

The Jewish *Politeuma* at Heracleopolis

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Urkunden des Politeuma der Juden von Heracleopolis (144/3-133/2 v. Chr.) (P.Polit. Iud.). Papyri aus den Sammlungen von Heidelberg, Köln, München und Wien, bearbeitet von James M.S. Cowey und Klaus Maresch (Abhandlungen der nordrhein-westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften; Papyrologica Coloniensia, vol. XXIX), Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2001. ISBN 3 531 09948 5; ISSN 0944 8837.

P.Colon. XXIX is the long-awaited publication of an archive of twenty papyri providing the first documentary evidence for the existence of a Jewish *politeuma* in Ptolemaic Egypt. More precisely, the papyri document the jurisdiction held by the *politarches* and the *archontes* of 'the *politeuma* of the Jews in Heracleopolis' in Middle Egypt. All the documents are dated between the 27th and the 38th year of an unknown reign, most probably that of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II, that is, 144/3-133/2 BCE. Sixteen papyri (nos. 1-16) are complaints about violation of clauses of contracts, in which the petitioner asks the *archontes* to enforce his or her rights. The four remaining documents (nos. 17-20) are pieces of correspondence between *presbyteroi*, that is, village officials of local Jewish communities around Heracleopolis, and the *archontes* of the *politeuma* in Heracleopolis. Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 10-12, 15, 16, 18-20 were worked out by James Cowey in his Ph.D. dissertation, while nos. 3, 6, 9, 13, 14 and 17 are edited by Klaus Maresch. It is to be presumed that nos. 7 and 8 were edited in collaboration. All the documents are preceded by individual introductions which try to reconstruct as far as possible the situation involved in the texts, whose comprehension is often hampered by allusiveness and/or poor state of preservation. The edition of the text is followed by linear notes, exhaustive on philological aspects, but also including legal and historical comments, and a German translation. A 34-page long introduction written by the two editors together provides a synthetic commentary on various aspects of the texts, including historical background, the legal import of the texts and a study of the organization of the *politeuma* as well as of the Jewish communities which had ties with it.

The papyri are unevenly preserved and often difficult to read, and their interpretation was a most delicate operation. This inevitably delayed the publication of the documents. The philological work done by both editors is remarkable. One example among others: the interpretation and translation of no. 3, ll. 9-20, succeeds in making sense of this very badly damaged passage in a convincing way. See also under no. 17, the note to ll. 5-7, p. 136.

The novelty of these twenty papyri published by Cowey and Maresch is amazing. These documents are likely to offer radical revisions of all current views on the history of the Jews in Egypt in the Ptolemaic period, and possibly also beyond the boundaries of Ptolemaic Egypt. The most spectacular documents are nos. 1, 4, and 8. Indeed, the

whole archive is important by virtue of the cumulative information it provides on this *politeuma*. Inasmuch as the documents cast light on limited aspects of the inner life of this Jewish *politeuma*, it is to be expected that the new publication will prompt new debates rather than settle old issues.

Some important aspects of the documents receive masterly comment in the general introduction. We can only follow C. and M. in their reconstruction of the inner structure of the *politeuma* as well as the regional situation: the *politeuma* of Heracleopolis was headed by a *politarches* and by *archontes*, whose exact number remains uncertain. These are annual magistrates; the *politarches* seems a *primus inter pares*, to quote C.-M.'s phrase (pp. 10f.). The jurisdiction of the *archontes* (or of the *politarches* and *archontes*, as in nos. 1 and 2) operated in the same way as did jurisdictions of Ptolemaic officials in the second century BCE. The competence of these *archontes* was apparently limited to enforcing rights stemming from legal contracts, in case of a failure of one side to abide by contractual clauses (pp. 11-18). The competence of the *archontes'* jurisdiction extended not only to the members of the *politeuma* itself, but apparently also to the non-Jewish population of the harbour area, which was set slightly apart from the city itself. Nos. 1, 10 and 11 are complaints laid by Jews (?) against non-Jewish individuals described as 'of those from the harbour'. The Jewish identity of the petitioner is explicitly stated in nos. 1 (the petitioner belongs to 'those of the *politeuma*') and 11 (the petitioner states only his ethnic label as Jewish, without mentioning his place of living); it is assumed by the editors in no. 10, although it should be noted that the petitioner, a woman, states only her name, omitting even her patronymic. The editors cautiously suggest that the harbour area may have been the physical center of the *politeuma* in order to explain the bearing of the *archontes'* jurisdiction on this area regardless of the ethnic origin of the individuals involved. They point out the fact that the fortress stood close to the harbour as a further clue to this assumption. At the very least, the harbour area must have been heavily populated by Jews (p. 12).

As far as Jews are concerned, the competence of the *archontes* of the *politeuma* extends outside Heracleopolis, to Jewish communities located either in the Heracleopolite nome or even in neighbouring nomes, as papyrus no. 8 shows (pp. 18-21). Four village communities appear in the documents: they are headed by local *presbyteroi*, who act as arbitrators. The papyri clearly show that in case the arbitration process failed, the petitioner could appeal to the jurisdiction of the *archontes* of the *politeuma*. We also see the *archontes* delegate to the *presbyteroi* the task of dealing with a matter which was laid before them. The papyri thus cast light on the hierarchy as well as the links between the *archontes* of the *politeuma* and the *presbyteroi* of village Jewish communities as lower-ranking officials. In light of these documents the editors speak of a 'special Jewish jurisdiction' ('Sondergerichtsbarkeit unter Juden', p. 13). They do not see the fact that some of the complaints involve non-Jews from the harbour area as defendants as a hindrance to this. As they point out, in all sixteen extant complaints the plaintiffs are (or most probably are) Jews.

The editors' comments on the judicial powers of the *archontes* (pp. 10-18) and on the geographic extension of their competence (pp. 18-23) are by far the best chapters of their introduction. The discussion of the material is cautious and the interpretations proposed by C. and M. are for the most convincing. They are at their best when dealing

with topics familiar to papyrologists, such as Ptolemaic law and judicial system, and the evolution of the judicial competence of Ptolemaic officials. The discussion of specifically Jewish matters in the introduction elicits more reservations.

As a whole, the picture of this Jewish *politeuma* adumbrated by the editors on the basis of the documents is quite impressive. Before turning to the reservations elicited by some of the editors' comments, it is worth mentioning that the archive provides interesting information over quite a large range of fields. Here is a list of selected items. Some are rightly emphasized by the editors themselves; others have been added in the list on a subjective basis.

Non-Jewish matters

Several documents (esp. nos. 3 and 8) allow us to assess the span of time needed for the process of decision to be carried out, between the presentation of the complaint and the decision.¹ No. 9 provides one more instance of the price of a slave, to be added to the few already known. See note to l. 12, with note to l. 16, pp. 106f. No. 8 contains the earliest instance of *Persēs tēs epigonēs* used as a status denomination (see further Appendix below).

Politeumata

Polites and politeumata. Papyrus no. 1 provides indisputable evidence for the use of πολῖται in reference to members of the *politeuma* and ἀλλόφυλοι for non-members — or more accurately non-Jews (ll. 17-18). The link between *polites* and *politeuma* has hitherto been denied by many commentators, who thought that *polites* referred to the common civic origin of the members of the *politeuma*. See the discussion of this matter, with bibliography, in the note *ad loc.*, p. 38.² *Allophyloi* is a term used in the LXX: see introduction, pp. 22-3, and note *ad loc.* for a discussion of further literary and documentary evidence of the term mainly in a Jewish context. For all this, one may wonder how Jews who were not members of the *politeuma* were labelled. Certainly not *allophyloi*. Most probably, then, *politai*. Thus, it is not certain that the evidence provided by pap. no. 1 puts an end to the basic ambiguity of the use of the term πολίτης in connection with a *politeuma*. If a specific link between *polites* and *politeuma* is to be assumed, on the basis of the new evidence as well as of funerary inscriptions from the Sidonian necropolis which was published around the turn of the nineteenth-twentieth centuries,³

¹ On this matter, see the remarks by R.S. Bagnall, 'Decolonizing Hellenistic Egypt', in P. Cartledge, P. Garnsey and E.S. Gruen (eds.), *Hellenistic Constructs. Essays in Culture, History and Historiography* (Berkeley 1997), 225-41, esp. 233-5, comparing the efficiency of operation of petitions addressed to the king in Ptolemaic Egypt with the Peruvian system of petitions to high officials in modern times.

² Add M. Launey, *Recherches sur les armées hellénistiques* II, *BEFAR* 169 (Paris 1951, repr. with *addenda*, 1987), 1083f.

³ See the discussion of this material in M. Launey (n. 2), 1081-4, with reference to the *editiones principes*. Further, G. Lüderitz, 'What is a *Politeuma*?', in J.W. van Henten and P.W. van der Horst (eds.), *Studies in Early Jewish Epigraphy*, *Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums* 21 (Leiden 1989), 193-5.

this use is perhaps to be traced back to a social phenomenon already documented in the fourth century BCE in the Greek world: with the increased number of mercenary units composed of uprooted individuals, the army began functioning as a substitute for a civic community. Such a phenomenon is documented in Xenophon's *Anabasis*.

One may add that the link between *politarches* and *politeuma*, already suggested by L. Robert but doubted by G. Lüderitz,⁴ is unquestionably demonstrated by the archive from Heracleopolis. One may query whether the evidence for the title of *politarches* in Macedonia cited by the editors as comparative material for the use of the term in their documents is of any use for the understanding of this function in Ptolemaic Egypt (p. 10, n. 37). In a different context J. Bingen has pointed out that the nomenclature of institutions may correspond to different realities as we move from one area to another. This seems to be the case with this *politarches*.⁵

The existence of a Jewish *politeuma* in Alexandria, which rested so far only on scant and partly unreliable evidence, cannot be doubted any longer. So much for its *existence*. Whether the new evidence has such far-reaching implications as C. and M. suggest for our understanding of the *nature* of Jewish *politeumata* in Alexandria and the Egyptian *chora* is another matter (pp. 4-9, and 18).

New evidence for a Jewish notarial office? An *archeion* is mentioned in no. 3, l. 12. The editor, in a note *ad loc.*, suggests that this may be a Jewish notarial office, like the one already attested in Alexandria (CPJ II, 143, ll. 7-8; see *P.Colon.* XXIX, p. 53, comment. to l. 12).

The editors note that the involvement of the *archontes* of the Heracleopolis *politeuma* in matters concerning neighbouring villages seems logically to imply that there were no other *politeumata* in the whole area; therefore, the number of Jewish *politeumata* should not be multiplied beyond our positive evidence (p. 20). The archive clearly proves that not every Jewish community was organized as a *politeuma*.

In their introduction the editors several times suggest a link between the presence of this *politeuma* in Heracleopolis in the latter half of the second century BCE and the existence of a fortress in the vicinity of Heracleopolis' harbour area (pp. 4 and 20). This fortress acquired paramount strategic importance in the second century BCE, as the high rank of the commander in charge proves (p. 4, n. 9). Though the editors refrain from explicit articulation of the view that this Jewish *politeuma* had a military background, since this is not explicitly supported by the extant evidence, such an assumption may be supported by the cumulative evidence already known on Ptolemaic *politeumata*. It is regrettable that the editors deemed the evidence documenting non-Jewish *politeumata* largely irrelevant for the study of their papyri. There is much more to retrieve from these parallel cases than they have found. Instead, they have chosen to treat Jews as a particular case, going in this far beyond current historiography, which usually treats the Jewish *politeuma* in Alexandria as a separate case. More will be said on this topic below.

⁴ G. Lüderitz (n. 3), 210.

⁵ Pointing to F. von Woess' study on *asyilia*, *Asylwesen Ägyptens in der Ptolemäerzeit* (Munich 1923). See J. Bingen, 'Normalité et spécificité de l'épigraphie grecque et romaine de l'Égypte', in L. Criscuolo and G. Geraci (eds.), *Egitto e storia antica* (Bologna 1989), 27.

The new evidence lends further support to M. Launey's observation that *politeumata* do not seem to have existed before Ptolemy VI Philometor's reign.⁶ Thus far, no *politeuma* is documented before this reign.

Literary texts versus documents

Ptolemy VIII and the Jews. In their introduction (p. 7) the editors notice that the existence of a Jewish *politeuma* in Heracleopolis under Ptolemy VIII 'proves that this ruler could not be hostile to the Jews' ('nicht judenfeindlich'), even if the beginning of his reign was a hard period for the Jews, as is usually argued on the basis of III Maccabees. The new evidence from Heracleopolis is congruent with two known synagogue inscriptions dedicated 'for the sake of Ptolemy (VIII) Euergetes (II)' (pp. 7f.). Thus, the new papyri provide one more instance of a necessary reappraisal of historical conclusions drawn on the testimony of literary texts. One may recall in this connection the case of the origins of native revolts in later Ptolemaic history: Polybius' testimony that the revolts started after the battle of Raphia in 217 and were the product of Egyptian nationalism has been thoroughly nuanced by papyrological finds. These latter proved that the movement started earlier than 217 and support the view that economic pressure as well as the role of local feuds in guiding local positioning towards rebellion or loyalty are no less important factors than nationalism.⁷ Or, to take another example, the balanced appreciation of Ptolemy XII Auletes' and Cleopatra VII's reigns which was adumbrated on the basis of papyrological evidence, versus Polybius' picture of first-century Ptolemaic rule as decadent.⁸ It is high time that we take these data into account before using Judaeo-Hellenistic literature for historical reconstruction. The new evidence will finally invite scholars to reassess the importance of III Maccabees for the writing of the history of Jews in Ptolemaic Egypt. Even if there is a historical kernel to the events related in this literary work, as has been argued,⁹ they have been distorted and amplified. Modern scholars should restore them to a juster and more modest scale.

⁶ M. Launey (n. 2), 1077.

⁷ We may recall the well-known paper by Cl. Préaux, 'Politique de race ou politique royale?' *Chronique d'Égypte* 11 (1936), 111-38. On the historiographical treatment of the issue of native revolts in Egypt, see W. Peremans, 'Les révolutions égyptiennes sous les Lagides', in Herwig Maehler and Volker Michael Strocka (eds.), *Das ptolemäische Ägypten. Akten des internationalen Symposions, Berlin, September 1976* (Mainz am Rhein 1978), 39-50. J.-C. Goyon, 'Ptolemaic Egypt: Priest and the Traditional Religion' in Robert S. Bianchi (ed.), *Cleopatra's Egypt: Age of the Ptolemies* (Brooklyn 1988), provides interesting insights into the background which led to secession in the Thebaid.

⁸ See H. Maehler, 'Egypt under the Last Ptolemies', *BICS* 30 (1983), 1-16. Also, more generally, D.J. Thompson, 'Egypt, 146-31 B.C.', in J.A. Crook, A. Lintott and E. Rawson (eds.), *Cambridge Ancient History IX². The Last Age of the Roman Republic, 146-43 B.C.* (Cambridge 1994), 310-26.

⁹ Mainly by M. Hadas, *Third and Fourth Maccabees* (New York 1953), 11. Also, V. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Philadelphia/Jerusalem 1959), 282. Their view was endorsed by P.M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford 1972) I, 83, and II, 164 n. 310.

That Ptolemy VIII cracked down on the Alexandrian population after his final reconquest of the throne in 145 BCE is attested elsewhere.¹⁰ That he took revenge on Cleopatra II's former mercenary troops would be an altogether expected step. Josephus boasts enough about Ptolemy VI Philometor's and Cleopatra II's use of Jewish generals.¹¹ The new documents from Heracleopolis only prove what might have been expected, namely that if Jewish Alexandrian writers, such as the author of III Maccabees or Flavius Josephus, posited universal Jewish solidarity of fate (a fact which still needs to be demonstrated outside the literary realm), outsiders did not. This fact is congruent with the claim made by a growing trend in current historiography that there was no pagan 'antisemitism' in Graeco-Roman antiquity, for the simple reason that Jews were no more 'peculiar' in their 'differences' than any other non-Greek or non-Roman ethnic group for Greeks and Romans.¹² That mercenaries and political allies who supported the wrong side saved themselves by going over to their victorious former opponent is a familiar phenomenon. Ptolemy VIII obviously needed loyal troops and mercenaries after securing his rule of Egypt. Josephus himself testifies to the fact that the heads of the Jewish *politeuma* in Leontopolis, who backed Ptolemy VI and Cleopatra II against Ptolemy VIII, survived the latter's final take over of Egypt, since Onias' sons, Ananias and Chelkias, still operated as Cleopatra III's generals against her son Ptolemy Lathyrus.¹³

Ethnics and ethnicity

Jewish immigration from Asia Minor to Egypt? In no. 8 the petitioner refers to a contract of loan that he agreed on with Plousia, daughter of Apollodoros, and her son Dorotheos, also called Zenon. The plaintiff refers to both of them as Jews in the present document, but specifies that the ethnic denomination used for both of them in the contract was different: there the man was called Πέρσης τῆς ἐπιγούρης (ll. 13-15), while the woman was called Γαργαρίσσα (ll. 11-12). The editor states in the note *ad loc.* (pp. 97f.) that this ethnicon (or rather, politicon) is not attested until now in the papyri; it must refer to Gargara in the Troad. As he points out, this is the first time that a Jew bearing a Greek civic ethnic appears in the documents from Egypt. Such a case should not, however, be seen as surprising. Exceptional conditions like the present archive from Heracleopolis are needed for us to be able to identify as ethnically Jewish an individual bearing a Greek name and patronymic and a Greek civic ethnic. However, if Plousia's politicon is genuine and was not acquired by her through her marriage to a Greek from Gargara, her case invites us to take Josephus' evidence about the Jews in Asia Minor bearing local civic ethnics, in the references gathered by the editor *ad loc.*, seriously. More interestingly, Plousia's case would then provide evidence for the first time that Jewish immigrants in Ptolemaic Egypt may not all stem from Judaea. One may recall in

¹⁰ See P.M. Fraser (n. 9) I, 86f.

¹¹ Josephus, *Against Apion*, 2.49.

¹² See lastly the remarks by M. Goodman, 'Jews, Greeks and Romans', in idem (ed.), *Jews in a Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford 1998), 3-14. Both works are quoted in a footnote in the general introduction, but one wonders to what extent they have been used by the editors.

¹³ Josephus, *AJ* 13.351 and 354.

this context Antiochus III's letter to Zeuxis, his satrap in Lydia, ordering him to transport two thousand Jewish military settlers with their families from Mesopotamia and Babylonia to Phrygia in the years 212-205/4 BCE.¹⁴ Jews could circulate from one place in their diaspora to another. This fact should be kept in mind, especially for the period of Ptolemaic thalassocracy in the third century BCE, which included some strongholds in Asia Minor. Greek immigration from the areas in Asia Minor which were under Ptolemaic rule to Egypt during this period is well documented. See, however, the next entry.

Multiple ethnic denomination. Plousia's case in no. 8 is interesting also for the use of ethnic denomination in Ptolemaic Egypt. C. La'da has rightly insisted on the need for us to distinguish between the use of ethnic denominations in private and official documents.¹⁵ Plousia seems to provide an instance of a change of ethnic denomination in official documents according to the institution dealt with. The case of her son, a Ἰουδαῖος called Πέρσης τῆς ἐπιγονῆς does not raise any problem. The denomination Πέρσης τῆς ἐπιγονῆς was a fictive ethnicon, which determined a specific legal status held by debtors. A summary of the *status quaestionis* about the legal connotation of Πέρσης τῆς ἐπιγονῆς is given by the editor, p. 98, note to l. 14f., with the relevant bibliography; see further the appendix below. The parallel with the legal situation of mother and son in our document would a priori suggest that Γαργαρίσσα may also function as a fictive ethnic denomination with a legal connotation. This seems hardly credible, however: the editor notes that this ethnic is not so far attested in Egypt, while debtors are legion in our documents. If, then, Γαργαρίσσα is Plousia's usual ethnic denomination towards the Ptolemaic administration, we must admit that Jewish civilians would use a different ethnic denomination, corresponding to their 'real' (?) ethnic identity, and not their otherwise accepted status denomination, when dealing with authorities of the Jewish *politeuma*. It is impossible to say whether Plousia's son could also bear the same ethnic label as his mother and be a Γάργαρος, alongside with a Ἰουδαῖος and a Πέρσης τῆς ἐπιγονῆς. There are numerous instances of sons who bear different ethnic designations from their fathers' in Ptolemaic documents, as there are many cases of individuals who change their ethnic designation in the course of their lives.¹⁶ One may note that the case seems to be different in military circles, as pap. no. 5 suggests: there the petitioner retains his military ethnicon, Μακεδών. In any case, we seem to have here

¹⁴ Josephus, *AJ* 12.147-149. See G.M. Cohen, *The Seleucid Colonies. Studies in Founding, Administration and Organization*, *Historia Einzelschriften* 30 (Stuttgart 1978), 6-9, with previous bibliography. Ph. Gauthier, *Nouvelles inscriptions de Sardes II*, *Centre de recherche d'histoire et de philologie de la IV^e section de l'EPHE III, hautes études du monde gréco-romain* 15 (Geneva/Paris 1989), 41f., argues in favour of this letter's authenticity.

¹⁵ C. La'da, 'Ethnicity, occupation and tax-status in Ptolemaic Egypt', *Acta Demotica. Acts of Fifth International Conference for Demotists, Pisa, September 1993* (Pisa 1994), 183-9, esp. 183.

¹⁶ See C. La'da (n. 15), 187. A case of multiple ethnic denominations is Dionysios, son of Kephalas, who calls himself in turn Persian, Macedonian and Greek (*Wynn* in Demotic), while he calls his brother a Libyan. See *P.Lugd.Bat.* 22 = *P.Dion.* (117/6-104 BCE).

an instance of changing use of ethnic denomination outside military circles, where pseudo-ethnic military denominations, such as *Makedon* and *Hellen*, are already known.

The case just mentioned of a Μακεδών petitioning the *archontes* of the *politeuma* of the Jews (no. 5) seems to be an interesting confirmation not so much of the pseudo-ethnic use of *Makedon* at this date (a fact already well established¹⁷), but of the presence of Jews among 'Macedonian' troops. This new case gives new weight to evidence already known: an Alexandros called Μακεδών in a document from Alexandria in Augustan times is the brother of one Theodoros who deposited his will in τὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἀρχεῖον (*CPJ* II, 142 and 143);¹⁸ Flavius Josephus compares the status of Jews in Alexandria to that of Macedonians (*Against Apion* 2.35-6). *CPJ* I, 30 is also worth recalling: in this papyrus Ἰουδαῖοι and Μακεδόνες are listed together, in what seems to be a military context.

Jewish marriages

Jewish law of marriage. Papyrus no. 4 is a complaint about the breaking of a marriage engagement which was made without the man engaged providing a letter of repudiation. This papyrus undoubtedly provides important evidence for the history of Jewish law and the praxis of marriage and divorce in Jewish circles. This elicits a rather long commentary by the editors, in the general introduction (p. 29), in the introduction to the text itself, and in the notes by J. Cowey. C. provides a detailed review of the documentary and literary material providing evidence for the practice of marriage law in Jewish circles in order to assess the place of this new document in its overall evolution. Material ranging from Elephantine to the Talmud is examined, with a discussion of all relevant previously known documents stemming from Hellenistic Egypt.

The discrepancy in the conversion of the date between the text edition (January 2, 134 BCE) and the note *ad loc.*, p. 62 (January 12) is an unfortunate typographical error. More disturbing is the fact that C. dismisses out of hand the possibility that the bride was not Jewish and that we may have here a case of intermarriage. Neither the bride's ethnic, nor her father's, is given in the document, a fact rather unusual in the archive, if they were Jewish. In their discussion of the few exceptions to the mentioning of the ethnic or ἰδιὰ (place of residence) of both plaintiffs and opponents in their general introduction, C. and M. assume that the bride was Jewish because of the 'context' (p. 11, n. 42: 'doch geht dies aus dem Kontext hervor'; see also pp. 58f.). They apparently take for granted that in cases of intermarriage Greek law would prevail. However, it seems no less plausible that the law of the groom would prevail, especially when the latter enjoyed a probably privileged social position as a member of a military *politeuma*. In our case, this would mean Jewish law. It could be argued that the behaviour of the bride's father, who broke the engagement without waiting for the groom to give his bride a letter of repudiation as required by Jewish law, would be perfectly understandable if the father was not used to following Jewish law himself. In favour of the bride's Jewish ethnic identity, however, it may be said that by the second century BCE mercenary

¹⁷ On Macedonian as a pseudo-ethnic, see M. Launey (n. 2) I, 325-31.

¹⁸ On this document see V. Tcherikover, 'Prolegomena' to *CPJ* I, 14; P.M. Fraser (n. 9) I, 53.

settlers were usually accompanied by their families.¹⁹ That Jewish women were available for marriage inside the local Jewish settlement of Heracleopolis is therefore more than plausible. However, the present case should be regarded as more uncertain than the editors consider it.

Intermarriage? A further possible case of intermarriage is provided by pap. no. 5. The cavalryman who introduces himself as Μακεδών is engaged to a woman with a Greek name. The bride's mother has an Egyptian name. In the milieu of the Heracleopolis *politeuma* this Egyptian name would call for attention. The people involved in this petition, however, do not belong to it and probably live outside Heracleopolis. Thus, a Jewish ethnic identity is possible for the bride's family, although it is by no means to be taken for granted. The name of the man who sold a house to the bride's mother, Philagros, does not provide any clue to the Jewish background of the bride's family, contrary to what is argued, p. 78. This name may be rare in Egypt and it may be found on the inscription SB V 8066 (recently republished by É. Bernand as *I. Hermoupolis* 6), but these facts hardly warrant our regarding it as a Greek equivalent for a Jewish name. SB V 8066 is one of the two Idumaeen stelae from Hermopolis, which do not contain any Jewish name at all. The editor has confused 'Semitic' (in this case, Idumaeen and Arabic) with 'Jewish' names.

The most striking aspects of the new documents bear on the inner life of these Jews making appeals to the *archontes* of the *politeuma*. These aspects are gathered up and discussed by the editors in Chapter 5 of their introduction, 'The issue of Assimilation and Hellenization of the Jews in Heracleopolis', pp. 23-9. Some of the new data provided by the new documents are indeed amazing, such as the testimony for a specific Jewish legal praxis revealed by pap. no. 4. For all this, specific Jewish features may be less numerous than the editors would have it in this chapter. The rest of this review will be dedicated to a re-examination of some of the comments of the editors which, in my view, grant excessive 'Jewish particularity' to these documents.

The vocabulary of the LXX. No. 4 offers documentary confirmation of a phrase used in the LXX to describe a deed of divorce, βυβλίον (*sic*, with the regular spelling in use in Ptolemaic Egypt) ἀποστασίου: see pp. 57f., as well as p. 69, note to ll. 23-24. This one instance, indeed sensational, prompted the editors to multiply beyond reasonable measure the instances of the use of specific LXX nomenclature in the documents. The most extreme example is their commentary on the use of ξενιτεία in no. 9, l. 30 (p. 108, note to l. 29f.). After pointing out that this word has so far been known only in papyri of the Byzantine era, the editors turn to 'instances from the Jewish realm', the *Letter of Aristeeas*, the LXX and Philo. One wonders what justifies this selection among all possible Hellenistic literary sources, under such a title. It is a fact that Jewish works are greatly over-represented in the corpus of surviving works of Alexandrian prose literature. The reasons for these over-representations are well-known: while Hellenistic prose style ceased to be copied after the dramatic change in literary taste which evolved in the first century BCE made Hellenistic works worthless as models to be imitated, Jewish

¹⁹ See for instance Flavius Josephus, *AJ* 12.148-149, already referred to, for Jewish settlers in Asia Minor. Aristophanes of Byzantium was the son of a mercenary who immigrated to Egypt with his family. See P.M. Fraser (n. 9), I, 307f. and 459-61.

texts survived because Christians were interested in their content, regardless of their style. In such conditions, that one rare word may be found in Jewish texts rather than in the scarce and fragmentary scraps of Alexandrian (non-Jewish) Greek prose is not to be considered surprising. There is still a long way to go before we can take such instances as supporting the existence of a Judaeo-Greek dialect, despite the strong, if for all that implicit, suggestion of the editors of *P.Colon.* XXIX. It may be worth recalling that the existence of a Judaeo-Greek dialect, once supported by Septuagint scholars, has become less and less plausible as our knowledge of the language of Ptolemaic papyri progresses.²⁰ On the contrary, this and the further instances of parallel use between the new papyri and the LXX pointed out by the editors only prove further that the LXX genuinely reflects Ptolemaic *koine*. This is true, undoubtedly, of the word ἀλλόφυλοι (p. 38, note to no. 1, l. 18).

More delicate is the problem raised by the editors' discussion of the terms ἀρχων, κριτής and πρεσβύτεροι, pp. 15 and 138. C. and M. state that both ἀρχων and κριτής, on the one hand, and πρεσβύτεροι and κριτής, on the other, are used in interchangeable manner in the documents. According to them, this language practice reflects the practice of the LXX, where they are used interchangeably to translate the wide-ranging semantic field of the Hebrew word *šofet*. However, this elaborate observation is made in the introduction immediately after the editors explain at some length that, in the second century BCE, the technical nomenclature of the Greek judicial courts, κρίνειν, κριτήριο, κριτής (this very word *is* in their list, p. 13!), etc., could be used in a loose manner in the context of administrative procedure, which provides parallels to the powers of the *archontes* of the *politeuma* (pp. 13f.). One wonders why the well-documented and well-argued discussion, pp. 13-4, about the extension of legal and judicial

²⁰ On the issue of a 'Jewish Greek' language, see now K.H. Jobes and M. Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids, Michigan 2000), 259-63, esp. 262f.; N. Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context* (Leiden 2000), 7-17. We may restate Jobes-Silva's conclusion, 262f.: 'Most scholars today agree with [John] Lee's conclusion that "the bulk of the Pentateuch vocabulary is the same as that of contemporary Greek". This means that the LXX Pentateuch provides no lexical evidence for a distinctive Jewish-Greek dialect. Any perceived influence of Hebrew on the Greek of the Pentateuch derives from the Hebrew exemplar from which the translation was made, and not from a Hebraized dialect of Greek in use among the Jewish people of the Diaspora'. Lee's quotation is taken from J.A.L. Lee, *A Lexical Study of the Septuagint Version of the Pentateuch* (Chico, Calif. 1983), 146. A similar conclusion is to be found in G. Horrocks, *Greek: A History of the Language and Its Speakers* (London 1997), 57. A somewhat more cautious conclusion, however, is articulated by C. Rabin in his paper 'The Translation Process and the Character of the Septuagint', *Textus* 6 (1968), 1-26, p. 25: 'the facts, as we have tried to explain them above, do not necessitate the assumption of a specific Judaeo-Greek, but of course they do not militate against such an assumption either; they simply have no direct bearing on that matter, any more than Philo's excellent Greek is a cogent proof that he could not at home and with his friends have spoken the quaintest Judaeo-Greek imaginable. As is well known, Goethe spoke in daily life his native Frankfurt dialect'. I owe most of these references to A. Pietersma, 'A New Paradigm for Addressing Old Questions: The Relevance of the Interlinear Model for the Study of the Septuagint', unpublished paper. A pdf version of this paper is available at the URL '<http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/~pietersm/>' section 'New Paradigm'. For the issue of Jewish-Greek, see this paper, 5, and 13-15.

nomenclature from the Greek *kriteria* to the procedure of officials is forgotten one page later, to make way for a semantic explanation relying on specific LXX vocabulary to account for the non-standard use of the word κριτής to refer to officials, ἄρχοντες or πρεσβύτεροι. If the administrative procedure led by *archontes* and *presbyteroi* can be loosely called *kriterion*, why should we be surprised that the *archontes* and *presbyteroi* themselves could be called *kritai*? The editors are sometimes inclined to transform into unique occurrences what may just be first occurrences — and not even always that.

The same applies to the commentary on no. 7, both in the general introduction (p. 26) and in the introduction to the document (p. 86). In this document the petitioner explains that his brother-in-law has handed over his daughter to him, in return for his entertaining both the father and the daughter during the father's illness. The daughter, apparently a young child, is explicitly called κοράσιον, 'slave', in the decision of the *archontes* (l. 37). It is suggested by the editors that giving over a child to pay off a debt reflects a Jewish practice. However, they refer, in a footnote *ad loc.*, to various studies dedicated to a papyrus stemming from Alexandria in Augustan times documenting the giving over of an infant child by a Jewish couple to their creditor (p. 86, n. 2). A. Passoni dell'Acqua, whose two studies on this document are referred to, reached conclusions exactly opposite to those of the editors of our document: according to her, this Alexandrian papyrus gives evidence of an Egyptian influence on a Jewish Alexandrian family. Further studies on which Passoni dell'Acqua herself relies weaken the claim that the papyrus no. 7 from the Heracleopolis archive may reflect specific Jewish practice. In her discussion of slavery for debt in Ptolemaic Egypt, I. Biezunska-Malowist showed that the Ptolemies strove to prohibit enslavement for private debts, but there is enough evidence to support the conclusion that this policy failed.²¹ In view of all this, further arguments would be needed to support the editors' view that the practice reflected in no. 7 is specifically Jewish.

The phrases πάτριος νόμος, ὄρκος πάτριος, ἐπιστολή ὄρκου πατρίου occur several times in the papyri. The references for the latter two are gathered and discussed on p. 26. There the editors point out that 'the custom of writing a contract under oath is exceptional in Ptolemaic Egypt, since at this time Greeks did not resort to oaths in private legal practice'. This may perhaps be accepted as one specific practice. However, the phrase ὄρκος πάτριος itself has some parallels in Ptolemaic Egypt, as we are reminded on p. 123, note to l. 10.

It should be pointed out further that the oath is most certainly said to be πάτριος in reference to the divinity by whom the Jews swore. Its specificity stops with this — in the religious dimension. For the rest, both references to a 'letter of the ancestral oath', in nos. 9, ll. 7-8 and 12, l. 10, are mentioned in connection with debts owned by one Jew to another. These debts between Jews are to be paid off with an interest rate of 24-25%, that is, the rate commonly used in Ptolemaic Egypt at that time. On this rate, see the commentary to no. 8, p. 99, note to l. 16. In spite of the fact that every detail of this document points to regular Ptolemaic practice, the editor strives to find a Jewish peculiarity in the leniency displayed by the *archontes* towards the debtor, and in their new

²¹ I. Biezunska-Malowist, *L'Esclavage dans l'Égypte gréco-romaine I* (Warsaw 1974), 29-50, esp. 39f., 42f., 49f. See also J. Modrzejewski, 'Servitude pour dettes ou legs de créance (note sur CPJud. 126)', *Recherches de papyrologie* 2 (1962), 75-98.

staggering of the dates when payments fall due (p. 95). This is rather curious. If Jewish law were relevant here, we should not expect the interest rate to be the one commonly applied in Egypt. Leniency towards the debtor should probably be seen as a matter of mere common sense and pragmatism. In no. 9, the failure to pay off the debt and its interest is considered by the petitioner, Berenike, as an infringement of the ancestral law (πα[ρ]αβ[ε]βηκότος τὴν πάτριον νόμον, ll. 28-9). The context makes quite clear that Berenike did not understand this phrase in the same way as modern scholars customarily would, that is, as *Halakhah*. In her mind, non-observance of the contractual clauses as sworn by the oath was enough to be considered an infringement of Jewish laws. Even if we allow for some probable dramatization of the situation on her part, we are far from what would be called 'Jewish law' in rabbinic texts.

This is not to deny that the publication of the documents from the archive of the Jewish *politeuma* in Heracleopolis will oblige us to re-think in a more subtle way the complex relation between Hellenization and fidelity to 'ancestral law' among the Jews of Ptolemaic Egypt. One possible starting point out of the present deadlock could be the kind of analysis already carried out on legal features of the LXX by Elias Bickerman. Back in 1956 Bickerman pointed out that the LXX occasionally adapted biblical law to Ptolemaic praxis. This track probably needs to be explored further.²²

For now, however, the commentary provided by the editors in their introduction is rather conservative in this sense. The tone is given right at the outset, in Chapter 1 of their introduction, dealing with 'The Historical Background' (pp. 3f.). There C. and M. list the political events in Judaea which prompted successive waves of Jewish immigration to Egypt. The context of the Maccabean revolt is depicted as the revolt of a 'national party' ('nationale Partei') fighting for 'the recovering of religious freedom' ('nach Wiedererlangung der Religionsfreiheit') against a 'pro-Greek party' ('griechenfreundliche Partei') (p. 3). Such a presentation, and indeed such vocabulary, does not take into account recent research on this period. In the editors' defence it should perhaps be noted that such vocabulary is still more common in German-speaking historiography on the classical world than in the English-speaking world.²³

The main issue at stake, in the various topics just discussed, is the editors' recurrent inclination, in their introduction, to isolate the case of the Jews from their Ptolemaic environment. They rather systematically dismiss non-Jewish material as a basis for comparison for their documents, while recent studies on Jewish history in the Graeco-Roman world, which are duly quoted in the footnotes of C.-M.'s introduction, emphasize the need to adopt the very opposite attitude.²⁴ The most serious consequence of this trend in the editors' analysis of the documents bears on their interpretation of the nature of the *politeuma*. This issue is dealt with in chapter 2 of their introduction, dedicated to 'Jewish *Politeumata* in Egypt' (pp. 4-9). It has already been noted above that the editors do not provide any explicit reason as to why they judge it irrelevant to

²² E. Bickerman, 'Two Legal Interpretations of the Septuagint', *Revue internationale des droits de l'antiquité* 3/3 (1956), 81-104.

²³ See for instance the difference in perspective and therefore in vocabulary between German-speaking and French-speaking studies on the topic of native revolts in Ptolemaic Egypt. A review of the relevant bibliography is given by W. Peremans (n. 7).

²⁴ M. Goodman (n. 12).

discuss anew the whole dossier of the *politeumata* in Egypt, whether Jewish or not. The evidence for non-Jewish *politeumata* is recalled only in the form of a list of sources (p. 6f.). More serious use of this material would have provided substantial support for the hypothesis, articulated very cautiously by the editors, that the Jewish *politeuma* from Heracleopolis had military connections.

This failure to categorize the material around a distinction between documents of the Ptolemaic and Roman eras, instead of distinguishing between Jewish and non-Jewish material, leads to a questionable definition of the *politeuma*, p. 7: 'cultic associations of more or less close-knitted ethnic groups of soldiers, or civilians, or civilians and soldiers, or even of groups of soldiers without united ethnic background'. As C. Zuckerman has shown in his study on *politeumata* quoted by the editors,²⁵ all the *politeumata* of the Ptolemaic period for which we have evidence have military connections. It is only in the Roman period that the *politeumata* lost their links with the army and became purely cultic associations, whether corresponding to homogeneous ethnic groups or not. Several authors have further emphasized that some cases clearly show that the ethno-religious community was divided into members of the *politeuma* and an external group. The clearest example is that of the Idumaeans in Memphis, as has been shown by D.J. Thompson Crawford. This author even argues that the organization of this Idumaeen *politeuma* reminds one of the division between military *hayla* and civilian *qeryah* which is documented in the units of Semitic mercenaries active in Achaemenid Egypt in Syene, Elephantine and Memphis. This division of the community is observable also among the Jewish community of Berenike, in Cyrenaica, under Roman rule.²⁶

There is nothing in the archive from Heracleopolis to undermine these conclusions. On the contrary, the new evidence invites us to see the Jewish *politeuma* in Alexandria in the same perspective — but the analysis of this issue would go far beyond the limits of this review. The new evidence makes the existence of a Jewish *politeuma* in Alexandria in (late Ptolemaic and) Roman times indisputable. That this has 'bearings on the discussion of the issue of the status of the Alexandrian Jews in Roman times', as claimed p. 8, is much less certain, if by this the editors mean to return to the old definition of the *politeuma* which saw it as a pattern providing the Jews with complete internal autonomy. There is as yet nothing in the new evidence to support the claim, p. 9, that the term ἵση πολιτεία which appears in the text of Claudius' edict quoted by Josephus (*AJ* 19.281-5) refers to the *politeia* of the *politeuma*, and that the latter was

²⁵ C. Zuckerman, 'Hellenistic *politeumata* and the Jews. A Reconsideration', *SCI* 8-9 (1985-88), 171-85. This author relies heavily on the previous analysis of the Ptolemaic documents by M. Launey (n. 2), 1066-77. Launey's analysis of the Idumaeen *politeuma* in Memphis is now superseded by D.J. Thompson Crawford's study of it, 'The Idumaeans of Memphis and the Ptolemaic *Politeumata*', *Atti del XVII^o Congr. Int. di Papirologia* (Naples 1984), 1069-75.

²⁶ The sources are given by the editors. See C. Zuckerman, 175f., and 179f. On the twofold organizational structure of the Idumaeans in Memphis, see J. Bingen, *REG* 109 (1996), 657 on G. Lüderitz' interpretation (n. 2), and *CE* 69 (1994), 157f. on A. Bernard's republication of the inscription as *I. Prose* 25. J. Bingen restates D.J. Thompson Crawford's reading of the inscriptions (n. 25).

offered equal status with the civic *politeia* of the Alexandrians. That *isopoliteia* was granted through *politographia* (inscription on a list of names of beneficiaries) by cities to groups of soldiers who had saved the city in hard times is a phenomenon well-documented throughout the Hellenistic world.²⁷ As a collective grant, however, *isopoliteia* was only a potential right, which could be implemented solely on an individual basis. Concretely, the soldiers were offered the possibility, if they so wished, to settle in the city and ask for citizenship. Those who chose to do so would undergo the regular process of enfranchisement, which involved enrollment in one of the civic demes and tribes.²⁸ Nothing supports the view that the *isopoliteia* referred to in the edict of Claudius, if Josephus gives us the genuine text of it, aimed at the *politeuma*. It seems to aim, on the contrary, at Jews asking for Alexandrian enfranchisement, as parallel sources prove.²⁹ The text of the edict may be genuine; the context in which Josephus used this text is not. Such a manipulation of quotations was quite common in antiquity, and should not surprise us in Josephus.

If we keep to the definition of the *politeuma* in *Ptolemaic Egypt* as a cultic organization of soldiers, it becomes possible to offer a different assessment of the status of the Jews organized in *politeumata* at this time. The Jews who belonged to the *politeuma* in Heracleopolis formed a military settlement, probably including soldiers and wives. Whether wives and children were formally members of the *politeuma* or only members of the local Jewish community cannot be decided, but parallel material from other *politeumata* as well as the evidence from the Heracleopolis archive itself suggest that they were not. As military settlers the members of the *politeuma* were well organized. Their leaders could fulfill administrative functions, a fact attested also in the case of the *politeuma* of the Cretans (*P. Tebt.* I, 32).³⁰ The Heracleopolis archive proves that their powers were similar to those of Ptolemaic officials, as convincingly argued by C. and M., pp. 11-17. That the Jews, and perhaps other ethnic groups, took advantage of their being organized as a *politeuma* and enjoying relative administrative autonomy as a *military group* in order to turn the institutions of the *politeuma* into judicial instances using their specific 'ancestral law', would be only too natural an evolution.

V. Tcherikover, followed in this by other scholars, depicted the *politeuma* as a pattern of autonomy that the Jews would have looked for. He conceived of the willingness of the Jews to enjoy a legal pattern enabling them to abide by their own laws as a highly self-conscious and self-reflective process. It seems to me that the new documents from Heracleopolis prove just the opposite. Ethnic particularism among these Jews does not seem to go beyond religious belief (see the 'ancestral oath'), cultic praxis³¹ and marriage customs. All in all, the realm of *πάτριος νόμος* followed by the Jews in Heracleopolis may not go *much* beyond the realm of *πάτριος νόμος* of the Idumaeans in

²⁷ See P.M. Fraser (n. 9) II, 135 n. 115.

²⁸ On the nature of *isopoliteia*, see Ph. Gauthier, *Les cités grecques et leurs bienfaiteurs*, BCH Suppl. XII) (Paris 1985), 164-9.

²⁹ See P.M. Fraser (n. 9) I, 50f.

³⁰ See M. Launey (n. 2) II, 1068-72, followed by C. Zuckerman (n. 25), 176.

³¹ As this can be assumed from all other parallel instances of Ptolemaic *politeumata*: see M. Launey (n. 2) II, 1064-84; P.M. Fraser, 'Inscriptions from Ptolemaic Egypt', *Berytus* 13 (1960), 151f.

Memphis: the phrase appears in an honorific decree voted by the gathering of the Idumaeans of the *politeuma* and of the city, where it refers to religious rites.³² Whatever the case, it seems reasonable to think that the development of Jewish institutions in Heracleopolis was a *consequence* of their being a military settlement organized as a *politeuma*. The opposite interpretation, that the Jews were eager to enjoy a specific organization likely to provide them with protection for their ancestral law and therefore asked for the grant of a *politeuma* from the start, sounds much less plausible. As a matter of fact, two recent studies by W. Clarysse have emphasized the fact that a Greek ethnic group, Cyrenaeans in the Oxyrhynchite nome, maintained a separate life which made possible the preservation of specific identities outside any formal organizational structure.³³ The *politeuma* in the classical definition given to it by V. Tcherikover was *not* a prerequisite for any ethnic group, Jews or others, to maintain their own traditions in the foreign land of Egypt.

One further item is worth considering before concluding the discussion of Hellenization: that of onomastics (pp. 30-2). It is usually taken for granted that the use of Greek names reflects a high degree of 'Hellenization' — by which term 'assimilation' into the surrounding culture is usually meant — and a much looser practice, if not the complete abandonment, of 'ancestral law'. On the other hand, the preservation of Hebrew names is usually held to be a token of (religious) 'conservatism'. This twofold assumption is proved wrong by the new documents. As the lists gathered by the editors, pp. 31f., show, an overwhelming proportion of Jews, both in Heracleopolis and in the neighbouring villages in which the Jewish settlement was important enough to allow for the appointment of local *presbyteroi*, bore Greek names. Only two Hebrew names are recorded throughout the whole archive. However, these Jews bearing Greek names were highly conscious of their religious and ethnic identity, and were eager to keep to their *πάτριος νόμος*.³⁴

What did these Jews have in mind when invoking their *πάτριος νόμος*? Probably something much less clearly defined than modern scholars, readers of the Mishnah and Talmud, would like them to. As long as the faith in the God of the Jews (see the oath) was respected, as long as some specific customs directly bearing on family life (law of marriage) were carried on, an unconscious process of progressive assimilation into local legal practices could be set in motion. Thus, the petitioners applying to the *archontes* of the *politeuma* could practice Hellenistic law, in matters such as money-lending, and at the same time invoke the *πάτριος νόμος* in perfectly good faith (allowing, perhaps, for

³² *SB V*, 8928, l. 15.

³³ W. Clarysse, 'Ethnic Diversity and Dialect among the Greeks of Hellenistic Egypt', in A.M.F.W. Verhoogt and S.P. Vleeming (eds.) *The Two Faces of Graeco-Roman Egypt. Greek and Demotic and Greek-Demotic Texts and Studies Presented to P.W. Pestman (P.Lugd.Bat. XXX)* (Leiden 1998), 1-13, with interesting comments on the case of Jews, p. 2. See also idem, 'Greeks in Ptolemaic Thebes', in S.P. Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes. Acts of a Colloquium on Thebes and the Theban area in the Graeco-Roman Period* (Leiden 1995), 1-19.

³⁴ Compare the situation of the Idumaeen settlers in Memphis: D.J. Thompson, *Memphis under the Ptolemies* (Princeton 1988), 100, emphasized their 'speedy Hellenization' on the basis of their practice of name-giving.

some dramatization). The documents from Heracleopolis definitely invite us to rethink the relation between 'Hellenization' and 'fidelity to tradition'. However, this process seems to have been much more flexible and spontaneous, much less self-reflective, than the presentation of the editors of *P.Colon. XXIX* invites us to believe.

The editors of the archive of the Jewish *politeuma* in Heracleopolis are not entirely to blame for their conservative presentation of Jewish material. One guesses that they were quite rightly excited by the amazing data provided by their documents, and were carried along with it. Furthermore, the bibliography on the topic of Jewish history in the Graeco-Roman world is not only huge but full of highly contrasting views. The editors, whose main field of training is *not* Jewish studies, had no difficulty finding worthy scholars to rely on for the views they put forward in their general introduction. We must be thankful to them for finally making the documents publicly available. Their edition provides a most valuable philological work. Their comments, insofar as they concern the realm of Ptolemaic society with which they are naturally more familiar, are thoroughly worked out and very carefully argued, and will serve as a basis for any further investigation of these documents.

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Appendix*

Persēs tēs epigonēs: in their commentary, p. 98, the editors rely on H.-A. Rupprecht, *Untersuchungen*, p. 19, to claim that Πέρσης τῆς ἐπιγονῆς functions as a status designation referring to debtors as early as 172 BCE. Rupprecht, however, does not say that *Persēs tēs epigonēs* became fictive as early as 172, but only that after this date *Persēs* is the only ethnic label to be associated with the phrase *tēs epigonēs*, while in earlier documents *tēs epigonēs* is found in association with many other ethnic labels (Makedones, Kretai, etc): 'Im Jahre 172 a.C. erscheint zum letztenmal ein Nicht-perses tes epigones. In der Folgezeit werden nur noch *Persai tes epigones* genannt, soweit eine Herkunftsbezeichnung gebraucht wird'. To assume that the status designation *Persēs tēs epigonēs* had acquired its legal meaning as early as 172 is an *argumentum e silentio*. The earliest positive evidence for the fictive use of this status designation known thus far was *P.Dion.* 30, 3-4, as recorded in *P.Polit.Iud.*, p. 99. In other words, *P.Polit.Iud.* 8 now provides the earliest evidence, and will oblige scholars to shift their discussion of this legal institution thirty years earlier than has been the case thus far.

* Composed by Uri Yiftach.