

JEWS AS BENEFACTORS¹

TESSA RAJAK

Philo opens his tract *On the Decalogue* by asking why Moses gave the laws in the desert rather than in a polis. The answer is concerned with the evils of city-life "In cities there arises that most insidious of foes, pride (τῦφος), and some people admire it and bow down to empty appearances of distinction and make it important by means of golden crowns and purple robes." He declares that "pride is the creator of many other evils: boastfulness, haughtiness, inequality²; and these are the sources of war, both foreign and civil". He also makes the fundamental claim that "pride brings divine things into contempt, although these ought to receive the highest honour (τιμῆ)." (*de Decal.* 1,4–7).

Josephus writes in similar vein in *Against Apion*, belittling the award of crowns and public announcements of honours: "for those who live by our laws, the reward is not silver or gold or a crown of olive or of parsley or any such proclamation." (CA II, 217–8). The allusion is surely not just to the time-honoured way of treating victors in the Olympic and other great games of Greece, as Thackeray's note suggests³, but rather to the modes of recognition of the powerful and

1. For the data-base and breakdowns on which this paper is based and for help of every kind, I am indebted to Dr David Noy of the Cambridge Jewish Inscriptions Project and Reading University.
2. Or perhaps "impiety", depending on the manuscript reading adopted (Colson prefers ἀνισότητος as in R to ανοσιότητος: see Loeb Philo VII, n. *ad de Decal.* I, 5).
3. Loeb Josephus, I. n. *ad loc.*

the munificent in the Greek civic milieu of Josephus' own day and age. The writer is making an ideological point, sharpening a distinction between Jews and pagans to establish an ethical contrast between two world views. He would not have needed, in this moralizing context, to take account of an awkward case like that of a man from Leontopolis in Egypt, perhaps a near contemporary of the historian. This was the most blessed Abraham ("Ἀβραῆμος ὁ μακαριστότατος), who was "not without honour" (*agerastos*) in his city but, in the interesting metaphor of his verse epitaph, "wore the wreath of magistracy for the whole people, in his wisdom."⁴

Once more in *Against Apion*, Josephus reminds readers that Jews, unlike Greeks, do not believe in making statues of those they like or admire (*CA II*, 74). Here, of course, the second commandment is at least as much a consideration as distrust of honours. And finally, at yet another point in that work, in a discussion of death, it is asserted by Josephus that "the Jewish law does not allow for expensive funerals or the erection of conspicuous monuments." (*CA II*, 205). This is another way in which the display values of the late Greek polis are undercut, at least in theory. In fact, we may be inclined to think that the tombs of the high priests in Jerusalem, still visible in the Kidron valley, told another story; but it might then be suggested that, in Jerusalem, Jewish self-differentiation from Greco-Roman values was less necessary. In any case, we need not be wholly surprised to find practice diverging from principle.

Visible abstention from social competition and from its various manifestations was a way of marking out a community from its civic environment and binding it together. This at least partly explains the stress laid upon such ideas by another diaspora Jew, Paul of Tarsus, as he sought to define a place in society for the developing Christian church.⁵ The Epistle to the Romans (12.3) offers, appropriately

4. *CPJ* III 1530A.

5. I am indebted to Halvor Moxnes for suggesting connections between this

enough, a particularly clear statement: "I say to everyone among you: do not be conceited or think too highly of yourself; but think your way to a sober estimate based on the measure of faith that God has dealt to each of you. For just as in a single human body there are many limbs and organs, all with different functions, so all of us, united with Christ, form one body."

It is instructive, and also ironic, to note that these critiques are expressed in terms indebted to Greek culture itself, even if they are fuelled, ultimately, by a biblical sense of justice. For there is a familiar *topos* favoured by writers of Stoic inclination – though not necessarily of modest lifestyle – which bears a clear resemblance to our theme, especially as Josephus expresses it. Plutarch, a near-contemporary, has this *topos* on occasion. But particularly with Dio Chrysostom, the second-century orator from Prusa, it is a characteristic stance to denounce the pursuit of public popularity. For him the absurdities of honours offer an excellent subject for satire or vituperation. So, Dio describes how cities "led their victims about with a sprig of green, as men lead cattle, or clapped upon their heads a crown or a ribbon" (*Or.* 66,2). Some men might be equipped with any number of crowns: olive, oak, ivy, myrtle. Yet, he says, the cost of getting a purple mantle from the dyers is less than getting it by public award. No nanny-goat would hurl herself over a cliff for the sake of a sprig of wild olive, and no sane person would walk around with his head bound unless he had suffered a fracture (*Or.* 66, 4–5). But with Dio, the whole issue is given a Stoic twist which is crucial to his philosophical position: to pursue δόξα, fame, is to be the victim of a passion like any other, and thus to be at the mercy of people and events and so unable to achieve true happiness.⁶ This conclusion puts an entirely different complexion on the matter from that in Philo and Josephus.

strand in Paul's thought, and civic patronage, in a paper given to a conference of Aarhus University.

6. On these themes in the speeches of Dio Chrysostom, who still endorsed

The various practices from which the two major Jewish-Greek writers distance themselves are ones which, at any rate from the Hellenistic period, were deeply ingrained in the fabric of city life around the Greek world and in areas influenced by it. We need to define it more closely, if we are to understand the Jewish reaction.⁷ The bestowal of lavish honours on those who had power, which might be manifested through office-holding, through personal connections, through family prominence, or, most often, through all three, and nearly always with the accompaniment of conspicuous wealth, was one of the most visible features in the life of a city. Those honours were the repayment for an expenditure of a large part of that wealth within the public domain, for supposed benefits, demonstratively conferred on the citizens. And they were a not-too-subtle statement to the donor that he had a reputation which could only be kept up by further benefaction.

So, those who were honoured were honoured not just for what they were or even for what they had achieved, but by way of trade-off for what they had done or given or were going to do or to give, for the enhancement of the city and for the advantage of its gods or its people. In a watered-down form, such phenomena are perfectly familiar today. But in the Greco-Roman world, they made up a tighter structure, with patterns that were more fixed, and they were also more crucial to the working of the cities and to social relations. Paul Veyne regards the unusual combination of apparently contradictory features, a sense of constraint on the one hand, and a measure of spontaneity, as the

generosity to one's city, see C.P. Jones, *The Roman World of Dio Chrysostom* (Cambridge, 1978), 110 ff.

7. For an excellent discussion of the system of benefaction in relation to synagogue construction, see now L. Michael White, *Building God's House in the Roman World: Architectural Adaptation among Pagans, Jews and Christians* (Baltimore and London, 1990), chap. 4.

distinguishing mark of Greco-Roman euergetism.⁸ Public buildings and works, provisioning, politics and diplomacy, entertainment and festivals, religious life, medicine: all these a city was likely to owe to its benefactors, who were usually prominent citizens, but occasionally interested outsiders. The process was also, as Philo and Josephus well appreciated, an intrinsic part of the moral formation of the pagan elites: benefactors were praised in the highest terms, and the φιλανθρωρία, μεγαλοψυχία and "amor civicus" which generated their actions were deemed supreme virtues.

It is because the system was so distinctive and so central that recent historians have found it useful to attach a name to it: it has become known as "euergetism", from the Greek *euergetes*, meaning a benefactor. The manifestations of classical euergetism are familiar to us largely through an extensive and increasing epigraphic record. Euergetism went hand in hand with the "epigraphic habit", since, in the first place, it was advantageous to donors to put their donations on public record, while, from the other side, honours could be made meaningful by being perpetuated in stone by a grateful recipient community or its representatives. Thus the act of giving could be made to serve not just the donor but his children and descendants, and the social standing of an entire family could be enhanced.⁹

8. Paul Veyne, *Bread and Circuses* (abridged English translation, London, 1990), 103.
9. Veyne's landmark study appeared in French in 1976; *Le pain et le cirque: sociologie historique d'un pluralisme politique* (Paris, 1976). Cf. A.R. Hands, *Charities and Social Aid in Greece and Rome* (London, 1968), chap. 2. Other important studies tend to focus on individual foundations: recently, and with bibliography, see Guy M. Rogers, "Demosthenes of Oenoanda and Models of Euergetism", *JRS* 81 (1991), 91–100. See also a collection of translated texts primarily for students of the New Testament: Frederick W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St Louis, 1982).

Honorific decrees are often framed in the most lavish of terms. Moreover, a city council's resolution that decrees should be inscribed on a stele in a prominent place is itself sometimes listed as one of the honours accorded to the honorand. It has been aptly pointed out that there is a careful reciprocation in the transactions, with honours being seen as due payment for services rendered. In fact, honours might well be spoken of as having to be commensurate in quantity and quality with the benefactions, as well as with the importance of the individual in question. Honours ranged from crowns, wreaths, and titles, to front seats at ceremonial occasions (προεδρία), the linking of parts of festivals or of whole festivals to the name of the donor, statues in precious metals, freedom from obligations, further and higher offices, and perpetuation to eternity of some or all of these benefits.

There were evidently local and temporal variations in custom (it would seem that honours became more elaborate as time went on), but on the whole the system surprises us with its uniformity. One typical instance – so typical, indeed, as to be described as "banale" by its editor – will therefore suffice for illustration: in the decree of the city of Kyme now in the J. Paul Getty Museum, which probably dates from the Augustan period and which honours the *prytanis* Kleanax, it is on record that this man's ancestral nobility of character (ἀμφιθάλα, εὐγένη[*sic*]) and his goodwill toward the people εἰς φιλοδοξίαν had made him overlook no opportunity of conferring benefit upon them. φιλοδοξία combined with εὐσέβεια had ensured extensive subvention of the mysteries of Dionysus, with public banquets and, of course, wine. His education of his son (obviously a future benefactor) merited special comment. The imperial cult had been well served. Altogether, an open and shut case for a gold crown. It is not clear, due to defects in the stone, what other rewards Kleanax received. It is worth pointing out that Kleanax does not appear to have belonged to the very highest social stratum in Kyme.¹⁰

10. The inscription is published by René Hodot in *Journal of the J. Paul Getty*

To get the honours right was vital in order to secure future services, from the donor in question or from others, and sometimes the gifts expected in the future are even spelled out in an inscription. Also, we find a number of formulae in which the donor is described as an example to others; and the actual inscription itself may also be explained as being intended to inspire emulation. Indeed, it is in this light that the various terms of praise for the generosity and the moral qualities of the donor should be seen, especially the stress on the virtues of φιλοτιμία or φιλοδοξία, love of honour of glory – precisely those attributes which Jews professed to disregard.¹¹

An additional feature to be observed in certain inscriptions is that there exists an opportunity for self-congratulation even for the givers-of-thanks: to pay due acknowledgement is itself an act within the sphere of public morality.¹²

It is clear that in the civic context and even more widely, on the regional and imperial levels, euergetism played a major economic role, though how far it is right to analyse it ultimately in those terms is a matter of disagreement: Paul Veyne would say rather little, stressing that the self-gratification of the donor, and the accumulation of honour and of power, are basic commodities in this kind of transaction, which needs therefore to be analysed in terms of social relationships and not of economic rationality. I shall not enter into these theoretical questions here. What is more to the point is to notice that the same patterns of language and behaviour operated also on a smaller scale, within the

Museum 9 (1982), 165–80; I owe my acquaintance with it to an unpublished seminar paper given by Riet van Bremen at the Institute of Classical Studies, London.

11. On *philotimia* manifested by gods when they are honoured, see the interesting remarks of H.S. Versnel, "Religious Mentality in Ancient Prayer", in H. Versnel (ed.), *Faith, Hope and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World* (Leiden, 1981), 51.
12. A striking example is Danker no. 15, from Iasos.

clubs and associations with which the cities proliferated. These too had their patrons, their notables and their benefactors, and they too honoured them in a variety of ways.¹³ We recall Polybius' unforgettable remarks about those wealthy families in Boeotia who had distributed the greater part of their fortunes among the clubs, so that many Boeotians had more dinners in the month than there were days in the calendar (XX, 6–7). In such a context, we quite often see individuals of moderate means acting out the roles of the good and the great.

Thus two major questions arise, when we come to consider the Jews. First, did they have any role to play in the civic euergetism of their environments, or rather was their reluctance to accept its principles a factor which contributed to marginalizing them? Second, did they take on board any aspect of these practices within their own organizations, and if they did, are there any signs of limits being set to their adoption? The protests of Philo and Josephus offer a background against which to ask these questions.

The foreground, as with the study of pagan euergetism, is necessarily epigraphic. Diaspora Jews, and in due course those in Palestine too, participated in the "epigraphic habit" and, as is well known, we have a body of inscriptions concerning benefactions within a Jewish or Judaizing context. Baruch Lifshitz¹⁴ collected the majority of them, a total of 102. His valuable collection with its commentary is the basis for this study and, indeed, a stimulus to it. Those rare cases where the benefaction is not synagogue-related, or ones where the benefactor appears not to be a Jew, as well as those in languages other than Greek, and of course those surfacing since 1967, are not included in the volume. In contrast to Lifshitz, I shall take into account the small number of relevant Latin inscriptions along with the Greek, though it is hard sometimes to avoid the shorthand "Greek inscriptions", because

13. See Hands, *op. cit.* (n. 9), 49–53.

14. *Donateurs et fondateurs dans les synagogues juives* (Paris, 1976).

that is what the bulk of them are. Aramaic and Hebrew material will appear here only peripherally.

Our theme is the Jewish Diaspora. This delimitation introduces a certain arbitrary element when it comes to inscriptions, and indeed, to Jewish communities, since there is no hard-and-fast distinction between a Diaspora Greek city, a city within Palestine but with a cosmopolitan population, like Caesarea, one on the fringes of Palestine such as Gadara, and one a little further afield but still within the same cultural world, for example, Beirut. One might adopt the Talmudic definitions of what was a Jewish city, but that would not advance matters very far. If we stop for a moment to consider Jerusalem itself, we recall that it is the provenance of one of our most important donor inscriptions, the text about the refurbishment by Theodotus son of Vettenu of the synagogue founded by his forbears (Lifshitz 79; *CIJ* II, 1404). We also recall that the apparently Roman name "Vettenu" has encouraged a *communis opinio* that this was a family of returnees from Rome; that, then, is where the father and grandfather will have been *archisynagogoi*. It becomes arbitrary to exclude even the Theodotus inscription. Then again, in terms of cultural patterns, Syria seems to be closer to Palestine sometimes than to what is regarded as the Diaspora. We shall see an example of this later. A further complication is that, when it comes to synagogue building within Palestine, donors are recorded in the Galilean villages of the later Roman empire, and not only in cities and towns, so we are no longer dealing with a civic phenomenon; these inscriptions are more often in Hebrew or Aramaic than in Greek.

These are very real problems and I do not pretend that I can see exactly how they should be dealt with. They affect discussion of the Greco-Roman Diaspora over a wide range of issues, and they suggest that the Diaspora-Palestine distinction may not always be the most useful one with which to operate, in writing the Jewish history of this period. Now, however, I shall better stick to my brief and keep my subject within limits, if I not only restrict the main discussion to texts in

Greek or Latin, but also direct the focus onto those which technically originate from outside Palestine.

There survive four reasonably extended texts concerning individual benefactions in a Jewish context, apart from the Theodotus inscription. One (from Berenice in Cyrenaica) in fact involves a non-Jewish patron of the Jewish community. The Aphrodisias inscription, which is the longest known Jewish inscription, concerns two groups of contributors to a foundation, including both Jews (among them proselytes) and sympathizers. Significant groups of benefactors are listed in the fourth major text, once again from Berenice. Groups also appear in a series of small inscriptions, as contributors to a mosaic floor in late fourth century Apamea in Syria, and at Sardis where they contribute to the wall-paintings of the synagogue, in much the same period. In the synagogue of Naro (Hamman Lif), the mosaic was also paved collectively.¹⁵ The group at Hammath Tiberias does not concern us.

A few middle-length inscriptions are of enormous interest, especially, perhaps, that concerning a woman called Tation in Phocaea, Ionia – whose Jewishness has also been doubted; that of the refurbishers of Julia Severa's synagogue at Akmonia, Phrygia, where the builder herself had been a pagan priestess; and that of Polycharmus, the *archisynagogos* at Stobi, Macedonia.

Short texts are occasionally of special note, as is the dedication of Publius Rutilius Ioses (thus disentangled by L. Robert, from the letters PROUTIOSES), an ἀξιολογώτατος ἀρχισυνάγωγος in Teos in Ionia (Lifshitz 16; *CIJ* II, 744). Often enough, we are just dealing with scraps, perhaps a name or a couple of names and a formula. All this is, in fact, very far from the verbose world of pagan epigraphic benefaction and honour. It may seem surprising, then, that I should claim the possibility of drawing any conclusions at all about Jews and euergetism. Yet a careful study, in which the dossier is considered as a

15. See Y. Le Bohec, "Inscriptions juives et judaisantes de l'Afrique romaine", *Antiquités Africaines* 17 (1981), 165–70.

whole rather than as individual items, throws up some striking possibilities.

For this purpose, a body of 94 inscriptions was studied. This number excludes those from Palestine, which Lifshitz included, but adds to his list several items in the categories already mentioned, including the Aphrodisias inscription, two items from Egypt, one Ptolemaic and one Roman, some short texts from Hammam Lif and Utica in Africa, an inscription from Ostia, and one from Philippopolis (Plovdiv) in Thrace. While not every one of these can receive individual discussion here, my general observations and tentative conclusions are based on this corpus. I have not been able to take into account material from Sardis, beyond what was known to Lifshitz, though when all of this is eventually published, it will obviously be of very great importance. A pair of inscriptions from the Samaritan community on Delos, who, as is well known, describe themselves as Israelites from Shechem, have here to be excluded from the reckoning, though not because they are undeserving of attention.

The overwhelming majority of inscriptions, while giving the names and sometimes the offices of donors, do not describe honours accorded to them. If we compare the non-Jewish epigraphy, this is already a striking fact, even taking into account the accidents of survival. Six post third century Syrian inscriptions might be deemed an exception in that they confer blessings on the donors or on their memories and in one case on their children too; this pattern is also found in nine late texts from Palestine, but nowhere else.

What of honours proper? Is there evidence that benefactors in the Diaspora Jewish milieu were repaid with visible honours, as was normal in a euergetic system, but as should have been discouraged, if the principles of Philo and Josephus meant anything?

It does seem to be the case that Jews did not honour one another with statues. There is one possible exception, but it is a very dubious one. This is an Egyptian fragment now in the Hermitage (Lifshitz 98), in which one Artemon son of Nikon, eleven times a *prostotes*, is

recorded, apparently, as having given something to a synagogue (probably that term is to be taken in the sense of "community"). This inscription in fact derives from a statue base, no doubt belonging to Artemon's honorific statue (a fact seemingly unknown to Lifshitz). However, it seems that we should probably discount altogether any Jewish attachment. A *synagoge* can also be a pagan grouping in Egypt and other places, and there are no other indicators of Jewishness, even if both Artemon and Nikon are names used by Jews. Were this to be taken as a Jewish inscription, it would constitute a striking exception on existing evidence.¹⁶

We now need to consider other kinds of honours conferred on benefactors. There are five clear-cut instances, three from Cyrenaica. It is important to note that all five may be described as in some sense marginal. I use the word "marginal" neutrally, without begging any questions, and its implications will emerge in the course of discussion.

One of the inscriptions from Berenice, now in Toulouse¹⁷, is a virtually complete decree made at the *sukkoth* convention (σύλλογος) honouring a certain M. Tittius, son of Sestus, evidently a Roman official (ἑπαρχος), who has been a patron both to the Jewish πολίτευμα and to individual members. He is to receive an olive wreath and a wool fillet at each assembly (σύνοδος) and at each new moon, and the archons are to have the decree itself inscribed on marble in the most prominent position in the amphitheatre. The garlanding may well presuppose the existence of a statue. Tittius himself is described as a

16. For arguments against the Jewishness of this inscription, see William Horbury and David Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Cambridge, 1992), no. 20, where it is now newly edited. Cf. no. 26, for an even more dubious case of what may have been a statue connected with a possibly judaizing association.

17. G. Lüderitz, *Corpus jüdischer Zeugnisse aus der Cyrenaika, mit einem Anhang von Joyce M. Reynolds* (Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des vorderen Orients Reihe B, 53, Wiesbaden 1983), no. 71.

man καλὸς καὶ ἀγαθός, but no further praise is offered. Arguably, no more would be expected, however, at so early a date as this: the inscription is perhaps even as early as the first century B.C., but more likely belongs to the first half of the first century A.D.¹⁸ In general terms, we see here a Jewish community honouring a pagan benefactor in the established Greek way. The question arises whether the amphitheatre was that of the city, in which the Jews as a group could conceivably have had a share and perhaps their own patch, or an oval building of their own, as was already proposed by Applebaum.¹⁹

Applebaum's solution would seem to be demanded by the sister inscription, where the amphitheatre of Berenice figures prominently. This decree honours M. Valerius Dionysius, also a Roman citizen, as the *tria nomina* indicate (though no tribe is given) and it is now to be found in Carpentras, of all places.²⁰ For Dionysius had surfaced the amphitheatre's floor and decorated its walls. His rewards are comparable, with the addition of freedom from liturgies. But since those liturgies can only be understood as those paid to the Jewish *politeuma* (such terminology can be paralleled in pagan epigraphy in the context of clubs and associations), Dionysius is normally taken as a member of that *πολίτευμα* and therefore as a Jew. I cannot see any way round this conclusion: we otherwise have to go to the lengths of supposing that Dionysius has refurbished the *city's* amphitheatre, that he has been honoured by the city's archons for it (the largely pagan names given for the archons might support this) and that the Jewish *πολίτευμα*, being a constituent part of the city, has joined with the archons in endorsing those honours, as part of the give-and-take

18. The identification of the dating era remains uncertain. For the early dating, see Martha W. Baldwin Bowsky, "M. Tittius Sex. F. Aem. and the Jews of Berenice (Cyrenaica)", *AJPh* 108 (1987), 495–510.

19. Shimon Applebaum, *Jews and Greeks in Ancient Cyrene* (Leiden, 1979), 164–7.

20. *CJZC* 70, with bibliography.

process in a highly integrated city²¹. If we do not accept this last, rather strained reconstruction, then we have here a case of a Hellenized and Romanized Jew honoured in Greek style, just possibly even with a statue, though that, it should be stressed, is nowhere mentioned in what survives of the text. The alternative reconstruction would show us the Jews as a community operating freely within the Greek euergetic pattern, in relation to an outsider and to the affairs of the city. Both scenarios would be remarkable and the Berenice community was indubitably a remarkable community. But we should treat it not as a unique case to be explained away, but as a fortunate surviving instance of what could be possible in certain circumstances.

At Akmonia in Phrygia, an interesting mixed environment of a different kind,²² the three first century restorers of the synagogue earlier established by Julia Severa were honoured by the community for their virtuous benevolence and zeal with a golden shield (Lifshitz 33; *CIJ II*, 766). The honour is a familiar one; so too are the virtues; but in the Jewish world they stand out. The donations are explained as having been made ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων, from the individuals' own resources. Of the dedicators, one is a Roman citizen, P. Turrionius Cladus; he and Lucius son of Lucius are *archisynagogoi*, the former for life (διὰ βίου),²³ and the third individual is described as an archon. Julia Severa, the foundress, is attested as a pagan priestess on the city's coinage, while

21. I am grateful to Joyce Reynolds for discussing this problem with me.

22. On this environment, see A.R.R. Sheppard, "Jews, Christians and Heretics in Acmonia and Eumeneia", *Anatolian Studies* 29 (1979), 169–80; P. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor* (Cambridge, 1991), 58–84. There is much that is still of value in W.M. Ramsay, *The Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia* vol. I, part 2 (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1897), who perhaps over-estimates actual Jewish involvement in the society.

23. On the significance of this title, see T. Rajak and D. Noy, "Archisynagogoi: Office, Title and Social Status in the Greco-Jewish Synagogue", *JRS* 83 (1993), 80–98.

the Turronii were a well-known family in pagan Akmonia. The presumption is that this Turronius Cladus, being an *archisynagogos* is attached to the Jewish community (I deliberately put it no more strongly than this). It makes sense that in such circles, the honour system should be firmly rooted. It is noteworthy, on the other hand, that a degree of restraint is observable in its application: there is no statue mentioned, and the praise is modest.

In the old Greek colony of Phocaea, in Ionia, Tation daughter of Straton, who was the son of Empedon, was honoured by the synagogue for favours to the Jews (Lifshitz 13; *CIJ* II, 738). Some have taken this formulation to suggest that she herself was not in any real sense Jewish, which is certainly not to be excluded²⁴. If this were the case, then the construction of a meeting place (οἶκος) and courtyard for which she was honoured with a gold crown and προεδρία (a front seat) would be another instance of Jewish involvement in the wider honour system of the city. We would be witnessing a mutual exchange of courtesies, with Tation appearing on occasion in the synagogue to take up her front seat. If Tation was Jewish, which is more likely, then the gold crown is something to be remarked on; but so, too, perhaps, is the absence of encomium. It is worth pointing out, however, that Jewish communities appear to have had no difficulty about awarding gold crowns to rulers who were benefactors, and even displaying them in (or perhaps in the entrance to) synagogues.²⁵

24. See Trebilco, *op. cit.* (n. 19), 230, n. 34. On Tation, see also Bernadette J. Brooten, *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue* (Brown Judaic Studies 36 Chico, California, 1982), 143–4.

25. See Philo, *Legatio* 133, with discussion in E. Mary Smallwood *Philonis Alexandrini Legatio ad Gaium* (Leiden, 1961), n. *ad. loc.*, 220–1. To Smallwood's list of Jewish honours to rulers from the Roman period, add Alexander Scheiber, *Jewish Inscriptions in Hungary* (Budapest, 1983), no. 3: a soldier who seems to be an *archisynagogos*, for the safety of Alexander Severus.

There are also two honorific decrees of a very fragmentary nature. One from Samos, of which three fragments survive, is apparently a decree by the presbyters of the Jews, and its concern seems to be with honours. We can make out here some of the characteristic language of the conferring of honours.²⁶ The second is a damaged Latin text from Castel Porziano, south east of Ostia, in which the word "universitas" has been supplemented before "Iudaeorum" and a plot of land is given to a *gerousiarch*, for a family tomb; this is done presumably, though not explicitly, as a recompense for his services (*CIJ* 533).

An interesting and difficult document from Tlos in Lycia (*CIJ* 757) has a citizen called Ptolemaios Leukios setting up a tomb for his family, under public protection, though at his own expense, as a consequence of his having held office – ὑπὲρ ἀρχοντείας τελουμένους. In this formula, the office-holder is conceived of as a *euergetes*, who is owed something by the city.

Now it is a possibility which we have to acknowledge that the donors in the bulk of our inscriptions were simply not big enough people to receive crowns, shields or garlands: had they been wealthy enough to give on a large scale they might, it could be argued, have done so. The lack of awards and eulogies would then tell us more about the economic status of Jewish communities than about their values and beliefs. And indeed many donations seem to be moderate, consisting in portions of a synagogue floor or wall, or perhaps an accoutrement or vessel. Perhaps one third of donors are not specified as title-holders.

Where there are groups of donors, the cost of an operation is split, and separate names or groups of names may be recorded, but that record, as one among many, is the only visible honour conferred. In the case of the Berenice group of AD 56 (*CJZC* 72), where sums of money are, uniquely, given, these range from ten drachmas from each of ten archons of the community, and from one priest, to twenty eight from

26. ἐτίμησαν πάσας δόξη[ς] ἀνέθηκα[ν] For the inscription see B. Lifshitz in *CIJ* I, ed. 2, Prolegomenon, 89 (731f).

one individual without office and twenty five from each of two others. Further names are missing. The great new Aphrodisias inscription, which lists those responsible for a mysterious memorial, gives a large number of names, perhaps the entire roster of the equally opaque *dekania*, which may or may not have included also the sympathizers on the second face of the stone.²⁷

It is tempting to argue that these and other group donations are nothing less than another strategy to minimize the impact of the donor and his or her wealth within the Jewish community, by asserting the act of giving as a communal and equalizing activity, not a field for display, for the exercise of power or the accumulation of privilege. The identity of the sums given by each and every one of the listed Berenice archons might support this case. Office-holding in that society carried its obligations, but was scarcely a route to outshining others. Lists of group donations are not unique to Jewish communities,²⁸ but they do seem to have taken root in the Jewish environment.

Our last major inscription, a 32-line text known since 1931, suggests another strategy for taking the donor out of the limelight, and that is to link the donation into the sphere of religious obligation. Claudius Tiberius Polycharmus of Stobi in Macedonia could have been no mean donor. This is suggested both by his Roman citizenship, evidently predating A.D. 212 and by what he owned: a property with a courtyard in the city large enough for him to hand over a major part of it, so that its downstairs could serve as a synagogue and a communal facility. He has the respected position of being father of the synagogue. But he makes over the gift εὐχῆς ἕνεκα, in fulfilment of a vow. That being so, self-advertisement is not in order, and we do not find any in the

27 J. Reynolds and R. Tannenbaum, "Jews and Godfearers at Aphrodisias" (Cambridge Philological Society, supplementary volume 12, Cambridge, 1987).

28 See Hands, *op.cit.* (n.9), 51, for examples of collective donations in the Greek world.

text. The detailed record of the donation appears to be designed largely to clarify the legal position, enshrining the right of Polycharmus and his heirs to the upper storey of the house, and securing against any change to the arrangements by the imposition of a fine to be paid to the patriarch (presumably a local Jewish official). More recent excavations have established something of an archaeological context for the inscription, though its date remains controversial. Fresco fragments in red on white repeat Polycharmus's name, with the formula Τιβέριος πατήρ εύχήν.²⁹

The vow formula is repeated in numerous small inscriptions, to be precise, we find it in 42 of them, in one form or another. In inscriptions that can be established as later in date, the formula ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας (*pro salute*) tends to take over, but to have the same implications. So standard are they that it is hard to decide whether a real vow was to be seen as underlying the donation in every case. These votive formulae are perfectly well-known in pagan contexts, where they are normally associated with various smaller or larger thank-offering dedications to deities. But the high correlation of votive formulae with essential building projects seems to be a distinctive feature of the Jewish epigraphy.³⁰

Yet another such strategy is what might be called the Sardis formula, where a contribution, instead of being described as coming from the individual's own resources in the customary fashion, is rather specified as the gift of God, or, more often, of the divine πρόνοια. This formula

29 See J. Wiseman and D. Mano-Zissi, "Excavations at Stobi", *AJA* 75, 1971, 395–411; Martin Hengel, "Die Synagogeninschrift von Stobi", *ZNTW* 57 (1966), 145–83.

30 On votive formulae, cf. Lea Roth-Gerson, "Similarities and Differences in Greek Synagogue Inscriptions of Eretz-Israel and the Diaspora", in *Synagogues in Antiquity*, eds. A. Kasher, A. Oppenheimer, U. Rappaport (Jerusalem, 1987), 133–46. For the pagan context, W.H.D. Rouse, *Greek Votive Offerings* (Cambridge, 1902).

appears in Lifshitz 20, where the editor adduces later Christian material; we now know, from circulated but unpublished texts, that it was widespread in the city. There is one parallel from Aegina (*CIJ* 722), Sardinian variants are, ἐκ τῶν τῆς προνοίας δομάτων and ἐκ τῶν δωρεῶν τοῦ παντοκράτορος θεοῦ and, more concisely, just *ek ton tes pronoias*. Tom Kraabel has in this symposium associated the formula with the cultured neo-Platonist milieu of late Roman Sardis; but the term πρόνοια for the deity is rooted in Greek-Jewish thought, being quite at home in Josephus.³¹

The ultimate strategy comes in a late inscription from Scythopolis (Beth She'an).³² This might be thought to represent a more extreme self-effacement than anything from the Greco-Roman Diaspora, because here the contributors to a sixth-century mosaic floor are anonymous and we are explicitly informed that their names are known to God. Perhaps those names were not entirely unknown to friends and neighbours either! Such a formula has affiliations, on the one hand, with Palestinian Aramaic synagogue dedications, with their characteristic Semitic request that the donor be remembered for good: there is obvious mutual influence between the Aramaic and Greek styles in Palestinian dedications, but the directions of influence are not easy to

31 On the synagogue inscriptions, see G.M.A. Hanfmann, "The Sixth Campaign at Sardis (1963)", *BASOR* 174 (1964), 3–58 (30 ff., The Synagogue, by D.G. Mitten; cf. A.T. Kraabel, "Impact of the Discovery of the Sardis Synagogue", in *Sardis from Prehistoric to Roman Times. Results of the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis 1958–75*, ed. G.M.A. Hanfmann (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), 178–90.

32 See Lea Roth-Gerson, *The Greek Inscriptions from the Synagogues in Eretz-Israel* (לשאלת ישראל הכתובות היווניות מבתי הכנסת בארץ ישראל) (Jerusalem, 1987), no. 9; Frowald Hüttenmeister and Gottfried Reeg, *Die antiken Synagogen in Israel*, vol. I (Wiesbaden, 1977), 62, no. 4.

disentangle.³³ On the other hand, the formula points forward to Christian epigraphy, which takes it up: a little text from Grado in northern Italy, for example, *both* gives us the name of a donor and then solemnly says "cuius nomen deus escit". We might also compare the wording of the Aramaic inscription from the synagogue of Severus at Hammath Tiberias: "may peace be to all those who donated in this holy place and who in the future will donate."³⁴ The different strategies I have pointed to will not have been employed with equal enthusiasm in all communities at all times. Local patterns can be dimly discerned. Yet it is not fanciful to detect also a certain consistency of principle, limits beyond which Jewish communities could not allow themselves to go in adopting local modes of giving and of honouring, limits which allow us to suggest that somewhere in this area lay one of the defining marks which were seen by Diaspora Jews as distinguishing them from their neighbours. If this suggestion is right, then they will have been striking an extremely delicate balance, doing things the Greek way up to a point, but stopping short where it mattered to them. It is the setting of that sticking point which constitutes the art of Diaspora living, and perhaps the art of being an ethnic or religious minority of any kind.

33 For discussion of Greek influence on the Hebrew/Aramaic formulae, see Roth-Gerson, *op.cit* (n. 30); for another angle on the formulae, Gideon Foerster, "Ancient Synagogue Inscriptions and their Relation to Prayers and Blessings" קתדרה, כתובות מבתי־הכנסת העתיקים וזיקתן לנוסחים של ברכה ותפילה) 19 (1981), 12–46. For donation in Palestine, A. Kindler, "Donations and Taxes in the Society of the Jewish Villages in Eretz Israel during the third to sixth centuries C.E.", in *Synagogues in Antiquity* (see n. 25), 55–6; also in R. Hachlili, ed., *Ancient Synagogues in Israel. Third-Seventh Century C.E.* (BAR International Series, 499, Oxford, 1989). For Aramaic and Hebrew texts, see J. Naveh, *On Stone and Mosaic* (על פסיפס ואבן: הכתובות הארמיות והעבריות) (Tel-Aviv, 1979)

34 See M. Dothan, "The Aramaic Inscription from the Synagogue of Severus at Hamat Tiberias", *Eretz Israel* 8 (1967), 183–5 (Hebrew); 73–4 (English).

We might go further, and suggest that there are some practices or features of life in the host community which will acquire a symbolic value. They are perceived as a danger area, standing for what is alien, controversial, impermissible. This conscious distancing from selected items in a culture is as significant a part of acculturation as the corresponding, and more often remarked on, process of selective appropriation.

Jews in the cities were not outside the framework of euergetism. Indeed, within it they manifested a complex interaction with the society around them. Through its agency, important political gestures were made. A pagan woman might build a synagogue; so might a centurion in Palestine, who sympathized with Judaism (Acts 10–11). A Roman administrator might be honoured in an amphitheatre. There are even possible instances of Jews making contributions to pagan cults: at Iasos, a Jerusalemite called Niketas son of Jason, specified as a μέτοικος, contributed to the Dionysia, and two further donors are described as Iouda (*CIJ* 749). At Smyrna, οἱ πότε Ἰουδαῖοι, participate in honouring Hadrian, appearing in a 45-line list of donors (*CIJ* 742). This last phrase is particularly intriguing.

At the same time, it is hard to believe that the absence in the Jewish epigraphy of virtually all the language in which the transactions of euergetism can be conducted can be no accident. To enter the Jewish world, as a sympathizer or proselyte, would have been to learn a new dialect of a familiar language.

For Paul Veyne, Christian society substituted charity for euergetism - to his mind, an entirely different concept,³⁵ involving a radical redefinition of philanthropy. In the new version, individual self-gratification is no longer the leading currency of privilege. Veyne suggests more than once that the changed concept had its roots in Judaism; and in a general sense this must be right. But I am not sure that this sharp dichotomy can deal adequately with a very complex

35 *op.cit.* (n. 9), 19–34.

process of change. As far as the Jews of the Greco-Roman Diaspora go, the evidence for charitable foundations is slight indeed. Still, we can now say that if the *πάτελλα* of the Aphrodisias inscription was indeed a soup kitchen (*ἰοκητή*), as Reynolds and Tannenbaum, its editors, inventively propose,³⁶ then we would have, through that one word, extraordinary epigraphic evidence of a real alternative to civic pride and self-aggrandizement, set in a judaizing context, yet close to the heart of the city, and involving even town councillors of pagan Aphrodisias. I have to confess, however, that I have my doubts about that *πάτελλα* – though what it was, I cannot tell you.

36 *op.cit.* (n. 24), 26–8.