to believe that the world was a bountiful creation and systematically to exaggerate it, rather than be reminded of the exact difference between the quantity harvested and the amount sown. To summarize, then, the ancients exaggerated the good features of their situation as a politeness to God and to their neighbors, and as a refusal to let discouragement set in. This partly explains the stories about the prodigious fertility that existed while the Temple stood, or would exist in the messianic future.<sup>28</sup>

Both the ancient and modern views of the equation between resources and needs have their own merits. Conversely, each of them can be forced and turned into propaganda. Obviously, modern economic thought, at least in its popular forms, hopes to confirm its version of the dilemma by simply repeating its message often enough. As for the ancient view of things, it is difficult to say to what degree the peasants, shepherds, and

---

intuition of an economic science at the end of the eighteenth century. For the slow development of capitalism, see F. Braudel, *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme: XVe–XVIIIe siècle*, 3 vols. (Paris: A. Colin, 1979); trans. as *Civilization and Capitalism*, 3 vols. (London: Collins, 1981–84). The intellectual conditions of the emergence of economic history are studied by L. Dumont, *From Mandeville to Marx: The Genesis and Triumph of Economic Ideology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977). For the inapplicability of modern economics categories to the ancient world, see above, n. 16.

<sup>26</sup>G. H. de Radkowski, "La civilisation de l'économie," *Esprit* (1977) 239.

<sup>27</sup>A widely shared idea, a vivid example of which is given in Mahmut Makal, *A Village in Anatolia*, trans. Sr. W. Deedes (London: Vallentine, Mitchell & Co., 1954), 84. Rabbinic literature is replete with examples of this reluctance to name evil things, even when they concern others.

<sup>28</sup>One such story is found in *pPe'ah* 7.4.20b, lines 3ff.: [text in Hebrew] "And about this he (Rabbi) exclaimed: *While the king was on his couch, my nard gave forth its fragrance (Song of Songs 1.12)*. The Temple lay waste, and you persist in your stiffneckedness?" The astonishment concerns the stubbornness of a vineyard (Israel) that keeps giving magnificent fruit, as if the Temple still existed.

craftspeople of their time shared the thoughts expressed by such aristocrats as Pliny, Josephus, or the great rabbis. We do not have the words of those most afraid of poverty. Or rather we have them in the form of prayers, which give the clear impression that God (or the gods) was always celebrated as a boundless giver and creator, whereas material needs were restricted to the basic necessities of life.<sup>29</sup> One possible indication of popular resistance to the idea that the equation between resources and needs had been inscribed once and for all in the heavens and translated on earth in a rigid system of sacred times (calendar) and places (temples) is the great importance given to “holy” or “pious” men. Their deeds—their prayers, fasts, and miracles—had the particularity of being “out of season,” or at least outside of the prescribed way of relating to God. They even displayed a hubris towards God by accepting the danger to their life, or sanity, of an immediate relationship with the divine powers in return for rains, a cure, or other material benefits. Their popular appeal can be inferred from the attention devoted to them in Talmudic literature. The Sages attempted both to check the development of this sort of revolutionary piety and to capitalize on it by explaining its efficaciousness in terms of their own categories.<sup>30</sup> Such appeals by pious men were not without danger and often led to their physical elimination and that of their followers.<sup>31</sup>

Poor and rich people alike, therefore, saw the world as a bountiful place. It was quite an exaggeration, however, to say that everything came about “of its own” or that agriculture was an easy choice. Aristocratic writers may have shared with their tenants and slaves their basic conception, but one may strongly suspect them of carrying on a propaganda effort, similar to the converse effort of modern slogans, when they proclaimed the natural

<sup>29</sup>The old prayers of Judaism reflect the paramount concerns of the whole population. For an example of expression of needs, it is sufficient to remember Jesus’ prayer: “Give us this day our daily bread.” Regardless of all the possible nuances of this demand, how much bread was “our daily bread”?

<sup>30</sup>See W. S. Green, “Palestinian Holy Men: Charismatic Leadership and Rabbinic Tradition,” *ANRW* 2/19.2:619–47; also A. Büchler, *Types of Jewish-Palestinian Piety from 70 B.C.E. to 70 C.E.* (London: Oxford University Press, 1922), 79–100 (concerning R. Ḥaninah b. Dosa).

<sup>31</sup>*AJ* 18.63–64; 85–87; 20.169–71. In the case of Jesus, his announcement of the “forgiveness of sins” could be construed as having social implications. Because sins were often the received explanation for lack of material blessings, to separate sins from their material consequences was a threat to the position of those who defined what was sin and how it could be alleviated—namely, the various groups of religious leaders. Now, it is also possible that the people in general may not have wanted to be “liberated from their sins.”

bounty of a land and at the same time took a severe view of people's needs.<sup>32</sup> One may suspect that they did it because the produce and rents from their lands, not to mention taxes, had in fact to be ruthlessly exacted, that is to say, partly taken from their tenants' or slaves' mouths. A basic attitude that parents in poorly provided homes were forced to teach to their children could also serve the purposes of kings and landlords keen on exacting the maximum amount of taxes and services from their subjects and tenants. It was essential to keep people's needs at a rigorous minimum.<sup>33</sup>

### 3.2 ASPECTS OF AGRICULTURE: CLIMATE AND SOIL

To understand the harshness of peoples' lives in Palestine, we may start with a description of its physical features. They were, in fact, common to most of the Mediterranean basin, and define limits and possibilities. This is not to imply that the nature of the environment strictly determines the appearance of definite kinds of social arrangements.<sup>34</sup> The tumultuous and varied history of the whole area proves the opposite. The two arresting factors for

<sup>32</sup>In the ancient world, as already indicated above (n. 19), [check] intellectual (usually religious) leaders took a dim view of human needs: self-sufficiency should be pursued by limiting wants. Hence the idea that one should not pray for material goods (cf. Josephus, *CA* 2.197, quoted above, n. 20: [check] the question of prayer was tied to the question of justice. Any petition to God was automatically an implicit petition to those having material goods to share). For the idea of detachment and simplicity of life, see L. W. Countryman, *The Rich Christian in the Church of the Early Empire* (Lewiston, N.Y.: E. Mellen, 1980), 52–53 (about Clement of Alexandria).

<sup>33</sup>An important question is also the role of asceticism in respect to the general discourse on resources and needs. Can we say that asceticism was, in the final analysis, at the service of landed aristocracies because it conferred dignity on poverty? It would have done so by showing that an almost animal way of life was possible on the *margins* of culture. Though it is on the margins, in the desert, it is always with some minimal help from the local population (see Athanasius, *Life of Anthony* [New York: Paulist Press, 1980]). The fact that it was on the margins meant that it was to be seen as an abnormal situation. One could say that far from being at the service of local aristocracies, from which it took many of its more renowned individuals, asceticism was rather an attack on city and aristocratic greed, and may actually have somewhat helped to curb it. But it is also true that ascetics often found themselves endowed with more power than ever had been exercised by the great figures of the traditional city: see P. R. L. Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 93.

<sup>34</sup>An idea strongly expressed by Montesquieu, *De l'esprit des lois* (Paris: Gallimard, 1951), 2: 474ff. (the whole book XIV): "Ce sont les différents besoins dans les différents climats qui ont formé les différentes manières de vivre; et ces différentes manières de vivre ont formé les diverses sortes de lois" (*ibid.*, 483–84). But for a different opinion on the same subject, see the same author, precisely about the Jews, in *Préparation de l'esprit des*

any Mediterranean farmer, until a recent date, were the climate (the amount and distribution of rain) and the soil.<sup>35</sup> The former, however, was more important than the latter, if we believe the old Greek proverb: "It is the year (or season) which bears and not the field."<sup>36</sup> Rains were and are scarce, falling mainly in winter: the mean monthly rainfall of June, July, and August seldom exceeds four inches and usually varies between one and two inches. The soil structure falls into three main categories: rather naked and rough mountaintops; slopes that have been smoothed and covered with deposits of limestone, sandstone, or marly clay; and small alluvial plains. In the summer, the mountaintops and hills are mostly used by shepherds. The slopes carry planted (olives, vineyards) and sown crops. The alluvial plains are suitable for more crops and garden vegetables, especially when properly irrigated.

#### SPECIFIC CONDITIONS OF PALESTINE

What has been said of Mediterranean soils applies quite literally to Palestine.<sup>37</sup> But what has been said of the rains must be specified. For that purpose, modern observations constitute a good starting point, since the confrontation with ancient sources clearly shows that the climate has remained

---

*lois*, *ibid.*, 60 (*Essai sur les causes qui peuvent affecter les esprits et les caractères*, pt. 2). A good discussion of the problem is found in C. C. McCown, *The Genesis of the Social Gospel* (New York: A. Knopf, 1929), 37–45.

<sup>35</sup>See Pierre Birot and Jean Dresch, *La Méditerranée et le Moyen-Orient*, 2 vols. (Paris: P.U.F., 1953–56); W. B. Fischer, *The Middle East. A Physical, Social and Regional Geography* (London: Methuen, 1956<sup>3</sup>). For a short physical description of the area, see A. H. M. Jones, *Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971<sup>2</sup>), 226–27.

<sup>36</sup>Theophrastus (372–70 to 288–86 B.C.), *Historia Plantarum* 8.7.6; cf. 8.1.7; *De Causis Plantarum* 3.23.4 (end: ὁ καὶ ἡ παροιμία καλῶς, ἔτος φέρει, οὕτι ἄρουρα.). See R. J. Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology* (Leiden: Brill, 1965<sup>2</sup>), 2:43–44.

<sup>37</sup>Mountains, hills, and alluvial plains are sometimes very small (Silo, Sichem), but there are three greater ones: the richer coastal plain (Shephelah and Sharon), the triangular Yizreel, and the Jordan Valley (the last valley is formed by lacustrine deposits). See the *Atlas of Israel* (Jerusalem: Survey of Israel, Ministry of Labor, 1970), map II/1 and 3; for the disposition of the terrain, see *ibid.*, maps I/10, 11, 12, and 13. One can find more information on the physical geography of the Holy Land in art. "Israel," *EJ*, 9:181–94 (climate) and 194–220 (soil); art. "Palestine", in *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible*, vol. 6; F. M. Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine*, vol. 1: *Géographie physique et historique* (Paris: Gabalda, 1933); L. Grollenberg, *Atlas of the Bible* (London: Nelson, 1956); Denis Baly, *Geographical Companion to the Bible* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1963);

substantially the same during the past two thousand years.<sup>38</sup> According to continuous observations conducted from 1931 to 1960 in Israel, the rains fall only during the "rainy season," from October to April (mostly in December, January, and February), and never from 15 May to September—three-quarters of the annual rainfall has normally fallen by the end of February. The mean annual rainfall is 550 millimeters,<sup>39</sup> enough to grow cereals (the absolute minimum needed is 200 millimeters). But there are considerable variations in this pattern: some years may be very dry (400 millimeters maximum in the mountains in 1946–47), or very rainy (1000 to 1200 millimeters in some areas in 1944–45).<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, the monthly rainfalls may vary considerably from year to year: they did so during the 1931–1960 period, ranging from 0 in November, December, March, and April, to maximums of 215, 300, 220, and 70 millimeters for those respective months.<sup>41</sup> This pattern of wide monthly variations may, of course, affect a dry as well as a rainy year. Last, the quantity of rainfall depends on the geographical location: it decreases from west to east and from north to south, but increases with the elevation of the terrain. The largest amounts fall on the slopes facing west or southwest. The smallest variability in annual rainfall occurs in the Jerusalem-Hebron mountains, in Carmel-Haifa, and in northern Galilee.<sup>42</sup>

One must add to its scarcity and irregularity the frequent destructiveness of the precipitation; the clouds may break into violent downpours that wash away the superficial soil together with the seeds and the shallowly rooted plants. It comes then as no surprise that even nowadays, traditional Middle Eastern farmers may worry each year about the quantity of rainfall. A serious risk is involved in the choice of the date of sowing: at each spring sowing, the modern fellah of Kufr al-Ma', in the Ajlun (in the northwest

<sup>38</sup>References to corroborative scientific studies on this subject are found in D. Sperber, "Drought, Famine and Pestilence in Amoraic Palestine," *JESHO* 17 (1974) 272–73n. Cf. G. Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1932), 2:136; also art. "Agriculture," in *EJ*, 2:387, and art. "Rains," 13:1520. N. Rosenan, "One Hundred Years of Rainfall in Jerusalem," *IEJ* 5 (1955) 137–53; idem, in *Symposium on Changes of Climate with Special Reference to Arid Zones (1961: Rome)* (Paris: UNESCO, 1963), 67–73; *Atlas of Israel*, map IV/2. For the Negev, where the climate has remained the same during the past two thousand years, see P. Mayerson, in *Excavations at Nessana: (Auja Hafir, Palestine)*, ed. H. Dunscombe Colt (London: British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, 1962), 218.

<sup>39</sup>All the following figures are given in the *Atlas of Israel*, based on observations made from 1931 to 1960. For the mean annual rainfall, see map IV/2A.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, map IV/2 C-D.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, map IV/2B.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, map IV/2J.

of the present kingdom of Jordan), "must decide whether to sow his seed before the first winter rains in hope of their quick arrival or to delay until after the rains have fallen."<sup>43</sup>

## PALESTINE IN MISHNAIC TIMES

### *Rain*

Talmudic sources confirm this picture, giving the distinct impression that the ancient farmer faced the same meteorological conditions as his modern counterpart and that lack of rain was the foremost danger.<sup>44</sup>

The book of Deuteronomy saw the land of Israel as "a land that drinketh water as the rain of heaven cometh down,"<sup>45</sup> and rains as a blessed gift of God to observant people, giving a "face" to the soil, that is, covering it with plants and flowers.<sup>46</sup> These elevated views, however, competed with fertility cults that persisted over long periods of times, though there are only traces of them in late Judaism. One of the terms used in Talmudic literature for a rain of sizable importance was *revi'ah*, meaning "fructification" and also "copulation."<sup>47</sup>

The year was divided into two contrasted periods: the rainy days and the hot days. The hot season was also called "the days of aridity" because then the soil became hard and arid.<sup>48</sup> The rabbis were sometimes carried away by their desire for symmetry and opposed six months of sunny days

<sup>43</sup>Richard T. Antoun, *Arab Village, A Social Structural Study of a Transjordanian Peasant Community* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), 5 and 10.

<sup>44</sup>See passages on climate in the literature on agriculture in Mishnaic Palestine, esp. H. Vogelstein, *Die Landwirtschaft in Palästina zur Zeit der Mischna: der Getreidebau* (Breslau: Inaugural dissertation, 1894); art. "Agriculture," in *EJ*, 2:388; Y. Feliks, *Agriculture in Palestine in the Period of the Mishna and Talmud* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1963) (in Hebrew); Krauss, *TA*, 2:148–57; Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte*, 1:115–30; H. Kreissig, "Die Landwirtschaftliche Situation in Palästina vor dem jüdischen Krieg," *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 17 (1969) 224, 227–29. A. Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1974), 1:25–32. See also other titles given in nn. 104 and 105 below. [check]

<sup>45</sup>Dt 11.11; at Qumran: "On you he stored the skies from above to distribute rain upon you," *1Q Moses* 2.10–11.

<sup>46</sup>Dt 11.10–15; Dt 26.15: "Blessed the soil you have given us . . . the land where milk and honey flow" (see interpretation in Midrash *DtR*. 5.13).

<sup>47</sup>*tTa'an*. 1.4.215, line 5: "Why is it called *revi'ah*? Because it fructifies (*rova'at*) the land." In *pTa'an*. 1.64b, "the above waters are masculine and the waters below are feminine."

<sup>48</sup>Vogelstein, *Die Landwirtschaft*, 1: p'Er. 8.25b; *mBM* 5.10 (*yemot bagarid*); *tBM* 6.15; see also Krauss, *TA*, 2:149.

to six months of rainy days.<sup>49</sup> There is some truth in that assertion since rains occur during a period from November to April,<sup>50</sup> but surely not every day. On the contrary, it did not rain in the summer and any shower in that season was quite an extraordinary event.<sup>51</sup> Dew also contributed to fruit growth throughout the year and could be very abundant, especially in the mountains.<sup>52</sup> The rainy season began and ended progressively.<sup>53</sup> The first rain (*yoreh*) normally fell during Marḥeshvan or Kislev (at the end of October or in November) and the late rain (*malqoš*) in Nisan (approximately April).<sup>54</sup> But the first rain was sometimes discounted as too weak (Moab Arabs say "a wetting"), and the second period of early rains passed for marking the beginning proper of the rainy season.<sup>55</sup>

The rabbinic observations of the dates delimiting the hot and rainy seasons were doubtlessly made by the rest of the population, inasmuch as they shared a common calendar. These observations agree with modern data gatherings. The rabbis were apparently not content with the fair regularity of these dates, however, and devised a surprisingly ideal pattern of rains. Whether the population shared it is difficult to say.<sup>56</sup> This pattern runs as follows: first came the *yoreh* (Dt 11.14), which consisted of three "fertilizing" rains called first (*revi'ah riṣonah* or *bekhirah*, early rain causing the first blossoming), second (*revi'ah šniyah* or *beynonith*, intermediate), and third (*revi'ah šlišith* or *revi'ah 'afilah*, the last).<sup>57</sup> They all fell in Marḥeshvan-Kislev, that is, from the end of October to November, supposedly at in-

<sup>49</sup>*pBM* 10b; *bTa'an.* 6b.

<sup>50</sup>Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1928–42), 1:34; 3:3.

<sup>51</sup>Josephus *Bj* 3.181. Cf. 1 Sam. 12.17: rain at harvest time was a miracle.

<sup>52</sup>*tSof.* 15.2; dew could be solicited any day of the year, *pTa'an.* 1.1; at Qumran, *1QM* 12.9.10, 19.2. North-facing slopes especially were under cultivation because they retained more moisture: Z. Ron, "Agricultural Terraces in the Judaean Mountains," *IEJ* 16 (1966) 38 and pl. 5B.

<sup>53</sup>*pBer.* 9.13d (*pTa'an.* 1.64d). 13.

<sup>54</sup>See the seasonal calendar on page III. [check] On both rains, see Vogelstein, *Die Landwirtschaft*, I; *tTa'an.* 1.1; cf. *bTa'an.* 6a; first rain in the second half of Marḥeshvan, *tTa'an.* 1.3; *Sifre Dt* 11.14 (Finkelstein, 89, no. 42). Late rain in Nisan, *mNed.* 8.5 and *Yalq. Num* 29. For Biblical passages on "rains in their time" (i.e., two rains in autumn and spring), see Dt 11.10–11; 11.14; 28.12; Lv 26.4; Ezek 34.26; Joel 2.23.

<sup>55</sup>*tTob* 7.8: .br Cf. *tTa'an.* 1.4.215.

<sup>56</sup>The modern Bedouins observed by A. Jaussen in Moab in the years around 1900 differentiated between six consecutive rains by name, from October to April: *Coutumes des Arabes au pays de Moab* (Paris: Adrien Maisonneuve, 1907), 323–25.

<sup>57</sup>*mTa'an.* 1.3–5; *pTa'an.* 64a; see *Tosefta*, *ibid.*, 1.3.214, lines 22–25, for discussion on intervals between these rains and their exact dates. See also *bNed.* 63a; *bTa'an.* 6a.

tervals of seven days (R. Jose's opinion determining the halakhah: 17th of Marḥeshvan, 23rd and 1st of Kislev).<sup>58</sup> Then came an undistinguished period of three months: R. Judah did not wish rain in Ṭeveth so that work could go on in the fields or in the schools.<sup>59</sup> Finally, Nisan (April) was the month of the last rain, called *malqoš*: this spring rain was of decisive importance for the harvest because it caused the heads of wheat to form and develop.<sup>60</sup> If cereal crops had failed, these last rains could presumably allow the growth of life-saving crops such as beans, chickpeas or vetch. The intervals between each rain could not be more than forty days, or drought threatened.<sup>61</sup>

This classification of rains was especially suited to the cereal-sowing period, which was in November or December in normal years. Armed with such a precise calendar (but not fixed: traditions varied, perhaps because of the rabbis' different locations), the community was able to react immediately and collectively to the threat of a lack of rain. But means other than the dates of occurrence were also available. Some rabbis tried to evaluate the early rains quantitatively and thus be in a better position to let the community know whether the bare minimum had been reached. Such an old antecedent of our meteorological stations consisted of a graded pail; a sufficient first rain should have filled it with one *tefaḥ* (the width of four joined fingers), the second rain with two *tefaḥim*, and the third with three *tefaḥim*.<sup>62</sup> It was also possible to observe the direct effect of the rains on the soil and see how deep it had penetrated.<sup>63</sup> Simplest of all, one found sufficient a rain that had been falling for seven days without interruption: it was well worth a *revi'ah šniyah* in the opinion attributed to R. Simon b. Gamaliel the First (60–90 C.E.), or equivalent to the three early rains lumped together.<sup>64</sup> All these attempts to provide an easy and indisputable yardstick reflect the dire situation in which all found themselves if the rains were late. If such was the case, a warning was then issued, calling upon everyone to participate in the varied and graduated measures that were the only recourse: prayers at all times, and fasting.

<sup>58</sup> *bTa'an.* 6a.

<sup>59</sup> *bTa'an.* 6b.

<sup>60</sup> *tTa'an.* 1.1.214; *bTa'an.* 6a.

<sup>61</sup> *mTa'an.* 3.1.

<sup>62</sup> *tTa'an.* 1.4.215, line 3.

<sup>63</sup> *baraita bTa'an.* 25b differentiates the soils according to their absorption potential: arid, moderately soft, cultivated soil.

<sup>64</sup> *tShevi.* 7.18.72, line 13, and *bTa'an.* 6a.

These measurements show clearly how precisely the rabbis tried to pinpoint God's will in every natural event. The pattern was devised to follow the natural course of things and functioned as a warning. But it may also be said with some truth that Jews had reached a consensus on the ideal rain pattern mainly in order to point out each variation from this pattern as the expression of a distance from God.<sup>65</sup> Rains actually did not fall "in their time": when not altogether lacking, which happened rarely, they often fell too late, at long intervals, too scarcely, or not abundantly enough where wanted so that the varied agricultural activities were considerably impeded.<sup>66</sup> Timeliness was indeed of paramount importance. Should the right amount of water fall at the right time, one could expect an extraordinary bumper harvest, as is often indirectly implied by numerous legends.<sup>67</sup>

It was a simple affair to know how much rain was needed and when to expect it. It was another matter to forecast the weather, although one tried to make keen meteorological observations on such factors as the clouds, the color of the sky, and the winds.<sup>68</sup> Consequently, the uncertainty was great as to when to sow the cereals: if there was hope for one major winter rain, depending upon one's location, it was perhaps better to sow before it, in early or mid-November. But if one expected a succession of rains, it was then perhaps more advantageous to wait for the passage of the first and even second rain, as did the Palestinian farmer living in the hills in 1900, in contrast with the Moab Bedouin.<sup>69</sup> The peasant's dilemma was that crops sown too early

<sup>65</sup>Rains falling during the Feast of Tents (15–23 Tishri, before the usual rainy season) were bad omens in an opinion attributed to R. Joshua (90–130 C.E.), *mTa'an*. 1.1.

<sup>66</sup>Irregularity of the annual fall and monthly pattern: *mTa'an*. 3.1; cf. *bTa'an*. 19b (involving R. Eleazar b. Peraṭa, floruit ca. 110–35 C.E.). Variations from one area to another, from one city to another: *mTa'an*. 3.2–3; *bTa'an*. 6b; variations between Judaea and Sepphoris in Galilee: *pTa'an*. 3.4; *bTa'an*. 25a (= stories about R. Ḥanina b. Ḥama, who lived ca. 225 C.E.); see R. Antoun, *Arab Village*, 6, 8, for evidence of great variations of precipitation from one slope to a neighboring one, with dramatic effects on crops.

<sup>67</sup>The embellishment was a constant theme: e.g., R. Eleazar b. Peraṭa (110–30 C.E.) is reported to have said that rains had been more abundant before the destruction of the Second Temple, *bar. bTa'an*. 19b; Judaeen wine had the reputation of having never turned sour in the Temple period, *tDem*. 1.2.45, lines 11–12 and *pDem*. 1.1.21d; *bPes*. 42b. *bTa'an*. 23a (top) speaks of "grains of wheat as large as kidneys and grains of barley like the stones of olives" obtained from rains falling "in their season," supposedly in Simeon b. Shetaḥ's days (80–60 B.C.E.); cf. *Sifra Lev* 26.4 (110b).

<sup>68</sup>Mt 16.1–2; Lk 12.54–55; *pTa'an*. 2.1.65b; astrological speculations, *pTa'an*. 1.3.64a (rains come when the stars of Kima, i.e., Draco, disappear. On this, see Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 1:633A).

<sup>69</sup>Jaussen, *Coutumes des Arabes au pays de Moab*, 248. See Feliks, *Agriculture*, 142–44.

might get blighted under the hot sun, especially in shallow soil.<sup>70</sup> .sp .o6i

The peasants were threatened by the irregularity of droughts as well as by the potential destructiveness of heavy rains. Heavy rains could shake off the fruits, thereby causing their loss, and wash away the soil.<sup>71</sup> They dug furrows in the slopes, forced people to flee their work, stopped the ass driver in the city, penetrated the houses whose roofs were not well plastered (rolled), sometimes destroyed houses, and prevented pilgrims from reaching their goals.<sup>72</sup> They were far from the right sort of rain that Ḥoni ha-me'aggel (first century B.C.E.), the miracle maker, insisted upon receiving from God: "beneficent . . . falling regularly" day after day and for such a long period of time that it threatened to flood the inhabitants of Jerusalem.<sup>73</sup>

Jews tended to interpret such catastrophic variations of the climate, or just the lack of rain, as signs of punishment for their sins.<sup>74</sup> Diseases, wars, and lack of blessing in produce were due, they thought, to all sorts of sins and particularly to neglect of the laws concerning tithing, the sabbatical year, and the poor man's dues.<sup>75</sup> It was believed, for instance, that rains had become especially scanty since the destruction of the second Temple.<sup>76</sup> But God normally blessed the country with rains and abundance of crops. Therefore, as Josephus wrote, "We should beseech God not to give us blessings for he has given them spontaneously and put them at the disposal of all, but for capacity to receive, and, having received, to keep them."<sup>77</sup> Nonethe-

---

Normally, one sowed after the first rains, expecting more rains to start the seedlings, and spring rains to ensure the heading. Egypt, in contrast, waited for the inundation before sowing. The contrast is set in *Sifre Dt* 11.10 (Finkelstein, 73, no. 38): "A rain, then one sows, then rains."

<sup>70</sup>"If the crops have undergone (an unusual) change, the alarm is sounded at once" (*mTa'an*. 3.1; *pTa'an*. 3.1.66b).

<sup>71</sup>*mKeth*. 1.6; 7.8. Cf. *bTa'an*. 6a (top). Contra, *bTa'an*. 6a, just above, where "yoreh, because it comes down gently (etym. *yarad*) and not heavily." Cf. *pSheq*. 1.1.46a, line 25. *ARN* 3.8a (hails); *bTa'an* 22b (bottom); See Vogelstein, *Die Landwirtschaft*, 3, nn. 15–18.

<sup>72</sup>*Sifre Dt* 11.14 (Finkelstein, 89, no. 42). *m'Eduy*. 5.2 sq.; *tNid*. 8.6.650, lines 1–2; pilgrims: *mTa'an*. 1.3.

<sup>73</sup>*mTa'an*. 3.8 (= *bTa'an*. 23a); *pBer*. 9.2.14a gives the measure of a good rain; also *pTa'an*. 3.3 (immediately after the Mishnah).

<sup>74</sup>*mTa'an*. 1.7. See *mAv*. 5.8–9; R. Joshua in *ARN* 38.57a. On the contrary, the presence of a just man guaranteed prosperity: *tSoṭa*, the whole of chap. 10.

<sup>75</sup>*bShab*. 32b.

<sup>76</sup>*mSoṭ*. 9.12; *pSoṭ*. 9.12. R. Eleazar b. Peraṭa, in *bar. bTa'an*. 19b already quoted.

<sup>77</sup>*CA* 2.197; the attitude of a Ḥoni ha-me'aggel was a dangerous one, a hubris toward God, that could be calamitous for everyone. The "Give us this day our daily bread" may also have appeared out of place as a demand made to a God who knew human needs. But

less, in order to obtain rains in sufficient quantity, it was essential to be ready to appeal directly to God with genuine prayers and fasts. The first rains were a sign that God's favor had returned, a favor that was extended to other domains and was a portent of great things.<sup>78</sup>

Prayers and rituals were the standard means. In the period of the Second Temple, the high priest recited a special prayer for rain on the Day of Atonement, the 10th of Tishri.<sup>79</sup> Special rites of great antiquity were performed at Sukkot.<sup>80</sup> In Mishnaic times, there was an initial invocation during the additional service on the eighth day of Sukkot: "In their merit favor us with abundant water . . . for a blessing and not for a curse, for life and not for death, for plenty and not for famine. Amen." A mention of God's power to cause rain was inserted in the second benediction of the daily *Amidah* prayer from the last day of Sukkot (23rd of Tishri) to the first day of Passover (15th of Nisan: "who causes the wind to blow and the rain to fall."<sup>81</sup> The daily ninth benediction contained also an additional mention during the rainy season.<sup>82</sup> If the vegetation was beginning to wilt away, if forty days had passed without rain, or if one specific area, however small, had not received sufficient humidity, public fasts and extraordinary prayers were also in order.<sup>83</sup> These fasts followed an elaborate progression, according to the severity of the case.<sup>84</sup>

There were also individual prayers of supplication in times of emergency: these prayers were unflattering to God, direct, impertinent even, asking for "rights" and justice.<sup>85</sup> There were even extraordinary means other than prayers or fasts. It was believed that some wondermakers could en-

---

note that Mt 7.25–34, concerning needs ("Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all [all these things]"), is more compassionate than Josephus, whose "capacity to receive" was meant to vary according to an individual's social status.

<sup>78</sup>As when rain apparently followed Petronius's speech in 38–39 C.E., an event taken to signify that his petition to Caligula on behalf of the people would not fail: *AJ* 18.285–86.

<sup>79</sup>*bYoma* 53b, based upon 1 Kings 8.35–6 and 2 Chron 7.13.

<sup>80</sup>See *mSukk.* 9 and Palestinian Talmud. On the rites performed at the Temple, see M. Delcor, "Rites pour l'obtention de la pluie à Jérusalem et dans le Proche-Orient," *RHR* (October–December 1970), reprinted in his *Religion d'Israël et Proche-Orient ancien des Phéniciens aux Esséniens* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 417–18.

<sup>81</sup>*mTa'an.* 1.1–2; see regular prayerbook. Another blessing on the rains in *mBer.* 9.2.

<sup>82</sup>*mTa'an.* 1.3:

<sup>83</sup>*mTa'an.* 3.1, 2–3.

<sup>84</sup>*mTa'an.* 1.4–7; *tTa'an.* 1.5: it was forbidden to work, rub oneself with oil, wash oneself, wear sandals, and use the bed (have sexual intercourse). See also *mTa'an.* 3.9; *bTa'an.* 25b.

<sup>85</sup>See J. Heinemann, *Prayer in the Period of the Tanna'im and the Amora'im, Its Nature and Patterns* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1966<sup>2</sup>), 128–30 (Hebrew).

tice God to give rains. They would, for instance, challenge God by taking an oath or reproaching him for his callousness.<sup>86</sup> Talmudic Sages thought that magical means were too dangerous and they proclaimed that intentions should be pure. Indeed, they considered the rain that came in answer to holy men's special prayers and oaths as God's reward for their virtuous life and charitable deeds or their Torah learning.<sup>87</sup> For holy men were reassessed in time as Sages of a more classical and temperate kind. One may therefore understand that religious acts were not a light matter in times of dearth.

### *Soil*

Soil was scarce, particularly in the mountainous areas. This is obvious from the location of ancient villages and cities: near water, by necessity, but usually on a saddle above it, in order not to impede the terracing work that began near the spring and expanded from there. The major factor for most sites was not defense, as often repeated in scholarly literature, but the availability of cultivable area.<sup>88</sup> We will see how extensive and elaborate terracing and irrigation techniques were. The frequent allusions to people or animals straying from the path also reflect the scarcity of soil. The path was often very narrow and even barely recognizable after winter rains. The passage of herds presented a particular problem, solved through various contractual arrangements.<sup>89</sup> Roads and paths within the cultivated areas also occupied the least possible place, with steps, stone slabs in the terrace walls, or inclines.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>86</sup>This was considered to be a very dangerous proposition, which could even lead to physical infirmities such as lameness: *bTa'an.* 25a, about R. Levi b. Sisi (tanna ca. 200 C.E.). About Ḥoni ha-me'aggel (90 B.C.E.), *mTa'an.* 3.8; also Josephus, *AJ* 14.22–24 (Onias). See W. S. Green, "Palestinian Holy Men: Charismatic Leadership and Rabbinic Tradition," *ANRW* II/19.2 (1979) 619–47; Strack-Billerbeck, 4:109–10; Büchler, *Types of Jewish-Palestinian Piety*, 198ff. Ḥoni's descendants were also miracle makers: *Bar. bTa'an.* 23a–23b.

<sup>87</sup>*pTa'an.* 11.64b and *bTa'an.* 24a, bottom; *tSoṭa*, chap. 10; cf. James 5.17–18.

<sup>88</sup>Ron, *IEJ* 16 (1966) 33–49; III–22; characteristic settlement sites are listed in the second article, 120–21.

<sup>89</sup>See Palestinian Targum to Dt 2.27.

<sup>90</sup>Ron, *IEJ* 16 (1966) 121. Strictly observant individuals walked in the middle of the path: *pBer* 2.5d, line 5; *bBQ* 81b (parallel passage, with different actors).

### 3.3 WORK AND TECHNICAL STANDARDS

On what follows, extensive information is given by G. Dalman on turn-of-the-century Palestinian practices, with abundant references to ancient literature.<sup>91</sup>

#### THE FARMER'S YEAR

Lack of water and soil was remedied by ceaseless work. The busier periods of the year were the sowing and harvesting seasons, the rain giving its rhythm to the calendar. A somewhat artificial regularity was imposed on the farmer's year by dividing it into six periods of two months each, which corresponded to the presence or absence of rain and the type of activity undertaken:<sup>92</sup> the sowing season, from mid-Tishri to mid-Kislev; the cold season, from mid-Kislev to mid-Shevat; winter, from mid-Shevat to mid-Nisan, the time to sow barley and those legumes or pulses "too strong to be quickly cooked"; the harvest season, from mid-Nisan to mid-Siwan; "summer," a "time to gather figs and also a time to dry them in the fields"; finally, from mid-Av to mid-Tishri, the end of the hot days. This calendar goes well with that of modern Kufr al-Ma' (following page).

This list conceals an important aspect of agricultural life—namely, strategies to ensure reliable yields and minimize risks of total failure by staggering crops.<sup>93</sup> The variety of crops and their rotation afforded a measure of safety even in a year of very low rainfall because different plants have different needs and, even more important, different sowing dates. If wheat failed, for instance, or even legumes, barley and millet were less likely to do so.<sup>94</sup> The implied variety of sowing and harvesting periods had consequences for labor. Family and farm hands could be used more evenly and in more varied ways in the fields as shepherds, drivers, or hands on properties located in other areas. The scattering of plots in areas with

<sup>91</sup> *Arbeit und Sitte*, vol. 2.

<sup>92</sup> *bBM* 103; cf. Rashi in his commentary on Gn 8.22.

<sup>93</sup> See the important remarks by D. C. Hopkins, "The Dynamics of Agriculture in Monarchical Israel," *SBL Seminar Papers* (1983) 187–93. Fuller statement in his *The Highlands of Canaan: Agricultural Life in the Early Iron Age* (Decatur, Ga.: Almond Press, 1985).

<sup>94</sup> Millet, which requires little seed, fertilizer and water, has a short growth cycle, yields evenly, and stores well. It was cultivated as a precaution in Roman Palestine as in Roman Italy: see M. S. Spurr, "The Cultivation of Millet in Roman Italy," *PBSR* 51, new series 38 (1983) 1–15.

MODERN CALENDAR	HEBREW CALENDAR (TALMUD)	JEWISH FEASTS	AGRICULTURAL CALENDAR OF KUFR AL MA` (AJLUN, JORDAN) WINTER CROPS	SUMMER CROPS
DEC.	9 KISLEV	20 Hanukkah (to Teveth 3)	<b>second plowing and sowing</b> ( <i>sara`</i> )	(onions, veget.,
JAN.	10 TEVETH	wheat (+ 75 days)	after each rain broad beans (+ 40 days)	
FEB.	11 SHEVAT		barley (+ 65 days)	
MAR.	12 'ADAR [13] VE-'ADAR	13 Nicanor's day 14-15 Purim		<b>second plowing</b> ( <i>thann</i> ) kersenneh lentils chickpeas (40 days)
APR.	1 NISAN	14 PASSOVER 15-21 AZYMES		<b>third plowing</b> sesame
MAY	2 'YYAR	18 Lag b'omer	<b>harvesting</b> barley (+ 20)	cucumbers watermelons kersenneh, beans, lentils
JUN.	3 SIWAN	6-7 SHAVUOTH	wheat (+10) sheep follow harvesters	sesame (for sale)
JUL.	4 TAMMUZ		<b>fallow</b>	other legumes
AUG.	5 'AV	9	<b>threshing</b> <b>winnowing</b> <b>sifting</b>	<b>pay:</b> storekeeper mayor religious leader blacksmith....
SEP.	6 'ELUL		<b>first plowing</b> ( <i>shgag</i> ) after harvest or summer crop (sometimes neglected)	
OCT.	7 TISHRI	1 Rosh ha-shanah 10 Yom Kippur 15-23 SUKKOTH Shemini 'atsereth	<b>gather firewood</b> (3 days)	
NOV.	8 MARHESH-VAN		<b>gather olives</b> (at Tibneh, 4 kms away)	
			<b>grind and press olives</b>	

Figure 3.1 – Religious and agricultural calendar

different soil and climatic conditions also increased safety. This latter possibility was not necessarily restricted to the more important landowners but could be practiced to some degree by small tenants through complex community and family arrangements.

A fuller list of the farmer's activities gives an idea of the unceasing labor necessary to subsist. *Mishnah Shabbat* 7.2 provides a list of thirty-nine activities that were considered subdivisions of food and clothing production, manuscript writing, construction, smithing, and transportation. For farming, the main classes of work were "sowing, plowing, reaping, binding sheaves, threshing, winnowing, cleansing crops."<sup>95</sup>

Most of these were accomplished by men. The text continues with activities reserved for women or servants: "grinding, sifting, kneading, baking." The enumeration is far from being complete: there was also weeding; pruning; the gathering of wood;<sup>96</sup> the collecting of wild plants; the care of buildings, terraces and water channels; composting;<sup>97</sup> the care of animals; and watching the crops. Most of these activities took so much time that working the land was perceived as precluding the study of Torah:

R. Simeon b. Yoḥay says: There is no end to the thing [work for sustenance]. If a man reaps in the harvest season, plows in the plowing season, threshes in the hot season, and winnows in the season of wind, when will he study Torah?<sup>98</sup>

<sup>95</sup>*tShab.* 10(9).17,19; *pShab.* 12.1.13c. These were some of the activities that a renter or sharecropper formally contracted to perform.

<sup>96</sup>*mShab.* 12.2.

<sup>97</sup>*tShab.* 9 (8).19.

<sup>98</sup>*Sifre Dt* 11.14 (Finkelstein, ed., p. 90): [Hebrew text] There is a fuller description of the tasks involved in a saying attributed to Ben Zoma, given in the following note. The Babylonian Talmud (*bBer.* 35b) adds one task to the list of *Sifre* and gives the correct order: plowing, sowing, harvest, threshing, winnowing. [Hebrew text] Cf. *pBer.* 1.5.3b, lines 15ff.; This old theme already appears in Ben Sira 38.24–26:

The scribe's profession increases wisdom;  
 whoever is free from toil can become wise.  
 How can one become wise who guides the plow,  
 who thrills in wielding the goad like a lance,  
 Who guides the ox and urges on the bullock,  
 and whose concern is for cattle?

(ET by P. W. Skehan and A. A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, [New York: Doubleday, 1987], 445). See also *Mekh. Ex.* 16.4 (Lauterbach, ed., 2:104–5): "Only to those who have manna to eat is it given to study the Torah. And like them are those who eat *Terumah*." Manna here is synonymous of food and clothes made by others.

The answer traditionally given to the question put in Simeon b. Yoḥay's mouth was that Torah study, ideally the vocation of all Israel but in practice limited to a few, could take place only if the basic work was done by others. We will return to this point in our chapter on social relations. Suffice it to note here how Ben Zoma is represented in Temple times as thanking God for all these other professions and servants that allowed him to devote himself fully to Torah.

Seeing crowds on the Temple mount, Ben Zoma said: "Blessed be He who created all these to serve me. How the first man toiled! But he could not taste one mouthful had he not plowed, sown, harvested, bound the sheaves, threshed, winnowed, riddled (the grain), ground, sifted, kneaded, and baked. Then he ate. Whereas I rise in the morning and find all these before me. How the first man toiled! But he could not put on one tunic had he not shorn, cleansed, combed, dyed, spun, woven, and sewn. Then he put (it) on. Whereas I rise in the morning and find all these before me. How many trades are industrious and get up early, whereas I rise in the morning and find all these before me."<sup>99</sup>

Women's work was especially long, painful, and dreary. The Mishnah lists the seven standard classes of women's work:

These are works which the wife must perform for her husband: grinding flour and baking bread and washing clothes and cooking food and giving suck to her child and making ready his bed and working in wool.<sup>100</sup>

If the woman brought slavewomen with her, she could be spared some or all of these labors, but idleness was severely discouraged, even for rich women. Again, the basic list is not complete: a woman's day also included going to the well or spring,<sup>101</sup> collecting wild foods and wood, and the care of animals at home. Several of these tasks were exhausting, though probably livened up by conversation and singing. Grinding, for example, took at least two to three hours per day: it was done very early, before sunrise, and often by

<sup>99</sup>*tBer.* 6(7).2.14, lines 24–30 (my translation): [4 lines of Hebrew text] *pBer.* 9.2.13c, lines 12–20, notes important additional tasks such as weeding and hoeing.

<sup>100</sup>*mKeth.* 5.5; cf. *tKeth.* 5.4 and *pKeth.* 30a. Laundry, which was done usually by women, could be done by men in certain areas (slaves, in the Caesarea area, where this part of the Palestinian Talmud was edited?): *pBB* 1.7.13a, lines 7–10.

<sup>101</sup>*tKeth.* 7.6.

slaves or servants (women).<sup>102</sup> To work wool, and especially linen,<sup>103</sup> was also a punishing task.

#### TECHNICAL LEVEL AND TYPE OF AGRICULTURE

Faced with the lack of easily available water and a soil difficult to tend, the Palestinian farming community used all the technical resources of the time.<sup>104</sup> The technical level of rural Roman Palestine was quite satisfactory, if one compares it with that of other areas of the Mediterranean basin at the time.<sup>105</sup> Archaeological and literary sources show that the

<sup>102</sup>See *mTob.* 7.4, a text implying that people doing menial tasks were often *'ammei ha-arev*. Two main milling techniques were in existence, according to this Mishnah: the "two-way mill," operated by two women, and the rotary mill, operated by one woman. For comparison, see N. Jasny's results, based on modern observations and experiments with ancient querns: "The Daily Bread of the Greeks and the Romans," *Osiris* 9 (1950) 235, 238, 241–42. He estimates that the milling of one pound of grain on a saddle-stone required about an hour, whereas rotary mills would allow one to grind up to 4 pounds per hour.

<sup>103</sup>*tKeth.* 5.4.

<sup>104</sup>For agriculture in Roman Palestine, see esp. the full account by Feliks, *Agriculture*; also Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie*, 1:73–141; Avi-Yonah, art. *Palaestina*, in *RE*, suppl. 13:430ff.; the two older standard works are H. Vogelstein, *Die Landwirtschaft*, and Krauss, *TA*, 2:148ff. For a general assessment of the global socioeconomic situation in Roman Palestine, see all the publications by D. Sperber, esp. *JESHO* 15 (1972) 227–55, on third-century C.E. agriculture; and "Aspects of Agrarian Life in Roman Palestine I: Agricultural Decline in Palestine during the Later Principate," *ANRW* II/8 (1977) 397–443 (esp. 414–27 on yields); *Roman Palestine, 200–400. Crisis and Change in Agrarian Society as Reflected in Rabbinic Sources. The Land* (Ramat-Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan University, 1978). There is a brief account in G. Alon, *The Jews in Their Land in the Talmudic Age (70–640 C.E.)*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1980), 153–68. See also F. M. Heichelheim: "Roman Syria," in Frank, *ESAR* 4:121–257 (127–57 for agriculture). For first-century C.E. agriculture, see the excellent summary by S. Applebaum: "Economic Life in Palestine," in *The Jewish People in the First Century*, ed. S. Safrai and M. Stern (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976) 2:632–56; esp. 646–56; also H. Kreissig, "Die landwirtschaftliche Situation in Palästina vor dem jüdischen Krieg," *Acta Antiqua* 17 (1969) 223–54. Two older, but still valuable, summaries are Klausner, "Economy," 180ff.; and F. C. Grant, *The Economic Background of the Gospels* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926) 54–64. Many perceptive comments will also be found in L. Reynier, *De l'économie publique et rurale des Arabes et des Juifs* (Geneva: J. J. Paschoud, 1820). For the economic situation of Galilee, see the recent studies by S. Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian, 323 B.C.E. to 135 C.E.* (Wilmington, Del.: M. Glazier, 1980), and by M. Goodman, *State and Society in Roman Galilee, A.D. 132–212* (Towtown, N.J.: Rowman & Allanheld, 1983).

<sup>105</sup>For a general assessment of techniques in antiquity, see Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology*, esp. vol. 2, on irrigation, power, and transport; B. Gille et al., *Histoire des techniques* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), 287ff.; C. Singer, et al., *A History of Technology* (Ox-

level of craftsmanship, use of energy, and agricultural techniques were approximately the same. This is especially true if one compares the most common techniques, and not extraordinary tools or means that occupy a disproportionate place in classical sources.<sup>106</sup>

Because of the difficult climatic conditions, some technical solutions imposed themselves; for example, one took advantage of the hygrometric factors and used only light-traction animals able to feed on little hay in the dry season. Until the present, Mediterranean farmers have used the so-called dry farming method. This method consists of weeding by plowing or hoeing; growing one crop (sometimes two, sometimes one in alternate years); plowing during or at the end of the summer in order to weed, protect the deeper layers, and extend the root range; and burning weeds and thatches to restore or fixate nutritive elements. With a simple plow, requiring little or no metal, the farmer attempted not only to clean and pulverize the soil but also to have a field that drained while retaining as much water as possible.<sup>107</sup>

Weeds were certainly a major concern of the farmer: only frequent plowing of fallows and hoeing would help to fight off weeds and insure a better harvest. Ideally, there were several plowings during the year, followed by harrowing, raking, hoeing, and a final plowing in autumn before sowing, with “ridging” if necessary.<sup>108</sup> There was more harrowing and hoeing in the spring to weed out and thin plants. Harvesting was done as early as possible (mid-May in the Eastern Mediterranean) to avoid losing grains, sometimes even earlier to prevent razzias, or because there was a famine. Spring sowing (of cereals) was necessary only if the autumn crop

---

ford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 2:81ff. (agriculture) and 103ff. (food and drink); M. Daumas, et al., *Histoire générale des techniques*, vol. 1: *Les origines de la civilisation technique* (Paris: P.U.F., 1962); ET: *A History of Technology and Invention*, vol. 1: *The Origins of Technological Civilization* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1969), esp. chap. 4 and 5; A. Neuburger, *The Technical Arts and Sciences of the Ancients* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1930), 82–88, for agriculture.

<sup>106</sup>Several technical improvements (presses, mills, looms, building, plow) spread in the Hellenistic period, see Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1:47. But the description by Frayn of baking, shepherding, and the farm, in her *Subsistence Farming in Roman Italy*, suggests that most technical innovations developed very slowly and left little trace.

<sup>107</sup>On cross plowing, see A. Steenberg, “Stone Shares of Ploughing Implements from the Bronze Age of Syria,” *Historisk-filosofiske Meddelelser*, 47 (1977) 32–36 (observations on recent practice) The plow of Mishnaic times, influenced by Roman techniques, is described by Applebaum in: “Economic Life in Palestine,” 651.

<sup>108</sup>See Feliks, *Agriculture*, 30ff.; Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte*, 2:130ff.

had failed.<sup>109</sup>

Given the rain patterns, the slope ratios in hilly areas, and the occurrence of winds occasionally threatening to blow the seeds away, one may understand that the equilibrium sought by the farmer might altogether escape him. One must also add many other threats from nature or fellow humans: the poor quality of the soil and seeds, the existence of all sorts of vermin, the lack of fertilization, razzias, and requisitions. Wars and famines, above all, kept agriculture in a depressed state.<sup>110</sup>

The distribution of rains and the physical structure of Palestine combined to create three major life environments.<sup>111</sup> The first milieu is the coastal plain, that is, the Shephelah and the plain of Sharon, together with the more swampy Huleh, Tiberias (north and south), Esdrelon (or King's domain), and Beth Shean. In these plains, agriculture was based partly on rains and partly on irrigation, wherever this was possible. In the unirrigated areas, there was enough water to support a mixed agriculture—trees together with cereals and often a two-year rotation.<sup>112</sup>

In more humid areas, such as the central and northern coastal plains and the slopes under the influence of the sea breeze, it was possible to resort to intercultivation, that is, the growing together of fruit trees and cereals or other crops. Despite the apparent burdening of the soil, there were two major advantages to this technique: first, fewer weeds were able to grow because of the constant cultivation; second, the revenue was more balanced because olive trees tend to give more every other year and there would always be a cereal yield, even though it be lower than without the trees.<sup>113</sup> But such

<sup>109</sup>For comparison, see the description of a year's work on a small farm in Roman antiquity in Frayn, *Subsistence Farming in Roman Italy*, 47ff.

<sup>110</sup>See above, Chapter 1, p. 45. [check] About the impact of famines on agricultural work, compare C. Clark and M. Haswell, *The Economics of Subsistence Agriculture* (London: Macmillan, 1970<sup>4</sup>), 21–25.

<sup>111</sup>I follow here some of the ideas of J. Sapin, “La géographie humaine de la Syrie-Palestine au deuxième millénaire avant J.C. comme voie de recherche historique,” *JESHO* 24 (1980) 1–20. These pages apply to the climate and soil structure of the whole area in the recent past. A stimulating description of the similar ecological systems of Syria before World War II may be found in J. Weulersse, *Paysans de Syrie et du Proche-Orient* (Paris: Gallimard, 1946).

<sup>112</sup>See X. de Planhol, *Les Zones tropicales arides et subtropicales* (Paris: A. Colin, 1970), 365–68; Sapin, *JESHO* 24 (1980) 16.

<sup>113</sup>On this, see K. D. White, *Roman Farming* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1970), 48. Philo of Alexandria opposed intercultivation with vines, explaining, among other reasons, that it would be too great a burden on the earth: *De Specialibus Legibus*, 4.211–18; it was obviously done (though not in Egypt?), *ibid.*, 4.215; Philo thought that this

a technique required stronger animals and stronger tools: the plowing had to be deeper, in order to break up the top roots of the vines and olive trees.<sup>114</sup> Indeed, the yoke of oxen of the plain of Sharon had a better reputation than that of the mountains.<sup>115</sup>

We do not know what the extent of this type of agriculture was in Roman Palestine. It certainly existed, and it is abundantly discussed in tractate *Kil'ayim* ("Mixed Kinds"), which is a development of the Biblical injunction not to mix diverse kinds of plants, animals, and fibers.<sup>116</sup> "Seeds,"—mostly cereals, but also vegetables—were sown in between rows of vines provided one took proper precautions to avoid contact between the two species.<sup>117</sup> Cereals were sown perhaps only every other year among vines, as the unorthodox method of a man from Zalmon seems to imply:

R. Judah said: It once happened in Zalmon that a man planted his vineyard in rows sixteen cubits [apart], and trained the foliage of every two rows to one side and sowed over the cleared land; and on another year he trained the foliage towards the place that had been sown and sowed over the fallow land; the case came before the Sages and they pronounced it permissible.<sup>118</sup>

The major concern was that trailing vines should not become mixed with cereals, and even the allegedly new method attributed to "this man of Zalmon," allowing him to sow half of his vineyard right up to the roots of his vines, was considered acceptable. The discussion in *Kil'ayim* concerns only vines and seeds. But it is clear that the intercultivation of olive or fig tree orchards did not raise any questions.<sup>119</sup> The practice caused problems to many a halakhist, especially those in contact with the heathens, but the tendency

---

technique found its origin in greed, and the fact that the sabbatical year had not been previously respected. In consequence, he thought, the earth was withholding its product, whereas intercultivation was a cunning attempt to make it give more, sabbatical year or not.

<sup>114</sup>White, *Roman Farming*, 47, with reference to Columella, *De Re Rustica* 2.2.24ff. Columella's passage is a beautiful text on the technical problems to be solved by the choice of proper oxen and plow—a choice not available to poor farmers.

<sup>115</sup>See *mKil.* 2.6. But plowing was usually not very deep. The 27 cm. depth adduced by Feliks, *Agriculture*, 26, was an absolute maximum.

<sup>116</sup>Lev 19.19 and Dt 22.9–11; see Y. Feliks, art. "Mixed Species," in *EJ* 12:169–72.

<sup>117</sup>*mKil.* 4.1; 4.7–9; etc.

<sup>118</sup>*mKil.* 4.9.

<sup>119</sup>*mKil.* 6.4, 5. See comparison between "intercultivated field" (*sadeh 'ilan*) and "naked field" (*sadeh lavan*): *mShev.* 2.1; *pMQ* 1.4c.

on the whole was to be lenient in the rulings.<sup>120</sup> Agricultural activities were more intensive in irrigated areas, where it was possible to grow all kinds of legumes, vegetables, cereals, and trees.

The second milieu is the hilly or mountainous area—Galilee, Carmel, and the Judean mountains. These regions provide a multitude of valleys and slopes, some quite isolated, where small communities could lead a relatively independent and autonomous life producing cereals, legumes, vegetables, and fruit. They were away from the easily crossed plains and could take advantage of numerous, albeit small, springs and wells. These were all put to full use by means of elaborate waterworks, and most of the slopes were apparently already terraced in antiquity to retain the soil and as much as possible of the humidity.<sup>121</sup> In the early and later Roman periods, almost all of the Galilee mountains were under cultivation. Archaeological photography reveals the presence of strip lynchets and the extraordinary density of stone enclosures.<sup>122</sup> This intensive cultivation brought about basic changes in the landscape.<sup>123</sup> Terraces in Galilee appear to have been inferior in quality to those found in Judaea and Samaria, perhaps because of difficulties in the terrain rather than lack of resources attributed to small tenant farmers.<sup>124</sup> The work was constant: terracing, maintaining water channels, manuring, and all the other normal agricultural activities. Such unceasing labor clearly demanded a stable form of government and would be very sensitive to times of upheaval.

The third type of environment is found in two areas: first, a narrow strip on the western rim of the Transjordanian plateau; second, a much wider area in the Negev where the loess of the Beersheva basin and the west-

<sup>120</sup>E.g., R. Meir and R. Simeon in *mKil.* 4.9; or R. Ishmael, from Kfar ‘Aziz, south of Hebron. R. Ḥananiah b. Ḥakinai was reputedly more severe (*mKil.* 4.8), perhaps representing a tradition with closer ties to the pagan world.

<sup>121</sup>Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie*, 1:81–82, 91–93 (photograph, p. 92). An archaeological survey of Judean terraces and the description of the skills and labor necessary for such techniques are to be found in the articles of Ron, *IEJ* 16 (1966) 33–49, 111ff. He estimates that at least half of the land in the Judean mountains was terraced. See also Z. Ron’s more recent work, quoted in n. 127 below. [check]

<sup>122</sup>B. Golomb and Y. Kedar, “Ancient Agriculture in the Galilee Mountains,” *IEJ* 21 (1971) 136–40, pls. 29B (strip lynchets) and 30 (enclosures). Influence of Roman *agrimensores*, p. 138. The density of fields seems to corroborate Josephus’s statements in *BJ* 3.41–43. Many of these enclosures, however, may have been built for sheep and goat raising rather than for cultivation. Enclosures were probably restricted to the hill country.

<sup>123</sup>Colomb and Kedar, *IEJ* 21 (1971) 140.

<sup>124</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, 138.

ward orientation of the Negev mounts combine to make agriculture possible. In these areas, farmers were at the mercy of even minimal climatic variations<sup>125</sup> and therefore made smaller investments. In these plains where the main products were cereals and legumes, tenants and sharecroppers could hardly protect themselves against the economic pressure applied by city inhabitants or nomads. The cultivation of parts of the Negev was started at first under the influence of Nabataeans, who wished to provide for their caravans circulating between Elath or Petra and Gaza.<sup>126</sup> It was greatly intensified in the Late Roman Empire and the Byzantine period.<sup>127</sup>

Archaeological surveys and excavations confirm the impression given by Josephus and Talmudic sources of a population putting to good use every inch of soil, even that of lower quality, for grain growing, olive tree or vine plantations, or a mix of both. One sign of an expansion of tree plantations (olive trees), recently discussed in the literature, is the existence of ancient towers found especially on the western slopes of Judaea and Samaria. These towers, perhaps erected at the end of the Hellenistic period, were used as stores and shelters, as well as watch towers, in cultivated areas too distant from the nucleated villages that constituted the main form of habitat.<sup>128</sup>

### *Irrigation*

Irrigation is an age-old technique, perfected and adapted to various environments in many ways.<sup>129</sup> Recent archaeological surveys and excavations have shown that the use of irrigation was particularly intensive in Palestine. Constructions from the Hellenistic and Roman periods have been found in all the agricultural environments sketched in the previous section.<sup>130</sup>

<sup>125</sup>E. Wirth, *Syrien, Eine geographische Landeskunde* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971), maps 3 and 4; *Atlas of Israel*, map IV/2.

<sup>126</sup>E.g., agricultural terraces have been found over a wide area around Mo'a (Khirbet Maiyat), on the road from Petra to Gaza: "Notes and News," *IEJ* 32 (1982) 165.

<sup>127</sup>Avi-Yonah, *Palaestina*, in *RE*, suppl. 13:434.

<sup>128</sup>S. Applebaum, S. Dar, and Z. Safrai, "The Towers of Samaria," *PEQ* (1978) 91–100 and pls. 10–12; Z. Ron, *Stone Huts as an Expression of Terrace Agriculture in the Judean and Samaritan Hills*, 2 vols. (Tel Aviv: Department of Geography, University of Tel Aviv, 1977) (in Hebrew).

<sup>129</sup>Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology*, 2:1ff.

<sup>130</sup>For the Hellenistic period, see paragraph by Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1:46 (Jericho, Engeddi, Adullam, Qumran). For the Roman period, Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie*, 1:83–91. For comparison with northern Africa, see H. Pavis d'Escurac, "Irrigation et vie paysanne dans l'Afrique du Nord antique," *Ktema* 5 (1980) 177–91.

In the coastal area, great constructions were sometimes erected in order to bring irrigation water from considerable distances. One good example of this is the Lower Aqueduct bringing water to Caesarea gardens and orchards from 5, and perhaps 10, kilometers in the north;<sup>131</sup> but these spectacular constructions often had purposes other than agriculture.<sup>132</sup> Other techniques were also in use, adapted to the lowlands. Dams kept winter waters from flowing into swamps or into the sea.<sup>133</sup> Various machines brought water to the surface, from simple water-drawing devices to more complex systems based on the wheel or even the Archimedean screw.<sup>134</sup>

Elaborate waterworks have also been uncovered on the margins of the desert, particularly at Jericho, where springs, lying as far as 14 and 15 kilometers northwest and southwest of the city, were fed into an extensive system of channels that can still be seen in part today.<sup>135</sup> In the mountainous area, numerous water systems, less striking than large aqueducts or norias but implying great technical knowledge and complex social organization, were in existence at the end of the Second Temple period.<sup>136</sup> Tunnels with narrow weirs raising the water level as high as possible, main conveyers, flumes, and troughs were cut in the rock or built with stones and plaster. The construction of artificial channels was coupled with the terracing of the valley floors, which allowed the retention of very precious soil.<sup>137</sup> The less desirable plots lay at the top of the valleys, where soil erosion was more threatening. These plots were more likely to be owned or worked by poor families, since the

<sup>131</sup>J. Ringel, *Césarée de Palestine. Etude historique et archéologique* (Paris: Ophrys, 1975), 65–66, 150.

<sup>132</sup>E.g., the Higher Aqueduct bringing water to the baths, pools, and fountains of Caesarea; likewise, the aqueduct built under Pontius Pilate, renovated under Septimius Severus's reign (end of second century C.E.), which brought water from 'Ain Atan ('Ain Etam) in the vicinity of Bethlehem to the Temple mount in Jerusalem. According to Josephus, the use of Temple money for this construction triggered a revolt, *AJ* 18.3.2; *BJ* 2.9.4. See Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie*, 1:90, and literature quoted there.

<sup>133</sup>For instance northeast of Caesarea, see Ringel, *Césarée de Palestine*, 65–66.

<sup>134</sup>Description in Y. Feliks, "Agricultural Methods and Implements in Ancient Erez Israel," in *EJ*, 2:380; Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie*, 85–88.

<sup>135</sup>Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie*, 83.

<sup>136</sup>Ron, *IEJ* 16 (1966) 113: the system at Abu Gosh was built before the Roman period; the damming of the spring at Battir is also old (Roman inscription dating from Bar Kokhba's period); see pl. 14A. For discussion of dating of terraces, see C. H. J. de Geus, "The Importance of Archaeological Research into the Palestinian Agricultural Terraces," *PEQ* 107 (1975) 68–69, who accepts the antiquity of terraces and water systems, and shows that ceramic dating can provide no more than a terminus ad quem.

<sup>137</sup>Ron, *IEJ* 16 (1966) 117 and figs. 9–10; pl. 14A.

topsoil would easily wash down toward the plots of those who could afford better terracing. Virtually all the springs of the mountainous area, especially in Judaea and Samaria, were tapped in like manner, and irrigated areas ranged from 0.1 to over 6 hectares.<sup>138</sup> Cisterns, which are found in great density over the whole of Israel, were also used for irrigation, particularly of tree plantations. One must also mention the numerous pools found in Judaea and Peraea.<sup>139</sup>

However numerous the waterworks uncovered so far, one must not overestimate the extent of irrigated acreage. Most land, even in terraced plots, was unirrigated. On irrigated plots, one did not cultivate only vegetables and fruit trees. Both unirrigated and irrigated fields carried cereals and legumes, the major food staples.<sup>140</sup>

### *Shepherding*

In all the three geographical areas, nomads, seminomads, and shepherds had a variety of understandings with the sedentary population. They were both necessary to each other, the one providing the animal products (wool, meat, milk, cheese, leather, and manure), the other providing fodder during the summer months and a few products of first necessity. When the first rains came in October or November, the shepherds left the fields where their herds had been grazing the stubble and led them to uncultivated areas while farmers began anew to till and sow. The spring rains of February and March, usually more abundant, allowed the herds to remain on the margins of the arable land and to become fatter before the dry months. During the summer, however, they had to return to the cultivated fields, which by then had been reaped, as well as to wooded hills. Sheep and goats were led from field to field in search of pasture, thereby providing a degree of fertilization. The period of April–May to October–November was therefore a time when farmers and shepherds lived in close proximity, so close in fact that often enough tempers flared for one reason or another.

One of the main reasons for conflict was that shepherds would not always keep to the stipulations of their contracts and would let their animals graze in unauthorized areas. This happened especially when flocks were moving to their assigned pastures. The Aramaic paraphrases of Palestinian

<sup>138</sup> Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie*, 91.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> *mMen.* 10.8; *tMen.* 10.31; cf. Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie*, 84–85.

origin in Gen 13.7 rely on this frequent occurrence to explain the quarrel between Abraham's and Lot's shepherds:

And there was a dispute between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle; Abram's herdsmen would muzzle their animals until they came to the place of pasture; Lot's herdsmen would not muzzle their animals, but rather let [them] free to go on grazing.<sup>141</sup>

The quarrel in the Hebrew Bible stemmed from the fact that the land was still in the hands of Canaanites and Perizzites and the behavior of Lot's shepherds was making a mockery of the traditional arrangements between shepherds and sedentary farmers.<sup>142</sup> The explanation given by the Targum cannot be dated with any certainty, but it would suit well the state of affairs in Roman Palestine. Tensions between Greek, Syrian, Samaritan, and Jewish populations were constant, and rabbinic authorities were often lenient in their decisions "for the sake of peace." Obviously, it was difficult for any shepherd to look honest in the eyes of a farmer. They had the reputation of being robbers, and one may suppose that it was sometimes deserved.

Yet farmers and shepherds must not have been as rigidly separated as sources make them appear. A farmer or his son could follow his herd in the summer and come home for the important work.<sup>143</sup> One must also remember that keeping a herd within the bounds of a path, however wide, is very difficult and that plants and trees lining the way were bound to suffer. In an agriculture in which every stalk and fruit counted, the causes for quarrel were therefore innumerable. Nevertheless, the many derogatory Talmudic comments on shepherds clearly show that, although difficult to manage, they were fundamental to the well-being of the community.<sup>144</sup>

<sup>141</sup>Fragmentary Targum, in *Vat. Ms. Ebr. 440*, published and translated by Klein, *The Fragment-Targums of the Pentateuch*, 1:132, and 2:96.

<sup>142</sup>This concern is made very clear in other versions of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: *Add. 27031* in the British Museum, trans. by Le Déaut, *Targum du Pentateuque*, 1:155; Targum *Neofiti 1*, in *ibid.*, 154.

<sup>143</sup>See McCown's observations on turn-of-the-century practices, in *The Genesis of the Social Gospel*, 59.

<sup>144</sup>*tBQ* 8.15–16; *tBM* 2.33; *tBikk.* 1.16; *mQidd.* 4.14; shepherds were not appreciated in Roman Italy either, see Macmullen, *Roman Social Relations*, 1–4. To say that "a certain Athronges" who attempted to become a king was a shepherd was enough in Josephus's mind to discredit him, *AJ* 17.278: see below, p. 200, and n. 265. [check] The fencing of roads and fields in the mountainous terrain minimized depredations. But in the open fields of the coastal area, conflicts must have been very frequent. For a theoretical model

But then, how can one explain that a number of Tannaitic sources report that it was forbidden to have flocks of sheep and goats in Israel?<sup>145</sup> This prohibition concerned only the *haverim*—the “companions,” or members of pious organizations.<sup>146</sup> The *haverim* themselves apparently found it difficult to respect the regulation and it is reported in this same passage of the Tosefta that Judah bar Baba was one of the first to own a flock (of sheep?). This change among *haverim* would, therefore, have taken place in the early second century C.E., for unknown reasons.

Why was the prohibition concerning flocks of sheep and goats issued? Krauss thought that the reason was the depredations by herds, which competed with the human population for scarce resources.<sup>147</sup> True, there must have been depredations, which were most acutely felt in areas of cash-producing crops (olives, vines). But this economic argument cannot be tested. What is certain is that flocks of sheep and goats were an essential component of agriculture in Palestine. The shepherds’ reputation, in Krauss’s opinion, could not have been as bad as the Talmudic sources make it appear. However, they were held in very low esteem by many Sages,<sup>148</sup> not only on account of their “thieving” ways but more generally because of their inability to practice religious laws. They were probably suspected of not properly keeping the Sabbath and purity rules, and tithing laws could not be easily applied to them.<sup>149</sup> The possession of sheep and goats was probably a cause of frequent conflicts and quarrels with neighbors, especially within cities. A desire for propriety, particularly on the part of Sages wishing not to attract the laughter or ill-intentioned comments of Gentiles, would have been enough to make it an undesirable occupation for *haverim*.<sup>150</sup>

---

of the complementarity of farming and herding, see N. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh. A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel, 1250–1050 B.C.E.* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1979), 437–73.

<sup>145</sup>General interdiction in *mBQ* 7.7; *tBQ* 8.10–15; *bar. bBQ* 79b.

<sup>146</sup>*mDem.* 2.3 (in the name of R. Judah).

<sup>147</sup>“La défense d’élever du menu bétail en Palestine,” *REJ* 53 (1907) 14–55, esp. 43–46.

<sup>148</sup>*tBikk.* 2.16.102.

<sup>149</sup>The social status of shepherds may have been determining. They may have often included a high number of people unable or unwilling to pay taxes, or who fled before other responsibilities, being at times outcasts or even bandits.

<sup>150</sup>Dio Chrysostomus suggests that a city where sheep invaded public places would be laughed at by strangers: *Orationes* 7.39. Temples were to be kept free from animals, as in this Delos dedication to Zeus Ourios by a man from Ascalon: “It is not permitted to introduce (here) a goat, pig or cow”: Delos inscription no. 2305, in P. Bruneau, *Recherches*

The rest of the population, however, was under a different set of constraints. Flocks of sheep and goats were an essential part of the economy. Those who raised them had much less choice in their means of livelihood than most *haverim*. In that sense, to be an *'am ha-areš*, an “impious” and “uncultivated” person, was an ill fate. Moreover, there could not have been “piety” without the existence of a majority of *'ammei ha-areš*. On these social identifications, more will be said in the following chapter on the vocabulary of poverty.

In contrast to Israel, which clearly was a country where shepherding was an important, albeit despised, activity, it is interesting to note the Egyptian situation. In his commentary on the story of Cain and Abel, Philo of Alexandria eulogizes shepherds as wise and temperate people.<sup>151</sup> But he lived in a country where shepherding was not an essential and conflict-causing activity, except in a few areas since the Ptolemaic period.<sup>152</sup> Egypt was never given to pastoral activities and was essentially a country of “cattle-rearers,” that is, farmers and land laborers.<sup>153</sup> These laborers, being the vast majority in Egypt, were the object of a deep contempt coming from cultured city

---

*sur les cultes de Délos à l'époque hellénistique et à l'époque impériale* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1970), 346–47. Gentiles might have poked fun at the religious behavior of the Sages, since animals demand some care even on Sabbath, a particular problem being the milking of animals and the disposal of milk and cheese obtained from this milk. On this point, see S. Goitein's remarks, in *A Mediterranean Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 124. It was sometimes necessary for a rabbi to have a ewe or a goat, e.g., in the event of disease. But the animal was then kept tied at the foot of the bed. A variant on Judah b. Baba's reported breaking of the rule concerning herds shows him in such a situation: *tBQ* 8.13 (no name mentioned in parallel passage, *bar. bBQ* 80a); see Büchler, *Types of Jewish-Palestinian Piety*, 17. His sin, in this story, was kept at the bare minimum, namely the breaking of the rule. The goat obviously could do no damage or bring one to break religious rules.

<sup>151</sup>*De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini*, 12.51; cf. *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, 1.59 (at Gn 4.2). Rashi, on the contrary, at Gn 4.2, simply says that God spared Abel the working of the land, “because it was cursed.” The normal condition for Rashi was that of a farmer.

<sup>152</sup>Herds of sheep and goats often belonging to, or kept by, Jews in papyri: *CPJ*, nos. 9, 28, 38, 39, 104, 106 (all these papyri come from the third and second centuries B.C.E.); 412 and 482, from Oxyrhynchos, beginning of first century C.E.; 518d, from Karanis, 324 C.E. (on destructions caused by cattle and small herds). See also N. Lewis, *Life in Egypt Under Roman Rule* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 121. There is some evidence for Egyptian temples having flocks of sheep and goats in Ptolemaic times, but none for the Roman period: see J. A. S. Evans, “A Social and Economic History of an Egyptian Temple in the Greco-Roman Period,” *YCS* 17 (1961) 230–31.

<sup>153</sup>Fertilization was done by the Nile. Furthermore, the timing of the crops and the exiguity of cultivated land did not easily allow for sheep and goats. Clothes were made with flax, which was an important crop, whereas wool was little used. Egyptian wool was

inhabitants, including Philo, who must have felt too close to them for comfort.<sup>154</sup> It was possible on the contrary for an Alexandrian Jew to inveigh shepherds with great symbolic meaning because there were so few of them, and remote at that. By so doing, Philo could hope to correct the views propounded by Manetho concerning the threats supposedly coming from foreign Semitic shepherds.<sup>155</sup>

#### WEAKNESS OF THE ECONOMY

The farmers of Roman Palestine did what they could with the techniques of the time to ensure and improve yields as much as possible.<sup>156</sup> We have spoken, for instance, of the staggering by which farming communities minimized the risks involved. But considered from our point of view, the weakness of the economy was general. Aside from lack of water, soil, and seed selection, all antiquity shared a fundamental weakness: the inefficient use of energy. This weakness was in part offset by the exchange of services taking place between shepherds and farmers. Lack of sufficient fodder, however, meant that fewer animals could be kept on a given territory. In fact, lean and even skinny animals were the rule, especially those animals used for traction and transport such as cows, oxen, donkeys, mules, and camels. It was even

---

perhaps of poor quality (highlands necessary?). Sheep were introduced mostly by the Greeks: see art. “Cloth,” in *IDB*, 1:651–52.

<sup>154</sup> Philo eulogizes skilled “husbandmen” (γεωργός) in the person of Noah (*De Agricultura* 1.3–4). But he takes land laborers (γῆς ἐργάτης = tenants, sharecroppers?) to be an image of evil and vice: “Whereas to the unrighteous man he (God) ascribes that working of the ground which is without scientific knowledge and carries very heavy loads” (*ibid.*, 5.20). Philo also opposes “shepherd” to “cattle-rearer” as the noble to the vile (*ibid.*, 6.27–29: ποιμὴν / κτηνοτρόφος). [check Greek] This pairing of opposite terms was a rhetorical device, see R. G. Hamerton-Kelly, in *Jews, Greeks and Christians* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 54–56. The choice of terms is all the more revealing. Josephus makes clear that laborers and cattle rearers, i.e., the vast majority of the native Egyptian population, were the object of a deep animosity and fear: *Contra Apionem* 2.29–32, 41, 70. Cf. MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations*, 197; P. Petit, *Histoire générale de l’Empire romain* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1974), 2:150.

<sup>155</sup> Gn 46.34 says that shepherds were hated in Egypt. Celsus (second century C.E.), perhaps influenced by Manetho, thought that to speak of “the goatherds and shepherds who followed Moses” (Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.23–24) was tantamount to saying “uneducated and stupid people” (*ibid.* 4.33). Celsus himself may have come from Syria: M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1980), 2:224.

<sup>156</sup> This section is concerned with agricultural production. For an overview of other productions (luxury goods or products essential for agriculture), see for instance Avi-Yonah, *Palaestina*, in *RE*, suppl. 13:430–36.

an apparently widely shared rhetorical theme, most certainly based on popular experience, that well-fed animals were unmanageable. So, for instance, John Chrysostom in his *First Homily Against the Jews*: “Just as animals, when they are allowed to eat as much as they want, grow fat and become stubborn and hard to hold . . . .”<sup>157</sup> Philo of Alexandria also makes use of the same theme.<sup>158</sup> Obviously, animals did not customarily eat their fill, and it was common experience that whenever they did so they could not be brought back easily to their usual diet and were stronger and more difficult to handle.

Most certainly, Jewish farmers wished to have well-fed animals that would allow a deeper and more regular plowing, as is clear from the *Sifre on Deuteronomy* 11.15: “Another interpretation: *You shall eat and be full*. When your animal eats and is satiated, it works the ground with strength, and so the Scripture says: *Abundant crops come by the strength of the ox* (Prov 14.4).”<sup>159</sup> This was the desirable state of affairs, but it was not often the case in ancient Palestine. Cows, oxen, and donkeys were often malnourished and tired. It was, therefore, difficult to make them work day after day. For instance, a passage in the Tosefta shows that one of the many possible applications of justice was that the owner of a cow should not take advantage of his neighbor by lending him an exhausted animal: “The worker may not do his work at night and then hire himself for the day; neither may he plow with his cow in the evening and let her in the morning [...] on account of the damage it causes to the owner.”<sup>160</sup>

It was expected that a well-fed animal should be able to plow several days in a row, without being unduly exhausted. The situation was especially difficult in the summer when fodder was especially rare. Yet cows were to continue work, even though it was light work, such as the treading out of cereals on the threshing floors. One was not “to muzzle the ox” (Dt 25.4), but could one let it eat all the grain it wanted? The solution given in the Tosefta explores the limits that can be assigned to the religious injunction, while at the same time revealing the passions that surrounded this question of food for animals, and the meagerness of the harvest:

<sup>157</sup> PG 48.846; ET by Wilken in W. A. Meeks and R. L. Wilken, *Jews and Christians in Antioch in the First Four Centuries of the Common Era* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1978), 88.

<sup>158</sup> *On Husbandry* 32.

<sup>159</sup> *Sifre Dt* 11.15 (Finkelstein, 92, no. 43): [Hebrew text]

<sup>160</sup> *tBM* 8.2.387, lines 25–27 (already quoted in Chapter 1, 37). [check] Cf. *pDem.* 7.3.26b. Text of Tosefta: [Hebrew text]

The owner [lending his cow] may starve and extenuate his cow so that she eats much when threshing; but he who hires her may give her the straw of sheaves to eat so that she does not eat much [grain] when she threshes.<sup>161</sup>

The fact that animals were ill-fed implied a low level of fertilization and traction, which in turn meant that crops could not be very large. The farmer of antiquity, and even of the Middle Ages, was therefore caught in a vicious cycle, seen from our point of view. Many years ago, the French officer and scholar Lefebvre des Noëttes set out to prove that the largest load carried in antiquity on a four-wheel cart weighed between 350 and 450 kilograms in the best of cases, as specified in the *Theodosian Code*.<sup>162</sup> His main argument was that the type of collars then in use strangled the animals' necks and that horses could not be properly used for traction.<sup>163</sup> Most carrying, therefore, was done by pack animals or on human backs. The theory went so far as to claim that the institution of slavery, or at least its keeping, was in direct relation to this technical inability.<sup>164</sup> It has now been shown that this author's claims rested on too narrow a documentation and that other reasons are to be invoked: lack of protection of wheels, slowness of land transport, and lack of proper surfaces on roads (heavier loads would have quickly ruined the pavement).<sup>165</sup>

In any case, Palestine was a region where several of the new Roman roads could not be taken by carts because they included flights of steps.<sup>166</sup> Most

<sup>161</sup>*tBM* 8.4.387. Straw was a normal food item for animals: *mShab.* 24.2. Text of Tosefta: [Hebrew text]

<sup>162</sup>8.5, 8, 17, 28, 30, 47.

<sup>163</sup>R. Lefebvre des Noëttes, *La force motrice à travers les âges* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1924), 6–7, 11, 31, 48, 68, 70; figs. 68, 95, 107.

<sup>164</sup>Followed for instance by Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology*, 2:85.

<sup>165</sup>P. Salama, "Considérations sur les transports routiers romains, en particulier dans la province d'Afrique," in *Actes du 79e Congrès national des Sociétés savantes* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1967), 291; see R. Chevallier, *Les voies romaines* (Paris: A. Colin, 1972), 205–06. H. Polge, "L'amélioration de l'attelage a-t-elle réellement fait reculer le servage?" *Journal des Savants* (1967) 5–42.

<sup>166</sup>See I. Roll, "The Roman Road Network in Israel," *Qadmoniot* 9 (1976) 38–50 (with bibliography, map, and plates). On Roman roads in general, see Chevallier, *Les voies romaines*. On the network in Palestine, see Avi-Yonah, *Palaestina*, in *RE*, suppl. 13:436ff. On social aspects of the road, W. M. Ramsay, "Roads and Travel in the New Testament," in *A Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. J. Hastings, 5:375–402 (on routes, length of travel, equipment, safety, inns, tolls, etc.).

burdens therefore had to be carried on people's backs or by pack animals.<sup>167</sup> Obviously, these limitations would have immediate consequences on the quality of soil preparation, and one had to rely greatly upon backbreaking human labor to pulverize the clods of earth, cover the seeds, pull out the weeds, harvest, and carry the produce to the threshing floors.

The low ratio of animals to land and low efficiency also meant a low level of fertilization. Evidently, farmers were aware of the necessity of heavy manuring in Roman Palestine as elsewhere. The sources indeed speak of the importance of dung, ashes, and organic compost, but it is clear enough that great amounts of manure could not be generated.<sup>168</sup>

Applebaum, who follows Ben-David's estimate of an average of 1:7 seed-to-yield ratio for cereals, thinks that Mishnaic agriculture might have obtained even better results "if the heavy scale of organic manuring recorded by the Mishnaic scholars was generally applied."<sup>169</sup> He quotes for the record *mShevi'it* 3.2: "How much dung may they lay down? Three dung-heaps in every *seah*'s space, ten skep-loads of dung to every heap, one *lethek* to every skep-load."<sup>170</sup> He calculates that "the equivalent is five tons per dunam (0.1 hectare) or 20 tons per acre." This, indeed, if correct, would be very heavy manuring; but, it is difficult to believe that it could be "generally applied." The number of animal-hours and man-hours required at the time to gather, carry, and spread it would be enormous.<sup>171</sup> Furthermore, it is difficult to imagine that there would be enough straw, debris, and animal refuse to produce the necessary quantity of manure. One may only accept

<sup>167</sup>By donkeys for shorter trips: three days, according to *mKeth.* 5.6; one week according to *tKeth.* 5; cf. S. Lieberman, *Tosefta Ki-Fshutab* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1967), 6:266, who also refers to *pBM* 5.5.80b. Camels were used for longer travel (two weeks on the average, according to the *Tosefta*, *ibid.*). See Chapter 2 above, n. 60. [check]

<sup>168</sup>On fertilization in Roman Palestine, see Feliks, *Agriculture*, 92ff.; art. "Agricultural Methods and Implements," in *EJ*, 2:376. For organic compost: *mBQ* 3.3; *mShev.* 2.14; for dung: *mYoma* 5.6; *tShab.* 8.9; *bSanh.* 59b. Compare Pliny, *Natural History* 17.49–57, and commentary by J. André, (Paris: Les Belles-lettres, 1964). The basic techniques were known, but fertilizers were not abundant.

<sup>169</sup>*ANRW* II/8 (1977) 375; see Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie*, 1:106 (the table actually gives a 1:5 yield average).

<sup>170</sup>*mShev.* 3.2 (quoted in Applebaum, "Economic Life in Palestine," n. 106). See also *tShev.* 2.14.63. Text of Mishnah:

<sup>171</sup>To fertilize two acres would require at least three hundred trips for a donkey and a man, carrying 150 kilograms at each trip. The work would require between two and three weeks of unceasing labor (supposing that one trip took half an hour). It also supposes that manure existed in such quantity and was easy to collect and to load.

the supposition that some plots close to home, especially those under irrigation, and probably carrying fruit trees, were abundantly fertilized: this was important because irrigation with clear water tended to wash away the soil nutrients.

In fact, the most common way to fertilize a field was to lead the cattle (mostly sheep and goats) onto the field where they grazed the stubble after the harvest. The herd was placed in an enclosed area where the droppings were collected before being taken away to fertilize other fields.<sup>172</sup> Herds could be hired for that purpose.<sup>173</sup> The quantities collected cannot have been very large, and a detail in the Palestinian Talmud reveals the haggling that could take place over minute quantities of dung:

It has been taught: he who hires small cattle [for the purpose of fertilizing his field with their droppings] is prohibited [from taking means] to “shake” them. What does it mean, to “shake” them? To make them walk from place to place. This is said of whoever has hired it for a short time. But for whoever has hired it for a long time, it is allowed. The very last day, it is forbidden.<sup>174</sup>

Presumably, the text refers to a herd that went from field to field after the harvest and was fenced in on a particular field, the owner (shepherd?) being paid for this service. One was entitled only to the normal droppings. This is a particular case of the rule of strict justice that prohibited such cheating as in not providing what was expected—in this case, a flock able to fertilize a field adequately. The discussion, though involving a search for the utmost limits of a legal principle, clearly shows that proper fertilization was at the same time ardently desired and difficult to achieve.

Sperber has suggested that another weakness, at least during the third and fourth centuries C.E., was the fragmentation of Palestinian large estates into small units held by poor tenants. The minuteness of plots and units of exploitation would have stifled the use of the more efficient techniques described by the Latin agronomists. It would also have prevented the achievement of self-sufficiency, since small tenants under a variety of contracts could not afford the diversified means necessary for this goal.<sup>175</sup> But economies of scale of the modern kind could not be achieved then, and “fragmentation,” or the scattering of plots and tenants in Roman Palestine

<sup>172</sup> *mShev.* 3.4. See also Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie*, 94.

<sup>173</sup> *tShev.* 2.20.64, lines 5–6: the owner of the flock is paid for the service.

<sup>174</sup> *pShev.* 3.4.34c, bottom (cf. *tShev.* 2.15.63, lines 21–26): [Hebrew text]

<sup>175</sup> *Roman Palestine*, 206.

(and in the Near East in general), far from being a weakness, was an adaptation to circumstances. It was important to spread climatic risks, especially affecting cereals, as widely as possible.<sup>176</sup> In any case, the picture arising from the Gospels, Josephus, documents from the Judaeen desert, and the rabbinic corpus is that large or even average landowners took an interest in their land directly or through an agent but did not do the work themselves if they could help it. Tenants were essential at all times. And the basic principle of the tenancy system, as will be argued in the following chapter, was that landowners kept tenants and their families at a very basic survival level. The size of the units of exploitation and the share of the crop left with the tenant followed from that principle.<sup>177</sup> True, Roman villas had certain means such as mills and presses. But a good portion of their work was also done by tenants. Furthermore, smallness of scale did not necessarily entail waste of labor or the impossibility to develop irrigation, terracing, and the use of large mills or oil presses. All of these could be developed and used cooperatively or under a variety of private arrangements.

### 3.4 YIELDS

In spite of all his hard work, the Palestinian farmer could not break what appears to us as a vicious cycle and which to him was the unmediated reality of long days of work, exhaustion, and anguish over diseases and catastrophes. Among these catastrophes, one of the worst was the failure of crops. This did not happen too often, and farmers were normally able not only to keep seeds for the following year but also to provide for the taxman, creditors, and themselves. A better sense of the constraints weighing on people's lives would be gained if the level of average crop yields could be established.

#### PROBLEMS IN THE EVALUATION OF EVIDENCE

Despite their intrinsic importance, yields cannot be established for most products, including pulses, olives, grapes, animal products, dates, and carobs. It can only be attempted for cereals, which were considered the most important product<sup>178</sup> and, therefore, are often discussed in the

<sup>176</sup>As argued above, pp. 49 (n. 351), 110, 112. [check]

<sup>177</sup>The situation in Roman Italy itself is not clear. The role of tenants is being studied anew. See studies by M. I. Finley, P. Garnsey, and others.

<sup>178</sup>The standard measuring units of the Talmud concern wheat. See Feliks, *Agriculture*, 155, n. 321: Biblical units concerned barley but wheat had replaced barley as the most desir-

sources. However, there are no gross general figures on the harvests of cereals and none either on the “net” product.

The only information available to us is the yield per seed ratio. Apart from the difficulty inherent in trying to establish such figures, great caution must be exercised when interpreting them.<sup>179</sup> One has to keep in mind that what really counted was the total amount collected on the threshing floors. We have already seen that this amount varied greatly according to climate, amount of work spent in the fields, and geographical location. But it varied also according to several other factors: one was the quantity of seed used per *beth-se'ah*, and this latter figure can only be guessed at, mostly by comparison.<sup>180</sup> Other factors impossible to quantify were the extent and quality of the fallow and the type of cereals grown (barley yielding more than wheat).<sup>181</sup> Furthermore, there must have existed an optimum use of labor, traction, and tools, about which one can only theorize.<sup>182</sup>

Seed-to-yield ratios are the best one may hope to obtain, however, because our sources, as well as Roman agricultural treatises, describe cereal yields in this way.<sup>183</sup> But, as indicated at the beginning of this chapter, many of the texts are to be rejected because they give wildly exaggerated figures. One must, therefore, carefully select and interpret those texts that seem more commensurate with reality. This will be done by comparing their possible implications with the figures obtained in other areas and at other periods of time under roughly similar technical conditions.

Not one text provides reliable yield figures. This is the case of Mt 13.8, which says that some of the sower's seeds “fell on good soil and brought

---

able food by the time of the Mishnah and Talmud. This wheat was naked wheat, *durum*: Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology* (Laiden: Brill, 1965<sup>2</sup>), 3:90–93. Barley, however, may have remained the most common crop. For tax purposes, barley, lentils, and vetch were reduced to their equivalent value in wheat, at least in the Murabba'at documents. Wheat may therefore have been less common than the Talmudic sources lead one to believe.

<sup>179</sup>See the remarks by M. Aymard, in “Rendements et productivité agricole dans l'Italie moderne,” *Annales, E.S.C.* 28 (1973) 492, 497.

<sup>180</sup>See below, p. 136. [check]

<sup>181</sup>On the average, half the cultivable land was probably let fallow each year, as was the practice in Greece until recently, see art. *Rustica Res*, in *DAGR*, 4:903b.

<sup>182</sup>This in itself does not mean an *optimum size* of the farming unit as we understand it. In fact, the problem here is to discover what the “unit” was in Roman Palestine: how were resources pooled together? Brothers, for instance, may have remained together, working the patrimonial land.

<sup>183</sup>Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie*, 103; Feliks, *Agriculture*, 158.

forth grain, some a hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty.”<sup>184</sup> This text reminds one of the sowing done by the seminomadic Isaac at Gerar in the Negev and which brought forth a hundredfold (Gen 26.12).<sup>185</sup> A rational explanation for these exaggerated figures may be that they were based on a consideration of the number of grains borne by each of the stalks that grew out of the three or four original tillers. Apocalyptic texts noted at the beginning of the present chapter also point to impossibly high yields, of a messianic character.<sup>186</sup>

Varro himself accepted a similarly exaggerated figure of 1:100 for Syrian wheat, but spoke more wisely of 1:10 and 1:15 in other cases, for areas that he knew better—for example Etruria.<sup>187</sup> All the preceding estimates would appear as exaggerations to the modern farmer or agronomist, who in the best of conditions may hope for yield ratios of 1:30, perhaps 1:40.

#### EVIDENCE FROM THE TALMUD

Only two isolated Talmudic texts appear to give reasonable figures for cereal yields, and we shall consider them now at some length.

The first of these two texts giving an order of magnitude is a commentary on a Mishnah in the Babylonian tractate *Baba Metzi'a*. This text considers the case of tenants who, discouraged by a low yield, discontinued the cultivation of a given leased field in subsequent years. It is one of several prescriptions that were meant to safeguard the landowners' rights, namely the quality of their land and the regularity of their revenues. The specific problem before the Sages was to determine what could constitute a minimum yield and thereby give a yardstick for future decisions on land contracts and disputes. The Mishnah reads as follows:

If a man leased a field from his fellow and it was not fruitful, and there was only produce enough to make a heap, he must still cultivate it.  
R. Judah said: What manner of measure is 'a heap'!—but, rather,

<sup>184</sup>Cf. Mk 4.8; Lk 8.8; *Evang. Thomae copt.* 9; see references given by Strack-Billerbeck, 1:655–59.

<sup>185</sup>Cf. R. Meir in *tBer.* 7.8.15, and Rashi at Gn 26.12: a hundred times more than had been expected to be harvested.

<sup>186</sup>See p. 97, n. 11. [check] A saying found in *bPes.* 87b and attributed to an authority living at the end of the third century C.E. (R. Ele'azar) points to the same rates: “No man sows a *se'ah* but to bring in a few *korin*.”\*

<sup>187</sup>*Rerum Rusticarum Libri* 1.4.4.1–2. See below, p. 132. [check]

[he must cultivate it] even if it yields only as much grain as was sown there.<sup>188</sup>

In other words, the tenant ought to shoulder the risk of a bad year: he was to cultivate and sow a field again, even though he had done it in vain the preceding year. But how much was sown on a given field? The Gemara answers:

R. Ammi said in R. Johanan's name: Four *se'abs* per *kor*.—R. Ammi, giving his own opinion, said: Eight *se'abs* per *kor*. An old man said to R. Hama, son of Rabbah b. Abbuha: I will explain it to you. During R. Johanan's time the land was fertile; during that of R. Ammi it was poor.<sup>189</sup>

Only this text appears to give a low figure. The savings, according to which 4 or 8 *se'abs* of seeds were expected to give 1 *kor*, or 30 *se'abs*, were attributed to third-century rabbis.<sup>190</sup> They imply yield ratios between 1:3.75 and 1:7.5, or an average of 1:5 or 6. This apparently low figure is not acceptable to several commentators, including Feliks.<sup>191</sup> This author accepts the correction given by Elijah ha-Gaon of Vilna (1720–97), who substituted *qabs* for *se'abs* in the text, thereby raising the yield ratio to 1:22 or 1:45. The latter figure is more consistent with the sort of yield Feliks expects to find in “an intensive agriculture such as the Talmudic-Mishnaic agriculture.”<sup>192</sup>

The correction, however, is not textually supported.<sup>193</sup> It is probably due to the desire to harmonize this text with other passages in the Talmud, which attempt to evaluate the quantity of gleanings to be left to the poor. Let us briefly examine these texts. The first one is a Mishnah in tractate *Pe'ah*, which says that the poor, at harvest time, must be given *kedei nefilah*: “If the wind scattered the sheaves [over ground from which Gleanings have not been taken] they estimate what Gleanings the field was like to have yielded, and this they give to the poor. Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel says: They give to the poor *bekedei nefilah*.”<sup>194</sup> This is the same expression as in our Mishnah, and has been translated “as much grain as was sown

<sup>188</sup> *mBM* 9.5, in which the last words are: [Hebrew text]

<sup>189</sup> *bBM* 105b: [long Hebrew text]

<sup>190</sup> If 1 *kor* is a unit of volume and not of area (= *beth kor*). See below.

<sup>191</sup> *Agriculture*, 158–59, 162 and n. 358.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 163–64; also his art. “Agricultural Methods and Implements,” in *EJ* 2:376 (yields of 1:30, 1:40, even 1:100).

<sup>193</sup> D. Sperber, “Aspects of Agrarian Life,” *ANRW* II/8 (1977) 420, n. 53.

<sup>194</sup> *mPe'ah* 5.1: [Hebrew text]

there.” The use of this same expression in two different contexts caused many different interpretations already among ancient commentators. The expression *kedei nefilah* literally means: “as much as falls.” It could equally mean a certain quantity of seeds (that “fell” to the ground) or the amount of grain and straw that fell to the ground during harvests and was abandoned to gleaners.<sup>195</sup> Those commentators who understood Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel to be referring to the amount of seeds required for the field as a measure of gleanings to be left to the poor refused his evaluation.<sup>196</sup> They did so because to give as gleanings from a field as much as had been sown in it would have been an enormous tax on the farmer in premodern times. Rather, their definitions of *kedei nefilah* tended to be very low. So, for example, the problem seen in the saying attributed to R. Simeon b. Gamaliel that the poor must be given *kedei nefilah* (cf. *mPe'ah* 5.1) is solved as follows in the Gemara: “And, how much is that?—when R. Dimi came [to Babylone], he said in the name of R. Eleazar—others state, in the name of R. Johanan: Four *kabs* per *kor*.”<sup>197</sup> If one thinks that R. Dimi in this text understood *kedei nefilah* as “the measure for resowing” (e.g., the Soncino ET), then one obtains a yield ratio of 1:45, which compares with the high ratios obtained in modern times. Furthermore, some other commentators understood “Four *kabs* per *kor*” as meaning “Four *kabs* per *beth kor*”—that is, per field where one sows one *kor*.<sup>198</sup> This would give an even higher, and positively impossible, yield ratio.

However, most of these commentaries on the amounts of gleanings to be left or given to the poor are obviously not construing *kedei nefilah* of *mPe'ah* as referring to “the measure for resowing” but to the amount of grains that fell behind the reapers at harvest times. This was the view of R. Samson ben Abraham of Sens (1150–1230) in his commentary on this Mishnah (*Pe'ah* 5.1). He explains that R. Simeon b. Gamaliel’s ruling gave as a measure “the quantity that normally is to fall at harvesting season” and that this measure *kedei nefilah* in *mPe'ah* 5.1 is not like the *kedei nefilah* of *mBM* 9.5, which has to do with sowing.<sup>199</sup>

<sup>195</sup>On sowing techniques, see Feliks, *Agriculture*, 128–30.

<sup>196</sup>E.g., Maimonides at *mPe'ah* 5.1: the law is not according to R. Simeon ben Gamaliel.

<sup>197</sup>*bBM* 105b (Soncino, ET, 603).

<sup>198</sup>R. Abbahu’s answer to R. Ze’ira in *pPe'ah* 5.1.18d; also in *bBM* 105b: “For when Rabin came, he said in the name of R. Abbahu in the name of R. Eleazar—others say, in the name of R. Johanan: Four *kabs* for a *kor* of seed. But the question still remains: for hand sowing or by oxen? The problem remains unsolved.”

<sup>199</sup>At *bPe'ah* 4b.

Yields were actually low and the correction by the Vilna Gaon can be rejected as an attempt to reconcile the commentaries on *mBM* 9.5 and *mPe'ab* 5.1. The discussions on the gleanings to be left to the poor, and which tended to leave very little (1 to 2 percent at the maximum), can only have taken place in a context of paucity. We may therefore conclude from our discussion that *mBM* 9.5 and *bBM* 105b indeed speak of 4–8 *se'abs* per *kor* of yield and imply a yield ratio from 1:3 to 1:7.

The second text describes how much flour and bran a *se'ab* of Arbel used to produce. The crops of the Arbel plain, 6 kilometers northwest of Tiberias, had a great reputation. The *se'ab* of Arbel, however, did not necessarily refer to wheat from Arbel proper but perhaps simply to a certain standard *se'ab* used in Lower Galilee and called “Arbelite.”<sup>200</sup> This tradition is found in several slightly different forms. In the Palestinian tractate *Pe'ab*, it reads: “R. Ḥiyya bar Ba said: A *se'ab* of Arbel used to produce a *se'ab* of fine flour, a *se'ab* of first flour, a *se'ab* of *cibarium*, a *se'ab* of bran flour, a *se'ab* of coarse bran, a *se'ab* of multi-colored flour. And now, one doesn't even obtain measure for measure.”<sup>201</sup> In Sperber's opinion, “this text is probably from the last quarter of the third century.”<sup>202</sup> The fact that it is all in Hebrew, except for the last sentence in Aramaic, suggests that R. Ḥiyya (or a later redactor) was quoting an earlier Hebrew text. Indeed, a Tannaitic tradition attributed to a second-century C.E. rabbi closely parallels our text. But it speaks of Judaea and not of Arbel: “It is stated, R. Yose said: a *se'ab* of Judaea used to produce five *se'abs*: a *se'ab* of first flour, a *se'ab* of fine flour, a *se'ab* of bran flour, a *se'ab* of coarse bran, and a *se'ab* of *cibarium*.”<sup>203</sup> In the variant attributed to R. Ḥiyya (floruit ca. 250–310 C.E.), the *se'ab* of Arbel “produces” 6 *se'abs* of various grades of flour and bran. But, the other variants in the tradition on the Arbel *se'ab* generally follow the Tannaitic text, with its fivefold increase. The words describing the grades of flour are the same, but their order is not fixed.<sup>204</sup> What we have, then, is a tradition that may go as far back as the mid-second century C.E. and was handed down through the fourth or fifth century C.E.<sup>205</sup>

<sup>200</sup> Sperber, *ANRW* II/8 (1977) 426, n. 65.

<sup>201</sup> *pPe'ab* 7.4.20a, bottom: [two lines of Hebrew text]

<sup>202</sup> Sperber, *ANRW* II/8 (1977) 407, 424.

<sup>203</sup> *bKeth.* 112a (Sperber, *ANRW* II/8 [1977] 407): [Hebrew text]

<sup>204</sup> *pSoṭ.* 1.8.17b; 9.14.24b, bottom.

<sup>205</sup> The text of *pPe'ab* 7.4.20a is inserted and expanded upon in *Tanḥuma Ex., Tetzaveh* 13.63, a text that may have been redacted in the fourth century C.E. at the earliest (see Sperber, *ANRW* II/8 [1977] 427).

Does this tradition imply a 1:5 yield ratio? Heichelheim thought so and has been followed by Ben-David.<sup>206</sup> But this text or texts obviously build on a natural phenomenon, namely the increase in volume that a given quantity of cereals undergoes at milling time.<sup>207</sup> Sperber is certainly correct in asserting that this text is not talking of crop yields.<sup>208</sup> He gives good linguistic reasons for this: for example, that the *Tanḥuma* version of this tradition speaks of flours, whereas other *Tanḥuma* texts speak of seeds when referring to yields.<sup>209</sup> But some of his other arguments are less cogent: he thinks that a fivefold harvest would be extremely low and certainly not “normal” as Heichelheim thought. He also finds unimaginable that someone would sow in R. Ḥiyya’s time only to harvest what he had sown (“and now, one doesn’t even obtain measure for measure”). But, on the contrary, it is obvious that a crop could fail for a myriad of reasons and yield nothing or barely enough to resow.<sup>210</sup> Evidently, a farmer did everything in his power to ensure a good yield, prayers and fasts included, but had to submit to uncontrollable elements.

This tradition, then, is wholly explainable as a legendary saying commenting on the volume increment taking place at milling. This increment certainly depended upon the quality of the grain. But the traditions on the Arbelite *se’ah* do not give us any idea of the yields.

#### COMPARISON WITH OTHER EVIDENCE

The only text that may be taken into consideration, therefore, is *bBM* 105b. It alone fits the meager evidence on yields in ancient times that one may gather from other sources in roughly similar technical conditions. Let us now review these sources.

Three testimonies on yields have been gathered by Patlagean in her work on aspects of poverty in the Eastern Roman Empire during the fourth and

<sup>206</sup>Heichelheim, “Roman Syria,” in *ESAR*, 4:128–29. Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie*, 1:104; also Avi-Yonah, art. *Palaestina*, in *RE*, suppl. 13:430.

<sup>207</sup>Sperber, *ANRW* II/8 (1977) 426 and n. 63a, referring to L. A. Moritz, *Grain Mills and Flour in Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 184. Add Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology*, 3:94 (the rate of flour extraction was very high in antiquity, i.e., as much as possible was kept as “flour”).

<sup>208</sup>Sperber, *ANRW* II/8 (1977) 424–5.

<sup>209</sup>*Ibid.*, 427.

<sup>210</sup>A proof of it is that tenancy contracts could include a penalty clause for noncultivation: *Mur.* 24B, line 11; 24C, line 10; *mBM* 9.3; *tKeth.* 4.10.

fifth centuries.<sup>211</sup> The first is the story of a miracle due to Nicolas the Sionite's power in the second half of the sixth century in Lycia. A year of dearth, when only enough to resow had grown, was succeeded by a year of abundance when 125 great *modii* were harvested for 25 *modii* of seed, giving therefore a ratio of 1:5.<sup>212</sup> The two other testimonies come from papyri found at Nessana in the Negev: *P. Ness.* 82, dated to the seventh century, and *P. Ness.*, dated 683–85 (?). *P. Ness.* 82, a domanial harvest account, gives yields for wheat at 1:6.75–7.2 and for barley at 1:8.04–8.75. The second papyrus is a harvesting account giving yield ratios of 1:4.28 and 1:3.7.<sup>213</sup> After noting that these three testimonies are the only ones in her sources, Patlagean concludes that “the ratios of 1:4–5 and 1:8–9 fit the ‘millenary stability’ of Mediterranean cereal yields, the first average or mediocre, the second fairly high, and perhaps open to doubt in the area where it is attested.”<sup>214</sup>

A few figures are also given by the Roman agronomists, some unreasonable and others more in accordance with possibilities. We have already noted that Varro, in the first century B.C.E., writes of such yields as 1:10 in some parts of Italy, 1:15 in Etruria, and even reports 1:100 for Sybaris and certain places in Syria and Africa without expressing any doubt about the last item.<sup>215</sup> One may grant more credit to Columella (first century C.E.) when he says that he “can hardly recall a time when grain crops, throughout at least the greater part of Italy, returned a yield of four for one.”<sup>216</sup> Columella could be exaggerating in the other direction because the purpose of this third chapter of his *De Re Rustica* was to show that vinegrowing—at least for estates close enough to special markets—was a more rewarding activity than the cultivation of *frumenta*. But his figure of 1:4 was still the rule in Italy, except in the Agro Romano, more than 1500 years later.<sup>217</sup>

Sicily was a different case. Cicero reports that in the exceptional district of Leontini, “the land gives a yield of eightfold, under favorable circum-

<sup>211</sup>E. Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique et pauvreté sociale à Byzance, 4-7ème siècles* (Paris: Mouton, 1977) 246–48.

<sup>212</sup>Ibid., 247. Text in *Hagios Nikolaos: Der heilige Nikolaos in der griechischen Kirche*, Band 1: *Die Texte*, ed G. Anrich (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1913), 3–35 (par. 59).

<sup>213</sup>Ibid., p. 248. See C. J. Kraemer, *Excavations at Nessana*, vol. 3: *Non Literary Papyri* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958).

<sup>214</sup>Ibid. The expression “millenary stability” comes from Aymard, *Annales E.S.C.* (1973) 475–97.

<sup>215</sup>*Rerum Rusticarum Libri* 1.44.1–2; cf. Aymard, *Annales E.S.C.* (1973) 475–97.

<sup>216</sup>*De Re Rustica* 3.3.4; cf. Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie*, 1:105.

<sup>217</sup>Aymard, *Annales E.S.C.* (1973) 492: 1:4 or 5 in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries; 1:8 in the Agro Romano.

stances, or tenfold, by the special blessing of heaven."<sup>218</sup> The context suggests that these figures themselves were clearly the best in the area. The 1:8 figure is confirmed by the research done by M. Aymard on several domains of Sicily in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries: only in a few bad years did the yields fall below 1:4 or even 1:3.<sup>219</sup>

A further element of comparison is found in the figures obtaining for the Middle Ages in Europe and even for the beginning of the modern period. Slicher Van Bath, for instance, has been able to conclude that meager yield ratios of 1:3 or 1:4 were also the rule during the Middle Ages and even in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for the major cereals.<sup>220</sup> The yields were already high, however, at the end of the Middle Ages in a few well-stocked and well-managed domains such as monasteries. But apart from these great domains, the rest of Europe had to wait until the sixteenth and especially the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to see yields slowly rise, the Low Countries and England leading the way.<sup>221</sup>

It would also be interesting to be able to compare what we think was the average yield in Roman Palestine with the yields current in Arab farming in modern Palestine until the beginning of the twentieth century. We would then have an indication of the possibilities offered by the same soil, cultivated with similar techniques. The only figures at our disposal are the evaluations of acreage sown and yields obtained in the last years of the British Mandate. The best years, with the largest acreage and results recorded, were 1940–42, when an average of 266,411 tons for all types of cereals was harvested on ca. 350,000 hectares. If the average sowing was at around 150 kilograms per hectare, this gives an approximate yield ratio of 1:5.

All the information at hand shows that one cannot accept the high yield ratios often given in the studies on the Talmudic period. From all the preceding research, it appears probable that the average seed-to-yield ratio was not higher than 1:5.

<sup>218</sup> *Actionis secundae in C. Verrem*, 3.18.47; 3.47.112.

<sup>219</sup> *Annales E.S.C.* (1973) 484–85, 488.

<sup>220</sup> *The Agrarian History of Western Europe, A.D. 500–1850* (London: Edward Arnold, 1963), 18, 172–73; tables, 328–29. Tables of yields for the 1500–1800 period are also given by S. Van Bath in the *Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, ed. M. M. Postan and H. J. Habakkuk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) 5:40. R. A. Donkin gives a general ratio of 1:3.5 for the Early Middle Ages, in *A New Historical Geography of England*, ed. H. C. Darby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 92.

<sup>221</sup> Van Bath, *Agrarian History*, 175–76, 330–33: in the eighteenth century, the average yield in the Netherlands was 1:12–15.

## HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL VARIATIONS

What was the importance of variations around this average, and especially of variations over time? It is usually accepted that both the great wars (66–70 C.E. and 133–35 C.E.) affected the productivity of the country considerably. Indeed, the passage and settling of armies for long periods of time were terrible events. Troops would plunder surrounding villages for food, cut trees for use in constructions and prevent normal activities. But it appears that the second part of the second century and the first half of the third century were times of considerable prosperity, underscored by many statements in the Talmudic literature.<sup>222</sup> This peak would have been followed by a long period of deterioration. Indeed, many scholars think that there was a general agricultural decline throughout the Roman Empire in the second half of the third century C.E.<sup>223</sup> Sperber thinks that this phenomenon was also felt in Roman Palestine and has looked for evidence of this in the rabbinic texts of the first centuries C.E. He would argue for the existence of high yields in normal times and thinks that many texts datable to the end of the third century are, in fact, evidence for abnormally low yields. Among these proof texts are the two traditions that we have studied.

But the evidence for a specific decline in yields over the whole Roman Empire in the third century cannot be considered as overwhelming, especially in the East.<sup>224</sup> Even if there had been a decline in the brilliance of city life, this did not necessarily entail a decline in the quality or level of production. In fact, the East retained a high level of urban economic activity. As for Roman Palestine, the texts on which Sperber supports his views cannot be regarded as definite proofs of a lower productivity. First, many of these texts that appear to indicate an agricultural decline may, in fact, also have been exaggerations—complaints about the miserable “present times” as set off against the fertility of the mythical past, “when the Temple was standing.” Second, the fact that the Gemara was redacted during the fourth and

<sup>222</sup>Feliks, art. “Agriculture” (Mishnaic and Talmudic Period), in *EJ*, 2:396.

<sup>223</sup>E.g., F. Oertel, “The Economic Life of the Empire,” in *CAH*, 12:260.

<sup>224</sup>See Petit, *Histoire générale de l'Empire romain*, 2:218–19. The autonomy and prosperity of cities were maintained well into the third century C.E. and even later. For the West, see François Jacques, *Le privilège de liberté: politique impériale et autonomie municipale dans les cités de l'Occident romain (161–244)* (Rome: Ecole française, 1984). A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1964), 2:822, 1040: there was no general agricultural decline. He discusses the causes of the recession in agriculture, pp. 812–23, concluding that the major reason was the ever heavier taxation. On the cultural and psychological aspects of the “crisis,” see Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity*, 28–33.

fifth centuries explains that there are many more proof texts for the generations immediately preceding the redaction than for times further removed. More specifically, in regard to the first tradition we have studied (p. 127), [check] one does not have to trust the old man (if his presence is more than a rhetorical device) who explains away the discrepancy between the yields in R. Yoḥanan's and R. Ammi's times. How could he keep an exact account, especially of series of years? He certainly must have observed great variations in yields in his time, but could he make an averaging that we could consider reliable?

As for the texts on the Arbelite *se'ab*, it is difficult to ascertain which periods exactly R. Jose or R. Ḥiyya b. Aba are referring to. In any case, this Aramaic gloss commenting on "now" (apparently R. Ḥiyya's time) is too isolated and too vague to be clearly interpreted. Supposing that R. Ḥiyya was its author, on what can he be said to have based his opinion? How general was this statement? Again, one may say that this text is one more tradition on long-gone miraculous yields, as compared to the day-to-day reality. It cannot be used to draw any conclusions about yields or quality of grains, and even less to ascertain agricultural trends.

There were great variations in yields not only from year to year, but also from slope to slope in the mountains and hills, and from unirrigated land to irrigated and well-fertilized plots. It is well known that Egypt, for instance, yielded much more than other areas of the Roman Empire, or at least that its yields were more regular, because of the Nile irrigation.<sup>225</sup> If variations between 1:3 and 1:8 could occur in the coastal plain, the King's domain (Yizreel valley), and in the Judaeen or Galilean valley floors, the same difference could also happen in the hills, between the top or slope of a hill and the small and narrow valley floor, the latter always giving something.<sup>226</sup> Fields built in terraces probably were more regular and bountiful, but good re-

<sup>225</sup>See Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie*, 105, quoting A. C. Johnson, *Roman Egypt to the Reign of Diocletian*, in *ESAR* 2:1. Lower estimates have been given by Johnson (*Roman Egypt*, p. 59: 1:4.25–10 for wheat and 1:7–12 for barley); D. Bonneau in *Publications de la Sorbonne, série Etudes*, 14 (1979) 65; and R. S. Bagnall ("Agricultural Productivity and Taxation in Later Roman Egypt," *TAPA* 115 [1985] 289–308, which is concerned with levels and variations of taxation in Egypt during the fourth and fifth centuries. His calculation [p. 306], in a hypothesis on yields, is to be translated into yields of 1:4 or 1:6). A higher figure, 1:10, is proposed by Cl. Préaux, in "Papyrologie et sociologie," *Annales Universitatis Saraviensis (Philosophische Fakultät)* 8 (1959) 5–20. Lewis, impressed by the high level of rents and taxation, is inclined to see even higher yields, in the 1:9 to 1:27 range: *Life in Egypt Under Roman Rule*, 121–22.

<sup>226</sup>See photograph in Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie*, 81.

sults depended upon two factors: first, the constant supervision and maintenance of channels and retaining walls; and second, a heavy manuring to replenish nutrients lost because of irrigation.

#### CONSEQUENCES OF LOW YIELDS

If the average yield was low, 1:3 for instance, one-third of the harvest would have to be put aside as seed for the following year and between one-quarter and one-third for various taxes, tolls, and tithes,<sup>227</sup> leaving about one-third for subsistence. This also meant that a large part of the land and of human and animal energies were reserved simply to renew the seed.<sup>228</sup> But if the average yield was higher, 1:8 for instance, the farmer had more possibilities: he could decrease the surfaces devoted to cereals or feed more people and more animals, which also meant more manure and more haulage power. But the advantage would not necessarily have been transferred to the tenant, at least in the case of large properties, since the landowner might be able to charge higher rents or find it convenient to divide his land into units small enough to keep his tenants at subsistence level.

To have a more precise idea of the food available to a farming family, one has to know the average size of a holding. Ben-David supposes an area of 7 hectares for a family of six to nine people.<sup>229</sup> An indication of size is given by Hegesippus in the account of a meeting between two of Jesus' relatives and Domitian. Whatever one may think of the historicity of this meeting, what interests us is that their domain was reputed to have 39 *plethras*, which is about 9 to 10 hectares, if, as probable in this text, *plethron* was used for *jugerum*.<sup>230</sup> This domain must not have appeared either too large or too small, but simply modest, as the context indicates, which specifies that the two brothers themselves worked their own land. It does not seem that they were living at subsistence levels, though. Many Romans or Italians

<sup>227</sup> On the level of taxes, see following chapter; Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie*, 297–98, estimates at 20.6 percent the various Jewish taxes and 12.5 percent the Roman taxes.

<sup>228</sup> Van Bath, *Agrarian History*, 18, 22, 184.

<sup>229</sup> *Talmudische Oekonomie*, 44; also 46, where he notes that a fellah's farm in 1909–23 comprised six to nine people for 8 to 10 hectares of land.

<sup>230</sup> Apud Eusebius, *HE*, 3.20.2–3; see Appendix on Weights and Measures. Contra D. L. Mealand, *Poverty and Expectation in the Gospels* (London: SPCK, 1980), who takes the *plethron* to be 0.5 *jugerum*, as Heichelheim, "Roman Syria", in *ESAR*, 4:146, who is followed by Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie*, 138. Curiously, the latter author gives 7 hectares as a result.

owned or worked less than 10 *jugera* (2.5 hectares).<sup>231</sup> Perhaps for reasons of propaganda, Pliny considered sufficient the lot of 7 *jugera* (less than 2 hectares) attributed to Plebeians from the Tarquins' spoil.<sup>232</sup> A domain of 39 *plethra-jugera* may have looked quite respectable in the eyes of most of the Palestinian population, but not, of course, of Domitian, who dismissed Jesus' grandnephews as men of little import.<sup>233</sup> It was exactly the amount of land deemed sufficient in Diocletian's time to serve as a basic unit of calculation for a new tax.<sup>234</sup> Hegesippus's story is instructive, but one must keep in mind that the size of farms varied greatly. In the following chapter, it will be argued that the area of a farm in tenancy basically was a function of the landowner's perception that tenants should live at subsistence level, debt being the control mechanism.

Nevertheless, what could have been the standard of life on a domain of 9 to 10 hectares? Supposing that half of it was under cereals in any given year, what could be left for consumption?<sup>235</sup> We must first gain an idea, however, of the quantity sown per unit of surface. Ben-David estimates 131 kilos per hectare, on the basis of 1 *se'ah* per *beth-se'ah*, but one could argue for a figure of 157 kilograms per hectare on the same basis.<sup>236</sup> In any case, the sowing quantity must have varied widely, but was always on the heavy side. The remarks made by a few visitors to Palestine early in this century have shown that Arab farmers tended to sow heavily and with great variation.<sup>237</sup>

<sup>231</sup>Frayn, *Subsistence farming in Roman Italy*, 15. See discussion of size in J. K. Evans, "Plebs Rustica II," *AJAH* 5 (1980) 159–63, who thinks that holdings under 10 *jugera* (2 to 3 hectares) must have been very common. His opinion is based on literary sources as well as on important excavations carried out in the Monte Foreo by the British School in Rome: G. D. B. Jones, "Capena and the Ager Capenas," *PBSR* 30, new series 17 (1962) 116–210.

<sup>232</sup>*Natural History* 18.3. The story of Cincinnatus (Livy 3.26.8), which speaks of 4 *jugera*, is another instance of the classical theme—repeated by Pliny and others—that everyone in the distant and glorious past was satisfied with very little. There is some truth to it, according to Evans, *AJAH* 5 (1980) 161: it was possible to survive on 7 *jugera*, given the supplement coming from wild plants, fruit, and so on.

<sup>233</sup>They were not poor enough to make it "an obvious occasion [for Hegesippus] to say something about 'the Poor' or the Ebionites," contra L. E. Keck, "The Poor Among the Saints," *ZNW* 57 (1966) 56.

<sup>234</sup>Petit, *Histoire générale de l'Empire romain*, 3:30–31.

<sup>235</sup>Cereals were important, but other products too would play a great role, as already emphasized: beans, chickpeas, vetch, even lupine, vegetables, and wild plants.

<sup>236</sup>*Talmudische Oekonomie*, 104. One *se'ah* = 13 liters, and 1 *beth-se'ah* = 2500 square cubits (very approximative). If the cubit were taken to measure 50 centimeters, one *se'ah* per *beth-se'ah* (625 square meters) would mean 157 kilograms of wheat. See Appendix on Weights and Measures.

<sup>237</sup>Feliks, *Agriculture*, 163. The figures quoted in Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte in*

This variation must be attributed to the fact that a farmer adapted his sowing to what he expected from a particular field or corner of a field: a more generous hand on unirrigated parcels but more restrained on humid valley floors and irrigated terraces. It is doubtful whether the Jewish farmer of Talmudic times had a lighter hand than his Roman or modern Arab counterpart, as argued by Feliks, who speaks of 62 to 124 kilograms per hectare.<sup>238</sup> On the contrary, the meager evidence at our disposal suggests that it was a universal practice.<sup>239</sup> Indeed, it was a necessity. Given the weakness of composting and soil preparation, a lighter hand would not have meant a significantly higher yield per seed ratio but almost surely a lower yield per acre, with smaller heaps on the threshing floor. The apostle Paul reflects this practice when using the example of the sower in his attempt to instill more generosity in the nascent Corinthian Church: “the point is this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.”<sup>240</sup>

In our calculations, pertaining to the domain of Jesus’ grandnephews, we shall therefore conservatively assume that the quantity of seeds was in the order of 150 kilograms per hectare. With a seed-to-yield ratio of 1:5, 5 hectares of cereals (or 20 *jugera*) would produce 3,750 kilograms gross, or about 2,000 kilograms net, after seeds, taxes, and various duties had been taken into account. Expressed in *se’ahs*, which is a measure giving a better idea of the long work involved (a basket), the gross product from 80 *se’ahs* of seed (4 *se’ahs* per *juger*) would be 400 *se’ahs*.<sup>241</sup> If such yields were regular,

---

*Palaestina*, 2:181–82, Anderling, *ZDPV* (1886) 51, and Sonnen, *Biblica* (1927) 80, suggest an average of 2 to 2.5 hectoliters (150 to 180 kilograms) per hectare.

<sup>238</sup>Feliks, *Agriculture*, 162–63: the Jewish farmer sowed “twice as little seeds as the Romans and three times as little as the Arab farmer.” But Feliks bases his comments on a *se’ah* of 8.54 liters, whereas it should be equal to 13 liters (as indicated, however, in his n. 356, p. 161). See also his art. “Agricultural Methods and Implements,” in *EJ*, 2:376, on the basis of *tKil.* 1.16.

<sup>239</sup>Still 2 to 2.4 hectoliters of seed in Sicily from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries: Aymard, *Annales, E.S.C.* (1973) 492. Cf. *tKil.* 1.15.74, lines 20–21.

<sup>240</sup>2 Cor 9.6; See 4 *Esdras* 4.32 (a text written in Palestine, around the beginning of the second century C.E.): “When heads of grain without number are sown, how great a threshing floor they will fill!” (trans. B. M. Metzger, in *OTP*, 1:531); 3 *Baruch* (*Greek Apocalypse*, provenance and date uncertain), 15: “for those who have sown well, harvest well” (trans. H. E. Gaylord, Jr., in *OTP*, 1:677).

<sup>241</sup>Compare Table in Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie*, 297. A mosaic representation found at Scythopolis of a sower holding a basket in his left hand, though belonging to the sixth century C.E., gives a good idea of what the *se’ah* looked like: the “December sower,” in the so-called Monastery of the Lady Mary (its foundress), in G. M. Fitzgerald, *A*

one could then rely less upon the higher-yielding barley, perhaps extract a finer and whiter wheat flour (at least for some occasions), have a larger family contributing to the renown of the household, hire a few seasonal workers, be able to offer more numerous and better sacrifices as well as feasts, and have more influence in local politics, especially when it came to decisions about the distribution of the tax burden.<sup>242</sup> But, on the contrary, to be on a smaller landholding or on worse land meant a greater reliance upon barley and pulses—*cibarium* bread as an everyday staple—and the necessity to glean, harvest, and hunt what one could in uncultivated areas. The smaller the landholding, the greater the necessity of relying upon uncertain means and even hiring oneself out to other landowners.

Low yields were the background for many practices and laws: concerning salaries, food restrictions (e.g., for women and daughters), distributions to the poor, marriage relations and contracts, widowhood and orphanhood. Any added demand on a family was seen as threatening an equilibrium acquired with much labor. It is also against this background that one may better understand the import of the ancient *Amidah* prayer, and particularly its ninth benediction, which appears to be a longer version of the “Give us this day our daily bread.” The *Amidah* is an ancient prayer: its main features probably came into existence in the days of the Second Temple. They were consolidated under the authority of Rabban Gamaliel II at Yavneh, shortly after the destruction of the Temple. In spite of this consolidation, however, the sequence and specific content of the eighteen benedictions continued to vary from community to community.<sup>243</sup> This is a literal

---

*Sixth Century Monastery at Beth-Shan (Scythopolis)* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1939), frontispiece and pl. VIII, fig. 1.

<sup>242</sup>Ten adults could live on 2,000 kilograms of grain, on the basis of 200 kilograms per person per year. The basic requirement in modern subsistence agriculture is 190 to 235 kilograms of unmilled grain per person per annum: Clark and Haswell, *The Economics of Subsistence Agriculture*, 58. About 10 percent are lost at milling, cf. Appendix B. The amount of bread or galettes consumed per day, per person, varied therefore between 600 and 750 grams, which is indeed the quantity that our sources assumed to be the legal minimum. Clark and Haswell also give the equivalence in grain of the minimum quantity of clothing per year as 15 kilograms.

<sup>243</sup>J. Heinemann, art. “Amidah,” in *EJ* 2:838–45, and his *Prayer in the Talmud. Forms and Patterns* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1977), 6–7, 26–30, 37–69. This book is an updated revision and translation of the Hebrew original (1964). It integrates the results of the textual and hermeneutic research that developed since the appearance of I. Elbogen, *Der jüdische Gottesdienst in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (Frankfurt: J. Kauffmann, 1931<sup>3</sup>). On the ninth benediction of the *Amidah*, see the revised Hebrew version of Elbogen’s fundamental work, *Ha-tefillah be Yisrael*, trans. Y. Amir, ed. J. Heinemann and others (Tel Aviv:

translation of the ancient Palestinian version, found in the Cairo Genizah and published by Schechter:

O Lord, our God, bless for us this year, for prosperity [and blessing], in its every kind of produce. Bring near quickly the year marking our redemption. Give dew and rain [the rains and dews that you will] on the face of the earth, satisfy the [thy] world with [thy blessings] the treasures of thy goodness, and give blessing to the doing of our hands. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who blesses the years.<sup>244</sup>

This prayer illustrates the dignity of people whose harvests were threatened by “all kinds of destruction and all kinds of catastrophes,” as the Yemenite ritual elaborates. It is the petition of weary but proud workers who did their part during the year and trusted in their God’s justice to bring it to fruition.

### 3.5 POPULATION OF PALESTINE

It is impossible to say whether Roman Palestine was overpopulated at any given time and, if it was, whether this condition was detrimental to the general welfare. What is feasible, however, is to give an estimate of the limit above which one could speak of overpopulation. By Roman Palestine is meant an area including Judaea, Samaria, Galilee, the coastal strip, and Iudumaea. It is notably difficult to assess the situation, and figures given in the literature vary widely.<sup>245</sup> Nevertheless, the preceding evaluation of technical standards and yield levels will allow us, we believe, to reach a solution better suited to the facts.

Broshi has shown that most previous estimates of the population of Roman-Byzantine Palestine were either out of proportion or rested, in the

---

Dvir, 1972), 38–39. For the modern text of the *Amidah* (short version of the ninth benediction), see S. Singer, *The Authorized Daily Prayer Book* (London: Eyre and Spottiswood, 1908).

<sup>244</sup>Rituals coming from the Mediterranean area (e.g., the Italian rite), including the Ashkenazi ritual, give slightly different versions of this short form. Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud*, 27–28, gives a less literal translation of the prayer. Text in S. Schechter, *JQR* 10 (1898) 657; I have put in brackets the translation and text of the variants given in a second fragment, p. 659 (this text is also given by G. Dalman, *Die Worte Jesu* [Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1930<sup>2</sup>], 299): [three lines of Hebrew text]

<sup>245</sup>See, e.g., table given by Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie*, 43, and the list given by A. Byatt, “Josephus and Population Numbers in First Century Palestine,” *PEQ* 56 (1973) 51–52. Byatt’s own estimation is 2,265,000 (p. 56).

best cases, on false presuppositions.<sup>246</sup> He himself offers two different methods by which one obtains a population figure that is considerably lower than most other estimates.

The first method consists of an evaluation of the urban population in Byzantine times. On the basis of 400 people per hectare of city area, after dedication of public and open spaces, he finds that the maximum urban population at the end of the Byzantine period was 372,000 inhabitants. He supposes then that this urban population was roughly one-third of the total population, a significantly higher percentage than in other provinces of the Roman Empire.<sup>247</sup>

In the second method, he divides the maximum grain yield of Palestine by the minimum individual consumption and thus obtains a theoretical maximum figure for the population. Both methods, according to M. Broshi's calculations, give a maximum figure of one million people for Palestine in the Roman-Byzantine period,<sup>248</sup> a number which was actually reached in the late Byzantine period, around 600 C.E. To estimate the grain-growing capacity of Roman Palestine, Broshi relies upon the 1940–42 average output in Palestine, when production was at a maximum.<sup>249</sup> The figure he obtains (266,411 tons for all types of cereals) may be confirmed in another way, also assuming that climatic conditions have not essentially varied in the last two thousand years. It is possible to compute directly the arable area of Palestine, Peraea and Decapolis excluded, and, by assuming that half of it could be put under cereals, calculate the crop output.<sup>250</sup> Accordingly, 381,000 hectares of cereals would produce about 230,000 tons of grain available for consumption if one sowed 150 kilograms per hectare

<sup>246</sup>M. Broshi, "The Population of Western Palestine in the Roman-Byzantine Period," *BASOR* 236 (1979) 1–10, with bibliography. The Hebrew version of this article can be found in Z. Baras, et al., eds., *Eretz-Israel From the Destruction of the Second Temple to the Muslim Conquest* (Jerusalem: I. Ben Zvi, 1982), 442–55, especially 452–55.

<sup>247</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 3–5 and n. 16; an opinion shared by M. Avi-Yonah, *Essays and Studies* (Jerusalem: Newman, 1964), 121 (in Hebrew).

<sup>248</sup>Broshi, *BASOR* 236 (1979) 7.

<sup>249</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>250</sup>Figures based on arable soil available in modern times give 763,000 hectares as soil good for any crop in Israel, West Bank, and Gaza: *Atlas of Israel*, maps XII/4; before 1948, grain constituted half of the total crop area of Palestine: *ibid.*, map XII/4. These figures are lower than those given by Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie*, 26–28 and 44. The article "Israel, Economic Affairs," in *EJ*, 9:775–76, estimates that 500,000 hectares were effectively cultivated, Gaza and West Bank included, and that 70 percent of this area was under field crops. McCown estimated an acreage of around 550,000 hectares of arable land, Negev excluded: *The Genesis of the Social Gospel*, 57–58.

and the seed-to-yield ratio was 1:5. This would be a maximum figure, if only because of the necessity to keep half the land fallow. Individual consumption must have turned at around 200 kilograms of grain per year, which roughly corresponds to the amount of bread to be provided to a beggar.<sup>251</sup> In the case of Rome, where distributions were more generous, one does not know whether the figures quoted in ancient sources did not also concern the individual's family.<sup>252</sup> All in all, the population of Roman Palestine would theoretically have peaked at 1,150,000 inhabitants.

Most other evaluations are usually too high and do not pay attention to the limits established by the quantities of food and water available.<sup>253</sup> Against our own results, it might be argued that archaeological surveys show an astonishing population density in the hills.<sup>254</sup> Furthermore, it might be maintained that the subsistence level of the time (as measured by the quantity of grains consumed in a year) was actually lower than modern calculations indicate and that reliance on wild plants was more important than previously thought.

It must be borne in mind, however, that the basis for our calculation is very generous. Taking into account a greater necessity for fallows, a particular form of which was the sabbatical year, and the extent of marshy lands, I am inclined to think that about one million people could normally live at any given time in Roman Palestine. The actual population may at times have been greater, as perhaps, for instance, during the first century C.E. But, given the slow evolution of techniques, the low level of energy, and the difficulty of bringing in large supplies of grain from the outside, I do not think that the one million figure can be easily expanded.<sup>255</sup>

<sup>251</sup>See n. 242 above. [check] M. Broshi thinks that 200 kilograms is a minimum and prefers a higher figure, 250 kilograms: in Z. Baras, et al., eds., *Eretz-Israel* (1982), 454. Cereal consumption of animals, however, which he sees as a factor, must have been negligible at the time.

<sup>252</sup>See J. André, *L'alimentation et la cuisine à Rome* (Paris: Les Belles-Lettres, 1981), 71–73: the yearly rations for farmhands and soldiers went from 240 to over 300 kilograms. For distributions of grain at Rome, see, e.g., A. Baudrillart, art. *Mendicatio*, in *DAGR*, 3:1715.

<sup>253</sup>E.g., Applebaum, *ANRW* II/8 (1977) 361–62, 376, gives a total of three million people, by relying partly on the ancient sources and partly on archaeological surveys; M. Avi-Yonah gives a high figure in his chapter on the “Historical Geography of Palestine,” in *The Jewish People in the First Century*, ed. S. Safrai and M. Stern (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 1:109–10. The figures given by him (2,700,000 to 2,800,000 before the Jewish War, cf. art. *Palaestina*, *RE*, suppl. 13:429–30) or by S. W. Baron (2,350,000 to 2,500,000, art. “Population,” in *EJ*, 13:871) are too high.

<sup>254</sup>On these surveys, see, e.g., de Geus, *PEQ* 107 (1975) 65–74.

<sup>255</sup>Concerning “importations” of grain, the figure of 80,000 *kors* of grain reported by

The actual figure for the population may have been much lower. A minimum figure of approximately 250,000 inhabitants may be arrived at by combining a mathematical model and the results of archaeological surveys.<sup>256</sup> The actual population, at any given moment in antiquity, must have numbered between these two extremes of a quarter of a million and one million people.

The ethnic and geographic distribution of the population has been discussed in various studies.<sup>257</sup> Suffice it to recall some of the facts. The more populated areas were the coastal plains and cities, the mountain areas and their alluvial plains, Peraea, the periphery of the Sea of Galilee, and Jericho. Until the Bar Kochba war (132–35 C.E.), Jews were the overwhelming majority in Judaea, Galilee, the Great Plain (Yizreel), Peraea, and Idumaea. Even in the coastal area, Jaffa, Gaza, Yavneh, and Azotus were predominantly Jewish. There were also important establishments of Jews in Batanaea and Trachonitis.<sup>258</sup> The Greek population (and Greek-speaking elements, especially Syrians) had steadily increased throughout the Hellenistic period. Greeks lived especially in the cities on the coast, in Samaria, and in the Decapolis. There were also many non-Jews in Caesarea, Tiberias, and Gabaa. Jews and non-Jews may have been fairly equal in numbers, about half a million each.<sup>259</sup>

---

Josephus, *AJ* 15.314, and accepted by S. Applebaum, “Economic Life in Palestine,” *The Jewish People in the First Century*, 2:669, seems impossible at first sight. The overland transport of such a quantity of grain would require in the neighborhood of 100,000 camels or donkeys, and a great deal of time (to organize the caravans). It represents ca. 16,000 tons, which about one hundred heavier boats of the time could carry. One may however accept that very large quantities of grain were brought in. Josephus insists on the magnitude of the effort and on the deep impression it made on Herod’s subjects as well as neighbors. For comparison, it may be noted that thousands of camels and donkeys could be mobilized for long periods of time in the 1920s to transport cereals from the Hauran to the coast of Lebanon: Weulersse, *Paysans de Syrie et du Proche-Orient*, 137.

<sup>256</sup>D. Oakman, “How Large is a *Polus Ochlos* (Mk 8.1)? Achieving a Sense of Scale Through Rank-Size Modeling of the Ancient Palestinian Population,” paper delivered at the 1987 Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Boston.

<sup>257</sup>See Avi-Yonah, *Palaestina, RE*, suppl. 13:427–29; Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie*, 46–48 (with excessive trust in the figures given by sources); E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.–A.D. 135)* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1979), 2:1–20.

<sup>258</sup>See *AJ* 16.285; 17.23–30; *Vita* 56–57; see C. Dauphin “Jewish and Christian Communities in the Roman and Byzantine *Gaulanitis*: A Study of Evidence from Archaeological Surveys,” *PEQ* 114 (1982) 129–30.

<sup>259</sup>This is M. Broshi’s “learned guess” in a recent article: “The Role of the Temple in the Herodian Economy,” *JJS* 38 (1987) 37.

The most momentous event affecting the Jewish population was the Bar Kochba war.<sup>260</sup> The Romans forbade the presence of Jews in the renamed Aelia Capitolina and its surrounding territory. Arabs and Syrians settled in Aelia. Many Jews resettled in the Jordan valley, the south of the country, and in the whole area of Yavneh (Yamnia), Lydda, and Jaffa. The Samaritans probably expanded in some of the areas now devoid of Jews. Yet, in the third century, Caesarea itself was the seat of a thriving Jewish community.<sup>261</sup> Both wars, particularly the second one, had disastrous effects on the Jewish population. It is impossible, however, to say how many people died, resettled, or left for other lands.<sup>262</sup>

### 3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has thrown some light on the nature of agricultural work, its intensity, and the difficulties presented by the environment. Other activities mostly revolved around agriculture: building, clothing, pottery, transportation. One may well imagine a countryside usually full of people busy at work, well aware that “as is the field, so is the seed; and as are the flowers, so are the colors; and as is the work, so is the product; and as is the farmer, so is the threshing floor.”<sup>263</sup> In normal times, intensive work led to abundance of cereals, legumes, vegetables, oil, fruits, animals, and other products. Supposing, then, that the product could be shared fairly, would everyone have lived in relative ease? The question cannot be answered, since it is not possible to establish exact figures for the population and production.

What is more clear is that the agriculture of the time was structured in a particular way. Low yields meant that a great amount of time, energy, and soil were devoted to the growing of cereals, legumes, oil, and other products necessary for subsistence, and more specifically to the storing and renewal of these resources (particularly the seeds). Any undertaking not directly geared toward the production of food as a means of subsistence was almost certainly speculative in nature. One thinks, of course, of the balsam

<sup>260</sup> Avi-Yonah, *Palaestina, RE*, suppl. 13:428.

<sup>261</sup> Ringel, *Césarée de Palestine*, 117–28.

<sup>262</sup> In spite of considerable efforts spent in that direction. See Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie*, 47–48. The sources are: Josephus, *Bj* 2.457–512; 6.420–34; and Tacitus, *Historia* 6.1.13 (for the First Revolt); Dio Cassius, in Xiphilinus’s *Epitome* 69.15 (for the Second Revolt).

<sup>263</sup> 4 Esdras 9.17 (a Palestinian text dating probably from the end of the first century C.E.).

plantations on the royal domains in Jericho. But it would be more important even to investigate whether cultures such as olive plantations and vineyards did not spread sometimes at the expense of grain and legume growing, and grazing. The development of these plantations, one suspects, went together with the creation of cities and a readier access to cash. In this respect, Tchalenko's research on the Belus mountains in Roman times affords an illuminating comparison.<sup>264</sup>

This low-yield agriculture was sensitive to destabilizing factors such as famines, wars, and—from the individual point of view especially—disease. A great stress, therefore, was placed on stability, order, peace, and health. But what appears to us as a great weakness was not perceived as such by the people of the time. They thought that poverty was the result more of a lack of justice than of a lack of resources. The existence of poverty and wealth was first of all a religious and political issue.

Understandably, an agriculture devoted to grain, tree, and animal products was in need of complex institutions, especially if it wished to maintain its chances to diversify and improve its output. It needed people who would spend their time at administrative and legal duties, carried out under religious vestments: priests, kings, scribes, sages. Authorities were granted a specific share of the revenues in return for their service, but they could abuse their authority in various ways. With some encouragement on the part of their communities, mystics and miracle-workers would then be more likely to appear and confront the religious hierarchy, forcing a constant redefinition of religious authority. This old problem of authority was made the more acute by the compelling presence of Roman troops and administrators, who were much less predisposed than the local leaders to acknowledge the religious dynamics. The study of taxes and rents will presently give us a better sense of these relationships and help understand the roots of poverty.

<sup>264</sup>G. Tchalenko, *Villages antiques de la Syrie du Nord, le massif du Bélus à l'époque romaine*, 3 vols. (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1953–58).

# 4

## Taxes and rents

The customs developed around food and clothing advertised as well as masked the various degrees of power held by those groups or individuals who were able to collect taxes and income from properties and command other people's labor. The people more likely to be expected to do the work for little or no recognition were the slaves, servants, wives or widows, children, farmhands, and tenants. To what extent did taxes, tithes, rents, the collection of debts, and the power to dispose of homegrown products cause misery? Any attempt at answering this question cannot be content with a simple evaluation of the quantities removed, although this is an important part of the investigation. One must also examine the ways in which the income was collected, the uses to which it was put, and the degree of acceptance or refusal expressed by those people subjected to this collection. A better knowledge of people's concerns, not necessarily restricted to the day's meal or the maintaining of a fortune, will help ascertain who suffered most, and why at times extreme solutions were resorted to.

There was no economic "surplus" of the modern kind, waiting to be lifted by landowners and tithers. Rather, villages and families were subjected to constant pressure, occasionally violent, aiming at removing maximal quantities through tithes, taxes, compulsory labor services, rents, and interest on debts. As a rule, the basic needs of working families—and within families, the needs of weaker members—were left unfulfilled. Social obligations came first, chief among them taxes, debts to be paid, duties to the community and family. Not only did the master's share come before the needs of the tenants' and laborers' families, but religious justifications were sought for this state of affairs.

Many changes occurred in the area during the period under consideration. The power held by certain groups passed sometimes to other groups bearing other names, having other concerns, and variously prepared or in-

clined to justify their privileges. Consideration will also be given to these changes, especially insofar as they caused shifts in the burden of taxation. For various reasons, the burden did not remain constant during this period, especially in times of revolts and wars. But the degrees and forms of revenue extraction, whatever the ruling power, remained uniform enough in the Mediterranean over the centuries.<sup>1</sup>

We begin with a sketch of taxes and tithes levied on Jews and non-Jews of Palestine by the Romans and the priests or, later, the Patriarchate, in order to determine their nature, the methods of collection, and their evolution during the three centuries under consideration. It is not easy to give a clear idea of the taxation that applied in Palestine, let alone the quantities involved and the consequences of such taxation.<sup>2</sup> Because the taxing system was both Roman and Jewish for much of the period, it is difficult to decide in what measure both sides competed with or complemented each other. The sources often give information that concerns only a given place and time. When figures are given, the quantities are often provided in general terms that are not easily interpreted. Furthermore, it is impossible to tell whether the demands made in edicts or letters and the quantities reported by ancient writers were effectively levied in the villages, and, a separate matter, how much reached its destination.

The sources do, however, provide precious information, even of a quantitative nature, that may be usefully compared with what is known from other periods or areas.<sup>3</sup> The literary sources are also full of complaints. But the majority are cries of anger, fear, or despair. Such texts, however subjec-

<sup>1</sup>Description of the Byzantine taxation and rent system in E. Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique et pauvreté sociale à Byzance, 4-7ème siècles* (Paris: Mouton, 1977), 271-96, 368-69. For continuation of the same principles in the Moslem period, see E. Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History of the Near East in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), 39-40. Another example is the system of taxation adopted by the Frankish kingdom of Jerusalem: R. B. Rose, "Pluralism in a Medieval Colonial Society" (Ph.D., Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, 1981), chap. 9 (I thank Prof. G. Lease for drawing my attention to this work). Finally, it is interesting to compare the situation in Algeria after 1871, when the Moslem population was subjected to a double taxation, traditional and French: Ch. R. Ageron, *Histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine*, vol. 2: *De l'insurrection de 1871 au déclenchement de la guerre de libération (1954)* (Paris: P.U.F., 1979), 194, 210.

<sup>2</sup>An estimate is found, e.g., in A. Ben-David, *Talmudische Oekonomie* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1974), 1:136 (table 8).

<sup>3</sup>For previous centuries, see M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 1:18-29. For the following period, Patlagean, *Pauvreté*.

tive and distorted they may be, inform us on the most hated taxes and often afford important details on the way they were collected.

An important thing to bear in mind is the sort of constraints weighing on any tax system in Roman Palestine.<sup>4</sup> The cash-based facets of the economy were more easily and cheaply taxable, particularly in the form of duties on trade, but the weakness of commerce and the pervasiveness of tax evasion put limits on this kind of income. Direct taxes such as land taxes or poll taxes were not as easy to evade. But it was generally costly to collect them. First, because the economy was not yet fully using cash, taxes were remitted in kind, at least partly. Second, the forecast and assessment of income from the land was hindered not only by the vagaries of weather but also by the complexity of property rights and customs. Over the centuries, the priesthood and monarchy in Israel had developed a complex system of tithes and dues centering on the Temple and the sacrificial system. The Roman administration had to rely to some degree on the local gentry and its political system for evaluation of income, distribution of the tax burden, and the control and settlement of disputes. At the beginning of Roman rule, the monarchy and priests qualified for that role. Later on, perhaps to a lesser degree, the Patriarchate was in the same situation. The cooperation of these Jewish authorities, however, was by no means easily secured: whereas some Jews in authority, however reluctantly, accepted Roman rule, or joined with it, others revolted.

Seen from the people's side, the constraints were of a different nature. Although the collection proper of direct taxes may have been somewhat fairer than that of indirect taxes, there is evidence it was ruthless. Furthermore, the means of payment were very difficult to procure, at least for those people living in small towns and villages, where silver was rare.<sup>5</sup> Cities and rich landowners who lived therein were the holders of good money and thus in control of the terms of exchange. Indirect taxes were even more abusive as a general rule. The difficulties inherent in the assessment and collection gave rise to varied and constant abuses of power.

<sup>4</sup>See the remarks by G. Ardant on the problems that any state must face in the collection of taxes: "Histoire de l'impôt et histoire de l'état," in *Points de vue sur la fiscalité antique*, ed. H. van Effenterre (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1979), 1–6.

<sup>5</sup>Examples from the Gospels: Mt 17.24–27; 22.17–21 (in which stories Jesus does not have the silver money); Mk 12.41–4. In Roman Egypt, the use of money with powers of legal tender was clearly limited to a minority: see A. Gara, "Fiscalité et circulation monétaire dans l'Égypte romaine," in *Points de vue sur la fiscalité antique*, 43–55 (esp. 53). People in the countryside got by with barter and lead money.

## 4.1 ROMAN TAXES

Everyone in Roman Palestine was to pay a poll tax, called the *tributum capitis*. In Syria, this tax was paid by all men aged fourteen to sixty-five. Landowners, except those exempted, also paid a land tax, the *tributum soli*. In addition to these major taxes, there were several special requisitions, often for military or administrative purposes, including the *annona*, *angariae*, billeting, and the *aurum coronarium*. There were also imports and tolls levied by the Roman administration, the Jewish administration, or the cities on various products or trades. For instance, taxes were levied on the sale of many products brought to town or city markets (*centesima rerum venalium*), or on the freeing of slaves (*vicesima manumissionum*). Goods in transit were subject to the *portoria* and tolls on highways and bridges. Finally, from 70 C.E. to well into the fourth or fifth century, except for brief periods of exemption, Jews were to pay a didrachm to a special treasury called the *fiscus judaicus*.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup>The literature on this question is abundant. See E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1973), 1:372–76, 400–407, 473ff., 508ff.; M. Stern, “The Province of Judaea,” in *The Jewish People in the First Century*, ed. M. Safrai and M. Stern (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 1:330–35, 372–74 (Census of Quirinius); S. lebaum, “Economic Life in Palestine,” in *ibid.* (1976), 2:661–62, 665 (Herod), 679, 698; E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), index, s.v. Taxation, *Tributum soli*, *Tributum capitis*; S. Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian, 323 B.C.E. to 135 C.E.* (Wilmington, Del.: M. Glazier, 1980), 187–94; A. Momigliano, *Ricerche sull’organizzazione della Giudea sotto il dominio romano (63 b.c.e.–70 c.e.)* (Pisa: Annali della Reale Scuola normale Superiore di Pisa, 1934); L. Goldschmid, “Les impôts et droits de douane en Judée sous les Romains,” *REJ* 34 (1897) 192–217; F. Heichelheim, “Roman Syria,” in *ESAR*, 4:231–45; A. Schalit, *King Herod, Portrait of a Ruler* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1964), 137–54 (in Hebrew); Overview of dues in J. Klausner, “The Economy of Judea,” in *The Herodian Period*, ed. M. Avi-Yonah (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1975), 204ff.; also in F. C. Grant, *The Economic Background of the Gospels* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926). For Roman taxation in general under the Empire, see P. Petit, *La paix romaine* (Paris: P.U.F., 1971), 144, 291–93; M. Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 572, n. 6; R. Rémondon, *La crise de l’Empire romain, de Marc Aurèle à Anastase* (Paris: P.U.F., 1980), 88–89, III–13, 129–30; A. Chastagnol, *L’évolution politique, sociale et économique du monde romain de Dioclétien à Julien* (Paris: Société d’édition d’enseignement supérieur, 1982), 364–82 (a reevaluation of Diocletian’s reforms).

## LAND TAX

In one form or another, most inhabitants of what was officially called Palestine after 135 C.E. onward seem always to have been subjected to a land tax.<sup>7</sup> This tax could be seen partly as a tribute, a prominent sign of subjection to the Romans. In the latter's eyes, it was in the nature of captured provinces to provide booty. The Roman procurators were often too quick in embracing this point of view. But the land tax could also be seen as the payment for rent of the emperor's private domain. In point of fact, Palestine became an imperial province and therefore, in the words of Josephus, "property of the Emperor."<sup>8</sup> Not all the revenues, however, went to the fiscus. The land tax was imposed on owners of property, but it first affected those who worked on the land, since any removal of produce affected their well-being, only less so in years of abundance.

This *tributum soli* may have been the main source of revenues,<sup>9</sup> but there are no recorded data for amounts. The few details we possess come from decrees dating to the beginning of Roman rule and transmitted by Josephus in a form difficult to interpret. He reports that Caesar and/or the senate adjusted the dispositions previously taken by Pompey.<sup>10</sup> They granted a certain number of concessions to Hyrcanus and Antipater and regulated the collection of taxes made under the latter's control or watch.<sup>11</sup> In a decree probably issued in 47 B.C.E., Caesar

ruled that they shall pay a tax for the city of Jerusalem, J a [check] excluded, every year except in the seventh year, which they call the sabbatical year, because in this time they neither take fruit from the trees nor do they sow. And that in the second year they shall pay the tribute at Sidon, consisting of one fourth of the produce sown, and

<sup>7</sup> Already 1 Macc 10.29–31 (Demetrius, in 152–51 B.C.E.; see Josephus, *AJ* 13.49); 1 Macc 11.34–37; *BJ* 1.154 (Pompey). *BJ* 2.403 (Roman emperor). See M. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941), 2:1000 (who stresses the conjectural aspect of his reconstruction).

<sup>8</sup> *BJ* 5.2.

<sup>9</sup> So according to M. Stern, in *The Herodian Period*, ed. M. Avi-Yonah, vol. 7 of *The World History of the Jewish People* (Jerusalem: Massada, 1975), 167; "The Province of Judaea," in *The Jewish People in the First Century*, 1:331.

<sup>10</sup> *AJ* 14.202–10.

<sup>11</sup> Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule*, 40–41, where the major positions on this problem are discussed. See also bibliography given in Schürer, *History*, 1:272, n. 20, and 273, n. 23.

in addition, they shall also pay tithes to Hyrcanus and his sons, just as they paid to their forefathers.<sup>12</sup>

The tribute to be exacted amounted therefore to a quarter of whatever was harvested on all arables.<sup>13</sup> The quantity levied in Judea and which had to be delivered in kind in Sidon corresponded roughly to the amount of seeds necessary for the following year.

The text, however, specifies that this tribute was paid “in the second year.” The phrase has been taken to mean that the tax was exacted every other year, or that the given rate lied only to the second year of the arrangement contracted with Hyrcanus II. But the expression must simply refer to the year following the sabbatical year, and there is no reason to assume that the rate charged for that year was any higher than for the following five years of the sabbatical cycle.<sup>14</sup> It was a lower rate than that imposed by the Seleucids, which was normally one-third of the harvest of cereals and one-half of tree produce.<sup>15</sup> But the addition of the tithes that Hyrcanus’s house was empowered to collect resulted in the same rate of one-third of the harvest of cereals.

The rate charged under Herod after 37 B.C.E. is not known. The bulk of taxes and duties levied under his authority was felt to be a very heavy burden, according to Josephus.<sup>16</sup> The etite for recognition and legitimation that led him to a policy of lavish donations in the eastern Roman Empire could not

<sup>12</sup> *AJ* 14.202–3 (47 B.C.E., according to Niese and to Latin version).

<sup>13</sup> Josephus’s text reads τὸ τέταρτον τῶν σπειρομένων. Cf. Herodotus’s expression concerning the arable part of Egypt, in *History* 2.77: περὶ τὴν σπειρομένην Αἴγυπτον.

<sup>14</sup> With Schalit, *King Herod*, 144–45, who speculates, however, that the rate for this second year may have been higher to compensate for the loss suffered during the sabbatical year. See the discussion in Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*. Following Momigliano and Heichelheim, Stern thinks that the tribute was levied every other year, resulting in a rate of 12.5 percent of the crop for the land tax (except for the sabbatical year): “The Province of Judaea,” 331.

<sup>15</sup> *I Macc* 10.29–31; see Schalit, *King Herod*, 145; Rostovtzeff, *SEHWW*, 467, 1001. For comparison, imperial tenants in Egypt remitted an average of 2.5 to 5.5 artabas per arura, according to N. Hohlwein, “Le blé d’Egypte,” *Etudes de papyrologie* 4 (1938) 81, nn. 2 and 3. This corresponded roximately to a third or half of the yield. See also R. S. Bagnall’s calculations in “Agricultural Productivity and Taxation in Later Roman Egypt,” *TAPA* 115 (1985) 289–308.

<sup>16</sup> *AJ* 16.153–54; *BJ* 1.524; 2.84ff. Schalit, *King Herod*, thinks that Herod levied a census in money on land (*usus fructus*) and an income tax in kind on produce. For an attempt to show Herod the Great’s reign in a less dramatic light than usual, see Freyne, *Galilee*, 190–91.

be satisfied without constant fiscal pressure.<sup>17</sup> At his death, the foremost concern of the population was to ask for relief from taxes.<sup>18</sup> But it is not possible to separate the land tax from other taxes or duties. We still learn that Judaea was to pay 600 talents under Roman procurators (6–41 and 44–66 C.E.), but cannot decide if this figure represents the whole revenue of the province, rather than only the land tax, and for how long.<sup>19</sup> Both Agras may have relaxed the pressure in their respective territories, though one should keep in mind that Josephus's lack of criticism of their reigns may have reasons other than their benevolence toward their subjects.<sup>20</sup> We will return later to the relationship between Roman and Jewish authorities, in the discussion of the evolution of the burden of taxation. Virtually nothing is known about the land tax after the first Jewish war.<sup>21</sup>

It is possible that the scale of taxation did not vary much in the period of Roman rule.<sup>22</sup> The Antonines, and even more the Severes, established greater control, but only by being more systematic in the collection of taxes already in existence.<sup>23</sup> They do not seem to have increased the regular taxes. But the Severan emperors transformed the previously occasional requisitions for the army (*annona*) into a regular tax, weighing on landowners and lessees alike. The *annona*, collected in kind, began to replace in part contributions previously given in currency.<sup>24</sup> The return to collections in kind, especially as emergency requisitions for war against the Persians in the middle of the third century C.E., must have been marked by greater pressures on farmers. Literary sources that go back to the third century are full of complaints about the *annona*.<sup>25</sup>

The pressures coming from the Roman administration were so great that the laws pertaining to the sabbatical year were alleviated for Jews in certain areas in the third century. The process of transformation of the *annona* into a regular tax in kind was completed by the Diocletian tax reform, which

<sup>17</sup>See J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 124.

<sup>18</sup>*BJ* 2.4; *AJ* 17.204.

<sup>19</sup>*AJ* 17.320; *BJ* 2.97.

<sup>20</sup>*AJ* 19.349; Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 125.

<sup>21</sup>Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 343, 484.

<sup>22</sup>See Stern, "The Province of Judaea," in *The Jewish People in the First Century*, 1:331.

<sup>23</sup>P. Petit, *Histoire générale de l'Empire romain* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1974), 2:74–76.

<sup>24</sup>Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 495, 527.

<sup>25</sup>Aramaic 'armona'.

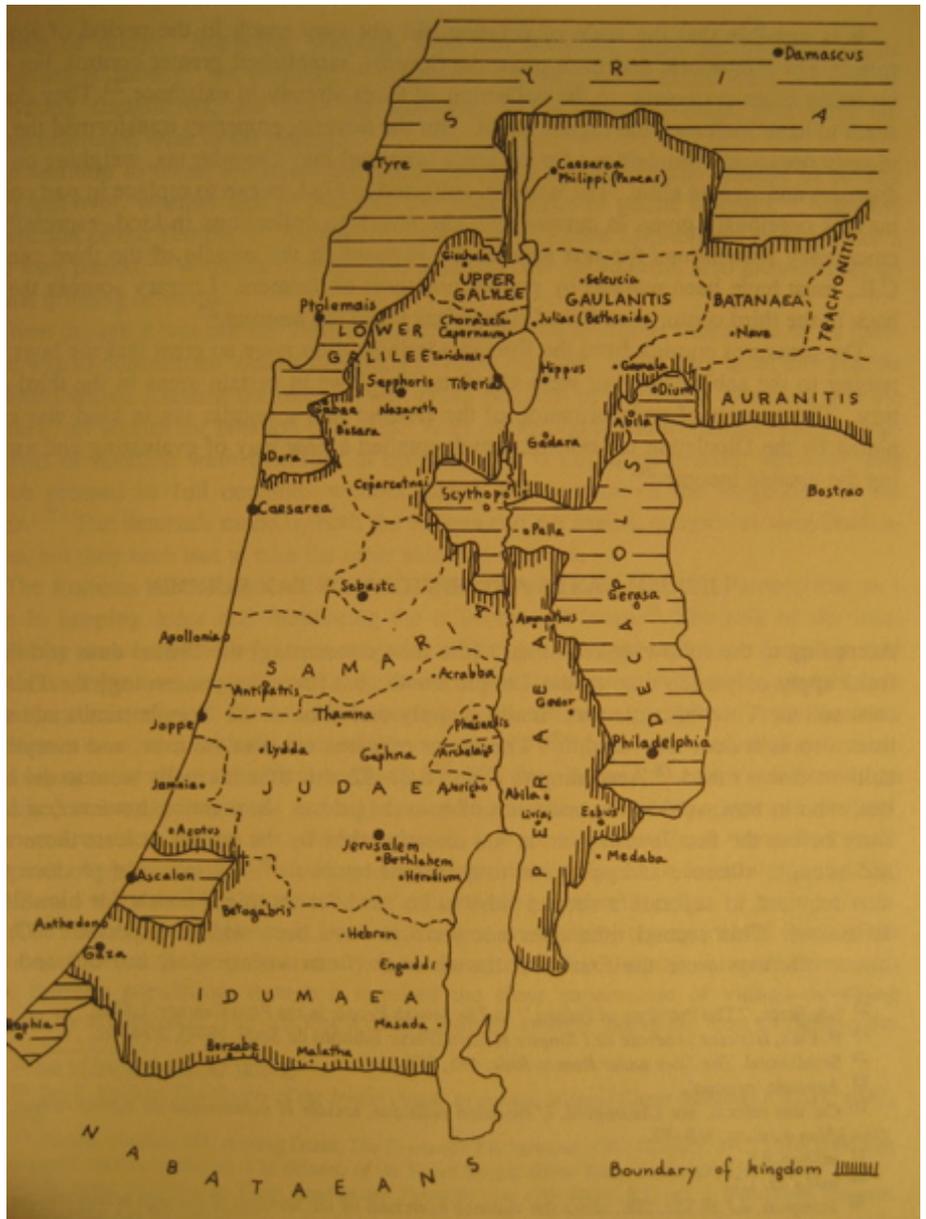


Figure 4.1 – Herod's Kingdom at His Death (4 B.C.E.)

entailed a new way of evaluating and assessing the taxable income.<sup>26</sup>

#### 4.2 JEWISH TAXES AND HISTORY OF TAX BURDEN

According to the following Mishnah,

the laws concerning] the Shekel dues and First-fruits apply only such time as the Temple stands; but [the laws concerning] the Tithe of corn and the Tithe of cattle and Firstlings apply such time as the Temple stands and such time also as it does not stand.<sup>27</sup>

The major religious tax was the tithe, and everything cultivated was tithed.<sup>28</sup> According to Num 18.21–32, this tithe normally went to the Levites, who in turn would give one-tenth of it to the priests. In practice, however, at least since before the first Jewish War, it was directly taken by the priests, at least those who had enough influence and personnel to ensure its removal.<sup>29</sup> The owner of produce was also required to separate a second tithe to be used for sacrificial meals for himself in Jerusalem. This second tithe does not seem to have been widely respected.<sup>30</sup> Other minor offerings were the firstfruits, the *terumah* (from wheat, wine, and oil) and the offering of dough. Important offerings from the livestock were the firstborn males (redeemed in money: the firstborn from unclean animals; the firstborn son), portions of everything slaughtered, and from the shearing. Many other offerings, especially the votive offerings, went to the priests.

In addition to these, a Tyrian didrachma was paid by every male Israelite of twenty years and over, whether rich or poor, for the maintenance of public worship.<sup>31</sup> After the destruction of the Temple, it was paid to the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, in Rome, for a very long period.<sup>32</sup> While the Temple was standing, certain families also provided for an annual offering of wood.

<sup>26</sup>On this reform, see Chastagnol, *L'évolution politique, sociale et économique du monde romain de Dioclétien à Julien*, 368–73.

<sup>27</sup>*mSheq.* 8.8.

<sup>28</sup>*mMa'as.* 1.1.

<sup>29</sup>Josephus, *AJ* 20.181, 206, about the violence exercised by the servants of the high priests coming to claim their share of the tithe; *Vita* 63, 80, where Josephus demonstrates his own generosity by not taking the share of produce due to him as a priest. I follow J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 105–8, 134–36.

<sup>30</sup>See the discussion in S. Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian* (1980), 281–87.

<sup>31</sup>Mt 17.24; Josephus *AJ* 18.312.

<sup>32</sup>See E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1979), 2:272.

Even though it was not the Temple's primary purpose to collect tithes, one of its functions was to concentrate wealth in a highly visible manner. For a long time, the Temple provided within Judaism the only answer to the problem of any state: where to find the "fluxes" of wealth for taxation purposes. With the arrival of the Romans to Judaea, two systems of taxation were therefore in operation. It is not at all certain, however, that "each pressed its full demands without taking any account of the exigencies of the other."<sup>33</sup> The demands made by both the Roman and the Jewish authorities were burdensome, but they both had to take the other side into account.

The Romans needed Hyrcanus, later the Herods, and even later the Patriarchate, as a help in keeping order and facilitating the collection of taxes.<sup>34</sup> The role of the local hierarchy was essential because a majority of the people kept their own language and customs: their own way of measuring land, for instance, by units of seeds used;<sup>35</sup> their calendar; their religion. Jewish faithfulness to Jerusalem was a problem for the Romans, because it conflicted with the Greco-Roman vision of things, which entailed a systematic development of cities with their territories.<sup>36</sup> The flow of wealth could more easily be checked and tapped on roads and harbors leading to cities, or at city gates and markets, than at Jerusalem (where it could be assessed, but not tapped, at least beyond a certain degree). Any foreign power wishing to tap the productive forces of Jewish territories had to allow a share destined to maintain the authorities recognized locally.

The Jewish tithing system, at least, with its notion of taking a proportional share of the produce, forced the priestly aristocracy to share somewhat the risks of cultivation with the farming population, though it required the close supervision of village threshing floors by the priests. The tendency of the Roman system, however, was to burden the producers with all the risks and ensure regularity of income through gifts of money by the local princes and a more exact census. This could be helped by developing cities as markets, sources of coinage, and centers of cultural symbols. In spite

<sup>33</sup>Freyne, *Galilee*, 183, quoting Grant, *The Economic Background of the Gospels*, 89. C. McCown also accepted Grant's assessment: *The Genesis of the Social Gospel* (New York: A. Knopf, 1929), 305.

<sup>34</sup>G. Alon, *The Jews in Their Land in the Talmudic Age (70-640 C.E.)*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Magnes Press/Hebrew University, 1980).

<sup>35</sup>See Appendix A.

<sup>36</sup>On the policy of urbanization, achieved mostly in the second and third centuries C.E., see M. Avi-Yonah, *The Holy Land, from the Persian to the Arab Conquests (536 B.C. to A.D. 640): A Historical Geography* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1977<sup>2</sup>), 112; A. H. M. Jones, "The Urbanization of Palestine," *JRS* 21 (1931) 78-85.

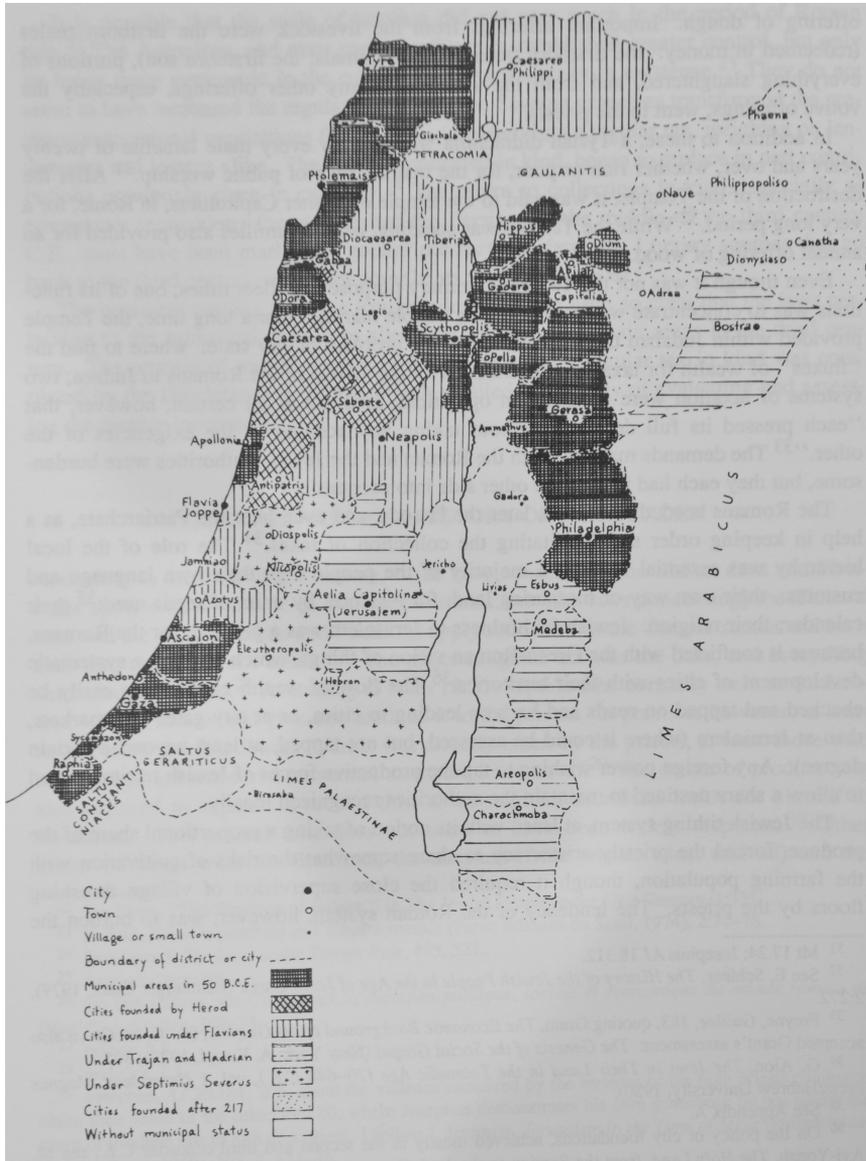


Figure 4.2 – City Creation in Roman Palestine

of all adjustments negotiated at various times, it seems that the collection of tribute had tended to become fixed since the beginning of Roman rule. Though not directly threatening to local elites, it tended to polarize them because it demanded that they either align themselves completely with the Romans and help with its collection, or side with the peasantry against the Romans and therefore claim tithes as their share.<sup>37</sup>

Successive manipulations of the local authority eventually led to the collapse of the system, based normally on loyalty to divinely appointed representatives. The Flavian emperors, and their successors as well, continued a dual policy: ensure the cooperation of the local authorities but also develop the network of Greco-Roman cities and extend the influence of the Roman legal system.<sup>38</sup> In the second and third century, the Patriarchate took the succession of the former kings and high priests. It kept order (Sanhedrin, local courts, calendar), and it collected its own dues. Very little is known of the role of the Sages and the *havuroth* in this new system. Many of the rabbis quoted in both Talmuds seem to be landowners, large and small. They lived in cities or in the biggest towns, in places that were centers of learning, but also markets, seats of courts, and generally political and economic centers. In response to the pressures coming from the Greco-Roman “colonialism,” they were able to construct a new canon and a new temple of sorts (Torah learning) that could operate from within the Greco-Roman cities. More research would be needed, however, to specify their economic role after the second century.

### 4.3 LABOR AND GROUND RENTS

Situations of ownership were varied in Roman Palestine. The Roman Emperor, local kings, and later the Patriarch, controlled very large domains. Smaller domains were owned by officials, dignitaries, or military personnel. Finally, a multitude of modest or even very small properties were in

<sup>37</sup>Josephus, for instance, took pride in not claiming the tithes due to him as a priest, *Vita* 63, 80, but later would receive land from the Romans, as well as tax exemptions. One suspects that generosity was not the only motive in not taking the tithes. He may have hoped to increase his authority, at least temporarily, and give himself more freedom to maneuver.

<sup>38</sup>See Ammianus Marcellinus 14.8.3, quoted by G. W. Bowersock, *Roman Arabia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), 79. The greater reach of Roman law is illustrated by the archives of Babatha, who litigates under the Roman system. Lease contracts found at Murabba‘at and Naḥal Ḥever possibly were also influenced by Roman contracts.

the hands of local families.<sup>39</sup> Properties could be very small, sometimes involving tiny plots or even single trees without the adjacent soil. Traditional tenancy arrangements, because they often involved the same parties, could allow this sort of limited property to occur.<sup>40</sup>

It is safe to say that those owning most of the land did not cultivate it and that cultivating the land implied absence of significant ownership. In Roman Palestine as in the Hellenistic East in general, landowners acquired status in part by not operating their farms themselves. Important landowners lived in cities distant socially or geographically from their lands. This distance did not necessarily imply a lack of interest on their part in the management of their land. Both rich, absentee, landowners and more modest householders used similar solutions: direct exploitation through sons or other overseers (slaves or hired contractors), and leasing. They had slaves, hired laborers for the short or long term, let their land to sharecroppers and tenants on fixed leases, or mixed the solutions at their disposal, according to the quality of the land, its remoteness from their house, and the customs of the place.<sup>41</sup> Jewish custom required perhaps that part of a rich landowner's

<sup>39</sup>For a complex picture of a century-old pattern of large and small properties, see M. Gil, "Land Ownership in Palestine Under Roman Rule," *RIDA* 17 (1970) 11–53, and S. Freyne, *Galilee From Alexander the Great to Hadrian* (Wilmington, Del.: M. Glazier, 1980), 156–70, esp. 163–70. The stories in the Gospels present very rich and powerful lords, more modest landowners (owner of 100 sheep in the Parable of the Lost Sheep, Mt 18.12–14 = Lk 15.3–7), and people of very small means (the woman with ten drachmas in Lk 15.8–10). Josephus's *Vita* gives interesting details on property. *Vita* 119 mentions villages located east of Ptolemais that belong to Queen Berenice. *Vita* 126–27 reports that the wife of Ptolemy, *epitropos* or overseer of Agrippa II, is coming from Agrippa's territory, carrying silver and gold, perhaps the produce of taxes and rents in Gaulanitis (cf. *BJ* 2.595ff.). When Josephus comes to Tiberias to speak with the local headmen, Crispus, former official of Herod Agrippa I, is absent, visiting his estates beyond Jordan (*Vita* 33). A certain Jesus (son of Sapphias, first magistrate of Tiberias?) has "a great castle, as imposing as a citadel," dominating the surrounding area and probably providing protection to the local population (tenants) in times of trouble: *Vita* 246. Josephus himself receives land (a village?) in the plain of Judaea, in replacement of his fields in the vicinity of Jerusalem. This grant by Titus is confirmed by Vespasian and later Domitian: *Vita* 422, 425, 429. Hegesippus, apud Eusebius, *HE* 3.20.2–3, reports that two brothers who were related to Jesus of Nazareth and lived under Domitian's reign owned in common a modest farm of 9 or 10 hectares that they cultivated themselves. The picture one may derive from the Mishnah and Tosefta is consistent with the information gleaned in the Gospels or Josephus.

<sup>40</sup>See *mBM* and, more restrictive, *tBM*.

<sup>41</sup>Direct management: the Parable of the Lost Son in Lk 15.11–32, in which the older son is supervising hired laborers (Lk 15.25. The plural "breads" in 15.17, part or all of their salary, make it more obvious that they are hired). Sharecropping: one suspects sharecrop-

domain be under direct management rather than farmed out to tenants and sharecroppers.<sup>42</sup> The existence of competing solutions allowed landowners a more efficient use of the labor force at their disposal. As will be seen later, the difference was not great between the situation of landless laborers and that of sharecroppers living in the village or villages owned by powerful masters.<sup>43</sup>

[At this point, summary of tenancy vocabulary badly needed. Check. Problem of property? (*hazaqah* on land transferred to tenant, perhaps not to sharecropper, who had no written contract? See Murabba‘at leases)]

#### WORKERS AND SALARIES

In the case of land cultivated by hired laborers or slaves, the landowner's control of land and cultivation was greatest. The main conditions for this solution, according to Columella, were good land and proximity to local markets.<sup>44</sup> Direct management, however, did not necessarily entail better yields and lesser consumption by workers than in sharecropping or tenancy. In this kind of arrangement, workers were under the supervision of the master's son or a trustworthy steward, whose task was primarily to ensure the proper use of labor and compress needs (food) to the maximum.<sup>45</sup> From

---

ping arrangements behind the large stores of grain coming from villages owned by the imperial family or the Herodian house (Queen Berenice) in Josephus, *Vita* 71 and 119 (for some other Herodian lands, see *AJ* 16.250; 17.24ff.; 17.321). The γεωργοί in the parable of the vineyard and the tenants (Mk 12.1–9; Mt 21.33–41; Lk 20.9–16) seem to be sharecroppers. A similarly structured story in *Sifre Dt* 32.9 mentions a king and sharecroppers (*arisim*). Tenancy: fixed leaseholds dating to 133 C.E. have been found in the Judaeian desert: *Mur.* 24 A–K. These tenancy contracts (payment in kind) concern farmers at ‘Ir Naḥaš, near Eleutheropolis, leasing rich land from Simeon Bar Kokhba, through the *parnas* of the village.

<sup>42</sup>See *mBikk.* 1.11.

<sup>43</sup>This is the picture given in the Parable of the Dishonest Steward (Lk 16.1–8a, exclusive to Luke), in which an absentee landlord seems to own the land of a whole village (or several villages), worked by tenants who are collectively responsible for the rent and other debts. See D. Oakman, *Jesus and the Economic Questions of His Day* (Mellen, 1986).

<sup>44</sup>*De Re Rustica* 1.7.

<sup>45</sup>See Mt 21.28–31, the Parable of the Two sons. Sons are also in charge in a story told in *pTa'an.* 4.8.69a: when landowners went up to Jerusalem, the Jerusalem councilmen who lived in the province would attempt to get their property with a false deed, then show it to the elder son. The important role of sons could lead to a competition in terms of authority and honor: see *Mekh.Ex.* 12.1 (Lauterbach, 1:8). There are also several Palestinian stories of sons who are closer than their father to the workers on the ancestral domain and are more compassionate regarding their needs. These stories concern the relationship between God

the point of view of the worker, however, security rather than quantity of income was the most important goal. The ability to command some form of employment meant that a worker could avoid beggary in its many forms and live in limited safety.

There were great differences between laborers hired by the day or even the hour, and workers needed in year-round occupations—for instance, hoeing, the care of trees,<sup>46</sup> guarding the crops—who were hired by the season or even the year. Poor relatives and neighbors allowed by custom to glean in the fields after the harvest had perhaps the least secure form of work, whereas workers having longterm arrangements with landowners were in a situation not very different from that of sharecroppers. Among the more stable kinds of workers were the diggers, measurers, and guards, whose salary in kind, paid on the threshing-floor at harvest time, was shared by owner and sharecropper.<sup>47</sup> Some of these workers could be sharecroppers and petty landowners who needed to supplement their income or whose contract included services on their landowner's estate.

In agricultural work, food seemed to constitute most of the salary.<sup>48</sup> There were harvesters whose salary consisted of the food they could eat while working.<sup>49</sup> Certain workers, who presumably came from afar, depended on the landowner for their board.<sup>50</sup> Day laborers not attached to the estate of a landowner were subject to periods of unemployment and want. They were hired when large undertakings made their help necessary, at harvest time, for ploughing, transportation, and construction projects. Unemployment seems to have been high, even at harvest time, when workers would be waiting around town squares at different hours of the day.<sup>51</sup>

---

and Israel but appear to use a common social situation.

<sup>46</sup> *mMa'as.* 3.3: "gardeners" were needed to weed, hoe, and pick the fruit in orchards.

<sup>47</sup> *tBM* 9.14 and *pBM* 9.1.12a. See texts below.

<sup>48</sup> As in Mt 10.10: "for the laborer deserves his food." This is also the impression given by Lk 15.17 in which the younger son remembers how his father's hired servants (μισθοιοι) "have bread enough and to spare."

<sup>49</sup> *mMa'as.* 2.7.

<sup>50</sup> *mMa'as.* 3.1–2.

<sup>51</sup> As is assumed by the storyteller in Matthew's parable of the Workers in the Vineyard, on which see L. Schottroff, "Human Solidarity and the Goodness of God: The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard," in W. Schottroff and W. Stegemann, eds., *God of the Lowly* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1984), 130.

## SHARECROPPERS AND TENANTS

Sharecropping had distinct advantages for a landowner.<sup>52</sup> It required less supervision of labor than was required in the hiring of temporary workers (or even slaves), though more than in tenancy for a fixed rent. Any system of sharecropping does require strict supervision, through sons or stewards and guards. Through this often abusive personnel, landowners specified the kind of crops to be planted, determined crop rotation and fallowing, prevented “abuse” of trees, and enforced the exacting measuring of yields.<sup>53</sup> This supervision, as can be seen from the abundant documentation found in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt, could be harsh. Sharecroppers had to pay for services such as transportation and irrigation, give the salaries of stewards or *oikonomoi*, entertain the landowner and his representatives when they visited their land, perhaps fall in debt to pay them:

<sup>52</sup>There is a growing list of economic and sociological studies of sharecropping, usually from a comparative point of view. See for instance R. Coles, *Migrants, Sharecroppers, Mountaineers* (1971); T. J. Byres, ed., *Sharecropping and Sharecroppers* (London: Frank Cass, 1983); F. Ellis, *Peasant Economics. Farm Households and Agrarian Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 141–59. On the problem in classical Antiquity, see P. Guiraud, *La propriété foncière en Grèce jusqu’à la conquête romaine* (Paris: Hachette, 1893); G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World; From the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981); M. Rostovtzeff, *SEHWW* 2 (1941) 1181–86; *SEHRE* 1 (1957) 204–207, 271–73 (on Syria); F. M. Heichelheim, “Roman Syria,” in *ESAR* 4 (1959) 146–49. One finds short developments on the situation in Roman Palestine in S. Krauss, *TA* 2 (1911) 108–111; G. Alon, *The Jews in Their Land in the Talmudic Age (70–640 C.E.)*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1980), 156–61; S. Applebaum, in the Chapter “Economic Life in Palestine,” in *The Jewish People in the First Century*, ed. S. Safrai and M. Stern (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976) 2:656–60; S. Freyne, *Galilee From Alexander the Great to Hadrian* (Wilmington, Del.: M. Glazier, 1980), 156–207; M. Goodman, *State and Society in Roman Galilee, A.D. 132–212* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman & Allanheld, 1983), 33–36; Attempts at more encompassing views of the phenomenon in D. E. Oakman, *Jesus and the Economic Questions of His Day* (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1986), 37–80; 141–48 (about Jesus’ views); H. Kreissig, “Die landwirtschaftliche Situation in Palästina vor dem jüdischen Krieg,” *Acta Antiqua* 17 (1969) 223–54. For comparison with the modern situation of tenants in the region, see J. Weulersse, *Paysans de Syrie et du Proche-Orient* (Paris: Gallimard, 1946); A. Granott, *The Land System in Palestine. History and Structure* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1952), 54–70; 286–314; Granott’s view of the *masha’a*—a communal system of periodic redistribution of land among sharecroppers—as antiquated and inimical to modern agriculture is criticized by S. Atran, “Le *masha’a* et la question financière en Palestine, 1858–1948,” *Annales E.S.C.* (1987), 1361–89.

<sup>53</sup>See the parable of the Dishonest Steward, Lk 16.1–8a, in contradistinction. For contracts specifying the type of crops to be planted in order to avoid the depletion of soils, especially in the case of short leases, see *mBM* 9.8–9 and *tBM* 9.12–13; 9.16, 18, 26, 32.

The renter of a field harvests, makes sheaves, [threshes], and winnows. [Then] the measurers, diggers, bailiff, and steward come and take from the middle (before the product is shared by the landowner and sharecropper). The well-master, bather, barber, boatsman, when they come [to collect] by the owner's authority, they take from his share; if they come [to collect] by the sharecropper's authority, they take from his share. The customs of the region are not to be changed.<sup>54</sup>

Nevertheless, this supervision, coupled with incentives that could not easily be maintained in the case of laborers, was a lesser burden for the landowner. Furthermore, while providing a flexible workforce (the cropper's family), sharecropping may also have entailed smaller outlays by the landowner, who largely controlled the amount of food available in this arrangement.<sup>55</sup> It was adapted to climatic and soil conditions, as well as to political conditions.

Sharecropping contracts varied widely, according to local custom. The evidence available indicates that the basic rule of thumb was to allocate one quarter of the harvest for payment of land use, one quarter for labor, another quarter for use of tools and animals, and the remainder for seeds. If the landowner provided everything (fields, seeds, housing, plough, wood, traction, grain for survival and fodder as needed) and paid taxes, the sharecropper received one fourth of the yield for the work of his family (one fifth

<sup>54</sup>*tBM* 9.14; *pBM* 9.1.12a adds the salaries of town watchmen to the expenses deemed common to owner and cropper. The presence of the boatsman may be due to a dittography ([Hebrew text here]), as in *pOidd.* 4.11.65a, line 40: see J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem* (1969), 304. Text of the Tosefta: [Three lines of Hebrew text] The Palestinian Talmud adds town guards to the measurers diggers, bailiff, and steward of Tosefta. Who were the measurers mentioned in both texts? Were they simply responsible for the exact measurement of the shares going to the respective claimants? Another possibility is that they were surveyors who helped in the periodic (yearly) redistribution of parcels among the sharecroppers of a given village. Text of the Palestinian Talmud: [three lines of Hebrew text] These passages are astonishingly similar to the description of produce-sharing at harvest time, circa 1880, as reported in A. Granott, *The Land System in Palestine* (1952), 62. Here, those paid on the threshing floor came in the following order: first the Government and *waqf* (religious endowment system); then the town merchant (debts), unless there was trickery or delay; they were followed by hired workers, *hurrāt*, and the village priest, "who acted also as a barber;" finally, the poor people (dervishes, the blind and leprous), none of whom left empty-handed. Not long after the harvest, the peasant had to borrow again from the merchant to feed his own family.

<sup>55</sup>It seems to have been true of Ptolemaic Egypt, where kings preferred to see their domains operated by sharecroppers rather than laborers or slaves: C. Préaux, *Le monde hellénistique. La Grèce et l'Orient de la mort d'Alexandre à la conquête romaine de la Grèce (323-146 av. J.-C.)*, vol. 2 (Paris: P.U.F., 1978), 484-85.

in certain cases). This clear-cut situation is reversed in a story from the book of *Jubilees*, in which everything in the land had been acquired for Pharaoh because of the famine. Only one fifth was taken as rent: “And Joseph took for the king one fifth of everything which bore fruit, and he left four parts for them for food and seed.”<sup>56</sup> In practice, the sharecropper was a plain laborer, paid in kind, with some form of unwritten contract guaranteed by custom, namely, by pressures from the community. Unlike the day or season laborer, however, the sharecropper secured in return a supply of food for his family. Even in bad years, it was in the owner’s interest to maintain his croppers’ families, and perhaps provide more than seeds. Most of sharecropping contracts were tacitly renewed every year, with little possibility of change on either side.<sup>57</sup> As will be seen shortly, a debt system was in place that operated as control.

If the sharecropper bore one half or more of the expenses involved in cultivation (seeds, tools, cattle), then he received one half of the crop. As seen above, taxes and salaries of hired workers were taken by those concerned before the actual sharing of the harvest between owner and cropper. In all these cases, agreements were verbal, “according to the custom of the place”.<sup>58</sup> Even though unwritten, contracts varied in many details and tended to be complex. The community as a whole remembered the customs of the past, regardless of present ownership, and its resistance to any kind of change presented the best guarantee for the individual sharecropper. In sharecropping contracts of this kind, the owner gets a maximum of work done, partly on his own homestead, especially at harvest times and in the plowing season.

Furthermore, by controlling the type of crops sown and letting share-

<sup>56</sup>*Jub* 45.12. The Fragmentary Targum, at Gn 41.34 (*Vat. Ebr.* 440), is in agreement with *Jubilees*: “And let him set aside a fifth part of the land during the seven years of plenty” (M. Klein, *Fragmentary Targum of the Pentateuch*, 1:153; 2:114). Compare Caesar, who took one quarter of everything sown, except in sabbatical years: Josephus, *AJ* 14.202–3. This decree of 47 B.C.E. has been quoted in full above, page 145 [check].

<sup>57</sup>There were hereditary tenants and sharecroppers: *pBikk.* 1.13.64b (*ʿaris le-ʿolam, ḥakhor le-ʿolam*). Columella reports the saying of Publius Volusius, who thought “that estate most fortunate which had as tenants natives of the place (*colonos indigenes*), and held them, by reason of long association, even from the cradle, as if born on their own father’s property”: *De Re Rustica* 1.7.3. See also *Sifre Dt* 32.9, in which a king lets his land to sharecroppers (*ʿarism*) and suffers through three generations of thieving tenants. He finally has a son, and therefore is able to eject the tenants and reclaim his property: [Hebrew text, 4 lines]

<sup>58</sup>See *mBM* 7.1; 9.1; *tMB* 9.10, and especially 9.14.

croppers cultivate only small surfaces, landowners could reduce or modulate their sharecroppers' income and make it difficult for peasant families to cover their rare expenses for clothing, dowry, ceremonies.<sup>59</sup> As much as possible, however, was spent in such rare feasts, since there was no need to save what would be taken anyway in one fashion or another by the master, tax agents, estate managers or community officials. It was a way of putting some pressure on the master, in a religious guise.<sup>60</sup>

## DEBTS

Debt was a permanent feature of the economic structure, as in any agriculture making great use of sharecropping arrangements.<sup>61</sup> Even though the sharecropper hoped to own a piece of land, however small, he was usually indebted. The reasons usually given for debt give too much importance to the financial aspect of debts.<sup>62</sup> It is clear enough that debtors could lose their property, or could even be seized physically and thrown in prison.<sup>63</sup> See as part of the sharecropping system, however, debts had aspects that do not easily fit a purely financial perspective. The continuous existence of huge debts, frequent remittals or deferments, and absence of alienable property are puzzling. In the vast majority of cases, it appears that little happened, or there was simply a change of title that meant little difference in the life of the farmer now technically a sharecropper. What was different, though impossible to measure, was that more labor could possibly be extracted. Columella thus reasoned that the landowner walked a fine line between strictly

<sup>59</sup>How the size of allotments to sharecropping families was determined must have been a complicated, inter-generational process that remains to be explored for Mediterranean antiquity.

<sup>60</sup>Hence the accent on feasting and the advice not to worry about the morrow in the Gospels may be seen as congruent with the mores of croppers or tenants.

<sup>61</sup>In Gospels: Lk 7.41–42 (cf. 6.34 and 16.1–9, which are Lucan passages on large debts); Lk 12.58–59 = Mt 5.25–26. [Need to explore other texts: Josephus? Mishnah? Tosefta?] A fairly small debt is the topic of a letter sent from Engedi to a neighboring village at the time of the Second Revolt: *Mur.* 46 (133–35 C.E.), in *DJD* 2 (1961) 164–66. Yonatan (administrator at Engedi?) recommends a certain Euphronius, son of Eli'azar, from Engaddi, to a certain Yoseh in another village. Euphronius, who is presented in a flattering light (he practices charity towards the poor, *'any'yn*, and buries the [poor] dead), is owed a sum in tetradrachms by someone whom Yoseh is asked to influence. He wants to recover the sum ("what belongs to him") and, to that end, is willing to forgive the interest on the sum, in a reasoning not so different from that seen in Columella below.

<sup>62</sup>See D. Oakman, *Jesus and the Economic Questions of His Day* (1986), 72–77, 149–56.

<sup>63</sup>Mt 18.25, 30.

exacting debt payments from tenants—which could be discouraging—and stimulating a better investment of labor in the land, which he himself favored.<sup>64</sup>

From the point of view of the landowner, the existence of debt was a sign that the correct degree of extraction was being applied to his tenants. It was an easy way to force families to pledge their labor for the following year, especially if the debt was large. The threat of physical violence (prison and torture) was useful though perhaps rarely used,<sup>65</sup> but the threat of a diminution in social status was more immediate, and with it the possible loss of security in food income.<sup>66</sup> It was in the landowners' interest to increase their sharecroppers' fears, if only to decrease the need for a fairly burdensome supervision. To maximize social pressure, the weight of the religiously organized community could be brought to bear. Landowners, who often were also religious authorities or closely tied to them, could use the common religious language of debt either in a harsh way, hoping to be paid a bigger proportion of the outstanding debts, or in a more subtle fashion, by showing compassion and expecting more work and faithfulness in return.<sup>67</sup> Debts must also have been part of the competition for political power among leading families, especially under the pressure of Roman demands. This onerous system of debts and the great luxury of rich landown-

<sup>64</sup> *De Re Rustica* 1.7.1–3. A landowner “should be more exacting in the matter of work than of payments, as this gives less offence yet is, generally speaking, more profitable.” In Columella's view, more work would mean a better yield, making it impossible for tenants (*coloni*) to ask for reductions in rent or debt.

<sup>65</sup> Landowners were expected to be fair, even kind, to their tenants, especially in matters involving the loan of grain for the sowing season: *mBM* 5.8.

<sup>66</sup> There were restraints on the kind of pledges admissible as payment for debts. According to *mGitt.* 5.1, and *pGitt.* 5.1.46c, the produce of “average fields” was to be used to pay normal debts, rather than the produce of superior fields (a temptation) or inferior parcels (which would prevent loans).

<sup>67</sup> The fast maneuvering steward of Lk 16.1–8a calculates that his absentee master will not resist appearing compassionate, a stand that this typical landowner obviously does not choose but for which undoubtedly he would be profusely and movingly thanked. At least the audience would assume this was the case. The explanation given of Lk 16.6–8 by J. A. Fitzmyer [*The Gospel According to Luke*, vol.2 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985), 1101], namely, that the manager simply is not taking his extravagant commission, is not convincing. Why would the tenants of this village be grateful to him for not taking what he was not entitled to in the first place? It makes more sense to imagine an abuse of authority in the little time left, this time alone to the advantage of the unsuspecting peasants, and the authority in question unable (the seal is still in the possession of the steward) and later unwilling (thanks to the grateful community) to change the new situation. I follow K. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1976), 86–110, esp. 98–102.

ing families in Jerusalem may have been one major factor leading to the Jewish War and the fall of the Temple.<sup>68</sup> Reasons other than simply economic must have been at work: perhaps a deep-seated bitterness about the way in which some members of the religious hierarchy manipulated their traditional religious authority and seemed to abandon revered customs.

#### TENANTS ON FIXED RENTS

A free (i.e. landowning) peasantry would have presented problems of management. There were contracts stipulating that the owner would pay taxes (or half of the taxes) and receive a fixed income, in kind or in cash, or a combination of both. This type of contracts was usually written and covered a short amount of time, at least when it concerned cereals,<sup>69</sup> but longer periods when it concerned fruit trees and vineyards, which required a longer investment (minimum of 4 years for grapes, 7-8 for fig trees and 14-15 for olive trees). Fruit-tree plantations were more capital-intensive but were also more likely to bring in cash to both tenants and owners, especially if they were located near an administrative or military center or near access roads (and ocean), since money was normally in Greco-Roman hands.<sup>70</sup>

In this arrangement too, things could go wrong for the tenant, who would then become a sharecropper. He could lose the animals he brought with him, and go too deep into debt. The fixity of the rent was a problem, remedied by adjustments.<sup>71</sup> A danger for the usually distant landowner was that tenants could come to think of their land as indefinitely in their possession, particularly if the centers of military and political power were felt to be too far or weak.<sup>72</sup> Tenancy contracts, especially in the written form,

<sup>68</sup>M. Goodman, "The First Jewish Revolt: Social Conflict and the Problem of Debt," *JJS* 33 (1982) 417-27.

<sup>69</sup>But contracts of five years have been found at Murabba'at: *Mur.* 24, esp. 24 B, C, D, E, dated 133 C.E., text and French translation in *DJD* 2 (1961) 124-32.

<sup>70</sup>See *tBM* 9.19 (about wine, olives, and flax, to be brought to town); 9.21 (vegetables sold in the market or in the field).

<sup>71</sup>*Mur.* 24 B (upward adjustment, in an interlinear correction). The Parable of the Dishonest Steward is an instance of considerable abatement. *mBM* 9.6: adjustments were possible, in the event of a drought or other catastrophe.

<sup>72</sup>Parable of the Wicked Tenants, *Mk* 12.1-12 (= *Mt* 21.33-41), studied by D. Oakman, *Jesus and the Economic Questions of His Day* (1986), 148. As in this parable, it was more likely to happen in the case of tenants leasing land for fruit plantations, because a long period of time was stipulated. See *mKil.* 7.6, about "thieves" taking a vineyard, sowing it (in intercultivation), later abandoning it. Even when planted with trees, fields remained important for cereal crops.

gave “power,” or temporary possession of the land, to the tenant, who could conceivably acquire it by usucaption.<sup>73</sup> Leases of this kind afforded more security to the families that could manage to obtain them, at least in relation to food, since cereals were inter-cultivated. It certainly brought greater freedom to both owner and tenants, since less supervision was needed at planting or harvest times. It is also possible that this kind of tenants would subcontract to sharecroppers and hire laborers.

Actual situations must have been very varied, with small landowners also being tenants, croppers, or even hired laborers. Members of modest families would be in various situations. The social risks were in effect spread over many people through blood relationships which must have been complex. The hope of acquiring land was strong, because it was the main path to a religiously defined life of honor. Access to land made it possible to lead a life of purity, offer sacrifices, pay tithes, be charitable, hire others, make better-suited marriages, and be properly buried. The ideas of Greek origin placed on the same social situation had a different bend, insisting upon the freedom and virtue achieved.

#### EVOLUTION OF TENANCY AND DEBT

In the Roman Empire at large, the government and landowners were supported by a population the overwhelming majority of which lived from agricultural activities and paid land taxes and ground rents.<sup>74</sup> It has been said that the general trend in the Empire was the “ever increasing concentration of land in the hands of its governing aristocracy at the expense of the population at large.”<sup>75</sup> This gradual and uneven trend was characteristic not only of Rome in its later stage but also of the whole of Mediterranean antiquity. In Hellenistic Greece, free farmers also had become tenants. Because rents and taxes tended to go up steadily, there were consequently constant evictions for insolvency. Even “the small proprietors often had nothing left with which to sow their fields” and “from the Peloponnese to Aetiolia (arose) cries of hatred, answered by massacres, banishments, spoliations.”<sup>76</sup>

<sup>73</sup>Prohibited, according to *mBB* 3.3. There were discussions as to the status of sharecroppers: like landowners, they could bring First-Fruits and read (from the Torah), according to *mBikk.* 1.11 (cf. *mBikk.* 1.2).

<sup>74</sup>A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964), 1:464–65.

<sup>75</sup>A. H. M. Jones, “Rome,” in *Third International Conference of Economic History* (Paris: Mouton, 1969), 100.

<sup>76</sup>G. Glotz, *Ancient Greece at Work, an Economic History of Greece from the Homeric Period to the Roman Conquest* (New York: Norton, 1967), 347–48. Debt remittal is a

One should remain alert to the possibility that all the solutions adopted in land use (lease-holding, sharecropping, rural slavery, hiring of workers, and private petty ownership) were necessary elements of an organic system at any given time. Most likely, the evolution of these elements involved more than a simple opposition between landowners and tenants. This seems true in Roman Palestine at least, where it is not possible to detect an evolution in terms of land concentration and exploitation of labor.<sup>77</sup> A better understanding of the dynamics of the labor market might lead to more sophisticated explanations of the evolution of rural society.

One possible element in the evolution of tenancy from the first to the fourth centuries C.E., especially under the shock of wars and the increase in number of cities, is that customary rights were perhaps slowly lost or transformed. Greater ties were made with local chieftains, the *ba'alei zero'ah* that recur in Talmudic literature.<sup>78</sup> As in the rest of the Roman Empire, already during and also after the Principate, peasants were forced by taxation, high rents, and duties plaguing them either to entrust themselves to a powerful landlord by the means of some legal fiction,<sup>79</sup> or even sometimes to leave their land and their village and at the same time their creditors.<sup>80</sup> From the point of view of the peasant, there was little difference if “patronage” would eventually become directly the duty of individuals rather than that of cities or the imperial administration as in the apogee of the Empire. The condi-

---

constant theme of all antiquity (cf. Is 58.6–10, quoted in *Epistle of Barnabas* 3.3). On prison for debts, see M. I. Finley, *Revue Historique de Droit Français et Etranger* 43 (1965) 159–84. Some Christians “gave themselves in chains, to redeem others (from their debts, presumably). Many gave themselves in slavery and fed others with the price of their sale” (Clement of Rome, *Epistle to the Corinthians* 55.2; see also the recommendations of Hermas, *Mandata* 8.10; *Didache* 5.2; *Epistle of Barnabas* 20.2).

<sup>77</sup>Elsewhere in the Roman Empire, the relative silence of the sources should not be construed as proof of the collapse of an independent peasantry: see P. Garnsey and R. Saller, *The Roman Empire. Economy, Society and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 76.

<sup>78</sup>See D. Sperber, “Patronage in Amoraic Palestine (c. 220–400): Causes and Effects,” *JESHO* 14 (1971) 227–52.

<sup>79</sup>A. H. M. Jones, *The Roman Economy* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1974), 132–37. N. Lewis, *Life in Egypt Under Roman Rule* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 162. This was particularly true at the end of the third century and the beginning of the fourth. See Lactantius’s description of atrocities committed in the application of Diocletian’s census: *De Mortibus Persecutorum* 23.1–2; 31.2.

<sup>80</sup>For the phenomenon of anachoresis in Egypt, see R. MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations, 50 B.C. to A.D. 284* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 34–35; Lewis, *Life in Egypt Under Roman Rule*, 163–65.

tions for this change existed from the second century C.E. on: namely, the absence of a centralized cult, and the lack of allegiance to cities that were not the product of normal economic growth but rather political foundations desired by the local elite and imposed by the emperors.

The situation of these peasants can be compared, *mutatis mutandis*, to that of the peasants of Syria and the Middle East who underwent until recently a similar process. In a situation where mainly for historical reasons (Persian and Roman conquests) the cities dominate the countryside and where ownership is perhaps not as well delineated as in the West, scores of these *fellahin* often lost their property rights either to their creditors or to their protectors.<sup>81</sup> The small landowner then becomes a sharecropper on his former land for an absentee owner, and he continues to cultivate it, his material condition having changed very little. And even if he has not become a sharecropper, he is certainly dependent in some measure on a rural patron: the duties of the latter in Syria of Late Antiquity were, according to Libanius and to Theodoret, to forward lawsuits, protect against other villages, help pay taxes and distribute water, arrange the canceling of debts, and settle disputes on the spot.<sup>82</sup>

#### JUSTIFICATIONS OF SOCIAL HIERARCHY

Ownership had limited meaning. Jews saw Roman control of their lands, based as it was on military power, as temporary in nature. They often replaced it in an apocalyptic framework. Jewish ownership was much more firmly put on a direct religious basis, though there was permanent discussion as to its meaning and validity. The essential notion seems to have been that of authority, delegated from above, and understood as a permission or an entitlement over a circumscribed sphere.<sup>83</sup> Because God was believed to be the supreme authority, any proper dominion needed some form of religious sanction. Within Jewish society, rights of ownership were secured in the last resort by a life of religious purity, with sacrifices in the Temple as long as it operated, or later a certain closeness to the Torah, the syna-

<sup>81</sup>See J. Weulersse, *Paysans de Syrie et du Proche-Orient* (1946), 113–21. The “protection” extends to individuals, families, or villages, against another proprietor, village, the tax collector’s greed, or the administration.

<sup>82</sup>Libanius, *Oratio* 47.19; Theodoret, *Historia Religiosa*, in *PG* 82.1420; both quoted by P. R. L. Brown, “The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity,” *JRS* (1971) 85–86.

<sup>83</sup>*ḥazaqah, reša’y, rešuth, rešutha’.*

gogue cult, and support of Torah learning. Tenant farmers, especially sharecroppers, had limited access to religious life so defined, mainly because they could not easily pay the taxes or tithes going with it. The Temple itself, where claims to debts were kept, had been at the center of a social hierarchy in which everyone was indebted to the person above (the higher placed, the more indebted, beginning with the Roman-protected king), in a ladder-like structure parallel to the concentric circles formed by purity rules. The larger landowners could make large favors to each other, and provided the outlay that allowed the Temple to function. But the Temple in turn could be used to maintain exploitation by insisting on the sacred character of debts, which were inseparable from sins.<sup>84</sup>

About work itself, Judaism did not think very differently from Hellenism. Work was a painful thing that had come about after the loss of a paradisiac state or a golden age.<sup>85</sup> But when it came to justify a given social structure, in which manual work, in its variety, bore more on some than on others, strategies were different. Some parts of this status quo were not perceived as requiring any extensive justification—for instance, slavery. But other elements did, and both Judaism and Greek culture had their own major explanation. On the Greek side, as indicated in the next chapter, a fairly small minority could use for its own purposes the idea of freedom and independence, an idea that cannot be separated from slavery.

In Judaism, the operating concept was that of the presence or absence of sin. Sin led to painful work and to sufferings, as it led to poverty. It was a basic idea about which there was a long history of reflection and reactions.<sup>86</sup> The traditional view can be observed in the following story attributed to R. Simeon b. Eleazar:

Hast thou ever seen a wild animal or a bird practicing a craft?—Yet they have their sustenance without care and were they not created for naught else but to serve me? But I was created to serve my Maker. How much more then ought not I to have my sustenance without care? But I have wrought evil, and forfeited my sustenance [i.e., forfeited my right to sustenance without care].<sup>87</sup>

<sup>84</sup>The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant, special to Matthew (Mt 18.23–35), does not criticize the social structure involved, only the harshness of the human character, at once debtor and lender.

<sup>85</sup>See G. Agrell, *Work, Toil and Sustenance* (Lund: Verbum, 1976), 47–67 (summary, 67).

<sup>86</sup>The book of Job provided the most important challenge.

<sup>87</sup>*mQidd.* 4.14. Cf. D. L. Mealand, *Poverty and Expectation in the Gospels* (London:

The basic idea was that a paradisiac state that implied sustenance without care was destroyed by sin. This appears to have been a very general statement. In practice, however, it allowed some people to think that they sinned less and therefore were entitled to sustenance—to gifts or tithes. Yet this feeling was counterbalanced by a belief in personal independence and in work.

Some people had to worry more than others about their daily living. A discourse attributed to Ben Zoma and developing an idea already found in the Wisdom of Ben Sira gives a vivid picture of the division of labor of the time, working to the advantage of the Sages.<sup>88</sup> Yet, it is also well known that the Sages expressed a positive attitude to work, at least to work of a specialized kind. But the sayings about the importance of learning a craft did not necessarily have in view manual work but more probably any responsibility that would leave time for the study of the Torah.<sup>89</sup>

Manual work was not seen as an enfranchisement, as delivering one from the needs brought to the body through sin.<sup>90</sup> The Sages mostly expected to be provided with necessities so as to be able to devote themselves to the Torah. They saw their service of the Torah as the service of God, and therefore as ensuring the fertility of the land, as ensuring their livelihood to the people. The payment for this service could not be direct (a claim) but only indirect, a gift.

#### 4.4 CONCLUSION

There was systematic exploitation of people through taxes, rents, and debts. A permanent feature of the society was widespread misery, forced contraction of needs (esp. on women, children, and anybody physically weak). Worse, terrible misery when disease struck, or bad yields, old age, death of husband, etc... Conditions probably worsened under Roman rule (type of taxes), wider local aristocracy, leading to more misery and troubles. Taxes were a heavy burden on people, weighing particularly on those with no po-

---

SPCK, 1980), 85–86, indicating the contrast with Lk 12.22–32 and Mt 6.25–34, where there is no reference to sin as explaining the necessity of “cares.” But the context in the Gospels is of a return to a paradisiac state.

<sup>88</sup> Quoted above, p. 112, n. 99. [check]

<sup>89</sup> *m.Av.* 2.2; *b.Ber.* 63a.

<sup>90</sup> A view that would be elaborated at a later time. See, e.g., T. P. Dunning, *Piers Plowman: An Interpretation of the A Text* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980<sup>2</sup>), 89–90. This view developed in the Middle Ages.

litical power. The land taxes could not be avoided and their removal by agents of a foreign power, wholly for the needs of this power, was deeply resented.<sup>91</sup> The payment of poll taxes in money, even though it seems to represent a small sum, was difficult to accomplish, since silver was extremely rare outside of towns.

In the case of sharecroppers and tenants, income was systematically limited by traditionally high rents and debts that were the ground for a complex playing out of rigid or compassionate behaviors. Landless laborers, sharecroppers, and tenants were three interlocking ways of labor, part of a whole dynamic system in which the hope of keeping or bettering one's status, as well as the fear of losing the little security one had, worked to the great advantage of a few landowners. The worse situations were those of day-to-day workers and especially their families. The socially enforced contraction of needs affected first of all women, children, and anybody physically weak. Debt bondage, death, and disease made these situations even more dramatic.<sup>92</sup>

For people in the grip of misery, there was little hope of securing the most basic needs, except by throwing oneself onto the generosity of kin and community. Even tenants and sharecroppers saw the future as full of ambushes. It is not surprising then to see communities looking back to the past, keeping fervently to the tradition as to a well-trodden path, anxiously watching any change, and warning of it in so-called apocalyptic texts.<sup>93</sup>

One may now understand better now what it meant to be oppressed or in a desperate situation. Someone was not called poor, however, simply for economic and social reasons. It is to this vocabulary of poverty that we turn next, in the following chapter.

<sup>91</sup>See interesting passage in *bShab.* 33b, reporting a discussion that one supposes to be late on the merits of Roman culture: public squares, bridges, baths. R. Simeon b. Yoḥai reportedly answered that the squares were for prostitutes, the baths for the Romans' own pleasure, and the bridges to collect tolls.

<sup>92</sup>Slaves (Lk 12.35–38; 14.17–22; 15.26; 17.7–10); widows (Lk 18.2–5); beggars (Lk 16.3); maimed, lame, blind (Lk 14.13).

<sup>93</sup>For a call to a more concrete view of apocalyptic visions, see R. A. Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 121–45, especially 138–45. There are interesting remarks on the topic in J. Berger, *Pig Earth* (198), 200–201.



# 5

## The vocabulary of poverty

The various words used for “poor” and “poverty” in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek are a natural point of departure for our inquiry, although they can provide but a glimpse of the nature and extent of poverty. The main advantage of studying them is to allow one to form an idea of the views that the ancients had of the phenomenon. The major sources of information in this respect are the New Testament, early Christian literature, the works of Josephus, the Mishnah, Tosefta, and those elements or pericopes of Talmudic literature that can be ascribed with some confidence to the first three centuries of our era. We shall also look at the Bible and at Qumran texts to establish the history of certain words.

Most words describing poverty were straightforward enough and can easily be translated into our modern languages. Yet one must bear in mind that they do not come from the poor themselves, who seldom speak directly in our sources. Authors, tradents, and editors of these sources were for the most part wealthy or closely affiliated with the wealthy. If poor, it appears that they had chosen their poverty, being the more respected for it. The first part of this chapter will be a general examination of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek vocabularies of poverty, but of poverty seen from outside. The second part will continue the inquiry on the same words, but as applied to themselves by a few groups or individuals, namely the Qumran community and early Christians.

The first question, then, is that of the trustworthiness of the sources. One must be alert to the possibility that people called poor may not represent the poorest social stratum. The latter may have obtained only fleeting recognition or none at all. Our examination of the meaning of the main words for poor and of some of the criteria delimiting their use will show that there is some ground for suspicion.

Approaching the problem differently, we may suppose that there were poor people who were not recognized as such. Does this mean that they are

altogether absent from the sources, or else that they are hidden in some way, coming under other words than poor? In the first instance, nothing can be said. In the second, it would be interesting to know the criteria of these oblique references. But recognition and interpretation of indirect terms cannot be achieved without gaining some awareness of the respective ideas that Jewish and Greek cultures had of poverty and wealth. The third part of the present chapter will attempt such a review.

Major differences in their conceptions of poverty can be expected between Greek culture and Palestinian Judaism in its least Hellenized corners.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>There is a great deal of evidence adduced to show that the contrast between Judaism and Hellenism is not as sharp as conveniently thought in the past. See S. Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine* (New York: Feldheim, 1965<sup>2</sup>), and *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1962<sup>2</sup>); V. (Avigdor) Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1959). A forceful but complex picture of the wide penetration of Greek language and customs in Palestine in the Hellenistic period has been drawn by M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 1:58–106, and *Jews, Greeks and Barbarians* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 112–26; he is followed by many, for instance A. Paul, “La Bible grecque d’Aquila et l’idéologie du judaïsme ancien,” *ANRW* II.20.1 (1986) 221–45. C. Schneider gives a less nuanced presentation in his *Kulturgeschichte des Hellenismus*, (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1967), 1:864–74, 898–901. Caution is indicated, particularly for early centuries, as argued in E. Will and C. Orrioux, *Ioudaïsmos-hellénismos; essai sur le judaïsme juéen à l’époque hellénistique* (Nancy: Presses universitaires, 1986), 59, 70–96 (and 120–36, 191, 197–210, for important discussions on the process of enculturation and resistance to it). F. Millar also cautions against exaggerating Greek influence on Near East cultures, “The Problem of Hellenistic Syria,” in *Hellenism in the East*, ed. A. Kuhrt and S. Sherwin-White (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 110–33; little is known about the local cultures that existed, and what is known shows resilience. On the difficulty of comparing vague categories such as Judaism and Hellenism, esp. in the Hellenistic period, see Will and Orrioux, *Ioudaïsmos-hellénismos*, and A. Momigliano’s review of the German original of *Judaism and Hellenism* in *JTS* 21 (1970) 149–53. On the origins and nature of the relationship between the Jewish, Greek, and Roman cultures, see A. Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), chap. 4 and 5; or the French translation with updated bibliography: *Sagesse barbares: les limites de l’hellenisation* (Paris: F. Maspéro, 1979), 87–136.

Greek influence may have been slow and sporadic even in the first centuries of our era: see J. N. Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek? How Much Greek Could the First Jewish Christians Have Known?* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 38–44; J. A. Fitzmyer, “The Languages of Palestine,” in *A Wandering Aramean, Collected Aramaic Essays* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1979), 29–56, esp. 32–38. The complex Galilean situation in the first century C.E. is described in S. Freyne, *Galilee From Alexander the Great to Hadrian* (Wilmington, Del.: M. Glazier, 1980), 139–45; and *Galilee, Jesus and the Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 171–75. Fairly similar assessment, of a relatively superficial hellenization of the Aramaic-speaking population, in the new English edition of E. Schürer’s handbook, edited and revised by G.

What is striking in Jewish tradition is its explicitness about poverty and its respect for the poor. God's protection made it difficult to see poverty as a disgrace, though not impossible. It is precisely this respect that moves the suspicious historian to question explicit mentions of poverty and to wonder whether there were poor people who are not directly mentioned in the sources but may have been included under a variety of generic terms such as the "crowds," "rabble," or "bandits." Their study will constitute the beginning of our fourth and last part. The danger would be to extend the inquiry

---

Vermes, F. Millar, M. Black, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1979), 21–80, esp. 20–28 (bibliography in n. 68) and 52–80; pp. 74–78 for an assessment of the relative importance of the Greek language, which concludes that there was limited knowledge or none at all for the "lower levels of Palestinian society." Similar conclusions in E. M. Meyers and J. Strange, *Archaeology, the Rabbis, and Early Christianity* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1981), 62–91 (summary, 90–91). Except in certain areas such as Upper Galilee, Hellenization appears to have made more progress during the second and third centuries C.E., as it did in other provinces of the Empire: for instance in Lycaonia, Cappadocia, and Phrygia, on which see L. Robert, *Hellenica* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1965), 13:52–53; cf. N. R. M. de Lange, *Origen and the Jews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 21–22, for the third century.

Throughout the period, however, Aramaic remained a very important language in Roman Syria and Palestine: for evidence from the end of the third century to the beginning of the fifth century, see F. Millar, "Paul of Samosata, Zenobia and Aurelian; the Church, Local Culture and Political Allegiance in Third-Century Syria," *JRS* 61 (1971) 6–8. Aramaic (Syriac) was still a very popular language in the fifth and sixth centuries C.E.: see G. Mussies's remarks in *The Jewish People in the First Century*, ed. S. Safrai and M. Stern (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 2:1059–60. This persistence can only mean that Hellenism was not very deep. In all this debate, one must not forget that the Greeks and later the Romans came as armed conquerors. It is village inhabitants, not landowners and leaders, who were usually subjected to violence: R. A. Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987), 104. Most people continued therefore to follow their own customs and did not adopt anything since they were not free to do so. Greek inscriptions, language, institutions, names, and architecture are indeed marks of Hellenization, but of which social groups? The use of Greek may have been strictly limited to papers of a legal nature, for which scribes were necessary. Only landowners having a daily interest in rents and taxation and connected with archival and political centers (Jerusalem, Caesarea, Sepphoris) would need to know Greek. Modest landowners and tenants would not, and even might fear its use. Sepulchral inscriptions are not necessarily a good indication of the language in common usage, as is shown by the use of Latin or other major languages by linguistic minorities in Europe. Even when borrowed, Greek words and expressions were assimilated and perhaps even unrecognizable to Greek speakers. Some Jews may have "adopted" Greek manners, institutions, and language, even unwittingly, though probably more willingly in the case of many leaders. It seems clear that those Jews from Judaea or Galilee who switched to Greek as their secondary or primary language belonged to a narrowly defined aristocracy. Hengel notes this when discussing the administration and taxation of Palestine in *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1:31, 48, 50–52, 56.

in such a way as to see the whole society as poor, or potentially poor, as the texts so often invite us to do.<sup>2</sup> If certain conditions of life did not appear as those of poverty to the consciousness of the time, can the modern historian be a better judge?

Greek tradition was in marked contrast with the Jewish perception of the poor. When Greeks spoke of the poor, it was not to flatter them. One might conclude that explicit Greek references to poverty should be given more credit than Jewish sayings. But it is obvious that, in the interest of polemics, the poverty of a foe could be entirely imagined or at least greatly exaggerated. Here too, but for reasons other than those thought to operate in Palestinian Judaism, it was often indirectly that the poverty of individuals was touched upon, especially in legal texts or literary works produced within the context of the Greek city. The Hellenistic city of the early Roman Empire still adhered to categories or concepts among which poverty and wealth did not play the most obvious part. The end of the fourth part of this chapter will be a study of the vocabulary of Josephus and his use of these various notions.

In all this, one must remember that many poor people may never have come to the attention of the authors of our texts. After all, not to be able to draw attention to oneself denoted the most extreme degree of poverty. It is unlikely that historians will ever be able to describe it at any length.

## 5.1 EXPLICIT VOCABULARY: HEBREW, ARAMAIC, AND GREEK

### THE BIBLE

The Bible, whether in its Hebrew form or one of the Greek versions, plays a role of great importance in influencing subsequent Jewish usage, as well as later Greco-Roman usage through Christianity. The major texts providing us with information on the vocabulary of poverty in use during the first three centuries C.E. reflect this influence at various degrees. A review of Biblical usage will therefore help one to understand further developments.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup>A view espoused by some rabbis under various forms: poverty is the fate of everyone (if not oneself, then the son or the grandson), *bShab.* 151b (a comment on Dt 15.11); this theme of the wheel doing its revolution in the world was very common in Greco-Roman antiquity.

<sup>3</sup>See art. “pauvres”, in *DBS*, 7:387–406; also the two very informative articles on *‘evyon*, in *TWAT*, 1:30–31 (= *TDOT*, 1:27–41) (by G. J. Botterweck), and *πτωχός*, in *TDNT*, 6:888 (by E. Bammel).

The most common words for poor in the Bible are *‘any* and *‘evyon*. *‘any* is found eighty times, whereas *‘evyon* is found sixty-one times.<sup>4</sup> Both designations, particularly *‘any*, took on religious significance in addition to their social or economic meaning. Etymologically speaking, *‘any* was the poor person seen in relation to other people—those who were oppressed or dependent. The term has a wider meaning than *‘evyon*, which speaks of the poor as in need, in the most extreme of circumstances, for instance lacking in water and bread.<sup>5</sup> The difference was in the immediacy of need. Whereas the *‘any* was pressed by debts and dependent upon the good grace of an employer or creditor, the *‘evyon* needed to be helped at once if he was to survive.

#### CLASSICAL GREEK USAGE

In classical Greek usage, the two most important words were *πένης* and *πτωχός*. The latter referred to a more severe, and the former to a less severe, form of poverty.<sup>6</sup> The same basic difference as in the Hebrew Bible exists in the Greek domain, but if it is clear enough that *πτωχός* should be translated as poor, destitute, or beggar, one is on less sure ground with *πένης*. The latter word could occasionally qualify someone having nothing, and its meaning then was little different from that of *πτωχός*. But *πένης* was normally a general, often opprobrious term, for anyone having a paid menial occupation. He was a person making a living, though often with difficulty. The problem is that a variety of physical situations, from that of hunger to a comfortable sufficiency, might lie behind the word.

To have a better understanding of the meaning of *πένης*, one must consider the opinion that classical and late Greek thought had of work.<sup>7</sup> For the ancients in general and the Greeks in particular, work did not acquire

<sup>4</sup>Other designations are less important: *&dal*, i.e., impoverished, of reduced means, used of someone having lost some of his property; *dakh*, “crushed”; *dash*, dispossessed; *makh*, lowly; *mishken*, dependent, a word which will become important at a later date.

<sup>5</sup>This has been the understanding of traditional commentators, beginning with Greek translators of the Bible, as will be seen in this chapter. See *Aruch Completum*, s.v. *‘evyon*.

<sup>6</sup>See dictionary articles: *TDNT*, 6:37–38 (art. *πένης* by F. Hauck); Bauer, *Lexicon*, s.v. *πένης*. This question was the subject of a dissertation by J. Hemelrijk, *πενία εν πλοῦτος* (Amsterdam: Blikman & Sartorius, 1925; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1979); its results were incorporated and elaborated on by H. Bolkestein, *Wohltätigkeit und Armenpflege im vorchristliche Altertum*, (Utrecht: Oosthoek, 1939), 181–85, 410, and by W. Den Boer, *Private Morality in Greece and Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 162–63.

<sup>7</sup>On Greek and Roman attitudes toward work, see Cl. Mossé, *The Ancient World at*

a value all of its own. It could not be seen as independent from the status of the person working. Of course, it did not escape anyone's attention that work, either agricultural or more technical, was essential to the Greek city. Indeed, work was encouraged in several ways by democracies and enforced by tyrannies.<sup>8</sup> But this recognition of the value of work did not automatically mean the social recognition of the individual craftsman or of craftsmen as a political group, at least on the part of aristocrats or even on the part of those concerned.<sup>9</sup>

On the contrary, because he was forced to work to live and had to receive some form of wage and to sell, the craftsman was dependent on others' goodwill. In this respect, he was similar to servants and slaves, free but fettered by various customs.<sup>10</sup> The act of selling one's work was not seen as different from selling oneself.<sup>11</sup> Only undertaken in freedom, that is, not or-

---

*Work* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1969), 25–29. This work is a translation and revision of *Le travail en Grèce et à Rome* (Paris: P.U.F., 1966; rev., 1971); A. Burford, *Craftsmen in Greek and Roman Society* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1972), chap. 1 and 2, esp. 12ff.; M. M. Austin and P. Vidal-Naquet, *Economic and Social History of Ancient Greece: An Introduction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 14–17 (with bibliography); an older but excellent article is *Artifices*, in *DAGR*, 1:441a–446a (by E. Caillemer). See also G. Glotz, *Le travail dans la Grèce ancienne, histoire économique de la Grèce depuis la période homérique jusqu'à la conquête romaine* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1920) = *Ancient Greece at Work* (New York: A. Knopf, 1926), 160–67. For a philosophical overview of the Greek concepts of action as bearing on the notion of work, see J. P. Vernant, “Catégories de l'agent et de l'action en Grèce ancienne,” in *Religions, histoires, raisons* (Paris: Maspéro, 1979), 85–95.

<sup>8</sup> Art. *Artifices*, in *DAGR*, 1:442–43.

<sup>9</sup> See P. Vidal-Naquet, art. “Grèce”, in *Encyclopaedia Universalis*, 7:1017 (1970) = 8:920–30 (1985<sup>2</sup>). Craftsmen themselves may not have had a different view, given the variety of status according to craft, country or city of origin, possession of some land, and so on: see G. Glotz, *Ancient Greece at Work*, 165 and 321–22, for the extreme specialization in the Hellenistic period (though accepting too easily the world of aristocrats like Ben Sira about the smooth complementarity of manual work and wisdom).

<sup>10</sup> See Mossé, *The Ancient World at Work*, 26–28; G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (London: Duckworth, 1981), 199; already Caillemer, *Artifices*, in *DAGR*, 1:442a, 443a. A very common view in the recent past was to explain Greco-Roman contempt for manual labor as stemming from the rise and spread of slavery. An instance of this is P. Jaccard, *Histoire sociale du travail* (Paris: Payot, 1960), 66–74. This view is now abandoned, and it is more accurate to speak of an old ambivalence toward the craftsman, “le héros secret de l'histoire grecque” (Vidal-Naquet, “Grèce”, in *Encyclopaedia Universalis*). See also Y. Garlan, “Le travail libre en Grèce ancienne,” in *Non-Slave Labour in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. P. Garnsey (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1980), 11.

<sup>11</sup> Garlan, *ibid.*, 14.

dered or paid, was acceptable.<sup>12</sup> This lack of time and self-sufficiency, some philosophers argued, made the craftsman unfit to be a citizen, at least an honorable one. One had to be rich to avoid the ties of dependence usually associated with work and be able to live like a true Hellene.<sup>13</sup> Work, because it meant subservience and dependence, was seen as an impediment to this ideal and was therefore contemptible.<sup>14</sup> Romans thought likewise, deeply imbued as they were in Greek culture.<sup>15</sup> Needless to say, comparatively few Greeks or Romans could afford the pleasures and duties of a proper education, except at its primary stages.<sup>16</sup> Those fortunate enough to be entitled to it made up a small and often vain society whose members knew each other and in which one chose his companions carefully.<sup>17</sup>

The work of peasants was put in a more favorable light by Greek noblemen, except Aristotle.<sup>18</sup> This positive attitude, however, mainly concerned certain types of rural activities elevated to the rank of art or craft.<sup>19</sup> The important question was still whether peasants were able to live on their land unfettered and therefore in self-sufficiency. Already in the classical period, the free countryman praised by Hesiod and Homer may have been an ide-

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>13</sup>A. J. Festugière, *L'idéal religieux des Grecs et l'Évangile* (Paris: Gabalda, 1932), 32–33. Note that poverty without such ties was considered dignified and even turned into a literary theme.

<sup>14</sup>Any sign of subservience was used in courts to cause the downfall of opponents; see, e.g., Demosthenes, *On the Crown* 157–65, quoted by Austin and Vidal-Naquet, *Economic and Social History*, 344–45.

<sup>15</sup>Festugière, *L'idéal religieux*, quoting Minucius Felix's *Octavius*.

<sup>16</sup>H. I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1965), 151, 157–60, 162, 171, 221: the *paideia* became more common with Hellenistic civilization and even became its basic unifying theme. It nevertheless remained “un facteur d'aristocratie.” The complete curriculum, which included studies in one of the great scientific centers, was within the reach of only a small elite (171). Marrou is followed by Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1:65–67, 68, 77, 105: the *paideia* was open only to “upper class Jews.” See also M. Hadas, *Hellenistic Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 71, on the importance of the influence of the Hellenistic view of education on the rabbis and on education as a social criterion.

<sup>17</sup>Festugière, *L'idéal religieux*; here is how Demosthenes castigated his opponent Aeschines (see n. 14 above): “I had the advantage of going to respectable schools and of having such means as is necessary to avoid doing anything disgraceful through poverty. . . . As a child you were brought up in great poverty, helping your father in a school.”

<sup>18</sup>Garlan, “Le travail libre en Grèce ancienne,” 15–16. For Aristotle as an exception, see Mossé, *The Ancient World at Work*, 26–27. Xenophon gives the standard classical view: *Oeconomicus* 4.15. Possession of some land, however small the plot, was extremely important.

<sup>19</sup>M. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941), 2:1182.

alized picture. In reality, fewer and fewer peasants were able to live on their own land free of debts and without some sort of dependence on others, either immediately before, and even more so after, the classical period.<sup>20</sup> This state of dependence, with all manners of degrees, became even more common in the Hellenistic and Roman East.<sup>21</sup>

The *πένητες* were all those people who needed to work in shops or in the fields and were consequently without the leisure characteristic of the rich gentry, who were free to give their time to politics, education, and war. Both categories, it is important to note, were not at the extremes of a wider spectrum, as in our modern societies, but on the contrary overlapped.<sup>22</sup> A *πένης* remained on a somewhat equal footing with the rich, at least in religious and political matters. He had a voice in the community and was conscious of supporting the whole edifice of society.<sup>23</sup>

If the *πένης* was the opponent of the *πλούσιος*,<sup>24</sup> he was also on the same side of the fence. Both *πένης* and *πλούσιος* determined each other's identities, whereas a *πτωχός* was on the margins and recognized by everyone as such.<sup>25</sup> Poor and rich belonged to the same world and placed themselves on a common, ever-sliding scale, but beggars could not. The *πτωχός* was someone who had lost many or all of his family and social ties. He often was a wanderer, therefore a foreigner for others, unable to tax for any length of time the resources of a group to which he could contribute very little or nothing at all. It was not the small services he could render, for instance newstelling,

<sup>20</sup>Mossé, *ibid.*, 57. Attacks on a peasant citizen's boorishness were apparently a new theme in fourth-century Athens: see Theophrastus, *Characters* 4 (319 B.C.E.), quoted by Austin and Vidal-Naquet, *Economic and Social History*, 372–74, also 151.

<sup>21</sup>On the variety of statuses in so-called nonslave labor in the Roman Empire, see C. R. Whittaker, "Rural Labour in Three Roman Provinces," in Garnsey, *Non-Slave Labour in the Greco-Roman World*, 73–99.

<sup>22</sup>See Austin and Vidal-Naquet, *Economic and Social History*, 16. This was already the view of Bolkenstein, *Wohltätigkeit*, 456 (but limiting it to the classical or preclassical period, before "Beginn der allgemeinen Verarmung").

<sup>23</sup>As forcefully expressed by the proud Penia of Aristophanes's *Plutus*, lines 552–53; see H. Van Daele's introduction to the G. Budé ed. of Aristophanes, (Paris, 1930), 5:79.

<sup>24</sup>A common contrast evidenced in dictionaries. Also in the Bible: 2 Sam 12.1; 1 Esd 3.19.

<sup>25</sup>See art. *mendicatio*, in *DAGR*, 3:1710b (by A. Baudrillart); art. *ξενοδοχείον, xenodochium*, in *RE*, 9A/2:1487–88 (by O. Hiltbrunner). The basic distinction is still kept, though with a more clearly *economic* criterion, in the Poor Law Commissioners' Report (1834). This report speaks of *poverty* ("state of one who, in order to obtain mere subsistence, is forced to have recourse to labour"), and of *indigence* ("state of a person unable to labour, or unable to obtain, in return for his labour, the means of subsistence"). See art. "Poverty," in J. Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, 10:139.

that could earn him a pittance, but rather traditional hospitality, reinforced by the belief that he was under the protection of the gods.<sup>26</sup>

These two words kept their fundamental difference of meaning in Hellenistic and Roman times.<sup>27</sup> The dominating class was now larger and everywhere present, following the rapid urbanization. It included shopowners, merchants, bankers, civil servants, and officers. But the wider ruling circles adopted the old aristocratic contempt for labor.<sup>28</sup>

#### SEPTUAGINT USAGE

The Greek translation of the Bible does not abide by our modern sense of social contexts and literary taste. Given what we know of the standard Hebrew and Greek usage just reviewed, it would seem appropriate to translate *‘any* as *πένης* and *‘evyon* as *πτωχός* or their equivalents. But there are very few verses in which the pair *‘any/‘evyon* has been translated as one would expect, and they all seem to belong to more recent versions.<sup>29</sup> The principles guiding the Greek translators are a challenge to our modern conceptions. One discovers that it is *πτωχός* that is most often used for *‘any* (thirty-eight times), a word appearing eighty times in the Bible, as already noted. *‘Evyon*, which appears sixty-one times, the Greek translators understood to mean someone deficient in something, as expected, but used *πένης* twenty-nine times to convey this idea, rather than *πτωχός*, *ένδεής*, or some other word. Why do the Greek translators seem to use these two Greek words “as

<sup>26</sup> Art. *mendicatio*, in *DAGR*, 3:1710b.

<sup>27</sup> Josephus, *BJ* 5.427, where the *πλουσιώτεροι*, richer people able to purchase wheat in besieged Jerusalem, are opposed to the *πενέστεροι*, poor people able to acquire only barley; *Epistle of Barnabas* 20.2 (= *Didache* 5.2), where the *πτωχός* is to be pitied but the *πένης* is opposed to the *πλούσιος* in matters of justice. The following maxim is found in an Egyptian papyrus that may be dated to the fourth century C.E.: *πένης ών πλουσίοις μη όμιλει* (*Papiri greci e latini* [Florence: Pubblicazioni della societa Italiana, 1913], 2: no. 120, line 47). This old piece of advice to keep away from the rich and powerful was quite common (cf. *Sir* 13.9). In early Christian texts, the contrasting of *πλούσιος* and *πτωχός* is often to be explained by the influence of the LXX (*Sir* 34.3–4; 13.19–24, but see 13.18 or minuscule 755 for 13.24) and the Gospels: *Rev* 13.16; *Hermas*, *Similitudes* 2.4 ff.; *1 Clement* 38.2.

<sup>28</sup> Glotz, *Ancient Greece at Work*, 322.

<sup>29</sup> One passage is *Prov* 31.20, where a difficult Hebrew text is understood by the Greek as: *διηνοιξεν πένητι καρπών δε έξεταιίνεν πτωχῶ*. The Peshitto understood “poor man” (*miskeno*) in the first stich and “destitute” (*bišo*) in the second: “She opens her hands to the poor and stretches out her arms to the destitute.” Another passage is *Is* 41.17 in which *ha‘aniyyim weha‘evyonim* is translated by LXX as *πτωχοί και οι ένδεείς*. But second-century C.E. Aquila and Symmachus have *οι πένητες και οι πτωχοί*. This is the only passage where Symmachus translates *‘evyon* as *πτωχός*.

equivalents”<sup>30</sup> This is an important question, since the Greek Bible had a determining influence on early Christian usage.

The problem is rendered very difficult because the Greek text has a long and complex history.<sup>31</sup> Important variations in style and accuracy may occur, sometimes within one book. In any case, the view here presented is that the Greek translators were well aware of the difference but obeyed particular principles in their work. The lack of regularity in the translation of *‘any* and *‘evyon* is perhaps an indication of the translators’ awareness. There is a respectable number of times when *‘evyon* is rendered by *πτωχός* (ten) or other words, and *‘any* by *πένης* and *πενιχρός* (thirteen) or other words. In all those passages where the context makes it clear that the poor person is in need of immediate relief, *‘evyon* is translated by *πτωχός* or *ἐνδεής*.<sup>32</sup> A survey of these passages where *‘any* and *‘evyon* appear in close parallel and imply some sort of difference in social status clearly reveals that Greek translators of all periods and origins were aware of their exact meaning. But the translation of certain verses is more puzzling. This is the case, for instance, in Dt 15.4–11 and 24.14–5.

In these texts prescribing generosity toward the poor during the sabbatical year and promptitude in the payment of salaries, the Septuagint does not translate *‘any* and *‘evyon* as *πτωχός* and *πένης*, as usual, but as *πένης* and *ἐνδεής* (or *ἐπιδεόμενος*). Four of the five uses of *ἐνδεής* for *‘evyon* found in the Bible occur in the present passages.<sup>33</sup> The reason for the unusual choice of words is that the Greek translators found it necessary to retain the contrast perceived in the original while at the same time aiming at “extreme literalness” by respecting at least one of the root meanings (*ἐνδεής* instead of *πτωχός*, for *‘evyon*).<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup>The expression is from the art. *πένης* in *TDNT*, 6:39. This could be explained by an equal degree of spiritualization, or moralization, of both words.

<sup>31</sup>See *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. R. E. Brown, J. A. Fitzmyer, and R. E. Murphy (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 69:51ff., for a summary of the major results of modern research.

<sup>32</sup>E.g., in Ex 23.11: “But the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat.” On the contrary, the rendition of *‘evyon* is (*κρίμα*) *πένητος* in Ex 23.6, which speaks of justice to the poor in general, a judgment presumably concerning a disputed possession. The very needy could only appeal to God’s tribunal.

<sup>33</sup>The other instance is Is 41.17, n. 28 above. *Πτωχός* does not appear at all in the Deuteronomy.

<sup>34</sup>On the fidelity, “to a fault,” of the Alexandrian translators, see H. B. Swete, *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902), 323–25. See E. Bickerman, “The Septuagint as Translation,” *Proceedings of the American*

Πένης could not have conveyed the idea of greater poverty that *‘evyon* signified in the presence of *‘any*. And had the customary *πτωχός* been used for *‘any*, to employ *ἐνδεής* for *‘evyon* would not have established a sufficient contrast. Hence, the adoption of *πένης* and *ἐνδεής*, which preserved the difference and yet respected the individual roots. In the absence of any other clear indication from the context, the Septuagint normally relied on the root of the Hebrew word considered singly. But their choice of words for these passages shows that the Greek translators clearly understood *‘any* to mark a less severe and perhaps more general poverty than that indicated by *‘evyon*.

Now if it is true that most of the Greek translators were aware of the difference between *‘any* and *‘evyon* as well as that between *πένης* and *πτωχός*, why did they usually translate *‘any* as *πτωχός* rather than *πένης*? It may well be that both *‘any* and *‘evyon* acquired a strong religious value early enough to obfuscate the difference in social meaning by the time Greek versions were made.<sup>35</sup> But this reason alone would explain only a lack of consistency. What is to be accounted for is the fairly consistent use of *πτωχός* for *‘any*. One consideration is that both words had a relatively similar root meaning.<sup>36</sup> But there may have been a more fundamental reason. One must keep in mind that *‘any* (with derivatives) became the most important and religiously valued word for poverty. The oppressed *‘any* placed in God all his hope for vindication and/or salvation. To describe such a state of absolute dependence, translators thought *πτωχός* most fitting, in spite of its negative connotations in Greek culture, because the word bespoke a person with no means at all and more readily elicited feelings of compassion.<sup>37</sup> The role of the synagogue as a center of relief for poor people may have had an influence on the translators. Be that as it may, *πτωχός* was destined to have a long career in Christianity, though not a simple one. The most important transformation is that the religious or moral meaning of *‘any* (and *‘anaw*) accrued to the word *πτωχός* in a new, Hellenized and Christianized, envi-

---

*Academy of Jewish Research* 28 (1959) 1–39, esp. 38: the Septuagint was first of all the Pentateuch, the Law (*ibid.*, 6), with consequences for the translation: “The awe due to divine utterances impressed the literalness of translation.” See also *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 69.58. It was carried to the point of making considerable use of homoeophony, most often for obscure Hebrew words: G. B. Caird, “Homoeophony in the Septuagint,” in *Jews, Greeks and Christians*, ed. R. Hamerton-Kelly and R. Scroggs (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 74–88.

<sup>35</sup>E.g., Is 41.17, a verse understood in spiritual terms at an early date (cf. Targums).

<sup>36</sup>Note though that *‘any* described a social/moral condition (“put low, humbled, afflicted”), whereas *πτωχός* depicted physical appearance (“cringed”).

<sup>37</sup>See below, p. 185. [check]

ronment.<sup>38</sup> With the Greek translation, the Bible brought into the open a view of the beggar rarely found in Greco-Roman society, or at least not publically acceptable.

#### NEW TESTAMENT

In the New Testament as a whole, *πτωχός* is the most common word for poor, especially in texts referring to concrete situations of poverty. It appears twenty-four times in the Gospels (ten in Luke, six of which are special to him) and four times in James's epistle, but never in Acts. Other Greek words commonly used at the time to describe specific situations of poverty, especially *πένης* and *ἐνδεής*, are not found in the Gospels. *Ἐνδεής* appears once in Acts,<sup>39</sup> but perhaps as an allusion to Dt 15.4, a text already analyzed.

*Πτωχός* usually means the needy and even destitute who is to be given alms, and sometimes the poor person at the bottom of the social ladder.<sup>40</sup> The Gospel of Luke often establishes a contrast between the *πτωχοί* and the rich, *πλούσιοι*. *πτωχός* may qualify characters in stories and parables as well as people in real life, for instance the poor widow in Lk 21.1ff. In the latter case, since the widow was obviously not completely without means, Luke introduces her as *πενιχρά*.

The work accomplished on the sources and traditions of the Gospels gives one a better perspective on the various views on poverty that are juxtaposed in the text. One such study shows that the severe view of wealth in the Gospel of Luke may have come from his special sources and could be explained by the very strained circumstances of the earliest church.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup>Greek writers, prior to the spreading of Christianity, did not read the Septuagint: see J. Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1972), 76, 124. Cf. the note on method by E. Tov, "Three Dimensions of LXX Words," *RB* 83 (1976) 529–44.

<sup>39</sup>Art. "Pauvres," in *DBS*, 7:395–96 (by A. George); see also J. Dupont, *Les béatitudes* (Paris: Gabalda, 1973<sup>2</sup>), 3:42.

<sup>40</sup>Alms to the poor needy: Lk 18.22 and parallels, Lk 19.8. Poor in the sense of socially low: Lk 21.1ff.; Mk 12.42–43; Lk 14.12–14.

<sup>41</sup>D. L. Mealand, *Poverty and Expectation in the Gospels* (London: SPCK, 1980), 12–87, with brief discussion of major bibliography, is an excellent exposé of what can, or cannot, be said of the evangelists' redactional activity, their sources, the oral tradition, and Jesus' probable views. The attempt to relate the viewpoints of the various circles of redactional work to particular historical settings is less convincing and invites further work. A summary of these settings is given in Mealand, pp. 7–11, 38–41. The reason I hesitate to accept a clear-cut historical background is that tax extortions, poverty, famine, and even religious persecution were rather permanent features in one area or another. This is not to deny the importance of the Jewish war or the famine under Claudius. On the latter, see Chapter 1

The first Beatitude has been the focal point of much research and controversy.<sup>42</sup> Major differences of interpretation concern the Matthean addition of “in spirit” to Luke’s “Blessed are the poor.”<sup>43</sup> The general consensus is that Luke, or his source, spoke of literal poverty, whereas Matthew spiritualized or moralized it. But what did this “spiritualization” consist of? Did τῷ πνεύματι refer to a purely mental state attainable even by the wealthy at little or no material cost, or was it to be understood as widening the social meaning of πτωχός? The discovery of a similar formula at Qumran has made scholars study afresh the Semitic background, the grammar of the passage, and the whole structure of the context. In his massive commentary, Dupont has come to the conclusion that the formula is to be understood in a spiritual sense as a poverty characterized by humility: humility before God and before others.<sup>44</sup>

The structure of the whole passage, however, is that of a contrast between four beatitudes and four curses (Luke), or between two series of beatitudes, the first four addressed to “passive” subjects, the next four to “active” people (Matthew).<sup>45</sup> If Mt 5.7–10 cannot be understood as only concerning a spiritual attitude, then the same may be true of Mt 5.3–6. Furthermore, the whole context in Matthew is that of a repetition of the giving of the Law at Sinai: the Beatitudes are a social program for the people, undistinguishable from the spiritual program. The expression “poor in spirit” may have been an effort to avoid the perplexities caused for Greeks by the simple πτωχοί of the source (and Luke). The fact that its background is “the humble in spirit” (*anawey ruah*) of IQM 14.7 and Is 61.1 does not mean that Matthew was less concerned for physical and social poverty than Luke.<sup>46</sup>

---

above, pp. 50–51. [check] More recent studies of the views of poverty and wealth in the New Testament have been published by E. Bammel (“The Poor and the Zealots,” in *Jesus and the Politics of His Day*, ed. E. Bammel and C. F. D. Moule [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984], 109–28); W. Schottroff and W. Stegemann (*God of the Lowly: Socio-Historical Interpretations of the Bible* [Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1984]), and D. Oakman (*Jesus and the Economic Questions of His Day* [Lewiston, N.Y.: Mellen, 1986]).

<sup>42</sup>Dupont, *Les béatitudes*, 3:385–471, where most previous opinions are analyzed and classified.

<sup>43</sup>Mt 5.3; Lk 6.21.

<sup>44</sup>*Les béatitudes*, 3:469–70.

<sup>45</sup>This was already argued by A. Lemonnyer, “Le messianisme des ‘Béatitudes,’” *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 11 (1922) 381–86. Rejected by Dupont, *Les béatitudes*, 3:632, n. 1.

<sup>46</sup>IQM 14.7 may be read as *anawey ruah* (humble): so the editor, E. L. Sukenik, in *‘Oṣar ha-megillot ha-gdolot* (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1954), pl. 29, followed by Dupont, *Les béatitudes*.

The rest of the vocabulary of poverty found in the New Testament has strong religious connotations and does not directly describe a social condition or an economic situation: meek, humble, childlike (insignificant and unsophisticated). These expressions, particularly the last three, have been studied in detail by Légasse.<sup>47</sup> Μικρός appears to have translated a formula used by Jesus to designate those who were without legal or religious culture and therefore considered of little importance.<sup>48</sup> The νύπιοι do not seem to have been any different.<sup>49</sup> Usually contrasted with the “sages” (σοφοί) and the “intelligent” (συνετοί), they corresponded to the “simple,” a notion that also appears in the Qumran texts.

#### OTHER JEWISH LITERATURE

The Mishnah, Tosefta, and halakhic Midrashim most often use this same word ‘any.’<sup>50</sup> The absence of other terms, particularly ‘evyon, is striking and puzzling.<sup>51</sup> In the Mishnah, ‘any does not usually refer to situations of beg-

---

*itudes*, 3:389–91 (with strong arguments). But others have read ‘anyey ruah) (poor): so, most recently, M. Baillet, in his restitution of the parallel line in 4Q 491.8–10, line 5, given in *DJD*, 7:21–22; also Y. Yadin, ed., *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 327; J. Carmignac, *La règle de la guerre des fils de lumière contre les fils de ténèbres* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1958), 204–5. Whatever the reading chosen, the immediate context of 1QM 14.7 does not make it obvious that “humility” as a virtue was meant. One could see in these “poor—or humble—in spirit” the frightened, dumb, weak, tottering, of the preceding verse, similar for instance to the “prostrated in the dust” (or more prosaically the “biting the dust”) of 1QM 11.13: [Hebrew text, two lines] (note the word play on “Poor and enemies” of the first line)—in other words, “humiliated”. As for the Church Fathers’ interpretations presented at length by Dupont (*Les béatitudes*, 3:399–419): their reading of various nuances of “humility” in Mt 5.3 should be replaced in the Fathers’ social context, keeping in mind that the πτωχοί of Luke was shocking to the Greeks, whereas the τῷ πνεύματι of Matthew offered an exit.

<sup>47</sup>On the last three terms, see S. Légasse’s elaborate study, *Jésus et l’enfant, “enfants,” “petits” et “simples” dans la tradition synoptique* (Paris: Gabalda, 1969).

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 52–53, 337.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 176.

<sup>50</sup>See C. J. Kasovsky, *Thesaurus Mishnae*, 4 vols. (Jerusalem: Masada, 1956–60); *Thesaurus Thosephtae*, 6 vols. (Jerusalem: 1932–61); B. Kosovsky, *Otzar Leshon Hatanna’im. Concordantiae verborum quae in Mechilta d’Rabbi Ismael reperiuntur*, 4 vols. (Jerusalem: 1965–69); *Otzar Leshon Hatanna’im. Concordantiae verborum quae in Sifra aut Torat Kohanim reperiuntur*, 4 vols. (Jerusalem: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1967–69); *Otzar Leshon Hatanna’im. Thesaurus “Sifrei”. Concordantiae verborum quae in “Sifrei” Numeri et Deuteronomium reperiuntur*, 5 vols. (Jerusalem: 1971–74);

<sup>51</sup>Found only in *mMeg.* 1.3,4 (gifts to the poor); *dal* in *mKil.* 5.13; *mSheq.* 5.3 and *mNeg.* 14.7, concerning sacrifices. The verb *ledaldel* (“to become impoverished,” in the sense of

gary, but rather concerns the legal situation of people of small means regarding their relations with the Temple, traditional laws, or creditors of various kinds.<sup>52</sup> The *ʿany* is often opposed to the rich, *ʿašir*.<sup>53</sup>

The Gemaras use both *ʿany* and *misken* or *miskena*.<sup>54</sup> This term *miskena* is the most common one in the Gemaras and likewise in the Targums of Palestinian origin written in Galilean dialects.<sup>55</sup> It replaces, or translates, *ʿany* in most of the discussions. The other words describing certain situations of poverty are much less common. In the later Targums of Galilean origin,<sup>56</sup> *ʿanya* has been translated by *miskena* and *ʿevyon* is translated by *šrikba*.<sup>57</sup> The latter word expresses the idea of need and implies the necessity of relief. It is not common in the literature.<sup>58</sup> The overwhelming impression is that *miskena* has become the one and only word for the poor. It is the common word found in the Targums, the Gemaras, and in later midrashim.<sup>59</sup> Its meaning of dependence may explain its unique position, as the situation of poor people became characterized by the dependence of tenants and laborers on landowners and patrons, at least from the third century C.E. on.

Apparently, the difference between poverty and destitution had vanished from the texts coming from the first centuries of our era. If the Onkelos version kept an opposition between *ʿanya* and *miskeyna*, this is perhaps due to its greater formalism rather than to an early date.

---

“being diminished” by losing one’s property) is found in *mSof.* 9.15.

<sup>52</sup>In only two situations does it refer to beggary: *mAv.* 1.5 and *mTob.* 7.9. The word normally refers to someone having a modicum of personal possessions but very little land or none at all: *mPeʿab* 4.9; 9.1; *mDem.* 4.4; 5.5; *mTer.* 9.2–3; *mKeth.* 4.7; *mKel.* 17.16; 16.7; 28.8 (clothes); *mMiqv.* 9.5; 10.3. There was a strict measurement of property, and the community was perfectly aware of everyone’s standing in that regard: *mNeg.* 14.11–13 (cf. *mPeʿab* 4.9). For the legal situation of the *ʿany* regarding debts, see *mSheq.* 1.4; 2.5; *mPeʿab* 5.2; *mGitt.* 3.7. For the form of his sacrifices: *mBikk.* 3.8; *mʿArakh.* 4.2. As legally entitled to various customary rights: *mPeʿab*, passim (esp. chap. 4, 5, 8); *mMaʿas. Sh.* 5.3; *mʿEduy.* 4.5; *mGitt.* 4.8; *mAv.* 5.9; *mShev.* 9.7–8; 5.3; given charity: *mShab.* 1.1; *mSheq.* 5.6.

<sup>53</sup>For instance: *mBikk.* 3.8; *mʿEr.* 4.9; *mBM* 9.3 (widow); *mBB* 10.7 (case of two brothers, one rich, the other poor); *mʿArakh.* 4.1. The poor was sometimes contrasted with the “honorable” person (*mekhubbad*): *mKeth.* 5.9.

<sup>54</sup>For instance in *pPeʿab* 8.9.21b, top; *bBM* 114a; *bBB* 43a, bottom; *bBM* 11b where *ʿevyon* is exceptionally used, in a commentary on Dt 24.15.

<sup>55</sup>Art. πτωχός, in *TDNT*, 894.

<sup>56</sup>See the introduction for discussion on the question of dating.

<sup>57</sup>In *Neofiti 1*: A. Diez-Macho, *Neophyti 1* (Madrid: C.S.I.C., 1978), 141.

<sup>58</sup>See the Concordances by C. J. Kasovsky, B. Kosovsky, and M. Kosovsky (in *Bibliography, Instrumenta studiorum*).

<sup>59</sup>See, e. g., *pBM* 2.8c; *pShev.* 7.37d.

## EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

We shall see later the use of *πτωχός* or *evyonim* as a possible self-definition of the first Christians. Here, we shall examine only some texts, mainly Syriac texts, where the poor are the object of various rules in the organization of charity. In early Christian texts in Syriac, *miskeno*<sup>60</sup> is the all-inclusive term. It appears to represent something like the *πένης* of Greek sources. This is for instance the case in the Syriac version of the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, a translation of a now lost Greek original that probably came from northern Syria in the third century.<sup>60</sup> This early collection of canons, influenced by Jewish-Christian thinking, has as one of its most important themes the defense of the poor. Among these rules are found clearly spelled out categories such as orphans and widows. There are also less well defined groups of people who are said to be “in need” and whom the context shows to be in great poverty.<sup>61</sup>

This lack of a clear-cut difference appears for instance in chapter 18, which presents a long list of people whose wickedness precludes acceptance of their gifts or offerings on the part of bishops or deacons.<sup>62</sup> Among these are the “perverters of judgment who for (reasons of) theft deal in wickedness and in deceit with the peasants and with all the poor.”<sup>63</sup> The context does not imply people completely without means but rather people who stand to lose something from the wrongdoing of those not respecting the laws or customs, or turning them to their own advantage. But a few paragraphs below, the church authorities are admonished to “nourish and clothe those in want from the labor of righteousness of the faithful,” a formula that seems to imply those who have lost everything.<sup>64</sup> One cannot formally distinguish between the poor and the needy. Need varied according to the person and

<sup>60</sup>A. Vööbus, *The Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac*, in *CSCO*, *Scriptores Syri*, no. 175:23\*; and 28\* for a discussion that this Syriac version may have been produced in the first part of the fourth century C.E.

<sup>61</sup>“In need,” perhaps translating the Greek *ὑστερήμα* or *χρεία*. Attempts at reconstituting the Greek original on the basis of the *Apostolic Constitutions* are “beset with great difficulties and complications” (Vööbus, *ibid.*, 31\*, referring to P. de Lagarde’s attempt). It has been established, however, that the Latin version, dated 486 C.E. but produced a century earlier, was faithful to the Greek original (*ibid.*, 30\*).

<sup>62</sup>Vööbus, *CSCO*, no. 180:164; cf. F. X. Funk, *Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum*, pt. I (Paderborn: F. Schoeningh, 1905. Reprint, Torino: Bottega d’Erasmus, 1970), 224–27; cf. enumeration in *Didache* 5.1–2; *Apostolic Constitutions* 4.6.

<sup>63</sup>The word used for peasants is *pagani* and “poor” is *miskeno*.

<sup>64</sup>Vööbus, *CSCO*, no. 180:166.

to his or her status. It was caused by disease, infirmity, old age, the inability to work, an added mouth to feed, and the like.

The same wording is found in the Syriac version of the story on the poor widow who gave of her necessities to the Temple treasury (Lk 21.1ff). The Greek text presents her as *πεινιχρή* and *πτωχή* (Jesus speaking), and giving *ἐκ τοῦ ὑστερήματος αὐτῆς*, whereas the Syriac speaks of her as *miskenta*<sup>65</sup> and giving *min hasiruta*<sup>65</sup>. What was to be distinguished, then, was not poverty and destitution but various degrees of need.<sup>65</sup> Everything, in the Jewish area and in Christianity, revolved around the notion of need, as will be seen and developed further in the section on charity.

## 5.2 EXPLICIT VOCABULARY: SELF-DESIGNATIONS

Many of the texts in rabbinic literature and the New Testament seem close to the poor people to whom they refer, in contrast to the attitude of a Josephus, who appears to keep his distance. Yet, as already noted, most of the mentions of poverty seen so far come from nonpoor speaking of others, and it is impossible to know to what extent these judgments corresponded to the self-perception of those concerned. The reverse problem exists also, regarding the exact situation of groups of people or individuals calling themselves or describing themselves as poor. Examples of this usage are found in the last century B.C.E. and in the first centuries of our era: in the Qumran community, in some of the groups represented in apocalyptic literature, and in early Palestinian Christianity. In addition, there are some individual cases, such as that evidenced by two inscriptions from Beth She'arim.

### QUMRAN AND THE ESSENES

The Dead Sea Scrolls<sup>66</sup> do not strictly belong to the chronological limits chosen for the present study, but this literature was in use in the first century

<sup>65</sup>Ideally, this was to be done not only by bishops assisted by their deacons but also by alms givers (normally subjected to the bishop's control) and even by the poor themselves.

<sup>66</sup>I adopt the hypothesis that Qumran was Essene: see Schürer, *History*, 2:561, 583–85, and G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Collins, 1977), 125–30. But one cannot strictly equate the Essenes with the Qumran community, as does for instance A. Dupont-Sommer, *Les écrits esséniens découverts près de la Mer Morte* (Paris: Payot, 1980), 51–81. Compare J. Carmignac, *Les Textes de Qumran* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1963) 2:56–57. The identification of Qumran as Essene is not without problems: see K. H. Rengstorff, *Hirbet Qumran und die Bibliothek vom Toten Meer* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1960), and J. P. Audet, "Qumran et la notice de Pline sur les Esséniens," *RB* 68 (1961) 346–87.

of our era. According to a wide scholarly consensus, most of these texts can be dated to a period preceding the second half of the first century B.C.E., although, paleographically speaking most copies date from the end of the first century B.C.E. or the beginning of the first century C.E.<sup>67</sup> The identification of the various strata of the texts and their relationship to historical events, either external or internal to the group, are tasks by no means completed.<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless, a comparison of their vocabulary of poverty and later Jewish or early Christian usage raises some interesting questions and illuminates later evidence. The inquiry is particularly interesting because Hellenistic forms of association that were to endure in various modes in Roman times may have had some influence on the organization of the Qumran community.<sup>69</sup>

In the Hymns of Thanksgiving, the author calls himself an *'any* and an *'evyon* or applies these terms to the whole group of the elect.<sup>70</sup> The terms do not appear to have different meanings.<sup>71</sup> In the War Rule, the sons of light are called the “humble in spirit.”<sup>72</sup> Those to be the object of God’s salvation are often called *'evyonim*.<sup>73</sup> In the Habakkuk Commentary, *'evyon/evyonim* is also the word used and, as in several other Qumran texts, has come to replace all other expressions for poor.<sup>74</sup> The “Community of the Poor” appears in one text only as a designation of the Qumran faithful.<sup>75</sup> As Keck has argued, “Poor” may not have been a “technical title” for

<sup>67</sup>F. M. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1961<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>68</sup>For a sketch, see Schürer, *History*, 2:585–88 and n. 50 (a list of various opinions).

<sup>69</sup>Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1:243–46. A view criticized by A. Momigliano in his review of the German edition, *JTS* 21 (1970) 149–53: Qumran was different from *thiasoi* because the pact between its members was predicated upon a pact with God.

<sup>70</sup>I follow Bammel, art. *πτωχός*, in *TDNT*, 6:897. *'any* in *IQH* 5.1; 5.21; 18.14–15 (a reference to Is 61.1–2 and Is 66.2; cf. Lk 4.16–22. See the investigation of the literary connections by D. Flusser, “Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit,” *IEJ* 10 [1960] 1–13). In *IQH* 2.34–35, the author calls himself an *'any weraš* (cf. 5.14). *'evyon* is found in 2.32; 3.25, 5.13ff.; 5.22 (a reference to *'evyonim* as a group). Both *'any* and *'evyon* in *IQH* 9.27.

<sup>71</sup>Seen as equal in *4QpPs* 37.1.11; the Damascus Rule also refers to the *'any* and to the *'evyon*, but apparently as outside people to be helped: 6.16, 21 and 14.14, passages where the old laws of Israel are repeated; cf. *4Q* 491.11, line 11, published by M. Baillet, *DJD*, vol. 7. Ms. B 1.9 (Schechter 19.9) speaks of the poor of the herd (cf. Zech 11).

<sup>72</sup>*IQM* 14.7: *'anawey ruah* (editor); see n. 45 above. [check]

<sup>73</sup>With a wide meaning: 11.9; 11.13; 13.14. But note that the word *'evyon* does not appear in the Community Rule (*IQS*).

<sup>74</sup>*IQpHab* 12.3, 6, 10.

<sup>75</sup>The *qaw'ey Yahweh* of Ps 37.9 are interpreted as the *'edath evyonim* of *4QpPs* 37.1.9

the community.<sup>76</sup> There were more formal Biblical expressions that Qumran people used to refer to themselves. Yet “poor” clearly was one of the honorable self-designations of this community.<sup>77</sup>

What did “poor” really mean in all these passages? Were the Qumran covenanters economically poor? Or was it a political term referring to the oppression to which they were subjected? Or was it even a strictly religious term? Furthermore, could it be applied to all the members of the community? One may begin to examine the questions from one particular angle, that of the hierarchy that existed at Qumran, and wonder whether certain social aspects were concealed within the framework of this hierarchy.

A verse from the Habakkuk commentary, for instance, mentions the common people:

*The violence done to Lebanon shall overwhelm you; the destruction of the beasts will terrify you, for the blood of men and violence to the earth, to cities and all who dwell therein.* (Hab. 2.17) This prophecy applies to the impious Priest, to repay him measure for measure for what he did to the Poor, as *Lebanon* is the council of the Community, and *the beasts*, these are the simple folk of Juda who do the Torah.<sup>78</sup>

---

and 2.10.

<sup>76</sup>L. E. Keck, “The Poor among the Saints in Jewish Christianity and Qumran,” *ZNW* 57 (1966) 68–77, summarized in his article “Poor” for the *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible: Supplementary Volume* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1976), 673b. Keck tends to minimize the Qumran evidence because he wants to deflate the claim that “in view of their communal life . . . Qumran provides a virtually complete precedent for the earliest Church in Jerusalem.” His words of caution must be heeded. If there is some common ground between the Essene and Christian views of poverty, it might be found on the basis of an analysis of what “poor” could mean in Jewish society, not only on the basis of word use. Furthermore, to confuse matters, some scholars seem to think that “divestment of *private* possessions” and poverty were strictly linked. It is revealing that the word *private* is added by many modern commentators, e.g., G. Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 31, but does not appear in the original texts. Others refuse this link, Keck for instance. Indeed, there is no evidence that the two things were *directly* linked at Qumran: see S. E. Johnson, “The Dead Sea Manual of Discipline and the Jerusalem Church of Acts,” *ZAW* 66 (1954) 106–20; Dupont, *Les béatitudes*, 3:425–26. But again, one should attempt to draw a picture of what the putting in common of possessions and the fruits of work could mean at the time, rather than be guided by our present sense of asceticism and communism. For instance, it is possible that the act of relinquishing his or her possessions could bring someone more political power and material services than before.

<sup>77</sup>*IQM* II.9, 13; 13.14. For a long list of all the names that the Qumran covenanters applied to themselves, see J. Carmignac, “HRBYM: Les ‘Nombres’ ou les ‘Notables’?” *RQ* 7 (1971) 582–83.

<sup>78</sup>*IQpHab* 12.3–6 (my translation); compare G. Vermes’ translation in *The Dead Sea*

This reference to the “simple folk” need not be contemptuous.<sup>79</sup> The word used often had a derogatory meaning in the Bible<sup>80</sup> but also took a religious connotation of humility, especially in the Psalms,<sup>81</sup> an evolution similar to that of *‘any/‘anaw/‘anawim*. This is the meaning intended in several passages from Qumran texts.<sup>82</sup> In the present passage, can social connotations be completely excluded from the interpretation?

It seems clear that the Poor in this text (*‘evyonim*) include two groups set in contrast: the council of the community, which was perhaps composed of a restricted number of the full members,<sup>83</sup> and the “simple folk of Juda.” Does this contrast imply the existence of a criterion of knowledge separating the “knowers” or “intelligent” from the “simple folk”? But one could also think that the latter is to be taken as a synonym of “the Poor” and therefore as including “Lebanon” in the expression.<sup>84</sup> There are two reasons favoring the first solution. First, the criterion of simplicity versus intelligence is found in other texts from Qumran with clear social connotations. Second, it is not a surprise to find it at Qumran since it was or came into wide use in the rest of Jewish society.<sup>85</sup> The criterion was in fact the capacity to interpret the Torah,<sup>86</sup> in both its legal and exegetical aspects.

---

*Scrolls in English* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1975<sup>2</sup>), 242; text in M. Burrows, et al., *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark’s Monastery* (New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1950), 1: pl. LX: [five lines of Hebrew text

<sup>79</sup>E.g., Carmignac, *Les textes de Qumran*, 2:115, n. 5. D. Barthélemy, *DJD*, 1:115.

<sup>80</sup>Various spellings at Qumran. The word *pethy* means: someone lacking judgment, easily convinced, therefore naive, gullible (see, e.g., Prov 14.15: “The simple believes everything, but the prudent looks where he is going”).

<sup>81</sup>Ps 119.130; 19.12; 116.4.

<sup>82</sup>On all this, see Légasse, *Jésus et l’enfant*, 169–72; J. Dupont, “les ‘simples’ (petâyim) dans la Bible et à Qumrân. A propos des *νήπιοι* de Mt 11.25; Lc 10.21,” in *Studi sull’ Oriente e la Bibbia offerti al p. Giovanni Rinaldi nel 60* (Genoa: Studio e vita, 1967), 329–36.

<sup>83</sup>For the general organization of the Essenes and Qumran, see Schürer, *History*, 2:562ff., 575ff.; G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 87–115, esp. 91–92 on the Council, perhaps meaning “a gathering of the whole community” (*IQS* 6.8–9), perhaps restricted to “twelve men and three Priests” (*IQS* 8.1).

<sup>84</sup>“Simple,” then, being taken in a purely religious acception. Another possibility is that “poor” is equated with “Lebanon.” In this case, “poor” would have a very specialized meaning and would be contrasted with the “simple.”

<sup>85</sup>It was a common and long-standing theme of the ancient Near East (*Satire of the Trades*) and later of many Jewish Sages that working with one’s hands (i.e., to earn a living by working the land or practicing a craft), though ideally worthwhile, excluded the possibility of becoming “wise.” See, e.g., Sir 38.24–27, already quoted previously, p. 112, esp. n. 98, [check] on sayings attributed to R. Simeon b. Yoḥay.

<sup>86</sup>See D. Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: University of

The practical nature of this hierarchical principle is explicit in a verse of the *Messianic Rule* (or *Rule of the Congregation*) in which the duties of the simple folk in the Messianic future are given as a service of statute labor, conceived of as a military service, each “according to his abilities.”<sup>87</sup> The “simple one” will be registered as a simple soldier and cannot pretend to any higher position in the Congregation, either as judge, official, or officer of the army.<sup>88</sup> The expression “simple folk,” then, seems to indicate members hierarchically subject who performed some of the essential tasks on which the day-to-day existence of the community depended.<sup>89</sup> They were given these tasks because they were “simple,” that is, not able to tell the Law, and in turn prevented by rule from gaining access to knowledge. They were effectively maintained in a servile rank.<sup>90</sup>

Now, one might easily grant that these simple people were poor, at least in the *πένης* sense, even though they might have gained a measure of security and fairer treatment by becoming dependents of Qumran. They may have come to the sect as dependents of priestly families, already having this subservient position in the houses and fields of their priests and masters. Or they may have come to find refuge from extreme misery, partly caused by violent taxation. In any case, one may ask in what sense the leaders of the Qumran community could speak of themselves as poor. If poverty is lack of food, clothing, housing, and security, there are several indications that

---

London, the Athlone Press, 1956), 158–59. At Qumran, it was the capacity to know the Law as interpreted by the leaders of the community. A simple priest who did not know the Law was therefore a “simpleton”: *CD* 13.3–7. Cf. Josephus’s attitude, *Vita* 196–98.

<sup>87</sup> *IQS<sub>a</sub>* 1.22; text of *IQS<sub>a</sub>* 1.19–22 in D. Barthélemy and J. Milik, *DJD*, 1:110: [three lines of Hebrew text]

<sup>88</sup> *IQS<sub>a</sub>* 1.19–21. The hierarchization by age (*IQS<sub>a</sub>* 1.12–16) is in addition to other criteria. Officers of the congregation were chosen by lottery. But the “simple” man could not participate in it. He is not to be understood as a fool, a simpleton (contra Légasse, *Jésus et l’enfant*, 175), unless one accepts the Qumran leaders’ judgment. He and his family (1.21) were registered as “foot soldiers” and expected to do the basic work (*hamas*). He was disqualified from participating in the lottery because he was not an Aaronide, a Levite, or a chief of tribe or families.

<sup>89</sup> Légasse’s attempt to recover in the variety of meanings of *pethy* at Qumran a historical development from the social to the religious is not convincing (*ibid.*, 174–75). He himself admits that the basis for such reconstructions is hypothetical. Note that Légasse’s sense of an original social meaning is “simple d’esprit,” such as may be found “dans une population mêlée.”

<sup>90</sup> In what measure did the *Messianic Rule* refer to, or reflect, the particular conditions of the community at Qumran? To evaluate this connection, one would have to study the social background of messianism in general and all social references in this text in particular.

these leaders were not poor when compared to “the simple folk of Juda” or at least to the majority of the population of Palestine.

First of all, archaeology has shown that the ruins of Khirbet Qumran, northwest of the Dead Sea, do not appear to have been those of a destitute community, in spite of the difficult environment it faced.<sup>91</sup> The great buildings and projects, the coin treasuries, and the general economic organization all testify to a fairly powerful community.<sup>92</sup> The fact that the community had developed rules to dispose of members’ property also points in the same direction.

Was there equality in the production and disposal of this wealth? But the word equality is not Biblical or Qumranic. What was spoken of, rather, is justice or injustice. Our question then becomes: How was justice interpreted at Qumran? The Qumran interpretation of the Bible appears ambiguous to us: in part radical, in part very conservative. As for their seemingly progressive social concern, it is important to examine it more closely.<sup>93</sup> The rigidity of the hierarchy suggests that social divisions were maintained. Indeed, who was to till the land put in common? To man the shops? To do the necessary and difficult transporting of goods? What were the economic duties of the Essenes in the “camps”?<sup>94</sup> The answer is that justice meant

<sup>91</sup>R. de Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Schweich Lectures, 1959) (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 86: “Certainly the resources of the area are very poor, but they do exist, and it is not impossible to live there.” For a more optimistic, uncritical assessment, see W. R. Farmer, “The Economic Basis of the Qumran Community,” *TZ* 11 (1955) 295–308, and *TZ* 12 (1956) 56–58 (postscript). L. M. Pákozdy proposes a reconstruction of the irrigation system in his article, “Der wirtschaftliche Hintergrund der Gemeinschaft von Qumrán,” in *Qumran-Probleme*, ed. H. Bardtke, Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Schriften der Sektion für Altertumswissenschaft, 42 (1963) 269–91.

<sup>92</sup>See R. de Vaux, *Archaeology*, 84–87 (for a summary of Qumran economic activities); 34ff. (for the hoard of 561 pieces of silver, Tyrian tetradrachms mostly); 109–10 (for community life). I leave aside the list of treasures of the Copper Scroll, dismissed by most as pure fancy. Yet it would be interesting to know why the list was composed on copper. See n. 120 below. [check]

<sup>93</sup>It is not enough to show that the community had imperious social concerns, as does, for instance, W. Tyloch, “Quelques remarques sur le caractère social du mouvement de Qumrán,” in Bardtke, *Qumran-Probleme*, 341–51.

<sup>94</sup>The ruins discovered in 1971 at ‘En el-Ghuweir, about 15 kilometers south of Qumran, seem to have been an Essene settlement composed of poorer members, or of members who could not live in the main settlement at Qumran because of war. See P. Bar-Adon, “Another Settlement of the Judean Desert Sect at ‘En el-Ghuweir on the Shores of the Dead Sea,” *BASOR* 227 (1977) 1–25. The settlement dates from the end of the second Temple period. Tombs are poorer; only a few bronze coins (Herodian) have been found. It seems to have been a community given to food production and crafts. The list of occupations

the performance of duties and the holding of privileges according to one's status as determined by birth, age, learning, and moral standing. One may suspect that those members coming from more famous families, wealthier and more educated, would naturally draw more consideration from their choice of poverty, since they had left more behind them. In addition, one must not forget that to be officially poor meant the capacity to receive and even demand the traditional taxes and gifts specified in the Pentateuch.

To throw some light on these problems, one must put the question of the hierarchy existing at Qumran in a wider context. This hierarchy, as one may reconstitute it from the Rule of the Community, the Messianic Rule, the Damascus Document, and the descriptions by Josephus and Philo, cannot readily be understood as stemming from economic differences.<sup>95</sup> It apparently did not use some of the social means of expression common at the time.<sup>96</sup> The nature of its criteria, rather, was explicitly religious—partly institutional and partly moral. Several criteria can be listed in order of decreas-

---

given for the Essenes by Philo in *Quod omnis probus liber sit* 76–78 and *Apologia* 11.8–9 is influenced by a concern to make them palatable to a Greek audience: farmers (γεωργός, shepherds (see Chapter 3, pp. 123–24), [check] beekeepers, craftsmen.

<sup>95</sup>See G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 90–92 and Schürer, *History*, 2:562–67, 575–9. Every person was registered in “the order of his rank,” *IQS* 6.22; placement at assemblies was also according to rank: priests came first, followed by the elders, then the people according to rank, *IQS* 6.8–9; cf. *IQS<sub>a</sub>* 2.14 (*lefi kavod*). There was perhaps a restricted council of the community, *IQS* 8.1–4. In any case, priests alone had jurisdiction in matters of doctrine, discipline, purity, property, *IQS* 9.7. One was to show respect to those having immediate precedence, *IQS* 6.24–27. Philo notes that elders had precedence over younger members, *Quod omnis probus liber sit*, 81 (see M. Petit, in SC [1974]); cf. *Apologia* 11.13; Josephus in *BJ* 2.119ff.; *AJ* 18.20ff.

<sup>96</sup>This may explain why Josephus speaks of the Essenes' lack of hierarchy, or “equality”: *BJ* 2.122, 129; *AJ* 18.20. He may have been led to make this statement by the parallelism that he finds necessary to draw with Pythagoreans (*AJ* 15.371). For a description of Pythagorean elements and their presence in Philo's *Quod omnis probus liber sit*, see M. Petit, ed. of text for SC, pp. 60–61. On the social significance of this movement, see M. Detienne, art. “Pythagore,” in *Encyclopaedia Universalis*, vol. 13. Like Pythagoreans, Essenes apparently did not use outer hierarchical marks, such as in clothing (see our Chapter 2). They also seem to have eschewed distinctive marks in their cemetery. The same would be true later of Qaraites, on whom see S. Szyszman, in *Akten des XVIII. Internationalen Soziologenkongresses (1958)* (Meisenheim am Glan: A. Hain, 1962), 2:352–60; idem, *Le karaïsme: ses doctrines et son histoire* (Lausanne: L'Age d'homme, 1980); A. Paul, *Ecrits de Qumran et sectes juives aux premiers siècles de l'islam. Recherches sur l'origine du Qaraïsme* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1969). The absence of these particular signs does not mean that the Essenes could not mark rank in other ways. The resemblance between Pythagoreans and Essenes is probably not due to dependence, see M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1:245–47.

ing openness, or increasing simplicity and ease of use; presence or absence of good deeds; purity or impurity; knowledge or simplicity; birth; and age.

The religious nature of most of these criteria does not completely obliterate their social aspects. This has already been shown in the case of the “simple folk.” Let us examine this criterion of knowledge in a wider context. The fact that the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls thought of themselves as possessed of knowledge and wisdom was not merely a matter of intellectual satisfaction. Their knowledge was of a divine kind, a mystery obtained through a meditation of God’s revelation, and the property only of angels.<sup>97</sup> The leaders of Qumran envisioned themselves as angels who would lead the people in their war of liberation.<sup>98</sup> But this criterion of intelligence, which separated the “knowers” and the “simple,” appears to reinforce the other criteria: age, birth, purity, and good works.

These criteria worked in various ways in the determination of the hierarchy at Qumran. The criterion of good works versus evil was susceptible of the widest application. It could serve to eliminate even priests, but also conceivably to allow the approach of non-Jews.<sup>99</sup> The next criterion, concerning purity and impurity, could be used to sever ties with non-Jews or even with Jews who did not share the same conception of purity and at the same time serve to rank all the members of the community.<sup>100</sup> The crite-

<sup>97</sup> *IQH* 18.23; 11.14. For a list of passages mentioning this knowledge as mystery, see Légasse, *Jésus et l'enfant*, 161–62.

<sup>98</sup> *IQSa* 2.8,9; *IQM* 7.6. See F. Schmidt, “‘Traqué comme un loup.’ A propos du débat actuel sur l’Apocalyptique juive,” *ASSR* 53 (1982) 13–14.

<sup>99</sup> *CD* 14.4 shows that proselytes were accepted, against Josephus, *BJ* 2.119 (they are “Jewish by race”). The standard study of Qumran law and its relationship with Rabbinic law is by L. H. Schiffman, *The Halakbah at Qumran* (Leiden: Brill, 1975) and *Sectarian Law in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Courts, Testimony, and the Penal Code* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983). A beginning has been made in the study of the ethical and penal system of Qumran from a social point of view (*IQS* 6.24–7.25). See for instance J. Pouilly, “L’évolution de la législation pénale dans la communauté de Qumran,” *RB* 82 (1975) 522–51. See also his *La règle de la communauté de Qumrân: Son évolution littéraire*, Cahiers de la Revue Biblique, 17 (Paris: Gabalda, 1976), 35–41, 60–62, 93–95. In his attempt to isolate various stages in the redaction of *IQS*, this author seems to assume that “lenient” means an earlier date, and “more severe,” a more recent date. He offers a useful review of sins and punishments, *RB* 82 (1975) 541–46, with a table, 548–49. But what did the negligence concerning the goods of the community mean (*IQS* 7.6–7): Not to work well in the fields? Not to take proper care of the beasts of burden? Break a vase? The punishment was distinctly material: deprivation of one-quarter of food allotment for a period of time.

<sup>100</sup> Purity rules had social connotations, as has been shown in Chapters 1 and 2. The stringency concerning purity rules as applied to the priests in the Temple was adopted at Qumran: Josephus, *BJ* 2.129.

tion concerning knowledge and ignorance eliminated most of the community, though it was still more open to interpretation than the simple right of birth.<sup>101</sup> The superiors of Qumran were priests by birth. Among these were the leaders, the lawgivers, and the judges.<sup>102</sup> Age also played an important role, within each of the categories delineated by other criteria.<sup>103</sup> One must also note the importance given to physical blemishes, considered impurities that could not be tolerated in the midst of the Congregation (that is, in its meetings): paralysis of various kinds, limping, blindness, deafness, muteness, or any other visible blemish including the “tottering” that old age caused in some people.<sup>104</sup>

If these criteria were used as indicated by the sources, one may only conclude that everyone was maintained in a very rigid order.<sup>105</sup> Must one conclude also that the Qumran leaders could not speak of themselves as poor in any social sense? Indeed, it has frequently been asserted that the spiritualization of the vocabulary of poverty was complete and prohibits any interpretation in social terms.<sup>106</sup> It would simply be a matter of attitude before God.

Others have thought of an answer in economic terms. One solution, for instance, is to look for poverty in the origins of the movement. Countryman has suggested that the leaders and founders of Qumran perceived

<sup>101</sup>In *CD* 13.2–4, a Levite expert in the Book of Meditation may replace a priest, whose presence was normally required for any group of ten if the priest was not conversant in the laws. At the head of the community were “the sages of the Congregation, the intelligent and the knowing, perfect in their ways,” *IQS* 1.28. These men of knowledge (*anašey da’uth*, a hapax) had the responsibility of reproving the sinner: *CD* 20, 4–5.

<sup>102</sup>Priests were registered in a book, *IQS* 6.2–3. A priestly genealogical list has been found in Cave 6 at Qumran. In this regard, the word *rabbim* should not be translated as “Numerous”: see J. Carmignac, who has convincingly argued that this translation does not hold: “HRBYM les ‘Nombreux’ ou les ‘Notables,’” *RQ* 7 (1971) 575–86. Context and usage external to Qumran show that the word should be understood as “the Great,” “the Masters.” Carmignac himself chooses “les Notables” to underscore the religious position of the leaders and because “‘maîtres’ a l’inconvénient de laisser supposer une nuance de domination” (p. 586). One may well suppose that this domination was a fact, which can only be better understood through a study of the notions of justice, purity, piousness, and holiness, as variously developed within the Judaism of the period.

<sup>103</sup>*IQS* 1.6–19, 25 (*rašey avoth*); *IQM* 6.14–7.3; *CD* 10.6–7; 14.6–9.

<sup>104</sup>*IQS* 2.5–7; cf. *IQM* 7.4–5.

<sup>105</sup>In spite of the yearly reevaluation and registration called for in *IQS* 5.24. This appears to be a system of credit points that operated at each level of the order, without allowing passage from one to the other, in theory at least.

<sup>106</sup>For instance Légasse, *Jésus et l’enfant*, 175, 226, who gives an excellent review of the sources, but all too arbitrarily separates “social” and “religious” meanings.

their situation in relation to that of the wealthy and powerful Sadducees.<sup>107</sup> Certainly, whether of their own accord or not, they had lost their position in Israel and consequently part or all of their economic revenues—their rights to tithes and shares in Temple sacrifices and activities.<sup>108</sup> For a variety of reasons, the leading circle at Qumran continued to feel persecuted by the “Evil Priest” or the “Evil Ones.”<sup>109</sup>

But this latter explanation alone does not account for the fact that “poor” was an honorific term. For a better explanation, one must take the religious connotation of the term very seriously.<sup>110</sup> According to the Bible, it is when a person has nothing (individual or Israel collectively) that he is in a position to realize that God is the only salvation. In return for this salvation, the poor man (or Israel) was expected to spend much of his time before God, meditating and praying.

For a good part, the “poverty” of the Essenes signified their total dependence on God.<sup>111</sup> But the Qumran community had its own way of acknowledging God as only master and savior. Purity was their paramount concern, as a way to achieve or safeguard holiness. Their rule about the “mixing of wealth” should be understood in this context of purity.<sup>112</sup> It was the sign

<sup>107</sup>L. W. Countryman, *The Rich Christian in the Church of the Early Empire* (Lewis-ton, N.Y.: Mellen, 1980), 30–31.

<sup>108</sup>The economic separation, and precarious situation, of Qumran is implied in many passages, e.g., 4Q 501, line 9: text in Baillet, *DJD*, 7:79. The Qumran leaders may have retained a following of people who made their offerings to the Temple through them, and who could precisely be the “simple folk of Juda” of 1QpHab 12.6.

<sup>109</sup>Threats to the priest and his council in 4QpPs 37.14: J. Allegro, “Further Light on the History of the Qumran Sect,” *JBL* 75 (1956) 94. *IQS* 9.22–3 speaks of abandoning goods (*hon*) and income (*amal kappayim*), “as a poor before him who dominates him.”

<sup>110</sup>Countryman, *The Rich Christian*, alludes to these aspects, but does not relate them to social concerns.

<sup>111</sup>God as their only master, *IQS* 9.23–6. The more common use of & ‘*evyon* at Qumran may have been motivated by a radical attitude of need before God.

<sup>112</sup>The new members turned over their possessions and the fruits of their work to a special intendant, *IQS* 6.19–20; severe punishments in case of lie, *IQS* 6.24–5. Cf. Philo, *Quod omnis probus liber sit* 86; *Apologia* 11.10. On that condition, the members were truly a community (*yahad*): *IQS* 1.11–2; 6.2–3. Everything was done according to justice (not equality): *CD* 14.12–16, which speaks of the collection and redistribution of a tithe on income. Many new members had only their work to give. W. Tyloch says that normal work was respected and compulsory at Qumran: “Quelques remarques sur le caractère social du mouvement de Qumrân,” in Bardtke, *Qumran-Probleme*, 344. But what can this mean? One could say the same of Sparta, or of any of the Greek tyrannies (see our remarks on Greek society at the beginning of this chapter). The reports by Philo (*Quod omnis probus liber sit* 85, 91; *Apologia* 10–12) and Josephus (*BJ* 2.122; *AJ* 18.20) are colored by their (and their reader-

that one had gained a state of purity. But it was also practical, allowing the inner Essene circle to maintain the traditional rules of purity, that is, to have as few contacts as possible with those considered to be less pure.<sup>113</sup> In addition, it permitted the members to devote more time and energies to prayer, meditation, and learning while retaining control of the wealth.

To speak of a renunciation of (private) property in the case of Qumran is therefore not exact, and to derive their “poverty” from this would be wrong.<sup>114</sup> Poverty at Qumran was primarily a mystical notion, and an essential one for people wishing to gain access to the divine mystery.<sup>115</sup> This mystical notion, one suspects, was restricted to the leaders of the community, particularly priests, who had a variety of reasons, some quite material, not to be satisfied with the new developments in Temple policy after the Greek yoke had been thrown off.<sup>116</sup>

Such a mystical view went together with an extreme desire to revive the ideal of justice as proclaimed in the priestly codes themselves. The Teacher of Righteousness and his close circle did precisely this by associating themselves with the economically poor people and living their kind of life.<sup>117</sup> They saw themselves as organizing the “meek” who are “trampled,” united

---

ship’s) respective social concerns: Philo insists on frugality, the lack of luxury, the κοινωνία. Josephus stresses the equality of status.

<sup>113</sup>Making the control of utensils, tools, foods, and clothes, easier in regard to these rules. The community as a whole could not be isolated: K. B. Starkova, “The Qumran Community and the External World,” *Palestinskii Sbornik* 25, fasc. 88 (1974) 67–72 (in Russian; short English summary). Indeed, the limits traced between the community and outsiders were not quite as “impermeable” as F. Schmidt thinks them to have been: “Traqué comme un loup,” *ASSR* 53 (1982) 13. Some of the members obviously had contacts with nonmembers, *CD* 13.14–16, even Gentiles, *CD* 12.9–11.

<sup>114</sup>See D. L. Mealand, “Community of Goods at Qumran,” *TZ* 31 (1975) 129–39. The legal system at Qumran, in L. Schiffman’s opinion, shows that private property remained in force, though communal use existed: *Sectarian Law in the Dead Sea Scrolls*.

<sup>115</sup>This was a Biblical notion: see especially Ps 25.8–9, 14; Sir 3.20 (Hebrew), a development of Am 3.7; see Légasse, *Jésus et l’enfant*, 163.

<sup>116</sup>What these reasons were can only be guessed. On apocalypics as a movement of protestation, see Schmidt, *ASSR* 53 (1982) 5–21: apocalypics was not only a literary phenomenon whose corpus has too often been exclusively defined in relation to the canonic corpus, but also the expression of widely felt social tensions. See the bibliography quoted there, in particular J. J. Collins, “Jewish Apocalyptic Against Its Hellenistic Near Eastern Environment,” *BASOR* 220 (1975) 27–36.

<sup>117</sup>One index of this life of poverty is the single dish which they receive at meals: Josephus, *BJ* 2.130.

With them that are eager in righteousness ...  
 To bring up from the tumult together  
 All the poor faithful men.<sup>118</sup>

The texts are certainly vehement against those priestly families that unjustly increase their wealth.<sup>119</sup>

As we have suggested, the establishment of Qumran was an attempt to return to a more rigid, and perhaps older, form of society, exclusively centered on the Temple. It was a return to a Temple-state economy, in which there was no other property than God's and in which all wealth was centralized.<sup>120</sup> The rigidity and formalism of the hierarchy together with the severity of punishment for sins also suggest a return to a type of extreme patriarchal and monarchical authority.<sup>121</sup> Extreme severity and benevolence were not necessarily in contradiction. The "simple folk" were protected by the "Wise," as in the Bible: protected in a moral way, but also against the greed of still more terrible masters and against the unsettling aspects of Hellenization<sup>122</sup> in return for some form of contribution.

As already pointed out, this association of poverty and piousness was not without precedents. It was at the root of the establishment of the priest and Levite classes in Israel. It took other forms in history, for instance with the *fuqarā'*, the mendicant dervishes of early Islam,<sup>123</sup> or the Mendicant Orders of the Middle Ages, but especially with some of the first believers in Jesus, to whom we shall soon turn our attention.

<sup>118</sup> *IQH* 5.21–2, translation by J. Baumgarten and M. Mansoor, "Studies in the New Hodayot, 3," *JBL* 75 (1956) 107–8. Dupont-Sommer translates: "Et c'est parmi les humbles, dans les balayures que [tu as placé] mon pied, parmi ceux qui sont prompts pour la justice." (*Les écrits esséniens*, 231).

<sup>119</sup> E.g., *IQpHab* 8.3–13; 9.3–7, perhaps a reference to the collection of state taxes by the high priest?

<sup>120</sup> The Copper Scroll also may be an indication of this: text in J. T. Milik, *DJD*, 3:199–302. Its origin and meaning are in dispute. Though found in Cave 3, the Copper Scroll may have had nothing to do with the Qumran community. Is it a fanciful list (Milik) or does it refer to real treasures? The bibliography on the question is given in J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Major Publications and Tools for Study* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1977), 141–43. Also Schürer, *History*, 3/1:467–69.

<sup>121</sup> Formulated, e.g., by Ben Sira, *Sir* 33.25–8; see S. K. Eddy, *The King Is Dead, Studies in the Near Eastern Resistance to Hellenism*, 334–31 B.C. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), chap. 8 and 9, esp. 192, 246–50, 254 (but the reasons given on p. 247 for the birth of the Essene movement are hardly satisfactory).

<sup>122</sup> Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1:73–74.

<sup>123</sup> Art. "faḳīr," in *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, 2:776: in the Koran 2.273, the *fuqarā'* may be an allusion to the Ahl al-Suffa living in the prophet's mosque, praying and meditating.

## “POOR” IN INSCRIPTIONS

A few Jewish inscriptions, in Aramaic and in Greek, speak of individuals as poor. The first inscription, written in paleo-Hebrew script, was found at Giv’at ha-Mivtar near Jerusalem<sup>124</sup> and probably comes from the late Second Temple period. The translation is as follows:

I, Abba, son of the priest Ele-  
az(ar), son of Aaron the elder, I  
Abba, the oppressed and the perse-  
cuted, who (was) born in Jerusalem  
and went into exile to Babylon, brought (back to Jerusalem) Matta-  
thi(ah), son of Jud(ah); and I buried him in the  
cave which I had acquired by the writ.<sup>125</sup>

The third line (“Abba, the oppressed and the persecuted”) presents difficulties in the reading and in the interpretation. The reading on which the present translation is based seems to impose itself on epigraphic grounds.<sup>126</sup> The word for “oppressed,” *ma’anyeh*, may also mean “made poor,” “humiliated.” In what sense could this Abba speak of himself as “oppressed and persecuted?” One could see the sentence as a formula common for those gone to Babylonia at the end of the Second Temple period and simply expanding on the idea of exile as a calamity even though they may have lived there of their own free will.<sup>127</sup> It would not refer to any other hardships particular to Abba. On the contrary, one might interpret these words, formulaic or not, as applying to some specific circumstances of Abba’s life, perhaps to his membership in a community of “Poor.” Or Abba was a Sadducee

<sup>124</sup>E. S. Rosenthal, “The Giv’at ha-Mivtar Inscription,” *IEJ* 23 (1973) 72–81, for decipherment, philological and historical aspects. J. Naveh, “An Aramaic Tomb Inscription Written in Paleo-Hebrew Script,” *IEJ* 23 (1973) 82–91, for epigraphical aspects. See pl. 19 in the same issue of *IEJ*.

<sup>125</sup>Translation in J. A. Fitzmyer and D. J. Harrington, *A Manual of Palestinian Aramaic Texts* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978), 169 (no. 68). Slightly different translation in Naveh, *IEJ* 23 (1973) 82–83; text: [seven lines of Hebrew text]

<sup>126</sup>Rosenthal comes to this conclusion, *IEJ* 23 (1973) 75, as does Naveh, *IEJ* 23 (1973) 91.

<sup>127</sup>It may have been influenced by the traditional reading of the book of *Lamentations* on the 9th of Av, in commemoration of the fall of the First Temple. See, e.g., Lam 1.6–7 (cf. 3.19): “They fled without strength before the pursuer (*rodef*). Jerusalem remembers in the days of her affliction (*yemey anyah*) and bitterness.” Naveh, *IEJ* 23 (1973) n. 47, suggests that the inscription may offer an early variant of a formula often used by the copyists of Mandaic manuscripts, and given in R. Macuch, *Handbook of Classical and Modern Mandaic* (Berlin: W. De Gruyter, 1965), 122: “I poor, humble and persecuted” (*ana ania udania umradpa*).

who suffered for his views. An argument in favor of his sectarian outlook is the fact that the Aramaic words were engraved in paleo-Hebrew script, a practice rare in this period and opposed by the heirs of the pharisaic movement.<sup>128</sup>

Two Greek inscriptions found at Beth She‘arim use the epithet *πενιχρός*.<sup>129</sup> One was found in the town area and the other in the necropolis. They belonged to the tombs of a Jewish family from Palmyra and are to be dated to the third century C.E., either before or after Palmyra’s fall and destruction. The first one refers to a “Samuel, son of Isaac the poor, son of Anastasios.” The second one speaks of “[the tomb] of Samuel, son of Germanus the poor.” It was apparently a laudatory epithet transmitted as a family tradition. Does it allude to a special way of life, perhaps “frugal, God-fearing,” as the editor suggests?<sup>130</sup> In any event, it is important to note that the epithet is “unparalleled in inscriptions.”<sup>131</sup> Only Jews seem to have honored themselves as “poor.” The meaning may not be very different from “pious.”<sup>132</sup>

Similarly, a trilingual inscription on an ossuary discovered in 1905 in Jerusalem qualifies a certain ‘Anin as “Poor” (*‘anyah*):

(*Hebrew*) Ḥanin, the Bashanite  
 (*Greek*) Anin, the Scythopolitan  
 (*Aramaic*) 1. Joseph, son of ‘Anin, the poor man;  
 2. the father buried the son.<sup>133</sup>

<sup>128</sup>Naveh, *IEJ* 23 (1973) 83, 91: a Samaritan origin is probably to be disregarded, considering the place of the inscription and its content.

<sup>129</sup>M. Schwabe and B. Lifschitz, *Beth She‘arim*, vol. 2: *The Greek Inscriptions* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1974), 79, 193, nos. 99 and 206. No. 99 can be found in J. B. Frey, *CIF* 2.1123 (p. 205). No. 206 was also published by B. Lifschitz, *RB* 68 (1961) 410–11. See J. and L. Robert, *Bulletin épigraphique* (1962) 207 (no. 314).

<sup>130</sup>Lifshitz, *Beth She‘arim*, 2:77, 79.

<sup>131</sup>*Ibid.*, 77. Indeed, I have not found another instance of *πένης*, *πενία*, *πενιχρός*, or *πτωχός* in J. and L. Robert’s *Bulletin épigraphique* (see *Index du bulletin épigraphique* established by the Institut F. Courby for the years 1956–70), or in other collections of inscriptions.

<sup>132</sup>E.g., *CIF* vol. 2.1161 (Beth She‘arim): Ἰακὼ ὄσ[ι]ος υἱὸς Σαμουήλου ὀσίου.

<sup>133</sup>J. A. Fitzmyer and D. J. Harrington, *A Manual of Palestinian Aramaic Texts* (1978), 182–83, 246–47 (no. 145). “The Aramaic part seems to have been added later to the Hebrew and Greek inscriptions” (Fitzmyer, p. 246). Text: [one line of Hebrew] / ‘Anin Σκυθοπολείτης / [two lines of Hebrew]

## THE “POOR” IN JERUSALEM

In two famous passages, the apostle Paul refers to the *πτωχοί* or the *πτωχοί τῶν ἀγίων τῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ*, for whom a collection was proceeding.<sup>134</sup> The formula has often been understood as a self-designation or even a title for the first Christian community.<sup>135</sup> But in order to infer this, the texts have been oversolicited.<sup>136</sup> At issue is the social composition of the Church: Was it entirely made up of poor people (voluntary or not), or were the “Poor” a particular group within the Church, or even on the margins of the Church? Whatever the solution adopted, many commentators seem to accept as a fact that this poverty in the Jerusalem church was in relative contrast to the wealth of Hellenistic communities converted by Paul and others. The relief sent to the mother church would simply have been a question of charity.<sup>137</sup> But conclusions would be less hastily drawn if sufficient attention were paid to the possible meaning of “poor” in contemporary Palestinian Judaism.

In Paul’s epistles themselves, a number of elements show that it was not only a question of temporary or permanent relief of an impoverished community. First, Paul presents it as a due: to collect material goods for Jerusalem was actually to pay back the spiritual goods coming from Jesus and the community of origin.<sup>138</sup> But he takes great care to speak the language of Greek communities when speaking of this collection: he presents it at times as a relationship between equals, at other times as a service, or a liturgy.<sup>139</sup> Such liberalities will bring forth more wealth and hence the possibility of even more liberalities, which meant the possibility of outshining ev-

<sup>134</sup> Gal 2.10; Rom 15.26; cf. 1 Cor 16.1–4; 2 Cor 8 and 9; Acts 11.29 for an earlier collection.

<sup>135</sup> E.g., art. *πτωχός*, in *TDNT*, 909, following K. Holl, “Der Kirchenbegriff des Paulus in seinem Verhältniss zu dem der Urgemeinde,” in idem, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 2: *Der Osten* (Tübingen: 1928; reprint. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1946), 59.

<sup>136</sup> See L. E. Keck in his articles, “The Poor Among the Saints in the New Testament,” *ZNW* 56 (1965) 100–29, and “The Poor Among the Saints in Jewish Christianity and Qumran,” 57 (1966) 58–74; J. A. Fitzmyer adopted the same position in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 2:240, 329, except concerning Qumran evidence, minimized by Keck (see n. 76 above). [check]

<sup>137</sup> Art. *πτωχός*, in *TDNT*, 909: “designed to alleviate the widespread suffering in the primitive church;” also Fitzmyer, *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*: “a term for the needy among the Christians in Jerusalem.” G. Theissen, on the contrary, thinks that “poor” had a religious meaning: *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, 34–35 and n. 26.

<sup>138</sup> Rom 15.27: see K. Holl, “Der Kirchenbegriff.”

<sup>139</sup> 2 Cor 8.13 (*ἰσότητος*; it is a *διακονία*: Rom 15.25; 2 Cor 8.4; 9.12ff.; *κοινωνία*: Rom 15.26–27; 2 Cor 8.4; 9.1, 13; *λειτουργία*: 9.12.

everyone else.<sup>140</sup> Second, he appears very anxious not only to see the collection performed and to see it yield excellent results but also to have it accepted in Jerusalem.<sup>141</sup> The acceptance of the gifts in Jerusalem was apparently based on particular criteria on which Paul is silent. To his Greek audience, he can only refer to Greek values of the time and he therefore speaks of a test that will demonstrate their submissive acceptance of the Gospel.

But how was this collection viewed in Jerusalem? It appears to be contradictory that the Church in Jerusalem would ask Paul “to remember the poor”<sup>142</sup> and yet could refuse the collection. Why would they do so? Any answer to this question can only be tentative since we know very little of the various groups within the early church. It might well be that a personal hostility to Paul is sufficient explanation. Certain members of the Jerusalem community may have wished to have their own agents, as previously in Antioch,<sup>143</sup> and Paul was anxious to show that the trust placed in him gave better than expected results. Other avenues are open to investigation. There may have been a problem of purity in accepting gifts and money from dubious sources, for example, from the Gentiles.<sup>144</sup> One must also remember the special position of proselytes of Gentile origin in regard to the Temple. The tradition was that philanthropy could bring atonement to the Gentiles as sin offerings did to the Jews.<sup>145</sup> Proselytes were asked to fulfill the traditional Jewish legal duties to the poor.<sup>146</sup> They were even asked to impoverish themselves for the sake of the Torah.<sup>147</sup> In other words, proselytes had to prove their willingness in very specific gestures.

We may now return to the problem of the identity of “the poor of the saints in Jerusalem.” We have tried to show that these poor were not only,

<sup>140</sup> 2 Cor 9.6ff.; 8.2ff. (the Macedonian church as a great competitor); the first part of this theme was traditional in Judaism, but not the second.

<sup>141</sup> Rom 15.31; 2 Cor 9.13.

<sup>142</sup> Gal 2.10.

<sup>143</sup> Acts 11.29; Holl, “Der Kirchenbegriff,” 61, has suggested that the timing of this collection during a famine (“in the days of Claudius”) indicated that the Jerusalem community had special prerogatives. But the famine may have been restricted geographically, see above, p. 50. [check]

<sup>144</sup> *mSheq.* 1.5; *mBets.* 3.2. Another, more specific, reluctance may have existed: these *πρωχοί*, who seem to have given prayer a special place (see Paul in 2 Cor 9.16) may not have wished to pray for the uncircumcised.

<sup>145</sup> *Bar.* in *bBB* 10 b. See Bammel, art. *πρωχός*, in *TDNT*, 901.

<sup>146</sup> *tPeʿab* 4.18 about Monobazus who “ruined” himself by his philanthropy to the poor. His name itself allowed puns on his “wasting” of his wealth. See n. 360 in Chapter 1. [check]

<sup>147</sup> *bYev.* 4.7a.

or necessarily, defined by their physical needs. In fact, the word *πτωχός* that Paul uses in his references to them is not part of his usual vocabulary of poverty.<sup>148</sup> If we bring to bear the evidence adduced in the rest of this chapter on the special status of poverty in Judaism, a more complex picture emerges. My conjecture is that they were only a part of the church in Jerusalem. Their poverty was first and foremost a complete dependence on God. In practical terms this meant living around the Temple and spending much time in prayer, which in turn meant the entrusting of possessions to designated overseers in the community. Perhaps this group can be identified with the community around James. They must have enjoyed considerable authority in the Jesus movement as a whole, an authority based on their life around the Temple and Jesus' family. Their prayers for their benefactors were probably thought to carry great weight.<sup>149</sup> It would not be surprising if non-Jews had to pay more to obtain the same spiritual benefits, while at the same time their culture may have been less predisposed to recognize the special authority of distant *πτωχοί*. The requirement must have appeared to the new churches as a form of tithing. Indeed, notwithstanding its irregularity and external form of "voluntary gift," this is what it was, as a comparison with the practice of other Jewish groups indicates.<sup>150</sup>

## JEWISH CHRISTIANITY

The developments that can be reconstructed from various sources on Jewish Christianity<sup>151</sup> also show their non-Greek character. In these various move-

<sup>148</sup> Also found in 2 Cor 6.10 and Gal 4.9; he uses Hellenistic categories: *ἀδυνατός*, *ἄσθενής*, etc. See Rom 12.7ff.; 2 Cor 8.14; Gal 6.10; the distinction between rich and poor is absent from the famous passage on equality in Christ, Col 3.11; his social vocabulary is akin to that of Josephus, on which see the discussion that follows. The challenge created by the use of the word *πτωχός* in reference to the faithful brings out the best in Paul's rhetorical gifts: 2 Cor 8.9. On the social context of Paul's letters, see W. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 65–66.

<sup>149</sup> 2 Cor 9.14. Compare the development below on the justification of their social position by Torah scholars.

<sup>150</sup> See Holl, "Der Kirchenbegriff," 61. Collections for the Sages and Torah scholars also took place at different intervals and in many forms: see A. Oppenheimer, *The Am ha-Aretz* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 45–51; Strack-Billerbeck, 3:316–18. It could not be presented as what it really was. The traditional justifications of tithing in Judaism (holiness of the beneficiaries, signified by particular forms of piety and purity, often called "poverty") could not be used very easily with a Greek audience.

<sup>151</sup> A term resisting precise definition in spite of persistent efforts: see M. Simon and A. Benoit, *Le Judaïsme et le christianisme antique* (Paris: P.U.F., 1968), 258–74. What Jerome

ments about which the sources are so sparse and laconic, the word *‘evyon* is central, whereas *πτωχός* does not appear (not in Acts either, when speaking of the primitive community). *‘Evyon* appears only in its Greek forms, first as an honorable title, later as something that Greek Christians do not wish to understand.<sup>152</sup> The Greek transliteration of the Hebrew word, a title, was felt to be preferable to the use of *πτωχός* in the Greek world. To be poor was a calamity everywhere, but it was particularly vilified among the Greeks, as will be shown. To present oneself as a *πτωχός* would have been to invite sarcasm. This is evidenced also in the early third-century Pseudo-Clementines, where *πένης* (the poor hardworking person) is the word considered proper for a Christian, against the *πτωχός* of the Beatitudes.<sup>153</sup> This text originated in a Greek milieu, even though influenced by Jewish Christianity,<sup>154</sup> that cannot picture itself as beggarly, or indecently poor. The same attitude is adopted in the Shepherd Hermas.<sup>155</sup>

Among Jewish believers in Jesus, on the other hand, *‘evyon* had become a title for an important group. There are problems with identifying these Ebionites and the *πτωχοί* of Rom 15.26 and Gal 2.10. Yet, even if a direct filia-

---

said of Ebionites still seems to apply to “Judeo-Christians” in general, at least in history books: “Wishing to be both Jews and Christians, they succeeded in being neither Jews nor Christians,” in *Letters* 89 (74).4, 2nd part (to Augustine).

<sup>152</sup>Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 1.26.2; 3.11.17; 3.21.1; 4.33.4; 5.1.3; the first known attestations of the slandering explanation of the term are in Origen, *De principiis*. 4.3.8 (GCS 22.334); *Commentarii in Matthaeum* 16.12 (GCS 40.512); *In Genesim homiliae xvi* 3.5 (GCS 29.44); these attacks were often repeated later (e.g., Epiphanius, *Panarion* 30.17.1f).

<sup>153</sup>*Homiliae* 15.10.4: πλὴν ὁ διδάσκαλος ἡμῶν πιστοὺς πένητας ἐμακάρισεν, καὶ αὐτοὺς οὐχ ὡς παρεσχηκότας τι (οὐδε γὰρ εἶχον), ἀλλ’ ὅτι μὴδὲν ἀμαρτάνοντες: B. Rehm and F. Paschke, *Die Pseudoklementinen*, 1: *Homilien*, GCS, 42:217. In *Homiliae* 2.20.2, the daughter of the Syro-Phoenician woman, though having the *πολιτεία*, marries a poor Christian (*πένης*). Cf. Peter’s self-description in *Homiliae* 12.6.7: his poverty (i.e., *πενία*, *κακουχία*) has prepared him for the tribulations of a preacher; this passage recommends that everyone keep his social status. Similar encouragements to accept “poverty” (*penuriae tolerantia*) are found in *Recognitiones* 2.28.3.

<sup>154</sup>For the date and a defense of the position that there are strong Judeo-Christian influences in these books, see O. Cullmann, *Le problème littéraire et religieux du roman pseudo-clémentin* (1930); J. Daniélou, *Nouvelle histoire de l’Eglise*, vol. 1: *Des origines à Grégoire le Grand* (Paris: Seuil, 1963), 38; against this position, see Keck, *ZNW* 57 (1966) 59–66, quoting the literature; for the relationship of the texts quoted with Mt 5.3, see G. Strecker, *Das Judenchristentum in den Pseudoklementinen* (TU 70) (Berlin, 1958), 123 (a second edition of this work appeared in 1982).

<sup>155</sup>*Similitudes* 2.5: *πτωχός* is opposed once to *πλούσιος*, in 2.4, at the beginning of the parable, but this opposition is immediately translated in the following commentary as that of *πένης* to *πλούσιος*.

tion cannot be established with certainty, the common features are striking enough.<sup>156</sup> Apart from the name<sup>157</sup> and from the comparable attachment to traditional Jewish Law,<sup>158</sup> there is also the presence of a theology typical of Palestinian communities.

The overriding concern of Ebionites was to recognize only one God. A complete submission to divine will was the necessary step for an ecstatic knowledge of God.<sup>159</sup> This entailed a “putting in common of wealth,” as in apostolic times,<sup>160</sup> and a stress on prayer. Poverty for Ebionites was not a consequence of this “putting in common of goods,” but rather a precondition, essentially a religious attitude before God. This belief in one God made it difficult to accept Jesus’ divinity as that of the son of God. Instead, they saw him as the only man having fulfilled the Law, the true prophet.<sup>161</sup> This accords with the “ascending christology” attributed to the first Jewish-Palestinian followers of Jesus.<sup>162</sup> It can certainly be understood in the first and second centuries as a faithfulness to Judaism—to friends, relationships, and families, in very troubled times. To what extent such views implied the type of rigid social hierarchy developed for instance at Qumran is difficult to say. They certainly did not imply any social anarchy and could be the mark

<sup>156</sup> See J. A. Fitzmyer, art. “Ebionites,” in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, 4:33. Keck, *ZNW* 57 (1966) 55–66, has argued against too easily accepting a direct lineage, against H. J. Schoeps, *Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums* (Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr, 1949); Daniélou, *Nouvelle histoire de l’Eglise*, 1:60, 88–89, also argues that Ebionites did not originate in the Jerusalem community (because, according to him, the latter was orthodox from the beginning). See also M. Simon and A. Benoit, *Judaïsme et christianisme antique*, 262ff.

<sup>157</sup> There is a difficulty in that *evyon* was usually translated by πένης or ἐνδεής in the Septuagint, whereas πτωχός represented ‘any. Symmachus, who may have belonged to the sect (Eusebius, *HE* 6.17), translated *evyon* as πτωχός only once, *Is* 41.17; see above, n. 29. [check]

<sup>158</sup> Circumcision, the Sabbath, turning toward Jerusalem when praying: Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum* 33; Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 1.26.2; Hippolytus, *Philosophoumena* 7.34; 10.22; Origen, *Contra Celsum* 2.1; 5.61; Eusebius, *HE* 3.27; 6.17.

<sup>159</sup> See passages quoted in Fitzmyer, art. “Ebionites,” in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, 4:36–40.

<sup>160</sup> Epiphanius, *Panarion* 30.17; but no trace of it in the *Pseudo-Clementines*.

<sup>161</sup> Hippolytus, *Philosophoumena*, 7.34. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 30.18; Eusebius, *HE* 3.27.

<sup>162</sup> G. Theissen, *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), 24–30; J. H. Schütz, in his introduction to Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, 13. On this, see also M. J. Suggs, *Wisdom, Christology, and Law in Matthew’s Gospel* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), esp. 99–127. Wisdom speculation was a major current in Matthew’s environment. Matthew’s presentation of Jesus as the incarnation of wisdom and the embodiment of Torah was a daring step in contrast to those “by whom Jesus was viewed simply as the last in the long line of wisdom’s representatives” (p. 130). Suggs thinks that the latter belonged to circles around the so-called Q source (p. 97).

of an extreme patriarchalism. Any social radicalism they may have meant took the form of a return to, or deepening of, traditional Jewish values: purity, justice, compassion.

#### CONCLUSION ON THE EXPLICIT VOCABULARY OF POVERTY

The Hebrew Bible clearly differentiated between the poor defined socially, as oppressed, subject, or of humble condition, and the poor as characterized by physical needs. The Septuagint was aware of this difference, in spite of appearances to the contrary caused by the principles of translation involved.

This same difference vanished, at least in an explicit fashion, in Qumran texts, in the Gospels, among early followers of Jesus in Palestine, and in early, mostly halakhic, rabbinic documents. One may speculate that the difference became obscured by the religious connotation equally applied to *‘evyon* and *‘any*. Another reason, socially derived, might be that a major opposition between the rich and the poor, as well as new forms of dependency, arose in Hellenistic and Roman times.<sup>163</sup>

In the Hebrew scriptures, the divine protection granted to poor people led to a constant elaboration of the words describing them. With their economic and social content now hidden, these terms of poverty were adopted at Qumran and in early Palestinian Christianity. An examination of some of the Dead Sea scrolls suggests that the “Poor” had a socially restricted meaning at Qumran that was not directly based on economic conditions. Such expressions as “the simple folk” may in fact have included members poorer, economically speaking, than the inner circle of the Qumran community. In the Gospels, “poor” appears to have had a wider meaning, from the social point of view. But the sketchy information that has come to us on the *πτωχοί* in Jerusalem and on the later Ebionites suggests a restriction of the social meaning of “poor” in particular directions.

Another conclusion is that the Hebrew-Aramaic vocabulary of poverty did not translate well into Greek. From the social point of view particular to us moderns, *‘any* would correspond to *πένης*, as is obvious from the Hebrew Bible itself and also from the Mishnah and other halakhic texts. But it was authoritatively translated as *πτωχός*, perhaps in a reaction of Diaspora Jews to surrounding Greek values. Since *‘any* was also susceptible of a religious meaning, more readily apparent, or refined, in *‘anaw*, this polysemy

<sup>163</sup>And not, as before, between the poor and the unjust, unrighteous, evil ones, etc. The opposition between rich and poor, however, did not begin to be formalized until the third century C.E.; see nn. 175, 259. [check]

of *ʿany/ʿanaw* was carried over to *πτωχός*,<sup>164</sup> presenting Greek Christians with particular problems, and solutions. What happened within Judaism, namely a broadening and deepening of the meaning of *ʿany* that could at times obscure its social value, was also to take place in Greek communities, perhaps with less success.

The immediate problem was that texts casting a *πτωχός* in a favorable light were shocking to the Greeks, who immediately began to interpret these passages. Many authors of Greek Christian literature sought to explain away the *πτωχός* of the Gospels and to harmonize the Beatitudes and their own view of society. One solution was to spiritualize the meaning of the word in infinitely varied ways. The other was to retranslate it as *πένης*, attaching to it values already present in Hellenistic society, albeit not developed. Both these solutions, though perhaps inspired by less-than-radical thinking, captured part of the Hebrew-Aramaic background of *πτωχός*. Whatever the solution chosen, the attention that Greek and Roman Christians felt impelled to pay to the *πτωχός* of the Gospel helped focus, and even precipitate, the timid movements that their society was making toward the recognition of the worth of poor working people of whatever status and eventually of beggars. But the influence that the Jewish view of poverty would have on Greco-Roman civilization through Christianity followed a rather meandering course. In order to appreciate better this influence, one must compare Jewish and Greek thoughts on poverty in a wider context, which shall follow separately.

### 5.3 GREEK AND JEWISH VIEWS ON POVERTY AND WEALTH

#### THE CONTRAST

The educated ranks who embodied the values of Judaism and Hellenism, those who had access to Torah learning or the highest steps of Greek education, present views on poverty that seem completely at variance with each other.<sup>165</sup> Poverty does not belong to the catalog of virtues proposed as goals worthy of the young Greek.<sup>166</sup> Nowhere does the Greek ideal appear to be concerned with poverty. The furthest it goes is to say that poverty is not a vice.

<sup>164</sup> *πτωχός* being made to correspond to a word that also meant *πένης, ταπεινός, πρᾶς*.

<sup>165</sup> See Bolkestein, *Wohltätigkeit*, 418ff. Contra: Den Boer, *Private Morality in Greece and Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 165–66.

<sup>166</sup> Festugière, *L'idéal religieux*, 32–33.

In many Jewish circles, on the contrary, poverty had always been extolled as a virtue, from Biblical times on, or at least as an honorable burden. Of course, for Jews too, as for anyone, poverty was a calamity to be feared. But it was nonetheless revered as something that made one close to God, something that even suited Israel. We have seen that it could become a title of honor given to, or appropriated by, those not most affected by misery. It also was used to sanctify the beginnings of famous Sages, as will be seen: it was felt to be a necessary quality for them.

This diametrical opposition concerning poverty as a theme did not disappear in the confrontation with the real poor, although it must be qualified in several respects. The Greeks considered any mention of poverty to be demeaning and implying lack of culture, greed, foul speech, or evil manners in general.<sup>167</sup> Jews, on the contrary, could not invoke poverty to slander an enemy.

The difference between Greek and Jewish attitudes is brought out sharply in the writings of those Greek or Roman authors who spoke with disgust of the sight of beggars and petitioners crowding synagogue courtyards in various cities of the Mediterranean. Artemidorus of Ephesus, for instance, a soothsayer from the second half of the second century C.E., writes that “a synagogue and beggars (*μεταίται*) and all people who ask for gifts (*προίχεται*), and such as arouse pity (*οϊκτροί*), and mendicants (*πτωχοί*), foretell grief, anxiety and heartache to both men and women.”<sup>168</sup> Such remarks cannot be simply explained as understandable expressions of chauvinism or xenophobia.<sup>169</sup> The Greeks were equally contemptuous of their own, and marks of poverty were always seized upon in any attempt to sully an opponent. Celsus betrays prejudices common to educated Hellenes when he writes about Jesus that “he came from a Jewish village

<sup>167</sup>See Den Boer, *Private Morality in Greece and Rome*, 161. Poverty was considered to be a misfortune that corrupted man. This is also the view of many Church Fathers or a view that they report without directly approving. E.g., Origen, who agrees in *Contra Celsum* 6.16 that “The majority of them have very bad character”; John Chrysostom, taking up the defense of the poor, presents them as “slandered, cursed, ridiculed, called impudent.” (*Homiliae in Matthaeum* 35.3 = *PG* 57.409b). Both are quoted in R. M. Grant, *Early Christianity and Society* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1977), 88.

<sup>168</sup>*Onirocritica* 3.53, in: M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1980), 2:330; cf. Juvenal (first century C.E.), *Saturae* 3.296 (Stern, 99); Cleomedes (first or second century C.E.), *De motu circulari* 2.1.91 (Stern, 157–58).

<sup>169</sup>On the relationship between Greeks and Celts, Romans, Jews, and Iranians, see A. Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom*.

and from a poor country woman who earned her living by spinning . . . . Because he was poor (διὰ πενίαν) he hired himself out as a workman in Egypt.<sup>170</sup> In this instance, we can see the difference between the Greek and the Jewish conceptions. The Jewish accounts that may have served in part as a basis for Celsus's story did not openly use poverty to slander Jesus, although they certainly did not refrain from using harsh words. They focused rather on the impurity of his birth or in later texts indirectly cast shame upon him by mentioning occupations for Mary that were lowly and morally contemptible.<sup>171</sup> A mention of poverty was sufficiently discrediting in Greek eyes, as in Roman eyes, and this was one of the major criticisms against Christianity. But this is not true of Jews, who resorted to other devices in order to mark social class and rank.<sup>172</sup>

#### NUANCES

Yet the ease with which one draws the contrast may blind us to some similarities. On the Greek side, one must recall that many of the remarks of abuse were particularly directed at the πένης. Whereas the πτωχός, who was viewed with a mix of awe and fear, could become the object of pity,<sup>173</sup> the πένης was a participant in the race for status. For what mattered in the Greco-Roman world was status, achieved through the possession of landed property, good breeding, relationships, and virtue.<sup>174</sup> It was vividly felt by everyone, al-

<sup>170</sup> Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.28 (Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, 234, 266).

<sup>171</sup> See Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, 295. See *mYev.* 4.13; story of a Myriam who married a Greek soldier, or had him as a paramour, in *tSukk.* 4.284; *pSukk.* 55d; *bSukk.* 56b; most of these variants of the story seem to be late, but the theme appears to be traditional and the point in any case is that “poor” in these stories was not a term of abuse. See R. T. Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash* (1903; repr. Clifton, N.J.: Reference Book, 1966), 48.

<sup>172</sup> Josephus seems to have operated both keys. In the variegated portrait he draws of John of Gischala, *BJ* 2.585 alludes to the poverty of his origins as an incriminating factor: “Poor (πένης δέ) at the opening of his career, his penury had for long thwarted his malicious designs” (Thackeray’s translation in *LCL*). *BJ* 7.264, however, does not speak of his poverty, but of his impurity: see below, n. 259. [check] None of this is found in the *Vita* (e.g., 43ff.; 70ff.), where John is presented in less crude colors. John of Gischala was in fact from a well-to-do family, on terms of friendship with illustrious people, among them Simon, son of Gamaliel: *Vita* 190–92. On this, see G. Baumbach, “Zeloten und Sikarier,” *TLZ* 90 (1965) 73, quoted by Theissen, *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity*, 40.

<sup>173</sup> Den Boer, *Private Morality in Greece and Rome*, 165–67, for a few (literary) instances. Also A. R. Hands, *Charities and Social Aid in Greece and Rome* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1968), 78–81.

<sup>174</sup> However defined: beauty, courage, elegance, wisdom, and knowledge.

though it is not easy to express it in words. It attached to oneself regardless of the variations of one or another of its elements. The Greeks and the Romans, like other ancient peoples, paid great attention to a person's original status in various matters, including wealth.<sup>175</sup> Consequently, the loss of status was perceived as most terrible and in need of whatever correction could be applied.<sup>176</sup> A striking way to express this loss of status was to say of someone that he had become a *πτωχός*, although he might still have more economic resources than a working poor (*πένης*).

Such a feeling was adapted by some Greek fathers of the Church to the Scriptures before them. Thus Origen writes that "reportedly, a *πτωχός* is he who has fallen from wealth, whereas a *πένης* is he who earns his subsistence by toil. For Scripture says: *Rich people have become poor* (Ps 33.11 in LXX), and also: *For we have been brought very low* (Ps 78.8 in LXX)."<sup>177</sup> The case of the "fallen" seemed more terrible, and *πτωχός* was thought to be more fitting than *πένης* not only because it was commonly applied to the worst situations of poverty but especially because a *πτωχός* could move one to pity, at least in certain times and places. In this regard, one must remember that Greeks did not easily invoke pity because it implied an unequal relationship, something theoretically unacceptable.<sup>178</sup> It does not mean, of course, that pity was not felt. But the relative absence of expressions of pity may give Greek thought a more cruel edge than it really had. The "fallen" rich

<sup>175</sup>For instance, in the matter of punishments, their severity had less to do with the crime itself than with the dignity of the person involved. This becomes particularly true in the Severan period, when the new and slowly forming opposition between *honestiores* and *humiliores* brings about a variety of legal effects, the penalty for crime being modified in favor of the *honestior* (though *honestiores* and *humiliores* did not become juridically defined categories): G. Cardascia, "L'apparition dans le droit des classes d'*honestiores* et d'*humiliores*," *Revue historique du droit français et étranger* 28 (1950) 305–37, 461–85. Also E. Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique et pauvreté sociale à Byzance* (Paris: Mouton, 1977), 12–13. One instance among many of these inequities is given in the late *Historia Augusta, Alexander Severus*: "Moreover, if any man turned aside from the road into someone's private property, he was punished in the Emperor's presence according to the character of his rank"; Paul, *Sententiae* 5.21a; 22.1–6; 23.13–18.

<sup>176</sup>On this, see Hands, *Charity*, 32–34, 41. An example is Seneca, *De Beneficiis* 2.10; later, Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiae* 22; also Ambrose, *Expositio in Psalmum CXVIII, 17* (PL 15.1516).

<sup>177</sup>*Fragmenta in Psalmos, 111.6 = PG 12.1201 B*. This is also quoted by Didymus Alexandrinus (died 398) in his *Fragmenta in Psalmos, 111.6*. Basil has a slightly different account, *Regulae Brevius Tractatae* 262: "I consider that a *πτωχός* is he who falls from wealth into need; but a *πένης* is he who is in need from the first."

<sup>178</sup>Hands, *Charity*, 78ff., esp. 85 (about democratic cities); see also Th. Koehler, art. "Miséricorde," in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, 10:1314. See also Strack-Billerbeck, 1203–05.

of Greco-Roman cities apparently needed to appeal to this sort of feeling. They could usually count on the solidarity of the members of their social class, but had to guard themselves against a sometimes vengeful “mob.”<sup>179</sup> On the contrary, a poor man losing some of his usually meager possessions or his health remained a *πένης*, clinging to what was left of his status or honor as long as possible. If he was forced to renounce it and become a beggar, his chances of exciting pity were presumably much smaller than those of the rich man who had lost all, or some, of his former means.

The same sort of respect for status is apparent in Jewish sources. Poverty as the loss of property was especially striking.<sup>180</sup> This is most often amplified in numerous stories about rich people having lost their wealth and moving others to acts of charity. One such story represents Hillel providing an impoverished nobleman with all the attributes befitting his former station.<sup>181</sup> This is also exactly what Josephus reports having done in the case of Gentile aristocrats who fled Trachonitis.<sup>182</sup>

It is therefore clear that Greeks and Jews alike were particularly sensitive to their peers’ downfall from high status. But to return to our original question, the view that Judaism was apparently more considerate of poverty than Hellenistic thought must be qualified in other respects.

#### DISCOURSES ON POVERTY AND WEALTH IN RABBINIC JUDAISM

God was both just and the protector of the poor. Because these principles could not be touched, on what grounds could a process of justification of wealth and poverty take place? For an answer, we turn to Talmudic texts presenting views held by rabbis who often enjoyed a special position in their society.<sup>183</sup> Not only were they legal and exegetical authorities, but they were also not poor, at least in many instances. They appear to have been well

<sup>179</sup>There were altars of Pity in Greco-Roman cities, specifically for those rich people who had lost the means to their status: Hands, *Charity*, 85. See art. *ἔλεος*, in *RE*, 5:2320–21. Compare the way in which Josephus says he appealed to the feelings of pity of the mob, *Vita* 87–107, 123–24, 143–44.

<sup>180</sup>*tʿArakh*. 5.6; *pKeth*. 2.10.26d (a very interesting text describing the public degradation to which a person forced to sell a field was submitted). See also *tBekh*. 6.19. Cf. *bNed*. 64b: “he who has lost his property’, i.e., a man once wealthy, is one of the four to be regarded as dead.”

<sup>181</sup>*bKeth*. 67 b; Hillel himself is said to have been poor. On this theme, see following page. [check]

<sup>182</sup>*Vita* 113.

<sup>183</sup>See Chapter 4 for a description of the social hierarchy, and its justification.

provided, on the whole, with food, clothes, family, extensive social relationships (including disciples), possessions, knowledge, honors, and security in their position. What one wishes to specify, therefore, are the basic modes of discourse on poverty that were held by mostly rich rabbis and their dependents. But there is an obvious danger of distortion involved in abstracting their world-views, since what is described is not the developed thought of any one Sage. The synthetic view offered here is only a framework against which to test individual or isolated pronouncements.

One solution was to elaborate the concept of poverty in such a way as to sever it partly or even entirely from its material or social meaning. This was an age-old process by which the feelings accompanying real poverty had become part of a complex concept including humility, meekness, and piety.

We read that poverty had spiritual benefits: it could, for instance, lead someone to conversion.<sup>184</sup> It was thought to be a necessary step toward holiness, at least in some quarters. This process had been made apparent in words: *'anaw* and *'anawah* meant something like “humble” and “humility,” but had not entirely lost their connections to material poverty.

The elaboration of the concept allowed its appropriation by nonpoor and even by rich people. We have seen several examples of this use of poverty as a title in preceding pages. There were also stories of poverty told about famous Sages. Two prominent examples are those of Hillel and Aqiva, whose stories, as respectively reported in Babylonian and Palestinian sources, have all the appearances of a context to determine who was poorer.<sup>185</sup> This theme of the early poverty of Sages may have been influenced by Hellenistic tales.<sup>186</sup> It may have come about for the purpose of deflating possible criticism of the wealth accumulated by those rabbis, or rather their houses. The authority of the houses of Hillel and Aqiva was confirmed by such stories because of the traditional association of poverty and piety. This authority was essential in certain economic matters. It gave weight to decisions attributed to these Sages concerning, for instance, the minimum allocation of food to

<sup>184</sup>*b'Er.* 41b; Cf. *b'Er.* 21b (those suffering poverty will not see Gehinnom).

<sup>185</sup>Hillel: *bYom.* 35b; Aqiva in parallel passages to *bYom.* 35b: *ARN* 12 (B, ed. Schechter, p. 30; A, 6.15, ed. Schechter, p. 29) and *bNed.* 50a; see S. Safrai, “Tales of the Sages in the Palestinian Tradition and the Babylonian Talmud,” in *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 22 (*Studies in Aggadah and Folk-Literature*, ed. J. Heinemann and D. Noy) (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1971), 220ff.

<sup>186</sup>For studies of the relationship between Hellenistic rhetoric and rabbinic literature, see H. A. Fischel, *Rabbinic Literature and Greco-Roman Philosophy* (Leiden: Brill, 1973); idem, prolegomenon and bibliographical survey in *Essays in Greco-Roman and Related Talmudic Literature* (New York: KTAV, 1977), xiii–lxxvi.

the poor.<sup>187</sup> This “poverty” also could be made to justify the collection of tithes in the post-Temple period.<sup>188</sup> Tithes were normally reserved to priests and Levites, who were traditionally associated with the poor. The need that subsequent generations of scholars had of a solid basis for their own authority explains the competition between the two stories of Hillel and Aqiva.<sup>189</sup>

A risk inherent in these stories and in the elaboration of the concept was to make poverty such an imaginary thing that it would become a mockery. Real poverty, however, was always present, forcing a variety of answers. One could try to relativize the situations of poverty by saying that everybody was poor in one way or another, or by referring to great Sages, whose legendary beginnings were often very modest. But to carry such arguments to the extreme was tantamount to refusing to see poverty where it was. With this came the risk of separating oneself from the people. In that sense, the Essenes, the followers of Jesus, and the Ebionites were corrective movements in the opposite direction.

To justify a policy of indifference toward the economically poor, one could accept to see economic and social misery where it was, but find spiritual reasons for it. A thread running through the Bible and Rabbinic thought is that poverty was the wage of sin, whereas wealth rewarded innocence and piety.<sup>190</sup> But what was sin or impiety? In the thought of the rabbis, and presumably the people in general, sin was lack of observance of precepts, including those precepts given authority under the Oral Law. This could be applied to the whole country: Israel was poor, it was repeated, because it did not properly observe the commandments.<sup>191</sup> It was also applied to individuals.<sup>192</sup> An individual could be poor on account of

<sup>187</sup>See *mPe'ab* 8.5 and Palestinian Talmud, *ibid.*

<sup>188</sup>On this collection normally going to priests and Levites but benefiting Sages (even non-priests or non-Levites) perhaps as early as the Severan age, see Oppenheimer, *The Am ha-Aretz*, 42–51. Also Strack-Billerbeck, 3:316–18.

<sup>189</sup>S. Safrai, “Tales of the Sages,” assumes that the story of Hillel’s poverty was a legend, but would find its origin in his personality: “his humility and his unassuming nature obscured his noble descent.” (pp. 222–23).

<sup>190</sup>*LevR.* 34.7: bad dispositions bring about poverty. John Chrysostom justified the social order with the same argument: the variety of social situations is the result of sin. See E. Troeltsch, *Social Teaching of the Christian Church* (London: G. Allen, 1931), 127; compare p. 185, n. 62a.

<sup>191</sup>*Sifre Dt* 15.4,II: see n. 204 below. [check]

<sup>192</sup>In *Jn* 9.2, the question put to Jesus by the disciples seem to express a common reaction: “Who sinned? He or his parents?” Cf. *Lk* 13.2, concerning a blind man. See Strack-Billerbeck, 2:528–29. Cf. below, on *ammei ha-ares*.

his own sin, but he could also be the victim of his ancestors' sin. Conversely, one could explain a person's wealth not only by his own merit but also that of his fathers, epitomized by Abraham.<sup>193</sup> This mixed doctrine of personal merits and imputed merits of the fathers authorized some flexibility not only in the answer to the individual problem of salvation but also in the process of justification of the social structure. One was wealthy in the last resort on account of individual purity and Torah learning, as Abraham had been exceptionally God-fearing and rich. This connection with Abraham was sometimes expressed in genealogical terms.<sup>194</sup> Abraham was thus the figure at the center of the "social debate."<sup>195</sup>

A very important consequence of sin was impurity. Not all sin led to a visible state of impurity. It was still true nevertheless in several important areas of everyday life.<sup>196</sup> Here, sin was considered to bring about a state of impurity that could be communicated in various degrees and had to be contained, if not cured, by a host of measures. Sin so defined in measurable, physical terms was thought to cause poverty.

This notion could be used for purposes of social discrimination. As has been seen in some detail in the first two chapters,<sup>197</sup> poverty implied a certain physical appearance that could easily be interpreted as being impure. Consequently, to assert that sin led to poverty could become a convenient way of forgetting that the converse was in fact true: namely, that poverty came first, and sin was its consequence in several respects.<sup>198</sup> When he wished to

<sup>193</sup>*mQidd.* 4.14: wealth and poverty do not come from the occupation, but from merit (*zekhut*). Abraham's merit brought forgiveness to Israel's sins, *CantR.* 4.6. On this doctrine of merit, see J. Bowker's helpful comments in *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature: An Introduction to Jewish Interpretations of Scripture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 202–03, which refers to A. Marmorstein, *The Doctrine of Merits in Old Rabbinical Literature* (London: Oxford University Press, 1920; repr. New York: KTAV, 1968). See also E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977).

<sup>194</sup>Abraham was reputed to have adhered strictly to the Oral Law: *bNed.* 32a. For genealogical connections to Abraham, through David, see, for instance, *bKeth.* 62b and *pTa'an.* 4.2 (Hillel); see S. Safrai, "Tales of the Sages," n. 41. Strack-Billerbeck, 2:225ff.

<sup>195</sup>A good example is the story of Lazarus and the Rich Man in Lk 16.20ff. The story operated on the assumption that extreme poverty meant extreme distance from Abraham and extreme wealth the reverse.

<sup>196</sup>Major portions of the Talmud are devoted to these questions. For seminal studies on philosophical and anthropological aspects of purity, see nn. 216–17 below. [check]

<sup>197</sup>Pp. 23–25, 53, 67, 72–75, 83–85. [check]

<sup>198</sup>This does not mean that sin was "designed" in such a way that it kept poor people in their place. What I am trying to show is how a certain view of the world could be used by

show that nothing good could come from the city of Tiberias, a feeling perhaps shared by many Galileans, Josephus found it convenient to use this idea of an intimate connection between impurity and poverty.<sup>199</sup> A poor person could therefore be in a difficult position: without proper Torah intelligence and impure because poor, and yet asked to accept his misery as just punishment for these failures. As in the related case of Torah ignorance, to be discussed, a given social structure could thus be solidly and conveniently justified.

If this sort of reasoning were carried to its extreme, one could in fact avoid speaking of poor people as poor and simply refer to them as sinners, impure, ignorant, simpletons, bandits. Josephus was inclined to do this, as shall be seen at the end of the chapter. In the case of rabbinic literature, such sayings must be weighed against the idea that poverty has other causes also (cf. book of Job) and against other marks of genuine interest for the poor, their education, and their general welfare. Another consideration is that such a justification of poverty was in potential conflict with the “imaginary” reworking of the notion, as described previously. It was difficult to do both at the same time.

A more difficult problem was that this explanation of poverty was disturbed by reality. As in the past, it was necessary to explain why a virtuous man could also remain poor and an evil man become and remain rich. Easy but unsatisfactory replies to this question were to insist that people’s sins

---

some to their advantage.

<sup>199</sup> *AJ* 18.36–38. Josephus did not often appeal to the best in a reader’s instincts. He needed to defame the city whence came his then arch-rival Justus of Tiberias. Tiberias could not be seen as particularly impure, or at least not all of it. It had a synagogue where townspeople gathered on various occasions: *Vita* 276–77. The synagogue was supposedly visited at a later time by the Nasi, Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh (*m’Er.* 10.10; cf. also *tShab.* 13.2). It became a seat of learning in the third century C.E., ca. 235. Oppenheimer accepts the idea that the “ignorant and poor” would have easily come to settle in Tiberias, but without explaining why: *The Am ha-Aretz*, 204. There is no reason to accept at face value the declarations of aristocrats such as Josephus and some Torah scholars who would lead one to think that poor people were more accepting of impurity. Nor is there a need to doubt the historical reliability of Josephus’s account on the ground that the prohibition of settlement would normally apply only to priests (according to Klein, *Eretz ha-Galil*, 100–10, quoted in Oppenheimer, *The Am ha-Aretz*). The passage of *AJ* does not inform us on the degree of impurity of Tiberias and the impurity and poverty of its inhabitants, but rather on Josephus’s concerns and psychology as well as on those of Galileans (including the people at Tiberias, whom *Vita* 112–13, 149–54, present as hostile, on religious grounds, to the presence of two Gentile aristocrats in their midst).

were not all visible or to put more stress on the ancestors' sins.<sup>200</sup> This sort of explanation was based on the strong belief that piousness was normally rewarded with wealth.

Better answers were needed. With the belief in resurrection, a basic concept of the Pharisees and later the rabbis, a new solution could be offered. The balance of rewards not received in this life for piousness would accrue "in the world to come," whereas those unjustifiably rewarded with wealth in this world would be punished after their deaths.<sup>201</sup> As for many other problems they encountered, the Sages worked out the solution in terms of limits. It was thought that God gave evil rich men all their rewards in this life for some minuscule good deed so as not to reward them in the hereafter. Conversely, a pious poor person would receive all his rewards in the future world.<sup>202</sup> Piousness in spite of poverty was claimed to be a sure indication of God's favor and vice-versa. This could be applied to the situation of Israel and the nations. It was predicated on the belief that spiritual gifts in afterlife were without common measure in material goods.

Now it must be noted that the piousness of the poor was often understood as being of a precise kind. It consisted in knowing and following all the precepts of the Torah, as expounded by the Sages. To continue on this path despite poverty was heroic. Normally, however, one should not have to wait for rewards in the hereafter. Many sayings and stories grant a happy end of wealth and honor to these secret Torah heroes.<sup>203</sup>

This sort of answer was fragile and in permanent need of corrections. The association of wealth and impiety kept the door open to criticism of wealth per se. A dangerous interpretation was at hand, namely, that all rich could be suspected of hiding some impiety. The wealth of some rabbinic families, and of the Patriarchate in particular, presented problems not discussed in the open but in various oblique ways. One answer to this problem must have been the circulation of stories describing the poverty of ancestral authorities.

<sup>200</sup> As in Josephus's example, n. 199 above. [check]

<sup>201</sup> See texts gathered in Strack-Billerbeck, 2:230ff.

<sup>202</sup> See story of Bar Ma'an, quoted in Strack-Billerbeck, 2:231.

<sup>203</sup> *m.Av.* 4.9: "R. Jonathan said: He that fulfills the Law in poverty shall in the end fulfill it in wealth." Generalized in *Sifre Dt* 15.4: When Israel does the will of God, the poor are in the midst of other nations (Finkelstein, ed., 174, no. 114; see also p. 177).

CONCLUSION ON THE CONTRAST BETWEEN GREEK AND JEWISH  
THOUGHT

In spite of all the ambiguities, Jewish texts leave one with the impression of a greater respect for the poor. The reason for this respect, as already noted, is that God stood out most clearly in the Hebrew Scriptures as the protector of the poor.<sup>204</sup> The basic contrast between Jewish and Greco-Roman vocabularies does not necessarily mean a difference in the attitudes of the mind. We have already taken note that the downfall of people of standing, rather than a perhaps too habitual misery, elicited the compassion of Jew and Greek alike. In both cultures, moreover, there were restrictions on the responsibility felt toward the poor, though these were expressed in different ways.

In Judaism, efforts were exerted at times to introduce ambiguity into the relationship of the poor to God. Poverty could be isolated as a concept and interpreted in such a way as to make it applicable to a wide range of situations of fortune. It was also stressed that the poor were in fact far from God on account of their sins or their ignorance. Their poverty would have consisted primarily in the poverty of their relationship to God. Material poverty, a relatively unimportant result, was to be accepted as a punishment. Poor people of impeccable reputation were found only in stories. It followed that the real poor were not always recognized as such and could not easily come under God's protection—a protection embodied in traditional laws that allotted a given share of the produce to the poor.

This tendency within Judaism was countered in various ways. We shall see later how traditional laws were applied concerning the protection and help to be extended to the poor. We shall also see how fundamental the duty of charity was understood to be. Furthermore, the poor of Jewish society never lacked champions who, wishing to return to what they saw as the original meaning of the Torah, took up their cause, sometimes violently.

Greeks did not find such precautions necessary. They usually saw little problem, not only in drawing attention to modesty of means and beggary but also in attaching blame or shame directly to the poor themselves.

<sup>204</sup>Ex 22.24–26; 23.6ff.; Lev 19.9ff.; 25.36; Dt 14.28–29; 15.7–11; 16.11–14; 23.20ff.; 24.14–15; 26.12–13; Prov 29.14.

## 5.4 IMPLICIT VOCABULARY

In Jewish society, recognition of poverty or misery may therefore not have been as simple as one might think. The economic criterion, though important, at least legally speaking,<sup>205</sup> was not the only one. There was a tendency to restrict the use of “poor” to those people meeting certain religious requirements. But what of the other poor? They may have been the object of less flattering epithets. A puzzling one is *‘am ha-areš*, which will be studied presently, with a view toward determining its social meaning.

In Hellenistic cities, the official language also did not consider people according to a purely economic standard. Various political categories came into play, as will be seen in Josephus’s social vocabulary.

THE *‘AMMEI HA-AREŠ*

The word has a long history, studied elsewhere, but its Biblical aspects need not detain us here.<sup>206</sup> Modern scholars have studied the expression as used in Talmudic literature but without satisfactorily explaining both the social and religious connotations of the term.<sup>207</sup> In Talmudic literature, *‘am ha-areš* refers to people recognized through the following criteria: they were under suspicion of not respecting the precepts of the Torah, particularly in matters of produce tithing and ritual purity, and were ignorant of the Torah, meaning that they did not study it, especially in its oral form. Torah is here an all-inclusive term, meaning the written and oral traditions, at its most general. Some scholars have sought to identify a historical development in these criteria, supposing for instance that the stress had been first on the

<sup>205</sup>Mishnah usage appears neutral in this regard: see nn. 52–53 above. [check]

<sup>206</sup>See literature quoted by Oppenheimer, *The ‘Am ha-Aretz*, 10, n. 37. See standard dictionaries, especially the article by Oppenheimer, in *EJ*, 2:833–34; S. Talmon, “History of the ‘Am ha-areš in the kingdom of Juda,” *Beth Mikra* 31 (July 1967) 27–55 (in Hebrew); J. P. Weinberg, “Der ‘am hā’areš des 6–4 Jh. v. u. Z.,” *Klio* 56 (1974) 325–35. There is a brief discussion in M. Weber, *The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations*, trans. R. I. Frank (London: New Left Books, 1976) 223–25, of the situation of the “country people” subjugated to the authority of a reorganized theocracy after the return from Babylonian exile.

<sup>207</sup>The situation already noted by G. Alon, *The Jews in Their Land in the Talmudic Age* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1984), 2:677, still obtains. The most encompassing study of the question, giving texts, *status quaestionis*, and bibliography, is by Oppenheimer, *The ‘Am ha-Aretz*. Statement of his position in art. “Am ha-areš,” in *EJ*, 2:834–36. His conclusions are on the whole accepted by S. Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian* (Wilmington, Del.: M. Glazier, 1980), 305ff. Several important sources on the *‘ammei ha-areš* are quoted in Schürer, *History*, 2:382–87 (also with bibliography).

practice of precepts. The end of the Second Temple and the subsequent reshaping of Judaism around the synagogue, in their opinion, would have meant that the emphasis was then placed on knowledge of the Torah.<sup>208</sup> This may be correct, although it appears from the texts themselves that both aspects of the criterion, practice and knowledge of Torah, were used at the same time.<sup>209</sup>

In any case, the criterion used to declare someone an *‘am ha-areṣ* was explicitly religious, a fact that gave it a wide-encompassing character. The question is whether these religious criteria could not be made to serve other purposes. What did it mean to call someone an *‘am ha-areṣ*? Were his explicitly religious failings just that, or were they a general and simple way also to express other failings of a less spiritual nature.?

Several writers have sought to identify the *‘ammei ha-areṣ* with a distinct social group, or even a class, in the nineteenth-century sense of the word.<sup>210</sup> Other scholars, however, are agreed that it is impossible to give a social class definition of the term, at least a specific one, and think that the goal of the Pharisees and of the rabbis was purely religious or educational.<sup>211</sup> In his article for the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Oppenheimer spells out his position clearly. He supposes that there was a sharply defined Pharisaic Judaism, with well-defined goals that were religious and educational, not eco-

<sup>208</sup>E. E. Urbach, *The Sages, Their Concepts and Beliefs* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975), 58off.

<sup>209</sup>Oppenheimer's opinion, *The ‘Am ha-Aretz*, 114–17, is that the criterion of Torah learning was used after the destruction of the Second Temple and that both criteria (practice of purity rules and tithes; Torah knowledge) were used until the beginning of the period of the Amoraim. As the educated groups (judges or Sages) wielded less power in the courts, it would have become less possible to use ritual purity and tithes as a criterion: see *mSot.* 9.13, 15. Lack of knowledge of Torah would have become the main criterion. But it would make sense to envision the two criteria as working together (apart from the problem of identifying how well developed these notions were at different times). Purity, for instance, is a criterion that more people could satisfy, whereas knowledge of the Torah is less clear and more elitist in its application.

<sup>210</sup>For *‘ammei ha-areṣ* as “primarily small landowners and tenant farmers,” see L. Finkelstein, *The Pharisees* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962<sup>3</sup>), 2:754. Similar view already in C. McCown, *The Genesis of the Social Gospel* (New York: A. Knopf, 1929), 306ff. In a much more speculative vein, see S. Zeitlin, *The Rise and Fall of the Judaean State* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962), 1:196–99: *‘ammei ha-areṣ* were the “landed folk,” supporting the other class composed of priests and Levites, whereas a new “third class” of artisans and traders—urban—did not have to bear this burden. See also Zeitlin, *Judaean State*, 3:319–22 (after the first Jewish War).

<sup>211</sup>E.g., Oppenheimer, *The ‘Am ha-Aretz*, 18–22, 106. Urbach, *The Sages*, 583–84, 632; see Schürer, *History*, 2:389, n. 20.

nomic or social. The Pharisees and the *ḥaverim*, though separated from the *‘ammei ha-areṣ* by a “barrier,” were not in conflict with them. There was a measure of symbiosis and numerous contacts between the Pharisees and *ḥaverim* on the one hand, and the *‘ammei ha-areṣ* on the other. This author recognizes that the *‘am ha-areṣ* label was mostly given to lower-class people but thinks that the use of the same label for a few members of the aristocracy who also were lax in their religious observance makes a sociological analysis pointless.<sup>212</sup> In other words, this author accepts the argument given in the sources, namely that the *‘ammei ha-areṣ* failed to observe some commandments properly, and that the Sages’ major goal was religious and educational.<sup>213</sup>

We agree with Oppenheimer’s position if class is to be understood according to modern socialist thought, if the *‘ammei ha-areṣ* are seen as a proletariat. The main problem with Oppenheimer’s approach is that he does not explain why it so happened that those people failing in certain religious tasks “belonged mainly to the lower classes.” The fact that *‘am ha-areṣ* had some social meaning, and yet that the definition was strictly religious, poses a problem. Or should one assume that “lower classes,” on the whole, were less equipped in some ways to practice religious commandments? If so, it would be important to know the reason for this assumption. Is it not possible that something in the nature of these commandments made them difficult to follow for some and less so for others?<sup>214</sup> Furthermore, the *‘ammei ha-areṣ* led quite a rigorous religious life. They respected the sabbatical rest and the sabbatical years, as well as most of the purity rules, went on pilgrimage, prayed according to custom, and paid some of the tithes.<sup>215</sup>

Another explanation that can render a better account of all the sources must be sought. The arguments offered against a social identification of the *‘ammei ha-areṣ* can all be countered, provided that the social and religious spheres are not rigidly and arbitrarily separated. For such an explanation, one has to take one’s distance from the texts and period presently

<sup>212</sup> *EJ* 2:834.

<sup>213</sup> See *The ‘Am ha-Aretz*, 106: to prevent others from transgressing. Alon was more inclined to see a social content in the term, but hesitated to go too far: *The Jews in Their Land*, 2:677–80.

<sup>214</sup> One reason for not paying tithes was lack of resources, see Oppenheimer, *The ‘Am ha-Aretz*, 47–48, 69–70. See also Zeitlin, *Judaeian State*. The reason for not studying the Torah was lack of time, as the Sages were well aware.

<sup>215</sup> See Finkelstein, *The Pharisees*, 2:674, 756–58; Oppenheimer, *The ‘Am ha-Aretz*, *passim*. See, e.g., *pShab.* 2.7.5b (the *‘ammei ha-areṣ* respect the prescriptions).

studied and have a better perspective of one of the fundamental notions of Judaism, namely the concept of purity and impurity. It was apparently the basic criterion—the original one, at least—behind the term *ʿam ha-areš*, this being only one of its numerous applications in the history of the Jewish people.

In Judaism, purity was the way to reach holiness. But purity is and was something as elusive as meaning.<sup>216</sup> Purity and impurity were two sides of a vision of the world extending to all aspects of life. In practice, purity could not be seen directly. Impurity could be perceived only as the absence of purity, or “muddle” (*tameʿ*). Conversely, purity could be inferred only as the absence of impurity, called clarity (*tahorah*).<sup>217</sup> The process of redefinition concerning the limits was constant through the centuries, but the principle itself was not touched. Furthermore, purity could not be claimed openly as a personal quality but only inferred as a thought or a comment on the part of another party.<sup>218</sup> From a social point of view, claims to purity could only be established by, or rather about, someone laying himself open to impurity, that is, someone whose life, customs, clothing, food, and so forth, were such that any impurity could be noticed at once. In Judaism such a way of life was required of everyone.<sup>219</sup>

In its applications, this principle could be made to justify social hierarchies. This is also the case with the *ʿammei ha-areš*. In order to present a surface on which impurity could easily be detected, a minimum of material means was needed. In fact, with more means, one could present a wider or more perfect surface on which any spot could be immediately conspicuous. This was true in all aspects of life: food, clothing, occupations, marital and social relationships, cult.<sup>220</sup> In return for such risks, one could hope to reap

<sup>216</sup>The view put forward in the following paragraphs is partly inspired by the modern definition of grammar, on which see J. Gagnepain, in his important book *Du vouloir dire* (London: Pergamon, 1982), 9: Grammar is a capacity to analyze the world, a power possessed by every speaking person. It allows one to make meaningful statements, in the precise measure that it allows for incorrectness. This is also Paul’s definition of the Law in Rom 5.20ff. (bringing out grace and sin in a seemingly endless match).

<sup>217</sup>See V. Jankélévitch, *Le pur et l’impur* (Paris: Flammarion, 1960), 5–48. M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London: Routledge and Kegan, 1966), 49–57, and her remarks in conclusion to J. Neusner’s publication of his 1972–73 Haskell Lectures at Oberlin: *The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1973).

<sup>218</sup>Jankélévitch, *Le pur et l’impur*, 5–6.

<sup>219</sup>Paul, Rom 7.5ff. Women also were expected to aim at an ideal purity of life, but only in a subordinate fashion. See p. 88 above. [check]

<sup>220</sup>See previous chapters for details: pp. 23–25, 28, 76, 79, 83–85. [check]

the honor due to a life of purity and piety. The claim could not be made directly, and humility was even considered an essential virtue.<sup>221</sup>

The *‘ammei ha-areṣ* were all those people who could not afford a perfectly white surface in all these aspects and consequently could not, by definition, become pious.<sup>222</sup> Yet their existence was essential as a category against which the Pharisees, and later the Sages and the *ḥaverim*, could distinguish themselves. The purity of the latter could not be suggested without the presence of the former, and the danger constituted by their proximity.<sup>223</sup> My view, therefore, is that the difference between *‘ammei ha-areṣ* and Sages or *ḥaverim* followed from the nature of the principle outlined previously.<sup>224</sup> This difference, and the social division it entailed, did not necessarily cause any problems. What caused problems was that the principle could be abused and made to justify the economic and social status of the common people. In fact, rabbinic literature contains numerous corrective decisions meant to provide everyone with the minimum capacity to be pure.<sup>225</sup>

The *‘ammei ha-areṣ* cannot be identified with the poor as a group. Neither were they only peasants, contrasted with city inhabitants,<sup>226</sup> or a so-

<sup>221</sup>See Chapter 2, p. 91. [check]

<sup>222</sup>*m.Av.* 2.5. This “surface” was a composite of implicit factors, physical appearances, birth, purity rules, and explicit Torah education.

<sup>223</sup>See already the *Letter of Aristeas* 106, mentioning “crossroads” in Jerusalem, where those people “bound by the rules of purity” kept their distances from the rest of the people (cf. Oppenheimer, *The ‘Am ha-Aretz*, 85).

<sup>224</sup>Consequently, Pharisees and Sages cannot be seen exclusively as educators wishing to lift their contemporaries’ moral standards (n. 214 above). They certainly did that. The Scribes and Pharisees, followed by the Sages, brought the Torah to the people and helped create and develop synagogues as houses of prayer and study, thus laying the foundations of an enduring Judaism. But how can one explain their position in purity matters? Urbach sees this “fence” as a necessity for self-affirmation and not exclusive at all; on the contrary, it could go together with a great acceptance of Gentiles and Gentile culture: “Self-Isolation or Self-Affirmation in Judaism in the First Three Centuries: Theory and Practice,” in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, vol. 2: *Aspects of Judaism in the Graeco-Roman Period*, ed. E. P. Sanders et al. (London: S.C.M., 1981), 268–98. In the present work, I do not seek to establish what importance purity rules hold for the subsequent history of the Jewish people. I simply attempt to uncover the principle at work in the rules of purity in order to understand how one could at times derive social and material advantages from their practice.

<sup>225</sup>Minimum of food, especially for Passover and Sabbath: above, p. 33; white clothing for festivities: p. 85.

<sup>226</sup>Against Zeitlin, *Judaeen State*, 3:319–22. In his view, the Sages’ sayings were an effort to fight the peasants’ boorishness. But from what point of view could the peasants be called boorish? Yet most were “peasants,” in the sense that they earned their living from

cial class as we understand the word. They were all those born of common parentage and without means. Their economic weakness meant that they could not “be brilliant” in their use of the purity rules, although they wished to be so. Other consequences were that they could not devote their time to Torah learning and be completely scrupulous regarding all religious dues.<sup>227</sup> They could live in cities,<sup>228</sup> but the majority were rural people living in small villages. The poor were effectively concealed among them.<sup>229</sup>

#### JOSEPHUS’S VOCABULARY

At first glance, the world described by Josephus is utterly different from that of the Mishnah or Gospel. This is not too surprising, since he himself was far removed in several respects from his country and country fellows. Not only did he write years after the events he purports to describe and to which he was witness, but he did so far away from his ancestral home. Furthermore, he was not a commoner either socially or politically. He came from one of the best and richest priestly families in Jerusalem, which owned land in Judaea-Galilee, and he had highly personal interests to defend in his writings. For reasons partly material, partly of conscience, he presented several apologies of his acts and of Judaism not only to some of his country fellows but also to educated and powerful Romans, his equals in many ways.<sup>230</sup>

---

agriculture, since this was by far the major activity.

<sup>227</sup>The *‘ammei ha-areṣ* can be identified with the tax payers, supporting the priests and, later, the Sages (even non priests): see Oppenheimer, *The ‘Am ha-Aretz*, 45–49. On the various types of tax collections and the justification of the Torah scholars’ position, see Chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>228</sup>The Sages and the *ḥavurot* lived normally in cities, i.e., where there were a sufficient number of people rich enough to dispose freely of their time, but not necessarily in walled cities. Many of the city inhabitants went to the surrounding territory for their daily (or weekly) work. All of the population in Palestine lived in nucleated villages, small or large, and in cities. The so-called opposition between city and countryside took here the form of an opposition between city and villages of its territory, and larger versus smaller villages.

<sup>229</sup>Note that the high priest *‘am ha-areṣ* contrasted with the *mamzer ḥakham* were limit-cases, not met in reality. Josephus speaks of several insignificant or even “boorish” high priests chosen by Herod (*AJ* 20.247; cf. 15.22) or later by the “robbers” (*BJ* 4.148; esp. *BJ* 4.155). But what Josephus finds (or expects his readers to find) revolting is that this new sort of high priest lacked the proper genealogical, viz. royal, connections and social pre-eminence. Yet they were not without social significance in the eyes of the groups that chose them.

<sup>230</sup>On all this, see P. Vidal-Naquet, *Il buon uso del tradimento. Flavio Giuseppe e la guerra giudaica* (Rome: Ed. Riuniti, 1980), with introd. by A. Momigliano and abundant bibliography, a revised edition of *Flavius-Josèphe ou du bon usage de la trahison*, published

One may therefore think with some justification that Josephus's descriptions of social conditions in Roman Palestine may have been affected by lack of precision, ignorance of real conditions, and desire to tailor his language to the reader's point of view and gloss over his own failures or those of his social group.<sup>231</sup>

Josephus's works are rich in adjectives describing the actors of his histories. It is therefore a surprise to see that he does not speak of poor people directly. Rather, he tends to use the political vocabulary of the Greek city in which the contrast between poor and rich hardly appears.<sup>232</sup> An extremely important category particular to Josephus is the contrast between the king and the priests on the one hand, and the people (*λαός*) or the common man (*ιδιώτης*) on the other. That the poor do not appear can also be simply explained by the fact that Josephus is not interested in poor people, except very incidentally. Only important people matter in his opinion, and he does not tire of reciting eulogies in their honor. He finds it essential to provide information on their strength, wealth, social significance, and sometimes virtue, intelligence, and culture. These are his categories, and their study provides, by antithesis, a picture of poverty, understood here as lack of all of these.

The first category of epithets is that of weakness or strength. Thus, a man may be *δυνατός*—powerful, noble, or rich—a word Josephus uses very frequently. These powerful people were the nobility, the men of substance,

---

in introduction to P. Savinel's French translation, *La guerre des Juifs* (Paris: Ed. de Minuit, 1977). This work is a fascinating exploration of Josephus's motivations, social and psychological. See also his remarks in "Les Juifs entre l'Etat et l'apocalypse," in Cl. Nicolet et al., *Rome et la conquête du monde méditerranéen, 264-27 avant J.C., tome 2: Genèse d'un empire* (Paris: P.U.F., 1978), 875-76.

<sup>231</sup>On this last point, that Josephus was particularly eager to exculpate the Judaeen aristocracy, priests, and nobles, see S. J. D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome, His Vita and Development as a Historian* (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 97 and n. 45. For Josephus's unreliability concerning the events of the Jewish War, see H. Drexler, "Untersuchungen zu Josephus und zur Geschichte des jüdischen Aufstandes 66-70," *Klio* 19 (1925) 277-312. Josephus's use of literary topoi (especially his reconstruction of speeches and stories of suicides) has led some scholars to suspect his reliability in such matters as the events at Masada. L. H. Feldman defends it, in "Flavius Josephus Revisited," *ANRW* II/21.2 (1984) 852-57, against T. Weiss-Romarin and D. J. Ladouceur (bibliography quoted in Feldman's article).

<sup>232</sup>There is no need to invoke the help of assistants: see T. Rajak, Appendix 2 of her *Josephus: The Historian and His Society* (London: Duckworth, 1983). For official Greco-Roman vocabulary, see Patlagean, *Pauvreté*, 9-11, 18-19.

as contrasted with the masses.<sup>233</sup> On the contrary, one might be ἀδύνατος,<sup>234</sup> weak in a social sense, an expression much less attested. Josephus prefers to use ἀσθενής and ἀσθένεια of weak, defenseless, or even sickly people.<sup>235</sup> They are those people often unable to fight and in danger of falling prey to others who are “stronger.” They are in need of a protector, both strong and restrained, such as Josephus himself.<sup>236</sup> This physical weakness most often appears to be the condition of women, children, and old people.<sup>237</sup>

Wealth is the second criterion used by Josephus, and it goes together with power, the first. The πλούσιος, εὐπορος and πλοῦτος are the rich, the well provided, those well served and with abundance of stores and stocks coming from their properties. At other times, the prosperous man is described as εὐδαίμων, which strikes a note of luck, fortune, and happiness. On the other side, one usually finds the ἄπορος, the indigent or destitute, often in a hopeless situation.<sup>238</sup> Ἐνδεής and ἐνδεία serve to characterize specific instances of need, usually lack of food and water.<sup>239</sup> Πένης and πτωχός are not adjectives in great use.<sup>240</sup> In Josephus’s works, πένης does not convey the idea of distress meant by ἄπορος or ἀπόρως πράττειν.<sup>241</sup> It is simply the poor in means, as opposed to the πλούσιος, and often with a connotation of humility.<sup>242</sup>

<sup>233</sup> Contrasted for instance with the πλῆθος of *AJ* 18.53. For a study of δυνατός and πρῶτος, see W. W. Buehler, “The Pre-Herodian Civil War and Social Debate. Jewish Society in the Period 76–40 B.C. and the Social Factors Contributing to the Rise of the Pharisees and the Sadducees” (Ph.D. Diss., Basel, 1974), 20–52.

<sup>234</sup> Or struck by ἀδυναμία. See *BJ* 7.144; *AJ* 3.29. On this word, see C. Spicq, *NLNT*, 1:45.

<sup>235</sup> Cf. Paul’s vocabulary, n. 146 above. [check]

<sup>236</sup> See his self-description in *Vita* 80: “[though only thirty years old], I preserved every woman’s honour; I scorned all presents offered to me . . . I even declined to accept from those who brought them the tithes which were due to me as a priest.” One wonders what sorts of services or advantages were to compensate for this remittance of tithes. Cf. also *Vita* 259. Contrariwise, see *AJ* 20.214 (about Costobar and Saul).

<sup>237</sup> *AJ* 2.83 (sickly); 3.5; 5.161; 12.224; 14.480; 20.214; *BJ* 1.352; 4.489; 6.415.

<sup>238</sup> *AJ* 4.272; 9.175; 17.99; 17.307; 18.37; 18.242; 18.367; *Vita* 66, in a description of a riot; corpses of the poor in *BJ* 5.568–69.

<sup>239</sup> Needy: *AJ* 3.1; 20.53; 20.219. Need of food: *BJ* 1.662; 2.432; 6.419 (grain). Need of water: *BJ* 3.181; 5.427.

<sup>240</sup> Πένης rare; two mentions of πενιχρός; πτωχός and πτωχεία mentioned twice. In *BJ* 5.570, πτωχός is applied to people who obviously are not beggars (“not having the courage to tax the poor”).

<sup>241</sup> For the latter, see *Contra Apionem* 1.273.

<sup>242</sup> Πενία: *BJ* 2.122; *AJ* 17.307; 18.145, 242, 243. Πένης opposed to the πλούσιος: *BJ* 5.427; 5.447; *AJ* 1.314; 14.31.

Josephus considers it most important to note the social significance of his characters and, more rarely, when need dictates, the lack thereof. One of his frequent words in this respect is ἀξιόλογος, together with other compounds of ἄξιος. He never fails to stress how “outstanding,” “influential,” or “of high rank” a person is, provided that he has not become his enemy.<sup>243</sup> Naturally, one could be more or less outstanding. Some were clearly recognized to be “first.” Notables were all distinguished by marks of their eminence. One was ἐπίσημος, distinguished, a very common epithet also, or in a quainter fashion, οὐκ ἄσημος, respected.<sup>244</sup>

To be ἄσημος, of common origin,<sup>245</sup> was to be on the other side of the fence. Marks of eminence, particularly marks in clothing, food, speech, and the like,<sup>246</sup> happened to go together with a connection to the best families, especially priestly families, in Josephus’s case. This good breeding, εὐγένεια, was synonymous with wealth as landed property, as well as with power, political and military. Education, seen as a training in the “knowledge of the laws” and “of the customs of the fathers,”<sup>247</sup> was at the same time an important source and a mark of this eminence. He himself seems to have been more impressed by priestly connections or, even better, by an association of priestly descent and education. To have Jerusalem as a place of birth, to be fully conversant in the laws, and to hold priestly office—these are the things that Josephus expected would make an impression on his Galilean followers.<sup>248</sup> These eminent people stood out in a sea of people of low birth,<sup>249</sup> who were often called “crowd,” “common folk,” or “rabble.”<sup>250</sup> Many of these lived in small villages in the countryside and had agricultural occupations.<sup>251</sup> They were reputed to be clumsy and uncultured.<sup>252</sup> Among them were found the “bandits” so often mentioned in Josephus and rabbinic literature. The term referred to the many people forced to live on the margins

<sup>243</sup> *AJ* 17.30; 17.53; 17.174; 18.200; 18.140; 19.89, etc.

<sup>244</sup> *Vita* 35; *Contra Apionem* 1.75.

<sup>245</sup> *BJ* 4.213; *Vita* 35; *Contra Apionem* 1.75 (quoting Manetho).

<sup>246</sup> See Chapters 1 and 2 above.

<sup>247</sup> *Vita* 196–98.

<sup>248</sup> *Vita* 198.

<sup>249</sup> *BJ* 1.650; 3.368; 4.148; 4.179; 6.49; 6.402; 7.266.

<sup>250</sup> Πλῆθος or τὸ δημοτικόν: the populace, the rabble. See *BJ* 4.202; 4.510; 6.277 (ληστρικόν; *Vita* 284.

<sup>251</sup> The λαός is frequently shown on its way to, or from, the χώρα: *BJ* 1.70; 2.10; 2.170; *AJ* 11.109; 11.133; 11.182 (τὸν δὲ γεωργοῦντα λαόν).

<sup>252</sup> *BJ* 1.650 (of low birth and lacking intelligence, also lacking courage); 4.155; 6.300.

of normal society and perceived as dangerous.<sup>253</sup>

Josephus's vocabulary does not seem to correspond to Hebrew-Aramaic terms. One is tempted to see the *'ammei ha-areš* in his "crowds" and "people." Πλήθος was a contemptuous appellation, whereas λαός was the more respectable term, sanctified by tradition.<sup>254</sup> The problem with this assimilation is that only one of the three criteria used in rabbinic literature—purity, tithes, Torah learning—may be recognized in Josephus's books, namely, lack of intelligence, education, or manners. Nevertheless, they may be the same people, though seen from a different perspective.

In this regard, it is notable that Josephus rarely raises the issue of purity and impurity as a social criterion. Among the numerous passages devoted to his foe, John of Gischala, only one text alludes to his impurity as proof enough of his impiety and inhumanity.<sup>255</sup> Another passage accuses the Zealots of having penetrated into the sanctuary "with polluted feet."<sup>256</sup> The rarity of this theme in Josephus may be due to a need to accommodate his account to Greco-Roman taste. But another reason may simply stem from Josephus's position in Jewish society. The Pharisees and other groups wishing to adapt their secular traditions to new situations were more concerned than Josephus to make the demands of purity bound on everyone. Josephus spoke as an aristocrat who did not require anything of the sort from the common people. His description of Moses' laws in the *Antiquities* makes it clear that only those born priests and with impeccable lineage were to have greater demands of purity made on them, and hence enjoy their prerogatives.<sup>257</sup> This is not to say that the efforts of the Sages were of a democratic nature. The principle at work in the old difference between

<sup>253</sup>Study of Jewish social banditry in R. A. Horsley and J. S. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs* (Minneapolis: Winston, 1985), 48–87. See also R. A. Horsley, "Josephus and the Bandits," *JSJ* 10 (1979) 37–63, and more recently his *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987). There is a study of Josephus's use of ληστής in Rajak, *Josephus*, 84–85, 123, 144 (on Josephus's following). For comparison, see P. Briant, "'Brigandage', dissidence et conquête en Asie Achéménide et hellénistique," in *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne* 1976, *Annales littéraires de l'Université de Besançon*, 188 (Paris: Les Belles-Lettres, 1976), 163–258, 273–79.

<sup>254</sup>For use of the term in Jewish inscriptions, see L. Robert, *Hellenica* 11–12 (1960) 260–62.

<sup>255</sup>*BJ* 7.264: "For he had unlawful food served at his table and abandoned the established rules of purity of our forefathers": τράπεζάν τε γὰρ ἄθεσμον παρετίθετο καὶ τὴν νενομισμένην καὶ πάτριον ἐξεδήτησεν ἀγνεῖαν. In other passages of *BJ* (throughout books 1–6), the crimes of the revolutionaries are presented as violations of universal norms: see Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, 88.

<sup>256</sup>*BJ* 4.150: μεμιασμένοι τοῖς ποσὶ.

<sup>257</sup>*AJ* 3.279.

priests and people (λαός) and to which Josephus still adhered as an aristocratic priest took a new life in the contrast between Sages/*ḥaverim* and *‘ammei ha-areṣ*. The nuances between the political positions of a Josephus and later those of the Sages may have mattered little to the *‘ammei ha-areṣ* themselves, who in any case lacked the means to appear pure.

## 5.5 CONCLUSION

Many Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek texts make it clear that material poverty existed, that it was sometimes very deep or very extensive, and that it was a serious concern of religious and civil leaders. But one is never poor only in a material sense. Jewish and Greek social values came to bear, so that material wants were also felt as indignities of various sorts and degrees: lack of freedom, intelligence, purity, piety. This was recognized by both cultures, which usually made a difference between physical states of need and social poverty. The concern for the poor was much more explicit in Judaism, where it was religiously grounded, than in the Hellenized world, where much contempt was directly expressed. In both cultures, poverty was accepted as a fact of life, which only the individual could hope to avoid.<sup>258</sup>

In the Greco-Roman world, poverty was often concealed behind civil and legal concepts. It is only at a much later date that the opposition between rich and poor would acquire a semi formal existence.<sup>259</sup> In the Bible, Gospels, Mishnah, Tosefta, Gemaras, and early Christian texts, on the contrary, poverty appears more naked, so to speak, as material and social need. Nevertheless, in Judaism and early Christianity alike, the tendency also existed to interpret, and overinterpret, poverty in less concrete terms. Furthermore, here too the poor could be despised in various ways, although not directly as “poor.” But the special place granted to the poor in Judaism and therefore in the Gospels forced the Christianized Greek world progressively to adopt an economic classification. This came about at a time when

<sup>258</sup>In Judaism, however, one continued to hope that poverty could disappear from Israel: *Sifre Dt 15.4*, for instance. Calls for a radical solution to poverty perceived as a problem, a concern for the whole people, never ceased to appear.

<sup>259</sup>See. Patlagean, *Pauvreté*, nff. In the Antonine age, the new “ethos of city life” was characterized by an acceptance of a sharper division between poor and rich people: P. Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 31. See also P. Garnsey, “Aspects of the Decline of the Urban Aristocracy in the Empire,” *ANRW* 2/1 (1974) 229–52.

the values and institutions of the Greco-Roman city were being subjected to great internal and external strains.

In his *Jewish Antiquities*, Josephus draws the portrait of a certain Athronges who attempted to take his share of power but was only possessed of inordinate physical strength. He could not claim a distinguished ancestry or personal “excellence.” Neither did he own great wealth. He was a shepherd, Josephus adds, by which he meant that Athronges was at the bottom rank of the common people.<sup>260</sup> In the previous chapters, basic facets of life of these common people have been highlighted. Some of the correctives to situations of misery and injustice remain to be seen: charity in its many forms, in discourse and practice.

<sup>260</sup> *AJ* 17.278: οὔτε προγόνων ἐπιφανῆς ἀξιώματι οὔτε ἀρετῆς περιουσία ἢ τινων πλήθει χρημάτων, ποιμὴν δὲ κτλ. On the contempt for shepherds, see Chapter 3, pp. 118ff. [check] Josephus’s remark may have been prompted by a more political feeling, namely his fear of the messianic kingship that had such a strong appeal in the Jewish popular tradition. In this tradition, the image of the shepherd was very important. The prophet-shepherd appeared from the margins of society, as a nonowner, without political power, with a connection to God that seemed uncalculated and therefore closer to that of the common people. How long this man’s purity of motives could last is another matter. An interesting comparison is afforded by a shepherd-prophet who became very successful in the 1920s and 1930s in the Alawite massif of Syria: J. Weulersse, *Paysans de Syrie et du Proche-Orient* (Paris: Gallimard, 1946), 275–78. Nevertheless, to acclaim “shepherds” as religious and political leaders made sense as a concerted attempt to keep in line the establishment of great landowning families. For Josephus’s treatment of messianic prophets, see the useful article by D. Hill, “Jesus and Josephus’ ‘Messianic Prophets,’” in *Text and Interpretation: Studies in the New Testament Presented to Matthew Black* ed. E. Best and R. McL. Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 143–54.



# Charity in Roman Palestine

## 6

The help extended to poor people in various situations of need took many forms, depending on the religion, culture, and social situation of the benefactor and the beneficiary. This chapter presents Jewish and Jewish-Christian charity on the one hand, and Greco-Roman aid on the other. Very early on, there existed a non-Jewish Christian element, particularly in the larger cities on the coast and in the Decapolis. Its views on poverty and charity were congruent to a large extent with those of the Christianized Greco-Roman world, to which the next chapter is devoted; however, this would not be true of the Syrian population that converted.

The chapter begins with a schematic study of the discourses on charity, focusing especially on the so-called Golden Rule. I then proceed to study the practices of each culture and religion. Here we meet with a difficult problem, namely the nature of Christianity in Roman Palestine.

### 6.1 DISCOURSES ON CHARITY

The Golden Rule is considered to be at the heart of Christianity. Variations of it are also found in other religions and cultures. Every society naturally encourages its members to take care of each other. The Golden Rule itself is based on our capacity to feel compassion, or pity. But what is pity? In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle answers that

pity we may take to be a pain at some manifest evil, destructive or painful, befalling someone undeservedly, when the evil is of a kind that we might anticipate striking ourselves or those close to us, and when it appears near.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Rhetoric* 2.8, quoted in E. Clifford, "Compassion," *The American Scholar* 49 (1980)

This answer seems to be an observation of common sense, but it hides a most difficult question in practice: Are there limits to the recognition of self in other human beings, and what are they? All the basic texts of Western culture answer in some way to this deep desire to have a clear definition of “Who is my neighbor?” So it was with Greek wisdom or any popular wisdom till our day. And so it was also with many a Biblical, Talmudic, or Patristical text. The few passages of the New Testament where Jesus either tells or shows that there is no clear definition are exceptional.

In *Works and Days*, Hesiod already gave the advice that one should not waste time and favors on people who are too far, geographically or socially, to return them:

Call your friend to a feast; but leave your enemy alone; and especially call him who lives near you: for if any mischief happen in the place, neighbours come ungirt, but kinsmen stay to gird themselves. [. . .] Be friends with the friendly, and visit him who visits you. Give to one who gives, but do not give to one who does not give.<sup>2</sup>

Aristotle did not go beyond Hesiod: “A friend is he who loves and is loved in return.”<sup>3</sup> The same thought recurs in Hellenistic and Roman times, in various settings.<sup>4</sup>

The same solid wisdom is found in the Book of Proverbs:

Your friend, and your father’s friend, do not forsake; and do not go to your brother’s house in the day of your calamity. Better is a neighbor who is near than a brother who is far away.<sup>5</sup>

This is not an outmoded attitude, even though the formulation may have changed with the languages and the passing of centuries. Hesiod might have been at home in our modern world, in regard to this aspect of life. He certainly would not have felt out of place in Nablus (Palestine) in the 1900s, where popular wisdom had it that “He who is near is your neighbor but he who is far is not your brother.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup>*Works and Days* 342–45, 353–54 (ET by H.G. Evelyn-White in LCL).

<sup>3</sup>*Rhetoric* 2.4.

<sup>4</sup>See for instance Seneca, *De Beneficiis*, passim, esp. book 2. On the whole question, see A. Dihle, *Die Goldene Regel. Eine Einführung in die Geschichte der antiken und frühchristlichen Vulgäretik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962).

<sup>5</sup>Prov 27.10.

<sup>6</sup>A. Jaussen, *Coutumes palestiniennes* (Paris: Geuthner, 1927), 328. The Arabic saying has an interesting form (it does not say that “he who is near is your brother . . .”).

The formula is an improvement of an older concept in which the members of the family were the only recourse and only blood relationships could be trusted.<sup>7</sup> A troubling aspect of the notion, however, was that it took a social situation as given: neighbors and kinsmen were there, and the relationships were simply to be cultivated. But how did one arrive at a given village or tribal structure? And if it became essential to assimilate nonkinsmen and nonneighbors, on what basis could one do it?<sup>8</sup>

As already evidenced by the quotation from Proverbs, the Bible gave expression to the same attitude of reserved trust. Lev 19.18 says in characteristically negative-positive fashion: “You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.” Understandably, it was within the boundaries of the children of Israel that this love (or absence of hate) was primarily to be lived.<sup>9</sup> The neighbor was the Israelite as defined by his or her blood ties and for the acceptance of the cult in Jerusalem. This definition itself was an ideal: in practice, all were not equally neighbors. Century after century, Israelites were reminded that it was incumbent upon them to take care of widows, orphans, and people fallen into poverty; that one is not to cheat, grab property, abuse slaves, hoard grain, tamper with weights and measures, and so forth.<sup>10</sup>

One might be tempted to conclude that the Bible is at one with the common philosophy described above. But the context of Biblical sayings is that of a special relationship with the unique God (“I am the Lord”) in whom every Jew was to profess his faith. The fundamental text here, according to ancient Jewish practice, was Dt 6.5: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, all thy soul and all thy might.” Every Jewish man was to recite it twice a day and wear it at prayer time in the *tefillin* attached to his forehead and left arm.<sup>11</sup> One fundamental characteristic of

<sup>7</sup>See the history of the Greek word φίλος.

<sup>8</sup>It was often done through the fiction of blood ties: see J. Cuisenier, *Economie et parenté, leurs affinités de structure dans le domaine turc et dans le domaine arabe* (La Haye: Mouton, 1975).

<sup>9</sup>E.g., Is 58.1–10 where charity is explicitly limited to Israel, the “House.” Or also Dt 24.10–15, on charity and debt.

<sup>10</sup>Many texts are conveniently gathered in R. J. Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: A Biblical Study* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977).

<sup>11</sup>Remains of *tefillin* have been found at Qumran (*XQP<sup>h</sup>yl.* 1–4); they contained Dt 6.4–9 among other texts: J. T. Milik, in *DJD* 6 (1977) 33–79; *Tefillin* were also discovered at Muraba‘at (*Mur.* 4): J. T. Milik, in *DJD* 2 (1961) 80–85, and pls. 22–24. See art. “Shema, Reading of” in *EJ*.

this all-encompassing, universal God in the Bible is that he created man and woman in his image. This kept open the door to the idea of a love knowing no bounds. Furthermore, the promise made to a particular people through their “fathers” also had potentially universal ramifications. For the time being, the special relationship of God with his people was expressed in the covenant, in which charity was given the form of laws that Israel promised to keep.

It was in this same framework that rabbinic thought also revolved. In the *Sifra*, R. Aqiva is reported to have commented on Lev 19.18 that “this is the greatest rule in the Torah.”<sup>12</sup> The summary of the Law attributed by the tradition to Hillel is more often quoted: “What is hateful to you, do not to your neighbour; that is the whole Torah, while the rest is the commentary thereof; Go and learn it.”<sup>13</sup>

There is nothing inferior to be found in this formulation, to the contrary of what has sometimes been asserted.<sup>14</sup> The fact that it is given in a negative form must be placed in the general context, which asked Jews to go beyond requirements. Bonsirven argued that a negative formulation determines only strict limits, whereas the positive precept opens wide the field of human action.<sup>15</sup> He did not go too far in his criticism because he recognized that a great number of sentences opened wide the door to charity.<sup>16</sup> But he did not realize that what made this Jewish attitude to the poor unique was the wide application of the principles of “justice” and “strict right” (his words) to social aid. The extension of these principles to various aspects of the welfare of modern nations is now taken for granted by most, and its origin easily forgotten.

The Gospels and early Christian tradition were grounded in Jewish

<sup>12</sup>*Sifra* 19.18 (Weiss 89b).

<sup>13</sup>*bShab.* 31a; *ARN* I(15) or II(29). This traditional formula is already found in the *Tobit* 4.15 and *Letter of Aristeas* 207. Rashi reports two interpretations of Hillel’s sentence (at *bShab.* 31a). The first one understands the neighbor to be God, on the basis of *Pr* 27.10. The second one takes Hillel’s formulation in the usual sense: “Your friend, and your father’s friend, do not forsake (*Pr* 27.10). This is the Holy Blessed be He. Do not transgress his commands, just as it is hateful to you that your neighbor transgresses your commands. Another explanation: Your neighbor concretely, as for example, stealing, larceny, adultery, and all the like.”

<sup>14</sup>See the criticisms of this view by G. F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1927), 2:87; E. E. Urbach, *The Sages, Their Concepts and Beliefs* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975), 589, 955 (n. 93).

<sup>15</sup>*Le judaïsme palestinien au temps de Jésus-Christ* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1935), 2:204.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*

thought. Both the negative and positive formulations were also found in the early apostolic tradition.<sup>17</sup> We have seen that there were potentially no limits to the Biblical ideal. The only thing that may be called new in the traditions about Jesus is that they present him as believing the ideal practical, speaking and acting accordingly. The answer to the lawyer in Mt 22.38–40 brings together the tenets of Jewish tradition:

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.

One might add the end of the traditional Aramaic saying ascribed to Hillel, which can be taken to mean “Go and learn,” or “Go and perfect.”<sup>18</sup>

Many stories show Jesus expressing the view that there was no limit to that ideal. To a “ruler” who belonged to the Pharisees, he gave this antithesis of Greek or Roman wisdom:

But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.<sup>19</sup>

The saying specifically referred to people dependent on public or private charity because they had lost all means of livelihood. These people could normally expect small alms and the benefits of the laws concerning the poor, but not to be treated as table fellows, which required a state of purity (and education) that they could not achieve.<sup>20</sup> One might think, nevertheless, that the saying, however broad, only applied to the community poor or, at

<sup>17</sup>A. Dihle, *Die goldene Regel: Eine Einführung in die Geschichte der antiken und frühchristlichen Vulgärethik* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1962), 10. Positive formulations of the Golden Rule are found in non-Christian texts: *ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>Cf. Lk 10.28: “And he said to him, ‘You have answered right; do this, and you will live.’”

<sup>19</sup>Lk 14.13–14. See commentaries in Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 3.14.3 = W. W. Harvey, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1857), 77; 5.33.2 = A. Rousseau et al., eds., SC, 152–53:408; 5.26.2 (*ibid.*, 332); Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 4.31.1 = A. Kroymann, CCL, 1:629; *De Resurrectione Mortuorum*, 33.7 = J. G. Borleffs, CCL, 2:964; Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 2.4.5 = O. Staehlin, GCS, 12:156. Clement of Alexandria had to convince his readers or listeners that the poor give a return: glory, heavens, spiritual treasures.

<sup>20</sup>Jose b. Yoḥanan (ca. 140 C.E.) reportedly said something similar, but much less specific: “Let thy house be opened wide and let the needy (*aniyim*) be members of thy household.” (*m.Av.* 1.5). See commentary on this in *ARN* 7, where Abraham is opposed to Job

most, to the poor of Israel. But other stories make the point that there was no limit to the notion of “neighbor.”

The parable of the Good Samaritan is specifically devoted to this.<sup>21</sup> In answer to the lawyer’s question (“And who is my neighbor?”), Jesus shows a man, who is to be understood as the “normal” neighbor, in a situation where his own people, for a variety of reasons (fear for life, purity laws, conflicting duties, cost, power of example), fail to exercise neighborliness toward him. But a Samaritan, the typical nonneighbor, who is marked as an enemy, disregards all these reasons, although they should have been even more compelling for him. He is moved by compassion and sets out to repair not only the failures of the priest and Levite but also the evil done by the robbers, and this without any possible hope of later compensation. The answer to the original question (“Who is my neighbor?”) is not made explicit. It is actually another question to which the lawyer (or audience as critic) might or might not wish to address himself: If it could be shown that someone who was not under the law made up abundantly for the failures of normal neighbors, however reasonable or legal these failures, is not the attempt to draw lines futile?<sup>22</sup>

---

and presented as a great benefactor. The duty of hospitality to strangers was stressed in Judaism as well as in Greco-Roman culture (“Let thy house be opened wide”). But the advice about the needy did not necessarily imply table fellowship.

<sup>21</sup>I follow K. E. Bailey’s interpretation, *Through Peasant Eyes: More Lucan Parables* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1980), 33–56, where other literature is quoted. Note that the Gospel of Luke is interested in a Samaritan mission. It is the only synoptic to have Jesus go through Samaritan territory on his way to Jerusalem.

<sup>22</sup>One would expect the lawyer’s next question to be: “Show me such a Samaritan,” to which the early Christian tradition answered by identifying Jesus as the Samaritan, and seeing his life and death in the light of this story. If the story is an authentic saying of Jesus, it helps to understand why his teaching made enemies among his own people, regardless of social status. The great differences of time and culture make the modern reader oblivious to the political side of a story that could be deeply unsettling. In a very tense conflict, with military aspects, Jesus is portrayed as telling his own people that the fundamental value of brotherly love was perhaps better kept by the other side. If the story was adapted or created with a Samaritan milieu in mind, it cannot be used to show why Jesus might have provoked deep-seated hates. But it could still be a somewhat unsettling story, this time for Samaritans, given the awareness that a Christian community comprising Samaritans would have of the political tensions of the area, even after the fall of the Temple.

## 6.2 JEWISH CHARITY

The most frequent word used by the rabbis to express charity, *ṣedaqah*, meaning “righteousness” or justice, reveals a basic attitude, namely, that of the donor’s obligation and the poor’s right.<sup>23</sup> The obligations to the poor found in the Bible were kept in Mishnaic times, specified, and extended in some directions.<sup>24</sup>

The produce of the Sabbatical Year was not strictly reserved to the poor, but available to all the people.<sup>25</sup> The fact that the sabbatical year was a year of release from all bonds, including debts, led lenders to refrain from making loans, which was already condemned in the Bible<sup>26</sup> but had to be accommodated in later tradition.<sup>27</sup>

Another important regulation was the tithe for the poor.<sup>28</sup> According to the oldest Biblical traditions, the second tithe was to be given to the poor in the third and sixth year of every sabbatical cycle. But various competing interpretations existed in the period of the Second Temple and afterwards.<sup>29</sup> One current of thought understood that the second tithe was due every year and that the poor man’s tithe was an extra share given in the third and fourth year.<sup>30</sup> This could only be detrimental to the interests of the poor. The rabbis seem to have held the former view.<sup>31</sup> But, in fact, the second tithe was collected only with considerable difficulty, simply because many people could not afford to pay it. It is doubtful if the poor received their share.<sup>32</sup>

During the harvest of grains, grapes, olives, and other fruits, the poor had three customary rights that seem to have been stubbornly claimed.<sup>33</sup> The harvesters were not to pick individual heads of grains or grapes fallen

<sup>23</sup>This meaning of almsgiving and giving charity is found only in a few late passages of the Bible: Sir 3.30; 7.10; 29.12; Tobit 4.7; 12.8–9, for instance. See art. “Charity,” in *EJ*, 5:340.

<sup>24</sup>See H. Bolkestein, *Wohltätigkeit und Armenpflege im vorchristlichen Altertum* (Utrecht: Oosthoek, 1936), 38–40; 53–66; 401–9. Moore, *Judaism*, 2:162–79; J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 126–34 (also 109–19).

<sup>25</sup>Ex 23.11; Lev 25.6; tractate *Shevi’ith*.

<sup>26</sup>Dt 15.1–2.

<sup>27</sup>The well-known *prosbol*, attributed to Hillel, *mShev.* 10.3–6.

<sup>28</sup>*mPe’ah* 8.2–9; *mMa’as. Sh.* 5.6–9, 10, and many other passages. In the Bible, Dt 14.28–29; 26.12–15.

<sup>29</sup>Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 134–36.

<sup>30</sup>This was the view of the later text of Tobit 1.6–8; cf. Josephus, *AJ* 4.240; on all this, Jeremias, *Jerusalem* 135, n. 27.

<sup>31</sup>*mMa’as. Sh.* 5.9.

<sup>32</sup>*mAv.* 5.9: a late text complaining about the breaking of that law.

<sup>33</sup>Their basis is Lev 19.9–10; 23.22; Dt 24.19–22.

to the ground. They were not to go back and harvest the field or the tree again, picking the forgotten sheaf or bunch. They were not to harvest the field completely, but to leave a corner (*pe'ah*, and its corresponding *'oleloth* in the vineyard). These customs have been often compared with those of other populations. But the Bible and subsequent tradition gave them an explicit moral ground, less obvious elsewhere. These measures were not always respected, and their application was often occasion for bitter complaints of favoritism, quarrels, and dangerous fights among the poor.<sup>34</sup>

There were other customary rights open to all, and not only to the poor. Cattle and flocks could be grazed in noncultivated areas. One could gather wood and grass even on private fields, presumably for cooking needs. Neither did the notion of private property attach to the Sea of Genesareth, which was an important source of food.<sup>35</sup>

Charity, especially in the form of almsgiving, was greatly encouraged and enforced to a certain extent. During pilgrimages or festivities, poor people were to be included, which meant that they obtained a part of the sacrifices or the various offerings.<sup>36</sup> Jerusalem was a center for beggars because it was particularly meritorious to give alms there.<sup>37</sup> Not all lameness or blindness was genuine, something that could be attempted only during crowded festivities or at very busy gates. It was considered important to give charity in secret, and ingenious ways to do this are reported in the rabbinic literature.

Charity was also organized as a public concern. In connection with the synagogue, there were two funds from which poor and strangers could obtain relief. The weekly money chest (*quppah*) served to support the local poor, who received a weekly allotment. The plate (*tambhui*) was open to any person needing a meal, especially strangers.<sup>38</sup> The collection was made in the synagogues by at least two officers for the money chest. The distribution was carried out by three officers. There obviously was need to prevent suspicion of misuse of funds (theft or favoritism).<sup>39</sup> This office was considered burdensome, and the honors showered on its beholders did not always

<sup>34</sup> *m.Av.* 5.9 complains that they are not respected.

<sup>35</sup> *bBQ* 80b–81a.

<sup>36</sup> *Dt* 16.11,14.

<sup>37</sup> *Jeremias, Jerusalem*, 116–17.

<sup>38</sup> E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1979<sup>2</sup>), 2:437. See Krauss, *TA*, 3:66–74.

<sup>39</sup> See the precautions taken by Paul, 2 Cor 8.18–24. See also Acts 6.1–5 (service of the tables).

suffice to make it attractive.<sup>40</sup> It was an obligation for everyone to give to the fund (not necessarily cash). The courts could interfere and appropriate property to recover the sum due for charity.<sup>41</sup>

The community charity fund provided for several kinds of need. To the poor registered in the town or village, it could provide money, food, or clothing. Among those poor, there could be people who had a certain social status. This difference of social status was recognized in the distributions. In other words, social status was considered a need. Beggars who went from door to door, however, were not to be given anything sizable.<sup>42</sup> These beggars probably were poorer but for a variety of reasons could not be accepted on the rolls. The charity fund also provided for the needs of strangers (an important need, recognized also by Greco-Roman culture), for the redemption of those enslaved, and for poor brides (dowry).

Attempts were made to find convenient ways of assessing the level of resources above which a person could not claim support from the charity fund or from traditional laws. Round figures in cash are provided: 200 *zuz* of fixed capital, or 50 *zuz* of usable capital. One cannot rely upon these figures, if only because the value of the *zuz* varied during the period (especially in the third century C.E.). A person could not be compelled to sell tools or household goods to maintain himself above this threshold.<sup>43</sup> Poor people were encouraged to stay away from these funds: their sense of shame was called upon. Or extreme merit was assigned to poor people who, though entitled to use of public charity funds, did not come forward and claim them.

In the distribution of any kind of charity, the basic rule was that one's own poor came before any others. The poor within the family, the village, the town, or the Jewish poor, had precedence. An exception was the traveler, who might take charity without being forced to repay it once he was back home.<sup>44</sup> A limit was put on the amount to be given: not all one's fortune could be distributed in charity. One-tenth of an individual's wealth, however this was calculated (if it could be), was the acceptable amount. One

<sup>40</sup> *bBB* 8a, 9a; *bShab.* 118b. For an indication of their social status, see *mQidd.* 4.5 (their descendants could be married by members of the priestly class, without the customary special examination).

<sup>41</sup> *bKeth.* 49b.

<sup>42</sup> *bBB* 9a. Similarly, the early Syriac church attempted to keep in check individual begging (*Didascalia Apostolorum*).

<sup>43</sup> *mPe'ah* 8.8.

<sup>44</sup> *mPe'ah* 5.4.

wonders if this was not another way of speaking of tithes.<sup>45</sup>

### 6.3 GREEK CHARITY

In Greco-Roman cities, a number of city activities were financed by the wealthier citizens.<sup>46</sup> But this was most often compensated by a return in friendship—obligations from others, honor, and sometimes quasi-divinity. Yet these motivations were not always obvious.<sup>47</sup> A number of benevolent acts were not considered worth the mention because no reciprocity was expected. Nevertheless these acts were very important for the beneficiaries: providing water or fire, directions, proper burial, a small coin for a beggar, or a piece of bread.<sup>48</sup>

There is very little in Greek or Latin literature to suggest that the rich felt obligated to do something for the poor, even in the first century of our era.<sup>49</sup> It is the love of brilliance and glory that remained the essential motivation of the rich man's generosity. Such a principle obviously meant that the needs of the poor were not necessarily the first consideration. The needs of the destitute were usually not taken into account, their situation being considered the consequence of laziness.<sup>50</sup> The needs of other poor were not given much consideration either. The primary recipients of benefactions were those closest to the giver, by education and "virtue," and who could return the favor. The gods themselves were shown to prefer the powerful, who could honor them properly. Even pity, another motivation for various acts of benevolence, was essentially shown to ensure oneself against possible disasters of fortune. Its benefits were extended only to those expected to show it in return.<sup>51</sup>

The distributions of food made under different guises (direct distribution, price control, banquets on the occasion of sacrifices and religious festivities) were not primarily directed toward the poorer people or the destitute. To a degree difficult to determine, the poor benefited from the vari-

<sup>45</sup>*bKeth.* 50a.

<sup>46</sup>I follow A. R. Hands, *Charities and Social Aid in Greece and Rome* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1968), 35ff.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, 47, contra Bolkestein, who thought he detected such a trend.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 65ff.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, 81.

ous public monuments and enjoyed the common culture. The baths, for instance, very common in Roman Palestine, were enjoyed even by the poor.

#### 6.4 CHRISTIAN CHARITY

We have already seen that various traditions in the Gospels present Jesus as encouraging the traditional duties of Judaism.<sup>52</sup> He himself practiced alms and strongly recommended it to his disciples.<sup>53</sup> But a new aspect was that he is presented as the center of every demonstration of love: “as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.”<sup>54</sup> His call to voluntary poverty was also new, at least in the radicalism of its demands. The disciples were called to sell their goods, give to the poor, and follow him.<sup>55</sup> He asked them to renounce home, family, security even.<sup>56</sup> As missionaries, they were to abandon all material resources.<sup>57</sup> In Roman Palestine, the laws of hospitality could be relied upon,<sup>58</sup> at least for food and lodging. But the disciples could not take any compensation for their teachings.<sup>59</sup> This was a sensitive point also for the Sages.<sup>60</sup>

The social situation of the early Church cannot be reconstructed in clear detail. It stressed the importance of private almsgiving.<sup>61</sup> The book of Acts reports how much appreciated were the gifts of Tabitha-Dorcas and Cornelius.<sup>62</sup> But the Epistle of James sternly reminds the rich of their duties, a sign that all was not well.<sup>63</sup> Help to the poor was rapidly developed as a community institution. Seven deacons were instituted in the Jerusalem Church for the daily service of widows.<sup>64</sup> This same Church received help from the Antioch community, in a time of famine, and from some of the

<sup>52</sup> Mk 14.5; Mt 6.1–4 (alms = typical act of justice); Mk 12.41–44 (the poor widow at the Temple); Lk 19.8–9 (Zacchaeus).

<sup>53</sup> Jn 13.29 (Jesus practices alms); recommends it to disciples: Mk 10.21; especially Lk 11.41; 12.33; 16.9; cf. 14.13, 21.

<sup>54</sup> Mt 25.40.

<sup>55</sup> Mk 10.17–21 and parallels; cf. Mk 1.16–20; 2.14.

<sup>56</sup> Mk 10.28–30.

<sup>57</sup> Mk 6.8–9; Mt 10.9–10; Lk 9.3 and 10.4.

<sup>58</sup> Mk 6.10; Mt 10.11–13; Lk 9.4; 10.5–8; 22.35.

<sup>59</sup> Mt 10.8.

<sup>60</sup> *mAv.* 1.13; 4.6.

<sup>61</sup> Acts 3.3–8.

<sup>62</sup> 9.36, 39; 10.2, 4, 31.

<sup>63</sup> 1.27; 2.1–7; 5.4–6.

<sup>64</sup> Acts 6.1–6.

communities founded by Paul.<sup>65</sup> At least some of the poor helped by these collections had taken vows of nazirate for which the sacrifices to be offered were a costly affair.<sup>66</sup> It was probably very important for the Church in Jerusalem to support a number of nazirs as well as other people devoted entirely to prayer in the Temple, if only to demonstrate their loyalty to the basic tenets of Judaism.

The putting in common of resources may also be seen in that light: a cultic association by the Temple.<sup>67</sup> This would not conflict with the expense of common resources for the functioning of the community, especially for the service to the poor.<sup>68</sup>

## 6.5 CONCLUSION

The charity practiced by the early Church in Palestine cannot be easily differentiated from Jewish ways. The same formulation of a need for solidarity that goes beyond blood ties was expressed by Jews and Christians. It was also found in Greco-Roman wisdom, though not with the same tension toward a universal love. In Judaism and Christianity, charitable gifts went directly to the poor, at least ideally, but the problem was to define who was poor. The economic or social element of poverty could not be separated from its religious context. In Hellenistic society, needy people received gifts indirectly. One exercised philanthropy in a political context, among citizens. Poor people had access to certain kinds of help because they participated to public life or to a cult, not primarily because of the economic nature of their need.

Jews and Christians shared the essential idea that charity and social aid were a response to commands expressed in a language of strict justice. In both Judaism and Christianity, the intrinsic worth of an individual as an image or creation of God was the (ideal) basis for social duties and obligations. In both, the feelings of pity and compassion were perceived as being the essential component of the system of laws and customs governing social aid. The belief that God was in some way the term of all acts of charity probably was the most powerful impetus behind such acts.

<sup>65</sup> Acts 11.29–30; 1 Cor 16.1–4; 2 Cor 8–9; Rom 15.25–28.

<sup>66</sup> Acts 21.23–26.

<sup>67</sup> Acts 2.44–45; 4.32,34–35.

<sup>68</sup> Acts 6.1; 11.29–30; 21.24.

Almsgiving has become objectionable in modern times, and one is inclined to think that it must have been of minimal help in the relief of poverty in the past. But a coin or a piece of bread were of great importance where poverty was so widespread. One of the reasons for the attraction that Judaism had for Gentiles may have been the systematic care and development of alms that could not be found in other parts of the Roman Empire. These advantages would soon spread everywhere with Christianity.



# 7

## Views on Poverty and Wealth in the Gentile Church

The Gospel of Luke offered the most radical and simple view on poverty when it proclaimed: “Blessed are the poor.”<sup>1</sup> This message was not new for Jews, except perhaps for its depth and urgency. The Jewish followers of Jesus did not question its appropriateness. But they at times restricted the meaning of “poor” to people who lived according to a number of criteria among which economic deprivation was only one aspect.<sup>2</sup>

In the Greco-Roman world, it was a new and revolutionary message. Its acceptance was not natural, and various ways of understanding the message developed. The present chapter depicts this resistance and some of the ways it came to be accepted. We begin with a brief description of the situation of the poor in Greco-Roman society, which is followed by a study of the social situation of the Fathers of the Church. Their own thoughts on poverty, wealth, and social order bear the marks of their social origin and of the resistance of Greek thought to the Gospels and the Bible. But they also show us that the concern for the poor made some progress in the Greco-Roman world.

### 7.1 POVERTY IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

During the first three centuries of our era, the situation of poor people in the Mediterranean world at large was not very different from that of Roman Palestine. There already existed *latifundiae*, with nonspecialized large-scale production and where the owners lived with their *coloni* and artisans in almost complete autarky. The most miserable in the cities also continued to look for a refuge in patronage.<sup>3</sup> Undoubtedly, many small landowners sub-

<sup>1</sup>Lk 6.20.

<sup>2</sup>See above, Chapter 5.

<sup>3</sup>F. Oertel, “The Economic Life of the Empire,” in *CAH* 12 (1939) 273–81.

sisted in most regions of the Empire and the political structure still relied to a great extent upon free citizen-peasants. Nevertheless, the social if not the material conditions of many seem to have changed for the worse, and the political and religious conceptions of poor citizens must have been badly shaken. More and more among them became conscious of the impossibility of reciprocating adequately for services provided to them by wealthier citizens in the spirit of friendship described by Marcel Mauss in his famous essay.<sup>4</sup> In usual practice, the benefactor actually expected a return in the not-too-distant future, although that return most often took the form of “honor,” an honor subject to inflation.<sup>5</sup> The impossibility of reciprocating drove many to attach themselves to the giver. It is not so much their means proper that they were losing, but rather their means insofar as they allowed them to pretend to *timia* or *doxia*, if only on a very small scale.

The imperial administration played perhaps the most important role in this evolution because it was too far away, too elusive, too powerful to be adequately responsive to individuals or even cities used to very personal dealings. In other words, the poorer elements were slowly deprived of their social status, because “the sanction ensuring that the ‘debt’ would be honoured was simply the social disgrace (*adoxia/infamia*) resulting from default—and the loss not merely of one ‘friend’ but possibly of many, who would take warning and repudiate their ‘friendship.’”<sup>6</sup> An erosion of communal decision making took place in parallel with the hunger for land of the *honestiores*. Yet the decline in the power of the assemblies and of municipal government was only gradual, at least in the West, and the encroachments of the imperial government were not as ruinous as thought in the past.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the ever greater expenses of the municipalities were to be met by the rich who constantly competed in “extravagant

<sup>4</sup>M. Mauss, “Essai sur le don,” *L'année sociologique*, ser. 2, 1 (1923–24); reprinted in his *Sociologie et anthropologie* (Paris: P.U.F., 1950), 145–279. A. R. Hands adapted the theory to antiquity: *Charity and Social Aid in Greece and Rome* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1968), 26–48.

<sup>5</sup>Works such as Seneca’s *De Beneficiis*, passim, or *Epistulae Morales* 81, provide proof of this. Seneca writes at length about giving to those who cannot return the favor, but he makes it clear that gratitude should be expected. For him, it is the mark of a *stultus* not to recognize the extent of one’s social debt (*Ep. Mor.* 81.8).

<sup>6</sup>Hands, *Charity*, 34.

<sup>7</sup>See F. Jacques’s massive work, *Le privilège de liberté* (Rome: Ecole Française, 1984). Jacques argues that the older view was often unduly influenced by the modern notion that the decline of local communities is a necessary aspect of the coming into their own of centralized states. See an instance in H. Last, “Rome and the Empire,” *CAH* 11 (1936) 435–78.

generosity,” voluntarily at first and under constraint from the third century C.E. on, when local aristocracies became unwilling to risk their fortune and status for a much eroded-honor not always forthcoming.<sup>8</sup>

In Chapter 5, I have indicated that the evolution of the Greco-Roman discourse regarding poverty came about under the prodding of the Greek Bible. Because pity and divine blessings were to accrue to the poor, as the Bible unmistakably repeated, Christian Greeks often came to understand the notion as applying to those most dramatically affected in their life, rather than to the common, penurious person. They felt that the need of an impoverished noble, particularly in the new monastic form, was worthier of consideration.

## 7.2 THE CHURCH FATHERS AS MEN OF THEIR TIME

The Fathers of the Church were Greeks and Romans of their time, sharing many common perceptions of their social conditions, and, if not the perceptions, at least the vocabulary needed to describe them. Many among them kept the way of life they were used to, that of their class. When Polycarp flees the soldiers in 155–7 C.E., it is to go to a small property, accompanied by a few people, presumably servants as well as friends.<sup>9</sup> He has slaves.<sup>10</sup> The party of horsemen pursuing him display a respectful attitude, and they are even given food and drink on Polycarp’s orders.<sup>11</sup> He is also on equal terms with the authorities of Smyrna and with the proconsul.<sup>12</sup> On the other side of the Mediterranean Sea, Denys of Alexandria is a thoroughly urbanized person, who feels at a loss outside of his city. He has servants;<sup>13</sup> his clothing is of linen and could well tempt highway men, on his own confession.<sup>14</sup> The grand-parents of Basil of Caesarea hid from Maximinus’s persecution

<sup>8</sup>To enter a *curia* even became a form of punishment, used for instance by Licinius and perhaps Maximinus Daia against the Christians: Eusebius, *De Vita Constantini* 2.30. For the evolution of the *curia*, see A. Chastagnol, *L’évolution politique, sociale et économique du monde romain de Dioclétien à Julien* (Paris: Société d’édition d’enseignement supérieur, 1982), 278–304, esp. 298–99. (The cities were not ruined forever by the authoritarian rule of Diocletian and his successors. The need to staff the new structures characteristic of the Late Empire led to social disequilibrium in local government.)

<sup>9</sup>*Martyrdom of Polycarp* 5.1–2: εἰς ἀγρίδιον [...] μετ’ ὀλίγων.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 7.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 8.2; 10.2.

<sup>13</sup>Eusebius, *HE* 6.40.3.

<sup>14</sup>*HE* 6.40.7.

in 304–11 C.E. accompanied by “very few servants to help the flight and take care of the food.”<sup>15</sup>

As for Origen, he chose poverty, a decision qualified by Eusebius’s viewpoint that it was “for a fitting reason, i.e., in order not to need others’ help.”<sup>16</sup> But he was born of a wealthy father whose fortune was confiscated by the officers of the imperial treasure, and still young, “he found at the same time the welcome and tranquillity near a woman very rich in the things necessary to live, and remarkable for the rest.”<sup>17</sup> Even later, while living himself on less than four obols a day (i.e., on the minimum wage of the time), the help that he needs for his scholarly work consists of seven tachygraphers, as many copyists, and young women calligraphers, all taken care of by a certain Ambrosy.<sup>18</sup>

Not only were the Church Fathers *honestiores* themselves, preserving much of their status, they also were in contact with Christians who belonged to the same class.<sup>19</sup> Eusebius often underlines their status, when, concerning the persecutions of the years 300–303 C.E., he speaks of an “*illustrissimus* man tearing up the edict against churches,” or of magistrates occupying important functions.<sup>20</sup>

It is difficult to assess the status of particular wealthy believers and consequently the specific reasons for their faith in a God who, though not condemning wealth as such, was the protector of the poor. The road followed by the Fathers themselves was not to reduce poverty to its material component. If poverty was need, then one could say that need was experienced by everybody, poor and wealthy alike: “The rich are in need of numerous things, and it is through evaluation (by others) only that they gain distinction.”<sup>21</sup>

The Fathers shared the opinions customarily held by the people of higher rank to whom they usually belonged. Numerous instances may be found to prove that they were as much or more men of their time as they were elements of a new *tertium genus*. For example, in their sentiment about work, they sharply distinguished those who labored and the others

<sup>15</sup>Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orationes* 43.6.1 (*Eulogy of Basil*).

<sup>16</sup>*HE* 6.3.9–12.

<sup>17</sup>*HE* 6.2.13.

<sup>18</sup>*HE* 6.23.2.

<sup>19</sup>See P. R. L. Brown, “Aspects of the Christianization of the Roman Aristocracy,” *JRS* 51 (1961) 1–11.

<sup>20</sup>*HE* 8.5; 8.9.7; 8.11.2.

<sup>21</sup>Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos* 11 (= *PG* 6.829).

they called the lazy. They shared here naturally the general feeling of antiquity (not entirely forgotten) that work, and more precisely hard manual work, is a necessity for everybody, a condition of life. In consequence, they commanded Christians not to resemble “such men, as do not know how to gain their food by their labor and sweat.”<sup>22</sup> In fact, those “men” are here identifiable as the creditors who “seize others’ property,” important landowners or their agents. If manual work is also for the *Didache* the respectable way to gain access to property,<sup>23</sup> it is not at all to idealize manual work but rather to insist that even the product of such an “honest” labor must be relinquished to redeem one’s sins. This does not support the argument presented here that the Fathers had aristocratic reflexes. But then, one must consider in turn the comment of Clement of Rome, who appears to be in substantial agreement with Cato’s ideas to improve his slaves’ efficiency: “the *good* worker takes freely the salary (bread) of his work, but the lazy and indolent cannot face his employer.”<sup>24</sup>

Some Christian writers joined Cicero, Dio Chrysostom, and Juvenal to give way to their contempt, or at best their lack of understanding, of the nonurban world.<sup>25</sup> One might have expected Caecilius Natalis, the mundane Pagan, to reject all country dwellers as boorish when referring to them as *rudibus agrestibus, quibus non est datum intelligere civilia*.<sup>26</sup> But Octavius himself, the gentle and civilized Christian, does not hesitate to censure Caecilius’s worth and treat him like a vulgar person who does not belong to the refined and urbanized, for *procul est ab eius simplicitate subtilis urbanitas*.<sup>27</sup> The tone is the same almost 150 years later when Gregory of Nazianzus wonders “how great a distance (there is) between city-dwellers and the rural.”<sup>28</sup> When Denys of Alexandria fled the persecution in the middle of the third century C.E., he was unable to tell the difference between peasants and bandits, probably for the good reason that the bandits were ex-peasants, and he was ready to give up his linen clothes in fear. There clearly was an unbridgeable difference between the Greek πολιτικός (Alexan-

<sup>22</sup> *Epistle of Barnabas* 10.4.

<sup>23</sup> 4.6, if one is to read: “If you own something from the work of your hands.”

<sup>24</sup> *Epistle to the Corinthians* 34.1.

<sup>25</sup> R. MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 30–31, and the whole of his chap. 2.

<sup>26</sup> Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 12.7.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.2.

<sup>28</sup> *Orationes* 2.29.

drine) that he was, and the others, known only as Ἀίγυπτοι or Κοπτοί.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, when the same Denys was ordered to go to Kephro in the Mareotis later in 257–8, he did not know where the place was and hardly knew the name.<sup>30</sup> The subsequent marching orders sending him to Kollouthion, a country he was more familiar with, made him nonetheless angry at first because it was an area without Christians or “gentlemen” (σπουδαίων ἀνθρώπων). Worse, it was probably subject to burdensome billeting orders (*recipiendi hospitis necessitas*) and, again, to bandits’ raids.<sup>31</sup> He was appeased only when informed that the place was closer to the city, where lived the Christians with whom he hoped to meet and arrange assemblies.<sup>32</sup>

The poor were not only eliminated from the everyday concerns of the wealthy, or feared when a contact was unavoidable, but also despised just for what they were, poor. This attitude, apart from other ideological arguments, helps to explain the bitterness expressed toward Paul of Samosata by his fellow bishops, priests, and deacons. He is reported to have become rich after having been formerly “poor and beggar” (πένης καὶ πτωχός). Although he “received no fortune whatsoever from his ancestors and gained none either by work or other means,” he “has arrived now at excessive riches through injustices and sacrilegious thefts.”<sup>33</sup> He was accused of taking gifts from those whom he helped out of some “injustice.” The reasons to accuse Paul of infamy were probably many and not all theological, but the sentiments of disgust called upon by the second synodical letter were exactly those condemning a free man who fought in a circus for pay, whereas he was eulogized if he did it for the sport.<sup>34</sup> At a much later date, Gregory of Nazianzus (ca. 325/29–390) praised his brother Caesarius (died ca. 369) because he did not take a salary for the medical attentions that he provided to magistrates.<sup>35</sup> But not surprisingly, Caesarius was rewarded, if not directly

<sup>29</sup>Eusebius, *HE* 6.40.7; see MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations*, 46–47. “Brigandage remained endemic in Roman Egypt,” according to N. Lewis, *Life in Egypt Under Roman Rule* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 202–04.

<sup>30</sup>Eusebius, *HE* 7.11.15.

<sup>31</sup>*HE* 7.11.16.

<sup>32</sup>*HE* 7.11.17.

<sup>33</sup>*HE* 7.30.7. F. Millar corrects the traditional portrait of Paul in his art. “Paul of Samosata, Zenobia and Aurelian,” *JRS* 61 (1971) 1–17.

<sup>34</sup>M. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (London: Hogarth Press, 1985<sup>2</sup>), 192, n. 33.

<sup>35</sup>*Orationes* 7.10.2. On salaries for doctors, see Hands, *Charity*. On the attitude of the Cappadocian Fathers toward wealth, see P. Gruszka, “Die Stellungnahme der Kirchenväter Kappadoziens zu der Gier nach Gold, Silber und andere Luxuswaren im täglichen Leben der Oberschichten des 4. Jahrhunderts,” *Klio* 63 (1981) 661–68.

in bullion or food, by his social ascent. In the case of Paul, one way chosen to counterattack his heterodoxy was to show how much he had remained a *πτωχός*, a beggar, in contrast with the poor people who worked hard and honestly for a living, and well-born people who did not take salaries.

The most interesting stand on poverty is to be found perhaps in Origen. The difference between the Greco-Roman and Jewish or Christian viewpoints appear here in negative form, as for example in his answers to Celsus who repeatedly remarks that the Christian preacher “drives away every intelligent man from arguing about his faith and invites only the stupid and low-class folk.”<sup>36</sup> Celsus is incensed because the preachers of the new religion refuse to dispute with the rich—that is, the well born, “the educated, the wise, the sensible”—but let come boldly forward “anyone ignorant, anyone stupid, anyone uneducated, anyone who is a child.”<sup>37</sup> This is the reason why, in Celsus’s opinion, “they are able to convince the foolish, dishonourable and stupid, and only slaves, women and little children.”<sup>38</sup>

Origen could not reply that Christians were interested only in poor people or accept that Christians were all poor. He made the same social judgment as his adversary cast on the *humiliores*. This is why he refused to believe Celsus, “for not even they [the Christian preachers] speak so shamelessly, though some may be unlettered and ignorant.”<sup>39</sup> He continues by criticizing the teachers who might seek “the stupid.”<sup>40</sup> The “noble teachers” (and himself), he argues, “do not want the assembly of Christians to consist of these [the unclever].”<sup>41</sup> He claims that when Celsus is describing these teachers “as wool-workers in houses, cobblers, laundry-workers,” he is only *comparing* them with “the most obtuse yokels.”<sup>42</sup>

He asserts that all Christians live morally<sup>43</sup> that everybody without distinction should be encouraged to be wise<sup>44</sup> and is worthy of God. But what

<sup>36</sup> *Contra Celsum* 3.18 (H. Chadwick’s translation, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [1953], 139); cf. Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 8.4; 9.4.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.44.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.74.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.56.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*; cf. *Octavius* 31.6: “*nec de ultima plebe consistimus*” (even though we refuse traditional honors).

<sup>43</sup> Similarly, in *Octavius* 35.5, Octavius recognizes that the Christian *disciplina* may be weaker than philosophy on some grounds, but that overall, the Christians “appear better” (morally).

<sup>44</sup> Cf. *Octavius* 16.5 also.

kind of morality does he talk about? Christians are not shameful, nor do they go about begging.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, the Gospel “calls these [the foolish, dishonourable, stupid, the slaves, women and children], and also people much superior to them.”<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, the faith of the simple is the best because of the ignorance of those concerned. Some elite will not be satisfied with it, but they will be able to go further and higher without looking out of Christianity.<sup>47</sup> And anyway, Origen asks, who is to be called stupid? “Every bad man is stupid.”<sup>48</sup> In spite of his own education, Origen is bringing the new message that the Gospel is for the souls of all humankind, “simple-minded” and “intelligent” alike. In this sense, Christianity is lifting a step further, if not fulfilling, not only the Law and the Prophets but also the aspirations of the Greek philosophy: “Our Scriptures have been written to suit exactly the multitude of the simple-minded, a consideration to which no attention was paid by those who made up the fictitious stories of the Greeks.”<sup>49</sup> And Tertullian makes the same point: “With God, there is greater consideration for those of lower degree.”<sup>50</sup> We are here in the Apostle Paul’s footsteps,<sup>51</sup> in the newly discovered territories of the idea of “human person,” but still clinging to the concrete definitions by status, class, and order.<sup>52</sup>

Poor people were also the victims of a marked contempt for the vices attached universally to their status, for their rusticity and boorishness.<sup>53</sup> Polycarp disregarded the crowd gathered in the arena as “unworthy that a defense should be made to them.”<sup>54</sup> For the extreme Tertullian, the mass of believers were *imprudentes et idiotae*, awkward and idiotic, because they did

<sup>45</sup> *Contra Celsum* 3.50.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.49.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.79; 7.4; cf. *Octavius* 16.5.

<sup>48</sup> *Contra Celsum*, 3.74.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.50.

<sup>50</sup> *Apologeticum* 39.16.

<sup>51</sup> Gal 3.28.

<sup>52</sup> See Marcel Mauss, “La notion de personne,” written in 1938 and reprinted in his *Sociologie et Anthropologie* (Paris: P.U.F., 1950), 357; after S. Schlossmann, *Persona und πρόσωπον im Recht und im Christlichen Dogma* (Leipzig: Lipsius and Tischer, 1906. Repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968).

<sup>53</sup> About the Ebionites, Eusebius repeats the already old slander that they have that name “because they had on Christ poor and humble thoughts,” *HE* 3.27.1; after Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, 1.26.2, and Origen, *De Principiis*, 4.22; see also Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 2.1ff; 5.61.

<sup>54</sup> *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 10.2; cf. 9.2: “He looks severely on the *plebs vilia* (= ὄχλον.”

not understand his trinitary theology and were afraid of it.<sup>55</sup> As for Caecilius Natalis, it is no surprise to see him wondering how the *studiorum rudes, litterarum profanis, expertes artium etiam sordidarum* can dare decide anything assured about the mystery of the universe when sects and philosophy itself have been meditating on it for centuries.<sup>56</sup> He calls Octavius himself *pistorum praecipuus*,<sup>57</sup> “prince of the bakers.” But the Christian hero only answers that “It is our poor folk who have pondered wisdom and handed on its teaching”<sup>58</sup> and not “the rich attached to their properties.” Is it here genuine respect for the poor, or a reference to the philosophers’ way of life?<sup>59</sup>

On the contrary, the rich were highly regarded. Polycarp for example, responded to the amiable proconsul, *cum grano salis*, that “we have been taught to render honour, as is meet, if it hurt us not, to princes and authorities appointed by God.”<sup>60</sup> A very different note is struck by early texts such as the *Didache* and the *Epistle of Barnabas*,<sup>61</sup> which violently attack the “oppressors” of the poor; but the “rich” as such are not designated, and it will be subsequently possible to differentiate the well-born landed aristocracy and pitiless exploiters. At any rate, Eusebius was pleased to report that many Romans converted who were “most distinguished by their riches and their birth.”<sup>62</sup>

Education and culture were also very admired attributes of the wealthy, though not reserved to them. Dorothy the priest is described by Eusebius as “not deprived of the most liberal education and of Greek propaedeutics.”<sup>63</sup> Origen accuses unnamed *imperiti* who claim that the Christian teachers and

<sup>55</sup> *Adversus Praxean* 3.

<sup>56</sup> *Octavius* 5.4; 12.7.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.1.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.5.

<sup>59</sup> See R. MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966), 59, for a description of the philosopher’s attire and behavior.

<sup>60</sup> *Martyrdom* 10.2.

<sup>61</sup> Respectively 5.2 and 20.2.

<sup>62</sup> *HE* 5.21.1; cf. already Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 37; *Ad Scapulam* 4–5. For social ties as determining one’s evil or virtuous posture, see Gregory of Nazianzus’s eulogy of his brother Caesarius, *Orationes* 7.6.3 (Caesary sought after the most distinguished and best known). Gregory praises also his brother for his mundane qualities, grace and good birth (5.2), “not of small importance for others,” i.e., not usually praised by Christians. The latter comment makes Gregory seem to be quite a man of his world, especially in view of his last question in the eulogy of Basil (“Who will praise me when I depart from life?” *Orationes* 43.82.4), tempered again cautiously by his properly modest “in the event that I provide something worthy of praises.”

<sup>63</sup> *HE* 7.32.3; cf. 8.9.7 for a public servant distinguished by his knowledge of philosophy.

preachers are useless of preferring their own ignorance, renamed “simplicity,” to laborious studies.<sup>64</sup> The criticism is directed to the ignorant, who often happened to be the poor. One must admit that it could also suit the ebullient and metamorphosing Tertullian who thinks that “we do not need curiosity after Jesus-Christ.”<sup>65</sup> Origen insists that “to have been educated . . . and to be intelligent . . . helps us (to know God).”<sup>66</sup> He seeks “rather the cleverer and sharper minds because they are able to understand the explanation of problems and of the hidden truths.”<sup>67</sup> However, the uneducated were not to blame, and “we ought to make allowances for the lack of education of those who, though they mean well, fail because of this defect.”<sup>68</sup> More mundanely, Gregory of Nazianzus praised at length his brother for his excellent schooling and his scholarly virtues.

### 7.3 THE CHURCH FATHERS AS PIONEERS OF A NEW SOCIETY

The conservative side of the Church Fathers has been the concern of the preceding pages. We now turn to the novelty of Christianity, already touched upon, using a few texts that illustrate a departure from Greco-Roman views. Christianity not so much replaced the old symbols with new ones as it changed the relations between symbols. In the order of the classical city it slowly substituted a new *concordia ordinum*, a new equilibrium, very early delineated in the West by Clement of Rome:

Let the strong take care of the weak, and the weak respect the strong;  
let the rich provide for the poor, and the poor thank (εὐχαριστέῖτω)  
God that He gave him somebody to fill his need: [. . .] Let not who  
is humble speak well of himself, but another of him [. . .].<sup>69</sup>

In the new community envisioned by Christians, the rich, holding their riches from God, were asked to provide relief to the poor, whereas the poor were required to pay back their respect and thanks to God alone, at least in theory: God alone was truly philanthropic.<sup>70</sup> In theory only, because it

<sup>64</sup> *Homiliae 5 in Ps. XXXVI*, 5.1 (= PG 12.1360). Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 9.43.1.

<sup>65</sup> *De praescriptione* 7.18.

<sup>66</sup> *Contra Celsum* 3.49.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.74–5. Also, Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 6.35.2–4; 9.43ff.

<sup>68</sup> *Contra Celsum* 6.15 comments about the proskynesis adopted by some Christians, but which for the Greeks was a mark of barbarism.

<sup>69</sup> *Epistle to the Corinthians* 38.2.

<sup>70</sup> Eusebius, *HE* 6.43.11.

may be inferred from many texts that some honor was to be given to the rich directly by the poor. Still, everybody could derive some satisfaction from an arrangement that freed both the poor and the rich from their interdependency and set new respectable limits to their respective cravings. In other words, Christianity was the re-creation on a larger scale, within the Church, of the “face-to-face” community spoken of earlier, and therefore offered the possibility of extending again to everybody a friendship that risked being reserved to only those who were able to return it. From this point of view alone, no factions or heresies could be allowed,<sup>71</sup> for the essential reason that the spiritual and material well-being of people was at stake.

This original form of the “give-and-take” economy is to be found almost pure in the early Christian texts. In the *Didache*, Hermas, or in the *Epistle to Diognetus*, the alms-giver, who must give everything, is declared innocent or blameless,<sup>72</sup> whereas those who take alms are condemned with the most extreme rigor if they are not in need. How is one to explain the former’s innocence? Was the Christian giver innocent in the sense that he did not have to know whether the receiver was in need or not? Or was he not innocent also because he asked nothing in return, and more precisely because he did not ask, as formerly in the Hellenistic city, for a return in honor and respect? These confirmations of his status came now from God, “for he received from the Lord the fulfillment of his ministry” and “he fulfilled in simplicity.”<sup>73</sup> The Christian giver got his salary from the Lord who “advantageously rewards.”<sup>74</sup>

The city philanthropist turned Christian benefactor was now invited (spiritually) to “spend . . . for such fields and houses as he was received from God.”<sup>75</sup> God was both creditor and debtor. The same precepts are to be found in the *Epistle to Diognetus*, although in a more clumsy formulation that reflects either the novelty of the ideas or a more Oriental (i.e., less democratic) attitude: “by ministering to those in need the things which he has received and holds from God, (the burden-reliever) becomes a God to those who receive them.” This is a surprising revelation that smacks of the tyranny abhorred by the Greeks. But the author promptly corrects him-

<sup>71</sup>Clement of Rome, *Epistle to the Corinthians* 47.7.

<sup>72</sup>*Didache* 1.5; Hermas, *Mandata* 2.6; Apollonius also, as quoted in *HE* 5.18.11. Alms come to replace sacrifice, in the Christianized Greek world as well as already in Judaism.

<sup>73</sup>Hermas, *Mandata* 2.6.

<sup>74</sup>*Didache* 4.7: ὁ τοῦ μισθοῦ καλῶς ἀνταποδότης. The Latin reads: *mercedis bonus redditor*.

<sup>75</sup>Hermas, *Similitudines* 1.8.

self: “this man is an imitator of God.”<sup>76</sup> These early attempts to distribute wealth equally by referring primarily the rich, but also the poor, directly and univocally to God could not operate satisfactorily or intensively enough on a large scale. The problem was then to keep the symbolic structure while allowing at the same time a return to normality, to less radical demands.

To this problem, part of the answer was the surge of spiritual beings such as the prophets or holy men. They acted as strong visible relays of God, able at the same time to reinforce their fellow compatriots in their relationship with one God and give them security in their new normality. But to do just that, they had to remain as spiritual as possible; they could take no advantage either from the rich or from the poor, or engage in trivial activities. Hermas waxes ironical on “that man who seems to have a spirit [. . .] lives in great luxury and in many other deceits, and accepts rewards for his prophecy, and if he does not receive them, he does not prophecy.”<sup>77</sup> Another solution to the problem was progressively to blur the categories used to evaluate the social situation, especially the easily recognizable contrast between rich and poor.

At first, in the early period, the radical difference between wealthy and needy was repeatedly emphasized. The wealthy were kept at a distance, for “the rich cleave with difficulty to the servants of God, fearing that they will be asked for something by them,”<sup>78</sup> and they were required to relinquish their riches. They might well be rich on this earth and “busied about their riches,” but they would be in the position of beggars in front of the Lord.<sup>79</sup> On one side were all the poor people, the oppressed, especially those constantly pressured by taxes, ground rents and debts, victims of a justice that deprived them of the means to live. On the other were those who follow “the way to death,”

<sup>76</sup>*Epistle to Diognetus* 10.6.

<sup>77</sup>Hermas, *Mandata* 11.12; 8.10; see Polycarp, *Epistle to the Philippians* 11.1; Apollonius, at *HE* 5.18.7–11, about Alexander, a Montanist: “If they are proved to have received gifts, they are not prophets, and we will bring many proofs of the fact.” In *HE* 5.28.10, 12, a bishop confessor who has received a salary (small) is treated as heretic; cf. again *HE* 7.30.7 about Paul of Samosata’s condemnation. For a modern version of a prophet making the most out of his gifts, see J. Weulersse, *Paysans de Syrie et du Proche-Orient* (Paris: Gallimard, 1946), 275–78. The church clergy also became, or tried to become, the only intermediate between God and the poor: centralizing benefactions, redistributing alms and honors. On their role, see for instance L. W. Countryman, *The Rich Christian in the Church of the Early Empire* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Mellen, 1980).

<sup>78</sup>Hermas, *Similitudines* 9.20.2.

<sup>79</sup>*Ibid.*, 2.5; cf. also 1.1; 4.6.

who are pitiless for the poor (πτωχόν) and who do not afflict themselves upon the afflicted, [...] who turn away the needy (τὸν ἐνδεόμενον)<sup>80</sup> and exploit the oppressed (θλιβόμενον), defenders of the rich, and lawless judges of the poor (πενήτων).<sup>81</sup>

The attack suits well the tax collectors, their agents, and the magistrates. The very rich landowners, however, seem too far removed, like the “plunderers” who “seem to walk in innocence, and look round to see whom they may plunder in their covetousness.”<sup>82</sup>

In contrast with the wretchedness of the wealthy, poverty was exalted and assimilated to justice: “Your soul will not stick to the proud (ὑψηλῶν), but you will go with the righteous and the humble (δικαίων καὶ ταπεινῶν).”<sup>83</sup> Extreme poverty was the criterion used to recognize the true apostles and prophets: they ought not to stay long, or be given anything, especially money.<sup>84</sup> If they stay longer, they must work and feed themselves.<sup>85</sup> They must not take advantage of their gift of prophecy and take food or money, except for the needy.<sup>86</sup> Yet poverty as such is not much eulogized in *Hermas*. He only gives once the advice “to be poorer than all men.”<sup>87</sup> *Hermas* was primarily concerned with the misery of those poor who did not choose to be so, and he wanted the richer person to ease their daily grief.<sup>88</sup> Anybody who enjoyed a surplus should be content with “sufficient frugality.”<sup>89</sup>

Time and again, however, the ever-renewed project of a great reduction of social differences was trimmed down. This was done at first by reaffirming a hierarchical conception of society that Clement of Rome translated in military terms: “The great cannot be without the small, neither the small without the great.”<sup>90</sup> Or it was accomplished by placing the Christians in a

<sup>80</sup>The Latin reads: “those who turn away from the good works.” The less precise formula may have referred to a more structured and limited charity.

<sup>81</sup>*Didache* 5.2; the *Epistle of Barnabas*, 20.2, adds those “who do not recognize a just salary.”

<sup>82</sup>*Epistle of Barnabas* 10.4.

<sup>83</sup>*Didache* 3.9; *Epistle of Barnabas* 19.6.

<sup>84</sup>*Didache* 11.4–6.

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*, 12.2–4.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*, 11.8–9, 12. Contrary view in 13.1–7 (tithe to be given to the prophets).

<sup>87</sup>*Mandata* 8.10.

<sup>88</sup>*Similitudines* 10.4.2.

<sup>89</sup>*Similitudines* 1.6; *Mandata* 8.3.

<sup>90</sup>*Epistle to the Corinthians* 37.4.

socially neutral position: *Christianus nec in pauperem superbit . . . Christianus vero nec aedilitatem (adfectat)*.<sup>91</sup> But this last conception was too ethereal, and, as has been seen, many Christians were detaching themselves from the poor. Many Christians did not hesitate to react against the Pagan assertion that they “come from the lowest levels of society.”<sup>92</sup> Origen himself, commenting allegorically on the Beatitudes, writes that “not even a stupid person would praise the poor indiscriminately. The majority of them have very bad characters.”<sup>93</sup>

Still, poverty was not abandoned as an ideal for Christian life, and the personal commitment of Origen is sufficient proof.<sup>94</sup> But one must consider the possibility that the asceticism of the few could be seen by the wealthy as sufficient to offset the essential shift from a Christian identification with the poor to the recent position of declared neutrality. Tertullian praised that life of poverty: “Only so much is eaten as satisfies hunger; only so much drunk as meets the needs of the modest.”<sup>95</sup> He vehemently claimed that Christian life was in complete opposition to that of the heathens, who, during a threatening famine, were “well fed daily and due to eat again. . . . We, parched with fasting, pinched with every austerity, abstaining from all food that sustains life, wallowing in sackclothes and ashes . . . we touch God.”<sup>96</sup> Poverty was lived by many Christians in the first centuries. But it was not considered so essential in the third and fourth centuries. It even appeared to some as a burdensome idea.

The same evolution is to be observed in the organization of charity and the criteria used to determine the proper alms receiver. We find in Hermas’s works the most open and humane view, due certainly to the author’s concern for people’s private life, their inner thirst for peace and gentleness, love, affection, quietness:

But I say that every man ought to be taken out from distress, for he who is destitute and suffers distress in his daily life is in great anguish and necessity. Whoever therefore rescues the soul of such a man from necessity gains great joy for himself. For he who is vexed by such distress is tortured with such anguish as he suffers who is in chains. For

<sup>91</sup>Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 46.13.

<sup>92</sup>*Octavius* 31.6.

<sup>93</sup>*Contra Celsum* 6.16. Cf. Eusebius, *HE* 7.30.9, saying that Paul of Samosata’s “shows” “excite the souls of the simple (τῶν ἀκεραιστέρων).”

<sup>94</sup>*HE* 6.3.9.

<sup>95</sup>*Apologeticum* 39.16.

<sup>96</sup>*Ibid.* 40.14.

many bring death on themselves by reason of such calamities when they cannot bear them.<sup>97</sup>

And he provides a list of those oppressed people: the widows, orphans, destitute, and the δούλους τοῦ θεοῦ (Christian slaves? or indebted people?). But charity was not yet defined in strict terms. It meant “to resist none, to be gentle, to be poorer than all men, to revere the aged, to practice justice . . . not to oppress poor debtors, and whatever is like to these things.”<sup>98</sup> It was properly without limits.<sup>99</sup>

This openness and basic trust appear more restrained in the *Didache* and *Epistle of Barnabas*, for whom the recipient must be only the needy, among whom were those oppressed by debts and the hungry.<sup>100</sup> With time, the “needy” became more and more categorized, and Tertullian for instance provides us with a precise and interesting list of those, Christians by necessity, on whom the fruit of the monthly collection was spent.<sup>101</sup> The Alexandrian church seems to have decided upon even more stringent standards, if we are to believe Clement of Alexandria. The poor, he says, must not only be God’s disciples, but also clean, and not in an attitude of beggars. “They must not appear needy or ill-clad.”<sup>102</sup> This passage is obviously not addressed to the humble, and it gives the impression that the rich are now catering to poor people who are expected to return not only an intercession with God, but also zeal for work, direct consideration, and honor.

Although perhaps an extreme formulation, the whole *Quis dives salvetur* is not an isolated interpretation of an all too clear Biblical message.<sup>103</sup> Minucius Felix also tried to account for the existence of wealthy Christians:

That most of us are reputed poor is no disgrace, but a credit, for the mind is relaxed by luxury, and braced by frugality. Yet, who can be poor, who is free from wants, who does not covet what is another’s, who is rich towards God? The poor man is he who, having much,

<sup>97</sup> *Similitudines* 10.4.2–3. ET by K. Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1913), 305. Cf. *Epistle to Diognetus* 10.6: the charitable person must relieve “everybody who is worse off in that in which he is the stronger.”

<sup>98</sup> *Mandata* 8.10.

<sup>99</sup> Clement of Rome, *Epistle to the Corinthians* 55.2.

<sup>100</sup> *Didache* 5.2; *Epistle of Barnabas* 20.2; 3.3.

<sup>101</sup> *Apologeticum* 39.5–6.

<sup>102</sup> *Quis dives salvetur* 33.

<sup>103</sup> See Countryman’s recent study, *The Rich Christian*.

craves for more. I will tell you how I look at it: no man can be so poor as he is at birth.<sup>104</sup>

Both texts, although disproportionate in length, are two variations on the same answer to the conflict between the original thrust of Christianity and the wealthy Christians' desire to enjoy the best of two worlds. Both claim that poverty and wealth are purely mental categories. For Minucius Felix, the rich are not really rich, and everybody is basically poor inasmuch as he simply craves for something else. In the last resort, everybody is poor toward God. In consequence, the wealthy may keep their *facultates*, provided they put them to good use, which fits perfectly well the Greco-Roman notion of philanthropy.<sup>105</sup> As for the poor, they are not really to be considered so, because they all have more than at birth. The poor are thus discreetly denied the possibility of being "spiritually wanting" themselves. All this does not prevent Minucius Felix from saying that poverty is better than "panting under a burden of wealth."

In *Quis dives salvetur*, the overflowing passions of both the rich and the poor (greed, envy, selfishness) are equated with riches, in contradiction with Minucius who equates them with poverty.<sup>106</sup> If put to good use, the neutral material wealth itself will then act as a "multiplier" of virtue, bestowed by God, with whom the relieved poor brethren will have interceded. As corollary, it is held that there is no virtue in beggary. The assertion is not surprising, if one understands that poor people were from then on those who *gave* the Kingdom of God, whereas the rich were to *beg* the proper poor to take their alms of 4 obols.<sup>107</sup> The classical notion was that the philanthropic act must go to the "good," to the "worthy."<sup>108</sup> But by feeding a limited number of chosen poor elevated to the dignity of "Kingdom distributors," the wealthy were now rid of the obligation to risk their fortune and status at ruinous liturgies, while still being in a position to enjoy a freshly acquired peace of mind. Seen through these texts of the second and third centuries, they appear to be the winners, in a system foreshadowing a feudal society in which *potentes* and *pauperes* together would form the static and hieratic order wanted by God.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>104</sup> *Octavius* 36.3–5.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.7.

<sup>106</sup> These passions are reputed to bring more evil than persecutions, *Quis dives salvetur* 25.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 32; 21.

<sup>108</sup> *Hands, Charity*, 75.

<sup>109</sup> See K. Bösl, "Das Problem der Armut in der Hochmittel-alterlichen Gesellschaft,"

The ideas about property evolved in primarily the same way and at the same pace as those on poverty. In the *Didache*, the ideal was clearly that there should not be any accumulation of property, and that only the needy could receive gifts. The forbidding of theft of the neighbor's property obviously implied the recognition of property itself.<sup>110</sup> But everything must ideally be given: "If you own something because of the work of your hands, give it for the redemption of your sins."<sup>111</sup> The ideal was to have everything in common with the brothers (not necessarily the poor): "Do not push back the needy (τὸν ἐνδεόμενον), put everything in common with your brother and do not say that you have riches on your own, for if you are to share the immortal wealth, how much more are you to partake in the perishable one."<sup>112</sup> The view is slightly different in Hermas: "Make no further preparation for yourself, beyond a sufficient competence."<sup>113</sup>

Property was soon accepted and considered to be socially neutral. Either it was a source of unrighteousness for *everyone*, because "all of us have either small or great possessions, derived from the Mammon of iniquity,"<sup>114</sup> or it all depended to what use it was put, to follow Clement of Alexandria.<sup>115</sup> At the beginning of the fourth century, the position was summarized by Lactantius for whom "the ownership of property contains the material of both vices and virtues, but *communitas* contains nothing but licence for vice."<sup>116</sup> This last comment took pretext of some abuses, real or imaginary, to reject the not forgotten ideal of a strict community life.<sup>117</sup>

The opinion about slaves varies also considerably during the three first centuries, although not about slavery itself, which is not questioned and cannot be by Christians who are themselves slave owners.<sup>118</sup> At the start of

---

*Oesterreichische Akademie der Wissenschaft, Philosophisch-Historischen Klasse, 294 (1974) 3–29.*

<sup>110</sup> *Didache* 2.2.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.* 4.6; Hermas, *Similitudines* 1.1.

<sup>112</sup> *Didache* 4.8; *Epistle of Barnabas* 19.8.

<sup>113</sup> *Similitudines* 1.6: this idea of self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια) was variously interpreted, since needs were thought to vary with social status.

<sup>114</sup> Irenaeus (?) *Fragmenta* 29 (W. W. Harvey, *Sancti Irenaei libros quinque adversus haereses* [Cambridge, 1857], 494).

<sup>115</sup> *Quis dives salvetur* 26.

<sup>116</sup> *Divinae Institutiones* 3.22.7.

<sup>117</sup> Epiphanes Gnosticus, at Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 3.6–9: everything should be held in common, even women. In his defense of the Christian way of life (ca. 197 C.E.), Tertullian was careful to spell out the exception: *Omnia indiscreta sunt apud nos praeter uxores* (*Apologeticum*, 39.11).

<sup>118</sup> On slavery and Christianity, see H. Guelzow, *Christentum und Sklaverei in den er-*

Christianity, slaves remained slaves, but they were not to be ordered bitterly or mistreated, if they were Christian, in fear that their hope in the same God might suffer.<sup>119</sup> In return, the slaves were asked to consider their masters like images of God, with respect and fear.<sup>120</sup> Ignatius of Antioch gave the same advice, but added that the new consideration toward slaves ought to have for counterpart their increased zeal, “for the glory of God, to obtain the true freedom.” Furthermore, “Let them not try to be freed by the community, so that they will not be found the slaves of envy.”<sup>121</sup> These early and cautious words of protection are too thin to mask the general contempt in which slaves were held. Hippolytus could abuse Callistus, for instance, because this latter had been a slave.<sup>122</sup> The accusations against Christians were often blamed on slaves.<sup>123</sup> Tertullian went so far as to say that the slaves of Christians are their enemies “from their very nature.”<sup>124</sup> This extreme view was not general, however. The slaves’ conditions were varied, and Eusebius, for instance, could eulogize Porphyry and Theodulos, both slaves respectively of Pamphyly and Firmilian the governor.<sup>125</sup>

In the fourth century C.E., the old theme of Christ’s poverty had become theological,<sup>126</sup> and it had become acceptable to believe that Christians had originated *de vili plebicula*.<sup>127</sup> Not that this theme was less dangerous to manipulate, but it was thought more fitting, in the now successful institution, to contain the despair of the needy by sanctifying poverty. In the same

---

*sten Jahrhunderten* (Bonn: R. Habelt, 1969); W. Held, *Die Vertiefung der allgemein Krise im Westen des römischen Reiches* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1974), 76ff.; also M. Finley, *Slavery in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Heffer, 1964<sup>2</sup>); E. M. Schtaerman, *Die Krise der Sklavenhalterordnung im Westen des römischen Reiches* (Berlin: 1964), esp. 112–38. Slavery was apparently thought as immoral in some Gnostic texts: see *Acta Thomae*, 82.3.

<sup>119</sup>*Didache* 4.10; the Latin version is more explicit: slaves are not to be mistreated because they might fear both the Lord and the master.

<sup>120</sup>*Ibid.*, 4.11; *Epistle of Barnabas*, 19.7.

<sup>121</sup>*Letter to Polycarp*, 4.3; Cato’s treatise on agriculture forbade slaves access to God. Ignatius allows it, but very cautiously. The masters of the American South would come round to Cato, by punishing their slaves for asking directly from God what they could obtain instead from their paternalistic owner: see E. D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974).

<sup>122</sup>*Refutation of All Heresies* 9.12.1.

<sup>123</sup>*HE* 5.1.14 (at Lyon in 177 C.E.).

<sup>124</sup>*Apologeticum* 7.3. Cf. *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 6; *HE* 4.15.11.

<sup>125</sup>*De Martyribus Palaestinae* 11.15; 11.24. Before the triumph of Christianity, apologists defended Christian slaves against calumnies: e.g., Athenagoras (end of the second century), in *Legatio* 35.1: no slaves brought accusations against their masters.

<sup>126</sup>Athanasius, *Homily in Mt* 11.27 (*PG* 25.209).

<sup>127</sup>Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians* 3 (*PL* 26.428).

fashion but more powerfully, the radical way of life chosen by Antony and his imitators, at the end of the persecutions, presented the poor of the Empire with a glorious image of their own wretchedness: “And in his cell he was a daily martyr to his conscience, always leading the battles of the faith.”<sup>128</sup>

#### 7.4 CONCLUSION

It would be surprising to discover that the Church Fathers, living in the Greco-Roman world, were entirely free to create new principles of moral behavior. In several respects, they did not depart from the feelings and conceptions common to their culture. A recent author notes that “early Christian sources rarely consistently glorify the righteous poor or condemn the wicked rich.”<sup>129</sup> Concerning the “righteous poor,” this does not strike one as remarkable, since the concept could not be found in mainstream Greek or Roman culture. What is remarkable is that the poor became a very important part of Christian thought and practice, in a world having little or no concern for them. Regarding the “wicked rich,” however, it must be realized that Pagans and Christians alike had harsh things to say about certain kinds of wealth, the difference between the two groups centering on the definition of “wicked.”

Radical criticism of wealth was more commonly expressed among Jewish Christians and Gnostic groups, often in an apocalyptic discourse. It can also be implied from the life of ascetes and early coenobites. But the Church Fathers usually did not question the existence of wealthy people, provided that their wealth satisfied the usual prerequisites. It had to be mostly in landed property, acquired of old, and justified by good birth, good education, and a willingness to engage in a number of expenses that the community deemed important. Wealth recently obtained, or obtained in nontraditional ways, was open to severe criticism, as we have seen in the case of Paul of Samosata.

Christian views of the use of wealth, however, were different from traditional conceptions. Christians agreed with non-Christians that it was important to refrain from “luxury” and to keep to *simplicitas* or ἀπλότης.<sup>130</sup>

<sup>128</sup> Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 47.

<sup>129</sup> H. W. Pleket, Review of *The Rich Christian in the Church of the Early Empire: Contradictions and Accommodations*, by L. W. Countryman, *VC* 36 (1982) 63.

<sup>130</sup> On *simplicitas* and ἀπλότης as an ideal of the Greeks and the Romans, see L. Robert, *Hellenica*, 13 (1965) 36, n. 1; *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 101 (1977) 90, n. 2.

But Christianity placed the contributions that the wealthy were to make in a very different light. For the Greeks and Romans, the highest principle followed in the sharing of duties and privileges was the good of the society at large. The Gods were at best a sanction, a protection. Christians, however, put this principle in a position ancillary to belief in one God who made moral demands that were to be answered, whatever the type of society.

Once the wealthy had entered the Church, they were expected to contribute to the well-being of the Christian community. But men were now agents of God, who was presented as the only true philanthropist. In this position of agents, clergy and prosperous laity were sometimes in competition. Within the clergy itself arose various types of religious people (mostly men) who became the new patrons of the society: holy men as well as bishops. The wealthy themselves entered the clergy, especially from the third century on. Those who did not could continue to occupy a prominent place in the new society by virtue of their family ties with the clergy and through their benefactions. These good works were presented in a new context. Biblical teaching invited Christians to see them as works of compassion that were a necessary step toward redemption.<sup>131</sup> These were the new means that the well-to-do had to justify their position in society. The pressures coming from the common people for gifts as large as possible were now mediated by the clergy.

The poor too found a new security, if only because redistribution through charity was encouraged on a large scale. But there were many more poor people than the rich would or could care for. Churchmen tended therefore to concentrate on certain traditional aspects of poverty, and attempts were made even at categorizing the suitable poor.

On the ideological plane, one had to account for the shocking revelation of a God who was not only close to the poor, a somewhat distant Father, but who even lived a life of poverty, the Son in the flesh. For a wealthy Greek to accept the Christian God meant that he had to contend with the idea of the dignity of the poor and of a boundless duty toward them. The first stage of subtle resistance to this demanding idea, culminating with Clement of Alexandria, was to raise the poor to a position of strictly spiritual equality within the Church, by making them the intercessors before God for the rich turned alms givers. There was a positive side to this theory, but it can also be seen as a fiction applying only to the poor within the Church and only inso-

<sup>131</sup> Sir 3.14–15, 30; 17.22; 29.11–13; 31.8–11; Tobit 12.8–9; Acts 10.4. On the history of the word *ἐλεημοσύνη*, see art. “Miséricorde”, in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, 10:1329 (by I. Noye).

far as they conformed to certain patterns of behavior. Later on in the fourth and fifth centuries, it became possible to move slowly toward a recognition of poverty as admirable in itself. But this recognition often took the form of an idealized portrait of Jesus' poverty. The way was thus prepared for the regulated imitation of Jesus' poverty and the Medieval *Pauperes Christi*.



## Epilogue

Various situations of poverty existed in Roman Palestine and in the rest of the Roman Empire. There were two broad categories for which our words poverty and indigence are approximations. The wider category included all those with some income, but without the means, especially leisure, necessary for such social activities as entertaining, education, and political and religious service. Furthermore, they were to some extent dependent for their material security upon the goodwill of the more powerful members of their community. These usually wealthier people could derive direct, or less direct, compensations for the type of personal services they rendered: help with debts, providing of work or land, and protection against others' claims. The narrower category included all those who had lost this minimal degree of security and were dependent for their food, clothing, and lodging on organized charity and the evocation of feelings of pity.

Judaism and Christianity on one side, and Greek and Roman culture on the other, offered views of poverty and of social aid that were at variance. In Judaism, the poor were protected by laws that were accepted as an integral part of the covenant with God. Charity was justice. Failure to enact these laws could be perceived as threatening the essence of the Jewish people. A minimal degree of protection was extended almost without question to people whose existence was threatened. But concerning other situations, religious authorities tended to restrict the use of "poor" to those people answering to a number of material and spiritual criteria. Those people whose lack of means was partly responsible for their religious failures—in terms of purity, tithing, or religious education—were not recognized as poor. To be recognized as poor and receive the full benefits of the law, it was essential also to behave in a certain religious manner.

Greco-Roman culture, on the contrary, had no reason to be cautious in its use of the words "poor" or "needy." Like Judaism, it encouraged various forms of social aid, sometimes on the basis of feelings of compassion but

usually on the basis of friendship among equals and a desire for order in the community. It was the social status of people that mattered, more so for the rich of course, and it was this sort of need that philanthropy attended to rather than the purely physical needs of people. The needy were not necessarily helped, and the “working poor” could expect a measure of help or relief only insofar as they were able to return the favor, either as a group or an individual.

After a short period of transition in Roman Palestine, the Jewish view, now detached from the Jewish nation, became available to the Greco-Roman world. Within Judaism, Christian Jews continued to apply the traditional teachings on poverty and charity, teachings on which it was difficult to improve. The only differences, to my mind, were that Jewish believers in Jesus may have eased the religious criteria demanded of the poor as well as extended the possibility of their application to more people (widows, for instance). Future research will help in elucidating these points. One must realize, of course, that Judaism and Christianity were not monolithic expressions of faith. The definitions of what poverty was, and what charity or justice should be, could be narrow or broad, peacefully or violently expressed.

In becoming Christian, Greeks and Romans accepted to be taught the Jewish views on poverty and to practice charity as understood by Jewish Christianity. This they did with such enthusiasm that their contemporaries found it necessary to react with expressions of disgust or wonder. Having accepted to respond to a sacred Greek Bible in which “poor” and “needy” were objects of concern, however, some Christians felt that their own languages were too liberal in the use of these words. The processes that had led in Judaism to the spiritualization of poverty also took place in Greco-Roman Christianity. But Greeks and Romans could not easily call the poor by other names. The ways open to them were to restrict the meanings of “poor” through laborious exegesis and require new criteria of behavior, not necessarily religious, from those in need.

It has not been possible to show that Christian charity was different in nature from other forms of social aid. One reason for this failure, as explained in the Introduction, is the difficulty of the investigation. Another reason why it could not be shown has to do with the nature itself of this charity. I assume that the act of charity, if it went beyond Seneca’s formulations as given for instance in the *De Beneficiis*, was invisible and impossible to trace. The forgiveness exercised privately—fornbearing, remitting or non-claiming of debts and customary rights—could or would not be seen by

the beneficiaries, let alone others. Furthermore, acts of charity tended to be seen rather quickly as acts dictated by nature. It does not follow that charity, though invisible at the source, left no trace whatsoever. The cumulative result of these invisible acts of charity took the form of new institutions and ways to deal with a variety of old social problems: widowhood, orphanhood, childhood, sickness, errancy, debt bondage, slavery, and so forth. But the historian usually sees only imperfections in regard to an ideal, or relatively fewer imperfections. She or he is in the position of a physicist who tries to derive knowledge on the nature of the particle observed from traces it left at various moments of its life.

The research for the book was motivated in part by the idea that Jesus' life was a source of social change. However, I have left aside the actions of Jesus himself, not because I believe his *ipsissima verba et facta* unattainable but because they would require a special kind of book where the literature is already immense. In regard to the role of Jesus' followers, one can only conclude that there may be a golden rule and golden moments of charity, but not one single golden age of charity. The proximity in time of the early Church to Jesus is not sufficient reason for applying to the whole period the dreams of perfection of another time. One sometimes encounters the idea that the history of Christianity is the history of a progressive decline from the point of perfection reached by Jesus. The thought probably originates in the idea that Jesus was a social reformer. But to believe in him as a savior would lead one to different conclusions. I myself have emulated the historian who, in Vladimir Jankélévitch's words,

évite à sa manière une vision de plein fouet qui le consumerait, fait du présent une absence et se ménage une approche indirecte ou graduelle vers l'ineffable.<sup>132</sup>

<sup>132</sup> *Le pur et l'impur* (Paris: Flammarion, 1960), 19.



# Appendices



## Weights and Measures

In Table 2 on the following page, I list the values used for the present work. However, the subject of weights and measures in Roman Palestine is a complex one and no simple solution applies. It has been dealt with at some length by A. Ben-David.<sup>133</sup> What characterizes most descriptions is the attempt to give a *coherent* picture, a system, and the assumption that it had a *wide application*.<sup>134</sup> Another characteristic is the reliance on literary sources, which often leads to contradictory results, or to the adoption of a system that downplays some of the sources for no good reason. Ben-David's work is exceptional, in that it takes archaeological discoveries into account, but he also pushes too far, in my judgment, his effort to coordinate and systematize these results with the literary data.

Any approach to the problem should be made in awareness of the following points: First, it is essential to ascertain the function(s) of these weights and measures. For instance, were the measures discovered by archaeologists those used by tithe or tax collectors, and in relation to what system? The same goes for literary sources: What were the concerns of the authors or redactors, if they can be discerned? Second, one must also bear in mind that the literary sources themselves did often try to put order where sometimes it was not possible. They did this either for administrative purposes, from love of logic and order, or perhaps to correlate their own situation with that of the impressively regularized Roman system.

The results obtained from archaeological sources, though more solid, have limits. The regularity discovered in the "Herodian" *log* may be posited only for the Herodian period and perhaps only in connection with the Roman tax system in which the *sextarius* was worth 0.54 iiter. More finds will

<sup>133</sup> *Talmudische Oekonomie* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1274), 1:221–42.

<sup>134</sup> Art. "Weights and Measures," in *EJ*, 16:288–20, for instance.

enable one to identify the nature of the system or systems, their interconnection, and the conditions of their application (geographic and social).

**Table 1** – *Weights and Measures*

	Mishnah-Talmud	Roman [Egyptian]
Length	cubit = ca. 45–55 centimeters	cubit = 52 centimeters
Area	<i>beth se'ah</i> = ca. 700–1000m <sup>2</sup> <i>beth kor</i> = 2–2 hectares	<i>iugerum</i> = 2517m <sup>2</sup> (ca. 5/8 acre)  [ <i>arura</i> = 2756 square meters]
Volume	<i>se'ah</i> = ca. 12 liters <i>qab</i> = ca. 2.2 liters (1/6 <i>se'ah</i> ) <i>log</i> = ca. 0.55 liters (1/24 <i>se'ah</i> ) <i>lethekeh</i> = ca. 128 liters <i>kor</i> = ca. 225 liters	<i>modius</i> = 8.7 liters  <i>sextarius</i> = 0.54 liters (cf. Greek <i>xestes</i> )  [ <i>artaba</i> = ca. 40 liters]
Weight	<i>maneh</i> = ca. 250 grams <i>kikkar</i> = ca. 21 kilograms	<i>mina</i> = 241 grams <i>libra</i> = 227 grams
Money	<i>maneh</i> = 4 gold <i>denarii</i> = 100 silver <i>denarii</i> ( <i>zuzim</i> ) <i>sela</i> = 1 Tyrian tetradrachm = 2 sheqels ( <i>sheqel</i> = didrachm) ( <i>zuz</i> = silver <i>denarius</i> ) <i>zuz</i> = 6 <i>ma'ot</i> (smallest silver coin. Bullion included pondions, <i>issars</i> , <i>peruṭot</i> .)	

#### VALUES OF THE *LOG*, *SE'AH*, AND *BETH-SE'AH*

Table 2 gives definite figures for the *se'ah* (ca. 12 liters) and the *log* (0.55 liters), but keeps wide margins for the basic unit of area, the *beth-se'ah* (700–1000 square meters). The reason is that, from the Jewish farmer's perspective, the unit of volume of cereals sown or harvested was more stable than the

unit of area.<sup>135</sup> Farmers adapted to the wide variations that existed in the quality of the soil by sowing a *se'ah* of grain on areas covering from 600 or 700 to over 1000 square meters. This entailed difficulties for the Roman administration, which was used to basing its assessments on units of area. It partly explains their need to rely on client kings, priestly hierarchies, or later Patriarchs.

It does not mean that the value of the *se'ah* itself was fixed in the whole province. This is obvious from many correlations given in Talmudic literature or from the variety of estimations given by Epiphanius in his *Treatise on Weights and Measures*.<sup>136</sup> The relevant passages of the Talmudic literature have been discussed by Sperber, who draws the conclusion that the *se'ah* ranged from 12 to 18.6 liters.<sup>137</sup> We also know of one *se'ah* measuring about 8.64 liters, according to R. Abbahu of Caesarea (third century C.E.).<sup>138</sup> This wide range of possibilities can be reduced slightly if one considers that both the *se'ah* of R. Abbahu (8.64 liters) and the *se'ah* of Sepphoris (18.6 liters) tended to equate respectively with the Roman *modius italicus* (about 2 liters) and *modius castrensis* (about 18 liters), probably for convenience or reasons of tax collection in the Caesarea area. *Se'ah* is often equated with *modius* in the Talmud (i.e., with *modius castrensis*).<sup>139</sup> The relative novelty of R. Abbahu's measurement and his manipulation of the number of *qab* per *se'ah* can be taken to mean that the 8.6-liter *se'ah* was not in general use.<sup>140</sup> The fact that the Sepphoris *se'ah* (18.6 liters) is better established in the sources does not mean that it should be trusted as a more

<sup>135</sup>See for instance the deed of sale found in Naḥal Ḥever (Wadi Ḥabra), dating to 125 C.E. or a little earlier: K. Beyer, *ATTM* (1284) 221–22, no. V 46; J. A. Fitzmyer and D. J. Harrington, *A Manual of Palestinian Aramaic Texts* (1278), 156, no. 52. The deed concerns a property described as being apt to being sown with 2 *se'ah* and 2 *qab* of wheat, more or less (not “yielding” this quantity, contra Fitzmyer-Harrington, p. 157). Text, as in K. Beyer, *ATTM*, p. 222: [two lines of Hebrew text]

<sup>136</sup>J. E. Dean, ed., *Epiphanius' Treatise on Weights and Measures. The Syriac Version* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1225), 45d (pp. 12–12); 52c–d (p. 41); 62a (p. 46); 66d (p. 56).

<sup>137</sup>“Costs of Living in Roman Palestine,” *JESHO* 8 (1265) 266ff. One desert *se'ah* = 12 liters; 1 Jerusalem *se'ah* = 15.5 liters; 1 Sepphoris *se'ah* = 18.6 liters.

<sup>138</sup>*pTer.* 5.1.42c, lines 47–48. See Sperber, *JESHO* 8 (1265) 270. This is the *se'ah* value chosen by Y. Felix in his pages on sowing, *Agriculture in the Times of the Mishna and the Talmud* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1262), 161–62.

<sup>139</sup>See Jastrow, *Dictionary*, *Se'ah*; Sperber, *JESHO* 8 (1265) 252, n. 1; 268–71.

<sup>140</sup>Four *qabs* instead of the usual 6. But he was not the only one to do so. (Normally, 1 *se'ah* = 6 *qabs* = 24 *logs*).

general value. The Jerusalem *se'ab* is given a value of 15.5 liters by Sperber.<sup>141</sup> But archaeological discoveries and other literary sources indicate that it had a value of 12 liters.<sup>142</sup> This is the mean value adopted in this book for the *se'ab* of Palestine. The wide variations that existed between the customs of different regions made tampering with weights and measures a constant temptation.

<sup>141</sup>On the basis of *pTer.* 10.5.47b, line 25, where 1 *log* of liquid is said to weigh 2 Roman *librae* (ca. 650 grams). One Jerusalem *se'ab* as defined above (15.5 liters = 15.5 kilograms) would contain *exactly* 24 such *logs*.

<sup>142</sup>See *bPes.* 102a: "The *xestes* for *muries* [kept as a standard] in Sepphoris was about the same as the temple *log*". A *sextarius* being 1/16 of a *modius*, therefore 1/16 *modius* (Sepphoris) = 1/24 *se'ab* (Jerusalem). Hence, 1 *se'ab* (Jerusalem, Temple) = 2/24 *modius* (Sepphoris). If the *modius* spoken of is *modius italicus* (ca. 2 liters), then 1 Temple *se'ab* = 12.5 liters. But one could reason in the other direction, i.e., knowing from archaeological finds that the Temple *log* is 540 grams, deduce that this *xestes* was the sixteenth part of a *modius* measuring 8.64 liters.

## Minimum daily bread

A mean *se'ah* of 12 liters would contain about 2.75 kilograms of wheat at a density of 75 kilograms per hectoliter, but a much lesser weight of barley.<sup>143</sup> Wheat weighing 2.75 kilograms would produce 12.5 kilograms of whole wheat bread, provided that the flour extraction rate was 100 percent and the degree of water absorption high.<sup>144</sup> Our extreme values for the *se'ah* (10 to 15 liters, see Appendix A) would give respectively about 10.5 kilograms and 15.75 kilograms of the same kind of bread. But let us keep to the Jerusalem *se'ah* to simplify: if eighteen loaves were made of one such *se'ah* of wheat, one loaf would weigh about 750 grams, or 1.65 U.S. pounds. This figure is maximal for both technical reasons and economic reasons. On the technical side, it has already been indicated that the rate of water absorption chosen for our purpose is high.<sup>145</sup> The density of wheat may also have been lower than 75 kilograms per hectoliter (type of hybrid? impurities?). Moreover, a 100 percent extraction rate for flour was out of the question. *Cibarius* flour was obtained at about a 20 percent rate. Another element of comparison is provided in Ibn Al-Awam's *Nabataean Agriculture*, where it is said that one needed 22 pounds of wheat to make 17 pounds of bread.<sup>146</sup> This would imply a flour extraction rate lower than 70 percent and a low rate of water absorption.

<sup>143</sup>Following modern experience and the densities implied by Pliny in *Natural History* 18.66, for Gallic wheat. Moritz, however, in *Grain-Mills and Flour in Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1258), 186, gives densities of 80–82 kilograms per hectoliter for most wheats quoted in Pliny.

<sup>144</sup>See Moritz, *Grain-Mills and Flour in Classical Antiquity*, 126. See also art. "Cereals" and "Baking," in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

<sup>145</sup>The rate chosen is 140 pounds of bread for 100 pounds of flour. Wholemeal, however, has the highest water absorption rate.

<sup>146</sup>J. J. Clément-Mullet, *Le livre de l'agriculture d'Ibn Al-Awam* (Paris: A. Franck, 1866), 27.

On the economic side, there is good reason to believe that measures were not always brim-full and that many bakers tried to make as many loaves as they could from a given amount of dough, perhaps twenty-two or even twenty-four instead of the supposed eighteen loaves. If we figure in a 10 percent level of waste, the respective quantities of *cibarium* bread obtained for the 10-liter *se'ah* (desert *se'ah*), our 12-liter *se'ah* (the Jerusalem *se'ah*), and the 15-liter *se'ah* (Sepphoris *se'ah*) are 8.80, 11.40 and 12.20 kilograms.<sup>147</sup> With the mean *se'ah* of 12 liters (Jerusalem *se'ah*), a loaf could weigh between 500 and 600 grams, depending on whether the baker made twenty-four or eighteen loaves out of this quantity of grain.

<sup>147</sup>For a water absorption rate giving 120 pounds of bread for 100 pounds of flour.

# List of Palestinian sages

Names in italics refer to heads of schools. An asterisk denotes members of the Hillel dynasty who acted as Heads of the Sanhedrin.

## *Pre-Tannaitic*

*Hillel*

*Shammai*

Simeon b. Shetaḥ

Simeon the Just

## *Tannaim I* (ca. 10–80 C.E.)

Rabban Gamaliel I

Ḥanina b. Dosa (charismatic)

*Yoḥanan b. Zakkai* (Head of Sanhedrin)

School of Hillel

School of Shammai

Simeon b. Gamaliel I

## *Tannaim II* (ca. 80–120 C.E.)

Eleazar b. Azariah

Eliezer b. Hyrcanus

*Rabban Gamaliel II*

Joshua b. Ḥananiah

## *Tannaim III* (ca. 120–40)

*Aqiva*

*Ishmael (b. Elisha)*

Yoḥanan b. Beroka

Yoḥanan b. Nuri

Jose the Galilean

Judah b. Bathyra

Tarfon

## *Tannaim IV* (ca. 140–65)

- Eleazar (b. Shammua')  
 Yoḥanan the Sandalmaker  
 Jose b. Ḥalafta  
 Judah b. Ilai  
 Meir  
 Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel II  
 Simeon b. Yoḥai  
*Tannaim V* (end of second century)  
 Eleazar ha-Qappar  
 Jose b. Meshullam  
 Nathan (ha-Bavli)  
*Rabbi (Judah ha-Nasi)*  
*Period of Transition* (beginning of third century)  
 Bar Qappara (ca. 210)  
 Gamaliel III (ca. 220)  
 Ḥiyya the Elder  
*Amoraim I* (ca. 220–250)  
*Hanina b. Ḥama* (ca. 225): Sepphoris  
*Hoshaya (Oshaya) Rabbah*: Caesarea  
*Joshua b. Levi*: Lydda  
 Judah II  
 Yannai  
*Amoraim II* (ca. 250–280)  
*Eleazar b. Pedat*: Tiberias  
 Gamaliel IV (fl. 280)  
*Yoḥanan (b. Nappaha)*: Tiberias  
*Simeon b. Laqish (Resh Laqish)*  
 (Simlai)  
*Amoraim III* (ca. 220–220)  
*Abbaḥu*: Caesarea  
*Ammi (b. Nathan)*: Tiberias  
*Assi*: Tiberias  
 Judah III (fl. 200)  
*Zeira*



# Abbreviations

## BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

Acts	The Acts	Jude	Jude
Am	Amos	1 Kg	1 Kings
Bar	Baruch	2 Kg	2 Kings
1 Chr	1 Chronicles	Lam	Lamentations
2 Chr	2 Chronicles	Lev	Leviticus
Col	Colossians	Lk	Luke
1 Cor	1 Corinthians	1 Macc	1 Maccabees
2 Cor	2 Corinthians	2 Macc	2 Maccabees
Dan	Daniel	Mal	Malachi
Dt	Deuteronomy	Mic	Micah
Ec	Ecclesiastes	Mk	Mark
Eph	Ephesians	Mt	Matthew
Est	Esther	Nah	Nahum
Ex	Exodus	Neh	Nehemiah
Ezek	Ezekiel	Num	Numbers
1 Esdr	1 Esdras	Ob	Obadiah
2 Esdr	2 Esdras	1 Pet	1 Peter
Ezra	Ezra	2 Pet	2 Peter
Gal	Galatians	Phil	Philippians
Gen	Genesis	Philem	Philemon
Hab	Habakkuk	Pr	Proverbs
Hag	Haggai	Ps	Psalms
Heb	Hebrews	Rev	Revelation
Hos	Hosea	Rom	Romans
Is	Isaiah	Ru	Ruth
Jas	James	1 Sam	1 Samuel
Jer	Jeremiah	2 Sam	2 Samuel
Jg	Judges	Sir	Ben Sira
Jr	Joel	S of S	Song of Songs
Jn	John	1 Th	1 Thessalonians
2 Jn	2 John	1 Tim	1 Timothy
3 Jn	3 John	2 Tim	2 Timothy
Job	Job	Tit	Titus

## QUMRAN LITERATURE

CD	<i>The Damascus Rule</i>
1QH	<i>The Hymns of Thanksgiving</i>
1QM	<i>The War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness</i>
1QpHab	<i>Commentary on Habakkuk</i>
1QS	<i>The Community Rule, or Manual of Discipline</i>
1QSa	<i>The Messianic Rule, or Rule of the Congregation</i>
4QpPs 37	<i>Commentary on Ps 37</i>

## OTHER ANCIENT JEWISH LITERATURE

‘Arakh.	<i>‘Arakhin</i>
ARN	<i>Avoth de-Rabbi Nathan</i>
Av.	<i>Avoth</i>
‘Av. Zar.	<i>‘Avodah Zarah</i>
b	<i>Babylonian Talmud</i>
Bar.	<i>Baraita</i>
BB	<i>Bava Bathra</i>
Bekh.	<i>Bekhoroth</i>
Ber.	<i>Berakboth</i>
Bets.	<i>Betsah (=Yom Ṭov)</i>
Bikk.	<i>Bikkurim</i>
BM	<i>Bava Metsi’a</i>
BQ	<i>Bava Qamma</i>
CantR.	<i>Canticum Rabbah</i>
Dem.	<i>Demai</i>
DEZ	<i>Derekh Erets Zuta</i>
DtR.	<i>Deuteronomium Rabbah</i>
‘Eduy.	<i>‘Eduyyoth</i>
Er.	<i>‘Eruvin</i>
ExR.	<i>Exodus Rabbah</i>
GenR.	<i>Genesis Rabbah</i>
Gitt.	<i>Gittin</i>
Ḥag.	<i>Ḥagigah</i>
Ḥall.	<i>Ḥallah</i>
Hor.	<i>Horayoth</i>
Hull.	<i>Hullin</i>

<i>Kel.</i>	<i>Kelim</i>
<i>Ker.</i>	<i>Kerithoth</i>
<i>Keth.</i>	<i>Kethuboth</i>
<i>Kil.</i>	<i>Kil'aim</i>
<i>LamR.</i>	<i>Lamentations Rabbah</i>
<i>LevR.</i>	<i>Leviticus Rabbah</i>
<i>m</i>	<i>Mishnah</i>
<i>Ma'as.</i>	<i>Ma'aseroth</i>
<i>Ma'as. Sh.</i>	<i>Ma'aser Sheni</i>
<i>Makhsb.</i>	<i>Makhsirim</i>
<i>Makk.</i>	<i>Makkoth</i>
<i>Meg.</i>	<i>Megillah</i>
<i>Me'il</i>	<i>Me'ilah</i>
<i>Mekh. Ex.</i>	<i>Mekhilta on Exodus</i>
<i>Men.</i>	<i>Menahoth</i>
<i>Midd.</i>	<i>Middoth</i>
<i>Miqv.</i>	<i>Miqva'oth</i>
<i>MQ</i>	<i>Mo'ed Qatan</i>
<i>Naz.</i>	<i>Nazir</i>
<i>Ned.</i>	<i>Nedarim</i>
<i>Neg.</i>	<i>Nega'im</i>
<i>Nidd.</i>	<i>Niddah</i>
<i>NumR.</i>	<i>Numbers Rabbah</i>
<i>Ohol.</i>	<i>Oholoth</i>
<i>'Orl.</i>	<i>'Orlah</i>
<i>p</i>	<i>Palestinian Talmud, or Yerushalmi</i>
<i>Par.</i>	<i>Parah</i>
<i>Pe'ab</i>	<i>Pe'ah</i>
<i>Pes.</i>	<i>Pesahim</i>
<i>PRE</i>	<i>Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer</i>
<i>Qidd.</i>	<i>Qiddushin</i>
<i>Qinn.</i>	<i>Qinnim</i>
<i>QohR.</i>	<i>Qoheleth Rabbah</i>
<i>R.</i>	<i>Rabbi</i>
<i>R. b.</i>	<i>Rabbi . . . ben . . .</i>
<i>R. Sh.</i>	<i>Rosh ha-Shanah</i>
<i>RuR.</i>	<i>Ruth Rabbah</i>
<i>Sanh.</i>	<i>Sanhedrin</i>
<i>Shab.</i>	<i>Shabbath</i>

<i>Shevi.</i>	<i>Shevi'ith</i>
<i>Shevu.</i>	<i>Shevu'oth</i>
<i>Sheq.</i>	<i>Sheqalim</i>
<i>Sifre Dt</i>	<i>Sifre on Deuteronomy</i>
<i>Soṭ.</i>	<i>Soṭah</i>
<i>Sukk.</i>	<i>Sukkah</i>
<i>t</i>	<i>Tosefta</i>
<i>Ta'an.</i>	<i>Ta'anith</i>
<i>Tam.</i>	<i>Tamid</i>
<i>Tem.</i>	<i>Temurah</i>
<i>Ter.</i>	<i>Terumoth</i>
<i>Ṭev. Y.</i>	<i>Ṭevul Yom</i>
<i>T. Jo.</i>	<i>Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, or Palestinian Targum</i>
<i>Ṭoh.</i>	<i>Ṭohoroth</i>
<i>'Uqts.</i>	<i>'Uqtsin</i>
<i>Yad.</i>	<i>Yadayim</i>
<i>Yalq.</i>	<i>Yalqut</i>
<i>Yev.</i>	<i>Yevamoth</i>
<i>Yoma</i>	<i>Yoma</i>
<i>Zav.</i>	<i>Zavim</i>
<i>Zev.</i>	<i>Zevahim</i>

## OTHER LITERATURES, ANCIENT AND MODERN

<i>AASOR</i>	<i>Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
<i>AJ</i>	Josephus, <i>Antiquitates Judaicae</i>
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>AJAH</i>	<i>American Journal of Ancient History</i>
<i>Annales, E.S.C.</i>	<i>Annales, Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
<i>Aruch</i>	<i>Aruch Completum</i>
<i>ASSR</i>	<i>Archives de sciences sociales des religions</i>
<i>ATTM</i>	K. Beyer, <i>Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer</i> (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984)
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>

Bauer, <i>Lexicon</i>	W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979)
<i>BJ</i>	Josephus, <i>De Bello Judaico</i>
<i>CAH</i>	<i>Cambridge Ancient History</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CCL	Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina
<i>CIJ</i>	J. B. Frey, ed., <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum</i> (Rome: Pontificio istituto di archeologia cristiana, 1936–52)
<i>CPJ</i>	V. Tchirikover, A. Fuks, and M. Stern, ed., <i>Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum</i> (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957–64)
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
CTA	A. Herdner <i>Corpus des tablettes en cunéiformes alphabétiques découvertes à Ras Shamra-Ugarit de 1929 à 1939</i> ( <i>Mission de Ras Shamra</i> , 10)
<i>DACL</i>	<i>Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie</i>
<i>DAGR</i>	<i>Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines</i>
<i>DBS</i>	L. Pirot, et al., ed., <i>Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplément</i> (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1928–)
<i>DHGE</i>	<i>Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastique</i>
<i>DJD</i>	R. de Vaux, P. Benoit, et al., ed., <i>Discoveries in the Judaean Desert</i> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952–)
<i>EJ</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i> (2d ed.)
<i>ESAR</i>	T. Frank, ed., <i>Economic Survey of Ancient Rome</i> , 6 vols. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1933–40)
ET	English Translation
Finkelstein	L. Finkelstein, <i>Sifre on Deuteronomy</i> (New York, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1969)
GCS	Griechischen christlichen Schriftstellen
<i>HE</i>	Eusebius, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>IDB</i>	G. A. Buttrick, ed., <i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976)
<i>IDBS</i>	<i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Supplementary Volume</i>
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>

- IGLS L. Jalabert and R. Mouterde, ed., *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1929–)
- Jastrow M. Jastrow, *Hebrew-Aramaic English Dictionary*
- JbAC *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*
- JBL *Journal of Biblical Literature*
- JESHO *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*
- JHS *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*
- JJS *Journal of Jewish Studies*
- JPOS *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*
- JQR *Jewish Quarterly Review*
- JRS *Journal of Roman Studies*
- JSJ *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period*
- JSS *Jewish Social Studies*
- JTS *Journal of Theological Studies*
- LCL Loeb Classical Library
- LSJ Liddell, Scott, and Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*
- MM Moulton and Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1997, reprint of 1930 Hodder & Stoughton ed.)
- MGWJ *Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*
- NLNT C. Spicq, *Notes de lexicologie néo-testamentaire*, 3 vols. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978–82)
- NTA E. Hennecke, W. Schneemelcher, and R. McL. Wilson, ed., *New Testament Apocrypha* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965)
- NTS *New Testament Studies*
- OTP J. H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983–85)
- PBSR *Papers of the British School at Rome*
- PEQ *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
- PG J. P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Graeca*
- PGL G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961)
- PL J. P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Latina*
- PP *Past and Present*
- QDAP *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine*

<i>RAC</i>	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>RE</i>	Pauly-Wissowa, <i>Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i>
<i>REG</i>	<i>Revue des études grecques</i>
<i>REJ</i>	<i>Revue des études juives</i>
<i>REL</i>	<i>Revue des études latines</i>
<i>RHE</i>	<i>Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique</i>
<i>RHPR</i>	<i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuse</i>
<i>RHR</i>	<i>Revue d'histoire des religions</i>
<i>RIDA</i>	<i>Revue internationale des droits de l'antiquité</i>
<i>ROC</i>	<i>Revue de l'Orient chrétien</i>
<i>RQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
<i>RSR</i>	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
<i>RSV</i>	Revised Standard Version
<i>SC</i>	Sources chrétiennes
<i>SEHRE</i>	M. Rostovtzeff, <i>The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire</i> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957 <sup>2</sup> )
Strack-Billerbeck	H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, <i>Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch</i> , 6 parts (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1922–61)
<i>TA</i>	S. Krauss, <i>Talmudische Archäologie</i> , 3 vols. (Leipzig: G. Fock, 1910–12)
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
<i>TLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
<i>TU</i>	Texte und Untersuchungen
<i>TWAT</i>	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum alten Testament</i>
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>UF</i>	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
<i>YCS</i>	<i>Yale Classical Studies</i>
<i>ZABR</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZKG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für kirchen Geschichte</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

# Bibliography

The bibliography is divided into two parts: ancient sources (Qumran, Pseudepigrapha, Rabbinic sources, Christian sources, Greek and Latin authors, *instrumenta studiorum*), and modern works.

## ANCIENT SOURCES

### QUMRAN

#### *Texts*

(CD) *The Damascus Rule*: S. Schechter. *Documents of Jewish Sectaries: Fragments of a Zadokite Work*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910. Reprinted, with prolegomenon and bibliography by J. A. Fitzmyer. New York: KTAV, 1970. The Qumran fragments have been edited in *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, vol. 3. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962. Pp. 128,181.

(Enoch) J. T. Milik, with collaboration of M. Black. *The Books of Enoch; Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976.

(1QH) *The Hymns of Thanksgiving*: E. L. Sukenik. *The Dead Sea Scrolls of the Hebrew University*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1955.

(1QM) *The War Rule*: E. L. Sukenik. *The Dead Sea Scrolls of the Hebrew University*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1955. Y. Yadin. *The War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness*. London: Oxford University Press, 1962.

(1QpHab) *Commentary on Habakkuk*: M. Burrows et al. *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark's Monastery*, vol. 1. New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1950.

(1QS) *The Community Rule*: M. Burrows et al. *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark's Monastery*, vol. 1. New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1950.

(1QSa) *The Messianic Rule*: D. Barthélemy and J. T. Milik. *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, vol. 1. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955. Pp. 107–30.

(4QpPs 37) *Commentary on Psalm 37*: J. M. Allegro. *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, vol. 5/1. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.

### *Translations*

G. Vermes. *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1975<sup>2</sup>.

J. Carmignac et al. *Les textes de Qumran, traduits et annotés*. 2 vols. Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1961–63 (with extensive notes).

A. Dupont-Sommer. *Les écrits esséniens découverts près de la Mer Morte*. Paris: Payot, 1980<sup>4</sup>.

### APOCRYPHA AND PSEUDEPIGRAPHA

R. H. Charles, ed. *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913.

J. H. Charlesworth, ed. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. 2 vols. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983–85.

E. Hennecke and W. Schneemelcher, eds. *New Testament Apocrypha*. 2 vols. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963–65 (vol. 1: *Gospels and Related Writings*; vol. 2: *Writings Relating to the Apostles, Apocalypses, and Related Subjects*).

### RABBINIC SOURCES

Editions used appear first, followed by translations.

### *Mishnah*

H. Albeck and H. Yalon. 6 vols. Jerusalem: Bialik Institute; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1952–58 (often reprinted).

H. Danby. *The Mishnah, Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933.

J. Neusner. *The Mishnah. A New Translation*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.

### *Tosefta*

M. S. Zuckerman. *Tosefta Based on the Erfurt and Vienna Codices*. Pasewalk, 1880. Reprinted with *Supplement to the Tosefta*, by S. Lieberman, 1933. Jerusalem: Wahrman Books, 1970.

S. Lieberman. *The Tosefta According to Codex Vienna*, . &. . . 4 vols. New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1955.

———. *Tosefta Ki-Fshutah. A Comprehensive Commentary on the Tosefta*. 8 parts. New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1955–73.

J. Neusner. *The Tosefta. Translated from the Hebrew*. 6 vols. New York: KTAV, 1977–81 (*Mo'ed, Nashim, Neziqin, Qodoshim, Tohorot*. Most of *Zera'im* translated by Haas, Jaffee, Peck, Mandelbaum, Sarason, Brooks, Newman).

J. Bonsirven. *Textes rabbiniques des deux premiers siècles chrétiens pour servir à l'intelligence du Nouveau Testament*. Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1955 (French translation of parts of the Tosefta tractates)

### *Palestinian Talmud*

Krotoshin edition, 1866.

J. Neusner. *The Talmud of the Land of Israel: A Preliminary Translation and Explanation*. In 35 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1982– .

### *Babylonian Talmud*

Romm edition. Vilna, 1880–86.

E. Z. Melammed. .br Jerusalem: Dvir; Tel Aviv: Masada, 1952.

M. N. Zobel and H. Z. Dimitrovsky. .br Jerusalem: Dvir; Tel Aviv: Masada, 1960.

S. Abramson. .br Jerusalem: Dvir; Tel Aviv: Masada, 1958.

R. N. Rabinovicz (= Rabinowitz). סופרים דיקדוקי *Variae Lectiones in Mishnam et in Talmud Babylonicum*. 16 vols. 1867–97.

I. Epstein, ed. *The Babylonian Talmud. Translated into English with Notes, Glossary and Indices*. 35 vols. London: Soncino, 1935–52.

### *Mekhilta on Exodus*

J. Z. Lauterbach. *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael. A Critical Edition on the Basis of the MSS and Early Editions with an English Translation, Introduction and Notes*. 3 vols. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1933–35.

H. S. Horovitz and I. A. Rabin. *Mekilta d'Rabbi Ismael cum variis lectionibus et adnotationibus*. Frankfurt, 1931; Jerusalem: 1960<sup>2</sup>.

### *Sifra*

I. H. Weiss. *Sifra*. Vienna, 1862. Reprint: New York, 1947.

L. Finkelstein. *Sifra on Leviticus*. Vol. 2: *Text of Sifra According to Vatican Manuscript Assemani 66*. Vol. 3: *Variants from Other Manuscripts, Early Printed Editions and Quotations by Medieval Authorities*. New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1983.

### *Sifre bemidbar, Sifre Zutta*

H. S. Horovitz. *Siphre D'be Rab. Fasciculus primus: Siphre ad Numeros adjecto Siphre zutta*. Leipzig: 1917; Jerusalem: 1966<sup>2</sup>.

S. Lieberman. *Siphre Zutta (The Midrash of Lydda)*. New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1968.

### *Sifre devarim*

L. Finkelstein. *Siphre ad Deuteronomium, H.S. Horovitzii schedis usis cum variis lectionibus et adnotationibus*. Berlin: 1939. Reprint: *Sifre on Deuteronomy*. New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1969.

R. Hammer. *Sifre: A Tannaitic Commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.

### “*Minor Tractates*”

S. Schechter. *Aboth de Rabbi Nathan. Edited from Manuscripts with an Introduction, Notes and Appendices*. Hildesheim, 1979 (corrected form of

Vienna edition, 1887).

M. Higger. *The Treatises Derek Erez, Pirke ben Azzai, Tosefta Derek Erez, Edited from MSS with an Introduction, Notes, Variants and Translation*. New York, 1935. Reprint: Jerusalem, 1970.

A. Cohen, ed. *The Minor Tractates of the Talmud*. 2 vols. London: Soncino, 1965 (1971<sup>2</sup>).

### *Homiletical Midrashim*

Romm edition. Vilna, 1877.

J. Theodor and H. Albeck. *Midrash Bereshit Rabba. Critical Edition with Notes and Commentary*. 3 vols. Jerusalem, 1965 (= corrected reprint of Berlin ed., 1912–36).

H. Freedman and M. Simon, eds. *Midrash Rabba. Translated into English*. 10 vols. London: Soncino, 1939, 1961<sup>2</sup>.

### *Targums*

E. G. Clarke, et al., ed. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of the Pentateuch: Text and Concordance*. Hoboken, N.J.: KTAV, 1984 (text according to British Museum Mss. Add. 27031).

A. Diez-Macho. *Neophyti I*. 5 vols. Madrid-Barcelona: C.S.I.C., 1968–78 (with Sp., Fr., and Eng. translations).

M. L. Klein. *The Fragment-Targums of the Pentateuch According to Their Extant Sources*. 2 vols. Rome: Biblical Institute (Analecta Biblica, 76), 1980 (vol. 1: *Texts, Indices and Introductory Essays*; vol. 2: *Translation*).

R. Le Déaut. *Targum du Pentateuque*. 5 vols. Paris: Le Cerf, 1978–81 (SC 245, 256, 261, 271, 282). French translations of *Neofiti 1* and *Add. 27031* on opposite pages, with notes and parallels.

A. Sperber, ed. *The Bible in Aramaic*. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1959–68 (vol. 1: *The Pentateuch According to Targum Onkelos*, 1959; vol. 2: *The Former Prophets*, 1959; vol. 3: *The Latter Prophets*, 1962; vol. 4A: *The Hagiographa*, 1968).

## CHRISTIAN SOURCES

Besides J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, I have used the following texts and translations:

*Apostolic Fathers*

K. Lake. *The Apostolic Fathers*. 2 vols. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1912–13.

Hermas: R. Joly. *Hermas. Le pasteur*. Paris: Le Cerf, 1968<sup>2</sup> (Sources Chrétiennes 53).

*Didascalia and Apostolic Constitutions*

F. X. Funk. *Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum*. Paderborn: F. Schoeningh, 1905.

A. Vööbus. *The Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac*. Louvain: CSCO, Scriptorum Syri, nos. 175–76, 179–80, 1979.

*Other Christian sources*

Epiphanius: K. Holl. *Epiphanius (Panarion)*. 3 vols. Leipzig-Berlin, 1915–33 (Griechischen christlichen Schriftstellen, vols. 25, 31, 37).

J. E. Dean. *Epiphanius' Treatise on Weights and Measures. The Syriac Version*. Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilizations, II. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1935.

Eusebius. *The Ecclesiastical History*. 2 vols. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1926–32 (vol. 1 by K. Lake; vol. 2 by J. E. L. Oulton and H. J. Lawlor).

Irenaeus: A. Rousseau, et al., ed. *Irénée de Lyon: contre les hérésies*. Paris: Le Cerf, 1965–82.

John Chrysostom: *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*. Translated by P. W. Harkins. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1979.

Justin Martyr: G. Archambault. *Justin. Dialogue avec Tryphon*. 2 vols. Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1909 (Collection "Textes et documents pour l'étude historique du christianisme").

L. Pautigny. *Justin. Apologies*. Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1904 (Collection "Textes et documents pour l'étude historique du christianisme").

Minucius Felix: G. H. Rendell. *Octavius*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1931.

Pseudo-Clementines: B. Rehm and F. Paschke. *Die Pseudoklementinen*. 2 vols. Berlin, 1953–65. 2nd edition, 1969: vols. 42 and 51 of *Griechischen christlichen Schriftstellen* (Vol. 1: *Homilien*; vol. 2: *Recognitionen*).

#### INSTRUMENTA STUDIORUM

Aland, K. *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum. Locis parallelis evangeliorum apocryphorum et patrum adhibitus*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1976<sup>9</sup>.

———, et al. *Vollständige Konkordanz zum griechischen neuen Testament*. 2 vols. Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1978–83.

*Atlas of Israel*. Historical section edited by M. Avi-Yonah. Jerusalem: Survey of Israel, Ministry of Labour; Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1970.

Baudrillart, A., et al., eds. *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*. Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1912–.

Bauer, W., W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Translation and adaptation of W. Bauer's 5th edition, 1958. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Benoit, A., et al. *Biblia Patristica. Index des citations et allusions bibliques dans la littérature patristique*. 3 vols. Paris: Ed. du C.N.R.S., 1975–80. (vol. 1: *Des origines à Clément d'Alexandrie et Tertullien*; vol. 2: *Le troisième siècle*; vol. 3: *Origène*).

Botterweck, G. J. and H. Ringgren, eds. *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament*. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1973–.

Buttrick, G. A., et al; eds. *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. An Illustrated Encyclopedia*. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1962. With a *Supplementary Volume*. Edited by K. Crim, et al. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1976.

Cabrol, F., and H. Leclercq, eds. *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*. Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1907–53.

- Cazelles, H., and A. Feuillet, et al., eds. *Dictionnaire de la Bible. Supplément*. Vol. 7. Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1966.
- Cross, F. L., and E. A. Livingstone, eds. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978<sup>2</sup>.
- Dalman, G. *Aramäisches-neuhebräisches Handwörterbuch zu Targum, Talmud und Midrasch*, 1938. Reprint: Leiden: Brill, 1967.
- Daremberg, Ch., and E. Saglio; eds. *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines*. Paris: Hachette, 1877–1919.
- Friedrich, G., ed. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Erdmans, 1964–76.
- Goodspeed, E. J. *Index Apologeticus*. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich, 1912.
- . *Index Patristicus*. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich, 1907.
- Jastrow, M. *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*. 2 vols. London, 1886–1903. Reprint: New York: Shalom Publishers Inc., 1967.
- Kasowski, Ch. J. *Thesaurus Mishnae. Concordantiae verborum quae in sex Mishnae ordinibus reperiuntur*. 4 vols. Jerusalem: Masada, 1956–60.
- Kasowski, Ch. J. *Thesaurus Thosephtae. Concordantiae verborum quae in sex Thosephtae ordinibus reperiuntur*. 6 vols. Jerusalem, 1932–61. Vols. 5 and 6 by M. Kasowski.
- Kasowski, Ch. J., and B. Kosovsky. *Thesaurus Talmudis. Concordantiae verborum quae in Talmude Babilonico reperiuntur*. Jerusalem, 1954–.
- Klauser, Th., ed. *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*. Stuttgart: A. Hiersemann, 1950–. To “Graffito.”
- Kohut, A., ed. *Aruch Completum*. 8 vols. Vienna, 1878–92. With *Addimenta ad Librum Aruch Completum* edited by S. Krauss. Vienna: The Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation, 1937.
- Kosovsky, B. *Otzar Leshon Hatanna'im. Concordantiae verborum quae in Mechilta d'Rabbi Ismael reperiuntur*. 4 vols. Jerusalem, 1965–69.
- . *Otzar Leshon Hatanna'im. Concordantiae verborum quae in Sifra aut Torat Kohanim reperiuntur*. 4 vols. Jerusalem: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1967–69.
- . *Otzar Leshon Hatanna'im; Thesaurus “Sifrei.” Concordantiae*

*verborum quae in "Sifrei" Numeri et Deuteronomium reperiuntur.* 5 vols. Jerusalem, 1971–74.

Kosovsky, M. *Concordance to the Talmud Yerushalmi (Palestinian Talmud)*. Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities; The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1979– (3 vols. published, to *Hatar*: 1979–84; vol. 4: *Onomasticon: Thesaurus of Proper Names*, 1985).

Lampe, G. W. H., ed. *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961.

Liddell, H. G., R. Scott, and H. S. Jones. *A Greek-English Lexicon; With a Supplement*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.

Rengstorf, K. H., ed. *A Complete Concordance to Flavius Josephus*. 4 volumes. Leiden: Brill, 1973–83.

Viller, M., et al.; eds. *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique, doctrine et histoire*. Paris: G. Beauchesne, 1932– .

Wissowa, G., et al.; eds. *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*. Stuttgart: A. Drückermüller, 1893–1980.

#### MODERN LITERATURE

Abel, F. M. *Histoire de la Palestine depuis la conquête d'Alexandre jusqu'à l'invasion arabe*. Vol. 2: *De la guerre juive à l'invasion arabe*. Paris: Galbada, 1952.

Aberbach, M. "Patriotic Tendencies in Targum Onkelos." *Journal of Hebrew Studies* 1 (1969) 13–24.

Agrell, G. *Work, Toil and Sustenance: An Examination of the View of Work in the New Testament, Taking into Consideration Views Found in Old Testament, Intertestamental, and Early Rabbinic Writings*. Stockholm: Verbum, 1976.

Alon, G. *Jews, Judaism and the Classical World, Studies in Jewish History in the Times of the Second Temple and Talmud*. Translated by I. Abrahams. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1977.

———. *The Jews in Their Land in the Talmudic Age (70–640 C.E.)*. Translated and edited by G. Levi. 2 vols. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1980–84.

André, J. *L'alimentation et la cuisine à Rome*. Paris: Belles Lettres, 1981<sup>2</sup>.

- Antoun, R. T. *Arab Village: A Social Structural Study of a Transjordanian Peasant Community*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972.
- Applebaum, S. *Prolegomena to the Study of the Second Jewish Revolt (A.D. 132–135)*. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1976.
- . “Judaea as a Roman Province; The Countryside as a Political and Economic Factor.” *ANRW* II.8 (1977) 355–96.
- Austin, M., and P. Vidal-Naquet, eds. *Economic and Social History of Ancient Greece: An Introduction*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977.
- Avi-Yonah, M. “Palaestina.” In *RE. Supplement*, vol. 13 (1973) 321–454.
- . *The Jews of Palestine. A Political History from the Bar Kokhba War to the Arab conquest*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1976.
- , ed. *Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*. 3 vols. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975–78.
- . *The Holy Land, from the Persian to the Arab Conquests (536 B.C. to A.D. 640): A Historical Geography*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1977<sup>2</sup>.
- Bacher, W. *Die Aggada der Tannaiten*. 2 vols. Strasbourg: K.J. Trubner, 1890–1903.
- Bagatti, B. *L'eglise de la Circoncision*. Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1965.
- . *L'eglise de la gentilité en Palestine*. Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1968.
- . *Antichi villaggi cristiani di Galilea*. Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1971.
- Bailey, K. E. *Poet and Peasant. A Literary-Cultural Approach to the Parables of Luke*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1976.
- . *Through Peasant Eyes: More Lucan Parables, Their Culture and Style*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1980.
- Bammel, E., and C. F. D. Moule, eds. *Jesus and the Politics of His Day*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Baras, Z., S. Safrai, M. Stern, and Y. Tsafir, eds. *Eretz-Israel from the Destruction of the Second Temple to the Muslim Conquest*, vol. 1. *Political, Social and Cultural History*. Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben Zvi, 1982 (Hebrew).

Baron, S. L. *A Social and Religious History of the Jews. Ancient Times.* Vols. 1–2. New York: Columbia University Press, 1952<sup>2</sup>.

Bauer, W. *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity.* Edited by R. A. Kraft and G. Krodel. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971.

Belo, F. *A Materialist Reading of the Gospel of Mark.* Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1981.

Ben-David, A. *Talmudische Oekonomie. Die Wirtschaft des jüdischen Palästina zur Zeit der Mischna und des Talmud,* vol. 1. Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1974.

Beyer, K. *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984.

Bickerman, E. *Studies in Jewish and Christian History.* 3 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1976–86.

Biezunśka-Malowist, I., and J. Kolendo, eds. *Actes du Colloque sur l'esclavage, Nieborów 2–6. XII. 1975.* Prace Inst. hist. Uniw. Warszawsk. (No. 10) 1979.

Black, M. *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospel and Acts.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967<sup>3</sup>.

Boerman, C. *The Rich, the Poor—And the Bible.* Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980.

Bokser, B. M. "An Annotated Bibliographical Guide to the Study of the Palestinian Talmud." *ANRW* II/19.2 & (1979) 139–256.

Bolkestein, H. *Wohltätigkeit und Armenpflege im vorchristlichen Altertum, Ein Beitrag zum Problem "Moral und Gesellschaft."* Utrecht: Oosthoek, 1939.

Bonsirven, J. *Le Judaïsme palestinien au temps de Jésus-Christ.* 2 vols. Paris: Beauchesne, 1934–1935.

Bosl, K. "Das Problem der Armut in der hochmittelalterlichen Gesellschaft." In: *Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaft, Philosophisch-historischen Klasse* 294 (1974) 3–29.

Bowker, J. *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969.

———. *Jesus and the Pharisees.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973.

- Brandon, S. G. F. *Jesus and the Zealots: A Study of the Political Factor in Primitive Christianity*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967.
- . *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church*. London: SPCK, 1957<sup>2</sup>.
- Brooks, R. *Support for the Poor in the Mishnaic Law of Agriculture: Tractate Peab*. Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983.
- Brown, P. R. L. *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.
- Bruce, F. F. *Jesus and Christian Origins Outside the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1974.
- . *Men and Movements in the Primitive Church*. Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1979.
- Buchanan, G. "Jesus and the Upper Class." *Novum Testamentum* 7 (1964–65) 195–209.
- Büchler, A. *Studies in Jewish History*. Studies in English and Hebrew. London: Oxford University Press, 1956.
- . *Der galiläische Am-ha-Ares des zweiten Jahrhunderts*. Vienna: A. Hölder, 1906.
- . *The Economic Condition of Judaea after the Destruction of the Second Temple*. Publication no. 4. London: Jews' College, 1912. Reprint: A. Corré, ed. *Understanding the Talmud*. New York: KTAV, 1975, pp. 73–106.
- . *Types of Jewish-Palestinian Piety from 70 B.C.E. to 70 C.E., The Ancient Pious Men*. London: Oxford University Press, 1922.
- Burford, A. *Craftsmen in Greek and Roman Society*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1972.
- Carney, T. F. *The Economics of Antiquity. Controls, Gifts and Trade*. Lawrence, Tex.: Coronado Press, 1973.
- Case, Sh. J. *The Social Origins of Christianity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1923.
- . *The Social Triumph of the Ancient Church*. New York: Harper, 1933.
- Causse, A. *Les "Pauvres" d'Israël (prophètes, psalmistes, messianistes)*. Paris:

Librairie Istra, 1922.

Charles-Picard, G., and J. Rougé. *Textes et documents relatifs à la vie économique et sociale dans l'empire romain, 31 avant J.-C. – 225 après J.-C.* Paris: Société d'édition d'enseignement supérieur, 1969.

Chastagnol, A. *L'évolution politique, sociale et économique du monde romain de Dioclétien à Julien. La mise en place du régime du Bas-Empire (284–363)* Paris: Société d'édition d'enseignement supérieur, 1982.

Chayanov, A. V. *The Theory of Peasant Economy.* Homewood, Ill.: American Economic Association, 1966.

Chevallier, R. *Les voies romaines.* Paris: Colin, 1972.

Clark, C., and M. Haswell. *The Economics of Subsistence Agriculture.* London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970<sup>4</sup>.

Clément-Mullet, J. J. *Le livre de l'agriculture d'Ibn Al-Awam.* Vol. II, first part. Paris: A. Franck, 1866.

Cohen, N. G. "Jewish Names as Cultural Indicators in Antiquity." *JSJ* 7 (1976) 96–128.

Cohen, S. J. D. *Josephus in Galilee and Rome. His Vita and Development as a Historian.* Leiden: Brill, 1979.

Collins, J. J. *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre.* *Semeia* 14. Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1979.

Conzelmann, H. *History of Primitive Christianity.* Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1973.

Countryman, L. W. *The Rich Christian in the Church of the Early Empire: Contradictions and Accommodations.* Lewiston, N.Y.: E. Mellen, 1980.

Cuisenier, J. *Economie et parenté, leurs affinités de structure dans le domaine turc et dans le domaine arabe.* EPHE, VIème Section, Sciences économiques et sociales. The Hague: Mouton, 1975.

Cullmann, O. "La Samarie et les origines chrétiennes." In *Mélanges W. Seston.* Publications de la Sorbonne. Série Etudes, IX. Paris: De Boccard, 1974, 135–142.

Dalman, G. *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina.* 6 vols. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1928–42.

Daniélou, J., and H. I. Marrou. *Des origines à Saint Grégoire le Grand.*

Paris: Seuil, 1963. Vol. 1 of *Nouvelle histoire de l'Église*. Edited by L. J. Rogier et al.

Daube, D. *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*. London: University of London, The Athlone Press, 1956.

———. *Ancient Jewish Law*. Leiden: Brill, 1981.

Davies, W. D. *The Gospel and the Land. Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.

Debord, P. *Aspects sociaux et économiques de la vie religieuse dans l'Anatolie gréco-romaine*. Leiden: Brill, 1982.

Deissmann, A. *Light from the Ancient East; The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911. Reprinted: Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1965.

De Jonge, M. *Studies on the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. Leiden: Brill, 1975.

———. *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text*. Leiden: Brill, 1978.

de Lange, N. R. M. *Origen and the Jews. Studies in Jewish-Christian Relations in Third-Century Palestine*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

Den Boer, W. *Private Morality in Greece and Rome. Some Historical Aspects*. Leiden: Brill, 1979.

Derenbourg, J. *Essai sur l'histoire et la géographie de la Palestine, d'après les Thalmuds et les autres sources rabbiniques, première partie, Histoire de la Palestine depuis Cyrus jusqu'à Adrien*. Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1867.

Derrett, J. D. M. "Law and Society in Jesus's World." *ANRW* II/25.1 (1982) 477–564.

Detienne, M., and J. P. Vernant, eds. *La cuisine du sacrifice en pays grec*. Paris: Gallimard, 1979.

Dix, G. *Jew and Greek. A Study in the Primitive Church*. London: Dacre, 1953.

Dodd, C. H. *The Founder of Christianity*. New York: Macmillan, 1970.

Donahue, J. "Tax Collectors and Sinners." *CBQ* 33 (1971) 39–61.

Donfried, K. P. *The Setting of 2 Clement in Early Christianity*. Supplement to Novum Testamentum. Vol. 38. Leiden: Brill, 1974.

Douglas, M. *Purity and Danger, An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Routledge & Kegan, 1966.

Doumet, J. *Etude sur la couleur pourpre ancienne et tentative de reproduction du procédé de teinture de la ville de Tyr décrit par Pline l'Ancien*. Leiden: Brill, 1980.

Dumont, L. *Homo Hierarchicus. Le système des castes et ses implications*. Paris: Gallimard, 1979.

Dupont, J. *Les béatitudes*. 3 vols. Collection Etudes bibliques. Paris: Gabalda, 1969–1973<sup>2</sup>.

Edersheim, A. *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 2 vols. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1947.

Epstein, J. N. *Introduction to Tannaitic Literature: Mishna, Tosephta and Halakhic Midrashim*. Edited by E. Z. Melamed. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1957 (in Hebrew).

———. *Introduction to Amoraitic Literature: Babylonian Talmud and Yerushalmi*. Edited by E. Z. Melamed. Jerusalem: Magnes Pres, 1962 (in Hebrew).

Esler, P. F. *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Evans, J. K. "Plebs Rustica." *AJAH* 5 (1980) 19–47, 134–73.

Farbstein, D. *Das Recht der unfreien und freien Arbeiter nach jüdisch-talmudischen Recht*. Frankfurt, 1896.

Falk, Z. W. *Introduction to Jewish Law of the Second Commonwealth*. 2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1972–78.

Feldman, L. H. "Flavius Josephus Revisited: the Man, His Writings, and His Significance," *ANRW* II/21.2 (1984) 763–862.

Feliks, Y. *Agriculture in Palestine in the Period of the Mishna and Talmud*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1963 (in Hebrew).

———. *Mixed Sowing, Breeding, and Grafting, Kil'ayim 1–2, A Study of the Halachic Topics and their Botanical-Agricultural Background*. Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1967 (in Hebrew).

- . “Jewish Agriculture in Israel in the Period of the Mishnah and the Talmud.” In *Eretz Israel From the Destruction of the Second Temple to the Muslim Conquest*, edited by Z. Baras et al., 418–41. Jerusalem: Y. Ben Zvi, 1982. In Hebrew.
- Finkelstein, L. *The Pharisees, The Sociological Background of their Faith*. 2 vols. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962<sup>3</sup>.
- Finley, M. I. *Slavery in Classical Antiquity: Views and Controversies*. Cambridge: Heffer, 1960 (1964).
- . *Aspects of Antiquity, Discoveries and Controversies*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1968.
- . *The Ancient Economy*. Sather Classical Lectures. Vol. 43. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973; London: Hogarth Press, 1985<sup>2</sup> (with corrections and a new chapter, “Further Thoughts”).
- , ed. *Problèmes de la terre en Grèce ancienne*. Paris: Mouton, 1973.
- , ed. *Studies in Ancient Society*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974.
- , ed. *Studies in Roman Property*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.
- . *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology*. New York: Viking, 1980.
- . *Economy and Society*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1981.
- Fischel, H. *Rabbinic Literature and Greco-Roman Philosophy*. Leiden: Brill, 1973.
- , ed. *Essays in Greco-Roman and Related Talmudic Literature*. New York: KTAV, 1977.
- Fitzmyer, J. A. *A Wandering Aramean: Collected Aramaic Essays*. Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1979.
- . *The Gospel According to Luke*. 2 vols. The Anchor Bible 28. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981–85.
- , and D. J. Harrington. *A Manual of Palestinian Aramaic Texts*. Rome: Biblical Institute, 1978.
- Foerster, W. *From the Exile to Christ: A Historical Introduction to Palestinian Judaism*. Translated by G. E. Harris. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964.

———, ed. *Gnosis: A Selection of Gnostic Texts*. Translated by R. McL. Wilson. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1972–74.

Forbes, R. J. *Studies in Ancient Technology*, 2nd edition. 6 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1964.

Forestell, J. T. *Targumic Traditions and the New Testament*. Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1979 (annotated bibliography).

Fox, R. L. *Pagans and Christians*. New York: Knopf, 1986.

Frank, T., ed. *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*. 6 vols. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1933–40.

Frayn, J. M. *Subsistence Farming in Roman Italy*. London: Centaur, 1979.

Frend, W. H. C. *Religion Popular and Unpopular in the Early Christian Centuries*. London: Variorum Reprints, 1976.

———. *Town and Country in the Early Christian Centuries*. London: Variorum Reprints, 1980.

———. *The Rise of Christianity*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.

Frey, J. B. *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaicarum. Recueil des inscriptions juives qui vont du III<sup>ème</sup> s. av. J.C. au VII<sup>ème</sup> s. de notre ère*. 2 vols. Rome: Pontificio Istituto di archeologia Cristiana, 1936–52. Reprint of vol. 1 with prolegomenon by B. Lifshitz: New York: KTAV, 1974.

Freyne, S. *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian, 323 B.C.E. to 135 C.E.: A Study of Second Temple Judaism*. Wilmington, Del.: M. Glazier; Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980.

———. *Galilee, Jesus and the Gospels. Literary Approaches and Historical Investigations*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988.

Gagé, J. *Les classes sociales dans l'Empire romain*. Paris: Payot, 1970<sup>2</sup> (additions to the first edition, pp. 449ff.).

Gamoran, H. "Talmudic Usury Loans and Business Loans." *JSJ* 7 (1976) 129–42.

Garnsey, P. *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970.

———, ed. *Non-Slave Labour in the Greco-Roman World*. Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1980.

———, ed. *Trade in the Ancient Economy*. Berkeley: University of Cali-

fornia Press, 1983.

———, and C. R. Whittaker, eds. *Trade and Famine in Classical Antiquity*. Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1983.

———, and R. Saller. *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.

———. *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World: Responses to Risk and Crisis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Gelin, A. *Les pauvres de Yahvé*. Paris: Le Cerf, 1953.

George, A. "Pauvres," in *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible* 7 (1966) 387–406.

Giblet, J. "Un mouvement de résistance armée au temps de Jésus." *Revue théologique de Louvain* 5 (1974) 409–26.

Ginzberg, L. *A Commentary on the Palestinian Talmud. A Study of the Development of the Halakah and Haggadah in Palestine and Babylonia*. 4 vols. New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1941–61. Reprint: New York: KTAV, 1971 (in Hebrew; "Introductory Essay" in English in the first vol.).

Goldschmidt, L. "Les impôts et droits de douane en Judée sous les Romains." *REJ* 34 (1897) 192ff.

Golomb, B., and Y. Kedar. "Ancient Agriculture in the Galilee Mountains." *IEJ* 21 (1971) 136–40.

Goodblatt, D. "The Babylonian Talmud." *ANRW* II/19.2 (1979) 257–336.

Goodenough, E. *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*. 12 vols. New York: Pantheon Books, 1953–65. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968 (Index vol.).

Goodman, M. *State and Society in Roman Galilee, A.D. 132–212*. Totowa, N.J.: Rowman & Allanheld, 1983.

Graetz, H. *History of the Jews*. 5 vols. London: D. Nutt, 1891–98.

Grannot, A. *The Land System in Palestine: History and Structure*. London: Eyre & Sottiswoode, 1952.

Granqvist, H. *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village*. Parts 1–2, *Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum*, 8. Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1931–35.

———. *Birth and Childhood Among the Arabs*. Helsinki: Soderstrom, 1947.

———. *Child Problems Among the Arabs*. Helsinki: Soderstrom, 1950.

Grant, F. C. *The Economic Background of the Gospels*. London: Oxford University Press, 1926.

Grant, R. M. "Jewish Christianity at Antioch in the Second Century." *RSR* 71 (1972) 93–108.

———. *Early Christianity and Society. Seven Studies*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977.

Grassi, J. A. *Underground Christians in the Earliest Church*. Santa Clara, Calif.: Diakona, 1975.

Green, H. A. *The Economic and Social Origins of Gnosticism*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 77. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985.

Green, W. S. "Palestinian Holy Men: Charismatic Leadership and Rabbinic Tradition." *ANRW* II/19.2 (1979) 619–47.

Guelzow, H. *Christentum und Sklaverei in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*. Bonn: R. Habelt, 1969.

Guérin, V. *Description géographique, historique et archéologique de la Palestine*. 3 vols. Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1868–80.

Gutmann, J., ed. *Ancient Synagogues: The State of Research*. Brown Judaic Studies 22. Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981.

Haas, P. J. *A History of the Mishnaic Law of Agriculture: Tractate Maaser Sheni*. Brown Judaic Studies 18. Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1980.

Hadot, J. "L'utopie communautaire et la vie des premiers Chrétiens de Jérusalem." In J. Préaux. *Problèmes d'histoire du christianisme*, vol. 3 (1972–73) 15–34.

Hamerton-Kelly, R., and R. Scroggs, eds. *Jews, Greeks and Christians. Religious Cultures in Late Antiquity. Essays in Honor of William David Davies*. Leiden: Brill, 1976.

Hands, A. R. *Charities and Social Aid in Greece and Rome. Aspects of Greek and Roman Life*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1968.

Harnack, A. *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*. 2 vols. New York: G.P. Putnam's, 1908.

- Heichelheim, F. M. "Roman Syria." In T. Frank. *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1938, 121–257.
- Heiser, C. B., Jr. *Seed to Civilization: The Story of Food*. San Francisco: W. H. Freeman & Co., 1981<sup>2</sup>.
- Hengel, M. *Was Jesus a Revolutionist?* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971.
- . *Property and Riches in the Early Church, Aspects of a Social History of Early Christianity*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974.
- . *Judaism and Hellenism. Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*. 2 vols. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974.
- . *Victory over Violence*. London: SPCK, 1975.
- . *Jews, Greeks and Barbarians, Aspects of the Hellenization of Judaism in the Pre-Christian Period*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980.
- Herford, R. T. *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*. 1903. Reprint. Clifton, N.J.: Reference Book, 1966.
- Hill, G.F. *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Palestine*. London: British Museum, 1914.
- Hock, R. F. *The Social Context of Paul's Ministry: Tentmaking and Apostleship*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980.
- Horsley, G. *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*. North Ryde, N.S.W.: The Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, Macquarie University, 1981–87 [4 vols. so far, covering Greek inscriptions and papyri published in 1976–79].
- Horsley, R. A. "The Sicarii." *Journal of Religion* 59 (1979) 435–58.
- . *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987.
- , and J. S. Hanson. *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements in the Time of Jesus*. Minneapolis: Winston, 1985.
- Hoyt, Th., Jr. "The Poor in Luke-Acts." Ph.D. Diss., Duke University, 1975.
- Humphreys, S. C. "History, Economics and Anthropology. The Work of Karl Polanyi." *History and Theory* 8 (1969) 165–212.

Huteau-Dubois, L. "Les sursauts du nationalisme juif contre l'occupation romaine de Massada à Bar Kokhba." *REJ* 127 (1968) 133–209.

Hynes, W. *Shirley Jackson Case and the Chicago School: The Socio-Historical Method*. Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1982.

Isaac, B. "Roman Colonies in Judaea." *Talanta* 12–13 (1980–81) 31–54.

Jacques, François. *Le privilège de liberté: Politique impériale et autonomie municipale dans les cités de l'Occident romain (161–244)*. Collection de l'Ecole française de Rome, 76. Rome: Ecole française, 1984.

Jaffee, M. *Mishnah's Theology of Tithing: A Study of Tractate Maaserot*. Brown Judaic Studies 19. Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981.

Jankélévitch, V. *Le pur et l'impur*. Paris: Flammarion, 1960.

Jardé, A. *Les céréales dans l'antiquité grecque*. Paris: Boccard, 1925.

Jasny, N. "The Daily Bread of the Ancient Greeks and Romans." *Osiris* 9 (1950) 227–53.

Jaussen, A. *Coutumes palestiniennes. I, Naplouse et son district*. Paris: P. Geuthner, 1927.

———. *Coutumes des Arabes au pays de Moab*. Paris: Gabalda, 1908.

Jeremias, J. *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: an Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions During the New Testament Times*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969.

Jones, A. H. M. "The Urbanization of Palestine." *JRS* 21 (1931) 78–85.

———. *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971<sup>2</sup>.

———. "Were Ancient Heresies National or Social Movements in Disguise?" *JTS* 10 (1959) 280–98. Reprinted in: *The Roman Economy*. Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1974.

———. "The Social Background of the Struggle between Paganism and Christianity." In A. Momigliano. *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*. Oxford University Press, 1963, 17–37.

———. *The Later Roman Empire*. 3 vols. Oxford: Blackwell, 1964.

Judge, E. A. "St Paul and Classical Society." *JbAC* 15 (1972) 19–36.

Juster, J. *Les Juifs dans l'Empire romain: leur condition juridique, économique et sociale*. Paris: P. Geuthner, 1914.

- Kadman, L. *Corpus Nummorum Palestinensium*. 4 vols. Jerusalem: Israel Numismatic Society, 1956–61.
- Kahane, T. “The Priestly Courses and Their Geographical Settlements.” *Tarbiz* 48 (1979) 9–29 (in Hebrew).
- Keck, L. E. “The Poor among the Saints in the New Testament.” *ZNW* 56 (1965) 100–37.
- . “The Poor among the Saints in Jewish Christianity and Qumran.” *ZNW* 57 (1966) 54–78.
- . *A Future for the Historical Jesus*. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1971.
- . “On the Ethos of Early Christianity.” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 42 (1974) 435–52.
- Kee, H. C. *Christian Origins in Sociological Perspective: Methods and Resources*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980.
- Klausner, J. “The Economy of Judaea in the Period of the Second Temple.” In M. Avi-Yonah, ed. *The World History of the Jewish People*. First Series: *Ancient Times*. Vol. 7: *The Herodian Period*. Jerusalem: Massada, 1975, 179–205.
- Klijn, A. F. J., and G. J. Reinink. *Patristic Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects*. Supplement to *Novum Testamentum* 112. Leiden: Brill, 1973.
- Koester, H. *Introduction to the New Testament*. 2 vols. Vol. 1: *History, Culture, and Religion of the Hellenistic Age*. Vol. 2: *History and Literature of Early Christianity*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press; New York: W. de Gruyter, 1982.
- Kolendo, J. *L'agricoltura nell'Italia romana. Tecniche agrarie e progresso economico della tarda Repubblica al Principato*. Rome: Ed. Riuniti, 1980.
- Kraeling, C. H. *The Synagogue*. Yale University Excavations at Dura-Europos. Final Report VIII, part 1. New Haven: Yale University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1956. New York: KTAV, 1979<sup>2</sup>.
- Krauss, S. *Talmudische Archäologie*. 3 vols. Leipzig: G. Fock, 1910–12.
- Kreissig, H. “Die sozialen Zusammenhang des jüdischen Krieges.” Ph.D. thesis, Humboldt-Universität, 1965.
- . “Die landwirtschaftliche Situation in Palästina vor dem jüdischen Krieg.” *Acta Antiqua* 17 (1969) 223–54.

———. “Prolegomena zu einer Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Seleukidenreiches.” *Klio* 56 (1974) 521ff.

Kuhrt, A., and S. Sherwin-White, eds. *Hellenism in the East: The Interaction of Greek and Non-Greek Civilizations from Syria to Central Asia after Alexander*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.

Kuntzmann, R., and J. Schlosser, eds. *Etudes sur le judaïsme hellénistique*. Paris: Cerf, 1984.

Lallemand, L. *Histoire de la charité*. 2 vols. Paris: A. Picard, 1902–03.

Légasse, S. *Jésus et l'enfant. “Enfants,” “petits” et “simples” dans la tradition synoptique*. Collection Etudes bibliques. Paris: Gabalda, 1969.

Lemonnier, A. “Le messianisme des Béatitudes.” *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* (1922) 373–89.

Levine, L. I. *Caesarea under Roman Rule*. Leiden: Brill, 1975.

———. “The Jewish Patriarch (Nasi) in Third Century Palestine.” *ANRW* II/19.2 (1979) 649–88.

———. “The Rabbinic Class of Third Century Palestine.” In *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies (1981)*. Division B. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1982.

Lewis, N. *Life in Egypt Under Roman Rule*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.

Lieberman, S. *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine; Studies in the Literary Transmission, Beliefs and Manners of Palestine in the First Century BCE–IVth c. CE*. New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1962<sup>2</sup>.

———. *Greek in Jewish Palestine; Studies in the Life and Manners of Jewish Palestine in the II–IV centuries C.E.* New York: Feldheim, 1965<sup>2</sup>.

———. *Texts and Studies*. New York: KTAV, 1974.

Lifshitz, B. “L'origine du nom des Chrétiens.” *Vigiliae Christianae* 16 (1962) 65–70.

———. “Jérusalem sous la domination romaine. Histoire de la ville depuis la conquête de Pompée jusqu'à Constantin (63 a.C.–325 p.C.).” *ANRW* II/8 (1977) 444–89.

Low, I. *Die Flora der Juden*. 4 vols. Vienna: R. Löwit, 1924–34.

MacMullen, R. *Enemies of the Roman Order: Treason, Unrest, and Alien-*

- ation in the Empire*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966.
- . *Roman Social Relations, 50 B.C. to A.D. 284*. New Haven: Yale University, 1974.
- . *Paganism in the Roman Empire*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981.
- . *Christianizing the Roman Empire (A.D. 100–400)*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984.
- Magnin, J. M. “Notes sur l’ébionisme,” *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 23 (1973) 233–65; 24 (1974) 225–50; 25 (1975) 245–73.
- Makal, M. *A Village in Anatolia*. Translated by Sir W. Deedes. London: Vallentine, Mitchell & Co., 1954.
- Malherbe, A. J. *Social Aspects of Early Christianity*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1977.
- Malina, B. J. “Jewish Christianity or Christian Judaism: Toward a Hypothetical Definition.” *JSJ* 7 (1976) 46–57.
- . *The New Testament World; Insights From Cultural Anthropology*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1981.
- . *Christian Origins and Cultural Anthropology: Practical Models for Biblical Interpretation*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1986.
- Mandelbaum, I. *A History of the Mishnaic Law of Agriculture: Kilayim*. Brown Judaic Studies 26. Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981.
- Mann, J. *The Bible as Read and Preached in the Old Synagogue*. 2 vols. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1940–66. Reprint. New York: KTAV, 1971 (with prolegomenon by B. Z Wacholder).
- Manns, F. *Essais sur le judéo-christianisme*. Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Analecta 12. Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1977.
- . *Bibliographie du judéo-christianisme*. Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Analecta 13. Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1979.
- Mantel, H. “The Causes of the Bar Kokba Revolt.” *JQR* 58 (1968) 224–42; 274–96.
- Marrou, H. I. *Histoire de l’éducation dans l’antiquité*. Collection “L’univers historique.” Paris: Editions du seuil, 1965<sup>6</sup>.
- . *Décadence romaine ou antiquité tardive? IIIe–VIe siècle*. Collec-

tion "Points-Histoire." Paris: Seuil, 1977.

Marshall, I. H. "Palestinian and Hellenistic Christianity: Some Critical Comments." *NTS* 19 (1973) 271-87.

Mathews, Sh. *The Social Teaching of Jesus*. Reprinted as *Jesus on Social Institutions*. "Lives of Jesus" Series. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971.

Mayerson, Ph. "Arid Zone Farming Practices in Palaestina Tertia." *AJA* 60 (1956) 180-81.

Mazar, B. *Beth She'arim*. 3 vols. Jerusalem: Massada Press on behalf of The Israel Exploration Society, 1973-76.

McCown, C. C. *The Genesis of the Social Gospel*. New York: A. Knopf, 1929.

Mealand, D. L. *Poverty and Expectation in the Gospels*. London: SPCK, 1980.

Meeks, W. A. "The Social World of Early Christianity." *The Council on the Study of Religion Bulletin* 6, February 1975, fasc. 1, pp. 4-5.

———. *The First Urban Christians. The Social World of the Apostle Paul*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982.

———. *The Moral World of the First Christians*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986.

———, and R. L. Wilken. *Jews and Christians in Antioch in the First Four Centuries of the Common Era*. Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1978.

Melammed, E. Z. *An Introduction to Talmudic Literature*. Jerusalem: Glaor, 1973 (in Hebrew).

Meshorer, Y. *Jewish Coins of the Second Temple Period*. Translated by I. H. Levine. Tel Aviv: Am Hassefer and Massada, 1967.

———. *City-coins of Eretz-Israel and the Decapolis in the Roman Period*. Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1984 (in Hebrew).

Meyer, R. "Der 'am Ha-'Ares. Ein Beitrag zur Religions-soziologie Palästinas im ersten and zweiten nachchristlichen Jahrhundert." *Judaica* 3 (1947) 169-99.

———. "Sadducees." in *TDNT*, 7: 35-54.

Meyer, R., and H. F. Weiss. "Pharisees." In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 9 (1974) 11-48.

- Meyers, E. M. "The Cultural Setting of Galilee: The Case of Regionalism and Early Judaism." *ANRW* II/19.1 (1979) 686–702.
- , and J. F. Strange. *Archaeology, the Rabbis, and Early Christianity*. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1981.
- Momigliano, A. "Christianity and the Decline of the Roman Empire." In *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963, 1–16.
- . *Ricerche sull'organizzazione della Giudea sotto il dominio romano (63 b.c.e. –70 c.e.)*. Annali della Reale Scuola normale Superiore di Pisa, 1934.
- . *Sagesses barbares: les limites de l'hellénisation*. Paris: F. Maspéro, 1979 (translation of *Alien Wisdom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).
- Mommsen, Th. *The Provinces of the Roman Empire, from Caesar to Diocletian*. 2 vols. New York: Scribner's, 1887.
- Montefiore, C. G. *Rabbinic Literature and Gospel Teachings*. London: Macmillan, 1930. Reprint: New York: KTAV, 1970.
- Moore, G. F. *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim*. 3 vols. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1927–30.
- Moritz, L. A. *Grain-Mills and Flour in Classical Antiquity*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958.
- Mossé, C. *The Ancient World at Work*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1969.
- Mott, S. C. "The Power of Giving and Receiving. Reciprocity in Hellenistic Benevolence." In G. F. Hawthorne, ed. *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation Studies in Honor of M. C. Tenney*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans, 1975, 60–72.
- Moxnes, H. *The Economy of the Kingdom. Social Conflict and Economic Relations in Luke's Gospel*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988.
- Murphy-O'Connor, J. "The Essenes and Their History." *RB* 81 (1974) 215–44.
- Negev, A. *The Greek Inscriptions from the Negev*. Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1982.
- Neubauer, A. *La géographie du Talmud*. Paris: M. Lévy, 1868.

Neusner, J. *The Rabbinic Traditions About the Pharisees Before 70*. 3 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1971.

———. *The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism (The Haskell Lectures, 1972–73), With a Critique and a Commentary by M. Douglas*. Leiden: Brill, 1973.

———. *From Politics to Piety; the Emergence of Pharisaic Judaism*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973.

———. *A History of the Mishnaic Law of Purities*. Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 6. 10 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1974–76.

———. “The Formation of Rabbinic Judaism: Yavneh (Jamnia) from A.D. 70 to 100.” *ANRW* II/19.2 (1979) 3–42.

———, P. Borgen, E. S. Frerichs, R. Horsley, eds. *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism. Essays in Tribute to Howard Clark Kee*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988.

Newman, L. *The Sanctity of the Seventh Year: A Study of Mishnah Tractate Shebiit*. Brown Judaic Studies 44. Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983.

Nicolet, C., ed. *Recherches sur les structures sociales de l'antiquité classique (Caen, 25–26 Avril 1969)*. Colloques nationaux du C.N.R.S. Paris: C.N.R.S., 1970.

———. *Rome et la conquête du monde méditerranéen, 264–27 avant J.C.* vol. 2. *Genèse d'un empire*. Collection Nouvelle Clio. Paris: P.U.F., 1978.

Nock, A. D. *Early Gentile Christianity and Its Hellenistic Background*. New York: Harper & Row, 1964.

———. *Conversion; the Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo*. London: Oxford University Press, 1933.

———. *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*. Selected and edited by Z. Stewart. 2 vols. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972.

Oakman, D. *Jesus and the Economic Questions of His Day*. Lewiston, N.Y.: Mellen, 1986.

Oppenheimer, A. *The Am Ha-Aretz. A Study in the Social History of the Jewish People in the Hellenistic-Roman Period*. Translated by I. H. Levine. Leiden: Brill, 1977.

Packman, Z. *The Taxes in Grain in Ptolemaic Egypt: Granary Receipts from Diospolis Magna 164–88 B.C.* New Haven: The American Society

of Papyrologists, 1968.

Patlagean, E. *Pauvreté économique et pauvreté sociale à Byzance, 4-7ème siècles*. Collection "Civilisations et sociétés." Paris: Mouton, 1977.

———. *Structure sociale, famille, chrétienté à Byzance IVe-XIe siècles*. London: Variorum Reprints, 1981.

Peck, A. *The Priestly Gift in Mishnah: A Study of Tractate Terumat*. Brown Judaic Studies 20. Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981.

Pena, I., P. Castelana, and R. Fernandez. *Les reclus syriens. Recherches sur les anciennes formes de vie solitaire en Syrie*. Milan: Franciscan Printing Press, 1980.

Perrot, Ch. *La lecture de la Bible dans la synagogue. Les anciennes lectures palestiniennes du Shabbat et des fêtes*. Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1973.

Petit, P. *La paix romaine*. Collection Nouvelle Clio 9. Paris: P.U.F., 1971.

———. *Histoire générale de l'Empire romain*. 3 vols. in the collection "Points-Histoire." Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1974.

Pfister, R. *Textiles de Palmyre découverts par le Services des antiquités du Haut-Commissariat de la République française dans la nécropole de Palmyre*. 2 vols. Paris: les Editions d'art et d'histoire, 1934-37.

Polanyi, K. *Primitive, Archaic and Modern Economies, Essays of Karl Polanyi*. Edited by G. Dalton. Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1968.

Polanyi, K., C. M. Arensberg, and H. W. Pearson. *Trade and Market in the Early Empires*. Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1957.

Préaux, J., ed. *Problèmes d'histoire du christianisme*. Bruxelles: Editions de l'Université, 1976.

Primus, Ch. *Akiva's Contribution to the Law of Zera'im*. Leiden: Brill, 1977.

Rabello, A. M. "The Legal Condition of the Jews in the Roman Empire." *ANRW* II/13 (1980) 662-762.

Rajak, T. *Josephus: The Historian and His Society*. London: Duckworth, 1983.

Rappaport, U. "John of Gishala—The Changing Fortunes of a Galilean Leader." In *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies (1981)*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1982.

Reynier, L. *De l'économie publique et rurale des Arabes et des Juifs*. Geneva: J. J. Paschoud, 1820.

Ringel, J. *Césarée de Palestine. Etude historique et archéologique*. Paris: Ophrys, 1975.

Rhoads, D. M. "Some Jewish Revolutionaries in Palestine from 6 AD to 73 AD According to Josephus." Ph.D. thesis, Duke University, 1973.

———. *Israel in Revolution: 6–74 C.E.: A Political History Based on the Writings of Josephus*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976.

Ritter, A. M. "Christentum and Eigentum bei Klemens von Alexandrien auf dem Hintergrund der frühchristlichen 'Armenfrommigkeit' und der Ethik der kaiserzeitlichen Stoa." *ZKG* (1975) 1–25.

Robert, L. *Hellenica. Recueil d'épigraphie, de numismatique et d'antiquités grecques*. Limoges: Bontemps, 1940–. Presently 14 vols. Reprint at Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1972.

Ron, Z. Y. D. *Stone Huts as an Expression of Terrace Agriculture in the Judean and Samaritan Hills*. 2 vols. Tel Aviv: Department of Geography, University of Tel Aviv, 1977 (in Hebrew).

Rosenthal, F. "Sedaka, Charity." *HUCA* 33 (1950–51) 411–30.

Rostovtzeff, M. *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*. 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941.

———. *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*. Revised by P. M. Fraser. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957<sup>2</sup>.

Rougé, J. "A propos des mendiants au IV<sup>ème</sup> siècle. Etude de quelques textes." *Cahiers d'histoire* (Lyon) 20 (1975) 339–46.

Rousselle, A. *Porneia: On Desire and the Body in Antiquity*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988 (Translation of *Porneia: De la maîtrise du corps à la privation sensorielle, IIe–IVe siècles de l'ère chrétienne*. Paris: P.U.F., 1983).

Safrai, S. .br Jerusalem: Ministry of Education and Culture (Biblical Culture Section), 1980 or 1981.

———, ed. *The Literature of the Sages*. Section 2 of *Compendium Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum*. Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987.

Safrai, S., and M. Stern, eds. *The Jewish People in the First Century*. Section 1 of *Compendium Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum*. 2 vols.

- Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974–76.
- Safrai, Z. “The Small Jewish Village in Eretz Yisrael During the Period of the Mishna and Talmud.” *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies (1981)*. Division B. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1982.
- Saller, S. J. *Second Revised Catalogue of the Ancient Synagogues of the Holy Land*. Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1972.
- Salmon, P. *Population et dépopulation dans l'Empire romain*. Collection Latomus 137. Bruxelles: Latomus, 1974.
- Sanders, E. P. *Jesus and Judaism*. London: SCM; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985.
- , et al., eds. *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*. 3 vols. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980–82 (vol. 1: *The Shaping of Christianity in the Second and Third Centuries*; vol. 2: *Aspects of Judaism in the Graeco-Roman Period*; vol. 3: *Self-Definition in the Greco-Roman World*).
- Sandmel, S. *The First Christian Century in Judaism and Christianity: Certainties and Uncertainties*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1969.
- . *Judaism and Christian Beginnings*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.
- Sarason, R. S. *A History of the Mishnaic Laws of Agriculture: A Study of Tractate Demai*. Part I: Commentary. Leiden: Brill, 1979.
- Saulcy, F. de. *Numismatique de la Terre Sainte. Description des monnaies autonomes et impériales de la Palestine et de l'Arabie Pétrée*. Paris: J. Rothschild, 1874.
- Schäfer, P. *Der Bar Kokhba-Aufstand. Studien zum zweiten jüdischen Krieg gegen Rom*. Tübingen: Mohr, 1981.
- Schalit, A. *König Herodes. Der Mann und sein Werk*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1969.
- Schiffman, L. H. *The Halakhah at Qumran*. Leiden: Brill, 1975.
- . *Sectarian Laws in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Courts, Testimony, and the Penal Code*. Brown Judaic Studies 33. Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983.
- Schneider, C. *Kulturgeschichte des Hellenismus*. 2 vols. Munich: C. H. Beck, 1967–69.
- Schoeps, H. J. *Jewish Christianity. Factional Disputes in the Early Church*.

Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969.

———. *Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums*. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1949.

Schottroff, W., and W. Stegemann, eds. *God of the Lowly: Socio-Historical Interpretation of the Bible*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1984.

Schürer, E. *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.–A.D. 135)*. English translation revised and edited. 3 vols. Vol. 1 edited by G. Vermes and F. Millar, 1973. Vol. 2 edited by G. Vermes, F. Millar, M. Black, and P. Vermes, 1979. Vol. 3/1 edited by G. Vermes, F. Millar, M. Black, P. Vermes, and M. Goodman, 1986. Vol. 3/2 (index) 1987. Edinburgh: Clark, 1973–87.

Schüssler-Fiorenza, E. *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*. New York: Crossroad/Continuum, 1983.

Schwabe, M., and B. Lifshitz. *Beth She'arim*. Vol. 2. *The Greek Inscriptions*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University; the Israel Exploration Society and the Institute of Archaeology at Hebrew University, 1974.

Scroggs, R. "The Sociological Interpretation of the New Testament: The Present State of Research." *NTS* 26 (1980) 164–79.

Sevenster, J. N. *Do You Know Greek? How Much Greek Could the First Jewish Christians Have Known?* Leiden: Brill, 1968.

Sherwin-White, N. *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963.

Simon, M. *Verus Israel: étude sur les relations entre chrétiens et juifs dans l'Empire romain, 135–425*. Bibliothèque des Ecoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 166. Paris: de Boccard, 1948.

———. *La civilisation de l'antiquité et le christianisme*. Paris: Arthaud, 1972.

———. "Réflexions sur le judéo-christianisme." In J. Neusner, ed. *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults*. Vol. 2. Leiden: Brill, 1975, 53–76.

———. *Le christianisme antique et son contexte religieux. Scripta varia*. 2 vols. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1981.

Simon, M., and A. Benoit. *Le judaïsme et le christianisme antique*. Collection Nouvelle Clío 10. Paris: P.U.F., 1968.

Singer, C., et al., eds. *A History of Technology*. Vol. 2. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956.

Smallwood, E. M. *The Jews Under Roman Rule, from Pompey to Diocletian. A Study in Political Relations*. Leiden: Brill, 1981. Reprint of 1976 edition, with minor corrections.

Smith, J. Z. *Map is not Territory, Studies in the History of Religion*. Leiden: Brill, 1978.

———. “Towards Interpreting Demonic Powers in Hellenistic and Roman Antiquity.” *ANRW* II/61.1 (1978) 425ff.

Smith, M. “Palestinian Judaism in the First Century.” In M. Davis, ed. *Israel, Its Role in Civilization*. New York: Arno Press, 1956. Reprint 1977.

Sokoloff, M. “The Current State of Research on Galilean Aramaic.” *JNES* (1978) 161–67.

Sperber, D. “Costs of Living in Roman Palestine, I–IV.” *JESHO* 8 (1965) 248–71; 9 (1966) 182–211; 11 (1968) 233–274; 13 (1970) 1–15.

———. “Denarii and Aurei in the Time of Diocletian.” *JRS* 56 (1966) 190–195.

———. “Gold and Silver Standards, A Study in Rabbinical Attitudes to Roman Coinage.” *NC* 7,8 (1968) 83–109.

———. “On Social and Economic Conditions in Third Century Palestine.” *Archiv Orientalni* 38 (1970) 1–25.

———. “Patronage in Amoraic Palestine (c. 220–400): Causes and Effects.” *JESHO* 14 (1971) 227–252.

———. “Trends in Third Century Palestinian Agriculture.” *JESHO* 15 (1972) 227–55.

———. “Drought, Famine and Pestilence in Amoraic Palestine.” *JESHO* 17 (1974) 272–98.

———. *Roman Palestine, 200–400. Money and Prices*. Bar-Ilan Studies in Near Eastern Languages and Culture. Ramat-Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan University, 1974.

———. “Social Legislation in Jerusalem During the Latter Part of the Second Temple Period.” *JSJ* 6 (1975) 86–95.

———. “Objects of Trade Between Palestine and Egypt in Roman Times.”

*JESHO* 19 (1976) 113–47.

———. “Aspects of Agrarian Life in Roman Palestine I: Agricultural Decline in Palestine During the Later Principate.” *ANRW* II/8 (1977) 397–443.

———. *Roman Palestine, 200–400: Crisis and Change in Agrarian Society as Reflected in Rabbinic Sources. The Land*. Bar-Ilan Studies in Near Eastern Languages and Culture. Ramat-Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan University, 1978.

———. *A Dictionary of Greek and Latin Legal Terms in Rabbinic Literature*. Ramat-Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan University, 1984.

Spicq, C. *Notes de lexicographie néo-testamentaire*. 3 vols. *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis* 22/1, 22/2, and 22/3. Fribourg: Editions universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978–82.

Spijkerman, A. *The coins of the Decapolis and Provincia Arabia*. Edited by M. Piccirillo. Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1978.

Stambaugh, J. E., and D. L. Balch. *The New Testament in Its Social Environment*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986.

Ste. Croix, G. E. M. de. “Early Christian Attitudes to Property and Slavery.” In D. Baker. *Church, Society and Politics*. Papers published for the Ecclesiastical History Society. Oxford: Blackwell, 1975, 1–38.

———. *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World, From the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests*. London: Duckworth; Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981.

Stein, S. “The Dietary Laws in Rabbinic and Patristic Literature.” In K. Aland and F. L. Cross, eds. *Studia Patristica: Papers Presented to the Second International Conference on Patristic Studies Held at Christ Church, Oxford, 1955*, vol. 2. *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, 64. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957, 141–54.

Stern, M. *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*. 3 vols. Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974–84 (vol. 1: *From Herodotus to Plutarch*; vol. 2: *From Tacitus to Simplicius*; vol. 3: *Appendixes and Indexes*).

Stone, M., ed. *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period; Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus*. Vol. II of section 2 of *Compendium Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum*:

*The Literature of the Jewish People in the Period of the Second Temple and the Talmud.* Assen: Van Gorcum; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.

Strack, H. L., and P. Billerbeck. *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch.* 6 parts. Munich: C. H. Beck, 1922–61 (parts 5–6 are indices by J. Jeremias and K. Adolph).

Strack, H. L., and G. Stemberger. *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch.* Munich: C. H. Beck, 1982<sup>7</sup> (completely reworked by G. Stemberger).

Strange, J. F. "Archaeology and the Religion of Judaism in Palestine." *ANRW* II/19.1 (1979) 646–85.

Strecker, G. *Das Judenchristentum in den Pseudoklementinen.* Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, 702. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1981<sup>2</sup>.

Tchalenko, G. *Villages antiques de la Syrie du Nord, le massif du Bélus à l'époque romaine.* Institut Français d'Archéologie de Beyrouth; Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 50. 3 vols. Paris: P. Geuthner, 1953–8.

Tcherikover, V. (Avigdor). *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews.* Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1959.

Teixidor, J. *The Pagan God. Popular Religion in the Greco-Roman Near East.* Princeton: Princeton University, 1977.

Temporini, H., and W. Haase, eds. *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt.* II.8 (*Politische Geschichte*); 19 (*Religion: Allgemeines; Palästinisches Judentum*); 20.1 (*Religion: Hellenistisches Judentum in römischer Zeit*); 25 (*Religion: vorkonstantinisches Christentum*). Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1977–83.

Theissen, G. "Wanderradikalismus: literatursoziologische Aspekte der Überlieferung von Worten Jesu im Urchristentum." *ZTK* 70 (1973) 245–71.

———. "Soziale Schichtung in der korinthischen Gemeinde. Ein Beitrag zur Soziologie des hellenistischen Urchristentums." *ZNW* 65 (1974) 232–72.

———. "Die soziologische Auswertung religiöser Überlieferungen. Ihre methodologischen Probleme am Beispiel des Urchristentums." *Kairos* 17 (1975) 284–99.

———. *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978 (published as *The First Followers of Jesus*. London: SCM, 1978).

———. *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982.

Tiede, D. L. *The Charismatic Figure as Miracle Worker*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series I. Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1972.

Trocme, E. "Le christianisme primitif, un mythe historique?" *Etudes théologiques et religieuses* 49 (1974) 15–29.

Troeltsch, E. *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*. London: G. Allen; New York: Macmillan, 1931.

Uhlhorn, G. *Christian Charity in the Ancient Church*. New York: Scribner's, 1883 (Translation of *Christliche Liebestätigkeit in der alten Kirche*, 1882<sup>2</sup>).

Urbach, E. E. *The Laws Regarding Slavery as a Source for Social History of the Period of the Second Temple, the Mishnah and the Talmud*. Vol. 1. London: Institute of Jewish Studies, 1964. Reprint: New York: Arno Press, 1979.

———. "Class-Status and Leadership in the World of the Palestinian Sages." In *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities*, vol. 2. Jerusalem: 1982, 38–74.

———. *The Sages, Their Concepts and Beliefs*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975.

Van der Ploeg, G. "The Meals of the Essenes." *Journal of Semitic Studies* 2 (1957) 163–75.

Van Effenterre, H., ed. *Points de vue sur la fiscalité antique*. Série Etudes 14. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1979.

Vaux, R. de. *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls (Schweich Lectures, 1959)*. London: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1973.

Vermes, G. *The Dead Sea Scrolls, Qumran in Perspective*. London: Collins, 1977.

———. *Jesus and the World of Judaism*. London: SCM, 1983.

Veyne, P. *Le pain et le cirque, sociologie historique d'un pluralisme politique*. Collection "Univers historique." Paris: Le Seuil, 1976.

Vidal-Naquet, P. "Du bon usage de la trahison." In Josephus. *La guerre des Juifs*. Translation by P. Savinel. Paris: Ed. de Minuit, 1977, 7–115.

- . *Il buon uso del tradimento*. Roma: Editori riuniti, 1980 (expanded version of preceding title).
- . *Les Juifs, la mémoire et le présent*. Paris: Maspéro, 1981.
- Virlouvet, C. *Famines et émeutes à Rome des origines de la République à la mort de Néron*. Collection de l'École française de Rome 87. Rome: Ecole française, 1986.
- Vogelstein, H. *Die Landwirtschaft in Palästina zur Zeit der Mischna. Der Getreidebau*. Inaugural Dissertation. Berlin, 1894.
- Vogt, J. "Der Vorwurf der sozialen Niedrigkeit des frühen Christentums." *Gymnasium* 82 (1975) 401–11.
- Wallon, H. A. *Histoire de l'esclavage dans l'antiquité*. 3 vols. Paris: Hachette, 1879. Reprint: Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1974.
- Weber, M. *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, vol. 3. *Das antike Judentum*. Tübingen: Mohr, 1920.
- . *The Sociology of Religion*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1956.
- . *The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations*. Translation by R. I. Frank. London: New Left Books, 1976.
- Weisfeld, I. H. *Labor Legislation in the Talmud*. University of Chicago Library, Department of Photographic Reproductions, 1946.
- Weulersse, J. *Paysans de Syrie et du Proche-Orient*. Paris: Gallimard, 1946.
- White, K. D. *Agricultural Implements of the Roman World*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1967.
- . *Roman Farming*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1970.
- . *A Bibliography of Roman Agriculture*. Reading: University of Reading, 1970.
- . *Country Life in Classical Times*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977.
- Wilcox, M. "Jesus in the Light of His Jewish Environment." *ANRW* II/25.1 (1982) 131–95.
- Wilken, R. L. "Toward a Social Interpretation of Early Christian Apologetics." *Church History* 39 (1970) 437–58.
- . *The Myth of Christian Beginnings*. New York: Doubleday, 1971. Reprint: Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980.

Will, E., and C. Orrieux. *Ioudaïsmos-hellénismos; essai sur le judaïsme judéen à l'époque hellénistique*. Nancy: Presses universitaires, 1986.

Wilson, C. T. *Peasant Life in the Holy Land*. New York: Dutton, 1906.

Wolf, E. R. *Peasants*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966.

Yadin, Y. *The Finds from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters*. Judaeen Desert Series, 1. Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society, 1963.

———. *The Excavation of Masada, 1963/4: Preliminary Report*. Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society, 1965.

Zeitlin, S. *The Rise and Fall of the Judaeen State*. 3 vols. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962–1978.

Zohary, M. *Plants of the Bible*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982.