John Van Maaren

The Boundaries of Jewishness in the Southern Levant 200 BCE–132 CE
Studia Judaica

Forschungen zur Wissenschaft des Judentums

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Preface

This project began as a tangent in my doctoral research on the Gospel of Mark but quickly grew to occupy most of my research focus. While looking for a way to think about Jewishness and the texts now contained in the New Testament that did not essentialize Jewishness or embed Christianity’s distinctiveness in its methodology, I came across Andreas Wimmers’s *Ethnic Boundary Making Paradigm: Institutions, Power, Networks* (2013), which outlines a sociological model that explains changes in the form and function of ethnicity through the interplay of macro-level phenomena and micro-level behaviors. This model promised a more rigorous conceptualization, but also required more time than I scheduled. The result was a 2019 dissertation titled “The Gospel of Mark within Judaism” that included three chapters on Jewishness and one on Mark. The current volume is a restructured and largely rewritten version of the three dissertation chapters that introduce the methodology and use it to think about Jewishness during the Hasmonean and Early Roman periods (now chapters 1, 3, and 4). I have also added a new chapter on the Seleucid period (chapter 2).

There are many people and institutions to thank. Anders Runesson, my original doctoral supervisor in the Department of Religious Studies at McMaster University, provided the enthusiastic encouragement to pursue this “tangent” and gave me the confidence and freedom to immerse myself in the literature and material evidence of Early Judaism despite the initial uncertainty of whether it would produce meaningful results. He also generously continued as my co-supervisor after taking a position at the University of Oslo. Matthew Thiessen’s willingness to join my committee as co-supervisor after joining the Religious Studies faculty at McMaster University in 2016 improved this project at every point through attention to detail, deep knowledge of the sources, and availability to talk through numerous aspects of the project. I would not have ventured to write on ancient Jewishness without the expertise of Eileen Schuller, my third committee member. She provided a critical eye for detail and caught numerous early errors. Two other people at McMaster were key for deepening my thinking. Daniel Machiela kindly invited me to work as a research assistant for a project on the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls that allowed me to better understand the material aspects of ancient manuscripts. Michael Johnson provided meaningful friendship throughout the program and taught me much about studying ancient Jewish literature and the research process.

This book has benefited from feedback at many research groups and seminars. These include the Authoritative Texts and Their Reception Research School, funded by the Norwegian Research Council, the McMaster Ancient Judaism Ancient Christianity Seminar, the Early Christianity, Early Judaism, and the Study of Religion Seminar at the *Canadian Society of Biblical Studies*, and the Jewish

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I completed much of the research and revisions as a residential doctoral fellow at Tantur Ecumenical Institute for Theological Studies in Jerusalem during the 2017–2018 and 2018–2019 academic years. Rector Fr. Russell McDougal cultivated a supportive and constructive community that provided the time for research amidst the many distractions that are the peoples, communities, and cultures that make up Jerusalem. I learned much from conversations with Tantur’s residential fellows and scholars, including Ryann Craig, Steve Geertz, Todd Hibbard, Raanan Mallek, Josh McManaway, Hector Patmore, David Smith, Nicholas Taylor, and Eric Wyckoff. Much of the chapter on the early Roman Period was researched and written in what is still my favorite library – that of the École biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem.

The process of developing this study into a book took up the twilight hours of my year-and-a-half at the Catholic University of America and was not yet complete when I arrived in Heidelberg for an Alexander von Humboldt postdoctoral fellow at the Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg. I thank Matthias Konradt, my Gastgeber, for allowing me to finish this project before beginning my postdoctoral research on the Gospel of Mark. I also thank the reviewers for constructive feedback, and especially Alexander Samely for a productive dialogue about numerous structural and thematic issues. Alice Meroz and Sabina Dabrowski provided a seamless editorial process.

Allyson, my life partner, has ensured our days are more than just studies. One of the nicest surprises of the academic journey has been the persons and ways of life we have come to know in Chicago, USA, Hamilton, Canada, Israel, the Palestinian Territories, Washington, DC, USA, and now Heidelberg, Germany. In each place we have found communities that welcomed our growing family. Allyson has made everywhere feel like home and has helped me see aspects of each place that I would have otherwise overlooked. Our three kids help me rediscover wonder. They also learn new languages at a pace I can only envy. The disadvantage of multiple international moves has been the time away from our extended family. Despite the distance, my parents, Jane and Rick Van Maaren, have been a constant source of support and encouragement. It is from them I first learned the importance of investigating the past for making meaning in the present and I dedicate this book to them.
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Abbreviations

1 Ancient Authors and Works

Appian
*Hist. rom.*  *Historia romana*

Aristotle
*Pol.*  *Politica*

Arrian
*Anab.*  *Anabasis*

Augustine
*Civ.*  *De civitate Dei*

Cicero
*Flac.*  *Pro Flacco*

Clem. Al.
*Strom.*  *Stromateis*

Curtius Rufus
*Hist.*  *Historiae Alexandri Magni*

Dead Sea Scrolls
1QapGen  Genesis Apocryphon
1QM  War Scroll
1QpHab  Pesher Habakkuk
1QS  Rule of the Community
4Q216  Jub a
4Q266–273  D a–h
4Q285  Sefer ha-Milḥamah
4Q372  4QapocrJoseph b
4Q471  War Scroll-like Text B
4Q491–496  M a–f
4QMKT  Miṣḥat Ma’asê ha-Torah
4QpNah  Pesher Nahum
11Q14  Sefer ha-Milḥamah
11Q19  Temple Scroll a
11Q20  Temple Scroll b
D  Damascus Document

Diodorus Siculus
*Hist.*  *Bibliotheca Historica*

Eus.
*Hist. Eccl.*  *Historia ecclesiastica*

Praep. ev.
*Praeparatio evangelica*
Herodotus

Hist  Historiae

Jos.  Josephus

Ag. Ap.  Against Apion

Ant.  Jewish Antiquities

J.W.  Jewish War

Life  Life

Justin

Dial.  Dialogus cum Tryphone

Juvenal

Sat.  Satirae

Pausanias

Descr.  Graeciae descriptio

Philo

Flacc.  In Flaccum

Pliny the Elder

Nat.  Naturalis historia

Plutarch

Alex.  Alexander

Cic.  Cicero

Demetr.  Demetrius

Polybius

Hist.  Historiae

Pseudepigrapha and Related Texts

1 En.  1 Enoch

2 Bar.  2 Baruch

An. Apoc.  Animal Apocalypse

ApW  Apocalypse of Weeks

Epistle  Epistle of Enoch

Jub.  Jubilees

Pss. Sol.  Psalms of Solomon

Sim.  Similitudes of Enoch

T. Mos.  Testament of Moses

Strabo

Geogr.  Geography

Suetonius

Dom.  Domitianus
2  Journals, Major Reference Works, and Series

ABD  Anchor Bible Dictionary. Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday
ABS  Archaeology and Biblical Studies
ABRL  Anchor Bible Reference Library
ADPV  Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins
AJEC  Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity
ANRW  Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung. Part 2, Principat. Edited by Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase, (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1972–
ASOR  American Schools of Oriental Research
Atiqot
AYBRL  Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library
BA  Biblical Archaeologist
BARIS  British Archaeological Reports International Series
BASOR  Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BBR  Bulletin for Biblical Research
BCH  Bulletin de correspondence hellénique
BETL  Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BHT  Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
Bib  Biblica
BibOr  Biblica et Orientalia
BJS  Brown Judaic Studies
BN  Biblische Notizen
BRLJ  Brill Reference Library of Judaism
BSGRT  Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana
BSJS  Brill’s Series in Jewish Studies
BTB  Biblical Theological Bulletin
BZ  Biblische Zeitschrift
BZABR  Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte
CBET  Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBQMS  Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CEJL  Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature
CGTC  Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary
CHANE  Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
CSCO  Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
CSHJ  Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism
ConBNT  Coniectanea Biblica: New Testament Series
CRINT  Compendia Rerum Judaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
CurBR  Currents in Biblical Research
DCLS  Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DJD</td>
<td>Discoveries in the Judaeaean Desert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSD</td>
<td>Dead Sea Discoveries</td>
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<tr>
<td>EBib</td>
<td>Études bibiques</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECL</td>
<td>Early Christian Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAT</td>
<td>Forschungen zum Alten Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRLANT</td>
<td>Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCS</td>
<td>Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten [drei] Jahrhunderte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GTR</td>
<td>Gender, Theory, and Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAR</td>
<td>Hebrew Annual Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCS</td>
<td>Hellenistic Culture and Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hermeneia</td>
<td>Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSCP</td>
<td>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</td>
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<td>HSM</td>
<td>Harvard Semitic Monographs</td>
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<tr>
<td>HTR</td>
<td>Harvard Theological Review</td>
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<td>HTS</td>
<td>Harvard Theological Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>HUCM</td>
<td>Monographs of the Hebrew Union College</td>
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<td>ICC</td>
<td>International Critical Commentary</td>
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<td>IEJ</td>
<td>Israel Exploration Journal</td>
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<td>INJ</td>
<td>Israel Numismatic Journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Int</td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
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<tr>
<td>JAAR</td>
<td>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</td>
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<tr>
<td>AJI</td>
<td>Journal of Ancient Judaism</td>
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<tr>
<td>AJJSup</td>
<td>Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements</td>
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<tr>
<td>JBL</td>
<td>Journal of Biblical Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>JBQ</td>
<td>Jewish Bible Quarterly</td>
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<tr>
<td>JHebS</td>
<td>Journal of Hebrew Scriptures</td>
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<tr>
<td>JJMIS</td>
<td>Journal of the Jesus Movement in its Jewish setting</td>
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<tr>
<td>JQR</td>
<td>Jewish Quarterly Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>JR</td>
<td>Journal of Religion</td>
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<tr>
<td>JRH</td>
<td>Journal of Religious History</td>
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<tr>
<td>JRA</td>
<td>Journal of Roman Archaeology</td>
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<tr>
<td>JRASup</td>
<td>Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JRS</td>
<td>Journal of Roman Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSJ</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSJSup</td>
<td>Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSNT</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSNTSup</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSOT</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSOTSup</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series</td>
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<td>JSP</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSPSup</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series</td>
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<tr>
<td>JTS</td>
<td>Journal of Theological Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>LCL</td>
<td>Loeb Classical Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEC</td>
<td>Library of Early Christianity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LHBOTS</td>
<td>Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
LSTS Library of Second Temple Studies
NEA Near Eastern Archaeology
NovT Novum Testamentum
NovTSup Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NRTh La nouvelle revue théologique
NSKAT Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar Altes Testament
NTS New Testament Studies
NTL New Testament Library
OTL Old Testament library
PEQ Palestine Exploration Quarterly
PVTG Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti Graece
RB Revue biblique
RBS Resources for Biblical Study
RechBib Recherches bibliques
RelSRev Religious Studies Review
RevQ Revue de Qumrân
RNT Regensburger Neues Testament
SANT Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testaments
SBLDS Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SC Sources Crétiennes
SCJ Studies in Christianity and Judaism
SCS Septuagint and Cognate Studies
Sem Semitica
SFSHJ South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism
SJ Studia Judaica
SJLA Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SJOT Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament
SNTSMS Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP Sacra Pagina
SSEJC Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity
STDJ Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
StPB Studia Post-Biblica
SymS Symposium Series
SWBA Social World of Biblical Antiquity
Abbreviations

**TAPA**  *Transactions of the American Philological Association*

**TBN**  Themes in Biblical Narrative

**TLZ**  *Theologische Literaturzeitung*

**TSAJ**  Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum

**TUGAL**  Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur

**TWNT**  *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*. Edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich. Stuttgart, 1932–70

**VL**  *Vetus Latina*

**VTSup**  Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum*

**WBC**  *Word Biblical Commentary*

**WC**  Westminster Commentaries

**WMANT**  Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament

**WUNT**  Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

**ZAW**  *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

**ZPE**  *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

**ZRGG**  *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*
1 Introduction and Methodology

Scholars continue to grapple with understanding Jewishness.¹ Shaye Cohen succinctly summarizes the undertaking: “I am attempting to understand how the Jews of antiquity drew the boundary between themselves and the gentiles, and thus to understand their conceptions of ‘Jewishness.’”² Reviews of work on the ancient Jews³ predictably complain of oversimplification and call for more attention to social, political, and cultural factors. Seth Schwartz, for example, critiques Cohen, along with Steve Mason⁴ and Daniel Boyarin,⁵ for working in binary categories and calls for more attention to complex social realities:

the tendency to think in binaries too often seems not an explanatory strategy but an intellectual style; its proponents seem to forget what they may claim to take for granted –

¹ The use of the intentionally vague Jewishness, rather than Judaism, is meant to disassociate the study from modern connotations of Judaism, which is sometimes understood in too strictly “religious” terms. Here I follow Shaye J. D. Cohen, The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties, HCS (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 7–8.
² Cohen, Beginnings, 8.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110787450-001
that social realities were more complex – and they are too quick to relieve themselves of the responsibility to make sense of the social, political, and cultural dynamics of change.6

David Goodblatt critiques Schwartz’s own work,7 along with that of Doron Mendels,8 stating, “I believe that narratives of ‘rise and fall’ [Mendels] or ‘collapse and rejudaization’ [Schwartz] can be misleading. Instead, the historical picture seems to be more usefully described as one of modification and change . . . .”9 Goodblatt’s study makes numerous important contributions to the study of these modifications and changes and, like other studies, does so without the benefit of a theoretical model to integrate individual insights into a cohesive picture of developing Jewish identity.

This study attempts to provide such an integrating mechanism by employing a recent contribution to the sociology of ethnicity that links micro-level individual identity construction with macro-level features of the political and social context. This model, which I refer to as the ethnic boundary making model, was developed by anthropologist-turned-sociologist Andreas Wimmer to explain “how and why ethnicity matters in certain societies and contexts.”10 Rather than simply identifying different forms and functions of ethnicity, it explains changes in both the form and function of ethnicity by “a cycle of reproduction and transformation composed of various stabilizing and transformative feedbacks.”11 As a compar-

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10 Ethnic Boundary Making: Institutions, Power, Networks (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 3. Andreas Wimmer does not name his model. I refer to it as the ethnic boundary making model because it is part of a paradigm in ethnic and racial studies called ethnic boundary making and within this paradigm, it is the first model that purports to systematically explain the making and unmaking of ethnic boundaries.
11 Wimmer, Ethnic Boundary Making, 111. The need for this type of integrating mechanism is noted (in relation to early Christianity) by Todd Berzon: “Insofar as ethnic reasoning was not an end in itself but rather a discursive operation driven toward a particular end, it is incumbent on scholars to develop models that attend to ethnicity as an epistemological and organizational technology. It is these issues, looking beyond the framework of identity, that demand further attention from scholars interested in early Christian notions of race and ethnicity. “Ethnicity and Early Christianity: New Approaches to Religious Kinship and Community,” CurBR 16 (2018): 191–227, esp. 221. Cf. Teresa Morgan, “Society, Identity and Ethnicity in the Hellenic World,” in Ethnicity, Race, Religion: Identities and Ideologies in Early Jewish and Christian Texts and in Modern Biblical Interpretation, ed. Katherine M. Hockey and David G. Horrell (New York: Bloomsbury, 2018), 23–45. esp. 27.
The Ethnic Boundary Making Model: Preliminary Remarks

Before outlining the *ethnic boundary making model*, several preliminary comments on the model, its place within the sociology of ethnicity, and its applicability to the study of Jewishness in antiquity will help introduce the model and illustrate its contribution to the study of Jewishness.

The Ancient Jews as an Ethnic Group: A Heuristic Choice

In order to employ the *ethnic boundary making model*, I approach the ancient Jews as an ethnic group. This is not a foreign idea to persons in antiquity, for

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Greek, Roman, and Jewish authors consistently designate the Jewish people as one *ethnos* (ἔθνος) among the many *ethnē* (ἔθνη) residing in the Greek and Roman worlds.\(^\text{15}\) It is true that the ancient term *ethnos* is broader than the modern category “ethnic group”\(^\text{16}\) and can refer to groups of nearly any sort (e.g., bees, doctors, or males).\(^\text{17}\) Further, not all ancient people groups described as *ethnē* represent ethnic groups by all definitions of ethnicity (e.g., Syrians).\(^\text{18}\) However, many, including the ancient Jews, are accurately described by this modern category.\(^\text{19}\) While various ways of belonging to the Jewish *ethnos* were emphasized by different persons at distinct times and in separate places, these differences do not change the basic designation of the Jews as an *ethnos*.\(^\text{20}\)

John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith outline six features commonly shared by co-ethnics.\(^\text{21}\) I quote their definitions here with brief explanations of how these were configured by members of the Jewish *ethnos* to show that each

\(^\text{18}\) The Seleucids defined a Syrian *ethnos* that included various people groups who did not share a common ancestry or culture, many of whom would likely not share a sense of solidarity. Nathanael J. Andrade, *Syrian Identity in the Greco-Roman World*, Greek Culture in the Roman Empire (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 10, 14–15.
\(^\text{19}\) Jonathan M. Hall writes of Greek ethnographers: “in attributing the social solidarity of an ethnos to genos (birth) and syngeneia (kinship) the Greeks came about as close as they could to our concept of ethnicity.” *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 18. See also Malkin, “Introduction,” 16. These characteristics are sufficiently present in most ancient conceptions of the Jewish *ethnos*.
\(^\text{20}\) According to the model of ethnicity adopted in this study (outlined later in this chapter under the two subheadings “The Ethnic Boundary Making Model”), designations such as “race,” “nation,” and “ethno-religion” are subtypes of ethnicity.
common characteristic is attested among at least some Jews and that treating Jewishness as an ethnic designation is warranted. I do not think that all six characters are part of the configuration of Jewishness for all Jews in antiquity, nor that all Jews understood each of the following features in the way I summarize below. Rather, these short summaries present common ways that some Jews configured each of these six common features, as indicated by the limited historical data. Throughout the study I italicize references to the names of these six common features.

(1) A common proper name, to identify and express the “essence” of its community.

In antiquity, three attested proper names are associated with the Jewish ethnos: “Hebrew” (עברית, Ἑβραῖος, Hebraeus), “Israel” (ישראל, Ισραήλ, Israel), and “Jew” (יהודי, Ιουδαίος, Iudaeus).22 “Hebrew” primarily designates a person from the pre-monarchic period of Jewish history.23 In second-temple texts, “Israel” can designate members of the united monarchy, northern kingdom, eschatological Israel, or simply function as a timeless designation of the ethnus. As we will see, most of the writers and redactors of the texts we address prefer “Israel.” During our period, the term “Jew” often designates members of the contemporary ethnus, but sometimes it designates a geographically defined subgroup, or specifically descendants of the southern kingdom of Judah. It is also used by the Seleucid, Hasmonean, and Roman rulers.24 Thoughout this study I refer to the ethnic group as “the Jewish ethnus” rather than “Israel.” This is partly for convenience, but it is also meant to reflect official designations of the people group and so take a broad and encompassing perspective.

23 For my understanding of the relation between these proper names, I follow Jason Staples’s recent study. For a short summary see, Idea of Israel, 26–29. Staples demonstrates that Kuhn’s influential thesis (that “Israel” is an insider designation and “Jew” is an outsider designation) is overly simplistic. While no extant non-Jewish texts from our time use ישראל, Israel, Hebrew usage of יהודים, Iudaeus is best explained as designating a part of Israel (esp. descendants of the southern kingdom) rather than as mimicry of non-Jewish usage.
24 Cf. Seleucid: Antiochus III: Jos., Ant., 12.137–144; Hasmonean: 1 Maccabees, Eupolemus (Ευσ., Praep. Ev., Frag. 1: 9.261; Frag. 2: 9.30.1–34.18; Frag. 3: 9.34.20; Frag. 4: 9.39.2–5; and Clem. Al., Strom., 1.23.153.4; 1.21.130.3; 1.141.4–5). 1 Maccabees also uses “Israel,” perhaps interchangeably, but often with connotations of greater Israel. For the Romans, we lack direct evidence of their preferred designation of the Jewish ethnus. However, the consistent use of the name Judea for the shifting political administrations and the absence of any evidence that Rome also used “Israel” suggests they preferred “the Jews.”
(2) A myth of common ancestry, a myth rather than a fact, a myth that includes the idea of a common origin in time and place and that gives an ethnie a sense of fictive kinship.

The eponymous ancestor Jacob/Israel is of central importance for Jewish ancestry. As we will see, putative descent from Abraham was employed to expand definitions of Jewishness by the Hasmoneans and contested by others.

(3) Shared historical memories, or better, shared memories of a common past or pasts, including heroes, events, and their commemoration.

The events narrated in Jewish sacred texts provide a foundational collection of historical memories. The communal reading of these texts in synagogues, a practice apparently unique to the Jews in antiquity, further engrained these narratives in collective Jewish identity. Prominent figures include the Patriarchs, Moses, David, Ezra, etc. Formative events include the call of Abraham, the exodus from Egypt, the constitution of a covenant people at Mt. Sinai, the golden age of the united monarchy, the exile and deportation to Babylon, the Antiochene persecution, and the Hasmonean rebellion.

(4) One or more elements of common culture, which need not be specified but normally include religion, customs, or language.

Religion, customs, language, and other cultural aspects shared by some Jews overlap significantly. Religion cannot be disentangled from other cultural elements, especially in antiquity. While those elements of Jewishness most closely associated with the modern term religion may be the Jewish deity and cultic veneration, both in Jerusalem and at other cultic sites, the observance of specific Jewish customs (e.g., dietary laws, Sabbath observance) is closely associated with Jewish law and with obedience to their deity. Accordingly, this study will approach the Jerusalem temple, cultic practice, and law as part of common culture, without distinguishing religion from common customs. At the same time, this study will retain the term ethno-religion as a subcategory of ethnicity. This designation describes ethnic groups for whom those elements most commonly associated with the modern concept of religion are especially prominent and when the practice of

other common customs is reinforced by appeal to an ethnic deity. In the case of the Jewish *ethnos*, these elements are primarily the Jewish deity and the associated cultic veneration. While there was no single language that was spoken by all Jews, the Hebrew language, as the language of many of their sacred texts, at times functioned symbolically for non-Hebrew speaking Jews.

(5) A link with a *homeland*, not necessarily its physical occupation by the *ethnie*, only its symbolic attachment to the ancestral land, as with diaspora peoples.

This is, of course, the land of Israel, or *Judea/Palestina*. The land had symbolic importance for Jews living in the *homeland* as well as for those in the diaspora. The symbolic importance of land persists despite the constantly changing, and sometimes disappearing, borders.

(6) A *sense of solidarity* on the part of at least some sections of the *ethnie*’s population.

This sense of solidarity is often shared by part, but not all, of the ethnic group and the strength of this sentiment varies. Variation in degrees of solidarity is well attested for members of the Jewish *ethnos* in the ancient Mediterranean world (i.e., *Oikoumenê*). For example, at the outbreak of the first Jewish revolt, Josephus relates that the Jewish residents of Scythopolis sided with the city rather than the revolt, and “regarding their own security as more important than kinship (τὴν συγγένειαν), met their own countrymen (τοῖς ὁμοφυλοῖς) in battle.” That is, according to Josephus’s description, the Jews of Scythopolis had a weaker sense of solidarity with the Jewish *ethnos* than the Jews of other cities drawn into the revolt, leading the Jews of Scythopolis to side with the city against the Jewish rebels.

In this study, I make no conclusions about the importance of any of these common features of Jewishness for all or most Jews. Rather, I am interested in the way that writers employ these common features in the remaking of ethnic boundaries and how this strategic use impacts the importance and function of these common

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27 This *sense of solidarity* is what Edward Shils and Clifford Geertz label “primordial attachments” (also primordial ties/sentiments) and that they use to explain the persistence of ethnic distinctiveness. Edward Shils, “Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties: Some Particular Observations on the Relationships of Sociological Research and Theory,” *The British Journal of Sociology* 8 (1957): 130–45; Clifford Geertz, “The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Politics in the New States,” in *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa*, ed. Clifford Geertz (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), 105–57. However, the sense of solidarity does not explain the persistence of ethnic boundaries because it is often not shared by all co-ethnics.

features in the continual construction of what it means to be Jewish (discussed below in subsection “Typology of Boundary Strategies Part I: Modes of Boundary Making”). In contrast to monothetic approaches that make one of the above features (most often common ancestry) the defining element of ethnic identity, I use a polythetic approach that understands ethnicity as made up of “maps of characteristics that may or may not be shared by members of a group.” The choice of a polythetic definition of ethnicity is heuristic insofar as it allows a broad definition of ethnicity that is able, for example, to encompass “conversion” as a feature of Jewishness, and coheres with Wimmer’s definition of ethnicity in the ethnic boundary making model.

Wimmer defines ethnicity as “a subjectively felt belonging to a group that is [most often] distinguished by a shared culture and by common ancestry” that “rests on cultural practices perceived as ‘typical’ for the community, or on myths of a common historical origin, or on phenotypical similarities indicating common descent.” This encompassing definition treats race, nationality, and ethno-religion as subtypes of ethnicity. Therefore, it differs from approaches that equate ethnicity with either race (e.g., Denise Buell) or nationality (e.g., David Goodblatt), or that distinguish ethnicity from an ethno-religion (e.g., Shaye Cohen).

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31 Similarly, John M. G. Barclay adopts a polythetic definition of ethnicity and acknowledges this is a heuristic choice when he writes, “Can we speak of shared ‘ethnicity’ even when there is no claim to shared ancestry, or is that a contradiction in terms? That is a definitional decision we have to make, and we must be clear that that is our decision.” “Τουθατος: Ethnicity and Translation,” in Ethnicity, Race, Religion, 49. Erich Gruen, while adopting a monothetic definition of Jewishness based on genealogy, acknowledges that the term ethnicity can be used heuristically with an agreed-upon definition that differs from common ancestry. “Did Ancient Identity Depent on Ethnicity?” 2.


ingly, when the Jewish *ethnos* realizes nationalistic aspirations, it can be subcategorized as a nationality (e.g., during the Maccabean revolt and Hasmonean dynasty); when Jewishness is understood in strictly genealogical terms and is attributed an ontological status, it can be subcategorized as a race (e.g., the authors of Jubilees, 4QMMT, the Animal Apocalypse and 1 Esdras); and when the adoption of Jewish cultic practice and associated customs is a commonly accepted means of becoming Jewish, it can be subcategorized as an ethno-religion (e.g., Shaye Cohen argues the conversion of the Idumeans under John Hyrcanus marks this shift). This broad and encompassing definition enables the ethnicity concept to do the conceptual work needed to examine changes in Jewishness without discarding the concept in favor of another.

**Ethnic Boundaries and the Study of Jewishness in Anqituity**

The *ethnic boundary making model* acknowledges that co-ethnics often share elements of common culture. However, it also makes the important distinction between ethnicity and culture – that is, not all members of an ethnic group necessarily share the same culture. Here Wimmer follows Fredrick Barth, whose seminal essay is often cited as a landmark in the sociology of ethnicity. This distinction shifts the focus of investigation from the “cultural stuff” of ethnic groups, understood as self-evident units, to the boundaries separating ethnic groups in a given social field defined spatially and temporally. Because the distinction between ethnicity and culture represents a watershed in the sociology of ethnicity, it will be helpful to trace the basic lines of development in the social-scientific understanding of ethnicity in order to better situate the contribution of the *ethnic boundary making model* to the study of ethnicity.


35 *Beginnings*, 118.


The development of the ethnicity concept may be usefully described as a dialectical from primordialism (thesis), through circumstantialism (anti-thesis), to constructivism (synthesis). Whereas previous scholarship had assumed that contact between different ethnic groups would naturally lead once-distinct peoples to assimilate to a common group identity and culture, primordialism and circumstantialism provided explanations for the persistence of ethnic groups in multi-ethnic societies.39 As a first explanation, sociologists suggested that the persistence of ethnic groups may be due to the strong primordial bonds that form among individuals in primary groups (e.g., neighborhoods, families, or play groups of children), often due to (putative) common descent, and the perceived immutability of ethnic identity.40 Edward Shils (1957) first outlined the basic primordialist position,41 but Clifford Geertz (1963) provided the classic formulation. He defined a primordial attachment as

one that stems from . . . the assumed “givens” . . . of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born in a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on, are seen to have an ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves.42

Geertz, in contrast to some later primordialists, was careful to point out that the “givens” are assumed rather than real, making allowance for shifting ethnic identities over time and avoiding essentializing ethnicity as an ontological given. The emphasis for primordialists, however, was on the resistance to change, and the object of investigation was the ethnic group as a self-evident unit, defined especially by common ancestry and common culture.

Mediterranean world can be found in Morgan, “Society, Identity, and Ethnicity in the Hellenic World,” 23–45; Berzon, “Ethnicity and Early Christianity,” 191–227; and Stewart Alden Moore, Jewish Ethnic Identity and Relations in Hellenistic Egypt: With Walls of Iron?, JSJSup 171 (Boston: Brill, 2015), 7–44.

39 The most notable examples are the persistence of ethnic difference in the so-called “melting pot” of the United States and the re-emergence of ethnic categorization in the former European colonies in Asia and Africa. Cornell and Hartmann, Ethnicity and Race, 44–45.

40 A term closely related to primordialism is “essentialism.” Both emphasize the givenness of ethnic ties. Whereas primordialism emphasizes the emotional ties binding members from birth and rooted in the ancient past (hence, “primordialism”), essentialism more generally approaches ethnicity as an ontological given. Cornell and Hartmann, Ethnicity and Race, 59.

41 “Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties,” 133.

Fredrik Barth (1969) provided an alternative explanation for the persistence of ethnic groups based on two empirical observations. First, ethnic boundaries can be both stable and porous because “boundaries persist despite a flow of personnel across them.”43 In other words, in a social context marked by widespread agreement on the relevant ethnic categories, examples of individuals crossing the boundary and joining a different ethnic group abound. Individuals and groups cross boundaries strategically, often to gain access to resources (whether concrete or symbolic). Accordingly, ethnic identification is often manipulated towards specific ends.44 Second, Barth observed that “stable, persisting, and often vitally important social relations are maintained across such boundaries, and are frequently based precisely on the dichotomized ethnic status.”45 For Barth and other circumstantialists, the persistence of ethnic difference is not based on the lack of contact across ethnic boundaries. Rather, inter-ethnic interaction is a necessary component in communicating ethnic difference as, for example, by an overly formal handshake or knowing glance. Therefore, for Barth and many others, the persistence of ethnic difference is explained not by primordial attachments, but by the ability of ethnic identity to adapt to changing circumstances.46

The circumstantialist identification of boundaries as the (metaphorical) place where persons develop agreed-upon criteria of determining membership and a structure of interaction meant that the focus of investigation was no longer the cultural stuff of ethnic groups understood as self-contained units. Rather, the basic unit of observation became a spatially defined area (with the chosen level of abstraction determined geographically or politically) and the boundary system operating in that area.47 Further, since not all members of an ethnic group necessarily share a distinct culture, the basic criterion for sociologists to determine group membership became self-ascription and ascription by others (i.e., someone is Jewish because they claim to be Jewish and because others agree).48

44 A term closely related to circumstantialism is “instrumentalism.” Both emphasize ethnicity as something used by persons towards particular means. Whereas circumstantialism emphasizes the contextual factors influencing persons’ use of ethnicity, instrumentalism places the focus on the goal to which ethnicity is utilized. Cornell and Hartmann, Ethnicity and Race, 59.
46 Cornell and Hartmann, Ethnicity and Race, 48.
47 Barth, “Introduction,” 17.
48 This was famously termed an “imagined community” by Benedict Anderson. Anderson speaks of nations, but the same expression is often repeated for the closely related concept ethnicity. Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 6.
Circumstantialism won the day over primordialism by integrating the basic primordial observation into a circumstantialist approach to ethnicity. That is, while ethnicity adapts fluidly to changing circumstances, persons often experience it as primordial and fixed.\footnote{Cornell and Hartmann, \textit{Ethnicity and Race}, 71. Cf. Francisco J. Gil-White, “How Thick Is Blood? The Plot Thickens . . .: If Ethnic Actors Are Primordialists, What Remains of the Circumstantialist / Primordialist Controversy?,” \textit{Ethnic and Racial Studies} 22 (1999): 789–820} Scholarship on ethnicity therefore began to focus on how ethnic identity is constructed and how it takes on the appearance of an immutable given. This emphasis on the construction of the perceived fixity of ethnic boundaries became known as constructivism.\footnote{Rogers Brubaker states “Today, few if any scholars would argue that ethnic groups . . . are fixed or given; . . . This holds even for those who . . . have sought to revive and re-specify the primordialist position by explaining the deep roots of essentialist or primordialist thinking in everyday life. In this sense, we are all constructivists now.” “Ethnicity, Race, and Nationalism,” \textit{Annual Review of Sociology} 35 (2009): 21–42, esp. 28. Summarizing studies of ethnicity in antiquity, Todd Berzon writes “scholars of the ancient Mediterranean have shifted their discussions of ethnicity away from essentialist, instrumentalist and primordialist conceptualizations of the category and instead have moved toward an understanding of the ideological, historical and discursive processes by which notions of national or ethnic kinship were constructed, maintained, altered and refashioned.” “Ethnicity and Early Christianity,” 192.} These constructivist assumptions now represent a consensus among sociological and anthropological approaches to ethnicity.\footnote{Richard Jenkins critiques Wimmer for neglecting ethnic solidarity. “Time to Move beyond Boundary Making?,” \textit{Ethnic and Racial Studies} 37 (2014): 809–13, esp. 810. Wimmer responds by pointing out that the model does not focus on ethnic solidarity but does explain the conditions under which solidarity develops. “Ethnic Boundary Making as Strategic Action: Reply to My Critics,” \textit{Ethnic and Racial Studies} 37 (2014): 834–42, esp. 834–35.}

Within the constructivist consensus, the \textit{ethnic boundary making model} represents an important development by offering the only attempt at “systematically explaining the varying character and consequences of ethnic boundaries.”\footnote{A synonymous term is “constructionist.”} A prominent emphasis among constructivists, since the late 1990s, has been the properties and mechanisms of boundary processes.\footnote{For a summary of these developments see Brubaker, “Ethnicity, Race, and Nationalism,” 28–34. For an early survey of sociology of ethnic boundary making see Michèle Lamont and Virág Molnár, “The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences,” \textit{Annual Review of Sociology} 28 (2002): 167–95.} The \textit{ethnic boundary making model} attempts to systematize the advances in understanding boundary making processes by developing a comparative analytic that explains how and why ethnicity matters.\footnote{Wimmer, \textit{Ethnic Boundary Making}, 2.} It therefore represents a promising, and as yet untapped, resource for better mapping changes in Jewishness in antiquity.
The development of ethnicity theory from primordialism, through circumstantialism to a constructivist consensus has several implications for this study. First, the focus on ethnic boundaries means that the focus of this study is not the Jewish *ethnos* as a self-evident unit, but the various boundaries between Jews and other *ethnē* (e.g., Jews and Samaritans, Jews and Egyptians, Jews and Greeks). The concept of “boundary” has two dimensions: categorical and behavioral. Categorical boundaries refer to manners of classification (e.g., the statement “Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans”) while behavioral boundaries refer to everyday lived networks of relations (e.g., individual Jews and how they interacted with individual Samaritans in actual practice). Behavioral boundaries are not concerned with whether actors interact across boundaries; they must in order to mark boundaries. Rather, behavioral boundaries are concerned with how actors interact: whether ethnic difference is marked by patterns of differentiation in everyday lived interactions. For example, while epigraphic evidence confirms that non-Jews participated in diaspora synagogues, it tells us little about how Jews interacted with non-Jews in synagogue settings. Only when categorical and behavioral boundaries coincide can one speak of a social boundary. In the case of the ancient Jewish *ethnos*, we lack sufficient data to verify social boundaries, since behavioral boundaries cannot be recovered. While the consistent categorical boundaries between Jews and others strongly suggest social boundaries existed in most contexts, we should not equate categorical boundaries with social boundaries.

Any constructivist study of ethnic boundaries must focus on a local-specific area. For this study, I demarcate the geographical area loosely as the Southern Levant with a specific focus on the shifting political boundaries during Seleucid (200–129 BCE), Hasmonean (129–63 BCE), and early Roman rule (63 BCE–132 CE). Accordingly, only textual and material remains that can plausibly be assigned to the Southern Levant during the chronological and spatial limits of this study constitute evidence for Jewishness. An implication of making the basic unit of

55 Moore takes this approach in his study of Jewish ethnic identity in Egypt, *Jewish Ethnic Identity*, 43–44.
57 John 4:9. All English translations of texts now contained in the New Testament are from the New Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.
observation a physical space means that the conclusions about Jewishness in the Southern Levant cannot be extrapolated to Jewishness in Rome, or elsewhere, where the different field characteristics impact the boundary system in different ways. While common sense suggests that there were shared characteristics by persons in Rome and Jerusalem who self-identified as members of a Jewish *ethnos* and who, even when meeting for the first time, would share a sense of *solidarity*, circumstantialism’s emphasis on boundaries implies that this sense of *solidarity*, and the identification of *common culture* must be a conclusion about Jewishness, based on the extant evidence, and not an *a priori* part of the definition of Jewishness.

A second implication of the constructivist consensus is that the separation of ethnicity from culture means that Jewishness cannot be defined in terms of global cultural markers shared by all Jews. For example, James Dunn’s four pillars of second temple Judaism (monotheism, election, land, and Torah/temple) should not be used to determine who was, and who was not Jewish.\(^{59}\) In the context of the constructivist consensus, James Dunn may have rightly identified four features shared by many Jews in antiquity. However, to use these characteristics as criteria for Jewishness and, for example, claim that an individual was not Jewish because they venerated multiple deities, is to confuse ethnic identity and some of its more common cultural manifestations. Instead, the critical feature of ethnic identity is self-ascription and ascription by others. Therefore, a Jew is someone who self-identifies as a Jew and more assuredly so if others also identify them as Jewish.\(^{60}\)

The criterion of self-ascription to identify members of the Jewish *ethnos* finds ample examples from antiquity. To take an example from Hellenistic Judaism, Artapanus’s claim that Moses founded the Egyptian animal cults departs dramatically from the Deuteronomistic emphasis on monotheism. However, his unmistakable commitment to and identification with the Jewish *ethnos* caused ancient historians and modern scholars to rightly regard Artapanus as Jewish.\(^{61}\) That is, according to both ancient historians and modern scholars, Artapanus is Jewish because he regards himself as Jewish.

Still, the separation of ethnicity and culture does not deny the importance of cultural difference. Rather, it repositions its role in the investigation of eth-


nicity in two ways. On the one hand, there is a correlation between common culture and ethnic identification. For example, in John Barclay’s scale of levels of assimilation among Egyptian Jews, the highest level of Jewish cultural assimilation involves abandoning “key Jewish social distinctives” such as allegiance to a single deity, Levitical dietary laws, Sabbath, and male circumcision. Barclay’s concept of assimilation – defined as social integration marked by social contacts, social interaction, and social practices – corresponds to an abandonment of shared culture by members of the Jewish ethnos. According to circumstantial and constructivist approaches to ethnicity the abandonment of shared culture does not in itself constitute a break with the ethnos. Rather, the key element of ethnicity is ascription. Barclay notes that Jews who abandoned ancestral practices tended to incur criticism from other Jews and are sometimes depicted as apostate. That is, there is a correlation between abandonment of shared culture and a break with the ethnos. However, the question of whether someone exhibits key cultural markers and whether they are part of the ethnic group, while related, remain distinct issues.

For example, the writer of 3 Maccabees characterizes a certain Dositheos as “a Jew by birth (τὸ γένος Ἰουδαῖος) who later changed his customs (τὰ νόμιμα) and apostatized (ἀπηλλοτριωμένος) from the ancestral traditions (τῶν πατρίων δογμάτων).” In the case of Dositheos, his abandonment of Jewish culture was met with a repudiation of his Jewishness by the writer of 3 Macc. However, our extant sources provide no indication of Dositheos’s self-ascription – that is, did Dositheos understand his own abandonment of Jewish culture to constitute a repudiation of his Jewishness? In the case of Jews from antiquity who purportedly abandoned the ancestral customs, we have no indication of their own self-ascription as Jewish or otherwise, because they are always mediated through hostile sources.

On the other hand, key cultural markers may be manipulated toward specific purposes. While Dositheos and other Jews may have sought to hide their Jewishness by a full abandonment of key cultural markers, more often, these cultural markers are simply manipulated toward practical ends. In the process they may take on different roles and be attributed greater or lesser importance.

64 3 Macc 1:3. Translation adapted from the New Revised Standard Version.
65 Stephen Wilson’s study examines individuals labeled as apostates or defectors by others and notes that “those so labeled . . . may not see themselves in the same light at all.” *Leaving the Fold: Apostates and Defectors in Antiquity*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 12.
The *ethnic boundary making model* provides a cyclical model that posits causal explanations for changing configurations of Jewishness by considering the role of personal agency, as discussed in the following two subsections.

### Personal Agency and the Struggle over Boundaries

The *ethnic boundary making model* focuses on the struggle over boundaries rather than simply their meaning and location. Accordingly, boundary markers (e.g., circumcision, Torah observance) matter not merely as such, but for how they are used by persons to negotiate the location, relevance, and consequences of boundaries. Various strategic *modes* of boundary making may be employed by persons according to different *means* (discussed below under the two subheadings “Typology of Boundary Making Strategies”). An individual’s strategic choices are motivated by a variety of incentives and restricted by various constraints. In the struggle over boundaries, persons may disagree about the most relevant and meaningful ethnic categories. Herod’s contested ethnicity is perhaps the most obvious example, if also anomalous. More generally, ethnic boundaries themselves are contested (e.g., are Idumaeans Jews?) and there-

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66 Wimmer, *Ethnic Boundary Making*, 4. In relation to Jewishness, John Barclay writes “at the very least, different elements of this complex compound could be foregrounded or downplayed for social purposes,” and “no doubt that association could be played up or down for political and polemical purposes.” “Ἰουδαῖος: Ethnicity and Translation,” 49, 52.

67 This emphasis goes beyond Barth. Moore, whose analysis of Jewish ethnicity in Egypt is highly dependent on Barth, limits his analysis to the identification of boundary markers. Moore, *Jewish Ethnic Identity*, 43–44.


69 These are not limited to power and economic resources, but include honor, dignity, or identity, etc. Wimmer, *Ethnic Boundary Making*, 5.

70 Major constraints include one’s position in relation to the hierarchies of power, the institutional environment, and the strategies of other actors in the social field. Wimmer, *Ethnic Boundary Making*, 78.


72 Cohen, including later traditions, concludes his discussion of Herod, “[D]epending on whom you ask, Herod was either a Ioudaios (that is, a Judaean and Jew), a blue-blooded Judean, an Idumaean and therefore not a Judaean, an Idumaean and therefore also a Judaean, an Idumaean and therefore a half-Judaean, an Ascalonite, a gentle slave, an Arab, or – the Messiah!” *Beginnings*, 23. See also Benedikt Eckhardt, “‘An Idumean, That Is, a Half-Jew’: Hasmoneans and Herodians Between Ancestry and Merit,” in *Jewish Identity and Politics between the Maccabees and Bar Kokhba: Groups, Normativity, and Rituals*, ed. Benedikt Eckhardt, *JSJSup* 155 (Boston: Brill, 2012), 91–115.