

AN EXTRAORDINARY JEWISH ETHNOGRAPHY RELATED
BY A ROMAN-GALLIC AUGUSTAN HISTORIAN

Bezalel Bar-Kochva

The Jewish excursus in Pompeius Trogus' *Historiae Philippicae*, contains a unique and rather bizarre account of the origins of the Jews. This account was generally regarded as valueless by scholars. The present article shows its importance for the understanding of the conflict between Samaritans and Jews as well as between Greeks and Jews in Ptolemaic Egypt, and the implications for a proper evaluation of the Josephan report on the Hasmonean state.

The article begins with a survey of the views about Pompeius Trogus, the man, and his work, focusing on the issues relevant to the Jewish Excursus. The second section defines the genre of the excursus and elaborates on its rules of composition. It then presents the Latin text with an accompanying Hebrew translation. The third section shows that there are two versions of the *origo* of the Jewish people in Trogus' account, and separates them. The following section tries to identify the authors of the original two versions, their place, ethnic descent and purposes. The fifth section delineates the historical background of the stories and suggests that they were composed around the year 107 B.C.E.

The sixth section elaborates on the question of Trogus' immediate source, identifying it with *On the Kings* of Timagenes of Alexandria. The next section explores the information available about Timagenes' eccentric character and behavior, and analyses accordingly his special attitude to the Jews as reflected in the fragments and testimonia preserved by Josephus. Section eight turns to the core of the discussion: the image of the Jews in the excursus itself. The last chapter refers to the question of who was the intermediate source for combining the two versions and how the combined description of the *origo* of the Jewish people reached Timagenes.