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Yair Hoffman

"Peri Twn Dekan Logwn Oi Kefalaia Nomwn Eisin"
The Status of the Decalogue in the Hebrew Bible

A common view is that although direct and unequivocal references to the Decalogue (Exodus 20:1–17; Deuteronomy 5:6–21) are very infrequent in the (Hebrew) Bible it is still referred to many times by way of indirect allusions which allegedly prove the eminent status of the Decalogue in Israel of the biblical period. This paper challenges the prevalent view. It is argued that in fact no more than three verified references to the whole Decalogue could be found. Hence serious doubts should be raised about the alleged exceptionally high status in the Bible of the Decalogue as well as to its assumed cultic *Sitz im Leben*. These and other related problems are discussed in the paper.

Sylvie Honigman

The Description of Judaea in the Letter of Aristeas, 83–106

Whereas modern scholars have long been suspicious about the historical reliability of the main story in the Letter of Aristeas numerous details found in this work have been accepted as facts and used for historical reconstruction by historians and archaeologists. The present paper argues that this confidence in the details is misplaced. On the basis of a close reading and analysis, it is shown that the description of Jerusalem and Judaea included in the Letter of Aristeas is a literary *montage* which is worthless for historical and archaeological reconstruction. The description of the city monuments in particular is written in close intertextual reference to Aristotle's depiction of the ideal polis in *Politics* 7.11. However, whereas Aristotle's reflection about the ideal city is framed by the most basic tenet of Greek classical political

thought, namely the distinction between three types of *politeiai* (democracy, aristocracy and monarchy), the author of the Letter of Aristeas reworks Aristotle's precepts in order to have them suit a fourth type of *politeia* in which the polis is headed by a high priest, that is, a theocracy. Although the word *theokratia* is first attested only much later, there is no doubt that as a conceptual model, it underpins the description of the Letter of Aristeas throughout. The descriptions of four items are analyzed in detail: the cisterns (Ar. 88–91), the streets (105–106), the citadel (100–104), and the harbors (114–115). For each item the discussion successively reviews the archaeological data, Aristotle's comments, and the author's own literary elaboration.

Miriam Ben Zeev

The Hasmonean State between Jewish Tradition and Hellenism

In the middle of the second century BCE, the Maccabees successfully fought against the Seleucid government and its culture. One century later, however, Hellenistic influences are still to be found in the Hasmonaean state. The question may therefore be asked, whether Hasmonean Hellenism was the same as that of the neighboring countries, and whether it points to secular tendencies, as is often suggested in modern scholarship.

Contemporary sources attest that Hellenistic influences are often found in Judea in those realms, such as bureaucracy, diplomacy, warfare, and architecture, in which no specific Jewish tradition existed. However, side by side with these, original cultural developments are attested. The coins minted by the Hasmoneans, for example, significantly differ from those commonly in use at the time, both in the West and in the East. They deviate in that they consistently refrained from the image of humans and animals, in accordance with the biblical prohibition of images. Unique features are also the building of ritual baths, *mikva'ot*, which attests care for ritual purity, and the extensive use

of stone utensils in everyday life. For the maintaining of the Jerusalem Temple, a special tax, the half shekel was imposed, or more accurately re-imposed, and its special character lies in the fact that not only Judean Jews had to pay it, but rather all Jews, including those of the Diaspora.

From a religious-cultic point of view, also, Hasmonean Hellenism was different from that of the neighboring countries where Hellenistic cults and mythologies freely mixed with the local ones, giving birth to peculiar syncretistic creations. No such creation is attested in Hasmonean Judea, where Jewish culture remained centered on the Temple of Jerusalem, a circumstance which has no parallel in the ancient world.

Raz Mustigman

The Genealogy of Josephus – an Addition to the List of Jewish Sources on Herod?

The genealogy of Josephus' own family (*Life*, 3-5) can shed light on Herod's reign. It mentions seven generations of Josephus' family, starting from the great grandfather of his grandfather and it concludes with his own sons. Between the dynasty's father of the first generation, who lived in the time of John Hyrcanus I and the year of Josephus birth (37/8 CE), in the sixth generation, about 160 years passed. But in the middle of this period there appears a chronological discrepancy: One of the second generation married the daughter of Jonathan the Hasmonean and gave birth to a son of the third generation in the first year of Hyrcanus. The son of the fourth generation is born in the ninth year of Alexandra. According to this list Josephus' grandfather was born when his great grandfather was 67 years old and Josephus' own father was born when Josephus' grandfather was 73 years old. In this paper I suggest a solution: Josephus didn't understand that 'Jonathan' is actually Jannaeus, and if so, the Josephus' great grandfather was born in the first year of Hyrcanus II and his grandfather was born in the ninth year of Mariamme's mother, the second Alexandra. Josephus' family members,

who were priests, did not accept the legitimacy of Herod's reign and therefore counted the regnal years according to the senior Hasmonean who lived in the period. In the year 29/8 BC the senior Hasmonean personage was Alexandra, Mariamme's mother. It was one year before she was executed. Only when there were no more senior Hasmoneans left, the genealogy compilers were forced to indicate the years according to a non-Hasmonean ruler (Archelaus). This solution should explain why King Herod is absent in the genealogy of Josephus' grandfather.

Gideon Fuks

Josephus and the Nabateans

The Nabateans and the Jews of Judea were close neighbors. It is thus not surprising that their paths crossed from time to time between 163 B.C.E. and 70 C.E. Our main witness is Josephus, who refers to the Nabateans many times, both in the *Bellum Judaicum* and in the *Antiquities*, usually simply as "the Arabs".

Josephus was part of Titus' entourage during the siege of Jerusalem, and during the later stages of the siege, he witnessed a terrible massacre of almost 2000 Jewish deserters from the city, which was wrought by Nabatean (and Syrian) soldiers serving under Titus' command. Josephus deemed it to be the cruelest event suffered by the Jews during the entire revolt. He must have carried with him harsh memories for many years to come.

However, as a conscientious historian, Josephus tried to be neutral when depicting the Nabateans. Only when the historical material at his disposal gave him the opportunity (such as the depictions of the first war of Herod with the Nabateans, the Polemos of Varus, and of course the massacre during the siege of Jerusalem) did Josephus give full vent to the Jews' hatred of the Nabateans.

Daniel R. Schwartz

Sources and Composition: Josephus' Account of the Clash between Samaritans and Galileans in the Days of Cumanus

Josephus' narrative in *Antiquities* 20 concerning Ventidius Cumanus' term of office as governor of Judaea (ca. 50 CE) pulls in different directions. While some sections present the governor as restrained and conscientious, others condemn him as corrupt. Moreover, the account presents other internal contradictions and puzzles as well. Why, for example, do the Samaritans complain over Cumanus' head about the Jews who had burned and sacked their villages (§125) after Cumanus had – with Samaritan assistance – punished the Jews for those same crimes (§122)? How could the land be filled with brigands (§124b) if they had all just retired to their strongholds (§124a)? Why does §134 speak of the conflict between Cumanus and the Samaritans, and not between them, on the one hand, and the Jews, on the other? Why, more broadly, would Josephus go out of his way to make Vitellius look restrained and conscientious? With the help of comparisons to the parallel narrative in Josephus' *War* and to Tacitus' *Annales* 12.54, it is argued that Josephus' narrative in *Antiquities* is based, ultimately, on materials of which some were meant to defend Ventidius and some to condemn him. These were probably prepared in the context of the investigation into his conduct reported by both Josephus and Tacitus – each from his own point of view, which contributed to skewing the materials. This analysis also allows us to conclude that there is no need to assume (as is widespread) that Tacitus erred in positioning the Samaritans as over against Cumanus and in placing Felix in Palestine during Cumanus' tenure as governor.

Uriel Rappaport

The Great Revolt in Light of the Historical Sources

This paper suggests examining the causes of the Great Revolt in light of the rejection/submission attitude of subdued peoples to the Roman conquest. It deals with the difference between the reaction of the Jews to Roman domination and the reaction of other peoples; to the uniqueness of the monotheistic Jewish religion in the polytheistic world of that time and to various components in Jewish culture, socio-economic situation and nationhood that lead to the outbreak of the revolt.

It argues that the leadership that was elected to prepare Judaea for a confrontation with Rome only pretended to do so and to identify with the goals of the rebels, but its real policy was to neutralize the rebels and to restore the former regime.

It shows that Flavius Josephus cooperated with the anti-revolt government in Jerusalem and shared with it the same opinion regarding the futility of the revolt.

Menahem Mor

Can We Point to any New Causes for the Bar-Kokhba Revolt?

Past research of the Bar-Kokhba Revolt listed two main causes for the outbreak of the Revolt:

1. Hadrian's decision to establish a Roman colony in Jerusalem named Aelia Capitolina (Cassius Dio, 69.12.1). However, this caused major difficulties since Eusebius argued that the establishment of the colony was an outcome of the revolt (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, 4.6.1–4).

2. Hadrian's ban on circumcision recorded in the *Historia Augusta* (HA, Hadrian 14.2).

The scholars who have dealt with these causes came up with three alternatives for the outbreak of the Revolt:

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1. The establishment of the colony Aelia Capitolina – as the only cause, while the ban on circumcision was considered as a punitive measure inflicted on the rebels

2. The ban on circumcision – as the only cause, while the establishment of the colony must be dated after the revolt, and should be considered as a result of it.

3. A combination of both causes: The building of the colony in Jerusalem and the ban on circumcision were a threat to Jewish national existence and were considered as “Red Lines” for the Jews.

However, recent studies have shed new light on the questions relating to the causes of the revolt and undermine some of the old interpretations.

1. There is numismatic evidence for the existence of Aelia Capitolina prior to the breakout of the Revolt.

2. Aharon Oppenheimer presented a new reading of Talmudic sources indicating that the ban on circumcision was an outcome of the Revolt.

Though according to these remarks we should consider the establishment of Aelia Capitolina as the main cause of the revolt, I will present a different approach in my article.

The fact that the rebels did not conquer Jerusalem and did not occupy the city during the three-and-a-half years of the revolt shows, in my opinion, that Aelia Capitolina was not a cause of the Revolt and we have to look for different explanations.

Considering the limited geographical scope of the Revolt, i.e., in the Judaeen mountains, the character and personality of the leader Simeon Bar-Kokhba, the spirit and nature of his followers and the rebels, I think that we should place greater emphasis on messianic expectations as a major cause that led the people of Judaea to revolt once again against the Romans.

Ben-Zion Rosenfeld

The Attitude of the Sages to Jerusalem and the Temple in the Generation Following the Bar-Kokhba Revolt

The article analyses the extent and purpose of the Sages' discussion of Jerusalem and the Temple in the generation after the Bar-Kokhba revolt.

Fundamentally, the Sages devoted much attention to these issues. Specifically they dedicated a much legal debate to issues related to Jerusalem and the Temple, although most of these were theoretical. Despite the geographic distance from the Temple, and the failure of the revolt – which made the possibility of rebuilding the Temple seem less possible than ever, we see that the Sages were intent on nurturing traditions about Jerusalem and the Temple. These Sages were the teachers of Rabbi Judah the Prince, the redactor of the Mishnah, and through their influence on him they established the attitude of future generations to Jerusalem and the Temple. Their central motivation was to keep the memory of the Temple and capital of the Jewish people alive, so they would serve as the basis for hope and the anticipation of redemption.

Ze'ev Safrai and the late Chana Safrai

The Process of the Sages' Takeover of Public Positions

The basic assumption of this article is that the Sages were one of the elite classes of the Jewish people after the destruction of the Second Temple. During Second Temple times the social role of the Sages was secondary, and in any case we should expect a slow process of takeover, a process that begins with distributing roles among the social groups, and during the course of which the elite class establishes its status.

There is an informal, but sacred agreement between the elite and the public. The elite provide the public with a basket of services that the public considers relevant and essential. And the public compensates the

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elite in one or several of the commonly accepted means. The elite must convince the public:

1. that their service is essential (although an onlooker may claim otherwise);
2. that the elite has access to this service, or a monopoly of it;
3. that nobody else can offer a competing service.

When the elite cannot or will not take over the additional roles, one of two methods of operation can be expected: (a) it will be distributed equally among all the sectors of the population, in an attempt to prevent another class from taking over the role; (b) there will be an attempt to minimize the importance of the role.

The main role of the Sages was studying Torah and making *halakhic* rulings. In addition there were other public religious roles. The Sages were unable to take over actual public roles such as the leadership of communal organization, communal courts, declaring the fast days, running the synagogue. We and our precursors have discussed these subjects in other articles. We have focused on a series of roles in the family sector that the Sages demanded for themselves and gradually took over to some degree. In almost all the cases the same trend is in evidence that can be described as a developmental series in clear stages:

1. turning a private or family function into a public one;
2. demanding that the role be filled by the *beit din* (three random people, or the municipal *beit din*);
3. demanding that one of its members be a Torah scholar or a Sage;
4. transferring the authority to a *beit din* of Sages, or to an individual Sage.

Usually the process is only at its inception in the early *Tannaitic* period, and it gains momentum during the course of this period, becoming clear and powerful in the *Amoraic* literature. This process reaches its peak in Babylon (and occasionally is clearly reflected only in the Babylonian Talmud). The historical process is not yet over, and it continues to develop before our eyes.

Menachem Ben-Shalom

Charity by a Hasid in Light of Avot de-Rabbi Nathan, Version A

The objective of this short article is to try to investigate the concept of *tzdaka* (charity) as it is reflected in the story in Avot de-Rabbi Nathan concerning the anonymous Hasid who gave a *dinar* (monetary unit) to a poor man, in a drought year, was expelled from his home and went to sleep in the cemetery. The story is a strange one, in its conception as well as in its literary design. It is a story about an anonymous Hasid who happened to arrive at a cemetery because of a quarrel with his wife on the issue of giving charity. There, he was listening to a conversation between ghosts, a conversation that was not intended for him. The ghosts, who are coming in and out of our world and beyond, uncover all that is concealed, without knowing that he is a partner to their secrets. As an outcome of this, in the coming years, **he alone** was seeing profit in his labor, at a time when all the rest were suffering a drought. Furthermore, he was not sharing his good fortune with the others in any way.

The scene revealed in this story does not fit the image of *Hassidut* and Hassid as they are portrayed in the literature of the Jerusalem Talmud and it does not fit the well-known figures of *Hasid* and *Hassidut* of the *Amoraic* era of the Babylonian Talmud. The article first follows the structure of the *Midrash*, and then deals with its conceptual content. Through the study of the text it is shown that the story, as formed in Avot de-Rabbi Nathan, portrays a late, post *Amoraic* source and is irreconcilable with the spirit of early *Hassidut*.

Joshua Schwartz

"Reduce, Reuse and Recycle", Prolegomena on Breakage and Repair in Ancient Jewish Society: Broken Beds and Chairs in Mishnah Kelim

The present study seeks to examine ancient Jewish society from the point of view of its garbage, especially broken beds and chairs. While garbage is often a mirror of society, it is all too often neglected in the study of social history. The source material for this study of Jewish garbology is Mishnah and Tosefta of tractate *Kelim*, which in the course of *halakhic* discourse on ritual purity, provides much information on utensils, whole and broken, as well as on recycling broken or repaired utensils in ancient Jewish society. We have chosen to examine this furniture in view of the fact that sitting/reclining/sleeping are among the most basic domestic and social habits, with a profound influence on household furniture and domestic life. We shall examine details of breakage (simple, purposeful and external), the use of broken beds/chairs (in primary and secondary capacities), repair and reuse in original capacity and recycling and use in a new capacity. Reference will be made to the Ancient Near East as well as to the Greco-Roman world. The present study serves as the first in a series of studies on the 'history of breakage and repair in ancient Jewish society'.

Shimon Dar

The Samaritans in Caesarea Maritima

For nearly 600 years, Caesarea was a flourishing city, the economic center and capital of the Roman and Byzantine province of Palestine. Caesarea was a cosmopolitan city and its population included pagans, Jews, Samaritans, and Christians. The Samaritans were a substantial portion of the population in the Late Roman and Byzantine periods, and are attested mainly in Jewish and Christian written sources. Scholars

estimate the population of Caesarea to be around 40,000–50,000 inhabitants, and a third of them were Samaritans.

Opinions vary concerning the arrival of the Samaritans to Caesarea. Some claim that the first settlers were brought by King Herod, the founder of the new city, while others claim that only after the Bar-Kokhba revolt (132–136 C.E.) did the Samaritans arrive in the city and its vicinity in the Sharon plain.

According to the Hebrew Talmudic sources, in the 4th century C.E., the Samaritans were the dominant community in the city; they served in the Roman security forces and the local imperial administration. The leaders of the Late Roman Caesarea Jewish community, the "*Rabanan dekeisarin*" headed by Rabi Abbahu, accused the Samaritans of idolatry (*Avoda Zara*), but the background of the issue is not clear. It could stem from commercial rivalry between the Jewish and Samaritan communities in the city. As an international maritime center, the leaders of the different communities in the city were engaged in lucrative commerce, and hence the possible rivalry between them.

Archaeological evidence from the excavations and surveys in Caesarea Maritima and its vicinity reveals pagan, Jewish and Christian remnants, but is very problematic regarding the Samaritan community. Until today, no Samaritan synagogue or public building has been discovered, and not a single funerary inscription mentioning specifically a Samaritan by name has been found.

In the last generation, scholars defined a distinct group of oil lamps as Samaritan, together with a certain type of stone sarcophagi as belonging to the Samaritans. Oil lamps and sarcophagi were discovered in the city and vicinity but not in defined areas. A small number of amulets with typical Samaritan formula were also found at Caesarea.

What are the reasons for this anomaly? We may propose several reasons for this situation:

1. Only in the Late Roman period did the Samaritans feel the necessity to adopt national and identity symbols.

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2. When the immigration of Samaritans to Caesarea started, the city was already built up, and no special quarter was allocated for the Samaritans.

3. Instead of a proper synagogue, the Samaritans performed the religious rituals in private halls, not yet discovered by archaeologists.

4. Could it be that Samaritans prayed in the Jewish Synagogue?

There are more questions than answers, but the situation until today in Caesarea Maritima is clear: a paucity of archaeological material culture which could be attributed to the historical Samaritan community in the city.

Abraham Tal

When Did the Samaritans Begin to Believe in Resurrection? (Between Manuscripts and Beliefs)

The inner witnesses regarding Samaritan belief in resurrection are scarce and contradictory. Various sources seem to attest a relatively late penetration of the idea into Samaritan literature. The 14th century poet Abisha is apparently the first to explicitly mention rising from the dead, which he describes in detail. Previously, authors who dedicated treatises to this subject seem to have struggled against rejection by members of the community. Two different recessions of the same literary piece represent two stages in the development of the notion of rising from the dead. One manuscript of a late medieval collection of *midrashim* (Tibat Marqe), copied before the year 1391, has no mention of the rising from the dead, while a latter recession of the same composition, copied in 1531, makes overt allusions to the matter. It is probable that in the interval between these two recessions the belief in resurrection crystalized within the community.

Aharon Oppenheimer

Babylon: the Site and Jewish Settlement in Talmudic Times

Babylon, sited on the east bank of the Euphrates 87 kilometers south of Baghdad, served as the capital of various empires throughout the second and first millennia BCE. Its walls and hanging gardens were among the Seven Wonders of the ancient World, but it was mostly in ruins by Talmudic times.

However, there was a Jewish settlement in Babylon in Talmudic times. In several places in the city excavations have uncovered Jewish incantation bowls from the Parthian and Sassanian periods. Jewish merchants from other places clearly came to the Babylon market, in itself evidence both of the importance of the Jewish market and the significance of Jewish settlement in Babylon.

Talmudic sources mention various remains which impressed contemporary Jews: the ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's palace; the Bridge of Babylon; *Be Tsenita deBavel* (a variety of ancient palm trees popularly attributed to the time of Adam); the Lions' Den and Fiery Furnace from the book of Daniel, and a synagogue attributed to Daniel. Jews in other parts of the Diaspora and in Eretz-Israel did not have such a feeling for 'archaeology'; this was peculiar to the Jews of Babylonia, who sought to present the continuous nature of Jewish settlement in Babylonia from the time of the First Temple. They also believed that the foundations of the *Shaf veYatev* synagogue in Nehardea had been built with stones from the ruins of the First Temple, and that the *Exilarchate*, which claimed descent from the House of David, had existed continuously in Babylonia from the end of the First Temple period. In other words, the two most important centers of life in Eretz-Israel – Temple and Monarchy – had moved to Babylonia. Arab geographers give evidence of Jewish pilgrimages on festivals to Daniel's Lions' den in Babylon; and Benjamin of Tudela attests that he saw Daniel's synagogue, as well as other sites in the ruins of Babylon, recording 3,000 Jews in his contemporary Babylon.

Rav had a special connection with Babylon: *halakhah* was determined in the district of Babylon (not Sura) according to Rav, and in the district of Nehardea according to Shemuel.

Yaakov Tepler

The Problem of the Identity of the "Kingdom of Arrogance" in *Birkat haMinim*

In most versions of *Birkat haMinim* God is requested to root out the "Kingdom of Arrogance" (*Malkhut Zaton*). Many scholars have assumed that this term referred to the Roman Empire whose global rule extended to the Land of Israel when this blessing was composed, presumably at the end of the 1st century CE.

We do not know the original wording of *Birkat haMinim*, the 12th benediction of the *Amidah* prayer. The term under discussion appears in the earliest texts of the *Amidah* dating to the Geonic period (the 9th century). There is no way of knowing if the "Kingdom of Arrogance" appeared in the original wording of this benediction which is attributed in the Babylonian Talmud to *Shemuel haQatan*, a sage and a pious (*Hasid*) who lived at the turn of the 1st and 2nd centuries CE.

In this paper I suggest two alternatives regarding the origin of this term. The first rejects the possibility that an official curse against Rome could have been included in a public prayer that was recited not only in the Land of Israel, but also in synagogues in the city of Rome itself. If "Kingdom of Arrogance" was actually included in the 2nd century text, it could have alluded only to the Christian Church, which was symbolized as the "Kingdom of Heaven". Thus, this curse is consistent with the general intention of the 12th benediction. The second alternative is that the term was indeed included in the blessing, but only in 3rd century Babylonia and later versions there, since Babylonia was not under Roman rule.

Yet the most probable hypothesis is a combination of these two alternatives. It is that the "Kingdom of Arrogance" was included in the

original version of *Birkat haMinim* as a polemic against Christianity, but hundreds of years later in the Jewish Diaspora of Babylonia, it was directed against Rome, both as the Kingdom of Wickedness, since Rome is referred to as an oppressor in many places in the Talmud, and as the Christianized Rome of the 4th century onwards.

Rivkah Nir

Aseneth – Jewish Proselyte or Christian Convert?

Aseneth's conversion, with the meal formula, and its symbolical honeycomb is one of the most enigmatic scenes in *Joseph and Aseneth* and is crucial to discovering its theological identity. The commonly held opinion is that *Joseph and Aseneth* is a Jewish work composed in the Hellenistic Diaspora, sometime between 100 BCE and 115 CE, and that it reflects propaganda used by Jews in their efforts to proselytize among their gentile neighbors. Accordingly, the scene of Aseneth's conversion is seen as Jewish conversion, *giur*.

It is my contention in this article that Aseneth's conversion cannot be understood in terms of Jewish *giur*, but only in terms of Christian conversion. Aseneth's conversion must, then, be placed within a Christian not a Jewish context. At its center stands the Eucharist, expressed by the "bread of life" and the "cup of immortality" and illustrated by the honeycomb. All the stages through which Aseneth went before partaking of the Eucharist and the acts which described the meal itself are compatible with the Eucharist liturgy and Christian initiation rites in the first centuries. Two main arguments were raised against the Christian identification of this episode: the absence of baptism and the apparent disconnection of the ointment to the meal formula. I demonstrate that Aseneth's baptism is clearly hinted at and that the ointment (*myron*) prayer was an integral part of the Eucharist liturgy. In performing these rites, Aseneth becomes a model for gentiles who were called on to follow her footsteps and to join the Church.

Edna Israeli

Who is *Taxo* – Reassessment of the Origin of *The Assumption of Moses*

To comprehend the intention behind the obscure figure of *Taxo* is to grasp the full meaning of *The Assumption* (or *Testament*) of *Moses* (a fragmentary Latin manuscript translated from the Greek), including its time-frame, religious affiliation, and overall purpose and tendency.

Numerous solutions based on diverse methods of reading, calculating and decoding the name, display the workings of richly inventive minds rather than of soundly grounded historical research. Consequently, of all the currently available solutions, there is not one that does justice to the text and addresses adequately its sequence, unity and logic.

The deadlock seemingly derives from the premise underlying all scholarly research, namely the purported Jewish authorship of the work. The present article therefore proposes to reconsider the prevailing view and treat the *AM* as a work of Christian authorship.

The affinity of *Taxo* with the messiah is strikingly conspicuous. Some scholars even noted that he is not only the messiah but also, most clearly, the suffering messiah whose atoning death entails the end of times and consecutive kingdom of heaven. *Taxo's* appearance and martyrdom, together with his "seven sons", mark the last phase before advent of the End and final redemption. On his appearance and actions, the kingdom of God embraces the whole universe, Satan and consequently all agonies and afflictions disappear, the enemies of "the elect" are avenged, and cosmic disruptions occur. All this is inconsistent with the Jewish perception of the messiah, but fits in with the Christian depiction of Jesus, as evidenced in the New Testament.

On this assumption and contrary to scholars who perceived *Taxo* as transliteration of the Greek original TAXO or TAXW, it is here suggested that the Latin translator transmitted an accurate copy of the Greek original TAKHW and that this letter combination creates a

tetragram (*Tau, Alpha, Chi and Omega*) behind which hides Jesus Christ.

This proposition rests on the presence of both T and X being letters that, from the earliest days of the Christian church, symbolized the cross and the crucified, while the two additional letters, Alpha and Omega (A & W), equally stand for Christ, whose New Testament representation is in the manner of the biblical God, being the first and the last.

Accordingly, the seven sons of TAXW are construed as symbolic embodiment of the overall community of believers, as already interpreted by the early Church Fathers, who linked the episodes about the barren Hannah, who bore seven sons (1 Sam 2:1–10), and the mother and seven brothers, who died in sanctification of God under the Antiochian persecutions (2 Macc. 7), with the seven churches in Revelation.

The *Assumption of Moses*, much like the Christological scheme, was intended as promise for ultimate cosmic salvation, appearance of God's Kingdom in creation attended by cosmic phenomena, and perdition to the ungodly and enemies, through the agency of *Taxo*, the Christ Messiah whose innocent blood provides stimulation for God's eschatological plan.

David Rokéah

The Septuagint and Christian Theology

The New Testament contains about 1,000 quotations from the Hebrew Bible, which appear in it in their Septuagint form. The author accordingly examines the influence of the Septuagint translation on the formation of Christian theology. He deals with the following subjects: the Virgin birth; the affair of the Magi; faith versus deeds; Israel and the gentiles: the polemic on the Election; the apologetics of the Cross; the form of the Cross as a means of salvation; the wooden fabric of the Cross as a means of salvation. The author concludes that the Septuagint translation was, indeed, crucial in the creation of Church doctrine in the early Christian centuries.

Ran Zadok

Occupations and Status Categories (Classes) in Borsippa

This paper offers an overview of the occupations and classes of the Borsippans between 750 and 484 B.C.E. Occupations are relatively rare in the documentation which is overwhelmingly private. They include food-processors, artisans as well as people engaged in transportation, commerce and security.

