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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Jews arose against Rome in the last years of Trajan (115–17), and again in the later years of his successor, Hadrian (132–5). When Trajan was leading Roman forces against Parthia, Jewish rebellion broke out in Cyrenaica, Egypt, Cyprus and Mesopotamia, and Judaea also was disturbed. Under Hadrian, Simeon bar Kosiba, nicknamed in Aramaic bar Kokhba, ‘son of the star’, ruled in Judaea as ‘prince of Israel’, *nesi’ yisra’el*, to quote the Hebrew phrase from his coins and the documents of his era; he was hailed as the ‘star’ foretold in Balaam’s prophecy ‘a star shall come forth out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel’ (Num. 24:17).¹ Reaction to his failure emerges when in rabbinic texts his name in the form Koziba is interpreted, through Hebrew and Aramaic *kzb*, ‘to lie’, as ‘liar’.²

The Hebrew catchwords ‘liberty’ and ‘redemption’ current under Simeon’s rule were continued, as coins and documents show, from the great Judaeen rising which had begun over sixty years before, under Nero in 66, and had issued in the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70.³ Probably the same slogans had been remembered, in Greek as

¹ His full name with the title is attested for example in the Hebrew lease P. Mur. 24, bought by R. de Vaux in 1951 and edited with commentary by J. T. Milik; see P. Benoit, J. T. Milik and R. de Vaux (eds.), *Les Grottes de Murabba’at* (DJD ii, Oxford, 1961), 4, 122–34. The vocalization Kosiba was first clearly indicated by the Greek text P. Yadin 59, line 2 (letter from Annanos to Jonathan), with the words ‘Simon son of Kosiba wrote again . . .’; see B. Lifschitz, ‘Papyrus grecs du désert de Juda’, *Aegyptus* xlii (1962), 240–56 (248–51); H. M. Cotton in Y. Yadin, J. C. Greenfield, A. Yardeni, and B. A. Levine, *The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters: Hebrew, Aramaic and Nabataean-Aramaic Papyri* (Judean Desert Studies 3, Jerusalem, 2002), 363–6.

² Lam. R. ii 4, on Lam. 2:2 ‘The Lord hath swallowed up all the habitations of Jacob’, discussed by P. Schäfer, ‘Bar Kokhba and the Rabbis’, in Schäfer (ed.), *The Bar Kokhba War Reconsidered* (TSAJ 100, Tübingen, 2003), 1–22 (3).

³ On these catchwords see C. Roth, ‘The Historical Implications of the Jewish Coinage of the First Revolt’, *IEJ* xii (1962), 33–46; M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten* (3rd edn, rev. and amplified, ed. R. Deines and C.-J. Thornton; WUNT 283, Tübingen, 2011), 115–27; Hengel, *The Zealots* (English translation of *Die Zeloten* [Leiden, 1961, 2nd edn 1976], Edinburgh, 1989), 110–22; S. Vollenweider, *Freiheit als neue Schoepfung. Eine Untersuchung zur Eleutheria bei Paulus und in seiner Umwelt* (FRLANT 147, Goettingen, 1989), 138–45; M. Goodman, ‘Coinage and Identity: the Jewish Evidence’, in C. Howgego, V. Heuchert, and A. Burnett (eds.), *Coinage and Identity in the Roman Provinces*

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well as Hebrew or Aramaic, in the upheaval under Trajan. ‘Redemption’ (*ge’ullah*) in this context is outward and political as well as inward and spiritual liberation.

The active resistance represented by these three risings together, over the years 66–135, shares the contemporary emphasis on liberty found among Greeks in the eastern Roman provinces, sharpened perhaps by Vespasian’s withdrawal from Achaëa of the freedom conferred by Nero; but Jewish revolt can be contrasted with a relative Greek acquiescence in Roman government overall.⁴ Disturbances did occur, however, in Greek cities, including alarms over ‘false Neros’ in Asia Minor under the Flavians, and under Antoninus Pius what could be called ‘rebellion’ in Achaëa; in Alexandria hostility to Rome expressed in rioting and vilification continued from the time of Caligula into the second century and beyond.⁵ The three Jewish risings from Nero to Hadrian and Pius stand out then for their sustained resistance to Roman forces, but they belong to a setting in the eastern provinces in which Roman peace was by no means unruffled.

In this book the two later Jewish risings, only fourteen years apart, are viewed together. Modern study has often treated them singly, thus steering clear of unwarranted generalization and noting that distinctive character of Jewish life in Judaea which the Zionist movement helped to put in the foreground. The two risings are indeed linked mainly with different parts of the Jewish population, in the diaspora and in Judaea, respectively, and it can be argued that the Trajanic disturbances in Cyrene, Egypt and Cyprus were first of all directed against gentile neighbours rather than Rome. The lion’s share of attention has gone accordingly to Bar Kokhba’s war, which broke out in Judaea, is clearly anti-Roman, and has potential

(Oxford, 2005), 163–6; D. Goodblatt, *Elements of Ancient Jewish Nationalism* (Cambridge, 2006), 123–39, 167–203; my ‘Liberty in the Coin-Legends of the Jewish Revolts’, in J. K. Aitken, K. J. Dell and B. A. Mastin (eds.), *On Stone and Scroll* (BZAW 420, Berlin, 2011), 139–52.

⁴ Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* v 41 (Apollonius of Tyana rebukes Vespasian for enslaving the Greeks); the Jewish-Greek contrast is strongly drawn by F. Millar, ‘Rome in Greek Culture: Cassius Dio and Ulpian’, in L. Troiani and G. Zecchini (eds.), *La cultura storica nei due primi secoli dell’impero romano* (Centro ricerche e documentazione sull’antichità classica, Monografie, 24; Rome, 2005), 17–40 (18–19), citing Josephus, *Ap.* i 42–4 (Jews are ready to suffer torture and death for their ancestral writings, but what Greek would do the same for his?). Greek readiness to die in defiance of Roman tyranny is stressed, however, in the Acts of the Alexandrians, discussed below; and P. Veyne, *L’empire gréco-romain* (Paris, 2005), 184, judges that Hellenic cultural identity was only equalled in tenacity by the religious identity of the Jews.

⁵ Veyne, *L’empire gréco-romain*, 211–12; B. Levick, *Vespasian* (London, 1999), 145; *Historia Augusta*, Antoninus Pius, v 5, ‘he also repressed rebellions (*rebelliones repressit*) in Achaëa and Egypt’; for more and less restricted interpretations of the Achaean event see B. Levick, ‘Greece and Asia Minor’, in A. K. Bowman, P. Garnsey and D. Rathbone (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History, Second Edition* xi, *The High Empire, AD 70–192* (Cambridge, 2000), 604–34 (632 n. 63); on Alexandrian anti-Roman feeling from Caligula onwards, P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (3 vols., Oxford, 1972), i, 797–800.

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as a precedent for the battles of modern Israel.⁶ Yet the links between Judaea and the diaspora, facilitated by the currency of both Aramaic and Greek in Judaea, make dissociation dubious; moreover, the Trajanic risings in the eastern Roman provinces were inevitably also a war against Roman inhabitants and Roman forces – a character which the Mesopotamian risings under Trajan had from the start.

Here then the two upheavals, the first at the time of Trajan's Parthian war and the second led by Bar Kokhba during Hadrian's principate, are treated together in one book. This method was followed by the founder of modern study of the two revolts, Friedrich Münter, in his monograph *Der jüdische Krieg unter den Kaisern Trajan und Hadrian* (Altona and Leipzig, 1821). More recently the need to consider the events under Trajan and Hadrian together was re-emphasized by a scholar who underlined the importance of both revolts, S. Applebaum, and was similarly recognized within a larger history of the Jews under Roman rule by E. M. Smallwood.⁷ Yet once again new finds and new studies have accumulated.

A fresh attempt at integrating these into a narrative account is made here, through discussion of sources against the background of earlier study.⁸ The successive phases of insurgence are described with Münter as 'war', following the example of ancient texts. Josephus had employed the Greek word *polemos*, 'war', for 'the war of the Jews against the Romans' which was quelled by Vespasian (Josephus, *B.J.* i 1), and it is already used of the later risings under Trajan and Hadrian by writers who were contemporary with the events, the Greek historian Appian of Alexandria and the Christian

⁶ For deliberate avoidance of treatment of the two uprisings as part of one resistance movement (with emphasis on the special character of Jewish life in Judaea) see G. Alon, *The Jews in Their Land in the Talmudic Age (70–640 CE)*, English translation ed. G. Levi, (2 vols., Jerusalem, 1980–4, repr. in one vol., Cambridge, MA, and London, 1989), 431; geographically governed dissociation of the two revolts can be seen again in the separate treatments of Judaeans and diaspora events, in this case in reverse chronological order, in S. Safrai, 'The Era of the Mishnah and the Talmud' in H. H. Ben-Sasson, *A History of the Jewish People* (Cambridge, MA, 1976), 330–5 (the 'war of Quietus' and Bar Kokhba), 370–2 (the diaspora revolt under Trajan); for the editor Ben-Sasson's relative openness to diaspora history, yet overriding sense of the centrality of the land for the historian, see M. Brenner, *Propheten des Vergangenen: Jüdische Geschichtsschreibung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 2006), 245–8. Mention of Bar Kokhba's revolt alone is exemplified in the brief discussion of signs of Jewish cultural persistence after Josephus in S. Weitzman, *Surviving Sacrilege: Cultural Persistence in Jewish Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 2005), 159.

⁷ S. Applebaum, 'Sociology and Strategy of Bar Kochba's War' [review of S. Yeivin, *Milhemet Bar Kokhba*], *JJS* i (1948–9), 118–22; E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule, from Pompey to Diocletian: a Study in Political Relations* (2nd edn, Leiden, 1981), 389–466.

⁸ By contrast, the sense that we should perhaps stay with the surviving texts, given the difficulties of getting behind the portrayals which they give, is reflected in Weitzman, *Surviving Sacrilege*, 3; difficulties are recognized together with an affirmation of attempts at suitably cautious reconstruction in Seth Schwartz, *Were the Jews a Mediterranean Society?* (Princeton, 2010), 175.

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philosopher Justin Martyr.⁹ At the end of the second century, Greek *polemos* is used likewise of all three revolts, in Hebrew transliteration, in the earliest document of rabbinic literature, the Mishnah: ‘the war of Vespasian . . . the war of Quietus [governor of Judaea under Trajan] . . . the last war’.¹⁰

As seen already, there are allusions to these wars in contemporary Greek pagan and Christian writers, and in rabbinic literature from the end of the second century onwards. The earliest surviving continuous accounts of Jewish war under Trajan and Hadrian come, however, from the Roman historian Cassius Dio in the early third century, and, independently, from the church historian Eusebius at the beginning of the fourth. Eusebius, like the Mishnah, relates the two revolts to one another and to the revolt of 66–70, but he views them as the seal of Jewish downfall and exile. Modern historical linkage of the two with one another and with the fall of Jerusalem in 70, as represented in this book, can therefore seem, despite the Mishnah, to perpetuate old Christian polemic.¹¹ Yet a continuum of Jewish unrest can be affirmed without polemical or apologetic nuance.

The two uprisings are, however, the only events of second-century Jewish history to be documented with some fulness in non-Jewish as well as Jewish sources, including narratives from historians in the ancient world. A second aim here, therefore, is at least to notice the broader context of these relatively well-attested events in the less well-documented second-century history of Jews and Christians.

⁹ Appian, *Historia Romana* xiv [= *Bella Civilia* ii] 90, 380, and frag. 19 (from book xxiv), both on events in Egypt; Justin Martyr, *I Apol.* xxxi 6 (‘the Jewish war which has just now happened’) and *Dial.* i 3 (‘the war which has just happened’), ix 3 (‘the war in Judaea’), all on Bar Kokhba’s rebellion; still in the second century, but not clearly contemporary with the revolts, Artemidorus, *Oneirocritica* iv 24 (Cyrene). The gravity of the word *polemos* is plain from its climactic use in Claudius’s letter to Alexandria (P. Lond. 1912, in *CPJ* ii, no. 153, p. 41, lines 73–4), on ‘anti-Jewish disturbance (*taraché*) and faction-fighting (*stasis*), or rather, if the truth must be spoken, war (*polemos*)’; on an interpretation of the sense as less grave, see Chapter 4, n. 60, below.

¹⁰ Mishnah, Sotah ix 14, following the text of the Cambridge manuscript Add. 470.1; some manuscripts and printed editions present a Hebrew text corresponding to ‘Titus’, but the less familiar name ‘Quietus’ gives a better sequence, parallel with the series ‘war of Vespasian . . . war of Quietus . . . war of ben Koziba’ in Seder Olam Rabbah (perhaps from the early third century), in A. Neubauer (ed.), *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles*, ii (Oxford, 1895), 66. For location of ‘the war of Quietus’ in Judaea see Chapter 4, below. For the revolts as wars compare also Sifre Deut. 322 ‘the war (*polemos*) in Judah’, i.e. the most recent war, that of Bar Kokhba, with L. Finkelstein (ed.), *Siphre ad Deuteronomium* (Berlin, 1939, repr. New York, 1969, with a new foreword), p. 372, against the rendering ‘a war . . .’ preferred by P. Schäfer, *Der Bar Kokhba-Aufstand* (TSAJ 1, Tübingen, 1981), 175–6 and n. 166; the Hebrew phrase is close to the Greek in Justin Martyr, *Dial.* ix 3, translated in the preceding note.

¹¹ This point is made by B. Isaac and A. Oppenheimer, ‘The Revolt of Bar Kokhba: Ideology and Modern Scholarship’, *JJS* xxxvi (1985), 33–60 (33, n. 1), reprinted (with Postscript) in B. Isaac, *The Near East under Roman Rule: Selected Papers* (Mnemosyne, Suppl. 177, Leiden, 1998), 220–56 (220–1, n. 1) and in A. Oppenheimer, *Between Rome and Babylon: Studies in Jewish Leadership and Society* (TSAJ 108, Tübingen, 2005), 197–224 (197, n. 1).

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Thus, in the history of Roman-Jewish relations, war against Rome under Trajan and Hadrian falls in the century between the death of Agrippa II, the last Herodian king, and the appearance of a Jewish ethnarchate or patriarchate, which can be called a kind of echo of the old Herodian client-kingship. Again, at the time of these risings, Christian church history is beginning to figure on its own through the separate discussion of Christians by Tacitus and the younger Pliny, although it still mingles with Jewish history.¹² The wars belong to the period in which both Jews and Christians moved towards separate forms of communal order which would long remain normative. By the end of the second century, respect for rabbinic teachers and their traditions was being expressed in the compilation of the Mishnah, and the outlines of episcopal government and of a collection of New Testament books were discernible in the church.¹³

Modern study of the revolts is sketched in the following chapter. Its most prolific period has coincided with nineteenth- and twentieth-century nationalism and imperialism, their influence on Jewish self-awareness, and reaction to them in Marxian and post-colonial approaches. Jewish and Roman national and imperial aspirations were widely taken by historians to be central in revolt and repression. At the same time, however, nationalism was being viewed by many as itself something typically modern, not to be found in the ancient world. So in the 1930s an ancient historian could protest that 'imperialism' remained, none the less, the best term to designate the tendency towards ruling other nations, however its historical manifestations might shift from time to time.¹⁴ More recently E. J. Hobsbawm

¹² Tacitus, *Ann.* xv 44 notes that Christianity began in Judaea, but treats it as a distinct *superstitio*; Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96 (c. AD 112) writes to Trajan on Christians without mentioning Jews; J. M. Lieu, *Neither Jew nor Greek? Constructing Early Christianity* (London and New York, 2002), 21–2, adds that Nero's treatment of Christians already implies their distinct status. The view that Jews and Christians did not separate before Constantine, advanced for example by D. Boyarin, *Border Lines* (Philadelphia, 2004), justly affirms their closeness, but underrates the early mutual dissociation discussed in my *Jews and Christians in Contact and Controversy* (Edinburgh, 1998), 11–14. This dissociation may therefore need emphasis, but the histories of Jews and Christians at this period still remain in many ways one story, as was underlined by E. Renan, *Histoire du peuple d'Israël* (5 vols., Paris, 1887–93), vol. v, book x, ch. 18, reprinted in *Oeuvres complètes de Ernest Renan*, ed. H. Psichari, vi (Paris, 1953), 1,513 ('l'on ne peut raconter l'une sans raconter l'autre').

¹³ On the later second century as the great divide between the period of Christian origins and later church history see E. Renan, *Histoire des origines du Christianisme*, vii, *Marc-Aurèle et la fin du monde antique* (Paris, 1882, repr. 1922), 502–3 (Christianity as it existed towards 180 needed very little augmentation to become that of the fourth and fifth centuries); A. Harnack, *History of Dogma*, i (translation of Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* [3rd edn, 3 vols., 1894], 2nd edn, London, 1897), 38 n., quotes Renan with commendation but puts the divide somewhat later.

¹⁴ G. De Sanctis, *Scritti minori*, vi (Rome, 1972), 1, 520 n., from 1936, quoted with more recent discussions of the propriety of using the term 'imperialism' in Roman history by J.-L. Ferrary,

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and others have again expounded nineteenth-century nationalism and imperialism as essentially new phenomena.¹⁵ Yet, although modern conceptions inevitably include reaction to modern conditions, continuities between ancient and modern views of nation and empire can also be perceived. This has been specifically urged with respect to Egyptians, Greeks and Romans as well as Jews.¹⁶ In this book too a communal self-awareness which can properly be called ‘national’ and even potentially ‘imperial’ is taken to be a factor in the Jewish uprisings, and in Egyptian and Greek as well as Roman responses to them. Thus Appian, cited above, could proudly call the Ptolemies ‘my kings’.¹⁷

Lastly, the focus of the sources on particular known theatres of war (Cyrene, Egypt, Cyprus, Mesopotamia, Judaea) is inevitably reflected in this book; it should be complemented, however, by a note of the sense of universality shared by Romans and Jews, including Christians, at the time. World-empire was central in the conception of Rome current under Trajan and Hadrian. Pompey’s triumph after his return to Rome from conquests including that of Judaea in 63 BC had helped to confirm for Romans, as Cicero put it, ‘that the whole world is held in our *imperium*’ (‘rule’ or ‘empire’).¹⁸ Greek-speaking Christians would share the Roman conviction that the whole inhabited world (*oikoumene*) paid tribute to Caesar (Luke 3:1), and among non-Christian Greeks in the mid second century the

Philhellénisme et impérialisme: Aspects idéologiques de la conquête romaine du monde hellénistique (Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d’Athènes et de Rome 271, Rome, 1988), xi, n. 1.

¹⁵ E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875–1914* (London, 1987), 60–2; Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (2nd edn, Cambridge, 1992), 14–79.

¹⁶ Egyptians and Greeks: B. McGing, review of A.-E. Veisse, *Les ‘révoltes égyptiennes’*, in *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* lii (2006), 58–63; Romans: N. Shumate, *Nation, Empire, Decline. Studies in Rhetorical Continuity from the Romans to the Modern Era* (London, 2006), 7–13, 55–8; Jews: S. Volkov, ‘Reflexionen zum “modernen” und zum “uralten” jüdischen Nationalismus’, reprinted from W. Hardtwig (ed.), *Deutschlands Weg in die Moderne. Politik, Gesellschaft und Kultur im 19. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1996), 145–60 in S. Volkov, *Das jüdische Projekt der Moderne: Zehn Essays* (Munich, 2001), 32–48; Goodblatt, *Elements of Ancient Jewish Nationalism*. Somewhat comparably, concepts of race which are often regarded as typically modern were traced in the ancient world by B. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, 2004).

¹⁷ Appian, *Historia Romana*, Proem 39 (see n. 9), discussed by J. Palm, *Rom, Römertum und Imperium in der griechischen Literatur der Kaiserzeit* (Acta Regiae Societatis Humaniorum Litterarum Lundensis lvii, Lund, 1959), 76–7.

¹⁸ Cicero, *Balb.* vi 16 (Pompey’s three triumphs attest ‘totum orbem terrarum nostro imperio teneri’), discussed by G. C. Picard, *Les trophées romains: Contribution à l’histoire de la Religion et de l’Art triomphal de Rome* (Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d’Athènes et de Rome, 187, Paris, 1957), 186–9 and H. Cancik, ‘Die “Repraesentation” von “Provinz” (nationes, gentes) in Rom. Ein Beitrag zur Bestimmung von “Reichsreligion” vom 1. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis zum 2. Jahrhundert n. Chr.’, in H. Cancik and J. Rüpke (eds.), *Römische Reichsreligion und Provinzialreligion* (Tübingen, 1997), 129–43 (131). On Cicero on world-empire see P. A. Brunt, *Roman Imperial Themes* (Oxford, 1990), 292, 298, 444; on Judaea in Pompey’s triumph see also Chapter 3, notes 21 and 26, below.

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equation of Rome with the *oikoumene* is a leitmotiv of the Roman oration of Aelius Aristides.¹⁹

The Jews likewise, drawing on hints at Israelite world-empire in their biblical tradition, both possessed and conveyed a sense of universality. In Greek as in Jewish description, not long after Cicero, the Jews are to be found throughout the *oikoumene*; Strabo's statement that it is hard to find anywhere in the world where they have not been received is quoted approvingly by Josephus, and Philo follows Greek and Roman imperial idiom, with biblical precedent, when he writes not so much of Jewish exile, as of colonization by Jews all over the world.²⁰ Josephus similarly interprets Balaam as foretelling that the Jews will provide some of their own people as inhabitants for every land, so that the *oikoumene* will be their habitation for ever.²¹ In the prophecy of Daniel the last of the four gentile empires is succeeded by the kingdom of the saints. Correspondingly, in Jewish prophecy from the Flavian period, as already by implication in Philo, the Israelite empire will succeed the Roman; 'Jacob's hand held the heel of Esau from the beginning' (II Esdras 6:8).

Christians also developed this Jewish sense of universality, as Saint Paul shows, by envisaging their own body as worldwide; the apostolic preaching extended 'to all lands' and 'to the limits of the *oikoumene*' (Ps. 19:5 as interpreted in Rom. 10:18).²² Under Trajan and Hadrian, in the years of renewed Jewish uprising, the church began to be called by Christians *katholikos*, 'universal'.²³ Within and beyond the Roman setting the 'universal'

¹⁹ Aelius Aristides, *Or.* xxvi 9; 59 (Rome rules the whole world), 29 (the whole world prays for Rome), 61 (Rome the world capital), 97 (the whole world lays down arms as if keeping a holiday), 98 (the whole world has recovered health), 102–3 (the whole world measured, opened, and made like one household), 105, cf. 103 (Rome takes good care of the world, the good creation of Zeus); see Oliver, *The Ruling Power: a Study of the Roman Empire in the Second Century after Christ through the Roman Oration of Aelius Aristides* (Philadelphia, 1953) [= *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* N.S. xliii (1953), 909, on xxvi 9.

²⁰ Strabo as quoted by Josephus, *Ant.* xiv 115, discussed by Y. Shahar, *Josephus Geographicus* (TSAJ 98, Tübingen, 2004), 261–2; Philo, *Flacc.* 45–6; imperial traits in the biblical treatment of David and Solomon are paralleled in the Pentateuch (Gen. 49:10, Num. 24:7, Deut. 28:12–13) and were developed in subsequent interpretation, illustrated in W. Horbury, 'Monarchy and Messianism in the Greek Pentateuch', in M. A. Knibb (ed.), *The Septuagint and Messianism* (BETL 195, Leuven, 2006), 79–128 (97–9), and from Josephus in Shahar, *Josephus Geographicus*, 262–4.

²¹ Josephus, *Ant.* iv 115–16, interpreting Num. 23:10, LXX 'who shall number the peoples [plural] of Israel?'

²² For comparable statements see Col. 1:6, cf. 1:23 (the gospel is being received in all the world, *kosmos*), and, in the gospel tradition, Matt. 24:14, cf. 28:18–19 (apostolic preaching to extend throughout the *oikoumene*).

²³ Ignatius, *Smyrn.* viii 2, *katholike ekklesia*, compared with contemporary Roman imperial developments of the language of Hellenistic union by A. Brent, *Ignatius of Antioch and the Second Sophistic* (STAC 36, Tübingen, 2006), 143, 304–6.

bodies or peoples of Jews and Christians vied with one another, both feeling the biblical history as their own.²⁴

These two risings have therefore gained yet greater significance in retrospect. They can seem to mark the end of a period in the history of both Jews and Christians as universal bodies or peoples. They effectively ended the Herodian age; they also signalled the beginning of the end of the Judaea-centred early period of the Christian church, and of what may be called the age of Christian beginnings.²⁵ The Jewish situation after the revolts did indeed retain continuities with Herodian times, notably in the persistence of Roman–Parthian tension and also eventually of some Roman concession to the Jews’ aspirations for self-government, as focused in their ethnarch; however, the temple which had been central in Herodian Jewish life was not rebuilt. One cannot say ‘neither side a winner, For things are as they were’.²⁶

On the other hand, these wars of the early second century stand within a continuum of Jewish life. They had been waged alongside and within the development of the Jewish community, and the church too, into forms which can be called classical and which would long be maintained. To look towards later history, this rebellion in two stages, with its associated martyrdoms, was the last great political confrontation between the biblical traditions on the one hand and *Romanitas* on the other, until you come, over a hundred years later, to the general persecutions of Christianity under Decius and Valerian (249–51, 257–60). In the Jewish community, the growth of rabbinic Judaism and its literature during these years would

²⁴ On views of the church as a race or nation in Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Eusebius and other early Christian writers see A. von Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (4th edn, 2 vols., Leipzig, 1924), i, 259–89; J. M. Lieu, ‘The Race of the Godfearers’, *JTS N.S.* xlvi (1995), 483–501; D. K. Buell, *Why This New Race? Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York, 2005), 94–115; A. P. Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius’ Praeparatio Evangelica* (Oxford, 2006).

²⁵ For church history, down to the mid second century, as Judaeen-centred see H. Chadwick, *The Circle and the Ellipse: Rival Concepts of Authority in the Early Church* (Oxford, 1959), repr. in H. Chadwick, *History and Thought of the Early Church* (London, 1982); W. Horbury, ‘Beginnings of Christianity in the Holy Land’, in O. Limor and G. G. Stroumsa (eds.), *Christians and Christianity in the Holy Land. From the Origins to the Latin Kingdoms* (Turnhout, 2006), 7–89 (15–18); for the end of the period of Christian origins in the late second century see Renan, as cited in n. 13, above.

²⁶ From the case against Mars in Dryden’s *Secular Masque* (1700), looking back to the wars of the seventeenth century:

‘The fools are only thinner,
 With all our cost and care;
 But neither side a winner,
 For things are as they were . . .
 Thy wars brought nothing about’.

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then span the inception of a Christian Roman empire with its own empire-wide Jewish population, and the brief prospect under Julian of a rebuilding of the Jewish temple coupled with a pagan revival. The history of Jewish war under Trajan and Hadrian may be the story of an ending, but it is also part of a study of Jewish and Christian origins.

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CHAPTER 2

Sources and historians

The primary literary sources to be noted below represent Graeco-Roman, Jewish-Roman and Christian-Roman outlooks, but all from their differing standpoints give a largely negative view of the two revolts. Emphasis falls on Greek and Roman losses and terror of rebel barbarism (Appian, Cassius Dio, Eusebius), on Jewish zeal or folly, impatient of rabbinic moderation and misled by the brave but brutal Bar Kokhba into loss, followed by persecution and martyrdom (rabbinic texts, Eusebius), and on the suffering of Christians who did not acknowledge Bar Kokhba (Justin Martyr, Eusebius).

Recognition of aspirations to liberty can appear in external accounts of other rebellions, as in Tacitus on Britain, but in the brief accounts of these Jewish uprisings, although it is implied in some rabbinic texts, the nearest approach to it comes in Dio. He presents the occasion of the Bar Kokhba war as what could be perceived by Jews as a provocation; elsewhere, speaking of the Jews more generally, he comments positively on the toleration they have gained by their ferocity and endurance (xxxvii 16, 5–17, 4, discussed below). Yet his final note of grave Roman losses in Judaea under Hadrian coheres with his general emphasis on the damaging character of the two risings.

Non-literary sources

This largely negative aspect of the external literary witness sharpens interest in non-literary sources. Inscriptions and coins have long been studied, and more recent discoveries include contemporary letters, deeds and other documents written on skin, papyrus, wood or ostraca. Thus Bar Kokhba coins and documents together provide, as already noted, his personal name, his title, and the slogans ‘liberty’ and ‘redemption’ – contemporary evidence for the self-presentation of the rebel ‘free state’.¹

¹ Chapter 1, notes 1 and 2, above; on the coins in general, L. Mildeberg, *The Coinage of the Bar Kokhba War* (Typos, vi; Aarau, Frankfurt am Main and Salzburg, 1984), reviewed by M. Hengel,