

The Hellenization of the East and the Orientalization of the West: The Paradox of Philo of Byblos¹

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Into Joseph's view of the world more and more of the clear and skeptical spirit of these Eastern Greeks was insinuating itself. He no longer understood how he could once have felt disgust for all that was not Jewish. The heroes of Greek myth and the prophets of the Bible did not exclude each other... Joseph began to hate the limitations which once had meant for him election and privilege. What mattered was to let the goodness in him flow out to others and draw unto himself the goodness of others.

He was the first man to live deliberately in accordance with this conception. He was a new kind of man, no longer a Jew, nor a Greek, nor a Roman, but a citizen of the world.

—L. Feuchtwanger, *Josephus: A Historical Romance*, translated from the German by W. and E. Muir (1932) 303.

The theme of this volume is when “West Met East.” The article below addresses this theme indirectly. The discussion begins with a consideration of the contributions of several outstanding scholars of the twentieth century who first pondered the meaning of the meeting of Western empires with the East in light of the extensive papyrological, epigraphic, and archaeological evidence

¹ This article owes much to the cordial cooperation and assistance of Corinne Bonnet of the University of Toulouse. Our common interests – both in the history of scholarship and in Philo of Byblos – have been a source of much enlightenment and pleasure. Nevertheless, as always, the sole responsibility for the contents, argument, and conclusions is mine.

that came to light during their careers – much of it as a result of their own research. In most cases, their concern was not on the first Western empire to meet the East, but on its later successors. Nevertheless, these scholars were the pioneers in the investigation of the larger questions concerning the meaning of the meeting of West and East in antiquity.

Questions arising from the history of scholarship have their fullest implication when their results are then applied to the analysis of sources and they can yield new understandings of the texts with which we have been wrestling for generations. For that reason, this article continues with a discussion of the paradoxes associated with Philo of Byblos. He is one of the prime examples of the meeting of East and West, but he often appears to us as a *testis unus*, a unique piece of evidence. The insights garnered from the investigation of the history of scholarship in the first parts of the article help reduce the sense we have of Philo as floating in a void and put him and his work in a wider context.

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Just what was life like in the Near East in the centuries after the mass Greek immigration that followed the conquests of Alexander the Great? Greeks and various oriental peoples were in touch with each other, learned from each other, but also sometimes talked back to each other, even before the conquests of Alexander the Great; but how could one get a feel for life as it was lived, in all its variety and complexity in the Hellenistic era, during the centuries after numerous Greeks came to live in so many places in the East? These questions fascinated Michael I. Rostovtzeff (1870-1952), whose great ability was “his uncanny gift of calling things ancient to life.”² Rostovtzeff’s last great work, *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World* (below, *SEHHW*), which appeared in 1941, very close to the end of his active career as a scholar, was intended as a major contribution to answering these questions.³

Rostovtzeff did not need anyone to teach him that only the most comprehensive approach to these questions, based on the broadest possible foundation of evidence, would yield answers worthy of serious consideration. Hav-

² See MOMIGLIANO 1994 for an insightful, sensitive, yet critical evaluation of Rostovtzeff’s contributions to scholarship. The quote is from MOMIGLIANO 1994, 32.

³ These questions were an ongoing topic in the extensive correspondence between Rostovtzeff and Franz Cumont (1868-1947). See, for example, the discussion of “Les enjeux historiographiques majeurs: Doura-Europos entre Orient et Occident,” in BONGARD-LEVINE ET AL. 2007, 15-23, or # 90, from Cumont to Rostovtzeff of March 5, 1932, BONGARD-LEVINE ET AL. 2007, 173-175, excerpts cited below, 290.

ing begun as a specialist in Latin literature, Rostovtzeff devoted years to the study of the archaeological remains of Greco-Roman antiquity uncovered in profusion during his lifetime. As any visitor to the Pergamon Museum in Berlin can still attest, the impact of this evidence on popular imagination and on scholarship was immense, but one needed vast erudition and genius to marshal this new mass of material (often mute and without the benefit of illumination by written testimony) into a coherent narrative that would tell the story of the interactions of cultures in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds. Even when the data was written, one needed a special kind of insight to take all of the individual pieces of testimony to civil, legal, and religious life and reconstruct the institutions that stood behind them, the principles on which they operated, and how they shaped peoples' lives. Nevertheless, for all their challenges and difficulties, these were the routes to direct contact with life as lived at the points of intersection of ancient cultures. The reader of *SEHHW* was to share that experience through the numerous plates included in the book.

One foundation of this grand synthesis was Rostovtzeff's leading role in the excavations of Dura Europus. In a preliminary report on the findings, presented to the Archaeological Society in Berlin in the summer of 1929, and delivered while work was still in progress at Dura (in fact, relatively early in Rostovtzeff's personal direct involvement in the excavations),⁴ Rostovtzeff expressed the hope that the Dura finds would allow a deeper understanding of Syrian Hellenism and open a window into offering answers to the questions posed above.⁵

A little more than decade later, with the last season of field work completed in 1937 and therefore behind him, Rostovtzeff summarized the

⁴ HOPKINS 1979, 29-32, provides a humorous description of the travails in the field at the excavation of Dura, the Rostovtzeffs' in particular. This was Prof. Rostovtzeff's first real experience at field archaeology, with the attendant discomforts of working with the "natives" and "roughing it." There was no water at the camp, and that drawn from the Euphrates was the color of weak coffee. There was no decent food, and Mrs. Rostovtzeff was "tall and large with an imperious manner and a very keen mind, determined to take charge whenever household arrangements for her husband were at stake, and with a predilection to say exactly what she thought." No preparations had been made for toilet facilities, which was a special hardship for her, as in order to be sure that no harm befell the wife of Yale's representative there was a soldier assigned as her bodyguard, with orders never to let her out of sight. Mrs. Rostovtzeff did not speak Arabic, so her protests to be left alone for toilet functions did no good. She complained of her plight in no uncertain terms. For a more conventional account of the difficulties on site at Dura see Cumont's letter to Rostovtzeff of October 26, 1926, BONGARD-LEVINE ET AL. 2007, #10, 69.

⁵ See ROSTOVITZEFF 1929. The occasion was the hundredth anniversary of the Berlin Institute of Archaeology. Franz Cumont was originally invited to offer a report on the excavations at Dura, but he suggested that it would be more appropriate to invite Rostovtzeff, since Yale University now led the excavations there; BONGARD-LEVINE ET AL. 2007, September 16, 1928, #25, 88; Rostovtzeff to Cumont, undated, #26, 91; Cumont to Rostovtzeff, October 21, 1928, #28, 94.

main implications of what he had found at Dura for understanding life in the Near East in an article submitted to *Renaissance*, the principal organ of the École Libre des Hautes Études, the French language university in exile in New York.⁶ According to Rostovtzeff, Dura allowed scholars an insight into:

*le grand problème, le problème éternel, celui de la symbiose et de l'interpénétration de la civilisation occidentale, c'est-à-dire grecque, et de la culture orientale dans le Proche Orient...le problème de l'occidentalisation, ou si l'on veut de l'hellénisation de l'Orient et de l'orientalisation des conquérants venus de l'Ouest.*⁷

Prior to the discovery of extensive archaeological remains from the East, it was difficult to appreciate the interpenetration and symbiosis of civilizations in the Hellenistic world. Much of the emphasis was on the hellenization of the Orient. But now, thanks to finds such as those at Dura, one could see that a more complex two-way process was at work. In addition to the “old” focus on the ways in which the peoples of the East were Hellenized, the archaeological remains showed the orientalizing of the new Greek cities founded in the East. Life in these cities was “oriental,” even for residents who were originally Macedonian or Greek. Roman Dura, according to Rostovtzeff:

*garde en quelque sorte son squelette grec. Mais son corps, sa chair, sa vie appartiennent à l'Orient...la cité de Doura-Europus et la vie quotidienne de son aristocratie macédonienne et grecque s'orientalisa fortement, sinon complètement. La même évolution se marque dans la vie religieuse des Macédoniens et des Grecs de Doura-Europus. Nombre de temples ont été fouillés à Doura...Il est frappant de voir qu'aucun de ces temples n'a été construit pour des divinités grecques.*⁸

Turning to the more complex question of the cultural identity of individuals, Rostovtzeff noted that if we were to ask about the orientalizing Macedonians and Greeks, or of the Hellenized orientals at Dura and elsewhere in the Near East, we would have to conclude that:

C'était des hommes sui generis, ni des Grecs proprement dits, ni un type spécial d'Orientaux. C'est un mélange organique, un amalgame qui s'opéra à Doura. Un nouveau

⁶ ROSTOVITZEFF 1943. The ideas summarized in this article were ones that had long dominated Rostovtzeff's thinking and writing on the topic. In a certain sense, the article was not so much a statement of new insights or conclusions but its publication in *Renaissance* was intended as an expression of personal support for the work of the École Libre, as the École Libre had offered sanctuary to many of Rostovtzeff's friends from the horrors of WWII. This article allowed *Renaissance* to benefit from Rostovtzeff's prestige and stature in the American scholarly world: *Renaissance* did not only publish the work of relatively unknown refugee foreigners.

⁷ ROSTOVITZEFF 1943, 44-45.

⁸ ROSTOVITZEFF 1943, 46-47.

*type d'humanité se forma. Dans leur mentalité mixte et leur manière de voir complexe et composite, il y avait des éléments grecs et orientaux qui se fondirent en un tout organique qui ne peut être soumis à une analyse chimique...Le phénomène que nous avons analysé à Doura, naturellement, n'était pas particulier à cette ville. Des processus pareils eurent lieu en Syrie, en Palestine, en Arabie, dans l'Inde, en Perse, en Egypte et en Asie Mineure.*⁹

This new type of humanity, this amalgam or symbiosis of East and West, with its complex and composite way of seeing the world, was now better documented and understood. It helped provide an answer to the question Rostovtzeff had identified at the beginning of his article as *le grand problème*.

It would be naïve to imagine that Rostovtzeff did not have his critics, both at the time and since. Franz Cumont (1868-1947) was co-director with Rostovtzeff of the excavations at Dura. He shared Rostovtzeff's interest in the religious and intellectual life of the Hellenized Near East, and was one of the people who encouraged Rostovtzeff repeatedly to write and complete his grand synthesis, *SEHWW* (see further below). Cumont agreed with Rostovtzeff that Dura was an example of “*îlots européens perdus dans un océan asiatique*,” lost islands which were then contaminated by the oriental cultures.¹⁰ He elaborated on the fate of the Greek colonists who tried to maintain their native culture, but maintained that the ultimate result was that while these Greek settlers were

*Propagatrices de la langue et de la culture occidentales, initiatrices des peuples étrangers à l'éducation hellénique, elle subirent cependant elles-même l'influence du milieu où elles vivaient et leur population promptement orientalisée adopta en partie les coutumes, les croyances, l'art même des “barbares” qui les entouraient.*¹¹

Nevertheless, Cumont felt that Rostovtzeff had gone too far and expressed some doubts concerning Rostovtzeff's synthesis. In his letter of March 5, 1932, cited above (n. 3), Cumont wrote:

⁹ ROSTOVITZEFF 1943, 54.

¹⁰ CUMONT 1926, i, xliv. For a persuasive critique of the pervasive “oceanic” metaphors utilized by Cumont and others to describe the relationship of cultures in the Hellenized Near East (e.g. the Asiatic ocean that ended up submerging these European islands, despite the dikes erected by Seleucid kings, etc.) see BRIANT 1982, 273-274. As Briant notes, European imperialist conceptions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, often based on racist foundations, played a large part in the way scholars of an earlier generation understood the relationship of colonists and natives in antiquity. The hydraulic metaphor Briant prefers for describing the Greek population of the Near East in the first centuries of the Hellenistic era is one proposed by Louis Robert: the Hellenistic kings “irrigated” the new foundations with fresh populations of Greek men and women, thus maintaining the domination of the Greco-Macedonian elite (BRIANT 1982, 275).

¹¹ CUMONT 1926, i, xlv-xlvi.

Votre article sur l'hellénisme oriental m'a vivement intéressé. J'y ai retrouvé votre pénétration et votre don de synthèse habituels. Pour le fonds, j'inclinerais à accorder à l'hellénisme une part plus large que celle dont vous le laissez maître. Vous le réduisez trop, le pauvre, à la portion congrue.¹² Il me paraît que dans les colonies des Séleucides les institutions et les lois sont restées grecques jusqu'à la domination des Sassanides. La loi sur les successions de Doura est macédonienne ou hellénique, non sémitique, et l'ensemble de la constitution de la ville a dû le demeurer aussi. Il en a été de même à Suse... On constate aussi que la chancellerie royale correspondait en grec, et même en grec fleuri avec les colonies helléniques – même sous Artaban III¹³ qui ne prit pas le titre de « philhellène ».

More recently, Millar has offered serious criticisms of the work of Rostovtzeff and Cumont at Dura.

I have tried to stress...that the involvement of Cumont and Rostovtzeff in the excavations was fundamentally a matter of conception and interpretation. Pre-conception, one might say... The work, conducted under difficult and dangerous conditions, was carried out by an evolving team of quite young and in many cases inexperienced archaeologists, under the distant guidance of two great figures.¹⁴

However, as the editors of the Rostovtzeff-Cumont correspondence stress, this criticism is excessive: this correspondence shows the extent to which the excavators were not dilettantes, but were involved personally in the work on the site, and their direction was not “long-distance” or purely conceptual.¹⁵

In more general terms, Millar has challenged Rostovtzeff's grand thesis of the orientalization of the West alongside the hellenization of the East in numerous detailed studies that argue the near submersion of native cultures in confrontation with Greco-Roman civilization. As summarized by Tessa Rajak, according to Millar,

cultural traffic ... went almost exclusively one way, and that was eastwards.... By the end of the second century AD, a fair number of once significant cultures were profoundly attenuated.... A major discovery in the book is the absence of any general Syrian cultural identity.¹⁶

¹² *La portion congrue* was the minimal distribution the higher clergy made to the lower ranks out of their tax revenues.

¹³ A rival for the kingship of Parthia, who reigned 80-81 CE. Cumont devoted substantial efforts to studying the letter of Artabanus III to the city of Susa. See BONGARD-LEVINE ET AL., 2007, Cumont to Rostovtzeff, February 17, 1932, #89, 172, and Cumont to Rostovtzeff, April 14, 1932, #92, 177.

¹⁴ MILLAR 1998, 474.

¹⁵ BONGARD-LEVINE ET AL. 2007, 12. On the field experience of the excavators prior to the years at Dura, see BONGARD-LEVINE ET AL 2007, 28-29. Cf., however, above, n. 4, for an account of the Rostovtzeffs' difficulties on site at Dura.

¹⁶ RAJAK 2002, 505-506.

Millar thus stated in even stronger terms Cumont's reservations above – that Rostovtzeff was allowing Hellenization too small a place in his synthesis – and that Rostovtzeff reduced the significance of the Hellenization of the East far too much, to a mere pittance.

However, specifically on the nature of the cultural interactions at Dura, Millar concluded that “while our evidence is wholly inadequate, what we have (at Dura) is compatible with the gradual and partial adjustment of a Hellenistic settlement to its local environment.”¹⁷ If one were inclined to be generous, even according to Millar, how far was Rostovtzeff off the mark when he wrote of the orientalization of the West, at least for Dura?

Finally, in response to Millar's skepticism, I prefer the approach proposed by Maurice Sartre, who wrote:

Millar's text constitutes an excellent presentation of the available documentation on the Syrian region ... but it leaves the somewhat discouraging impression that we possess only a few pieces of a puzzle that is impossible to reconstruct. To be sure, there is a great deal that we do not know. But is it not the job of the historian of antiquity to persevere in trying to reconstruct the past, taking into account each new discovery (and they keep on appearing), even though we know how many elements we lack – and will continue to lack? Otherwise, why not devote ourselves to other tasks?¹⁸

In his own assessment of the evidence, Sartre offered a picture more balanced than that of Rostovtzeff or Millar, but perhaps closer to that of the former. Sartre insisted on looking at the language of official texts, but also at the onomasticon, at mosaics¹⁹ and paintings, and at the duration of religious cults and gods. As he summarized,

Rather than seeing cultures that coexisted in Roman Syria as rivals, it would be more helpful to recognize the extent to which their interpenetration helped give each social or ethnic group, and sometimes each individual, a composite appearance; all were more or less marked by Hellenism or by some variant of the Semitic cultures, and no group or individual could be considered free of the influence of the others.²⁰

¹⁷ MILLAR 1993, 445-452 and 467-471, esp. 445-446, quote 446.

¹⁸ SARTRE 2007, 375-376, n. 6.

¹⁹ On what one can learn from mosaics about the cultural climate and the interpenetration of cultures, particularly for the period after the chronological limits Sartre set for his study, see BOWERSOCK 2006.

²⁰ SARTRE 2007, 295.

One of Rostovtzeff's principal collaborators in the grand project to understand the encounter of East and West in antiquity was his fellow Russian émigré and former student from St. Petersburg, Elias Bickerman (1897-1981). Already in 1930, at the beginning of his career as a faculty member in Berlin, Bickerman had indicated what he considered to be *the* great problem in the history of western thought, as it had been formulated by Tertullian: "*quid Athenis et Hierosolymis, quid Academiae et Ecclesiae?*"²¹

The two men were in constant academic touch throughout Rostovtzeff's life, and Rostovtzeff played a key role at crucial moments in Bickerman's career, first during the latter's years as a young scholar in Berlin, next helping obtain Rockefeller Foundation subvention for his position in Paris in 1933, when Bickerman lost his job in Berlin, and then especially in organizing Bickerman's escape to the USA (again, with the help of funding from the Rockefeller Foundation) after the German conquest of France in 1940. When Rostovtzeff died in October 1952, the American Russian émigré community organized a memorial meeting to honor him in New York six weeks later, on December 7, 1952. The invitation to this event praised Rostovtzeff as one of the intellectual and academic leading lights of Russia and a source of great national pride throughout the world, going back to his election to the Royal Russian Academy of Sciences. Bickerman, who then had just been appointed at Columbia University, was one of three principal speakers.²²

Throughout his life, Bickerman was proud to present himself as a follower of Rostovtzeff's method. Thus, in Berlin, the New School, and at Columbia University he always ended historical lectures with slides illustrating the events, people, and places discussed in the lecture. He traveled widely, visiting sites all around the ancient Mediterranean. In an application to the Bollingen Foundation, from 1957, preserved in the Goodenough Archive at Yale University, he noted these practices as an explicit continuation of the approach learned from Rostovtzeff, his teacher.²³ Accordingly, Bickerman's remarks in

²¹ BICKERMAN 1930, 133.

²² BAUMGARTEN 2010, 112-114, 120-142, 164. For a discussion of this event see also WES 1990, 91.

²³ BAUMGARTEN 2010, 150, 162-163. Rostovtzeff also loved to travel and to escape New Haven for Europe as often as possible. See BONGARD-LEVINE ET AL. 2007, 48. In a letter to Cumont of March 26, 1936 he explained that the "real reason" he travelled so much was his wife, who was "*un voyageur enragé et s'ennuie quand elle reste sans voyager pour quelque temps.*" BONGARD-LEVINE ET AL. 2007, #115, 208. Bickerman tried to lift Rostovtzeff's spirits in a note to him of April 30, 1944 (the last communication I found between the two; on Rostovtzeff's health see below, 294-295) talking about the first day of Spring, hoping that the sunshine had reached New Haven, and expressing the hope (despite the fact that the war in Europe was not yet over!) that Rostovtzeff would soon be able to

memory of Rostovtzeff in December 1952 – in Russian and for a Russian audience that would have fully appreciated the cultural background of the two men, as well as the significance of their lives as Russian anti-communists in the trials and tribulations of the 20th century – should have been of great interest, but they have not survived.

Nevertheless, one important reflection by Bickerman on the import of Rostovtzeff's *SEHHW* does exist in a little known essay published in the fascicle of *Renaissance* that followed the one in which Rostovtzeff's essay discussed above appeared. In this review, Bickerman responded extremely favorably to Rostovtzeff's work and discussed its wider importance.²⁴

Before the review appeared in print, Bickerman sent a copy to Mrs. Rostovtzeff,²⁵ expressing the hope that it would interest her husband.²⁶ There were at least two reasons Bickerman wrote to Mrs. Rostovtzeff and not to her husband. First, Mrs. Rostovtzeff and Franz Cumont had played a central role in encouraging Prof. Rostovtzeff to write *SEHHW*. Rostovtzeff himself had doubts of the merits of his efforts. The difficulties of preparing a synthesis troubled Rostovtzeff greatly, as he wrote to Cumont:

*Je ne suis pas content de mon livre. Un livre de synthèse est toujours une torture, surtout quand il s'occupe d'une période si peu connue et si peu compréhensible. Écrire un livre sur l'histoire politique c'est simple. Mais sociale et économique !...Comment j'envie les personnes qui sont plus sages que moi et se limitent à un sujet seul et se contentent d'écrire des articles bien fouillés en y consacrant tout le temps nécessaire.*²⁷

Or again, in another letter to Cumont, from July 1939: "*Vous attendez de mon livre plus que je suis capable de donner. Je crains qu'après lecture Vous me direz: essai sénile d'une synthèse impossible.*"²⁸ However, Cumont and Mrs.

live in retirement in Paris or Rome, and that he (Bickerman) would visit Europe and tour there in the summer of 1945, BONGARD-LEVIN 1997 #33, 340.

²⁴ BICKERMAN 1944.

²⁵ In addition to the reasons discussed below, Bickerman had the highest estimation for Mrs. Rostovtzeff. See BAUMGARTEN 2010, 56, n. 30.

²⁶ Undated letter to Mrs. Rostovtzeff – likely from 1944/5, considering the date of the publication of the review in *Renaissance* 2-3 – found in the Michael Ivanovitch Rostovtzeff Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC [cited below as Rostovtzeff Papers], Box 3, Correspondence: Language Subseries, Russian: 1920-1945, 1940s, undated. This letter is not one of the thirty-six Bickerman-Rostovtzeff documents in BONGARD-LEVIN 1997, 329-345.

²⁷ BONGARD-LEVINE ET AL. 2007, Rostovtzeff to Cumont, October 24, 1937, #126, 222. In his letter of reply, of November 9, 1937, BONGARD-LEVINE ET AL. 2007, #127, 224 Cumont tried to convince Rostovtzeff of the need for synthesis and that Rostovtzeff alone was capable of making that indispensable contribution at the highest level, which would bring him the highest honors.

²⁸ BONGARD-LEVINE ET AL. 2007, Rostovtzeff to Cumont, July 7, 1939, #150, 259.

Rostovtzeff continually encouraged Prof. Rostovtzeff to complete the work. As he wrote to Cumont, in September 1937:

*Vous, avec ma femme, m'avez attelé à un char qui est trop lourd pour moi. Mon volume hellénistique devient plus grand chaque jour et demande de moi une concentration complète. Même avec cela, il sera un livre, je le crains, bien médiocre.*²⁹

The role of Mrs. Rostovtzeff and of Franz Cumont in inspiring the author was then acknowledged in the dedication of *SEHHW* to them: “This book is dedicated to my wife and to my friend Franz Cumont. Without their encouragement and warm support in dark moments of doubts it would never have been written. M.R. August, 1940.”³⁰ In light of her role in encouraging her husband to complete the work, Mrs. Rostovtzeff needed Bickerman’s reassurance that the effort had been worthwhile.

A second reason Bickerman wrote to Mrs. Rostovtzeff was Prof. Rostovtzeff’s declining health and his increasing inability to work effectively as a scholar. In several letters to Cumont from 1936 and 1937, Rostovtzeff complained of irritability, nervousness, and being tired.³¹ Matters were even worse during the war years, for Rostovtzeff the fourth great war of his lifetime,³² and one that led him to untiring efforts to help refugee scholars.³³ Bickerman was well aware of Rostovtzeff’s condition: Rostovtzeff wrote to Bickerman,

²⁹ BONGARD-LEVINE ET AL. 2007, Rostovtzeff to Cumont, September 3, 1937, #124, 218-219. On this same theme see also Rostovtzeff to Cumont, October 24, 1937, #126, 222, on the need Rostovtzeff felt for constant revision in order to take account of new publications. See also the summary discussion of this point by the editors of BONGARD-LEVINE ET AL. 2007, 50-51.

³⁰ *SEHHW* vol. I, 15. See also Rostovtzeff’s letter to Cumont of October 1, 1940, BONGARD-LEVINE ET AL. 2007, #163, 276: “*Mon livre – dédié à Vous et à ma femme qui en sont responsables.*”

³¹ BONGARD-LEVINE ET AL. 2007, Rostovtzeff to Cumont, March 24, 1936, #115, 208; Rostovtzeff to Cumont, September 9, 1937, #125, 220; Rostovtzeff to Cumont, December 9, 1937, #128, 226.

³² BONGARD-LEVINE ET AL. 2007, Rostovtzeff to Cumont, September 8, 1939, #155, 265. As Rostovtzeff counted them, they were the Russo-Turkish War of 1877, the Russo-Japanese War, WWI, and now WWII.

³³ The obligation Rostovtzeff felt to help refugee scholars was overwhelming. As he wrote to Cumont, BONGARD-LEVINE ET AL. 2007, #143, 247, on December 11, 1938: *chaque jour je reçois des lettres de personnes que je connais et que je ne connais pas. Tous demandent des places dans nos Universités et tous sont des personnes de valeur...Que puis-je faire ? Trop des candidats et pas des places.* See further, WES 1990, 84-87 and BAUMGARTEN 2010, 141, n. 114. W.L. Westermann (1873-1954) of Columbia University also had an active role in helping refugee scholars and was the address for many appeals. See BAUMGARTEN 2010, 119, n. 6 and 195.

To cite only one example of the obstacles Rostovtzeff faced, he was unable to help Leonie Zuntz (1908-1942), the specialist in Hittite with whom Bickerman had been romantically involved in Berlin (BAUMGARTEN 2010, 20). As Rostovtzeff explained to W. Schubart of Berlin (1873-1960), there were visa difficulties, and positions in Hittite were non-existent in America. Rostovtzeff to Schubart, February 3, 1937, Rostovtzeff Papers, Box 1, Correspondence, Individuals, Schubart, Wilhelm, 1933, Jan.-1960, Aug. n.d.

on October 13, 1943, after discussion of academic matters: “I am now back from Hot Springs, I hope having improved my health although I do not feel exactly that way.”³⁴ Rostovtzeff was even more explicit in a letter to C.B. Welles, written on October 8, 1946, from the Institute of Living, a psychiatric hospital, in Hartford: “I am afraid that waiting for my recovery ... will mean indulging in optimism. Shock in my case, is unfortunately not justified (i.e. had not helped)³⁵ – I have not advanced in the restoration of my intellectual and physical (hearing, sight) capacities since McLean.”³⁶

As these were the only two issues of *Renaissance*, Bickerman’s review is virtually unknown, to the extent that Fergus Millar wrote that while Bickerman reviewed many of his teacher’s works he never reviewed *SEHHW*. Millar explained this supposed omission by suggesting that “Rostovtzeff, who was 71 in 1941, suffered from depression in his later years,³⁷ and it may be (as a pure speculation) that Bickerman, perhaps the best-qualified of all scholars at that time, did not want to take on such a review.”³⁸

Bickerman’s review of *SEHHW* in *Renaissance* 2-3 has recently been discussed at length by Pierre Briant of the Collège de France in his Rostovtzeff Lecture at Yale in November 2011, entitled “Michael Rostovtzeff, Elias J. Bickerman and the ‘Hellenization of Asia’: From Alexander the Great to World War II”; Briant’s lecture should soon appear in print.³⁹ My interest in these articles from the 1940s differs somewhat from that of Briant: Rostovtzeff’s article in *Renaissance* 1 and Bickerman’s review from *Renaissance* 2-3 will form the context for the discussion of Philo of Byblos in the third part of this paper.

³⁴ Rostovtzeff Papers, Box 1, Correspondence Individuals, B-C, 1937, Apr.-1947, July; BONGARD-LEVIN 1997, #31, 340. I cite the English original.

³⁵ Sophie Rostovtzeff wrote to Welles on April 4, 1946 that her husband had shock treatments earlier that year – Rostovtzeff Papers, Box 1, Correspondence: Individuals, Rostovtzeff, Sophie to C. Bradford Welles, 1944, Oct.-1954, June. According to FEARS 1990, 408, Rostovtzeff underwent a lobotomy, but there is no mention of a lobotomy in the correspondence I reviewed in the Rostovtzeff archive.

³⁶ McLean is a psychiatric hospital in Belmont, MA, affiliated with Harvard Medical School. BONGARD-LEVINE ET AL. 2007, Rostovtzeff to Welles, October 8, 1946, Appendice, #22, 340-341.

³⁷ As the discussion above indicates, Millar’s estimation of Rostovtzeff’s health was accurate. On Rostovtzeff’s health see further BAUMGARTEN, 2010, 140-141, n. 113.

³⁸ MILLAR 2011, 182b. I should note, however, that Bickerman’s review of *SEHHW* in *Renaissance* 2-3 is #170 in F. Parente’s bibliography of Bickerman’s writings, in BICKERMAN 1985, ix-xxxvii, elsewhere praised by MILLAR 2011, 182a.

³⁹ This lecture will appear in a volume of *Oriens et Occidens*, to be edited by J.G. Manning, together with other papers discussing Rostovtzeff’s contributions to the study of the ancient world. My paper in that volume will be on “Rostovtzeff and Bickerman on Hellenization: A Comparison and Contrast”. It will explore further the issues discussed in this article. For the moment, Briant’s lecture can be heard on the web, at <https://soundcloud.com/yaleuniversity/michael-rostovtzeff-elias-j>.

Like Rostovtzeff, Bickerman recognized the two-way nature of the dynamics taking place in the Hellenistic East. It was just as appropriate to focus on the orientalizing of the Greeks in the East as it was to concentrate on the ways in which easterners became hellenized. As Bickerman insisted in his review of *SEHHW*, the Greeks who came to the East intended to settle there, not make a quick profit and return home. These intentions created a reality which prevailed for generations. As Bickerman told his then student Nina Garsoïan, when she expressed an interest in Armenian history:

Hellenization in the Seleucid East, Armenia included, was shallow and uneven, far from the universal force some imagined. People thought that Alexander's conquest transformed the East and made it Greek, but that was not the case. The men who appear in Egyptian papyri worked as Greeks and had Greek names, but their wives had native names.⁴⁰ When these men came home they shed their Greek identity.⁴¹

Or, as he wrote in a new preface prepared for the Russian translation of his *Institutions des Séleucides*, but never completed or published due to his death:

les Séleucides n'étaient pas des maîtres lointains séparés par les mers ou même par les océans de leurs peuples. Ils vivaient parmi ceux-ci, et déjà Antiochus III était né en Asie séleucide. Les richesses que les rois obtenaient soit par impôts et corvées soit par les guerres furent essentiellement dépensées en dedans de l'empire.⁴²

As a result, echoing Rostovtzeff's conclusions discussed above, the Greeks in the East became as much orientalized as they hellenized the Near Easterners with whom they came into contact. A hybrid culture arose, in which Hellenism no longer threatened local traditions and in which the peoples of the Near East no longer despised Greek culture. In fact, Bickerman asserted, citing the example of Porphyry, some Hellenized orientals became its most learned and ardent defenders. In a clear nod to the contemporary context of WWII exiles in New York, at the *École Libre*, Bickerman noted with pride a contemporary analogy: one of General de Gaulle's first supporters was Felix Éboué (1884-1944) – the Governor General of Chad, a black Frenchman born in French Guiana, a grandson of slaves, who studied law in Paris at the *École nationale de la France d'Outre-mer*. Éboué joined de Gaulle's movement on June 18, 1940.⁴³

⁴⁰ Cf. BRIANT 1982, 275-276, who expressed serious reservations about the prevalence of "mixed marriages" between Greeks and natives in the East.

⁴¹ BAUMGARTEN 2010, 244. As this is oral testimony, learned in conversation with Prof. Garsoïan, I follow the practice adopted in the biography of Bickerman and set this material in italics.

⁴² BAUMGARTEN 2010, 245.

⁴³ BICKERMAN 1944, 392.

This discussion of the interpenetration of East and West — what Rostovtzeff called the new type of humanity that arose as a result of the mutual encounter of Greeks and Orientals in the Hellenized regions of the East — is extremely helpful for understanding the paradoxes posed by Philo of Byblos. I first encountered Philo of Byblos about forty-five years ago when Prof. Elias Bickerman suggested that I write my MA thesis on his fragments. At the time, Bickerman explained that Felix Jacoby had edited the fragments in one of the concluding volumes of his *FGrH* but had not written the commentary. The MA thesis became the basis for a doctoral dissertation, then a book,⁴⁴ and I have returned to write on Philo occasionally since then.⁴⁵

That Philo is a source of unending paradoxes is a particularly apt fate for an author who himself wrote a work entitled *The Paradoxical* (or *Unconventional*) *History* (F 1.28, F13).⁴⁶ Almost no piece of information concerning the author or his work fits together with the others in a way we would consider expected or coherent. To take a few simple examples, at the outset, we know him as Philo of Byblos, yet it is not clear if he ever lived at Byblos. Hermippos of Beirut was one of his disciples (T2a),⁴⁷ while the orator Paul of Tyre (T2b) and the scholar Herodian of Alexandria (T2c) were both noted by the *Suda* as his contemporaries. The *Suda* also noted that Herennius Severus was consul when Philo was seventy-eight years old, in the 220th Olympiad (101-104 CE),⁴⁸ but Philo had an apparently more important connection with the Roman consular Herennius Severus, as he took his name, so that his full formal name was Herennius Philo of Byblos (see e.g. F9 and F14). Perhaps Herennius Severus was Philo's patron. This seems likely, based on the statement that Philo introduced his disciple Hermippos of Beirut to Herennius Severus during Hadrian's reign. Perhaps Philo's Herennius Severus was the same as T. Herennius Severus, whom Pliny called a most learned man, and who wanted portraits of C. Ne-

⁴⁴ BAUMGARTEN, 1981.

⁴⁵ See especially BAUMGARTEN, 1996.

⁴⁶ Greek *paradoxos* does not only mean paradoxical in our sense of the word, but also unexpected, surprising, or unconventional. See for example Jos., *AJ* 2. 347, on the "paradoxical" nature of the splitting of the Red Sea at the time of the Exodus from Egypt.

⁴⁷ On Beirut in Roman times, see further MILLAR 1993, 279-285. In accordance with the general thesis of his work (above, 290), MILLAR 1993, 285, concluded that "it remains highly uncertain what, if anything, remained of the Phoenician culture of Berytus and its hinterland." Accordingly, if one followed Millar, Hermippos should have known little about his Beirut heritage.

⁴⁸ Other sources tell us nothing about the year of the consulship of Herennius Severus, so there is no external confirmation just when in the 220th Olympiad it fell, or if Herennius Severus was consul at some other time. See also the following note.

pos and T. Catus for his library (*Nat. Hist.* 4.28). If so, perhaps this circle of learned men and their patron gathered in Rome. However, this conjecture far from eliminates the possibility that Philo lived in or near Byblos, or elsewhere in the Near East. In sum, our sources – the Suda in particular – enveloped Philo of Byblos in a geographical haze.⁴⁹

Did Philo know some Phoenician?⁵⁰ Yes; on the whole his translations of Semitic names and titles were correct,⁵¹ and he preserved a cosmogony that seems to have been written in parallelism, the technique of Biblical and Ugaritic poetry. Yet, that very same cosmogony is very far from any ancient Near Eastern cosmogonic text. No deities are found there, and the process of forming the world unfolds in a “rational” or “scientific” manner, as a result of the natural interactions of light, darkness, chaos, *pneuma*, and moisture. A “scientific” meteorology, explaining meteorological phenomena as a result of natural processes (“the clouds and not Zeus”) dominates. Philo’s cosmogony, for all its outward “Semitic” features, seems conceptually more at home in the world of the Pre-Socratics or of the Epicureans. Arguments that it was “not influenced by Greek thought,” as once put forward, inevitably founder on the details of the text.⁵²

Philo is also well known for his anti-Greek comments. The Greeks were intellectual thieves, who misappropriated the treasures of other nations and claimed them for their own. One of Philo’s goals was to teach his readers the truth and make them familiar with the “real” Phoenician originals (F1.27, 2.40-41). As such, Philo was part of the oriental reaction against Greek cul-

⁴⁹ Philo’s dates are also confusing: the geographical haze has a chronological analogue. If Philo was seventy eight in the 220th Olympiad (above), this would establish his birth in 23-26 CE. Yet, we are also informed that Philo wrote on the reign of Hadrian (T1) and introduced Hermippos of Beirut to Herennius Severus during the reign of Hadrian (T2a). A man born in 23-26 CE would have been over ninety years old at the beginning of Hadrian’s reign (117-138). From another vantage point, the Suda also informed us (T1) that Philo was born around the time of Nero (Emperor from 54 to 68 CE). This would make Philo’s surviving to write about Hadrian and introduce a disciple to Herennius Severus during Hadrian’s reign more plausible.

⁵⁰ I pass over the long-standing (never ending?) discussion of whether his better known namesake, Philo of Alexandria, knew Hebrew and if so, how much.

⁵¹ According to RIBICHINI 1999, 154-155, the main thrust of Philo’s work was to argue that the Phoenicians knew the correct divine names, which were then transformed, misunderstood, or mystified by the Greeks. If one accepts Ribichini’s argument this would create a presumption that Philo knew some Phoenician and that at least some Phoenician practices were still alive in Philo’s time. Nevertheless, as Ribichini himself conceded, on the basis of the work of Bonnet and others, these Phoenician traditions had undergone substantial modification by Philo’s time. For example, solar gods had become more important as a result of Roman imperial solar pantheism, so that divinities who previously had few if any solar associations now acquired them, RIBICHINI 1999, 158-159.

⁵² BAUMGARTEN 1981, 94-139. The cosmogony at the beginning of the fragments indicates that Philo conceived his task as much more than just a “Phoenician” history, indeed as a universal history. See RIBICHINI 1999, 152.

ture, brilliantly analyzed by Bickerman in his article on *Origines Gentium*.⁵³ At the same time, Philo was a polymath, writing *Concerning the Acquisition and Selection of Books* (T1). Were these books only Semitic? If Philo's Herennius Severus was the same as the T. Herennius Severus, discussed above, it is tempting to conclude that Philo, as the author of *Concerning the Acquisition and Selection of Books*, advised T. Herennius Severus about acquisitions for his library. But T. Herennius Severus, if his preferences were those of the Roman upper classes, would have wanted Greek books, as evidence of his good taste and belonging to the world of higher culture, not Phoenician ones. Furthermore, even if Philo knew some Phoenician, it is virtually certain that T. Herennius Severus did not. Would he want these "barbaric" works in his library? Another encyclopedic effort was *Concerning Cities and the Famous Men each of them Produced* (T1, 4; F 15-18). Even the few fragments preserved from *Concerning the Acquisition and Selection of Books*, and the larger number of fragments from *Concerning Cities and the Famous Men each of them Produced*, make it clear that these works covered the larger Greco-Roman world, and were not exclusively focused on Phoenicia and/or the Middle East. And all that from a man who insisted that the Greek accounts of the past were full of contradictions and composed by authors more concerned with polemics than with the truth.

This brief introduction to the paradoxes presented by Philo helps explain the long and convoluted course of the history of scholarship on his writings over the centuries. To begin with an example from antiquity, how is it that Philo was so highly regarded both by Porphyry and Eusebius that Eusebius introduced Philo (for his own evangelical purposes) by quoting Porphyry's praise of Philo and Sanchuniathon (F1.21)? Yet, Porphyry and Eusebius were two authors with starkly opposing confessional loyalties! How could Porphyry and Eusebius, a "pagan" and a Christian, both value Philo so highly? We would imagine that if Philo was good for either one he must have been anathema to the other.

However, things were not that simple. Philo, as I have been arguing, was much more complex and paradoxical. For Eusebius, as a Christian, Porphyry was "the author of the intrigue against us." Nevertheless, Eusebius could then use Porphyry's endorsement of Philo as a club to beat over the head of "pagans," since Philo was a Euhemerist and Euhemerism was taken by ancient Jews and Christians as a sign that the "pagans" themselves did not believe in

⁵³ BICKERMAN 1952. As I suggested, (BAUMGARTEN 2010, 287-290), Bickerman's article should be read as post-colonialist *avant la lettre*. See also FROMENTIN & GOTTELAND 2001.

the reality of their gods, that the “pagans” were really atheists.⁵⁴ Furthermore, the stories Philo told of the actions of his divinized humans were morally reprehensible. For Eusebius, this proved that the “pagan” gods were “not worthy of approval for their virtue... but were involved in the evil of depravity and complete wickedness (F 1.22).”⁵⁵

Porphyry, I suggest, focused on a different aspect of Philo’s work, one that is relatively minor in the fragments as we know them, but attested nonetheless – his opposition to the Jews (F9).⁵⁶ Perhaps what mattered to Porphyry was Philo’s disparaging narrative of Jewish History which went back to Sanchuniathon and even further back to Hierombalos, priest of Ieuo, whose work was accepted as correct by Abibalos king of Beirut (F1.21), all of these living at times before the Trojan War and approaching those of Moses. In offering an ancient, alternative, and unfriendly version of Jewish History, Philo would have served Porphyry’s anti-Christian purposes well, since attacks against the Jews and critiques of their tradition were part of the anti-Christian polemic offered by “pagan” authors, such as by Celsus (when writing in his own name).⁵⁷ The assumption that Philo’s critique of the Jews was much more extensive and damning than we can learn from the surviving fragments is supported by Josephus’ comment that in proving the antiquity of the Jews he will draw on Phoenician sources, especially Tyrian ones, because Phoenicians, and Tyrians in particular, were notoriously known as the bitterest enemies of the Jews (*CAp* 1.70). Therefore, by implication, for Josephus’ purposes, one cannot dismiss these Phoenician/Tyrian sources as Jewish forgeries or accuse them of

⁵⁴ BAUMGARTEN 1981, 53-54, 66; BAUMGARTEN 1996, 103, n. 39.

⁵⁵ Along similar lines, the Rabbis praised Oenomaus of Gadara (a very minor figure by our standards) as the greatest philosopher among the nations of the world, *GenR* 734. What Oenomaus did to earn this praise was not specified. The fragments of Oenomaus contain a critique of Greek religion, and of oracles in particular. Perhaps Oenomaus was praised by the Rabbis because of his gibes against gods and oracles: here was an insider who spilled the beans and told the truth about the falsity of oracular cults. It was not an accident that the emperor Julian accused Oenomaus of impiety, *Or.* 6.199A, 209B-C, 212A. According to Julian, Oenomaus’ aim was

To do away with all reverence for the gods, to bring dishonor on all human wisdom, to trample on all law that can be identified with honor and justice, and more than this, to trample on those laws which have been, as it were, engraved on our souls by the gods, and have impelled us to believe without teaching that the divine exists, and to direct our eyes to it and to yearn towards it; for our souls are disposed towards it as eyes towards the light (209B-C).

Those aspects of Oenomaus’ work which Julian found most reprehensible would have been music to Rabbinic ears. On Oenomaus see further SARTRE 2007, 285.

⁵⁶ BAUMGARTEN 1981, 35-36. These unfavorable comparisons may have included Phoenician accounts of child sacrifice, where the child was really offered up, with the Biblical *akeda*, which was only a test at the end of which Isaac was saved. Phoenicians might well ask: who were the true knights of faith, the Phoenician fathers who offered their sons or Abraham? BAUMGARTEN 1981, 250.

⁵⁷ BAUMGARTEN 1990, 41-42.

a pro-Jewish bias, as Philo did concerning Hecataeus/Ps.-Hecataeus (F9). The Phoenician/Tyrian sources to which Josephus referred have not survived, but his comment is testimony to the existence of a Phoenician/Tyrian anti-Jewish literature, in which Philo's comments on the Jews fit well.

To turn to modern times, since Scaliger in 1583, scholarship now covers four hundred thirty years of twists and turns in response to scholarly fashions, ideological, and theological shifts. More recently, an important aspect of the study of Philo was the response (woefully exaggerated at times) to new discoveries of ancient near eastern literature. How is it possible that Philo has been portrayed in so many different ways over the centuries, as demonstrated by Corinne Bonnet?⁵⁸ It is not only that Philo was (and in some ways continues to be, even today), as dubbed by Bonnet, *testis unus*.⁵⁹ Perhaps part of the answer goes back to the fact that we have so many different Philos from among whom to choose. Which of the many faces he showed do we elect to frame in the center? The plurality of Philos is not only a matter, as I once thought, of his efforts at reconciling, coordinating, and systematizing the different traditions of each city.⁶⁰ The issue is much deeper and touches to what seems to us as the core. To name one more example, do we prefer Philo the Euhemerist,⁶¹ whose work conformed to the canons of Euhemeristic historiography, who fought the battle of the Euhemerists against the allegorizers and physiologizers of Greco-Roman culture of his day,⁶² or Philo who narrated a Phoenician version of the ancient near eastern trope of "kingship in heaven?"⁶³ Yet, in the end, both these Philos were the same person.

⁵⁸ BONNET 2010.

⁵⁹ See also RIBICHINI 1999, 150, on Philo as *quasi unico*.

⁶⁰ BAUMGARTEN 1981, 267.

⁶¹ One should note that at least in the extant fragments Philo never mentioned Euhemerus. His focus was on the great sources of old – Taautos, Hierombalos, Abibalos, Sanchuniathon and company. Perhaps to have appealed to Euhemerus would have been a concession on Philo's part that the guiding principle of his work was not the ancient sources he supposedly rediscovered and translated but a "modern" author. We modern scholars are the ones who make Philo into a Euhemerist. However, in light of Philo's conformity with the canons of Euhemeristic historiography this conclusion seems fully justified.

⁶² BAUMGARTEN 1981, 243; BAUMGARTEN 1996. On this paradoxical aspect of Philo see also RIBICHINI 1999, 151.

⁶³ BAUMGARTEN 1981, 235-242.

As noted at the outset, Rostovtzeff and Bickerman were among the first scholars to discuss the implications of the meeting of East and West in the light of the new archaeological and epigraphic evidence available as a result of excavations in the East, Dura in particular. While their articles are “old” scholarship, they are also “classics of scholarship,” well worth reading even though they were written some seventy years ago and remain relatively unknown. Both articles in *Renaissance* are far from the most recent “cutting edge” contributions to the topic and Rostovtzeff’s conclusions have been challenged by both contemporary and more recent evaluations of the evidence (above, 289-291).

Nevertheless, I would also argue that these articles by Rostovtzeff and Bickerman have a quality best epitomized by Bickerman’s concluding remarks in his *Renaissance* review analyzed above. Commenting on Rostovtzeff’s *SEHHW*, Bickerman wrote: “*c’est un livre qui fait penser. Et je ne connais de meilleur éloge qu’on puisse décerner à un livre ou à un auteur.*”⁶⁴ Even today, decades after they were written, and despite so many new contributions to the topic, these articles force the reader to think.

For my purposes, the arguments put forward by Rostovtzeff and Bickerman concerning the orientalization of the West and the hellenization of the East, which provoked changes on both sides and caused a “new type of person,” *sui generis*, to emerge, provide a background against which the contradictions and paradoxes we may find in Philo of Byblos recede.⁶⁵ His work is no longer so enigmatic.⁶⁶ Philo may remain *testis unus* and *sui generis*, but that is only an accident of preservation. As a Hellenized oriental living among orientalized Greco-Romans, and participating in his own way in both cultures, Philo, as Rostovtzeff and Bickerman help teach us, was not nearly as anomalous as we might classify him.⁶⁷ We wish we knew more about the members of his

⁶⁴ BICKERMAN 1944, 392.

⁶⁵ Compare the conclusion, which complements my argument here, offered by BONNET 2010, 136: *le double ancrage de Philo, dans une tradition phénicienne manifestement séculaire, dont il est à la fois le seul et le dernier témoin, et dans l’air du temps, celui d’un « empire gréco-romain » qui englobe l’orient, n’est plus évalué comme une difficulté insurmontable, une impasse historique et historiographique, qui obligerait l’historien à choisir, mais plutôt comme une richesse heuristique.*

⁶⁶ MILLAR 1993, 277.

⁶⁷ Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929) said of Gershom Scholem (1897-1982) that he came home as a Jew, but came home alone. See MYERS 1995, 153. One might be tempted to say the same of Philo of Byblos as a Phoenician. However, despite the lack of explicit extensive evidence to support this conclusion, as a result of which Philo of Byblos will always remain something of *testis unus*, I would argue that Philo of Byblos was far from as alone as we might think in his “Phoenician” way of life

circle, such as Hermippos of Beirut, Paul of Tyre, or Herodian of Alexandria, but we should expect them to have been little different than Philo of Byblos. For all Philo's opposition to Greek culture, an opposition that we may presume his friends shared, they were all full-fledged participants in a new world in which East and West had come together from both sides towards the middle to create a new cultural complex. Our knowledge of Philo and his friends is very limited, which makes Philo, in particular, seem unique. A more careful reading of the ancient evidence, however, turns Philo and his circle into more typical representatives of an important cultural trend of their times. They are examples of a solution to what Rostovtzeff identified in the passage quoted at the beginning of this article as "*le grand problème, le problème éternel, celui de la symbiose et de l'interpénétration de la civilisation occidentale, c'est-à-dire grecque, et de la culture orientale dans le Proche Orient.*"

v

This essay is appearing in a volume in honor of a friend of long-standing, Prof. Ranon Katzoff. We have been friends since he came as a graduate student to Columbia, including a year of intense activity in Yavneh,⁶⁸ through many years as colleagues at Bar Ilan. In his research, while placing the ancient Jews firmly in the Greco-Roman world, unlike Feuchtwanger's Josephus, in the epigraph of this article, he has emphasized Jewish difference. If this work has one outstanding quality it is the very trait noted by Bickerman above, in praise of Rostovtzeff's *SEHHW*: *c'est un livre qui fait penser. Et je ne connais de meilleur éloge qu'on puisse décerner à un livre ou à un auteur.* To take only two examples closer to my own areas of interest, Ranon has forced us to think longer and harder about the relationship between Jewish law, as we know it from Rabbinic sources, and the legal traditions lying behind the Yadin papyri.⁶⁹ He has raised the puzzle of how, contrary to our expectations, Rabbinic traditions associated with R. Eliezer appear in sources concerning the Jews of Rome.⁷⁰ It is in appreciation of that aspect of Ranon's contributions that I have organized this article around the work of two outstanding scholars of an earlier generation who regularly forced (and still force) us all to think, and to the analysis of a paradoxical ancient source that also shares that same quality.

and identity for his time.

⁶⁸ See now KRAUT 2011.

⁶⁹ I cite only the most recent of many articles: KATZOFF 2007, 545-575.

⁷⁰ KATZOFF 2008, 306-319.

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