

***Jesus and the "Cave of Robbers":
Toward a Jewish Context for
the Temple Action***

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The topic for the 1992 annual Institute for Biblical Research (IBR) meeting in San Francisco focused on the Jewish matrix of early Christianity. My assignment was to speak on Jesus. Don Hagner's was to speak on Paul.¹ He approached his subject broadly, addressing the larger question of Paul's understanding of God's covenant with Israel and the Gentiles. I approached my subject much more narrowly, focusing on the meaning of Jesus' action in the temple precincts. I chose this narrower topic for three reasons. *First*, prior to 70 CE the religious center of the Jewish people was the temple. Various groups and individuals may have been critical of the temple's caretakers, but they were loyal to the institution itself and to what it stood for. The large sums of money that poured into its coffers, both from Palestine and from the diaspora, testify to this deeply felt loyalty. Accordingly, investigation of Jesus' action in the temple has the potential of taking us to the heart of the larger question of Jesus' relationship to Judaism. *Second*, Jesus' action in the temple has drawn considerable scholarly attention in recent life of Jesus research. This is because interpreters have rightly sensed that this action, if understood correctly, potentially clarifies Jesus' mission with respect to Israel and makes intelligible his execution at the hands of the Romans, Israel's overlords. *Third*, study of Jesus' action in the temple precincts brings into focus the larger question of what Judaism was and with what features of this faith and practice Jesus either agreed, disagreed, or thought was in need of revision. Therefore, although the

1. I. H. Marshall responded to both papers. I greatly appreciated Howard's comments, as well as those offered by the IBR Fellows. The discussion was stimulating and profitable.

focus of this paper is narrow, in that it is limited to a specific gospel passage, it does hope to make a contribution to the larger topic of Jesus within the first-century Jewish matrix.

In his recent study, *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins*, Burton Mack concludes that Mark's account of Jesus' action in the temple is a "Markan fabrication."² He believes that the incident cannot be historical because of the "lack of evidence for an anti-temple attitude in Jesus" and because it advances themes that are essential to Mark's agenda.³ The latter point is not without merit, but the first point begs the question in assuming that in the context of the historical Jesus the action was "anti-temple." Evidently Mack has not taken into consideration the possibility that what Jesus might actually have done was significantly different from the function that the Markan evangelist assigns to it and from what interpreters often say about it.⁴ What Jesus was actually doing will be considered in the second part of this study. The first part of the study will rebut Mack's conclusion that the account of the temple action is nothing more than a literary fiction.⁵

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE TEMPLE ACTION

The major problem with Mack's conclusion is that it does not adequately explain the appearance of the temple action found in John 2:13-20. In a footnote he explains his view of the literary relationship between Mark and John, opining that the latter drew upon the former, but not in a slavish, scribal sense. For support, Mack cites the collection of studies edited by Werner Kelber, where a few of the writers suspect that John knew Mark.⁶ But what impresses Mack is John's similar narrative design of moving from miracles to passion. This he believes could not possibly be a coincidence, but is evidence

2. B. L. Mack, *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988) 292.

3. *Ibid.*, 292; cf. 11, 282.

4. In her review, A. Y. Collins exposes this fallacy (*JBL* 108 [1989] 726-29).

5. Mack's book is fraught with problems, not the least of which are his assertions that Mark invented much of the tradition (see esp. chap. 2). His interpretation of Mark and its negative influence in the course of history represents a painful scholarly tour de force. Although at many points sympathetic, even W. Kelber disagrees with Mack, saying, "Mark cannot be blamed for all the ills of the West stretching from the crusades to the holocaust" (*CBQ* 52 [1990] 161-63, esp. 163). The hutzpah on the book's back cover notwithstanding, Mack's imaginative analysis hardly constitutes scholarly progress in the study of Mark and Christian origins.

6. W. H. Kelber, ed., *The Passion in Mark: Studies on Mark 14-16* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976).

of Johannine dependence upon Mark.⁷ Although it is nowhere made explicit, presumably the reader is to assume that John's account of the temple action was taken from Mark.

There are, however, several problems with this line of reasoning. The first and probably most serious is its circularity. The studies produced by Kelber and company represent attempts, along standard redaction-critical lines, to unpack Mark's theology. These scholars face the same difficulties that all redaction critics, since the time of Willi Marxsen,⁸ have had to face, and that is the problem of trying to distinguish Mark's sources from Mark's additions and revisions. Since we do not possess Mark's sources (as we do those of Matthew and Luke—and here I am assuming Markan priority), an unavoidable element of subjectivity is introduced into our work. The problem becomes acute when we claim that we have detected the presence of Markan redaction, as distinct from his source, only to discover that this putative "redaction" also appears in the Fourth Gospel. Such discoveries have led some of the contributors to Kelber's book to make the further claim that John must have been dependent upon Mark.⁹ But is it not as likely, if not more likely, that what was tentatively identified as "redaction" in Mark might in reality be "tradition," in view of its appearance in a Gospel thought by many to be independent of the Synoptic tradition?¹⁰ It strikes me as special pleading to prefer a more subjective source-critical theory, as source-critical work in Mark must always be because its putative sources are no

7. Mack, *A Myth of Innocence*, 225 n. 12. See also p. 282. At least one scholar has found Mack's reasoning compelling; cf. R. J. Miller, "The (A)Historicity of Jesus' Temple Demonstration: A Test Case in Methodology," *SBLSP* 30 (1991) 235-52.

8. W. Marxsen, *Mark the Evangelist: Studies on the Redaction History of the Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1969).

9. See J. R. Donahue, "Introduction: From Passion Traditions to Passion Narrative," *The Passion in Mark*, ed. Kelber, 8-10.

10. With a few exceptions, the persistent trend is to conclude that the Fourth Gospel is independent of the Synoptics. See R. Kysar, *The Fourth Evangelist and His Gospel: An Examination of Contemporary Scholarship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1975); and more recently P. Borgen, "John and the Synoptics," *The Interrelations of the Gospels* (ed. D. L. Dungan; BETL 95; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990) 408-37; J. D. G. Dunn, "Let John Be John: A Gospel for Its Time," *The Gospel and the Gospels* (ed. P. Stuhlmacher; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991) 293-322, esp. 299 n. 13. In the recently published Festschrift for Frans Neirynck, (*The Four Gospels* 1992 [eds. F. Van Segroech, et al.; BETL 100; 3 vols., Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992] U. Schnelle ("Johannes und die Synoptiker," 3.1799-1814) and P. Borgen ("The Independence of the Gospel of John: Some Observations," 3.1815-33) plausibly suggest that the Johannine community made use of some of the materials that found their way into the Synoptic Gospels, but that it is highly doubtful that this community made use of one or more of the Synoptic Gospels themselves. Their conclusions are consistent with those of C. H. Dodd a generation ago.

longer extant, to a theory that on all counts should be viewed as less subjective because the documents in question (i.e., Mark and John) are extant and are therefore available for comparative study.

An example of this problem is seen in Kim Dewey's essay on Peter's denial of Jesus (Mark 14:53-54, 66-72).¹¹ Dewey believes that the Markan evangelist has intercalated traditions of Peter's denial outside of the high priest's house and of Jesus' confession inside before the high priest and the Council. The most compelling evidence of Markan redaction, we are told, is the appearance of an editorial "seam" created by leaving Peter warming himself by the fire (v. 54) and then later, in returning to him (v. 67), using the same language (i.e., "Peter" and "being warmed"). This two-word seam was supposed to have been created when the traditions were spliced together. But what of the similar, indeed, even more pronounced "seam" in the Fourth Gospel, where we have not two words in common, but six (cf. John 18:18-25)? Does not its presence call into question these speculative conclusions regarding Markan redaction? Does not the Johannine seam point to a common tradition that antedates both the Synoptic and Johannine traditions? No, we are assured, it does not. The presence of this seam in John, Dewey avers, constitutes evidence that John knew Mark.¹²

There are, however, several problems with Dewey's (and Mack's) conclusion. *First*, apparently it has gone unobserved that there are examples of such "seams" in Greco-Roman literature which have nothing to do with the splicing together of literary sources.¹³ These seams, which are no more than story telling devices enabling the narrator to resume a portion of the narrative that for a time had been dropped, are as common to the oral medium as they are to the written.¹⁴ For scholars who attach great importance to the literary aspects of the Gospels and to the literature of the Greco-Roman world, this is a curious oversight. *Second*, the assertion that John's version of the seam is due to Markan influence is problematic in its own right, when it is observed that outside of the seam itself, remarkably few of

11. K. Dewey, "Peter's Curse and Cursed Peter" *The Passion in Mark*, ed. Kelber, 96-114.

12. Ibid., 104-5. Dewey is influenced by the earlier work of J. R. Donahue (*Are You the Christ? The Trial Narrative in the Gospel of Mark* [SBLDS 10; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1973] 58-63) and N. Perrin (*The New Testament: An Introduction* [New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1974] 229).

13. Craig A. Evans, "'Peter Warming Himself': The Problem of an Editorial 'Seam,'" *JBL* 101 (1982) 245-49. For two examples in Greco-Roman literature see Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon* 2.1; 3.1; 11.1; 12.1.

14. R. H. Gundry cites my study ("Peter Warming Himself") with approval (*Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993] 891).

the details found in Mark are found in John. The wording of the accusations and the denials is quite different. The accusers in John are not the same as in Mark. Even the physical location of the scene is different in the Johannine version. How and why the Fourth Evangelist would carefully preserve a Markan seam and then disregard the more significant details of the narrative itself Dewey does not explain. This observation has led Robert Fortna to conclude that the Fourth Gospel is literarily independent of the Markan Gospel.¹⁵

Third, the problem is compounded when we observe that neither of the two gospels that did make use of Mark, namely Matthew and Luke, picked up Mark's seam, though they did carry over most of his details. This observation leads to the plausible supposition that the seam was part of the *oral* tradition, independently preserved in Mark and John, but edited out of the narrative in the polished *written* traditions of the later Synoptic Evangelists.

The problems that arise from the conclusion that the Fourth Gospel is dependent upon Mark for its story of Jesus' action in the temple are similar to those just considered relating to Peter's denial of Jesus. *First*, the Johannine context, with its setting at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, is completely different from the Markan context. Although the Fourth Evangelist apparently knows that the temple action occurred during a feast (either Sukkot or Passover; John 2:23) and so is in agreement with the Synoptic tradition at a very important point, evidently he does not associate it with Jesus' final Passover. *Second*, there are as many differences in the details as there are similarities, with only a meager amount of vocabulary shared by the Markan and Johannine accounts. John introduces oxen and sheep and has Jesus driving them out with a whip. No equivalent of Mark's statement that Jesus did not permit people to carry vessels through the temple (Mark 11:16) is found in John's version. The quotation of Isa 56:7 and the allusion to Jer 7:11 do not appear in John; instead, Ps 69:9 is quoted. A related but very different version of the saying about the destruction of the temple (Mark 14:58) is found in John's version (John 2:19-21). Of all these differences, the last one could plausibly be explained as Johannine redaction, but most of the other differences resist such facile explanation. It is for these reasons and for others that competent Johannine scholars, whose arguments Mack does not take into account, have concluded

15. R. T. Fortna, "Jesus and Peter at the High Priest's House: A Test Case for the Question of the Relation between Mark's and John's Gospels," *NTS* 24 (1978) 371-83. See also P. Borgen, "John and the Synoptics in the Passion Narrative," *NTS* 5 (1958-59) 246-59. Borgen concludes that the common points between John and the Synoptics point to oral tradition.

that the temple narrative in the Fourth Gospel is not derived from the Synoptic tradition.¹⁶

Mack's rejection of the authenticity of the temple action is problematic in another area as well. If Jesus did not protest against temple polity or threaten the temple establishment, then how are we to account for the involvement of the ruling priests, if not the high priest himself, in his arrest and subsequent crucifixion? It will not do to delete this tradition as still more Markan fabrication, for it is attested in Josephus, who tells us that the "leading men" accused Jesus before Pilate (*Ant.* 18.3.3 §64). The "leading men" of this statement, which is part of the Josephan account that is today almost universally accepted as authentic,¹⁷ undoubtedly refers to the ruling priests. Jesus' action in the temple, independently attested in Mark and John, remains the best explanation for high priestly opposition to Jesus.

What also leads Mack to suspect that John was familiar with Mark is their common plot. Both depict Jesus as a teacher and miracle worker, whose crucifixion is desired by the Jewish leaders. According to Mack, "John's use of . . . this narrative design apart from knowledge of Mark would constitute a coincidence of fantastic proportions."¹⁸ Here Mack has put his finger on the classic problem that has confronted interpreters since scholarly life of Jesus research got underway: If Jesus was a teacher and miracle worker and no more, then how do we explain his arrest and crucifixion? But if Jesus was a revolutionary, and so got himself executed for acts of sedition, how do we explain the ancient and widespread portrait of him as a teacher and healer? It is the temple action that provides the vital historical link between Jesus the teacher and miracle worker, on the

16. C. H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963); R. E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John I-XII* (AB 29; Garden City: Doubleday, 1966) 118-20. For more recent confirmation of Johannine independence of the Synoptic tradition see B. D. Chilton, "[ὡς] φραγέλλιον ἐκ σχοινίων [John 2:15]," *Templum Amicitiae: Essays on the Second Temple* (ed. W. Horbury; E. Bammel Festschrift; JSNTSup 48; Sheffield: JSOT, 1991) 330-44, esp. 333-34; M. A. Matson, "The Contribution to the Temple Cleansing by the Fourth Gospel," *SBLSP* 31 (1992) 489-506, esp. 499.

17. Cf. L. H. Feldmann, "The Testimonium Flavium: The State of the Question," *Christological Perspectives* (eds. R. F. Berkey and S. A. Edwards; H. K. McArthur Festschrift; New York: Pilgrim, 1982) 179-99, 288-93; idem, "Flavius Josephus Revisited: The Man, His Writings, and His Significance," *ANRW* 2.21.2 (1984) 822-35, esp. 822; J. P. Meier, "Jesus in Josephus: A Modest Proposal," *CBQ* 52 (1990) 76-103. M. J. Cook is mistaken when he speaks of a "consensus" among scholars to the effect that the *Testimonium Flavium* is wholly spurious ("Jesus and the Pharisees—The Problem as It Stands Today," *JES* 15 [1978] 441-60). The consensus, or at least near consensus, is that Josephus's account has been redacted but not invented by Christians.

18. Mack, *A Myth of Innocence*, 225 n. 12.

one hand, and Jesus the crucified criminal, on the other. Jesus' miracles, teaching, and temple action, as will be shown in the second part of this paper, were all part of a coherent mission and ministry that make sense in and are to a great extent clarified by the Jewish context. His miracles and teaching were not simply acts of kindness and mercy, but were part of an agenda which had the restoration of Israel as its goal. The miracles and teaching anticipated the temple action, which formed Jesus' final and climactic public teaching. The temple action was not a random, accidental event, but a deliberate and calculated demonstration.

By denying the historicity of the temple action, Mack has unwittingly broken the historical and causal link between miracle/teaching and crucifixion. He is then left marveling at the "coincidence" of both Mark and John portraying the wonder-worker and teacher as done away with at the instigation of the religious leaders. Finding such a coincidence "fantastic," he argues that John must have gotten the idea from Mark, who had earlier happened on it as part of his anti-temple, anti-Judaism theme. But the coincidence of the similar narrative design is adequately and plausibly explained if the temple action is accepted as historical.¹⁹

The historicity of Mark's and John's common narrative design, if not the temple action itself, receives a measure of indirect support from Josephus in the passage to which allusion has already been made. According to Josephus, Jesus was a παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής ("doer of amazing deeds")²⁰ and a διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων ("teacher of men"), whom Pilate condemned to be crucified, having been accused by τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν ("the leading [Jewish] men"). In this brief passage, which comprises all of two sentences, Josephus does not explain on what grounds Jesus was accused, nor does he explain on what grounds Pilate condemned him to the cross. But he does describe Jesus as a teacher and wonder-worker who was crucified at the instigation of the Jewish leaders. Thus, Josephus provides us with an early and independent account which coheres in a significant way with the narrative design common to Mark and John. In short, this

19 The temple action explains the overarching narrative design common to Mark and John (i.e., how a religious teacher comes to grief on a Roman cross), even though their respective applications are not limited to the event's original significance. On these applications see below.

20. In *m. Sota* 9:15 Hanina ben Dosa is described as one of the פְּעֻמֵי יְשׁוּעָה ("men of deeds"). "Deeds" here probably should be understood as mighty deeds or miracles; cf. M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (2 vols.; London: Putnam, 1895-1903; reprinted, New York: Parades, 1950) 1.820; G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels* (London: Collins, 1973) 79.

"narrative design" is not a literary fiction, but a rough approximation of the historical events, independently attested by Mark, John, and Josephus.

THE TEMPLE ACTION IN CONTEXT

In recent years several scholars have rightly emphasized the importance of the temple action for understanding the factors that led to Jesus' crucifixion and perhaps also for understanding the factors that made up Jesus' mission.²¹ Among the most promising of these studies is that offered by Bruce Chilton, who rightly criticizes the overdrawn inferences of S. G. F. Brandon, who had concluded that Jesus' action in the temple precincts was nothing less than an attempted (and failed) coup, and the recent novel suggestion of E. P. Sanders, who proposed that Jesus' action was no more than a prophetic gesture announcing the imminent demise and replacement of the old temple.²² Chilton interprets Jesus' action against the background of similar actions taken by his approximate contemporaries and against the background of several important and related passages in the New Testament Gospels.

The principal strength of Chilton's approach lies in its comparative analysis. He shows that Jesus' action is quite intelligible when viewed as one of several protests and demonstrations relating to the Jerusalem temple.²³ Two of the incidents are preserved in the writings of Josephus. The first protest was directed against Alexander Jannaeus during the festival of Tabernacles (*Ant.* 13.13.5 §§372–73).²⁴ The nation was incited (probably by Pharisees)²⁵ to pelt the king with lemons, just as he was about to offer sacrifice. His critics said that "he was descended from captives [cf. *Ant.* 13.10.5 §292] and was unfit to hold office and to sacrifice." What had been the immediate occasion for this demonstration is difficult to say, but concern for

21. S. G. F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots: A Study of the Political Factor in Primitive Christianity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967); idem, *The Trial of Jesus of Nazareth* (New York: Stein and Day, 1968); E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); B. D. Chilton, *The Temple of Jesus: His Sacrificial Program Within a Cultural History of Sacrifice* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992).

22. Chilton, *The Temple of Jesus*, 94–100.

23. *Ibid.*, 73, 100, 183.

24. In his briefer parallel account, Josephus significantly remarks that "it is on these festive occasions that sedition is most apt to break out" (*J. W.* 1.4.3 §88).

25. Earlier, Josephus asserts that "so great is their influence with the masses that even when [the Pharisees] speak against a king or high priest, they immediately gain credence" (*Ant.* 13.10.5 §288). Of course, allowance must be made for Josephus's tendentiousness.

sacrificial purity was probably the justification for the action, if not a genuine underlying motivation. Alexander retaliated with his troops, killing some six thousand of the crowd. The second incident occurred in the final months of Herod's life, when two rabbis,²⁶ through their public teaching, persuaded several young men to cut down the golden eagle affixed to the gate of the temple (*J.W.* 1.33.2-4 §§648-55; *Ant.* 17.6.2-4 §§149-67). Enraged, Herod had the rabbis and the men who had damaged the eagle burned alive, denouncing them as sacrilegious and impious.

Chilton recommends to our attention two other demonstrations in the temple precincts that do not end in violence but do reflect popular concerns with temple polity.²⁷ Traditions relating to these incidents are preserved in the rabbinic writings. The first episode involves Hillel, who apparently "taught that offerings (as in the case of his own *'ōlah*) should be brought to the temple, where the owners would lay hands on them, and give them over to the priests for slaughter."²⁸ Persuaded by his teaching, a member of the house of Shammai brought three thousand animals to the temple and gave them to those who were willing to follow Hillel's teaching.²⁹ The second incident involves Simeon ben Gamaliel who in his time protested the exorbitant charge for doves. Simeon countered by teaching the following: "By this Temple! . . . If a woman suffered five miscarriages that were not in doubt or five issues that were not in doubt, she need bring but one offering, and she may then eat of the animal offerings" (*m. Ker.* 1:7). The effect of this teaching, we are told, was to bring about a sharp reduction in the price of doves.

It is against the background of these examples that Chilton interprets the action of Jesus in the temple precincts. "Jesus can be best understood within the context of a particular dispute in which the Pharisees took part. . . . In that the dispute was intimately involved with the issue of how animals were to be procured, it manifests a focus upon purity akin to that attributed to Hillel and Simeon." "Hillel, Simeon, and Jesus are all portrayed as interested in how animals are offered to the extent that they intervene in the court of the temple in order to influence the ordinary course of worship."³⁰ Jesus

26. Josephus calls these men σοφιστάι, which in the singular is probably the equivalent of "rabbi." In *Ant.* 18.3.3 §63 he calls Jesus a σοφὸς ἀνὴρ and a διδάσκαλος, which might suggest that Josephus regarded Jesus as a rabbi as well.

27. Chilton, *The Temple of Jesus*, 100-103.

28. *Ibid.*, 101.

29. *T. Hag.* 2.11; *y. Hag.* 2.3; *y. Besa* 2.4; *b. Besa* 20a-b; on the antiquity of the tradition cf. Philo, *Spec.* 1.37 §198.

30. Chilton, *The Temple of Jesus*, 103.

did not attack the sacrificial system or the temple,³¹ nor did he call for a different, more spiritual religion (as is often asserted in commentaries). Jesus was concerned with the purity of the pragmata of Israel's sacrificial system. Chilton suspects that Jesus' concern, possibly prompted by Caiaphas's apparently recent and novel introduction of animals into the temple precincts, was similar to that earlier expressed by Hillel.³² Jesus' action, or "occupation," as Chilton understands it, was "designed to prevent the sacrifice of animals acquired on the site, in trading that involved commerce within the Temple and obscured the Pharisaic understanding that those animals were fully the property of [the people of] Israel (as distinct from the priesthood or the Temple)."³³

The concern that Jesus expressed in the temple was not, however, an isolated incident, but was a manifestation of important themes that ran throughout his ministry. Chilton identifies several passages in the Gospels which cohere with his interpretation.³⁴ These include the cleansing of the leper, where Jesus assumes priestly prerogatives (Mark 1:40-44); and pronouncements regarding the temple tax (Matt 17:24-26), what is clean and what defiles (Mark 7:1-8, 14-23, though not all of this material derives from Jesus), what his disciples may carry as they travel throughout Israel (Matt 10:9-14; Mark 6:8-10; Luke 9:3-4; 10:4-7), and what constitutes proper giving to the temple (Mark 7:9-13; 12:41-44). Chilton believes, moreover, that Jesus' remarkable pronouncements relating to forgiveness (Matt 5:23-24; Luke 7:47), "binding and loosing" (Matt 18:18), and the justification of those regarded by the priestly establishment as unclean or outcast (Luke 10:29-37; 18:9-14) are closely linked to his understanding of purity and sacrifice.³⁵

31. Chilton is certainly correct when he states that Jesus' action had "nothing whatever to do with destroying the fabric of the edifice itself" (ibid., 100). But his statement that Jesus' action was not "immediately directed at . . . the high priests" requires qualification, perhaps more than the adverb "immediately" entails. Since by all accounts the presence and activities of the merchants and money changers within the temple precincts was by the permission and at the direction of the chief priests, any challenge or criticism leveled at the former implied challenge and criticism of the latter. I think that it is therefore correct to speak of Jesus' criticism of temple polity.

32. Chilton, *The Temple of Jesus*, 107-11; idem, *A Galilean Rabbi and His Bible: Jesus' Use of the Interpreted Scripture of His Time* (Wilmington: Glazier, 1984) 17-18. For an assessment of the relevant rabbinic traditions see V. Eppstein, "The Historicity of the Gospel Account of the Cleansing of the Temple," *ZNW* 55 (1964) 42-58.

33. Chilton, *The Temple of Jesus*, 111. See also idem, "[ὡς] φραγέλλιον ἐκ σχοινίων," 335-42.

34. Chilton, *The Temple of Jesus*, 121-30.

35. Ibid., 130-36; idem, "The Purity of the Kingdom as Conveyed in Jesus' Meals," *SBLSP* 31 (1992) 473-88, esp. 484. Matson argues for a somewhat similar conclusion ("Temple Cleansing," 499-506). See also N. T. Wright, "Jerusalem in the New

The evidence that Chilton has presented appears to sustain the principal elements of his interpretation of Jesus' action in the temple. But what specific action or teaching precipitated Jesus' arrest and execution? What provoked the high priest into taking action against Jesus? Chilton believes that it was Jesus' break with the cultus and his teaching that an offering of bread and wine (Mark 14:22-24 par.), where the conditions of purity and ownership are met, is to be preferred to the sacrifice of an animal at the temple. The words of institution in their original sense, Chilton explains, were neither christological nor soteriological. Rather, "body" and "blood" referred to the body and blood of the sacrificial animal, symbolized by bread and wine, and not to the body and blood of Jesus.³⁶ Judas, who was present when Jesus uttered these provocative words, hurried away and reported them to the high priest. Caiaphas, perceiving the potential economic threat (remember the result of Simeon's teaching) and ideological subversion,³⁷ made arrangements through Judas to take Jesus quietly and hand him over to the Romans.³⁸

Chilton's analysis has much to commend it. His interpretation of Jesus' action in the temple is compelling, so far as it goes. His contextualization of this action, both in reference to Jesus' contemporaries and in reference to Jesus' related teaching, is persuasive. His work goes a long way in addressing and filling a serious lacuna in life of Jesus research. Nevertheless, nagging questions remain.

First, it is not clear why Caiaphas would take such aggressive action against a teacher who had begun to advocate a view very similar

Testament," *Jerusalem Past and Present in the Purposes of God* (ed. P. W. L. Walker; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 53-77, esp. 58. For important criticism of Sanders's *Jesus and Judaism* touching the question of purity in Jesus' teaching see J. Neusner and B. D. Chilton, "Uncleanness: A Moral or an Ontological Category in the Early Centuries AD?" *BBR* 1 (1991) 63-88, esp. 80-88. P. Richardson argues that Jesus took action in the temple because of the use of silver Tyrian coins bearing the image of the god Melkart ("Why Turn the Tables? Jesus' Protest in the Temple Precincts," *SBLSP* 31 [1992] 507-23). Such an interpretation does not necessarily compete with that proposed by Chilton. Richardson's interpretation, if valid, supports the hypothesis that purity issues lay behind Jesus' action.

36. Chilton, *The Temple of Jesus*, 152-54; idem, "The Purity of the Kingdom," 487-88. For a recent and enthusiastic endorsement of Chilton's interpretation see B. Lang, "The Roots of the Eucharist in Jesus' Praxis," *SBLSP* 31 (1992) 467-72.

37. As Chilton puts it: Jesus' "social eating took on a new and scandalous element: the claim that God preferred a pure meal to impure sacrifice in the temple. Any such claim struck at the conception of the unique efficacy of the cult on Mount Zion. The dispute concerning the pragmatics of purity turned out to strike at an axiom within the ideology of Israel's sacrifice. Eschatological purity had become more important than place, and the authorities of the temple could never accept any such inversion of their own ideological priorities" (*The Temple of Jesus*, 154).

38. *Ibid.*, 151.

to what apparently was practiced by the Essenes.³⁹ According to Philo, the Essenes "are men utterly dedicated to the service of God; they do not offer animal sacrifice, judging it more fitting to render their minds truly holy" (*Prob.* 12 §75). Josephus explains that the Essenes had been excluded from the temple, owing to their distinctive purification rites; therefore, "they offered their sacrifices among themselves" (*Ant.* 18.1.5 §19). The Dead Sea Scrolls seem to support this claim: "They [the covenanters] shall expiate guilty rebellion and sinful infidelity . . . without the flesh of burnt offering and the fat of sacrifice, but the offering of the lips in accordance with the Law will be an agreeable odor of righteousness, and perfection of way shall be as the voluntary gift of a delectable oblation" (1QS 9:3-5).⁴⁰ The idea of spiritual sacrifice probably also explains the temple language that the community used to describe itself: "The Council of the Community shall be established in truth as an everlasting planting. It is the House of holiness for Israel and the Company of infinite holiness for Aaron . . . appointed to offer expiation for the earth" (1QS 8:5-6).⁴¹ And elsewhere: "He [God] has commanded a sanctuary of men [מִקְדָּשׁ אֲנָשִׁים] to be built for Himself, that there they may send up, like the smoke of incense, the works of the Law" (4QFlor 1:6-7).⁴² Even if Chilton's novel interpretation of the words of institution be provisionally accepted, it is far from obvious that Caiaphas would have felt significantly threatened by a private halakah advocating withdrawal from the official cultus.⁴³ Why not ban Jesus from the temple

39. C. A. Evans, "Opposition to the Temple: Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls," *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1992) 235-53.

40. A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran* (trans. G. Vermes; reprinted, Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1973) 93 and n. 1.

41. *Ibid.*, 91.

42. *Ibid.*, 311-12; G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (2d ed., New York: Penguin, 1975) 246. Dupont-Sommer's misleading parenthetical insertion, "made by the hands," which appears after "sanctuary," has been omitted. Qumran's stricter and more widely applied rules of purity are documented in 11QTemple; cf. G. A. Anderson, "The Interpretation of the Purification Offering (פְּרִיָּה) in the Temple Scroll (11QTemple)," *JBL* 111 (1992) 17-35.

43. To this Chilton responds by observing that whereas the Essenes were content to await the final eschatological battle, after which they would assume control of the temple, Jesus evidently was calling for the purification of the temple in the here and now (*Temple of Jesus*, 141-46; and personal conversation following the discussion of my paper). Accordingly, Caiaphas could afford to ignore the Essenes, but he could not ignore Jesus. The distinction that Chilton draws between the respective programs of Jesus and the Essenes is an important one and, I think, for the most part convincing. Nevertheless, a question remains. Why does Caiaphas immediately respond with force after a private teaching? We should expect a response, if any was thought necessary, after a public teaching.

precincts, as Caiaphas and/or his high priestly colleagues had banned certain Essenes?

Second, it is even less clear why the Romans would crucify someone, in effect, for boycotting the sacrificial system of the temple. If Jesus' action constituted a protest and teaching against temple polity along the lines that Chilton has proposed, how are we to account for the Roman crucifixion? The *titulus* on Jesus' cross ("King of the Jews" [Mark 15:26; cf. 15:2, 9, 12, 18], that part which is common to all four Gospels), whose authenticity is very probable,⁴⁴ clearly indicates that Jesus was viewed as a messianic royal claimant of some sort. A messianic role would not have been inconsistent with the temple action and perhaps would even have required it. One thinks of Psalms of Solomon 17-18 where a "Messiah" who will cleanse (καθαρίζειν) Jerusalem and drive sinners out is described (see esp. 17:30, 36; 18:5). As a messianic claimant, Jesus has challenged temple polity and in doing so has possibly challenged the ruling authority of the high priest.⁴⁵

There is an important historical parallel that may clarify the chain of events that began with Jesus' action in the temple. According to Josephus,

Four years before the war . . . there came to the feast, at which is the custom of all Jews to erect tabernacles to God, one Jesus son of Ananias, an untrained peasant, who, standing in the Temple, suddenly began to cry out, "A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the sanctuary, a voice against the bridegroom and the bride, a voice against all the people." . . . Some of the leading citizens, angered at this evil speech, arrested the man and whipped him with many blows. But he, not speaking anything in his own behalf or in private to those who

44. The authenticity of the *titulus* is accepted by N. A. Dahl ("The Crucified Messiah," *The Crucified Messiah and Other Essays* [ed. Dahl; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1974] 1-36); E. Bammel ("*The Titulus*," *Jesus and the Politics of His Day* [eds. Bammel and C. F. D. Moule; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984] 353-64); and, with caution, M. de Jonge (*Christology in Context: The Earliest Christian Response to Jesus* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988] 210). It should be remembered that Antony and the Roman Senate appointed Herod βασιλεὺς Ἰουδαίων (Josephus, *J. W.* 1.14.4 §§282-85), which indicates that the wording of the *titulus* is at least consistent with official Roman terminology. Had Christian Jews invented the *titulus* tradition, we should have expected something like "Jesus, King [or Messiah] of Israel," in place of the ethnic designation "Jews." Note that the chief priests, in marked contrast to the Romans, are said to have mocked Jesus as "the Messiah, the King of Israel" (Mark 15:31). A conflated and secondary form of the *titulus* tradition appears in *Gos. Pet.* 4.11: "they wrote upon it: this is the King of Israel." This later tradition has confused the divergent Roman and Jewish forms of the title.

45. Recall that from the Hasmonean period the high priest sometimes functioned as Israel's de facto king.

struck him, continued his cries as before. Thereupon, the rulers . . . brought him to the Roman governor. There, though flayed to the bone with scourges, he neither begged for mercy or wept. . . . When Albinus the governor asked him who and whence he was and why he uttered these cries, he gave no answer to these things. . . . Albinus pronounced him a maniac and released him. . . . He cried out especially at the feasts. . . . While shouting from the wall, "Woe once more to the city and to the people and to the sanctuary . . ." a stone . . . struck and killed him (*J. W.* 6.5.3 §§300-309).

There are several important parallels between the temple-related experiences of Jesus of Nazareth and Jesus son of Ananias. Both entered the precincts of the temple (τὸ ἱερόν: Mark 11:11, 15, 27; 12:35; 13:1; 14:49; *J. W.* 6.5.3 §301) at the time of a religious festival (ἑορτή: Mark 14:2; 15:6; John 2:23; *J. W.* 6.5.3 §300). Both spoke of the doom of Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-24; *J. W.* 6.5.3 §301), the sanctuary (ναός: Mark 13:2; 14:58; *J. W.* 6.5.3 §301), and the people (λαός: Mark 13:17; Luke 19:44; 23:28-31; *J. W.* 6.5.3 §301). Both apparently alluded to Jeremiah 7, where the prophet condemned the temple establishment of his day ("cave of robbers": Jer 7:11 in Mark 11:17; "the voice against the bridegroom and the bride": Jer 7:34 in *J. W.* 6.5.3 §301). Both were "arrested" by the authority of Jewish⁴⁶—not Roman—leaders (συλλαμβάνειν: Mark 14:48; John 18:12; *J. W.* 6.5.3 §302). Both were beaten by the Jewish authorities (παίειν: Matt 26:68; Mark 14:65; *J. W.* 6.5.3 §302). Both were handed over to the Roman governor (ἡγαγον αὐτόν ἐπὶ τὸν Πιλάτον: Luke 23:1; ἀνάγουσιν . . . ἐπὶ τὸν . . . ἑπαρχόν: *J. W.* 6.5.3 §303). Both were interrogated by the Roman governor (ἔρωτᾶν: Mark 15:4; *J. W.* 6.5.3 §305). Both refused to answer to the governor (οὐδὲν ἀποκρίνεσθαι: Mark 15:5; *J. W.* 6.5.3 §305). Both were scourged by the governor (μαστιγοῦν/μάστιξι: John 19:1; *J. W.* 6.5.3 §304). Governor Pilate may have offered to release Jesus of Nazareth, but did not; Governor Albinus did release Jesus son of Ananias (ἀπολύειν: Mark 15:9; *J. W.* 6.5.3 §305).⁴⁷

46. R. A. Horsley rightly draws our attention to the fact that it was only the priestly aristocracy that tried to silence Jesus son of Ananias ("'Like One of the Prophets of Old': Two Types of Popular Prophets at the Time of Jesus," *CBQ* 47 [1985] 435—63, esp. 451).

47. Both I. H. Marshall and other IBR Fellows raised the possibility, given the numerous verbal parallels, of some sort of literary relationship between *J. W.* 6.5.3 and the passion tradition. Although this possibility was not vigorously pursued during our time of discussion, perhaps a brief reply would be useful. *First*, the "parallels" comprise no more than nouns of place and context and verbs that mark the various steps in the judicial and penal process. In other words, the parallels are precisely what one would expect in cases where routine actions are being described. *Second*, aside from the single parallel cluster where we have a common verbal root, preposition, and Roman governor as object, there are no instances of parallel sentences or phrases. Literary re-

If we focus upon the *reaction* to Jesus' activity in the temple, then it seems clear that the closest parallel is the experience of Jesus son of Ananias a generation later. The parallels with Hillel and Simeon are helpful in clarifying what may have motivated Jesus of Nazareth, but they are less helpful in clarifying the response of the Jewish and Roman authorities. Jesus son of Ananias evidently did not have any agenda of reform or criticism (as did Hillel and Simeon); nor did he attack the authorities (as did the crowd that pelted Jannaeus or the young men who vandalized the golden eagle). His action consisted of nothing more than a dolorous prediction of the temple's impending doom.

Jesus of Nazareth, on the other hand, was apparently motivated out of concerns relating to temple polity. Evidently he took exception to the presence of the animals in the temple precincts and to the attendant commercial activities. What he taught in the temple on this occasion, of which only fragments are preserved in the Gospels, may very well have paralleled the earlier teaching of Hillel, as Chilton has suggested. The comparison is apt. But the reaction of the temple authorities suggests the presence of a more serious element in Jesus' teaching and action. This element likely consists of some sort of prophetic pronouncement against the temple, probably related to Jeremiah 7, just as the later oracle of Jesus son of Ananias would also be based on Jeremiah 7.

The evidence for this conclusion is found at four points. First, there is the allusion to the "cave of robbers" of Jer 7:11 (Mark 11:17). This fragment should not be viewed as a Christian embellishment or replacement of something that Jesus had said.⁴⁸ Not only is there no

relationships are suspected when there is a high concentration of common vocabulary, especially phrases and whole sentences. In short, I think that the common vocabulary adduced above indicates common judicial and penal process, but not literary relationship. There is no indication that the story of one Jesus influenced the telling of the story of the other Jesus.

48. R. Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium* (HTKNT 11/2; 4th ed., Freiburg: Herder, 1991) 199. However, Sanders and others dismiss Mark 11:17 as inauthentic; cf. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 66, 363-64 (n. 1), 367 (n. 40). R. Bultmann thinks that Mark 11:17 has replaced the older saying about the "house of merchandise" (*The History of the Synoptic Tradition* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1968] 36; John 2:16). J. Gnilka is correct to point out that the introductory clause, "he was teaching and saying to them," is Markan, but that does not mean that the rest of the verse is Markan (*Das Evangelium nach Markus* [EKKNT 11/2; Zürich: Benziger, 1979] 127). Allusion to two or more passages of Scripture is characteristic of Jesus. The presence of "Gentiles" in the quotation of Isa 56:7 has led some to think that this verse was placed on the lips of Jesus to advance or explain the Gentile mission. Of course, this may have been the case. But the verse seems to advance Gentile proselytization from the perspective of non-Christian Judaism, rather than from that of Christianity. Why would the early Church add a verse

indication that Jer 7:11 was employed by the early Church, independently of Mark 11:17 and parallels, to criticize the Jewish temple, there is evidence in Jewish sources that the temple establishment of the first century was viewed by some Jews as corrupt and, specifically, guilty of robbery (Josephus, *Ant.* 20.8.8 §181; 20.9.2 §§206-7; 1QpHab 8:12; 9:5; 10:1; 12:10; *T. Mos.* 7:6; *Tg. 1 Sam* 2:17, 29; *Tg. Jer* 8:10; 23:11; *t. Menah.* 13.18-19).⁴⁹ Such an utterance on the part of Jesus is, therefore, entirely consistent with the action in the temple and with what can be known of the pre-70 social and religious setting.⁵⁰ *Second*, the accusation at Jesus' hearing before the Jewish Council that he had threatened to destroy the temple and raise up a new one (Mark 14:58) coheres with the allusion to Jeremiah 7, a passage that goes on to warn of the (first) temple's destruction (vv 12-15). Though admitting that Jesus did predict the temple's destruction (Mark 13:2), the Markan evangelist is careful to contextualize Jesus'

that is part of an eschatological vision in which is imagined all the nations of the earth coming to Jerusalem and to her temple to offer sacrifice to God? Would early Christians, with increasing christocentricity and increasing hostility from and toward the Jerusalem religious establishment, have appealed to such a verse? Furthermore, why would Mark invent a saying identifying the temple as the place of prayer for Gentiles when, by the time of his writing, the Temple no longer existed? Chilton (*The Temple of Jesus*, 119) rightly observes that the Synoptic citation of these verses from Isaiah and Jeremiah "quite clearly indicates an enduring interest in the Temple." In my judgment, the quotation of this verse likely goes back to Jesus, by which he expressed his expectation that Jerusalem's temple should be worthy of its divine purpose and mission. I think that such an understanding complements very well Chilton's interpretation of Jesus' attempt to occupy and teach in the temple precincts.

49. For a survey and assessment of the evidence, see my "Jesus' Action in the Temple and Evidence of Corruption in the First-Century Temple," *SBLSP* 28 (1989) 522-39. See also R. A. Horsley, "High Priests and the Politics of Roman Palestine," *JSJ* 17 (1986) 23-55.

50. Compare also Jesus' statements about the religious establishments' oppression of widows (Mark 12:38-40, 41-44) to Jer 7:6-7 ("if you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow . . . then I will let you dwell in this place").

M. J. Borg accepts the saying found in Mark 11:17 as authentic, but thinks that Jesus uttered it in reference to "violent ones" who congregated in the temple precincts to plot against Rome (*Conflict, Holiness and Politics in the Teachings of Jesus* [New York: Mellen, 1984] 171-75). Borg thinks that the word ληστῶν carries the sense often given to it by Josephus; however, this interpretation faces several difficulties. (1) It is highly unlikely that the chief priests, who were Roman allies, would have permitted such persons to occupy any part of the temple precincts. (2) Why would chief priests have challenged Jesus (Mark 11:27-33) for criticizing such persons? (3) If Jesus spoke against such would-be insurrectionists, why then did he overturn the tables and concern himself with the sacrificial animals? It is better to interpret ληστῶν in Mark 11:17 against the context of Jeremiah 7, rather than against the context of Josephan usage. See further M. D. Hooker, "Traditions about the Temple in the Sayings of Jesus," *BJRL* 70 (1988) 7-19, esp. 17-18.

prediction as an introduction to an apocalyptic discourse (Mark 13:5-37) and not as a threat. Indeed, in the apocalyptic context of Mark 13 Jesus' warning against the temple is transformed into a formal prophecy. It is framing the testimony of the two witnesses as a threat ("He said, 'I will destroy . . .'"") that makes the accusation false. In other words, according to Mark, Jesus did not threaten the Temple's destruction ("I will destroy"), but he did warn of it ("not a stone will be left").⁵¹ The *third* piece of evidence is found in the scene that follows Jesus' appearance before the high priest. When Jesus was pronounced guilty by Caiaphas and the Council, the attendants mock him with calls to "prophecy" (Mark 14:65). Such mockery, which is likely not Christian invention (though there is evidence of Christian attempts to introduce christological implications),⁵² coheres with the proposed scenario that the arrest of Jesus of Nazareth, like the later arrest of Jesus son of Ananias, was precipitated by a warning of the temple's doom, not simply by a new teaching calling for modification of the sacrificial pragmata or, having failed to bring about such modification, for sacrifice outside of the auspices of the temple priesthood. The *fourth* and final indication that Jesus warned of the temple's destruction at the time that he took action in the temple precincts is seen in the Johannine version (2:13-20), where Jesus says: "Destroy this sanctuary and in three days I will raise it up" (v. 19).⁵³

51. Sanders, who regards Mark 14:58 as authentic, argues that Jesus did in fact threaten to destroy the temple and erect its messianic replacement within three days (*Jesus and Judaism*, 61-76). This interpretation is problematic at many points. See my "Jesus' Action in the Temple: Cleansing or Portent of Destruction?" *CBQ* 51 (1989) 237-70; Chilton, *The Temple of Jesus*, 98-99.

Jesus' prediction of the temple's destruction probably had been no more than a part of his teaching in the temple precincts, but came to be emphasized in the light of the events of 66-70. Indeed, the allusion to Jeremiah's "cave of robbers" probably had more to do with criticizing temple polity than with predicting the temple's destruction; cf. Chilton, *The Temple of Jesus*, 119. Mark apocalypticizes the prediction (Mark 13) and subordinates it to his anti-temple theme, whereby Jesus and his new community replace the temple establishment (Mark 12:10-11; 14:58). John subordinates the destruction prophecy quite transparently to his Christology, whereby Jesus is presented as the new sanctuary, destroyed but resurrected on the third day (John 2:19-22).

52. Matt 26:68 reads: "Prophecy to us, you Christ!" Further christianization is seen in Gos. Pet. 3.9, which has collapsed the appearances before the Council and the Roman governor and has the people strike and whip Jesus, saying, "With such honor let us honor the Son of God."

53. B. F. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1979) 181; Matson, "Temple Cleansing," 505; J. P. M. Sweet, "A House Not Made with Hands," *Templum Amicitiae* (ed. Horbury, 368-90, esp. 371); Wright, "Jerusalem in the New Testament," 58-60. According to Chilton Jesus (in John 2:19) has accused the temple establishment of destroying the sanctuary: "Jesus' act amounts to an attempt to prevent that destruction. Far from being an attempt to prophesy the ruin of the temple, Jesus' aim was

The reference to Jeremiah's "cave of robbers" constitutes an important link between Jesus' action in the temple and his execution. The allusion to Jeremiah supports Sanders's contention that at the time of his action in the temple Jesus spoke of the temple's destruction,⁵⁴ though not in the sense that Sanders proposed. And it was this prophetic warning, and not simply a teaching that was contrary to official temple polity, that prompted Caiaphas actively to seek the destruction of Jesus.

The reaction of Jewish and Roman authorities to Jesus of Nazareth is analogous to their reaction to Jesus son of Ananias. Had Albinus found the son of Ananias sane and dangerous, in all probability he would have had him executed. But in the case of Jesus of Nazareth, who entertained messianic ideas, who had a following, who challenged the polity of the chief priests, and who evidently was found sane and dangerous, execution was deemed expedient.⁵⁵

purification, along the lines of stopping illicit trade (cf. Zech. 14.21c)" ("ὡς] φραγέλιον ἐκ σχοινίων," 341). This may be, but the persistence of the tradition to the effect that Jesus did predict the temple's destruction (cf. Acts 6:13) does suggest that Jesus spoke of it. In my judgment, Jesus condemned temple polity (perhaps suggesting that it was the polity itself that threatened the temple with destruction) and warned that if corrections were not forthcoming the fate of the Herodian temple would follow that of the Solomonic temple (just as centuries earlier Jeremiah warned his contemporaries that the fate of the Solomonic temple would follow that of the house of God at Shiloh).

54. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 61.

55. Remember, too, that Caiaphas and Pilate evidently got along well, so the latter may have been more willing to acquiesce to the demands of the former (a point which serves Chilton's interpretation equally well). It is likely that Albinus did not enjoy a cordial relationship with any of the several high priests who served during his brief term in office (62-64 CE; Joseph Cabi son of Simon [61-62 CE]), who may have been removed from office prior to the arrival of Albinus, Ananus' son Ananus [62 cd, who put to death James the brother of Jesus and was removed from office, Jesus son of Damnaeus [62-63 CE], and Jesus son of Gamaliel [63-64 CE]). The frequent turnover suggests friction between the governor and the high priests and, in any event, would not have been conducive to the development of good working relations. According to Josephus, especially in the briefer account in the *Jewish War*, the administration of Albinus was marked by cruelty and corruption (*J.W.* 2.14.1 §§272-76; *Ant.* 20.9.1-5 §§197-215).