

## HECATAEUS OF ABDERA AND A NEW CONJECTURE IN JOSEPHUS, *CONTRA APIONEM* 1.189\*

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*Abstract.* This paper proposes a new conjecture in a much-discussed passage of Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 1.189. The passage poses several problems: the precise meaning of a phrase; the historical context of the passage; and its authenticity (that is, whether it is a genuine fragment of the Greek historian Hecataeus of Abdera, as Josephus supposes, but most recent scholarly treatments do not). These problems are necessarily interconnected. The new conjecture aims to make sense of the disputed wording and of the historical context and to reaffirm basic authenticity. The passage thus emerges as containing valuable historical information about the Jewish settlement made by Ptolemy Soter; as illuminating alike Ptolemaic, Greek and Jewish traditions about the history of the Jews under the Ptolemies; and as reaffirming a basic Hecataean core for the particular material and hence the essential authenticity of the book *On the Jews* attributed to Hecataeus.

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### 1. Hecataeus of Abdera

In order to provide an overview of the interpretative possibilities, I begin with some general observations. Hecataeus was a philosopher and historian who lived at the time of Alexander the Great and Ptolemy I. He wrote *On the Poetry of Homer and Hesiod*, *On the Hyperboreans*, a *History of Egypt* and, in all probability, other philosophical works.<sup>1</sup> Hecataeus' work on Egyptian history was used by Diodorus in the first book of his *Historical Library*. Hecataeus himself visited Egypt (Diod. 1.46.8). An Egyptian history would obviously have contained some material on the Jews, and this is proved by the fact that Diodorus also uses Hecataeus' *History of Egypt* for his excursus on the Jews in Book 40, which is preserved by Photius.<sup>2</sup>

Diodorus' testimony is thus important. In 40.3.1, a passage the authenticity of which is widely accepted, he writes: 'Now that we are to record the war against the Jews [in Pompey's time] we consider it appropriate to give first a summary account of the establishment of the nation from its origins, and of the practices observed among them'.<sup>3</sup> He then goes on to an exposition of the exodus from Egypt and the figure of Moses and concludes this

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<sup>1</sup> On Hecataeus: Jacoby, *FGrHist* no. 264; Feldman (1993) 8-9; Schürer (1997) 859ff.

<sup>2</sup> Diod. 40.3 = Stern, *GLAJJ* 1.26-35.

<sup>3</sup> Translation by Walton (1967); on the authenticity of this passage see Sterling (1991) 75-8.

section by pointing out (Diod. 40.3.8) that his information comes from Hecataeus.<sup>4</sup> Thus Diodorus' account of the Jews begins with the exodus, and its primary interest is his description of the high-priestly office. According to Bar Kochva, the excursus on the Jews in Diodorus presented an *interpretatio graeca* of Judaism and blended different periods of the biblical past, revealing the Greek perspective of Hecataeus.<sup>5</sup> Stern explains Hecataeus' reference to the selection of the high priests by appealing to his apparent ignorance of the hereditary principle of succession in the high-priestly line.<sup>6</sup> Mendels, on the other hand, finds an expression of the views of a Jewish priestly group that, at the end of the fourth century BCE, denigrated monarchy—a stance which enjoyed biblical grounding and one that continued to garner support in late Hasmonean times.<sup>7</sup> Walton notes the fusion of prophetic and priestly aspects in Hecataeus' report.<sup>8</sup> In sum, Diodorus' presentation of the Jews in 40.3 comes from a work in which Hecataeus looked at the customs of the Jews from a Greek perspective. Clearly, also, and unsurprisingly, Hecataeus could get some quite simple facts about the Jews wrong, such as the exact location of the temple of Jerusalem, and his remarks that the Jews never had a king or that all Jewish priests received tithes.<sup>9</sup> This provides an important standard of comparison for our assessment of the *Contra Apionem* material.

A critical question for us is whether Hecataeus also wrote a separate book about the Jews. Our Jewish historian Josephus is clear that he did. In *C.Ap.* 1.183 Josephus introduces his source as Hecataeus of Abdera, 'a man who was both a philosopher and extremely able in practical affairs, who

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<sup>4</sup> The text talks of Hecataeus 'of Miletus', although the author is Hecataeus of Abdera. The mistake is commonly ascribed to Photius. Cf. Stern *GLAJJ* 1.34-35.

<sup>5</sup> Bar Kochva (1996) 26.

<sup>6</sup> Stern, *GLAJJ* 1.31; Bar Kochva (1996) 33-4.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Jos. *AJ* 14.41; Mendels (1983) 104-6 = Mendels (1998) 334-51.

<sup>8</sup> Walton (1955) 255-7: 256: 'His Moses is in part the ideal Greek *nomothetes* and in part the philosopher and he appears to have regarded the high priest essentially as the successor to Moses, both as the highest civil authority and as a mouthpiece for the continuing revelation of God's will'. Hecataeus (in Diodorus) speaks of various gatherings of Jews at which the high priest 'announces what is ordained': VanderKam (2004) 120.

<sup>9</sup> Hecataeus' remark in *C.Ap.* 1.188 that all Jewish priests receive tithes is inaccurate, as only the Levites received them. In Diod. 40.3.5 he states that the Jews never had a king. In *C.Ap.* 1.198 he locates the Temple in almost the centre of Jerusalem. In *C.Ap.* 2.43 he refers to a supposed gift of Samaria to the Judaeans by Alexander the Great. Also the story of the Jewish archer Mosollamos in *C.Ap.* 1.201-4 has been regarded by scholars as spurious, although there is no clear evidence proving this; cf. Feldman (1993) 8-9; 464 nn. 24-5. For Mendels (1983), Hecataeus was drawing most of his information on Jewish history from Jewish circles in Egypt, hence his inaccuracy on some Palestinian data.

flourished at the same time as Alexander the King and was associated with Ptolemy, son of Lagus', and happily remarks that the historian 'did not refer to us [the Jews] in passing but composed a book (*βιβλίον*) on the Judaeans themselves from which I wish to touch on a few passages, in summary form'.<sup>10</sup> At the end of the Mosollamos episode (*C.Ap.* 1.205) Josephus breaks off and refers his readers to further information in Hecataeus' original work, saying that the book was 'easy to find'. Later (*C.Ap.* 1.214) Josephus juxtaposes, and contrasts, Hieronymus of Cardia, who wrote a history of Alexander's Successors and never mentioned the Jews in his work, with Hecataeus, who 'devoted a whole book to us'. Similarly, the author of the *Letter of Aristeas*, an Alexandrian Jew probably from the second century BCE, cites this book when discussing the causes of the absence of biblical citations among Greek writers (§31). And the Christian Clement, also from Alexandria, cites verses on monotheism attributed to Sophocles from a work by Hecataeus 'the writer of histories', entitled *On Abraham and the Egyptians* (*Strom.* 5.14.113). Writers, therefore, in the second century BCE and later could point to a physical book on the Jews under the name of Hecataeus. This book was evidently to be found in Alexandria's libraries and was 'easy to find' elsewhere also. Hecataean authorship would be broadly consistent with a number of factors: the fact that Hecataeus did provide information about the Jews in his *History of Egypt*; the distinctly benevolent attitude towards the Jews exhibited in the material attributed to Hecataeus by Josephus in *C.Ap.* 1.183–204 and in *C.Ap.* 2.43; the dates of the events described (the early Hellenistic era and Alexander respectively), that is, near to the time of Hecataeus himself; and the fact that the *Letter of Aristeas* explicitly claims (§31) that Hecataeus admired Judaism.

On the other hand, Herennius Philo of Byblos (in the Lebanon), a Greek grammarian and historian living under Hadrian, states that this work attributed to Hecataeus was an apologetic falsification invented by the Jews.<sup>11</sup> This claim could of course be prejudiced and polemical, since the Greek Philo lived at a time of war against the Jews, and, moreover, the passage in which he dismisses Hecataeus has come down to us via a quotation by the

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<sup>10</sup> Translation by Barclay (2007) 106–7.

<sup>11</sup> On the reliability of Hecataeus cf. Stern, *GLAJJ* 1.23–5; for another detailed survey, see Sterling (1991) 59–91. According to Gruen (1998) 202–3 Hecataeus' *Περὶ Ἰουδαίων* is an attempt by Jews in Egypt to tidy up after the events the ugly facts about Jewish relations with the first Ptolemy. For Willrich (1895) 32, 80–82, the story about Ezekias was a version of Onias IV's move to Egypt in the 160s. On the debate about the authenticity of Hecataeus's work, cf. Pucci Ben Zeev (1993) 217–24; Troiani (1977) 42; *FGrHist* 264, *Kommentar*, 266ff. On Herennius Philo of Byblos, cf. *FGrHist* 790. On Hecataeus consulting Egyptian priests, Murray (1970) 156; cf. also Gauger (1982), and Capponi (2005).

Christian writer Origen, a staunch anti-Jewish intellectual.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, the claim is of course a possible one, and this testimony, combined with acknowledged difficulties and inaccuracies in the fragments attributed to Hecataeus by Josephus and with its general pro-Jewish tendency, has led past generations of scholars, among them Willrich, Schürer, Jacoby, Fraser, Feldman and Barclay, to cast doubt on the authenticity of this separate work on the Jews and to reject the authenticity of the material attributed by Josephus to Hecataeus in *C.Ap.* 1.183–204 (including our passage) and 2.43. The most recent study of Hecataeus, by Bar Kochva, argues that the extracts from Hecataeus' alleged book about the Jews in the *Contra Apionem* are a forgery, a sort of ethnography written by a Diaspora Jew between 107 and 93 BCE that provided a justification for the Jewish settlement in Egypt.<sup>13</sup> A less radical position is taken by Stern, who hypothesises that Josephus had at his disposal a revised, pro-Jewish version of Hecataeus;<sup>14</sup> different again is the position of Troiani, who hypothesises that Josephus used an anthology of quotations on the Jews from Greek authors that aimed at emphasising the good relations between the Hellenistic monarchies and the Jews.<sup>15</sup> Of course, when a well-known ancient historian or biographer cites obscure authorities of the past, the question always arises whether he is using him directly or through some sort of anthology or collection, but Josephus' own testimony at *C.Ap.* 183 and 205 (above) tends against this hypothesis in this instance. Moreover, on the larger question, the Troiani hypothesis does not actually deny the Hecataean provenance of the *C.Ap.* material.

## 2. Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 1.189

The controversial passage which is the main focus of this article needs to be considered as part of the whole section, *Contra Apionem* 1.186–9:

[186] λέγει τοίνυν ὁ Ἑκαταῖος πάλιν τάδε, ὅτι μετὰ τὴν ἐν Γάζῃ μάχην ὁ Πτολεμαῖος ἐγένετο τῶν περὶ Συρίαν τόπων ἐγκρατῆς, καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων πυνθανόμενοι τὴν ἡπιότητα καὶ φιλανθρωπίαν τοῦ Πτολεμαίου συναπαίρειν εἰς Αἴγυπτον αὐτῷ καὶ κοινωνεῖν τῶν πραγμάτων ἡβουλήθησαν. [187] ὧν εἰς ἦν, φησὶν, Ἐζεκίας ἀρχιερεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ἀνθρωπος τὴν μὲν ἡλικίαν ὡς ἐξηκονταεξ ἑτῶν, τῷ δ' ἀξιώματι τῷ παρὰ τοῖς ὁμοέθνοισι μέγας καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν οὐκ ἀνόητος, ἔτι δὲ καὶ λέγειν δυνατὸς καὶ

<sup>12</sup> *Contra Cels.* 1.15 = *FGrHist* 264 T 7c = *FGrHist* 790 F 9.

<sup>13</sup> Bar Kochva (1996) 219–31.

<sup>14</sup> Stern, *GLA* 1.24.

<sup>15</sup> Troiani (1977) 40–1.

τοῖς περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, εἴπερ τις ἄλλος, ἔμπειρος. [188] ‘καίτοι, φησίν, οἱ πάντες ἱερεῖς τῶν Ἰουδαίων οἱ τὴν δεκάτην τῶν γινομένων λαμβάνοντες καὶ τὰ κοινὰ διοικούντες περὶ χιλίους μάλιστα καὶ πεντακοσίους εἰσίν.’ [189] πάλιν δὲ τοῦ προειρημένου μνημονεύων ἀνδρός ‘οὗτος, φησίν, ὁ ἄνθρωπος τετευχῶς τῆς τιμῆς ταύτης καὶ συνήθης ἡμῖν γενόμενος, παραλαβὼν τινὰς τῶν μεθ’ ἑαυτοῦ τὴν τε διαφορὰν ἀνέγνω πᾶσαν αὐτοῖς· εἶχεν γὰρ τὴν κατοίκησιν αὐτῶν καὶ τὴν πολιτείαν.’

The most recent translation (Barclay (2007) 108–10) reads as follows:<sup>16</sup>

[186] Now Hecataeus further says this, that after the battle at Gaza, Ptolemy became master of the territories of Syria and many of the people, when they heard of Ptolemy’s kindness and benevolence, wanted to go with him to Egypt and to share in the political affairs. [187] One of these, he says, was Ezekias, ‘a high-priest of the Judeans, a man about sixty-six years old, of high standing among his fellow countrymen and no fool intellectually, and moreover an able speaker, and as experienced as anyone in political affairs’. [188] ‘Indeed’, he says, ‘the total number of the Judeans’ priests who receive a tenth of the produce and who administer public affairs is about 1500.’ [189] Referring again to the man mentioned above he says: ‘This man, when he had acquired this honour and had become our acquaintance, gathered some of those in his company and read to them the complete difference; for he had their settlement and the constitution written.’

As we shall see, there are difficulties with some of the detail of this translation.

So as not to prejudice the question of the genuineness of the fragments here attributed to Hecataeus, I shall myself refer in the first instance to ‘Hecataeus’.

It looks as if Josephus produced these four sections by abridging a longer section from the work of ‘Hecataeus’ and successively pasting the separate parts. The recurring verb *φησίν*, ‘he says’, signals the beginning of a new quotation from ‘Hecataeus’. The practice accords with his own statement at 1.183 (quoted above). Here too it does not seem necessary to resort to Troiani’s hypothesis.

The first section (186) concerns the aftermath of the battle of Gaza of 312 BCE, when the future King Ptolemy I Soter conquered Syria and Judaea. There is no particular reason to accept Bar Kochva’s suggestion that ‘Hecataeus’ is wrong on the battle and that the events described should be

<sup>16</sup> Barclay (2007).

put after the final conquest of Judaea in 302 BCE,<sup>17</sup> other than that this is one item of a ‘package’ of elements that Bar Kochva finds suspect.<sup>18</sup> The general historical context is well illuminated by other sources. Diodorus 19.33.7 informs us that after the battle of Gaza Ptolemy and his army raided various cities in Syria and Phoenicia (Ake, Joppe, Samaria and Gaza) and then returned to Egypt carrying the booty. A later passage in Diodorus (19.85.4) describes the post-war settlement after Gaza and states that Soter ordered in an edict (the verb used is *προσέταξεν*, a technical term for ‘decreed’) 8,000 soldiers into Egypt, and their distribution across various Egyptian districts (*νομαρχίας*). The *Letter of Aristeas* (13, 19–25, 36) informs us that Ptolemy Soter deported to Egypt over 100,000 Jews and chose 30,000 of the best soldiers to supply garrisons in the most dangerous spots in Egypt.

An important emphasis in our passage is the claim of ‘Hecataeus’ that after the battle of Gaza many Jews were impressed by the kindness and munificence of Ptolemy Soter and thus decided to join him and migrate to Egypt in order to take part in state business. Diodorus<sup>19</sup> represents Ptolemy’s general character in similar terms and to similar effect, so that many wanted to ‘share his friendship’. In fact, as the already cited *Letter of Aristeas* attests, the Jews were deported as captives of war. As Bar Kochva emphasises, there is ample historical evidence for the harsh treatment that Soter reserved for the Jews, both after Gaza in 312 and after the final reconquest of Judaea in 302.<sup>20</sup> Josephus himself, in the *Jewish Antiquities* (*AJ* 12.3), possibly quoting the chronicles of Agatharchides or Hieronymus of Cardia, reports that, ‘the cities suffered ill and lost many of their inhabitants in the struggles, so that Syria at the hands of Ptolemy son of Lagus, then called Soter [‘Saviour’], suffered the opposite of [that which is indicated by] his surname’.<sup>21</sup> It was after this initial deportation that some Jews secured Ptolemaic favour. Thus the *Letter* (§37) points out that ‘the young were placed in the army, while those who were apt to stay with the king, and deserved the trust of the court, were assigned specific tasks and services’, while Josephus, in *C.Ap.* 2.44 and *AJ* 12.45, states that Ptolemy entrusted to the Jews the fortresses throughout Egypt, because he was certain of their loyalty. And it was his son, Ptolemy II Philadelphos, who issued a decree that freed over 100,000 Jewish slaves who had come to Egypt under his father (*Letter of Aristeas* 19–25, 36).

Nevertheless, in his treatment of the events of *C.Ap.* 1.186 at *AJ* 12.9, Josephus states that many Jews had been taken to Egypt as captives, but

<sup>17</sup> Bar Kochva (1996) 55, 90.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. p. 255 below.

<sup>19</sup> 19.86.3–4; and cf. 18.14.1.

<sup>20</sup> Bar Kochva (1996) 71 ff. for a survey of the sources.

<sup>21</sup> Translation by Bar Kochva (1996) 73.

many others had gone to Egypt spontaneously, attracted by the excellence of the land and the liberality of the king. This looks like an attempt to split the difference between the emphasis of *AJ* 12.3 and that of *C.Ap.* 1.186. It is of course interesting in itself to observe ancient historians adopting different views about the same events in different works or even within the same works.

For us, a crucial question is: where does the emphasis on Ptolemy's 'philanthropy' come from? It could be a late, retrospective gloss designed to 'normalise' Ptolemaic-Jewish relations from the very beginning of Ptolemaic rule, in which case 'Hecataeus' here really is 'Pseudo-Hecataeus'. Equally, however, it could represent Ptolemaic propaganda at the time, as Diodorus' more general characterisation (19.86.3-4; cf. 18.14.1 [cited above]) surely does. Certainly, Ptolemy will have presented himself as the liberator of the cities from earlier tyrannies, according to the Hellenistic royal rhetoric widely used in this kind of document; in Diod. 18.56.3, for instance, Polyperchon juxtaposes the freedom and peace restored by the kings with the 'many bitter things' that the Macedonian generals inflicted on the cities. In fact, after the story of Ezekias, Josephus states that 'next' (εἰτα) Hecataeus praised the loyalty of the Jews to their Law in spite of the harsh treatment they received from their neighbours and visitors and the frequent outrages of Persian kings and satraps.<sup>22</sup> These words sound like an echo of Ptolemy's propaganda, which undoubtedly will have presented the king as a liberator of the Jews from the tyrannical rule of the Persians.

Also relevant here is a passage at *C.Ap.* 2.43 where Josephus mentions Alexander's gift to Judaea of the territory of Samaria. The passage says: 'he [Alexander] held our nation in honour, as Hecataeus also says concerning us: because of the kindness and loyalty that the Judaeans showed to him, he added the Samaritan territory to theirs, free of tribute. And Ptolemy, son of Lagus, had opinions about the Judaeans in Alexandria similar to those of Alexander.'<sup>23</sup> This story has been regarded as 'an anachronism rather than a mistake, or 'a way to tell history that is deliberately non-objective', and has been ascribed 'either to a Hellenistic author poorly informed on Judaeans history and culture or to an idealising Judaeans unafraid to be creative'.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *C.Ap.* 1.190-1.

<sup>23</sup> *C.Ap.* 2.43-44 as translated by Barclay (2007) 192-3.

<sup>24</sup> Barclay (2007) 339; Bar Kochva (1996) 113-21 regards this political reality as anachronistic, tracing it to the Hasmonean era. Stern *GLAJJ* 1.23-4 and Schürer (1997) 3.672-3 think that there was an authentic kernel, which had been exaggerated. Gager (1969) 135-6 attributes it to the authentic Hecataeus, in my opinion, rightly.

The quotation, however, again plausibly reflects the Ptolemaic point of view—or, at least, the Ptolemaic propaganda. It echoes the rhetoric of the official communications issued by Alexander and the Successors to Greek cities, which often contained concise historical summaries of the political relations between Alexander (and earlier powers) and the conquered cities—summaries that were obviously ‘non-objective’, but strongly biased in favour of the conqueror. Thus Diodorus 20.76.7 reports that in 306 BCE Ptolemy Soter wrote to Seleucus, Lysimachus and Cassander ‘about his successes and about the large number of men who had deserted to him’. The story of the voluntary migration to Egypt clearly reflected the king’s official point of view, just as in the case of the famous ‘war bulletin’ of the 3rd Syrian War, in which Ptolemy III Euergetes in 246 BCE claims to have been welcomed with great joy by the crowd and the satraps of the conquered cities Seleucia and Antioch.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, Ptolemy Soter had written a history of Alexander’s campaigns, of which we have some quotations in the indirect tradition and which may be preserved in some papyrus fragments, such as *POxy* 4.679, as Grenfell and Hunt first suggested and Prandi recently reinforced.<sup>26</sup> And in our case, since, according to Josephus (*C.Ap.* 1.183), Hecataeus was both a highly competent man of affairs and a *συγγενόμενος*—a vague term that could mean either ‘acquaintance’ or ‘comrade’—of Ptolemy Soter,<sup>27</sup> he would naturally have transmitted the royal point of view.<sup>28</sup>

For Josephus himself, the emphasis of the passage suits the claim of the *Contra Apion* that there had always been good relations between the Jews and the Ptolemaic dynasty.<sup>29</sup> Thus, while historically distorted, the first quotation is compatible alike with a genuine separate book on the Jews by Hecataeus and with a later pseudonymous work, but there is no particular reason to prefer the latter alternative.

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<sup>25</sup> *FGrHist* 160 = *PPetrie* 2.45 and *PPetrie* 3.44. Mazzarino (1966) 1.36 speaks of ‘auto-esaltazione’.

<sup>26</sup> On the lost history of Alexander by Ptolemy I, cf. *FGrHist* 138 FF 1-35, with *Kommen-tar*, 498-508. For Ptolemy’s history in the papyri, cf. Grenfell and Hunt in *POxy* vol. IV, p. 127, Prandi (2010) 31-3, no. 3 F. Pearson (1960) 258 is less certain. Cf. also a possible fragment on Alexander written by an Alexandrian contemporary of Ptolemy Soter, *PLaur* 4.138 (Prandi (2010), no. 10F), on which see Luppe-Pintaudi (1980) and Pintaudi (1983) 29-31, no. 138. On the question of the royal propaganda in Ptolemy I’s history, see Gorteman (1958); Schepens (1983) 349.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *LSJ* s.v. *συγγίνομαι*. The aulic title *συγγενής* appears in the first century BCE, according to Mooren (1977) 23 n. 2.

<sup>28</sup> On Hecataeus broadcasting a Pharaonic type of kingship based on the idealisation of the king as a benefactor and an earthly god, cf. Murray (1970) 157-61.

<sup>29</sup> Josephus’ agenda is also clear from other arguments in his work. On the so-called ‘Jewish question’ at Alexandria cf. Barclay (1996) 6off.



The second section of the quotation (§187) states that among the Jews who went to Egypt with Ptolemy was Ezekias, an intellectual and politician, who was then 66 years old. The passage defines him as ἀρχιερεύς. On a normal understanding of the term this means high priest, but according to Josephus himself in the *Jewish Antiquities* the high priest of Jerusalem at the time was Onias.<sup>30</sup> Stern suggests that the title ἀρχιερεύς without article or further specification was a general indicator of rank that applied to all the members of high priestly families; this hypothesis has now been rejected, as this usage of the term is definitely later than either Persian or Hellenistic times.<sup>31</sup> If this hypothesis is to be maintained in the present passage, then either Josephus is not quoting verbatim and is himself using a usage acceptable in his own time, or the usage itself indicates a ‘late’ text, pointing to a pseudonymous work on the Jews attributed to Hecataeus. The first of these possibilities runs counter to Josephus’ stated method here. It is best to admit immediately that the statement about Ezekias’ high priesthood is wrong, which would not in itself disqualify genuine Hecataean authorship, especially as there is a widespread tendency in ancient historiography to inflate the status of the narrative ‘hero’ of the moment.

Moreover, a coin found in the excavations at Beth Zur bears the names in Hebrew of Yehohanan, i.e. Onias (I), the high priest of Jerusalem at the time of Alexander, and of Hizqiyahu, i.e. Ezekias, the treasurer or finance minister of the temple.<sup>32</sup> Later studies show that the Ezekias featured on the coin was a governor of Yehud who ruled during the Persian period.<sup>33</sup> It is thus absolutely certain that Ezekias was not the high priest of the Temple of Jerusalem, but a governor or, as Stern suggests, the treasurer (γαζοφύλαξ) of the Temple.<sup>34</sup> Hence Bar Kochva hypothesises that ‘the author was inspired by the name and personality of that governor, but transformed Ezekias from governor into High Priest, just as he transformed the forced exile to Egypt into a voluntary migration, the harsh treatment of the local population by Ptolemy into ‘philanthropy’, and probably also the time of Ipsus (302/301

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<sup>30</sup> According to Jos. *AJ* 11.297, 302-3, 347, the high priests in the late Persian age and in Alexander’s time were Johanan, Iaddous (Jadduas) and Onias. In *C.Ap.* 1.31-6 Josephus states that the pedigree of priestly families was registered in public archives and used in matters such as marriage—he himself used it, as stated in *Vita* 6 and *AJ* 20.227 ff., which offers a list of high priests up to 70CE. According to Bar Kochva (1996) 84, Ezekias cannot be included in the list of Jerusalem’s high priests, and it is unlikely that Josephus’s list is wrong. On the high priesthood, cf. VanderKam (2004); Brutti (2005).

<sup>31</sup> Stern *GLAJJ* 1.40-1; rejected by Bar Kochva (1996) 84 and VanderKam (2004) 118.

<sup>32</sup> Sellers (1933) 73-4.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Mildenberg (1979) 183-96 with pls. 21-2.

<sup>34</sup> VanderKam (2004) 117; Stern, *GLAJJ* 1.40. Cf. Schürer (1997) 2.342f., 347ff.

BCE) into the time of Gaza (312 BCE)'.<sup>35</sup> I have already mentioned the last item of Bar Kochva's hypothesis.<sup>36</sup> The error about Ezekias as high priest and the *Tendenzen* (exile represented as migration, harsh treatment as 'philanthropy') are, as we have seen, not incompatible with genuine Hecataean provenance.

The third section of the quotation (§188) is a kind of parenthetical observation, namely that during the Persian period there were around 1,500 priests among the Judaeans who had the same status as Ezekias had in public affairs. The sentence opens with the conjunction *καίτοι*, which surely here, as usually, means 'and yet' (not 'indeed' as Barclay has it), hence introducing a slight qualification to the previous sentence (thus: 'he was an *ἀρχιερεύς* and a great man, even though the Jews have about 1500 *ἀρχιερείς*'). The reason why Josephus at this point even includes Hecataeus' remark is that this comes within a context where he is trying to assert the excellence of the Jews, and so he wants it to be known that there were many priests of high station, a point that adds to his argument. The figure quoted for the number of priests seems, however, to be incorrect:<sup>37</sup> again, however, this is within the margin of error for genuine Hecataean provenance.

The fourth section (§189) reports first that Ezekias obtained an official honour (*τιμὴ*). What is this honour? Might it refer to Ezekias' (alleged) status as 'high priest of the Jews'? In that case, the perfect participle *τετευχώς* refers to an already existing status, as defined in §187. But it seems more natural to refer it to the *fulfilment* of §186 '[he] wanted to go with him to Egypt and to share in the political affairs'. Then, after receiving his wish (= 'this honour'), Ezekias became 'familiar to us'—that is, in my view, to Hecataeus and Ptolemy. This passage sounds like a description of Ezekias' official admission to court. *Συννηθής* is a term found in letters of recommendation of the mid-third century BC, such as those in the archive of Zenon.<sup>38</sup>

Then, we are told, Ezekias read something at a meeting, because he had important written information. If my reconstruction so far is correct, this

<sup>35</sup> Bar Kochva (1996) 79-91: 89.

<sup>36</sup> P. 251 above.

<sup>37</sup> For Stern, *GLAJJ* 1.42, the figure of 1,500 Judean priests is too low; according to the Bible there were 1,192 or 1,790 priests in Jerusalem (*1Chron.* 9.13), while *C.Ap.* 2.108 states that there were 20,000 priests. According to *Pseudo-Aristeas* 95, there were 700 priests in service at the temple of Jerusalem. As regards tithes, Josephus informs us that priests and Levites received them (*AJ* 4.68, 4.205, 20.181, 20.206; *Vita* 63, 80); cf. Stern, *GLAJJ* 1.41-2; Schürer (1997) 2.318 ff.

<sup>38</sup> In *PMichZen* 1.82r.3 = *PCairZen* 4.59590, Harmodius writes to Zenon to recommend Antiochos '[who is handing you this letter and is a relative of ours], and he has sailed up the river to your place [- -]. You will do me a favour by receiving [him ...]'. On documentary letters of recommendation in Latin, cf. Cotton (1981).

meeting is to be understood as having taken place either in Jerusalem or (better) in Alexandria, after Ezekias had secured his ‘wish’ (186) ‘to share in the political affairs’ and after he had obtained his ‘honour’ from Ptolemy and become the ‘acquaintance’ of Ptolemy and Hecataeus (189).

To whom is he reading? *Αὐτοῖς* is usually taken to refer to Jews. However, a completely different interpretation<sup>39</sup> is that *αὐτοῖς* refers to Ptolemy and Hecataeus and others at court. Ezekias is then reading a document that explained the foundation and way of life of the Jews. The point would be that he wished to stress to the new masters of the Jews the antiquity of the Jewish race—a stress that would of course also suit Josephus’ general brief. In support of this interpretation, it is urged that *παραλαβών* means ‘take along with’ (not ‘gathered some of those in his company’, as Barclay has it), and their destination is the Ptolemaic court. But, while the point about *παραλαβών* meaning ‘take along with’, is valid and needs to be accommodated, this interpretation does not seem to fit the reference to ‘our acquaintance’: ‘them’ (still within the direct quotation of ‘Hecataeus’) surely refers to a different group from the Ptolemaic court, i.e. Jews. The scenario then is that either Ezekias ‘took’ some of his own men (present at the Ptolemaic court) with him to report to a larger group of Jews, or that these ‘some of his own men’ were his own direct audience.

We now come to the textual crux of the passage: the interpretation of *διαφοράν* (the reading of all Josephus’ manuscripts). A first, linguistic point is that the *τε* of the Greek text cannot stand unsupplemented, because there is no *καί* to pick it up.<sup>40</sup> This factor, combined with the difficulty of interpretation, leads Bar Kochva to propose: *ἀπέδειξε <καὶ τὴν συγγραφὴν>* between *διαφοράν* and *ἀνέγνω*, translating: ‘He pointed out to them the advantage and read to them the whole *συγγραφὴ* (‘decree’, ‘charter’?). For he possessed in writing their settlement and *politeia*’. But this solution involves considerable rewriting. A simpler move is to delete the *τε*, as Thackeray (in the Loeb) and other editors have done.

What does the text then mean? Barclay’s translation, ‘he read to them the complete difference’, is only a literal, ‘holding’ translation, which follows the literalist translation philosophy of the series edited by Steve Mason. Does ‘difference’ here mean ‘advantage’, as in ‘this [inheriting £1,000,000] will make a difference to your life’? It is hard to say, and Barclay’s explana-

<sup>39</sup> Which I owe to an anonymous reader.

<sup>40</sup> Unless one brackets off *εἶχεν γὰρ τὴν κατοίκησιν αὐτῶν* and then links the *καὶ* before *τὴν πολιτείαν γεγραμμένην* with the *τε* (a solution suggested by John Marincola), with the result ‘he read both the complete difference [or whatever] (for it [or he] had their settlement) and the written constitution.’ But this yields forced Greek (and English).

tory note does not attempt to resolve the problem.<sup>41</sup> The difficulty of the passage leads Lewy and Niese, followed by Stern, to substitute the word *διφθεράν* for *διαφοράν*, and to translate: ‘he assembled some of his friends and read them the whole scroll, in which was written the story of their settlement and the constitution of the state’; this interpretation was widely accepted for a long time.<sup>42</sup> In the view of these scholars, Ezekias read a parchment that contained the Torah and the history of the Jewish settlement in Palestine.<sup>43</sup> This interpretation hardly works on its own terms: it would be bizarre for Ezekias to read the Torah in the presence of Hecataeus in the post-war context immediately after the battle of Gaza, and after having been awarded an official honour by Ptolemy I. Moreover, as we have seen, the translation of *παρέλαβεν* as ‘assembled’ is suspect. The oddity of interpretation could be avoided by taking *διφθεράν* in the general sense of ‘scroll’, not specifically the Torah, and then making the ‘settlement’ and ‘constitution’ refer not to the history of Israel but to the terms of the new Jewish settlements in Egypt, but in that case the ‘emendation’ *διφθεράν* loses much of its distinctiveness.

In any event, the document read by Ezekias seems to have been an official royal document that Hecataeus had given him on behalf of Ptolemy. Ezekias read ‘the entire “x”’ in a process that seems to have taken some time—the document evidently contained official dispositions that needed to be read word for word. This scenario also excludes Thackeray’s rendering ‘advantage’.

What other possibilities are there for understanding *διαφοράν*? In documents related to agriculture, the *διαφορά* (feminine singular) is the difference between the produce of one year and that of the subsequent year, but may also indicate the ‘schedule’ or ‘roster’ of rent or tax amounts.<sup>44</sup> In *POxy* 67.4624, in a business letter from the first century by the gymnasiarch Dius to his agent Sarapion, the gymnasiarch asks for the payment of allowances, gives orders on the construction of an exedra, and then states that ‘I wrote to you the *διαφορά* in another letter’. Coles there translated the term as ‘ad-

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<sup>41</sup> Barclay (2007) 110 n. 635: ‘difference could refer to the range of differences distinguishing Judaeans from Greek ways of life ... with the meaning “advantage” it could refer to the benefits of emigration to Egypt’; he concludes that ‘both the scene and the purpose of this reading are unclear and the textual problems render the difficulty insoluble’.

<sup>42</sup> Lewy (1932) 123; cf. Stern, *GLAJJ* 1.35, 42. Cf. Bar Kochva (1996) 222 and n. 104 for a survey of scholars’ reception of this hypothesis.

<sup>43</sup> Papyrus, not parchment, was the main writing material used in the Ptolemaic period; cf. Turner (1968) 1-16.

<sup>44</sup> *PTebt* 1.64 ii.16; cf. *PTebt* 1.60,60, 115; 61 (118 BCE) b 50 and *passim*. *PTebt* 1.70 (111-110 BCE), *PTebt* 1.72 19. *PTebt* 1.74.67 and 75.83 concern agriculture.

vantage', but the meaning of the word remains unclear. It might be 'roster'. Such a meaning suits the 'list' quality of the document read by Ezekias; on the other hand, an agricultural or financial term does not seem appropriate here, and the use of *διαφορά* as 'roster' or 'schedule' does not seem demonstrable outside such contexts.

Progress depends on reconstructing a plausible historical scenario. This document should have been a 'foundation decree', or a 'permission to settle' in Egypt in newly created communities and according to new conditions dictated by Ptolemy Soter.<sup>45</sup> The scene that 'Hecataeus' describes in *Contra Apionem* 1.189 with Ezekias reading out an official regulation—whatever it was—after the Ptolemaic conquest is entirely plausible in the historical context of the age of the Successors. There are several similar scenes documented in the literary sources. As was first pointed out by Bickerman and recently reinforced by Lane Fox, 'Already Alexander communicated with Greek cities by his Successors' favoured instrument, the *διάγραμμα*—according to Bickerman an 'official regulation containing various dispositions'. A similar regulation was sent by Alexander to the Greek cities after Gaugamela: in Plutarch (*Alex.* 34.2) he told them that, 'all their tyrannies were abolished and they might live under their own laws'.<sup>46</sup> Diodorus (18.55.4–56.8) reports that in 319/8 BCE Polyperchon deposed tyrants and oligarchs in Greece by drafting an edict (*δόγμα*) and then circulating a *διάγραμμα*: 'At once, therefore, they called together the envoys, who were present from the cities, and after bidding them to be of good cheer, they promised to re-establish democratic governments in the cities. As soon as they had drafted the decree that had been adopted, they gave it to the envoys, in order that they might quickly return to their native cities and report to their assemblies the goodwill that the kings and the generals entertained for the Greeks.'<sup>47</sup> Luckily, Diodorus reports the *διάγραμμα* of Polyperchon word for word: it was a war bulletin with dispositions for all the cities and specific provisions for some of them. It first summed up the 'acts of kindness to the Greeks' by Macedonian kings (Diod. 18.56.2), then cited letters sent to all the cities on his accession to restore peace after the death of Alexander and referred to the recent Greek defeat in the Lamian war. It officially proclaimed peace and allowed the cities to govern themselves according to the constitutions (*πολιτείας*) that they enjoyed under Philip and Alexander, and to act according to the *διαγράμματα* of these kings (18.56.3). Polyperchon then returned those exiled from the cities by Macedonian generals in Alex-

<sup>45</sup> So Bar Kochva (1996) 223 (though, as we have seen, I do not accept his text).

<sup>46</sup> Bickermann (1940) 25-35: 30 talks of a '*règlement general, contenant plusieurs dispositions*'. Cf. also Lane Fox (2011) 1-29, esp. 9.

<sup>47</sup> Translation by R. M. Geer (Loeb).

ander's time, and decreed (18.56.4) that these people could exercise their citizens' rights in their native cities. The document then dealt with local matters. It listed the cities to which exiles were not to be returned (18.56.5), specified the status of the Athenians and granted them the island of Samos as Philip had previously decreed (18.56.7–8). A final clause exhorted 'all the Greeks' to 'pass a decree that no one shall engage either in war or in public activity in opposition to us, and that if anyone disobeys, he and his family shall be exiled and his goods shall be confiscated.' The document ended with reference to Polyperchon as the official regent and threatened people who failed to carry out what had been written.

In my view, therefore, the document that Ezekias read out must have been very similar to the *διάγραμμα* mentioned above: it was an official post-war regulation in which Ptolemy Soter announced his victory and dealt with the political status of the Jews and other prisoners of war. Crucial here is the already cited passage in Diodorus (19.85.4) which describes the post-war settlement after Gaza and explicitly states that Soter ordered in an official edict 8,000 soldiers into Egypt, and their distribution across various Egyptian districts (*νομαρχίας*). This official regulation is likely to be linked to the document read by Ezekias. These are the hard historical facts (consistent also with the *Letter of Aristeas* (13, 19–25, 36)), as cited above,<sup>48</sup> that underlie the idealizing and propagandizing glosses of *C.Ap.* 1.186 and 189. Those glosses, as we have seen, are consistent both with an authentic work on the Jews by Hecataeus and with a later pseudonymous work.

This reconstruction of the historical situation points to an alternative reading in the text. The scene of soldiers being allocated to, or dispersed across, various garrisons reminds us of another passage in Diodorus (14.57.4), which deals with the Carthaginian conquest of Messana in 396 BCE and states that the conquered people 'took to flight ... and scattered among the fortresses of the territory.' The verb for 'scatter' here is *διασπείρω*. The appropriate word to describe this distribution, and a verb used numerous times by Diodorus to describe war scenarios, is *διασπορά*, or the verb *διασπείρω*, not *διαφορά*.<sup>49</sup> This is palaeographically plausible. An ancient scribe could have copied *διαφορά* instead of the right reading *διασπορά*, by mistaking a ligatured  $\sigma + \pi$  for a  $\phi$ . In the papyri of the Roman period the form of the sigma was lunate (*c*) and the  $\pi$  was often written with

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<sup>48</sup> P. 252.

<sup>49</sup> Almost all the instances of the verb *διασπείρω* in Diodorus refer to human beings (above all troops) being 'scattered about' as a result of wars: cf. 11.12.6, 11.21.2, 11.61.6, 12.70.4, 14.57.4, 14.59.4, 16.58.4, 17.35.1, 17.69.6, 20.30.2, 20.67.4. In 1.28.1 the verb indicates the spreading of colonies, in 19.67.4 homes.

the left vertical elongated towards the bottom and the top horizontal curved.<sup>50</sup>

While the word *διασπορά* is never used by Josephus himself, it occurs frequently in the Septuagint and in several works of Philo.<sup>51</sup> Josephus uses various forms of the verb *διασπείρω*—in *AJ* 12.139 to indicate the dispersal of Jewish prisoners of war, in 12.278 on the exiles in fear of Mattathias, and in *C.Ap.* 1.33 with reference to the dispersal of Jewish priests across Egypt and Babylon as well as in the wider world. This ‘Jewish’ sense of *διασπορά* and *διασπείρω* is not found in non-Jewish authors, but is not excluded here because Hecataeus knew Jews, because the speaker here is himself a Jew, and because it so happens that the ‘Jewish sense’ here coincides with a perfectly normal Greek usage (as illustrated by Diodorus above). These circumstances positively commend the reading. We may add that the retention of a *δια-*compound nicely evokes the more official term of *διάγραμμα*, which I have discussed above.

I believe therefore that the correct translation and meaning of the passage is:

‘This man, when he had acquired this honour and had become our familiar, took along some of his own men and read to them all the dispersal [of the Jews]; for he had their settlement and their constitution written.’

### 3. Hecataeus’ Book

So far, we have seen nothing decisive against the authenticity of the book on the Jews attributed to Hecataeus. Let us then adopt its authenticity as a provisional hypothesis and see how it might work out. The fact that all the information Diodorus takes from Hecataeus seems to come from the *Aigyptiaka*, and that even the material used in Diodorus’ excursus on the Jews in Book 40 mainly involves Egypt,<sup>52</sup> suggests that the book on the Jews by Hecataeus also concerned Egypt. This is also consistent with Josephus’ use of the book in *Contra Apion*.

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<sup>50</sup> Cf. Kenyon (1899) 42: in the Roman period, *ϕ* was written ‘without raising the pen, being formed of a semi-circular curve.’ On the different shapes of the lunate sigma, cf. p. 44. On the paleography of Greek papyri, see Turner (1987).

<sup>51</sup> *LXX Je.* 15.7, *De.* 28.25, *Ev. Jo.* 7.35, *Ps.* 146 (147) 2. Philo *Praem.* 115 talks of ‘spiritual dispersal’, wrought by vice; in *Conf.* 197 refers to the dispersal of the Jews desired by God in *Gen.* 11.8, and cites *Deut.* 30.4. Cf. also *LSJ s.v.* ‘scattering, dispersal’.

<sup>52</sup> Diod. 40.3 = Stern, *GLAJF* 1.26-35.

There is a rather basic question here: what is a ‘book’? As Turner explains, ‘for Plato and for Cicero a book (*βύβλος*, *βιβλίον*, *volumen*) was a roll of papyrus ... inconvenient, impermanent, and not very capacious’.<sup>53</sup> Every individual scroll carried a title, which was usually written on an attached tag of papyrus, parchment or skin, and one scroll could contain one tragedian’s play, or two or three short books by Homer. So Hecataeus’ single ‘book’ ‘On the Jews’ would have had his name and the title on the attached tag. But it was extremely rare for an entire historical work to be written on one scroll, as almost all the historical works we know were divided into several books. Josephus’ statement (*C.Ap.* 1.214) that, while Hieronymus had never mentioned the Jews in his historical work, Hecataeus had devoted to them ‘an entire book’ surely implies that he is referring to one scroll within the Egyptian History of Hecataeus. ‘Pseudo-Hecataeus’ therefore becomes a redundant and unconvincing hypothesis.

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<sup>53</sup> Turner (1968) 7.



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