TEMPLE IDEOLOGY IN THE WRITINGS OF JEWISH ALEXANDRIA

by

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(Under the Direction of David S. Williams)

ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to demonstrate the ways in which Philo and the writers of 3 Maccabees, the Letter of Aristeas and the Wisdom of Solomon used the tools of Greek philosophy and Jewish culture. After a summary of the social and literary relationship of the Alexandrian community to Jerusalem and the Temple there, a close reading of the four authors' works reveals the ways which the idea of Temple ties the Jews to their brethren in Palestine and to the Greek world which surrounded them.

INDEX WORDS: Alexandria, Judaism, Temple, Jerusalem, 3 Maccabees, Philo, Aristeas, Wisdom of Solomon, Platonism, Stoicism

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DEDICATION

To J. May this be worthy of your faith in me.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Temple at Jerusalem had a long and intriguing history over the traditional millennium of its existence. Constructed according to tradition by Solomon in 960 B.C.E. Using an influx of gifts from neighboring countries, it was sacked and destroyed in 586 B.C.E. by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. It was rebuilt by 515 B.C.E. under the direction of Cyrus, a shell of its former self, while prophets who proclaimed its superior glory over its predecessor dealt with others who questioned the legitimacy of the Temple and its priests. It was desecrated by Antiochus IV, restored by Simon of the Hasmonean dynasty, and expanded by the Herodian lineage before being destroyed again in 70 C.E.. It has remained the object of theological reflection even long after its destruction, both for the Jewish community and for Christians who adapted its language and symbolism for their own hopes.

For many of the Jews who remained in Eretz Yisrael after the reconstruction of the Temple, the structure was often a source of contention. Various groups within the Jewish community argued about the proper priestly lineage or even the role of the temple in Jewish life. Some of these groups repudiated the whole institution as corrupt, waiting for heaven to restore the fullness while practicing for when that day came, while others worked within the sacrificial cycle and hoping for a future when these questions would be resolved one way or another. However, the Temple itself provided a basis for communal identity—one that would provoke them to violence in its defense, if need be.

Away from Israel, however, those sorts of debates never emerged. Though the Jewish communities in the major cities of the Greco-Roman era did contribute to Jerusalem through monetary gifts, the Temple was not a substantial part of their theology. In time, however, many of these communities started crafting ways of reimagining the Temple in light of their social circumstances. These new visions drew upon the philosophical and cultural resources of their cities, and attempted in the absence of a corporeal Temple to evoke an ideal version.

This paper will examine the views of a subset of the greater Jewish community who lived in Alexandria between the time of the Ptolemies and the beginning of the Roman Empire (for the sake of the paper, roughly 200 B.C.E. to 100 C.E.). The aim of this paper is to bring together the evidence that we have from the Jewish community in Alexandria and determine how some of its members formed their constructs of the significance and communal importance of the Temple. Though the voices are few, there are many insights to be gleaned from their struggle with a theme which was at once both germane to their tradition and far removed from their personal experience. Such insights might be useful to understand both how religious symbols can transform over time and how Diaspora communities saw themselves relative to their Palestinian colleagues.

The importance of the Temple in Palestine.

J.D.G. Dunn classifies three ways in which the Temple was important to second-Temple Judaism. Though he specifically has Palestinian Judaism in mind, these categories will also find parallels in the treatment of the subject in Alexandrian literature, and thus it would help to outline them here.

1) The Temple was a political center, and as such the reason for Judaea's existence. The land which was allotted to Judaea during the Hellenistic and Roman empires was precisely that land that was necessary to maintain the operation of the Temple cult, especially for sacrifices. As a consequence, the Temple was often the background to the battle for political power both during and after the Maccabean revolt, and the office of the high priest often had a great deal of political influence within the Jewish state.[1] Even after the possession of Palestine by Pompey and his army in 63 B.C.E., the priesthood and Temple still maintained political influence over the people, albeit in conjunction with Rome's authority. Interruption of religious ritual on Rome's part often sparked a riot or demonstration in return, to the point that the empire's stance toward the Jews was (with the exception of Caligula) to let them practice freely unless the Jews were actively threatening Roman rule.[2].
2) The economic importance of the Temple also contributed to the cohesion of Diaspora and Palestinian Judaism. One of the unifying features of Judaism during this period, the half-shekel tax, brought resources from all over the empire to one central location. In addition, the three main feasts of the faith brought tens of thousands of people to Jerusalem, with crops and money, each year. Finally, Herod's expansion project for the Temple grounds provided labor for thousands of people for close to fifty years, until 68 C.E. According to Dunn, the relative isolation of Jerusalem from any trade or travel route only heightened the importance of the Temple grounds as a center for commercial activity.

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[1] Even Matthias and his family claimed priestly authority. For the relationship between the religious and political views in Palestine, see Mendels, *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism,* 107-160.

[2] Mendels 301.

3) Finally, Dunn conceives of the Temple as a religious area, a center for devotion and sacrifice for the Jews, and thus a unifying symbol. The period from the destruction of the first Temple produced quite a bit of literature which commemorates or mourns the Temple, and solidifies Jewish identity with the Temple. Even in sects which denied the authority of the Temple at Jerusalem (most notably the Essenes at Qumran and certain movements within the Christian community, but perhaps also the practitioners at Heliopolis and Elephantine), the idea of the Temple and proper sacrifice as a sign of Israel's distinctiveness was maintained.[3]

The third point above appears to have carried over to Diaspora understandings of the Temple as well, where individual sacrifice was not a viable option, but envoys were still sent each year with goods representing the fruits and taxes for an entire population. One can perhaps also see this situation reflected in the structure of synagogue practice in Alexandria and elsewhere – the emulation of certain functions, including prayer and worship, which would be ideally practiced at the Temple grounds in Jerusalem.[4]

The overlap in these categories is unavoidable, especially given the mindset of the Hellenistic era. Political power and religious power were often one and the same, especially in the Levant. Priests often spoke for the people and often had full political power; the assimilation of the high priesthood into the royal family in the case of the Hasmonean dynasty appears to be rather typical of power situations (if not necessarily in terms of full autonomy) throughout the Near East politically.

Alexandrian Judaism

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[3] Dunn, *The Parting of the Ways*, 42-46.

[4] The inability to go to the Temple to worship does not necessarily mean that the Diaspora communities thought of themselves as second-rate Jews. See Schwartz, "Temple or City," 118-9.

Judaism in Alexandria was as old as Alexandria itself; many of the first settlers in the city when Alexander founded it in 334 B.C.E. were soldiers with Jewish affiliation.[5] The primary cause for its Jewish population influx, however, was the policy of Ptolemy I Soter (ruler 305-285 B.C.E.), who founded the Ptolemaic dynasty after Alexander's death. His expansion policies into Syria included the city of Jerusalem, which he took in approximately 301 B.C.E. amidst constant warfare against the Seleucids. This paved the way for Judaean migration to Alexandria. The Letter of Aristeas provides a rather inflated view of the number of Jews in Egypt because of the policies of Soter; vv. 12-27 indicate that he moved "no less than one hundred thousand" Jews from Syria and enslaved all who could not serve as soldiers. Though there were probably a large number of Jews brought into Egypt through warfare, the number itself seems incredible. Nevertheless, there is evidence in the Zeno papyri for the presence of slaves in Egypt, including a Jewish one, and certainly evidence enough for the presence of Jewish soldiers and officers throughout Egypt from the second century on. There was conceivably another reason that Jews would seek to move to Alexandria: financial opportunities that were unavailable in Syria. Josephus speaks of Jews being "drawn by the excellence of the country and the prodigality of Ptolemy"[6].

In any case, by the time of Ptolemy II, when Manetho composed his Egyptian history, there were presumably enough Jews in Egypt to impress upon him the knowledge of the Exodus narrative and make the enterprise meaningful.[7] Our knowledge of the historical situation in Alexandria unfortunately drops at this point until either the time of Ptolemy IV Philopator (if 3

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5 This is not to give credence to Josephus' account in *War* II.487 or *Apion* II.35, where the Jews were given permission by Alexander to settle the city on equal footing to the Greeks.

6 *Ant.* 12:9

7 Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, 273

Maccabees' narrative of the drunken elephants does have a historic core) or VI Philometer and the construction of the Oniad Temple if it (does not).[8]

Beyond that, our knowledge of the Alexandrian community in the Hellenistic era is spotty. Though Josephus provides a great deal of information about Onias IV, the son of the high priest deposed by Jason, and his role in Egyptian politics, as well as those troops who served under him in Leontopolis, the knowledge of Alexandria's Jews is rather slim.

There is one story that arises because of Onias' decisions, however, which does affect the Jews *en masse*. Presumably the next major episode that can be reconstructed is in the struggle between Cleopatra II and Ptolemy VIII Eugeretes after Philometer, her husband and his brother, had died. Onias IV, a general over a contingent of Jews in Leontopolis, sided with Cleopatra, who eventually was defeated. Josephus recounts a story of how the Jews were then threatened to be crushed by an elephant but were saved through the intervention of his mistress Ithaca/Irene.

The high status of Onias IV was passed down to his sons Helkiah and Hananiah, who were recounted as having remained loyal to Cleopatra III in her struggle against Ptolemy IX Lathyrus, as well as advising her not to overrun the Hasmonean dynasty during the reign of Janneus.[9]

A couple of later episodes recounted by Josephus seem to suggest that the Egyptian Jews of the armies would obey the authority of the high priest above and beyond their own government. In *Antiquities* XIV:131, Josephus recounts a narrative wherein the Romans, seeking to restore Ptolemy XI Auletes to his throne in 55 B.C.E., moved past the Jews at Pelusium by appealing to their friendship with Antipater. Seven years later, Antipater himself, seeking to move through Pelusium to Memphis to help support Julius Caesar, moved past them

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8 Ibid 275
9 Ibid 283

by appealing to his letter of friendship from Hyrcanus II, the high priest, and even got them to give the army some of their own supplies.

Before going on to the Roman section of Alexandrian history, a few words should be said concerning Onias' temple, established while Onias IV was in exile from Jerusalem. Scholars and sources, including contradictory accounts in Josephus' work, say markedly different things about the purpose of Onias' temple. In any case, it might be safe to say that Onias IV was the one who constructed the temple, following Josephus' *Antiquities* and *2 Maccabees* and against Josephus' *War*. The temple itself, established in Leontopolis on the ruins of a temple dedicated to Bast, was designed to emulate Jewish practices. The temple itself is not mentioned in any works from Alexandria but only in Josephus' writings; it stands to reason, then, that the temple itself did not play a great role in Egyptian Judaism. It might well be that the main purpose of the temple was an attempt to perpetuate the lawful priestly lineage and to provide the Ptolemies with a replacement for the Seleucid-approved high priests should they have retained Syria.[10] In any case, there is nothing indicating that the temple itself was important to Alexandrian or Egyptian Judaism as a whole.

By the time of the Roman occupation of Alexandria in 30 B.C.E., the number of Jews in the city had grown substantially since its founding. The Jewish community was not isolated (by the time of Philo, at least) to a particular location in the city. Though Jews were mainly living in two of the five quarters of the city, synagogues could be found scattered throughout the city.[11] If the community was not isolated, neither was it monolithic in regards to the rights of the citizenry. The development of the Alexandrian *polis* was such that only those who lived in the city from early on were given full rights as citizens, so long as they were registered with a *demos* or

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[10] Ibid 280-1.
[11] *Gaium* 132.

subunit. As the influx of immigrants grew, however, the city decided to stop admission to the *demos* and thus prevented the growth of the citizenry. This created a sort of three-tiered class hierarchy, in which only a small number of people who could root themselves in a *demos* or possessed hereditary land allotments, including a number of Jews, could consider themselves "Alexandrians," with the remainder being categorized by their original nationality.[12] In response, the Jews of the city organized themselves into a politeuma, headed by an ethnarch in the Hellenistic period and then a gerousia in the Roman, within which they had significant autonomy and the ability to enforce their own laws in disputes between other Jews.[13] Within the Jewish population, this created a split between those who retained their rights and those excluded from public discourse. There would be attempts to try to bridge this gap in the Roman period, as 3 Maccabees and some of the writings of Philo show.[14] As Greek-speaking non-Egyptians, however, all the Jews ranked within the city's hierarchy above the natives of the land.

Following the Roman occupation of Alexandria, little of this social structure would change in name. The relative autonomy of the *politeuma* would be compromised, however, as the Roman authorities set forth policies to try to eliminate any ambiguity in the social structure. Ambiguity was what preserved the well-being of quite a number of Jews. Except for a small minority of the Jews, however, most of the people were subjected to the same status as the native Egyptian population.

This concludes our brief summary of the situations which gave rise to the texts under examination. As we shall see in the analysis of each book we take up, the view of Temple and the political situation cannot be understood separately.

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[12] Bickerman, *Jews in the Greek Age,* 87-8.

[13] Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 114-5. *Ant.* 14.7.2.

[14] Though my discussion of 3 Maccabees will bring this discussion to the forefront, as it does have bearings on the relationship between the *politeuma* and the Temple, the particular documents by Philo – *Legatio ad Gaium* and *In Flaccum* - will not be mentioned except in passing.

Worship

The primary structure for worship in the Diaspora appears to have been the synagogue. Though in no way was worship in the Temple broken off, for utilitarian purposes the communities in Diaspora chose to gather in structures referred to in the literature as synagogues or proseuche ("prayer houses") for social and religious purposes. Beyond that, however, knowledge about the origins of the synagogue is unknown and probably unknowable.[15] The advent of the assemblies in Egypt date back to approximately the middle of the third century B.C.E., as marked by the Schedia and Arsinoe finds. Overall we know of the existence of about fifteen assemblies from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt.

What happened in synagogue meetings in Alexandria is relatively unknown. It seems, however, that the Temple was not completely replaced by what was going on in the synagogue meetings, but was rather supplemented, taking into itself roles of religious life which had no strict function in the Temple service. Prayer, for example, though attested to in 2 Chronicles and 2 Kings, is shown to be associated with, but in no way necessary to, sacrifice. Until the destruction in 70 C.E., the primary focus of Temple worship appears to be sacrificial.[16]

The synagogues appear to have become the places where communal prayer was focused, both in Diaspora and in Palestine. They also presumably became the place for the study of Tanakh and for community gatherings, and at least in Alexandria the extensive synagogue system became a network for Jewish government. Though there appears to be no explicitly religious

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[15] Cohen, "The Temple and the Synagogue," 298.

[16] This is not saying that no one ever prayed at the Temple during the second-Temple period; Josephus for example in *Ant.* 4.8.13 describes a tradition that Palestinians recited the Shema twice a day for thanksgiving. As well, rabbinic testimony in m. Ta'am 4:2-3 describes the recitation of biblical passages and prayers during the Tamid; the historicity, however, appears to be suspect.

meaning given to the buildings themselves, the centers often functioned in the Egyptian centers as community grounds.

Looking at literature from Alexandria, however, one is hard-pressed to find any information on the synagogue. Philo only mentions the synagogue twice in passing, once each in *Ad Gaium* and *In Flaccum*, describing their destruction in the Jewish pogram. We also find them mentioned once each in 3 Maccabees and Pseudo-Philo.[17] Otherwise, there appears to be nothing extant about their existence. S.J.D. Cohen offers an interesting argument as to why this is the case, stating that "the multiplicity of synagogues, like the multiplicity of *bamot* in the first Temple period and the multiplicity of sects in the second, represents the breakdown of unity and unanimity, the dissolution of Judaism's claim to truth."[18] To talk about Judaism apart from its historical and religious grounding in the Temple and the scriptures is to undermine its conceptual unity. In other words, though one can speak of Jewish communities all over the world, one dare not speak of multiple Judaisms, even if the evidence demonstrates that this would have been a useful way to talk about them.

Should we then look at a single view of the Temple in Alexandrian Jewish literature? Any attempt might well be for naught. Presumably, with a fairly large number of synagogues in Alexandria, study and discussion of the Tanakh and other literature will have produced differing perspectives, which is precisely what we end up seeing. However, these perspectives were rooted in a single tradition which restricted complete freedom of interpretation and provided a ground for belief and community. I believe this is what we end up seeing when one reads the literature – an attempt to found Judaism on those tenets which are generally accessible to all

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[17] Biblical Antiquities 11:8
[18] Cohen 313.

those who practice the faith. The Temple, the scriptures, and the believing community are each in their own ways honored; the ideal relationships between the three, however, are up for review.

It is important to maintain the perspective that the Alexandrian community did not write the literature which came from it, but rather individuals whose political and religious ideals and reasons for writing were ultimately their own. To be sure, they may *reflect* community interests, and presumably had an audience of some kind. The audience of Philo's letters, for example, might not see anything useful in 3 Maccabees, and vice versa. But, considering that at least most (and possibly all) of the Alexandrian religious texts were composed presumably in the early Roman or late Ptolemaic period, one can see several attempts to grapple with these issues in about the same place and time.

Temple Ideology

Each of the authors I will be discussing below conceives of a Judaism, as I will hope to demonstrate, which works within the framework of the biblical narrative and adapts it to a specific historical situation where the traditional meanings of symbols are stretched and transformed. In this case, the specific symbol studied will be the Temple, a structure which has a great deal of history behind it but had very little practical influence on the life of the average Alexandrian Jew. Without this significance – without the particular brand of politicking that surrounded the sects in Palestine – and in the face of social pressures to conform to Hellenism while preserving their Jewishness, what would the concept and significance of the idea of the Temple look like?

One fundamental question needs to be raised: when one speaks of Temple ideology, what does one mean? Should a discussion be limited to the "reality" which the Temple structure itself indicates, the myth in which an understanding is rooted? Or can talk about the ideal Temple be separated from the physical version and its economic and cultural importance?

The Alexandrian communities, as isolated as they were for the most part from everyday affairs in Jerusalem, and as immersed in both the Septuagint and the prevailing philosophies of Platonism and Stoicism as they were had the opportunity to craft for themselves a new vision of both the structure and the symbolism behind the Temple. Though it still plays a sort of economic purpose in the community's life through the Temple tax, the specific religious meaning appears to shift from a matter which is central to the community's self-perception to a smaller part of a greater Alexandrian narrative.

The Temple in early Jewish literature

Reinterpretation of the significance of the Temple is about as old as Judaism itself. The author of Trito-Isaiah, for example, writes that "Heaven is my throne, and earth my footstool" and proceeds to condemn those who insist that the covenant requires sacrifice.[19] Against the narrative of the Temple encouraged by Ezra-Nehemiah and the prophets Zechariah, Haggai and Malachi, 3 Isaiah provides a view of the importance of Jerusalem and the Temple which is radically inclusive for the entirety of the Jewish community, whether or not they are inside the emerging borders of Yehud.

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[19] Isaiah 66

A relatively small amount of the literature that follows the fall of the first Temple explicitly tries to deal with a response to the calamity. The book of Tobit, probably composed sometime in the second century B.C.E., demonstrates a view of the Temple that bridges together the ideal of devotion to the Temple and the reality of the covenant relationship in a time and place where the Temple does not exist. Tobit begins with the title character's avoidance of idolatry, risking his life to travel to Jerusalem and its Temple from the northern kingdom. Once Temple worship is no longer an option, however, the ground for Jewish identity transferred to familial and tribal welfare. The shift to ethics and caring for fellow Jews, though, even to risking one's life to bury Jewish dead, provided a distinctly Jewish – but not necessarily Diasporan – way of coping with the loss of the Temple.

Later on in the history of Judaism, the evaluation of Jerusalem and the Temple took a more varied tone. One can easily trace this in the texts that emerged from Palestine in the first few centuries before the Temple's destruction. One need only look at the writings of the Essene and Qumran communities, Josephus, and the views represented by the writings of the nascent Christian communities to demonstrate the wide variety of stances the various groups in and around Jerusalem could take concerning its importance.[20] After the destruction of the Temple, the earliest rabbinic writings and the Jewish apocalypses provide more of a view as to the *symbolic* importance of the structure.

Yet once one leaves Palestine, the overall mentions of the Temple cult as a whole seem to almost vanish. A collection of letters from Egyptian Jews does contain a number of references to priests, but those references almost always seem to refer to Ptolemaic high priests. There is a

[20] The speech of Stephen in Acts 4 proves to be especially useful here in demonstrating a view of the Temple which in many ways is more radical than even the Qumran separatists.

mention about Jerusalem in the Zenon papyri, but its contents are useless to us for our present purposes, as it is merely a list of Palestinian cities to which wheat flour was delivered.[21]

Other pieces of literature do not demonstrate too much more than this. The fourth Sibylline oracle expounds upon the uselessness of trapping God in a temple, but otherwise gives no support to one side or another.[22] Similar sentiments which mention but downplay the Temple can be found in the Diaspora writings of Hecataeus, Pseudo-Hecataeus through Josephus, and arguably 2 Maccabees.[23]

The fact that there is not much evidence of the sectarian squabbles that marked the relations among the major sects in Palestine indicates a lack of interest in the topic. We turn now to examine how a few of the major writers in Alexandria from the second century B.C.E. to the early first century C.E. handled the issue.

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[21] *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, I.3a

[22] Against Schwartz 116, I don't think that the passage necessarily demonstrates a gladness for the Temple structure to be eliminated; if anything, the descriptions more resonate with Deutero-Isaiah's mockery of Gods made by hands than a universal contention with all structures. The fact that no sense of praise appears in vv. 115-125 indicates, at least to me, a sort of neutrality towards the Temple structure – a viewpoint which would be feasible in the case of a Diaspora author.

[23] Schwartz 121-126.

CHAPTER 2

:PHILO

We know very little about the life of Philo Judeus (20 B.C.E. - 50 C.E.); the only detail we can put a date on is his involvement in the embassy to Rome in 40 C.E., at which time, as he describes in the beginning of *Legatio ad Gaium*, he was already an old man. His role in Alexandrian society was high enough; his father was a Roman citizen, evidently of a long line.[24] As such, he and his brother Alexander the alabarch were able to hold a rather prestigious place in Alexandrian society. It is clear that he had a great deal of learning, was presumably brought up with an education through the gymnasium, and had a great deal of time and energy for political affairs. He had as well a rather mystical and philosophical bent to his inner life, as evidenced in a few rare autobiographical passages.

Philo's extant writings fall into several categories. His historical texts, *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium*, provide a glimpse into the political situation of the Jews under the prefect Aulus Avilius Flaccus, who oversaw the persecution and massacre of Alexandria's Jews in 38 C.E..

The majority of his extant writings focus on either the interpretation of Torah or on pure philosophy. In the former category, divisions can be made between those writings which focus more on gentile interests (*De Opificio, De Abrahamo, De Josepho, De Specialibus Legibus, De Virtutibus, De Praemiis* and *De Exsecrationibus*) and those which assume an in-depth knowledge of the law and thus would seem to assume a Jewish audience. His allegorical works, such as *De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini, De Gigantibus, De Agricultura, De Plantatione, De Ebriete, De*

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[24] Goodenough, *Introduction to Philo*, 2-3.

Sobrietate, and several others, focus on a less literal, more spiritual interpretation of biblical narratives to edify the educated Jewish readers.

Philo's philosophical texts include *De Aeternitate Mundi, De Animalibus, De Providentia,* and *Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit*. Each of these texts is rooted in well-known philosophical quandaries of the period.[25]

Philo and the Temple

Philo's writings are focused on the reinterpretation of Tanakh for a world very unlike the Judaism from which the texts originally emerged. As a member of the upper crust of Alexandrian society and deeply steeped in its traditions, Philo had the opportunity to formulate a thorough reinterpretation of Torah for his age and make the basic message communicable both to interested gentile intellectuals and fellow Jews who sought a relevant understanding of a law whose precepts were often obscure or inapplicable in their current situation.

In this light, the writings of Philo concerning Jerusalem, the Temple, and its cult seem to indicate a relatively new style of Temple critique. Though he did not consider the Temple unnecessary, and offered sacrifices and prayers there at least once,[26] he considered the Temple to have greater cosmic significance than its modest appearance would suggest. He used the teachings of Stoicism and Platonism to express the fundamental truths of Judaism to a culture largely unacquainted with Torah. . The truth toward which Moses and the prophets pointed was primarily a spiritual truth, but simultaneously required an earthly counterpart to stir people to virtue.

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[25] Mondésert, "Philo of Alexandria," 890.
[26] *De providentia* 2:64

There does not seem to be a proselytizing emphasis in his writings, however. There is no claim that men should ever become Jewish in order to become virtuous. The claim is made, however, that Judaism as a revealed religion is a more perfect expression of nature than the laws of the city-states, and that people would come closer to the philosophical ideal if they (properly) understood the Torah.

Philo's writings, therefore, almost never treat the subject matter in a strictly literal manner, though they might contain elements of literal interpretation. Even those writings which deal primarily with historical events, *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium*, portray deliberately meaningful, pro-Jewish interpretations of the events which are ultimately consistent with Philo's apologetic emphasis. Otherwise, his writings tend to focus on interpretation of scripture, even in lieu of events and structures which contemporarily existed – Judaea, Jerusalem, and the Temple mount.

Concerning Jerusalem, it is worth noting that the one place in Philo's writings in which it is mentioned by name, *De Somniis* 2:250-51, seems to indicate that Jerusalem is not the dwelling place of God:

> But that which is called by the Hebrews the city of God is Jerusalem, which name being [allegorically] interpreted means, "the sight of peace." So they do not look for the city of the living God in the region of the earth, for it is not made of wood or of stone, but seek it in the soul...since where could any find a more venerable and holy abode for God amid all existing things, than the mind fond of contemplation...?

D.R. Schwartz regards this as a denial that the Temple could be physical, but rather must be wholly spiritual.[27] Sarah Pearce, against Aryeh Kasher and Maren Niehoff, argues that this is a

[27] Schwartz 120.

strong indication that Philo did not hold any allegiance to Jerusalem above Alexandria, though he did venerate the Temple, as we will explore later in this section.[28]

In any case, Philo's allusions to Jerusalem in *In Flaccum* 46 and *Legatio* 281-2, which label the holy city as a metropolis and other Jewish communities as colonies, need not mean that Philo would have advocated any sort of ultimate allegiance to Jerusalem over Alexandria. As Joseph Meleze-Mordrzejewski argues (and Pearce agrees), referring to Jerusalem and other communities in that sort of relationship would have had the advantage of placing the Diaspora in terms of Greek expansion. Instead of a tragedy as it had been interpreted from Deuteronomy on, it becomes intentional, dignified, another way of aligning Judaism with Hellenistic political philosophy.[29] It is safe to say, therefore, that Jerusalem as the mother city, rather than as the home of the Temple, did not have a great deal of attraction for Philo.

Indeed, the Temple receives a great deal more attention than the four lines given to the city—more than enough to make Philo the greatest source by far concerning Alexandrian views of the Temple. The amount of information he provides in his writings, from its spiritual significance to the various types of sacrifices to various holidays to the nature of the high priest, is near staggering, and probably worthy of a book in its own right.[30] For the sake of brevity, most of the following commentary will focus on the nature of, and the Jewish community's relationship with, the Temple.

Concerning his interpretation of the Temple cult, Philo's chief concern is one which, to most educated Greeks of the period, Jewish or not, might have occurred naturally – the desire to imitate God. Insofar as one chooses to be virtuous, says Philo, one must set his or her course after what is already revealed in nature. According to Philo, the law as revealed by Moses is

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[28] Pearce, "Jerusalem as 'Mother-City'," 23-31

[29] Mordrzejewski, *Jew of Egypt*, 70, Pearce 33-34

[30] An excellent book has been written solely about Philo's views on worship, the first dedicated study of its kind: Jutta Leonhardt, *Jewish Worship in Philo of Alexandria* (Tübingen: Mohr, 2001).

perhaps the closest that any human has ever come in codifying everything which is virtuous, rational, and decent. While this law demonstrates the rational way that man should act, it also points the way to the physical structures and events which validate this practice, including the city of Jerusalem and the Temple cult. Philo's treatment of the Temple cult follows from his treatment of the law. He treats the Temple as symbolic of true worship without divorcing it from the actuality and need for physical worship.

Most of the information concerning the Temple in Philo is derived from his *De Specialibus Legibus*, which is primarily concerned with accessing the universal truth of Moses' revealed laws, especially those which seem most odious to Greek hearers, to demonstrate the utter rationality of Jewish law. The laws in the first book of the series deal primarily with circumcision and the existence of God before turning on to Temple rituals and their effectiveness.

> We ought to look upon the universal world as the highest and truest Temple of God, having for its most holy place that most sacred part of the essence of all living things, namely the heaven; and for ornaments, the stars; and for priests, the subordinate ministers of his power, namely, the angels, incorporeal souls, not beings compounded of irrational and rational natures, such as our bodies are, but such as have the irrational parts wholly cut out, being absolutely and wholly intellectual, pure reasonings, resembling the unit.[31]

As Jonathan Klawans notes, "this passage is characteristically dualistic [of Philo], even allegorical."[32] Each major structure and office in the earthly Temple is shown to have a counterpart in God's court which is completely rational rather than a mixture.

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[31] *De spec. leg*. I:66-7

[32] Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple,* 118.

Philo's analysis continues by holding that God "does not permit those who desire to perform sacrifice in their own houses to do so, but orders all men to rise up…and to come to this Temple."[33] This action stresses people's loyalties to God above even their home lands and families, lest their piety be suppressed by their familial ties. The passage to Jerusalem, he notes, allows men from all over the world to escape the troubles of this life and establish friendships with others based on "boldness and a desire to honour God" in both spirit and physical action.[34]

Philo then returns to the physical description of the Temple, stressing the comparison between the beauty of the outer portico and the splendor of the Most Holy Place. Though presumably Philo would have never seen the interior of the Temple, he is able to describe the Most Holy as "beautiful beyond description, as one may conjecture from what is now seen around on the outside" but is also at the same time invisible to all but the high priest.[35] Once a year, as the high priest enters the Temple grounds with coals and frankincense, the smoke which proceeds from the Most Holy prevents worshipers from entering or even seeing that most beautiful part.

The beauty of the exterior Temple grounds is such, though, that the building is described as in no way inferior to the mountains around the city, and is acclaimed by foreigners who travel there and find themselves amazed by the appearance compared to their own public shrines.[36] This beauty, though, is one of austerity, and thus because of the virtue of the law and observations from nature lacks any sort of grove or garden, which would serve to detract from the Temple's purpose, and to encourage piety, clarity, and rationality.[37]

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[33] *De spec. leg.* I.68

[34] Ibid I.69-70

[35] Ibid I.72. As the Jewish god is the one to whom all praise and service is due, it might be unmeet to consider him as the antitype of the high priest. However, Philo describes the high priest in De somniis II.185-9 as a intercessor between man and God who really becomes the people whom he represents in Yom Kippur.

[36] Ibid I.73

[37] Ibid I. 74-75

Philo now switches his emphasis from the aesthetic aspects of the Temple to its economic activity. The Temple's primary source of income, the first fruits of all men over twenty years of age, provides a real benefit to both the Temple institution and the givers. By their adherence to this law, the practitioners ransom themselves from the threat of slavery, disease, or other threats to well being. The population of each Jewish envoy from around the empire is represented only by the most commendable of men, who would ensure the delivery of the gifts and thus validate the hopes of the pious.[38]

Philo continues through the length of *De Specialibus Legibus* with an in-depth discussion on the necessity for purity in the high priesthood and the sacrifices which, though relevant to the Temple, only continue in the vein through which Philo has been leading his readers, demonstrating the ways in which the Temple functions recreate the fullness of the structure of the greater Temple, i.e., the created order under God. In each place, even the smallest bits of the Temple cult are shown to have cosmic significance, such as the twelve loaves demonstrating the natural division of the year by the equinoxes.[39]

In short, the Temple and its practices, in short, reflect and typify the greater cosmos in which the structure is established. By adherence to the dictates laid forth in the laws of Moses, one might, with or without an education in the gymnasium or even any knowledge of the philosophers, discover wisdom. The same allegorical treatment with which Philo handles the laws and the narrative from the creation to Moses' time in earlier treatises comes back to examine the Temple and discern within its practices a way toward deeper truths and coincidences with the cosmos. Thus, the Temple is shown to be as enduring and necessary as the law is in leading men to proper virtue, both in mind and in bodily practice.

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[38] Ibid I.78
[39] Ibid I.172

Philo and sacrifice

Philo's view of sacrifices follows directly from his view of the spiritualized Temple. The journey to Jerusalem is not merely for the sake of offering the whole sacrifice, but to demonstrate the purity of spirit of the traveler,

> for he who was not about to offer sacrifice in a pure and holy spirit would never endure to quit his country, and his friends, and relations, and emigrate into a distant land, but would be likely, being under the influence of a more powerful attraction than that towards piety, to continue attached to the society of his most intimate friends and relations as portions of himself, to which he was most closely attached.[40]

As Jutta Leonhardt notes, "the pilgrim moves from the familiar into the land of God, literally and metaphorically, and the driving force is his piety."[41] One may worship God from one's home, but ultimately faith must take leave of the familiar and sacrifice not only the flesh of an animal for thanksgiving, but cultivate self-discipline and joy in serving God by sacrificing one's own time and energy.

Once one arrives in Jerusalem—and it is only in Jerusalem, as the physical representation of God's city and home to the high priest who serves the world through his ministry (I.97), that can receive proper sacrifice—the ritual of sacrifice can still be ruined by an impure heart or ignorance. Only the one who sacrifices with a pure spirit will have a sacrifice accepted by God. Indeed, that person might be accepted by God even if there is no animal

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[40] Ibid I.68
[41] Leonhardt 219

brought up, as the soul is a sufficient sacrifice.[42] A sacrifice which has honored God and provided spiritual benefit to the one who sacrifices has achieved its goal.[43] In addition, Harold Attridge notes, "Although Philo does not devote a single tractate to the question of superstition, he frequently uses the term…it finds expression in an improper evaluation of the effects of ritual. Sacrifice and Temple worship cannot possibly influence God."[44] For Philo, the spiritual aspects of the law trump the physical, important though the physical might be in order to remind and rectify the individual in his duties.

Indeed, the relationship between personal piety and Temple sacrifices takes an increased significance in the light of his perception of forgiveness and ritual. As J. Laporte notes, apart from the priority of the spirit above the ritual, Philo's interpretation of the sacrifices follows closely to the common sense meaning of the Tanakh rather than taking on a spiritual significance.[45] The conditions cited for the purity of the high priest, for example, demonstrate for Philo the perfection of soul necessary to enter the presence of God.

Conclusions

Philo's attempt at reinterpreting the Torah through Greek eyes provided a vision of worship and the Temple which need not be rooted in the physical to be effective. Philo managed to resist the temptation to utterly cut off piety from the observation of the Torah citing that the outward action is as important to piety as the intention and purity of the soul.[46] Nevertheless, the

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42 *Vita Moses* II:108
43 *De Spec. Leg.* I.195
44 Attridge, "The Philosophical Critique of Religion," 72.
45 Laporte, "Sacrifice and Forgiveness," 34.
46 For a more explicit condemnation, *Mig. Abr.* 89-93.

true Temple can never be enmeshed in stone, just as the true sacrifice can never be met in an animal offering and the true city of God exists in the soul..

What Philo presents to his readers is a view of the Temple which is symbolic of the world and which provides a focus and distillation of the natural activity of the real Temple of God and the celestial intelligences. It is a channel through which piety and communion with like-minded souls can be cultivated by means of one's devotion, donation, and visitation. It is, in short, a way to attain wisdom and develop virtue both in one's actions and in one's soul.

CHAPTER 3

3 MACCABEES

In all of Alexandrian Jewish literature, the greatest amount of space devoted to the Temple as a historically-based (as opposed to ideal) structure is in the first two chapters of 3 Maccabees. As the relevant portion of the narrative portrays it, after Ptolemy IV Philopator's victory over Antiochus III at the battle of Raphia, he entered the city of Jerusalem in his program to "encourage" the cities in the area (1:6-8). Ptolemy was greeted graciously, and he sacrificed and gave thanks to the Jewish God for his victory. At that point, as he arrived in the holy place, he sought to enter the sanctuary, considering himself more worthy of the honor than those of the city, including the high priest (1:12). The people of the city reacted almost as one, beseeching the king to change his mind and begging for God's involvement through communal prayer and mourning; though the thought of violence was entertained by several of the young men, even they are finally brought into the spirit of the moment. The event culminated with the high priest Simon leading an intercession on behalf of the Jewish community, asking God to act justly toward those with hubris and insolence, and compassionately toward Israel (2:1-20). God responds in turn, shaking Philopator "to and from as a reed is shaken on the wind," leaving him paralyzed and mute, but still alive for his bodyguards and friends to retrieve back to Alexandria. God is shown to be faithful to the sanctity of the Temple, the people, and the terms of the covenant in a way that leaves no doubt in anyone's mind. Ptolemy, on the other hand, is punished, and heads back to Alexandria with bitterness in his heart.

The story of the invasion of the Temple has a number of parallels in other Jewish writings. Josephus recounts a story in the *Antiquities* in which Alexander the Great visited

Jerusalem and had an encounter with the high priest, which indicated that it was the god of the Jews who was actually responsible for his military victories.[47] The supernatural nature of the story, coupled with the fact that Alexander most likely did not even come close to Jerusalem in his journeys, has made the story historically implausible.[48] However, the parallel of the general-king paying tribute at the Temple has a literary precedent.

Another incident in Jewish literature bears far more striking similarities. The story of Heliodorus in 2 Macc 3:1-40 bears many of the same details. Heliodorus was the man in charge of Seleucus IV Philopator's affairs, sent to plunder the Temple treasury by the king. Heliodorus is sent with the express goal of plundering the Temple, and is not considered haughty or impious in the text, but merely following orders. Nevertheless, the reaction of the citizens of Jerusalem is remarkably similar. The priests prostrate themselves before the altar and the people gather to make supplication around the holy place; the entire population was in anguish (14b-21). At the last possible moment, God sends a manifestation which brutally beats Heliodorus to his last breath. Immediately thereafter, his bodyguards remove him and beg the high priest to ask God for his life, which the priest does (22-34). Heliodorus apparently learns his lesson in a much shorter time period than Ptolemy; he immediately sacrifices and attests to God's power, while Ptolemy simply leaves the city with wrath in his heart until he encounters his own manifestation.

Other connections also crop up in analysis of the tale. The similarity in plot structure between 3 Maccabees and Greek Esther has received some attention among scholars. Both tales involve an innocent community of Jews in a foreign city whose monarch threatened their well-being until a dramatic reversal took place, guided by the will of God. Greek Esther (as opposed to the Hebrew rendition) had received some notice in 3 Maccabees studies, and certain segments

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[47] Ant. 11.329-339

[48] Schürer, *History,* 2.310

of scholarship believe that Greek Esther is directly based on 3 Maccabees.[49] The story here also shares these same similarities with Daniel. In both, as George Nickelsberg also points out, "Jews are cited for their peculiar laws and accused of disobeying royal law. Their death is decreed, but they are rescued and celebrate the occasion with a special feast" with enduring etiological significance.[50]

Other texts, including the Letter of Aristeas, also demonstrate a strong similarity with the story in question. Both texts possess a similarity of character and purpose in their pursuit of historical verisimilitude in presenting the Jewish people and law as being in harmony with the goals of the Ptolemaic monarchy. In addition, the various stylistic and grammatical forms between the two texts demonstrate a common mental framework, and perhaps even direct influence on one text over another.[51]

There were also several incidents around the time period when 3 Maccabees would have been written in which the Temple grounds in Jerusalem had been threatened. The most famous incident, which helped contribute to the Hasmonean revolt, happened in 169 B.C.E. under the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes.[52] In the Roman era, two incidents stand out. The first was Pompey's invasion of the Temple grounds in his seizure of the city in 63 B.C.E., during which he entered the sanctuary but took nothing.[53] The second time the Temple was threatened was in 40 C.E., when Caligula ordered that a statue of him be placed in the Jerusalem Temple; the stalling tactics of Petronius delayed this from happening until Caligula's death removed the threat completely.[54]

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[49] Johnson, *Historical Fictions*, 137.
[50] Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 202.
[51] Emmet, "Third Book of Maccabees," 157. Hadas, *Third and Fourth Books of Maccabees,* 8-9.
[52] The account is attested to in 1 Macc 1:20-24, 2 Macc 5:11-21, Josephus' *Antiquities* 12.246, and *Against Apion* 2.83-84.
[53] Josephus' *Jewish War* 1.145-51, *Antiquities* 14.67-72; Tacitus, *History* 5.9; Cicero, *Flaccus* 67.
[54] *Ad Gaium* 203, *Antiquities* 18.257-309

The nature of 3 Maccbees is unlike Philo or Wisdom of Solomon (to be covered below), as it seeks to convey not any sort of timeless truth or philosophical treatise, but rather a potential historical situation. The Temple, as part of this scenario, is both structure and symbol to a reality other than itself, though social rather than philosophical. The author of 3 Maccabees, however, does not explicitly indicate what the symbolized structure is, and provides no definite keys within the text to decipher the mystery. In fact, questions about the historical situation which would have produced the text have been asked for 350 years, without any firm conclusions beyond a 170-year time frame and a number of circumstances toward which the text could have been addressed.[55]

Early attempts to find a specific historical core which the narrative is expanding, including efforts to tie this story to the threatened destruction of the Alexandrian Jewish community by elephants under the reign of Physcon as described in Josephus, have had limited success. Most recent commentators on the text have abandoned more "descriptive" interpretations of the text in favor of a more integrated view of the text as crafting legend, history, and imagination with the goal of communicating a specific agenda or warning.[56] Rather than attempting to describe a historical situation, the text tends to lend itself towards a moral interpretation, designed to convey the real dangers of some social or historical situation. The exact moral and social situation, however, remains in the air.

The remainder of 3 Maccabees beyond the Jerusalem episode concerns itself with the plight of the Alexandrian Jewish community, upon whom Ptolemy has decided to vent his

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[55] The absolute latest that 3 Maccabees could possibly have been written seems to be 70 C.E., since the Temple plays quite a prominent role in the first quarter of the book and the text seems to be completely ignorant of its destruction. On the other side, a clear allusion to the Prayer of Azariah 26-27 in 3 Maccabees 6.6, speaking of the wind of dew to which the furnace was likened upon the visitation of the angel of the lord, acts as a *terminus post quem* of about 100 B.C.E.. See Johnson 129-132.

[56] Most, but not all; see Aryeh Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt: The Struggle for Equal Rights* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1985) for a modern example of an approach arguing for the historicity of the text.

frustration. The first stage of this is a heinous choice for the people: register with the city under the *laographia* ("poll tax") and be marked with the mark of Dionysius while being reduced to the status of slaves or death by force.[57] Though a few do so, the majority of the people remain steadfast to the faith. In response, Ptolemy commands all the communities in and around Alexandria to expel their Jews for purposes of extermination, declaring them to be enemies of the common good. The destruction of the Jews does not go as expected, however. First, the registration which Ptolemy demands of all the Jews is frustrated when the scribes run out of ink. Then the first attempt to crush the Jews with drunken elephants fails when God has Ptolemy sleep through the appointed time. When the attempt is repeated, the Lord casts upon Ptolemy a sort of amnesia which causes him to forget his purpose and to even sing the praise of the Jews. Finally, two angels from heaven emerge and send the entire army into confusion, to the point where the elephants begin crushing the king's soldiers. Ptolemy repents at last, and restores all which was lost back to the Jewish population, praises them as loyal citizens, and allows them to kill off any Jew who apostatized under pressure.

The narrative itself seems to indicate solidarity between the Jews of Jerusalem and Alexandria more than the importance of the Temple structure, as parallels with the latter five chapters indicate.[58] Furthermore, the prayer which comes from the high priest's lips, though tying back to Solomon's inaugural statement that prayers offered in Jerusalem will be heard, also stresses the statement that God's dwelling is not in an earthly Temple.[59] The Temple is acknowledged as a *special* place of God's dwelling by the author, but not a *unique* place, further

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[57] 3 Macc. 2:28-30. For more information on the intermediate status of the Jewish community in Alexandria, see Barclay. Cf. Philo, *In Flaccum* for the Alexandrian Jewish revolt and the issues surrounding it.

[58] Cousland, "Reversal," 40

[59] 3 Maccabees 2:15-16; compare 1 Kings 8:27-29

emphasized by God's inclination to the Alexandrians' cry. After that chapter, the Temple is mentioned but once more.[60]

What can we make of this unity? S.R. Johnson makes a note of the relationship between the Alexandrian community and the one in Palestine, as expressed in the pieces of the discussion we have between the two camps: "The famous letters appended to the opening of 2 Maccabees (1-2)…represent the Jews of Jerusalem in the late second century as being acutely concerned with the correct celebration of Hanukkah…in Egypt." [61] The attempt to try to alter the festal calendar of the Egyptian Jews might well have had direct political implications. This was one time when bolstering the connection between the Palestinian and Alexandrian Jews was not necessarily one which would be mutually advantageous: "the consequences of events in Palestine might be forced, willy-nilly, upon the Jews of Egypt."[62] If a community of Jews in one place can be shown to revolt against their king, and they can be tied ideologically to a community in a different location, then those kings who rule over other large communities might be inclined to put down any signs of rebellion before they begin.

It is feasible, then, that 3 Maccabees is a warning against such a union between the two communities. Yet the text does not indicate that Palestinian and Alexandrian Jews should in any way be ideologically separated. Indeed, for a text written in Alexandria, it is surprising that the communities are often so unilateral in their views toward the violation of the ancestral law, and their actions in light of it (the tendency toward non-violent resistance rather than active revolt). The Temple, as this is concerned, points toward a common area of interest for all the Jewish communities involved, the catalyst for both groups' bout with persecution.

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[60] Cousland 40 seems to infer that Jerusalem is referred to in 3 Maccabees 5:43. Yet Jerusalem is not mentioned, but the Temple and Judea as a whole, in Philopator's utterance – an important distinction which will reappear further in the paper.

[61] Johnson 165.

[62] Ibid. 166.

What effect would differing historical situations produce as far as refining this view? If 3 Maccabees were to be located in the early Roman period rather than the late Ptolemaic period, would anything different be said about the relationship between Alexandria and the Temple in the text? Quite possibly. Positing the text as a response to either the poll tax in the time of Augustus in 10 C.E. or the attempted defamation of the Temple under Caligula in 40 C.E. would have it respond to a relatively less stable social situation for the Jews in Alexandria as a whole. The Jewish position in the city of Alexandria and throughout Egypt was unique. Even from Alexandria's founding, Jews had a special place in the city's social hierarchy, working as "courtiers, generals, shopkeepers, farmers, and soldiers" alongside the Greek inhabitants.[63] Indeed, many of the Jews of the city were full citizens. However, the establishment of Roman law and the forced social stratification served to sever most of the Jews from those privileges they took for granted and made them much more politically vulnerable. If there was a perceived connection between the Temple and the Alexandrian community, or at least a sense that the cultural unity of the Jews across the empire would be a liability, then a tenuous social situation had the great possibility of turning ugly quickly.[64] Any sort of similar connection between a Ptolemaic-era Jewish community with a greater overall status within their borders and the Maccabean kingdom would, in this light, seem less likely. However, before examining how much less likely one scenario would be over another, let us consider a Roman date first.

If the story did arise out of some sort of historical circumstance, the most likely candidates appear to be some time in the early Roman period between 20 and 15 B.C.E., as proposed by Viktor Tcherikover, and around 40 C.E., as proposed by Heinrich Ewald.

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[63] Ibid 170.

[64] Ironically, this would be a strike against Roman composition, or at least one which depends on a historical basis rather than a hypothetical one. The crises during Gaius' reign had unique causes for Alexandria and Jerusalem, with the only common thread between them the emperor's desire for worship. See Johnson 133.

Fausto Parente presents a related situation from one of Philo's letters. Philo, in his *Legatio ad Gaium,* posits two groups of Jews who come to visit Gaius around the time of the latter's death, Philo himself being the leader of one group and a man by the name Isidoros the head of the other. In response to the act of two delegations and the political situation (namely, the Jewish persecution during the reign of Flaccus), Claudius, who succeeded Gaius, wrote a scathing letter to all the inhabitants of the city. Concerning the Jews, he wrote:

> As to the Jews, I hereby order that they shall not seek to obtain more than they already posses, nor, henceforth, shall they send two delegations, as though living in two separate cities, which has never occurred heretofore, nor shall they mix in the games presided over by the gymnasiarchs and the *kosmetai*, since they now enjoy all that should be theirs, and in a city which is not their own, enjoy an abundance of good things.[65]

Mention of the gymnasium rights did not come up until this point in the conflict. This would only be an issue, according to Parente, if the second delegation made some point concerning the rights of certain Jews in the city – those who were wealthy, but were not considered citizens. These Jews "were asking not simply or the restitution of their rights, which Flaccus has retried to take away by demoting them from 'residents'…to 'foreigners,' but something more."[66] Gymnasium rights ("the games presided over by the gymnasiarchs and the *kosmetai*"), and thus citizenry, were at stake.[67] Parente hypothesizes that Jews of the Alexandria *politeuma*, wealthy but not citizens and thus subject to the *laographia*, were the ones seeking to use the confusion to further their own ends, and were apparently willing to break ties with the Jewish community to achieve those ends.

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[65] *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum* II.36-55

[66] Parente, "The Third Book of Maccabees as Ideological Document and Historical Source" in *Henoch* 10:4 (1988), 172.

[67] CPJ II.73-74

Thus, Parente's construction of the narrative of 3 Maccabees remains rooted in the historical realities of the author's day. Each portion of the story ties in some way with a real social situation, made possible by the Roman ascension to power over Alexandria. The purported wrath against the Jewish people under the governor Flaccus finds connection with Caligula's attempt to defame the Temple, demonstrating the interconnection between the fates of the two communities. Parallels with Daniel and Greek Esther provide a thematic basis for the conflict. Indeed, the story proves as a warning against the more ambitious members of the politeuma – the faithful are shown to kill those who have fallen away to attain greater social prestige.

However, we are still short of a historical basis for the persecution, only a political situation where the Alexandrian community saw its survival as something in doubt. As it turns out, Parente (as well as Collins, Tcherikover and Ewald) are in the minority in putting 3 Maccabees in the Roman period. The majority of scholarship seem to place the text in the final part of the Ptolemaic era due to

S.R. Johnson posits an earlier date, between 100 and 30 B.C.E., primarily based on linguistic evidence and a potential scenario where the threat to the Alexandrian Jews was palpable due to the higher status of the Egyptian Jews in the face of an expanding Jewish kingdom to the east, and the mutual level of interest between the two groups, as indicated by the introduction to 2 Maccabees and other texts. The scenario set forth in the text for the Alexandrian Jews, to align themselves with the Dionysian cult or be killed, is merely an extreme version of the choice the community had to make between remaining separate and adhering to Jewish tradition or else becoming completely Hellenized. While some in the text fell away, the majority chose to remain faithful to the law. By choosing the law, they saved their own lives and

received eventual acclaim from the king who had attempted to annihilate them. This invented past she likens to a new confrontation between the Jews and Pharaoh which manages to reconcile rather than split in Exodus.[68] As such, historicity would not be necessary; the text becomes a guide to life under any monarch and an exhortation to righteousness, rather than a recounting of previous persecutions.

So what purpose does the Temple play in this conflict? It serves as a catalyst for persecution, as mentioned earlier. In a broader sense, however, the Temple has become a political beacon for a community in which apostasy was not uncommon. Furthermore, the community had to straddle by virtue of their situation the call to remain faithful to the Torah and the challenge of keeping the peace with their neighbors. We do not see the same call to wisdom or the assertion that Judaism is itself the most rational way to live; there is a crisis moment which compels both the characters and the audience to choose one or the other, unlike the implications of those writers more influenced by Middle Platonism. The call is to remain both in Jerusalem and Alexandria, to show solidarity to the tradition and the Temple which remains at its center while remaining in their specific circumstances, and to remain faithful to God even when God and government clash.

[68] Johnson 174-181. Eleazar's prayer in 6:1-15 invokes precisely that image of the confrontation with Pharaoh, but also invoked Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar

CHAPTER 4

WISDOM OF SOLOMON

The message of the Wisdom of Solomon points to the workings of God in and through history, and points towards a time when the persecuted righteous will have their fortunes restored and their lives avenged. Written most likely in the aftermath of the persecution of the Alexandrian Jewish community in 38 C.E., the writer of Wisdom spends much of the time expanding on the pursuit of righteousness (personified by the pursuit of Sophia or wisdom) and the fate of those who either fail to find wisdom or raise their hands against God's people. As such, this appears to have little to do with the Temple either as an institution or as a structure. Indeed, there is not much throughout this exhortation that relates to the Temple, apart from a single prayer given by the narrator, an expansion of Solomon's priestly prayer in 1 Kings. Nevertheless, what there is will be examined in detail here, both within the context of the narrative and in comparison with the literature discussed previously in this paper, in order to try to come to a more complete picture of Temple depictions in the Roman era.

Scholarship tends to date this text to anywhere between the second century B.C.E. and 50 C.E., during Caligula's reign; most recent commentators, however, seem to place the text somewhere in the Roman period.[69] It is safe to consider the text Egyptian, as there is no linguistic determination that the text originated in a different language, and quite a bit of diatribe against the native Egyptians.[70] For the sake of the current analysis, a Roman Egyptian origin will be presumed; however, this will bear little impact on the portions of this text under examination.

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[69] See Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon* 22-25 for a discussion of dating which weighs the evidence for a Ptolemaic date versus a Roman one; he leans towards Roman, a designation which Collins follows.

[70] Wisd 19:13-17

The direction of the text considers the outworking of wisdom in history, though in a reversed sort of pattern, beginning with an eschatology (chapters 1-5) before moving on to the nature of Wisdom (6-9) and finally ending with a historical recounting of the narrative of the Tanakh (10-19). The first portion of the book heavily contrasts the fates of the righteous and the wicked, with the righteous eventually being justified before God and receiving immortality, and the wicked receiving due recompense for their deeds and especially their mockery of God and life and the persecution of the righteous. The largest and concluding portion of the book recounts the deeds of Wisdom as representative and consort of God, acting on God's behalf from the creation of humanity to the Passover and the punishment of the Egyptians.

Though both these sections are important to the textual unity, the middle portion, chapters 6 through 9, which offer a description of Solomon's relationship with Wisdom, will receive the most attention. It is in these chapters that Wisdom itself begins emerging as a character, and, as we shall see, the relationship between God, wisdom and the Temple flows from the understanding set forth here.

The Primacy of Wisdom

The sixth chapter begins with an exhortation to all leaders to seek after wisdom in light of the threats from the beginning of the text "because severe judgment falls on those in high places."[71] Fortunately, Wisdom is not difficult to find (vv. 12-16), and those who seek after her instruction will naturally save themselves and their kingdoms from destruction (vv. 17-21). In this way the lesson is driven home that the kingdoms of the world ultimately flow from God,

[71] Wisd 6:5b

and only by adhering to the natural order of the world, which is Wisdom, can a kingdom be ruled rightly (vv. 3-4).

"Solomon" the narrator, speaking from the height of the united monarchy to the present, discusses his ties with Wisdom from a young age, presumably as the ultimate example of the combination of wisdom and kingship.[72] In this way the author introduces the reader to his passionate affair with Wisdom, from the initial encounter and realization that she was necessary to rule properly to the recognition that the pursuit of Wisdom precedes all things, both in importance and in time (7:7-14). Here, Wisdom is depicted as the teacher of all things, from the natural sciences and philosophy to psychology and metaphysics; indeed, all knowledge that God can bestow comes through her (15-21).Wisdom herself is an emanation of God, as pure, perfect and powerful as her source, serving to renew all things and connect undefiled souls to God (22-28). Wisdom is the source of true wealth, understanding, righteousness, experience and knowledge (8:5-8) and as such is necessary to rule properly and advantageously, allowing Solomon to silence the nations with knowledge and both fight and rule effectively (8:9-16).

God is shown to be the source of knowledge through which Wisdom has its being; however, there is no mention of obedience to Torah for righteousness, but rather adherence to Wisdom's teachings, which are received through direct revelation. As a consequence of this, David Winston concludes that "[Wisdom] is clearly the Archetypal Torah, of which the Mosaic Law is but an image."[73] The disclosure of Wisdom is the only thing which serves to correctly interpret even the Torah itself. Thus, no one can come to a knowledge of God, God's will, or

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[72] At least if the author chose Solomon as the narrator for the wisdom tradition connected to his name through Proverbs and 1 Kings. Cf. Winston 33-38 for an analysis of the assorted Wisdom traditions which, coupled with the lack of attention paid to Solomon as a character throughout his commentary, seems to suggest that the choice of Solomon as narrator (as opposed to, say, Wisdom herself, per Proverbs 8:4-9:6) was secondary to the attempt to bring together the traditions of Proverbs, Job and Ben Sira with Egyptian and Platonic influences to support Wisdom's ubiquity.

[73] Winston 43

proper human conduct through any earthly source unless God reveals it to that person. The wicked serve as the foil to this depiction , coming to the conclusion that life is finite and that personal gain should be one's chief priority. Likewise, idolaters who began their delusion through well-meaning, if purely natural, attempts end up sliding into destruction and ascribing powers to wood and stone to no good end.

It is within this perception of the relationship between the holy soul and God through Wisdom that the next portion of this paper must be interpreted. Chapter 9 is on one level a reworking of the prayer of Solomon depicted in 1 Kings 3:6-9 but at the same time a reexamination of the relationship that God has with Solomon and his people. And it is precisely in this reworking that the Temple appears in this book.

Solomon's Prayer and the Temple

1 Kings 3:6-9	Wisdom of Solomon 9:
You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he waked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today.	O God of my ancestors and Lord of mercy, who have made all things by your word, and by your wisdom have formed humankind to have dominion over the creatures you have made, and rule the world in holiness and righteousness, and pronounce judgment in uprightness of soul, give me the wisdom that sits by your throne, and do not reject me

And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted.

Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?

from among your servants. For I am your servant the son of your serving girl, a man who is weak and short-lived, with little understanding of judgment and laws; for even one who is perfect among human beings will be regarded as nothing without the wisdom that comes from you. You have chosen me to be the king of your people and to be judge over your sons and daughters. **You have given command to build a Temple on your holy mountain, and an altar in the city of your habitation, a copy of the holy tent that you prepared from the beginning.** With you is wisdom, she who knows your works and was present when you made the world; she understands what is pleasing in your sight and what is right according to your commandments. Send her forth from the holy heavens, and from the throne of your glory send her, that she may labor at my side, and that I may learn what is pleasing to you. For she knows and understands all things, and she will

> guide me wisely in my actions and guard me with her glory. Then my works will be acceptable, and I shall judge your people justly, and shall be worthy of the throne of my father. For who can learn the counsel of God? Or who can discern what the Lord wills? For the reasoning of mortals is worthless, and our designs are likely to fail; for a perishable body weighs down the soul, and this earthy tent burdens the thoughtful mind. We can hardly guess at what is on earth, and what is at hand we find with labor; but who has traced out what is in the heavens? Who has learned your counsel, unless you have given wisdom and sent your holy spirit from on high? And thus the paths of those on earth were set right, and people were taught what pleases you, and were saved by wisdom.

The Temple is one of three blessings which God had bestowed upon Solomon, alongside the kingdom and wisdom. In the context of the book, however, these three are not distinct and are part of the particular movement of Wisdom, as we shall investigate in the next portion.

Though the prayer in Wisdom is structurally similar to the one in 1 Kings, the prayer itself does not echo the sentiments of the original. The difference in style between the eloquent Greek of the Wisdom passage and the terse poetics of the Hebrew aside, both prayers follow roughly the same pattern of praise-petition-supplication. Most of the lines in the Hebrew version have parallels in the Greek text, and quite a bit of the Greek text, especially toward the end, is a pathos-packed expansion conveying the humility of the petitioner and the glory of the recipient. The philosophical and religious presumptions that go into both prayers, however, appear to be worlds apart.

Whereas the writer of 1 Kings focused Solomon's prayer on the fulfillment of the covenant God made with his father and the continuance of good will, the writer of Wisdom places the beginning and end of praise in the spiritual realm. God's actions toward Solomon do not begin with the choosing of David, but rather the creation of the world through wisdom; David's righteousness does not come into the picture at all, and even David himself is mentioned only in passing as the one from whom Solomon inherits the throne.

In this, Solomon appears to stand ideologically outside the Davidic covenant; his rule is not a continuation of the Davidic dynasty, but rather is the continuation of God's holy and righteous rule which began in creation and is present at all places and times. Solomon seeks to rule not after the righteousness of his father, but rather after the righteousness which comes through observance of Wisdom. Solomon in Wisdom subjects his will to that of Sophia “who understands and guides all things” in an attempt to rise above the limitations of the earthly tent and find what is pleasing to God, rather than seeking to fulfill the covenant made between God and his father. The fullness of God's blessing is not restricted to a certain people or lineage, but

is open to anyone who pursues wisdom, and the text has already set Solomon up to be the prime example of a righteous, receptive ruler.

What does this shift mean for the Temple, the physical sign of God's presence with the Jews? By all indications it remains a sign, but the signified shifts to a position more in line with Philo's reading of the Temple than that of the Deuteronomic historian. Gone are the ideas of God physically dwelling in Jerusalem. God commands it be built on the holy mountain as "a copy of the holy tent," not as a new dwelling place for the physical ark. As Solomon's reign through his submission to Wisdom is to be a physical representation of God's creative actions, so the Temple is to be a physical representation of the spiritual Temple. Solomon's task, in other words, becomes the enactment of the ideal. He seeks to devote himself and his efforts to the pursuit of wisdom, and insofar as the Temple demonstrates the worship of God in human history, Solomon is called to bring that into existence.[74]

The Temple becomes part of Solomon's calling, a passing detail which nevertheless both identifies the narrator in Israel's history and through that identification posits the Temple and the kingdom both as gifts of God. In any case, there does not seem to be any indication throughout the rest of the text that God's communion with either Solomon or the chosen people hinged in any way on the presence or absence of the Temple, unlike in the history and prophets. God simply calls Solomon to rule over Israel and to build the Temple, and Solomon in turn asks God for Wisdom to accompany his rule, so that he would do what is right before the Lord and be saved.

One gets the impression that nothing would be lost if the author did not add that sentence about the Temple. We receive nothing concerning the importance of the structure, and given the general themes of the book as a whole this might not be surprising. Temples are prevalent

[74] Cf. 2 Macc 2:9.

throughout the empire, each dedicated to its own conceptions of deity, but none of them touch the Platonic ideal. The point is to indicate its ultimate connection to a universal mind, not to encourage separatist attitudes and further the potential ideological split between the Jewish and Greek communities. Yet one cannot easily conceive of Judaism or Solomon's reign without the Temple, at least if one is a Jew with any knowledge at all about the tradition. The strategy here then seems to be the acknowledgment of the command to build a house for the Lord with the caveat that the Temple, as well as the spiritual tent on which the physical form is based, is part of the same universal movement of Wisdom from the beginning.[75] It is important to Judaism, but might be seen as an embarrassment to a writer who wants to identify Judaism with universal wisdom.

The Temple does not appear to be the only casualty. If the author of Wisdom was willing to mention the Temple, even for one line, the absence of any mention of the law seems more than odd. The narrative portion at the end of the book stops just short of Sinai. The main offenses listed in the text are not failure to adhere to Torah, but idolatry – making dead gods from stone and wood – and persecuting the righteous, both of which are mentioned in Torah but hardly come close to its entirety. Jerusalem is not mentioned apart from the holy mount. What seems to be appearing, then, is a promotion of the Jewish God without several of the pillars which had historically marked Judaism across time and space – a Judaism which has given up the revelation to the community for the revelation to the pure (which of course would naturally include the Alexandrian Jews, but on a spiritual basis rather than an ethnic one). Even with the high probably that Jewish readers of this book would certainly read the law into the text, the shift

[75] The heavenly Temple itself may not necessarily have to be interpreted in terms of preexistence. Joseph Reider, *The Book of Wisdom* (New York: Harper & Brothers 1957), 128-9 note 8 indicates he believes it was from the beginning of Jewish history and not before the creation of the world, but there are similar examples in other periods of Judaism and other ancient writings which would seem to indicate some strand of belief in preexistence. For a brief discussion of the evidence, including contemporary see Winston 203-5 notes 8 and 9.

between how Israel had been traditionally constituted and how the author here rebuilds it reflects the understanding of Wisdom as core to true religious belief.

In the face of persecution, which probably gave rise to this text, is there any reason for a seeming throwaway line such as 9:8? In the end, with little to go on, it might well be that the Temple could not be redefined as easily as the ties which bound the community together would be, and thus the Temple was relegated to a sign of Solomon's rule and an indication of God's rule.

Conclusion

The world which the writer of Wisdom hopes for is not a world in which individual, contingent events make up historical reality, but rather a thoroughly Platonic world where ultimate reality exists beyond and through history. God and wisdom are eternal; death and other aspects are ephemeral and will be punished in this world and will cease to exist in the world to come. In this world, those souls which recognize God and pursue wisdom will be vindicated in the world to come, regardless of their fates in this world. Solomon is held as the prime example of the righteous soul, as compared to the Egyptians in the past few chapters who worshiped all sorts of hateful creatures, sought to oppress the righteous, and refused to repent even in the face of punishment. Political application set aside for now, it is monotheism which ultimately is said to deliver the community, even despite their present troubles, and it is the state of their souls, pure before being cast into bodies, which allow the possibility of seeking the one God and God's Wisdom. The Temple, like the knowledge which Wisdom bestows upon those who seek her, is for the benefit and proper worship of God, an indication and a marker of those who have made God the object of their desire.

CHAPTER 5

THE LETTER OF ARISTEAS

The Letter of Aristeas to Philocretes is unique among the Alexandrian writings concerning its approach to the Temple in Jerusalem. Whereas the other texts examined in this paper look primarily at the Temple as either a physical type to an earthly reality, as per Philo and Wisdom, or the political setting as demonstrated in 3 Maccabees, the Temple here is described primarily in terms of its physical attributes.

This is not to say that the author of Aristeas breaks completely with the approach given by fellow authors. While the Temple is given a place of prominence within the text, it is idealized and used to further supplement the aims of the writer concerning the relationship between Greek and Jewish culture. The whole of the Letter is primarily an attempt to give an account and defense of the Jewish people in the face of a cultural break between the Greek and Jewish worldviews in of Alexandria. As we shall see in this chapter, the placement and description of the Temple is one which, in light of Philo's writings and as a sort of complement to 3 Maccabees, takes seriously the distinctiveness of the Jewish people, but also seeks to place them within the greater context of Hellenistic culture.

To being our investigation, the date and audience should be established as far as possible. Unfortunately, concerning the date there is not much evidence, and at best we can establish a time frame of about 350 years, anywhere from 250 B.C.E. to 100 C.E., between the reign of Ptolemy I Lagos and Josephus' massive quotation of *Aristeas* in his *Antiquities*.[76] John Collins summarizes the persuasive arguments for the termini post and ante in the latter half of the second

[76] See Shutt, “Letter of Aristeas,” 7-11.

century B.C.E., based on arguments by Elias Bickerman and Arnoldo Momigliano.[77] In any case, a date outside of the late Ptolemaic period seems unlikely; the author was evidently a pious Jew who was familiar with the proceedings of Ptolemaic court life and ably and freely used technical language through the piece.[78]

The audience appears to be primarily Jewish as well. Though the writer of the piece was familiar with court proceedings, Jewish rituals such as circumcision and Sabbath observance are also taken for granted.[79] Furthermore, several instances concerning the conduct of Ptolemy toward Jerusalem,[80] toward the elders,[81] toward the Torah,[82] and toward the Jewish god[83] suggest that any propagandistic tendencies in the text are not necessarily pointed toward the Alexandrian Greeks. As Tcherikover so wryly (and accurately) put it,

> Did not the author here offend the taste of the pagan reader? Was he so simple as to think that such propaganda would be successful among educated Greeks? No, such a thought was indeed far from his mind. His intention was to influence the Jewish, not the Greek, reader. There is nothing that makes you love people more than the knowledge that they love you.[84]

The Jewishness of the author dovetails into this assumption of a Jewish audience, despite the author's claims of identity.[85] P.M. Fraser notes two streams converging through the

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77 Collins 98. For a summary of the linguistic formulae placing Aristeas in that frame, see Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* 2.970-71. Many of the formulae are similar with those found in 3 Maccabees, and, as noted there, are subject to a broader range of interpretation; see Schürer 3.1:681-84 for a possible defense of a date in the early second century.

78 Fraser 1.698. See also Schürer 3.1-683-84.

79 Bartlett 13.

80 Aristeas 80-81

81 Ibid., 174-75

82 Ibid., 177-78

83 Ibid., 37.

84 Tcherikover, "Ideology of Aristeas," 68.

85 Aristeas v. 16 proposes a divide between the worship of the Jewish prisoners and the worship of "Aristeas" and Ptolemy: "These people worship God the overseer and creator of all, whom all men worship including ourselves..."

vocabulary of the author – one rooted in the Ptolemaic court, and the other in the Septuagint.[86] Viktor Tcherikover, against Emil Schürer, argues that the sheer amount of praise given to Judaism indicates an author whose purpose is to support Judaism to an audience who was greatly familiar with the Scriptures. More to the point, even the description of the Temple itself is based very heavily on scriptural accounts, a point that will be delved upon later in this paper.

John Bartlett, agreeing with Tcherikover, argues:

> The author seems concerned to defend a form of Judaism that was thoroughly at home in *Hellenistic* Alexandria. He is demonstrating to his Jewish contemporaries in Alexandria (sure the most obvious addressees) that their Scriptures are fully legitimate and need no revision, that their own position in the state is respected, and that they can hold up their heads as Jews among the educated *Hellenistic* society of Alexandria.[87]

What we then have is both an attempt by an educated Hellenistic Jew to justify to the community in Alexandria a continuation of their status as a covenant people in Diaspora and a way to establish the legitimacy of Judaism in the context of the Hellenistic world. It is indeed significant that both Ptolemy and Eleazar the high priest pave the way for the translation of the Septuagint, creating the possibility of esteem from both worlds, at least in the minds of those reading the text.

The Story

[86] Fraser 1.703
[87] Bartlett 13.

The letter begins with a greeting to Philocretes which lays out the fundamentals of the letter, namely the account of Aristeas' meeting with Eliezer the high priest concerning the translation of the Torah from Hebrew to Greek. Most of the form of the beginning, however, is clearly laudatory, as traditional for a letter, but also effective in establishing the tone of the entire piece. Aristeas describes his brother as a man of "scholarly disposition"[88] who is seen as one who is "more favorably inclined toward the piety and disposition of those who live by the sacred Law." Aristeas himself was inclined to make favorable statements both towards his brother's didactic inclinations and towards the great wisdom of the Jews, suggesting that it is natural that one who loves knowledge and philosophy would find fellowship with Eleazar in particular and the Law in a more general sense. Not a word of harshness crosses Aristeas' description; he only has the highest esteem for the Jews and their law.

The first portion of the letter body concerns Ptolemy's plan, enacted by the royal librarian Demetrius, to collect all the books in the world. Demetrius, after reporting to the king how many books they have in stock, declares that the Hebrew law should be incorporated. With no debate he sends word to Eleazar the priest concerning this matter. The narrative then shifts to a concern Aristeas himself had concerning the fate of the deported Judaeans due to the actions of the king's father. In response to Aristeas' plea, couched in good political consideration - "What justification shall we have for our mission, as long as large numbers are in subjection in your kingdom?" - and the same sort of universalist mentality with which Aristeas begins the letter, the king chooses not only to liberate the one hundred thousand Jewish slaves his father brought from his conquests of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia, but also those brought into Egypt before or since, and provide essentially everyone of Jewish descent in the region twenty drachma each, a total which approached six hundred and sixty talents. This is described variously in the text as

[88] Aristeas 1.

magnanimous, gracious, and worthy of being honored by the Most High God whom all (Greek) people worship, albeit by different names.[89] Already we see the righteousness on the king's part, both before his court and before God, connected intimately with showing favor toward the Jewish people.

One notices right away that not a single person in this narrative hates the Jews, or considers them less than equals. Even the king's father who is responsible for the deportation of the sizable portion of the Jews in Egypt is only spoken of having been "prevailed upon by his troops on account of the services which they had given in the trials of war."[90] There were ready advocates in the court ready to speak on behalf of the Jews, Aristeas and the bodyguards Sosibius and Andreas. When the king prepares to send his envoy to Jerusalem, he orders the creation of Temple gifts with which "there was absolutely no work of art comparable in magnificence and craftsmanship, either in the royal treasuries or any other."[91] Aristeas notes that the only reason the gifts, which include a table and drinking bowls, were not more ornate was that they would otherwise be useless for Temple service.[92]

To continue the trend, let us look at the reception of the translators. As soon as Aristeas and Andreas are announced in Alexandria, the king takes the unusual step of receiving them immediately. In contrast, we are told the established procedure was that even the most important visitors are received five days after being announced, and emissaries are held up for up to thirty.[93] Further, the day of their arrival, which coincides in the text with the anniversary of an unspecified defeat of Antigonus, was to be held as a holiday for the remainder of their lives. Philocrates bows before the Torah scrolls seven times while weeping.

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[89] The descriptors are in v. 19, the universal God in v. 16.
[90] v. 14
[91] v. 80
[92] v. 54
[93] v. 175

In summary, at least in the narrative leading up to the description of the Temple and much of it afterward, there is no real distinction made between the piety of the Greeks, or at least of educated men and the royal court, and the Judaism represented by the Jerusalem faction. Judaism is considered equal to the values of the court. The next portion will attempt to examine the description which Aristeas gives of the city of Jerusalem and especially the Temple grounds in this light.

The Temple grounds

The discussion between Aristeas and Philocrates about Jerusalem begins with the Temple, the single most prominent structure:

> ...we saw the city built in the midst of the whole land of the Jews, upon a hill which extended to a great height. On the top of the hill the Temple had been constructed, towering above all. There were three enclosing walls, over seventy cubits in size, the width being proportionate and the length of the equipment of the house likewise everything was built with a magnificence and expense which excelled in every respect. It was obvious that the expenditure of money had been unrestricted upon the door, the fastening upon it by the doorposts, and the strength of the lintels. The configuration of the veil was in respects very similar to the door furnishing, and most of all in view of continuous movement caused to the material by the undercurrent of the air. It was continuous because the undercurrent started from the bottom and the billowing extended to the rippling at the top—the phenomenon making a pleasant and unforgettable spectacle.

The furnishing of the altar was constructed in a manner commensurate with the place and the sacrifices consumed in the fire, and that of the ascent to it likewise —the site had the ladder designed in a manner consistent with seemliness for the ministering priests swathed up to the loins in "leather garments." The house faces east, and the rear of it faces west. The whole foundation was decked with (precious) stone and had slopes leading to the appropriate places for carrying the water which is (needed) for the cleaning of the blood from the sacrifices. (Many thousands of animals are brought there in the festival days.) There is an uninterrupted supply not only of water, just as if there were a plentiful spring rising naturally from within, but also of indescribably wonderful underground reservoirs, which within a radius of five stades from the foundation of the Temple revealed innumerable channels for each of them, the streams joining together on each side. All these were covered with lead down to the foundation of the wall; on top of them a thick layer of pitch, all done very effectively. There were many mouths at the base, which were completely invisible except for those responsible for the ministry, so that the large amounts of blood which collected from the sacrifices were all cleansed by the downward pressure and momentum. Being personally convinced, I will describe the building plan of the reservoirs just as I understood it. They conducted me more than four stades outside the city, and told me to bend down at a certain spot and listen to the noise at the meeting of the waters. The result was that the size of the conduits became clear to me, as has been demonstrated.[94]

[94] Aristeas 87-91

The description of the Temple here appears to be more directly related to scriptural accounts than to any sort of eyewitness testimony. Viktor Tcherikover points out a small list of similarities, including the Jerusalem's location in v. 83 in the center of Judaea with the prophetic account in Ezekiel 48, the establishment of the Temple on the top of a mountain with Micah 4:1 and Isaiah 2:2, and the eastward orientation of the entrance and the presence of natural springs in Ezekiel–features which do not match the archaeological record. In short,

> the author's intention was to describe Palestine as a Holy Land, where the sublime ideal of Biblical theocracy was fulfilled. For Aristeas, the most important part of the Holy Land is Jerusalem, and of Jerusalem the Temple, its High Priest and its religious service....The Jewish reader in Alexandria learned from those chapters that his heart should be attracted ...by the pure and beautiful Holy Land, as it appears in the pages of the Holy Scriptures—and of Israel as an integral part of the Torah of Israel.[95]

This need not be the case, though. If the depiction of Palestine and the Temple services were indeed formed in the ideal of the Torah, they also seem to have reflected or co-opted Greek values. It need not, in other words, be designed to draw the hearts of Alexandria's Jews toward the Holy Land, but rather to further the connection between Greek philosophy and the Torah which has been established from the beginning of the letter. In any case, though, it seems that the author of Aristeas was not attached to the Temple, but rather was steeped in the Tanakh and the ideal Temple.

Conclusion

[95] Tcherikover, *History* 78-79.

The approach which Aristeas takes with the description of Jerusalem and the Temple by itself calls forth similarities with Philo and the writer of Wisdom of Solomon. Where the author of Wisdom drew upon the ideal Temple and priesthood in Israel's history—that of Solomon—and Philo drew upon a combination of Platonic thought and the biblical tradition to convey the message of the eternal Temple, the author of Aristeas drew upon the prophetic tradition to portray a picture of Judaea and Jerusalem which encapsulates the ideals of both the Jewish and the *Hellenistic* worlds.

The purpose of Aristeas' depiction of Jerusalem and the Temple seems to point in a similar direction as the other major scenes in the letter – to try and solidify the identification of Judaism with philosophy in such a way as to suggest that the mother city and her traditions are the epitome of Greek rationality.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This paper arose from a simple question: how does faith survive outside of the circumstances in which it was conceived? What allows a faith community to survive apart from its traditional expressions and rituals? What could be done to foster tribal solidarity and prevent complete assimilation into the greater Alexandrian society?

The question is as much a political question as it is a religious one. The texts analyzed in this paper are a small part of the total corpus that the Jewish community produced over its 400 year history, many of which dealt with the major problems of assimilation.

For most of the Jews in the city, there was no material or social advantage to leaving their religion behind. However, those who sought greater social status for themselves or their family would be risk for apostasy. As well, Jews who were relatively isolated from the community, members of the community heavily involved in court life, and those who married Gentiles were at risk of forsaking Judaism completely. The people who treated the law as pure allegory, though not forsaking the community directly, did threaten the distinctiveness of the Jewish people.

The whole enterprise of maintaining solidarity required a restructuring of Judaism as an intellectual and imaginative faith as well as a practical one. Those most fluent in Hellenistic culture had to engage its language and philosophy and define the pillars of Judaism on new terms. The notions of sacrifice and ritual purity, integral in Palestinian and pre-exilic thought, become a reflection and clarification of what the Hellenes practiced. There was no need to apostatize, the writers were saying, because by being Jews they were *de facto* Greeks.

The literature of the Alexandrian community provides a unique perspective into how the educated leaders of the city dealt with these issues in time. Looking specifically at the depiction of the Temple in their writings helps to show how these writers saw the Alexandrian Jews relationship to Greek culture, both in their methodology and in the implications of their arguments. Philo and the writer of Wisdom of Solomon borrowed heavily from Platonism, each linking the Temple to a transcendent reality connecting the Jewish god to everyone regardless of religion. The writer of Aristeas turned to Tanakh to construct a vision of the Temple simultaneously grounded in Jewish hope and political expedience. The author of 3 Maccabees, in turn, made the temple a political symbol connecting communities whose members may never lay eyes upon each other. The Temple became a focus of greater communion in their hands, forging new connections between the Hellenistic world and Judaism writ large.

Though difficult to assume that these writers were mouthpieces for their communities, it is safe to say that they were writing with Alexandrian Jews as their primary audience with the intention of keeping their culture intelligible and their community intact. In their own ways, they sought to make Judaism accessible and logical to their readers and coreligionists. Though we are limited in our ability to gauge how well they succeeded in their projects, their influence on nascent Christianity – itself in part an attempt to interpret Jewish thought in the Greek world – should help demonstrate the lasting impact of their works.

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