Concord and communitas: themes in Philo's account of Jewish pilgrimage

Journeys in the Roman East: Imagined and Real

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Ian Rutherford

I.

Even before Christianity, a common form of journey in the Roman East, as in all ancient societies, must have been pilgrimage of various sorts.[1] The surviving sources probably massively underestimate the volume and variety. Festivals at major Greco-Roman centers such as those of Artemis of Ephesos and Artemis of Perge in Pamphylia must have drawn large numbers.[2] The oracles of Apollo at Didyma and above all Claros continue to flourish in this period; Claros in particular was still attracting sacred delegations accompanied by choirs of young singers which resembled the official delegations ("*theoriai*") of earlier periods in Greece.[3] Lucian tells us about the rise of a fake oracle of the snake-deity Glycon set up by Alexander of Abonouteikhos with a broad catchment area including initially N. Anatolia and ultimately the whole known world.[4] Healing sanctuaries continued to be popular as well, such as those of Asclepius at Epidauros, Pergamum (immortalized in the writings of Aelius Aristides), and Aegeai in Cilicia.[5] Thanks to Lucian, we are reasonably well informed about pilgrimage to the sanctuary of Atargatis-Derketo at Hierapolis-Membig in North Syria, which he says attracted dedications from all over the Middle East and Turkey, including Arabia, Phoenicia, Babylon, Cappadocia, Cilicia, and Assyria.[6] Pilgrimage to healing sanctuaries and oracles is also attested in Roman Egypt, e.g. in relation to the so-called Memnonion at Abydos which functioned as a temple of Sarapis and Bes.[7] On the Southern border of Egypt the

* Thanks to Maren Niehoff and Amit Gvaryahu.

1 For pilgrimage in Rome, see Petsalis-Diomidis 2011, etc.

2 Ephesos: Elsner 1997; Perge: *Polemon Physiogno*. apud Swain 2007, 457.

3 Didyma: Fontenrose 1988; Claros: see now Ferrary 2014.

4 Petsalis-Diomedis 2011; Lucian, *Alexander Pseudomantis* 15–30.

5 Pergamum: Petsalis-Diomidis 2011, 167–220; Aelius Aristides: Rutherford 1999. Aigeai: see Eusebius of Caesarea, *De Vita Constantini* 3.56.

6 *De Dea Syria* c.10 with Lightfoot 2003.

7 See Rutherford 2002.

temple of Isis at Philai drew pilgrims and tourists from Egypt and sacred delegations from the kingdom of Meroe in Ethiopia.[8]

This brief survey leaves out what in terms of sheer numbers may be the greatest pilgrimage tradition in the early Roman Empire, namely Jewish pilgrimage to Jerusalem.[9] Until the practice was brought to an end or at least seriously curtailed by the destruction of the Second Temple in 70AD, thousands of pilgrims from Judea, Babylon, and all over the Jewish Diaspora visited Jerusalem every year to celebrate the three main Jewish festivals: Passover (Pesach) in Nisan (April), the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot) in Sivan (June), roughly corresponding to Christian Pentecost, and Sukkot (Tabernacles) in Tishri (October). Attendance at these festivals is already prescribed in the Torah (although that was presumably intended to cover only pilgrimage from within Judea and Samaria);[10] moreover some of the Psalms, the "Songs of Ascent," are generally interpreted as being intended for performance in the context of these pilgrimages.[11] Alongside this was the payment of temple tax (Exodus 30:13), which communities were supposed to send to Jerusalem, even if the individuals making the payments did not themselves attend.

In the early Roman period, the pilgrimage seems to have become enormous, in part because it attracted Jews of the Diaspora living abroad. Martin Goodman (1999) has suggested that the practice was encouraged by Herod the Great for economic reasons. Josephus, in his discussion of the casualties in the siege of Jerusalem in 70AD, says that 2,700,000 people attended the Passover in that year; some Hebrew sources give even higher numbers.[12] Josephus's figure is no doubt exaggerated, but even if he overestimated the true number by a factor of twenty, it was still a huge gathering, quite possibly greater than any pilgrimage-gathering in antiquity.[13]

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[8] See Rutherford 1998.

[9] On Jewish pilgrimage see Safrai 1969, id. 1981; Iancu 1987; Feldman 2006; Amir 1983.

[10] Deut 16:16; Exodus 23:17. Some sort of pilgrimage to Jerusalem as having taken place in the period after Solomon. The historical account in 1 Kings 12:26–28 where Jeroboam takes steps to discourage Israelites of the Northern kingdom from making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, believing that this will lead to them uniting again with Judah.

[11] Psalms 120–34.

[12] Josephus, *J.W.* 6.420–27; *t. Pes.* 4.3.

[13] On the number of pilgrims, see Jeremias 1969, 77–84; Kerkeslager 1998, 106 n.18. Niehoff forthcoming (chapter 8) urges caution about the scale of the pilgrimage. The only case in the ancient world where a number anything like that is reported is the festival of Bastet at Bubastis in the Egyptian Delta which Herodotus (2.59–60) claims was attended by 700,000. See Rutherford 2006.

II.

The fullest discussion of pilgrimage to Jerusalem, at least in a Greek writer, is by the Jewish Alexandrian author Philo of Alexandria. For Philo both the city and the Temple of Jerusalem were unique. The Temple was the only place in which it was legitimate to worship Yahweh, and Jerusalem was the mother-city (*metropolis*) of world Jewry (*Flacc.* 46), contrasting with the "fatherlands" (*patrides*) where Jews actually lived. The term *metropolis* implies that individual diasporic communities are colonies.[14]

Philo himself made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem at least once, but his brief reference to that journey in *On Providence* provides no insight into the significance of the experience; he mentions it simply in order to explain why he once visited Ascalon ("When I was on my way to our ancestral temple to offer up prayers and sacrifices"), where he observed birds that had over a period of generations become accustomed to gather in full view of humans, because the local inhabitants were forbidden to eat them (*De Prov.* 2.64).

His most elaborate account is in the *Special Laws* (1.67–70), an elaboration of the prescription regarding pilgrimage in the Torah. Since God provides that there is only one Temple (a principle that may not have been strictly observed since Jewish temples are occasionally attested elsewhere),[15] it is incumbent on people to go there to sacrifice, which is also a test of piety:

"Further, he does not consent to those who wish to perform the rites in their houses, but bids them rise up from the ends of the earth and come to this temple. In this way he also applies the severest test to their dispositions. For one who is not going to sacrifice in a religious spirit would never bring himself to leave his country and friends and kinsfolk and sojourn in a strange land (*xeniteuein*), but clearly it must be the stronger attraction of piety which leads him to endure separation from his most familiar and dearest friends who form as it were a single whole with himself (*henomenon meron*). And we have the surest proof of this in what actually happens. Countless multitudes from countless cities come, some over land, others over sea, from east and west and north and south at every feast. They take the temple for their port as a general haven and safe refuge from the bustle and great turmoil of life, and there they seek to find calm weather, and, released from cares whose yoke has been heavy upon them from their earliest years, to enjoy a brief breathing space in scenes of general cheerfulness. Thus filled with comfortable hopes, they devote the leisure, as is their bounden duty, to holiness and the honouring of god. Friendships are formed between those who hitherto did not know each other and the sacrifices and libations are the occasion of reciprocity of feeling [literally a mixing

[14] Philo, *Flacc.* 46; see Amir 1983. On the role of the "mother city" in Philo, see Niehoff 2001, 34–44, who argues that Philo developed this idea (which has no correspondence in Jewish thought) in response to the crisis of 39–42AD, when he wanted to present the idea of the importance of Judaism to a Roman audience in terms that would be familiar to them. See also Horst 2003, 142 with further references.

[15] On Jewish pilgrimage within Egypt to Elephantine and Leontopolis near Heliopolis, see Kersklager 1998, 109–23; McCreedy 2011.

(*krasis*) of *ethe*][16] and constitute the surest pledge of concord (*homonoia*)."[17] [Literally: "creating the mixing of *ethe* on the occasion of sacrifices and libations for the purpose of the surest pledge of concord."]

We have here a profound analysis of the sociology of pilgrimage. There are three components:

i. first, leaving one's own community, as from a set of unified parts, so as to become a stranger (in a strange land; *xeniteuein*).[18]

ii. calm, cheerfulness, leisure-devoted-to-religion; and

iii. becoming part of another community in Jerusalem: getting to know fellow Jews you did not know before, the mixing of *ethe*, and the creation of *homonoia*. Those new ties presumably survive even after you return home, to be revived again on the next pilgrimage. Notice in particular how religious and sociological motivations are coordinated in this passage. The first part talks about the religious motivations which lead people to leave home; then the achievement of calm, which seems to be an end in itself; then a period of leisure, which is devoted to religion; then, in the final sentence, the performance of libations and sacrifices, which have as their outcome the creation of a "mixing of feelings" and a pledge of concord. It sounds a little like a libation or sacrifice performed on the occasion of the ratification of a treaty between two sides.[19]

A few decades later, after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, Josephus gives an account very similar to Philo's (*Ant.* 4.203–4):[20]

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[16] The meaning of *ethe* is uncertain here; it could be "feelings" or "customs."

[17] εἶτα τοῖς βουλομένοις ἐν ταῖς οἰκίαις αὐτῶν ἱερουργεῖν οὐκ ἐφίησιν, ἀλλ᾽ ἀνισταμένους ἀπὸ περάτων γῆς εἰς τοῦτ᾽ ἀφικνεῖσθαι κελεύει, ἅμα καὶ τῶν τρόπων ἀναγκαιοτάτην λαμβάνων βάσανον· ὁ γὰρ μὴ μέλλων θύειν εὐαγῶς οὐκ ἂν ὑπομείναι ποτὲ πατρίδα καὶ φίλους καὶ συγγενεῖς ἀπολιπὼν ξενιτεύειν, ἀλλ᾽ ἔοικεν ὑπὸ δυνατωτέρας ὁλκῆς ἀγόμενος τῆς πρὸς εὐσέβειαν ὑπομένειν τῶν συνηθεστάτων καὶ φιλτάτων ὥσπερ τινῶν ἡνωμένων μερῶν ἀπαρτᾶσθαι. καὶ τοῦδε σαφεστάτη πίστις τὰ γινόμενα· μυρίοι γὰρ ἀπὸ μυρίων ὅσων πόλεων, οἱ μὲν διὰ γῆς, οἱ δὲ διὰ θαλάττης, ἐξ ἀνατολῆς καὶ δύσεως καὶ ἄρκτου καὶ μεσημβρίας καθ᾽ ἑκάστην ἑορτὴν εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν καταίρουσιν οἷά τινα κοινὸν ὑπόδρομον καὶ καταγωγὴν ἀσφαλῆ πολυπράγμονος καὶ ταραχωδεστάτου βίου, ζητοῦντες εὐδίαν εὑρεῖν καὶ φροντίδων ἀνεθέντες, αἷς ἐκ πρώτης ἡλικίας καταζεύγνυνται καὶ πιέζονται, βραχύν τινα διαπνεύσαντες χρόνον ἐν ἱλαραῖς διάγειν εὐθυμίαις· ἐλπίδων τε χρηστῶν γεμισθέντες σχολάζουσι τὴν ἀναγκαιοτάτην σχολὴν ὁσιότητι καὶ τιμῇ θεοῦ, φιλίαν καὶ πρὸς τοὺς τέως ἀγνοουμένους συντιθέμενοι καὶ κρᾶσιν ἠθῶν ἐπὶ θυσιῶν καὶ σπονδῶν εἰς βεβαιοτάτην πίστιν ὁμονοίας ποιούμενοι. Translations are based on the Loeb versions.

[18] The word *xeniteia* is later used of the alienated life of monks: see Bitton-Ashkelony 2005, 147–51 on the role of *xeniteia* and its Syrian equivalent *askaniutha* in early Christian pilgrimage; for the idea of the Christian pilgrim as an alien see also Pullan 2005, 394–95. Amir 1983, 58 suggested an allusion to the "Call of Abraham" at Genesis 12:1: καὶ εἶπεν κύριος τῷ Αβραμ ἔξελθε ἐκ τῆς γῆς σου καὶ ἐκ τῆς συγγενείας σου καὶ ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ πατρός σου εἰς τὴν γῆν ἣν ἄν σοι δείξω …

[19] A sacrifice guarantees a covenant at Exodus 24:5–8; for the practice in general see Giorgieri 2001, 435; Faraone 1993, 65 ff. and 76 ff.

[20] Συνερχέσθωσαν δὲ εἰς ἣν ἀποφήνωσι πόλιν τὸν νεὼν τρὶς τοῦ ἔτους οἱ ἐκ τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς, ἧς ἂν Ἑβραῖοι κρατῶσιν, ὅπως τῷ θεῷ τῶν μὲν ὑπηργμένων εὐχαριστῶσι καὶ περὶ τῶν εἰς τὸ μέλλον παρακαλῶσι καὶ συνιόντες ἀλλήλοις καὶ συνευωχούμενοι προσφιλεῖς ὦσι· καλὸν γὰρ εἶναι

Let them assemble in that city in which they shall establish the temple, three times in the year, from the ends of the land which the Hebrews shall conquer, in order to render thanks to God for benefits received, to intercede for future mercies, and to promote by thus meeting and feasting together feelings of mutual affection. For it is good that they should not be ignorant of one another, being members of the same race (*homophulos*) and partners in the same institutions; and this end will be attained by such intercourse (*epimixis*), when through sight and speech they recall those ties to mind, whereas if they remain without ever coming into contact (*anepimiktos*) they will be regarded by each other as absolute strangers.

The basic argument is: since they already have ties of race and institution, it is good that they get to know each other, and this is achieved through pilgrimage to Jerusalem. This is so similar to Philo's account that it may be borrowed from it (see below). There is, however, one significant difference: while Philo says that the pilgrims are to come "from the ends of the earth," Josephus specifies that they come "from the ends of the land which the Hebrews shall conquer (*kratosin*)." If this is meant to refer to the territory of the Diaspora, it is an odd way of saying it, since the Jews had not conquered these territories. On the other hand, this text is meant to be a paraphrase of Deuteronomy 16:16 ("Three times a year all your men must appear before the Lord your God at the place he will choose"), which presupposes a context before the Diaspora, so perhaps Josephus has modified Philo's cosmopolitan perspective to suit this new context. The implication should be spelled out: in this case Josephus refers to pilgrimage from a much more limited area, namely the territories surrounding Jerusalem.

Philo adds some further remarks about pilgrimage a few paragraphs later, when he is discussing the financing of the Temple, and paraphrases Exodus 30:13: "When you take a census of the Israelites to count them, each one must pay the Lord a ransom (*kofer*) for his life at the time he is counted." Philo calls this offering "first fruits" (Greek *aparkhai*), and he says that people make it in the expectation that it will bring "release from slavery, healing of diseases, secure enjoyment of liberty and complete preservation from danger" (1.77). In this case, people's participation in the ritual comes about not by visiting Jerusalem themselves, but by making offerings in their own cities, from where they are conveyed to Jerusalem by others who thus carry out a sort of proxy-pilgrimage on their behalf (1.78):[21]

And at stated times there are appointed to carry the sacred tribute envoys (*hieropompoi*) selected on their merits, from every city those of the highest repute, under whose con-

μὴ ἀγνοεῖν ἀλλήλους ὁμοφύλους τε ὄντας καὶ τῶν αὐτῶν κοινωνοῦντας ἐπιτηδευμάτων, τοῦτο δὲ ἐκ μὲν τῆς αὐτῆς ἐπιμιξίας αὐτοῖς ὑπάρξειν, τῇ τε ὄψει καὶ τῇ ὁμιλίᾳ μνήμην αὐτῶν ἐντιθέντας· ἀνεπιμίκτους γὰρ ἀλλήλοις μένοντας ἀλλοτριωτάτους αὑτοῖς νομισθήσεσθαι.

[21] καὶ χρόνοις ὡρισμένοις ἱεροπομποὶ τῶν χρημάτων ἀριστίνδην ἐπικριθέντες, ἐξ ἑκάστης οἱ δοκιμώτατοι, χειροτονοῦνται, σώους τὰς ἐλπίδας ἑκάστων παραπέμψοντες· ἐν γὰρ ταῖς νομίμοις ἀπαρχαῖς αἱ τῶν εὐσεβούντων ἐλπίδες εἰσίν.

duct the hopes of each and all will travel safely. For it is on these first-fruits, as prescribed by the law (*tais nomimois aparkhais*), that the hopes of the pious rest.

The word *hieropompoi* which Philo uses for those envoys who bring the temple tax looks like a technical term of Greek religion, though in fact it only occurs in Philo.[22] The emphasis on them being excellent men is reminiscent of things said about sacred delegates (*theoroi*) in Greek religion.[23] More broadly, the idea of an obligation to send *aparkhai* to a major religious center sounds similar to earlier Greek practice: for example, in the late fifth century Athens required its allies to send first fruits to Eleusis; in the Hellenistic period delegates called *hieropoioi* brought *aparkhai* to Didyma; and in the late second century Athens sent a sacred delegation called the Puthais to take *aparkhai* to Delphi.[24]

The *hieropompoi* are also mentioned in a passage from the *Legatio ad Gaium*, written in 43AD after the crisis caused by the proposed dedication of a statue of the emperor in the Temple at Jerusalem. Philo imagines the Roman general P. Petronius assessing the danger of the Jewish military threat on the basis of the nature of the envoys bringing offerings from the East.[25]

He was frightened also by the forces beyond the Euphrates, since that Babylon and many other satrapies were occupied by Jews was known to him not only by report but by experience. For every year envoys (*hieropompoi*) were dispatched for the sacred purpose of conveying to the temple a great quantity of gold and silver amassed from the first-fruits, and these envoys travel over the pathless, trackless, endless routes which seem to them good highroads because they feel that they lead them to piety. So he was naturally much alarmed lest hearing of this unprecedented dedication the Jews of those parts might suddenly take to raiding, and coming from different quarters might encircle his troops and joining hands attack them now isolated in their midst with terrible effect. While following this line of reasoning he shrank from action. (*Legat.* 215–18)

Here he is most concerned with sacred delegates coming from Babylon and the East (i.e. the territory of the Parthians, beyond the Roman Empire).[26] As in *Special Laws*, he sees pilgrimage as a process with the power to generate social cohesiveness, but here this is turned to military purpose as a force that defends

[22] Some Greek inscriptions have the related term "*hieragogoi*" in a similar context. Obligatory offerings: for *hieropompoi* see Philo *Spec. Laws* 1.78; *Leg. Ad Gaium* 312; *hieragogoi*: Rutherford 2013, 157.

[23] Aristotle, *EE* 3.6, 1233b10–12; Rutherford 2013, 162.

[24] Rutherford 2013, 114–16.

[25] Petronius senses that pilgrimage poses a threat: … ᾔδει γὰρ Βαβυλῶνα καὶ πολλὰς ἄλλας τῶν σατραπειῶν ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων κατεχομένας, οὐκ ἀκοῇ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ πείρᾳ· καθ' ἕκαστον γὰρ ἐνιαυτὸν ἱεροπομποὶ στέλλονται χρυσὸν καὶ ἄργυρον πλεῖστον κομίζοντες εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν τὸν ἀθροισθέντα ἐκ τῶν ἀπαρχῶν, δυσβάτους καὶ ἀτριβεῖς καὶ ἀνηνύτους ὁδοὺς περαιούμενοι, ἃς λεωφόρους εἶναι νομίζουσιν, ὅτι πρὸς εὐσέβειαν ἄγειν δοκοῦσι. περιδεὴς οὖν ὡς εἰκὸς ἦν, μὴ πυθόμενοι τὴν καινουργουμένην ἀνάθεσιν ἐπιφοιτήσωσιν ἐξαίφνης καὶ περίσχωσιν, οἱ μὲν ἔνθεν οἱ δὲ ἔνθεν, κύκλος γενόμενοι, καὶ συνάψαντες ἀλλήλοις τοὺς ἐναποληφθέντας μέσους δεινὰ ἐργάσωνται. τοιούτοις μὲν λογισμοῖς χρώμενος ἀπώκνει. For the context, see Smallwood 1961.

[26] For the journey of pilgrims from Babylon, see Josephus, *Ant.* 17.2.2; Safrai 1981, 128.

Jerusalem against an external religious threat.[27] Pilgrims are particularly dangerous because they work together ("encircle … joining hands") and because their religious faith makes them travel easily over difficult roads – a rare observation in an ancient source about the pilgrims' experience of the journey.[28]

III.

In both *Special Laws* and the *Legatio ad Gaium*, then, Philo sees pilgrimage as a means of facilitating the creation of an ideal community, either peaceful or military. These accounts are no doubt idealized to some extent: Philo is giving us a picture of how he ideally sees the pilgrimage operating rather than how it is actually was at any one time.[29] In reality, participation was probably less common than he suggests and perhaps varied depending on proximity to Jerusalem, but it seems to me unlikely that he is simply inventing something which did not happen at all.

This approach finds an echo in that of modern anthropologists and historians of religion who have studied pilgrimage. By definition, the main purpose of a pilgrimage is the religious one of visiting a religious center and performing a religious activity of some sort there, but it is usually a multi-faceted activity with the religious frame supporting social practices such as bringing a group of people together and helping communities to form. Analysis of this was dominated for a long time by the anthropologist Victor Turner, who in 1972 argued that the key effect of pilgrimage is what he called "communitas," a perceived leveling of differences between participants, resulting in a new social order

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[27] Cf. Isocrates, *Paneg.* 182: a panhellenic expedition against the Persians will resemble a *theoria* (religious delegation) rather than an army. Another occasion when a pilgrimage threatened the Roman Empire was at Abydos in 359AD when the Roman Emperor intervened on the grounds that it was becoming a focus for anti-imperial sentiment (Ammianus Marcellinus 19.12). These examples are interesting and should be discussed in the main text in comparison to Philo.

[28] It is hard to find a parallel in Greco-Roman sources for the idea that the journey is easier for pilgrims than for other people. See, however, Aelius Aristides, *Sacred Tale* 5 (50.4) who describes his exaltation on making a journey to a healing sanctuary; see Rutherford 1999, 142–43.

[29] For the view that Philo's account of pilgrimage is to some extent a literary construct see Niehoff forthcoming, chapter 8. It is also worth bearing in mind that Philo may have been interested in the idea of a permanent ideal community in Israel in the context of Jewish Messianic prophecy (see Wolfson 1947, 2, 407–10). At the end of *De praemiis et poenis* 165–68, he seems to imagine a future moment of national deliverance when all Jews will be restored to the "appointed place" and "the cities that now lie in ruins will be restored," so the possibility arises that he thought of pilgrimage to Jerusalem as a sort of prefiguration of this apocalyptic moment. See Lieber 2007, 200. For Jerusalem as a site of transcendental, metaphysical significance in Philo see Klauck 1986, 135–37.

which he called "antistructure."[30] Turner's approach was challenged by scholars who saw the effect of pilgrimage as to confirm hierarchies and differences among participants.[31]

Another common effect of pilgrimage that anthropologists have identified is the facilitation of communication and the creation and reinforcement of communities. In modern India, for example, great pilgrimage networks have been shown to be a medium which allowed the free dissemination of information between participants, something which the British in India became aware of and exploited.[32] And in S. Arabia it has been argued that traditions of pilgrimage to common sanctuaries and festivals stretching back millennia played a critical role in the development of social groups in the region.[33]

It probably worked much the same way in the ancient Mediterranean.[34] It has been argued that participation in common sanctuaries like Olympia and Delphi played a major role in establishing the idea of a community of Greeks (or if you like, "in creating Greek identity") in eighth–seventh centuries BC, for example, perhaps earlier; and, once the idea of a community was established (whether as the result of participation in the sanctuaries or in some other way), continued participation in common festivals was a way of maintaining it.[35] Common participation in festivals also facilitated communication between Greek states, and for that reason major festivals were good places to make a major political announcement. It worked the same way for subgroups of Greeks, as members of

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[30] Communitas: Turner 1974 (an adapted version of Turner 1972); Feldman 2006 explores elements of Jewish pilgrimage in the Second Temple period that suggest Turnerian communitas.

[31] See Eade and Sallnow 1991.

[32] Maclean 2008, 144–45 (citing Bayly 1996, 2): "The capacity of the pilgrimage network to carry information was also understood by the East India Company and later the administration of the Raj. The government, as we have seen, sought to positively influence the messages carried back to village India. It was the ultimate strength of the pilgrimage communication network to influence Indian opinion that forced the British, despite their dislike of the "heathen practices" carried out at the mela and the overwhelming costs involved in providing adequate infrastructure, to patronise the melas as they did. Inevitably, with the rise of nationalist mobilization in the early twentieth century, the Allahabad melas became a site where these nationalist ideas were disseminated."

[33] McCorriston 2011, 52; McCorriston 2013, 608: "In the highly mobile world of Arabian pastoralists, the periodic gatherings and rites of pilgrimage played a paramount role in constituting social groups. … Pilgrimage ritual is not unique to Arabian social identities, but in Arabia it played an exceptional role in linking mobile peoples and very small settled populations in wider social networks to support specialized exchanges. Arabian pilgrimage is a constellation of gathering, sacrifice, and feasting at a sacred place to assemble and reify communities that are not coresident, and it is used here not to denote a particular ritual but to name the structuring practices that shape and reshape social arenas."

[34] For the parallel between panhellenic festivals and Jewish pilgrimage, see Leonhardt-Balzer 2001, 22.

[35] Rutherford 2013, 277–80; Hall 2002 sees the sanctuaries as a focus for the development of Greek identity, but in the seventh century BC.

the Ionian League in Western Anatolia were said to have met regularly at festivals at Delos, Ephesos or Priene, and even at Athens, which represented itself as their "*metropolis*."[36] In some cases, imperial authorities seem to have encouraged their subjects to participate in a central festival, so that it became a symbol of their power: Athens had done this in the fifth century BC, and the early Ptolemies did something similar in the third.[37]

The panhellenic gatherings had a powerful, symbolic force. In Herodotus's account of the Persian Wars the Athenians are represented as saying that the common sanctuaries and sacrifice there are one of three things that define their identity as Greeks, and make it unthinkable that they could join the Persian side, along with kinship and their way of life.[38] Aristophanes's Lysistrata stirs up yearning for panhellenic peace by recalling times when the Greeks have engaged in joint sacrifice at the panhellenic sanctuaries.[39] One term we sometimes find for this intense panhellenic sentiment is "*homonoia*" (concord). Already in the fifth century BC the rhetorician Gorgias called for *homonoia* between the Greeks in his 'Olympian Speech,' which was presumably delivered at the great festival at Olympia, in front of all the assembled Greeks.[40] "*Homonoia*" was even worshipped as a goddess at Plataea in Boeotia, the site of an important battle between the united Greek forces and Persians in 479BC, and eventually (mid third century BC at the latest) a cult of "Zeus Eleutherios" (i.e. Zeus of Freedom) and Homonoia was set up at Plataea which itself became the site of a national festival of commemoration, which lasts into the Roman period.[41]

Important as this practice was in the Greek world, however, Greco-Roman writers do not show much interest in making grand theoretical statements about it. In fact, when Greek intellectuals talk about national festivals, they tend to be critical. Thus, in his account of the constitution of his ideal state of Magnesia in the *Laws*, Plato forbids citizens to visit national festivals except unless they are over 40 and traveling in a public capacity.[42] Similarly, the Stoic Epictetus regarded the great festival at Olympia as a distraction from philosophical introspection, though in one passage he seems to have advised that one should at least try to join in festivals, "for what is pleasanter to a man who loves his fellow-men than the sight of large numbers of them?"[43]

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[36] Rutherford 2013, 60.
[37] Rutherford 2013, 254–56.
[38] Herodotus, *Hist.* 8.144.2.
[39] Aristophanes, *Lys.* 1128–134; see Rutherford 2013, 266.
[40] Gorgias DK 82B8a = Plut. *Conj. praec.* 43, 144 BC; Philostr., *VS* 1.493.
[41] For the term, see Therault 1996. The cult of Zeus Eleutherios and Homonoia: West 1977. The *terminus ante quem* is provided by the decree for Glaukon, of the mid third century BC by the Hellenic League, found at Plataea. On the practice, Rutherford 2013, 260.
[42] Plato *Laws* 12.950e–951a; see Rutherford forthcoming.
[43] Arrian, *Epict.* 1.6.19; Arrian, *Epict.* 4.4.27 with Bénatouïl 2013, 164–65; Brunt 2013, 144.

Greek intellectuals show more interest in festivals organized within a specific community. Plato in his *Laws* recommends a calendar of no less than 365 festivals.[44] For Aristotle, the purpose of festivals organized by political communities is relaxation.[45] A similar idea is found much later in a passage in Strabo's *Geography*, which indicates that it was developed Hellenistic philosophy.[46]

Philo must have been aware of Greek festival culture, which continued in his lifetime, albeit without the intensity of the Hellenistic period. Many of the things he says about pilgrimage have parallels in Greek sources, and his terminology seems to be largely borrowed from Greek intellectual idiom. We saw earlier that his use of the terms *aparkhai* and *hieropompoi* echo Greek usage. The reference to leisure (*skhole*) and relaxation recalls the passages of Aristotle and Strabo just cited. His use of the term *homonoia* for the process of intellectual convergence generated by pilgrimage seems to echo the usage of that term in Greek sources. Similarly, the idea that pilgrimage provides an opportunity to get to know other people echoes statements made by Plato in the *Laws* about the purpose of civic festivals. In Book 5 their purpose is said to be,

> so that … people may fraternize with one another at the sacrifices and gain knowledge and intimacy, since nothing is of more benefit to the state than this mutual acquaintance; for when men conceal their ways from one another in darkness rather than in light, there no man will ever rightly gain either his due honor in office, or the justice that is befitting.

Similarly in Book 6 the purpose of sacrificial gatherings is said to be partly thanksgiving to the gods and partly mutual acquaintance.[47]

Amid all these similarities to the Greek sources, two differences stand out. First, no Greek source, as far as I am aware, argues that pilgrimage is valuable because it creates an opportunity to create relationships with other people. Greek writers occasionally report that significant relationships begin at festivals at sanctuaries (this is a common theme in the fictionalized world of the Greek Romance, for example), but this is never identified as a reason to go.[48] Secondly,

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[44] Plato, *Laws* 8.821a-c. Leonhardt-Balzer 2001, 291–92 suggests that Philo imitated this passage at SL2.42–55.

[45] Aristotle, *NE* 8.9.1160a22–30. Epicurus called the wise man "lover of spectacle," i.e. lover of festivals: Plut. *Against Epicurean Happiness* 1095c., a clear challenge to Plato's condemnation of lovers of spectacles.

[46] Strabo, *Geog.* 10.3.9: "Now this is common both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, to perform their sacred rites in connection with the relaxation of a festival … the relaxation draws the mind away from human occupations and turns the real mind towards that which is divine."

[47] *Laws* 5.738d-e: ὅπως ἂν … φιλοφρονῶνταί τε ἀλλήλους μετὰ θυσιῶν καὶ οἰκειῶνται καὶ γνωρίζωσιν, οὗ μεῖζον οὐδὲν πόλει ἀγαθὸν ἢ γνωρίμους αὐτοὺς αὑτοῖς εἶναι. ὅπου γὰρ μὴ φῶς ἀλλήλοις ἐστὶν ἀλλήλων ἐν τοῖς τρόποις ἀλλὰ σκότος, οὔτ᾽ ἂν τιμῆς τῆς ἀξίας οὔτ᾽ ἀρχῶν οὔτε δίκης ποτέ τις ἂν τῆς προσηκούσης ὀρθῶς τυγχάνοι … *Laws* 6.771d: … ἡμῶν αὐτῶν οἰκειότητός τε πέρι καὶ γνωρίσεως ἀλλήλων … καὶ ὁμιλίας ἕνεκα πάσης. For Plato's *Laws* as a model for Philo see Leonhardt-Balzer 2001, V.3.3; Lieber 2007, 200–201.

[48] Philip is supposed to have met Olympias when both were being initiated at Samothrace: Plut. *Alex.* 2; for the Greek romance, see Rutherford 2013, 349–54.

as I said earlier, Greek writers do not seem to present arguments in favor of pilgrimage at all, even though it was a significant part of their culture.

IV.

One possibility that I would like to consider is that Philo's account of pilgrimage echoes an official invitation used by the Jerusalem authorities. In view of Goodman's suggestion that pilgrimage to Jerusalem was promoted by Herod the Great, the possibility arises that Philo and Josephus are echoing the rhetoric of an official doctrine, perhaps contained in an announcement sent to the participants.

In the Hellenistic world if you were organizing a big festival and wanted to encourage broad participation, it was standard practice to stress the contributions you had made to the wider Greek community, the festival as a whole being a celebration of Greek identity. When Ptolemy Philadelphos organized the Ptolemaia festival at Alexandria in 283/2BC in honor of his father Ptolemy Soter, the League of the Islanders passed an enthusiastic decree promising to send a delegation on the grounds that:

> Ptolemy Soter had been the cause of many good things for the Islanders and the rest of the Greeks, by liberating cities, restoring laws, establishing the ancestral constitution for all, and relieving them of taxes, and since now King Ptolemy, succeeding to the kingdom after his father, continues to show the same goodwill and concern to the Islanders and the rest of the Greeks. (The decree of Nicouria, *SIG*^{3} 390, 11–26)

It seems very likely that these words reflect those of an official invitation.[49] A few years later, the Aetolians invited the Greeks to a new festival at Delphi, the Soteria, a commemoration of their recent action of saving Greece by demanding Delphi from the Gauls.[50] More generally, in the later third and early second centuries BC Greek cities solicited participation in festivals by sending out messengers to deliver a formal announcement, which sometimes included appeals to affinity and ancestral connections between inviters and invitees. Thus in 208 BC Magnesia on the Maeander established a festival called the Leukophruenia in honor of the local Artemis Leukophruene, apparently as the result of an epiphany, and, like many other Greek cities in this period, proclaimed Magnesia "inviolable"; messengers were dispatched to invite other Greek cities to send delegates to the festival (bring sacrifices and *aparkhai* in some cases) and to ask them to recognize the claim of inviolability (presumably because panhellenic recognition of this status would guarantee some level of protection). The argument presented to justify this involves the idea of the community of Greeks,

[49] Rutherford 2013, 267–68.
[50] Rutherford 2013, 268–69.

specifically that Magnesia is worthy of this attention, because in the past its citizens performed great benefits for the Greeks.[51]

There are similarities here with what Philo and Josephus say about pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Although they do not talk about how Jerusalem has benefitted the Jews of the Diaspora, the justification is based on ethnicity; and although as far as we know, Jerusalem was never proclaimed "inviolable,"[52] the city's unique status is central to the argument. I would suggest, then, that Philo and Josephus draw on the text of an official invitation, sent by the authorities in Jerusalem (possibly via the official emissaries ("*apostoloi*") known to have been used),[53] which might well have included both a reminder that the Temple was the unique center of Jewish faith and an appeal to Jews from different parts of the Diaspora to come and get acquainted, and the language would quite possibly have been informed by official Greek idiom.

V.

If Philo could imagine that the assembled *hieropompoi* might have posed a military threat to the Romans, the Roman authorities may well have realized the strategic threat posed by Jewish pilgrimage as well. Given the risk, the destruction of the focus of the pilgrimage – the Temple – in 70AD made strategic sense, and it is significant that when Hadrian decided to rebuild Jerusalem as Aelia Capitolina in 131AD, he had a temple of Jupiter built instead of restoring the Temple.[54]

If uncontrolled pilgrimage was dangerous, a religious network might be useful if it could be made to serve the needs of the Empire. Around the same time, Hadrian established the "Panhellenion," a new religious-political network based in Athens, comprising selected cities in the Eastern Roman Empire. These cities were required to send delegates to Athens, who met in a council and participated in the imperial cult.[55] The Panhellenion had a strict ethnic condition for membership: cities had to be able to prove that they were of true Greek origin.[56] One possibility is that Hadrian's model for this was the practice of earlier Greek religious networks. However, although there was a vague sense that the great Greek festivals were for Greeks, there is no sign that the criterion of eth-

[51] See Rutherford 2013, 270–71; Rigsby 2013, 179–279.
[52] Rigsby 1996, 527–31.
[53] Safrai 1974, 205–10.
[54] Cassius Dio 69.12, 1–3.
[55] Panhellenion: Jones 1996; Romeo 2002.
[56] A good example of how it worked is a decree from Cyrene from AD 134/5, according to which the city of Cyrene in Libya was regarded as truly Greek and sent two delegates whereas the smaller city of Ptolemais-Barca, though Greek, was regarded as less deserving and hence sent only one. See the translation of Jones 1996, 53.

nicity was strictly enforced, at least in this period.[57] In fact, as far as the strict ethnic qualification is concerned, the Jewish pilgrimage to Jerusalem is much closer to the Panhellenion, with the crucial difference that the latter was an instrument of the imperial cult.

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[57] Rutherford 2013, 264–80. In the fifth century BC athletes had to prove that they were Greek to take part in the Olympics (Hdt. 5.22; Rutherford 2013, 265), but van Nijf 1999, 177 argues that in the Hellenistic period the requirement for participants to be ethnically Greek was slowly relaxed.

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