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Peter Schafer. *Judeophobia: Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997. viii + 306 pp. $35.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-674-48777-2.

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Judeophobia's theoretical discussion of antisemitism occurs mostly in the Introduction and the concluding chapter, "Anti-Semitism." If one is only, or primarily, concerned with whether Peter Schafer thinks the Greco-Roman world's hostility to Jews can be classified as antisemitism, one can fairly read the "Introduction" and the final chapter, and skip the rest of the book.

Schafer's answer, as I understood it, is simple and persuasive: yes, antisemitism as we know it–and as Schafer defines its "line of the unacceptable" (p. 206)–did indeed exist and thrive in Hellenistic Egypt and Syria-Palestine, and, with some modifications, in late Republican Rome.

In the Introduction, Schafer defines the two basic scholarly approaches to historical hostility to Jews as follows:

a. The essentialist/substantialist approach, which assumes "the unique religious, cultural, and social characteristics of Judaism itself are the causes of what later becomes known as "anti-Semitism." This approach presumes antisemitism is a "'natural' phenomenon within every society" and is expressed in terms like "the essence of Judaism" and "the antagonism between Judaism and Hellenism." This position is taken, Schafer asserts, not only by antisemitic authors, but also by some Christian and Jewish thinkers as well. It has many offshoots, all basically assuming that something the Jews are or do (e.g. setting up exclusivist laws) causes the negative Gentile reaction. This position, Schafer records Mommsen and others as saying, "is as old *as Judaism itself* and the Jewish Diaspora" (p. 3).

b. The "counterthesis" to essentialist/substantialist assumptions, developed by Isaak Heinemann, is that "ancient antisemitism was not based on the 'essence' of Judaism, however defined, but rather on very concrete *political* conflicts." Heinemann's three basic conflicts, according to Schafer, are "the Syrian-Palestinian, the Egyptian, and the Roman." Followers of this position "agree that the decisive role in promoting the rise of ancient anti-Semitism was played by the Maccabean revolt and the successful expansionist policies of the Hasmoneans in the second century B.C.E. which followed the violent Hellenization instigated by Antiochus IV Epiphanes" (Bickerman, Hengel, Habicht, Bringmann et al.). Giovannini apparently redirects this to argue that Greek hostility became assured once the Jews put themselves under Rome's protection (p. 5). Schafer puts under this rubric those who want to see a "fundamental difference between pagan hostility toward Jews and Christian anti-Semitism" (p. 5). He cites Isaac, Simon, Poliakov, Ruether, and Gager among those who seek to diminish the importance or eliminate entirely the charge of antisemitism in Alexandrian Hellenism, reserving it for Christendom.

Schafer's basic position is that both models, the substantialist and the functionalist, are untenable, since religion and politics were rarely if ever separated or separable in the pagan world (p. 7). He further argues that most scholars combine both approaches, emphasizing one more than another. The functionalists tend to talk more about politics than religion, "dissolving the phenomenon" and "in the end explaining it away." The essentialists, assuming "an always self-identical anti-Semitism arising out of the very essence of Judaism itself," run the risk of "confusing cause with pretext and in the end finding the Jews themselves guilty of what happened to them" (p. 8).

He argues:

...one always needs both components to "create" anti-Semitism: the anti-Semite and the Jew or Judaism, concrete Jewish peculiarities and the intention of the anti-Semite to distort and to pervert these peculiarities. Anti-Semitism always happens in the mind of the anti-Semite, but it needs its object, the Jew or Judaism. The fact that anti-Semitism is sometimes found even in the absence of Jews, as modern history has taught us, is no argument against this, precisely because it is the distorted imagination of the anti-Semite, nourished by real Jews as well as

by his fantasies about Jews, which creates anti-Semitism (p. 8).

Within this theoretical frame, the book proceeds in three parts, the largest of which is the first entitled: WHO ARE THE JEWS? Part I sifts through extant documents from the Greco-Roman period which refer to Jews to determine precisely what complex of attitudes toward Jews and Judaism each text maintains. The most determinative ones are those carrying the earliest attacks on Jews from the Third to the First Century B.C.E. Schafer covers the classical sources, among them Hecateus of Abdera (who visited Egypt around 300 B.C.E.), Manetho, an Egyptian priest of Heliopolis (also circa 300 B.C.E.), and Apion, a grammarian of Egyptian origin (early part of the First Century C.E.), probably the head of the Alexandrian Museum, and Josephus's "archenemy of the Jews." These are matched against more neutral texts, like those of Plutarch, Varro, and Strabo, and some defenses by Jews like Josephus and Philo.

In Part I, Schafer attempts also to infer the "agendas" of the various authors from the texts themselves (and also relates these to the uses later writers put them to). He presents and analyzes the texts in terms of their topics, as well as place in the essentialist/functionalist armories; he also examines contemporary scholars' interpretations and carefully constructs the intellectual basis for his own conclusions. The topics examined for the Gentiles' beliefs, opinions, and attitudes are, chapter by chapter: the Expulsion from Egypt, the Jewish G-d, Abstinence from Pork, the Sabbath, Circumcision and Proselytism.

Part II gives a chapter apiece to the extant texts on two key historical incidents: the Egyptian destruction of the Jewish Temple in Elephantine, (Upper) Egypt during the Persian rule (410 B.C.E.), and the later Egyptian pogroms in Alexandria (August 38 C.E.) which began during Caligula's reign and continued after his assassination and the succession of Claudius (including Jewish counter-attacks in February and March of 41 C.E.). In both cases there were clear, outstanding political realities involved, with the Jews supporting the Persians' foreign rule in Elephantine and that of the Romans in Alexandria. Schafer examines their interaction with the religion and culture of the time to try to determine which situations, if any, fit essentialist and functionalist views of antisemitism.

The three chapters of Part III summarize the experience and attitude towards Jews of three historical centers of conflict: Egypt, Syria-Palestine, and Rome. They give a sense of regional as well as historical antagonisms of Gentiles to Jews and Judaism, bringing into sharper focus the theoretical problems of the functionalist position, and again laying the ground work for Schafer's crucial concluding chapter.

Schafer sees antisemitism as beginning with virulent Egyptian traditions recalling the Expulsion of Jews from Egypt. In contrast to the Exodus story, this was not a flight to freedom but a casting out of a diseased, impious, and dangerous foreign element. This story was already in full flower at the time Manetho and others composed their texts. The Egyptian tradition proved a strong basis for later Alexandrian Greek theoretical development, as well as for the political "hands-on" employment of pogroms during the reigns of Caligula and Claudius. During the later Maccabean period, when Jerusalem was besieged by Hellenist Syrians under Antiochus VII Sedetes, the climactic response to Jewish uniqueness was created when the king's counselors urged him to go beyond defiling the Temple to humble the arrogant Jews (who refused to worship like civilized people did, many gods). He should rather finish the job by exterminating all of them, since they were a threat to Hellenistic world culture. Jews supposedly hated all non-Jews (misanthropy); they were "atheists" in that they refused to honor pagan gods, preferring the worship of one god exclusively.

To the normal but not universal Hellenistic hostility to Jews and Judaism, the Romans–Cicero, Juvenal, and Tacitus–added both admiration or astonishment combined with "fear" of the Jews' ability to survive in the Empire without a homeland. Also disturbing was the conversion of upper class Romans to Jewish identity which even then seemed peculiar because it obviously transcended membership in a nation. Thus Jews and Judaism were seen by some important Romans as threatening to the triune basis of ancient Roman culture: worship of gods, loyalty to family, and to nation.

Schafer makes clear that Roman writers–by comparison to the Egyptians, Syrians, and Hellenists–were much more ambivalent about Jews and Judaism. They might be attracted to Judaism for its not worshipping idols, as apparently ancient Roman tradition had not either, at least before the Greeks brought in human statues. Admirable, too, was their maintaining ancient customs and rituals, however silly or superstitious they might seem to civilized men. But Romans also feared the ability of Judaism and Jews to lure Romans away from identification with their culture, and into the exclusivist Jewish culture and religion. The Egyptians and Greeks had no such problems, apparently. Their response in practice was more single-mindedly antagonistic and violent.

This is all recapitulated in the last chapter, "Anti-Semitism," where I also enjoyed reading Schafer's rather elegant critique of Gavin Langmuir's categories, thereby concluding what his introduction had presented concerning the strengths, weaknesses, and popularity among scholars of essentialist and functionalist assumptions concerning antisemitism. I think one of the book's great strengths is the clarity with which its author exposes Langmuir's confusing categories of reality, xenophobia, and fantasy and exactly when these supposedly pass into antisemitism. Schafer states more clearly than his scholarly peers "the line of the unacceptable":

The Jews as the 'evil incarnate,' denying and perverting in their xenophobic and misanthropic hatred all cherished values of humankind, conspiring against the civilized world–this…is the allegation which crosses the line from the 'justifiable' to the 'unjustifiable,' from 'anti-Judaism' to 'anti-Semitism.' It is directed against 'the' Jews….and it has no regard for what Jews do and do not do in reality–'the' Jews are identified as the outcasts of human civilization (p. 206).

His own conclusion about the origins and continuity of antisemitism is worth quoting extensively:

It needed the Greek retelling of ancient Egyptian prejudices, and the Greek claim to a world-wide culture, to turn anti-Judaism into anti-Semitism. But the retelling depended on deep Egyptian hatred of this particular group of foreigners provided by Egyptian priests, and …phrased unequivocally for the first time by the Egyptian priest Manetho, one may well maintain that anti-Semitism did, and could, emerge in Egypt alone (p. 208).

It is true that the allegation of the Jewish 'separateness' and 'strangeness' does have a *fundamentum in re*, but to argue that it is the *reason* for pagan anti-Semitism is to confuse cause with pretext, to hold the Jews themselves responsible for what others do to them (p. 209).

The only crucial question is what the Greco-Egyptian and Greek authors made of it. They turned Jewish separateness into a monstrous conspiracy against mankind and the values shared by all civilized human beings, and it is therefore [their] attitude which determines anti-Semitism (p. 210).

For those who want a one-volume reference to pre-Christian antisemitism together with a detailed and at times elegant examination, argument, and analysis of the scholarly attempts to define antisemitism, or "anti-Semitism" as Schafer writes it, this is the book to read.

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