

HELLENISM, term generally used by historians to refer to the period from the death of Alexander the Great (323 B.C.E.) to the death of Cleopatra and the incorporation of Egypt in the Roman Empire in 30 B.C.E. Egypt was the last important survivor of the political system which had developed as a consequence both of the victories of Alexander and of his premature death. The word Hellenism is also used to indicate more generically the cultural tradition of the Greek-speaking part of the Roman Empire between Augustus and Justinian and/or the influence of Greek civilization on Rome, Carthage, India, and other regions which were never part of the empire of Alexander. Finally, Hellenization is used with reference to Judea, Persia, etc. to indicate the penetration of elements of Greek civilization into territories which, though subject to Greco-Macedonian rule for a certain period of time, preserved their national culture with conspicuous success.

The words Hellenism and Hellenistic have a long history in which the text of the Acts of the Apostles 6:1 plays a central part because it opposes *Hebraioi* to *Hellenistai*. At least from the 16th century onward (J. Scaliger) this text was interpreted to imply a contrast between Jews who used Hebrew and Jews who used Greek in the synagogue service. D. Heinsius developed the notion that Jewish *Hellenistai* used a special Greek dialect (*lingua hellenistica*), which is reflected in the Septuagint translation of the Bible. C. Salmasius denied the existence of such a special dialect (1643), but the notion of a special *lingua hellenistica* to indicate the Greek of the Old and New Testaments remained in circulation until the middle of the 19th century. In the 18th century in Germany, J.G. Herder used *Hellenismus* to indicate the way of thinking of Jews and other Orientals who spoke Greek. In 1820 in France J. Matter specifically connected the word *Hellénisme* with the thought of the Greek-speaking Jews of Egypt. J.G. Droysen stretched the meaning of the word to signify the period of transition from the pagan to the Christian world which started with Alexander. In 1833 he published a volume on Alexander the Great; and in 1836 and 1843 he published two volumes of *Geschichte des Hellenismus* embracing the century 323–222 B.C.E. He intended to continue his work in further volumes, but never did so, and it is not quite clear from what he says whether his original intention was to reach the age of Muhammad or to stop with Augustus. In 1877–78 he published a second (considerably modified) edition of these three volumes under the title of *Geschichte des Hellenismus* (which now included the reign of Alexander). The second edition, both in the German text and in the French translation by A. Bouché-Leclercq, became authoritative, and consolidated the notion of Hellenism as a special period of the history of antiquity characterized by a mixture of Greek and Oriental elements. Since Droysen, many historians have reexamined the political and constitutional history of this period; they include B. Niese, K.J. Beloch, A. Bouché-Leclercq, J. Kaerst, W.W. Tarn, E. Bickerman, and E. Will. But research has been particularly intense and productive in the field of economic and social history (U. Wilcken, M. Rostovtzeff, W. Otto, C. Préaux, and C. Schneider) and in the

field of the history of religions (F. Cumont, R. Reitzenstein, H. Usener, P. Wendland, W. Bousset, A.D. Nock, and M.P. Nilsson). Droysen's notion of Hellenism has also deeply influenced the work of literary historians such as U. Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, F. Susemihl, F. Leo, E. Norden, and R. Pfeiffer.

The study of Greek influence on Judaism has developed into a special branch of research on which E. Bickerman, H. Lewy, S. Lieberman, V. Tcherikover, and M. Hengel, among others, have written with distinction. Research on Hellenism has been helped by archaeological discoveries, new inscriptions, and the constitution of a new branch of research, papyrology, since the beginning of the 20th century. Papyrology is especially relevant to the study of the Hellenistic period because a considerable portion of the papyri discovered in Egypt belongs to the last three centuries B.C.E.

However, a knowledge of the political history of Hellenism is hampered by the fragmentary nature of the surviving sources. The works of the great historians of the Hellenistic age (Hieronymus of Cardia, Duris, Timaeus, Agatharchidas, Phylarchus, and Posidonius) are all lost, with the exception of Polybius, and only fragments of his work remain. The only continuous account of the Hellenistic age is found in the short summary of the *Historiae Philippicae* by *Pompeius Trogus (end of the first century B.C.E.) written by Justinus in the second century C.E. Plutarch's *Lives* of some Hellenistic kings and politicians are of the utmost importance. Books I, II, and III of Maccabees are invaluable for Jewish history and must be supplemented by the relevant sections of Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*. Strabo, Pliny the Elder, Pausanias, Galen, Athenaeus, and Diogenes Laertius, though all writing in the Roman Empire, provide essential information on Hellenistic science, social life, and customs.

The empire of Alexander the Great was the result of the military and intellectual cooperation of Greeks and Macedonians, who constituted the ruling class in the states emerging from the struggles of Alexander's successors. This collaboration was precarious in Greece alone, where consequently there was no political stability. The rivalries between Greek cities and the interference of the great Hellenistic states in Greek affairs led to Roman intervention at the end of the third century and ultimately contributed to the transformation of Greece into a direct Roman dependency in 146 B.C.E. The great Hellenistic states – Macedonia, Syria, Egypt, Thrace (for the brief period until 281 B.C.E.), Pergamum (at least after 240 B.C.E.) – though much stronger, had other sources of difficulty: they were faced by dynastic struggles in their midst, by frequent wars with their neighbors, and above all they had large native populations to control. The third century was the period of the greatest power and prosperity of these kingdoms. Almost everywhere during the second century B.C.E. the increasing inability of the Greco-Macedonian ruling class to prevent internal dissolution is noticeable. The Romans took full advantage of the difficulties of the Hellenistic states, played on the fear of social revolution among the wealthy Greeks, and exploited rivalries and native rebellions, with the result that

they defeated and ultimately absorbed all the Hellenistic states. Macedonia, first defeated in 197, was reduced to impotence in 168 and transformed into a province in 149. Syria (the Seleucid state) was first deprived of some of its best Oriental regions by native rebellions (such as those leading to the creation of the Parthian and Bactrian states about 250 B.C.E.). Later it was defeated and mutilated by the Romans (188). The Jewish rebellion of the Maccabees contributed to the further decline of the Seleucid state, which was transformed into a Roman province in 64 B.C.E. Pergamum became a Roman province (province of Asia) in 129 B.C.E., Bithynia in 74. Egypt (the kingdom of the Ptolemies), as already noted, was incorporated by the Romans in 30 B.C.E. The last strong resistance of the Macedonian-Greek elements against the Romans was provoked and supported by Mithridates VI Eupator about 80 B.C.E. and ended in violent repression by the Romans. The last act of resistance against the Romans during the Hellenistic period in the East was not Greek, but Jewish.

In all the Hellenistic states Greek was the language of the aristocracy and the administration. The foundation of new cities (especially in the Seleucid kingdom) and of new villages (particularly in Egypt) contributed to the spread of Greek, but the peasants and the native priests kept the indigenous languages alive. Except in Judea, which had an original literature in Hebrew and Aramaic even under Greek rule, the important developments in literature were all in Greek. Even natives of Egypt and Babylonia wrote their histories in Greek (Manetho, Berossus; cf. Fabius Pictor in Rome). The schools and the gymnasia were organized according to Greek tradition: Homer, the tragedians of the fifth century (especially Euripides), and the orators and historians of the fourth century were the models of the new classicism. Erudition developed for its own sake and, notably in Alexandria and Pergamum, was under royal protection. The libraries of Alexandria were centers of research, besides containing extraordinary collections of manuscripts (apparently not confined to texts in Greek). Classicism notwithstanding, literature and art developed new styles, characterized by realism of detail and a tendency toward the idyllic and the pathetic. Modern scholars have recognized local trends not only in literature but also in art. They are, however, not so important as the essential unity of Hellenistic culture. Philosophy remained centered in Athens, but the great philosophic schools of the academy (Platonists), Peripatos (Aristotelians), Stoa (disciples of Zeno), and Porch (Epicureans) spread everywhere. There was also a revival (perhaps a transformation) of Pythagorean groups, which began to look like a religious sect. Natural sciences made enormous progress, and so did mathematics. Euclid, Apollonius of Perge, and Archimedes represent the culmination of Greek research in geometry and mechanics. Eratosthenes applied mathematics to geography and Aristarchus developed the heliocentric theory, but Hipparchus (who made fundamental discoveries in astronomy) persuaded the succeeding generations with his new version of the geocentric system. Scientific medicine flourished in Alexandria and

elsewhere: The advances in anatomy (Herophilus), physiology (Erasistratus), etc., remained unsurpassed until the Renaissance. Pytheas explored new regions in the north. The philosopher Posidonius explained the tides.

Everywhere the new literature and art interested large strata of the Greek-speaking public, which was predominantly middle-class. If some poets were obscure and full of subtle allusions to the literature of the past (Callimachus, Lycophron, Euphorion, and to a certain extent Theocritus), others were easily comprehensible (Menander, Herodas, and perhaps Apollonius Rhodius). New prose genres, such as the erotic novel, were meant to appeal to a large public. There are signs that much of the literature now lost was fairly popular in character. Figurative art certainly had a wide appeal, as can be deduced from the amount of cheap, but graceful, figurines of this period. Improved techniques of work affected the lives of the many, and town-planning together with the easier economic conditions of private persons produced better housing in many places. But neither philosophy nor science meant much even to the middle class in the Greek-speaking cities. In religion the stronger influences came from the native populations, not from the upper (Greek or Hellenized) stratum. There was no sign that the gods of the Greek Olympus were dying: they went on performing miracles and acquiring new festivals and new sanctuaries. However, a progressive transformation of the old city cults was noticeable, with a new emphasis on free associations of devotees of a specific god, on mysteries, on spiritual notions such as philanthropy and purification. Dionysus became distinctly popular. At the same time Oriental gods – either with their original names (Osiris, Isis) or by identification with Greek gods (Hermes – Thot; Jupiter – Dolichenus) – were widely worshiped outside their original countries, with appropriate modifications of their cults. A curious case of a new god with old Egyptian roots was Serapis. Babylonian astrology gained many believers, even among philosophically educated Greeks. The Greek idea of Fortune (*Tyche*) increased in importance and was worshiped as a goddess, partly owing to Oriental influences. No doubt there were educated people who cared little for gods, either Greek or Oriental. Epicurus preached the indifference of gods to human events and Euhemerus reduced the gods to ancient human benefactors; yet the climate of the age was religious.

With all its regional and chronological differences, Hellenism is a cultural unity which corresponds to the existence of a uniform upper stratum of society and is reflected in the remarkable uniformity of the Greek language (the so-called *koiné*) from India to Gaul, wherever there was a Greek settlement. International trade both favored, and was favored by, this uniform upper stratum; Greek-speaking traders moved round the world. They were joined by more or less Hellenized Orientals and later by Italians. The slaves, the native peasants, and the Greek proletariat neither contributed much to, nor enjoyed the advantages of, this civilization.

It is much more difficult to speak of Hellenism as a political and institutional phenomenon, because conditions var-

ied so profoundly from region to region. Monarchy was the unifying institutional fact. The king was supposed to own his own state by right of conquest (patrimonial monarchy). He was surrounded by a hierarchy of officials with specific functions. Monarchy was connected with religion by a dynastic cult. The army in each country was modeled on the Macedonian prototype which had ensured Alexander's victories. New military features included the use of elephants, the improvement of siege-engines, and the construction of bigger ships. The fact remains, however, that the political organization of Egypt was different from that of Syria, and both Egypt and Syria were of course different from Pergamum (where the king was much more the head of a Greek community) and from Macedonia, not to speak of the Greek city-states and leagues (Aetolia, Achaëa, etc). Economic production, taxation, relations between natives and Greeks, and religious institutions varied greatly from state to state. The Ptolemies organized a state-controlled economy in Egypt which had no parallel elsewhere and slowed down urbanization. The Seleucid state included territories which differed from each other economically and socially. They were kept together (when they were kept together) by the royal army and the militarized Greco-Macedonian colonies. The Seleucids never made any serious attempt at central control of the economic affairs of their state.

The great paradox of the Hellenistic age is that a Greek-speaking man could move easily from country to country with a reasonable expectation of finding work and being well received everywhere – and yet he would not find himself at home anywhere outside his native city. Furthermore, from the end of the third century onward any Greek would also increasingly feel the presence of a new intimidating power – Rome. The structure of Hellenistic civilization was not weak, for it survived the defeat of Hellenistic states, but daily life seemed dangerous; and indeed wars and rebellions were frequent and increasingly catastrophic. Philosophy and religion both provided escape from worldly commitments and consolation for disappointments.

Here the Jews presented a remarkable exception. Confronted with Greek ideas, some attempted to combine Greek intellectual values with Hebrew ones; such efforts were more successful in Egypt than in Judea. However, even in Judea the Hellenizing movement under Antiochus IV came near to prevailing. Ultimately the Jews organized their culture and their political life on their own terms, as witnessed by the rise of the Essenes and Pharisees. The independence of Jewish intellectual life in the Hellenistic age is partly explained by the fact that while Jews took a great interest in Greek ideas, the outside world took relatively little interest in Hebrew ideas. The translation of the Bible into Greek did not mean that the Greeks read the Bible. The isolation in which the Jews lived, especially in Judea, was conducive to the creation of a style of thought and life which can be (and was) considered competitive with Hellenistic civilization.

[Arnaldo Dante Momigliano]

Hellenism and the Jews

Contact between Greeks and Semites, probably including Jews, seems likely to have occurred in Mycenaean times, as remains of Greek pottery in Palestine and Syria testify. Several interesting parallels between early Greek, especially that of Homer, and biblical vocabulary have been suggested, such as Homeric *amumôn* ("without blemish") and biblical *mum* ("blemish"), Homeric *machaira* ("sword") and biblical *mekherah* (Gen. 49:5), Homeric *erebos* ("darkness") and biblical *erev* ("evening") and *ma'ariv* ("west"), and Greek *kados* ("pitcher," in Archilochus) and Hebrew *kad* ("pitcher"). Parallels between Homeric and biblical motifs are generally less striking. The possibility of a link between the even earlier Minoan civilization and Jews, or at any rate Semites, suggested by the presence of Minoan pottery at Ugarit and supported by bilingual (Greek and Northwest Semitic) inscriptions in Crete dating from 600 to 300 B.C.E., awaits the decipherment of Linear A.

It was not until the time of *Alexander the Great, however, that the contacts between Greeks and Jews were revived and intensified. The fact that for two centuries Palestine was part of Hellenistic kingdoms, first of Ptolemaic Egypt and then of Seleucid Syria, made Greek influence on Jewish thought and life inevitable. In the first third of the second century B.C.E., a group of Hellenizing Jews came to power in Jerusalem. They were led by wealthy Jewish aristocrats such as Joseph son of Tobiah, and his son Hyrcanus, who were apparently attracted to the externals of Hellenism; their Hellenization was, at first, primarily social rather than cultural and religious. *Jason the high priest carried his Hellenizing to the extent of establishing Greek educational institutions, the gymnasium and *ephebeion*, and of founding Jerusalem as a Greek city, Antioch-at-Jerusalem. But Jason was only a moderate Hellenizer compared with *Menelaus, whose succession as high priest occasioned a civil war between their factions, with the *Tobiads supporting Menelaus and the masses of the people standing behind Jason. As the scholars Bickermann, Tcherikover, and Hengel have shown, it was the Hellenizers, notably Menelaus and his followers, who influenced Antiochus Epiphanes to undertake his persecutions of Judaism so as to put down the rebellion of the *Hassideans, who were supported by the masses of Jerusalem and who rebelled against the Hellenizers. Perhaps the account in the *Dead Sea Scrolls of the war between the sons of light and the sons of darkness reflects this struggle.

In the following year the fight of the Maccabees against the Hellenizers began. This struggle highlights the antagonism between the rich and highborn in the towns, who believed in finding a *modus vivendi* with Hellenism, and the peasants and urban masses, who could brook no compromise with their religious traditions. In victory the Maccabees were particularly ruthless toward the Greek cities of Palestine (of which there were 30) and their inhabitants, but their struggle was against the Greek cities as a political rather than as a cultural force. It is a mistake to regard the Hellenization of the Palestinian Jews as so deep that they would have been absorbed had not

Antiochus' persecution aroused a fanatic reaction. Similarly it is a mistake to look upon the Maccabees as despisers of Greek culture. In point of fact, Jonathan the Hasmonean, far from hating Greek culture, renewed the treaty of friendship with Sparta (Jos., Ant., 13:164–170) that the high priest *Onias I is said to have negotiated about 300 B.C.E. Alexander Yannai employed Greek mercenaries in his army (*ibid.*, 13:387), and from his time onward coins are inscribed with Greek as well as with Hebrew. The very Aristobulus who forced the Itureans to become Jews called himself "philhellene" (*ibid.*, 13:318). The rise of the Pharisees may be seen, to some degree, as a reaction against the Greco-Roman culture favored by the Sadducees, who were allied with the phil-Hellenic Hasmoneans. The Hellenic influence increased under Herod, who built a Greek theater, an amphitheater where Jews wrestled naked with Greeks, and a hippodrome in or near Jerusalem. Even Agrippa I, who is so highly regarded in rabbinic sources (Bik. 2:4, etc.), built a theater and amphitheater at Berytus (Jos., Ant., 19:335) and himself attended the theater at Caesarea (*ibid.*, 19:332–4).

Jews came to Egypt just before the end of the kingdom of Judah in the sixth century B.C.E. and fought as mercenaries, in all probability side by side with Greeks who had come for the same purpose. But large-scale emigration began with *Ptolemy I after the death of Alexander. Philo (*In Flaccum*, 43) reports that in his day the Jews in Egypt numbered a million. By that time there were large Jewish communities in Syria, especially Antioch (Jos., Wars, 7:43), Greece proper (Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium*, 281–2), Asia Minor (Jos., Ant., 14:213, 255–64; Philo, op. cit., 245), Cyprus (Jos., Ant., 13:284), Rome (Cicero, *Pro Flacco*, 67), and Cyrene (Jos., Ant., 14:115), all of which were primarily Greek speaking.

The Hellenization of the Jews, both in Palestine and the Diaspora, consists in the substitution of the Greek language for Hebrew and Aramaic, the adoption of Greek personal names, the adoption of Greek educational institutions, the growth of a Jewish Hellenistic literature and philosophy, and religious deviation and syncretism as seen in legal institutions and in art (see *Diaspora). In Palestine, the predominance of Greek in ossuary inscriptions (the dates vary) so that of 168, 114 are in Greek only, the discovery of Greek papyri in the Dead Sea caves, and of Greek letters from leaders of the Bar Kokhba rebellion, and the presence of perhaps as many as 2,500–3,000 Greek words in the talmudic corpus, especially in the homiletic Midrashim composed for popular consumption, testify to what degree the Greek language had gained currency (see Rabbinical Knowledge of *Greek and Latin). The contact with Greek influenced, moreover, a number of developments in Hebrew phonology and syntax and led to the establishment of a number of Hebrew roots derived from Greek. Simeon b. Gamaliel went so far as to praise Greek as the only language into which the Torah could be perfectly translated (Esth. R. 4:12). Judah ha-Nasi remarked, "Why talk Syriac in Palestine? Talk either Hebrew or Greek" (Sot. 49b). It was said (Hag. 19b) of the second-century rabbi Elisha ben Avuyah, that he never ceased reciting Greek poetry. In the next century R. Abbahu

knew Greek so well that he was able to pun in it (Gen. R. 14:2), and justified teaching his daughters Greek since it served as an ornament (TJ, Pe'ah 1:1, 15c). The fact that the Mishnah (Sot. end) records that during the war of Lusius *Quietus (117 C.E.) a decree was passed banning the teaching of Greek to one's son indicates that the rabbis regarded the use of Greek as a real danger, but the language continued in vogue.

It can hardly be maintained that Greek was used only by the upper classes and was restricted to commerce, or that it was restricted to those who needed it to communicate with the governing authorities; the Christian Hellenizers (Acts, 6:1), who apparently spoke Greek only and were thus more deeply affected by Hellenization, were not restricted to the higher classes. Josephus (Ant., 20:264) clearly indicates that ordinary freemen and even slaves in Palestine had learned many languages. However, his statement (*ibid.*, 20:263) that it had proven difficult for him to master Greek, especially the pronunciation, and the faulty Greek in many inscriptions indicate that the level of knowledge of Greek was not high. Even Josephus (Apion, 1:50) had to employ assistants to polish the Greek of his *De Bello Judaico*. The knowledge of Greek possessed by Jewish Christians in Palestine, however, because of their closer contact with Diaspora Jews and with non-Jews outside Palestine, must have been better; and recent scholarship has concluded that it is probable that Jesus himself sometimes spoke Greek.

In the Diaspora, the earliest Jewish inhabitants of Alexandria in the fourth century B.C.E., to judge from the papyri, spoke Aramaic; but so thoroughgoing was the victory of the Greek over the Hebrew language that after the third century B.C.E., with the exception of the Nash Papyrus, until 400 C.E., all papyri from Egypt pertaining to the Jews are in Greek. Similarly, of the 116 Jewish inscriptions from Egypt only five are in Hebrew, and they are, it appears, of late date (see *Alexandria; *Egypt, Hellenistic Period; *Zeno Papyri). Even in the Jewish community of Rome, which seems to have had a stronger identification with Judaism, only five of the 534 inscriptions are in Hebrew or Aramaic. Because the *Septuagint was regarded as divinely inspired, there appeared to be no need to learn Hebrew. Indeed, there is a very real question as to whether Philo, by far the greatest of the Alexandrian Jewish writers, knew more than a modicum of Hebrew; it is surely significant that whereas he tells so much of his Greek education he tells nothing about his Hebrew education.

Another aspect of Hellenization is the choice of Greek personal names. In Palestine the percentage is much lower than in the Diaspora, but the names of rabbis such as Abtolemus, Alexander, Antigonos, Symmachus, and Theodosius indicate that the process was at work even there. The fact that at least three-fourths of the personal names of the Jews of Hellenistic Egypt are of Greek origin is striking. The Jews often tried to choose Greek names similar in meaning or sound to their Hebrew names, but names derived from those of Greek or Egyptian deities are common. In Rome about half of the names of the Jews in inscriptions are of Latin origin, about a

third are of Greek origin, and only about a sixth are derived from Hebrew or Aramaic.

Education was a key area of Greek impact. After the establishment of the gymnasium and *ephebeion* by Jason the high priest in pre-Maccabean times, there is no further information on Greek educational institutions established by Jews. However, in the first century Rabban Gamaliel had 500 students of Greek wisdom in addition to 500 students of Torah (Sot. 49b, et al.), although this permission to study Greek was granted to the house of Rabban Gamaliel only because of their special relationship with the Roman government. In Egypt the only known schools with Jewish content were the Sabbath schools, intended for adults, which, according to Philo (Spec., 1:62), taught the traditional Greek four cardinal virtues. On the other hand, there is mention of the eagerness of Jews to enroll their children of secondary school age in Greek gymnasia; and apparently, until they were excluded by the Emperor *Claudius in 41, they had succeeded in their efforts. Such an education initiated youths into the Greek way of life, especially athletics, its most characteristic feature. No Jew could have attended a Greek gymnasium without making serious compromises with his religion, for the gymnasia had numerous busts of deities, held religious processions, sponsored sacrifices, and participated in the athletic games associated with the festivals. Similarly, the fact that the 72 translators recommended that King Ptolemy watch plays (Letter of Aristeas, 284) and that Philo himself often attended the theater (Ebr., 177) shows that Hellenization had made deep inroads. It is not surprising that the rabbis (Av. Zar. 18b) forbade attendance at theaters, for ancient dramas were performed only at festivals of the gods in the presence of the altar and priests of the gods.

The most obvious instances of Greek influence are to be seen in Jewish literature of the Hellenistic period. In Palestine, even *Ben Sira, whose opposition to Hellenism before the Maccabean rebellion is manifest, has a number of aphorisms which seem to be derived from Aesop, Theognis, and Euripides. The *Testament of Joseph and the Book of *Judith show Greek influence in the introduction of erotic motifs found in Greek romances. Similarly, the Book of *Tobit, composed either in Palestine or Antioch in the second century B.C.E., shows Hellenistic influence in the form of its romance. Aside from Justus of Tiberias and Josephus, no Palestinian author is known who definitely wrote in Greek, and indeed there is no apparent Greek influence in the first century B.C.E. "Biblical Antiquities" of Pseudo-Philo. But in his paraphrase of the Bible, Josephus, in his eagerness to answer antisemitic charges, makes numerous changes. Thus his Abraham is presented as worthy of Greek political and philosophical ideals: he possesses skill in persuasion, the power of logical deduction, and scientific knowledge, and, in a show of liberalism, he offers to be converted by the Egyptians if he fails to convince them. Samson is an Aristotelian-like *megalopsychos* ("great-souled man"); Saul is a kind of Jewish Achilles; and Solomon a kind of Jewish Oedipus. Finally, Josephus' portraits of Moses and of Esther are in the tradition of Hellenistic romance, with em-

phasis on erotic elements. Indeed, the life of Moses used by Artapanus, Philo, and Josephus contained details borrowed from the legendary life of Pythagoras.

There has been much debate on the degree of Hellenic influence on the rabbis themselves. A number of tales about Hillel recall Socratic and Cynic anecdotes. Joshua b. Hananiah's discussions with Athenians, Alexandrians, and Roman philosophers (Bek. 8b; Nid. 69b; Sanh. 90b), Meir's reported disputations with the Cynic *Oenomaus of Gadara (Gen. R. 68:20) – a city a little east of the Jordan which also produced three other famous ancient Greek writers, Menippus the satirist, Meleager the poet, and Philodemus the Epicurean philosopher and poet – as well as Judah ha-Nasi's discussions with "*Antoninus"; Av. Zar. 10a–11a, etc.) and rabbinic condemnation of Epicureanism (Mish. Sanh. 11:1; Avot, 1:3; etc.), all reflect rabbinic interest in and concern about Hellenism (see Classical *Greek Literature). We know of only one rabbi, however, *Elisha b. Avuyah, upon whom Greek influence was so great that he actually became a Gnostic heretic.

It has been suggested that *Platonism influenced the rabbis with its theory of ideas, the notion that the soul possesses perfect knowledge before birth, and, above all, the method of dialectic. Moreover, a number of striking parallels in content and form between the Epicureans and the rabbis have been noted. The *Stoic ideal of the sage, as well as Stoic techniques of allegorizing and expounding law, influenced Philo, but it is doubtful to what extent they influenced the rabbis. The rabbis mention only two philosophers – Epicurus and Oenomaus – by name, and they do not use any Greek philosophical terms. The fact that they never mention Plato, Aristotle, or Philo would indicate that their information was probably drawn second-hand. Similarly the proverbs in rabbinic literature which have classical parallels probably represent contact not with Greek literature but with Greek speakers. The alleged influence of Hellenistic rhetoric upon rabbinic methods of interpretation is in the realm of terminology rather than of substance. The "fence" which the rabbis created around the Torah (see Avot 1:1) succeeded, on the whole, in keeping the masses of the Jews from succumbing to Greek culture, as the complaints about Jewish religious and social separateness (cf., e.g., Tacitus, *Histories*, 5:4) indicate. As to sectarian groups, it has been argued, with some degree of probability, that the communal organization and the strict rules for the administration of the Essenes and the Dead Sea brotherhood were directly influenced by Pythagoreanism and its revival, neo-Pythagoreanism. Josephus (Ant., 15:371), in any case, remarks that the Essenes followed the Pythagorean way of life.

The influence of Greek thought on Diaspora Jews starts with the Septuagint (the alleged meeting of a Jew with *Aristotle (Jos., Apion, 1:176–82) is fictitious). Recent investigators, on the whole, agree that there is no systematic pattern of Hellenizing, and that the Greek elements tend to be superficial and decorative rather than deep-seated and significant. Again, it was formerly thought that the language of the Septuagint was a kind of Jewish Greek which would be unintelligible to

non-Jews; but the papyri show that the language is that of Hellenistic Egypt. Yet the fact that, for example, “Torah” was translated as *nomos* (“law”), *emunah* as *pistis* (“belief”), and *zedakah* as *dikaïosynē* (“justice”) brought the connotations, especially Platonic, of these words to the Greek reader ignorant of the original. Hence Paul could preach antinomianism to an audience that looked upon the Torah as a law which could be repealed rather than as a way of life, and when the injunction *Elohim lo tekalel* (Ex. 22:24) was interpreted to mean “Thou shalt not curse the gods,” it became a text for Philo (*De Vita Mosis*, 2:205; Spec., 1:53) and Josephus (Apion, 2:237; Ant., 4:207) to preach liberalism toward other religions. Apparently because they saw the danger in the adulation of the Septuagint by the Hellenistic Jews, the rabbis changed their initially favorable reaction to the translation (Meg. 9b) to a bitter comment (Sof. 1:7) comparing the completion of the Septuagint with the making of the golden calf. The stature of the Septuagint is obvious in the fragments of the Greco-Jewish historian *Demetrius, who already in the latter part of the third century B.C.E. followed the Septuagint’s patriarchal chronology rather than that of the Hebrew text, though his Septuagint was not quite identical with any of our versions.

The Letter of *Aristeas, supposedly written in the third century B.C.E., but more probably about 100 B.C.E., apparently by an Alexandrian Jew who was a propagandist for the cooperation of Hellenism and Judaism, is addressed not merely or even primarily to non-Jews but rather to fellow Jews. The 72 elders to whom the translation of the Torah was entrusted are depicted as having had a good Greek education, and engage with the king in a symposium on ethics and politics reminiscent of those described by Plato, Xenophon, Athenaeus, Plutarch, and Macrobius. “Aristeas” (16) even goes so far as to identify Zeus with God. Social isolation is not a corollary of Judaism in his view. Among his contemporaries only the author of III Maccabees opposed the drive for citizenship of the Alexandrian Jews.

Other Alexandrian Jewish writers attempted to show that the Greeks had borrowed from the Jews. Thus the Jewish Peripatetic philosopher Aristobulus, in the second century B.C.E., asserts (in Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, 13:12, 1–16) that Homer, Hesiod, Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato were all acquainted with a translation of the Torah into Greek which had been made before the Persian conquest of Egypt (525 B.C.E.). The historian Eupolemus (c. 150 B.C.E.), perhaps a Palestinian, reports that Moses taught the alphabet to the Jews, who in turn passed it on to the Phoenicians, who transmitted it to the Greeks. The historian Artapanus (c. 100 B.C.E.) identifies Moses with the semilegendary Greek poet Musaeus and with Hermes-Thoth, and makes him the founder of navigation, architecture, strategy, and philosophy; Moses thus, far from hating mankind, as antisemites had charged, is a benefactor in the Hellenistic sense. Cleodemus (or Malchus), perhaps a Jewish historian, boasts that two of the sons of Abraham accompanied Heracles in his campaign against Libya and that Heracles married the daughter of one of them (Jos., Ant., 1:240–1).

Among the most obvious instances of Greek influence on Jewish writers are *Philo the Elder’s epic poem *On Jerusalem* (c. 100 B.C.E.) in Homeric hexameters, and that of his presumed contemporary *Theodotus, a Samaritan, on the rape of Dinah. Ezekiel the poet, at about the same time, composed tragedies, of which a portion of one, *The Exodus*, is extant, a veritable exercise in Euripidean trimeters. Among Apocryphal books the Wisdom of Ben Sira, dating from perhaps the second century B.C.E., uses a number of technical terms drawn from Platonic and Stoic philosophy; and such a view as the preexistence of the soul is apparently drawn from Plato. It and its presumed contemporary, IV *Maccabees, are reminiscent of Cynic-Stoic diatribes. Furthermore, the latter shows Greek influence in its presentation of the Torah as teaching the four cardinal virtues; the arguments are pervasively Stoic, and the form of the disputation is modeled on Plato’s *Gorgias*. Of Philo it was said already by Jerome (*De Viris Illustribus*, 11), “Either Plato philonizes or Philo platonizes.” That his Hellenization transcends mere language can be seen in his description of Moses’ education, which is presumably held up as an ideal. His Egyptian instructors are said to have taught him arithmetic, geometry, harmonics, and philosophy (*De Vita Mosis*, 1:23–24), the very subjects which constitute the higher education of Plato’s philosopher-king (*Republic*, 521c–535a), while his Greek teachers are said to have taught him the rest of the regular school course – presumably, grammar, rhetoric, and logic. In his profound debt to Platonism Philo is similar to the author of IV Maccabees, his presumed contemporary.

Evidence of Greek influence on Jews of the middle and lower classes is largely dependent upon *papyri and art objects that have been discovered. The papyri show many instances of Jews using common Hellenistic law in their business life. The documents are drawn up as Hellenistic documents in a government notary’s office. The most obvious violations of *halakhah* are seen in the loan documents: of the 11 that have come down only two do not charge direct interest. One of them is in a highly fragmentary condition and the other is subject to the interest of 24% if not repaid within a year. The one divorce document follows non-Jewish formulas completely; and, in direct violation of *halakhah*, there is no statement that it is the husband who is divorcing the wife.

Greek influence, as Goodenough has amply shown, is clearly to be seen in Hellenistic Jewish art and architecture. Thus Josephus tells that the courts and colonnades of the Temple built by Herod in Jerusalem were in the Greek style. Pagan and syncretistic art has been discovered in the synagogues of both Palestine and the Diaspora (especially at *Dura-Europos in Mesopotamia), in direct violation of stringent biblical and rabbinic prohibitions. It cannot be argued that these motifs were merely decorative, since they were employed in a similar way by earlier and contemporary pagans and by contemporary and later Christians. Goodenough has concluded that these figures had meaning as symbols; that these symbols constituted a sub-rational lingua franca among Jews and non-Jews alike, just as the Greek language provided a rational bond

among them; and that they represented a kind of allegorization through art, of the sort that Philo had attempted through philosophy. Additional evidence that some Jews adopted certain pagan elements can be seen in the charms (that is, verbal incantations) and apotropaic amulets (or the material objects themselves containing graphic symbols used to ward off evil) which Goodenough has collected.

It is not surprising that contact with Hellenism should have produced deviations from Jewish observance. Philo (*Post.*, 35–40) mentions the extreme allegorists, who insisted on interpreting the ceremonial laws as only a parable: these are undoubtedly forerunners of Pauline antinomianism. Others relaxed their Jewish observance in order to become citizens of Alexandria, an act that involved worship of the city gods. Actual apostasy was apparently rare, though there is mention of the case of Philo's nephew, *Tiberius Julius Alexander, as well as those of Dositheos and Helicon, all of whom pursued careers at the imperial court. Philo on one occasion (*Spec.*, 3:29) does attack intermarriage, but the virulent *antisemitism in Alexandria must have served as a deterrent. A more common reaction to the challenge of secularism was for Jews to cease religious observance except on the Day of Atonement (Philo, *Spec.* 1:186). Finally, there is some evidence that the one city where Christianity seems to have made real inroads in converting Jews was the one most deeply influenced by Hellenism, Alexandria.

See also *Bible (in Hellenistic Judaism); *Hellenistic Jewish Literature; *Cynics and Cynicism.

[Louis Harry Feldman]

Spiritual Resistance

One aspect of the contact between Hellenism (and Rome) and Judaism deserves special treatment, the spiritual resistance against their rule. The struggle of the Jewish people against Greek and Roman domination was accompanied by a literature which encouraged and intensified resistance. After military defeat it became frequently the only weapon, an important instrument of hope and survival. A significant trend in recent scholarship considers much of Jewish literature between Alexander the Great and the conquest of Islam as spiritual or religious resistance.

Resistance of this type was found among all the larger nations of the ancient Near East: the Babylonians and Egyptians under the Persians and the Egyptians and Persians under the Greeks who, in turn, developed a preponderantly cultural resistance under the Romans. The eastern pattern, however, was religious: foreign conquest destroys the sacred and just world order by which native king, cult, nature, and people function under the ruling god, a belief which was strengthened by the frequent misrule of the conqueror. A future cataclysmic reestablishment under a kingly redeemer must therefore right all wrongs. Meanwhile, a hereafter would punish or reward the individual. This apocalyptic scheme existed throughout the Near East: e.g., the *Oracle of Hystaspes* and the later *Bahman Yasht* (Persian), Sesostris and Ramses legends, *Demotic Chron-*

icle, Oracle of the Potter (Egyptian), *Babylonian Chronicle*, Ninos-Semiramis legend (Babylonian). Archaizing styles (e.g., script and literature, cf. *Coins, *Dead Sea Scrolls), clerical organization, and proselytism were also aspects of resistance.

Jewish spiritual resistance differed in some respects from this general pattern; here it was the weapon of a small people lacking the glory of an imperial past. It differed, further, in its intensity and perpetuity, its monotheism (though dangerously attenuated in the apocalypse) and, at times, its appeal to all classes from aristocracy to peasantry. It differed in a stronger stress on social justice inherited from biblical prophecy and the constant reference to past liberations in sacred scriptures. In his glorification of the Augustan restoration *Virgil may have combined classical concepts with eastern "Empire" apocalyptic ones (*Eclogue* 4; cf. Horace, *Epode* 16; Dan. 2 and 7). Oppression created obscure allusions (to Antiochus, Pompey, Nero, etc.) and secret code words in both *apocalypse and Talmud (e.g., Edom or Babylon for Rome adopted from here by Christian apocalyptic writers (Rev. 16:5) and perhaps in the Dead Sea Scrolls ("Kittim" in the Habakkuk Peshar)). Finally, Jewish resistance created an incomparably greater variety of literary sources and forms. Alongside the detailed apocalypse, with its violent cosmic vision, the psalm remained popular as a vehicle of resistance (Dan. 9:4–19; II Macc. 1:24–29; Psalms of Solomon, perhaps the heading of Ps. 30, et al.). Martyrology emerged, and many of its features were borrowed by emerging Christianity (II Macc.; IV Macc.; talmudic examples collected in *Midrash Elleh Ezkerah*, cf. H.A. Fischel, in *JQR*, 37 (1946/47), 265–80, 363–86). Alongside Diaspora historiographies, Palestinian works treated both biblical and contemporary history in the spirit of religious resistance (I Macc.; Jub.; *Pseudo-Philo*). Many talmudic dialogues ("Antoninus" versus Rabbi Hadrian and the Athenian wise men versus Joshua b. Hananiah), Alexander legends (Tam. 31b. ff., et al.), parables, and fables (Akiva, fox and fishes, Ber. 61b) have resistance aspects. Spiritual resistance is also manifest in the Hebrew examples of the erotic Greco-Oriental romance (Esth., Judith, Testament of Joseph, III Macc., Moses Romance). The talmudic sermon interpreted biblical passages, such as those of the unclean animals, as referring to Greece and Rome (Lev. R. 13, 5, et al.). The resistance aspects of liturgy, still little explored, may be considerable. Resistance is obvious and probably intentional in the symposiastic *seder* ritual (cf. S. Stein, in *JJS*, 8 [1957], 13–44).

The resistant writer freely added materials from foreign literature. Judith, some details of the Greek Lindus chronicle and Daniel and the Sibylline Oracle (Oriental prophecies) are among prominent examples. Similarly, the Midrash seems to have been acquainted with the Hellenistic critique of Rome's materialism and cruelty (cf. Shab. 33b and Cicero, *Academica* 21, 137; Meg. 6b; Pes. 119b, et al., and Dio. 13, 16, 31, 41 ff., 121) and its "scandalous" foundation legend (Shab. 56b; Esth. R. 3, 5 and Justin 28:2, 8 ff.; Horace, *Epode*, 16). Occasionally, resistance consisted in quietism, and the talmudic sage resembled (and was acquainted with) the Greco-Roman philosopher-

rhetor who also often had to choose between martyrdom and withdrawal. The rabbis created much **halakhah* of decisive resistance value, especially legislation against emperor worship, later used by Tertullian among others. Naturally, resistance never excluded periods of accommodation, objective insights into the virtues of Greece and Rome (Avot 3, 2; Av. Zar. 2b; 18a; Gen. R. 9 end, 16, 4, et al.), and useful borrowings. Strangely enough, much earlier non-Jewish scholarship condemns Jewish resistance, totally oblivious to the fact that without it there would be no Western civilization as we know it.

[Henry Albert Fischel]

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HELLENISTIC JEWISH LITERATURE. To a general historian the term “Hellenistic” describes the literature of the period from the death of Alexander the Great (323 B.C.E.) until Rome’s predominance in the Mediterranean (c. 30 B.C.E.). Sometimes the same general term is used to refer to Jewish material as well; thus, the Book of Ecclesiastes, early rabbinic literature, and the *Dead Sea Scrolls are sometimes referred to as “Hellenistic.” More precisely, however, the term Hellenistic Jewish literature does not describe a historical period – nor even characterize a movement – but rather applies to a specific body of literature that was written in the Greek language; was transmitted only in the Greek language; or was preserved in one or more secondary versions derived from the Greek (though a number of these works have now been found in the original). Its two main centers were Palestine and

Alexandria (Egypt), although other localities of the Diaspora may have contributed (see *Jason of Cyrene). Its temporal limits extend into the second century C.E., for the educated classes of the major cities of the Roman period continued to use Greek rather than Latin as the language of culture. Since the term Hellenistic Jewish literature refers to a subclass of the literature of a period, it is difficult to discuss it historically or in terms of genres in isolation from the rest of the literature of the same period. Traditionally, the material of this literature has been divided into Apocrypha, *Pseudepigrapha, and individual authors. Schuerer presents the material as either Palestinian or as Diaspora literature. Only recently, in the works of Joshua Gutmann, has there been an attempt at a systematic historical presentation.

The fundamental book of this literature is the Greek translation of the Bible, the *Septuagint. Although the story of its origin as told in the Letter of *Aristeas is probably propaganda, in fact an early date for this translation, at least of the Pentateuch, is very probable (the reign of *Ptolemy Philadelphus, 285–246 B.C.E.), testifying to the rapid loss of knowledge of the Hebrew language by the Alexandria Jewish community. The rest of the literature is greatly dependent on this text. In historical writing, for example, retelling of biblical history is found in the fragments of *Demetrius, *Eupolemus, *Artapanus, Aristeas, *Cleodemus, and *Thallus, in Pseudo-Philo’s *Biblical Antiquities*, and in the first half of the *Antiquities* of *Josephus, all couched in the language of the Greek translation with little or no reference to the Hebrew original. In more contemporaneous histories, such as I and II *Maccabees, *Philo’s *Embassy to Gaius*, and Josephus’ *Jewish War*, there is an obvious debt to the models of Thucydides and Polybius. With the exception of I Maccabees (probably), Pseudo-Philo, and the original of Josephus’ *Jewish War*, all these histories were composed in Greek. The folkloristic elaborations on the biblical text found in this literature are more often translations from a Semitic original. Some are insertions into the biblical text, perhaps stemming from the original copy, such as the story of the three youths in I *Esdras 3:1–5:6 or the insertions in the Greek *Esther; others are additions, such as **Sussanna or Bel and the Dragon, to the biblical Book of Daniel; still others, separate books in themselves, such as *Jubilees, *Tobit, *Judith, and the Ascension of *Isaiah, are further examples of stories told in a biblical manner. Artapanus and II and III Maccabees come closer to the dramatic manner of a Greek romance.

Books such as the Wisdom of *Ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus) continue the tradition of biblical wisdom literature. Little or no direct influence of Greek philosophy can be discerned in them; but in books like the Wisdom of *Solomon, especially in the latter half, and in IV Maccabees, Platonic and Stoic terminology and ideas are present. *Aristobulus and Philo explain Mosaic law as an anticipation of Greek philosophy, and they employ the Greek technique of allegory to reconcile these two traditions. Apocalyptic literature, as found in *Enoch, the Assumption of *Moses, IV Esdras, the Syrian and Greek *Baruch,