

## Class 4 Jewish Charity in the Greek and Roman World

The last class dealt with the ideal of charity in the Bible in contrast to that what can found amongst other nations who lived at around the same time. Today we turn our attention back to the world of the Talmud and contrast their religious approach to charity to classic world, the Greek and Roman world with their emphasis upon *euergetism*. To understand the central phrase which characterizes giving to others in the classical world. I will quote first from Gardners's book on charity and then direct your attention to two readings that will help clarify the stark difference between **religiously motivated charity** – were God demands from man to have mercy on the poor and downtrodden and to take action to help him/her out, as we have seen in the verses in Deuteronomy and what the rabbinic understanding of charity (in a previous class), and the **honor and status driven** giving as found in the classical world.

Let us first start with a definition of *euergetism* (taken from Gardner's book) which was the principal form of generous giving in the classic world:

*euergetism* – a neologism created from the wording of Greek decrees **that honor a benefactor (euerget'es). Euergetism was a form of benefaction in which a benefactor gave a gift to a city and the citizens would reciprocate by giving a countergift to the benefactor.**

This informal institution was ubiquitous from the fifth century B.C.E. onward throughout the Greek-speaking world. Among other places, we find it in Hellenistic and Roman-era Palestine. It was defined by a remarkably consistent set of features. From his or her own pocket, a benefactor would finance public works, games, fortifications or other forms of military assistance, or municipal services, or provide for the local cult. **In return, the benefactor would receive a gift drawn from a fairly standardized set of rewards.** The gift most characteristic of *euergetism* was an honorary decree passed by the local council that recounted the benefactor's contribution to the city and bestowed personal honors upon him or her. The honors set forth in the decree were accompanied by other gifts given to the benefactor, including statues in his or her image, crowns and other objects made of gold, and seats of honor at games and festivals. The gifts were awarded in public ceremonies that praised the benefactor, and the decrees themselves were inscribed and displayed in prominent locations. This served to publicize the benefaction, encourage others to contribute to the city, and elevate the social status of the benefactor. **It created a lasting memorial so that the benefaction, the benefactor, and the honors would be remembered as long as the stele with the inscription stood.** Because these gifts either elevated or solidified the benefactor's social position, political standing, or both, *euergetism* provided a means to acquire or maintain authority. Royalty, therefore, were benefactors *par excellence*.

Unlike charity, *euergetism* was meant to benefit the citizens of a particular town. **These may have included needy individuals, but euergetism did not target "the poor" per se. Whereas charity lies in the moral realm, euergetism was a mechanism for the benefactor to capture honor and status.**

Now that you have somewhat entered the Greco-Roman world **please read the reading of P. van der Host** from his article on organized charity in the ancient world (it is enough to read the sections that I have highlighted in his study). This will give you a good picture of the classic world's approach to the poor (in contrast to the Jewish approach).

It is worth emphasizing despite the fact that in the Roman times free bread was distributed to the population. **It was limited to real citizens**, any poor person who was not a citizen was not given bread. Moreover the amount of bread distributed was not dependent on need or amount of mouths that needed to be fed. Everyone head of household received the same amount.

Then read Gardner's study on "Competitive Giving in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century". By the time you read this study of Gardner there will be much repetition with regard to understanding the non-Jewish world so you can read that part of the study quickly, **and instead focus upon how he explains the Rabbinic approach to "competitive giving" as found in Mishnah Yuma and in Tosefta Peah**. His basic argument is that although the Jewish approach to charity is so very different than that of the classic world. The Rabbis care for the poor and expect the Jew to be generous in supporting them in the fashion of a free gift, not expecting anything concrete in return, at least not in a worldly return. Nevertheless, Gardner does point to two early sources that do not discount some kind of return. What is of interest is in defining in what ways is the Rabbinic "return" different from that what is found in the Greco-Roman sources. So please pay attention to this rabbinic "concession" to the ideals of their time. It is also worth noting that both sources deal with contributions given by pagan individuals who converted to Judaism, which may explain their approach. Later in the semester we shall discuss more "mainstream" sources that promise some-kind of return in this world or the next.

I am combining the readings into one file, after the summary questions will first be van der Host and then Gardner.

### Summary Questions:

What is the basic difference between "religious giving" as found in Judaism and other religions and the main expression of generosity in the classical world?

What is "Euergetism" and why is that important for this course?

Did the Greeks and Romans care for the poor?

Does the statement "God loves the poor" make sense within the Greek world-view?

What was the main motivation behind Greek generosity?

Within the Greco-Roman world when is "pity" acceptable?

How does van der Host explain the distribution of food in the Roman city was not charity?

What was **the concrete** benefit that the generous person received in return for his act in the Greek world?

What kind of objects did the generous person in the Greek world usually donate?

What is the difference according to Gardner between Greek "Euergetism" and Jewish "Euergetism" as found in the Mishna Yuma?

What is the difference according to Gardner between Greek "Euergetism" and Jewish "Euergetism" as found in Tosefta Peah?

According to Gardner what kind of gifts are acceptable as a return for one's generosity and what gifts are not?



However great the role of euergetism (*euergesia*, *eupoia*)<sup>4</sup> in Greek culture may have been, the well-to-do were never expected to support and help the poor. As Bolkestein says, “Niemals wird der Begriff “Wohltun” mit dem Objekt “Arme” verbunden.”<sup>5</sup> And the verbs *eu poiein* and *euergetein* (Latin *benefacere*, to do good, to be beneficent) never mean “almsgiving.” The highest of Greek virtues, *dikaïosynê*, meant justice in the sense of *suum cuique*, but never mercifulness towards the poor, unlike Hebrew *tsedaqa*. The Greek word *philanthrôpia* never has the sense of our modern philanthropy; one is *philanthrôpos* towards one’s own people, parents and other family members, and guests or strangers, not towards the poor.<sup>6</sup> And *eleêmosynê* in the sense of showing pity or mercy for someone never has the poor as its primary object; the semantic development in which it takes on the meaning of “alms” is a strictly Jewish and Christian usage.<sup>7</sup> For exhortations to give alms to the poor one looks in vain in Greek and Roman literature. Greek moralists do not admonish people to concern themselves about the fate of the poor, except incidentally when someone had been unexpectedly hit by a great catastrophe. To be sure, generosity (*eleutheriotês*) was praised as a virtue, but the poor were never singled out as its object, it was always directed to humans in general, provided that they deserved it, that they were *axioi*. “Niemals wird als wichtige Pflicht der Reichen dargestellt, die Hungernden zu speisen, die Dürstenden zu laben, die Nackten zu kleiden oder auch Witwen und Waisen zu helfen.”<sup>8</sup>

When Greek literature speaks about the joy of giving to others, it has nothing to do with altruism but only with the desired effect of giving, namely honour, prestige, fame, status. Honour is the driving motive behind most of Greek beneficence,<sup>9</sup> and it is for that reason that the Greek word *philotimia* (love of honour, also *philodoxia*) could develop the meaning of “generosity, beneficence,”<sup>10</sup> not directed towards the poor but to fellow humans in general,

4 On the terminology see F. W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1982), 317–493.

5 Bolkestein, *Wohltätigkeit* 101.

6 See now esp. K. Berthelot, *Philanthrôpia judaica: Le débat autour de la “misanthropie” des lois juives dans l’Antiquité* (JSJS 76; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 17–78.

7 The Stoics even frowned upon mercy as being a *pathos*.

8 Bolkestein, *Wohltätigkeit* 150.

9 See, e.g., Xenophon, *Mem.* 3.12.4; *Oec.* 11.8; Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 8.8 (1159a14–15); *Rhet.* 1.5 (1361a27–30: “Honour is the token of a man’s being famous for doing good”). See B. W. Longenecker, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 67–74.

10 See, e.g., the honorary inscription from Boeotia in IG VII, 2712, 53–54: “He devoted himself to the love of fame [*to philodoxon*] . . . through continual expenditure.”

especially those from whom one could reasonably expect a gift in return. These were the *axioi*, because these acknowledged and respected the principle of reciprocity, *charis anti charitos*, one of the main pillars of Greek social life.<sup>11</sup> It is stated in all its simplicity by Hesiod: “Give to him who gives, but do not give to him who does not give (in return)” (*Erga* 354). Even though occasionally some ancient moralists said that the best form of beneficence is the one in which one does not expect anything in return from the beneficiary, the pervasive view was that a donor should be reimbursed one way or another, preferably with a greater gift than he himself had given.<sup>12</sup>

Religion was not of much help for the poor; they simply were not the favourites of the gods. There was a Zeus Xenios, there was a Zeus Hiketêsios, but there was no Zeus *Ptôchios* (or any other god with an epithet indicating concern for the needy). It was rather the rich who were seen as the favourites of the divine world, their wealth being the visible proof of that favour. “God loves the poor” would have been a bizarre statement in ancient Greece.<sup>13</sup> The poor could not pray for help from the gods *because they were poor* for their poverty was a disadvantage in their contact with the gods. At the background here is the common view that the poor are morally inferior to the rich, they were often regarded as more readily inclined to do evil;<sup>14</sup> for that reason their poverty was commonly seen as their own fault—it was “selbstverschuldet.” No

11 See, e.g., Xenophon, *Mem.* 4.4.24: “Is not the duty of requiting benefits (*anteuergetein*) universally recognized by law?” More references in P. W. van der Horst, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 169. See further the collection of essays in Ch. Gill, N. Postlethwaite and R. Seaford (eds.), *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

12 It is important to keep in mind that expecting something back from the poor is not as strange as it may seem at first sight. The Greek words for “poor,” *penês* and *ptôchos*, usually have rather different connotations: *Penêtes* were not destitute but people who did not have enough wealth to live from (unlike the rich) and for that reason had to work with their hands; they were peasants, manual labourers and the like, and they formed the bulk of the common people. (The elite often expressed contempt for manual labour.) *Ptôchoi*, however, were the really destitute (“Bettelarme”) who depended wholly on others for their living. Not in every Greek author, however, there is such a hard and fast distinction between the two terms; see Longenecker, *Remember the Poor* 37–38.

13 See H. Gülzow, “Soziale Gegebenheiten der altkirchlichen Mission,” in *Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte, Band 1: Die alte Kirche* (ed. H. Frohnes & U. W. Knorr; München: Kaiser, 1974), 19; R. Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1997), 88, 211. Longenecker, *Remember the Poor* 96–104, maintains that among Greeks and Romans there were religiously motivated gestures for the needy, but his evidence is very meager.

14 J. Hahn, “Armut,” *DNP* 2 (1997): 18. The Cynics had a much more positive view of poverty, but they were marginal and it should be kept in mind that “the Cynic obsession with

wonder that they were not seen as the *axioi*, those who deserve help, and that no organized charity developed in ancient Greece and Rome. In such societies, giving alms to the poor could not be seen as a virtue. Care for the poor was often seen as a waste of resources.

The mutual support the poor received in their clubs and associations can hardly be called organized charity because the money came partly from their own pocket, i.e., from the regular contributions that members were obliged to pay. Also the distributions of corn and oil to the population by city states or emperors in times of need cannot pass for organized charity because the corn was either given to all citizens in equal measure, not only the poor, or only to those who had citizenship. The poor did not get more than the rich; even “the poorest class of society was never singled out for specially favourable treatment.”<sup>15</sup> *Grosso modo* all this applies to the Romans no less than to the Greeks. When a Roman is generous towards others, it is not because these are poor but because he expects to get something in return and because it confers honour and status upon him. *Beneficia* are for fellow citizens, not for the poor who were often regarded as morally inferior and inclined to crime.

Although there were rare birds who criticized the principle of reciprocity, this criticism “never reaches the obvious conclusion, namely that the surest way to avoid any suggestion of giving with a view to a return is to confer one’s gift on someone who is incapable of giving in return.”<sup>16</sup> That the beneficiary was usually expected to give something in return, sometimes made the benefaction feel for him like a burden.<sup>17</sup> But the idea of *charis anti charitos* was deeply ingrained in ancient society and giving remained one of the chief ways of acquiring honour and status within the social or political group. Neither Greek nor Roman shrank from admitting that striving after honour and fame was the decisive motive for generosity. As Cicero says, “most people are generous in their gifts not so much by natural inclination as by the lure of honour” (*Off.* 1.14.44), and Pliny the Younger pithily says, *sequi... gloria... debet*, “honour must be the consequence,” namely of generosity (*Ep.* 1.8.14).

There was a rather widespread lack of sympathy for beggars, who did not deserve gifts because from the penniless one could not expect anything

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the value of poverty would be completely lost on the irrevocably poor”; thus R. Knapp, *Invisible Romans* (London: Profile Books, 2011), 106.

15 A. R. Hands, *Charities and Social Aid in Greece and Rome* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), 89.

16 Hands, *Charities and Social Aid* 31.

17 For that reason Menander says, “There are some who even hate their benefactors” (*Monostichoi* 244, ed. Jaekel 46).

in return, unless it was political support that could be expected from them and could also lead to an accrual of honour. Often even pity was seen as “an attitude to be adopted on an essentially *quid-pro-quo* basis,”<sup>18</sup> well illustrated by Thucydides when he makes Cleon say: “Pity is appropriately given on an exchange basis to men of like character, and not to those who are not going to show pity in return” (*Hist.* 3.40.3). There is no indication that any private donor discriminated in favour of the lower classes nor has there been any tendency to regard public distributions as doles instituted primarily to aid the destitute. Organized charity in the sense of institutionalized care for the poor was unknown in Graeco-Roman antiquity.<sup>19</sup> “Pagans did not notice the very poor at all except when they became politically threatening.”<sup>20</sup>

# Competitive Giving in the Third Century CE

## Early Rabbinic Approaches to Greco-Roman Civic Benefaction

Gregg E. Gardner

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### Introduction

The importance of religion and competition to life in the Greco-Roman Mediterranean is exemplified by acts of euergetism, whereby benefactors gave gifts to a city and were rewarded with counter-gifts that marked honour and status. In light of programmatic statements by ancient Jewish writers denouncing Greco-Roman urban culture's emphasis on wealth, status, and social competition, scholars have explored whether (and if so, how) Jews engaged with euergetism. They have examined the topic among sources for the late-antique Jewish Diaspora, in Palestinian texts from the Hellenistic and early Roman eras (i. e., the late Second Temple era, up to 70 CE), and in later Amoraic rabbinic texts (late fourth-fifth century CE). While scholarly discourse has rightly moved beyond the simplistic bifurcation of Judaism and Hellenism, and how one "influenced" another, these studies have shown that euergetism remains an area in which traditions of Hellenic and Israelite origin required creative tinkering in order to coalesce.

This paper seeks to fill a lacuna in scholarship by examining euergetism in Tannaitic or early rabbinic texts - the earliest works of rabbinic Judaism, which were redacted in Roman Palestine in the third century CE. How did Tannaitic texts engage with euergetism and how do they compare with other Jewish sources from the Greco-Roman world? I find that these texts engage with forms of euergetism that were altered and adapted to address interests and suit sensibilities that were characteristically rabbinic. In particular, the Tannaim removed euergetism from its Greco-Roman moorings in competition for the honour and public recognition that is projected by visible, material objects. They relocated it into a matrix of ideas and values that were central to rabbinic thought - such as piety and observance of biblical commandments, rewarding the righteous, divine justice, and care for the poor.

### Euergetism, Competition, and Jewish Ideals

Euergetism is a neologism created from the wording of Greek honorific decrees that recognised a benefactor (euergetes) of a city. Euergetism was ubiquitous from the fifth century BCE onwards throughout the Greek-speaking world and was defined by a remarkably consistent set of features. An individual would personally finance construction projects, public games, fortifications or other forms of defence, the maintenance of local cults, or other items central to civic life. In return, the benefactor would be recognised for his/her contribution with a counter-gift, the most characteristic of which was an honorary decree passed by the local body politic that recounted the benefactor's contribution and bestowed honours on him/her. The decree would then be inscribed on a stele and placed in a central location. The honours set forth in the decree were often accompanied by other counter-gifts such as a statue in his or her image; objects made of gold or silver (e. g., a crown), or a seat of honour at games and festivals. All of this was intended to aggrandise the benefactor, elevate his/her social standing, and encourage others to give. Euergetism was a means to gain or maintain authority and influence in Greco-Roman cities; kings, for example, were benefactors par excellence.



An important aspect of euergetism was social competition. Paul Veyne writes that Hellenistic decrees ascribe benefaction "... to emulation or competition (philotimia) among good citizens who want to distinguish themselves and be honoured for having rendered some service to the city." Similarly, Guy Rogers writes that benefactions were seen as part of a competition for institutionally rewarded titles and privileges. There were two types of competition, one between rival cities (and their respective elites) and another between individuals within a single locale. The latter would establish one's local identity and place within the city's social hierarchy. Competition was "unremitting" as elites sought to outdo the benefactions of one another and capture the status that came with it. Jill Harries writes that public acknowledgement was "... an essential part of the confirmation of status in the highly pressurised environment of aristocratic competition for honours and office". Martin Goodman calls it a "rivalry for honours". Indeed, social competition served as a powerful motivation for would-be-benefactors to invest in a particular type of contribution. We see this, for example, in public building activities, where benefactors were motivated by competition for local and regional status to fund certain construction projects. Similarly, in funding games, Romans tried to outdo each other with the content of the games that they staged as well as the venues that they created.

The role of competition for public honours posed significant problems to Jewish ideals. Writers such as Philo and Josephus stake out ideological positions that abhorred the pursuit of earthly, material honours, including those gained through competitive giving.<sup>11</sup> I will return to their views later, though for now I note that these writers understood euergetism as incompatible with the pursuit of piety and obedience to God. Instead, leaders of society ought to be chosen by their commitment to piety (e. g., the priesthood), as opposed to their material resources. As such, Goodman writes that Judeans did not - ideally, at least - see a direct link between wealth and social prestige, as the highest status in Jewish society belonged to the priests, whose standing was not based on wealth. Moreover, euergetism retained some elements of pagan religiosity and rewards such as giving the benefactor statues in his/her image, which clashed with the Second Commandment prohibiting idolatry. Thus, Tessa Rajak, Goodman, and Seth Schwartz have illuminated how Diaspora and Second Temple-era Palestinian Jews, and the Amoraim, adapted euergetism in ways that circumvented aspects of Greco-Roman urban culture that were antithetical to Jewish ideals.

## Euergetism in Early Rabbinic Literature

Early rabbinic literature contains no programmatic or abstract denunciations of euergetism like those by Philo and Josephus. Tannaitic attitudes, however, can be gleaned by examining key texts on benefaction. Two in particular stand out as engagements with euergetism: chapter three of m. Yoma, which discusses contributions to the Jerusalem Temple, and t. Peah 4:18, a narrative on King Munbaz's relief of a famine.

Mishnah Yoma 3 discusses a number of contributions made to the Temple, such as the Parvah chamber, which was used for purification and named for its Persian benefactor (m. Yoma 3 :3, 3 :6) . A certain Ben Gamla donated gold lots to be used on Yom Kippur that replaced those made of boxwood. In return, "they remembered him with praise (m. Yoma 3 :9)." Likewise, in m. Yoma 3:10:

Ben Qatin made twelve spigots for the laver, which previously had only two; and he also made a machine for the laver, so that its waters would not become unfit [by remaining] overnight. Munbaz the king made all the handles of the vessels for the Day of Atonement out of gold. His mother Heleni made a candlestick of gold, [which was placed] over the doorway of the Holy; and she also made a tablet of gold, on which the portion of The Suspected Adulteress was written. Miracles befell the doors of Nicanor; and they remembered him with praise (m. Yoma 3:10).

This pericope reflects Greco-Roman norms, whereby it was common for benefactors to contribute towards the local cult and receive recognition in return. As I discussed above, rewards given to a benefactor broadcasted his or her honour to the public at large through material media. Similar goals are pursued in m. Yoma 3:9 - 10, albeit by very different means. In particular, there are no material counter-gifts, no visible rewards that project status and promote social competition. Rather, in the Mishnah, the benefactors are rewarded by having their names remembered with praise (m. Yoma 3:9 -10).

## King Munbaz and Euergetism

The second key text on Tannaitic approaches to euergetism is t. Peah 4:18:

An event in which Munbaz the king went and squandered (ביידין) his treasures during years of distress.

His brothers sent [a letter] to him, "Your ancestors saved treasures and added to those of their ancestors. But you went and gave away all of your treasures - [both] yours and those of your ancestors!"

He [Munbaz] said to them:

"My ancestors saved treasures below, but I saved [treasures] above, as it is said: Faithfulness will spring up from the ground<sup>23</sup> (Ps 85:12)."

"My ancestors saved treasures in a place in which a [human] hand rules, but I saved [treasures] in a place in which I [human] hand does not rule, as it is said: Righteousness (צדק) and justice are the base of Your throne; [steadfast love and faithfulness stand before You] (Ps 89:15)."

"My ancestors saved treasures that do not yield interest, but I saved treasures that yield interest, as it is said: Hail the just man, for he shall fare well; [He shall eat the fruit of his works] (Isa 3:10)."

"My ancestors saved treasures of money, but I saved treasures of lives/souls, as it is said:

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; a [wise man] captivates people (Prov 11 :30)."

"My ancestors saved treasures for others, but I saved treasures for myself, as it is said: ... and it will be to your credit [before the Lord your God] (Deut 24:13)." "My ancestors saved treasures in this world, but I saved treasures for myself in the world-to-come, as it is said: Your Vindicator shall march before you (Isa 58:8)" (t. Peah 4:18).

In this pericope, King Munbaz relieves a famine by giving away his treasures to those in need. Appalled that Munbaz would deplete the family fortune, his brothers write to him, contrasting his behaviour with that of their ancestors, who preserved the family fortune. Munbaz counters that the brothers misunderstand his actions - he is not squandering the family fortune, but rather saving it and adding to it. He distinguishes and elevates his actions from those of his ancestors in six ways, each of which is backed by a biblical proof text.

Scholars have long noted that Munbaz in this and other classical rabbinic texts refers, however loosely, to the historical figure of Monobazus II. From Greek and Latin writings (e.g., Josephus, Dio Cassius, Tacitus), we learn that Monobazus II was part of a family that ruled the small kingdom of Adiabene in Babylonia during the first century CE. Notably, Josephus narrates how Monobazus, together with his mother Helena and brother Izatus, converted to Judaism and made an offering at the Temple in Jerusalem. Moreover, Josephus relates how the family re-shaped Jerusalem's landscape by financing construction projects (a palace, massive family tomb, etc.), and providing military support. The family's munificence peaked in 46/47 CE when it arranged for and financed famine relief in Jerusalem following a drought - the "classic act of a Greek or Roman evergete.

This text, however, has yet to be examined within the context of euergetism. It draws upon a received tradition of Munbaz as a Hellenistic civic benefactor in order to model ideal behaviour for the local Palestinian economic elite. Whereas benefactions would normally be encouraged by the promise of material rewards that broadcast one's social status, our text promises intangible and heavenly rewards that are only accessible in otherworldly realms. These counter-gifts are drawn from rabbinic notions of divine justice, particularly the rewards for the righteous. These otherworldly rewards, moreover, are identical in kind to the earthly benefactions that Munbaz bestows.

We see this most prominently in the concept of "treasures," which in rabbinic Hebrew often indicates common foodstuffs, such as grain. Some rabbinic texts associate the word with the storage of intangible and otherworldly items, such as souls and grace. The term is likewise used in otherworldly contexts in Hellenistic-era texts and Jewish works on mysticism, which discuss treasures of snow and hail, and treasures of punishments for the wicked. Thus, while the ancestors store tangible and material treasures in the lowly human domain, Munbaz stores immaterial treasures in an immaterial place - above, in the world to come, which is beyond human control. Similarly, the concepts of interest/profit/fruit (פִּרְיָ) and soul/life (נֶפֶשׁ) operate in both this worldly and otherworldly contexts, appearing in discussions of earthly economic and legal matters as well as discourses on punishments, rewards, and divine justice. That the rewards include interest or profits touches upon what Gary Anderson identifies in the Yerushalmi and early Christian texts as "a unique set of 'economic' properties" whereby treasures invested in otherworldly contexts have a particularly high rate of return.

While Greek inscriptions point to social competition in the pursuit of honour and status as motivations to give, t. Peah 4:18 removes euergetism from these contexts. Instead of offering material counter-gifts that promote the benefactor's earthly standing, t. Peah 4:18 offers intangible and otherworldly rewards drawn from rabbinic discourses on divine justice - an idiosyncratically rabbinic approach to euergetism. Moreover, euergetism is not only encouraged by rewards, but also by the underlying argument of the passage, made through the choice of proof texts - namely, that it is a form of righteousness (צִדְקָה).

Ephraim Urbach observed that otherworldly treasures exist independently of human actions in the Hebrew Bible, while in t. Peah 4:18 these rewards are created by Munbaz's benefaction. Urbach explains this anomaly as a product of Munbaz's status as a proselyte, as his ability to store treasures for himself in the world to come is indicative of the "religious propaganda and missionary activities" that converts must adopt if they are to be accepted by their new coreligionists. Thus, Urbach's comments are typical of how scholars reading rabbinic texts on the Adiabene dynasty tend to focus on the issue of conversion. To be sure, no text from a Tannaitic compilation indicates direct knowledge of the family's conversion to Judaism. Reading t. Peah 4:18 within the context of Tannaitic attitudes on conversion, therefore, seems forced. In view of the context of euergetism, however, Munbaz's extraordinary individual, human agency seems entirely expected, as euergetism itself was driven by the agency of individual benefactors. The decision of what, where, to whom, when, and how much to give was a function of a benefactor's personal discretion and generosity.

## Euergetism and Judaism

How do the early rabbinic engagements with euergetism compare with Jewish sources of other periods and regions? In her study of inscriptions from late-antique synagogues in the Diaspora, Rajak demonstrates how Jews adapted euergetism to suit their idiosyncrasies. Whereas typical euergetic custom was to promote a donor's personal generosity, the synagogue inscriptions cast contributions as fulfillments of **religious obligations or as votive offerings**. There was an emphasis on donations by groups, instead of individuals, and some contributions were attributed as gifts from God. In an extreme case, the synagogue in Beth Shean (Scythopolis) kept benefactors' names anonymous, noting that God knew their identities. Thus, Diaspora Jews strove to minimise the prominence of any individual benefactor, abstaining from the typical visible and material honours that would otherwise promote social competition.

We see similar concerns in Palestinian sources, especially in Josephus, who writes th~t there is no room in the Jewish constitution for Greco-Roman civic norms. As I touched upon earlier, Josephus disparages Greeks for allowing personal wealth to determine one's social and political standing. Jews, by contrast, grant leadership to priests, who - at least in Josephus' idealised depiction - are characterised by their obedience to God and piety. Josephus belittles the pursuit of silver, gold, crowns, statues, and public recognition, writing that Jews abstain from such materiality, status symbols, and earthly honours.

For Josephus, euergetism could be acceptable if it was performed in the service of piety and obedience to God by fulfilling commandments; this included the provision of sacrifices, votive gifts to the Temple, and food distribution to the needy. These gifts could be seen as the fulfillment of certain biblical imperatives such as those related to the Temple cult and care for the poor. When describing these acts, Josephus avoids the language of euergetism, choosing to portray these benefactions as acts of piety (eusebeia). For example, Josephus depicts Adiabene's famine relief as an act of piety that can be assimilated to biblical commandments to support the poor. Similarly, in his account of the numerous sacrifices offered by Herod (e. g. 300 oxen) and other local notables to commemorate the refurbishments of the Temple in Jerusalem, Josephus describes the event in ways that avoid the language of competition among human benefactors. Rather, God alone is the true benefactor. Moreover, Schwartz finds that for Josephus rewards for benefactors could not take material form. Rather, only oral memorialisation was considered legitimate, as Josephus did not fully reject but rather adapted the Greco-Roman culture of display and reciprocity.

Moving ahead to Amoraic rabbinic texts of the late fourth century, Schwartz finds that Amoraic views on euergetism and memorialisation show "unmistakeable continuity" with the countercultural and adaptionist approach of Josephus. Like Josephus, the Yerushalmi rejects the aspects of euergetism that memorialise benefactors in plastic form and accepts forms that can be assimilated to biblical piety and the performance of commandments.

The acts of euergetism portrayed in m. Yoma 3 fit into the patterns that Schwartz finds in Josephus and the Yerushalmi. First, the acceptable benefactions are consistent with the performance of commandments related to the Temple cult. Second, the counter-gift is atypical of Greco-Roman counter-gifts, but typical of what we see in other Jewish texts, as the benefactor is simply memorialised without any reference to visible or material honours. Indeed, this memory would be further perpetuated in oral form by the rabbis when they transmitted these traditions.

The second text, on Munbaz's famine relief in t. Peah 4:18, bears some similarities to earlier Jewish engagements with euergetism, but also breaks new ground. First, the benefaction is typical of those acceptable to Jewish sensibilities, which have allowed for gifts that support the needy. Second, the Tannaim frame the narrative as an act of religious devotion, or more specifically צדקה - a term that here denotes both "righteousness" (as in biblical Hebrew) and "charity". The difference between this text and earlier engagements is that while rewards are immaterial, t. Peah 4:18 makes no mention of "memory" or a "memorial" to the benefactor or his benefaction. Rather, the counter-gifts are items drawn from a trove of rabbinic concepts related to rewards for the righteous and divine justice.

In this respect, t. Peah 4:18 is rather innovative. Gaining rewards for righteousness is surely a received tradition from the Hebrew Bible and there are indications in a handful of Second Temple era texts that such rewards would be earned by giving alms. Thus, the redactors of t. Peah 4:18 bring together received biblical and Hellenistic Jewish traditions on rewards for righteousness and charity, and blend them with acceptable forms of Greco-Roman euergetism. That is, the Tannaim equate an acceptable form of euergetism - support for the needy - with acts of righteousness and almsgiving that warrant otherworldly rewards for the benefactors.

## Conclusion

There were a number of aspects of euergetism that ran counter to Jewish ideals, particularly social competition for material rewards that projected and defined one's honour and standing in society. Scholars have asked if and how Jews engaged in euergetism, and in this paper I have sought to fill a lacuna in scholarship by exploring engagements in Tannaitic texts of the third century. I find that these texts mostly accord with Second Temple era sources and Amoraic texts. Certain benefactions, namely those that could be assimilated into modes of piety and the performance of biblical commandments were viewed as acceptable. Likewise, the rewards provided to the benefactor were immaterial. In m. Yoma 3, **the reward is memorialisation**, which is precisely what we find in Josephus. In t. Peah 4:18, the rewards are **likewise immaterial**, but instead of memorialisation, Munbaz pursues financial or economic rewards in the world to come that mirror the material contributions that he makes in this world. They are identical in kind to his

benefactions, but differ in location - a typical euergetic move, as Rajak writes that honours were often selected to be commensurated in quantity and quality with the benefactions. By eliminating material rewards, the Tosefta removes euergetism from the context of competition for earthly honours that are marked and projected by certain material objects and re-contextualises it within rabbinic discourse.