

"ALEXANDRU IOAN CUZA" UNIVERSITY OF IAȘI

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FACULTY OF HISTORY

**- ABSTRACT –
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**The Image of Jews in the Works of Latin Historians
during the Principate Period**

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Imagology, as an academic discipline, has origins that can be traced back to the 19th century, but the term itself became more commonly used starting in the mid-20th century. This field has been influenced by various currents of thought and intellectual movements that have addressed how cultures, nations, and groups are represented and perceived in the context of intercultural relations. The origin of imagology can be linked to the romantic tradition of the 19th century, which placed a particular emphasis on cultural individuality and national identity. Literary studies began to explore how nations and cultures express their specificity in their literary works.

In the post-World War II period, emancipation movements and the struggle for independence led to a reconsideration of colonial representations. Subsequently developed, postcolonial studies have analyzed the impact of imperialism and its associated representations. In the era of globalization, imagology has become increasingly relevant. Modern technologies, such as the internet and social media, have had a significant impact on how images and representations circulate and are perceived globally. Imagologists now explore the influence of new media on the construction of cultural and national identities. Although rooted in earlier centuries, imagology solidified its status as a distinct academic discipline in the 20th century and continues to evolve to explore contemporary cultural and social changes.

Imagology plays an important role in historical research, providing an additional perspective on understanding the past and intercultural relationships, allowing researchers to explore the mentalities and perceptions of an era or culture in a more nuanced manner. By analyzing images and stereotypes, historians can thus gain a deeper understanding of how people in the past perceived and interpreted their world.

Under the spectrum of imagological research, we understand the way in which various cultures have perceived each other throughout history and how these mutual representations have influenced intercultural relationships. Studying how certain images have been used to create stereotypes and prejudices can provide a broader understanding of intercultural dynamics.

The study of imagology thus offers a captivating perspective on how ancient societies perceived and represented their own members, and especially how they viewed and described other cultures and communities with which they interacted. Within this research, we will focus on the image of the ancient Jews and on classical historical sources from the early

Roman Empire period to better understand how they were perceived and represented in writings from that time.

The classical historical sources from the early Roman Empire period represent an invaluable source of information regarding how the Romans and their contemporaries viewed and described the Jews, as well as how the Jews self-represented within the ancient world. This field of study allows us to explore the cultural representations, stereotypes, and prejudices that influenced the perception of the ancient Jews during this period.

Imagology in the context of ancient Jews during the early Roman Empire holds particular importance, as this community had significant interactions with Roman culture and administration. Studying the image of the Jews during this period helped us understand both the perspectives of the Romans toward a different culture and religion, as well as how the ancient Jews responded to the representations and stereotypes attributed to them.

In this work, we observed how, from an imagological perspective, the classical historical sources from the early Roman Empire period were influenced regarding the ancient Jews. By analyzing the writings of Tacitus, Flavius Josephus, Suetonius, and Dio Cassius, we managed to a certain degree to understand how they represented and characterized the Jewish community during that period. Through these sources, we trace the evolution of perceptions and intercultural relations between Jews and Romans of that era.

This research not only provides us with insight into how imagology has contributed to shaping representations of Jews but also how these representations influenced discourse and intercultural relationships during the early Roman Empire period. Furthermore, this exploration will help us understand how classical historical sources can be viewed from an imagological perspective and to what extent these representations have persisted and had an impact on conceptions of Jews in later eras.

In conclusion, choosing this research topic not only sheds light on the representations of Jews in the sources of Roman historians but also provides an opportunity to explore the influence of these representations on culture, identity, and intercultural relationships in the past. Additionally, it serves as a starting point for future research projects that may incorporate possible interdisciplinary approaches from the fields of sociology, psychology, and anthropology.

In the field of humanities, the study of imagology has gained prominence within current research. It examines the formation of collective representations of 'the other,' the

'foreigner,' taking the form of images and stereotypes. Under this interpretation, the concept of an image must be understood as a synthesis, a simplification of a number of traits (often focusing on the negative ones), giving rise to stereotypes and clichés. By using collective representations, one can 'read' and analyze the general opinion of a group. Thus, in the social imaginary, we encounter condensed formulations with descriptive functions.

The demarcation from the 'foreigner' ultimately leads to the assertion of one's own identity. When used for political purposes, it can take on new meanings with even more negative and powerful effects. The expression of prejudices can lead to the rupture of connections between states, peoples, or civilizations.

In the analysis of stereotypes, we discover that they are truncated representations with the value of a template, generalizing individual manifestations based on certain specific traits. In Walter Lippman's view, the stereotype is an abusive generalization that detaches from the complex context and reality to be used for another purpose. Thus, perceptions between individuals are nothing more than clusters of labels and stereotypes. A seminal work in this field was Edward Said's 'Orientalism' (1978), which played a fundamental role in the development of imagology. Said analyzed how the West constructed images and representations of the East, expanding his research to the notion of 'the other.'

Eric Adler focuses his attention on the presentation of the barbarian using passages from Latin historiographies (such as Sallustius, Tacitus, Titus Livius). His writing reveals aspects that change the perspective on Latin historiography. Thus, it is influenced not only by Roman 'colonialism' and 'expansionism' but also by the social category to which it is addressed. In his view, ancient authors did not necessarily write for posterity but for that elite, those educated representatives of society who held leadership positions in the state. According to him, such works would not have found purpose among the uneducated masses.

In his work, 'Rethinking the Other in Antiquity,' Erich S. Gruen emphasizes three civilizations that defined the Mediterranean space (Greek, Roman, and Hebrew) and how they came into contact with each other and neighboring civilizations. Through a detailed analysis, we see how stereotypes and distortions in the perception of 'the other' emerged. Gruen presents how the ancients integrated the traditions of foreign civilizations, imagined blood ties, and associations with distant peoples and cultures through legends, myths, and crafted histories. Setting aside the contrasts, the work itself also portrays connections,

intercultural links based on context, highlighting how the collective consciousness of a civilization formed both from within and in relation to the external.

Modern authors have extensively addressed imagology and the portrayal of Jews in antiquity, providing an updated and complex perspective on the subject. These authors have explored the representations of Jews in ancient sources and analyzed how these representations were influenced by the cultural, social, and political context of the time.

Peter Schäfer is renowned for his extensive expertise in the field of ancient Judaism and classical studies. This expertise allows him to analyze in depth and with precision the representations of Jews in classical literature and to understand the interactions between them.

His works investigate how Jews interacted culturally and socially during that time, how they were perceived and presented in the literature of ancient authors, as well as the reciprocal influence between the Greco-Roman cultural world and the Judaic one. His works provide both the general context and the details and nuances. The importance of his work in this field is undisputed, offering new directions in research.

As for revealing nuances, Schäfer explores the subtleties and deep meanings behind the representations of Jews in classical literature. This provides a complex perspective on how Jews were perceived and the interpretation of these representations from a cultural and historical standpoint. His works have brought to light the reciprocal influence between these two cultural worlds and the evolution of the image of Jews in antiquity, as well as how the Greco-Roman world incorporated fabrications and constructions into its discourse used in the social-political context of the times.

John J. Collins has made significant contributions to research related to Jews in classical and ancient literature. His importance in this field lies in his expertise in late antique literature, producing influential works on Jewish apocalypses and intertestamental literature, offering a significant perspective on how Jews of that period expressed their beliefs and perceptions in the context of classical culture.

Adopting an interdisciplinary approach, Collins combines the study of Jewish and classical texts with knowledge of history, religion, and culture. This approach has allowed for a deeper understanding of the interactions between Jews and the classical world.

His works on biblical texts and Jewish apocalypses are of particular importance for understanding how Jews expressed their religious ideas and hopes during that period, indirectly influencing representations in classical literature.

Shaye J.D. Cohen is recognized as one of the most important experts in the field of ancient Judaism and classical Jewish literature. His extensive experience and profound knowledge in the field allow him to analyze with accuracy and depth the representations of Jews in the context of classical literature.

Cohen's works explore the imagology of Jews in the social, political, and cultural context of the ancient world. He investigates how Jews were represented in ancient writings and the influence of historical context on these representations. One of Cohen's most well-known works is 'The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties.'

Cohen adopts an interdisciplinary approach, combining Jewish studies with classical studies to provide a complex perspective on how representations of Jews were shaped by ancient contexts and mutually influenced by classical culture. However, Shaye J.D. Cohen also takes a critical stance toward ancient sources, acknowledging the prejudices and stereotypes present in them. This provides a deeper understanding of how Jews were represented in classical literature and how these representations can be accurately interpreted.

Through his research, Martin Goodman discusses how representations of Jews in ancient literature were influenced by the social, political, and cultural context of the time. He explores the relationships between Jews and other cultural groups, as well as how stereotypes and prejudices have influenced the imagology of Jews.

Martin Goodman takes a critical approach to ancient sources and classical literature to unveil the subtext and implicit perspectives in the representation of Jews. This provides a deeper understanding of how various sources contributed to shaping the image of Jews in the ancient world. He makes a significant contribution to the research on the image of Jews in classical literature and antiquity through his rigorous approach, contextual analysis, and critical perspectives, helping reveal how Jews were perceived by neighboring peoples and represented in classical literary sources.

Steve Mason is a historian and researcher known for his significant contributions to the study of the history of ancient Judaism and the relationships between Jews and the Roman world, including his research on Jews in classical literature.

Mason's works carefully examine the historical and cultural context in which Jews interacted with the Roman Empire and how they were represented in classical literature. He discusses Roman politics, social and religious interactions to understand the influences on the image of Jews.

Mason also explores intercultural connections—the interactions between Jews and Roman culture and how these interactions influenced how Jews were perceived in ancient literature. He addresses the complex relationship between religion and politics in the interaction between Jews and the Roman Empire. This allows him to reveal the influences of the religious and political context on the representations of Jews in classical literature. By analyzing socio-political influences, he highlights how these factors shaped the way Jews came to be described in Roman literature, examining stereotypes, prejudices, and political influences on the image of Jews.

Seth Schwartz, an American historian and researcher, is known for his notable contributions to the study of ancient Judaism and the relationships between Jews and classical culture, including his research on Jews in classical literature.

Schwartz's works explore how Jews interacted with the Greco-Roman world and how they were perceived and represented in classical literature. He discusses the mutual influence between these two cultures and how it shaped representations of Jews.

By analyzing the historical context of the time, Schwartz establishes how it influenced the way Jews were represented in classical literature. He explores aspects such as politics, society, and cultural exchanges to better understand the representations of Jews.

His works, such as 'Imperialism and Jewish Society: 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.' and 'Were the Jews a Mediterranean Society? Reciprocity and Solidarity in Ancient Judaism,' analyze how Jews were integrated into Roman society and how they were perceived in classical literature. These works discuss concepts and aspects related to solidarity and social interactions among Jews.

In his works, Schwartz also investigates the evolution of the concept of Jewish identity in the context of the Greco-Roman world. He addresses aspects such as the cultural, religious, and social assimilation of Jews and how these, in turn, influenced how they were represented in classical literature.

Building on such works and research directions, we can trace the formation of stereotypes. In the attempt to outline the image of Jews, our focus will be particularly on Roman historiography and literary sources from the late 1st century BCE to the 2nd century CE. As a starting point, however, we must understand how a series of stereotypes were adopted and incorporated into their works.

In this endeavor, the work is structured into three chapters. The first chapter addresses how stereotypes emerged in classical literature, how they were subsequently adopted from one author to another, what values they acquired, and when and in what moments they reflected on the Jews. Not only Egyptian or Greek authors from the 3rd-2nd centuries BCE are reviewed, but also the main labels directed at the Jews (xenophobia, misanthropy, proselytism).

On the other hand, the second chapter deals with the general context, following a clear chronological order, tracing the sequence of events that marked the Jewish world. Starting from the end of the reign of Alexander the Great to the Bar Kochba revolt, we can thus observe the complexity of the interaction between the Jewish and Greco-Roman worlds. It can be seen how stereotypes and labels are applied depending on the political, social, and religious context.

However, the third chapter brings Tacitus, Flavius Josephus, Suetonius, and Cassius Dio into focus. By going through their works and comparing sources, it is observed how each introduced motives and subjective representations regarding the ancient Jews into their works.

The first chapter begins with a reference to two general concepts, namely the notions of 'the other' and 'barbarian,' which emerged within the Hellenistic civilization and extended into the Roman space. The Greek perception of the Easterners takes shape with the first conflicts between them and the Persian Empire. Thus, realizing that they spoke a different language than their neighbors, the Greeks used the term 'βάρβαρος' ('barbarian') to name them, with the meaning of 'speaker of a foreign language.' It is believed that this term, βάρβαρος, is originally onomatopoeic, 'bar-bar' meaning babble, reflecting the speech of foreign peoples to the Greeks. Eventually, the designation acquired a negative connotation, extending to the entire lifestyle of foreigners, ultimately coming to mean 'illiterate' or 'uncivilized' in general. In a general conception, the Greek distinguished themselves from a barbarian in four ways: refined language, education, religion, and the rule of law. Greek education thus came to be identified with aristocracy.

Focusing on historiography from the Republican and immediately following Imperial period, we observe the manner of presentation and dissemination of trends. Even in antiquity, historical writing experienced two orientations. One scientific, seeking and presenting the truth, and the other artistic, characterized by exaggeration and hyperbole of facts, often driven by propagandistic purposes.

In this endeavor to faithfully portray the image of the Jews during the Principate, we identify common themes not only among Roman historians but also among their Greek and Egyptian predecessors. The concepts of misanthropy, xenophobia, or proselytism are reiterated by each author and altered to serve a particular purpose.

The best example lies in the very narrative of the Exodus, with each author distorting it in one way or another or offering new interpretations. The first account concerning the Jews is related to the moment of the Exodus, as found in Hecataeus of Abdera. We observe that Hecataeus's description is sympathetic, a typical example of Hellenistic ethnography through its idealized forms, devoid of any anti-Semitic sentiment. His work is dedicated to all foreigners, not just the Jews, which sets it apart from subsequent works by its lack of denigration and hostile attitude. We even discern an admiring tone in Hecataeus's presentation of Moses, noting that he did not depict the image of divinity in any way, being of the opinion that God has no human form. However, we see that he makes a differentiation based on religious aspects, suggesting the distinction between Jews, Greeks, and Egyptians. In Hecataeus, the Jews are distinct not only from the Egyptians but also from the Greeks, and this distinction arises from their belief in a non-anthropomorphic God. Even though all foreigners, including the Greeks, were expelled from Egypt due to different religious customs and rituals, only the Jews adhered to this strange belief in a non-anthropomorphic God and to sacrifices and customs that differed from those of other nations.

The interpretation of Manetho's statements about the Jews is difficult and debatable because his work has not been preserved in its entirety. Manetho seems to provide an Egyptian perspective on events and peoples in the region, including the Jews. According to Josephus's accounts, Manetho would have claimed that the Jews were involved in a revolt and were expelled from Egypt under the leadership of a figure named Moses. Manetho would have described these Jews as a group of lepers who caused disturbance in Egypt.

The story of the Exodus certainly predates Manetho and Hecateus. This is precisely why we need to identify elements in the narrative that would facilitate our effort in reconstructing the historical context. In analyzing the two versions, two dominant motifs emerge – that of impiety and xenophobia. The first (stemming from Hecateus) refers to the 'foreigners' who practiced different rituals and religious customs. Manetho emphasizes, however, not only the refusal to worship Egyptian gods, the destruction of temples, but also the consumption of sacred animals, suggesting that the Jewish people would demonstrate 'wildness and impiety'.

Xenophobia (fear or hatred of strangers) has at times been present in the writings of classical historians regarding various groups, including the Jews. It is important to emphasize that the ancient historians' perspective on other ethnic or cultural groups was often influenced by cultural context and stereotypes.

The practice of expelling strangers (*xenelasia*) was not unfamiliar to the ancient Greeks. Even Sparta was accused of this custom, as recounted by Thucydides. Just before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, Pericles delivered a speech urging Sparta to abandon this practice (*xenelasia*). Aristotle mentions this practice without providing further details. The term refers to the expulsion of strangers from a city or territory. It was a political form of exclusion meant to maintain the purity of a community or protect its interests. *Xenelasia* was often employed as a way to prevent potential threats or disturbances caused by foreigners.

In the context of the city-states of ancient Greece, *xenelasia* was a way to regulate the presence of foreigners and maintain the cultural and political integrity of the local population. It could be imposed for various reasons, such as during periods of political turmoil, fears of espionage, or economic concerns. Overall, *xenelasia* was a policy that reflected the attitudes of city-states in ancient Greece toward foreigners and their efforts to preserve their own identity and security.

In Strabo's view, however, we see how the expulsion of strangers is portrayed as a characteristic of barbarians, citing examples such as the practices of the Egyptians, Persians, or Carthaginians, the latter being known to drown those who reached their lands in the waters of the sea. From all these examples, we can observe the emergence of a so-called ethnographic cliché, namely the formation of a stereotype.

Unlike *xenelasia*, fueled by practical motives, *misoxenia/xenophobia* intertwines with the national character of a people. We find this concept in Hecateus, in his description of the Jewish people, stating that they lead a xenophobic and anti-social way of life.

Manetho presented a rather negative perspective on the Jews. He described the events of the Jews' expulsion from Egypt in a manner that characterized them as a repulsive and destabilizing group.

Tacitus, a Roman historian from the 1st century AD, tended to use negative terms when describing non-Roman populations. In his "Histories," he also addressed the Jewish population in the context of the Jewish revolt against Roman rule. Tacitus was influenced by contemporary stereotypes and prejudices against the Jews.

In general, during the classical period, there were stereotypes and negative perceptions of foreign populations in the writings of Greek and Roman historians. Xenophobia was often present in descriptions of different cultures, and the Jews were no exception. It is important to emphasize that these xenophobic perspectives are not universal, and not all ancient historians had the same opinions or prejudices. Additionally, these sources must be interpreted in the historical and cultural context of their time, taking into account the specific influences and motivations of the authors.

In these circumstances, we observe how accusations of "antisocial" xenophobia and misanthropy directed against the Jews constituted a powerful weapon in the Greco-Roman world. Accusations of misanthropy begin to take on new traits as the scope of those accused becomes larger, surpassing the point where only a group of people or a community is targeted, extending to an entire population. Another attributed trait is their "hatred" towards other peoples. All these accusations are expressed around 300 BCE by Hecateus, who depicts, devoid of emotions, the reasons that led to the formation of xenophobic behavior among the Jews.

The immediate period, especially the first century and the beginning of the second, sees the increasing influence of the Jewish community, and along with it, grows the hatred towards them. In the eyes of the Romans, especially the aristocracy, the attraction exerted by Judaism is viewed as a threat. By the end of the first century AD, during the reign of Domitian, the phenomenon of conversion to Judaism was seen as an uncontrollable scourge. In his accusations, Domitian used the notion of "atheism" against those who chose the path of Judaism. The accusation itself represented a good method through which the emperor could not only transfer private property to the state but also eliminate his adversaries from the political scene, as in the case of Flavius Clemens and his wife Flavia Domitilla, members of the Roman aristocracy who had converted to Judaism and had been stripped of their rights.

The second chapter begins with the exposition of the situation in Judea immediately after the death of Alexander the Great:

- After Alexander's death in 323 BCE, his successors (diadochi) took control of various parts of his empire.
- Judea initially came under the rule of the Ptolemies (Egypt) but later passed under the control of the Seleucids (Syria).
- In the 2nd century BCE, the Hasmonean family, led by Mattathias and later his sons, led a revolt known as the Maccabean Revolt against Seleucid rule.
- The Jews achieved independence, and the Hasmonean dynasty was established, during which Judea experienced a period of relative autonomy.
- The Romans, under the command of Pompey, conquered Judea in 63 BCE, bringing it under Roman control.
- The Jews continued to live under Roman domination, subjected to taxes and cultural pressure.
- Herod the Great was appointed king of Judea by the Romans and ruled with their support. He governed Judea with an iron hand, undertaking numerous major projects, including the expansion of the Temple in Jerusalem.
- The Zealot uprising and that of Judas of Galilee, the defeat of Roman garrisons, and the beginning of Vespasian's campaign in 67 CE in Judea.
- The conquest of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE.
- The Bar Kokhba revolt was triggered by Roman policies of cultural and religious assimilation and the construction of a temple dedicated to Jupiter on the site of the former Jewish Temple in Jerusalem.
- Initially successful, the revolt led by Bar Kokhba declared an independent Jewish state, and he was even called the "Messiah" by some Jews.
- However, the Romans intervened, and under the command of General Sextus Julius Severus, they crushed the revolt in 136 CE.
- The Bar Kokhba revolt had dramatic consequences for the Jews. Many communities were destroyed, and those remaining were subjected to severe restrictions.
- The Jewish population was significantly reduced, and the future of Judea was strongly influenced by Roman repression.

In the third chapter, considering both the general context and the main motives and stereotypes used in the description of the Jews, all these traits are highlighted in the works of historians from the Principate period, starting with Tacitus.

Beginning with a general overview to understand and approach how the Jewish world was perceived, it is observed that for Tacitus, the empire consisted of two entities - the East and the West. The West revolved around Rome and participated in the construction of Roman civilization. The East, on the other hand, presented itself as a mosaic of cultures and civilizations, such as Greek, Persian, or Egyptian, contrasting with the Latin collective mentality. Romans were hostile to the East and considered the expansion into this region to have serious consequences because the East was, by definition, corrupting. Following the Roman tradition, Tacitus is a categorical opponent of the East. Whenever he has the opportunity, he expresses his contempt for this region or its peoples. For example, the Egyptian people are unpredictable, superstitious, and lazy, and the historian's historical hostility towards superstitions is evident repeatedly. Tacitus shows reluctance towards miracles, even seeking rational explanations when a miracle apparently occurred, as exemplified by the healing of two disabled persons by Vespasian. In the historian's view, miracles were commonplace in the East (we find the critical and ironic tone).

Regarding freedom, the Romans did not accept servitude and reacted against it. In Tacitus's eyes, the East is characterized by superstitions, inconsistency, lack of a warrior spirit, laziness, servitude, and a despotic political system. According to Tacitus, the "bad" Roman emperors are those who allow themselves to be captivated by the allure of the Eastern world. Perhaps that is why he emphasizes the "metamorphosis" of Vespasian because, after a short period of flirting with the Eastern mentality, Vespasian returns to the traditions sanctioned by the Eternal City.

In his descriptions of the Jews, Tacitus places them outside the Roman world, considering them as belonging to the "others." In his ethnographic descriptions, he presents their customs, which he deems disgusting and perverse. To delve into the subject, it is necessary to analyze his writings by dividing them into two categories: information related to geography and that which pertains to the population.

Regarding the description of the territory, Tacitus informs us that the lands of the Jews border on Arabia to the east, Egypt to the south, Phoenicia to the west, and Syria to the north. Tacitus doesn't even name the country - with the name Judea - except in the context of

foreign invasions. The borders of Judea are outlined briefly, not at the beginning of the ethnographic account, as one might expect, but in the middle. Once Tacitus enters into the description of the country, he dismisses the representations of Judea found in the writings of his predecessors, who were interested in the exceptional wonders of the landscape, using three strategies: emphasizing similarities with the Italian landscape, associating incredible images with unpleasant ones, and, most importantly, interpreting so-called natural wonders to discredit and eliminate any possibility regarding their divine origin. In this way, Tacitus outlines the country considering the following general lines: 1) it only exists as a distinct territory when it is a reward or an obstacle for powerful countries, 2) it contains sufficient natural resources to provide an incentive (apart from the political one) for complete Roman assimilation, and 3) it lacks supernatural providence, making the superstitious people of Judea easily conquerable and without hope of revenge against the Romans.

In describing the waters, Tacitus mentions the Jordan River, noting that it does not flow into the sea but crosses two other lakes, pouring into the third. Considering the place a curiosity in itself, Tacitus provides a detailed presentation. The third lake he refers to is likened to the sea, with the difference that nothing lives in it, the wind does not blow on its surface, and the waters are inert. Moreover, the water is foul-smelling, but it keeps both objects and those who do not know how to swim afloat. He also specifies how bitumen is extracted from here, mentioning that once drawn ashore, due to the heat of the earth and the sun, it hardens and is then cut with saws or chisels.

The desolate image continues in the description of the fields, with the land being scorched and unproductive. Plants, whether wild or cultivated by humans, end up blackening and turning to dust. Tacitus entertains the hypothesis that there were cities in this area that burned due to lightning strikes, but he believes that the miasma from the lake, the climate, and the soil are unhealthy, making life impossible.

Even though, for Tacitus, the land of Judea is fertile and self-sufficient, suggesting a divine presence, he diminishes its importance and even eliminates it by making comparisons, categorizing natural phenomena as harmful, and suggesting the disdain of the divine towards the Jews. Describing their inability to regain the favor of the gods, Tacitus provides justification for such a region, neglected by the gods, to be conquered and integrated without any fear of retaliation from providence.

Tacitus portrays the Jews as a people who cannot take care of themselves, uncivilized, living in an area that cannot be considered a state but only a hostile and mostly uninhabited

territory. He makes references to nomadism (such as the lack of laws, ancient order, and a lack of interest in technological progress), supporting these associations with descriptions of the origin and rituals of the ancient Jews.

Details of such a world include funeral practices (simple and lacking a well-established ritual), sources of food (pastoralism), wedding practices (isolated, licentious cases, but present), and the way such communities were governed (a small number of laws, at best, with the possible presence of a monarchical system).

Tacitus thus suggests that they appeared, lived, worshiped, and governed in a continuous state of nomadism. In his presentations, the Jewish people are always depicted as being on the move. He even provides six different references to their origin, each one distinct.

The uncertainty about the Jews is induced not only in the presentation of their origin but also in the reconstruction of rituals or customs that deviate from those already known in the Greco-Roman or Egyptian world, in the settlements that have either disappeared or are in a precarious state, and in their inability to govern themselves.

The line separating literary descriptions, stereotypes related to barbarism/nomadism, and the failure as a civilization gradually fades, giving way to a necessity: the Roman conquest as a beneficial force bringing much-desired order and balance to the region.

By suggesting that the Jews live in a continuous state of nomadism, Tacitus employs familiar ethnographic paradigms to shape his representation of the Jews as a people who deserved and inevitably came under Roman rule during the Flavian period.

At the opposite pole this time are the works of Flavius Josephus. He considers the Judeo-Roman conflict a tragedy, expressing concern about its effects and consequences. Aware that many of those who read his writings are Roman aristocrats involved in the politics and administration of the empire, he appeals to their understanding. The reader must realize that the Jewish people were merely pawns for various factions pursuing their interests, throwing everything into chaos. In his view, the culprits are the tyrants, rebels, zealots, and bandits who took advantage of the events, exacerbating the crisis even further. At the same time, Josephus makes them known, with the intention of exonerating his own people, showing the pro-Roman side of his compatriots, aware of the consequences of armed conflict against the empire.

By describing the Jewish people as a whole, Josephus considers them an innocent part caught up in the revolt, attempting to change the attitude of Roman readers, appealing to their

humanity and understanding, and returning to the friendly attitudes towards the oppressed that existed before the conflict. We observe how his presentations concerning the Jewish side are influenced by an apologetic and political nature, an important factor that must be taken into consideration. Furthermore, starting from the causes of the war, Josephus believes that both parties are responsible for the occurrence of this conflict. The mismanagement of Palestine led to the fragmentation of the main factions advocating for peace, resulting in tensions between Jews and non-Jews and the emergence of destabilizing forces in the region.

In a much deeper sense, Josephus views the war from a theological (prophetic) perspective, as the coming of the Romans, the conquest of Jerusalem, the flames that consumed the Temple, and all the disasters that befell the Jewish people are seen as punishments inflicted by divinity upon the people. Rome is perceived as a tool in the hands of divine providence through which the sinful are punished (see also references to the Old Testament, specifically the struggles and enslavement of the Jewish people under the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Babylonians).

In "The Lives of the Twelve Caesars" (*Vita Caesarum*), Suetonius provides valuable information about the Jews during the early imperial period, and in some instances, he is the sole available source. This applies to his statements regarding mourning among the Jews at the death of Julius Caesar; Augustus's attitude toward Judaism; the anecdote about Tiberius and the Jewish grammarian in Rhodes; Nero's promise regarding the kingdom of Jerusalem; and, finally, the investigation related to the "Jewish tax" during the reign of Domitian. Other incidents recorded by Suetonius parallel those found in other sources, especially in the accounts of Tacitus and Cassius Dio.

Suetonius's works offer an interesting perspective on how Jews were perceived and represented during the early Roman Empire. While Suetonius does not focus exclusively on the Jewish community in his writings, he provides some significant clues about how Romans of that period viewed the Jews.

The main aspect highlighted in Suetonius's works is the association of Jews with important historical events and figures of that era, such as the conflict with Claudius regarding their expulsion from Rome or the tense relationship with Emperor Nero. These accounts reveal an often negative perspective on the Jews, seen as a community that brought disturbance and discord to Roman society.

Additionally, Suetonius mentions aspects related to the religious practices of the Jews, such as observing the Sabbath or their dietary restrictions, suggesting that Romans might perceive these traditions as something strange or different. However, it is important to emphasize that Suetonius does not provide a comprehensive or detailed picture of the Jews or their culture. He focuses more on events or historical figures involving Jews, and in many cases, these mentions are only small sections of his biographies.

The works of Suetonius represent just one of the historical sources that can help us understand the Roman perception of Jews during the early Roman Empire. These representations can offer an important perspective on intercultural relations and existing stereotypes of that era, but they should be analyzed in the broader context of historical sources and the evolution of these relationships over time.

Cassius Dio's references to Jews and Judaism in the Roman History are of great interest. His opinions reflect the social and cultural environment of the Greek cities in Asia Minor in the late second century AD, places with long-standing contacts between Greeks and Jews. Dio also held high positions in the Roman administration from the time of Septimius Severus to that of Alexander Severus, including the significant governance of the military province of Pannonia Superior. Certain passages in his account constitute the most important literary source for crucial events in Jewish history during the Roman period, such as the Jewish revolts under Trajan and Hadrian. These passages are also valuable for supplementing the accounts of Josephus and other sources regarding the history of the Jewish-Roman wars.

Regardless of his sources and the extent to which he relied on them regarding facts, Dio often colors his history with his own opinions and experiences, especially when the subject interests him. While recounting the past, he does not lose sight of contemporary situations and implications.

The conquest of Jerusalem by Pompey in 63 BCE provided Dio with a suitable opportunity to describe the main features of the Jewish religion. He claims that the Jews distinguish themselves from the rest of humanity in almost every detail of life. Significantly, however, in contrast to earlier writers, he makes no attempt to explain Jewish separateness through misanthropy. Dio was familiar with the monotheistic principle of the Jewish religion and knew that the Jews had never erected a statue of their ineffable God. This is emphasized, and Dio's presumed source for the history of the late Roman Republic, namely Livy's History, plays a role in this context.

The study of imagology in Latin literature is particularly important and relevant in multiple ways. Imagology refers to the study of images, stereotypes, and cultural and social representations in literature, especially in the context of the Latin language and culture. This discipline brings to the forefront crucial aspects related to cultural and national identity, ethnic and regional stereotypes, as well as intercultural relationships.

Imagology aids in understanding how Roman identity and the national or cultural identities of other groups were constructed and represented in Latin literature. This analysis reveals how the Romans and others were perceived and how they perceived themselves in the context of intercultural relationships.

At the same time, it reveals the cultural stereotypes and prejudices that existed in Latin literature. These stereotypes can provide important clues about the perceptions and mentalities of Roman society toward other cultures or ethnic groups.

The study of imagology helps understand the dynamics of intercultural relationships in the Roman world. It can reveal how the Romans interacted with other cultures, how they were perceived, and how they perceived their cultural counterparts.

Imagology is not only a historical discipline but also has significant contemporary relevance. Analyzing cultural stereotypes and the construction of identities can offer important perspectives for understanding current cultural and intercultural issues.

Furthermore, it makes a significant contribution to cultural studies, understanding culture as a complex and evolving phenomenon. This sheds light on how culture is perceived, created, and transmitted through literature and other forms of cultural expression.

The study of imagology in Latin literature is essential for a deeper understanding of mentalities and intercultural relationships in the Roman world. This discipline highlights how cultural identity and stereotypes were created and transmitted through literature, providing a valuable perspective on how Roman culture and literature interacted with other cultures in antiquity and influenced the subsequent development of Western civilization.

Regarding the creation of a work on imagology, it is important for several reasons:

1. **Better Understanding and Analysis of Cultural Representations:** Imagology focuses on cultural representations and stereotypes in a society. Creating such a work can provide a better understanding of how culture and identity are perceived and represented in a specific context.

2. **Explore Social and Cultural Impact:** A work in imagology can highlight the impact that cultural representations have on society and intercultural relationships. It can show how cultural stereotypes can influence people's perception, attitudes, and behavior.
3. **Contemporary Relevance:** The study of imagology is not just a historical discipline; it has contemporary relevance. In a globalized world where intercultural interactions are increasingly common and important, understanding how cultures are perceived and represented remains a current and relevant topic.
4. **Contribution to Cultural Studies:** Analyzing ancient sources from an imagological perspective can be an important component of cultural studies, which examines culture as a complex phenomenon. Creating a work in this field can contribute to a deeper understanding of culture and how it develops and is transmitted through language, art, and other forms of cultural expression.
5. **Promotion of Intercultural Dialogue:** Conducting such a study can contribute to promoting dialogue and understanding between different cultures and ethnic groups. By exploring cultural representations and stereotypes, the work highlights both differences and similarities between cultures, facilitating communication and cooperation.
6. **Development of Research and Analytical Skills:** Creating a work in imagology involves research, critical analysis, and argumentation. These skills are valuable not only in the field of cultural studies but also in academic careers and many other fields.

In conclusion, creating a work on imagology can bring multiple benefits, including a deeper understanding of culture, the promotion of intercultural dialogue, and the development of research and analytical skills. This discipline can shed light on how cultural representations influence society and contribute to building a more understanding and respectful environment between different cultures and cultural groups.

A research project focused on imagology in the writings of Tacitus, Flavius Josephus, Suetonius, and Dio Cassius provides a comprehensive perspective on how various cultures and peoples were represented in the literature of the Roman Empire.

The writings of the four historians collectively depict a wide range of cultures and ethnicities within the Roman Empire, including Romans, Jews, Germans, Greeks, and others. Each historian approached these representations differently, reflecting the multicultural context of the Roman world.

We have seen how stereotypes and prejudices are evident in the works of the four historians. Often, these were based on existing cultural stereotypes and biases of their time in describing various ethnic groups. These representations reveal the prevailing attitudes and prejudices in Roman society.

The overall situation in the Roman Empire significantly influenced the writings of Tacitus, Flavius Josephus, Suetonius, and Dio Cassius. They wrote within the Roman hegemony, which affected how they perceived and represented other cultures.

Each historian had their own historical and political motivations that shaped their writings. For example, Tacitus used historical accounts to criticize the Roman government, Flavius Josephus sought to legitimize Judaism, and Suetonius aimed to provide biographical accounts of Roman emperors. These motivations influenced their representations of different cultures. Ultimately, the writings of these historians reflect the dynamics of cultural exchange, diplomacy, and conflict within the Roman Empire. They document interactions between different ethnicities, including trade, alliances, wars, and diplomacy, showcasing the complexity of cultural relationships.

We must also consider that the works of Tacitus, Flavius Josephus, Suetonius, and Dio Cassius have immense historiographical importance. They serve as essential primary sources for understanding not only the cultures they described but also the perceptions and attitudes of Roman society toward these cultures. They provide valuable perspectives on the historiography of the Roman Empire.

Despite the presence of stereotypes and prejudices, these historians also demonstrated a degree of complexity and nuance in their descriptions of other cultures. At times, they challenged prevailing stereotypes or provided nuanced views of different ethnicities.

A research project examining imagery in the writings of Tacitus, Flavius Josephus, Suetonius, and Dio Cassius deepens our understanding of how various cultures were represented in the literature of ancient Rome (in this case, the Jews). It underscores the complexity of cultural representation, the impact of stereotypes and prejudices, and the historical and political factors that influenced these representations. Such research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of both the Roman and Jewish worlds.

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