



(סיכום באנגלית)

Reviewed work(s):

Source: *Zion / ציון*, Vol. (תשכ"ה), pp. I-IV

Published by: [Historical Society of Israel/](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/70053109>

Accessed: 19/11/2011 11:35

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Historical Society of Israel/ is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Zion /*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

SUMMARIES

THE PSALMS OF SOLOMON, THE HASMONEAN DECLINE, AND CHRISTIANITY

by JOSHUA EFRON

In the last century, a view has gained wide currency in scholarly circles that the pseudo-epigraphic collection of the "Psalms of Solomon" was compiled during the decline of the Hasmonean kingdom. The poet himself, as it were, witnesses fatal events, expresses the reactions and feelings of pious Jews concerning the degradation and death of the monarchy, Pompey's arrival in the country and his death on the Egyptian coast, chastises his sinful generation, justifies the divine punishment for Jerusalem, and hopes for speedy redemption. Prevalent views regarding this work — with the exception of a few faint voices of reservation — usually attribute it to the main stream of Pharisaism. They consider it a valuable, ancient, primary, and direct Palestinian source opening a window on the Pharisees' spiritual world and affording an understanding of Pharisaic Judaism's extreme negative position towards the Hasmonean monarchy. However, a painstaking analysis of the Psalms leads the author to completely reject this conception together with all its hypotheses and conclusions.

A scene of destruction, ruin, and mass exile unfolds as the background of the Psalms. Jerusalem jubilantly welcomes an anonymous, miraculous enemy who suddenly bursts into the country and deals it a blow spreading death and devastation. This chain of events and its consequences do not fit the circumstances of Pompey's expedition. The Psalms contain no echo of the protracted defense of the Temple Mount, of the internal clash of the various factions, or of other historical occurrences. Their writer does not distinguish between classes, trends, or parties, but denounces the sins of the entire people, on whom just punishment is to be visited. The only survivors are groups of virtuous pietists, who, fleeing the defiled city of Jerusalem, save themselves from the catastrophe, and wander about in the desert waiting for salvation.

Confronted with the disaster, the poet prays for divine vengeance and sees the enemy in the shape of a Dragon falling stabbed on the mountains of Egypt; the unburied carcass is swept away by waves. A faint similarity to the story of Pompey's death gave rise to the view held by scholars concerning the time and significance of the work. However, Pompey did not fall on mountains, and his corpse was not abandoned to the waves. The scene revealed to the poet is not realistic but appears in the form of a vision based on biblical prophecies and ancient imagery. Its latent meaning becomes clear in the light of Christian eschatology. The miraculous "enemy" who is also called "Dragon", "evil one," or "he who smites mightily" (according to Isaiah 14) is given the typical attributes of the anti-Christ; he personifies the false Messiah and Satan's messenger who will appear in a flash of lightning in the End of Days, make himself master of the Holy City, lead astray the people who despised true salvation, and drag it to destruction.

According to the Psalms, catastrophe was to be visited on Jerusalem, sunk in corruption, because its inhabitants plundered and defiled what was holy "as if there were no redeeming heir", stole divine promises, destroyed David's throne, and harassed his loyal followers. These accusations cannot possibly be imputed to the Hasmoneans and make no sense in their period; it paraphrases the classic Christian contention that Judea was

II

laid waste and the inhabitants driven out because they had sinned against their redeemer of the house of David, denied his kingdom, and persecuted his congregation.

The basic ideas, concepts, and terminology of the work are, in the writer's view, Christian, although they have been clothed in an ancient Israelite mantle and patterned on biblical psalms. Only the virtuous pietists merit future resurrection and salvation. Their morality demands humility, bending the back to blows, and a pure heart. Their religion is practised by prayer, confession, and fasting. Their observances contain no references to Temple sacrifices, the Sabbath, circumcision, and other obvious Jewish practices which the New Testament abolishes. Contrasting with them are descriptions of evil-doers, hypocrites, sycophants, rogues, and pervertors of the Law based on the negative traits enumerated by the Gospels.

A hymn to the Messiah in the last two Psalms presents the saviour and victor in the eschatological drama. In the writer's opinion, it conspicuously displays the characteristics of the Christian ideal in a biblical guise. The redeemer, a scion of the house of David, is pure, a pupil of God, destroys evil-doers by the very words of his mouth, has compassion for the peoples of the Earth, gathers his flock and watches over it, keeps all afflictions away from it, and pronounces his exalted and divinely-inspired sayings with great eloquence. In the new, purified Jerusalem, according to the Christian apocalyptic visions, there will be no sanctuary and no traces of a Jewish, national character.

PHILO'S HOMILIES ON FEAR AND LOVE AND THEIR RELATION

TO PALESTINIAN MIDRASHIM

by JOSHUA AMIR

Philo's homilies concerning the fear and love of God are based on a thesis shared by all the schools of Hellenistic philosophy: that fear is an inferior religious attitude. However, considerable vacillation can be detected in Philo's treatment of this point, which he discusses in many places. In *one* group of homilies, he accepts a prevalent view in Greek thought that the Lawgiver painted a terrifying image of God because that was the only way of forcing obedience to the Law on the mass of people and that only those who in their ignorance believe in this image acquire fear. In *another* group he recognizes severity or dominance as one aspect of God's true image. It depends on the degree of man's ethical and religious advancement (or on God's loving-kindness) whether he appeals fearfully to the severe image or in love to the compassionate image of God. Both divine attributes are alluded to in the Torah by the use of two different *names* of God. In the third group each of those attributes by itself presents an incomplete manifestation of God and the attitude towards a single one of them individually is therefore religiously inferior; to the devoutly pious individual God appears with both of His names simultaneously. It is noteworthy, however, that at this point, Philo deliberately refrains from reaching the logically obvious conclusion that the perfect attitude to God should also consist of a combination of fear and love.

Contrasting with all these numerous homilies, a single lengthy one, with which he begins the composition "Who is the Heir of Divine Things?" occupies an altogether isolated position. In this work, Philo puts into the mouth of Abraham an eloquent speech in which he thanks God for the synthesis of confidence (which is used here as a synonym for love) and fear in his heart. This genuine appreciation of fear clearly opposes whatever has been said elsewhere. In addition, this homily does not find sufficient support

in the scriptural passage (Genesis 15 : 2) as it is cited by Philo. In the Massoretical text, however, the verse begins with two *Divine Names* (of which only one appears in Philo), and it is obvious that those should have been the textual basis of the homily. This impression is strengthened by another verse (Isaiah 50 : 4), cited by Philo in the same passage, which begins with the same two Divine Names of the Massoretic text. From this it may be concluded that Philo is citing the paraphrase of another person's homily predicated not on the Greek but on the Hebrew text. Philo adopted this homily because of its strong religious sentiment, although it does not entirely fit his own conception of piety. It may be assumed that the author of that original homily was a Palestinian scholar who had come to Alexandria to preach.

If that is true, the homily must be assigned a place in the development of the Palestinian Midrash. However, the connection between severity and fear on the one hand, and mercy and love on the other, with which the homily deals, is alien to the Midrash. It may be conjectured that this connection was acknowledged in Palestine in Philo's period, but later it was discarded under the influence of the idea of accepting suffering with love.

SOME FEATURES OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN MEDIEVAL EGYPT

by E. ASHTOR

The writer attempts to answer the question whether or not the Jewish communities in medieval Egypt preserved the features characteristic of such communities in Hellenistic and Talmudic times or were molded on the pattern of their Moslem environment. Further he tries to elucidate some problems of communal life by showing them to be results of economic conditions, prevailing in medieval Egypt. Special emphasis is laid on the difference between the manifold activities and the relatively greater resources of the sizable Jewish community in the Egyptian capital and those in smaller, provincial localities.

Various Genizah documents lead to the conclusion that about 15% of the communities' members were the recipients of alms while power resided in the hands of a small group of rich merchants and tax farmers who constituted the upper class. As in the Moslem state and the Egyptian towns of the Middle Ages, no elections, as we understand them, were conducted, and only the archaic remnants of ancient democratic institutions survived.

The Jewish communities maintained synagogues, ritual baths, provided kosher food etc. and engaged in social welfare work, e.g., the weekly distribution of bread rations. The funds for these expenditures were derived partly from the rental of houses which were endowments possessed by the community and partly from self-assessed taxes.

The communities were administered in an entirely institutionalized manner, but only a few of the communal laws of this period in Egyptian Jewish history have survived. This fact points to the high degree of congruity between life in the Jewish communities and the dominant Moslem environment.

(to be concluded)

ANTISEMITISM IN HUNGARY AND ITS PLACE IN POLITICS, 1883-1887

by *Nathaniel Katzburg*

Modern antisemitism first made its appearance in Hungary in the mid 1870's, slowly gaining ground in subsequent years, particularly among the gentry and sections of the professional classes. An antisemitic party formed in 1883 won 17 seats in the general

elections of the following year. The party's ideology and program were tinged with strong conservative, anti-liberal and anti-capitalistic colouring. In view of this fact, antisemitism in Hungary at that time may be regarded as a manifestation of the deep resentment felt by a part of the dispossessed gentry and the conservative, middle-class urban elements against the new capitalistic order, of which the Jews were considered the principal bearers. Numerically weak and politically isolated, the party constituted an insignificant factor in the factional strife of the period. However, it was an effective instrument for influencing public opinion and disseminating anti-Jewish prejudices. Towards the end of the 1880's, a marked decline in the political strength of the antisemites became apparent as the result of internal dissension on the one hand and the hostile attitude of other political parties, on the other. Nevertheless, antisemitism during this period influenced anti-Jewish attitudes in later times. Such themes as the economic domination of the Jews and their alleged harmful and corrupting influence on the morals and spiritual life of non-Jewish society were vigorously given utterance in countless antisemitic publications in the 1880's and transmitted to subsequent antisemitic groups.

The clerical, antisemitic People's Party which came into being in the mid 1890's inherited many of the tenets of antisemites of the previous decade. Anti-Jewish ideas prevalent among the nationalistic right-wing groups after World War I can also be traced to the period under discussion.

Among the sources utilized by the author, in addition to contemporary antisemitic writings, were the records of the Hungarian parliament and dispatches sent by British consular and diplomatic representatives in Budapest and Vienna. A number of these dispatches, hitherto unpublished, are given in full in appendices I-VI. Unpublished Crown-copyright material in the Public Record Office, London, has been reproduced with the kind permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.

THE ST.-DENIS JEWS AND THEIR ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MONASTERY DURING THE TWELFTH CENTURY

by *A. Grabois*

The writer analyzes the contribution of the Jews to the economic development of the St.-Denis Abbey during the twelfth century. At the beginning of this period, money-lenders to the monastery also included Jews. The loans were subject to the customary interest rate of the time which amounted to 50% per annum. Jews settled in St.-Denis at the turn of the twelfth century probably as a consequence of the establishment of the local fair. In 1111, these Jews (five families, all told) were transferred to the jurisdiction of the abbot by King Louis VI. They became an important factor in the Abbey's economic prosperity. The writer believes that the contributions of these Jews to the development of the monastic demesne explain the favourable attitude of Abbot Suger to the Jews in general.