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Richard Fenn

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This study demonstrates how fruitful the relationship between the social sciences and biblical studies can be if sociological method is imaginatively applied to an account of Palestinian society during the first century. It seeks to show how a sociologist, in examining Josephus' account of the struggle for succession within the Herodian household, would set about asking certain questions about Palestinian society as a whole. The author identifies a succession-crisis that affects every level of Palestinian society, which leads him to ask how that crisis may threaten Israel's capacity to reproduce itself from one generation to the next. As an introduction to the peculiar *craft* of sociology, this book will be of great interest to students of antiquity and of the New Testament.

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# THE DEATH OF HEROD

*An essay in the sociology of religion*

RICHARD FENN

*Professor of Christianity and Society,*

*Princeton Theological Seminary*



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*To Eugene Schneider*

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It is always a sensitive and sometimes a risky enterprise for a sociologist to discuss an area of interest which is not primarily in his or her field, but James Charlesworth at Princeton Theological Seminary has opened the way for me to begin this inquiry and has been a very helpful and resourceful colleague. I am also grateful for the friendship and encouragement I have received from Pat Miller, Clarice Martin, James Moorhead, Thomas Long, and Donald Capps: all colleagues at the Seminary. Jerry Gorham has provided unstinting and excellent secretarial support.

This book is dedicated to Eugene Schneider, my first teacher in sociology. He mediated the field of sociology through the mind and soul of a humanist filled with criticism and wonder.

Readers may note that all but a few of the quotations are from the Loeb Classical Library edition of Josephus. On occasion, where I have been making use of Cornfeld's work on Josephus' *Jewish War*, I have used his translation as well as his commentary. A few words or phrases from Josephus remain without citation; these are from the Whiston edition noted in the references.