

Intolerance, Polemics, and Debate in Antiquity

*Politico-Cultural, Philosophical, and Religious Forms
of Critical Conversation*

Edited by

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Contesting *Oikoumenē*: Resistance and Locality in Philo's *Legatio ad Gaium*

Pieter B. Hartog

Philo of Alexandria* was a philosopher, exegete, and politician who lived in the first century CE.¹ He belonged to the social and intellectual upper class of Alexandria and played a central role in the Judaeans response to the riots between Judaeans,² Greeks, and Egyptians that occurred in that city in 38 CE. His *Legatio ad Gaium* is a stylised account of the vicissitudes of the Judaeans embassy to the emperor Gaius Caligula, which Philo headed and which sought to convince Gaius of the injustice of the Greek and Egyptian attacks on the Judaeans and their property. The central theme of the *Legatio* is the relationship between Judaeans and Romans, and the work reads as a political treatise that deals with the place of the Judaeans within the Roman Empire.

My point in this chapter is that Philo's *Legatio* engages in an intricate and multilayered act of resistance. I argue that Philo's attitude towards the Romans

* I would like to thank Annette Merz and Sean Adams for their comments on an earlier version of this chapter.

1 On Philo's biography, see Daniel R. Schwartz, "Philo, His Family, and His Times," in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo*, ed. Adam Kamesar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 9–31; Mireille Hadas-Lebel, *Philo of Alexandria: A Thinker in the Jewish Diaspora*, Studies in Philo of Alexandria 7 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), esp. 27–89.

2 I will use the English term "Judaeans" to render the Greek term *Ioudaios*. This term has a more explicitly ethnic connotation than its alternative, "Jew," and this connotation ties in best with what I consider to be Philo's purpose with the *Legatio*: to define the position of the Ἰουδαίων ἔθνος (*Legatio* 210) within the global Roman Empire. On the terms "Jew" and "Judaeans" to render *Ioudaios*, see, for example, Steve Mason, "Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 38 (2007): 457–512; David M. Miller, "The Meaning of *Ioudaios* and Its Relationship to Other Group Labels in Ancient Judaism," *Currents in Biblical Research* 9 (2010): 98–126; idem, "Ethnicity Comes of Age: An Overview of Twentieth-Century Terms for *Ioudaios*," *Currents in Biblical Research* 10 (2012): 293–311; idem, "Ethnicity, Religion and the Meaning of *Ioudaios* in Ancient Judaism," *Currents in Biblical Research* 12 (2014): 216–65; Daniel R. Schwartz, *Judeans and Jews: Four Faces of Dichotomy in Ancient Jewish History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

is not straightforwardly negative³ or positive,⁴ but that his portrayal of Romans, Judaeans, and the *oikoumenē* in the *Legatio* is complex.⁵ To explain this complexity, I will employ the concepts of “resistance” and “locality” as they have been developed by scholars who study globalisation, and contend that Philo’s argument in the *Legatio* proceeds in two complementary directions. Firstly, Philo stresses the dependence of Roman rule on the character and deeds of the emperor. Secondly, Philo presents the Judaeans as a global *ethnos* and the guardians of traditional Roman values. These directions in Philo’s argument, which I describe below as moves of “localising *oikoumenē*” and “globalising the Judaeans,” come together in Philo’s assertion that under the rule of the mad emperor Gaius, the stability and future of the Roman Empire depended on the Judaeans.

1 Globalisation and the Roman Empire

The term “globalisation” is highly equivocal. It was first developed in economics to describe the economic effects of the Industrial Revolution, which resulted in an increased interdependence of the various parts of the globe.⁶

3 This position is associated in particular with Erwin R. Goodenough, *The Politics of Philo Judaeus: Practice and Theory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), esp. 21–41. In that work, Goodenough argued that no love was lost between Philo and the Romans, but that Philo could not always speak his mind freely out of fear of retaliations. For a more nuanced proposal—that Philo’s basic attitude towards the Romans was negative, even if he accepted some aspects of Roman rule—see Katell Berthelot, “Philo’s Perception of the Roman Empire,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 42 (2011): 166–87.

4 This has been argued by Maren Niehoff, who wrote that Philo’s writings “are the first detailed expression of a sustained pro-Roman attitude on the part of a Jewish intellectual”; *Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture*, *Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum* 86 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 112.

5 I am not the first to suggest that Philo’s attitude towards the Romans cannot be easily understood in terms of the categories “positive” or “negative.” For earlier suggestions that Philo’s position is complex, see, for example, A. H. M. Jones, review of E. R. Goodenough, *The Politics of Philo Judaeus*, *The Journal of Theological Studies* 40 (1939): 182–85; Ray Barraclough, “Philo’s Politics: Roman Rule and Hellenistic Judaism,” in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung: II: Principat: 21.1: Religion (Hellenistisches Judentum in römischer Zeit: Philon und Josephus)*, ed. Wolfgang Haase (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1984), 417–553; Sarah J. K. Pearce, *The Land of the Body: Studies in Philo’s Representation of Egypt*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 208 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 2–3.

6 Scholars have debated the extent of interconnectedness that is necessary to speak of “globalisation.” In the earliest years of research on globalisation, scholars concentrated on processes that literally spanned the entire world. Thus Roland Robertson defined globalisation

Globalisation, according to this view, is a quintessentially modern phenomenon with roots that go back no further than the eighteenth century.⁷ Yet this understanding of globalisation was soon criticised, both for its economic focus and for its Western bias.⁸ In response to this critique, scholars became aware of the cultural effects of increases in interconnectedness and the emergence of global spaces.⁹ Moreover, a historical approach developed, which recognised processes of globalisation in pre-industrial societies.¹⁰ What unites these approaches is their focus on rapid increases in connections between cultures, traditions, and persons, as well as the interdependence of these cultures, traditions, and persons within global spaces.

as “the compression of *the world* and the intensification of consciousness of *the world* as a whole” (*Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* [London: Sage, 1992], 8, my italics). Later studies problematised this focus on “the world” from two directions. Firstly, modern processes of globalisation do not normally affect the entire world: only part of the globe is involved in and profits from processes of globalisation, and globalisation may increase rather than mitigate the inequality between different parts of the world. See Anthony McGrew, “The Third World in the New Global Order,” in *Poverty and Development in the 1990s*, ed. Tim Allen and Alan Thomas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 255–72. Secondly, processes of globalisation can be recognised in geographical areas that do not span the entire world. For these two reasons, Nederveen Pieterse’s distinction between “globalisation” (as a process) and “globality” (as a geographical range spanning the entire globe) is helpful. See his “Ancient Rome and Globalisation: Decentering Rome,” in *Globalisation and the Roman World: World History, Connectivity and Material Culture*, ed. Martin Pitts and Miguel John Versluys (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 225–39, here 230.

7 So, for example, in Mike Featherstone, ed., *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity: A Theory, Culture & Society Special Issue* (London: Sage, 1990); John Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture* (Cambridge: Polity, 1999); Anthony Giddens, *Sociology*, 6th ed. (Malden, MA: Polity, 2009), 108–51.

8 On the Western bias expressed in the close association of globalisation with modernity, see most explicitly Nederveen Pieterse, “Ancient Rome and Globalisation,” 225–28; idem, *Globalization and Culture: Global Mélange*, 3rd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016); also Andre Gunder Frank, *ReORIENT: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

9 Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture*; Roland Robertson and Kathleen E. White, “What is Globalization?” in *The Blackwell Companion to Globalization*, ed. George Ritzer (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 54–66; Nederveen Pieterse, *Globalization and Culture*.

10 A. G. Hopkins, ed., *Globalization in World History* (London: Pimlico, 2002); Michael D. Bordo, Alan M. Taylor, and Jeffrey G. Williamson, eds., *Globalization in Historical Perspective* (Chicago: The University of Chicago University Press, 2003); Øystein S. LaBianca and Sandra Arnold Scham, eds., *Connectivity in Antiquity: Globalization as a Long-Term Historical Process*, Approaches to Anthropological Archaeology (London: Equinox, 2006); Justin Jennings, *Globalizations and the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

The attention that theories of globalisation devote to increased interconnectivity and interdependence between different cultures and traditions dovetails neatly with socio-historical circumstances in the Roman world. The Romans united the entire Mediterranean region under a single ruler and developed an advanced infrastructure.¹¹ The Roman Empire was held together by intertwined networks of roads and waterways, which facilitated the travel of goods, persons, and ideas across the empire.¹² Theories of globalisation provide an ideal starting point to study the effects of these increases in interconnectedness.¹³ Even so, the application of globalisation theories to the Roman world has met with the criticism that these theories have little innovative to offer in comparison with concepts already in use in Roman studies. “Globalisation” has been labelled a buzzword, used for its appeal to modern readers rather than for its analytical value.¹⁴ It will be necessary, therefore, to be more precise when it comes to the conceptual benefits of globalisation theories.

In my opinion, the main advantage of globalisation theories is that they stress the interdependence and complexity of different cultures and traditions and consider the boundaries between them as permeable, negotiable, fluid, and ever-changing in more explicit ways than other concepts and theories. In their conception of cultural traditions as ever-changing negotiations rather than bounded entities, globalisation theories have much in common with

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- 11 Lionel Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1974); David Abulafia, *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean* (London: Allen Lane, 2011).
- 12 Irad Malkin, Christy Constantakopoulou, and Katerina Panagopoulou, eds., *Greek and Roman Networks in the Mediterranean* (London: Routledge, 2009); Anna Collar, *Religious Networks in the Roman Empire: The Spread of New Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Laurens E. Tacoma, *Moving Romans: Migration to Rome in the Principate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Luuk de Ligt and Laurens E. Tacoma, eds., *Migration and Mobility in the Early Roman Empire*, Studies in Global Social History 23, Studies in Global Migration History 7 (Leiden: Brill, 2016); Elio Lo Cascio, Laurens E. Tacoma, and Mirjam J. Groen-Vallinga, eds., *The Impact of Mobility and Migration in the Roman Empire: Proceedings of the Twelfth Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Rome, June 17–19, 2015)*, Impact of Empire 22 (Leiden: Brill, 2017).
- 13 Cf. Pitts and Versluis’s observation that “[w]hereas there has been an undoubted paradigm shift towards identity, connectivity and networks in our understanding of the Roman world, the very concept that is widely discussed and debated in the social and historical sciences to understand all this—globalisation—is largely evaded”; “Globalisation and the Roman World: Perspectives and Opportunities,” in eadem, *Globalisation and the Roman World*, 3–31, here 20. Cf. Robert Witcher, “Globalisation and Roman Imperialism: Perspectives on Identities in Roman Italy,” in *The Emergence of State Identities in Italy in the First Millennium BC*, ed. Edward Herring and Kathryn Lomas (London: Accordia Research Institute, 2000), 213–25.
- 14 Frits G. Naerebout, “Global Romans? Is Globalisation A Concept That is Going to Help Us Understand the Roman Empire?” *Talanta* 38–39 (2006–07): 149–70.

postcolonial theories.¹⁵ For historical reasons, this is not surprising: the history of colonisation is an important pre-history for later globalisation processes.¹⁶ Nonetheless, theories of globalisation differ from postcolonial models in two important regards. To begin with, postcolonial models conceptualise intercultural interaction in terms of two cultural traditions which transform into a new, “hybrid” culture. Thus they tend to maintain rather than alleviate the distinction between “coloniser” and “colonised”—or “dominant” and “local” culture.¹⁷ Globalisation theorists often approach cultural manifestations in globalised contexts as manifold and multilayered entities, in which not just one dominant and one local culture, but a wide range of global and local cultures interact. Jan Nederveen Pieterse’s concept of “global *mélange*” is particularly useful in capturing the complexity of cultures in globalised spaces.¹⁸ It is thus particularly useful in the study of the Roman world, where cultural interactions were highly complex and involved a variety of different cultures and traditions. Philo’s works exemplify this complexity: Maren Niehoff has demonstrated that this Alexandrian author constructs a complex cultural and religious identity for himself by engaging in dialogues with Roman, Greek, Egyptian, and other traditions.¹⁹

A second difference between postcolonial models and theories of globalisation concerns the issue of power. Postcolonial models imply a power difference between interacting cultural traditions, whereas globalisation theories tend to view intercultural interactions less in terms of power differences, and more in terms of interdependence: the global depends on the local, and the local on the global. This involves the risk of overlooking existing power differences (for instance, between the Romans and local cultures), but it has the advantage of emphasising the need for Roman traditions, practices, and discourses to be adapted and adopted on a local level in order to be effective—and the need for local traditions to adopt and inscribe themselves into the global context of which they are a part. As I intend to show in this chapter, we can see this

15 A particularly important work is Homi K. Bhabha’s *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), where he develops the postcolonial concept of “hybridity.” For a postcolonial reading of the *Legatio*, see Torrey Seland, “‘Colony’ and ‘Metropolis’ in Philo: Examples of Mimicry and Hybridity in Philo’s Writing Back from the Empire?” *Études platoniciennes* 7 (2010): 11–33.

16 See the contributions to Hopkins, *Globalization in World History*.

17 For a similar critique of postcolonial models, see Pitts and Versluys, “Globalisation and the Roman World,” 6.

18 See Jan Nederveen Pieterse, “Hybridity, So What? The Anti-Hybridity Backlash and the Riddles of Recognition,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 18 (2001): 219–45; idem, *Globalization and Culture*.

19 *Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture*. See also below (p. 222) on the Ascalonites.

process at work in Philo's *Legatio*. Philo accentuates the local aspect of Roman rule by making it explicitly dependent on the character of the emperor. At the same time, Philo asserts the global presence of the Judaeans across the Roman Empire.

Another reason not to discard globalisation theories as a helpful tool of analysis is that the analytical potential of these theories has not yet been fully explored.²⁰ Previous studies on ancient globalisation have neglected Jewish and Christian evidence,²¹ which has the potential to broaden the scope of the concept and yield further insight into how it might be useful in the study of the ancient world. Moreover, studies on globalisation in pre-modern societies are not always explicit about which concepts they adopt from the complex array of globalisation theories. General appeals to "globalisation" are problematic due to the different meanings the term may carry,²² but they do not exclude the possibility that specific notions from studies of modern globalisation are useful in the study of the Roman Empire. For that reason, this chapter will focus on two concepts developed in modern globalisation theories—"resistance" and "locality"—and apply these to explain the purpose and argument of Philo's *Legatio*.

2 Resistance and Locality in Philo's *Legatio*

For many theorists of globalisation, "resistance" is an integral part of any globalisation process. This resistance results from the anxiety of inhabitants of global spaces about participating in a larger, interconnected space. As a reaction to the (real or perceived) imperialistic ambitions of global institutions—which George Ritzer neatly described with his term "grobalisation"²³—the inhabitants of potentially global spaces may attempt to reject all aspects of globalisation and retain a strong sense of local culture.²⁴ This is not the most common reaction, however. Most processes of globalisation result neither in

20 See Pieter B. Hartog and Jutta Jokiranta, "The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Hellenistic Context," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 24 (2017): 339–55, here 352–53.

21 See, for example, Pitts and Versluys, *Globalisation and the Roman World*.

22 So Naerebout, "Global Romans?"

23 *The Globalization of Nothing* (Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press, 2007); idem, "Grobalization," in *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Globalization*, ed. idem (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2012), online at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/book/10.1002/9780470670590> (last accessed 13 June, 2019).

24 On anti-globalisation movements, see Jeffrey M. Ayres, "Framing Collective Action Against Neoliberalism: The Case of the Anti-Globalization Movement," *Journal of World-Systems Research* 10 (2004): 11–34; Janet M. Conway, "Anti-Globalization Movements," in

the extinction nor in the unaffected preservation of local traditions. Resistance often takes subtler forms, in which the global changes its shape in the context of the local, and vice versa. In this scenario, the global does not impose itself on the local, but the two are mutually dependent. Roland Robertson adopted the term “glocalisation” to describe these subtler forms of resistance.²⁵ According to Robertson, distinctions between the global and the local are unhelpful, as the two occur side by side. On this view, resistance takes the form of “a desire to maintain at least a modicum of the ‘local’ within the more broadly ‘global.’”²⁶ In other words, the locus of resistance is not with either the global or the local, but *in between* the two: inhabitants of global spaces will find themselves constantly negotiating the global and the local in their self-perception and self-presentation.

Such subtle resistances are not unique to modern times. Tim Whitmarsh and others have shown how local groups in the Roman Empire upheld, developed, and reimagined their local identities in dialogue with the global context in which they found themselves.²⁷ And I have recently argued that the authors and collectors of the Qumran Dead Sea Scrolls participated in globalised intellectual networks but did not adopt the knowledge transmitted via these networks unchanged: they adapted it to their local ends.²⁸ This shows that, in the Roman world as today, processes of globalisation depended on local participation, and local traditions altered as they participated in global processes.²⁹ Philo’s *Legatio* reflects this same dynamic: as I intend to show in the following

The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies, ed. Nancy A. Naples (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 1–5.

- 25 *Globalization*; idem, “Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity,” in *Global Modernities*, ed. Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash, and idem, Theory, Culture & Society (London: Sage, 1995), 25–44. See also Erik Swyngedouw, “Neither Global nor Local: ‘Glocalization’ and the Politics of Scale,” in *Spaces of Globalization: Reasserting the Power of the Local*, ed. Kevin R. Cox (New York: Guilford Press, 1997), 137–66.
- 26 Laura Adams, Miguel Centeno, and Charles Varner, “Resistance to Cultural Globalization—A Comparative Analysis,” in *Conflicts and Tensions*, ed. Helmut K. Anheier and Yudhishthir Raj Isar, The Cultures and Globalization Series 1 (Los Angeles: Sage, 2007), 80–89, here 81.
- 27 Tim Whitmarsh, ed., *Local Knowledge and Microidentities in the Imperial Greek World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- 28 Pieter B. Hartog, *Pesher and Hypomnema: A Comparison of Two Commentary Traditions from the Hellenistic-Roman Period*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 121 (Leiden: Brill, 2017).
- 29 Cf. Kostas Vlassopoulos’s comment that “globalisation can [...] provide the means by which a local cultural system can be redefined, elaborated, codified or modified for new circumstances”; *Greeks and Barbarians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 21.

pages, Philo's argument in this treatise plays with the global and local aspects of the Romans and the Judaeans. The result is a glocalised perception of the Judaeans *ethnos*, which Philo portrays as faithfully maintaining its local laws and customs whilst also engaging the global context of the Roman Empire and adapting Roman traditions and discourses to its own ends.

The concept of "locality" is related to that of resistance but has a different focus. Whereas "resistance" describes the reactions of individuals and groups to processes of globalisation, "locality" describes how such groups and individuals define themselves within global spaces. For Arjun Appadurai, who coined the concept, locality is "a structure of feeling" and "an aspect of social life" related to how people create a sense of belonging for themselves.³⁰ In Appadurai's words, locality can be understood as "a complex phenomenological quality, constituted by a series of links between the sense of social immediacy, the technologies of interactivity, and the relativity of contexts [...], which expresses itself in certain kinds of agency, sociality, and reproducibility."³¹ Appadurai goes on to point out that, in globalised contexts, locality tends to take the form of translocality: as individuals within a global space become interconnected and interdependent, their self-perception and sense of belonging transcend local boundaries and are redefined in the light of the global spaces in which these individuals participate.³² The effects are similar to those of globalisation: in both cases, individuals present their local customs and traditions in globalised terms whilst participating in globalising processes by adapting them to their local needs.

Appadurai's insight that locality tends to become translocality in globalised contexts finds confirmation in Philo's *Legatio*. To begin with, Philo stresses how good Roman emperors—Augustus and Tiberius—exhibited what can be considered a translocal mindset. These emperors were interested not just in their own affairs, but in the stability of the global empire. To that end, they allowed the *ethnē* that inhabited the Roman world to uphold their own local customs. In Philo's presentation, Augustus and Tiberius did not merely condone, but actively promoted local traditions and customs. So Augustus, "when he discovered that the sacred 'first-fruits' were being neglected, instructed the governors of the provinces in Asia to grant to the Jews alone the right of

30 *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Public Worlds 1 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 178–99.

31 *Modernity at Large*, 178.

32 Cf. Witcher's comment on the Roman world that "[t]he ability of cultural symbols to be reproduced regardless of spatial location permits the development of 'imagined communities' which, to some extent, are able to transcend the immediate limitation of spatial locations"; "Globalisation and Roman Imperialism," 220.

assembly” (*Legatio* 311),³³ and the same emperor “gave orders for regular sacrifices of holocausts to be offered every day at his expense to the Most High God” (*Legatio* 317). Tiberius angrily condemns Pilate’s placement of two shields honouring the emperor in the Herodian palace and orders Pilate to remove them (*Legatio* 299–305). Additionally, Philo’s image of the Judaeans is thoroughly translocal. As the Alexandrian writer points out, Judaeans live across the entire *oikoumenē* and are a global force for potential resistance to the emperor (e.g., *Legatio* 214). What is more, the Judaeans are concerned not only with their own laws and customs, but also—through their defence of their own traditions—with the stability of the Roman *oikoumenē*. In this way, the Judaeans become heirs to the translocal attitude that characterised the praiseworthy predecessors of Gaius—Augustus and Tiberius.

3 Localising *Oikoumenē*

The first thread in Philo’s argument is that of localising *oikoumenē*. This entails Philo’s emphasis on the local aspects of Roman rule and its dependence on the character and actions of the Roman emperors. As I intend to show, this move on Philo’s part is a response to Roman propaganda, which portrayed the Romans as rulers of the global *oikoumenē*. Against this promotion of the Romans as global rulers, Philo paints a glocalised portrait of Roman rule, in which Roman global rule depends on the capabilities of the emperor. Under Gaius—whom Philo portrays as a reckless, self-centred ruler—the *oikoumenē* becomes a contested space, and the Roman Empire is under threat. If it were not for the Judaeans and their defence of their local customs, Gaius’s arrogance would have put an end to Roman rule.

The close connection between the Romans and the Greek term *oikoumenē*, which is reflected in a wide range of sources from the Roman period, is a fruit of the late Hellenistic era.³⁴ Polybius was the first to draw this connection when

33 Translations of the *Legatio* follow E. Mary Smallwood, *Philonis Alexandrini Legatio ad Gaium* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), with small alterations. I have retained the Greek term *oikoumenē* and replaced “Jews” in Smallwood’s translation with “Judaeans.”

34 In earlier periods, the term referred more generally to the inhabited or known world. On its connotations, see James S. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought: Geography, Exploration, and Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Tassilo Schmitt, “Oikoumene,” in *Brill’s New Pauly*, ed. Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider, online at <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-s-new-pauly/oikoumene-e829080> (last accessed June 13, 2019); Yuval Shahar, *Josephus Geographicus: The Classical Context of Geography in Josephus*, *Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum* 98 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), esp. 8–11.

he set himself the goal of explaining “by what means and under what system of polity the Romans in less than fifty-three years succeeded in subjecting nearly the whole *oikoumenē* to their sole government” (*Histories* 1.1.5).³⁵ For Polybius, the Romans are unique in consolidating the entire *oikoumenē* under one ruler,³⁶ and he attributes their success both to the workings of chance or fate (*tychē*; τύχη) as a force that “has steered almost all the affairs of the world in one direction” (*Histories* 1.4.2) and to the Romans’ military and political prowess (*Histories* 1.63.9).³⁷ Polybius’s account of how the Romans gained control over the *oikoumenē* influenced later authors and laid the basis for portrayals of the Romans as lords of the *oikoumenē* (or its Latin equivalent, *orbis terrarum*) and of the Roman Empire as a global space.³⁸

Philo appears to have been familiar with Polybius’s work. As Niehoff points out, Philo accepts Roman global power, as he writes that Gaius ruled “an empire not merely consisting of most of the most essential parts of the world [...] but [...] an empire stretching from the sunrise to the sunset and comprising lands both within and beyond the Ocean” (*Legatio* 10).³⁹ But Philo’s tone differs somewhat from that of other Roman authors. Whereas Roman authors may portray the Roman Empire as a lasting entity,⁴⁰ Philo stresses the volatility of

35 Translations of Polybius follow Paton, Walbank, and Habicht (LCL). I have retained the Greek term *oikoumenē* where it occurs in Polybius’s text.

36 *Histories* 1.2.1; 1.2.7.

37 It has been observed that Polybius is not systematic in his use of *tychē*. In some passages, the term has the connotation of a divine power steering the course of history and providing retribution for certain wrongdoings; in others, *tychē* has a much more general meaning and refers to unexpected or inexplicable events. In relation to the Romans, Polybius sometimes thinks of Roman rule in teleological terms, attributing it to the workings of *tychē*, but in other passages he attributes Roman success to the planning and efficiency of the Romans themselves. On *tychē* in Polybius, see F. W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957/1967/1979), 1:16–26; idem, “Fortune (*tychē*) in Polybius,” in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, ed. John Marincola (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 349–55; idem, “Supernatural Paraphernalia in Polybius’ *Histories*,” in *Polybius, Rome and the Hellenistic World: Essays and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 245–57; René Brouwer, “Polybius and Stoic *Tyche*,” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 51 (2011): 111–32; Lisa I. Hau, “*Tychē* in Polybios: Narrative Answers to a Philosophical Question,” *Histos* 5 (2011): 183–207.

38 Such later claims can be found in works by a wide range of authors, such as Aelius Aristides, Vergil, and Strabo. See Claude Nicolet, *Space, Geography and Politics in the Early Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991); Michael Sommer, “OIKOYMENH: Longue durée Perspectives on Ancient Mediterranean ‘Globality,’” in Pitts and Versluys, *Globalisation and the Roman World*, 175–97.

39 Cf. Niehoff, *Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture*, 113–14.

40 For example, Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.275–279: “Then Romulus, proud in the tawny hide of the she-wolf, his nurse, shall take up the line, and found the walls of Mars and call the people

Roman rule and its dependence on the character and abilities of the emperor.⁴¹ In Roman propaganda, images of the emperors often portrayed them as embodiments of Roman power and rulers over the *oikoumenē*.⁴² Philo subscribes to this rhetoric in his depictions of Augustus and Tiberius. The rule of these emperors, Philo explicates, can be characterised by the term “peace” (εἰρήνη): both Augustus and Tiberius united the *oikoumenē* under Rome and brought peace across the empire.⁴³ These favourable portraits of Augustus and Tiberius in the *Legatio* fulfil an important rhetorical function:⁴⁴ they accentuate the negative traits Philo attributes to Gaius.⁴⁵ Philo depicts this latter emperor as young and irresponsible,⁴⁶ mad and foolish,⁴⁷ exhibiting a burning hatred towards the Judaeans.⁴⁸ Whereas Augustus and Tiberius brought peace to the *oikoumenē*, Gaius’s behaviour instigated a “war” (πόλεμος) between the Judaeans and the emperor and his allies.⁴⁹ Gaius’s self-centredness poses a direct threat to the *oikoumenē* and the stability of the Roman Empire. For Philo, Gaius’s case illustrates how unstable Roman rule can be and shows that the stability and future of the empire depends on the character and virtue of its rulers.

Romans after his own name. For these I set no bounds in space or time; but have given empire without end”; Fairclough, LCL.

41 For that reason I am hesitant to agree with Niehoff that *Legatio* 10 indicates that “Roman rule [...] seemed far more stable to Philo [than that of the Hellenistic kingdoms]”; *Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture*, 113.

42 Statues may portray the emperor or high military commanders with the *oikoumenē* in their hands or under their feet. See Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, trans. Alan Shapiro (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1988); Barbara R. Rossing, “(Re)claiming *Oikoumenē*? Empire, Ecumenism, and the Discipleship of Equals,” in *Walk in the Ways of Wisdom: Essays in Honor of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza*, ed. Shelly Matthews, Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, and Melanie Johnson-Debaufre (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 2003), 74–87, here 76–78. Cf. also how Augustus portrays himself in *Res gestae* 3: “I undertook many civil and foreign wars by land and sea throughout the world (*toto in orbe terrarum*)”; P. A. Brunt and J. M. Moore, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti: The Achievements of the Divine Augustus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 19.

43 See *Legatio* 8 and *Legatio* 309.

44 Cf. Niehoff, *Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture*, 121–28.

45 This negative depiction of Gaius shares many characteristics with the portrayal of Gaius in works by Roman authors, such as Suetonius and Dio Cassius. See Niehoff, *Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture*, 111–37; Per Bilde, “Philo as a Polemist and a Political Apologist,” in *Alexandria: A Cultural and Religious Melting Pot*, ed. George Hinge and Jens A. Krasilnikoff, Aarhus Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity 9 (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2009), 97–114, here 110.

46 *Legatio* 183, 190, and 218.

47 *Legatio* 76–77 and 93.

48 *Legatio* 133 and 201.

49 For *polemos* used to describe the conflict in Alexandria, see *Legatio* 119, 121, and 132. For Gaius as an enemy to peace, see *Legatio* 90, 108, and 301.

Discussing the difference between chance (*tychē*) and nature (*physis*) in the introduction to the *Legatio*, Philo seems to be reacting to Polybius's attribution of Roman power over the *oikoumenē* to *tychē*:

Mentally we are mere babes in our stupidity, regarding Chance (*tychē*), which is the most unstable of things, as the most reliable, and Nature (*physis*), which is the most steadfast, as the least secure. For we change and transpose our actions as in games of draughts, looking upon the things of Chance (*ta tychēra*) as more lasting than the things of Nature (*ta physei*), and upon the order of Nature as less secure than the things of Chance.

The contrast between Philo and Polybius is not absolute,⁵⁰ but Philo's treatment of *tychē* and *physis* in this passage supports his view that Roman rule was inherently volatile, whereas the Judaeian *ethnos* would remain safe and secure. It has been noted that Philo's contrast between *tychē* and *physis* carries Stoic overtones.⁵¹ For the Stoics, *tychē* often indicated an admission of a lack of understanding by those in want of the highest wisdom.⁵² So whereas for Polybius the association of Roman rule with *tychē* indicates that Roman dominance over the *oikoumenē* is not random,⁵³ for Philo the connection between *tychē* and the Romans illustrates the volatility of Roman fortunes. He contrasts "the things of *tychē*" with "the things of *physis*." This expression presumably refers

50 Stoic notions of *tychē* are present in Polybius (Brouwer, "Polybius and Stoic *Tyche*"), and Philo refers to the *tychē* or *tychai* of the Ptolemies (*Legatio* 140), the Judaeians (*Legatio* 190), Gaius (*Legatio* 284), Augustus (*Legatio* 309), and Agrippa (*Legatio* 327). It has been pointed out that Polybius was aware of the instability of *tychē*, as his story on Scipio Africanus indicates (*Histories* 15.17.3–18.8). Philo's attitude towards *tychē* seems to have been close to Josephus's, for whom Gaius's death "[was] not only [...] of great importance in the interest of all men's laws and the safeguarding of them, but [...] it [...] will teach a lesson in sobriety to those who think that good fortune (*eutychia*) is eternal and do not know that it ends in catastrophe unless it goes hand in hand with virtue"; *Jewish Antiquities* 19.15–16, Feldman, LCL.

51 Smallwood, *Philonis Alexandrini Legatio ad Gaium*, 151–52; Lucio Troiani, "Natura e storia politica in Filone d'Alessandria," in *La rivelazione in Filone di Alessandria: Natura, legge, storia: Atti del VII convegno di studi del gruppo italiano di ricerca su Origene e la tradizione Alessandrina*, ed. Angela M. Mazzanti and Francesca Calabi, Biblioteca di Adamantius 2 (Villa Verucchio: Pazzini, 2004), 1–8.

52 Smallwood, *Philonis Alexandrini Legatio ad Gaium*, 151; Brouwer, "Polybius and Stoic *Tyche*," 113–20.

53 For example, *Histories*. 1.4.5: "For though [*tychē*] is ever producing something new and ever playing a part in the lives of men, she has not in a single instance ever accomplished such a work, ever achieved such a triumph, as in our own times."

to the Judaeans' observance of their own laws and customs. For the Stoics, true wisdom consisted of living one's life in accordance with the law of Nature.⁵⁴ Philo adopts this Stoic principle, but equates the law of Nature with the law of Moses. He writes, for instance, that only Moses's laws were "stamped, as it were, with the seals of nature (*physis*) herself."⁵⁵ So the Judaeans live their lives according to the law of Nature when they follow the Mosaic law.⁵⁶ "The things of *physis*" can therefore be understood as the Judaeans' laws and customs. Along these lines, Philo's argument is that Roman rule is unstable due to its association with *tychē*, whereas the Judaeans will remain safe and secure due to their observance of their own law and customs—which equal the law of Nature (*physis*).⁵⁷

Philo develops this line of argument in the remainder of the *Legatio*. He differs from other Roman authors, who attributed Roman rule to some divine power. For Philo, Roman rule is only as good as its emperors.⁵⁸ For that reason, a large part of the *Legatio* is devoted to Gaius's character and actions, which Philo portrays in an unambiguously negative light. An illustrative

54 See, for example, Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.26.1–2: "But much more important is the following law of life—that we must do what nature (*physis*) demands"; Oldfather, LCL. See furthermore A. A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 120–21 and 147–50; Brad Inwood and Pierluigi Donini, "Stoic Ethics," in *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, ed. Keimpe Algra et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 675–738. On the law of Nature, see also Gisela Striker, "Origins of the Concept of Natural Law," in *Essays on Hellenistic Epistemology and Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 209–21; Gerard Watson, "The Natural Law and Stoicism," in *Problems in Stoicism*, ed. A. A. Long (London: Athlone, 1971; repr. 1996), 216–38; Jacob Klein, "Stoic Eudaimonism and the Natural Law Tradition," in *Reason, Religion and Natural Law: Plato to Spinoza*, ed. Jonathan Jacobs (Oxford University Press, 2012) 57–80.

55 *De vita Mosis* 2.14.

56 On Philo's equation of the Mosaic and the Natural law, see Émile Bréhier, *Les idées philosophiques et religieuses de Philon d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Alphonse Picard & Fils, 1908), 10–14; Hindy Najman, "The Law of Nature and the Authority of Mosaic Law" and "A Written Copy of the Law of Nature: An Unthinkable Paradox?" in *Past Renewals: Interpretative Authority, Renewed Revelation and the Quest for Perfection in Jewish Antiquity*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 53 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 87–106 and 107–18, respectively; Trent A. Rogers, "Philo's Universalization of Sinai in *De decalogo* 32–49," *The Studia Philonica Annual* 24 (2012): 85–105; Hindy Najman and Benjamin G. Wright, "Perfecting Translation: The Greek Scriptures in Philo of Alexandria," in *Sibyls, Scriptures, and Scrolls: John Collins at Seventy*, ed. Joel Baden, Hindy Najman, and Eibert Tigchelaar, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 175 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 897–915.

57 For a similar argument, see Berthelot, "Philo's Perception of the Roman Empire," 179–84.

58 Cf. Berthelot ("Philo's Perception of the Roman Empire," 169), who even suggests "a rivalry of election and universalism between Israel and Rome."

example is Philo's use of the term "jealousy" (*φθόνος*), which occurs only twice in the *Legatio*, to illustrate Gaius's illicit conduct and its global implications. In *Legatio* 48, Philo has Macro—Gaius's chief advisor—warn the emperor that "[j]ealousy (*φθόνος*) has never got control of the whole *oikoumenē*, or even of large sections of it, such as the whole of Europe or Asia." The warning is wasted on Gaius, and the emperor forces Macro to take his own life. With Macro out of the way, Gaius lets jealousy get the better of him and so, ironically, fulfils Macro's prophecy. *Legatio* 80 depicts Gaius's appropriation of the honours of the demi-gods (and later the Olympic deities) as motivated by his jealousy: "[Gaius's] jealous (*φθόνος*) greed appropriated the honours of all of [the demi-gods] alike, or rather, appropriated the demi-gods themselves." Philo's response to this behaviour consists of a series of comparisons between Gaius and the gods whose honours he appropriated. These comparisons bring out the global implications of Gaius's actions: whereas the gods distributed good things throughout the *oikoumenē*, Gaius is "a universal destroyer and murderer"⁵⁹ who "showered untold evils [...] on all parts of the *oikoumenē*,"⁶⁰ "brought disease upon the healthy, mutilation upon the sound, and in general unnatural, premature, and cruel deaths upon the living,"⁶¹ and "transformed the settled order into uproar and faction."⁶² For Philo, Gaius's self-glorification reflects not merely a personal defect, but has global consequences and puts the stability of the Roman *oikoumenē* at risk.

Gaius's main issue is with the Judaeans, who deny him the divine honours he is seeking. As Philo writes: "It was only of the Jews that Gaius was suspicious, on the grounds that they were the only people who deliberately opposed him and had been taught from their very cradles [...] to believe that the Father and Creator of the universe is one God" (*Legatio* 115).⁶³ But Philo's argument is broader than this. When he contrasts Gaius with Augustus, Philo formulates the latter's virtues in general terms as caring "as much for the preservation of the customs of the various nations as for the preservation of Roman ones" and "not [...] doing away with the practices of a particular people" (*Legatio* 153). This general point that the stability of the Roman Empire depends on allowing individual *ethnē* to observe their own customs forms the background of Philo's defence of the Judaeans right to live according to their laws. It is the context in

59 *Legatio* 88–89.

60 *Legatio* 101.

61 *Legatio* 106–07.

62 *Legatio* 113.

63 Cf. *Legatio* 198.

which, for instance, the following remarks in Agrippa's letter to Gaius must be understood:

Therefore, my lord, since you have these striking precedents for a gentler policy than your own, all closely connected with the family from which you were descended and born and in which you have taken such pride, preserve what each of them has preserved. As Emperors they plead the Cause of the laws to you as Emperor, as Augusti to you as Augustus, as your grandfathers and ancestors to you as their descendant, as many people to you who are but one, and they say in effect, "Do not abolish customs which have been maintained at our express wish up to the present day. For even if nothing sinister were to befall you as a result of their abolition, yet the uncertainty of the future is not entirely without terror even for the boldest, unless they despise the things of God."⁶⁴

This passage summarises what Philo⁶⁵ considered to be the main problem with Gaius: as a result of his self-deification and self-centredness, he abolished the customs of local peoples in the Roman Empire—and in particular, those of the Judaeans, whom Gaius hated bitterly. As Philo writes elsewhere, "he regarded himself as the law, and broke the laws of the lawgivers of every country as if they were empty words" (*Legatio* 119). By so doing, Gaius abandoned the values and mindset of his predecessors and posed a threat to the stability of the Roman *oikoumenē*.

Philo's portrait of the Romans can be understood as an act of resistance to the globalising aspirations of Roman rule. In contrast to authors and sculptors who articulated the global claims of the Roman Empire, Philo offers a glocalised picture of the Romans and localises the *oikoumenē*. Although Philo seems comfortable with Roman rule over the *oikoumenē*, he simultaneously points out that the future of the Roman Empire is not a given. Roman dominion has a local aspect, in that it depends on the preservation of the laws and customs of local groups within the empire. Rome's early emperors understood this well, and through their defence and promotion of local—and for Philo, especially Judaeans—customs, they were able to build a global empire. At the same time, in Philo's view, the case of Gaius demonstrates that the assumption of power

64 *Legatio* 321–22.

65 On Agrippa's letter as the fruit of Philo's imagination, see Solomon Zeitlin, "Did Agrippa Write a Letter to Gaius Caligula?" *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 56 (1965): 22–31; Daniel R. Schwartz, *Agrippa I: The Last King of Judaea*, Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum 23 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990), 87, 178–80, and 200–202.

by a local-minded, self-centred emperor puts the stability of the *oikoumenē* at risk and may even strike the death blow to the Roman Empire.

4 Globalising the Judaeans

The second line of Philo's argument is the one that globalises the Judaeans. As I have indicated above, Philo's portrayal of the Judaeans in *In Flaccum* and the *Legatio* is thoroughly translocal. Adopting a Greek model, Philo depicts the Judaeans in Alexandria and elsewhere across the Roman Empire as "colonies" (ἀποικίαι) of the mother-city (μητρόπολις), Jerusalem.⁶⁶ Philo stresses this global distribution of the Judaeans throughout the *oikoumenē* time and again in his political works.⁶⁷ For Philo, the global spread of the Judaeans sets them apart from other *ethnē* in the Roman world:

[Petronius] also had in mind the vast numerical size of the Jewish nation (*ethnos*), which is not confined, as every other nation is, within the borders of the one country assigned for its sole occupation, but occupies almost the whole *oikoumenē*. For it has overflowed across every continent and island, so that it scarcely seems to be outnumbered by the native inhabitants.⁶⁸

The global presence of the Judaeans means that they constitute a potential power that could resist Gaius. Philo occasionally plays with the idea of the Judaeans engaging in violent resistance against Roman officials,⁶⁹ but in most cases, the resistance he imagines would be peaceful. Their willingness to resist Gaius also sets them apart from other *ethnē*, as Philo points out in *Legatio* 116–17:

66 See Aryeh Kasher, "Jerusalem as a 'Metropolis' in Philo's National Consciousness," *Cathedra* 11 (1979): 45–56 (Hebrew); Niehoff, *Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture*, 17–44; Sarah Pearce, "Jerusalem as 'Mother-City' in the Writings of Philo of Alexandria," in *Negotiating Diaspora: Jewish Strategies in the Roman Empire*, ed. John M. G. Barclay, Library of Second Temple Studies 45 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 19–36; Seland, "'Colony' and 'Metropolis' in Philo."

67 See *In Flaccum* 46 and 49; *Legatio* 283–84 and 330.

68 *Legatio* 214.

69 For example, *In Flaccum* 48; *Legatio* 208, 301, and 334–35; also the Jamnia incident (*Legatio* 200–203). Bilde speaks of a "menacing undertone" in Philo's *In Flaccum* and *Legatio*. See his "Philo as a Polemist and a Political Apologist," 111–12.

All other men, women, cities, nations, countries, and regions of the world—I can almost say the whole *oikoumenē*—although they deplored what was happening, flattered Gaius none the less, glorifying him more than was reasonable, and so increasing his vanity. [...] But one single race, the Judaeans, stood apart and was suspected of being likely to resist, since it was used to accepting death as willingly as if it were immortality in order not to allow any of their ancestral traditions, even the smallest, to be abrogated.

A combined reading of these two passages shows how Philo depicts the Judaeans as a global force of resistance against Gaius. This image of the Judaeans is intricately bound up with Philo's portrayal of Gaius. As I have argued above, Philo's critique of Gaius is that he is so occupied with his own affairs and glory that he forsakes his imperial responsibilities. By abandoning the laws of local *ethnē* in the empire, Gaius undermines the peace his predecessors had brought about. As the Judaeans resist Gaius, therefore, they are not only defending their own local laws, but also the stability of the Roman Empire. In Philo's account, the Judaeans embody the traditional values expressed by Rome's first emperors. By drawing sharp distinctions between the Judaeans and other *ethnē*, Philo engages in a cultural competition and argues that the future of the Roman Empire depends exclusively on the Judaeans. At a time when the emperor had abandoned the translocal attitude of Augustus and Tiberius and all *ethnē* in the empire followed suit, the Judaeans alone resisted and safeguarded the stability of the Roman *oikoumenē*.

These passages show that Philo's argument in the *Legatio* is not confined to the Romans and the Judaeans. Even though the conflict between the Roman emperor Gaius and the Judaeans *ethnos* arguably constitutes the main theme of the *Legatio*, Philo's argument involves all other *ethnē* in the empire. Theories of globalisation are helpful in capturing the complexity of Philo's argument, which involves a cultural competition not just with Gaius and the Romans, but also with other local groups in the empire. Unsurprisingly, the Egyptians and the Greeks take pride of place in Philo's argument,⁷⁰ but Philo's context is broader than this. The *Legatio* includes negative comments on, for instance, the Ascalonites. Apelles, one of Gaius's advisors, comes from the city of Ascalon, whose "inhabitants cherish an implacable and irreconcilable hatred for the Jews who live in the Holy Land and with whom they have a common frontier."

70 On Philo's portrayal of the Egyptians in the *Legatio* and his other writings, see Niehoff, *Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture*, 45–74; Pearce, *The Land of the Body*, esp. 54–80 on *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium*.

Just as Helicon—Gaius’s other advisor—“injected his Egyptian poison into the Judaeans,” so Apelles exposed the Judaeans to “his poison from Ascalon” (*Legatio* 205). This shows that Philo is a translocal writer whose argument depends on his engagement with a broad range of local cultures and traditions from across the Roman world. In that sense, Philo’s writings can be taken as a “global *mélange*” in which the Alexandrian author positions himself vis-à-vis the broad, multicultural background of the Roman Mediterranean.⁷¹

Philo’s translocal view of the Judaeans also permeates his descriptions of the Alexandrian riots and of Gaius’s plan to set up his statue in the Jerusalem temple. Philo’s description of the riots in the *Legatio* proceeds in two stages. In the first stage, Judaeans homes are demolished and the Judaeans are forced to live together in a narrow space (*Legatio* 119–31). In the second, more serious stage,⁷² the mob, backed up by Flaccus (*Legatio* 132), attacks Judaeans houses of prayer (προσευχαί) (*Legatio* 132–37). Although destruction of these houses of prayer was not an option “because large numbers of Jews lived crowded together close by” (*Legatio* 134), the Alexandrians nevertheless erected statues of Gaius in them, effectively turning these Judaeans spaces into shrines of the imperial cult.⁷³

Philo’s account of the riots does not portray them as merely an attack on Judaeans spaces. Arguing that the riots resulted from the hatred the Alexandrians—like Gaius—felt towards the Judaeans, rather than from a concern for the stability of the empire, Philo imbues these attacks with more-than-local significance. In Philo’s narrative, the riots in Alexandria are attacks on the empire as a whole. He illustrates this in two ways. Firstly, he points out that by destroying Judaeans houses of prayer, the Alexandrians also destroyed Judaeans signs of loyalty towards the emperor: “I say nothing about the simultaneous destruction and burning of the objects set up in honour of the Emperors.”⁷⁴ It is unclear which objects Philo is referring to here, but they presumably included inscriptions, and perhaps crowns.⁷⁵ The punishment for destroying such objects was severe: the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, for instance, describes

71 Cf. Niehoff’s portrayal of Philo as a “Mediterranean thinker” in her “Wie wird man ein Mediterraner Denker? Der Fall Philon von Alexandria,” in *Ein pluriverses Universum: Zivilisationen und Religionen im antiken Mittelmeerraum*, ed. Richard Faber and Achim Lichtenberger, *Mittelmeerstudien* 7 (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2015), 355–67.

72 *Legatio* 132: “They consequently became still more excited and rushed headlong into outrageous plots of even greater audacity.” In *In Flaccum*, Philo presents a different picture of the riots; see Smallwood, *Philonis Alexandrini Legatio ad Gaium*, 220.

73 Smallwood, *Philonis Alexandrini Legatio ad Gaium*, 222.

74 *Legatio* 133.

75 So Smallwood, *Philonis Alexandrini Legatio ad Gaium*, 220–21.

how Thecla is thrown to the lions after disrespecting a crown bearing Caesar's image.⁷⁶ Even so, the Alexandrian mob is not concerned with any punishment they might receive, as "they derived confidence from the fact that they had no punishment to fear from Gaius, who, as they well knew, felt an indescribable hatred for the Judaeans."⁷⁷ Gaius's and Flaccus's reaction to these insults corresponds with Philo's critique of these officials: when the Alexandrian mob attacks the empire and its symbols, Gaius and Flaccus are more concerned with satisfying their own hatred than with defending the honours of the empire.

Secondly, Philo explains that the statues of Gaius erected in Judaeen houses of prayer were not meant to honour the emperor,⁷⁸ but to satisfy the Alexandrians' hostility vis-à-vis the Judaeans. Philo finds a clear sign of this in a second-hand statue the Alexandrians hastily set up in a former synagogue:

So great was their haste and the intensity of their enthusiasm that, since they had no new four-horse chariot available, they took a very old one out of the gymnasium. It was very rusty, and the ears, tails, hooves, and a good many other parts were broken off. According to some people, it had been dedicated in honour of a woman, the earlier Cleopatra, great-grandmother of the last one.⁷⁹

A greater insult, Philo continues, is hardly imaginable.⁸⁰ And yet the Alexandrians feared no retaliation, but even "entertained extravagant hopes of being praised and of enjoying even greater and more conspicuous rewards for having dedicated the synagogues to Gaius as new precincts" (*Legatio* 137). The point here is the same as before: Gaius and the Alexandrians are so blinded by their hatred of the Judaeans that they allow insults to the Roman Empire to pass unpunished. The Judaeans, in contrast, are loyal inhabitants of the empire, who honour the emperor in their houses of prayer and, as Philo writes elsewhere, offer "prayers, the dedication of offerings, and numerous sacrifices" to the emperor.⁸¹ This portrayal of events corresponds with Philo's overall

76 *Acts of Paul and Thecla* 26. On the implications of Thecla's action, see Jaś Elsner, *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph: The Art of the Roman Empire AD 100–450* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 58.

77 *Legatio* 133.

78 Philo develops this argument at length when he wonders why the Alexandrians, if they are so concerned with honouring their rulers, never erected statues of the Ptolemaic kings or previous emperors. See *Legatio* 138–61.

79 *Legatio* 135.

80 *Legatio* 136.

81 See *Legatio* 279–80.

argument that the Judaeans are key to preserving the stability of the Roman Empire, which Gaius and his associates are putting at risk.

Gaius's hatred of the Judaeans finds its zenith in the emperor's plan to erect a statue of himself in the Jerusalem temple. In the *Legatio*, this incident—which historically constituted merely a local conflict⁸²—acquires global relevance. Philo's argument develops in two directions. Firstly, Philo emphasises the global appeal of the temple. One of Gaius's reasons for erecting his statue in Jerusalem is because its temple "is the most beautiful temple in the world, and it has been adorned from time immemorial with a constant stream of generous gifts" (*Legatio* 198). Gaius is not alone in his admiration for the Jerusalem temple: other Romans, including Gaius's grandfather Marcus Agrippa, had visited the temple⁸³ or were involved in the activities that took place there.⁸⁴ The difference between Gaius and other Roman officials is that the latter's admiration for the temple motivated them to protect its Judaeian character. Gaius's impending violation of the temple would therefore entail a tragic break with the policy of his predecessors.

Secondly, Philo points to the vast size of the Judaeian *ethnos* and its close attachment to the temple in Jerusalem. In *Legatio* 210, Petronius—Gaius's legate in Syria, who had been ordered to erect the statue—fears Judaeian resistance: "All peoples are tenacious of their own customs, but the Judaeian nation is particularly so. [...] But more outstanding and noteworthy is the respect which they all show for the Temple." Moreover, Petronius is aware of the number and broad geographical spread of Judaeians in the Roman Empire.⁸⁵ This combination of size and allegiance to the temple makes the Judaeian *ethnos* a powerful potential source of resistance. Thus Gaius's plan could have disastrous consequences. In his letter to Gaius, Philo's Agrippa presents a similar argument, but he strikes a more positive tone. Rather than threatening Gaius with the forces of resistance he is likely to unleash, Agrippa writes to the emperor that "if my native city has a share in your kindness, it will not be a single city but countless others set in every region of the world as well [...] which will enjoy the benefits [...], so that your glory may resound throughout every part of the

82 On the historical ramifications of the temple episode, see E. Mary Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule: From Pompey to Diocletian*, Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 20 (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 174–80; Per Bilde, "The Roman Emperor Gaius (Caligula)'s Attempt to Erect his Statue in the Temple of Jerusalem," *Studia Theologica* 32 (1978): 67–93; Erich S. Gruen, "Caligula, The Imperial Cult, and Philo's *Legatio*," *The Studia Philonica Annual* 24 (2012): 135–47.

83 *Legatio* 291 and 294.

84 *Legatio* 298 (Tiberius), 311 and 313 (Augustus).

85 *Legatio* 214–15.

world and your praises may re-echo mingled with thanks" (*Legatio* 283–84). In the *Legatio*, therefore, the Jerusalem temple is a universal focal point: respecting and promoting its Judaeian character will bring peace and praise to the emperor throughout the *oikoumenē*, whereas its violation will lead to empire-wide war.⁸⁶

5 Conclusion and Reflections

In this chapter, I have sought to illuminate the general argument of Philo's *Legatio ad Gaium* by applying the concepts of resistance and locality, as they have been developed in modern theories of globalisation. In my view, Philo presents a complex argument in his *Legatio*, in which the interplay between global and local aspects of the Romans and the Judaeians plays a central part. Philo accepts Roman claims to global domination but simultaneously emphasises the dependence of that rule on the character of individual emperors. Additionally, Philo recognises the Judaeian *ethnos* as one of the many *ethnē* inhabiting the Roman Empire, but also imbues them with a particular importance. They alone reject Gaius's irresponsible behaviour, and so they alone are heirs to the translocal attitude Augustus and Tiberius exhibited. For Philo, the stability and the future of the Roman Empire depend on the Judaeians.

This conclusion invites further reflection on the aims and purposes of Philo's *Legatio* as well as on the application of modern theories to the study of the ancient world. Scholars have disagreed about the audience Philo intended for the *Legatio*. If, as I have argued, Philo's argument in this work is inherently complex, this would lend support to the view that the intended audience of the *Legatio* was mixed.⁸⁷ How exactly we should conceive of this mixed audience will be a fruitful topic for further study. Moreover, I hope to have illustrated the utility of modern theories—and theories of globalisation in particular—in guiding our readings of ancient sources. At first glance, such an application

86 *Polemos*: *Legatio* 218, 220, and 226. Cf. above (pp. 215–16) on the contrast between Gaius as promoting war and his predecessors as bringing peace.

87 The intended audience of Philo's *Legatio* has been the subject of much discussion. Goodenough argued that Philo was addressing a Roman audience—more precisely, Gaius's successor, Claudius (*The Politics of Philo Judaeus*, 19). Niehoff, in contrast, proposed that Philo was addressing a Jewish audience (*Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture*, 39–40). Pieter van der Horst has convincingly argued that *In Flaccum* addresses a mixed Judaeo-Roman audience. His suggestion can be extended to the *Legatio* and seems to do more justice to the complexity of the argument Philo develops in these works. See his *Philo's Flaccus: The First Pogrom: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 15–16.

of modern theories to Philo's writings may seem uncalled for, due to the cultural divides between modern and post-modern societies and the Roman world in which Philo lived and wrote. Yet the focus of this volume on "cultural resistance"—a term unknown to ancient authors—already demonstrates that in our studies of the ancient world, it is difficult to escape modern models, theories, and interests. In my view, applying modern theoretical frameworks to the ancient world can help us make sense of ancient sources and provide a historical dimension to contemporary debates. This cannot be done uncritically, however, and further reflections on how interactions between modern theories and ancient sources can be developed remains a desideratum.

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