

ETHNICITY AND JEWISH IDENTITY IN JOSEPHUS

By

DAVID McCLISTER

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To the memory of my father, Dorval L. McClister, who instilled in me a love of learning;
to the memory of Dr. Phil Roberts, my esteemed colleague;
and to my wife, Lisa, without whose support this dissertation, or much else that I do,
would not have been possible.

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David McClister

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Flavius Josephus was a Jewish historian who lived in the first century CE. When the First Jewish War began in 66 CE, Josephus was given a leading role in the defense of Galilee in northern Palestine. He was captured by the Roman forces and accompanied them to Jerusalem where he witnessed the fall of the city in 70 CE. After that Josephus was taken to Rome where he wrote an account of the Jewish war with Rome (the *Bellum Judaicum*), a history of the Jews (the *Antiquitates Judaicae*), a short autobiography (the *Vita*), and a defense of the antiquity of the Jews (the *Contra Apionem*). All of these works were intended for a non-Jewish audience.

Josephus wrote at a time when anti-Jewish sentiments were common, and the recent defeat at the hands of Rome only exacerbated the negative image ascribed to Jews. It is the thesis of this dissertation that Josephus produced his literary works not simply to satisfy the curiosity of interested Gentiles concerning Jewish origins and customs, but to craft and negotiate an ethnicity for the Jews that would portray them as a people worthy of Roman respect. Ethnic identity is a social construct that is shaped in a complex matrix of psychological and social factors, and often in response to a perceived crisis that threatens a person's or group's sense of social belonging. Josephus lived under the kinds of conditions in which groups typically feel the need to adjust and

reassert their social identity. I suggest that this lens can provide a useful way of reading Josephus, and can account for the shape and purpose of his works.

Josephus' strategy for creating this ethnic portrait was to depict the Jews as having essentially the same qualities of the noble Greeks of the past, whom the Romans respected. In this undertaking Josephus was participating in a long-standing debate within Jewish circles over the limits and extent of Hellenization among them. What was new was that Josephus used the vehicle of Greek historiography to accomplish his purpose. All of his literary works drew heavily on well-known Greek historiographical models for their presentations of the events, their characterizations of the Jewish people, and their refutations of Gentile slanders. The result was a picture of Jewish history and piety in which the Jews are seen to embody well-respected Greek ideals.

It is not known how widely Josephus' works circulated in his own day or shortly thereafter, nor do we know how successful they were in their purpose of creating a bold, new picture of Jewish identity. There are indications that Josephus' works did not effect much change in how Gentiles viewed Jews in the Roman empire. However, the success of the project (measured in terms of social acceptance) is not the object of this study, nor is it a criterion for judging the importance of what Josephus wrote. One of the enduring values of Josephus' works is that they demonstrate, in antiquity, an attempt by a marginalized group to negotiate an ethnicity, and thus they provide an important window into the complexities of Jewish life in the Roman empire.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Josephus and His Writings

Joseph ben Matthias, more commonly known by his Roman name, Flavius Josephus, was born in Jerusalem in 37/38 CE.¹ He grew up among the Jewish aristocracy and dabbled in the various Jewish religious sects, ultimately deciding to identify himself with the Pharisees. When he was twenty-six years old (c. 63/64 CE), he participated in a delegation to Rome to plead for the release of Jewish priests who had been imprisoned by the procurator of Judea, Marcus Antonius Felix. There he came into contact with influential people in Roman society and government, including Poppea, Nero's wife. He returned to Palestine and became caught up in the early stages of the First Jewish War, and in the fall of 66 CE he was put in charge of the defense of Galilee. Vespasian and the Roman fifth, tenth, and 15th legions arrived in Galilee from Syria and laid siege to the town of Jotapata where Josephus was serving as general. The town fell but Josephus was spared because he predicted that Vespasian, as well as his son Titus, would become emperor. Josephus then accompanied the legionary forces to Jerusalem and witnessed the fall of the city in 70 CE. After that he was removed to Rome, granted citizenship, and wrote several literary works.

Josephus' first literary product was an account of the First Jewish War in seven books; his *Jewish War* (Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίους; known later by the Latin title *Bellum Judaicum*) was written between 75 and 81 CE,² possibly under imperial patronage. This work

¹ The first year of the emperor Gaius. *Vit.* 2; *BJ* 1.3.

² M. Brighton, *The Sicarii in Josephus' Judean War* (PhD Diss. University of California, Irvine, 2005) 58. In *Vit.* 361 Josephus says αὐτοῖς ἐπέδωκα τοῖς αὐτοκράτορσι τὰ βιβλία μόνον οὐ τῶν ἔργων ἔτι βλεπομένων ("I gave the books to the emperors themselves while the events were all but still being seen"). Parts of the work thus must have been finished before the death of Vespasian in June of 79 CE. The book seems to show signs of later revision. S. Schwartz, "The

was first written in an Aramaic version, which has not survived, but Josephus then composed a version of it in Greek.³ Next he wrote a history of the Jewish people, the *Antiquities of the Jews* (Ἰουδαϊκῆς Ἀρχαιολογίας; later known by the Latin title *Antiquitates Judaicae*), in twenty books, which was published in 93 or 94 CE.⁴ Josephus' autobiographical work, the *Life* (Ἰωσήπου βίος; later known as the *Vita*), which mostly deals with his time as commander in Galilee, was written between 94 and 96 CE⁵ and made an appendix to the *Antiquitates Judaicae*. The purpose of this short treatise was to defend himself and his conduct during the war against criticisms that had been leveled by a political rival, Justus of Tiberias. His last literary production,⁶ a polemical apologetical treatise in two books, came to be called *Against Apion* (Περὶ Ἀρχαιότητος Ἰουδαίων Λόγος; later known by the Latin title *Contra Apionem*). While this later Latin title singles out Apion (a well-known Egyptian scholar and literary critic; died c. 45 CE) as the object of the work's response (ἀντίρρησις), he is actually only the subject of the

Composition and Publication of Josephus' "Bellum Judaicum" Book 7', *HTR* 79 (1986) 373-86. All translations in this study are my own unless otherwise noted.

³ Josephus says προουθέμην ἐγὼ τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίαν Ἑλλάδι γλώσση μεταβαλὼν ἃ τοῖς ἄνω βαρβάροις τῆ πατρῴῳ συντάξας ἀνέπεμψα πρότερον ἀφηγήσασθαι ("I have proposed to relate in the Greek language, for those under Roman rule, translating those things which I formerly sent to the upper barbarians, having first laid them out in my native language"). However, μεταβαλὼν here is best understood as rewriting instead of translating. The Greek reads like an original composition and not simply a translation from an Aramaic source. G. Hata, 'Is the Greek Version of Josephus' "Jewish War" a Translation or a Rewriting of the First Version?', *JQR* 66 (1975) 90-6.

⁴ In *AJ* 20.267, Josephus says "the present day" (τῆς νῦν ... ἡμέρας) was the 13th year of Domitian and Josephus' 56th year. Some scholars working with source-critical tools have suggested that the *AJ* may have gone through more than one edition, but the internal evidence for two editions is slim. D. Barish, 'The "Autobiography" of Josephus and the Hypothesis of a Second Edition of His "Antiquities",' *HTR* 71 (1978) 61-71.

⁵ Barish 75.

⁶ It has sometimes been suggested that *AJ* 20.267 indicates that Josephus intended to write another account of the First Jewish War. The context, however, shows that Josephus was speaking of the *Vita*. H. Petersen, 'Real and Alleged Literary Projects of Josephus', *AJP* 79 (1958) 259-62. Josephus then mentioned (20.268) plans for a theological treatise. Petersen (263-5) identified it with the *Contra Apionem*, but Feldman thinks a different work was envisioned (L. Feldman, *Josephus, 9: Jewish Antiquities Books 18-20* (Cambridge, MA 1969) 531.

second book. The treatise addresses claims of several critics of Jews and of Judaism that were circulating in Josephus' own day, of whom Apion was the most outspoken. As the Greek title indicates, the basic focus of the work is a defense of the antiquity of the Jewish people, a topic that had already been addressed in the *Antiquitates Judaicae*.

The writings of Josephus were transmitted in antiquity by Christian scribes (as all classical works were), and the edition of Niese, published in seven volumes from 1885 to 1895, has generally remained the standard scholarly critical edition to the present day.⁷ Later editions have not strayed far from Niese in spite of the fact that his text relied too heavily on too few textual witnesses. In particular, Niese relied heavily on Codex Palatinus Graecus 14 (P; Vaticanus, 10th century) for the *Vita*, and did not give enough consideration to later manuscripts that appear to have preserved better readings. Similarly, he basically relied on Codex Parisinus Graecus 142 and Codex Ambrosianus (A; Mediolanensis), both from the 10th century, for the *Bellum Judaicum*, and Codex Regius Parisinus (R; 14th century) and Codex Oxoniensis (15th century) for the *Antiquitates Judaicae*.⁸ The *Contra Apionem* survives in a single exemplar, Codex Laurentianus (L), which lacks 2.52-113. The missing section is extant in an Old Latin translation produced under Cassiodorus, c. 550 CE, which has yet to be fully exploited for purposes of textual criticism of the Greek text.⁹ The present study uses the Niese edition, and consults the

⁷ *Flavii, Josephi, Opera. Edidit et apparatu critico instruxit Benedictus Niese*. 7 vols. (Berlin 1885-1895). This was the first truly critical Greek text of Josephus. A concise history of editions appears at the end of E. Schürer, 'Josephus, Flavius' in S. Jackson (ed.), *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, 6 (Grand Rapids 1953) 236.

⁸ L. Feldman, 'Flavius Josephus Revisited', in *ANRW* II.21.2 (New York 1984) 765. The new commentary on Josephus published by Brill (not yet complete) is based on the Niese text with few emendations.

⁹ G. Richards and R. Shutt, 'Critical Notes on Josephus' Antiquities', *CQ* 31 (1937) 170-77.

eclectic text of Thackeray, which generally follows Niese and the Teubner edition by Naber¹⁰ and is printed in the Loeb volumes of Josephus.¹¹

Josephus' literary output has secured him a prominent place in later Greek historiography. The *Vita* is the only extant pre-Christian autobiography.¹² The *Bellum Judaicum* is our sole source for most of our knowledge of the First Jewish War,¹³ and has also long been of interest to historians for its portrayal of the political situation behind the revolt, to scholars of Judaism and Jewish history as an important source of information for a key moment in that history and for the diverse nature of Judaism in the first century CE, and to New Testament scholars as a source of information for an important period of earliest Christianity. The monumental *Antiquitates Judaicae* is the only complete, full-scale secular account of Jewish history to survive antiquity¹⁴ and was a remarkable attempt to introduce Jewish history and religion to the Gentile world. The *Vita* and *Contra Apionem* provide striking examples of direct apologetic confrontation with Hellenistic culture. Together the writings of Josephus provide us with an invaluable and wide view of the complexities of Jewish life within the Roman empire. Most significant for this study is the fact that Josephus stands in a unique place among the ancient Hellenistic historiographers because he had a foot in three different worlds at the same time: Jewish, Roman, and Greek.

¹⁰ S. Naber, *Flavii Iosephi opera omnia*. 6 vols. (Leipzig 1888-1896).

¹¹ H. Thackeray, R. Marcus, and L. Feldman (trans.), *Josephus*. 9 vols. (Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, MA 1956-1969). Of this text, Feldman says "there have been few reasons for challenging, in any substantial way, the readings of that text." L. Feldman, *Judean Antiquities 1-4: Translation and Commentary* (Leiden 2000) xxxvii.

¹² S. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome: His Vita and Development as a Historian* (Boston 2002), 101.

¹³ Dio Cassius' description of the siege of Jerusalem (66.4.1-7.2) is the only other substantial account. Tacitus has a short account of the war in *Hist.* 5.1-13, and Suetonius' biographies of the Flavian emperors mention scattered details. A summary of the non-Josephan data is in S. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, 243-60.

¹⁴ The only other work that comes close is the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* by Pseudo-Philo, written some time in the first century CE, and which selectively covers the Biblical narrative from Genesis to the death of king Saul.

The *Bellum Judaicum*

The questions of the original target audience of Josephus' works, and why he felt compelled to write them, are complicated. Josephus says that the Aramaic version of the *Bellum Judaicum* was written τοῖς ἄνω βαρβάροις (“to the upper barbarians”).¹⁵ These people could be the same ones mentioned a few lines later, Πάρθους μὲν καὶ Βαβυλωνίους Ἀράβων τε τοὺς πορρωτάτω καὶ τὸ ὑπὲρ Εὐφράτην ὁμόφυλον ἡμῖν Ἀδιαβηνοὺς (“the Parthians and the Babylonians, the farthest Arabians and our fellow-countrymen beyond the Euphrates, and the Adiabenenes”).¹⁶ It seems easier to believe that Josephus wrote his original account in Aramaic for Palestinian Jews, since that was their (and his) native language, and to conclude with Rajak that “We have, then, to take it that Josephus is fancifully exaggerating or engaging in a certain amount of wishful thinking when he extends his prospective readership beyond his own people to the oriental world at large.”¹⁷

Josephus never specifically identifies the intended audience of his Greek version of the *Bellum Judaicum* other than to say that καὶ γὰρ μὲν ἀναλώμασι καὶ πόνοις μεγίστοις ἀλλόφυλος ὢν Ἑλλησί τε καὶ Ῥωμαίοις τὴν μνήμην τῶν κατορθωμάτων ἀνατίθημι (“I, with great expenses and labors, being a foreigner, am presenting this record of accomplishments to both Greeks and Romans”)¹⁸ and προυθέμην ἐγὼ τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίαν (“I have set forth [an account] for those under Roman rule”).¹⁹ Mason has suggested a Roman audience was particularly in view,²⁰ and Josephus says that the emperor Titus himself gave the work his

¹⁵ *BJ* 1.3.

¹⁶ *BJ* 1.6.

¹⁷ T. Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and His Society* (Philadelphia 1983) 181.

¹⁸ *BJ* 1.16. He similarly mentions both Greeks and Romans as his target audience in 1.6.

¹⁹ *BJ* 1.3.

²⁰ S. Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament* (Peabody 1992) 64.

approval.²¹ However, a wider audience cannot be ruled out and, in fact, seems warranted.

Josephus was well aware of the differences between Greeks and Romans; he distinguished between them often enough in his writings. Thus when he says that he wrote for both Greeks and Romans, it must mean that he had more than just a Roman audience in mind. He aimed his work at the general Hellenistic reading public made up of both groups. It is most reasonable to believe, then, that the *Bellum Judaicum* was intended generally for the Greek-speaking world of the Roman empire which would include Romans, Greeks, and Josephus' own people, the Jews, most of whom were conversant in Greek as well.²² The fact that the emperor gave it his approval need not mean that Josephus' account was aimed only at a Roman audience. It simply means that the emperor judged it to be appropriate reading for the general public of the empire.

What purpose was the *Bellum Judaicum* intended to serve? Josephus does not explicitly say why he wrote his first, Aramaic account. Many earlier scholars believed it was written to discourage further rebellion in the east,²³ and that the Greek version of the *Bellum Judaicum* served the same purpose for Palestinian Jews. However, this view has increasingly come to be questioned by modern scholars. The approach that the *Bellum Judaicum* served as Roman imperial propaganda first does not do justice to the nature of Josephus' account, which does not portray the revolt as stemming from the Jewish people generally nor from the Jews in Palestine as a whole. Josephus lays the blame for the war on a minority of Jews who were bent on causing

²¹ *Ap.* 1.50-52; *Vit.* 1.363.

²² Rajak concludes that "the Jewish Diaspora was always the primary setting for Josephus as a writer" and "what Josephus wrote was a report on a tragic event, issued for those who were interested" (*Josephus: The Historian and His Society* 178 and 184).

²³ Thackeray's suggestion was typical: "Josephus was commissioned by the conquerors to write the official history of the war for propagandist purposes. It was a manifesto, intended as a warning to the East of the futility of further opposition and to allay the after-war thirst for revenge, which ultimately found vent in the fierce out-breaks under Trajan and Hadrian." H. St. John Thackeray, *Josephus: The Man and the Historian* (New York 1929) 27.

trouble and who defiled the Jewish temple in doing so. He also depicts the Romans as having had good relations with the Jews until the war, and reluctant to destroy the city during the war.²⁴

Even more, the *Bellum Judaicum* was designed to show that Judaism and Roman power were not incompatible, as the Jewish God used the Romans to punish the rebels in Jerusalem. This is hardly imperial propaganda.²⁵ These considerations make it unlikely that his account was designed for application to politics on the larger level of the client kingdom²⁶ or for application to those nations that had hostile intentions toward Rome.

The Greek version of the *Bellum Judaicum* did not have a (Roman) propagandist purpose either, as Josephus' own statements in his introduction show. Josephus was well aware that historiography could be, and regularly was, written for purposes other than recording the events, or was exploited for political purposes. He notes:

οἱ μὲν οὐ παρατυχόντες τοῖς πράγμασιν ἀλλ' ἀκοῆ συλλέγοντες εἰκαῖα καὶ ἀσύμφωνα διηγήματα σοφιστικῶς ἀναγράφουσιν, οἱ παραγενόμενοι δὲ ἢ κολακεία τῇ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους ἢ μίσει τῶ πρὸς Ἰουδαίους καταψεύδονται τῶν πραγμάτων περιέχει δὲ αὐτοῖς ὅπου μὲν κατηγορίαν ὅπου δὲ ἐγκώμιον τὰ συγγράμματα τὸ δ' ἀκριβὲς τῆς ἱστορίας οὐδαμοῦ.

("Those who were not present for these events, but having gathered random and discordant bits from rumor, write narratives sophistically, and those who were present, either for

²⁴ See, e.g., *BJ* 1.10.

²⁵ M. Goodman, "Josephus as Roman Citizen," in F. Parente and J. Sievers (eds.), *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period: Essays in Memory of Morton Smith* (Studia Post-Biblica 41, Leiden 1994) 337-8.

²⁶ Cf. Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and His Society*, 181: "... it is hard to see how Josephus' subject-matter could ever have served to deliver a short, sharp message to the east. It is hardly plausible that the news of Rome's effective suppression of a petty province in revolt would have much impressed the ruler of a great empire like Parthia." Thus when Josephus says (3.108) Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν διεξῆλθον οὐ Ῥωμαίους ἐπαινέσαι προαιρούμενος τοσοῦτον ὅσον εἶς τε παραμυθίαν τῶν κεχειρωμένων καὶ εἰς ἀποτροπὴν τῶν νεωτεριζόντων ("I have therefore recounted these things, not as preferring to commend the Romans, but for the comfort of those who have been conquered and for the prevention of those who make insurrection"), we should probably understand this to mean that he hoped any surviving radical faction in Judea would not attempt a second revolt.

flattery to the Romans or hatred against the Jews, falsely report the events, and their writings contain either accusation or encomium, but nowhere historical accuracy”).²⁷

In the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, he referred to the *Bellum Judaicum* saying ἐβιάσθη ἐκδιηγῆσασθαι διὰ τοὺς ἐν τῷ γράφειν λυμαινομένους τὴν ἀλήθειαν (“I was compelled to set out the truth in detail on account of those who are doing harm in their writings”). He therefore made a careful point that he was aware of the extremes to which historiography was subject. While he claimed that τὸν Ἰουδαίων πρὸς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον συστάνα μέγιστον οὐ μόνον τῶν καθ’ ἡμᾶς σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ ὧν ἀκοῆ παρελήφμεν ἢ πόλεων πρὸς πόλεις ἢ ἔθνῶν ἕθνεσι συρραγέντων (“the war of the Jews with Rome constituted the greatest war, not only of those which have been in our time but also nearly the greatest of which we have received a report, either of city fighting with city or nation with nation”),²⁸ he also criticized other historians and their accounts of the war saying βούλονται μὲν γὰρ μεγάλους τοὺς Ῥωμαίους ἀποδεικνύειν καταβάλλουσι δὲ αἰεὶ τὰ Ἰουδαίων καὶ ταπεινοῦσιν· οὐχ ὁρῶ δὲ πῶς ἂν εἶναι μεγάλοι δοκοῖεν οἱ μικροὺς νενικηκότες (“they wish to demonstrate Roman greatness, but they constantly put down and lessen the actions of the Jews, but I do not see how those who have defeated the little might be considered to be great”).²⁹ He gives further notice that Οὐ μὴν ἐγὼ τοῖς ἐπαίρουσι τὰ Ῥωμαίων ἀντιφιλονεικῶν αὔξειν τὰ τῶν ὁμοφύλων διέγων (“I for my part have determined not to exalt the deeds of my fellow-countrymen out of jealousy against those who exaggerate the deeds of the Romans”). It seems clear that Josephus did not see himself as writing military or political propaganda for either side.

The theory that Josephus wrote to discourage rebellion also puts him in a compromising position personally, since he himself participated in the rebellion in Palestine, and discouraging rebellion would make him look like a traitor to his own people. There was definitely a tension in

²⁷ *BJ* 1.1-2.

²⁸ *BJ* 1.1.

²⁹ *BJ* 1.7-8.

which Josephus found himself as he wrote under Roman sponsorship. He had to take care not to offend his imperial patron, and at the same time he felt loyalty to his people and homeland. The degree to which this compromised Josephus' portrayal of things is an ongoing debate. However, it is clear that Josephus himself was aware of this tension, and he addressed it at the beginning of his work. He says τοὺς δ' ἐπὶ τοῖς πράγμασι λόγους ἀνατίθημι τῇ διαθέσει καὶ τοῖς ἑμαυτοῦ πάθεσι διδοὺς ἐπολοφύρεσθαι ταῖς τῆς πατρίδος συμφοραῖς (“but I attribute my words on the events to my disposition and to my own feelings, being given over to lament for the calamities of my homeland”)³⁰ and εἰ δὴ τις ὅσα πρὸς τοὺς τυράννους ἢ τὸ ληστρικὸν αὐτῶν κατηγορικῶς λέγοιμεν ἢ τοῖς δυστυχίμασι τῆς πατρίδος ἐπιστένοντες συκοφαντοίῃ διδότω παρὰ τὸν τῆς ἱστορίας νόμον συγγνώμην τῷ πάθει (“if indeed there should be someone who with complaint might slander what we might say accusingly about the tyrants or their piracy or the ill fortune of my homeland, let him give sympathetic indulgence for what is outside the standard of the historian”).³¹ Either Josephus was feigning patriotism, or he truly lamented the recent calamity. And if he was a traitor, then why write an account that attempted to absolve the majority of Jews of blame? The nature of the account itself suggests that Josephus was no traitor to his people. He thought that the best policy for him was not to deny that his closeness to the events affected his portrayal of them. Josephus was aware of his delicate position, personally and politically, and thought of himself neither as a traitor to his people nor as the author of imperial propaganda.

Josephus' purpose in the Greek *Bellum Judaicum* was instead corrective and apologetic. The passages quoted above repeatedly refer to inaccuracies of other accounts of the war due largely in part to a desire either to flatter the Romans or to denigrate the Jews (or both). Of other accounts he says Καίτοι γε ἱστορίας αὐτὰς ἐπιγράφειν τολμῶσιν ἐν αἷς πρὸς τῷ μηδὲν ὑγιές

³⁰ *BJ* 1.9.

³¹ *BJ* 1.11.

δηλοῦν καὶ τοῦ σκοποῦ δοκοῦσιν ἔμοιγε διαμαρτάνειν (“Although they [other historians of the war] presume to entitle their accounts ‘histories,’ in which additionally they set forth nothing that is sound, they seem to me to miss their own mark completely”).³² He also remarks ἄτοπον ἡγησάμενος περιιδεῖν πλαζομένην ἐπὶ τηλικούτοις πράγμασι τὴν ἀλήθειαν (“I thought it improper to ignore the straying from the truth on such great matters”)³³ and τὰ μὲν ἔργα μετ’ ἀκριβείας ἀμφοτέρων διέξειμι (“I am setting forth the deeds of both sides with precision”).³⁴ Such bold claims invite public scrutiny and are not the kinds of things one would normally propose if he were writing slanted political propaganda knowingly filled with historical inaccuracies.

Josephus may have been refuting a wide-spread view that the Jewish populace of Palestine as a whole started and actively participated in the war, or that Jews everywhere were the enemies of the Romans. As cases in point, Tacitus prefaced his account of the Jewish revolt with a polemic against Jewish character (*Hist.* 5.5), and in Philostratus’ biography of Apollonius of Tyana we hear Euphrates say ἐκεῖνοι μὲν γὰρ πάλαι ἀφεστᾶσιν οὐ μόνον Ῥωμαίων, ἀλλὰ καὶ πάντων ἀνθρώπων (“For they [Jews] have long been in revolt not only against the Romans, but against all men”).³⁵ Josephus was careful to note that this idea, that all Jews everywhere were united in anti-Roman sentiment, belonged to the rebels alone, and it never materialized: ἐπειδὴ Ἰουδαῖοι μὲν ἅπαν τὸ ὑπὲρ Εὐφράτην ὁμόφυλον συνεπαρθήσεσθαι σφίσις ἤλπισαν (“these Jews hoped that all their kinsmen beyond the Euphrates would join with them”),³⁶ and in the *Antiquitates Judaicae* he says τὸν τελευταῖον ἄκοντες πρὸς Ῥωμαίους κατέστησαν (“[the Jews]

³² *BJ* 1.6.

³³ *BJ* 1.6.

³⁴ *BJ* 1.9.

³⁵ 5.33.

³⁶ *BJ* 1.5.

unwillingly engaged this last [war] with the Romans”).³⁷ His sympathetic, almost forgiving picture of Titus further suggests that Josephus was also hoping to temper Jewish attitudes toward Rome.³⁸ Such an apologetic approach fits well with what we know about Josephus’ other writings (discussed below) and with the conclusion drawn above about the intended audience of the account. I will suggest below that there is another function of this account, but it is necessary to discuss Josephus’ other writings first.

The *Antiquitates Judaicae*

Concerning the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, Josephus claimed that he wrote for interested persons in the Greek-speaking world: ταύτην δὲ τὴν ἐνεστῶσαν ἐγκεχείρισμαι πραγματείαν νομίζων ἅπασιν φανεῖσθαι τοῖς Ἑλλησιν ἀξίαν σπουδῆς (“I have taken this present work in hand believing that it will appear worthy of attention to all the Greeks”).³⁹ In 16.8 he says μέλλουσιν αἱ τῶν ἡμετέρων πράξεων ἀναγραφαὶ τὸ πλεον εἰς τοὺς Ἑλληνας ἰέναι (“the records of our deeds are intended to be mostly for the Greeks”), and at the end of that work he says again λέγω δὴ θαρσῆσας ἤδη διὰ τὴν τῶν προτεθέντων συντέλειαν ὅτι μηδεὶς ἂν ἕτερος ἠδυνήθη θελήσας μήτε Ἰουδαῖος μήτε ἀλλόφυλος τὴν πραγματείαν ταύτην οὕτως ἀκριβῶς εἰς Ἑλληνας ἐξευεγκεῖν (“I indeed say boldly now at the completion of this task that no one else could be so willing, neither among Jews or foreigners, to carry out this undertaking so accurately for the Greeks”).⁴⁰

An examination of the introduction to the *Antiquitates Judaicae* reveals Josephus’ purpose for the work. The first thing the reader encounters is a different kind of statement of the motive for writing the history from that found in the *Bellum Judaicum*. In that previous work there were

³⁷ *AJ* 1.6.

³⁸ Cf. Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 61.

³⁹ *AJ* 1.5.

⁴⁰ *AJ* 20.262.

several references to faulty accounts of the war with Rome, and Josephus said he wrote to correct them. Here in the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, however, there are no explicit references to other works that stand in need of correction. What Josephus emphasized instead for the *Antiquitates Judaicae* is that he wrote to meet a public interest in Jewish history. He reports that others, including his patron, Epaphroditus, also encouraged the work: ἦσαν δέ τινες οἱ πόθῳ τῆς ἱστορίας ἐπ’ αὐτήν με προύτρειπον καὶ μάλιστα δὴ πάντων Ἐπαφρόδιτος (“There were some who, with desire for our history, urged me upon it, and especially more than all, Epaphroditus”).⁴¹ Besides this, Josephus added ἔτι κάκεινα πρὸς τοῖς εἰρημένοις λογισάμενος οὐ παρέργως περὶ τε τῶν ἡμετέρων προγόνων εἰ μεταδιδόναι τῶν τοιούτων ἤθελον καὶ περὶ τῶν Ἑλλήνων εἴ τινες αὐτῶν γνῶναι τὰ παρ’ ἡμῖν ἐσπούδασαν (“and in addition to these reasons I was thinking not cursorily about whether our ancestors wished to share these things and about whether some of those among the Greeks were eager to know the things concerning us”).⁴² In fact, Josephus portrayed himself as responding to the same kind of interest in Jewish things and the general Hellenistic love of knowledge⁴³ that supposedly prompted the production of the Septuagint in the third century BCE for Gentile readers, and drew a parallel between himself and the *Antiquitates Judaicae* on the one hand, and Eleazar the priest and the Septuagint on the other hand.⁴⁴

⁴¹ *AJ* 1.8. Epaphroditus is mentioned as the patron of the *AJ*, *Vit.*, and *Ap*. His identity cannot be correlated with certainty with others of the same name who are known to us from antiquity. See H. Cotton and W. Eck, ‘Josephus’ Roman Audience: Josephus and the Roman Elites’, in J. Edmondson et al (eds.), *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome* (Oxford 2005) 49-52.

⁴² *AJ* 1.9.

⁴³ In *AJ* 1.12 he says ἐνόμισα ... τῷ βασιλεῖ δὲ πολλοὺς ὁμοίως ὑπολαβεῖν καὶ νῦν εἶναι φιλομαθεῖς (“and I likewise thought ... to suppose that, there are many even now who, like the king, are lovers of learning”).

⁴⁴ *AJ* 1.10-12. Josephus knew the so-called *Letter of Aristeas*, which purports to narrate the circumstances behind the production of the Greek Torah in Alexandria in the time of Ptolemy II. He gives his version of the story, closely following the *Letter*, in *AJ* 12:11-118. According to the *Letter*, Eleazar was the name of the Jewish high priest whom Ptolemy contacted in order to

Josephus even suggested that his service to the Greek-speaking world in the *Antiquitates Judaicae* was greater than that of the Septuagint, since the Septuagint produced under Eleazar contained only the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, but his own account covered the entire history of the Jews.⁴⁵

All of this was certainly an ambitious picture given that Gentiles were, by all indications, generally uninterested in the history or customs of the Jews. As Tcherikover noted, “the translation of the Holy Scriptures into Greek made no impression whatsoever in the Greek world, since in the whole of Greek literature there is no indication that the Greeks read the Bible before the Christian period.”⁴⁶ We may therefore characterize Josephus’ picture of a general public that is hungry to learn of Judaism as a rhetorical touch designed to generate interest in his account. It is the same kind of ambitious promotion of his work that was noticed above in the *Bellum Judaicum*.⁴⁷ However overstated this was, it is clear that Josephus wrote the *Antiquitates*

translate the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. Since Josephus was himself a priest, the comparison no doubt seemed natural.

⁴⁵ *AJ* 1.12-13.

⁴⁶ V. Tcherikover, ‘Jewish Apocalyptic Literature Reconsidered,’ *Eos* 48 (1956) 177. Cf. also J. Barclay, ‘Apologetics in the Jewish Diaspora,’ in J. Bartlett (ed.), *Jews in the Hellenistic Roman Cities* (London 2002) 141.

⁴⁷ The claim may be exaggerated but not wholly untrue. Some Gentiles in Rome were interested in Judaism, for Tacitus mentions Jewish proselytes in Rome in *Hist.* 5.5. Philo and Josephus both speak of proselytes with sufficient regularity to give the impression that they could be found everywhere, and proselytism was the reason given for Jewish expulsions in Rome in 139 BCE and 19 CE (D.C. 57.18.5a). Mason says that the evidence shows that “the only reasonable hypothesis seems to be that gentile attraction and also full conversion to Judaism were easily observable phenomena during Josephus’ residency in Rome at the end of the first century.” S. Mason, “The Contra Apionem in Social and Literary Context: An Invitation to Judean Philosophy,” in L. Feldman and J. Levison (eds.), *Josephus’ Contra Apionem: Studies in its Character and Context with a Latin Concordance to the Portion Missing in Greek* (Leiden 1996) 193. It was one of the paradoxes of the ancient world that Judaism held an attraction for some and a repulsion for others. J. Sevenster, *The Roots of Pagan Anti-Semitism in Ancient Times* (NovTSup 41, Leiden 1975) 191-218; L. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World* (Princeton 1993) 288-382.

Judaicae for a general audience, mostly Gentile, whom he assumed, or at least hoped, would find his account worth the reading.

Although Josephus did not explicitly say so in the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, a case can be made that it was written to address then-current misconceptions about Judaism.⁴⁸ His own narrative comments throughout the work “suggest he is concerned to address a real threat to the Jews: denigration of them as a people.”⁴⁹ Josephus composed the work in Rome where there were significant anti-Jewish sentiments based on superstitious misconceptions about Judaism. One example of such misconceptions may be found in the description of Tacitus (fl. c. 75-120 CE), who feared foreign influences in Rome and whose views must have reflected a segment of popular opinion. He described Jewish customs in general as “sinister and disgusting” (*sinistra, foeda*), he said that they harbor hatred and enmity toward all other people (*adversus omnis alios hostile odium*), and that among themselves nothing was considered unlawful (*inter se nihil inlicitum*). Because the Jews believed in an invisible God, Tacitus charged that they disdained anyone who worshipped an image of a god made from perishable materials in human form (*profanos qui deum imagines mortalibus materiis in species hominum effingant*), and for this same reason they had no statues in their cities and refused to pay honor to their kings or to the emperor (*Igitur nulla simulacra urbibus suis, nedum templis sistunt, non regibus haec adulatio, non Caesaribus honor*)⁵⁰ —a complaint Josephus also took up later in his *Contra Apionem*. F. F. Bruce has suggested that Tacitus preferred to paint the Jews in the worst possible light because “Tacitus simply shared a widespread prejudice, as did his younger contemporary Juvenal.”⁵¹

⁴⁸ I will attempt to establish this context more thoroughly in a subsequent chapter.

⁴⁹ J. McLaren, *Turbulent Times?: Josephus and Scholarship on Judea in the First Century CE* (JSPseudSup 29, Sheffield 1998) 108.

⁵⁰ *Hist.* 5.5.

⁵¹ ‘Tacitus on Jewish History’, *JSS* 29 (1984) 33, 40.

Furthermore, the Jews had been expelled from Rome twice, once under Tiberius in 19 CE out of fear of the foreign nature of Jewish religious rites,⁵² and later under Claudius in 49 CE for rioting.⁵³ Such moves on the part of the emperor surely must have fueled popular suspicion, if not ill-will, towards the Jews in Rome.

That Josephus wrote to counter and correct such a negative public image of Judaism seems apparent in light of his expressed aim to show, through the *Antiquitates Judaicum*, that Judaism was all about a just God who rewards the faithful and punishes the disobedient. He says:

τὸ σύνολον δὲ μάλιστα τις ἂν ἐκ ταύτης μάθοι τῆς ἱστορίας ἐθελήσας αὐτὴν διελθεῖν ὅτι τοῖς μὲν θεοῦ γνώμη κατακολουθοῦσι καὶ τὰ καλῶς νομοθετηθέντα μὴ τολμῶσι παραβαίνειν πάντα κατορθοῦται πέρα πίστεως καὶ γέρας εὐδαιμονία πρόκειται παρὰ θεοῦ καθ' ὅσον δ' ἂν ἀποστῶσι τῆς τούτων ἀκριβοῦς ἐπιμελείας ἄπορα μὲν γίνεται τὰ πόριμα τρέπεται δὲ εἰς συμφορὰς ἀνηκέστους ὃ τι ποτ' ἂν ὡς ἀγαθὸν δρᾶν σπουδάσωσιν

(“On the whole, whoever especially wishes to go through it would learn from this history that for those who obey the purpose of God and do not dare to transgress the appropriately ordained things, they succeed in all things beyond belief, and good fortune lies ahead as a reward from God; but to whatever extent they withdraw from exact attention to these things, the possible becomes impossible and whatever they are zealous to do as good turns into incurable calamities”).⁵⁴

This portrait of the God of the Jews is then set in contrast to what can only be a reference to the gods of the Greeks and Romans: οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλοι νομοθέται τοῖς μύθοις ἐξακολουθήσαντες τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ἀμαρτημάτων εἰς τοὺς θεοὺς τῷ λόγῳ τὴν αἰσχύνην μετέθεσαν καὶ πολλὴν ὑποτίμησιν τοῖς πονηροῖς ἔδωκαν (“But other legislators, following myths, have in their account

⁵² Tac. *Ann.* 2.85; Suet. *Tib.* 36; D.C. 57.18.5a.

⁵³ Suet. *Cl.* 25.4.

⁵⁴ *AJ* 1.14. Josephus was not alone in this view among the ancient Jews. The same approach to respect for divine institutions drives the history of 2 Maccabees. Cf. especially 2 *Mac* 4:16-17: ὦν καὶ χάριν περιέσχεν αὐτοὺς χαλεπὴ περίστασις καὶ ὦν ἐζήλουν τὰς ἀγωγὰς καὶ καθ' ἅπαν ἤθελον ἐξομοιοῦσθαι τούτους πολεμίους καὶ τιμωρητὰς ἔσχον ἀσεβεῖν γὰρ εἰς τοὺς θείους νόμους οὐ ῥᾶδιον ἀλλὰ ταῦτα ὁ ἀκόλουθος καιρὸς δηλώσει (“For this reason a painful circumstance overcame them, and those whom they emulated wished to assimilate their culture in every way became their enemies and punishers. For it is not a light matter to be impious toward the divine laws—and the following period will make these things clear”). This was the general view of the rabbis as well.

ascribed to the gods the shame of human sins and have given the wicked much excuse”).⁵⁵ By such a portrait of God, set so starkly against the Hellenistic gods, Josephus would hope to show that the Jews themselves were not the scoundrels they were commonly thought to be but were actually the devoted people of a respectable and noble deity, a deity more upright than those of the Gentiles. Given this picture of God, goodness consists first of all in piety toward God, which can regularly be seen in Jewish praxis when it is understood correctly and divorced from slanderous prejudice.⁵⁶ If the Gentiles could see this, Jewish religious practices and customs would then be viewed in an entirely different light. If pagans could see the true nature of the God of the Jews, they would also see the true character of the Jews themselves. The means to accomplish this understanding was a full-scale presentation of the history of Judaism, highlighting the origin of its customs, its laws, its great figures, and above all, the nature of its God.

The second major work of Josephus thus also, like the *Bellum Judaicum*, had an apologetic purpose. In the *Bellum Judaicum* Josephus wrote to correct faulty accounts and impressions of the war with Rome, but especially those that denigrated the Jews and himself. In the *Antiquitates Judaicae* he wrote to correct misconceptions about the Jewish people that came as a result of misinformation about Jewish origins, customs, and laws. What united both works was a common concern to present a positive picture of the Jewish character to the world. It is important to note that in the *Antiquitates Judaicae* Josephus shows no sign of distancing himself from the particular view of God he has come to hold as a Jew (and more particularly, as a Pharisee). For example, there is no attempt to identify the God of the Jews with a Hellenistic deity. He had no intention of assimilating Jewish ways to others, but of explaining them. His refusal to

⁵⁵ *AJ* 1.22. *Cf. Ap.* 2.239.

⁵⁶ *AJ* 3.49. εὐσβεία and its cognates appears 110 times in the *AJ*. *Cf. Ap.* 2.171.

compromise on this essential point further refutes any idea that Josephus' personal situation led him to compromise himself, his people, or his religion before the Romans.

The *Antiquitates Judaicae* gave Josephus a different kind of platform for his apologetic concerns, and allowed him to present a much more comprehensive apologetic than was possible through a vehicle like the *Bellum Judaicum* alone. Josephus thus wrote both a contemporary history (the *Bellum Judaicum*) and a history of the distant past (the *Antiquitates Judaicae*), for each could provide a unique way of demonstrating Jewish character, and together the combination of literary *topoi* afforded him a larger canvas on which to paint his picture of the Jewish people. In undertaking both kinds of accounts he actually anticipated his younger contemporary Tacitus, who wrote both a history of recent times of war (the *Histories*) and later an account of the formative period before his own day (the *Annales*).

The *Vita* and the *Contra Apionem*

The *Vita* was written primarily in response to charges from Justus of Tiberias, a rival who had written an account of the First Jewish War (published perhaps in the early 90's CE,⁵⁷ but now lost) that was critical of Josephus and his conduct during the war. Because of the nature of the accusations, the *Vita* concentrates on the period of Josephus' life, spanning about six months, when he commanded Jewish rebel forces in Galilee. Justus' account was apparently designed to discredit Josephus before his Roman patrons and before leading Jews in Palestine. Josephus does not quote any direct accusations from his rival, but a mirror reading of the *Vita* suggests that he was accused of actively promoting the revolt in Galilee, especially in the city of Tiberias, as a kind of corrupt renegade who lacked both the support of the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem and

⁵⁷ Based on Josephus' statement in *Vit.* 359 that Justus had delayed the publication of his account until after the deaths of Vespasian, Titus, and the Jewish ethnarch Herod Agrippa II. Agrippa either died or was deposed in 88/9 CE. See A. Kushner-Stein, 'The Coinage of Agrippa II', *Scripta Classica Israelica* 21 (2002) 123-31.

popular support in Galilee, and of using his position as military leader for personal gain.⁵⁸ The target audience, therefore, of the *Vita* must have been a wide one, including the Roman imperial household with its network of patrons and clients, Justus and his supporters, and Jews who may have been exposed to stories of Josephus' treason and impiety.

The fact that this work was appended to the *Antiquitates Judaicae* is significant. What was at stake in the slanders of Justus was not just Josephus' own reputation, but the credibility of the accounts he wrote. For ancient historians, credibility was a matter of the historian's character.

Marincola speaks of

the importance in antiquity of character in rhetoric and real life: the highly stratified societies of Greece and Rome cared a great deal about the status of the speaker. The proof that things are as the historian says they are depended not a little on the audience's perception of the narrator's character: to believe an historical account, it was necessary to believe the historian himself.⁵⁹

For Romans, this consideration was more important than it was for Greeks.⁶⁰ Josephus' self-defense is therefore a defense of the history he wrote.

The *Contra Apionem* was Josephus' last literary work, published in two books perhaps near the end of Domitian's reign. Its original title is uncertain. Eusebius refers to it as *On the Antiquity of the Jews*,⁶¹ and Porphyry knew it as *Against the Greeks*.⁶² Jerome seems to have been the one who gave it the title *Contra Apionem*.⁶³ The treatise is generally a defense of the antiquity of the Jewish people, but responds to many other charges against the Jews as well.

Authors of works on Egyptian history (Manetho, Chaeremon, and Lysimachus) who had

⁵⁸ H. Attridge, "Josephus and His Works" in M. Stone (ed.), *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (CRINT 2.2, Philadelphia 1984) 190; T. Rajak, "Justus of Tiberias," *CQ* n.s. 23 (1973) 354-8; S. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome* 126.

⁵⁹ J. Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* (Cambridge 1997) 6.

⁶⁰ Marincola 130.

⁶¹ *H.E.* 3.9.4.

⁶² *De abst.* 4.11.

⁶³ *Adv. Iou.* 2.14, where he quotes Porphyry and replaces Porphyry's title with this one.

transmitted outlandish stories about the Jewish people are mentioned, and answered, in the first book. Manetho (fl. third century BCE) was a native Egyptian who wrote a history of Egypt in Greek which has survived only in fragments quoted in other authors.⁶⁴ Chaeremon of Alexandria was a Stoic philosopher, a tutor of Nero, and also wrote a history of Egypt in Greek, again known only in fragments.⁶⁵ Lysimachus was a Greek grammarian and mythographer⁶⁶ who flourished some time after the second century BCE and wrote treatises on Jewish history and laws.⁶⁷ Apion was an Alexandrian rhetorician, literary critic, and outspoken detractor of the Jews in the first century CE, who also wrote a history of Egypt. He attracted Josephus' ire by telling the same kinds of stories about the origins of the Hebrews as the other authors he refutes, but also by maligning the Jews as a low, rebellious people who refused to worship the same gods as most others in the Hellenistic world. He also represented the Alexandrians before Caligula against the Jews in the delegation that went to Rome over ethnic riots in that city in 38 CE. In the *Contra Apionem*, then, Josephus was directly responding to leading sources of anti-Jewish rhetoric and polemic, especially those who had maligned the Jews using historiography. The aim of this work was therefore in keeping with the aims of both the *Antiquitates Judaicae* and the *Bellum Judaicum* in that it shared a concern to present a positive picture of the Jewish people in

⁶⁴ R. Laqueur, 'Manethon', in A. Pauly and G. Wissowa, et al (eds.), *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft: neue Bearbeitung* (Stuttgart 1894-1980) 1060-1106.

⁶⁵ M. Frede, 'Chaeremon der Stoiker', in *ANRW* II.36.3 (1989) 2067-103.

⁶⁶ G. Damschen, 'Lysimachos [6]', in H. Cancik and H. Schneider (eds.), *Der neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike. Das klassische Altertum und seine Rezeptionsgeschichte*, 7 (Stuttgart 2003) 608.

⁶⁷ Josephus says 'Ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ Ἀπολλώνιος ὁ Μόλων καὶ Λυσίμαχος καὶ τινες ἄλλοι τὰ μὲν ὑπ' ἀγνοίας τὸ πλεῖστον δὲ κατὰ δυσμένειαν περὶ τε τοῦ νομοθετήσαντος ἡμῖν Μωσέως καὶ περὶ τῶν νόμων πεποίηται λόγους οὔτε δικαίους οὔτε ἀληθεῖς ... ("And since Apollonius Molon and Lysimachus and some others, partly from ignorance and mostly from enmity, have produced treatises which are neither fair nor true concerning both our lawgiver Moses and the laws ..."). *Ap.* 2.145.

light of popular suspicions and to correct inaccurate elements in then-circulating reports about the Jews. He addressed his work to πάντας ὅσοι τάληθές εἰδέναι βούλονται περὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀρχαιότητος (“all who wish to know the truth concerning our antiquity”).⁶⁸

How widely Josephus’ works actually circulated in his day cannot be determined. In antiquity books were mostly read by and circulated among a limited group within (local) society.⁶⁹ Authors normally wrote under patronage, and their works would have been most well-known by the patron, the people within his social circle, and his other clients. However, Josephus says that his account of the Jewish war had circulated among Romans who had participated in the campaign and that he sold copies of the work to some fellow-Jews, including Julius Archelaus and Herod Agrippa II.⁷⁰ In the *Antiquitates Judaicae* he refers to the *Bellum Judaicum* as if it were commonly available and as if his readers were acquainted with it.⁷¹ We may assume that proselytes⁷² in Rome and elsewhere were interested in his works, and it has been suggested that Tacitus and Suetonius used Josephus as their source for the idea that the Jewish Scriptures predicted the rise of a great world leader from Judea.⁷³ Given what is known about the publication of books in antiquity, it is not unlikely that Josephus’ works were first, and perhaps mainly, read by those in literary circles in Rome. Yet we may certainly believe that any author

⁶⁸ *Ap.* 1.3.

⁶⁹ L. Reynolds and N Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars* (3rd edn, Oxford 1991) 19; S. Mason, ‘Of Audience and Meaning: Reading Josephus’ *Bellum Judaicum* in the Context of a Flavian Audience’, in J. Sievers and G. Lembi (eds.), *Josephus and Jewish History in Flavian Rome and Beyond* (SupJSJ 104, Leiden 2005) 71-91.

⁷⁰ *Ap.* 1.51.

⁷¹ *AJ* 1.4, 203; 13.72, 298; 18.11; *cf. Vit.* 413.

⁷² As noted (n.47 above). Proselytism was apparently successful enough to warrant imperial attention. Sevenster, *The Roots of Pagan Anti-Semitism*, 195-9.

⁷³ Bruce 42. Tacitus mentions this in *Hist.* 5.13.4f, and Suetonius in *Ves.* 4.5. Josephus describes the prophecy in *BJ* 6.312f.

hoped that his work would eventually attain a much wider circulation, as Josephus' own words have already shown.

This brief survey of Josephus' publications shows that, in contrast to the great amount of Jewish literature that had been produced since the Maccabean revolt and into Josephus' time, his Greek writings were not aimed exclusively at fellow-Jews. He does not engage in an "inside" conversation, but in all his works he writes for a wider audience. In fact, none of his works in Greek could be described as having been written primarily for fellow-Jews. They were instead written with non-Jewish readers in mind first. Additionally, his works were written with the purpose of informing the general public about the facts concerning the recent war with Rome, the Jewish religion, and the general character of the Jewish people. His writings reveal that he was perhaps the leading apologist for Judaism of his day. This dissertation is an inquiry into a particular aspect of this larger purpose, and how Josephus went about accomplishing it.

A Brief History of Research

In order to describe the contribution of the present inquiry it is necessary to sketch briefly a history of investigations into the writings of Josephus that have examined his purpose and methods. Since Christians took interest in Josephus' works soon after their publication, Josephan studies have a long history. Much of that history, however, involved the use of Josephus in anti-Jewish theological polemics.⁷⁴ This is sadly ironic, for as I have shown above, Josephus hoped that his writings would present a positive picture of the Jews to his readers. Nevertheless the *Bellum Judaicum* proved to be an irresistible proof text for Christians who wished to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity over Judaism through the results of the First Jewish War. Having a contemporary Jewish author declare that God was on the side of the Romans against the Jews in

⁷⁴ See Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 8-24; H. Schreckenberg, 'The Works of Josephus and the Early Christian Church', in L. Feldman G. Hata (eds.), *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity* (Detroit 1987) 315-21.

that war was an admission that lent itself easily to pro-Christian politics and propaganda. It was not until the modern era that Josephus began to be read seriously as an author in his own right.

Modern scholarship on Josephus went through a mostly negative phase in the late 1800s and early 1900s, with an emphasis on source criticism that resulted in the view that Josephus' own contribution to his works was minimal.⁷⁵ The cue for this came from Josephus himself, who mentioned that he used assistants in connection with writing the *Bellum Judaicum*: πάσης μοι τῆς πραγματείας ἐν παρασκευῇ γεγενημένης χρησάμενός τισι πρὸς τὴν Ἑλληνίδα φωνὴν συνεργοῖς οὕτως ἐποίησάμην τῶν πράξεων τὴν παράδοσιν (“when all my materials were prepared, I made use of some assistants for the Greek language, and thus I prepared the account of the events”).⁷⁶ He also admitted for the *Antiquitates Judaicae* that χρόνου δὲ προϊόντος ὅπερ φιλεῖ τοῖς μεγάλων ἄπτεσθαι διανοουμένοις ὄκνος μοι καὶ μέλλησις ἐγίνετο τηλικαύτην μετενεγκεῖν ὑπόθεσιν εἰς ἀλλοδαπὴν ἡμῖν καὶ ξένην διαλέκτου συνήθειαν (“as time went on, as it likes to take hold of those who contemplate great things, there developed for me a hesitation and delay to translate such a great purpose into a usage of language that is foreign and strange to us”).⁷⁷ Thackeray's studies emphasized the role he believed the literary assistants had,⁷⁸ and many scholars, following his lead, came to view Josephus merely as a redactor who relied heavily on written sources and literary assistants instead of as an author in his own right. Scholars also viewed Josephus with great suspicion personally for two main reasons: 1) it was generally believed that Josephus' patronage by the imperial Flavian family stood at odds with his loyalties to the Jews, and 2) the accounts in the *Bellum Judaicum* and *Vita* seem to give two different pictures of Josephus' loyalties during the First Jewish War. Josephus was thus seen not only as a

⁷⁵ Bilde calls this the “classic conception of Josephus.” ‘Main Trends in Modern Josephus Research’, *Nordisk Judaistik. Skandinavian Jewish Studies* 8 (1987) 74-6.

⁷⁶ *Ap.* 1.50.

⁷⁷ *AJ* 1.7.

⁷⁸ Thackeray, *Josephus: The Man and the Historian* 100-24.

plunderer of other works, but also as an opportunist who manipulated his circumstances to his favor without regard for personal integrity. Representatives of this view were Bentwich,⁷⁹ von Destinon,⁸⁰ Hölscher,⁸¹ Laqueur,⁸² and Foakes-Jackson.⁸³ One of the products of this phase of research was a high degree of skepticism concerning the historical reliability of Josephus' works (since Josephus himself was viewed as a scoundrel), and vestiges of this view and its conclusions remain in the works of some scholars of the present day.

There has been a shift in the direction of Josephan studies since the mid-1900s. Many scholars today are more open to seeing Josephus as an independent author with creative skills of his own. The way for this new direction was paved by the studies of scholars such as Drüner,⁸⁴ E. Stein,⁸⁵ Richards,⁸⁶ and Shutt,⁸⁷ who argued for the linguistic and stylistic unity of Josephus' writings. This perspective suggested that Josephus did much more than simply excavate material from other sources. A notable contribution was Attridge's 1976 Harvard dissertation on the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, which argued that Josephus was adding his own individual (and theological) perspective to the forms and categories of Greek historiography that were current in

⁷⁹ N. Bentwich, *Josephus* (Philadelphia 1914). "Josephus hardly merits a place on his own account in a series of Jewish Worthies, since neither as a man of action nor as man of letters did he deserve particularly well of his nation" (p.5).

⁸⁰ J. von Destinon, *Die Quellen des Flavius Josephus in der Jüdische Archaeologie, Buch xii-xvii* (Kiel 1882).

⁸¹ G. Hölscher, 'Josephus', in Pauly A. and G. Wissowa, et al (eds.), *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft: neue Bearbeitung*, 9 (Stuttgart 1894-1980) 1934-2000.

⁸² R. Laqueur, *Der jüdische Historiker Flavius Josephus. Ein biografischer Versuch auf neuer Quellenkritischer Grundlage* (Geissen 1920).

⁸³ F. J. Foakes-Jackson, *Josephus and the Jews* (Grand Rapids 1977).

⁸⁴ H. Drüner, *Untersuchungen über Josephus* (Marburg 1896).

⁸⁵ E. Stein, *De Woordenkeuze in het Bellum Judaicum van Flavius Josephus* (Amsterdam 1937).

⁸⁶ G. Richards, 'The Composition of Josephus' "Antiquities"', *CQ* 33 (1939) 36-40.

⁸⁷ R. Shutt, *Studies in Josephus* (London 1961).

his day so that the result was anything but a mere cutting-and-pasting of sources.⁸⁸ The result of this new approach is that Josephus is generally now given more credit as a skillful author who shaped his sources for definite aims. Pessimism concerning Josephus' personal motives continues in the work of S. Cohen,⁸⁹ Schalit is severe in his judgment of him as a person in his *Encyclopedia Judaica* article,⁹⁰ and O'Neill has defended Thackeray's thesis that Josephus' assistants (and later editors) played a major role in the composition of his works.⁹¹ Nevertheless, several attempts have been made to see Josephus as operating with purer motives. Farmer compared Josephus with Polybius and concluded that the pro-Roman elements of Josephus' works were an outgrowth of his zeal to serve his own people.⁹² Braun read the *Bellum Judaicum* as Josephus' own attempt to explain (like a theodicy) the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.⁹³ Both scholars attributed to Josephus a nobler aim that absolved him of outright duplicity. In a similar way, Rajak, Bilde, and Jossa have each proposed that Josephus' role in the Jewish revolt in Galilee is not presented in two different ways in the *Bellum Judaicum* and *Vita*. Instead, these scholars argue that the differences in the accounts are due to the different natures and purposes of those works, and that together they present the same picture in principle.⁹⁴ Such views tend not to see Josephus as an unscrupulous manipulator of his circumstances. Bilde has

⁸⁸ H. Attridge, *The Interpretation of Biblical History in the Antiquitates Judaicae of Flavius Josephus* (Harvard Dissertations in Religion 7, Missoula 1976).

⁸⁹ S. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*.

⁹⁰ A. Schalit, 'Josephus, Flavius', in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 10 (Jerusalem 1972) 251-65.

⁹¹ J. O'Neill, 'Who Wrote What in Josephus' *Contra Apionem*?', in J. Kalms and F. Siegert (eds.), *Internationales Josephus-Kolloquium Brüssel 1998* (Münster 1998) 270-77.

⁹² W. Farmer, *Maccabees, Zealots, and Josephus: An Enquiry into Jewish Nationalism in the Greco-Roman Period* (New York 1956).

⁹³ M. Braun, 'The Prophet Who Became a Historian', *Listener* 56 (1956) 53-7.

⁹⁴ Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and His Society*, 183-222; see also her "Justus of Tiberias," 351-4; P. Bilde, *Flavius Josephus Between Jerusalem and Rome* (JSPseudSup 2; Sheffield 1988) 176-82; G. Jossa, 'Josephus' Action in Galilee During the Jewish War', in F. Parente and J. Sievers (eds.), *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period: Essays in Memory of Morton Smith* (Studia Post-Biblica 41, Leiden 1994) 265-78.

also concluded, after carefully examining Josephus' various statements about the causes of the First Jewish War, that "Josephus cannot be reduced to an apologist for the Romans, or even the Flavian dynasty. It is completely wrong then to see his main concern as primarily apologizing and justifying his own dubious activities during the war."⁹⁵ Moehring's portrait of Josephus in his 1984 *ANRW* essay is also positive along the same lines.⁹⁶ He attempts to break away from the older pessimistic approach and to understand Josephus on his own premises. He sees the ancient historian as being motivated by an issue with which Josephus wrestled personally, namely, a desire to reconcile Jerusalem and Rome. The result is a view of the man and his works that does not posit a fundamental contradiction at the foundation.

Two more things may be added to the observations of these scholars. First, the writings of Josephus themselves do not support the view that Josephus' personal circumstances compromised him personally or as a historian. As noted above, Josephus' writings show him to be a staunch apologist for Judaism. If he was the Roman collaborator and lackey that he has so often been made out to be,⁹⁷ he surely would not have spent a good portion of his life trying to present a positive picture of Jewish character to outsiders. We would expect him to have abandoned his heritage and taken up literary themes that were more laudatory of the Romans. Rather than see his situation as compromising his veracity, the texts themselves show that Josephus used his situation to the advantage of his people. His position in Rome became a pulpit, as it were, for the defense of Judaism. There is no personal compromise here.

⁹⁵ P. Bilde, 'The Causes of the Jewish War According to Josephus', *JSJ* 10 (1979) 201.

⁹⁶ H. Moehring, 'Joseph ben Matthia and Flavius Josephus: the Jewish Prophet and Roman Historian', in *ANRW* II.21.2 (1984) 864-944.

⁹⁷ Cf. S. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, 86: "If any historian was a Flavian lackey, it was Josephus."

Second, there is nothing inherently odd nor suspicious about a non-native speaker of Greek seeking assistance with Greek composition. No one today would charge that an author writing in a language not native to him was not the true author of what he wrote because he had editorial assistance. Josephus' use of assistants in Greek composition should not, therefore, lead us to assign a minimal role to Josephus himself in shaping the character of his publications. In fact, if large tracts of Josephus' works were mostly the product of his presumably non-Jewish assistants,⁹⁸ it would be difficult to explain the thoroughly pro-Jewish, apologetic nature of those works. Feldman has examined several of the stories in the *Antiquitates Judaicae* and has shown they are often cast in a way to make them more amenable to Hellenistic audiences, by reshaping the characters and their actions to conform to Hellenic models.⁹⁹ None of this would be expected from texts written largely by outsiders unless we are prepared to say that Josephus cared little for, or was unable to control, the final character of the works bearing his name, or that the assistants are in the end solely responsible, even quite apart from Josephus' own aims, for the thoroughly Greek character of the accounts. Josephus tells us that he took pains to acquaint himself with Greek language and literature.¹⁰⁰ For an author living in Rome, this would have been a personal necessity, not something delegated to subordinates. Attributing much of the

⁹⁸ Thackeray was noted for having claimed to have detected the work of at least two different assistants in the *AJ. Josephus: The Man and the Historian*, 100-24. He nowhere ventures a guess about the ethnicity of these assistants, but what he attributes to them would be most fitting only for Greek assistants.

⁹⁹ See especially his *Studies in Josephus' Rewritten Bible* (SupJSJ 58, Atlanta 1998) and *Josephus' Interpretation of the Bible* (Hellenistic Culture and Society 27, Berkeley 1998).

¹⁰⁰ *AJ* 20.263: ... καὶ τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν δὲ γραμμάτων ἐσπούδασα μετασχεῖν τὴν γραμματικὴν ἐμπειρίαν ἀναλαβὼν τὴν δὲ περὶ τὴν προφορὰν ἀκρίβειαν πατριος ἐκώλυσε συνήθεια (“... and I was eager to share in the writings and the scholarly experience of the Greeks, although my ancestral usage hindered my acquiring precision concerning the pronunciation”).

character of Josephus' works to his assistants only creates more difficulties than it purports to solve.

An important contribution to the question of Hellenistic Jewish literature was Tcherikover's 1956 essay "Jewish Apologetic Literature Reconsidered," where he argued that Jews, not pagans, were reading this literature, because pagans would not have been interested in it in the first place.¹⁰¹ The result for Josephus studies was that an attempt was made to understand his works in light of a Jewish audience. A few scholars have followed this lead, but it does not fit Josephus' own statements about his target audience (noted above), nor does it explain why Josephus was constantly explaining Jewish customs to his readers. Most modern scholarship has concluded, instead, that Josephus was writing for non-Jews. What remains, however, is Tcherikover's important question of why Josephus thought non-Jews would have been interested in Jewish history and customs. The usual answer is that his works answered an implicit and ongoing public debate over the value of Judaism. That is, Josephus' works were primarily apologetic in character and purpose. Mason has noted, however, that this solution does not answer all the questions. If, for example, the *Antiquitates Judaicae* is designed to refute slanders about Jewish origins and customs, then why does that topic not take up more of the work? And why would Josephus write an account that is only implicitly, but not explicitly, apologetic? And what Gentile would have waded through 60,000 lines on the subject?¹⁰² Clearly, more research can be done.

The modern positive view of Josephus has led to a more serious study of how Josephus crafted his literary works. Several studies, in which the emphasis is on Josephus in his cultural

¹⁰¹ See n.46 above.

¹⁰² S. Mason, "Should Any Wish to Enquire Further" (Ant. 1.25): The Aim and Audience of Josephus' Judean Antiquities', in S. Mason (ed.), *Understanding Josephus: Seven Perspectives* (JSPseudSup 32, Sheffield 1998) 68-72.

and literary context, have investigated his works in comparison with classical Greek literary paradigms. Many scholars have demonstrated clear Thucydidean influences on the *Bellum Judaicum*.¹⁰³ Rajak argues that the *Antiquitates Judaicae* shares many common elements with Livius, Diodorus Siculus, Manetho, Hecataeus of Abdera, and Berosus,¹⁰⁴ and Eckstein has demonstrated Josephus' conscious use of Polybius in the *Bellum Judaicum*.¹⁰⁵ In fact, comparison of Josephus and earlier Greek historiographers has become a well-explored facet of Josephan studies. Also, as noted above, Feldman has investigated the Hellenistic shape of many of the Biblical stories in the *Antiquitates Judaicae*. As a result of such studies, recent scholarship on Josephus is less concerned with attempting to reconstruct (and condemn) Josephus' personal motives, or to discover the sources he used. Instead scholars are concerned with Josephus' shaping of his materials according to the traditions of Greek historiography and the results this shaping produced.

The interplay between Josephus' apologetic concerns and his shaping of his material was explored in a 1981 dissertation at Rutgers University entitled "Apologetics in Josephus" by J. Daniel. He argued that Josephus wrote the *Antiquitates Judaicae* with an eye on enhancing the image of Jews and Judaism before the Greco-Roman culture at large, and this involved extensive reshaping of the materials of the Biblical stories to the point that the resulting picture of the Jews is hardly recognizable compared to the stories in the Hebrew Bible. Daniel also emphasized the cultural situation in which Josephus wrote his works and claimed that intense anti-Jewish sentiments in the Greco-Roman world motivated Josephus.

¹⁰³ E.g., Mader, Stein, Thackeray, and Drüner.

¹⁰⁴ 'Josephus and the "Archaeology" of the Jews', *JJS* 33 (1982) 465-77.

¹⁰⁵ A. Eckstein, 'Josephus and Polybius: A Reconsideration', *CA* 9 (1990) 175-208.

Daniel's work is, in a way, typical of how scholars continue to view Josephus. While there has been a shift in how Josephus himself has been viewed, investigations into Josephus' extensive use of Greek literary *topoi* have produced their own skepticism about the historical value of the end results, often suggesting that the models are more important for Josephus than historical accuracy. As Rhodes has observed, however, just because an author employs a well-known *topos* does not mean that he is somehow being insincere or untruthful.¹⁰⁶ It is true that anyone who would use Josephus as a source for the events in Palestine in the first century CE must acknowledge that in Josephus we have a tightly woven and highly selective combination of fact and interpretation.¹⁰⁷ It is, after all, *Josephus'* version of the events. On the whole, however, recent scholarly work on Josephus has a higher regard for the historical credibility of his writings (or of scholarship's ability to get to the unbiased historical facts) than those of the early twentieth century.¹⁰⁸ Yet, as the survey of Josephus' work presented above has shown, modern scholarship generally agrees that there is more than a simple reporting of facts going on in Josephus.

It has come to the attention of some modern scholars that Josephus' efforts to present the Jews favorably to a Hellenistic audience can also be viewed as an exercise in self-definition. In particular, Sterling's study, *Historiography and Self-Definition*, argues that Josephus was writing in a genre he identified as apologetic historiography. He argues that this genre has roots going back to the sixth century BCE and has these characteristics:

All of the authors [in this genre] were natives or "insiders" who related the story of their own group in an effort to offer a self-definition of that group (function). The texts were addressed to outsiders in some cases and to members of the same group in others. The common element in all cases was the need that each author felt to relate his/her group to

¹⁰⁶ P. J. Rhodes, 'In Defense of the Greek Historians', *G&R* 41 (1994) 157-8.

¹⁰⁷ McLaren 179-218.

¹⁰⁸ Some noted problems in Josephus' *BJ* are discussed in T. Ilan and J. Price, 'Seven Onomastic Problems in Josephus' "Bellum Judaicum"', *JQR* 84 (1993) 189-208.

the larger world. The works are therefore apologetic, but may be either directly or indirectly apologetic depending upon the primary audience.¹⁰⁹

By “self-definition” Sterling meant:

... the attempt of an author to provide identity for the group to which the author belongs in contrast to outside perceptions. It is not intended to convey the impression that the author’s proposal was normative for the group, but that the author offered it as a normative understanding. In each instance, this definition represents a shift from previously held views since the group in question is now seen as a subgroup within a larger body rather than as an isolated unit. The phrase thus connotes an effort to shape as well as to describe.¹¹⁰

Sterling’s discovery of the genre of apologetic historiography is significant for the present study. By the first century CE, Greek historiography already had a long association with ethnography. The works of Hecataeus and Herodotus in particular devoted much of their space to description of foreign people and their customs. Historiography easily became the venue by which a people could be described or by which a people could describe themselves in relation to others. That is, it became a vehicle for presenting, or constructing, an ethnic identity. That construction could also have an apologetic purpose. Concerning apologetics, Kasher notes “From the viewpoint of the literary genre and especially from the psychological viewpoint, the use of apologetics may at times be interpreted as an expression of lack of confidence, the manifestation of a position of weakness and inferiority relative to the rival, as if it were an excuse with some regret or as if it were conciliatory in nature.”¹¹¹ Kasher also observes that “there is usually a direct connection between apologetics and controversial personal or social phenomena in certain circumstances of time and place, and ... apologetics is intended to defend

¹⁰⁹ G. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephos, Luke-Acts, and Apologetic Historiography* (NTSupp 64, Leiden 1992) 17.

¹¹⁰ Sterling 17.

¹¹¹ A. Kasher, ‘Polemic and Apologetic Methods of Writing in *Contra Apionem*’, in L. Feldman and J. Levison (eds.), *Josephus’ Contra Apionem: Studies in Its Character and Context with a Latin Concordance to the Portion Missing in Greek* (Leiden 1996) 145.

persons or groups in respect of their actions or opinions and views.”¹¹² When apologetics are undertaken on the group level, this collective apologetics has close connections with ethnical discussions.

Sterling’s study, and to a certain extent also Daniel’s, anticipated a growing interest in the subject of how peoples in ancient times viewed and portrayed themselves, particularly in literary texts. Such studies draw upon the phenomenon of *ethnicity*. The study of ethnicity, or the way in which people define themselves, is a modern one. However, scholars have begun to apply questions about ethnicity to peoples in ancient times, and to read ancient texts with an eye to discerning their ethnic components or ethnic information. Hall’s book *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* was first published in 1997,¹¹³ and has become regarded as a kind of benchmark in its field. Other examples of such studies are R. Laurence’s essay “Territory, Ethnonyms, and Geography: The Construction of Identity in Roman Italy,”¹¹⁴ the volume edited by A. Bulloch, E. Gruen, A. Long, and A. Stewart entitled *Images and Ideologies: Self-Definition in the Hellenistic World*,¹¹⁵ and *Ethnicity in Hellenistic Egypt*, edited by P. Bilde, T. Engberg-Pedersen, L. Hannestad, and J. Zahle.¹¹⁶

Study in the self-definition particularly of Jews in ancient times has been encouraged by long-standing scholarly interests in the character of formative Judaism and the conditions surrounding the rise of early Christianity. Josephus is an important source for both, and he also fits Sterling’s model of an author who wrote apologetic historiography. Also, as noted above, Josephus has a foot in three worlds at the same time. The matters of ethnicity and self-definition

¹¹² Kasher, ‘Polemic and Apologetic Methods’, 146.

¹¹³ J. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge 1997).

¹¹⁴ In R. Laurence and J. Berry (eds.), *Cultural Identity in the Roman Empire* (London 1998) 95-110.

¹¹⁵ (Berkeley 1994).

¹¹⁶ (Aarhus 1992).

are a large part of the man and his circumstances, and several streams of modern scholarly inquiry therefore converge in Josephus.

The Present Study and Its Contribution

It is common in the scholarship on Josephus for his writings to be described as an apologetic retelling of traditional Jewish stories in order to make them more amenable to a Greek audience. This retelling has often been viewed as a degrading of those stories,¹¹⁷ motivated by missionary zeal.¹¹⁸ There are at least three problems, however, with this approach. First, such a description of his writings assumes the perspective of an insider whose chief concerns were primarily religious in nature, and further tends to assume a dichotomy between an imaginary and monolithic “normative” Judaism and a corrupted, Hellenized form of it—assumptions that can hardly stand.¹¹⁹ Josephus’ literary portraits of the Jews looked like rewritings only if one knew what the originals looked like (which his Gentiles readers did not), and it is questionable whether we should assume that religious zeal was the primary concern of people like Josephus¹²⁰ or that anti-Jewish sentiments centered around Jewish religion. Second, it is not generally agreed that Judaism was a missionary religion in Josephus’ day, nor does writing in the mode of apologetics

¹¹⁷ E.g., J. Daniel, ‘Apologetics in Josephus’ (PhD Diss. Rutgers University, 1981) iii, 212-15; M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, trans. J. Bowden (Philadelphia 1981) 1.313.

¹¹⁸ A. Kraabel refers to this as the “old consensus,” characterized by paganizing Jewish religion to make it more attractive to Gentiles and by a longing for the ancestral homeland, and viewed primarily as a religious endeavor. ‘The Roman Diaspora: Six Questionable Assumptions’, in J. Overman and R. MacLennan (eds.), *Diaspora Jews and Judaism: Essays in Honor of, and in Dialogue with, A. Thomas Kraabel* (Atlanta 1992) 5-6.

¹¹⁹ S. Jones, ‘Identities in Practice: Towards and Archaeological Perspective on Jewish Identity in Antiquity’, in S. Jones and S. Pearce (eds.), *Jewish Local Patriotism and Self-Identification in the Graeco-Roman Period* (JSPseudSup 31, Sheffield 1998) 29-30.

¹²⁰ S. Cohen, ‘Respect for Judaism by Gentiles According to Josephus’, *HTR* 80 (1987) 423: “In his view Judaism is not a missionary religion.” Some scholars, however, still defend the idea that Josephus’ aim was to win adherents to Judaism. Cf. S. Mason, “The Contra Apionem in Social and Literary Context’, 208-16.

necessarily imply a missionary purpose.¹²¹ The question of how successful Judaism was in winning converts in the first century CE is still open, and the lack of a definitive answer precludes using it as a basis for suggesting that Josephus had a missionary purpose in his literary works. Third, the word “apologetic” has been so stretched in scholarly usage that it is barely a useful term any more.¹²²

The known facts point in another direction. Two things in particular stand out. First, there is more than defense of Jewish religious customs going on in Josephus. Although Josephus knew how to defend his people from misconceptions and wild derogatory rumors, his writings also went well beyond these kinds of apologetics. Gruen’s observation about Jewish Hellenistic literature is especially appropriate to the works of Josephus: “These works go beyond what is conventionally termed apologetic writing. They do not represent mere defensive, rear-guard action by a beleaguered minority in an alien world. What stands out is the aggressive inventiveness of the stories.”¹²³ Second, Josephus’ Greek writings were qualitatively different from the majority of works produced by Jews from Maccabean times to his own day in that he wrote about Jewish history and culture to inform non-Jewish readers. All of his literary works had a non-Jewish target audience, but a Jewish subject-matter.

What might these facts tell us about the purposes of those works? Surely there is a connection between the intended audience of Josephus’ writings, the nature and subject of those writings, and the context in which he wrote them. Any interpretation must take into consideration that his writings were a response to what Josephus saw as the practical concerns of the situation,

¹²¹ Barclay, ‘Apologetics in the Jewish Diaspora’, 136, 147f.

¹²² Barclay, ‘Apologetics in the Jewish Diaspora’, 135.

¹²³ E. Gruen, ‘Fact and Fiction: Jewish Legends in a Hellenistic Context’, in P. Cartledge et al (eds.), *Hellenistic Constructs: Essays in Culture, History, and Historiography* (Hellenistic Culture and Society 26, Berkeley 1997) 87.

namely the enormity of anti-Jewish sentiment in the Roman world. The Romans had drawn a clear line between Hellenes (in which the Romans included themselves) and Jews, and Josephus was trying to re-draw it. The recent war with Rome had exacerbated a long-standing negative image of Jews in the ancient world, an image of Jews as rebels and, ultimately, losers. That image needed repair, and the ideology that had fueled the rebels in the recent war with Rome, and that had bred a perception of wide-spread Jewish animosity toward Rome, needed to be repudiated and replaced.

To an outsider (to whom the texts were aimed), Josephus' writings were literary portraits of Jewishness that were intended to be normative for understanding all Jews, and the nature of these portraits is that they are *not* wholly, or even primarily, religious in character. The sum effect of Josephus' writings, which always had non-Jews in view, was to shape a positive picture of Jews not only religiously, *but also historically and socially*. Josephus was well-aware of the sentiments of Gentiles towards Jews in his day. He knew that the rebels who had, in his view, caused the war had promoted an image of Jewishness that led directly to violence,¹²⁴ and he aimed to replace that view with one that was more amenable to Roman tastes. He knew the rumors and the popular unkind interpretations that had been placed on the behavior and customs of his people, and he wrote to confront and to correct the untruths and misconceptions. He did this not only by offering counter-facts, but also by crafting a new cultural portrait of Jews. Furthermore, in constructing this new positive image he used the paradigms of the very people who had created, received, and fostered the negative rumors and misconceptions. These

¹²⁴ For this phenomenon, see J. Fearon and D. Laitin, 'Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity', *International Organization* 54 (2000) 845-77. One may compare this with the ethnic constructions behind the riot in Alexandria in 38 BC. See K. Goudriaan, 'Ethnic Strategies in Graeco-Roman Egypt', in P. Bilde et al (eds.), *Ethnicity in Hellenistic Egypt* (Studies in Hellenistic Civilization 3, Aarhus 1992) 79-95.

paradigms were often secular, not merely religious, in character, and by using them Josephus demonstrated that he had more than Gentile religious sympathy in view. He had a larger, social agenda.

Josephus' circumstances, and the content of his writings, suggest that his works were designed to present a positive image of Jewish culture which served as a correction to the prevailing, mostly negative image. The present investigation stands in the trajectories of recent Josephan studies and of explorations into the ethnicities of ancient peoples and the texts that reflect them. I propose that, given the historical context in which Josephus wrote, Josephus was attempting a transformation in the way non-Jews viewed and understood Jews. That is, Josephus was not simply accommodating Jewish history and customs to pagan points of view so they could understand it or that they would be attracted to it. He was instead accommodating Jewish ethnicity to Hellenism so that the Jews would be perceived as a people who possessed Greek qualities. This was more than explaining the Jewish way of life to outsiders, and it was more than simple apologetics. Josephus was re-inventing Jewish identity to conform with Greek identity. The best way to describe this is that he was in the business of constructing an ethnicity for the Jewish people of his day through his literary works.

The construction of an ethnicity is more than an exercise in self-defense¹²⁵ (even though ethnicities can be, and often are, constructed in response to some perceived social marginalization), let alone religious self-defense. It is instead to make a claim in the world, to make a statement about "who we are," to provide a rationale for fitting into a larger society. The goal of the present study is to read and describe Josephus' literary works from the perspective of ethnicity. I wish to view his writings not from the Jews' perspective simply as a retelling of

¹²⁵ Cf. E. Gruen, 'Cultural Fictions and Cultural Identity' *TAPA* 123 (1993) 13.

traditional stories, nor primarily as a religious undertaking with a missionary purpose, but as carefully crafted products for Gentile readers whose aim was to broker a respectable social position for Jews within Greco-Roman society at large in the first century. Specifically, I will attempt to explore the writings of Josephus to discern the picture of Jewish self-definition and ethnicity that emerges from them. This study will also, following the lead of modern Josephus scholarship, look into how Josephus used Greek literary models to craft his works. The combination of these two perspectives will construct the basic thesis of this dissertation, that Josephus used these models to create a picture of Jewish ethnicity and self-definition that hoped to present the Jews to the Greco-Roman world at large as having the best characteristics of the noble Greeks of the past.

Josephus was not the only, nor first, Jew in ancient times to attempt to show that Jews exhibited qualities that were essentially Greek in character. Philo of Alexandria (*fl.* first century BCE) attempted to show the compatibility between the teachings of the Hebrew Scriptures and those of Greek philosophy.¹²⁶ Josephus' contribution lay in building a large-scale ethnicity through the tool of historiography. It was not, in Josephus' view, only that Jewish theology could compete with the best of pagan philosophy (the basic approach of Philo). Josephus wanted his audience to see that the Jews also shared the Greek spirit in their experiences and in their great historical figures, and historiography was the vehicle of choice for presenting these ideas. He saw fertile opportunities in the rich diversity of Jewish history to demonstrate the essentially Greek character of his people (the ethnic thrust of the *Antiquitates Judaicae*), he told the story of their war with Rome in such a way that a reader would see Greek qualities in the Jews and their experiences (the ethnic thrust of the *Bellum Judaicum*), and he demonstrated that the Jews and

¹²⁶ P. Borgen, 'Philo of Alexandria', in M. Stone (ed.), *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (CRINT 2.2, Philadelphia 1984) 233-82.

their religious beliefs are every bit as old as (and even older than) those of the Greeks, and wholly compatible with them (the ethnic thrust of the *Contra Apionem*).

Josephus' foray into historiography must no doubt be seen as an ambitious move on his part. Even if it was commonly expected for authors of accounts of wars to imitate Thucydides, and to engage in *mimesis* of the tradition as a whole,¹²⁷ to put oneself in such famous company was surely always a bold step. Yet even here we may be witnessing another aspect of Josephus' overall plan. It appears that Josephus hoped to present the Jews as possessing the respected elements of the Greek cultural heritage, including a preeminent national historian: himself. He presented himself, therefore, as the Jewish Thucydides (even to the point that, just like Thucydides, he was criticized concerning his actions in the war), the Jewish Herodotus, the Jewish Polybius, but also more: a Jewish prophet whose understandings were divinely guided. Given the political and cultural climate in which he wrote, this must have been an audacious step indeed. However, we can see Josephus' posturing of himself as the great historian of a people whom he wanted to compare favorably to the Greeks as completing the broad picture he aimed to present. Of course, it also served the function of presenting himself favorably to his patron and the literary elite of Rome.

I will not argue that the construction of an ethnicity was the exclusive purpose of Josephus' works. There is plenty of self-encomium and nationalistic propaganda in them as well. However, reading Josephus' writings from the perspective of ethnicity reveals another important dimension of them. To my knowledge, while it is well-known that Josephus presented the Jews to his readers in Greek models, no study has yet interpreted this phenomenon in terms of

¹²⁷ Marincola 12.

ethnicity.¹²⁸ What I propose to do, then, is to use the insights of modern studies of ethnicity as a way of interpreting the overall aim and purpose of Josephus' literary output. I hope to demonstrate that this method can provide a satisfactory answer for the questions of what Josephus was doing and why he was doing it. I do not presume that this approach explains everything about Josephus' editorial activity, because it is probably not possible to argue that Josephus followed a single rationale consistently.¹²⁹ His works are complex materials generated in a complex situation. I do hope to show, however, that approaching Josephus from the perspective of ethnicity can provide a new perspective on his works.

The approach of this dissertation also shares the concern of recent scholarship to read Josephus as seriously as possible in his own right and to locate Josephus firmly within the Hellenistic cultural and literary milieu. It is within that milieu that we can expect to find not only evidence of Josephus' method but also the reason that prompted the effort and the concern Josephus addressed and hoped to answer, namely, the wide-scale social rejection of Jews in the Greco-Roman world and the corresponding desire, at least among Jews like Josephus, to find a legitimate, accepted place within that culture.

¹²⁸ Rajak authored a short essay on 'Ethnic Identities in Josephus', but it is only a sketch of how Josephus views the difference between Greeks and Jews. *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome* (Boston 2002) 137-46.

¹²⁹ S. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome* 37.

CHAPTER 2 ETHNICITY, SELF-DEFINITION, AND THE ANCIENTS

The Concept of Ethnicity

The word “ethnicity” was coined in modern times,¹ but the concept has a history going back into ancient times. The English word is derived from the Greek word ἔθνος, which originally referred to a group of people (or even animals) who lived together, and then acquired the sense of a group of people who comprise a nationality (*i.e.*, they lived together as a nation), whether it was stated positively (a group of people belonging to the same nation) or negatively (a group of people not belonging to a particular nation under consideration). In this latter usage, τὰ ἔθνη came to mean “foreigners.” Among Greeks, therefore, the term could mean “non-Greek.” Similarly, Jewish literature in Greek regularly refers to Gentiles as τὰ ἔθνη. The word could also be used in a narrower sense to denote the people who comprised smaller social units, and could be applied to groups such as guilds, classes of people, the people in a geographical area such as “the provincials,” or the people under a particular ruler.² The basic idea was of a group that shared some common characteristics, especially some level of social life together. An ἔθνος was a geographical, political, or cultural group.³

Even though the phenomenon of ethnicity has become the object of modern scholarly inquiry only relatively recently, approaches to this subject have changed over recent years as the social and political climate in which modern scholars’ work has changed. The result is that debate persists over several issues in the study of ethnicity. It is beyond the scope of the present

¹ In 1953, according to J. Hall 34. The term did not enter English dictionaries until 1972. N. Glazier and D. Moynihan, *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience* (Cambridge, MA 1975) 1. Ground-breaking discussions were E. Leach, *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (London 1954) and F. Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Boston 1969).

² *LSJ* 480.

³ C. Jones, ‘ἔθνος and γένος in Herodotus’, *CQ* 46 (1996) 316.

study to attempt to formulate a new critical theory of ethnicity that is in dialogue with current scholarly viewpoints or to attempt a new working model. I will instead attempt the more modest task of taking a current, generally-accepted understanding of ethnicity and applying it to the works of Flavius Josephus in the context of the world of the first century BCE.

The term “ethnicity” denotes a socio-political self-understanding. The subject of this self-understanding may be an individual or a group of people. Although Weber despaired that the term was so nebulous that it ought to be abandoned,⁴ most modern scholars are more optimistic, and there is widespread agreement that the basis of an ethnic community is a shared belief in a common descent. So Weber proposed that “We shall call ‘ethnic groups’ those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or custom or both, or because of memories of colonization or migration; ... it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists”⁵ This is what others have called a putative myth of shared descent.⁶ Ethnicity is not an objective category, but a subjective one. A person lays claim to an ethnicity on the basis of what he or she believes, whether that claim is grounded in (historical) fact or not. “Ethnicity is based on mythical beliefs about the genealogical facts, not the genealogical facts themselves.”⁷ The story of shared descent may indeed have basis in historical fact or in blood relationships, but it need not have. Belief in this story is chosen, not necessarily innate, and the basis for choosing to believe for oneself one story of origins over another is complicated by many factors, not all of which are rational. “This belief is of course never finished but always subject to reinterpretations and adjustments, depending on

⁴ M. Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (New York 1968) 385.

⁵ M. Weber 389.

⁶ Cf. G. Bentley, ‘Response to Yelvington’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 33 (1991) 169.

⁷ A. Abizadeh, ‘Ethnicity, Race, and a Possible Humanity’, *World Order* 33 (2001) 25.

the present circumstances. In that sense, ethnicity is dynamic, changeable, and socially constructed.”⁸

This understanding of ethnicity means that a person or group may define themselves as they choose. Since ethnicity is not purely a function of actual genealogy, but of the adoption of a wider set of symbols, a person or group may construct their ethnicity more broadly than nationalistic or genealogical lines alone would allow.⁹ Some people prefer to define themselves more narrowly, as they may refer to themselves as African Americans, Irish Catholics, or French Canadians. This was also common in the ancient world, as in the designation “Hellenistic Jews.” Ethnicity, then, has no fixed essence or boundaries that are somehow inherent to a particular people. Instead the boundaries of ethnicity are mutable, subject to revision, adaptation, or abandonment in favor of other ones. “... ethnicity is a bundle of shifting interactions rather than a nuclear component of social organization. ... The primary characteristics of ethnic boundaries is attitudinal. In their origins and in their most fundamental effects, ethnic boundary mechanisms exist in the minds of people.”¹⁰

The creation or adoption of an ethnicity is an act of self-definition. It allows a person or minority group to situate themselves within the larger world and create a unique identity for themselves. “Ethnic identity can be a fundamental element of self-understanding, rooted in notions of loyalty and a sense of consistency across time and contexts.”¹¹ As noted above, Weber

⁸ M. Verkuyten, *The Social Psychology of Ethnic Identity* (New York 2005) 75.

⁹ Cf. “Fewer Americans Call Themselves Multiracial” *USA Today* < http://www.usa.today.com/news/nation/2007-05-04-multiracial_N.htm?csp=34 > 4 May 2007. Although the article title suggests that it is reporting on racial identification, the fact that this phenomenon is changing (based on comparison with earlier Census Bureau data) suggests that this is also a matter of ethnicity.

¹⁰ U. Østergård, “What is National and Ethnic Identity?,” in P. Bilde et al (eds.), *Ethnicity in Hellenistic Egypt* (Aarhus 1992) 36-7.

¹¹ Verkuyten 78.

also included in his definition the idea that ethnicities are accompanied by a sense of sharing in visible things like physical types or customs. His “or” reflects that there is more than one way into a specific ethnicity. However, the inclusion of customs in the definition means that a person who does not share physical characteristics associated with a particular ethnicity may still lay claim to that ethnicity by belief in some kind of connection with the origins of those in the group, and also by adopting the customs that have come to be associated with the ethnic group. In this way ethnicities are negotiable. However, most sociologists today would probably agree that Weber’s inclusion of custom unnecessarily limits the concept of ethnicity, because customs are themselves a negotiable element in the construction of an ethnicity.

Fundamental to the idea of an ethnicity, as reflected in Østergård’s words above, is the drawing of a boundary that either demarcates “us” from “them” or that identifies “us” with “them” (or that does both simultaneously). I will discuss below what factors serve to achieve that demonstration. The fact that an ethnicity is a social construct that is chosen by a group or individual means that the composition and maintenance of any ethnicity, that is, of the boundary, is a task that confronts each successive generation. Every generation must decide what to do with the ethnicity it has inherited, whether it be to change it, abandon it, or reaffirm it. Because people chose an ethnicity, there is nothing about an ethnicity itself that is self-maintaining; ethnicities must be maintained—boundary-lines must be determined—by the people who adopt them. The decisions a group makes concerning the maintenance of its ethnicity are collectively called an *ethnic strategy*.¹²

Since the myth of shared descent that lies at the heart of an ethnicity can be real or mythical, ethnicity has been viewed either in a primordial way or in an instrumental way. The

¹² Goudriaan 76.

primordial view sees ethnicity as “a basic and natural unit of history and humanity,”¹³ often with a deterministic role in things. Those who view ethnicity in this way see it as a kind of force of nature, almost biological. The instrumentalist view sees ethnicity as a tool that social groups use for the pursuit or advancement of their political and economic agendas or interests. As such it has a situational quality. That is, the primordialist view emphasizes the emotional attachment generated from actual blood ties, while the instrumentalist view sees the adoption of an ethnicity as a means to political or economic ends, leaving the truth of any claims to common origin as another matter. Which approach is the better description of how ethnicity actually operates is a matter of current debate.¹⁴ Given the phenomenon of ethnic malleability, the instrumentalist approach seems to be able to mount the stronger case and is the predominant view among modern sociologists. However, the two approaches need not be understood as exclusive of each other, as most sociologists would also argue that ethnicity has roots in nationality. Smith has therefore suggested that ethnicities are best described as having both historical and symbolic-cultural attributes.¹⁵ That is, ethnicity and concepts of race or “nation” can be, and often are, related, but they need not necessarily be.

There is a dialectic between the social and individual levels in the construction of ethnicity. From the level of society, it is clear that sociocultural circumstances and structures are an important part of the dynamics of ethnicity. People are affected by their social environment. However, individuals are also strong forces in the matrix of factors that go together to forge an ethnicity. When approached from this perspective, it is equally clear that “people are not passive

¹³ J. Hall 17.

¹⁴ See G. Bentley, ‘Ethnicity and Practice’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 29 (1987) 25-7.

¹⁵ A. Smith, *National Identity* (Reno 1991) 20. Cf. Verkuyten (88): “Primordial and circumstantial approaches ... are complimentary rather than contradictory.”

victims of circumstance. They are able to think about their situation, do something about it, reflect, assert, react, and create.”¹⁶ Forces from both levels must therefore be recognized.¹⁷ People function in, and in response to, specific socio-political contexts, but these same people are also contributors to those contexts. The dynamic and negotiable nature of ethnicity and the multi-dimensional character of ethnicity-building does not mean, however, that all elements in the matrix of factors are capable of the same kind or level of manipulation. The role of individual choice is, nonetheless, “important among ethnic minority groups with a more collectivist cultural background.”¹⁸

The way that individuals can posture themselves within society is limited by the more stable nature of social institutions. “The continuous negotiation on the level of everyday interactions does not imply a similar level of flexibility and variability on the level of society.”¹⁹ In other words, change at the institutional and cultural level does not occur easily. It is, generally, the nature of institutions to resist change. What this means is that there can be a real difference in how an individual chooses to define himself, and how the society into which he hopes to fit perceives his attempt. The social nature of ethnicity means that an ethnical strategy is practiced within a dialogue with a society that is “other,” and that “other” may not view an ethnic group the way the group views itself. The differences between those two views can create tension.

These two factors—the dynamic, negotiable quality of ethnicities, and the resistance of social institutions to change—have a bearing on the success of a given ethnic agenda. Together they make ethnicities especially susceptible to falsification. Negotiation into an ethnicity, if it

¹⁶ Verkuyten 17.

¹⁷ See S. Jones, ‘Discourses of Identity in the Interpretation of the Past’, in P. Grave-Brown, et al, (eds.), *Cultural Identity and Archaeology: The Construction of European Communities* (London 1996) 67-8.

¹⁸ Verkuyten 25.

¹⁹ Verkuyten 25.

hopes to be accepted, requires some semblance of credibility. Verkuyten has observed that ethnic constructions must not stray too far from reality if they are to serve as emotionally convincing and satisfying self-definitions.²⁰ One cannot invent, or attach oneself to, an ethnicity out of thin air. As an exercise in historical reconstruction, an ethnicity must ostensibly be believable, especially by the larger group into which an ethnic group seeks admission. Since the purposes of constructing or attaching oneself to an ethnicity are to enjoy a sense of unique identity and to provide a means by which others may view and understand oneself or the group, the ethnicity has to maintain some kind of connection with the real world. Ultimately, the success of the enterprise relies on the quality of the dialectic between the larger social level and the smaller individual or minority group level. “Ethnic identities are not simply the products of ethnic assignments imposed by others or assertions made by people themselves, but the result of the interaction between the two.”²¹

The drive to situate oneself (as an individual or a minority group) within the larger social context involves psychological factors, especially the sense of self-esteem. Here Verkuyten notes that “People prefer identifications that bring positive social identities, and thereby positive collective self-esteem. . . . Identification and self-esteem are assumed to be closely related, and often they are not distinguished but taken as indicators for each another.”²² Also relevant to this study is his observation that “A sense of identity implies an awareness not only of who and what one is, but also of the value, recognition, and respect that particular identities bring. Self-esteem

²⁰ “Justification . . . is necessary both for in-group members and for outsiders. Ethnic claims have to be ‘proven’ if they are to become meaningful identities. Many things are possible here, but not every possibility is intellectually plausible and morally acceptable. Although ethnic identities are malleable, they are not complete fabrications.” Verkuyten 75.

²¹ Verkuyten 18.

²² Verkuyten 67.

develops in interaction with others and is strongly dependent on the esteem granted socially.”²³ While these observations do not constitute absolute “rules” of how ethnic identities must, or always, develop, they acknowledge the important fact that the need to feel accepted, to achieve a sense of belonging, is a legitimate factor in the formation of an ethnic identity. Furthermore, the degree to which one thinks ethnic identity is negotiable is directly related to one’s current position in the larger society. “... members of marginalized and minority groups are more likely to hold a constructionist point of view in which empiricist claims are criticized and multiple interpretations of reality are considered valid.”²⁴

Ethnicity is not the same thing as what we might loosely call nationalism²⁵ or patriotism. Nationalism is a sense of pride in one’s perceived heritage, or “the attitude that the members of a nation have when they care about their national identity.”²⁶ Nationalism often carries with it the sense of promotion and defense of one’s heritage in the face of some perceived crisis or threat, whereas patriotism “denotes an identification with a loyalty towards a peculiar combination of territory and nation.”²⁷ The two, are however, closely related. When these are driven by a perceived threat, that threat may come from outsiders whose different values and lifestyles are seen as a menace to the survival and the very existence of the group, or the perceived threat to the heritage may come from within the group itself, from members who are judged to have compromised key elements of the group’s collective identity. It may even involve both, when

²³ Verkuyten 68.

²⁴ Verkuyten 28. Cf. J. Hall 18.

²⁵ I am not using the term in the same way some anthropologists use it, to describe an attitude of which the goal is the formation of a political nation-state. I am using the term here more in accordance with its popular usage.

²⁶ ‘Nationalism’, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. < <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nationalism/> > 23 May 2006.

²⁷ S. Pearce and S. Jones, ‘Introduction: Jewish Local Identities and Patriotism in the Graeco-Roman Period’, in L. Grabbe and J. Charlesworth (eds.), *Jewish Local Patriotism and Self-Identification in the Graeco-Roman Period* (Sheffield 1998) 22.

some members of a group see other members as having compromised or identified with an external threat. Since nationalism may be ignited by the perception of others within the same ethnic group, nationalism is not ethnicity. This is not to say that nationalistic concerns are unrelated to ethnic self-definitions. Indeed, they are.²⁸ It is instead to say that nationalism should be viewed as an element or catalyst in the formation of an ethnicity.²⁹

A significant study of ethnicity among the ancient Greeks is *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* by Jonathan Hall, who proposes that ethnicity is characterized chiefly by three things: 1) a putative myth of shared descent, 2) a dynamic, negotiable quality, and 3) expression through written and spoken discourse.³⁰ This description follows the basic understanding of ethnicity laid out above, that what chiefly makes for ethnicity is the *belief* or the *assertion* shared by a group of people that they have a common origin. The putative character of this basic element of ethnicity makes it dynamic and negotiable. Also, like others, Hall posits that ethnicities are maintained through a dialectic between the individual and a collectivity.³¹ What he adds to the discussion here is that ethnicity can be negotiated through texts (oral or written) that create a narrative

²⁸ “Specific social identities can also become overwhelming or unidimensional when the society obliges people to place a particular identity in the forefront of their minds and central in their behavior. A simple example is a nation at war when national identity forcibly takes precedence to almost all other ones.” Verkuyten 52.

²⁹ Modern discussions of national identity are identical in many ways to discussions of ethnicity, and some scholars have not differentiated clearly between the two. This is because there seems to be general agreement that national identities are rooted in ethnicities. See A. Smith, *National Identity*, 19-42. Similarly, B. Anderson referred to nations as “imagined communities,” yet the attributes of “nation” as he described them are much the same as the attributes of ethnicity (*Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London 1983)). The same is true of M. Bruner’s description of the formation of national identity in *Strategies of Remembrance: The Rhetorical Dimensions of National Identity Construction* (Columbia 2002) 1-11. Nevertheless, ethnicity and nationhood are different (although related) social constructs. The perspective of this dissertation is not that Josephus was forging a *national* identity for Jews. They already had that. Instead, Josephus was forging a new *ethnic* identity for Jews.

³⁰ J. Hall 2.

³¹ J. Hall 29.

connection of shared origin, in the past, between people. Texts create and communicate a narrative thought world that is interpretive of the myth of descent of the people who use and transmit those texts. The creation of texts (whether they be deme membership lists, literary texts, genealogies, etc.) is thus a significant moment in the creation of an ethnicity. Through these texts elements of identity can be described, denied, or polarized in relation to competing or alternate elements. However, while recognizing the role of texts in the construction of ethnicity, we should not go to the extreme of reducing ethnicity solely or purely to a function of self-definitional literary discourse. While an ethnicity may utilize texts, ethnicity is not a literary construct. The realities are more complex and flexible than that, and self-definition is accomplished in specific contexts that bring varied and unique collections of circumstances to bear on the shape and outcome of the exercise and that affect how an ethnicity actually translates into a mode of being. “Whilst ethnicity always involves active processes of performance and interpretation in the objectification of cultural difference, it is still constituted in the context of specific cultural practices and historical experiences which provide the basis for the perception of similarity and difference.”³²

A fuller description of ethnicity is offered by Smith, who has suggested that there are six characteristics of the ethnic group as opposed to other kinds of social groups: 1) a collective name, 2) a common myth of descent, 3) a shared history, 4) a distinctive shared culture, 5) an association with a specific territory, and 6) a sense of communal solidarity.³³ This description adds precision to those of Weber and Hall. Smith’s description recognizes the importance of a collective name for the ethnic group. Names have always been one of the most powerful means

³² Jones, “Discourses of Identity”, 56.

³³ A. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (New York 1987) 22-46.

of self-definition known to people, arguably more so among the ancients than among peoples in modern times.

Smith's description also adds to the fundamental notion of a shared myth of origins the important idea that an ethnicity includes a shared history that enjoys a traditional status among those who subscribe to it. This is not contradictory to the fact that the putative myth is subject to modification or revision, because traditions are themselves fluid things, and a shared history may certainly change over time as it is transmitted and retold for new generations. However, even as the story may take new nuances or shapes, the thing that survives is the ethnicity codified or institutionalized in the story. This results in what Smith calls the paradox of ethnicity, viz., "its mutability in persistence, and its persistence through change."³⁴ Although the precise contours of an ethnicity change over time, the ethnicity itself remains viable. Furthermore, it is easy to see how this role of tradition works hand-in-hand with the presence of literary texts. As the texts are preserved and transmitted, the ethnicity they portray comes to have a codified, or institutional, quality that eventually becomes tradition.

Smith further suggests that an ethnic group will have a distinctive shared culture. This is not, however, to equate ethnicity with culture. To say that ethnicity is the product of a perceived or believed, and hence negotiable, putative myth of common descent is to say that ethnicity is neither determined nor necessarily expressed by symbols of material culture. No ethnic group is defined by markers (including cultural ones) that are objectively absolute, because ethnicity is a social construct. Hall therefore distinguishes between ethnic *criteria* and ethnic *indicia*. The former are those attributes that are chosen by the group as deterministic of membership within the ethnic group. The latter are merely operational attributes "which people tend to associate

³⁴ A. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* 32.

with particular ethnic groups once the criteria have been established.”³⁵ These kinds of identifiers can change over time and thus are not formally determinative of ethnicity. More importantly, both the criteria and the indicia may vary from one group to the next. Thus, for example, a specific religion may be a criteria for one ethnicity, but religion may serve only as an indicia in another ethnicity. Or, use of a specific language may be a criteria for one ethnicity, but language may not be crucial to the ethnicity of another person or group.³⁶ The determinative factor is whether or not something contributes to the creation and maintenance of the putative myth of common descent that lies at the heart of the ethnicity.³⁷ It is thus also context-sensitive.

The existence of a shared culture within an ethnicity is a product of the fact that ethnicity is a subset of culture. Culture, like ethnicity, is an attempt at identification, but is conceptually different³⁸ and broader. There are usually various ethnicities within a culture. Friedman delineates the two thusly: “If *cultural identity* is the generic concept, referring to the attribution of a set of qualities to a given population, we can say that cultural identity that is experienced as carried by the individual, in the blood, so to say, is what is commonly known as *ethnicity*.”³⁹ Ethnicity thus involves how an individual, or a group, appropriates the elements of their culture into their own contexts. As Verkuyten describes it,

Acculturation as the process of becoming more similar culturally does not have to imply a change of group membership and self-definition People often hold on to their ethnic group identity, to what they feel is a continuity with the past, although their culture

³⁵ J. Hall 21.

³⁶ For example, J. Hall argues (168-81) that even among the ancient Greeks, dialectical differences were not determinative of ethnic groups.

³⁷ Verkuyten 75. It is for this reason that it is methodologically unsound to attempt to determine the ethnicity of a people solely or primarily from the archaeological examination of material cultural remains. See S. Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity: Constructing Identities in the Past and Present* (New York 1997); *idem*, “Identities in Practice”, 48.

³⁸ S. Jones, ‘Discourses of Identity’, 67. She notes that the realization that ethnic groups are self-defined “reveals a critical break between culture and ethnicity.”

³⁹ J. Friedman, *Cultural Identity and Global Process* (London 1994) 26.

becomes intermingled with that of others. Contact between ethnic groups almost always leads to an exchange of cultural characteristics and mutual adjustments, but at the same time it often results in enhanced ethnic consciousness and stronger group differentiation. ... Cultural content and ethnic identity are, to an important degree, functionally independent.⁴⁰

So a person or group may assimilate elements of a culture near to them, but these assimilated elements do not essentially change a group's understanding of their own ethnicity. In fact, such cultural elements are often redefined to attain a new and special meaning within a particular, new ethnic context. It is in this sense, then, that an ethnicity will have a distinctive shared culture.

The last two of Smith's elements, association with a specific territory and a sense of communal solidarity, prove to be flexible in practice. Concerning territory, it is entirely possible for a person or group to maintain their ethnicity outside of their ancestral homeland and retain only the most nominal connection with it. For example, it is commonplace among many native-born U.S. citizens that they know where their ancestors came from outside of the U.S., but they have never visited those ancestral homelands and have no personal ties to them. Yet they often still proudly claim a heritage from outside U.S. territories. A group may even adopt a place as a new homeland. The myth of Aeneas leaving Greek lands to establish a people in Latium immediately comes to mind, as well as the fact that many people in Roman imperial times lived in lands other than their ancestral homelands. There were several diasporas in antiquity, caused by war, famine, and other such things. The Jewish diaspora was one of these. However, many of these diasporas managed to adjust their understanding of their relation to an ancestral homeland in such a way as to survive well outside of it. Smith's last element, communal solidarity, is a difficult thing to define. It should not be surprising, therefore, if it proves to be quite variable in its application. However, he states that one form in which this element of ethnicity is manifested is in institutional philanthropic expression. The power of this element is that it may overcome

⁴⁰ Verkuyten 77.

things such as territorial dislocation or internal factionalism or sectarianism. Community solidarity provides a sense of togetherness which can override internal social stratifications or ideological disputes.⁴¹

Organized religion can play a particularly powerful role within an ethnicity in that it is able to reinforce an ethnicity in a unique way. Some would even go as far as to say that a shared religion is a fundamental element of an ethnicity.⁴² Smith has identified three aspects of the relationship between organized religion and ethnicity that make the combination especially potent.⁴³ First, religions often embody some kind of story of origins, often in close connection with a creation story. These stories of origins are closely related to ethnicity's myth of common descent, and serve to define that myth in cosmic terms so that the people who subscribe to the ethnicity feel that they have a special place in the cosmos, leading to a sense of separation and superiority. Second, religions regularly succumb to political and cultural agendas. Even those religions which are in theory universalistic and teach a salvation that transcends ethnic, social, or national boundaries regularly become associated, in time, with specific communities and succumb to forces that forge new forms and contents for the religion, with the result that the religion and the specific ethnic community become closely linked. Third, organized religion often has a ready-made apparatus for the diffusion of ethnic myths and symbols. Typically this apparatus consists of things like a priesthood and channels of communication (such as regular assemblies of the social group) through which groups are regularly taught the symbols. In addition, religious clergy (whether they are called such or not) serve to guard and codify sacred

⁴¹ A. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* 30.

⁴² C. Renfrew, "Prehistory and the Identity of Europe," in P. Grave-Brown, et al (eds.), *Cultural Identity and Archaeology: The Construction of European Communities* (London 1996) 130.

⁴³ A. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* 34-7.

texts and legal codes which reflect the self-understanding of the group. Religion becomes especially important for diaspora communities: “Religion here plays a dual role, at once conservative as with resident *ethnie*, and innovatively adaptive to meet a variety of changing conditions while retaining its central promise.”⁴⁴

It must be understood that the description of ethnicity I have given above is a composite construct. The model is descriptive, not prescriptive. Not all of the elements need to exist for a people to have an ethnicity, nor must they formally recognize them in order for their ethnicity to be genuine. All that is essential is some sense of “us” that is construed as being in some sense different from “them.” The sociological study of a people’s ethnicity may therefore, for the sake of description, impose categories on that people which they themselves do not actually use to define themselves. It is in this sense that Renfrew says that “ethnicity is a matter of degree.”⁴⁵ However, the formal elements are useful as analytical tools if it is remembered that they are theoretical, categorical descriptions that do not necessarily directly reflect how a people thinks or speaks about themselves.

Whenever an ethnic group is confronted (by whatever means) with another, dominant culture, a crisis in self-understanding often results. “A crisis of confidence often develops in a less developed community when it comes into prolonged cultural contact with a more developed power. Imperial expansion, for example, carries an almost magnetic attraction for the threatened or conquered peoples in its path.”⁴⁶ In such a situation that weaker group has limited options for maintaining its ethnicity.⁴⁷ One option is to effectively ignore the dominant culture altogether

⁴⁴ A. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* 114.

⁴⁵ Renfrew 130.

⁴⁶ A. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* 56.

⁴⁷ J. Hall 31; cf. G. Bohak, ‘Ethnic Continuity in the Jewish Diaspora in Antiquity’, in J. Bartlett (ed.), *Jews in the Hellenistic Roman Cities* (London 2002) 180.

and reject things that would be considered ethnic dilution. There is more than one way to do this. One method would be to continue to speak one's native language, or to continue to reckon time by the calendar of one's homeland. Another method would be to create new dimensions of comparison with the dominant group that enable the disadvantaged group to bypass its social dislocation.⁴⁸ If possible, a group may attempt to reacquire its traditional territory and homeland,⁴⁹ or it may try to reestablish itself by placing renewed emphasis on genealogical legitimation.⁵⁰ Such circumstances may even breed apocalypticism. The practical difficulties involved in implementing such strategies often result in the failure to maintain this stance as a permanent option. A second option is to assimilate culturally with the dominant group on the largest scale possible. This entails a breach of the group's ethnic boundaries in order to adopt new ones that are acceptable to the dominant culture, and often requires some kind of management of a subjective or intellectual transcendence of nationality. The ancient Thracians are an example of this. They flocked into Egypt in droves as mercenaries for Ptolemy II and Ptolemy III and within a few generations had taken up Greek names, and typical Thracian names (like Seuthes) eventually passed into the stock of common Greek names. They so fully assimilated to Greek culture that they erased their own distinctive ethnicity. "In the end, there was no cultural feature left by which they could (or, for that matter, would) distinguish themselves from the Greeks. At that moment they vanished from history."⁵¹ The chief problem

⁴⁸ J. Hall 31.

⁴⁹ This was one of the goals of the Zealot party among the Jews. A. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* 57. We should remember that land-holding, especially in the Roman provinces, was a form of economic power, although the land also had a religious significance for ancient Jews.

⁵⁰ A. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* 50-3.

⁵¹ Goudriaan 79. Cf. also S. Honigman, 'The Birth of a Diaspora: The Emergence of a Jewish Self-Definition in Ptolemaic Egypt in the Light of Onomastics', in J. Cohen and E. Frerichs (eds.), *Diasporas in Antiquity* (Brown Judaic Studies 288, Atlanta 1993) 102-4.

with pursuing this option is that it will, if pursued fully, result in the subversion and loss of one's original identity by the complete absorption into the dominant group.

The third option is to attempt to establish some kind of dialectic in which one negotiates some self-definitional elements that will be shared with the surrounding culture while keeping other elements intact. In practical terms, this may entail living in a new place, in a different culture, but retaining certain ethnic markers from one's homeland, making trips back to the homeland,⁵² maintaining correspondence with others in the homeland, continuing to practice traditional religion, becoming bilingual, etc. Some ethnic markers that are negatively perceived in the dominant culture are thus remodeled or adapted and presented positively. In this option, existing ethnic markers are conserved (but not in pristine condition). Depending on which strategy the group adopts, identities may be obliterated, transformed, or revived. However, the strong force of assimilation operative in the ancient world meant that groups that adopted the first option probably began a process by which their descendants would eventually practice the third.

For those who pursued the third option, especially for a prolonged period of time, the phenomenon of ethnicity was further complicated when self-definition was practiced in the context of an overarching imperialistic politico-commercial structure (such as the Roman empire). In such a context

As the accumulation and possession of abstract wealth plays a central role in the definition of social position, ascribed ethnic categories are not directly constitutive of the social order ... Ethnic categories cannot function as categories of social structure in a system where social position is not ethnically described, but economically and politically achieved. It is

⁵² There are several reports in the ancient literature of Jewish pilgrimages to Palestine in Roman times. Cf. Philo, *De Provid.* 2.64; Euseb. *PE* 8.14.

in such circumstances that ethnicity or cultural identity becomes salient, insofar as it is clearly separate from social position.⁵³

Ethnic groups that lie outside of the political and economic mainstream therefore find that their ethnicity, no matter how well-defined it is, is insufficient to purchase them a place within the social structures where power is brokered. The ethnicity that perhaps once served as a powerful marker of social status becomes relativized and marginalized within a larger, “foreign” system where social position is determined otherwise. A people’s sense of ethnicity may be a comfort to them in other ways, but it certainly can be divorced from social status. Of course, this would be more acute for those who were once considered elites within their own (previous) ethnic self-understanding. Indeed, radical changes of status on many levels are possible in such a scenario, and the rise of an apocalyptic mindset to interpret the changes of the present is sometimes not far behind.⁵⁴

Modern scholarship in post-colonial theory has explored the complex negotiation between a group and the structure of power that has come to dominate it. When one culture dominates another, the result is often a kind of hybrid situation which entails “the ambivalence of the new cultural formation which results from cultural contact in conditions of unequal power.”⁵⁵ Both the dominant culture and the dominated culture experience change in this process. The contours of this change are not static, and thus many possibilities for confrontation, compromise, assimilation, syncretism, or dialogue become possible all at once. Authors within the dominated culture may “negotiate complex paths of self-expression through the adapted medium of the

⁵³ J. Friedman, “Notes on Culture and Identity in Imperial Worlds,” in P. Bilde et al (eds.), *Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Kingdom* (Studies in Hellenistic Civilization 1, Aarhus 1990) 30.

⁵⁴ J. Sørensen, ‘Native Reactions to Foreign Rule and Culture in Religious Literature’, in P. Bilde et al (eds.), *Ethnicity in Hellenistic Egypt* (Studies in Hellenistic Civilization 3, Aarhus 1992) 164, 180.

⁵⁵ J. Barclay, ‘Josephian Rhetoric in Flavian Rome’, in J. Edmondson et al (eds.), *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome* (Clarendon 2005) 317.

dominant discourse”⁵⁶ resulting in what some have called transculturation. The permeability and mutability of ethnic boundaries thus becomes both a means of survival for an ethnic group and at the same time a threat to its unique identity or even its existence. On the one hand, this permeability makes it possible for one ethnic group (like the Jews) to assimilate and lay claim to a status within a larger dominant culture (such as Hellenistic culture) and, in the process, to change that culture to some degree. On the other hand, this same openness to culture carries with it a certain dilution of the existing ethnic identity (which was a concern of some ancient Romans). Too little assimilation keeps the group on the “outside,” and too much assimilation can make for the disappearance of the distinctives of the group altogether. Decisions about what elements are to be retained as ethnic criteria and which ones may be reduced to the status of ethnic indicia are often complex and hotly debated. This is to be expected, because a traditional self-understanding is at stake. The situation is further complicated by the fact that language of assimilation or acculturation may mask a subversive, revolutionary spirit.⁵⁷

An ethnicity has political dimensions to the extent that it is a declaration of how a person or group wishes to be perceived or treated by others with regard to social power. Ethnicity can become a powerful motivator in political causes when an ethnic group believes its political rights are being denied or suppressed so as to produce a situation of inequality or oppression, and especially when the denial of those rights or privileges runs counter to elements of one’s ethnicity. To the extent that ethnicity can lay claim to a place or status within a larger culture, the assertion of ethnicity can amount to a reaffirmation of political status. Sometimes the struggle may be for political power without the element of inequality, and sometimes the goal may simply

⁵⁶ Barclay, ‘Josephian Rhetoric’, 318.

⁵⁷ N. Elliot, ‘The “Patience of the Jews”: Strategies of Resistance and Accommodation to Imperial Cultures’, in J. Anderson et al (eds.), *Pauline Conversations in Context: Essays in Honor of Calvin J. Roetzel* (JSOTSup 221, London 2002) 32-41.

be equality, not superiority. The modern term for this phenomenon is “identity politics.”

Verkuyten describes it this way:

Identity politics is about the recognition of one’s status as rightfully belonging and the public manifestation of modes of belonging. In addition, identity politics is about recognition by others of who and what one is.... It is concerned with the emancipation from repressive, ignored, or denied social identities, and with the equal value of groups and the equal respect to which they are entitled. For many, this does not simply imply equal treatment but rather that specific experiences, histories, cultures, and contributions of groups are publicly affirmed and recognized.⁵⁸

The following points summarize the features of the concept of ethnicity I have described:

- The term “ethnicity” denotes a socio-political self-understanding held either by individuals or groups. The term is modern, but the concept is a historical phenomenon.
- The fundamental element of ethnic self-understanding is a putative myth of common origin.
- Ethnicities are constructed and maintained in a dialectic, or matrix of relationships, between the individual or minority group and the larger society. However, not all elements in the matrix are equally malleable.
- As a social construct based on a putative myth, an ethnicity is negotiable, yet it must maintain some semblance of credibility within a dialogue between insiders and outsiders. This is a function of the dialectic in which an ethnicity works.
- Ethnicity is not the same thing as race, nationalism, or patriotism.
- Ethnic criteria are not static. Instead they are chosen because they support in some significant way the putative myth of common origin.
- Cultural elements may be assimilated in the service of an ethnicity, but ethnic identity and acculturation are separable.
- Ethnicity can be expressed through texts, which often impart an institutional and traditional quality to the ethnicity.

⁵⁸ P.69.

- Religion can be a powerful force in the maintenance of an ethnicity, especially for diaspora communities.
- Ethnic groups are sometimes called upon to manage their self-understanding in the face of a larger, dominant culture. They may manage this by ignoring the dominant culture, by completely assimilating to it, or by attempting to negotiate some level of participation in it while retaining elements or markers of their own distinctive self-definition.
- Ethnicity does not necessarily buy power within a social structure. In fact, it may buy marginalization.
- The negotiable quality of ethnicity creates a situation in which the negotiation risks the loss (through assimilation or otherwise) of elements that some may have considered as ethnic criteria.
- One motive for constructing an ethnicity is the psychological need for self-esteem and a sense of belonging. “Identity politics” is the politicizing of this psychological need.

Greek Ethnicity and the Roman World

Questions of ethnicity may be applied to ancient peoples, and have been so applied by classical scholars for some time (although the sociological models and definitions of ethnicity have changed throughout the history of classical scholarship on this subject). This becomes a useful way to explore what people in ancient times thought of themselves, and may help explain historical processes, events, and literature.

Ethnic self-understandings were just as flexible in the ancient world as they are in our world today. Multiple ethnic designations were certainly possible in ancient Greco-Roman society. Josephus spoke of one group of Jews saying ἦσαν δὲ Ἰουδαῖοι Αἰγύπτιοι (“they were Egyptian Jews”).⁵⁹ These Jews had survived in Egypt and had maintained a high degree of separateness from the larger culture of which they were a subset, enough to still call themselves Jews, but had also managed a degree of assimilation by which they could be called “Egyptian.” Bohak cites⁶⁰ as other examples the Ἑλληνοσκύθαι (Greco-Scythians), the Λιβυφοίνικοι (Libyan

⁵⁹ *BJ* 1.190.

⁶⁰ p.189.

Phoenicians),⁶¹ the Συροφοίνικιοι (Syro-Phoenicians),⁶² the Gallograeci (Phrygian Gauls, Galatians),⁶³ and the Celtiberi (Iberian Celts, in Hispania).⁶⁴ Of special interest are the Φοινικαίγυπτιοι (Phoenician Egyptians),⁶⁵ the Ἑλληνομεμφίται (Greco-Memphites),⁶⁶ and the Καρομεμφίται (Carian Memphites), all of whom were neighbors of the Jews whom Josephus designated as Ἰουδαῖοι Αἰγύπτιοι. All of these groups had been allocated land and had permission to build temples for themselves. That is, Egypt became their new homeland, and this important element of ethnic identity became transposed, as it were.⁶⁷

In spite of the fact that some people managed to achieve a kind of dual-ethnicity, the norm was that most people continued to be associated with a single ethnicity, whether that association was hereditary or negotiated. Thus in Euripides' *Phrixus*, we hear of a (fictional) man who left Sidon and settled in Thebes, and Φοῖνιξ πεφυκῶς, ἐκ δ' ἀμείβεται γένος Ἑλληνικόν ("having been Phoenician originally, he changed his *genos* to Greek"),⁶⁸ and in Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* a Tyrian character offers to exchange his *ethnos* and his *patris* for another (ἔθνος δὲ καὶ πατρίδα τὴν ὑμετέραν ἀλλάξομαι) if it means he can marry the Egyptian girl with whom he has fallen in love.⁶⁹ Strabo's opinion in the early first century CE was that the Greek cities of the part of Italy known to him as Magna Graecia (except Tarentum, Rhegium, and Naples) had become completely barbarized (ἐκβεβαρβάρωσθαι) and thus lost their Greek character.⁷⁰ In a similar vein,

⁶¹ The term is used by Polybius (e.g., 3.33.15), whose works were known by Josephus.

⁶² Used in the New Testament, *Mark* 7.26.

⁶³ E.g., Tac. *Ann.* 15.6; Caes. *Civ.* 3.4; Liv. 38.12.1. The Greek version of the word appears in D.S. 5.32.

⁶⁴ E.g., Caes. *Civ.* 1.38.

⁶⁵ *PSI* 5.531.1.

⁶⁶ *PSI* 5.531.6.

⁶⁷ Bohak 190.

⁶⁸ *Fr.* 819.

⁶⁹ 5.19.

⁷⁰ 6.1.2.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a generation earlier, spoke unapprovingly of Greeks who had forgotten their Greek heritage, ceased speaking the language, and no longer acknowledged the ancient gods.⁷¹ To him, they were no longer Greek. In Ptolemaic Egypt, Jews took on the designation “Macedonian” when they joined the military unit that was originally comprised of ethnic Macedonians,⁷² a point which Josephus was eager to mention.⁷³ Similarly, he mentions the case of queen Helena: Κατὰ τοῦτον δὲ τὸν καιρὸν τῶν Ἀδιαβηνῶν βασιλῆς Ἑλένη καὶ ὁ παῖς αὐτῆς Ἰζάτης εἰς τὰ Ἰουδαίων ἔθη τὸν βίον μετέβαλον (“about this time Helena, queen of the Adiabenes, and her son Izates, changed their life to the custom of the Jews”),⁷⁴ and καὶ τὴν Ἑλένην ὁμοίως ὑφ’ ἑτέρου τινὸς Ἰουδαίου διδαχθεῖσαν εἰς τοὺς ἐκείνων μετακεκομίσθαι νόμους (“and Helena likewise was taught by another Jew and was brought over to their laws”),⁷⁵ Πυθόμενος δὲ πάνυ τοῖς Ἰουδαίων ἔθεσιν χαίρειν τὴν μητέρα τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἔσπευσε καὶ αὐτὸς εἰς ἐκεῖνα μεταθέσθαι νομίζων τε μὴ ἂν εἶναι βεβαίως Ἰουδαῖος εἰ μὴ περιτέμνοιτο πράττειν ἦν ἕτοιμος (“when he [Izates] learned that his own mother was quite happy with the Jewish customs, he also changed to them, and thinking that he would not truly be a Jew unless he was circumcised, he was ready to do it”).⁷⁶ A similar case appears in 3 Maccabees 1.3: Δοσίθεος ὁ Δριμύλου λεγόμενος τὸ γένος Ἰουδαῖος ὕστερον δὲ μεταβαλὼν τὰ νόμιμα καὶ τῶν πατρίων δογμάτων ἀπηλλοτριωμένος (“Dositheos, the one called the son of Drimulus, later changed his customs and estranged himself from the ordinances of his fathers”).

The fact that ethnicities could be changed or adopted is also reflected in a statement recorded in Arrian’s *Discourses of Epictetus*, concerning Jews:

⁷¹ 1.89.4.

⁷² Tcherikover, *CPJ* I.14; II nos. 142 and 143.

⁷³ *BJ* 2.487f; *AJ* 12.8. *Ap.* 2.35f.

⁷⁴ *AJ* 20.17.

⁷⁵ *AJ* 20.35.

⁷⁶ *AJ* 20.38.

Τί οὖν Στωικὸν λέγεις σεαυτὸν, τί ἐξαπατᾷς τοὺς πολλοὺς, τί ὑποκρίνη Ἰουδαῖον ὢν Ἕλληνα; οὐχ ὁρᾷς πῶς ἕκαστος λέγεται Ἰουδαῖος, πῶς Σύρος, πῶς Αἰγύπτιος; καὶ ὅταν τινα ἐπαμφοτερίζοντα ἴδωμεν, εἰώθαμεν λέγειν οὐκ ἔστιν Ἰουδαῖος, ἀλλ' ὑποκρίνεται. ὅταν δ' ἀναλάβῃ τὸ πάθος τὸ τοῦ βεβαμμένου καὶ ἡρημένου, τότε καὶ ἔστι τῷ ὄντι καὶ καλεῖται Ἰουδαῖος.

(“Why, then, do you say you are a Stoic, why do you deceive the majority, why do you play the part of a Jew although you are a Greek? Do you not see how each is called a Jew, a Syrian, or an Egyptian? For whenever we see someone acting both ways, we customarily say ‘He is not a Jew, but he is only playing the part.’ But whenever he takes up the *pathos* of the of who has been immersed and joined it, then he is called by the name ‘Jew’.”)⁷⁷

Four things stand out about this statement. First, it shows that adopting a different ethnicity for oneself was common enough that it could be used as a real-life illustration of Epictetus’ point about the need for consistency between one’s profession and one’s practice. Interestingly, the statement apparently reflects Jewish proselytism. Second, it shows that a person could present himself before others in any way he chose. What makes a person an Egyptian is not his physical parentage, but that he adopts and lives by Egyptian customs; so also for Syrians and Jews respectively. Third, at the core of the matter, a person becomes a “Jew” when he consciously adopts the mentality (πάθος) of a Jew. It is a conscious, deliberate choice to define oneself, and to be known by others, in a particular way and according to an already-known ethnicity. Fourth, simply imitating the ethnicity of another, while holding on to customs or practices normally associated with a different ethnicity, or while thinking in a way incongruous with that imitation, was considered disingenuous. Being Jewish and merely acting Greek (or vice versa) fooled no one. To become a Jew is to take up the Jewish *pathos*, not merely to participate in external ethnic indicia.

⁷⁷ 2.9.19-20. W. Oldfather ((trans.), *Epictetus: The Discourses as Reported by Arrian, the Manual, and Fragments, I* (Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, MA 1956) 272) notes that the reading τί ὑποκρίνη Ἰουδαῖον ὢν Ἕλληνα; is an emendation, “for the MS. says ‘the part of Greeks when you are a Jew’.” For the purposes of this study, the point is made either way.

Smith's six elements of ethnicity were noted above. By the first century, all of these elements were in place for the group commonly called the "Greeks." 1) They had a group name, "Greeks." 2) They believed in a common myth of descent, which extended back into the heroic past. The fact that the Greeks themselves seem to have been mostly uninformed about the historical particulars of their own national history much prior to the beginning of the first millennium BCE does not diminish anything. As I noted above, it is the belief, not necessarily the proof, of common descent that lies at the heart of an ethnicity. What matters was not that they knew all the details of their common descent, but that they believed they had one and were conscious of it. 3) They had a shared history that had been well-chronicled in its latter days through literary historiographies. 4) Greek culture was distinctive, and well-known and well-recognized into and through the Roman period. 5) The Greeks had a long association with a particular geographical place, and it could be argued that they had created 6) a sense of communal solidarity among themselves. While it might be a matter of debate as to the level and success of this solidarity, this seems to be what Aristotle had in mind as he described Greek life together: Πόλις μὲν οὖν οἰκιῶν πλῆθός ἐστι καὶ χώρας καὶ κτημάτων αὐτάρκες πρὸς τὸ εὖ ζῆν. φανερόν δέ· ὅταν γὰρ μὴ δυνατοὶ ὦσι τούτου τυγχάνειν, διαλύεται καὶ ἡ κοινωνία. ἔτι δὲ ἔνεκα τούτου συνέρχονται· οὐδὲ ἔνεκα ἔστι καὶ γέγονε, καὶ ἡ οὐσία αὐτοῦ τυγχάνει αὕτη οὐσα ("By a Nation we mean an assemblage of houses, lands, and property sufficient to enable the inhabitants to lead a civilized life. This is proved by the fact that when such a life is no longer possible for them, the tie itself which unites them is dissolved. Moreover, it is with such a life in view that the association is originally formed; and the object for which a thing exists and has come into being is in fact the very essence of that particular thing").⁷⁸

⁷⁸ *Oec.* 1.1.2. Armstrong's translation.

The existence of these six elements is not to say that there was anything like a standard uniformity across the ancient world of how Greek ethnicity was perceived, experienced, practiced, or described. What does seem fairly constant, however, is that the *cultural* aspect of this ethnic identity was particularly strong. This was due in part to the great power of classical Greek culture. Ironically, it was so pervasive that the concept of Greek identity became diluted. This is reflected as early as c. 380 BCE in Isocrates, *Panegyricus* 50: τὸ τῶν Ἑλλήων ὄνομα πεποίηκε μηκέτι τοῦ γένους ἀλλὰ τῆς διανοίας δοκεῖν εἶναι, καὶ μᾶλλον Ἕλληνας καλεῖσθαι τοὺς τῆς παιδείουσως τῆς ἡμετέρας ἢ τοὺς τῆς κοινῆς φύσεως μετέχοντας (“the name of the Greeks seems to have been made no longer the name of the nation, but of the thought, and those who share our learning are called ‘Greek’ rather than those who share a common nature”). Nor am I suggesting that Smith’s six elements are a precise description of the way the ancients viewed and described themselves. Their categories were not completely the same as ours. For example, Herodotus speaks of τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἔδν ὁμαιμόν τε καὶ ὁμόγλωσσον καὶ θεῶν ἰδρύματά τε κοινὰ καὶ θυσίαι ἤθεά τε ὁμότροπα (“the kinship of Greeks in the same blood, and the same language, and their common shrines of the gods, and customary sacrifices, and habits”) (8.144). I am instead saying that it is possible to see Smith’s six elements among the ancient Greeks. Furthermore, by the time of Josephus Greek ethnicity was mediated through widespread Hellenism, and there were many variants of what could be called “Greek” as these elements of ethnicity took on local colorings. However, it is clear that the semantic field of the word “Greek” was sufficiently defined in antiquity, the term was readily understandable as denoting an ethnicity, and it can be described in terms of these six elements.

As I noted above, ethnical strategies are often born in situations where an ethnicity is confronted with a more powerful social reality that threatens it in some way. For example, the

causes of war often involve some element of ethnicity, but questions of ethnic self-understanding are also prompted by other, and larger, phenomena. The rise of Hellenism in the ancient, classical world was such a phenomenon. With the influx of Greek culture throughout the ancient world, many peoples found themselves in need of reaffirming their unique identities, and much of their literature in the Hellenistic period reflects a consciousness of the need for self-definition. The growth and eventual domination of Roman power throughout the ancient world occasioned another, and simultaneous, crisis for many peoples. By Roman times, although Hellenism was arguably the most prominent feature of the larger socio-political situation, it was mediated through the experience of Roman *imperium*. Long-standing political structures and hierarchies were dismantled or relativized by Roman conquest. Groups needed to maintain some sense of identity in the face of the new situation. As social structures changed, ethnicities needed modification, revision, and renegotiation. In classical antiquity, this renegotiation of ethnic identity was expedited partly because ancient culture was characterized by assimilation in almost every aspect of life.

The power of the Greek cultural heritage, coupled with both a thorough-going assimilation within society and the plastic, negotiable nature of ethnicity, enabled Greek culture and ethnicity to survive in the Roman world. There was, however, a change in the notion of “Hellenic” as Greek power weakened and Roman power grew. So, “...the Romans of the Republic and later were usually content with the term *Graecus* to denote both ethnic Greeks and Hellenised peoples of non-Greek origin.”⁷⁹ As I noted above, in the negotiation of an ethnicity within the context of a dominant culture, both the dominant culture and the minority culture experience change. Greek ethnicity was able to survive through means of an extensive and influential dialogue with Rome.

⁷⁹ N. Petrocheilos, *Roman Attitudes to the Greeks* (Athens 1974) 18.

In that dialogue the Roman world was profoundly affected by Greek culture, but the definition of Greek identity changed also. Furthermore, this change was *imposed* from without, by a new and dominant culture. This resulted in wide-scale changes in how people were defined by others and in how they defined themselves. This is not the place to enter into a discussion of how Romans defined themselves vis-à-vis Greeks. The approach, as well as the answer, to that question is complicated, but it remains that the Roman world of the first century was a world largely adapted from Greek models.

This is not to say, however, that Greek culture was static over its history in ancient times. The Hellenistic world had witnessed great political and cultural changes. As early as 405 BCE Aristophanes (in *The Frogs*) was lamenting the end (in his opinion) of high Athenian culture with the passing of Euripides and Sophocles, and the sense of Greek superiority generated in the wake of the Persian wars was relativized by the conquests of Alexander III and their aftermath. “From the point of view of the Greeks, or at least the majority of them, the rise of Macedonia and the conquest of the East was not a victory of Hellenism over the barbarians; they could not identify themselves with the Macedonians and their kings.”⁸⁰ As Polybius tried to point out to his fellow-Greeks, there simply was no stopping Roman imperialism. By the time of Cicero, the orator could speak of Athens as “weakened and virtually broken.”⁸¹ Control of Greek affairs moved from Greece to new Hellenistic centers of power (places like Pella, Alexandria, and Antioch), and with the coming of Roman imperialism power shifted again to Rome. Yet in spite of the political decline of Greece, Greek things were still highly respected in the Roman world, and Greek ethnicity itself survived.

⁸⁰ A. Giovannini, ‘Greek Cities and Greek Commonwealth’, in A. Bulloch et al (eds.), *Images and Ideologies: Self-definition in the Hellenistic World* (Berkeley 1993) 265.

⁸¹ *QFr.* 1.1.28.

...despite these vicissitudes and misfortunes, the Greeks were able to preserve their identity remarkably well. Even in the worst conditions, even as exiles or as slaves, they preserved the awareness that they were the heirs to a great culture that was different from all others. They were proud of their way of living and thinking. The humiliation of economic and political decline was to a certain degree compensated for by the admiration for Greek civilization. Hellenism was extraordinarily attractive, and the Greeks were conscious of this attractiveness.⁸²

Conscious, but also guarded. The Roman admiration for Greek culture did not run in the opposite direction.

This feeling was not reciprocated. Some Greeks might admire the political wisdom of the Romans and all were impressed by their military power, but they never ceased to regard them culturally as barbarians. The Greeks were supremely satisfied with their own language and literature, and, except for a few antiquarians like Plutarch, who were curious about Roman history and institutions, felt no call to learn the barbarous Latin tongue or read its uncouth and imitative literature. The result was that the Greeks had no impulse to Romanize themselves, and the Roman government felt no mission to impose their civilization on the East.⁸³

The basic effect of Roman domination was to make the maintenance of an ethnicity outside of its original context even more difficult. The dominant culture was always quick to remind such people that they were outsiders. "...foreign immigrants could expect their host society ... to note their peculiar appearances, customs and accents, and to remind them of their 'barbarian' origins."⁸⁴ With Greeks in the Roman world this difficulty was strongly mitigated by the fact that their culture was the source of much that was now called Roman. Greeks thus had fewer reasons to feel like outsiders. In fact, the Romans seem to have extended sympathy toward contemporary Greeks out of a sense of Roman debt to Greek culture. "The former glories of Greece are seen as still compensating for its reduced state, and ... the achievements and services of Athens in

⁸² Giovannini 267.

⁸³ A. H. M. Jones, 'The Greeks Under the Roman Empire', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17 (1963) 4.

⁸⁴ Bohak 178-9.

particular, and of the other old states in some degree, are held to justify, and indeed to demand, specially considerate treatment of the contemporary Greek world.”⁸⁵

The Roman stance toward the Greeks, although mostly positive, was an uneasy one. As noted earlier, ethnicity does not necessarily buy status, even if that ethnicity has managed to pervade a large part of the larger society. The Greeks were a conquered people and received the scorn normally accorded to those who were vanquished. The Latin verb *pergraecor* acquired a contemptuous nuance (“self-indulgent”),⁸⁶ as did the term *Graeculus* (“Grecian”),⁸⁷ which was accompanied by such adjectives as *levis* (“capricious”), *loquax* (“talkative”), *insulsus* (“boring, stupid”), and *fallax* (“deceitful”).⁸⁸ Latin authors ascribed to Greeks the qualities of *volubilitas* (“too talkative”), *ineptia* (“immoderate behavior or speech”), *arrogantia* (“haughtiness”), *impudentia* (“shamelessness”), *levitas* (“instability”), as well as deceit, luxury, and a lack of manliness.⁸⁹ None of this rhetoric, however, could hide what was obvious, and, in truth, only sarcastically confessed it: that the Romans owed a tremendous debt to Greek culture in almost every way. Cato the Censor (M. Porcius Cato; c. 243-149 BCE) was famously opposed to the influx of Greek things in his day, fearing them as a corrupting influence.⁹⁰ Gruen has argued, however, that it would be a mistake to see in Cato’s invectives some kind of wholesale repudiation of Hellenic excellence. He was, after all, quite knowledgeable in all things Greek himself. Instead, Cato was interested in asserting Roman superiority over Greek culture. “Cato’s knowledge of Greek and Greek culture, on the one hand, and his disparaging attitude, on the

⁸⁵ Petrocheilos 67.

⁸⁶ As in Pl. *Mos.* 64. Cf. J. Balsdon, *Romans and Aliens* (Chapel Hill 1979) 38.

⁸⁷ This word was used to express a variety of attitudes towards Greeks, “from the mildly patronising to the openly contemptuous.” Petrocheilos 53.

⁸⁸ H. Hill, ‘Dionysius of Halicarnassus and the Origins of Rome’, *JRS* 51 (1961) 90.

⁸⁹ Petrocheilos 35-48.

⁹⁰ Plu. *Cat. Ma.*

other, were mutually reinforcing.”⁹¹ By criticizing Greek achievements, the surpassing quality of the Roman achievements in the same areas would become more apparent. That is, Cato objected not to philhellenism in general, but to a philhellenism that suggested Roman inferiority.

Post-Cato rhetoric against Hellenism seems to have softened considerably. After the second century BCE, “Romans tended to idolize not only Greece’s past glory, but those Greeks whose creation it was, as well,”⁹² and “the anti-Greek current in Republican Rome perished virtually without a trace.”⁹³ Cicero was an admirer of Greek culture and styled himself a philhellene.⁹⁴ He expressed regret that Corinth had been destroyed (146 BCE),⁹⁵ and he spoke approvingly of Greek cities of his day as cultural centers⁹⁶ as well as the cultural superiority of Athens.⁹⁷ This is no surprise, since Cicero himself received a Greek education. Guite has surveyed Cicero’s references to Greeks and has concluded, however, that Cicero’s praise of Greek things is also tempered by his patriotism.

He was fighting, as Scipio had fought, to give the Roman spirit a chance to declare itself in letters as well as in life. It was the Greeks who had made him aware of what Roman literature could be, it was they who had nourished its earliest growth; it was they who even now furnished his mind, exercised his intelligence, and sharpened his pen. And yet it was these same Greeks who by their terrible dominance were preventing Roman literature from ever achieving its rightful stature.⁹⁸

Here we see that a strong sense of Roman ethnicity continued to play a formative role in the face of the power of Greek culture and dominated the dialogue, just as it had in Cato the Censor’s criticisms of Greek culture. As much as Cicero was indebted to Greek culture, he envisioned the day in which Romans would know an even better culture built on its foundations. Until that day

⁹¹ E. Gruen, *Culture and Identity in Republican Rome* (Ithaca 1992) 74.

⁹² A. Henrichs, ‘Graecia Capta: Roman Views of Greek Culture’, *HSCP* 97 (1995) 244.

⁹³ Henrichs 246.

⁹⁴ *Att.* 1.15.1.

⁹⁵ *Off.* 1.35.

⁹⁶ *QFr.* 1.1.27-8.

⁹⁷ *Flac.* 62.

⁹⁸ H. Guite, ‘Cicero’s Attitude to the Greeks’, *GR* 9 (1962) 157.

dawned, Cicero seems to have harbored a kind of love-hate relationship with Greek culture. The often-quoted line about literature by Horace, *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artis intulit agresti Latium* (“captured Greece seized her fierce conqueror and brought the arts into uncivilized Latium”), latently admits an inferiority to Greek things, an attitude that apparently was both widespread and humiliating at the same time.⁹⁹ Vergil, a contemporary of Horace, also paid hesitating homage to Greek culture in *Aeneid* 6.847-53:

Excudent alii spirantia mollius aera
 (credo equidem), vivos ducent de marmore vultus,
 orabunt causa melius, caelique meatus
 describent radio et surgentia sidera dicent:
 tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento
 (hae tibi erunt artes), pacisque imponere morem,
 parcere subiectis et debellare superbos

(“Others will fashion more softly-breathing bronzes
 (I truly believe), and will bring out fresh faces from marble,
 they will plead their cases better, and the movement of the heavens
 they will trace with a rod and designate the rising stars:
 you, Roman, remember to rule peoples with supreme power
 (these will be your arts), and to establish the order of peace,
 to spare those who have been subjected and to subdue the arrogant”).¹⁰⁰

Again, the Greek heritage is summoned only to become the foil for Roman excellence. While the Greeks had excelled in artistic achievements, they did not achieve anything like the Roman empire with its impressive display of political power. In the comparison, Rome wins.

Rome’s debt to Greece was undeniable, and yet the Romans despised the implication that Greece was therefore the greater culture, and they detested certain qualities among the Greeks.

⁹⁹ The statement appears in *Ep.* 2.1.156-7. Hill (92) refers to the sentiment of these words as “the conventional theory” in its day. Saunders suggests that Horace was echoing the words of Cato (‘The Nature of Rome’s Early Appraisal of Greek Culture’, *CP* 39 (1944) 209). Cf. Liv. 34.4.3.

¹⁰⁰ However, the *Aeneid* still reflects a good amount of tension between Greece and Rome. See Hill 90-2.

This tension was managed in three ways.¹⁰¹ One strategy was to claim that Greeks throughout the ages possessed both good qualities and bad ones.¹⁰² Another strategy made a distinction between the Greeks of the past and the Greeks of the present, the former being noble, the latter being contemptible.¹⁰³ Yet another way around the tension was to distinguish between good ones and bad ones among contemporary Greeks.¹⁰⁴ It could be argued that the second of these approaches was the most common. By Roman imperial times, Greek things, especially from the golden age of Athens, were considered, in many ways, to represent an ideal. This was especially apparent in the influence Greek culture had on Roman art, architecture, and literature. Many of the temples in Rome were built using Greek craftsmen and after archaic Greek models, Roman villas were built in Greek style,¹⁰⁵ and Greek works of art had flooded Italy since the second century BCE.¹⁰⁶ With the coming of the Augustan age and the flowering of a truly national literature, there was little, if any, doubt that Roman culture, and thus an increasing sense of Roman ethnicity which was different from that of the Greeks, had come into its own. Yet even in that time many of Rome's best literati still looked back to Greek culture with a sense of debt, as evidenced by the lines from Horace and Vergil quoted above. And there were other, more general, indicators that Greek culture and ethnicity survived well under Roman domination. In imperial times literature continued to be written in Greek, even literature designed for the eyes of Roman elites who daily conversed in Latin, and within the Greek language itself there was an Atticizing movement which attempted to mimic the style and rhetoric of classical Athens. Josephus wrote in the time of the Second Sophistic, a kind of renaissance of Greek culture. What is important here is that

¹⁰¹ Balsdon 38-40.

¹⁰² Cic. *Flac.*, 9.

¹⁰³ Cf. Cic., *De Orat.* 3.197; D.Chr., *Or.* 31.157-60.

¹⁰⁴ Cic. *Ver.*, 2.2.7.

¹⁰⁵ P. Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor 1990) 25-31.

¹⁰⁶ E. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome* (Berkeley 1984) 259.

there was among some a distinction to be drawn between contemporary Greeks and Greeks of the past. The ideal lay with the latter, not the former.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, Romans spoke well of Greek culture because they saw themselves as standing on the shoulders of that culture, as it were, and having surpassed it. “A widespread consensus held that command of Greek learning was not only respectable but fundamental in projecting Rome’s own cultural ascendancy.”¹⁰⁸ Greek ethnicity was thus able to survive the Roman crisis in large part because the Romans themselves had a use for it, even if ultimately to claim superiority to it.

Hellenistic authors, presumably driven by the wants and needs of their audiences, found legitimation in establishing connections between themselves and the mythic, heroic Greek past. That is, ethnicities were reinvented by appeal to the epic age. “... in the competitive atmosphere of the Hellenistic world, a claim to heroic associations became one ritual means by which to articulate local histories and local strengths to outside authorities.”¹⁰⁹ This is another way of speaking of re-casting an ethnicity in a Greek mold. Alcock goes on to speak of

...the yearning on the part of Hellenistic communities for a history, either real or “invented.” ... Stress was laid upon recovering and celebrating origin myths and legends, on establishing pedigrees running back into the mists of time. In part, this self-consciousness appears a product of the threat to the independent life of small cities, a threat rooted in Hellenistic times which grew apace under the Roman empire. The right to privilege, the very right to existence, increasingly had to be demanded upon historic grounds. ... Ancestries and origins, invoked through myth and ritual, could be used to claim kinship with other cities, to establish status, and to secure identity.¹¹⁰

Historians such as Polybius, a native Greek who lived in Rome for several years and tutored Scipio, no doubt did much to foster and feed philhellenism in Rome,¹¹¹ as did Augustus’

¹⁰⁷ Petrocheilos 63-7.

¹⁰⁸ Gruen, *Culture and National Identity* 270.

¹⁰⁹ S. Alcock, ‘The Heroic Past in a Hellenistic Present’, in P. Cartledge et al (eds.), *Hellenistic Constructs: Essays in Culture, History, and Historiography* (Hellenistic Culture and Society 26, Berkeley 1997) 33.

¹¹⁰ Alcock 33.

¹¹¹ See Saunders 212-3.

decision to adopt a Greek mythological progenitor for the subject of the national epic.¹¹² By the turn of the first century CE, the mood of uneasy recognition of Greek culture seems to have shifted sufficiently that Dionysius of Halicarnassus could contrive a Greek origin for the Romans and proclaim that Rome should rightly be called a Greek city.¹¹³ He also produced explanations of the Greek origins of clientship and the Senate, he found Greek elements in various features of Roman religion, and he had several characters who are either portrayed as aware of the Greek political models or as consciously imitating famous Greeks.¹¹⁴ Hill has suggested that Dionysius was consciously opposing the anti-Hellenic undercurrent of sentiment in his day.¹¹⁵ Even if that assessment goes to far, Dionysius still stands as a confession (even if it is overdone) of the enduring power of Greek culture in his day.

It was also noted above, from Hall, that among the ancients, ethnicity was expressed in texts. Historiography after the Greek model was, by Josephus' time, a nearly-ideal vehicle for the expression or construction of an ethnicity, since it was capable of dealing with the subjects of origins as well as portraying the defining characteristics of a people as revealed through their words, actions, and customs. Greek historiography developed initially from the epic tradition, and the power of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as a definition of Greek identity was and is well known. Both of those works communicated a strong sense of συγγένεια (in spite of the personal disagreements between major characters) and strong ties to the homeland. Greek historiography acquired an interest in geography and the cultures of other lands from the influence of Hecataeus of Miletus and his Περιήγησις Γῆς, a work that combined a survey of geography with ethnography. It was left for Herodotus to take the next step and turn ethnography into history.

¹¹² Hill 90, 92.

¹¹³ 1.89.1.

¹¹⁴ Hill 89.

¹¹⁵ Hill 92-3.

“Ethnography was subsequently either subsumed under the banner of history or became more historically oriented.”¹¹⁶ Greek historiography became a medium by which the cultures of others served to highlight what was essentially Greek by way of contrast and comparison. Even as the Mediterranean world fell under Roman rule, the Roman admiration for Greek things meant that historiography in the Greek vein continued to be written—witness Polybius and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and in a different genre, the *Aeneid* of Vergil. In these writers we see that Greek culture was still the latent benchmark of comparison, even when the subject was the history of Rome. Although Greek culture was now the foil for Roman culture, the shape of the expression was still Greek.

My discussion of Greek ethnicity has, so far, drawn from sources in the world around Josephus. But what did Josephus himself mean when he said that something, or some one, was “Greek”? What was *his* concept of Greek ethnicity? This has a significant bearing on what Josephus thought he was doing and how he tried to do it. As it turns, out, Josephus does not seem to have had a clearly-defined idea of Greek identity. Nowhere did he discuss the matter explicitly, and often “Greek” in Josephus simply means “non-Jewish.” In the *Bellum Judaicum*, the term regularly appears as part of an “us” versus “them” dichotomy in which those who are not “us” (Jewish) are often (but not always) hostile to Jews.¹¹⁷ Herein lies a significant clue to Josephus’ literary aims. His use of the word “Greek” to denote what is non-Jewish (often with hostility) betrays his view of the world in which he lived, a world in which Jews were “other,” not part of mainstream society. He operated on the basis of a perceived wide-scale social rejection of his people and he wrote to get them “inside.” As I have shown above, this is typical of scenarios in which ethnicities are created. Josephus fits the model well. At any rate, Josephus’

¹¹⁶ Sterling 52.

¹¹⁷ Rajak, *The Jewish Dialogue*, 139, 142.

failure to lay down explicit criteria for what he means by the word “Greek” can be interpreted to mean that he operated on the idea of Greek identity that was common in his day. No explication was needed, because everyone knew what it was. If this assumption is correct, then we are justified in understanding Greek identity in the way I have outlined above, as drawn from the ancient sources.

Rajak has also noted that Josephus sometimes distinguishes between Syrians and Greeks. In Palestine this distinction would not have been easy to maintain, especially if “Syrian” simply reflects the Roman provincial designation of the area in which these people lived. Surely they were thoroughly Greek in their culture, so the difference between Greeks and Syrians is puzzling. Rajak has suggested, tentatively, that “Greek” refers to people who were citizens of Greek-style cities, presumably with their own constitutions, and “Syrian” refers to those who lived in towns or villages, but whose culture was Greek also.¹¹⁸ The suggestion is viable. If it is correct, it provides an important clue about what Josephus thinks a Greek is: he is one who is a recognized part of an established Greek city.

At least one thing does seem clear: Josephus operates on the basis of a *cultural* idea of Greek identity. “... at the time of writing the *Jewish War*, Josephus was on the way to forming a conception of a Greek culture as something distinct from the people who were contemporary Greeks, or would-be Greeks.”¹¹⁹ Framing the matter in this way is what would allow Josephus an opportunity to attempt to negotiate a way in for the Jews. If Greek identity was a matter of *culture*, Josephus could argue that Jews are Greek *in this way*, even though Jews had no blood ties to Greeks.

¹¹⁸ Rajak, *The Jewish Dialogue*, 140f.

¹¹⁹ Rajak, *The Jewish Dialogue*, 143.

Josephus and Ethnicity

As there was a Greek ethnicity in Roman times, there was also a Jewish ethnicity in place. Smith's six elements of ethnicity existed for the Jews. In addition to 1) their communal name (Ἰουδαῖοι),¹²⁰ they possessed 2) a national, canonized literature (the texts of the Hebrew Bible) that detailed a myth of common descent and 3) a more recent literature (such as the books of the Maccabees) that continued to tell their shared history. Strongly ingrained in that name and history was their religion. It is probably true that, in antiquity, to say that someone was Jewish always included the idea that they practiced Judaism in some form or to some extent.¹²¹ This does not, however, warrant the idea that the religious component was necessarily the dominant one signified by the word Ἰουδαῖος. It would be correct to say, however, that in the first century CE religion was a criterion for Jewishness and not merely an indicium. It was also well-known that Jews had 4) a distinctive shared culture, that 5) their ancestral home was considered to be Palestine (and especially its capital, Jerusalem), and 6) that they not only perceived but also practiced a strong sense of communal solidarity. Items 1, 4, 5, and 6 were often noted by pagan authors.¹²²

While Greek ethnicity fared well under Roman domination, Jewish ethnicity did not. Greek culture became such a powerful force that it was considered the norm, and non-Greek cultures were considered inferior. As Verkuyten describes it,

Ethnicity and race can develop into stigma identities, which provide a chronically salient distinction or a master status that cannot be ignored and serves to define the essential character of those who are classified. An example of this is the identity 'Gypsy' in many

¹²⁰ The meaning of the name Ἰουδαῖος changed over time. It was originally, and predominantly, an ethno-geographic term. After the Maccabean period the Judean *ethnos* changed and the term acquired a wider meaning, denoting anyone who followed a Jewish way of life. S. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness* (Berkeley 1999) 69-70, 78-9.

¹²¹ S. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness* 135-97.

¹²² I will demonstrate this in chapter 3.

east European countries. A person can be a doctor, an engineer, or a teacher, but as soon as she or he is known to be a Gypsy, this identity tends to become the definitive one.¹²³

The same situation prevailed for Jews in the Roman empire. Some of the most abundant evidence for Jewish engagement in ancient society has come from Egypt, where it appears that Jews pervaded almost every level of ancient Hellenistic society. Some served as soldiers (of various ranks, until the Roman period), some were money lenders, some were tradesmen, contractors, horse dealers, tax-farmers, artisans, merchants, vine-dressers, weavers, potters, musicians, doctors, etc., and more often than not they bore Greek names in addition to their national names. “A general conclusion emerging from the surviving records is that the economic and occupational status of Egyptian Jewry under the Ptolemies was normal to the extent that they were represented in all callings, well represented on the land, in the armed forces and in the government services,”¹²⁴ and evidence from other places suggests that Egypt was not an anomalous situation for the Jews under Roman rule. Jews were not distinguished from Gentiles by their occupations,¹²⁵ and even in Rome itself they appear to be regular parts of public life. Cicero noted their presence in his public defense of Flaccus,¹²⁶ and Suetonius mentions their presence among those who mourned the death of Julius Caesar.¹²⁷

Yet in spite of this thorough penetration into the institutions of the ancient world, the Jews were viewed as different from the rest of the Greco-Roman world in every one of Smith’s six elements of ethnicity. In the next chapter I hope to describe the extent and severity of this public perception of the Jews in the time of Josephus. For now, the point is that the perceived Roman

¹²³ P.52.

¹²⁴ S. Applebaum, ‘The Social and Economic Status of Jews in the Diaspora’, in S. Safrai and M Stern (eds.), *The Jewish People in the First Century* (CRINT 1.2, Philadelphia 1976) 703-4. Cf. Tcherikover, *CPJ* I.16-19; also M. Williams, *The Jews Among the Greeks and Romans: A Diasporan Sourcebook* (Baltimore 1998) 19-26.

¹²⁵ S. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness*, 37.

¹²⁶ *Flac.* 28.

¹²⁷ *Iul.* 84.5.

political and cultural realities of the first century CE meant that the Jews were in need of revising and renegotiating their ethnicity if they hoped to enjoy a respected place within the larger cultural realm. The motive for this was, as noted above, rooted in a psychological need for some sense of self-esteem and belonging.

What was Josephus' understanding of Jewish ethnicity? For him, the term Ἰουδαῖος simply means "Jewish," and he used it in both an ethno-geographic sense and as a religious term. When used as an ethno-geographic term, it can refer to all the inhabitants of the country called "Judea," or it can refer more narrowly to the people who live in the southern part of that country (as opposed to Samaritans or Galileans).¹²⁸ In fact, Josephus regularly distinguishes Jews from both Samaritans and Idumeans ethnically, and the "boundaries of what may count as Jewish do thus appear relatively non-negotiable."¹²⁹ The phrase Ἰουδαῖος τὸ γένος basically means "Judaean by birth," and S. Cohen has argued that the phrase does not necessarily have a religious implication for Josephus. It means that a person was born in Judea.¹³⁰

One area in which Jewish ethnicity was especially vulnerable to change was in the association of Jews with the homeland and the capital city of Jerusalem. By the time of Josephus, it seems that "Judea" was becoming less and less of an ethnic criterion for Jews because their territorially dislocated situations often made strong ties to the homeland difficult or nearly impossible. The political situation contributed greatly to this condition. Josephus wrote during the Flavian dynasty of Rome, in which broad political changes were being effected in the Roman east. The Roman experiment with client kingdoms in the east had, in a word, failed, having

¹²⁸ S. Cohen, 'ἸΟΥΔΑΙΟΣ ΤΟ ΓΕΝΟΣ and Related Expressions in Josephus', in F. Parente and J. Sievers (eds.), *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period: Essays in Memory of Morton Smith* (Studia Post-Biblica 41, Leiden 1994) 25-32.

¹²⁹ Rajak, *The Jewish Dialogue* 138.

¹³⁰ S. Cohen, 'ἸΟΥΔΑΙΟΣ ΤΟ ΓΕΝΟΣ', 36-38.

resulted in too much instability. When Vespasian came to the throne, eastern client kingdoms were dismantled and replaced by direct Roman oversight. Aristobulus, king of Lesser Armenia, had his kingdom annexed to the province of Galatia in 71 or 72 CE; Antiochus IV, king of Commagene, was deposed in c. 73 CE and had his kingdom annexed to the province of Syria; Sohaemus lost his throne as king of Emesa and his territory was also attached to Syria in the early 70's CE; Vespasian refused to reinstitute the Herodian dynasty of southern Palestine when he declined to appoint Herod Agrippa II as king over Judea, and Trajan annexed the kingdom of the Nabateans in southern Palestine in 106 CE. As more and more territory came under direct Roman administration, concepts of homeland were harder to maintain. Palestine in particular saw more than its share of Roman manipulation. “... within a time span of 132 years (63 BCE–70CE), Palestine was divided and redivided many times, given to local dynasts, and taken from others by the Roman oppressor.”¹³¹ The imposition of Roman rule in 63 CE permanently changed the character of the Jewish homeland. Jews saw it as becoming more and more pagan, and it eventually lost much of its value as a political national symbol.

The terminology in the surviving texts is also telling, since “almost no one in the Flavian period calls the Jews ‘Judeans’; that is, almost no one links the *Iudaioi* to Judea.”¹³² The term for the ancestral homeland becomes, among non-Jews, either Idumea or Palestina, and when pagan authors speak of *Iudaioi*, they do not link them with Judea. Among Romans, Judea as an ethnographic place was, in effect, disappearing,¹³³ and this made the religious indicium more

¹³¹ D. Mendels, *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism* (New York 1992) 252.

¹³² D. Schwartz, ‘Herodians and *Ioudaioi* in Flavian Rome’, in J. Edmondson et al (eds.), *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome* (Oxford 2005) 69.

¹³³ A similar thing happened with Greek culture. The Romans referred to Greece as Achaea, not as Hellas.

prominent.¹³⁴ Schwartz notices that “if one compares the *War* and the *Antiquities*, Josephus’ usage seems to show a growing notion of the Jews as people defined not by virtue of their relationship to a place, but, by virtue of their relationship to a religion.”¹³⁵ In fact, Josephus downplayed the significance of the Jewish homeland in his narrative of Biblical history, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 1-11. In the canonical Biblical texts, the land of Palestine belongs to the Jews by a covenantal promise from God. As Josephus tells the stories, however, he often omits repetitions of that promise and instead turns the occupation of the land into a prophecy (and uttered by a pagan prophet at that).¹³⁶ Similarly, he omits God’s order to Joshua to conquer the land, and he regularly omits the divine promise of return to the land after the Babylonian exile. “He simply does not portray the land as the heart of the Jewish experience.”¹³⁷ Josephus seems to have acknowledged that, in the face of the political realities of his day, a strong sense of connection with Palestine was not a viable criterion of Jewish ethnicity.

The religious dimension of Jewish ethnicity was a sensitive issue for a person in Josephus’ situation. On the one hand, Josephus remained Jewish in his religious convictions throughout his literary works. Nowhere did he assimilate the Jewish God with a pagan god, nor offered a way by which Jews could worship pagan gods, and he went to great lengths to explain how the customs which seemed so odd to non-Jews were actually expressions of great piety when understood correctly. For Josephus, being Jewish meant worshipping and living according to Torah and Jewish customs respectively. His idea of Jewish identity is *τίνας ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ τίσι χρησάμενοι τύχαις ὑφ’ οἷω τε παιδευθέντες νομοθέτη τὰ πρὸς εὐσέβειαν* (“who Jews were from the beginning, and what fortunes they have experienced, and by what

¹³⁴ D. Schwartz 69-70.

¹³⁵ D. Schwartz 77.

¹³⁶ *AJ* 4.101ff, Balaam.

¹³⁷ B. Amaru, ‘Land Theology in Josephus’ “Jewish Antiquities”, *JQR* 71 (1981) 229.

lawgiver they were taught the things of piety”).¹³⁸ Josephus was basically invoking what Smith identifies as a shared history. These things were not for sale, they were non-negotiable. On the other hand, Jewish refusal to integrate into pagan religion and to give up foreign customs was commonly interpreted as kind of malevolence against the world at worst, or a strange aloofness at best. A large part of Josephus’ task was to try to convince his Greek (i.e., Hellenistic) readers that the Jews were sufficiently Greek *culturally* that these other aspects of their self-identity should not pose a significant obstacle to full membership in Hellenistic society.

Conclusion

Josephus wrote in the milieu where older Greek things were viewed with a kind of idealism, where Jewish things were viewed as foreign, and in which the Jews were struggling with affirming, or renegotiating, their self-definition. It was also a time when the Jews had been publicly defeated by Roman power, their homeland was ceasing to function as an element of their self-understanding, and the Roman east was becoming more tightly controlled directly by Rome. Before Josephus wrote the *Bellum Judaicum*, other accounts of the war either flattered the Romans or denigrated the Jews,¹³⁹ and Josephus repeatedly mentioned Roman hatred of the Jewish nation as an important part of the background to the war.¹⁴⁰ The public perception of Jewish ethnicity was suffering terribly. However, Josephus also stood in a tradition of openness to Hellenism.¹⁴¹ From this collection of circumstances an opportunity presented itself. Josephus had at his disposal a literary vehicle by which he could construct an ethnicity for the Jews: historiography in the Greek tradition. Through this genre he would contribute to the dialogue

¹³⁸ *AJ* 1.6.

¹³⁹ *BJ* 1.2.

¹⁴⁰ *Cf. BJ* 3.133, 140; 4.135; 5:451, 556; 6:214, 263; etc. *BJ* 7:47 sums it up: τὸ δὲ κατὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων παρὰ πᾶσιν ἦκμαζε μῖσος (“hatred of the Jews by all men was at its height”).

¹⁴¹ This is the subject of the next chapter.

about how to perceive Jewish identity in the world of the first century CE. From its roots in Homer and on through the work of Herodotus, Greek historiography had long possessed strong ethnic qualities and Josephus chose to exploit this function of the genre for the crisis in which he envisioned his people. His plan was to write Jewish historiography in the Greek vein for the purpose of negotiating a renewed definition of Jewish ethnicity in the Roman world. He himself was well-suited to the task, since he was a Jew who lived in Rome and enjoyed Roman citizenship and literary patronage. He immersed himself in Greek literature for the task that he no doubt thought would redeem his people in the arena of public opinion and provide them with a new sense of self-understanding that would carry them into the foreseeable future.

S. Cohen has argued that “the Hellenistic world not only served as the foil against which the Jews redefined themselves, but also provided the conceptions that were essential to the new Jewish self-definition.”¹⁴² This comports to what was noted above, that an ethnic group often hopes to define itself in terms of the symbols of the dominant culture around it. Josephus was keenly aware of this fact and used the conceptions, and the means for expressing them, of his day to accomplish this redefinition. Dionysius’ positive presentation of Hellenism is significant for the present study. Dionysius was a native of Halicarnassus (east of Rome) who came to Rome c. 29 BCE after a war (the civil war in Rome) and wrote a national (Roman) history in twenty books. He felt indebted to the Romans for the benefits of his life in Rome¹⁴³ and wrote to educate Greeks about Roman history which he felt they knew only incorrectly.¹⁴⁴ His history concerns ethnicity in that he set out to correct and change (for the better) the perceptions of one people

¹⁴² S. Cohen, “Religion, Ethnicity, and ‘Hellenism’ in the Emergence of Jewish Identity in Maccabean Palestine” in P. Bilde et al (eds.), *Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Kingdom* (Aarhus 1990) 204.

¹⁴³ 1.6.5.

¹⁴⁴ 1.4.2.

about another. To this extent he was opening the dialogue that makes the establishment of an ethnicity possible. All of this is remarkably similar to Josephus, who came to Rome from the east after a war only a couple of generations later and who, it is generally acknowledged, knew the *Roman Antiquities* of Dionysius¹⁴⁵ and wrote a national (Jewish) history in twenty books that was designed to dispel false understandings of Jewish origins and customs.¹⁴⁶ Both authors were engaged in the business of constructing an ethnicity for peoples of their own day. While neither were ready to surrender either a fundamental Roman or Jewish identity respectively, both labored to show that those identities had strong and old affinities with Hellenism. Again, we may not suppose that Dionysius' *Roman Antiquities* represents the view of every Roman, but its publication argues for a continuing acknowledgement of the Roman debt toward the Greeks and Greek culture, even if in the end the Romans viewed themselves as better by the comparison. More importantly, as Saunders has observed, "The philhellenes seem to have been slow to relinquish any part of their Roman birthright. Yet from the introduction of Greek philosophy at Rome there did slowly emerge a mingling of Greek and Roman ideals which resulted in a more cosmopolitan view of men and of life."¹⁴⁷ Indeed, the classic Greek distinction between Greeks and barbarians had no counterpart in the Roman view.¹⁴⁸ This more cosmopolitan view, which stands behind Dionysius' work, along with ever-expanding notions of what it meant to be Greek, opened a window of opportunity for Josephus to negotiate for the Jews a favorable place within the sentiments of his day in Rome which were increasingly favorable toward Greek culture.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. L. Feldman, 'Hellenizations in Josephus' Jewish Antiquities: The Portrait of Abraham', in L. Feldman and G. Hata (eds.), *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity* (Detroit 1987) 134.

¹⁴⁶ P. Collomp, 'Der Platz des Josephus in der Technik der Hellenistischen Geschichtsschreibung', in A. Schalit (hg.), *Zur Josephus-Forschung* (Darmstadt 1973).

¹⁴⁷ Saunders 217. Cf. also Balsdon 41.

¹⁴⁸ F. W. Walbank, 'Nationality as a Factor in Roman History', *HSCP* 76 (1972) 158.

As Josephus undertook his literary works he was therefore engaging in a project of ethnic self-definition that was in keeping with the concerns of other literary works in his own day. He was also participating in a long-standing Jewish concern to re-affirm who they were in the face of a changing world. How to do this, however, had been, and was still, debated in Josephus' time. The Jewish literature that arose in the period from the fourth century BCE to the first century CE (known as the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha) proposed different strategies that spanned a wide range of possibilities. Josephus' choice was to attempt to define Jews in Greek terms. That he did not chose to align Jews with Roman excellence is significant. As I have noted, the Romans respected Greek culture but at the same time felt that they had surpassed it. By choosing to align the Jews with Greek excellence, Josephus was careful not to claim any kind of equal footing with Roman ascendancy.¹⁴⁹ No one would have believed it, especially in light of the humiliating defeat of 70 CE. Instead, Josephus chose the more humble option of aligning the Jews with that Greek culture with which the Romans had already made peace, a culture they could respect and despise at the same time. For Josephus, if the Jews could attain to some semblance of the respect the Romans offered the Greeks (even if it was offered in condescension), that would have been enough. This approach was markedly different from the violent apocalypticism that had culminated in the First Jewish War. It was, instead, an approach that emphasized sameness and compatibility.

¹⁴⁹ Goodman, 'Josephus as Roman Citizen', 336-38.

CHAPTER 3 THE MILIEU IN WHICH JOSEPHUS LIVED AND WROTE

Why did Josephus feel the need to produce texts that, among other things, reconstructed Jewish ethnicity? This question is not fully answered by the observation noted in chapter two, that a psychological sense of self-esteem and belonging is an important factor in the development of an ethnicity. The question may be taken further: what precipitated a sense of low self-esteem and rejection that led Josephus and others like him to propose new ways of understanding the relationship between the Jews and Hellenistic culture? What was going on that created a sense of crisis calling for the reassertion of Jewish self-understanding? The answer to this question is important because it establishes a motive, within historical conditions, for the ethnographic feature of all of Josephus' works. People do not produce statements of ethnicity, or literary works heavy with ethnic apologetics, spontaneously or randomly. Ethnicities need revision and renegotiation in the face of challenge and perceived crisis that affect self-esteem. Ethnicities are, by their nature, responses. In this chapter I hope to reconstruct a historical context for Josephus' works that explains why concerns of ethnicity and self-definition would have been on his mind, as well as demonstrate his awareness of them.

Mistreatment of Jews in Greco-Roman Society

I noted in the previous chapter that the Jews appeared different to their neighbors in every way, if we use Smith's description of ethnicity as a way of comparing two groups. Even worse, attempts by Jews in ancient times to maintain those differences in practice by conserving traditional customs and refusing to adopt customs of the people around them (thus adopting what appeared to be a strategy of ignoring the dominant culture) made them appear not just different, but conceited and hostile to the rest of society. This "strangeness" was, perhaps more than

anything else, the prime factor behind anti-Jewish sentiments.¹ In addition to this, the Jews of Josephus' day had most recently been defeated by the Romans (by Pompey, who subjugated Judea in 64 BCE, and again, of course, in the First Jewish War, 66-70 CE). Therefore this ethnic group, which was already seen as odd and hostile, now had the added stigma of having been humiliated in military defeat, twice within recent memory. As a result of previous conquests (at the hands of Assyrians, Babylonians, and Greeks), by the first century CE Jews had been dispersed all over the ancient world (commonly called the Jewish diaspora). A people who were displaced because of war, unrest, famine, etc. now also found themselves in even more difficult circumstances: they were a minority in a foreign place, and they generally were among the poorer people in that place.

The picture that emerges from the ancient sources is that Jews were regularly subjected to unfair or harsh treatment by Roman society at large, and that the Roman governmental machine was hardly sympathetic at local levels. In what follows I will attempt to review briefly, in chronological order, a series of events that demonstrates this picture.

Unfair economic policies toward Jews predated Roman control of the east. In the late-second and early-first centuries BCE, a wave of nationalism swept through Egypt as the Ptolemaic regime weakened and economic difficulties arose.² Under this movement the Egyptian Jews did not fare well, and the Seleucid king Seleucus IV Philopater (187-175 BCE) tried to confiscate the temple treasury in Jerusalem for the Seleucid coffers.³ By the first century BCE,

¹ Sevenster, *The Roots of Pagan Anti-Semitism*, 143-4. Z. Yavetz wisely suggests that anti-Jewish sentiments in antiquity should not be viewed as a unique phenomenon but should be understood against the wider context of antibarbarism in general. 'Judeophobia in Classical Antiquity: A Different Approach', *JJS* 44 (1993) 13.

² E. Gabba, 'The Growth of Anti-Judaism or the Greek Attitude Towards the Jews', in W. Davies and L. Finkelstein (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, 2 (Cambridge 1989) 635.

³ *2 Mac* 3:1-40.

Egyptian anti-Judaism had transcended its local setting and combined with misinformation in Greek authors and anti-Jewish propaganda from the Seleucids to create a wider anti-Jewish environment in the ancient world.⁴ When Roman rule began in 31 BCE, changes in Egyptian governmental administration resulted in Jews basically disappearing from civil service positions in society, which probably suggests that not many of them were economically affluent at that time.⁵ This significance of this is that in the ancient world, social mobility was basically available through the network of civil service positions which contributed to the maintenance of social homogeneity.⁶ In addition to being cut off from positions from which they might better themselves, most Egyptian Jews were also subjected to heavier taxation than Greeks.⁷ In a similar move, after the conflagration of 70 CE, Vespasian imposed a tax for a new *fiscus Iudaicus* on all Jews in the empire.⁸

It was well-known in many places that, prior to the First Jewish War, Jewish communities outside of Jerusalem (the Diaspora) levied a tax among themselves and sent the sum to Jerusalem every year.⁹ For example, Tacitus mentions it in his *Histories* (5.5) as part of his description of the customs of the Jewish people. The problem was that it was a constant challenge for Jews to keep these funds safe for their intended destination. For example, in *Antiquitates Judaicae*

⁴ Gabba 636, 646.

⁵ Applebaum, 'The Social and Economic Status', 704-5.

⁶ See N. Purcell, 'The Apparitores: A Study in Social Mobility', *Papers of the British School at Rome* 51 (1983) 125-73.

⁷ The evidence is collected in *CPJ* I nos. 60-2.

⁸ *C.D.* 65.2.

⁹ J. Liver, 'The Half-Shekel Offering in Biblical and Post-Biblical Literature,' *HTR* 56 (1963) 173-98. Josephus mentions the practice as being that of all Jews everywhere. "Θαυμάση δὲ μηδεὶς εἰ τοσοῦτος ἦν πλοῦτος ἐν τῷ ἡμετέρῳ ἱερῷ πάντων τῶν κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην Ἰουδαίων καὶ σεβομένων τὸν θεὸν ἔτι δὲ καὶ τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀσίας καὶ τῆς Εὐρώπης εἰς αὐτὸ συμφερόντων ἐκ πολλῶν πάνυ χρόνων." ("And let no one wonder that there was such wealth in our temple, since all the Jews throughout the empire, and those who worshipped God, even those of Asia and Europe, have been sending their contributions to it from very ancient times.") *AJ* 14.11. Tacitus knew about it as well: *Hist.* 5.5.

14:112f, Josephus quotes the *Historica Hypomnemata* of Strabo of Cappadocia as evidence of this problem. Strabo documented that in the course of the war in 88 BCE πέμψας δὲ Μιθριδάτης [εἰς Κώ] ἔλαβε τὰ χρήματα ἃ παρέθετο ἐκεῖ Κλεοπάτρα βασίλισσα καὶ τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ὀκτακόσια τάλαντα (“Mithridates sent to Cos and took the funds which queen Cleopatra had put there, and eight hundred talents of the Jews”), to which Josephus adds the explanation: “ἡμῖν δὲ δημόσια χρήματα οὐκ ἔστιν ἢ μόνα τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ δῆλον ὅτι ταῦτα μετήνεγκαν εἰς Κώ τὰ χρήματα οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ Ἰουδαῖοι διὰ τὸν Μιθριδάτου φόβον” (“For we have no funds but only those that are God’s, and it is clear that the Asian Jews had sent these funds to Cos out of fear of Mithridates”).

Confiscating these funds was a relatively easy thing to do and was one of the most common actions taken against Jewish communities. In the ancient literature we hear several complaints that these funds had been seized by local officials. In 59 BCE Lucius Valerius Flaccus, the imperial legate in Asia in 62-61 BCE, was tried for maladministration over a complaint by the Jews of Asia that he had confiscated their funds which were intended for Jerusalem. He was defended by Cicero. The Roman Senate had banned the export of gold and silver to foreign countries, but the Jews had always been granted an exemption in order to pay their temple tax.¹⁰ Flaccus, however, ignored the exemption and put the money into the Roman *publicum*. Cicero’s defense was to admit that the charges were true and that his client was acting dutifully, following Roman law in prohibiting the export of the funds. In the course of the defense, Cicero shows little restraint in denigrating the Jews. He says:

Quis est, iudices, qui hoc non vere laudare possit? Exportari aurum non oportere cum saepe antea senatus tum me consule gravissime iudicavit. Huic autem barbarae superstitioni resistere severitatis, multitudinem Iudaeorum flagrantem non numquam in contionibus pro re publica contemnere gravitatis summae fuit. ... Stantibus Hierosolymis

¹⁰ E. Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule From Pompey to Domitian* (Leiden 1976) 126.

pacatisque Iudaeis tamen istorum religio sacrorum a splendore huius imperi, gravitate nominis nostri, maiorum institutis abhorrebat; nunc vero hoc magis, quod illa gens quid de nostro imperio sentiret ostendit armis; quam cara dis immortalibus esset docuit, quod est victa, quod elocata, quod serva facta.

(“Who is there, judges, who cannot truly praise this? The senate had most seriously ruled often before, while I was consul, that gold ought not be exported. But to resist this barbarous superstition was to be strict, and to disregard the multitude of Jews, who were inflamed in the assemblies about public business, was an act of the highest dignity. ... While Jerusalem was standing and the Jews were peaceful, the religion of that detestable people was adverse to the splendor of this empire, the dignity of our name, and the customs of our ancestors; now it is more truly detestable, since that people have shown with arms what they think about our empire; and just how dear it was to the immortal gods has been shown, because it was conquered, farmed out for taxes, and has become occupied.”)¹¹

The defeat of Jerusalem to which Cicero referred was that of Pompey in 64/3 BCE, which brought Judea under Roman control. Cicero’s speech was delivered in 59 BCE, so the memory of that defeat was still fresh in Roman minds. Cicero seemed confident that he could easily arouse anti-Jewish sentiments among the jurors, whom he was attempting to persuade to see the issue from the Roman side. To deny the Jews an exemption was simply to hold them to the demands of law; Flaccus was acting properly, Cicero explains. According to him, the Jews had proven themselves to be troublemakers both in Rome and in Jerusalem, and this latest incident was another example of their rebellion against Roman law. He therefore argued that they deserved to have their requests ignored. Furthermore, he added, the inferiority of the Jews as a people was evident in the results of the recent conflict. The gods obviously did not favor them. In another place in the same speech, he referred to Jerusalem as *suspiciosa ac maledica civitate* (“a suspicious and slanderous city”).¹² Yet we probably ought not make too much of Cicero’s rhetoric here. It was his common practice, in such judicial settings, to incriminate the national

¹¹ *Flac.* 69.

¹² *Flac.* 68.

character of opponents.¹³ When we take this rhetorical practice into account, “there is little left of Cicero’s supposed anti-Semitism.”¹⁴ In the rest of Cicero’s extant works the Jews are conspicuously ignored, so he does not seem to have been particularly troubled by, nor interested in, them. Yet a case can be made that Cicero was playing upon current anti-Jewish sentiments, and that “... Cicero counted on arousing anti-Jewish prejudice in the jurors’ minds to colour their consideration of the charges against Flaccus.”¹⁵

Another example dates from 14 BCE and comes from Josephus:

Τότε δὲ περὶ τὴν Ἰωνίαν αὐτῶν γενομένων πολὺ πλῆθος Ἰουδαίων ὃ τὰς πόλεις ὤκει προσῆει καιροῦ καὶ παρρησίας ἐπειλημμένοι καὶ τὰς ἐπηρείας ἔλεγον ἄς ἐπηρεάζοντο μήτε νόμοις οἰκείοις ἐώμενοι χρῆσθαι δίκας τε ἀναγκαζόμενοι διδόναι κατ’ ἐπήρειαν τῶν εὐθυνόντων ἐν ἱεραῖς ἡμέραις καὶ τῶν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα χρημάτων ἀνατιθεμένων ἀφαιροῖντο στρατειῶν καὶ λειτουργιῶν ἀναγκαζόμενοι κοινωνεῖν καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα δαπανᾶν τῶν ἱερῶν χρημάτων ὧν ἀφείθησαν αἰεὶ Ῥωμαίων αὐτοῖς ἐπιτρεψάντων κατὰ τοὺς οἰκείους ζῆν νόμους.

(“Then when they [Agrippa and Herod] were in Ionia, a great multitude of Jews who inhabit their cities came, seizing the opportunity and courage, and related the abuses they were suffering, that they were not allowed to have their own laws, that they were forced to present their lawsuits, by the abuse of the judges, on the holy days, and that they were deprived of the funds that had been set aside for Jerusalem, having been forced to participate in campaigns and public services and to spend the sacred funds for these things, from which they were always released by the Romans, who had allowed them to live according to their own laws.”)¹⁶

The litany of complaints reveals a situation of frequent interference in their way of life and, even more, being *forced* to do things that were against their religion. The fact that they had lawsuits in

¹³ To cite one example, Cicero used similar language defending Fonteius against the Celts. He said: *ceterae pro religionibus suis bella suscipiunt, istae contra omnium religiones; illae in bellis gerendis ab dis immortalibus pacem ac veniam petunt, istae cum ipsis dis immortalibus bella gesserunt* (“others undertake wars on behalf of their religions, but they wage war against the religion of all; others when waging war beg for peace and pardon from the immortal gods, but they have waged war with the immortal gods themselves”). *Pro Font.*, 30. See also Walbank 158.

¹⁴ M. Stern (ed.), *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (Jerusalem 1984) 194. See also A. Marshall, ‘Flaccus and the Jews of Asia (Cicero ‘Pro Flacco’ 28.67-69)’, *Phoenix* 29 (1975) 141-2.

¹⁵ Marshall 142.

¹⁶ *AJ* 16.27-8.

the public courts suggests that they had been defrauded in some ways and needed to seek redress in the local legal system. They were, however, forced to conduct legal business on Saturdays in violation of their practice of not working on the Sabbaths. The choice they were given was either to violate the Sabbath and get some legal relief, or keep the Sabbath and suffer injustices. Their temple contributions were also confiscated and spent on public works, and they were pressed into military service in spite of the fact that it was well-known that the Sabbath regulations forbade Jews from taking up arms on that day.¹⁷ In fact, it seems that Jews were regularly granted exemption from Roman military service for this very reason.¹⁸

Later in the same book, Josephus relates in a lengthy section (16.160-173) that Jews in Asia and Cyrene were experiencing, among other things, further interference with their collection of money for the Jerusalem temple, and they appealed to Augustus for help. All Josephus says is that ἐν δὲ τῷ τότε δι' ἐπιχειρίας ἐχόντων τῶν Ἑλλήνων αὐτούς ὡς καὶ χρημάτων ἱερῶν ἀφαίρεσιν (“at that time the Greeks mistreated them so far that they took their sacred funds”).¹⁹ The Jews sent envoys to Augustus to complain about this treatment, and Augustus ruled in their favor. Josephus then quotes the decree Augustus made about this matter and proceeds to quote five more such decrees: one by Augustus addressed to Gaius Norbanus Flaccus, the proconsul of Asia, one by Agrippa addressed to the people of Ephesus, another by Agrippa to the people of Cyrene, one by Flaccus to the magistrates of Sardis, and one by the proconsul Julius Antonius to the people of Ephesus, all to the same effect, that the money the Jews collected for the Jerusalem temple was not to be touched. The picture that develops is that seizure of Jewish Diaspora funds intended for the Jerusalem temple was not an uncommon

¹⁷ Cf. *AJ* 14.226.

¹⁸ S. Applebaum, ‘The Legal Status of the Jewish Communities in the Diaspora’, in *The Jewish People in the First Century* (CRINT 1.2, Philadelphia 1974) 459-60.

¹⁹ *AJ* 16.160.

occurrence in the cities where Jews lived, and that the Jews complained about it often. The overall purpose of these stories, which are a major and distinctive part of the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, was to establish that Romans had always sided with Jews when it came to practicing their customs,²⁰ although this falls far short of any official “charter” of Jewish privilege across the empire.²¹ Josephus’ overall appeal for ethnic toleration of the Jews was not new. The fact that he felt compelled to rehash the matter suggests, however, that anti-Jewish sentiments had risen and now required that his audience be reminded of the long-standing friendly disposition of Rome towards the Jews.

Perhaps one of the most famous incidents of Jewish mistreatment happened in Egypt during the tenure of Aulus Avilius Flaccus (32-8 CE), an event that has come to be called the first pogrom. Philo of Alexandria was a witness to the scene. In 38 CE Herod Agrippa I (who was a friend of the emperor Gaius) visited Alexandria on his way to take his new position as “king” of part of Palestine, and on his visit he was publicly insulted by anti-Jewish Greeks in that city. The incident quickly spilled over into the synagogues and the Jewish sections of the city. Many Jews were killed or tortured, their homes ransacked and their possessions looted. Philo laid the blame for the riot at the feet of the Roman governor Flaccus, who, he charges, was paranoid with suspicion that Agrippa was out to topple him.²² The governor failed to restrain the violent mob and, according to Philo, even encouraged its actions. The groundwork for this violence had been laid in the time of Augustus, when he confirmed the special privileges the Jews already enjoyed and at the same time denied the Alexandrians’ request for a senate.²³ The Jews had long shown loyalty to Rome, but Alexandrians were anti-Roman. Action against the Jews therefore

²⁰ S. J. Case, ‘Josephus’ Anticipation of a Domitianic Persecution’, *JBL* 44 (1925) 14.

²¹ T. Rajak, *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 2002) 301-11.

²² Ph., *In Flaccum* 10-20.

²³ *CPJ* II no. 150.

became a convenient way for Alexandrians to vent their dislike of Rome.²⁴ Flaccus eventually fell victim to the political intrigues of the day, resulting in banishment and execution, but the Jews found no redress in the emperor Gaius who treated their delegation scornfully at Rome. When Claudius came to the throne, the Jews appealed once more for reparations, but all they got was an order not to push the situation either in Alexandria or in Rome any farther.²⁵

We should not develop the impression that Alexandria was the norm.²⁶ Of course, Jews coexisted peacefully with their pagan neighbors in many places. For example, there was a large Jewish population in Syrian Antioch (estimated at 65,000 persons), many of whom probably enjoyed civic privileges equal to those of Greeks, and they constituted a *πολίτευμα*—an ethnic group from abroad that constituted a self-contained, but not autonomous, political community and that enjoyed a pleasant existence there.²⁷ Furthermore, Dio Cassius portrays the Alexandrians as a people who did not get along with anyone²⁸—an exaggeration, but probably indicative of the volatile situation that seems to have been characteristic of that city. However,

²⁴ H. Bell, 'Anti-Semitism in Alexandria', *JRS* 31 (1941) 4.

²⁵ The text of the decree is in *CPJ* II no. 153 and A. Hunt and C. Edgar (trans.) *Select Papyri II* (Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, MA 1963) 79-89.

²⁶ As J. Collins has suggested, the rioting in Alexandria in 38 CE was the product of specific circumstances in that city and not the product of a general hatred of Jews. 'Anti-Semitism in Antiquity?: The Case of Alexandria', in C. Bakhos (ed.), *Ancient Judaism in its Hellenistic Context* (SupJSJ 95, Leiden 2005) 18.

²⁷ C. Kraeling, 'The Jewish Community at Antioch', *JBL* 51 (1932) 130-60; *CJP* 1.6. There is scholarly debate over whether Jews constituted a *πολίτευμα* in any of the cities where they lived. J. Méléze-Modrzejewski denies that the Jews had such a status ('How to be a Greek and Yet a Jew in Hellenistic Alexandria', in S. Cohen and E. Frerichs (eds.), *Diasporas in Antiquity* (Brown Judaic Studies 288, Atlanta 1993) 77-80). However, the *Letter of Aristaeus* (310) refers to Alexandrian Jews by this term, and two inscriptions from Berenice in Cyrenaica (1st cent. CE) mention ἔδοξε τοῖς ἄρχουσι καὶ τῷ πολιτεύματι τῶν ἐν Βερενίκῃ Ἰουδαίων. E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ, 3.1* (rev. and ed. G. Vermes et al, 3 vols.; Edinburgh 1986) 88.

²⁸ 65.8.

the evidence is broad enough to conclude that Jews regularly and frequently suffered various forms of harassment from their neighbors, even if it was not universal.

Within Palestine, a well-known Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, incurred the displeasure of Jews more than once for actions they considered to be willfully offensive. Josephus reports in *Antiquitates Judaicae* 18.55-59 that Pilate set up images of Tiberius in Jerusalem. He also tells the story in *Bellum Judaicum* 2.169-174. That the same story appears in both works suggests that our author saw this as important for his purposes. The date was probably Pilate's first year in office, 26 CE, and the images were most likely the *signa* of the Roman cohort in Judea, which had representations of the emperor.²⁹ In the *Antiquitates Judaicae* Josephus calls them προτομάς Καίσαρος ἀλ̄ ταῖς σημαίαις προσῆσαν (“busts of Caesar, which were attached to the ensigns”), in the *Bellum Judaicum* τὰς Καίσαρος εἰκόνας ἀλ̄ σημαίαι καλοῦνται (“the images of Caesar which are called ensigns”). The exact nature of the Jewish objection is unclear, because there was nothing in Biblical Jewish law that would have prohibited this.³⁰ Nevertheless, the Jerusalem Jews objected that this action on Pilate's part violated a Jewish prohibition of idols within the city. Pilate received the Jewish objectors in the stadium at Caesarea Maritima, and stationed soldiers in the wings who, at his signal, advanced on the crowd. The procurator eventually backed down, but the incident reflected a willingness on his part to use force, instead of legal procedures, to settle complaints about the violation of Jewish religious sensibilities.

As it stands, this story is an example of an unprovoked and undeserved affront against Jewish piety. The occasion for bringing the *signa* to Jerusalem was that Pilate had moved Roman troops to Jerusalem for the winter. In the version of the story in the *Antiquitates Judaicae*,

²⁹ C. Kraeling, ‘The Episode of the Roman Standards at Jerusalem’, *HTR* 35 (1942) 263-89.

³⁰ Feldman, ‘Flavius Josephus Revisited’, 818.

Josephus says Πιλάτος δὲ ὁ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἡγεμῶν στρατιὰν ἐκ Καισαρείας ἀγαγὼν καὶ μεθιδρύσας χειμαδιοῦσαν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐπὶ καταλύσει τῶν νομίμων τῶν Ἰουδαϊκῶν ἐφρόνησε (“Pilate, the governor of Judea, intended the abolition of Jewish customs when he led the army from Caesarea and wintered it in Jerusalem”). Caesarea Maritima, thirty five miles away, was the normal residence of the procurator. Pilate certainly would have felt at home there, for the city was thoroughly Romanized. According to Josephus, then, the reason Pilate made this invasive move to Jerusalem for the winter was that he willfully intended to violate and do away with Jewish customs. In other words, the Jews were innocent victims of a man who had no respect for their religion and who was bent on causing trouble. Given the pluralism of Roman religion, this is surely designed to strike the reader as odd and sinister.

Josephus also relates a mistreatment of Jews by the same governor only a year or so later.

He says

Ἐδάτων δὲ ἐπαγωγὴν εἰς τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα ἔπραξεν δαπάνῃ τῶν ἱερῶν χρημάτων ἐκλαβὼν τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῦ ρεύματος ὅσον ἀπὸ σταδίων διακοσίων οἱ δ' οὐκ ἠγάπων τοῖς ἀμφὶ τὸ ὕδωρ δρωμένοις πολλαί τε μυριάδες ἀνθρώπων συνελθόντες κατεβῶν αὐτοῦ παύσασθαι τοῦ ἐπὶ τοιοῦτοις προθυμουμένου τινὲς δὲ καὶ λοιδορία χρώμενοι ὕβριζον εἰς τὸν ἄνδρα οἷα δὴ φιλεῖ πράσσειν ὄμιλος. ὁ δὲ στολῆ τῇ ἐκείνων πολὺ πλῆθος στρατιωτῶν ἀμπεχόμενοι οἱ ἐφέροντο σκυτάλας ὑπὸ ταῖς στολαῖς διαπέμψας εἰς ὃ περιέλθοιεν αὐτοῦς αὐτὸς ἐκέλευσεν ἀναχωρεῖν τῶν δὲ ὠρμηκότεων εἰς τὸ λοιδορεῖν ἀποδίδωσι τοῖς στρατιώταις ὃ προσυνέκειτο σημεῖον. οἱ δὲ καὶ πολὺ μειζόνως ἤπερ ἐπέταξεν Πιλάτος ἐχρῶντο πληγαῖς τούς τε θορυβοῦντας ἐν ἴσῳ καὶ μὴ κολάζοντες οἱ δ' εἰσεφέροντο μαλακὸν οὐδέν ὥστε ἄοπλοι ληφθέντες ὑπ' ἀνδρῶν ἐκ παρασκευῆς ἐπιφερομένων πολλοὶ μὲν αὐτῶν ταύτη καὶ ἀπέθνησκον οἱ δὲ καὶ τραυματῖαι ἀνεχώρησαν καὶ οὕτω παύεται ἡ στάσις.

(“He [Pilate] made a supply of water for Jerusalem, taking for its expense the sacred funds, for the head of the stream was two hundred stadia away. But they [the Jews] were not pleased with the things that had been done regarding the water, and many ten thousands of men got together and complained to him to stop such a desire. And some attacked him with verbal abuse and insulted the man, just as a crowd likes to do. But he, covering with their robes a great multitude of soldiers, who carried clubs under their robes, and sending them to where they might surround them [the Jews], himself ordered the Jews to leave, but when they began to insult him, he gave to the soldiers the signal which had been previously arranged. They gave much more blows than Pilate had ordered, punishing equally the troublemakers and those who were not, and they brought on nothing mild so that unarmed

people were seized by armed men, and many of them who were attacked in this way even died, and the wounded ones withdrew, and thus the revolt ended.”).³¹

Given the other examples reviewed above, it is clear that Pilate was acting in a way that other Roman officials had acted toward Jews in other parts of the empire. His seizure of Jewish funds was not unprecedented. Funds in Jerusalem must have been especially tempting. The annual temple tax sent from Jews in the provinces made the temple rich and had made it a target more than once. For example, Crassus plundered the Jerusalem temple during his Parthian expedition.³² How much money was taken in this particular incident we do not know, but it seems that the knowledge that a sizeable sum of money was sitting in Jerusalem proved an irresistible temptation for a procurator who wished to engage in public works as part of a program to honor the emperor and stay in his favor.³³ Josephus reports the incident as a misuse of Roman *imperium* and a breach of good will with the client subjects, the Jews.

Josephus himself had a first-hand experience with unfair treatment of Jews at the hands of Romans when, at the age of 26 (63/64 CE), he participated in a delegation to Rome to appeal to Nero on behalf of some Jewish priests from the homeland of Judea (remember, Josephus was such a person himself) who had been imprisoned and sent to Rome for trial. The details of this are sketchy. He says

Μετ' εικοστὸν δὲ καὶ ἕκτον ἐνιαυτὸν εἰς Ῥώμην μοι συνέπεσεν ἀναβῆναι διὰ τὴν λεχθησομένην αἰτίαν καθ' ὃν χρόνον Φηλιξ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐπετρόπευεν ἱερεῖς τινας συνήθεις ἐμοὶ καλοὺς κἀγαθοὺς διὰ μικρὰν καὶ τὴν τυχοῦσαν αἰτίαν δῆσας εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην ἔπεμψε λόγον ὑφέξοντα τῷ Καίσαρι οἷς ἐγὼ πόρον εὐρέσθαι βουλόμενος σωτηρίας μάλιστα δὲ πυθόμενος ὅτι καίπερ ἐν κακοῖς ὄντες οὐκ ἐπελάθοντο τῆς εἰς τὸ θεῖον εὐσεβείας ... ἀφικόμην εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην ... διὰ φιλίας ἀφικόμην Ἀλιτύρω μιμολόγος δ' ἦν οὗτος μάλιστα τῷ Νέρωνι καταθύμιος Ἰουδαῖος τὸ γένος καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ Ποππαία τῆ τοῦ Καίσαρος γυναικὶ γνωσθεὶς. προνοῶ ὡς τάχιστα παρακαλέσας αὐτὴν

³¹ *AJ* 18.60-2.

³² *AJ* 14.105-9.

³³ J. Taylor, 'Pontius Pilate and the Imperial Cult in Roman Judea', *NTS* 52 (2006) 555-82.

τοὺς ἱερεῖς λυθῆναι μεγάλων δὲ δωρεῶν πρὸς τῇ εὐεργεσίᾳ ταύτῃ τυχῶν παρὰ τῆς Ποππαίας ὑπέστρεφον ἐπὶ τὴν οἰκείαν.

(“When I was in my 26th year, it fell to me to go up to Rome for the reason that will now be stated: At the time when Felix was procurator of Judea, some priests who were close friends to me, and fine and good men, were bound for a small and indefinite reason and sent to Rome to furnish a defense to Caesar, men for whom I was desiring to find a means of rescuing, especially since I learned that although they were living in hardships, they did not forget piety toward the divine being I arrived at Rome ... and through friendship I became known to Aliturus, a Jew by race but who was especially mindful to Nero, and through him I became known to Poppea, Caesar’s wife. I gave thought as quickly as possible, calling on her for help that the priests be released; and having gained great gifts from Poppea, in addition to this service, I returned home”).³⁴

We do not know what these priests had done to land them in this trouble. The picture Josephus gives us is that the procurator’s actions were motivated out of spite against Jews rather than out of any serious legal offense. The charges against them, Josephus says, were trivial. Whether this assessment of the situation is historically correct or not, we will never know, but it is not out of line with the way other Roman officials sometimes treated Jews, especially those officials who were assigned to Judea. These priests may have done nothing more than irritate the procurator with some complaint of a civil nature, enough that the procurator could accuse them of causing civil unrest. The fact that the matter was resolved so easily suggests that no serious infraction of Roman law was involved. We may also surmise that these Jews had already had a hearing before the procurator and had appealed to Rome. Felix was recalled from office some time in the late 50’s CE. Josephus says he joined the delegation to Rome in his twenty-sixth year, or 63-64 CE. Therefore the Jewish priests Felix had sent to Rome had been held in custody on minor charges for between six and ten years without a hearing before the emperor. The wheels of justice had been turning slowly for these people.³⁵

³⁴ *Vit.* 1.13-14, 16.

³⁵ In the New Testament’s *Acts of the Apostles* (12.1-12, 25) a similar scene is described as another Jew, Paul, stood trial before Felix’s successor, Porcius Festus. Felix had left Paul’s case unresolved for two full years. Festus admitted that he could not discern that Paul had

The events reviewed above paint a general picture of frequent harassment of Jews at the local level in the provinces, an harassment that was frequently instigated by Roman officials themselves. It was not official persecution, but it was not kind treatment either. Daniel correctly observes that “The Greek and Roman attitude toward them was more one of contempt than of hatred,”³⁶ and Gruen notes that “Romans showed little understanding of Judaism, but were hardly inveterate bigots. The texts reveal neither intolerance nor racism. And nothing in them suggests that Romans were bent on persecution.”³⁷ These actions did, however send the message that the Jews were not considered social equals.

The kinds of harassment noted above reflect in actions the derogatory comments we hear about the Jews in the ancient literature.³⁸ Apollonius Molo (first cent. BCE), a famous rhetorician whose pupils included Cicero and Caesar, referred to the Jews as cowards, godless, witless, hostile to other men, the vilest of all men, and having contributed nothing to civilization.³⁹ Similarly, according to Augustine, Seneca called the Jews *sceleratissimae gentis*

committed any crime but indicated that he was willing to sacrifice Paul (and turn him over to his enemies) for the sake of initial good relationships with the local client authorities, and so Paul exercised his right to *provocatio*. This incident took place in 57 CE, when Porcius Festus began his procuratorship in Judea, only six years before Josephus made his trip to Rome. When the account in *Acts* ends, Paul had sat in custody in Rome for two more years, still waiting for his trial before the emperor (28.30). One is also reminded of the group of Greeks of which Polybius was a part. They were sent to Rome in 168 BCE on charges of opposition to the sovereignty of Rome and held for seventeen years without trial. Hata has suggested, in a highly speculative article, that Josephus’ story is fictitious. G. Hata, ‘Imagining Some Dark Periods in Josephus’ Life’, in F. Parente and J. Sievers (eds.), *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period: Essays in Memory of Morton Smith* (Studia Post-Biblica 41, Leiden 1994) 314.

³⁶ J. Daniel, ‘Anti-Semitism in the Hellenistic-Roman Period’, *JBL* 98 (1979) 53.

³⁷ E. Gruen, ‘Roman Perspectives on the Jews in the Age of the Great Revolt’, in A. Berlin and J. Overman (eds.), *The First Jewish Revolt: Archaeology, History, and Ideology* (London 2002) 37.

³⁸ For a full treatment, see Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*.

³⁹ As reported by Josephus in *Ap.* 2.148, 236.

(“a most wicked people”).⁴⁰ The poverty of many Jews also made them despised, as when Martial describes *a matre doctus ... rogare Iudaeus* (“the Jew taught by his mother to beg”).⁴¹

These opinions were based largely on misinformation or malicious interpretations about actual Jewish practices. Most Greek and Latin authors do not seem to have investigated these matters much at all, and simply repeated common (and malevolent) stories about Jewish practices, their origins, and their meanings that were demonstrably incorrect. For example, Horace, Tacitus, Juvenal, Petronius, Seneca, and Dio Cassius all viewed the Sabbath observance as the practice of idleness and a waste of time.⁴² Pliny the Elder described Judaism as a kind of magic,⁴³ and Pompeius Trogus said the Jews came from Damascus,⁴⁴ while Strabo repeated a story that said the Jews were Egyptians.⁴⁵ Even when Varro, the great scholar and forerunner of the Augustan religious restoration, commended Jews for worshipping an aniconic deity, he was nevertheless misinformed when he said that the Jews worshipped the Roman god Jupiter.⁴⁶ The transmission of such stories, careless by modern historical standards, is indeed partially attributable to the nature of historiography in the ancient Hellenistic world. Much of it sounds like stereotyping and it cannot be taken at face value. However, the creation and propagation of stereotypes reflects a prejudice that was willing to believe such outrageous stories about Jews in the first place. Furthermore, as Gruen has pointed out, what is interesting is that anti-Jewish

⁴⁰ *De civ. D.* 6.11.

⁴¹ 12.57.13, as noted by Daniel, ‘Anti-Semitism’, 52.

⁴² Hor. *Satires* 1.9; Tac. *Hist.* 5.4.; Juv. 14.105-6; Petr. *Satyr.* frag. 37; Seneca, as reported in August., *C.D.* 6.11; D.C. 37.17. Older Greek writers such as Agatharchides of Cnidus believed the same thing (quoted to this effect by Josephus in *Ap.* 1.209-12).

⁴³ *HN* 30.11: Est et alia magices factio a Mose et Ianne et Lotape ac Iudaeis pendens, sed multis milibus annorum post Zoroastren (“There is another branch of magic, derived from Moses and Jannes and Lotapes and the Jews, but coming many thousand years after Zoroaster”).

⁴⁴ In Justin’s epitome of the *Historiae Philippicae* bk. 36 (epitome 2.1).

⁴⁵ From Strabo’s lost *Historica Hypomnemata*, quoted by Josephus *AJ* 14.118.

⁴⁶ In August., *De Consensu Evangelistarum* 1.22.30, 31; 1.27.42.

sentiments seem to be the same both before and after the War.⁴⁷ That is, the sentiment remained constant, apparently well-rooted in the Roman psyche.

A clearer example is the slander that appears to have been widespread in the first century, that the Jews worshipped the head of an ass in the Jerusalem temple. Tacitus mentions it,⁴⁸ and Josephus includes it in his list of things to refute in his *Contra Apionem*.⁴⁹ A sense of the animosity some Greeks felt toward the Jews is related in another story, apparently also widely-circulated,⁵⁰ that the reason the Jewish temple in Jerusalem was off-limits to everyone was because the Jews kept a Greek captive there and fed him liberally in order to use him as a human sacrifice and to eat his flesh.⁵¹ According to the story, the eating of the victim's entrails was accompanied by an oath in which the Jews vowed to hate Greeks. What is especially interesting about the story is that the *Greeks* are the yearly object of Jewish hatred. Similarly, the *Suda* lexicon reports that an otherwise unknown author Damocritus (late first century BCE or early first century CE) related a story that the Jews hunted down and captured a foreigner every seven years, and killed him by shredding his flesh.⁵² The stories emphasize the extreme "otherness" of the Jews as perceived by pagans, a cultural distance that was interpreted as hostility. Such tales

⁴⁷ E. Gruen, 'Roman Perspectives', 28-9.

⁴⁸ *Hist.* 5.4.

⁴⁹ *Ap.* 2.80ff. The story was as old as the third century BCE, probably originated in Egypt, and eventually existed in three versions. B. Bar-Kochva, 'An Ass in the Jerusalem Temple—The Origins and Development of the Slander', in L. Feldman and J. Levison (eds.), *Josephus' Contra Apionem: Studies in its Character and Context with a Latin Concordance to the Portion Missing in Greek* (Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums 34, Leiden 1996) 310-26. The fact that it is recorded in Mnaseas, Apollonius Molon, Posidonius, Damocritus, Apion, Plutarch, and Tacitus is evidence that anti-Jewish slanders were wide-spread in antiquity and probably more numerous than the extant evidence betrays. Sevenster, *The Roots of Pagan Anti-Semitism*, 8-11.

⁵⁰ Josephus says that Apion was acting as spokesman for others (*propheta vero aliorum factus est Apion*) *Ap.* 2.91.

⁵¹ *Ap.* 2.91-5.

⁵² *FgrHist* 730. The mention of "every seven years" is possibly a gross misunderstanding of the Jewish cycle of Sabbath years.

were designed to portray the Jews as barbarians, the enemies of civilized society, people who were not fully human and who, worst of all, in the worst kind of deception hid their hostility in the guise of religious piety.⁵³

Jews were generally regarded as a backwards, foreign (i.e., un-Roman) people whose ways and beliefs were strange. As Daniel has noted, “A survey of the comments about Jews in the Hellenistic-Roman literature shows that they were almost universally disliked, or at least viewed with an amused contempt.”⁵⁴ Furthermore, their strict monotheism, coupled with privileges that exempted them from Roman institutions like the emperor cult and the fact that they often willfully segregated themselves from others in the cities where they lived, made them appear aloof and, even worse, hostile to the rest of society. Such was the impression of Philostratus, Diodorus Siculus, and Juvenal.⁵⁵ Some of the most vitriolic statements are found in Tacitus. In one place he says:

Hi ritus quoquo modo inducti antiquitate defenduntur: cetera instituta, sinistra foeda, pravitate valere. Nam pessimus quisque spretis religionibus patriis tributa et stipes illuc congregabant, unde auctae Iudaeorum res, et quia apud ipsos fides obstinata, misericordia in promptu, sed adversus omnis alios hostile odium. Separati epulis, discreti cubilibus, proiectissima ad libidinem gens, alienarum concubitu abstinent; inter se nihil inlicitum. Circumcidere genitalia instituerunt ut diversitate noscantur. Transgressi in morem eorum idem usurpant, nec quicquam prius imbuuntur quam contemnere deos, exuere patriam, parentes liberos fratres vilia habere.

(“This worship [the Sabbath], however it was introduced, is defended by its antiquity; the other customs, perverted and disgusting, are superior in their depravity, for the worst among all other people, scorning the religions of their homelands, piled up contributions and presents there, from which the wealth of the Jews was augmented; and among themselves they are resolutely loyal, displaying compassion, yet they show hostile hatred against all others. They are separate at feasts, they sleep apart, they are a nation most abandoned to lust, and they abstain from intercourse with foreign women; among themselves nothing is unlawful. They instituted circumcision that they might be known as different, and those who have gone over to their custom practice it; nor do they give any

⁵³ J. Rives, ‘Human Sacrifice among Pagans and Christians,’ *JRS* 85 (1995) 71-2.

⁵⁴ Daniel, ‘Anti-Semitism’, 46.

⁵⁵ Philostr., *VA* 5.33; *D.S.*, 34.1; 40.3-4; *Juv. Satires* 14.102-4.

instruction first than to despise the gods, to disown their country, and to consider parents, children, and brethren worthless.”)⁵⁶

When seen in the light of these kinds of remarks, actions by local officials that disregarded Jewish rights are not surprising.

Josephus’ Own Experiences

We must not ignore Josephus’ personal experience with anti-Jewish sentiments, for these were surely powerful forces that factored into his writing plans. In Palestine Josephus knew well the tensions between Jews and the native Syro-Greek populations, and he cited these tensions as a fundamental contributing factor in the start of the First Jewish War.⁵⁷ There were several more opportunities to experience similar tension in Rome. At first glance, Josephus’ situation in Rome seems to have been comfortable if not privileged. Vespasian granted Josephus citizenship, an apartment in the emperor’s house on the Quirinal hill (in regio VI of Rome), and a pension.⁵⁸ The emperor also gave him land in Judea, which Domitian later declared tax-exempt.⁵⁹ However, closer examination reveals that there was little of elite treatment here. Vespasian’s palace was on the Palatine hill, so Josephus was being kept at a distance from emperor even if he did enjoy a free room from him. By 94 CE the house on the Quirinal hill was demolished by Domitian to build the temple of the *gens Flavia*, and we may suppose that Josephus was either evicted or

⁵⁶ *Hist.* 5.5.

⁵⁷ Bilde, ‘The Causes of the Jewish War’, 189-90: “An important aspect of this conflict, in the view of Josephus, was the ethnic composition of the Roman auxiliaries in Palestine, because these were dominated precisely by natives among the non-Jewish inhabitants. According to Josephus this state of affairs was a direct contributory cause of the war.” Of these people Josephus said οἱ καὶ τοῖς ἐπιούσι χρόνοις τῶν μεγίστων Ἰουδαίους ἐγένοντο συμφορῶν ἀρχὴ τοῦ κατὰ Φλωρον πολέμου σπέρματα βαλόντες (“who in the following times were those who became the greatest hazards to the Jews, sowing the seeds of the war beginning at the time of Florus”) (*AJ* 19.364).

⁵⁸ *Vit.* 423.

⁵⁹ *Vit.* 425, 429.

relocated, presumably to a less prominent place.⁶⁰ The Flavians actively promoted eastern nobles in their administration, so Josephus' treatment was nothing special, nor was the gift of tax exemption by Domitian, who gave the same privilege to all teachers of grammar and rhetoric.⁶¹ There is no indication that Josephus knew anyone within the imperial family except Titus, and even then there is no indication of familiarity. It is not even certain, contrary to common assumption, that the emperors commissioned Josephus' works⁶² (Epaphroditus is named as his patron for *Antiquitates Judaicae*, not the emperor), nor is there any evidence that Josephus had any important connections in Roman society with anyone from the equestrian order or above. An author who was not reluctant to sing his own praises surely would have mentioned such social connections if he had them. He mentions one Catullus, the ἡγεμῶν of Cyrene, who implicated Josephus in the riots in Alexandria.⁶³ The exact identity of this Catullus is problematic, but even without such details all that can be said is that Josephus was prominent enough to become the target of anti-Jewish rhetoric by a member of the Roman aristocracy.⁶⁴ All Josephus could say about his own status was that he had been granted Roman citizenship by the emperor, but in the first century CE this was nothing uncommon either; "there is nothing to distinguish Josephus' status and role as an imperial client from that of hundreds if not thousands of other imperial clients with the name Flavius."⁶⁵ This is a far cry from any notion that he kept and maintained a network of social contacts among the elite and powerful in Rome. Price has also suggested, with

⁶⁰ Cotton and Eck 39-41. This corresponds with evidence that suggests that the latter part of Domitian's principate was characterized by increased emphasis on Roman nationalism (specifically, the imperial cult) and a stricter policy toward Jews. E. Smallwood, 'Domitian's Attitude toward the Jews and Judaism', *CP* 51 (1956) 1-13.

⁶¹ S. Mason, "Should Any Wish to Enquire Further", 75f.

⁶² S. Mason, "Should Any Wish to Enquire Further", 77.

⁶³ *BJ* 7.437-53.

⁶⁴ Cotton and Eck 48.

⁶⁵ J. Price, 'The Provincial Historian in Rome', in J. Sievers and G. Lembi (eds.), *Josephus and Jewish History in Flavian Rome and Beyond* (SupJSJ 104, Leiden 2005) 106.

plausibility, that Josephus probably never did any public recitations of his works, given his poor spoken Greek, and so he was not a regular among the literary figures in Rome in his time.⁶⁶ He seems only to have enjoyed the ordinary *beneficia* that emperors were generous to give anyway, and nothing more, and by all evidence he was basically ignored by the elite in Rome.

Furthermore, during Josephus' own lifetime Rome was being transformed by the Flavian dynasty into a place and an administration that proclaimed the Roman victory over Jerusalem through its public institutions and architecture. Previous victories over the Jews in Palestine had been publicly celebrated,⁶⁷ but the attention given to the Roman victory in 70 CE outstripped them all. Triumphal arches commemorating Titus' victory in Jerusalem were set up, one at the circular end of the Circus Maximus,⁶⁸ and the other on *Via Sacra* on the slope of the Velia (where it still stands). The extant arch displays in its inner panels the looting of the Jerusalem temple and Titus riding in triumphal procession. These were, of course, not memorials of war in the modern sense. They were public political statements. "War monuments that perpetuate victory and glory are another means of converting military achievement into political power."⁶⁹ In addition to these arches, according to the work of Alföldy, the Flavian amphitheater originally

⁶⁶ J. Price, 'The Provincial Historian in Rome', 105.

⁶⁷ Coins proclaimed Pompey's victory, and Sosius celebrated a triumph in Rome after his defeat of the Hasmonean Antigonus in 37 BCE, and the victory was proclaimed on coins and on the *Fasti Triumphales Capitolini* inscription (*CIL* 1.2 (1893): 50, 70). D. Edwards, 'Religion, Power, and Politics: Jewish Defeats by the Romans in Iconography and Josephus', in J. Overman and R. MacLenna (eds.), *Diaspora Jews and Judaism: Essays in Honor of, and in Dialogue with, A. Thomas Kraabel* (Atlanta 1992) 294-99.

⁶⁸ This arch is no longer extant, but was dedicated in 81 CE. It is depicted on the Severan Marble Plan of Rome and stood at least until the 9th century CE, for its inscription is recorded in the manuscript known as the *Anonymus Einsiedlensis* (published in *CIL* VI.944), and its foundations were discovered in modern excavations. See F. Millar, 'Last Year in Jerusalem: Monuments of the Jewish War in Rome', in J. Edmondson et al (eds.), *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome* (Oxford 2005) 120.

⁶⁹ Hölscher 15.

bore an inscription that proclaimed it had been built from the spoils of Jerusalem.⁷⁰ An arch of Isis also proclaimed the Roman victory.⁷¹ The spoils from the temple (specifically the golden menorah and the table) were put on public display in Vespasian's new Temple of Peace, and the temple torah scroll and purple wall hangings from the Jerusalem sanctuary were taken to his palace.⁷² For the next 12 years Vespasian and Titus minted coins, which were circulated throughout the empire, bearing the inscription *IUDAEA CAPTA*, and a new tax, for a new *fiscus Iudaicus*, was levied on Jews in place of the collection they had formerly taken up for the Jerusalem temple.⁷³ The tax funded the new temple of Jupiter Capitolinus and its yearly collection reminded the Jews that the money once used for their own God was now being given to a Roman deity. The destruction of Jerusalem provided a much-needed foundational myth for the fledgling Flavian dynasty and allowed it to compare itself favorably to the first principate that brought stability after a time of civil strife.⁷⁴ While Rome conquered other places during this period, no conquest was given as much resources⁷⁵ or as much public attention as that of Jerusalem. "... never had Jews as a nation and as an ethnos had to deal with symbolism that singled out their defeat with consistent iconographic and rhetorical displays across the breadth of

⁷⁰ G. Alföldy, 'Eine Bauinschrift aus dem Colosseum', *ZPE* 109 (1993) 195-226. See also L. Feldman, 'Financing the Colosseum', *BibArchRev* 27 (2001) 20-31, 60-1, which mostly summarizes Alföldy. The stone that originally bore the inscription is currently on display in the gallery in the upper level of the Colosseum.

⁷¹ Edwards 304.

⁷² *BJ* 7.158-62.

⁷³ *BJ* 7.218; D.C. 66.7.2.

⁷⁴ T. Barnes, 'The Sack of the Temple in Josephus and Tacitus', in J. Edmondson et al (eds.), *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome* (Oxford 2005) 129.

⁷⁵ While the conquest of Jerusalem was not the largest conflict the Romans ever engaged, they did pour tremendous resources into it. It was arguably the longest siege against any city in the first century CE (it lasted five months), and employed four legions, parts of two others, twenty infantry cohorts, eight mounted regiments, and 18,000 foot soldiers supplied by client kings. This was more than was sent for the invasion of Britain in 43 CE. Millar 101.

the Roman empire for the better part of twelve years.”⁷⁶ As much as 15 years after the event, when Domitian needed to legitimize his reign, he turned once again to the conquest of Jerusalem for political capital and re-issued the *IUDAEA CAPTA* coins to tie him to that great victory. Reminders of the denigrated position of Jews in Roman eyes were, literally, all around Josephus. His own experience was that Judaism was under exceptional pressure.⁷⁷

Conclusion

As I have shown in the previous chapter, expressions of ethnicity, especially literary ones, are the result of a perceived crisis of identity and a sense of alienation. The need for self-esteem and social acceptance is a powerful force in driving the creation of an ethnicity. So what was the perceived crisis behind the literary works of Josephus? The answer, in short, was a wide-spread anti-Jewish sentiment in the Greco-Roman world in which Josephus lived. This sentiment was, for Josephus, recently further exacerbated by the humiliating defeat of the Jews by the Romans in the First Jewish War, reminders of which were everywhere around him in Flavian Rome. The Jews had become a veritable symbol of the uncooperative, and even hostile, foreigner whose exclusion from the vitality, wealth, and power of the Roman world was considered just and right.

The Jews were subject to mistreatments of various kinds in the ancient world because they were seen as outsiders who refused to demonstrate local civic pride and as a people whose practices seemed judgmental against others or simply foreign. It would, of course, be a mistake to think that the Jews were the only ethnic, social, or religious group who experienced such mistreatments.⁷⁸ There was in Josephus’ day a general prejudice against all things and people who did not conform to the Roman ideal, and this prejudice found expression in various ways.

⁷⁶ Edwards 306.

⁷⁷ Goodman, “Josephus as Roman Citizen,” 338.

⁷⁸ Sevenster, *The Roots of Pagan Anti-Semitism*, 42-48.

For example, the senate expelled some Greek philosophers from Rome in 162 and 155 BCE,⁷⁹ as did Nero in 65 CE,⁸⁰ Vespasian in 72 CE,⁸¹ and Domitian in 90 CE⁸² and again in 93 CE.⁸³

Political interests manipulated the personal fears or paranoia of the emperors, and criticisms of the emperors were treated harshly.⁸⁴ But the fact that the Jews were not alone in being perceived as cultural misfits does not diminish the nature of what they experienced.

The situation of the Jews in the Hellenistic world was complicated by the fact that perceptions of the Jews and their place in that world were different on the “inside” (majority) than they were on the “outside.” The insiders, the client peoples of the Roman empire who worshipped the traditional gods of Greece and Rome and who acknowledged the *imperium Romanum*, saw Jews in an either/or way: they could be Jews (i.e., practice Judaism), or they could assimilate themselves into Greco-Roman society and culture, along with the identity it implied, but they could not do both. It was assumed that Judaism and full participation in Hellenism were opposites. From the ancient texts we hear no overtures from the pagans to the Jews, inviting them or instructing them how to become part of their world. What we hear instead from the “insiders” is a constant rehearsal of stereotypes and negative images that shouted “stay away.” Full Jewish participation in the institutions that marked off Greek and Roman identity was considered impossible. The nature of the Jewish people and their religion made it so, according to the “insiders.” There were, of course, proselytes, and some of them were even

⁷⁹ Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome*, 257.

⁸⁰ Tac. *Ann.* 15.71.

⁸¹ D.C. 65.9.

⁸² This first banishment is implied by Dio Cassius’ statement in 67.13 that Domitian banished philosophers *again*. It probably occurred in connection with the conspiracy of Saturninus. J. Toynbee, ‘Dictators and Philosophers in the First Century A.D.’, *G&R* 13 (1944) 58.

⁸³ D.C. 67.13; Suet. *Dom.* 10.2; Aulus Gellius 15.11.4. See R. Harte, ‘The Praetorship of the Younger Pliny’, *JRS* 25 (1935) 53.

⁸⁴ Toynbee 43-58.

influential or well-known people. On the whole, however, their presence does not mitigate the general exclusion Jews faced from society. One of the great driving forces at work in this tension was the connection between culture and religion. As long as the Jews had a different God and a different understanding of the relationship between religion and secular culture, and refused to acknowledge in any meaningful way the gods of the Greeks and Romans, getting “inside” was going to be impossible. Josephus, however, was convinced that one of the problems was that the Greeks and Romans fundamentally misunderstood Judaism and its God, and he wrote the *Antiquitates Judaicae* to explain it properly. In approaching the problem from the standpoint of overcoming misunderstandings, Josephus had landed on one of the fundamental aspects of that problem⁸⁵ and was taking a positive track and going beyond mere apologetics.

⁸⁵ On the role of cultural dissonance in the tensions between Jews and Romans, see S. Stern, ‘Dissonance and Misunderstanding in Jewish-Roman Relations’, in M. Goodman (ed.), *Jews in a Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford 1998) 241-50. In ancient times it seems that, in spite of much contact, there was little real understanding of other cultures outside of one’s own. J. Teixidor, ‘Interpretations and Misinterpretations of the East in Hellenistic Times’, in P. Bilde et al (eds.), *Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Kingdom* (Studies in Hellenistic Civilization 1, Aarhus 1990) 66-78.

CHAPTER 4 HELLENISTIC CULTURE AND JEWISH ACCULTURATION

In the previous chapter I explored several lines of evidence that shows that Jews were, generally, objects of contempt in Roman Hellenistic culture at large. The kind of crisis that would typically give rise to some kind of attempt at, or assertion of, self-definition was in place. But did the Jews feel compelled by this crisis to respond in this way? Is there any indication that Jews *wanted* to fit into the Hellenistic culture around them? Is there evidence to suggest that they cared to be seen as “insiders”? The answer is that the Jews were not only eager to fit in, but they had also been trying this very thing for a long time when Josephus arrived on the scene. Josephus shared the hopes of many of his fellow-Jews, that they could negotiate a respected place within the culture of his day, and the ethnographic, or ethnicity-creating, character of his writings was yet another attempt to achieve this. Josephus was actually participating in, and advancing, a long-standing project among Jews in the ancient world.

If all we had were the statements of outsiders about how Jews refused to assimilate into the society at large in their day, we might think that the Jews resisted assimilation in every facet of their lives, for the outsiders typically complained of how Jews remained (in their perception) aloof from Hellenistic culture in critical ways. However, the fact is that Jews in various places attempted assimilation into Greco-Roman society to varying degrees and on a broad scale. The evidence leads us to ask not *if* the Jews had tried to be Hellenistic, but instead *the extent* to which Jews in ancient times assimilated Hellenistic institutions as markers of their own identity.

The Question of Jewish Hellenization

By terms such as “Hellenism,” “Hellenistic,” and “Hellenization” I mean what Hengel said, “a complex phenomena which cannot be limited to purely political, socio-economic,

cultural or religious aspects, but embraces them all,”¹ and further “it cannot be restricted to Greek *paideia*, philosophy and rhetoric, even less to syncretism and mystery religions.”² This fits well with Friedman’s description: “Hellenism is not simply about the spread of Greek cultural forms to Asia. It is about conquest and the establishment and transformation of political and economic structures in a wide region. It is, not least, about the colonial establishment of Greeks in Asia and the consequences of this phenomenon for cultural change.”³ It was a pervasive influence⁴ of the Greek culture on the cultures of the Orient, but this influence did not displace native traditions. Grabbe summarizes

Hellenization was a long and complex phenomenon. It cannot be summarized in a word or a sentence. It was not just the adoption of Greek ways by the inhabitants of the ancient Near East or of Oriental ways by Greeks who settled in the East. Hellenistic civilization was *sui generis* and must be considered from a variety of points of view, for it concerned many different areas of life: language, custom, religion, commerce, architecture, dress, government, literary and philosophical ideals. Hellenization represented a process as well as a description of a type of culture.⁵

Levine casts the net a little wider:

Hellenization constituted more than simply the dissemination of Greek social mores, language, and institutions throughout the East; What took place was a much a process of selection, adoption, and adaptation as it was of conquest and subjugation. Moreover, without denying the dominant role of Greek civilization, we should recognize that Hellenization was far more complex than merely the impact of the West on the East.

¹ Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* 3.

² M. Hengel, ‘Judaism and Hellenism Revisited’, in J. Collins and G. Sterling (eds.), *Hellenism in the Land of Israel* (Notre Dame 2001) 9.

³ J. Friedman, ‘Notes on Culture and Identity’, 25.

⁴ Some scholars (such as W. Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilization* (London 1947)) thought of Hellenism as a *dominance* of Greek culture and institutions, but this is not necessary to the idea of Hellenism.

⁵ L. Grabbe, ‘The Jews and Hellenization: Hengel and His Critics’, *Ioudaios* < <ftp://ftp.lehigh.edu/pub/listserv/ioudaios-1/Articles/lghellen> > 15 May 2006. The idea of Hellenization was coined by J. Droysen in *Geschichte des Hellenismus* (2 aufl., Gotha 1877-78). Debate continues over whether Hellenism produced a melting-pot of cultures or a two-tiered society.

In this light, therefore, Hellenization is ... the interplay of a wide range of cultural forces on an *oikoumene* defined in large part—but not exclusively—by the Greek conquests of the fourth and third centuries B.C.E.⁶

What is important for this study is that the kind of acculturation that happened in Hellenization “is primarily a process of change in identity and not simply a question of the learning of codes.”⁷ Hellenization entailed much more than simply learning the Greek language, doing public construction with Greek architectural models, etc. It involved a redefinition of many peoples on many levels.

Any inquiry into the phenomenon of Hellenization among the Jews of antiquity is complicated by at least three factors. First, there is the diversity within ancient Judaism itself. Most scholars today prefer to speak of the Judaisms of antiquity rather than portray Judaism as a monolithic, homogeneous thing. Pearce and Jones summarize the position of modern scholarship well by saying

We have seen a move away from the understanding of Judaism and Jewish identity as normative, homogeneous phenomena, ... Notions of ‘essence’ and homogeneity have been abandoned and an alternative model has been widely adopted which stresses the existence of a plurality of Judaisms and Jewish identities in antiquity that made up complex and variegated social phenomena in both the Land of Israel and the Diaspora.⁸

Various sects existed within ancient Judaism, and these sects had different views, sometimes widely different, on a range of topics from Hellenistic acculturation to the prospects of the liberation of Palestine from Roman rule. Each group had different responses to the question of what defined a Jew, and each had different agendas for the nation. And certainly, individuals

⁶ L. Levine, *Judaism and Hellenism in Antiquity* (Peabody 1998) 18-19.

⁷ Friedman, ‘Notes on Culture and Identity’, 25.

⁸ P.15. See also M. Smith, ‘Palestinian Judaism in the First Century’, in M. Davis (ed.), *Israel: Its Role in Civilization* (New York 1956) 68-78. This understanding is a product of the nature of the evidence and not of the claims made in the evidence. When ancient Jewish authors wrote of Judaism, “they tended to assume that there was only one Judaism” (*i.e.*, theirs). M Goodman, ‘Jews and Judaism in the Mediterranean Diaspora in the Late-Roman Period: The Limitations of the Evidence’, in C. Bakhos (ed.), *Ancient Judaism in its Hellenistic Context* (SupJSJ 95, Leiden 2005) 182.

within each group did not agree with each other in every detail of their shared attitudes or in their level of conviction concerning them. This phenomenon is a function of the fact that ethnicities are chosen by a people and not inherent to them. It is not even clear from the extant materials if any of the ancient Jewish sects represented the theological views of the average Palestinian Jew (the *am ha-aretz*).⁹ The variety within ancient Judaism therefore makes it impossible to speak of ancient Jewish ethnicity or the adoption of ethnic markers in such a way that would describe all Jews of antiquity.

The second factor is the varying degrees with which Jews had contact with Hellenism in different places. Jerusalem and its firmly entrenched customs provided a strong resistance to Hellenism. Once outside of Jerusalem and its immediate environs, one could find significant contact with Hellenism mediated through Roman imperialism in places within Palestine such as Caesarea Maritima or Sebaste. However, we should not suppose that Palestine was as thoroughly Romanized as it is sometimes thought. Even in Galilee in the north, the fact is that evidence of widespread Romanization in the first century is lacking until after the outbreak of the First Jewish War.¹⁰ Outside of Palestine rabbinic influence was probably not great¹¹ and the Roman mediation of Hellenism for Jews was generally more powerful and successful.¹²

⁹ M. Smith 68-73.

¹⁰ See M. Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus* (SNTSMS 134, Cambridge 2005) 221-9; A. Berlin, 'Romanization and anti-Romanization in pre-Revolt Galilee', in A. Berlin and J. Overman (eds.), *The First Jewish Revolt: Archaeology, History, and Ideology* (London 2002) 69.

¹¹ M. Goodman, 'Jews and Judaism in the Mediterranean Diaspora', 178-9.

¹² Even here, however, we must guard against supposing that the differences were drastic. "... the religion and theology of the Jews seems to have been basically the same character in Palestine and in the Diaspora. ... Of course, the absence of the Temple in the Diaspora caused the cultic, ritual and religious life to be different." P. Bilde, 'The Jews in the Diaspora of the Roman Empire', *Nordisk Judaistik. Scandinavian Jewish Studies* 13 (1992) 117.

The third factor is the differing attitudes of Jews in various places toward the culture around them. The fact is that, within the groups that constituted ancient Judaism, many voices were competing to be heard concerning the relationship of Jews to Greco-Roman society at large. The Jewish literature of the Hellenistic period¹³ shows much diversity when it comes to attitudes toward Gentiles and their cultures. The provenance, purpose, and intended audience of much of this literature is sometimes hard to ascertain, and thus we may only speak of the propagandistic or apologetic functions of this literature provisionally. It does seem, however, judging from the volume and diversity of literature that has survived, that Jewish authors believed they could inform and persuade their fellow-Jews to adopt some particular aspect of self-understanding. The diversity of the surviving literature thus again suggests that the boundaries of Jewish ethnicity in ancient times were debated and not fixed.

These factors resulted in a situation that was in no way uniform in every place for every Jew. As noted above, the ancient world was a world in which forces of assimilation operated powerfully. These forces were so strong that Bohak has argued that it is not possible to speak of any kind of ethnic continuity among diaspora Jews. If it existed, he claims, it was the exception, not the rule.¹⁴ This seems, to me, an overstatement, or perhaps an overly narrow use of the term “continuity.” Most, if not all, Jews were apparently influenced by Hellenism in some way,¹⁵ and most, if not all, Jews were comfortable with some degree of Hellenization, and they still considered themselves Jews by some set of standards even if the assimilation and acculturation was not uniform in every place where Jews lived.

¹³ It suffices for this study to restrict our use of this terminology to Jewish literature that was written in Greek.

¹⁴ Bohak 175, 191.

¹⁵ So V. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (New York 1977).

Most notably, Jews in many places used the Greek language, even if they continued to use a local or native language alongside it. As noted in chapter two, language can serve as an ethnic indicium. Accordingly, adoption of the Greek language by ancient Jews was more than just a concession to the political and economic realities around them. Admittedly, some facility in Greek was necessary for commerce and communication with foreign magistrates, so use of the Greek language by itself would not necessarily comprise evidence of Hellenization among Jews. It is, however, evidence when viewed in the larger context in which other elements of Greek culture were also adopted into Jewish culture. In that larger context it indicated a degree of acceptance of Hellenism and a desire to be counted as part of that social world. The strength of this fact is more obvious when we contrast the scene in *2 Maccabees* 7.8, where one of the seven brothers voiced his refusal to eat pig's flesh τῆ πατρὶω φωνῆ (“in the language of his fathers”), and in Second Jewish War, the Bar-Kochba Revolt (132-135 AD), when the leaders of the revolt mandated the used of Hebrew as an expression of nationalistic solidarity.¹⁶ Similarly, in Luke's *Acts* (14.8-18) we hear of the people of Lystra in the interior of Asia Minor speaking in the Lycaonian language, not Greek, and Paul chose to address a hostile Jewish crowd in Jerusalem in Aramaic (21.40), not Greek. In some contexts, choice of language reflected a conscious ethnic identification.

A command of the Greek language was necessary at a minimum for anyone who wished to carve out a place for themselves in the Hellenistic world, and refusal to use the language indicated a rejection of Hellenism to some extent and a preference for some other ethnic

¹⁶ A. Berlin and J. Overman, ‘Introduction’, in A. Berlin and J. Overman (eds.), *The First Jewish Revolt: Archaeology, History, and Ideology* (London 2002) 10.

tradition.¹⁷ Hengel notes that “anyone who sought social respect or even the reputation of being an educated man had to have an impeccable command of it. The word ἑλληνίζειν primarily meant ‘speak Greek correctly’, and only secondarily ‘adopt a Greek style of life’. Impeccable command of the Greek language was the most important qualification for taking over Greek culture.”¹⁸ Diodorus Siculus could say in the mid-first century BCE Συμβάλλεται δ’ αὕτη καὶ πρὸς λόγου δύναμιν, οὐδὲ κάλλιον ἕτερον οὐκ ἂν τις ῥαδίως εὔροι. τούτῳ γὰρ οἱ μὲν Ἕλληνας τῶν βαρβάρων, οἱ δὲ πεπαιδευμένοι τῶν ἀπαιδευτῶν προέχουσι, πρὸς δὲ τούτοις διὰ μόνου τούτου δυνατὸν ἐστὶν ἓνα τῶν πολλῶν περιγεῖσθαι (“But it [history] also contributes to the power of speech, and one cannot easily find another, better thing than that. For in this matter the Greeks surpass the barbarians, and the educated surpass the uneducated, and by this power alone one man is able to rise above the many”).¹⁹ Similarly, the LXX was produced initially not for pagans, but for the Jews of Alexandria who were so immersed in Greek culture that many of them could not read their Scriptures in the original Hebrew.²⁰ The fact that the Hebrew Scriptures now took on Greek dress is significant. The Alexandrian Jews were presenting themselves, by means of the LXX, as a people whose religion was not foreign to the Hellenistic world around them.²¹ There is a scholarly consensus that many Palestinian Jews were conversant

¹⁷ Cf. the fact that the Roman senate did not allow anyone to address it in any language other than Latin, or that L. Aemilius Pallus delivered Rome’s terms to Amphipolis (at the end of the Third Macedonia War) in Latin even though his Greek was impeccable (Livy 45.29.3). This was a conscious distancing of themselves from Greek culture. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome* 267.

¹⁸ Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* 58.

¹⁹ 1.2.5-6.

²⁰ P. Green, *Alexander to Actium: The Historical evolution of the Hellenistic Age* (Hellenistic Culture and Society 9, Berkeley 1990) 317.

²¹ CPJ I.41f.

in Greek as well.²² Jews of the Diaspora were taking Greek names since the third century BCE, documents in Greek were among those found in the Jewish manuscript caches at Qumran, Murabbat, Nahal Hever, Nahal Seelim, Nahal Mishmar, the so-called Cave of the Letters, and Masada, and hundreds of Greek inscriptions of Jewish origin (funerary inscriptions, ostraca, etc.) have been found both in Palestine and in the Diaspora.²³ The widespread use of Greek by Jews in antiquity should thus be interpreted as an indicator of their willingness to be understood to some extent along the lines of Greek culture.

While it might be easy to think of the situation of the ancient Jews vis-à-vis Hellenism as creating an either/or proposition for them, this does not appear to have been the case even in Palestine where Jewish nationalism flared up at times. Concerning Palestinian Jews, the landmark study of Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, challenged any such dichotomy. Many ancient Jews apparently did not see themselves as caught between being Jewish on the one hand, or compromising their Jewishness and adopting Hellenistic culture on the other hand. Hengel argued that the Hellenization of Jews in Palestine was a long process that had begun even before the conquests of Alexander and that resulted, by the first century, in a thorough saturation of Greek culture among Jews throughout the ancient world. He asserted that “the usual distinction between Palestinian and Hellenistic Judaism needs to be corrected. ... From about the middle of the third century BC all Judaism must really be designated ‘*Hellenistic Judaism*’ in the strict sense”²⁴ Another way of saying this is that the evidence seems to suggest that the ancient Jews readily found in Hellenism new means for self-definition. The thoroughness of the

²² See J. Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek?* (Leiden 1968), and J. Fitzmyer, ‘Languages of Palestine in the First Century A.D.’, *CBQ* 32 (1970) 501-31.

²³ G. Mussies, ‘Greek in Palestine and the Diaspora’, in S. Safrai and M Stern (eds.), *The Jewish People in the First Century* (CRINT 1.2, Philadelphia 1976) 1042-51.

²⁴ Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* 104.

Hellenization of the ancient Jews suggests that they were eager to find a place for themselves in the broader Hellenistic culture.

Hengel's picture of ancient Judaism stirred scholarly debate,²⁵ but generally it has prevailed. Yet it does seem that Hengel went too far in parts of his thesis. For example, in making his case for pervasive Hellenization of the ancient Jews, Hengel downplayed the difference between Palestinian Judaism and the Jews of the Diaspora. This was a methodological mistake that blurred the great amount of diversity that actually appeared within Judaism. A better corrective to Hengel's picture of a massive, thorough penetration of Hellenism into Judaism (including in Palestine) is the study by Green, *Alexander to Actium: The Historical Evolution of the Hellenistic Age*, where he argues that Hellenism did not spread evenly or even easily throughout the areas affected by Alexander's conquests. Instead, Green argues, Alexander succeeded in establishing pockets or islands of Hellenism, and Hellenistic influence on surrounding non-Greek cultures was often met with varying degrees of acceptance, if not with resistance. It would not be accurate to think that people in remote areas were regularly conversant in Greek or adopted Greek culture.

Although Hengel's conclusions need to be nuanced more, it seems unavoidable that Hellenism indeed made inroads, sometimes substantial ones, into many quarters of Judaism. This became more apparent as one moved away from Palestine and into territory that was not the Jewish homeland. In fact, the majority of Jews in ancient times lived and flourished outside of

²⁵ Most notably by L. Feldman, 'Hengel's Judaism and Hellenism in Retrospect', *JBL* 96 (1977) 371-82; his *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World*; and his 'How Much Hellenism in the Land of Israel?', *JSJ* 33 (2002) 290-313; and by A. Momigliano, in his review of Hengel's book, 'Hengel, M. "Judentum und Hellenismus: Studien zu ihrer Begegnung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Palästinas bis zur Mitte des 2. Jh. v. Ch."', *JTS* n.s. 21 (1970) 151. Momigliano called for a more judicious treatment of the phenomenon in his *Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization* (Cambridge 1975).

Jerusalem in the Diaspora, where Hellenism was *the* culture. Generally, the current scholarly discussion is not about the *possibility* of Hellenistic influence on Judaism (including in Palestine), but about the *level* of penetration. Gruen has argued that there is, in the thinking of some, a simplistic dichotomy of “either resistance to assimilation and longing for Jerusalem, or conformity to and embrace of the alien environment” and that this dichotomy

did not face the Jews who dwelled in Greco-Roman communities in the Second Temple period. ... The Jews abroad had chosen their residence voluntarily and (in many cases) had been there for generations. They had no cause to ache for Jerusalem. Nor, by contrast, were they obliged to adopt a new guise and sacrifice their identity to blend in with their surroundings.²⁶

He goes on to note that

We can therefore abandon simplistic dichotomies. Diaspora Jews did not huddle in enclaves, isolated and oppressed, clinging to a heritage under threat. Nor did they assimilate to the broader cultural and political world, compromising their past, ignoring the homeland, and reckoning the Book (in Greek) as surrogate for the Temple. The stark alternatives obscure understanding. A complex set of circumstances, diverse and dependent on local conditions, produced a mixed, ambiguous, and varied picture.²⁷

As I noted above, as one moved away from Palestine, Hellenistic influence was much more apparent in the Jews of the Diaspora than among the Palestinian Jews. In the Diaspora we see a wide range of assimilation and accommodation to Greek culture. Thus

There is growing recognition that Jews in antiquity experienced very different social and political conditions, and correspondingly engaged in their local political, social and cultural environments in many different ways. Several recent studies of the Jewish communities of the Diaspora generally indicate that there is good evidence for many Jews integrating at a local level and expressing a real sense of identification with the local environment while maintaining their Jewish identity.²⁸

²⁶ E. Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews Amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge 2002) 5.

²⁷ E. Gruen, *Diaspora* 6.

²⁸ Pearce and Jones 17.

Within Palestine, the aristocracy was the group most interested in Hellenism partly because it offered them a means of maintaining their economic status.²⁹ At the same time it seems correct to recognize that there were some substantial differences between the Judaism of Palestine and that of the Diaspora,³⁰ without falling into the false either/or dichotomy of a normalized Judaism (Palestine) versus a compromised Judaism (in the Diaspora). It would not be an oversimplification to say that Jerusalem was the greatest pocket of conservative or orthodox Judaism in the ancient world, but this does not mean that one would regularly encounter Jews who were not zealous for their religion outside of Jerusalem. The difference between Palestinian Judaism and Diaspora Judaism was not the religion, the zeal for the religion, the purity of the religion, etc. The difference may be better described as lying in the approach to and construction of the ethnicity, and the choices of what would count as ethnic indicia. Concerning the presence and power of Hellenism, however, there is no doubt. The question is not if Hellenism penetrated Palestine, but instead the question is one of how much resistance did a particular person or group offer to it³¹ and how a Jew or a local group of Jews managed their self-understanding, how they constructed their ethnicities, in light of it.

Hellenization had occurred even among Palestinian Jews, yet at the same time we must recognize that the religious criterion always played a powerful role in their lives and ethnic self-understanding. That dominance of religious concerns did not, however, prevent even Palestinian Jews from absorbing Hellenism to a great degree. Jerusalem itself bore many marks of Hellenization in the first century. Levine's survey of the evidence led him to conclude that "The

²⁹ Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* 1.56. Surely we must attribute much of Josephus' own affection for Hellenism to his association with the aristocracy.

³⁰ J. Collins, 'Cult and Culture: The Limits of Hellenization in Judea', in J. Collins and G. Sterling (eds.), *Hellenism in the Land of Israel* (Notre Dame 2001) 52.

³¹ Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World* 44.

impact of Hellenism on the Near East in general, and on Judaea and Jerusalem in particular, was considerable.”³²

The origins of the Hellenization of the capital city of Jerusalem have proven to be a controversial topic in modern scholarship. Some questions about the so-called Seleucid enforcement of Hellenization are still open.³³ However, even the Jewish account in *2 Maccabees* reveals that Hellenization was not initially forced upon the Jews by the Seleucids, but that Jason (note the Greek name), out of personal ambition to become high priest, bargained with Antiochus IV to secure the priesthood and to turn Jerusalem into a Hellenistic city. The bargain involved a promise of a substantial increase in tribute revenues from the Jews to the Seleucid king—an additional 440 talents of silver, with another 150 to come if permission was granted to build a gymnasium—and enrolled the men of Jerusalem as citizens of the capital city, Antioch.³⁴ The author of *2 Maccabees* clearly was not pleased with Jason. He reported that

ἦν δ' οὕτως ἀκμή τις Ἑλληνισμοῦ καὶ πρόσβασις ἀλλοφυλισμοῦ διὰ τὴν τοῦ ἀσεβοῦς καὶ οὐκ ἀρχιερέως Ἰάσωνος ὑπερβάλλουσαν ἀναγνείαν ὥστε μηκέτι περὶ τὰς τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου λειτουργίας προθύμους εἶναι τοὺς ἱερεῖς ἀλλὰ τοῦ μὲν νεὸν καταφρονούντες καὶ τῶν θυσιῶν ἀμελοῦντες ἔσπευδον μετέχειν τῆς ἐν παλαιίστρῃ παρανόμου χορηγίας μετὰ τὴν τοῦ δίσκου πρόσκλησιν

(“There was such a high degree of Hellenization (Ἑλληνισμός) and increase in the adoption of foreign ways (ἀλλοφυλισμός) because of the surpassing wickedness of Jason, who was impious and not high priest [legitimately], that the priests were no longer intent upon their service at the altar, but despising the sanctuary and neglecting the sacrifices, they hastened to participate in the unlawful spectacle in the wrestling arena after the invitation to the discus.”)³⁵

The author of *2 Maccabees* thought that Jason’s predecessor, Onias, was a model of righteousness, and he has imposed a religious overlay upon the politics of the situation. Yet even

³² Levine 38.

³³ cf. E. Gruen, ‘Hellenism and Persecution: Antiochus IV and the Jews’, in P. Green (ed.), *Hellenistic History and Culture* (Berkeley 1993) 238-73.

³⁴ *2 Mac* 4:8-9.

³⁵ *2 Mac* 4:13-14.

this anti-Hellenistic author conceded that at first Hellenism was not forced upon the Jews. It was Jason's idea, not that of the Seleucids.

Interestingly, the author of *1 Maccabees* was pro-Roman and anti-Greek. He described a Jewish delegation to Rome saying

αὐτὸν ἐπέλεξετο Ἰουδας τὸν Εὐπόλεμον υἱὸν Ἰωαννοῦ τοῦ Ἀκκῶς καὶ Ἰάσονα υἱὸν
Ἐλεαζάρου καὶ ἀπέστειλεν αὐτοὺς εἰς Ῥώμην στήσαι φιλίαν καὶ συμμαχίαν καὶ τοῦ ἄραι
τὸν ζυγὸν ἀπ' αὐτῶν ὅτι εἶδον τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν Ἑλλήνων καταδουλομένους τὸν
Ἰσραὴλ δουλείᾳ

("So Judas chose Eupolemus the son of John, son of Accos, and Jason the son of Eleazar, and sent them to Rome to establish friendship and alliance, and to free themselves from the yoke; for they saw that the kingdom of the Greeks was completely enslaving Israel.")³⁶

But the authors of these books are giving an opinion of Hellenization that, as far as we can tell, proceeded with no opposition in Jason's own day. There are no reports of contemporary riots or dissensions over Jason's initiatives,³⁷ and none of the Jewish literature written shortly after the event criticized the initiative.³⁸ The books of *Maccabees* look back at that time with disdain and identified Jason's behavior as a horrible mistake, but that is a later perspective, and it cannot be identified as a majority view. Ironically, the books of the Maccabees were written in *Greek*.³⁹

Problems came when another contender for the priesthood, Menelaus, offered Antiochus a greater sum for the priesthood, effectively out-bidding Jason. Antiochus agreed, and to raise the money Menelaus took vessels from the Jerusalem temple and sold them in the markets near Tyre (*2 Mac* 4:23-42). This caused rioting in Jerusalem. Apparently the Jews of Jason's day were able to distinguish between civic elements (ethnic indicia) of their identity and religious elements

³⁶ *1 Mac* 8:17-18.

³⁷ L. Grabbe, 'The Hellenistic City of Jerusalem', in J. Bartlett (ed.), *Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman Cities* (London 2002) 13.

³⁸ J. Goldstein, 'Jewish Acceptance and Rejection of Hellenism', in E. Sanders (ed.), *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition: Volume Two: Aspects of Judaism in the Graeco-Roman Period* (Philadelphia 1981) 81.

³⁹ *1 Maccabees* was originally written in Hebrew, but that text did not survive antiquity. What survived was the Greek translation. Goldstein 18.

(ethnic criteria) without difficulty. Stealing from the temple crossed the line, but Hellenizing the city did not. When Menelaus made his power play, Antiochus was away (in 168 BC, fighting in Egypt). With the Syrian ruler away, the riots over Menelaus' looting of the temple encouraged Jason to retake his position by force. When Antiochus returned to Palestine, he saw what looked like a general revolt, and it is at this point that the Seleucid king began to forbid the practice of Judaism. It was not long after this that the Maccabean War for independence began. However, the problem is far too complex to describe with the simple solution that Jason's introduction of Hellenism was the cause, as the authors of *1* and *2 Maccabees* have postulated.⁴⁰ Again, however, the problem was not that the Jews of Jerusalem were opposed to Hellenization, but that they jealously and zealously valued their ancestral worship. Only when Hellenization interfered with that did the Jews revolt. Otherwise some notable monuments in Jerusalem were built in this time, namely the tomb of the Bene Hezir in Jerusalem's Kidron Valley, and Jason's tomb west of the city, both featuring Doric architectural style, and Hasmonean coins were minted bearing symbols common in the Hellenistic world at the time—except there are no images of living beings.⁴¹

Within Palestine, a good indicator of the extent of Jewish Hellenization into the time of Josephus is the nature of the client kingdom of Herod the Great, who ruled from 40-1 BCE.⁴² Herod filled Palestine with Hellenistic material culture.⁴³ Three notable examples were the cities

⁴⁰ N. Hyldahl, 'The Maccabean Rebellion and the Question of "Hellenization"', in P. Bilde et al (eds.), *Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Kingdom* (Studies in Hellenistic Civilization 1, Aarhus 1990) 194.

⁴¹ Levine 44.

⁴² I am here using the revised dates of J. Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* (rev. edn., Peabody 1998) 291-300. Others put the death of Herod at 4 BCE.

⁴³ Hellenism was not the only influence on Herodian architecture, for Herod was also affected by his affinities for the cultures of Rome and the east. But "Hellenistic architecture was obviously the most vigorous cultural determinant on Herod's buildings." P. Richardson, *Building*

of Caesarea Maritima, Banias, and Sebaste (formerly Samaria). All three cities had temples either pagan deities, to Rome, or to Augustus in the first century.⁴⁴ Caesarea Maritima was only about 60 miles from Jerusalem, and there was a significant Jewish population there, enough that an offense against the Jews of Caesarea Maritima is cited by Josephus as the event that started the Revolt of 66 CE.⁴⁵ However, Caesarea Maritima looked so much like a Greek city that the Gentile inhabitants argued that it belonged to them, and cited as proof the presence of statues and temples which Jews would not have built.⁴⁶ The temple to Augustus at Banias closely resembled a temple to Augustus at Pola.⁴⁷ Most interesting is the fact that Herod especially concentrated on making the capital city of Jerusalem as Hellenistic as he could. In Jerusalem itself he built pools, and a theater (possibly out of wood⁴⁸). This theater was adorned with inscriptions honoring Caesar and was the site of athletic games, involving contests between animals and condemned prisoners, in honor of Augustus on a five year cycle. According to Josephus, Herod tried his best to make the games equal in prestige with those that were celebrated in other parts of the empire

Jewish in the Roman East (Waco 2004) 226-7. See also G. Foerster, 'Art and Architecture in Palestine', in S. Safrai and M. Stern (eds.), *The Jewish People in the First Century* (CRINT 1.2, Philadelphia 1976) 971-1006.

⁴⁴ At Banias, the temple to Zeus Heliopolitanus was built near the end of the first century CE. A temple to Pan and the nymphs had been built near it in the earlier part of the first century CE. Herod the Great also built a temple to Augustus there in 19 BCE. Josephus *BJ* 1.404-6; *AJ* 15.359, 363-4. See A. Berlin, 'Where Was Herod's Temple to Augustus?', *BibArchRev* 29 (2003) 22-4. Caesarea Maritima had a temple to Rome and Augustus sitting atop a prominent platform facing the harbor. Josephus mentions it in *AJ* 15.339; *BJ* 1.417. See R. Bull, 'Caesarea Maritima: The Search for Herod's City,' *BibArchRev* 8 (1982) 24-41. A temple of Augustus stood at Sebaste, the stairs and platform of which are still there. *BJ* 1.403; *AJ* 15.298. See D. Barag, 'King Herod's Royal Castle at Samaria-Sebaste', *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 125 (1993) 4-8.

⁴⁵ *BJ* 2:282ff.

⁴⁶ *BJ* 2.266.

⁴⁷ D. Jacobson, 'Herod's Roman Temple', *BibArchRev* 28 (2002) 18-27.

⁴⁸ See J. Patrich, 'Herod's Theater in Jerusalem—A New Proposal', *Israel Exploration Journal* 52 (2002) 231-9.

by offering large prizes by which he hoped to attract the most well-known athletes of the day.⁴⁹ He also built an amphitheater somewhere outside the city⁵⁰ and rebuilt the citadel north of the temple and renamed it the Antonia.⁵¹ All of this gave an unmistakably strong Hellenistic, and especially Roman, flavor to the city.⁵²

Herod's renovation of Jerusalem aroused some complaints among the local inhabitants. Just as it had been in the days of the Maccabean revolt, the Jerusalem Jews still drew a line between the two spheres of culture and cult.⁵³ Many Jews were tolerant of many Greek things in their local cultures, but they were especially sensitive and resistant to anything that was perceived as a threat to or compromise of the exclusive worship of their ancestral God, Yahweh, and hence to their identity as Jews. Josephus prefaces his account of these things saying Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ μᾶλλον ἐξέβαινεν τῶν πατρίων ἔθων καὶ ξενικοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασιν ὑποδιέφθειρεν τὴν πάλαι κατάστασιν ἀπαρεγχείρητον οὖσαν ἐξ ᾧ οὐ μικρὰ καὶ πρὸς τὸν αὖθις χρόνον ἠδικήθημεν ἀμεληθέντων ὅσα πρότερον ἐπὶ τὴν εὐσέβειαν ἤγειν τοὺς ὄχλους ("On account of this he departed even more from the ancestral customs, and through foreign pursuits he gradually corrupted the ancient way of life that was inviolable; from which things we were harmed not a little and at a later time as well, as whatever things that formerly led the masses to piety were

⁴⁹ *AJ* 15.268-70.

⁵⁰ Possibly the same as the hippodrome mentioned in *BJ* 2.44 and *AJ* 17.255.

⁵¹ *BJ* 1.401. See the list of Herod's buildings in P. Richardson, *Herod: King of the Jews and Friend of the Romans* (Columbia 1996) 197-202. From this same time is the non-Herodian, but still Hellenistic, so-called tomb of Absalom dated to the first century CE and featuring engaged Ionic columns. L. Rahmani, 'Ancient Jerusalem's Funerary Customs and Tombs: Part Three', *Biblical Archaeologist* 45 (1982) 47.

⁵² Yet we should be careful to distinguish Herod's use of Hellenistic architectural models from the idea that Herod was acting as an agent for Hellenization. Richardson, *Building Jewish*, 238.

⁵³ Collins, 'Cult and Culture', 55. As I have suggested, however, the Jews did not always agree about where the line was to be drawn.

being neglected.”).⁵⁴ Josephus thought the Hellenization of the city had, in some areas, gone too far so as to corrupt Jewish religious values, which in turn led to a general impiety towards their God.⁵⁵ Nor was he alone in this view. He reports that the locals complained that having athletic contests between wild animals or between animals and men was clearly contrary to Jewish customs. ἀσεβές μὲν γὰρ ἐκ προδήλου κατεφαίνετο θηρίοις ἀνθρώπους ὑπορρίπτειν ἐπὶ τέρψει τῆς ἀνθρώπων θέας ἀσεβές δὲ ξενικοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασιν ἐξαλλάττειν τοὺς ἔθισμούς (“For it appeared as blatant impiety to throw men to wild beasts for the enjoyment of men as spectators, and also as impiety to change their customs for foreign practices”).⁵⁶ Just how strong this protection of Jewish identity markers was in Jerusalem became clear when the trophies for these contests were displayed in public. To many of the locals, they appeared to be presented as objects of worship containing human likenesses on standards adorned with weapons, which μὴ πατριον ἦν αὐτοῖς τὰ τοιαῦτα σέβειν (“it was not their ancestral practice to venerate such things”).⁵⁷ When it became clear that these had provoked significant consternation, Herod invited a dialogue, the purpose of which Josephus saw as trying to persuade them to abandon their religious convictions (καὶ παρηγόρει τῆς δεισιδαιμονίας ἀφαιρούμενος).⁵⁸ It turns out that they were not images at all, and only when they inspected the trophies closely did they cease their objection. Even this, however, did not alleviate everyone’s suspicions:

τινὲς δ’ αὐτῶν ἐπέμενον τῇ δυσχερείᾳ τῶν οὐκ ἐξ ἔθους ἐπιτηδεύματων καὶ τὸ καταλύεσθαι τὰ πάτρια μεγάλων ἠγούμενοι ἀρχὴν κακῶν ὅσιον ᾤθησαν ἀποκινδυνεῦσαι μᾶλλον ἢ δοκεῖν ἐξαλλαττομένης αὐτοῖς τῆς πολιτείας περιορᾶν Ἡρώδην πρὸς βίαν ἐπεισάγοντα τὰ μὴ δι’ ἔθους ὄντα καὶ λόγῳ μὲν βασιλέα τῶ δ’ ἔργῳ πολέμιον φαινόμενον τοῦ παντὸς ἔθνους

⁵⁴ *AJ* 15.267.

⁵⁵ *Cf.* also Case 15-17.

⁵⁶ *AJ* 15.275.

⁵⁷ *AJ* 15.276.

⁵⁸ *AJ* 15.277.

(“But some of them persisted in dissatisfaction with the practices that were not customary, and they thought that such dismissal of the ancestral ways would lead to the beginning of great evils, and that it was better to make a bold attempt than to seem to overlook the changes Herod had made in their state, bringing things in by force which were not customary, and that he was a king in pretext but in deed appeared as the enemy of all the people.”)⁵⁹

Ongoing objections did not, however, put an end to the presence of Hellenism in Palestine.

After Herod’s death, his son Herod Antipas continued in the same direction. “The rebuilding of Sepphoris and establishment of Tiberias allowed the client king to demonstrate his enthusiasm for the mingling of Greek, Roman, and local cultures that was taking place throughout the Levant.”⁶⁰ In addition, a basilica was built in Beth-she’arim and a hippodrome was built in Magdala.⁶¹ Krauss has shown that the rabbinic literature contains over three thousand Greek and Latin loanwords,⁶² and Stein demonstrated suggestive parallels between the Seder and Passover Haggadah on the one hand, and Greco-Roman symposia on the other hand.⁶³ B. Cohen has suggested points of contact between the legal corpora of Romans and Jews,⁶⁴ and Daube explored the influence of Hellenistic rhetoric on rabbinic Biblical interpretation.⁶⁵ The overall picture that emerges is that Hellenism was a substantial presence in the institutions of the Jews within Palestine.

⁵⁹ AJ 15.280-1. Out of sensitivity to Jewish religious concerns, Herod generally avoided the use of images of living things in his buildings within Judea. He was more liberal outside of Judea. Richardson, *Building Jewish*, 238-9.

⁶⁰ Chancey 221.

⁶¹ Chancey 223.

⁶² S. Krauss, *Greichsiche und Lateinische Lehnwörter im Talmud, Midrasch und Targum* (Berlin 1899).

⁶³ S. Stein, ‘The Influence of Symposia Literature on the Literary Form of the Pesah Haggadah’, *JJS* 8 (1957) 13-44.

⁶⁴ B. Cohen, *Jewish and Roman Law: A Comparative Study* (New York 1966). A more moderate assessment was provided by B. Jackson, ‘On the Problem of Roman Influence on the Halakah and Normative Self-Definition in Judaism’, in E. Sanders et al (eds.), *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition 2: Aspects of Judaism in the Graeco-Roman Period* (Philadelphia 1981) 157-203.

⁶⁵ D. Daube, ‘Rabbinic Methods and Interpretation and Hellenistic Rhetoric’, *HUCA* 22 (1949) 239-64.

How did Diaspora Jews, those outside of Palestine, see themselves? Did they see themselves as aliens in foreign lands, strangers to the culture around them? Did they see their Jewishness constantly challenged by the Greek culture around them? Were they forced to live in some kind of reluctant compromise with Judaism? Did they long for the homeland? Did they, in essence, see themselves as living in some kind of exile? Or were they comfortable with many of the elements of Hellenism? Again, there is no single picture that emerges from the ancient evidence. Instead we find that Jewish feeling about life in the Diaspora ran a gamut of reactions. “There is evidence that at least some Diaspora Jews of the Greco-Roman period understood themselves as living in an ongoing ‘exile’ which would be remedied by an eventual return to the Land.”⁶⁶ Some saw the destruction of the temple and the taking of Jews into foreign slavery as a prelude to the coming of the Messiah.⁶⁷ Others, however, did not define themselves in these ways. Gruen concludes “It is not easy to imagine that millions of ancient Jews dwelled in foreign parts for generations mired in misery and obsessed with a longing for Jerusalem that had little chance of fulfillment. ... To assume that they repeatedly lamented their fate and pinned their hopes on recovery of the homeland is quite preposterous.”⁶⁸ Even among those who did define their Jewishness in terms of exile, the definitions are not consistent. For example, in the *Book of Jubilees*, written in the second century BC, the role of the Israelite homeland is downplayed in favor of a definition of Jewishness that emphasized the nation’s moral purity and closeness with

⁶⁶ J. Scott, ‘Exile and the Self-Understanding of Diaspora Jews in the Greco-Roman Period’, in J. Scott (ed.), *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions* (Leiden 1997) 218.

⁶⁷ B. Chilton, ‘Salvific Exile in the Isaiah Targum’, in J. Scott (ed.), *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions* (SupJSJ 56, Leiden 1997) 239-47.

⁶⁸ *Diaspora*, 234.

God.⁶⁹ While the homeland could be a part of a Jew's self-definition, nothing said it had to be, and most were apparently quite content without it playing a central role in their self-understanding. The Zealots were, of course, the striking exception. But even Josephus does not seem to think of the Diaspora in Hellenistic times in negative terms. He does not speak of either the deportation by the Assyrians or by the Babylonians as an exile (φυγή), nor does he speak of his own removal to Rome as an exile. In fact, he seems to speak of the spread of the Jews throughout the ancient world with pride.⁷⁰ He sees no inherent problem with either the Diaspora itself or its Hellenization. This corresponds with what I have pointed out in a previous chapter, that the ethnographic character of Palestine for Jews was virtually disappearing in the first century CE. In fact, some Jews in the Diaspora went to considerable lengths in appropriating local culture. An inscription from Iasos dated to the second century BCE lists a Jew, a certain "Nicetas, son of Jason, a Jerusalemite," as a contributor to the Dionysia.⁷¹ Jews had reserved seats in the theater at Miletus⁷² and Aphrodisias, and they participated in trade guilds in

⁶⁹ B. Halpern-Amaru, 'Exile and Return in Jubilees', in J. Scott (ed.), *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions* (Leiden 1997) 143-4. Interestingly, the book of Jubilees was written in Hebrew.

⁷⁰ L. Feldman, 'The Concept of Exile in Josephus', in J. Scott (ed.), *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions* (Leiden 1997) 147-61.

⁷¹ E. Hicks, 'Iasos', *JHS* 8 (1887) 102. Whether he contributed willingly or under compulsion, we do not know. M. Hengel, *Jews, Greeks, and Barbarians* (trans. J. Bowden, Philadelphia 1980) 105.

⁷² According to the inscription on the fifth row of seats concerning a group called τῶν θεοσεβῶν. *CIJ* II no. 748. Even if the inscription refers to Jewish sympathizers and not ethnic Jews, it still evidences close contact between Jewish and pagan cultures. See J. Gager, 'Jews, Gentiles, and Synagogues in the Book of Acts', *HTR* 79 (1986) 91-9. Philo attended the theater performances in Alexandria (*On Drunkenness* 177).

Hierapolis.⁷³ Inscriptional evidence shows that some Jews were among the gymnasium graduates at Cyrene.⁷⁴ In death, they used Greek funerary epithets.⁷⁵

Jews in Hellenistic Egypt assimilated Greek culture to a relatively high degree, at least as far as the matter can be judged from literary evidence. The Jewish historian Demetrius (“the Chronographer”; c. late third century BCE) wrote a history of the Jewish monarchy that employed the Greek literary device of *aporialusis*, indicating a thorough acquaintance with the critical methodologies of his day.⁷⁶ Artapanus, an Egyptian Jew of the mid-second century BCE, wrote a work *Concerning the Jews* in which he retold Biblical stories in the genre of the historical romance. He claimed that Moses was the teacher of Orpheus and that he was called Hermes by the Egyptian priests.⁷⁷ Artapanus was clearly interested in reconciling Jewish and Hellenistic Egyptian religious claims, and the general tone of his work was pro-Egyptian. Ezekiel the tragedian wrote *The Exodus* in iambic trimeter, following Greek tragic poetry (especially Euripides and Aeschylus).⁷⁸ Aristobulus (fl. mid-second century BCE) employed allegory in his exegesis of Jewish scripture along lines similar to those of the Stoics, and the surviving fragments of his work show evidence of interaction with the Stoic and Pythagorean philosophies.⁷⁹ He claimed that Greeks knew the teachings of Moses, thus implying that the Jewish traditions were older. The *Letter of Aristeas*, of Egyptian provenance, described the

⁷³ A. Kraabel, ‘Impact of the Discovery of the Sardis Synagogue’, in J. Overman and R. MacLennan (eds.), *Diaspora Jews and Judaism: Essays in Honor of, and in Dialogue with, A. Thomas Kraabel* (Atlanta 1992) 275.

⁷⁴ M. Williams (ed.) 107, 113f.

⁷⁵ M. Williams (ed.) 126-28.

⁷⁶ C. Holladay, ‘Jewish Responses to Hellenistic Culture in Early Ptolemaic Egypt’, in P. Bilde et al (eds.), *Ethnicity in Hellenistic Egypt* (Studies in Hellenistic Civilization 3, Aarhus 1992) 140.

⁷⁷ Holladay 141, 145.

⁷⁸ Holladay 141.

⁷⁹ Holladay 142.

Septuagint as originating in Hellenistic Egyptian interest in and respect for the Jewish sacred texts, and portrayed the production of the translation as a model of Jewish-Egyptian cordiality. The account followed the rhetorical canons of the *progymnasmata* in creating a work in the Greek genre of *diegesis*.⁸⁰ “Such willingness to experiment with new literary forms, especially to this extent, suggests a rather significant level of engagement with Hellenistic culture.”⁸¹ The *Letter* stops short, however, of any sense of full assimilation of Hellenistic values. For all its conciliatory tone, the author defends strict monotheism over against the polytheism of the culture around him.⁸² However, he is willing to treat Jewish food laws—which were always a major difference between Jews and their pagan neighbors—allegorically.⁸³ The *Third Sibylline Oracle*, produced in Egypt in the mid-second century BCE, took a more conservative stance. It was critical of pagan religion, but it stopped short of expressing hostility and was, after all, in a Greek literary form (pronouncements from a sibyl). At the other end of the spectrum, Philo of Alexandria, who lived a generation before Josephus, was practicing an allegorical approach to the Jewish scriptures to show the basic compatibility of Jewish beliefs and Greek philosophy. All of this shows that some Egyptian Jews were doing what Josephus would do in Rome in the first century CE: using Greek literary models to forge an essentially Greek ethnicity for Jews.

On the whole, these works are evidence of the willingness of Egyptian Jews to participate in the intellectual life of the Hellenistic culture around them, and to express their ethnicity in new ways. Holladay notes

Jewish engagement with Hellenistic culture, as represented in these writings, represents both an exercise in ethnic promotion as well as ethnic self-preservation. ... Their appropriation of these new forms suggests not only that Hellenistic culture was speaking to

⁸⁰ Holladay 142.

⁸¹ Holladay 143.

⁸² Sections 134-8.

⁸³ Sections 151-2.

them, but that they were speaking to Hellenistic culture. Yet these new literary forms are also serving to reinforce ethnic identity by providing ways for making both Jewish scripture and tradition more credible to Jews themselves.⁸⁴

Similarly, Gabba notes that “The emergence of a Jewish literature in Alexandria, at the end of the third century BCE, does not betoken a missionary or apologetic campaign directed towards Greek readers, but rather an internal need of the Jewish community itself, since it aims to strengthen the Jews’ own consciousness of their religion and nationality.”⁸⁵ The Jews of Alexandria maintained their specifically Jewish customs as they lived in that city. They had synagogues, they followed the dietary restrictions, and they had their own governing council. They were, to use the Greek term, a *πολίτευμα*.⁸⁶

Whether in or out of Palestine, a degree of Jewish acculturation with Hellenism was regularly observed. Even that most solid criterion of Jewishness, Jewish religion, was significantly affected. Three examples will illustrate this point broadly. First, the Torah was common to all Jews, even if only nominally. Collins notes that “The Torah provided a common basis for postexilic Judaism in the sense that all forms of Judaism related to it in one way or another.”⁸⁷ Yet he goes on to note that in spite of the unifying character of the Torah, “It did not provide a definitive norm in the sense of prescribing a single orthodox way of being Jewish.”⁸⁸ However, the fact remains that the Jews had something that few other people in antiquity had: a single document to which they could appeal for their self-identity. Within this one document, the Torah, was contained both the narratives of Israel’s founding fathers as well as the laws which framed the Israelite covenant with their God. Himmelfarb notes that the Torah “was a central

⁸⁴ Holladay 144.

⁸⁵ Gabba 637.

⁸⁶ A. Kasher, ‘The Civic Status of the Jews in Ptolemaic Egypt’, in P. Bilde et al (eds.), *Ethnicity in Hellenistic Egypt* (Studies in Hellenistic Civilization 3, Aarhus 1992) 117.

⁸⁷ J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (2nd edn, Grand Rapids 2000) 20.

⁸⁸ Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem* 20.

institution for Jews in the hellenistic period” and that this institutionalized document attained such a powerful status that it enabled Jews to maintain a grip on their ethnic heritage sufficient to withstand the leveling force of Hellenism.⁸⁹ However, even the Torah itself could be subjected to a thoroughly Hellenistic treatment (in addition to having been translated in Greek). The works of Artapanus and Ezekiel the Tragedian had already taken a step in this direction.

Second, many Jews considered circumcision the defining characteristic of a Jew, and apparently many non-Jews considered it the same way.⁹⁰ Whenever Petronius mentioned Jews, he saw circumcision as their defining custom.⁹¹ In Luke’s *Acts of the Apostles*, converted Jewish Pharisaic teachers who wished to interpret Christianity along the lines of Pharisaic Judaism insisted that Gentile converts be circumcised according to the covenant demand of the Jewish Torah.⁹² This emphasis on the symbol of circumcision was not unique to Palestinian Jews. Yet discussions over the necessity of observing the practice are frequent enough in the ancient literature to suggest that many doubted whether it was essential to Jewish self-definition. By no means is it clear that basically all Jews in the Hellenistic period saw it that way. Josephus himself sometimes omits references to it in his retelling of Biblical stories,⁹³ and some Jews had the surgical procedure known as epispasm performed to reverse their circumcision. The reason for this was that it was considered unacceptable to appear in a public bath or gymnasium circumcised. The author of *I Maccabees* recalls with disdain how this was done even during the

⁸⁹ M. Himmelfarb, ‘The Torah Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Difference in Antiquity’, in C. Bakhos (ed.), *Ancient Judaism in its Hellenistic Context* (SupJSJ 95, Boston 2005) 114, 121-2.

⁹⁰ Hadrian’s later prohibition of the practice suggests that it was interpreted as a clear sign of the practice of Judaism. *Scriptores historiae Augustae: Hadrian* 14.2.

⁹¹ *Satyricon* 68.8; 102.13-14; frag. 37.

⁹² *Acts* 15.1, 5.

⁹³ E.g., in the story of Joshua, *AJ* 5.1, and in the story of the demands of Jacob’s sons on the Shechemites, *AJ* 1.340.

time of Jason: καὶ ὠκοδόμησαν γυμνάσιον ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις κατὰ τὰ νόμιμα τῶν ἔθνων καὶ ἐποίησαν ἑαυτοῖς ἀκροβυστίας (“and they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem according to the customs of the Gentiles, and they made themselves uncircumcised”).⁹⁴ The fact that some Jews went to this length to participate in that most important Hellenistic institution, the gymnasium, speaks volumes about the degree of Hellenistic acculturation among the ancient Jews.⁹⁵ It is further indication of how the elements or markers of Jewish ethnicity were not considered fixed.

Third, many Jews, and apparently many non-Jews, in the Hellenistic period thought that Sabbath observance was a chief identifying mark of Jews. Josephus himself seems to brag that it was known throughout the Greek world.⁹⁶ If there was an element that was a near-universal marker of Jewish identity, the Sabbath came close to it. Sabbath-keeping among the Jews of Rome is mentioned by Horace,⁹⁷ Tibullus,⁹⁸ Ovid,⁹⁹ Pompeius Trogus,¹⁰⁰ Seneca,¹⁰¹ Petronius,¹⁰²

⁹⁴ 1.14-15.

⁹⁵ On a related point, it has been claimed that the *Letter of Claudius* to the Alexandrians indicates that Jews of that city were trying to gain access into the gymnasium. Roman reorganization of Egypt had led to the gymnasium becoming one of the most elite social institutions in the country’s *metropoleis* (R. Alston, ‘Philo’s “In Flaccum”: Ethnicity and Social Space in Roman Alexandria’, *G&R* 44 (1997) 167-9). Entrance was admitted only to ephebes. In the aftermath of the riot in 38 CE, Claudius told the Jews, among other things μηδὲ ἐπισπαίειν γυμνασιαρχικοῖς ἢ κοσμητικοῖς ἀγῶσι (“not to intrude into the games put on by the *gymnasiarchoi* or the *cosmetai*”; line 93). The reading ἐπισπαίρειν has been suggested instead of ἐπισπαίειν, which would mean that the Jews were told not to oppose or harass the games (A. Kasher, ‘The Jewish Attitude to the Alexandrian Gymnasium in the First Century AD’, *American Journal of Ancient History* 1 (1976) 152-6). Exactly what the Jews were doing with reference to the gymnasium in Alexandria is unclear either way, and Kasher’s suggestion is based on an incorrect understanding of the Jewish population’s status as a πολίτευμα (see Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 120-2). Since this evidence is ambiguous, I have not included it as evidence of Jewish assimilation of Hellenism in antiquity.

⁹⁶ *Ap.* 2.282.

⁹⁷ *Satires* 1.9.

⁹⁸ *Eleg.* 1.3.13ff.

⁹⁹ *Ars Amat.* 1.3, 11; *Rem. Amat.* 219-20.

¹⁰⁰ As reported in the *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* by Marcus Junianus Justinus, bk 36.

¹⁰¹ As reported in August., *De Civ. D.* 6.11.

¹⁰² *Fragmenta* 37.

Marital,¹⁰³ Juvenal,¹⁰⁴ and Tacitus.¹⁰⁵ In fact, the Jewish practice of refraining from labor on the Sabbath was so well-known that it evidently gave rise to a belief that Jews even refrained from eating on the Sabbath.¹⁰⁶ As noted in the previous chapter, this custom was interpreted as being alien and was treated with ridicule. Williams suggests that the Sabbath played a special role in the lives of Jews in Rome, since most of those Jews were descendants of people who had been sent to Rome as slaves after Pompey's subjugation of Judea in 63 BC and Sosius' recapture of Jerusalem from the Parthians in 37 BC. On both occasions, the historians say that Jerusalem fell to the invaders on a Sabbath. The Sabbath, then, was for Roman Jews a day of remembrance of their present exile.¹⁰⁷ In other words, its praxis served a role in their ethnicity.

Yet even this essential Jewish institution acquired Hellenistic features. Closely related to the Sabbath was the institution of the synagogue, where Sabbath assemblies were convened and, in the Diaspora, the Scriptures were read in Greek. The existence of synagogues throughout the ancient world is a well-known fact, and Hellenistic influence is apparent in their architecture. Synagogues were typically built according to the style of the country in which they existed,¹⁰⁸ and many examples of synagogues built in good Hellenistic style survive, including in Palestine. Levine notes that based upon both architectural remains and literary descriptions, in Galilee and the Golan it was almost impossible to distinguish a synagogue from a non-Jewish edifice merely

¹⁰³ 4.4.

¹⁰⁴ 14.96-106.

¹⁰⁵ *Hist.* 5.4.

¹⁰⁶ J. Michael, 'The Jewish Sabbath in the Latin Classical Writers', *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature* 40 (1924) 124.

¹⁰⁷ M. Williams, 'Being a Jew in Rome: Sabbath Fasting as an Expression of Romano-Jewish Identity', in J. Barclay (ed.), *Negotiating Diaspora: Jewish Strategies in the Roman Empire* (London 2004) 15-18.

¹⁰⁸ Levine 139-79.

by its exterior.¹⁰⁹ Outside of Palestine there is the striking example of the synagogue in Sardis, which was part of a massive urban complex that comprised the public gymnasium.¹¹⁰ The only way into the synagogue is through the entrance on the outside street; no entrance from the gymnasium complex was available. In the main hall of the synagogue was a heavy table that probably served as the lectern. The supports of this table carry carved depictions of Roman eagles clutching thunderbolts, and the table itself is flanked by two pairs of stone lions, which were prominent in the local mythology of Sardis.¹¹¹ The entrance to the synagogue had a public fountain, the floors were done in mosaics, and Greek inscriptions lined the walls surrounding the aedicules which probably housed the Torah scrolls. The impression is one of a wealthy Jewish community that felt comfortable with its Hellenistic surroundings and its symbols, yet at the same time maintained a measure of distance.¹¹² Thus even an institution as significant for self-definition as the Sabbath was subjected, in the synagogue, to considerable Hellenistic influence.

The picture that develops is that there was no corner of ancient Judaism that was not affected by Hellenism, even in Palestine. Even those ethnic markers that were considered most characteristic or even essential to Jewish self-definition were affected by Hellenism in some ways. There was no single, monolithic entity of Judaism in the first century CE. The ethnic boundaries were never clearly or firmly fixed, nor was there agreement among Jews as to level of acculturation with Hellenistic culture was and what was not acceptable, or what degree of

¹⁰⁹ P.143.

¹¹⁰ The synagogue apparently became part of the complex after it was rebuilt and remodeled in the second century CE. A. Kraabel, 'Paganism and Judaism: The Sardis Evidence', in J. Overman and R. MacLenna (eds.), *Diaspora Jews and Judaism: Essays in Honor of, and in Dialogue with, A. Thomas Kraabel* (Atlanta 1992) 242.

¹¹¹ Kraabel, 'Paganism and Judaism', 245-6.

¹¹² Goodman ('Jews and Judaism', 193-7) has suggested, based on the unusual features of the site, that the building might have been not a synagogue, but a place where Gentiles ("God-fearers") worshipped the Jewish God. This interpretation has not gained general acceptance.

assimilation constituted a compromise of Jewish identity. Instead, there was a general dialogue of Jews with Hellenism that was going on simultaneously in different places, and at different levels, and with different convictions about what constituted an acceptable degree of acculturation. It is clear that Hellenism provoked a crisis in Jewish self-definition, and that crisis was met with varying responses.

Yet the great abundance of evidence suggests more than the fact that Hellenism merely penetrated Judaism. It suggests also that among most Jews in antiquity, there was a perceived need to fit into Hellenistic culture at large. The Jews were, at various levels, eager to see themselves in Greek terms. Hellenization on the part of the Jews was intentional. It was, as we have seen, more than the presence of Greek elements in native non-Greek societies. Hellenism necessitated peoples' redefinition of themselves, and the Jews actively participated in this process. The significance of this fact for the present study is that it helps us to see more clearly the character of Josephus' works.

Conclusion

I discussed in the previous chapter that a strong anti-Jewish sentiment pervaded the Roman world of Josephus' day, and this was sufficient to provoke a sense of a need for self-definition among Jews. In this chapter I have shown that many Jews attempted to overcome this negative perception by embracing Hellenism, often to great lengths. In other words, Hellenism was widely perceived to be the solution to the problem. The outsiders (in this case, Jews) were trying to get in by adopting, as much as they could, cultural identity markers belonging to the insiders (those identified by Hellenistic criteria). This was, to be sure, a balancing act in which the goal was to get "inside" without sacrificing those things that expressed their own self-understanding as Jewish (which made them "outsiders" in the first place). To be both thoroughly Jewish and thoroughly Hellenistic was surely a difficult thing to attempt, and it is doubtful if many Jews

ever really succeeded at convincing other peoples of the Roman world that they had accomplished it. The persistence of rejection from the Greco-Roman society at large in spite of sweeping adoption of Hellenistic identity markers on the part of Jews confirms this.

The point to see is that the Jews themselves saw no problem in being both Jewish and Hellenistic. This was because they were able intellectually to divorce certain expressions of Greco-Roman culture from religion. This was a different mindset than operated among most others. Most public buildings in the Greco-Roman world, including places like public baths, had close religious associations bound up with them. It does not seem that the Jews could have, or would have, denied a connection between culture and religion. The ancient world was saturated with this kind of thinking, and the Jews were no exception. In their way of thinking, however, the connection was between culture and religion (in general), but not necessarily with Greco-Roman religion in particular. It is precisely at this point that Josephus found a way “in.” He proposed to define Jewishness as equal to, but without being identical to, the cultural and religious heritage of the Greeks and Romans. In this way he preserved what was specifically Jewish and at the same time hoped to negotiate a place within the dominant culture around him. Given the dilemma of defining Jews in terms of what was unique to them or what was compatible with Hellenistic culture, Josephus made his case on the Greek side of self-definition, since the Romans had admired and patterned much of their own culture after that of the Greeks. In portraying the Jews as he did, Josephus was participating in an on-going dialogue and, at the same time, advancing it through new means (historiography in the Greek vein).

Of course, this line of reasoning involved a problem. Josephus hoped that Jews and Judaism would find a place in the larger Roman society, that it would be accepted and respected because it shared many of the virtues the Romans had long admired among the Greeks. In other

words, Josephus was hoping that Roman cultural and religious pluralism would be large enough to embrace the Jews and their religion. The problem, however, was that the pluralistic sentiment did not run the other way. Josephus was unwilling to compromise what he understood to be essential elements in Judaism in order to bridge the gap between “inside” and “outside.” Fundamental among these elements was monotheism. The difference between Jew and Gentile was, for Josephus, a real one. He neither ignored it nor dismissed it. Everyone knew better. However, syncretism of the kind needed to fully assimilate Judaism into the Roman world was not possible. This would prove to be the deal-breaker. “Jewish faith bred an anti-social clannishness which in turn cast suspicion on them *as citizens*.”¹¹³ Yet Josephus hoped he could get around this by emphasizing the good qualities that already existed within his people. Josephus hoped to present a broader picture of Judaism which revealed that it was consonant with peoples the Romans already admired and accepted.

¹¹³ J. Daniel, ‘Anti-Semitism’, 58.

CHAPTER 5
JEWISH ETHNICITY IN JOSEPHUS' *BELLUM JUDAICUM*

The *Bellum Judaicum* and the Greek Tradition of Historiography

In his first literary work, the *Bellum Judaicum*, Josephus consciously stepped into the world of Greek historiography and crafted a narrative that not only read or sounded like Greek history, but that also portrayed the Jews as being a people similar in many ways to the ancient Greeks. Scholarship on Josephus has long explored his use of Greek models in it. Some scholars (e.g. Hölischer, Bilde, Horsley, Feldman) have suggested that Josephus' use of these models is merely formal and conventional, but others (e.g., Shutt, Mader) have argued that it is functional. If the use of these models is simply conventional, then it remains to explain why they *had* to be used at all. Of course it is certainly possible, even probable, that this is part of a strategy to win an initial reading of his account. After all, why would a Greek or Roman reader be inclined to read something written in a mode foreign to them? It would be much better to tell the story in a way that did not tax the reader up front. Furthermore, all historians after the classical period felt compelled to imitate Herodotus and especially Thucydides to some extent. Marincola notes that

the literary tradition of classical antiquity—including the writing of history—was conservative and, ... had as its central technique the employment of *mimesis*, the creative imitation of one's predecessors. The idea that one should imitate one's great predecessors, and look to them for the proper way to treat almost any task is a fundamental aspect of ancient literary creation and criticism. Already established by the fourth century BC, imitation of one's predecessors never ceased to exert an influence on ancient writers of both poetry and prose.¹

However, mere use of traditional vocabulary or imitation of style was not enough. "... the writer must appropriate the spirit of his model or models and breathe new life into them the goal of ancient composition was not to strike out boldly in a radical departure from one's predecessors, but rather to be incrementally innovative within a tradition, by embracing the best in previous

¹ Pp.12-13.

performers and adding something of one's own marked with an individual stamp.”² There is ample evidence that Josephus was aware of what good Greek history was supposed to look like, and yet it is also clear that Josephus did not simply go about his work in a merely mechanical way.³ He even stated explicitly that he was aware of the “rules” for the production of a proper historical account. In *Bellum Judaicum* 5.20, while lamenting the fate of Jerusalem, Josephus says ἀλλὰ καθεκτέον γὰρ καὶ τὰ πάθη τῷ νόμῳ τῆς γραφῆς ὡς οὐκ ὀλοφυρμῶν οἰκείων ὁ καιρός ἀλλ’ ἀφηγήσεως πραγμάτων (“but it is necessary by the rule of composition to refrain from such emotions, as not being the time for personal lamentations but the narrating of events”). In other words, he followed the models, but not slavishly, and gave his own personal cast to the work.

Precisely how much of this modeling and borrowing was due to Josephus himself has been debated, for, as I have noted, he admits that he had help with Greek composition. Some modern scholars have gone as far as to suggest that Josephus’ literary assistants were responsible for much of the finished result. Thackeray believed that these “hacks” (as he calls them) were trained in the Thucydidean school which is mentioned by Cicero and Lucian⁴ and were therefore responsible for the good Atticistic style of the work, although they were, in Thackeray’s opinion, far inferior in style to the master, Thucydides. Thackeray even thought he could distinguish different assistants in different parts of the *Antiquities*.⁵ This may be more than the evidence can bear, for style is a difficult criteria to define and use in source criticism. Shutt correctly observes that Josephus’ statement about “assistants with the Greek language” does not mean that Josephus was mostly ignorant of the language and that the assistants therefore basically did much of the

² Marincola 14.

³ This was established in Attridge’s dissertation.

⁴ Cic. *Orat.* 9.30; Lucianus *Hist. Conscr.* 15.21-3.

⁵ *Josephus: The Man and the Historian* 107-116.

actual composition, but that Josephus was conversant in the vernacular Koine and simply needed help in producing a more refined, polished written Greek in the Atticistic style.⁶ Even with help, Josephus was the final judge of what was produced under his name, and the thoroughly Greek cast of the work was still ultimately the product of its author. As Rajak has noted, “It would be rash . . . to suppose that he would not be fit, when eventually he came to the Greek *War*, at the very least to collaborate fruitfully with his assistants, and to take the ultimate responsibility for substance and style alike.”⁷

There is a sense in which war was the first, and always the greatest, theme of Greek historiography. This goes back to the epic tradition institutionalized in Homer’s *Iliad*, and it is also the main theme in Herodotus (the Persian War), Xenophon (the expedition of Cyrus), Thucydides (the Peloponnesian War), and Polybius (the Roman conquest of Greece). Similarly, the conflict of Greeks versus barbarians, or east versus west (Herodotus), became emphatic aspects of the typical narrative. The treatment of warfare never lost sight of its epic roots, and by the first century CE there was an observable “intermeshing between historical narratives and epic in the area of warfare.”⁸ Josephus’ use of Greek historiographical models for the account of a great war can be understood as a facet of his program of building a Greek-looking ethnicity for Jews. Rajak recognizes this when she notes that “what is striking and even bold in Josephus is the very fact that he had introduced a distinctive Jewish interpretation into a political history which is fully Greek in form, juxtaposing the two approaches.”⁹ The fact that the Jews had participated in a war that was billed by the Flavian dynasty as one of the greatest wars of recent

⁶ Pp.59-68.

⁷ *Josephus: The Historian and His Society* 62-3.

⁸ R. Ash, ‘Epic Encounters? Ancient Historical Battle Narratives and the Epic Tradition’, in *Clio and the Poets: Augustan Poetry and the Traditions of Ancient Historiography* (Mnemosyne 224, Leiden 2002) 255.

⁹ *Josephus: The Historian and His Society* 79.

memory naturally presented Josephus with an opportunity to compare the Jews and the Greeks in their experience of an epic war. His choice to write on the theme of a great war also had a direct relationship with his agenda of ethnicity-building, because “War defines oppositions between one subject group and others, and between a collective self and a collective enemy. It is the most extreme form of realizing identity and otherness.”¹⁰ Josephus’ account, which explicitly aimed to correct then-current interpretations of the war, would attack head-on the idea that most Jews were confirmed enemies of Hellenistic culture and Roman society. In effect, he would use a story about a conflict to disarm the perceptions of cultural hostilities that the conflict had produced.

In the ancient Roman culture of honor and shame, character and credibility went hand-in-hand, and an historian’s credibility rested to a large extent on the public perception of his own character. It is not surprising, therefore, that Josephus engages in what appears to us today to be an inordinate amount of self-flattery for the purpose of establishing his own authority and thus the authority of his account. Josephus no doubt saw himself (or at least saw an opportunity to portray himself) as similar to noted Greek historians and thus as standing in a legitimate role as a Greek historiographer. For example, both Thucydides and Josephus were commanders in the war in which they participated, both lost the engagements in which they were involved, and both received the criticism of their fellow-countrymen for it.¹¹ Concerning Polybius and Josephus, both men served in military positions in their own home countries, both came under the protective sponsorship of powerful Roman families, both witnessed the destruction of great cities

¹⁰ T. Hölscher 4.

¹¹ It is a curious coincidence that many Greek historiographers were exiles from their own cities: Herodotus, Thucydides, Ctesias, Theopompus, Philoistus, Timaeus, Polybius, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Posidonius. A. Momigliano, ‘Greek Historiography’, *History and Theory* 17 (1978) 9. To this list we may add Josephus.

that were dear to them (Corinth and Jerusalem), and both wrote histories concentrating on Roman power in which they defended their own behavior.¹² Concerning Xenophon and Josephus, both served as military leaders (neither of high rank), both served a foreign army (albeit in different capacities), both witnessed a decisive military engagement in their day, both wrote an account of their experiences, and both had to deal with the image of being a traitor.¹³ It is likely that Josephus realized that his own experiences had paralleled many of the experiences of the great Greek soldier-historians and that he stood in an ideal position to write the account of the Jewish War.

In the course of the account Josephus presented himself as an ideal general who had the status of a hero among the Jews, whose capture all but guaranteed Roman victory, and whom Vespasian praised as “the most sagacious of his enemies.”¹⁴ The need for this characterization was exacerbated in Josephus’ case by the fact that he had a personal detractor, Justus of Tiberias, who had also written an account of the war that portrayed Josephus as the enemy of Rome.¹⁵ However, Josephus was also consciously following the Greek historiographical tradition by presenting himself so positively. S. Cohen has noted that Josephus’ self-portrayals follow familiar Greek models.¹⁶ His self-description mirrors the kinds of stock descriptions of good

¹² Eckstein 175.

¹³ There are, of course, significant differences between the two. Xenophon witnessed a battle fought on a battlefield (Cunaxa), whereas Josephus witnessed the siege of a city (Jerusalem). Xenophon claims that when he joined the expedition of Cyrus, he did not know its purpose. When Josephus joined the Roman side, however, it was because he was convinced that God was on the side of the Romans. In a twist of irony, Josephus says that in his case, it was the Romans who were ignorant of the nature of the fight they entered. Also, Xenophon fights his way back home, but Josephus remains in Rome.

¹⁴ *BJ* 2.568, 3.143-4, 341, 435-6; Attridge, ‘Josephus and His Works’, 188.

¹⁵ Josephus’ response to Justus appears in *Vit.* 1:336-67.

¹⁶ S. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome* 91-7.

generals found in authors such as Cicero and Onasander,¹⁷ and he attributes to himself the use of the same kinds of military tactics that are described in Thucydides, Herodotus, and other sources. For example, raising the height of the walls and erecting animal-skin coverings over his men (*BJ* 3.171-4) was done at Plataea in the Peloponnesian War (Th. 2.75), and hanging out wet objects to make the enemy think the defenders have plenty of water inside the city (*BJ* 3.186-9) was done by Thrasybulus of Miletus (Hdt. 1.21.1–22.3). S. Cohen puts all of this down to Josephus' ego and claims that it was counter to Josephus' apologetic purpose.¹⁸ I would suggest, however, that two other considerations apply here. First, Josephus was engaging in an aspect of the Greek tradition by his self-advertisement. "That the ancient historian was concerned with his own fame and wrote history to achieve renown is not to be doubted."¹⁹ Second, this characterization formed the perfect complement to his presentation of his own people, the Jews, as similar to the ancient Greeks in this experience. Just as the Greeks had a tradition of war and great historians, so the Jews had the First Jewish War and Josephus.

From a literary point of view, Josephus stood in a great stream of tradition of prose Hellenic historiography, and he consciously incorporated many conventions from that tradition into his own history. This was recognized as early as the fourth century CE, when Jerome described Josephus as "the Greek Livy."²⁰ Casting stories in Greek molds for the benefit of Greek readers was part of this tradition, traceable back to Xanthus.²¹ In particular, authors of histories regularly acquainted themselves with the histories of other authors and felt obliged to

¹⁷ Cic. *De Imperio Cn. Pompei* 13.36-48; Onasander 1.1, 2.2.

¹⁸ S. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome* 95-7.

¹⁹ Marincola 61. cf. A. Momigliano: "Adulation, rather than propaganda, was the insidious tempter of the classical historians" ('Tradition and the Classical Historian', *History and Theory* 11 (1972) 286).

²⁰ *Ep. XXII ad Eustochium*, 35.

²¹ Momigliano, 'Greek Historiography', 3.

imitate their style and work, but also to advance upon them in some way (including correcting them). As noted above, the ideal was to pay homage to the tradition and yet not be completely bound by it. It was also customary to offer some kind of criticism of one's predecessors and their treatment of events. This element in the historiographical tradition goes back to Hecataeus of Miletus, and was perhaps most famously sounded in Thucydides' criticism of Herodotus (1.20). Josephus engaged in all of these aspects of the tradition. He was acquainted with the works of Thucydides, Herodotus, Polybius, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Nicolaus of Damascus at a minimum—of whom the first three were considered the standard models for Hellenistic historians²² (although he specifically mentions none of them in the *Bellum Judaicum*). Yet he made it clear that he was also making an original contribution: φιλόπονος δὲ οὐχ ὁ μεταποιῶν οἰκονομίαν καὶ τάξιν ἀλλοτρίαν ἀλλ' ὁ μετὰ τοῦ καινὰ λέγειν καὶ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἱστορίας κατασκευάζων ἴδιον (“The industrious one is not he who remodels the arrangement and order of another but who, along with reporting new things, prepares his own body of history”).²³ He also complained that Greek historians had neglected Jewish history almost completely,²⁴ that he was aware of other histories of the Jewish War, and that he set out to correct what he thought were glaring inaccuracies in them.²⁵ This last complaint is, in fact, arguably the most emphatic theme in the introduction to the *Bellum Judaicum*, but it is also quite Thucydidean as well, since Thucydides registered the same kinds of complaints about the historian Hellanicus.²⁶

²² Momigliano, ‘Tradition and the Classical Historian’, 280.

²³ *BJ* 1.15.

²⁴ *BJ* 1.13.

²⁵ *BJ* 1.1, 6-9.

²⁶ 1.97.

Another part of the Greek historiographical tradition was an ongoing debate over the value and purpose of history,²⁷ whether it was for entertainment or for a didactic purpose. A didactic purpose required accuracy and emphasis on truth, whereas history as entertainment participated in conventions from tragedy (paradox, crisis, suspense, intervention of the gods, myth, etc.). Thucydides was considered the model for didactic history, and later also Polybius. Herodotus was more the story-teller, but Cicero called him “the father of history” because he was the first to differentiate clearly between myth and history in his account, and his expressed aim was to preserve the memory of the glorious deeds of the past: ὡς μήτε τὰ γεινόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, τὰ μὲν Ἕλλησι τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα ἀκλεᾶ γένηται (“so that the things done by men might not be forgotten in time, nor the great and marvelous works, some displayed by the Greeks and some by the barbarians, might become inglorious”).²⁸ In good Herodotean style, Josephus claims κἀγὼ ... τὴν μνήμην τῶν κατορθωμάτων ἀνατίθημι (“I am setting forth the memorial of great achievements”). However, the Greek historiographical tradition was strongly indebted to Greek tragedy from Herodotus onwards, and this element of it never disappeared.²⁹ Therefore, although Josephus stated that his account of the Jewish war was not designed for entertainment, but for those who seriously wished to know the facts about it,³⁰ he did not ignore the rhetorical, dramatic side of history-writing. Eusebius had long ago recognized the tragic nature of the Josephus’ account of Herod,³¹ and G. M. Paul noted that Josephus used past unreal conditional sentences, probably imitated from Homer and introducing an unexpected event that dramatically reverses the situation in the

²⁷ Momigliano, ‘Tradition and the Classical Historian’, 291.

²⁸ Hdt. 1.1.

²⁹ These two aims are not necessarily exclusive, as Rhodes has noted (p.166).

³⁰ *BJ* 1.6, 16.

³¹ He calls it a τραγικὴ δραματουργία in *H.E.* 1.8. Thackeray notes several dramatic elements in that story in his preface to the Loeb edition of Josephus, II xvi-xvii.

narrative, in order “to present Titus in particular in a dramatic way.”³² Chapman has shown that Josephus employed the device of spectacle and the language of Greek tragedy to describe the siege of Jerusalem and other stories in his account,³³ and R. Hall has demonstrated a correspondence between Josephus’ method in the *Contra Apionem* and the canons of Roman rhetorical inquiry.³⁴

As the Greek tradition of historiography developed, there came to be an emphasis on contemporary history. Even those who wrote about the ancient past brought the narrative down to their present day. There developed a general reluctance to re-hash what others had already said about the past because of the belief that the past was unavailable historically. The difference between heroic and historical times was basically introduced by the work of Hecataeus. This distinction was already accepted and assumed by the time of Herodotus, and an emphasis on contemporary history began in earnest with Thucydides. There came to be a realization that the past was, in a real sense, beyond the historian’s grasp and therefore there was nothing new to add. Opportunity and fame as a historian lay instead in writing on new things. Of course, Josephus wrote of a war that happened within his own lifetime and within his own experience. He sharply criticized Greek historians who had neglected such a great war in favor of simply re-hashing the histories of older times, some for which they had no data.³⁵

³² G. M. Paul, ‘The Presentation of Titus in the “Jewish War” of Josephus: Two Aspects’, *Phoenix* 47 (1993) 57.

³³ H. Chapman, ‘Spectacle and Theater in Josephus’ *Bellum Judaicum*’ (PhD Diss. Stanford University 1998).

³⁴ R. Hall, ‘Josephus, *Contra Apionem* and Historical Inquiry in the Roman Rhetorical Schools’, in L. Feldman and J. Levison (eds.), *Josephus’ Contra Apionem: Studies in Its Character and Context with a Latin Concordance to the Portion Missing in Greek* (Leiden 1996) 229-49.

³⁵ *BJ* 1.14-16.

The craft of the ancient historian lay in the discernment and description of change and its causes. This theme fascinated the ancients of the classical world, especially the Ionian pre-Socratic philosophers. Behind all things they searched for the underlying principles and causes. This quest for identifying causes of historical events appeared prominently in Herodotus and Thucydides, but was well-alive in later Greek historians also. In fact, the themes of change and war often went hand-in-hand, because wars were often the means by which great societal changes were effected.³⁶ Accordingly, Josephus' choice of a war as the subject of his first book was thus a natural foray into Greek historiography, and he spent a large section of his account (1.1-2.283, or 956 sections of the text as it has come to be divided) describing the political context that, in his view, led to the First Jewish War.³⁷ Josephus' descriptions of the several smaller events that cumulatively led to the great revolt cannot help but remind us of the same kind of presentation in Thucydides.

Another fascination for the Greek historians was foreign lands and peoples. The ethnographic emphasis in the tradition goes back to Homer's *Odyssey* and is prominent also in the travel digressions in Hecataeus, Herodotus, and Theopompus. However, it was the Greek experience of war against foreign enemies that brought the differences between Greeks and barbarians into sharpest focus. What was essentially Greek became clearer through the exploration of the customs, laws, and governments of other peoples, and through the accounts of conflict with them, so this element of the tradition served a role in the construction, or affirmation, of Greek ethnicity. Similarly, Josephus acted as if his Greek and Roman readers

³⁶ Momigliano, 'Tradition and the Classical Historian', 283.

³⁷ In fact, Josephus seems to have been especially aware of the complex nature of the causes of this war. Bilde, 'The Causes of the Jewish War', 197-202.

were naturally interested in matters of Jewish history,³⁸ which was probably a rhetorical touch on his part. The assumption, however, bought into the paradigm neatly. It added to the sense that one was reading legitimate Greek historiography.

Literary artistry was considered another hallmark of proper Greek history-writing. It remained that good, respectable history was first and foremost supposed to be factual and truthful, yet all historians felt the need for their accounts to be written in a way that was engaging (following the high style of Thucydides). Josephus explicitly distanced himself from merely rhetorical accounts in *Bellum Judaicum* 1.1, where he spoke of other accounts that had been written “sophistically” (σοφιστικῶς). Some modern scholars would judge this to be mere lip-service on Josephus’ part, since his account is fairly heavy with rhetorical flourishes.³⁹ However, it is not the truth of the claim that is ultimately important, but the impression that claim makes on the reader. In this same vein, Josephus was also careful to note in *Bellum Judaicum* 1.13-14 that excellence of literary style ought not be the primary standard of good history either. In fact, in that passage Josephus implicitly compares his own account with the accounts of the classical historians, and against contemporary Greek authors. In doing so he was participating in the Roman practice, noted before, of distinguishing between the noble Greeks of the past and contemporary Greeks of lesser achievements, and comparing himself favorably with the former.

The personal observation of what was studied (autopsy), participation in the events one narrated, or having seen sites personally was considered a requirement for any Greek historian who wished to be judged as competent. Thucydides had participated in the Peloponnesian War, and Polybius experienced Roman conquest himself and even claimed to have visited the site

³⁸ *BJ* 1.3, 16; cf. *AJ* 1.9.

³⁹ Cf. S. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, 90: “BJ is a good representative of rhetorical historiography.”

where Hannibal crossed the Alps. This emphasis on eyewitness testimony was another part of the tradition's heritage from Greek pre-Socratic philosophy. In good Greek fashion, Josephus thus placed his claim to be an eyewitness at the front of his account: Ἰώσηπος Ματθίου παῖς ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεύς αὐτός τε Ῥωμαίους πολεμήσας τὰ πρῶτα καὶ τοῖς ὕστερον παρατυχῶν ἐξ ἀνάγκης (“I myself, Joseph son of Matthias, a priest from Jerusalem, fought the Romans at first and was forced to be present for what happened later”).⁴⁰ Similarly, a good historian was expected to maintain some semblance of neutrality and objectivity and refrain from excesses of either praise or blame in his account. This is evident as early as Homer. Similarly, in Herodotus barbarians are generally portrayed sympathetically, not as inherently evil. In keeping with this aspect of the tradition, Josephus presented his claim to objectivity in *Bellum Judaicum* 1.9: Οὐ μὴν ἐγὼ τοῖς ἐπαίρουσι τὰ Ῥωμαίων ἀντιφιλονεικῶν αὔξειν τὰ τῶν ὁμοφύλων διέγνων ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν ἔργα μετ’ ἀκριβείας ἀμφοτέρων διέξειμι (“Now I have resolved not to magnify the deeds of my countrymen out of jealousy against those who exalt the Roman deeds, but I am recounting the deeds of both with accuracy”).

There is, in Greek historiography, a precedent for establishing the authority of the historical account in some way. Marincola observes that whereas in myth the authority is guaranteed by the muse, in history the authority is vouchsafed by the author himself.⁴¹ How this was achieved in practice varied. Herodotus constantly appears in the first person in his narrative to provide testimony to what is presented, but Thucydides rarely interjects himself into his account. His method instead was instead to write a seamless account that has the appearance of being *the* presentation of the facts. “The narrative homogeneity of Thucydides is meant to inspire

⁴⁰ *BJ* 1.3.

⁴¹ Pp.4-5.

confidence.”⁴² Polybius appears as a mixture of these two methods. “The Polybian narrator combines a largely unobtrusive narrative of the deeds with a highly intrusive explicator of that narrative.”⁴³ Close to Thucydides’ method was Xenophon, who is so unobtrusive in his *Anabasis* as to be nearly anonymous.⁴⁴ Josephus followed a path somewhere between that of Xenophon and Polybius. Outside of the introduction to the *Bellum Judaicum*, Josephus does not often speak in the first person. He preferred, like Xenophon, to treat himself in the third person as a true character in the narrative. Yet Josephus was not adverse to interjecting explanations and comments, like Polybius, and thus presented himself as the fairly typical Greek author.

While the foregoing discussion does not exhaust the list of things that were common to, or defined, Greek historiography, it shows that Josephus was consciously tapping into that tradition. No educated reader in his day would have missed the fact that Josephus was presenting his account according to the standard form for Greek historiography. Given the circumstances in which Josephus wrote (specifically, the anti-Jewish climate), and the thorough-going nature of his use of these models, surely more was involved in the *Bellum Judaicum* than an author paying lip-service to a literary genre. My contention is that Josephus saw in the use of the paradigm of Greek historiography a way of fitting the Jews into the larger, well-accepted cultural paradigm of the ancient noble Greeks.

Josephus went beyond adopting the formal elements of the Greek historiographical tradition. He also adopted specific situations from it as types for his presentation of the Jews. For example, he adopted from Herodotus the paradigm of a clash between a superpower and an underdog. For Herodotus, the superpower was Persia, who threatened the Greek homeland and

⁴² Marincola 9.

⁴³ Marincola 10.

⁴⁴ Marincola 10.

its smaller forces. Polybius engaged this same paradigm as he chronicled the rise of Rome over the Greek states, arguing that resistance was futile and Roman domination was inevitable. For Josephus the superpower is Rome, and the underdog is the Palestinian Jews. There was some of this in Thucydides as well, in the well-known Melian dialogue in 5.17 of his *History*. There the Athenians demanded that the island of Melos capitulate to them, underscoring their demand with a reminder that the Athenians possessed the greater military force on that occasion. The Athenians portrayed themselves as a much greater power which the Melians could never withstand. The dialogue there was echoed in the speech which Josephus himself delivered to the Jerusalem Jews, on behalf of the Romans, in *Bellum Judaicum* 5.367. Another example appears in *Bellum Judaicum* 1.373ff, where Josephus has Herod making a speech to his troops who were discouraged over a military defeat and the havoc wreaked by an earthquake. This is similar to the scene in Thucydides (2.60ff) where Pericles delivered a speech to the Athenians after they had suffered invasion of their homeland and a devastating plague.⁴⁵ Also, the account of the report of the news that Jotapata had fallen to the Romans⁴⁶ is reminiscent of the account in Thucydides (8.1) of the failure of the Sicilian expedition,⁴⁷ and Josephus' description of the nature of the *στάσις* in Jerusalem "is clearly inspired by" Thucydides' description of the *στάσις* in Corcyra (3.82f).⁴⁸ In fact, Mader has argued that Thucydides' narrative of the Corcyrean affair "shimmers like a subtext through *BJ* often enough to suggest that it provides a stable point of reference."⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Thackeray notes this in vol. 2 of the Loeb edition of Josephus, p. xvii, as does Mader 6.

⁴⁶ *BJ* 3.432.

⁴⁷ Thackeray's Loeb edition, II xvii. This kind of borrowing also appears in the *AJ*, where the description of Herod's disease (17.167ff) closely follows Thucydides' description of the symptoms of those who suffered in the plague in Athens (Th. 2.49.2-6). D. Ladouceur, 'The Death of Herod the Great', *CP* 76 (1981) 28-30.

⁴⁸ Eckstein 178.

⁴⁹ Mader 56.

More specific examples are available. It is well-known that the *Bellum Judaicum* has several clear verbal or paradigmatic echoes of Thucydides' *History*, so much so that recent treatments of Josephus no longer bother to cite the parallels. It is useful for the present study, however, to rehearse some of these briefly. There are close verbal parallels as Josephus gives an overview of the political context of the war:

Thucydides	Josephus <i>Bellum Judaicum</i>
<p>1.1 . . . ἀκμάζοντές τε ἦσαν ἐς αὐτὸν ἀμφοτέροι παρασκευῇ τῇ πάσῃ καὶ τὸ ἄλλο Ἑλληνικὸν ὄρων ξυνιστάμενον πρὸς ἐκατέρους τὸ μὲν ἐυθύς, τὸ δὲ καὶ διανοοῦμενον. κίνησις γὰρ αὕτη δὴ μεγίστη τοῖς Ἑλλησιν ἐγένετο μέρει τινὶ τῶν βαρβάρων,</p> <p>(“ . . . both sides were complete in all the preparations for it, and seeing the other Greeks united against the others, some immediately, others contemplating it. Indeed this was the greatest uproar among the Greeks and among a certain part of the barbarians”)</p>	<p>1.4 γενομένου γὰρ ὡς ἔφην μεγίστου τοῦδε τοῦ κινήματος ἐν Ῥωμαίοις μὲν ἐνόσει τὰ οἰκεῖα Ἰουδαίων δὲ τὸ νεωτερίζον τότε τεταραγμένοις ἐπανέστη τοῖς καιροῖς ἀκμάζον.</p> <p>(“For when, as I said, this greatest of uproars happened, of the internal affairs of the Romans were in disorder, and the revolutionary party of the Jews then arose and flourished when the times were ripe.”)</p>

A few more verbal similarities appear as both authors claim that the war of which they wrote was the greatest in the world's history:

Thucydides	Josephus <i>Bellum Judaicum</i>
<p>1.2 κίνησις γὰρ αὕτη δὴ μεγίστη τοῖς Ἑλλησιν ἐγένετο μέρει τινὶ τῶν βαρβάρων, ὡς δὲ εἰπεῖν καὶ ἐπὶ πλείστον ἀνθρώπων. τὰ γὰρ πρὸ αὐτῶν καὶ τὰ ἔτι παλαιότερα σαθῶς μὲν εὔρειν διὰ χρόνου πλήθος ἀδύνατον ἦν, ἐκ δὲ τεκμηρίων ὧν ἐπὶ μακρότατον σκοποῦντί μοι πιστεῦσαι ξυμβαίνει, οὐ μέγιστα νομίζω γενέσθαι οὔτε κατὰ τοὺς πολέμους οὔτε ἐς τὰ ἄλλα.</p> <p>(“For this was the greatest upheaval that happened among the Greeks, and among a certain part of the barbarians, and as one might say, the majority of mankind. For it has been impossible to discern the full picture, because of the passing of time, concerning the things</p>	<p>1.1 Ἐπειδὴ τὸν Ἰουδαίων πρὸς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον συστάντα μέγιστον οὐ μόνον τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ ὧν ἀκοῇ παρειλήφραμεν ἢ πόλεων πρὸς πόλεις ἢ ἐθνῶν ἔθνεσι συρραγέντων</p> <p>(“Since the war of the Jews with the Romans has been the greatest ever engaged, not only of those that have been in our times, but nearly of all those that we have heard of; either of those of cities fighting against cities, or nations against nations”)</p>

before these events and the more ancient things; but by my considering proofs to the fullest extent it has turned out that I have come to believe that I do not think greater things have happened either in wars or other things.”).

Thackeray lists six more cases where it is clear that Josephus has borrowed the vocabulary of Thucydides, nine cases of verbal indebtedness to Herodotus, six for Xenophon, six for Demosthenes, and others for Homer, Sophocles, and Virgil.⁵⁰

As for paradigmatic parallels, Josephus follows Thucydides in claiming that his account rises above the normal tendencies of exaggeration and only reports the truth:

1.21.2 καὶ ὁ πόλεμος οὗτος, καίπερ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐν ᾧ μὲν ἂν πολεμῶσι τὸν παρόντα αἰεὶ μέγιστον κρινόντων, παυσαμένων δὲ τὰ ἀρξαιᾶ μᾶλλον θαυμαζόντων, ἀπ’ αὐτῶν τῶν ἔργων σκποῦσι δηλώσει ὅμως μείζων γεγενημένος αὐτῶν.

(“And so this war, although the men who fight in it always judge it to be the greatest one, and when it is over they wonder more at earlier ones, from observation of their deeds it will be clear that it was much greater than those that happened before.”)

1.2, 12 οἱ παραγενόμενοι δὲ ἢ κολακεία τῇ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους ἢ μίσει τῷ πρὸς Ἰουδαίους καταψεύδονται τῶν πραγμάτων περιέχει δὲ αὐτοῖς ὅπου μὲν κατηγορίαν ὅπου δὲ ἐγκώμιον τὰ συγγράμματα τὸ δ’ ἀκριβὲς τῆς ἱστορίας οὐδαμοῦ . . . τὰ γούνη πάντων ἀπ’ αἰῶνος ἀτυχήματα πρὸς τὰ Ἰουδαίων ἡττηθῆναι δοκῶ κατὰ σύγκρισιν.

(“Those who were present, either for flattery to the Romans or for hatred against the Jews, lie about the events, and the things written by them contain either accusation or encomium, but nowhere the historical truth. . . . The misfortunes of all men from the beginning of the world seems to me to be inferior, by comparison, to those of the Jews.”)

And in a similar way Josephus follows Thucydides in defending the writing of a factual account that may read dryly over an account written for entertainment:

⁵⁰ Loeb edition, II xvii.

1.22.4 καὶ ἐς μὲν ἀκρόασιν ἴσως τὸ μὴ μυθῶδες αὐτῶν ἀτερπεστερον φαίνεται· ὅσοι δὲ βουλήσονται τῶν τε γενομένων τὸ σαφὲς σκοπεῖν καὶ τῶν μελλόντων ποτὲ αἰθίς κατὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον τοιούτων καὶ παραπλησίων ἔσεσθαι, ὠφέλιμα κρίνειν αὐτὰ ἀρκούτως ἔξει. κτῆμὰ τε ἐς αἰεὶ μᾶλλον ἢ ἀγώνισμα ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα ἀκούειν ξύγκειται.

(“ . . . And likewise the lack of what is mythological will appear, to the hearing, boring; but if as many as wish to know the exact truth about the things that have happened, and of such things and similar things that will happen again according to human experience, judge these things to be beneficial, it will be enough. It has been written as a possession for all time rather than as a show-piece for momentary hearing.”)

1.15-16, 30 τό γε μὴν μνήμη τὰ προῖστορηθέντα διδόναι καὶ τὰ τῶν ἰδίων χρόνων τοῖς μετ’ αὐτὸν συνιστάνειν ἐπαίνου καὶ μαρτυρίας ἄξιον . . . τιμάσθω δὴ παρ’ ἡμῖν τὸ τῆς ἱστορίας ἀληθές ἐπεὶ παρ’ Ἑλλησιν ἡμέληται . . . γε τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἀγαπῶσιν ἀλλὰ μὴ πρὸς ἡδονὴν ἀνέγραψα.

(“Offering the memory of what has not been previously recorded, and putting together the affairs of one's own time for those who come afterward, is a task worthy of praise and declaration. . . . Yet let that which is true in history be preferred by us, since it has been neglected among the Greeks . . . and I have written it for those who love the truth but not for those who love pleasure.”)

Mader notes additional correspondences in *Bellum Judaicum* 4.131-4 (= Th. 3.82-3), 4.319-21 (= Th. 2.65), 5.367 (= Th. 1.72.2 and 5.105.2), and 6.136-40 (= Th. 7.44).⁵¹ E. Stein has catalogued allusions to Greek authors at the rate of between two and four allusions per page in the *Bellum Judaicum*,⁵² and Drüner's examination of the evidence led him to conclude that Josephus' use of Thucydides was deliberate.⁵³

It is possible that Thucydides served as more than a verbal or paradigmatic template for Josephus, because aspects of ethnicity also played a role in Thucydides' presentation of the war. Price notes that “ . . . the Hellenes fighting the war engaged in radical redefinition of the entity Hellas, to which they all claimed proprietary rights in a way which excluded their opponents.”⁵⁴ This is typical of how ethnicities are constructed, especially for imperialists. To say that

⁵¹ P.6.

⁵² Pp.58-68.

⁵³ P.34.

⁵⁴ J. Price, *Thucydides and Internal War* (Cambridge 2001) 328.

Josephus saw this feature of Thucydides' work and adopted it for his own ends might beg the question of how much Josephus actually knew and understood the *History*. However, the consensus of modern scholarship is that Josephus was himself well acquainted with the work of Thucydides,⁵⁵ and it is not inconceivable that this feature of the *History* was not lost on Josephus. At the very least it shows that Josephus' purpose was not inherently contradictory to his models and therefore it was not out of line for Josephus to use Thucydides as a model for describing a war in which cultural identity played a role.

Eckstein thinks Josephus used Polybius as his primary model.⁵⁶ He argues that Josephus used Polybius on both the conceptual and the verbal levels. Specifically, Josephus' description of the Roman army in *Bellum Judaicum* 3.70-109 (which contributes nothing to the narrative itself) draws heavily on Polybius' description in 6.19-42. Josephus emphasizes the importance of a historian having political and military experience and being an eyewitness to and participant in the things he relates; he is willing to overlook the failure of another historian to tell all the truth of a matter; he is willing to tell the whole story even though it may prove embarrassing to his own people; he is conscious that his emotional involvement in the story he relates may interfere with the proper telling of history; he blames the loss of the conflict on the ineptness of some of his own fellow-countrymen; he writes about a conflict that engulfs the entire Mediterranean basin; he writes contemporary history (in the *Bellum Judaicum*); he provides a table of contents at the beginning of the work; he writes for those who "are lovers of truth"; he has a resignation and a conciliatory tone towards Rome and its power; he blames the irrational youth of some of his countrymen for the start of the war; he appeals to τύχη as a factor in the rise of Rome's

⁵⁵ Mader 5.

⁵⁶ P.207. Similarly, Petersen (266-72) has suggested that in six places in the *AJ* where Josephus claims that a topic has been covered, when in fact it has not (*AJ* 12.390; 13:36, 61, 108, 119, and 186), the referent is to coverage in Polybius.

prominence, and he says that that Roman success was inevitable. All of these features of the *Bellum Judaicum* have direct parallels in Polybius, and Eckstein argues that in some of them, Polybius can be the only model Josephus could have followed. He observes that “Polybius revealed to Josephus a good Hellenistic explanation of events, one that would obviously be acceptable to a Greek-speaking audience, and one that carried the additional advantage of exonerating much of the Jewish population from responsibility for the Revolt.”⁵⁷

Champion has shown that Polybius portrays the Romans as in keeping with the best traditions of the ancient Greeks. “Romans are incorporated as part of the Hellenic cultural commune, and Polybius presents them with didactic and admonitory lessons for preserving their polity in its optimal condition.”⁵⁸ Josephus, like Polybius, wrote to demonstrate that a group that had come to be hated by some (for Polybius, the Romans; for Josephus, the Jews) in fact exhibited some of the best ideals of that model of nobility, the ancient Greeks. Both authors were holding up a nation as worthy of respect and awe because of its affinities to Greek ideals. In doing so, both authors interjected ethnicity into their presentations.

Debate over whether Josephus’ primary model was Thucydides or Polybius is not crucial for this study. It is possible, if not likely, that no one author served as a *primary* model for the *Bellum Judaicum*. I have already noted that Josephus drew on a number of themes from several Greek historians. What is important is the *implication* of Josephus’ extensive use of Greek historical models. Are these examples simply a case of a later historian paying homage, through *mimesis*, to his literary predecessors according to Hellenistic convention? Or is there more to it than this? I suggest that Josephus wrote not simply to discourage anti-Jewish sentiment, but to make a positive statement about the Jews, and in doing so he tapped into a characteristic of

⁵⁷ P.93.

⁵⁸ C. Champion, *Cultural Politics in Polybius’ Histories* (Berkeley 2004) 99.

Greek historiography that was in vogue in his day. The remarks of Mader summarize the point well. After referring to a few of Josephus' uses of Thucydides and Polybius, Mader says:

Intertextual allusion of this kind is not just a matter of formal *ornatus*, but implies also an interpretive intent: Josephus by invoking recognizable frames and models suggests analogies and parallels in a manner which would engage his Greco-Roman readers in their own cultural terms, and which thus adds subtle nuance to his narrative. From this perspective the 'Hellenizing glass' serves as a medium for implied authorial comment, predisposing the reader to a particular interpretation of the historical data.⁵⁹

In light of the fact that the Jews of the first century were struggling for acceptance in the wider Hellenistic culture, and that Josephus was writing for the Greek-speaking world of his day, it would seem that more than *mimesis* is going on here. Josephus is instead characterizing. These phenomena suggest that Josephus had a purpose in mind for how he wanted his account, and the people in it, to be understood.⁶⁰ The clear echoes from the opening of Thucydides' *Histories* immediately brings the reader to think of the conflict of the ancient Greeks and the story in the *Bellum Judaicum* in the same terms, and to see the people (the Jews) of the *Bellum Judaicum* as in some way parallel to the ancient Greeks. This becomes even more apparent in light of the fact that this frequent use of the Greek historiographical tradition was not consistent across Josephus' writings. In particular, his *Antiquities* have an observable "Isocratean-Dioysian slant," whereas the *Bellum Judaicum* has "a conscious Thucydidean-Polybian orientation."⁶¹ The use of the Thucydidean-Polybian model in the *Bellum Judaicum* seems to be deliberate and suggests that it was designed to invite implicit comparison between Josephus' subject and that of Thucydides. As Mader notes, "Josephus brings to bear the classical categories ... on his Jewish narrative apparently with an eye to informed readers (Greeks, Romans, Hellenized Jews) and in a manner

⁵⁹ P.9; he alludes to Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and His Society*, 103. Although Mader is arguing for a different use of the Greek historiographical tradition than we are arguing in this paper, he bases his approach on this same intertextual phenomenon.

⁶⁰ Cf. Mader 5.

⁶¹ Attridge, 'The Interpretation of Biblical History', 44-50.

that activates prior knowledge and associations, and so steers (or at least potentially affects) reader-response through allusion to common frames of reference”⁶² Whereas Mader suggests that Josephus’ use of Thucydides and the Greek historiographical tradition in general serves to give the impression of rationality to an account that is really nothing more than subjective polemic,⁶³ I suggest that Josephus’ employment of that tradition alternately, or additionally, served to provide an ethnicity for Hellenistic Jews.

Some Greek Elements Within the *Bellum Judaicum*

Is there anything to which we might look in Josephus that would demonstrate that Josephus’ wrote with a specifically ethnic slant or purpose? Three examples stand out. First, as noted above, Josephus, like his model Polybius, appeals to τύχη⁶⁴ as a factor in Rome’s success. In fact, τύχη appears twenty-two times in the narrative. In *Bellum Judaicum* 1.45 Josephus reports that πλήθει δὲ ὑπερέχοντες οἱ βασιλικοὶ καὶ δεξιᾶ χρησάμενοι τύχη κρατοῦσι (“the king’s forces, being larger and having luck on their side, were victorious”). For a Jewish writer, this is amazing for at least two reasons. First, Josephus tells us that the Pharisees ascribed all events to destiny and to God.⁶⁵ As a Pharisee, we would expect Josephus to have been satisfied with taking this course in explaining the Jewish defeat, but he was not. Second, Josephus’ introduction of τύχη into the account is amazing especially in light of the fact that Josephus had

⁶² Mader 8.

⁶³ Mader 4.

⁶⁴ τύχη came into Greek historiography through the influence of Greek tragedy. C. Fornara, *The Nature of History in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Berkeley 1983) 125-7.

⁶⁵ *BJ* 2.162. Greek: εἰμαρμένη τε καὶ θεῶ προσάπτουσι πάντα. Cf. *AJ* 13.172: οἱ μὲν οὖν Φαρισαῖοι τινὰ καὶ οὐ πάντα τῆς εἰμαρμένης ἔργον εἶναι λέγουσιν τινὰ δ’ ἐφ’ ἑαυτοῖς ὑπάρχειν συμβαίνειν τε καὶ μὴ γίνεσθαι (“The Pharisees say that some things, but not all things, are the work of fate, and some things happen by our own doing and do not come about [by fate]”); cf. 16.398. The two were perhaps not necessarily seen as exclusive, but understanding Josephus’ descriptions, and the relationship between these two forces, has proved difficult. Cf. G. Moore, ‘Schicksal und freier Wille in der jüdischen Philosophie bei Josephus’, in A. Schalit (ed.), *Zur Josephus-Forschung* (Wege der Forschung 84, Darmstadt 1973) 167-89.

another, competing factor in place in his account to explain the Roman victory at Jerusalem: the favor of the God of the Jews. It is a major theme in the *Bellum Judaicum* that the Jews lost the war because fanatical rebels angered God by their pollution of the temple, and thus God favored the Romans and gave them victory as punishment for the rebels' impiety. θεὸς δ' ἦν ἄρα ὁ Ἑρμαῖος τὰ Γαλιλαίων πάθη χαριζόμενος ("It was God favoring the Romans for the calamities of the Galileans").⁶⁶ Josephus himself warned the inhabitants of Jerusalem saying θεὸς ἄρα θεὸς αὐτὸς ἐπάγει μετὰ Ἑρμαίων κάθαρσιν αὐτῷ πῦρ καὶ τὴν τοσούτων μiasμάτων γέμουσαν πόλιν ἀναρπάζει ("It is indeed God, God himself, urging on with the Romans a cleansing fire for himself, and he is plucking up the city that is full of such defilements").⁶⁷ In fact, Josephus presented himself as the prophetic author of this explanation, for which reason the Romans spared his life at Jotapata. That is, Josephus presented this explanation as coming from God.

Now Josephus already had a perfectly good explanation for the Roman victory at Jerusalem, one that Jewish readers would have found to be perfectly orthodox, especially because a similar theology was found already in the canonical book of Jeremiah, which discussed the Babylonian destruction of the city.⁶⁸ Even for non-Jewish readers, the concept of the gods being on the side of the victor had a long history, going back to Homer, as part of the religious milieu of the ancient world. It would have made good sense to a non-Jewish reader if Josephus had left the matter as a case of victory by the help of a deity. Therefore Josephus did not need to tap into the concept of τύχη in order to explain the outcome of the war either to Jews

⁶⁶ *BJ* 3.293.

⁶⁷ *BJ* 6.110. He puts the same sentiment in the mouth of Agrippa II in 2.390-94.

⁶⁸ S. Cohen, 'Josephus, Jeremiah, and Polybius', *History and Theory* 21 (1982) 370-7.

or Gentiles. Yet Josephus added this element to his account, creating tension with the other explanations.⁶⁹ Why?

Perhaps Josephus thought that a theological explanation of the war's outcome would have been ultimately unsatisfying to his pagan readers. After all, Josephus presents the war not just as another war, but as an event comparable to the Peloponnesian War, a war that forever changed the world. Momigliano has observed that "Though Tyche might appeal to a pagan historian, no personal god was ever invoked to explain the course of history."⁷⁰ After Herodotus, gods play no direct role in historical explanation. Instead the gods became the instrument of overriding τύχη.⁷¹ So perhaps the idea of a world-changing war directly determined by the personal God of the Jews was, in Josephus' judgment, too Jewish of an explanation. τύχη provided a less personal explanation and even made the presentation somewhat Thucydidean, since in Thucydides there was a thread that decisions made by human beings were also part of a larger divine plan.⁷² Squires has noted that a concept of divine providence can be discerned in the classical historians, and that Josephus' Jewish theological views enabled him to capitalize on this theme,⁷³ but appealing to τύχη aligned his description with Greek conventions. In short, an appeal to τύχη would have made better sense to his Hellenistic readers. Whatever the reason, Josephus' use of this term that had a well-known place in Greek thought shows that Josephus was deliberately casting the story in specifically Greek terms, thus making the story appear closer to Greek experience than it could have been portrayed otherwise. By interjecting τύχη into the account,

⁶⁹ S. Cohen notes ('Josephus, Jeremiah, and Polybius', 372) that Josephus' use of the term τύχη is not consistent.

⁷⁰ Momigliano, 'Tradition and the Classical Historian', 284.

⁷¹ Price, 'The Provincial Historian in Rome', 116-7.

⁷² Rhodes 158.

⁷³ J. Squires, 'Hellenistic Historiography and Philosophy in Josephus' Account of the Jewish History', *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* 4 (1990) 148-54.

Josephus was explicitly painting the Jews in Greek dress, and implicitly declaring that the experiences of the Jews paralleled those of the Greeks. The Jews, for literary purposes, have become Greeks.

A second indicator of the specifically ethnic function of Josephus' use of Greek historiographical models can be seen in how he seemed to downplay those things that were specifically and uniquely Jewish. While this program is most noticeable in the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, rewriting for the purpose of making the material appear more Greek also characterizes the *Bellum Judaicum*. For example, the various sects of the Jews are presented as philosophies⁷⁴ to make them appear more Greek. Specifically, the Essenes are said to live the same kind of life as the Greek Pythagoreans,⁷⁵ the Pharisees are said to be like the Stoics,⁷⁶ and his descriptions of the Sadducees and Epicureans have much in common.⁷⁷ Closer inspection reveals, however, that the Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, and Essenes had little in common with the classical Greek notions of philosophy. The term φιλοσοφία of course had a long history and had come to denote Greek speculative thought on the nature of the world and existence (including the role of the gods). The Jews, however, historically shunned such speculation since they believed their sacred texts provided answers to the kinds of questions the Greeks asked. Josephus' choice of terms, in spite of the fact that they did not accurately describe the institutions of Jewish culture, indicates his desire to paint the Jews with a Greek brush politically and socially. In fact, Josephus could have cited Greek approval for his choice of terms. Theophrastus, Aristotle's successor in the

⁷⁴ *BJ* 2.119ff.

⁷⁵ *AJ* 15.371.

⁷⁶ *Vit.* 12.

⁷⁷ *AJ* 10.277f and *Ap.* 2.180.

Peripatetic school, referred to the Jews as “a philosophical race.”⁷⁸ In Josephus’ defense, the term “philosophy” was broad enough that it could encompass the peculiar theological traditions of the Jews. There was no single word in the ancient world that comprehensively denoted what our word “religion” denotes. “Philosophy” was the closest term,⁷⁹ but at the same time its use by Josephus did not denote quite what it meant among Greeks.⁸⁰ Josephus took advantage of this ambiguity to create the impression of alignment between Greek and Jewish culture on this point.

This technique of painting the Jews with a Greek brush is seen to be all the more bold when one notes that Jews and Greeks were significantly different in many ways. The Jews classically were a nation who lived in a territory with a capital city, Jerusalem. The Greeks, however, classically had no capital city. Instead the Greeks lived in several independent πόλεις. Jewish religion was monotheistic and centered in one place in the ancient world (Jerusalem), but Greek religion was polytheistic and had shrines everywhere. The Jews had a Torah, revealed by their God, that dictated morality. For the Greeks, the gods were not sources of moral instruction. Ethics was instead the purview of speculative philosophy. Jewish law contained dietary strictures that applied to everyday life, most notably abstinence from pork. The Greeks had no such customary restrictions. The Greeks were a seafaring people, but the Jews were not. The differences can easily be multiplied. Josephus consistently smoothed over or ignored significant differences between Jewish and Greek ethnicities and recast the former to look as much as possible like the latter.

⁷⁸ In Porph. *Abst.* 2.26. From the fragment it does not seem that Theophrastus had anywhere near an accurate knowledge of Jewish beliefs and customs. W. Jaeger, ‘Greeks and Jews: The First Greek Records of Jewish Religion and Civilization’, *JR* 18 (1938) 131-4.

⁷⁹ M. Smith 79.

⁸⁰ Cf. Green 501: “Hellenistic Greeks...thought of Jews as a race of philosophers (a view sustainable only by the failure to read anything they actually wrote...).”

Both of the examples above show that Josephus was making conscious choices about his presentation of the Jews. In the former example, Josephus was adding an element of explanation to the story that was unnecessary from a Jewish point of view, but one that would have greatly increased the Hellenic characterization of the story and its peoples by its addition. In the latter example Josephus was suppressing elements of Jewish ethnicity that one would otherwise expect to find in a Jewish description of Jewish culture, elements that would have made the Jews appear un-Greek, and has instead re-cast a major component of Jewish ethnicity in purely Greek terms. These techniques, along with his heavy use of the Greek historiographical tradition throughout, led the ancient reader to see the Jews in much the same way as that same reader would have encountered the Greeks in the works of the recognized, authoritative Greek historians.

Perhaps the most noticeable evidence within the *Bellum Judaicum* that Josephus was trying to bridge the divide between Roman and Jewish relationships appears in his treatment of the emperor Titus who, at the time of the Jewish revolt, was the officer in charge of finishing the campaign. As I have tried to demonstrate in chapter three, Roman-Jewish tensions were high in the first century CE. Josephus needed to soften Roman views of Jews and to present a view of Titus that was not antagonistic toward Jews if there was to be a successful negotiation on the part of Jews into Roman society. The former of these tasks involved explaining that the war was started and prosecuted by a handful of Jews who were bent on making trouble.⁸¹ The rest of the populace involved in the conflagration was, according to Josephus, quite unwilling to be in that situation. This may have been an attempt to counter a notion that Jews in general across the Roman empire were eager for a revolt. In 1.5 we hear what sounds like an echo of this rumor:

ἐπειδὴ Ἰουδαῖοι μὲν ἅπαν τὸ ὑπὲρ Εὐφράτην ὁμόφυλον συνεπαρθήσεσθαι σφίσιιν ἤλπισαν (“For

⁸¹ *BJ* 1.10; 2.290, 330; etc.

the Jews hoped that their fellow-country from beyond the Euphrates would join with them”). The insurrectionists apparently envisioned this as a great war of east versus west, and mention of this little fact is reminiscent of the Herodotean presentation of groups in terms of polarities.

Discrediting this idea of a war of Jews versus the world required presenting Titus as God-fearing and pious, respectful of the Jews and their great religious institution, sympathetic and unwilling to bring calamity on the Jews. In short, Josephus needed to show that, from the point of view of an authoritative Jewish historian, Jews did not view Titus as their arch-enemy. If this point could be established, Roman perceptions of Jews could be softened.⁸²

According to Josephus, Titus did not want to destroy the Jewish temple. In the introduction to the *Bellum Judaicum* Josephus set the tone for the reader and said that the Romans attacked the Jews unwillingly (χειρας ἀκούσας) and Καίσαρ Τίτος ἐν παντὶ τῷ πολέμῳ τὸν μὲν δῆμον ἐλέησας ὑπὸ τῶν στασιαστῶν φρουρούμενον πολλάκις δὲ ἐκὼν τὴν ἄλωσιν τῆς πόλεως ὑπερτιθέμενος καὶ διδοὺς τῇ πολιορκίᾳ χρόνον εἰς μετάνοιαν τῶν αἰτίων (“Titus Caesar throughout the whole war pitied the people who were being held by the rebels, and often willingly held off the taking of the city, and gave time for repentance for those who started it while the siege was underway”).⁸³ In fact, he set this tone twice in the preface, to make sure that the reader understood that this was the proper interpretive grid through which the history was to be read. After telling how he will describe the coming of the Roman army, the activities of the rebels, and the place where all this happened, he says: Ἐπειτα διέξειμι τὴν τε τῶν τυράννων πρὸς τοὺς ὁμοφύλους ὁμότητα καὶ τὴν Ῥωμαίων φειδῶ πρὸς τοὺς ἀλλοφύλους καὶ ὁσάκις Τίτος σῶσαι τὴν πόλιν καὶ τὸν ναὸν ἐπιθυμῶν ἐπὶ δεξιᾶς τοὺς στασιάζοντας προυκαλέσατο.

⁸² In exonerating the Roman general (and by implication, the army) of much of the blame, Josephus anticipates Livy, who exonerates Rome of guilt in the Second Punic War and is generously favorable to Titus Quinctius Flaminius, who ended that war with a crushing victory. Cf. M. Grant, *Greek and Roman Historians* (London 1995) 72-3.

⁸³ *BJ* 1.10.

(“Then I will recount the fierceness of the tyrants against their own fellow-countrymen, and the forbearance of the Romans to the foreigners, and how often Titus, wanting to save the city and the temple, offered the rebels assurances”).⁸⁴ Similarly, in 6.215f, during the siege, Josephus portrayed Titus as having been left no other choice but to destroy the temple and to press the revolt to a violent end: Καίσαρ δὲ ἀπελογεῖτο καὶ περὶ τούτου τῷ θεῷ φάσκων παρὰ μὲν αὐτοῦ Ἰουδαίοις εἰρήνην καὶ αὐτονομίαν προτείνεισθαι καὶ πάντων ἀμνηστίαν τῶν τετολμημένων τοὺς δὲ ἀντὶ μὲν ὁμοιοῖας στάσιν ἀντὶ δὲ εἰρήνης πόλεμον πρὸ κόρου δὲ καὶ εὐθηνίας λιμὸν (“but Caesar exonerated himself before God concerning this, saying that peace and independence had been offered to the Jews by him, and amnesty for all the wrongs they had done, but instead of instead of harmony they preferred rebellion, instead of peace they chose war, and rather than a measure of abundance they chose famine”). In 5.456 he has Titus practically begging the Jews not to force him to destroy the city, and in 6.95 we are told that Titus even offered to send Josephus into the city to offer the daily sacrifice (since at this point those who regularly did this were now dead) and that he had no intention of destroying the temple and offending its God. Instead he wanted it to stand because it was worthy of admiration as a great foreign edifice,⁸⁵ and he expressed regret that it had to end as it did.⁸⁶ Perhaps even more amazing is the comment that Titus despaired at the crucifixions of so many Jews who were caught escaping the city, crucifixions that he himself had ordered for the purpose of instilling fear in those who remained inside.

μαστιγούμενοι δὴ καὶ προβασανιζόμενοι τοῦ θανάτου πᾶσαν αἰκίαν ἀνεσταυροῦντο τοῦ τείχους ἀντικρῦ. Τίτῳ μὲν οὖν οἰκτρὸν τὸ πάθος κατεφαίνετο πεντακοσίων ἐκάστης ἡμέρας ἔστι δὲ ὅτε καὶ πλείονων ἀλισκομένων ... τό γε μὴν πλέον οὐκ ἐκώλυεν τάχ' ἂν ἐνδοῦναι πρὸς τὴν ὄψιν ἐλπίσας αὐτούς εἰ μὴ παραδοῖεν ὅμοια πεισομένους

⁸⁴ *BJ* 1.27.

⁸⁵ *BJ* 6.228.

⁸⁶ *BJ* 7.112-13.

(“having first been whipped and tormented to the point of death with every kind of torture, they were crucified opposite the walls. The suffering brought pity to Titus, as every day five hundred Jews were being caught, and sometimes more; ... The main reason he did not hinder it was that he was hoping they might possibly give in at the sight of it, fearing lest they might suffer the same things”).⁸⁷

What are we to make of all this positive, generous characterization of Titus? Is it true?

Since the corresponding sections of Tacitus have been lost, we have no other contemporary ancient source by which we may compare it. However, the lost parts of Tacitus were known to both Sulpicius Severus and Orosius, fourth-century Christian authors, and their accounts of this event were built on them.⁸⁸ Both of these later historians reported that Titus deliberated with his advisers concerning whether or not to destroy the temple (which Josephus confirms in 6.236-43).

The texts are pertinent here. Severus says

Fertur Titus adhibito consilio prius deliberasse an templum tanti operis everteret. Etenim nonnullis videbatur aedem sacratam ultra omnia mortalia illustrem non oportere deleri, quae servata modestiae Romanae testimonium, diruta perennem crudelitatis notam praeberet. At contra alii et Titus ipse evertendum in primis templum censebant ...

(“It is said that Titus summoned a council first, to consider whether he should destroy a temple of such great work. Indeed, it seemed to some that destruction of a holy, illustrious temple beyond all human achievement was not required, whose preservation was a testimony of Roman restraint, and whose destruction would offer a lasting mark of cruelty. Against this, others and Titus himself determined that the temple especially had to be destroyed ...”)⁸⁹

And Orosius reports

quod tamen postquam in potestatem redactum opere atque antiquitate suspexit, diu deliberavit utrum tamquam incitamentum hostium incenderet an in testimonium victoriae reservaret ... itaque Titus, imperator ab exercitu pronuntiatus, templum in Hierosolymis incendit ac diruit.

(“after it had been forcefully taken and he had admired its works and antiquity, for a long time he deliberated whether he should burn it as an incitement of the enemy or preserve it

⁸⁷ *BJ* 5.449-50.

⁸⁸ This was demonstrated by J. Bernays, *Ueber die Chronik des Sulpicius Severus* (Berlin 1861) ii.81-200, as noted by Barnes 133-4.

⁸⁹ *Chronicorum Libri duo* 2.30.6-7; text as quoted in Barnes 134-5. The text also appears in the preface to the Loeb edition of Josephus, II xx.

as a testimony to his victory ... Thus Titus, having been proclaimed *imperator* by the army, burned and destroyed the temple in Jerusalem”)⁹⁰

The picture from both authors is that in the end the decision was reached that the temple ought to be destroyed. Interestingly, Josephus tells us that the final decision was to let the temple stand: ὁ δὲ Τίτος οὐδ’ ἂν ἐπιβάντες ἐπ’ αὐτοῦ πολεμῶσιν Ἰουδαῖοι φήσας ἀντὶ τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἀμυνεῖσθαι τὰ ἄψυχα οὐδὲ καταφλέξειν ποτὲ τηλικούτου ἔργου Ῥωμαίων γὰρ ἔσεσθαι τὴν βλάβην ὥσπερ καὶ κόσμον τῆς ἡγεμονίας αὐτοῦ μένοντος (“But Titus was saying that even if the Jews should advance upon it and fight from there, the fighting should not be against inanimate things instead of men, nor should there ever be a burning of so great a work by the Romans, for that would be harmful, and it would also be an adornment of their abiding empire”).⁹¹

So what is the truth here? Barnes believes that “Tacitus’ version of the destruction of the temple must surely be preferred to that of Josephus.”⁹² Given the prevalence of anti-Jewish sentiment in the Roman world, it certainly seems incredible that a battle-hardened commander like Titus should be so reluctant to press for a decisive victory in such circumstances. In fact, Rives has suggested that it might even be possible to detect here the application of a Flavian policy towards foreign cults that threatened loyalties to Rome and Roman identity. Vespasian, he argues, would not have seen Jerusalem as the center of a religion as we would see it, but as the center of a cult that threatened the peace and security of the empire by virtue of its claim to an alternate authority.⁹³ This, however, may be going too far. As Gruen has noted, the extant evidence does not support the notion that the Romans felt threatened by the Jews.⁹⁴ More

⁹⁰ *Historiae adversum Paganos* 7.9.5-6; text as quoted in Barnes 135.

⁹¹ *BJ* 6.241.

⁹² Barnes 143. So also W. Weber, *Josephus and Vespasian: Untersuchungen zu dem Jüdischen Krieg des Flavius Josephus* (Hildesheim 1973) 72-3.

⁹³ J. Rives, ‘Flavian Religious Policy and the Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple’, in J. Edmondson et al (eds.), *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome* (Oxford 2005) 145-66.

⁹⁴ Gruen, ‘Roman Perspectives on the Jews’, 29-37.

realistic, it seems, is the notion that Titus, and Romans in general, were shocked and angered at the ingratitude the revolt communicated. The Romans had no vested interest in the destruction of Jews or Judaism, and had bent over backwards to accommodate this unusual people. Now the Palestinian Jews had started a war, in spite of good treatment from Rome, and there was no way the Romans were about to let it go unpunished.

The incredulity of Titus' behavior in Josephus' account thus highlights just how far Josephus was willing to go to present the Romans and Jews as being on favorable terms with each other. This literary "handshaking" can be interpreted as evidence that Josephus was attempting to negotiate a way into Roman culture for the Jews. Titus is presented as a pious, God-fearing man who wished to avoid bloodshed and the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, but was forced into both by the rebels. Likewise, the majority of Jews are presented not as victims not of outright Roman hatred, nor as fighting out of hatred for the Romans themselves, but as trapped by the insane determination on the part of the rebels to fight until the very end. This distancing of Titus from the decision to destroy the temple also served to put the matter in God's hands, where Josephus claimed the matter lay from the beginning.

Whether Josephus was simply capitalizing on what appeared to be hesitation on Titus' part (and Josephus was simply inferring that this meant that Titus did not want the temple destroyed), or Titus was at one point actually opposed to the temple's destruction, or Josephus felt political pressure to present his patron in the best light possible and thus simply invented the outcome of the council, or he willingly contradicted the facts, it is clear that Josephus was manipulating his material here. Of course, this sympathetic portrait of Titus has contributed greatly to the perception that Josephus was a traitor to his own people who was simply touting the imperial propaganda. However, I suggest that if we read Josephus from the point of view of ethnicity,

another agenda emerges that is not so derogatory to Josephus nor as complementary to Titus.⁹⁵ The picture that Josephus was trying to create was that no one wanted this war except the minority that made up the insurrectionists, and that both groups were peace-loving people who had every intention and prospect of getting along otherwise. Titus' reluctance to destroy the temple in Josephus' telling of the story stands as a gesture of good will toward the Jews proceeding from the emperor himself. The action is far more significant than a glimpse into military deliberations in a great war. It becomes a symbol of the imperial attitude toward the Jews, employed by Josephus to fit his literary aim of demonstrating Roman acceptance of Jews. It also absolves Josephus of much of the characterization of shamelessly praising his imperial patron.

Conclusion

It is clear that Josephus followed the Greek tradition of historiography as he composed his *Bellum Judaicum*. He imitated that tradition in adopting as his basic subject the theme of a great, contemporary war between peoples who were foreigners to each other. Like a good Greek historian he criticized his predecessors and claimed that his work was written as a monument of a great event for serious seekers of the truth. He wrote from his own personal experience in the events he related, he established himself as a trustworthy interpreter of the war, he paid careful attention to the antecedents of the war, and he included tragic elements within the narrative—all in good Greek fashion. He followed Greek form in laying out the introduction to his work, often step-by-step with Thucydides, he engaged in verbal echoing or borrowing from well-known

⁹⁵ Cf. McLaren, who has shown that Josephus does not follow stock descriptions of a good military commander current in his day. 'Josephus on Titus: The Vanquished Writing About the Victor', in J. Sievers and G. Lembi (eds.), *Josephus and Jewish History in Flavian Rome and Beyond* (SupJSJ 104, Leiden 2005) 279-95. He argues that there is implicit criticism of Titus in this, but it may well also be that Josephus was simply not familiar enough with the stock conventions to employ them.

Greek authors such as Thucydides and Polybius, and he cast some of the stories in his narrative in ways that were clearly reminiscent of the types of stories he found in these authors as well. The Greek historiographical tradition was Josephus' paradigm on several levels. In addition, Josephus downplayed the Jewish character of some things by putting them in Greek dress. The Jewish sects became philosophies, and the outcome of the war was determined not by God alone—which would have been a perfectly acceptable explanation for both Jewish and pagan readers—but also by the Greek element of τύχη. In the sensitive issue of hostility between Romans and Jews, Josephus nearly stretched the limits of credibility as he basically absolved Titus of responsibility in the destruction of the Jerusalem temple. The Roman commander was portrayed as having been forced, against his personal sentiments, piety, and pleas to the contrary, to act as he did by the obstinate determination of the rebels. The rebels were to blame, not a general Roman hatred of Jews or a general Jewish hatred of Romans. The two nations are both depicted as victims of the rebels' actions; otherwise they would not have fought with each other.

How is all of this to be understood? Scholarship has wrestled with this question and has produced different answers. Some have suggested that Josephus' use of Greek models is merely formal, and that nothing more should be read into it. Others have suggested that his use of these models is part of an integral strategy on Josephus' part, but there is disagreement over what that strategy was. I believe that Mader was correct in noting that all of this Hellenism was designed to create and manage a deliberate impression on the reader, and I suggest that one way to interpret the matter is that Josephus was attempting to build a new ethnicity for Jews in his day. Following an instrumentalist understanding of ethnicity, it is possible to see these features of the *Bellum Judaicum* as Josephus' attempt to negotiate a place for the Jews within the larger (Roman) culture of his day. Specifically, he was establishing, through a literary construct, a solidarity with

the Greek cultural heritage, thereby attempting assimilation into the Roman world, and engaging in what modern sociologists call identity politics. A reader of the *Bellum Judaicum* in ancient times would certainly have been impressed with how Greek the Jews appear in that narrative, and how Greek the narrative itself sounded. That reader would have thought that he was reading a Greek historiography of a people who were like the ancient Greeks themselves in many ways. By adopting the Greek tradition to tell his story, Josephus was hoping to convince his target audience (readers in the Greek world) that the Jews were, in substantial ways, just like the Greeks of the past. If they were just like them, then they ought to be regarded with the same kind of openness and respect. This mode of reading Josephus need not be exclusive. Josephus was skilled enough to manipulate his materials for other purposes also, but the desire to design an ethnicity along Greek lines explains the phenomenon well.

CHAPTER 6
JOSEPHUS' PRESENTATION OF THE JEWS IN HIS *ANTIQUITATES JUDAICAE*

In the late 80s or early 90s CE, Josephus undertook his most extensive literary project, the *Antiquitates Judaicae*. Here he presented a version of Jewish history for a Hellenistic audience. In this chapter I hope to show that Josephus has manipulated the presentation of this history to suit an agenda of ethnicity-building. The literature that has arisen in connection with the *Antiquitates Judaicae* is vast,¹ and a comprehensive look at the *Antiquitates Judaicae* is neither possible nor necessary for the present purposes. I hope instead to cite elements of the *Antiquitates Judaicae* that demonstrate how it addresses concerns of Jewish ethnicity and to look at two basic aspects of that work: 1) Josephus' positive presentation of Jewish history and its great characters, 2) and his management of negative elements. In this latter aspect I will concentrate on his presentation of the part of that history that was contemporary to him and his audience (basically the history of the Herodian dynasty in Palestine and Roman rule through procurators).

The Fluid Nature of Foundational History/Myth

It is important to realize that as Josephus was aligning Jewish piety with Greek in the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, at the same time he was preserving elements of Jewish uniqueness. Josephus accomplished this latter objective by a staunch refusal to compromise anything that was, in his judgment, essentially Jewish. Nowhere did Josephus attempt to align the God of the Jews with a pagan deity. Likewise, some institutions which were uniquely Jewish—such as Sabbath observance—were neither downplayed nor aligned with any practice from paganism. Josephus had no intention of completely assimilating Judaism into Hellenism (a feat he could

¹ Cf. L. Feldman, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship (1937-1980)* (Berlin 1984). The topical bibliography of works between 1937 and 1980 covers nearly 900 pages, approximately 600 of which relate to the *AJ*.

have attempted if he so desired), of completely surrendering Jewish identity for a Greek one. Instead he was doing what everyone else did with stories of national origins: he was taking advantage of the flexible, plastic nature of those stories in order to craft a particular perception or to serve a particular end. As I noted in chapter two, the fluid nature of traditions is one of the things that makes the creation and maintenance of an ethnicity possible.

Myths in the ancient world were incredibly elastic and capable of a wide latitude of treatment and even of transformation, as the needs allowed and demanded. A cursory look at any compilation of ancient Greek and Roman myths shows that many variants of the stories existed, often side-by-side historically. Furthermore, the more remote the myth, the more it came to attain a symbolic quality and not that of historical fact (*cf.* Herodotus' wrestling with the problem in his *History*). The remote antiquity of many of the stories at Josephus' disposal easily lent them, in the Greco-Roman milieu in which he wrote, to adaptation. Even if a Roman reader knew the details of these stories from the LXX (which is highly doubtful), he would not have thought it strange to hear slightly different versions of those stories from Josephus, nor would he have necessarily thought that Josephus was being deceptive by changing elements of the story for his audience. "Roman writers, well aware that they were working with legendary material and malleable traditions, felt free to redesign and embellish within the general framework. They found no virtue in mere reproduction of predecessors, nor did they regard themselves as promoting a canonical tale. Their presuppositions had little in common with modern expectations."²

Josephus took a similar approach to the Biblical stories he retold in the *Antiquitates Judaicae*. If he wanted his readers to hear a "standard" version of any of them, he simply could

² Gruen, *Culture and National Identity*, 32.

have pointed them to the LXX, easily available in his day, or he could have simply reproduced the LXX stories as closely as he wished. But in fact he did neither. Instead he chose to relate those stories in his own words, casting them in ways more easily digested by his Greco-Roman audience, while still claiming that he was faithful to the canonical (“orthodox”) versions of those stories. In *Antiquitates Judaicae* 1.17 Josephus therefore says τὰ μὲν οὖν ἀκριβῆ τῶν ἐν ταῖς ἀναγραφαῖς προῖων ὁ λόγος κατὰ τὴν οἰκείαν τάξιν σημαίνει τοῦτο γὰρ διὰ ταύτης ποιήσειν τῆς πραγματείας ἐπηγγειλάμην οὐδὲν προσθεῖς οὐδ’ αὖ παραλιπὼν (“As I go on, the story of the things contained in the records will tell accurately, according to the proper order, for I have promised to do this throughout this treatise, adding nothing nor neglecting anything”). Similarly, in 10.218 he says

ἐγκαλέση δέ μοι μηδεὶς οὕτως ἕκαστα τούτων ἀπαγγέλλοντι διὰ τῆς γραφῆς ὡς ἐν τοῖς ἀρχαίοις εὐρίσκω βιβλίοις καὶ γὰρ εὐθὺς ἐν ἀρχῇ τῆς ἱστορίας πρὸς τοὺς ἐπιζητήσοντάς τι περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων ἢ μεμψομένους ἠσφαλισάμην μόνον τε μεταφράζειν τὰς Ἑβραίων βίβλους εἰπὼν εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα γλωτταὶ καὶ ταῦτα δηλώσειν μήτε προστιθεῖς τοῖς πράγμασιν αὐτὸς ἰδίᾳ μήτ’ ἀφαιρῶν ὑπεισχημένος

(“But let no one accuse me for relating every one of these things throughout the work as I find them in our ancient books. For directly in the beginning of my history, I have been careful, against those who were seeking something about these matters or who were finding fault with me, only to translate the Hebrew books, saying them in the Greek language, and promising to reveal these things neither adding my own ideas to these matters nor taking anything away.”)

Either Josephus lied outrightly (which is hard to believe), or he did not see his presentations of the Biblical stories as containing any substantial violations with respect to the shapes they bore in the canonical Hebrew Bible. In fact, Josephus described his *Antiquitates Judaicae* as a *translation* of the Bible.³ I noted above that he presented himself as the analogue to Eleazar in the *Letter of Aristeas*, and thus implied that his *Antiquitates Judaicae* was the analogue to the LXX. The fact that Josephus presented himself as a prophet also created the impression that

³ *Ap.* 1.54 (μεθερμηνεύειν, but interestingly συγγράφειν in 1.1); *AJ* 1.5 (μεθερμηνεύειν); 10.218 (μεταφράζειν); cf. 20.261.

Josephus' translation was divinely inspired (which claim was also made for the LXX) and thus as reliable as the prophetic literature of the Bible itself.⁴ By "translation" Josephus did not understand a literal rendering, but a dynamic one. The Jews agreed that the truth lay in their sacred books. What they did when they wrote about them was to interpret, contemporize, and actualize them.⁵

There is good indication that Josephus was already aware of variations in the materials he knew. In the *Antiquitates Judaicae* Josephus repeatedly demonstrated his knowledge of Hebrew as he cited and explained the Hebrew words that describe Jewish traditions. Modern research has concluded, however, that Josephus was basically following the LXX in the Biblical parts of his *Antiquitates Judaicae*.⁶ If this is correct, then Josephus must have known that the LXX versions of many Biblical stories were not identical in every respect with their Hebrew versions. Variations in names, geographical details, numbers, genealogies, and details of stories abound between the two collections. Josephus already stood in the stream of a tradition that knew more than one version of traditional stories.

As a Pharisee Josephus was also well aware of the many variants or additional details of the Biblical stories that circulated through the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical literature and other traditions. These alternate stories were highly esteemed by many Jews. The Pharisees in

⁴ P. Bilde, 'Contra Apionem 1.28-56: An Essay on Josephus' View of His Own Work in the Context of Jewish Canon', in L. Feldman and J. Levison (eds.), *Josephus' Contra Apionem: Studies in Its Character and Context with a Latin Concordance to the Portion Missing in Greek* (Leiden 1996) 103-8.

⁵ Bilde, 'Contra Apionem 1.28-56', 108-9.

⁶ K. Krieger, 'Die Funktionen der Septuaginta-Legende in Flavius Josephus' Werken *Antiquitates Judaicae* und *Contra Apionem*,' in *Internationales Josephus-Kolloquium* (1999) 246-261. Cf. also J. Fischer: "Josephus, who in the first four books of his *Antiquities* gives a paraphrased and annotated version of the Pentateuch, composed in Greek, relied heavily on the Septuagint version, as is evident from the many parallel passages." 'The Term DESPOTHS in Josephus', *JQR* 49 (1958) 133. There is debate over how much he consulted the Hebrew text, and if he consulted an Aramaic Targum. S. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, 35f.

particular accepted more than what was contained in the written Torah and the Jewish sacred canon. Their adherence to and defense of the oral Torah, which some of them claimed had authority equal to that of the written Torah, is well known. Although we in modern times have trained ourselves, when coming to such a variety of traditions, to ask critical questions about sources, or kernels of historical truth, etc., many Jews of antiquity did not come to these stories with the same kinds of concerns, at least initially. Since Josephus already believed that the stories in the Hebrew Bible were not necessarily complete, and that other trusted versions of the stories existed, it was not difficult for him to reshape those stories for an audience who would have had trouble appreciating the (Jewish) cultural nuances of the originals.

Josephus was far from alone in this kind of handling of materials from his Jewish tradition.

From a survey of Jewish literature of Hellenistic times Gruen concludes

For Hellenistic Jews writing in Greek, the Scriptures provided stimulus for ingenuity and creativity. The concept of a fixed and unalterable tradition had not yet taken hold. ... Composition and interpretation proceeded concurrently, and the idea of established texts was still in process of formation. The fluidity of the tradition may frustrate modern scholars. But it gave impetus to writers eager to reshape and revivify narratives long familiar but conveniently adaptable.⁷

In fact, Jewish authors (including Josephus) were adopting the same kind of approach that the Romans themselves had taken concerning their own foundational myth, the story of Aeneas. In another study, Gruen has shown that the myth of Rome's origins was a complicated tangle of stories that knew many variants. Some of these variants emphasized a Greek origin for the Romans (which Dionysius of Halicarnassus was able to exploit), and indeed that element of the story never disappeared. "The notion of Rome as a Greek foundation or one with a substantial Greek component remained alive and well, even at a time when Aeneas might otherwise have

⁷ E. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley 1998) 110.

held the field.”⁸ In fact, the retention of the Greek element of the story proved an important part of the myth for the purposes of Roman self-definition. “It enabled Rome to associate itself with the rich and complex fabric of Hellenic tradition, thus to enter that cultural world, just as it had entered the wider political world. But at the same time, it also announced Rome’s distinctiveness from that world.”⁹ The preservation of the Greek element in the myth allowed the Romans to both compare and contrast themselves to the Greeks at the same time. Otherwise, however, the details of the story were always somewhat negotiable. Even when Roman historiographical literature began to flourish, the Aeneas story was not cast in an unalterable form. “... it was accepted practice at a time when traditions were fluid and particulars susceptible to manipulation. ... The connection itself delivered the vital message. All the rest was malleable.”¹⁰ Josephus was taking advantage of this kind of approach to ancient traditions as he set out to relate Jewish history for his non-Jewish audience in the *Antiquitates Judaicae*.

Another element that made Josephus’ task easier was the fact that it was common practice in Hellenistic historiography for an author to rewrite his sources extensively. It can be observed in Aeschines’ handling of material from Andocides, Livy’s use of Claudius Quadrigarius, Diodorus of Sicily’s incorporation of Agatharcides, and Plutarch’s appropriation of Dionysius of Halicarnassus. “An author was expected to take some liberties with his source. ... He was expected to recast the narrative, to place his own stamp upon it, to use the material for his own purposes, to create something new. But on the whole he was faithful to the content and sequence of the original.”¹¹ This practice was itself a reflection of the larger phenomenon of

⁸ Gruen, *Culture and National Identity*, 19.

⁹ Gruen, *Culture and National Identity*, 31.

¹⁰ Gruen, *Culture and National Identity*, 35.

¹¹ S. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, 31.

Hellenistic historiography, which was, in this sense, largely a creative endeavor,¹² and Josephus stood firmly within the stream of such creative historical writing for the purpose of creating a national identity—which is another way of speaking of creating a putative myth of shared descent for purposes of ethnicity. This creative type of historiography was a wide-spread reaction to the power of Hellenism that confronted many peoples with a need to define themselves anew in light of the cultural changes and new cultural forces that had appeared after Alexander the Great.¹³

With this flexible approach to both ancient history and to his own method of writing history, Josephus was cleverly attempting to broker a place for Jews within the Roman world. As I noted in chapter two, Romans paid homage to their debt to Greece even if only to use the greatness of Greek accomplishments as the backdrop that set Roman accomplishments in even greater relief. Roman philhellenism had a double edge. Too much praise of Greek things sounded like an admission that Roman things were inferior. In a similar way, Josephus was both aligning the Jewish heritage with the Greek, yet at the same time keeping a measured distance from it. His approach was neither apathetic aloofness from Roman sensitivities nor shameless surrender of Jewish cultural values. He needed to establish enough Hellenic qualities in Jewish culture to create a sense of admiration for it, yet be careful not to overdo it lest it appear as a slight against Roman greatness or as a competitor to it. Within this strategy was room for display of those things that were also uniquely Jewish.

¹² Although there were dissenting voices such as Polybius and Ephorus, who took a more rationalist approach. Collomp 287.

¹³ Mendels 37-45.

Examples of Josephus' Positive Portrayal of Jews and Jewish History by Means of Greek Models

The *Antiquitates Judaicae* may be thought of as the foundation for Josephus' program of ethnicity-building. In order to make the case that Jews ought to be given a respected place within Roman culture, Josephus needed to demonstrate that Jewish culture embodied the very ideals that the Romans already respected: those of the ancient Greeks. In this way the presentation of Jewish culture along the lines of things the Romans already respected became an argument, as it were, that the Romans ought to extend their respect to the Jews. In fact, if an awareness of the extensive similarities between Jewish and Greek cultures, institutions, great figures, histories, etc. did not prompt the Romans to revise their attitudes toward Jews, then the Romans would have to face the idea that they were being inconsistent at the least, or patently hypocritical at the most.

Use of Greek Forms, Paradigms, and Terms

The form of Josephus' work is the first suggestion that he was aligning the Jews with the Greeks: an ἀρχαιολογία of the Jews¹⁴ in 20 books, a clear reminiscence of Dionysius of Halicarnassus' Ῥωμαϊκὴ ἀρχαιολογία also in 20 books. The name and arrangement of the work announced to its ancient audience that this was Jewish history cast in Greek form, following the forms and conventions of Greek historiography. Furthermore, as noted above, Dionysius of Halicarnassus attempted to establish the closest possible relationship between the Greeks and the Romans, so far as to posit a Greek origin for the Romans. While Josephus did not go this far with the Jews, he hoped to show as many congruencies between Jews and Greeks as he could without sacrificing his own notion of Jewishness.

¹⁴ This is how Josephus describes his work in *AJ* 1.5.

The arrangement—or rearrangement, as it turns out—of Josephus’ material also betrays a conscious effort to imitate Greek historiography which was, in his day, influenced by rhetorical theory. In *Antiquitates Judaicae* 4.196-7 he stated that the legal materials concerning Moses in the Jewish canon were not in the best arrangement as they stood in the sacred texts, and that he deliberately set them out in a different order:

Βούλομαι δὲ τὴν πολιτείαν πρότερον εἰπὼν τῷ τε Μωυσέος ἀξιώματι τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀναλογοῦσαν καὶ μαθεῖν παρέξων δι’ αὐτῆς τοῖς ἐντευξομένοις οἷα τὰ καθ’ ἡμᾶς ἀρχῆθεν ἦν ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν ἄλλων τραπέσθαι διήγησιν. γέγραπται δὲ πάνθ’ ὡς ἐκεῖνος κατέλιπεν οὐδὲν ἡμῶν ἐπὶ καλλωπισμῶ προσθέντων οὐδ’ ὅτι μὴ κατελέλοιπε Μωυσεῖ. νενεωτέρισται δ’ ἡμῖν τὸ κατὰ γένος ἕκαστα τάξιαι σποράδην γὰρ ὑπ’ ἐκείνου κατελείφθη γραφέντα καὶ ὡς ἕκαστόν τι παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ πύθοιτο τούτου χάριν ἀναγκαῖον ἡγησάμην προδιαστείλασθαι μὴ καὶ τις ἡμῖν παρὰ τῶν ὁμοφύλων ἐντυχόντων τῇ γραφῇ μέμψις ὡς διημαρτηκόσι γένηται.

(“But I wish first to discuss the government, relating what is proper to the virtue of Moses, and to supply learning to those who encounter through it the things that were according to our antiquity, and then turn to the narrative of other things. They are all written as he left them, nothing being added by us by way of ornament nor anything besides what Moses left. But it has been changed by us, to set in order each according to its kind, for it was left by him having been written in a in scattered way and as he learned each thing from God. I thought it necessary to explain this freely beforehand, lest there might be someone from my countrymen bringing a charge that we have erred with respect to the Scripture.”)

In doing so, Josephus was demonstrating a sensitivity to the rhetorical concerns of *τάξις*, *οἰκονομία*, and *διάθεσις* to make his narrative materials more orderly and readily understandable. In particular, the term *οἰκονομία* was used by Greek authors to describe the orderly presentation of material that imparts a sense of continuity to a narrative and makes it easier to follow.¹⁵ It is even possible to detect here the traces of Josephus’ further indebtedness to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who had much to say on the arrangement and development of rhetorical material.¹⁶ That Josephus had Greek rhetorical practice in mind here is clear from the fact that

¹⁵ W. Wuellner, ‘Arrangement’, in S. Porter (ed.), *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period* (Leiden 2001) 51-87.

¹⁶ *Lys.* 15; *Isoc.* 4; *Dem.* 15; *Comp.* 6; Th. L. Feldman, ‘Rearrangement of pentateuchal narrative material in Josephus’ *Antiquities* Books 1-4’, *HUCA* 70-71 (1999-2000) 133-4.

while there was a sense among Jewish authors that foundational stories were elastic, few of them strayed from the order in which events were presented in the canonical Biblical texts. For example, Philo of Alexandria, for all of his extensive treatment of the Biblical materials, never changed the order of the Biblical details. Josephus stands almost alone in taking liberty at this point, and certainly was unique in the extent to which he was willing to practice it.¹⁷ It is thus another indicator of how Josephus made the Biblical materials fit into a Greek mold.

One overall impression Josephus seems to have been crafting was that the Jewish people had long been objects of scorn not because they were irreligious, but because they were highly religious. The problem lay not in the Jews but in the irreligious character of their neighbors, who did not appreciate their high view of God. This of course, only worked to the shame of these neighbors, the latest of whom was Rome. Much of the narrative was therefore designed to highlight the high moral and religious character of Jewish culture.

The first move in Josephus' strategy of building a positive image of Jews was to lay out the proper understanding of the Jewish God and his role in history. Hence in 1.14 Josephus explained the controlling idea: the God of the Jews is concerned, above all, with moral virtue, specifically (*ἀρετή*; 1.20, 23). This virtue is spelled out in the Jewish Law, we are told, and was demonstrated in the lives of great Jewish historical characters. Those who conform to God's demand of moral virtue are rewarded and those who refuse to conform to it are punished, and these rewards and punishments are not reserved for the afterlife but are experienced in the vicissitudes of the present.¹⁸ The destruction of the Jerusalem temple was already interpreted in

¹⁷ There are a few exceptions in Pseudo-Philo and the midrashic literature. L. Feldman, 'Rearrangement of pentateuchal narrative material', 132.

¹⁸ I am not arguing that Josephus' view of God, or his theological outlook, was in some sense "correct," normative, etc. Josephus' Pharisaic outlook colors his view, to be sure, and his view was only one of several such competing views among his Jewish contemporaries. In fact,

exactly this way in the *Bellum Judaicum*—God’s retribution against the rebels who desecrated the holy precincts. Of course, ἀρετή was a quality that had a long and lofty history among the Greeks,¹⁹ if not a diverse one.²⁰ The Greek word had, by Hellenistic times, developed a semantic range large enough to encompass many subordinate ideas and was capable of describing the morality inculcated in the Hebrew Bible without doing much violence to either the word itself or to Jewish ethics. It is arguably one of Josephus’ favorite words, appearing nearly 300 times in his writings. That it is consciously used for its significance in Hellenic culture is suggested by the fact that the LXX rarely used the word in the canonical books (seven times total, and never in the Pentateuch). Josephus was not following the LXX here by this choice of terms. By concentrating on the moral virtue of Jewish religion, and using a highly-visible Greek keyword for it, Josephus was able to align the Jews with the same kinds of virtues the Romans already knew from the Greeks and at the same bypass those elements of religion in which the Jews looked so foreign. Furthermore, as I have suggested, this becomes an argument: if the Romans are a religious people, then they ought to respect the high virtue of the Jewish God.

In constructing his ethnic portrait of Jews, Josephus was aware that those religious elements that were uniquely Jewish were going to be the parts of the story that would be the least likely to be accepted or appreciated by his Greco-Roman audience, a noble portrait of the Jewish deity notwithstanding. His strategy in dealing with these things was, time and time again, simply to convert them to Greek models and effectively eliminate the differences between Jewish and Greek cultures that had become such obstacles for winning respect for Jewish culture. I have

Josephus’ interpretations of Jewish laws or customs are sometimes singular. B. Revel, ‘Some Anti-Traditional Laws of Josephus’, *JQR* 14 (1924) 293-301.

¹⁹ See W. Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture Vol. 1* (New York 1945), 3-14.

²⁰ See M. Finkelberg, ‘Virtue and Circumstances: On the City-state Concept of Arete’, *AJP* 123 (2002) 35-49.

already noted in my discussion of the *Bellum Judaicum* that Josephus chose to use the term φιλοσοφία to describe Jewish theology. This practice continued in the *Antiquitates Judaicae* as well.²¹ In the introduction to the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, Josephus said that an inquirer into the details of Jewish theology would find the endeavor to be “exceedingly philosophical” (λίαν φιλόσοφος).²² He portrayed Jewish envoys to Alexandria as perfectly competent to answer difficult philosophical questions²³ to the point that they gained the admiration of the Alexandrian philosopher Menedemus.²⁴ In a similar way Josephus portrayed Solomon, whom the Biblical tradition says was expert in all matters of the natural world (1 Kings 4.29-34), as a philosopher (he says that Solomon ἐφιλοσόφησε “did philosophy”),²⁵ and claimed that the Queen of Sheba was interested in meeting Solomon because she was a student of philosophy herself.²⁶ This made Solomon’s philosophical ability appear even greater, since the queen was portrayed as one who would not have been impressed with pseudo-intellectualism.

A glimpse of how Josephus tended to downplay things that were uniquely Jewish may be seen in his choice of terms for his own people. The designation “Hebrews” occurs 319 times in his writings, all demonstrably in contexts where Josephus, or a character in his narrative, is referring to Jews in remote antiquity. In contrast, the term “Jews” appears 1,241 times in his writings, occasionally side-by-side with the term Hebrews, but most frequently in his history of his people from the Seleucid period onwards. Harvey has suggested that the term “Hebrews” in

²¹ *AJ* 18.11, 23; cf. *Ap.* 1.54.

²² *AJ* 1.25.

²³ *AJ* 12.99.

²⁴ *AJ* 12.101.

²⁵ *AJ* 8.44. Even here, however, Solomon was not engaged in the same kind of activity as the Greeks had classically pursued, for Solomon’s knowledge of the natural world was the product of the gift of σοφία from God, a point that Josephus dutifully mentions (8.42) but does not emphasize.

²⁶ *AJ* 8.165.

Josephus' day meant "one who is a good Jew," a Jew who is religiously orthodox and traditionally pious.²⁷ That is, the term "Hebrew" had a strong ethnic demarcation attached to it and suggested a separateness from the Gentile world—the very picture Josephus was trying to dismantle. So, while he did not completely dissociate contemporary Jews from the ancient Hebrews, he kept the ethnically-loaded term "Hebrews" in the background, in the portion of the narrative dealing with the distant past.

Another example surfaces in how Josephus repeatedly referred to the Jewish political system by the Greek term *πολίτευμα* or *πολιτεία*, spelled out in a *διάταξις*. The LXX, however, regularly described the Jewish religious charter as a *διαθήκη*, a covenant with God. For his account, Josephus suppressed the use of the term that was regular for the LXX, a term that was not ordinarily used of political charters in the secular Greek of his day. In fact, the word *διαθήκη* does not appear in the *Antiquitates Judaicae* until 13.349 when Josephus is covering the background of the Herodian client kingdom, and there it has the ordinary, secular sense of a "will." It never appears in his retelling of the Biblical story, although the LXX he followed used the word well over 300 times to denote the special agreement between the Jews and their God. Josephus decided instead to use a word that was more commonly and more readily understandable and, even more importantly, culturally connected to Hellenism.²⁸ In doing so, however, he arguably altered the picture of Jewish government as it stood in the LXX and gave the Jewish political arrangement a Greek character. This becomes even more significant in light

²⁷ G. Harvey, 'Synagogues of the Hebrews: "Good Jews" in the Diaspora', in S. Jones and S. Pearce (eds.), *Jewish Local Patriotism and Self-Identification in the Graeco-Roman Period* (JSPseudSup 31, Sheffield 1998) 132-47.

²⁸ A similar phenomenon appears as Josephus described Jewish synagogues as *σύνοδοι*, a term used regularly for the associations and guilds in Graeco-Roman cities. A. Fitzpatrick-McKinley, 'Synagogue Communities in the Graeco-Roman Cities', in J. Bartlett (ed.), *Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman Cities* (London 2002) 63.

of the fact that Josephus took pains to explain other words that were particularly Jewish, such as the Hebrew words “Sabbath” (as in *AJ* 1.33), “Israel” (*AJ* 1.333), and “Adonai” (*AJ* 5.121) as well as many Hebrew personal names throughout the narrative. Josephus could have explained that the Jewish political system was different from what regularly prevailed in Hellenic culture, and that it was commonly called a διαθήκη, translating the Hebrew term *berith*. Instead he presented the matter to his reading audience as if the Hebrew and Greek political arrangements were the same. The result is that the suggestion that the Jews enjoyed a privileged and exclusive relationship with God (making them appear aloof and negatively critical) is gone.

Beyond using Greek terms for Jewish institutions, it seems that Josephus stretched the facts to create the impression that Jews were regular citizens in Greek cities. I briefly mentioned earlier that the riots in Alexandria in 38 CE were the subject of a *responsa* by Claudius in 41 CE, who demanded that the public disturbances stop and that the Jews not press for more privileges than they already enjoyed. It is clear from the imperial letter that the emperor did not believe that Jews were citizens of Alexandria, as he described them as ἐν ἀλλοτρία πόλει περιουσίας (“living in a city not their own”).²⁹ The keys to the situation are that citizenship in Alexandria was considered to be Roman recognition of Greek ethnicity, and, as I have shown earlier, Josephus seemed to operate on the idea that a Greek was one who was a citizen, or at least a recognized part, of an established Greek city. In commenting on the emperor’s *responsa*, Josephus quotes Claudius as saying that the Alexandrian Jews ἴσης πολιτείας παρὰ τῶν βασιλέων τετευχότας καθὼς φανερόν ἐγένετο ἐκ τῶν γραμμάτων τῶν παρ’ αὐτοῖς καὶ τῶν διαταγμάτων (“possessed equal citizenship from the kings. This is clear from the records they have and from their edicts”).

²⁹ “The Letter of Claudius to the Alexandrians,” in *CPJ* II no. 153 (p.41, line 95).

So, by Josephus' ideas of Greek identity, the Jews of Alexandria were Greeks, and Claudius himself said so.

The problem here is that *isopoliteia* was a relationship between Greek cities in which citizenship in one city was granted reciprocal recognition in the other.³⁰ It is impossible that this relationship existed between Jews and native Alexandrians, for at least two reasons: 1) there is no evidence that Greek cities had *isopoliteia* with non-Greek cities,³¹ and 2) the Jews lived in the same city with the Alexandrians.³² Most modern scholars have therefore resorted to attributing a different sense to Josephus' ἴσης πολιτείας. H. Jones suggested that the Alexandrian Jews possessed a status between that of full Alexandrian citizens and ordinary λαοί, and that the peoples of such an intermediate group had full civil rights, but not citizenship.³³ In other words, the Jews constituted a (foreign) πολίτευμα, and they could be called πολῖται of that πολίτευμα, but they were not technically πολῖται of Alexandria. Josephus, however, would apparently have us to believe that Claudius' words admitted all Alexandrian Jews into citizenship of that city, and thus they enjoyed recognition of Greek ethnicity by the Romans.³⁴

Josephus attempted the same thing in other places. In *Antiquitates Judaicae* 14.185-267 he cited a long list of documents which were adduced to show that the Romans had always been friendly and respectful toward the Jews. In one of these citations Josephus referred to a public inscription, in bronze, set up by Julius Caesar in Alexandria that declared the Jews to be citizens

³⁰ A. Chanotis, *Die Verträge zwischen kretischen Poleis in der hellenistischen Zeit*. (Heidelberger althistorische Beiträge und epigraphische Studien 24, Stuttgart 1996) 101-8.

³¹ Applebaum, "The Legal Status of the Jewish Communities", 438.

³² In the *responsa*, Caesar rebuked the Jews for sending their own embassy to him as if they lived in a separate city.

³³ 'Claudius and the Jewish Question at Alexandria', *JRS* 16 (1926) 29.

³⁴ Some Jews were able to manage their way into full Alexandrian citizenship. However, it also appears that their status as citizens was precarious. *CPJ* II no. 151 is a letter of an Alexandrian Jew complaining to the Roman governor that his status as a citizen of Alexandria had been unfairly downgraded.

of Alexandria (Καῖσαρ Ἰούλιος τοῖς ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ Ἰουδαίοις ποιήσας χαλκῆν στήλην ἐδήλωσεν ὅτι Ἀλεξανδρέων πολῖται εἰσιν).³⁵ He did not, however, quote the inscription. The omission of a quotation of such a crucial piece of evidence suggests that Josephus was being quite liberal in his interpretation of the inscription. In that same list of documents Josephus has the people of Sardis referring to the Jews as citizens.³⁶ But Josephus seems to betray himself when he says in another place that an Alexandrian stele recorded Jewish *rights* (τά δικαιώματα),³⁷ and of Alexander he says that to the Jews ἔδωκεν τὸ μετοικεῖν κατὰ τὴν πόλιν ἐξ ἴσου μοίρας πρὸς τοὺς Ἕλληνας (“he granted for them to reside in the city in equal portion with the Greeks”)—an ambiguous phrase. Neither δικαιώματα nor ἐξ ἴσου μοίρας amounted to Alexandrian citizenship. The best interpretation is that the Roman emperors confirmed the Jewish status as a πολίτευμα, but nothing more.³⁸

Josephus also betrayed the real situation when he quoted Strabo as saying that in Cyrene τέτταρες δ' ἦσαν ἐν τῇ πόλει τῶν Κυρηναίων ἢ τε τῶν πολιτῶν καὶ ἢ τῶν γεωργῶν τρίτη δ' ἢ τῶν μετοίκων τετάρτη δ' ἢ τῶν Ἰουδαίων (“there were four groups in the city of the Cyrenaicans: the citizens, the farmers, the resident aliens, and the Jews”). It should be remembered that Cyrene was one of the places where the Jews' temple contributions had been confiscated. It is clear from Strabo's words that the Jews did not fit into any native political category in Cyrene, so they were not citizens of that city. Their vaguely-defined status may have

³⁵ *AJ* 14.189. Similarly, in 12.8 he says Alexander the Great τοῖς Μακεδόσιν ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ ποιήσας ἰσοπολίτας (“made them equal citizens with the Macedonians in Alexandria”).

³⁶ 14.259: οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει ἀπ' ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι πολῖται (“The Jews who live in this city from the beginning are citizens”).

³⁷ *Ap.* 2.37.

³⁸ *CPJ* 1.56. This was simply a political expedient on the part of the Romans. The dissolution of the Ptolemaic government left the status of minority ethnic groups in question, and Rome simply confirmed the status they had previously enjoyed.

even been the pretext for the locals' confiscation of their temple contribution.³⁹ Further confirmation of their non-citizen status appears in Augustus' response to the Jewish complaint in Alexandria. He granted the Jews *ivsoitelei/a*, which meant that they had a status between that of metics and citizens and thus were not liable to the same taxes as metics. Similarly, Philo of Alexandria never spoke of Jews as possessing full citizenship in the *polis* of Alexandria, and the Jews were subjected to the *laographia* by Rome (beginning in 4 CE), indicating that Rome did not count them as citizens of Alexandria either, and thus they were not considered true Hellenes.⁴⁰ On the whole, Applebaum concluded "We have not discovered in the course of our investigation evidence that in any Greek city in the Hellenistic or early Roman period the Jews possessed citizenship as a body."⁴¹ Yet Josephus often seems to give the impression that Jews regularly enjoyed citizenship status. The picture that develops is that Josephus was playing fast and loose with the terminology in such a way that implied the Jews were citizens. This is striking in light of the fact that Josephus later criticized Apion for trying to pass as a native Alexandrian when he was not.⁴² Furthermore, Josephus was playing with fire as he attempted to get the Jews into Alexandrian citizenship. Egypt, to Roman ears, conjured up the image of Cleopatra. So

³⁹ Applebaum, 'The Legal Status of the Jewish Communities', 444.

⁴⁰ *CPJ* 1.59-64. For purposes of the poll tax, the Jews were not even considered *metropolitai*, which would have recognized them as people of Greek education but not citizens of the *polis*, and which would have given them a discount on the tax liability.

⁴¹ Applebaum, 'The Legal Status of the Jewish Communities', 449. He goes on to note that there was no precise and comprehensive Roman legislation concerning Jewish rights empire-wide. What existed was a series of imperial confirmations of Jewish privileges in local places (pp.457-8).

⁴² *Ap.* 2.29.

Josephus was careful to press for recognition of Jews as citizens of the Greek *polis* of Alexandria, but at the same time kept a distance from Egyptians.⁴³

Applebaum further notes “However small the prospects of success for the average Jew, the claim to civic equality might become significant from a psychological, fiscal, and judicial point of view.”⁴⁴ His notice of the psychological motive fits well with the approach of this dissertation, that a perceived crisis in self-esteem motivated Josephus to portray the Jews in terms of the Greeks. In the matter of political terminology it appears that he either thought the terms were fluid enough to include Jews as citizens of major Greek cities, or he himself used the terms imprecisely. Either way it is clear that Josephus was eager to posit citizenship of Diaspora Jews, for this would certainly have made them look like insiders, equal to Greeks in many ways. The question of the status of Jews in Alexandria was an old one in Josephus’ day. However, his aim was not simply to contribute an opinion about that particular problem. Instead he made the case for Jewish equality on a much larger scale. The Jewish struggle for civic status also reveals another dimension of the situation. Bilde noted that the most important feature of the Western Jewish Diaspora was its struggle for equal civic rights and cultural recognition, “And this struggle was, and had to be, fought against their Greek fellow citizens.”⁴⁵ Roman ascendancy, however, meant that the struggle the Jews had engaged with their Greek neighbors was now taken to a Roman audience for adjudication.

Beyond things such as adopting a Greek paradigm for the title and number of books for his work, and using Greek terms where they did not precisely fit, Josephus also made connections

⁴³ J. Barclay, ‘The Politics of Contempt: Judaeans and Egyptians in Josephus’ *Against Apion*’, in J. Barclay (ed.), *Negotiating Diaspora: Jewish Strategies in the Roman Empire* (London 2004) 109-27.

⁴⁴ Applebaum, ‘The Legal Status of the Jewish Communities’, 451.

⁴⁵ Bilde, ‘The Jews in the Diaspora of the Roman Empire’, 106.

between ancient Greeks and Jewish history. Overall, Josephus cited 55 Greek authors in his works, 21 of them in the Biblical section of *Antiquitates Judaicae* in 36 citations.⁴⁶ For example, in *Antiquitates Judaicae* 7.67, as Josephus related the capture of Jerusalem from the Jebusites by David, he paused to note that γὰρ Ἀβράμου τοῦ προγόνου ἡμῶν Σόλυμα ἐκαλεῖτο μετὰ ταῦτα δὲ αὐτὴν φασὶ τινες ὅτι καὶ Ὅμηρος ταῦτ' ὠνόμασεν Ἱεροσόλυμα τὸ γὰρ ἱεροῦ κατὰ τὴν Ἑβραίων γλῶτταν ὠνόμασε τὰ Σόλυμα ὃ ἐστὶν ἀσφάλεια (“For it was called Soluma at the time of Abraham our forefather, but after these things some say that Homer also called it Jerusalem, for the temple is called, according to the Hebrew language, Soluma, that is, ‘stability’”).⁴⁷ The reference is possibly to *Odyssey* 5.283, which mentions the Solymian hills. This connection is probably incorrect,⁴⁸ but Josephus was using a well-known method among the ancients (seen especially in Herodotus) to connect ancient places with places known to contemporary readers. The fact that Tacitus made the same possible identification of the Jews with the Solymi in Jerusalem in his *Histories* (5.2) may mean that Josephus was drawing on a fairly well-known idea (unless Tacitus got the idea from Josephus). It was the connection with Homer (or epic poetry in general) that was significant for Josephus, and not whether the connection could withstand all criticism. By making this connection Josephus hinted at two things: 1) the antiquity of Jewish culture and its capital city (and antiquity was a well-respected quality among the Romans), and 2) that the greatest poet of ancient Greece apparently knew of the Jews and graced them with mention in his immortal composition. The connection was designed to give his

⁴⁶ J. Bowley, ‘Josephus’ Use of Greek Sources for Biblical History’, in J. Reeves and J. Kampen (eds.), *Pursuing the Text: Studies in Honor of Ben Zion Wacholder* (JSOTSup 184, Sheffield 1994) 202-4.

⁴⁷ The part of the text that mentions Homer is disputed. Marcus’ opinion (Loeb edition V 394) is that “these words are probably a gloss.”

⁴⁸ Jaeger 127-8.

narrative more credibility and to offer a broader perspective which took in non-Jews.⁴⁹ Josephus was arguably following the model of Herodotus, whose account was famous for its inclusion of stories about foreigners. Even more, such stories “provided a convenient means whereby the Jews could reinvent themselves in a Hellenistic context”⁵⁰—that is, they provided a way to construct a Greek ethnicity for Jews.

There was also a thread that connected the Jews with Sparta. In *2 Maccabees* 5.9 is the story that in 168 BCE the high priest of the Jews, Jason, fled to Sparta when he could find no refuge in Egypt. The reason he chose Sparta was διὰ τὴν συγγένειαν (“on account of their kinship”). Another story related how the high priest Jonathan sent letters to Rome and to Sparta asking for renewal of friendship with those states. The letter to Sparta is recorded in *1 Maccabees* 12.5-18, and a copy of the response from king Areus of Sparta follows (verses 19-23). In those letters the Jews and Spartans mutually acknowledged each other as ἀδελφοί. Josephus related this latter story in a shortened form in *Antiquitates Judaicae* 12.225-7, and had the Spartan king say to the Jews that ἐντυχόντες γραφῆ τινι εὔρομεν ὡς ἐξ ἑνὸς εἶεν γένους Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ Λακεδαιμόνιοι καὶ ἐκ τῆς πρὸς Ἄβραμον οἰκειότητος (“by coming across a certain document we have found that Jews and Spartans are of one *genos* and are of kinship to Abraham”), and then referred to the Jews saying ἀδελφούς ὑμᾶς ὄντας (“since you are brethren”). After Jonathan died, the Spartans also sent an offer of alliance to his successor, Simon (*1 Mac* 14.20-3). Earlier, in *Antiquitates Judaicae* 1.240-1 Josephus quoted the historian Alexander Polyhistor (first century BCE), who himself cited an author named Cleodemus Malchus, that two of Abraham’s sons accompanied Heracles in his Libyan expedition. The daughter of one of these sons married Hercules and bore Diodorus, who fathered a son named

⁴⁹ Bowley 207.

⁵⁰ E. Gruen, ‘Fact and Fiction’, 78.

Sophon, from whom the Sophacians derived their name. Plutarch (*Sert.* 9.8-10) speaks of a son of Heracles named Sophax, and relates that Sparta was founded by Heracles and that the city was ruled by his descendants for several generations. Herodotus reported (7.208) that Leonidas was descended from Heracles.⁵¹ So a connection between Abraham and Heracles made Jews and Spartans brethren. Josephus never made the direct connection himself, but, as it was in the case of his reference to Homer, it was unnecessary to do so. The suggestion was enough.

Sometimes Josephus was fortunate enough to find a reference in a Greek author that fit his Jewish topic precisely. For example, in *Antiquitates Judaicae* 1.107-8 Josephus was dealing with the long lifespans of people in the primeval age, specifically the age of Noah. The Biblical text says that Noah died at the age of 950 years.⁵² This, of course, required some kind of defense, and Josephus found it in the works of Greek historians. He said:

μαρτυροῦσι δέ μου τῷ λόγῳ πάντες οἱ παρ' Ἑλλήσι καὶ βαρβάροις συγγραψάμενοι τὰς ἀρχαιολογίας καὶ γὰρ καὶ Μανέθων ὁ τὴν Αἰγυπτίων ποιησάμενος ἀναγραφὴν καὶ Βηρωσὸς ὁ τὰ Χαλδαϊκὰ συναγαγὼν καὶ Μῶχός τε καὶ Ἐστιαῖος καὶ πρὸς τούτοις ὁ Αἰγύπιος Ἱερώνυμος οἱ τὰ Φοινικικὰ συγγραψάμενοι συμφωνοῦσι τοῖς ὑπ' ἐμοῦ λεγομένοις Ἡσίοδος τε καὶ Ἑκαταῖος καὶ Ἑλλάνικος καὶ Ἀκουσίλαος καὶ πρὸς τούτοις Ἐφορος καὶ Νικόλαος ἱστοροῦσι τοὺς ἀρχαίους ζήσαντας ἔτη χίλια περὶ μὲν τούτων ὡς ἂν ἑκάστοις ἢ φίλον οὕτω σκοπεῖτωσαν

(“All those from the Greeks and the barbarians who have composed *Archaeologies* testify about my statement, for even Manetho who produced the Egyptian history, and Berossus, who collected the Chaldean evidences, and Mochus, and Hestaius, and with these the Egyptian Hieronymus and those who composed the Phoenician records, agree with the things said by me, and Hesiod, Hecataeus, Hellanicus, and Acusilaus, and with these Ephorus and Nicolaus, record that the ancients lived a thousand years. But concerning these things, let each one consider them as he pleases.”).

⁵¹ In making these connections I have followed L. Feldman, ‘Josephus’ Moses and Plutarch’s Lycurgus’, in J. Edmondson et al (eds.), *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome* (Oxford 2005) 212-3. See also Gruen, ‘Cultural Fictions and Cultural Identity’, 9-10.

⁵² *Gen.* 9.29.

What is most interesting is the comment at the end (*cf.* also 2.348, 3.81, et al) which echoed well-known statements in Greek historiographers⁵³ and “became a commonplace in Hellenistic-Roman historiography.”⁵⁴ This offer to allow the reader to judge for himself was an obvious Greek touch in an account that was otherwise strongly apologetic. In this same vein, Josephus sometimes mentioned Herodotus in order to disagree with him.⁵⁵ By the first century fault-finding with Herodotus had become a minor convention in historiography,⁵⁶ and Josephus participated in it like any other contemporary Greek author would.

Many Greek paradigms made impressions on the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, and sometimes particular elements within the traditional materials with which Josephus worked lent themselves quite easily to Greek presentations. For example, the creation story in the Biblical account described a primordial world surrounded by water, which Josephus implicitly connected with the mention of the four-headed river of *Genesis* 2.10 to become a river that encircles the whole earth.⁵⁷ This sounds just like the Greek Oceanos that surrounded the earth and was the source of all life.⁵⁸ That this was purely an attempt to make the Biblical account conform to Greek models is made clearer by the fact that the rabbinic reading of the Biblical creation story posited no such

⁵³ E.g., Hdt. 2.123; Th. 6.2.1; D.H. 1.48.

⁵⁴ S. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, 39. The practice is recommended explicitly in Lucian, *Hist. Conscr.* 60.

⁵⁵ *AJ* 8.253ff, 10.19f.

⁵⁶ Bowley 211-2. *cf.* the famous passage in Thucydides, 1.20, and Plutarch’s *On the Malice of Herodotus*. Josephus later says in *Ap.* 1.16 περίεργος δ’ ἂν εἶην ἐγὼ τοὺς ἐμοῦ μᾶλλον ἐπισταμένους διδάσκων ὅσα μὲν Ἑλλάνικος Ἀκουσίλαῳ περὶ τῶν γενεαλογιῶν διαπεφώνηκεν ὅσα δὲ διορθοῦται τὸν Ἡσίοδον Ἀκουσίλαος ἢ τίνα τρόπον Ἐφορος μὲν Ἑλλάνικον ἐν τοῖς πλείστοις ψευδόμενον ἐπιδείκνυσιν Ἐφορον δὲ Τίμαιος καὶ Τίμαιον οἱ μετ’ ἐκείνον γεγονότες Ἡρόδοτον δὲ πάντες (“I would be over-doing it if I were to teach them what they know, what a great disagreement Hellenicus has with Acusilaus about genealogies, how Acusilaus sets Hesiod straight, or in what way Ephorus demonstrates Hellenicus a liar in most of his history, as Timaeus then does to Ephorus, and the succeeding writers do to Timaeus, and all do to Herodotus”).

⁵⁷ *AJ* 1.38.

⁵⁸ *Cf. Il.* 18.607, 21.194; Hdt. 4.8; Arist. *Metaph.* A3.983b27.

thing.⁵⁹ At other times Josephus expanded a Biblical narrative to incorporate Greek features that were not originally there in his source materials. Thus although the canonical Biblical picture did not describe the life of the first man, Adam, as blissful, Josephus used this language to enlarge on the Biblical account and thus made the narrative conform to Greek ideal of the past Golden Age as found in Hesiod and many other classical authors.⁶⁰ In particular, Hesiod said that in the Golden Age men were free from ills (κακοί) and toil (πόνος), in contrast to a life of misery in which men grow old quickly (καταγηράσκω).⁶¹ Josephus had God say that Adam’s life was κακοῦ παντὸς ἀπαθῆ (“free from every evil”), that Adam was able to live χωρὶς ὑμέτερου πόνου (“without your own toil”) which otherwise would have only brought on old age sooner (ὦν παρόντων γηράς τε θάττον).⁶² Alternately, sometimes Josephus inserted key terms that would make a reader think of a Biblical story in terms of a similar Greek story. So in telling the story of the flood Josephus said that Noah built an ark, a λάρναξ. The LXX used a different word (κιβωτός), but Josephus chose to use the word that was used by Apollodorus⁶³ and Plutarch⁶⁴ in telling the Greek tradition of the flood and the story of Deucalion. Thus either by adding details, by capitalizing on features of his material that had Greek parallels, or by changing the vocabulary to suggest Greek parallels, Josephus told the ancestral Jewish stories in a particularly Greek way.

⁵⁹ Feldman, *Studies in Josephus’ Rewritten Bible* 1.

⁶⁰ Feldman, *Studies in Josephus’ Rewritten Bible*, 3-4.

⁶¹ *Op.* 113-115, 90-93.

⁶² *AJ* 1.46. Note that Josephus has used the Attic spelling (θάττον) instead of the spelling more common in the Koine, θάσσον.

⁶³ *Bibliotheca* 1.7.2.

⁶⁴ *De soll. an.*, 13.

Exempla

The Hellenistic canons of Greek historiography also made impressions on Josephus' account of Jewish history. By Josephus' day historiography was becoming more biographically-oriented. It had long been a method within Greek historiography to present leading figures in historical episodes as *exempla* of character traits, virtues, and conduct to be emulated.⁶⁵ The technique was already discernible in Aristotle, Isocrates (his *Evagoras*), and Thucydides.⁶⁶ It received further impetus in Xenophon's *Hellenica* and his biography of Agesilaus,⁶⁷ and in the hands of Polybius *exempla* became prime vehicles for his purposes of modeling political utility.⁶⁸ Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* (which he himself called "histories") represented a culmination of this process of transformation from history as a record of events, led along the way by great historical figures, to history mostly as the biography of an exemplar. Interestingly, Plutarch's biographies were apologetic in nature, designed to demonstrate that great Greeks were equal to great Romans.⁶⁹ Josephus' presentation of Jewish history in the *Antiquitates Judaicae* was similarly driven by *exempla*, and their stories were crafted to make them similar to prominent Greek characters. A few examples may suffice.

The founding father of the Jews was Abraham, and Josephus crafted his presentation of this leading Jewish exemplar after the model of a Greek philosopher. Josephus says that Abraham δεινὸς ὢν συνείναι τε περὶ πάντων καὶ πιθανὸς τοῖς ἀκρωμένοις ("was clever,

⁶⁵ Momigliano, 'Tradition and the Classical Historian', 289.

⁶⁶ Feldman, 'Josephus' Moses and Plutarch's Lycurgus', 209-11.

⁶⁷ J. Bury, *The Ancient Greek Historians* (New York 1958), 153.

⁶⁸ Fornara 107-113.

⁶⁹ Grant 73.

knowing all things and able to persuade those who heard him”).⁷⁰ His ability to persuade, that is, to use rhetoric effectively, cast him in good Greek fashion. Josephus also presented Abraham as having higher conceptions of ἀρετή than others and as being the first proponent of monotheism,⁷¹ having arrived at this conclusion not by divine revelation (as the Biblical story might suggest), but by use of his ability to reason.⁷² In fact, the Abraham of Josephus uses a form of the teleological argument that is based on Platonic and Stoic models.⁷³ “More simply, we may say that Josephus has taken Cleanthes’ third argument from the irregularity of sublunar phenomena and extended it to the heavens themselves. Josephus was apparently the first to do so, and Abraham is thus depicted as a philosophic innovator.”⁷⁴ The portrait also included statements that Abraham won the respect of the Egyptians as being a man of the greatest intelligence (συνετώτατος), that he (again) possessed a superb ability to persuade, and was the one who taught the Egyptians arithmetic and astronomy,⁷⁵ and that when he went to Egypt at a time of famine in Palestine it was not simply to get food, but also to converse with the Egyptians on philosophical matters and to correct their thinking, unless theirs proved superior to his.⁷⁶ He was superbly intelligent and yet fair-minded, and most importantly, open to serious and substantial dialogue with others. This strongly positive portrayal of Abraham no doubt was designed to counter the popular image that Jews were closed-minded and intolerant of all that was not Jewish. Abraham

⁷⁰ *AJ* 1.154. Feldman notes that ἀκροάομαι was used of students listening in the philosophical schools. L. Feldman, ‘Abraham the Greek Philosopher in Josephus’, *TPAPA* 99 (1968) 145.

⁷¹ *AJ* 1.155.

⁷² *AJ* 1.155-57.

⁷³ Feldman, ‘Abraham the Greek Philosopher’, 146-7.

⁷⁴ Feldman, ‘Abraham the Greek Philosopher’, 149.

⁷⁵ *AJ* 1.167.

⁷⁶ *AJ* 1.161.

was portrayed as a veritable Jewish Aristotle, a Hellenistic “renaissance man.” With such a great exemplar at the head of their family tree, how could one not respect the Jews?

In Greek thought, the nobility of a body of law was partly a function of the nobility of the lawgiver.⁷⁷ Thus it was necessary for Josephus to present a positive—and Greek—portrayal of the great lawgiver of the Jews, Moses, who was apparently the most well-known Jewish character among Gentiles.⁷⁸ A positive, Greek portrayal of Moses would (in Josephus’ opinion at least) have contributed significantly to the building of a Jewish ethnicity along Greek lines. Hata has argued that Josephus’ treatment of Moses “reveals the intention of its author and the hidden current running under its narrative only when it is read within the context of the anti-Semitism that is attacked in *Against Apion*.”⁷⁹ One of the most obvious attempts to align Moses with Greeks is when Josephus says that the so-called Song of Moses—the poem celebrating the deliverance of the Israelites at the Red Sea and the simultaneous defeat of the Egyptians (Exodus 15)—was composed in hexameter verse,⁸⁰ and that Moses later composed another work in hexameter,⁸¹ which by its description apparently refers to a section of the canonical Deuteronomy. There is no such regularly discernible thing as hexameter in Hebrew poetry, nor does the LXX text of Exodus 15 render the Song of Moses as hexameter; this was a purely Greek characterization on Josephus’ part. It did, however, make Moses look like that famous ancient Greek historian-poet, Homer.

⁷⁷ Cf. Y. Amir, ‘Josephus on the Mosaic “Constitution”’, in H. Reventlow et al (eds.), *Politics and Theopolitics in the Bible and Postbiblical Literature* (JSOTSup 171, Sheffield 1994) 18.

⁷⁸ There are at least 24 separate references to Moses or the exodus in pagan literature contemporary with Josephus. G. Hata, ‘The Story of Moses Interpreted within the Context of Anti-Semitism’, in L. Feldman and G. Hata (eds.), *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity* (Detroit 1987) 180f.

⁷⁹ Hata, ‘The Story of Moses’, 182.

⁸⁰ *AJ* 2.346.

⁸¹ *AJ* 4.303.

A more subtle approach is taken concerning the presentation of Moses' deeds. Feldman has observed that the contours of Josephus' portrayal of Moses follow closely the contours of Plutarch's portrayal of the Spartan lawgiver Lycurgus. For example, both are portrayed as reluctant to take hold of the reins of power, as the objects of envy, as men who sought wisdom from abroad, as military leaders, as survivors of rebellions led by relatives, and as men characterized by moderation and piety.⁸² Similarly, the bodies of law that came from each are described as having similar features. Both came from deity, both created councils of elders to assist in governance, both discouraged the visual arts, both forbade consultation of soothsayers, both demanded an offering of the first fruits of crops, both paid particular attention to details of child-rearing, and both demanded that the laws not be changed.⁸³ In other ways, Josephus presented Moses as a Stoic philosopher. For example, Josephus borrowed a Stoic phrase, *πόνων καταφρονήσει* ("despising exertion") to describe the greatness of Moses in *Antiquitates Judaicae* 2.229.⁸⁴ The account also has dramatic touches with motifs and phrases from the Greek tragedians.⁸⁵

Whether or not Josephus knew Plutarch or his writings is debatable, so the question of borrowing is hard to decide. Feldman argues that it is possible, if not likely, that the two men at least knew of each other if they did not actually know each other.⁸⁶ However, both authors were acquainted with the elements of *encomia* commonly advocated in the rhetorical practices of the day. Thus even if they did not have direct access to each other's work, they shared a common paradigm for writing about great historical figures. Either way, Josephus' portrait of Moses

⁸² Feldman, 'Josephus' Moses and Plutarch's Lycurgus', 216-22.

⁸³ Feldman, 'Josephus' Moses and Plutarch's Lycurgus', 222-30.

⁸⁴ L. Feldman, 'Josephus' Portrait of Moses. Part Three', *JQR* 83 (1993) 321.

⁸⁵ Feldman, 'Josephus' Portrait of Moses. Part Three', 322-5.

⁸⁶ Feldman, 'Josephus' Portrait of Moses. Part Three', 231-7.

clearly shared many similarities with Plutarch's presentation of Lycurgus. In fact, "Moses is modeled in Platonic fashion after the founder of a Greek *polis*, whose laws form the constitution (πολιτεία) of the state."⁸⁷ In this way, Moses was presented as reflecting Greek virtues almost transparently. Such a thoroughly Greek picture of the Jewish lawgiver was designed not only to present yet another great exemplar for which the Jewish people as a whole ought to be respected, but also to impart a similar respect to the law which came through Moses. This was an important part of the project for Josephus, given the low view many pagans had about things such as Jewish Sabbath observance and dietary restrictions.

Certain foreigners in the Biblical stories, or stories of Jews in foreign contexts, were especially important for Josephus because they presented opportunities to show favorable relationships between Jews and non-Jews. Again, such incidents become arguments imbedded within the narrative. If other foreigners could respect the Jews and their culture, and treat them favorably, then so could the Romans. In fact, in light of stories of favorable relationships between Jews and other nations, the Romans would appear out of step, as if every other nation found admirable qualities in the Jews except the Romans. So Josephus had Jethro, a foreigner (Midianite), adopt Moses as his son,⁸⁸ something the canonical Biblical story did not posit. Most importantly, Joseph rose to prominence in Egypt, and Daniel was a Jew who served the Babylonian court in the Jewish diaspora in Babylon itself. Since such narrative situations were important for presenting a positive picture of Jews in the diaspora in the Roman world, Josephus gave considerable space in his work to these two figures. In fact, both of these figures would

⁸⁷ Feldman, 'Josephus' Portrait of Moses. Part Three', 215-6. Cf. A. Droge ('Josephus Between Greeks and Barbarians', 126) commenting on the similar treatment of Moses in the *Ap.*: "The presentation of Moses in this passage owes more to Plato's *Laws* than it does to the book of Deuteronomy."

⁸⁸ *AJ* 2.263.

have been an important characters for Josephus personally, since they, like Josephus, were prophets living outside of their homeland who predicted favorable things of the pagans they served and who were the object of jealousy on the part of rivals. In each of these cases Josephus expanded the Biblical accounts to enhance the idea of a positive reception of Jews by non-Jews which was only latent in the Biblical texts.⁸⁹

Josephus paid special attention to the account of the Jewish patriarch Joseph. The canonical Hebrew text of Genesis spent 585 lines to tell his story, but Josephus used 1172 lines.⁹⁰ In Josephus' hands, Joseph was presented as having the best qualities of a Hellenistic hero. Josephus emphasized Joseph's good looks, a quality that reminds us of great Greek characters renowned for their handsome appearance such as Hector in the *Iliad*⁹¹ or the statement in Plato's *Phaedrus* that leaders ought to be handsome.⁹² In addition to good looks, Josephus also claimed that Joseph possessed a keen mind, evoking the semblance of Roman characters such as Romulus and Remus who are described in the same way.⁹³ In fact Josephus went out of his way to stress the wisdom of Joseph, using no less than five different words (σοφία, σύνεσις, δεξιότης, φρόνησις / φρόνημα, and λογισμός) for wisdom or intelligence in the account.⁹⁴ His wisdom was manifested in several ways. For example, Joseph is presented as being skilled in the art of persuasion in a way that is quite different from the presentation in the Biblical text. In the scene

⁸⁹ It may be that Josephus also emphasized these stories out of self-defense. As prophets in foreign courts, Joseph and Daniel serve as paradigms for Josephus himself. Although the Greeks and Romans were well familiar with the idea of inspired poets, they were unfamiliar with the idea of inspired historiographers. As I noted in chapter two, Josephus' status as a prophet (respected in Jewish culture) would have been radically relativized under the social structure of Roman culture. Perhaps these stories therefore also served as an apologetic for Josephus' self-designated role in his Roman situation.

⁹⁰ L. Feldman, 'Josephus' Portrait of Joseph', *RB* 99 (1992) 380-1.

⁹¹ 22.370.

⁹² 279.

⁹³ Dion. Hal. 1.79.10.

⁹⁴ As noted by Feldman, 'Josephus' Portrait of Joseph', 392.

where Potiphar's wife propositions Joseph, in the Biblical account the young man refuses on moral grounds alone (*Genesis* 39:8-9). In Josephus' account, however, Joseph attempts to avert the woman's advances with rational argument. In fact, in Josephus' telling of the story, Potiphar's wife was just as attracted to Joseph because of his intellect as she was by his good looks.⁹⁵ In a similar way, although the Biblical text reports that the king of Egypt consulted his magicians in the attempt to interpret his dreams, in Josephus' telling of the story the magicians are not mentioned and the story becomes a contest between the wise men of Egypt and the wise Joseph.⁹⁶ Furthermore, in the Biblical text Joseph suggested that the pharaoh appoint someone to manage the harvests in light of the coming famine, but in Josephus' version the pharaoh asked Joseph to do this job without having it suggested to him first, which gave the impression that the pharaoh was impressed with Joseph's wisdom already. Generally, foreigners in Josephus' telling of the story (Potiphar, his wife, the king of Egypt, etc.) regularly noticed Joseph's intellect.

More importantly, Josephus drew significant attention to Joseph's wisdom in his ability to interpret dreams, a skill widely revered in the ancient world, including among the Greeks. Dreams were important for Josephus; he recorded 35 of them in his works.⁹⁷ Like other ancient peoples, the Greeks generally believed that dreams were communications from gods,⁹⁸ and the ability to interpret them was considered a special talent. In fact, it was generally acknowledged that the interpretation of dreams was a talent that belonged only to people who were spiritual⁹⁹ and who possessed a high degree of piety and goodness.¹⁰⁰ Alternately, some in the ancient

⁹⁵ *AJ* 2.41.

⁹⁶ *AJ* 2.75.

⁹⁷ Feldman, 'Josephus' Portrait of Joseph', 396.

⁹⁸ Cf. *Il.* 1.62-3; Hes. *Theog.* 211-13; *Crito* 44.A2-B5.

⁹⁹ *Pl. Smp.* 203A.

¹⁰⁰ P. Athanassiadi, 'Dreams, Theurgy, and Freelance Divination: The Testimony of Iamblichus', *JRS* 83 (1993) 116.

world (e.g., the Epicureans) believed that the interpretation of dreams was the proper domain of philosophers.¹⁰¹ Either way, Joseph was in good company. That one of the founding figures of the Jewish people had significant experiences with dreams (either receiving them or interpreting them) that led him from one land to another immediately makes us think also of Aeneas and his dream in *Aeneid* 3.147-71, where he is told to go to Italy.¹⁰² Of course, not everyone in ancient times believed that dreams were auspicious. Thucydides ignored them, and among some people in Roman times, dreams were considered only deceptive and insubstantial, things that concerned only those who were simplistically superstitious.¹⁰³ Yet in spite of skeptics, belief in the divine nature or divine origin of dreams persisted in the ancient world. Even Aristotle believed that they had some significance although he was able to deny intellectually that they were sent by gods.¹⁰⁴ Josephus was not necessarily arguing philosophically about their significance one way or the other. It seems that instead Josephus saw in this feature of the Joseph story an element that resounded with the culture of his day, one that made the Jews look much like Greeks and Romans. In fact, the time in which Josephus wrote was a time when dreams were being given more and more credence in the culture at large. The abundance of documents about dreams and their interpretation from the Greek East and Egypt led Clay to refer to the second century CE as “an age of dreams,”¹⁰⁵ and Harris remarks that “the epigraphical evidence suggests at least the possibility that dream prophecies gained an extra degree of importance from Flavian times or after 100 AD.”¹⁰⁶ The Joseph narrative lent itself quite easily to the sentiments of the day.

¹⁰¹ See D. Clay, ‘An Epicurean Interpretation of Dreams’, *AJP* 101 (1980) 342-65.

¹⁰² Cf. A. Weston, ‘Three Dreams of Aeneas’, *CJ* 32 (1937) 229-32.

¹⁰³ E.g., Theophrastus (*Char.* 16.11) and Diogenes of Sinope (*Diog. Laert.* 6.43). See W. Harris, ‘Roman Opinions About the Truthfulness of Dreams’, *JRS* 93 (2003) 18-34.

¹⁰⁴ Arist., *Div. Somn.* 1.462b14-15, 463a5-6; 2.463b12-464b6.

¹⁰⁵ Clay 343.

¹⁰⁶ Harris 31.

In the story of Joseph we see another quality of the Hellenistic hero, viz. that he comes from good stock. This too was part of the Greek convention of historiography Josephus chose to emulate. The *Hippias maior*, ascribed to Plato, dictated that one of the things that ought to receive due attention in an ἀρχαιολογία is the matter of genealogy.¹⁰⁷ Glaucus and Diomedes exchanged genealogies when they meet on the battlefield in the *Iliad* to establish their status as great men.¹⁰⁸ Tacitus related the ancestry of Agricola in his biography of that well-known legate,¹⁰⁹ and Herodotus traced the lineage of the Spartan king Leonidas.¹¹⁰ Dionysius of Halicarnassus emphasized this quality in Romulus and Remus when he noted that οἱ δὲ ἀνδρωθέντες γίνονται κατὰ τε ἀξίωσιν μορφῆς καὶ φρονήματος ὄγκον οὐ συφορβοῖς καὶ βουκόλοις ἐοικότες, ἀλλ’ οἷους ἄν τις ἀξιώσειε τοὺς ἐκ βασιλείου τε φύντας γένους καὶ ἀπὸ δαιμόνων σπορᾶς γενέσθαι νομιζομένους (“when they became men, they appeared both in elegance of form and elevation of thought not as pig-herders or cattle-herders, but as those whom one might consider as born of royal lineage and thought to be offspring of the gods”).¹¹¹ The ancient novel likewise gave due attention up front to the genealogy of the main character.¹¹² Yet Josephus did not use genealogies in his stories to connect the Jews to the Greeks. Instead he used them to connect great Jewish figures with the Greek *value* of having a good ancestry.

Josephus’ presentation of the Jewish prophet Daniel makes the same basic impression as the Joseph story. In general, Josephus tried to emphasize a core set of values about many of the Biblical characters he treated. “When we examine the key figures in Josephus’ paraphrase of the Biblical narrative, we see that, in almost every case, in addition to the external qualities of good

¹⁰⁷ 285D.

¹⁰⁸ 6.123-231.

¹⁰⁹ Ag. 4.

¹¹⁰ 7.204.

¹¹¹ 1.79.10.

¹¹² G. Schmeling, *Xenophon of Ephesus* (Boston 1980) 21.

birth and handsome stature, he places great stress on the four cardinal virtues of character—wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice—and on the spiritual quality of piety.”¹¹³ Josephus used the literary convention of the *exemplar* not only in imitation of Greek historiographical style, but also to present Jewish characters as people who embodied Greek ideals.

To say that Josephus portrayed Jews as having Greek characteristics, or that he used Greek models in telling Jewish history, is not to say that Josephus necessarily did it well. The fact that he was a newcomer to the Greek literary tradition showed itself from time to time. One of the most obvious problems was that in the part of the *Antiquitates Judaicae* that dealt with Biblical history (books 1-11), he sometimes mixed the genres of myth and historiography (as when he compared Moses to Homer). The history of the Hebrews as contained in the canonical books of the Hebrew Bible¹¹⁴ was written as history, as a detailed account presented as a continuum. In this way the Jews had long been different from the Greeks, who had myths (in poetry) for their ancient past and histories (in prose) for their recent past. When Josephus attempted to cast Hebrew “historical” characters into forms that made them resemble Greek mythical characters, he was blurring a well-known line in his day.¹¹⁵ The result does not look typically Greek in some ways and thus paradoxically made the finished product look foreign in these aspects, not Hellenic.

Stories of Positive Impressions on Non-Jews

Just as foreigners in the Biblical stories are often heard acknowledging Jewish piety, Josephus also knew of another document that bolstered this image. Thus Josephus paid special

¹¹³ Feldman, ‘Josephus’ Portrait of Joseph’, 390. Cf. also L. Feldman, ‘Josephus’ Portrait of Jacob’, *JQR* 79 2/3 (1988-1989) 106.

¹¹⁴ The contents of his Bible are described in *Ap.* 1.38-40. The Hebrew canon was considered closed in Josephus’ day.

¹¹⁵ M. I. Finley, ‘Myth, Memory, and History’, *History and Theory* 4 (1965) 281-302.

attention to the story of the LXX itself. A particular document, the so-called *Letter of Aristeas*, explained the origin of the translation and suited Josephus' purposes well. Just how important it was for Josephus may be gauged from the amount of space he devoted to it in his work. Pelletier claims that "After the Bible, it is the document that Josephus cites most extensively."¹¹⁶ From it Josephus presented the LXX as a *bona fide* piece of Greek literature, produced at the request of an pagan ruler (Ptolemy Philadelphus) who is portrayed as interested in Jewish laws and customs and whose invitation to produce the translation was a tacit invitation for the Jews to participate in the Hellenistic cultural world.

The story was particularly well-suited to Josephus' aims, because the *Letter* placed the production of the LXX within the context of the birth of the Hellenistic age and in a place that was indisputably one of the greatest centers of Hellenistic learning, Alexandria. The picture was that from the beginning of the Hellenistic age, the Jews had been recognized as having something important to contribute and were invited inside. A Hellenistic scholar, with the agreement of the king, thought that the books of the Jews ought to have a place in the great library. Their inclusion there was a confession, as it were, that the LXX was worth reading by the Greeks. This point was guaranteed by the fact that the LXX had been produced under the patronage of no less than the king of Egypt in consultation with one who was arguably the greatest scholar of the day, the keeper of the Royal Library of Alexandria, Demetrius of Phalerum. This story, however, betrays evidence of editing that was sensitive to the tastes of a Roman audience. The *Letter of Aristeas* had been transmitted among the Jews (obtaining a place in the collection known as the Apocrypha), but it was written in the Koine Greek of the second and third centuries BCE, and that style "did not reflect the literary tastes of the early Roman

¹¹⁶ A. Pelletier, 'Josephus, the Letter of Aristeas, and the Septuagint', in L. Feldman and G. Hata (eds.), *Josephus, The Bible, and History* (Detroit 1989) 102.

Empire.”¹¹⁷ So rather than quote from the document, Josephus paraphrased it. Similarly, details of the story that would have bored Romans are omitted, and he has simply extracted the material that made for the best narrative.¹¹⁸

Foreign rulers or other powerful figures who had favorable experiences with Jews were also important for Josephus’ purposes, and their stories were similarly enhanced to emphasize their good will toward Jews. Balaam, the Mesopotamian prophet who was hired to curse the Israelites but who instead blessed them, thus became an important figure for Josephus, and he devoted a third more space to the account than the LXX did. The picture of Balaam in Josephus is not that of the classical arch-enemy of Jews, as the rabbis depicted him. Josephus instead softened the picture by adding such things as Balaam’s offering a sacrifice before he prophesied¹¹⁹ and the prophet’s hospitality toward the envoys from the Moabite king Balak.¹²⁰ Even more importantly, here Josephus had a story of a non-Jew blessing the Jews. However, with the prophet’s blessing in the Biblical text came the characterization that the people of Israel “will dwell alone” (*Numbers* 23:9), which could potentially only serve to underscore perceptions of Jewish aloofness from the rest of the world. So Josephus had the prophet predict instead that the Jews would become the happiest of all people.¹²¹

In a similar vein, Josephus was able to capitalize on the fact that the *Letter of Aristeas* portrays Ptolemy Philadelphus as having such a favorable disposition towards the Jews and such high regard for their piety that he released all Jews from slavery within his domain, at considerable expense (700 talents) to the royal treasury, and that the invitation to come to

¹¹⁷ Pelletier, 102-3.

¹¹⁸ Pelletier, 103-6.

¹¹⁹ *AJ* 4.113.

¹²⁰ *AJ* 4.105.

¹²¹ *AJ* 4. 114.

Alexandria and work on the translation was accompanied by beautiful furnishings for the Jerusalem temple. What a contrast there was between the magnanimous and respectful treatment of Ptolemy on the one hand, and the treatment Jews received from Romans on the other hand. Ptolemy supplied a table for the temple, the Romans had taken a table out of the temple when they sacked it. Ptolemy released Jewish slaves, the Romans made slaves of Jews. Ptolemy invited the Jews to be part of Hellenistic culture and for the written expressions of their culture to have a place on one of the most important institutions of the day, the library of Alexandria. The Romans, however, generally kept the Jews at arm's length. Surely these contrasts were not totally lost on Roman readers of the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, and were designed to make them rethink their stance toward the Jews.

One of the most important stories for Josephus' purpose of aligning Jews with Greeks was his account of the meeting between Alexander the Great and the Jews in Jerusalem.¹²² As it stands the story appears to be a compilation of three original stories,¹²³ which Josephus himself combined.¹²⁴ The tale is surely apocryphal, dating perhaps from the Maccabean period.¹²⁵ Neither Arrian nor Plutarch nor any other credible Greek source mentions a visit to inland Palestine by Alexander, neither on his way to nor from Egypt. The only other literature in which the story is mentioned is late and Jewish in origin. Greek history knew nothing about a meeting of Alexander with Jerusalem Jews. Nevertheless, the value of this story for Josephus' purposes of ethnicity was immense. The Jewish reception of Alexander at Jerusalem is related as a typical

¹²² *AJ* 11.302-47.

¹²³ A. Büchler, 'La relation de Josèphe concernant Alexandre le Grand', *Revue des études juives* 36 (1898) 1-26.

¹²⁴ S. Cohen, 'Alexander the Great and Jaddus the High Priest According to Josephus', *AJS Review* 7 (1982) 43; see also R. Marcus' appendix C in vol. 6 of the Loeb edition of Josephus.

¹²⁵ A. Momigliano, 'Flavius Josephus and Alexander's Visit to Jerusalem', *Athanaeum* 57 (1979) 442-8.

Greek *adventus* story, in which a monarch is given a grand welcome by the inhabitants of a city.¹²⁶ Alexander was dutifully and clearly acknowledged for the great leader he was. The story goes on to relate that after his *adventus* Alexander honored the Jewish God with a sacrifice and, most importantly, the Jews freely capitulated to Alexander's authority, and Alexander confirmed their right to practice their ancestral customs. Jewish acceptance of Greek culture is thus underscored, as is Greek approval of exclusivistic Jewish monotheism, an approval from the hand of one no less than the founder of the Hellenistic world himself. Furthermore, the story also shares in the qualities of an epiphany tale where a god appears to an important figure in a dream, the result of which is the salvation of a city from destruction.¹²⁷ Here both Alexander and the Jewish high priest Jaddus received dreams, thus doubly insuring the city's safety. The potential aggressor Alexander was prevented from attacking the city, and the guardian priest Jaddus was encouraged about the city's safety. Most importantly, the story also served as a foundation for Josephus' multiple assertions that the Jews enjoyed Greek civic rights from Alexander himself.

Management of Negative Impressions

It is one thing to present an ethnic group as positively as possible using the conventions of the dominant social structure to argue for a basic compatibility between that structure and the ethnic group. It is another thing to deal with negative perceptions satisfactorily. It is to this latter problem, as it presented itself to Josephus in telling the material of Jewish history, that I now turn. Because of the milieu in which he lived and wrote, it was impossible for Josephus to ignore the many criticisms that had been leveled against Jews and Judaism. The risk, however, was always that bringing these matters up only tended to magnify them and keep them in the forefront unless they could be given a truly satisfying treatment.

¹²⁶ S. Cohen, 'Alexander the Great and Jaddus the High Priest', 45-9.

¹²⁷ S. Cohen, 'Alexander the Great and Jaddus the High Priest', 49-53.

One tactic available to Josephus was simply to avoid making things worse for himself and omit elements of stories that proved to be problematic. For example, the Biblical story of the flood has God punishing the world because God “repented” of having made man. This has long proved to be a thorny text and Josephus apparently anticipated that it would have raised considerable problems for his readers. It was not as if there was a lack of attempts to make sense of the Biblical statement; several were at hand to Josephus in the rabbinic traditions. The problem was that a pagan audience that was generally unsympathetic toward Judaism in the first place was not in a position to appreciate any of them. So Josephus’ solution was to omit the statement from the history altogether.¹²⁸ Here we see Josephus at work, picking and choosing which elements of his material can or cannot, in his judgment, manage the impression he hoped to create. This was not, however, a standard nor preferred practice for Josephus. It was risky, because anyone who wished to check the LXX could have seen that Josephus had conveniently left out details that were potentially embarrassing or philosophically problematic. Josephus’ preferred approach instead was to recast the stories in such a way that they were more intelligible for a Hellenistic audience,¹²⁹ or to add materials to make them more palatable. “If we examine other passages which Josephus totally omits, we see that the overwhelming majority of them fall into two categories: either the omission is to protect the reputation of a character, ... or the passages in question are such as would impugn the Jews’ reputation for tolerance .. and offered ammunition to Jew-baiters in his non-Jewish audience.”¹³⁰ Either way, omission seems to have been the solution of last resort. However, the Hebrew primeval history seems to have been one of the most problematic parts of Scripture for Josephus, no doubt because many parts of it sounded

¹²⁸ Feldman, *Studies in Josephus’ Rewritten Bible*, 21-2.

¹²⁹ Feldman, *Studies in Josephus’ Rewritten Bible*, 61.

¹³⁰ Feldman, *Studies in Josephus’ Rewritten Bible*, 62.

strange to Greeks. N. Cohen has noted that Josephus made more changes to the Biblical stories in this part of the history than in the rest of it.

“In AJ I-V the material has been entirely recast with the object of bringing the Biblical narratives into conformity with the style and psychology of the Greek novel. The genealogies have been paraphrased in the Greek style, the narratives embellished with long speeches in the traditional manner of the contemporary historiographer, and much additional matter culled from non-Biblical sources has been added,”¹³¹

Sometimes Josephus encountered the opposite problem in the Biblical materials: not enough information to suggest alignment between Jews and Greeks. Instead of a negative impression, such material simply constituted a non-impression. When this happened, Josephus, with his fluid understanding of the nature of traditional stories, embellished and added details to make a story sound more Greek. For example, one of the most impressive displays of dedication to God in the Hebrew Bible is the *aqedah*, Abraham’s “offering” of Isaac at the command of God (*Genesis* 22). The Biblical narrative was sparse on details in a way that was not typical of Greek stories. So Josephus “hellenized the Biblical narrative so that it acquires precisely those qualities that are missing in the Bible—clarity, uniform illumination, and lack of suspense.”¹³² In the process he also downplayed the theological element of the story and used terminology that echoed Homer’s description of Priam. For example, Isaac is described in *Antiquitates Judaicae* 1.222 as ἐπὶ γήρωσ οὐδῶ κατὰ δωρεάν αὐτῶ τοῦ θεοῦ γεινόμενον (“who was as a gift to him [Abraham] from God on the threshold of his old age”), and Homer described Priam, who was about to lose his son Hector, as ἐπὶ γήραος οὐδῶ (*Il.* 22.60).¹³³ Similarly, Josephus’ presentation of Isaac has affinities with Euripides’ presentation of Iphigenia; both are portrayed as being the delight of their parent, but also willing to be offered and rejecting any notion of acting against

¹³¹ N. Cohen, ‘Josephus and Scripture: Is Josephus’ Treatment of the Scriptural Narrative Similar Throughout the “Antiquities” I-XI?’, *JQR* 54 (1964) 319.

¹³² L. Feldman, ‘Josephus as a Biblical Interpreter: The “Aqedah”’, *JQR* 75 (1985) 213.

¹³³ Feldman, ‘Josephus as a Biblical Interpreter: The “Aqedah”’, 213, 215.

the will of a god.¹³⁴ Yet the story of the *aqedah* had its own problem: it could read to a pagan like a story of child sacrifice, something that was taboo in Hellenistic times.¹³⁵ So in Josephus' account we hear the explanation: οὐ γὰρ ἐπιθυμήσας αἵματος ἀνθρωπίνου τὴν σφαγὴν αὐτῷ προστάξει τοῦ παιδὸς ἔλεγεν (“for it was not that he [God] was desiring human blood that he ordered the slaying of the child by him”)¹³⁶—an addition to the Biblical account.

The Jewish right to the land of Palestine was a touchy issue for Josephus. I noted in a previous chapter that land is a prominent ethnic criterion by most accounts, but that ethnic element was bearing less and less weight for Jews in the first century CE, mostly due to the fact that many of them lived outside the traditional homeland, client kingdoms of Rome in the east were being replaced by direct Roman oversight, and in 70 CE their center of worship in the ancestral homeland was destroyed. In light of these factors (especially the last one), it would have been difficult for Josephus to maintain some kind of Jewish theological claim to the traditional homeland with any kind of credibility. In post-70 CE, Jerusalem was a symbol of Jewish defeat and Roman supremacy, and a theology of possession of Palestine by divine right would have sounded ludicrous. This created a problem for Josephus as he told the Biblical story to outsiders, because the canonical Biblical texts have as a prominent theme the giving of the land of Palestine to Israel by covenant promise from God. So rather than have Abraham leave Chaldea for Palestine at the command of God, Josephus has him leave because of the religious intolerance of the Mesopotamians, and Abraham's descendants will get the land as fulfillment of a prophecy but not as the guarantee of a covenant with God.¹³⁷ There are many places in the canonical narrative where the land and the covenant with God are explicitly connected, but

¹³⁴ Feldman, ‘Josephus as a Biblical Interpreter: The “Aqedah”’, 219, 221, 233.

¹³⁵ Cf. Plutarch, *Pelopidas* 21.4.

¹³⁶ *AJ* 1.233.

¹³⁷ *AJ* 1.185.

Josephus regularly ignored or minimized them. The land theology of the Jews has thus been suppressed at the least, and denied at the most.

There were probably many reasons that presented themselves to Josephus for suppressing the land aspect of the canonical narrative. As I have noted, the land theology in the canonical texts simply would not have been believable in light of the historical facts, especially those of 66-70 CE. Also, Josephus was probably distancing himself from the kind of Jewish nationalism (such as that of the Zealots) that made possession of the land of Palestine one of the key contentions between Jerusalem and Rome. “He deleted the theology of covenanted land because he did not want the land to be a focal point, as it was for Davidic messianism, with all its revolutionary implications in Josephus’ day.”¹³⁸ In fact, Josephus has instead read, and presented, the Biblical story to expound a rationale for the Jewish Diaspora of his own day. He has the *pagan* prophet Balaam (an outsider, from the story in *Numbers 22-23*) predict that the piety of the Jews would result in their filling the earth and sea. “It is not a portrait true to the classical Biblical end of days; rather it is a reflection of the Hellenistic world.”¹³⁹

Scenes in the Hebrew Bible where Jews suffered under the treatment of foreign monarchs would also prove a difficult subject for Josephus if he wanted to smooth out Jewish-Roman relationships in his day. It would not serve his purpose to repeat stories about mean-spirited foreigners, for such stories could easily be seen as representing analogues to the Romans. Furthermore, stories of Jewish mistreatment by foreigners would only serve to demolish the portrait of a long history of good relationships with foreigners that he presented elsewhere. It was in the interest of Josephus’ plan, therefore, to remove the harsh edges of characters who, in the Biblical texts, came across as villains. So the Pharaoh of Joseph’s time is portrayed much more

¹³⁸ Amaru 229.

¹³⁹ Amaru 228.

positively in Josephus than he is in the Biblical text, and he repeatedly heaps praise upon Joseph (in contrast to the more reserved picture in the Biblical text).¹⁴⁰ Similarly, the Pharaoh of the exodus, in scenes foreign to the Bible, tenderly holds the baby Moses in his arms¹⁴¹ and later entrusts Moses to lead an Egyptian expedition against Ethiopia.¹⁴² The idea to kill Hebrew babies as a means of population control and prevention of uprising came from Pharaoh in the Bible, but in the account of Josephus it comes from one of Pharaoh's scribes. In this way the Pharaoh's characterization was softened in a way similar to that of the treatment of Titus in the *Bellum Judaicum*. The ruler was not depicted as callously harsh toward Jews, and the hardships that came on the Jews in his time were seen as the work of underlings who lacked the king's appreciation for the Jews and their piety.

Other difficult parts of Biblical stories lent themselves more readily to reception by ears accustomed to hearing the Greek tales, and only needed the appropriate key words inserted into them to make the connections more apparent. For example, the Biblical flood story raises the question of why God would create man and then turn around and destroy him. For this question there was an answer more amenable to the philhellenic spirit: it was the ὑβρις of man that precipitated the flood.¹⁴³ With this word, which is not used in the LXX version of the story, Josephus subtly tapped into the Greek tragic tradition and provided a solution that a Hellenic audience would have found perfectly satisfactory. In fact, Josephus laid the groundwork for this explanation previously in *Antiquitates Judaicae* 1.66, where he accused Cain and his descendants of ὑβρίζων. He provided a similar explanation for God's confusing the languages at the Tower of Babel. There man's prosperity led to ὑβρις, and ὑβρις led to punishment. This follows a fairly

¹⁴⁰ Feldman, *Studies in Josephus' Rewritten Bible*, 83-4.

¹⁴¹ *AJ* 2.232f.

¹⁴² *AJ* 2.238-53.

¹⁴³ *AJ* 1.100, using the verb ἐξυβρίζω.

typical pattern in Greek tragedy.¹⁴⁴ Coloring the story in this way helped Josephus' readers overcome a potential problem with the story and thus enabled Josephus to manage negative impressions that could have arisen from the traditional materials.

Another kind of difficulty presented itself with the story of Solomon, who is portrayed in the Bible as being corrupted by his attraction to foreign gods. In the Biblical story, the ruin of Solomon's kingdom is directly tied to his participation in and support of foreign religious cults among his foreign wives. This was problematic for Josephus, for it reinforced the negative stereotype of the religiously intolerant Jew who looked upon non-Jews as defiled. Jewish refusal to participate in Greco-Roman religion was one of the most persistent pagan criticisms leveled against Jews in Josephus' day. Josephus therefore softened the Biblical picture in several ways. Human speakers replace God, so the rebuke against Solomon does not come directly from the deity. Josephus' telling of the Solomon story also has a more erotic emphasis, as well as an emphasis on Solomon's advanced age, which serves to excuse his offense to some degree. Furthermore, in the Josephus version, Solomon does not build high places for worship of foreign gods. His offense instead is that he used a few features of foreign iconography in his own projects.

The interesting thing here is that Josephus could have chosen to follow the account in *Chronicles*, which does not mention Solomon's offenses. Instead he chose to use, with modifications, the more embarrassing version from *Kings*. Why? Begg has suggested that the story held two attractions for Josephus. First, it highlighted his theme of the moral excellence of God, and how God rewards the good and punishes the evil (*AJ* 1.14). Second, the story has tragic features (a character whose good life is ruined by *hubris*) which Greek readers would have found

¹⁴⁴ Feldman, *Studies in Josephus' Rewritten Bible*, 28.

congenial.¹⁴⁵ This corresponds with what I will demonstrate next about other stories in the *Antiquitates Judaicum*: Josephus manages potentially negative stories as *exempla* of high moral virtues.

It is in the latter part of the *Antiquitates Judaicae* that some of the most difficult problems for the construction of an ethnicity appeared. Many Greek or Roman readers would have been largely ignorant of ancient Jewish history, but would have been more familiar with the negative stories associated with the Jews within recent memory. Books 14-20 of the *Antiquitates Judaicae* center around the client kingdom of Herod the Great in Palestine, and its legacy. It is clear that Josephus was not an admirer of Herod the Great. Among the things Josephus said about him are that he had no rightful claim to rule the Jews, he came to prominence by killing his rival Aristobulus, he was gripped by an insane jealousy and paranoia that drove him to acts of immense cruelty, he was a hypocrite inasmuch as he criticized the Arabs for the very things he himself did, it was his idea to kill his son Hyrcanus, and he killed his own wife because he suspected that she had turned against him and had encouraged his children to do the same. The latter act caused Herod considerable personal anguish, because he loved Mariamne greatly. In fact, in Josephus' portrait Herod loved all women yet was quick to condemn rival kings on rumors of their adultery. Herod also corrupted the kingdom's piety, he looted the tomb of the revered king David, and he executed his sons on the belief that they had plotted to overthrow him. He was a tyrant at home, but in the presence of the Roman emperor he gave every impression of being fair, just, and loyal to Roman interests. He was power-hungry and manipulated everyone and everything around him in order to enhance or maintain the power he

¹⁴⁵ C. Begg, 'Solomon's Apostasy (1 Kgs. 11,1-13) according to Josephus', *JSJ* 28 (1997) 312-13.

had accumulated. Herod's wife, Mariamne, fares little better. Although she eventually lost her life at her husband's command, she had plenty of vices of her own.

How could such an embarrassing portrait of his homeland's most famous king and his wife serve any good purpose for building a positive view of Jews in the Roman world? A partial answer is suggested in 16.395-8, where Josephus briefly entertained the idea that it might be that the forces of τύχη and ἀνάγκη, which is also called εἰμαρμένη, were at work. As in the *Bellum Judaicum*, Josephus allowed this Greek explanation a place in his history even though he had clearly stated in the preface of his work that the history he relates is controlled by the fact that God rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked.¹⁴⁶ Josephus had a perfectly good and consistent explanation for why the house of Herod was plagued by such internal turmoil. In fact, he charged Herod with impiety in 16.188 (he looted the tomb of David), so the suggestion of the role of τύχη is again all the more surprising, since we would expect Josephus' theology of retribution from a just God to explain the matter instead. The use of the τύχη here is another sign that Josephus was crafting his narrative in such a way as to reflect a sharing in perspectives and experiences that were typically Greek.

Another part of the answer surely lies in Josephus' theology of divine retribution. The story of Herod's horrible end displays the justice of God. Yet another aspect of the answer may lie in Josephus' description of the famous Egyptian queen Cleopatra in 13.328-43 and 15.77-258. She was, Josephus says, a scheming, murderous woman allied with a man (Antony) whose loyalties to his own homeland were compromised in the pursuit of personal power, who meddled in the affairs of other governments in the attempts to expand her own power, and who had driven her own son from Egypt. Josephus was buying into the standard Roman view of Cleopatra here.

¹⁴⁶ *AJ* 1.14.

In addition, Josephus had good reasons for animosity against Cleopatra as a Jew, for the Egyptian monarch had no respect for Jewish political concerns and traded Jewish interests like pawns in her political game (by intervening in the intrigues within the family of Herod she hoped to give control of Idumea to Antony; 15:62ff). The Jews and the Romans therefore had a common enemy in Cleopatra. Both could rightly complain about how she had acted against their sovereignty. In some ways, Herod and Mariamne were analogues to Antony and Cleopatra.¹⁴⁷ Both Romans and Jews had endured rulers who were self-serving tyrants. In this way Josephus demonstrated a solidarity between Jews and Romans in that both had similar experiences with unscrupulous Hellenistic client kings.

As I have shown in chapter three, Josephus gave considerable attention in the latter part of his *Antiquitates Judaicae* to stories of how Jews were mistreated by those in Greco-Roman culture at large, and in particular how Jewish funds meant for the temple were often confiscated by Roman officials or with their knowledge. These stories played a significant apologetic role in the *Antiquitates Judaicae* in at least two ways. First, the significance of these stories in terms of ethnicity is that they portray precisely the kind of institutional philanthropic expression that manifests the sense of solidarity which Smith posited as a fundamental element in ethnic self-definition. Monetary contributions to the temple in the ancestral homeland were a public expression of Jewish solidarity. The fact that Josephus related several instances of the violation of these funds suggests that he found in this problem a particularly menacing threat to a practice that, in his view, lay at the heart of Jewish self-understanding. His repeated attention to this particular problem is a strong indicator that he saw this as a violation of the Jewish way of life itself. For Josephus, an important element of Jewish ethnicity was at stake. Second, if the Roman

¹⁴⁷ Interestingly, one of Herod's nine wives was named Cleopatra (*AJ* 17.21).

people prided themselves at all on being pious and religious, then stories of their interference in Jewish religious matters should cause them to reconsider their attitudes and actions. As I have shown in chapter five, Josephus supported the idea that the Romans were religiously sensitive. His portrayal of Titus' reluctance to destroy the Jerusalem temple emphasized this quality. This was not a matter of cowering to the imperial ego, as it has often been interpreted in the history of Josephan studies. Instead Josephus was affirming Roman religious sensibilities in order to build a case that the Jews ought to be respected for the greatness of this same quality among themselves. This depended, of course, on also demonstrating that Judaism enshrined considerably noble ideals itself, which is the very thing the *Antiquitates Judaicae* is designed to do. Yet as always, this presentation was crafted in such a way to show that the Jewish religion participated in the good qualities that were also recognized and admired in Greek culture. With such a portrait, Josephus could hope to lift the stigma that Judaism was a foreign, "eastern" (i.e., suspicious) religion.

The stories which Josephus told about Jewish mistreatment are those that were likely circulated as proof of the foreign and rebellious nature of Jews. Therefore Josephus chose to address the very stories that were used to fuel anti-Jewish sentiments, in order to demonstrate that they had been misinterpreted. He was attacking the problem of anti-Jewishness head-on. The tactic here was the same as in the *Bellum Judaicum*, where Josephus said that he wrote his account to set the record straight against other accounts that denigrated both him and the Jewish people. In doing so Josephus was careful in how he told the stories, and in choosing which elements of the stories got emphasis.

The story about Pilate's placement of images of Tiberius, on military *signa*, in Jerusalem was one of the stories Josephus told to illustrate how Jews had been treated unfairly. There are,

however, a few things amiss with this story. First, it would have been cooler in Jerusalem (in the mountains of Judea, elevation approximately 2,550 feet above sea level) in the winter than in Caesarea, which sits on the coast. That Pilate would have moved himself and a Roman cohort to a colder place for the winter does not make sense by itself. Much more likely is that Pilate anticipated problems in Jerusalem, or that he simply wanted to assert his presence in the capital city as the new procurator and the local embodiment of Roman power. It could well have been an introductory display of power designed to remind the locals just who was in control. Alternately, it could have been a routine, or even friendly visit to the city. In the *Acts of the Apostles*, Luke relates that Porcius Festus, upon taking office in Judea, visited Jerusalem to meet the local leaders.¹⁴⁸ Either way, it seems more plausible that Pilate's visit to Jerusalem had to do with asserting Roman authority and keeping the peace more than it did with the suitability of Jerusalem as winter quarters for troops. Second, since Pilate would have been personally accountable to Rome for anything he did that stirred up unrest among the client peoples, it is hard to believe that he went to Jerusalem specifically with the intention of undoing Jewish customs, as Josephus claims he did. It is unthinkable that Pilate could not have known about the sensitivity of Palestinian Jews concerning Jerusalem itself. Third, this was a risky story for Josephus to tell, because it portrayed the Palestinian Jews as religiously and culturally intolerant, which is one of the perceptions that stigmatized them in the Hellenistic world in the first place. It was normal Roman practice for Roman troops to set up their standards wherever they camped. Like raising one's flag at an embassy or in an occupied town, it was indeed a political statement (that, in its day, also included religious overtones). The act itself was not necessarily

¹⁴⁸ *Acts* 25.1.

inflammatory, and may have been nothing more than a display of the procurator's loyalty to emperor, yet the Jerusalem Jews took great offense at it.

Josephus crafted the presentation of this story carefully for his own apologetic purposes. The episode has been narrated in such a way so as to maximize both the sense of unfairness within it and the high piety of the Jews. Josephus saw in this incident a prime example of how Jews were treated unfairly, how their religious beliefs were discounted by Romans, and how their protests against such treatment were summarily dismissed or, worse, interpreted as their causing trouble. The Jewish opposition to the Roman ensigns was presented as an objection arising from the greatest kind of piety and religious dedication. Josephus wanted his readers to think that it was only because the Jews were such good, religious people that this was a problem for them. His agenda is clear, and the difficulties in his story are completely overshadowed by the characterization of the incident as a willful affront against a pious people. In the end, Josephus thought it was worth the risk to tell this story because it highlighted Jewish piety and innocence. This was important in the face of accusations that the Jews were ἀσεβεις and ἄθροιοι.

Similar considerations apply to the story of Pilate's confiscation of temple funds to build an aqueduct. Stern notes that if there was more money in the temple treasury than was actually needed for temple expenditures, the surplus was used for other things including the municipal needs of Jerusalem.¹⁴⁹ Pilate may not have thought he was out of line and that such use of the funds were at his discretion. While the fact that he again used armed troops to end the discussion does not encourage optimism concerning his motives, his actions need not be interpreted as wholly malicious either. As Josephus told the story, however, only one conclusion seemed proper.

¹⁴⁹ Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors* 198.

The event related in *Antiquitates Judaicae* 16, where Jews of Asia and Cyrenaica complained to Herod and Agrippa in Asia, is also problematic. There was, again, a risk involved in presenting things in this way. Josephus' repeated appeals to official documents and decrees that gave the Jews exemptions ran the risk of emphasizing Jewish non-conformity and special treatment. Decree after decree testified to the existence of a privilege that made the Jews look foreign and unlike their neighbors, but the risk was offset first by the apologetic value these stories held, and second by the fact that the decrees Josephus listed were tangible "proof" (depending on one's perspective, of course) of Rome's kind disposition toward Jews. As Josephus saw it, the decrees constituted official Roman recognition of the great piety of the Jewish people everywhere. Even when their practice of sending money to Jerusalem cut across Roman law, the highest officials in Roman government had consistently ruled that this expression of Jewish piety was extraordinary and was not to be violated. This in turn became a compliment to the Romans themselves for having recognized and upheld such piety among a client people, and a reproach upon those who had tried to violate it. Allowing the Jews to collect and send money to Jerusalem demonstrated the Roman recognition of the God of the Jews as a legitimate deity whose worship and favor needed to be maintained. Seen in this way, the Jewish collection for Jerusalem was not so much a case of special pleading and privilege (i.e., otherness, non-Roman), but an act of religious piety respected by the emperor himself, thoroughly in keeping with Augustan ideals of religious piety, and thus thoroughly Roman.

After listing the various decrees that allowed the Jews to maintain their practice, Josephus says ποιῶμαι δὲ πολλάκις αὐτῶν τὴν μνήμην ἐπιδιαλλάττων τὰ γένη καὶ τὰς ἐμπεφυκυίας τοῖς ἀλογίστοις ἡμῶν τε κακείνων μίσους αἰτίας ὑπεξαιρούμενος ("I make frequent mention of them [the decrees] to bring the nations to reconciliation and to remove the causes of hatred that have

clung to those who are unreasonable among us and them”).¹⁵⁰ The problem, he says, was social and cultural dissonance, not immorality. Josephus pleaded that the Jews were good people, and this goodness made them just like other respected peoples, especially the Greeks. διὸ καὶ ταῦτα παρ’ ἐκείνων ἡμῖν ἀπαιτητέον καὶ δέον οὐκ ἐν τῇ διαφορᾷ τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων οἶεσθαι τὸ ἀλλότριον ἀλλ’ ἐν τῷ πρὸς καλοκαγαθίαν ἐπιτηδείως ἔχειν (“therefore these things are more expected from them concerning us, and it is necessary for them not to suppose hostility in the difference of practices, but that there is a careful disposition to goodness”).¹⁵¹ This is an important statement, because it reveals that Josephus knew the attitude of the inhabitants of the provinces toward Jews, and their perception of them. He appealed to the Hellenistic society at large for a more beneficent interpretation, not only of the former Jewish collection for Jerusalem, but of all Jewish customs. The fact that the Jews had large sums of money which they had not invested in the local cities where they lived no doubt made them appear to be unconcerned, aloof, and willfully disengaged from civic life and their neighbors. Josephus tried hard to explain that this was not a proper interpretation and that the collection of this money ought to be seen as one way Jews had of honoring their God. It was an act of piety, he suggests, not of ill-will against the cities in which they lived.

Rajak has noted that Josephus had to engage in a kind of slight-of-hand to make this argument work. The decrees which Josephus cited are haphazardly listed, and none of them would have constituted an official Roman legal charter for Jewish privileges. They were instead responses to particular incidents, over particular problems, in various places and would not have been meant, nor interpreted at Rome, as empire-wide precedents.¹⁵² Yet that was exactly the

¹⁵⁰ *AJ* 16.175.

¹⁵¹ *AJ* 16.178.

¹⁵² Rajak, *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome* 304-18.

impression Josephus left from his handling of them. Their precise legal content has been summarized—that is, generalized—in order to milk them for political capital.

In *Antiquitates Judaicae* 16.178 Josephus admitted that there was at least one scandal involving a collection of funds for Jerusalem. An unnamed Jew who was in trouble with the law in Palestine came to Rome and presented himself as a teacher of Jewish wisdom. He managed, with three partners, to convince an affluent Roman woman, Fulvia, who was a proselyte, that she had to send purple and gold to the temple in Jerusalem, which he and his friends would be glad to deliver for her. She gave them the contribution, and they put it in their own pockets. The woman feared she had been duped, told her husband what had happened, and he reported the matter to the emperor. The result was that Tiberius ordered all the Jews to leave Rome.¹⁵³ The date was 19 CE.

In an account designed to portray the Jews in the best possible light to outsiders, this story stands out as a shining example of avarice and greed. Why did Josephus tell this story? Why tell a story that seemed to communicate the very impression of Jews that Josephus was trying to correct? Why not just skip this story, as he did with other things? There are at least three answers. First, as I noted in chapter two, Romans acknowledged both good and bad among Greeks, and the Greeks themselves were sometimes critical of various sub-groups within their own ethnicity.¹⁵⁴ Josephus was thus not doing anything unusual here. Second, it would have been unwise and unrealistic if Josephus had ignored well-known examples of Jewish shortcomings. He had to avoid presenting the Jews as the perfect people, because no one would have believed it. As I also noted in chapter two, the construction of an ethnicity must adhere to some semblance

¹⁵³ *AJ* 18.81-4.

¹⁵⁴ *cf.* a Rhodian's criticism of other Greeks in Livy, 45.23.14-16, and Cicero distinguishes between good ones and bad ones in *Ver.* 2.2.7.

of credibility if it is to succeed. Third, Josephus depicts the majority of Jews as victims here, suffering for the actions of a few who were unscrupulous and greedy. This is exactly how he depicted the Jews of Jerusalem in his account of the First Jewish War, where he said that the war was caused by a minority who were bent on rebellion and that the rest of the Jews of Palestine were innocently caught up in, and suffered in, the war. Similarly, here Josephus ended the story saying καὶ οἱ μὲν δὴ διὰ κακίαν τεσσάρων ἀνδρῶν ἠλαύνοντο τῆς πόλεως (“So for the wickedness of four men they [the Jews] were banished from the city”).¹⁵⁵ This story seems designed to serve as a prime example of the prejudices Jews constantly faced, and the unfairness of the actions that resulted from them. As the story stands in Josephus, it strikes the reader that the punishment here (banishment of all Jews) does not fit the crime (the deception of four of them). It was presented as a story of wide-scale unfair treatment of Jews. Such, according to Josephus, was the world in which Jews lived. It was a world in which lurid stories about Jews abounded, a world in which tales of Jewish offenses against society and culture circulated freely, and a world in which those tales were believed and used as justification for widespread mistreatment of Jews and for interference in Jewish religious practices. That is, even though the present story was embarrassing, Josephus risked telling this story to make another point, a point consonant with his overall portrayal of Jews to Greeks and Romans: that this should *not* be understood as a story that describes typical Jewish behavior. This was not the action of the majority, but of a few.

However, this story of the expulsion of the Jews in 19 CE is also related by Suetonius, Dio Cassius, and Tacitus, where we learn that there were other factors at work. Suetonius says

Externas caerimonias, Aegyptios Iudaicosque ritus compescuit, coactis qui superstitione ea tenebantur religiosas uestes cum instrumento omni comburere. Iudaeorum iuventutem per

¹⁵⁵ *AJ* 18.84.

speciem sacramenti in prouincias grauioris caeli distribuit, reliquos gentis eiusdem uel similia sectantes urbe summouit, sub poena perpetuae seruitutis nisi obtemperassent. Expulit et mathematicos, sed deprecantibus ac se artem desituros promittentibus ueniam dedit.

(“He abolished foreign cults, especially the Egyptian and the Jewish rites, compelling all who were addicted to such superstitions to burn their religious vestments and all their paraphernalia. Those of the Jews who were of military age he assigned to provinces of less healthy climate, ostensibly to serve in the army; the others of that same race or of similar beliefs he banished from the city, on pain of slavery for life if they did not obey. He banished the astrologers as well, but pardoned such as begged for indulgence and promised to give up their art”).¹⁵⁶

The classification of Judaism along with Egyptian rites and (eastern) astrology is telling, According to Suetonius, the emperor apparently thought that the Jews were part of a larger influx into Rome of foreign practices and eastern influences which were viewed as socially and culturally unhealthy. The expulsion of the Jews was, it could have been argued, an act of Tiberius’ zeal for the traditional gods of Rome and for Roman society in general. Tacitus, who also feared any non-Roman influences, wrote of this incident:

.... actum et de sacris Aegyptiis Iudaicisque pellendis factumque patrum consultum ut quattuor milia libertini generis ea superstitione infecta quis idonea aetas in insulam Sardiniam ueherentur, coercendis illic latrociniis et, si ob gravitatem caeli interissent, vile damnum; ceteri cederent Italia nisi certam ante diem profanos ritus exuissent.

(“...There was a debate too about expelling the Egyptian and Jewish worship, and a resolution of the Senate was passed that 4000 of the freedmen class who were infected with those superstitions and were of military age should be transported to the island of Sardinia, to curb the brigandage of the place, a cheap sacrifice should they die from the pestilential climate. The rest were to leave Italy, unless before a certain day they repudiated their impious rites.”).¹⁵⁷

This corresponds to a mention of an earlier expulsion in 139 BCE. Valerius Maximus reported:

Chaldaeos igitur Cornelius Hispalus urbe expulit et intra decem dies Italia abire iussit, ne peregrinam scientiam venditarent. Iudaeos quoque, qui Romanis tradere sacra sua conati erant, idem Hispalus urbe exterminavit arasque privatas e publicis locis abiecit.

¹⁵⁶ *Tib.* 36.

¹⁵⁷ *Ann.* 2.85.

“Cornelius Hispalus therefore expelled the Chaldeans from the city and ordered them to leave Italy within ten days, and that they should not sell their foreign knowledge. The Jews also, who had tried to pass their sacred things on to the Romans, the same Hispalus banished from the city and he threw their private altars out of public places.”

The Romans had a long history of being suspicious of foreign influences. It makes much more sense to interpret the expulsion of Jews from Rome in 19 CE in this light than it does to interpret it as the result of one incident of fraud that affected one Roman family. Dio Cassius sheds further light on the incident as he reports Τῶν τε Ἰουδαίων πολλῶν ἐς τὴν Ῥώμην συνελθόντων καὶ συχνοῦς τῶν ἐπιχωρίων ἐς τὰ σφέτερα ἔθνη μεθιστάντων, τοὺς πλείονας ἐξήλασεν (“As many Jews came to Rome in great numbers and were converting many of the natives to their ways, he banished most of them”).¹⁵⁸ Apparently the Jews had become successful enough at proselytizing that Judaism was making inroads into Roman society, and this aroused the emperor’s suspicion. Proselytizing could itself be viewed as an activity that proclaimed the Jewish rejection of the Roman gods and the Roman way of life.¹⁵⁹ Tacitus complained of converts to Judaism: *Nam pessimus quisque spretis religionibus patriis tributa et stipes illuc congeriebant, unde auctae Iudaeorum res* (“For whoever are the worst people, having scorned their ancestral religions, kept giving tribute payments and offerings, from which the wealth of the Jews increased”).¹⁶⁰ The combination of success at proselytizing plus the sense that Jews were part of a suspicious eastern influx into Rome made them ripe targets for imperial expulsion. As the Romans told this story, then, the emperor’s actions were about maintaining Roman purity. It had certain ethnic overtones and depicted the Jews as foreign and unwelcome.

The way in which Josephus chose to relate this story, however, provided the scenario of unfairness and innocence he was trying to communicate to his Hellenistic audience. Gone from

¹⁵⁸ D.C. 57.18.6a.

¹⁵⁹ Daniel, ‘Anti-Semitism in the Hellenistic-Roman Period’, 62-4.

¹⁶⁰ *Hist.* 5.5.

his account are any suggestions that the Jews were introducing non-Roman things into Rome or pushing a foreign religion. That would have only reinforced the popular view of Jewish otherness. The lack of this information in Josephus' version instead made the Jews appear just like any other inhabitants of Rome. On the literary level, Josephus presented the Jews as insiders who, for reasons that were completely unfair, were treated like outsiders. The harsh nature of the punishment, as it is portrayed, also bespeaks the attitude Josephus was addressing, that of popular prejudice against Jews. The banishment of all Jews over this incident makes sense only if there is already a strong suspicion against all Jews within the social and cultural context. How many scams were foisted in the name of religious contributions to Jerusalem we cannot know. Surely there were others, and even if they were not common, the emperor's harsh reaction seems to suggest that the action of these Jews only served to confirm what was already the prevailing public impression of Jews among the inhabitants of Rome, viz. that Jews were maliciously deceptive, that they were a threat to the well-being of Romans everywhere, and that they were up to no good.

Even when it was risky, Josephus presented those stories in the relation between Jews and Rome wherein true Jewish religious devotion could be seen. In fact, it was quite bold on Josephus' part to address his apologetic agenda in this fashion. Rather than downplay or ignore episodes that tended to demonstrate characteristics of Jews that were deemed foreign and un-Roman, Josephus told those stories but advised his readers, through his narrative presentation, that it would be a mistake to see in them supposed elements of alienation. Instead, he argued, they demonstrate the best qualities of these people. This double public persona of being pious yet at the same time being accused of all kinds of evil, is reflected in *Satire 14* of Juvenal (who was Josephus' contemporary) which says *Romanas autem soliti contemnere leges Iudaicum ediscunt*

et seruant ac metuunt ius, tradidit arcano quodcumque volumine Moyses (“they are in the habit of disregarding Roman laws, yet they memorize and guard and fear Jewish duty, all that Moses handed down in his secret book”).¹⁶¹

Conclusion

Josephus intended his Greek readers to see leading Jewish historical figures as equal to great figures in Greek history. To a Hellenistic reader unfamiliar with the LXX accounts, and who read only Josephus’ versions of the stories, the impression would have been basically straightforward. From the title of the work, to its concerns for order, to connections with well-known Greek figures, to its use of *exempla*, such a reader would have felt basically at home with much in the *Antiquitates Judaicae*. Some particularly Jewish elements in the stories were preserved because, in Josephus’ judgment, they highlighted virtues that were unique to the Jews in the ancient world, even when those stories ran the risk of touching on negative stereotypes of Jews. Other elements of the stories were either ignored (like the Jewish practice of circumcision), downplayed (like the Jewish claim to the land of Palestine), or transformed by casting them in Greek forms (as seen in his use of particular Greek terms to describe facets of Jewish culture). He was able to adapt his stories in this way partly because the traditions he knew, and the milieu in which he wrote, allowed him some flexibility. His rewriting of those stories was in step with the historiographical conventions of his day, and the fluid nature of foundational myths gave Josephus room to emphasize, or create, dimensions of his traditional materials to suit his aim of aligning Greek and Jewish ethnicities, or to omit elements of the tradition that did not serve his purpose.

Confirmation that it was his specific intention to create this alignment of Jewish and Greek characteristics comes in a statement Josephus himself made about the *Antiquitates Judaicae* later

¹⁶¹ Lines 100-02.

in the *Contra Apionem*. Apion had charged that the Jews had no great intellectuals in their history. Ἀλλὰ θαυμαστοὺς ἄνδρας οὐ παρεσχήκαμεν οἷον τεχνῶν τινῶν εὐρετὰς ἢ σοφίᾳ διαφέροντας καὶ καταριθμῆι Σωκράτην καὶ Ζήνωνα καὶ Κλεάνθη καὶ τοιούτους τινάς ... περὶ δὲ τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν ἀνδρῶν γεγονότων οὐδενὸς ἦττον ἐπαίνου τυγχάνειν ἀξίων ἴσασιν οἱ ταῖς ἡμετέραις ἀρχαιολογίαις ἐντυγχάνοντες (“But [he says that] we have not provided illustrious men such as inventors of any arts or men distinguished in wisdom, and he enumerates Socrates and Zeno and Cleanthes and some other such ones. ... Those who have read my *Archaeologies* know, concerning the men we have produced, that there has been no one found less worthy of praise”).¹⁶² The Jews deserved the same praise as Greeks because they were, in Josephus’ hands, basically the same people culturally.

The *Antiquitates Judaicae* was more than Jewish history for Greek readers. That was already available to the Hellenistic world in the LXX. Josephus went well beyond simply telling the stories. He re-made the history and, in the process, re-made the people who were its subject. Through the vehicle of historiography Josephus was re-inventing Jewish identity, he was re-drawing the ethnic lines that separated Jews from others, he was creating a Jewish ethnicity which (he hoped) would allow Jews a regular place in Hellenistic society.

¹⁶² *Ap.* 2.135f.

CHAPTER 7
JEWISH ETHNICITY IN JOSEPHUS' *VITA* AND *CONTRA APIONEM*

Josephus' *Vita* and his *Contra Apionem* were both written to answer criticisms. In the former, he reacted mostly to criticisms about his own conduct during the war. In the latter, he answered derogatory statements about the Jews made by intellectuals of his day. The nature of these works meant that there was more apologetic and polemic in them than would appear in an historical account, and subsequently there is less of the program of ethnicity-building than appears in the *Bellum Judaicum* or the *Antiquitates Judaicae*. The fact that these two later works had to be written at all was something of an admission on Josephus' part that his major works had failed to persuade his readers concerning Josephus' role in the war (for the *Bellum Judaicum*) and his portrait of Jewish culture (for the *Antiquitates Judaicae*). "Josephus believes that it is his 'duty' (δεῖν) to defend his people, but his persistence is nothing other than a confession that he has failed in his attempt, and it confirms the vigor of the anti-Semitism existing in Rome."¹ Both of these lesser works still, therefore, had non-Jewish readers in mind, and in both works he continued to depict himself and the Jews in ways that were essentially Greek.

The *Vita*

Josephus' *Vita*, written after both the *Bellum Judaicum* and the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, was not a full-scale autobiography, but was a response to an assault on his character brought by a rival, Justus of Tiberias, who had written an account of the war that slandered Josephus. The *Vita* begins with Josephus' genealogy, a claim that he was something of a child prodigy, his religious

¹ G. Hata, 'The Story of Moses', 195. *cf.* also Spilsbury, 'Contra Apionem and Antiquitates Judaicae: Points of Contact', in L. Feldman and J. Levison (eds.), *Josephus' Contra Apionem: Studies in Its Character and Context with a Latin Concordance to the Portion Missing in Greek* (Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums 34, Leiden 1996) 367.

experimentations, and a story of his participation in a delegation to Rome when he was 26 years old. The purpose of this prefatory material was to argue that Josephus had been an upright, respectable person all his life. After that the account is absorbed with his personal conduct during the First Jewish War. Because the *Vita* centers around Josephus personally, there are fewer indications of his view of the ethnicity of Jewish people as a group. However, Hellenistic standards served as part of the conceptual foundation for the work as well as provided models for specific responses.

The fact that Josephus wrote an apologetic autobiography itself reflects a point I have already noted, that the credibility of an ancient Greek historian's work was measured in part by the character and conduct of the historian himself. In Jewish culture and literature, however, credibility was usually established on other grounds. Jewish authors writing in a Jewish vein often emphasized some notion of divine authority, themselves fading into the background as divine instruction took over, or they established credibility by assuming a pseudonym (especially of a Biblical character) or by advertising their reputation as defenders of their ancestral faith (either through apology, polemic, or expertise in the Torah). The fact that Josephus defended *himself*, even though he claimed to be a prophet and an expert in the Torah, suggests that he was writing with Greek standards of credibility in mind, not Jewish ones. In other words, the mode by which Josephus here establishes his credibility is Greek, not Jewish. In this way he continued to portray himself like a Greek historian, suggesting to his reader that the history he produced is to be read according to that form.

This appeal to an historian's personal life as the basis for the credibility of his work is also reflected in Josephus' criticisms of Justus of Tiberias. Justus' account has not survived, but Rajak has reasoned that it must have portrayed Josephus as two-faced, a man playing to Roman

interests yet all the while an insurrectionist at heart, and that Josephus' piety may have been questioned as well.² In *Vita* 338-67 Josephus launched his specific rebuttals of Justus. He got to the heart of the matter when he said (as if Justus were present before him) καὶ αἱ μετὰ ταῦτα δὲ πολιτεῖαί σου σαφῶς ἐμφανίζουσιν τὸν τε βίον τὸν ἄλλον καὶ ὅτι σὺ τὴν πατρίδα Ῥωμαίων ἀπέστησας ("and your political dealings after these things clearly show your life differently, and that it was you who led the revolt against the Romans").³ This statement summarizes several specific criticisms raised in the following sections of the *Vita*. In the end, Josephus claimed that Justus' personal behavior discredited him. The thing to note is that Josephus was holding Justus to a Greek standard of credibility.

Justus' lost account no doubt largely focused on the revolt in Galilee and also contained a description of the siege of Jerusalem. In chapter five I noted that one of the criteria of a good Greek historian by the first century CE was that he was an eyewitness of the things he reported. In *Vita* 358 Josephus charged that Justus' account of the revolt in Galilee surely must be suspect, because it failed to meet this criterion. Justus was not present in the places where key parts of the history unfolded. According to Josephus, Justus was in Berytus⁴ at the time and thus was in no position to say what happened in Galilee, at Jotapata (the city Josephus defended against the Romans), or in Jerusalem. Justin's account was therefore to be rejected by the general reading public because Justus failed to meet the Greek standard of a good historian.

In the account of his religious experimentations, Josephus relates that he finally settled upon the sect of the Pharisees, which, he says παραπλήσιός ἐστι τῇ παρ' Ἑλλησιν Στωϊκῇ

² Rajak, 'Justus of Tiberias', 357.

³ *Vit.* 344.

⁴ *Vit.* 357. Berytus is modern-day Beirut, Lebanon. In Josephus' day it was in the Phoenician region of Syria. It is approximately 60 linear miles from the Sea of Galilee.

λεγομένη (“which is nearly the same as that which is called the Stoics by the Greeks”).⁵ We see here the same kind of approach that characterized certain depictions in the *Antiquitates Judaicae*: describing Jewish institutions with familiar Greek terms, yet stopping short of equating the two. In this way what was uniquely Jewish was not lost, but was accommodated to Hellenistic standards. A fuller explanation of the beliefs of Pharisees, as Josephus understood them (or at least as he wanted them to be understood) appeared in *Bellum Judaicum* 2.162-3, 166 and *Antiquitates Judaicae* 18:12-15.⁶ Here in the *Vita* he could have easily either rehearsed them or he could have simply referred his reader to the pertinent section of his previous works (as he does in *Antiquitates Judaicae* 13.173 and 18.11). Instead he chose now to go further and compare them closely to a philosophical sect within Hellenistic culture. The comparison counted on the assumption that the reader did not know much about the Pharisees in the first place, because a closer examination would have revealed several significant differences between Pharisees and Stoics. Josephus’ description basically erased the line between Jewish culture and Hellenistic culture, and a non-Jewish reader who was unfamiliar with Jewish sectarianism would have been under the impression that Pharisees and Stoics held to the same basic beliefs. Jewish institutions were again brought into Roman culture through the door of Hellenism.

As noted before, at age 26 Josephus participated in a delegation to Rome to secure the release of some Jewish priests who had been sent there on charges by the procurator of Judea, M. Antonius Felix. The account appears in *Vita* 1.13ff. A noteworthy feature of this story is that Josephus was careful to trace the network of social and political connections that got him to Poppea and that enabled him to secure the release of the priests. He made a special point that

⁵ *Vit.* 12. The precise nuance of παραπλήσιος is hard to determine from this context. The word can mean “nearly resembling,” “about the same,” “similar,” or “about equal to.” *LSJ* 1321.

⁶ See also *AJ* 13.172.

there was a Jew, Aliturus (an actor), who was well-liked by Nero, and through this fellow-Jew he was able to approach Poppea. The fact that there was a highly respected Jew among Nero's friends was important for Josephus. Aliturus was a good example of a Jew who had successfully made the transition from outsider to insider. He acts within the story as any other insider would, able to use his influence for his friends. His appearance in the narrative is itself an apologetic for Jewish mobility within Roman society. Then Josephus himself took on the role of the insider. He formed connections with important people, and through them he was able to secure favors for others. His language does not necessarily indicate that he got a personal audience with Poppea, and Josephus probably would have made a bigger point of this had it actually happened. Nevertheless, Josephus (at least on a literary level) had made the transition from outsider to insider, a role in which he portrayed himself consistently as the account goes on. That the story concerned Romans in the highest levels of civic life was not insignificant, for it bolstered the image of friendly relations between Romans and Jews.

We would like to know about some of the periods in Josephus' adult life which he does not cover in the *Vita*, especially the two-year period between his return to Palestine after participating in the delegation to Nero and the time he was appointed commander of Jewish forces in Jotapata.⁷ For example, how is it that the rulers in Jerusalem, who were priests and Sadducees, asked Josephus, a priest who had rejected the sect of the Sadducees and chose to live according to the sect of the Pharisees, to represent their concerns in Galilee, a place that foreseeably was going to be absolutely crucial in the war? Some things about the picture do not add up, and given what we know about the way in which Josephus suppressed unflattering information in the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, we are suspicious about what Josephus has *not* told us

⁷ Cf. G. Hata, 'Imagining Some Dark Periods in Josephus' Life', 309.

in the *Vita*. What we do have, however, is a picture of Josephus meeting the requirements of a Greek historian and an Hellenistic “insider,” and that was what counted for him.

The *Contra Apionem*

The *Contra Apionem* was ostensibly written in response to criticisms leveled against the Jews by well-known Greeks. While the Alexandrian grammarian Apion received much of the attention, the introduction makes it clear that the real target audience of the *Contra Apionem* was a nebulous “them” who had read, and rejected, Josephus’ explanation of Jewish culture in his *Antiquitates Judaicae*: Ἰκανῶς μὲν ὑπολαμβάνω καὶ διὰ τῆς περὶ τὴν ἀρχαιολογίαν συγγραφῆς κράτιστε ἀνδρῶν Ἐπαφρόδιτε τοῖς ἐντευξομένοις αὐτῇ πεποιηκέναι φανερόν περὶ τοῦ γένους ἡμῶν τῶν Ἰουδαίων ὅτι καὶ παλαιότατόν ἐστι (“I take it that it has been made sufficiently clear, through the narrative of the *Archaeology*, most excellent Epaphroditus, to those who have read it, concerning our Jewish race, that it is also most ancient”).⁸ In the next section he mentions an anonymous συχνοί (“large number of people”) who had rejected what they read in the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, and then in 1.3 he said it was his aim τῶν μὲν λοιδορούντων τὴν δυσμένειαν καὶ τὴν ἐκούσιον ἐλέγξει ψευδολογίαν τῶν δὲ τὴν ἄγνοιαν ἐπανορθώσασθαι (“to disprove those who accuse us of ill will and voluntary lies, and to correct the ignorance of others”). Furthermore, it is clear that this συχνοί are Greeks, for Josephus says his aim was to answer them by producing literary witnesses who were esteemed by the Greeks: χρήσομαι δὲ τῶν μὲν ὑπ’ ἐμοῦ λεγομένων μάρτυσι τοῖς ἀξιопιστοτάτοις εἶναι περὶ πάσης ἀρχαιολογίας ὑπὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων κεκριμένοις (“I will use for the things I have said the witnesses who are judged by the Greeks to be most trustworthy concerning all antiquity”)⁹—on the assumption that Greek critics would be silenced by Greek evidence. If we are correct in our thesis that one of the

⁸ *Ap.* 1.1.

⁹ *Ap.* 1.4.

burdens of the *Antiquitates Judaicae* was to show the essentially Greek character of Jewish ethnicity, then the rejection of the *Antiquitates Judaicae* must mean that Greek readers, for whom it was intended, had rejected that characterization of Jewish ethnicity.

The significance of this observation is that, as I have suggested, the Greeks were the very group to which Josephus wished to join the Jews culturally. *Their* rejection of Josephus' program needed serious attention. It would have been one thing to convince Romans that Jews were just like Greeks culturally, but what if the Greeks were not buying it? What if Greek literati rejected the comparison between Jews and Greeks? The Greeks knew what was Greek, and if they did not see Jews as possessing Greek qualities, Josephus' enterprise was doomed to fail. Perhaps this accounts for why the *Contra Apionem* had to be written, from Josephus' perspective.

Although Josephus called the *Contra Apionem* an ἀπολογία,¹⁰ a notable difference between this work and his other literary productions is that whereas there is a definite apologetic thread running throughout all of them, the *Contra Apionem* added polemics to apologetics. This gave the work an added sense of urgency, even beyond that which was seen in the *Antiquitates Judaicae*. If the *Antiquitates Judaicae* was eager to show the Greek qualities of Jewish culture (to the point of making strained comparisons), then the *Contra Apionem* was almost desperate to do so. "What was set out obliquely in the national history of the Jews is set out more directly in the *CA*."¹¹ The difference between apologetics and polemics may be a fine line, but the terms may be understood as suggesting that polemics is a more rhetorically-heightened form of apologetic response. One of the purposes of polemics is "to change the opinions of the distant

¹⁰ *Ap.* 2.147. οὐ γὰρ ἐγκώμιον ἡμῶν αὐτῶν προειλόμην συγγράφειν ἀλλὰ πολλὰ καὶ ψευδῆ κατηγορουμένοις ἡμῖν ταύτην ἀπολογίαν δικαιοσάτην εἶναι νομίζω ("I do not propose to write an encomium about ourselves, but I consider this to be a most reasonable apology against the many and false things that have been charged to us").

¹¹ Spilsbury 367.

and the opposed (at least to cast doubt in their minds), and to arouse interest among the indifferent and the uninvolved, with a view to eventually convincing them as well.”¹² Polemics was the tool Josephus needed to forge a new Jewish ethnicity for Greeks (and their sympathetic audience) who had rejected Josephus’ proposal about the fundamentally Greek character of Jewish identity. The apologetic nature of his major works expressed a psychological need to conciliate Jews to the Hellenistic world, but polemics were needed to persuade those readers in whom Josephus perceived a hostile rejection of his claims for Jewish ethnicity. I have noted in chapter two that a psychological need for belonging, and posturing oneself for acceptance, are hallmarks of an ethnical strategy. In the *Contra Apionem* we have it taken to the next level, through polemics, because of the nature of the situation, viz. outspoken rejection of Jewish claims to fit into Greek culture.

At the beginning of the *Contra Apionem* Josephus rehearsed the kinds of accusations that prompted his response. They were 1) the charge that the history of the Jews did not go into ancient times, as evidenced by the fact that the Jews were basically ignored by the Greek historians who covered those times (the assumption being that if the Greek historians did not mention it, it was not to be taken as fact¹³), 2) the charge that the Jews were not a pure race of people, and 3) that they came to inhabit Palestine in an underhanded way. The first of these charges received most of Josephus’ attention, which indicates that something important was at stake in it. “For Josephus the allegation of “lateness” was equivalent to the assertion of cultural dependence and historical insignificance. ... Simply put, nothing could be both new *and* true.”¹⁴

¹² Kasher, ‘Polemic and Apologetic Methods’, 144.

¹³ See *Ap.* 1.161.

¹⁴ Droge 125.

The Romans generally respected what was ancient.¹⁵ To say that Jewish culture was not ancient was therefore to say that it deserved no respect. What is interesting here, as Gruen has noted, is that this was not a typical Greek complaint concerning other peoples.¹⁶ This suggests that Josephus may have been dealing more with a *perceived* sentiment than an actual one, and that the real issue that concerned him was not the antiquity of the Jews but *the Greek assessment of Jews*. In responding to the charge of lateness, Josephus echoed and amplified the criticism he offered in *Bellum Judaicum* 1.13-16, that Greek historiography was overrated as far as coverage of the remote past was concerned. He established this in the *Contra Apionem* by applying the standards of Greek historiography to the Greek historians themselves. In particular, Josephus pointed out that the oldest Greek historians and philosophers did not belong to the remote past themselves and were indebted to other sources for their information.¹⁷ They were not contemporaries of the events they reported, and since the Greeks themselves did not keep historical records very well, the historians had no reliable Greek eyewitness testimony to which they could appeal.¹⁸ In short, they did not meet their own standards for good historiography. The result was that Greek historical knowledge of the distant past (specifically, prior to the Persian invasions) was a mess, and there was little agreement among the Greek historians concerning it.

In raising this defense, Josephus was actually echoing Plato's *Laws*, where Clinias admitted that Greek civilization was, in Plato's day, relatively recent.¹⁹ Clinias there, speaking of the events of ancient times, says ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν χθές καὶ πρόην γεγονότα ("they happened, so to

¹⁵ Cf. the statement made by Tacitus about Jewish Sabbath observance, noted earlier: *Hi ritus quoquo modo inducti antiquitate defenduntur* ("This worship, however it was introduced, is defended by its antiquity") (*Hist.* 5.5).

¹⁶ E. Gruen, 'Greeks and Jews: Mutual Misperceptions in Josephus' *Contra Apionem*', in C. Bakhos (ed.), *Ancient Judaism in its Hellenistic Context* (SupJSJ 95, Leiden 2005) 40.

¹⁷ *Ap.* 1.7-14, 44-6.

¹⁸ *Ap.* 15-22.

¹⁹ 3.677d; cf. *Timaeus* 22ac.

speak, only yesterday and the day before”). Josephus said ἐχθές δὴ καὶ πρόην ... φαίνονται γεγυότες (“they appear to have happened yesterday or the day before”).²⁰ Herodotus likewise made it clear that Egyptian history went much further back than Greek history²¹ and explicitly admitted that the Greeks did not learn of the origin of their gods “until yesterday or the day before, as they say” (οὐκ ἠπιστέατο μέχρι οὗ πρόην τε καὶ χθές ὡς εἶπειν λόγῳ).²² “In the Hellenistic period the same point would be made again and again by native writers who had learned to compose history in Greek fashion.”²³ Pointing out the lack of Greek knowledge of ancient times was thus a Greek thing to do, and Josephus appeared quite Greek in doing it.

There were other reasons the Jews did not appear in the Greek historians. Josephus argued that the Jews had no significant contact with the Greeks because they were not a seafaring people, and thus the Greek historians naturally knew little about them, just as they also knew little about other great nations such as the Iberians or the Romans.²⁴ He added that the lack of historical accuracy among the Greeks was due to the fact that the Greek historians were too preoccupied with literary style and not enough with veracity, that the former interfered with the latter because inventiveness was valued over truthfulness,²⁵ and that general malice toward the Jews also explained why no Greek writer mentioned them.²⁶ With these replies, Josephus excused the Jews from attaining a prominent place in the works of Greek historians.

The standards that made Greek historiography look bad when it came to the distant past made Jewish history look good. Josephus claimed that the Jews had always treated the

²⁰ *Ap.* 2.154.

²¹ 2.143.

²² 2.53.

²³ Drodge 120.

²⁴ *Ap.* 1.60-8.

²⁵ *Ap.* 1.24-7.

²⁶ *Ap.* 1.213-4.

documents of the Biblical canon with the greatest respect (in contrast to the nearly indifferent attitude of Greeks toward their historical records), and that it contained “the record of all time” (τοῦ παντὸς ἔχοντα χρόνου τὴν ἀναγραφὴν),²⁷ spanning about 5000 years.²⁸ That is, if one used conventional Greek standards of historical trustworthiness, the Jews outdid the Greeks themselves. The same kind of favorable comparison appears later in 2.171f, where Josephus claimed that the Jewish legal approach combined the best qualities of both Athenian and Spartan laws: the Athenian system emphasized legal prescription, and the Spartan system emphasized practical training, but the Jewish system had both. In both cases the point was that the Jews had achieved the ideal the Greeks had proposed but themselves failed to reach.

For reliable information on the remote past, Josephus argued that one would have to read the ancient records of the civilizations of the Egyptians (via Manetho), the Babylonians (via Berossus), and the Phoenicians (via an otherwise unknown author named Dios), all of which he quoted at length.²⁹ Unlike the Greek records, these accounts went far into the past, and *they* clearly established the antiquity of the Jews. Even while he was busy defending this particular point, however, the business of connecting the Jews with the Greeks was never far behind. If the authorities he had already cited were not enough to satisfy a Greek reader, Josephus then cited two lists of Greek names to show that the Greeks had known about the Jews for a long time. The first list names Pythagoras, Theophrastus, Herodotus, Choerilus, Aristotle, Hecataeus, and Agatharchides, and the second list names Theophilus, Theodotus, Mnaseas, Aristophanes, Hermogenes, Euhemerus, Conon, Zopyrion, Demetrius Phalarus, Philo the elder, and Eupolemus

²⁷ *Ap.* 1.38.

²⁸ *Ap.* 1.1; cf. *AJ* 1.13.

²⁹ *Ap.* 1.69-160.

—the last three of which are especially commended.³⁰ These lists of Greek names were surely intended to be impressive. The sense is that there was a kind of familiarity between the ancient Greeks and Jews.

Josephus wanted to have the best of both worlds, and this created a problem that appears in two ways. First, he provided perfectly good explanations for why the Jews did not appear in Greek history, but then he adduced these two lists of references to Jews in the works of Greek historians. Apparently it did not occur to Josephus that these two approaches might be mutually exclusive. This same technique appeared in Josephus' major works, where he juxtaposed a Jewish theology of retribution with a Greek view of τύχη to explain historical events. Here as well as there, two different lines of reasoning created an unresolved tension in the argument. Second, Josephus criticized Greek historical knowledge for its inability to go into the distant past, but then he cited two lists of Greek authors as evidence in his argument for the antiquity of the Jewish people. If the antiquity of the Jews was the main concern, the argument is self-contradictory. If, however, the main concern was to create the impression of a close agreement between Jews and Greeks culturally, then the evidence has a different function, namely to reaffirm the close cultural connections between Greeks and Jews. This inconsistency in Josephus' method serves to confirm our suspicion, noted above, that the real issue for Josephus in the *Contra Apionem* was not the antiquity of the Jews, but the Greek rejection of Jewish claims to be the cultural equals of Greeks.

The actual evidence that comes from these lists is mostly speculative over-reaching if not incorrect. As factual arguments they leave much to be desired. On the first list, for the authors he explicitly quotes, his "evidence" is less than sure. For example, his so-called evidence of

³⁰ *Ap.* 1.161-218.

Herodotus' knowledge of the Jews is the historian's notice of the "Syrians of Palestine who practice circumcision" (2.104.3).³¹ However, this is a reference to Philistines, not Jews.³² Similarly, Josephus cites the poet Choerilus as a witness, but the evidence consists of the poet's mention of γένος θαυμαστὸν ἰδέσθαι γλῶσσαν μὲν Φοίνισσαν ἀπὸ στομάτων ἀφιέντες ὤκειον δ' ἐν Σολύμοις ὄρεσι πλατέη παρὰ λίμνη ἀρχμαλέοι κορυφὰς τροχοκουράδες αὐτὰρ ὑπερθεῖν ἵππων δαρτὰ πρόσωπ' ἐφόρουν ἐσκληρότα καπνῶ ("a race wonderful to see, uttering the Phoenician language from their mouths. They were living in the Solyman mountains, by a broad lake, having dark heads shaved around, and above them they wore smoke-dried skins stripped from horses' heads"),³³ concerning which Josephus says δῆλον οὖν ἐστίν ὡς οἶμαι πᾶσιν ἡμῶν αὐτὸν μεμνήσθαι ("I think it is clear to all that he had us in mind").³⁴ However, Choerilus used Herodotus (7.70) as his source for these people, and Herodotus was describing Ethiopians, not Jews. The Solyman mountains are similarly mentioned in connection with the Ethiopians in the *Odyssey* 5.282f.³⁵ Josephus misunderstood the reference, blinded by his zeal to make connections between Jews and Greeks. To those who knew the works of Herodotus or Choerilus better, this blunder would surely have cast doubt on Josephus' scholarship.

The second list of authors is even more problematic. The way Josephus summarily cites them by name only, but with no quotations to prove his point, is suspicious. "...none of these writers can be identified with absolute certainty. ... Josephus is able to give an illusory impression of scholarship, but it remains doubtful whether he knew any of these historians at

³¹ Quoted in *Ap.* 1.169.

³² Gruen, 'Greeks and Jews: Mutual Misperceptions', 42.

³³ *Ap.* 1.173.

³⁴ *Ap.* 1.174.

³⁵ Gabba 655-6.

first hand.”³⁶ Gruen is even more skeptical. Concerning the last three names on the list, whom Josephus especially commends, he says:

We may be confident that each of these writers was, in fact, a Jew, writing under a Greek pseudonym. That is surely true of Hecataeus and almost as surely of Philo, Demetrius, and Eupolemus. Josephus ought to have known this—and probably did. . . . he was perfectly happy, even proud, to parade Greek authors, or what he took to be Greek authors, as confirming the favorable impressions and the prestige that Jews enjoyed among the intelligensia of the Mediterranean world.³⁷

In spite of the fact that Josephus was probably speaking past the facts, he was doing what Jewish apologists normally did, looking for any possible allusion to Jews in Greek authors.³⁸

It is in this attempt to connect the Jews with the Greeks as closely as possible that we encounter one of the most fabulous stories in Josephus’ works. In *Contra Apionem* 1.176-182, Josephus tells a story, gleaned from the writings of Clearchus of Soli, of how Aristotle once met with a Jew, presumably at Assos,³⁹ and was favorably impressed with him. Quite significant for Josephus’ purposes were the words Clearchus put in Aristotle’s mouth about the Jewish fellow: οὗτος οὖν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐπιξενούμενός τε πολλοῖς καὶ τῶν ἄνω τόπων εἰς τοὺς ἐπιθαλαττίους ὑποκαταβαίνων Ἑλληνικὸς ἦν οὐ τῇ διαλέκτῳ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τῇ ψυχῇ (“This man, being shown hospitality by many, and having come down from the upper regions to those which are by the sea, was Greek not only in language but also in spirit”).⁴⁰ According to Clearchus, Aristotle even admitted to his followers that the Jew taught him more than he was able to teach the Jew.⁴¹

³⁶ Droge 124-5.

³⁷ Gruen, ‘Greeks and Jews: Mutual Misperceptions’, 42-3.

³⁸ Here he was following in the steps of Demetrius, Pseudo-Eupolemus, and Artapanus. Gabba, ‘The Growth of Anti-Judaism’, 618, 638-41.

³⁹ H. Lewy, ‘Aristotle and the Jewish Sage According to Clearchus of Soli’, *HTR* 31 (1938) 207; also B. Bar-Kochva, ‘The Wisdom of the Jew and the Wisdom of Aristotle’, in J. Kalms and F. Siegert (eds.), *Internationales Josephus-Kolloquium Brüssel 1998* (Münster 1998) 241.

⁴⁰ *Ap.* 1.181.

⁴¹ Greek παρεδίδου τι μᾶλλον ὧν εἶχεν. Bar-Kochva (‘The Wisdom of the Jew’, 245-47) has argued that the passage cannot mean this, however. Instead, he argues, the passage should be

The Jew was received warmly among the Ionian Greeks and had no less a figure than Aristotle himself to testify to the excellence of Jewish philosophy and moral virtue.

It stretches credibility to think that the story is true as it stands. For one thing, it contains a factual error. In the story Clearchus described the Jews as descendants of the Indian Kalanoi, but there was no such caste.⁴² Furthermore, the form of the quotation—prefaced and ended with a warning that material will be omitted, and picking up in the middle of the story—suggests that Josephus has been highly selective from his source and has omitted details that would have made the Jewish character seem more foreign.⁴³ As I have shown, this was standard practice for Josephus as he carefully managed negative impressions. The story probably tells us more about Clearchus' musings about Jews than anything else, for it reflects a common ancient Greek belief that easterners had a strange and wonderful kind of wisdom and philosophy, but it also served to demonstrate Josephus' contention that the Jews were not a recently-derived race of people (*contra* Apion). Most of all, it has a well-respected Greek referring to a Jew as one who was Greek in his language and in his spirit. A better endorsement of Jewish intellectual culture would have been hard to imagine, yet Josephus was careful not to over-play the story. As it stands the story hints that some of Aristotle's brilliance was due to his encounter with this Jew, and hence with Jewish intellectualism, but it does not belabor the notion.

Further alignment of Jews with Greeks was achieved when Josephus compared the two on the matter of national slanders: Θεόπομπος μὲν τὴν Ἀθηναίων τὴν δὲ Λακεδαιμονίων

read as “he rather conveyed something of the things he had,” taking μάλλον in an absolute sense instead of as a comparative. Reading the words this way results in the passage asserting that this Jewish fellow had integrated himself enough into Greek culture sufficiently to engage Aristotle in conversation on substantial philosophical topics. This is how Clement understood the passage, *Strom.* 1.15.

⁴² Bar-Kochva, ‘The Wisdom of the Jew’, 247.

⁴³ Lewy 223-6; Gabba, ‘The Growth of Anti-Judaism’, 621.

Πολυκράτης ὁ δὲ τὸν Τριπολιτικὸν γράψας οὐ γὰρ δὴ Θεόπομπος ἐστὶν ὡς οἴονται τινες καὶ τὴν Θηβαίων πόλιν προσέλαβεν πολλὰ δὲ καὶ Τίμαιος ἐν ταῖς ἱστορίαις περὶ τῶν προειρημένων καὶ περὶ ἄλλων βεβλασφήμηκεν (“Theopompus slandered Athens, Polycrates slandered Sparta, and the one who wrote the Tripoliticus (for he certainly was not Theopompus as some think) fastened upon Thebes, and Timaeus in his histories slandered many of those just mentioned and others also”).⁴⁴ The Jews were in good Greek company here, even if what they had in common was that they both had been the victims of malicious literary defamation. This is reminiscent of the implicit comparison noted in the *Bellum Judaicum*, where the impression was created that the Jewish experience in the First Jewish War was much like the experience of the Greeks at the hands of their enemies. Another function of the story was that it put the Jews side-by-side with the Greeks in popular sentiment. I noted in chapter three that Roman admiration of the Greeks was also tempered with contempt, so even in their experience of contempt, the Jews had something in common with the Greeks. In *Contra Apionem* 2.130 he again compared the Jews’ national misfortunes with those of the Greeks as he refuted the slander that Jewish history was full of defeats. So was the history of others, Josephus replied, including the Greeks. Defeat, says Josephus, does not mean the victims were inferior people. οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἰσχυρῶς ἐπὶ τοῖς ταπεινοῖς παρουσῶν (“No one reproached those who suffered these things”).⁴⁵ In the same passage he latently compared the destruction of the Jerusalem temple to the destruction of the famous shrines in Athens, Ephesus, and Delphi. Again, the Jews were in very good Greek company here.

I have noted that Josephus, in his major works, used Greek terms to describe various aspects of Jewish culture even when those terms did not precisely fit (terms such as φιλοσοφία). In the *Contra Apionem*, however, Josephus went even farther and actually invented a new word:

⁴⁴ *Ap.* 1.221.

⁴⁵ *Ap.* 2.131.

θεοκρατία. It appears in his explanation of the Mosaic legal code: ὁ δ' ἡμέτερος νομοθέτης εἰς μὲν τούτων οὐδοτιοῦν ἀπέιδεν ὡς δ' ἂν τις εἴποι βιασάμενος τὸν λόγον θεοκρατίαν ἀπέδειξε τὸ πολίτευμα θεῶ τὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ τὸ κράτος ἀναθείς (“But our legislator envisioned none of these [other kinds of governments], but he created the government which one might call by a strained expression a Theocracy, attributing authority and power to God”).⁴⁶ The fact that he used the word prefaced by a kind of apology (it is “a strained expression”) surely indicates that Josephus coined this word.⁴⁷ There was no term in either Hebrew or Aramaic that was equivalent to it. The Jewish πολίτευμα is a θεοκρατία, Josephus says.

As ingenious as this was, again the term does not exactly seem to fit. There are at least two problems here. First, the picture from the canonical Biblical texts is that God delivered the law to Moses, who then taught it to the people. A law of divine origin was a common-enough idea in the Ancient Near East,⁴⁸ but not necessarily in Hellenic culture. The Greek concept of a πολίτευμα involved a different idea, that of a legislator (a νομοθέτης) who assigned specific roles to various parts of the state.⁴⁹ Josephus changed the Biblical picture to fit a Hellenistic mold. The problem is that, technically, Josephus has Moses as the author of the πολίτευμα, who then assigns God the role of chief legal authority.⁵⁰ In attempting to describe the Jewish “constitution” as a πολίτευμα of the great lawgiver Moses, he therefore actually had God in a subordinate role,

⁴⁶ *Ap.* 2.165.

⁴⁷ Amir, ‘Josephus on the Mosaic “Constitution”’, 20.

⁴⁸ For example, the famous stele that records the Code of Hammurabi depicts, at the top, the king in the presence of the god Shamash, receiving symbols of authority (a rod and a ring). The implication is that the laws Hammurabi published had divine authority behind them, if not divine origin. Shamash was, among other things, a god of justice.

⁴⁹ Some (like Plato) claimed divine origin for laws, but most Greeks seem to have viewed this as a ploy to get people to obey them. *Cf.* Str. 16.2.39: Ταῦτα γὰρ ὅπως ποτὲ ἀληθείας ἔχει, παρὰ γε τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐπεπίστευτο καὶ ἐνενόμιστο (“For these things, whatever truth they have, are believed and enacted by men”).

⁵⁰ Amir, ‘Josephus on the Mosaic “Constitution”’, 22.

“which seems to be the consequence of grafting a religious concept onto a secular background.”⁵¹ As I noted concerning the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, sometimes Josephus’ zeal to relate the Jews to the Greeks resulted in an anomaly. Second, Josephus explicitly distanced the Mosaic πολίτευμα from three other forms of government that were well-known to his readers: monarchies, oligarchies, and republics.⁵² In doing so he mimicked Plato, who similarly rejected all other forms of government for a unified system that bore the name of the god who provided its justice.⁵³ This conscious distancing of Jewish culture from Hellenistic culture, even though following a Greek model (Plato) to do it, seems unusual for an author who otherwise strained to make Jewish institutions look as Greek as possible, but it is understandable when we remember that there are some things about Judaism that Josephus was not at all ready to surrender to Hellenism, and chief on that list was always Jewish religious practices and ethics. Josephus saw the Jewish πολίτευμα as inextricably bound up with Jewish religion. To describe the government in purely secular terms would have been to give up the unique religious content of it, and this he would not do. We have here, therefore, a place in which Josephus seems to have been caught between managing a Hellenistic impression for his readers on the one hand, and preserving his Jewish religious sensibilities on the other hand. His solution, technically, failed at both. In an ironic way, however, Josephus’ invention of this word managed to answer another criticism that had been leveled against the Jews, namely that the Jews had nothing innovative in their history.⁵⁴

Another criticism Apion leveled against the Jews was that they settled in a poorly-chosen place in Alexandria: ὄκησαν πρὸς ἀλίμενον θάλασσαν γειτνιάσαντες ταῖς τῶν κυμάτων

⁵¹ Amir, ‘Josephus on the Mosaic “Constitution”’, 22.

⁵² *Ap.* 2.164.

⁵³ *Pl., Lg.* 4.713a. *cf.* Y. Amir, ‘Theokratia as a Concept of Political Philosophy’, *Scripta Classica Israelica* 8-9 (1989) 83-105.

⁵⁴ *Ap.* 2.135.

ἐκβολαῖς (“they settled at the harborless sea, near the pounding of the waves”),⁵⁵ and he expressed surprise that the Jews there should even be acknowledged as Alexandrians. Clearly Apion had portrayed the Jews as outsiders in an extreme way, not even worthy of association with the city in which they lived. Josephus’ rebuttal to this quickly turned into a discussion of Jewish privileges not only in Alexandria but in other major centers of the Hellenistic world. The Jewish presence in that part of Alexandria was, according to Josephus, due to the grant of Alexander himself and was further confirmed by the Ptolemaic monarchs,⁵⁶ public monuments, and Caesar. The combination of both Greek and Roman recognition is emphatic. Public recognition of the Jews’ rightful place in this leading Hellenistic city was an important matter, especially for Josephus’ program of ethnicity-building. According to him, then, the Jews rightly bore the title of “Alexandrians” just as was the custom in other places:

πάντες γὰρ οἱ εἰς ἀποικίαν τινὰ κατακληθέντες κἂν πλείστον ἀλλήλων τοῖς γένεσι διαφέρωσιν ἀπὸ τῶν οἰκιστῶν τὴν προσηγορίαν λαμβάνουσιν. καὶ τί δεῖ περὶ τῶν ἄλλων λέγειν αὐτῶν γὰρ ἡμῶν οἱ τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν κατοικοῦντες Ἀντιοχεῖς ὀνομάζονται τὴν γὰρ πολιτείαν αὐτοῖς ἔδωκεν ὁ κτίστης Σέλευκος ὁμοίως οἱ ἐν Ἐφέσῳ καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἄλλην Ἰωνίαν τοῖς αὐθιγενέσι πολίταις ὁμωνυμοῦσιν τοῦτο παρασχόντων αὐτοῖς τῶν διαδόχων. ἡ δὲ Ῥωμαίων φιλανθρωπία πᾶσιν οὐ μικροῦ δεῖν τῆς αὐτῶν προσηγορίας μεταδέδωκεν οὐ μόνον ἀνδράσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ μεγάλοις ἔθνεσιν ὅλοις Ἰβήρες γοῦν οἱ πάλαι καὶ Τυρρηνοὶ καὶ Σαβῖνοι Ῥωμαῖοι καλοῦνται

(“For all who are called to any colony, even if they are greatly separated from one another in their own race, take their appellative from their founders. And why is it necessary to speak of others? For the Jews living in Antioch are called Antiochenes, for Seleucus the founder gave them citizenship, just as the Jews living in Ephesus and the rest of Ionia share the same name with the native citizens, this granted also to them by the royal successors. And the benevolence of the Romans has extended still further, that their appellative has been bestowed not only on men but also on entire great nations, so even those who were formerly Iberians, and Tyrians, and Sabines are called Romans”).⁵⁷

⁵⁵ *Ap.* 2.33.

⁵⁶ Cf. *AJ* 12.8, where Josephus claimed that Ptolemy I (Soter) gave the Jews the status of ἰσοπολιτεία.

⁵⁷ *Ap.* 2.38-40.

This was important evidence, for it showed Jews both enjoying and being viewed as regular members of major Hellenistic cities. Alexandria, Syrian Antioch, and Ephesus were among the largest and most important Hellenistic cities in Josephus' day, so it was not as if the Jews' political status was recognized only in backwater towns. Josephus made an emphatic point that he was not merely citing a political theory (καὶ τί δεῖ περὶ τῶν ἄλλων λέγειν). The fact was, according to Josephus, that in the greatest cities of the Roman world the Jews had been treated exactly like any other group within Hellenistic culture. Moreover, they bore the same local names as the natives in the old Greek heartland itself, the western coast of Asia Minor, and he implies that the Jews were certainly included under the umbrella of "Roman."⁵⁸ It is the Greek recognition of Jews, however, that gets the most attention from Josephus. After the statement quoted above Josephus goes into a short history of benevolent treatment of the Jews by Alexander III, Ptolemy I (Soter), Ptolemy II (Philadelphus), Ptolemy III (Euergetes), and Ptolemy VI (Philometor), a history which emphasizes the loyalty and service of the Jews to Greek rulers of Egypt. The trouble with Cleopatra found the Jews on the side of the Romans, and Josephus duly noted that this loyalty was attested by both Julius Caesar and Augustus. Again, both Greeks and Romans had acknowledged the Jews as a significant constituency and ally.⁵⁹

At *Contra Apionem* 2.145 Josephus finished his refutation of the criticisms of Apion and turned to other slanders from other authors, namely Apollonius Molon and Lysimachus, whose slanders concerned Moses. While he said οὐ γὰρ ἐγκώμιον ἡμῶν αὐτῶν προειλόμην συγγράφειν

⁵⁸ Josephus' statement about the Iberians is probably to be taken as a generalization. Not all communities in Roman Hispania enjoyed Roman citizenship. See T. Mommsen, *The Provinces of the Roman Empire* (Chicago 1968) 71. See also n. "a" in Thackeray's Loeb translation, 1:308.

⁵⁹ Josephus repeats this important fact in *Ap.* 2.72.

(“I do not propose to write an encomium about ourselves”),⁶⁰ he again turned to Greek models for comparison. Specifically, Josephus claimed that Moses surpassed the greatest names in Greek legal history. φημὶ τοίνυν τὸν ἡμέτερον νομοθέτην τῶν ὁπουδηποτοῦν μνημονευομένων νομοθετῶν προάγειν ἀρχαιότητι Λυκοῦργοι γὰρ καὶ Σόλωνες καὶ Ζάλευκος ὁ τῶν Λοκρῶν καὶ πάντες οἱ θαυμαζόμενοι παρὰ τοῖς Ἑλλησιν ἐχθῆς δὴ καὶ πρῶην ὡς πρὸς ἐκεῖνον παραβαλλόμενοι φαίνονται (“Thus I say that our lawgiver surpasses in antiquity all the known lawgivers anywhere. For Lycurguses and Solons and Zaleucus of the Locrians and all those who are marveled at by the Greeks have appeared only yesterday or the day before in comparison to him”).⁶¹ Similarly, he explicitly compared Moses with Minos: τοιοῦτος μὲν δὴ τις [αὐτὸς] ἡμῶν ὁ νομοθέτης οὐ γόης οὐδ’ ἀπατεῶν ἄπερ λοιδοροῦντες λέγουσιν ἀδίκως ἀλλ’ οἴους παρὰ τοῖς Ἑλλησιν ἀύχοῦσιν τὸν Μίνω γεγονέναι καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα τοὺς ἄλλους νομοθέτας (“such a one was indeed the kind of person our lawgiver was; not a swindler, nor a cheat, which is the very thing the revilers unjustly say, but such a one as Minos had been among the Greeks, and the other lawgivers afterwards”),⁶² and went on to extol the Jewish legal charter as the best that could be imagined. What is surprising is that Josephus’ description of the Jewish politico-religious system in the *Contra Apionem* does not so much follow the contours of the description in the canonical Biblical account, but follows the one in Hecataeus of Abdera, a Greek author.⁶³

In 2.168 he came even closer to claiming explicitly that the Jews were the source of Greek wisdom. He says:

ταῦτα περὶ θεοῦ φρονεῖν οἱ σοφώτατοι παρ’ Ἑλλησιν ὅτι μὲν ἐδιδάχθησαν ἐκείνου τὰς ἀρχὰς παρασχόντος ἐὼ νῦν λέγειν ὅτι δ’ ἐστὶ καλὰ καὶ πρέποντα τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ φύσει καὶ μεγαλειότητι σφόδρα μεμαρτυρήκασιν καὶ γὰρ Πυθαγόρας καὶ Ἀναξαγόρας καὶ Πλάτων οἷ

⁶⁰ *Ap.* 2.147.

⁶¹ *Ap.* 2.154. See pp.248-9 above for Josephus’ appropriation of the phrase “yesterday or the day before” from Greek literature.

⁶² *Ap.* 2.161.

⁶³ Droge 137.

τε μετ' ἐκεῖνον ἀπὸ τῆς στοᾶς φιλόσοφοι καὶ μικροῦ δεῖν ἅπαντες οὕτως φαίνονται περὶ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ φύσεως πεφρονηκότες

“I now leave off from saying that the wisest of the Greeks learned these things about God because they were taught by him [Moses] who provided the principles, for they testify greatly that they are good and fitting to the nature and majesty of God. For Pythagoras, and Anaxagoras, and Plato, and those philosophers who came after him from the Stoa, and nearly all others, exhibited as much, having thought about the nature of God”).

Josephus was in a bold mood here. Josephus says he would not make the explicit claim that the Jews were in fact the source of Greek intellectualism (although his words produce that same effect), but would allow the evidence to speak for itself. If the Jews had these ideas about God first, and then the Greeks had similar ones, the implication was that the Jews were the source for the Greeks. As if he could hold it in no longer, and convinced he has made his case, he finally said in 2.281: πρῶτοι μὲν γὰρ οἱ παρὰ τοῖς Ἑλλησι φιλοσοφήσαντες τῷ μὲν δοκεῖν τὰ πάτρια διεφύλαττον ἐν δὲ τοῖς πράγμασι καὶ τῷ φιλοσοφεῖν ἐκείνῳ κατηκολούθησαν (“The earliest philosophers among the Greeks, while they seemingly observed their ancestral customs, in their deeds and in their philosophies they followed him [Moses]”). Josephus seems to have failed to keep his promise of avoiding encomium, yet he was sharing in a particular apologetic that Jews had been advancing for nearly 300 years. “In addition to Aristobulus, the Jewish historians Eupolemus and Artapanus presented Moses and the patriarchs as culture-bringers to the Egyptians, Babylonians, and Phoenicians, who in turn civilized the Greeks.”⁶⁴ The cue for this was actually, again, the Greek Hecataeus of Abdera, who had established a paradigm of great civilizations branching off from Egypt. Droge notes:

Hecataeus had produced a model and, more importantly, had established a relationship between Egyptians, Greeks, and Jews which would become the standard for nearly three centuries. Both Josephus’ method of cultural comparison and his representation of Judaism remain in thrall to Hecataeus’ ethnographic model. To insist, as he does at the beginning of his treatise, that the first Greek philosophers were ‘disciples’ of the Egyptians and Babylonians, was to say nothing new. ... Whether as native Egyptians or as resident aliens,

⁶⁴ Droge 128.

the Jews had been linked to a prestigious source which conferred on them an enviable antiquity and pedigree. In this sense, then, the Jews were called upon to perpetuate their own myth in the terms in which the Greeks had invented it.⁶⁵

The result was that not only were the Jews in Josephus' presentation quite Greek in their legal traditions, but the Greeks turned out to be quite Jewish, and, more importantly, if Droge's assessment is correct, Josephus was bringing his Greek readers *back* to a well-established understanding of Jewish origins that was well-rooted in Greek thought. The malicious versions of Jewish origins circulated by anti-Judaic writers such as Apion were thus seen to be a *perversion* of a Greek story that originally complimented the Jews.

Josephus' defense of Jewish law culminated with another comparison to Athenian and Spartan traditions. As Josephus had expounded the virtues and excellencies of Jewish law for Greek readers, he was aware that he had painted a picture that probably seemed too good to be true, a picture of a nation of people who had the highest philosophical concept of God, who lived according to the highest moral standards, who found unity in all things that were good, and who had a long history of faithfulness to their original laws. The problem, of course, was that the more he elevated Jewish piety, the more it began to sound like a criticism of non-Jews, and that brought to the fore again the matter of Jewish exclusivity. Josephus' answer was that Plato's high ideals (which Josephus claims did not reach as high as Jewish ones) evoked the same kind of criticism.⁶⁶ That is, the Jewish religion was comparable to some of the loftiest thoughts in the Greek philosophical tradition, including the response they both drew. If that were not enough, Josephus then conceded that some found the Spartans to be the better legal and moral example, for they long remained faithful to the laws of Lycurgus. Even here, however, the Jews prove to be the better ones, Josephus argued, because the Spartans abandoned their legal faithfulness

⁶⁵ Droge 133.

⁶⁶ *Ap.* 2.220-35.

when times got tough.⁶⁷ The Jews, on the other hand, had remained faithful to their law when they were persecuted (or so Josephus claimed). So again, the Jews had out-Greeked the Greeks themselves. Josephus was using a rhetorical technique of defending an apparent transgression as an expression of loyalty to tradition,⁶⁸ something Greek readers surely would have noticed.

The implicit criticism of pagan religion became explicit in 2.236-249, where Josephus entered the well-known Greek tradition of criticism of the morality of the ancient gods, following the σίλλοι of Greeks such as Xenophanes of Colophon, Heraclitus of Ephesus, Timon of Philus, and Greek skepticism in general.⁶⁹ He defended his attack on Greek religion by appealing to the Greeks themselves. τίς γὰρ τῶν παρὰ τοῖς Ἑλλησιν ἐπὶ σοφία τεθουμασμένων οὐκ ἐπιτετίμηκεν καὶ ποιητῶν τοῖς ἐπεφανεστάτοις καὶ νομοθετῶν τοῖς μάλιστα πεπιστευμένοις ὅτι τοιαύτας δόξας περὶ θεῶν ἐξ ἀρχῆς τοῖς πλήθεσιν ἐγκατέσπειραν (“For who of those admired by the Greeks for wisdom did not rebuke the most famous of the poets and the most trusted of the legislators because they sowed from the beginning such estimates of the gods among the multitudes?”).⁷⁰ These τεθουμασμένοι are later called οἱ φρονήσει διαφέροντες (“those who are superior in thought”).⁷¹ The point is that if the high character of Judaism came across as a criticism of Greek religion, this criticism itself was a Hellenic kind of thing because the noblest among the Greeks themselves criticized their ancestral religion. Thus again the Jews were standing well within the thought and practice of the noble Greeks of the past.

⁶⁷ *Ap.* 2.227.

⁶⁸ As seen in Aelius Theon, *Exercises* 8: “Whenever we seek forgiveness we shall have starting points from the following: first, that the action was unintentional, either through ignorance of chance or necessity; but if it was intentional, one should say that it was reverent, that it was customary, that it was useful.” In G. Kennedy (trans.), *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Atlanta 2003) 49.

⁶⁹ Josephus had mentioned this feature of Greek religion briefly before, in *AJ* 1.22.

⁷⁰ *Ap.* 2.239.

⁷¹ *Ap.* 2.242.

Jewish refusal to assimilate to Greek religion was, of course, at the core of the Jewish social problem. Apion had put his finger on the problem when he asked, concerning the Jews of Alexandria, *quomodo ergo ... si sunt cives, eosdem deos quos Alexandrini non colunt?* (“how then is it ... if they are citizens, that they do not worship the same gods as the Alexandrians?”),⁷² and the issue was raised again by Apollonius Molon. Interestingly, nowhere did Josephus say that the practice of Judaism entailed the rejection of the pagan gods,⁷³ and however numerous proselytes were, Josephus consistently downplayed their presence.⁷⁴ Instead, Josephus’ response was that it was a mark of piety that Jews remained faithful to the laws which Moses gave them from God. He argued that what contemporary critics viewed as a fault in the Jews was actually a virtue when seen in the light of classical Greek practice. Plato, the Spartans, and the ancient Athenians prized the same attitude toward laws and moral behavior as proved by their treatments of Socrates, Anaxagoras, Diagoras, and Protagoras.⁷⁵ If such a virtuous attitude was judged to be intolerance, then the Greeks themselves were guilty of the same offense. Josephus put forth the case of Ninus as additional evidence:

Νίνου⁷⁶ γὰρ τὴν ἱέρειαν ἀπέκτειναν ἐπεὶ τις αὐτῆς κατηγορήσεν ὅτι ξένους ἐμίει θεοὺς νόμῳ δ’ ἦν τοῦτο παρ’ αὐτοῖς κεκωλυμένον καὶ τιμωρία κατὰ τῶν ξένων εἰσαγόντων θεὸν ὄριστο θάνατος οἱ δὲ τοιούτῳ νόμῳ χρώμενοι δῆλον ὅτι τοὺς τῶν ἄλλων οὐκ ἐνόμιζον εἶναι θεοὺς οὐ γὰρ ἂν αὐτοῖς πλειόνων ἀπολαύειν ἐφθόνου

(“For they executed Ninus the priestess, since someone accused her, that she lulled people to the custom of strange gods. This had been forbidden by them, and a punishment of death had been determined for those who bring in a strange god. Now those who act by such a

⁷² *Ap.* 2.65.

⁷³ S. Cohen, ‘Crossing the Boundary and Becoming a Jew’, *HTR* 82 (1989) 27.

⁷⁴ S. Cohen, ‘Respect for Judaism by Gentiles’, *HTR* 80 (1987) 427-8. Similarly, C. Gerber suggests that Josephus’ depiction of proselytes in the *Ap.* is largely a literary device. ‘Des Josephus Apologie für Judentum’, in J. Kalms and F. Siegert (hg.), *Internationales Josephus-Kolloquium Brüssel 1998* (Münster 1998) 265.

⁷⁵ *Ap.* 2.255-268.

⁷⁶ An emendation from *νῦν* in the manuscripts.

law make it clear that they do not consider the gods of others to be gods, otherwise they would not have begrudged themselves to enjoy more gods”).⁷⁷

So again, the Jews were actually like the Greeks in this regard. The Greeks were not an intolerant people, but were simply zealous to preserve the purity of their religious customs. If that was a good Greek quality, then the Jews lacked nothing in that regard.

Conclusion

Perceived criticism against the Jews provided Josephus with further opportunities to construct his Greek ethnicity for the Jewish people. The program that characterized his earlier, major works continued in his later, minor works. There is less of this collective program discernible in the *Vita* because that work concentrated on Josephus himself and not on the Jewish people as a whole. Even so, Josephus described his own affiliations and conduct in way that depicted him as an insider who was in touch with Hellenistic culture and politics, and he latently used Greek standards for historians to portray himself favorably to his readers and to discredit his detractors.

The collective program of ethnicity-building is more visible in the *Contra Apionem*, where broad slanders against the Jews allowed Josephus further opportunities to align Jews with Greeks. The extent to which Josephus went to achieve this alignment in the *Contra Apionem* is paralleled only in the *Antiquitates Judaicae*,⁷⁸ and in some ways exceeds it. In the *Contra Apionem* Josephus compared the Jews and Greeks by using Greek standards of historiography,⁷⁹ by citing several famous Greek figures who were acquainted with the Jews (culminating in a story concerning Aristotle and a Jew), by comparing the misfortunes of both Jews and Greeks,

⁷⁷ *Ap.* 2.267-8. She is mentioned in *D. Adv. Boeot.* 39.2.

⁷⁸ Spilsbury (348-67) has noted the extensive similarities between the *Contra Apionem* and the *Antiquitates Judaicae*.

⁷⁹ My own reading has confirmed the view of S. Cohen in this regard, who has noted that in the *Contra Apionem* “Josephus attacks the Greeks with their own weapons.” S. Cohen, ‘History and Historiography in the Against Apion of Josephus’, *History and Theory* 27 (1988) 5.

by using Greek terms to describe Jewish institutions (including one Josephus invented), and by emphasizing the political status Jews had enjoyed, especially under Greek rulers. He also managed negative impressions of Jews by reverting to the same theme that characterized the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, namely the lofty nature of Jewish piety. Even here, however, the apologetics were accompanied by comparison with a Greek notion of piety.

The *Contra Apionem* has a more aggressive presentation of Jewish ethnicity than does Josephus' other works. This is due to the nature of the work itself and the circumstances which prompted its origin. Continued anti-Jewish polemics, in spite of Josephus' thoroughly Greek depiction of them in the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, called for strong rebuttal. Moreover, it would seem that Jewish-Roman relations took a downward turn in the reign of Domitian. A shortage of cash prompted Domitian to collect the Jewish tax with more rigor,⁸⁰ and the emperor was taking his deity more seriously all the time, especially against those (like Jews⁸¹ and Christians⁸²) whose religious scruples or philosophical ideas conflicted with acknowledging his divine status.⁸³ It is possible to see in Josephus' writings a growing sense of apprehension about the nature of Jewish-Roman relations.⁸⁴ The significance of this for the present study is that the deterioration of this relationship would have prompted increased efforts on Josephus' part to assert a Jewish ethnicity that called for acceptance in the Roman world, and this is exactly what we see.

However, a note of caution is appropriate here. We should not jump to the conclusion that Josephus' portrayal of things necessarily reflects the social realities of his day accurately. "It is

⁸⁰ Suet., *Dom.* 12.

⁸¹ Cf. D.C. 67.14, where the philosopher Juventius Celsus was threatened with banishment and escaped by acknowledging the emperor as "master and god."

⁸² Cf. the New Testament's *Apocalypse of John* (the *Book of Revelation*).

⁸³ Cf. D.C. 67.13.

⁸⁴ Case 10-20.

notoriously unwise to rely on a group's self-description to produce an accurate picture of that group."⁸⁵ This is rhetorical polemic, not objective history. As I have noted, there are several oddities about Josephus' method in the *Contra Apionem*. He does not tell us who was complaining that the Jews were not an ancient culture. He denigrated Greek history when it appeared to criticize the Jews, but piled up names of Greek historians when he thought he saw in them references to Jews, and the main charge he set out to refute does not sound like a typical Greek complaint about foreigners. He was not accurate when he used the Greek historians, and his use of Greek terms to describe Jewish institutions was dubious. A good case can be made that Josephus was dealing more with his own perception of anti-Jewish sentiments than with real ones.⁸⁶ After all, he began the treatise by mentioning that several people had criticized his *Antiquitates Judaicae*. He then took that to be a criticism of Jewish culture and ethnicity generally. It is not that widespread anti-Jewish perceptions could not have existed. I have argued above, in chapter three, that the Roman world had its share of anti-Jewish sentiment, and surely Josephus' perceptions were grounded in his actual social situation. He could not have invented these objections wholesale, written a book to refute them, and expected people to take the result seriously. But the *Contra Apionem* does not necessarily reflect its historical context in a purely objective way. The fact that Josephus' personal situation compromised his objectivity and sometimes interfered with his larger purpose will always be a factor in reading his works, and to insist on deciding between him writing out of personal motives or out of national interests is to create a false dichotomy. Both played a part, but how to weight them will be a matter of ongoing debate. For the purposes of this study, however, a stance is not necessary. Ethnicities are not necessarily driven by the realities of the situations in which they are proposed, but by a perceived

⁸⁵ Goodman, 'Jews and Judaism in the Mediterranean Diaspora', 182.

⁸⁶ Gruen, 'Greeks and Jews: Mutual Misperceptions', 39-50.

crisis on the part of those who propose them. Whether the perception accurately reflects the reality is beside the point. What we see is that the factors that typically motivate people to forge and promote an ethnicity were in place for Josephus, and the *Contra Apionem* makes sense when read in this light.

CHAPTER 8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The literary works of Flavius Josephus were addressed to non-Jews. This is our first clue concerning the nature and purpose of these works. Josephus was not engaging in an inside conversation among Jews over how, or to what extent, Hellenism compromised Jewish religious principles or Jewish ethnic identity (the two were closely related). He was instead initiating a dialogue with the larger Roman-Hellenistic world of his day. This dialogue was prompted by a wide-spread and persistent anti-Jewish sentiment in Hellenistic society, a sentiment that had originated in Egypt, but by the first century CE had spread to many other places. Diaspora Jews were often subjected to unfair treatments of various kinds and were the objects of literary slanders. They were seldom in a position to access the means by which upward social mobility could have been attained, and they often had their temple contributions confiscated while local Roman officials either looked on or encouraged it. As a result, they often felt antagonized by Roman *imperium*. Their exclusive dedication (which they viewed as the expression of piety) to their own religion was interpreted as malice towards all others, and those who did not understand Jewish customs often put a malicious spin on them. More than anything else, the First Jewish War had ended in a crushing defeat of the Jews that was institutionalized in the political machinery of the Roman empire and that was used to bolster the image of the Flavian dynasty at Jewish expense. The Jewish social and cultural image had suffered greatly in Josephus' day. They had been marginalized and discounted in almost every way.

It is not as if the Jews had deliberately isolated themselves culturally from the rest of the world. Indeed, they had a long history of Hellenization going back to the Seleucid period in Palestine. Of course, this was not uniform for Jews everywhere, since Hellenization was not a uniform phenomenon, nor was Judaism a monolithic social entity. However, in many places and

in many ways the Jews had deliberately assimilated Hellenistic culture. There was a widespread use of the Greek language on their part, and the evidence suggests that this was not simply due to the practical exigencies of the day. The LXX was the Bible of most Jews in the first century CE. They used Greek architectural styles for their public buildings (especially synagogues), and they were integrated into the work force of the ancient world across the spectrum of usual occupations. The Greek literature produced by Jewish authors such as Artapanus, Aristobulus, and Ezekiel the Tragedian, as well as the anonymous authors of the Jewish *Sibylline Oracles* and the *Letter of Aristeas* thoroughly incorporated Greek literary motifs in their works. Even in southern Palestine, where the presence of the Jerusalem temple offered strong resistance to Hellenism, Greek culture within Jewish institutions was apparent. Herod the Great had left public buildings throughout his domain, most of which prominently bore explicit Hellenistic features. We have argued that the evidence reveals a picture of the Jews not as a people who found Hellenism imposed on them and who reluctantly tolerated it, but as a people who were willing to adapt to the social forces around them and who did not see the Hellenization as inherently consisting in a compromise with their collective identity.

What was the *subject* of the dialogue Josephus initiated with the Hellenistic world? A close look at Josephus' literary methods holds an answer: the subject of the dialogue was the Greek quality of the Jewish people. Throughout his writings Josephus portrayed Jews as sharing in the qualities and experiences of the noble Greeks of the past. In the *Bellum Judaicum*, Josephus recounted the First Jewish War following the Greek models of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Polybius in particular, but also participating in the conventions of the Greek traditions of historiography in general. It was "the greatest war ever," it was fought between a superpower and much smaller nation, people found themselves unwilling participants in it, and its record was

provided by one who fought in the conflict and witnessed much of it firsthand. This *mimesis* was not merely a formal exercise meant to be a token gesture toward the conventions of the day. Instead it lay at the heart of Josephus' narrative and colored almost everything in it, including Josephus' presentation of himself as an historian after the Greek paradigm. In addition to adopting the formal elements of the tradition, Josephus also used specific scenes from Greek history as types for his depiction of the Jews, and he even used elements of the Greek historiographical tradition when did they not fit well with his own story (as in his use of τύχη). Complementary to this was his suppression of things (like the Jewish sects) that were uniquely Jewish and recasting them in Greek terms, or the suppression of things that would have reminded his readers of Roman animosity (as seen in his favorable portrait of Titus). In the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, Josephus used an ἀρχαιολογία of the past as a vehicle for presenting the essential agreement between the Jews and the ancient Greeks culturally. The fluid way in which foundational stories were treated and understood in his day allowed him the flexibility to do this. Around the central facet of a holy God Josephus told the stories of the Jewish Biblical tradition in such a way that Jewish piety resembled Greek virtue. He changed the vocabulary of the stories to echo Greek stories, he used Greek terms to describe Jewish cultural or political institutions (even though the terms did not always fit), he downplayed or ignored aspects of the stories that would have seemed especially foreign for a Greek reader, and he labored to establish connections between the Jews and the Greeks in the past. He presented major figures in Jewish history like Greek *exempla* who embodied Hellenistic ideals, he emphasized those episodes in the tradition where Jews made positive impressions on Greeks, and he manipulated the presentation of stories that presented the Jews in a bad light, or that presented theological

problems, in order to minimize those aspects of Jewish culture that would have seemed foreign or hostile to Hellenistic society and to highlight the aspect of Jewish piety or innocence in them.

What was the *purpose* of the dialogue Josephus initiated with the Hellenistic world? There were other accounts of the First Jewish War circulating in Josephus' day. The problem was in the way they depicted the Jews, and Josephus in particular. Similarly, there was already an account of Jewish history written in Greek (the LXX) for any Gentile who may have wished to know the facts of that history and the origins of Jewish culture. For Josephus, however, the problem with the LXX seems to have been that although it was written in the Greek language, it was not Greek in its spirit or presentation, and its characters did not look like Greeks, not to mention that it was a collection of fairly disparate materials that lacked literary and linguistic cohesion. That is, the Jews still looked strange and aloof from the world in that telling of the story. Like those other accounts of the First Jewish War, the problem with the LXX lay also in the way it depicted the Jews. Furthermore, the LXX did not extend its history down to the present day, and thus did not fit the literary expectations of a Greek reader in that regard either. In Josephus' view, the Jews were suffering socially and culturally under the malicious perceptions of others, and there was nothing to which Gentiles could turn to see it differently. The customs, the history, and the version of the war they knew obscured (if not downright perverted), in Josephus' opinion, the true identity of the Jewish people. Therefore Josephus set out to fill the void, to provide a presentation of the Jews that showed them in the light in which Hellenistic society ought to see them.

The point, then, of the *Bellum Judaicum* was not simply to provide a Jewish account of the war, but to provide a *corrected* account of the war that presented the Jews in the proper way. The other accounts of the war had presented the Jewish people (as a group) as hostile foreigners, but

Josephus wanted them to be viewed as a people who embodied those features that had already been accepted (even if grudgingly) in the Roman world: those of the ancient Greeks. The *Bellum Judaicum* thus showed how closely the Jews had paralleled Greek experience in their own. This point was made on a larger scale in the *Antiquitates Judaicae*. Its purpose was not to explain Jewish culture to Greek readers, for if Josephus simply wanted to explain the various facets of that history and culture as they appeared in the LXX, he could have done so easily. The problem with explanation is that while it may address misunderstandings or provide a rationale for what is mysterious, it leaves its object as what it is. An explanation of foreign customs still leaves the reader with foreign customs. But the perception of Jews as a people of strange, foreign (and thus hostile) ways was the problem. More than simple explanation was needed. Thus the purpose of the *Antiquitates Judaicae* was to show its intended non-Jewish readership that the essential features and characters of Jewish culture and history were, for all practical purposes, Greek. Josephus was re-describing Jewish identity for his readers. Like most Jews, Josephus was able to feel at home personally in the Hellenistic world, but he perceived that non-Jews did not reciprocate the feeling. His two major literary productions were an attempt to bridge the gap of negative perceptions for non-Jews, to show them that they could view the Jews in the same way they viewed Greeks, because they both had the same qualities. He found the seeds of such a use of historiography within the Greek tradition already, for Greek historiography had long contained ethnographic elements.

It has been common in the scholarship on Josephus to refer to his writings as apologetic. While this description is correct, it does not go far enough. There is more than ordinary apologetics going on here. The thorough-going nature of his application of Greek models to Jewish things, resulting in omission of old materials or invention of new elements, shows that

more than defense was involved. Josephus engaged in a re-writing of the traditional materials in order to present the Jewish people in a different way. The result, while not perfect, would have been fairly straightforward for his target audience. As they read about the Jews in Josephus' writings, readers would have come away with the impression that the Jews were remarkably similar to the ancient Greeks in many ways. The better way to describe this is that Josephus was constructing an ethnicity for the Jews. "From a 'bird's eye view' the construction of ethnicity is likely to be manifested as multiple overlapping boundaries constituted by representations of cultural difference, which are at once transient, but also subject to reproduction and transformation in the ongoing process of social life."⁸²⁰ This describes succinctly, and exactly, what Josephus was doing as he applied Greek models to Jewish history.

An ethnicity is a dynamic social construct by which a person, or group, defines themselves in relation to others out of a basic psychological need for self-esteem. The need for such self-definition often arises out of a sense of crisis that threatens one's established self-understanding. The crisis can consist of almost anything, including war or large-scale social forces (such as Hellenism) that confront a social group in a way that is perceived as threatening. At the heart of such a construct is a putative myth of shared descent. This myth may be understood literally, as referring to an actual blood tie, but more often it is construed in other ways. Other elements of an ethnicity are typically things like a shared history, a distinctive culture, a homeland, and a sense of community solidarity. Not everything needs to be negotiable, and not everything that is available for negotiation needs to be negotiable to the same extent, nor does every element of an ethnicity have to bear equal weight. Some elements, such as claim to a homeland, prove to be expendable in practice. Many factors will determine the course of an ethnical strategy, such as

⁸²⁰ S. Jones, 'Discourses of Identity in the Interpretation of the Past', 70-1.

the power of religious institutions. The nature and value of any particular ethnic identifier (whether at the level of criteria or indicia) is determined by the socio-historical context in which the ethnic dialectic is pursued.

As Josephus undertook his reinvention of Jewish ethnicity, he faced all the limiting factors that any ethnicity faces. He had to negotiate it in the face of a dominant, “other” culture and its conservative, resistant institutions. He had to make the end result plausible. In the end, an ethnicity is a proposal for how a certain people are to be understood in relation to the rest of society. For that reason, the “success” of an ethnicity is ultimately not determined by the people who forge it, but by the people who are asked to accept it. Josephus’ program of building a new ethnicity for the Jews, of re-inventing Jewish identity for Gentile readers, proved difficult as evidenced by the fact that he had to follow up his major literary works with two smaller works, both of which pressed the ethnic agenda again. The credibility of his portrait of Jewish ethnicity in the *Bellum Judaicum* was questioned, mostly because of critics who cast aspersions on his character, and he responded with the *Vita*, a defense of his own conduct. Greek readers were also hesitant to accept his picture of Jewish culture and ethnicity in the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, and he responded with the *Contra Apionem*, in which he zealously pressed his case further.

In his literary works Josephus produced an ethnicity for Jews that was unique in its time in terms of its scope. However, the verdict of history seems to be that Josephus’ proposed ethnicity for the Jews was rejected by both his own people and the Roman world around them. Quotations from his works do not appear until the end of the second century, where he is first cited by the Christian author Theophilus of Antioch.⁸²¹ Josephus is mentioned by Suetonius (*Vesp.* 5.6) and Dio Cassius (65.1), but no pagan author apparently cited Josephus until Porphyry, at the end of

⁸²¹ In *Autol.* 3.20-3.

the third century CE,⁸²² and no Jewish author cited him until the Middle Ages.⁸²³ It is possible, but not certain, that Dio Cassius used Josephus as a model.⁸²⁴ Eusebius⁸²⁵ in the fourth century CE said that copies of Josephus' works had been deposited in a library in Rome, but who put them there we do not know. Later Christians used Josephus generally for their own theological purposes (which were often anti-Jewish), but not for understanding Jewish ethnicity. We will close with a few suggestions about why it did not work.

First, neither the Jews nor the Romans were ready for it.⁸²⁶ The Jews were still feeling the sting of defeat in war, and the Romans were not done manipulating its value to them. Neither party was in a position to re-think Jewish identity in such a way that the barriers of the past could be removed. The Roman literary scene was probably not ready for a Jewish Thucydides either. The problem was that too many other considerations were in play. As J. Hall notes, "... ethnic identity can sometimes be a matter of an achieved status which vests itself in the garb of an ascribed one. This happens where an individual manages successfully to persuade his or her peers that s/he fulfills the criteria for ethnic inclusion, *regardless of any objective considerations.*"⁸²⁷ However, the objective considerations were too powerful to overcome at the time the ethnicity was proposed. The context of Roman imperial power made the successful prosecution of new ethnicities virtually impossible. J. Yinger notes that "In some developing states, of course, ethnicity has been accepted as an organizing principle, to some degree because

⁸²² In *Abst.* 4.11.2-14.2.

⁸²³ Droge 141.

⁸²⁴ M. Eisman, 'Dio and Josephus: Parallel Analyses', *Latomus* 36 (1977) 657-73.

⁸²⁵ *H.E.* 3.9.2.

⁸²⁶ *cf.* Droge 141: "In the end it was an experiment that failed, or perhaps we should say, an experiment whose time had not yet come. Not even his coreligionists were persuaded."

⁸²⁷ P.28.

no ethnic group has had sufficient power to declare itself the core.”⁸²⁸ The opposite, however, was true in Josephus’ context, and Roman identity politics prevailed over Jewish ethnic myth.

Second, the Romans’ cultural patience for the Jews had already been exhausted.⁸²⁹ The differences between Jews and others were perceived as too great to allow them a place on the inside. The Romans were generally tolerant toward native cultures and were perfectly willing to extend citizenship to those who adopted Roman mores.⁸³⁰ However, Josephus’ proposals were too little too late. There were just too many things about the square peg of Jewish culture that could not fit into the round hole of Hellenistic society. In a sense, Josephus’ sense of his own culture, and his aim to *preserve* it (even though he was trying to put it in Greek guise), was his biggest obstacle.

Third, we noted in our chapter on ethnicity that any ethnical strategy must attain some semblance of credibility if it hopes to succeed. There were many elements of Josephus’ ethnicity, however, that failed at precisely this point. Would any Roman really have believed that a Roman general like Titus was shocked and moved to tears at the sight of his enemies getting what they deserved? Would they have believed that the expulsion of Jews from Rome in 19 CE was really caused only by the actions of four men, and that the emperor would be that unfair? Would any Greek really have believed that Aristotle learned philosophy from a Jew? Would any Alexandrian have agreed that the Jews in that city were on an equal political footing with the Alexandrians themselves? In these and similar other places Josephus was trying too hard and crossed the line of believability. In others ways as well, the project must have seemed like an attempt to justify a contradiction. If the Jews really were just like the Greeks in Hellenistic

⁸²⁸ ‘Ethnicity’, *Annual Review of Sociology* 11 (1985) 169.

⁸²⁹ Yavetz 15-18.

⁸³⁰ Walbank 155.

society, then why did they not participate in the local cults, or why did they send their money to Jerusalem instead of investing it in the cities where they lived? In some ways, it must have appeared as an attempt to integrate without compromise.

Fourth, and related to the third reason, is that in some places Josephus' employment of Greek paradigms comes across as ham-fisted and unsatisfying. As we have noted above, he crossed a well-known boundary between history and myth when he compared Moses and Homer. In his attempt to describe the Jewish governmental system in Greek terms he has Moses, not God, at the head of the Jewish state. He made the Roman army the tool of the Jewish God, and he admitted his personal bias up front in the *Bellum Judaicum* (1.9-12), something no self-respecting Hellenistic historian would have done.⁸³¹ It certainly made him look inept and not worth the reading. There were also important features of the Greek historiographical tradition that an ancient reader would have noticed were lacking in Josephus' major works. For example, we noted in our study of Josephus' *Bellum Judaicum* that change and its causes was a major theme of the Greek historians, and that a war was one manifestation of it. However, Josephus has a war, but no change. At the beginning of the story Rome ruled the world, and at the end of the story the world is still securely under Roman control. Similarly, the theme of change is completely absent from the *Antiquitates Judaicae*. Instead it sought to justify Jewish traditional customs by comparison with Greek ones. But in using historiography in this way, Josephus was acting against a major element of the convention he was trying so hard to employ. "The Greek and Roman historians were not supposed to be the keepers of tradition."⁸³²

Fifth, Josephus' reputation was apparently a continual obstacle to both groups. His reputation as a Roman sympathizer generally prevented Jews from accepting his literary works.

⁸³¹ J. Price, 'The Provincial Historian in Rome', 110-11.

⁸³² Momigliano, 'Tradition and the Classical Historian', 284.

That this was an ongoing problem is evidenced by the fact that he had to write the *Vita*, in defense of his character and in response to a fellow-Jew, some fifteen years after the publication of the *Antiquitates Judaicae*. The problems with his own reputation may even account for why the Aramaic version of the *Bellum Judaicum* did not survive antiquity.⁸³³ Josephus' Greek writings appear to have been completely ignored by the Jews of his day. "Understandably, the cozier he [Josephus] became with the Romans—the conquerors of the Jews—the more detestable he became to his people. . . . His name does not appear in either version of the voluminous Talmud, which was finally edited in the fifth and sixth centuries, or in any other early Jewish writing."⁸³⁴ The fact that Josephus apparently did not maintain contact with Jews in Palestine after settling in Rome probably did not help matters.⁸³⁵ To the Romans Josephus probably always appeared as little more than a member, however noble in person,⁸³⁶ of that defeated people who had caused so much trouble in the recent past. It would be a long time before the Jews recovered from the black eye received in their defeat in 70 CE. Neither group, then, had much use for him, and in the end his program for Jewish ethnicity was too simplistic to handle the complicated nature of the situation it was designed to address.

⁸³³ Feldman, 'Flavius Josephus Revisited', 839.

⁸³⁴ Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament* 25. This is due also in part to the fact that the rabbis generally avoided references to the war.

⁸³⁵ Moehring 865.

⁸³⁶ Suetonius referred to him as a *nobilis captivus* (*Vesp.* 5.6).

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

L. David McClister was born in 1960 in Evergreen Park, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. He grew up in the neighboring suburbs of Crestwood and Burbank, and graduated from Reavis High School in 1978. He attended Florida College, in Temple Terrace, Florida and received his A.A. degree from that school in 1980. He earned a B.A. in classical civilization from Loyola University of Chicago in 1983, and an M.A. in biblical studies from that same institution in 1988. David has also served as a minister among Churches of Christ since 1980, working with local congregations in Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, and Florida. In 1996 David moved to Temple Terrace, Florida to accept a teaching position at Florida College, and was granted tenure in 2005. He has had articles published in the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* (1996) and *The New Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (2000). While he was working at Florida College, the Classics department at the University of Florida created its distance program leading to the Ph.D. in classics, and David began work in that program in 2003.

Upon completion of his Ph.D. David plans to continue teaching at Florida College. David has been married to Lisa Ann McClister for 26 years. They have four children: Melissa (Senuick), age, 24; Matthew, age 23; Meghan, age 20; and Michelle, age 17.