

What if We Got Rid of the Goy? Rereading Ancient Jewish Distinctions

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Abstract

The *goy* has been present in Jewish discourses since antiquity. Despite this, its birth and history have received almost no scholarly attention. In this paper we shift the focus from the various historical attitudes towards the *goy*, to the very constitution of the concept and the dichotomy it constructs. We claim that scholars have been anachronistically reading Jewish (or Judaeen) texts from the centuries before the common era as if they contained the Jew/*goy* distinction. Through a series of readings in texts like Jubilees, Pseudo-Aristeas, Joseph and Aseneth, 1-4 Maccabees, the Damascus Document, we seek to demonstrate the plurality of options for separation that existed before the Jew/*goy* discourse took over.

Keywords

gentiles – Bible – Second Temple – Jewish-Hellenism – rabbinic literature – Paul

The *goy* has been present in Jewish discourses since antiquity. Despite (or perhaps because of) this, its birth and history have received almost no scholarly attention. Different attitudes toward the *goy*, and the various ways in which a *goy* can become a Jew were discussed at length, but the construction of the category itself went unnoticed. We wish to shift the focus from the various historical attitudes towards the *goy*, to the very constitution of the concept and the dichotomy it constructs. We would claim that there is nothing obvious about this concept or the naming it entails, and that it did not always function as an essential attribute of the self-understanding of Jews.

The category of the *goy* is dichotomous: every person is either a Jew or a gentile; generalized: all peoples are gentiles to the same extent with no significant distinctions among them; and individualized: every member of a non-Jewish group or nation is a gentile in the same manner and to the same extent.¹ In previous papers my colleague Adi Ophir and I have tried to show that this category crystallized in the first two centuries of the Common Era, especially in the Pauline letters and Tannaitic literature.²

Rabbinic literature stabilized the Jew/*goy* distinction as a binary system along with a systematic effort to eliminate various hybrid identities that existed in previous discourses, and to locate them within one of these two categories. The following are some examples of the results of this effort: The word “*ger*” which in the Hebrew Bible refers to “alien resident,” is interpreted in rabbinic literature as “one who converted (*nitgayyer*).” At the same time, the scriptural *ger* (known in rabbinic parlance as “*ger toshav*”) was marginalized to the point that both Talmuds can compare him to “a *goy* in every respect” (y. Yebam. 8:1; b. ‘Avod. Zar. 64b). “God-fearers” were considered gentiles (devoted, but gentiles nonetheless). Samaritans became questionable Jews. They are cast by the Mishnah (m. Qidd. 4:3) alongside the *shetuki* and *assufi*, who do not know the identity of their fathers. Slaves became second-class members of the Jewish community, together with women and minors (see, e.g., m. Naz. 9:1). Tannaitic law insisted on placing hybrid individuals in one of these two poles, erecting a border between them that included well-maintained crossing points.³

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- 1 It is in this, rather than in any modern manner, that we use “individualized” to define the rabbinic “goy” discourse below.
 - 2 Ishay Rosen-Zvi and Adi Ophir, “Goy: Toward a Genealogy,” *Diné Israel* 28 (2011): 69-122; Rosen-Zvi and Ophir, “Paul and the Invention of the Gentiles,” *JQR* 105 (2015): 1-41. See also Rosen-Zvi, “*Huledet ha-goy be-siferut hazal*,” *Te’uda* 26 (2014): 361-438 [Hebrew]. There one can also find a detailed review of scholarship on ethnic distinctions in Paul’s letters and rabbinic literature. The current paper is a part of this larger, shared project, but at the same time stands independently as a textual historical analysis of pre-rabbinic discourses on other nations.
 - 3 Our study thus diverges from studies which read rabbinic discussions of the *goy* “in terms of any other ethnic group’s treatment of the ‘other’”; cit. from Gary G. Porton, *Goyim: Gentiles and Israelites in Mishnah-Tosefta* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 10; cf. Sacha Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, AGJU 23 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 4-6; Judith Lieu, “The Forging of Christian Identity and the Letter to Diognetus,” in *Neither Jew nor Greek? Constructing Early Christianity* (London: T&T Clark, 2002): 171-89, esp. 188. As psychologists and sociologists remind us, identity is based on difference and differentiation. In the context of ethnic groups, this insight was most powerfully argued by Fredrik Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Long Grove: Waveland, 1969), 9-38; see, e.g., 14: “the nature of continuity of ethnic unit is clear: it depends on the maintenance of a boundary . . . continuing dichotomization between members and outsiders.” This observation has been cited repeatedly since; see, e.g., Daniel

There is not yet a full blown Jew/*goy* discourse in the Pauline corpus, but there we find the first systematic use of ἔθνη in a non-ethnic, individualized sense. Paul blatantly ignored the ethnic identities of his readers and taught them that they were simply gentiles. “I have often intended to come to you . . . in order that I may reap some harvest among you as I have among the rest of the ἔθνη” (1:13), he tells the Roman congregation. “I speak to you ἔθνη,” he later says, adding: “inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the ἔθνη” (Rom 11:13). Paul did not address here (or anywhere else) the Romans as Romans. Instead he told them that he turns to them because they are gentiles, and as the apostle to the gentiles he is committed to all gentiles equally: “I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. Hence (ὅυτως) my eagerness to proclaim the gospel to you *also* who are in Rome” (1:14-15).⁴ We have speculated that Paul’s unprecedented privatization and de-politicization of the eschatological prophecies on the *goyim* (see, e.g., the catena of such verses in Rom 15:9-12) was his way to admit Christ believers from the nations into the Jewish salvation history.

In this paper I turn to pre-Pauline compositions and claim that scholars have been anachronistically reading Jewish (or Judaeon) texts from the centuries before the common era as if they contained the Jew/*goy* distinction. I then discuss the image of non-Jews before it was solidified into the rabbinic division, by following the conceptual configurations through which the

Boyarin’s brilliant analysis of heresiology as the basis of orthodoxy rather than vice versa, in *Borderlines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). But our interest here is in one particular sort of difference, and it is this sort that, we insist, has a history, and its history can be reconstructed. In this paper we employ neither sociological and social-anthropological theories of ethnicity, nor postcolonial theories of borders and their inherently blurred nature. We attempt to trace the career of the *goy* as a specific form of “other,” and of the specific modes of “othering” it involved. Since our task is to reconstruct the emergence of a distinct formation of exclusion, this requires attention to a corpus of primary texts that does not presuppose any of the modern formations of exclusion described in these studies. If our own research is relevant to this scholarly corpus, it is by showing the necessity of a detailed, historically embedded and textually anchored scholarship that refrains from positing a general theory of otherness and is not driven by the passion to deconstruct binary oppositions. We try to reconstruct, rather than deconstruct, the contingent genealogy of a certain binary structure, whose emergence we hope to trace in details. Since this specific “other” appears to us only as a discursive category, it is necessary to frame our research within a theory of discourse. We thus need to account for the history and historicity of concepts, and their relation both to terms and to institutions and techniques (A more detailed methodological reflection on our project will be found in our forthcoming monograph)

4 On Paul’s usage of the Greek/barbarian dichotomy to construct his own binary opposition see Rosen-Zvi and Ophir, “Paul and the Invention of the Gentiles,” 29-30.

distinctions between Jews and their others were articulated in those periods. I seek to demonstrate that when these texts are read without assuming the binary model behind them, several difficulties are resolved and themes which the consensual scholarly perspective found puzzling become accessible. The texts discussed below are not arranged chronologically or geographically, but rather according to the different ways these texts make and maintain distinctions. My goal is to demonstrate the plurality of options for separation that existed before the *Jew/goy* discourse took over. Instead of one systematic distinction or a simple evolutionary process, I see a series of different, competing models. For comparison and contrast I cite the rabbinic “mature” concept of *goy*.⁵

Scholars have ascribed to the scriptural books at least two types of divisions between Israel and others: the Deuteronomistic concept of “election” and Ezra’s “holy seed.”⁶ However, aside from the fact that in these divisions the plurality of nations is never reduced to an abstract notion of otherness, they become models for division only once they are materialized in later texts. Looking backwards from later texts like Jubilees, the Damascus Document, or the Psalms of Solomon—for which scripture has already some kind of authoritative status—a reader can point to “biblical” roots of these distinctions. From the point of view of the history of later traditions, scriptural material is a repertoire of stories, themes, topoi, metaphors, oppositions, and associations from which ever new stories, arguments, and conceptual structures are formed. The rabbinic constructed opposition between Jew and *goy* is *one* such conceptual structure that at some point came to monopolize the corpus identified as “Jewish.” This conceptual structure should not be projected backward on the vast literature from the Bible to the Roman Period, thus blurring the novelty of the later sources. The present paper attempts to offer an antidote to such anachronistic tendencies by examining alternative realizations of the scriptural ingredients.⁷

5 On the possible implication of this finding to the history of the “Jew,” and especially the recent debates about the alleged transformation of “Judaism” from ethnos to religion/culture, and the related question of the suitable translation to *yehudi/Ioudaios*: Judaeen (ethnos) or Jew (religion; on this see David M. Miller, “The Meaning of Ioudaios and its relationship to Other Group Labels in Ancient Judaism,” *CurBR* 9 [2010]: 98-126), see Rosen-Zvi, “*Huledet ha-goy*,” 406-7.

6 These appear as the two crucial moments in many studies. See, e.g., Saul Olyan, *Rites and Rank* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 74-83; Joel S. Kaminsky, *Yet, I Loved Jacob: Reclaiming the Biblical Concept of Election* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2007), 122-24.

7 In a previous version of this paper it included also an extended discussion of the development of the terms *ethne* and *goyim* from the Bible to the rabbis and from the LXX to Philo, Josephus, and Paul. On the advice of the reviewers of this journal, we decided to dedicate a separate

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The Book of Jubilees advocates for a sharp distinction between Israel and all others, expressing separatist sentiments which could well be termed xenophobic.⁸ This distinction, moreover, is based on an ontological and metaphysical conception of Israel's uniqueness originating in creation itself, from which Jubilees traces the imperative to keep the nation pure and separated.⁹ It is thus not surprising that scholars read Jubilees and rabbinic literature together as two, similarly exclusivist, legal systems.¹⁰

But for Jubilees Israel is one and the *goyim* (i.e., nations) are many. Different peoples have different attributes and the attitude toward them is different, as Cana Werman meticulously demonstrated.¹¹

paper to this grave and delicate issue. There, we will also discuss the various *allo-* names used for non-Jews in Jewish Hellenistic writings; see Judith Lieu, "Not Hellenes but Philistines? The Maccabees and Josephus defining the 'Other,'" *JJS* 53 (2002): 246-63. This paper is thus dedicated to conceptual developments only.

- 8 Christian Frevel, "Separate Yourself From the Gentiles," in *Mixed Marriages: Inter-marriage and Group Identity in the Second Temple Period*, ed. Frevel (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), 220-50 at 220, for example, writes: "There is hardly any Jewish writing from the second century BCE that is as radical and plain in the call for separation from the nations as the book of Jubilees." Cf. Jacques T. A. G. M. van Ruiten, "Abraham and the Nations in the Book of Jubilees," in *Abraham, the Nations, and the Hagarites*, ed. M. Goodman, G. H. van Kooten, and van Ruiten, TBN 13 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 105-16. Some examples include the extensive rewriting of: (1) the treaty between Isaac and Abimelech (i.e., the Philistines; Gen 26:26-33) in Jub 24:26-33; (2) Isaac's blessings to Esau (Gen 27:40) in Jub 26:34; and (3) Jacob's reaction to the massacre of Shechem (Gen 34:30) in Jub 30:25. Citations from James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees: A Translation*, CSCO 511 (Leuven: Peeters, 1989). I also consulted the new Hebrew translation of Cana Werman, *Sefer ha-yovelim: Mavo, targum u-feirush* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi, 2015).
- 9 See Jub 1:22-29; 2:19-23, 31; 5:16-18; 7:12; 8:18-21; 15:27-32; 16:17-18, 25-26; 19:16-29; 32:18-19; 48:8. See Gabriele Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways between Qumran and Enochic Judaism* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1998), 94; James Kugel, "The Holiness of Israel and the Land in Second Temple Times," in *Texts, Temples and Traditions: A Tribute to Menahem Haran*, ed. M. Fox et al. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 21-32; Kugel, *A Walk through Jubilees: Studies in the Book of Jubilees and the World of its Creation*, JSJSup 156 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 32-35; and Jacques T. A. G. M. van Ruiten, *Abraham in the Book of Jubilees*, JSJSup 161 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 158, 164.
- 10 See Cana Werman, "*Ha-yahas la-goyim be-sefer ha-Yovlim uve-sifrut Kumran be-hashva'ah la-halakhah ha-Tana'it ha-kedumah ule-sifrut hitsonit bat ha-tekfah*" (PhD diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1995), 333-38; Isaac W. Oliver, "Forming Jewish Identity by Formulating Legislation for Gentiles," *JAJ* 4 (2013): 105-32.
- 11 Werman, "*Ha-yahas la-goyim*," analyzes the diverse depictions of various scriptural figures and Jubilees's attitudes towards them: the negative image of Esau, the positive

Jubilees 22:16-22 is a case in point. This passage offers an ideology of total separation of the seed of Jacob from the nations, possibly ruling out Judaization too,¹² but does not yet employ a category that encompasses all the nations together. It thus juggles between “idolaters,” the “peoples of Canaan,” and other categories, to form an all-encompassing category:

Separate from the nations...for their actions are something that is impure...they offer their sacrifices to the dead and they worship demons...Be careful, my son Jacob, not to marry a woman from all the descendants of Canaan's daughters, because all of his descendants are (meant) for being uprooted from the earth. For through Ham's sin Canaan erred... There is no hope in the land of the living for all who worship idols... As the people of Sodom were taken from the earth, so all who worship idols will be taken. (Jub 22:16-22)

Since Jubilees has no unified category at its disposal, it needs to buttress its injunction to separate with specific explanations. It weaves together various scriptural categories and myths, such as the curse of Canaan, the contagious impurity of corpses, the ensnaring dangers of idolatry, and more. Separation from others is not a cause for, but rather the effect of, continuous and active intervention.

Similarly, Jub 30, which retells the story of Shechem and Dinah, proscribes intermarriage unprecedentedly harshly. It does not however present a unified gentile from whom Jews ought to stay away. The object of separation is he “who is from the seed of the nations” (30:7),¹³ and the legal categories used to justify the separation are those of Moloch (Lev 18:21; and cf. Targum Ps. Jonathan ad loc.) and the defilement of the holy seed (Ezra 9:2).¹⁴

“Israel” too is divided into the elect and the non-elect. The polemic about circumcision in Jub 15 is meant not only to distinguish between Israel and

image of Laban, and the ambivalent figure of Ishmael. These evaluations have direct legal consequences: there is a subset of the commandments incumbent on Ishmaelites, and Jacob's sons are allowed to marry Arameans.

12 See Christine Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 73-81.

13 “Seed” is also a central category in the Israelite collective identity. For Jubilees's genealogical terms see Martha Himmelfarb, *A Kingdom of Priests: Ancestry and Merit in Ancient Judaism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 80-82.

14 See John C. Endres, *Biblical Interpretation in the Book of Jubilees* (Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1987), 120-54; Cana Werman, “Jubilees 30: Building a Paradigm for the Ban on Intermarriage,” *HTR* 90 (1997): 1-22.

other nations (particularly Ishmael), but also between different groups within Israel.¹⁵ The absence of a binary distinction allows authors both to narrow the scope of election to specific groups within Israel¹⁶ and to widen it universally.¹⁷

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- 15 Scholars suggest that the target of this pericope is not Hellenized Jews but Pharisees. See Werman, “*Ha-yahas la-goyim*,” 31; Michael Segal, *The Book of Jubilees: Rewritten Bible, Redaction, Ideology and Theology*, JSJSup 117 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 244; van Ruiten, *Abraham in the Book of Jubilees*, 156 and the bibliography there in n. 34. See also Menahem Kister, “Body and Sin: Romans and Colossians in Light of Qumran and Rabbinic Texts,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Pauline Literature*, ed. Jean-Sébastien Rey, STDJ 102 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 171-208, esp. 185 n. 52: “I do not agree with Charles’ statement in his notes on Jub 1:24: ‘Israelites are God’s children according to our author by virtue of their physical descent from Jacob’ . . . Rather, sonship of God is conferred on Israel because of their repentance, the holy spirit, and their observance of the commandments.”
- 16 Aharon Shemesh, “*Hamavdil bein benei or li-veni hoshekh, bein israel la-amim*,” in *Atara L’Haim: Studies in the Talmud and Medieval Rabbinic Literature in Honor of Professor Haim Zalman Dimitrovsky*, ed. D. Boyarin et al. (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2000), 209-20 [Hebrew], shows that the same laws which, in rabbinic literature, separate Jews from gentiles, serve at Qumran to separate the members of the sect from others. Cf. Bilhah Nitzan, “The Concept of the Covenant in Qumran Literature,” in *Historical Perspectives from the Hasmoneans to Bar Kokhba in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. D. Goodblatt, A. Pinnick, and D. R. Schwartz, STDJ 37 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 85-104; George W. E. Nickelsburg, “Polarized Self-Identification in the Qumran Texts,” in *Defining Identities: We, You, and the Other in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Florentino García Martínez and Mladen Popović, STDJ 70 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 23-31. For a similar process in the Wisdom tradition see Marco Marttila and Mika S. Pajunen, “Wisdom, Israel and the Nations: Perspectives from the Hebrew Bible, Deuterocanonical Literature, and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *JAJ* 3 (2013): 2-26. See especially their usage of Joel Kaminsky’s tripartite division—elect, non-elect, anti-elect—to define groups *inside* Israel in some wisdom compositions. Some scholars identify similar proto-sectarian processes already in the Persian period. See, e.g., Anselm C. Hagedorn and Shani Tzoref, “Attitudes to Gentiles in the Minor Prophets and in Corresponding Pesharim,” *DSD* 20 (2013): 472-509, esp. 483-86.
- 17 For the connection between sectarianism and universalism, see Daniel R. Schwartz, “Ends Meet: Qumran and Paul on Circumcision,” in Rey, *Dead Sea Scrolls and Pauline Literature*, 295-307; Gudrun Holtz, “Inclusivism in Qumran,” *DSD* 16 (2009): 22-54. Note that for Holtz “exclusivism” means “members of the community” only (p. 24), while “inclusivism” refer to any tendency to include “non-Essene Israel, the nations and/or the whole of creation” (26). What is most significant for our context is not the claim that “inclusive eschatological tendencies were more widespread than is generally assumed” (34), that “in the law sections of Qumran literature it is only the intra-Jewish opponents who are thoroughly disqualified, not the Gentiles” (49), or that “Israel at large—or similarly, the non-combatant part of the nations—is either ignored or seen in neutral, if not positive, terms” (53). Rather it is the very subjection of the Israel/nations distinction to a more powerful one—that between the sect and anyone else, Jews and non-Jews alike—that is indicative

Jubilees is not short on motivation for separation, but it does lack the appropriate categorization that captures all objects of separation in a single, unified group. The significance of this categorization should not be underestimated. Jubilees has to justify the separation time and again, lumping together various scriptural categories and concepts, something an abstract category would make unnecessary. The rabbinic abstract *goy* includes its own justification and makes further explanations superfluous, for *goy* is by its very nature a mark of otherness. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the rabbinic explanation of the need to purify gentile vessels: “Due to the gentility of gentiles” (מפני גייות גוים; Sifre Num. 158, ed. Horowitz, 214).¹⁸ The sentence is deliberately tautological, as if saying: do not look for external reasons for the impurity of things that were touched by *goyim*. It is the gentility itself that is the cause; no additional explanation is needed.

The repetitive engagement with the need for difference may indicate the very real lack of categorization in a world where distinction is still a constant struggle. In the rabbinic world, boundaries and distinctions were assumed to be self-evident. Tannaitic literature does not contain an explicit prohibition of intermarriage (the one mention of Jewish/gentile sex in m. Sanh. 9:5 is oblique

of, and only possible in pre-*goy* discourses. Such subjection of national consciousness to sectarian one is noticed also by scholars who do not share the inclusive readings of Holtz. See, e.g., Philip Davies, “‘Old’ and ‘New’ Israel in the Bible and the Qumran Scrolls: Identity and Difference,” in García Martínez and Popović, *Defining Identities*, 33-42, at 39: “against the outside world as a whole . . . Jews and Gentiles together.” This also explains the doubts whether certain Pesharim passages discuss “internal Jewish enemies” or “foreign power” (cf. Hagedorn and Tzoref, “Attitudes to Gentiles,” 505). Let us add that scholarly attempts to read explicit references to humanity in the scrolls (see, e.g., the Treatise of the Two Spirits [1QS 3:13,17, 4:20]; the Vision of Hagu in 4QInstruction [4Q417 1 i 16]; and the eschatology of the War Scroll [1QM 11:14]) as implicitly referring to Israel only (so Menahem Kister, “*Al ha-ra ve-al ha-tov: ha-basis ha-teologi shel adat Qumran*,” in *Megilot Qumran: mevo’ot u-mehkarim*, ed. M. Kister, 2 vols. [Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2009], 2:497-528, esp. 512, 518) are less than convincing.

- 18 The homily deals with the commandment to purify the spoils after the war with Midian (Num 31:23). It rejects the idea that the need for purification is due to the fact that the vessels were touched by enemy corpses, and instead insists that it is the very “gentleness” of those who touched them that necessitates the purification. See Vered Noam, *Mi-kumran la-mahapekha ha-tanna’it: hebetim bi-tefsat ha-tumah* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi, 2009), 133 [Hebrew]; Noam, “The Gentleness of the Gentiles: Two Approaches to the Impurity of Non Jews,” in *Halakha in Light of Epigraphy*, ed. Albert I. Baumgarten et al., JAJSup 3 (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 27-41.

and equivocal).¹⁹ Instead it focuses on the interface between Jew and gentile, assuming the stability of the categories themselves.

Separation in Tannaitic literature is presented in a new discursive frame, part of the unthought-of environment. In a single concept this frame is able to articulate a binary distinction (ontology), a point of view (epistemology), normative regulation (ethics), and implicit justification (rhetoric). Within this frame, explicit justifications are unnecessary. When *goy* appears, not only is the same justification used for separate cases, but all separate cases become identical, tokens of the same type. In Jubilees, in contrast, each act of separation calls for further articulation. Time and again Israel's exceptionalism needs to be justified using a different set of rationales, according to context.

Understanding that the binary model post-dates Jubilees can help account for various odd "exceptions" to Jubilees's famous exclusivism. Jubilees 7 includes the commandments of Noah to his sons;²⁰ chapter 20 features yet another set of commandments for Ishmael and his descendants—to avoid idolatry and not marry Canaanite women;²¹ the command to love your fellow (Lev 19:18) is

19 M. Meg. 4:9 explicitly rejects translating Lev 18:21 in a way that explicates such a prohibition. The prohibition itself is found only in a statement in y. Šabb. 1:4, 3c attributed to R. Shimon b. Yohai, part of the rabbinic "eighteen decrees." b. 'Avod. Zar. 36b further explains that the biblical prohibition is only limited to the seven original peoples of Caanan. While Cana Werman and Christine Hayes read this as expressing the rejection of the exclusivist model of Ezra and Jubilees, Shaye Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 245-46, sees here an indication that the rabbis no longer saw intermarriage as a significant threat. We would add that the rabbinic general disregard may indicate that the prohibition was already considered obvious to them.

20 Several scholars read the Noachian commandments in Jub 7 in light of the book's general exclusivist ideology. See Werman, "Ha-yahas la-goyim," 333-38; Oliver, "Forming Jewish Identity"; Todd R. Hanneken, "The Sin of the Gentiles: The Prohibition of Eating Blood in the Book of Jubilees," *JSJ* 46 (2015): 1-27. Such readings, however, are influenced by the rabbinic conceptualization of the seven commandments. See Moshe Lavee, "Sheva mitsvot bene noah: avnei ha-binyan shel ha-tefisah ha-talmudit ba-megillot, be-sifriyyat ha-kat uve-ma'asei ha-shelihim," *Meghillot* 10 (2013): 73-114, esp. 92. Lavee meticulously shows how Tannaitic literature rewrites older traditions about the Noachian laws, subjecting them to the separation between Israel and gentiles, and making them part of a two tiered, fully segregated and explicitly contrasted system. For the Tannaitic anti-universalistic usage of the Noachian commandments see Christine Hayes, *What's Divine About Divine Law? Early Perspectives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 354-69.

21 See VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Translation*, 55.

not confined in Jubilees to fellow Israelites²² and “Jubilees consistently cites the promise to bless the nations in its rewritten narrative.”²³

Exclusivism not framed through a binary opposition can be found more easily in Jewish texts written in Greek. Joseph and Aseneth negotiates issues of intermarriage and conversion, and displays special interest in foreignness. The story begins with a stark contrast between Egyptians and Hebrews. Curiously, however, both are supposed to be disinterested in the other, and intermarriage is discussed from both sides. Aseneth rejects her father’s offer to marry Joseph based on the fact that he is a foreigner (ἄλλόφυλος), a slave, and a son of Cannanite shepherds. He also slept with his mistress (4:9). For his part, Joseph cannot eat with the Egyptians (7:1, cf. Gen 42:33) and refuses to kiss Aseneth because she is of a foreign nation (ἄλλοτρία, cf. 7:5) and an idol worshipper (8:5-6).²⁴ After Aseneth is transformed Joseph hugs (19:10) and kisses (20:4) her.²⁵ Joseph explains his refusal to kiss Aseneth, mixing all these elements together:

It is not fitting for a man who worships God, who will bless with his mouth the living God . . . to kiss a strange woman who will bless with her mouth dead and dumb idols . . . But a man who worships God will kiss his mother and his sister . . . of his clan and family and the wife who shares his bed, (all of) who(m) bless with their mouths *the living God*. Likewise for a woman who worships God it is not fitting to kiss a strange man, because this is an abomination before the Lord God. (Jos. Asen. 8:5-7)²⁶

22 Only one allusion to Lev 19:18 refers to a fellow Israelite (Jub 46:1), while all the rest appear in immediate familial context, especially that of Isaak and Ishmael or Jacob and Esau. See Atar Livneh, “Love Your Fellow as Yourself: The Interpretation of Leviticus 19:17-18 in the Book of Jubilees,” *DSD* 18 (2011): 173-99, esp. 176.

23 Jub 12:23, 19:17, 20:10; Jeffrey Wisdom, *Blessing for the Nations and the Curse of the Law: Paul’s Citation of Genesis and Deuteronomy in Galatians 3.8-10*, WUNT 2.133 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 73.

24 Aseneth looks like a Hebrew (1:5) but worships all the Egyptian gods (2:2; 3:6), while Joseph worships the one, true God (3:4; 4:7; 6:3; 8:5). According to Aseneth’s own confession, God himself “hates all those who worship idols” (12:7-8).

25 On different readings of the kiss see Eckart Reinmuth, ed., *Joseph und Aseneth: Eingeleitet, ediert, übersetzt und mit interpretierenden Essays*, Scripta Antiquitatis Posterioris ad Ethicam Religionemque pertinentia 15 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 22.

26 Citations are according to the long—and for most scholars the original—recension translated and annotated by Christoph Burchard in James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983).

The text shifts from religious identity to chastity and back again. Similarly, Aseneth's "conversion" is narrated as a spiritual transformation, and as "repentance" (15:7),²⁷ leading her to abandon idolatry and cling to the true God, rather than as an ethnic conversion.²⁸

A few verses earlier Potiphar tells Joseph that Aseneth and Joseph are siblings (ἀδελφοί): they are both virgins and both reject foreigners (8:1). Various concepts of brotherhood and foreignness feature here simultaneously. Idolatry is shunned in favor of the one true God. Aseneth is not a member of Joseph's tribe and is not a Hebrew (8:6). She is also a temptress, which makes the whole encounter sexually charged.²⁹ Finally, Joseph accepts Aseneth as a sister when he realizes she is Potiphar's daughter (7:8). These various categories—ethnic, religious, sexual, familial—are all mixed in a way that makes traditional distinctions impossible. What does Jacob mean when he warns Joseph against foreign woman (7:5)? How can Aseneth be both foreign to Joseph (8:5-6) and his sister (7:8)? This confusion is not a problem to be solved; rather it is characteristic of the discourses that precede the formation of the binary division.³⁰

Flexible Election

The binary distinction also precludes the elasticity of election. A good example of this phenomenon is the Animal Apocalypse embedded in 1 Enoch (85-90). Chapter 89 narrates the division of nations, based on Gen 10. Unlike its scriptural source, however, the Animal Apocalypse portrays the nations as

27 Cf. Acts 11:18, and see D. Flusser, "Yosef ve-asenat: roman Yehudi hellenisti," *Dapim Le-Mehkar Be-Sifrut* 2 (1985): 73-81, esp. 74.

28 See Randall D. Chesnutt, *From Death to Life: Conversion in Joseph and Aseneth* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995). On Aseneth's "conversion" and the initiation rituals into the Hellenistic *mysteria* see Michael Schneider, *Ha-masorot ha-genuzot shel ha-mistikah ha-yehudit: mehkere ha-mistikah ha-yehudit ha-kedumah al pi eduyot shel sefarim hitsonim, sifrut helenistit, mekorot notsriyim u-muslemiyim* (Los Angeles: Cherub, 2012), 28-33.

29 See Ross S. Kraemer, *When Aseneth Met Joseph: A Late Antique Tale of the Biblical Patriarch and his Egyptian Wife, Reconsidered* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 51.

30 Cf. Erich Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 93: "The attitudes reflected therein with regard to relations between Jews and Gentiles, tense but resolvable, may tip the balance slightly toward a Ptolemaic rather than Roman setting. Comparable attitudes are discernible in works like the Letter of Aristeeas, 3 Maccabees, and the writing of Artapanus." While we fully agree with the cultural observation, we would claim that it is exactly the *lack* of "Jews and Gentiles" discourse which characterizes all these compositions.

predators and unclean beasts of various kinds, named and specified. Abraham, a white bull, is an exception:

And they began to beget wild beasts and birds and there came from them species of every sort: lions, tigers, hyenas, dogs, wild boars, foxes, hyraxes, swine, falcons, eagles, kites, foqans-birds and ravens. And there was born in their midst a white bull. (1 En. 89:10)³¹

Devorah Dimant writes: “The cattle signifies Israel, while the wild animals and predator birds—the gentiles . . . The distinction between Israel and the gentiles is presented as fundamental, as a constant battle, and is a central axis in the apocalypse as a whole.”³² But this binary representation—Israel and the gentiles—is missing from the apocalypse. The nations are different from each another, each with its own distinct symbolism: Ishmael is a wild ass, Esau a swine, Egyptians are wolves, and Philistines dogs. The exception of one species does not make all others one.

The difference is not only semantic. The lack of a binary structure allows the apocalypse to narrate a saga of separation which transcends the Israel/nations division. Its focal point is the rise of a small number of young sheep, possibly hinting to the Essenes,³³ who form the new group of elects from which the universal eschatological redemption begins. The ultimate goal is a transformed humanity, that returns to an original, unified Adamic status, in which all ethnic distinctions disappear and all species become “white cattle” (90:38).³⁴

Scholars emphasized separately the exclusive (“sectarian”) and the inclusive (“universal”) aspects of this apocalypse. Mark Elliott reads it as a clear example of “remnant theology,” comparing it to Qumran: “The author . . . was unhindered by nationalistic doctrines from pronouncing on an apostate nation its

31 Citation according to Patrick A. Tiller, *A Commentary on the Animal Apocalypse of 1 Enoch* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 269.

32 Devorah Dimant, “Ha-historiya al pi hazon ha-hayot (hanokh ha-habashi 85-90),” *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 1 (1982): 24-25. Cf. Ida Fröhlich, “The Symbolical Language of the Animal Apocalypse of Enoch (1 Enoch 85-90),” *RevQ* 14/56 (1990): 629-36, esp. 632 (“dichotomic system”).

33 Menahem Kister, “Le-toledot kat ha-isiyim: iyunim be-hazon ha-hayot, sefer ha-yovelim u-verit damesek,” *Tarbiz* 56 (1986-1987): 1-18.

34 See Daniel C. Olson, *A New Reading of the Animal Apocalypse of 1 Enoch*, SVTP 24 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 229, 242. Olson claims that the previous verse, which describes the servitude of all the beasts/nations to the white bull, is no more than a tribute to scriptural traditions. Further “the transformation in 90:38 will change that submission from a permanent state of servitude unto a token gesture” (226).

judgement in the most extreme terms.”³⁵ Aaron Sherwood, conversely, cites 1 En 90 as an exemplar of the restoration through the (re)unification of Israel and the nations in the end times: “the nations’ progression in vv. 30-38 from defeat through subservience to full and equal participation in Israel’s eschatological blessing matches the pattern witnessed in (at least) Trito-Isaiah and the Psalter,” and further “the nation’s recreation lags behinds Israel’s by one step.”³⁶

Neither phenomenon is unique to this text. Scholars have pointed to eschatological universalism in various scriptural texts (mainly by way of finding precedents for Paul).³⁷ The narrowing of election to the “remnants of Israel” is similarly a general feature of apocalyptic texts, not just sectarian ones.³⁸ Either move is possible only before the *goy* discourse took over. The lack of an all-encompassing binary distinction allows the authors not only to confine election to a sub-group of Israel,³⁹ but also, eventually, to extend it to all humankind.

Another case of the intricacies of identifying the elect is Wisdom of Solomon. The first, eschatological part of this work (chs. 1-5) contrasts the

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- 35 Mark A. Elliot, *The Survivors of Israel: A Reconsideration of the Theology of Pre-Christian Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 80. Cf. Laurence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 384; Florentino García Martínez, “Invented Memory: The ‘Other’ in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Qumranica Minora II*, ed. Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, STDJ 64 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 187-218, esp. 214. For fuller bibliography see Holtz, “Inclusivism in Qumran,” nn. 3-5.
- 36 Aaron Sherwood, *Paul and the Restoration of Humanity in Light of Ancient Jewish Traditions*, AJEC 82 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 197, 199.
- 37 See Terrence L. Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish Patterns of Universalism (to 135 CE)* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007); B. van der Lans, “Belonging to Abraham’s Kin: Genealogical Appeals to Abraham as a Possible Background for Paul’s Abrahamic Argument,” in Goodman et al., *Abraham, the Nations, and the Hagarites*, 307-18; and Sherwood, *Paul and the Restoration*.
- 38 Richard Bauckham, “Apocalypses,” in *Justification and Variated Nomism, vol. 1: the Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, ed. D. A. Carson, P. T. O’Brien, and M. A. Seifrid (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 135-88. See especially the analysis of the “righteous” and “elect” in 142-44, and Carson’s summary: “the righteous are the true Israel; sinners are either Jewish apostates or Gentile oppressors” (515). Cf. Elliot, *Survivors of Israel*.
- 39 This is true already for Ezra which, despite scholarly emphasis on its formation of binary distinctions (see, e.g., Saul Olyan, “Purity Ideology in Ezra-Nehemiah as a Tool to Reconstitute the Community,” *JSJ* 35 [2004]: 1-16, esp. 10-11, and the bibliography cited there), is not contrasting Israel and gentiles, but rather “the sons of the *gola*” and all others. It is therefore (proto-)sectarian in nature, as was justly emphasized by Stephen Hultgren, *From the Damascus Covenant to the Covenant of the Community*, STDJ 66 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 146-63.

righteous and the evil doers. Both are characterized according to their individual traits, which are considered as a result of free choice (3:9-10). The “elect” and “holy ones” are personal designations, as are the “ungodly” who deny divine retribution.⁴⁰ Both sides are Jews, and are thus expected to fulfill the law (2:12); thus 4:14-15:

The masses (λαοί) see this and do not understand, nor do they take such a happening to heart, that God’s grace and compassion are for his chosen (ἐκλεκτοῖς αὐτοῦ), and a gracious visitation for his holy ones (όσίοις αὐτοῦ).⁴¹

This is an apologia for the premature death of the righteous: “for his soul was pleasing to the Lord, therefore he urged it forth out of the midst of wickedness” (4:14).⁴² God himself chose the elect,⁴³ and the λαοί are all the rest, Jews and non-Jews alike (thus “masses” in the translation).⁴⁴ The national context some scholars have sought to find here, is in reality glaringly absent.⁴⁵

Unlike the first part of Wisdom, the second (6-10) and third (11-19) parts of this book contain an unmistakable national ideology. The second part, which comprises of the praises of Wisdom, concludes with a narrative of Wisdom’s actions in history. It begins with a universal poem, speaking to the kings “whose pride is in nation masses” (6:1-2), and ends with the Israelites’ national song at

40 Some scholars read these chapters as a polemic against Ecclesiastes, while others as anti-Epicurean. See John J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 194.

41 Citations from David Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1979).

42 Cf. the clear allusion to the figure of Enoch in v. 10.

43 See Greg Schmidt Goering: “Election and Knowledge in the Wisdom of Solomon,” in *Studies in the Book of Wisdom*, ed. G. G. Xeravits and J. Zsengellér, JSJSup 142 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 163-82, esp. 168.

44 Cf. “But the souls of the just (δίκαιοι) are in God’s hand, and no torment shall in no way touch them [...] They will judge nations (ἔθνη) and hold sway over peoples (λαοί), and the Lord shall be their sovereign for all eternity” (3:1, 8). Here too it is the righteous, rather than Israel as a nation, who govern the ἔθνη. Only they will shine forth in the end times (3:7; cf. Dan 12:3).

45 See John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora from Alexander to Trajan* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 184-86; and the comments by Goering, “Election and Knowledge,” 170: “Barclay reads the Book of Eschatology as ‘a reflection of conflict between Jews and non-Jews’. Yet even he acknowledges that the specific language of attack on the ungodly suggests that the opponents themselves may be Jews.” Cf. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom*, 194 n. 62.

the sea (10:20-21).⁴⁶ The national saga peacefully coexists with the most universalistic portrayal of wisdom, narrated in both Platonic and Stoic terms.⁴⁷ Such a combination between the national and the universal is common in Jewish Wisdom literature from the Hellenistic period.⁴⁸

The “midrash” on the Exodus, the third and final part of Wisdom (11-19), brings “our fathers” (18:6) alone to the fore. They are “your sons” (16:10), “your holy ones” (18:1), “a holy people (ἕθνος ἄγιον)” (17:2) and “the righteous” (18:20). Against them stand their enemies (16:8, 22)—the evildoing (19:1), sinning (19:13) Egyptians—who wish to destroy the Israelites and are punished measure for measure.⁴⁹ But the Egyptians are never used as a metonym for ἕθνη in general.⁵⁰ The Canaanites receive a very different treatment (chap. 12).⁵¹ The fact that each nation is judged according to its own deeds, functions as the greatest manifestation of divine justice: “who shall bring charge against you for having destroyed nations (ἕθνη) of your own making? . . . For neither is there any God beside you that cares for all . . .” (12:12-13).

That this is an Israel-and-the-nations structure rather than a dichotomous Jew/goy one, can be demonstrated through comparison to a Tannaitic midrash which erases all distinctions between the Canaanites and the Egyptians:

“You shall not copy the practices of the land of Egypt where you dwell” (Lev 18:3)—The verse compared the practices of Egypt to the practices of the Canaanites, and the practices of the Canaanites to the practices of Egypt. As the deeds of the Canaanites, who are overrun with idolatry . . . so

46 See, e.g., 10:15, on the Exodus: “She delivered a holy people (λαός) and a blameless seed (σπέρμα) From the nation (ἕθνος) of oppressors.”

47 See Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 26-32, 38-40; Alexander A. Di Lella, “Conservative and Progressive Theology: Sirach and Wisdom,” *CBQ* 26 (1966): 139-54, esp. 148.

48 Collins, *Jewish Wisdom*.

49 For the educational logic of measure for measure in this composition see Yehoyada Amir, “Measure For Measure in Talmudic Literature and in the Wisdom of Solomon,” in *Justice and Righteousness: Biblical Themes and their Influence*, ed. H. G. Reventlow and Y. Hoffman, *JSOTSup* 137 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 29-46. Amir shows that the same logic of measure for measure works also in the first part—albeit in a personal, rather than collective, level (45).

50 Similarly, in Ezekiel’s *Exagoge* the Egyptians never represent the nations in general. See Howard Jacobson, *The Exagoge of Ezekiel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 92-93.

51 For the Cannanites’ sin and punishment see Katell Berthelot, “The Original Sin of the Canaanites,” in *The “Other” in Second Temple Judaism: Essays in Honor of John J. Collins*, ed. D. C. Harlow et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 49-66.

are the deeds of the Egyptians. (Mekhilta de-Arayot; Sifra, Aharei 8 [ed. Weiss, 86a])⁵²

Here is another example, this time from the Mekhilta of R. Ishmael:

And Egypt pursued them (Ex 14:9). This tells us that none of them stumbled, lest they see it as a bad omen (*yenaḥashu*) and return. And so we find everywhere, that gentiles practice augury (*menahashim*), as it says, *for these gentiles which you are to replace [obey augurs and oracles]* (Deut 18:14). *And the elders of Moab [and the elders of Midian] went [with oracles in their hands]* (Num 22:7), *and Bilam the son of Beor the Augur [they killed by the sword]* (Josh 13:22). (Mek. R. Ishm. Vayehi 2, ed. Horowitz-Rabin, 91)

Although the attribution of magical powers to the Egyptians was a popular ethnic stereotype in this period,⁵³ the above homily easily skips over to other peoples and to gentiles in general. The prooftexts cited are about Canaanites, Moabites, and Midianites—but not Egyptians. *Goyim* are *goyim*.

David Winston's explanation that the "hatred" in Wisdom is only "circumstantial,"⁵⁴ and John Collins's assertion that "The author appears to be interested in the type rather than in the historical particularism,"⁵⁵ are unnecessary. Rather, it is possible to fully accept Joseph Reider's judgement of the "arrogant and undisguised particularism," of this text, "sometimes bordering on fanaticism,"⁵⁶ and still not assume a binary distinction. Scholars ignored this possibility and thus felt compelled to choose between one of two extremes: either the text centers on the Jews/ἔθνη division, or it ignores ethnic identities

52 Compare the parallel homily in the *Sifra* (*Aharei* 8:1 [ed. Weiss, 85c]). On Egypt in rabbinic literature, see R. Ulmer, *Egyptian Cultural Icons in Midrash* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009). On Egypt in Hellenistic literature see Gideon Bohak, "The Ibis and the Jewish Question: Ancient 'Anti-Semitism' in Historical Perspective," in *Jews and Gentiles in the Holy Land in the Days of the Second Temple, the Mishnah, and the Talmud*, ed. M. Mor et al. (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2003), 27-43. On rabbinic internalization of Hellenistic stereotypes see Gideon Bohak, "Stereotipim etniyim ba-olam ha-yevani—romi: mitsrim, finikim, yehudim," in *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies* 12, B (2000): 7-15.

53 See previous note.

54 Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 45 writes: "The ancient Egyptians and Canaanites [...] serve the author as symbols for the hated Alexandrians and Romans of his own days."

55 Collins, *Jewish Wisdom*, 230. He goes on to say: "Wisdom of Solomon does not name names, and so leaves open the possibility that there may be other holy peoples and nations of oppressors." Cf. Goering, "Election," 170-71.

56 Joseph Reider, *The Book of Wisdom* (New York: Harper, 1957), 41.

altogether, centering on personal righteousness alone. Based on the lack of any noticeable particularism in the first part, some scholars claimed it cannot be of the same authorship as the other two.⁵⁷ But such combinations are not rare in this period, and they become inconceivable only to late readers.

Unlike the Alexandrian Wisdom, Psalms of Solomon⁵⁸ features both Jews and generalized ἔθνη. Several Psalms deal with specific political events (mainly Pompey's conquest) but nonetheless present ἔθνη as a generalized concept. Thus in Pss. Sol. 1 the enemies are Greeks (the crimes of the Hasmonean Kings "were worse than the ἔθνη before them") while in Pss. Sol. 2 they are Romans ("The ἔθνη humiliated Jerusalem when she was trampled down"). Both are identified simply as ἔθνη, with no further specifications.⁵⁹ In several places the hope for casting the Romans away from Jerusalem appears as part of a wider eschatological hope: "to purge Jerusalem from the ἔθνη [...] to destroy the law-breaking ἔθνη with the word of his mouth" (Pss. Sol. 17:22-24); "don't turn us over to the ἔθνη... and ἔθνος will not defeat us" (Pss. Sol. 7:3-6).⁶⁰

A process of abstraction is already underway in Psalms of Solomon. But the story is more complicated. Two contrasts are evident in the text: Israel versus the ἔθνη and righteous versus wicked.⁶¹ Both Pss. Sol. 2 and Pss. Sol. 17 present

57 See Reider, *Wisdom*, 19-21; Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 13-14. For the history of the scholarly debate over the book's unity see John H. Hayes, *New Testament: History of Interpretation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 243.

58 Citations are according to Robert B. Wright, *The Psalms of Solomon: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text* (New York: T&T Clark, 2007). For the Syriac version see J. Rendell Harris, *The Odes and Psalms of Solomon Published from the Syriac Version* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911). For the question of the original language see recently Jan Joosten, "Reflections on the Original Language of the Psalms of Solomon," in *The Psalms of Solomon: Language, History, Theology*, ed. E. Bons and P. Pouchelle, *EJL* 40 (Atlanta: Scholars, 2015), 31-48. Note that although Joosten suggests Greek rather than Hebrew as the original language, he agrees with the accepted dating and provenance: "The Jerusalemite origin of the Psalms should not be doubted, nor the dating to the period following the year 63 BCE... ideas and social location close to that of the 'Pharisees.'" See however n. 63 below.

59 As Amit Gevaryahu noted to us, for a Jerusalemite there was little difference between Greek-speaking Syrians and Greek-speaking Syrians under a Roman flag. The lack of a distinction between Greeks and Romans does not yet mean they muddle all the gentiles together, like the rabbis do.

60 Contrast Sib. Or. 4:174-176. There too the Romans are punished (by the destruction of Pompeii) for their atrocities in Jerusalem. But the sinners are the Romans alone, and nowhere do they represent the ἔθνη in general. On this text see John J. Collins, "The Place of the Fourth Sibyl in the Development of the Jewish Sibyllina," *JJS* 25 (1974): 365-80.

61 In some cases the righteous narrator presents himself as a sinner, in a manner that resembles the *Hodayot* found at Qumran. See Ishay Rosen-Zvi, *Demonic Desires: Yetzer*

the appearance of the ἔθνη as a response to the sinfulness of the wicked Jerusalemites: “ἔθνη who worship other gods went up to your altar [...] *For their part*, the people of Jerusalem desecrated the Lord’s sanctuary” (Pss. Sol. 2:2-3). Although Pompey himself is described as evil (2:1),⁶² in most cases both the wicked and the righteous are Jewish inhabitants of Jerusalem. In some verses the distinction is purely individualistic (see, e.g., 3:5-9), while in others the righteous and the wicked are part of groups, which scholars designate as “Pharisees,” “Hassidic,” “Essene,” and the like.⁶³

But are the Israelites *as a people* identified as righteous? This may seem to be the case in Pss. Sol. 10:5-6: “and Israel will joyfully praise the Lord’s name; and the devout will celebrate in the assembly of the people . . . and the synagogues of Israel will glorify the Lord’s name.” But other verses explicitly contrast “Israel” with the wicked *inside* the nation: “because God has reserved Israel for himself, But it is not so with sinners and criminals” (Pss. Sol. 14:5-6). It thus seems reasonable that “Israel” are the *Hassidim* themselves, with whom the author casts his own lot, and who are the elect. In most cases, however, it is simply impossible to know whether the “righteous” are synonymous with the nation as a collective or a group therein.⁶⁴ The frequent exchange of personal and collective contexts makes the identity of the righteous difficult to pin down (see, e.g., 2:6; 16:1; 17:15).

We can however make two definite observations despite the murkiness. First, Israel’s identity is not constituted mainly through the negation of the

Hara and the Problem of Evil in Late Antiquity (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 48-53.

- 62 Greek: ἀμαρτωλῶν, Syriac: ‘wl’, 2:1; cf. 17:24. On the nations as sinners in Pss. Sol. 17 see Johannes Tromp, “The Sinners and the Lawless in Psalms of Solomon 17,” *NT* 35 (1993): 344-61, esp. 350. Most scholars believe that “man alien to our race” (ἀλλότριον γένους ἡμῶν) and “the lawless one” (ὁ ἄνομος) in Pss. Sol. 17:7,11 refer also to Pompey, but see Kenneth Atkinson, “Herod the Great, Sosius, and the Siege of Jerusalem (37 B.C.E.) in Psalm of Solomon 17,” *NT* 38 (1996): 313-22; Wright, *Psalms of Solomon*, 6.
- 63 The identity of the group behind this composition is unclear. The Pharisaic attribution, common in early scholarship, was attacked by recent scholars. Instead they identify the group as Hasidic, Essene, or simply as belonging to “some unknown eschatological group in Jerusalem”; Wright, *Psalms of Solomon*, 9. See the survey of Kenneth Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord: A Study of the Psalms of Solomon’s Historical Background and Social Setting*, JSJSup 84 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 6-7.
- 64 On Pss. Sol. 2, see Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*, 20-21: “. . . he refers to himself and his group as ‘us’, ‘those who fear the Lord’, the ‘pious’ and the ‘righteous’ . . . the writer apparently combines Jerusalem’s Jewish residents with the Gentiles under the general rubric of ‘sinners.’” Note that the general designation “the sons/daughters of Jerusalem” appears in this Psalm only in the narrative of the sin, not of the future salvation.

gentiles, but that of the wicked, i.e., internal foes.⁶⁵ Second, ἔθνη is never applied to individuals, and its context is always political. Pss. Sol. 17:28-29 is a clear example:

He will distribute them upon the land according to their tribes. The stranger and the foreigner (πάροικος καὶ ἀλλογενής; *wtwtb' wnwkrv'*) will no longer live with them. He will judge peoples and nations (λαοὺς καὶ ἔθνη; *'mm' w'wmt*) in the wisdom of his justice.

The πάροικος and ἀλλογενής, the individual foreigners, will be expelled from eschatological Israel.⁶⁶ At the same time the collectives, the λαοί and ἔθνη, are invited into the city, carrying gifts to the temple and thus fulfilling prophetic promises (see esp. Isa 66:20).⁶⁷ While it is not wholly clear how these two pictures fit together,⁶⁸ it is clear that they are related to two different contexts.

Psalms of Solomon goes a long way toward an abstract understanding of the *goy* but keeps interchanging and juxtaposing several binary oppositions, without privileging the distinction between Israel and its other.

Marriage and the Continuity between Family, Tribe, and Nation

Another expression of the dialectic between limiting and expanding the elected group can be found in Tobit.⁶⁹ Tobit commands his son, Tobias:

65 Compare the discussion of the Dead Sea Scrolls above (nn. 16-17), and see Shani Tzoref, "Peshar Nahum, Psalms of Solomon and Pompey," in *Reworking the Bible: Apocryphal and Related Texts at Qumran*, ed. Esther G. Chazon, Devorah Dimant, and Ruth A. Clements, STDJ 58 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 65-84.

66 A clear opposition to Ezekiel's eschatological program, according to which the *gerim* inherit within the tribes among which they live (Ezek 47:22). Cf. Joel 4:17.

67 The promise "to purge Jerusalem from the ἔθνη" refers specifically to the Roman conquerors "who trample her down to destruction" (22). These are also the "law-breaking ἔθνη" (24). Other nations are invited to Jerusalem "to see the glory of the Lord" (31).

68 Cf. J. J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 55; Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord*, 140-41.

69 Citations are from the translation of Robert J. Littman, *Tobit: The Book in Codex Sinaiticus* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), according to the longer (and probably earlier) recension (G¹¹). Cf. the comparative edition of Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Tobit* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003). The fact that this text is not easily identified with any specific Jewish group, and that its time and place cannot be decided, only enhance its importance to our study, as it seems to represent some kind of "popular Judaism." See John J. Collins, "The Judaism of the Book of Tobit," in

Keep yourself, my child, from all prostitution. First, take a wife from the descent line of your fathers (σπέρματος τῶν πατέρων). And do not take a foreign wife who is not of the tribe of your fathers (τῆς φυλῆς τοῦ πατρὸς σου) because we are the sons of the prophets and truly the sons of the prophets. And [Noah] was the first prophet,⁷⁰ and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, our fathers from the beginning, remember, child, all these took wives from their kinsmen (ἐκ τῶν ἀδελφῶν αὐτῶν). And they were blessed in their descendants and their descent line will inherit the land. And now, child, love your kinsmen, and do not be too arrogant in your heart to take for yourself one of them as a wife from the sons and daughters of your people (τοῦ λαοῦ σου). (4:12-13)⁷¹

Scholars emphasize the strict endogamy preached here.⁷² Legitimate marriage is not only inside the tribe, but also inside the clan, as the explicit reference

The Book of Tobit: Text, Tradition, Theology, ed. G. G. Xeravits and J. Zsengellér, JSJSup 98 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 23-40, 39. Cf. Gruen, *Diaspora*, 148-58.

- 70 For the tradition of Noah as the first endogamist, see 1Q20 (1QapGen ar) 6:8 with Armin Lange, "Your Daughters Do Not Give to Their Sons and Their Daughters Do Not Take for Your Sons (Ezra 9,12): Intermarriage in Ezra 9-10 and in the Pre-Maccabean Dead Sea Scrolls, Teil 1" *BN* 137 (2008): 17-39.
- 71 Codex Sinaiticus (the chief witness of G^{II}) is lacking here. For a new reconstruction of these verses see Stuart Weeks, "Restoring the Greek Tobit," *JSJ* 44 (2013): 1-15. For our propose the differences are insignificant.
- 72 William M. Soll, "The Family as Scriptural and Social Construct in Tobit," in *The Function of Scripture in Early Jewish and Christian Tradition*, ed. C. A. Evans and J. A. Sanders (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 166-75; Thomas Hieke, "Endogamy in the Book of Tobit, Genesis, and Ezra-Nehemia," in Xeravits and Zsengellér, *Book of Tobit*, 103-20. Cf. Devorah Dimant, "The Family of Tobit," in *With Wisdom as a Robe: Qumran and Other Jewish Studies in Honour of Ida Fröhlich*, ed. K. D. Dobos and M. Koszeghy, Hebrew Bible Monographs 21 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 157-62. Dimant demonstrates that the narrative establishes the continuity of family, tribe, and nation through emphasizing familial relations between *all* the Israelite figures, and the repeated invocation of "brotherhood." This nation-as-extended-family model is mirrored also in William Soll's thesis that Tobit expands the scriptural decree to bury relatives to the nation as a whole; see Soll, "The Book of Tobit as a Window on the Hellenistic Jewish Family," in *Passion, Vitality and Foment: the Dynamic of Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Lamontte M. Luker (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2001), 242-74, esp. 273-74. See also E. Arazi, "The Interrelations between Honor and Shame and Purity and Pollution in the Jewish Conception of Death in the Hellenistic and Early Roman Periods" (MA Thesis, Tel-Aviv University, 2014), 71-89 [Hebrew]. Cf. Gruen, *Diaspora*, 157, who comments: "The narrator is surely having a bit of fun here. Maintenance of kinship ties might bring some stability to an otherwise fragmented diaspora existence. But clannishness, when carried to excess,

to the patriarchs indicates.⁷³ Endogamy was a common phenomenon, especially in priestly circles, and could have been motivated by utility as much as by pietism.⁷⁴ Noteworthy, however, is the straightforward continuity in these verses between nation (λαός), tribe (φυλή) and family (πατριά),⁷⁵ in a similar manner to the one found in the Priestly narratives on the patriarchs in Genesis.⁷⁶

Tobit presents a genealogical model, according to which family is the most fundamental unit, and both tribe and nation are extensions of this unit (esp. 1:9-10; 5:9-14; 6:11-12, 18-19; 7:2-3, 10; 9:6; 10:12; 13:16; 14:8). A similar continuity between tribe and the nation is found in other works that preach endogamy, such as the T. Levi 9:10;⁷⁷ Jub. 25:5; Jdt 8:2; Jos. Asen. 8:5-6; and the Temple Scroll, 11QT^a 57:15-16.

prompts ridicule.” Similarly David McCracken, “Narration and Comedy in the Book of Tobit,” *JBL* 114 (1995): 401-18, at 414: “tribal and familial qualifications are excessive.” Note that already Martin Luther saw Tobit as “a pious comedy”; see Hayes, *New Testament: History of Interpretation*, 221.

- 73 William Loader, *The Pseudepigrapha on Sexuality* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 152. Cf. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 172-73; Hieke, “Endogamy,” 108; Littman, *Tobit*, xxxvii, 91-92; McCracken, “Narration,” 414 (“a non-Naftali is foreign”). On endogamy in Jubilees see James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 33.
- 74 See “loss and great poverty” in Tob 4:13. See Tobias Nicklas, “Marriage in the Book of Tobit: A Synoptic Approach,” in Xeravits and Zsengellér, *Book of Tobit*, 139-54, esp. 144; Adiel Schremer, *Zakhar u-nekeva bera'am: ha-nisu'in be-shilhei yemei ha-bayit ha-sheni witekufat ha-mishnah veva-talmud* (Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar, 2003), 160-64.
- 75 Named also γένος in the book (e.g. 5:9), while the more immediate household is named οἶκος (1:5). See Littman, *Tobit*, 51 and the concordance in Stuart Weeks, Simon Gathercole, and Loren Stuckenbruck, eds., *The Book of Tobit: Texts from the Principal Ancient and Medieval Traditions* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004). The term “brothers” (ἀδελφοί) can refer to all different levels, a fact which creates an inherent ambiguity, as Littman (ibid.) observed.
- 76 Benedict J. Conczorowski, “All the Same as Ezra? Conceptual Differences between the Texts on Intermarriage in Genesis, Deuteronomy 7 and Ezra,” in Frevel, *Mixed Marriages*, 89-108, esp. 97. For the national “brotherhood” as an extension of the familial one in priestly sources see Francis I. Andersen, “Israelite Kinship Terminology and Social Structure,” *BT* 20 (1969): 29-39.
- 77 The text warns not to marry a wife “from the race of foreigners or nations” (ἀπὸ γένους ἀλλοφύλων ἢ ἔθνων). This injunction is likely directed at the priests: see Hayes, *Gentile Impurities*, 72. Harm W. Hollander and Marinus de Jonge, *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Commentary*, SVTP 8 (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 158 write: “ἀλλόφυλοι is practically a synonym of ἔθνη.” However, a comparison with the Aramaic Levi Document, which most probably served as a source for the Greek Testament of Levi, is revealing. The command there is explicitly endogamic: *mn mšphty sb lk*. See Jonas C. Greenfield, Michael Stone, and Esther Eshel, *The Aramaic Levi Document: Edition, Translation, Commentary*, SVTP 19 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 74, 160; Armin Lange, “Your Daughters Do Not Give to Their Sons and

Although some strata of rabbinic literature praise endogamy to a certain degree,⁷⁸ the rabbis never connect their praise of marriage within the tribe with their prohibition of intermarriage with gentiles. For the rabbis, these are two totally separate spheres.⁷⁹

The Dialectic of Openness and Seclusion

The ethic of separation found in the Letter of Aristeas has long been a source of embarrassment for its readers. Various Second Temple texts mark the distinction between Jews and others by highlighting the sexual self-restraint of the former in contrast to the promiscuity of the latter.⁸⁰ Aristeas goes further and deduces from this the need for a complete separation. The laws of impure animals in Leviticus 11 are a symbol that:

[W]e are separated (διεστάλαμεθα) from all men. For most other men defile themselves in their sex and in this they shall sin greatly, and lands and countries all take pride in this. And not only do they sleep with men, they also defile their mothers and their daughters. But we are separated (διεστάλαμεθα) from this. (Let. Aris. 152)⁸¹

Their Daughters Do Not Take for Your Sons (Ezra 9,12): Intermarriage in Ezra 9-10 and in the PreMaccabean Dead Sea Scrolls, Teil 2," *BN* 139 (2008): 79-98, esp. 81 n. 9 (Lange's own explanation: "for the time of the patriarchs, ancient Judaism perceived the family of Levi and the peoples of Israel as identical" is not convincing). Cf. James Kugel, "The Story of Dinah in the 'Testament of Levi,'" *HTR* 85 (1992): 1-34, at 18, who writes: "The Testament of Levi does not mention Shechem's 'foreignness' as the reason for his crime being such an abomination, because foreignness as such is irrelevant."

78 See, e.g., y. Qidd. 4:4 (65:4): "So a man would stick to his tribe and family." Cf. Adiel Schremer, "Ben-ahot: kinuyey she'erut ve-nisue'i penim bi-tekufat ha-mishnah vehatmud," *Zion* 60 (1995): 5-35.

79 Cf. Himmelfarb, *Kingdom of Priests*, who emphasizes continuities between Second Temple and rabbinic genealogical perceptions of Jewishness.

80 See Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 58-65.

81 Translation according to Moses Hadas, *Aristeas to Philocrates (Letter of Aristeas)* (New York: Harper, 1951), 160-61. These verses are part of the apology for the law by Elazar, the high priest (Let. Aris. 130-171).

As Michael Tuval writes, “The letter is usually considered to be one of the most universalistic compositions produced by Jews in the Greco-Roman Diaspora,”⁸² so the discomfort is understandable. But “the nations” here does not designate a unified entity, and Aristeas needs to point realistic reasons for its general accusation: “this is what most (πλείονες) people do;” “cities and lands all (ἅλαι) take pride in it.”⁸³ Even greater details appear in the context of idolatry (135-138), where specific distinctions are made between Greek and Egyptian habits.⁸⁴ Neither here nor anywhere else in the letter is there any unified, essentialist characterizations of the ἔθνη as a whole.

This becomes clearer when comparing Aristeas's rhetoric of contrasting Israel and the nations to that of Tannaitic Midrash. The Sifra too discusses separation in terms of sexual ethics, and there too the context is the separating of pure from impure animals. The Sifra's homily is explicitly based on the juxtaposition of the two modes of separations in Leviticus 20:25-26: “You shall *separate* between the clean beast and the unclean . . . [I] have *separated* you from the nations, that you should be mine.”⁸⁵ The fact that the discourse of separation in Let. Aris. 129 and 139-142 appears also in the context of the discussion on pure and impure animals, allows us to speculate that it is based on a similar exegesis on Lev 20.⁸⁶

The reasoning for separation is, however, very different in these two texts. Here is the Sifra:

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- 82 Michael Tuval, *From Jerusalem Priest to Roman Jew: On Josephus and the Paradigms of Ancient Judaism*, WUNT 2.357 (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 79.
- 83 Similar realistic concerns are found in other Jewish Alexandrian compositions with regard to idolatry. Cf. Wis 14:20-25: “and the *multitude*, attracted by the charm of his work . . . and *all* is a raging riot of blood and murder . . .”; Philo, *Spec.* 1.30: “Moses, being well aware that pride had by that time advanced to a very high pitch of power, and that it was well guarded by the *greater part of mankind*.”
- 84 See Mary-Ann L. Beavis, “Anti Egyptian Polemic in the Letter of Aristeas 130-165,” *JSJ* 18 (1987): 145-51. Cf. Philo, *Spec.* 3.22-23.
- 85 In Tannaitic Midrash, these verses ground separation-related commandments. See Aharon Shemesh, *Onashim ve-hata'im: min ha-mikra le-siferut hazal* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2003), 198-202. Cf. Mek. R. Ishm. Kaspā 2 (320), in which Assi Son of the Lion-Cub learns from Exod 22:30 and Deut 14:21 that holiness is specifically connected with food prohibitions.
- 86 On midrash in Aristeas in general see Arkadi Kovelman, “Typology and Peshet in the Letter of Aristeas,” in *Ancient Israel, Judaism, and Christianity in Contemporary Perspective: Essays in Memory of Karl-Johann Illman*, ed. J. Neusner (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2006), 153-81.

“I am the Lord your God who has set you apart from other peoples” (Lev 20:24)—See how you are different from the nations: in the nations a man decorates his wife and gives her to another, a man decorates himself and gives himself to another. (Sifra, Qedoshim 5:2; ed. Weiss, 93c)

While in *Aristeas*, one nation is distinguished from many, in the *Sifra* there are already two single entities juxtaposed with one another: “you” and “the nations.” The *Sifra* features “the nations” as a proper name which requires no detail or any recognition of plurality. Unlike *Aristeas*, it sees no need to apologize for the generality of the accusation, or even to account for it. And so we see a fundamental difference in the discourse of separation itself. For *Aristeas*, there are specific cultural concerns which warrant separation between Jews and gentiles. Their “gentility” is in itself not the cause for the separation:

Now our Lawgiver being a wise man and specially endowed by God to understand all things, took a comprehensive view of each particular detail, and fenced us round (περιέφραξεν) with impregnable ramparts and walls of iron, that we might not mingle (ἐπιμισγώμεθα) at all with any of the other nations, but remain pure in body and soul, free from all vain imaginations . . . Therefore lest we should be corrupted by any abomination, or our lives be perverted by evil communications, he fenced us round (περιέφραξεν) on all sides by rules of purity. (Let. Aris. 139, 142)⁸⁷

The issue here is adherence to the laws, not negation of the gentiles.⁸⁸ Scholars who ignore this fact, ascribe to *Aristeas* the dichotomous structure found in rabbinic literature, and then celebrate his ability to overcome the dichotomy thorough his universalistic message. But, in fact, *Aristeas* does not overpower this binary distinction, rather it simply does not know it.

The situation is different when the binary distinction is already presupposed. Another homily in the *Sifra* can serve as an example. It portrays separation itself as the basis of identity:

87 On the metaphor of the “wall” see Judith Lieu, “Impregnable Ramparts and Walls of Iron: Boundary and Identity in Early Judaism’ and ‘Christianity,’” *NJS* 48 (2002): 297–313, esp. 299.

88 In the citation above, from 152, the verb διαστῆλιν is used to denote separation both from forbidden sexual practices and from “all men.” The latter is merely the product of the former.

And I will separate you from the nations for me—If you are separate from the nations, you will be mine, and if not, you shall belong to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and his companions.

Israel has one king, and so do the gentiles. One can hardly think of a better illustration for the rabbinic binary structure.

The Sifra passage should also be compared to Paul's famous description of sexual depravity in Rom 1:18-32. Like the Sifra, Paul is parodying Hellenistic sexual practices.⁸⁹ But Paul calls the gentiles to account for their moral depravity, which he considers as a direct result of idolatry,⁹⁰ while in the Sifra the gentiles' promiscuity is simply the natural state of things. The Tannaitic homily does not bother to account for the moral state of the nations, to portray God as angry, or to call upon the nations to repent. Justification and anger become superfluous with the birth of the gentile: *goyim* are simply *goyim*, and Jews are their diametric opposite.⁹¹

Scholars felt obligated to preserve Aristean's universalistic world view by underplaying his critique of the Hellenistic world. "If the High priest speaks scornfully of unenlightened pagans, enlightened pagans would have done the same," writes Moses Hadas.⁹² Similar explanations appear in many recent discussions of the book.⁹³ But if so, why does the high priest draw such harsh

89 Although Paul uses the general ἄνθρωποι, he seems to be referring to Hellenistic civilization in particular. See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 270-71, and the literature cited there, and cf. Andrew Das, *Paul, the Law and the Covenant* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2011), 171-77.

90 On the common Jewish Hellenistic theme of the moral depravity of the nations as a result of their paganism see Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 71-72; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 272; Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 92; John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 170; Kathy L. Gaca, *The Making of Fornication: Eros, Ethics, and Political Reform in Greek Philosophy and Early Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 193-94.

91 Cf. Sifre Deut. 213, ed. Finkelstein, 247: "For the Gentiles are cursed and their daughters make themselves up during wars to make others fornicate with them." Here, too, the distinction is binary and general, with no justification other than "the gentiles are cursed." In some MSS, another homily, likely from the lost Mekilta on Deuteronomy, explains why the captive woman is required to remove her beautiful clothes and mourn her parents for a month: "So the daughter of Israel may be glad, and this one sad, the daughter of Israel made up and this one made ugly." Cf. Sifre Num. 131.

92 Hadas, *Aristean*, 62.

93 Here are a few examples: Collins, *Athens and Jerusalem*, 158: "this ethic . . . emphasized those aspects of Jewish law which were respected by enlightened Gentiles and fitted easily into the self-understanding of the Jewish authors as enlightened Hellenes"; Sylvie

separatist conclusions from his critique: “that we might not mingle (ἐπιμισγώμεθα) at all with any of the other nations, but remain pure in body and soul”? If “the attacks contained in the apology are aimed at specific aspects of Greek (and Egyptian) philosophy and religion that were widely criticized by Greeks themselves,”⁹⁴ would it not be more reasonable to cooperate with the Hellenic intelligentsia against the errors and depravity of the masses? After all, other Jewish Hellenistic writers explain dietary laws without recursion to the logic of separation,⁹⁵ and separatism itself appears in other compositions as an allegation rather than something to brag about.⁹⁶

When scholars say that according to Aristeas “the Torah does not separate the Jews from the Greeks, but, on the contrary, brings the two nations together,”⁹⁷ they artificially convert the “iron wall” into a bridge.⁹⁸ Along with its well-known and justly celebrated universalism,⁹⁹ Aristeas does indeed espouse exclusivist views. It is exactly the lack of generalized concept of *goyim*

Honigman, *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria: A Study in the Narrative of the Letter of Aristeas* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 21: “The apology for the Law is so inconspicuous in its religious boldness that it is misleading to assume . . . that it contains some violent polemics against Greeks stemming from a Jewish monotheistic point of view”; Loader, *Pseudepigrapha on Sexuality*, 430: “The Author can assume that in being concerned about corruption through wrong relationships he stands on common ground with the best of Jewish and Greek tradition. Indeed, this is true of much of what follows in the high priest’s speech”; and Hayes, *Divine Law*, 105: “Elazar the high priest explains that the categories of pure and impure are deeply rational when understood allegorically.”

94 Honigman, *Septuagint*, 23. Commenting on Aristeas 152 she adds: “it would not be impossible to imagine condemnations of pederasty in the Alexandrian Hellenistic literature” (p. 22), but admits that no traces for this have survived.

95 See, e.g., 4 Macc 5:22-27; Philo, *Spec.* 4.100-118.

96 See LXX Esther, Addition B 5-6; 3 Macc 3:7. In the latter case, it is specifically food separatism that is at stake. See Barclay, *Mediterranean Diaspora*, 199.

97 Victor A. Tcherikover “The Ideology of the Letter of Aristeas,” *HTR* 51 (1958): 59-85, at 82. See his apologetic reading of the “iron wall” on 70, 84.

98 A similar critic was made by Gruen, *Diaspora*, 214-15; Gruen, “The Letter of Aristeas,” in *Outside the Bible: Ancient Jewish Writings Related to Scripture*, ed. L. H. Feldman, J. L. Kugel and L. H. Schiffman, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 2013), 3:271-68, at 2739 n. 139. See also next note.

99 Hadas, *Aristeas*, 61; Honigman, *Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship*, 19; Noah Hacham, “The Letter of Aristeas: A New Exodus Story?” *JSJ* 36 (2005): 1-20, esp. 4; Moshe Simon-Shoshan, “The Task of the Translators: The Rabbis, the Septuagint, and the Cultural Politics of Translation,” *Proof* 27 (2007): 1-39, esp. 6-7. Cf. Gruen, *Diaspora*, 221: “Jews have not only digested Hellenic culture, they have also surmounted it.”

that allows Aristeeas to bring the two together. One does not need to underplay the wall of separation by restricting it only to “vain opinions” or “polytheistic worship.”¹⁰⁰ Suffice it to acknowledge that the separation is from the many, that it does not deviate from Hellenistic conventions of cultural preservation,¹⁰¹ and that it is anchored in specific contexts and justifications.¹⁰²

The dietary laws are a case in point:

For as many cities (as) have (special) customs in the matter of drinking, eating, and reclining, have special officers appointed to look after their requirements. And whenever they come to visit the kings, preparations are made in accordance with their own customs, in order that there may be no discomfort to disturb the enjoyment of their visit. The same precaution was taken in the case of the Jewish envoys. (Let. Aris. 182)

Each nation has its own type of separatism, and the Jews are not different for being different.¹⁰³ This latter insight is explicitly expressed by Celsus:

The Jews, then, became a distinct nation and established laws according to common practice in their country . . . acting in this manner like other people because each honors the traditional practices (τὰ πάτρια), whatever kind have happened to be created.¹⁰⁴

100 Loader, *Pseudepigrapha on Sexuality*, 432 n. 383.

101 Daniel Barbu, “Aristeeas the Tourist,” *Bulletin der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Judaistische Forschung* 23 (2014): 5-12, at 8, writes: “The notion that alien wisdom is a source of corruption . . . is in fact a recurrent motif in ancient historiography . . . less an expression of Jewish separatism or ‘misanthropy,’ than an essential element of Aristeeas’ description of the Jews as an alien wisdom able to serve as example of an ideal society.”

102 A good analogy is from the kind of separateness which ultraorthodox Jewish communities maintain with regard to secular Jews. It can be quite radical, even fierce, and an iron wall of a kind, but it is driven by explicit cultural justifications (protecting “our” children), it changes from sphere to sphere, and, most importantly, it does not preclude an inclusive view of the Ultraorthodox being part of the larger Jewish people, even its vanguard. See Samuel C. Heilman, *Defenders of the Faith: Inside Ultra-Orthodox Jewry* (New York: Schocken Books, 1992). This—rather than the binary, total, dichotomous, Jew/goy distinction—is the kind of separation we find in Aristeeas between Jews and gentiles.

103 Cf. Philo, *Legat.*, 362.

104 Origen, *Cels.* 5:25. Translation according to John G. Cook, *The Interpretation of the Old Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism*, STAC 23 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 125. Cf. Henry Chadwick, *Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 283. For the theological basis of Celsus’s assertion—“different parts of the earth were from the

In a realm of multiplicity, where many different phenomena and groups are acknowledged, it is not impossible, not even uncommon, that “the very work that emblemized concord between the cultures also trumpets Jewish uniqueness and superiority.”¹⁰⁵

Fourth Maccabees also presents a remarkable combination of chauvinism and openness. Like 2 Maccabees, on which it is based, it presents a worldview of *Kulturkampf*:¹⁰⁶ true philosophy is identical with the torah,¹⁰⁷ but the popular hedonism advocated by Antiochus is its exact opposite. Antiochus tries to persuade Elazar, the pious priest, to awaken from his “foolish philosophy” (5:11); while he suggests to the woman and her seven children to “renounce the ancestral tradition of your national life. And enjoy your youth by adopting the Greek way of life and by changing your manner of living” (8:7-8).¹⁰⁸ These two stories of martyrdom espouse national pride, advocating the advantages of torah and Jewish tradition as well as the supremacy of the “sons of the Hebrews” (9:18)¹⁰⁹ and “the seed of Abraham” (18:1).

There are Jews and there are Greeks here, the Jewish way and the Greek way. But there are no “gentiles.” A Hellenistic Jew of Paul’s time could speak about the torah and its complex relationship to his non-Jewish milieu, without feeling the need to lump together all non-Jews under one category.¹¹⁰

beginning distributed to different tutelary divinities”—see Bar-On and Paz, “Helek adonai amo: al mitos behirat Israel ba-goral veva-vikua ha-gnosti—ha-notsri—ha-pagani—ha-yehudi,” *Tarbiz* 76 (2010): 23-61, esp. 52-53. This idea goes back to Herodotus’s “custom is king” (*Hist.* 3.38). See Wilfried Nippel, “The Construction of the Other,” in *Greeks and Barbarians*, ed. Thomas Harrison (Routledge: New York, 2002), 278-310, esp. 284.

105 Erich S. Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 279.

106 Judith Lieu, “Not Hellenes but Philistines? The Maccabees and Josephus defining the ‘Other,’” *JStJ* 53 (2002): 246-63, at 250.

107 See esp. 4 Macc 1:16-17. The combination is called “devout reason” (ὁ εὐσεβῆς λογισμὸς, 1:1; poorly translated by Hadas as “religious reason”); cf. Daniel R. Schwartz, *Sefer Maqabim 2: mavo, targum, perush* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi, 2004), 161.

108 On the philosophical background of Antiochus’s arguments see David deSilva, *4 Maccabees* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 103-5.

109 Cf. the mother’s speech “in Hebrew” in 16:16-22.

110 See Elias J. Bickerman, “The Date of Fourth Maccabees,” in *Studies in Jewish and Christian History*, 3 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 1:275-81.

Enemies and Other Nations

The book of Judith presents a theology of covenant¹¹¹ which leads to a doctrine of separation,¹¹² and yet, the enemies of Israel are presented there as an assembly of many peoples:

And the heads of the sons of Esau and the chieftains (οἱ ἡγούμενοι) of the people of Moab came to him, and all of the generals (στρατηγοί) of the sea peoples came near to him . . . and the camp of the children of Ammon and with them five thousand of the sons of Assyria . . . and the children of Esau and the children of Ammon came up . . . and the rest of the army of Assyria . . . and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord . . . for all of their enemies (πάντες οἱ ἐχθροὶ αὐτῶν) surrounded them. (7:8-19)

Some of the nations are “the peoples (ἔθνεσιν) rising up against my people” (16:17), while the rest of the nations are an audience, invited to learn a lesson from the divine drama.¹¹³ ἔθνη appears in a general, unspecified manner only when evoking the scriptural theme of God preventing his people from becoming a byword among all the nations.¹¹⁴

Third Maccabees is also full of enemies. This book models its narrative on Esther,¹¹⁵ but differs from it in some important respects. It features not only “enemies” and “nations,” but what appears to be a primitive version of the

111 Carey A. Moore, *Judith: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1985), 60-61.

112 On Judith's special emphasis on laws of separation in purity, sex, and food, see Thomas Hieke, “Torah in Judith: Dietary Laws, Purity and Other Torah Issues in the Book of Judith,” in *Pious Seductress: Studies in the Book of Judith: Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on the Deuterocanonical Books*, ed. G. G. Xeravits, DCLS 14 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 97-109. Judith's nationalism is emphasized particularly by those scholars who see the text as anti-Hasmonean. See Benedikt Eckhardt, “Reclaiming Tradition: The Book of Judith and Hasmonean Politics,” *JSP* 18 (2009): 243-63 and the bibliography cited there.

113 Jdt 9:14: “And you shall make knowledge in every nation (ἐπὶ παντὸς ἔθνους; see Moore, *Judith*, 194) and in every family, and they shall know that you are . . . a shield for the seed of Israel.”

114 Jdt 4:12 (cf. Lam 1:21); 8:22 (cf. Deut 28:37; 1 Kgs 9:7). Compare Tob 3:4 and 13:3-5. See also the opposite description in Jdt 14:7. A similar concern with regard to the Assyrians is attributed to Achior in 5:21.

115 Carey A. Moore, “On the Origin of the LXX Additions to the Book of Esther,” *JBL* 92 (1973): 382-93, esp. 384-85. Cf. Fausto Parente, “The Third Book of Maccabees as Ideological Document and Historical Source,” *Hen* 10 (1988): 143-82, esp. 175-76, who surmises that 3 Maccabees was also written for liturgical purposes.

gentile.¹¹⁶ Note the following two verses: “In every place that this decree reached, a feast was set up for the ἔθνη at public expense . . . But for the Ἰουδαίοις there was grief” (4:1-2); and “Let the ἔθνη fear your invincible might . . . You have done mighty works for the salvation of the people of Jacob” (6:13). Both verses contrast Jews with ἔθνη, but while the latter speaks about collectives (cf. 6:9), the former refers to a group of individual hostile non-Jews.¹¹⁷ However, in all these cases the peoples referred to are part of a crowd, multitude, or mob, which has a clear political identity.

Third Maccabees is also indecisive about the generalization of the ἔθνη, i.e. seeing the different groups of non-Jews as belonging to one category. John Barclay’s assessment that “the author’s world is structured by a binary contrast of ‘Jews’ and ‘Gentiles,’ whose relationship is chiefly defined by hostility,”¹¹⁸ reveals, at best, only part of the picture. True, 4:1 portrays the ἔθνη as all celebrating the king’s decree against the Ἰουδαίοι.¹¹⁹ But 3:6-8 explicitly distinguishes the response of the “foreigners” (ἄλλόφυλοι)¹²⁰ from that of the Greeks living

116 For the absence of anti-gentile sentiments in Esther, see Shlomo Abramski, “Pre-Ideological Anti-Semitism in the Scroll of Esther,” in *Sefer Moshe Goldstein: Mehkarim be-mikra uve-mahshevet Israel*, ed. B. Z. Luria and S. Z. Kahana (Jerusalem: Ha-hevra le-heker ha-mikra be-Israel, 1988), 1-23, esp. 21; Michael V. Fox, *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 217-20; and Jon D. Levenson, “The Scroll of Esther in Ecumenical Perspective,” *JES* 13 (1976): 440-51. See also Elias J. Bickerman, *Four Strange Books of the Bible: Jonah, Daniel, Koheleth, Esther* (New York: Schocken, 1967), 191-92 who describes the events of Esther as the result of royal intrigue and personal vendettas. This profound difference between Esther and 3 Macc. (and Greek Esther), makes Bickerman’s own dating of Esther to around 100 BCE unlikely. See Bickerman, “The Colophon of the Greek Book of Esther,” in *Studies in Jewish and Christian History*, 3 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 1:218-37, esp. 231. Compare Lawrence M. Wills, *The Jewish Novel in the Ancient World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 99-100.

117 Cf. also 5:6, 13.

118 Barclay, *Mediterranean Diaspora*, 197.

119 This emphasis on the gentiles’ reaction is remarkable when compared to the parallel plot in Esther, where the whole city is “thrown into confusion” (3:15). Johnson’s, *Historical Fictions*, 138 n. 39 (cf. 158), note that “there are, to be sure, some among the Alexandrians who bear ill will toward the Jews (3 Macc. 4:1), but the author is at pains to suggest that they were in the minority and that the Greeks of Alexandria at least were universally sympathetic” is openly apologetic.

120 On the ἄλλόφυλοι as the native Egyptians, see A. Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Tel Aviv: Publications of the Diaspora Research Institute and the Haim Rosenberg School of Jewish Studies, 1978), 206 [Hebrew]. This specific usage of ἄλλόφυλοι undermines Barclay’s, *Mediterranean Diaspora*, 197, assertion that the author makes

in Alexandria,¹²¹ and in chapter 4 the author takes pain to make exceptions (4:4). Later, only a small circle of the king's advisors are described as "especially hostile toward the Jews" (5:3).¹²² The nations appear as a multiplicity and the author reemphasizes their different reactions (3:4, 9-10, 29; 4:4; 7:20). Moreover, 3 Maccabees offers not only an ethnic perspective, but an Alexandrian one as well. The Jews of Alexandria are allied with their Greek neighbors, who, in turn, are distinct from their kinsmen of the countryside (3:1).¹²³

What to make of this text's "attitude to gentiles," then? Scholars are undecided. Some read it as antagonistic towards gentiles,¹²⁴ while others see openness and attempts to limit enmity.¹²⁵ Here, too, readers foisting binary oppositions on the text see only part of the picture. These debates are a perfect reflection of the multiple perspectives and conflicted discourses which the introduction of the *goy* did away with.

general distinctions "between those of the same racial origin (δμοφύλους, 3:21) and those of another (ἀλλόφυλοι, 3:6)"; see also next note.

- 121 Collins, *Athens and Jerusalem*, 126-27 reads this positive evaluation of the Alexandrian Greeks as but "standard Jewish apologetic." Cf. Barclay, *Mediterranean Diaspora*, 197: "The reference to the 'Greeks' is thus primarily a rhetorical ploy, and one which the author cannot weave convincingly into the pattern of the plot." Ploy or not, this distinction consciously undermines the sharp binary distinctions.
- 122 This suits a former evaluation that because the Jews' special food regulations "they appeared hateful to *some*" (3:4), while their good name was established "among *all men*" (3:5).
- 123 On the Jews of the *χώρα*, see 3:13; 4:18; 7:20; and Barclay, *Mediterranean Diaspora*, 23-27. Only when the Alexandrian Jews are caught helping those of the *χώρα*, they too are included in the decree (4:12-13). Some scholars see this twist in the plot as indication of an integration of two separate narratives; see J. Tromp, "The Formation of the Third Book of Maccabees," *Hen* 17 (1995): 311-28.
- 124 E.g.: Bickermann, "Colophon," 237; Bickerman, "Notes on the Greek Book of Esther," 259; Tcherikover, "The Third Book of the Maccabees," 20-24; Barclay, *Mediterranean Diaspora*, 192-203; and Parente, "The Third Book of Maccabees," 169-70, 180.
- 125 E.g.: Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism*, 231; Collins, *Athens and Jerusalem*, 127-28; and Sara R. Johnson, *Historical Fictions and Hellenistic Jewish Identity: Third Maccabees in its Cultural Context* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 179.

The additions in Septuagint Esther¹²⁶ are remarkably similar to 3 Maccabees.¹²⁷ Like the latter, the former presents clear exclusivist characteristics. Mordechai's dream, which appears at the very beginning of the book (A) and finds its interpretation at its very end (F), is illuminating for our project. The interpretation begins with a personal fight between Mordechai and Haman—"The two dragons" (4)—but soon becomes a national struggle: "The nations represent those who gathered to destroy the name of the Jews. And my nation, this is Israel, who cried out to God and was saved" (5-6).

Bickerman emphasizes the radical divergence of this image from the one presented in the Hebrew Esther: "In Lysimachus' adaptation, the hatred is between the Gentiles and the Jews . . . an incident arising from court intrigues became, in the Greek Esther, the symbol of an eternal conflict."¹²⁸

And so, in 3 Maccabees we find individuation without generalization, while in Greek Esther we see generalization and binarization without individuation. The rabbinic *goy* will arrive when these two processes will coalesce.

In light of all this it is easier to appreciate the uniqueness of the treatment of *goyim* in Tannaitic literature. In this corpus, *goy* (in the singular!) refers, for the first time, not to a single nation, but to an individual from among the *goyim*, a non-Jew. An example of this process is nicely illustrated in the Tosefta:

R. Judah says: a man should say three blessings every day. Blessed is He who has not made me a *goy*. Blessed . . . who has not made me an ignoramus (*bwr*). Blessed . . . who has not made me a woman. A gentile, for it says "all gentiles (*gwyim*) are nothing to Him, as naught and vanity they count toward Him" (Isa 40:17). An ignoramus, for "there is no ignoramus

126 Citations according to Carey A. Moore, *Daniel, Esther, and Jeremiah: The Additions*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1995). Moore, "On the Origins of the LXX Additions to the Book of Esther," *JBL* 92 (1973): 382-93, argues for a Hebrew *Vorlage* for some of the additions. See, however, the convincing counterarguments of Bickerman, "Notes," 249. Wills, *Jewish Novel*, found the most profound similarities to the Greek novel in the parts Moore considers "Hebrew," namely Esther's prayer (p. 123) and Mordechai's dream (p. 117).

127 For the debate about the historical meaning of these similarities see Parente, "Third Book of Maccabees," 168; Collins, *Athens and Jerusalem*, 123; Johnson, *Historical Fiction*, 137.

128 Bickerman, "The Colophon," 236; cf. Bickerman, "Notes," 259: "The Story of Purim is now another tale of the eternal conflict between 'the people of God' and 'all the nations.'" Bickerman is undecided about the context of this "uncompromising nationalism:" is it "the violent and implacable war between the Hasmonean and the Greek cities in Palestine," (cit. "The Colophon," 237; cf. Collins, *Athens and Jerusalem*, 111-12) or the active intervening in the dynastic wars in the Alexandrian diaspora (cit. "Notes," 262-65).

fearful of sin” (m. ’Abot 2:5). A woman, for women are not obligated in the commandments. (t. Ber. 6:18)

While the exclusion of the woman and the ignoramus merits some explanation—pointing out difference between free, educated men and women or ignoramuses—in the case of the gentile no such argumentation is given. Instead, R. Yehuda invokes a verse which uses three different words for “nothing” to describe “all *goyim*.” In its original context, the verse describes the smallness of *all* nations, including Israel, to God, the lord of the universe: “Behold, the nations (גוים) are as a drop from a bucket, and are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales” (Isa 40:17). But the Tosefta is not alone in “translating” these verses into a statement about the “others.” Thus 4 Ezra reads:

For *the other nations* (*mm*) which have descended from Adam, You have said that they are *nothing*, and that they are *like spittle*, and You have compared their abundance to *a drop of a bucket* (Isa 40:15). And now, O Lord, these nations, which are reputed as *nothing*, domineer over us and devour. (6:56-57)

In both 4 Ezra and the Tosefta, Isaiah’s *goyim* are read as “foreigners.” The prophetic distinction between creator and creatures becomes a distinction no less sharp between Jews and all others. But this similarity elucidates also the distinction: while in 4 Ezra the verse remains exclusively in the political sphere, foreign nations vs. Israel, in the Tosefta it forms the basis of a distinction between Jewish and non-Jewish individuals.

To sum up: many elements of the later discourse of the *goy* are to be found in various second Temple compositions: grouping all nations except Israel together in the Septuagint; a generalized prohibition to mingle in Tobit and Jubilees; a binary opposition in Greek Esther and a privatization of ἔθνη in 3 Maccabees. The birth of the *goy* is the merging of all these parts together, making them one discursive configuration, a system or thought and practice.

In this survey we tried to show that the discourse of the *goy* did not yet exist in Second Temple corpora. We began by arguing that there is a difference between “attitudes toward gentiles” and the conceptualization of “the gentile” itself. We showed that chauvinism can exist without a unified concept of *goyim*. We then claimed that the lack of binary oppositions explains the flexibility with regard to the limits of the group of the elect. These borders are fluid and can expand and contract at will. Another crucial distinction that became blurred with the formation of the Jew/*goy* binary opposition is that between collective enemies and individual foreigners. Finally, we argued that “getting

rid of the *goy*" offers the possibility of seeing various combinations of openness and seclusion, which previous scholarship found hard to accept.

Thus reading these texts without assuming the category of the *goy* enables readers to find new insights and solve old riddles. But it mainly reveals the multiple modes of separation Jews employed before the *goy* took over. The texts discussed above espouse a variety of distinctions and distinction-making which was later replaced by the binary and all-encompassing configuration of Jew versus gentile.