Fifty Years *Journal for the Study of Judaism*: A Jubilee Issue

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This last issue of volume 50 of the *Journal for the Study of Judaism* marks a half a century of the journal and its contribution to the study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman periods. The six articles in this issue (more are to appear in volume 51) have been written by members of the board, including three former editors of the JSJ Supplements series. Some contributions focus on the past fifty years of study of “Second Temple Judaism,” but together, all of the articles represent a variety of contemporary approaches and perspectives in the field, and are, to varying degrees, programmatic.

When Adam S. van der Woude founded the *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period*, the first volume of which appeared in 1970, on the very first page he expressed the hope that a new journal “devoted to the study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman periods” would be of importance for biblical scholars, archaeologists, and rabbinicists, as well as for classicists and historians of religion working on the Hellenism of the East. The periodization of the field of the journal reflected a strong historical interest related to the then still prevailing historical-critical method, an approach that has become less dominant over the past decades. The specific periodization expressed in the name of the journal reflects a broad view on the continuity of Judaism from the Second Temple period into Rabbinic Judaism (the journal never adopted a narrow definition of the “Roman period”), and the scope of the journal and its series has always been more comprehensive than “Second Temple Judaism,” a label that was not even used when the journal was founded.

Under the leadership of Van der Woude, and subsequently, until recently, Florentino García Martínez, the journal has expanded from 200 pages to 600 pages annually. García Martínez and John J. Collins initiated the Supplement series, which under Collins’ editorship—and subsequently that of Hindy Najman, Benjamin G. Wright, and presently René Bloch and Karina

Hogan—has published an average of six volumes a year. Throughout these fifty years, scholarship in the field of the journal has developed, partly due to new (re)discoveries, as described by Collins, and partly due to new methods of interpretation, as discussed by Anders K. Petersen.

Two of the newer interpretive approaches mentioned by Petersen are exemplified in the articles by Steve Mason and Françoise Mirguet. Mason's discussion of a famous and important passage from Josephus about "the accurate succession of prophets" illustrates the new rhetorical approach towards Josephus that did not yet exist when the journal was founded, but which developed in the 1980s. In this particular case, Mason demonstrates how a combination of traditional philology, attentiveness to the potential disconnect between ancient and modern categories, and modern literary analysis sheds an entirely new light on a passage that was always seen as a historical statement about prophecy. Mirguet's contribution gives a substantive and nuanced review of a relatively new and promising interdisciplinary field of studies, also briefly touched upon by Petersen, that of the study of emotions in early Jewish texts, and offers perspectives for further research. Both Mirguet and Petersen demonstrate the importance of the broader field of contemporary study of religion and the social sciences for the study of Ancient Judaism and its literature, while Petersen even urges we should engage fields such as the cognitive science of religion and evolutionary biology and psychology.

In different ways, in programmatic articles both Najman, writing together with her Oxford colleague Tobias Reinhardt from Classics, and Wright, put forward other current developments in the field. Wright's article reviews and explores how the Septuagint was constructed and interpreted as a Hellenistic Greek text. Najman and Reinhardt's article proposes a comparative model that they apply to Jewish wisdom literature and Latin didactic poetry. The larger question is that of cultural encounters, or conversations across religious and cultural boundaries, a question that goes beyond that of concrete historical encounter between Judaism and Hellenism.

Together, the articles in this jubilee volume give a broad (though admittedly incomplete), perspective on the past, current, and possibly also future state of the field. The first editorial board welcomed articles dealing with all aspects of Judaism in the mentioned periods, but they could not have foreseen the explosion of interest in the field, the new discussions, as on Hellenism or the different kinds of Judaism, on categories and models, let alone the "linguistic turn," the engagement with the social sciences, or our contemporary interest in cultural encounters. For the future of the journal, we aim at welcoming and promoting studies using a wide spectrum of approaches on all aspects of Judaism in the periods covered by our journal.