

THE HEBREW REPUBLIC



Illustration from the 1700 Dutch edition of *The Hebrew Republic*.

THE HEBREW REPUBLIC

Petrus Cunaeus

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Petrus Cunaeus (Pieter van der Cun, 1586–1638), Dutch philologist and jurist, lectured at the University of Leiden from 1611 until his death. He was the first Christian scholar to make extensive use of Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* in his research on ancient Jewish history. In addition to his scholarly work, Cunaeus served the States of Holland as legal counsel in matters of commerce and maritime affairs.

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INTRODUCTION

PETRUS CUNAEUS' *De Republica Hebraeorum*, or *The Hebrew Republic*, is a compelling, evocative, and at moments provocative treatise which, within its class, makes for fascinating reading. This statement may come as something of a surprise. The work recalls, indeed exemplifies, an age when the world of learning seemed as if mesmerized by the unworldly quest for "antiquarian" lore, philological subtleties, and abstruse theological hairsplittings: an age that eminently produced bulky, long-winded volumes which somehow, and as paradoxical as this may seem to us, comfortably made their way from the study into the harsh "outdoor" world of political and social reality. The humanists' dogged vindication of predecessors, their relentless quest to salvage the relics of worlds long lost from the wreckage of time, seems wondrously at odds with their acute social commitment. Still, often enough, it is precisely the spanning of these poles which makes for their rewarding reading. Cunaeus' work is a case in point. Its impact asserts itself on numerous levels. However, without some considerable amount of background knowledge, these aspects tend to elude the modern reader all too easily. This introduction sets out precisely to forestall any such unfortunate outcome.

Cunaeus' *Hebrew Republic* warrants interest on at least three counts. First, its in-depth learning recalls that world of early Leiden humanists who established their university's durable reputation throughout the world of letters. The treatise is in all respects representative of decades of solid biblical research in Holland's bastion of Calvinist orthodoxy. At the same time, it offers much more than that. Within his circle of almost by definition versatile humanists—the Scaligers, Heinsii, Vossii, and the like—Cunaeus is easily identifiable. What made him stand out among his peers was not so much the scope of his learning—his comfortable command of philology, the law, and theology alike—but rather his distinctive approach to all the subjects he addressed. Petrus Cunaeus was endowed with a keen social intellect, an uncommonly critical eye, and a highly creative bent of mind. He was not just another professor of Latin, rhetoric, or the law. As the foremost Leiden

professor of political science, his primary interest was man rather than matter: man's follies, man's superstitions, man's cunning. In his courses at Leiden his subjects were Tacitus and Suetonius, the "political" historians. As a professor of Latin he read Horace, Martial, and Juvenal, the gem of Roman satire. He himself authored one of the most biting and intelligent political satires produced by the Renaissance; in the midst of social upheaval and political riot in Holland, he made short shrift of the arrogance of university dons, the imbecility of clergymen and self-acclaimed theologians, and the fickleness of the mobs.

Among Leiden colleagues and students, Cunaeus also enjoyed a reputation for his pure, ornate rhetoric. Time and again he was singled out to perform public addresses, whether at funerals, lustra, or convocations. *The Hebrew Republic* is written in the lively, argumentative, provocative style which, it is only fair to say, mirrored his character. Much was written on Cunaeus' character—and probably much more *not* put in writing—during his lifetime. Even among our all too polemic humanists, Cunaeus stood out for his readily inflammable nature. His impatience, his outspoken tenor, his sarcastic wit, and his merciless criticism of colleagues add a definite flavor to his works, and likewise to *The Hebrew Republic*. Cunaeus never leaves us in doubt as to the (want of) merits of an author under consideration. If Maimonides is his steadfast guide in most matters Hebrew and Jewish, so is St. Jerome among the Christian apologists. Not as fortunate are the otherwise perfectly reputable scholars from all periods whose genius meets with less than respect in Cunaeus' eyes. Indeed, his verdict on the nation he sets out to describe stands as perplexingly stern and less than fair. Far from being merely descriptive, Petrus Cunaeus' *Hebrew Republic* amounts to a thesis, a personal testimony. But then, in Cunaeus' hands, nothing could ever turn out noncommittal.

Dutch Social Circumstance

A second major element of interest constitutes the acute social context of Cunaeus' treatise. To be sure, at first sight its title and substance would hardly suggest any topical relevance. The work sets out to discuss the ancient Hebrew republic and Church. However, its preface to the "States of Holland" (the civic authorities of that most influential of the "Seven United Provinces" which at the time constituted the Dutch Republic) makes no allowances for any misunderstanding. Cunaeus' treatise was meant as an admonition to the body politic—then in acute peril of losing its grip on society—not to be trapped by the conniving of religious zealots and political machinators in

the mold of Jeroboam, who neatly undid the unity of the Hebrew Commonwealth. In a way, the treatise belongs to the category of *Fürstenspiegel*—the body of literature designed to instruct rulers in the governance of their countries. Throughout Cunaeus' analysis, records of the corrupting, almost self-destructive impact of power—be this at the hands of kings, high priests, or Levites—and the many pitfalls of religious fanaticism stand out as buoys at sea. Cunaeus felt that there was ample ground for such a warning—and time would prove his analysis right. Within a year of the publication of his work the young, aspiring Dutch Republic was grounded by social crisis without precedent and beyond repair, and it was religious friction that had unleashed the forces, *and* the partisan pretexts, that brought about its downfall. With this in mind, the reader cannot help addressing Cunaeus' evaluation of Hebrew circumstance from a double perspective, and will readily acquaint himself with the intertextuality and hidden layers of seemingly historical and speculative observations. At this point it comes as no surprise to learn from Cunaeus' correspondence that the treatise actually came about in the context of a major comparative study of models of state, its premature publication hastened at the urging of some of the foremost politicians and theologians of the time.

Whatever impact Cunaeus' plea had at the *Binnenhof* quarters in The Hague, it did not forestall tragedy. In September 1618 the crisis that, slowly but surely, had been building up over the previous decade came to a head in the coup d'état of Prince Maurice of Orange. This political intervention sealed the fate of the struggling aristocratic republic, reorienting it towards a mixed constitution, yet without healing personal rifts or bridging ideological gaps. The purges of the 1620s never came anywhere near to solving the many riddles that had brought the hazardous political experiment of the 1580s to its knees. Instead, they hailed a prolonged period of extremely complex social and political strife that was to seriously impair the balance and efficacy of the Republic's administration until, a full two centuries later, French revolutionary thought finally did away with its outdated program and moldered fabric.¹

However, the crisis of 1618 did not just rout the shaky balance and faltering synergy of the Seven Provinces; it also questioned the theoretical underpinnings of the Confederacy as such. How had all this come about?

In the previous century and a half, from about 1400 to 1550, Holland had seen its scepter and nucleus of power carried away from The Hague, the time-honored abode of the Counts of Holland, first towards Burgundy, then, by the Hapsburgs' proverbially profitable marriages, towards Philip's proud new center, Madrid—thus to find itself relegated to the very outskirts

of that legendary boundless empire. Around 1570, political conservatism, spurred by power-bereft nobility and swept along by religious discontent and anti-clericalism, exploded into the Revolt of the Seventeen Provinces, which spanned the area of what is now Belgium and the Netherlands. A quarter century of desperate, uphill fighting resulted in what proved to be the definitive loss of the Southern Provinces and of the revolt's intellectual heart, Brussels, to Parma and the Counter-Reformation. By the time that, around 1600, a precarious military stalemate was secured, the revolt had grudgingly seen itself reduced to the Seven Northern Provinces. By then, its ideological center had, once more, touched base at The Hague.

Gallant military valor and astounding exploits overseas notwithstanding, the administration of the Confederacy of these Seven United Provinces, which from that time made up the Dutch Republic, was not without its complications. The core of the problem was precisely the absence of any decisive common denominator—be this in terms of policy, religion, or commercial interests—other than the stern renunciation of Hapsburg rule. Toleration was the single pragmatic policy that remained to prevent infighting in the face of acute external pressure, and the growing debate over toleration, notably in terms of religious orthodoxy, became urgent in the years leading up to the Twelve Years' Truce with the Spanish (1609–1621). Ironically, once the truce was in force, it was precisely over this issue that, in the year 1610, debate within the States-General of the Confederacy ended in perfect deadlock. If to many of its protagonists political sovereignty and liberty of conscience were at the heart of the revolt, to others it was Calvinist orthodoxy. What was at stake, in short, was the understanding of church and state, of tolerance and doctrine.

One never stops wondering at the fatal turn events took in subsequent years. Conflict was first triggered by a polemic between two Leiden professors of divinity, Arminius and Gomarus, over issues of predestination and the Lord's grace, a conflict known in literature as the Remonstrant Troubles. When mediation failed and conflict hardened into riots, public authorities intervened to safeguard social order—which then forced the question of their authority to interfere with church matters in the first place. From that juncture the conflict became politicized, placing the slumbering embers of class difference and provincial parochialism at the service of the personal ambitions of the Republic's paramount protagonists. These were the *Landsadvocaat* or Grand Pensionary, Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, that steadfast advocate of the wealthy Holland regent and merchant classes, and the Prince of Orange, captain-general of the Union and champion of orthodoxy, backward provinces, and the lower social strata. The outcome, in September 1618, was

a coup d'état and a series of political trials and purges. With proud Oldenbarnevelt, that grand old man of Dutch politics, lowering his head to the block, his foremost counsel Hugo Grotius was fortunate enough to get away with a life sentence.

During the years leading up to this crisis, Petrus Cunaeus had grown, step by step, from a keen observer of the political chess game to a serious player in his own right. With time, he became directly involved in the debate and in the genesis of some of the most penetrating tracts issued by leading intellectuals of the period, Hugo Grotius first among them. Now, in the ongoing debate, the analysis of republican models abroad—whether historical or contemporary—was one approach to help clarify issues. Hugo Grotius himself, in an otherwise unpublished tract that dates back to the turn of the century, had explicitly modeled his proposed emendation of the Dutch Republic after the constitution of the old Hebrew Confederacy. In doing so, he had brought all the stock elements of the genre, as developed by Carlo Sigonio and others, to bear on the Dutch situation. Throughout the years 1610–1618 Hugo Grotius and Petrus Cunaeus most emphatically joined forces in an exchange of views to help forestall imminent crisis. *The Hebrew Republic* was Petrus Cunaeus' paramount contribution to that debate.

*Dutch-Jewish Relations of the Period*²

Before focusing on Cunaeus exclusively, there is some reason to further widen our scope and examine a third element which, though mostly on the far horizon,³ was never fully absent from the scene. To add to the religious patchwork and social complexities of the Republic, after 1600 a new phenomenon presented itself and soon enough further complicated the already elusive issue of toleration. This concerned the influx of Jews to the Netherlands. Shortly before the publication of Cunaeus' *Hebrew Republic*, the States of Holland had, after years of vacillation, instigated a first official memorandum on the position of the Jews and their worship.⁴

Let us briefly review the facts. The few pockets of Jewish life left in the Netherlands after their formal banishment by Charles V in the mid-sixteenth century had been dealt with by Spanish persecution in the days of the Duke of Alba.⁵ This is not to say that the Dutch had no dealings with Jews. One can easily think of at least three regular avenues of contact. To start with, throughout the sixteenth century, nearby Antwerp cherished a flourishing Jewish community.⁶ Again, Dutch trade with the Baltic was intense. Hugo Grotius' father, who, among other things, kept a brewery in Delft, was among

the many Dutch merchants to order his corn and *klaphout* from the cheap Polish markets.⁷ Jewish merchants were in complete control of these markets and in exchange, through their Dutch contacts, imported salt, wines, and luxury goods from the West.⁸ A third element that came into play were the contacts with the Portuguese (crypto-)Jewish Marranos, the remnants from the wreckage of the 1490s in the Iberian Peninsula who, in subsequent decades, had put up a network of profitable trade routes. These contacts rapidly intensified from the mid-1590s, when the Dutch first ventured out on the oceans to steer towards the Indies. If anything, it is the “historical” chapters of Hugo Grotius’ *De jure praedae*, the legal reflection on the contested legitimacy of the capture of a Portuguese *caraque*, which lends us insight into these contacts.⁹

Yet another element came into play. Throughout Europe, the upsurge of atheism and deism, due to the paralyzing stalemate of Reformation and Counter-Reformation, no less than the intellectual skepticism exemplified in the works of Bodin, Montaigne, and Lipsius, reflected a society adrift. In the Low Countries, on top of this, had come the breakdown, in the 1560s when revolt spread, of virtually all central administration. Typically enough, the Dutch Reformed Church, at its constituting Synod of Emden, had been established beyond the control of public authorities—something that would backfire later on. When central administration was finally reinstalled in 1579, the Confederation, at its constituting meeting in Utrecht, explicitly guaranteed freedom of conscience for all religious denominations. Soon enough, the Dutch Republic stood out as a safe haven amidst the bulwarks of clashing ideologies in Europe. Its social stratification was a patchwork of Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, and Mennonites, where immigrants, Jews among them, felt immune from persecution or trade guild opposition. All this is not to say that the Low Countries were entirely free from the widespread prejudice against Jewish worship met with elsewhere; far from it. In fact, one has only to single out the reservations regarding the Jews of that great, enlightened Rotterdam scholar Erasmus to appreciate that none of the stock recriminations that were found throughout Europe were alien to the Dutch.¹⁰ Indeed, Cunaeus’ own tract prompts the question of how much bias and prejudice still lingered on among Holland’s intelligentsia at about 1620. By the same token, however, William of Orange himself, invariably at a loss for how to finance his campaigns against the Spanish, turned from the first to Jewish bankers, with a further view of using their help to kindle the Sultan’s opposition against Philip II.¹¹ In short, if we turn to discuss the first wave of Jewish immigrants into the United Provinces, we will have to bear in mind that, all theory and doctrine notwithstanding, the Dutch and

PREFACE

To the Illustrious and Mighty States of Holland and Western Frisia

FOR YOUR INSPECTION, most illustrious Members of States, I offer a republic—the holiest ever to have existed in the world, and the richest in examples for us to emulate. It is entirely in your interest to study closely this republic’s origins and growth, because its creator and founder was not some man sprung from mortal matter, but immortal God Himself—He whose worship, and whose pure service, you have adopted and now protect. You will see what it was, in the end, that preserved the Hebrew citizens for so long in an almost innocent way of life, stirring up their courage, nurturing their harmonious coexistence, and reining in their selfish desires.

There is no doubt that the kinds of rules by which this people governed its republic were more effective than the precepts created by any of the wise men.¹ I have shown that a great many of these rules can be unearthed from the sacred books; it is only their military knowledge of which nothing at all was passed down to the memory of later generations. But as anyone who pays careful attention to the victories and accomplishments of the Hebrews will admit, every one of them was extremely skilled in the arts of war. For after they had left behind the land of Egypt (where they lived for a very long time); and made a long and unplanned journey; and were kept wandering for forty years in the vast deserts of Arabia, they then went on to expel a number of very strong and hostile peoples, and successfully invaded that country where they consecrated their towns and their Temple. Here on this fortunate soil they were incredibly fruitful, because they were able to cooperate with one another. They met as a group to plan for the welfare of all. And though there were many communities, they did not try to set up their own individual fiefdoms; rather they defended with great passion the people’s liberty. In order to establish a good and efficient government that would lack nothing, they all shared the same laws, magistrates, senators, and judges, as well as the same weights, measures, and currency. In fact, there was only one thing that kept virtually all of Palestine from coming to be considered one unified city: that its inhabitants were not all enclosed within the same

walls. In other respects, both the country as a whole and its various cities were similar and even identical to one another.

Among the towns, however, there was one city in particular which, by force of law, demanded more respect and reverence than all the others. Not, Heaven forbid, so that it might dominate the other cities, but so that people from all over the country (who lived far apart from one another) could gather three times a year for communal rituals and sacred ceremonies. So not only did this city fail to disrupt the harmony of the various communities, it actually bound them more tightly together. The twelve Israelite tribes lived in an extremely fertile area, and because of their amazing fruitfulness they each grew to be the size of a nation. They were in no danger from the power of their enemies, the storms of war, and other evils of that sort. They always emerged from disaster stronger than before, and through defeat and destruction they drew their courage and strength from the very sword that attacked them.

The Republic of the Hebrews remained like this for a very long time, until finally after the death of Solomon—when the high point of its happiness had been reached—its fortunes began to turn in a very different direction. A certain Jeroboam, whose hopes and strength lay entirely in civil conflict, stirred up the people in treasonous assemblies, and when he had drawn to himself ten entire tribes he set up a kind of separate state for himself, whose citadel and capital was Samaria. So there was no longer one republic but two. One of these, which was called Israelite, or the Ten Tribes, lasted only a short time, for the entire nation was soon defeated in war, and followed its conqueror into permanent exile. But the other republic—that of the Judeans, whose seat of government was at Jerusalem—was not completely destroyed until the time of Vespasian Caesar, though its power had been reduced to the point that in almost every conflict it was no match for its enemies. Of course, none of this could have happened if this people, which had conquered so many nations and lands in the past when its power was united, had not been split into opposing camps. It is civil conflict, illustrious Members of States, which presents our enemies with their greatest opportunity. The government of the Hebrews, then, was thoroughly ruined by the very same thing that has destroyed even the most flourishing regimes of other countries.

Review in your minds the history of all the ages, and you will find that it was for this reason that practically all the illustrious nations disappeared. Only rarely does fortune turn its ill will toward one people in order to destroy another, unless that people's domestic troubles have already left it unable to control its own vices and its own power. Certainly the Romans, who were the most clever of men, and of whom Marcus Tullius² says quite rightly that

they became the masters of the entire world in the course of defending their allies, understood perfectly well that the best thing God could do to help them overthrow other states was to disrupt and divide peoples who were joined by treaty. For so it was that the Romans, in the course of giving help to people in trouble or settling local disputes, came to dominate them completely; and *where they had made a desert, they called it peace*.³

At one time, everyone feared the Achaeans because the states of the Peloponnese⁴ had entered their League, which was based on inviolable laws, the principles of justice, and equality of rights among the member states. And their state was really quite similar to your own, illustrious Members of States, in that it was by far the best: it was rock solid and undisturbed because it trusted in its unity and was supported by its own strength. How many times did the Roman People (who were the masters of the world) try to break up that unity with skill and deceit, because they knew that Greece would be impregnable as long as the Achaean League was left standing?⁵ This was the task they gave to the proconsul Gallus; and when it did not succeed, they used a cunning plan. They had the Spartans join the League, but on unequal terms, so that they would always be a source of conflict and argument with the other members. Certainly this was the very thing that brought about the destruction of the Achaeans many years later.

I could mention other examples of this sort—the history books are full of them—but this is not the place for a long recitation. Rome herself, “the goddess of lands and nations” (which Mithridates⁶ used to say was founded to plague the entire world), fell apart when her citizens turned on each other and her leaders broke into factions; she grew weary, gave up her freedom, and accepted a tyrant. But since my real topic is the Hebrews, I must save for last what is at the heart of the matter. To wit: the battle of wills and passions that split the holy people into two after Solomon’s death could have been resolved, as so often happens, at the very moment it took place, and the people’s health could have been restored. But Jeroboam, a man who was thoroughly versed in the shameful crimes men use to dominate each other, and who had been responsible for the secession, made use of a technique which guaranteed that the Twelve Tribes would never reconcile: he corrupted the true religion with an empty superstition. So once he had used his glib tongue to foist his fictions on a gullible and apathetic people, what had been a fight about freedom and power came to be about sacred rituals and places of worship.⁷

In my book, illustrious Members of States, I have examined these questions and many more of the same type, and I thought it was quite a worthwhile effort to have it published. It is you yourselves, sacred fathers of your

country, who are always mindful that *harmony makes small things grow large, and disharmony makes great ones collapse*. The outcome of events has proven the truth of this: through God's grace and your own virtue, and through the auspices of your invincible leader, your republic has grown by leaps and bounds until it has reached such heights that your enemies can complain about nothing but your greatness. I humbly beseech God Almighty, who protects and defends this republic, that the union and harmony that have given you such great success should last forever.

In fact, when I think about your discretion and wisdom, which have always been evident in the way you conduct matters of importance, I have complete confidence that the future will turn out as all good men would wish. And yet, no one today can boast that he has been born into such fortunate times that he does not need to turn his thoughts now and again to the examples set by previous generations. Many of your citizens have already split off into factions of one sort or another, and they have been fighting over these differences of opinion ever since they entered into a pointless conflict over obscure issues of religious doctrine which most of them do not even understand. Then the mob follows its own passions in one direction or another, and every day more and more people are caught up. Since you, illustrious Members of States, are now devoting all your energies to the matter, you must understand that it is in your interest to apply a timely remedy to this problem, before your country, which is flourishing now, is damaged by the kinds of internal evils that have been and will be more destructive to so many nations than foreign wars, famine, disease, and all the other evils that beset the world like so many plagues. But it would be beside the point for me to say anything more about this. There is no way that I could come up with anything so profound that you would not readily think of it yourselves. I ask you, illustrious Members of States, to study over and again the Hebrew Republic—the holiest and best of all—which I have described in this book. It contains ideas that kings, leaders, and the administrators of republics may adopt for their own use. In fact, I was all the more eager to present this information to you because I reasoned that the members of your Senate are the best of the age, and are so learned that they would be able to judge for certain whether anything I have written here might shed some light on antiquity, and on the works of its noble authors.

CHAPTER 18

The place of the Jews after the coming of the Messiah. On the restoration of the Jews, which they are still awaiting. What makes that nation respected even today. How much our religion owes to the Jews. Whether they have rewritten or corrupted the Holy Book. On the diligence and dependability of the Masorites.

IMMORTAL GOD wanted the Jews to be called a kingdom of priests and a chosen people, and to be the only caretakers of His rites and worship until the day should dawn when the Messiah would be presented to the world. From that moment on, the son of God wanted his heavenly gifts, which for a long time had belonged to only one people, to be shared by everyone; and though the news was spread to peoples everywhere, it benefited only those who believed. Here was a truly astonishing turn of events: the gentile nations received with joy and awe the One who was entirely devoted to their welfare, and who left the kingdom of Heaven in order to rescue mankind when it had stumbled. The Jews, on the other hand, did not understand that this man, who more than one prophet had indicated was going to arrive at a set time and place, had now done so and was there among them, so strong was the power of their incomprehension. Their eyes were blinded because their minds were on other things and refused to see what was right in front of them; so they were disowned and spurned by God, and *even now they eat lentils, and cry over their lost birthright*. The prophet Jeremiah says that their crime was recorded *in hardest steel*.²²¹ In fact, they did not even try to avoid their punishment: they said, *may his blood be on us and upon our children*.²²² St. Paul wrote something very noteworthy in the letter he sent to the Romans. There he says as follows: *I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery—a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles shall come in*.²²³

Though nowadays the Jews are wandering about, pathetically unaware of where they are, there will no doubt come a time when they will be returned to the right path. The sun has not set for the last time: its light will once again shine even on them, and though they have certainly fallen, they

have not been extinguished. Ezekiel also produced some prophecies about this, which are found in chapter 36 of his book. The prophet says that in the future God will give them a new heart, and a better understanding will occupy their breasts. Then the veil that Moses placed on his face will be lifted,²²⁴ for they will turn to God, who allowed them to live in darkness and the profoundest ignorance so that the day would finally come when He could show them exceptional mercy. This is the proper interpretation of the words of St. Paul: *And when Israel turns to the Lord, the veil will be lifted up.*²²⁵ Many people have found this verse to be extremely murky, and it has taxed the efforts of a number of scholars.

This matter of which I am speaking is very significant, and its obvious consequence is that we cannot in good conscience continue to shun the Jews as the objects of popular hatred when they still possess such great potential. Certainly St. Paul reveres them, and despite their errors he lavishes praise on them. For he says: *It is they whom God chose, and theirs is the glory, and the Covenant, and the Law, and the sacred worship, and the promises; theirs are the patriarchs, and from them came Christ in his corporeal form.*²²⁶ What greater nobility could there be? They can count so many patriarchs, prophets, and kings among their grandfathers and great-grandfathers; in short, so many excellent men of divine virtues whose names God has sanctified!

It is true, I must admit, that all of today's Jews have a slavish and illiberal character, and if you were to examine their way of life and their pursuits, you would find nothing at all worthy of a great and proud spirit. The reason for this is not hard to imagine, for such pursuits are (like other phenomena) cyclical in character. Just as the times change, so does human behavior. Certainly, on the day the bright light of their freedom was taken away from them and their power was torn from their hands, their noble spirit was also broken, so that today nothing remains of their energetic vigor. As good Eumaeus is inspired to say to his king Ulysses in Homer, *Zeus, whose voice is borne afar, takes half a man's worth away from him when the day of slavery comes upon him.*²²⁷ Just as the boxes in which slave dealers tie up dwarves while they are growing not only keep their little bodies from expanding but even shrink them, so slavery of any sort places shackles on the soul itself and suffocates a man's noble characteristics. How high can they aspire when for so many years and throughout the world they have been wearied by such terrible injustices? Haven't boys dragged them by the hems of their garments, and men by their beards? And wasn't the rage of every Caesar vented upon them? Tiberius sent their young men out to provinces where the climate was unhealthy, on the pretext of assigning them military service.

He sent four thousand to Sardinia, which was especially plague-ridden, so they would meet with a horrible death.²²⁸ Titus threw nearly as many to the animals when he put on shows at Beirut and Caesarea.²²⁹ Even Trajan, who was the most lenient of all the emperors, forbade the Jews to read the Law, and later emperors often did the same. This was the worst kind of affliction, and Rabbi Zacuto includes it among the *shmadot* or persecutions. He says that *they decreed a persecution, so that the Jews could not read the Law*.²³⁰

But all these things were done by the pagans; since we have much closer ties with the Jews our two groups should show affection for each other, and should consider it a common bond that we obey the commands of the same God. So deeply does St. Paul love this people that he actually wants to give up his life for them; he also says that *if the first fruits are holy then so is the lump*;²³¹ *and if the root is holy so are the branches*.²³² I am not going to indulge myself now by singing their praises, since I despise nothing more than silliness; and yet it is perfectly obvious, as far as the more recent past is concerned, how much our religion owes to this nation. For who if not the Jews has kept the Bible for us, safe and sound? How many scribal errors would have crept into the Holy Book if it had been entrusted only to the care of men like Lactantius, Augustine, Gregory, and Chrysostom, who—holy as they were—knew nothing of Hebrew? Among the Greeks and Latins who governed the early Church,²³³ only Origen and Jerome²³⁴ knew Hebrew (and this is an overstatement). Others did not even know the alphabet. When, therefore, mistakes were made because of the carelessness of the copyists, it was not the Christian scholars to whom the men of that age looked for help or support.

The Jews, on the other hand, had one interest and one concern that they all shared: to protect the books of Moses, the Prophets, and the Writings from the dangers of the times. They alone are to be congratulated for this; no other nation merits a share in their glory. Rabbi Abraham of Salamanca²³⁵ has a very important passage in his book *Yuhasin*, from which we learn that all the copies of the biblical text had been corrected according to an extremely ancient manuscript which Rabbi Hillel had once written with his own hand. (He was the greatest leader of the Jews, and came from Babylonia to Syria²³⁶ sixty years before the birth of our Lord God Christ.) Rabbi Abraham's words are well worth quoting here:

*In the kingdom of Leon*²³⁷ *they uncovered the book of arba'a ve'esrim [twenty-four, i.e. the number of books in the Hebrew Bible] which is called "Biblia," and which was written down by Rabbi Hillel; and they corrected all their copies against it. And I have seen a part of it which was for sale in Africa,*

and it had been written nine hundred years before my time.²³⁸ And Kimhi²³⁹ says in his *Grammar*, on the verse "that you may remember,"²⁴⁰ that the *Pentateuch* was in the city of Toledo.²⁴¹

So at that time the Jews had the good judgment, the intellectual power, and the set of rules needed to correct the text of the Bible. How easy it would have been for them to rewrite those passages that seemed to contradict their delusions,²⁴² since the Christians hardly knew three words of Hebrew! But their piety stood in the way, and kept them from changing any of the sacred text. And yet there were some who believed that the Jews had deliberately misrepresented many passages, though Origen gave a brilliant response to these people in the eighth book of his explanations of Isaiah. I myself am astonished whenever I think about the tireless efforts of the Masorites,²⁴³ for after carefully examining and comparing every part of the Hebrew text they marked it with certain signs.²⁴⁴ This happened after the destruction of the Second Temple, around the year 436. They recorded not only how many verses and words were contained in each book, but even how many letters; so even though the world later descended into complete barbarity, thanks to them not a single mark of that wonderful text was lost. With good reason did the Rabbis say that *the Mesorah is a sort of walled enclosure for the Law*.²⁴⁵

Rabbi Zacuto, whose testimony I just now praised, includes in his book some Jewish foolishness from which, Lord help us, he concludes that the accents and punctuation marks existed in the time of Ezra.²⁴⁶ I have mentioned this theory only so that those men of our time who say it was not the Masorites who invented the system of marks can add it to their other frivolous arguments. I would also like to criticize another theory that appears in this rabbi's book. Using the same argument as before,²⁴⁷ he dates the Targum of Onkelos²⁴⁸ to the time of Ezra. Although this argument has no value, and readily shows us how little the first conjecture is worth,²⁴⁹ it will no doubt find its defenders, if only as a reason not to reject the other theory. For a long time now, many scholars have been motivated by a zeal so stubborn that they will latch on to anything at all which supports their opinion, and it is not of the slightest interest to them what it is or what they are doing with it.

If the text of the sacred scriptures is not in doubt and is unlikely to undergo any further changes, I give the credit to the Jews who lived in more recent times, after the destruction of the Second Temple. For once their great and wealthy state had been destroyed, they began to take measures so that despite extreme misfortune they might salvage from the wreckage at least this one plank, whose value was priceless. Though I love them for this, the rest of their activities deserve only pity. They busy themselves with marks and

letters and books, but no more than that. They neither examine nor seek out the sacred and true perceptions, so what they themselves say in their own language fits them to a tee: *They made the essential trivial, and the trivial essential.*²⁵⁰ And the worst of it is that they have no idea how childlike and clueless they really are, for even though all their misfortunes have occurred because they know nothing of God's law, they claim that it was because they lost their homeland, and their kingdom was snatched away from them, and other things of the kind which cannot make us happy when we have them or truly unhappy when we lose them. Seneca mentions a foolish friend of his wife named Harpastes, who suddenly lost her sight *and did not know she was blind, and kept asking her pedagogue*²⁵¹ *to take her somewhere else, saying that her own home was dark.*²⁵² The same thing has happened to the Jews. They carry around within themselves the cause of their own misfortune; and if by some miracle they were to get Canaan back, they would change their skies but not their spirit. They bring their own night with them wherever they go, and it will not lift until they have paid the heavy penalties for their foolishness and their stubbornness.

BOOK II

1. Cf. for example Mishna Avot 4:17.

2. Cunaeus has already referred to the father of this Onias as the *fourth* Onias, a confusion that ultimately stems from the conflict between Josephus, who says that this man was the son of the previous high priest (Onias III) but was also known as Menelaus, and 2 Maccabees, which only calls him Menelaus and does not suggest that he was the son of an Onias. According to Josephus, then, the father of the Onias who went to Egypt was Onias IV, while according to Maccabees he was Onias III.

3. The sons of Aaron, whose descendants were priests, as opposed to the other Levites, who served as their assistants.

4. Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 20.10 in modern editions. Josephus says there that Alcimus was “of the stock of Aaron, but not of that family of Onias,” which Sigonio took to mean that he was therefore from one of the non-priestly Levite houses. But as Cunaeus says here, of the twenty-four priestly families descended from the sons of Aaron only one supplied high priests. It was therefore from one of the others that he thinks Alcimus came.

5. Cunaeus makes the distinction between “high priest” and “other priests” clearer than it is in English (or Hebrew) by using two different Latin terms—*pontifex* (“bridge-builder,” an important Roman priesthood) for the high priest, and *sacerdos* (a more generic term) for the others.

6. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Vessels of the Sanctuary 4:15.

7. A grandson of Herod to whom Claudius had given a kingdom in Lebanon.

8. From the Latin for “shoulder.”

9. In classical literature, the heart is the seat of both emotion and thought.

10. A Latin translation of the part of the *Jewish War* that describes the fall of Jerusalem and the Temple; cf. Josephus *Jewish War* 5.5.7.

11. ταύτην τὴν ἐσθῆτα οὐκ ἐφόρει ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς τὸν ἄλλον χρόνον, λιτοτέραν δὲ ἀνελάμβανεν, ὅποτε δὲ εἰσίοι εἰς τὸ ἅδυλον. εἰσῆει δὲ ἅπαξ κατὰ ἐνιαυτὸν μόνον ἐν ᾗ νηστεύειν ἔθος ἡμέρα πάντας τῷ θεῷ. The standard editions of this text differ from Cunaeus’ version: instead of *monon* (“only, sole”), which would refer to the Day of Atonement as being the only occasion on which the priest entered, they read *monos*, referring to the high priest as the only person to go in on that day. This is significant because in chapter 4, Cunaeus will insist that the priest went in alone not just on the Day of Atonement, but all the time.

12. Leviticus 16:4.

13. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Vessels of the Sanctuary 8:3. בגדי לבן הם ארבעה כלים ששמש בהן כהן גדול ביום הכפורים וארבעתן לבנים ומן הפשתן לבודו הן; כתנתו ומכנסיו. ראבנט. ומצנפת.

14. A band of wool worn around the head by Roman priests, to which Cunaeus is comparing the priestly *mitznefet*.

15. I.e. completely burned.

16. Leviticus 16:2-4.

17. Leviticus 16:32.

18. I.e. embroidered.

19. In the classical world, an especially expensive kind of flax.

20. τῆν ἱερὴν ἐσθῆτα.

21. Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 15.11.4.

22. An important Roman priest, who wore a distinctive kind of headdress.

23. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Vessels of the Sanctuary 8:2.

24. The Hebrew name for the hat—*migba'at*—would therefore come from the same root as *giv'a*, “hill” (though Maimonides doesn’t actually say this).

25. Joseph Caro, the sixteenth-century authority who also wrote the *Shulhan Aruch*.

26. מחוסר בגדים.

27. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Vessels of the Sanctuary 10:5.

28. I.e. about the future.

29. Presumably the *shechina*, or divine Presence, found in Jewish thought.

30. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Vessels of the Sanctuary 10:10.

31. This sentiment is actually a partial paraphrase from the Roman poet Vergil, *Aeneid* 10.502.

32. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Vessels of the Sanctuary 10:10-12.

33. A traditional Jewish practice, performed upon learning of the death of a close relative.

34. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Vessels of the Sanctuary 5:6.

35. Cunaeus is referring to a comment of the *Kesef Mishneh*.

36. The high priest at the time of Jesus’ trial.

37. Matthew 26:64-65: Jesus implies that he is the Messiah, and Caiaphas calls him a blasphemer.

38. The law therefore served the purpose of further distinguishing the high priest from the others.

39. A prohibition which was applied to all Jews only in the Middle Ages.

40. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Vessels of the Sanctuary 5:10.

41. Ibid. 5:7. לשכת כהן גדול.

42. Ibid. As opposed to the outlying districts.

43. Perhaps the most important Roman priesthood. The pope is called “pontiff” by analogy, and Cunaeus himself uses *pontifex* as the translation of “high priest.” The office of *pontifex* was filled by members of important political families, which is why in this instance it went from Lepidus to Augustus, both of whom were members of the powerful Second Triumvirate at the end of the Roman Republic.

44. Who would later be known as Augustus, the first Roman emperor.

45. For the story, cf. Dio Cassius *Roman History* 54.27.3.

46. Paul.

47. Letter to the Hebrews 9:7. εἰς τὴν δευτέραν σκηνὴν ἅπαξ τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ μόνος ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς εἰσῆει οὐ χωρὶς αἵματος.

48. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of the Temple 7:19. בית קדש הקדשים מקודש מבין ההיכל שאין נכנס לשם אלא כהן גדול ביום הכפורים בשעת העבודה.

49. The *kaporet*, sometimes translated “mercy seat.”

50. Leviticus 16:2–8. As before, Cunaeus quotes some of the same text he has already quoted elsewhere, but he translates it somewhat differently.

51. The Holy of Holies.

52. Hebrew *kodesh*, “holy.”

53. Exodus 30:1, 6–7.

54. A reference to the classical theory of four humors, according to which an excess of phlegm makes a person sluggish.

55. It is actually verse 5.

56. Exodus 40:26.

57. A Hellenistic Jewish philosopher of the first century CE, whose work became an important influence on Christian Neoplatonist thought.

58. About the location of the incense altar.

59. ὁ νόμος προσέταξε δύο κατασκευασθῆναι βωμοὺς ἢ ταῖς ὕλαις, καὶ τοῖς τόποις, ἢ ταῖς χρεαίαις διαφέροντας. ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἐκ λίθων λογάδων ἀτμήτων ἀνωκοδόμηται, ἢ ἐν ὑπαίθρῳ παρὰ ταῖς τοῦ νεῶ προβάβεσιν ἴδρυται καὶ γέγονε πρὸς χρείαν τὴν τῶν ἐναίμ ων. ὁ δὲ χρυσοῦ μὲν κατεσκεύασται, ἴδρυται δ' ἐν ἀδύτῳ εἴσω τοῦ προτέρου καταπετάσματος, ὅς οὐδενὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἔστιν ὁρατὸς ὅτι μὴ τοῖς ἀγνεύουσι τῶν ἱερῶν καὶ γέγονε πρὸς χρείαν τὴν τῶν θυμιαμάτων. The passage actually comes from Philo's work *On the Special Laws* (1:273–274), but Cunaeus calls it by the title it bears in a contemporary printed edition of selections from this work.

60. Luke 1:9.

61. The father of John the Baptist.

62. Luke 1:10. πᾶν τὸ πλῆθος τοῦ λαοῦ ἦν προσευχόμενον ἔξω, τῇ ὥρᾳ τοῦ θυμιάματος.

63. Luke 1:21. ἦν ὁ λαὸς προσδοκῶν τὸν Ζαχαρίαν. καὶ ἐθαύμαζον ἐν τῷ χρονίζειν αὐτὸν.

64. Philo *On the Special Laws* I.72. ὁ νεὸς παντὸς λόγου κρείσσων, ὡς ἐκ τῶν περιφαινομένων ἔστι τεκμήρασθαι. τὰ γὰρ ἐντὸς ἀόρατα παντί τῳ, πλήν ἐνὶ τῷ ἀρχιερεῖ.

65. Ibid. καὶ τούτῳ μέντοι δι' ἔτους ἐπιτετραμμένον ἅπαξ εἰσιέναι πάντ' ἔστιν ὁρατὰ.

66. Cunaeus is bothered by the fact that although this statement begins with the word *tamen*, “yet,” it does not seem to be making a contrast: if the priest could go in, why *wouldn't* he be allowed to see everything?

67. καὶ τούτῳ μέντοι δι' ἔτους ἐπιτετραμμένον ἅπαξ εἰσιέναι, πάντ' οὐκ ἔστιν ὁρατὰ. Here Cunaeus adds the word “not” to the Greek text of Philo.

68. πυρεῖον μὲν γὰρ ἀνθράκων πλήρες καὶ θυμιάματος εἰσκομίζει. πολλῆς δὲ ἀναδιδομένης, ὡς εἰκὸς, ἀτμίδος κατέχεται τὰ ἐν κύκλῳ πάντα. καὶ ἡ ὄψις ἐπισκιάζεται, ἢ ἀνακοπὴν ἴσχει, πρὸς ὡ ἀδυνατοῦσα.

69. Cunaeus presumably means the time right after the exiles returned from Babylonia, which was marked by conflict with the Samaritans and disagreements within the community.

70. 1 Maccabees 4:47.

71. 1 Maccabees (which is written in Greek) is now thought to have been based on a Hebrew original of the second century BCE.

72. Exodus 30:10.

73. Leviticus 16:18.

74. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Vessels of the Sanctuary 10:11.

75. Judges 1:1–2, 20:18.

76. 1 Samuel 10:22. These texts actually say only that the people consulted God.

77. Deuteronomy 34:10.

78. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Service on the Day of Atonement 1:2.

79. By contact with a ritually unclean person or thing.

80. Cunaeus is assuming that the word *matkinin*, “arrange,” means (as it often does) “make a change in the law.”

81. In the techniques of the rituals.

82. Which the high priest would have to perform himself.

83. Which it was feared might happen while he was in the Holy of Holies.

84. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Service on the Day of Atonement 1:3. מתקינין לו כהן גדול אחר שאם יארע בזה פיסול יעבוד האחר תחתיו. בין שאירע בו פיסול קודם תמיד של שחר בין שאירע בו פיסול אחר שהקריב קרבנות זה שנכנס תחתיו אינו צריך חינוך. עבר יום הכפורים הרי הראשון חוזר לעבודתו והשני עובר. ואם מת הראשון זה שני מתמני [מתמנה] תחתיו. *They arrange another high priest for him so that if this one accidentally becomes invalid, the other one will serve in his place. Whether he becomes invalid before the daily morning sacrifice or after he has made his offerings, his substitute does not need any training. Once the Day of Atonement has passed, the first one returns to his duties and the second moves on; and if the first one dies, the second is appointed in his place.*

85. Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 17.6.4 in modern editions.

86. Though neither Josephus nor Cunaeus say so explicitly, the Rabbis were generally concerned that the high priest might have an emission which would make him impure. Josephus says (perhaps out of respect) that the high priest was dreaming about his own wife.

87. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Vessels of the Sanctuary 4:16.

88. From the Greek *katholikos*.

89. I.e. the Sanhedrin.

90. *And he will take a brazier full of coals from the altar, from before the Lord... and he will bring it within the veil; and put the incense on the fire before the Lord, so that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat which is upon the testimony, lest he die.* Cf. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Service on the Day of Atonement 1:7.

91. Leviticus 16:2. בענן אראה על הכפרת.

92. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Service on the Day of Atonement 1:7. משביעין אנו עליך במי ששכן את שמו בבית הזה שלא תשנה דבר מכל דבר שאמרנו לך.

93. Since this last comment does not come from Maimonides, it is not clear what Cunaeus is referring to here; he may have in mind the fact that the high priest was read to from the Bible to keep him from falling asleep.

94. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Service on the Day of Atonement 3:7.

95. Ibid.

96. Cunaeus seems to be bothered by the degree to which the practices associated with the scapegoat in Rabbinic law have no explicit basis in the Bible.

97. מתרבה בגדים.

98. מתרבה משחה.

99. ריבוי בגדים ומשחה.

100. Though Maimonides, whom Cunaeus is summarizing here, doesn't mention the people, Cunaeus seems to be importing the idea from the biblical source for the priest's sin offering (Leviticus 4:3).

101. Leviticus 4:3.

102. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Vessels of the Sanctuary 4:12-13. וממנין כהן גדול הוא ראש לכל הכהנים ומושחין אותו בשמן המשחה. ומלבישין אותו בגדי כהונה גדולה. ואם אין שם שמן המשחה מרבין אותו בגדי כהונה גדולה בלבד. כשם שמתרבה בשמן המשחה כך מתרבה בבגדים: כיצד מרבים אותו בבגדים. לובש שמנה בגדים ופושטן וחוזר ולובשן למחר שבעת ימים יום אחר יום. וכשם שריבוי בגדים שבעה כך משיחה בשמן שבעה יום אחר יום.

103. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Vessels of the Sanctuary 4:14. אין בין כהן משוח בשמן המשחה למרובה בגדי' אלא פר שמביא כהן המשוח אם שגג באחד מן מצו' שחייב עליהן חטא.

104. Cunaeus brought the previous two quotes in Hebrew without translation.

105. The sons of Aaron.

106. Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 7.14.7.

107. A saying found in the Roman satire called *Apocolocyntosis*, which is full of improbable events.

108. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Vessels of the Sanctuary 4:4-5.

109. Cf. Luke 1:8.

110. As usual, Cunaeus is repeating the reference to the Talmud he has found in the *Kesef Mishneh*.

111. Literally, "hewn stone."

112. Cunaeus presumably means the *bet av*, one of the twenty-four groups of priestly families descended from two of the sons of Levi.

113. Josephus *Jewish War* 5.5.7.

114. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Entrance into the Sanctuary 6:11-12. בית דין הגדול היו יושבין בלשכת הגזית ועיקר מעשיהם התדיר שהיו יושבין ודנין את הכהונה ובודקין הכהנים ביוחסין ובמומים: כל כהן שנמצא פסול בייחוסו לובש שחורים ומתעטף שחורים ויוצא מן העזרה: וכל מי שנמצא שלם וכשר לובש לבנים ונכנס ומשמש עם אחיו הכהנים: מי שנמצא כשר בייחוסו ונמצא בו מום: יושב בלשכת העצים ומתלע עצים למערכה וחולק בקדשים עם אנשי בית אב שלו ואוכל.

115. Cunaeus quotes the original without translation.

116. Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 14.13.10.

117. The Parthians had taken him captive and made his brother Antigonus high priest.

118. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of the Sanhedrin 2:1.

119. Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 4.8.17. πρᾶσσέτω δὲ μηδὲν ὁ βασιλεὺς δίχα τοῦ ἀρχιερέως καὶ τῆς τῶν γερουσιαστῶν γνώμης. This idea does not appear in the text on which Josephus is basing himself (Deuteronomy 17:13-20), but Josephus (like Cunaeus after him) has been influenced by the classical idea that the best form of government is aristocracy, and if there is a king he should at least be advised by aristocrats like the Sanhedrin.

120. Exodus 19:6.

121. 2 Chronicles 19:11. Though this term was originally a Persian title for the governor of a province, Cunaeus presumably has in mind something much more modest. The passage in Chronicles has here “officers.”

122. 1 Chronicles 26:30.

123. 1 Chronicles 26:31–32.

124. 1 Chronicles says they were members of the family of Hevron, who was one of the grandsons of Levi.

125. I.e. the Judeans.

126. Cunaeus is combining two critiques of one-man rule: a Roman one, in which *superbia* (arrogance) causes a leader to place himself above the other citizens; and a Jewish one, in which only God can be the true ruler (i.e. the “theocracy” he says existed in the time of the Bible).

127. Cunaeus presumably means “people” in the sense of the non-Levite masses, while “community” would include the aristocrats of the priestly class and the Sanhedrin.

128. Cunaeus is using “Israelite” here not as he has elsewhere, but as Maimonides does—to refer to Jews who are neither priests nor Levites.

129. It is not clear where Cunaeus has gotten this idea. He may be extrapolating from the rule that those who could not go to Jerusalem had to gather in their own towns.

130. All the above comes from Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Vessels of the Sanctuary 6:1–2 (though Maimonides says that the problem was not that the people had to travel great distances, but that they could not all fit into the Temple courtyard).

131. Ibid. 6:3. שלא יצאו מעונג שבת לצום.

132. Ibid. 6:4–6. The Torah was read in public on these occasions.

133. Though this rhetorical device (“see for yourself”) was often used by classical authors, it should not be taken to mean that such primary sources were actually available to the reader, or even that the author himself had seen them.

134. Cunaeus is presumably thinking of the common expression “the sons of Aaron, the priests.”

135. Cf. 1 Chronicles 15:16–22, which does not however say that there were twenty-four families of these.

136. Gibeon was a Canaanite city that tricked Joshua into making peace; rather than break this treaty the Israelites decided to turn its inhabitants into conscripted laborers. See Joshua 9.

137. Literally “subjects.”

138. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Forbidden Intercourse 12:22–23.
139. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Vessels of the Sanctuary 3:8.
140. Ibid.
141. Ibid. 3:9–11. Unless the Bible specified otherwise, the violation of such a negative commandment was to be punished by lashes.
142. Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 8.3.
143. Plutarch *Moralia* 819e.
144. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of the Temple 7:2. לא יכנס אדם להר הבית. במקלו או במנעל שברגליו או באפונדתו ובמעות הצרורין לו בסדינו.
145. Mark 11:16. ἵνα μὴ τις διενέγκῃ σκεῦος διὰ τοῦ ἱεροῦ.
146. As in classical texts, “Asia” is today’s Asia Minor.
147. The midrash known as *Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer*, which the *Kesef Mishneh* mentions as the source of this opinion in his comment on the passage from which Cunaeus has taken it, Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of the Temple 2:2.
148. Midrash Genesis Rabba 2:7.
149. These references come from the same comment of the *Kesef Mishneh*. However, the tractate of the Jerusalem Talmud to which Cunaeus refers has no twenty-third chapter; he has misread the letters כ”ג, which stand for *kohen gadol* (high priest)—the name of one of the chapters—as their numerical equivalent.
150. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of the Temple 2:2. שנברא ממקום כפרתו.
151. Cunaeus seems to mean that even though the Jews admit that Jerusalem is the spot where their sins were forgiven, they refuse to believe that this was accomplished by the Crucifixion.
152. Josephus *Against Apion* 2.8.
153. Josephus *Jewish War* 6.9.3. This is misleading—Josephus is describing the Passover sacrifice made by the entire people at once, on the eve of the festival; in fact, Josephus mentions it as a means of calculating the size of the nation.
154. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of the Daily Offerings and Additional Offerings 2:4. ראשונה מערכה גדולה שעליה מקריבין התמיד עם שאר הקרבנות: שנייה בצדה קטנה שממנה לוקחין אש במחתה להקטיר קטורת בכל יום: שלישית אין עליה כלום אלא לקיים מצוות האש שנאמר אש תמיד תוקד.
155. This detail is not found in Maimonides; perhaps Cunaeus has added it to strengthen his claim that the incense altar was placed outside the Holy of Holies.
156. Leviticus 6:6.
157. Josephus *Jewish War* 2.17.6.
158. I.e. they brought enough wood to last the entire year.

159. The reason Cunaeus suggests there were twenty to thirty families at a time is presumably that—assuming each family had about ten or twelve people—he can then arrive at the figure of 120,000 which he has already mentioned as the population of Jerusalem.

160. A sacrifice which was burned entirely on the altar.

161. Cunaeus seems to have read Maimonides, who says (see below) that “this is” the wood offering, as though he had said “this is the reason for it.”

162. I.e. to perform the practices associated with mourning, such as sitting on the ground.

163. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Vessels of the Sanctuary 6:9. זמן קבוע היה למשפחה לצאת ליערים להביא עצים למערכה; ויום שיגיע לבני משפחה זו להביא העצים היו מקריבין עולות נדבה וזהו קרבן העצים וזהו להם כמו יום טוב.

164. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of the Temple 7:3.

165. Ibid. 7:4.

166. That is, whether they were found in the Torah and were not an innovation of the Rabbis.

167. The issue, according to Maimonides, was that the cubit of floor space taken up by the wall could have come from either (or both) of the two rooms it was dividing.

168. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of the Temple 4:2.

169. Ibid. 8:1–6. Cunaeus seems to be saying that the preferential treatment given to the priests was (as with the separate courtyards in the Temple) a proper expression of piety.

170. One of the most famous Hellenistic poets.

171. Callimachus *Hymns and Epigrams* 4.286. γηλεχέες θεράποντες ἀσιγήτοιο λέβητος. The priests attended the Pythia, a woman who gave oracles while suspended in a vat which hung over a cleft in the rock.

172. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of the Temple 8:2–3. Maimonides cites these verses to support specific features of the law on watches, but he does not feel the need to offer any biblical proofs for the institution itself.

173. Numbers 3 describes the duties of the Levites in the Tabernacle, to which Cunaeus is comparing the Talmudic description of their Temple duties.

174. And therefore (as Cunaeus has already pointed out) very unlike the portable Tabernacle.

175. As he has done before, Cunaeus is contrasting the written law of the Torah with the rulings of the Rabbis, which he considers worthless.

176. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Vessels of the Sanctuary 7:1.

177. Ibid. 7:14.

178. The Roman satirist.
179. Juvenal *Satires* 6.397. The job of the *haruspex* was to interpret the future from the shape and appearance of the organs removed from sacrificed animals, and by observing the heavens.
180. I.e. his Seleucid successors.
181. The political leader of the returnees from Babylonia. See Haggai 1.
182. Cunaeus is presumably thinking of Josephus' critique of the Zealots, whom he blamed for stirring up pointless resistance and turning the Jews against each other. If not for them, Cunaeus is saying, the Jews would have defeated the Romans.
183. A Jewish work of the early Middle Ages which assigned specific dates to the events of the Bible and the Second Temple period.
184. Rabbi Yose ben Halafta, the Talmudic authority who is traditionally considered the author of *Seder Olam*.
185. היה ר' יוסי אומר מגלגלין זכות ליום וזכות וחובה ליום חובה שנמצאת אומר כשחרב הבית בראשונה אותו היום מוצאי שבת היה ומוצאי שביעי היתה ומשמרתו של יהויריב היתה ותשעה באב היה וכן שנייה וזוה [עונם] ובזה הלויים עומדים על דוכנן ואומרים שירה. וישב עלהם את אונם [עונם].
186. According to Josephus, Titus never meant for the Temple to be destroyed, and even tried to prevent it.
187. I.e. the Jewish state.
188. An aphorism of the Roman comic writer Publilius Syrus.
189. The destruction of a city was a favorite source of pathos for classical historians (including Josephus) who liked to make their work dramatic.
190. Matthew 24:2. οὐ μὴ ἀφεθῇ ὧδε λίθος ἐπὶ λίθον, ὃς οὐ μὴ καταλυθῇσεται.
191. The Sabines were an ancient Italian people, the first to be taken over by the early Romans, whose disappointed hopes had become proverbial.
192. Emperor 117–138 CE.
193. The Jupiter whose cult was on the Capitoline Hill in Rome.
194. Cunaeus presumably means ancient authorities like Josephus.
195. Cf. 2 Kings 17:24.
196. The region north of the Black Sea.
197. The Persian state that bordered the Roman Empire to the East.
198. The Hellenistic poet Theocritus, in *Idylls* 14.48–49.
199. οὐτε λόγῳ τινὸς ἄξιοι, οὐτ' ἀριθμητοὶ,
δύστανον μεγαρῆς ἀτιμοσάτη ἐνὶ μοῖρᾳ.

The point seems to be that the inhabitants of Megara (in Greece) were, like the Samaritans, an entire people held in contempt.

200. I.e. *Seder Eliyahu Rabba*.

201. למה היה דוד המלך דומה לכותי המחזיר על הפתחים.

202. The king of the Philistine city of Gath; cf. 1 Samuel 21:10–15.

203. This comment implies that the Samaritans were so pitiable because by leaving their own communities, they had lost their rights as citizens (the states of classical antiquity were reluctant to extend such rights to immigrants).

204. Cunaeus is referring to the legislation of the Christian emperor Justinian (sixth century CE).

205. Apparently a legal device that allowed them to use their own procedures.

206. The “arrogance” mentioned in *Novella* 129 seems to refer to the frequency with which Samaritans who had ostensibly become Christians kept their traditional practices, such as observing the seventh day as the Sabbath.

207. 2 Kings 17:30–31.

208. In classical society, cooperation between states often centered on mutually respected cults.

209. 2 Kings 17:24–29.

210. “Superstition” was the standard Roman term for unfamiliar foreign religions.

211. Who was a contemporary of Alexander the Great.

212. This description of the sects is based on Josephus *Jewish War* 2.8.14; but though Josephus does criticize the Sadducees, he also praises the Pharisees for their legal interpretations.

213. Cunaeus seems to think that the Essenes were the last of the three sects to develop, presumably because Josephus mentions them last; but Josephus never attempts to date the origins of any of the sects. His order (Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes) is based on the relative size and importance of each group.

214. Josephus emphasizes their purity, simplicity, and abstinence, which he admired a great deal.

215. Cunaeus’ feeling that such disputes were worse than idolatry presumably had something to do with his experience of the religious conflicts of the seventeenth century.

216. Cunaeus presumably means not that there were no well-educated men, but that there was no one who had the divine inspiration needed to give the laws their deeper meaning; this is why he emphasizes that the scholars of the time were “mortal” and “human.” As he explains in III.8, this situation continued until Christ gave the Apostles the ability to understand the mysteries of the Bible.

217. This is how Cunaeus characterizes the entire process of Rabbinic interpretation and the Oral Law which it served, just as he has already attacked the Rabbis for drawing conclusions not found in the text of the Bible itself.

218. Maimonides says this in the preface to his *Commentary on the Mishna*. According to tradition, when Elijah returns to announce the Messiah he will settle all the unresolved controversies of the Rabbis.

219. As opposed to being discussed in groups.

220. The Rabbinic tradition explains such disputes as the product not of interpretation *per se*, but of the carelessness with which students preserved the explanations they had received from their teachers, in a line of transmission going back to Moses.

221. The Nazirites were Israelites who took vows of abstinence (Numbers 6); the Kenites and the Rechabites were originally foreign tribes (and possibly one and the same tribe) that were incorporated into the Israelite nation.

222. By “recent times” Cunaeus means everything after the First Temple period.

223. Josephus *Life* 2.

224. Ibid.

225. Josephus *Jewish War* 2.13.4.

226. Followers of a man from the Golan named Judah, who refused to pay Roman taxes.

227. All this is essentially Josephus’ view of things.

228. 44–46 CE.

229. Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 20.5.1.

230. This man, whose name is not known, is also referred to as “the Egyptian” in the New Testament (Acts 21:38).

231. Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 20.8.6.

232. Procurator 55–60 CE.

233. Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 20.8.5. ληστηρίων ἢ χώρα ἀνεπλήσθη, καὶ γοήτων ἀνθρώπων, οἱ τὸν ὄχλον ἡπάτων. δείξειν ἔφασαν ἐναργῇ τέρατα ἢ σημεῖα κατὰ τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ πρόνοιαν γενόμενα· καὶ πολλοὶ πεισθέντες, τῆς ἀφροσύνης τιμορίας ὑπέσχον.

234. Cf. Cicero *On Behalf of Murena* 22.

235. I.e. the seven nations, whom Cunaeus has already described as completely devoid of human decency.

236. Cf. Josephus *Against Apion* 1.22.

237. Though Cunaeus wants to prove the Jews’ bravery as soldiers, the stories in Josephus to which he refers actually talk about their resistance to changing their customs even under threat of punishment.

238. ἔα αὐτοῦς στρατεύσιν τοῖς πατρώοις ἔθεσιν ἐμμένοντας, καὶ κατὰ ταῦτα ζώντας. This passage actually comes from *Jewish Antiquities* 11.8.5, a mistake that implies either that Cunaeus was consulting not the text of Josephus but a selection

of passages from his various works; or that Cunaeus himself had first copied down passages from different places and only then inserted them into his text (which could also explain why he sometimes misquotes or misspells the Greek).

239. In 479 BCE.

240. A fifth-century BCE poet who wrote an epic about the Persians.

241. The passage comes from a description of the various armies, each from a different nation, which took part in Xerxes' invasion of Greece.

242. Josephus *Against Apion* 1.22.

Τῷ δ' ὀπιθεν διέβαινε γένος θαυμαστὸν ἰδέσθαι,
Γλῶσσαν μὲν φοίνισσαν ἀπὸ στομάτων ἀφιέντες.
᾿Ωικεε δ' ἐν Σολύμοις ὄρεσι πλατέῃ ἐνὶ λίμνῃ,
Αὐχμαλέοι κορυφᾶς, τροχοκούριδες· αὐτὰρ ὕπερθεν
Ἴππων δαρτὰ πρόσωπ' ἐφόρουν ἐσκληκότα καπνῷ.

243. Like some other classical authors, Josephus equates "Solymi" with "Hierosolyma," i.e. Jerusalem, which he takes as a Greek name (*hieros* means "holy" in Greek). The mountains would then be the Judean hills.

244. τροχοκούριδες. I.e. like a monk's tonsure.

245. Leviticus 19:27. As he often does when quoting Latin and Greek texts as clauses within one of his own sentences, Cunaeus has adjusted the grammar of the biblical quote; here he changes it from second to third person: **שלא יקפו פאת ראשם**.

246. Poseidon.

247. Homer *Odyssey* 5:282–84.

Τὸν δ' ἐξ αἰθιοπῶν ἀνίων κρείων ἐνοσίχθων
Τηλόθεν ἐκ Σολύμων ὄρεων ἴδεν· εἴσατο γὰρ οἱ
Πόντον ἐπιπλείων.

248. Pisidia was a country in southwestern Asia Minor.

249. Cunaeus seems to be thinking here of Aramaic rather than Phoenician as such.

250. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Kings and Wars 5:1. **מלחמת המצוה היא מלחמת שבעה עממים ומלחמת עמלק ועזרת ישראל מיד צר שבא עליהן**.

251. This reference is incorrect; and though these peoples are mentioned in chapters 23 and 33, God says there (and in Deuteronomy 7) that he himself will destroy them. Only Deuteronomy 20:17—which is the one source Maimonides does quote—tells the people themselves to do so.

252. Deuteronomy 7:1.

253. Ibid. 25:17–9.

254. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Kings and Wars 5:1. **מלחמת הרשות היא המלחמה שנלחם המלך עם שאר העם להרחיב גבול ישראל ולהרבות גדלתו ושמעו**.

255. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Kings and Wars 6:1-4.

256. That is, the age of monotheism. Cf. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Kings and Wars 6:1.

257. Though Maimonides does not say this, it does suit Cunaeus' ideas about natural law.

258. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Kings and Wars 9:1.

259. Cunaeus is not using the term "kabbalistic" in its modern sense; he is simply echoing Maimonides, who says that the six precepts were a *kabbalah*—a tradition—from Moses.

260. Cunaeus has slightly misunderstood the point of Maimonides, who says (see note 262 below) that though intuition may tell us this is so, it is also commanded explicitly by the text of the Torah.

261. Genesis 9:4.

262. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Kings and Wars 9:1. על ששה דברים נצטווה אדם הראשון על עכום ועל ברכת השם ועל שפיכות דמים ועל גילוי עריות ועל הגזל ועל הדינים: אף על פי שכולן הן קבלה בידינו ממשנה רבינו והדעת נוטה להן מכלל דברי תורה יראה שעל אלו נצטווה: הוסיף לנח אבר מן החי שנאמר 'אך בשר בנפשו דמו לא תאכלו': נמצאו שבעה מצוות: וכן היה הדבר בכל העולם עד אברהם בא אברהם נצטווה יתר על אלו במילה.

263. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Idolatry and Heathenism 1:1.

264. Maimonides suggests that at first men worshiped the stars only because they saw that God had given them a place of honor.

265. Since Maimonides doesn't draw any distinction between the worship of stars and of planets, it may be that Cunaeus is singling out the latter as an even lower form of religion (as well as drawing on the association between the planets and the Greco-Roman pantheon).

266. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Idolatry and Heathenism 1:3.

267. According to the Midrash, Nimrod the king of Ur imprisoned Abraham for ten years and tried but failed to kill him.

268. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Idolatry and Heathenism 1:2. עמודי של עולם. Though Maimonides is calling him "the pillar of the world," Cunaeus (as he does in other places) interprets *olam* "world" to mean "age," as it does in certain Hebrew phrases.

269. I.e. the practice of idolatry before the time of Abraham.

270. While the Rabbis thought such a city should be destroyed for its impiety, Cunaeus seems to think it was guilty of violating natural law, which also governed the relations between nations. He says that Maimonides' discussion of idolatry "sheds light" on this issue because if, outside of Abraham's community, all cities were idolatrous, they were therefore violating at least one of the seven precepts and had to be treated accordingly.

271. Joshua 11:19–20.

272. Fetials were Roman priests in charge of the rituals of warfare and diplomacy; Cunaeus is comparing them to the Israelites who went ahead of the army to offer peace.

273. Though they would have become slaves of the Israelites.

274. Joshua 9.

275. Assuming, of course, it is true that even though they were Canaanites they could still reach a settlement.

276. Cunaeus seems to be conflating the end of Joshua, chapter 8 (where Joshua reads all the laws to the people), with the beginning of chapter 9 (“When... the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites heard of this,” i.e. Joshua’s victories) and concluding that it was the law of destroying the seven nations that they had heard about.

277. In Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Kings and Wars 6:5. Maimonides, however, says that the Gibeonites were afraid because they did *not* know the law, which would in fact have given them another chance.

278. Since neither the Bible nor Maimonides mention the idea of expiation in a voluntary war, Cunaeus may be inferring it from the statement (Deuteronomy 20:18) that the Canaanites had to be destroyed so that they would not cause the people to sin.

279. Thus, as in the case of the seven Noahide laws, the nation to be destroyed has violated natural law.

280. It is because the sins listed here are all some form of incest that Cunaeus describes the Canaanites as unnatural.

281. Leviticus 18:25.

282. Deuteronomy 23:4–7.

283. These actions are similar to those of the Canaanites in the sense that they also show a disregard for the natural rights of others.

284. The Israelites.

285. The seven nations.

286. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Kings and Wars 6:6. אף על פי שאין שואלים בשלום אם השלימו מעצמם תחלה מקבלין אותן.

287. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Kings and Wars 7:1. אחד מלחמת הרשות ואחד מלחמת המצוה ממניין כהן לדבר אל העם בשעת המלחמה ומושחין אותו בשמן המשחה וזהו הנקרא משוח המלחמה.

288. Deuteronomy 20:3–4.

289. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Kings and Wars 7:2–3.

290. Maimonides actually says that the priest recites the words at the border; but Cunaeus has misread the word *sefar*, “border,” as *sefer*, “book.”

291. Deuteronomy 20:5–9.

292. 1 Samuel 11:6–7.

293. A number of emperors were considered gods after their deaths.

294. The knights were a social class ranked just below the Roman Senate.

295. Suetonius *Augustus* 24.

296. Digest 49.16.4.12.

297. Josephus *Against Apion* 2.34. *περὶ γε τοῦ μήτε χλευάζειν, μήτε βλασφημεῖν τοὺς νομιζόμενους θεοὺς παρ’ ἐτ’ροῖς αὐτῆς ἔνεκα προσηγορίας τοῦ θεοῦ.*

298. I.e. because they were called God.

299. Exodus 22:27. *אלהים לא תקלל.*

300. Josephus *Against Apion* 1.22.

301. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Kings and Wars 6:11. *שצדיק על עיירות כותים בשבת ועושין עמהם מלחמה בשבת.*

302. Cf. 1 Maccabees 2:39–41.

303. A historian of the Hellenistic period.

304. Josephus *Against Apion* 1.22.

305. The daughter of the Seleucid king Antiochus I.

306. One of Alexander’s generals, and the first Greek ruler of Egypt.

307. Cunaeus is presumably relying on *Jewish War* 2.16.4, where King Agrippa says that Pompey was able to besiege the Jews successfully because he made his preparations on the Sabbath. However, it is clear from *Antiquities* 14.4.2–3 that the Jews did in fact respond to direct attacks on that day; but since Pompey knew that they would ignore anything less than an attack, he made sure to build his siege works on the Sabbath, when the Jews would not try to tear them down. Cunaeus, who was presumably aware of this, chooses to ignore it in order to strengthen his point.

308. Cunaeus may have in mind the self-sacrifice with which the Maccabees and their followers were later associated, and which made them models for the Christian martyrs of the Roman Empire.

309. Josephus *Against Apion* 1.22.

310. Augury—watching the sky and the direction in which birds flew—was a traditional form of Roman prophecy.

311. This is a paraphrase of Cicero *Letters to Friends* 6.6.

312. Pliny *Natural History* 28.17.

313. Deuteronomy 22:5: *A woman shall not wear the appurtenances of a man, and a man shall not wear women's clothing; for all who do this are an abomination to the Lord.*

314. Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 4.7.43. φυλάσσετε μάλιστα ἐν ταῖς μάχαις, ὥστε μήτε γυναῖκα ἀνδρικῇ σκευῇ χρῆσθαι, μήτε ἄνδρα στολῇ γυναικεῖω.

315. That is, they were made to wear the toga. Although this was the traditional garment of Roman men, it was also worn by prostitutes, who spent their time in the public places frequented by men, where decent women would not go.

316. Martial *Epigrams* 10.52. The joke is that a eunuch wearing a toga looked like a woman (Thelys means *female*) who was being forced to wear one.

317. Xenophon *Education of Cyrus* 8.40.

318. As in his description of the Egyptians in I.5, Cunaeus is referring to the classical theory that people who live in warm southern climates (like Egyptians and Jews) are too soft, and those who live in cold northern ones (like Germans and Britons) are too hard.

319. His name was actually Lucius.

320. Seneca *To Helvia on Consolation* 7.1. Seneca was a Roman thinker in the court of Nero (first century CE), who wrote an essay in which he used philosophy to comfort his mother Helvia during the time of his exile from Rome.

321. Since Alexander and his army were Macedonians, this refers to the colonies he founded in the East.

322. A region of Greece.

323. The Phoenician colony of Carthage, in modern Tunisia.

324. These were Carthaginians who established communities on the Spanish coast.

325. In classical geography, "Asia" is Asia Minor and "Africa" is North Africa above the Sahara.

326. Josephus *Against Apion* 2.4.

327. The second Ptolemy to rule Egypt, in the third century BCE.

328. Ptolemy VI and his sister-wife.

329. Josephus *Against Apion* 2.5: They were put in charge of the army.

330. Augustus' friend and military commander.

331. Proconsul of Asia, 31–27 BCE.

332. Proconsul of Asia in 4 BCE.

333. Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 16.6.1–7.

334. Cunaeus may mean to imply that because these communities were so cut off, they did not know they had already sent the Jerusalemites more than enough money.

335. John Hyrcanus, the Hasmonean ruler.

336. The son of Demetrius, who was in turn the nephew of Antiochus Epiphanes.

337. Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 7.15.3. The dating (which is very inaccurate) belongs to Josephus. The Greek talent is equal to about 26 kg.

338. Ibid.

339. This story is found in Herodotus *Histories* 1.187, though it is told about Nitocris, who like Semiramis was a legendary queen of Assyria.

340. 1 Kings 10:22: *Once every three years the fleet of ships of Tarshish used to come bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.*

341. Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 8.7.4. ὅτι τοῦ ἀργυρίου τοσοῦτον ἐποίησε πλῆθος ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ὁ βασιλεὺς, ὅσον ἦν καὶ λίθων.

342. That is, the right to try their own civil cases.

343. Cf. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Kings and Wars 5:9. When Cunaeus calls the law “harsh” he is presumably referring to the statement that one may not leave the land unless there is such great famine that the price of wheat has doubled.

344. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Kings and Wars 5:12. כל הדר בחוצה לארץ. כאילו עובד עבום.

345. 1 Samuel 26:19.

346. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Kings and Wars 5:9.

347. Ibid. 5:8. מפני שמעשה מקולקלים יותר מכל הארצות.

348. Ibid. 5:7. שאלסכנדריאה בכלל האיסור.

349. That Maimonides feels the need to specify Alexandria may well have to do not with the behavior of its Jews, but with the fact that it was on the coast of Egypt and had never been considered a part of the country proper (whose borders he gives in the same chapter).

350. I.e. the fighting between Alexander’s successors over the territory between Syria and Egypt.

351. Josephus *Against Apion* 1.22. Josephus attributes this information to Hecataeus, and there is no other evidence for a high priest with this name.

352. This is an odd proof of persecution. By “undisturbed,” the text means “given an exemption from their civic obligations” (in this case guardianship of a minor). Cunaeus may be influenced here by the fact that in the late Roman Empire, people often measured their status by their ability to get out of just such civic obligations.

353. It was a Purim custom to burn Haman in effigy; though the crosses mentioned here could be the gallows on which Haman planned to hang Mordecai and was then hanged himself, the law itself assumes they are anti-Christian symbols.

354. This presumably refers to the restrictions placed on the marriages of priests, and of people who were somehow related to each other.

355. *Codex* 1.9.7, "On Jews and Heaven-worshippers."

356. II.3.

357. 2 Samuel 12:8.

358. Leviticus 18:18.

359. Cf. Luke 16:18; Mark 10:11-12.

360. Cunaeus mentions these three specific emperors (from the late fourth and early fifth centuries CE) because they are all mentioned in the above passages of Justinian's *Codex* as authors of the rules on Jewish marriage and litigation.

361. It is not clear whether Cunaeus is ignoring the development of rabbinic civil law because he considers it illegitimate, or because he thinks of the Talmud as a repository of biblical interpretation rather than a source of contemporary legal procedure.

362. I.e. civil as opposed to religious law.

363. I.e. the Ten Commandments.

364. Cicero.

365. I.e. so that everyone can rest from their labors.

366. *Seder Eliyahu Rabba*, section 2.

367. That is, the six days of creation preceding the first Sabbath represent six millennia of labor, to be followed by a seventh millennium of peace.

368. Tacitus *Histories* 5.4.4.

369. In the same passage Tacitus reports a belief that the Jews originally came from Mount Ida in Crete, and that their name was corrupted from *Idaioi* (Ideans) to *Ioudaioi* (Jews). If the Ideans worshiped Saturn, then naturally they would have honored the seventh day.

370. In his comments on Exodus 20:13.

371. That is, the last nine of the Ten Commandments; ibn Ezra omits the first ("I am the Lord your God...") because the number one is, like God, the unchanging source of all the others, and therefore beyond the natural world.

372. I.e. the Sun, the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, the Zodiac, and the Prime Mover (which turned the other spheres). The command to rest on the Sabbath, then, corresponds to the sphere of Saturn.

373. That is, we are to rest on the Sabbath because only then are both these unlucky planets dominant—one at night, and one during the day. For the rest of the week they rule on different days.

374. A paraphrase of Horace *Satires* 1.10, which makes fun of bad writers.

375. In his comments on Exodus 20:7.

376. The prophet.

377. 2 Kings 4:23.

378. In antiquity, Pythagoras was thought to have been the founder of a sect that lived according to his teachings.

379. The legendary second king of Rome, who was said to have founded its religious institutions.

380. According to Plutarch's *Life of Coriolanus* 25.2, Numa decreed that a herald would be appointed to make sure the official who performed the rites was not distracted.

381. Pliny *Natural History* 31.24.

382. Horace *Satires* 1.9. The line is spoken by a man who tells his friend he won't accompany him that day because it is a Sabbath, and he is a Jewish sympathizer. Cunaeus is implying that Pliny's gullibility puts him in the same category.

383. Horace *On the Art of Poetry* 10.

384. This comment is actually made by Rabbi Moses ben Nachman, on Deuteronomy 32:26. Cunaeus may have read it in a later Hebrew text, and confused the abbreviations Rambam (Maimonides) and Ramban (Nachmanides).

385. Josephus *Jewish War* 7.5.1. Josephus says that Titus saw a river in Syria which was dry for six days and ran on the seventh (i.e. the opposite of Pliny's stream) and was therefore called "sabbatical," though it had no connection to the Jews as such.

386. Author of a collection of all the omens and supernatural events mentioned in Livy's history of Rome.

387. Pliny did not write about "history" in the modern sense, but about "natural history," in particular, biology, botany, and geology.

388. That is, why the Ten Commandments had to be supplemented by the rest of the Torah.

389. Cunaeus presumably has in mind the "anxious superstitions" with which he associates Rabbinic Judaism.

390. When, that is, even the inferior societies of the gentiles had inexplicable practices.

391. The chief officials of Sparta.

392. This entire passage is based on Plutarch *On the Postponement of Divine Vengeance*, 550.

393. Plutarch *Table Talk* 4.5 ("Whether the Jews abstain from pork because of their reverence or aversion for the pig").

394. The point seems to be that since superstitious people react to the appearance of things rather than their deeper significance, they would not normally consider worshiping an animal with disgusting habits.

395. Possibly a turtle.

396. Horace *Epigrams* 1.12.21.

397. Juvenal *Satires* 15.10.

398. Petronius fragment 37.

399. I.e. that the Jews worshiped the pig. It was also believed that the Holy of Holies contained the image of a pig's head.

400. That is, instead of *porcinum numen adoret* he was reading *porcinum nomen abhorret*.

401. I.e. it cannot be translated into Latin.

402. Which in the Bible is sometimes a punishment for sin.

403. That is, one that they might catch innocently from pigs, but that would resemble leprosy and therefore shame its victims.

404. Leviticus 13.

405. Perhaps Cunaeus means that since Plutarch offers naturalistic explanations of Jewish practices, he would appreciate the theory that they avoided the pig because it spread disease. Such a theory could also coexist with Plutarch's belief that the Jews worshiped pigs.

406. Dionysos, the god of wine.

407. A Semitic harvest god.

408. Plutarch *Table Talk* 4.5.3.

409. Ibid. 4.6.2. The idea that the Festival of Tabernacles was in honor of Bacchus was not original to Plutarch; it was found in Greek literature long before his time (the first century CE).

410. Which was associated with Dionysos.

411. I.e. the *thyrsos*, also associated with Dionysos. Thus the four species associated with the Festival of Tabernacles are actually symbols of Dionysiac worship.

412. I.e. as though they were the *shofar* associated with the New Year.

413. A Roman god identified with Dionysos.

414. That is, the celebrations of the Bacchants.

415. Tacitus *Histories* 5.5: *While Liber established festive rites, the customs of the Jews are absurd and shabby.*

416. κώδωνας καὶ ῥοῖσκους.

417. Livy *History of Rome* 39.16.2.

418. In 186 BCE, the Senate—fearing that the worshipers of Bacchus in Italy were a secret society which threatened the safety of the state—outlawed the cult and punished a number of its members.

419. The speaker is actually not Cato, but one of the two consuls for that year.

420. Despite Cunaeus' comment, the participants in this cult were not generally abused even in Italy, let alone in the Greek world; and though classical writers gave a number of reasons for disliking Jews, they did not accuse them of being followers of Dionysos.

BOOK III

1. Author of biographies of the first twelve emperors.

2. Author of (among other works) histories of the emperors of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, and of the “year of the four emperors” in 69–70 CE.

3. Cf. Josephus *Against Apion* 2.17.

4. Modern anthropologists draw the same distinction between “shame cultures” and “guilt cultures.”

5. Josephus *Against Apion* 2.17. ὅτι τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ δόγματος ἐξενεγκεῖν οὐκ ἐτόλμησαν. Josephus is actually talking about philosophers like Plato, rather than legislators.

6. Josephus *Against Apion* 2.32.

7. That is, though the Greeks thought civic values could be taught by means of the traditional myths, they would have created a stronger state if, like Moses, they had taught the simple truth about God. Plato likewise did not think these myths should be used as a source of spiritual education.

8. Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 4.8–49, a review of Moses' legislation.

9. Josephus *Against Apion* 2.15–42, a comparison of biblical and Greek laws and beliefs.

10. I.e. Julius Caesar. The story is in Pliny *Letters* III.12.

11. A contemporary of Caesar and his political rival.

12. The name traditionally given to the author of *On the Sublime*, a book about literary theory.

13. A Hellenistic poet of the second century BCE, author of the *Argonautica*.

14. By “ancient leaders of the Church,” Cunaeus presumably means the patriarchs of the Hebrew Bible (see his discussion in III.1).

15. There are at least two reasons to think that Cunaeus himself studied with Jewish exiles from the Spanish Expulsion: he is familiar with the Hebrew/Aramaic terminology of rabbinic texts, and he sometimes transliterates Hebrew terms according to the Sephardic pronunciation used by the exiles.

16. That is, by relying too much on the judgments of others we risk abdicating our responsibility for our own thoughts.

17. Like Socrates in Plato’s *Apology*, Cunaeus claims that his rhetorical skills are poor.

18. I.e. by allowing the judgments of his readers to sway his feelings about his work.

19. Horace *Satires* 1.10.

20. Cf. 1 Peter 2:9.

21. Cf. Exodus 19:5.

22. As he has said earlier in this work, Cunaeus does not think that Jewish sovereignty ended with the monarchy.

23. Adam, Eve, Cain, and Abel.

24. I.e. when God accepted Abel’s offering and rejected Cain’s. Though Cain had not yet killed his brother—the act that earned him his mark—Cunaeus believes that because God is aware of our true natures, he condemned Cain from the start.

25. I.e. Satan. The one “carried off,” then, was not Abel—who died pure—but Cain, who was seduced.

26. The story of the Garden of Eden, which Milton, in *Paradise Lost*, likewise portrays as God’s victory over Satan.

27. Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 1.2. Josephus blames Cain for inventing farming, which was an unnatural process achieved by force (unlike shepherding, which depended on the natural behavior of animals), and for doing so in order to satisfy his own selfish desires.

28. Cf. Genesis 3:17–19.

29. In Genesis 1:5, the first day of creation is called *ehad*, or “one.”

30. A sixteenth-century Spanish commentary on the Bible, which Cunaeus presumably learned about from the exile community in Holland (a later edition was published there).

31. A Spanish poet and philosopher, and a relative of the biblical commentator.

32. אמר אחד לפי שהאחד הוא סימן להתחלה אשר אין תחלה קודמת לה.

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