

# Josephus and his Choice: Reading the 'Bellum Judaicum' within the Greco-Roman Historiographic Tradition

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Josephus and his Choice:  
Reading the *Bellum Judiacum* within the Greco-Roman  
Historiographic Tradition

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## Introduction

When Flavius Josephus claims in his proem that he wrote the *Bellum Judaicum* because he “found it monstrous to allow the truth upon such great affairs to go astray... and [to allow] the Greeks and those of the Romans who did not march with the army to be ignorant as to why the war began and by how many calamities it progressed and how it came to an end, reading [accounts filled] with either flattery or fiction” (*BJ* 1.6),<sup>1</sup> he seems to identify his audience, Romans and Greeks, and his purpose, to accurately inform. However, when Josephus goes on to state that he will relate “the actions of both sides with accuracy, but as to the narrative of the events I attach my disposition and experiences giving myself to lament over the misfortunes of my country” (*BJ* 1.9),<sup>2</sup> he complicates the picture by introducing a third audience and seems to violate the norms of objective historiography by admitting to lament openly for the misfortunes of his country. At stake in these considerations is Josephus’ reliability as a historian. This paper will argue that Josephus in fact writes for a tripartite audience composed of Jews, Romans, and the Greek-speaking east and that his open emotions for Jerusalem do not constitute bias in the ancient conception of it. He is to be considered a reliable historian.

Born Yosef ben Matityahu in 37 CE to a Jewish priestly family living in Jerusalem (*Vita* 1), Josephus led an eventful life.<sup>3</sup> At the outbreak of the Jewish revolt against Rome in 66 CE the Jews elected Josephus as general for all of Galilee in addition

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<sup>1</sup> ἄτοπον ἡγησάμενος περιδεῖν πλαζομένην ἐπὶ τηλικούτοις πράγμασι τὴν ἀλήθειαν... ἀγνοεῖν δὲ Ἕλληνας ταῦτα καὶ Ῥωμαίων τοὺς μὴ ἐπιστρατευσαμένους, ἐντυγχάνοντας ἢ κολακείαις ἢ πλάσμασι. All translations are my own.

<sup>2</sup> τὰ μὲν ἔργα μετ’ ἀκριβείας ἀμφοτέρων διέξειμι, τοὺς δ’ ἐπὶ τοῖς πράγμασι λόγους ἀνατίθημι τῇ διαθέσει καὶ τοῖς ἑμαυτοῦ πάθεσι διδοὺς ἐπολοφύρεσθαι ταῖς τῆς πατρίδος συμφοραῖς.

<sup>3</sup> For Josephus’ birth name see Chapman 2009: 320.

to Gamala (*BJ* 2.568). After fortifying the region and fighting with some limited success, Josephus was captured at the Galilean city of Jotapata, but escaped death by prophesying that then general Vespasian would become emperor (*BJ* 3.392-408). After Vespasian's troops proclaimed him emperor in 69 (*BJ* 4.592-602), the new emperor not only freed Josephus from slavery, but at the behest of Titus also severed his chains so as to declare symbolically that he had never been a slave (*BJ* 4.622-9). Josephus later attempted in vain to aid the Roman side at the siege of Jerusalem by calling out to those Jews inside the city and urging them to surrender (*BJ* 5.361-420). Upon arriving at Rome with Titus in 71 after the sack of Jerusalem, Josephus was granted Roman citizenship, given a stipend, and took up residence in Vespasian's former house on the Quirinal (*Vita* 423), where he began work on the *Bellum Judaicum*.

The life of Josephus was clearly filled with dichotomous roles. He was both a Jewish priest of royal blood and a recipient of Flavian patronage, a general for the Jewish resistance against Rome and an ally to Rome at the siege and sack of Jerusalem. Josephus' many conflicting positions have seemed to many readers to betray his programmatic declaration that he will write about the affairs of both sides accurately. On the one hand Josephus guarantees that his personal involvement in the war necessitates a truthful historical account, for he criticizes other accounts of these affairs because the authors were not involved and thus write incoherent narratives (*BJ* 1.1). On the other hand he implies that personal involvement can lead to bias and inaccuracy when he censures some eyewitness accounts written by historians who "lie about the events either because of flattery towards the Romans or hatred towards the Jews" (*BJ* 1.2).<sup>4</sup> It is an

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<sup>4</sup> ἢ κολακεία τῇ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους ἢ μίσει τῷ πρὸς Ἰουδαίους καταψεύδονται τῶν πραγμάτων.

axiom of ancient historiography that personal involvement produces bias and inaccuracy.<sup>5</sup> Josephus was personally involved on multiple sides and so this critique seems germane to Josephus. Moreover, Josephus' insistence on exculpating the Romans and specifically the Flavians could be viewed as flattery, and indeed has been read that way. "For domestic strife destroyed that [fatherland], and the tyrants of the Jews dragged the unwilling hands of the Romans and fire upon the Temple" (*BJ* 1.10).<sup>6</sup> At the same time Josephus' impartiality could appear clouded due to his excessive love of the Jews, as reflected in his open lamentation over the sufferings of Judaea (*BJ* 1.12).

It is difficult to ascertain what Josephus is trying to accomplish in this seemingly contradictory introduction, but certainly not impossible. The core concern of this paper will be to comprehend Josephus' purpose in writing the *Bellum Judaicum* and from there to make an evaluation of his reliability. I will contend that Josephus' *Bellum Judaicum* must be read within the context of the Greco-Roman historiographic tradition. His choice to adhere to the conventions of that tradition answers specific objections raised by scholars, who view his work as unreliable. This choice of tradition also demands a tripartite audience composed of Jews, Romans, and the Greek-speaking east. Reading Josephus in this way reveals his aim of instructing the leaders of all sides on the best ways to manage affairs between Rome and her subject nations.

The landscape of scholarship on Josephus has changed since Fergus Millar's 1993 address to the Classical Association in which he asked, "why do we exclude from the standard conception of what a classical education is about Jewish and Christian texts in

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<sup>5</sup> Luce 1989.

<sup>6</sup> γὰρ αὐτὴν στάσις οἰκεία καθείλεν, καὶ τὰς Ῥωμαίων χειρὰς ἀκούσας καὶ τὸ πῦρ ἐπὶ τὸν ναὸν εἴλκυσαν οἱ Ἰουδαίων τύραννοι.

Greek, and Christian texts in Latin?”<sup>7</sup> Incorporating these texts into the classical canon, he argued, would allow us to “accept the centrality of the works of Josephus.”<sup>8</sup> Since 1993, classicists have paid more attention to Josephus and his place in the Greco-Roman historiographical tradition.<sup>9</sup> Reading Josephus’s *BJ* through the lens of classical historiography carries with it certain expectations about style, composition, audience, purpose, and reliability.

Recent scholarship on Josephus has focused on why and for whom Josephus wrote. These questions were largely disregarded in early 20<sup>th</sup> century scholarship because the prevailing view was that he relied heavily upon Greek assistants.<sup>10</sup> Josephus was instead studied mostly from the point of view of Jewish and Christian theology.<sup>11</sup> If Josephus did rely upon assistants, any examination of Josephus’ works would not be able to make conclusive statements about his style or purpose. Finding the author’s voice would be near impossible. This argument gradually came to be rejected<sup>12</sup> and in Tessa Rajak’s seminal 1983 monograph on Josephus it was completely refuted.<sup>13</sup> Rajak demonstrates that although he collaborated with others, Josephus takes “the ultimate responsibility for substance and style alike.”<sup>14</sup> This continues to be the prevailing view

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<sup>7</sup> Reprinted in Millar 2002: 34.

<sup>8</sup> Millar 2002: 34.

<sup>9</sup> Marincola 1997 incorporates Josephus into his examination of ancient historiography; Mader 2000; Edmonson, Mason, and Rives 2005; Sievers and Lembi 2005; Feldherr 2009 includes a chapter on Josephus; Pastor, Stern, and Mor 2011.

<sup>10</sup> Thackeray 1929: 100-124; this theory is built on Josephus’ own comment in *Against Apion* 1.50 that he composed the *BJ* “using some assistants for the Greek language” (χρησάμενός τισι πρὸς τὴν Ἑλληνίδα φωνὴν συνεργοῖς).

<sup>11</sup> See Schreckenberg 1968 and Feldman 1984 and 1986 for complete bibliographies on the subject.

<sup>12</sup> Richards 1939: 36-40; Schutt 1961: 59-75 contends that the *BJ* required assistance, but the *Antiquities* did not.

<sup>13</sup> Rajak 2002: 47-63, 233-236. The 1983 edition was reprinted with added preface and introduction as well as an expanded bibliography. The text, however, remains the same.

<sup>14</sup> Rajak 2002: 62-63.



among scholars of Josephus.<sup>15</sup> Assigning responsibility for the style and substance of the *BJ* to Josephus allows questions of his intentions to be asked.

Rajak's analysis of Josephus' basic interpretation of the revolt argues for a combination of Jewish and Hellenized elements. She contends that bad governors created a division between the Jews and Romans, which was further widened by Jewish criminal and reckless types. The people were misled by the leaders of seditious factions and they took up arms. The established leadership failed to act, which further nourished the growth, strength, and command of these factions, and eventually led to civil war and revolt.<sup>16</sup> Rajak argues that "Josephus' theory is Hellenized in presentation."<sup>17</sup> Moreover, she contends that Josephus' primary focus when writing the *BJ* is to come up with a theological explanation for the destruction of the Temple and that as such it is fundamentally not Flavian propaganda.<sup>18</sup>

Scholarship on Josephus' purpose and audience has been widely divided since Rajak. There are a number of prevailing views concerning Josephus' primary audience(s) and purpose for writing the *BJ*. Rajak represents one of the main ideas concerning these two aspects of Josephus' work, which holds that Josephus' primary goal in writing the *BJ* was to offer a theologically sound explanation to the Jews of the Diaspora for God's abandonment of the Temple and its subsequent destruction.<sup>19</sup> Although scholars of this camp at times admit secondary or subordinate audiences, they hold the Jewish audience to be of primary importance. Opposite this view stands the

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Bilde 1988: 132-134, 142, 202; Mason 1991: 48-51; Mader 2000: 7-8; Ullmann and Price 2002: 98.

<sup>16</sup> Rajak 2002: 78.

<sup>17</sup> Rajak 2002: 78; This theory was first explicitly argued in Hata 1975: 89-108. Cf. Mader 2000 and Chapman 2009.

<sup>18</sup> Rajak 2002: see especially chaps. 3-5, 8.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Rajak 2002 particularly 78-143; Bilde 1988 particularly 75-78; Chapman 2009; Curran 2011 claims the Jewish apologetic aim outweighs the Thucydidean and Polybian phrases.

notion that the primary intended audience was Roman, especially those Romans living in and around the city of Rome.<sup>20</sup> On this view, Josephus writes to extol Roman hegemony and supremacy, but particularly to praise Vespasian and Titus. Pushing back against this, McLaren has questioned the positive portrait of Titus in the *BJ*, arguing that Josephus was not simply a mouthpiece for the Flavians.<sup>21</sup> Other scholarship embraces both Jewish and Roman audiences as equally important to the composition and aims of Josephus' work.<sup>22</sup> Lastly, Price is of the opinion that Josephus writes not only to the Jews of the Diaspora and the Romans, but also to the Hellenized east.<sup>23</sup>

The question of Josephus' audience for the *Bellum Judaicum* has been one of the central concerns of recent scholarship, but as yet no clear consensus has emerged. My approach will be somewhat different from the aforementioned studies. Although my view echoes Price's argument that the work has a tripartite intended audience, I will first examine Josephus' writing within the context of the Greco-Roman historiographic tradition. This will involve understanding the particular stylistic and rhetorical elements employed by Josephus, what purpose he believed his work had, the relationship between him and his readers, and why he wrote in the first place. By examining Josephus in the context of Greco-Roman historiography, I will show that his conformity to the conventions of this tradition answer objections raised by scholars about his reliability. This, in turn, will allow us insight into the motivation and purpose behind the *BJ*. Naturally a comparison to Polybius, another foreigner writing Roman history at Rome in Greek, will aid in this study demonstrating the possibility of engaging in open

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<sup>20</sup> Beard 2003 calls Josephus a Flavian lackey (556); Mason 2005 argues for the difficulty of widely disseminating Josephus' work after publication.

<sup>21</sup> McLaren 2005.

<sup>22</sup> Parente 2005.

<sup>23</sup> Price 2005.

lamentation for one's country while still remaining objective. From there I will show how Josephus addresses each of his audiences in turn, by examining specific passages within the text that reveal to whom Josephus was writing and why. I will conclude by arguing that Josephus wrote within the Greco-Roman historiographic tradition so that he could reach three audiences at one in order to instruct each of them on ways to manage relations with foreign states.

## Historiography

When Flavius Josephus set out to write the *Bellum Judaicum* he was faced with choosing the historiographic tradition within which to write. A tradition of Jewish historical writing can be traced back to at least the tenth century BCE with the account of Solomon's selection as David's successor (2 Samuel 9-20; 1 Kings 1-2). This led to later Jewish historians recording the Deuteronomistic history (Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, and 1 & 2 Kings) and the Chronicler's history (1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah).<sup>24</sup> Before their encounter with the Greeks, Jews had developed their own historical tradition. While Hellenism influenced Jewish historians across the board, not all embraced the Greek historiographic tradition. An author's choice to write in either a Semitic language or Greek indicated which tradition he chose to follow. Some historians intentionally pursued Jewish biblical precedents (e.g. 1 Maccabees, 1 Esdras, Pseudo-Philo), whereas others opted for Greek historiography (e.g. 2 Maccabees, Josephus).<sup>25</sup> Although both Hellenism and the biblical tradition greatly influenced all of these Jewish historians, the fact that Josephus deliberately chose to write within the Hellenistic historiographic tradition is of integral importance when reading him and attempting to understand his purpose.

His conformity with that tradition answers the specific objections of critics who regard his work as unreliable. Scholars who argue that Josephus is unreliable because he writes with bias towards one audience or another have overlooked the importance of the

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<sup>24</sup> Sterling 2007.

<sup>25</sup> Sterling 2007: 231.

choice that Josephus made about how to compose his work.<sup>26</sup> By failing to consider his choice of which tradition (Hellenistic or biblical) to follow, scholars read Josephus incorrectly because they do not realize the degree to which his work conforms to the conventions of the Greco-Roman historiographic tradition. What they cite as evidence of Josephus' bias is better understood as Josephus following the standard practices of the genre.

Scholarship on Josephus' style has generally recognized that he models his work on Greco-Roman predecessors, particularly Thucydides and Polybius.<sup>27</sup> Josephus employs set speeches, proemial topoi, and rhetorical writing, which conform to the standards of the Greco-Roman historiographic tradition. A number of scenes from the *BJ* have been recognized as likely influenced by episodes in Thucydides and Polybius.<sup>28</sup> The extent of Josephus' Hellenization has been questioned in the past,<sup>29</sup> these objections fail to appreciate the choice Josephus made in composing and how deeply the influence of the Greco-Roman tradition runs throughout the *Bellum Judaicum*.<sup>30</sup>

A complicating factor to understanding how and why Josephus follows the conventions of Greco-Roman historiography is his inclusion of specifically Jewish perspectives in the work. All Jewish historiography written during the Hellenistic and

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<sup>26</sup> E.g. Beard 2003 calls Josephus a "Flavian lackey"; Parente 2005 questions the legitimacy of the description of the Jewish rebels as well as Titus' role in the burning of the Temple; Curran 2011 asserts that the Jewish apologetic aim outweighs all else.

<sup>27</sup> Villalba I Varneda 1986; Mader 2000.

<sup>28</sup> Schwartz 1990: 224 suggests *BJ* 1.373-379 ~ Thuc. 2.60-64 (speech of Herod after earthquake v. Pericles' speech during the plague); *BJ* 4.131-134 ~ Thuc 3.81.2-3.83 (outbreak of stasis in Jerusalem v. on Corcyra); *BJ* 4.319-321 ~ Thuc. 2.65 (eulogies of Ananus and Pericles respectively); *BJ* 6.136-140 ~ Thuc. 7.44 (night battles); *BJ* 3.70-107 ~ Polyb. 6.19-42 (descriptions of Roman army). I would also add *BJ* 7.123-157 ~ Polyb. 6.53-54 (Roman Imperial triumph v. Roman Republican funeral). See also Mader 2000: 55-103.

<sup>29</sup> Bilde 1988: 205 "Josephus' Hellenization is of a rather formal and superficial nature."

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Mader 2000: ix-18.

early Roman periods shared two common perspectives.<sup>31</sup> First, Jewish historians focused their narratives on the story of the Jewish people and their identity within the larger world. Second, underlying this story was the belief that God controlled the history of the Jewish people. Josephus incorporates these two standpoints into his narrative, for the *BJ* is a history of Roman and Jewish interaction focused on the most recent conflict, and the role of God cannot be overemphasized in Josephus' explanation for the destruction of the Temple. That Josephus includes these perspectives indicates his intention to write for a Jewish audience.

His decision to blend these two perspectives into a narrative composed within the Greco-Roman (rather than biblical) historiographic tradition reveals that Josephus actually writes to multiple audiences at once. The Greco-Roman tradition afforded Josephus with broader and better opportunities to achieve his goals in writing the *BJ*. First, this tradition allowed Josephus to reach an elite Roman and Greek audience, whereas the biblical tradition was ignored by elite Romans and Greeks as evidenced by Tacitus' misunderstanding of early Jewish history (*Hist.* 5.2-8). Second, Josephus is able to prove that Jewish historians base their histories on fact and truth by writing an accurate account of this war. Josephus attacks contemporary Greek historians for their inaccuracy in writing history particularly of foreign peoples (*BJ* 1.13-16) and so Josephus attempts to prove that Jewish historians write accurate histories.<sup>32</sup> Lastly the Greco-Roman tradition gives Josephus the ability to instruct the elite on the best ways to govern and interact with Jews.

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<sup>31</sup> Sterling 2007: 241-242.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Sterling 2007 and Josephus' *Against Apion* 1.1-56 in which he claims that Greek historiography is inconsistent and concerned more with style and elegance than historical veracity.

The integration of specific Jewish perceptions within a narrative composed according to the conventions of the Greco-Roman historiographic tradition thus indicates that Josephus simultaneously writes to elite Romans, Jews, and other Greek subjects of Rome. Because Josephus writes to multiple audiences, his work has multiple layers of meaning depending on how and what Josephus communicated to each audience. Contemporary scholars often disregard that Josephus writes to multiple audiences and conveys different meanings to each one. When this fact is forgotten Josephus' writing can seem to contain bias towards one group or another. It is therefore necessary to bear in mind when reading the *BJ* that Josephus is addressing multiple audiences.

By focusing on the specific characteristics of Greco-Roman historiography that Josephus decides to include in his *Bellum Judaicum*, it is clear that what scholars cite as examples of Josephus' bias are actually features of the Greco-Roman historiographic tradition that Josephus has consciously incorporated into his style. Just as it is widely recognized for Greek and Roman historians that the form and content of their histories are inseparable,<sup>33</sup> so too must Josephus be read in such a way that recognizes both the form and content of his history. To ignore the form, in which Josephus chooses to present his history, would be to ignore the very reasons why this Jewish general turned Roman citizen wrote at all.

The logical place to start is with the proem (*BJ* 1.1-30), which exhibits a number of themes present in other introductions to classical historical works. Josephus' call to history is multifaceted, yet each reason he states places him within the Greco-Roman historiographical tradition. The very subject matter of his work and its greatness is given

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<sup>33</sup> Wiseman 1979; Woodman 1988; Kraus and Woodman 1997: 2; Feldherr 2009: 6-7; Laird 2009: 197-213.

the prominence of the being placed first. Subject matter is the most common call to history for ancient historians.<sup>34</sup> From the first line the reader is aware not only of what Josephus will discuss, but also how and why it is important. He is to relate “the war of the Jews against the Romans, the greatest that has existed not only of those through our time, but even those we have received by report either of cities against cities or nations dashed against nations” (*BJ* 1.9).<sup>35</sup> Herodotus and Thucydides both claim that the wars they are dealing with are far superior to any other because of the magnitude of the armies, the number of nations involved, the length, sufferings, and other such things.<sup>36</sup> Thucydides expected from the outset that the Peloponnesian would be “the most remarkable of previous engagements” in part because “this was the greatest disturbance among the Greeks and a great part of the barbarians, so as to say the majority of mankind” (Thuc. 1.1-2).<sup>37</sup> Historians after Thucydides tended to follow his model for claiming particular greatness of a war that affected so much of the world.<sup>38</sup> In comparison to other empires of the past, Polybius proclaims, Rome excelled because “the Romans made not some portion, but, I dare say, the whole inhabited world subject to them” (Polyb. 1.2.7).<sup>39</sup> For Polybius and subsequent historians, history became universal rather than piecemeal when Rome conquered the world.

After first simply stating this to be the greatest of all wars, Josephus goes on to specify why. The domestic affairs at Rome were in shambles, during which turbulent

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<sup>34</sup> Marincola 1997: 34-43.

<sup>35</sup> τὸν Ἰουδαίων πρὸς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον συστάντα μέγιστον οὐ μόνον τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς, σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ ὄν ἀκοῆ παρειλήφαμεν ἢ πόλεων πρὸς πόλεις ἢ ἔθνῶν ἔθνεσι συρραγέντων.

<sup>36</sup> Hdt 1.1, 7.20-21; Thuc. 1.1, 1.23.

<sup>37</sup> ἀξιολογώτατον τῶν προγεγενημένων...κίνησις γὰρ αὕτη μέγιστη δὴ τοῖς Ἕλλησιν ἐγένετο καὶ μέρει τινὶ τῶν βαρβάρων, ὡς δὲ εἰπεῖν καὶ ἐπὶ πλείστον ἀνθρώπων.

<sup>38</sup> Marincola 1997: 37-38.

<sup>39</sup> Ῥωμαῖοί γε μὴν οὐ τινὰ μέρη, σχεδὸν δὲ πάσαν πεπονημένοι τὴν οἰκουμένην ὑπήκοον αὐτοῖς.



times the Jewish revolutionary party was at its zenith and rose up in insurrection (*BJ* 1.4). The entire eastern part of the empire hung in the balance due to an excess of uproars, which the Jews were hoping to spur on. At the same time Rome was occupied with the neighboring Gauls and Celts. The death of Nero brought about even more confusion and uproar as many individuals found this to be an opportune time to seek the sovereignty. The soldiery stoked these flames, as it desired change in the hopes of making a profit (*BJ* 1.5).

Josephus depicts this war coming at a time crucial not only in the history Rome, but also for the whole world. Tacitus, when beginning his *Histories*, writes similarly. It was a time “rich in misfortune, gloomy with battles, discordant with civil strife, and even savage during peace” (*Hist.* 1.2.1).<sup>40</sup> He goes on to discuss how the whole Roman world, east and west, was involved (*Hist.* 1.2). These historians emphasize the importance of their works by setting them upon the world stage and pointing out how precarious the future of Rome and the world were. The events in the *BJ* are important to the city of Rome and the city of Jerusalem to be sure; however, they matter to the whole of the Roman Empire. The revolt of Judaea and the sack of Jerusalem played integral roles in the history of all people under Roman hegemony.

Given that the climax of his work comes at the sack of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple, Josephus is eager to show the range of fortune that his native city undergoes during this time. “For it happened that our city of all those under the Romans had arrived at the greatest place of prosperity and in turn fell down to the lowest

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<sup>40</sup> *opimum casibus, atrox proeliis, discors seditionibus, ipsa etiam pace saevum.*

of misfortunes” (*BJ* 1.11).<sup>41</sup> Josephus has been called to write his history because of the greatness of the events themselves. The war in Judaea and the siege of Jerusalem alone warrant a history, but the author emphasizes their importance within contemporary world events to amplify the importance of the Jewish revolt and his history of it. In this way Josephus aligns himself with previous Greek historians including Herodotus, Thucydides, and Polybius who also were called to write based on the greatness and worthiness of the deeds.<sup>42</sup>

Another stated motivation, other than the greatness of the deeds themselves, for Josephus to write the *Bellum Judaicum* is the lack of other quality histories of this war available to Greeks and Romans. Josephus claims that other accounts by eyewitnesses are falsified “either because of flattery for the Romans or hatred toward the Jews” (*BJ* 1.2),<sup>43</sup> while those who were not present write “random and discordant tales” (*BJ* 1.1).<sup>44</sup> Most importantly he claims that all of the other works display “the accuracy of history nowhere” (*BJ* 1.2).<sup>45</sup> Josephus, on the other hand, asserts that he will relate “the affairs of both sides with accuracy” (*BJ* 1.9).<sup>46</sup> With this statement, Josephus places himself directly in line with Thucydides, who carries out his task “with accuracy concerning each event as much as is possible” (Thuc. 1.22.2).<sup>47</sup>

The accuracy that Josephus claims to write with is part of his motivation for writing because he considered it “monstrous to allow...that the Greeks and those of the

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<sup>41</sup> πόλιν μὲν γὰρ δὴ τῶν ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίοις πασῶν τὴν ἡμετέραν ἐπὶ πλείστον τε εὐδαιμονίας συνέβη προελθεῖν καὶ πρὸς ἔσχατον συμφορῶν αὐθις καταπεσεῖν.

<sup>42</sup> Marincola 1997: 45, 48. This is different from some Roman historians including Sallust, who report that they chose to write history and then searched for an event.

<sup>43</sup> ἢ κολακεία τῇ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους ἢ μίσει τῷ πρὸς Ἰουδαίους.

<sup>44</sup> εἰκαῖα καὶ ἀσύμφωνα διηγήματα.

<sup>45</sup> τὸ δ' ἀκριβὲς τῆς ἱστορίας οὐδαμοῦ.

<sup>46</sup> τὰ μὲν ἔργα μετ' ἀκριβείας ἀμφοτέρων διέξειμι.

<sup>47</sup> ὅσον δυνατὸν ἀκριβεία περὶ ἐκάστου ἐπεξελεθῶν.

Romans who did not march with the army to be ignorant” about the war, its causes, and its culmination (*BJ* 1.6).<sup>48</sup> Both of Josephus’ stated reasons for writing this history, the greatness of the events themselves and the desire to provide Greeks and Romans with an accurate account of the war, are for the public benefit and not for any private agenda or personal gain. This subtlety in his presentation places him amongst Greco-Roman historiographers.

While the ancient historian did care for his own fame and sought to achieve renown through the writing of history, this motivation for writing is often suppressed in an attempt to emphasize the public benefit of his work.<sup>49</sup> Thucydides claims that his work is a possession for all time (*Thuc.* 1.22.4), but Marincola suggests that his work is described in the passive voice as if to suggest the work wrote itself.<sup>50</sup> Thucydides is hesitant to push his personal motivation for glory over the public benefit his work will provide. Diodorus Siculus alleges that historians benefit human society through their labor (*Diod. Sic.* 1.1). Sallust contends that history writing is an alternative way to achieve glory and fame (*Cat.* 3).

Josephus follows the precedent set by these historians when he praises the historian of current events: “Indeed to give to record things which have yet to be written down and to organize the events of one’s own time is worthy of praise and commendation” (*BJ* 1.15).<sup>51</sup> Josephus recognizes the glory associated with writing history, but he distances himself from this motivation. He chooses rather to focus on the

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<sup>48</sup> ἄτοπον ἡγησάμενος περιδεῖν...ἀγνοεῖν δὲ Ἕλληνας ταῦτα καὶ Ῥωμαίων τοὺς μὴ ἐπιστρατευσαμένους.

<sup>49</sup> Marincola 1997: 57-62.

<sup>50</sup> Marincola 1997: 58 n. 98. κτήμά τε ἐς αἰεὶ μᾶλλον ἢ ἀγώνισμα ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα ἀκούειν ξύγκειται.

<sup>51</sup> τό γε μὴν μνήμη τὰ προῖστορηθέντα διδόναι καὶ τὰ τῶν ἰδίων χρόνων τοῖς μετ' αὐτὸν συνιστάνειν ἐπαίνου καὶ μαρτυρίας ἄξιον.

public benefit his work will provide, just as his predecessors did. He writes for the benefit of all three of his audiences because he understands history's purpose in the same way as Polybius: "the truest education and training for political actions is the study of history" (Polyb. 1.1.2).<sup>52</sup>

Related to Polybius' understanding of how history can benefit its student is his conception of who is qualified to write history. Since the study of history provides an education for a life of political activity, it naturally follows that the historian must have practical experience in military and political affairs. "It is neither possible that one having no experience of military action is able to write well about the things which happen during war nor that one not having experience of political practice and circumstances is able to write well about the happenings within politics" (Polyb. 12.25g.1).<sup>53</sup> Polybius believes that history is *πραγματικός* ("political", "statesmanlike"), written about *ἄνδρες πραγματικοί* for *ἄνδρες πραγματικοί* by an *ἄνθρωπος πραγματικός*.<sup>54</sup>

Josephus agrees that only a man of practical experience has the authority to write history, for his objective is to instruct those in command of each side about the best ways to manage Roman – Jewish (and even more broadly Roman – subject nation) affairs. Who better to write a history of Roman and Jewish relations than the man with practical experience on both sides during both peace and war? As a young man before the war he was sent on a diplomatic mission to Rome to free a number of Jewish priests (*Vita* 13-

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<sup>52</sup> ἀληθινωτάτην μὲν εἶναι παιδείαν καὶ γυμνασίαν πρὸς τὰς πολιτικὰς πράξεις τὴν ἐκ τῆς ἱστορίας μάθησιν.

<sup>53</sup> Ὅτι οὔτε περὶ τῶν κατὰ πόλεμον συμβαινόντων δυνατόν ἐστι γράψαι καλῶς τὸν μηδεμίαν ἐμπειρίαν ἔχοντα τῶν πολεμικῶν ἔργων οὔτε περὶ τῶν ἐν ταῖς πολιτείαις τὸν μὴ πεπειραμένον τῶν τοιούτων πράξεων καὶ περιστάσεων.

<sup>54</sup> Davidson 2009: 134.

16). When revolt broke out he was chosen as the general in charge of fortifying and defending the cities of Galilee (*BJ* 2.566 ff.). After his capture by the Romans, Titus used Josephus at the siege of Jerusalem in an attempt to convince the Jews to capitulate (*BJ* 5.361-419; 6.94-110). His history ought to be understood primarily as a political manifesto written to all parties involved rather than a single side.

From the beginning of his work Josephus must demonstrate that he has acquired the practical military and political experience necessary to write a history that can instruct and move his audience(s). The author gives a brief autobiography when he announces who he is: “Josephus, son of Mathias, a priest from Jerusalem, I myself at first having fought against the Romans and later was among them out of force” (*BJ* 1.3).<sup>55</sup> Josephus’ military experience is clear from this statement, but what is less obvious is that Josephus also asserts his political experience. By calling attention to the fact that he is a priest, Josephus claims high social status.<sup>56</sup> In his *Vita* he elaborates “thus for us [i.e. the Jews] connection to the priesthood is a sign of a lineage’s distinction” (*Vita* 1.1).<sup>57</sup> As a member of the priesthood Josephus was one of the nobility and thus had recourse to a life of politics.

Moreover, by calling attention to his native city with this statement, Josephus is able to capitalize on a feature of Greco-Roman historiography to explain and legitimize a later statement about his open lamentation for Jerusalem and the Jews. “As to the narrative about the events I attach my disposition and experiences giving myself to

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<sup>55</sup> Ἰώσηπος Μαθηίου παῖς ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεὺς, αὐτὸς τε Ῥωμαίους πολέμησας τὰ πρῶτα καὶ τοῖς ὕστερον παρατυχῶν ἐξ ἀνάγκης.

<sup>56</sup> Marincola 1997: 145.

<sup>57</sup> οὕτως παρ' ἡμῖν ἡ τῆς ἱερωσύνης μετουσία τεκμήριόν ἐστιν γένους λαμπρότητος.

lament over the misfortunes of my country” (*BJ* 1.9).<sup>58</sup> Josephus seems to violate one of the conventions of ancient historiography when he admits that he will express personal emotions about what happened to his country. Greco-Roman historians often seem biased by modern standards. They display a clear view of what they deem to be right or wrong through allotting praise and blame, yet they consistently insist they avoid bias.<sup>59</sup> Most famously, Tacitus declares his writing is free from bias by stating that he writes “without anger and favor” (*Ann.* 1.1).<sup>60</sup> The ancient conception of bias, however, is different from our modern understanding of it. Ancient writers viewed bias and not falsehood as the antithesis of truth. What detracts from the truth of an historical work are hatred and flattery because these can cause an author to add pure inventions to distort the truth.<sup>61</sup> The causes of bias, therefore, are “emotions felt by the historian: hope and fear, favoritism and hatred.”<sup>62</sup> These emotions are caused by past or potential future benefits received and injuries suffered.<sup>63</sup>

Josephus’ statement that he will allow his emotions for Jerusalem to trickle into his narrative is at odds with the standard convention of Greco-Roman historiography to deny all biases and avoid emotion. Jonathan Price contends that the juxtaposition of typical elements of historical prefaces (author’s name, greatness of his subject, impartiality, and adherence to accuracy) with this jarring statement of bias would have

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<sup>58</sup> τοὺς δ' ἐπὶ τοῖς πράγμασι λόγους ἀνατίθημι τῇ διαθέσει καὶ τοῖς ἔμαυτοῦ πάθεσι διδοὺς ἐπολοφύρεσθαι ταῖς τῆς πατρίδος συμφοραῖς.

<sup>59</sup> Luce 1989: 16-31; Marincola 1997: 158-174; Price 2005: 110.

<sup>60</sup> *sine ira et studio*.

<sup>61</sup> Marincola 1997: 160-161.

<sup>62</sup> Luce: 1989:18.

<sup>63</sup> Luce: 1989:19.

been disconcerting to a Roman and Greek audience, many of whom would thus dismiss him and his work.<sup>64</sup>

There exists, however, an exception to the no bias rule that Price has overlooked. Josephus' admitted lamentations over the misfortunes of his country must be viewed in combination with his decision to explicitly state his nationality. T.J. Luce asserts that patriotic feeling often produced bias among ancient historians.<sup>65</sup> An historian's country bestows certain benefits upon him, for which he is required to show proper appreciation and not to do so in his writings is a "sign of moral defect."<sup>66</sup> Livy is open about his love of Rome and belief that it is the greatest, most sacred, and richest in good deeds (*praef.* 11).<sup>67</sup> Many historians are silent in their prefaces about the love they have for their fatherland, but that is because patriotism is expected of them. Even Tacitus shows favoritism towards Rome. Although he may criticize individual Romans for their actions, decisions, or general behavior (one only needs to think of Nero), his overall take on affairs is pro-Roman. Bias could even be expected against enemies of the historian's country. In the revolt of Boudicca (*Ann.* 14.29-37), for example, Tacitus blames the veteran and common soldiers for inciting revolt because of their cruelty and oppression (*Ann.* 14.31). However, he describes the Britons as barbarians and people whose groves were "sacred to savage superstition" (*Ann.* 14.30).<sup>68</sup> This language is similar to that used by Tacitus to describe the Jews, whom he claims are "a race obedient to superstition,

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<sup>64</sup> Price 2005: 109-112.

<sup>65</sup> Luce 1989: 20.

<sup>66</sup> Luce 1989: 21.

<sup>67</sup> *ceterum aut me amor negotii suscepti fallit, aut nulla unquam res publica nec maior nec sanctorum nec bonis exemplis ditior fuit.*

<sup>68</sup> *luci saevius superstitionibus sacri.*

adverse to religion” (*Hist.* 5.13).<sup>69</sup> This allegation takes an even more pro-Roman stance when viewed in conjunction with his earlier claim: “all things for them are profane which are sacred among us, and again practices are allowed among them which are abominable to us” (*Hist.* 5.4).<sup>70</sup>

Josephus was not the only ancient historian to display his personal emotions about a specific event. Even foreign authors of Roman history allowed emotion for their native country and people to seep into their narratives. Diodorus Siculus, writing in the first century BCE, inserts his personal feelings when he laments the sack of Corinth by the Romans in 146 BCE. “For because of the extreme degree of loss no one either writing or reading [about the destruction of Corinth] could be without tears” (*Diod.* 32.26.1).<sup>71</sup> Polybius, who clearly states that the historian must ignore personal feelings even when that involves praising enemies and criticizing friends (*Polyb.* 1.14)<sup>72</sup>, is also emotional about the destruction of Corinth. “Even an enemy, upon witnessing the misfortunes of Greece, would feel pity” (*Polyb.* 38.16.7).<sup>73</sup> These two historians feel the need to lament the calamities of their native country.

Josephus models his open lament for Jerusalem and the Jewish people off Polybius’ version. Polybius asserts that the reason these events constitute such a calamity is “because of the thoughtlessness of their leaders and their personal mistakes” (*Polyb.*

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<sup>69</sup> *gens superstitioni obnoxia, religionibus adversa.*

<sup>70</sup> *profana illic omnia quae apud nos sacra, rursum concessa apud illos quae nobis incesta.*

<sup>71</sup> διὰ γὰρ τὴν ὑπερβολὴν τῶν ἀκληρημάτων οὔτε γράφων τις οὔτ' ἀναγινώσκων ἄδακρυς ἂν γένοιτο.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. 22.9.12, 22.19.1, 23.15.1 for when he criticizes friends and family; Cf. 1.31, 1.42, 1.45, 25.3, 25.8, 29.17-18 for when he praises enemies.

<sup>73</sup> καὶν ἐχθρὸν ἐλεῆσαι θεασάμενον τὴν τότε περιπέτειαν τῆς Ἑλλάδος.



38.16.9).<sup>74</sup> Just as Polybius blames Greece for her own misfortunes, so too does Josephus blame the Jews for the destruction of the Temple. Neither historian laments his native country at the expense of Rome, but rather focuses on the failures of his own country and people.

Like Polybius, when Josephus gives himself over to overt lamentation for his country and people, he recognizes that this type of writing does not fit within his chosen genre. “For emotion must be restrained by the custom of historical writing, as it is not the appropriate time for personal lamentation, but for the narration of events” (*BJ* 5.20).<sup>75</sup> That Josephus calls attention to digressions from the narrative for his personal lamentation indicates his complete understanding of the conventions of Greco-Roman historiography. He realizes the exception to the no bias rule and takes advantage of it.

His emotional digressions may seem jarring to a modern audience, but not because they belie his impartiality. The source of his emotions is identical to other Greek and Roman historians: his country and his people. His ancient audience simply was not accustomed to reading laments about non-Greek or non-Roman entities. Unlike Greek or Roman historians, Josephus’ emotions are not centered on Greece, Rome, or their people, but instead Jerusalem and the Jews. He must justify his feelings because they are directed at a different target, not because they arise differently. Scholars have mistaken Josephus’ explanation for an excuse.

Josephus, therefore, calls attention to the fact that he is from Jerusalem and will give over to lament the fate of his city and people because patriotism towards foreign

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<sup>74</sup> κατὰ δὲ τοὺς νῦν λεγομένους καιροὺς ἠτύχησαν ἀτυχίαν ὁμολογουμένην διὰ τὴν τῶν προεστώτων ἀβουλίαν καὶ διὰ τὴν ἰδίαν ἄγνοιαν.

<sup>75</sup> ἀλλὰ καθεκτέον γὰρ καὶ τὰ πάθη τῷ νόμῳ τῆς γραφῆς, ὡς οὐκ ὀλοφυρμῶν οἰκειῶν ὁ καιρός, ἀλλ’ ἀφηγήσεως πραγμάτων.

nationalities was not to be expected from ancient historians. His patriotism ought not to be considered bias in the ancient conception of it. It is not patriotism that produces bias or inaccuracy, but personal benefits and injury from individuals.<sup>76</sup> By calling attention to his nationality and the fact that he will lament his country's misfortunes, Josephus capitalizes on the possibility within Greco-Roman historiography to lay claim to his right to lament his country. Jerusalem is equally worthy of commiseration as Corinth or Rome.

As the examination of Greco-Roman historiographical features in the *BJ* progresses beyond the poem, it is clear that Josephus employs the same stylistic traits throughout his work. His subject matter is focused on war, major political events, and the transfer of power. He provides extensive geographical descriptions of Judaea as well as ethnographies of the various peoples involved. These general features of his work are all in accord with previous Greek and Roman historians.

Josephus capitalizes on certain features of Greco-Roman historiography in order to address multiple audiences. Like all Greek and Roman historians before him, Josephus attributes speeches to a number of figures in his narrative. The longer speeches show a great concern for rhetorical style, which had come to be commonplace among ancient historians.<sup>77</sup> Speeches in ancient history allowed the historian to comment on events. Even Thucydides used speeches to offer analysis of political positions and philosophize about human affairs.<sup>78</sup> Josephus uses speeches in the same way: as instruments for his thoughts.

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<sup>76</sup> Luce 1989: 19-20.

<sup>77</sup> Villalba I Varneda 1986: 89-92.

<sup>78</sup> Rajak 2002: 80.

The majority of speeches in the *BJ* are used to showcase various arguments all opposed to revolting against Rome. Although most of the major speeches represent this one opinion, this does not imply that Josephus is repetitive. Each speech is tailored to its position in the narrative and the current state of affairs. Josephus capitalizes on set speeches by using them at different stages of the revolt to address multiple audiences. When King Agrippa II warns the Jews not to revolt while sedition was still developing, Josephus uses the opportunity to address other subject nations of Rome. Josephus' speeches during the siege of Jerusalem, on the other hand, are adapted specifically to a Jewish audience. Scholars who contend that Josephus addresses only one audience have neglected to consider his ability to tailor the same argument to different audiences.

More significantly, Josephus conceives of history's purpose as instructing ἄνδρες πραγματικοί. He does this largely in part through the use of exemplarity and the apportionment of proper praise and blame, which are hallmarks of Greco-Roman historiography. Josephus uses exemplarity to influence elite Romans and Jews to interact with one another in the most productive way.

History, like rhetoric, was intended to instruct and delight its audience as well as to move and transform its behavior.<sup>79</sup> When Cicero declares that history is the work for an orator (*De or.* 2.62), it is easy to understand how much of a role rhetoric had on historiography.<sup>80</sup> The goals of history writing were similar to those of public speech. History was not to be read and forgotten. Rather, by understanding the good and bad stratagems, commanders, and speeches of the past with an appreciation for the patterns of

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<sup>79</sup> Feldherr 2009: 4-5.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Woodman 1988: 197 who asserts "writing of history was regarded as a branch of rhetoric by the ancients."

human behavior that arise from studying past actions, leaders of the present can make more informed decisions that have positive influences on their present and future.

Livy expresses the political influence of history when he declares that within historical writing, “you can find there for yourself and for your republic something you should imitate, and there something disgraceful from beginning to end which you should avoid” (*praef.* 10).<sup>81</sup> The emphasis on exemplarity that Livy exhibits is common throughout not only Roman historiography, but also culture.<sup>82</sup> Emulation of past great deeds was a driving factor in guiding people in their own day.

Polybius also emphasizes the role exemplarity plays in moving his audience within his work. When describing a typical republican funeral for an illustrious man, Polybius remarks, “what is most important, the young men are eager to stand firm against everything on behalf of the republic for the sake of obtaining the glory which accompanies the brave” (Polyb. 6.54.3).<sup>83</sup> The Roman funeral as described by Polybius keeps alive those of past generations who achieved glory and so inspires future generations to emulate them. History, for Polybius, should and does accomplish the same thing. Through both funeral rites and history “the glory of those who accomplished something good is made immortal” (Polyb. 6.54.2).<sup>84</sup> By displaying the most glorious deeds of the past, ancient historians are able to influence the present and future actions of their military and political commanders.

Influencing correct actions and discouraging bad ones requires the historian to assign proper praise and blame to characters and actions in his work. Thus historians

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<sup>81</sup> *inde tibi tuaeque rei publicae quod imitere capias, inde foedum inceptu foedum exitu quod uites.*

<sup>82</sup> Roller 2009.

<sup>83</sup> τὸ δὲ μέγιστον, οἱ νέοι παρορμῶνται πρὸς τὸ πᾶν ὑπομένειν ὑπὲρ τῶν κοινῶν πραγμάτων χάριν τοῦ τυχεῖν τῆς συνακολουθούσης τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς τῶν ἀνδρῶν εὐκλείας.

<sup>84</sup> ἀθανατίζεται μὲν ἢ τῶν καλόν τι διαπραξαμένων εὐκλεία.

sought to instruct the leaders of their cities and nations by conferring correct judgments upon affairs, people, and stratagems of the past. They praised and blamed those people, actions, and customs worthy of each. One of the principle objectives of ancient historical writing was to bestow praise and blame upon individuals or groups deserving such.<sup>85</sup> Failure by the historian to make sound judgments about the goodness and badness of those appearing in his narrative indicated a major flaw in the historian's disposition.<sup>86</sup>

Josephus, like his predecessors Livy and Polybius, uses exemplarity and the correct allotment of praise and blame throughout his history in order to instruct his readers. His endeavor to influence his readers through the same means as other Greco-Roman historians is complicated by the fact that Josephus writes to multiple audiences. For this reason Josephus praises and blames people on both sides. On the one hand he attempts to instruct present and future Roman military and political leaders on the best ways to interact with their Jewish subjects, while on the other Josephus informs present and future Jewish rulers about the most effective ways for dealing with Roman authority. By extension he speaks to Roman leaders about interacting with subjects in general and to the leaders of other subject nations about coping with Roman authority. Scholars have tended to focus on only one half of Josephus' division of praise and blame. As a result they are left with a bitter aftertaste of bias,<sup>87</sup> when in actuality Josephus balances his praise and blame for the Romans and Jews.

Rather than simply praising and blaming both sides arbitrarily, Josephus does so according to a fixed system of values. When individuals on either side of the conflict

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<sup>85</sup> Feldherr 2009: 5.

<sup>86</sup> Luce 1989: 21-22.

<sup>87</sup> See especially Beard 2003 who asserts Josephus' toadyism for the Flavians and Curran 2011 who contends that the overarching aim of the *BJ* is Jewish apologetic.

display reverence to God, proper authority, and inspiring leadership, Josephus praises them accordingly. The opposites of these values – impiety, the inversion of order, and mismanagement – are cause for reproach. Romans and Jews both are praised for all three values and blamed for all three vices. The confusing nature of Josephus’ apportionment of praise and blame is indicative of the complex structure of the revolt itself, but what shines through are the values Josephus believes the leaders on each side ought to exhibit in the future in order to prevent this from happening again.

Of the virtues Josephus espouses throughout his work the one most critical is religious reverence. The destruction of the Temple was a cataclysmic event for Jews everywhere and Josephus’ explanation of it places the blame squarely on the shoulders of the rebel leaders. God brought fire to the Temple in order to purge it of their sacrilege. These rebels left the dead unburied (*BJ* 4.381), shied away from no atrocity (*BJ* 4.138), and were more prolific in their crimes than any previous generation (*BJ* 5.442).<sup>88</sup> In fact, the most commonly asserted general judgment passed by Josephus within the *Bellum Judaicum* is that the Jewish rebels brought more destruction to the city of Jerusalem than the Romans because of their impiety.<sup>89</sup> The Romans, however, were not without their share of criticism for sacrilege. Caligula’s “impiety stretched to Judaea” when he ordered that a statue of himself be placed within the Temple of Jerusalem (*BJ* 2.184).<sup>90</sup> His disregard for Jewish law would have led to open violence had he not died unexpectedly (*BJ* 2.184-203).<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Cf. *BJ* 4.318, 5.562, 5.566, 6.164.

<sup>89</sup> Rajak 2002: 82 (*BJ* 2.10, 3.297, 4.397, 4.558, 5.28, 5.362, 6.122-124).

<sup>90</sup> ἐκτείνειν δὲ τὴν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἐπὶ Ἰουδαίαν.

<sup>91</sup> Jewish law forbids any image of God or man within their Temple (*BJ* 2.195).

Set against these people criticized for their blasphemous exploits are a number of individuals exalted for their religious reverence. When the zealots took hold of the Holy Places and began to use them as a base for their tyrannical control, Ananus, one of the high priests, became outraged at their abomination and led an insurrection against them (*BJ* 4.151-318). Although Ananus did not want to surrender to the Romans, he still found it abhorrent that the zealots should profane the Temple in this way. Despite his failure to defeat the zealots, Ananus received a lengthy encomium from Josephus for his devout reverence to God (*BJ* 4.319-325). Josephus is highly concerned with proper devotion to God and thus praises efforts to maintain correct worship regardless of the outcome. Titus receives the same type of praise that Josephus gives to Ananus. Titus wanted to preserve the Temple and took pains to do so. He asked Josephus to try to persuade John to stop defiling the Holy Places (*BJ* 6.94) and convinced his council of war to protect the Temple from destruction (*BJ* 6.236-241). Although he failed to save the Temple from destruction, Josephus makes sure to assert that it happened against Titus' wish (*BJ* 6.266).

It is clear from these two examples that Josephus is more concerned with an individual's intent to preserve correct religious practices and to not profane sacred places than he is with the outcome.<sup>92</sup> This is due to Josephus' belief that God controls the fate of the Jewish people.<sup>93</sup> It was God's will to purge the Temple of the sacrilege committed within it and for this reason Ananus' and Titus' actions were conducted in vain.

Nevertheless Josephus praises them because they acted in a manner that Jews and

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<sup>92</sup> One might also include the actions of Pompey in this regard. Although Josephus is critical of Pompey for entering the Temple and seeing the Holy of Holies, Josephus is appreciative that Pompey touched none of the sacred artifacts and ordered that they Temple be cleansed and customary sacrifices resumed (*BJ* 1.152-153).

<sup>93</sup> Sterling 2007: 241-242.

Romans should act all of the time. Josephus' message is to act respectfully towards religious practices.

Josephus has a hierarchical view of world order and as such praises the exercise of proper authority and condemns the inversion of normal order. On the Jewish side, Josephus shows that Kings Herod and Agrippa II are effective leaders in part because they are deserving of their command. Because their power has been legitimized by Rome, they are particularly adept at managing relationships with foreign powers. Herod is able to survive the civil war between Antony and Octavia despite choosing Antony's side at first. Not only does he remain in power, but also the Jews remain unharmed. King Agrippa II understands the Jewish resentment for Roman provincial governors, but strongly advises against taking action against Rome because he is keenly aware of her capabilities in comparison to the Jews. These leaders know what is best for their people, but also understand how to interact with Roman supremacy.

Titus, in his role as commander of the Roman army, exercises proper authority and Josephus exalts this. The young general is not only victorious in his battles, but has a keen sense of moderation. He understands when to attack and when to be patient. Titus is also sagacious in his balance of ruthlessness and mercy. In the battle for the Galilean city of Tarichaeae, for example, Titus put an end to the massacre once the guilty had been slain and took pity on the innocent natives (*BJ* 3.501). As the proper authority he sees the difference between the guilty and innocent and understands the importance in distinguishing between the two.

Moreover, Josephus tends to show that when proper authority is ignored disaster follows. King Agrippa II's admonition to the Jews falls on deaf ears and eventually



Jerusalem is destroyed. Both Herod and Titus are undermined during various battles and each time their troops are slaughtered.<sup>94</sup> Herod rarely blundered in war, but when he did it was “due to either someone’s betrayal or the hasty judgment of his soldiers” (*BJ* 1.430).<sup>95</sup> Josephus advances his condemnation of inverting order when he depicts the rebel leaders. They seized control and took power away from those fit for it. “The revolutionary and militant factions through their youth and recklessness were prevailing over the aged and prudent” (*BJ* 4.133).<sup>96</sup> Proper authority was ignored and the Jewish people met with disaster.

Even Titus is blamed for subverting proper authority. As general of the Roman army, Titus must not put himself in danger unnecessarily. His duty is to command more than it is to lead the charge and his advisors beseech him “to not perform the function of a soldier since he was lord of both the war and the world, and thus that he, upon whom all fluctuates, not undertake a sharp turn of the scale” (*BJ* 5.88),<sup>97</sup> but he does not listen. Instead he is constantly depicted at the front lines of battles narrowly escaping death.<sup>98</sup> The unnecessary risks in which Titus puts himself and his soldiers comprise a major factor in McLaren’s negative assessment of Titus as a commander.<sup>99</sup> Josephus emphasizes the importance of obeying and maintaining proper authority.

Of course it is possible that those who appropriately obtain power abuse it. Therefore Josephus praises those who display inspirational leadership while condemning

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<sup>94</sup> Cf. *BJ* 1.367 and *BJ* 5.109. A similar sentiment is held by Caesar in *De Bello Gallico* 7.52.

<sup>95</sup> ἡ προδοσία τινῶν ἢ προπετεία στρατιωτῶν ἐγένετο.

<sup>96</sup> τὸ νεωτερίζον δὲ καὶ τῶν ὀπλῶν ἐπιθυμοῦν ἐπεκράτει νεότητι καὶ τόλμη γηραιῶν καὶ σωφρόνων.

<sup>97</sup> μὴ στρατιώτου τάξιν ἀποπληροῦν ὄντα καὶ τοῦ πολέμου καὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης δεσπότην, μηδ' ὀξεῖαν οὕτως ὑφίστασθαι ῥοπήν ἐν ᾧ σαλεύει τὰ πάντα.

<sup>98</sup> *BJ* 3.323, 3.472-487, 5.54-59, 5.486.

<sup>99</sup> McLaren 2005.

those who mismanage their authority. Ananus displays excellent leadership in his attempt to oust the zealots from the Temple. As high priest he has the right to lead the Jewish moderates against the tyrannical zealots and is able to effectively mobilize them. His speech (*BJ* 4.163-192) inspires the general population to endure no longer the harsh and sacrilegious rule of the zealots. Titus also gives a number of inspirational speeches to his troops. Each time he is able to instill in his troops bravery and a frenzied enthusiasm for victory.<sup>100</sup> Ananus and Titus use their legitimate authority positively to inspire their subordinates.

Directly opposed to these men are the provincial governors and the established Jewish leadership. Numerous provincial governors ruling badly opened the rift between Jews and Romans.<sup>101</sup> The last two procurators are described as particularly horrible. Luceius Albinus, who ruled 62-64 CE, “did not neglect any form of villainy” (*BJ* 2.272).<sup>102</sup> He burdened the country with extraordinary taxes, was easily bribed by criminals, and disregarded brigands running rampant throughout the land (*BJ* 2.272-276). “Gessius Florus, coming after him, proved Albinus to be most excellent by comparison” (*BJ* 2.277).<sup>103</sup> He was the cruelest of men, utterly shameless, contemptuous of truth, and seemed to promote brigandage (*BJ* 2.278-279). He was sure that if peace were kept among the Jews, his crimes would be reported to Caesar, so as a result he set about inciting revolt by increasing their sufferings (*BJ* 2.283). These men abused their power and in doing so sowed the seeds of sedition. Josephus also blames the established Jewish

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<sup>100</sup> *BJ* 3.472-485, 3.495-496, 6.33-54.

<sup>101</sup> Rajak 2002: 78.

<sup>102</sup> οὐκ ἔστιν δὲ ἥντινα κακουργίας ιδέαν παρέλειπεν.

<sup>103</sup> τὸν Ἀλβίνον ἀπέδειξεν ὁ μετ' αὐτὸν ἐλθὼν Γέσσιος Φλώρος ἀγαθώτατον κατὰ σύγκρισιν.

leadership for their inactivity in preventing the revolutionaries from gaining power.<sup>104</sup> Their failure to utilize proper authority is cause for reproach.

Scholars have misunderstood Josephus' use of praise and blame as evidence for bias in his work and thus have discredited his reliability. They have failed to recognize that Josephus' goal was not to praise the Romans or defend the Jews, but instead to offer a solution to prevent further hostilities based upon both sides adhering to certain values. He is addressing multiple audiences through the allotment of praise and blame. When Mary Beard calls Josephus a Flavian lackey,<sup>105</sup> she neglects to consider that Josephus also criticizes Titus for unnecessarily putting himself and his troops in danger. When John Curran claims that Josephus' Jewish apologetic aim prevails over other reasons for writing,<sup>106</sup> he focuses on only half of Josephus' goal and overlooks the complexity with which Josephus assigns praise and blame.

Another feature of Greco-Roman historiography employed by Josephus to address multiple audiences is the practice of ethnography. Herodotus most famously engaged in extended ethnography, but the practice was continued as, for example, Diodorus Siculus and Plutarch both use ethnography to explain Carthaginian child sacrifice.<sup>107</sup> Josephus uses the practice to explain certain Jewish beliefs and customs in a way relatable to Roman and Greek readers. By doing so he is able to he is simultaneously able to show both elite Romans that Jews have the capacity for interacting peacefully because of shared values and Jewish leaders that their lifestyle is not incompatible with Roman hegemony.

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<sup>104</sup> Rajak 2002: 78-103.

<sup>105</sup> Beard 2003: 556.

<sup>106</sup> Curran 2011.

<sup>107</sup> Diod. Sic. 20.14; Plut. *De superst.* 13.

Josephus digresses from his narrative to give a detailed account of the three sects of Judaism (*BJ* 2.119-166). Many features of Jewish life resonate with Roman customs. The Essenes despise riches (*BJ* 2.122) not unlike the Stoics. Josephus shows the particular piety with which each group act in order to debunk the view espoused by Tacitus that Jewish religion is completely contrary to everything that Roman religion stands for (*Hist.* 5.4).

During his discourse on the three sects of Judaism, Josephus brings up various beliefs about the soul. Both the Essenes and the Pharisees believe in the immortality of the soul. Titus, addressing his despondent troops before the walls of Jerusalem, also espouses his belief in the immortality of the souls of men who die in battle (*BJ* 6.46-49). Although there are differences between the two views, Josephus shows that they are compatible. Jewish beliefs are neither abhorrent nor dichotomous with Roman ones.

One of the major themes that many ancient historians treat is the fickle role of fortune (τύχη) in human affairs. Herodotus famously describes human affair as on a wheel, which does not allow the same people to always prosper (*Hdt.* 1.207). Josephus echoes this sentiment when Herod remarks, “it is not fixed among mankind either to be unfortunate or the opposite, but it is possible to see that fortune alternates between each” (*BJ* 1.374).<sup>108</sup> Titus, observing the fate of Josephus after his capture, reflects on “how powerful fortune is, and the sharp vicissitude of war, and the instability of human affairs” (*BJ* 3.396).<sup>109</sup> Herod and Titus have the same understanding of fortune’s role in human affairs.

<sup>108</sup> οὔτε δὲ τὸ δυστυχεῖν οὔτε τοῦναντίον ἐν ἀνθρώποις βέβαιον, ἀλλ’ ἔστιν ἰδεῖν ἐπαμειβομένην εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν τύχην.

<sup>109</sup> ὅσον δύναται τύχη, καὶ ὡς ὀξεῖα μὲν πολέμου ῥοπή, τῶν δ’ ἀνθρωπίνων οὐδὲν βέβαιον.

Josephus does not use his ethnography of Judaism as an instrument of Jewish apology, but rather he takes advantage of a feature of Greco-Roman historiography to help convince multiple audiences of the compatibility with one another. Romans and Jews can exist together as master and subject because their modes of living and values are not mutually exclusive. Viewing Josephus' ethnographic digressions as evidence for his work being interpreted as Jewish apologetic disregards the complex nature of his historiography, which employs standard features of Greco-Roman historiography in ways that address multiple audiences as once.

A prime example of how Josephus utilizes a convention of Greco-Roman historiography to address multiple audiences is his historiographical (rather than historical) use of female characters throughout the *BJ*, which precisely mirrors their historiographical and rhetorical use by Roman historians. Kristina Milnor has succinctly laid out the various ways in which female characters are employed within Roman historiography: "as paragons of domestic virtue against which to measure masculine civic vice, or as monstrous examples of how far the state's rot has spread."<sup>110</sup>

Josephus introduces women into his narrative sparingly and most often they play ancillary roles to the main action of the narrative. Herod's two wives and Cleopatra are such women. They receive minimal description and action. One of Herod's wives, Doris, and some of his daughters-in-law are involved in plots to poison other members of the royal family (*BJ* 1.582-600). Josephus does not assign them large parts in the narrative, but their appearance and involvement with plots to kill members of the royal family are used to underscore the corruption and degeneracy that is running through the

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<sup>110</sup> Milnor 2009: 280.

Jewish royal family during Herod's reign as king. Josephus does, however, present in his history two prominent women, each of which is represented in one of the two ways conventional to Roman historiography.

Alexandra ruled as Queen of the Jews from 78-69 BCE after her husband, Alexander Jannaeus, bequeathed the kingdom to her. Although Alexander was particularly cruel and fought numerous wars against his own subjects eventually crucifying 800 Jewish captives in the middle of Jerusalem only to watch their wives and children slaughtered while they hung from their crosses (*BJ* 1.85-106), Alexandra stood as a model of virtue (*BJ* 1.107-119). Whereas the extent of her husband's cruelty, "advanced through the excess of anger to impiety" (*BJ* 1.97),<sup>111</sup> Alexandra, "greatly lacking his cruelty and opposed to his transgressions of law, brought the people into her goodwill" (*BJ* 1.107).<sup>112</sup> Moreover, "she understood most thoroughly the ancestral customs of the law" (*BJ* 1.108).<sup>113</sup> Over the course of her reign the Pharisees came into significant power. She listened to them because of their religious devotion, but eventually they misused their power and her trust (*BJ* 1.110-114). Between her husband and the Pharisees, Alexandra stands as a model of civic virtue adhering to ancestral custom and religious piety. Josephus uses her for the same historiographical reason as Valerius Maximus uses Sempronia (*Val. Max.* 3.8): she stands as a contrast to male civic vice.

The other prominent female character to appear in the *BJ* is Mary, who is introduced during the siege of Jerusalem. At this point in the war all of Judaea has been

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<sup>111</sup> προύκοψεν δὲ αὐτῷ δι' ὑπερβολὴν ὀργῆς εἰς ἀσέβειαν τὸ τῆς ὀμότητος.

<sup>112</sup> τῆς ὀμότητος αὐτοῦ μακρὰν ἀποδέουσα καὶ ταῖς παρανομίαις ἀνθισταμένη τὸν δῆμον εἰς εὐνοίαν προσηγάγετο.

<sup>113</sup> ἠκριβου γὰρ δὴ μάλιστα τοῦ νόμου τὰ πάτρια.

pacified except the city of Jerusalem where all of the revolutionaries have gathered. The city is engaged in civil war amongst factions of revolutionaries while simultaneously defending itself against the besieging Roman army led by Titus (*BJ* 5.98). Because of the Roman blockade, the city was rife with famine and countless people were succumbing to starvation (*BJ* 5.424; 6.193). The leaders of the revolutionaries searched everyone in the city to take from them any food they might possess.

Mary was one of those afflicted by the famine. The tyrant leaders took all of her property and food. She reached such a stage of starvation from the famine that she killed and ate her son (*BJ* 6.201-213). When the rebel leaders came having smelled the cooked meat, she offered to them the half of her son that she had not eaten. Even to them this was repulsive. She addresses their look of horror: “Do not be either more faint-hearted than a woman nor more sympathetic than a mother” (*BJ* 6.211).<sup>114</sup> Mary’s actions and words have shown the rebel leaders to be “cowards towards this single thing” (*BJ* 6.212).<sup>115</sup> This takes on greater significance since Josephus claims “no generation from the beginning of time became more productive of evil” (*BJ* 5.442).<sup>116</sup> The rebellion has caused the deterioration of the family – the most sacred and fundamental social institution. The moral corruption of the rebel leaders has permeated life inside Jerusalem. Their moral weakness is highlighted in this episode by the fact that they are unable to endure the consequences of their own depravity.

The position of this episode within the narrative reveals Josephus’ understanding of how Roman historians use women as a historiographic tool. The scene of Mary’s

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<sup>114</sup> μὴ γένησθε μήτε μαλακώτεροι γυναικὸς μήτε συμπαθέστεροι μητρὸς.

<sup>115</sup> πρὸς ἔν τούτο δειλοὶ.

<sup>116</sup> μήτε γενεὰν ἐξ αἰῶνος γεγονέναι κακίας γονιμώτεραν.

cannibalism is placed at the precipice of the sack of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. Josephus utilizes the character of Mary to underscore the vice running rampant throughout the Jewish revolutionary parties. The Romans now have just cause to sack Jerusalem and exterminate the civic vice which has taken over the city. While the Greco-Roman interpretation of this scene resonated with a large part of Josephus' audience, his Jewish readers would have interpreted this passage in a different way, but no less important. Cannibalism to a Jewish audience implies the actualization of God's warnings for sacrilege.<sup>117</sup> "In the desperate straits to which the enemy siege reduces you, you will eat the fruit of your womb, the flesh of your own sons and daughters whom the Lord your God has given you" (Deut. 28:53).<sup>118</sup> God's warning to the Jewish people against sacrilege and the profaning of the Temple are fulfilled by Mary's actions. While Josephus has been claiming that God has fated Jerusalem and her Temple to destruction throughout the *BJ*, it is now clear to the Jewish audience the inevitability of that destruction and upon whom the fault lies. This passage is one instance where it is possible to see Josephus clearly addressing multiple audiences at the same time, a topic that will be further developed below.

Josephus' choice to write in the Greco-Roman historiographic tradition cannot be undervalued. His conformity with the conventions of that tradition answers specific objections raised by critics, who consider his history unreliable. Scholars who claim that Josephus writes with bias because of his professed inclusion of emotion for the sufferings of his country and people overlook the ancient expectation of expressing emotion for one's country. Josephus must justify his decision to conform to this practice because he

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<sup>117</sup> Chapman 2007: 420.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. Lev. 26:28.



is from Jerusalem and not Greece or Rome. Josephus greatly understood the standard conventions of Greco-Roman historiography and took advantage of them to create a history that both conformed to them and expanded beyond them. His inclusion of specific Jewish perspectives, namely that his history revolved around the Jewish people and that God controlled their fate, was innovative, but this does not affect his reliability. His interpretation of the events neither obscures nor distorts the historical accuracy of his account.<sup>119</sup> He used the combination of traditions to reach the broadest audience possible because his goal was to instruct those in power on how to prevent another calamity of this magnitude from occurring again.

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<sup>119</sup> Bilde 1988: 199.

## Audience

It has been shown that Josephus integrates specific Jewish perceptions into a narrative composed according to the conventions of the Greco-Roman historiographic tradition. The combination of the two different traditions allows Josephus to reach the broadest possible audience. This indicates that Josephus writes to three audiences at once: elite Romans, Jews, and other Greek subjects of Rome. Josephus had already published a history of this war in Aramaic specifically for a Jewish audience by the time he composed the Greek version. He must therefore be writing for an audience that comprises non-Jews, namely Romans and the Greek-speaking Hellenized east. He states this clearly in the proem (*BJ* 1.6). Had Josephus simply wanted to address a Roman and Greek audience, the Jewish perspective would have been absent. Hence Josephus must be writing to all three audiences at once.

The overarching goal Josephus has in writing his Greek version is to instruct all sides on how best to manage relations between Rome and subject nations with particular focus on Judaea. As was shown above, Josephus does this in large part through allotting praise and blame based on a fixed system of values. Other objectives exist for each audience and these can be perceived in specific passages throughout the *Bellum Judaicum*. Josephus not only informs Jewish readers on how to manage affairs with Rome, but also offers a theological explanation for the destruction of the Temple. Besides presenting a model for governing subject nations, Josephus writes to a Roman audience to show the virtues necessary for maintaining their hegemony as well as to extol

Roman power. Furthermore he warns the Hellenized east about the dangers of revolt and the inevitability of Roman victory.

When scholars focus on one audience or even two, but neglect the other(s), they tend to discredit Josephus' reliability.<sup>120</sup> Since Josephus writes to multiple audiences at the same time, certain episodes highlight one audience in particular. The other two are not absent, but rather are subordinated. Each audience has passages of which it is the primary audience. It is through an analysis of these episodes that one is able to perceive Josephus' tripartite audience with its various goals. The passages serve both to illuminate the shadow cast over Josephus' intended audiences and also to act as lenses through which the modern reader might come to a better understanding of the tension that exists within the narrative. For this reason, if one focuses on only part of Josephus' intended audiences, his narrative is confusing and seems slanted one way. By recognizing the presence of all three intended audiences, the picture is clearer and Josephus remains a reliable source for these events.

A goal of utmost importance for Josephus is to convince his Jewish audience of a theologically viable explanation for the destruction of the Temple.<sup>121</sup> Its destruction and the subsequent displacement of countless Jews "stimulated a discourse within Judaism on the character and mission of Jews in the world."<sup>122</sup> The *Bellum Judaicum* can be seen as part of this ongoing attempt to understand the implications of this destruction.

Josephus explains the cataclysmic event throughout the text, but focuses his explanation during the siege and subsequent sack of Jerusalem. The sacrilege committed

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<sup>120</sup> Beard 2003; Mason 2005; Curran 2011.

<sup>121</sup> Rajak 2002: 78.

<sup>122</sup> Curran 2011: 84.

by the rebel leaders is to blame for the destruction of the Temple. As was shown above, the episode involving Mary the cannibal implies the actualization of God's warnings for sacrilege. The Jews have profaned the Temple and because of their impiety, God has decided to purge the Temple with fire.

Titus is resolved on preventing the destruction of the Temple and as soon as he learns of its imminent danger, "jumping up just as he was, he began running towards the temple in order to stop the fire" (*BJ* 6.254).<sup>123</sup> Titus is active and leading the charge himself, but the reader already knows that his actions will be in vain: "But God had long ago condemned it [the Temple] to fire" (*BJ* 6.250).<sup>124</sup>

When a nameless soldier spread the fire to the Temple, Josephus ascribes his actions as under "some divine impulse" (*BJ* 6.252).<sup>125</sup> The cause for the Temple's destruction lies in the realm of the divine. God, not Titus, has decided to destroy the Temple. Within the Greek text there exists a battle for control of the passage. On one side Titus attempts to contain the rage of his soldiers and thwart the advances of the fire. Facing him, the fire, driven on by a supernatural undercurrent, fights for control of the Temple. This *ἀγών* is particularly prevalent from sections 260-6, where Titus and the flames alternate as subjects of active verbs and participles. This game of chess finally ends: "for then since suddenly a flame shined forth from within, the commanders were withdrawing with Caesar" (*BJ* 6.266).<sup>126</sup> At this point the flames have won the battle both for control of the Temple and the text. Titus is reduced to a mere object of a prepositional phrase, while the flames command the sentence through the genitive

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<sup>123</sup> ὡς εἶχεν ἀναπηδήσας ἔθει πρὸς τὸν ναὸν εἴρξων τὸ πῦρ.

<sup>124</sup> τοῦ δ' ἄρα κατεψήφιστο μὲν τὸ πῦρ ὁ θεὸς πάλαι.

<sup>125</sup> δαιμονίῳ ὀρμῇ τινι.

<sup>126</sup> τότε γὰρ ἐξαπίνης ἔνδοθεν ἐκφανείσης φλογὸς οἷ τε ἡγεμόνες μετὰ τοῦ Καίσαρος ἀνεχώρουν.

absolute. Titus can no longer lead, but is left to follow – a task almost unknown to him in the *Bellum Judaicum*.

After such an inversion of Titus' typical role in the narrative, one concludes that this excerpt is not primarily meant to deal with Titus' actions. The goal of this passage, as conveyed by the language, regards the Jewish audience first and foremost. Josephus wrote this passage to explain that it was God who decided to destroy the Temple because of the impious actions of the Jewish rebels. Josephus alludes to his interpretation earlier in the narrative. After the murder of the high priest Ananus, God, “considering the city stained,” condemned it to destruction and wished that “the sacred places be cleansed by fire” (*BJ* 4.323).<sup>127</sup>

There is no doubt that Josephus writes for a Jewish audience and the evidence comes from this excerpt. His other two audiences are indeed present, but they are subordinated here because his most important aim here is to convince his Jewish audience of a theological explanation for the destruction of the Temple. It is not unlikely that Josephus is also writing to convince himself of the same thing because of the serious theological implications associated with such an event. God abandoned the Jews and the Temple.

Mason, in particular, is skeptical of a Jewish audience and contends that only a Roman elite one existed for *Bellum Judaicum* since it was composed in Rome. He uses the correspondence between Josephus and Agrippa concerning the composition of the *Bellum*, taken from Josephus' *Vita* 361-6, as evidence of Josephus following the normal publication practices, which included disseminating his work through inner circles of

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<sup>127</sup> κατακρίνας ὁ θεὸς ὡς μεμιασμένης τῆς πόλεως ἀπώλειαν καὶ πυρὶ βουλόμενος ἐκκαθαρθῆναι τὰ ἅγια.

colleagues.<sup>128</sup> The problem with this approach is that Agrippa himself is both Jewish and of elite status within Rome. To consider only the latter detail neglects an important piece of evidence in support of a Jewish audience. This correspondence should actually be seen as qualifying the Jewish audience.

Josephus writes for Jews of the same class as himself and Agrippa. He writes from the position of a member of a former ruling class of Jews, willing at all times to reach an agreement with the government of Rome.<sup>129</sup> As one from the traditional Jewish ruling class, Josephus is a moderate and writes to them not only to offer a theologically valid explanation for the destruction of the Temple, but also to criticize their inaction against the rebels. He is concerned that another revolt, which would bring about the same destruction and violence, could occur in the future. He is not unfounded in this fear; a second revolt would occur under Hadrian. The message Josephus imparts to this sect within Judaism is simple: do not allow this to happen again. The revolt led to the Jews being in a worse situation than they were previously. Coming to terms with Rome is never out of the question and it is the responsibility of this group to initiate discussion rather than to allow others to incite rebellion. Preservation of the Jews, the Temple, and Jewish rites is of utmost importance and necessitates the submission to Roman rule.<sup>130</sup>

There is evidence for the two other audiences gaining something out of this episode as well. For the Roman audience, the conquest of Jerusalem, culminating with the sack of the Temple, displays the power of Rome and her ability to win. When Josephus shows the Flavians quelling this rebellion and civil war, a Roman audience

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<sup>128</sup> Mason 2005: 84.

<sup>129</sup> Rajak 2002: 103.

<sup>130</sup> Price 2005: 115.

would also view this as symbolic of their ability to bring peace to the Roman Empire as a whole. It has been just a year since Rome itself was plagued by civil war and her citizens have seen three other emperors since Nero, before Vespasian was finally able to restore order. The unconquerable force of the Roman army and the devastation it caused the Jews was on display for the Hellenized east. Jerusalem was destroyed beyond recognition and her most sacred places were not immune to the destruction. This serves to caution other subject nations against revolt by showcasing the inevitable consequences.

Josephus has great respect for other nations within the Roman Empire and hopes that they might learn from the mistakes of his fellow countrymen. He warns the Hellenized east about the dangers of revolt and the inevitability of Roman victory. This admonition comes to the forefront of the narrative during Agrippa's speech to the Jews of Jerusalem in which he tries in vain to dissuade them from revolt (*BJ* 2.345-401). While the actual historical audience for this speech is the Jews, a closer look at the placement, structure and content of the speech shows a deeper intended audience.

The thesis of Agrippa's speech, namely that revolt against Rome is a poor decision, is almost identical to Josephus' two speeches that attempt to get the Jews to capitulate (*BJ* 5.379-398 and 6.99-110).<sup>131</sup> The respective position of each speech allows Josephus to take different approaches with the speeches and to focus on different audiences. Since Josephus' speeches come during the midst of the siege of Jerusalem, his argument is tailored to a Jewish audience by appealing to past Jewish history.<sup>132</sup>

Agrippa's speech, situated on the precipice of revolt, is adapted for a wider audience.

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<sup>131</sup> Rajak 2002: 80 "the overwhelming bulk of speech material is an expression of a single cluster of sentiments, springing from a single essential position."

<sup>132</sup> For example, he recalls the example set by King Jeconiah, who endured captivity rather than give up the holy places to the enemy and God's flames. *BJ* 6.103-106; cf. 2 Kings 24.8-17.

The advice Agrippa provides to the Jews can be applied to any nation subject to Rome because the successes and misfortunes particular to the Jewish revolt have not yet distinguished it from others. While the speech certainly does address a Jewish audience, Josephus capitalizes on its position and makes the Hellenized east the primary audience by having Agrippa offer a warning to all nations on the verge of war.

The specific order in which Agrippa discusses the subject nations of the Roman Empire suggests that this passage is focused primarily on Josephus' Hellenized east audience and only secondarily on his Jewish and Roman ones. The Athenians (*BJ* 2.358) are the first state mentioned by Josephus and they are followed by other Greeks. If the Jews or the Romans were the primary audience of this speech, the Athenians would not be the first race mentioned. As seen in the speeches of Josephus (*BJ* 5.379-398 and 6.99-110), appealing to past Jewish history is an indication of targeting a Jewish audience. Although Agrippa does mention Jewish resistance to Pompey's invasion (*BJ* 2.357), he dismisses this quickly and it is not included in his main argument.<sup>133</sup> That the Athenians are given the primary position is also proof that this speech is not directed primarily at a Roman audience because of the relative unimportance of the Athenians to the history of the Roman Empire. The conquests of Carthage, Egypt and Gaul are more important in Rome's history than that of Athens and the rest of Greece. These three nations are discussed after relatively minor states including Thrace, Illyria, and Dalmatia, which implies that if the speech were tailored specifically towards a Roman audience, it would

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<sup>133</sup> Mason 2008: 265-268 outlines this speech in the following way: *exordium* (introduction) 2.345-347; *narratio* (statement of the case) 2.348-357; *confirmatio/argumentatio* (proof) 2.358-399; *peroratio* (conclusion) 2.400-401. This section falls under *narratio* and not *confirmatio/argumentatio*.



have given greater positional prominence to the former three nations. The placement of Greek states must indicate a Hellenized east primary audience.

The discussion of the Greeks is the longest of any nation within the speech. They are also arguably more praised than any other people in the speech. Agrippa criticizes Jewish reluctance to serve Rome by claiming that it is much more difficult for the Greeks, “who surpassing all people under the sun in nobility and possessing so great a land yield to six rods of the Romans” (*BJ* 2.365).<sup>134</sup> Egypt and Gaul are a close second in praise, but the Carthaginians, Rome’s most storied rival, are hardly considered. In one relative clause Agrippa shows the zenith and nadir of the Carthaginians, “who boasting of the great Hannibal and nobility from the Phoenicians fell under the hand of Scipio” (*BJ* 2.380).<sup>135</sup> By showing Greeks in such a positive and lengthy light, Josephus speaks to the Hellenized east about the merits of accepting Roman hegemony.

The treatment of each nation is relatively formulaic underscoring the notion that Rome will always be sovereign. Agrippa starts by calling attention to the people he is about to discuss and then moves to highlighting their most famous accomplishments and people or innate attributes and natural defenses. For the Athenians, the battle of Salamis is mentioned, while for the Spartans it is Thermopylae (*BJ* 2.358-9). Philip and Alexander are featured in the treatment of Macedon (*BJ* 2.360). The Britons receive homage to their great walls and the ocean that defends their island (*BJ* 2.378), while the Germans are praised for their “strength and greatness of bodies” who “have hearts greater

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<sup>134</sup> οἱ τῶν ὑφ' ἡλίῳ πάντων προύχοντες εὐγενεῖα καὶ τοσαύτην νεμόμενοι χώρον ἔξ Ῥωμαίων ὑπέικουσιν ῥάβδοις.

<sup>135</sup> οἱ τὸν μέγαν ἀνυχοῦντες Ἀννίβαν καὶ τὴν ἀπὸ Φοινίκων εὐγένειαν ὑπὸ τὴν Σκιπίωνος δεξιᾶν ἔπεσον.

than their bodies and souls which despise death” (*BJ* 2.376-7).<sup>136</sup> At the end of each nation’s consideration Agrippa brings up that the Romans have conquered them. Concerning Egypt Josephus remarks: “But none of these [advantages] were found to be stronger than the fortune of the Romans, and two legions stationed in the city curb deep Egypt together with the nobility of the Macedonians” (*BJ* 2.387).<sup>137</sup> The continual postponement of Rome within these treatments emphasizes the inevitability of Roman conquest. No matter how great Agrippa describes any one nation, they are unable to escape subjugation to Rome. This is meant to deter other nations from revolt. Josephus has seen the reality of revolt with all of its death, destruction, and internal violence for those opposing Rome. It is a gruesome affair that he wishes upon no other nation and so warns them not only of this, but also the fact that Rome will be victorious. There is no point in suffering through revolt since Rome will win and ravage them even more for revolting.

Since Josephus writes to the Hellenized east in order to deter them from revolt, he naturally addresses those in power. Josephus qualifies his Greek audience in the same manner as he does his Jewish audience. He concentrates on the ruling class because they have the power to prevent their nations from revolting by asserting their properly obtained authority. Josephus does not want to see other nations make the same mistakes as his own did.

Just as the episode concerning the destruction of the Temple proportionately appealed to all three audiences, so too does this passage. Judaea, like the other nations

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<sup>136</sup> ἀλκὴν μὲν γὰρ καὶ μεγέθη σωμάτων... μείζω δὲ τῶν σωμάτων ἔχοντες τὰ φρονήματα καὶ τὴν μὲν ψυχὴν θανάτου καταφρονούσαν.

<sup>137</sup> ἀλλ’ οὐδὲν τούτων ἰσχυρότερον εὐρέθη τῆς Ῥωμαίων τύχης, δύο δ’ ἐγκαθήμενα τῇ πόλει τάγματα τὴν βαθεῖαν Αἴγυπτον ἅμα τῇ Μακεδόνων εὐγενεῖα χαλινοῖ.

discussed in the speech, is under the control of Rome. By constantly praising the accomplishments and abilities of other nations, especially in comparison with Judaea, and then still remarking how they have submitted to Roman rule, Josephus, through the mouth of Agrippa, warns the Jews of the reality of defeat and the worthiness of submitting to Roman hegemony. This speech is meant to deter Jewish readers from making the same mistakes as the Jews did in the past by setting out the realistic chances of success. Each nation discussed is superior to the Jews in some particular way. “Are you wealthier than the Gauls, stronger than the Germans, wiser than the Greeks, more numerous than all the people in the world?” (*BJ* 2.364).<sup>138</sup> Since none of them were able to escape submission, the Jews cannot rationally believe in the success of rebellion.

The Roman audience gleans much more from this speech than simple delight in the praise for Roman superiority. The virtues by which Rome can maintain her hegemony are on display within this passage. Nations are described at the pinnacle of their power and then shown to be subservient to Rome as if she conquered each of them at their zenith. This is certainly not actually how Rome came to rule each of these nations, but the way it is presented lends the reader, especially a Roman one, to perceive Rome as eclipsing the best of all nations. Romans have and must continue to excel in the individual characteristics of her subject nations. They must be wiser than the Greeks, stronger than the Germans, and more courageous than the Gauls. Agrippa’s speech provides more than just exaltation of Rome. It offers guidance to Romans.

Josephus’ peculiar combination of addressing his Roman audience through both veneration and instruction comes into the vanguard of the narrative during his digression

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<sup>138</sup> ὡμεις πλουσιώτεροι Γαλατῶν, ισχυρότεροι Γερμανῶν, Ἑλλήνων συνετώτεροι, πλείους τῶν κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐστὲ πάντων;

on the Roman army (*BJ* 3.70-109). Order and discipline characterize the Roman army throughout the excursus and these virtues are needed for retaining Roman sovereignty. Referring to Rome's empire, Josephus remarks that the Romans "hold such authority as a possession of excellence, not a gift of fortune" (*BJ* 3.71).<sup>139</sup> Victory for them is inevitable because they train in peace as if in war. The praise Josephus grants toward Roman valor also serves as instruction for future Romans. Rome will continue to maintain supremacy so long as her people continue to practice the virtues of order, discipline, fortitude, and prudence. For Josephus the power and extent of the Roman Empire are direct consequences of the Roman people. "One would suitably say that their possession is less than those who acquired it" (*BJ* 3.107).<sup>140</sup>

Concluding his digression, Josephus explicitly states how this passage pertains to his other two audiences. The passage exists "for the consolation of those who have been subdued and for the dissuasion of those attempting revolution" (*BJ* 3.108).<sup>141</sup> He warns both his Jewish readers and those of the Hellenized east about the futility of revolt. The Roman army is unconquerable so long as it maintains the regimen described by Josephus. Their victories do not depend on whom they fight, but how they train. Josephus advances the concept that there is nothing a nation can do to defeat the Roman army.

Josephus simultaneously writes to three audiences so as to instruct each side on the best ways to manage affairs between Rome and her subject nations. Regarding each of his three audiences, moreover, Josephus has other purposes in mind. He offers a theologically viable explanation for the destruction of the Jewish Temple to his Jewish

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<sup>139</sup> τὴν τοσὴνδε ἡγεμονίαν αὐτοὺς ἀρετῆς κτῆμα ἔχοντας, οὐ δῶρον τύχης.

<sup>140</sup> δεόντως γὰρ ἂν τις εἴποι τὸ κτῆμα τῶν κτησαμένων ἔλασσον.

<sup>141</sup> εἷς τε παραμυθίαν τῶν κειρωμένων καὶ εἰς ἀποτροπὴν τῶν νεωτεριζόντων.

audience. For his Greek readers Josephus demonstrates the dangers and destruction involved with revolt as well as the inevitability of Roman victory. The virtues by which Rome can maintain her sovereignty in addition to just exaltation of Rome's power are on display for Josephus' Roman audience. Josephus writes to a specific class of people regardless of which sect of his audience they might belong. As a member of the traditional Jewish ruling class, Josephus writes to an elite audience across the board. He is interested in instructing those people who have the legitimate power to manage diplomacy between nations.

It is only by recognizing Josephus' tripartite audience that the reader can make accurate judgments concerning Josephus' reliability. When scholars focus on only one audience, they fail to notice the complex way in which Josephus addresses multiple audiences with different messages at the same time. This has caused some scholars to regard Josephus as a Flavian propagandist, while others see him as a Jewish apologist. These extreme views are a result of seeing only part of Josephus' intended audience and as a result distort his reason for writing and discredit his reliability.

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## Conclusions

Josephus' choice to write in the Greco-Roman historiographic tradition is of paramount concern when attempting to understand his purpose for writing and his reliability. Josephus includes specific Jewish perspectives within a history composed according to the standard conventions of Greco-Roman historiography in order to reach a tripartite audience of Jews, Romans, and Greeks. What many scholars have cited as evidence against Josephus' reliability is better seen as Josephus' adherence to the conventions of the Greco-Roman historiography. Josephus does not betray his impartiality by openly lamenting for the misfortunes of his country, but rather capitalizes on one of the features of the Greco-Roman historiographic tradition.

Since Josephus writes to three different audiences, his work has multiple layers of meaning depending on how and what Josephus communicated to each audience. The same episode often presents different interpretations to each audience because Josephus has secondary motives for each audience. Contemporary scholars often disregard that Josephus writes to multiple audiences and conveys different meanings to each one. When this fact is forgotten Josephus' writing can seem to contain bias towards one group or another.

Josephus writes within the Greco-Roman historiographic tradition in order to instruct all three of his audiences about how to diplomatically manage relations between Rome and her subject nations. His interpretation of the events does not affect his reliability and he ought to be read as equally committed to truth and historical accuracy as Thucydides, Polybius, and Tacitus.

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