MICHAEL TUVAL

From Jerusalem Priest to Roman Jew

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Michael Tuval

From Jerusalem Priest to Roman Jew

On Josephus and the Paradigms of Ancient Judaism

Mohr Siebeck

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Preface

This monograph is a slightly revised version of my doctoral dissertation, which was approved by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in March 2012. It is an honor and pleasure to acknowledge people and institutions without whose inspiration and support this study would hardly have been possible. First, I consider myself fortunate to have had an opportunity to study at the Hebrew University. Second, I thank my *Doktorvater*, Prof. Daniel R. Schwartz, who since my first day at Hebrew U. has not only been a committed teacher, supervisor, and friend, but also an example of what it means to be a scholar, and a *Mensch*. My debt to him is greater than words can express, and I deem it an honor to count myself among his students. Anybody familiar with Danny's scholarship will not fail to realize that, to some extent, this study develops work he began many years ago.

I am grateful to the readers of my dissertation, Prof. John J. Collins, and Prof. Doron Mendels, for their feedback and very useful advice. Some of their criticism I have (as yet) ignored at my own peril. I thank the editor of WUNT II, Prof. Jörg Frey, for accepting this thesis for publication, and Dr. Henning Ziebritzki and Mr. Matthias Spitzner of Mohr Siebeck, who helped prepare the manuscript for publication.

Many other scholars have helped me along the way in numerous ways, and turned my learning experience into an intellectual extreme adventure. Especially I would like to thank Prof. Michael E. Stone, who was a member of my dissertation committee, and about whom it is said that "at that time there were giants in the land." Prof. Stone likes to say that in our world scholarship is perhaps the last profession which one learns by apprenticeship. Whether or not there are still other such professions around, I am proud to have been among his apprentices, and friends. I thank two other members of my dissertation committee, Dr. David Satran and Dr. Jackie Feldman, not least for their suggestion to limit the scope of this study (although I did not really listen to them – Chapter 1 is more or less what I suggested as the whole study). And I particularly want to express my gratitude to Prof. Alexander Kulik, without whose help and support I would not have completed this study, and from whom I learnt quite a lot.

I also owe a debt to the following scholars: Dr. Gideon Aran, Prof. Cyril Aslanov, Dr. Esther Chazon, Dr. Ruth Clements, Prof. Isaiah M. Gafni, Prof. Deborah Gera, Dr. Semion Goldin, Prof. Erich S. Gruen, Dr. Noah

Hacham, Prof. Moshe D. Herr, Prof. Oded Irshai, Prof. Menahem Kister, Prof. Max Küchler, Prof. Andrei Orlov, Dr. Serge Ruzer, Prof. Daniel Stoekl Ben Ezra, Prof. Loren T. Stuckenbruck, Prof. Zeev Weiss, and Prof. Israel J. Yuval. I am very grateful to Markus Lau, the academic assistant of Prof. Max Küchler (University of Fribourg, Switzerland), who patiently helped me to prepare a camera-ready copy of this study. Needless to say, the responsibility for any and all errors is mine alone.

This book could not have been written without the generous financial support I received from numerous sources over the years. Since the beginning of my MA studies in 2000 and until 2006 I benefited from an annual scholarship in Jewish History from Hebrew University's Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies. Between 2006 and 2009 I was lucky to enjoy a research scholarship at HU's Scholion Interdisciplinary Research Center in Jewish Studies; much of the original dissertation was written during the period I was part of the Scholion group on "From Religion of Place to Religion of Community." In 2008–9 I benefited from a research scholarship in the project "Jewish Pseudepigrapha in Cross-Cultural Transmission" (supported by the Israel Science Foundation). I express my gratitude to HU's Dept. of Jewish History and the Kaye family for the Lilian Mendoza Prize in Jewish History which I was awarded in 2009. In 2011–12 I received a research scholarship in the project "Jews and Slavs in the Middle Ages: Interaction and Cross-Fertilization" at HU, which is supported by the European Research Council, and in 2011 I received a research grant from HU's Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature. During the first semester of 2012–13 the Jean Nordmann Foundation enabled me to spend three months at the University of Fribourg, and since April 2013 I am a Minerva-Stiftung postdoctoral fellow at the Faculty of Protestant Theology of Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich, where I have the privilege of being hosted by Prof. Loren T. Stuckenbruck. I am very grateful for all the generous support I have received over the years, and hope that this book shows that it was well-placed.

Earlier versions of Chapters 1 and 4 appeared in collections of articles published by E. J. Brill, as noted at the outset of each chapter. I am grateful to Brill for permission to include revised versions in the present volume.

I thank my children, Dvir, Moriah, and Tzur, for being the best children for which one could possibly hope. I want you to know that I am proud of you. Most of all, I want to thank my mother, Irina, for her inspiring courage and defiant optimism, for it was she who resolutely decided to leave far-away Diaspora behind and move to Israel. Having spent two decades in Israel, I realize that this was the most important decision in my life, a decision I have never had any reason to regret. I dedicate this study to her.

Michael Tuval Tel-Aviv – Munich, *Erev Rosh Hashana 5774*

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Introduction

1. The Aims of This Study

The writings of Flavius Josephus are our main historical source for Judean history of the Second Temple period, in general, and for the history of Jerusalem Temple, its cult, and its priesthood, in particular. However, in this study I am neither primarily interested in the political history of Judeans, nor in the history of Judean cultic institutions. Rather, I attempt to analyze Josephus' changing perceptions of the Jewish religion between his two major historiographical works, *Judean War* (*BJ*), and *Judean Antiquities* (*AJ*).[1]

Thus, this is a study of Josephus' own versions of Judaism. Although he never uses the term "Judaism," hardly any scholar today would contest the fact that throughout his career he chose to remain a believing and practicing Jew – or, at least, chose to present himself as such.[2] Yes, he did surren-

[1] In the present study, I decided to concentrate on *BJ* and *AJ*, and to confine my discussion of Josephus' *Autobiography* (*Vita*) and *Against Apion* (*CA*) to a limited number of pertinent points. The reasons for this choice are as follows: first, since *BJ* and *AJ* are works of historiography and often cover parallel ground, they offer themselves for a comparison more easily than Josephus' other works (esp., *CA*). Second, both *BJ* and *AJ* are precisely dated, and we know that most of the first was published in late 70s, and the second was completed in the 90s of the first century C.E. In case of *Vita*, there is a long-time debate what in this short book is early, and what is late; see S. J. D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome. His Vita and Development as a Historian* (Leiden, 1979); D. R. Schwartz, *Flavius Josephus, Vita: Introduction, Hebrew Translation, and Commentary* (Jerusalem, 2007) (in Hebrew), 3–5. As far as *CA* is concerned, there are several problems: firstly, it is an openly polemical apologetic work, written to defend Judaism from fierce anti-Jewish attacks; secondly, its second part has been shown to a large extent to be based on a previous Alexandrian Jewish source (or sources), see S. Belkin, "The Alexandrian Source for Contra Apionem II," *JQR* 27 (1936), 1–32; J. M. G. Barclay, *Flavius Josephus. Translation and Commentary 10. Against Apion* (Leiden, 2007), 353–61. Therefore, it is more difficult to know, where in *CA* one hears Josephus' own voice. The last, but not least, consideration is the sheer question of space. All this is not to say that I do not believe that both *Vita* and *CA* can be used as witnesses to "later Josephus." I plan to return to the subject in future studies.

[2] "Judaism" is not a broadly attested term in Second Temple Jewish literature. The first occurrences in Greek are in 2 Macc 2:21; 8:1; 14:38, then in 4 Macc 4:26, and in Paul's Epistle to the Galatians 1:13–14. In Hebrew it is first attested in the eleventh cen-

der to the Romans after the fall of Yodfat,[3] instead of committing suicide with his soldiers. However, he claimed that he did this because of a previous divine revelation, and as a minister and messenger of God, who had appointed him to be a harbinger of future greatness to Vespasian and a prophet of doom to the Judean rebels.[4] The factual veracity of this story – and similar ones, like that concerning R. Yohannan ben Zakkai – is not my concern here.[5] As will become clear from my analysis of Josephus' writings below, I am frequently rather skeptical concerning many of the autobiographical claims he makes. However, the indisputable fact is that he did not comfortably become another renegade Tiberius Julius Alexander, but rather dedicated his energies to producing twenty volumes of writings, most of which aimed at the defense of Jews and Judaism.[6] Whatever his circumstances were, he continued to identify himself with both.

So, this is a study of the dynamics of Josephus' Judaism. To put it bluntly at the outset, I claim that Joseph ben Matthias, who had been a native of Jerusalem, the capital of Judea, not only moved to Rome, the capital of the

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tury C.E.; see J. Pasto, "The Origin, Expansion and Impact of the Hasmoneans in Light of Comparative Ethnographic Studies (and Outside of its Nineteenth-Century Context)," in P. R. Davies and J. M. Halligan (eds.), *Second Temple Studies II. Studies in Politics, Class and Material Culture* (Sheffield, 2002), 172, n. 2; J. D. G. Dunn, "Judaism in the Land of Israel in the First Century," in J. Neusner (ed.), *Judaism in Late Antiquity, Part 2: Historical Syntheses* (Leiden, 1995), 232–6. For a recent discussion of the use of Judaism-terminology, see S. Mason, "Jews, Judeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History," *JSJ* 38 (2007), 1–56.

[3] In the spelling of Palestinian toponyms, I follow E. Stern (ed.), *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land.* 4 Vols. (Jerusalem, 1993); idem (ed.), *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land 5. Supplementary Volume* (Jerusalem, 2008).

[4] *BJ* III 350–4; the passage is quoted on p. 21 below. On Josephus' "prophetic" self-consciousness and presentation, see R. Gray, *Prophetic Figures in Late Second Temple Palestine: The Evidence from Josephus* (Oxford, 1993), 35–79.

[5] For the analysis of traditions dealing with R. Yohannan b. Zakkai's surrender to the Romans, see G. Alon, "Rabban Johannan B. Zakkai's Removal to Jabneh," in idem, *Jews, Judaism and the Classical World* (Jerusalem, 1977), 269–313; J. Neusner, *Development of a Legend. Studies on the Traditions Concerning Yohanan ben Zakkai* (Leiden, 1970); A. Saldarini, "Johanan ben Zakkai's Escape from Jerusalem: Origin and Development of a Rabbinic Story," *JSJ* 6 (1975), 189–204; P. Schäfer, "Die Flucht Joḥanan b. Zakkais aus Jerusalem und die Gründung des 'Lehrhauses' in Jabne," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt II 19.2* (Berlin-New York, 1979), 43–104. For some interesting ideas concerning the relationship between the stories of Josephus' and R. Yohannan b. Zakkai's surrender, see E. Nodet, "Josephus' Attempt to Reorganize Judaism from Rome," in Z. Rodgers (ed.), *Making History: Josephus and Historical Method* (Leiden, 2007),103–22. I return to this last study several times below.

[6] Tiberius Julius Alexander is discussed in chapter 3 below.

Roman Empire, and became a Roman citizen, Titus Flavius Josephus,[7] but also that he gradually became a different person, and that this has very much to do with his Judaism. That is, at the beginning he was a Jerusalem priest, but in the course of time became a sophisticated intellectual Diaspora Jew. I also claim that at the outset of his career, and even shortly after his arrival in Rome, Josephus adhered to the typical priestly, Temple-and-cult-centered, version of Palestinian Judaism, as is evident from *BJ*, most of which was completed sometime before 79 C.E.[8] On the other hand, in my view, it is just as evident from his next major composition, *AJ*, that by the early nineties of the same century, Josephus' religious views and values had undergone dramatic changes – he became a Diaspora Jew. In this study, I attempt to explain what I mean by "Diaspora Judaism," and to document the individual transformation of Josephus.

However, even in his latter works Josephus continued to present himself as a Jewish priest. Since he evidently lost interest in the Temple and cult as time went on, it is intriguing to ask why he continued to value his priestly origins and status. That is, some things in Josephus' understanding of Judaism seem to have drastically changed, but others apparently remained constant. Therefore, I would like to analyze and try to explain both those that changed and those that did not.

2. Josephus and Palestinian and Diaspora Judaism

The natural question that should arise at this point is "What is meant here by ancient Diaspora Judaism and in what ways is it different from Palestinian Judaism?" Earlier scholars claimed, or assumed, that this difference was a linguistic and cultural matter: Jews of the Greco-Roman Diaspora spoke Greek and were Hellenized; Palestinian Jews spoke Hebrew and/or Aramaic, and were "orthodox"/"rabbinic"/non-Hellenized.[9] Both Christian and Jewish scholars employed this dichotomy to further their interpreta-

[7] On Josephus' Roman name, see W. Eck, "Flavius Iosephus, nicht Iosephus Flavius," *SCI* 19 (2000), 281–3; S. Mason, "Flavian Josephus in Flavian Rome: Reading on and between the Lines," in A. J. Boyle and W. J. Dominik (eds.), *Flavian Rome: Culture, Image, Text* (Leiden, 2003), 559, n. 1.

[8] Josephus claims that he presented the work to both Vespasian and Titus for approval (*Vita* 361–363). Vespasian died in 79 C.E. Some contemporary scholars think that *BJ* VII was written later than the first six books. For more information on the composition, date, audience, and aims of *BJ*, see in chapter 2 below.

[9] A great deal has been recently written on the subject of Judaism and Hellenism; see, e.g., D. B. Martin, "Paul and the Judaism/Hellenism Dichotomy: Towards a Social History of the Question," in T. Engeberg-Pedersen (ed.), *Paul beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (Louisville, 2001), 29–61.

tions of the origins of Christianity, the formation of Rabbinic Judaism, and the differences between these two. Thus, by claiming that Palestinian Jews were more "orthodox" than their coreligionists in the Western Diaspora, Jewish scholars of previous generations usually implied that they were essentially non-Hellenized, and more "authentic" in the sense that they formed an organic link in the unbroken and natural continuum from the Hebrew Bible to the Mishnah and Talmud, and beyond – to mediaeval and even modern Judaism. Christian scholars believed as much, claiming that Jesus and, especially, Paul, broke out of this particularistic Judean cult in order to create a higher religion of spiritualism and ethics, Christianity. In contrast to Palestinian Judaism, Hellenistic Diaspora Jews, who expressed themselves in terms of Greek language and culture, were perceived by them as a halfway house in the process of this epochal transformation.[10]

Now these views are mostly a legacy of the past;[11] the majority of scholars admit that both Diaspora and Palestinian Jews (including the rabbinic Sages) were Hellenized, and the question is only in which ways and to what degree.[12] It is even clear that it is not always the case that the for-

[10] For a very brief overview, see W. Meeks, "Judaism, Hellenism, and the Birth of Christianity," in Engeberg-Pedersen, *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide*, 17–27.

[11] For an exception, see L. H. Feldman, "How Much Hellenism in Jewish Palestine?" *HUCA* 57 (1986), 83–111; idem, "How Much Hellenism in the Land of Israel?" *JSJ* 33 (2002), 290–313; idem, "The Influence of Hellenism on Jews in Palestine in the Hellenistic Period," in idem, *Judaism and Hellenism Reconsidered* (Leiden, 2006), 1–34. A similar position was espoused by A. Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt: The Struggle for Equal Rights* (Tübingen, 1985), who claimed that even Diaspora Jews were essentially non-Hellenized and "orthodox." Needless to say, the Judaism/Hellenism dichotomy served well both Christian and Jewish apologetic agenda: Christian scholars claimed that the "enlightened" and "progressive" Hellenistic Jews were more prone to recognize the superiority of "universalist" Christianity over "parochial" and "particularistic" Judaism. See F. C. Baur, *Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi. Sein Leben und Wirken, seine Briefe und seine Lehre: Ein Beitrag zu einer kritischen Geschichte des Urchristenthums* (2. Aufl.; Leipzig, 1866); A. Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (2. Aufl.; Leipzig, 1906). At the same time Jewish scholars contrasted the warm concept of God of the Hebrew Bible and the "joy of the Law," preserved in the Judaism of the Land of Israel, with the remoteness of God and sophisticated philosophical concepts of Diaspora authors in order to explain Paul's misrepresentation of and estrangement from the faith of his fathers. For the criticism of early twentieth-century Christian scholarship on Judaism, see G. F. Moore, "Christian Writers on Judaism," *HTR* 14 (1921), 197–254 (cf. E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* [Minneapolis, 1977], 1–12, who lamented that not much had changed since Moore wrote and until his day). For an example of a Jewish position sketched above, see C. G. Montefiore, *Judaism and St Paul: Two Essays* (London, 1914). For criticism of Montefiore, see W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (London, 1948; frequently reprinted), 1–16.

[12] For early statements on the subject, see M. Smith, "Palestinian Judaism in the First Century," in M. Davis (ed.), *Israel: Its Role in Civilization* (New York, 1956), 67–81,

mer were necessarily more Hellenized than the latter.[13] Moreover, scholars have come to recognize the vast diversity of opinion and practice both among the Jews in the Land of Israel, and those of the Diaspora, to the degree that some prefer to speak of "Judaisms" or "Judaic systems," rather than of one singular "Judaism," – without any connection to the Judaism/Hellenism debate.[14]

I would argue that these two approaches, "Judaism" vs. "Judaisms," are not necessarily contradictory, or mutually exclusive. Thus, I see much value in trying to isolate what was common to all, or most of the Judaic systems flourishing in the period under review, that is, in the attempts to describe and analyze what some scholars now call "common Judaism."[15]

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repr. in idem, *Studies in the Cult of Yahweh*. 2 Vols. (ed. by S. J. D. Cohen; Leiden, 1996), 1:104–15; idem, "Goodenough's Jewish Symbols in Retrospect," *JBL* 86 (1967), 53–68, repr. in idem, *Studies in the Cult of Yahweh*, 1:184-200. The standard, although on many points problematic, treatment is M. Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus, Studien zu ihrer Begegnung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Palastinas bis zur Mitte des 2 Jh.s v.Chr.* (Tübingen, 1973) (ET: *Judaism and Hellenism. Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period.* 2 Vols. [Philadelphia, 1974]). It is generally recognized that Hengel exaggerated the *extent* of Hellenization in Palestine as early as in the third – beginning of the second centuries B.C.E., but since the publication of his study most scholars became convinced that, in broad terms, he was right. For the recent reevaluation of the thesis and the restatement of the issues, see the articles in J. J. Collins and G. E. Sterling (eds.), *Hellenism in the Land of Israel* (Notre Dame, 2001), and Engeberg-Pedersen, *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide*.

[13] None of the known Diaspora Jewish authors wrote stories about Greek philosophers, like the anecdote about Plato attributed by Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum*, II, 41, to the Palestinian contemporary of Josephus, Justus of Tiberias. See M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism. Volume Two. From Tacitus to Simplicius* (Jerusalem, 1980), 333–334, #398. On the influence of Greek and Hellenism on the rabbis, see S. Lieberman, *Greek and Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (Jerusalem, 1962); D. Sperber, *Greek in Talmudic Palestine* (Ramat Gan, 2012); H. A. Fischel, *Rabbinic Literature and Greco-Roman Philosophy. A Study of Epicurea and Rhetorica in Early Midrashic Writings* (Leiden, 1973); J. Neusner, *Jerusalem and Athens: The Congruity of Talmudic and Classical Philosophy* (Leiden, 1997).

[14] See, e.g., J. Neusner, W. S. Green, and E. Frerichs (eds.), *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (Cambridge, 1987); A. Segal, *The Other Judaisms of Late Antiquity* (Atlanta, 1987). For criticism, see S. Schwartz, "How Many Judaisms Were There? A Critique of Neusner and Smith on Definition and Mason and Boyarin on Categorization," *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 2 (2011), 208–238.

[15] The term was coined by E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE – 66 CE* (London–Philadelphia, 1992). Another useful related term, which he invented earlier (idem, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*), is "covenantal nomism." The topic of "common Judaism" is further investigated in W. O. McCready and A. Reinhartz (eds.), *Common Judaism: Explorations in Second-Temple Judaism* (Minneapolis, 2008), and F. E. Udoh et al. (eds.), *Redefining First Century Jewish and Christian Identities. Essays in Honor of Ed Parish Sanders* (Notre Dame, 2008).

However, I also think that apart from common features and even apart from many shared systemic characteristics, the differences in Judaic thought and practice evident from contemporary literature and archaeological remains sometimes justify fragmentation of Judaism and, indeed, recommend that we speak of "Judaisms" or "Judaic systems."[16]

In this study, I suggest that the essential difference between the Second Temple Judaism of the Land of Israel and that of the Diaspora, as more-or-less coherent systems of belief and practice, concerns the role of the Jerusalem Temple and its sacrificial cult.[17] Schematically speaking, for the common, non-sectarian Judaism of the Land of Israel they were paramount; for the Judaism of the Diaspora – dispensable, not to say negligible. For the first, the Temple was God's house, the sacrificial cult was the main form of divine worship, and the priests were His divinely appointed ministers; for the second – the praying congregation, holy martyrs, or heavenly semi-divine biblical heroes[18] were better intercessors with God and mediators of divine pardon and boons than the contemporary flesh-and-blood priests in Jerusalem. That is, they were "better," if only because they were more available in Diaspora context. The "common Judaism" of an average Judean in the Land of Israel was constituted around the Temple of Jerusalem and its cult; to be a Judean was – more than anything else – to worship at the Temple of Jerusalem.[19] That of a Diaspora Jew was defined

[16] It seems that much of the confusion relating to these two approaches arises out of different aims of scholars who espouse them, not to say personal polemics. For prominent examples, see the criticism of Sanders' work in, e.g., J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Judaism: Structure and System* (Minneapolis, 1995), 7–13; 20–3. However, I think that both Sanders and Neusner have emphasized some very important methodological points.

[17] Here I follow in the steps of J. N. Lightstone, *The Commerce of the Sacred: Mediation of the Divine among the Jews in the Graeco-Roman Diaspora* (2nd ed.; New York, 2006 [1st ed., 1984]). Lightstone's book is discussed in chapter 1; I also return to it in chapter 4.

[18] The list of Diaspora avenues of access to the divine could be easily expanded by adding miracle-men, Torah-scrolls, miraculous amulets, martyrs' graves and bones, and relics of diverse kinds; see below in chapter 1, and Lightstone, *The Commerce of the Sacred*.

[19] Notice John 4:20, where the difference between the Judeans and the Samaritans is summarized in terms of where geographically one worships God – on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, or on Mt. Gerizim in Samaria. Cf. M. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilizations* (London, 2007), 175–6: "First-century Judaism was thus very varied, but one assumption shared by all types of Jew was that Jerusalem was the ideal sanctuary for the worship of God. It was denial of this one tenet that ensured that Samaritans were not Jews. On the Samaritan side, the issue was simple. They never called themselves Jews (*ioudaioi* in Greek, *yehudim* in Hebrew). They were the 'Israelites who worship God on Mount Gerizim'. For them, *yehudi* meant 'Judean', and denoted someone from the province of Judaea, *Yehud*, which was distinct in the Persian and Hellenistic periods from Samaria to the north. But for Jews, it was their devotion to their

and framed by the Torah; to be a Jew in the Diaspora was to obey the commandments of Moses, the Lawgiver, which had been revealed to him by God[20] – or, at least, to learn the book and think about its contents.[21]

In the context of this study, I dedicate a chapter to the description and analysis of the alternative Judaic paradigms in Diaspora literature. I do not claim that most Diaspora authors vigorously polemicized against the Temple-centered views of their Judean brethren. They felt no pressing need to do so and, after all, the Judeans' views were well-founded in the Torah, which was accepted by Diaspora Jews as well. However, I do suggest that because of the unavailability of the Temple and its cult in the Diaspora, for all practical purposes, the Jews who resided there tended, gradually, to replace them with other (Jewish) things. I suppose they had no other choice.

However, most of the extant Diaspora literature is static – its authors left us stills, not movies. Even in the case of Philo, whose literary output is vast – which of his tractates is early and which is late is a matter of scholarly analysis and arguments.[22] It is a challenging – not to say speculative – task to trace the evolution of Philonic views on most subjects.[23] Emphatically, however, this is not the case with Josephus. We know where he came from originally, and where he stayed later, and we know (at least, in broad

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rival sanctuary on Mount Gerizim in Samaria that put Samaritans beyond the pale." For a convincing common-sense reconstruction and description of Judean "common Judaism" (as well as for the discussion of the central role of the Temple in it), see Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief*. For a challenge to Sanders' "common Judaism" approach, see B. Chilton and J. Neusner, *Judaism in the New Testament: Practices and Beliefs* (London, 1995).

[20] E.g., Aristobulus, Philo, 4 Maccabees.

[21] E.g., Artapanus and Ezekiel the Tragedian. All these are discussed in chapter 1 below. It is needless to say that I do not imply that Second Temple Palestinian Jews did not study Torah, that it did not play an important role in their lives, or that they did not observe it. What I am trying to say is that while in the Land of Israel Jews had both Temple and Torah, in the Diaspora they only had Torah, which fact made it, by default, much more central and important.

[22] Apart from *Flacc*. and *Legat*., which deal with dated historical events, and were written by Philo late in his life. See next note. The evolution of Paul's thought (whom I consider to be mainly a Diaspora author) has been studied before. See, e.g., W. D. Davies, "Paul: from the Jewish Point of View," in W. Horbury, W. D. Davies, J. Sturdy (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism. Volume Three: The Early Roman Period* (Cambridge, 1999), 678–730. I plan to discuss Paul in future studies.

[23] For attempts to reconstruct a chronology of Philo's writings, see, e.g., A. Terian, "The Priority of the *Quaestiones* among Philo's Exegetical Commentaries," in D. M. Hay (ed.), *Both Literal and Allegorical. Studies in Philo of Alexandria's Questions and Answers on Genesis and Exodus* (Atlanta, 1991), 29–46; G. E. Sterling, "Philo's *Quaestiones*: Prolegomena or Afterthought?" in Hay, *Both Literal and Allegorical*, 99–123; J. R. Royse (with the collaboration of A. Kamesar), "The Works of Philo," in A. Kamesar (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* (Cambridge, 2009), 59–62.

terms) when he completed his several compositions.[24] Thus, *BJ* and *AJ* often cover parallel ground or deal with similar subjects, and so we can readily compare what Josephus said concerning them, and when; and even when they do not discuss the same topics it is possible to identify their leading ideas, and thus identify Josephus' "religious" outlooks at the time of their composition.

In this study, I suggest that *BJ* was written by Josephus the newcomer from the Temple-city of Jerusalem, the proud priest, and an adherent of the Jerusalem Temple-and-cult priestly version of Judaism – the one with which he was chiefly and intimately acquainted at that time. The latter compositions, namely, *AJ* with its appendix *Vita*, and *CA*, were written by Josephus the Torah-centered Diaspora Jew, who knew, on the one hand, that the Temple and its cult were no more (while the priests had to be looking for a new definition), but, on the other hand, that Judaism persists and Jews have to, and can, go on. So, in his later work he suggests how this could and should be done. As I demonstrate in this study, Josephus already dealt with the question of how Jews and Romans could coexist in the aftermath of the Revolt in his earliest composition, *BJ*. However, his treatment of this question was vastly different there: while the Law of Moses was not part of his earlier solution, in *AJ* it is the key.

In the context of the study of Palestinian and Diaspora Judaism of the Second Temple period, I think that Josephus is a unique and priceless human test-case. It has been said of another first-century Jewish thinker and author that he "bestrode Judaism and Christianity like a colossus;"[25] *mutatis mutandis*, I would like to claim, in a similar vein, that Josephus bestrode Palestinian and Diaspora Judaism of his time.[26] And just as in Paul's case "Judaism" and "Christianity" are no longer perceived by scholars as monolithic and as clearly distinct from each other, I also agree that the dividing lines between Palestinian and Diaspora Judaism are messy, especially in Josephus. They are messy indeed, but nonetheless they are there, and observable.

3. Temple and Torah in Judea, Diaspora, and Josephus

Lest my position be interpreted as an attempt to replace the Judaism/Hellenism dichotomy in the study of ancient Judaism with another

[24] On the dating of *Vita*, see n. 1 above. On the date of *BJ* VII, see chapter 2.

[25] Davies, "Paul: from the Jewish Point of View," 730.

[26] I am not qualified to ask whether Josephus underwent any kind of "conversion experience" similar to Paul's. However, the story of divine revelation at Yodfat in *BJ* III 350–4 (quoted below) is still in need of a serious psychological study.

artificial dichotomy between the Temple cult and the Torah, I would like to clarify my view of their interrelationship a bit further. As I demonstrate in chapter 1, the Temple, its cult, and its priesthood were important, indeed most important, constituents of the Judean religion in the Land of Israel in the Second Temple period. Most non-sectarian Judeans seem to have understood the Jerusalem Temple-cult as the main expression of divine worship and the chief avenue of their communication with the Deity; for them, divine worship meant Temple worship. At the same time, I also assume that most Jews living in the Land of Israel tried to observe the laws of the Torah as well as they could or saw fit. The Torah was the law of the Land, and most Judeans obeyed it – after all, this was the way they grew up, and what they saw their mothers and fathers doing. Schematically speaking, however, when compared to Diaspora literature, most non-sectarian works produced in the Land of Israel in this period do not witness to much systematic reflection on the role of the Mosaic legislative system as the "constitution" of the Jewish people as an entity, let alone its role for all humanity.[27] The laws of the Torah seem mostly to have been perceived as a given, as national customs, and were seen as only one of the components which defined who was a Ἰουδαῖος/יהודי, along with the territory of Judea and worship at the Temple of Jerusalem.[28]

Thus, for example, such an understanding is reflected in *BJ*, when Josephus defined certain things as "improper" or "not to be done," but not as "unlawful" because forbidden by the Law.[29] One does not need to consult a book of law in order to determine what is not done normally; one knows it from experience. The lack of systematic interest in and deep reflection on the contents, structure, and meaning of the Mosaic Law is clearly illustrated by Josephus' narrative in *BJ*, and for this reason I dedicate a large section of chapter 2 to the examination of Josephus' knowledge and interpretation of the biblical materials in his earliest work, in addition to the analysis of what he considered to be right or wrong from the "religious" point of view.

However, when we turn to the Diaspora literature (including Josephus' later writings), we discover a different picture. Diaspora Jews realized very

[27] This does not mean that I do not agree with the view which sees the Torah as one of the three or four main pillars of Second Temple Judaism, in general; e.g., see S. Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.* (Princeton, 2001), 49–99; J. D. G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (2nd ed.; London, 2006).

[28] Thus, as has already been pointed above in n. 19 above, the Samaritans were not Jews, since their cultic center was on a different mountain, although they believed in the same God and observed more or less the same Torah of Moses.

[29] *BJ* I 650. In *AJ* XVII 151 he emphatically chooses the second option. Cf. *BJ* IV 561–2. These passages are discussed below.

well that the Law of Moses was *not* the law of the land, since in the lands where they lived other laws were operative. A Jew in the Diaspora had *to choose* to remain a Jew, and the only way he could do this was by following the Jewish Law. In other words, for them the Mosaic Law became both the center and the framework of Jewish identity, and therefore generated animated reflection on its meaning, structure, character, as well as its role in their lives. The observance of the Law and its study also gradually came to be perceived as acts of divine worship, indeed the main such acts. In Second Temple Judea the Temple cult clearly was defined and perceived as the main worship activity, and *halakhic* observance does not seem to have been predominantly defined in such terms. However, in the Diaspora, where no Temple was available for worship, we witness a shift towards a different understanding of the meaning of Torah-observance. Beyond the borders of the Land of Israel (just as within them, after the destruction of the Temple), the Law became the main basis for the definition of what it meant to be a Jew, and observance of its commandments came to be interpreted as divine worship.[30]

In such circumstances the absence of the Temple and its sacrificial cult was not seen as an obstacle as far as communication with the Deity was concerned, but rather another item on the list of things no longer relevant or applicable in Diaspora conditions – such as tithes or other commandments pertaining to the Land of Israel and relevant only there. *Mutatis mutandis*, the Temple and its cult are part of the Torah just as the laws regarding leprosy are, and the former can be perceived as irrelevant parts of Jewish Law by one who has no access to them in a similar way to how the latter are viewed by a healthy person. So, albeit somewhat anachronistically, as far as the perception and the role of the Torah were concerned, the move from Palestinian to Diaspora existence could be described as a move from traditionalism to "orthodoxy."[31]

One could object to my view of Josephus' religious change by pointing out that although he indisputably wrote his books in the Diaspora, as far as the Jerusalem Temple was concerned he was in a different situation from most of the other Diaspora writers, namely – in contrast to them, he was writing after the Temple was destroyed. This fact, one might think, could account for a very different perspective – after all, the rabbis in the Land of Israel faced the same problem and arrived at some conclusions, in many ways similar to those which in my view were mainly distinctive of Diaspo-

[30] Cf. Acts 15:21, on the (Diaspora) synagogue preaching/proclaiming "of Moses."

[31] For the application of this paradigm to the history of modern Judaism, see J. Katz, "Orthodoxy in Historical Perspective," in P. Y. Medding (ed.), *Studies in Contemporary Jewry II* (Bloomington, 1986), 3–17; M. Samet, "The Beginnings of Orthodoxy," *Modern Judaism* 8 (1988), 249–269.

ra Judaism. However, I would agree with the assessment but deny that it conflicts with my analysis. Namely, it seems that Diaspora-wise there was no fundamental difference between the Second Temple period and the post-Destruction era – whether the Temple existed or not, the Jews of the Diaspora lived most of their lives without any kind of active participation in its cultic life. Their life was centered on the Diaspora communal institutions and various and diffused loci of the sacred, such as synagogues and other congregational meeting places (such as those of Philo's Therapeutae), and on the alternative means of mediation of divine powers, such as prayers, Torah-scrolls and Torah-study, martyrs' graves, holy men and heavenly beings, to give just a few examples.[32] And as far as the early rabbis are concerned, I also take them to be representatives of a Diaspora Judaism of a kind, since after the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple, for all practical purposes, there was no cardinal difference between the Jews in Judea or Galilee, or in North Africa, Syria, Mediterranean islands, Asia Minor, Greece, Rome, Bosporus, or Spain.[33]

However, I would not want to claim there were no differences in this respect between Josephus, the immigrant from Judea, and native Diaspora authors. The latter were born, grew up, and spent their lives in a Templeless context, while Josephus was an upper-class Jerusalem priest whose youth and early adulthood were spent in the shadow of the Temple, and who, most likely, actively officiated in its cult as a priest. From *BJ* we know that he witnessed its destruction, and agonized over acute theological questions generated by its overthrow.[34] In his writings, he had to deal with

[32] On these, see Lightstone, *The Commerce of the Sacred*, and chapter 1 below.

[33] The same applies to the people behind the Dead Sea Scrolls. They clearly say of themselves that they had chosen voluntary exile: "The well is the Law. And those who dug it are the converts of Israel, who left the land of Judah and lived in the land of Damascus" (CD-A VI 4–5 = 4Q266 3 II 12). In other places they designate themselves as "the exiled of the desert" (גולת המדבר): 1Q33 (1QM) I 2, and "exiled sons of light" (גולת בני אור): 1Q33 (1QM) I 3. Cf. the description of the location of the Teacher of Righteousness as "house of his exile" (אבית גלותו), 1QpHab XI 6. It does not really matter whether the place of their exile was only some 25 km away from Jerusalem, or, indeed, whether "the exile" was only in their mental self-perception. On Qumran, as well as Rabbinic Judaism from this perspective, see N. Hacham, "Exile and Self-Identity in the Qumran Sect and in Hellenistic Judaism," in E. Chazon and B. Halpern-Amaru (eds.), *New Perspectives on Old Texts: Proceedings of the 10th International Symposium of the Orion Center for the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 9–11 January, 2005* (Leiden, 2010), 3–21; idem, "Where Does the Shekhina Dwell? Between Dead Sea Sect, Diaspora Judaism and Rabbinic Literature," A. Lange, E. Tov, M. Weigold (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Context: Integrating the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Study of Ancient Texts, Languages, and Cultures.* Vol. 1 (Leiden, 2011), 399–412.

[34] On this, see now J. Klawans, *Josephus and the Theologies of Ancient Judaism* (Oxford, 2012), 180–209.

his memories and to come to terms with a new situation in which the Temple and its cult were no more. His memories and struggles are evident throughout his early and late compositions, but it is also clear that, by the time he produced *AJ*, he wanted to convey to his readers that the Temple was a memory and Torah was his present life.[35]

4. Josephus: Some Introductory Remarks on Methodology

It is a well-known fact that Josephus' writings provide the basis for any reconstruction of Judean history in the Second Temple period. Since I discuss and analyze *BJ* and *AJ* in much detail in chapters 2 and 3 below, here I will only express some thoughts on Josephus' autobiographical materials and the ways they have been treated in some previous studies.[36] I will also outline my overall thesis concerning his religious development, clarify my methodological presuppositions, present a biographical sketch, and attempt to place my study in the context of previous and contemporary research on early Judaism, in general, and on Josephus, in particular.

First of all, it must be said that most of what we know about Josephus is based on his own written statements, which means that we know it because he wanted us to, or because certain things about him were so well-known that he could not have hidden them.[37] And he mainly wanted us to know

[35] For a full-length study of the Temple and priestly themes in Josephus, see now O. Gussmann, *Das Priesterverständnis des Flavius Josephus* (Tübingen, 2008). This study is useful as a compendium on these subjects in Josephus, and contains a number of important observations on the role of Josephus' priestly self-understanding in his presentation of Jewish history. However, it frequently fails to distinguish between "early" and "late" Josephus. This might be due to the fact that, as I show in chapter 4, in contrast to other themes, the priestly status and identity retained their importance for Josephus throughout his literary career.

[36] Summaries of earlier Josephan scholarship are provided in H. Schreckenberg, *Bibliographie zu Flavius Josephus* (Leiden, 1968); idem, *Bibliographie zu Flavius Josephus: Supplementband mit Gesamtregister* (Leiden, 1979); L. H. Feldman, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship 1937–1980* (Berlin-New York, 1984); idem, *Josephus: A Supplementary Bibliography* (New York, 1986); idem, "Flavius Josephus Revisited: The Man, His Writings, and His Significance," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt II 21.2* (Berlin-New York, 1984), 763–862. I discuss many important recent works below.

[37] Josephus' falling into captivity and his prophecy of Vespasian's future greatness and of his own future release from slavery to Vespasian are mentioned by Suetonius, *Divus Vespasianus*, 5:6 (Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, Vol. 2, 122–123, #313), Appian of Alexandria (apud. Zonaras, *Epitome Historiarum*, XI, 16; Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, Vol. 2, 185, #347), and Cassius Dio, *Historia Romana*, 66.1.1–4 (Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, Vol. 2, 371, #429). However, it is very likely that these authors obtained this information from *BJ*. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Historia Ecclessiastica* 3.9.2, says that

good things about him and to think that, among very many other wonderful things, he was a noble, honest and lovable individual, an educated priest, a brilliant general, an outstanding historian and an exemplary Jew. However, as I hope to demonstrate in this study, despite Josephus' claims, certain things about him can be known to have been different from what he claimed them to be. This is important for the present study, since in contrast to some scholars, I think that contrary to Josephus' repeated claim, he – for one example among many – was not thoroughly familiar with the Bible not only in his youth, but even at the time of writing *BJ*.

I would like to make it clear at the beginning of this study that I do not believe that very much of what he actually claims to have been or to have done can be trusted by a critical and responsible historian. My approach has nothing to do with a preconceived judgment on Josephus' character and personality, as I hope will become clear in the course of this study. Rather, it stems from the impression received from reading critically Josephus' autobiographical narratives and his statements concerning himself. It seems that he was absolutely convinced that he was an extraordinary genius, a moral giant, and one of the few most wonderful people who had ever trodden this earth; he wanted his readers to believe these things, too. I can understand why Josephus wanted to present himself in such a way, but it is rather difficult, in my view, to accept this picture as reflecting "historical Josephus." Being sympathetic to an author does not mean one has to be gullible.

True, some scholars still write introductions to Josephus or outlines of his career by just paraphrasing what he said about himself.[38] Thus, various scholars repeat as "facts" Josephus' claims to have been a precocious child, a top member of the first priestly course, a Hasmonean, an outstanding expert on biblical traditions (due to the excellent education he received in Jerusalem as a child), a teenager who, beginning at the age of sixteen managed to pass through the sects of the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Essenes, then spent three more years with a desert ascetic, and came back to Jerusalem at the age of nineteen (!) to be engaged in public life.[39]

Josephus was honored with the erection of a statue in Rome. His source for this tradition is unknown, and its value is difficult to assess.

[38] It is nowadays considered as real scholarly progress to be freed from the "classical conception of Josephus," which was over-critical towards his personality and suspected him of self-gratification and ulterior motives. See P. Bilde, *Flavius Josephus between Jerusalem and Rome: His Life, His Works, and Their Importance* (Sheffield, 1988), 141–171.

[39] *Vita* 1–12. E.g., T. Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and His Society* (2nd ed.; London, 2002), 11–45. My thoughts on the passage dealing with Josephus' spiritual quest (*Vita* 10–2) are similar to those of Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, 107: "The impossible chronology of this section may be a sign not of textual corruption but of men-

I find it extremely difficult to trust Josephus on any of the above (as well as on many other points), and will illustrate the reasons for my hesitation with just a few examples, emphasizing different aspects of the problem. Previous scholars have pointed out a number of times that the beginning paragraphs of *Vita* are overloaded with difficulties of chronological character. One of these is illustrated a couple of sentences above: in *three years* Josephus managed to pass through the sects of Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Essenes, and afterwards to spend *three years* in the desert. Another problem is immediately faced by anybody who wants to reconstruct Josephus' genealogy on the basis of the data he provides at the beginning of *Vita*.[40] I do not think Josephus did not know how to count, but it does seem that he did not do any serious research before he threw in the numbers and it might even be suspected that he made them up ad hoc – which, in my view makes it risky to rely on them or to trust the story in which they appear.[41]

Thus, the examples that illustrate why I think it is extremely hazardous to trust Josephus' statements concerning him are as follows. The first one concerns the basic question of Josephus' general trustfulness when it comes to describing personal matters or events in which he was involved. Fortunately for us, he described many of the same events in which he personally participated during his generalship of the Galilee in both *BJ* and *Vita*. Earlier scholars have analyzed the patterns of relationships between these two works, and even produced synopses of the parallels.[42] However, the task of reconciling the contradictory accounts of the same events involving Josephus in *BJ* and *Vita* is not much easier than harmonizing the Synoptics with the Gospel of John. Scholars generally have to admit that Josephus was lying – the question is only: where – in *BJ* or in *Vita*? Or, perhaps, he was lying in both?[43] In other words, it should not be a surprise to anybody that he was capable of inventing stories about himself and playing with "historical facts" to suit his purposes.

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dacity: Josephus had three years to study with Bannus because his tour of the academies was imaginary." I would add that both his quest of the sects, and his three-year tutorship under Bannus, may have been imaginary by the same token.

[40] *Vita* 3–5.

[41] Schwartz, *Flavius Josephus, Vita*, 158–161 tries to solve the chronological problems inherent in Josephus' genealogy in several different ways, but eventually admits that none of them is satisfactory.

[42] Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, 3–7; S. Mason, *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary, 9. Life of Josephus* (Leiden, 2001), 213–22.

[43] U. Rappaport, "Where Was Josephus Lying – In His *Life* or in the *War*?" in F. Parente and J. Sievers (eds.), *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period: Essays in Memory of Morton Smith* (Leiden, 1994), 279–89.

The second example concerns Josephus' claims concerning his genealogy and was already pointed out by M. Smith: there is no evidence, before the sixteenth book of *AJ*, that Josephus knew that he was related to the Hasmoneans.[44] In the ironical words of Smith, "The knowledge of it grew in him with time."[45] As Smith points out, in *BJ* he merely claimed to be a Jerusalem priest; by the time he was well through the composition of most of *AJ* he discovered his royal connection; and when he began writing *Vita* he already figured out the whole pedigree (which, as noted, is notorious for its chronological problems). This evolutionary process of discovering one's royal and high-priestly identity and status looks suspect, to say the least.[46]

My third example is meant to illustrate, in comparative perspective, what kind of self-glorification fables Josephus was prepared to create and to tell his audience. The story is given by him in *Vita* 9: "While still a boy, really, about fourteen years old, I used to be praised by everyone because [I was] book-loving: the chief priests and principal men of the city would often meet to understand the legal matters more precisely with my assistance."[47] The story is a *topos*, and makes much sense if Josephus wanted to present himself to his contemporaries as a kind of "second Moses" or as a potential leader of world Jewry.[48] The closest parallel to this account in

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[44] *AJ* XVI 187.

[45] M. Smith, "The Gentiles in Judaism 125 BCE–CE 66," in W. Horbury, W. D. Davies, J. Sturdy (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism. Volume Three: The Early Roman Period* (Cambridge, 1999), 225.

[46] Contra Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and His Society*, 16, who writes concerning his genealogy the following: "For while there are some features which are improbable, there are none which are impossible; and, as long as what Josephus tells us is *possible*, we have no right to correct it" (emphasis in the original).

[47] Translation follows Mason, *Life of Josephus*, 12–14. Quotations from Josephus' works are taken from S. Mason (ed.), *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary Series* (Leiden, 2000–), where available. Since this series is not complete at the time of writing, in many places I quoted from H. St. J. Thackeray, et al., *Josephus.* 10 Vols. (LCL; Cambridge, MA & London, 1926–1965). All quotations are acknowledged, and my emendations are indicated. On this passage Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and His Society*, 28, who compares Josephus to the Gaon of Vilna (!), writes: "But when Josephus, at the age of fourteen, solved problems for the high priests and the city leaders, he had obviously gone beyond the stage of mere memorising, and was able to apply the intelligence which was his second main asset to the analysis of complex problems." Both Rajak and A. Schalit (trans. and ed.), *Josephus: Antiquitates Judaicae.* Vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1944), XLI, n. 47, take the story as a "fact." Cf. L. L. Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian.* 2 Vols. (Minneapolis, 1992), 1:5, who writes on this passage that it is "a statement, exceeded in its incredibility only by its frequent quotation by modern scholars without comment, as if to take it at face value."

[48] On the parallels, see Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, 105–106; F. Siegert, H. Schreckenberg, M. Vogel, *Flavius Josephus. Aus meinem Leben (Vita). Kritische*

terms of time, place and content comes from the Gospel of Luke 2:46–7: "After three days they found him [Jesus] in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers."[49] Nowadays it would be extremely difficult to find a New Testament scholar claiming, in an academic context, that this tradition concerning the *Wunderkind* Jesus in Luke's Gospel, whose author believed that his hero was a divine agent of God's salvation who had been born from a virgin, risen from the dead and ascended to sit at the right hand of Power, was based on "real events." Rather, such gullibility would be branded as fundamentalism, and laughed out of scholarly company. However, very few scholars seem to be amazed at the robust psychology of Josephus, who shamelessly made an even bolder claim about himself (although, admittedly, he did not suggest that he had been divinely fathered or virginally conceived). Ironically, even the historicity of Rabbinic stories in Mishnah *Yoma* (1:3–7) dealing with the supposed patronizing of the incompetent and half-literate high priests by the Sages is not taken seriously by scholars anymore, although the Mishnaic Sages claimed much less for themselves than did Josephus.[50]

In a similar way, Josephus is often trusted as far as his statements about his honesty, truthfulness, unselfishness, and education are concerned. Some even seem to think that he actually was too humble, even less self-seeking, and much better educated than he claimed. Thus, sometimes one encounters claims that *BJ* is not pro-Roman propaganda at all, and that Josephus did not really get that much from Vespasian and Titus in terms of privileges and money, especially when compared to some other people.[51]

Ausgabe, Übersetzung und Kommentar (Tübingen, 2001), 25, n. 14 (bibliography), and Mason, *Life of Josephus*, 14, n. 66, who also compares the passage with Josephus' treatment of Moses. That Josephus at least hinted at his own comparability to Moses follows from *AJ* XX 264–6: he is one of the two or three Jews, who succeeded in achieving an "exact knowledge of the law" and therefore became "capable of interpreting the meaning of the Holy Scriptures." Moses must be the other one, or one of the other two. On the precociousness of biblical heroes as a motif in Josephus, see L. H. Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible* (Berkeley, 1998), 90–91. On Josephus as a potential leader of Judaism, see B. Chilton, *The Temple of Jesus* (University Park, 1992), 69–87, and Nodet, "Josephus' Attempt to Reorganize Judaism from Rome." For my view of Josephus' ambitions, see below.

[49] Following *NRSV*.

[50] Sanders, *Judaism*, 396, writes on *m. Yoma* 1:3–7: "Which of the high priests allowed himself to be treated in such a way, as if he were a complete incompetent? Annas? Ananus? Caiaphas? Certainly not. These men were tough, shrewd and competent – and very likely arrogant. 'Sages' did not lead them around by their noses."

[51] S. Mason, "'Should Any Wish to Enquire Further' (*Ant.* 1. 25): The Aim and Audience of Josephus' *Judean Antiquities/Life*," in idem (ed.), *Understanding Josephus: Seven Perspectives* (Sheffield, 1998), 72–9.

As far as his education is concerned, he is variously presented in scholarly literature as an exceptionally broadly educated Second-Temple Jewish scholar and even a phenomenal repository of rabbinic learning (he is presumed to have been familiar with or at least reflecting not only Talmudic and Midrashic traditions, but even some out-of-the-way mediaeval lore, say, Yalkut Shimoni),[52] or, alternatively, to have mastered most of Greek and Roman pagan literature – since he seems to reflect various motifs current in the Greco-Roman authors and to engage in dialogue with them – even at the time of writing *BJ*![53]

It goes without saying that in this sympathetic context young Josephus is routinely supposed to have attended a typical rabbinic *beth-midrash*, of which, according to the later Talmudic and Midrashic literature, Second Temple Jerusalem was full.[54] Josephus himself does not say anything concerning Judean educational institutions, in which he acquired his presumed expertise in the biblical laws and prophetic traditions, but this does not prevent scholars from easily projecting much later rabbinic constructs back to the first-century C.E. Jerusalem. The logic is simple: if he says he studied Torah, we must assume he studied it where the Jews usually studied Torah – and that is, of course, at a *beth-midrash*. However, no contemporary literary or archaeological source bears witness to the existence of such "houses of study" in Josephus' Jerusalem.[55] Moreover, he never claims to

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[52] L. H. Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation*; idem *Studies in Josephus' Rewritten Bible* (Leiden, 1998); idem, *Flavius Josephus. Translation and Commentary, Volume 3: Judean Antiquities 1–4* (Leiden, 2000), passim; idem, "Torah and Greek Culture in Josephus," *Torah U-Madda Journal* 7 (1997), 47–87.

[53] Mason, "Flavius Josephus in Flavian Rome;" idem, "Should Any Wish to Enquire." Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation*, believes Josephus to have been thoroughly familiar with both rabbinic traditions and Greco-Roman thought. It is clear from *AJ* that by the nineties Josephus had read extensively in Greco-Roman authors. However, it is virtually inconceivable that a Palestinian Jew who had spent less than a decade in the Diaspora (as Josephus by the time of composing *BJ*) would have been able to become widely-read in pagan historiography. See S. Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaean Politics* (CSCT 18; Leiden, 1990), for a critical analysis of what can be safely concluded concerning Josephus' erudition in *BJ* and *AJ*.

[54] On Josephus as a Jerusalem *beth-midrash* student, see Schalit, *Josephus: Antiquitates Judaicae*, XXXIX. Rajak, Josephus: *The Historian and His Society*, 26–30, does not use the concept of "*beth-midrash*," but her reconstruction of Josephus' education is also wholly retrojected from later rabbinic sources.

[55] בית מדרשי in the Geniza text of Ben-Sira 51:23 is a translation from Syriac; see M. Kister, "A Contribution to the Interpretation of Ben Sira," *Tarbiz* 59 (1990), 304, n. 2 (in Hebrew). The only piece of archaeological evidence which comes close is the Jerusalem synagogue inscription of Theodotus, son of Vettenus (*CIJ 2.1404* [*SEG 8.170*]). It is most likely that his family came to Jerusalem from the Diaspora. Moreover, Josephus never claims to have attended synagogues in Jerusalem. For the text and discussion of the inscription, see L. Roth-Gerson, *The Greek Inscriptions from the Synagogues in Eretz-*

have attended a rabbinic-like school, but rather declares that his expertise stems from his having been born and raised as *a priest*. So, it seems safer to suppose that whatever knowledge he acquired in his early years, was at the Temple and in the priestly circles. Apart from Josephus' general proclamations concerning his superb education, we do not find any hard evidence that could corroborate his statements that by the time he was writing *BJ* he had a thorough knowledge of the Bible.[56] The biblical traditions quoted in *BJ* are extremely strange and garbled, and if anything, they represent the exact kind of stuff that might be expected from a proud Jerusalem priest – namely, obsession with the Temple.[57]

It is rather obvious that the impression many scholars have concerning Josephus' *early* education stems from the fact that his *late* writings, especially *AJ* and *CA*, do witness to his fairly exhaustive knowledge of the Bible, familiarity with extra-biblical Jewish traditions and writings, and with quite a few of the Greco-Roman authors. Then, if *all* of Josephus' writings are read as if they were governed by the rabbinic principle "there is no early and late in the Torah," and his proclamations concerning his superb education are also taken at their face value, this *late* knowledge is easily traced back to his *early* years and into *BJ*.[58] I would think it safer to assume that the kind of Jewish education Josephus received in Jerusalem would have been of a practical and pragmatic nature, namely, what he needed to know as a priest: he must have been familiar with the biblical laws regulating proper slaughter of sacrificial animals, laws dealing with blemishes and "leprosy," as well as rules of ritual purity and impurity, which were relevant to the Temple.[59] In addition to this, he would also have been familiar with general Jewish practice. As will be discussed below, *BJ* provides no evidence that he had previously been engaged in seri-

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Israel (Jerusalem, 1987), 76–86 (in Hebrew); A. Runesson, D. D. Binder, and B. Olsson, *The Ancient Synagogue from Its Origins to 200 C.E. A Sourcebook* (Leiden, 2008), 52–4; H. M. Cotton et al. (eds.), *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae. Volume I: Jerusalem. Part 1: 1–704* (Berlin, 2010), 53–6. I return to this inscription below. A. Momigliano, "Ciò che Flavio Giuseppe non vide," in *Settimo Contributo alla Storia Degli Studi Classici e del Mondo Antico* (Rome, 1984), 305–17; ET: "What Josephus Did Not See," in idem, *On Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (Middletown, 1987), 108–19, considers the synagogue as one of the main things that Josephus "did not see."

[56] Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaean Politics*, 23–45 has analyzed "Josephus' intellectual development" as witnessed by *BJ*. I discuss his knowledge of the Bible in *BJ* in chapter 2 below.

[57] See the discussion in chapter 2 (pp. 115–28).

[58] Thus, despite all his critical acumen, S. Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 92, is typical: "He [Josephus] was raised first on traditional Judean-Jewish texts, the (Hebrew) Bible above all." The statement appears in the context of his discussion of *BJ*.

[59] Cf. the discussion of Josephus' familiarity with Passover proceedings, discussed in chapter 2 below (pp. 125–6).

ous Torah-study for the sake of learning and interpretation of the whole corpus of Jewish legal, prophetic and sapiential traditions.

However, by the time he wrote *AJ*, the picture had completely changed. Now, in the Diaspora context and far away from the ruined Temple, the Torah with its laws – "the Mosaic constitution" – became for him the only framework, inside and around which the Jews were able to consolidate their identity and their very existence as a separate national and religious entity. I claim that this transformation of Josephus' religious outlook and emphases was occasioned by his geographical and temporal move from the Temple-state of Judea to the Temple-less and culturally challenging Diaspora.

In my investigation of Josephus' religious evolution I am not really dependent on the veracity of his claims concerning himself. Rather, his works provide the raw material for the comparison and analysis. Thus, as has been pointed out above and will be illustrated below, although he claims to have been a biblical expert at an early age, his claims can be checked against the materials in his early writing, and results of this comparison will determine the verdict. In a similar way, without even concentrating on the autobiographical materials in his later compositions, it is possible to assess what was important to him, and what he considered central to his religious worldview, because he continually dwelled on certain subjects, issues and paradigms. And if, as is often the case, we do not find these topics in his earlier writing, but instead of them find something else, then we are entitled to suppose that his views changed over the years – especially, as I claim, if there is some logic that could explain such a change. In this study I will endeavor to document, analyze, and explain the transformation.

5. Josephus' Biography and the General Context of His Writings

If we leave aside the problematic autobiographical materials discussed above, we still can know something about Josephus. He dates his birth, twice, to the first year of Gaius' Caligula imperium, that is 37 C.E.[60] It is reasonable to suppose that he indeed was born, as he claims a few times, into a priestly family of considerable status and means. This is confirmed by the later events of his life, such as his having been a member of a delegation to Rome and his subsequent appointment as the rebel commander of Galilee. It would be unreasonable to suppose that a person without any social standing would have been chosen for tasks such as these.

[60] *Vita* 5, *AJ* XX 268.