

THE DATE AND PROVENANCE OF THE FOURTH SIBYLLINE ORACLE

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'Book IV, which presupposes in vv. 130-6 the outbreak of Vesuvius in 79 A.D. and in vv. 137-9 the idea of Nero's return and so his death in A.D. 68, can only have been written towards the end of the first century A.D.; nothing can be determined about its place of origin.'¹

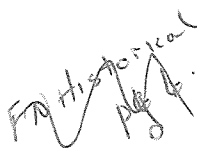
¹O. Eissfeldt., The Old Testament: An Introduction, P.R. Ackroyd, trans. (New York: Harper and Row, 1965) 616.

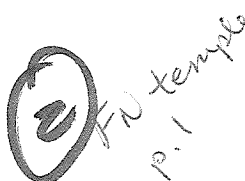
I. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Third, Fourth and Fifth Sibylline Oracles¹ are considered to be part of the corpus of Jewish propaganda literature, existing without any major interpolations by Christian editors.² This paper will be concerned with some of the questions involved in determining the date and provenance of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle. This work, for all its ease of style in comparison to the corpus of the Oracula Sibyllina,³ has been the object of much discussion which has centred around the debate over its origins. It is generally accepted that the author of this oracle was Jewish.⁴ However, suggestions as to where this Jew lived

 ¹All quotations of the Sibylline Oracles will be from the English translation of H. C. O. Lanchester, 'The Sibylline Oracles' in APOT 368-406, unless otherwise stated. The definitive Greek text is still considered to be that of J. J. Geffcken, Die Oracula Sibyllina (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1902). The latest textual reconstruction of the Greek text is by A. Kurfess, Sibyllinische Weissagungen: Urtext und Übersetzung (Berlin: Heimeran, 1951). Extensive use will also be made of the latest English translation by J. J. Collins, 'The Sibylline Oracles' in OTP 317-472. References to other translations, German, English and French, will be made throughout the text and are denoted in the bibliography by an asterisk.

²The only interpolation which is generally considered Christian is V:256-9. Collins, OTP 354, also considers III:776 to be a Christian interpolation. This lack of Christian interpolation might itself be a minor point in favour of keeping the Jewish corpus together in relation to provenance.

 ³A. Bouch-Leclerq, Histoire de la divination dans l'Antiquité, T. II (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1880) 205 n. 1. He states that it is 'le moins décousu et le moins mal écrit de tous.'

 ⁴J. J. Collins, 'The Place of the Fourth Sibyl in the Development of the Jewish Sibyllina' JJS 25(1974) 364, n. 1. The idea that the oracle could be Christian was proposed by C. Alexandre, Excursus ad Sibyllina, whose argument is outlined by J. R. Harris in 'Sibylline Oracles,' HDB, Suppl. Vol. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904) 68

(Footnote Continued)

and what form of Judaism he espoused, have ranged from an 'Asiatic Jew domiciled in Italy,'⁵ to one from a Jewish baptismal sect in the Jordan Valley,⁶ or the Maeander Valley,⁷ or to one who possibly was influenced by Iranian thought.⁸ Lastly, there is the point of view that the Fourth originated from the same milieu as the Third and Fifth Sibylline Oracles in Egypt and expressed normal Judaism and monotheism.⁹

This lack of consensus over the origin of the Fourth can be broken down into two major points of view, with variations. The first, that the Fourth comes from the same school as the other two Jewish Sibyllines and that the corpus originated in Alexandria, has been argued most

(Footnote Continued)

and is not generally adhered to. However, it is suggested as a possibility, elsewhere, e.g., in S. E. Johnson, 'Stray Pieces of Early Christian Writing,' JNES 5(1946) 52-3. The opinion of Abrahams states the general position: 'It falls well within the range of the Jewish Hellenistic literature, and there is no necessity for assuming Christian authorship.' Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels (New York: KTAV, 1967(1917)) 40.

³ FN temple p. 2
⁵ The opinion of Th. Zahn is quoted by H. N. Bate, whose comment on Zahn's proposal is that 'there is about as much reason (72-5) for placing him in Egypt.' The Sibylline Oracles: Books III-IV (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1918) 24.

⁴ p. 3
⁶ Collins, 'The Place' 380. His position supports the conclusions of J. J. Thomas, Le mouvement baptiste en Palestine et Syrie (Gembloux: J. Ducolot, 1935) 46-60.

⁵ p. 4
⁷ J. B. Lightfoot, St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon (London: Macmillan & Co., 1876) 97.

⁶ p. 5
⁸ For a discussion of this theory proposed by R. Reitzenstein, see Thomas, Le mouvement 57.

⁷ p. 6
⁹ The latest exponents of this theory is V. Nikiprowetzky, La troisième Sibylle Etudes Juives IX (Paris: Mouton, 1970) 229-67. Note especially 238, 240-1 and his detailed criticisms of Thomas, Le mouvement and M. Friedländer, 'La Sibylle juive et les partis religieux de la dispersion' REJ 29(1894) 183-96. In the same vien is the article by B. Noack, 'Are the Essenes Referred to in the Sibylline Oracles?' ST 17(1963) 101-2.

recently by Valentin Nikiprowetzky.¹⁰ The second argument, and the one upon which most attention will be focussed, is that of John J. Collins.¹¹ He feels that there are major reasons for separating the Fourth from the Third and the Fifth,¹² concluding that the Fourth originated from a Jewish baptismal sect which probably resided in the Jordan valley. His arguments are based on three major points.¹³ First, its eschatology is different from the other two oracles, since there is a total conflagration of the world where everyone is destroyed and a general resurrection with a second judgement of the good and evil.¹⁴ Secondly, the Fourth has an indifferent, if not hostile, attitude towards the temple, whereas the other two have a positive attitude towards the temple in Jerusalem and its sacrificial cult.¹⁵ Thirdly, the exhortation to repentance includes the washing of the penitent's

8 p.11
¹⁰ "Reflexions sur quelques problèmes du quatrième et du cinquième livres des Oracles Sibyllins" HUCA 43(1972) 29-76. See n. 9 above. This position is also accepted by M. Simon, "Sur quelques aspects des Oracles Sibyllins juifs" in D. Hellholm, ed., Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1983) 220-1.

9 p.13
¹¹ Nikiprowetzky and Collins are the only scholars to have devoted extensive research to the Sibylline Oracles since Kurfess in 1952.

10 p.12
¹² "The Place"; OTP 383; Between Athens and Jerusalem (New York: The Crossroads Publishing Company, 1983) 152-3. This last text will not be referred to again, in this paper, as it simply reiterates Collins' position on all three Sibylline Oracles as he has developed in the other references.

11 p.7
¹³ The attitude towards Egypt is another minor point which he uses to differentiate the oracles. Collins, "The Place" 369-70. This point will be discussed below, pp. 51-3, although less extensively than Collins' major points.

12
¹⁴ Collins, "The Place" 369-70; OTP 382.

13 p.8
¹⁵ Collins, "The Place" 366-9; OTP 383.

body in ever-flowing rivers, which suggests to Collins that baptism is the sole redemptive act necessary for salvation in the end-times for the Fourth Sibyl.¹⁶

It is the contention of this paper that the points mentioned above are not only insufficient to separate the Fourth Sibylline Oracle from the corpus of the Jewish Sibyllines with respect to their provenance - be that Alexandria or Leontopolis¹⁷ but Collins has not given due consideration to the historical circumstances under which the Fourth Sibylline Oracle was written and the time span between it and the others. There will be a focus on the provenance of the Fourth by attempting to discern parallels of style and theme with those of the Third and Fifth Sibylline Oracles, which are generally assumed to be the product of Alexandrian Judaism.¹⁸

Since it has certain ramifications for any discussion of the historical and thematic differences discernable among the oracles, the date of the oracle will be discussed first. This has been accepted, almost without exception, as circa 80 C.E. However, it will be suggested, here, that a redaction as late as the end of the second century is possible, based on the ex eventu nature of oracles 140-51.

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17

¹⁶ Collins, "The Place" 377-8; OTP 383.

15
FN II.10.
p. 8

¹⁷ Collins suggests that the oracles derived from the Jews who lived and worshipped at the Jewish temple in Leontopolis. J.J. Collins, The Sibylline Oracles of Egyptian Judaism, SBLDS 13 (Missoula, Mont.: University of Montana Press, 1972).

16
FN Historical
p. 3

¹⁸ The only major dissenter to this conclusion is Collins, SOEJ 51-3. Collins continues to hold this position in his latest writings. See n. 12, 17 above.

Secondly, the argument will focus on a comparison between the structure of the three oracles in order to determine whether there are any major differences which would preclude a derivation of the Fourth from the same 'school' of thought as the others. If they are the products of the same 'school' of thought, then, even though they are a minimum of three centuries apart in composition, there should be some continuity of thought. It is hoped that this study will clarify some of the difficulties in studying this oracle and will also point out the connections which hold all three of the Jewish Sibylline Oracles together.

II. THE DATE OF THE FOURTH SIBYLLINE ORACLE

II. i. Introduction

One of the principal methods used in dating apocalyptic works is that of assuming that many of their prophecies are vaticinia ex eventu.¹ In the Fourth Sibylline Oracle, the last ex eventu prophecies are considered to be those of lines 130-9 which refer to the latter part of the first century C.E.² The principal concern of scholars has thus been to determine the origins of the oracles, be they Hellenistic, Babylonian, Egyptian or Jewish.³ This interest has continued in the two

¹P. J. Alexander, 'Medieval Apocalypses as Historical Sources' The American Historical Review 72(1968) 997-1018. This article contains an interesting discussion on the methodology and problems involved in determining both the date and origins of an apocalypse on the grounds of ex eventu prophecy.

²H. Ewald, Abhandlung über Entstehung, Inhalt und Werth der Sibyllinischen Bücher (Göttingen: 1858) 85; Rzach, 'Sibyllinische' PW 2A (1923) 2133; Geffcken, Komposition und Entstehungszeit der Oracula Sibyllina (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1902) 18. See p. 8, n. 6 below.

³P. M. Fraser considers that the Sibylline Oracles (the Third is the focus of his discussion) are writings from an extreme orthodox element of Judaism. Ptolemaic Alexandria (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972) I 286. An attempt to find exotic sources for the oracles could be considered as a desire to show the syncretistic nature of sibylline Judaism and thus help to determine the 'sectarian' origins of the author(s) of the Sibylline corpus. See Collins, 'The Syncretism of the Sibyllina' SOEJ 97-118, and the comments of J. Gager in his review of this monograph, JBL 95(1976) 156. Collins' article, 'The Place' 370-6, attempts to make the Fourth Sibylline Oracle a sectarian document, in part on this basis. J. Barr discusses the question of the influence of Iranian sources for certain concepts (in particular ones that relate to apocalyptic) in Judaism and Christianity in a recent article. He suggests that it is not direct borrowings that are crucial but rather there is an acceptance of a comparability which allows for

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most recent articles on the Fourth where the latest attempt to discern an origin for the historical oracle (49-151) has led to the suggestion that lines 49-101 belong to an older Hellenistic oracle. Macedonian in origin, this oracle contained its own eschatological ending which the Jewish author discarded before adding oracles which brought the historical events up to date. An eschatological ending which reflected the author's (and/or the group's) beliefs concerning the end was then appended to complete the oracle.⁴

The Fourth appears to be a well written composition, yet there has been an underlying assumption that the oracles have been put together in some fashion which has been loosely structured around a framework such as that of the 'ten generations'.⁵ There has been no suggestion that the historical oracle has a chronological schema in which the author made use of older oracles, possibly creating new ones, to once more convince the pagan world that the Sibyl was an authentic prophetess of the one, true God. On consideration of this possibility, however, a pattern begins to emerge.

(Footnote Continued)

the acceptance of another's concepts without actually surrendering the claims of the parent religion. 'The Question of Religious Influence: The Case of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity' JAAR 53(1985) 201-35.

⁴Collins, 'The Place' 370-6. His argument leans heavily on that of D. Flusser, 'The Four Empires in the Fourth Sibyl and the Book of Daniel' Israel Oriental Studies 2(1972) 148-75. Ewald suggested that the Sibyl viewed world history as split into five ages which covered twelve generations. The fifth age consisted of the eleventh generation which was Rome and a twelfth, the messianic age. Abhandlung 89-90.

⁵Collins, 'The Place' 370-2.

After a brief discussion of the previous reasons for dating the Fourth Sibylline Oracle as circa 80 C.E., it will be shown that a pattern exists in the historical oracles 49-139. Therefore, it is quite likely that it was a deliberate arrangement on the part of the author/redactor of the Fourth. It is then possible to consider that the oracles of 140-51 were also part of the historical data and could shed light on a dating of the oracle later than has been previously considered.

II. ii. Previous Dating of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle

For many years the consensus regarding the date of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle has been that it was written around the end of the first century C.E. and most likely close to 80.⁶ This is based on several factors. The first is that the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 C.E. is without a doubt the event referred to in verses 130-4.⁷ Secondly, there are two references which refer to the rise of a pseudo-Nero in Parthia in 80 C.E. Both of these passages make reference to what came to be known as the Nero legend, which stated that Nero had not died but had fled to the east (119-24) where he was not despised as he was in Rome

⁶It is impossible to find an author who has dated the oracle later than the latter part of the first century C.E. Not even Alexandre, who feels that the oracle is Christian, posits a date later than the first century (see Harris, "'Sibylline'" 68). Collins, "'The Place'" 367, n.14; OTP 382. Lanchester speaks for the majority: "'So by general consent the book is ascribed to about the year 80 A.D.'" "'Sibylline'" 373.

⁷Rzach, "'Sibyllinische'" 2133; Geffcken, Komposition 20; Bate, Sibylline 24; Collins, OTP 387, b2.

and that he would one day return to destroy Rome(137-9).⁸ There were probably two pseudo-Neros who arose after 68 C.E. but one of them is clearly documented as occurring in 80 C.E. when the Parthian king struck coins in his honour.⁹ These two sections would definitely give a terminus a quo for the oracle, but whether or not they can, at the same time, serve as a terminus ad quem is disputable without further discussion.¹⁰

Thirdly, it has been proposed that the oracle referring to the destruction of the second temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E. was composed while the events were fresh in the mind of its author.¹¹ There are at least two reasons for having reservations about this statement as the basis for a terminus ad quem. First, there is a striking resemblance to the views of Josephus and possibly some of the Pharisees regarding the account of the responsibility for the destruction of the temple.¹² This

⁸Collins SOEJ 80-7; D. Magie, Roman Rule in Asia Minor to the End of the Third Century after Christ, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1950) I 565; R. Syme, "'Flavian Wars and Frontiers'" CAH 142-4; R.H. Charles, The Revelation of St. John, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Ltd, 1980(1920)) II 80-7. The Nero legend is discussed more fully in chapters three and four below.

⁹N. C. Debevoise, A Political History of Parthia (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968(1938)) 214, n.6. Collins, OTP 387, n.c2. For 69 C.E. - Tac, Hist. 28,9; Dio, 64.9. For 88(9) - Suet, Nero 57. See also Sib. Or. 3:63-74 which is considered to be a late fragment inserted into the oracle (See p. 59 below). Geffcken, Komposition 20: Lanchester, "'Sibylline'" 373. R. MacMullen, Enemies of the Roman Empire (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966).

¹⁰Nikiprowetzky feels that both are provided for with this data. "'Reflexions'" 30.

¹¹Lanchester, "'Sibylline'" 373; Ewald, Abhandlung 85.

¹²Note the similarities to the views of Josephus. These will be (Footnote Continued)

evokes the possibility that an author could have been relying on Josephus' Jewish War or other sources in the creation of this oracle.¹³ Second, even if the oracle had been composed shortly after the destruction of the temple, there is no reason why a later author could not have taken it, just as he did others from an existing corpus of oracles, and incorporated it into his own creation.

Finally, it has been suggested that the date is early because both Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria quote it.¹⁴ However, only two of the passages mentioned¹⁵ bear a strong resemblance to any in the Fourth, Clement's Exhortation to the Greeks and Justin's Exhortation to the Greeks,¹⁶ and the connection cannot be accepted as secure in attempting to date the Fourth Sibylline Oracle. The texts in the Fourth (4-5; 24-30) are corrupt in the manuscripts¹⁷ and verses 24 and 27-30 have been reconstructed through cross-references to, and emendations

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discussed in chapter five. See M. Grant, The Jews in the Roman World (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973) 206-9. Nikiprowetzky, 'Reflexions'. J. Neusner, Judaism: The Evidence From the Mishnah (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981) 24-8, 34-7, 43-4. J. Neusner, Ancient Israel After Catastrophe: The Religious World View of the Mishnah (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983) 14-6. This text is a non-scholarly explication of the effect of and reaction to the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E. on Judaism to the development of the Mishnah.

23 ¹³ See discussion on Josephus and the temple in chapter five below.

24 ¹⁴ Ewald, Abhandlung 91 n.1.

25 ¹⁵ Justin Martyr, The First Apology 20; Exhortation to the Greeks, 16: Clement of Alexandria, Exhortation to the Greeks 4:44, 4:54.

26 ¹⁶ Clement of Alexandria, Exhortation 4:54. Justin Martyr, Exhortation 16. The remaining passages could easily refer to parts of the Third Sibylline Oracle or to the Fragments.

27 ¹⁷ Geffcken, Oracula 91, 92-3.

from, the passages in Justin and Clement.¹⁸ Furthermore, the attribution of the Exhortation to the Greeks to Justin Martyr and therefore an early date, is no longer accepted.¹⁹ To add to the doubtfulness of these passages as indicative of early dating, Clement began his writing career in the latter part of the second century C.E.²⁰ Consequently, in either case, the oracle could have been written any time prior to this point. Connected to this last point is the fact that the section which Clement does appear to quote is in the earliest part of the Fourth (1-47) which could have been a self-standing oracle containing as it does an eschatological ending as well as the description of the one God, justification of the Sibyl, descriptions of the godly, denunciations of the ungodly, and an exhortation to righteousness.²¹

Accordingly it would appear that the reasons for dating the oracle at 80 C.E. are not as strong as has been previously accepted. However, to argue for a later date requires that the burden of proof lies with anyone who would suggest an alternate date. This proof must come from the text and to a large part from a possible ex eventu explanation for

28 ¹⁸Geffcken, Oracula 92; Lanchester, "'Sibylline'" 394; Collins, OTP 384, column.

29 ¹⁹J. Quasten, Patrology, Vol. I: The Beginnings of Patristic Literature: From the Apostles Creed to Irenaeus (Westminster, Md.: Christian Classics Inc., 1984(1950) 205.

30 ²⁰J. Quasten, Patrology, Vol. II: The Anti-Nicene Literature After Irenaeus (Westminster, Md.: Christian Classics, Inc., 1984(1950)) 5-6.

31 ²¹See p. 43 below.

verses 140-151 - something which has hitherto been considered improbable.²²

The following sections will discuss the historical oracles 49-151. The possibility that the author of the Fourth consciously structured a chronological sequence in order to validate the Sibyl's prophecies of the future and justify the one, true God of the Jews will be explored by attempting to determine the events to which these ex eventu prophecies may be referring.

II. iii. Historical Oracles: 49-139

Many of the oracles in this section of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle are easy to date and refer to well-known facts of history, for example, those referring to Alexander the Great(86-90; 93-6), the destruction of the second temple(115-27) and the massive earthquake at Laodicea ad Lycum(107-8).²³ In the following discussion only those oracles which have not attracted scholarly unanimity as to their historical referents or where an alternative solution is being proposed will be expanded upon.²⁴

32 ²²Alexander suggests the possibility of using apocalyses themselves as sources for historical data. 'Medieval' 997-8.

33 ²³See p. 47, n. 39 below.

34 ²⁴The chart, pp. 32-3 below, contains the completed historical and chronological data.

72-5 - Fifth Century B.C.E.

It is assumed that this oracle concerning Egypt relates to some older period of Egyptian history, the historical significance of which cannot be discerned.²⁵ One of the most important facts of Egyptian life was the irrigation system of the Nile which 'promoted the impulse to a unified state.'²⁶ It has been suggested that civil war and internal strife were the prime causes of famine in Egypt, for during these periods the irrigation system was not maintained.²⁷ If this is correct, then this oracle could refer to some break in peace in Egypt. There are two possible historical events in the fifth century B.C.E. which could account for such an oracle having been created.

The first is in 484. Xerxes successfully put down a revolt in Egypt which had taken place just before the death of his father, Darius.²⁸ Second, in 460, there was a successful coup against the Persians in which the Egyptians, with Athenian help, controlled all of Egypt.²⁹ They managed to maintain their control for approximately six

35 ²⁵Ewald, Abhandlung 85, n. 4; Collins, OTP 386, 'Greek assistance to the Ionian revolt against Persia in 499 B.C.'

36 ²⁶Much like the Canadian Pacific Railroad in Canada! H. Kees, Ancient Egypt: A Cultural Topography (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977(1961) 53.

37 ²⁷J. Vandier, La famine dans l'Egypte ancienne (New York: Arno Press, 1979(1936) 53.

38 ²⁸Herodotus, vii:4-7: A.T. Olmstead, History of the Persian Empire (Chicago: Phoenix Books, 1963(1948)) 228, 235. Bresciani, 'Diaspora' CHJ, 361-2.

39 ²⁹Herodotus, iii:15-6. Olmstead, History 303-4. J.M. Cook, The
(Footnote Continued)

years.³⁰ During the period 484-455/4, it can be surmised that the situation in Egypt was one of internal strife with a probable disruption of the all-important irrigation systems surrounding the Nile. There is some suggestion of this in a letter from the Elephantine area.³¹

Second, there were uprisings in Egypt during the Persian reign of Darius II (423-404/5). The most important was from 411-404, after which Amyteus became the Pharaoh over all of Egypt.³² During this period there were episodes of violence perpetrated by Egyptians against the Jews in Elephantine,³³ and the change from Persian to Egyptian rule took place there between 401 and 400.³⁴

These events could have been remembered within the history of Egypt as periods of anarchy. It is quite probable that an Egyptian Jew would also be aware of the connection between famine and political disturbances and would thus have placed an oracle of this nature in a chronological sequence which would require only knowledge of the upheavals of the Fifth century B.C.E. from its readers.

(Footnote Continued)

Persian Empire (New York: Schocken Books, 1983) 168, feels that the revolt was limited to Lower Egypt. Bresciani, "'Diaspora'" 362, also states that the rebellion was limited to the zone of the delta.

40 ³⁰Olmstead, History 308; Cook, Persian 168-9. Bresciani seems to believe that the rebellion was short-lived and states that the Persians quickly retook control of Memphis and killed Inaros. "'Diaspora'" 362.

41 ³¹B. Porten, Archives From Elephantine (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968) 25-6.

42 ³²Bresciani, E., "'The Diaspora: Egypt, Persian Satrapy'" CHJ 363.

43 ³³Bresciani, "'The Diaspora'" 364.

44 ³⁴Porten, B. "'The Diaspora: The Jews in Egypt'" CHJ 400.

80-1 - 396 B.C.E.

While Mount Aetna was given to many eruptions,³⁵ the most likely date, given the chronological schema, would be that of 396 B.C.E. which is referred to by Diodorus Siculus(14:59,3).

82 - 379 B.C.E.

The reference, here, is most likely to be to the city, Croton,³⁶ since it appears to be impossible to place this oracle into the historical oracles which specifically focus on affairs relating to the Persian empire as it affected Egypt. Collins suggests that this is part of the oracles concerned with the Greek/Persian hostilities.³⁷ However, within a chronological schema, the most likely reference is to the capture of Croton by Dionysius in 379 B.C.E. After this, Croton seemed to have been slowly ruined through internal, Lucanian, Bruttian, Pyrric,

⁴⁵ ³⁵E. Semple, The Geography of the Mediterranean Region (New York: AMS Press, 1971(1931)) 52-4. There are alternative dates for an eruption. For example, 479 B.C.E (Aeschylus, Prometheus 351-69; Pindar Pythian Odes 1,20ff.) and 425 B.C.E (Thucydides, 3,116). In the same passage, Thucydides refers to an earthquake of Aetna as having occurred fifty years earlier, however, this may be the 479 earthquake referred to above.

⁴⁶ ³⁶This translation is accepted by both Lanchester, 'Sibylline' 394 and Collins, OTP 386. There is an alternate reading for the verse - 'Croton's great city of Men' - which is found in one group of manuscripts. Geffcken, Oracula 95.

⁴⁷ ³⁷OTP 386 (especially the Peloponnesian War).

and Hannibalic wars. Not even a Roman colony in 194 BCE could revive it.³⁸

83-5 - 383-38 B.C.E.

Lanchester has suggested that this oracle refers to the Peloponnesian War.³⁹ However, the period following 396 B.C.E. was one of continued dissension among the Greeks which was fueled by Persian diplomacy and money.⁴⁰ The beginning of the rule and conquests of Alexander the Great, which is the concern of the following oracles, effectively put an end to Persian interference and domination of the world.

91-2 - n.d.

The oracles regarding Samos and Delos have defied specific historical explanations.⁴¹ Both islands are close together and were important ports during various periods in pre-Roman history.⁴²

48 ³⁸ OCD, 2nd ed. 299-300. Diod. 14.103f.; 19.3; Livy 24.3; 34:45.

49 ³⁹ Lanchester, 'Sibylline' 394.

50 ⁴⁰ P., Riessler, ed., trans., Altjüdisches Schrifttum ausserhalb der Bibel (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966(1928)) 1328.

51 ⁴¹ The close connection between the two islands can be noted in, e.g., Thucydides, 3:103.

52. ⁴² 'Delos' OCD 320-1: 'Samos' OCD 949.

During the Ptolemaic empire, Delos was the home of transported Egyptian deities and had such a flourishing trade with Alexandria that it was the nodal point for trade between the two halves of the Aegean.⁴³ Delos supported Perseus, the Macedonian, against Rome and was placed by Rome under the control of Athens in 166 B.C.E.⁴⁴ In 89 B.C.E. it was destroyed by Mithridates.⁴⁵

Samos, too, was part of the Ptolemaic interests. In S.O. III:463, there is reference to the building of a royal mansion which may refer to the height of the splendour of the Temple to Hera in 538 B.C.E. although it has been suggested that this might refer to its capture by the Ptolemies in the early third century B.C.E.⁴⁶ Although it had been an important trading point in the Greek and Persian world, it was ultimately eclipsed by Rhodes in the new Hellenistic world and ceased to hold any real importance for Mediterranean trade.⁴⁷ It was lost to the Ptolemaic empire after the the First Macedonian War in the mid - second century B.C.E. which gave Rome control over much of the eastern Mediterranean.⁴⁸

Both Alexandre and Rzach have assumed that the lines are misplaced - Alexandre would place them after 96, while Rzach places them after

§3 ⁴³P. M. Fraser, Ptolemaic Alexandria (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972) I 170-1; 657.

§4 ⁴⁴OCD 321.

§5 ⁴⁵Fraser, Ptolemaic, I 171.

§6 ⁴⁶Lanchester, ''Sibylline'' 387.

§7 ⁴⁷OCD 949.

§8 ⁴⁸Fraser, Ptolemaic I 79.

100.⁴⁹ Both these emendations would have the effect of removing them from the centre of the Macedonian oracles,⁵⁰ but the transfer does not solve the dating problem with regards to the proposed schema.

97-8 - n.d.

This oracle is an older Hellenistic one which is referred to by Strabo and alludes to the fact that the Pyramus, a Cilician river, created a lot of silt and was often clogged at its mouth.⁵¹ This points to the prevalence among the oracles for those which have more than one possible date of fulfillment.

59 ⁴⁹Lanchester, 'The Sibylline' 395. Geffcken does not discuss this passage in either Oracula or Komposition with regard to this question. The above discussion suggests a possibility for a mutual dating of these oracles. Both Samos and Delos became subject to Rome during the latter half of the second century B.C.E. Given the anti-Roman feeling in Alexandria (Fraser, Ptolemaic I 127-8, 550), this oracle could have been written with this particular historical data in mind. What might be relevant is III:350-64 (See pp. 46-7 below). The Samos and Delos oracles(363-4) include the oracle against Rome and may be part of the larger anti-Roman oracle which would make the suggestion of mid-second or even early first century (Lanchester, 'Sibylline' 385) more plausible. (See p. 12, n. 22 above) This would require a movement of over ten verses (after IV:102) which is tempting in view of the chronological sequence. At this point, however, I would not consider myself competent to suggest such a move which would require greater knowledge of the textual problems of these oracles than I have acquired to this point.

60 ⁵⁰This is an example of what appears to be a sibylline convention of placing geographical locations together, either because of historical or locational similarities. Other examples in the Fourth are 89-90; 90-1; 95-6; 99; 105-6; 109-12; 128; 140-2. Geffcken, Komposition 19, n.2.

61 ⁵¹Strabo, 1:3:7; 12:2:4. Semple, Geography 108. Collins, OTP 386.

99-100 - 303 B.C.E.

The dating of 303 is tentative. There are textual emendations suggested for Baris.⁵² There was a Baris under Cyzicus' control.⁵³ Given the Sibyl's penchant for doubling names, it would appear that this is the correct reading.⁵⁴ Cyzicus, itself, was important to the Aegean trade of Alexandria⁵⁵ and its cults seem to have attracted some attention there.⁵⁶

Geffcken suggests the date 303,⁵⁷ based on Pausanias' description of an earthquake which destroyed Sicyon and affected the cities of the Carian, Lycia and Rhodes(Paus. 2:7,1). Certainly, some earthquakes, which also generated tidal waves, often had far-ranging effects on the coastal areas of the Mediterranean Basin.⁵⁸ However, Pausanias' reference to the date of the above-mentioned earthquake is unclear.⁵⁹

62 52 Two of the conjectures are 'Sybaris' and 'Kibura'. Lanchester, 'Sibylline' 395; Bate, Sibylline 87.

63 53 A. H. M. Jones, The Cities of the Eastern Provinces 2nd ed., rev. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1971(1937)) 91.

64 54 Geffcken, Komposition 18, 19, n.2; Kurfess, Sibyllinische 304.

65 55 Fraser, Ptolemaic I 101, 171-3.

66 56 Fraser, Ptolemaic I 627-31.

67 57 Geffcken, Oracula 96.

68 58 Semple, The Geography 43-50.

69 59 Bate, Sibylline 87. Kurfess relies on this text for dating the earthquake which destroyed Rhodes (IV:104). On Cyzicus, he states only a comparison to III:442. Sibyllinische 304.

The problem appears to depend on how he is read. The date of 303 will be accepted as likely.

101 - 224 B.C.E.

Although Rhodes had, at different periods in its history, suffered from the effects of war and physical disasters, in 224 there was an earthquake which destroyed the walls of the city, the dockyards and the famous Colossus.⁶⁰

109-13 - 68 C.E.

This could refer to an earthquake and tidal wave in Asia Minor during the reign of Nero which is mentioned by Cassius Dio(73:27).

114 - 63-6 C.E.

During the period between 54 and 66 C.E. there was a great struggle between the Romans and the Parthians over the control of Armenia which had devastating effects on the country. It was ended by agreement in 63, formally in 66. Armenia became a vassal state of Rome.⁶¹

⁷⁰ ⁶⁰ Semple, Geography 42: Magie, Roman Rule, I 190.

⁷¹ ⁶¹ Debevoise, Parthia 179-93.

128-9 - 76 C.E.

There was an earthquake and tidal wave in Cyprus, after which
Vespasian rebuilt the temple of Aphrodite in Paphos.⁶²

Summary

It has been possible in the above discussion of the oracles of section 49-139 to date historically all but two oracles, those dealing with Samos and Delos (91-2) and the Pyramus river(97-8). Furthermore, the dating of the oracles historically has produced a chronological sequence with one slight irregularity(109-13).⁶³ It is thus plausible to suggest that the writer of 49-139 may have deliberately structured this chronological framework when he either adopted, adapted or created oracles for this sibylline verse. This gives rise to a possibility which will be explored in the next section, that oracles 140-51 refer to historical data and were also part of the chronological framework.

While it might be argued that the imposition of the chronological schema has affected the method of research, the very fact that most of the oracles had historical referents which produced a chronological sequence, something which has been noted by Flusser and Collins with

72 ⁶²W. Smith, ed., The Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography, Vol. II (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1857) 548.

73 ⁶³This can be easily understood by looking at the chart, pp. 32-3 below.

regard to the 'Hellenistic or Macedonian' oracle (extent to IV:101),⁶⁴ warrants the conclusion that some kind of chronological ordering of the text was intended by its author.⁶⁵

II. iv. Historical Oracles:140-51

During the second century C.E. there was a revolt of Jews in 112-7, which began in Cyrene under a messianic leader and badly affected Egypt. The Bar Kochba Revolt in Palestine was the second major Jewish revolt during this century and had devastating results for Jews throughout the Roman Empire. There was another revolt under Antoninus Pius circa 152 which appears to have lasted one year and gave rise to 'search and destroy' orders, since any revolt in Egypt seriously jeopardized Rome's food supplies.⁶⁶ In 175, a revolt against Marcus Aurelius was centred in Antioch in Syria with Alexandria as the second centre of the revolt. The rule of Commodus, Marcus Aurelius' heir, was characterized by Cassius Dio as a movement from an age of gold to one of iron and rust.

74 ⁶⁴Collins, 'The Place' 370-6.

75 ⁶⁵As will be seen below, these oracles have been relegated to the area of fantasy. While it is being suggested that this is not necessarily the case in this instance, the caveat of Alexander should be noted. Not all oracles which can have a historical basis in hindsight were intended as such when written. 'Medieval' 1000-1.

76 ⁶⁶N. Lewis, Life in Egypt Under Roman Rule (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983) 201, 203-4; J. Juster, Les juifs dans l'empire romain (New York: Burt Franklin 1965(1914)) II 194. Egypt furnished one-third of Rome's grain supply and thus was crucial to the functioning of the centre of the empire. Semple, Geography 369.

From the point of view of the indigenous populations, Roman rule in the second century may not have been a particularly benevolent one.⁶⁷ Constant rebellion in the eastern part of the empire and the threat of famine, etc., make the second century as probable a time for oracles of damnation with eschatological dimensions as any other period in Jewish/Roman relations. It is this period which will be suggested as providing the historical data behind IV:140-51.

140-151

If these verses are referred to at all, the general attitude of scholars towards them echoes the opinion of J. Geffcken:

'Die nächsten Verse (140-151) kann man ruhig beiseite lassen, sie scheinen neben einer Wiederholung (145-148 vgl. III, 350ff.) reine Phantasmagorie zu enthalten.' /68/

This may have been a premature judgement on the part of Geffcken based on an assumption that the oracle was written in the latter part of the first century C.E. and the difficulty in finding any historical referents for these verses.⁶⁹ The historical events of the oracular section, 49-139, appear to have been ordered chronologically. It is,

77 ⁶⁷ Lewis, Life 207.

78 ⁶⁸ Geffcken, Komposition 20; Rzach, "'Sibyllinische'" 2134; Ewald, Abhandlung 85, n. Collins, "'The Place'", does not mention them and in his new translation with reference to lines 145-8, he states that "'This should not be interpreted with Lanchester as a reference to a specific event. As in the parallel Sibylline passages, it attests the common Asiatic hope for vengeance on Rome.'" OTP 388, n. d2.

79 ⁶⁹ Since Geffcken wrote these lines, much has changed in the studies of the Roman Empire, due primarily to the many archeological discoveries from Egypt. Lewis, Life, 1-8; 207.

therefore, quite possible that there may be an extension of this chronological order in the following lines as well. While Geffcken did not relate the following suggestions to the verses in question, he did open up the possibility that they could have relevance to a historical situation in his discussion of IV:97-101. Here, he applies the following criterion:

'Dagegen möchte ich geltend machen, dass wir es hier 97-101, mit einem älteren hellenischen Orakel zu thun haben (vgl. V. 97.98), das wohl nicht fragte, ob eine Örtlichkeit bedeutend sei, sondern einfach ex eventu ein Ereignis, das wirklich geschehen war, prophezeite. Ferner gehört Baris in die Nähe von Kyzikos, und endlich wird die Quantität der geographischen Namen sehr frei von den Sibyllen gemessen.'
/70/

This gives rise to several possibilities in an attempt to date 140-51. First, there is a close connection between 145-8 and III:350-55.⁷¹ The conscious reworking of the oracle may indicate that the author wished to specifically indicate some change in the historical situation.⁷² Secondly, Antioch and Cyrrhus, approximately 80 kilometres apart, are as close together as, for example, Baris and Cyzicus, which were discussed above.⁷³ Thirdly, this section continues the addition of names to the Sibyl's corpus of place names which is also considered a factor by Geffcken.⁷⁴ He contends that oracles were not chosen for inclusion

80 ⁷⁰Komposition 19, n. 2.

81 ⁷¹See p. 46-7 below.

82 ⁷²This would fall in line with the reworking of the oracle on Samos and Delos (IV:91-2; III:363). See p. 46-8 below.

83 ⁷³See p. 19 above.

84 ⁷⁴Geffcken, Komposition 19, n.2.

because they related to important places but because the prophecies about them had come true: something which was far more important if an attempt to convert pagans to Judaism is being made.⁷⁵ Given these possibilities, the oracles 140-51, may actually have some historical basis. The oracles can be broken into four parts: 140-2; 143-4; 145-8; 149-51. Each of these sections will be considered below for possible historical allusions.

140-2

This passage contains oracles which refer to Antioch(140-1) and Cyrrhus(142).⁷⁶ It is very possible that they could be referring to the events of 175 C.E. when C. Avidius Cassius declared himself emperor in revolt against Marcus Aurelius. The revolt lasted three months ending

85⁷⁵ They may have been written as apologia to persuade Jews themselves, of the correctness of Jewish position in the face of Gentile arguments, as is possible also with Philo. Ewald, Abhandlung 24-5; Edinburgh Review 42. This becomes a distinct possibility if the position of Fraser (p. 6, n. 3 above) on the extremely orthodox nature of the Sibylline group (supported to a limited extent by J. J. Collins (p. 6, n. 3 above) in SOEJ) is accepted.

86⁷⁶ Kurfess omits this line altogether with no explanation. Sibyllinische 118-9, 305. Collins has changed Cyrrhus to Cyprus. OTP 387. The line is difficult and has been in need of textual emendation. According to Geffcken's philological apparatus Cyprus is not considered. He does point out that Cyprus occurs in Tzetze, Chiliades 7:564-70. Geffcken, Oracula 99 (Kurfess, Sibyllinische 305). However, Tzetze was a 'notoriously careless' copyist of the twelfth century C.E. OCD 1102. Lanchester, 'Sibylline' 396, n. points out that Cyrrhus is a conjecture and lists other suggestions, Cyprus, Scyros and Sypien. Furthermore, kurros was spelled in various ways, one of them being kupros (Der Kleine Pauly 3, 421). It would seem then, that, as Geffcken accepts, Cyrrhus is the best alternative for this passage, a suggestion which becomes further enhanced by the following discussion.

when Cassius was assassinated by two of his soldiers.⁷⁷ The revolt was supported in the east, particularly by Alexandria, the second major centre of the revolt, which was willing to support almost any revolt against the empire.⁷⁸ Marcus Aurelius apparently dealt leniently with the communities which took part in the revolt except for Antioch and Cyrrhus, which he even refused to visit until much later.⁷⁹

Cyrrhus had been the birthplace of Avidius Cassius and also housed the tenth legion which took part in the eastern wars.⁸⁰ It was from the legions which had participated in the wars in the east that the plague, or pestilence, had been brought into the Roman Empire in approximately 165 C.E. and raged for more than fifteen years with devastating effects.⁸¹ The legions which were housed at Cyrrhus had also always played a large part in the destruction of any attempt to secure Jewish autonomy in Palestine.⁸²

87 ⁷⁷ Magie, Roman Rule I 665-6; G. Downey, A History of Antioch in Syria (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961) 227-9.

88 ⁷⁸ Lewis, Life 201.

89 ⁷⁹ Downey, History 228, 131. An interesting alternative was made by S. Krauss who suggested that this oracle was written against Antioch as punishment for its 'excès contre les juifs'. Furthermore, the return of Nero was to punish 'Rome orientale' which Krauss sees as a symbol for Antioch. 'Antioche' REJ 45(1902) 45.

90 ⁸⁰ ~~Keil~~ ^{W. Weber}, CAH 348-9; Magie, Roman Rule I 663-4.

91 ⁸¹ ~~Keil~~ ^{Weber}, Cah 348-9; Magie, Roman Rule I 661-3; II 1534, n. 9. J. A. Gilliam, 'The Plague Under Marcus Aurelius' American Journal of Philology 82(1961) 249.

92 ⁸² Vespasian began his assault on the Jews in the war of 66 C.E. from Antioch. Jos. J.W. 3:29. The three legions housed in Antioch and Cyrrhus were responsible for maintaining peace in Palestine. It was the X Fretensis legion which was consistently in Syria and took part in
(Footnote Continued)

Thus 140-2 may be an allusion to this historical event which relates to Antioch's folly in following an attempt to overthrow the emperor. The association of Cyrrhus with the pestilence and strife could well refer to the legions which were housed there. This would place these oracles in the late second century C.E.⁸³

143-4

There were earthquakes in Asia Minor during the reign of Commodus.⁸⁴ In particular there was one which had had devastating effects on Smyrna in 178 C.E.⁸⁵ Coastal earthquakes such as the one

(Footnote Continued)

Jewish-Roman disagreements from the time of Herod till after the Bar Kochba revolt. E. N. Luttwak, The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire: From the First Century A.D. to the Third (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1981(1976)). 24-5.

93 ⁸³A second explanation is that an oracle may have originated referring to Antioch in an earlier period based on other data. In his discussion of this period in Antioch's history, Downey mentions that Cassius had seized Jewish property to raise money for the war against Julius Caesar during the Roman Civil Wars. Downey, History 158. (See also Jos. Ant 14:319-23). Antony too had his problems with Antioch which supported the Parthian takeover in 39 B.C.E. In this case, it would have been taken by the redactor of the Fourth and used to represent another event and makes understanding their historical allusions difficult. A third possibility would situate the oracle in the struggles for the empire in 193-4 C.E. when Antioch again supported a contender for emperor against Septimius Severus. Downey, History 236-40. However, when the oracle is combined with the one on Cyrrhus, it would appear that the events of 175 are more likely. See also the following argument on IV:145-8 and Krauss' argument on p. 26, n. 80 above.

94 ⁸⁴Cassius Dio 73:12.2. Magie, Roman Rule I 668-9; II 1538, n. 19.

95 ⁸⁵Cassius Dio 71:32.1-3. Magie, Roman I 666(178); II 1537, n.17; Gilliam, "'Plague'" 230. For the date as 177, see C.A. Behr, Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert - Publisher, 1968) 112-3, n. 68.

which occurred at Smyrna had been known to have widespread effects on the eastern Mediterranean.⁸⁶

145-8

These verses are taken by Lanchester to refer to a Roman defeat in the first century.⁸⁷ However, the possibility that these oracles refer to the events of the second century has been indirectly implied by Keil:

'...this statement (IV:145-8), if we disregard its propagandist aims and take it as referring to the province of Asia, appears to testify to the fact that the province which was so brutally plundered during the civil wars had, after a hundred years of government under the Empire, regained a prosperity surpassing her condition in pre-Roman times. This description would be still truer if applied to the developments of the next century, when the beneficent administration of the Antonines brought a still more flourishing export trade, and thus raised the standard of living to heights which were never subsequently reached again.' (underlining mine) /88/

Magie, who along with Keil accepts a dating of 80 C.E. for the Fourth Sibylline Oracle, feels that it refers to the Pax Romana and expresses the 'actual conditions of his (...) time.'⁸⁹

Furthermore, the reference in the oracle to a surfeit of strife could possibly refer to the reign of Commodus, 180-92 C.E. Cassius Dio referred to this period as descending 'from a kingdom of gold to one of

96 ⁸⁶Semple, Geography 43-50.

97 ⁸⁷'Probably the defeat of Paetus at Randeia in A.D. 62.' 'The Sibylline' 396, n.

98 ⁸⁸Keil, CAH 583.

99 ⁸⁹Magie, Roman Rule I 582; II 1444, n. 41. R. K. McElderry, 'Some Conjectures on the Reign of Vespasian' JRS 3(1913) 121.

iron and rust.(71:33,4)'' After his father's death, rather than following existing policies, Commodus made what is considered to have been an ill-advised peace settlement on the northern frontiers, and from this point on the encroachment on the boundaries of the empire began to seriously affect it.⁹⁰ In Egypt, Commodus is thought to have destroyed the family of Avidius Cassius who had been pardoned by his father, and the exploitation of Egypt for its grain supplies was apparently increasing.⁹¹ All of these factors give a likelihood that this oracle could have been intended by its author to refer to the events of the second century C.E.

149-51

These oracles have, as yet, no specific historical referents which would definitely place them in the latter part of the second century. According to Magie, little is known about this period in Asia Minor, in part because Cassius Dio's discussion is, for the most part, lost.⁹²

100 ⁹⁰P. Olivia, Pannonia and the Onset of Crisis in the Roman Empire (Chicago: Argonaut, Inc., 1967) 299-310. Magie, Roman Rule I 667-9; Rostovtzeff, Social I 393-4; II 641, n. 73. An alternate and dissenting interpretation of the reign of Commodus can be found in an article by W. Weber, who sees him as inaugurating a new golden age. ''The Antonnines'' CAH 386-91. Perhaps this is more related to Weber's political views than to the historical evidence.

101 ⁹¹M. I. Rostovtzeff, Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1971(2nd ed., 1957) I 394; II 677, n. 52; 708, n. 4,5. See also J. Lindsay, Daily Life in Roman Egypt (London: Frederick Muller, Ltd., 1963) 278.

102 ⁹²Magie, Roman Rule I 668.

However, there are some suggestions which could place the oracle in this period.⁹³

Famines were a frequent occurrence in Asia Minor. Grain shortages were probably occurring in various parts of the empire due to constant and massive troop movements as much as to climatic conditions.⁹⁴ In 189 C.E. there was a grain shortage in Rome,⁹⁵ which had prior claim on grain shipments from Egypt and elsewhere. This shortage may have increased the probability of grain shortages in Asia Minor.⁹⁶ There also appears to have been a sudden rise in the price of grain in Egypt under Commodus, which might indicate that there was less grain coming from Asia Minor.⁹⁷ Although the Maeander Valley was noted for its fertile soil which made it the object of conquest, the surrounding lands of Asia Minor, such as Caria, suffered from the usual six month Mediterranean drought.⁹⁸ Massive troop movements may have exacerbated an already precarious situation. The similarity of this oracle to that of IV:72-5, where famine is linked with the Nile hiding its black water, could be of some importance in understanding these lines. In these

103. ⁹³ Caria was at one time under the control of the Ptolemaic empire. Fraser, Ptolemaic I 67.

104 ⁹⁴ Rostovtzeff, Social II, 599-601, n. 9; I, 147.

105 ⁹⁵ Cassius Dio, 73:13.

106 ⁹⁶ Rostovtzeff, Social I, 201; II, 599-60, n. 9. There is no adequate treatment of the famines during the Roman Empire. R. MacMullen, Enemies of the Roman Empire (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966) App. A, 249-54.

107 ⁹⁷ Magie, Roman Rule II 1534, n. 9.

108 ⁹⁸ Semple, Geography 346-7.

lines (149-51) famine is linked with the Maeander's also hiding its black water.⁹⁹ If the argument for 72-5 is correct, then this oracle may have been created to explain some similar occurrence - at least in the eyes of the author and his readers.

Summary

This section has shown that it is possible to find historical data which might relate to the oracles in 140-151, contrary to the opinion of Geffcken. The latter part of the second century C.E. has been characterized by the phrase used in the Cambridge Ancient History for its volume on this period - 'The Imperial Peace'. However, for Jews, Egyptians and many others it may not have been so peaceful.¹⁰⁰ The plague, the revolt against Marcus Aurelius, the reign of Commodus, famines and earthquakes may all have contributed to the sense of impending doom, important enough for the Sibyl to once again bring forth utterances of doom and stress the importance of repentance before the end.

The following chart demonstrates the pattern which was hypothesized at the beginning of this discussion. As can be seen, it yields a

109. ⁹⁹Geffcken, Oracula 95, 99. The Maeander often carried enough silt to close its mouth and change the course of the river. OCD 527; Semple, Geography 120-1.

110 ¹⁰⁰Lewis ends his monograph with a rhetorical question: 'How many dwellers in the province of Egypt, we may wonder, would have recognized Gibbon's words (supporting in glowing phrases the reality of the Pax Romana) a description of the world in which they lived?'. Life 207.

chronological structure which can plausibly place the Fourth Sibylline Oracle at the end of the second century C.E.

II. v. Chronological Table

<u>Sib. Or. IV</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
49-53	to 630 BCE	From the Flood to the conquest of the Assyrians by the Medes.
54-60	to 546	Defeat of the Medes by Cyrus in 546 B.C.E.
65	525	With the conquest of Egypt, the Persians had conquered the world.
67-71	c. 499	Continuing wars with the Greeks.
72-5	484	The revolt of Egypt under Darius was successfully put down by Xerxes(?).
76-9	480	Successful expedition of Xerxes against the Greeks.
80-1	396	One of the eruptions of Mount Aetna.
82	379	Croton captured by Dionysius
83-5	383-38	Clashes between the Persian and Greeks after 396 in which continual dissension among the Greeks was fueled by Persian money and diplomacy.
86-7	335	The beginning of the campaigns of Alexander the Great
88-9	335	The fall of Thebes.
90	332	The fall of Tyre
91-2	n.d.	Samos and Delos.
93-6	331	Babylon, Bactra and Susa fall to Alexander.
97-8	n.d.	Oracle regarding the Pyramus river known for its silt collection.
99-100	303	Earthquakes in Baris and Cyzicus.

101	224	Rhodes demolished by an earthquake.
102-4	214-168	Beginnings of the conquests of Rome.
105-6	146	The fall of Carthage and Corinth to Rome.
107-8	60 C.E.	Earthquake in Laodicea ad Lycum.
109-13	68	Earthquake and tidal wave in Asia Minor.
114	63-6	War between Rome and Parthia over Armenia.
115-27	66-70	Oracles incorporating the Jewish War against Rome, the flight or death of Nero and the destruction of the Temple.
128-9	76	Earthquake and tidal wave on Cyprus.
130-6	79	Eruption of Vesuvius.
137-9	c. 80	One of the returns of a pseudo-Nero.
140-2	c. 175	Revolt of Avidius Cassius against Marcus Aurelius and the plague which swept the empire during the latter part of the second century.
143-4	177/183	Earthquake and tidal wave on Cyprus. Possibly the earthquake in Smyrna(177) or Ephesus and Nicomedia(183).
145-8	180	Rule of Commodus, particularly when referring to Egypt.
149-51	c. 189	Grain shortages in Rome which depended on Egypt for much of its grain. Also troop movements through Asian Minor which would cause severe shortages for the local populations.

II. vi. Partial Conclusions

In this chapter, 'The Date of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle,' there was an attempt to question the assumption that the date of circa 80 C.E. for the Fourth Sibylline Oracle was not inviolate. After a discussion of the reasons for the previous dating of the oracle, it was shown that these reasons were not as strong as has been accepted. The discussion of the historical oracles 49-139, showed that there was a chronological consistency inherent in its structure. This led the way to the possibility that the succeeding oracles 140-51, may also have been written with historical data in mind. The data of late second century C.E. appeared to give a high probability that this period could contain the events for ex eventu prophecy. While few dates are ever totally conclusive where oracles are concerned, the different historical events, when put together, can be considered to contain enough data to warrant drawing up a specific conclusion, viz., that the Fourth Sibylline Oracle can be reasonably dated at the end of the second century C.E. The ramifications of the later dating on the interpretation of this oracle and its provenance will be seen in the following section.

A secondary point which has arisen from the above discussion is that there seems to be close connection between the oracles and Egyptian history. A closer comparison of the Third and Fifth Sibylline Oracles with the Fourth will strengthen what is becoming apparent with regard to the Alexandrian, or at least Egyptian provenance, of this oracle.

changes made
Aug 3/85

III. STRUCTURE AND THE PROVENANCE OF THE FOURTH SIBYLLINE ORACLE

III. i. Introduction

There have been many suggestions regarding the origins of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle.¹ Nikiprowetzky believes that there are four main stylistic reasons for placing the Fourth in Alexandrian Egypt: a) the familiarity with the Homeric verse, b) its euhemerism,² c) its syncretism³ and d) its theological thought.⁴ Most of the secondary sources in recent years have focussed on one aspect of the oracle, e.g. baptism⁵ or the historical oracle,⁶ and have made judgements regarding its provenance on that basis. While it would be impossible within the scope of this research paper, which is focussed on the Fourth, to do an exhaustive analysis of all the nuances involved in a comparison between the Jewish Sibyllines,⁷ certain facets of the Fourth will be compared

¹See pp. 1-3 above.

²Fraser also points out the impact of Euhemeris on the Sibylline Oracles. Ptolemaic I 297, 299-300.

³See p. 6, n. 3 above. Syncretism is a natural phenomenon when two cultural groups, however different, come in contact. This would explain how Judaism could be 'syncretistic' yet 'orthodox'.

⁴La troisième 228.

⁵E.g. Thomas, Le mouvement 46-60.

⁶E.g. Flusser, 'The Four Kingdoms' 148-75.

⁷One is hard pressed to find any secondary sources since the nineteenth century (e.g. Ewald, Abhandlung) which closely relate the oracles to one another, other than in the short commentaries appended to the text and/or translation. Except for Kurfess, Sibyllinische, in

to similar themes and structures in the Third and the Fifth. If the Fourth belongs to the same milieu as the Third and the Fifth, there is a possibility that its author would have used the Third⁸ and, accepting the later dating, the Fifth⁹ as models for his own updated version to complement the Sibylline corpus. In addition to deliberate construction of the historical oracles into a chronological sequence which was described in Chapter two above, there are other factors which could denote a deliberate use of thought patterns and structure.

In the present chapter, it will first of all be shown that there is a structural pattern in the oracles which was probably deliberately created and that the Fourth endeavours to follow this pattern. Secondly, the discussion will focus on the similarities between the historical oracles and the attitude towards Rome and Egypt which can be discerned from these oracles. Thirdly, two other themes, a) the description of God and b) the godly and ungodly, will be examined briefly.

(Footnote Continued)

1952, the basic textual work and translations are still those of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Collins, 'The Place' 365. The inconsistencies in the latest translation by Collins are pointed out throughout the discussion below. The only other exception is the work of Valentin Nikiprowetzky. However, his research was focussed primarily on the Third, for which he made a new translation, and there was an article on the Fourth and Fifth - both of which are noted where relevant.

⁸Nikiprowetzky dates The Third towards the mid-first century B.C.E (43 B.C.E.). La troisième 216-7. Collins argues for a mid-second century date for the bulk of the oracle accepting first century additions. SOEJ 21-2, 28-32; OTP 354-5.

⁹This oracle is usually dated before the advent of the Bar Kochba War. Collins, SOEJ 94-5; Nikiprowetzky, 'Reflexions' 30-3.

III. ii. Literary Structure

The Sibyllines/ Oracles are literary works and must be considered from that standpoint. Literary works have their own particular structure, this being how poems are differentiated from novels and newspaper articles from Ph.D theses.¹⁰ For example, in Sibylline Oracles, the periodisation of history and the use of ex eventu prophecy is one of the structures which delineates Sibylline oracles from other apocalyptic works.¹¹ The East - West conflict¹² and eschatological destruction are also standard Sibylline themes and affect its structure.¹³ However, in the following section it is the framework into which the prophecies were placed that is of prime concern in determining similarities between the three Jewish Sibyllines.

¹⁰At least one would hope there is a difference!

¹¹Collins, OTP 323. Alexander, 'Medieval' 997-8.

¹²H. R. Hall sees the entire history of the Ancient Near East as an attempt by the West to impose its ideals on the East which made continuous attempts to rebuff them. He contends that these rebuffs were always partially successful until the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 C.E. The Ancient History of the Near East: From the Earliest Times to the Battle of Salamis (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1963(1913)) 586-7. Collins, SOEJ 58.

¹³Collins, SOEJ 100-1; 'The Place' 369, n. 24.

The Third Sibylline Oracle

A literary reading of the Third Sibylline Oracle finds it divided into five parts: 1. 1-161; 2. 162-294; 3. 295-488; 4. 489-808; and finally, 5. 809-29, where the Sibyl justifies her authenticity by virtue of her status as Noah's daughter-in-law.¹⁴ This division of the Third treats the oracle as a unit which is how it would have appeared to readers a century or two later.

The oracle has what could be called a prologue or even an abstract which outlines the rest of the oracle.¹⁵ It has been pointed out that this section of the oracle contains its latest material and Collins surmises that it might possibly have been the conclusion of a different oracle.¹⁶ This may well be true, but for the purposes of a second century oraculist this type of reconstruction would probably have been unknown.¹⁷

¹⁴ Collins divides the book into a main corpus and later material. Thus we have 1. 97-161; 2. 162-95; 3. 196-294; 4. 545-656; 5. 657-808. 1-96 is a later addition SOEJ 21-7; OTP 354. The closest approximation to division is that of Friedlieb as discussed in Lanchester, 'Sibylline' 371. However, this division does not imply more than one author who used sources to compile this work. See p. 40, n.20 below.

¹⁵ Collins considers 97-161 as the introduction to the oracle. OTP 354.

¹⁶ Collins, SOEJ 64-7; OTP 354.

¹⁷ It is probably stating the obvious, but it can be presumed that if the redactor of the Fourth was creating an updated oracle, he would have believed that previous oracles were divinely inspired and true. He would, of course, presume that his oracle derived from the same source of divine inspiration.

In each succeeding section, one to four, there appears to be a movement forward in historical time to predictions of the end of the world. The first section includes an introduction with a description of the one God, a denunciation of idolatry, and a discussion of world history to the destruction of the Titans, and it ends with a list of eight world empires, the last being Rome. The second section begins with a denunciation of world empires and then describes the race of the godly, sketching their history from Abraham to the rebuilding of the temple after the exile. The third section is a detailed oracle describing the woes which are to befall various and sundry empires and cities. The fourth section is the most particularized part of the oracle. It includes a detailed description of the final days and their horrors and compares them with the joys and blessings of the godly.

The fifth section continues the historical pattern but has moved into an appeal to prevent the end of history from occurring. There are exhortations to repentance and detailed instructions concerning what must be done to be included among the godly or to even stop the day of fate from taking place. The last section of the Third can be called an epilogue. This is the justification of authenticity of the Sibyl and her relationship to the one God and includes a denunciation of the false prophecies of the other Sibyls.

Each division begins with the Sibyl being forced to prophesy.¹⁸ This may indicate that different self-standing oracles have been connected and that this may have been the redactor's method of

¹⁸4-6; 162-3; 296-99; 489-91; 809-12.

connecting the shorter oracles into one larger composition for greater impact. Within each of these sections there is a recurring pattern of sin and wickedness followed by destruction, which is in turn followed by a restoration.¹⁹ The above discussion shows that there is a time sequence in the sections. The most probable explanation is that there was a fairly comprehensive organizational patterning on the part of the final redactor.²⁰

The Fifth Sibylline Oracle

The Fifth can also be broken into sections: 1. 1-51; 2. 52-110; 3. 111-178; 4. 179-285; 5. 286-433; 6. 434-530. As in the Third, there is evidence of deliberate structuring in the oracle. The first section of this oracle is considered to contain the latest historical data because of a positive reference to Hadrian and a possible late interpolation referring to Marcus Aurelius.²¹ In tone, this section does not bear any particular resemblance to the Third, which was referred to above as a prologue or even abstract of the following oracle. Rather it is (very) a strict chronological listing of the Roman emperors to Marcus Aurelius. X

¹⁹Collins, OTP 354. Collins does not note the historical dimension of these sections.

²⁰Nikiprowetzky sees the work as that of a single redactor. La troisième 215. Collins argues against this position throughout the first two chapters of SOEJ. See his comment of Nikiprowetzky's position: SOEJ 144, n. 49.

²¹Collins, OTP 390. Simon, 'Sur quelques aspects' 223.

Each of the sections begins with a 'woe' statement from the Sibyl.²² Unlike the Third, the Sibyl is now a familiar friend of Isis(52) and the terminology of the Third whereby God has put a goad through her heart so that she must speak²³ is no longer evident, although the Fifth's Sibyl still speaks unwillingly. In 52, she is 'wearied to conceive the message of evil'. In 111, it is her craven heart that provokes her. In 179, she only 'bemoan(s) the doom' of Egypt. Finally, in 286, her 'wise mind lay(s) a burden on (her)'. The last section, 434-530, begins with only a 'woe' statement.

It has been noted by Collins that the historical oracles of doom alternate between Asia and Egypt. Sections 2 and 4 contain oracles primarily vocalized against Egypt, while sections 3 and 5 are concerned with Asia and Europe.²⁴ The last section, which explicates the end of the world, could also be included as one of those primarily concerned with Egypt.²⁵

Without detailed study of the oracles²⁶ it is impossible to postulate the same kind of historical development such as has been done above for the Third, since the references are more particularized than

²²1; 52-3; 111-2; 179; 286-7; 434.

²³See p. 39, n. 18 above.

²⁴Collins, OTP 390.

²⁵For example the eschatological temple is built in Egypt, although it is later destroyed. See pp. 84-7, below.

²⁶It was impossible within the scope of this paper to to a detailed tracking of the possible historical referents for either the Third or the Fifth and therefore, there is a reliance for dating and historical insights, on the work of secondary sources for these two oracles.

those of the Third which discusses, for example, the history of Israel. However, the oracles relating to Nero²⁷ constitute a pattern of historical progression in the oracle. In each of the historical oracle sections, there are oracles concerned with Nero which show a marked progression in their tone. In section two it is even debatable that the destroyer is Nero(93-110). The history of Nero's life and his flight from Rome(137-54) is related, and the fourth section anticipates the horrors of Nero's return as the dreaded event of the last days. In the fifth section, his return has occurred, and he will conquer the entire world(361-74), but there will be an eschatological intervention which will put an end to the final battle(375-85). The fourth and fifth sections also contain a messianic figure (256-9; 414-33) and in the latter section there is an expansion of his role. But not even this messianic figure will be able to stop the destruction of the eschatological temple and the oracle ends with a battle of the stars and total annihilation.

As with the Third, each section contains a description of the horrors awaiting the ungodly and the bliss of the godly. While each section also contains an eschatological scene of positive bliss at the end of time before the final end, there is one glaring lack in the Fifth. Unlike the Third and as will be seen below, the Fourth, there is no exhortation to repentance or details on how one may avoid the dreaded end. It is as if this particular Sibylline redactor truly felt that

²⁷The Nero legend will be dealt with in more detail on pp. 62-5 below.

there was no hope left at all 'short of the destruction of the universe.'²⁸

The Fourth Sibylline Oracle

In its literary structure, the Fourth bears a greater similarity to the format of the Third than to that of the Fifth, albeit in digest form. It continues within the Jewish tradition, re-evaluating prophecy and incorporating new motifs. It, too, can be broken into the following structured pattern: 1. 1-48; 2. 49-151; 3. 152-61; 4. 162-70; 5. 171-92.

The oracle begins with an introduction(1-23) wherein the Sibyl speaks because a goad has been driven through her heart(18). Then the mighty God is described. This is followed by a contrast of the godly with the ungodly and there is a premonition given of their fate at the last judgement(24-48). This introduction can most clearly be seen as an abstract of the whole oracle, and the Sibyl as much as implies that this was the point of the preceding 47 verses when she states that she has described what will occur at the end and will detail 'all that is to come to pass from the first generation'(48).

The oracles against the nations of the world take up the next portion(49-151) where the history of the world is described to the beginning of the tenth generation when the judgement of the world will take place. As has been pointed out in chapter II of this paper, there is a definite chronological schema to this section. In the Fourth, as

²⁸Collins, SOEJ 92-3.

in the Fifth, the references to Nero have a pattern as well - the first mentions his life and flight(119-24), while the second discusses his return(137-9). There is an exhortation to repentance in the fourth section(162-70) just as there is in the fifth section of the Third. It details what is to be done to avoid the fate which is otherwise inevitable. This is followed by the description of the events which will take place if the wicked continue in their ways(171-92). It is here, as has been pointed out above, that the Fifth is unlike its fellow Sibyllines.

Summary

Structurally, the Fourth bears a remarkable similarity to the Third Sibylline Oracle, and to a lesser degree, the Fifth. All three oracles have distinguishable sections into which the oracles, the threats and the exhortations are organized. The demarcation of these sections is different in each of the oracles, however, each oracle contains fairly clear markers for its respective sections. In the Third and Fifth, the Sibyl's pronouncements and thematic shifts distinguish the sections, while in the Fourth there is a change in content. Each oracle contains a historical progression: in the Third, from the Titans to the final end; in the Fifth, through the progressive stages of Nero's career to the final eschatological battle and in the Fourth, from the beginning of history to the end - noted explicitly in the chronological sequence of its oracles. The Jewish Sibyllines Oracles have a connection in their need to prove the Sibyl's unerring ability to predict the future in an historical fashion.

The Fourth is a very short oracle in comparison to the other two: 192 verses as compared to 829 for the Third and 530 for the Fifth. As a consequence, this suggests that the Fourth may have been written as a unit with some forethought. This means that the themes and historical oracles would have been condensed in the process. How this was done will be discussed in the next two sections, where the historical oracles and particular themes will be looked at in order to discover if there are further connections between the three oracles.

III. iii. Historical Oracles

The idea that the historical oracles can yield a clue to the provenance of a Sibylline text should be met with certain reservations. This can be illustrated by observing the inconsistencies within Collins' application of their importance for this purpose. He states: "There is nothing to indicate the place of origin of Sybilline Oracles 8. Verses 131-138 were obviously written in Egypt (vs. 138), but the rest of the work could have been written in any part of the Near East that was subject to Rome."²⁹ He regards sections 3 and 5 of the Fifth as not incompatible with an Egyptian origin, even though they are lacking in Egyptian references.³⁰ Yet with regard to the provenance of the

²⁹Collins, OTP 417.

³⁰Collins, SOEJ 75; OTP 391. There is no question about the provenance of the Third which refers to Egyptian Ptolemaic kings and Cleopatra. Collins does once again use the criteria of a particular oracle, in this case 155-61, although it is clarified by a lengthier explanation than in the other cases noted above. OTP 355.

Fourth Sibylline Oracle, he argues that "the only reference to Egypt ... is part of the hellenistic oracle, ... (therefore,) there is no basis whatever for Egyptian provenance."³¹ If one reference to Egypt does not constitute Egyptian origin for a Sibylline Oracle ^(FN 21) - yet no references to Egypt is not incompatible with Egyptian origin ^(FN 20) - but the fact that eight verses were composed in Egypt tells us nothing of the provenance of an oracle ^(FN 29) - there would appear to be little that can be garnered from the use of historical oracles to successfully determine the provenance of an oracle. In the following section this point will be examined, as will the assumption that only one explicit reference to Egypt tells the whole story regarding the possibility of Egyptian origin.

Redaction of Historical Oracles

There is a remarkable similarity between some of the oracles. However, rather than having been lifted from one oracle and placed in another, they show signs of having been reworked. For example, the oracles concerning Samos and Delos in the Fourth(91-2)³² are closely related to a similar oracle in the Third(363-4) and the Eighth(165-6). The oracle is based on a play on words in Greek in both the Third and Eighth³³ and includes a prophecy of doom on Rome. The Third also points

³¹ OTP 382; see also, "The Place" 367, n. 11. See p. 49, n. 46 below.

³² See pp. 16-8 above.

out that all the prophecies are now being fulfilled. The Fourth drops the anti-Roman oracle³⁴ which may be indicative of a milder attitude towards Rome or an acceptance of the persistence of an empire that only God will be able to destroy in the 'end-time'.

Another oracle from the Fourth which resembles one in the Third is 145-8 which appears to be a re-working of III:350-55. In the Third, Rome is being repaid for her 'hideous violence' as well as for exacting tribute on Asia Minor, and Italians shall live in 'bondage and penury in Asia'. There appears to be a milder approach to Rome in the Fourth where Rome is merely being called to account for her thievery and will return 'two-fold and more' to Asia.³⁵

An added connection between the two is that while some of the geographical locations of some of the oracles is the same there appears to be a different emphasis. The oracles of the Third seem to be more politically oriented than those of the Fourth and Fifth, both of which seem far more concerned with physical disasters. For example, in the Fourth, the oracle concerning Rhodes(IV:101) predicts a crowning disaster. In all probability this refers to one of the many earthquakes and tidal waves from which Rhodes periodically suffered.³⁶ However, the oracle in the Third(444-8) most likely refers to the events of 167

(Footnote Continued)

³³Geffcken, Komposition 67, 150. Edinburgh Review (London: 1877) 45.

³⁴Geffcken, Oracula 96. Lanchester 'Sibylline' 395. The wordplay has also been lost in the Fourth although the context of the verses is closely related.

³⁵See pp. 28-9 above.

³⁶See p. 20, n. 62 above.

B.C.E., when the Rhodians sided with Perseus against Rome and consequently the island was stripped of much of its power and position.³⁷ In the oracles referring to Laodicea(IV:107-8; III:470-3; V:290), the oracles of both the Fourth and Fifth refer to physical disasters.³⁸ The oracle in the Third, on the other hand, most likely refers to the destruction of the city by Sulla during the Mithridatic wars of 87 B.C.E.³⁹

Attitude Towards Rome

There seems to be a remarkable consistency in the attitude towards Rome in all three of the oracles,⁴⁰ although there may be some reason for suggesting that the polemic against Rome in the Fourth is more subdued than it is in the Third⁴¹ and the Fifth.⁴² The Fifth, which is vehemently certain of Rome's destruction, goes so far as to say that God

³⁷ OCD 923. Lanchester, 'Sibylline' 387; Bates, Sibylline 67.

³⁸The oracle in the Fourth probably refers to the earthquake in 60 C.E. which destroyed most of the city. Tacitus, Ann XIV. 27. D. Magie, Roman Rule II, 1421, n.73. Lanchester suggests that the reference in the Fifth is to the earthquake in 17 C.E., which damaged twelve cities in Asia Minor. 'Sibylline' 402, n. 286-97.

³⁹Lanchester, 'Sibylline' 387; Bates Sibylline 68.

⁴⁰Simon, 'Sur quelques aspects' 221-2.

⁴¹Collins feels that the anti-Roman oracles in the Third 'need not imply that the Jewish community in Egypt was always anti-Roman.' SOEJ 78. See Fraser, Ptolemaic I 127-8, 550 on the negative reaction in Alexandria to the destruction of Carthage by Rome in 167 B.C.E.

⁴²Collins, SOEJ 78-9.

had once honoured the Romans(176).⁴³ Although Rome will be punished in the Fourth,⁴⁴ it is not specifically centred out from the rest of the world for destruction in the vehement manner of the Fifth. It was now the belief that this would be taken care of outside of the this-worldly political sphere.⁴⁵ There appears to be a de-politicization of the oracles in the Fourth and this is probably related to the results of the disastrous wars of the Jews against the Romans in the first century and a half, C.E. It may also reflect a more stabilized position within the empire than had existed previous to the Bar Kochba War. The bans against circumcision and many of the others which had been put in place by Hadrian had been rescinded and severe problems did not arise again until Septimius Severus and the outright ban on conversion to Judaism.⁴⁶

Geography of the Sibylline Oracles

One of the reasons for placing the Fourth in Asia Minor or Palestine has been that there is, apparently, an overwhelming interest

⁴³This is reminiscent of the position which is used by Josephus with particular force in the Jewish War. J.W. ii:354, 391; v:367, 369, 412. It is not unlikely that Josephus also saw the eventual destruction of Rome - but in God's time. J.W. v:377; vii:451-3. cf. Chapter five below.

⁴⁴See pp. 86-9 below.

⁴⁵See p. 60, n. 75 below.

⁴⁶Juster, Les juifs I 269-70, n. 5. J. Gager, The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983) 89-101.

and knowledge of the cities of Asia Minor.⁴⁷ However, of the place names and groups mentioned in the Fourth, all but fifteen are mentioned in the Third, and of those, eight are mentioned in the Fifth. This leaves exactly seven peculiar to the Fourth, as can be seen by the following chart.

NAME CHART

<u>NAMES</u>	<u>FOURTH</u>	<u>THIRD</u>	<u>FIFTH</u>
Assyrians	49	207-68	336
Medes	54, 62-3	160	23, 147, 441
Euphrates	61, 120, 139	---	115, 437
Persians	62-5, 87	159, 169, 207, 291	22, 93, 101, 113-6 147, 247, 336, 441
Hellespont	70	---	336
Hellas (term only used in Sibs)		70, 83 564, 598, 639, 732, 810	510, 537, 545, 137
Phrygians	71	140, 169, 205, <u>401, 402, 407,</u> 514	130
Egypt and the Nile	72-5	46, 161, 208, 249, 255, <u>314,</u> <u>320, 348,</u> , 608, 614	3, 56, 57, 60, 73, 92, 112, 179, 279, 458, 460, 484, 488, 489, 501, 505, 507
Asia	1, 76, 79, 145, 147	168, <u>342, 350</u> <u>351, 353, 354,</u> <u>367, 381, 388,</u> <u>391, 450,</u> 599, 611	99, 118, 287, 292, 443, 449, 461, 465

⁴⁷ Ewald, Abhandlung, 85. Collins, 'The Place' 369 who feels that while this is not 'a clear pointer to the provenance of the book, ... they (the oracles) weigh against an Egyptian origin.'

Sicily and Aetna	80	----	16
Croton's city	82	----	----
Macedonians	88, 95, 102	161, 172, 190, <u>381</u> , 610	338, 373, 461
Thebes	89	----	189
Carians, cities of the Carian	90, 149	170, 209, <u>472</u> <u>341-47</u>	287, ⁴⁸ 288
Tyre	90	----	288, 455
Samos	91	<u>363</u> , 463	----
Delos	92	<u>363</u>	----
Babylon	93	104, 160, <u>301</u> , <u>303</u> , <u>307</u> , <u>384</u> , 809	6, 23, 143, 159, 434
Bactra	95	----	----
Susa	96	----	----
Greece	96	813	----
Pyramus	97	----	----
Baris	99	----	----
Cyzicus	99	<u>436</u> , <u>442</u>	----
Rhodians	101	<u>444</u>	----
Italy	103, 104, 116, 119, 130	<u>464</u> , <u>470</u>	138, 160, 342, 448
Corinth	105	<u>487</u>	214
Carthage	106	<u>484</u>	----
Laodicea	107	<u>471-3</u>	290
Lycians &	109	<u>433</u> , <u>439</u> , 514	126, 129, 461

⁴⁸, 'land of the Ionians, Carians and Lydians'' It should be noted that these are the places where many of the soldiers came with the armies which fought with the Persians during the defeat of Egypt.

Myra			
Patara	112	<u>441</u>	----
Armenia	114	----	----
Solyma - Jerusalem	115, 125	only references to the temple	250
Parthians	124	----	438
Syria	125	----	125, 204
Salamis, Paphos & Cyprus	129, 143	<u>457</u>	450, 451, 452, 454
Rome	123, 138, 145	46, 52, 161 175-93, <u>350</u> , <u>352, 356, 364</u> , 520	139, 168, ⁴⁹ 443, 463, 386-402
Antioch	140	344	----
Cyrrhus	142	----	----
Maeander	149, 151	----	321

1. There are seven points which are unique to the Fourth: Croton's city (Italy - Sicily), Bactra (Parthia), Susa (Parthia), Pyramus (Asia Minor), Baris (Asia Minor), Armenia (Syria), Cyrrhus (Syria).

2. There are eight points which are in the Fourth and the Third but not in the Fifth: Samos (Aegian Sea, Asia Minor), Delos (Aegian Sea, Greece), Greece, Cyzicus (Asia Minor), Rhodians (Mediterranean, Asia Minor), Carthage (North Africa), Patara (Asia Minor), Antioch (Syria).

3. There are eight points which are in the Fourth and the Fifth but not in the Third: Euphrates (Parthia), Hellespont (Greece/Asia Minor), Sicily/Aetna (Italy), Thebes (Greece), Tyre (Syria), Parthians (Parthia), Syria, Maeander (Asia Minor).

⁴⁹ 'unclean city of Latin and Tiber'

What is important is that only two of these are in Asia Minor and none are in Palestine. Also, the preponderance of identical names shared by the Third and Fourth are found in the oracular section of the Third (295-488) and have been underlined in the above chart.⁵⁰ This points to a possible source for the Fourth which is itself internal to the Oracula Sibyllina, although the commonality may only be structural since there seems to be a shift in the tenor of the oracles.

The difficulty with using historical oracles as evidence for provenance can be seen in the Fifth's denunciations of Ethiopia (194, 206, 213, 505). Ethiopia occurs in the Third (160, 208, 320, 516) but solely as one among a list of other countries. In the Third, any reference to Ethiopia could be connected with the biblical use of the 'Gog and Magog' passages of the prophets.⁵¹ In the Fifth however, it has taken on an adversarial role which becomes by verse 505 almost eschatological in the same manner as Babylon is in the New Testament apocalyptic work, the Revelation of John.⁵² Collins remarks that 'It is unlikely that there were any historical reasons for this prominence given to Ethiopia in Sib V.'⁵³ However, with the important and

⁵⁰The majority of these occur in III:295-488, which is considered to contain a group of unrelated prophecies. Nikiprowetzky, La troisième 67-8. Collins would place the origin of this section to an Erythrean Sibyl because of the prevalence of place names from Asia Minor. SOEJ 27-8.

⁵¹E.g. Ezekial 38:5. Collins, SOEJ 80.

⁵²Collins, SOEJ 80.

⁵³Collins, SOEJ 80.

extreme role which Ethiopia plays in the Fifth,⁵⁴ a case could easily be made for Elephantine as the origin of these oracles.⁵⁵ Ethiopia had been the refuge for the anti-Jewish pharaoh, Amenhopis.⁵⁶ In the Letter of Aristeas⁵⁷ Jews were sent to fight against the Ethiopians and they replaced disaffected Egyptians who fled south.⁵⁸ To bolster the argument even further, there was continuous conflict in Elephantine between the Egyptians and the Jews and between their rival priests.⁵⁹ To further enhance this argument, the possibility of an Elephantine provenance for The Potter's Oracle has been suggested. This is in part because of the highly nationalistic attitude of the Egyptians in Upper Egypt and the importance of the Elephantine priests of Khnum, the arch enemies of the fifth century Jews.⁶⁰ Whether or not Elephantine could

⁵⁴Collins, SOEJ 79-80.

⁵⁵For example, a suggestion has been made that the author of the Life of Moses was a descendent of a Jew from the garrison of Elephantine. See Fraser, Ptolemaic I 705-6; II 985, n. 199.

⁵⁶Josephus, A.A. 1.228-50. According to Josephus, who claims to be quoting Manetho, Amenhopis was the pharaoh who expelled Moses and the Jews. See the notes on this passage by Thackeray in the Loeb Classical Library edition of Josephus' works.

⁵⁷Note the strong anti-Egyptian bias in 121-72 of this work. Fraser, Ptolemaic I 697.

⁵⁸Porten, "'The Diaspora'" 387. With reference to Is. 11:11; 19:19. See these references with regard to the Fifth and the rebuilding of the temple in Egypt.

⁵⁹The Elephantine temple had been destroyed by Egyptians in 410 B.C.E. on the encouragement of the priests of Khnum. According to Porten, the Jews were allowed to rebuild after 407 as long as they no longer made sacrifices. Porten, "'The Diaspora'" 389-90

⁶⁰A. B. Lloyd, "'Nationalist Propaganda in Ptolemaic Egypt'" Historia 31(1982) 54, n. 2.

conceivably be the origin of the Ethiopian oracles would need far more research. However, given the propaganda nature of oracular literature,⁶¹ the anti-Egyptian stance of the Fifth Sibylline Oracle could conceivably have led to the use of this motif. In the final analysis, though, little is known of Egypt after the fifth century B.C.E.⁶² and any identification with the Fifth and Elephantine would be precarious, at best.

Attitude Towards Egypt

In Chapter two, it began to appear if as there was a relationship between the author of the Fourth and Egypt. It is possible that the redactor of this oracle may have picked these particular oracles, not only because they had come true, but because they related to matters which concerned the history of empires and places which would have been known to Alexandrians. Alexandrian Egypt had close trading ties with some of the places mentioned in the oracles, many of which had been under Ptolemaic control. The world of the Mediterranean during the

⁶¹Lloyd's article shows a close relationship between propaganda literature and the insecurity of a particular group. While his insights are reserved for Egyptian oracular literature, much of what he states could be related to the Sibylline Oracles as well. 'Nationalist' 33-5. The positive attitude towards Egyptian kingship in the Third has been pointed out by Collins, SOEJ and its relationship to Egyptian oracles has been noted elsewhere. J. Gwyn Griffiths 'Apocalyptic in the Hellenistic Era' in D. Hellholm, ed., Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1983) 290.

⁶²B. Porten, Archives From Elephantine (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968). 'The Diaspora' 400.

Roman empire was much smaller than we sometimes think. Even in the Ptolemaic period, travel was not overly difficult. For example, it took ten days to travel from the Maeotic Lake (north of the Black Sea)⁶³ to Rhodes and then four more to Alexandria,⁶⁴ and there was an avid interest in the world outside that city, which was a major trading port.⁶⁵ The Carians, Ionian and Lydians had fought in Persian and Macedonian armies and later became part of the administrative structure of the Ptolemaic empire. Alexander was a major figure in Egyptian history and had founded Alexandria. The assumption of a core Hellenistic oracle, while possible, is therefore unnecessary.⁶⁶ These oracles are suggestive of the possibility that the Fourth could have been written in Egypt. In comparison with the Third and Fifth, the claim that there was an Alexandrian origin for the Fourth Sibylline Oracle becomes strengthened.

There is definitely an extreme hostility towards Egypt in the Fifth which is not evident in the Fourth anymore than it is in the Third.⁶⁷ Collins points out that the messianic king of the Third is of the Ptolemaic line and there was always an ambivalent quality about

⁶³Flowing into the Maeotic Lake, the Tanais River which is mentioned in Sib III:338-40 was considered one of the possible dividing points between Europe and Asia. Strabo, 65-6: Fraser, Ptolemaic I 530.

⁶⁴Fraser I 172.

⁶⁵See Fraser, 'Geographical Writings' Ptolemaic I 520-53.

⁶⁶Collins, 'The Place' 370-6. He concludes that it was written by a non-Jew (contrary to Flusser) and later redacted by the Jewish author. 'The Place' 376-7.

⁶⁷Collins, SOEJ 76-8. See p. 55, n. 61 above.

Egyptian - Israelite relationships.⁶⁸ Jews had fled to Egypt in times of need. From Josephus in Genesis to the family of Jesus in the Infancy narrative of Matthew, Egypt was seen in the biblical context as a place of refuge. At the same time, there were continuous problems which are amply indicated by the Exodus story.

It was in the prophets where both aspects converged and in many ways the same can be said for the Fifth. As has been noted by Porten:

'Despite their denunciations, all three prophets (Isa. Jer. Ezek.) foretold the restoration of Egypt subsequent to her punishment (Is. 19:18ff.; Jer. 46:26; Ezek. 29: 13ff.)' /69/

It may be that it is the Fifth which indicates the most about relations between Egypt and the Jews during the first century and a half C.E., when the relations between the two had been strained to the breaking point many times and had required the intervention of Rome.⁷⁰ By the end of the second century C.E., animosity against the Egyptians may have been directed elsewhere.⁷¹

⁶⁸Porten, 'The Diaspora' 372-5. See above on Ethiopia and Fifth.

⁶⁹Porten, 'Diaspora' 375.

⁷⁰E. M. Smallwood, The Jews Under Roman Rule (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981) 220-56, 364-8, 389-412.

⁷¹If provenance were to be based on this criterion alone, it would draw forth the conclusion that the Fifth is the oracle which does not belong. In fact, although this was not the purpose of this paper, it appears that the Fifth is different for the other two in areas such as its description of God (see p. 58 below), its use of Ethiopia (see pp 55-6 above), and in its eschatology (e.g., see p. 76 below).

Summary

The Fourth appears to be less politically oriented than the others. As the discussion of II. iii. shows, many of the oracles can be related to Egyptian history. This is true of the Persians, Alexander and Rome. Interest in Asia Minor is not worth discussing as a differentiating point for the oracle, as this interest in foreign places occurs in the others. It is simply that Geffcken's point referred to in Chapter II, viz., that there is a bent for including more place names, must be given serious consideration. The places and peoples mentioned in these oracles would all have been familiar to one living in Alexandria. Thus, to use the proliferation of place names as a criterion for determining provenance of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle can be considered totally unwarranted in separating the Fourth from the other Jewish Sibyllines.

III. iv. Description of God

In the description of the one true God, the Fourth bears a striking resemblance in tone and structure to that of the Third. God was not fashioned by any human being (IV:6-7, 11b; III:13-4). No one can see him (IV:12; III:12) and he is not an idol in a temple (IV:8-11; III:29-32). The Sibyl in the Fourth is being forced by this God to warn the world of the future (18-23) just as she has been in the oracles of the Third (1-7; 164-4; 295-9; 489-91; 809-12).

However, the description of God in the Fifth is changed in its emphasis from the other oracles. God had become the 'begetter or

Father'(284, 328, 360, 406).⁷² God is one 'whose Being is for ever' (174); 'immortal, loud-thundering God of Heaven'(76); he is the 'Chief of all'(277), 'the King, the Watcher of all from heaven'(352). Furthermore, the breath of God is in everyone(406) and 'we needs must love God the Father, the Wise, the Everlasting'(360).⁷³

The gods of the pagans in the Fifth are treated with the type of polemic as in the Third and the Fourth, although not in the form of direct comparison. The vain Gods are stones with no speech, no understanding and no hearing being made with mortal hands(77-84). The pagans 'spend themselves sacrificing ... to lifeless Hermes and gods of stone.'(354-6). 'On the other hand, the just do not 'praise a God of senseless earth, nor did a cunning workman among them make a god of stone:...' (403-4).

In all three of these oracles, God is the judge and destroyer. There is complete agreement that God will take care of the wicked and that the 'Day of Yahweh' is inevitable.⁷⁴

⁷²Lanchester, 'Sibylline' translates as 'Father' what Collins translates as 'begetter'. Could we suggest that there was a little of the patriarch in Lanchester!

⁷³One might suggest that this description of God bears a closer resemblance to the God of the Johannine writings than it does to the other two Jewish Sibyllines.

⁷⁴The role of God in Sibylline eschatology will be discussed more fully on pp. 66-8, 71-2 below.

III. v. Godly and Ungodly

The description of the godly and the ungodly in the Fourth(24-33; 33-9; 154-8) agrees with the descriptions of the Third(29-45; 495-500 573-623; 632-5; 657-70; 741-95). In the Fifth, there is also a preference for describing the wickedness of the ungodly than for any interest in the godly. Their sins are listed(162-7; 350-6; 386-94) and interspersed at times with the wonderful behaviour of the godly(249-50; 260-85; 368; 403-7).⁷⁵ In both cases the godly are described as much by what they do not do as by what they do - the major sin being the worship which would lead even the godly away from the worship of the one God.

III. vi. Partial Conclusions

The conclusion at the end of Chapter two was that the historical oracles in the Fourth had been organized in a chronological sequence which suggested a probable date to the end of the second century C.E. In the discussion of the structure of the oracles, a chronological sequence was also noted in both the Third and the Fifth Sibylline Oracles. At the same time, it was also discovered that there were similarities in the way each oracle clearly marked its sections. This gave rise to the probability that the redactor of the Fourth was modelling his oracle after the others, but particularly in relationship to the Third. While there were some differences, they were not great

⁷⁵ A propos of some of the other differences which have been noted, the Fifth refers to the Jews as 'Hebrews' twice in the oracle(161; 258).

and could be explained by the differences in the length of the different oracles.

The discussion regarding the historical oracles showed that there was a connection between the oracles. However, this connection did not favour the separation of the provenance of the Fourth from that of the other Jewish Sibyllines on any conclusive grounds. First, there was a definite change in emphasis between the Third and the other two works. The emphasis in the latter two oracles was less on political prophecy than on physical disasters. Second, the attitude towards Rome was less emphasized in the Fourth than in the Third and Fifth. It was suggested that this pointed to a de-emphasis in the belief that the Roman Empire would be destroyed in a this-worldly context.⁷⁶ Third, the attitude towards Egypt was most hostile in the Fifth. This hostility was less pronounced in the Fourth and Third and it was suggested that this is best explained in view of the Egyptian hostility, particularly in Alexandria, to the Jews in the century previous to the writing of the Fifth. None of these points indicate a drastic change from the Third, the Fifth and the Fourth Sibylline Oracles. The Fourth emphasis has become less involved with the political sphere, however, this is not an unlikely shift given the nearly four centuries between them.

Lastly, it would appear that familiarity with multiple place names contributed little to the discussion of the provenance of the Fourth.

⁷⁶Hanson's distinction between 'prophetic eschatology' and 'apocalyptic eschatology' is very useful in understanding this particular change between the Third and the other two oracles. P. Hanson, The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979) 9-12.

Alexandria was a trading port and that fact alone meant that it was well versed in the many and varied places which are mentioned in the Sibylline Oracles. Furthermore, the Third contains a large oracle section which could have served as a model for the Fourth. Therefore, on varied grounds it would be unwise to use the historical oracles to differentiate the Fourth from the provenance of the Third and Fifth.

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IV. ESCHATOLOGY AND THE PROVENANCE OF THE FOURTH SIBYLLINE ORACLE

IV. i. Introduction

This chapter will focus on certain aspects of eschatology in the Sibylline Oracles. These aspects have been used to separate the Fourth from the provenance of the Third and Fifth Sibylline Oracles.¹ The eschatology of the Fourth, as it relates to the Nero legend, for example, will be compared to that of the Third and Fifth. The exhortation to repentance poses problems requiring separate treatment and will be dealt with in greater detail than the other points.

Eschatology has been a notoriously difficult area to describe in systematic and concrete forms. From Daniel, the texts of the Pseudepigrapha and Qumran to those of the New Testament, there has been difficulty ^{to} in systemize ^{ing} the structure, form, themes, and meaning of their eschatological ideas.² In a recent article, P. R. Davies has pointed out some of the presuppositions which have hampered an understanding of the eschatological character of the Qumran community.³ Among the presuppositions which he criticizes is the assumption that there is a coherent structural body of eschatological doctrines evident

¹See p. 3 above.

²See the discussions in K. Koch, The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic (London: SCM, 1972); D. S. Russell, The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964) and J. J. Collins, Daniel, The Forms of the Old Testament Literature, XX (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984) 1-24.

³'Eschatology at Qumran' JBL 104(1985) 39-55.

in the Qumran doctrines.⁴ Eschatology, which depends to some extent on prophecy of the end, changes over years.⁵ Concepts such as life after death and resurrection change, as does the perception of the function of the Messiah and 'antichrist'.

Eschatological concepts which are important to these oracles will be discussed. From the Nero legend to the exhortation to righteousness, certain changes in attitude will be noted as they are known or as they arise. There are differences between the oracles but an attempt will be made to account for the differences discussed from the perspective of historical change and the religious development which occurred over four of the most crucial centuries in the formation of Judaism.⁶

⁴Davies, 'Eschatology' 40-1. His criticisms, at this point, are levelled primarily against Morton Smith and J. J. Collins. Against Collins he points out that eschatological or apocalyptic thought could not have gone on unchanged during the period of the writing of the documents. The idea that this body of documents served as an unchangeable guide to the thought of Qumranites without taking into consideration change in prophecy and historical circumstances is not excusable.

⁵As Davies points out, a group which believes in prophetic revelation must do something with unfulfilled prophecy, 'Eschatology' 42. Note his scathing remark on Collins' desire to view the incompatibilities among the documents as part of myth and folklore technique rather than as preceding from different period of time or sources. IBID 55 n. 45. Davies is suggesting that source-criticism and other techniques of biblical scholarship be applied to the Qumran documents before further attempts are made to provide an all-encompassing analysis of Qumran eschatological ideas.

⁶See R.H. Charles, Eschatology: The Doctrine of a Future Life in Israel, Judaism, and Christianity (New York: 1913) for a discussion of the development of eschatological ideas from their beginnings in biblical Judaism. Collins views the Third as a form of incipient apocalyptic. SOEJ 110-3. This concept of incipient apocalypticism may fit in very well with Hanson's organizing principle for the development of apocalyptic ideas. See p. 62, n. 76 above.

IV. ii. The Nero Legend

Both the Fourth and the Fifth Sibylline Oracles contain passages which constitute part of the Nero legend. Collins refers to the references in the Fourth as an underdeveloped Nero legend: "it is merely part of the historical framework".⁷ While there is nothing comparable to this type of "antichrist" in the Third, in 611 there is reference to an eschatological king who destroys Egypt and who can be seen as a direct precursor to the Nero adversary.⁸ In the prologue of the Third(63-74), Beliar will appear before the end. This section is considered to be a late interpolation, referring to Nero by some scholars.⁹ Whether this passage refers to Nero or to Simon the Magus,¹⁰ Beliar(1) was the precursor to the Nero and antichrist myths which were eventually fused by Christian writers.¹¹

⁷Collins, "The Place" 377 n. 64, 66; SOEJ 80-7. See, in particular, SOEJ 86. Geffcken understands the Nero legend in the Fourth as the precursor of the elaborated vision in the Fifth. Komposition 25-6.

⁸Collins, SOEJ 87. In all probability, the historical personage referred to in this passage is Antiochus Epiphanes without the mythological accretions of Beliar and Nero. IBID 87; Lanchester, "Sibylline" 389.

⁹Collins, SOEJ 86-7.

¹⁰This is an alternate suggestion because of the reference to Sebaste in this passage. Lanchester, "Sibylline" 380. Nikiprowetzky dismisses this and other suggestions preferring to accept that the Beliar passage has a clear Jewish derivation. La troisième 223-5.

¹¹R. H. Charles, Revelation II 76-87. See particularly, 80, 84-7. Charles appears to feel that the Beliar of the Third is also Nero: "This passage is unhappily of uncertain date, though no doubt before 90 A.D., since Nero is still regarded as alive." 84.

In the first section of the Fifth(1-51), which is the latest part of the oracle,¹² Nero is described in some detail(28-34). When this passage is compared to the oracles concerning Nero in the Fourth, both could be considered to be relating a historical fact in much the same way.¹³ In this section of the Fifth, as in the Fourth, Nero comes back, causes devastation but ultimately fails.¹⁴ This is a far cry from the Nero of subsequent passages in the Fifth where he is definitely the eschatological adversary of the last days.¹⁵ In the Fourth, Nero's return could easily refer to the historical data of 80, and he would not be an eschatological adversary since, as with the first section of the Fifth, it was a fact that this pseudo Nero had failed.¹⁶ It is clear that the Fourth has de-emphasized the Nero legend and it could now be considered as 'part of the historical framework'.¹⁷

¹²It was written closer to the time of Hadrian. Collins, SOEJ 75.

¹³See Collins, SOEJ 183-4, n. 8. Neither Collins nor Bousset discuss the Nero legend as a possible method around which to organize the Fifth in the manner which related it to historical progression as has been done pp. 41-2 above.

¹⁴The importance of this for the historical oracles and the structure of the Fourth and Fifth has been discussed on pp. 39-40 above.

¹⁵This suggestion might have some bearing on the question of the dating of V:1-51. The periodization to Marcus Aurelius for this particular section would not seem so unlikely and it would make the positive attitude to Hadrian a little more plausible. However, this is beyond the scope of the present discussion but it suggests another possible area for further research.

¹⁶See p. 9, n. 9 above.

¹⁷See pp. 8-9 above. A messianic figure appears in both the Third and Fifth but will not be discussed at length here. This de-emphasis on the Nero legend or 'antichrist' myth should be considered in conjunction with the lack of a messianic figure. The lack of both these
(Footnote Continued)

Both Collins and Charles date some of the Neronic passages from the Third and Fifth as startlingly close to the destruction of the second temple.¹⁸ Thus, one ~~has to~~^{could} relate the lack of highly developed Neronic mythology to the Fourth's lack of interest. On the other hand, the Fourth could simply be relating in digest form, a legend which had lost its eschatological impact, but could nevertheless be seen as part of the historical data which had been correctly prophesied.¹⁹

IV. iii. Fire Imagery or the First Judgement

The fire imagery of the Fourth bears many similarities to the imagery of the Third and the Fifth. The concept of the destruction of the world as judgement on its evils, and fire as the purifying agent must be considered to be part of the Jewish intertestamental thought structure and had been developing in the prophets since the exile.²⁰ This concept of ekpyrosis is found everywhere in the writings of this period and bears certain resemblance to the Stoic doctrine of the

(Footnote Continued)

figures in the Fourth could indicate a lessening of messianic fervour after the disastrous wars of the previous hundred and fifty years.

¹⁸ Charles, on Sib. V:143-8, dates it to 71-4 A.D. Revelation II 81. See p. 63, n. 8 above on Sib III:63-74. Collins dates these passages in section three and five (see pp. above) close to destruction of temple. SOEJ 75. Nikiprowetzky regards this passage as an interpolation and the only part to be dated later than the rest of the Third. However, he would only date it to approximately 25 B.C.E. La troisième 223-5.

¹⁹ See pp. 7-8 above.

²⁰ Collins, SOEJ 106-110.

destruction of the world before its re-creation although it is doubtful that there is a close connection.²¹

The importance of fire is found in the Third where there will be a ceaseless cataract of fire and the sky, the stars and creation itself will become a molten mass and dissolve(83-90). In later sections of the Third, God will judge with fire and there shall be brimstone from heaven(689-91) and fiery swords will fall on earth and all shall perish at the hand of the Eternal(669-74). Rome will be totally destroyed by a cataract from heaven(52-4) and finally, God 'shall burn with fire the race of stubborn men(761)'.

In the Fifth, God has 'destroyed every city from its foundations with sheets of fire, and burnt up the families of the men who before wrought evil(418-9)'. There will be a 'great celestial conflagration (411)', and 'a rain of flaming fire(274)'. Rome will be 'wedded to flaming fire(178)', 'fire shall rain on mortal men from the fields of heaven(377)' and 'Asia shall blaze with flames of fire(118)'. In 298-305, there is a concerted destruction by fire with thunder lighting, flaming thunderbolts and a fiery meteor. Furthermore, 'a great star from heaven ... shall burn up the deep sea and Babylon itself(158-9)' because it killed 'many faithful saints of the Hebrews and true people(160-1)'.

In the Fourth, the eruption of Vesuvius is 'a firebrand (which) shall reach broad heaven' and is a punishment on Rome for destroying the 'guiltless race of godly men'(130-6).²² In the final destruction as

²¹Collins, SOEJ 102.

²²See Chapter five below, for a discussion of the eruption of Vesuvius as punishment on Rome for the destruction of the Second temple.

envisioned by the Fourth, fire will come upon earth which will be entirely burned up along with the race of men(173-8). There is no difficulty in seeing that these are all connected to the eschatological belief in the concept of epkyrosis, the destruction of the world by fire at the end of time. The Fourth is concise and as totally unambiguous about the end as the Third and the Fifth.

IV. iv. Resurrection

Resurrection is one of those concepts for which there is little in the way of Old Testament authority²³ and, according to Josephus, was one of the doctrines over which the Sadducees and Pharisees were divided.²⁴ However, there are few apocalyptic books which contain no reference at all to resurrection²⁵ and while there is not conclusive evidence of resurrection as a consistently developed Sibylline belief, there are some verses which may imply at least some form of resurrection in the oracles previous to the writing of the Fourth.

²³The first clear reference to resurrection appears in Daniel 12:1-3. See the extensive discussion of this text and the attendant problems in G. W. Nicklesburg, Resurrection, Immortality and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972) 11-47. He discusses the resurrection in the Fourth Sibylline Oracle and sees it closely related to the text of IV Ezra (II Esdras) 7. However, there is no discussion of the Third such as will be proposed below. IBID 138-41. Barr, 'The Question' 223-4.

²⁴Jos. J.W. 2:163; Ant. 18:14.

²⁵Russell discusses five apocalyptic texts, including Sibylline Oracle IV, which contain clear references to a general resurrection and mentions others, including the Qumran documents, which contain concepts which often imply resurrection. The Method 366-74.

Neither the Third nor the Fifth refer positively to a resurrection, however, it is possible to glean some views which may be similar. While there are no clear statements about resurrection in the Third, in lines 63-7, there is a reference to a false resurrection contained in the description of Beliar, who will raise up the dead and perform other signs, all of which will be ineffective(66-7). Secondly, there is the statement that there shall be a judgement from God and 'all shall perish at the hand of the Eternal(671b-2)'. In succeeding lines 'all the sons of the great God shall live quietly around the temple(702-3)'. These lines are more than a little ambiguous. Nikiprowetzky feels that there is a definite belief in immortality in the Third, of the 'resurrection of the soul' type. However, this is hard to reconcile with the vision of a physical earth after the world is recreated in the Third.²⁶

The Fifth is also lacking in an obvious reference to a resurrection of the dead, although there is some form of life after the conflagration. In the Fifth, it would appear to be that shameless men will be utterly destroyed(302) and that there will be more dead bodies than the sand(305).²⁷ The great celestial conflagration will take place

²⁶Nikiprowetzky, La troisième 167-8. The ambiguity of resurrection (the body versus the soul) and the questions it raised for apocalyptic writers is discussed by Russell, although there is an implicit assumption that resurrection of the soul is the 'higher' concept. This results in his pointing out that the concept of the resurrection of the body is not confined to the earlier apocalyptic writings but appears in Sib IV also(376). The Method 374-9.

²⁷In verse 370, there is a possible reference to some form of resurrection somewhat similar to Ezekiel's dry bones(Ez. 37:4-8) although the context is somewhat different. It would appear that a capricious God 'will raise up again through contrary zeal', those who have fallen. Collins' translation of this passage is quite different and it loses any suggestion that resurrection might be implied. OTP 402.

so that a 'new creation shall come forth(212)'. The general impression which is created, is that the whole world will be destroyed - good and evil - although this is not by any means clear. The passages are also highly ambiguous, and it is difficult to correlate one passage in which it appears that some will be alive: e.g., 384 ('but the wise people that are left shall have peace') with, e.g., 380 ('shall destroy at once all kings and the best of men') or with others in which all of Asia will burn, all of Ethiopia, the deep sea, all of Italy, and all the families of men will be destroyed(418). By the end of the Fifth, there will be total annihilation 'In the last time when men shall be wholly evil(73-4)'.

Therefore, the concept of resurrection is highly ambiguous in both oracles. The only conclusive statement that could be made is that the idea of resurrection, general or otherwise, was not consistently developed as a decisive part of the Jewish belief structure by the early second century C.E.²⁸ A second possible conclusion that can be drawn is that there was an implicit belief in life after the conflagration, at least for the just. It can only be assumed that this was clear to those

²⁸Barr, 'The Question' 224. While the new Schürer seems to imply that resurrection 'was already firmly established in the time of Jesus', it would appear from both the primary sources of the pseudepigraphical literature and the secondary sources quoted in this section that this was not the case. It is not clear in any of these works exactly what the belief was or what its parameters were. The fact is that even this section in the new Schürer raises questions as to whether there was any coherent view of what resurrection entailed. In this, the Sibylline Oracles seem to be following the general trend in their lack of coherence over what will happen after the final destruction. E. Schürer, The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ rev. and ed. by G. Vermes, F. Millar, and M. Black, Vol. II (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Ltd., 1979) 539-44.

for whom the oracle was written. ^{NP} In the Fourth, there is the resurrection of the dead to a final judgement where the wicked will be sent to hell and the godly will live again on what one assumes will be a paradisaical earth(181-92). The Fourth accepts the concept of the resurrection of the body and also appears to assume that God will refashion men as he²⁹ did the first time.³⁰ It is quite possible that the Fourth Sibyl is trying to clear up the ambiguity concerning what would happen after the final destruction of the world something about which all three oracles are in total agreement.

IV. v. Second Judgement

There are no parallels in the Third or in the Fifth, to the idea of a second and final judgement after which all who have been resurrected will face the final judgement. This is something about which the Fourth is unambiguous(183-190). There is also no indication in the Third as to what will happen to the wicked, other than the fact that they will die after suffering the last days. Presumably, in the eyes of the Third Sibyl, this will be punishment enough. In the Fifth, the Romans ~~at least~~ hopefully, will go to Hades after having been wedded to flaming

²⁹The reference to God as 'he' is not meant to be taken as an non-acceptance of the modern feminist stance on the question of the gender of God. Its use at this point accords with the conception of God during this period as male which was underscored by the imagery of God as 'Father'. For the author of the Fourth, it can be assumed that this God was conceived of as male, although this is not as explicitly laid out as it is in the Fifth. See p. 56 above. It is this male God who will re-create the bones.

³⁰Nicklesburg, Resurrection 140-1.

fire(V:177b-78), while in the Fourth, the ungodly go to Tartarus or Gehenna(185-6).³¹ When this is considered in view of the lack of clarity regarding the concept of resurrection in both the earlier oracles, the lack of a concept of a general resurrection after which all will be judged, is not surprising. This does indicate a change in beliefs within the Sibylline movement, but is not surprising; particularly if the Fourth was written at the end of the second century C.E.³²

But the Third and Fourth do agree on one thing, the faithful will be rewarded with a new life on earth(IV:187, 45; III:367-80; 744-95). The final verse of the Fourth(192) is almost identical to III:371-2a.³³ In the Fifth it is stated that 'But the wise people that are left shall have peace, having had trial of evil that later they rejoice(384)' and there is a discussion of the bliss of the new creation(260-85). None of the oracles detail the afterlife down to the last jot and tittle.³⁴

They all seem much more concerned with the impending doom. It must at some point be assumed that there was some hope being offered and that it

*Now
in next page*

³¹Russell discusses the development of the concept of Sheol through the Pseudepigraphical works and the use of Gehenna for Hell. The Method 357-66. Once again the Fifth uses a word, in this case, Hades, which seems out of context in the Sibylline Oracles.

³²See p. 71, n. 28 above.

³³This verse also appears in VIII:164, although Geffcken places it in parentheses because of textual incoherency. Oracula 150.

³⁴Collins states that 'Neither Sib III, 46-92, or Sib. V ever relate the fortunes of the just after the judgment'' SOEJ 99. As this discussion shows this is an unwarranted statement. Nikprowetzky discusses III: 767-77, for example, where there is one scenario, that of the nations turning to monotheism, coming to Jerusalem and being led by the just. La troisième 168-72.

They all seem much more concerned with the impending doom. It must at some point be assumed that there was some hope being offered and that it was going to be well worth the wait. If the end was going to be so bad, and there was no hope, why would anyone convert, remain a Jew or even bother with the writing of these verses?

IV. vi. Summary

It was suggested above that the Nero legend could be seen as de-emphasizing the 'antichrist' figure of Nero as he appeared in the Fifth. In other areas of the eschatology of these oracles, there were some close similarities, such as the manner in which the world would be destroyed. On the other hand, it appears from the above discussion, that it is quite possible that the author of the Fourth was clarifying particular concepts which were highly ambiguous in both the Third and Fifth Sibylline Oracles, such as resurrection. Given a minimum of about four centuries between them, it is hardly surprising that there are some differences in thought, particularly in the area of eschatology. The different political situation and differing motivations which were engendered by the Jewish revolts which occurred over the intervening centuries had had their effect. One of those effects was the discouragement of the type of messianic expectation that led to the Bar Kochba and other revolts.³⁵ However, rather than suggest that the

³⁵Nicklesburg concludes that persecution, oppression or injustice towards the righteous as one of the prime motivating factors for the development of the concepts of resurrection, immortality and judgement.
(Footnote Continued)

temporal difference is the only important reason by which the differences can be understood, it is possible to suggest that the author of the Fourth was also attempting to clarify certain ambiguities which exist in the other oracles. It may have become more important for the Sibyl to pour forth her utterings after the advent of Christianity; the subsequent competition for proselytes and therefore the need for this kind of clarification.³⁶

IV. vii. Exhortation to Righteousness

In the Fourth Sibylline Oracle, the exhortation to righteousness calls to the heathen to repent and bathe their bodies in running water as a sign of their repentance(162-70). This section has been used to differentiate the Fourth from Alexandrian Judaism by many authors, primarily in the nineteenth century although they are followed by modern scholars such as Collins who refer to these lustrations as 'baptism' and

(Footnote Continued)

Resurrection 170-6. However, he does point out that this does not seem to be a factor in the Qumran documents writings on these subjects(166-7), and there are other texts, such as the Fourth Sibylline Oracle, in which resurrection, immortality and judgement are not attached to the concept of a justification for suffering religious persecution, oppression or injustice(131-43).

³⁶This was suggested in the nineteenth century by B. Badt, in part because of a lack of a messianic figure during the final end. Ursprung, Inhalt und Text des vierten Buches der sibyllinische Orakel (Breslau: 1878) 15. However, this has not been accepted by any other secondary sources researched to date. When the date of the Fourth is accepted at the latter part of the second century, the possibility of the need for 'self-definition' with regards to Christianity makes this suggestion more attractive. Certainly, the Sibylline oracles were used, interpolated and created by Christians during this period. It is not absurd to suggest that the Jewish Sibyl might write to counteract Christian propaganda.

places the oracle in the Jordan Valley,³⁷ Others feel that the washings are merely the ritual ablutions of Judaism.³⁸ The question is far too complex to discuss at length;³⁹ however, a few remarks are required. If baptism is used in an anachronistic sense, i.e. that it carries a sacramental value as in certain segments of modern Christianity, then it is unlikely that the Jews practised 'baptism'.⁴⁰ However, in all probability it is also unlikely that the early Christians practised 'baptism' in this sense either.⁴¹ The Fourth was written as an

³⁷To Collins the author of the Fourth 'elevates baptism and repentance as the only key to salvation.' 'The Place' 377-8; Thomas, Le mouvement 48-9; M. Friedländer, 'La Sibylle juive et les partis religieux de la dispersion' REJ 29(1894) 188-9. Ewald, Abhandlung 86. Collins refuses to go as far as claiming that they were related to the Essenes as did Ewald, for example; probably because so much more is now known about this group. Rather he would align the author of this oracle with the thinking of Christian Ebionites or Elcasaites, two groups about whom little is known(379-80).

³⁸Abrahams refers this passage to Isaiah 1:15 and Ezekiel 36:25-7, pointing out that these passages were also used by the rabbis in their discussions of Jewish baptism. 'Pharisaism' 40-1. Noack, 'Are the Essenes' 101-2. Nikiprowetzky, 'Quelques' 35, n. 19. This article is primarily a critical review of A. Peretti, La Sibilla Babilonese nella Propaganda Ellenistica which I have not seen. For his comments on Friedländer and Thomas (n. above), see Nikiprowetzky, La troisième 229-67. He feels that the ablutions were those characteristic of Judaism and points to Josephus(A.J. 14:10,23) mention of the preference for building synagogues near the water(240).

³⁹The question of whether the Fourth is indicative of Jewish proselyte baptism is a secondary issue within the parameters of this paper. However, it is germane to the larger question of Jewish proselytism in the Roman period and should be discussed separately.

⁴⁰See the discussion in E. Schürer, The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, Ltd., 1924(1890)) III. ii. 323-4; Abrahams, 'Pharisaism' 41-2.

⁴¹Abrahams discusses the similarities between early Christian baptism and Pharisaic baptism, concluding that there was little difference. 'Pharisaism' 42-6; S.E. Johnson states 'It appears,
(Footnote Continued)

eschatological plea for repentance, and if the term 'baptism' is to be used it should be in terms of the last days - as a sign that repentance has taken place.

This brings up a second problem with regard to the importance of a concept of 'baptism' in determining origin for Sibylline Oracles. Once more,⁴² there are inconsistencies within the introductions to the Sibylline Oracles which are translated in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.⁴³ For example, the fact that the Sixth Sibylline Oracle is interested in baptism and actually mentions the Jordan River does not make it necessary to postulate a Jordan Valley provenance.⁴⁴ The Seventh Sibylline Oracle, too, is interested in baptism⁴⁵ and rages against Coele-Syria and Palestine, yet nothing conclusive can be learned about its origin.⁴⁶ There should be serious reservations about using

(Footnote Continued)

then, that for the Qumran sectaries, for John and for the early Christians, baptism was a final rite of purification and initiation which was permitted only after thoroughgoing repentance.' 'The Dead Sea Manual of Discipline and the Jerusalem Church of Acts.' ZAW 66(1954) 107-8. However, H.H. Rowley wishes to see something fundamentally different between the Jewish ritual and that of John the baptist and early Christians. 'Jewish Proselyte Baptism' HUCA 15(1940) 330-end. Schürer, too, wishes to distinguish Christian baptism and that of John the Baptist from the Jewish rite. Jewish People III.ii. 323, n. 308. As can be seen from Johnson's article, cited above, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls had an early impact on the perception of this question in modern scholarship.

⁴²See pp. 45-6 above.

⁴³OTP.

⁴⁴OTP 406.

⁴⁵The baptism of Christ. VII: 64-7.

⁴⁶OTP 408. One might be justified in asking whether there are different criteria for Jewish and Christian Sibylline Oracles.

baptism as indicative of provenance unless there are strong indicators elsewhere in the oracle. To this point there has been no compelling reason to separate the Fourth from the others. The main concern of the following section will be to concentrate on the function of this 'baptism' in the 'end-time' scenario of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle in comparison to the function of sacrifice in the Third.⁴⁷

The Third Sibylline Oracle

In the Third, the ways of the wicked(566-72; 596-604) are intermingled with a description of the godly and their rewards(573-95; 610-23) and are followed by an exhortation to repentance(624-33) with the results of disobedience following. It is through sacrifice and following righteousness that God will be pleased(624-33). The godly raise their hands to heaven and ever cleanse their flesh with water(591-3), and in the end of time men 'with deep groans, upraising

⁴⁷Collins even dismisses the possibility of baptism as a replacement for sacrifice. 'The Place' 377-8. If the Fourth is to be dated at the latter part of the second century, then the possibility that 'baptism' might be the rite of entrance to Judaism in the second century should be considered. I. Levi suggests the possibility that baptism was considered by some Jews as the sole rite of entrance for converts and posits the period of the Hadrianic repressions as likely. 'Le prosélytisme juif' REJ 53(1907) 59-61. Epictetus, an early second century Roman writer(50-130 C.E.), appears to have believed that baptism was the conversion rite to Judaism. *Diss.* II,9:19-21. Both Stern and Reinach consider that the baptism to which Epictetus refers, is Jewish. M. Stern, Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism, Vol. I From Herodotus to Plutarch (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974) 543, n.; T. Reinach, Textes d'auteurs grecs et romains relatifs au judaïsme (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1963(1895)) 155.

their hands straight to broad heaven, shall begin to call to his succour the Mighty king, ...(558-61)'.

The role of sacrifice in the last days is of particular interest, since it is part of the exhortation to repentance. It is also a sign that the end is near. The Third Sibyl says that as long as there are godless men the 'day of fate'⁴⁸ will reach its end and 'Ye shall not sacrifice until all these things come to pass(570)'. Even if sacrifice is made, once the end has begun all sacrifice will be useless(563-9).⁴⁹ In verse 571, it is reiterated that 'Whatsoever the one God put purposes fails not of its accomplishment. For that all things be accomplished the stress of necessity will insist.' Afterwards, the sacrifice will be reinstated 'by a race of God-fearing men' at the temple(573-83). Therefore, the ungodly should make sacrifice to God now, seeking intercession from him and mending their evil ways(724-31). This correlation between the cessation of sacrifice and its later resumption finds close parallels in the visions of Daniel where the desolation of the temple is foretold 'until the decreed end is poured out on the

⁴⁸The 'day of fate' resembles the 'Day of Yahweh' of the Old Testament prophets: i.e. Is. 2:6-21; Amos 4:12; 5:18-20.

⁴⁹My interpretation of this passage rests primarily on 566. Although there are textual problems with 563-4, I am at this point accepting the translation of Lanchester, 'Sibylline' 388-9, notes. Nikiprowetzky's translation also gives this sense (*La troisième* 319) as does Bate, *Sibylline*; Kurfess, *Sibyllinische* 101. However, Collins translates and interprets the lines differently, 'The Place' 366; *OTP* 374. The implication of Collins' translation is that Greece will be saved. The translation of Blass, 'Die Sibyllinischen Orakel' in E. Kautzsch, ed., *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments* (Tubingen: 1900) 196, does not include a negative.

desolator(9:27)'.⁵⁰ It is, according to the Sibyl, possible to avoid this fate. The exhortation to repentance seems to imply this, although it is not expected that this will happen(i.e. 568, 628, 732-40).

The Fifth Sibylline Oracle

In the Fifth there is no call for repentance or exhortation to righteousness. It is only implied in 493-503. This passage calls for people to come to the temple and bring sacrifices. It seems to be a call to those who are of the same background as the Sibyl, the familiar friend of Isis. The only extrapolation to be made from this is that the Sibyl is a foreigner to Judaism, unlike the Sibyl of the Third who had labelled herself, a daughter-in-law of Noah(824-7).⁵¹ The Sibyl of the Fourth, on the other hand, who gives no justification or clue to her identity, except that she is unlike other Sibyls who talk of false Gods(4).⁵²

⁵⁰Dan. 8:11-14; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11.

⁵¹It would be difficult to ascertain the significance of this passage. The Fifth Sibylline Oracle appears to be raising more questions than can be answered at this point.

⁵²This raises another possibility; that the Fifth was a far more sectarian document than the other two oracles in that there is no room for the repentance of the 'outsiders'. Perhaps the situation of the early part of the second century in Egypt created a far more insular group than had existed previously.

The Fourth Sibylline Oracle

In the Fourth the exhortation to righteousness is preceded by a description of the evil ways of the present time(152-61) and followed by an account of the results of the failure to repent. It is through washing, supplication and following righteousness(165-70) that one must seek intercession from God. Then God will forgive. The ''washing'' and ''stretching of hands'' is the proper response to the end of time(152-67) and the ungodly are being asked to emulate what would be a practice of second century Judaism and a sign of righteousness.⁵³

The exhortation to repentance in the Third oracle includes the need to sacrifice to the true God. Sacrifice at the temple would no longer be possible after 70 C.E. The ungodly could not have been asked to give up sacrifices to the temple of the Mighty God as did the author of the Third(565; 573-9), and it sounds patently ridiculous to assume that he would have asked them to be circumcized if these were the last days.⁵⁴

The destruction of the temple was a sign that the end of the world was close at hand and the end of the world would be total and complete. Fire will destroy the world as it had the Jerusalem temple and those who died during the eruption of Vesuvius. There is still one last chance to

⁵³cf. Sib III:559-61; 591-2. Noack, ''Are the Essenes'' 93-6, 101. See p. 76, n. 38 above.

⁵⁴The process of becoming part of the covenant relationship of Israel was not considered a light undertaking. See the discussions of proselytism during this period in B. J. Bamberger, Proselytism in the Talmudic Period (New York: KTAV, 1968(1939)) and W. E. Braude, Jewish Proselytizing in the First Five Centuries of the Common Era (Providence, R.I.: Brown University, 1940).

change God's mind(168-70). However, this is no more a real possibility than it was in the Third or the Fifth. The hope now lies in the final judgement when the godly will receive their reward after a general resurrection and last judgement(181-92).

IV. viii. Partial Conclusions

The discussion of the eschatology has not shown any differences between the oracles which would necessitate the separation of the Fourth from the provenance of the Third. The question of the Fifth is more complicated but within the context of the historical events of the early second century, it should probably not be separated from the others. There are major differences between the Third and Fifth also, which should show that placing them together while eliminating the Fourth is a hazardous task. The differences in eschatology are not startling when looked at in the light of the major shift in Judaism which began after 90 C.E. The obvious need for clarification of concepts such as resurrection in the earlier oracles may have played a part in the creation of the concise, well written Fourth Sibylline Oracle.

This leaves one last point which will be discussed in the paper. The attitude of the Fourth Sibyl to the temple in Jerusalem is considered to be a major stumbling block by many scholars in giving the oracles a single provenance.

V. THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE TEMPLE AND THE PROVENANCE OF THE
FOURTH SIBYLLINE ORACLE

V. i. Introduction

It has been concluded by Collins that "The main reason why Sib IV cannot be attached to the Egyptian Sibyllina lies in its fundamentally different attitude to the temple"¹ which he sees as indicative of an anti-temple polemic.² A Jewish temple plays a large part in the eschatology of the Third and the Fifth Sibylline Oracles.³ For both the Fourth and the Fifth Sibyllist, the Jerusalem temple no longer existed.⁴ The Fourth Sibylline Oracle may have been written, in part, to explain this fact in light of earlier oracles by the Jewish prophets and the Sibyl.⁵ If all three oracles originated in the same

¹"The Place" 366. *FN III, VII. p. 82*

²He denies that there is any direct attack on the temple. The temple has an indispensable role in the Third and a place in the eschaton of the Fifth despite the fact that it was already destroyed. Therefore, by ignoring the temple and failing to distinguish it from pagan temples, the author of the Fourth is engaging in a form of attack. "The Place" 366-9; 378-9.

³One cannot specifically state that it is solely the Jerusalem temple which is important to these oracles. Collins suggests a provenance of Leontopolis for these oracles. SOEJ 49-53.

⁴Nikiprowetzky, La troisième 234. Collins feels that this is immaterial to the discussion. See p. n. below.

⁵Badt's contention (see p. 75, n. 36 above) that there may have been an underlying polemic against Christianity in the writing of the oracle, will not be explored extensively, here. However, the meaning of the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E. gave rise to the development of "new covenant theology" in Christianity.

milieu, which appears to be the case at this point, then it should be possible to explain the differences in attitude towards the temple in the Fourth, if indeed there are any. Given the strong possibility that the oracle was written at the end of the second century instead of circa 80 C.E., some of the differences which Collins considers definitive, can be explained from the perspective of the temporal distance from the destruction of the temple.⁶

The following discussion will focus on the role of the temple in the Third and then the Fifth Sibylline Oracles. This will be followed by an analysis of the role of the temple in the Fourth and an alternative to Collins' 'anti-temple' position will be proposed. It will be shown that there is sufficient reason to suggest that the attitude towards pagan temples and towards the Jerusalem temple in the Fourth Sibylline Oracle is not drastically removed from that of the other Sibyllines Oracles in light of historical considerations.

V. ii. The Temple in the Third Sibylline Oracle

The temple is included in the last three sections of the work. The second section(162-294) discusses the reasons for the destruction of the first temple and the rebuilding of the new. After pronouncing the doom of the wicked nations, the Sibyl points out that evil will also 'come to the godly men who dwell around the great temple of Solomon(213-4). She then launches into a description of the godly and a short history

⁶In the same way in which as the differences in the Nero legend were explained. See pp. 65-7 above.

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emphasizing the Exodus, ^{the} and giving ^d the law and the penalties for disobedience - punishment by mortal hands or by divine justice(256-60). The temple is destroyed because the godly did not obey the holy law and served idols(273-9).⁷ After ''seven decades of times''(280),⁸ while trusting in the holy law, God will send a king and the temple will be rebuilt ''as it was before''(286-94).⁹ This second section ends on a very positive note regarding the restoration of the Jerusalem temple.

The third section(295-488) mentions the temple twice, both times in reference to the destruction of those who had destroyed the temple. Israel's perfidy may have brought about her woes, but God will, nevertheless, bring judgement on those who have destroyed the temple and harmed his people.¹⁰ The first reference is to the downfall of Babylon and Assyria because they had destroyed the temple(300-2). The second reference is not as clear. Woes fall upon Libya, Gog and Magog and the ''daughters of the west'' for their treatment of the temple which they had utterly destroyed(319-33).¹¹ Although the countries mentioned are those of the oracles of Ezekiel 38-9, the reference is most likely to

⁷Jer. 7:13-4; 11:9-11; 26:6; Ezek. 8. This follows the Deuteronomistic position regarding the result of idolatry and the sins of Israel. Add corroboration.

⁸Jer. 25:11; 29:10; Dan. 9:2.

⁹Zech. 6:12-3,15.

¹⁰Jer. 25:12. pg. 9.

¹¹While it cannot be conclusively proved, there is the possibility that this particular passage may have had some influence on the choice of Ethiopia as the eschatological destroyer of the temple in the Fifth Sibylline Oracle. See pp. 53-5 above.

the desecration of the second temple by Antiochus Epiphanes.¹² This
 desecration of the second temple ^{since it} was considered by certain ^{some} of the Jews
 as ^{as equivalent to its} akin to destruction. This is the attitude of I Maccabees 2:7-13 and
 that of Daniel, where there is a prophecy of its destruction(9:26).¹³
 Given this section's preoccupation with the history of the post-exile
 period, it could be assumed that this reference is to the second
 temple's desecration and that ^{it} this is being compared to the destruction
 of the first.¹⁴ The rest of this division is occupied with the doom
 which is to fall upon the wicked for their impiety.

In the fourth section(489-808) the role of the temple is crucial to
 its eschatology.¹⁵ The horrors which will befall the wicked(601-18;
 632-51; 669-701) are contrasted with the peace and joy of the
 godly(573-603; 619-23; 657-60; 702-9; 741-60; 767-95). These verses are
 interspersed with calls to repentance(624-30; 732-40; 762-66; 808)
 exhorting the wicked to serve the living God, to give up their evil ways
 and to make sacrifice to God. It is the temple and its surroundings

¹² Lanchester, "'Sibylline'" 384. Collins' reference to Dan. 7:7 is unclear. OTP 369.

¹³ L. F. Hartman and A. A. Di Lella, The Book of Daniel, AB 23 (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1978) 240, 245, 252-3 - n. 22.

¹⁴ J. Nolland, "'Sib. Or. III. 265-94, An Early Maccabean Messianic Oracle'" JTS 30(1979) 161-3, discusses the possibility of this kind of parallelism being a literary device used in Sib III and in Daniel 9:26. Collins does not agree and sees this passage as referring to Cyrus. OTP 355, n. 11.; 368, f2.

¹⁵ Collins, SOEJ 37, sees two separate formulations of eschatology in this section. However, the literary links between the verses are such that it is possible to consider that it is one conception of the end of time, as in all probability the author of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle would have seen it.

which are crucial to the salvation of the godly during the tribulations of the last days. There will be a storming of Jerusalem by envious kings(665-8).¹⁶ Those who serve God will be spared the devastation(708) because God will 'shield them standing beside them alone in His might, encircling them, as it were, with a wall of flaming fire(705-6).¹⁷ Eventually, on seeing this peace, all the cities and isles(710)¹⁸ will turn and 'make procession to His Temple'(718), sing hymns and follow the law and repent of their former ways(721f.).¹⁹ As has been discussed above,²⁰ sacrifice at the temple was considered as the important ritual by which gentiles could indicate that they had repented. There is no doubt that the temple plays an important role in the fourth section of this oracle. ~~The temple~~ ^{T-4} is still an earthly one although it bears a salvation aspect.²¹ The temple and the functioning of its sacrificial rite are perceived in a positive manner.²²

~~pg 14~~ ¹⁶ Zech. 12:2-3,9; Ezek. 38-9. See Collins, 'The Place' 366, n.7.

~~15~~ ¹⁷ Zech. 2:5.

~~16~~ ¹⁸ Zech. 8:20; Is. 45:20-2; 49:6.

~~17~~ ¹⁹ Zech. 8:13; Is. 56:7. The description of the end of the world bears a close resemblance to Isaiah - cf. Sib. III:788-95 and Is. 11:6-9.

~~pg 73~~ ²⁰ See pp. 78-80 above.

~~pg 21~~ ²¹ Collins, SOEJ 45; 156, n. 68. Although Isenberg does not refer to the Sibylline oracles, his discussion of the temple in Judaism in terms of 'access to power' for Jews has some bearing on any discussion of the atonement value of the temple's sacrificial cult. 'Power Through Temple and Torah in Greco-Roman Palestine' in J. Neusner, ed., Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults Vol. II (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975) 24-52.

~~pg 22~~ ²² Simon, 'Sur quelques' 228; Nikiprowetzky, La troisième 169.
(Footnote Continued)

Third S.O.

The third oracle has a very positive attitude towards the temple and its cult. In fact it can be considered as indispensable to the Third's eschatology. The destruction of the first temple, its restoration, the desolation of its enemies and a parallel interpretation of the desecration of the second temple are all similar to Old Testament prophetic perceptions of the role of the temple in Judaism.

V. iii. The Temple in the The Fifth (Sibylline Oracle

One of the strongest points ^{for the differentiation of the Fourth S.O. from the provenance of the Third & Fifth} for Collins' argument ~~as he sees it~~, is that the Fifth, written after the Fourth, is still discussing the rebuilding of the temple.²³ This lack of an eschatological temple or of the rebuilding of the temple ^{in the Fourth} cannot, ^{he would} though, be considered definitive. The existence of this ^{new} temple was not always explicitly clarified in Jewish writings of the intertestamental period, before or after the destruction in 70 C.E: so much so that there is debate over whether there was a belief in a new temple or not.²⁴

(Footnote Continued)

There is no hint in this oracle that the second temple is inferior to the first, as in, e.g. Tobit 14:5 and II Bar. 68:6, nor that the cult practiced there is polluted as in Malachi.

²³ 'The Place' 368-9. See OTP and SOEJ. This does not reflect the negative aspect of the eschatological temple's destruction.

²⁴ E. P. Sanders, Jesus and Judaism (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985) 77-90. See V. Nikiprowetzky, 'Le nouveau temple' REJ 130(1971) 5-30. This article is an extensive review of R. J. McKelvey's The New Temple: The Church in the New Testament (London: Oxford University Press, 1969) which is very critical of McKelvey's ability to handle the Jewish sources partly because of Christian theological bias (e.g. 24-5). McKelvey concludes that there was an expectation of a new temple in the new Jerusalem of the messianic age before the destruction of the second

(Footnote Continued)

In sections 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the Fifth there are references to Jewish temples, although the reference in 4 is implicit.²⁵ The references to the Jerusalem temple seem to be entirely devoted to the second temple, the attitude of the holy ones to it and its destruction. The other references to temple seem to be to the eschatological building of a new temple by God in the end times. In the third section the temple is destroyed by Nero(150-4). The Romans are then destroyed in the eschaton(155-61).

The fourth section discusses how wonderful life is going to be when the end comes with everybody sitting around Palestine at the centre of the world(249-85). There is an implicit assumption that there will be a temple there because there will be sacrifices(268). The next section brings up the the second temple again and Nero's role in its destruction which the Sibyl saw for the second time(398-402). Once more Nero will be destroyed(406-13). In the sixth and last section of this oracle, there is a new city, a new temple and a description of the messianic age. The new holy temple(501) will be built in Egypt, by God, in the eschaton. However, even it will be destroyed by the Ethiopians²⁶ on

(Footnote Continued)

temple. Almost the exact opposite is argued by L. Gaston in his massive discussion of the effect of the destruction of the temple on Christianity. No Stone on Another: Studies in the Significance of the Fall of Jerusalem in the Synoptic Gospels NovTSup 23 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970).

²⁵ cf. V:268 where sacrifices will be offered.

²⁶ This is a somewhat surprising development and is unique to the Fifth. This could have had some impact on the view towards the temple taken by the author of the Fourth.

whom God will then wreak terrible vengeance(501-9), following the pattern set by the Third and the Old Testament.

Unlike the ⁵⁰Third and, as will be seen, the Fourth, which denounce pagan temples in general, there are references in the Fifth to specific pagan temples. There is the destruction of a temple of Isis²⁷ and the Egyptians will mourn(54-7). A temple of Artemis will no longer be inhabited and the Ephesians will mourn(293-97). Finally, there is a reference to the burning of the temple of Vesta in 64 C.E.(395-7), after which the temple in Jerusalem is destroyed.²⁸ There are two points which will be noted here. All three of the pagan temples which are voided, were to powerful female deities in the pagan pantheons. Furthermore, one is Egyptian, Isis; another, Greek, Artemis, and the last one mentioned, Vesta, is Roman. This suggests that there were different interests, political and religious, at work in the Fifth as compared the other two oracles.²⁹

There are other differences in this portrait of the temple from that of the Third. For example, the Jews are not held in any way responsible for the destruction of the temple. In the Third, the Jews brought the destruction of the temple upon themselves for their impious

²⁷cf. V:484-5.

²⁸This seems to be related to the destruction of the temple, however, the reference is unclear(398-402). Simon, 'Sur quelques'
226.

²⁹The significance of these points have not been analysed in this paper. It is interesting, however, that this oracle, which emphasizes God the begetter, or father, (p. 58-9 above) should designate three of the female goddesses of antiquity for denunciation.

p. 7/8

acts.³⁰ In the Fifth, there is no mention of this type of responsibility, the burden is entirely on those who destroyed it, the Romans. Secondly, the eschatological temple is destroyed. This may have had something to do with the ^{strong Egyptian} attachment to the second temple and ~~in~~ ^{also} ~~light~~ of the fact that even the temple in Leontopolis had been closed down.³¹ Where there had once been four Jewish temples, none existed any longer.³² ~~While~~ Collins explains this destruction as part of an extreme pessimism.³³ It is quite possible that one of the rationales for the non-messianic character of rabbinic and thus torah-centric Judaism is to be found in just this kind of pessimism. The Fourth Sibyl may also have been ~~trying~~ ^{written to} counteract this totally pessimistic view of the end.

V. iv. The Temple in the The Fourth Sibylline Oracle

The author of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle would in all likelihood have perceived the Third and Fifth Oracles as prophecy in the manner of the Old Testament prophets,³⁴ and the obscurity of the oracular form

³⁰ See pp. 84-5 above. *pg 69*

³¹ Collins, SOEJ 79; Smallwood, The Jews 367-8. *pg 71*

³² Porten briefly discusses the four temples of Judaism in "The Diaspora" 386-7. *pg 70*

³³ Collins, SOEJ 93-4. *pg 81*

³⁴ Or else why write a new Sibylline Oracle? On prophecy and apocalyptic see, R.H. Charles, Religious Development Between the Old and New Testaments (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1948(1914)) 12-46. Hanson's The Dawn of Apocalyptic is of particular importance in understanding the close ties between these two forms of religious thought.

Must be considered as important

A attempt is made.



pg 23

would easily lend itself to reinterpretation. These bodies of oracles appear to have existed as units and it is quite possible that the author of the Fourth would have seen the Third and Fifth as self-contained bodies of prophecy. Thus, they would be read as a whole and the author of the Fourth would not have been concerned with separations and attitude shifts in the manner of the twentieth century scholar. After 70 C.E. and the destruction which by the end of the second century looked as if it were forever, the Fourth Sibyl had to somehow relate this to Judaism and the promises of the prophets.

4.1 Prophecy and the Destruction of the Temple

Within the Book of Daniel, there is a prophecy of the destruction of the temple and the accompanying cessation of sacrifice, which will occur before the final days (9:24-7). In this chapter, Daniel is searching for an explanation of the seventy years of Jeremiah.³⁵ In much the same manner, the Fourth Sibyl may have been looking for a way to understand the meaning of the destruction of the temple in earlier prophecy. The cessation of sacrifice was a sign of the approaching final days in Daniel (9:27). For the Third Sibyl, sacrifice would be useless in the last days and would cease (564-72).³⁶ It is not improbable that the cessation of true sacrifice and the destruction of the second temple would have been seen as a sign that the day of fate

FN III. VIII. ³⁵9:2; cf. Jer. 25:11-2; 29:10. *pg 6*

FN III. VIII. ³⁶See p. 78-80 above. *p. 7*

had begun.³⁷ The onslaught of the Roman legions under Titus would fulfil the motif of the storming of Jerusalem as described by the Third Sibyl and the prophets.³⁸ The internal dissension within Jerusalem could have been seen as fulfilling other prophecies of Daniel(9:26; 11:30-2; 12:7).³⁹ Bruce argues that these are the referents for Josephus' view that the war was the fulfillment of ancient oracles.⁴⁰ If this is the case, then it is not unlikely that the Fourth Sibyl would also find similar explanations from Daniel or from another common source such as earlier Sibylline Oracles.⁴¹

Thus it is possible to state that the Fourth might have been dealing with the destruction of the temple but from a viewpoint quite different than that of even the Fifth. By the end of the second century, the temple was gone, no longer for seventy years but possibly until the eschaton. However, it is the specific passages in Fourth

FR II, III
pg 11
37 The cessation of sacrifices occurred just before Titus finally destroyed the temple. J.W. VI:93-5. Gaston sees Josephus attitude towards this cessation as a sure sign of the end. No Stone 460.

pg 26
38 Jos. J.W. VI:109-10.

pg 8
39 F. F. Bruce, 'Josephus and Daniel' Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute IV(1965) 152-60.

pg 9
40 'Josephus' 155.

pg 10
41 'Josephus' 162, n. 23. M. Friedländer suggests that the Third Sibylline Oracle could have been the basis of the prophecies which were referred to by Josephus, Suetonius and Tacitus (III:194-5; 652 relating to Josephus B.J. VI,5,4(310-5): Tac. Hist. V,13; Suet. Vesp. c.4 and III. 670(and V:512); 795-806 to Josephus, B.J. VI,5,3(288-309): Tac. Hist. V,13.) as the ambiguous oracles which the people believed and justified the war. He argues that this is likely since '...la Sibylle jouissait de la plus grande popularité auprès du peuple.(emphasis author's)' 'Les prophéties sur la guerre judéo-romaine de l'an 70' REJ 30(1895) 122-4.

which must be examined to determine the attitude towards the temple in the Fourth. The passages in the Fourth which are of importance in the discussion of its attitude towards the temple and its cult are 1. 4-12; 2. 24-39; 3. 115-39. These passages have been interpreted by Collins to indicate that the author of the Fourth oracle was engaging in a polemic against the Jerusalem temple as have others.⁴² However, not all authors agree with this position⁴³ Thus, it is important to look closely at each of the three passages and determine just what is said.

4.2.

1. 4-12

Collins translates v. 8 as 'God does not have a house, stone drawn to a temple',⁴⁴ or 'For he does not have a house, a stone set up as a temple.'⁴⁵ This is opposed to the translation of Lanchester, 'For He has not as His habitation a stone set up in a temple ...' and has no

FN III. III.
p. 26

⁴²For example, 'It is almost impossible not to admit that the Jewish sanctuary and its liturgy are here included and condemned, along with the pagan idols and rites ... in the name of Spiritual worship.' M. Simon, St. Stephen and the Hellenists in the Primitive Church (London: Longman's Green & Co., 1958) 87. Simon has modified his position slightly in a recent article 'Sur quelques' 228-31. Ewald, Abhandlung 86; Friedländer, 'La Sibylle' 186-7; Badt, Ursprung 15. The nineteenth century writers tended to liken the author of the Fourth to an Essene based in part on their reading of Jos. Ant. 18,1,5 (i.e. Badt above). For a recent discussion and translation of this text of Josephus, see J. Nolland, 'A Misleading Statement of the Essene Attitude to the Temple' RevQ 9(1978) 555-62.

p. 27 ⁴³Badt in Friedländer REJ 29(1894) 186, n. 1.

p. 28 ⁴⁴'The Place' 366.

p. 29 ⁴⁵OTP 384.

parallel, either, among Blass, Terry, Bate or Simon.⁴⁶ Collins sees this as indicative of an anti-temple bias and his translation would account for this.⁴⁷ However, this was part of the message of Ezekiel - that God was not confined to the temple of Jerusalem⁴⁸ and Ezekiel's message cannot be considered as anti-temple or anti-cult.⁴⁹

These verses indicate that God does not live in a stone, he is not like the idols which others worship which are dumb and helpless. This passage follows closely the argument of the 3rd, where the message is imparted in 8-35: 'God's dwelling is in heaven'(11); 'he is unseen yet seeing all himself(12)'' and 'No mason's hand did make him''(13). At the same time, the wicked 'bow to dumb idols and stone statues'(31); sit at 'doors of godless temples'(32) and take 'delight in miserable stones'(34). In both the third and the fourth oracles this justification of the true God is part of the introduction, written in part to counteract the charge of atheism which was levelled

⁴⁶Lanchester, 'Sibyline' 393. Blass, 'Sibylinischen' 201; M. S. Terry, The Sibylline Oracles (London: 1899) 99; Bate, Sibyline 83; Simon, Stephen 87. Lanchester discusses the possibility of two variants to the verse - 'dragged' for 'set up' and 'likeness' for 'habitation' - but neither variant would affect the translation to render the view of Collins. See following note.

⁴⁷Collins translation is now even further away from Lanchester than previously. OTP 384. He has appeared to combine different textual possibilities to come with this particular translation. As mentioned above, he finds no support in any other translation.

p. 31 ⁴⁸11:14-6; cf. Is. 66:1-2.

ps 32 ⁴⁹Or else why the vision of the new temple? Ez. 40-6.

against the Jews.⁵⁰ In no way can this passage be seen as a condemnation of the temple of Jerusalem and its cult.⁵¹

2. 24-39

This passage decries all temples and sacrifices. Collins accepts that this includes the Jerusalem cult as well.⁵² A careful reading of the passage indicates that it is the heathen converts who turn their backs on all temples and sacrifices. Presumably, these would be the pagan ones to which the gentiles had previously adhered. There was no longer any temples in Judaism. Therefore, it is unlikely that the Jerusalem temple and cult would be included in this invective,⁵³ particularly if the final redaction of the Fourth took place at the end of the second century although it would be true for the end of the first. The following verses, 38-9, point out that the wicked accuse the godly of the evils which they themselves commit. An explanation found

p. 34 ⁵⁰ CPJ, Vol. I (1957) 89-90; 89, n. 80. Gager, Origins 85.

ps 33 ⁵¹ One is hard pressed to understand Simon's comment: "This is the usual argument against idolatry, as found in both Jewish or Christian apologetics and in pagan philosophical treatises." Stephen 87. These does not seem to ~~integrate~~ ^{combine} with the position noted on p. 94, n. 43 above. There seems to be a problem with the Fourth in that it seems to be the lone indicator of a truly 'anti-temple', 'anti-cult' Jewish statement. It could be asked whether this position is just too good to give up and therefore becomes a presupposition for work on the oracle. See Simon, "'La Quatrième Livre offre à cet égard une réelle originalité.'" regarding its attitude towards the destruction of the temple. "'Sur quelques'" 229.

ps 35 ⁵² "'The Place'" 366-7; OTP 384, c: cf. Simon, Stephen 87.

ps 37 ⁵³ Nikiprowetzky, La troisième 234.

in reference to this passage.

in the situation in Egypt in the first century C.E. when the Jews were subject to persecution by the Greeks, particularly in Alexandria, most notably in 38 and 66.⁵⁴ This passage has no parallels in the third oracle and can be considered to have been written with the historical data of the first century C.E. in mind.⁵⁵

3. 115-36

According to Collins, this passage is no more than "... a simple historical statement. Sib. IV does not develop the incident or attach any special significance to it."⁵⁶ There are two major issues which develop from this passage which cause a difference of opinion regarding the attitude of the Fourth to the destruction of the temple. The first is the responsibility for its destruction and the second is whether or not Rome has been punished for destroying the temple, Jerusalem and Palestine. Part of the problem lies in whether or not this passage should be seen as a whole or separated into distinct oracles

It is generally accepted that the Zealots⁵⁷ are the "they"

p. 39 ⁵⁴ CPJ 61-9, 79; Smallwood, The Jews 220-55.

p. 41 ⁵⁵ CPJ 48-85.

p. 42 ⁵⁶ "The Place" 368-9. Simon, "Sur quelques" 221.

⁵⁷ This term is being used here as an all-inclusive one despite that difficulties with seeing the Zealots as a party or sect before 67(8) C.E. Most secondary sources still use this term to describe the multivaried resistance groups who joined to fight the first Jewish War against Rome. For a discussion of the problem, see D. Rhoads, Israel in Revolution: 6-74 C.E. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979(1976)) 47-149; M. Smith, "'Zealots and Sicarii: Their Origins and Relation'" HTR 64(1971) 1-19 and M. Stern, "'Zealots'" EncJud 1973 Yearbook 135-52.

p. 88

referred to in verses 117-8 and were responsible for the destruction of the temple.⁵⁸ The internal struggle within Jerusalem during the First Jewish War against Rome must be seen as part of the reason for the Roman victory in 70.⁵⁹ Recently, however, Nikiprowetzky has made the suggestion, which was accepted by Collins,⁶⁰ that the reference is to the Romans.⁶¹ He bases his argument on the implication that, if the 'godly' were Zealots or Jews, the Sibyl is saying that they were the cause of the war and that outside of Josephus, one cannot find any strong denunciation of the Zealots.⁶²

The verses, 115-8, read:

'To Solyma too the evil blast of war shall come from Italy, and shall lay in ruins God's great temple whenever, confident in their folly, they shall cast godliness to the winds and commit hateful murders before the temple.'

It would appear from the text that 'they' caused the destruction of the temple(115-7; 125-7)⁶³ and by implication also started the war. Josephus was suspect among the Jews and his view of the situation would

p. 86 ⁵⁸ Simon, 'Sur quelques' 229; Lanchester, 'Sibyline' 395.

p. 45 ⁵⁹ Lanchester, 'Sibyline' 395. See Nikiprowetzky, 'Reflexions'
66. Riessler, Altjüdischen Schriften 1328.

p. 47. ⁶⁰ 'The Place' 367, n. 25. However, in OTP 387, w, both possibilities are noted.

p. 46 ⁶¹ 'Reflexions' 66. This is the only place where I have serious objections to Nikiprowetzky's analysis of the Fourth.

p. 48 ⁶² 'Reflexions' 66.

p. 49. ⁶³ Even if it was the case that the Sibyl was saying that they had started the war explicitly, it is not an improbable statement. However, justified on economic, social and religious grounds the war might have been, it was not the Romans who struck the first blow for freedom.

have carried little weight according to Nikiprowetzky.⁶⁴ While it is true that Josephus' views were and are suspect,⁶⁵ this does not mean that there were no other negative feelings towards the Zealots. The internal struggles in Jerusalem were devastating. 'Josephus's imagination was fertile, but even if only half of what he says is true, it was still horrible enough.'⁶⁶ For example, the temple in Jerusalem was highly esteemed by Egyptian Jews.⁶⁷ The Jewish war had its repercussions in Egypt with riots against the Jews in Alexandria in 66 and the creation of a deep social schism within the Jewish community as well as the suspension of the Jewish religion.⁶⁸ Sicarii, who had escaped Jerusalem at the end of the war, attempted to cause a revolt in Alexandria and were turned over to the Roman authorities by Alexandrian Jewish authorities.⁶⁹ It is not hard to imagine that, at least in Alexandria, the attitude towards the Jews who had fomented revolt in Jerusalem would have been negative and that they would have been blamed for the destruction of the temple by the author of the Fourth.⁷⁰ In

64, 'Reflexions' 66. p. 50.

65 S. Cohen, Josephus etc., see my paper on Josephus. p. 52.

66 Schürer, Jewish People, rev. ed. I 504. See also Rhoads, Israel in Revolution (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976?).

67 Collins, SOEJ; Tcherikover, CPJ 45. Letter of Aristeeas: See Fraser, Ptolemaic I. Philo.

68 Tcherikover, CPJ 79-?. See also Smallwood, Josephus, etc.

69 Tcherikover, CPJ 79-80. Rhoads, Israel. Josephus, Bellum Judaicum

70 Although if things got bad enough the Jews would revolt as in the revolts of 115 in Egypt and Cyrene. Smallwood, The Jews

this case, it is certainly better to go along with the general consensus and see the 'godly' as the Jews who revolted against Rome rather than to try to find a Jew, Alexandrian or otherwise, who thought of the Romans as 'godly'!

Collins claims that Nikiprowetzky departs from the evidence in asserting that the eruption of Vesuvius is God's punishment on Rome for the temple's destruction.⁷¹ However, it is not difficult to interpret the passage in light of the attitude taken towards the destruction of the first temple by the third Sibyllist and the prophets.⁷² The temple is destroyed because 'they' (those who started the war) have cast godliness to the winds (116-8) and the land is wasted by the Romans (125, 127). This would be equivalent to the destruction of the first temple because the godly had forsaken God and turned to idols and to the desecration by Antiochus Epiphanes for sins committed.⁷³ As in the Third (300-2; 319-33)⁷⁴, the destroyers of the temple are punished.⁷⁵ There is an earthquake and flood, but more specifically the eruption of Vesuvius is meant to be the sign that God has punished the Romans for destroying 'the guiltless race of godly men' (135-6). However sinful they might be, the Sibyl apparently feels that the covenant of the

1843 .71, 'The Place' 368; cf. Nikiprowetzky, La troisième 234. Although he does not cite Collins, Simon also criticizes Nikiprowetzky on this point. 'Sur quelques' 229-30.

p. 78 ⁷² See also IV Esdras.

p. 87 ⁷³ See pp. 85-6 above.

p. 94 ⁷⁴ See pp. 85-6 above.

p. 85 ⁷⁵ Simon, 'Sur quelques' 221.

Israelites overrules the sin. Besides even Josephus wrote glowingly concerning the bravery and godliness of the victims of Masada although he makes it clear that he feels that they committed a great sin against God by starting the war.⁷⁶ The God of the Israelites had had a long history of forgiving and avenging his people.

V. v. Partial Conclusions

By the end of the second century, the Jews had learned to live without an earthly temple and its atoning sacrifices. The temple in the Third Oracle was earthly, as was its eschatology. But this temple no longer existed. The author of the Fourth Oracle had to deal with this fact in some manner. It has been suggested that the author of the Fourth chose 'more spiritualising approach',⁷⁷ However, the above discussion shows that it might be better to suggest that the Fourth Sibyl has chosen to accept that a Jewish temple in this world is gone, perhaps forever. There does not seem to be any reason to label the Fourth Oracle as either anti-temple or anti-cult. Pagan temples and cults are hated, the Romans are punished for destroying the temple and the pious are vindicated. Thus on these ground, there is no compelling reason to separate the Fourth from the Third and Fifth Sibylline Oracles because it has a 'fundamentally different attitude towards the temple.'

pg 82 76 Jos. J.W. VII:252-406. He even has praise for the sicarii martyrs in Egypt. J.W. VII:417-9.

p. 61 77 Collins, 'The Place' 368. cf. Nikiprowetzky, La troisième 234.

The messianic fervour of all three major Jewish revolts in less than seventy years had had an impact of Judaism. Both the Third and the Fifth include some form of 'messianic saviour' who is excluded from the Fourth. It is very likely that the impact of 'rabbinism' was being felt on the Jews of Alexandria whether related to Javneh and the 'framers of the Mishnah' or not. During the intervening years between the final form of the Third and the creation of the Fourth, there was a development in the ideas of eschatological concepts. It is here that the Fourth's approach to the eschaton and the temple is to be found.⁷⁸

*not in some obscure
"anti-temple" Jewish cult.*

⁷⁸It would be interesting to do a source analysis of ideas towards the temple in prophetic and apocalyptic eschatology, beginning with II Samuel 7 and the initial problems with the temple, through Isaiah, the pseudepigraphal works, Qumran to the Letter to the Hebrews and Revelation in the New Testament. The prospect that this would have some impact on the analysis of the Fifth and Fourth Sibylline Oracles is tantalizing.

VI. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

In the Corpus Papyrorum Judaicorum, it was suggested that after the revolt of 112-5 C.E. in Egypt and Cyrene, the Alexandrian community was so devastated that it was not until after the third century that anything of any interest or importance was written.¹ There is a lack of second century sources; a problem that is not singular to Alexandrian Judaism. Cassius Dio's history for this period is fragmented and sources are lacking in many other areas such as those required for the study of the rise of both second century Christianity and rabbinic Judaism. Thus, any discussion of the Fourth and Fifth, as well as the Third Sibylline Oracles is done in a partial vacuum. This vacuum is augmented by the very nature of oracular writings which are often difficult to understand in themselves.² However, in the last hundred pages there has been an attempt to clarify some of the problems which surround the Fourth Sibylline Oracle and its relationship to the other oracles in the Jewish Sibylline Corpus.

The second chapter of the paper suggested that a late date of the last twenty years part of the second century C.E. was not only possible for the Fourth Sibylline Oracle, but probable, given the historical data

¹CPJ I 85-88. (Tcherikover places the Fourth Sibylline Oracle in Alexandrian Judaism and feels that fragments of the Fourth and Fifth are examples of writings too insignificant to be worth comment. CPJ I 107.) This has probably had a lasting impression on scholars such as Collins. SOEJ 75.

²I have not even addressed the problem of the texts, although it is obvious from some of the discussions in the footnotes that this is quite a serious hindrance, particularly in the discussions of certain controversial issues.

available. This finding has been further augmented, though not explicated, by the fact that a later dating of this oracle clarifies some of the more puzzling features of the Fourth such as resurrection and the attitude towards the temple. These are concepts which seemed out of place with the Third and the Fifth and had therefore been used to differentiate the Fourth from them. It also appeared from the data compiled for the Fourth's historical oracle section that many of the oracles which had had unclear referents, could be analysed from the point of view of Egyptian history. This opened the possibility that the Fourth could have an Egyptian provenance.

The third chapter compared the Third, Fourth and Fifth Sibylline Oracles from the standpoint of structure and certain themes. It became obvious that there was a close parallel to the Third although there were similarities to the Fifth, as well. The discussion of the oracles and the attitude to Rome and Egypt suggested more strongly an Egyptian, and possibly Alexandrian provenance for the Fourth. But it was pointed out that there was a less political tone to the Fourth. This is not difficult to understand, particularly when the Fourth is dated to the end of the second century, when Judaism as an emerging religion distinct from what had gone before, was just beginning to recover from two disastrous centuries.

The fourth chapter discussed the eschatology of the three oracles. Eschatological concepts have been considered by some scholars to be a major differentiation point for the oracle. There were similarities in the judgement of the world by fire in all three but there were differences in areas such as resurrection and the last or second judgement. These could, however, be explained from the point of view of

the development of eschatology over a period approximately four centuries and the fact that there may have been a need for the author of the Fourth to clarify particular positions which were ambiguous in both the Third and the Fifth. The exhortation to righteousness which has been important because it has raised the possibility that it indicated that the Fourth was the writing of a 'baptismal' sect. The function of this passage and comparison to the exhortation to conversion in the Third was examined. There were enough similarities to assume that there was no need to overemphasize this passage in any attempt to determine provenance.

The last chapter dealt with the question of the temple in the Fourth, an oracle which has been assumed by many authors to epitomize anti-temple Judaism. The analysis of the passages which are important for the temple discussion showed that the attitude towards the temple in the Fourth Sibylline Oracle cannot be used to separate this oracle from the provenance of the Third or the Fifth. One of the primary facts with regard to any attitude towards the temple in second century Judaism would be that fact that it had been destroyed following a disastrous war which had had messianic undertones.³ There was a need to re-evaluate older prophecy and to come to terms with the role of the Jewish God and the meaning of history. There is neither an invective against the temple of Jerusalem nor is the Sibyllist indifferent to its destruction. The need to find meaning from the destruction of the central embodiment of the Jewish religion led to a reinterpretation of prophecy in light of

³Rhodes, Israel 176-81.

the early part of the second century and three failed attempts to force the Messianic kingdom. The last, Bar Kochba, created the massive dislocations about which we know little and can only conjecture.

The major conclusion which can be drawn regarding the provenance of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle is that there is no reason which is compelling enough to separate it from the provenance of the Third and Fifth Sibylline Oracles.⁴ The later dating has made the arguments for maintaining all three oracles together stronger, but the analysis holds even if the dating were to be maintained at 80 C.E. The oracles all belong within the framework of Egyptian Judaism, most likely that of Alexandria.

⁴If the above analysis has any merit, it would appear as if the Fifth is the 'odd man' out.

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