

2. Introduction

2.1 The Life of Flavius Josephus

Flavius Josephus, born *Yosef ben Matityahu* (Hebrew: יוסף בן מתתיהו), needs no introduction. He is among the best-known individuals of the ancient world. Born in the first year of the reign of the Emperor Gaius Caligula (37/38 CE), he is the foremost historian of first-century Judaea, the chronicler of the *Jewish War* and the entire *Second Temple Period*. His writings are a primary resource both for the current circumstances of his homeland during his lifetime and for its past. Frequently noted, Flavius Josephus “is certainly the single most important source for the history of the Jewish people during the first century C.E.”¹ His twenty-volume *opus magnum*, the *Jewish Antiquities* (*Antiquitates Judaicae*), is an historical account stretching from creation to his own day. It encompasses a panoramic narrative of the entirety of the Jewish experience, the first half in large part based on a paraphrase of the Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament. The *Jewish War* (*Bellum judaicum*), a recounting of recent events based on his own eyewitness testimony and contemporary documentation, chronicles in seven books the insurrection against Rome (66–73 CE), which ended with the capture of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. His *Life* (*Vita*), originally an appendix to the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, is one of the few extant autobiographies from Graeco-Roman antiquity, in fact, “the earliest autobiographical work that has survived intact from ancient times.”² For clearly apologetic and polemical purposes it focuses narrowly on the brief period of time during the rebellion when he was the military commander in Galilee. His final work, the two-volume *Against Apion* (*Contra Apionem*), is an account of Jewish customs in response to antisemitic smears and slanders. It defends “the antiquity of the Jews and the virtues of their literary and political culture and, with a dazzling display of learning, refuting the many vicious calumnies lodged against them.”³ Together his writings comprise a corpus which has been in the public domain and a subject of continual study since their appearance at the end of the first century, extensively read and excerpted and copied in their entirety. A century ago, the Englishman H. St. John Thackeray, the leading Josephus scholar of his day, could claim that “There was a time in my own country when almost every house possessed two books, a Bible and a Josephus.”⁴

1 Harold W. Attridge, “Josephus and His Works,” in Michael E. Stone, ed., *The Literature of the Jewish People in the Period of the Second Temple and the Talmud, Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus*, *Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum* 2/2 (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 185–232, at 185.

2 Pnina Stern, “*Life of Josephus: The Autobiography of Flavius Josephus*,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period*, 41:1 (2010), 63–93,” at 63.

3 Jonathan J. Price, “Josephus,” in Andrew Feldherr and Grant Hardy, eds., *The Oxford History of Historical Writing: Volume 1: Beginnings to AD 600* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1: 219–43, at 223.

4 H. St. John Thackeray, *Josephus: The Man and the Historian* (New York: Jewish Institute of Religion Press, 1929; reprint Ktav Pub. House, 1967), 3.

“It is from Josephus’ own pen that we derive the majority of our information;”⁵ and as has been regularly recognized, “Josephus provided more information about himself than any other ancient historian.”⁶ Both in the *Bellum judaicum* and the later *Vita*, Josephus claimed distinguished parentage for himself. His mother, never mentioned by name, was descended from the Hasmonean dynasty, kings and high-priests of Judaea in the second century BCE; and like his forebears, his father was a temple priest of special distinction, a priest of the 24th line of sacrificers (*Vita* 2–5; *BJ* 1.3).⁷ With perhaps some embellishment, he reports that he was a brilliant student, if not a prodigy, who was already consulted on matters of scripture by his elders while still a youngster, enjoying a reputation for an excellent memory and sound understanding (*Vita* 8).⁸ During his adolescence he pursued studies with each of the major Jewish sects, the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Essenes, and even spent three years in the wilderness with the hermit Bannus, otherwise unknown, ultimately committing himself at the age of 19 in 55–56 CE to the approach of the Pharisees, “a sect having points of resemblance to that which the Greeks call the Stoic school” (*Vita* 12).⁹

On the eve of civil war in 63–64, Josephus joined an embassy on its way to Rome in order to secure the release of priests previously imprisoned and dispatched to the capital by Felix, the Roman procurator of Judaea (52–60). There befriended by the Jewish actor Aliturus and the Empress Poppaea, Nero’s wife (*Vita* 16), he made acquaintance with the Roman elite. For such an astute student, his time in the capital must have served as an introduction to Roman customs and the Latin language. Thackeray believed “this visit to the capital ... impressed him, at any rate, with a sense of Rome’s invincibility.”¹⁰ When war with Rome ensued shortly thereafter in 66, Josephus was entrusted with a military command defending the Galilee. This ended with his capture at the siege of Jotapata in the summer of 67, his resourceful escape from a suicide pact, whether in his words “should one say by fortune or by the providence of God?” (*BJ* 3.391),¹¹ and next his fateful decision to predict that Vespasian, then commander-in-chief of the Roman army, would someday succeed to the imperial throne (*BJ* 3.401).¹² When this occurred,

5 William den Hollander, *Josephus, the Emperors, and the City of Rome: From Hostage to Historian* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 7.

6 Anthony Grafton and William Sherman, “In the Margins of Josephus: Two Ways of Reading,” *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 23:3 (2016), 213–38, at 222.

7 Josephus, *Works*, 1: 2–5; and 2: 2–3: Ἰώσηπος Ματθίου παῖς, [γίνεται Ἐβραῖος,] ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερέως. Cf. Oliver Gussmann, *Das Priesterverständnis des Flavius Josephus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 202: “Josephus’ Mutter, deren Namen nicht erwähnt wird, stammte möglicherweise aus hasmonäischem Hause (V 2).”

8 Josephus, *Works*, 1: 4–5.

9 Josephus, *Works*, 1: 6–7.

10 Josephus, *Works*, 1: viii.

11 Josephus, *Works*, 2: 686–7: εἴτε ὑπὸ τύχης χορὴ λέγειν, εἴτε ὑπὸ θεοῦ προνοίας. Cf. Louis H. Feldman, “Flavius Josephus Revisited: the Man, His Writings, and His Significance,” in Hildegard Temporini and G. G. W. Haase, eds., *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, 21.2 (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1984), 763–862, at 785: “it is hard to avoid the suspicion that Josephus cunningly arranged the lots (as indeed the Slavonic version of War 3.391 specifically declares) so as to be one of the last two of his men who survived the suicide pact.”

12 Josephus, *Works*, 2: 688–9: “You will be Caesar, Vespasian, you will be emperor, you and your son here” (σὺ Καῖσαρ, Οὐεσπασιανέ, καὶ αὐτοκράτωρ, σὺ καὶ παῖς ὁ σὸς οὗτος); and Feldman, “Flavius Josephus Revisited,” 786: “The fact that Josephus’ prophecy [of Vespasian’s accession to the throne] is found

Josephus was released from captivity (*BJ* 4.622–9; *Vita* 415; and *CA* 1.48) and assumed an active role as an interpreter and an intermediary between the Roman forces and the Jewish revolutionaries. Titus' victory secured Josephus passage back to the capital and a position at the Flavian court where he was well treated and spent the final decades of his life writing. Whereas Josephus recounts at considerable length his youth and his time during the Judean war, some thirty years (37/8–71), by comparison he is far more reticent about his stay in Rome of approximately the same duration (71–c. 100). He says little about this period of time, more than half of his adulthood; and as noted, “Of his thirty or more years in Rome there is little to record.”¹³ In fact, “of his activity at Rome, one knows only his literary production, which lasted some twenty-five years.”¹⁴ It may, indeed, be significant that the patron of his later works was not a member of the imperial family, but a certain Epaphroditus, possibly Marcus Mettius Epaphroditus, a Greek grammarian and *litterateur* active in the last third of the first century (*AJ* 1.8–9; *Vita* 430; and *CA* 1.1, 2.1 and 296).¹⁵ The date Josephus died is unrecorded. It must postdate the death of King Agrippa II whose passing he notes, but that exact year too is uncertain. It seems likely that it occurred sometime around the turn of the second century.

Josephus' career is known almost exclusively from his own testimony. Rarely (if at all) do external sources confirm his accounts, and much of what he says has been challenged. Certainly there is much to question, but it is unlikely that the narrative of major events is untrue. Josephus acknowledged that historical writings would be judged by his fellows and was no doubt aware that “enemies would have been quick to detect any doctoring of the facts.”¹⁶ As he admitted at the end of the *Antiquities*, he wrote “while there are still persons living who can either disprove or corroborate my statements” (*AJ* 20.266).¹⁷ Similarly, in the *Vita* he asserts that he wrote the *Bellum judaicum* in Rome immediately following the fall of Jerusalem, unlike his rival Justus of Tiberias who postponed publishing his account of the war twenty years until after the principal eyewitnesses capable of challenging its accuracy had disappeared.¹⁸ For Josephus, Justus had not dared to publish “until now, when those persons are no longer with us and you think that you cannot be confuted” (*Vita* 360).¹⁹ Josephus understood that his literary audience was capable of judging the veracity of his writings, and outright falsehoods and total fabrications would be recognizable. Too many contemporaries in high places

in the ‘War’, which was presented to Vespasian and Titus for approval, vouches for its historicity, as ... has [been] stressed.”

- 13 Thackeray, *Josephus: The Man and the Historian*, 15; and den Hollander, *Josephus, the Emperors, and the City of Rome*, 7.
- 14 Flavius Josephus, *Les Antiquités Juives*, volume I: livres I à III, ed. Étienne Nodet, 2nd ed. (Paris: *Les Éditions du Cerf*, 1992), vii: “De son activité à Rome, on ne connaît que sa production littéraire, qui dura quelque vingt-cinq ans.”
- 15 Josephus, *Works*, 4: 4–7; 1: 158–9; 1: 162–3; 1: 292–3; and 1: 410–11.
- 16 Feldman, “Flavius Josephus Revisited,” 785.
- 17 Josephus, *Works*, 9: 528–9: ἕως ἔχω ζῶντας ἢ τοὺς ἐλέγξοντας ἢ τοὺς μαρτυροῦσοντας.
- 18 See Tessa Rajak, “Justus of Tiberias,” *The Classical Quarterly*, 23:2 (1973), 345–68; and Tessa Rajak, “Josephus and Justus of Tiberias,” in Tessa Rajak, *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome: Studies in Cultural and Social Interaction*, *Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums* 48 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 177–93, at 186: The “reader is protected by one consideration: that outright invention on the writer’s part would have earned the scorn of surviving witnesses of the original event.”
- 19 Josephus, *Works*, 1: 132–3: νῦν δ’ ὅτ’ ἐκείνοι μὲν οὐκέτ’ εἰσὶν μεθ’ ἡμῶν, ἐλεγχθῆναι δ’ οὐ νομίζεις, τεθάρρηκας.

remained to contradict his accounts if they were wholly fictitious. For this reason, he could not have altered his description of events beyond recognition, and so – without evidence to the contrary – it seems reasonable to accept that his testimony has a factual basis. Not to dismiss exaggeration, or embellishment or self-justification, as might be expected, or just carelessness, slips of memory and a dependence on flawed sources, there must be a substratum of truth underpinning the commentary of Flavius Josephus. It is difficult to understand how a vantage point in the late 19th or 20th century or thereafter offers a better view of the episodes which took place during the *Jewish War* and its aftermath than that of a contemporary, who, if not present at the actual happenings, was, to be sure, in Judaea and at Rome during the time of their occurrence.

In addition to being an eyewitness and sometime participant in the events of his times, Josephus also had at his disposal documents written by others. In both the *Vita* and the *Contra Apionem*, he mentions access to the campaign commentaries of the Roman generals Vespasian and Titus, which no longer exist (*Vita* 342 and 358; and *CA* 1.56).²⁰ He knew the *Universal History* and a possible *Life of Herod* by Nicolaus of Damascus, an administrative official for Herod the Great and his son Herod Archelaus. These writings, now lost except for fragments, were a probable source of information. Josephus explicitly credits Nicolaus of Damascus for knowledge of the privileges accorded the Jews of Asia by Marcus Agrippa (*AJ* 12.127).²¹ He received correspondence from King Agrippa II, the last member of the Herodian dynasty, in Josephus's words, "letters testifying to the truth of the record" (*Vita* 364; cf. *CA* 1.51).²² These communications must have been a valuable resource; but, except for the two excerpts quoted (*Vita* 365–6), none of the sixty-two letters mentioned survive.

For the earlier sections of the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, Josephus had as his main resource the Old Testament, either in one of the current Greek translations or in the original Hebrew or both. Exactly which is a matter of dispute. His wording seems to follow the Lucianic recension, one of a number of Greek versions of the Hebrew Bible.²³ In addition, he had a collection of holy books which he received from Titus after the fall of Jerusalem. For den Hollander, Étienne Nodet "on the basis of a detailed comparison [with] existing Biblical manuscripts ... presents the possibility that the ultimate source of the *Antiquities* was in fact this set of volumes, which may have been taken from the temple library."²⁴ In books three, four and five of the *Antiquities*, which paraphrase the Octateuch, Josephus refers to what appears to be extra-biblical material from the temple in Jerusalem. He remarks that "A writing deposited in the temple attests that God foretold to Moses that water would thus spring forth from the rock" (*AJ* 3.38;

20 Josephus, *Works*, 1: 124–7; 1: 132–3; and 1: 184–5.

21 Josephus, *Works*, 7: 62–5. For Nicolaus of Damascus' mention elsewhere, Josephus, *Works*, 7: 482–3 (*AJ* 14.68); and Josephus, *Works*, 7: 452–3 (*AJ* 14.9). Cf. Mark Toher, "Nicolaus and Herod in the *Antiquitates Judaicae*," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 101 (2003), 427–47; and Tyler Smith, "Josephus's *Jewish Antiquities* in Competition with Nicolaus of Damascus's *Universal History*," *Journal of Ancient Judaism*, 13 (2022), 52–76.

22 Josephus, *Works*, 1: 134–5: ἐπιστολάς τῆ τῆς ἀληθείας παραδόσει μαρτυρῶν. Cf. Josephus, *Works*, 1: 182–3.

23 Attridge, "Josephus and His Works," 211, and note 44.

24 den Hollander, *Josephus, the Emperors, and the City of Rome*, 173.

cf. Num. 21.16).²⁵ For Thackeray, “these refer not to the Scriptures generally but to a separate collection of chants made for the use of the temple singers, and that the allusion here is to the little song to the well in Numb. xxi. 16 ff., with the introductory promise ‘Gather the people together and I will give them water’.”²⁶ Elsewhere Josephus mentions the *Song of Moses* “in a book preserved in the temple” (*AJ* 4.303).²⁷ In a third instance he notes that Joshua’s staying of the sun “is attested by Scriptures that are laid up in the temple” (*AJ* 5.61; cf. Josh. 10.13).²⁸ On these three separate occasions Josephus acknowledged sacred texts from the temple in Jerusalem which supplied him with information for the earlier books of the *Antiquities*.

In his attempts to document the longevity of the Jewish people in the *Contra Apionem*, Josephus also quoted numerous ancient historians. It is often the case where his citations constitute some of the earliest remaining references to their works. Moreover, there are borrowings from various writers sprinkled throughout the *Antiquities* and the *War*. Underlying the Josephan corpus is a broad array of sources, both his own personal testimony and those of others.

2.2 The Afterlife of Flavius Josephus

Despite the appearance of betrayal to his fellow Judaeans and his allegiance to Rome, Flavius Josephus remained a Jew throughout his lifetime: “For never may I [Josephus] live to become so abject a captive as to abjure my race or to forget the traditions of my forefathers” (*BJ* 6.107).²⁹ His writings, especially his final work, the *Contra Apionem*, confirm his adherence to the faith of his ancestors. Nevertheless, his books were for the greater part of the first millennium ignored by his co-religionists and instead embraced by Christians. Early Fathers of the Church found useful information in his works regarding ancient Judaea, the birthplace of Christianity, along with references to figures from the Gospels, including John the Baptist (*AJ* 18.116–9), James the Just, the brother of Jesus (*AJ* 20.200), and Jesus Christ himself in the controversial and much-debated *Testimonium Flavianum* (*AJ* 18.63–4). Although the authenticity of each of these three passages has been challenged, there seems to be a growing consensus that the *Testimonium Flavianum*, while possibly subject to later editing, is – along with the other two – in part authentic and not a complete fabrication: “A widely held view nowadays is that Christian alterations may have been fairly minimal ... The language generally is Josephan and there are some features that would seem unlikely to have come from a Christian scribe.”³⁰ The three references are found in the surviving Greek man-

25 Josephus, *Works*, 4: 336–7, and note a: δηλοῖ δὲ ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ ἀνακειμένη γραφὴ τὸν θεὸν προοιπεῖν Μωυσεῖ οὕτως ἐκ τῆς πέτρας ἀναδοθήσεσθαι ὕδωρ.

26 Josephus, *Works*, 4: 336–7, note a. Cf. Thackeray, *Josephus: The Man and the Historian*, 90.

27 Josephus, *Works*, 4: 620–3: ἦν καὶ καταλέλοιπεν ἐν βιβλῷ ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ.

28 Josephus, *Works*, 5: 28–9: δηλοῦται διὰ τῶν ἀνακειμένων ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ γραμμάτων.

29 Josephus, *Works*, 4: 406–7: μὴ γὰρ ἔγωγέ ποτε γενοίμην ζῶν οὕτως αἰχμάλωτος, ἵνα παύσωμαι τοῦ γένους ἢ τῶν πατρίων ἐπιλάθωμαι.

30 Helen K. Bond, “Josephus and the New Testament,” in Honora Howell Chapman and Zuleika Rodgers, eds., *A Companion to Josephus* (Malden, MA and Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 147–158, at 154; and Alice Whealey, “The *Testimonium Flavianum*,” in Honora Howell Chapman and Zuleika Rodgers, eds., *A Companion to Josephus* (Malden, MA and Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 345–55. Recently arguing

uscripts, the earliest dating from the tenth or eleventh century, and appear as well in the much older Latin and Syriac translations. The three passages make their first known appearance in the writings of Eusebius and are thereafter universally held to be genuine by later churchmen throughout the Middle Ages. Eusebius' reliance on Josephus assured him a place in the Christian canon and was instrumental in securing the preservation of his writings down through the centuries: "Undoubtedly the chief reason why Josephus' works have survived in their entirety is that Christians saw in him major evidence for the achievements of John and especially of Jesus."³¹ It has recently been recognized that "annotations in early medieval manuscripts of Flavius Josephus ... [serve] to better grasp Josephus's ever-expanding influence and reputation throughout the course of the early Middle Ages."³² Among the early fathers, Flavius Josephus is often cited by name. Theophilus of Antioch († post 181/182) may be the earliest Christian writer to do so and knows him as the chronicler of the *Bellum judaicum*, the "Josephus, who described the Jewish war which was brought upon them by the Romans" (*Ad Autolyicum*, iii.23).³³ Clement of Alexandria († 215) calls him "the Jew Flavius Josephus, who composed the Jewish histories" (*Stromateis*, 1.21.65),³⁴ while Tertullian (c. 145–220) names him "The Jew Josephus, native champion of Jewish Antiquities" (*Apologeticus*, xix.6).³⁵ Reflecting on Judaic history, Minucius Felix adds, "Read their own writings; or omitting the ancients, turn to Flavius Josephus" (*Octavius*, xxxiii.4).³⁶ Pseudo-Justin can refer to both Josephus and Philo of Alexandria, his fellow Jew, as "most wise" (σοφώτατοι) (*Cohortatio ad Graecos*, ix).³⁷ On other occasions, Christian authors adopt material from his works without attribution. Without naming Josephus or the *Bellum judaicum*, Melito of Sardis († 190) in his work *On the Passion* recounts what appears to be the episode of cannibalism at the siege of Jerusalem where a mother, driven mad with hunger, de-

the case for forgery, Nicholas Peter Legh Allen, "Josephus, Origen, and John the Baptist: Exposing a Christian Apologist's Deceit," in Gideon R. Kotzé, Wolfgang Kraus, and Michaël N. van der Meer, eds., *XVI Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Stellenbosch, 2016* (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2019), 7–31; and Nicholas Peter Legh Allen, *Christian Forgery in Jewish Antiquities: Josephus Interrupted* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020).

31 Feldman, "Flavius Josephus Revisited," 821.

32 Jean-Félix Aubé-Pronce and Richard Matthew Pollard, "Annotating Flavius Josephus in the Early Middle Ages: Early Impressions from Thousands of Notes," *Medievalia et Humanistica*, New Series 46 (2021), 167–200, at 167.

33 *Theophilus of Antioch, Ad Autolyicum*, ed. Robert M. Grant, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 132–3: Ἰώσηππος ὁ ἀναγράφας τὸν Ἰουδαϊκὸν πόλεμον τὸν γενόμενον αὐτοῖς ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίων.

34 Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, in *PG* 8: col. 889: Φλαῦιος δὲ Ἰώσηπος, ὁ Ἰουδαῖος, ὁ τὰς Ἰουδαϊκὰς συντάξας ἱστορίας.

35 Tertullian, *Apology*, in Terrot Reaveley Glover, ed., *Tertullian, Apology. De Spectaculis. Minucius Felix: Octavius* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 98–9: "Iudaeus Iosephus, antiquitatum Iudaicarum vernaculus vindex."

36 Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, in Gerald H. Rendall, ed., *Tertullian, Apology. De Spectaculis. Minucius Felix: Octavius* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 416–7: "Scripta eorum relege, vel, ut transeamus veteres, Flavi Iosephi."

37 Pseudo-Justin, *Cohortatio ad Graecos*, in *PG* 6: cols. 241–312, at 257–8: ἐτι δὲ καὶ οἱ σοφώτατοι Φίλων τε καὶ Ἰώσηπος, οἱ τὰ κατὰ Ἰουδαίους ἱστορήσαντες, ὡς σφόδρα ἀρχαίου καὶ παλαιοῦ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἀρχοντος Μωϋσέως μέμνηνται.

vours her own child (*Peri Pascha*, 52).³⁸ Numerous Early Christian exegetes, including Tertullian and Julius Africanus, adopt the excursus on the antiquity of the Jews found in the *Contra Apionem*. There is a single surviving papyrus from the late-third century (*Pap. Graec. Vindob.* 29810) with excerpts from the *Bellum judaicum* (*BJ* 2.576–9 and 582–4),³⁹ but it is unclear from the extant evidence how well known Josephus' works were, or how widely they were distributed in the first centuries of the Common Era. These brief references in early patristic writings, nonetheless, provide proof that his writings were consulted and circulated in the years following the author's death.

The situation changes markedly with Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea (c. 267–30 May 339), whose texts constitute a watershed between the early patristic fathers and later Christian authors. The Bishop of Caesarea counts Flavius Josephus among the most important witnesses to ancient Judaea and the times of Jesus Christ. He extols the writer's importance for his *Ecclesiastical History*: "It is right not to ignore the date and origin of the Josephus who collected so much material in the work just dealt with ... and he is for other reasons worthy of credence" (*Eccl. Hist.*, III.9.1–3).⁴⁰ It is in the writings of Eusebius where the three passages from the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, which refer to the Gospel personages John the Baptist (*AJ* 18.116–9; *Dem. Evan.*, 9.5.15; *Eccl. Hist.*, I.11), and James the Just (*AJ* 20.200; *Eccl. Hist.*, 172.19–174.1), as well as Jesus Christ make their first appearance. In fact, Eusebius cites the *Testimonium Flavianum* three times (*AJ* 18.63–4; *Eccl. Hist.*, I.11.7–8; *Dem. Evan.*, 3.5; and *Theophany*, 5.44). On occasion, he has even been accused of inventing it. As has often been recognized, "Eusebius does not merely find Josephus useful for all matters of historical inquiry but he was the first to do so."⁴¹ Unlike his predecessors who avoided exact citations, Eusebius "copiously quoted the Jewish historian and claimed to do so literally."⁴² For some, "it may not be an exaggeration to speak of a canonization of Josephus in the early Christian centuries,"⁴³

38 Michael E. Hardwick, "Melito of Sardis," in *Josephus as an Historical Source in Patristic Literature through Eusebius*, Brown Judaic studies CXXVIII (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 15–18, at 17; and Josephus, *Works*, 3: 432–7 (*BJ* 6.199–219).

39 Hans Oellacher *Griechische literarische Papyri* II: Mit Autoren-, Namen-, Wort-, und Sachindex zu I und II von Hans Gerstinger und Peter Sanz, Mitteilungen aus der Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek (Baden bei Wien: R. M. Rohrer, 1939), no. 36, 61–3; and Josephus, *Works*, 2: 544–7. The poorly preserved and partially illegible fragment does not exhibit the characteristics of any of the well-known manuscript families of the *Bellum judaicum*.

40 Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History*, ed. Kirsopp Lake, 2 vols. (London: W. Heinemann, 1926–32; 1957–59 reprint with English translation by J. E. L. Oulton), 1: 224–7; cf. the Latin translation by Rufinus of Aquileia, *History of the Church*, trans. Philip R. Amidon, Fathers of the Church 133 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016), 112: "It is, to be sure, worthwhile noting after this who this Josephus was, and where he came from and of what stock, since he has furnished us so much material and information about the events of history."

41 Hardwick, *Josephus as an Historical Source in Patristic Literature*, 1.

42 Sabrina Inowlocki, "Josephus and Patristic Literature," in Honora Howell Chapman and Zuleika Rodgers, eds., *A Companion to Josephus* (Malden, MA and Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 356–67, at 362; and Gohei Hata, "The abuse and misuse of Josephus in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, books 2 and 3," in Shay J. D. Cohen and Joshua J. Schwartz, *Studies in Josephus and the Varieties of Ancient Judaism*, Louis H. Feldman Jubilee Volume, Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 67 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 91–102, at 92, note 2: "In the first three books of the [*Ecclesiastical*] *History*, 16 passages from the *War*, 13 passages from the *Antiquities*, one passage from *Against Apion* and one passage from *Vita* are cited."

43 Inowlocki, "Josephus and Patristic Literature," 364.

where “Josephus occupies a place in Christian literature second only to the Bible itself in importance.”⁴⁴

His works provided additional context and background for occurrences and individuals featured in the New Testament, and this interest by the Christian Church in the writings of Flavius Josephus has made them the subject of regular study since their publication at the end of the first century of the Common Era. For Heinz Schreckenberg, “With the exception of the Bible no other ancient text is as important for the history of Judaism and Christianity as the works of Josephus.”⁴⁵ Richard Matthew Pollard names “Flavius Josephus: The most influential classical historian of the early Middle Ages” and concludes that “as far as the early Middle Ages are concerned, classical historiography really meant the works of Flavius Josephus.”⁴⁶ It is perhaps no exaggeration to suggest that his *Antiquities* was “the single most often copied historical work of the middle ages.”⁴⁷

2.3 Flavius Josephus and Artwork of Roman Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages

From the time of their appearance in Roman Antiquity through the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Reformation, artists have relied on the texts of Flavius Josephus. In particular, miniatures decorating manuscripts of the *Jewish Antiquities* and the *Jewish War* have been the subject of scholarly investigation in the past; but others with a less immediate and direct connection to these texts have not received the same level of attention. Other than my five submissions to peer-reviewed journals, there has been a relatively small number of contributions to appear since the end of the last century regarding artworks related to Josephus.

Imagery from the *frieze of the Spoils from the Temple in Jerusalem* on the Arch of Titus, a work crafted in his own lifetime, depends on his writings, and two of the most important illuminated manuscripts to survive the Middle Ages, the Latin *Codex Amiatinus* of c. 700 and the Byzantine Greek *Paris Psalter* from the mid-tenth century, illustrate specific passages from the author’s works. Josephus’ influence on Roman and medieval art was significantly far more widespread than currently recognized. Magnus

44 Hardwick, *Josephus as an Historical Source in Patristic Literature*, 1.

45 Heinz Schreckenberg, “Josephus in Early Christian Literature and Medieval Christian Art,” in Heinz Schreckenberg and Kurt Schubert, eds., *Jewish Historiography and Iconography in Early and Medieval Christianity*, *Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum* (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1992), 7–138, at 7.

46 Richard Matthew Pollard, “Flavius Josephus: The Most Influential Classical Historian of the Early Middle Ages,” in Elna Screen and Charles West, eds., *Writing the Early Medieval West: Studies in Honour of Rosamond McKitterick* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 15–32, at 15–16. Cf. Martin Goodman, *Josephus’s The Jewish War Book: A Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 38: “It is a remarkable fact that more [Greek] manuscripts survive from this period [tenth to twelfth centuries] for Josephus than for either Herodotus or Thucydides.”

47 James J. O’Donnell, *Cassiodorus* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 1979), 246. For Franz Blatt, *The Latin Josephus I: Introduction and Text: The Antiquities: Books I–V*, *Acta Jutlandica XXX. 1* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1958), 22: “The Latin Josephus was the chosen history book of the Middle Ages.”

Aurelius Cassiodorus Senator, for example, is a case in point. This high-ranking official at the court of Theodoric the Great, king of the Ostrogoths (475–526), was a resident of Constantinople c. 550 and subsequently the founder of the Vivarium, a monastery on his family estates at Squillace in the southern Italian region of Calabria. He singles out Josephus as the source for his illustrations of the Tabernacle of Moses and the Temple of Solomon in the *Codex grandior*, his “bible of larger size:” “Josephus, in the seventh chapter [that is, chapter six] of the third book of his *Antiquities*, has described it [the tabernacle] in careful narrative, and we have had it painted and [we] placed [the tabernacle picture] at the beginning of our larger Pandect [*Codex grandior*]” (*Expositio psalmodum* 14.1).⁴⁸ These two pictures of the Sinai tabernacle and Jerusalem temple no longer survive; but a detailed analysis of the illumination of the tabernacle from the *Codex Amiatinus* (Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Amiatino 1, bifolium 6v and 7r; formerly 2v/II and 7r/III), thought to follow Cassiodorus’ model, confirms that wording from the *Jewish Antiquities* was its source. As has been pointed out, “the description of Josephus seems to be exactly the textual basis for the miniature, more exact in its details than the biblical text itself.”⁴⁹ By and large unrecognized has been the extent of his contribution to the genesis, nature and design of major masterpieces of Roman Antiquity and the early Middle Ages.

The influence of Flavius Josephus on the visual arts can be documented even prior to his demise. His account of the Flavian Triumph of 71 CE underlies the design of the frieze of the *Spoils from the Temple in Jerusalem* on the interior south wall of the Arch of Titus in Rome (Chapter 3).⁵⁰ While a similarity between the two had been noted previously, it had not been recognized how close is this concordance between Josephus’ words and the imagery of the sculpted panel. There is a direct correspondence between major features of the relief and passages from both Josephus’ principal works, the *Belium judaicum* and the *Antiquitates Judaicae*. The participation of the Judean historian Flavius Josephus in the imperial triumph, following the subjugation of Judaea the year before, is a matter of debate; but Josephus wrote immediately following the event, delivering a version of the *Jewish War* to Titus and Vespasian prior to the latter’s death in 79. The completion of the monument only postdates the death of Titus on 13 September 81, and the *Antiquities* was only to reach the public many years thereafter in 93–94. Given that at least a decade, and possibly longer, had passed between the time of the triumph and the erection of the Arch, it seems likely that the sculptors of the panel of the *Spoils from the Temple in Jerusalem* required assistance in illustrating the procession with its unfamiliar Jewish artifacts. Since major elements of the panel depend on both the *Bel-*

48 Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms*, Ancient Christian writers, no. 51–53, trans. P. G. Walsh, 3 vols. (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1990–91), 1: 157; and Cassiodorus, *Expositio Psalmodum*, ed. M. Adriaen, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina 97–8, 2 vols. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1958) 1: 133, lines 43–5: “De quo [tabernaculo] etiam et Iosephus in libro Antiquitatum tertio, titulo septimo, diligenti narratione disseruit, quod nos fecimus pingi et in Pandectis maioris [*Codex grandior*] capite collocari.”

49 E. Revel-Neher, “Du Codex Amiatinus et ses rapports avec les plans du Tabernacle dans l’art juif et dans l’art byzantin,” *Journal of Jewish Art*, 9 (1982), 6–17, at 9, note 15: “La description de Josephus semble être exactement la base textuelle de la miniature, plus précise dans ses détails que le texte biblique lui-même.”

50 Steven H. Wander, “Flavius Josephus and the Frieze of the *Spoils from the Temple in Jerusalem* on the Arch of Titus,” *Word & Image: A Journal of Verbal/Visual Inquiry*, 38:3 (2022), 207–22; and Steven H. Wander, “Review of Steven Fine, *The Arch of Titus: from Jerusalem to Rome—and back* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2021),” *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* (2022.06.27).

lum judaicum and the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, it appears that Flavius Josephus – in one way or another – had an active role in the design of the relief and preserving the memory of this event for posterity.

In his *Ecclesiastical History* Eusebius of Caesarea mentions that Josephus was honored with a statue in Rome (Chapter 4).⁵¹ The sculptural monument has disappeared without trace, but on folio 2r of Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 50, generally dated to the mid-ninth century, a Latin translation of the first twelve books of Flavius Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* and the seven books of his *Jewish War*, there is a pen-and-ink drawing of an upright figure which bears a striking resemblance to sculptural effigies. An inscription in Greek, the unique instance of that language in the codex, titles the rendering as "Josephus, the Writer of History" (ἸΩΣΗΦΟΥ ΤΟΥ Ἱστοριογράφου), and the Latin from Rufinus' translation of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* echoes the manuscript inscription: *Ioseppus historiografus*. Despite this full-length figure with its Greek caption in the Bern codex, being an "author portrait," recent scholarship has viewed this curious image variously as a "demon," a "soldier," a "herald" or a "temple priest." Instead, it may be a reflection of that lost portrait statue of the Judaeen historian in Rome.

The rear panel of the Franks (Auzon) Casket, which illustrates the fall of Jerusalem during the Judaeen war, an event chronicled in Josephus' *Jewish War*, depends primarily, it seems, not on literary accounts but on pictorial models (Chapter 4). The inscriptions with their combination of runes in Old English and misspelled Latin words suggests a craftsman with limited linguistic skills. On the other hand, the design demonstrates a sure knowledge of the Roman artistic legacy. In the upper right-hand corner, the carving includes fleeing figures whose costuming matches that of the Bern drawing. Like the wording in Latin (*fugiant*) and in Old English (*gisl*) on the same side of the whalebone relief, identifying the "inhabitants of Jerusalem" as fugitives or refugees, a second inscription to the right of the Bern image may be read as *peregrinus* ("traveller" or "provincial"), expressing the same idea. Unlikely to be coincidence, the shared features of these two artworks, among the earliest associated with Josephus, may derive from the same source, the statue which once stood in his honor at Rome.

The recorded remains of mosaics from the twelfth-century portico of S. Giovanni in Laterano, Rome echo features from the Bern Josephus and the rear panel of the Franks (Auzon) Casket depicting the Sack of Jerusalem (Chapter 4). Complicating the matter, the portico was demolished in 1731; and the mosaics from the architrave no longer survive. The artworks are known only through the seventeenth-century publication of the antiquary Giovanni Giustino Ciampini, *De sacris aedificiis a Constantino Magno constructis. Synopsis historica* (Rome: apud Joannem Jacobum Komarek, 1693), where there are descriptions and engravings which themselves derive from an earlier set of copies in manuscript: Rome, BAV, Barb. lat. 4423, dated 1672. Ciampini's depictions, twice removed from the originals, are obviously suspect in their details, but his transcriptions and actual fragments of the stone inscriptions accompanying them confirm their prior existence and their relationship to accounts of the Judaeen War. A clear vi-

51 Steven H. Wander, "Author Portrait of Josephus, the Writer of History (Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 50, fol. 2r) and his Lost Statue at Rome," *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte = Revue suisse d'art et d'archéologie = Rivista svizzera d'arte e d'archeologia = Journal of Swiss archeology and art history*, 78:1 (2021), 5–18.