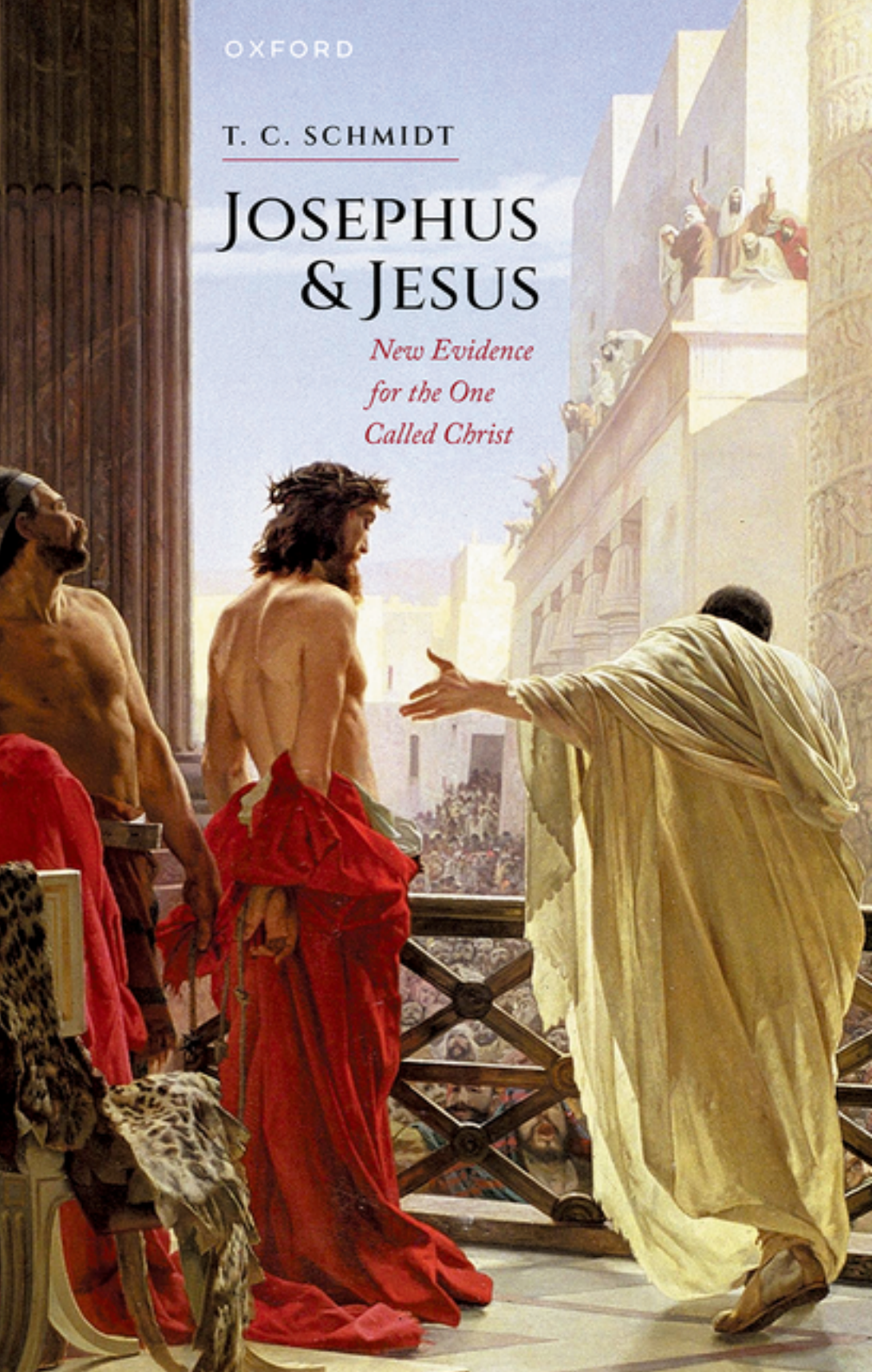

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Josephus and Jesus

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New Evidence for the One Called Christ

T. C. SCHMIDT

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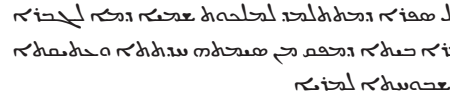
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Tom Schmidt
New Haven, CT
September 2024



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Abbreviations

BDAG	Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (see Bibliography for full details)
BNJ	*Brill's New Jacoby* (https://scholarlyeditions.brill.com/bnjo/)
CSEL	*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*
GCS	*Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte*
GCS NF	*Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte: Neue Folge*
LSJ	*Liddell-Scott-Jones Greek-English Lexicon* (see Bibliography for full details)
NPNCF^2	*Nicene Post-Nicene Church Fathers: Second Series*
PG	*Patrologia Graeca*
PL	*Patrologia Latina*
RPC	*Roman Provincial Coins* (https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/)
TLG	*Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*
TU	*Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*

A Note on Citations of Rabbinic Literature

The Mishnah, the Babylonian Talmud, and the Jerusalem Talmud are cited according to the sectional numberings of Sefaria. Citations of the Jerusalem Talmud also include brackets giving the sectional numberings of Neusner. The Tosefta is cited according to the sectional numberings of Neusner.

Introduction

Sometime in 93 or 94 CE the Jewish writer Flavius Josephus was finishing up his history of the Jewish people entitled the *Antiquities*. He had already covered the distant past and so he found himself discussing the more recent events of 30 CE. There he decided to write about Jesus of Nazareth.[1] His words are of enormous consequence because they happen to be the earliest description of Jesus given by a non-Christian. So famous is what Josephus said that scholars have given his account of Jesus its own name: the *Testimonium Flavianum*.

But there is a problem. Though the *Testimonium Flavianum* is found in all manuscript witnesses of Josephus' *Antiquities*, scholars have long been suspicious of its authenticity due to the supposed pro-Christian claims it contains. I give below the extant Greek version of the *Testimonium Flavianum* along with a translation according to how it has most often been interpreted by modern scholars.[2]

Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.63–4[3] *c.*93/4 CE

Γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον Ἰησοῦς σοφὸς ἀνήρ, εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή· ἦν γὰρ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής, διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡδονῇ τἀληθῆ δεχομένων, καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν Ἰουδαίους, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἐπηγάγετο· ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν. καὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν παρ' ἡμῖν σταυρῷ ἐπιτετιμηκότος Πιλάτου οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο οἱ τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαπήσαντες·

And in this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man, for he was a doer of miraculous deeds, a teacher of men who receive truth with pleasure. And he led many from among the Jews and many from among the Greeks. He was the Christ. And, when Pilate had condemned him to the cross at the accusation of the first men among us, those who at first loved him did not cease to do so, for he appeared to

[1] Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.63–4. Aside from this passage, Josephus briefly refers to Jesus one other time in *Antiquities* 20.200; see Appendix 2 for discussion.

[2] In this book, quotations of Josephus' works are from Accordance's digital version of the Greek text derived from Niese, *Flavii Iosephi Opera*.

[3] Citations of Josephus are given according to the sectional numberings in the Loeb Classical Library and not the broader chapter and paragraph numberings in other editions. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

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ἐφάνη γὰρ αὐτοῖς τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν πάλιν ζῶν τῶν θείων προφητῶν ταῦτά τε καὶ ἄλλα μυρία περὶ αὐτοῦ θαυμάσια εἰρηκότων. εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀπὸ τοῦδε ὠνομασμένον οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φῦλον.

them alive again on the third day given that the divine prophets had spoken such things and thousands of other wonderful things about him. And up till now the tribe of the Christians, who were named from him, has not disappeared.

If authentic, this paragraph would not only be the earliest witness to Jesus outside of Christian tradition,[4] but also a remarkable affirmation of Christian beliefs about him, especially regarding his resurrection, messianic status, and fulfillment of prophecy—at least as the *Testimonium Flavianum* (TF) is usually understood. For this very reason scholars have typically interpreted the TF as containing several assertions that are unlikely for a first-century Jew to have made:[5] Jesus is implied as being something more than human, he is said to have worked miracles, he is called 'the Christ', his death is blamed on the Jews, he is credited with fulfilling Hebrew prophecy, and it is even claimed that he was resurrected from the dead.[6] The TF's description of Jesus' followers has also been grounds for suspicion since, apparently, the TF uses the quite Christian sounding words 'truth'[7] and 'love' to characterize the disciples of Jesus.[8]

Adding to the improbability that a non-Christian writer like Josephus would record such things, the early Christian theologian, Origen of Alexandria,

[4] The testimonies of Thallus and Mara bar Serapion are sometimes said to predate Josephus, but neither mentions Jesus specifically by name. For Thallus, see BNJ 256 F1, which is extracted from George Syncellus' quotation of Julius Africanus found in George Syncellus, *Chronography* §610 and which can in turn be found in Mosshammer, *Georgius Syncelli Ecloga Chronographica*, 391. For text and discussion of Mara bar Serapion, see Cureton, *Spicilegium Syriacum*, 73–4 (English) 46 lines 14–20 (Syriac); Merz and Tieleman, *The Letter of Mara Bar Sarapion in Context*. Seneca also makes a possible mention of Jesus, though this is far from clear, and if true, Seneca would also not mention Jesus by name. For text and discussion, see Seneca, *de Ira* 1.2.2 and Herrmann, *Chrestos*, 41–3. Some also argue that Seneca's correspondence with the apostle Paul is authentic; see Ramelli, 'Pseudepigraphical Correspondence between Seneca and Paul'. I believe however that the most likely place where Seneca might have mentioned Jesus is in his lost work *de Superstitione*, though this depends on how one interprets Seneca's remarks as reported by Augustine in *City of God* 6.11.

[5] For a survey of pre-nineteenth-century scholarship on the TF, see Bardet, *Le Testimonium Flavianum*, 30–6; Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 73–201. For catalogs and discussions of more recent scholarship regarding the authenticity of the TF, see Bardet, *Le Testimonium Flavianum*, 57–9, 233–53; Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 169–95; Whealey, 'The Testimonium Flavianum', 350–4; Paget, 'Some Observations', 583–99; Winter, 'Josephus on Jesus', 428–41 at 428–30; Meier, 'Jesus in Josephus', 81–4; Feldman, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship (1937–1980)*, 684–91. For the best and most extensive bibliographies of Josephan scholarship in general, see Schreckenberg, *Bibiliographie zu Flavius Josephus*; Schreckenberg, *Bibiliographie zu Flavius Josephus: Supplementband mit Gesamtregister*; Feldman, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship (1937–1980)*; Feldman, *Josephus: A Supplementary Bibliography*. For a critical, though now dated, overview of Josephan scholarship, see Feldman, 'Flavius Josephus Revisited'.

[6] For example, Pines and Mason find all of these points worthy of at least suspicion; see Pines, *An Arabic Version*, 19–20; Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 234. Meier thinks similarly, though he mentions neither the miraculous deeds nor Jewish culpability; see Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 60–1.

[7] Thackeray, *Josephus*, 145.

[8] Bammel, 'Zum Testimonium Flavianum', 11.

specifically states that Josephus 'himself did not believe in Jesus as the Christ', saying so in his apologetic work *Against Celsus* (248 CE) and again in his *Commentary on Matthew* (248 CE).[9] And in one instance Origen asserts Josephus' unbelief in Jesus while quoting a passage from Josephus' *Antiquities* that is in the vicinity of where the TF should have (allegedly) declared that Jesus was in fact the Christ.[10] Because Origen wrote some eight hundred years before the earliest extant manuscripts of the *Antiquities* were transcribed,[11] there was clearly ample time, the thinking goes, for a Christian scribe to interpolate the TF and for this interpolation to spread throughout the remaining manuscripts that are preserved today. On account of these reasons, many, though not all, scholars have considered the extant version of the TF to be a later pro-Christian interpolation either in whole or in part.[12] And this has in turn led to many attempts at positing conjectural emendations (i.e. hypothetical revisions) to the TF in the hopes of re-creating or re-imagining what Josephus might have originally said.[13]

[9] Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.47; *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17. For further discussion, see Chapter 1 pp. 13–6.

[10] For further discussion, see Chapter 1 pp. 13–4.

[11] The earliest Greek manuscript of *Antiquities* 18 comes from the eleventh century. For discussion, see Leoni, 'The Text of the Josephan Corpus'; Schreckenberg, *Rezeptionsgeschichtliche*, 114–56; Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*, 13–51. There are Greek authors who quote the TF as early as 313 CE, and manuscripts of such quotations exist in Latin and Syriac as early as 411/12 CE; see Chapters 1 and 2 pp. 16–7, 46. Additionally, there also exist witnesses to the Greek TF in many manuscripts, late though they may be. For these, see Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*, 13–51. For images of the earliest Greek manuscripts, see Images 1–6.

[12] A minority of scholars consider the TF to be entirely interpolated; see Zeitlin, 'The Christ Passage in Josephus', 231–55 at 236; Olson, 'Eusebius and the Testimonium Flavianum'; Olson, 'A Eusebian Reading'; Norden, 'Josephus und Tacitus', 637–66 at 640–50. Norden even says 'I do not think it necessary to subject to examination of its content the individual sentences of a section whose interpolation as a whole is proven' (*Die einzelnen Sätze eines Abschnitts, dessen Interpolation als Ganzes erwiesen ist, einer Prüfung auf ihren Inhalt zu unterziehen, halte ich nicht für nötig*). Norden, 'Josephus und Tacitus', 647.

Other scholars reason that the TF, while not wholly spurious, has been interpolated, perhaps heavily, with some thinking it to be more interpolated than others, or giving no indication on the severity of interpolations; see Eisler, *The Messiah Jesus*, 61–2; Winter, 'Josephus on Jesus', 437–8; Baras, 'Testimonium Flavianum: The State of Recent Scholarship', 303–13, 378–85; Feldman, 'Flavius Josephus revisited', 822; Feldman, 'On the Authenticity of the Testimonium Flavianum', 28. For the best arguments, see Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 225–36; Schwartz, *Judaean Antiquities, Books 18–20*, 75–6 n. 310.

Yet still others consider that the TF has been only slightly interpolated, as with Meier, 'Jesus in Josephus'; Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 67; Thackeray, *Josephus*, 137; Bammel, 'Zum Testimonium Flavianum', 9–22; Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 354 n. 44. Some scholars hold this view quite tentatively and, what is more, small changes can indeed have great effects; Paget, for example, says that his solutions are so tentative that he is 'inclined . . . to a type of postmodern agnosticism'. Paget, 'Some Observations', 545; see also 603–6. Bermejo-Rubio believes only that 'small changes' have occurred, but that they were such as to recast the entire TF in a more positive light; see Bermejo-Rubio, 'Hypothetical Vorlage', 353; see also 327–8.

In recent times, scholars have begun acknowledging that much if not all of the TF is likely authentic; for discussion see n. 14.

[13] For example, Eisler was extravagant in his emendations; see Eisler, *The Messiah Jesus*, 61–2. For other examples of emendations, see Winter, 'Josephus on Jesus', 436; Bammel, 'Zum Testimonium Flavianum', 11–21; Dubarle, 'Le témoignage de Josèphe', 50; Paget, 'Some Observations', 603–6; Feldman, *Josephus: Jewish Antiquities, Volume VIII, Books 18–19*, 48–51.

But this doubt over the authenticity of the TF runs into several issues, something that scholars have been increasingly acknowledging.[14] The least of these is that there are many discussions of the TF by early and medieval Christians that predate our Greek manuscripts of the *Antiquities*, and though these Christians cite the same form of the TF as found in our present manuscripts, most do not seem to have interpreted the TF as a pro-Christian statement at all. Instead, they appear to have viewed it as a neutral, ambiguous, or even slightly negative account of Jesus.[15]

Then there is the fact that the TF is colored throughout with Josephan parallels, turns of phrase, and stylizations, many of which contain content quite similar to other skeptical non-Christian reports about Jesus—so much so that it seems improbable that the TF could have been interpolated in any major way. Some scholars have even remarked on their surprise when finding so many parallels within Josephus' work.[16] Beyond these points, a contextualized reading reveals several statements within the TF which can even be understood as critical of Jesus and which would be highly unlikely for a later Christian interpolator to leave behind, and which, again, scholars are recognizing more and more.[17] All this suggests the idea that perhaps the TF has been misinterpreted by modern scholars: perhaps it is not a pro-Christian statement of any kind; perhaps in fact it is a generally neutral account of Jesus or even a slightly skeptical one.

[14] Whealey describes the change in scholarly position well; see Whealey, 'The Testimonium Flavianum', 350–4. Those who believe that the TF is wholly authentic or that it has only one significant interpolation include Nodet, 'Jésus et Jean-Baptiste selon Josèphe [pt. 1]', 321–48; Nodet, 'Jésus et Jean-Baptiste selon Josèphe [pt. 2]', 497–524; Nodet, *Baptême et résurrrection*, 66–72; Victor, 'Das Testimonium Flavianum', 72–82; Cernuda, 'El testimonio flaviano', 355–85, 479–508; Curran, 'To Be or to Be Thought to Be'; Goldberg, 'Josephus's Paraphrase Style'. Bardet believes the TF may well be authentic, asserting that 'there is nothing improbable about it' (*celle-ci n'a rien d'invraisemblable*) and that it is 'completely plausible and completely justifiable in the context of Judaism during this timeframe' (*tout est plausible, tout est justifiable dans le contexte du judaïsme de l'époque*); Bardet, *Le Testimonium Flavianum*, 163, 231. Bardet finds the passage to be plausibly authentic in part because he believes that Jews in the time of Josephus may have been far more willing to embrace messianic claimants like Jesus, while still calling themselves 'Jews', see Bardet, *Le Testimonium Flavianum*, 227–32. However, Bardet does think that it is still possible that some changes were made to the TF; see Bardet, *Le Testimonium Flavianum*, 231. Whealey also believes that the TF is largely authentic with the only substantive change being that 'was thought to be the Christ' (or an equivalent phrase) has been changed to 'was the Christ', as I myself similarly argue in this book; see Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum', 115; Whealey, 'The Testimonium Flavianum', 354.

[15] This phenomenon has been observed to a lesser extent by Paget, 'Some Observations', 563–5; Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 18–43; Whealey, 'The Testimonium Flavianum', 345–7. Such observations disprove Feldman's theory that Christians would have mentioned the TF more often if it was authentic, for in fact they usually seem to have found little remarkable about it; see Feldman, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship (1937–1980)*, 690.

[16] See Chapter 4 pp. 108–9.

[17] Bermejo-Rubio, 'Hypothetical Vorlage', 353–8; Paget, 'Some Observations', 601.

And this is what I argue in the present book. I maintain that the TF found in extant manuscripts of the *Antiquities* is essentially authentic, and that it has merely lost two or three words that can still be found preserved in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Armenian textual witnesses. These include the Greek word 'certain' (τις) and the Syriac phrase *mestabrā itaw* which in the TF can be translated as 'thought to be'. The Syriac hence means that the original TF did not say that Jesus 'was the Christ' but only that he was 'thought to be' the Christ. The Latin version of the TF similarly says that Jesus was 'believed to be' (*credebatur esse*) the Christ.

It is remarkable, however, that even without these missing words the general sense of the TF has been preserved in extant Greek manuscripts, at least from the point of view of many ancient readers. These readers seem to have understood the extant TF not as affirming that Jesus 'was the Christ', but rather that Jesus 'was Christ', interpreting the word 'Christ' as an alternative name for Jesus, not a religious title.

A major advantage of my position is that it does not rely on speculative textual emendations designed to recraft what Josephus might have written. Neither does it ignore the strikingly Josephan character of the TF; nor why so many ancient Christians did not view the TF as a positive valuation of Jesus; nor why there are statements in the TF that can even be understood as critical of Jesus. Instead, the theory takes the best textual evidence and interprets the TF in accordance with Josephus' style, the predilections of other early non-Christian writers, and the TF's own reception history. The result is a relatively ambiguous TF that can be plausibly interpreted negatively or neutrally,[18] and which reads something like this (differences from the above text and translation are placed in bold):

[18] The interpretation of the TF as basically ambiguous or neutral has been suggested before; see Paget, 'Some Observations', 559, 603–6; Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 76 n. 19, 84 n. 43; Meier, 'Jesus in Josephus', 84 n. 19, 87, 88 n. 33, 99; Feldman, 'The Testimonium Flavianum: The State of the Question', 199; Thackeray, *Josephus*, 137–38; Dubarle, 'Le témoignage de Josèphe sur Jésus d'après la tradition indirecte', 507–8; Dubarle, 'Le témoignage de Josèphe d'après des publications récentes', 55; Baras, 'Testimonium Flavianum: The State of Recent Scholarship', 308. Paget and others believe, however, that the TF must be emended to achieve this neutrality or ambiguity (though Paget holds this position quite tentatively). Paget also affirms that it is modern scholars who have 'attributed so much importance to [the TF]', not ancient or medieval writers; see Paget, 'Some Observations', 565; see also 560–1. Vincent comes closest to my position in that he believes that the whole TF is ironic, and therefore authentic, though I instead take the passage as somewhat ambiguous; see Cernuda, 'El testimonio flaviano'. Feldman sometimes suggests a neutral TF, but more often he creates a false binary between a positive or negative version of the TF, and concludes that the TF must therefore be spurious because otherwise more writers would have mentioned it; see Chapter 1 n. 1. Feldman also claims that non-Christians in the ancient world were wondering if Jesus ever in fact existed and therefore would have been highly interested in the TF. But he bases this assertion on a misreading of a single passage in Justin, *Dialogue* 8; see Feldman, 'On the Authenticity of the Testimonium Flavianum', 14; Feldman, 'The Testimonium Flavianum: The State of the Question', 182–3. For a similar critique of Feldman's claim, see Paget, 'Some Observations', 602 n. 269.

Γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον Ἰησοῦς **τις** σοφὸς ἀνήρ, εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή· ἦν γὰρ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής, διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡδονῇ τἀληθῆ δεχομένων, καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν Ἰουδαίους, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἐπηγάγετο· ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος [***mestabrā itaw***] ἦν. καὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν παρ᾽ ἡμῖν σταυρῷ ἐπιτετιμηκότος Πιλάτου οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο οἱ τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαπήσαντες· ἐφάνη γὰρ αὐτοῖς τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν πάλιν ζῶν τῶν θείων προφητῶν ταῦτά τε καὶ ἄλλα μυρία περὶ αὐτοῦ θαυμάσια εἰρηκότων. εἰς τε νῦν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀπὸ τοῦδε ὠνομασμένον οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φῦλον.

And in this time there was a **certain** Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man, for he was a doer of **incredible deeds**, a teacher of men who **receive truisms with pleasure**. And he **brought over** many from among the Jews and many from among the Greeks. He was [**thought to be**] the Christ. And, when Pilate had condemned him to the cross at the accusation of the first men among us, those who at first **were devoted to** him did not cease to be so, for on the third day **it seemed to them that** he was alive again given that the divine prophets had spoken such things and thousands of other wonderful things about him. And up till now the tribe of the Christians, who were named from him, has not disappeared.

Interpreted in this way, it is clear that the TF has nothing suspicious about it.

But this is far from where the present book ends, since here important questions arise: if the TF is genuine, if it really was written by Josephus, then from where did Josephus obtain his information about Jesus? And how much did these sources know about Jesus? In answering these questions, some intriguing evidence within the TF points to sources very near to Jesus himself. For Josephus does not simply say in the TF that it was the 'first men' (πρώτων ἀνδρῶν) who accused Jesus, but that it was the 'first men among us' (παρ᾽ ἡμῖν). This is an important clue, since, as it turns out, the phrase 'among us' (παρ᾽ ἡμῖν) is common in Josephus' writings, where it is used fifty-one other times. And combing through every one of these fifty-one instances makes it plain that the phrase marks a subject with which the speaker was directly familiar. In other words, Josephus appears to be claiming in the TF that he actually knew some of those who accused Jesus.

One would be hard-pressed to believe such a thing based on a single point of linguistic data, but compelling support for this conclusion exists in several other statements where Josephus confirms that he did in fact know the 'first' men (πρῶτοι) of Jerusalem beginning in 51/2 CE. And it is only likely that some of those 'first' men of Jerusalem would have also been numbered with 'the first men among us' whom Josephus says accused Jesus twenty or so years before.

All this occasions some further, significant discoveries. After analyzing Josephus' social network, it becomes possible to actually identify the names of certain of Josephus' acquaintances who were likely partisans in the trial of Jesus. The most probable candidate is the High Priest Ananus II. He was the brother-in-law of the High Priest Caiaphas and the son of the High Priest Ananus I (Annas in the Gospels), both of whom put Jesus to death. As the reader will see, Ananus II had good reason to be in attendance at Jesus' trial and Josephus did know Ananus II directly. And there are several other candidates too, whom Josephus also knew and who were in all probability also at the trial of Jesus. And not only this, but it is evident that Josephus knew still others within his large social network who had facilitated judicial proceedings against Jesus' apostles. The most prominent of these are undoubtedly King Herod Agrippa II, who attended the trial of the apostle Paul, and once again the High Priest Ananus II, who executed James, the brother of Jesus.

Taken as a whole then, the evidence indicates that the *Testimonium Flavianum* was indeed composed by Josephus, a man who actually knew those who put Jesus and the apostles on trial. It hence offers remarkable insight into both the Jesus of history and the early Christian movement. We would do well to consider carefully what it says.

Book Outline

I argue for the above points via the following contributions.

Part 1: The Authenticity of the *Testimonium Flavianum*

First, Chapter 1, shows that Greek-speaking Christians in the ancient and medieval worlds tended to interpret the TF not as a pro-Christian confession, but rather as a neutral, ambiguous, or even slightly negative account of Jesus, one that did not afford easy apologetic gain. Such observations suggest that if any Christian interpolations occurred, they were likely quite minimal given that the majority of readers viewed the TF as not all that favorable to Jesus. This explains why certain writers like Origen chose not to mention the TF—for he, as with many others, likely found it to be unremarkable or even risky to use. These observations also clarify why so many of those Christians who did take notice of the TF emphasized its more mundane details rather than its alleged spectacular content, since for them it had few if any sensational claims. Yet the very ambiguity which I argue is present within the TF also allowed a minority of writers to interpret (or misinterpret) it almost as a

confession of faith. In this chapter the manuscripts of important authors are consulted directly.

Chapter 2 canvasses various western and eastern versions of the TF—in Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Armenian—while consulting several manuscripts and correcting past transcriptions. Most significantly, a certain Syriac text shows that the most suspicious statement in the extant version of the TF, 'he was the Christ', instead likely read 'he was thought to be the Christ'. This reading is found in an important Syriac translation of the TF which new evidence suggests should be traced back to Jacob of Edessa (*c.*708 CE), a noted translator of Greek works and one of the most educated men of his day. Jacob's translation is crucially matched by another famous translator, St. Jerome (*c.*420 CE), who rendered the phrase almost synonymously into Latin as 'he was believed to be the Christ'. This correspondence indicates that both translators had before themselves a much more ancient Greek text, a text which I argue contained the original wording of Josephus. Such a reading also explains, once again, why Origen and others asserted that Josephus did not believe that Jesus was the Christ. And, furthermore, it agrees with Josephan style, thereby giving the reading a ring of verisimilitude. Be that as it may, many Christian readers still do not seem to have read the altered phrase 'he was the Christ' (ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν) as a confession of faith. Instead, they simply assumed that Josephus was identifying Jesus with the alternative name of 'Christ', much like how many ancient non-Christian writers were quite willing to call Jesus the name of 'Christ', without thinking that such signaled faith in him.

Chapter 3 provides a close analysis of the TF, demonstrating that many non-Christian sources (both Jewish and pagan) frequently made comments about Jesus that were strikingly similar to those found in the TF, as when they attribute miracles to Jesus or when they claim that Jewish leaders were responsible for his death. Hence, such content in the TF should not be viewed suspiciously by scholars, nor even interpreted as positive valuations. The analysis also highlights numerous linguistic parallels shared between the TF and Josephus, some of which are brought forth for the first time, and many of which cast the TF in quite an ambiguous light—far different from the positive reading of the TF advanced by many scholars.

Chapter 4 analyzes the TF's various lexemes and phrases stylostatistically in order to determine whether the TF's frequency rate of common words and rare words matches the frequency rate of comparable words elsewhere in Josephus' corpus. The results plainly indicate that both common and rare words are present in the TF at the same frequency one would expect if Josephus were the author. The chapter further discusses the placement of the TF within the *Antiquities*, its textual preservation, and possible ways to translate it.

Part 2: The Sources of Josephus and the Meaning of the *Testimonium Flavianum*

Chapter 5 examines Josephus' background with a view to discovering his potential sources of information about Jesus. Josephus, as it happens, was born of an eminent priestly family and circled among elite echelons of Jerusalem society during the 50s CE. In this time, he also became closely familiar with the Essenes, Sadducees, and Pharisees. Later, in the 60s CE, Josephus was stationed in Galilee for several years at which time he visited many places where Jesus once ministered, such as Cana and Capernaum. All these locales—Jerusalem and towns in Galilee—would have been peopled with those who remembered Jesus directly, and from them Josephus could have become well apprised of the man from Nazareth. Josephus further tells us how, beginning in 51/2 CE, he had frequent interactions with the 'first' men (πρῶτοι) of Jerusalem. As mentioned above, this group matches the 'first men among us' (πρώτων ἀνδρῶν παρ' ἡμῖν) whom Josephus describes in the TF as bringing judicial proceedings against Jesus. The evidence thus suggests that Josephus would have known some of these 'first men among us' who accused Jesus. Such is confirmed by examining the dozens of other times Josephus deploys the phrase 'among us' (παρ' ἡμῖν). These instances show that Josephus used the phrase 'among us' (παρ' ἡμῖν) as a way of indicating direct knowledge of a subject. The data therefore stipulates that by saying in the TF that it was 'the first men among us' who accused Jesus, Josephus is claiming to have himself known some of those who accused Jesus.

Chapter 6 investigates Josephus' social network and identifies individuals through whom Josephus may have learned first-hand details of Jesus. These include members of six leading Jewish families: The royal family of the Herodians, the rabbinic family of Hillel, and the high priestly families of Ananus I, Boethus, Camith, and Phiabi. Josephus was directly familiar with all six families and all six had members well placed to have encountered Jesus face to face. Some of these families even aided in bringing accusations against him. What is more, Josephus' contacts can be traced out so completely that it is even possible to identify the names of several who would have likely attended the trial of Jesus and others who attended trials of Jesus' followers. I show that of no candidate is this so probable as with the High Priest Ananus II, a sometime ally and then later enemy of Josephus.

In the Conclusion, I summarize my findings, and argue that a neutral or ambiguous account of Jesus is precisely what one would expect from Josephus given his social network and given the similar ways he treated known associates of Jesus in John the Baptist and James, the brother of Jesus. To illustrate the basic ambiguity of the TF, I include an English translation highlighting such aspects of the TF. I also discuss what the TF can tell us about the Jesus of history and the early

Christian movement, particularly regarding how the claims of Jesus' miracles and his resurrection developed.

Lastly, I also provide several Appendices which include the following:

- A response to accusations that Eusebius of Caesarea forged the TF.
- A discussion on Origen of Alexandria and his knowledge of Josephus' passage on James, the brother of Jesus, in *Antiquities* 20.200.
- An essay regarding whether, according to the Gospels, Jesus was arrested on Passover.
- An investigation on whether the Jewish *Toledot Yeshu* can provide independent evidence that Ananus II participated in the trial of Jesus.
- A discussion of the Great Sanhedrin and its records of the trial of Jesus.
- An excursus on Josephus' silence regarding Jesus in the *War*.
- Select photographs of important manuscripts.

PART 1

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE *TESTIMONIUM FLAVIANUM*

1
The Greek Reception

The Puzzling Early Reception

This chapter surveys the reception of the *Testimonium Flavianum* in the hands of Greek Christian authors beginning with Origen in the third century and continuing up to the late Byzantine period.[1] I show that the vast majority do not seem to have considered the TF to be a pro-Christian statement at all. Instead, most treated it as a neutral, ambiguous, or even slightly negative account of Jesus, a very puzzling phenomenon indeed if one considers the TF to be a later Christian interpolation, but quite sensible if the TF should instead be interpreted as a somewhat detached report—the very kind of thing that might have been written by Josephus himself.

Origen

The reception of the TF commences early on with **Origen of Alexandria** (*c.*185–255 CE). As mentioned in the Introduction, Origen clearly stated, on two different occasions, that Josephus 'himself did not believe in Jesus as the Christ', making this claim in his apologetic work *Against Celsus* (*c.*248 CE)[2] and also in his *Commentary on Matthew* (*c.*248 CE).[3] It is notable that in one instance, Origen

[1] For a summary of the general reception of Josephus amongst Jewish, Christian, and pagan authors, see Paget, 'Some Observations', 539–44; Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*, 68–171; Schreckenberg, *Rezeptionsgeschichtliche*, 5–70; Kletter, 'The Christian Reception of Josephus', 368–81; Hardwick, *Josephus as an Historical Source*. For the reception of the TF specifically, see Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 1–71. For writers before Eusebius (excluding Origen), see Whealey, 'Josephus on Jesus: Evidence from the First Millennium', 285–7; Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 6–12. Feldman and Olson think it is telling that so few Christian writers mention the TF and both argue that this points to the TF's inauthenticity, but often they (especially Feldman) assume that the TF must have been either positive or negative (and hence not neutral or ambiguous) and therefore they both believe that it is suspicious that Christians did not either trumpet the TF or condemn it; see Olson, 'Eusebius and the Testimonium Flavianum', 307; Feldman, 'The Testimonium Flavianum: The State of the Question', 181–5; Feldman, 'Flavius Josephus revisited', 822–5; Feldman, 'On the Authenticity of the Testimonium Flavianum', 16. Whealey though spends much time defending the silence that early patristic writers seem to have over Josephus and deploys various reasons to do so, many of them quite cogent. However, the simplest reason that so many writers were silent about the TF is that they found it to be unremarkable insofar as they read it as a neutral, ambiguous, or even vaguely negative account and hence had little reason to discuss it. Whealey does acknowledge this point; see Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 15–18.

[2] Ὁ δ' αὐτός, καίτοι γε ἀπιστῶν τῷ Ἰησοῦ ὡς Χριστῷ. Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.47 (ed. Marcovich, *Origenes*, 47 line 7 = TLG 2042.001 line 9).

[3] τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἡμῶν οὐ καταδεξάμενος εἶναι Χριστόν. 'Though not accepting our Jesus to be the Christ'. Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17 (ed. Klostermann p. 22 line 12. = TLG 2042.029 lines 37–8). On the dating of these works of Origen, see Nautin, *Origène*, 375–6.

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asserts that Josephus did not believe that Jesus was the Christ while quoting a passage from Josephus' *Antiquities* that is near to where the TF should have declared that Jesus was the Christ,[4] at least according to how the TF has been typically understood. On account of this, many have assumed that Origen did not know about the TF, and have thence concluded that it must have been interpolated by a later Christian scribe.[5]

Yet there is evidence for suspecting that Origen did know of some version of the TF, even though he does not mention it explicitly.[6] To begin, Origen is aware of Josephus' later reference to James 'the brother of Jesus who was called Christ' in *Antiquities* 20.200.[7] Such a statement in and of itself suggests that Josephus had written about Jesus earlier in the *Antiquities*, for it is unlikely that Josephus would have mentioned Jesus to identify James, but never have introduced Jesus to his audience in the first place.[8] It is therefore also plausible that Origen would have known of this earlier passage about Jesus since he wrote within 150 years of Josephus, so near in time to the Jewish historian that he likely possessed manuscripts of the *Antiquities* uncontaminated by later Christian scribes. This is particularly likely since Origen had access to manuscripts deriving from Jewish circles.[9]

[4] Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.47 (which discusses *Antiquities* 18.116–19 and *Antiquities* 20.200–1). He also does the same in *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17 (which discusses *Antiquities* 20.200–1). For this exact point, see also Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 229–30.

[5] It must be noted that there was a flourishing Hellenistic Jewish literary circle in the first and second centuries—witnessed by writers like Philo, Josephus, Justus of Tiberias, Theodotion, Aquila, and Symmachus—so Origen need not have used Christian scribes to obtain Josephus' texts, but may have instead accessed it via Jewish scribal circles. He, for example, obtained manuscripts of Symmachus' work from a woman who had inherited them from Symmachus himself. And Origen was willing to use a contact of Symmachus even though Symmachus had attacked the Gospel of Matthew; see Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.17.1. Given Origen's access to manuscripts from Jewish circles, it is a fair conclusion that if the TF really was omitted from Origen's manuscript of the *Antiquities*, then it is equally possible that a hostile Jewish scribe might have omitted a neutral-sounding TF as that a sympathetic Christian scribe may have inserted a positive-sounding TF. On Origen and Jewish sources, see Daniélou, *Origen*, 174–91. Ancient testimony regarding Symmachus is contradictory, some believe that he was a Jewish Christian (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.17), others that he was Jewish (Origen as quoted in Palladius *Historia Lausiaca*, 64.1—Epiphanius considered Symmachus to be a Samaritan convert to Judaism; see Epiphanius, *Weights and Measures* 16 [55c]). It is also possible that Origen had access to the *Antiquities* via his teacher Clement of Alexandria, but evidence shows that Clement's circle did not make interpolations into *Antiquities* 20.200 even though it contradicted their beliefs, so such a circle would also be unlikely to interpolate the TF. On this, see p. 236 and Appendix 2 nn. 15, 17.

[6] The reasons why Origen may have known the TF, or at least some neutral version of it, are rehearsed by Whealey, 'Josephus on Jesus: Evidence from the First Millennium', 288–91; Paget, 'Some Observations', 557–61, 618; Feldman, 'The Testimonium Flavianum: The State of the Question', 182–3; Thackeray, *Josephus*, 139–40; Eisler, *The Messiah Jesus*, 38; Bardet, *Le Testimonium Flavianum*, 80–8; Bermejo-Rubio, 'Hypothetical Vorlage', 352.

[7] Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17; *Against Celsus* 1.47, 2.13.

[8] Niese argues that Josephus sometimes mentions significant figures without introducing them such as Caiaphas in *Antiquities* 18.35, 95. But the argument is not that Josephus never does this, but that it is rare for him to do so. Furthermore, it is one thing to mention someone without introduction when they have an unremarkable name like Caiaphas, and quite another to offhandedly mention someone, without introduction, when their name or moniker suggests that they are the Christ. It would also be strange for Josephus to introduce someone like James and explain that he is the brother of a presumably more well-known person, Jesus, but then for Josephus to never actually introduce Jesus before or after. See Niese, *De testimonio*, IX.

[9] See n. 5 above.

The idea that Origen did know of at least some version of the TF is further supported by three intriguing observations. First, Origen twice declares that Josephus did not believe that Jesus was the Christ,[10] even though, apart from the TF, Josephus never discusses Jesus in any kind of detail. This implies that Origen did know of some discussion of Jesus in Josephus' work located before the brief mention of him as the brother of James in *Antiquities* 20.200.

Secondly, one of the times Origen mentions Josephus' unbelief, he also refers to Josephus' description of John the Baptist in *Antiquities* 18.116–19[11]—quite near where the TF is currently placed in *Antiquities* 18.63–4—but then, soon after, Origen says 'the Jews do not relate John to Jesus, nor the punishment of John with that of Jesus',[12] perhaps because, in the TF Josephus himself also does not make any connection between John and Jesus. Nor does Josephus draw any link between their executions. This seems all the more possible because, thirdly, just a few lines later Origen rather abruptly switches tactics to argue that the fact that Jesus was 'prophesied by the Jewish prophets' is the 'greatest point in favor of Jesus' authority'.[13] It could be that Origen's sudden turn in argument toward Jewish prophets may have been influenced by the content of the TF, which discusses the Hebrew prophets in relation to Jesus, but only, as I will argue in Chapter 3, in a detached subjective way.[14]

It is therefore at least plausible, though surely not conclusive,[15] that Origen had access to a version of the TF, but that he read it in a negative, neutral, or ambiguous light; otherwise he likely would have deployed it in his apologetic work, as he did with similar Josephan passages on John the Baptist and James, the brother of Jesus.[16] Yet, on the other hand, Origen also praises Josephus for not being 'far from the truth'[17] and does so when discussing a passage in the *Antiquities* near where the TF should have been located. Consequently, if Origen knew a version of the TF, he probably considered it to be not overly negative and perhaps neutral, ambiguous, or otherwise fairly mundane.[18] I must say though that one cannot be sure of any of these things, and indeed so much of our expectation regarding how the TF ought to have been treated by ancient and medieval writers rests on certain presuppositions that those writers may or may not have held.[19] Even so, Origen's comments

[10] Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.47; *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17.
[11] Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.47.
[12] Ibid., 1.48 (ed. Marcovich p. 50 lines 11–12 = TLG 2042.001 lines 94–5).
[13] Ibid., 1.49 (ed. Marcovich p. 50 lines 15–16 = TLG 2042.001 lines 1–3).
[14] This passage was pointed out to me by Whiston, *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, 821 dissertation 1.viii.1.
[15] Paget, for example, pushes back against the above observations that Origen may have known a version of the TF, yet he thinks it still might be possible, especially if Origen interpreted the TF negatively; see Paget, 'Some Observations', 557–61.
[16] Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.47, 2.13; *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17.
[17] οὐ μακρὰν τῆς ἀληθείας γενόμενος. Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.47 (ed. Marcovich p. 47 line 11 = TLG 2042.001 lines 13–14).
[18] For scholars who discuss this possibility, see above n. 6
[19] For discussion on such presuppositions, see Paget, 'Some Observations', 545–6, 581–4, 616–19.

are still suggestive, though not proof, that the original version of the TF may have been neutral, ambiguous, or even slightly negative, and therefore not helpful for him to use.

Eusebius

In any case, this is where the reception of the TF gets far more difficult to explain if we interpret it as a suspiciously pro-Christian account of Jesus, as many scholars have done. For, about sixty-five years after Origen, **Eusebius of Caesarea** (*c.*263–339 CE)[20] would become the first to explicitly quote the TF, doing so in his first edition of the *Ecclesiastical History* written around 313 CE.[21] He also gives the same version of the TF in several succeeding editions of the *Ecclesiastical History*, the last of which was issued around 326 CE.[22] He further quotes from the TF two more times in his later apologetic works the *Demonstration* (*c.*318–323 CE)[23] and the *Theophany* (*c.*325/326 CE).[24] Eusebius' knowledge of the TF is particularly interesting because he inherited Origen's library and even possessed manuscripts with Origen's own handwriting.[25] Yet, he knew a copy of the *Antiquities* that had the TF in it, while Origen, at least according to some, did not.

To explain why Eusebius, though not Origen, was aware of the TF, a minority of scholars, like Solomon Zeitlin, Ken Olson, and Louis Feldman,[26] have theorized that Eusebius himself interpolated or forged the TF, but most other scholars have found this hypothesis to be improbable.[27] I discuss this idea at length in

[20] For discussion of Eusebius' treatment of the TF, see Whealey, 'Josephus on Jesus: Evidence from the First Millennium', 291–6; Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 18–29; Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum'; Paget, 'Some Observations', 561–3, 577–8.

[21] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.11.7–8. For the dates of the editions of the *Ecclesiastical History*, see Burgess, 'Dates and Editions', 471–504; Louth, 'The Date of Eusebius' Historia Ecclesiastica', 111–23. Barnes dates the first edition of the *Ecclesiastical History* fifteen to twenty years earlier; see Barnes, 'The Editions of Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History', 191–201.

[22] Burgess, 'Dates and Editions', 502; Louth, 'The Date of Eusebius' Historia Ecclesiastica', 111–12.

[23] Eusebius, *Demonstration* 3.5.105 (124b–c). Throughout this book sectional numbering for the *Demonstration* is taken from the TLG database, additional numbers in parentheses are from Heikel, *Eusebius Werke 6: Demonstratio Evangelica*.

[24] Eusebius, *Theophany* 5.44. Dates for the *Demonstration* and the *Theophany* are taken from Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 278. Ferrar dates the *Demonstration* to 314–18 CE; see Ferrar, *Eusebius: Proof of the Gospel*, vol. 1 p. xii–xiii.

[25] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.24.3.

[26] Zeitlin, 'The Christ Passage in Josephus', 237–40; Zeitlin, 'The Slavonic Josephus', 41–50; Zeitlin, 'Josephus on Jesus', 392–9; Olson, 'Eusebius and the Testimonium Flavianum', 310–14; Olson, 'A Eusebian Reading'; Feldman, 'On the Authenticity of the Testimonium Flavianum', 26–8. Note that in order to press his case against Eusebius, Olson applies a mistaken chronology to Eusebius' works.

[27] Other scholars who believe Eusebius did not forge or interpolate the TF include, Paget, 'Some Observations', 561–3, 577–8; Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum'; Bermejo-Rubio, 'Hypothetical Vorlage', 328 n. 4; Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*, 206–11. Whealey sums up Olson's arguments: 'although Olson has a few insightful points, his overall linguistic analysis is based on an insufficient and occasionally inaccurate reading of both Eusebius' works and Josephus' works, and a few of his general arguments are logically flawed'; see Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum', 73.

Appendix 1, but for now I will say that in all of his hundreds (or even thousands) of quotations, Eusebius can never be shown to so fictitiously alter a text.[28] He even preserves a passage in Josephus that contradicts the New Testament, as when he quotes Josephus contradicting the book of Acts.[29] There Eusebius points out the contradiction and does not bother to change Josephus' text.[30] On another occasion, Eusebius ignores contradictions between Josephus' chronology and that given by Luke.[31] Likewise, Eusebius also does not alter potentially negative statements about Jesus that remain in the TF itself, like the potentially derogatory phrase a 'certain Jesus' (Ἰησοῦς τις);[32] the perhaps too carnal 'with pleasure' (ἡδονῇ); the ambiguous παράδοξα which can be interpreted to mean 'incredible' or even 'magical' deeds; and also the term ἐπηγάγετο 'he led away' or more ominously 'he led astray'[33]—all of which I discuss in Chapter 3 and all of which Eusebius left ine tact. I think then that Eusebius should be considered an unlikely candidate for forging or interpolating the TF, at least until clear evidence to the contrary emerges.

Eusebius' Puzzling Reason for Quoting the *Testimonium Flavianum*

But most interesting for our purposes is that despite quoting the entire TF three times, Eusebius never uses its suspiciously pro-Christian claims in his apologetic defense of Christianity, nor even notices such content at all.[34] This would be very odd if he or anyone else had interpolated the TF to burnish Christian credentials. In fact, the three times that Eusebius cites the TF[35] he uses it merely to verify the chronological placement of the life of Jesus and to emphasize that Jesus had many disciples of both Jewish and Greek extraction.

So, the first time he uses the TF comes in his *Ecclesiastical History* and there he only quotes it to disprove the chronological claims of an anti-Christian document which had recently been forged.[36] But despite deploying the TF for apologetic

[28] See discussion in Appendix 1 pp. 215–22.

[29] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.10.10 which refers to the contradictory names for King Herod (or Agrippa) given in Acts 12:19–23 and *Antiquities* 19.343–50.

[30] Theodoret does the very same with another passage of Josephus in his *Commentary on Daniel* 81.1393 line 31–81.1396 line 21 (= TLG 4089.028).

[31] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.5.3–4, where he ignores that the census of Quirinius in the *Antiquities* 18.1–2, 26 is placed in chronological contradiction to Luke 2:1 and Matthew 2:1. On this, see Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 20. Eusebius also does not alter the statement in the TF that appears to contradict the Gospels when it claims that Jesus had many followers who were Greek; see Whealey, 'Josephus on Jesus: Evidence from the First Millennium', 295–6; Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 26–7.

[32] This variant is missing from Greek manuscripts of the *Antiquities*, but was preserved by Eusebius; for discussion, see Chapter 3 p. 68

[33] On each of these statements, see the relevant discussions in Chapter 3. For a list of such statements, see Chapter 7 p. 198 and also Bermejo-Rubio, 'Hypothetical Vorlage', 353–8; Paget, 'Some Observations', 601.

[34] For similar observations about the way Eusebius discusses the TF, see Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 23–8; Paget, 'Some Observations', 561–3; Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*, 206–11.

[35] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.11.7–8; *Demonstration* 3.5.105 (124b–c); Eusebius, *Theophany* 5.2–20.

[36] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.11.9.

purposes, he never mentions any of the astounding assertions seemingly present in the TF. Thereafter, he edited his *Ecclesiastical History* several times, but never altered his rather staid discussion of the TF.[37]

Yet Eusebius' next usage of the TF is even more perplexing. This is made in his *Demonstration* where in the opening pages he explicitly declares that his purpose in writing the book was to show that the Hebrew prophets spoke of Christ,[38] his 'wonderous, incredible deeds' (παραδόξους θαυματουργίας),[39] and also his resurrection.[40] Yet, later when it comes time for him to quote the TF,[41] he never marshals its evidence regarding these matters to his side, nor does he even indicate that he is aware of its extravagant claims despite having, evidently, just quoted them.

Actually, Eusebius only seems to have used the TF in the *Demonstration* to prove that Jesus had many disciples and therefore, according to Eusebius, must have 'acquired something beyond the rest of men'. For after quoting the TF he concludes:

> Hence if even [Josephus] testifies according to the historical [record] that Jesus not only won over twelve apostles and seventy disciples, but also attracted many of the Jews and many of the Greeks, then it is clear that he acquired something beyond the rest of men. For how else could he have attracted a multitude of Jews and Greeks except by employing certain wonders and incredible deeds (παράδοξα) and new teaching?[42]

Strikingly, after this rather mundane use of the TF, Eusebius then appears wary that the TF may provide fodder for detractors; for after quoting it he pivots to rebut those who 'admit that Jesus performed incredible deeds (παράδοξα), but that he did so with deceptive magic directed at the onlookers, such as by a conjurer or sorcerer, to dazzle those who stood by'.[43] Eusebius no doubt has in mind the fact that the TF uses the very same word, παράδοξα, to describe Jesus' miracles and is worried that many may not find performing παράδοξα to be all that impressive or even morally sound. Eusebius' fear is quite legitimate because παράδοξα were the very illicit things that anti-Christian writers actually accused Jesus of doing.[44] Such anxiety makes good sense given that Eusebius' version of the TF (the same that is

[37] On different versions of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, see above p. 16.
[38] Eusebius, *Demonstration* 1.proem.1–2 (2).
[39] Eusebius, *Demonstration* 1.1.3 (4) (ed. Heikel GCS 23 p. 3 line 29 = TLG 2018.005 line 5).
[40] Eusebius, *Demonstration* 1.1.6 (5).
[41] Eusebius, *Demonstration* 3.5.105–6 (124b–c).
[42] Eusebius, *Demonstration* 3.5.107–8 (124c–d) (ed. Heikel GCS 23 p. 131 lines 3–9 = TLG 2018.005 lines 1–8).
[43] τὸ τῶν συνομολογούντων μὲν τὸν Ἰησοῦν τὰ παράδοξα πεποιηκέναι, γοητείᾳ δὲ ἄλλως ἐπὶ πλάνῃ τῶν ὁρώντων οἷα θαυματουργὸν ἢ φαρμακέα τινὰ θαυμασιῶσαι τοὺς παρόντας. Eusebius, *Demonstration* 3.5.110 (125a–b) (ed. Heikel GCS 23 p. 131 lines 24–6 = TLG 2018.005 lines 3–5).
[44] For an analysis of παράδοξα, see Chapter 3 pp. 73–5 where Celsus used the word in his accusations against Jesus.

extant in currently known manuscripts of the *Antiquities*) does have some fairly ambiguous if not negative statements to make about Jesus, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 3.

This pattern of neglecting or ignoring the (apparently) pro-Christian claims of the TF continues when Eusebius quotes the TF for the third time in his *Theophany*,[45] a work now only extant in Syriac translation. With this Eusebius mentions that the portion of the *Theophany* that contains the TF was mostly reworked from his *Demonstration*,[46] and, indeed Eusebius is once again sensitive to charges that Jesus practiced sorcery and so puts forward a similar argument defending Jesus, but here he places it before the TF not afterward.[47] Then after citing the TF, he concludes with words similar to what he had used in the *Demonstration*:

> If therefore this author testifies concerning [Jesus] in this way, that he was a doer of wondrous deeds (ܥܒܝܕܬܐ ܕܚܝܠ̈ܐ) and not only was followed by the twelve apostles and [not only] brought to himself the seventy disciples, but indeed also myriads of other Jews and myriads of gentiles, is it not clear that he acquired something greater beyond the rest of mankind? For how otherwise could he have brought to himself many of those from Jews and from Greeks, if not for the fact that he employed wonders and amazing deeds and new doctrines?[48]

One cannot be sure if the Syriac translator of this work introduced any changes to Eusebius' thoughts,[49] but if not, then on this occasion Eusebius does at least emphasize Jesus' miracles more than he has in the past—but even here Eusebius knows that detractors may not be all that impressed with such things. And, further, he again finds more relevancy in the great number of disciples which the TF states that Jesus gained. Oddly then, for the third time, Eusebius does not highlight the TF's acknowledgment of Jesus' messianic status, his divinity, his resurrection, nor the fact that his marvelous deeds were prophesied in scripture, even though such would have greatly aided his argument. Why not?

The Puzzling Later Reception

This puzzling treatment can be greatly amplified because many Greek writers after Eusebius also curiously avoid mentioning the more fabulous claims of the TF, and

[45] Eusebius, *Theophany* 5.44.
[46] Eusebius, *Theophany* 4.37.
[47] Eusebius, *Theophany* 5.2–20, which roughly corresponds to *Demonstration* 3.6.1–39 (125–34), whereas *Theophany* 5.21–45 roughly corresponds to *Demonstration* 3.4.32–51 (109–14) through 3.5.52–110 (114–25).
[48] Eusebius, *Theophany* 5.45, Syriac from Lee, *Theophania*, vol. 1 p. 204 lines 6–11.
[49] See Chapter 2 pp. 46–8.

instead highlight its lesser statements. Thus, **Isidore** of Pelusium (*c.*450 CE) enthusiastically quotes the whole TF, but only remarks that he is 'especially amazed' that Josephus, 'a lover of truth' praises Jesus as 'a teacher of those who receive truths', because, as Isidore says, Jews are 'unsurpassably indifferent' and 'do not believe'.[50] He likewise never remarks upon the suspiciously Christian claims of the TF, even though he seems to have just quoted them.

In his *Commentary on Revelation*, **Oecumenius** (*c.*550 CE) interprets a passage in the Revelation of John as affirming that 'the teachings of the Lord afforded discernable grace' and that 'grace' had been 'poured on [Jesus'] lips'.[51] To support these claims he quotes the entire TF and introduces it like so: 'And Josephus, a Jewish man, compelled by truth, writes as follows concerning him [Jesus] in the book of the *Antiquities* of Israel:'.[52] It seems then that Oecumenius used the TF simply to describe the nature of Jesus' teachings so that he might use it to support the idea that such teachings were full of grace. Thus, as with Isidore before him, Oecumenius likely found that the most noteworthy aspect of the TF to be only that part which described Jesus' role as 'a teacher of men who receive truths with pleasure', though in this instance Oecumenius' text contains a textual variant so that his version reads 'a teacher of men who speak true things with pleasure'.[53] But whatever the case, Oecumenius, for some reason, never bothers to point out any of the far more remarkable claims made by the TF. This is all the more peculiar because Oecumenius was writing a commentary on Revelation, which Oecumenius believed frequently described the resurrection of Jesus,[54] his divinity,[55] and his fulfillment of prophecy[56]—why not quote the TF regarding these matters instead of deploying it to highlight a basically mundane assertion about Jesus' teachings?

The anonymous ***Religious Discussion at the Court of the Sassanids*** (sixth century) does not quote the TF as a whole, but presents a protagonist as enumerating Jewish witnesses of Jesus (John the Baptist, Nicodemus, etc.) some of whom it says named Jesus to be the Christ. Yet of Josephus it instead says '[What of] Josephus your own writer of history, who spoke about Christ, who was demonstrated to be a righteous and good man by divine grace, by means of signs and wonders, and

[50] Isidore of Pelusium, *Letter* 1259 (4.225) (ed. Évieux, *Isidore de Péluse*, 258 lines 25–9 = TLG 2741.001 lines 25–9). For a translation of this passage and its surrounding contents, see Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 37–8. Here, Whealey also shows that Isidore must have known the *Antiquities* directly.

[51] Oecumenius, *Commentary on Revelation* 4.10.7 (trans. modified from Suggit, *Commentary on Revelation*, 70).

[52] Oecumenius, *Commentary on Revelation* 4.10.7 (ed. Hoskier, *The Complete Commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse*, p. 88 lines 8–10 = TLG 2866.001 p. 88 lines 8–10). The sectional numbering, 4.10.7, is taken from Suggit, *Commentary on of the Apocalypse*.

[53] διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡδονῇ τἀληθῆ λεγομένων; Oecumenius, *Commentary on Revelation* 4.10.8 (ed. Hoskier, *The Complete Commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse*, p. 88 lines 12–13 = TLG 2866.001 p. 88 lines 12–13).

[54] Ibid., 1.11.3, 4.15.2.

[55] Ibid., 1.3.5, 3.13.10.

[56] Ibid., 1.14.2–3, 1.117.1.

one who bestowed benefits on many? And as many other things that are recorded, which we do not bring forward now?'[57] The author thus mentions nothing about the most incredible statements found in the TF—Jesus' resurrection, his messianic status, his divinity, and so on—though such content surely would have aided his purpose.

Similar examples can be multiplied. **George the Monk** (ninth century) calls Josephus a 'lover of truth' and quotes an excerpt from Josephus' passage on John the Baptist.[58] He then quotes the TF in full and briefly complains, 'As these things have been taken from the above Hebrew writings, what defense or excuse do the stupid and crack-brained Jews have?'[59] The first part of this sentence is taken verbatim from Eusebius' own rather mundane analysis of the TF, but George's own alterations still do not mention any of the TF's most pro-Christian claims.[60] Most surprisingly is that immediately afterward George quotes John Chrysostom to apparently articulate his frustration with what 'the Jews' believe about Jesus. This frustration though only amounts to the fact that they considered John the Baptist to be superior to Jesus because he had an impressive and unusual upbringing in the desert, was the son of a High Priest, was born of a barren woman, and called many to baptism. But Jesus, from the Jewish perspective, did no such thing except to be baptized by John the Baptist, which George quotes Chrysostom as saying 'rather confirms this notion' of John being superior to Jesus.[61] George's argument is not exactly clear. He obviously thinks the Jewish TF rebuts the notion that John the Baptist was superior to Jesus, but the reader is left wondering exactly how. George never comes around to arguing that, according to the TF, Jesus was not just greater than John in regard to his clothing and upbringing, but that he was in fact the Christ, was raised from the dead, was foretold by Jewish prophets, and was perhaps divine.

The anonymous author of the ***Theognosia*** (ninth century)[62] presents a series of prophecies about Jesus found in the Old Testament. When he comes to the

[57] *Religious Discussion at the Court of the Sassanids* §60 (of Bringel), p. 36 lines 8–11 (of Bratke). English translation modified from Pearse, 'Religious Discussion'. Greek text from Bratke, 'Das sogennante Religionsgesprach', 1–305. A French translation can be found in Bringel, 'Une polémique religieuse'. A slightly different version of this text (which leaves off the last sentence) is preserved in PG 89.1248 lines 36–40 (= TLG 2897.003) and is falsely attributed to Anastasius of Sinai. For brief mention of this document, see Paget, 'Some Observations', 563, 568 n. 116; Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*, 106–7.

[58] George the Monk, *Chronicon* p. 324 lines 18–25, p. 325 line 1 (ed. de Boor = TLG 3043.001).

[59] Ibid., p. 325 lines 13–15.

[60] George's use of Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.11.9 are highlighted in bold: **ταῦτα τοῦ ἐξ Ἑβραίων συγγραφέως ἀνέκαθεν** διεξελθόντος, **ποίαν ἀπολογίαν** ἢ συγγνώμην ἔχουσιν ἀνοηταίνοντες οἱ ἐμβρόντητοι Ἰουδαῖοι. George the Monk, *Chronicon* p. 325 lines 13–15 (ed. de Boor).

[61] ὅπερ μᾶλλον ἐβεβαίου τὴν ὑπόνοιαν ταύτην. George the Monk, *Chronicon* 326 p. 326 lines 3–4 (ed. de Boor = TLG 3043.001). A recension of George's work, called the *Chronicon breve*, exists in PG 110.41–1260 and it too contains the same discussion; see *Chronicon breve* 385, 388 (= TLG 3043.002).

[62] This work was once incorrectly considered to be by Gregory Nazianzus; see Jaeger, *Two Rediscovered Works*, 82–3 n. 5.

topic of the resurrection, he quotes from the Psalms and then introduces the TF by only saying: 'Now, Josephus the Hebrew, in the eighteenth book of his *Antiquities*, says. . . .'[63] But other than quoting the TF, he says nothing more, and so the reader is left unsure if the TF should be interpreted as affirming the resurrection or merely as relaying an historical report about it.

This uncertain treatment is confirmed by comments the same author makes in another work of his, the ***Dissertatio contra Judaeos***.[64] There he quotes the entire TF once again[65] and, instead of pointing out its apparently Christian content, he reasons that 'either [the Jews] crucified and murdered a true and good and divine prophet, thus becoming wicked, and lawless and impious, or on the contrary, they seized a cheat and a deceiver and a false prophet'.[66] He concludes that with Jesus 'the Jews' must have murdered a true prophet because otherwise God would not let the very ends of the earth proclaim their 'wretchedness, and ingloriousness, and contempt'.[67] Nowhere does the author point out that the very Jewish TF affirms, at least apparently, that Jesus was the Christ, was perhaps divine, was resurrected, and was the true subject of Jewish prophecy. Rather he seems to find the TF to be quite ambiguous, neutral, or even slightly negative, otherwise why would he suggest that according to the TF Jesus was either a divine prophet or a charlatan?

Sometime between the fifth and ninth centuries, **Pseudo-Sophronius** translated Jerome's work, *On Illustrious Men* from Latin into Greek,[68] making many redactions and additions in the process.[69] As I will discuss in Chapter 2, Jerome did not point out any of the more fantastic details in the TF, and Pseudo-Sophronius chooses to preserve Jerome's discussion on the TF, making no further remarks despite changing Jerome's work drastically in other areas.[70] But, curiously, Pseudo-Sophronius carefully follows Jerome's comments even though he did not follow Jerome's translation of the TF and instead sought out a Greek copy of the TF to present to his audience.[71] This brings up the question: why did Pseudo-Sophronius not expand upon Jerome's silence over Jesus' resurrection, his fulfillment of prophecy, and his

[63] Φησὶ δὲ καὶ ὁ Ἑβραῖος Ἰώσηπος κατὰ τὸν ὀκτωκαιδέκατον τόμον τῆς Ἀρχαιολογίας αὐτοῦ. *Theognosia* PG vol. 130 col. 272. 35–7 (= TLG 2017.077). This is a fragment of a much larger quotation preserved by Euthymius Zigabenus in his *Panoplia Dogmatica*.

[64] The authorship of this work is discussed in Hostens, *Anonymi auctoris Theognosiae*, xxii–xxxii.

[65] *Dissertatio contra Judaeos* 2 lines 386–98 (ed. Hostens p. 33 = TLG 3186.008).

[66] Ibid., 2 lines 405–9 (ed. Hostens p. 34). The author's whole discussion of the TF, as well as his introductory remarks, is contained in *Dissertatio contra Judaeos* 2.321–446 (ed. Hostens pp. 31–5).

[67] ἀθλιότητα καὶ ἀκλεΐαν καὶ ἀδοξίαν. *Dissertatio contra Judaeos* 2 lines 427–8 (ed. Hostens p. 34).

[68] The identification and the authenticity of this translation is of some dispute with certain scholars claiming that Erasmus made the translation himself, though this seems doubtful. For discussion on this, see Gebhardt, 'Hieronymus de Viris Inlustribus', iii–xvii. For the dating of the work, see Gebhardt, vii–viii. See also the introduction to Jerome's *Illustrious Men* in NPNCF^2 vol. 3 pp. 355–6.

[69] For example, Pseudo-Sophronius nearly doubles the number of Jerome's entries before Josephus is discussed, so that Josephus becomes the twenty-third entry rather than the thirteenth.

[70] Pseudo-Sophronius, *Jerome's Illustrious Men* 23.

[71] This is clear because Pseudo-Sophronius' version follows the Greek 'he was the Christ' (ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν), instead of Jerome's intriguing variant 'he was believed to be the Christ' (*Christus credebatur esse*).

divinity when he was so willing to alter Jerome's comments in other areas and even change his translation of the TF? It seems unlikely that Pseudo-Sophronius' silence is due to doubts about the authenticity of the TF since he is quite willing elsewhere to make other misleading and pro-Christian claims about Josephus, as when he states that Josephus credited great righteousness to James the brother of Jesus.[72] So why not also mention the pro-Christian content of the TF?

Whatever the reason, the **Suda**, a tenth-century encyclopedia, does similarly and reuses practically wholesale Jerome's passage on Josephus (via the above Greek redaction) for its own entry concerning Josephus.[73] It then crafts a second entry on Josephus as well.[74] But once more, the Suda nowhere notes the TF's report of Jesus' resurrection, or that his 'wonders' were foretold by Hebrew prophets, or that he was possibly divine. And like Pseudo-Sophronius, the Suda freely repeats the same false claim about Josephus describing James as being righteous, so its silence is likely not due to any kind of scruples over the TF's authenticity.[75] The most that can be said of the Suda and Pseudo-Sophronius is that they may acknowledge that the TF calls Jesus 'the Christ', but even this is not clear.[76]

Several manuscripts of the *Chronicle* of **Simeon Magister Logothete** (tenth century)[77] quote the TF in full when discussing Emperor Tiberius. Here the TF is introduced by merely saying 'Josephus writes concerning our Lord'[78] with no further remarks. **George Cedrenus** (eleventh–twelfth century) begins his treatment of the TF by quoting from Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* to establish the chronological span of Jesus' life and ministry, but then rather than giving a direct quotation of the TF, he only paraphrases it, yet still does not emphasize any of the Christian claims, nor show any kind of awareness about its fabulous content.[79] In fact his paraphrase avoids explicitly claiming that Josephus declared that Jesus 'was the Christ', and instead says 'Christ led many also from the

[72] Pseudo-Sophronius, *Jerome's Illustrious Men* 2 (ed. Gebhardt p. 4 lines 21–3).
[73] Suda, iota 503 (Ἰώσηπος) (= TLG 9010.001).
[74] Ibid., 504.
[75] Ibid., 503.
[76] This ambiguity is due to the following reason: by reusing Jerome's material, these two Greek witnesses repeat his claim that Josephus 'admits that the Christ was slaughtered by the Pharisees on account of his many signs, that John the Baptist was truly a prophet, and that Jerusalem was destroyed on account of the slaughter of James the apostle'; see Pseudo-Sophronius, *Jerome's Illustrious Men* 23 (ed. Gebhardt p. 17 lines 6–9). But with Jerome, this statement was clearly not intended to claim that Josephus called Jesus 'the Christ', because in Jerome's ensuing quotation of the TF, his version reads that Jesus was merely 'believed to be the Christ'. Jerome was therefore merely employing Christian nomenclature when writing to his Christian audience and is not claiming that Josephus called Jesus the 'Christ'. Jerome did likewise when he called James 'the apostle' in the same sentence. Yet because the later Greek redactor and the Suda made use of a Greek copy of the TF, their versions instead state that Jesus 'was the Christ' (ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν), meaning that their use of Jerome's remarks might, though not necessarily, indicate that they thought that Josephus did call Jesus 'the Christ'.
[77] Wahlgren argues that this author should not be identified with Simeon Metaphrastes; see Wahlgren, *Symeonis Magistri*, 3*–4*.
[78] Simeon Magister Logothete, *Chronicle* 51 (ed. Wahlgren pp. 82–3).
[79] George Cedrenus, *Compendium Historiarum* 1.345 lines 2–10 (= TLG 3018.001).

Greeks',[80] leaving it unclear to the reader as to whether Cedrenus thought that Josephus called Jesus the title 'the Christ' or instead if Cedrenus himself was re-wording Josephus' statement by inserting a Christian name for Jesus.[81] **John Zonarus** (eleventh–twelfth century) also treats the TF in a similarly mundane fashion and introduces it purely as a chronological anchor: 'At this time our Lord and God Jesus Christ appeared in Judaea, concerning which things Josephus says word for word in the eighteenth book of the *Antiquities*'.[82] After quoting the TF, he adds only: 'And from the *Antiquities* Josephus writes these things concerning Christ'.[83]

Lastly, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, **Nicephoras Callistus** (*c.*1325 CE) devotes a chapter to the TF which he modestly entitles, 'that Josephus mentions our Savior Jesus Christ in the eighteenth book of his work and what words he relates concerning him'.[84] He then says: 'I thought it fitting to put forward Josephus the historian, a lover of truth among the Hebrews, as a kind of completion to my first book of history. He relates these things concerning our Savior Jesus Christ in the eighteenth book of the *Antiquities*'.[85] Nicephoras seems to have thought the TF to be noteworthy, but it is not clear what he found so noteworthy about it—all he says of it in the title heading to his chapter is that Josephus 'mentions' Jesus. This is in contrast to how he treats similar passages from Josephus about John the Baptist and James the brother of Jesus. With John, Nicephoras also calls Josephus a 'lover of truth',[86] but then highlights the fact that Josephus gives 'praise' (ἔπαινος) to John,[87] and claims that Josephus' account corroborates the Gospels.[88] With James, Nicephoras emphasizes that Josephus testifies to his righteous character[89] and that Jews of Jerusalem suffered much because of his murder—though Josephus never actually says such things.[90] Yet Nicephoras does not highlight anything specifically remarkable about the TF.

[80] πολλοὺς γὰρ καὶ ἀπὸ Ἑλλήνων ἠγάγετο Χριστός. George Cedrenus, *Compendium Historiarum* 1.345 lines 5–6 (= TLG 3018.001).

[81] Paget wonders if this version hints at a more neutral version of the TF, but is unsure; see Paget, 'Some Observations', 571. I believe this is unlikely because Cedrenus tells us that he received his information from Eusebius (1.344 line 16 and 1.345 lines 11–12). Therefore, the most likely reason for Cedrenus' version is that he is simply summarizing the TF, which is why his version labels Jesus as 'Christ' and why it completes the verb 'cease' (παύω) with a predicate so as to make it say 'cease preaching'. For further discussion on παύω and its awkward lack of a predicate in the TF, see Chapter 3 pp. 94–5. For a brief discussion about Cedrenus' version, see Whealey, 'Josephus on Jesus: Evidence from the First Millennium', 301.

[82] John Zonarus, *Epitome historiarum* 2.12 lines 14–17 (= TLG 3135.001).

[83] Ibid., 2.12 lines 30–1.

[84] Nicephoras Callistus, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.39 lines 1–3 (= TLG 3236.001).

[85] Ibid., 1.39 lines 6–11.

[86] Ibid., 1.20 line 46.

[87] Ibid., 1.20 lines 3–4.

[88] Ibid., 1.20 lines 44–6.

[89] Ibid., 2.38 lines 92–6.

[90] Ibid., 2.38 lines 97–100.

Summary

Twelve Greek authors mention the TF and ten quote it fully,[91] some of them multiple times, making thirteen whole quotations and two paraphrases.[92] Yet none mention the TF's extraordinary content and instead prefer to focus on matters like chronology, Jewish culpability in Jesus' death, the nature of Jesus' teachings, and the number of Jesus' disciples. Several also point out Jesus' miracles as reported in the TF, but as I will show in Chapter 3, it was quite common for non-Christians to acknowledge Jesus' miracles, and even anti-Christian writers would do so. Other than that, none of the sources speak about Jesus' purported divinity in the TF, nor his resurrection, nor the fact that the Hebrew prophets spoke of his wonders. A few might notice the TF's claim about Jesus being 'the Christ', but even this is debatable. One could of course argue that a few might have had reason for ignoring the TF's fantastic content, perhaps because they were unsure of its authenticity. But it seems unlikely that all or even most of them felt suspicious of it, for if they did, why promote its authenticity by quoting it?[93] Why not instead mention doubts about it? And if authenticity was a concern, why would so many feel no qualms at making other false claims about Josephus, such as that he credited great righteousness to James, the brother of Jesus?[94]

[91] The two paraphrases of the TF are *The Religious Discussion at the Court of the Sassanids* and George Cedrenus. I exclude three Greek sources from the list of quotations or paraphrases; one is Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *On Virtues and Vices*, 1.84 [50] lines 17–26 (= TLG 3023.002), because though he makes a direct excerpt of the whole TF without comment, his lack of comment is only due to the fact that his work is a patchwork of excerpts from various historians for which he does not usually leave supplementary remarks. I also exclude an anonymous marginal note containing the epitome of the Greek *Tripartite History* that says: 'The glorious Josephus concerning Christ, for he says that in this time Jesus was a wise man if it is necessary to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful deeds and a teacher of men who receive true things with pleasure [lacuna] and many also from the Greeks Christ led off'. (My translation from Hansen, *Theodoros Agnostes: Kirchengeschichte*, 3.) Though this note comments on nothing in particular about the TF, its nature as marginalia suggests that one should not put too much emphasis on its silence. Lastly, I also do not include the different version of George the Monk's *Chronicon*.

[92] Eusebius quotes from the TF three times and an anonymous author quotes it twice, once in his *Theognosia* and again in his *Dissertatio contra Judaeos*.

[93] Paget suggests that many writers may have been unwilling to quote the TF because they did not want to call attention to the pro-Christian claims of the TF, since they knew of other versions of it or because the TF was not in their manuscripts; see Paget, 'Some Observations', 556–7, 561. But if so, why do so many who quote the whole TF likewise neglect to mention its pro-Christian claims?

[94] This is made by many authors, such as the Suda, iota 503 (Ἰώσηπος) (= TLG 9010.001); Pseudo-Sophronius, *Jerome's Illustrious Men* 2 (ed. Gebhardt p. 4 lines 21–3); Nicephoras Callistus, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.38 lines 92–6 (= TLG 3236.001); George the Monk, *Chronicon* p. 379 lines 6–10 (ed. de Boor = TLG 3043.001); Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.20; George Cedrenus, *Compendium Historiarum* 1.362 lines 8–10 (= TLG 3018.001).

The Puzzling Indirect Reception

This is an unexpected result if one interprets the TF as a pro-Christian account of Jesus. And it so happens that the same phenomenon can be observed with several additional writers who do not quote the TF (despite its apparent relevancy for their purposes), yet who were certainly aware of it insofar as they likely knew both the *Antiquities* of Josephus and the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius, in which the TF is quoted. In other words, there are several writers who definitely knew of the TF from Eusebius and probably also from Josephus, and yet who curiously do not mention it even though its apparent Christian claims would have been of great interest to them.[95]

Thus, **Theodoret**[96] frequently quotes from Josephus' *Antiquities* throughout his *Commentary on Daniel*,[97] which he wrote around 431 CE.[98] He even quotes from *Antiquities* 18.33–5, a passage just thirty or so verses from the TF.[99] He also knows of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, which he uses numerous times in his own work *Compendium of Heretical Fables*,[100] composed around 423 CE.[101] He further shows familiarity with Eusebius' *Demonstration*.[102] But despite having access to up to three copies of the TF—from Josephus' *Antiquities*, Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, and Eusebius' *Demonstration*[103]—Theodoret says quite precisely that Josephus did not 'accept the Christian message',[104] even though Eusebius' version of the TF (apparently) states that Josephus did accept the message. This is suggestive that Theodoret, like Eusebius before him, did not interpret the TF in a positive manner.

[95] Chrysostom and Ambrose might also be added, but though they knew Josephus, I cannot tell if they knew Eusebius' work. For a discussion on their usage of Josephus, see Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*, 88–9, 90–1.

[96] For discussion on Theodoret and the TF, see Schreckenberg, 98–9; Paget, 'Some Observations', 559, 567–8; Whealey, 'Josephus on Jesus: Evidence from the First Millennium', 301; Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 36.

[97] Most frequently he draws upon Josephus' historical knowledge (Theodoret, *Commentary on Daniel* 8 [1444], 9 [1479–80]), but occasionally he corrects Josephus (Theodoret, *Commentary on Daniel* 6 [1395–6]).

[98] On the dating of this work, see Hill, *Theodoret of Cyrus*, xiii.

[99] Theodoret, *Commentary on Daniel* 9 [1480].

[100] Explicit references to Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* comes from Theodoret, *Compendium of Heretical Fables* 2.2 and Theodoret's own *Ecclesiastical History* 1.preface. That Theodoret was greatly indebted to Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* is abundantly clear throughout most of his *Compendium of Heretical Fables*. For a translation of this work, see Cope, 'An Analysis of the Heresiological Method of Theodoret'.

[101] Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 3 p. 544.

[102] The evidence for this is discussed by Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 36, 49 n. 65. Theodoret also knows Eusebius' *Preparation of the Gospel*; see Theodoret, *Cure for Greek Maladies* 2.97 (ed. Scholten, *Theodoret, De Graecarum affectionum curatione*, 244.)

[103] Paget does not think it certain that Theodoret had access to the TF, but acknowledges that it as possible, Paget, 'Some Observations', 559, 567–8.

[104] Theodoret, *Commentary on Daniel* 12 [1544] (translation modified from Hill p. 327). Note, that in this passage Theodoret is quite hostile to Jews in general. This may show that he interpreted the TF quite negatively.

The ***Paschal Chronicle*** (seventh century) cites Josephus several times.[105] In one instance the chronicle appeals to the *Antiquities* about the death of John the Baptist,[106] and another time it misleadingly credits Josephus as claiming that Jerusalem was destroyed because the Jews had killed James, the brother of Jesus.[107] But when the document comes to Jesus, it instead emphasizes chronological concerns, saying that Josephus supports the idea that Jesus preached 'for three years'[108] and then adds that 'Josephus in the eighteenth book of the *Jewish Antiquities* writes that there were three high priests after Annas'.[109] In evaluating these mentions of Josephus, two things become clear: firstly, the *Paschal Chronicle* has no reservations about incorrectly citing Josephus to support Christian claims, and, secondly, it also obviously follows Eusebius throughout large portions of its narrative, even citing him explicitly at times.[110] In fact when it mentions that Jesus preached 'for three years' it is borrowing from Eusebius who cites Josephus to support the notion that Jesus preached for about three years.[111] Immediately after this, Eusebius quotes from the TF.[112] Yet, despite surely knowing the TF from Eusebius, if not from the *Antiquities* directly, the *Paschal Chronicle* never mentions it.[113] What can explain this? It cannot be that the chronicle was concerned about the TF's authenticity, for it is quite willing to misrepresent Josephus elsewhere. Is there some other explanation?

George Syncellus (*c.*810 CE) too wrote a lengthy chronicle of world history, and in it he mentions Josephus by name sixty-five times and Eusebius 141 times,[114] all while frequently citing passages from both the *Antiquities* and the *Ecclesiastical History*.[115] Syncellus also makes sure to deploy Josephus to corroborate Christian claims concerning the death of John the Baptist and James the brother of Jesus,[116] but he says nothing of the TF. This does not seem to be because he doubted the genuineness of the testimony, for he does not hesitate to make Josephus falsely say, once again, that Jerusalem was destroyed because the Jews had killed James, the brother of Jesus.[117] George surely knew about the TF at least from Eusebius, so why avoid discussing it?

[105] For a list of citations, see Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*, 106.
[106] *Paschal Chronicle* p. 408 lines 1–11 (ed. Dindorf = TLG 2371.001).
[107] Ibid., p. 463 lines 16–21.
[108] Ibid., p. 417 lines 6–9.
[109] Ibid., p. 417 lines 17–19.
[110] Ibid., p. 461 line 21, p. 477 lines 4–5, and p. 490 line 2.
[111] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.10.4 (quoting from *Antiquities* 18.33–5).
[112] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.11.7–8.
[113] Schreckenberg says that the *Paschal Chronicle* did not know Josephus directly, Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*, 106. Yet Schreckenberg lists Josephan passages in the *Paschal Chronicle* that are not found in Eusebius, Schreckenberg, 79–84, 106.
[114] I obtained these numbers through a TLG lemma search for Ἰώσηπος and Εὐσέβιος.
[115] For a list of the citations, see the index in Adler and Tuffin, *The Chronography of George Synkellos*. Also see Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*, 110–12.
[116] George Syncellus, *Chronicle* §388, §413. See also §407 where Syncellus cites Josephus to corroborate a passage from the book of Acts.
[117] George Syncellus, *Chronicle* §413.

Photius (*c.*890 CE) is interesting for similar reasons. He was extraordinarily well read and is often considered to have been the most educated scholar of his day. In one of his lengthy works, the *Library*, he makes 280 summaries of various ancient and medieval books including Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*[118] and his *Demonstration*,[119] both of which of course quoted the TF. He also knows the *Ecclesiastical History* of Sozomen,[120] who gives a Christianizing paraphrase of the TF, about which I will speak in the next section below. Most importantly though, Photius also discusses Josephus' works and describes the *Antiquities* on two different occasions,[121] once giving a lengthy two-dozen paragraph summary of *Antiquities* books 14–20, the portion of the *Antiquities* where the TF should have been placed.[122] In this summary, Photius briefly mentions Josephus' discussions of John the Baptist[123] and James the brother of Jesus,[124] but all he may say of the TF is 'At this point also the saving passion occurred' (Κατὰ τοῦτον καὶ τὸ σωτήριον ἐγεγόνει πάθος).[125]

It is unclear if one should take this remark as a short summary of the TF, much like how Photius treated Josephus' reports of John and James.[126] Or if instead one should take the remark simply as an editorial note of Photius, much like an earlier statement Photius makes in the same summary that points out when Jesus was born,[127] or when he reminds the reader that the Agrippa mentioned in Josephus' narrative was Agrippa I who executed James, the brother of John.[128] One reason to think Photius has in mind the TF is that he begins his brief statement about Jesus with the phrase 'in this' (κατὰ τοῦτον) and then follows it with the word 'to be' or 'was' (ἐγεγόνει), quite similar to the opening phrase in the TF, which includes the three same Greek words with the same meanings: 'in this time there was' (γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον). What is also striking is that a TLG search for the exact phrase κατὰ τοῦτον in the vast works of Photius, which number around a million words, reveals only nine other times that he deploys it, but none refer to a time frame, like Photius seems to do in this instance.[129] It is plausible then (though not provable) that while writing this passage Photius altered his customary style

[118] Photius, *Library* 27. For a critical edition and a French translation of this work, see Henry, *Photius: Bibliothèque*.
[119] Ibid., 10, 12.
[120] Photius, *Library* 30. Note that with his discussions of Eusebius and Sozomen, Photius does little more than to indicate that he had read their books, something which he also confirms in his prologue where he claims he read all of the books given an entry in the *Library*.
[121] Photius, *Library* 76, 238.
[122] Ibid., 238.
[123] Ibid., 238 [316a] (ed. Henry vol. 5 p. 149 lines 36–9).
[124] Ibid., 238 [317b] (ed. Henry vol. 5 p. 152 lines 6–9).
[125] Ibid., 238 [316a] (ed. Henry vol. 5 p. 149 lines 39–40).
[126] Ibid., 238 [315a] (ed. Henry vol. 5 p. 149 lines 36–9); 238 [317b] (ed. Henry vol. 5 p. 152 lines 7–9).
[127] Ibid., 238 [314a] (ed. Henry vol. 5 p. 142 lines 19–21).
[128] Ibid., 238 [316b] (ed. Henry vol. 5 p. 150 lines 26–8).
[129] Of these nine instances, five complete κατὰ τοῦτον with τρόπον, two complete it with λόγον, and one each with ἀγών and ὅρος.

because as he summarized the *Antiquities* he was plugging in Josephus' turns of phrase as he went,[130] and therefore also loosely followed the introductory wording of the TF.[131]

But either way, this makes for something of a puzzle: why does Photius not mention the TF more explicitly? Some have suggested that the TF goes unmentioned in Photius since it was not in the manuscripts of the *Antiquities* that he had read.[132] Yet this seems unlikely because in another location, Photius complains that a Jewish contemporary of Josephus, Justus of Tiberias, does not mention 'the miracles performed by him [i.e. Jesus]' (τῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τερατουργηθέντων) in his own historical work.[133] Yet Photius complains about no such thing regarding Jesus and his miracles in the *Antiquities*. Such suggests that Photius thought that Josephus did mention Jesus' miracles.

It also does not seem probable that Photius ignored or minimized the TF because the manuscript of the *Antiquities* which he had before him contained a different version of the TF which was quite negative. The reason for this being so unlikely is that Photius has no qualms about pointing out when Josephus contradicts biblical history,[134] and frequently criticizes other authors for what he views as false or blasphemous statements.[135] He does this even with revered authors contemporaneous with Josephus, as with Clement of Rome.[136]

Nor is it likely that Photius omitted mentioning the TF because he considered it to be a forgery since Photius often critically discusses both forgeries[137] and interpolations in various works.[138] Likewise, he also sought out old manuscripts[139] and gathered multiple copies for verificational purposes,[140] and spent much time talking about the results of these investigations, giving many references to manuscript variants and authorial editions.[141] He even paid attention to marginal notes in order to establish authorship.[142] In the latter case, he summarizes another work attributed to Josephus, but is suspicious that it has been misattributed to the Jewish

[130] For example, Photius clearly follows the wording of *Antiquities* 15.8 in *Library* 238 [315b–316a] (ed. Henry vol. 5 p. 147 lines 41–5). Many other examples can be found by using the TLG 'Parallel Browsing' feature to compare the *Antiquities* and the *Library*.

[131] This point though should not be pressed too far, for it is also possible that κατὰ τοῦτον should instead be translated 'under him [Herod]', but in this case it would still depart from Photius' style because with all the other times he uses κατὰ τοῦτον he supplies a noun to partner with τοῦτον, which still hints that the phrase was suggested to Photius by another writer, see n. 129. This would be a stronger argument if Photius had instead written κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον, matching the TF more precisely.

[132] Paget, 'Some Observations', 556–7.

[133] Photius, *Library* 33 [6b] (ed. Henry vol. 1 p. 19 lines 34–8).

[134] Ibid., 76 [52b] (ed. Henry vol. 1 p. 155 lines 19–21).

[135] Ibid., 13, 75, 77, 108, 109, 111, 114.

[136] Ibid., 126.

[137] Ibid., 1, 75, 112–13.

[138] Ibid., 233.

[139] Ibid., 77, 111.

[140] Ibid., 77, 111–13, 172–74.

[141] Ibid., 13, 77, 98, 111–13.

[142] Ibid., 48.

historian because of its openly Christian claims,[143] whereas Josephus, Photius understood, was a Jew, not a Christian.[144]

So then, if Photius viewed the TF as suspiciously Christian, why not criticize its authenticity as he does elsewhere? On the other hand, if Photius had access to a different, more negative version of the TF, why would he not criticize its anti-Christian content, as he also does for other passages? And, lastly, if the TF was simply not present in the manuscripts of the *Antiquities* Photius had before him, why would he not then follow his standard practice of discussing interpolations and forgeries, especially since he knew of at least three other works that did discuss the TF? Moreover, why would he not complain that Josephus omits describing Jesus in detail, just as he complained about Josephus' contemporary Justus of Tiberias?

To summarize, throughout Photius' literary pursuits, he explicitly discusses manuscript variants, authorial editions, interpolations, and forgeries; he complains when Jesus' miracles go unmentioned in historical works; and he criticizes authors for various theological and historical errors, even including Josephus himself. And indeed, he once also discounts Josephus as an author of a work because of that work's Christian content. Given all this, and the fact that Photius knew of the TF through at least Eusebius and Sozomen, it certainly seems that the best explanation for Photius' treatment (or lack of treatment) of the TF is that he simply found it unremarkable. And so, he only briefly summarized it, just like he did with Josephus' reports of John the Baptist and James the brother of Jesus.[145]

The Pro-Christian Reception

Unlike those individuals given above, there are five Greek writers who do notice the TF's allegedly pro-Christian content. They interpret the TF as claiming that Jesus was divine, was prophesied in Scripture, was resurrected, and was the Christ—though only one author notes all of these claims.

But be that as it may, their treatment of the TF is very instructive, for three of them only paraphrase the TF and therefore do not actually quote it directly. Of these, **Sozomen's** (*c.*450 CE) paraphrastic summary forms almost a small commentary. He claims that Josephus spoke of Jesus' miraculous works (παραδόξων ἔργων), attested to his 'true words' (λόγων ἀληθῶν), affirmed his resurrection, called him 'Christ', and acknowledged the prophecies about him. Sozomen then concludes his summary by saying 'it seems to me that while narrating these

[143] Ibid., 48 [11b] (ed. Henry vol. 1 p. 34 lines 38–9).
[144] Ibid., 47, 48, 76.
[145] For discussion of Photius and his relationship to the TF, see Paget, 'Some Observations', 556–7 n. 57. See also Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*, 120–2.

things [Josephus] in reflecting on his works all but proclaims that Christ is God' (μοι δοκεῖ ταῦτα ἱστορῶν μονονουχὶ βοᾶν ἀναλόγως τοῖς ἔργοις θεὸν εἶναι τὸν Χριστόν).[146] Notably, Sozomen covers all the potentially positive claims of the TF, interpreting them in a favorable light as he goes, though this does require him to alter the ambiguous 'truisms' (τἀληθῆ) to the more praiseworthy 'true words' (λόγων ἀληθῶν).

But while Sozomen covers almost every point of the TF, **Malalas** (*c.*565 CE) and **Michael Glycas** (twelfth century) provide paraphrases that truncate the TF while also vamping up its ambiguous phrasing. Malalas, for instance, does not actually mention any of the most fabulous details of the TF except for claiming that Josephus considered calling Jesus 'God', but he does not say that Josephus actually did. He also claims that Josephus described Jesus' miracles, though with this it seems that Josephus' phrasing may have made him uncomfortable since he substitutes the more positive term σημεῖα 'signs' for the TF's potentially negative term παράδοξα 'incredible' or even 'magical' deeds.[147]

In fact, Malalas may have also found the TF's phrase 'if it is necessary to call him a man' too ambiguous for his tastes given that such a phrase could be read as implying that Jesus was actually less than a man.[148] And so, in his brief summary, Malalas changed the phrase to 'if it is necessary to call such a one a man and not God'.[149] In these efforts to gussy up the TF, Malalas even goes so far as to falsely claim that Josephus called Jesus 'good and just' (ἀγαθὸς καὶ δίκαιος), which Josephus did not say.[150] It hence is not even clear that Malalas should be counted as noticing the spectacular claims of the TF, since the only ones he points out either were not stated by Josephus or, if they were, seem to have struck Malalas as being too ambiguous in Josephus' original phrasing.

Glycas, on his part, does at least seem to mention Josephus' description of Jesus' resurrection appearance after three days, but this depends on how one interprets the Greek.[151] But other than this, all he points out is that Josephus called Jesus 'wise' and then, like Malalas, he claims that Josephus testified to the miracles of Jesus, but with this he uses the positive σημεῖα 'signs' for the ambiguous παράδοξα.[152]

[146] Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.1.5–6 (ed. Hansen, *Sozomenus: Kirchengeschichte*, GCS NF 4 p. 7 lines 3–16 = TLG 2048.001). For brief discussion, see Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*, 97.

[147] John Malalas, *Chronicle* 10.26 [247–8] lines 11–23 (ed. Thurn, *Ioannis Malalae: Chronographia*, 187 = TLG 2871.004). For brief discussion, see Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*, 104.

[148] On this, see Chapter 3 pp. 71–2.

[149] εἴπερ ἄρα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἄνθρωπον δεῖ λέγειν καὶ μὴ θεόν, John Malalas, *Chronicle* 10.26 [248] lines 19–20 (ed. Thurn, *Ioannis Malalae: Chronographia*, 187 = TLG 2871.004). For a similar point, see Bammel, 'A New Variant Form of the Testimonium Flavianum', 146.

[150] This claim is reminiscent of what Josephus said of John the Baptist in *Antiquities* 18.117.

[151] Glycas uses the Greek phrase ζῶντα φανῆνα, which, as I explain in Chapter 3 pp. 96–100, can be translated 'appeared alive' or 'appeared to be alive' (Michael Glycas, *Annales* 436 line 20 (= TLG 3047.001)). Sozomen uses the same wording, but the context makes it clearer that he is interpreting the phrase as actually claiming that Jesus rose again.

[152] Michael Glycas, *Annales* 436 lines 16–20 (= TLG 3047.001).

In total, neither Malalas nor Glycas mention that Josephus called Jesus 'the Christ', or that he spoke of any prophecies concerning Jesus, or that he praised Jesus' teachings or that Jesus worked παράδοξα. One must wonder, if Malalas and Glycas thought that the TF spoke so highly of Jesus, why not quote it for their readers to see? Why briefly summarize it and omit so many of its apparently flattering claims?

All this means that, as far as I can tell, only two Greek sources—the anonymous ***Acta Sanctorum Donati et sociorum*** (fifth–sixth century)[153] and the anonymous ***Dialogue with the Jews*** (sixth–seventh century)[154]—point out the extraordinary Christian content of the Greek TF, and also quote it for their readers to evaluate. But even they do not clearly claim that that the TF states Jesus was 'the Christ'.[155] Instead, all they mention is that Josephus testified to the resurrection of Jesus and to his divinity. Yet, both greatly exaggerate this latter claim with one saying that Josephus 'expressly testifies to the divinity' (ῥητῶς τὲ θεότητι),[156] and the other misleadingly stating that Josephus 'testifies that Christ was true God' (μαρτυρεῖ τὸν Χριστὸν τὸν Θεὸν ἀληθινὸν γεγονότα).[157] This tendency to exaggerate makes one wonder if the only other positive claim they point out—the resurrection—has also been exaggerated.

In stepping back to evaluate the five authors who notice the pro-Christian claims of the TF, it is relevant that three of them find the claims so unbelievable that they spend great effort in justifying why Josephus would have written words so like a Christian would have. One anonymous writer asks, 'Who compelled Josephus, being a Jewish man, to write such things?'[158] He then rifles through a sampling of reasons, dismissing each one in turn, and finally concludes that Josephus had been 'beguiled' (παρέπεισεν) into saying such things by the providential power of Christ himself.[159] Glycas cautions 'but you, beloved, do not be amazed that even certain barbarians put forth good things, for God, when he molded man, implanted within him the discernment between good and evil'.[160] And Sozomen likewise argues that Josephus must have been 'struck by a miracle'.[161]

It appears then that those who notice the sensational details tend to be so shocked that they feel the need to openly justify such content to their audience by, quite literally, appealing to the miraculous. This kind of reaction to the fabulous claims in the TF greatly contrasts with the staid reactions of so many others

[153] *Acta Sanctorum Donati et sociorum* 3.11 (Palmé, *Acta Sanctorum*, vol. 18 Maii (5) p. 150a–b). For a very brief discussion, see Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*, 98.

[154] *Dialogue with the Jews* 10 lines 342–82 (ed. Declerck pp. 97–8 = TLG 3186.001).

[155] Sozomen is the only author to clearly point this out; see n. 166.

[156] *Dialogue with the Jews* 10 line 347 (ed. Declerck p. 97).

[157] *Acta Sanctorum Donati et sociorum* 3.11 (Palmé, *Acta Sanctorum*, vol. 18 Maii (5) p. 150a.)

[158] *Dialogue with the Jews* 10 lines 360–2 (ed. Declerck p. 98).

[159] *Dialogue with the Jews* 10 line 375 (ed. Declerck p. 98).

[160] Michael Glycas, *Annales* 436 lines 20–1 (= TLG 3047.001).

[161] ὑπὸ δὲ τοῦ παραδόξου πράγματος καταπλαγείς. Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.1.5 (NPNCF^2 translation; ed. Hansen p. 7 line 13 = TLG 2048.001).

who instead matter-of-factly point out several unremarkable claims in the TF and move on.

Conclusion

Running through the twenty times the TF is quoted or paraphrased in Greek literature, it seems that, all told, only three or four authors claim that the TF asserts Jesus' resurrection.[162] Four authors mention Jesus' implied divinity in the TF, but three greatly exaggerate the statement.[163] Three authors treat 'truisms' (τἀληθῆ) as an endorsement of Jesus, but two change the phrasing to be more positive.[164] Six authors point out the miraculous deeds of Jesus, but four of them swap out the possibly negative παράδοξα 'incredible deeds' for a more palatable word, and a fifth is concerned with the implications of παράδοξα.[165] Only one author, Sozomen, clearly claims that the TF 'conspicuously names [Jesus] the Christ',[166] though perhaps a few could be added to this number if we count ambiguous instances.[167] Lastly, it is again only Sozomen who notes the TF's claim that Jesus fulfilled Jewish prophecy.[168] Thus, the number of Greek writers who sensationally interpret the TF is far less than those writers who make no mention of any such things, even when it would have been most helpful to them. And those few who interpret the TF positively often alter it when describing it to their readers. Consequently, the great majority of Greek writers seem to have considered the TF to be fairly mundane and

[162] Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.1.5–6 (ed. Hansen p. 7 line 8 (= TLG 2048.001), *Acta Sanctorum Donati et sociorum* 3.11 (ed. Palmé p. 150a), and the anonymous *Dialogue with the Jews* 10 lines 342–3 (ed. Declerck p. 97 = TLG 3186.001). Depending on how one interprets the Greek, Michael Glycas may also claim that the TF affirms the resurrection of Jesus.

[163] Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.1.6 (ed. Hansen p. 7 lines 11–12 = TLG 2048.001); *Acta Sanctorum Donati et sociorum* 3.11 (ed. Palmé p. 150a); the anonymous *Dialogue with the Jews* 10 line 347 (ed. Declerck p. 97 = TLG 3186.001); John Malalas, *Chronicle* 10.26 [247–8] lines 11–23 (ed. Thurn, *Ioannis Malalae: Chronographia*, 187 = TLG 2871.004). Malalas is the only one to not exaggerate the statement.

[164] Isidore of Pelusium, *Letter* 1259 (4.225) (ed. Évieux, *Isidore de Péluse*, 258 lines 25–9 = TLG 2741.001 lines 25–9); Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.1.6 (ed. Hansen p. 7 line 7 = TLG 2048.001); Oecumenius, *Commentary on Revelation* 4.10.8 (ed. Hoskier, *The Complete Commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse*, p. 88 lines 12–13 = TLG 2866.001 p. 88 lines 12–13).

[165] Eusebius, *Demonstration* 3.5.107–8 (124c–d) (ed. Heikel GCS 23 p. 131 lines 3–9 = TLG 2018.005 lines 1–8); Eusebius, *Theophany* 5.2–20; Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.1.6 (ed. Hansen p. 7 lines 11–12 = TLG 2048.001); *Religious Discussion at the Court of the Sassanids* §60 (of Bringel), p. 36 lines 8–11 (of Bratke); Pseudo-Sophronius, *Jerome's Illustrious Men* 23 (ed. Gebhardt p. 17 line 6); John Malalas, *Chronicle* 10.26 [247–8] lines 11–23 (ed. Thurn, *Ioannis Malalae: Chronographia*, 187 = TLG 2871.004); Michael Glycas, *Annales* 436 lines 16–20 (= TLG 3047.001). Sozomen is the only one to treat παράδοξα positively, while Eusebius is concerned about its implications.

[166] Χριστὸν δὲ περιφανῶς ὀνομάζει. Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.1.5–6 (ed. Hansen p. 7 line 5 = TLG 2048.001).

[167] These are *Acta Sanctorum Donati et sociorum*, the anonymous *Dialogue with the Jews*, Pseudo-Sophronius, the Suda, and George Cedrenus. Michael Glycas, *Annales* 436 line 20 (= TLG 3047.001) may be a another instance depending on how one translates his summary.

[168] Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.1.5 (ed. Hansen p. 7 line 9 = TLG 2048.001).

some, like Eusebius and the anonymous author of the *Dissertatio contra Judaeos*, appear to have found it to be potentially negative.

All this urges the conclusion that in the TF most Greek authors noticed no spectacular claims of any kind. And their reticence regarding such incredible content cannot be credited to suspicions over the TF's authenticity, because, as I have pointed out above, so many do not blush to make other false, pro-Christian statements about Josephus. What then can explain such disparate reactions to the TF?

In the present book I suggest a solution to this puzzling reception history. I argue that those statements in the TF which sound so extravagantly suspicious to our modern ears seemed quite different to most ancient and medieval writers who read them as not only ambiguous, but as also quite similar to other non-Christian reports about Jesus. This explains why so many never bothered to make use of the spectacular details in the TF; for to them, the TF did not have anything spectacular about it. Instead, the TF merely presented a neutral, ambiguous, or even vaguely negative account about Jesus that was of little benefit for their purposes. Yet, that very ambiguity allowed a minority of writers—most of whom only summarized or even manipulated its content—to interpret the TF in a way that promoted various Christian claims about Jesus.

But, before I make my case about the ambiguity of the TF, I must discuss other authors who wrote in Latin, Syriac, and Arabic, yet who knew the TF in Greek, or at least knew those who did.

2
The Western and Eastern Reception

The Puzzling Latin Reception

In the previous chapter, we saw how Greek authors tended to interpret the *Testimonium Flavianum* not as a pro-Christian account of Jesus, but as something far less positive and far more ambiguous, or even in some cases slightly negative. But what of other writers in Latin, Syriac, and Arabic, who were able to read the TF in the original Greek, or had access to those who could? How did they treat the TF? In what follows I introduce these non-Greek writers and note several peculiarities in their responses to the TF. I show that though many translated the Greek TF in a positive manner, most give hints that they were not entirely comfortable with its original Greek content and some even provide what I will argue in Chapters 3 and 4 are authentic variant readings.

Most important of these authors are Jerome of Stridon (*c.*393 CE), Michael the Syrian (*c.*1199 CE), and Agapius of Menbij (*c.*941/2 CE), all of whom do not present the TF as saying that Jesus 'was the Christ', but rather that he was, respectively, 'believed to be', or 'thought' to be, or 'was perhaps' the Christ. The source that Agapius and Michael used for the TF has been somewhat of a mystery to scholars, but new evidence presented in this chapter points to noted Syriac translator Jacob of Edessa (*c.*708 CE), whom I argue had access to the *Antiquities* of Josephus in the original Greek. Throughout the chapter I also introduce various names, dates, and key terms. Given the breadth of this chapter, it may be helpful to first consult the summary provided at the chapter's conclusion.

Pseudo-Hegesippus (*c.*370 CE)

Pseudo-Hegesippus (*c.*370 CE) is the first Latin writer to make any kind of mention of the TF.[1] He rewrote the Greek version of Josephus' *War* in a work entitled *On the Ruin of the City of Jerusalem* (*de excidio urbis hierosolymitanae*). He therefore had great facility in Greek. The oldest manuscript of his work is quite early, coming from the sixth century.[2] Pseudo-Hegesippus' project, though, can hardly be called

[1] Pseudo-Hegesippus, *On the Ruin of the City of Jerusalem* 2.12.1. For discussion, see Whealey, 'Josephus on Jesus: Evidence from the First Millennium', 297–9; Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 30–4; Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*, 56–8.

[2] MS Ambrosianus C 105 inf. (sixth century CE). For discussion of manuscripts, see Ussani, *Hegesippi qui dicitur historiae libri V*, vol. 2 pp. viii–xxiii.

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even a paraphrastic translation as the author freely imports material and changes Josephus' text, by, for example, inserting a lengthy discussion on Peter and Paul in Rome.[3] However, Pseudo-Hegesippus also presents a paraphrase of the TF that he appears to have derived directly from Greek manuscripts of the *Antiquities*,[4] and upon which he also provides some comments.

In both his paraphrase and his short comments, he characterizes the TF in a stridently pro-Christian and even anti-Jewish manner touching on almost every point, mentioning its affirmation of Jesus' resurrection, his miracles, his divinity, and his fulfillment of prophecy—except, oddly, he does not claim that TF called Jesus 'the Christ'. Pseudo-Hegesippus also notably does not actually translate the TF, but simply paraphrases it, which follows the pattern of those few Greek writers who likewise interpreted the TF in a Christianizing vein, as I observed in Chapter 1.

In this regard Pseudo-Hegesippus goes even so far as to distort the content of the TF to suit his aims by portraying ambiguous or possibly negative Greek phrases with far more positive Latin parallels.[5] Thus, for him the TF's run-of-the-mill 'truisms' (τἀληθῆ) are described as 'moral precepts' (*praeceptis moralibus*); that Jesus 'brought over' or even 'misled' (ἐπηγάγετο) becomes 'they believed in him' (*crediderunt in eum*); the questionable term 'incredible' or perhaps 'magical' deeds (παράδοξα) is turned into 'wonders' (*mirabilium)* and also repeated as 'deeds beyond human ability' (*operibus ultra humanam possibilitatem*); and the rather ambiguous 'if indeed it is necessary to call him a man' (εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή) is vamped up in his comments into the unrecognizable 'the leaders of the synagogue who had laid hold of him unto death confessed him to be God' (*principes synagogae quem ad mortem comprehenderant deum fatebantur*). Lastly, the prosaic 'and up till now the tribe of the Christians, who were named from him, has not disappeared' (εἰς [ἔτι] τε νῦν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀπὸ τοῦδε ὠνομασμένον οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φῦλον) is greatly exaggerated as 'from whom [i.e. Jesus] the congregation of the Christians has also penetrated into every race of men, with not one nation in the Roman world remaining that is without his veneration' (*ex quo coepit*

[3] Pseudo-Hegesippus, *On the Ruin of the City of Jerusalem* 3.2.

[4] It is clear that Pseudo-Hegesippus had access to the *Antiquities* because he places Josephus' testimony of John the Baptist after his testimony about Jesus (*On the Ruin of the City of Jerusalem* 2.12.1–2), just as they are found in *Antiquities* 18.63–4 and 18.116–19. This is not how such passages are found in Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 1.11.1–9, who is likely the only other source from whom Pseudo-Hegesippus could have learned of the passages. Pseudo-Hegesippus also includes material from an adjacent passage in the *Antiquities* that Eusebius and earlier Christians had not mentioned regarding the incident involving Paulina found in *Antiquities* 18.65–80 and in Pseudo-Hegisippus, *On the Ruin of the City of Jerusalem* 2.4.1. On this, see Whealey, 'Josephus on Jesus: Evidence from the First Millennium', 297–8.

[5] I discuss these ambiguous and negative phrases in detail in Chapter 3. For a list of them, see Chapter 7 p. 198.

congregatio Christianorum et in omne hominum penetravit genus, nec ulla natio Romani orbis remansit, quae cultus eius expers relinqueretur).[6] Pseudo-Hegesippus also highlights the TF's claim that Jesus was resurrected and that the Hebrew prophets spoke of him, but it appears to me that his willingness to so distort the TF ought to make one question whether he has presented these latter two statements accurately. He does after all seem like a very poor exegete.

One further item of interest is that—like Sozomen, Michael Glycas, and the anonymous author of the *Dialogue with the Jews*—Pseudo-Hegesippus also feels the need to provide some kind of rationale as to why Josephus would have remained a Jew after saying such spectacular things about Jesus. And so, he reasons that Josephus 'did not believe his own words' (*nec sermonibus suis*) because of his 'devious mind' (*mente devius*) and the 'hardness of his heart' (*duritiam cordis*).[7] In view of this, it must be observed that for Pseudo-Hegesippus to conclude such a thing about Josephus, there must have been something Josephus said that clearly indicated he was not a believer in Jesus. As will become apparent below, it is likely that Pseudo-Hegesippus had before himself no version of the TF that claimed Jesus 'was the Christ', but instead a version which read much more like 'was believed to be the Christ'. This would explain how Pseudo-Hegesippus knew that Josephus did not believe in Jesus. And, in fact, Pseudo-Hegesippus likely alludes to such a statement when he paraphrases the TF as 'they believed in him' (*crediderunt in eum*).[8] This sounds very like the textual variant witnessed by Jerome, our next Latin author to treat the Greek TF.

Jerome of Stridon (*c.*393 CE)

Jerome of course is the famous translator of many Greek texts, including the New Testament, and thus knew Greek quite well. He also cites Josephus more than fifty times throughout his writings,[9] though he only quotes from the TF on one occasion. This version of the TF can be found in his *Illustrious Men*

[6] Pseudo-Hegesippus, *On the Ruin of the City of Jerusalem* 2.12.1 (ed. Ussani, CSEL 66 vol. 1 pp. 163–4).

[7] Ibid., 2.12.1 (ed. Ussani, CSEL 66 vol. 1 p. 164). For a translation and discussion of this passage, see Whealey, 'Josephus on Jesus: Evidence from the First Millennium', 298.

[8] Pseudo-Hegesippus, *On the Ruin of the City of Jerusalem* 2.12.1 (ed. Ussani p. 163 line 12).

[9] For discussion on Jerome's usage of Josephus, see Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*, 91–5. For discussions on Jerome and the TF specifically, see Whealey, 'Josephus on Jesus: Evidence from the First Millennium', 299–300; Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 29–30; Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*, 94–5. Alice Whealey thinks it likely that Jerome translated his version of the TF from Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, but Jerome was very familiar with Josephus' works, so I think it also possible that he utilized manuscripts of the *Antiquities*; see Whealey, 'The Testimonium Flavianum in Syriac and Arabic', 581.

(*c.*393 CE),[10] a work witnessed by manuscripts as early as the sixth or seventh century.[11]

Here, however, Jerome is forced to conduct some imaginative hermeneutics to claim that Josephus 'manifestly confesses that Christ was killed by the Pharisees on account of the greatness of his signs, and that John the Baptist was truly a prophet, and that because James the apostle was killed, Jerusalem was destroyed'.[12] But Jerome's translation of the TF says no such thing about Jesus[13] and it even departs from the TF's extant Greek version by saying that Jesus was 'believed to be the Christ' (*credebatur esse Christus*),[14] not that 'he was the Christ'. On the face of it, Jerome's translation of this phrase is, in context, reminiscent of Pseudo-Hegesippus' paraphrase 'nevertheless, many Jews and even more gentiles believed in him' (*plerique tamen Iudaeorum, gentilium plurimi crediderunt in eum*),[15] whereas Jerome's more literal translation has 'He also had very many followers, from the Jews as much as from the gentiles, and was believed to be the Christ' (*Plurimos quoque tam de Iudaeis quam de gentilibus habuit sectatores et credebatur esse Christus*).[16]

Apart from this parallel, there are also hints that Jerome did not exactly relish all the implications of the TF's contents, for he substitutes more positive Latin phrases for statements that could be construed as negative in the original Greek. Thus, the potentially negative 'incredible' deeds (παράδοξα) is rendered 'wonders' (*mirabilium*); the possibly carnal term 'with pleasure' (ἡδονῇ) is instead 'gladly' (*libenter*); and 'he brought over' or even 'he misled' (ἐπηγάγετο) becomes the much plainer 'he had followers' (*habuit sectatores*).

What is most curious, however, is that Jerome never mentions the most pro-Christian statements allegedly present within the TF, especially Jesus rising from the dead, even though he points out positive material about James the apostle and John the Baptist in other parts of the *Antiquities*.[17] And his silence is unlikely due to worries over the authenticity of the TF or to concerns that the fabulous content in the TF would simply be a bridge too far for incredulous readers; otherwise

[10] Jerome, *Illustrious Men* 13.5–6. Sectional numberings for this work are taken from Halton, *St. Jerome: On Illustrious Men*. On the dating of this work, see Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 4 pp. 228–9.

[11] MS Vaticanus Regin. Lat. 2077 may come from the sixth century; see Image 7. A seventh-century manuscript is MS Paris Lat. 12161 page 43 lines 3–16 found at https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b52506880r. For information, see Richardson, 'Hieronymus liber de viris inlustribus', xii–xiii.

[12] *manifestissime confitetur propter magnitudinem signorum Christum a Pharisaeis interfectum, et Iohannem Baptistam vere prophetam fuisse, et propter interfectionem Iacobi apostoli, Hierosolymam dirutam*. Jerome, *Illustrious Men* 13.4 (ed. Richardson p. 16 lines 10–13). See also another edition of this version of the TF in Levenson and Martin, 'The Latin Translations of Josephus on Jesus', 78.

[13] It appears that Jerome may have derived the first part of this statement from John 11:47.

[14] Jerome, *Illustrious Men* 13.6 (ed. Richardson p. 16 line 18). This phrase can be found in the seventh-century manuscript MS Paris Lat. 12161 page 43 lines 8–9.

[15] Pseudo-Hegesippus, *On the Ruin of the City of Jerusalem* 2.12.1 (ed. Ussani p. 163 lines 11–12).

[16] Jerome, *Illustrious Men* 13.5 (ed. Richardson p. 16 lines 17–18). I owe this observation to Whealey, 'Josephus on Jesus: Evidence from the First Millennium', 298–9.

[17] Jerome, *Illustrious Men* 2.9, 13.4.

why would he falsely claim that the TF credits the Pharisees with the killing of Jesus on account of his signs? And, again, if genuineness was a concern for Jerome, why would he misleadingly claim that Josephus blamed the fall of Jerusalem on the killing of James when Josephus did not do so?[18] And, lastly, why would he substitute more positive Latin terms for the TF's potentially negative phrases if he was worried about readerly doubts over authenticity?

One way to account for this is to suppose that Jerome has interpreted the TF quite differently from modern readers and has consequently found nothing really remarkable about it. This explains why throughout Jerome's voluminous works he thought it useful to quote from the TF on only one occasion, but would quote from other Josephan passages many times, such as Josephus' statement about a supernatural voice saying 'we are departing' from the Jewish temple,[19] which he mentions six times.[20] In this regard Jerome may have viewed the TF's statement about Jesus' resurrection as presenting a subjective report, not a statement of fact, an interpretation which I think has great merit and which I will discuss further in Chapter 3. It is possible then that Jerome intended his Latin translation *apparuit enim eis tertia die vivens* to mean 'he appeared to them on the third day to be alive' or 'it was evident to them that he was alive on the third day'. This would match the meaning of the Greek word φαίνω in the TF, which can be translated as 'seem' or 'appear to be'.

Yet, while such are allowable meanings of *appareo* and authors like Cicero, Livy, and Suetonius use it so,[21] in context *appareo* more easily reads 'he appeared to them on the third day alive'. And this indeed is the meaning behind similar constructions in Jerome's own Latin translation of the Bible,[22] and is also similar to Pseudo-Hegesippus' Christianizing paraphrase discussed above. Clearly then, *appareo* would have probably sounded like an affirmation of the resurrection to Jerome's ancient readers.

[18] Ibid., 2.9, 13.4. Jerome likely inherited this statement from Eusebius, who in turn derived it from Origen's mistaken summary of Josephus. See Appendix 2 pp. 237–38 for more details.

[19] *War* 6.300. Note, some editions place this at *War* 6.299.

[20] For references, see Whealey, 'The Testimonium Flavianum', 346.

[21] See, for example, Cicero, who uses *appareo* with a participle to mean 'seeming', when he writes *alterum nimis est vinctum, ut de industria factum appareat*, 'the other is too compressed so that it seems made on purpose'. Cicero, *Orator* 195 (my translation from Hendrickson and Hubbell, *Cicero: Brutus; Orator*, 470 lines 19–20). Or Livy who says *desertum apparuisset forum*, 'The forum appeared to be deserted'. Livy, *History* 3.52.5 (my translation from Foster, *Livy*, p. 172 lines 11–12). Or again, Quintus Curtius who says *diuque circa equum Alexandri pendenti magis quam volanti similis apparuit*, '[an eagle] appeared for a long time to be suspended over Alexander's horse rather than to be flying', and wonders if such was an illusion. Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander* 4.15.26 (my translation from Rolfe, *Quintus Curtius: History of Alexander*, p. 308). Or, once more, Suetonius, who says *Paulatim et ipsa utilis honestaque apparuit*, '[Rhetoric] itself gradually appeared to be useful and honorable'. Suetonius, *On Rhetoricians* 1 (my translation from Rolfe, *Suetonius*, 436 line 7). See also similar instances of *appareo* used with the participle or adjective in *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, appareo I.C.1. See also Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, appareo, I.B.

[22] For instance, Mark 16:9 reads *Surgens autem mane prima sabbati, apparuit primo Mariae Magdalene, de qua ejecerat septem daemonia*, though this example is not an exact match since *apparuit* can be interpreted as missing a subordinate participle. See also Matthew 1:20, 2:7, 2:13. Latin taken from Gryson, Fischer, and Weber, *Biblia Sacra*.

If, however, Jerome had not intended such a claim, he must have been truly careless when translating the TF. But as it happens, Jerome is well known to have been awfully sloppy when composing his *Illustrious Men*, where his version of the TF is found. Moreschini and Norelli for instance say that *Illustrious Men* contains 'abundant errors and details not checked by the writer';[23] and Quasten agrees saying 'it is not difficult to point out his errors of interpretation which betray his ignorance'.[24] Jerome himself acknowledges this overhasty tendency of his when he elsewhere writes of the great speed in which he composed certain works.[25] He even claims he wrote his roughly three-hundred-page *Commentary on Matthew* in just two weeks.[26]

Jerome's treatment of the TF is thus a bit of a puzzle. If he had wanted to accentuate the factuality of the resurrection, why in his comments on the TF did he make an obviously false statement about the Pharisees killing Jesus 'on account of his signs' when he could have instead highlighted the TF's even more extraordinary statement about the resurrection or any of the other incredible claims of the TF? On the other hand, if he wanted to highlight the subjectivity of the resurrection in his translation of the TF, why choose a poorly suited term like *appareo* to do so?

Jerome's sloppiness is the key to all this, I think. It is probable that as he was working on *Illustrious Men* and writing about the TF, he was hastily shifting between Greek and Latin, commenting as he went, not paying all that much attention to what he was doing and thus merely translating and recording the first things that came to his mind—which in this case, conspicuously, did not include a single one of most pro-Christian details allegedly found in the Greek TF. In fact, Jerome may well have had in mind the more ambiguous Greek version of the TF when making his comments, as any translator might do.

This explanation answers why Jerome added his inaccurate comment about Jesus being killed by the Pharisees 'on account of the greatness his signs' (he really wasn't reading carefully), and could readily explain why Jerome used the more concrete *appareo* to translate the TF's more ambiguous φαίνω, which to the Greek reader can mean 'seem' as well as 'appear' (he also wasn't translating carefully).[27] Jerome's sloppiness also explains why he falsely quoted Josephus elsewhere, but for some reason never drew attention to the spectacular claims of the TF.

But such carelessness makes it difficult to discover what Jerome actually thought of the TF. He may have considered it to be highly complementary of Jesus, but then never mentioned such things due to his inattentiveness. Or, he may have considered the TF to be ambiguous or even negative, and so decided to gussy it up a

[23] Moreschini and Norelli, *Early Christian Greek and Latin Literature*, vol. 2 p. 319.
[24] Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 4 p. 228.
[25] See for example, Jerome, *Commentary on Isaiah* prefaces to books 1, 2, 13, and 17.
[26] Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* preface.4.
[27] I discuss the ambiguity of φαίνω at length in Chapter 3 pp. 96–100.

bit in his Latin translation only to end up sloppily saying things in his comments about the TF that his own translation of the TF never actually says.

One thing is clear however. Even if Jerome did think of the TF as markedly positive, it would be unwise to put too much stock in his interpretation given how careless his treatment of the TF actually was. And, furthermore, Jerome's practice of recasting negative or neutral phrases in the TF ought to raise the possibility that he has done the same thing to the TF's account of Jesus' resurrection and fulfillment of prophecy.

Rufinus of Aquileia (*c.*402/3 CE)

Whatever the case, about ten years later, Rufinus of Aquileia also encountered the Greek TF while working on his free Latin translation of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* (*c.*402/3 CE),[28] which is preserved in manuscripts as early as the eighth or ninth century.[29] With this translation, as one scholar has said, Rufinus did not 'hesitate to rewrite or add explanations of his own that would aid understanding', and did so to such an extent that his translation should be considered 'in actual fact an independent piece of work'.[30] Rufinus even goes so far as to insert 'some incomparably absurd miracle stories' in one location, as another scholar observes.[31] Yet though being willing to interpolate absurdities, when Rufinus comes to Eusebius' mundane comments about the TF, spoken of in Chapter 1, he leaves them as he found them, adding no further remarks.[32]

What Rufinus does do though is substitute positive Latin phrases in the place of ambiguous or potentially negative Greek terms, much like Jerome did. This follows Rufinus' larger translational practice of 'replacing imprecise words and phrases in Eusebius with expressions which were clear and unambiguous'.[33] Hence, the perhaps derogatory 'a certain Jesus' ('Ιησοῦς τις) becomes just 'Jesus' (*Iesus*).[34] 'Incredible' or possibly 'magical' deeds (παράδοξα) are 'wonders' (*mirabilium*).

[28] On the dating of this translation, see Amidon, *The Church History of Rufinus of Aquileia*, x.

[29] Levenson and Martin, 'The Latin Translations of Josephus on Jesus', 16–17.

[30] Christensen, *Rufinus of Aquileia and the Historia Ecclesiastica, Lib. VIII–IX, of Eusebius*, 333. For a similar assessment, see Schwartz and Mommsen, *Eusebius Werke 2.1–3: Die Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 3 pp. ccli–cclii. Examples of Rufinus' changes include his omission of an entire paragraph in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.33.3.

[31] *einige unvergleichlich absurde Wundergeschichten*. Schwartz and Mommsen GCS vol. 9.3 p. cclii.

[32] This can be seen from a comparison of the Greek of Eusebius and the Latin of Rufinus, which may be found side by side in Schwartz and Mommsen GCS vol. 9.1 pp. 78–81.

[33] Christensen, *Rufinus of Aquileia and the Historia Ecclesiastica, Lib. VIII–IX, of Eusebius*, 333.

[34] Jerome makes the same translational decision here, but I have not included it as one of the instances where Jerome may have altered ambiguous or negative terms in the text because he may not have had access to a manuscript that actually had τις in it since I show in Chapter 3 p. 68 that many Greek manuscripts omitted it. Rufinus, on the other hand, almost certainly had access to such a variant reading because he was not using manuscripts of the *Antiquities* of Josephus, but rather manuscripts of the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius, which contained the variant.

The seemingly carnal phrase 'receive . . . with pleasure' (τῶν ἡδονῇ . . . δεχομένων) is transformed as 'listened gladly' (*libenter . . . audiunt*). And 'he brought over' or 'he misled' (ἐπηγάγετο) becomes the innocuous 'he joined to himself' (*adiunxit sibi*).

The tendency to re-furnish the TF with more positive terms is all the more notable because Rufinus, like Jerome before him, chose not to use readily available Latin terms that would have preserved the ambiguity of certain Greek phrases. This is the case with the TF's term ἐπηγάγετο, which could have been nicely mirrored by the Latin *perducere* meaning 'to bring over', but also 'to induce';[35] or again with παράδοξα, which could have been matched by the Latin *incredibilis* meaning 'extraordinary', but also 'not worthy of belief'.[36] Rufinus also seems to translate the TF as claiming that Jesus was actually resurrected, but again this depends on how *appareo* should be interpreted, as I said above.[37] Like with Jerome and Pseudo-Hegesippus though, Rufinus' practice of interpreting (or doctoring) the TF so as to make it favor Jesus should probably make one suspicious that he has done the same with its account of Jesus' resurrection and the prophecies concerning him.

Cassiodorus (*c.*585 CE)

Cassiodorus (*c.*585 CE) is the last ancient Latin author to encounter the Greek TF. In his day he was one of the few Latin writers to know Greek and he supervised the translation of both Sozomen's *Ecclesiastical History* and Josephus' *Antiquities*,[38] the latter of which is preserved in manuscripts dating as early as the eighth century.[39] Hence he, or at least his team of translators, would have known both the pro-Christian summary of the TF given by Sozomen, mentioned in Chapter 1, and also the version of the TF found in Greek manuscripts of the *Antiquities*. With Sozomen's work, the Latin translators carefully follow his Christianizing paraphrase of the TF quite literally,[40] but with the *Antiquities*, something interesting

[35] Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, perduco II.B.

[36] Ibid., incredibilis I.A.

[37] *apparuit enim eis tertio die iterum vivus*, ed. Schwartz and Mommsen GCS vol. 9.1 p. 81 line 6. Rufinus closely follows the Greek word for word, but uses the adjective *vivus*, whereas Jerome deployed the participle *vivens*.

[38] Cassiodorus, *Institutions* 1.17.1. Cassiodorus had the three ecclesiastical historians Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret combined into one volume known in Latin tradition as the *Tripartite Ecclesiastical History*. Cassiodorus says that this was translated 'by friends', see Cassiodorus, *Institutions* 1.17.1 (trans. Jones, *Cassiodorus Senator: An Introduction to Divine and Human Readings*, 116). In the same passage, Cassiodorus also says that the *Antiquities* of Josephus was translated by a man named Epiphanius.

[39] The earliest manuscript is MS Copenhagen Det Kongelige Bibliotek GKS 157 f. 149r lines 28–34; found here http://www5.kb.dk/manus/vmanus/2011/dec/ha/object307901/en/#kbOSD-0=page:303. For a list of manuscripts see, Levenson and Martin, 'The Latin Translations of Josephus on Jesus', 14–16. For the only complete transcription of the Latin text of the *Antiquities*, see Pollard et al., *Flavius Josephus: Antiquities*.

[40] Cassiodorus, *Tripartite Ecclesiastical History* 1.2.4–5 (ed. Jacob and Hanslik, *Cassiodori-Epiphanii: Historia Ecclesiastica Tripartita*, 10–11).

happens. Instead of translating the TF themselves, as they appear to have had done for the almost three hundred thousand previous words in the lengthy *Antiquities*,[41] they instead turn to Rufinus' Latin version of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* and copy his positive rendering of the TF verbatim. They then do the same thing for Josephus' passage on John the Baptist, which is also present in Rufinus' translation of Eusebius.[42]

Cassiodorus and his team copied only one other passage from Rufinus in their translation,[43] a passage just thirty or so verses from the TF and which discusses the High Priests Ananus I and Caiaphas. Yet the translators chose not to copy many other passages in the same vicinity of the TF that can also be found in Rufinus' version of Eusebius.[44] What could be the cause of this? Alice Whealey suggests simple laziness on behalf of the translators,[45] and this may well be true. But it is strange that a team of translators so expert and industrious as to plow through nearly three hundred thousand words in the Greek *Antiquities*—something even the renowned translator Jerome said he could not do[46]—would somehow find that it saved them time to stop, locate another manuscript, and then thumb through it only to copy a few brief passages, all while simultaneously not copying other nearby Josephan passages. It is possible they would have done so, of course, but it is also possible that, when the translators were looking ahead to the latter books of the *Antiquities* in preparation for their translation, they did not exactly like what they saw in the Greek version of the TF, and so cast about for Rufinus' friendlier version of it. Then, with the manuscript of Rufinus already before them, they copied the TF (*Antiquities* 18.63–4), and two other passages in the general area (*Antiquities* 18.34–5, 116–19), but did not find it worth the trouble to do so with most of the

[41] The TLG says that the *Antiquities* of Josephus numbers 312,006 words. My statement that there was almost 300,000 words before book 18 of the *Antiquities* should be therefore taken as a general estimate.

[42] The translators likely first came upon the passage about Jesus since Josephus gives this passage first in *Antiquities* 18.63–4, and then afterward presents the passage on John the Baptist in *Antiquities* 18.116–19. These two passages are given in reverse order in Rufinus' translation of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*.

[43] *Antiquities* 18.34–5.

[44] Whealey is technically incorrect that Cassiodorus only copied the TF and the passage on John the Baptist, for Levenson and Martin argue that two other passages were copied as well; see Whealey, 'Josephus on Jesus: Evidence from the First Millennium', 300; Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 35; Levenson and Martin, 'The Latin Translations of Josephus on Jesus', 6 n. 14. However, one of the passages that Levenson and Martin believe was copied (*Antiquities* 17.168–70 from Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.8.6–8) does not seem to me to be a clear case of copying, leaving only one other in *Antiquities* 18.34–5. Other passages where Josephus is quoted in Rufinus' translation of Eusebius, but which were not copied by Cassiodorus include *Antiquities* 18.1 (*Ecclesiastical History* 1.5.4); *Antiquities* 18.257–60 (*Ecclesiastical History* 2.5.2–5); and several others listed in Levenson and Martin, 6 n. 14. An exhaustive study on Cassiodorus' use of Rufinus has yet to be carried out.

[45] Whealey, 'Josephus on Jesus: Evidence from the First Millennium', 300; Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 35.

[46] Jerome, *Letter* 71.5. See also Cassiodorus, *Institutions* 1.17.1.

Josephan passages found in Rufinus' Latin version of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*.[47]

Yet though Cassiodorus and his team did not actually translate the TF themselves, it is still illuminating to observe how they translated words and phrases in the TF when they are found in other passages of the *Antiquities*, for these instances show just how ambiguous or potentially negative the Greek TF may have appeared to them. For example, a similar construction to the Greek TF's possibly derogatory 'a certain Jesus' ('Ιησοῦς τις) occurs elsewhere in the *Antiquities* and is translated by Cassiodorus as 'a certain Achen' (*Achar . . . quidam*),[48] whereas in Rufinus' version of the TF the word *quidam* is omitted. The TF's ambiguous 'incredible' deeds (παράδοξα) is 'wonders' (*mirabilium*) in Rufinus' version of the TF, but in other passages of the *Antiquities*, Cassiodorus translates the same term far more neutrally as 'inconceivable' or 'surprising', or 'paradoxical works' (*inopinabilia opera*).[49] The TF's perhaps too sensuous 'with pleasure' (ἡδονῇ) is translated by Rufinus rather positively as 'gladly' (*libenter*), but elsewhere Cassiodorus translates the term quite literally as 'with pleasure' (*cum voluptate*).[50] The TF's 'he brought over' or 'he misled' (ἐπηγάγετο) is the neutral 'he joined to himself' (*adiunxit sibi*) in Rufinus, but when this Greek term shows up in other passages Cassiodorus renders it ambiguously as 'he persuaded' (*persuasio facta est*)[51] or more sinisterly as 'pretending' or 'feigning' (*simulans*).[52] Most crucially, the TF's key word regarding Jesus' resurrection 'he appeared (ἐφάνη) to them alive again' is translated by Cassiodorus in another passage, one that is almost grammatically identical to the TF, as 'seem' (*viderentur*),[53] meaning that the TF could also be translated as 'he seemed alive to

[47] One might posit that Cassiodorus and his team did not find any statement about Jesus in their Greek manuscripts of *Antiquities* 18, which is why they relied upon Rufinus. But this is very unlikely, otherwise how would Cassiodorus have known to place Rufinus' version in precisely *Antiquities* 18.63–4? One must remember that, in the ancient world, there were not finely delineated sectional numberings in manuscripts and so Cassiodorus would not have been able to tell from Rufinus' quotation of the TF (or from Eusebius or Jerome or likely anyone else) where exactly to place the TF in *Antiquities* 18. Furthermore, the TF's placement in *Antiquities* 18.63–4 is quite odd from a Christian perspective because it comes before the testimony about John the Baptist in *Antiquities* 18.116–19, once again suggesting the Cassiodorus and his team did find at least some version of the TF in *Antiquities* 18.63–4, for otherwise they would have hardly placed the passage in the appropriate spot on their own. It also seems unlikely that Cassiodorus and his team turned to Rufinus because Rufinus' version of the TF had become a kind of canonically known rendition that they thought fitting to repeat. This is because Jerome's version was just as famous, slightly older, and of course, stemmed from the legendary translator of the Vulgate itself, something for which Cassiodorus greatly revered Jerome; see Cassiodorus, *Insititutions* 1.4.1, 1.5.4–5, 1.6.1.

[48] Cassiodorus, *Josephus's Antiquities* 5.33 (ed. Pollard). Here the Latin *quidam* is written in a different hand in the earliest manuscript, MS Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek Bamberg, Msc. Class. 78 f. 52r col. 2, line 41, but the word must surely be based on the original translation of Cassiodorus given that it precisely corresponds with the Greek.

[49] Cassiodorus, *Josephus's Antiquities* 9.182 (ed. Pollard). See also Cassiodorus, *Josephus's Antiquities* 2.223, 2.267, 2.345. Definitions of *inopinabilis* from Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, inopinabilis I, II.

[50] Cassiodorus, *Josephus's Antiquities* 17.329 (ed. Pollard).

[51] Ibid., 17.327 (ed. Pollard).

[52] Ibid., 1.207 (ed. Pollard). Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, simulo II.

[53] Cassiodorus, *Josephus's Antiquities* 2.35 (ed. Pollard).

them again'—thus placing the belief in the resurrection in the mind of the disciples, not in the mind of Josephus. Put together, if these translational choices are applied to the TF, they would make it markedly more ambiguous with respect to Jesus and perhaps even hostile to him.[54]

Conclusion Regarding the Latin Reception

No matter the conclusion one might reach concerning the above Latin versions, there are certainly difficulties in claiming that they all witness to a pro-Christian interpretation of the TF. Indeed, with every one of them there is evidence suggesting that their authors considered the Greek TF to be less than positive in places thereby causing them to ignore certain aspects or to burnish them up with more complimentary Latin phrasing. In this regard, Pseudo-Hegesippus mangles the TF so badly that one can hardly trust his reading of it. Jerome emphasizes none of the supposedly Christian details despite highlighting an outlandish claim not actually in the TF. Rufinus also adds none of his characteristic changes to his translation of Eusebius' mundane comments on the TF. Pseudo-Hegesippus, Jerome, and Rufinus repeatedly reconstrue potentially negative or ambiguous Greek phrases by replacing them with more positive Latin terms. And Cassiodorus' expert team suspiciously turns to Rufinus' positive version of the TF for help with translation when it seems fair to say that they needed no help at all. More than this, Cassiodorus' translational decisions elsewhere in the *Antiquities* show just how ambiguous or even negative the Greek TF may have actually been.

There are of course other explanations for some of these things, but it is difficult to understand why so many translators would have consistently responded in such ways if the TF was obviously complimentary to Jesus—perhaps some of their reactions are explainable in this vein, but not likely all of them. In fact, their willingness to recast potentially negative terms in the TF suggests at least the possibility that they may have recast the allegedly pro-Christian claims of the TF, especially regarding the resurrection of Jesus and the prophecies made concerning him. In other words, given that they revamp the TF's possibly negative phrasing, should we not expect them to also do the same with the more neutral and ambiguous phrases in order to make them sound unambiguously positive, such as with the resurrection of Jesus? Taking all this into account then, it is all the more striking that not one of the above writers argues that the TF called Jesus 'the Christ', except for when Cassiodorus translates Sozomen's Greek paraphrase of the TF. This is much like how no Greek author clearly interprets the TF as calling Jesus 'the Christ' either, with once again the exception of Sozomen.[55]

[54] For a list of these passages, see p. 198.

[55] The other debatable examples are the *Acta Sanctorum Donati et sociorum*, the anonymous *Dialogue with the Jews*, Pseudo-Sophronius, the Suda, Michael Glycas and George Cedrenus.

The Puzzling Syriac and Arabic Reception

The Syriac Translations of Eusebius (fourth century CE)

A similar pattern of reception is just as discernable in Syriac and Arabic tradition, if not more so. The first treatment of the Greek TF in these eastern languages can be found in the Syriac translations of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* (*c.*313 CE) and his *Theophany* (*c.*325/6 CE).[56] It is not known who translated these, but the great antiquity of the manuscripts which contain them points to a translation date sometime in the fourth century, perhaps during Eusebius' own lifetime. The manuscript tradition of the Syriac *Ecclesiastical History* is extremely ancient, being witnessed by a sixth-century manuscript[57] and another from 462 CE, the latter of which happens to be the second oldest dated literary manuscript in existence.[58] Yet the manuscript containing the *Theophany* is earlier still, having been written in 411/12 CE, actually making it the earliest dated literary manuscript in the world.[59] Images of these manuscripts may be found in the back of this book.

When comparing the original Greek of the *Ecclesiastical History* to the Syriac translation it is clear that the translator has not enhanced Eusebius' pedestrian comments about the TF.[60] With the *Theophany*, the original Greek is no longer extant, so one cannot make a direct comparison with it to see if the Syriac translator has made changes.[61] But still, Eusebius tells us that the portion of the *Theophany* that contains the TF was mostly a reworking of his *Demonstration*,[62] which does exist in Greek. And, when comparing the Syriac *Theophany* to the parallel portion of the Greek *Demonstration*,[63] it becomes clear that, again, the translator has not added much to Eusebius' mundane discussion of the TF there either. The only possible exception to this is that the Syriac translator (whether following Eusebius or not) emphasizes Jesus' miracles in the TF, which he positively renders as 'wondrous deeds' (ܥܒܝܕܬܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ) instead of the more ambiguous 'incredible deeds' implied by the Greek παράδοξα.[64]

[56] No Syriac translation seems ever to have been carried out on Eusebius' *Demonstration* (*c.*318–23 CE), the other work wherein Eusebius quotes the TF.

[57] MS British Library Add. 14,639. See Image 10. For a description of this manuscript and its dating, see Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts*, vol. 3 pp. 1039–40 (catalog #1411).

[58] MS National Library of Russia Siriyskaya novaya seria 1 (#24 in the Pigulevskaya catalog). See Image 9. For discussion on the date of the manuscript, see Wright, vol. 2 p. 631 n. *. For detailed description of this manuscript and the Syriac manuscript mentioned immediately above, see Wright, Maclean, and Merx, *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius in Syriac*, v–xii.

[59] British Library MS Add. 12,150. See Image 8. For a description of the manuscript and its dating in relation to other known manuscripts, see Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts*, vol. 2 pp. 631–3 catalog #1226. For another discussion of the date of the manuscript, see Lee, *Theophania*, vol. 2 pp. xi–xv.

[60] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* (Syriac) 1.11.9 (ed. Wright pp. 48–9).

[61] The TF is found in Eusebius, *Theophany* 5.44.

[62] Eusebius, *Theophany* 4.37.

[63] The parallel sections are *Theophany* 5.45 and *Demonstration* 3.5.107–8 (124c–d).

[64] For further discussion on Eusebius' treatment of the TF in his *Theophany*, see Chapter 1 p. 19.

In terms of their translations of the TF, the Syriac translator of the *Ecclesiastical History* does a better job witnessing to the ambiguity of the TF. He preserves the possibly derogatory 'a certain Jesus' (Ἰησοῦς τις) as 'a certain man' (ܒܪ ܐܢܫ) and he maintains the perhaps carnal sounding 'receive with pleasure' with an identical phrase 'receive with pleasure' (ܚܕ ܒܚܕܘܬܐ ܩܒܠܘ). The translator of the *Theophany*, however, omits the word 'certain' and reworks 'receive truisms with pleasure' to the far more confessional 'in truth receive him [i.e. Jesus] pleasantly' (ܒܫܪܝܪܐ ܩܒܘ ,ܡܢܘ). Both translators turn the prosaic 'truisms' (τἀληθῆ) into the more profound 'truth' (ܫܪܪܐ),[65] and both also embellish the ambiguous Greek 'incredible deeds' (παράδοξα) with either 'celebrated deeds' (ܥܒܕܐ ܕܫܡܝܐ)[66] or 'wondrous deeds' (ܢܣܝܢܐ ܕܬܫܒܘܚܬܐ).[67] Both also turn the potentially negative 'he brought over' or 'he misled' (ἐπηγάγετο) into the far less ambiguous 'make disciples' (ܐܬܠܡܕ)[68] or 'gather' (ܟܢܫ).[69]

Finally, both translate the resurrection appearance with the same grammatical syntax and vocabulary: 'he appeared to them alive' (ܐܬܚܙܝ ... ܠܗܘܢ ,ܚܝ). Interestingly, the Syriac word *ḥza* in the Ethpeel conjugation can mean either 'appear' or 'seem'.[70] Thus the Syriac Peshitta uses the same wording as the TF (ܐܬܚܙܝ ,ܠ ... ܚ) to describe the physical appearance of Jesus upon his resurrection.[71] But the Peshitta also deploys a similar turn of phrase in the subjective sense of 'to seem to someone' in several instances,[72] as when the disciples do not believe the resurrection account because 'these words appeared in their eyes like dreams and they did not believe them' (ܘܠܐ ܗܝܡܢܘ ܠܗ ܠܐܢܫ ܗܠܝܢ ܡܠܝܢ ܗܟܝ ܕܚܠܡܐ ܐܬܚܙܝ ,ܠܗܘܢ),[73] or in the phrase 'it seemed also to me' (ܐܬܚܙܝ ,ܠܝ ܐܦ ܠ),[74] or 'how does it seem to you?' (ܡܐ ܐܬܚܙܝ ܠܟ),[75] or 'you seem righteous before men (ܐܢܬ ܒܝܫ ܐܬܚܙܝ ܠܒܪ

[65] The reader should be aware though, that the difference in Syriac between the singular and plural of 'truth' is but two small dots placed above the word, sometimes combining with other dots—so the plural becomes (ܫܪܪܥ) instead of the singular (ܫܪܪܐ)—which might easily fall out in later transcription. Hence one cannot be certain that the original translator did not include such plural markings. However, given the extreme antiquity of the manuscript witnesses, it seems likely that the dots were not included in the original translation. It is also possible that this change was not meant to make the TF more positive since it is not unusual for Greek plural words to be translated as singular in Syriac.

[66] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* (Syriac) 1.11.7. The Syriac translator for the *Ecclesiastical History* seems to have incorrectly fixated on the etymological root of παράδοξα and so thought the word had something to do with δόξα 'glories'.

[67] Eusebius, *Theophany* 5.44.

[68] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* (Syriac) 1.11.7.

[69] Eusebius, *Theophany* 5.44.

[70] Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 136.

[71] Mark 16:14; Acts 9:17. For other similar instances, see Mark 16:9; Acts 7:2, and especially Acts 7:26; Matthew 17:3; Mark 9:4. I searched the Peshitta using Gwilliam, Pinkerton, and Tritton, *The New Testament in Syriac*, as digitized by George Kiraz for the Syriac Digital Corpus, whose XML version is copyrighted by James. A. Walters. https://syriaccorpus.org/100#.

[72] For ܚܙܐ meaning 'appear' and 'seem', see Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 136 ܚܙܐ §Ethpe b; Nöldeke, *Compendious Syriac Grammar*, 201 §254.

[73] Luke 24:11.

[74] Luke 1:3.

[75] Matthew 22:17.

ܟܕܐ ܒܟ ܟܫܝܐ), yet inside you are full of wrongdoing'.[76] Philoxenus uses a similar grammatical construction when he sarcastically criticizes an adversary, 'he seems so wise (ܟܚܟܝܡ ,ܚܟܝܡ ܠܐ ܟܡܐ), though he does not even understand the force of the argument'.[77]

Yet, it must be said that these latter examples either omit the Syriac word *kad* or place it in a different syntax from how it is deployed in the Syriac TF. The Syriac Peshitta, by contrast, does in several verses contain *kad* in the same syntax as the Syriac TF, and here the Peshitta means to assert an actual appearance, not a subjective one.[78]

It is likely then that the Syriac translators understood the TF as stating that Jesus was actually seen alive by the disciples. Still, the potential ambiguity is noteworthy given that, as I will argue in Chapter 3, the phrase regarding Jesus' resurrection is even more ambiguous in the original Greek of the TF.[79] And furthermore, our next author may have read the Syriac TF in just such a subjective light.

Agapius of Manbij (*c.*941/2 CE) and Michael the Syrian (*c.*1199 CE)

The Arabic version of the TF comes from the *Kitāb al-Tārīkh* or *Book of History*, composed by the historian Agapius of Manbij (*c.*941/ 2 CE).[80] Agapius derived his information from Greek and Syriac sources[81] and intended his work to function as a kind of universal history from creation to his present day. Unfortunately, the portion of his history that contains the TF can now only be found in a single

[76] Matthew 23:28.

[77] Philoxenus, *Dissertations* 4.26 (ed. Briere, *Philoxeni*, 38.3: p. 558 [88] lines 8–9).

[78] See, for example, the Peshitta in Matthew 17:3 (ܡܬܚܙܝ ܠܗܘܢ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܥܡ ܐܝܠܝܐ ܘܡܘܫܐ) and Mark 9:4 (ܐܝܠܝܐ ܥܡ ܡܘܫܐ ܕܡܬܚܙܝ ܠܗܘܢ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܥܡ ܝܫܘܥ).

[79] Alice Whealey has pointed out that a Syriac florilegium contains a quote of the TF derived from Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* that adds the phrase (ܗܝ ܕܒܪܝܪ) at the end of the TF. Whealey wonders if this phrase may have been understood by later readers as indicating subjectivity. However, this phrase likely emphasizes factuality and should be rendered 'it is clear' or 'it is obvious'. See for example how the phrase is used to translate the Greek words δῆλον and σαφής in the Syriac version of Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.17.24, 3.4.1, 3.4.2, 3.10.5. Whealey could still be right though that later readers, like Agapius, may have misinterpreted the phrase as emphasizing subjectivity and not factuality. For further discussion on this, see Whealey, 'The Testimonium Flavianum in Syriac and Arabic', 587.

[80] His chronicle is often erroneously labeled *Kitāb al-ʿUnwān* or 'Book of the Title', but its likely authentic title can be found in early manuscripts and is *Kitāb al-Tārīkh or* 'Book of History'. Agapius is also known by various names such as Agapius of Hierapolis (the Greek name of Manbij), or Maḥbūb ibn Qustantīn al-Manbijī; or al-Rumi (the Byzantine); or simply al-Manbijī. As can be seen from his many names, he was of Greek descent from the northern Syrian city of Manbij and was the son of Constantine the Orthodox Metropolitan of that same city. See Lamoreaux, 'Agapius of Manbij', 136–45; Swanson, 'Christian-Muslim Relations', vol. 2 pp. 241–5; Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, vol. 2 pp. 39–41.

[81] On Agapius' knowledge of Greek and Syriac, see Lamoreaux, 'Agapius of Manbij', 138. Lamoreaux is a bit hesitant to credit Agapius with a knowledge of Syriac, but I think that this must be regarded as certain given that he depended on Syriac sources like Theophilus of Edessa, see nn. 116, 118. Regarding Theophilus; see Rompay, 'Theophilos of Edessa'.

manuscript,[82] and one filled with so many scribal errors that what Agapius originally wrote must be reconstructed with the help of a later Arabic writer, al-Makīn Ğirğis ibn al-'Amīd (*c.*1080 CE), who quotes Agapius quoting the TF in full.[83] Their combined version of the TF reads as follows:

وكذلك يوسفيوس العبراني فانه قال في ميامره التي كتبها على شر اليهود: انه كان في هذا الزمان رجل حكيم يقال له ايسوع وكانت له سيرة حسنة وعلم انه فاضل وانه تتلمذ له كثير من الناس من اليهود وسائر الشعوب وكان فيلاطس قضى عليه بالصلب والموت والذين تتلمذوا له لم يتركوا تلمذته وذكروا انه ظهر لهم بعد ثلثة ايام من صلبه وانه عاش فلعله هو المسيح الذي قالت عنه الانبياء الاعاجيب.

And likewise Josephus the Hebrew, for he says in his treatises which he wrote concerning the evil of the Jews: 'There was in this time a wise man who was called Jesus and his conduct was good and it was known that he was righteous and that many from among the people—from both Jews and the surrounding nations—became his followers. And Pilate sentenced him to crucifixion and to death. And those who followed him did not forsake following him, but they reported that he appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive. Perhaps he was the Christ of whom the prophets spoke marvels'.[84]

This version of the TF is remarkable in that it, more explicitly than any versions we have hitherto seen, does not imply that Jesus was divine, nor that he worked supernatural deeds, nor that he was executed at the instigation of Jewish leaders. Most intriguingly, it also does not claim that Jesus was resurrected, but only that

[82] MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana Or. 323 (1288 CE); see Image 14. The TF can be found in f. 6v lines 11–17, 7r lines 1–2. Note that this manuscript is listed incorrectly as 'Or. 132' instead of 'Or. 323' in Swanson, who derived it from the old number of Assemani's catalog; see Assemani, *Bibliothecae Mediceae Laurentianae et Palatinae codicum*, 213; Swanson, 'Christian-Muslim Relations', vol. 2 p. 244. For two different scholarly editions of Agapius, see Cheikho, *Agapius Episcopus Mabbugensis Historia Universalis*, 239; Vasiliev, *Agapius episcopus Mabbugensis historia universalis*, PO 7.4 pp. 471–2 (15–16).

[83] MS Paris, BnF ar. 4729 (nineteenth century) f.107v line 11, 108r lines 1–6; MS Paris, BnF ar. 294 (fourteenth century). f. 162r line 15, 163r lines 5–11. For discussion on Agapius and Al-Makin as well as a transcription of the TF in al-Makin, see Diez, 'Les antiquités gréco-romaines'. For another transcription of al-Makin quoting Agapius, see Cheikho, *Agapius Episcopus Mabbugensis Historia Universalis*, 391.

[84] This Arabic text is taken from Cheikho, *Agapius Episcopus Mabbugensis Historia Universalis*, 239, 391 with reference to the Arabic manuscript Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana Or. 323 (see Image 14) and to the text of al-Makīn. For an alternative translation and slightly different edition of the Arabic text, see Pines, *An Arabic Version*, 9–10.

his disciples 'reported' (ذكروا)[85] that he was; nor does it state Jesus was 'the Christ' or that he was the subject of prophecy, but rather speculatively suggests that such things might be so. Agapius also adds a curious detail about Jesus being sentenced to not just be crucified but also to 'death', a little fact that will become important later on.

Despite the omissions of the suspicious details, Agapius is not exactly the most reliable of witnesses,[86] a trait easily observed in the larger passage wherein he quotes the TF. Here, Agapius gives six different testimonia about Jesus which he says are derived from the writings of Longinus, Tertullian, Phlegon, Ursinus, Josephus, and King Abgar of Edessa. These sources each describe various reports about Jesus, many of them legendary, and each of which go on to relate the deeds and words of various famous figures like Emperor Augustus, Emperor Tiberius, Pontius Pilate, and King Herod to name a few. Agapius feels free to elaborate on many of these quotations adding, taking away, and poorly summarizing,[87] but even so, his unreliability lurches in an obviously pro-Christian and anti-Jewish direction. So then, why, as Agapius came to the TF, would he present such a neutral version, instead of embellishing it with Christianizing details, as was his custom?[88]

Before answering this question, it will be clarifying to examine another eastern version of the TF, this time in Syriac and found in the *Record of Times* (ܟܬܒܐ ܕܙܒܢܐ)[89] written by the historian and patriarch of the Syriac Orthodox Church, Michael the Syrian (*c.*1199 CE).[90] It begins from creation and continues to 1195 CE, just four years before Michael's death.[91] It exists in two different Armenian recensions,[92] but in only one original language manuscript, MS Archdiocese of Aleppo 250 S, copied in 1598 CE.[93] Michael's version of the TF reads as follows:

[85] Lane, *Arabic–English Lexicon*, 968 ذكر.

[86] For a similar observation, see Bammel, 'A New Variant Form of the Testimonium Flavianum', 145–6.

[87] I give examples of this below.

[88] Pines himself argued along similar lines in favor of the authenticity of Agapius' version of the TF; Pines, *An Arabic Version*, 21–3, 66–7.

[89] This is the title given by Bar Hebraeus, *Ecclesiastical Chronicle* 1.693; see Wilmshurst, *Bar Hebraeus: The Ecclesiastical Chronicle*, 246–7; Weltecke, 'The World Chronicle by Patriarch Michael the Great (1126–1199): Some Reflections', 24.

[90] Michael is also called Michael the Great; or Michael Rabo; or Michael Qīndasī; or Michael the Elder.

[91] Weltecke, 'Michael I Rabo'; Weltecke, 'The World Chronicle by Patriarch Michael the Great (1126–99): Some Reflections'. The Syriac text and a French translation of Michael's chronicle may be found in Chabot, *Chronique de Michel Le Syrien*.

[92] There is also an Arabic Garshuni translation which may be based on a different exemplar than the single remaining complete Syriac manuscript; see Takahashi, 'Excerpts', xxxvi. However, I have not been able to check this translation.

[93] Edessa-Aleppo Codex f. 50r left column lines 15–27 (f. 47r in print edition); see Image 12. For printed pictures of the manuscript, see Ibrāhīm, *The Edessa-Aleppo Syriac Codex*. The manuscript can now also be found online at https://www.vhmml.org/readingRoom/view/500917. Note that the folio numbers in the online version are three greater than the print version (so, for example, f. 47r in the print edition becomes 50r in the online version and so on).

ܐܝܟܢܐ ܐܦ ܟܬܒ ܝܘܣܦ ܒܣܦܪ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܕܥܠ ܡܠܟܘܬ ܝܗܘܕ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܓܒܪܐ ܚܟܝܡ ܕܫܡܗ ܝܫܘܥ ܐܢ ܢܫܪܐ ܠܢ ܠܡܐܡܪ ܥܠܝܗ ܓܒܪܐ ܗܘ ܓܝܪ ܥܒܕ ܦܥܠ̈ܐ ܫܦܝܪ̈ܐ ܘܡܠܦܢ ܫܪܪܐ ܗܘ ܕܥܒܕ ܠܗ ܫܘܒܚ̈ܐ ܫܦܝܪ̈ܐ ܘܣܓܝ̈ܐ ܡܢ ܝܗܘܕ ܘܡܢ ܥܡ̈ܡܐ ܘܐܬܚܫܒ ܕܗܘ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠ ܦܘܡ ܣܗܕܘܬܐ ܕܪܫ̈ܝ ܥܡܐ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܐܬܬܠ ܦܝܠܛܘܣ ܠܡܨܠܒܐ ܘܡܝܬ ܐܠܐ ܕܐܝܠ̈ܝܢ ܠܗ ܠܐ ܫܒܩܘ ܡܢ ܚܘܒܗ ܐܦ ܕ[94]ܠܐ ܐܬܚܙܝ ܠܗܘܢ ܒܬܠܬ ܝܘܡ̈ܝ ܚܝ ܘܗܟܝܠ ܢܒܝ̈ܐ ܐܠܗ̈ܝܐ ܐܡܪܘ ܥܠ ܗܠܝܢ ܫܘܒܚ̈ܐ ܕܡܬܡܗ̈ܢ ܥܠܝܗ ܘܥܕ ܗܫܐ ܠܐ ܫܒܩ ܥܡܐ ܕܟܪܣܛ̈ܝܢ ܡܢ ܫܡܗ ܐܬܟܢܝ.

Also the author Josephus says in the treatise concerning the *Government of the Jews*:'In these times there was a certain wise man whose name was Jesus, if it is lawful for us to call him a man, for he was a doer of glorious works and a teacher of the truth. And he made disciples of many from the Jews and from the peoples. It was thought that he was the Christ. And it was through the testimony of the leaders of the people, on account of this, that Pilate gave him over to the punishment of the cross and he died. But those who loved him did not cease from his love [as] he appeared to them after three days alive. For the prophets of God spoke such astonishing things concerning him. And until today the people of the Christians have not disappeared and have been named from him.'

This particular version of the TF agrees with Agapius' version in three key places. Like Agapius, Michael's version says that Jesus was not just sentenced to be crucified, but also 'he died' and like Agapius, it does not specifically blame the Jews for Jesus' death.[95] For our purposes though, the most interesting parallel with Agapius is that Michael does not report Josephus as saying that Jesus 'was the Christ', only that 'it was thought that he was the Christ' (ܕܐܝܬ ,ܡܫܝܚܐ ܗܘܐ ܕܗܘ). One could also translate the phrase as 'it was proclaimed that he was the Christ', though this is not a common way to understand the Syriac.[96] But whatever the case,

[94] Michael's Syriac contains 'not' (ܠܐ) at this point, whereas the original reading was clearly 'through' (ܡܢ); see n. 95.

[95] This latter observation has gone unnoticed by scholars due to mistranslations that have had Josephus say that it was the rulers of 'our people' which were responsible for Jesus' death, though the Syriac more vaguely says it was the rulers of 'the people' (ܥܡܐ). Michael in fact literally says 'not according to the testimony of the leaders of the people' though this is likely because the direct object marker and its pronoun (ܡܢ) was mistaken by a copyist for the quite similar looking Syriac negative particle (ܠܐ); see Whealey, 'The Testimonium Flavianum in Syriac and Arabic', 586; Pines, *An Arabic Version*, 28.

[96] On 'proclaimed to be' as a possible translation, see Chapter 3 pp. 86–7.

the Syriac translation is of particular interest given that Jerome around the year 393 CE quotes the TF in Latin with the basically synonymous translation, 'he was believed to be the Christ'.[97] Pseudo-Hegesippus (*c.*370 CE) suggests a similar wording as well.

The parallels shared between Agapius and Michael do not end with the TF, however, because Michael also embeds the TF within the very same roster of six testimonia about Jesus and gives them in the same order as Agapius does. In fact, much of Michael's and Agapius' material that cover the first two centuries of the Christian era corresponds with one another.[98]

This means one of three things: either Michael, writing 250 years after Agapius, was directly (or indirectly) dependent upon Agapius for the six testimonia; or that Michael was reliant on a common source for the testimonia, a source that Agapius also used; or some combination thereof as if, for example, Michael had before him both Agapius and also the source used by Agapius.

In examining these possibilities, it is clear that Michael must have, at minimum, used a source other than Agapius, and that for two reasons.[99] First, Michael gives us a list of the sources that he utilized, and he does not mention Agapius.[100] Secondly, if we take the six testimonia in Agapius and Michael, and compare them with how earlier writers quote the same sources, we find that Agapius routinely expands, distorts, and omits material while Michael more conservatively preserves material and, importantly, never follows Agapius' changes in any instance as far as I can tell.

For example, the wording of Michael's Syriac version of the TF corresponds closely with the version given in the Syriac translation of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*,[101] showing that Michael must have used a source other than the Arabic of Agapius because he could hardly have independently turned Agapius' Arabic back into the very Syriac from which it was derived. Or again with the Longinus testimonium, Agapius adds more than five hundred words of extra material, discussing a letter exchanged between Augustus and King Herod about the Magi not found in this testimonium's earliest source, the mid-seventh-century *Maronite Chronicle*.[102] On the other hand, Michael preserves the Longinus testimonium 'practically in the same form'[103] as it is found in the *Maronite Chronicle*.[104] If

[97] Another similarity between Jerome and Michael is that they both use 'until today' instead of 'until now', which the Greek TF has. Not much should be made of this coincidence though because Rufinus, who was using Eusebius' version that contained 'until now', also similarly translates it as *hodiernum* 'today'. So it seems to have been a common way of interpreting the original phrase.

[98] I discuss these parallels below

[99] Their source is discussed in Whealey, 'The Testimonium Flavianum in Syriac and Arabic', 575–80.

[100] Michael the Syrian, *Record of Times* preface (ed. Chabot vol. 1 p. 2; *Zhamanakagrut'iwn*, 1–3 (Armenian)). Michael's preface is lost in Syriac and so one must rely on two different Armenian translations published in 1870 (*Tear'n Mixaye'li*) and 1871 (*Zhamanakagrut'iwn*). I rely on the 1871 edition.

[101] Pines, *An Arabic Version*, 23–30; Whealey, 'The Testimonium Flavianum in Syriac and Arabic', 578–80.

[102] Witakowski, 'Magi Syriac Tradition', 822.

[103] Witakowski, 'Magi Syriac Tradition', 822.

[104] Agapius, *Book of History* 2.1 (Vasiliev vol. 7.4 pp. 463–7 [7–11]).

Michael had been following only Agapius here, he would not have been able to preserve what was already distorted by Agapius.[105]

Quotations from outside of the six testimonia of Jesus also bear the same pattern. Thus, Michael adequately summarizes Eusebius' statements about an ancient writer named Papias.[106] Agapius however does not mention the name of Papias, and inaccurately states that an author from Papias' era and hometown wrote a commentary on the Gospel of John.[107] Michael also provides large quotations from Josephus concerning the destruction of Jerusalem,[108] but Agapius quickly summarizes them.[109] Michael further correctly cites Hegesippus as the source for Emperor Domitian's order to kill the descendants of Jude, the brother of Jesus,[110] while Agapius summarizes it unattributed.[111] Agapius also gives a confused version of Hegesippus' account describing the death of James the brother of Jesus, but does not attribute it to any source and then, on top of that, inserts a fabulous tale about how after the death of James, certain Jews confiscated the cross of Christ and then shortened the genealogies in the Hebrew Torah.[112] Michael, however, correctly gives the account of Hegesippus, though without attribution.[113] And so on.

The first conclusion one can draw from examining the above citations is that Agapius is totally unreliable. At times he summarizes and at other times he greatly expands, often distorting the original meaning in the process, while Michael, though by no means perfect, tends to be far more conservative when it comes to his quotational practices.[114] This renders Agapius' version of the TF greatly suspect,

[105] Michael the Syrian, *Record of Times* 5.10 (Chabot vol. 1 pp. 138–9 (French); vol. 4 p. 88 (Syriac); MS Edessa-Aleppo Codex MS f. 45v center column lines 21–37).

[106] Michael the Syrian, *Record of Times* 6.2 (Chabot vol. 1 pp. 165–6 (French); vol. 4 p. 100 (Syriac)).

[107] Agapius, *Book of History* 2.1 (Vasiliev vol. 7.4 pp. 504–5 [48–9].

[108] Michael the Syrian, *Record of Times* 6.2 (Chabot vol. 1 pp. 163–8 (French); vol. 4 pp. 98–102 (Syriac)).

[109] Agapius, *Book of History* 2.1 (Vasiliev vol. 7.4 pp. 497–8 [41–2]).

[110] Michael the Syrian, *Record of Times* 6.3 (Chabot vol. 1 pp. 169–70 (French); vol. 4 p. 102 (Syriac)).

[111] Agapius, *Book of History* 2.1 (Vasiliev vol. 7.4 p. 498 [44]).

[112] Agapius, *Book of History* 2.1 (Vasiliev vol. 7.4 p. 492 [36]).

[113] Michael the Syrian, *Record of Times* 6.1 (Chabot vol. 1. pp. 159–60 (French); vol. 4 pp. 97–8 (Syriac)).

[114] The one great exception to this that I could find is that Michael erroneously claims that Phlegon said that at the crucifixion of Jesus 'the dead were resurrected and entered Jerusalem and cursed the Jews' (Michael the Syrian, *Record of Times* 5.10, my translation from Chabot vol. 1. p. 143 (French) 4 p. 90 (Syriac); MS Edessa-Aleppo Codex f. 49v right column lines 42–4 (f. 46v)). Here Michael or his source seem to have derived this account from Eusebius' *Chronicon*, but misread Eusebius' prior statement that Greek historians corroborated the miraculous occurrences at Jesus' crucifixion and assumed that Phlegon must have also spoken of the Matthean account (Matthew 27:52) of the saints being raised from the dead at the resurrection and that they entered Jerusalem. See Eusebius, *Chronicon* Olympiad 202.3 as found in the Armenian and Latin versions Karst, *Die Chronik*, GCS 20 p. 213; Helm, *Die Chronik des Hieronymus*, GCS 24 pp. 174–5. For a Greek version of Phlegon derived from Eusebius, see *Paschal Chronicle* 412 lines 9–16, p. 417 lines 9–15 in Dindorf, *Chronicon paschale*, vol. 1. In a study of Michael's sources, van Ginkel argues that Michael does indeed manipulate sources to suite his aims, but even so, van Ginkel is speaking about how Michael adapted sources covering periods after the conclusion of Jacob of Edessa's *Chronicle*. This *Chronicle* of Jacob, as I will argue below, was continued by Michael and hence may not have been manipulated as much as later sources, which van Ginkel hints is possible; Ginkel, 'Michael the Syrian and His Sources', 59 n. 11. In any case, my larger point is not that

but increases the likelihood that Michael has preserved his source's version of the TF at least somewhat accurately.

Despite these observations, Shlomo Pines, the scholar who first brought attention to Agapius' version, argued that Agapius had actually preserved the TF reliably. Pines' principal reason for this was that he viewed it as so unlikely for a Christian like Agapius to greatly minimize Josephus' positive references to Jesus. On these grounds Pines believed that Agapius must have therefore had before him a version of the TF different from the Greek version, a version that was neutral or even ambiguous. Otherwise, Pines thought, one could not explain why the zealously pro-Christian Agapius would have lessened the pro-Christian claims of the TF as they currently exist in Greek manuscripts.[115] All this seems especially probable since, as already noted, Agapius makes it a practice to routinely Christianize his sources and is viciously anti-Semitic.

At first approach the above arguments appear to have merit, but closer examination reveals that their foundations are quite weak. In fact, contra Pines, it is clear that with the TF Agapius has followed his habit of enhancing (and summarizing) his sources along favorable Christian lines. But the source he used was not much different from the Greek TF, and is fairly well preserved in Michael's version. This is in evidence for several reasons. As shown previously, Michael and Agapius utilized a common source which contained a version of the TF, a source which was likely preserved better by Michael given the evidence from their quotational practices. Therefore, when Agapius read this source, he would have encountered the neutral or even negative phrase 'it was thought that he was the Christ' which is reflected in Michael's version of the TF. Seeing this phrase, Agapius embellished it into something that hypothetically might be true, so as to make Josephus say 'perhaps [Jesus] was the Christ'. Agapius also mildly enhanced the phrase 'a certain wise man' who performed 'celebrated works', by instead emphasizing the goodness and righteousness of Jesus, by saying 'a wise man who was called Jesus and his conduct was good and it was known that he was righteous'.

Next, upon coming to the descriptions of Jesus' resurrection and his fulfillment of prophecy, Agapius likely read the Syriac[116] as giving a subjective report about what the disciples believed, not what Josephus actually affirmed. In response to this, Agapius summarized the phrase as 'they reported that he appeared to them

Michael perfectly preserved his sources, but that he did a better job than Agapius. See Ginkel, 'Michael the Syrian and His Sources'; Ginkel, 'Making History'.

[115] Pines, *An Arabic Version*, 21–3, 66–7.

[116] Though Agapius used Greek sources, in this instance he seems to have been following a Syriac source for the six testimonia on Jesus because Michael follows the same source and Michael implies that he only made use of Syriac sources, Michael the Syrian, *Record of Times* 11.17. For a similar assessment, see Pines, *An Arabic Version*, 23; Whealey, 'The Testimonium Flavianum in Syriac and Arabic', 575–8. It might also be possible that Agapius and Michael are using the same source, but that Agapius is referring to a Greek version and Michael to a Syriac.

three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive'. Then, Agapius enhanced the statement about prophets speaking of Jesus by casting it as a possibility in the mind of Josephus, rather than presenting such a belief from the perspective of the disciples. Thus, Agapius wrote 'perhaps he was the Christ of whom the prophets spoke'. Finally, though Agapius was quite anti-Semitic throughout his works, in his version of the TF he does not omit Jewish involvement in Jesus' death because the version of the TF he had before him, witnessed in Michael's version, never explicitly mentioned Jewish leaders, since it only ambiguously said 'the leaders of the people' (ܥܡܐ) had Jesus crucified. In fact, Michael's version had earlier used the same term 'peoples' (ܥܡܡܐ) to refer to Gentiles, thus implying to the Syriac reader that it was Gentile, not Jewish, leaders who crucified Jesus.

For these reasons, Agapius' Arabic version of the TF should be properly viewed as a secondary witness to the version of the TF found in Michael the Syrian since Michael is far more consistent at preserving his sources. However, regardless of who preserved the source more accurately, it is remarkable that both Agapius and Michael do not highlight any suspiciously pro-Christian statements in the TF. This parallels a similar trend in most of the Greek writers I have already discussed.

Jacob of Edessa as the Common Source for Michael and Agapius

But this then leads to some questions: who was originally responsible for composing the source used by Michael the Syrian and Agapius? And did this person have access to Josephus' *Antiquities*—and therefore also to the TF—in the original Greek? And if so, did this Greek version of the TF include a phrase like 'it was thought that he was the Christ', as witnessed by Michael, Agapius, and Jerome?

Scholars have agreed that Michael and Agapius mutually relied upon Theophilus of Edessa, a Syriac chronographer and translator of Greek works,[117] who died around 785 CE.[118] Though this seems to be the case, it is unlikely that Theophilus is the source for the six Jesus testimonia within which the TF can be found in Michael's work, for Theophilus only seems to have covered the Islamic era.[119] This time is centuries after the six testimonia regarding Jesus would have

[117] On Theophilus' translations, see Hoyland, *Theophilus of Edessa's Chronicle*, 6–7.

[118] Agapius claims in the latter part of his work that he used Theophilus of Edessa; see Agapius, *Book of History* 2.2 (Vasiliev PO 8.3 p. 525 [265]). Michael makes a large quotation of Dionysius of Tel Mahr, who in turn mentions Theophilus of Edessa as a source of his own; see Michael the Syrian, *Record of Times* 10.20 (Chabot vol. 2. p. 358 (trans.); vol. 4 p. 378 (Syriac)). On the use of Theophilus' work by Dionysius, see Conrad, 'The Conquest of Arwad', 326–32; Hoyland, *Theophilus of Edessa's Chronicle*, 11–15.

[119] Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, 402–3; Rompay, 'Theophilos of Edessa'. Conrad contradicts this and claims that Theophilus' *Chronicle* began with creation, but this seems unlikely because no source can be shown to use Theophilus for events before the Islamic era; see Conrad, 'The Conquest of Arwad', 331. Hoyland agrees and persuasively argues that Theophilus likely did not contain material before 590 CE; see Hoyland, *Theophilus of Edessa's Chronicle*, 19–20.

been historically relevant. It thus is likely that Michael and Agapius had another source, one which wrote about the first century CE.

Alice Whealey has instead hypothesized that Michael and Agapius may have also relied, perhaps indirectly, upon the now lost *Chronicle* of Jacob of Edessa (*c.*708 CE),[120] though in her most recent publication she is somewhat circumspect about this conclusion.[121] I think, however, that her suggestion is quite right, for there is as yet unnoted evidence that points toward Jacob of Edessa as indeed the ultimate source used by Agapius and Michael, and therefore also their source for the TF.

To begin, in the preface of Michael's *Record of Times* (preserved only in Armenian) he says, 'First we must mention the names of the historians from which we will be gathering the material for our structure'.[122] Among several sources, Michael lists Eusebius and Josephus, but then says that 'the blessed Jacob of Edessa made an abridgement of all these' (Եւ սուրբն Յակովբ ուռհայեցին համառօտ ընդ ամենն էանց).[123] Then, when Michael's history reaches the twentieth year of Constantine (*c.*326 CE), he includes a large quotation from Jacob's *Chronicle* giving a detailed description of Eusebius' *Chronicon*. In this quotation Jacob also declares that he translated, added pre-Constantinian material, and then continued Eusebius' work past Constantine.[124] This assertion is confirmed by a fragment of Jacob's *Chronicle* that still survives, wherein Jacob declares that he would not only continue, but also add to Eusebius' work.[125]

Michael further indicates that he was making direct use of Jacob of Edessa's *Chronicle* because he cites him both before and after Constantine.[126] And, indeed, one scholar who compared the few surviving fragments of Jacob's *Chronicle* with Michael's *Record of Times* concluded that they are 'with very few exceptions identical'.[127]

In fact, far from creating a totally original work, Michael even explains that the whole of Jacob's *Chronicle* was actually inserted into his *Record of Times*:

[120] Whealey, 'The Testimonium Flavianum in Syriac and Arabic', 577–8; Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 39–40.

[121] Whealey, 'The Testimonium Flavianum in Syriac and Arabic', 577–8.

[122] Michael the Syrian, *Record of Times* preface (trans. Bedrosian §2 translation; see also Chabot vol. 1. p. 1 (French)).

[123] Michael the Syrian, *Record of Times* preface (my trans. from *Zhamanakagrut'iwn*, 3 lines 5–6. For other modern translations, see Bedrosian §2 (English); Chabot vol. 1. p. 2 (French). It should be emphasized that here Michael, does not mention Agapius as a source, as I mentioned above.

[124] Michael the Syrian, *Record of Times* 7.2 (Chabot vol. 1. pp. 253–5 (French); vol. 4 pp. 127–8 (Syriac); f. 68r–v (f. 65r–v in print edition)).

[125] This is MS British Museum Add. 14,685. For Syriac text, see Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts*, vol. 3 pp. 1062–4. For a French translation of a portion of this fragment, see Chabot vol. 1 p. 255 n. 1. For further discussion, see Brooks, 'The Chronological Canon of James of Edessa', 263.

[126] For example, Michael the Syrian, *Record of Times* 5.10, 6.1, 6.3 (Chabot vol. 1 pp. 140, 159, 168 (French); vol. 4 pp. 89, 97, 102 (Syriac)).

[127] Brooks, 'The Chronological Canon of James of Edessa', 264. The above observations regarding Michael's *Record of Times* and its relationship to Jacob's *Chronicle* was first made by Whealey, 'The Testimonium Flavianum in Syriac and Arabic', 577 n. 13; Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 39–40.

> This *Chronicle* [i.e. Michael's *Record of Times*] has been collected and laboriously written very distinctly and methodically, from the books of the Chroniclers who are worthy of trust, and from a great number of books that exist in our language pertaining to the things in question, and especially from the works of Abbas Mar Jacob of Edessa, whose entire *Chronicle* (ܟܬܒܐ ܕܝܥܩܘܒ ܡܠܦܢܐ) on this subject is inserted here (ܡܫܬܪܫ ܗܟܐ); so, since he [i.e. Jacob] noted methodically in his book the designation of the numbers and the sum of the years from Adam, that is to say, from the beginning of this temporal world, up to that time, we have inserted here his entire *Chronicle*, as well as notable parts of the others.[128]

While the above indicates that Michael used other historians at points, all of the ones that Michael names as sources in his preface can be eliminated as sources for the six Jesus testimonia (and hence for the TF) on various chronological or topical grounds. First, Michael and Agapius clearly used the same source for the six Jesus testimonia, and so this source must have been written before Agapius (*c.*941/2 CE), but after the sixth or seventh centuries, when at least one of the six testimonia was written.[129] This eliminates many of the historians mentioned by Michael.[130] Secondly, of the remaining historians, none cover historical material before Constantine, when the Jesus testimonia would have been relevant[131]—none, that is, except Jacob of Edessa.[132]

The above evidence undoubtedly argues that Jacob first translated Eusebius' *Chronicon* from Greek into Syriac,[133] reworking it and supplementing in the

[128] Michael the Syrian, *Record of Times* 11.17 (my translation in consultation with Chabot's French and Syriac and the Edessa-Aleppo codex; see Chabot vol. 2 p. 482 (French); vol. 4 p. 450 (Syriac); MS Edessa-Aleppo Codex f. 229v middle note lines 2–4 (f. 226v in printed edition)).

[129] The latest testimonium is likely the Longinus testimonium, whose earliest attestation is not till 664 CE by the *Maronite Chronicle*; see Witakowski, 'Magi Syriac Tradition', 822.

[130] These sources are Julius Africanus (*c.*221 CE), Hegesippus (*c.*180 CE), Annianus of Alexandria (*c.*400 CE), Ignatius Bishop of Melitene (*c.*1094 CE), Saliba of Melitene (twelfth century CE), John of Kaisoum (*c.*1171 CE), and Dionysius bar-Salibi (*c.*1171 CE). For dates of the medieval figures, see Chabot vol. 1 p. 481; Langlois, *Chronique de Michel le Grand*, 20.

[131] These are sources like Zosimus, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, and John of Antioch, all of whom only discussed events after Constantine, as Michael explains in his preface. Theodosius of Edessa (*c.*832), Dionysius of Tel-Mahre (*c.*845), Theophilus of Edessa (*c.*785 CE) are also mentioned by Michael later in his work, but again, these only discussed events after Constantine. For these latter three, see Michael the Syrian, *Record of Times* 7.2 (Chabot vol. 1. p. 255 (French); vol. 4 p. 128 (Syriac); 10.20 (Chabot vol. 2 p. 358 (French); vol. 4 p. 378 (Syriac)).

[132] If one were to date the Longinus testimonium far earlier to the fourth century then Annianus could be considered a source for the six testimonia (and therefore the TF), but as Annianus wrote in Greek, Michael would hardly have been able to access his work directly and so must have relied on a Syriac intermediary, which again would point to the translator Jacob of Edessa, whom Michael states in his preface did in fact use Annianus.

[133] Witakowski doubts whether Jacob actually translated Eusebius' *Chronicon*, but his reasons are unsound. First, Witakowski states that only Theodosius of Edessa, as cited by Michael, claims that Jacob translated Eusebius' *Chronicon* (Michael the Syrian, *Record of Times* 7.2 in Chabot vol. 1 p. 255 (French), vol. 4 p. 128 (Syriac)), but this is not true, for Michael also cites a long quotation from Jacob himself saying the same (Michael the Syrian, *Record of Times* 7.2 in Chabot vol. 1 pp. 253–5 (French); vol. 4 pp. 127–8 (Syriac)) and Michael goes into great detail explaining this as well (Michael the Syrian, *Record of Times* 11.17 in Chabot vol. 2 pp. 482–3; vol. 4 p. 450). Witakowski also thinks that

process, and then continuing it to around 708 CE.[134] Afterward, Michael adopted or at least adapted Jacob's entire *Chronicle* and then likewise continued it to around 1195 CE. And all this follows the custom of Syriac chronographers whose practice it often was to utilize a 'layering' technique by taking up material from earlier chronicles sometimes wholesale.[135]

For our purposes then, Jacob of Edessa is the obvious candidate for the source used by both Agapius and Michael the Syrian, and therefore the one who was responsible for the version of the TF to which they both witness. It is probable that as Jacob was translating and reworking Eusebius' *Chronicon*, he noticed reports involving Jesus that Eusebius had cited from sources, like Josephus, Abgar, Phlegon, and Tertullian,[136] all of whom can be found quoted by Eusebius in his *Chronicon* or in his *Ecclesiastical History*. Jacob then added in testimonies from two sources that he had discovered in Longinus and Ursinus, thus making a roster of six testimonia that came to be used by both Agapius and Michael.

Jacob of Edessa and Josephus

But I would like to press this study on sources even further. What can be said about the sources which Jacob himself used? Did he derive his version of the TF from Eusebius or did he instead consult Josephus, or even another writer? As it happens,

Jacob should have mentioned in his own writings that he translated Eusebius' *Chronicon*, but Jacob's translation of Eusebius occurred at the very end of his life and was even interrupted by his death (as Witakowski acknowledges on p. 39), giving good reason for why he may not have mentioned the translation in his other writings, and, furthermore, Michael does cite Jacob speaking about his translation of Eusebius' *Chronicon*, as stated above. Thirdly, Witakowski thinks that Jacob could not have included Eusebius' *Chronicon* within his own because Jacob believed his own *Chronicle* was a continuation of Eusebius; but Jerome also continued the work of Eusebius and still included a translation of Eusebius' *Chronicon* within his own work, as Jerome says in his preface (ed. Helm GCS 24 p. 6). It is also possible that Jacob conceived his continuation as a separate work from his translation of Eusebius, but if so, Jacob still could have expanded upon Eusebius' *Chronicon* when translating it. Witakowski's only substantive objection is that 'Abdisho' bar Brīkā (EbedJesus) (*c*.1300 CE) claims that the *Chronicon* of Eusebius was translated by a different author, but it is possible that the *Chronicon* was translated more than once, or that Jacob (as was his custom) revised this earlier translation, or that 'Abdisho' simply got his facts wrong since he does not seem to be directly familiar with the work in question, whereas Michael quotes from Jacob explicitly. See Witakowski, 'The Chronicle of Jacob of Edessa', 32, 41. For 'Abdisho's claim, see Assemani, *Bibliotheca orientalis*, vol. 3.1 p. 168.

[134] It is possible that Jacob envisioned his translation of Eusebius' *Chronicon* and his own continuation to be two separate works, but Michael clearly imagines them as one and the same. For further discussion, see Harrak, 'Jacob of Edessa as a Chronicler'.

[135] Van Ginkel, 'Making History', 351. Van Ginkel refers to a forthcoming article by Larry Conrad on the topic of Syriac 'layering', but this article never seems to have been published. For another reference to the article, see van Ginkel, 'Michael the Syrian and His Sources', 59 n. 3. For a similar assessment, see Mazzola, 'A "Woven-Texture" Narration'.

[136] For these testimonia, see Eusebius, *Chronicon* Olympiad 202.4 as found in the Armenian and Latin versions Karst, GCS 20 p. 213, Helm, GCS 24 pp. 174–5 (Phlegon); Eusebius, *Chronicon* Olympiad 203.3 as found in Karst, GCS 20 p. 214, Helm, GCS 24 pp. 176–7 (Tertullian); Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.11.7–8 (Josephus); Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.13.6–20 (Abgar).

Jacob was quite proficient in Greek and was a renowned translator and linguist in his own right, often making a practice of revising earlier Syriac translations by checking the original Greek.[137] Could Jacob have continued his accustomed translation habit by reading the TF in the Syriac version of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, and then checking the original Greek in Josephus' *Antiquities*? This question is important to answer, because if around 708 CE Jacob knew the TF from a Greek version of the *Antiquities*, then he would become a powerful witness for the authenticity of the Syriac variant 'it was thought that he was the Christ', a variant paralleled in Latin by Jerome (*c.*393 CE) as 'he was believed to be Christ'. If so, this would raise the possibility that this particular variant can be traced back to Josephus himself.

On the face of things, it seems at least possible that Jacob consulted both Eusebius and Josephus when translating the TF since a comparison between Jacob's version of the TF and that found in the Syriac version of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* shows so many parallels that they must be related in some way. Yet, at the same time, they also depart from one another on several occasions, perhaps indicating Jacob's own customary habit of revising previous Syriac translations.[138] This could imply that Jacob used a source other than Eusebius. But with this data alone, such is only simple speculation. Other evidence relevant in this regard is that Michael claims that Jacob used both Josephus and Eusebius,[139] but again it is not entirely clear if Jacob used Josephus directly or if he only used Josephus through Eusebius' many citations of Josephus' work.

Further guidance on this matter is given by Silvia Castelli, who conducted a study on the use of Josephus' work in Syriac sources. She notes that though Josephus' *War* was translated into Syriac, all are agreed that his *Antiquities*, the work which contains the TF, was never translated into Syriac.[140] Therefore, practically all quotations of the *Antiquities* that remain in Syriac literature are ultimately derived from the Syriac translation of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, which quotes the *Antiquities* many times. In Castelli's survey of Syriac authors, no Syriac work can be shown to be consistently familiar with the Greek *Antiquities* in any kind of direct way,[141] but for one exception: the *Record of Times* by Michael the Syrian.[142] Yet,

[137] Jacob was the author of the first comprehensive Syriac Grammar and also revised the Syriac translations of various Greek homilies and biblical texts. For discussion, see the articles in Romeny, *Jacob of Edessa*.

[138] For a good discussion on this matter, see Whealey, 'The Testimonium Flavianum in Syriac and Arabic', 578–80.

[139] Michael the Syrian, *Record of Times* preface (found in Bedrosian §2; Chabot vol. 1. p. 2; *Zhamanakagrut'iwn*, 3 lines 5–6).

[140] Castelli, 'Riferimenti a Flavio Giuseppe', 202; Brock, 'Some Syriac Legends Concerning Moses', 249; Brock, 'Josephus'.

[141] For a survey of Syriac authors and their relationship with Josephus, see Castelli, 'Riferimenti a Flavio Giuseppe', 202–17.

[142] 'Michael seems to have been the first to benefit from Joseph's Greek text' (*Michele pare essere stato il primo a fruire del testo greco di Giuseppe*); Castelli, 'Riferimenti a Flavio Giuseppe', 223.

as I have just discussed, Michael portrays the pre-Islamic portion of his *Record of Times*—the portion in which he many times quotes Josephus—as incorporating wholesale Jacob's own *Chronicle*. So, the fact that Michael's work contains unique quotations of the *Antiquities* in its earlier sections can be accounted for not because Michael had access to a Greek version of the *Antiquities*, but because his source, Jacob, did.[143]

Castelli then surveys Michael's *Record of Times* and gives several examples of its quotations of the *Antiquities* that are unknown in both Eusebius and other Syriac sources, noting that many of these quotations closely follow the Greek text of the *Antiquities*, while others abbreviate material.[144] Most crucially, she also observes that whenever Michael's *Record of Times* utilizes material from the *Antiquities* not quoted in other Syriac sources, then it explicitly cites its source as coming from one of Josephus' 'books' or otherwise makes an explicit citation.[145] Twice it even gives a title, once using the term 'Antiquities' (ܟܬܒ ܥܬܝܩܐ)[146] and another time the 'Government' or 'Polity of the Jews' (ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܘܡܓܢܘܬܐ).[147] On the other hand, when the *Record of Times* appears to be indirectly using Josephan material derived from another source, it then only records more vaguely that Josephus 'said' something,[148] and twice even indicates that it is quoting Josephus 'through Eusebius'.[149] Castelli concludes, 'Consequently, the direct use of the text of Josephus seems limited to the passages in which Michael makes explicit declaration.'[150]

[143] Adding to this is the fact that Michael appears to claim that he only used Syriac sources for his *Record of Times*; see Michael the Syrian, *Record of Times* 11.17.

[144] Castelli, 'Riferimenti a Flavio Giuseppe', 217–20. Castelli also indicates, without specifying, that there are times when Michael expands on the testimony of Josephus (p. 220), but I have only been able to discover one of these instances. Here, Michael, or his source, states that the words of Eusebius in *Ecclesiastical History* 3.5.3 are actually those of Josephus (Michael, *Record of Times* 6.2; Chabot vol. 1 pp. 163–4 (French); vol. 4 p. 99 (Syriac)). But this likely occurred because in the next section, 3.5.4, Eusebius somewhat confusingly says that the previous events can be found in Josephus, thus perhaps to some readers Eusebius might be read as attributing the former statement to Josephus. Though Michael's source has been sloppy here, Michael does not preface the quotation by stating that the information was found in a 'book', which follows Castelli's observation that here Michael (or more accurately his source, Jacob of Edessa) is indicating that he obtained this information indirectly, a fact I discuss immediately below.

[145] Michael, *Record of Times* 1.4, 1.5, 2.2 (Chabot vol. 1 pp. 5, 6, 8, 17 (French); vol. 4 pp. 3, 4, 8 (Syriac).

[146] Michael, *Record of Times* 2.2 (Chabot vol. 1 p. 17 (French); vol. 4 p. 8 (Syriac); MS f. 7v left col. line 30 (f. 4v in print edition)).

[147] Michael, *Record of Times* 5.10 (Chabot vol. 1 p. 144 (French); vol. 4 p. 91 (Syriac); MS f. 50r left column line 16 (f. 47r in print edition)).

[148] Michael, *Record of Times* 2.1, 6.1 (Chabot vol. 1 pp. 14, 152 (French); vol. 4 pp. 6, 94 (Syriac)).

[149] Michael, *Record of Times* 5.10 (Chabot vol. 1 pp. 137, 139 (French); vol. 4 pp. 88, 89 (Syriac)).

[150] '*Di conseguenza, l'uso diretto del testo di Giuseppe pare limitato ai passi in cui Michele ne fa dichiarazione esplicita*'. Castelli, 'Riferimenti a Flavio Giuseppe', 220. Castelli also argues that Michael's *Record of Times* (or as I think, his source Jacob of Edessa) only had access to the first book of the *Antiquities* because Michael only seems to cite directly from this book, with all other citations, including the TF, coming through Eusebius (pp. 220, 221, 223). To be fair, however, aside from the TF, Michael's *Record of Times* shows little interest in Josephus' *Antiquities* as it moves on through history. In fact, other than the TF, it only explicitly quotes material after Josephus' *Antiquities* book 1 on one occasion (a long quote it says is taken from Eusebius; see Michael, *Record of Times* 5.10 (Chabot vol. 1 pp. 137, 139 (French); vol. 4 pp. 88, 89 (Syriac)). This is despite the fact that Michael (or Jacob)

In other words, Michael's source for his *Record of Times*, likely Jacob of Edessa, seems to have used both the Syriac version of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* and Josephus' Greek *Antiquities*, going back and forth between the two, but in each case giving indications as to which source was being directly utilized. Intriguingly, this practice is quite analogous to how Jacob is known to have conducted his translational work insofar as he would take Syriac translations and revise them in comparison with the original Greek.[151]

It is thus striking how Michael's *Record of Times* presents Josephan material which could have only been derived from Josephus' *Antiquities*, but also Josephan material that must have been derived from Eusebius, while apparently in each scenario leaving clues as to the ultimate source of the quotations. As I said above, the best explanation for this is that Michael's source, Jacob of Edessa, used both the Syriac version of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* and also the original Greek of Josephus' *Antiquities*. And this is in fact what Michael's *Record of Times* indicates when it cites Josephus 'through Eusebius'[152] and when it says that Jacob used both Josephus and Eusebius.[153] It bears repeating that this practice parallels Jacob's habit of revising previous Syriac translations by checking the original Greek.

certainly had access to other material in the *Antiquities* through Eusebius. For example, Eusebius quotes from Josephus' *Antiquities* in his *Ecclesiastical History* 1.5.4 (*Antiquities* 18.1), 1.10.4 (*Antiquities* 18.33–5), 1.11.4–6 (*Antiquities* 18.116–19), 2.5.2–5 (*Antiquities* 18.257–60), and at least several other places as well, but these are not used in the *Record of the Times*. Thus, any silence regarding the later parts of the *Antiquities* is more probably due to lack of interest and not because Michael's source, likely Jacob, was unable to access the later books of the *Antiquities*. Moreover, as I will argue below, Michael's source indicates that with the TF he is quoting Josephus directly.

[151] This practice also squares with how Jacob seems to have checked quotations made by Eusebius. For example, the *Record of Times*—which as the reader will remember is based off of Jacob's *Chronicle*—quotes a passage from Josephus' *War* that Eusebius also quotes. Here a prophet is presented wandering throughout Jerusalem prophesying its downfall. But unlike Eusebius, the *Record of Times* accurately describes how the prophet was killed upon the city walls and then correctly gives his last words '[woe] to me' (Chabot vol. 1 p. 168; vol. 4 p. 101; MS f. 55r right col. lines 44; Josephus, *War* 6.309; Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.8.9). This phrase is also not present in the Syriac translation of the *Ecclesiastical History*; see Wright, Maclean, and Merx, *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius in Syriac*, 133. Indeed, the *Record of Times* explicitly claims to have consulted Josephus directly, 'Know, oh reader, lover of wisdom, that all that is written in the lower column of the preceding page, which makes known the famine and the massacre which took place during the destruction of Jerusalem, is taken from the book of Josephus, the diligent chronographer who lived in that time and who wrote seven books on this last and total destruction of Jerusalem. We have taken partially that which is necessary for the strain of this history. Whoever desires to know the whole story which exposes all that happened, then read the book of Josephus. That which I have gathered and placed here is sufficient for this work, which in the same manner takes up and arranges the exposition of [his] many writings' (my translation from Syriac in consultation with the French of Chabot vol. 1 p. 168 (French); Chabot vol. 4 p. 102 (Syriac); MS f. 55v left column lines 1–10 (f. 52v in print edition)). However, though Jacob has consulted Josephus directly, this may not have been the Greek version of *War*, but a pre-existing Syriac translation. But the *Antiquities* was never translated into Syriac, so Jacob would have needed to check a Greek manuscript when consulting that work.

[152] Michael, *Record of Times* 5.10 (Chabot vol. 1. pp. 137, 139 (French); vol. 4 pp. 88, 89 (Syriac)).

[153] Michael the Syrian, *Record of Times* preface (found in Bedrosian §2; Chabot vol. 1. p. 2; *Zhamanakagrut'iwn*, 3 lines 5–6).

But most notable of all is that when Michael's *Record of Times* comes to the TF, it employs one of its characteristic explicit citations of Josephus saying that it was taken from Josephus' '*Government of the Jews*' (ܡܕܝܢܚܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܝܐ).[154] Per Castelli's own observation then, this explicit citation suggests that Jacob's version of the TF was taken directly from a Greek manuscript of one of Josephus's works concerning the governmental administration of the Jews—and the *Antiquities* is of course the best candidate.

Summary and Conclusion

In assessing the observations gathered above, it is remarkable that Latin, Syriac, and Arabic authors, much like their Greek counterparts, all leave hints that the TF was not as pro-Christian as many of today's scholars believe. Jerome (*c.*393 CE) and Rufinus (*c.*402/3 CE) mention none of the fantastic claims in the TF and both reshape the TF to be much more complimentary to Jesus via their various translation choices. Cassiodorus (*c.*585 CE) translated the *Antiquities* into Latin, yet when he comes to the TF, he suspiciously chooses to copy Rufinus' pro-Christian rendering of it. However, when words and phrases in the TF show up throughout the *Antiquities*, Cassiodorus instead chooses to translate them ambiguously or slightly negatively. Jerome, for his part, also provides an interesting textual variant when he quotes the TF as saying that Jesus was 'believed to be the Christ' not that he 'was the Christ'. This variant is likewise suggested by Pseudo-Hegesippus' (*c.*370 CE) paraphrase.

Importantly, the same variant is also mirrored in the version of the TF found in Michael the Syrian's *Record of Times* (*c.*1199 CE), which says 'it was thought that he was the Christ'. The variant is also witnessed in Agapius' Arabic paraphrase (*c.*941/2 CE) which says 'perhaps he was the Christ'. As I have shown in this chapter, Michael and Agapius relied on a common source for their versions of the TF, with Michael clearly preserving the source far more accurately than Agapius. It is also clear that the identity of their shared source seems to have been Jacob of Edessa and his now mostly lost *Chronicle* (*c.*708 CE). Jacob is by far the most likely candidate because Michael the Syrian explicitly casts his *Record of Times* as a continuation of Jacob's work and the few fragmentary remains of Jacob's *Chronicle* are practically identical with corresponding portions of Michael's *Record of Times*.

Jacob in turn derived his version of the TF from the Syriac translation of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, but he also appears to have corrected it against a Greek manuscript of the *Antiquities*. This is probable for five reasons. First, Jacob's version of the TF mirrors the Syriac translation of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*

[154] Michael, *Record of Times* 5.10 (Chabot vol. 1 p. 144 (French); vol. 4 p. 91 (Syriac); MS f. 50r left column line 16 (f. 47r in print edition).

quite closely in certain areas, showing that he must have derived the TF from this translation. Yet his version of the TF also departs from the *Ecclesiastical History* in several areas, suggesting at least the possibility that Jacob relied on another source as well. Secondly, Jacob elsewhere quotes passages from the *Antiquities* of Josephus that cannot be found in Eusebius or in any other known Syriac work, implying he had direct access to the Greek *Antiquities*. Thirdly, Jacob, is described by Michael as using both Josephus and Eusebius as sources, again suggesting that Jacob did in fact use both authors directly. Fourthly, a study of Jacob's citational practices show that he reveals whether he is citing Josephus directly or indirectly by making certain prefatory remarks before each quotation, occasionally even saying that he is citing Josephus through 'Eusebius'. With the TF, Jacob seems to indicate he is citing Josephus directly. Fifthly, the idea that Jacob revised a Syriac translation by checking it with the Greek *Antiquities* makes good sense for Jacob since he was an accomplished translator with a known practice of revising previous Syriac translations by comparing them with the Greek originals.

Taken together, these five points argue persuasively that Michael's important variant 'it was thought that he was the Christ' can be traced back through Jacob of Edessa to a Greek manuscript of Josephus' *Antiquities* which existed in the Syriac world no later than 708 CE, when Jacob died.[155] Therefore, the Syriac variant presented by Michael provides a powerful confirmation of Jerome's synonymous Latin translation 'he was believed to be the Christ', which he made around 393 CE. Pseudo-Hegesippus (*c.*370 CE) also suggests that he was aware of a similar reading.

Given these early witnesses, a version of the TF that did not say Jesus 'was the Christ' must have originated quite early. Such a version would have the effect of making the TF far more neutral or ambiguous regarding Jesus and would in turn suggest that a non-Christian like Josephus wrote it. As I will show in the next chapter, there are many reasons for believing that Josephus was responsible for the TF, and that in it he did not claim that Jesus 'was the Christ' but only that Jesus was 'believed to be' or was 'thought to be' or was simply 'called' the Christ.

[155] But even if evidence arises proving Jacob not to be the source for Michael's TF, probability would fall to the next most probable candidate, Theophilus of Edessa (*c.*785 CE). He, like Jacob, was also a renowned historian and translator of Greek works. He therefore could have similarly translated the variant 'it was thought that he was the Christ', from Greek manuscripts of the *Antiquities* of Josephus.

3

An Authorial Commentary on the *Testimonium Flavianum*

In order to make my case about the ambiguity of the *Testimonium Flavianum* and its authenticity, let us now turn to it and work through its various statements.[1] As we go, I will take care to note stylistic similarities between the TF and Josephus' work, as well as other parallels between the TF and ancient non-Christian statements about Jesus. These observations will aid in evaluating whether Josephus wrote the words and phrases in the TF and, if so, what he meant by them.

Throughout the investigation I will be guided by the practice of forensic authorship attribution and stylistic analysis.[2] This field of inquiry is predicated on the assumption that 'language users have individual preferences and habits that determine their use of language'.[3] Cumulatively, these predilections work to form a unique linguistic fingerprint, an idiolect, whereby an individual author has the potential to be identified.[4] In this it must be noted that there exists a potential confounding factor with identifying stylistic patterns in Josephus' work, for he reports that he wrote his *War* when he was not fully familiar with Greek, and implies that he used scribes or secretaries to help him.[5] It may also be that Josephus further

[1] For other close readings of the TF which attend to issues of authenticity and interpretation, see Bammel, 'Zum Testimonium Flavianum'; Bardet, *Le Testimonium Flavianum*, 93–107; Bermejo-Rubio, 'Hypothetical Vorlage', 353–61; Cernuda, 'El testimonio flaviano'; Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum'; Goldberg, 'Josephus's Paraphrase Style', Schwartz, *Judaean Antiquities, Books 18–20*, 75–7. For a survey and analysis of the various ways that the TF has been translated and understood in French literature, see Bardet, *Le Testimonium Flavianum*, 48–56.

[2] Ainsworth and Juola, 'Modern Forensic Authorship Analysis'; Grant, *The Idea of Progress in Forensic Authorship Analysis*. Note that the practice of stylistic analysis is crafted according to each particular investigation of authorial identity, whereas the discipline of stylometric analysis takes preselected markers of authorship—such as word use frequency, or length of clauses, etc.—and applies them in a rigorous statistical process, often requiring complex computation. On this, see Grant, *The Idea of Progress in Forensic Authorship Analysis*, 24.

[3] Ainsworth and Juola, 'Modern Forensic Authorship Analysis', 1165.

[4] For a brief discussion of what may qualify as a marker of authorial style, see Ainsworth and Juola, 1166–7.

[5] *Apion* 1.50. Forensic authorship attribution becomes more and more accurate to the degree that a given corpora of documents were written under similar circumstances, in similar genres, and to similar audiences; see Grant, *The Idea of Progress in Forensic Authorship Analysis*, 22, 61–2. If Josephus used secretaries to assist him in writing, then it follows that the circumstances in which he wrote his works could drastically differ. Interestingly, Josephus does claim personal responsibility for translating his *Antiquities* into Greek (*Apion* 1.1), but he says much the same thing in regard to the *War* (1.3). However, in this latter case, he seems unsure of the quality of his Greek (*War* 7.454).

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employed a cast of secretaries to assist him in composing the *Antiquities*, where the TF is located. Thackeray even claimed to be able to identify which secretary was being used based on peculiarities of style evident in various books within the *Antiquities*.[6] Others have disputed that Josephus used assistants in the *Antiquities*,[7] but even if he only did for his *War*, then such could still hinder identifying a unique stylistic fingerprint for Josephus.[8]

Be that as it may, a sound response to these possibilities is to more heavily weight stylistic parallels found in the *Antiquities* than those found in other works of Josephus. Especially valuable would be parallels in the books of the *Antiquities* near to where the TF is located. As the reader will see, many of the stylistic parallels shared between the TF and Josephus' work do indeed cluster in the sections of the *Antiquities* surrounding the TF.

Γίνεται δὲ . . . Ἰησοῦς
'and Jesus became . . .'

We begin[9] in the first line of the TF and straightaway, to the careful reader of Josephus' work, the introductory phrase γίνεται δέ could be interpreted as commencing a negative account. For, as Robert Eisler, Henry Thackeray, and Fernando Bermejo-Rubio have pointed out, γίνεται δέ, in this exact form, is used by Josephus

[6] Thackeray claims that one secretary who was fond of Thucydidean phrasing was responsible for *Antiquities* books 17–19, Thackeray, *Josephus*, 110–14, 141.

[7] Feldman, 'Flavius Josephus Revisited', 860.

[8] When forensic stylistic principles are applied to the TF there are several other issues that may either aid or hinder in identifying its author. Firstly, forensic authorship attribution becomes more and more simple as the authorial candidates being considered become fewer. In the present investigation, the main question of interest is whether one author, Josephus, wrote the TF; hence this investigation qualifies as the simplest binary form of forensic authorship attribution; see Ainsworth and Juola, 'Modern Forensic Authorship Analysis', 1165–6; Grant, *The Idea of Progress in Forensic Authorship Analysis*, 18. Secondly, forensic authorship attribution becomes more and more accurate as the corpora of documents to be analyzed become larger. In the case of the TF, I will be analyzing a very large corpus of documents attributed to Josephus (467,298 words, according to the Accordance database), against the small ninety-word TF. The smallness of the target corpus is not insurmountable though, as the target document is often quite small in these kinds of investigations, and evidently in criminal cases it averages 248 words, with most being smaller than two hundred words; see Grant, *The Idea of Progress in Forensic Authorship Analysis*, 22–3; see 61–2 for other considerations.

[9] It is appropriate at the beginning of this investigation to say that the TF is not mentioned in the ancient tables of contents associated with the *Antiquities*. There is reason for thinking that this table was assembled by a Jew, perhaps at the time the *Antiquities* was composed or shortly thereafter. However, the fact that the tables do not mention the TF is unremarkable given that they also do not mention assuredly authentic passages about John the Baptist, or James the brother of Jesus, and many other events described in the *Antiquities*. On account of this, it seems to have been the case that whoever composed the tables of contents did not think that events related to Jesus and his associates were worth highlighting. Paget, 'Some Observations', 556–7 n. 58. For discussion on the tables of contents, their Greek text and a translation pertaining to *Antiquities* books 18–20; see, respectively, Thackeray, *Josephus: Jewish Antiquities, Volume IV: Books 1–4*, 636–7; Feldman, *Josephus: Jewish Antiquities, Volume VIII, Books 18–19*, 390–403; Feldman, *Josephus: Jewish Antiquities, Volume IX: Book 20*, 146–54.

on many other occasions (twenty-seven by my counting),[10] and with roughly half of these[11] it introduces 'a calamity, disturbance or trouble, or some individual who is the source of such trouble'.[12] For instance, a parallel occurs when 'Antiochus became an origin of disturbances once more' (Γίνεται δὲ πάλιν ἀρχὴ θορύβων Ἀντίοχος);[13] or 'there was a group of women in the court who agitated newer disturbances' (Γίνεται δὲ καὶ γυναικῶν σύνταγμα κατὰ τὴν αὐλήν, ὃ νεωτέρους ἐκίνησεν θορύβους).[14] Some even occur in the very book of the *Antiquities* where the TF is placed, as when Josephus says, 'A terrible calamity arose . . .' (Γίνεται δὲ . . . συμφορὰ δεινή).[15]

In fact, γίνεται δέ is so stereotypically Josephan that Eisler and Thackeray wanted to emend the TF to make it say that Jesus 'became' (γίνεται) a 'disturbance' (θόρυβος) or a 'sedition' (στάσις), on the grounds that this matched Josephus' typical style of partnering γίνεται with a predicate, and because it also fitted the surrounding context of the TF, which speaks of five similar stories of uproar, most of which use θόρυβος to describe each affair.[16] But, as the passage stands, it can already be interpreted as having a predicate, 'In this time Jesus became a wise man'[17] or just 'In this time there was Jesus, a wise man'. And, in any case, Josephus did not always use γίνεται with a predicate,[18] nor did he always use the phrase in a negative way,[19] as when he says, 'And not long afterward a son came for Abraham from Sarah' (Γίνεται δὲ Ἀβράμῳ μετ᾽ οὐ πολὺ καὶ παῖς ἐκ Σάρρας);[20] or 'an ark also was [devoted] to God' (Γίνεται δὲ καὶ κιβωτὸς τῷ θεῷ),[21] or the almost identical,

[10] Excluding the TF, Josephus uses the exact form of the phrase γίνεται δέ eighteen times and the phrase γίνεται δ᾽ nine times. I tabulated these numbers by searching for the exact form of each phrase in the Accordance Josephus Tagged Greek Database.

[11] These may be found in *Antiquities* 18.310, 20.76, 20.118, 20.173; *War* 1.45, 1.86, 1.99, 1.128, 1.292, 1.517, 1.568, 1.648, 4.76, 4.208.

[12] Thackeray, *Josephus*, 142–3. For further discussion, see Bermejo-Rubio, 'Hypothetical Vorlage', 353–4; Eisler, *The Messiah Jesus*, 42–5.

[13] *War* 1.99.

[14] *War* 1.568. Also, *War* 4.208, 'John became a cause for the destruction of all of these people' (Γίνεται δὲ τούτοις πᾶσιν ὀλέθρου παραίτιος Ἰωάννης). See also *War* 1.517, 4.76; *Antiquities* 18.310, 20.118, 20.173. As these passages demonstrate, γίνεται need not be translated with the present tense and hence does not indicate that Jesus was still alive, contrary to Feldman, 'On the Authenticity of the Testimonium Flavianum', 21.

[15] *Antiquities* 18.310.

[16] Eisler, *The Messiah Jesus*, 50–1; Thackeray, *Josephus*, 140–3. Mason finds five incidents of uproar (*Antiquities* 18.55–9, 60–2, 65–80, 81–4, and 85–7), which are placed immediately surrounding the TF (*Antiquities* 18.63–4); see Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 225–6. Bermejo-Rubio, Eisler, and Nordon, though, note four different occasions of uproar (*Antiquities* 18.55–9, 60–2, 65–84, and 85–7); see Bermejo-Rubio, 'Hypothetical Vorlage', 359; Eisler, *The Messiah Jesus*, 42–3; Norden, 'Josephus und Tacitus', 640–1. However, this method of segmentation combines two stories that even Josephus himself considered to be distinct accounts (*Antiquities* 18.65). See further discussion in Chapter 4 pp. 130–31.

[17] I first learned of this possible interpretation from Cernuda, 'El testimonio flaviano', 359.

[18] Thus, he sometimes used the phrase to introduce the existence, flourishing, arrival, or birth of a person; for example, see *Antiquities* 17.14 and the similar phrase in *Antiquities* 1.213. For usages of the phrase without a predicate and without reference to humans, see *Antiquities* 3.134.

[19] *Antiquities* 2.4, 3.134, 20.51, 20.230; *War* 1.189, 1.499.

[20] *Antiquities* 1.213.

[21] *Antiquities* 3.134.

though not exact, phrase 'Now Malichos was worried, as he was in Tyre' (Μάλιχος δὲ ὑποπτεύσας, ὡς ἐν Τύρῳ γίνεται).[22]

Furthermore, the Gospel of Matthew describes the near riot at Jesus' trial as an 'uproar' (θόρυβος),[23] so it is difficult to see why a Christian scribe would have omitted the same term from the TF. Besides, not all of the five stories adjacent to the TF use θόρυβος,[24] and the TF's description of Jesus 'bringing over' (or even 'misleading') many Jews and Greeks before his execution has all the hallmarks of an 'uproar' even if such vocabulary is not specifically deployed.

κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον 'in this time'

This phrase of course has no suspicious content, but it does contain notable stylistic counterparts with other passages in Josephus. For example, one unnoted parallel deploys the same prepositional phrase (κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον) with γίνομαι, just as the TF does, 'For in this time there had not been any high priest' (καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον ἀρχιερεύς τις ἐγεγόνει).[25] It has likewise gone unnoticed by scholars that Josephus uses the exact phrase κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον four total times, all of which cluster around books 13–20 of the *Antiquities* and two of which occur shortly before and after the TF.[26]

Ἰησοῦς [τις]: '[a certain] Jesus'

Moving along, another possibly negative statement is encountered, 'a certain Jesus' (Ἰησοῦς [τις]). This very well could be interpreted in a belittling fashion, and according to LSJ, the indefinite adjective τις may carry 'a sense of contempt' when used with proper names,[27] as it is used here. Josephus in fact deployed the same exact phrase for the head of a band of robbers also named Jesus, whom Josephus calls 'a certain Jesus' (Ἰησοῦς τις).[28] He also uses the same term to introduce a false

[22] *War* 1.231.

[23] Matthew 27:24. See also Matthew 26:5; Mark 14:2.

[24] *Antiquities* 18.81–4 does not use θόρυβος or its derivatives. It also does not use στάσις. If one were to claim that the use of θορυβέω in *Antiquities* 18.65 applies to the story in *Antiquities* 18.81–4, then, from context, it must not apply to the story in *Antiquities* 18.66–80. Either way, one of the five stories does not contain the word θόρυβος or its derivatives.

[25] *Antiquities* 13.46.

[26] *Antiquities* 13.46, 17.19, 18.39, 18.80. For this statistic I ran a search in Accordance for the exact form of the phrase κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον. For very similar, though not exact, phrases, see *Antiquities* 13.171, 13.351.

[27] LSJ, Τις, A II 6 p. 1796–8. For example, Sophocles writes about 'a certain Thersites' (Θερσίτης τις), whom he presents as an uncontrolled babbler; see Sophocles, *Philoctetes* 442 (= TLG 0011.016).

[28] *War* 3.450.

messiah as 'a certain Menahem' (Μανάημός τις)[29] and Tacitus, a younger contemporary of Josephus, refers to another messianic claimant with the Latin equivalent, *Simo quidam*, or 'a certain Simon'.[30] According to Justin, Trypho the Jew used it of Jesus himself, 'a certain Jesus, a Galilean deceiver, whom we crucified' (Ἰησοῦ τινος Γαλιλαίου πλάνου ὃν σταυρωσάντων ἡμῶν);[31] as does even Satan in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, who talks of 'a certain Jesus' (τις Ἰησοῦς).[32] Finally, the procurator Festus refers to Jesus with the same phrase 'a certain Jesus' (τινος Ἰησοῦ) in Acts 25:19. Moreover, the phrase is thoroughly Josephan since on twenty-six other occasions Josephus deploys a proper noun and modifies it immediately afterward with τις in the singular, masculine, nominative form.

It is little wonder then that Christian scribes omitted the word from all Greek manuscripts of Josephus' *Antiquities*,[33] and that the only reason we are aware of its existence is because it is preserved by Eusebius via manuscript A of the *Ecclesiastical History*[34] and in its ancient Syriac (ܣܪ)[35] and Armenian (մի) translations.[36] Michael the Syrian's version of the TF, which I argue in Chapter 2 was derived from Jacob of Edessa (*c.*708 CE), also preserves 'a certain wise man, whose name was Jesus' (ܚܕ ܓܒܪܐ ܚܟܝܡ ܗܘܐ ܫܡܗ ܕܝܫܘܥ).[37] And according to Bermejo-Rubio, the Slavonic recension of Josephus' work contains vestiges of this word with the phrase *muži někij*, which may be 'retroverted into Greek' as ἀνήρ τις.[38]

[29] *War* 2.433. See also *Antiquities* 4.14 (Korah), 5.33 (Achan); *War* 2.57 (Simon), 4.503 (another Simon). For further references, see Bermejo-Rubio, 'Hypothetical Vorlage', 358 n. 152.

[30] Tacitus, *Histories* 5.9. Latin from Bermejo-Rubio, 358 n. 153; Eisler, *The Messiah Jesus*, 47.

[31] Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* 108.2 (ed. Marcovich, *Iustini Martyris: Dialogus cum Tryphone*, 255 lines 9–10 = TLG 0645.003 line 5). On Justin's knowledge of Jewish Christianity, see Paget, 'Jewish Christianity', 756–7.

[32] *Gospel of Nicodemus* 20.1 line 6 (= TLG 2976.001).

[33] The existence of the indefinite article τις caused Eisler to conclude that it must not have been added by a Christian, Eisler, 'Jésus d'après la version slave de Flavius Josèphe', 2.

[34] MS Paris Grec 1430 (tenth century) f. 26b line 3. See Image 6. Further pictures may be found at https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10722779g/f32.item.zoom. This manuscript is discussed in Schwartz and Mommsen, *Eusebius Werke 2.1–3: Die Kirchengeschichte*, GCS 9.3 p. xxiii.

[35] MS British Library Add. 14639 (sixth century) f. 14b left col, line 29; MS Russian National Library Siriyskaya novaya seria 1 #24 (462 CE) f. 16a right col, line 26; BL.Add.12154, f. 151r line 20 (eighth/ninth century). See Images 9, 10, and 11. The first two manuscripts are discussed in Wright, Maclean, and Merx, *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius in Syriac*, v–xii.

[36] MS HMML 7640 (Codex Mechitaristarum Vindobonensis 49 (70C)) f. 15a line 22. See Image 13. For text and discussion, see Preuschen, 'Eusebius Kirchengeschichte Buch VI und VII aus dem Armenischen übersetzt'; Wright, Maclean, and Merx, *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius in Syriac*, xiii–xvii; Carean, *Patmut'iwn Eketec'woy Eusebiosi Kesrac'woy*.

[37] Michael the Syrian, *Record of Times* 5.10 [91] found in MS Edessa-Aleppo Codex 50r left col, line 17. For pictures of the manuscript, see Image 12 and n. 93 in Chapter 2.

[38] Bermejo-Rubio, 'Hypothetical Vorlage', 358. I thank Viacheslav Lytvynenko for confirming this Slavonic reading for me, though he cautions 'The phrase *muži někij* is indeed a retroverted translation of the Greek ἀνήρ τις, although a more precise rendering of ἀνήρ is muž (singular) rather than muži (plural)' (personal correspondence January 2024). Peter Williams also cautioned me that there are many instances in Syriac translation where *ḥad* (ܚܕ) is added when it does not correspond with a Greek word, so it is possible that the Syriac translation of the TF does not actually witness to the Greek term. See Williams, *Early Syriac Translation Technique*, 133–41.

But it must be said that one is not required to read the τις negatively, for it does not always imply disparagement and indeed Josephus will use it for people whom he esteems, like Naboth[39] and Manoah.[40] One could also interpret τις as modifying 'a wise man' to make the introduction of the TF read 'in this time there was Jesus, a certain wise man . . .'. Given these things, τις is therefore ambiguous and could plausibly be read negatively or neutrally. Josephus, for example, may have been inspired to speak of Jesus with τις due to traditions he shared with the Jewish-Christian account of Jesus known as the *Gospel of the Ebionites*. Quotations from this Gospel introduce Jesus like this: 'And there was a certain man by the name of Jesus' (ἐγένετό τις ἀνὴρ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦς).[41] Notable here is that this phrase introduces Jesus with the same two words—γίνομαι and τις—that the TF also uses to introduce Jesus 'there was in that time a certain Jesus' (Γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον Ἰησοῦς τις). In this case however the Gospel's use of τις cannot be seen as derogatory because it does not modify the proper name of Jesus; but even so, the TF may not necessarily be derogatory either. All that to say, it is possible that this shared wording is not mere coincidence and that the TF and the *Gospel of the Ebionites* were drawing from the same Jewish tradition about Jesus.

So then, with just a handful of words, we have already noted striking parallels with Josephan phrasing, found reasons for interpreting the TF as possibly negative or at least ambiguous, and highlighted intriguing correspondence between the TF and early Jewish traditions about Jesus. And there is more of the same to come.

σοφὸς ἀνήρ: 'a wise man'

The next phrase in the TF appears to praise Jesus as a wise man by calling him a σοφὸς ἀνήρ. This accords with the style of Josephus, who uses, in the *Antiquities* no less, the same locution for Solomon (ἀνδρὶ σοφῷ)[42] and Daniel (σοφὸς ἀνήρ).[43] The phrase also follows at least roughly the general pattern of how Josephus treated the messianic claimant Menahem, mentioned above, 'who was called the Galilean, a most ruthless sophist' (τοῦ καλουμένου Γαλιλαίου, σοφιστὴς δεινότατος).[44] Though Josephus here uses a negative term σοφιστής when speaking of Menahem's wisdom, he elsewhere has Pharaoh call his magicians 'wise' (σοφῶν). Immediately

[39] *Antiquities* 8.355.
[40] *Antiquities* 5.276. Bermejo-Rubio says that Josephus uses τις to refer to Abraham; see Bermejo-Rubio, 'Hypothetical Vorlage', 358. I have been unable to find this passage, however.
[41] Epiphanius, *Panarion* 30.13.2 (= TLG 2021.002, 1.349 line 4).
[42] *Antiquities* 8.53.
[43] *Antiquities* 10.237.
[44] *War* 2.433.

afterwards Josephus puts the positive term σοφίας in the mouth of Moses to have him admit that the magicians of Pharaoh did indeed possess 'wisdom' (σοφίας).[45]

Similarly, the TF's apparent praise for Jesus' wisdom is not out of order when compared with other non-Christian sources and hence may well have been unremarkable for a first-century Jew, like Josephus, to have said. The evidently non-Christian Mara bar Serapion (first–third century), a Syriac philosopher, calls Jesus 'wise' (ܚܟܝܡܐ).[46] The virulently anti-Christian writer Porphyry approves of an oracle that classifies Jesus as among the 'wise men of the Hebrews' (*sapientes Hebraeorum*).[47] Lactantius quotes a similar statement by the Milesian Apollo, which deploys the same vocabulary as the TF to state that Jesus was a 'wise man' (σοφός).[48] Consequently, calling Jesus 'wise' does not necessarily signal that the TF was written by a Christian, or even that the TF was a positive portrayal of Jesus.

Adding to this point is the fact that the New Testament authors never call Jesus a 'wise man' (σοφός) and Luke alone directly states that Jesus had 'wisdom', but he only applies this to the boy Jesus.[49] A crowd once or twice declares that Jesus possessed great 'wisdom',[50] but again this does not seem to be a typical way early Christians spoke about Jesus. The apostle Paul even condemns 'wise men' (σοφοί),[51] and Jesus too critiqued them.[52] This tendency continued in other early Christian writings with Ignatius of Antioch, Justin the Martyr, Irenaeus, and Clement of Alexandria all doing the same,[53] likely because the term 'wise man' was so often associated with pagan philosophy. Of course, in a sense, all Christians would have confessed that Jesus was profoundly wise—and certainly some early Christians would have called Jesus 'a wise man'—but nevertheless there was clearly suspicion over the term. Yet, as seen above, non-Christians had no such qualms and would often label Jesus 'a wise man'.

[45] *Antiquities* 2.285–6.

[46] *Letter of Mara bar Serapion* found in Cureton, *Spicilegium Syriacum*, 46 (Syriac pagination) line 19. On the various debates over the date of Mara bar Serapion (some of which push him into the fourth or fifth centuries) and whether he was a Christian or not, see the essays in Merz and Tieleman, *The Letter of Mara Bar Serapion*.

[47] *Ab his sapientes Hebraeorum (quorum unus iste etiam Iesus fuit, sicut audisti diuina Apollinis, quae superius dicta sunt)*. Augustine, *City of God* 19.23 (693, 115–17), Latin from the Corpus Augustinianum Gissense, https://cag3.net/. For discussion, see Cook, *The Interpretation of the New Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism*, 112.

[48] Lactantius, *Institutes* 4.13.11, found in Brandt and Laubmann, *L. Caeli Firmiani Lactanti: Opera omnia*, 319 line 7. For discussion, see Cook, *The Interpretation of the New Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism*, 108. Lucian, another critic of Christianity, comes close to this when he contemptuously speaks of 'that crucified sophist' (ἀνεσκολοπισμένον ἐκεῖνον σοφιστήν); see Lucian, *Death of Peregrinus* 13 line 17 (= TLG 0062.042).

[49] Luke 2:40, 52.

[50] Matthew 13:54; Mark 6:2.

[51] 1 Corinthians 1:18–25.

[52] Matthew 11:25; Luke 10:21.

[53] For example, Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Ephesians* 18; Justin, *Dialogue* 32.5; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.20.3; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 5.1.8.

So, once more, calling Jesus a 'wise man' seems more appropriate coming from a non-Christian than an early Christian. Beyond all this though, how one interprets Jesus' wisdom in the TF hinges on how one interprets the very next clause.[54]

εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή: 'if indeed one ought to call him a man'

This phrase is quite Josephan, for instance 'if one ought to have said [it occurred] by chance' (εἴτε ὑπὸ τύχης χρὴ λέγειν)[55] and 'if one ought to call it strength of opinion' (εἴτε τῆς γνώμης ἰσχὺν χρὴ λέγειν)[56] and 'there, one must speak true things' (ἔνθα χρὴ τἀληθῆ λέγειν).[57] The word εἴγε is used twenty-one times outside of the TF in Josephus, and five of these times it is deployed nearby the TF in *Antiquities* 17.181, 17.311, 18.9, 18.128, and 20.41.[58] The lexeme χρή complemented by λέγω is used five other times by Josephus,[59] and on one other occasion Josephus matches the TF by using λέγω and the pronoun αὐτός to designate calling someone a certain term, as with 'calling him an Alexandrian' (λέγων αὐτὸν Ἀλεξανδρέα).[60]

It is often claimed, however, that the phrase at hand is suspicious because it goes beyond simply complementing the wisdom of Jesus and seems instead to be denying his humanity in order to promote his divinity.[61] In this one must remember that Christian authors like Origen, Eusebius, and practically all others ardently felt that Jesus was in fact human.[62] They consequently would have viewed any denials of his humanity as heretical. Therefore, most Christians—authors and scribes—would likely not have interpolated such a statement into the TF. And, more pointedly, one could always interpret the above statement as sarcastically implying that Jesus was *less* than human.[63] Evidence of this is that Josephus does

[54] Additionally, the weakly positive 'wise' falls far below Christian estimations of Jesus. It therefore seems unlikely for a Christian forger to insert; see Bardet, *Le Testimonium Flavianum*, 98–9; Bermejo-Rubio, 'Hypothetical Vorlage', 357 n. 148.

[55] *War* 3.391.

[56] *War* 7.417.

[57] *War* 1.16. Other instances exist as well (such as *War* 5.97). Mealand seems not have accounted for these in his research, for he says that the phrase εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή is not particularly Josephan; see Mealand, 'On Finding Fresh Evidence', 84 n. 12.

[58] In this count I am including εἴγε and the synonymous εἴ γε, as the only difference between the two is whether an editor has decided to insert a space, but in ancient Greek speaking and writing, the spacing would often be irrelevant.

[59] *War* 1.16, 2.366, 3.391, 5.461, 7.417.

[60] *Apion* 2.41. Josephus may also use the same locution in *Apion* 1.82, but this seems more likely to be the quoted words of Manetho.

[61] Pines, *An Arabic Version*, 19–20; Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 234.

[62] See, for example, Origen's definition of apostolic doctrine affirming Jesus' humanity; see Origen, *First Principles* 1.pref.4; or Eusebius' creedal like statements in *Ecclesiastical Theology* 1.6.1–1.7.3.

[63] While it is unconvincing that the entire TF could be interpreted ironically or sarcastically, Vicent Cernuda makes a strong case that at least this phrase of the TF could be interpreted in such a way; see Cernuda, 'El testimonio flaviano', 359–65. See also Bammel, 'Zum Testimonium Flavianum', 18.

elsewhere enjoy using sarcastic barbs in his work. For example, in *Against Apion*, he sarcastically calls Apion 'the wonderful Apion' (ὁ δὲ θαυμαστὸς Ἀπίων).[64] And he does the same with Justus of Tiberias, his hated enemy, whom he names 'the most skillful of writers' (δεινότατε συγγραφέων).[65] If one interprets the TF's statement about Jesus' humanity as sarcasm, such would then cast negative light on the previous statement that Jesus was 'wise' in as much as it too would become sarcastic. The statement may thus hearken back to how in the Gospels Jesus was accused of not only being in league with demons, but also of being a demon himself.[66]

Either way though, it was not out of line for an ancient non-Christian to suggest that Jesus was something more than human. For instance, as great a critic of Christianity as Porphyry was willing to admit that certain gods declared that 'Christ was most faithful and has been made immortal'. He then goes on to cite an oracle in support of this.[67] Porphyry himself seems to have classified Jesus as an 'undefiled soul' and hence one of the three kinds of 'superior beings' that accompany the gods.[68]

Such sentiments would also not have appeared to be atypical of Josephus since he employs the epithet 'divine' (θεῖος) to describe Jewish figures like Moses, Solomon, and Isaiah.[69] He even affirms that Moses' 'power was beyond human' (τῆς ὑπὲρ ἄνθρωπόν ἐστι δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ)[70] and that Moses' legislation 'made the man to be considered greater than his nature' (τῆς αὐτοῦ φύσεως κρείττονα νομίζεσθαι).[71] It may also have been that Josephus considered Jesus to be on par with the magicians of Pharaoh who, according to Moses, did have 'wisdom' (σοφίας) and could perform a miraculous sign (παράδοξον), but their power was not divine (εἰς θεόν), only human (τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων) and wrought by magic (μαγείας).[72] Such is especially probable given how many statements in the TF overlap with Josephus' account of Moses and the sorcerers of Egypt, as I will show further on in this chapter. Whatever the case, the TF does not present Josephus as actually calling Jesus divine anyway, but only presents this as a potential possibility—as long as one does not interpret the statement more negatively.

[64] *Apion* 2.25.
[65] *Life* 340.
[66] Matthew 10:25.
[67] τὸν γὰρ Χριστὸν οἱ θεοὶ εὐσεβέστατον ἀπεφήναντο καὶ ἀθάνατον γεγονότα. Eusebius, *Demonstration* 3.7.1 (134b) lines 2–3 (= TLG 2018.005). See also Augustine, *City of God* 19.23 (691, 48–51). For discussion, see Cook, *The Interpretation of the New Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism*, 109.
[68] Ibid., 111.
[69] For example, *Antiquities* 3.180 (Moses), 8.34 (Solomon), and 10.35 (Isaiah). Carl Holladay, followed by Paul Spilsbury, has argued that in these instances Josephus is not claiming that these people actually were divine, but rather that they were holy or otherwise exemplary figures; see Holladay, *Theios Aner in Hellenistic-Judaism*, 47–102, especially 78–9; Spilsbury, *The Image of the Jew in Flavius Josephus' Paraphrase of the Bible*, 107–10. Similarly, Philo also considered calling the mind of Moses 'divine'; see Philo, *De Vita Mosis* 1.27.
[70] *Antiquities* 3.318.
[71] *Antiquities* 3.320.
[72] *Antiquities* 2.285–6.

All of this combines to explain why so many Christian writers may have found this particular aspect of the TF to be ambiguous and hence not especially useful. In considering this, I am inclined to think that the phrase should be interpreted straightforwardly as Josephus expressing diffidence, uncertainty, or ambiguity regarding his personal estimation of Jesus, or on the other hand, he might instead have used the phrase as a way of acknowledging that Jesus was a polarizing figure among his readers, whatever Josephus' own opinions may have been.

We, after all, have little reason to assume that a late first-century Jew like Josephus must have shared the same opinion about Jesus as his readers, or even had a concrete opinion at all. This is evidenced by the fact that early Jewish sources had a multitude of shifting, overlapping, and contradictory expectations regarding the Messiah. Rabbinic sources, for example, mention various kinds of personages who would presage the Messiah, such as Melchizedek, Elijah, a prophet like Moses, or another kind of Messiah (making multiple messiahs). Some Jewish sources even state that the Messiah had already arrived and been killed.[73] It could well have been that Josephus thought Jesus to be one of these kinds of figures, or at least considered it a possibility.[74]

ἦν γὰρ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής: 'for he was a doer of miraculous deeds'

The phrase 'he was' (ἦν γάρ) is used by Josephus in this exact form forty-two other times in his works. The overall statement, however, seems suspicious to modern Western sensibilities which find it unlikely that someone could believe in the authenticity of a miracle worker and not also be counted as that person's devotee.[75]

[73] Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 98a.17 (will Messiah come today or not?); *Sanhedrin* 98a.13 (Messiah will be glorious versus Messiah will be lowly), *Sanhedrin* 98b.12,15, 99a3 (Messiah is dead), *Sukkah* 52a.2–3 (Messiah son of Joseph has already been killed, but the Messiah son of David is still to come), Sukkah 52b.11 (multiple Messiahs). See also Midrash Rabbah, *Song of Songs* 2.13.4 (Elijah, Melchizedek, a war Messiah and the actual Messiah); Gospel of John 1:21–5 (the prophet). Scholars acknowledge this point. Bardet, for example, successfully shows that what a Jew thought about Jesus in this time may not be so obvious; see Bardet, *Le Testimonium Flavianum*, 227–32. And Bermijo-Rubio point outs that we should not be 'prejudiced and anachronistic' in our assumptions about what a first-century Jew would think about Jesus; see Bermejo-Rubio, 'Hypothetical Vorlage', 348–9. According to Feldman, Rabbi Akiva thought Simon bar Kochba was the Messiah, yet he remained Jewish. On this, see Feldman, 'Flavius Josephus revisited', 829. In this regard, the 'Jew of Celsus' reports that many Jews were followers of Jesus (Origen, *Against Celsus* 2.1, 4), so it is possible that Josephus himself did also believe that Jesus was the Christ. However, if this is so, it would raise the question of why Origen said that Josephus did not believe that Jesus was the Christ in *Against Celsus* 1.47 and *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17, as I explain on pp. 13–4.

[74] For several essays showing that ancient Judaism and Christianity were more intertwined than is commonly thought, see Becker and Reed, *The Ways That Never Parted*.

[75] Certain scholars have argued that because Eusebius uses the phrase παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής, he must therefore be the one who interpolated the phrase into the TF. For further discussion on this, see Appendix 1.

But things were quite different in the ancient world. In fact, Jewish sources otherwise critical of Jesus repeatedly admit that he did work what we would call 'miracles'. We see this most strikingly in the 'Jew of Celsus' (*c.*150 CE) who says that Jesus did perform παράδοξα, using the precise word deployed by the TF.[76] Justin the Martyr further says that Jews believed Jesus worked miracles by magic,[77] and a similar claim is time and again lodged against Jesus by Jewish authorities in the Gospels themselves.[78] The Babylonian Talmud also criticizes Jesus 'because he practiced sorcery' (שכישף).[79] And the Jerusalem Talmud states that Jesus' followers could heal in his name, yet it still cautions faithful Jews not to be persuaded by them.[80] The versions of the Jewish *Toledot Yeshu* (second–fifth centuries), an early account of Jesus,[81] are highly critical of him, yet records all sorts of miracles that Jesus worked including even raising the dead.[82] Likewise, a second- or third-century Jewish-Christian document, perhaps called the *Ascents of James*, reports that Jews would accuse Jesus of performing miracles like a sorcerer might do.[83] Pagan sources also spoke similarly, as with the Milesian Apollo, who acknowledged that Jesus did 'miraculous deeds' (τερατώδεσιν ἔργοις)[84] and the anti-Christian writer, Porphyry, effectively agrees.[85]

More than this, the connotations of the word παράδοξος, though supernatural, were morally questionable and open to negative interpretation. LSJ defines the term as something 'incredible', 'contrary to expectation', or even 'a paradox'.[86] The *Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek* further specifies other definitions like 'surprising' and 'strange'.[87] So, Plato will say that something is 'contradictory and false' (παράδοξόν τε καὶ ψεῦδος),[88] and the only time in the New Testament where Jesus

[76] Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.6 (ed. Marcovich, *Origenes*, 10 line 22 = TLG 2042.001 line 18). See also Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.28, 38, 2.48–53. For a discussion of Celsus and his use of Jewish documents, see Niehoff, 'A Jewish Critique of Christianity from Second-Century Alexandria'.

[77] οἱ δὲ καὶ ταῦτα ὁρῶντες γινόμενα φαντασίαν μαγικὴν γίνεσθαι ἔλεγον. Justin, *Dialogue* 69.7 (ed. Marcovich p. 191 lines 39–40 = TLG 0645.003 lines 1–2).

[78] See, for example, Matthew 9:34, 10:25, 12:24; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15.

[79] Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 43a.20; see also 107b.14. For discussion, see Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud*, 63–74. See also Commodian, *Song of the Two Peoples* lines 386–396.

[80] Jerusalem Talmud, *Shabbat* 14.4.12 [14.4.1.3EE of ed. Neusner]; see also Tosefta, *Hullin* 2.22, Midrash Rabbah, *Ecclesiastes* 1.8.3–4. For discussion, see Schäfer, 52–62.

[81] For a brief discussion of the dating of the traditions within the *Toledot Yeshu*, see Chapter 4 n. 42

[82] For a listing of Jesus' miracles in the various versions of the *Toledot Yeshu*, see Meerson and Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 1 p. 75.

[83] Pseudo-Clement, *Recognitions* 1.58.1, 1.70.2. For the dating of this document and further discussion, see Paget, 'Jewish Christianity', 762–3; Jones, *An Ancient Jewish Christian Source on the History of Christianity*, 163–4; Broadhead, *Jewish Ways of Following Jesus*, 202, 267–73.

[84] Lactantius, *Institutes* 4.13.11 (ed. Brandt and Laubmann, *L. Caeli Firmiani Lactanti: Opera omnia*, 319 line 7). For discussion, see Cook, *The Interpretation of the New Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism*, 108.

[85] Porphyry admits that the apostles did miracles (Jerome, *Tractatus de Psalmo* 81; found in Morin vol. 3.2 p. 80 lines 21–2). Similarly, Arnobius engages with an opponent who alleges that Jesus worked miracles through the knowledge of secret, magical arts or because he was a kind of demigod of old; see respectively Arnobius, *Against the Nations* 1.43, 53, and 1.48–9.

[86] LSJ, παράδοξος, I.

[87] *Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, παράδοξος.

[88] Plato, *Statesman*, 281a line 13 (= TLG 0059.008).

is ever said to perform παράδοξα is when a crowd says so in Luke 5:26, a statement that may not be entirely complimentary.[89] The New Testament writings instead prefer to designate miracles with other Greek words like 'signs and wonders and mighty works' (σημείοις τε καὶ τέρασιν καὶ δυνάμεσιν).[90]

The negative connotations of παράδοξα are most explicitly pointed out by Eusebius, who, in his discussion of the TF, says there are those who 'admit that Jesus performed incredible deeds (τὰ παράδοξα), but that he did so with deceptive magic directed at the onlookers, such as by a conjurer or sorcerer, to dazzle those who stood by'.[91] In a passage mentioned above, Josephus closely follows this understanding when he makes Pharaoh say that the 'wise' (σοφῶν) magicians of Egypt employed their dark arts (μαγείας) to perform a παράδοξον before Moses by turning their staffs into snakes, so as to show that they too had something regarding the divinity (εἰς θεόν). Moses then even acknowledges that the Egyptians had 'wisdom' (σοφίας), but that their power was really only human (τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων).[92] This passage remarkably pairs with the TF's similar usages of παράδοξος, σοφός, ἀνήρ, and θεῖος[93]—and all in the context of magic and sorcery. This, combined with the fact that it does not seem likely that a Christian would have inserted such a term as παράδοξος into the TF, makes it quite probable that the TF came from the hand of Josephus. Possible ways of translating παράδοξα therefore range from anything between the positive 'miraculous deeds', to the ambiguous 'incredible deeds' or 'crazy deeds',[94] to the more negative 'magical deeds'.

Importantly, the TF's larger phrase παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής also coheres well with Josephan style as παραδόξων ἔργων in different forms is used by Josephus in *Antiquities* 9.182 and 12.63. Ποιητής is used elsewhere by Josephus nine times, but only in the sense of 'poet', not the sense which the TF gives it of 'doer'.[95] Yet as Meier points out,[96] Josephus uses cognates of ποιητής in a similar way, especially ποίησις for 'an action' or 'a deed'. In fact, by my reckoning Josephus uses the lexeme ποίησις with a genitive eight total times, seven of which cluster around *Antiquities* 17–19, exactly where the TF uses ποιητής with the genitive 'miraculous deeds' (παραδόξων ἔργων).[97] And on three other occasions Josephus

[89] For example, in this passage the NRSV and NKJV versions translate παράδοξα in Luke 5:26 as 'strange things', and many other English versions do the same.

[90] 2 Corinthians 12:12. See also Acts 2:22.

[91] Eusebius, *Demonstration* 3.5.110 (125a–b) (ed. Heikel GCS 23 p. 131 lines 24–6 = TLG 2018.005 lines 3–5).

[92] *Antiquities* 2.285–6.

[93] Josephus' discussions of the magicians of Egypt does not contain the word ἀνήρ, but it does contain the rough synonym ἀνθρώπινος. For a discussion on the TF's use of θεῖος with regards to prophets, see p. 101.

[94] I thank Peter Montoro who first suggested to me this possible English phrase.

[95] Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 231.

[96] Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 81 n. 41.

[97] For example, 'the making of siege engines' (ποίησιν μηχανημάτων), *Antiquities* 4.299; 'the doing of children' (τῶν παίδων τῆς ποιήσεως), *Antiquities* 17.94; 'the making of sacrifices' (ἱερῶν ποιήσεως), *Antiquities* 18:15. See also 18.21, 18.22, 18.55, 18.314, 19.71. To find these I ran a search in Accordance for the lexeme ποίησις within three words of a genitive.

deploys the term ποίησις not as 'an action' but simply as 'a poem'.[98] Why then should we be surprised if he would alternate between using ποιητής to mean poet and doer? As the great Josephan scholar Thackeray noted, the style of book 18 of the *Antiquities* shows a predilection for 'periphrasis' and 'strange words'.[99] Hence, for Thackeray it made perfect sense that we would find ποιητής ('doer') written in the TF instead of the simpler verb form ποιεῖν ('to do'),[100] just as κριτής (a 'judge' or perhaps to preserve the awkwardness a 'judger') is used instead of κρίνειν ('to judge') shortly thereafter in *Antiquities* 19.217. Given these parallels with Josephan style and the possible negative implications of παράδοξα, it seems far more plausible that Josephus was responsible for this phrase than it being the result of Christian interpolation.

διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡδονῇ τἀληθῆ δεχομένων: 'a teacher of men who receive truisms with pleasure'

This phrase is thoroughly Josephan. Διδάσκαλος (teacher) is used sixteen other times by Josephus, often quite negatively.[101] In these instances though, he uses it with a genitive to indicate the content of teaching, as in 'a teacher of good things' (διδάσκαλός τε ἀγαθῶν),[102] 'a teacher of evil' (κακίας διδάσκαλον),[103] 'teachers of wisdom' (διδασκάλους σοφίας),[104] and 'a teacher of flattery and fear' (κολακείας δὲ καὶ φόβου διδάσκαλοι).[105] Only once does he parallel the TF by using it with the genitive to indicate the person taught (as opposed to the subject matter), as with 'he was a teacher of lies to the Sicarii' (διδάσκαλος ἦν τῶν σικαρίων τῆς ψευδολογίας).[106] Given this usage pattern, it is possible to instead translate the passage in the TF as 'one who taught about men who receive truisms with pleasure', but it need not be understood this way, especially given evidence I will present in the next section.

In any case, the phrase ἡδονῇ . . . δεχομένων is markedly Josephan as well and is used with the dative ἡδονή eight total times by Josephus, all of which remarkably cluster around *Antiquities* 17–19, most of them in book 18, precisely where

[98] *Apion* 1.12 (two occasions), 2.155.

[99] Thackeray, *Josephus*, 132. Thackeray attributed changes in style within the works of Josephus to various secretaries, but other scholars have disagreed; see nn. 6 and 7. In either case, whoever was responsible for the style of the latter books of the *Antiquities* clearly did have a fondness for periphrastic constructions.

[100] Thackeray, *Josephus*, 144.

[101] For further discussion on the negative aspects of διδάσκαλος in Josephus, see Bermejo-Rubio, 'Hypothetical Vorlage', 354.

[102] *Antiquities* 13.115.

[103] *Antiquities* 17.325.

[104] *Antiquities* 18.16.

[105] *Antiquities* 19.172.

[106] *War* 7.444.

the TF uses the same wording.[107] Once Josephus deploys the phrase in the same form as the TF: 'which the counselors received with pleasure' (τῶν βουλευτῶν ἡδονῇ δεχομένων).[108] Similarly, Josephus four times uses ἄνθρωπος alongside δέχομαι, all of which occur in the latter part of the *Antiquities*.[109] Τἀληθῆ is also Josephan and is used by him thirty-nine times in its crasis form, eight of which occur in the same case and number as in the TF. Of these eight, five appear in the *Antiquities*.[110]

Despite these parallels, the phrase as a whole often strikes contemporary readers as suspicious because it presents a positive estimation of Jesus insofar as he apparently taught those who 'receive truths'. But this phrase may still be interpreted as fairly derogatory given that the word for 'pleasure' (ἡδονή) was often a negative term among ancient Christian writers. Thus, Eusebius dedicates two chapters of his *Preparation of the Gospel* toward refuting 'those who define ἡδονή as the chief end'[111] and in Josephus it functions similarly, especially when partnered with δέχομαι. This can be observed in the very same book where the TF occurs. For example, 'the men received the hearing of what they said with pleasure' (καὶ ἡδονῇ γὰρ τὴν ἀκρόασιν ὧν λέγοιεν ἐδέχοντο οἱ ἄνθρωποι), which, as Josephus explains, caused evil to fill the nation;[112] or, when a man 'received the request with pleasure' (καὶ δεχομένου τὴν ἱκετείαν ἡδονῇ)[113] in order to lead a woman astray.[114] As I said, both of these occur in the very same book of the *Antiquities* where the TF is located, and both of them are markedly negative. Such suggests that Josephus intended the phrase 'receive with pleasure' to denote an overly excitable or all too zealous reception of Jesus' teachings.

This understanding is further supported by the fact that Josephus subtly contrasts τἀληθῆ with ἡδονή on 2 other occasions. Once, Pharaoh asks Joseph not to flatter him when interpreting his dream 'for the sake of pleasure, even if the truth be quite gloomy' (πρὸς ἡδονήν, ἂν τἀληθὲς σκυθρωπότερον ᾖ).[115] Secondly, Josephus declares that while he intends to write with beautiful style so that his readers 'may receive the experience with pleasure (ἡδονῆς), what historians should aim at above all is accuracy and to speak the facts (τἀληθῆ)'.[116] These two examples

[107] *Antiquities* 17.329, 18.6, 18.59, 18.70, 18.236, 18.333, 19.127, 19.185. For this number I used Accordance to perform a search for the lexeme δέχομαι with a dative form of ἡδονή within the same verse.

[108] *Antiquities* 19.185.

[109] *Antiquities* 14.130, 15.341, 17.329, 18.6.

[110] *Antiquities* 3.74, 3.308, 4.219, 8.23, 14.3; *War* 1.16, 3.438; *Life* 262. For this number I used Accordance to perform a search for the exact form of τἀληθῆ.

[111] Πρὸς τοὺς κατ' ἐπίκουρον ἡδονὴν τέλος ὁριζομένους. Eusebius, *Preparation of the Gospel* 14.21.1 lines t1–2 (= TLG 2018.001).

[112] *Antiquities* 18.6.

[113] *Antiquities* 18.70.

[114] For further discussion on the negative aspects of ἡδονή and δέχομαι, see Bermejo-Rubio, 'Hypothetical Vorlage', 354; Thackeray, *Josephus*, 144–5; Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 76 n. 19.

[115] *Antiquities* 2.80.

[116] ἡδονῆς τὴν ἐμπειρίαν παραλαμβάνοιεν πάντων δὲ μᾶλλον τῆς ἀκριβείας τοὺς συγγραφεῖς στοχάζεσθαι μηδὲν τοῦ τἀληθῆ λέγειν . . . προτιμῶντας. *Antiquities* 14.3.

put the TF's phrase 'receive truisms with pleasure' in a kind of ambiguous tension since 'truths' (τἀληθῆ) and 'pleasure' (ἡδονή) are not particularly complementary to one another, even if they are not inherently contradictory.

This is not to say that Josephus and even Christian writers could not use ἡδονή in a positive sense,[117] but it certainly had many negative connotations. And we find proof of such worries in the manuscript tradition of Eusebius' *Demonstration*, where a later scribe has changed the TF's phrase from 'a teacher of men who receive truisms with pleasure' (τῶν ἡδονῇ τἀληθῆ δεχομένων) to 'a teacher of men who revere truisms' (διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων τἀληθές σεβομένων)—thereby omitting any mention of ἡδονή.[118] Jerome and Rufinus likewise chose less ambiguous Latin phrases when translating the TF, and one Syriac translator did the same.[119]

Turning to the word 'truths' (τἀληθῆ), it appears at first to signal a positive meaning,[120] but when examined in the context of Josephus' usage pattern a more neutral implication of τἀληθῆ can be sensed. Of the thirty-nine times that Josephus makes use of the term in the crasis form, as it occurs in the TF, he never once appears to refer to some deep, sublime reality or mystical truth.[121] Instead, in all cases he seems rather to be speaking of various 'facts', the 'present situation', 'the way things are' or 'truisms'.[122] This is in contrast to how Josephus uses the more profound and abstract 'truth' (ἀλήθεια), which he deploys 109 times.[123] It would also be strange for a Christian to interpolate τἀληθῆ, given that it never once appears in the Septuagint or the New Testament,[124] though the more sublime 'truth' (ἀλήθεια) occurs frequently.

Accordingly, the term τἀληθῆ in the TF should probably be understood with little if any profound valence and likely should be taken to be fairly general or run-of-the-mill truths, as with the English terms 'facts at hand', 'maxims', 'pithy sayings', or especially 'truisms'. Notably this might denote a style of teaching very like

[117] For example, *Antiquities* 18.59 where Jews are willing 'to receive death with pleasure' (ἡδονῇ δέξασθαι τὸν θάνατον) in order to honor their laws. Josephus uses the word ἡδονή positively also in *Apion* 2.189. On this passage, see Bardet, *Le Testimonium Flavianum*, 95–6. For an overview of positive usages of ἡδονή in both Josephus and Eusebius, see Olson, 'A Eusebian Reading', 104–5.

[118] For discussion, see Appendix 1 p. 218.

[119] See pp. 38, 41–2, 46–7.

[120] Some have even suggested emending the term; see Thackeray, *Josephus*, 145.

[121] *Antiquities* 8.23 is the one possible exception, but here Solomon is praying for wisdom so that he might judge the people fairly, or as he says 'I might, by accepting truths and just things, judge the people' (ἵν τὸν λαὸν τἀληθῆ καὶ τὰ δίκαια λαβὼν κρίνοιμι). Thus, this statement seems best interpreted as an appeal for sound judgment in regard to the facts, not any kind of profound mystical reality.

[122] *Antiquities* 3.74, 3.308, 4.219, 14.3; *Life* 262; *War* 1.16, 3.438.

[123] For this number I ran a search in Accordance for the lexeme ἀλήθεια.

[124] I confirmed this by a TLG search for the crasis form of τἀληθῆ in the New Testament and the Septuagint. For similar thoughts, see also Thackeray, *Josephus*, 145. Several scholars have also suggested that τἀληθῆ could simply be a corruption of τἀ ἄλλα ἔθη, 'other customs', on the grounds that *epsilon* and *eta* are often used interchangeably in Greek manuscripts. This would then place the sentence in a completely negative light. On this, see Bardet, *Le Testimonium Flavianum*, 100; Dubarle, 'Le témoignage de Josèphe', 52. Thackeray and Eisler wonder if the original was instead 'unusual' (τἀ ἀήθη) and argue that a similar scribal mistake was made in *War* 6.403; see Thackeray, *Josephus*, 145; Eisler, *The Messiah Jesus*, 53.

the simple kind of sayings and parables attributed to Jesus throughout the Gospels. And this is indeed how some writers appear to have understood the phrase, such as Pseudo-Hegesippus who translates τἀληθῆ as 'moral commands' (*praeceptis moralibus*);[125] and also Eusebius, who says that the TF describes Jesus' teachings as ξενιζούσῃ . . . διδασκαλίᾳ, which can be rendered neutrally as 'new teaching' or even more negatively as 'strange teaching'.[126]

In summary, this section of the TF contains remarkably Josephan vocabulary with its usage of 'teacher' (διδάσκαλος), 'receive with pleasure' (τῶν ἡδονῇ . . . δεχομένων), and 'truisms' (τἀληθῆ), all of which are strongly or at least plausibly Josephan. Most importantly though is that these terms do not indicate a positive estimation of Jesus, for 'teacher' (διδάσκαλος) is often used by Josephus negatively, 'receive with pleasure' (τῶν ἡδονῇ . . . δεχομένων) is often negative, and 'truisms' (τἀληθῆ) is again fairly mundane in Josephus' writings. It is quite plausible then that Christian writers would have thought of the noted phrase as deprecating, or at least ambiguous, and therefore would not have wanted to promote it. The next passage, I believe, will further confirm such worries.

καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν Ἰουδαίους, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἐπηγάγετο: 'and he brought over many of the Jews and many also of the Greeks'

The phrase πολὺς μὲν . . . πολὺς δέ is typically Josephan. For example, 'he procured many horses in quite a short period and many chariots (πολλοὺς μὲν ἵππους ἐν ὀλίγῳ πάνυ χρόνῳ πολλὰ δ' ἅρματα ἐκέκτητο);[127] and 'many of Vitellius' soldiers and many of the people' (πολλοὺς μὲν τῶν Οὐιτελλίου στρατιωτῶν πολλοὺς δὲ τῶν δημοτικῶν);[128] and 'many of the Macedonians and many more of the Greeks' (πολλοὶ μὲν Μακεδόνων, πλεῖστοι δὲ Ἕλληνες).[129] An abundance of other similar, or even exact, parallels can be found, some of which occur in the same book where the TF is located.[130]

Josephus also uses the exact phrase καὶ πολλοὺς μέν on seven occasions[131] and the exact phrase πολλοὺς δὲ καί on five occasions.[132] Furthermore, he frequently

[125] Pseudo-Hegesippus, *On the Ruin of the City of Jerusalem* 2.12.1 (ed. Ussani p. 163 lines 12–13). See also Whealey, 'Josephus on Jesus: Evidence from the First Millennium', 299.

[126] Eusebius, *Demonstration* 3.5.108 (124d) line 3 (= TLG 2018.005). For discussion, see Whealey, 'Josephus on Jesus: Evidence from the First Millennium', 299.

[127] *Antiquities* 7.194.

[128] *War* 4.654.

[129] *Antiquities* 18.372.

[130] See *Antiquities* 8.294, 9.85, 12.401, 15.61, 15.296, 16.234, 18.353, 20.177. See also *Antiquities* 18.372, quoted above. I count forty-four parallels in all. For these parallels I searched Accordance for the lexeme πολύς occurring in the same verse with both μέν and δέ.

[131] *Antiquities* 12.287, 12.373, 16.18, 20.177; *War* 1.5, 1.86, 3.113.

[132] *Antiquities* 11.322; *War* 4.542, 5.455; *Life* 42; *Apion* 2:269.

matches ἐπάγομαι with πολύς as the phrase in the TF does.[133] Paget, though, points out that the TF uses the singular adjective Ἑλληνικός awkwardly insofar as the adjective does not modify a noun as it usually does in Josephus.[134] But Paget does acknowledge one instance where Josephus uses such a turn of phrase 'but the Greek [party] was superior due to assistance from [their] soldiers (προεῖχον . . . τὸ δὲ Ἑλληνικὸν τῇ παρὰ τῶν στρατιωτῶν ἀμύνῃ),[135] and I note that this example compares Jewish and Greek parties, just as the TF does. I also find another instance where Josephus similarly uses Ἑλληνικός 'so that they would not by necessity transgress [their laws] by using Greek [oil]' (μὴ δι' ἀνάγκην Ἑλληνικῷ χρώμενοι τὰ νόμιμα παραβαίνωσιν).[136] All this in my mind makes the phrase plausibly Josephan.

As far as the content of the phrase goes, however, the TF appears to claim that Jesus led many Jews and Greeks. But this would be an odd statement for a Christian to interpolate since the New Testament is quite clear that Jesus 'came only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel'[137] and that the Gospel was preached 'first to the Jews', and only thereafter to the nations.[138] One might object that Jesus is said to have attracted some non-Jewish followers during his ministry—a centurion or two,[139] the demoniac from Gadarene,[140] a woman from Tyre,[141] and some Greeks with whom Jesus does not seem to actually have met[142]—but these are limited to small groups on the periphery, and certainly were not the focus of his ministry according to the canonical Gospels. Notably, the only exception to this comes from the mouth of Jewish leadership when the Pharisees exclaim to one another, 'Look! The world (κόσμος) has gone after him.'[143] Given the hostility of the Pharisees though, it seems best to read such an assertion as an exaggeration by Jesus' enemies. Similarly, versions of the *Toledot Yeshu* (second–fifth centuries), an early and quite hostile Jewish account of Jesus' life, also state that during Jesus' ministry 'he misled the world by his sorcery' (התעה את העולם בכישופו).[144]

What these exceptions reveal is that the idea of Jesus having many non-Jewish followers seems to come from early Jewish sources, not Christian ones. It

[133] For example, *Antiquities* 5.96, 8.254, 11.29, 13.101, 14.361, 20.7, 20.78; *War* 7.164.
[134] Paget, 'Some Observations', 574.
[135] *War* 2.268.
[136] *Life* 74.
[137] Matthew 10:6, 15:24.
[138] Acts 13:46; Romans 1:16, 2:9.
[139] Matthew 8:5–13, 27:54; Mark 15:39; Luke 7:1–10, 23:47.
[140] Mark 5:1–20; Luke 8:26–39.
[141] Matthew 15:21–8; Mark 7:24–30.
[142] John 12:20–2. Other possible passages are Matthew 4:25; Mark 3:8; Luke 6:17 where great crowds drawn from largely Gentile areas follow him. However, the ethnicity of the crowds is not specified in the passages.
[143] John 12:19.
[144] *Toledot Yeshu*, Group 1: Early Yemenite §67 (Meerson and Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 1 p. 149 (English) vol. 2 p. 67 (Hebrew)). See also similar statements in other versions presented in vol. 1 p. 128, 137, 149, 159, 242, 244.

accordingly seems better to place the authorship of the phrase in the hands of a Jewish writer like Josephus, not a Christian scribe.

It may also be possible to infer when this phrase was written since the likeliest time would have been when many of both Jews and Greeks were calling themselves followers of Jesus, thus allowing for contemporary anachronism to creep in. And this kind of situation was occurring only toward the end of the first and beginning of the second century, exactly when Josephus wrote, but not later on when Christians would have had opportunity to make changes to the text.[145] This is by no means a conclusive observation, since clearly the *Toledot Yeshu* contains a similar tradition though it was written well after Josephus, but it is at least suggestive that the TF was written sometime within the first and third centuries, with an earlier time being preferable. Josephus would hence be a good candidate for its author.

Apart from this, the TF's phrase about Jesus having many Greek and Jewish disciples may also carry a far more ambiguous or possibly negative valence than the one implied by how scholars have traditionally translated it. This revolves around the meaning of the Greek word ἐπάγομαι, which can mean 'to lead' someone in a neutral sense,[146] or, according to LSJ and the *Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, it may have the negative connotations of 'induce' or otherwise mislead.[147] Thus, Cassiodorus translated the same term elsewhere in the *Antiquities* as 'he persuaded' (*persuasio facta est*)[148] and as 'feigning' (*simulans*).[149] And this seems to be an accurate understanding of how Josephus uses the phrasing at times, for example, 'lest on account of its strength he induce the multitude to rebellion' (μὴ διὰ τὴν ὀχυρότητα πολλοὺς εἰς ἀποστασίαν ἐπαγάγηται)[150] or when Abraham deceivingly 'led Sarah in the guise of [his] sister' (ἐν ἀδελφῆς ἐπαγόμενος σχήματι τὴν Σάρραν).[151]

[145] Feldman, 'The Testimonium Flavianum: The State of the Question', 189; Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 64; Meier, 'Jesus in Josephus', 93–4; Thackeray, *Josephus*, 146; Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum', 85–8. Olson, however, thinks this argument is insufficient because we do not know what ancient Christian writers would have believed about Jesus' earthly ministry; Olson, 'A Eusebian Reading', 105–7. The problem with Olson's argument is that it is an argument from silence, since he provides no early Christian references which claim that Jesus had many Greek followers except for dubious examples in Eusebius' writings. For further discussion, see Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum', 85–8.

[146] For this neutral meaning, see *Antiquities* 1.263, 2.173.

[147] LSJ, ἐπάγω, II 6; *Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, ἐπάγω. So, Thucydides relates how the Argives 'induced the Spartans to agree' (ἐπηγάγοντο τοὺς Λακεδαιμονίους ξυγχωρῆσαι) to a treaty even though it seemed quite foolish; Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 5.41.2 line 8 (= TLG 0003.001). On this interpretation of ἐπάγομαι, see also Bermejo-Rubio, 'Hypothetical Vorlage', 354–5; Cernuda, 'El testimonio flaviano', 373–4.

[148] Cassiodorus, *Josephus's Antiquities* 17.327 (ed. Pollard).

[149] Cassiodorus, *Josephus's Antiquities* 1.207 (ed. Pollard). Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, simulo II.

[150] *War* 7.164.

[151] *Antiquities* 1.207.

In fact, in another passage, much underappreciated by scholars, Josephus uses the very same wording to describe how a certain imposter pretended to be Alexander, the son of Herod, and 'convinced as many of the Jews that came to meet him to believe [that he was Alexander]' (Ἰουδαίων ὁπόσοις εἰς ὁμιλίαν ἀφίκετο ἐπηγάγετο εἰς πίστιν),[152] Josephus then says that 'the cause [of this] was that men received [his] words with pleasure' (αἴτιον δὲ ἦν τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὸ ἡδονῇ δεχόμενον τοὺς λόγους).[153] Taken together, Josephus claims that the false Alexander 'convinced' or even 'led astray' (ἐπηγάγετο) certain men (ἀνθρώπων) because they 'received' (δεχόμενον) his words 'with pleasure' (ἡδονῇ). Hence, this 'pleasure', which the men had in 'receiving' the words of the pretender, seems therefore to indicate an overeager, overzealous, or all too credulous belief—not something particularly positive.

Most striking, however, is that the above passage closely parallels the TF which also describes Jesus 'leading' or 'misleading' (ἐπηγάγετο) 'men who receive truisms with pleasure' (ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡδονῇ τἀληθῆ δεχομένων). Such a close linguistic correspondence inescapably points toward Josephus as the responsible party for at least this portion of the TF and further supports my contention that the TF's phrase διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων should be rendered 'a teacher of men' because such an understanding better explains, at least slightly, the ensuing sentence that speaks of Jesus 'leading' or 'misleading' many people—though later readers may of course have instead read the passage as meaning 'a teacher about men'.

Either way, claiming that Jesus misled others is just what one would expect of a Jewish writer since other Jewish traditions similarly speak of Jesus, as the Babylonian Talmud does when, as I mentioned previously, it accuses Jesus of 'inciting all Israel and leading them astray' (והסית והדיח את ישראל כל).[154] And so too does the 'Jew of Celsus' (*c.*150 CE), who repeatedly accuses Jesus of deceiving other Jews,[155] as also do Jewish leaders in the Gospels: 'He stirs up the people by teaching throughout the whole of Judaea'.[156] Finally, versions of the *Toledot Yeshu* (second–fifth centuries) agree that Jesus 'misled' many people.[157]

But this is not to say that the TF's use of ἐπάγομαι must be interpreted negatively or that it was even meant to be negative, for in the sixty-five times Josephus uses ἐπάγομαι the vast majority of instances are purely neutral.[158] However one

[152] *Antiquities* 17.327. Several scholars note this parallel, but do not notice how it is partnered with other vocabulary from the TF too; see Thackeray, *Josephus*, 146; Bermejo-Rubio, 'Hypothetical Vorlage', 354; Cernuda, 'El testimonio flaviano', 374 n. 84; Bammel, 'Zum Testimonium Flavianum', 13. Eisler might make the connection, but does not point it out explicitly; see Eisler, *The Messiah Jesus*, 53–4.

[153] *Antiquities* 17.329.

[154] Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 43a.20, 107b.14 (see also 43a.21). For discussion, see Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud*, 63–74.

[155] Origen, *Against Celsus* 2.1, 4. See also 1.62, 68.

[156] Luke 23:5. See also Matthew 27:63; Luke 23:2; John 7:12, 47.

[157] See n. 144.

[158] For this number I searched Accordance for all forms of ἐπάγω in the middle voice, excluding the TF. For an in-depth discussion arguing that the meaning of ἐπάγω is largely neutral, see Schwartz, 'Reinach and Stephanus, Philo and Josephus. A Note on the Testimonium Flavianum'.

chooses to take it though, the evidence demonstrates that such phrasing could well have been interpreted neutrally, ambiguously, or negatively by one who was so inclined. And in this regard, it is understandable that so many Christian writers did not view it as complimentary to Jesus and hence avoided calling attention to it.

ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν: 'he was the Christ'

At first glance this phrase appears to call Jesus the Messiah, something impossible for the non-Christian (and very Jewish) Josephus to say. But certain scholars have suggested that the TF's phrase 'he was the Christ' might instead indicate an alternative name for Jesus, not a religious title or a position.[159] English speakers do something similar when they speak of the 'Prophet Mohammed', 'His Holiness the Dalai Lama', or, for that matter, 'Jesus Christ' even though they may not always profess any kind of faith in these individuals.[160] It seems especially plausible that the TF may be doing such a thing with χριστός because it goes on to explain that 'Christians' are 'named from him' (ἀπὸ τοῦδε ὠνομασμένον), implying that χριστός was simply a kind of sobriquet or moniker. This is why non-Christian writers like Suetonius, Pliny, Tacitus, and Porphyry all call Jesus 'Christ', but only as an alternative designation, not in any kind of confession of Jesus as Messiah.[161] Such a manner of speaking is understandable since in ancient times the term 'Christ' did not have specific religious connotations in most parts of the Greek world.[162] And this is not to mention a long list of ancient names which etymologically mean one thing, but which in actual use mean nothing of the sort and only designate the person to whom the name belongs.

If the TF is using 'Christ' likewise, it should then be read not as claiming that Jesus was the Christ (i.e. the anointed one), but as only that Jesus was called by that name. Further support of this can be found in the fact that Josephus uses the word χριστός without reference to Jesus,[163] where the word mundanely refers to an

[159] Nodet, 'Jésus et Jean-Baptiste selon Josèphe [pt. 1]', 333–4, 337–8; Nodet, *Baptême et résurrrection*, 67–8.

[160] For similar argument, see Bardet, *Le Testimonium Flavianum*, 103–7.

[161] Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars*, Claudius 25.4; Pliny the Younger, *Letter* 10.96.7; Tacitus, *The Annals*, 15.44; Porphyry, *Philosophy from Oracles* as quoted in Eusebius, *Demonstration* 3.7.1 (134b), and in Augustine *City of God* 19.23; Porphyry, *Against the Christians* as quoted in Augustine, *Epistle* 102.8 (Fragment 76 of Becker, *Porphyrios, 'Contra Christianos'*, 406–7.) We see a similar phenomenon in Clement of Alexandria when he speaks about the Buddha, and uses the title as a name; see Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 1.15.

[162] Kittel, Friedrich, and Bromiley, 'Χρίω', sec. A.

[163] This contradicts the contentions of scholars that Josephus never uses the word χριστός except to refer to Jesus; see Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 228; Olson, 'Eusebius and the Testimonium Flavianum', 315; Feldman, 'The Testimonium Flavianum: The State of the Question', 191; Feldman, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship (1937–1980)*, 690.

area of a building that was smeared or anointed with a kind of material, probably plaster: 'another area, up to the roof, was anointed [or smeared]' (τὸ δὲ ἄλλο μέχρι τῆς στέγης χριστὸν ἦν).[164] This passage notably contains a formulation similar to the TF (χριστὸν ἦν), showing that Josephus may not have considered that χριστός inherently designated anything messianic. An alternative translation of the TF's phrase that highlights such ambiguity would be 'He was Christ', making the term sound, perhaps, more like a name.[165]

On the other hand, as far as I can tell,[166] Josephus never once uses the phrase οὗτος ἦν to identify an alternative name for someone; rather he only seems to use it for titles, positions, and descriptions.[167] So, 'David . . . he was the father of Solomon' (Δαυίδου . . . πατὴρ Σολομῶνος ἦν οὗτος);[168] or Herod, 'He was the Tetrarch of Galilee' (τετράρχης δὲ οὗτος ἦν Γαλιλαίας).[169] Josephus even uses this phrase for another Jesus, 'And Jesus, for he was the brother of Onias (Ἰησοῦς δέ, οὗτος γὰρ ἦν ὁ τοῦ Ὀνίου ἀδελφός).[170] Josephus also occasionally uses the phrase to give further clarifying remarks.[171] The one possible exception to the above is when Josephus says, 'he was Simon the son of Gioras' (Σίμων οὗτος ἦν ὁ Γιώρα).[172] This is a close match with the TF, but one difference is that in this instance Josephus is supplying the actual name of the person and is not giving an alternative name as would need to be the case with the TF.

Instead, when giving an alternative name, Josephus generally deploys words like καλούμενος or ἐπικαλούμενος or ἐπιλεγόμενος as in, 'a certain Menahem, son of Judah, who was called the Galilean' (Μανάημός τις, υἱὸς Ἰούδα τοῦ καλουμένου Γαλιλαίου);[173] or 'John, who was called the Baptist' (Ἰωάννου τοῦ ἐπικαλουμένου βαπτιστοῦ);[174] or 'Alexander, who was called Balas' (Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ Βάλας ἐπιλεγόμενος).[175] He also frequently uses λεγόμενος, as with, 'the Rephaim, who are called Pamphlogonians' (Ῥιφαθαίους τοὺς Παφλαγόνας λεγομένους).[176] And this is the exact word used by Josephus in his other reference to 'Jesus, who was called Christ' (Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ).[177] What is more, it would

[164] *Antiquities* 8.137.
[165] For further discussion, see n. 161.
[166] For this I used Accordance to perform a search for verses that included a proper name and the exact word forms of οὗτος and ἦν. I attempted to be as thorough as possible, but it may be that some terms in the search were split by verses and hence were not revealed in the results.
[167] *Antiquities* 1.79, 2.229, 5.126, 8.200, 9.138, 12.171, 13.271, 18.3, 20.81, 20.132, 20.145, 20.179, 20.183, 20.208; *War* 1.248, 2.450, 2.556, 4.416, 4.460, 5.137, 5.527, 7.216; *Life* 177, 373. See also Thackeray, *Josephus*, 146. Josephus deploys οὗτος ἦν in the exact form nineteen times, some of which are included in the verses enumerated in this footnote.
[168] *War* 5.137.
[169] *Antiquities* 18.240.
[170] *Antiquities* 12.238.
[171] *Life* 191.
[172] *War* 7.153–4.
[173] *War* 2.433. See also *Antiquities* 4.84, 4.327, 12.266, 13.367, 19.257.
[174] *Antiquities* 18.116.
[175] *Antiquities* 13.119. See also *Antiquities* 13.120, 13.268, 13.285.
[176] *Antiquities* 1.126. See also *Antiquities* 1.133.
[177] *Antiquities* 20.200.

be strange for Josephus to follow his consistent pattern of referring to alternative names when he says 'Jesus, who was called Christ' (Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ) in *Antiquities* 20.200, but to dispense with this practice only in the TF in *Antiquities* 18.63–4 by saying that Jesus 'was the Christ' (ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν), especially when the term χριστός could so easily have misled his audience into thinking of a religious confession.

Two Reconstructions Using λεγόμενος

On balance then, all this suggests that if Josephus wrote the phrase as it stands in Greek manuscripts of the *Antiquities*, then he probably would have meant to say that Jesus actually was the Christ, and this does not seem at all likely, especially given that Origen (*c.*248 CE), our earliest witness to book 18 of the *Antiquities*, twice states that Josephus did not believe that Jesus was the Christ.[178] And even if Josephus felt that Jesus was some kind of lesser messianic figure presaging the coming of the actual Messiah (for certain ancient Jews did believe in pre-messianic figures) one would still think that Josephus would have spent more time talking about him.[179] Consequently, this is the only part of the TF where the entire Greek tradition may have lost something,[180] perhaps a term like 'was called' (λεγόμενος), which Josephus uses elsewhere for Jesus.

If this is so, then the original wording would have been something like 'He was the one called Christ' (ὁ λεγόμενος χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν). Such a phrase is quite similar to what Josephus used in his *Life* for identifying an alternative name for one of his own family members 'of these Matthias was the one called Ephaeus' (τούτων ἐστὶν Ματθίας ὁ Ἠφαίου λεγόμενος).[181]

Another synonymous possibility keeps the same words, but rearranges them, as 'He was called the Christ' (ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος λεγόμενος ἦν). In grammatical terms, this reconstruction would partner the extant Greek verb 'was' (ἦν) with the passive participle 'being called' (λεγόμενος) resulting in a paraphrastic participle that can be translated in English with the finite passive verb 'was called'. Josephus uses similar syntax elsewhere in the second half of the *Antiquities*. For example, when referring to the name 'Pentecost', he writes 'our ancestral Festival is called this' (ἑορτὴ δὲ ἡμῶν ἐστιν πάτριος τοῦτο κεκλημένη).[182] Intriguingly, just

[178] Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17; *Against Celsus* 1.47. For a discussion of this, see pp. 13–4.
[179] For discussions on the various early Jewish views of the Messiah, including the idea of multiple messiahs, see p. 73. For how Josephus may have thought of Jesus, see pp. 201–3, 205.
[180] Though all manuscripts of the *Antiquities* omit τις in the TF, it is preserved in a Greek manuscript of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* and in its ancient Syriac and Armenian translations. See p. 68.
[181] *Life* 4.
[182] *Antiquities* 17.254.

twenty-eight verses after the TF, Josephus deploys a phrase very like what the TF may originally have contained when he says 'it is thusly called a fortress' (φρούριον δ' ἐστὶν οὕτως λεγόμενον).[183]

The advantages of using λεγόμενος to reconstruct the TF is that it requires only one word to be dropped by a later scribe, it closely matches the vocabulary Josephus deploys elsewhere for Jesus, it matches the grammatical syntax and vocabulary Josephus uses for presenting names or designations, and Josephus deploys such syntax and vocabulary near to the TF.

There is also support for these reconstructions outside of the TF's Greek textual tradition. Thus, Jerome's (*c.*393 CE) Latin translation of the TF instead states that Jesus 'was believed to be the Christ' (*Christus credebatur esse*) and Pseudo-Hegesippus (*c.*370 CE) implies the same reading in his Latin paraphrase of the TF 'they believed in him' (*crediderunt in eum*). Michael the Syrian (*c.*1099 CE), following Jacob of Edessa (*c.*708 CE),[184] supports this with his Syriac version of the TF that says 'it was thought that he was the Christ' (ܗܘ ܕܐܬܚܫܒ ܕܗܘܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܗܘ).[185] For our purposes, both Latin and Syriac translations present roughly synonymous meanings and, given the geographic and linguistic distance between the Latin and Syriac translators, it is hardly credible that one would have been copying from the other. Both therefore seem to be translating the same Greek phrase, perhaps something like one of the reconstructions offered above which supply the word λεγόμενος.

Not only this, the Syriac phrase *mestabrā . . . hwa* (ܗܘ . . . ܡܫܬܒܚܐ) is a particularly intriguing candidate for reconstructing the original Greek because it can also be understood as meaning 'was proclaimed'.[186] This corresponds with

[183] *Antiquities* 18.91. See also *Antiquities* 12.6, where Josephus quotes from another writer.

[184] See Chapter 2 pp. 37–8, 51–2, 55–8 for discussions on Pseudo-Hegesippus, Jerome, and Jacob of Edessa. Note that the same phrase, *Christus credebatur esse*, is also present in two early manuscripts of Rufinus' Latin translation of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, but this phrase is likely not original to Rufinus and seems to have been inserted from Jerome's translation by later scribes; see Levenson and Martin, 'The Latin Translations of Josephus on Jesus', 20, 25–6, 59.

[185] Michael the Syrian, *Record of Times* 5.10 [91] found in MS Edessa-Aleppo Codex 47r left col., lines 20–1. The Armenian translation of Michael's work witnesses to a similar reading, 'it seemed clear that he might be the Christ' (յայտնի երեւէր թէ նա իցէ Քրիստոսն), found in MS Nor Djoulfa 525, Amenap'rkič (before 1302 CE), f. 51v/1–51v/2. Another Armenian translation of Michael reads 'it was clear that he was the Christ' (յայտնի էր թէ նա է Քրիստոսն), found in MS Jerusalem 32 (1273 CE), f. 50v/2–51r/1. I thank Andrea Schmidt who sent me her transcriptions and citations of these passages. For further information on the dates of the above manuscripts and other related matters regarding the Armenian versions of Michael's *Record of Times*, see respectively Schmidt, 'Manuscrits', 186; Schmidt, 'The Armenian Versions I and II of Michael the Syrian'.

[186] For this definition, see Smith, 'ܫܒܚ', sec. ethpe. and ethpa., p. 359. In the Syriac Peshitta, Luke 16:16 uses *mestabrā* with the meaning of 'was proclaimed'. The only remaining Syriac translation of Josephus' work is the sixth book of his *War*. In the Greek of this book, λεγόμενος is only used at *War* 6.132 and the Syriac translates it with *etamar* (MS f. 323v right column line 15). For pictures of the manuscript, see https://archive.org/details/CerianiTranslatioSyraPescittoVeterisTestamentiExCodiceAmbrosiano_201312/page/n30/mode/1up. Once the Syriac of the *War* is digitized by Simtho, it will be illuminating to see if the translator ever translated any instance of the Greek λέγω with the Syriac *mestabrā*.

the Greek λεγόμενος, which can on occasion be translated with the very similar, 'was declared'.[187] These are not the most obvious ways to translate *mestabrā* and λεγόμενος, but they are allowable and it is possible that a Syriac Christian translator would have made such a decision.[188] Increasing the probability that λεγόμενος was originally present in the TF is that, as I noted above, it is the very word Josephus uses of Jesus elsewhere in *Antiquities* 20.200 when he says 'Jesus who was called Christ' (Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ). The word is also used in a similar way by Josephus twenty-eight verses after the TF in *Antiquities* 18.91 to state that something was 'called' a fortress.

Furthermore, there are reasons for believing that Jacob's Syriac translation follows the Greek more precisely than Jerome's Latin translation, and therefore that the Syriac can likely be trusted to reconstruct the original wording of the Greek. This is because the Latin omits the Greek words 'was' (ἦν) and 'he' (οὗτος), which are present in the current text of the Greek TF. The Syriac, by contrast, witnesses to both.

Firstly, in the Syriac translation, the verbal participle *mestabrā* (ܡܫܬܒܚܐ), 'being thought' is complemented by the Syriac word *hwa* (ܗܘܐ) or 'was'.[189] This matches precisely the Greek word 'was' (ἦν), which is already present in the Greek TF, though missing in the Latin. The two Syriac verbs (*mestabrā* and *hwa*), placed together like this, have the result of combining to create a kind of paraphrastic participle that has the meaning of a finite verb, either 'was thought' or less likely 'was proclaimed'[190] depending on how one wants to interpret the Syriac word *mestabrā*. Such is a close match with the reconstruction offered above, 'he was called the Christ' or even 'he was declared the Christ' (ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος λεγόμενος ἦν).

Secondly, though in its current form the Syriac translation is missing a word precisely corresponding to the Greek demonstrative pronoun οὗτος (which the Latin is missing as well), there are clues in the Syriac's transmission history indicating that it originally contained such a pronoun. Our knowledge of the Syriac translation, likely made by Jacob of Edessa (*c.*708 CE), comes only through Michael the Syrian who wrote in 1199 CE. But Michael's work is itself only preserved in a single Syriac manuscript dating to 1598 CE.[191] Yet this work of Michael's was translated into Armenian on two earlier occasions, being witnessed by manuscripts dating to 1273 and 1302 CE. It is unclear if these translations represent different revisions

[187] LSJ, 'λέγω', sec. III 1; Diggle, *The Cambridge Greek Lexicon*, λέγω §10, 862.

[188] In context, if *mestabrā* means 'was proclaimed', then the Syriac TF would seem to imply that it was the 'many Jews and Greeks' who had proclaimed Jesus the Christ.

[189] Grammatically speaking, *mestabrā* is in the singular feminine, meaning that it should be translated as an impersonal passive verb, as in 'it was thought that he was the Christ'. See Nöldeke, *Compendious Syriac Grammar*, sec. 254. I thank Johan Lundberg and Jack Tannous for pointing this out to me.

[190] This grammatical construction is sometimes called a 'compound tense'; see Muraoka, *Classical Syriac*, §85.

[191] On this manuscript, see and n. 93 in Chapter 2 and Image 12.

of the same translator, but at least one (if not both) of the versions made use of the actual autograph manuscript of Michael's work.[192] Interestingly, both Armenian versions insert the Armenian demonstrative pronoun *na* (նա) in the noted phrase. This is a redundancy not necessary in Armenian grammar.[193] Such suggests that the Syriac translation of the TF likely contained a demonstrative pronoun corresponding with the Greek pronoun οὗτος present in the TF. This means that almost all of the words in the extant Greek version of the TF correspond to almost all of the words in the Syriac-Armenian tradition and vice versa, with the significant exception being the Syriac word *mestabrā*. But, as described above, *mestabrā* is roughly synonymous to the word λεγόμενος which is used elsewhere by Josephus in reference to Jesus. All this implies that a Greek word like λεγόμενος has fallen out of the TF as it is currently preserved in Greek.

Other Reconstructions Using εἶναι with Various Participles

But this picture is not as tidy as it first seems. One issue is that the Syriac should technically be translated impersonally as 'it was thought that he was the Christ' whereas the Greek and Latin use the personal construction 'he was' (οὗτος ἦν) and 'he was believed to be' (*credebatur esse*). If the syntax of the Greek TF was originally impersonal, then it would be expected that the nominative words already present in the Greek TF (χριστός and οὗτος) would need to be changed into the accusative case. Another grammatical issue is that the Syriac *hwa* (ܗܘܐ) or 'was' can instead be fairly interpreted as complementing *it* (ܐܝܬ), not *mestabrā* (ܡܬܬܒܪܐ). This would demand that the Syriac be translated with a present tense main verb as 'it is thought that he was the Christ', not the past tense 'it was thought that he was the Christ'. Though this does not alter the fundamental sense of the phrase, it would mean that the Syriac does not witness to a paraphrastic participle in Greek, as I have suggested above.

But, these grammatical issues aside, if the Syriac is actually presenting a literal word-for-word translation, then it would indicate that there is yet another word, aside from a participle like λεγόμενος, which was originally part of the Greek but no longer present. Hence this word has also been dropped from the Greek TF. The reason for this is that the Syriac supplies the word *it* (ܐܝܬ), which may in context be translated with the English 'was' as in 'it was thought that he was (ܐܝܬ) the Christ'. The Latin also contains the equivalent word *esse* or 'to be'. Given that the Syriac and the Latin agree on this missing word, it is probable that some form of the Greek word 'to be' (εἶναι) has been omitted from the Greek witnesses of the TF.

[192] Schmidt, 'The Armenian Versions I and II of Michael the Syrian', 95.

[193] For similar grammatical structure, see the classical Armenian translation in John 9:17, and also Matthew 24:26, 26:66; Mark 12:27; Luke 22:59; John 10:13 (ed. Zōhrapean).

With the above observations in mind, it is not possible to take the Syriac and the Latin and then literally back-translate them into the Greek from which they were derived since the Latin appears to be missing words present in the remaining Greek, and the Syriac appears to have a different grammar than that present in the remaining Greek. The best one can do is to follow both the Latin and Syriac as closely as possible by incorporating the Syriac vocabulary on the one hand and the Latin grammar on the other. This done, a plausible Greek reconstruction would be: ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος εἶναι λεγόμενος ἦν, which can be translated as 'he was said to be the Christ' or 'he was declared to be the Christ'. One could also interpret the Syriac *mestabrā* differently and reconstruct the phrase as ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος εἶναι νομιζόμενος ἦν or 'he was thought to be the Christ'. If instead one wanted to match the meaning of the Latin more closely, it would be possible to reconstruct the phrase as 'he was believed to be the Christ' (ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος εἶναι πιστευόμενος ἦν). Compared to the extant text of the Greek TF, these reconstructed readings of course contain two additional words: the infinitive 'to be' (εἶναι) and a participle.

The advantage of the above reconstructions is that they mirror the Syriac vocabulary closely while following the Latin grammar closely too. They are also feasible since Jacob and Jerome, if faced with originals corresponding to these reconstructions, could have credibly produced the Syriac and Latin texts to which they both witness. Importantly, Josephus was capable of writing such Greek syntax since he uses phraseology similar to the above reconstructions when he deploys a participle with the Greek word 'to be'. For example, in the *Antiquities* Josephus describes how Antipater was falsely 'believed to be a lover of [your] father' (φιλοπάτωρ εἶναι πεπιστευμένος).[194] Elsewhere in the *Antiquities* he also says 'thinking him to be strong enough' (νομίσας ἀξιόμαχος εἶναι).[195] And again in the *Antiquities*, he says 'the pine trees are comparable to those said to be [pine] now' (τὰ τῆς πεύκης ξύλα τοῖς νῦν εἶναι λεγομένοις).[196] Though neither of these examples contain a paraphrastic participle as with the reconstructions offered above, Josephus uses paraphrastic participles on other occasions.[197]

The Original Wording

Gathering all of the above data, one cannot be certain what Greek word or words have been omitted from the TF at this point. The most obvious candidate is the word λεγόμενος, which has much to recommend it. Josephus uses this word elsewhere for Jesus and he also uses the same word nearby the TF in the same

[194] *Antiquities* 17.110; see also similar usages in *Antiquities* 7.212, 14.455.
[195] *Antiquities* 9.246; see also *Antiquities* 11.337, 13.177, 14.166.
[196] *Antiquities* 8.177.
[197] *Antiquities* 2.186, 15.419.

grammatical construction. Further, in the Syriac TF the word *mestabrā* ('thought' or less likely 'proclaimed') can also be interpreted as reflecting the meaning of λεγόμενος ('said' or 'declared') somewhat closely, while the Latin *credebatur* ('believed') follows the meaning too, but more loosely. If it is only λεγόμενος that has been omitted from the TF, then the original phrase was likely 'He was called the Christ' (ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος λεγόμενος ἦν). Another possibility that rearranges the same words is 'He was the one called Christ' (ὁ λεγόμενος χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν), but this does not have as many grammatical parallels in Josephus.

On the other hand, one cannot rule out a different phrasing that also follows the Syriac, like νομιζόμενος meaning 'was thought'. This matches the Syriac more closely than λεγόμενος. One might also suggest a different Greek word that follows the Latin, like πιστευόμενος meaning 'was believed'. It is also unclear if the original Greek contained the word 'to be' (εἶναι); both the Syriac and the Latin agree on this word being present, and there are comparable constructions to be found in Josephus' work too, but those examples do not involve a paraphrastic participle as would be required if εἶναι was used in the TF. It is hence possible that both the Syriac and Latin translators supplied the word 'to be' independently of one another for the sake of euphony or grammatical style.

But whether or not one of the above reconstructions represents the original wording of the Greek TF, the fact that the Latin and Syriac effectively correspond in meaning indicates that a different form of the TF, one which claimed that Jesus was only considered to be the Christ, is in all probability the original reading of the TF. Other witnesses in support of such a reading can be found with the Arabic historian Agapius (*c.*941/2 CE), who seems to have used Jacob's Syriac translation of the TF. He gives a summary of the TF stating that 'perhaps he was the Christ' (فلعله هو المسيح).[198] Further indirect support comes from Pseudo-Hegesippus (*c.*370 CE), who likely had a similar reading before him given that he paraphrased the TF as saying 'they believed in him' (*crediderunt in eum*).[199] In his comments on the TF he also never claims that Josephus thought Jesus was the Christ, despite interpreting all of the other claims in the TF in a stridently pro-Christian manner.[200] Finally, such a reading also accords with how Josephus describes Jesus elsewhere as one who was merely 'called' the Christ.[201]

That Josephus originally said that Jesus 'was thought to be' or otherwise considered to be 'the Christ' is further supported by the nature of the extant Greek TF, which oddly uses the past tense to say that Jesus 'was the Christ', whereas if a

[198] MS Laurenziana Or. 323 f. 7r line 1 (1288 CE), corresponding to Image 14; al-Makīn also quotes the passage, but does so by citing Agapius; see MS Paris, BnF Arabe 294 f. 163r lines 10–11 (fourteenth century). The reader should know that it is also possible to translate the Arabic phrase 'perhaps he was the Christ' with the present tense. For further discussion on Agapius and Michael, see Chapter 2 pp. 48–55. On al-Makīn, see Diez, 'Les antiquités gréco-romaines', 134–5.

[199] Pseudo-Hegesippus, *On the Ruin of the City of Jerusalem* 2.12.1 (ed. Ussani p. 163 line 12).

[200] Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 31–3.

[201] *Antiquities* 20.200.

Christian had fabricated the phrase wholesale, one would expect that the present tense 'is' would have been used, just as Christians traditionally proclaimed.[202] This suggests that Josephus' original phrasing, whatever it was, included the past tense. Moreover, such a reading that Jesus 'was' somehow 'considered to be' or 'called' the Christ implies a disagreement between what people thought of Jesus and what the author of the TF himself believed. For example, the Syriac Peshitta uses the same phrase as the Syriac TF when it says that Jesus 'was thought to be' (ܚܫܒܘ) the son of Joseph in Luke 3:23, though biologically speaking Luke did not believe that Jesus was the son of Joseph.[203] Or in Mark 10:42 certain Gentile rulers are 'considered' (ܚܫܒܝܢ) to rule over others.[204] This well explains why Origen would have twice insisted that Josephus did not believe that Jesus was the Christ, since his version of the TF likely reflected the Syriac and Latin, and thus clearly implied that Jesus was not the Christ.[205] One final note about this reconstruction of the TF is that it suggests that Josephus did not think it necessary to explain to his audience the meaning of the technical term χριστός since he leaves it undefined in the TF. But this is to be expected since he uses χριστός elsewhere in *Antiquities* 8.137, where he also assumes that his audience would have known that the term refers to something or someone that was 'anointed', and hence does not otherwise explain χριστός for his readership.

Yet, to reiterate, it is quite possible that later Christians would have interpreted the altered phrase 'He was the Christ' as simply identifying another name for Jesus,[206] notwithstanding the fact that given Josephus' personal stylistic tendencies he would not have meant the altered phrase to be read in such a way. But later Christian readers would likely not have realized this about Josephus, especially because other non-Christians did use 'Christ' as a name, not a title.[207] So Suetonius, Pliny, Tacitus, and Porphyry all seem to use the term 'Christ' as a name, and by it they did not mean that Jesus actually was the anointed one, but were merely identifying him by means of an alternative name.[208] A great advantage of

[202] For example, John 20:31; Acts 9:22, 17:3; 1 John 2:22, 5:1. On this point, see Whealey, 'Josephus on Jesus: Evidence from the First Millennium', 304. Charles Hill suggested to me the idea that the phrase originally read 'He was not the Christ', but was altered by dropping the οὐχ between χριστός and οὗτος due to a scribe's eye skipping from one ΟΥ to another. This would turn 'He was not the Christ' (ΟΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ<u>ΟΥΧΟΥ</u>ΤΟΣΗΝ) into 'He was the Christ'. (ΟΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ<u>ΟΥ</u>ΤΟΣΗΝ). This is quite plausible, but I think it best to follow readings witnessed in manuscripts or in quotations, unless more evidence comes to light.

[203] Gwilliam, Pinkerton, and Tritton, *The New Testament in Syriac*. On the same point, see Whealey, 'The Testimonium Flavianum', 352; Whealey, 'The Testimonium Flavianum in Syriac and Arabic', 581.

[204] 1 Corinthians 12:22; 2 Corinthians 10:9; Galatians 2:6, 9.

[205] Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17; *Against Celsus* 1.47.

[206] Paget wonders whether Simeon Magister Logothete and George Cedrenus may hint at a more neutral version of the TF which omitted the phrase ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν, but as Paget acknowledges, such writers were dependent on Eusebius who does witness to the phrase ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν; see Paget, 'Some Observations', 568. All this suggests to me that these writers likely thought the phrase 'he was Christ' designated an alternative name for Jesus and not a title; see Chapter 1 pp. 23–4.

[207] For similar considerations, see Paget, 548; Victor, 'Das Testimonium Flavianum', 78–80.

[208] See n. 161.

this interpretation is that it explains how some Christians could interpret the altered TF as promoting Jesus as the Christ, while others could regard the very same passage as unremarkable.

καὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν παρ' ἡμῖν σταυρῷ ἐπιτετιμηκότος Πιλάτου: 'and when Pilate condemned him to the cross at the accusation of the first men among us'

This phrasing contains numerous parallels with Josephus' style, particularly with passages in and around book 18 of the *Antiquities*, where the TF is located. For example, ἐνδειξίς is only used two other times by Josephus, but both instances are in the latter half of the *Antiquities*.[209] Likewise, ἐπιτιμάω is used thirteen other times by Josephus, with books 16–19 of the *Antiquities* accounting for eight of these.[210] Notably, Josephus employs the very word just four verses after the TF, when he says that a man, 'thought it good to condemn himself to death' (θάνατον ἐπιτιμᾶν αὑτῷ καλῶς ἔχειν ἐνόμισεν).[211] Josephus also deploys καὶ αὐτόν in that exact form thirty-four other times. Several of these even begin sentences, like they do in the TF.[212] The name Pilate (Πιλάτου) is similarly used by Josephus in the genitive absolute on two other occasions,[213] just as it is used in the TF.

Josephus further uses πρῶτος and ἀνήρ with matching grammatical cases eleven other times in his works[214] and it is striking that nine of these occur in the *Antiquities*, with seven instances in books 17 and 18. There are also three times where Josephus deploys the phrase τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν in the exact form as the TF, and one of these is found shortly after the TF. Here 'first men' are described hatching a plot, 'Artabanus realized that the plot was unavoidable because it was

[209] *Antiquities* 13.306, 19.113. For this, I searched Accordance for the lexeme ἐνδειξίς.

[210] *Antiquities* 16.262, 16.355, 18.68, 18.107, 18.183, 18.255, 18.351, 19.202. For this, I searched Accordance for the lexeme ἐπιτιμάω.

[211] *Antiquities* 18.68. Paget points out that Josephus typically used ἐπιτιμάω with the accusative to indicate the punishment and the dative to indicate the rebuked or condemned person, whereas the TF does the reverse; Paget, 'Some Observations', 574. But elsewhere Josephus seems to follow the TF's grammar as in *Antiquities* 5.105, 'Phineas, having stood up, said that they [accusative] sinned too greatly to be condemned by words [dative]' (στὰς Φινεέσης μεῖζω μὲν αὐτοὺς ἁμαρτεῖν ἔλεγεν, ἢ ὥστε λόγοις ἐπιτιμηθέντας). He may also do the same in *Antiquities* 16.355, 18.351 and *War* 2.183, where the rebuked person is also in the accusative, though in the latter two instances the rebuked person is governed by πρός from a previous clause. Josephus also once uses the genitive to indicate the condemned as in, *Apion* 2.239. Hence, Josephus was not always consistent in his usage of ἐπιτιμάω.

[212] *Antiquities* 5.252, 10.14, 17.221; *War* 1.487, 6.89.

[213] *War* 2.171, 2.175.

[214] *Antiquities* 4.140, 6.211, 17.7, 17.81, 18.7, 18.99, 18.121, 18.353, 18.376; *Life* 169, 266. See also other parallels in *Antiquities* 4.21, 17.342. For these references I used Accordance to search for all instances of the lexeme πρῶτος occurring within five words of the lexeme ἀνήρ and then only counted those with matching cases.

laid by many first men (αἰσθόμενος δὲ τὴν ἐπιβουλὴν ὁ Ἀρτάβανος ἄφυκτον οὖσαν διὰ τὸ ὑπὸ πολλῶν καὶ τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν συντεθεῖσαν).[215]

The locution 'among us' (παρ' ἡμῖν) is deployed by Josephus fifty-one times elsewhere in his works.[216] Despite this, some have claimed that the TF is still suspicious because παρ' ἡμῖν is not inserted between the definite article and its noun, as it often is in Josephus' work. However, Josephus uses παρ' ἡμῖν in other ways on several occasions, as he does in the TF.[217] Goldberg is instead suspicious of the phrase because he claims that the use of the first-person plural unnecessarily inserts Josephus into the narrative. But, Josephus will speak similarly elsewhere in the *Antiquities* when he mentions that the 'Essenes' and certain 'High Priests' were 'among us'.[218] He also frequently deploys the phrase to indicate events or people whom he himself witnessed, such as 'and until now this cure has remained in force among us, for I have observed . . . (καὶ αὕτη μέχρι νῦν παρ' ἡμῖν ἡ θεραπεία πλεῖστον ἰσχύει· ἱστόρησα γάρ . . .).[219] And, as I show in Chapter 5, Josephus likely knew some of those 'first men' who accused Jesus, so it is quite probable that he could have written the phrase 'among us'.

Some have also objected that a Jew like Josephus would not call attention to Jewish culpability in the death of Jesus, as this phrase does.[220] But against this are other Jewish sources which often loudly boast of Jewish responsibility. So Trypho the Jew is portrayed as bragging about 'a certain Jesus, a Galilean deceiver, whom we crucified' (Ἰησοῦ τινος Γαλιλαίου πλάνου ὃν σταυρωσάντων ἡμῶν);[221] the 'Jew of Celsus' agrees, 'having examined him and having condemned him we found him worthy to be punished' (ἡμεῖς ἐλέγξαντες αὐτὸν καὶ καταγνόντες ἠξιοῦμεν κολάζεσθαι);[222] and the Babylonian Talmud and the *Toledot Yeshu* speak of how Jesus was executed by a Jewish court on the eve of Passover. Both sources also talk of how his disciples were executed.[223]

In this regard, it is noteworthy that early Christian writings try to exculpate Pilate by showing that he was not the one who had the primary responsibility of executing Jesus, thus laying the direct blame on Jewish leaders.[224] The TF, however,

[215] *Antiquities* 18.99.

[216] For this total I searched for the exact phrase 'παρ' ἡμῖν' in Accordance. Technically παρὰ ἡμῖν is used forty-nine times, but there are two other instances of the synonymous παρὰ μὲν ἡμῖν that are used as well. For further discussion, see Chapter 5 pp. 151–8.

[217] See, for example *Antiquities* 3.248, 8.46, 8.113, 13.167; *Life* 1; *Apion* 1.109. See also Winter, 'Josephus on Jesus', 434.

[218] *Antiquities* 15.371, 20.198. Goldberg, 'Coincidences', 70–1.

[219] *Antiquities* 8.46. See Chapter 5 pp. 151–8 for several other examples.

[220] Pines, *An Arabic Version*, 19–20; Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 234. Pines though does not think this to be a serious objection.

[221] Justin, *Dialogue* 108.2 lines 9–10 (= TLG 0645.003 line 5).

[222] Origen, *Against Celsus* 2.9 lines 3–4 (= TLG 2042.001).

[223] Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 43a.20, 22–6. For similar accounts in the versions of the *Toledot Yeshu*, see Meerson and Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, 176, 316 (Passover execution of Jesus); 143, 201–2 (execution of disciples).

[224] Mark 15:1–15; Matthew 27:11–26; Luke 23:1–25; John 19:12–16; Acts 3:13; see also Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 35.6; *Dialogue* 85.2; Tertullian, *Apology* 21.18, 24; *Against the Jews* 8.18; Melito

credits Jewish instigation in the form of lodging an accusation, but gives Pilate the responsibility for the actual deed.[225] Certain traditions in the Jewish *Toledot Yeshu* also portray Jewish leaders as coordinating with the Romans to execute Jesus.[226] The non-Christian Tacitus, a younger contemporary of Josephus, follows a similar pattern by putting the focus of Jesus' death on Pilate.[227] All this combines to place the creation of this passage more credibly in the hands of a non-Christian than a Christian, with Josephus the most likely party given the stylistic parallels pointed out above.

οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο οἱ τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαπήσαντες: 'those who loved him at first did not cease [doing so]'

The phrase 'those who first' (οἱ τὸ πρῶτον) is common in Josephus with five other instances of τὸ πρῶτον used immediately after a definite article and two of these instances are quite close to the TF.[228] Another word, 'cease' or 'leave off' (παύω), is used with an implied direct object and some have claimed that such syntax contradicts Josephus' usage, which is said to always provide an explicit direct object.[229] There are, however, several examples of Josephus using παύω without a direct object, as when rain[230] and war[231] 'cease', but these are not exact parallels and they do not necessarily suggest an implied direct object anyway. Better parallels are when seditions and uprisings 'cease' as in 'the sedition of the Hebrews . . . ceased' (ἡ δὲ τῶν Ἑβραίων στάσις . . . ἐπαύθη),[232] or just a few verses before the TF another Jewish uprising is described, 'and thus the sedition ended' (καὶ οὕτω παύεται ἡ στάσις).[233] Another close grammatical parallel comes in a passage that also happens to use the same exact verb form, 'Where the writers of these things cease [recording events]' (ὅπου δ' οἵ τε τούτων συγγραφεῖς ἐπαύσαντο).[234] A further

of Sardis *On the Passover*, 96. In the New Testament, only Acts 4:27 does not try to exonerate Pilate, but this broadly accusatory statement makes Herod, Jews, and Gentiles culpable as well. Other early Christian statements which blame Pilate generally follow the same pattern of broadly making many people, or even all people, culpable for the death of Jesus and hence do not lay primary fault on Pilate; see for example Tertullian, *Against Praxeas* 28.2; *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 20.2.

[225] For a similar argument, see Winter, 'Josephus on Jesus', 433.
[226] This is most clearly expressed throughout the version of the *Toledot Yeshu* known as Group 1; see Meerson and Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, 127–66.
[227] Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44.
[228] *Antiquities* 8.370, 14.125, 15.265, 18.278, 18.333.
[229] Mason, for example, claims that such a usage can be found nowhere else in Josephus; see Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 231. See also Eisler, *The Messiah Jesus*, 55; Paget, 'Some Observations', 574.
[230] *Antiquities* 1.90.
[231] *Antiquities* 5.174.
[232] *Antiquities* 4.66.
[233] *Antiquities* 18.62.
[234] *War* 1.18.

related usage is when Josephus also uses πρῶτος, a negative particle, and the same exact form of ἐπαύσαντο, 'they did not cease earlier' (οὐ πρότερον ἐπαύσαντο).[235]

All these demonstrate that the TF's use of παύω is not only quite Josephan, but also often associated with disturbances among the Jewish people, much in line with other vocabulary we have already seen in the TF. Furthermore, early Christian tradition repeatedly emphasizes that the disciples abandoned Jesus before his death,[236] denied him before others,[237] and then did not even believe that he was resurrected.[238] This description glaringly contrasts with how the TF portrays the disciples as persisting in their belief despite Jesus' death. This matches similar portrayals in traditions within the Jewish *Toledot Yeshu*, which describe the disciples as being faithful to Jesus immediately after his execution.[239] As such, it seems far more likely that the TF's wording came from a Jew like Josephus than a later Christian scribe.

In this phrase, another term, 'love' (ἀγαπάω), is sometimes thought to be suspicious because it is assumed to imply a deep or sublime love, as it frequently does in the New Testament; hence it strikes one as being more likely to come from a Christian interpolator than Josephus.[240] But Josephus deploys ἀγαπάω more than seventy times and with it he usually refers to far more mundane actions such as 'to like' or 'to be pleased' or 'to be devoted'. This is how Josephus uses the word just a few verses before the TF when he says, 'but they did not like the things which were done to the water' (οἱ δ' οὐκ ἠγάπων τοῖς ἀμφὶ τὸ ὕδωρ δρωμένοις);[241] or later on in the same book, 'but he enjoyed the safety of being made a captive by Jewish men' (ἀγαπῶν δὲ τὴν σωτηρίαν μετὰ αἰχμαλωσίαν ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων ἀνδρῶν γενομένην).[242]

But most remarkably, as Bermejo-Rubio and Eisler point out,[243] Josephus also uses the term ἀγαπάω to claim that the Jewish insurrectionist 'Aristobulus became a source of disturbances . . . who again gathered together many Jews who desired a change and who had long been devoted to him' (ἀρχὴ γίνεται θορύβων Ἀριστόβουλος . . . ὃς αὖθις πολλοὺς Ἰουδαίων ἐπισυνίστη, τοὺς μὲν ἐπιθυμοῦντας μεταβολῆς, τοὺς δὲ ἀγαπῶντας αὐτὸν πάλαι).[244] This passage strikingly parallels the TF in that Josephus here uses γίνεται to introduce Aristobulus, just as

[235] *Antiquities* 9.266.
[236] Matthew 26:31, 56; Mark 14:27, 50; John 16:32.
[237] Matthew 26:69–75; Mark 14:67–72; Luke 22:56–62; John 18:17, 25–7.
[238] Matthew 28:17; Mark 16:11, 13–14; Luke 24:11, 25, 41; John 20:24–9.
[239] For example, see Meerson and Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, 133, 153, 200. Note, though, that one version does imply that the disciples doubted his resurrection at first because it says that they mourned greatly at his death; see Meerson and Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, 300.
[240] Bammel, 'Zum Testimonium Flavianum', 11.
[241] *Antiquities* 18.60.
[242] *Antiquities* 18.361.
[243] Bermejo-Rubio, 'Hypothetical Vorlage', 355–6; Eisler, *The Messiah Jesus*, 55. See also Thackeray, *Josephus*, 147.
[244] *War* 1.171.

the TF does for Jesus. Josephus then deploys a time marker to describe those who 'had long been devoted to [Aristobulus]', thus matching the TF's phrase 'who had first been devoted to him' (οἱ τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαπήσαντες).[245] Josephus goes on to describe Aristobulus as 'gathering many Jews' (πολλοὺς Ἰουδαίων ἐπισυνίστη) which nicely parallels the TF's phrase 'he brought over many from among the Jews' (πολλοὺς μὲν Ἰουδαίους . . . ἐπηγάγετο). The use of the word ἀγαπάω in the TF should thus not only be read in a neutral light, but, more importantly, its application to the followers of Jesus renders it wholly Josephan given the close parallels it shares with Josephus' description of the followers of the rebel Aristobulus.

ἐφάνη γὰρ αὐτοῖς . . . ζῶν: 'For he appeared to them alive'

Moving on, we once again have a statement that on first glance strains credulity. The phrase 'for to them' (γὰρ αὐτοῖς) is perfectly Josephan and he uses it forty-two times in that exact form, including twice shortly after the TF.[246] Yet it is the meaning of the larger phrase that strikes many as too incredible to believe, for it presents Josephus as, apparently, confessing that Jesus did in fact appear alive to his disciples on the third day. But here I make a very simple observation. I suggest that the phrase ought to be translated not that 'he appeared to them alive', but rather, 'he appeared to them to be alive', or even 'it seemed to them that he was alive'.[247] In other words, I maintain that φαίνω parallels the English usage for the word 'appear' in that it can ambiguously refer to either (1) an event of actual appearing, or (2) an event appearing or seeming to be so (perhaps falsely). Thus, the TF may not state that Jesus actually appeared to the disciples, but only that it seemed that way to the disciples. This meaning of 'seeming' for φαίνω is well expressed by Plato, who wrote, 'Certain things may seem so, but indeed may not be so in truth' (φαινόμενα, οὐ μέντοι ὄντα γέ που τῇ ἀληθείᾳ).[248] And Origen, writing some six hundred years later, quite agrees, 'nothing that seems (φαινόμενον) is good inasmuch as it exists in appearance and not in truth and expresses the image of illusions not accurately or truly'.[249]

[245] For other examples of ἀγαπάω being used with a time marker, see also *Antiquities* 12.173; *War* 1.171, 2.141.

[246] *Antiquities* 18.90, 18.121.

[247] Some scholars have suggested that φαίνω with αὐτοῖς implies subjectivity, but they have not elaborated on their assertions; see Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum', 95; Whealey, 'Josephus on Jesus: Evidence from the First Millennium', 304; Victor, 'Das Testimonium Flavianum', 77; Bardet, *Le Testimonium Flavianum*, 51.

[248] Plato, *Republic* 596e line 4 (= TLG 0059.042).

[249] οὐδὲν φαινόμενον καλόν ἐστιν, οἱονεὶ δοκήσει ὂν καὶ οὐκ ἀληθῶς καὶ τὴν φαντασίαν πλανῶν ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀκριβῶς καὶ ἀληθῶς ἐκτυποῦν. Origen, *On Prayer* 20.2 (my trans. from ed. Koetschau, *Origenes Werke II*, GCS 3 p. 344 lines 9–11 = TLG 2042.008).

This is an important point and it is worth a detailed examination to see if such an interpretation is legitimate. The TF uses φαίνω with the participle 'alive' (ζῶν), and Greek lexicons and grammars give somewhat contradictory guidance for interpreting φαίνω when supplemented by a participle. LSJ, Smyth, and Goodwin, all which focus on classical literature, indicate that a supplementary participle is used with φαίνω to designate an act of real or actual appearance, and that an infinitival verb is used when φαίνω instead designates that something merely appears so or seems so. This would mean that the TF's phrasing should refer to an actual appearance, as in 'he appeared to them alive'.[250] But, Smyth, with Goodwin agreeing, cautions that 'the above distinction, however, is not always followed'[251] and Smyth gives some counterexamples.[252] BDAG, which focuses on literature closer in time to Josephus, is even more ambivalent and provides several examples showing that φαίνω with either the infinitive or the participle can indicate something seeming or appearing to be so (but which may not actually be so).[253]

And indeed, a survey of literature from around the first century CE shows that many writers used φαίνω with the participle to specify appearing to be so or seeming to be so. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, for example, writes, 'For it seems that many things appear beautiful and wonderful when compared with themselves, but when compared to other better things [they appear] to be less glorious' (πολλὰ γὰρ τῶν καθ' αὑτὰ φαινομένων καλῶν καὶ θαυμαστῶν ἑτέροις ἀντιπαρατεθέντα κρείττοσιν ἐλάττω τῆς δόξης ἐφάνη).[254] Plutarch similarly writes, 'For that malignant power which once was called monarchy and tyranny, then seemed to be a saving defense of the city' (ἡ δ' ἐπίφθονος ἰσχὺς ἐκείνη, μοναρχία λεγομένη καὶ τυραννὶς πρότερον, ἐφάνη τότε σωτήριον ἔρυμα τῆς πολιτείας γενομένη).[255]

Jewish and Christian writers of the first and second centuries CE follow the same pattern. Philo states, '[God] appears to be speaking to certain persons as if they were his coworkers' (φαίνεται γὰρ διαλεγόμενός τισιν ὡς ἂν συνεργοῖς αὐτοῦ),[256] and then discusses whether God was actually doing so, before concluding that he was.[257] The Gospel of Matthew also deploys φαίνω likewise, as in 'so that you do not appear to men to be fasting [though you actually are]' (ὅπως μὴ φανῇς τοῖς ἀνθρώποις νηστεύων).[258] And the *Shepherd of Hermas* says too, 'nothing seems

[250] LSJ, φαίνω, B II; Smyth and Messing, *Greek Grammar*, sec. 2143; Goodwin, *A Greek Grammar*, sec. 1592.

[251] Smyth and Messing, *Greek Grammar*, sec. 2143; Goodwin, *A Greek Grammar*, sec. 1592.

[252] Smyth gives the counter examples of Demosthenes, *In Midiam* 21.39 (Smyth §1965) 'It will appear that he did not consider the laws on your behalf nor was even angry' (οὐχ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν οὐδὲ τῶν νόμων φροντίσας οὐδ' ἀγανακτήσας φανήσεται) (= TLG 0014.021 lines 3–4); and Plato, *Phaedo* 114d (Smyth §2106) 'It appears that the soul is immortal' (ἀθάνατόν γε ἡ ψυχὴ φαίνεται οὖσα) (= TLG 0059.004 line 4).

[253] Bauer et al., *BDAG*, φαίνω 2b, 5.

[254] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Epistula ad Pompeium Geminum* 1.7 lines 6–8 (= TLG 0081.015).

[255] Plutarch, *Pericles* 39.4 lines 1–3 (= TLG 0007.012).

[256] Philo, *De Confusione Linguarum* 168 (= TLG 0018.013 lines 4–5).

[257] Philo, *De Confusione Linguarum* 169–82.

[258] Matthew 6:18 (ed. Aland et al., *The Greek New Testament*).

to have been cut off from it [though something indeed was]' (οὐδὲν φαίνεται ἐκομμένον ἀπ' αὐτοῦ).[259]

Clearly, then, in literature contemporary to Josephus, φαίνω with a participle can designate seeming or appearing to be so, with no implication of the truth of the matter. But how did Josephus use φαίνω? He deploys the word 126 times,[260] and if we work through every instance we find that the vast majority either do not apply to the case at hand or are too ambiguous to make any determination one way or the other. But several are quite illuminating. For example, with φαίνω and a participle Josephus suggests that Ahab might have been deceived, 'And so Ahab appears to have been deceived by this in regard to [his] understanding' (φαίνεται οὖν καὶ Ἄχαβος ὑπὸ τούτου τὴν διάνοιαν ἀπατηθείς).[261] Or, in another instance, Josephus describes King Herod's relationship with Agrippa, saying '[Herod] appeared glad [to see Agrippa]' (ἄσμενος δὲ ἐφάνη).[262] Josephus implies that merely appearing glad was not a guarantee of actually being glad, for he explains immediately afterward that on account of this Agrippa 'supposed' (δοκοῦντος) that he and the king were friends—and in this case it turns out they were. Or again Josephus says that Herodotus 'appears to mention [our nation] in a certain way (τρόπῳ τινὶ φαίνεται μεμνημένος)[263] and then follows with a debatable citation that does not explicitly mention Jews.[264]

In another instance, Antipater goes to Caesar to accuse Archelaus of being 'on a stage faking tears during the day' (ἐπὶ σκηνῆς δακρύειν μὲν προσποιούμενον τὰς ἡμέρας) over his father's death, but at night living it up.[265] And so, Antipater reasons, that 'if granted the kingdom, Archelaus will appear to be the same toward Caesar as he was toward his father' (φανεῖσθαί τε καὶ περὶ τὸν Καίσαρα τοιόνδε ὄντα Ἀρχέλαον συγχωροῦντα τὴν βασιλείαν, ὁποῖος γένοιτο καὶ περὶ τὸν πατέρα).[266] Here, Josephus, through the mouth of Antipater, is explaining that Archelaus will appear to be one thing, but really be quite another—and uses φαίνω with a participle to do so (φανεῖσθα . . . ὄντα).

While some might quibble with certain of the above instances, the following example is not only the closest syntactical parallel to the TF, but also the clearest example of using φαίνω as 'to seem so' or 'to appear so'. With this, Josephus describes how the brothers of Joseph put blood on Joseph's clothes in order to deceive their father Jacob, 'so that he [Joseph] might appear to him [Jacob] to have

[259] *Shepherd of Hermas*, parable 8.3 (69.1) (ed. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 602 = TLG 1419.001 line 3).

[260] I derived this number from a TLG search for the lexeme φαίνω; curiously Accordance gives only 119 instances.

[261] *Antiquities* 8.420. Cassiodorus' Latin translation also understands φαίνεται in this passage as 'seem': *Hoc ergo modo uidetur etiam achab deceptus* (Pollard et al., *Flavius Josephus: Antiquities*).

[262] *Antiquities* 16.21.

[263] *Apion* 1.168.

[264] *Apion* 1.169–70. For other less clear examples, see *Antiquities* 3.38, 4.48; *Apion* 1.12.

[265] *Antiquities* 17.234.

[266] *Antiquities* 17.235.

been killed by beasts' (ὡς ἂν ὑπὸ θηρίων αὐτῷ φανείη διεφθαρμένος),[267] when, of course, Joseph had not been killed at all. In this latter instance we have φαίνω employed in the passive to describe how Joseph 'appeared' or 'seemed', then a dative pronoun to indicate to whom Joseph 'appeared' or 'seemed', and the participle to indicate what 'appeared' or 'seemed' to be the case.[268] And in this instance, we know that Joseph was not actually killed, but that it only falsely appeared so to Jacob. Notably, when this passage was translated into Latin by Cassiodorus and his team they also understood it as meaning 'seem' and so rendered it as 'so that it might seem to him as though he had been devoured by beasts' (*ut ei uideretur quasi a bestiis deuoratus*).[269] The remarkable thing about this passage is the close parallel it shares with the TF, which likewise uses φαίνω in the passive with a dative pronoun and a participle to indicate that 'he appeared to them to be alive' or even the impersonal 'it seemed to them that he was alive'.[270]

These examples show that the TF can legitimately be interpreted as merely claiming that it seemed to the disciples that Jesus was alive again, not that Jesus actually was alive. And this interpretation is backed by contemporary Greek usage as well as by Josephus' own stylistic tendencies. In fact, I can find no clear example of Josephus using a participle with φαίνω to indicate actual appearance; rather he instead prefers to use such syntax to indicate what appears to be so or seems to be so.[271]

Such then I propose is not only what is meant by the passage, but how most ancient and medieval Christians read the passage. A great benefit of this interpretation is that it shows how the TF's ambiguity would allow some readers to take it as giving a mere report, but others to take it as giving a statement of fact—a scenario

[267] *Antiquities* 2.35.

[268] Even if one were to insist that φαίνω in this instance means 'to actually appear' or even 'to be obvious' the phrase would still portray the term in a subjective perspective from the point of view of the author: 'so that [Joseph] might actually appear to him [Jacob] to have been killed by beasts' or 'so it might be obvious to him [Jacob] that he [Joseph] was killed by beasts'. In both instances the 'obvious' or 'factual' nature of the appearance is only so from the perspective of Jacob, not the author. In this sense the passage in the TF contains two subjective elements, the first is φαίνω meaning 'to seem' the second is the dative pronoun 'to them'. The result is that even if only one element was present in the TF, the other could still by itself portray the resurrection of Jesus as a subjective report and not as a factual occurrence.

[269] Cassiodorus, *Josephus's Antiquities* 2.35 (Pollard et al., *Flavius Josephus: Antiquities*).

[270] Though an impersonal rendering 'it seemed' for ἐφάνη would require a change of subject to properly translate the nominative supplementary participle 'he was alive' (ζῶν), such a switch in subject is grammatically permissible; see Smyth and Messing, *Greek Grammar*, sec. 1965.

[271] The only possible exception to this is when Josephus quotes the words of another writer to tell of an appearance of an Egyptian deity, 'he says that Isis appeared to Amenhotep in his sleep blaming him' (φησὶν ὅτι κατὰ τοὺς ὕπνους ἡ Ἶσις ἐφάνη τῷ Ἀμενώφει μεμφομένη αὐτόν) (*Apion* 1.289). But here the syntax is not Josephus', but the quoted writer's. And even if it is Josephus' own words, he clearly believes the appearance never happened because he ridicules it (*Apion* 1.287, 293), and so we might just as well render the phrase 'and Isis seemed to Amenhotep to be blaming him in his dream'. In any case, if a clear example is found of Josephus employing the participle with φαίνω to indicate actual appearance, the examples I have given above show that he did not always do so. Certain other ambiguous instances of using the participle with φαίνω include *Antiquities* 6.200, 14.154.

that well explains the great diversity in how Christians handled the TF. All this also points toward Josephus as the author of this phrase inasmuch as it matches his style, and because it also seems unlikely to have come from a Christian since the New Testament almost exclusively deploys ὁράω for discussing the resurrection appearances of Jesus, not φαίνω.[272]

τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν πάλιν: 'on the third day again'

The literal rendering of this phrase awkwardly reads 'having the third day again', but such is typical of Greek writers for indicating a timeframe and Josephus uses the phrasing numerous times throughout his work.[273] A more colloquial translation would be 'on the third day again' (τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν πάλιν). Remarkably, Josephus uses ἔχω, ἡμέρα, and πάλιν together on two separate occasions, just as they are used in the TF. Thus 'she went out again on the following days' (ἐξῄει πάλιν ταῖς ἐχομέναις ἡμέραις),[274] and 'on the next [day] he came again and used the same words, and for forty days he did not cease' (τῇ δ' ἐχομένῃ πάλιν ἐλθὼν τοὺς αὐτοὺς ἐποιήσατο λόγους, καὶ μέχρι τεσσαράκοντα ἡμερῶν οὐ διέλειπε).[275]

Most relevant for our purposes is that Christians do not seem to have used the turn of phrase 'having the third day' (τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν) when speaking about how Jesus was raised 'on the third day'. In fact, a TLG search for the lexemes ἔχω, ἡμέρα, and τρίτος within seven words of one another reveals no references to Jesus' resurrection before the fifth century.[276] Christians instead preferred the simple dative τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ[277] or the simple accusative, or various prepositions like ἕως, μέτα, διά, or ἐν.[278] It thus seems likelier that a non-Christian such as Josephus would employ the TF's phraseology, rather than a Christian interpolator.

[272] Matthew 28:7, 10; Luke 24:34; Acts 13:31, 26:16; 1 Corinthians 15:5–8. Only the long ending of Mark uses φαίνω, Mark 16:9, 12, 14. Note that unlike with the TF, in these three latter instances, φαίνω does not have a subordinate participle. This indicates that it does not mean 'appear to be' or 'seem to be', but that Jesus 'actually appeared'.

[273] For example, the following use ἔχω and ἡμέρα: *Antiquities* 1.193, 2.72, 3.290, 5.327, 6.287, 7.1, 19.291. Of these 1.193, 3.290, 7.1, and 19.291 modify ἡμέρα with a number, just as the TF does. Goldberg claims that there is not a precise parallel in the *Antiquities*, but this is not the case. For example, in *Antiquities* 7.1 it is used to denote time after which, and in *Antiquities* 5.327 it denotes time in which. See Goldberg, 'Coincidences', 68.

[274] *Antiquities* 5.327.

[275] *Antiquities* 6.174.

[276] The closest reference comes from the apocryphal *Acts of John* 72 lines 2–3 (= TLG 0317.001), which speaks of a certain Drusianas, who would be raised from the dead after three days (εἰς τὸ μνῆμα, τρίτην ἡμέραν ἐχούσης τῆς Δρουσιανῆς), but the text does not speak of Jesus that way.

[277] Matthew 16:21, 17:23, 20:19; Luke 9:22, 18:33, 24:7, 24:46; Acts 10:40; 1 Corinthians 15:4. For early Christian references, see Justin Martyr, *Dialogue* 97.1 line 4, 100.1 line 3 (ed. Marcovich p. 236, 241 = TLG 0645.003); Epiphanius, *Ancoratus* 118.10 (= TLG 2021.001 lines 9–10); and many others.

[278] τρίτην ταύτην ἡμέραν (Luke 24:21). See also other similar locutions like ἕως τῆς τρίτης ἡμέρας (Matthew 27:64); μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας (Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:34); διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν (Matthew 26:61; Mark 14:58); ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις (Matthew 27:40; Mark 15:29; John 2:19–20).

τῶν θείων προφητῶν ταῦτά τε καὶ ἄλλα μυρία περὶ αὐτοῦ θαυμάσια εἰρηκότων: 'given that the divine prophets spoke these and ten thousand other wonders concerning him'

This phrase is marked by the genitive absolute construction with 'the divine prophets' (τῶν θείων προφητῶν) being the subject of the participle 'having spoken' (εἰρηκότων). The phrase as a whole is typically Josephan. For example, ταῦτά τε καί is used by Josephus in the same exact form in *Antiquities* 19.141, and in a slightly different form in *War* 1.157.[279] The exaggerated phrase 'ten thousand other things' (ἄλλα μυρία) is normal hyperbole for Josephus,[280] and he uses the same phrasing twice elsewhere.[281] The locution 'concerning him' (περὶ αὐτοῦ) is used twenty-nine times[282] and he enjoys partnering the phrase with λέγω, as he does in the TF. For example, 'speaking as follows concerning them' (περὶ αὐτῶν λέγων οὕτως).[283]

The same can be said for 'divine' (θεῖος), which Josephus deploys to refer to revered figures in Jewish tradition, as I mentioned above.[284] He twice even uses θεῖος in conjunction with prophets: 'as he was undeniably a divine prophet' (ὢν δ' οὗτος ὁ προφήτης θεῖος ὁμολογουμένως)[285] and 'truly a divine and excellent prophet' (θεῖον ἀληθῶς καὶ προφήτην ἄριστον).[286] The word θαυμάσιος is deployed twenty-seven times by Josephus and once, like with the TF, he partners it with λέγω, 'yet I will speak of what is more wonderful than this' (ὃ δ' ἐστὶ τούτου θαυμασιώτερον ἐρῶ).[287]

Josephus was also keenly interested in all things related to prophecy, including the fulfillment of biblical prophecy,[288] the activities of post-biblical prophets,[289] and the phenomenon of false prophets.[290] So it makes sense that he would note prophecies involving Jesus. But the phrase still falls under suspicion for some because it seems to present Josephus as affirming that the Hebrew prophets actually

[279] To identify these locations, I ran an Accordance search for the lexeme οὗτος within two words of the phrase τε καί.

[280] Thackeray, *Josephus*, 147.

[281] *Antiquities* 13.382; *War* 2.361. Olson is incorrect when he says that Josephus never uses the phrase, Olson, 'A Eusebian Reading', 109. To identify these locations, I ran an Accordance search for the lexemes ἄλλος and μυρίος within the same verse. For some reason Mealand seems to have missed these instances because he says that such phraseology is only partially witnessed in Josephus; see Mealand, 'On Finding Fresh Evidence', 84 n. 12.

[282] For example, *Antiquities* 17.332, 18.202.

[283] *Antiquities* 1.161. See also *Antiquities* 1.163; *Apion* 1.69, 1.171.

[284] For further discussion, see p. 72.

[285] *Antiquities* 10.35.

[286] *Antiquities* 8.243.

[287] *Antiquities* 3.216.

[288] *Antiquities* 10.35, 208–10, 276; *War* 4.387, 6.109, 7.432.

[289] *War* 1.68–9, 6.300–9; *Antiquities* 15.373–9. Josephus even considered himself to be a prophet; see *War* 3:352.

[290] *Antiquities* 20.97–9, 167–72; *War* 2.258–63.

foretold Jesus' wondrous deeds. This is especially so given that the genitive absolute construction is often believed to be grammatically disconnected from the rest of the sentence,[291] making the phrase to read as a statement of fact written from the point of view of Josephus himself. In reply, I point out the work of Lois Fuller, who shows that genitive absolute constructions in the time of Josephus can be grammatically connected to the larger sentence.[292] If this is the case with the TF, then the phrase could easily be interpreted as presenting the perspective of the disciples, not Josephus.

In fact, Fuller goes on to demonstrate that though a genitive absolute construction usually appears at the beginning of a sentence, it may occasionally appear after the main verb, as it does in the TF. In these instances, Fuller maintains that it then can 'nuance the significance of the main action'.[293] Josephus does this near the TF in *Antiquities* 18.119 when he writes 'there was an opinion among the Jews that the destruction of the army was a punishment for him, since God wanted to afflict Herod' (τοῖς δὲ Ἰουδαίοις δόξαν ἐπὶ τιμωρίᾳ τῇ ἐκείνου τὸν ὄλεθρον ἐπὶ τῷ στρατεύματι γενέσθαι τοῦ θεοῦ κακῶσαι Ἡρώδην θέλοντος). Josephus uses the genitive absolute in the same way a few verses later in *Antiquities* 18.122 in order to explain why Herod went up to Jerusalem 'since an ancestral feast of the Jews was approaching' (ἑορτῆς πατρίου τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ἐνεστηκυίας). In both cases the genitive absolute concludes a sentence in order to explain a cause or motive for the 'opinion of the Jews' on the one hand, and Herod going up to Jerusalem on the other.[294]

By applying such an understanding to the TF, one could very well interpret the TF's genitive absolute as explaining the cause for why 'it appeared to them' that Jesus was alive, thus putting the rationale in the mind of the disciples. This would make the phrase quite neutral. Rendered in English, the phrase would read something like, 'It seemed to them, given that the divine prophets had spoken such things and many other marvels about him, that he was alive on the third day'.

But of course, the phrase is ambiguous and could be interpreted in a variety of other ways, some of which would affirm the truthfulness of prophecies about Jesus.[295] And this ambiguity hinges on both how the main verb (φαίνω) should be understood and what role the genitive absolute construction plays in the sentence. A more ambiguous rendering than the neutral version I have given above would be something like, 'He appeared to them to be alive on the third day given that the divine prophets had spoken such things and many other marvels about him'. Here it is unclear if the second half of the sentence is presented from the perspective

[291] Fuller, 'The Genitive Absolute', 42.
[292] Ibid., 143–6.
[293] Ibid., 154 (modified).
[294] See also *Antiquities* 19.133.
[295] For a thorough discussion on various ways to translate genitive absolute constructions, see Fuller, 'The Genitive Absolute', 153–64.

of the disciples or from that of the writer. All that to say, the TF is not necessarily making any kind of definitive statement about what the Hebrew prophets said about Jesus, but may instead be placing such sentiments into the minds of the disciples—yet its ambiguous syntax leaves open the possibility that later readers might interpret the TF as affirming Jesus' fulfillment of prophecies, as several later Christians would do.[296]

εἰς [ἔτι] τε νῦν: 'until now'

Josephus nowhere uses this four-word combination,[297] though he does deploy smaller units of the phrase. Thus, he uses τε νῦν on ten other occasions, all of which occur in the *Antiquities*, and nowhere else. One occurrence is even placed quite near the TF in book 18 of the *Antiquities*.[298] He deploys the reverse phrase νῦν τε three times, two of which occur in the *Antiquities*.[299] He makes use of εἰς νῦν (without a noun or pronoun object of εἰς) on only two other occasions, but both of them are in book 18 of the *Antiquities* where the TF is placed.[300] He also uses ἔτι with νῦν, typically in two different ways,[301] yet notably he uses both words in a unique series of particles on seven occasions,[302] all of which are in the *Antiquities*. Other variant phrases with ἔτι are scattered about like τε ἔτι (one time),[303] ἔτι τε καί (two times),[304] and the shorter ἔτι τε (seven or nine times depending on textual variation).[305]

Alice Whealey however points out that the Greek textual witnesses of the TF's phrase εἰς [ἔτι] τε νῦν are divergent and contain different though

[296] For example, Pseudo-Hegesippus, *On the Ruin of the City of Jerusalem* 2.12.1 lines 26–8 (ed. Usanni p. 163); Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.1.5 lines 8–9 (ed. Hansen p. 7).

[297] Josephus does come close to the phrase when he says 'until now it is called Succoth' (εἰς τὰς ἔτι νῦν Σκηνὰς λεγομένας) in *Antiquities* 1.337. Despite this, several scholars have claimed that the TF's phrasing εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν is more distinctive of Eusebius than Josephus and then argue that Eusebius interpolated the TF into manuscripts of the *Antiquities*; see Appendix 1.

[298] *Antiquities* 2.104, 2.129, 2.161, 2.175, 4.137, 4.180, 7.383, 12.143, 17.47, 18.304.

[299] *Antiquities* 13.49, 15.37; *War* 1.17.

[300] *Antiquities* 18.266, 18.345. To identify these locations, I ran an Accordance search for εἰς followed by νῦν within three words of one another. I excluded instances where a definite article intervenes between the two words, because such gives an entirely different syntax to the phrase.

[301] ἔτι νῦν (*Antiquities* 1.92, 6.20, 8.154, 8.174); ἔτι καὶ νῦν (*Antiquities* 1.35, 1.125, 1.131, 1.160, 1.204, 1.212, 8.281, 9.290, 10.267, 12.119).

[302] These include ἔτι γὰρ καὶ νῦν (*Antiquities* 1.203); ὅθεν νῦν ἔτι (*Antiquities* 2.313); ἔτι δὲ καὶ νῦν (*Antiquities* 3.31); καὶ νῦν ἔτι (*Antiquities* 3.299); δὲ καὶ νῦν ἔτι (*Antiquities* 5.125); καὶ νῦν δ' ἔτι (*Antiquities* 7.378); καὶ ἔτι νῦν (*Antiquities* 14.188). Also, εἰς τὰς ἔτι νῦν Σκηνὰς λεγομένας (*Antiquities* 1.337).

[303] *War* 1.623.

[304] *Antiquities* 2.323, 14.194.

[305] *Antiquities* 3.304, 4.39, 10.27, 13.128, 20.71; *War* 1.22, 6.267. Textual variants also include *Antiquities* 5.226, 8.145. For all of the preceding information on ἔτι . . . νῦν, I ran a search in Accordance for ἔτι and νῦν within three words of one another.

effectively synonymous phrases. She suggests that the original probably omitted ἔτι (hence becoming the simpler εἰς τε νῦν) because the two earliest manuscripts of *Antiquities* book 18 and several important Greek writers (who make direct use of the *Antiquities*) contain this variant reading.[306] I discuss this in more detail in Appendix 1, and I think that Whealey is right that the Greek textual tradition favors εἰς τε νῦν as the original reading. Though εἰς τε νῦν would still be unique in the works of Josephus, it would not be unexpected, for Josephus also deploys νῦν in a unique series of particles and prepositions on at least twelve occasions without ἔτι, all of which occur in the *Antiquities*, and several of which cluster around where the TF is located.[307]

Excluding ἔτι also makes the phrase εἰς τε νῦν more Josephan in that it more closely follows Josephus' other two usages of εἰς νῦν found in book 18 of the *Antiquities*, around where the TF is placed.[308] Whatever the case though, it seems unwise to assume Josephus could not have written either εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν or εἰς τε νῦν, given that in the *Antiquities* he deploys νῦν with ἔτι in seven unique ways, and he also deploys νῦν without ἔτι in at least twelve unique ways.[309] It thus seems that Josephus delighted in using νῦν in singular ways since he deploys it in no less than nineteen unique series of particles and prepositions. Probability would reason that he could be doing the same in the TF.

A further relevant observation is that, while this phrase εἰς [ἔτι] τε νῦν appears to mark the present tense since it contains the word 'now' (νῦν), its subsequent clause is actually in the past tense. This is an unusual grammatical construction, but Josephus does the very same thing in the two other instances where he deploys εἰς with νῦν, and both of these happen to occur shortly after the TF in book 18 of the *Antiquities*, as I mentioned above.[310] This, combined with the above observations, makes the phrase (whether εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν or εἰς τε νῦν) plausibly Josephan, if not thoroughly so.

[306] See Images 1 and 2 and pp. 126–7, 135, 223–4. Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum', 101–3.

[307] μέντοι γε νῦν (*Antiquities* 5.112); δὴ νῦν (*Antiquities* 6.291); δὲ νῦν γε (*Antiquities* 10.124); δὲ νῦν μέν (*Antiquities* 12.424); καὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ νῦν (*Antiquities* 17.67); ὡς καὶ νῦν οὔτι (*Antiquities* 17.86); δ' ὅμως καὶ νῦν (*Antiquities* 18.11); δὲ πολλάκις καὶ μέχρι νῦν (*Antiquities* 18.44); ἀλλὰ νῦν γοῦν (*Antiquities* 18.349); δὲ ἤδη καί (19.171); καὶ μέχρι νῦν ὡς (*Antiquities* 19.345); ἢ νῦν ὡς (*Antiquities* 20.126). I am probably undercounting the actual number of unique variations, as I did not search every instance of νῦν in a series of particles but only made a selection and presented those that were unique.

[308] *Antiquities* 18.266, 18.345; Whealey, 'The Testimonium Flavianum', 103.

[309] For examples outside of the *Antiquities*, see ἀλλὰ μὴν τό γε νῦν (*War* 2:355); νῦν μὲν οὖν (*War* 1:392).

[310] *Antiquities* 18.266, 18.345. For discussions related to how Josephus deploys νῦν with the past tense, see Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum', 100–1. Paget seems to incorrectly claim that Josephus does not use νῦν with the past tense; see Paget, 'Some Observations', 575, 578.

τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀπὸ τοῦδε ὠνομασμένον οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φῦλον: 'The tribe of the Christians, who were named from him, has not disappeared'

The phrase ἀπὸ τοῦδε is used one other time by Josephus[311] and ἐπιλείπω with a negative particle is used four times by Josephus, once in the exact form, 'he did not cease' (οὐκ ἐπέλιπε).[312] Josephus also five times deploys ὀνομάζω with ἀπό, as with the phrase 'having been named Magogites from him' (ἀπ' αὐτοῦ Μαγώγας ὀνομασθέντας).[313] He never though uses the term 'Christian' (χριστιανός) in any other location. However, I show in Chapter 4 that this should not raise suspicions since, among other reasons, Josephus deployed one unique lexeme on average about once in every eighty-seven words. The TF is ninety words long, meaning that one should expect it to contain a unique word, just as the TF actually does.[314] And, for that matter, when one is speaking of Jesus' followers, what lexeme would be more likely than 'Christian'?

The lexeme 'tribe' (φῦλον) is used by Josephus eleven other times, and in seven of these he partners the word with a group in the genitive case, like in the TF.[315] But his usage pattern has been the subject of some controversy and misstatements. Thackeray believed it was markedly negative,[316] but this cannot be the case because Josephus does use it to describe Jews, even using the same locution as the TF does for Christians, 'the tribe of the Jews' (τὸ Ἰουδαίων . . . φῦλον).[317] In other cases it is used by Josephus to refer to 'others'—that is, to groups of people distinct from Jews.[318] So the word is probably a neutral one in Josephus, though it is understandable that readers might have taken it negatively. Mason claims that Josephus uses the term to refer to ethnic groups, not religious groups,[319] but Josephus deploys it for groups of Jews, locusts,[320] and women,[321] suggesting that for Josephus it simply meant a 'group' whatever kind it may be. But either way, first- and second-century Christians did refer to themselves as a 'race' (γένος)[322] and a 'nation'

[311] *War* 3.515.
[312] *Antiquities* 15.2. See also *Antiquities* 3.29, 7.159; *War* 1.482.
[313] *Antiquities* 1.123; *War* 1.407, 5.162, 5.166, 5.171.
[314] See pp. 110, 117, 123.
[315] *Antiquities* 2.306; *War* 2.366, 2.374, 2.397, 3.354, 7.327; *Apion* 2.127. Of these, *War* 2.366, 2.397, 3.354, and 7.327 all deploy φῦλον with the definite article, like the TF does.
[316] Thackeray, *Josephus*, 148. One example of a derogatory usage is with Justin, *Dialogue* 119.4 where Justin uses φῦλον to describe 'a barbarian tribe' as compared to Christians; see Marcovich, *Iustini Martyris: Dialogus cum Tryphone*, 275 lines 23–4.
[317] *War* 3.354. Also, in *Antiquities* 14.115 Strabo is quoted by Josephus referring to Jews as a φῦλον; and in *War* 2.397, 7.327 Josephus refers to Jews as a φῦλον in the speeches of Agrippa and Eleazar respectively.
[318] *War* 2.366, 2.374, 2.379, 2.381; *Apion* 2.127.
[319] Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 232.
[320] *Antiquities* 2.306.
[321] *Antiquities* 13.430.
[322] See, for example, 1 Peter 2:9 and *Epistle to Diognetus* 1.1.

(ἔθνος),[323] so Josephus may have picked up such ethnographic identification from them.

Be that as it may, even though Christians would use ethnic terms to describe themselves, they never seem to have used φῦλον to do so. A TLG search for the lexemes φῦλον and Χριστιανός within seven words of one another reveals only four references that can reliably predate the sixth century.[324] Of these, two are by Eusebius, but with the first he is quoting a summary of a letter of Emperor Trajan derived from Tertullian,[325] and with the second he again quotes the very same summary.[326] So these two instances cannot be attributed to Eusebius (or Tertullian) since they are summaries of a non-Christian's words. The third reference is from the hagiographical *Martyrdom of Ignatius*, which appears to contain the same exact quotation of Trajan.[327] The fourth and final reference comes from Sozomen, who says that the phrase τὸ Χριστιανῶν φῦλον was used by Emperor Shapur of Persia when he threatened to eradicate 'the tribe of the Christians'.[328] Consequently no example of the term φῦλον referring to Christians can ever be found in use among ancient Christians; rather it seems to have been of currency among non-Christians.

One could skeptically posit however that such references only show Christians dubiously claiming that non-Christians used the term Χριστιανῶν φῦλον, and hence none of the above data gives us direct testimony that non-Christians actually deployed the term. This seems unlikely, for why would Christians consistently claim that others use a vaguely derogatory word against them like φῦλον, when the others never do? In any case, around the time of Josephus, the non-Christian writer Suetonius uses the Latin ethnic term *genus* to describe Christians,[329] and *genus* is the Latin word Rufinus used to translate the term φῦλον in his translation of the TF.[330] And, conversely, the term φῦλον was used by a later Greek translator to translate *genus*.[331]

[323] 1 Peter 2:9.

[324] In this I exclude references to the TF. I also exclude the following spurious work attributed to Athanasius, *Sermo de descriptione deiparae* vol. 28 p. 948 line 46 (= TLG 2035.088), which may well date centuries after his time.

[325] τὸ Χριστιανῶν φῦλον. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.33.2 (ed. Schwartz GCS 9.1 p. 272 line 8 = TLG 2018.022 line 2).

[326] τὸ τῶν Χριστιανῶν φῦλον. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.33.4 (ed. Schwartz GCS 9.1 p. 274 line 2 = TLG 2018.022 lines 13–14). Certain scholars have argued that Eusebius' use of this phrase points to him as the author of the TF; for further discussion see Appendix 1.

[327] τὸ τῶν Χριστιανῶν φῦλον. *Martyrdom of Ignatius* 11.3 lines 3–4 (= TLG 2657.002).

[328] Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.9.5 (ed. Hansen GCS NF 4 p. 62 line 22 = TLG 2048.001 line 4).

[329] *afflicti suppliciis Christiani, genus hominum superstitionis novae ac maleficae.* Suetonius, *Twelve Caesars*, Nero 6.16.2 (ed. Rolfe p. 110 lines 15–17).

[330] See Rufinus' Latin version of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* 1.11.8 (ed. Schwartz GCS 9.1 p. 81 line 9). Rufinus, however, omits the term in his translation of *Ecclesiastical History* 3.33.2 and omits all of Trajan's reply in his translation of 3.33.3.

[331] See Appendix 1 p. 225.

From this several things are clear. Firstly, Suetonius shows that the Latin word *genus* was used by non-Christians to describe Christians in Josephus' day. Secondly, *genus* was seen as a good translation of φῦλον. Thirdly, φῦλον was seen as a good translation of *genus*. And fourthly, several Christians quote non-Christians as calling them a φῦλον. On balance then it is credible that non-Christians actually did call Christians a φῦλον in Josephus' time.[332] The term φῦλον would also be puzzling coming from a Christian interpolator, since it would require the Christian to insert a possibly derogatory term into the TF. Given all of this, it makes the most sense that the phrase 'tribe of the Christians' comes from the hand of Josephus and not a later Christian interpolator.

What is more, if we combine the clause at hand with the previous clause in the TF, it reads 'until now, the tribe of the Christians, who were named from him, has not disappeared' (εἰς [ἔτι] τε νῦν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀπὸ τοῦδε ὠνομασμένον οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φῦλον). Several scholars have argued that this phrase suggests surprise that Christians have remained, or a hope that they soon will disappear, or a disappointment in the fact that they have not yet done so.[333] And such sentiment is not likely to have come from a Christian interpolator. All told then, the phrase 'tribe of the Christians' in the TF seems very like something Josephus would say and much less like something a later Christian scribe would insert.

[332] For further discussion on this matter, see Appendix 1 pp. 224–5.

[333] Bermejo-Rubio, 'Hypothetical Vorlage', 356; Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum', 101; Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 66.

4

Authenticity and Possible Translations of the *Testimonium Flavianum*

Introduction

In view of the numerous parallels between the *Testimonium Flavianum* and Josephus that the last chapter has uncovered, it scarcely needs to be said that the TF appears authentically Josephan. The parallels are notable even beyond their great number, for they remarkably correspond with practically every aspect of the TF, from small particles to stock terms to multi-word phrases. Several parallels help to interpret the TF by showing that some statements which might initially strike one as an endorsement of Jesus are actually far more neutral, while others highlight how negative or derogatory the TF could potentially be, and still others reflect early Jewish traditions about Jesus. Some describe the life of Jesus in terms never used by Christians, and others present facts that contradict Christian tradition. All this is likely why so many Christian writers do not seem to have interpreted the TF as a positive portrayal of Jesus. It is striking too that many of the parallels cluster around the latter books of the *Antiquities*, demonstrating that the TF cohesively blends with its surrounding 'stylistic idiolect', as the field of forensic authorship attribution would put it.[1]

Such impressive parallels have convinced not a few scholars that the TF is largely or wholly authentic, causing some to even change from suspicion to embrace. Meier writes, 'in fact, most of the vocabulary turns out to be characteristic of Josephus'.[2] Thackeray states that, though once skeptical, he has 'now been led to abandon my belief that the whole [TF] is a Christian interpolation', for the TF 'bears the marks of the author's style'.[3] He adds that 'practically the whole of the language can be illustrated from Josephus. The criterion of style, to my mind, turns the scale in favor of the authenticity of the passage considered as a whole, if not in every detail'.[4] Mealand conducts a broad stylometric analysis of Josephus' corpus and surprises himself by concluding, 'When I began to study the passage about Jesus, I had initially thought that little if any of it would turn out to be in the style of Josephus. But my results so far actually suggest that on the more extensive tests, provisionally reported here, the bulk of the passage about Jesus in Josephus

[1] See pp. 66, 67, 75, 76, 92, 103–4.
[2] Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 63.
[3] Thackeray, *Josephus*, 137.
[4] Ibid., 141–2.

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is genuine'.[5] Bardet agrees, saying that the notion of such parallels coming from someone other than Josephus would require 'a talent of imitation which would hardly have an equivalent in antiquity'.[6] Even the skeptical Feldman acknowledges that the fact that the TF has 'a substratum of authentic material seems increasingly confirmed by stylistic studies'.[7] Mason too, though generally incredulous, believes 'much' of the passage is 'perfectly normal' Josephan style.[8] It must be remembered that these scholars came to their conclusions without knowing many of the stylistic parallels presented in this book.

But questions may still remain in the mind of the reflective reader. Though the TF shares many close parallels with the work of Josephus, some words and phrases in the TF are rare or even nonexistent elsewhere in Josephus' work. Are these markers of inauthenticity? And, for that matter, are the impressive number of lexical parallels perhaps a little too impressive? That is, do they betray the hand of a later forger or interpolator who set about to integrate Josephus' most frequent vocabulary into the TF? What also of the placement of the TF? Does the TF's location in the *Antiquities* cohere with its surrounding context or does its location rather give the appearance of being inserted by another hand? What of its length in comparison to the adjacent stories around it? And what about the Greek text of the TF? Is it entirely authentic, or do other witnesses, like the Latin and Syriac versions, preserve a more authentic original? Finally, what are the possible ways in which ancient and medieval readers might have understood the TF?

These are the questions to which this chapter will attend. The ensuing pages first analyze the TF stylometrically and then discuss its placement within the *Antiquities* before turning to describe its textual preservation. The chapter concludes by presenting possible ways of translating the TF.

Stylometric Analysis

Lexemes

We begin with stylometric analysis.[9] The TF is made up of ninety words,[10] which in turn are drawn from sixty-two lexemes. Lexemes are the lexical form of a word—that is, the form of a word that is found in a dictionary.[11] As Table 1 shows, all the

[5] Mealand, 'On Finding Fresh Evidence', 84.

[6] [*U*]*n talent d'imitation qui n'aurait guère d'équivalent dans l'antiquité*. Bardet, *Le Testimonium Flavianum*, 229.

[7] Feldman, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship (1937–1980)*, 684.

[8] Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 233.

[9] For discussion on this and related terms, see p. 64 n.2.

[10] This word count includes τις, but not ἔτι. It further includes the definite article τά which appears as part of the crasis τἀληθῆ; however it counts εἴγε as one word, not two words.

[11] Sometimes 'lexemes' are also called 'lemmas' in linguistic literature.

lexemes in the TF are abundantly utilized throughout Josephus' work; all, that is, except for three. But there are good reasons for believing even these lexemes to be completely Josephan.

The rarest lexeme is 'Christian' (χριστιανός), which is not used by Josephus anywhere else. But of course, in the first century χριστιανός was a rare lexeme even among Christians which is why it is only used three times in the entire New Testament.[12] And all three of these references can be interpreted as something that non-Christians called the followers of Jesus, not what the earliest Christians called themselves. So, since χριστιανός is a rare word in the first century, it would be strange for Josephus to employ it frequently, but not at all strange for him as a non-Christian to speak of 'Christians' when discussing a man called 'Christ'. The Roman historian Tacitus, a younger contemporary of Josephus, does the same thing when he presents a paragraph about 'Christ' (*Christus*) and then mentions how 'Christians' (*Christianos*) derived their name from him—Tacitus' only use of the Latin lexeme *Christianus*.[13] Another contemporary historian, Suetonius, also uses 'Christian' (*Christianus*) once only.[14] Furthermore, the TF employs the lexeme χριστιανός in the context of saying 'the tribe of the Christians' which was not a phrase that early Christians used to refer to themselves, though it does seem to have been used by non-Christians.[15] Thus, it would not be unexpected that Josephus would use the lexeme 'Christian' (χριστιανός), and the fact that he uses it nowhere else should be of no concern since other contemporary historians use it similarly.

The same goes for the next rarest lexeme 'Christ' (χριστός), which is used by Josephus twice elsewhere.[16] But what other lexeme would be likelier for Josephus to use when discussing Jesus? And, as above, Josephus' younger contemporary, the historian Tacitus, does likewise when discussing Jesus, for he also mentions the lexeme 'Christ' (*Christus*),[17] but in this case Tacitus does not mention the lexeme again, whereas Josephus does. Suetonius, another younger contemporary of Josephus, also seems to only mention the lexeme 'Christ' (*Chrestus*) once.[18] As such, though the lexeme 'Christ' is particularly rare in Josephus' work, it is perfectly probable that he would use it when speaking about Jesus, just as Tacitus and possibly Suetonius also do.

The third lexeme that appears infrequently within Josephus' work is 'accusation' (ἔνδειξις). This is deployed by Josephus two other times and both instances are situated in the latter half of the *Antiquities*, where the TF is placed.[19] The overall usage pattern of ἔνδειξις therefore matches the habit of authors who may shift their

[12] Acts 11:26, 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16.

[13] Tacitus, *The Annals*, 15.44 (ed. Jackson and Moore vol. 322 p. 282 line 19). It is possible that Tacitus originally spelled the lexeme *Chrestianos*; see Voorst, *Jesus Outside the New Testament*, 43–4. But either spelling would be a unique lexeme and his meaning is the same with both.

[14] Suetonius, *Lives of the Twelve Caesars* Nero 16.2 (ed. Rolfe, p. 110 line 16).

[15] See pp. 105–7, 224–5.

[16] *Antiquities* 8.137, 20.200. See pp. 83–4.

[17] Tacitus, *The Annals*, 15.44 (ed. Jackson and Moore vol. 322 p. 282 line 20).

[18] Suetonius, *Lives of the Twelve Caesars* Claudius 25.4 (ed. Rolfe p. 54 line 4). It is debated whether or not Suetonius has in mind Jesus with his reference, but either way the lexeme is unique in his writing; see Voorst, *Jesus Outside the New Testament*, 30–9.

[19] *Antiquities* 13.306, 19.113.

stylistic preferences when writing under different circumstances.[20] It is likely that Josephus experienced different circumstances when composing his *Antiquities*, since its great length means that he probably worked on it for years. For this reason, ἔνδειξις seems plausibly Josephan. It is true that he uses the lexeme rarely, but he seemed to have taken a liking to it when writing the latter half of the *Antiquities*.

All told then, just about the entire vocabulary of the TF is used elsewhere by Josephus many times, with one lexeme ἔνδειξις, used two times elsewhere; another, χριστός, also used twice, and only one, χριστιανός used nowhere else. As explained above, there are good contextual grounds for believing that each one of these lexemes could have been used by Josephus in the TF, but it so happens that there are further statistical reasons for believing so too. This is because finding a handful of rare lexemes is the statistical result one should expect from any chance sampling of an author's work. After all, from a stylostatistical point of view most lexemes from a randomly selected passage within any corpus will be those that are used frequently throughout the corpus, and then a smaller number will be used infrequently, and still fewer will be used barely at all or even only once. Therefore, in a given selection of text, one should on average find many lexemes that are frequently used elsewhere and a few lexemes that are infrequently used. To put it differently: regarding any blind sampling of an author's text, one would expect that, on average, the majority of lexemes would be abundantly attested in the author's corpus while a minority would be less attested—for it really could be no other way. Otherwise, an author would on average use all their lexemes around the same number of times in all of their passages, which is nonsensical.

Statistical Analysis

This frequency pattern is borne out by statistics derived from the Accordance Josephus Greek database. This database reports that, excluding the TF, Josephus' corpus is comprised of 467,209 words. These words are in turn derived from a vocabulary of 14,253 lexemes, as Table 2 shows. Of these 14,253 lexemes more than one-third, 5,365 lexemes, are used by Josephus only a single time (i.e. 'one-count lexemes'). Then a further 1,997 lexemes are used by Josephus twice ('two-count lexemes'), and 1,102 are used three times ('three-count lexemes'), and so forth,[21]

[20] Grant, *The Idea of Progress*, 22–3, 61–2. See further discussion on p. 64 n.5.

[21] The *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* contains slightly different statistics. It reports that there are 475,709 words in Josephus' corpus drawn from 15,621 lexemes (both numbers including the TF). Accordance made for a better model because the TLG seemed to have a higher incidence of incorrectly registering certain lexemes, which resulted in over- and occasionally under-counting. However, I believe, based on provisional testing with the TLG, that the overall word frequency results regarding the TF would not significantly differ if the TLG was used instead of the Accordance database. This is because though the TLG counts more words in Josephus' corpus than Accordance, the TLG also counts more lexemes which seems to thus result in roughly the same frequency rate as present in the Accordance database. Even so, Accordance still required some adjustments to make Table 1 column 1 consistent. First, Accordance did not include the thirty-nine instances of τἀληθῆ under the lexeme ἀληθής, and so these were added to the numbers in Table 1 column 1. Accordance also did not consider the definite article τά as being present within the thirty-nine instances of τἀληθῆ, so these instances were also added to the total numbers of the definite article. Additionally, Accordance incorrectly divided μυρία into two lexemes—μύριοι (ninety-two instances) and μυρίος (seventeen instances)—and so these were combined together. Lastly, Accordance treated εἴγε (four instances) differently from the effectively synonymous εἰ + γε (seventeen instances), and so these instances were added together as well.

Table 1 TF Lexemes

1 Lexeme #	2 Forms of lexeme present in TF	3 Number of instances in Josephus' corpus	4 Number of instances in TF
1	τόν	71,244	11
	τῶν		
	τά		
	τοῦ		
	ὁ		
	τῶν		
	οἱ		
	τό		
	τῶν		
	τῶν		
	τό		
2	καί	25,845	4
	καί		
	καί		
	καί		
3	δέ	15,812	2
	δέ		
4	αὐτόν	13,771	4
	αὐτόν		
	αὐτοῖς		
	αὐτοῦ		
5	τοῦτον	5,995	3
	οὗτος		
	ταῦτα		

Table 1 Continued

1 Lexeme #	2 Forms of lexeme present in TF	3 Number of instances in Josephus' corpus	4 Number of instances in TF
6	ἦν ἦν	5,682	2
7	μέν	5,494	1
8	εἰς	4,617	1
9	τε τε	4,601	2
10	γάρ γάρ	3,676	2
11	κατά	3,183	1
12	οὐκ οὐκ	3,117	2
13	πολλούς πολλούς	2,637	2
14	Γίνεται	2,523	1
15	περί	2,393	1
16	τις	2,256	1
17	ἡμῖν	1,823	1
18	ἔχων	1,839	1
19	λέγειν εἰρηκότων	1,838	2
20	παρ'	1,736	1
21	Ἰουδαίους	1,189	1
22	ἄλλα	1,156	1

(*continued*)

Table 1 Continued

1 Lexeme #	2 Forms of lexeme present in TF	3 Number of instances in Josephus' corpus	4 Number of instances in TF
23	ἀπό	1,025	1
24	ἡμέραν	754	1
25	ἀνήρ ἄνδρα ἀνδρῶν	665	3
26	πρώτων πρῶτον	675	2
27	ἀνθρώπων	428	1
28	χρόνον	432	1
29	νῦν	401	1
30	ἔργων	388	1
31	πάλιν	381	1
32	ζῶν	293	1
33	προφητῶν	286	1
34	θείων	228	1
35	δεχομένων	226	1
36	τοῦδε	185	1
37	ἐπαύσαντο	171	1
38	τρίτην	142	1
39	τἀληθῆ	130	1
40	ἡδονῇ	126	1
41	Ἰησοῦς	122	1
42	ἐφάνη	119	1

Table 1 Continued

1 Lexeme #	2 Forms of lexeme present in TF	3 Number of instances in Josephus' corpus	4 Number of instances in TF
43	ἐπηγάγετο	106	1
44	μυρία	109	1
45	χρή	85	1
46	ἀγαπήσαντες	74	1
47	ὠνομασμένον	63	1
48	ἐπέλιπε	39	1
49	παραδόξων	38	1
50	Ἑλληνικοῦ	31	1
51	θαυμάσια	28	1
52	σοφός	22	1
53	εἴγε	21	1
54	Πιλάτου	19	1
55	διδάσκαλος	16	1
56	ἐπιτετιμηκότος	13	1
57	σταυρῷ	11	1
58	φῦλον	11	1
59	ποιητής	9	1
60	ἐνδείξει	2	1
61	χριστός	2	1
62	Χριστιανῶν	0	1

Note: In all tables, numbers derived from Josephus' corpus exclude the lexemes/words found in the TF

Table 2 Word and lexeme count in Josephus' Corpus

	1 Total number of words in TF	2 Total number of words In Josephus' corpus	3 Total number of individual lexemes in Josephus' corpus
Abbreviations	= TF	= TW	= TL
	90	**467,209**	**14,253**

Table 3 Rare Lexemes in Josephus' Corpus

	1 X-count lexemes (lexemes used X times in corpus)	2 Number of different X-count lexemes in corpus	3 Total number of instances of all X-count lexemes in corpus	4 Expected number of words per instance of X-count lexeme in corpus	5 Number of instances of all X-count lexemes that appear in TF
Abbreviations & formulas	= X	= Y	X * Y = A	= TW / A	= Z
	1	5,365	5,365	87.08	1
	2	1,997	3,994	116.98	0
	3	1,102	3,306	141.32	2
	4	717	2,868	162.90	0
	5	534	2,670	174.98	0
	6	380	2,280	204.92	0
	7	317	2,219	210.55	0
	8	267	2,136	218.73	0
	9	231	2,079	224.73	0
	10	196	1,960	238.37	1
	11	158	1,738	268.82	0
	12	150	1,800	259.56	2
	13	136	1,768	264.26	0
	14	117	1,638	285.23	1
	15	119	1,785	261.74	0

all of which can be seen in Table 3 column 2'.[22] To cast this in a different light, there are 5,365 occasions in Josephus' corpus where he deploys a lexeme that he uses nowhere else, or about once every 87.10 words (Table 3 column 4). Given that the TF is ninety words, one should expect to find a unique lexeme present within it, and we do find one: 'Christian' (χριστιανός).[23]

These statistics can be pressed even further, as shown in Table 4 columns 4 and 5. Given the frequency of rare lexemes in Josephus' corpus, one can roughly estimate how many rare lexemes would be expected to appear, on average, in a genuine Josephan passage of ninety words. Thus, with an authentic Josephan passage of ninety words, one would typically expect to find around 2.99 instances of lexemes that occur between one and four times; and with the TF we find three instances—a quite precise match. Or, in a ninety-word passage, one would expect to find 4.78 instances of lexemes that occur between one and eight times; and with the TF we find three, still quite close to what is expected.[24] Or again, we would expect to find 6.24 instances of lexemes that occur between one and twelve times; and with the TF we find six, spot on. Finally, one would expect to find about 7.24 instances of lexemes that occur between one and fifteen times; and with the TF we find seven such instances, once more a very precise match. It is clear in Table 4 that however one might choose to set the parameters of rare lexeme appearances (whether they appear anywhere between one and fifteen instances), the frequency rate of the TF's rare lexemes compares very well with what we would typically find in an authentic Josephan passage. No rare lexemes appear too frequently, nor do they appear too infrequently.

[22] That is, a lexeme that appears only once is labeled in Tables 3 and 4 as a 'one-count lexeme', a lexeme that appears only twice is a 'two-count lexeme', and so on.

[23] The rarity of χριστιανός and its expected frequency rate are variously indicated in Table 1 column 2, Table 3 column 5, and Table 4 column 5. It is important to note that in Table 3 column 5 and Table 4 column 5 a 'one-count lexeme' is considered to be a lexeme that appears once in the TF. A 'two-count lexeme' is a lexeme that appears once in the TF and once in Josephus' corpus. A 'three-count lexeme' appears once in the TF and twice in the corpus, and so on.

[24] Regarding lexemes that occur between one and eight times, someone might claim that their expected 4.78 instances seem to be suspiciously greater than the actual sum of three instances. The same could be said for the expected results of the seven- through eleven-count lexemes which are all a bit higher than the actual sums (see Table 4 column 5). These results however are not statistically significant enough to arouse suspicion regarding the authenticity of the TF since they are within Josephus' rate of variability. For example, the two verses after the TF (*Antiquities* 18.65–6) include 101 words yet have three unique lexemes, far more than the expected sum of 1.16 for a passage of 101 words. Or again with the next passage, *Antiquities* 18.67–8, there are sixty-eight words yet there are ten instances of one- to fifteen-count lexemes, which are far greater than the expected 5.48 instances for a passage of sixty-eight words. One factor lowering the results for the TF's actual sum of instances for seven- through eleven-count lexemes is that I chose to combine the four instances of the lexeme εἴγε with the seventeen synonymous lexemes εἴ + γε (see n. 21 above). If εἴγε was treated on its own (as the Accordance database does), then the four instances of εἴγε would combine with the one instance of it in the TF and correspondingly increase the actual sum of instances of seven- through eleven-count lexemes in Table 4 column 5, thereby making the expected number of instances even more closely align with the actual sum of instances in the TF.

Table 4 Expected Frequency Rate for Rare Lexemes in Josephus' Corpus (Lexemes Occurring between One and Fifteen Times in Josephus' Corpus)

	1 1- to X-count lexemes	2 Cumulative sum of all 1- to X-count lexemes in corpus	3 Expected number of words per instance of 1- to X-count lexemes in corpus	4 Expected number of instances of 1- to X-count lexemes in a 90-word sample of corpus	5 Actual number of instances of 1- to X-count lexemes in 90-word TF
Abbreviations & formulas	—	= Σ(A)	= TW/Σ(A)	= TF/(TW/Σ(A))	= Σ(Z)
	1	5,365	87.08	1.03	1
	1 to 2	9,359	49.92	1.80	1
	1 to 3	12,665	36.89	2.44	3
	1 to 4	15,533	30.08	2.99	3
	1 to 5	18,203	25.67	3.51	3
	1 to 6	20,483	22.81	3.95	3
	1 to 7	22,702	20.58	4.37	3
	1 to 8	24,838	18.81	4.78	3
	1 to 9	26,917	17.36	5.19	3
	1 to 10	28,877	16.18	5.56	4
	1 to 11	30,615	15.26	5.90	4
	1 to 12	32,415	14.41	6.24	6
	1 to 13	34,183	13.67	6.58	6
	1 to 14	35,821	13.04	6.90	7
	1 to 15	37,606	12.42	7.24	7

And the same can be said when a similar analysis is applied to Josephus' frequency rate of deploying common lexemes. Table 5 tabulates the number of instances of the first through twenty-fifth most common lexemes in Josephus' corpus and Table 6 calculates how many instances of these lexemes one would, on average, expect to find in a random ninety-word sampling of Josephus' writing. As Table 6 columns 3 and 4 show, one would expect to find about 25.56 instances of the first through fifth most common lexemes in Josephus' corpus, and in the TF we find twenty-four instances—a close match. Likewise, we would expect to find 30.31 instances of first through tenth most common lexemes, and in the TF we find thirty. Again, we would expect to find 33.93 instances of first through fifteenth most frequent lexemes and with the TF we find thirty-three. And so on.[25]

None of these results is what would be expected if a scribe had composed or significantly altered the TF, for no scribe would possess Josephus' own frequency rate when it came to deploying rare or common lexemes. This is due to the fact that, as the field of forensic authorship attribution maintains, all authors have a distinctive idiolect—that is, they each have a unique pattern whereby they employ language.[26] And this pattern can be observed by analyzing their writing. Yet the TF looks to have the same frequency rate as the rest of Josephus' corpus for both rare and common lexemes. If this result does not conclusively prove that Josephus wrote the TF, it certainly shows that there is nothing unusual regarding the vocabulary of the

[25] Only in the categories of first most frequent, first to second most frequent, and first to third most frequent, is there anything like a result conforming to slightly less than a precise match. But this is easily explainable by the fact that it is normal for Josephus to deploy his most common lexeme, 'the' (ὁ), at widely variable rates throughout his corpus. So, though on average he deploys the lexeme 'the' (ὁ) once every 6.56 words (see Table 6 column 2), he will deviate greatly from this average when random passages are selected. For example, the TF (*Antiquities* 18.63–4) is ninety words and contains eleven instances of the lexeme 'the' (ὁ), for a rate of one instance per 8.18 words. This makes for a 1.62 difference from the average of 6.56 throughout his corpus. Yet the two verses immediately after the TF (*Antiquities* 18.65–6) contain 101 words, but twenty-two instances of the lexeme 'the' (ὁ), making one instance per 4.59 words, a difference greater than two instances from average, and far greater than the TF's difference from average. Then, the next two verses (*Antiquities* 18.67–8) are even more extreme. These two verses have sixty-eight words yet only seven instances of the lexeme 'the' (ὁ), making a rate of 9.71 words per instance of the lexeme, a difference greater than three instances from the average. Thus, the TF's difference from average is quite typical of Josephus when it comes to his most frequently used lexeme, 'the' (ὁ). As a result, the TF's lower than average numbers of the first most frequent lexeme results in the effective lowering the TF's numbers in the ensuing categories of first to second most frequent, and first to third most frequent lexemes. It is not until the first to fourth and first to fifth most frequent lexemes that the number of lexemes tabulated are enough to return the TF to a precise Josephan average.

[26] See pp. 64–5.

Table 5 Most Common Lexemes in Josephus' Corpus

	1 Ranking of common lexemes	2 Common lexemes	3 Number of instances of lexeme in corpus	4 Number of instances of lexeme in TF
Abbreviations & formulas	—	—	= NI	= NT
	1	ὁ	71,244	11
	2	καί	25,845	4
	3	δέ	15,812	2
	4	αὐτός	13,771	4
	5	οὗτος	5,995	3
	6	εἰμί	5,682	2
	7	μέν	5,494	1
	8	εἰς	4,617	1
	9	τε	4,601	2
	10	ὅς	4,305	0
	11	πρός	4,266	0
	12	ἐπί	4,216	0
	13	γάρ	3,676	2
	14	ἐν	3,436	0
	15	κατά	3,183	1
	16	οὐ	3,117	2
	17	πολύς	2,637	2
	18	πᾶς	2,596	0
	19	ὡς	2,582	0
	20	γίνομαι	2,523	1
	21	περί	2,393	1
	22	τις	2,256	1
	23	βασιλεύς	2,235	0
	24	διά	2,229	0
	25	ἐκ	2,158	0

Table 6 Expected Frequency Rate for Most Common Lexemes in Josephus' Corpus

	1 1st–Xth most common lexeme(s)	2 Number of words per instance of 1st–Xth most common lexeme(s) in corpus	3 Expected number of instances of 1st–Xth most common lexeme(s) in a 90-word sample of corpus	4 Actual number of instances of 1st–Xth most common lexeme(s) in 90-word TF
Abbreviations & formulas	—	TW/Σ(NI) = NW	= TF/NW	= Σ(NT)
	1st	6.56	13.72	11
	1st–2nd	4.81	18.70	15
	1st–3rd	4.14	21.75	17
	1st–4th	3.69	24.40	21
	1st–5th	3.52	25.56	24
	1st–6th	3.38	26.65	26
	1st–7th	3.25	27.71	27
	1st–8th	3.15	28.60	28
	1st–9th	3.05	29.48	30
	1st–10th	2.97	30.31	30
	1st–11th	2.89	31.14	30
	1st–12th	2.82	31.95	30
	1st–13th	2.76	32.66	32
	1st–14th	2.70	33.32	32
	1st–15th	2.65	33.93	33
	1st–16th	2.61	34.53	35
	1st–17th	2.57	35.04	37
	1st–18th	2.53	35.54	37
	1st–19th	2.50	36.04	37
	1st–20th	2.46	36.52	38
	1st–21st	2.43	36.98	39
	1st–22nd	2.41	37.42	40
	1st–23rd	2.38	37.85	40
	1st–24th	2.35	38.28	40
	1st–25th	2.33	38.69	40

passage, or its use of rare lexemes, or its use of common lexemes. It is also the very result we would expect if Josephus had actually written the TF. From these results, the conclusion unavoidably follows that the vocabulary of the TF cannot be used to cast suspicion on the TF since all of it appears Josephan.

Relationships between Lexemes

A limiting feature in the above analysis is that it does not factor in the relationship between lexemes, but instead assumes that lexemes appear at essentially random intervals according to their frequency rate with no correlation to one another. Yet, as all readers will know, certain words have a tendency to cluster together. So, for example, when examining a list of rare lexemes in Josephus' corpus, it becomes clear that rare lexemes have a tendency to be placed closer to other rare lexemes than would otherwise be expected of a common lexeme. This is because many of the one-count and two-count lexemes in Josephus' corpus (lexemes that appear only once or twice) are names for individuals, people groups, titles, and other related nomenclature.

Consequently, when Josephus names a person or group of people, he will tend to provide other names too, either because people often go by alternative names and titles or because people are often associated with other people or groups which context demands must be named as well. And it is probable that these names will tend to be rarer lexemes because many of the rare lexemes in Josephus can be classed as nomenclature. To give some examples, it is surely not random that the rare lexemes 'Phut' (Φούδης), 'Phutites' (Φοῦτος), and 'Phout' (Φούτης) appear in adjacent verses in Josephus' work, for they are all related to one another and hence by using one of the names Josephus was led to provide other names as well—and these three happen to be unique lexemes (i.e. one-count lexemes).[27] Furthermore, in the very same verses Josephus also gives two unique lexemes (Μέρση and Μερσαῖος) which Josephus provided because he was giving alternative names for, respectively, Egypt and Egyptians. Likewise, it is not coincidental that the names of 'Moses' (Μωϋσῆς) and 'Joseph' (Ἰώσηπος) appear in the very same verse where the unique lexemes 'Tisithen' (Τισιθέν) and 'Peteseph' (Πετεσήφ) also appear. For these latter two are, respectively, the alternative Egyptian names of Moses and Joseph, both of which Josephus presents to the reader—one name begetting another name so to speak.[28]

What this means is that rare lexemes, especially names and other related nomenclature, tend to be clumped together and are hence not distributed evenly throughout Josephus' corpus.[29] And it turns out that Josephus' practice of using such lexemes in clumps can be observed in the TF since the rarest lexeme in the

[27] *Antiquities* 1.132–3.
[28] *Apion* 1.290.
[29] I do not have the mathematical background to be able to confirm this observation in a rigorous statistical method, and so I base this observation from reading through an exhaustive list of rare lexemes provided by the Accordance database.

TF is the name of the people group 'Christians' (χριστιανός), which is unique in Josephus' corpus. And it so happens that the next rarest lexeme is an alternative designation for a person, 'Christ' (χριστός), a lexeme only used twice elsewhere. It is obvious that these rare lexemes have been deployed together in the TF because they are nomenclature associated with Jesus. By extension then, the TF seems to exhibit the same practice of clumping together terminological vocabulary as we find in the rest of Josephus' corpus. All this once again suggests that the TF is genuine insofar as it follows Josephus' practice of deploying rare lexemes in close intervals when discussing alternative names and designations.

Phrases

Similar marks of authenticity can also be observed when the larger phrases of the TF are examined. Thus, two-, three-, and four-word phrases in the TF are frequently deployed by Josephus elsewhere, as can be seen in Tables 7 and 8. It is striking that almost every word of the TF is part of a larger phrase that can be indexed back to a similar or identical phrase in Josephus' work. It should be noted that because phrases are composed of individual lexemes, each of which has its own rate of frequency in Josephus' corpus, then the law of probability demands that any string of individual lexemes (a phrase) will tend to be much less frequent than the rarest of its individual lexemes. Hence, if a two-word phrase is made up of a lexeme that appears four times in the corpus and another that appears fifty times in the corpus, then the most the phrase as a whole could possibly appear in the corpus would be four times, but in general one would expect the number of appearances to be less because the phrase's two lexemes will sometimes be used without one another. The upshot of this is that if we expect to find on average one unique lexeme in a passage the size of the TF, then we will tend to find several unique phrases and more phrases that are quite rare.[30]

And, as Tables 7 and 8 illustrate, this is the case with the TF. Almost all of the ninety words making up the TF are embedded within phrases that are used by Josephus in other areas of his work with only three phrases that have no parallels elsewhere and several more phrases with only one or two parallels elsewhere. But this is exactly the kind of frequency pattern which would be anticipated if Josephus had written the TF. Not only this, all three of the unique phrases have further evidence suggesting that they are Josephan. I examine each of these in turn below.

[30] The parallels listed in Table 7 occasionally include parallels that are not tied to specific lexemes but instead include a broader range of categories. For example, ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν in the TF has a parallel with *Apion* 2.41 that also uses λέγω with αὐτός to designate calling someone a certain term. That certain term however is not ἄνδρα. As such, if one wanted to more narrowly define parallel phrases as only pertaining to precise lexeme parallels, then there would be more unique phrases than the three listed in Table 8 and discussed below. But again, one would expect there to be more unique phrases in the TF than the number of unique words. In any case, the parallel in *Apion* 2.41, while not a precise lexeme parallel, is indeed an extremely close parallel and supports the argument that the TF was authored by Josephus.

Table 7 Phrases in the TF

1 **Phrases in the TF**	2 **Number of parallels in Josephus' corpus**	3 **Parallel type searched for**
γίνεται δέ	18	Exact form. Nine additional cases when γίνεται δ' is included, making 27 total.
κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον	4	Exact form.
Ἰησοῦς τις	26	Proper name immediately preceding τις with both lexemes in the singular, masculine, and nominative.
σοφὸς ἀνήρ	2	σοφὸς and ἀνήρ modifying one another within three words.
εἴγε . . . λέγειν χρή	3	Conditional particle subordinating λέγω and χρή. Minimum count.
λέγειν χρή	5	χρή modifying λέγω. Minimum count.
ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν	1	λέγω with αὐτός to designate calling someone a certain term [ἄνδρα].
ἦν γάρ	42	Exact form.
παραδόξων ἔργων	2	παράδοξος modifying ἔργον.
διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων	1	διδάσκαλος with the genitive of the person taught [ἀνθρώπων].
ἀνθρώπων . . . δεχομένων	4	ἄνθρωπος modifying δέχομαι.
ἡδονῇ . . . δεχομένων	8	ἡδονή with δέχομαι.
τῶν ἡδονῇ . . . δεχομένων	1	Exact form.
ἡδονῇ τἀληθῆ	1	ἡδονή within two words of τἀληθές.
καὶ πολλοὺς μέν	7	Exact form.
πολλοὺς μὲν . . . πολλοὺς δέ	44	πολὺς μέν followed by πολὺς δέ in any declension or number.
πολλοὺς δὲ καί	5	Exact form.
πολλοὺς . . . ἐπηγάγετο	8	ἐπάγομαι used with πολύς. Minimum count.
Ἰουδαίους . . . τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ	1	ὁ Ἑλληνικός (an adjective with definite article) modifying no noun but compared to Ἰουδαῖος (noun).
ὁ χριστὸς . . . ἦν	1	χριστός with the definite article and the exact form of ἦν.
οὗτος ἦν	19	Exact form.
καὶ αὐτόν	34	Exact form.
καὶ αὐτόν	5	Exact form at the beginning of a sentence.
πρώτων ἀνδρῶν	11	πρῶτος modifying ἀνήρ.
τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν	3	Exact form.

Table 7 Continued

1 **Phrases in the TF**	2 **Number of parallels in Josephus' corpus**	3 **Parallel type searched for**
παρ᾽ ἡμῖν	49	Exact form. Two additional cases when παρὰ μὲν ἡμῖν is included, making 51 total.
αὐτὸν . . . σταυρῷ ἐπιτετιμηκότος	1	ἐπιτιμάω with the accusative to indicate the accused person [αὐτόν] and the dative to indicate the punishment [σταυρῷ].
Πιλάτου	2	Πιλάτου in a genitive absolute construction.
ἐπαύσαντο	5	παύω without a direct object.
οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο	1	Negative particle with the exact form of ἐπαύσαντο.
οἱ τὸ πρῶτον	5	Definite article immediately followed by the exact form of τὸ πρῶτον.
πρῶτον ἀγαπήσαντες	4	ἀγαπάω with a time marker [πρῶτον].
γὰρ αὐτοῖς	42	Exact form.
ἐφάνη . . . αὐτοῖς . . . ζῶν	1	φαίνω with dative [αὐτοῖς] and with a participle [ζῶν]. Minimum count.
τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν	4	ἔχω with a number [τρίτην] modifying ἡμέρα. Minimum count.
ἔχων ἡμέραν πάλιν	2	ἔχω with ἡμέρα and πάλιν.
τῶν θείων προφητῶν	1	θεῖος modifying ὁ προφήτης.
θείων προφητῶν	2	θεῖος modifying προφήτης.
ταῦτά τε καί	1	Exact form.
ἄλλα μυρία	2	ἄλλος and μυρίος.
περὶ αὐτοῦ	29	Exact form.
περὶ αὐτοῦ . . . εἰρηκότων	4	λέγω with περί modifying αὐτός.
θαυμάσια εἰρηκότων	1	θαυμάσιος as the object of λέγω.
εἰς... νῦν	2	εἰς followed by νῦν with past tense.
τε νῦν	10	Exact form.
ἀπὸ τοῦδε	1	Exact form.
ἀπὸ . . . ὠνομασμένον	5	ὀνομάζω with ἀπό.
οὐκ ἐπέλιπε	1	Exact form.
τῶν Χριστιανῶν . . . φῦλον	7	φῦλον with a group in the genitive case [Χριστιανῶν].
τῶν Χριστιανῶν . . . τὸ φῦλον	4	τὸ φῦλον with a group in the genitive case [Χριστιανῶν].

Note: 'Minimum count' means there may exist more parallels, but due to the limitations of Accordance, an exhaustive search was impossible. Parallels listed in the center column are cited in Chapter 3. Greek words in brackets indicate a grammatical or semantic parallel rather than a precise lexeme parallel.

Table 8 Unique Phrases in the TF

Γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον Ἰησοῦς τις σοφὸς ἀνήρ, εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή· ἦν γὰρ **παραδόξων ἔργων <u>ποιητής</u>**, διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡδονῇ τἀληθῆ δεχομένων, καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν Ἰουδαίους, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἐπηγάγετο· ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν. καὶ αὐτὸν **<u>ἐνδείξει</u> τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν** παρ᾽ ἡμῖν σταυρῷ ἐπιτετιμηκότος Πιλάτου οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο οἱ τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαπήσαντες· ἐφάνη γὰρ αὐτοῖς τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν πάλιν ζῶν τῶν θείων προφητῶν ταῦτά τε καὶ ἄλλα μυρία περὶ αὐτοῦ θαυμάσια εἰρηκότων. **εἰς τε νῦν** τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀπὸ τοῦδε ὠνομασμένον οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φῦλον.	And in this time, there was Jesus, a certain wise man, if indeed one ought to call to call him a man, for he was **<u>a doer</u> of miraculous deeds**, a teacher of men who receive truths with pleasure. And he led many from among the Jews and many from among the Greeks. He was the Christ. And, when Pilate had condemned him to the cross **<u>at the accusation</u> of the first men** among us, those who at first loved him did not cease to do so, for on the third day he appeared to them alive again given that the divine prophets had spoken such things and thousands of other wonderful things about him. **And up till now** the tribe of the Christians, who were named from him, has not disappeared.

Note: All phrases in the TF have close or exact parallels elsewhere in Josephus' corpus except for the three phrases in bold. However, these three phrases are made up of smaller phrases that do have parallels. To indicate this, the words in the bolded phrases that are not part of these smaller phrases are underlined. The English translation reflects the 'positive' interpretation of the TF on pp. 137–8.

ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν 'at the accusation of the first men'

The phrase 'at the accusation of the first men' (ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν) has no parallel in Josephus, but it does contain the smaller phrase 'of the first men' (τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν) that is used by Josephus elsewhere. Thus, the only reason the larger phrase has no parallel is because the lexeme ἔνδειξις is particularly rare, having only two other usages in Josephus' corpus. Yet, as Table 4 demonstrated above, Josephus would be expected to deploy several rare lexemes in a ninety-word paragraph and it follows naturally that those rare lexemes would make up larger phrases that have no other precise parallel.[31] Adding to the authenticity of the phrase is the fact that the two times Josephus uses ἔνδειξις are in the latter half of the *Antiquities*, where the TF is placed, showing that he probably took a fancy to ἔνδειξις and began using it as he was writing the TF.[32]

εἰς [ἔτι] τε νῦν 'until now'

The two remaining unique phrases have provoked suspicion among certain scholars since, it is said, Josephus never deploys them, but Eusebius of Caesarea

[31] For further discussion on the authenticity of ἔνδειξις, see pp. 110–1.
[32] See Chapter 3 p. 92.

does. This makes Eusebius a prime candidate for interpolating the phrases into the TF. I discuss the case of Eusebian forgery in detail in Appendix 1. But here, it suffices to say that when examined closely, there are good grounds for concluding that the two phrases are authentically Josephan.

Firstly, it is true that the TF's phrase 'until now' (εἰς [ἔτι] τε νῦν) is unique in Josephus' corpus whether or not it has the particle ἔτι.[33] However, Josephus deploys the smaller phrase τε νῦν on ten other occasions and the similar phrase εἰς νῦν on two other occasions, both of which are in book 18 of the *Antiquities*, where the TF is placed. In these latter two instances εἰς is used with the present tense adverb 'now' (νῦν) and then curiously followed by a verb in the past tense, just as it is in the TF.

Moreover, Josephus uses the word νῦν in many different ways throughout his corpus, including in no less than in nineteen unique sequences of particles and prepositions,[34] so why should one be surprised if with the TF he were to deploy νῦν in yet another unique series of particles? Thus, while there is no exact parallel to the TF's phrase, there certainly are similar ones and Josephus clearly enjoyed using many singular varieties of similar phrases.[35]

παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής 'doer of incredible deeds'

The phrase 'doer of incredible deeds' (παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής) has also earned suspicion on the grounds that Josephus never deploys it elsewhere, while Eusebius does.[36] Yet the smaller 'incredible deeds' (παραδόξων ἔργων) is deployed by Josephus two other times and he utilizes the term ποιητής nine times elsewhere. In these nine instances, however, Josephus only uses ποιητής with the meaning of 'poet' not 'doer'. But such as that may be, Josephus does use the abstract cognate ποίησις several times with the meaning of 'action' or 'deed' and he matches these usages with the genitive case, as he does in the TF. So, while there is no precise parallel, there are clearly comparable cases.

Furthermore, παράδοξος is an ambiguous term that can be taken quite prejudicially, which is why the anti-Christian critic, the 'Jew of Celsus', uses the word to claim that Jesus performed his 'miracles' (παράδοξα) by magic. For the same reason παράδοξος is only used once in the New Testament to describe Jesus' miracles, but in this instance a crowd uses the word in what may not have been an entirely positive sense.[37] Therefore the whole phrase παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής

[33] For discussion on the authenticity of the particle ἔτι, see pp. 103–4, 135, 223–4.
[34] See Chapter 3 pp. 103–4.
[35] See Appendix 1 pp. 223–4 for discussion regarding whether Eusebius interpolated this phrase.
[36] See Appendix 1 pp. 225–7 for discussion regarding whether Eusebius interpolated this phrase.
[37] Luke 5:26. For discussion, see pp. 18–9, 73–6, 226.

does not come across as anything like a Christian would interpolate to characterize the doings of Jesus, and rather sounds much more like what an early Jewish writer would use, a writer exactly like Josephus.[38]

And, as I said, one would expect there to be on average at least a few unique phrases in any ninety-word sampling of Josephus' corpus, so having three unique phrases in the TF is what should be anticipated if the TF were authentic and should cause no suspicion. The genuineness of these three phrases is further fortified by the fact that they all have smaller phrases embedded within them that are used by Josephus elsewhere.

Conclusion

With the above evidence in view, it is clear that the stylistic parallels between the TF and Josephus' corpus all point in the one direction of authenticity. And this is true for parallels on the smaller, more granular lexical level, and for parallels on the larger phraseological level. To sum up, most of the TF's lexemes are used frequently in Josephus and a very small subset are rarely used with one lexeme not being used by Josephus anywhere else. The same can be said for the larger phrases of the TF, most of which are used frequently and a small minority of which have no precise parallels. But these kinds of frequency patterns match the expected usage rate for any authentic passage in Josephus' work insofar as they follow his frequency rate of utilizing certain lexemes and phrases quite a bit, and a few not all that much.

Placement and Length

Similar conclusions can be drawn from how the TF is placed within the narrative of the *Antiquities* and how its length compares to the five stories adjacent to it. First, its placement. In the *Antiquities*, the TF is situated amid five different stories of uproar, all of which tell of murder, intrigue, blasphemy, and other wrongdoing.[39] Given the context, it is unlikely that a Christian scribe would have risked associating Jesus with such themes by inserting the TF amid a litany of evildoers and disturbances, as the author of the TF pointedly does. This is especially true given that the TF can easily be read as Jesus 'bringing over' or possibly 'inducing' (ἐπηγάγετο) many Jews and Greeks in the mold of a false Messiah leading an insurrectionist uprising, who was then executed at the accusation of Jewish religious leaders.

[38] For discussions on the authenticity of the phrase παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής see pp. 73–6, 225–7.
[39] For references, see p. 66 n.16.

What is particularly intriguing about this is that whoever chose the placement of the TF seems to have followed the Jewish practice of connecting Jesus with arousing trouble among Jews, or at least it can easily be interpreted that way. This is how the 'Jew of Celsus' (*c.*150 CE) characterizes Jesus when he accuses him of deluding Jews;[40] and the Babylonian Talmud concurs when it describes Jesus as 'inciting and leading Israel astray' (והסית והדיח את ישראל).[41] So too do traditions found in the Jewish *Toledot Yeshu* (second–fifth centuries),[42] which also portray Jesus as an insurrectionist who stirred up great trouble in Israel.[43] Accordingly, the thematic placement of the TF amid accounts of various uproars not only suggests Jewish authorship, but can leave the reader of the *Antiquities* with an ambiguous, if not vaguely negative impression of Jesus 'bringing over' many Jews and Greeks and then being crucified.

Another pertinent aspect of the TF's placement in the *Antiquities* is that it is located *before* the account of John the Baptist not afterward.[44] Such implies that the author of the TF considered Jesus to have preached *before* John, or at least that the author did not consider it important to portray John as a forerunner to Jesus. This is in great contrast to practically all Christian tradition which casts John as beginning his ministry before Jesus, and dying before Jesus as well.[45] This is not just a chronological claim, but a theological one inasmuch as John is consistently portrayed as fulfilling biblical prophecy by preparing the way for the Christ to come.[46] In fact, the only possible exception to this collective testimony can be found in an ancient Jewish-Christian account of Jesus known as the *Gospel of the Ebionites*. Quotations that remain of this Gospel can be read as also portraying Jesus' ministry as beginning before John's ministry,[47] just as the TF does with its presentation of Jesus before its presentation of John.

[40] Origen, *Against Celsus* 2.1, 4. See also 1.62, 68.

[41] Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin*, 43a.20; see also 107b.14. For discussion, see Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud*, 63–74.

[42] Though the extant versions of the *Toledot Yeshu* were likely collected in full form in the ninth or tenth centuries, the composition of the stories seems to have taken place, based on linguistic analysis, around the year 500. However, several of the traditions which are spoken of in the *Toledot Yeshu* are agreed to date back to the second century or earlier on account of the fact that certain of their details match information given by the second- and third-century sources 'the Jew of Celsus', Tertullian, and the *Gospel of Judas*; see Sokoloff, 'Date and Provenance'; Piovanelli, 'The Toledot Yeshu', 95–7; Deutsch, 'The Second Life', 285–6.

[43] For example, *Toledot Yeshu* Group 1: Early Yemenite §65 (Meerson and Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 1 p. 148).

[44] Jesus is discussed by Josephus in *Antiquities* 18.63–4; John the Baptist is discussed in *Antiquities* 18.116–19.

[45] Matthew 3:1–17, 4:12–17, 14:1–13; Mark 1:1–14, 6:14–30; Luke 3:1–22, 4:14–15, 9:9; John 1:15, 30, 3:28; Acts 1:5, 22, 10:37, 11:16; 13:24–5.

[46] Matthew 3:1–3; Mark 1:2–4; Luke 3:1–4.

[47] When describing the *Gospel of the Ebionites* Epiphanius first presents an extract introducing Jesus in *Panarion* 30.13.4 (= TLG 2021.002, 1.350 line 2) and then later says that in their Gospel, the Ebionites 'alter the written sequence' (ἀκολουθίαν ἤλλαξαν τὸ ῥητόν), *Panarion* 30.22.4 = TLG 2021.002, 1.363 line 8. However, Epiphanius also quotes a passage from the 'beginning' of the Gospel which describes John the Baptist, so one cannot be too sure that Jesus was introduced before John; see Epiphanius,

A further point of contact between the TF and the *Gospel of Ebionites* is that, according to Epiphanius, the Gospel introduces Jesus with the Greek words γίνομαι and τις: 'And there was a certain man by the name of Jesus' (ἐγένετό τις ἀνὴρ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦς).[48] This is very like the TF, which also introduces Jesus with γίνομαι and τις when it says 'there was in that time a certain Jesus' (Γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον Ἰησοῦς τις). The above parallels with the *Gospel of Ebionites* would not be expected from the vast majority of Jesus followers in the first few centuries of the Christian era and hence would not be expected of a Christian interpolator,[49] though it is unsurprising that the Jewish Josephus would have relied on Jewish traditions shared with the Jewish-Christian Ebionites.

There really are only two objections to the authenticity of the TF as regards its placement and its length. First is that the TF is far shorter than the other five stories of uproar within which the TF is embedded in *Antiquities* 18.55–87. Hence to account for its relative brevity, the skeptically minded reader could argue that material appears to be missing from the TF. Yet, when comparing the lengths of the five stories adjacent to the TF, it is clear that they are not all uniform in total word count. The first story (*Antiquities* 18.55–9) is 195 words, the second (*Antiquities* 18.60–2) is 137 words, the third (*Antiquities* 18.65–80) is 680 words, the fourth (*Antiquities* 18.81–4) is 142 words, and the fifth (*Antiquities* 18.85–7) is 123 words. Though the TF being 90 words makes it slightly shorter in proportion to all the rest, the story directly adjacent to the TF is out of proportion to a far greater degree being more than three to five times longer than any other story. So the fact that the TF is slightly shorter than average does not mark it as suspicious. Considered in this light, the length of the TF provides no grounds for suspicion.

Another objection to authenticity pertains to the TF's placement and comes from certain scholars who claim that it wrecks the coherence of the five stories of discord and uproar presented before and after the TF in *Antiquities* 18.55–87. Therefore, the logic goes, the TF must be a later interpolation. But the primary reason given for this purported dislocation is that the TF does not explicitly

Panarion 30.13.6, 30.14.3 (= TLG 2021.002, 1.350 line 8, 1.351 lines 12–14). Assembling in their proper order Epiphanius' quotations of the *Gospel of the Ebionites* is difficult, but no matter the choice, the *Gospel of the Ebionites* appears to present events in a different sequence than the canonical Gospels. Either Jesus appears to be introduced before John the Baptist, or Jesus appears to be introduced twice, or Jesus appears to have a full complement of twelve disciples before ever being baptized by John the Baptist, thus implying that he was ministering before or at least concurrently with John the Baptist. Faced with such a tradition, it is understandable why a non-Christian like Josephus would introduce Jesus before introducing John the Baptist. For one way of ordering the fragments of the *Gospel of the Ebionites* (where Jesus appears to be introduced after already being introduced), see Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. 1 pp. 169–70.

[48] Epiphanius, *Panarion* 30.13.2 (= TLG 2021.002, 1.349 line 4).
[49] On this, see also Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 66.

include the word 'disturbance' (θόρυβος) in its description of Jesus.[50] Yet, as explained in Chapter 3, not all of the five stories surrounding the TF explicitly mention the word 'disturbance' (θόρυβος), even though they all describe one. So why should it be a problem for the TF to omit an explicit mention of a 'disturbance' (θόρυβος) even while it describes one?[51]

More crucially, the TF does indeed cohere quite well with its immediate context. As already noted, it matches the surrounding five stories of unrest inasmuch as it tells of many Jews and Greeks being led by a man who would be crucified at the behest of Jewish and Roman authorities.[52] Moreover, three of the other stories adjacent to the TF have nothing whatever to do with Judaea, two have nothing to do with Pontius Pilate, and one has nothing to do with Jews, meaning that the TF makes much better contextual sense being placed where it is than some of the other five stories. Not only this, the TF is sandwiched between two stories that are striking for how they relate to Jewish accusations regarding Jesus. The story which directly precedes the TF involves Pontius Pilate constructing an aqueduct (καταγωγὴν ὑδάτων) in Jerusalem (*War* 2.175; *Antiquities* 18.60–2), and versions of the Jewish *Toledot Yeshu* notably state that Jesus was buried near an aqueduct (*aquaeductum*), causing his body to wash away and his disciples to claim that he was resurrected.[53] This belief that Jesus' body somehow came to rest in a watery

[50] Norden for example argues that the entire TF is an interpolation because it lacks any vocabulary referring to a 'disturbance'; see Norden, 'Josephus und Tacitus', 640–50. Mason argues similarly, though is not as extreme; see Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 226–7. Mason makes the further argument that the TF does not even describe something that could be construed as a disturbance and that immediately after the TF in *Antiquities* 18.65, Josephus says 'a certain other calamity' (ἕτερόν τι δεινόν), suggesting that he had just spoken of a calamity in the TF, which Mason claims he did not. But of course, as I said, one does not need an equivalent word for 'disturbance' or 'calamity' to understand the TF as implying that the crucifixion of Jesus (or his leading of many Jews and Greeks) was a disturbance. In support of this, the story at *Antiquities* 18.85 likewise begins 'The Samaritan nation also did not escape a disturbance' (Οὐκ ἀπήλλακτο δὲ θορύβου καὶ τὸ Σαμαρέων ἔθνος), even though the previous story did not include the word θόρυβος within it, and rather only contained it out of sequence in *Antiquities* 18.65. If this story can be governed by a reference to a kind of disturbance or calamity out of sequence, then why not the TF? See further discussion in Chapter 3 nn. 16 and 24.

[51] All this besides, Josephus has long been known for being an inveterate patchwork writer, stringing together stories with little relation to one another. In fact, the portion of the *Antiquities* that precedes the TF (*Antiquities* 18.55–62) is a revamped and expanded version of what Josephus had written twenty years earlier in his *War* 2.169–77, so we know that in this particular passage Josephus was actually inserting things into a narrative well after it had first been written. We should not therefore be surprised if the organization of the passage suggests as much. And, in any case, the story immediately following the TF in *Antiquities* 18.65–80 has nothing to do with Judaism or Judaea or political intrigue, making the TF far more coherently placed in comparison. Due to many such examples in Josephus' corpus, Feldman calls Josephus 'unbelievably sloppy' and other scholars note Josephus' organizational mishmash; see Feldman, 'Flavius Josephus Revisited', 862; Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 86 n. 54; Thackeray, *Josephus*, 140–1; Paget, 'Some Observations', 578–81; Eisler, *The Messiah Jesus*, 44. Given this, one should not place too much on alleged thematic differences between the TF and nearby passages. For discussion on Josephus' silence of Jesus in his *War*, see Appendix 6.

[52] Fittingly, after relating the TF, Josephus immediately says in *Antiquities* 18.65 that 'a certain other calamity' (ἕτερόν τι δεινόν) occurred, implying that he found at least some aspect of the TF to be quite terrible.

[53] This story is reported by the ninth-century Bishop Agobard in *De Judaicis superstitionibus* (PL vol. 104 col. 87D). Schäfer gives a translation of Agobard's account and finds the account to be an accurate

place is also testified by the third-century writer, Commodian, who quotes Jews as saying that they had cast Jesus' body into a 'well' (*puteus*).[54]

Perhaps even more notable than this though is that directly after the TF (in *Antiquities* 18.65–80), Josephus relates a salacious story of a man, smitten by a woman's beauty, pretending to be a god in order to commit adultery with her for one night. This is much like the hostile account of Jesus in the *Toledot Yeshu*, which portrays a man, smitten by Mary's beauty, pretending to be Joseph in order to commit adultery with her for one night.[55] Similar derogatory views of Jesus' parentage are presented by the 'Jew of Celsus', who claims that Jesus' mother conceived Jesus through adultery, causing Jesus to pretend that God was his father.[56] The Jewish critic then mocks Mary by wondering how beautiful she must have been to attract the attentions of God himself.[57] The Babylonian Talmud also ridicules Mary and her birth of Jesus on similar grounds.[58]

Undoubtedly the above stories were put forth by early Jews to rebut the claims that Jesus was born of a virgin, was the Son of God, and was resurrected. It is hard to imagine what Christian, of whatever persuasion, would have wanted to risk associating Jesus with similar criticism by placing the TF between stories with such themes. Rather, the TF's placement seems far likelier to come from a writer aware of Jewish criticisms of Jesus, someone very like Josephus himself.

It would be however a misunderstanding to say that the TF's location necessarily communicates any such derogatory beliefs about Jesus. Instead, its position suggests a placement by a non-Christian who, knowing Jewish accounts of Jesus,

portrayal of the *Toledot Yeshu* traditions; see Schäfer, 'Agobard's and Amulo's Toledot Yeshu', 32–4, 48. For discussion of the story within the *Toledot Yeshu* traditions, see Meerson and Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 1 pp. 101–3. Importantly, only the vaguer term 'stream' (τοῦ ῥεύματος) is used in the *Antiquities* 18.60 and the more specific term 'aqueduct' (καταγωγὴν ὑδάτων) is deployed in the parallel passage in *War* 2.175. As such, it may be that the author of the *Toledot Yeshu* was not relying on the *Antiquities* for his account, but instead was drawing from different, also ancient tradition.

[54] Commodian, *Song of the Two Peoples* lines 440–3, 477 (ed. Martin pp. 89–90). I thank Charles Augustine Rivera for pointing this out to me.

[55] All three groupings of the versions of *Toledot Yeshu* contain claims (though some do not contain all the claims) regarding how a man, lusting after Mary's beauty, deceived her into thinking he was her husband or her betrothed; see Meerson and Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 1 pp. 155–6, 167–8, 185–6, 233–4, 273–4, 286–8, 305–6. For a similar observation, see Bell, 'Josephus the Satirist', 16–22. Bell goes on to argue that Pseudo-Hegesippus, when recounting this salacious story from Josephus, is aware of details similar to the birth story of Jesus, but not found in any known version of the TF (*On the Ruin of the City of Jerusalem* 2.4.1). This suggests to Bell that the TF's original form was markedly anti-Christian. However, these supposed details are no more salacious than those already present in the Greek version of the story and it is too speculative to think they must be derived from some other version of the TF.

[56] Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.28, 32.

[57] Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.39.

[58] The Talmud criticizes Mary for her long perhaps braided hair, which was a marker of licentiousness. See Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat* 104b.5 and discussion (as well as related passages in Jewish literature) in Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud*, 15–24.

felt that it made good sense to discuss Jesus somewhere amid stories of uproar, and somewhere before John the Baptist, and somewhere directly adjacent to stories of an aqueduct and a pretend god seducing a beautiful woman. Josephus is obviously the most likely candidate. But whether he actually believed the implication of such things in regard to Jesus is of course not clear. He, for example, may have been aware that Jerusalem's two major aqueducts entered the old city of Jerusalem in the south or west, whereas Jesus was likely buried north of the old city.[59] Josephus might also have not revealed his opinion of Jesus within the TF because he himself was unsure of what he thought, or perhaps his view (whether negative or positive) differed from his readers, or any number of similar such possibilities.[60]

Textual Preservation

All that to say, there is really only one phrase in the Greek TF that sounds like something only a Christian would have said and therefore not what Josephus would have written. In what follows I discuss the textual preservation of this phrase as well as two other phrases that have debatable textual evidence.

ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν
'He was the Christ'

The most suspicious phrase in the Greek TF is, far and away, the statement that reads 'he was the Christ' (ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν). Judging from grammatical and lexical parallels in Josephus, examined in Chapter 3, this phrase appears to affirm

[59] The earliest direct reference to the location of Jesus' burial is by Eusebius, who says it was north of Mount Zion, in *Onomasticon* 365. The two most likely specific locations for Jesus' tomb—the current Church of the Holy Sepulcher and the Garden tomb (or Gordon's Calvary)—are also north of Mount Zion. For maps of Jerusalem's aqueducts and discussions on possible locations of Jesus' tomb, see Stern, *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, vol. 2 pp. 714, 718, 746–7, 769; Barkay, 'The Garden Tomb: Was Jesus Buried Here?'; Kelley, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre*; Coüasnon, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem*, 8–11; Yechezkel et al., 'The Shaft Tunnel of the Biar Aqueduct of Jerusalem', 921–2; Mazar, 'A Survey of the Aqueducts to Jerusalem'. The specific aqueduct Pontius Pilate built is unclear, but the potential candidates likely entered Jerusalem to the south, or did not even reach Jerusalem. The Upper Level Aqueduct comes closest to the possible locations of Jesus' burial, but it is still some distance away from the possible locations of the tomb and most scholars believe it was not yet built in the time of Jesus. On these aqueducts, see Yechezkel et al., 'The Shaft Tunnel of the Biar Aqueduct of Jerusalem', 918, 921–2; Mazar, 'A Survey of the Aqueducts to Jerusalem', 237–8. Some scholars suggest that the author of the *Toledot Yeshu* was inspired centuries later to craft the story of Jesus' burial near an aqueduct after the author had viewed an aqueduct in Jerusalem that ran through graves; see Meerson and Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, 101–3.

[60] See Conclusion pp. 203, 207.

that Jesus was actually the Messiah.[61] But this one suspicious phrase in the Greek textual tradition also happens to be the one phrase where the Latin and Syriac translations are united in presenting a different, much more Josephan reading: 'he was believed to be the Christ' (*credebatur esse Christus*) or 'it was thought that he was the Christ' (ܗܘܐ ,ܡܫܒܚܢ ܗܘܬܐ ܗܝ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ). The Syriac phrase can also technically be translated as 'it was proclaimed that he was the Christ', though this is not the way the Syriac would typically be read in other contexts.[62]

As discussed in Chapter 2, these two translations were respectively carried out by the illustrious translators Jerome of Stridon (*c.*393 CE) and, in all probability, Jacob of Edessa (*c.*708 CE). Arabic and Armenian witnesses provide further support for these translations and Pseudo-Hegesippus (*c.*370 CE) does too in his Latin paraphrase of the TF.[63] Strikingly, the translations of Jerome and Jacob also closely conform to how Josephus presents Jesus elsewhere when he says that he was 'called Christ' (τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ).[64] Most intriguing is that the key Syriac word *mestabrā* can also be translated as 'proclaimed', making it a relatively close synonym to the Greek word λεγόμενος, which can be translated as 'called' or 'declared'. Regardless of what the original Greek wording was though, the fact that the Latin and Syriac unite at this point indicates that the original stated that Jesus was only considered to be the Christ, not that he actually was the Christ.

Still, this change to the Greek textual tradition need not necessarily have been a purposive Christianization of the passage, for as I show in Chapter 1, most ancient and medieval Greek writers seem to have read the altered phrase as simply giving Jesus an alternative name, 'Christ', and hence did not take it as a confession of his messianic status. This is much like how Greco-Roman writers would use the term 'Christ' as another name for Jesus, not as a religious title. It would therefore be odd for a Christian scribe to purposefully change a text which so many other Christians continued to read along the same lines as the original.

A further reason for considering this change to be accidental is that the phrase 'he was the Christ' would be awkward for a Christian to state since it is presented in the past tense, whereas Christians ancient, medieval, and modern instead confess that Jesus 'is' the Christ with the present tense.[65] As such, it seems plausible that if certain Christians purposefully altered the phrase, they also would have altered the tense of the verb too.

Whatever the case though, the most probable scenario is that Josephus wrote a phrase affirming that Jesus was only considered to be the Christ, and that a word or two was later dropped out, whether by accident or purpose.

[61] For references, see pp. 84–5.
[62] See Chapter 3 pp. 86–7.
[63] For references, see pp. 35–8, 48–52, 86 n. 185.
[64] *Antiquities* 20.200.
[65] See Chapter 3 pp. 90–1.

᾽Ιησοῦς τις
'a certain Jesus'

Beyond this there is one other aspect of the Greek TF that may have suffered a substantive change to its original meaning and one other aspect that may have suffered an innocuous change. The substantive change regards the phrase 'a certain Jesus' (᾽Ιησοῦς τις). All Greek manuscripts of the *Antiquities* studied by scholars omit 'a certain' (τις),[66] but the word is preserved in the earliest quotation of the TF found in the original Greek of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, as well as in the Syriac and Armenian translations of the *Ecclesiastical History*. The word is also witnessed in the TF's Slavonic recension and the Syriac translation of Jacob of Edessa. The term would have struck many readers as communicating derogatory intent, and so omitting the phrase would have made the passage sound more positive in regard to Jesus. Yet, τις need not be interpreted negatively, for Josephus uses it in a neutral way too. Nevertheless, even if the word was purposefully omitted by a later Christian scribe, it was not scrubbed out altogether.[67]

εἰς [ἔτι] τε νῦν
'until now'

There is also a question of the precise Greek wording of the TF's phrase εἰς [ἔτι] τε νῦν 'until now', but this is not a substantive change since all the textual witnesses provide effectively synonymous phrases. Evidence however clearly favors the original reading of εἰς τε νῦν since the two earliest manuscripts of the *Antiquities* contain this phrase and important Greek quotations do so as well. No matter what the authentic reading was though, the basic meaning of the phrase as 'until now' is assured since, as I said above, all textual witnesses (manuscripts, quotations, and translations) agree on the general sense of the phrase even if they present slightly different variations of it.[68]

Other Textual Changes?

It appears then that the TF's original form has been preserved in its entirety within its broad textual tradition, though only Jerome and Jacob of Edessa preserve

[66] For a complete listing of manuscripts of the *Antiquities* books 11–20; see Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*, 13–47.

[67] For further discussion of the phrase ᾽Ιησοῦς τις, see pp. 67–9.

[68] For further discussion of the phrase εἰς [ἔτι] τε νῦν, see pp. 103–4, 126–7, 223–4. One may ask why it is appropriate to include τις in the TF, but to exclude ἔτι, when Eusebius is the primary witness for including both. But there are additional witnesses for τις in the Slavonic translation and the Syriac

that Jesus was 'believed to be' or otherwise 'thought' to be the Christ; and only Eusebius, Jacob, and the Slavonic recension preserve the word 'certain'. But be that as it may, are there any textual changes to the TF of which we are unaware? Could there have been other statements in the TF that were omitted or added by later Christian scribes?

This is very unlikely. If Christian scribes were in the habit of doctoring the TF, why would the TF be so thoroughly Josephan in style? Why would it reflect early Jewish beliefs about Jesus? Why would the TF have so many statements that do not draw from Christian modes of expression or that seem to contradict Christian belief? Why, if Christian scribes were in the business of making alterations to the TF, would they leave so many potentially disparaging statements behind?[69] And how would such tampering have so quickly contaminated so many lines of textual evidence, including Greek manuscripts, early Greek quotations, and early Latin and Syriac translations?

The most plausible conclusion is that there was no concerted effort by scribes to tamper with the TF and that the only two potentially substantive changes to manuscripts of the *Antiquities* have been identified.

Possible Translations

Yet it must be emphasized that even these two potentially substantive changes need not be read as necessarily altering the meaning of the TF, just as none of the TF's potentially negative statements inherently call for a negative interpretation. For as I have maintained, the TF's statements are on the whole ambiguous and can be interpreted in a variety of ways by the reader. Thus, when taken in the full context of Josephus' work, statements that could be interpreted negatively will also often be used elsewhere by Josephus in a purely neutral context, and those statements that might be positive, are also deployed by Josephus in a neutral or negative context.

Thus, saying that Jesus performed παράδοξα could be interpreted negatively as 'magical deeds' or neutrally as 'incredible deeds', but also positively as 'miraculous deeds'. Asserting that Jesus 'misled' or 'induced' (ἐπηγάγετο) many people might also be reasonably translated as the more ambiguous 'brought over' or even the neutral 'led'. Likewise, characterizing Jesus' disciples as receiving 'truths with

translation by Jacob of Edessa, both of which had independent access to the *Antiquities*. In contrast, ἔτι does not have any other witnesses that can be shown to have consulted manuscripts of the *Antiquities* directly. Further, from a text critical perspective there is ample evidence that τις was omitted by scribes since it can be shown to have been transcribed by Eusebius, but then omitted by many later scribes of his work. Hence it seems much more likely to have been omitted in the manuscripts of the *Antiquities* by scribes. However, with ἔτι no similar evidence shows scribes tending to omit it.

[69] For discussion on what Josephus meant by the TF, see the Conclusion pp. 201–3.

pleasure' (τῶν ἡδονῇ) could be taken negatively as pertaining to an uncontrolled appetite for lesser 'truisms', yet it could also be understood positively as referring to an avid pursuit of certain ideals or hard and fast facts. Finally, labeling Jesus as a 'certain Jesus' (Ἰησοῦς τις) could obviously be derogatory, but Josephus will use the same term for biblical figures whom he respects, so it need not necessarily be taken as a sign of contempt. Such ways of understanding the TF may be seen in Chapters 1 and 2 with how various Greek, Latin, Syriac, and Arabic writers interpreted the TF—though it is telling that most Greek writers seem to have preferred a neutral, ambiguous, or slightly negative interpretation of the TF.

Negative, Neutral, and Positive Translations

To illustrate the ambiguity of the TF I give on the next page three possible ways of translating it.[70] All three follow what I regard to be the original text of the TF and therefore include the Greek word τις ('certain') and omit the word ἔτι (which could be translated as 'still' or left untranslated). The only textual difference between the three is that the 'negative' translation includes the slightly skeptical Syriac words 'thought to be' (*mestabrā itaw*) whereas the 'neutral' translation includes the Latin 'believed to be' (*credebatur esse*). Both of these reconstructions are discussed in detail in Chapter 3. The 'positive' translation omits any Latin or Syriac evidence. Different translational decisions are indicated in bold font.

The TF's rather ambiguous Greek is not possible to perfectly render into English, and obviously many of my translational choices could be swapped back and forth into different combinations, or otherwise nuanced. One must not forget that it is less likely but still technically possible to translate the Syriac *mestabrā* as 'proclaimed', a translation that loosely follows the Greek word 'called' (λεγόμενος) which Josephus uses elsewhere for Jesus in *Antiquities* 20.200. This then would be another viable way to understand the TF.

Another important item to consider is that with the positive translation the phrase 'he was Christ' can, in the original Greek, be more easily interpreted as an alternative name and not a title, which is how several Greek authors seem to have understood it. For our purposes here though, these three interpretations are enough to demonstrate the ways in which the TF could have been plausibly interpreted by ancient and medieval readers.

[70] Parallel translations are also provided by Vicent, though with significant differences in interpretation compared to my own; see Cernuda, 'El testimonio flaviano', 507. Nodet similarly provides parallel translations; see Nodet, *Baptême et résurrrection*, 66; Nodet, 'Jésus et Jean-Baptiste selon Josèphe [pt. 1]', 332.

Negative	Neutral	Positive
And in this time, there was **a certain Jesus,** a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man, for he was a doer of **magical** deeds, a teacher of men who **take pleasure in truisms**.	And in this time, there was **a certain Jesus,** a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man, for he was a doer of **incredible** deeds, a teacher of men who **receive truisms with pleasure**.	And in this time, there was **Jesus, a certain wise man,** if indeed it one ought to call him a man, for he was a doer of **miraculous** deeds, a teacher of men who **receive truths with pleasure**.
And he **led astray** many from among the Jews and many from among the Greeks. He **was thought to be the Christ**.	And he **brought over** many from among the Jews and many from among the Greeks. He **was believed to be the Christ**.	And he **led** many from among the Jews and many from among the Greeks. He **was the Christ**.
And, when Pilate had condemned him to the cross at the accusation of the first men among us, those who at first **were devoted to** him did not cease to **be** so, for on the third day **it seemed to them that he was alive** again given that the divine prophets had spoken such things and thousands of other wonderful things about him. And up till now the tribe of the Christians, who were named from him, has not disappeared.	And, when Pilate had condemned him to the cross at the accusation of the first men among us, those who at first **were devoted to** him did not cease to **be** so, for on the third day **he appeared to them to be alive** again given that the divine prophets had spoken such things and thousands of other wonderful things about him. And up till now the tribe of the Christians, who were named from him, has not disappeared.	And, when Pilate had condemned him to the cross at the accusation of the first men among us, those who at first **loved** him did not cease to **do** so, for on the third day **he appeared to them alive** again given that the divine prophets had spoken such things and thousands of other wonderful things about him. And up till now the tribe of the Christians, who were named from him, has not disappeared.

Conclusion

But aside from how the TF could viably have been understood, what did Josephus actually intend to communicate concerning Jesus? Was he purposefully ambiguous? Or did he have in mind a neutral, negative, or positive perspective? For that matter, where did Josephus get his information about Jesus? And what can Josephus tell us about the Jesus of history? It is on these questions that the following chapters turn.

PART 2

THE SOURCES OF JOSEPHUS AND THE MEANING OF THE *TESTIMONIUM FLAVIANUM*

5

Josephus' Sources

Clues in His Background

Given that the *Testimonium Flavianum* appears to be authentically Josephan, questions naturally arise regarding Josephus' sources of information about Jesus. Did Josephus simply recast a Christian source to make it more neutral or ambiguous? Or did he draw from a non-Christian source, perhaps one that had independent knowledge of Jesus? It has been supposed by some that Josephus obtained his information about Jesus from the Gospel of Luke,[1] but this does not square with the evidence. If Josephus had done so, one would think that there would be at least some explicit phraseology shared between the TF and Luke, and yet there is none.[2] In fact, it is one of the remarkable aspects of the TF that it so frequently employs language *not* used by early Christians, such as the terms 'having the third day', or that Jesus worked 'incredible' or 'magical deeds', or that he taught men who receive 'truisms' with 'pleasure', or that Christians were a 'tribe'.[3]

[1] Goldberg is most prominent in this regard, yet even he does not think that Josephus necessarily used Luke, only a source like Luke which Josephus then rewrote; see Goldberg, 'Josephus' Paraphrase Style', 6; Goldberg, 'Coincidences', 76. Goldberg does show that the TF parallels the Emmaus account in Luke in terms of its general structure and perhaps in some vocabulary items, but Goldberg is too critical of the idea that these arose from coincidence. If a person were to independently summarize the general contours of Jesus' life, it would be unsurprising if that person would happen to follow one of the New Testament summaries of Jesus' ministry in terms of its general sequence while sharing a sprinkling of similar words (for such New Testament summaries see Acts 2:22–32, 3:13–15, 5:30–2, 10:36–43, 13:23–31). Further, in n. 2 below I show that when Josephus does borrow from written sources, he sometimes copies whole phrases, which Josephus does not do with Luke. Still, if one were to insist that the points of contact between Josephus and Luke are too great to be coincidental, it ought to be remembered that Josephus and Luke did share similar sources in view of evidence that Luke was present at the trial of Paul before Herod Agrippa II and that Josephus knew Agrippa II and his sister Berenice, who were both at the same trial (see discussion in Chapter 6). Luke also was familiar with James, the brother of Jesus (Acts 21:18), and Josephus was familiar with James' enemy, Ananus II, who put James to death (*Antiquities* 20.200). Ananus II was also likely at the trial of Jesus himself and Luke may have known others at the trial too (on these matters see Chapter 6). Hence, one need not speak of a shared written source between Luke and Josephus; instead, if their accounts of Jesus really do overlap, such points of contact are readily explainable due to the fact that they seem to have been connected with the same individuals—both allies and enemies of Jesus—who were close to the events at hand. Other scholars have unpersuasively argued that rather than Josephus using Luke, Luke used Josephus, but this is unlikely on chronological grounds; see Appendix 2 n. 99.

[2] Cohen for instance says that when recasting a written source Josephus will repeat occasional phrases; Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, 232. This is evident when examining Josephus' use of the *Letter of Aristeas*, where he copies exact phrases; see for example *Letter of Aristeas* 10 [183–4] and *Antiquities* 12.96–7. For further discussion see Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, 34–47. This borrowing is far more direct and explicit than the words and concepts shared between Luke and Josephus, which are pointed out by Goldberg; see above.

[3] See Chapter 3 and, for a list of these points, see Conclusion p. 198.

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But what is more significant than all this is that the TF actually contrasts with—or even contradicts—Luke and other early Christian sources by its statement that Jesus had many Greek followers, by its emphasis on the responsibility of Pilate in Jesus' execution, and by its apparent claim that Jesus' disciples remained faithful to him at his death.[4] The placement of the TF within the *Antiquities* also contradicts Luke and other Christian tradition insofar as it discusses Jesus' ministry *before* it discusses that of John the Baptist, implying that Jesus ministered before John. But no early Christian group seems to have believed such a thing except possibly one small Christian sect, and they seem to have derived the notion from Jewish tradition.[5] Likewise, the TF's placement in the *Antiquities* further hints at Jewish traditions about Jesus' birth and burial, none of which are alluded to in early Christian writings.[6] It would be highly unlikely that these things would be true of the TF had Josephus been relying upon Luke or any other Christian source. Rather, the above evidence suggests that the source or sources Josephus was using were Jewish, not Christian. And this fits well with the profile of Josephus who, after all, was a Jewish historian, who was raised in a Jewish society, and who was writing about Jesus, a Jewish man.

Josephus' Background

But what or who were Josephus' Jewish sources? In answering this question, it must not be forgotten that Josephus would have been afforded many opportunities for learning of Jesus from Jews who had encountered him directly, or at least who were well apprised of his activities.

Josephus' Youth

Josephus was born in 37/8 CE in Jerusalem[7] and was also raised in Jerusalem.[8] His family was aristocratic[9]—his father of high priestly pedigree and royal lineage,[10] and his mother also of royal descent;[11] the one was in his mid-20s when Jesus died

[4] Luke 24:11, 25 highlight the unwillingness for the disciples to believe that Jesus had actually been raised from the dead. For further discussion, see Conclusion.

[5] See Chapters 3 and 4 pp. 129–30.

[6] See Chapter 4 pp. 130–3.

[7] *Life* 5, 7, 198, 205. Though these passages do not technically mandate that Josephus was actually born in Jerusalem, they certainly imply as much since Josephus' father appears to have been from Jerusalem and Josephus claims to have been as well. See also further discussion immediately below.

[8] *Life* 12. In this passage Josephus returns to Jerusalem at age 19 after an absence of three years. In 69 CE his father was still living in Jerusalem (*Life* 202–4; *War* 5.533) and his mother, wife, and children were still there too (*War* 5.419). Josephus also considered Jerusalem to be his 'home' (πατρίς); see *Life* 205. For discussion, see Mason, *Life of Josephus*, 103 n. 912.

[9] Josephus recounts that his family was greatly distinguished by being members of the first of twenty-four courses of priests, and by being of the chief family of that course; see *Life* 2.

[10] *Life* 1–8. See also *War* 1.3.

[11] *Life* 2.

and the other probably in her teens if not early 20s.[12] Josephus' father, being of eminent priestly stock, would have been present in Jerusalem on the Passover of 30/33 CE when Jesus was publicly put on trial and then publicly crucified,[13] and his mother likely was too, for it would have been expected of all devout Jews to be in attendance and both seem to have been residents of Jerusalem anyway.[14] Josephus stayed in touch with his mother and father for more than thirty years and would have learned much from them.[15]

Yet Josephus had more than just his parents to hear tell of Jesus. By age 14 he was already known for being well read in religious matters and for having an excellent memory[16]—likely self-aggrandizement on the part of Josephus, but someone who goes on to publish almost half a million words in a language not his own can be trusted to have been a precociously gifted teenager. At that same age, around 51/2 CE, he informs us that he was already familiar with the 'chief priests and first men of the city' of Jerusalem (τῶν ἀρχιερέων καὶ τῶν τῆς πόλεως πρώτων), with whom he was 'continually' (ἀεί) meeting.[17] This surely means that his father knew them too or was even one himself, as would be expected for Josephus' father, a man of an esteemed priestly family claiming descent from high priests and kings, however far removed.

Josephus confirms elsewhere that his father was indeed a trusted confidant of at least one High Priest.[18] And Josephus would go on to be personally acquainted with two and probably more High Priests.[19] It is important to note that many of the 'chief priests and first men' whom Josephus knew as a teenager[20] would have been

[12] Josephus' father was born in 6 CE; see *Life* 5. Josephus' mother may have been younger than his father, but she could not have been much younger because she did have at least one child before Josephus (*Life* 8) and in *Life* 9 Josephus considered a 14-year-old to still be a 'child' (ἀντίπαις), hence, his mother was likely not married before 15 or 16 years of age and therefore she likely would not have had Josephus (who was not her first child), before 19 or 20 years of age. Probably she was therefore born sometime between 6 CE and 17 CE. On Josephus' brother being older than him, see Mason, *Life of Josephus*, 12 n. 53.

[13] Numbers 8:24 appears to indicate that priests begin their service at age 25, around the age of Josephus' father when Jesus was crucified. However, 1 Chronicles 23:27 suggests that this may have later been lowered to age 20. When priests began their service in the first century CE is unknown. For information on first-century priestly practice, see Sanders, *Judaism*, 77–92.

[14] On the biblical requirement for Jews to be present in Jerusalem on Passover, see pp. 190–1.

[15] Around 68 CE Josephus received a letter from his father begging to see him (*Life* 204–5). Josephus speaks of being quite worried about his mother's safety around 69 CE (*War* 5.419) and that at the same time his father was in prison (*War* 5.533). Josephus may have rescued both after Jerusalem's fall (*Life* 418).

[16] *Life* 8–9.

[17] *Life* 9.

[18] *Life* 193, 202.

[19] Josephus would go on to know the High Priest Ananus II and the High Priest Joshua son of Gamala, and he may well have also known the High Priests Ishmael, Joseph, and Jonathan the son of Ananus I, see pp. 177–90. Josephus further implies in *Life* 194 that he was acquainted with 'many chief priests and rulers of the people' (πολλοὺς γὰρ τῶν ἀρχιερέων καὶ τοῦ πλήθους προεστῶτας). Throughout his works, Josephus uses the term ἀρχιερεύς in reference to both the 'High Priest' (indicating the highest-ranked priest) and 'chief priests' (indicating the class of higher-ranking priests). However, his context almost always makes it clear to which category he intends. In this book, I further disambiguate ἀρχιερεύς by translating it with the terms 'High Priest' or 'chief priest' depending on Josephus' intention. For further discussion on Josephus' usage of ἀρχιερεύς, see n. 158 in Chapter 6.

[20] *Life* 9.

in Jerusalem on the Passover of Jesus' execution twenty years before, and could have easily encountered Jesus then, or in any number of other locations and times. Some of them may have even attended proceedings against Jesus. This is a crucial point, to which I will return below.[21]

Starting at age 16, in 53/4 CE, Josephus began intensely studying the practices of the Essenes, the Sadducees, and the Pharisees.[22] This led him to become a disciple of an ascetic named Banas who seems to have been an Essene. Banas was much like John the Baptist with his frugal and rough diet, primitive clothing, home in the desert, and frequent washings in water.[23] Josephus says he was with Banas for three years.[24]

Josephus' Adulthood

At age 19, in 56/7 CE, Josephus became a Pharisee, but probably for political reasons[25] since he never abandoned his love of the Essenes.[26] Then, between 56 and 62 CE, when Josephus was 20 to 25 years old, he would have started serving as a priest, like his father.[27] Toward the end of this period, in 62 CE, his reputation had apparently reached such heights that he was chosen to lead an embassy to Rome in quest of releasing certain distinguished priests.[28] There he obtained an audience with the empress, who interceded on his behalf. She also happened to be holding under her supervision a former High Priest named Ishmael. It is likely that Josephus would have come to know Ishmael during his stay in Rome and even have worked to free him.[29]

[21] I also discuss this topic at length in Chapter 6.

[22] *Life* 10.

[23] *Life* 11. On Essene practices, see below pp. 148–9.

[24] *Life* 12.

[25] Josephus explains that Sadducees often had to become Pharisees in order to curry favor with the public; see *Antiquities* 18.15, 17 and relatedly 13.298. It stands to reason that as Josephus was entering into 'public life' (πολιτεύεσθαι; *Life* 12) he may have been forced to make a similar decision and therefore to leave the Essenes.

[26] Josephus, though a Pharisee himself, could be quite critical of them; see *Antiquities* 17.41, for further discussion see p. 149. He also is critical of the Sadducees, *War* 2.166. Yet he consistently praises the Essenes; see *Antiquities* 18.18–22; *War* 2.119–61. Mason disputes that Josephus was actually a Pharisee, and hence believes he only followed pharisaical norms out of the necessity of being active in public life, but this would still mean that Josephus was extremely familiar with Pharisees; see Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees*, 342–56. For Josephus on the Sadducees, see Baumbach, 'The Sadducees in Josephus'. For the Essenes, see Rajak, 'Ciò Che Flavio Giuseppe Vide'.

[27] Josephus confirms that he did become a priest; see *Apion* 1.54; *War* 1.3, 3.352. For when he would have begun his priestly service, see n. 13.

[28] *Life* 13–16.

[29] Josephus' embassy to Rome in 62/3 CE was meant to free certain priests who had been sent there some years earlier by the Roman governor Felix, whose service ended *c.*59 CE (on this dating see Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3 p. 3331). While in Rome, Josephus appealed to Poppaea, the wife of Nero, who managed to free them (*Life* 16). At around the same time, Ishmael the High Priest was also being held in Rome (*Antiquities* 20.193–5), having arrived when Festus was governor (*c.*59–62 CE; for dating, see Keener cited above). There, Ishmael remained under the supervision of Poppaea. The dates of Felix and Festus' terms as governor are not entirely certain and can be moved about two or three years here or there, but it is most likely that Josephus' embassy was either meant to free Ishmael, or that Josephus at least met Ishmael in Rome since Ishmael seems to have been in Rome at the same time as Josephus (62/3 CE) and was held by Empress Poppaea, the very person to whom Josephus appealed for the release of eminent Jewish priests.

Around the same time, about 62 CE,[30] Josephus relates that James, the brother of Jesus, became the target of the High Priest Ananus II, who had him illegally executed.[31] This caused such a stir among the people that Agrippa II removed Ananus II from the high priesthood. Josephus would go on to know personally both Agrippa II and Ananus II,[32] so he could have learned of James directly from them. Still, he probably would have already known about James in 62 CE given the great political upheaval James' execution had caused. But if Josephus had known of James, he would have also known reports of James' much more famous brother 'Jesus, who was called the Christ', as Josephus styles him.[33]

Shortly after the death of James, in 64 CE,[34] the city of Jerusalem was riven by strife and intrigue.[35] War was afoot. Josephus, concerned about rebellion and having returned to Jerusalem, began 'again spending time with the chief priests and the first men of the Pharisees' (πάλιν τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσιν καὶ τοῖς πρώτοις τῶν Φαρισαίων συνδιέτριβον).[36] Then, a year or so later, Josephus was appointed general of Galilee[37] and later sent by 'the first men of Jerusalem' (τῶν Ἱεροσολυμιτῶν οἱ πρῶτοι) into Galilee itself.[38] That Josephus was a member of the upper echelons of Jewish society is indicated by the fact that only six others were appointed to the rank of general; two of these seem to have been sons of a High Priest and another of a chief priest.[39] It is plausible that the remaining generals had similar connections as well. The general Joseph son of Simon, for example, was probably a former High Priest.[40]

Upon arriving in Galilee, Josephus gathered an army of 100,000 men[41] and began planning defenses, all while staying in communication with the 'Sanhedrin'

[30] James was likely executed in 62 CE because Josephus relates that his trial occurred during the intervening moment when the Roman governor Festus had died and his replacement had not yet arrived (*Antiquities* 20.200; for the dating of Festus' death, see n. 29). It is probable that Josephus was either at that time in Rome or in Jerusalem.

[31] *Antiquities* 20.200.

[32] On Josephus' relationship to Ananus II, see Chapter 6 pp. 187–8.

[33] *Antiquities* 20.200.

[34] This date is derived from the fact that Josephus tells us that he began to meet with the first men of Jerusalem before the arrival of Cestius Gallus (*Life* 23). Given that, according to *War* 2.555, Cestius was defeated in the twelfth year of Nero (65/6 CE), his meetings must have happened shortly before. On the date of the twelfth year of Nero, see Mason, *Judaean War 2*, 377 n. 3331.

[35] *Life* 17; *Antiquities* 20.214.

[36] *Life* 21.

[37] *War* 2.568.

[38] *Life* 28–9. Josephus tells us in *Life* 80 that shortly after this time he was in his thirtieth year, which puts the timing of his appointment as general around 66/7 CE.

[39] *War* 2.566–8. The generals who were sons of High Priests were John, son of the High Priest Ananias, and Eliezer, son of a certain High Priest whose name seems to have suffered textual corruption. Another general, Joshua, was the son of a chief priest. For discussions on the identity of these generals, see notes in Mason, *Judaean War 2*, 381–5.

[40] See Chapter 6 pp. 180–2. It might be supposed that Josephus has exaggerated his role in the Jewish war and was therefore never a general, but even the usually suspicious Cohen cannot bring himself to reject Josephus as being a general of Galilee, though he speculates that in actuality Josephus and Ananus II were two of eleven generals appointed for the war as opposed to Josephus being one of seven generals appointed under two supreme commanders, the latter of which included Ananus II; see Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, 195–206, especially 200.

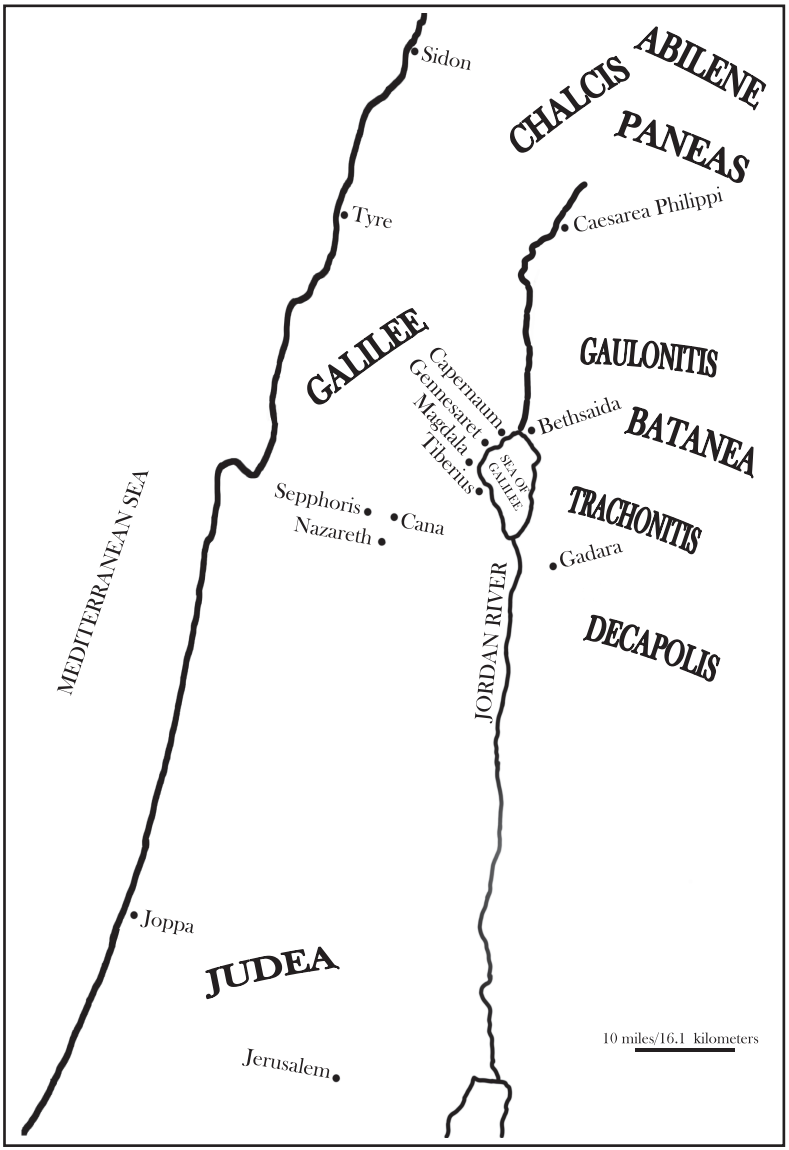
[41] *War* 2.576. For Josephus' activities in Galilee, see Jossa, 'Josephus' Action in Galilee during the Jewish War'; Schwartz, 'Josephus in Galilee: Rural Patronage and Social Breakdown'.

(τῷ συνεδρίῳ) and the 'first men of Jerusalem' (τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πρώτων).[42] He also set about becoming familiar with the geography of Galilee and its inhabitants. Over the next two or three years (66–9 CE) he traveled extensively in the region and could count 240 Galilean cities and villages.[43] His travels touched upon many areas associated with Jesus, as can be seen in the Map below. He visited Capernaum,[44] Gadara,[45] Tiberias,[46] and even lived in the towns of Cana[47] and Magdala.[48] He knew well the coast of the Sea of Galilee,[49] could describe in detail the land of Gennesaret,[50] and undoubtedly was familiar with many other locales where Jesus had lived and preached and traveled by. All these areas, the reader should remember, are said in the canonical Gospels to be where Jesus preached to thousands of people about thirty-five years before Josephus' arrival.[51] Certainly many of them would have been still alive when Josephus was there.

Josephus was further acquainted with places where early Christians are known to have had residence. He, for example, was stationed in Sepphoris for a time, where the *Tosefta* (third–fourth centuries CE) reports that some early Christians were ministering.[52] Sepphoris, like Cana, was also only three or so miles down the road from Nazareth, Jesus' hometown,[53] and it surely would have had citizens in Josephus' day who remembered Jesus. Josephus traveled to Capernaum as well, which not only had been the center of Jesus' ministry, but is later said to have been the home of early Christians.[54] He visited Joppa too, where according to Acts the apostle Peter had once ministered.[55] Toward the end of his tenure in Galilee, the 'first men of Jerusalem' (οἱ τῶν Ἱεροσολυμιτῶν πρῶτοι) confirmed Josephus as 'ruler' (ἀρχήν) of Galilee.[56]

[42] *Life* 62, 217.
[43] *Life* 235.
[44] *War* 3.519; *Life* 403. Capernaum, of course, was Jesus' home throughout much of his ministry; see Matthew 4:13; Mark 2:1; Luke 4:31; John 2:12, 6:59.
[45] Life 42, 44, 82. This location is attested in Matthew 8:28 according to its earliest manuscripts, as well as other manuscript readings at Mark 5:1 and Luke 8:26.
[46] John 6:23; *Life* 31, 64, 68, 82, 92, 94, 164, 167, 169, 188, 280, 322–3, 326.
[47] *Life* 86; John 2:11, 4:46.
[48] Magdala was the Galilean hometown of Mary Magdalene, perhaps Jesus' closest female disciple (Matthew 27:56, 28:1; Mark 15:40, 47, 16:1; Luke 8:2, 24:10; John 19:25, 20:1, 18). Josephus calls Magdala by the Greek name 'Taricheia' (Ταριχέης). He was stationed there for some time during the Jewish war; see *Life* 96, 127, 132, 156–9. On the identification of Magdala with Taricheia, see Matassa, 'Magdala'.
[49] Josephus calls the 'Sea of Galilee' the 'Sea of Gennesaret', a term which the New Testament also uses on one occasion; see *War* 3.463–4, 506–15; Luke 5:1. The Gospel of John will also use the term Sea of Tiberias (John 6:1, 21:1).
[50] *War* 3.506–15; Matthew 14:34; Mark 6:53.
[51] Matthew 14:13–21, 15:32–9; Mark 6:31–44, 8:1–9; Luke 9:12–17; John 6:1–14. See also Matthew 4:25; Mark 3:8; Luke 6:17.
[52] *Tosefta*, Hullin 2.22–4. For a skeptical discussion of this reference, see Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud*, 42–7.
[53] Stern, *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, 'Sepphoris' vol. 4 1324.
[54] Midrash Rabbah *Ecclesiastes* 1.8.4. See also Epiphanius, *Panarion* 30.11.10, who claims that by the fourth century there were no Christians in Capernaum.
[55] *Life* 230; *War* 2.573; Acts 9:36–43.
[56] *Life* 310.

It can fairly be said that a man of such background and interpersonal connections need not have had written sources to tell of Jesus, for he would doubtlessly have known people who had met Jesus or were well apprised about him. Indeed, there are many contacts of Josephus who would have had good knowledge of Jesus, perhaps even firsthand knowledge.



Map. Ancient Israel in the Time of Jesus and Josephus

The Essenes and the Pharisees as Sources

In evaluating the formative years of Josephus, one senses that of the many avenues he had to learn of Jesus, a likely thoroughfare would have been his time with the Essenes in the 50s CE, since he voices many opinions that are paralleled by both the Essenes and early Jewish-Christian texts.[57] Hence, like the Essenes, Josephus approved of frequent washings in water,[58] rough and simple clothing,[59] and vegetarianism (or at least dietary frugality),[60] and affirmed those who abstained from animal sacrifices in the Temple.[61] These traits notably match early Jewish-Christian sources which similarly affirm frequent baptism,[62] and which describe Jesus and John the Baptist as abstaining from meat,[63] and which describe Jesus as forbidding sacrifices.[64] John the Baptist is also portrayed by Jewish-Christian writings as wearing rough clothing.[65] In a similar way, Josephus too held John the Baptist in high regard and implies that he preached after Jesus, not before. This is much like the *Gospel of the Ebionites*, an early Jewish-Christian text, which praises John the Baptist and also implies that John preached after Jesus, not before.[66] Josephus furthermore disagreed with the Sadducees concerning their rejection of the afterlife, which not only agrees with the beliefs of Essenes,[67] but also parallels criticisms of

[57] Josephus also reports that Essenes often were advanced in years, meaning that in all probability he would have been familiar with many Essenes who were far into their adulthood when Jesus was ministering; see *War* 2.151. Philo corroborates the tendency for Essenes to be of a great age; see Philo, *Hypothetica* 11.3.

[58] Josephus' teacher, Banas, practiced frequent bathing (*Life* 11), as did the Essenes (*War* 2.129, 138).

[59] Josephus' teacher wore only plant-based clothing (*Life* 11), and the Essenes were also quite frugal in their clothing (*War* 2.121–3, 126, 137).

[60] Josephus' teacher, Banas, was a vegetarian (*Life* 11) and certain distinguished priests whom Josephus endeavored to rescue from imprisonment in Rome were also vegetarian (*Life* 14). Josephus does discuss the frugal diet of the Essenes (*War* 2.130–4), though nowhere does he explicitly say that the Essenes were vegetarian; yet he does state that they followed the 'lifestyle' (διαίτῃ) of Pythagoras (*Antiquities* 15.371), who was said to be a vegetarian. There is good reason however to suspect that most Essenes were not actual vegetarians; see Taylor, *The Essenes*, 16, 195. Curiously, the Slavonic version of the *War* states that John the Baptist was a vegetarian; *Slavonic Jewish War* 2.7.2b, 2.9.1f.

[61] Josephus states, or at least implies, that Essenes did not sacrifice at the Temple; see *Antiquities* 18.19; *War* 2.129. Josephus also praised John the Baptist, whom Josephus says believed that purity could be gotten by means other than sacrifices; see *Antiquities* 18.117.

[62] Epiphanius, *Panarion* 30.15.3–16.1. The Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* 1.55.3–4 strongly affirms the importance of baptism in the face of Jewish criticism but does not mention repeated baptism. This and the below citations taken from the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* may originally derive from the second- or third-century Jewish-Christian document called the *Ascents of James*; on this see Chapter 3 p. 74.

[63] *Gospel of the Ebionites* (found in Epiphanius, *Panarion* 30.13.4, 30.19.3, 30.22.4). Epiphanius goes on to say that vegetarianism was a general trait of Ebionites in *Panarion* 30.15.3. See also Pseudo-Clement, *Recognitions* 1.30.1.

[64] *Gospel of the Ebionites* (found in Epiphanius, *Panarion* 30.16.5). See also Pseudo-Clement, *Recognitions* 1.37.4, 1.39.1, 1.54.1.

[65] *Gospel of the Ebionites* (found in Epiphanius, *Panarion* 30.13.4).

[66] For further discussion, see p. 129.

[67] *Antiquities* 18.18. Josephus would have believed in the immortality of the soul given that he became a Pharisee and also trained as an Essene, both of which embraced such a belief. On the Pharisees and the afterlife see *Antiquities* 18.14.

the Sadducees found in the early Jewish-Christian *Ascents of James*.[68] These commonalities argue that each group—Essenes and early Jewish followers of Jesus—was likely well aware of the other. By extension, Josephus, while training as an Essene, would have likely known of Jesus and early Christians.

Aside from the Essenes, it is also quite likely that in the 50s CE Josephus learned of Jesus through pharisaical sources since he remarkably seemed to agree with Jesus' condemnation of Pharisees even though Josephus appears to have been a Pharisee himself.[69] Thus Josephus critiques Pharisees for making a show of things (προσποιουμένων), for holding women in their thrall (ὑπῆκτο ἡ γυναικωνῖτις), and for 'being intent on violence and rabble rousing' (εἰς τὸ πολεμεῖν τε καὶ βλάπτειν ἐπηρμένοι).[70] These are very like the criticisms Jesus lodges against the Pharisees in the Gospel of Matthew where he accuses them of doing deeds 'to be seen by men' and of 'devouring the houses of widows'—and of, in general, being lawless, bloodthirsty, and rejecting mercy and justice.[71] There is, moreover, a tradition in early Jewish-Christian sources that depicts Pharisees as endorsing the ministry of John the Baptist,[72] much like Josephus did.[73]

In view of these shared concerns, it would be quite unlikely for the young Josephus in the 50s CE not to have been aware of Jesus, especially given the points of belief held in common by early Jewish-Christians on the one hand and the Essenes, Pharisees, and Josephus on the other. This is not to mention Jesus' famous conflict with the Pharisees which would have made him a notorious figure throughout the pharisaical groups in which Josephus traveled. It would have also been probable that Josephus knew of Jesus given that in the 50s CE Christianity was a growing movement that was being championed by the former Pharisee Saul of Tarsus, all of which was occurring precisely when Josephus was joining the Pharisees.

The First Men and Chief Priests

The above are plausible ways by which Josephus might have learned of Jesus; be it from his parents, or Pharisees and Essenes, or the common folk of Judaea and Galilee, or even from chief priests, High Priests, and the 'first men' of Jerusalem. But I would like to examine the sources of Josephus' knowledge of Jesus further. Is there any specific evidence identifying Josephus' sources? Indeed, there is.

[68] Pseudo-Clement, *Recognitions* 1.56.1–2. See also Matthew 22:23–33; Mark 12:18–27; Luke 20:27–40; Acts 23:6–8.
[69] On this, see p. 144.
[70] *Antiquities* 17.41.
[71] Matthew 23:5–7, 14, 23–34. See also Luke 11:39–44.
[72] *Gospel of Ebionites* (found in in Epiphanius, *Panarion* 30.13.4); Pseudo-Clement, *Recognitions* 1.54.6–7.
[73] *Antiquities* 18.117.

In the TF, Josephus says that it was the 'first men' (πρώτων ἀνδρῶν) who brought an accusation against Jesus. With these words Josephus implies that it was not merely a few of the most senior of the chief priests who took Jesus to trial, but a broader collection of Jewish leaders. In agreement with this are the Gospel accounts which maintain that it was 'all the chief priests and elders',[74] 'the scribes',[75] and 'the whole Sanhedrin'[76] and also Herod Antipas the Tetrarch[77] who participated in the judicial (or extra-judicial) proceedings against Jesus, and that the great majority voted for death. The Babylonian Talmud also portrays the trial of Jesus as being held before a court, undoubtedly the Sanhedrin.[78] The *Mishnah* (third–fourth centuries CE) further reports that quorum for the Sanhedrin in cases of trying a false prophet was seventy-one members.[79] Thus, the outlined scenario from Josephus, the Talmud, the Mishnah, and the Gospels is that there were dozens of 'first men' taking part in the proceedings against Jesus during the Passover of 30/33 CE, from the High Priest and Herod Antipas the Tetrarch, to chief priests and the junior members of the Sanhedrin and perhaps other high-ranking Jews besides—anyone who might be classed among the 'first men.'[80]

This fact is crucial to grasp, for Josephus goes on to say that in 51/2 CE he himself was 'continually' (ἀεί) meeting with the 'first men' (πρώτων) of Jerusalem and with the 'chief priests' (ἀρχιερέων).[81] And this acquaintance of his with the 'first men' and 'chief priests' appears many times throughout the following twenty years of his life, as we have seen in the above. Josephus was even of such prominence that, at only the age of 25, he obtained an audience with the empress of Rome in order to release certain distinguished priests. Later, he seems to have been known by 'many chief priests',[82] and often conferred with the 'first men' of Jerusalem, and was commissioned as general of Galilee by them. He also knew two High Priests face to face, and likely others as well.[83] Indeed, it is possible that his own father may have been considered one of the first men or chief priests of Jerusalem, for Josephus says that he was one of 'the most famous of the Jerusalemites' (γνωριμώτατος ὢν . . . τοῖς Ἱεροσολυμίταις),[84] was descended from

[74] Matthew 27:1; Mark 14:53.
[75] Luke 22:66, 23:10; see also Matthew 26:57.
[76] Mark 14:55.
[77] Luke 23:6–12; Acts 4:27.
[78] Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 43a.20–1.
[79] Mishna, *Sanhedrin* 1.5. Josephus roughly corroborates the Sanhedrin as being around seventy members in *War* 2.570. For further information about the ancient Sanhedrin, see Mantel, 'Sanhedrin', vol. 18 pp. 21–3. On the charge of Jesus being a false prophet, see Chapter 6 n. 214.
[80] The category of 'first' (πρῶτοι) men in Josephus seems to designate a relatively exclusive and influential group. For example, in *Antiquities* 20.194 the 'first' men sent to Rome are associated with the High Priest.
[81] *Life* 9. See also *Life* 21.
[82] *Life* 194.
[83] See n. 19.
[84] *Life* 7.

both high priestly lineage and royal ancestry, and married a woman also of royal descent, Josephus' mother.[85]

From these observations it is not too much to conclude that some of these 'first men' with whom Josephus was familiar could have been among those 'first men' whom Josephus says lodged an accusation against Jesus. So too could the 'chief priests' whom Josephus knew have been some of those chief priests who put Jesus on trial—for the Gospels say 'all the chief priests' were there.[86]

Among Us

But can we move beyond mere plausibility? Can it be shown that Josephus did know certain of those 'first men' and chief priests who brought charges against Jesus? I believe so. For there lies within the TF a statement, half hidden, indicating that Josephus was personally acquainted with some of those very men who accused Jesus. This is signaled when Josephus says that it was not the 'first men' (πρώτων ἀνδρῶν) who brought Jesus to trial, but the 'first men *among us*' (πρώτων ἀνδρῶν παρ' ἡμῖν). In adding 'among us' (παρ' ἡμῖν) Josephus appears to supply a personal note of familiarity. This at least is how Gary Goldberg has read the phrase. Goldberg concludes from this that the TF must have been derived to some extent from a Christian source because Josephus was not in the habit of 'inserting himself' into his 'historical narrative' and therefore would not have composed the phrase as it stands.[87]

Yet, as we have seen, it was quite typical of Josephus to boast of his familiarity with the 'first men' of Jerusalem and he could easily have known some of those involved with Jesus' trial. Moreover, Josephus was fond of the phrase 'among us' (παρ' ἡμῖν) and deploys it fifty-one other times,[88] so there is no reason to find its presence unusual in the TF. Of greater importance than these points is that a careful review of these fifty-one instances reveals that Josephus seems to only use the phrase 'among us' for things and people with whom he or the speaker was personally acquainted.[89] Such evidence indicates that in the TF Josephus is claiming direct familiarity with some of the 'first men' who accused Jesus.

[85] *Life* 2, 4.

[86] Matthew 27:1; Mark 14:53.

[87] More specifically, Goldberg argues that this phrase reveals that Josephus did not compose the phrase whole cloth, but must have been inattentively copying Luke 24:20. Goldberg, 'Coincidences', 70–1. See also Winter, 'Josephus on Jesus', 434.

[88] The total of fifty-one instances includes forty-nine instances of παρ' ἡμῖν and two instances of the synonymous παρὰ μὲν ἡμῖν.

[89] In the below footnotes I cite all fifty-one instances of παρ' ἡμῖν or παρὰ μὲν ἡμῖν in Josephus' corpus. I make comments on those instances that are not straightforward.

Thus, Josephus frequently uses the term 'among us' (παρ' ἡμῖν) in reference to Jewish laws,[90] customs,[91] terminology,[92] attitudes,[93] writings,[94] language,[95] and to the Jewish kingdom,[96] their capital of Jerusalem,[97] and their temple[98]—every one of which Josephus (or the speaker whom Josephus quotes) had directly experienced and had firsthand knowledge. So, Josephus says regarding the Festival of Tabernacles 'this is a festival especially observed among us' (ἑορτὴ δέ ἐστιν αὕτη παρ' ἡμῖν εἰς τὰ μάλιστα τηρουμένη),[99] and of course Josephus would have celebrated this festival many times himself. And, similarly, Josephus asserts that Jerusalem is 'the greatest city among us' (τῇ μεγίστῃ πόλει . . . παρ' ἡμῖν)[100] and Josephus would have known Jerusalem personally, for he was raised in Jerusalem.

Events, deeds, and historical happenings that occurred under Josephus' observation or that of the speaker are also marked by him with 'among us', as when he says

[90] *Antiquities* 16.177; *Apion* 2.150, 2.271, 2.277, 2.287.

[91] *Antiquities* 12.277, 15.50, 15.259, 20.264; *Life* 1, 275; *Apion* 1.162, 2.181; *War* 3.377. In *Apion* 2.124 Josephus describes a false charge that Jews were in the habit of swearing an oath to hate foreigners, which Josephus refutes by saying 'no one has ever said that they heard this oath sworn among us' (οὐδεὶς πώποτε τὸν ὅρκον εἶπεν ἀκοῦσαι παρ' ἡμῖν ὀμωμοσμένον). By the phrase 'among us', Josephus as the speaker means to say that no one, including himself, has directly witnessed Jews who have sworn such an oath. Josephus obviously was personally acquainted with many Jews who did not hold this custom.

[92] *Antiquities* 3.172, 3.248, 11.107, 14.106, 15.371. The latter reference reads 'who among us are called Essenes' (οἱ παρ' ἡμῖν Ἐσσαῖοι καλούμενοι). At first glance this might imply that Josephus is stating that a particular group of ascetic Jews, who existed in the distant past, was actually 'among us'; but the context shows rather that he is explaining Jewish terminology with which he was directly familiar. This follows the exact pattern of *Antiquities* 3.172 and 3.248. Of course, Essenes continued to thrive in Josephus' day and he also knew many.

[93] *Antiquities* 5.96 (the speaker is Joshua). In *War* 1.16 Josephus uses the phrase 'among us' to refer to himself and his readers many of whom Josephus would have of course known. Is also possible that the phrase could be interpreted as referring to Jewish history, much of which of course Josephus personally witnessed in the *War*. In *Apion* 2.232 Josephus presents an exaggerated rhetorical statement, boasting 'therefore especially among us' (Ἆρ' οὖν καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν) no one can claim to know of even two or three Jews who 'betrayed their laws or were afraid of death' (προδότας γενομένους τῶν νόμων ἢ θάνατον φοβηθέντας). Taken literally, Josephus is of course wrong as he himself has described Jews betraying Jewish laws (like the whole Sanhedrin in *Antiquities* 20.216–18), but in *Apion* 2.232 he is rhetorically (and hyperbolically) using 'among us' to claim that no one has directly witnessed Jews who betrayed their country or their laws, in order for him to highlight past and present Jews who upheld great steadfastness and bravery in the face of death, some of whom Josephus witnessed in the Jewish war with Rome, and whom he knew many others directly witnessed as well (*Life* 420; *War* 3.229–34, 3.320–2, 4.326–9, 4.385). That Josephus was a personal witness to some of these is in evidence in *Apion* 1.55; *War* 5.420, 429. Josephus himself also faced death (*Life* 136–46; *War* 4.624–9, 5.419) and so he is probably including himself in the statement too.

[94] *Antiquities* 10.267, 14.187; *Apion* 1.1, 1.38. Relatedly, *Apion* 2.180 refers either to writings or Jewish beliefs about God.

[95] *Antiquities* 20.71.

[96] *Antiquities* 8.113 (the speaker is Solomon).

[97] *Life* 7.

[98] *Antiquities* 3.318; *Apion* 1:109, 1.154. In these references Josephus speaks of the temple of Solomon as being 'among us', but it should be noted that though Solomon's Temple, from a certain perspective, did not exist in Josephus' day, given that it had been destroyed centuries before, Josephus himself still considered that the rebuilt temple, in which he served as a priest, was the genuine temple of Solomon, as he makes clear in *War* 6.269.

[99] *Antiquities* 15.50.

[100] *Life* 7.

'and until now this cure has remained in force among us, for I have observed . . .' (καὶ αὕτη μέχρι νῦν παρ' ἡμῖν ἡ θεραπεία πλεῖστον ἰσχύει· ἱστόρησα γάρ . . .).[101] Or, in *Antiquities* 10.35 Josephus indicates that biblical prophecies were fulfilled 'among us'. Later, in a speech to the besieged inhabitants of Jerusalem, shortly before its fall, he claims some of these biblical prophecies were being fulfilled before his very eyes by Jerusalem's impending defeat, 'Who does not know the records of the old prophets, especially the oracle which is already coming to fruition against this miserable city?' (τίς οὐκ οἶδεν τὰς τῶν παλαιῶν προφητῶν ἀναγραφὰς καὶ τὸν ἐπιρρέποντα τῇ τλήμονι πόλει χρησμὸν ἤδη ἐνεστῶτα;).[102]

There in fact seem to be only three out of fifty-one examples where the phrase 'among us' marks a subject where it is not conclusive that the speaker had direct or personal knowledge, but even in these instances such knowledge is quite likely. First, Josephus quotes the High Priest and general Jonathan Apphus as referring to his predecessor as 'Onias III who was High Priest among us' ('Ονίᾳ τῷ γενομένῳ ἀρχιερεῖ παρ' ἡμῖν).[103] Onias III died in 175 BCE[104] and Jonathan became High Priest in 152 BCE, but was already leading men in battle around 165 BCE,[105] and had helped his father, a distinguished priest,[106] to violently thwart sacrilege in the temple around 167 BCE.[107] Hence, probability favors the High Priest Jonathan having known the former High Priest Onias III face to face given their chronological proximity and the fact that they were both of important priestly families.

Secondly, Josephus refers to the High Priest Ishmael as 'Ishmael who was High Priest among us' ('Ισμαήλου δὲ παρ' ἡμῖν ἀρχιερέως ὄντος),[108] and Ishmael was not only High Priest when Josephus was an adult, but Josephus may have even led

[101] *Antiquities* 8.46. See also *Antiquities* 8.117 (the speaker is Solomon), 8.280 (the speaker is Abijah). In *Antiquities* 1.5 Josephus describes his book as containing 'all of the antiquities among us' (ἅπασαν τὴν παρ' ἡμῖν ἀρχαιολογίαν); and books 19–20 of the *Antiquities* of course describe many events and people whom Josephus knew directly, such as Herod Agrippa II. On Josephus' relationship to him, see Chapter 6 pp. 161–4.

[102] *War* 6.109. See also *War* 4.387. For related references, see also *War* 3.352, 7.432. In a different example, in *Antiquities* 1.9 Josephus mentions Greeks 'who endeavored to know the affairs among us' (γνῶναι τὰ παρ' ἡμῖν ἐσπούδασαν). With this, Josephus clearly has in mind not just ancient Greeks, but also contemporary Greeks interested in the past and present affairs of the Jews, like his patron Epaphroditus, whom he mentions in the same verse (*Antiquities* 1.8–9), and other Greeks of his day who were interested in Jews, whom he mentioned a few verses earlier (*Antiquities* 1.4). He may also have had in mind Empress Poppaea, whom Josephus had known (*Life* 16), and also Greek writers whose works were extant in Josephus' day (*Apion* 1.215–18, 2.2, 2.84, 2.145), or who even wrote during Josephus' lifetime (like Apion, whom Josephus wrote against in *Against Apion*). Thus the 'affairs among us' pertains to the past and contemporary affairs of the Jews—and whether the speaker is here construed to be Josephus or certain Greeks, clearly all were directly familiar with some of these affairs.

[103] *Antiquities* 13.167.

[104] *Antiquities* 12.225. For the date of the death of High Priest Onias III, see VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 197.

[105] *Antiquities* 12.321 (for the date of the event), 12.333, 335, 350.

[106] *Antiquities* 12.264 (for the date of the event), 12.268.

[107] *Antiquities* 12.266, 270. For the reign of the High Priest Jonathan Apphus, see VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 251–70.

[108] *Antiquities* 3.320.

an embassy to Rome to set him free.[109] The circumstances of this episode are not definite, yet if Josephus did not lead such an embassy for Ishmael, he was personally familiar with two or more High Priests and several other chief priests around when Ishmael was alive.[110] His knowledge of Ishmael must therefore have been quite close and likely even direct.

Thirdly, and perhaps most tenuously, is when Josephus asserts that Essenes were true prophets and then somewhat ambiguously adds that he has seen fit to relate 'miraculous' or 'strange things' (παράδοξα) which 'have occurred among us' (περὶ τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν ἐμφῆναι).[111] If Josephus is speaking generally here, then he of course was witness to certain παράδοξα, as he himself says in a speech he once gave.[112] However, if he is specifically referring to the miraculous fulfillment of prophecies given by Essenes, then the matter is not so clear. Josephus does relate several of their prophetic fulfillments,[113] but all these occurred before he was born. It is very possible though that Josephus did believe that he witnessed certain fulfillments himself even if he does not mention them explicitly. In *War* 2.159, for example, he implies that such Essene prophecies were still being given and, besides this, he investigated the Essenes and seems to have undergone the three-year initiation period of an Essene.[114] During this time he could have obviously observed many of what he thought to be prophetic fulfillments. He also describes himself as making authentic prophecies that were fulfilled,[115] so he may also have had in mind his own role as a true prophet in the lineage of the Essenes, especially given that he seems to have trained as one.

In reviewing the examples discussed or cited above, even including the last three, the phrase 'among us' (παρ' ἡμῖν) marks a subject as one with which Josephus (or the speaker) was directly familiar or at least was probably so. But if not, then it marks something which the speaker had at least good, close connection and sure knowledge of.

One could object that none of these examples precisely match the way the phrase 'among us' is deployed in the TF, where it pertains not to any kind of custom, event, location, individual or such like, but to a group of people, 'the first men among us' who brought an accusation against Jesus, as Josephus says. There are though, seven remaining instances of the term 'among us' and these do demarcate a group of people. So, it must be asked, in these seven instances, does Josephus use the term to indicate that he himself (or the speaker) personally knew members of the group? He does appear to do just that. It will be fruitful to work through the seven examples one by one.

[109] See Chapter 6 pp. 179–80.
[110] See n. 19.
[111] *Antiquities* 15.379.
[112] *War* 6.102.
[113] *War* 1.78–80, 2.111–13; *Antiquities* 13.311, 15.373–9, 17.345–8.
[114] *War* 2.137–8; *Life* 10–12. On Josephus' teacher, Banas, and his relationship to Essenes, see above pp. 144, 148–9.
[115] *War* 3.351–4, 4.622–9.

Josephus uses the phrase while quoting Jonathan Apphus who speaks of sending along two men 'who are from the senate among us' (τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς γερουσίας ὄντων παρ' ἡμῖν).[116] Clearly Jonathan not only knew the two Jewish senators, but he would have known many other members of the Jewish senate as well since he was the Jewish political and religious leader at the time.[117]

When enumerating the five sons of the High Priest, Ananus I, Josephus points out that all five became High Priest themselves, 'which never happened to any [other] of the High Priests among us' (ὅπερ οὐδενὶ συνέβη τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν ἀρχιερέων).[118] He also twice refers to the whole roster of Jewish high priests as 'the High Priests who were among us' (οἱ γὰρ ἀρχιερεῖς οἱ παρ' ἡμῖν).[119] It is obvious that Josephus was not on personal terms with all of the Jewish High Priests in history, but he was on such terms with at least two of the High Priests, as he tells us explicitly elsewhere. He even describes the High Priest Joshua as his friend and trusted confidant.[120]

Again, Josephus mentions the three Jewish 'sects among us' (παρ' ἡμῖν αἱρέσεων)[121]—the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Essenes—many members of which Josephus knew personally, some of whom were even leaders of these sects.[122] Josephus also states 'for I served as general of those among us who are named Galileans' (ἐστρατήγουν μὲν γὰρ τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν Γαλιλαίων ὀνομαζομένων).[123] It goes without saying that Josephus was well acquainted with many Galileans, including their leaders,[124] during his years stationed in Galilee.[125] In two final examples, Josephus further uses the phrase 'among us' to indicate 'those [kings] among us who were allies' (οἱ παρ' ἡμῖν σύμμαχοι) of the Romans,[126] and he certainly knew the Jewish king, Agrippa II, who was an ally with Rome and also his friend; he doubtless knew many other Jewish leaders who were allies too, including

[116] *Antiquities* 13.169.

[117] On the High Priest Jonathan Apphus, see p. 153.

[118] *Antiquities* 20.198.

[119] *Apion* 1.36. See also *Antiquities* 1.11, which reads 'Eliezer was second to none in virtue compared to the High Priests among us' (ὁ δὲ τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν ἀρχιερέων οὐδενὸς ἀρετῇ δεύτερος Ἐλεάζαρος).

[120] For discussion of Josephus' relationship to the High Priest Joshua and other High Priests, see n. 19 and p. 178.

[121] *Life* 10.

[122] Josephus knew the High Priest Ananus II (see Chapter 6 pp. 187–8), who was a Sadducee (*Antiquities* 20.199); he also knew the leaders of the Pharisees (*Life* 21) and was a Pharisee himself (*Life* 12); and he personally studied the Essenes (*Life* 10) and is likely to have even undergone the three-year initiation of an Essene (see p. 144). One of his fellow generals may also have been an Essene (*War* 2.567–8, for a contrary analysis see Mason, *Judaean War 2*, 384 n. 3396).

[123] *Apion* 1.48.

[124] *Life* 79.

[125] *Life* 84.

[126] *Apion* 2.134. One might claim that in this verse Josephus is only speaking specifically about the time in the long past when the Romans conquered Judaea, yet Josephus clearly describes a plurality of Jewish kings (βασιλέων) who were allied with Rome, meaning that he must be referring to the entire timeframe, up until his present day, in which Rome occupied Judaea. It is possible that Josephus also knew Aristobulus, the Jewish king of Chalcis; see Chapter 6 pp. 169–71.

himself.[127] Josephus again deploys 'among us' in a similar way shortly afterwards when he speaks of illustrious 'men among us' (τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν ἀνδρῶν) mentioned in his work *Against Apion*.[128] These, again, would comprise many famous Jewish leaders whom he personally knew such as various High Priests, like Ananus II and Joshua son of Gamala, both of whom he greatly praises at times,[129] and, once more, King Agrippa II, whom he also lauds.[130]

A survey of the above fifty-one instances of 'among us' (παρ' ἡμῖν) reveals that in almost every case it is employed by Josephus for something of which he himself or the quoted speaker would have had first-hand knowledge. In just three instances does Josephus use the phrase for something of which he (or the speaker) only probably had first-hand knowledge, but even in these cases there is nevertheless a very close association.

Let us though, for the sake of argument, be skeptical. Perhaps Josephus simply uses the phrase 'first men among us' as a synonym for the 'first men among the Jews' whether known or unknown to Josephus, past or current, near or far. Perhaps the phrase says nothing about Josephus' connections to the first men who accused Jesus, but merely indicates that something was associated with Jews generally.

In considering this, it is surely relevant that not one time does Josephus use the term 'among us' to describe something or someone related to Jews but of great personal distance from the Jewish speaker, despite hundreds of opportunities to do so.[131] That is, Josephus never uses the phrase to refer to matters far removed from the speaker in time or geography. Thus, when Josephus speaks about Mordechai, who lived hundreds of years before Josephus, he does not say 'Mordechai was one of the first men among us', but instead he says that Mordechai was one of 'the first men among the Jews' (τῶν δὲ πρώτων παρὰ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις)[132]—for Josephus could not have known Mordechai face to face and hence does not use the phrase 'among us'.

There are many other like cases. As, for instance, when speaking of far distant historical leaders, Josephus says 'the first men of the Jews' (οἱ πρῶτοι τῶν

[127] For examples of Jewish leaders who were allies of the Romans, see *War* 4.14–15; *Life* 30, 32–4, 43, 46, 407–8. For Josephus' relationship with King Agrippa II and others of the Herodian dynasty, see Chapter 6 pp. 159–172.

[128] *Apion* 2.136.

[129] On Josephus' relationship to these High Priests, see Chapter 6 pp. 177–8, 187–8. On Josephus' praise for their leadership, see *War* 4.318–22.

[130] *Antiquities* 20.12 (here Josephus approvingly quotes a letter praising Agrippa II); *Apion* 1:51; *Life* 367. For Josephus' relationship with Agrippa II, see Chapter 6 pp. 161–4.

[131] Out of the fifty-one times Josephus uses the phrase, there are several instances where one could conclude that Josephus' primary intent is to refer to Jews generally rather than to the speaker's direct relationship with the given subject (see also p. 158). Most likely are with *Apion* 2.124, 2.232, and *Antiquities* 1.9, but as I show in nn. 91, 93, and 102, in all of these examples the speaker is still directly familiar with the subject. These three examples also pertain to quite general statements and are not concrete, specific historical assertions like that found in the TF.

[132] *Antiquities* 11.198.

Ἰουδαίων),[133] or 'the first men of the people' (τοὺς πρώτους τοῦ λαοῦ),[134] or 'the first men of the people of the Hebrews' (οἱ τοῦ λαοῦ τῶν Ἑβραίων πρῶτοι),[135] or 'the first men among the Jews and Samaritans' (οἱ πρῶτοι τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἔν τε Ἰουδαίοις καὶ Σαμαρεῦσι).[136] He will also use similar terms like 'the magistrates of the Jews' (Οἱ δ' ἐν τέλει τῶν Ἰουδαίων),[137] or 'the leaders of the Jews' (οἱ δοκιμώτατοι τῶν Ἰουδαίων).[138] But in all these he does not say 'the first men among us' or 'the leaders among us', or some such similar term alongside the phrase 'among us' (παρ' ἡμῖν).

Nor does Josephus use 'among us' when speaking of Jews who lived during his lifetime but whom he did not know. So, for example, after Josephus says that it was the 'first men among us' who accused Jesus in *Antiquities* 18.63, he then soon afterwards in *Antiquities* 18.257 switches to use the third person when speaking of Jews in Alexandria and Babylon, who lived far from Josephus' home city of Jerusalem. In the first instance, he says that around 39/40 CE the Jews of Alexandria sent the famous philosopher Philo as 'the lead ambassador of the Jews' (ὁ προεστὼς τῶν Ἰουδαίων τῆς πρεσβείας)—he does not say 'the lead ambassador among us', since Philo and his Alexandrian entourage were evidently not known by Josephus.[139] He does the same again soon thereafter in *Antiquities* 18.379 when speaking of the Jews in Babylon around 50 CE, 'such were the affairs of the Jews who lived in Babylonia' (καὶ τὰ μὲν κατὰ Ἰουδαίους τοὺς ἐν τῇ Βαβυλωνίᾳ κατῳκημένους τοιαῦτα ἦν).[140] He does not say 'those among us who lived in Babylonia', since it seems quite unlikely he would not have known those Babylonian Jews personally.

Or, in an example even closer in time and place, Josephus explains that around 60 CE there arose a dispute between the chief priests (τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσι) and, in his words, 'the first men of the masses of the Jerusalemites' (πρὸς τοὺς πρώτους τοῦ πλήθους τῶν Ἱεροσολυμιτῶν).[141] It is notable that Josephus does not say 'the first men of the masses among us', for in all probability he did not know the leaders of

[133] *Antiquities* 14.165.
[134] *Antiquities* 11.141.
[135] *Antiquities* 7.53.
[136] *Antiquities* 17.342.
[137] *Antiquities* 14.163. See also *Antiquities* 14.302, 17.160; *War* 1.243, 3.138, 4.336. More literally ἐν τέλει could be translated 'in office'. The reader should note that Josephus frequently deployed the first person in the *Antiquities*, but only rarely in his *War*, where he refers even to himself in the third person (for example, *War* 2.568). This means that citations from the *Antiquities* are more valuable for determining whether Josephus is claiming direct knowledge of a subject. On Josephus' use of first and third person, see Winter, 'Josephus on Jesus', 434.
[138] *Antiquities* 14.21.
[139] *Antiquities* 18.259. Technically the phrase should be literally translated as 'the leader of the Jews' embassy'.
[140] *Antiquities* 18.379.
[141] *Antiquities* 20.180. Certain manuscripts of the *Antiquities* read that the chief priests were also opposing the regular 'priests', however these words (τοὺς ἱερεῖς καί) are omitted in the oldest manuscript of *Antiquities* book 20 (Manuscript A in Niese, which is MS Ambrosianae F128sup. f. 348r line 18). Zonarus seems to agree on this point in his *Epitome Historiarum* 6.16 11–12 (Dindorf, *Ioannis Zonarae: Epitome Historiarum*, 2:47).

the lower classes in Jerusalem since he himself was of aristocratic lineage. Less than twenty verses later though, he returns to the first person when speaking about certain of the 'High Priests among us' (τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν ἀρχιερέων),[142] for Josephus did know at least two High Priests directly.[143]

Some of the above instances would not prove the case. But after so many, a consistent pattern develops: Josephus deploys 'among the Jews' (παρὰ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις) or a synonymous phrase when referring to matters related to Jews generally. But when specifically referring to matters related directly to himself (or the speaker), he writes 'among us' (παρ' ἡμῖν). These are telling signs that, as used by Josephus, the term 'among us' (παρ' ἡμῖν) bespeaks close familiarity, near acquaintance, and direct knowledge.[144] This is not to say that the primary meaning of the phrase 'among us' (παρ' ἡμῖν) is always to mark direct knowledge, for obviously the phrase could have additional connotations in certain instances. Rather what I wish to emphasize is that with 'among us' (παρ' ἡμῖν) the marking of direct knowledge seems to always be intended, sometimes as a primary meaning and at other times as a concurrent secondary meaning. But in every example direct knowledge appears to be intended.[145]

And this is what I submit Josephus meant when he said in the TF that it was 'the first men among us' who accused Jesus. For, given the linguistic evidence gathered above, it is very likely that Josephus is claiming to have known some of those 'first men'. And historically speaking, this is not at all improbable for a man like Josephus, of an eminent priestly family, who kept company with 'chief priests' and 'first men' of Jerusalem beginning in 51/2 CE, and was even himself directly acquainted with at least two High Priests and King Herod Agrippa II, and other members of the Herodian dynasty besides.

But this is not all that can be said about Josephus and Jesus, for as the next chapter will show, it is even possible to identify those acquaintances of Josephus who may have actually brought Jesus to trial.

[142] *Antiquities* 20.198.

[143] On his relationship with the High Priests, see Chapter 6 pp. 177–90.

[144] In other words, the case is proved by the consistent pattern Josephus displays, not by isolated instances. It is possible that future scholars will find exceptions to this pattern, but the whole point is that, despite counterexamples that may be found, the strong tendency of Josephus is that he deploys 'among us' (παρ' ἡμῖν) when marking a subject of which the speaker has direct knowledge.

[145] See n. 131.

6
Identifying the 'First Men among Us'
Possible Candidates

As observed in the last chapter, evidence suggests that Josephus was directly familiar with some of the 'first men among us' who put Jesus on trial. Given this, would it be possible to determine the identities of these men, known to Josephus, who were also partisans in the trial of Jesus? I believe it is possible. In fact, Josephus' social network is so thoroughly illuminated that we can actually identify several probable candidates who both participated in the trial of Jesus and were later directly connected with Josephus. There are others too who, if they were not at the trial, at least may have otherwise met Jesus or been well-informed about him. All these contacts would have been capable of directly apprising Josephus of Jesus or of doing so indirectly through any number of mutual acquaintances.

What follows is a sketch of six leading families with whom Josephus was familiar and whose members were also likely party to the execution of Jesus. These include the royal family of the Herodians, the rabbinic family of Hillel, and the high priestly families of Camith, Boethus, Phiabi, and especially Ananus I.[1] As the reader will see, not every family nor every one of their members possess the same likelihood of having encountered Jesus or of serving as one of Josephus' sources. Some are less certain and others more, but the potential candidates are so many and so closely connected to Jesus that even if some did not actually meet Jesus (or did not tell Josephus of him), others of course very probably did. Hence, they are likely candidates for Josephus' 'first men among us' who accused Jesus.

The Royal Family of Herod the Great

We commence with the Herodians. It is important to note at the outset that navigating the Herodian dynasty with understanding requires a good chart. The

[1] There were very few families that held the high priesthood in the first century, see *War* 4.147–9. For discussion, see VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 488. As will be shown below, Josephus was directly familiar with High Priests from the four most influential high priestly dynasties. These four dynasties drew their lineages from their patriarchs Ananus I, Camith, Boethus, and Phiabi. All told, between 6 CE and 70 CE there were nineteen High Priests and around a dozen were supplied by the above four families. See VanderKam who tabulates eleven, but he neglects to include the Camith family; VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 493.

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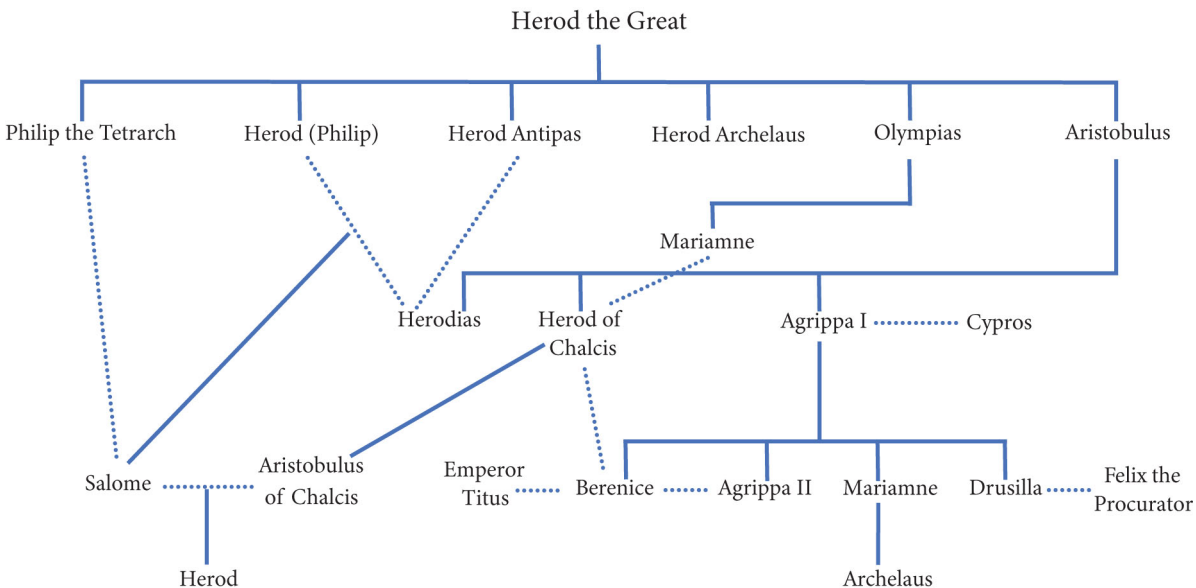


Chart 1. The Family of Herod the Great

Note: Single lines mark biological descent, dotted lines mark marriage or romantic relationship.

dynasty's founder was Herod the Great, whom the Gospel of Matthew presents as attempting to kill the infant Jesus.[2] This Herod had many wives and many children, and their descendants then went on to marry one another. So systematically did they interbreed that charting out their bewildering genealogy results in less a family tree and more a family circle.

Herodias, for example, married her uncle (Herod Philip), then divorced him and married her other uncle (Herod Antipas),[3] and then gave her daughter, Salome, as a wife to her other uncle (Philip). When he died, Salome married her own cousin (Aristobulus of Chalcis).[4] Salome could not marry her own uncle (Herod of Chalcis) because he had already married her cousin, Berenice.[5] When Berenice's husband (and also uncle) died, she is alleged to have had an affair with her own brother, Agrippa II.[6]

Before such a tangled family, English kinship terms fail. The reader is hence advised to refer to Chart 1 to redress any confusion that arises due to the mass of names and interrelations mentioned below. It is vital to get good bearings regarding the Herodian family, for many of their members are presented in the New Testament as having connections with Jesus or his early followers. Many also had connections with Josephus, whether direct or indirect. The Herodians are therefore plausible avenues for Josephus' knowledge of Jesus, with one or two perhaps being included within the 'first men among us' whom Josephus says participated in Jesus' execution.

Agrippa II and Berenice

Of all the Herodians, Josephus was closest to King Herod Agrippa II (*c.*27/8–94/5 CE). Agrippa II wrote sixty-two letters to Josephus or on his behalf.[7] In two that remain he says that he writes to Josephus, his 'dearest friend' (φιλτάτῳ),[8] and promises Josephus that 'whenever you should meet with me, I myself shall inform you

[2] Matthew 2:1–18.

[3] *Antiquities* 18.136. Josephus claims that Herodias first married a son of Herod the Great named 'Herod' and then divorced him to marry another son named 'Herod', who also had the name 'Antipas' (*War* 2.167) and was Tetrarch of Galilee (*War* 1.668, 2.94–5). Herodias' daughter later married Philip, the Tetrarch of Trachonitis, who was yet another son of Herod the Great (*Antiquities* 18.137). Matthew and Mark however state that Herodias first married a son of Herod the Great named 'Philip' before divorcing him and marrying a son of Herod the Great named Herod (Matthew 14:3; Mark 6:17). Many scholars have concluded, not without controversy, that Herodias' first husband's name therefore was 'Herod Philip' just as her second husband's name was 'Herod Antipas'. For discussion, see Hoehner, *Herod Antipas*, 131–6.

[4] *Antiquities* 18.137.

[5] *Antiquities* 19.354.

[6] *Antiquities* 20.145; Juvenal, *Satires* 6.158.

[7] *Life* 364. For the age of Agrippa II, see nn. 15, 44.

[8] *Life* 365–6.

of many matters which are not generally known'.[9] Agrippa began his reign in 49 CE over Chalcis, a kingdom northeast of Galilee close to the location where Matthew has Jesus uttering his famous phrase 'upon this rock I will build my church'.[10] Then in 53 CE Agrippa was transferred by the Emperor to the greater territories of Batanea, Trachonitis, Gaulonitis, and Abilene,[11] in portions of which Jesus had personally ministered.[12] The town of Bethsaida, for example, seems to have straddled the border of Galilee and Trachonitis and three of Jesus' disciples called Bethsaida home,[13] and Jesus himself frequently visited the locale and was even said to have worked several miracles there.[14]

As king of such areas, nothing prevents the conclusion that Agrippa II would have come to know many locals, both high and low, who had encountered Jesus twenty or so years before, or at least were correctly informed of him. But these persons would not be Agrippa's only connections to Jesus, for it turns out that Agrippa actually grew up in Jesus' home territory of Galilee, being born there in 27/8 CE and living there off and on until probably at least 37 CE.[15] And Galilee in the late 20s and early 30s is of course when and where Jesus conducted most of his ministry.[16]

[9] ὅταν μέντοι συντύχῃς μοι καὶ αὐτός σε πολλὰ κατηχήσω τῶν ἀγνοουμένων. *Life* 366. A more literal translation would be 'matters which are unknown', but I adapt the translation of Thackeray, *Josephus: The Life, Against Apion*, 135.

[10] According to Matthew 16:13–18, Jesus spoke these words in the area of Caesarea Philippi, and this locale seems to have bordered Chalcis since Chalcis included much of the large mountain range of Mount Hermon in present-day Lebanon and Syria. See as well Mark 8:27. Jesus also ministered further west of Chalcis in the areas of Tyre and Sidon, see Matthew 15:21; Mark 7:24. There were several territories in the ancient world called 'Chalcis', but the one ruled by Agrippa II must have been relatively close to Galilee, see Will, 'Un Vieux Problème de La Topographie de La Beqā' Antique'; Reinach, 'Le mari de Salomé et les monnaies de Nicopolis d'Arménie', 141. Schwartz however disagrees, see Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaean Politics*, 9 n. 25.

[11] *Antiquities* 20.138; *War* 2.247.

[12] Portions of these areas make up what is termed the Decapolis, see Mark 7:31. Crowds also followed Jesus from these regions (Matthew 4:25; Mark 3:8; Luke 6:17) and one man was said to loudly proclaim Jesus' deeds in this area too (Mark 5:20).

[13] According to John 1:44 the apostles Philip, Andrew, and Peter were from Bethsaida. See also John 12:21.

[14] Matthew 11:21; Mark 6:45, 8:22; Luke 9:10, 10:13.

[15] As Josephus says, Agrippa II was about 17 when his father died (*Antiquities* 19.354), which was in the third year of Claudius (*Antiquities* 19.350–1) or 44 CE. Agrippa II was living in Galilee with his parents beginning around 28 CE where he remained for at least a few years until his father, Agrippa I, fled to Syria in 32 or 33 CE; see n. 41 below. Josephus says elsewhere that Agrippa II eventually was brought up in Rome (*Antiquities* 19.360), but he was probably not sent there until he reached puberty around 40 CE or when his father, Agrippa I, was appointed to rule over the Tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias in 37 CE (*Antiquities* 18.237–8). For example, Herod the Great's sons were not sent to Rome for education until they were 10–14 years old given that they were sent between 20 and 22 BCE. They then were retrieved when they were of marriageable age in 17 or 18 BCE (see *Antiquities* 15.342, 16.6, 16.136; chronological notes in Loeb translation; and also Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People*, vol. 1, p. 452). The whereabouts of Agrippa II between 32 and 37 CE are not entirely clear, but Josephus does say in *Antiquities* 18.160 that his mother took her children (undoubtedly including Agrippa II) back to Judaea, which must have been sometime in the mid-30s CE. All told then, Agrippa II would have as a child spent significant time in Galilee and Judaea in the 30s CE. For a plausible reconstruction of the movements of the father of Agrippa II, see Schwartz, *Agrippa I*, 49–53.

[16] Matthew 4:23; Mark 1:39.

It is surely plausible that as a young boy Agrippa II heard of Jesus. Agrippa's own uncle, for example, is said by Luke to have interrogated Jesus[17] and others in his family had good opportunity to have witnessed Jesus in person.[18]

This leads to an intriguing possibility that I will discuss at the end of this chapter. For now, I will say that whatever knowledge Agrippa II had about Jesus (as juvenile as it may have been in the mind of a boy) could obviously have matured through Agrippa's contacts with others during his adult years. This is in evidence in Acts 25–6, where Luke reveals that Agrippa II personally attended the trial of the apostle Paul, around 59 CE.[19]

Preparatory to Paul's trial, Luke describes the Roman procurator Festus as informing Agrippa about the early Jesus movement.[20] This does not seem to have been necessary though, because when Paul speaks to Agrippa about Jesus he asserts that Agrippa 'is aware of these things' regarding Jesus 'since I am convinced that none of these things has escaped his attention'.[21]

Agrippa's sister, Berenice (*c.*28/ 9–after 79 CE), accompanied him at this trial and it is almost certain that Josephus knew her as well.[22] The evidence for this is that Josephus and Berenice were both in Rome at the same time;[23] Josephus knew Berenice's beloved brother, Agrippa II, quite well;[24] Josephus also knew her lover, the future emperor Titus;[25] and lastly Josephus knew both Agrippa II and Titus when both were in Rome, the very time that Titus was having his affair with Berenice.[26] Such connections mean that Josephus knew two different people, Berenice and Agrippa II, who attended the trial of the apostle Paul.

A few years after the trial of Paul we find further hints regarding Agrippa's knowledge of Jesus. Josephus tells us that, in 62 CE, Agrippa II defrocked the High Priest Ananus II for illegally executing 'James, the brother of Jesus who was called Christ'.[27] To take such drastic and risky political action as removing the High Priest, Agrippa II in all probability had reliable information about James, Jesus, and the early Christian movement.

Beyond this, such an event suggests that Agrippa II was not particularly hostile to Christians, since it would have been difficult for him to punish a High Priest on account of actions against a religious movement that Agrippa himself disliked. In support of this, Luke portrays Agrippa II as holding a sympathetic

[17] See pp. 194–6.
[18] See discussions of Agrippa I and Cypros, Herodias, Salome, and Aristobulus of Chalcis, pp. 165–72.
[19] Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3 p. 3331.
[20] Acts 25:13–22.
[21] λανθάνειν γὰρ αὐτὸν τούτων οὐ πείθομαι οὐθέν. Acts 26:26.
[22] For the age of Berenice, see n. 44 below.
[23] *Life* 422–3; *Apion* 1.50–1; Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 65.15.3–4.
[24] *Life* 362–6; *Apion* 1.51.
[25] *Life* 363, 416–23, 428; *War* 3.408, 5.114, 5.325; *Apion* 1.48–51.
[26] Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 65.15.3–4. For additional discussion about Berenice and Josephus, see Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaean Politics*, 115–18, 137–8, 156, 212–13.
[27] *Antiquities* 20.200.

curiosity toward Christianity, for at Paul's trial he makes the following reply to Paul's evangelizing efforts, 'In a short time you are persuading me to become a Christian!'[28] It is possible to instead translate the statement more skeptically as 'In a short time are you persuading me to become a Christian?' But, all the same, Agrippa and his sister Berenice are not described by Luke as being hostile to Christianity, and afterward they conclude that Paul had done nothing deserving of death.[29]

It stands to reason that Agrippa would have been well informed of Jesus. Not only would he have had good opportunity to learn of Jesus when he ruled over territories in which Jesus ministered only twenty or so years before, but he likely knew people even more closely connected to Jesus while growing up in Galilee in the 30s CE. Besides all this, Agrippa II and his sister Berenice personally interrogated the apostle Paul, and Agrippa II personally defrocked the High Priest on account of his illegal execution of Jesus' brother. And Josephus knew Agrippa II closely. Obviously, Josephus could have learned much of Jesus from Agrippa II and from his sister Berenice, whom Josephus also seems to have known.

Drusilla and Felix

Josephus' connections with the Herodian dynasty were not limited to Agrippa II and his sister Berenice however. It so happens that Agrippa II had also another sister, Drusilla (*c.*34/5–? CE),[30] who was the wife of Felix, the procurator of Judaea (r. 52–59 CE).[31] According to Luke, they too heard Paul testify during his imprisonment around 58 CE when Felix would call for him to speak of Jesus 'quite frequently'.[32] Felix is even described by Luke as possessing 'quite accurate knowledge' of Christianity.[33] Felix must have gained this knowledge apart from Paul since Luke indicates that Felix was well informed before meeting Paul. Felix could, for example, have learned of Jesus through official Roman or Jewish reports regarding Jesus' trial,[34] especially since he assumed his procuratorship only about twenty years after the event.

As far as Josephus is concerned, Seth Schwartz thinks it possible that he personally knew Felix's Herodian wife, Drusilla, due to the fact that Josephus and Drusilla both seem to have spent years in Rome at the same time where they also traveled in

[28] Ἐν ὀλίγῳ με πείθεις Χριστιανὸν ποιῆσαι. Acts 26:28.
[29] Acts 26:31.
[30] For the date of Drusilla's birth, see n. 44.
[31] Acts 24:24; *Antiquities* 20.142–3. Neither the beginning of Felix's governorship nor its duration is completely certain; see Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3 p. 3331.
[32] πυκνότερον. Acts 24:26.
[33] ἀκριβέστερον εἰδὼς τὰ περὶ τῆς ὁδοῦ. Acts 24:22.
[34] See Appendix 5 on Sanhedrin documents regarding Jesus' trial.

the same close society.[35] This would suggest that Josephus knew her husband Felix too. It scarcely needs to be pointed out that Josephus could thus have learned much of Jesus through Drusilla, or her husband (and former Judaean procurator) Felix, just as he could have through Agrippa II and Berenice. All of these individuals met Paul himself and heard him tell of Jesus, and Agrippa II and Felix are even said by Luke to have had good knowledge of Christianity before encountering Paul. Luke also seems to have been in attendance at these hearings,[36] so his statements regarding Agrippa II and Felix and their knowledge of Christianity should be given some weight.

But though Josephus knew Agrippa II and also Berenice, and perhaps even Drusilla and Felix, none of them could have been one of the 'first men' who accused Jesus. Agrippa II and Berenice were only little children, Drusilla was not yet born, and the non-Jewish Felix could hardly be expected to have dealt with Jesus in Jerusalem some twenty years before his procuratorship. Be that as it may, Agrippa II and Berenice were both definitely familiar with others in their family who had remarkable connections with Jesus and who had probably encountered him face to face. These family members would have been easily capable of telling Agrippa II and Berenice about Jesus and then for the two of them to relay this information to Josephus. Let us now turn and examine these family members.

Agrippa I and Cypros

The father of Agrippa II (and his sisters Berenice and Drusilla) was King Agrippa I (11/10 BCE–44 CE), who was appointed ruler over the territory of Philip the Tetrarch probably about 37 CE.[37] These territories covered Gaulonitis, Trachonitis, and Paneas, the same area where Jesus was said to sometimes minister, the very area in fact where Matthew records that Jesus revealed himself to be the Christ.[38]

[35] Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaean Politics*, 148, 156. The evidence that Drusilla lived in Rome with Felix after the destruction of Jerusalem is circumstantial, but plausible insofar as Rome seems the most likely place for them to go and their son clearly lived nearby Rome given that he was killed in the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE; see *Antiquities* 20.142–4. On Josephus living in Rome, see *Apion* 1.50; *Life* 422–3, 428–9.

[36] Luke, the author of Acts, uses the first-person plural 'we' to describe himself as being with Paul in Jerusalem in Acts 21:17–18, immediately after which Paul was arrested. During his imprisonment, Felix the Governor ordered that Paul's friends be allowed to minister to him, no doubt including Luke (Acts 24:23). Then sometime later, after Paul's trial before Agrippa and Berenice in Acts 26, Luke again says that 'we' would sail for Italy (Acts 27:1). Though some scholars dispute this, by far and away the most straightforward reading of these passages is that the author, Luke, is claiming to have accompanied Paul at these events.

[37] *War* 2.181. For a reconstruction of events relating to Agrippa I, see Schwartz, *Agrippa I*, 57–8.

[38] Matthew 16:13–18; Mark 8:27–30 which took place at Caesarea Philippi in Paneas. Philip's tetrarchy also included land from the northeastern shores of the Sea of Galilee spreading out north and east, locations where Jesus ministered; see Mark 5:1–20, 7:31–8, 8:27–38. On Philip's territory, see *Antiquities* 17.189. See also n. 10 above.

Then around 41 CE Agrippa I was granted the title of king by Emperor Caligula, who also expanded his territory to include Judaea, over which Agrippa I ruled until his death in 44 CE.[39] During this time he executed the apostle James, the son of Zebedee, who was the brother of the apostle John. He then locked up the apostle Peter in prison for execution.[40] To so aggressively pursue the closest disciples of Jesus, Agrippa I and his family would have been aware of many reports about Jesus in the 30s and early 40s CE.

Previous to all this though, Agrippa I served as *agoranomos* (a kind of inspector of markets) in Tiberias of Galilee for a few years before and after 30 CE,[41] precisely when and where Jesus and his followers were ministering.[42] At this time Agrippa I no doubt had ample opportunity to learn contemporary reports of Jesus. If we are to accept the Gospel accounts, then Agrippa would likely have been present at the birthday party of his brother-in-law (and uncle) Herod Antipas, where John the Baptist was executed, since 'the first men' of Galilee were in attendance.[43] The invitees most certainly included Agrippa I, as few in Galilee would have been more prominent and no Galilean family would have been more closely connected to Antipas than he. It follows that, if the Gospels are accurate, Agrippa I likely would have heard many contemporary reports of Jesus at the banquet given that the execution of John the Baptist (a close associate of Jesus) was by far and away the most notable event of the party and would have been a topic of great discussion. Agrippa's wife Cypros was also with him in Tiberias during these years seeing as she was bearing his five children at the time.[44] Clearly then, Agrippa I and Cypros were both extraordinarily well-placed to know of Jesus.

[39] *Antiquities* 19.274–5; see also Schwartz, *Agrippa I*, 91–3. For primary sources outside of Josephus, see Philo, *In Flaccum* 25; *Legatio ad Gaium* 326. For the death of Agrippa I, see Acts 12:20–3; *Antiquities* 19.343–53.

[40] Acts 12:1–5.

[41] *Antiquities* 18.149. These dates are not certain, but they seem the most plausible reconstruction of the evidence. See Hoehner, *Herod Antipas*, 259 n. 1; Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People*, vol. 2, 151 n. 4. Since these scholars, the arrival of Agrippa to Tiberias by 29 or 30 CE has been further supported through the discovery of a lead weight dating to 31 CE and inscribed with what is likely Agrippa's name; see Stein, 'Gaius Julius, an Agoranomos from Tiberias'. Additionally, Josephus says that Agrippa I left his position in Tiberias and fled to Flaccus in Syria (*Antiquities* 18.150), and this was likely on or after 32 CE, since Flaccus does not seem to have been governor of Syria until 32 CE and then died in 33 CE; see Schwartz, *Agrippa I*, 47, 51. For an overview of the founding of Tiberias, see Hoehner, *Herod Antipas*, 91–100.

[42] Tiberias is only mentioned by name in the Gospels at John 6:23 (and perhaps 6:1), but it was a major city in Galilee and Jesus of course spent most of his ministry in Galilee, see Matthew 4:23; Mark 1:39.

[43] τοῖς πρώτοις τῆς Γαλιλαίας. Mark 6:21.

[44] *Antiquities* 19.354 lists four children (see also *War* 2.220). A fifth child, Drusus, is mentioned in *Antiquities* 18.132. This Drusus must have been the third child born since Josephus says that he died before puberty, yet he is not listed in *Antiquities* 19.354 as being alive in 44 CE when Agrippa II was 17, Berenice was 16, Mariamne was 10, and Drusilla was 6 years old. Given that Drusus apparently outlived his infancy but did not reach puberty, and given the age gap between Berenice and Mariamne, it is most probable that Drusus was the third child born. All in all then, Cypros seems to have borne five children to Agrippa I between 27/8 and 38/9 CE. Important information regarding the Herodian dynasty genealogy is given in *Antiquities* 17.12–22, 18.130–42; *War* 1.562–5. See also *War* 1.557.

Herod Antipas and Herodias

Josephus' connections to Jesus may be drawn more closely still. It turns out that Agrippa I had obtained his position as *agoranomos* of Tiberias only because his wife, Cypros, was on close, personal terms with his sister, Herodias. As Josephus relates, Cypros, being worried about her husband's financial troubles and mental health, appealed to Herodias. Herodias then prevailed upon her husband, Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee, to assist Agrippa I.[45] Thereafter, at Herodias' behest, Antipas appointed Agrippa I to his position of *agoranomos* of Tiberias a few years before 30 CE, as recounted above.

Since Tiberias was the administrative capital of Antipas' territory, this means that the family of Herod Antipas was living in Tiberias at the same time the family of Agrippa I was also living in Tiberias. Such a situation would have meant that both families—husbands, wives, and children—were in frequent, personal contact for they were quite close in terms of blood, marriage, politics, and geography. In fact, Josephus specifically recounts one story where Agrippa I and Antipas attended a banquet together.[46] And Agrippa I, the reader will remember, was also likely present at Antipas' birthday party where John the Baptist was executed. Family gatherings of this sort would have presumably happened often, especially during Jewish festivals in Jerusalem, as over Passover.[47]

In view of such close familial interaction, it is fair to conclude that Josephus' friends Agrippa II and Berenice[48] would have been in close contact with their uncle and aunt, Herod Antipas and Herodias, both of whom likely knew much about Jesus. As recounted in the Gospels, Herodias is the one who demanded the head of John the Baptist. Herod Antipas is the one who ordered John's head to be given.[49] Previous to this, Antipas used to listen to John preach.[50] The Gospels go on to elaborate that Antipas had good knowledge of Jesus: he had heard of Jesus,[51] he desired to see Jesus,[52] he also desired to kill Jesus.[53] He even knew reports of Jesus' miracles and hoped to see them.[54] Not only this, but a man who was brought up with Antipas was a follower of Jesus, and the wife of his steward was a follower of

[45] *Antiquities* 18.147–9.
[46] *Antiquities* 18.150.
[47] For similar thoughts, see Kokkinos, *The Herodian Dynasty*, 308.
[48] I omit Drusilla here because she would likely not have been able to recall much directly about Herodias and Herod Antipas, since she was born in 34/5 CE and they were exiled in 39 CE. On the date of exile, see *Antiquities* 18.252–5; Hoehner, *Herod Antipas*, 262 and notes.
[49] Matthew 14:1–12; Mark 6:21–9.
[50] Mark 6:20.
[51] Matthew 14:1; Mark 6:14.
[52] Luke 9:9.
[53] Luke 13:31.
[54] Luke 23:8.

Jesus as well.[55] Antipas appears further to have sent representatives—the Gospels call them 'Herodians'—to test Jesus on the subject of taxation.[56]

But most strikingly of all, it is recorded in the Gospel of Luke that Herod Antipas, along with his soldiers, interrogated Jesus on the day of his crucifixion.[57] This Herod Antipas, the reader will recall, was in actual fact the uncle (and great uncle) of Herod Agrippa II and Berenice, both of whom were known to Josephus. It should be emphasized that both Agrippa II and Berenice would have seen their uncle Antipas many times growing up in Galilee in the 30s CE. From him they could have told Josephus many things about Jesus of Nazareth.

Salome and Aristobulus of Chalcis

As surprising as it may be, there are still others in the Herodian family who may have provided Josephus with information about Jesus. Of those that remain, one of the most plausible is Salome. Were the Gospels to be believed, she was the girl who requested from her stepfather, Herod Antipas, the head of John the Baptist and then presented it to her mother, Herodias.[58] Regarding Salome's age at the time, she appears to have been in her early teens because she is said to have been only a 'girl' (κοράσιον),[59] but yet was soon old enough to wed her great-uncle, Philip the Tetrarch, who died in 34 CE.[60] Philip ruled territories on the northeastern side of the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus occasionally ministered.[61] Salome could have heard of Jesus while living with her husband, or heard of him earlier when living with her mother and stepfather in Galilee, perhaps even during one of John the Baptist's preaching sessions before her stepfather, Herod Antipas.[62] She certainly must have learned of Jesus around when he was crucified, for if Luke is correct, her stepfather had been hoping to meet Jesus and finally got his opportunity to do so when he interrogated Jesus the morning of his crucifixion.[63] This likely would have been a topic of great conversation in the household.

[55] Acts 13:1; Luke 8:3. Other members of the Herodian family who were associated with Jesus may include the anonymous royal official whose son Jesus healed in John 4:46–54.

[56] Matthew 22:16; Mark 12:13. See also Mark 3:6.

[57] Luke 23:6–15. Though only Luke records this event in the New Testament, it does not seem plausible that he fabricated it as a some have claimed. On the reasons for its historical core, see Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I–IX*, vol. 2, pp. 1478–80.

[58] Matthew 14:1–12; Mark 6:14–29. See also Luke 3:19–20, 9:7–9; John 4:24. For the name Salome, see *Antiquities* 18.136–7.

[59] Matthew 14:11; Mark 6:22.

[60] *Antiquities* 18.106, 137. Hoehner, *Herod Antipas*, 155–6; Reinach, 'Le mari de Salomé et les monnaies de Nicopolis d'Arménie', 154.

[61] See nn. 10 and 38 above.

[62] Mark 6:20.

[63] Luke 23:7–12.

Aside from knowing about Jesus, it is also possible that Salome was acquainted with Josephus, as the later course of her life make such connections quite natural. In 34 CE, Salome's husband (and great-uncle) Philip died.[64] She then married her cousin Aristobulus of Chalcis, who would in 53 CE come to rule Chalcis, a kingdom north-northeast of Galilee,[65] around where Jesus traveled at times.[66] Salome and Aristobulus went on to live for many years. Coins exist featuring Salome as still queen in 67/8 CE.[67] Her husband Aristobulus reigned into the 90s.[68] How long Salome lived is not known, nor if Josephus knew her directly, though he certainly could have.[69]

[64] *Antiquities* 18.106, 137. Hoehner, *Herod Antipas*, 155.

[65] *Antiquities* 18.137. Aristobulus evidently did not receive the kingdom of Chalcis at his father's death, for first it was given to Herod Agrippa II and only afterwards to Aristobulus (*Antiquities* 20.104, 20.138; *War* 2.223, 2.247, 7.226). For further references to the family and career of Aristobulus, see *Antiquities* 18.134, 20.158; *War* 2.221, 2.252; and Hoehner, *Herod Antipas*, 251; Reinach, 'Le mari de Salomé et les monnaies de Nicopolis d'Arménie', 141.

[66] For Jesus' activity in or at least near Chalcis, see n. 10 above.

[67] Reinach, 'Le mari de Salomé et les monnaies de Nicopolis d'Arménie', 154; Dalaison, 'L'atelier monétaire de Nicopolis en Arménie Mineure', 18–19; Dalaison, 'Qui était Salomé?', 504. Reinach was not able to correctly read the inscription of the coin of Salome he had before him, and hence incorrectly dated it to around 54 CE; see Reinach, 'Le mari de Salomé et les monnaies de Nicopolis d'Arménie', 143. Dalaison was also incorrect in dating the coin to 61/2 CE since a very legible example clearly dating to 66/7 CE was, I believe, unavailable to her. This coin has been catalogued under RPC #1.3840. I thank Kevin Hoffman for assisting me with these resources.

[68] Reinach, 'Le mari de Salomé et les monnaies de Nicopolis d'Arménie', 156.

[69] It should not be theorized that Salome must have died by 70/1 CE on the grounds that she is unmentioned on a coin of her husband Aristobulus from 70/1 CE (RPC #2.1692). This is because there are two other coins of Aristobulus that do not feature Salome, but which date to when she was still alive (RPC #1.3839, 1.3840A). Reinach was not aware of this when he theorized that Salome had died in the 60s CE, see Reinach, 'Le mari de Salomé et les monnaies de Nicopolis d'Arménie', 155. Reinach also recounts a legend from Nicephoras Callistus (*Ecclesiastical History* 1.20 in PG vol. 145, col. 692d–693a) that tells a story of Salome dying in a snowy environment, which would imply she died before moving to snowless Lebanon from Armenia in 72 CE (the date in which lesser Armenia was taken from Aristobulus); see Reinach, 'Le mari de Salomé et les monnaies de Nicopolis d'Arménie', 155. However, the mountains of Lebanon do receive much snow. Another theory is put forth by Kokkinos, who, against the evidence, theorizes that the Salome whom Aristobulus married was the granddaughter of Herodias, not her daughter; see Kokkinos, *The Herodian Dynasty*, 310. Other scholars rightly disagree; see Dalaison, 'Qui était Salomé?', 498–501; Dalaison, 'L'atelier monétaire de Nicopolis en Arménie Mineure', 10–13; Reinach, 'Le mari de Salomé et les monnaies de Nicopolis d'Arménie', 153–4; Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaean Politics*, 149. Though Dalaison disproves the arguments of Kokkinos, she then offers her own theory (Dalaison, 'Qui était Salomé?', 502–3) that the Salome who married Aristobulus was indeed the daughter of Herodias, but that the girl who danced for the head of John the Baptist was not. This requires Dalaison to create a new personage of whom there is no record in ancient history and to argue awkwardly that Herodias was not actually the mother of the girl who danced for the head of John the Baptist, even though the Gospels say she was; see Mark 6:22 and Matthew 14:6. This is made worse by the fact that the entire tenor of the passage in Mark and Matthew suggests that the girl had a closer relationship with Herodias than with Antipas, thus suggesting Herodias was her mother and that Antipas had recently become her stepfather. Dalaison's only substantive point is that a textual variant at Mark 6:22 can be construed to mean that the girl in question was the daughter of Antipas, not Herodias. However, as most agree, Matthew used an extremely early version of Mark and so can be trusted for supplying the original textual reading. Also, the variant in Mark is not contained in early Coptic, Syriac, and Latin translations, nor several fifth-century Greek manuscripts. Lastly, Herod Antipas does not have any children listed by Josephus in his genealogies of the Herodian dynasty; see n. 247. But even if Dalaison is correct, it would still mean that Salome was likely at the banquet where John the Baptist was executed because the banquet was held in honor of, according to Dalaison, her own father.

One point that speaks to the likelihood of this is that Josephus appears to have known Salome's son, Herod, personally.[70] And Schwartz considered it likely that he knew her husband Aristobulus too, and even obtained historical documents from him.[71] It is also possible that Josephus corresponded with Aristobulus during his many years of historical research. Support for this comes from the fact that Josephus says at one point that he was familiar with 'some of the relatives' (τινες αὐτοῦ τῶν συγγενῶν) of Agrippa II who were still living in 75 CE and who had 'been present' (παρατετεύχεισαν) for the Jewish war with Rome.[72] There were not many relatives of Agrippa II left at that time who also participated in the war, so Josephus may well have had in mind Salome and especially her husband Aristobulus.[73]

This Aristobulus is therefore yet another intriguing candidate for Josephus' knowledge of Jesus. As before mentioned, it is possible that Josephus either knew Aristobulus directly or corresponded with him regarding historical documents. But if not, he seems to have known Aristobulus' son, Herod. It is also likely that Aristobulus would have had good knowledge of Jesus. The date of Aristobulus' birth is unclear, but evidence indicates it was before 15 CE.[74] So he would have been

[70] *Apion* 1.51; see Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaean Politics*, 149–50 n. 133; Barclay, *Against Apion*, 37 n. 210. Barclay seems to lean toward identifying this Herod as indeed being the son of Salome, but he also believes that there is one other promising candidate: a certain Herod, the son of Phasael, the son of Phasael, who in turn was the elder brother of Herod the Great (*Antiquities* 17.22, 18.130–1). As Schwartz points out though, Phasael senior, the brother of Herod the Great, died around 40 BCE when his eldest son was already 7 years old (*Antiquities* 14.367–71, 15.12–13; *War* 1.274–5). His other son, the younger Phasael, therefore would have been born no later than 40 BCE and probably several years earlier. The younger Phasael's wife, Salampsio, had a full-blooded brother who was born around 35 BCE and she herself must have been born before 30 BCE when her mother died (*Antiquities* 15.237). Hence, Herod, son of this younger Phasael and Salampsio, was almost assuredly born between 20 and 5 BCE since this would put the likely age of his father at between 20 and 40 years old and the age of his mother at between 15 and 35 years old. This Herod therefore would in all probability not have been alive to receive a copy of Josephus' *War* (*Apion* 1.51), which was completed at the earliest in 75 CE (this is the date of the last event mentioned; see *War* 7.158; Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 65.15.1).

[71] Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaean Politics*, 157–8.

[72] *Life* 362. See also *Life* 359; *Apion* 1.50–2. Josephus must have presented his *War* to relatives of Agrippa II no earlier than 75 CE when the work was completed; on this date see n. 70 above.

[73] Josephus may imply that he knew multiple Jewish kings in *Apion* 2.134 where he suggests that such kings were 'among us' (παρ' ἡμῖν); see Chapter 5 p. 155 n. 126. He certainly knew King Agrippa II, and Aristobulus would be the one other Jewish king he reasonably could have known. However, *Apion* 2.134 only really necessitates that he knew one Jewish king, so this is not conclusive. Josephus also knew Archelaus, who married Mariamne, sister of Agrippa II; see *Apion* 1.51; *Antiquities* 19.355, 20.140, 20.147. Schwartz wonders if Josephus also knew Julius Hyrcanus the son of Queen Berenice. This is based on the fact that the name Hyrcanus is rare and may have been selected so as to flatter Berenice, see *Life* 5; *Antiquities* 20.104; *War* 2.221; Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaean Politics*, 11. On Josephus' connection to Berenice, see p. 163.

[74] For example, Aristobulus was in all probability older than his future wife Salome, who was probably born between 16 and 20 CE, as discussed above. For the age of Aristobulus, see Reinach, 'Le mari de Salomé et les monnaies de Nicopolis d'Arménie', 153; Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaean Politics*, 149. However, Kokkinos believes Aristobulus was born around 30 CE (Kokkinos, *The Herodian Dynasty*, 305), but this would make him around fifteen years younger than his wife Salome, which forces Kokkinos (p. 310) to imagine that Salome was actually the granddaughter of Herodias when Josephus specifically says otherwise; see *Antiquities* 18.136–7.

at least a teenager when Jesus was ministering. He also could have observed some portion of the trial of Jesus, especially since, if Luke is to be trusted, his uncle and future father-in-law Herod Antipas the Tetrarch interrogated Jesus the day of his crucifixion.[75]

Observations: The Herodian Candidates

In sorting through the above interrelations, it is clear that Josephus was acquainted with several in the Herodian dynasty who would have been well apprised of Jesus and some of whom may have encountered Jesus directly, whether they be Agrippa II, Berenice, Drusilla, Felix, Salome, Aristobulus, or others unknown. But in saying that it was the 'first men among us' who accused Jesus, Josephus implies that he was familiar with leading men who were somehow involved in the execution of Jesus. And it is clear that neither Agrippa II, nor his sisters Berenice and Drusilla, nor his cousin Salome, nor her son Herod, nor even the procurator Felix match this description owing to their age, gender, or circumstances. But there is one Herodian candidate remaining for the 'first men among us': Aristobulus of Chalcis. Evidence shows that he was a teenager or young adult in 30/33 CE and that Jesus was brought to trial before Herod Antipas, who was Aristobulus' own uncle and future father-in-law.

I will speak at the end of this chapter how an encounter between Aristobulus and Jesus is not as speculative as it first seems. But, for now, I will say that if such an encounter did not occur, then Josephus may have had in mind other Herodians who had to do with the execution of Jesus. As we have also seen, Josephus' phrase 'among us' (παρ' ἡμῖν) might on rare occasion be interpreted as indicating connections that, while quite close, were not direct.[76] If this is so in the TF, then Josephus could instead have been thinking of someone like Agrippa I, Herod of Chalcis, or especially Herod Antipas, who is said by Luke to have personally interrogated Jesus on the day of his crucifixion.[77] Though Josephus did not know these men directly, he did have many secondary connections with them through their children and other relatives.

[75] Luke 23:6–12.

[76] This is the case with three out of fifty-one instances of the phrase παρ' ἡμῖν, though even in these three it is more plausible that they refer to a direct connection; see Chapter 4 pp. 151–8.

[77] Luke 23:6–12. It is true that Josephus says in the TF that Jesus was accused by 'first men' and that Luke states that Herod Antipas did not find anything worthy of death in Jesus (Luke 23:15). This would seem to indicate that the Herodians did not bring an accusation against Jesus. However, Luke does say elsewhere that the 'rulers' of the Jews delivered Jesus to death (Luke 24:20), and that Herod Antipas 'gathered' against Jesus at his trial (Acts 4:27) and that Herod Antipas had previously tried to kill Jesus (Luke 13:31). Antipas also badly mistreated Jesus on the day of his crucifixion, which is suggestive that he did not find Jesus to be innocent of all charges, but only innocent of certain trumped-up charges presented by the Sanhedrin.

One must not forget though that even if Josephus did not consider the Herodians to be the 'first men among us' who accused Jesus, he could still have gained accurate knowledge of Jesus from some of them.

The Rabbinic Family of Hillel

But let us move on to more probable candidates for the 'first men among us'. Aside from royal acquaintances, Josephus was connected with the rabbinic family of Hillel. This Hillel was an illustrious Jewish rabbi who founded a prestigious rabbinical school (or, perhaps more accurately, a lineage) in the first century BCE, as is seen in Chart 2.[78] His successor, Simon I, was a famous rabbi in his own right and may have been Hillel's son.[79] Either way, Simon in his turn, is reported to have had yet another famous rabbi as a son, Gamaliel by name (sometimes called Gamaliel I).[80] Gamaliel is mentioned several times in the Talmud and Mishnah.[81] Many of his activities are unknown, but he evidently wrote authoritative letters to the people of Galilee and southern Palestine, and another to the Jews in the Diaspora.[82] He is further reported to have been known by King Agrippa I[83] and, more importantly, to have been a highly reputed Pharisee and teacher of the law.[84] To this, the Mishnah records that 'When Rabban Gamaliel the Elder died, the glory of the Law ceased and abstinence died'.[85] So respected was Gamaliel that he was first of the pre-70 CE Pharisees to earn the title *Rabban*, 'our master', and he seems also have been given the title *Nasi*, 'Prince'.[86] If so, this means he was the formal leader of the Sanhedrin around when Jesus was ministering.[87]

[78] For discussion, see Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions*, part 1, 312–40.

[79] Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat* 15a.10. Neusner states however that this is not definite since only later commentators assert the father-son relationship, see Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions*, part 1, 294. Some have further thought that Simon may have been the Simeon who is said by Luke to have taken the baby Jesus in his arms, but such is unpersuasive speculation; see Cutler, 'Does the Simeon of Luke 2 Refer to Simeon the Son of Hillel?' The strongest evidence that Cutler can put forth is that much like Rabbi Simon, Simeon is called 'a great teacher' and a 'rabbi' in the *Gospel of Nicodemus* 16.2, 6. But the Gospel of Nicodemus is scarcely tethered to historical facts.

[80] Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat* 15a.10, 19a.10; for discussion, see Roth, 'Gamaliel, Rabban'. Again though, the fact that Rabbi Gamaliel was both the son of Simon and grandson of Hillel is not certain; see n. 79 above.

[81] For a comprehensive survey, see Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions*, part 1, 341–76.

[82] Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 11a.14–11b.4.

[83] Babylonian Talmud, *Avodah Zarah* 55a.2–3.

[84] The evidence for Gamaliel being a Pharisee is that Luke says so in Acts 5:34 and then implies the same in Acts 22:3 where Paul, a famous Pharisee, says that he learned at the feet of Gamaliel. Josephus also labels Simon, the son of Gamaliel, as both a Pharisee and a descendent of an extremely famous lineage, implying that his father, Gamaliel, was also a Pharisee; see *Life* 191.

[85] Mishnah, *Sotah* 9.15 (Danby translation p. 306).

[86] Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions*, part 1, 375.

[87] In the above footnote, Neusner doubts that Gamaliel was accorded the title of *Nasi*. However, Jewish tradition does state this (Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat* 15a.10); it also states that at some point Gamaliel was removed from a certain office (Babylonian Talmud, *Rosh Hashanah* 22a.1; *Sanhedrin* 11b.4). The Mishnah further describes Gamaliel as seemingly being in charge of a 'court' (*beit din*)

Gamaliel was also familiar with Christianity. This makes sense because, as a leading Pharisee, he would have known much about Jesus insofar as the Pharisees were a locus of opposition to Jesus throughout his ministry.[88] More explicit evidence of Gamaliel's knowledge of Christianity is found in Acts 5, between 30 and 35 CE, when the apostles are arrested and brought before the High Priest and the Sanhedrin. There, Peter and the other apostles make an impassioned speech where they accuse the Sanhedrin of murdering Jesus: 'The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you murdered by crucifying him on a tree'.[89]

Then, in the words of Luke, 'a certain Pharisee in the Sanhedrin named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law honored by all the people, arose and ordered that the men be brought outside for a moment'.[90] He then counseled the Sanhedrin to follow a moderate course of action. His advice wins over the Sanhedrin, who flogged the apostles and then released them. Later in Acts 22 we learn that the Pharisee Saul of Tarsus, the future apostle Paul, 'was trained at the feet of Gamaliel'.[91] Thus, according to the book of Acts, Gamaliel was of immense reputation in the early to mid-30s CE when he already had great authority in the Sanhedrin—if not being the leader of the Sanhedrin itself. He also had directly encountered the foremost of the apostles.

More than this, Gamaliel was involved in the trial of Jesus. This is evident for several sound reasons. The first is chronological, since as a highly prestigious member (or even the actual leader) of the Sanhedrin in the early 30s CE, probability indicates that he would have been present at Jesus' trial. Such is all the more likely because the Mishnah required any trial of a false prophet to have the whole body of the Sanhedrin present,[92] and Matthew and Mark both say that indeed 'the whole Sanhedrin' (τὸ συνέδριον ὅλον) was present at the trial of Jesus.[93] Gamaliel hence must have been in attendance. And, as a leader of the Pharisees, Gamaliel would have had great interest in Jesus, their long-time enemy. Further confirming Gamaliel's participation in the trial is the conclusion of Peter's speech before Gamaliel in Acts 5, where the apostle emphatically says to the Sanhedrin 'you [plural] murdered' (ὑμεῖς διεχειρίσασθε) Jesus.[94] Given Gamaliel's response to this allegation and his prestigious position as both a leading Pharisee and a leading member of the Sanhedrin, Gamaliel surely must have been included as one who 'murdered' Jesus.

which met in Jerusalem (Mishnah, *Rosh Hashanah* 2.5). This court seems to have been the Great Sanhedrin.

[88] The Pharisees are mentioned in the New Testament so frequently that it is not worth listing individual instances, but by my count they are referred to nearly one hundred times and are almost always hostile to Jesus.

[89] Acts 5:30.

[90] Acts 5:34.

[91] Acts 22:3. For discussions on the historicity of this claim, see Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, pp. 3217–20; Avery-Peck et al., 'Gamaliel and Paul'.

[92] See n. 215.

[93] Matthew 26:59; Mark 14:55, 15:1. See nn. 214–15.

[94] Acts 5:30.

But if Gamaliel was connected with Jesus, was he also connected with Josephus? The Jewish historian refers to Gamaliel three times, and always as the father of one called 'Simon', yet another famous Rabbi.[95] This Simon (sometimes titled Simon II) is further mentioned in Jewish tradition as also being the son of Gamaliel.[96] The Babylonian Talmud goes on to claim that, like his father before him, Simon was the *Nasi*, that is, the prince or leader of the Sanhedrin.[97] And it was this Sanhedrin that Josephus communicated with while general of Galilee.[98] Josephus further explains that he himself knew Simon. The passage is worth quoting at length:

> Simon son of Gamaliel . . . was of the city of Jerusalem, and was of an exceedingly famous lineage, and of the sect of the Pharisees, who seem to surpass others in the following of ancestral laws. He was a man of immense intelligence and reason, able to correct a poor state of affairs by his wisdom. He was an old friend and companion of John, but he was at that time at variance with me.[99]

As Josephus goes on to recount, around 68/9 CE, Simon son of Gamaliel intricately orchestrated the betrayal of Josephus by bribing the former High Priest and current supreme commander, Ananus II.[100]

The above passages make clear that Josephus knew Simon and that Simon's father, Gamaliel, would have had intimate knowledge of Jesus. Not only this, since Gamaliel was the teacher of Saul of Tarsus, the future apostle Paul, it is obvious that his son Simon would have had good opportunity to become familiar with Paul—both were Pharisees, both were raised in Jerusalem,[101] both lived roughly at the same time, and both learned at the feet of the great Rabbi Gamaliel.[102] Simon was also a member of the Sanhedrin when it presided over the trials of Paul[103] and James, the brother of Jesus.[104] All this suggests that Simon knew quite a bit about Jesus and the apostles, and that he would have been able to communicate this to Josephus directly.

Yet could Simon son of Gamaliel, be one of Josephus' 'first men among us'? Could he have met Jesus? And, more than that, is it possible that Simon also

[95] *Life* 190–2, 309; *War* 4.159. For further discussion on Simon, see Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions*, part 1, 377–88.

[96] Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat* 15a.10; Mishnah *Kerithoth* 1.7; Mishnah *Ta'anit* 4:8. Some of Simon's teachings may be preserved in Talmudic literature; see Neusner, part 1, 377–88.

[97] Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat* 15a.10.

[98] *Life* 62. For discussion on when Simon was leading the Sanhedrin, see below.

[99] *Life* 191–2.

[100] On Ananus II, his role as High Priest and supreme commander, and his relationship with Josephus, see below pp. 187–8.

[101] Acts 22:3. For discussion, see Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3 pp. 3207–8.

[102] See p. 193 for discussions on Gamaliel training his son Simon.

[103] Paul stood before the Sanhedrin in the 50s CE (Acts 22:30, 23:1–6), and Paul also claims that the Sanhedrin in the 30s CE was quite familiar with him (Acts 22:5).

[104] *Antiquities* 20.200.

participated in the trial of Jesus? Simon certainly can be placed in Jerusalem at the time since his family resided there.[105] But was he old enough to have participated?

It is not clear exactly when Simon was born. What can be said confidently in this regard is that Simon's father, Gamaliel, was already of enormous reputation in the early 30s CE, suggesting that Gamaliel himself was probably born at least by 20 BCE in order to gain such standing. His son Simon, as Josephus says, was of similar fame by 68/9 CE. Jewish tradition pushes this date earlier still since it portrays him, firstly, as the prince of the Sanhedrin;[106] secondly, as flourishing before the destruction of the Temple;[107] and thirdly, as writing letters on mundane calendrical matters to the Jews throughout Israel[108]—not something one would likely be concerned with doing when Rome was ravaging Israel after 66 CE. This suggests that Simon had already achieved the highest religious stature by 65 CE at the latest.

Josephus also notes that during the Jewish war Simon was 'an old friend and companion of John' (φίλος τε παλαιὸς τῷ Ἰωάννῃ καὶ συνήθης),[109] implying that Simon was not a young man at the time since his 'old friend' John went on to obtain command of both Jerusalem[110] and its Temple during the final stages of the Jewish war.[111] Such a feat typically requires decades of experience to accomplish. All this chronological data offers the reasonable conclusion that Simon was getting on in years by 65 CE. He hence was very likely born before 10 CE. He therefore would have been an adult when Jesus was brought to trial in 30/33 CE.

Moreover, Simon was descended from an illustrious rabbinic lineage, a lineage in which his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather were classed as among the most famous rabbis of their day.[112] And Simon himself went on to have many famous rabbis as direct male descendants with his son, grandson, and great-grandson all evidently leading the Sanhedrin.[113] Undoubtedly, in such a family, rabbinic practices were passed down from father to son, meaning that Simon would have been carefully trained from childhood by his own father Gamaliel to assume the role of distinguished rabbi.

If all these things are so (and I believe they are quite likely), then Simon was well positioned to have been a partisan in the trial of Jesus—if not as a member of the Sanhedrin, then perhaps as one of their students who are said in the Mishnah

[105] Given that his father was the prince of the Sanhedrin, his family must have lived in Jerusalem. Acts 22:3 appears to confirm that at least his father lived in Jerusalem.

[106] Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat* 15a.10.

[107] Mishnah *Kerithoth* 1.7.

[108] Midrash Tannaim on Deuteronomy 26:13 §1–13; for discussion see Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions*, part 1, 378–9.

[109] *Life* 192.

[110] *War* 4.503. John assumed control of Jerusalem after a power struggle following the death of Ananus II, the previous supreme commander.

[111] *War* 4.577.

[112] Even if one follows Neusner (n. 79) and supposes that Simon was not actually the great-grandson of Hillel, Josephus is quite clear that Simon was descended from Rabbi Gamaliel.

[113] Roth, 'Gamaliel, Rabban'; Burgansky, 'Simeon Ben Gamaliel I'; Burgansky, 'Simeon Ben Gamaliel II (of Jabneh)'; Ta-Shma, 'Judah (Nesiah)'.

and Tosefta to have had specific seats reserved for them when the Sanhedrin held court.[114] But if otherwise, Simon clearly would have had good, close knowledge of Jesus and perhaps have even encountered him face to face in other contexts. And, of course, Josephus knew Simon personally. Hence Josephus may have had Simon in view as one of those 'first men among us' who accused Jesus.

Chart 2. The Family of Hillel

1. Hillel (20s BCE–10 CE)
2. Simon I (10s–20s CE)
3. Gamaliel I (30s–40s CE)
4. Simon II (50s–60s CE)
5. Gamaliel II (70s–110s CE)
6. Simon III (140s CE)

Note: The above dates are tentative estimates for when each served as prince (*Nasi*) of the Sanhedrin. It is definite that Gamaliel I was the father of Simon II, but how the others are related is less certain.

Chart 3. The High Priestly Families of the First Century BCE/CE

The Family of Boethus

1. Boethus (24/22–5 BCE), name may instead have been Simon son of Boethus
2. Joazar son of Boethus (4 BCE, 6 CE?), probably served twice as High Priest
3. Eleazar son of Boethus (4 BCE)
4. Simon Cantheras son of Boethus (41–42 CE)
5. Elionaeus son of Cantheras (43?–45 CE), probable grandson of Boethus
6. Joshua son of Gamaliel (63–64 CE), married to a daughter of Boethus

The Family of Phiabi

1. Joshua son of Phiabi (30–24/22 BCE)
2. Ishmael son of Phiabi (15–16 CE?)
3. Ishmael son of Phiabi (59–61 CE), possibly the same as the earlier Ishmael son of Phiabi

The Family of Camith

1. Simon son of Camith (17–18 CE)
2. Joseph son of Camei (45–48 CE), Camei is a probable corruption of Camith
3. Joseph son of Simon (61–62 CE), probable son of Simon son of Camith

The Family of Ananus

1. Ananus I (6–15 CE)
2. Eliezer son of Ananus I (16–17 CE?)
3. Joseph Caiaphas (18–36/7 CE), son-in-law of Ananus I
4. Jonathan son of Ananus I (36/7 CE)
5. Theophilus son of Ananus I (37–41 CE)
6. Mathias son of Ananus I (42–43 CE?)
7. Ananus II son of Ananus I (62 CE)
8. Mathias son of Theophilus (64–66 CE?), possible grandson of Ananus I

Note: Dates for when each served as High Priest are adapted from VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*.

[114] See n. 216 below.

The Four High Priestly Families

Thus far we have passed through the royal family of the Herodians and the rabbinic family of Hillel, both of which had members who were known to Josephus and who also had ample opportunity to meet Jesus or to have known much about him. Yet there still remains to speak of the four families that dominated the High Priesthood in the first century. These families too had several members who could easily have been at the trial of Jesus, and Josephus knew members of each family. Hence, in these families there exist good candidates for Josephus' 'first men among us' who brought accusations against Jesus.

The High Priest Joshua Son of Gamala

One of the most likely candidates is the High Priest Joshua son of Gamala, who served in 63–64 CE.[115] The Mishnah asserts that this Joshua married the daughter of Boethus,[116] thus linking Joshua inseparably with the famous Boethus high priestly family. Boethus himself is a shadowy figure and it is not entirely clear if he ever served as High Priest, or if that honor belonged to many of his descendants. Josephus implies that Simon, the son of Boethus, was the first of his family to become High Priest (r. 23–25 BCE), a position he attained because he had a beautiful daughter whom Herod the Great wanted to marry.[117] Later however, Josephus seems to contradict this by saying that it was Boethus himself whose daughter married Herod the Great, which implies that Boethus received the high priesthood in exchange for his daughter.[118] In this view, it may instead have been a different Simon son of Boethus, also named Cantheras, who served as High Priest between 41–42 CE.[119]

Josephus only refers to Boethus three other times. In these he describes the High Priest Joazar (r. 5–4 BCE) as being a son of Boethus[120] and his brother, Eliezer, as being High Priest (r. 4 BCE) as well.[121] A certain Matthias is also described by Josephus as being a son of Boethus. He died in 70 CE.[122] It is also probable that one other descendent of Boethus became High Priest too.[123] There are several possibilities for untangling how the high priestly members of the Boethus family were

[115] For an overview of what is known of Joshua, see VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 483–6.
[116] Mishnah, *Yebatmoth* 6.4.
[117] *Antiquities* 15.320–2, 17.78.
[118] *Antiquities* 19.297, note that the contradiction in Greek is not clear in Whiston's translation.
[119] For discussion, see VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 444.
[120] *Antiquities* 18.3.
[121] *Antiquities* 17.339.
[122] *War* 5.527.
[123] Elionaeus son of Cantheras (r. 43?–45 CE); see VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 449–53.

related and likewise several ways to solve the contradiction over whether Boethus served as High Priest.[124] But whatever their resolution, the High Priest Joshua son of Gamala married into this eminent Boethus family.[125] The high priestly members of this family can be seen in Chart 3.

And Josephus was quite close to Joshua, for he explains that he 'was a friend and companion to me' (φίλος ὢν καὶ συνήθης ἐμοί).[126] So close was this friendship that Joshua took great risk in informing Josephus' father of a secret plot against Josephus that had been hatched by no less than the prince of the Sanhedrin, Simon son of Gamaliel, in collusion with the most powerful man in Jerusalem at the time, the former High Priest Ananus II son of Ananus I.[127] It is important to note that Joshua was, Josephus tells us, quite elderly in 69 CE, since at that time he was the 'oldest of the chief priests except for Ananus II' (ὁ μετὰ Ἄνανον γεραίτατος τῶν ἀρχιερέων Ἰησοῦς).[128] This suggests that Joshua would have been at least in his mid-60s at this point, if not much older. He therefore was an adult when Jesus was crucified.

It is simple logic to conclude that in 30/33 CE, Joshua must have been a priest of immense reputation in order to marry into the illustrious Boethus family, let alone for him to be so well placed as to be later appointed High Priest himself. As will be emphasized further below, the evidence from Josephus, the Jewish Mishnah, and the Gospels together affirm that there would have been dozens of 'first men' participating in the judicial proceedings against Jesus inasmuch as the 'whole Sanhedrin'[129] and 'all the chief priests'[130] came together for the trial with many other scribes and elders besides.[131]

Hence it is not improbable to think that Joshua would have been counted a member of the Sanhedrin or at minimum would have been among the 'first men' and 'chief priests' when he was an adult in Jerusalem around 30 CE. Joshua therefore may well have been party to the prosecution of Jesus. And Josephus definitely knew Joshua and could have counted him as one of the 'first men among us' who accused Jesus. It must be further observed that even if Joshua was not a partisan in the trial of Jesus, Josephus could still have relied upon him as a good, close, and contemporary source of information about Jesus.

[124] For example, see VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 444–8.
[125] Note that Josephus spells Joshua's father's name two different ways: Γαμαλίηλος (*Antiquities* 20.213, 223) and Γαμάλας (*War* 4.160; *Life* 193, 204). For information about Joshua, see VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 483–6.
[126] *Life* 204.
[127] *Life* 196–204.
[128] *War* 4.238.
[129] Matthew 26:59; Mark 14:55, 15:1.
[130] Matthew 27:1; Mark 14:53.
[131] Matthew 26:57; Mark 14:53, 15:1; Luke 22:66.

The High Priest Ishmael Son of Phiabi

Josephus may also be connected with our next high priestly candidate: Ishmael son of Phiabi. He served as High Priest from 59 to 61 CE, though it is possible his tenure began much earlier, perhaps as far back as 49 CE.[132] Two previous men from the Phiabi family had served as High Priest before him, Joshua son of Phiabi (r. 30–22 BCE) and another Ishmael son of Phiabi (r. 15–16 CE). Such high priestly relations means that our more junior Ishmael was a man of enormous connections within Jewish religious circles. It is also possible, though unlikely, that the two Ishmaels, junior and senior, were really one and the same and that, therefore, Ishmael served as High Priest on two occasions several decades apart. It is more probable though that the name 'son of Phiabi' should be read as indicating not a direct biological son of Phiabi but simply a descendent of Phiabi. In this sense the two Ishmaels were simply of the same high priestly lineage.

Whatever the case, the Ishmael who served as High Priest in 59 CE traveled to Rome a year or so later to appeal a decision respecting a temple wall. Upon arrival, he and his retinue were favorably received by Empress Poppaea who interceded for them before Emperor Nero. Then, despite the fact that Ishmael's mission was successful, Poppaea for certain motives unexplained, kept him as a hostage.[133]

There are three reasons for suspecting that Josephus was directly acquainted with Ishmael. The first is that he refers to Ishmael as a man 'among us' (παρ' ἡμῖν), a phrase which, as I discussed in Chapter 5, Josephus deploys for subjects that were directly familiar to the speaker.[134] Secondly, it was around the time when Ishmael was a hostage to Empress Poppaea that Josephus himself led an embassy to Rome to free distinguished priests who were imprisoned. There he obtained an audience with Poppaea and successfully liberated the priests. It is not absolutely certain that Josephus' mission specifically included freeing Ishmael, nor that his time with Poppaea necessarily overlapped with Ishmael's captivity, but the latter at least seems very likely.[135] Thirdly, there is evidence that Ishmael survived the Jewish war, so Josephus may have become acquainted with him at that time as well.[136] The plausibility of this is increased by the facts that Josephus' friend, Agrippa II, had personally appointed Ishmael as High Priest,[137] and that Josephus sought out Jewish leaders who survived the war.[138] Hence, through Agrippa II, Josephus would presumably have had some kind of connection with Ishmael in the early 70s CE.

[132] VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 467–75.
[133] *Antiquities* 20.190–5.
[134] *Antiquities* 3.320.
[135] For discussion, see Chapter 5 pp. 153–4.
[136] *War* 6.114. See VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 466.
[137] *Antiquities* 20.179.
[138] See n. 152.

The evidence thus points to the fact that Josephus probably knew the High Priest Ishmael face to face, having first met him when they were both in Rome under the patronage (or imprisonment) of the empress, or he could have connected with him after the Jewish war, or any number of other possibilities. And of course, Ishmael, being High Priest in 59 CE, would have been of some priestly standing thirty years previously when Jesus was ministering. It is also not unlikely that Ishmael, as a descendent of High Priests and a future High Priest himself, would have been either a member of the Sanhedrin who voted to put Jesus to death or, if not, that he would have been classed as one of the chief priests, who are all said to have attended Jesus' trial.[139]

Hence Josephus may have had Ishmael in mind as one of the 'first men' who accused Jesus. The strongest hint of this is that Josephus uses the very same phrase for both Ishmael and the 'first men' at the trial of Jesus. He says of Ishmael that he was a High Priest 'among us' (παρ' ἡμῖν) and that that those 'first men' who accused Jesus were also 'among us' (παρ' ἡμῖν).[140]

The High Priestly Family of Camith

Another candidate for the 'first men among us' who accused Jesus is the High Priest Joseph, the son of Simon, though the evidence for this is somewhat tentative.[141] Joseph served as High Priest from 61 to 62 CE and seems to have been descended from the Camith high priestly family. If so, his father was the High Priest Simon son of Camith (r. 17–18 CE)[142] and Joseph may also have had another high priestly relative who shared his given name: the High Priest Joseph son of Camei (r. 45–48 CE).[143]

As far as the High Priest Joseph son of Simon is concerned, we know little except that he survived the Jewish war by going over to the Romans.[144] Evidence also suggests that he was appointed as a general alongside Josephus during the Jewish

[139] Matthew 27:1; Mark 14:53.

[140] *Antiquities* 3.320, 18.64. It is also possible that Ishmael survived the Jewish war since Josephus explains that he was executed in Cyrene, far away from Judaea (*War* 6.114). If this is so, Josephus would have had a further opportunity of becoming acquainted with Ishmael since he made an effort to engage with Jewish leaders who survived the war. On this see n. 152.

[141] *Antiquities* 20.196.

[142] *Antiquities* 18.34–5.

[143] *Antiquities* 20.16, 103. For discussion on the interrelationships between these three High Priests, see VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 425–6, 453–5, 475–6. It is not absolutely certain to which high priestly family the High Priest Joseph son of Simon belonged, but if not to the Camith family then he would have belonged to the Boethus family, since the only other first-century High Priest named Simon was of that family. Josephus clearly affirms that Joseph's father Simon was a High Priest; see *Antiquities* 20.196.

[144] *War* 6.113–14. The only other High Priest named 'Joseph' to whom Josephus may refer to here is Joseph son of Camei (r. 45–8 CE), but it is unlikely that this Joseph would have survived more than twenty-five years after he first served as High Priest. It is also more plausible that Josephus had in mind the more recent High Priest named Joseph.

war.[145] The reasons for identifying this general Joseph son of Simon with the High Priest Joseph son of Simon are twofold: firstly, of the seven generals and two supreme commanders leading the Jewish army, one was a former High Priest, two were sons of High Priests, and another was the son of a chief priest.[146] At a later time, yet another High Priest (Joshua son of Gamala) seems to have joined the war effort as co-supreme commander.[147] Given that the ranks of generals and supreme commanders were so frequently associated with the high priesthood, we might expect to find further high priestly connections among the generals whose family relations are not definitively known by scholars, as with the general Joseph son of Simon.

Secondly, though 'Joseph' and 'Simon' are common names in first-century Palestine,[148] the combination of 'Joseph son of Simon' is rare in Josephus' corpus. In fact, by my calculations there appear in Josephus' writings only two individuals named 'Joseph' who also have a father named 'Simon'.[149] And these two are the High Priest Joseph son of Simon and the general Joseph son of Simon. Further connecting these two individuals is the coincidence that the High Priest Joseph flourished at the precise time in which the general Joseph was operating and while he was operating in the precise military capacity associated with high priestly families. It follows that these two Josephs may have been the same individual.

If so, Josephus would have known the High Priest Joseph son of Simon as one of his six co-generals during the Jewish war. He also may have become acquainted with him in later years since Joseph seems to have gone over to the Romans during the war as Josephus himself did.[150] This would have presented an opportune time for Josephus to become acquainted with Joseph given that Josephus was allowed great latitude by Emperor Titus to meet with Jewish prisoners.[151] Later on Josephus also made efforts to get to know Jewish leaders who had survived the war,[152] providing yet another opportunity for Josephus to become familiar with the High Priest Joseph.

But, if it is true that Josephus knew the High Priest Joseph, then he would have known a man whose father was High Priest in 17–18 CE, whose relative was also High Priest in 45–48 CE, and who himself went on to become High Priest in 61–62 CE. Such a one would have been privy to the highest galleries of Jewish society throughout his lifetime.

[145] *War* 2.567.
[146] See Chapter 5 n. 39.
[147] *Life* 193; *War* 4.238. For discussion, see Mason, *Judaean War 2*, 382 n. 3368.
[148] This is obvious from looking at the number of times the names are witnessed in part 1 of Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity*.
[149] To verify this, I searched in Accordance for the names Σεμεών and Ἰώσηπος within the same verse and then also Σίμων and Ἰώσηπος within the same verse.
[150] *War* 6.113–14.
[151] *Life* 417–21.
[152] *Life* 359, 362; *Apion* 1.50–2.

A further reasonable conclusion is that Joseph was likely an adult when Jesus was crucified. His age at the time can be inferred from the facts that Joseph was High Priest in 61 CE and that his father was High Priest in 17 CE. Therefore, given his likely age and eminent status, it is conceivable that Joseph could have participated in Jesus' trial as a member of the Sanhedrin, or as one of the chief priests, or simply as one of the crowd.[153] Therefore, even if not probable, it is at least plausible that Josephus may have learned about Jesus from the High Priest Joseph, or have included him as one of the 'first men among us' who accused Jesus.

The High Priestly Family of Ananus

Yet of all the candidates for the 'first men among us' who accused Jesus, the most likely are members of the lineage of the High Priest Ananus I. This family had no less than seven men serve as High Priest in the first century, and perhaps also an eighth. Their patriarch was Ananus I, who served for nine years between 6 and 15 CE. Ananus I was afterward followed by his son Eliezer (r. 16–17 CE), and then by his son-in-law Joseph Caiaphas (r. 18–36 CE), and then by four more sons: Jonathan (r. 37 CE), Theophilus (r. 37–41 CE), Mathias (r. 42–43 CE), and Ananus II (r. 62 CE). The High Priest Mathias son of Theophilus (r. 64–66 CE) was likely his grandson.[154] These can be seen in Chart 3.

The family of Ananus had many dealings with Jesus and the early Christian movement, and Josephus knew one or two of their high priestly members. Nowadays the most infamous member of the family is Caiaphas, the High Priest who put Jesus to death. If we accept the testimony of the Gospels, then sometime late in Jesus' ministry Caiaphas vigorously advocated for Jesus' execution at a meeting which included the 'Sanhedrin' (συνέδριον), the 'chief priests' (ἀρχιερεῖς) and the 'Pharisees'.[155] Thereafter, about one week before Jesus' crucifixion, Caiaphas held a council in his own 'courtyard' (τὴν αὐλήν) with the 'chief priests and elders' where it was decided that Jesus was to be arrested and executed.[156]

As mentioned above, the father-in-law of Caiaphas was Ananus I; he is called 'Annas' in the Gospels.[157] Though Ananus I was not officially the High Priest when

[153] On the requirement for all the members of the Sanhedrin to be present at the trial of a false prophet, perhaps even with their disciples, see n. 215. For a description of Jesus' trial, see pp. 182–4 and Appendix 5.

[154] Josephus explains that Ananus was 'extremely fortunate' (εὐτυχέστατον) in having five sons who became High Priest; *Antiquities* 20.198. For an overview of the family, see respective pages in VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*.

[155] John 11:46–53.

[156] Matthew 26:3–5. See also Mark 14:1–2; Luke 22:1–2.

[157] The Gospel writers (Luke 3:2; John 18:13, 24; Acts 4:6) spell the name of Ananus as Ἄννας whereas Josephus prefers Ἄνανος (for instance *Antiquities* 20.197–8). Such a difference in orthography is a phenomenon quite common in the ancient world which did not have consistent spelling. See, for example, the many variations of 'Ananus' documented in Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late*

Caiaphas reigned, Josephus and the Gospels indicate that he retained a powerful, emeritus role.[158] Hence, according to the Gospel of John and perhaps also Luke, after Jesus' arrest on the night of Passover, he was 'first brought to Ananus, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas'.[159] There, in the house of Ananus I,[160] Jesus was interrogated by Ananus I, struck by one of the officers, and then 'sent bound to the High Priest Caiaphas'.[161]

Caiaphas then, according to the Gospels, interrogated Jesus in his own 'home' (οἶκος) too,[162] but this time there was present the 'whole Sanhedrin' (τὸ συνέδριον ὅλον)[163] and 'all chief priests' (πάντες οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς).[164] When morning came, the 'whole Sanhedrin' (ὅλον τὸ συνέδριον)[165] and 'all chief priests' (πάντες οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς)[166] were called to order yet again, presumably in their official place of meeting.[167] Jesus was interrogated a third time, found worthy of death, and then brought to Pontius Pilate.[168] Then 'all the multitude of them' (ἅπαν τὸ πλῆθος αὐτῶν) accused Jesus once more before Pilate.[169] According to Luke, some of these

Antiquity, part 1, 99–102. Josephus himself will even spell the name of the same person differently; see for example 'Simon' (Σίμωνα) at *Life* 190, 309 and 'Simeon' (Συμεών) at *War* 4.159; or Gamala which he spells Γαμαλήλος or Γαμάλας; see n. 125 above.

[158] Not only do the Gospels of Luke and John portray him in this influential capacity (see nn. 159, 162), but Josephus does so as well by continuing to treat the high priesthood of Ananus I as if it still continued even though he was out of office. Thus, Josephus will say that Ananus I enjoyed being High Priest 'for a long period of time, which never happened with any of the other High Priests among us'. *Antiquities* 20.198. Josephus here must be including the years that Ananus I spent in his role of highly potent, ex officio High Priest, since otherwise his term of service was not all that long compared to other High Priests contemporary to Ananus I (such as Caiaphas and Ananias). In another related example, Josephus refers to Ananus II as still the High Priest in 69 CE (*War* 4.318), when technically he had been removed from the high priesthood some seven years previously (*Antiquities* 20.203). See also *Antiquities* 20.213 which portrays past and present High Priests as warring with one another. For further discussion, see VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 420–1, 464; Safrai and Stern, *The Jewish People in the First Century*, vol. 2, p. 600.

[159] John 18:13. See n. 162 below.

[160] John 18:15 specifies that Peter watched the proceedings from the 'courtyard' (αὐλή) of Ananus, presumably indicating that Jesus was either interrogated in the courtyard of the house, or was brought to a location within the residence where Peter could still observe from the courtyard. It is also possible to translate αὐλή as 'chambers' or 'dwelling', which would indicate that not only Jesus, but also Peter entered the actual structure of the house. If this is the case, Peter's presence was likely limited to some kind of outer hall.

[161] John 18:24.

[162] Luke 22:54–5; see also Matthew 26:57–8; Mark 14:53–4; John 18:24, 28. Luke and Mark do not mention the name of Caiaphas and so their description of this event may instead refer to Ananus I interrogating Jesus, which is related in the Gospel of John. This is especially probable with Luke who is aware that Ananus I was functioning as High Priest during the ministry of Jesus; see Luke 3:2 and Appendix 3 n. 2.

[163] Matthew 26:59; Mark 14:55, 15:1.

[164] Mark 14:53.

[165] Mark 15:1.

[166] Matthew 27:1.

[167] Luke 22:66. The Sanhedrin was said to have met in a part of the Temple called the Chamber of Hewn Stone, see Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 11.2; Middoth 5.4; perhaps also *War* 5.144.

[168] Matthew 27:1–2; Mark 15:1; Luke 23:1; John 18:28.

[169] Luke 23:1–5. See also Matthew 27:12–13; Mark 15:3–4; John 18:29–32.

also followed Jesus to accuse him further when Pilate sent him to Herod Antipas.[170] After Jesus was returned to Pilate, the chief priests stirred up a great crowd, which had evidently gathered to watch the events.[171]

There are various ways to fit the Gospel accounts together with some methods rejecting certain claims and others reconciling them,[172] but what is important here is that the Gospels are united in suggesting that many members of the family of Ananus attended the proceedings against Jesus far beyond just the High Priests Ananus I and Caiaphas. This is clear by how repeatedly the Gospels record that it was 'all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes'[173] and 'the whole Sanhedrin' who gathered against Jesus during his trial.[174] The Mishnah corroborates this by stating that at the trial of a false prophet the whole Sanhedrin was to assemble.[175] Josephus also suggests the same when he says that it was the 'first men among us' who accused Jesus, implying there was present a broad selection of leading religious and political figures. And who would be more likely to attend the trial of Jesus than leading members of Ananus' family? This is especially probable since, according to the Gospels, Ananus and his son-in-law Caiaphas led portions of the trial within their own houses. Several leading men of Ananus' family could also have witnessed Jesus throughout the last week of his life when he had public encounters with Jewish leaders in Jerusalem,[176] or if not at that time, then at other points during Jesus' ministry.[177]

Aside from all this though, Luke reports that after executing Jesus the family of Ananus remained in still close contact with the Jesus movement, giving them further opportunities to learn of Jesus. Thus, a short time after Jesus' death, 'the rulers, elders, and scribes in Jerusalem, as well as Ananus the High Priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of high priestly lineage'[178] met together and

[170] Luke 23:6–12.

[171] Matthew 27:15–24; Mark 15:8–15; Luke 23:4, 48.

[172] Certain scholars are skeptical that the Gospel writers can be harmonized regarding the trial of Jesus, see for example Winter, *On the Trial of Jesus*, 27–43. For an attempt at reconstructing the trial which accepts most, though not all, of the Gospel claims, see Theobald, *Der Prozess Jesu*, 663–6. In view of this it is important to note that the structure presented by all four Gospels fits quite well with one another: Jesus is arrested at night, brought to Ananus, then Caiaphas, then brought to a morning meeting of the Sanhedrin, then brought to Pontius Pilate. None of the Gospels contradict this pattern. The details given by the Gospel writers also parallel the policies articulated in the Sanhedrin tractates; see Appendix 5. The most substantive contradiction that may exist between the Gospel accounts regards the calendar day on which Jesus was crucified; see Appendix 3.

[173] πάντες οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς. Mark 14:53. See also Matthew 27:1; Luke 22:66.

[174] τὸ συνέδριον ὅλον. Matthew 26:59. See also Mark 14:55, 15:1. Luke 22:66 does not specifically say it was the entire Sanhedrin but describes what could easily have been a plenary session of the Sanhedrin.

[175] See n. 215.

[176] Matthew 21:15, 23, 45; Mark 11:18, 27; Luke 19:47, 20:1, 19; John 12: 9–11, 19, 42.

[177] John 11:49 seems to indicate that Caiaphas and the chief priests were long interested in Jesus. Further, John 19:20 records that 'many of the Jews' were present and read the inscription posted on the cross of Jesus. Many undoubtedly saw other events related to the trial of Jesus as well.

[178] Acts 4:5–6.

interrogated Jesus' apostles Peter and John. Such a gathering surely included many members of the family of Ananus beyond the High Priests Ananus I and Caiaphas. The most likely candidates are the two leading sons of Ananus I: Eliezer who was at that time a former High Priest (r. 16–17 CE), and Jonathan, who would soon become High Priest (r. 37 CE). Luke may stipulate these two by name in the quote above by deploying the Hellenized name 'Alexander' and the alternative name 'John.'[179]

It is clear too that other members of the family of Ananus would have also been present, for Luke says that there were gathered 'as many as who were of high priestly lineage' (ὅσοι ἦσαν ἐκ γένους ἀρχιερατικοῦ).[180] This may well have included the remaining sons of Ananus I, such as Mathias, Theophilus, and Ananus II, each of whom would go on to become High Priest. Additional men in attendance likely included members of other high priestly lineages (for Luke implies they were there), such as the future High Priests Joshua son of Gamala, Ishmael son of Phiabi, and Joseph son of Simon—every one of whom Josephus might have known or even definitely did.

If Luke is correct, then following this interrogation of Peter and John, the sons of Ananus I continued to persecute early Christians. Shortly afterward a certain High Priest led the Sanhedrin trial of the eleven apostles,[181] and a High Priest, perhaps the same one, supervised yet another Sanhedrin trial, this time of Stephen,[182] the first Christian martyr. That all these High Priests were of the family of Ananus is clear for chronological reasons since Luke appears to place these events as occurring sometime in the 30s CE, and in that decade the high priesthood was continually filled by descendants of Ananus I. For the same reason during the 30s CE it is probable that Saul of Tarsus received letters from none other than a high priestly son of Ananus I instructing him to arrest followers of Jesus.[183]

The same family of Ananus may have also instigated the execution of the apostle James the son of Zebedee in the early 40s CE and then encouraged the arrest of the apostle Peter, for Luke says that King Agrippa I only did these things because he

[179] Though most manuscripts of Acts 4:6 read 'John' (Ἰωάννης), Codex Bezae reads 'Jonathan' (Ἰωνάθας) and therefore matches Josephus' name for the High Priest Jonathan. Further, there is evidence that the Hebrew names 'John' (יוחנן) and 'Jonathan' (יהונתן) were sometimes interchangeable or at least confused in the ancient world; see for example, Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity*, part 4, 87 #3; part 1, p. 144 #14. The Greek name 'Alexander' (Ἀλέξανδρος) in Acts 4:6 is more difficult to pin down; however, it is similar in sound to the Hellenized Hebrew name 'Eliezer' (Ἐλεάζαρος). Hence, it may have been the High Priest Eleazar's Greek name, since for ancient Jews in Palestine, a second name that was Greek (or Roman) often sounded similar to their Hebrew name; see Appendix 4 p. 255–6 and Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, 93.

[180] Acts 4:6.

[181] Acts 5:17–42.

[182] Acts 7:1. That this trial took place before the Sanhedrin is clear from Acts 6:12, 15.

[183] Acts 9:1–2, 22:5.

saw that it 'pleased the Jews', a plausible reference to Jewish religious leadership.[184] Lastly, Josephus tells us that Ananus II, the son of Ananus I, illegally gathered the Sanhedrin in 62 CE to execute James, the brother of Jesus, and others with him.[185]

Such ruthlessness is why the family of Ananus became a byword for violence and strife. Thus, the Babylonian Talmud states regarding this family, 'Woe is me because of the High Priests of the house of Ananus (חנין)'.[186] For this reason, Jesus' parable of the rich man and Lazarus may have subtly criticized the cruelty of the High Priest Caiaphas, his five brothers-in-law, and his father-in-law Ananus I.[187]

With the above evidence in view, the conclusion can scarcely be avoided that members of the family of Ananus would have had excellent knowledge of Jesus and several can certainly be said to have participated in proceedings against him. But were any of Ananus' family known to Josephus? And could Josephus have included them as the 'first men among us' who accused Jesus?

Jonathan Son of Ananus I

Observations have already been made in Chapter 5 that Josephus kept company with the 'first men' and 'chief priests' of Jerusalem beginning in the early 50s CE. It is hence very possible that he encountered certain of the high priestly sons of Ananus I. One plausible candidate is Jonathan. He served as High Priest about 37 CE,[188] and was offered the position again in 42 CE but declined.[189] He remained however a still powerful force in politics for years afterward. He was, for example, sent to Rome around 52 CE to face trial with another High Priest, Ananias, and was vindicated.[190] He then befriended the Judaean procurator Felix, but fell out of favor and was murdered at Felix's behest in Jerusalem around 58 CE.[191] Before this though, in the early 30s CE, evidence indicates that Jonathan was present for the interrogation of the apostles Peter and John since Luke says 'as many as were of high priestly

[184] Acts 12:1–5. The family of Ananus I held the high priesthood continuously between 18 and 43 CE except for a brief time during the term of Simon Cantheras son of Boethus (r. 41–42 CE).

[185] *Antiquities* 20.200–1.

[186] Babylonian Talmud, *Pesachim* 57a.8. See Tosefta, *Menahot* 13.4 (13:21D of ed. Neusner).

[187] Luke 16:19–31. This interpretation has not been accepted by scholars, but it is an old one and has much to recommend it. See, for example, Sepp, *Thaten und Lehren Jesu*, 329.

[188] *Antiquities* 18.95, 123.

[189] *Antiquities* 19.313.

[190] *War* 2.243–6.

[191] *Antiquities* 20.162–4; *War* 2.256. Felix was governor roughly between 52 and 59 CE (see n. 31), so Jonathan must have been murdered sometime within that span. Evidence suggests that it was likely toward the end of Felix's term of office because Josephus states that Jonathan had initially been a great ally of Felix but then had fallen into disfavor after continuously vexing him, which is suggestive that Jonathan's murder was several years into Felix's term. Further, Josephus states that Jonathan's murder was carried out by the Sicarii, a group which Josephus claims did not come to prominence until the term of the next governor Festus 60–2 CE (*Antiquities* 20.185–6; see also *War* 2.254). Hence, setting a date for Jonathan's murder at the end of Felix's term as governor, perhaps 58 CE, makes best sense of the evidence.

lineage' were present at the proceedings.[192] As mentioned above, Luke even says the high priestly interrogation was attended by a certain 'John', a likely alternative name for 'Jonathan'.[193] This same Jonathan would probably have participated in the trial of Jesus since his own father and brother-in-law presided over it and 'all the chief priests' were in attendance.[194]

However, the only evidence pointing to Josephus' familiarity with Jonathan is circumstantial. Schwartz argues, for instance, that Josephus had much respect for Jonathan, which is in great contrast to other members of the family of Ananus. At this Schwartz hypothesizes that such admiration may have arisen because Josephus actually knew Jonathan. This personal connection could also explain why Josephus was later appointed to the prestigious position of general in the army of Jonathan's brother Ananus II.[195] But such potentialities are impossible to verify. It is true though that for Josephus to obtain such an illustrious position in the Jewish army, he likely had deep connection with the families of the two supreme commanders, either with Joseph son of Gorion, or Ananus II son of Ananus I.[196] Beyond this though one can only speculate.

Ananus II Son of Ananus I

But there does remain one other, far more likely candidate for the 'first men among us' who accused Jesus—and his name has just been mentioned: Ananus II, last of the sons of Ananus I to hold the high priesthood. This junior Ananus was a sometime ally and then later enemy of Josephus. He and Josephus first appear together around 67 CE when, with war approaching, Ananus II and Joseph son of Gorion were jointly appointed to be 'supreme commanders' (αὐτοκράτορες) of 'everything that pertained to the city' of Jerusalem.[197] Under them were placed seven generals, one of whom was Josephus.[198] If before Josephus had not known

[192] Acts 4:6.
[193] See p. 185.
[194] Matthew 27:1; Mark 14:53.
[195] Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaean Politics*, 94–5 and n. 133. Josephus' hostility to Ananus and his family is most notable in the *Antiquities* and the *Life*, but far less so in the *War*.
[196] *War* 2.563. It seems that Joseph son of Gorion must not have continued on as supreme commander since Josephus does not mention him in the ensuing narrative (except perhaps at *War* 2.563); on this see Mason, *Judaean War 2*, 381–2 n. 3368.
[197] *War* 2.563.
[198] *War* 2.568. Mason rightly seems to assume that Ananus II was jointly in charge of the whole war effort (and hence in charge of Josephus); see Mason, *Judaean War 2*, 383 n. 3384. However, one might argue that the Greek in *War* 2.563 could imply that Ananus II was simply the general appointed over Jerusalem and that hence he and Josephus were in equal positions of rank. This is unlikely though because Ananus II is given the title 'supreme commander' or 'emperor' (αὐτοκράτορες; *War* 2.563), whereas Josephus is given the lesser title 'general' (στρατηγός; *War* 2.566; *Life* 194) or 'leader' (ἡγεμών; *War* 2.568). Ananus II is also presented in Josephus' *Life* and *War* as having immense sway in the war effort. Either way, whether Ananus II was Josephus' direct superior, or whether they were two of a handful of generals appointed to equal rank in Jerusalem by the assembly, they both would have known each other face to face.

Ananus II face to face,[199] he certainly would have in the war councils that followed. Josephus was soon dispatched to Galilee, where he kept in contact with the leadership in Jerusalem, no doubt including Ananus II.[200]

However, in the ensuing months, Ananus II was turned against Josephus. The head of the Sanhedrin, Simon son of Gamaliel (whom we have met above), secretly counseled Ananus II that Josephus should be removed from his generalship. Josephus writes that in response:

> the High Priest Ananus posited that the deed would not be easy since many of the chief priests and the leaders of the people testified that I was performing well as general and for an accusation to be made about a man against whom it is not possible to bring a just charge was the deed of wicked men.[201]

Undeterred, Simon bribed Ananus II and received clandestine orders to remove Josephus from command. Josephus was only made aware of this betrayal through the means of his friend, the former High Priest, Joshua son of Gamala, who was in attendance at the secret meeting and whom we have also met above.[202] Thereafter, Josephus, while avoiding capture,[203] sent ambassadors to Jerusalem. Once there, they made known the plot before the general assembly. The assembly then reaffirmed Josephus' charge over Galilee, though Ananus II seems to have remained in power.[204]

Ananus II was therefore known to Josephus directly, if not intimately. And Ananus II knew much about Christians. It was he, the reader will remember, who considered James, the brother of Jesus, such a threat that at enormous political risk he went to the extent of having James illegally executed in 62 CE. This act caused so great an upheaval that King Agrippa II removed him from the high priesthood after only a few months.[205] It was also this Ananus' father and brother-in-law who presided over the interrogation of the apostles John and Peter in Acts 4:6, which Ananus II himself likely attended since Luke says that there were present 'as many who were of high priestly lineage'.[206] And of course, it was this Ananus' father and brother-in-law who personally had Jesus arrested, interrogated, and condemned to death.

[199] It is likely, for example, that Josephus would have become familiar with Ananus II when he was meeting 'again' (πάλιν) with the 'chief priests' in the Temple during the outbreak of the war; see *Life* 20–1. He also would have had many opportunities earlier to have known Ananus II given his long association with the 'chief priests and first men' of Jerusalem; see *Life* 9 and further discussion in Chapter 5 pp. 149–51.

[200] See Chapter 5 pp. 145–6.

[201] *Life* 194.

[202] *Life* 195–204. See also *War* 2.626–31.

[203] *Life* 205–308.

[204] *Life* 309–10.

[205] *Antiquities* 20.200–3.

[206] Ananus II may also have been present at the death of Stephen since the Sanhedrin had gathered for it according to Acts 6:12, 15.

But was Ananus II at the trial of Jesus in 30/33 CE? And could he have been one of those whom Josephus considered 'the first men among us' who accused Jesus? There are good reasons for believing so. First is that Ananus II was well into his adulthood when Jesus was crucified. As last of the sons of Ananus I (r. 6–15 CE) to serve as High Priest, Josephus says that in 69 CE Ananus II was 'the most aged of the chief priests' (ὁ γεραίτατος τῶν ἀρχιερέων Ἄνανος).[207] This cannot refer to simple precedent in rank or seniority since the High Priest Joseph preceded Ananus II in office and was still alive at the time.[208] In order to emphasize Ananus' great age, Josephus states again elsewhere that Ananus was the 'most aged of the chief priests' (γεραίτατος τῶν ἀρχιερέων).[209] He also quotes Ananus II as mentioning 'my old age' (τοὐμοῦ γήρως)[210] in the final speech Ananus gave shortly before he was killed in 69 CE.[211]

It is further likely that Ananus II was advanced in years because his father, Ananus I, began serving as High Priest in 6 CE, more than sixty years prior to Ananus' final speech as supreme commander.[212] To top that, Ananus II's brother Eliezer first served as High Priest in 16 CE, more than fifty years previously. To have a father and brother serving as High Priests sixty and fifty years beforehand clearly indicates that Ananus II was well advanced in years. Given this, the conclusion is unavoidable that in 69 CE the High Priest Ananus II was quite old by the standards of the ancient world. He must have been at least in his late 60s, but of course being many years older is more likely. This means Ananus II would have been well into his adult years when Jesus was crucified in 30/33 CE, and probably older than Jesus himself.

This observation is of great importance, because as has already been emphasized it was Ananus' own brother-in-law, Caiaphas, and also Ananus' own father, Ananus I, who brought judicial proceedings against Jesus. Ananus would likely have been at this trial since the Gospel accounts relate 'all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes' and 'the whole Sanhedrin' gathered together.[213] This should not be read as a Christian exaggeration on the part of the Gospel authors, for the Mishnah (third–fourth century CE) agrees that when trying a false prophet —which Jesus was accused of being[214]—the entire Sanhedrin of seventy-one members was to

[207] *War* 4.151.

[208] *Antiquities* 20.196; *War* 6.114. For discussion, see p. 180. The High Priest Ishmael was also likely alive; see above p. 179.

[209] *War* 4.238. In the above quote Josephus may instead be referring to the smaller group of former High Priests, but if so, Ananus II would still be of great age.

[210] *War* 4.164.

[211] *War* 4.316–18.

[212] It is clear from *Antiquities* 20.197–8 that Ananus II was the direct biological son of Ananus I.

[213] Mark 14:53–5; Matthew 26:59. For further references, see nn. 173, 178, 189–90.

[214] Matthew 26:60–3, 67–8; Matthew 27:63; Mark 14:57–62, 65; Luke 22:63–4. The witnesses who allege that Jesus predicted he would destroy the Temple and rebuild it also seem to be accusing him of false prophecy; see Matthew 26:59–62; Mark 14:56–60. In a lengthy study, Theobald attempts to reconstruct the trial of Jesus and I think is too suspicious over certain aspects of the trial's historicity, but he does agree that Jesus was charged with being a false prophet; Theobald, *Der Prozess Jesu*, 669–70.

assemble.[215] The Mishnah adds that many additional students of the Sanhedrin members also attended such trials.[216] Josephus further corroborates this by saying that it was the 'first men among us' who accused Jesus, indicating a large, leading body of men. The Gospels of course supply the additional detail that a great crowd gathered at a portion of the trial too.[217]

So, then, as the son of a nepotistic high priestly father, a father who would ensure that five of his sons and also his son-in-law became High Priest, it is only reasonable to conclude that the adult Ananus II would have had a place reserved for him whenever the 'whole Sanhedrin' and 'all the chief priests' assembled, as at the trial of Jesus. It is quite probable then that Josephus' acquaintance, Ananus II, was one of the 'first men among us' whom Josephus says accused Jesus.

The House of Their Fathers

But the presence of Ananus II at the Passover trial of Jesus is made all the more certain by a singularly remarkable fact, not yet observed in this chapter. According to the Torah, on the evening of Passover, faithful Jews were required to gather in Jerusalem to partake of the Passover lamb 'according to the house of their fathers' (לבית־אבת).[218] This Hebrew phrase 'house of their fathers' (*bēt avot*) stipulates a group larger than a simple nuclear family, and rather refers to a more extended household, such as one headed by the oldest paternal grandfather and his descendants, or whoever was the patriarch of the larger family group at the time.[219] Exodus confirms this interpretation by saying elsewhere that one must consume a Passover lamb 'according to your clan' (למשפחתיכם), a phrase which, as Leviticus explains, includes relatives like uncles and cousins.[220]

[215] Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 1.5–6; *Shebuoth* 2.2. The same number is suggested by Josephus, *War* 2.570. Theobald doubts that the entire Sanhedrin was present for Jesus' trial, but he does not consider that the claims of the Gospels match what the Mishnah prescribes; see Theobald, *Der Prozess Jesu*, 663.

[216] Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 4.3–4; Tosefta, *Sanhedrin* 7.8–9, 8.1–2. For further discussion on the nature of Jesus' trial and the makeup of the Sanhedrin, see Appendix 5.

[217] Matthew 27:15–24; Mark 15:8–15; Luke 23:4, 48.

[218] Exodus 12:3. For gathering in Jerusalem, see Deuteronomy 16:2, 5–6 and n. 227 below.

[219] Exodus 6:14; Numbers 17:1–3; Joshua 22:14; 1 Chronicles 4:38; Ezra 2:59–60; Nehemiah 7:61–4. It is also clear that the Passover meal was to involve more people than a typical nuclear family based simply on the fact that a 1-year-old lamb (Exodus 12:5) is too large for almost all nuclear families to completely consume in one night (Exodus 12:10; Numbers 9:12; Deuteronomy 16:4). Some might object that the Hebrew phrase in Exodus 12:5, 'a son of a year' (בן-שנה), must indicate that the lamb was less than a year old and hence was probably newly born in the springtime and, consequently, would not have provided much meat for even a small family. However, Gray argues persuasively that the phrase indicates the Passover lamb would have been at least a year old not less; see Gray, *Sacrifice in the Old Testament*, 348–51. Revelation 5:6 corroborates this by portraying Jesus as the Passover 'lamb' (ἀρνίον) who has horns, something that no newborn lamb would have. As such, it is clear that the family size at Passover was marked not by the descendants of the father of the nuclear family, but by those who were related to the patriarch of the larger family unit. Josephus also claims that the group eating a Passover lamb could not be less than ten and that groups of twenty were common; see *War* 6.423; see also Exodus 12:4.

[220] Exodus 12:21; Leviticus 25:49.

Exodus goes on to specify that there was to be 'a lamb for a house' (שה לבית)[221] and that the lamb 'shall be eaten in one house (בבית אחד), you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house'[222] and also that the blood of the lamb was to be applied to the door posts of the house itself.[223] Moreover, Exodus charges the father with explaining the purpose of these rituals to his son: 'Tell your son on that day, saying "this is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt".'[224] The Mishnah also speaks of the role which the father played on Passover.[225]

The obvious sense intended in the above is that, if possible, the entire familial unit was to eat the Passover lamb within the patriarchal residence. Exodus further requires that those who partook were to spend the night[226] and Deuteronomy adds that in future generations all this was to take place in the city were God's name would dwell, that is, in Jerusalem.[227] Of course, not all Jews followed every letter of the law and sometimes it was quite impractical to do so—what with traveling to Jerusalem, finding a house for your family, etc.—but the clear intent of Passover law was for an entire extended family to gather in the house of the familial patriarch in Jerusalem on the evening of Passover and then to spend the night.[228]

[221] Exodus 12:3.
[222] Exodus 12:46.
[223] Exodus 12:7, 13, 22, 23.
[224] Exodus 13:8.
[225] Mishnah, *Pesahim* 8.3 apparently involves a man slaughtering a Passover lamb on behalf of his adult sons, and Mishnah, *Pesahim* 8.1 discusses a man slaughtering a Passover lamb on behalf of his married daughter.
[226] Exodus 12:7, 22. Though Exodus stipulates that no one was to leave the door of the house until morning, later rabbinic tradition seems to have required members to simply spend the night in the house, see Mishnah, *Pesahim* 10.8; Tosefta, *Pesahim* 8.8i; Babylonian Talmud, *Sukkah* 47b.4. See also Pseudo-Jonathan, *Targum on Exodus* 12.7.
[227] Deuteronomy 12:5–7; see also 1 Kings 9:3. The Mishnah, Babylonian Talmud, and Jerusalem Talmud are unanimous: of those Passover regulations I have mentioned above, the only one that was possible to modify was putting blood on the door posts, see Mishnah, *Pesahim* 9.5; Babylonian Talmud, *Pesahim* 96A; Jerusalem Talmud, *Pesahim* 9.5.1 (9.5a–c of ed. Neusner). The Tosefta permits the same allowance (*Pesahim* 8.14) but also contains an ambiguity insofar as it seems to require spending the night (*Pesahim* 8.8i), but then also allows one to leave the residence, perhaps temporarily (*Pesahim* 8.15). It also states that one may eat the Passover in one location and spend the night in another (*Pesahim* 8.17), though this likely pertains to the difficulty of journeying to Jerusalem, obtaining a sacrificed lamb at the Temple, and then bringing the lamb to a house to eat it. The Tosefta also likely represents a later relaxation of the rules since the earlier Mishnah, *Pesahim* 5.10 states that one received his sacrificed lamb in the Temple and then took it away to cook and eat in a house where one would spend the night. Eating the lamb was supposed to take place within a house because Mishnah, *Pesahim* 7.12 discusses the dimensions of a house for the purposes of defining where the lamb may be eaten. The implications of Mishnah, *Pesahim* 9.5, 10.8 further indicate that one needed to spend the night in the house where the lamb was consumed.
[228] Jesus himself, for example, may not have been following all these Passover stipulations when he presided over Passover in the upper room with his disciples (Mark 14:15; Luke 22:12). Yet one should not forget that Jesus was never one for following the particulars of Jewish ritual law as when he violates the Sabbath (Mark 2:24–6), or touches a dead body (Mark 5:41), or touches a leper (Mark 1:40–2), or when he does not rebuke an unclean woman for touching him (Mark 5:25–34). It is also possible that Jesus was actually following Passover law since his father Joseph had probably died by this point making Jesus the family patriarch. In this view, Jesus' family may actually have been in attendance at the Last Supper in the upper room, the location where Jesus may have been planning on staying the night. Evidence of this is that his mother and brothers and perhaps even his sisters were present in apparently

The House of Ananus I

And all this has enormous consequence for the whereabouts of Ananus II on the evening of Jesus' Passover trial. For to put it plainly, on the evening of Passover Ananus II was supposed to have been at his father's house in Jerusalem. And it was on the evening of Passover, at this very time, that Jesus was actually brought to his father's house for trial.[229] One cannot fail to conclude that even if Ananus II was not in attendance at Jesus' trial as a member of the chief priests or of the Sanhedrin,[230] then he would have been in the house of his family patriarch on Passover in obedience to Jewish law. And it matters not whether his family held Passover in the house of his father, the former High Priest Ananus I,[231] or in the house of the current High Priest, his brother-in-law Caiaphas—[232] for according to the Gospels, Jesus was brought to both.[233] Such would have provided Ananus II with an extraordinary opportunity to participate in the interrogation of Jesus.

If it is not certain that Ananus II was at some portion of the trial of Jesus, it is certainly very likely. After all, a fair-minded assessment would deem it highly probable for Ananus II, the 'most aged' of the High Priests in 69 CE, to have been considered a member of the Sanhedrin or at least of the 'chief priests' and 'first men' in Jerusalem during the Passover of 30/33 CE. And this is precisely the time and location where Ananus' own high priestly father and his own high priestly brother-in-law interrogated Jesus in the presence of 'the whole Sanhedrin'[234] and 'all the chief priests'.[235] But if otherwise, Ananus II surely would have observed the portion of the proceedings held in his family's patriarchal residence, especially since this occurred on the night when, according to biblical law, Ananus II

the same upper room shortly after his death (Acts 1:13–14). As far as the presence of his disciples at the Last Supper is concerned, Exodus 12:4 allows for neighbors to partake of the Passover meal under certain conditions, which could have allowed Jesus' disciples to do the same.

[229] Matthew 26:17; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:7.

[230] Given that the gathering of the Sanhedrin was also attended by disciples of the Sanhedrin members, Ananus II may have participated or witnessed the trial in a more junior capacity as a disciple to a Sanhedrin member, such as to his father Ananus I or his brother-in-law Caiaphas. On this, see p. 190. He also could have been a formal disciple to one of his illustrious brothers, one of whom, Eliezer, had already been High Priest by that time, see p. 182.

[231] John 18:13–15. Luke 22:54 may also imply that Jesus was brought to the house of Ananus, see p. 183.

[232] Matthew 26:57–8, 69; Mark 14:53–4, 66–8; John 18:24, 28; and perhaps Luke 22:54. See also nn. 158 and 162.

[233] Theobald is generally skeptical, but he agrees that on the night of his arrest Jesus was taken into the house of the High Priest; Theobald, *Der Prozess Jesu*, 664. One might object that in distinction to the synoptic Gospels, the Gospel of John claims that Jesus was actually interrogated the evening before Passover, not on the Passover evening itself; for this see Appendix 3.

[234] Matthew 26:59.

[235] Mark 14:53.

was supposed to be present at the house of his family patriarch.[236] And Josephus knew Ananus II.

The House of Gamaliel

But this observation—that first-century Jews were required on Passover to partake of a lamb in Jerusalem 'according to the house of their fathers'—bears even further consequence for Josephus' knowledge of Jesus. For it enables us to place still other of Josephus' contacts more closely to the trial of Jesus.

I have already explained that in the 60s CE Josephus was personally familiar with the prince of the Sanhedrin named Simon and that, further, Simon's father, Gamaliel, was a leading member of the Sanhedrin in the early 30s CE if not the prince of the Sanhedrin itself. It is beyond doubt that in the Passover of 30/33 CE Gamaliel would have had his family obey Passover law, for what else would a pharisaic leader of the Sanhedrin do? Hence, the Mishnah records regarding Passover that:

> Rabban Gamaliel used to say . . . 'in every generation a man must so regard himself as if he himself came forth out of Egypt, for it is written "And you shall tell your son in that day saying, 'it is because of that which the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt' ".'[237]

That Gamaliel carefully taught his son Simon to obey Passover law is all the more evident by the fact that the Mishnah several times quotes both Gamaliel and his son Simon commenting on the biblical specifications for celebrating Passover.[238]

And given such specifications, we now know where Simon would have been on the night of Passover when Jesus was held for court. Simon would have been celebrating Passover in Jerusalem at the house of his father Gamaliel. Then, after the Passover meal, Gamaliel would have been called to the Sanhedrin, which had gathered in the household of Caiaphas to interrogate Jesus. After a first round of questioning, Gamaliel would have returned to spend the night in his home, as required by Jewish law. When morning came, he would have joined the Sanhedrin's assembly to examine Jesus again. And all the while Simon—his adult son, rabbinic protégé, and future leader of the Sanhedrin—would have at minimum been witnessing his father coming to and from the Sanhedrin trial of Jesus if not actually accompanying him to it. And Josephus knew Simon.

[236] It is possible that eastern manuscripts of the Jewish biography of Jesus, *Toledot Yeshu*, preserve evidence that Ananus II was an active participant in the trial of Jesus. See Appendix 4.

[237] Mishnah, *Pesahim* 10.5 quoting from Exodus 13:8 (Danby pp. 150–1 translation modified).

[238] Mishnah, *Pesahim* 1.5, 3.4, 7.2, 10.5 (Gamaliel), 2.3, 4.5 (Simon son of Gamaliel). Note that this particular Simon may have been our Simon's grandson; see Burgansky, 'Simeon Ben Gamaliel I'.

The Houses of the High Priests

Much the same can be safely presumed for Josephus' other well-connected acquaintances. Take for example, his 'friend and companion',[239] the High Priest Joshua son of Gamala. On the Passover of 30/33 CE, Joshua would have gathered in Jerusalem in the house of his family patriarch. At some point in the evening several leading members of the family would have undoubtedly been called to the judicial proceedings against Jesus that Passover night—for surely such a distinguished family would have had some who were members of either the chief priests or the Sanhedrin, and of course 'all the Sanhedrin' and 'all the chief priests' were at the trial of Jesus.[240] So the family would have had ranking members in attendance.

Then, after the nighttime interrogation of Jesus, these men would have rejoined Joshua's family in the patriarchal home, spent the night in obedience to Jewish law, and in the morning returned for the latter half of Jesus' trial. It is possible that Joshua would have accompanied his ranking family members to a portion of the trial—he was an adult at the time and was a High-Priest-to-be, showing that his family was in all probability actively training him to obtain such a lofty position.[241] Joshua obviously could have also been part of the crowd that gathered when Jesus was before Pontius Pilate. But at a very minimum, Joshua would have been ideally positioned to hear first-hand information about the trial of Jesus on the very day (or night) it occurred. And Josephus knew Joshua.

Josephus likely knew other High Priests too, such as Jonathan son of Ananus I, Joseph son of Simon, and Ishmael son of Phiabi. These three High Priests range from being possibly to probably known by Josephus and all of them were descended from the most eminent of high priestly families. Each of them also would have gathered with their distinguished families when Jesus was brought to trial. Hence each would in the least have heard of the trial of Jesus as it happened, if of course they did not attend the trial themselves. And Josephus plausibly knew each of them.

The House of Herod Antipas

There is one more family whose members Josephus knew: the royal Herodians. They too seem to have been involved in the trial of Jesus. The Gospel of Luke describes how, during the interrogation of Jesus, Pontius Pilate became frustrated in

[239] *Life* 204.
[240] See nn. 173–4.
[241] Jonathan is particularly likely to have attended such proceedings since he was the son of Ananus I and hence would have been staying for Passover in the very residence where Jesus was interrogated. He also would soon be High Priest in 37 CE.

his attempts to free Jesus and so sent him to Herod Antipas. This Herod Antipas was of course Tetrarch of Galilee, Jesus' home territory, and Antipas was in Jerusalem at this time given that it was Passover. He was thus available to receive Jesus. And this reception likely would have occurred in his own residence since as ruler of Galilee he would not have had an official government compound of his own in Judaea. But even if he for some reason did, he would have usually resided in the compound anyway.[242] So then, it would have been there in his Jerusalem residence, where Herod Antipas and his soldiers interrogated Jesus, humiliated him, and then sent him back to Pilate.[243]

But as this chapter has pointed out, Jewish law mandated that Jews assemble on the night of Passover not only in Jerusalem, but also 'according to the houses of their fathers'. Thus, on Passover in the house of the patriarch Herod Antipas, the Herodian family would have been required to gather and then to spend the night. And it was on the morning after Passover, at that very location, where Jesus was brought for interrogation.

If Luke is correct in his account, then there would have been many others of the Herodian family present inasmuch as they probably all would have spent the previous night there since Jewish law stipulated it—nor did the family blush at making executions a family affair given their treatment of John the Baptist. This actually seems very probable. There are three other accounts in the New Testament describing judicial (or extrajudicial) events presided over by a member of the Herodian dynasty and all three stipulate that family members were witnesses, even including the girl Salome, daughter of Herodias, who though a girl, personally requested the execution of John the Baptist and then gruesomely carried his head to her mother on a platter.[244]

But as far as the specifics of who in the Herodian family would have been in attendance at the house of Herod Antipas, it is not too much to say that Agrippa I and his wife Cypros would have been there since Antipas had recently appointed Agrippa I *agoranomos* of nearby Tiberias. So he and his wife would have been able to come to Jerusalem on Passover. It is likely that their children, Agrippa II and Berenice, would have been present as well and it is even possible that the two children could have seen Jesus at this time, though they would have been very young[245]—but the Herodian family did after all make children witnesses to judicial

[242] For example, Pontius Pilate seems to have been living in the Roman Praetorium since he was there early in the morning (John 28:28). Florus, a later successor of Pontius Pilate, seems to have taken up residence in the same location (*War* 2.301).

[243] Luke 23:6–15.

[244] The first episode is the execution of John the Baptist, where the wife of Antipas, Herodias, and her daughter were present (Matthew 14:1–12; Mark 6:21–9). The second is an informal hearing of the apostle Paul before the procurator Felix, at which his Herodian wife Drusilla attended (Acts 24:24–7). The third is the trial of Paul before Agrippa II, where his sister Berenice attended (Acts 25:13–27).

[245] Agrippa II was born 28/9 CE, meaning that if Jesus was crucified in 30 or 33 CE Agrippa II would have been anywhere between about 2 and 5 years of age. His sister Berenice was about one year younger. On their ages, see n. 44.

proceedings. Either way though, Agrippa II and Berenice would obviously have had many opportunities to hear about Jesus' interrogation in the years following and then told of it to Josephus directly since evidence shows he knew both of them.[246]

However, of all the possible residents at the house of Antipas on the specific Passover in question, it is the most probable that Antipas' wife Herodias and his stepdaughter Salome would have been present when Jesus was brought to the location, for who else would be more likely to be with him but his wife and young stepdaughter? He had no other descendants.[247] And families were required to come together on Passover and then to spend the night. But, if it is true that Jesus was brought to the house of Antipas the morning after the Passover meal, then it would have been likely for Herodias and Salome to have heard about such an event, even if they did not witness portions of it themselves.

Aside from these two, it is also probable that Salome's cousin and future husband Aristobulus would also have been among the audience of those observing Jesus' interrogation since he would have been an older teenager or young adult at the time and was both the nephew and grand-nephew of Herod Antipas. Therefore, he presumably would have been required to be in attendance as well.[248] And Josephus knew the son of Aristobulus and Salome, and evidence indicates that he may have even known Aristobulus and Salome themselves.

Hence, Josephus had many connections with those present in the house of Herod Antipas when Jesus was interrogated there. He was the 'dearest friend' of Agrippa II, who likely would have been in the house as a young child. He probably knew Berenice too, who also would have been there, though again very young at the time. He may further have been acquainted with Aristobulus and Salome, both of whom had good reason to be present and who would have been old enough to remember the events or even to have participated. Josephus more definitely knew their son Herod. Yet even if Josephus did not know any who were actually present at the house of Herod Antipas, he certainly knew several who were well placed to hear all about what went on from their family members who witnessed it.

[246] For discussion, see pp. 161–4.

[247] Herod Antipas is given no children in Josephus' genealogies of the Herodians; see *Antiquities* 17.12–22, 18.130–42; *War* 1.562–5.

[248] Aristobulus and his father, Herod of Chalcis, had further motivation for being in Jerusalem on the Passover since they possessed a special interest in the Temple of Jerusalem. On account of this interest, Herod of Chalcis requested from the Emperor and was granted permission by him to oversee the Jewish Temple, to guard the high priestly vestments, and to appoint the High Priest, see *Antiquities* 20.13–16, 103 (Whiston omits translating the name of Aristobulus in *Antiquities* 20.13). Upon the death of Herod of Chalcis, the privilege of appointing High Priests, for some reason, did not pass to his son, Aristobulus (though the Emperor had promised that it would) and instead was given to Agrippa II, *Antiquities* 20.179. On this, see Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaean Politics*, 154–6.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted ten or so different persons whom Josephus probably knew and whom evidence suggests could or would have been at the trial of Jesus. Yet it would be a mistake to consider these individuals as the only possible sources for Josephus' information about Jesus. For he surely knew some or even many others who had encountered the man from Nazareth.[249] This only makes sense for someone like Josephus, who was raised by a distinguished priestly family in Jerusalem in the 30s and 40s and 50s CE, who knew the leading men of Judaea throughout much of his life, and who was stationed in Galilee, the center of Jesus' ministry. Josephus himself emphasizes that 'many' people followed Jesus, and the Gospels say that thousands heard him preach.[250] Most of these men and women would still have been alive when Josephus was a boy growing up in Judaea. Not a few would have still remained when he was an adult serving in Galilee. Undoubtedly Josephus could have learned much of Jesus from them.

What Josephus can tell us about the Jesus of history will be the subject of the concluding chapter.

[249] For example, Josephus states in *War* 6.114 that several high-ranking priests survived the Jewish war. While the probability is difficult to assess, it is clearly possible that some of these may have been old enough to have met Jesus and that they could also have known Josephus.

[250] Matthew 14:13–21, 15:32–9; Mark 6:31–44, 8:1–9; Luke 12:1, 9:12–17; John 6:1–14. See also Matthew 4:25; Mark 3:8; Luke 6:17.

7
Summary and Conclusion
The Jesus of History

The Authenticity of the *Testimonium Flavianum*

Gathered in aggregate and squarely faced, the *Testimonium Flavianum* gives every sign of authenticity. The reasons for this, coming down to essentials, are founded in the TF's vocabulary, phrasing, reception, content, and context—all of which agree with early Jewish tendencies in general and with Josephus' tendencies in particular. The TF should hence be attributed to Josephus with much confidence.

This conclusion though is not in accordance with previous scholarly theories which assert that the TF suspiciously contradicts Josephus' writing style and that it contains claims unlikely to have been made by the Jewish historian. The results of this book's investigations instead show that the TF actually matches Josephus' style quite precisely and that its content is very like the things which Josephus often says elsewhere.[1] Not only this, but the TF is suffused with words, claims, and turns of phrase that were not used by ancient Christians, and that come across as written by a non-Christian.

To reiterate some examples, the TF uses the phrase 'having the third day' (τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν), it calls Christians a 'tribe' (φῦλον), it says that the followers of Jesus delighted in 'truths' or 'truisms' (τἀληθῆ), it calls Jesus a 'wise man' (σοφός), and it uses the words 'appear to be' or 'seem' (φαίνω) to describe the resurrection of Jesus—none of which early Christians preferred to use or even ever used. The TF also makes claims that disagree with early Christian belief, such as how the TF wonders if Jesus was actually human (or less than human), when early Christians viewed denying Jesus' humanity as heretical; or how the TF states, contrary to the New Testament, that Jesus had many Greek disciples; or how, again contrary to the New Testament, the TF emphasizes that Jesus' disciples were faithful to him after his death; or how the TF places Jesus as flourishing before John the Baptist, which is once more contrary to the New Testament. There are even potentially derogatory terms in the TF that a Christian interpolator would be highly unlikely to leave behind, such as 'a certain Jesus' (Ἰησοῦς τις), 'incredible' or even 'magical deeds' (παραδόξων), 'with pleasure' (ἡδονῇ), and 'bring over' or perhaps 'mislead' (ἐπηγάγετο).[2]

[1] See Chapters 3 and 4.
[2] For further discussion on items in this paragraph, see Chapter 3. For the placement of the TF, see Chapter 4 pp. 128–33.

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Such examples suggest that the TF is not so approving of Jesus as has been previously supposed. It is in fact ambiguous enough to be interpreted negatively, neutrally, or positively—and so it seems to have been by ancient and medieval readers.[3] Yet though the TF is in certain ways ambiguous, it is less so when interpreted in the light of Josephus' stylistic practice, which makes clear that those aspects of the TF that have been thought of as the most positive toward Jesus (and therefore the most suspicious) are in reality far more mundane. Thus, contrary to the assertions of some scholars, the TF does not affirm Jesus' resurrection, his messianic status, or his fulfillment of prophecy. It instead simply reports such matters as things which Jesus' followers believed.[4] This is why most ancient and medieval writers seem to have interpreted the TF as generally neutral and far from a pro-Christian redaction or interpolation or any such thing.[5]

Josephus' Sources for Jesus

What is more, it is also apparent that in the TF Josephus claims to have actually known some of the 'first men' (πρώτων ἀνδρῶν) who were party to the crucifixion of Jesus. For he says that these 'first men' were 'among us' (παρ' ἡμῖν), a phrase which, the fifty-one other times Josephus deploys it, seems to always mark a subject with which the speaker was directly connected and personally acquainted. Josephus goes on to emphasize several times elsewhere that he was closely familiar with the 'first men' (πρῶτοι) of Jerusalem beginning in the early 50s CE and continuing through the Jewish war in 70 CE.[6] It goes without saying that some of these 'first men' were probably the 'first men among us' whom Josephus says accused Jesus two or three decades before. But that is not all, during the 50s and 60s CE Josephus also directly knew 'chief priests'[7] in Jerusalem and at least one leading member of the Sanhedrin,[8] and the Gospels say that 'all the chief priests' and 'the whole Sanhedrin' were present for Jesus' trial.[9] The Gospels ought to be trusted in this claim since the Mishnah concurs that at the trial of a false prophet the entire Sanhedrin was to assemble.[10] It is probable, therefore, that Josephus knew some who participated in judicial proceedings against Jesus, whether 'first men', chief priests, or members of the Sanhedrin—for he was well connected to each group and each group had a hand in Jesus' crucifixion. And, it turns out, the affairs of

[3] See Chapters 1 and 2.
[4] See relevant locations in Chapter 3.
[5] See Chapters 1 and 2.
[6] *Life* 9, 21, 28–9, 217, 310; see also Chapter 5 pp. 149–51.
[7] *Life* 9, 21, 193–4; see also Chapter 5 pp. 149–51.
[8] Rabbi Simon son of Gamaliel; see Chapter 6 pp. 172–6.
[9] For 'all the chief priests', see Matthew 27:1; Mark 14:53. For the 'whole Sanhedrin', see Matthew 26:59; Mark 14:55, 15:1. See also pp. 189–90.
[10] Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 1.5–6. See also Chapter 6 pp. 189–90.

Josephus' life have so ordered themselves that it is even possible to identify several persons, known to Josephus, whom he likely had in mind when speaking of those 'first men among us' who accused Jesus.

These individuals can be found among the ten or so different acquaintances of Josephus discussed in the last chapter, all of whom had good reason to have been at the trial of Jesus. The most probable is Josephus' commander, the High Priest Ananus II. His father, Ananus I, and his brother-in-law, Caiaphas, both had Jesus crucified. Another likely acquaintance is Josephus' fellow Pharisee Rabbi Simon, prince of the Sanhedrin. His father, Gamaliel, was a famous leader (or even *the* leader) of the Sanhedrin in 30/33 CE, the same Sanhedrin which 'murdered' Jesus.[11] Yet another likely acquaintance is Josephus' friend High Priest Joshua. He was very old in 69 CE, meaning he would in all probability have been a high-ranking chief priest four decades previously when Jesus was put to trial before 'all the chief priests'.[12] And the above three persons are apart from the seven others discussed in Chapter 6 who each have plausible connections with both Josephus and Jesus.

But there is another reason to conclude that Josephus knew some who attended the trial of Jesus. This is because the individuals mentioned above can all be placed at the same time and general location of the trial itself. This is clear from Jewish law, which stipulated that on the evening of Passover—when Jesus was put on trial—faithful Jews were to gather in Jerusalem in the house of their familial patriarch. The conclusion from these things is that Ananus II, Josephus' future commander, would have been celebrating Passover in the house of his father at the precise time the New Testament says Jesus was brought to his father's house for interrogation.[13] It means too that Simon, Josephus' fellow Pharisee, would have been with his father Gamaliel when Gamaliel was called to the Sanhedrin trial of Jesus. And much the same can be said for the other of Josephus' acquaintances as they celebrated Passover with their illustrious families, each family undoubtedly having many members among the Sanhedrin or the chief priests who, according to the Gospels, all attended the trial of Jesus.

I should not fail to emphasize that the Passover timing of such an event would have given Josephus' contacts an extraordinary opportunity to have learned what occurred at the trial of Jesus, probably even allowing some to participate. And from this experience they each could have apprised Josephus about many things pertaining to Jesus of Nazareth. Indeed, Josephus is so well connected to Jesus that he is only one degree of separation removed from each of the four Jewish leaders whom the Gospel authors describe as participating in Jesus' trial: Ananus I, Caiaphas, Herod Antipas, and Gamaliel.[14] For Josephus knew close family members of each

[11] Acts 5:30.

[12] See Chapter 6 for discussions on these three individuals.

[13] See Chapter 6 pp. 190–6. Even if Ananus II instead observed Passover in the house of his brother-in-law Caiaphas, the current High Priest, Ananus still would have had good opportunity to witness the trial of Jesus, for Jesus was brought to the house of Caiaphas also. On the difference between the Gospel of John and the Synoptics regarding when Jesus was actually interrogated, see Appendix 3.

[14] See Chapter 6 for discussion on these individuals.

man.[15] And of course, some of those family members are likely to have attended the trial itself, making Josephus a direct contact with those who prosecuted Jesus.

Aside from these persons, there are also any number of other individuals whom Josephus may have met during his years in Galilee or his decades in Jerusalem whom he could have heard speak of Jesus.[16] These include a great range of people, from various chief priests, to the scions of the Herodian dynasty, to the leaders of the Sanhedrin, to the common folk of Jerusalem and Galilee, to even Josephus' own father and mother. After all, his parents were living in Jerusalem during the public crucifixion of Jesus in 30/33 CE, when his father was an esteemed priest and his mother was at least a teenager.[17] They both would have been able to recount to him many things about Jesus. And this is not to forget that Josephus also knew several Jewish leaders who supervised the trials of the apostles James, Paul, and likely Peter and John.[18] All told then, Josephus clearly had an impressive roster of informants able to tell him about the man from Nazareth.

But, given these things, there now remains but one more significant question to address: what can the TF tell us about the Jesus of history? For if the TF is authentic—if it really was written by a Jewish historian who grew up in Jerusalem in the 30s and 40s CE, who lived among the common people of Galilee, who circled among the chief priests of Jerusalem in the 50s and 60s CE, and who knew the prince of the Sanhedrin and several High Priests; if its author, Josephus, really did know some who crucified Jesus and some who put the apostles on trial—then we would be wise to pay attention to its words. For the TF may have historical depths which have not yet been plumbed.

The *Testimonium Flavianum*: Its Text and Meaning

In determining what the TF has to say about Jesus of history, it is necessary to discover what Josephus meant to communicate in the TF and, also, to ascertain the original text of the TF. To begin, did Josephus mean his account of Jesus to be negative, ambiguous, neutral, or positive? Throughout this book I have belabored the negative potentialities in the TF's phrasing because so many instances exist where the wording of the TF is used elsewhere by Josephus in a negative sense.[19] However, a purely negative interpretation of the TF runs into problems. First is

[15] Hence, Josephus knew one or two sons of Ananus I (Ananus II and possibly Jonathan), he knew the son of Gamaliel (Simon), he knew one or two brothers-in-law of Caiaphas (Ananus II and possibly Jonathan), and he knew the nephew (Agrippa II), niece (Berenice), and grandson (Herod) of Herod Antipas and perhaps also his stepdaughter (Salome) and stepson-in-law (Aristobulus). See Chapter 6.

[16] See Chapters 5 and 6 pp. 142–7, 197.

[17] See Chapter 5 pp. 142–3.

[18] Josephus' acquaintances may also have access to Sanhedrin documents concerning the trial of Jesus, or Josephus himself may have had such access; see Appendix 5.

[19] For example, 'certain' (τις), 'incredible deeds' or 'magical deeds' (παραδόξων), 'with pleasure' (ἡδονῇ), and 'lead' or 'mislead' (ἐπηγάγετο). See Chapter 3 for discussion.

that these negative turns of phrase also have counterexamples where Josephus uses the same terms neutrally or sometimes even positively.[20] Secondly, Josephus was quite capable of being openly critical of religious figures,[21] yet he is not obviously so toward Jesus. Nor does he explicitly follow any of the more outlandish and derogatory portrayals of Jesus found in other Jewish sources like the 'Jew of Celsus' or the Babylonian Talmud, or the *Toledot Yeshu*. It is true, there are several hints that he was aware of these criticisms, but he never openly embraces them.[22] Along with this, no ancient or medieval source appears to have read the TF in a purely negative light, even if some readers were concerned over certain phrases.[23] So it would be unwise for us to read the TF as a wholly negative account.

In further support of this are several reasons for considering Josephus to have thought somewhat favorably of Jesus, or at least to have allowed for the possibility. Firstly, his friend and correspondent King Agrippa II was not unfriendly toward Christians suggesting that Josephus would not have been either.[24] Secondly, Josephus greatly esteemed John the Baptist,[25] a known associate of Jesus, and it is reasonable that his admiration for John the Baptist would have colored his opinion of Jesus. Thirdly, he also presents James, the brother of Jesus, in an ambiguous, perhaps even vaguely sympathetic light. Thus, in the account of James' trial, Josephus criticizes the conduct of his own commander and former High Priest, Ananus II, who had James illegally executed. Though Josephus also mentions that James was put on trial as a lawbreaker, he does not affirm or deny the verity of the charge, and instead highlights Ananus II as the one committing malfeasance.[26] Josephus would have had good reason to be suspicious over the propriety of James' trial since it was conducted by Ananus II, the very man who betrayed Josephus, as explained in Appendix 6. All this suggests that Josephus may have viewed James with ambiguity, if not a touch of sympathy, and therefore probably viewed his brother Jesus similarly.

On the other hand, it would be equally unwise to read the TF as purely positive. There are simply too many potentially negative statements scattered about that to read

[20] See respective discussions in Chapter 3.

[21] For example, Josephus deeply criticizes pseudo-prophets, deceiving wonderworkers, and false teachers in *Antiquities* 18.81–2, 20.97–9, 142, 167–72; *War* 2.258–63. He also criticizes the behavior of two different High Priests in *Antiquities* 20.199, 205–7, the Sadducees in *War* 2.166, and the Pharisees in *Antiquities* 17.41. Relatedly, he condemns certain others for falsely claiming to be a god; see *Antiquities* 18.72–7, 256.

[22] For example, Josephus hints that he knew of Jewish accusations that Jesus worked miracles by magic given his use of the word παράδοξα; see Chapter 3 pp. 73–6. He also can be interpreted as casting Jesus as leading or even inducing (ἐπηγάγετο) a large group of disciples, which matches Jewish accusations that Jesus was a deceiver; see Chapter 3 pp. 81–3. Lastly, Josephus places the TF between a story of a pretend god sleeping with a woman and a story about Pontius Pilate and aqueducts, each of which, respectively, hearken back to Jewish traditions about Jesus' birth and death; see Chapter 4 pp. 131–3.

[23] See especially Eusebius' discomfort with the word παράδοξα; see as well the anonymous author of the *Dissertatio contra Judaeos*, as discussed in Chapter 1 pp. 18, 22. Cassiodorus and his team also neglected to translate the TF, perhaps because it contained statements that elsewhere they translated negatively; see Chapter 2 pp. 44–5.

[24] See Chapter 6 pp. 163–4.

[25] *Antiquities* 18.116–19.

[26] *Antiquities* 20.199–201. Appendix 6 shows that Ananus II and Gamaliel betrayed Josephus and it was their fathers who had Jesus executed. Hence one more reason Josephus may have been sympathetic to Jesus is that Jesus was accused by the very same families that betrayed Josephus.

them all favorably would take some improbable hermeneutical acrobatics. In this regard, the placement of the TF and some of its vocabulary allude to Jesus as being a conjurer, an insurrectionist, a pretender, a false Messiah of disreputable birth and suspicious burial, who led a rabble of overzealous, uneducated followers. Though, as said above, Josephus never unequivocally states any of these things and only alludes, suggests, hints, or subtly refers to them.[27] Such is why most Greek authors seem to have interpreted the TF as ambiguous, neutral, mundane, or slightly negative.[28]

All told then, the above observations answer quite completely to the question of what Josephus meant by the TF. He seems to have intended it to be neither openly negative nor openly positive, and therefore largely neutral. He did however insert a healthy amount of ambiguity, enough for one to draw several negative or positive inferences about Jesus. Whether this was because Josephus hoped to curry favor with an audience divided over their estimation of Jesus, or because he himself had no certain opinion of Jesus, or because his sources differed regarding Jesus, or because he admired Jesus but did not want to reveal his true feelings, or because he simply did not care, I cannot tell.

Text and Translation of the TF

In terms of the actual wording of the TF, its original Greek text is accurately preserved in present Greek manuscripts and quotations with the exception that one or two Greek words seem to have dropped out from the phrase 'he was the Christ' (ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν). As discussed in Chapter 3, Jerome's Latin translation and Jacob's Syriac translation show that the phrase originally read something like that Jesus was 'believed to be the Christ' (*credebatur esse Christus*) or that 'it was thought that he was the Christ' (ܗܘ ,ܡܗܝܡܢ ܗܘܝܬ ܡܫܝܚܐ). These translations are further supported by later Armenian and Arabic versions and by the early Latin version of Pseudo-Hegesippus. Of all the ancient versions, Jerome's Latin most closely follows the grammar of the remaining Greek text ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν, while Jacob's Syriac most closely follows its vocabulary.[29] The Syriac is also intriguing because the phrase *mestabrā itaw* (ܡܗܝܡܢ . . . ܐܝܬܝܗܘ) can be alternatively translated as 'proclaimed to be'. Though this is not the usual way to understand *mestabrā*, such an interpretation is almost synonymous with the Greek word λεγόμενος that Josephus uses elsewhere for Jesus when he says that Jesus was 'called' or 'declared' (λεγόμενος) the Christ.[30]

Be that as it may, the rule of textual criticism is that one should err on the side of conservatism and normal word usage. Hence, in the below Greek text I supply the Syriac phrase *mestabrā itaw* between brackets and then translate it according to its

[27] See n. 22 and pp. 73–6, 77–79, 81–3, 89–90, 131–3.
[28] See Chapter 1 pp. 33–34.
[29] See pp. 88–9.
[30] *Antiquities* 20.200.

typical meaning as 'thought to be'. This results in a text that does not contain conjectural emendations,[31] and which follows Greek witnesses at all times except at one point where it relies on the wording of Jacob's Syriac version and the grammar of Jerome's Latin version, both of which are supported by other Latin, Arabic, and Armenian witnesses. Though the Syriac in all likelihood fairly portrays Josephus' intended meaning, the reader should remember that the original Greek wording of the phrase may have read something like 'thought to be' (εἶναι νομιζόμενος) or 'believed to be' (εἶναι πιστευόμενος) or simply that Jesus was 'called Christ' (ὁ λεγόμενος χριστός).[32]

As far as the English translation goes, it is not possible to preserve all of the ambiguity of the original TF, but one can get a good approximation of what Josephus meant by comparing how Josephus uses the same words and phrases in the TF elsewhere throughout his work, as I do at key points in Chapter 3. One particularly difficult word to translate is *paradoxa* (παράδοξα), which I have rendered as 'incredible deeds'. Taken together, all this results in an English translation that sounds like so:[33]

Γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον Ἰησοῦς τις σοφὸς ἀνήρ, εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή· ἦν γὰρ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής, διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡδονῇ τἀληθῆ δεχομένων, καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν Ἰουδαίους, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἐπηγάγετο· ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος [*mestabrā itaw*] ἦν. καὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν παρ' ἡμῖν σταυρῷ ἐπιτετιμηκότος Πιλάτου οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο οἱ τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαπήσαντες· ἐφάνη γὰρ αὐτοῖς τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν πάλιν ζῶν τῶν θείων προφητῶν ταῦτά τε καὶ ἄλλα μυρία περὶ αὐτοῦ θαυμάσια εἰρηκότων. εἰς τε νῦν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀπὸ τοῦδε ὠνομασμένον οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φῦλον.

And in this time, there was a certain Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man, for he was a doer of incredible deeds, a teacher of men who receive truisms with pleasure. And he brought over many from among the Jews and many from among the Greeks. He was [thought to be] the Christ. And, when Pilate had condemned him to the cross at the accusation of the first men among us, those who at first were devoted to him did not cease to be so, for on the third day it seemed to them that he was alive again given that the divine prophets had spoken such things and thousands of other wonderful things about him. And up till now the tribe of the Christians, who were named from him, has not disappeared.

[31] According to Metzger and Ehrman, a conjectural emendation occurs when an editor supplies a reading that is not witnessed by the original language of the ancient text or by any of its ancient or medieval translations; see Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 230.

[32] One might argue that my reconstruction should also add the Syriac word for 'was' or *hwa* (ܗܘܐ), but this is already represented by the Greek word ἦν and hence does not need to be supplied.

[33] This translation is quite similar to the 'neutral' translation presented in Chapter 4 pp. 137–8 with the exception that I use the phrase 'it seemed to them that he was alive again' instead of 'he appeared to them to be alive again'.

With the above translation in view, it is fitting to take our interpretive cue from the TF's opening line: 'In this time there was a certain Jesus, a wise man, if it is necessary to call him a man, for he was a doer of *paradoxa*. . . .' Howsoever one translates *paradoxa* (παράδοξα) will guide the interpretation of the whole. If it be deemed positive, as in 'miraculous deeds' (a viable translational decision), then the tenor of the TF will change accordingly. The same goes for the relatively equivocal 'incredible deeds', which would cast ambiguous light on the TF. But if one chooses the negative 'magical deeds', then the meaning of the TF swings in a more critical direction. One could also reasonably translate 'brought over' (ἐπηγάγετο) in a negative manner as 'induced' or 'led astray', which would then make the whole TF quite condemnatory of Jesus. There are of course several other aspects of the TF which could be translated as slightly positive or negative in English, though in the original Greek, the ambiguity of these phrases would have been on full display for readers.[34]

It deserves mentioning yet again that however one may choose to translate the TF, it is unlikely that Josephus intended a purely negative portrayal of Jesus. Likewise, one must also consider that, as far as the phrases that have often been understood as the most positive toward Jesus, the evidence indicates that these are far more neutral. Thus, the original text of the TF did not say that Jesus 'was the Christ' but instead something like that Jesus was 'believed to be' or 'thought to be', as the Latin and Syriac evidence indicates (with support also coming from Arabic and Armenian evidence). It could also be that Josephus repeated the same terms he used of Jesus elsewhere and that the original text was that Jesus was 'called the Christ' (τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ).[35]

Similarly, drawing on Josephus' own grammatical style, it is clear that the TF's mention of Jesus' resurrection should not be translated as 'he appeared to them alive again on the third day' but rather 'he appeared to them to be alive' or even 'it seemed to them that he was alive'.[36] This casts the entire assertion about Jesus' resurrection and his fulfillment of prophecy as a belief of Jesus' disciples, not a belief of Josephus himself.

The Jesus of History

So then, if in the TF Josephus means to describe Jesus somewhat neutrally while providing a good bit of ambiguity, what can the TF tell us about the Jesus of history? It tells us much I think. In fact, it corroborates many key points regarding Jesus presented in the New Testament.

[34] For further discussion on *paradoxa*, see Chapter 3 pp. 73–5. For other possible translations of the TF, see Chapter 4 pp. 137–8.
[35] *Antiquities* 20.200.
[36] See Chapter 3 pp. 96–100.

Corroborations

Viewed as a whole, the TF broadly outlines the same account of Jesus' life and ministry as the four canonical Gospels, though with a different tenor and emphasis. Hence, the placement of the TF in the *Antiquities* confirms that Jesus ministered during the governorship of Pontius Pilate, the reign of Herod Antipas the Tetrarch, and the high priesthood of Caiaphas, when the emeritus High Priest Ananus I was still of great influence. This accords completely with the Gospels and other references in the New Testament.[37]

As far as the actual content of the TF goes, Josephus begins by calling Jesus a 'certain Jesus' (Ἰησοῦς τις), thus applying to Jesus a possibly derogatory or suspicious turn of phrase, but one that matches how early non-Christians spoke of Jesus.[38] Next, Josephus calls Jesus 'a wise man' (σοφός), but nowhere do the New Testament authors call Jesus this and some even criticize the 'wise'.[39] Obviously early Christians portrayed Jesus as having much wisdom,[40] but they did not characterize him with the term σοφός probably because it reminded the first-century listener of a pagan Greek philosopher. It is telling though that non-Christian writers missed this subtle emphasis and instead freely admitted that Jesus was 'wise'.[41] So it is understandable that Josephus would have done the same.

Moving along, Josephus rhetorically wonders whether to call Jesus 'a man' since, in Josephus' words, he was 'a doer of *paradoxa*'. As already mentioned, *paradoxa* (παράδοξα) pertains to miraculous deeds that are frequently associated with conjuring and wizardry. This then chimes with assertions, again witnessed by the Gospels, where Jesus is accused of performing miracles with the aid of demons.[42]

Further, as regards Jesus' humanity, the TF rhetorically wonders whether 'one ought to call [Jesus] a man'. This harmonizes with how the Gospels present first-century Jews as being conflicted over Jesus, with some speculating that he might be the Son of God or even God,[43] and with others accusing him of not only being in league with demons, but of being a demon himself.[44] Josephus' rhetorical statement about Jesus' humanity hence quite agrees with the New Testament's

[37] Luke 3:1–2; Acts 4:6, 27; John 18:13, 24, 28–32.
[38] Acts 25:19. For further discussion, see Chapter 3 pp. 67–9.
[39] Matthew 13:54; Mark 6:21; 1 Corinthians 1:18–25.
[40] For example, in 1 Corinthians 1:18–25 Paul criticizes the 'wise', but goes on to emphasize that Jesus was actually the very 'wisdom' of God. And again, in Matthew 13:54 and Mark 6:21 Jesus critiques the 'wise'; though elsewhere he also implies that he himself had immense wisdom: Matthew 11:19, 12:42; Luke 7:35, 11:31, 49.
[41] For example, Mara bar Serapion, Porphyry, and the Milesian Apollo. For discussion, see Chapter 3 pp. 69–71.
[42] See Chapter 3 pp. 73–5.
[43] John 20:28; Hebrews 1:8; Philippians 2:6.
[44] Matthew 10:25.

portrayal of early first-century Jewish beliefs.[45] More than this though, the ambiguity with which Josephus describes Jesus may be attributed to Josephus' understanding that Jesus was a polarizing figure, who generally caused Jews to fall into diametrically opposed groups.[46] It could also reflect the fact that many Jews in the first century simply did not know what to think of Jesus and his miracles, as the New Testament itself also claims,[47] or that Josephus did not know either, or other such possibilities.[48]

Of Jesus' disciples, Josephus affirms that Jesus had many followers and that his ministry, somewhat shockingly for a Jewish teacher, also included Gentiles. This again coheres with the Gospel accounts which emphasize that thousands of people followed Jesus, or otherwise heard him preach, and that a few of these were Gentiles.[49] The character of Jesus' disciples and the nature of his teachings are also alluded to by Josephus and again these match the canonical Gospels. Such is clear from careful evaluation of Josephus' vocabulary which shows him describing Jesus' disciples as 'those who receive truisms with pleasure'. The phrase 'receive with pleasure' (τῶν ἡδονῇ . . . δεχομένων) in Josephus' writings most frequently refers to overzealous or heedless actions. Along with this, the term 'truisms' (τἀληθῆ) contrasts with the more profound term 'truth' (ἀλήθεια) and suggests basic, run-of-the-mill facts, observations, and the like.[50]

Thus, the content of Jesus' teaching, as portrayed by Josephus, seems to be one of a simple, matter-of-fact nature, much like the presentation of Jesus' public teaching in the Gospels with his pithy sermons, succinct retorts, colloquial parables, and so on.[51] This is in great contrast to many Jewish teachers in the first century who delivered complex, elaborate, and even inscrutable teachings.[52] Furthermore, Josephus' description of the disciples as receiving these simple 'truisms with pleasure' also corresponds nicely with the New Testament description of Jesus' disciples as being slow to understand,[53] uneducated,[54] overly zealous, and volatile in temperament.[55]

[45] It should also be observed that early Christians ardently believed that Jesus was in fact human and so it seems quite unlikely that a later Christian scribe would have inserted a phrase into the TF that hypothetically wonders whether Jesus was human or not. For further discussion, see Chapter 3 pp. 71–3.

[46] John 7:11–13, 25–31, 40–52.

[47] Matthew 12:23, 13:54–7; Mark 6:14–15, 8:27–8; Luke 9:7–8, 18–19; John 4:29.

[48] See pp. 73, 203 for further possibilities.

[49] On Jesus having thousands of followers, see Matthew 14:13–21, 15:32–9; Mark 6:31–44, 8:1–9; Luke 9:12–17; John 6:1–14. See also Matthew 4:25; Mark 3:8; Luke 6:17. On non-Jewish followers, see Chapter 3 pp. 80–1.

[50] See Chapter 3 p. 78.

[51] See Chapter 3 pp. 78–9.

[52] This is obvious to anyone who has read the original language texts of Josephus, Philo, and certain Dead Sea Scrolls. On the latter, see Charlesworth, 'The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Historical Jesus', 26–7.

[53] Matthew 15:16; Mark 4:13, 7:18; Luke 24:25.

[54] Matthew 11:25; Luke 10:21; John 7:15; Acts 4:13.

[55] Matthew 20:20–8; Luke 9:54–5, 22:50–1; John 18:10–11. Jesus' disciples also promised to remain faithful to him, before actually rejecting him; see n. 72 below.

Josephus then uses the ambiguous term 'brought over' (ἐπηγάγετο) to describe Jesus leading many Jews and Greeks. This word can be interpreted as connoting deception, exactly like what Jewish leaders accused Jesus of doing according to the Gospel accounts.[56] Moreover, the Gospels describe how Jesus' many followers caused great alarm among Jewish leaders[57] who worried that the 'whole world' was going to follow him[58] and that Jesus would cause a rebellion.[59] All this is once again corroborated by Josephus' portrayal of Jesus leading 'many from among the Jews and many from among the Greeks' and then being crucified by the Roman governor at the behest of Jewish leaders. The reader of the TF is thus left with a fair impression that Jesus may have been accused of fomenting rebellion, which, according to the Gospels, he actually was. It must be observed however that Josephus never openly affirms that Jesus led an uprising, but only hints at the possibility.

Turning to Jesus' execution, resurrection, messianic status, and fulfillment of prophecy, Josephus also confirms the New Testament. He says, unequivocally, that Jesus was crucified by Pontius Pilate at the accusation of the 'first men among us'. This precisely accords with how the Gospel accounts portray many Jewish leaders hounding Pontius Pilate with accusations against Jesus, causing Pilate to sentence Jesus to crucifixion.[60] The fact that Josephus affirms the crucifixion also verifies the claim of the Gospels that Jesus was charged with rebellion,[61] since the crucifixion of a non-slave was typically reserved for only two crimes: robbery and rebellion.[62] Of course, Josephus further substantiates the fact that Jesus' disciples believed that Jesus fulfilled Jewish prophecy, that he was the Christ, and that he was raised from the dead after three days.[63]

Lastly, Josephus also calls Jesus' followers 'Christians', which once more subtly corroborates the New Testament. This is because the New Testament implies that the term 'Christian' (Χριστιανῶν) was originally coined by non-Christians in the mid-first century.[64] Hence it would be quite probable that a first-century Jew, like Josephus, would deploy the term, and that he would also find the need to define such a neologism. And of course, Josephus does both in the TF.

[56] Matthew 27:63; Luke 23:2; John 7:12, 47, 52.
[57] John 4:1–2.
[58] John 12:19.
[59] Luke 23:1–5, 14.
[60] See Chapter 6 pp. 183–4.
[61] Luke 23:2–5. While Luke is the only Gospel writer who is specific about this charge, the three others portray Jesus as being charged with claiming to be an unlawful king, which would amount to rebellion in Roman eyes; see Matthew 27:11, 36; Mark 15:2, 26; John 18:33, 19:19–22.
[62] Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World*, 46–50.
[63] It is true that technically Josephus does not explicitly claim that Jesus' disciples believed he was the Christ, but the whole thrust of the TF leads one to assume as much, especially given that Josephus specifically credits the disciples as believing that Jesus was raised from the dead and that he fulfilled prophecy.
[64] Acts 11:26, 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16. See pp. 105, 110, 117, 225.

Contradictions

There are however a few matters that do not, at first sight, accord with the New Testament and its portrayal of Jesus. The most obvious is that Josephus may have thought that Jesus died before John the Baptist insofar as he discusses Jesus' death before he discusses John's.[65] Though it is true that Josephus may here contradict the clear claim of the New Testament documents, it is also true that Josephus frequently places historical events out of order for the sake of his narrative. Sometimes he even does this when retelling historical events that he himself had lived through and that he himself had already recounted in a different order elsewhere.[66] As such, Josephus may not have actually been making a chronological claim regarding Jesus and John but instead may have chosen to place Jesus before John because he found such an arrangement to be more suitable for his thematic emphasis of highlighting 'disturbances' during the reign of Pontius Pilate.[67]

In fairness to Josephus, the point should be made that even if he was making a chronological claim, the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus did significantly overlap, so placing Jesus' death before John's is not so egregious an error from a purely chronological perspective. Given this, if Josephus really did think that Jesus died before John the Baptist, such an error is not all that far off the mark. It also should not outweigh other New Testament documents which are united in claiming that John died before Jesus,[68] especially given that Josephus muddles chronology elsewhere.

In view of this it should be emphasized that such tension with the New Testament actually has the counter effect of promoting the authenticity of the TF since it is so unlikely that a later Christian scribe would have inserted a story of Jesus' death before that of John the Baptist. Indeed, the only other group that may have believed Jesus ministered before John the Baptist was a small, relatively insignificant Jewish-Christian sect called the Ebionites. They greatly depended on early Jewish tradition and it is unsurprising that Josephus could have relied on similar Jewish tradition about the chronology of Jesus' life as compared to that of John the Baptist.[69]

The only two other areas where Josephus conflicts with the New Testament are less examples of contradiction and more of differing perspective.[70] In the TF,

[65] Jesus is discussed in *Antiquities* 18.63–4 and John the Baptist is discussed in *Antiquities* 18.116–19.

[66] Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, 3–8. See also a table comparing the different chronological sequences given in the Josephus' *Life* and *War*, found in Mason, *Life of Josephus*, 213–22.

[67] On these disturbances, see Chapter 3 p. 66 n. 16, pp. 128–9. It was common for Josephus to rearrange chronology for the sake of his chosen theme or for greater literary effect; see Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, 233.

[68] See p. 129.

[69] See p. 129.

[70] One more tension with the New Testament could be deduced from the fact that Josephus highlights the role of Pontius Pilate in the death of Jesus, whereas the New Testament almost always emphasizes the role of Jewish leaders. This though is not a contradiction and is simply a matter of emphasis since the Gospel narratives clearly show Pontius Pilate as ultimately presiding over the death of Jesus; see Chapter 3 pp. 93–4.

Josephus claims that Jesus had many Greek followers and that his disciples did not cease to be faithful to him after his execution. Of course, the New Testament documents are quite clear that neither are true. Though Jesus did minister to Greeks on occasion, he did not have many Greek followers.[71] And though Jesus had zealous disciples, the Gospel accounts are emphatic that they abandoned him at his death and initially doubted his resurrection, only later returning to their devotion.[72] The New Testament documents go even so far as to show that several of the apostles—Paul and Jesus' brothers Jude and James—did not even believe in Jesus during his ministry, but only did so after he had been raised from the dead.[73]

But in each of the above two instances, Josephus' presentation of the case is understandable from his perspective as an outsider. To Josephus it would have seemed a fair assumption that Jesus attracted many Greek followers during his lifetime given that Jesus did attract some Greeks and that, soon after his death, many Greeks professed faith in him. Not only this, the one passage in the Gospels that appears to portray Jesus as having a large non-Jewish following is actually the exaggerated statement of contemporary Jewish leaders—'Look! The world has gone after him'[74]—and hence is not affirmed by the Gospel authors. Thus, drawing from Jewish sources close to Jesus and peering into the first-century Christian movement from without, Josephus would have had ample reason to report that many Greeks had followed Jesus even if only a few actually had.[75]

Likewise, though Jesus' disciples abandoned him, it is again understandable that a non-Christian like Josephus would have reported the opposite on the grounds that those same disciples were afterward willing to die for the belief that Jesus had been resurrected, as the New Testament[76] and other early Christian documents say.[77] Josephus would obviously have been aware of their zeal given that he knew personally those who supervised the capital trials of the apostles Paul and James the brother of Jesus. Josephus also likely knew some who had attended the trial of the apostles Peter and John.[78] It hence would have taken an intimate and detailed

[71] See Chapter 3 pp. 80–1.

[72] The disciples insisted that they would not abandon Jesus (Matthew 26:33, 35; Mark 14:29; Luke 22:33; John 13:37), shortly before actually abandoning him (Matthew 26:56; Mark 14:50; John 16:32). Judas of course also betrayed Jesus, Peter denied Jesus, and the disciples as a whole refused to believe that he had been resurrected; see Chapter 3 p. 95 for discussion.

[73] Jesus' brothers, James and Jude, did not believe in him (Mark 3:21, 31, 6:3; John 7:5), but both apparently were converted after his death (Acts 12:17, 15:13, 21:18; 1 Corinthians 9:5, 15:7; Galatians 1:19, 2:9, 2:12; James 1:1; Jude 1:1). Paul of course persecuted the church before becoming a Christian himself; see 1 Corinthians 15:9; Galatians 1:13.

[74] John 12:19.

[75] See Chapter 3 pp. 80–1.

[76] Acts 4:18–21, 5:27–33, 40–2, 7:54–60, 12:1–5, 16:22–4, 20:22–4. See also Paul's trials before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa II in Acts 24–6 and his words in Philippians 1:21 and 2 Corinthians 11:23–7.

[77] Clement of Rome, *First Epistle* 5.1–7; Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Smyrnaeans* 3.1–3 (see also *Letter to the Romans* 4.1–5.3); Polycarp, *Letter to the Philippians* 9.1–2. See also *Antiquities* 20.200–1.

[78] See Chapter 6 pp. 163–4, 184–6.

knowledge of Christian teaching to understand that this devotion of Jesus' followers was not maintained after his execution, as Josephus says, but only regained after the disciples believed Jesus had been resurrected. So, while Josephus is technically incorrect on this count, his statement is quite explicable as coming from an outsider.

In the light of these observations, the tensions that the TF holds with the New Testament once again have the corollary effect of substantiating the authorship of the TF in view of how improbable it would be for a Christian to make such mistakes, but yet how probable for a non-Christian, like Josephus, to have done so if he was well informed of Jesus, but lacked the specialized, insider knowledge of a Christian.

Conclusion

To sum up regarding the Jesus of history, Josephus advances the following points to a greater or lesser degree: Jesus was a Jew who was crucified by Pontius Pilate, during the reign of Herod Antipas the Tetrarch and under the high priesthood of Caiaphas, while the emeritus High Priest Ananus I still held great sway. Before Jesus' death he was known as a wise man who taught simple, basic truths, but who was also a polarizing figure, with some wondering if he was more than human and others thinking he was less. His disciples were many and included both Jews and non-Jews. These were perhaps not particularly educated and were prone to being overzealous. Aside from Jesus' teaching ministry, he also performed miracles that were viewed by some as being gotten by sorcery. Others, however, believed him to be the Christ. After he was crucified by Pontius Pilate at the behest of Jewish leaders, his disciples claimed that he had been resurrected three days later and that he fulfilled Jewish prophecy. These followers of Jesus were called 'Christians' and still existed at the end of the first century.

To this description there must be added the historical observation that Josephus' account of Jesus does not likely reflect information about Jesus that originated in 93/4 CE, when Josephus wrote the TF.[79] Rather, Josephus' information goes back many decades earlier and can be traced to those who interrogated the apostles in the 30s through 60s CE and to those who attended Jesus' trial in 30/33 CE.[80] For Josephus did know such people.

[79] Josephus says in the conclusion of his *Antiquities* that the present day was the fifty-sixth year of his life and the thirteenth year of Emperor Domitian, which corresponds with 93/4 CE. See *Antiquities* 20.267 and Mason, *Life of Josephus*, xv–xvi n. 1.

[80] It is also possible that Josephus knew those who had access to Sanhedrin documents regarding the trial of Jesus, or that Josephus himself did; see Appendix 5.

Miracles, Prophecy, and the Resurrection on the Third Day

It is therefore thoroughly remarkable that what Josephus says about Jesus follows the outlines of what the New Testament documents declare. Most striking of all is that Josephus' testimony quite clearly proposes that Jesus did in fact perform miracles and that the belief about his resurrection and fulfillment of prophecy was not developed years after Jesus lived, but was, to quote Josephus, already held by the disciples of Jesus 'on the third day'. This point is considerably fortified by the fact that Josephus was quite capable of criticizing supernatural claims.[81] But instead of classifying the miraculous reports of Jesus as the outgrowth of later myths and legends, he rather presents them as being contemporaneous with Jesus and the apostles.

All this suggests that there was no long, postmortem period where Jesus went from humble teacher to resurrected wonderworker, a period in which the basic claims of Jesus' miracles and resurrection grew like coral on a reef, with one person expanding and exaggerating the imagination of the previous. Rather, such fundamental beliefs about Jesus were present from the beginning of the Christian movement,[82] and were disseminated by Jesus' own disciples and even, it seems, by his enemies.[83]

Josephus, after all, was directly familiar with those Jewish leaders who attended judicial proceedings against not only Jesus but also against the apostles James, Paul, and likely Peter and John too. At such trials, Josephus' acquaintances extracted testimony from Jesus and the disciples regarding their beliefs, often under threat of execution. Hence these Jewish leaders would have been reliable informants for Josephus to learn about the teachings of Jesus and his followers.[84]

All this urges the further inference that the early Christian movement was not so divided as sometimes supposed. It is agreed by scholars that four of Jesus'

[81] Josephus laughs at the idea of wizards in *Life* 150. He also does not hesitate to portray certain so-called prophets and miracles as lying and false; *Antiquities* 20.97–9, 142, 167–72; *War* 2.258–63. See Betz, 'Miracles in the Writings of Flavius Josephus', 212–13.

[82] In his comprehensive study on the historical Jesus, Meier similarly concludes 'the miracle traditions about Jesus' public ministry are already so widely attested in various sources and literary forms by the end of the first Christian generation that total fabrication by the early church is, practically speaking, impossible'. Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, vol. 2 p. 630.

[83] Jesus' enemies of course claimed that Jesus worked miracles, but only with the help of demons or some similar means; see Chapter 3 pp. 72, 74. And though they did not believe Jesus had been resurrected bodily, they did not dispute that the early disciples believed as much; see the Jew of Celsus in Origen, *Against Celsus* 2.70.

[84] The reader of this book might wonder why Josephus' contacts would have cared enough about Jesus to have become well acquainted with him or at least to have been aware of the outlines of his personal history. But surely the family of Ananus I and those associated with the Sanhedrin would have been quite interested in Jesus given that he caused so great an upheaval that they appealed to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, to have Jesus executed. The continued flourishing of the Jesus movement no doubt would have also vexed them considerably. This is evident by the fact that Ananus II risked his own high priesthood in order to have James, the brother of Jesus, illegally executed in 62 CE; see *Antiquities* 20.200–1.

early apostles—Peter, James, John, and Paul—were the most prominent leaders of the early church.[85] Some scholars however go on to hypothesize that these four strongly disagreed on significant matters.[86] Over and against this hypothesis stands Josephus' *Testimonium Flavianum*. For Josephus seems to have been in touch with individuals who put all four of these apostles on trial, yet he does not depict a Christian movement riven by disagreement, nor does he set forth an account of Jesus far different from that presented by the New Testament documents. It stands to reason that whatever conflicts the four leading apostles may have had with one another, these did not concern the fundamental beliefs sketched out by Josephus.

And according to Josephus, the principal belief upon which the disciples seem to have agreed was that Jesus was raised from the dead on the third day in fulfillment of Jewish prophecy. This is in great contrast to certain scholars who theorize that the disciples were consciously deceiving others regarding Jesus' resurrection, or that they believed they had seen a mere symbolic vision of Jesus after his death, or even that they thought Jesus had simply visited them in spirit.[87] Instead, Josephus' words are suggestive that the disciples, from their perspective, actually considered Jesus to be alive in the flesh three days after he had been dead in the flesh.

For by Josephus claiming in the TF that 'it seemed' to the disciples that Jesus was alive, the implied meaning is clearly that they honestly believed he had risen from the dead. And by using the word 'alive', Josephus could not have meant that the disciples believed some vision of Jesus was divinely granted to them as a way to vindicate his mission, or affirm his righteousness, or some such thing, for otherwise they would not have thought Jesus was actually 'alive'. And by Josephus claiming that the disciples believed Jesus was alive 'again', their intended belief is obviously that Jesus was physically alive again when he once had been physically dead. It could not be intended that Jesus' soul or spirit continued to live and then visited the disciples, for his spirit would not have died in the first place and hence could not be alive 'again'.

Thus, if Josephus had meant to characterize the disciples as being intentionally deceptive, he would not have said that Jesus 'seemed to them' to be alive. If he had wanted to portray the disciples as claiming that they merely beheld a kind of divinely granted symbolic vision of Jesus, he would not have specified that it was actually Jesus himself whom they considered to be 'alive'. And, if he intended to cast the disciples as only believing in the continued spiritual existence of Jesus, he would not have used the word 'again'.

[85] Barnett, *Jesus and the Rise of Early Christianity*, 389–94.

[86] For example, Chilton writes 'James and Peter and Paul disagreed ideologically' and discusses whether these apostles should even be viewed as part of a single 'movement'. See, Chilton and Evans, *The Missions of James, Peter, and Paul*, 487–8.

[87] These hypotheses regarding what the disciples originally believed about the resurrection of Jesus are enumerated in Allison, *Resurrecting Jesus*, 204–13.

Therefore, the plain reading of Josephus is that the belief in Jesus' bodily resurrection on the third day was held by the disciples of Jesus quite soon after his death, even on 'the third day', as Josephus says. And these disciples seem to have included the four leading apostles of Jesus—Peter, James, John, and Paul—the very ones 'reputed to be pillars' of the church,[88] each of whom went on to lead distinct Christian communities, each of whom are said to have contributed to the documents of the New Testament, and each of whom Josephus' acquaintances had put on trial. The only surer informants would be those who had encountered Jesus directly—but of course, Josephus knew people who had. And it bears emphasizing that Josephus' contacts were not only those who had merely met Jesus, but even certain individuals who were party to his interrogation and crucifixion.

* * *

Well then, we have come to the end. The last threads of this book have been gathered together; their tracery is nearly complete—let us now tie the final knot. For too long scholars have dismissed the value of Josephus' *Testimonium Flavianum*. But we must follow the evidence: the *Testimonium Flavianum* is authentic, and within it there resides a compelling witness to the origins of Christianity and to 'the one called Christ'.

[88] Galatians 2:9. Paul does not class himself as a pillar of the church in this quotation, but he has been by almost all other Christians since. He also does not claim to have seen Jesus on the third day after his death, but only sometime thereafter.

APPENDIX 1

Eusebius, His Citational Practices, and the *Testimonium Flavianum*

A small but vocal group of scholars contends that the *Testimonium Flavianum* is largely or completely a forgery and that the forger was none other than the very first person to cite the TF: Eusebius of Caesarea (*c*.313 CE).[1] He was, they say, in the habit of changing the words of others, making him a prime suspect. Their central argument, however, turns on three phrases in the TF which are supposed to exhibit the stylistic hallmarks of Eusebius and no one else. In this appendix I will hold each of these claims under the light of close examination. We will see that Eusebius was particularly exacting in his quotations and is therefore an unlikely candidate for forging the TF. All this is notwithstanding the fact that the TF gives little sign of forgery anyway, as Chapters 1–4 demonstrate.

Eusebius' Citations of Josephus

Ken Olson is chief among the proponents of Eusebian forgery. To lay the foundation for his case he points to three passages where he believes Eusebius materially alters Josephus' words.[2] One passage though, at *Ecclesiastical History* 2.6.3, is not actually an alteration at all; here Eusebius simply summarizes his interpretation of Josephus and then proceeds to justify it with various excerpts. In this case it is actually Olson who has put words into the mouth of Eusebius. With the second alleged instance, at *Ecclesiastical History* 3.5.6, even Olson admits that Eusebius only 'implies' that Josephus placed the fall of Jerusalem on the Passover,[3] but Eusebius does not actually quote Josephus as saying this, and once again, Eusebius only presents his own interpretation. Neither of these two cases show any kind of tendency to supply misquotations of Josephus let alone to actually forge or interpolate the manuscripts of his work.

[1] Zeitlin, 'The Christ Passage in Josephus', 237–40; Zeitlin, 'The Slavonic Josephus', 41–50; Zeitlin, 'Josephus on Jesus', 392–9; Olson, 'Eusebius and the Testimonium Flavianum', 310–14; Olson, 'A Eusebian Reading'; Feldman, 'On the Authenticity of the Testimonium Flavianum', 25–8. Scholars who have engaged with these arguments and have found them insufficient include Paget, 'Some Observations', 561–3, 577–8; Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum'; Bermejo-Rubio, 'Hypothetical Vorlage', 328; Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*, 206–11. Whealey sums up Olson's arguments, 'although Olson has a few insightful points, his overall linguistic analysis is based on an insufficient and occasionally inaccurate reading of both Eusebius' works and Josephus' works, and a few of his general arguments are logically flawed'; see Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum', 73.

[2] Olson, 'Eusebius and the Testimonium Flavianum', 318–19. With these examples, Olson relies heavily on Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 16–17.

[3] Olson, 'Eusebius and the Testimonium Flavianum', 319.

The third passage, at *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.20, concerns Eusebius' treatment of Josephus and James the brother of Jesus (*Antiquities* 20.200). There Eusebius incorrectly states:

> And indeed, Josephus does not shrink from witnessing to these things in the following words '*These things befell the Jews as punishment for James the Just, who was the brother of Jesus who was called Christ, since the Jews killed him who was most just*'.[4] And the same author records his death in the twentieth book of the *Antiquities* as follows. . . .[5]

Eusebius then goes on to quote from Josephus' description of the death of James in *Antiquities* 20.197, 199–203. It is clear in all this that Eusebius would have us believe that the above italicized sentence is also from the work of Josephus, yet it is in actuality found nowhere in his corpus. This is the one occasion where Eusebius does truly mangle a quotation of Josephus, but even in this instance Eusebius is not creating or manufacturing any alterations, but rather is accurately passing along a misquotation which was already before him.[6]

There are several reasons to conclude this. For one, it is improbable that Eusebius' would have manufactured this quotation because it employs the phrase 'brother of Jesus' whereas Eusebius' preferred vocabulary to describe James was the 'brother of the Lord' or the 'brother of the Savior'.[7] More importantly, Eusebius even cautions that James was actually not physically related to Jesus, since, as he explains, James was the son of Joseph from a previous marriage.[8] So why would he have interpolated such a thing into Josephus' work?[9]

Instead, what seems to be going on is that with the italicized sentence Eusebius has been misled by his hero Origen (*c.*255 CE), whom sixty years prior to Eusebius had incorrectly asserted in his work *Against Celsus* that Josephus said 'These things befell the Jews as punishment for James the Just, who was the brother of Jesus who was called Christ, since they killed him who was most just'.[10] Eusebius follows Origen's characterization of Josephus word for word, only making explicit implied words and changing the grammar from indirect speech to direct speech.[11]

Because Eusebius inherited portions of Origen's library,[12] it is possible that Eusebius' misquotation of Josephus was based on an interpolation that existed in the manuscripts of Josephus that Eusebius had obtained from Origen. Yet, if this were the case, Eusebius would not of course be responsible for interpolating the passage. The far more likely scenario though is that Eusebius simply trusted Origen's misquotation of Josephus and copied the quotation directly from Origen's *Against Celsus*.

[4] ταῦτα δὲ συμβέβηκεν Ἰουδαίοις κατ' ἐκδίκησιν Ἰακώβου τοῦ δικαίου, ὃς ἦν ἀδελφὸς Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ, ἐπειδήπερ δικαιότατον αὐτὸν ὄντα οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀπέκτειναν. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.20 (Schwartz and Mommsen, *Eusebius Werke 2.1–3: Die Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 1 p. 172 lines 9–11.

[5] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.20–1.

[6] See Appendix 2 pp. 235–9 for an additional discussion on this question.

[7] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.12.4, 2.1.2, 23.1, 23.4, and the chapter heading of 2.23. For Jude, see 3.19.1, 20.1.

[8] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.1.2.

[9] For a similar argument, see Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum', 112.

[10] ταῦτα συμβεβηκέναι τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις κατ' ἐκδίκησιν Ἰακώβου τοῦ δικαίου, ὃς ἦν ἀδελφὸς Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ, ἐπειδήπερ δικαιότατον αὐτὸν ὄντα ἀπέκτειναν. Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.47 (Marcovich, *Origenes*, 48 lines 12–14.). Origen refers to this quotation in two other locations, *Against Celsus* 2.13; *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17.

[11] On this see Chadwick, *Origen: Contra Celsum*, 43 n. 2.

[12] See p. 16.

Evidence for this is that Eusebius does not supply the title or book number for the work of Josephus he is citing, as he does for his other Josephan quotations.[13] This suggests that Eusebius did not find the italicized quotation in any writing of Josephus and so could not actually cite from where it came. Thus, he likely derived it from Origen. Apart from this, a point that should not be forgotten is that were Eusebius to have been in the business of interpolating passages, he surely would have inserted the noted quotation into manuscripts of Josephus' work, cited where it could be found, and been done with it. But there is no persuasive evidence that the passage was ever inserted into manuscripts of Josephus.[14] And Eusebius appears to have refrained from inserting it even though he believed that the quotation was authentically from Josephus.

Taken together, it is clear that Eusebius was by no means perfect, but even in these supposedly signal cases of misquotation, none of them show Eusebius concocting new words for Josephus, nor less any example of 'rewriting Josephus' or even of inserting passages in the manuscripts of Josephus, as Olson claims.[15]

Eusebius' Citational Practice

And all this accords with Eusebius' citational practice. As Chapter 1 has made clear, throughout his many hundreds or even thousands of quotations[16] Eusebius repeatedly refrains from making substantive changes to texts, even when they contradict the Bible or are potentially offensive toward Jesus. He, for example, points out that Josephus contradicts the New Testament regarding the name of Agrippa, but does not alter Josephus' text.[17] In another instance Eusebius does not bother to change contradictions between the dating of Quirinius' census in Josephus and the dating of the census in the Gospels.[18] Most relevant is that Eusebius does not alter the TF's ambiguous or possibly negative statements about Jesus, even though other scribes and translators did such things. Thus, Eusebius is our primary witness to the TF's potentially derogatory phrase 'a certain Jesus' (Ἰησοῦς τις), which many scribes and translations omitted. He also preserves the fleshly sounding 'with pleasure' (ἡδονῇ); and maintains the perhaps negative 'incredible' or 'strange' deeds (παράδοξα). He

[13] Baras, 'Testimonium Flavianum', 311–12.

[14] On this, see Paget, 'Some Observations', 549–52; Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum', 108–9. Inowlocki finds it convincing that Eusebius was merely recording the passage that Origen had previously written; see Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*, 195. Curiously, Olson also agrees; Olson, 'Eusebius and the Testimonium Flavianum', 318.

[15] Olson, 'Eusebius and the Testimonium Flavianum', 319. Olson also attempts to cast Eusebius in a suspicious light by showing that in his *Life of Constantine* he manufactured a speech of Licinus; see Olson, 'A Eusebian Reading', 97–8. But this is purely hypothetical since there is no evidence that the speech has been forged, just the scholarly speculation that it *might* or *could* have been. As discussed below, Eusebius has been accused of forging documents in the *Life of Constantine* before and been vindicated. In any case, in the ancient world fictionalizing a speech was viewed as completely different from interpolating manuscripts and forging passages. The one was an openly accepted practice of ancient historians from Thucydides onward (Keener, *Acts*, vol. 1 pp. 274–82), while the other was greatly frowned upon, especially by Eusebius himself, see *Ecclesiastical History* 5.20.2 and, for another similar quote, n. 23. See also Kruger, 'Early Christian Attitudes toward the Reproduction of Texts'.

[16] Eusebius quotes from documents other than scripture about 250 times in his *Ecclesiastical History*; see Lawlor and Oulton, *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 2 p. 19. If one were to include Eusebius' quotations from scripture then probably he made thousands of quotations within his writings that are extant. For a definition of 'quotation', see Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*, 6.

[17] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.10.10; *Antiquities* 19.343–50; Acts 12:19–23.

[18] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.5.3–4; *Antiquities* 18.1–2, 26; Luke 2:1; Matthew 2:1. On this, see Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 20.

further preserves the term ἐπηγάγετο which can be understood as 'he led astray'.[19] Why keep these words if he was interpolating or forging the TF?[20]

Eusebius similarly refrains from altering passages in other authors, such as the Egyptian Manetho, whose history he says is 'reliable' (հաստատագոյն).[21] But though admiring Manetho for his accuracy, Eusebius still admits that Manetho's Egyptian dynastic lists contradict biblical history; yet he leaves such contradictions as they are and instead muses about possible solutions.[22] And all this quite agrees with what Eusebius himself thought of forging or interpolating documents; for he wrote 'May such an argument, that a falsehood be composed for the praise and glory of Christ, never prevail in the church of Christ and of God, the fathers of exact truth'.[23]

In fact, Eusebius has been accused of forgery and material interpolation by scholars in the past and more than once has been vindicated. Certain scholars claimed that Eusebius fictionalized an edict of Constantine,[24] but a remarkable discovery of a contemporary copy of that very edict shows that Eusebius did not do so.[25] Or again, in a survey of Eusebius' habits of citation, Sabrina Inowlocki alleged that Eusebius tampered with the TF when quoting from it in his *Demonstration* by replacing the TF's potentially negative phrase 'receive with pleasure' (τῶν ἡδονῇ . . . δεχομένων) with the more pious 'revere' (σεβομένων).[26] However, Alice Whealey has proved that Eusebius did not change the TF at all, for in his *Theophany*, Eusebius quotes his *Demonstration* quoting the TF, and there the TF is unaltered.[27] Such shows that a later scribe who copied the *Demonstration* must have been responsible for the alteration, not Eusebius since Eusebius quotes himself quoting the passage accurately.

Inowlocki and also Hardwick further alleged that Eusebius altered Josephus' description of an owl perched above Agrippa at his death in order to make it cohere with a parallel passage in the book of Acts which instead describes an angel at the event.[28] Hardwick writes 'We see for the first time a conscious alteration of the Josephan text to make it serve Eusebius' purpose: the testimony of Josephus confirms the accuracy of the New Testament'.[29] Inowlocki agreed, stating that in this passage Eusebius omitted βουβῶνα (which she translates as 'rope') and replaced it with 'angel' (ἄγγελον), resulting in a passage that looked much more like that presented in the biblical book of Acts. There are several problems with

[19] On each of these statements, see the relevant discussions in Chapter 3.

[20] Olson also claims that the TF meets Eusebius' apologetic too perfectly, to the point of being suspicious. Yet it is clear that Eusebius instead barely deploys the TF at all in favor of his apologetic; see pp. 17–9. Various scholars have noted the same and have rejected Olson's claims; see Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*, 209; Paget, 'Some Observations', 562–3; Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 23–8.

[21] Eusebius, *Chronicon*, 'Egyptian Chronicle' (ed. Aucher (Awgerean), vol. 1 p. 199 line 21). For another translation, see Bedrosian, *Eusebius' Chronicle*, §43.

[22] Eusebius, *Chronicon*, 'Egyptian Chronicle' (ed. Aucher (Awgerean) pp. 200–2; trans. Bedrosian §44).

[23] μὴ δὴ κρατοίη τοιοῦτος λόγος ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ Χριστοῦ καὶ Θεοῦ πατέρων ἀκριβοῦς ἀληθείας, ὅτι ψεῦδος σύγκειται εἰς αἶνον καὶ δοξολογίαν Χριστοῦ. Eusebius, *Gospel Problems and Solutions*, To Stephanus 4.1 (Greek fragment 8) (My translation from Pearse, *Eusebius of Caesarea: Gospel Problems*, 36–7 [146–7]). See also Pearse 'Eusebius the Liar'.

[24] Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 2.24–42.

[25] Jones and Skeat, 'Notes on the Genuineness of the Constantinian Documents in Eusebius' Life of Constantine'.

[26] Inowlocki believes that this change was purposeful, 'I find it hard to believe that this textual variant reading results from a mere coincidence'; Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*, 211. See also Olson, 'Eusebius and the Testimonium Flavianum', 313; Thackeray, *Josephus*, 144.

[27] Whealey, 'Eusebius and the Jewish Authors', 360–1.

[28] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.10.6; Josephus, *Antiquities* 19.346; Acts 12:23; Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*, 194; Hardwick, *Josephus as an Historical Source*, 82, 122.

[29] Hardwick, *Josephus as an Historical Source*, 82.

this accusation. Firstly, βουβῶν means 'owl', not 'rope'. Secondly, in Eusebius' quotation Josephus himself calls the owl an 'angel' immediately afterward, so Eusebius is not guilty of replacing βουβῶνα with ἄγγελον but only, perhaps, of omitting the term βουβῶνα. Thirdly, Eusebius is in all likelihood not even guilty of that particular sin of omission since the two earliest manuscripts of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* do contain βουβῶνα precisely where it should be.[30]

Inowlocki also argues that, in his *Preparation*, Eusebius alters quotations of Plato to Christianize his philosophy.[31] Yet Eusebius himself was no apologist for Plato, and in the *Preparation* itself he dedicates numerous chapters *against* Plato entitled variously 'that all things are not rightly stated by Plato, therefore it is not unreasonable that we have rejected his philosophy'; 'that Plato is not entirely accurate'; 'that Plato did not properly present an opinion concerning the soul', and several more.[32] In fact almost half of book 13 of the *Preparation* is devoted to Eusebius refuting Plato. Hence it is not at all clear why in this same work Eusebius would have changed a passage in Plato when he was also so willing to proclaim Plato's errors. It seems more likely that the Platonic passages Inowlocki believes to have been changed by Eusebius were, in reality, already corrupted in the manuscript Eusebius or his assistants had before them.[33]

What all of these examples demonstrate is that no one has been able to find even a single instance of Eusebius gravely interpolating passages,[34] let alone of forging or otherwise altering a passage and then inserting it into the manuscript of another author. This is why the list is so long of scholars who have praised Eusebius for his accurate quotations—Karl Dindorf, Jacob Freudenthal, Paul Henry, Hermann Diels, Édouard des Places, Robert Grant, Gregory Sterling, J. Coman, Heinz Schreckenberg, and André Pelletier—sometimes these scholars even used Eusebius' quotations to correct manuscripts of other texts.[35] Because of this, even the often- critical Hardwick will say that Eusebius was 'generally faithful to his source, paraphrasing only seldom'[36] and the sometimes skeptical Inowlocki also acknowledges that Eusebius typically has 'great accuracy' when it comes to his citations, such that he is unlike 'most of his predecessors'.[37]

[30] On this, see Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum', 107 n. 94; Schwartz and Mommsen, *Eusebius Werke 2.1–3: Die Kirchengeschichte*, GCS 9.1 p. 128 line 9 and notes.

[31] Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*, 87–8.

[32] The titles of these chapters are taken from table of contents of *Preparation* book 13 chapters 14–16; for the Greek text, see Mras, *Eusebius Werke 8.1–2. Die Praeparatio Evangelica*, vol. 2 p. 164 lines 9–13.

[33] In a study of the quality of the manuscripts that Eusebius possessed, Schwartz remarks that the manuscripts were 'not always especially good and correct' (*nicht immer eine besonders gute und correcte*); see Schwartz and Mommsen, *Eusebius Werke 2.1–3: Die Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 3 p. cliii. It is possible also that the corruptions might have been carried out by Eusebius as a matter of accident.

[34] The best example of an interpolation I have seen is when Eusebius (*Preparation* 8.9.27) may insert the words 'and upon the cities and houses for protection' (καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν πόλεων καὶ οἰκήσεων διὰ τὸ σκεπάζεσθαι) into a quotation of the *Letter of Aristeas* so as, perhaps, to subtly make the Jewish practice of writing the words of scripture on doors and gates accord with Eusebius' contemporary Christian practice of using the sign of the cross as a means of protection. But all of this is very speculative and it cannot be discounted that the words are actually authentic, or were inserted by someone other than Eusebius. In any case, if Eusebius did manipulate the text, it would be an isolated example and a fairly innocuous one at that. For discussion, see Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*, 193–4.

[35] These scholars are listed and discussed in Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*, 85–7, 191–3.

[36] Hardwick, *Josephus as an Historical Source*, 69.

[37] Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*, 71. She will go on to caution however that 'Eusebius was at least able to tamper with the text' and then I think too suspiciously interprets his faithfulness only as a means to disguise his dishonesty: 'he displays honesty throughout the rest of his work on textual matters and keeps claiming his willingness to be objective as possible' so that he might get 'his reader

The worst that can be shown of Eusebius is that he occasionally nips and tucks quotations, trimming words every once in a while, plugging in a synonym here, inserting a clarification there, or presenting a passage in an uncontextualized way. This has been demonstrated by the results of two different studies. First is the monograph by Inowlocki who surveys Eusebius' quotations of Jewish authors in his *Demonstration* and his *Preparation*.[38] In her work she notes seven occasions in which Eusebius presented a quotation without due context, but many of these seem to my eyes debatable or fairly minor, and of course none of them involve interpolations or omissions.[39]

She further notes thirteen occasions of 'textual changes',[40] but six of these are small omissions that are arguably all either innocuous or speculative enough so that it is not even clear if Eusebius actually omitted anything.[41] Another is an alleged interpolation, but the only other textual witness to the passage is an Armenian translation which contains the same wording as Eusebius— so why consider it an interpolation by Eusebius?[42] Another is not even a quotation, but two paraphrastic summaries, and both are quoted accurately by Eusebius elsewhere.[43] Another features basically synonymous word swapping, but again Eusebius accurately quotes the same passage in another work.[44] Another presents clarifying additions, and yet again, Eusebius accurately quotes the passage in a different location.[45] All that is left is one quotation where Eusebius swapped in what can be viewed as a simple clarifying synonym (but if not, he accurately cites the passage elsewhere),[46] another where he may have changed a single letter (though even here scholars do not agree that the change substantially altered the meaning or that Eusebius even changed the text),[47] and finally, another where Eusebius quotes the TF.[48] With this, Inowlocki thinks Eusebius accurately cited the TF in his *Ecclesiastical History*, but made one small change in his *Demonstration*— though, as I discussed above, this charge has been disproven by Whealey. All that to say is that, in her study, Inowlocki cannot find any substantial changes that Eusebius made to quotations and, in fact, has difficulty finding even minor changes.

Lawlor and Oulton also performed a study on the approximately 250 quotations Eusebius presented in his *Ecclesiastical History*[49] and found similar results. While canvassing these quotations, they enumerate fifty in which Eusebius omitted text and, of these omissions,

into the habit of trusting him. The changes are even more efficient when they are scattered and discrete'. Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*, 89.

[38] Inowlocki more briefly surveyed Eusebius' citations of non-Jewish authors as well, and there alleged, I think improperly, that Eusebius altered quotations of Plato. For discussion see p. 219.

[39] Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*, 168–72.

[40] Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*, 195–220.

[41] In what follows I transcribe Inowlocki's citations while changing the titles of works to cohere with the titles I give in this volume: *Preparation* 7.13.3 = Philo, *De agricultura* 51; *Preparation* 8.13.2 = Philo, *De opificio mundi* 8; *Preparation* 8.14.1 = Philo, *De providentia* 2.3; *Preparation* 13.18.15 = Philo, *De specialibus legibus* 1.17; *Preparation* 13.18.16 = *De specialibus legibus* 1.20; *Demonstration* 8.2.402d = Josephus, *War* 6.299.

[42] *Preparation* 7.13.1–2 = Philo, *Quaestiones in Genesim* 2.62.

[43] *Demonstration* 8.2.402d–403a = Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.55–9; *War* 2.169–70 = Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium* 299.

[44] *Demonstration* 8.2.399a = Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.34–5.

[45] *Demonstration* 8.2.397d–398a = Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.247–9; *Demonstration* 8.2.398b = Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.92–3.

[46] *Demonstration* 9.5.431a–b = Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.116–17.

[47] *Preparation* 7.13.4–6 = Philo, *De plantatione* 8–10.

[48] *Demonstration* 3.5.1 24b–c = Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.63–4.

[49] Lawlor and Oulton, *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 2 pp. 19–27.

thirty-five led to an obscuring of some of the 'sense' of the passage.[50] But from their discussions of these thirty-five cases, it is clear that most examples are innocuous and simply omit antecedents for pronouns and other similar things, and do not alter the overall thrust of the passage.[51] Most crucially, not a single one of these examples shows Eusebius actually adding words to a quotation.

And in fact, the omissions that Eusebius does make are quite minor. This is in evidence with the two most egregious omissions that Lawlor and Oulton present. In the first, Eusebius quotes Josephus introducing himself, but Eusebius omits the phrase 'by race a Hebrew' (γένει Ἑβραῖος).[52] However, the earliest Greek manuscript of the *War* also omits this phrase[53] and Eusebius states clearly in the very next verse that Josephus was Jewish.[54] Therefore, it is not clear that Eusebius actually omitted this information (for it may have been missing in the manuscript he was using), but if he did omit the phrase, it should be classified as an inconsequential and innocent omission since Eusebius asserts the omitted information directly after quoting the passage.[55]

In what is perhaps the most serious example of omission, Eusebius tries to prove from a passage in Josephus that Jesus ministered for not quite four full years.[56] In this quotation, Eusebius omits vital chronological information from immediately before and after the quotation that disproves Eusebius' theory.[57] However, the quotation itself also disproves Eusebius' theory.[58] And, further, the quotation is also accurate. In other words, though Eusebius has omitted important surrounding material, he does not seem to have done so with any ill intent because otherwise, why would he accurately quote material that disproves his own theory? Why not alter the quotation or simply give a distorted paraphrase? This and like instances led Lawlor and Oulton to conclude that Eusebius was recalling passages from a sometimes-faulty memory and then marking off quotations for a secretary to later insert.[59] Importantly, this and other examples do not show Eusebius adding or interpolating material into his quotations. At worst they show that, on occasion, he might omit the context of a passage or, more rarely, make slight omissions. But even more importantly, these examples certainly do not show Eusebius inserting alterations into the manuscripts of another author.

[50] Lawlor and Oulton rightly point out that the number of quotations that omit some kind of material is likely higher than the fifty quotations they identified because about half of the 250 quotations given by Eusebius no longer have extant documents by which scholars may check their accuracy. This however is partially mitigated by the fact that Eusebius will often give summaries of these quotations elsewhere thus allowing scholars to identify missing material; see Lawlor and Oulton, *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 2 pp. 19, 23.

[51] Lawlor and Oulton, *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 2 pp. 20–4.

[52] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.9.1 quoting from *War* 1.3.

[53] According to Niese this is MS P or Codex Parisinus Graecus Gr. 1425 from the eleventh century; see Niese, *Flavii Iosephi Opera*, vol. 6 p. V, 3.

[54] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.9.2.

[55] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.9.2.

[56] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.10.2–5.

[57] Eusebius quotes from *Antiquities* 18.33–5, however he begins in the middle of verse 33 and concludes in the middle of verse 35. The beginning of 33 shows that the timeframe of the passage commences at the very start of the reign of Tiberius, not near the fifteenth year of his reign, which is required in Eusebius' chronological theory. The ending of verse 35 contains additional information showing that several of the High Priests stipulated by Josephus did not serve during the governorship of Pontius Pilate, again disproving Eusebius' theory.

[58] The information that Eusebius does quote shows that one High Priest served for a very short period of time and another served for an uncertain amount of time. Eusebius however claimed that all four High Priests each served for about a year, thus allowing for a slightly less than four-year ministry for Jesus.

[59] Lawlor and Oulton, *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 2 p. 26.

What is the most interesting though is that, of the thirty-five quotations classified by Lawlor and Oulton as obscuring some part of the original sense of a passage through omission, twenty stem from documents that no longer survive. Lawlor and Oulton were able to conclude that Eusebius' quotations had omitted material because Eusebius elsewhere summarizes their content, and in these he reveals missing text.[60] This once more led them to conclude that Eusebius himself was not responsible for preparing the quotations in his *Ecclesiastical History* (an arduous endeavor in the pre-printing press world), but had assigned this task to a secretary who did not always live up to the job.[61]

The fact that Eusebius reveals missing text in his discussions of various quotations has great relevance for the authenticity of the TF. For throughout his writings Eusebius quotes and discusses the TF three times, and in no instance does he give any hint that material had been omitted from the TF. Therefore, though Eusebius will on occasion omit material in his quotations, when he does do so the omissions are insignificant and his other quotations of the same passage tend to reveal such omissions. But though Eusebius quotes the TF three times, none of them suggest that he omitted material.

Conclusion

We may learn from the above examples that while Eusebius was not perfect and did make mistakes, he also had numerous motives and opportunities to alter passages, yet he consistently chose not to do so. In fact, not a single example can be found in hundreds of opportunities where Eusebius significantly altered a quotation, let alone where he interpolated material into the manuscript of another author. Further, those instances where Eusebius makes minor (and relatively insignificant) omissions are often revealed when Eusebius quotes or discusses the same passage elsewhere. Yet Eusebius quotes the TF three times and in none of the cases does he reveal different material. Given the character of Eusebius' citational practice, fairness would assume that he did not interpolate or otherwise alter the TF—unless specific evidence arises.

Stylistic Parallels between the TF and Eusebius

But Olson, Feldman, and certain others believe that just such specific evidence can be found. For this they point to three different phrases within the TF that supposedly match the style of Eusebius far more than that of Josephus. Feldman even writes that these phrases 'are found elsewhere in Eusebius and in no other author'.[62] Thus, the three phrases allegedly furnish the unmistakable stylistic fingerprint of Eusebius. Let us now turn and examine this evidence for ourselves.

[60] Lawlor and Oulton, *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 2 p. 23. For other examples, see p. 220.
[61] Lawlor and Oulton, *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 2 pp. 24–7.
[62] Feldman, 'On the Authenticity of the Testimonium Flavianum', 26. See also Olson, 'Eusebius and the Testimonium Flavianum', 313. For a through critique of this, see Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum', 80–4, 96–105; Paget, 'Some Observations', 577–8; Pearse, 'Feldman, the Testimonium Flavianum, Eusebius and the TLG'; Pearse, 'Words, Words, Words'.

εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν
'until now'

The TF's phrase 'until now' (εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν) is said by Feldman and Olson to be a favorite of Eusebius, but one not used by any other Greek writer.[63] Yet, this ignores the fact that the textual witnesses for this phrase in the TF are quite diverse. In consequence, it is by no means clear that the TF originally stated εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν and not another synonymous variant like εἰς τε νῦν, which is not used by Eusebius.[64]

In fact, the two earliest manuscripts of the *Antiquities* instead read εἰς τε νῦν[65] and several patristic writers who had direct access to the *Antiquities* also give the same reading.[66] The third earliest manuscript of the *Antiquities* has another reading altogether with εἰς ἔτι τε καὶ νῦν, but this phrase is also not used by Eusebius.[67] I cannot find a manuscript of the *Antiquities* that actually reads εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν.

The closest are manuscripts that only excerpt the TF and are not continuous copies of the *Antiquities*. As such, these may not be quoting the TF from the *Antiquities* directly but instead may be quoting Eusebius (who does quote the TF with εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν). Even so, one of the two earliest of these excerpts has the slightly different εἰς ἔτι καὶ νῦν.[68]

It seems that the reason past editors of Josephus' work have settled on εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν as the original reading of the TF is because Eusebius quotes it that way in his *Ecclesiastical History*. But Eusebius quotes the phrase differently in his *Demonstration* as the synonymous ὅθεν εἰσέτι νῦν,[69] and two important manuscripts of the *Ecclesiastical History* also have different though still synonymous readings.[70] So why rely on Eusebius? Given that the two earliest manuscripts of the *Antiquities* read εἰς τε νῦν and that patristic writers who had direct access to the *Antiquities* read the same (and because many witnesses like Eusebius have a range of synonymous readings), I think plausibility clearly favors εἰς τε νῦν over εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν.

And the shorter εἰς τε νῦν is no marker of Eusebian authorship because it turns out that Eusebius never uses it. But whether one settles on εἰς τε νῦν or εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν, I show in Chapters 3 and 4 that both phrases have parallels with Josephus, making either plausibly Josephan. Indeed, Josephus seems to have enjoyed deploying ἔτι and νῦν in unique ways, using both words together in seven unique phrases throughout his work and only νῦν in

[63] Feldman, 'On the Authenticity of the Testimonium Flavianum', 26; Olson, 'Eusebius and the Testimonium Flavianum', 312; Olson, 'A Eusebian Reading', 109–10.

[64] A TLG search of Eusebius' corpus revealed no instances where he uses the phrase εἰς τε νῦν (searched May 22, 2020, and June 24, 2022). Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum', 101–3.

[65] MS Ambrosianae F 128 (eleventh century) f. 274v line 7; MS Vatican gr.984 (1354 CE) 152v line 31. See Images 1 and 2.

[66] Such as Pseudo-Sophronius and Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus and perhaps the author of *Dissertatio contra Judaeos*. In addition to these, Isidore of Pelusium had independent access to the *Antiquities* and has the alternative phrase εἰς δὲ τὸ νῦν. Oecumenius also knew the *Antiquities* and he reads εἴ τε νῦν. John Zonarus has εἰσέτι νῦν. For citations of these writers, see Chapter 1. For discussion, see Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum', 102–3.

[67] MS BML.Plut 69.10 (fourteenth/fifteenth century) f360v left column line 23. In the manuscript the third word is written as a kind of superscript above the line as in εἰς ἔτι ᵗᵉ καὶ νῦν. See Image 3.

[68] MS Vatican gr.342 (1087–8 CE) f. 282v line 22. MS Vatican gr.148 (tenth/eleventh century CE) f. 214v line 12 which excerpts the TF does however have the reading εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν. See Images 4 and 5.

[69] Eusebius, *Demonstration* 3.5.106 (124c) (ed. Heikel GCS 23 p. 131 line 1).

[70] Schwartz and Mommsen, *Eusebius Werke 2.1–3: Die Kirchengeschichte*, GCS 9.1 p. 80, label these manuscripts as B (MS Paris Graecus 1431) which reads εἰς ἔτι νῦν and D (MS Paris Graecus 1433) which reads εἰς ἔτι γε νῦν.

twelve unique phrases, so we should not be surprised if he decided to follow his practice in the TF. It is also possible that some other synonymous turn of phrase was originally deployed by Josephus since the textual witnesses attest to so many various, albeit equivalent stylizations. In any event, the evidence clearly favors εἰς τε νῦν as being the original wording of Josephus and this does not point to Eusebius as interpolator.[71]

τῶν Χριστιανῶν . . . τὸ φῦλον 'the tribe of the Christians'

Secondly, the TF's phrase 'tribe of the Christians' (τῶν Χριστιανῶν . . . τὸ φῦλον) is claimed to be twice used by Eusebius and no other author before him.[72] I must say though that this is not a fair portrayal of the case at all. While Eusebius twice uses the phrase (τῶν Χριστιανῶν . . . τὸ φῦλον) both instances occur in quotations that Eusebius makes of a summary of Emperor Trajan's letter about Christians.[73] It is true that in the original Latin of Trajan's letter there is no Latin equivalent for the term 'tribe' of the Christians,[74] but this does not suggest that Eusebius was in the habit of interpolating such phrases into the writings of non-Christians. The reason for this is that, as Eusebius tells us, he derived his account of Trajan's letter not from the Latin letter itself but rather from a summary of the letter found in a Greek translation of the Latin *Apology* of Tertullian.[75] Unfortunately, this translation is lost, but in the original Latin of Tertullian's *Apology* it is clear that Tertullian's summary of Trajan's letter does include the Latin term 'race' (*genus*), a rough synonym for the Greek φῦλον.[76]

So then, it seems most likely that it was the Greek translation of Tertullian's *Apology*,[77] which used τῶν Χριστιανῶν . . . τὸ φῦλον to translate the Latin *genus*, not Eusebius, who

[71] For further discussion on ἔτι and νῦν in Josephus, see pp. 103–4, 126–7, 135. Some may wonder why I consider ἔτι to be likely inauthentic but have thought τις to be authentic, since the main evidence for both words comes from Eusebius. On this see Chapter 4 n. 68.

[72] Olson, 'A Eusebian Reading', 109–10; Olson, 'Eusebius and the Testimonium Flavianum', 312–13; Zeitlin, 'The Christ Passage in Josephus', 237–40, 253–4; Feldman, 'On the Authenticity of the Testimonium Flavianum', 25–6. For critiques of this claim, see Paget, 'Some Observations', 577–8; Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum', 96–100.

[73] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.33.2, 4 (ed. Schwartz and Mommsen, *Eusebius Werke 2.1–3: Die Kirchengeschichte*, 272 line 8, page 274 line 2).

[74] Pliny, *Letter* 10.97 (ed. Merrill, pp. 301–2).

[75] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.33.3. Eusebius earlier had said that the *Apology* of Tertullian had been translated into Greek, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.2.4. This translation may have come from Tertullian himself, for he did write works in Greek (Tertullian, *De baptismo* 15; *De corona* 6.3; and perhaps *De virginibus velandis* 1.1). According to NPNCF[2] (vol. 1 p. 106 n. 9) Eusebius likely knew Latin quite poorly because he only is familiar with Latin works that were translated into Greek and shows great unfamiliarity with Latin literature in general. Eusebius does on one occasion say that he translated one small rescript from Latin into Greek 'to the best of our ability' (*Ecclesiastical History* 4.8.8), implying that he was not very proficient; see Lawlor and Oulton, *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 2 pp. 36–7. Harnack makes a far more thorough investigation and comes to similar conclusions. He believes, however, that the translation that Eusebius used of Tertullian was also likely used by Julius Africanus; see Harnack, 'Die griechische Übersetzung des Apologeticus Tertullian's'.

[76] *Tunc Traianus rescripsit hoc genus inquirendos quidem non esse, oblatos vero puniri oportere*. Tertullian, *Apology* 2.7 (ed. Dekkers, *Qvintus Septimius Florens Tertvlliani*, 88 lines 32–3.) When Tertullian made his summary, he may have been thinking of how other non-Christians around the time of Trajan referred to Christians, such as Suetonius, who does label Christians a *genus*. On this, see n. 79 below.

[77] This translation may have been carried out by Tertullian himself; see n. 75 above.

is guilty only of persevering the term and being honest about his sources.[78] Consequently, this supposed stylistic connection between the TF and Eusebius is extremely tenuous since Eusebius never seems to have used the phrase himself, but only quoted others using the phrase.

Further, I show in Chapter 3 that there is good reason to think that non-Christians employed the term φῦλον with reference to Christians toward the end of the first century, exactly when Josephus wrote. Around this time, the non-Christian writer Suetonius made use of the Latin ethnic term *genus* to characterize Christians.[79] And, *genus* was used elsewhere to translate the term φῦλον.[80] Conversely, φῦλον was used to translate the Latin *genus* in the Greek translation of Tertullian's summary of Trajan's letter. Thus, there is ample evidence that φῦλον and *genus* were interchangeable equivalents. The logical deduction is that if around the end of the first century Suetonius could use *genus* to speak of Christians then Josephus could use φῦλον to do the same.

παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής 'a doer of incredible deeds'

The third phrase of the TF that is said to be more Eusebian than Josephan is 'a doer of incredible deeds' (παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής). Olson, followed by Feldman, have pointed out that no other Greek authors make use of it before 300 CE,[81] except that is for Eusebius, who uses it nine times according to my count.[82] They then conclude that such a phrase must be the unmistakable mark of Eusebius' tampering. This is their most powerful argument in favor of Eusebian forgery.

Yet, a careful analysis of Eusebius' usage pattern tells a different story. Instead of finding the phrase dispersed throughout Eusebius' works—as one would expect if it was a habitual turn of phrase of his—the noted expression first appears clustered around Eusebius' quotations of the TF and then only later does the phrase arise independently of the TF. To put it another way, Eusebius only begins deploying the phrase independently of the TF twenty or more years after he had first (and then repeatedly) encountered it in the TF. To me this more probably indicates that Eusebius had been inspired by the TF to use the phrase, not that he inserted it into the TF.

[78] Because we no longer have the extant Greek translation of Tertullian's *Apology* it is unknown whether the Greek translator translated Tertullian's Latin word *genus* with φῦλον or with τῶν Χριστιανῶν . . . τὸ φῦλον, but even if the translator only used φῦλον then Eusebius has merely added the Greek τῶν Χριστιανῶν for the sake of clarity.

[79] *Afflicti suppliciis Christiani, genus hominum superstitionis novae ac maleficae*. Suetonius, *Twelve Caesars*, Nero 6.16.2 (ed. Rolfe vol. 38 p. 110 lines 15–17).

[80] See Rufinus' Latin version of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* 1.11.8 (Schwartz and Mommsen, *Eusebius Werke 2.1–3: Die Kirchengeschichte*, GCS 9.1 p. 81 line 9). Rufinus for some reason decides not to translate the term in his version of *Ecclesiastical History* 3.33.2 and actually omits the entirety of Trajan's reply in his translation of 3.33.3, see Chapter 3 n. 330.

[81] Olson, 'A Eusebian Reading', 103; Olson, 'Eusebius and the Testimonium Flavianum', 310; Feldman, 'On the Authenticity of the Testimonium Flavianum', 22, 26. For thorough responses to Olson, see Paget, 'Some Observations', 577; Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum', 80–4.

[82] To confirm this, I ran a TLG lemma proximity search for παράδοξος, ἔργον, and ποιητής within five words of each other in the whole corpus of Greek literature (June 25, 2022). I exclude quotations of the TF from my total numbers. There may be one hagiography that deploys the phrase before 300 CE, but its dating is uncertain; see *Vitae Sancti Sebastiani et Sociorum* TLG# 5219.001 §17 line 10.

Thus, Eusebius first uses the phrase in 313 CE for his *Ecclesiastical History*[83] where he deploys it several chapters before he quotes the same phrase in the TF.[84] Then, between 318 and 323 CE, Eusebius uses the phrase four times in his *Demonstration*, all of which cluster shortly before and after his quotation of the phrase in the TF.[85] In 326 CE he encountered the phrase again when he quoted the TF in his *Theophany*.[86] Throughout this time he also would have encountered the phrase several times in the TF as he issued new editions of his *Ecclesiastical History*. Only at this point, after encountering the phrase numerous times over twenty years, does Eusebius begin to deploy it independently of the TF, doing so in his *Commentary on the Psalms* (*c.*335 CE),[87] his *Commentary on Isaiah* (*c.*337 CE),[88] and his *Life of Constantine* (*c.*337 CE).[89]

Some might object that because Eusebius first uses the phrase in his *Ecclesiastical History* several chapters before the TF, he therefore must have first used the phrase independently and afterward interpolated it into the TF. However, Eusebius was a master of the quotation, and we might expect he would use key turns of phrase to subtly prepare readers for their use in upcoming quotations, especially if he was going to quote a potentially negative phrase like παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής.

All must at least agree that this is what Eusebius did when he deployed the phrase παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής in his *Demonstration* before quoting it within the TF. In this instance, some kind of habitual usage of the phrase could not have inspired him to interpolate it into the TF, because the phrase had already existed in the TF at least some five or ten years earlier when he quoted it in his *Ecclesiastical History*. Therefore, in his *Demonstration* he must have been inspired to deploy the phrase before the TF because either he consciously wanted to calibrate his reader's understanding of such an ambiguous phrase or because it had been subconsciously suggested to him in his preparatory research, as happens to any of us when we are reading and speaking about other authors. But if we grant that in the *Demonstration* Eusebius was inspired to deploy the phrase παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής due to his planned quotation of it in the TF, then should we not suppose that the same thing occurred the first time he used the phrase in his *Ecclesiastical History*?

All things considered, it is reasonable that after repeatedly encountering and quoting a phrase over many years, Eusebius would then begin using it himself. What is more, there is little plausibility that Eusebius would go to the trouble of concocting a phrase that he knew opponents of Christianity would readily admit was true, or even one that was vulnerable to negative interpretation. For as I show in Chapter 3, the opponents of Christianity were quite willing to state that Jesus performed παράδοξα and Eusebius himself knew that such a term had connotations with illicit magical deeds.[90] If Eusebius knew the phrase could be

[83] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.2.23.

[84] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.11.7.

[85] Eusebius, *Demonstration* 3.4.21 [107e], 3.5.59 [115b], 3.5.103 [123d], 3.7.4 [134d]. He uses the phrase in the TF in 3.5.105 [124b]. For the dating of the *Ecclesiastical History* and the *Demonstration*, see p. 16. Note that Olson's dating for the works of Eusebius is mistaken; see Olson, 'Eusebius and the Testimonium Flavianum', 307, 313.

[86] The *Theophany* is only preserved in Syriac and hence its Greek usage of the phrase is not included in my total calculations.

[87] *Commentary on the Psalms* PG 23.984 line 57, 23.1033 line 46 (= TLG 2018.034). For the dating of this work, see Armstrong, *Eusebius of Caesarea: Commentary on Isaiah*, xxv.

[88] *Commentary on Isaiah* 2.57 line 62 (= TLG 2018.019). For the dating of this work, see Armstrong, xxi–xxv.

[89] *Life of Constantine* 1.18.2 line 4 (= TLG 2018.020). This work celebrates the life and death of Constantine, and hence must have been written after he died in 337 CE; see Armstrong, xxv.

[90] For further discussion of this, see pp. 18–9.

interpreted in a negative fashion, why would he choose to interpolate it?[91] In consequence, the ambiguous nature of the phrase also points to the improbability that Eusebius was responsible for inserting it. And, as I argue in Chapters 1 and 2, this very ambiguity was sensed by other Christian writers as well.

Conclusion

Eusebius is a highly unlikely candidate for forging the TF. Studies of his citational practice show him never to have substantially altered quotations, and he himself warned against doing anything of the sort. Further, the three phrases in the TF that allegedly match Eusebius' style more than Josephus' are all highly problematic. The TF's phrase εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν is used only by Eusebius and no other author, but the manuscripts of the *Antiquities* show that the original reading was likely εἰς τε νῦν, which is not used by Eusebius. Secondly, τῶν Χριστιανῶν . . . τὸ φῦλον is once again used by Eusebius, but the words are only present within quotations that Eusebius makes of others and hence are not his own words. Evidence also suggests that φῦλον was a term non-Christians used to refer to Christians around when Josephus was writing. Lastly, παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής is only first used by Eusebius in and around where he quotes from the TF. It is then some twenty or so years later, after Eusebius had quoted from the TF several times, that he begins using the phrase independently of the TF. Not only this, but the term was open to negative interpretation and hence would be highly unlikely for a Christian like Eusebius to interpolate. Given this, it seems more probable that Eusebius adopted the phrase from the TF, rather than interpolating the phrase into the TF. All this evidence aside, it does not make much sense that if Eusebius was interpolating the TF, he would have left behind (or inserted) so many ambiguous or even potentially negative sounding phrases into it. Lastly, Josephus' style is evident throughout the entire TF, and it is unlikely that Eusebius, or anyone else, would have been able to so closely mimic Josephus' stylistic markers. This is especially improbable given that many of these stylistic parallels have been unknown until the advent of computer-assisted searches.

Addendum

When the manuscript of this book was already with the publisher, I became aware of a recent article by Chrissy Hansen to which I would like to make a brief reply.[92] Hansen argues that all versions of the *Testimonium Flavianum*—whether preserved in current manuscripts of the *Antiquities* or in other quotations—can be traced back to Eusebius of Caesarea. From this Hansen concludes that the only witness to the TF is effectively Eusebius and that, in turn, Eusebius is likely the one responsible for interpolating the whole TF.[93] The present appendix has shown though that Eusebius is singularly unlikely to have interpolated the TF. Beyond this, there is also good evidence that Eusebius is not the source for the TF as found in the manuscripts of the *Antiquities* nor is he the source for certain other writers who quote the TF. Hence such witnesses independently confirm the text of the TF.

[91] The ambiguity of the phrase is important here, for it seems that when someone deploys it in a favorable context (as Eusebius does elsewhere) then the context marks it as positive. But when it is deployed without a clear favorable context, as in the TF, then it becomes ambiguous.

[92] Hansen, 'Reception of the Testimonium Flavianum'.

[93] Hansen, 68–9.

The first witness to the TF outside of Eusebius is Pseudo-Hegesippus (*c.*370 CE), whom Hansen admits knew of Josephus' *Antiquities*. Hansen however dismisses Pseudo-Hegesippus' value as a direct source since she thinks he did not read Josephus particularly closely[94]—but of course that is beside the point and still shows that Pseudo-Hegesippus knew the *Antiquities* directly. Hansen's arguments that Pseudo-Hegesippus did not read Josephus closely are also insufficient insofar as the only evidence for this is that Pseudo-Hegesippus did not closely follow Josephus' text. Yet Pseudo-Hegesippus feels at great liberty to change his sources drastically,[95] so this is not good evidence of inattentive reading but only of a willingness to alter sources.

Turning to argue that Pseudo-Hegesippus was dependent on Eusebius, Hansen points to vague parallels between Pseudo-Hegesippus and Eusebius, parallels like the fact that Pseudo-Hegesippus and Eusebius both discuss John the Baptist while discussing Jesus. But Hansen omits that Pseudo-Hegesippus discusses John after Jesus, just like Josephus does, but not like Eusebius. This would be unlikely if Eusebius was the source for Pseudo-Hegesippus.[96] Furthermore, Pseudo-Hegesippus summarizes the TF as claiming that 'they believed in him' (*crediderunt in eum*) which is not what Eusebius' version of the TF stated and which sounds much more like the genuine version witnessed by Jerome 'he was believed to be the Christ' (*credebatur esse Christus*). It also sounds very similar to the version presented by Jacob of Edessa 'it was thought that he was the Christ' (ܗܘܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܗܘ ,ܣܒܘ ܗܘܐ).[97] On the issue of dependency, Carson Bay's recent and excellent study on Pseudo-Hegesippus lists the *Antiquities* as a direct source for Pseudo-Hegesippus, but Bay does not mention Eusebius as a source.[98] All told then, the evidence favors treating Pseudo-Hegesippus as a source for the TF that is independent of Eusebius.

Hansen also tries to dismiss Jerome (*c.*393 CE) as an independent source by claiming that Jerome followed Pseudo-Hegesippus due to what seem to be again vague parallels between the two.[99] I note further that Jerome must be following the TF directly since his translation follows the Greek precisely, something that would be impossible if Jerome had instead followed the greatly exaggerated version of Pseudo-Hegesippus. Jerome also must have had direct access to the *Antiquities* because his version contains the variant 'he was believed to be the Christ' which Eusebius does not have. Hansen's only response to this is to conjecture that Christian authors found the TF too Christian to be plausible, so they tried to reduce such pro-Christian content[100]—yet I show that Jerome had no compunction to exaggerate claims in Josephus in a pro-Christian way and that he even does so in his comments immediately after the TF.[101] Furthermore, if there really were Christian authors willing to diminish the Christian content of the TF, as Hansen claims, then why suspect that all witnesses to the TF have been subjected to Christian interpolation? Would not, as Hansen's logic implies, at least some Christians have been averse to such interpolation? Should we not, therefore, expect to have some uncontaminated witnesses? All this aside, the evidence clearly favors treating Jerome as a source for the TF that is independent of Eusebius.

[94] Hansen, 56–7.
[95] Bay, *Biblical Heroes and Classical Culture in Christian Late Antiquity*, 46–53.
[96] Hansen, 'Reception of the Testimonium Flavianum', 58. See also Chapter 2 p. 36 n. 4
[97] For further discussion on Pseudo-Hegesippus, Jerome, and Jacob of Edessa, see Chapter 2.
[98] Bay, *Biblical Heroes and Classical Culture in Christian Late Antiquity*, 45–6.
[99] Hansen, 'Reception of the Testimonium Flavianum', 60–1.
[100] Hansen, 'Reception of the Testimonium Flavianum', 58–60.
[101] See pp. 38–9.

Isidore of Pelusium (*c.*450 CE) also has first-hand knowledge of Josephus' *Antiquities* and is thus another independent source. Hansen's reasons for dismissing Isidore are only that Isidore quotes a work of Eusebius that does not contain the TF, and that Isidore was friends with John Chrysostom who quoted from Eusebius, but not from the TF.[102] None of this is strong evidence that Isidore shows dependency on Eusebius' version of the TF. Much more persuasive is that Isidore quotes material from the *Antiquities* not found in Eusebius or anywhere else,[103] showing that Isidore knew the *Antiquities* directly.

Lastly, Jacob of Edessa (*c.*708 CE) used both Eusebius and Josephus, but in his quotation of the TF he indicates he was directly dependent on the *Antiquities*, as I argue in Chapter 2. Further evidence of direct usage is that his translation contains the remarkable variant 'it was thought that he was the Christ', a variant that cannot have been derived from Eusebius. Hansen argues in reply that Jacob would have had motive to diminish Christian language in the TF since he labored under Islamic rule,[104] but in this Hansen does not realize that Muslims call Jesus the Messiah.[105] Therefore, according to Hansen, Jacob would actually have suffered the temptation to make Josephus affirm the messianic status of Jesus, yet instead Jacob has the variant 'it was thought that he was the Christ'. As a consequence, Jacob should be considered a source independent of Eusebius.

It is likely that several other authors also quote or allude to the TF independently of Eusebius— such as the Slavonic version of Josephus, the Roman historian Tacitus, and Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus[106]—but time and space do not allow for me to speak of them in detail here. Instead, I will close by pointing out that the earliest manuscripts of the *Antiquities* book 18 do not seem to be derived from Eusebius on account of the fact that their versions of the TF contain two textual variants not found in Eusebius.

The first variant is contained in the three earliest manuscripts of *Antiquities* book 18, all of which present the TF as omitting the word 'certain' (τις)— a possibly derogatory statement that is included by Eusebius. It is highly unlikely that Eusebius or any Christian scribe would have inserted this word, and given that no manuscripts of the *Antiquities* are known to contain it, there is a good possibility that the manuscripts of the *Antiquities* stem from a textual tradition apart from Eusebius—otherwise one would expect at least some of them to witness to the word, just as some manuscripts and translations derived from Eusebius witness to it.[107]

The second variant is more persuasive for showing that the *Antiquities* manuscripts are independent of Eusebius. The two earliest manuscripts of *Antiquities* book 18 contain 'εἰς τε νῦν' in the TF, whereas Eusebius has the different reading 'εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν'. Because Greek manuscripts of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* remain from two different authorial editions and because both editions contain Eusebius' variant,[108] it must be that this variant is what Eusebius actually wrote and not what a later scribe inserted. On the other hand, the different variant 'εἰς τε νῦν' contained in the two earliest *Antiquities* manuscripts seems to be the authentic variant. The conclusion follows naturally that these two manuscripts cannot be derived from Eusebius— otherwise they would have followed his incorrect variant. To top it off, the third earliest manuscript of the *Antiquities* book 18 also does not follow

[102] Hansen, 'Reception of the Testimonium Flavianum', 62.
[103] Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 37.
[104] Hansen, 'Reception of the Testimonium Flavianum', 61.
[105] Quran 4.171.
[106] *The Slavonic Jewish War* 2.9.3; Tacitus, *The Annals* 15.44; Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *On Virtues and Vices* 1.84 [50] lines 17–26.
[107] For further discussion, see 67–9, 135, 217 and Image 6.
[108] See p. 16 and Burgess, 'Dates and Editions', 483.

Eusebius at this point. All this demonstrates that the three most important manuscripts of the *Antiquities*—which are also the three earliest manuscripts of the *Antiquities*—are not dependent on Eusebius for the TF.[109]

Gathering the above observations, the logical conclusion is that there are in actual fact several witnesses to the TF independent of Eusebius, including quotations, translations, and the earliest manuscripts of the *Antiquities*.

[109] For further discussion, see pp. 103–4, 126—7, 135 and Images 1–3.

APPENDIX 2

James the Brother of Jesus: *Antiquities* 20.200

The object of this appendix is to present Josephus' second mention of Jesus found in *Antiquities* 20.200 and to discuss its authenticity. The vast majority of scholars believe this passage to be authentic, and those few who dissent will be answered in the ensuing pages. The passage reads as follows:

ἅτε δὴ οὖν τοιοῦτος ὢν ὁ Ἄνανος, νομίσας ἔχειν καιρὸν ἐπιτήδειον διὰ τὸ τεθνάναι μὲν Φῆστον, Ἀλβῖνον δ' ἔτι κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ὑπάρχειν, καθίζει συνέδριον κριτῶν καὶ παραγαγὼν εἰς αὐτὸ τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ, Ἰάκωβος ὄνομα αὐτῷ, καί τινας ἑτέρους, ὡς παρανομησάντων κατηγορίαν ποιησάμενος παρέδωκε λευσθησομένους.

Because Ananus was of this [persuasion], he considered he had a fitting opportunity since Festus had died and Albinus was still on his way. He assembled the Sanhedrin of judges and, bringing before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and certain others, he made an accusation against them as breakers of the law, and delivered them over to be stoned.

The above section of the *Antiquities* tells how, with the Roman procurator Festus dead and his replacement, Albinus, on the way, the High Priest Ananus II assembled the Sanhedrin to have James, the brother of Jesus, stoned to death around 62 CE. In the immediately preceding sections (*Antiquities* 20.197–9) Josephus had explained that Ananus II was a son of the former High Priest, the illustrious Ananus I, whose four other sons also were honored with the same office, Ananus II being the fifth and last. According to the Gospel of John 18:13, the senior Ananus I also supervised the trial of Jesus alongside his son-in-law Caiaphas. All this means that the junior Ananus II was descended from a family willing to execute their enemies and Ananus II seems to have been no different himself, for not only did he execute James and certain others, but Josephus criticizes him as being arrogant (θρασύς) and reckless (τολμητής),[1] and even speaks of how James' execution was illegal.[2] On account of this unlawful act, Josephus goes on to explain, Ananus II was removed from the high priesthood upon the protest of Jews who were 'most moderate' (ἐπιεικέστατοι).[3]

The large majority of scholars consider *Antiquities* 20.200 to be authentic,[4] and for many sound reasons. The textual evidence for the passage is secure. It is found in all three principal

[1] *Antiquities* 20.199.

[2] *Antiquities* 20.201.

[3] *Antiquities* 20.201–3. For further discussion on Ananus I and his family, see Chapter 6 pp. 182–90.

[4] Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 2–5; Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum', 108–15; Paget, 'Some Observations', 546–54; Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 57–9; Meier, 'Jesus in Josephus', 79–81; Feldman, 'The Testimonium Flavianum', 183; Feldman, 'Flavius Josephus revisited', 823; Thackeray, *Josephus*, 133–6; Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 236–48; Winter, 'Josephus on Jesus', 430–2. Winter, for example, writes 'Most authors who reject *Antiquities* 18.63–64 as spurious have no doubts about the genuineness of *Antiquities* 20.200' (quotation modified to reflect sectional numberings of this volume); Winter, 'Josephus on Jesus', 430 n. 1. Paget says 'In general, scholars have not doubted the authenticity of this passage'; Paget, 'Some Observations', 546. Feldman states 'Few

Greek manuscripts of *Antiquities* book 20,[5] and is also contained in the sixth-century Latin translation supervised by Cassiodorus.[6] It is further quoted by reliable Greek authors who had direct access to the *Antiquities*, such as Eusebius of Caesarea around 313 CE,[7] Photius of Constantinople *c*.890 CE,[8] and John Zonarus in the eleventh or twelfth century.[9] The passage is also coherently embedded within a larger narrative drawing on many themes emphasized by Josephus, some quite subtly.[10]

In terms of the clause concerning Jesus, its authenticity is considerably aided by the fact that it does not seem like anything that would have been accidentally or intentionally interpolated by an early Christian. Firstly, the clause identifies Jesus with the words 'who was called Christ' (τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ), an ambiguous turn of phrase that, without context, communicates a distant or skeptical portrayal of Jesus.[11]

Secondly, the surrounding context contradicts Christian tradition about James' death in several respects: it places it around 62 CE whereas Christian tradition puts it shortly before (and even as the cause of) the destruction of Jerusalem around 69 CE.[12] It portrays the Sadducees as the enemies of James and suggests that the Pharisees were his allies,[13] whereas Christian tradition names the Pharisees as James' opponents[14] (it is also difficult to believe the great majority of Christians would ever have hinted at the notion that those Jews 'who were strict in observing the laws' were allies of James). In addition to this, Josephus describes

have doubted the genuineness of this passage on James'; Feldman, 'The Testimonium Flavianum', 183. Olson, though rejecting the passage, will also say 'The vast majority of scholars have accepted the authenticity of the passage about James'; Olson, 'Eusebius and the Testimonium Flavianum', 314.

[5] Other Greek manuscripts also contain the passage, though these were not used in Niese's critical edition; however, Schreckenberg does not report any differences between their readings and the reading of the three principal manuscripts; see Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus Tradition*, 13–47.

[6] For a discussion of this translation, see Chapter 2 pp. 42–5.

[7] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.21.

[8] Photius, *Library* 238 (ed. Henry, *Photius: Bibliothèque*, 152 [317b] lines 7–9).

[9] John Zonarus, *Epitome historiarum* 6.17 [2.49].

[10] Mason, for example, writes 'A quick glance shows how well this account fits into both the larger and smaller context'; Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 236–48, at 239. See also Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 3–4.

[11] For example, Pontius Pilate uses the phrase twice (Matthew 27:17, 22). Eusebius uses the very same phrase a few verses after quoting Josephus' words about James the brother of Jesus 'who was called Christ' in order to describe the epistle of Jude as the 'epistle said to be of Jude' (τῆς λεγομένης Ἰούδα). Eusebius then describes how Jude's authorship is disputed (*Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.25; ed. Schwartz and Mommsen, *Eusebius Werke 2.1–3: Die Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 1 p. 174 lines 14–15). Eusebius uses the same phraseology for the Revelation of John (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.18.2), apparently to communicate that its authorship is disputed also (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.24.18).

[12] Hegesippus records that James' execution occurred immediately before Vespasian's siege of Jerusalem, and Eusebius says that Clement's account of James' death agrees; see Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.18–19, 2.1.4. However, Josephus places the execution some years previous to this.

[13] The passage describes the High Priest Ananus II as a Sadducee (*Antiquities* 20.199) and then says that those who were upset at James' death were those 'who seemed to be the most moderate of those in the city and were strict in observing the laws' (*Antiquities* 20.201; ἐδόκουν ἐπιεικέστατοι τῶν κατὰ τὴν πόλιν εἶναι καὶ περὶ τοὺς νόμους ἀκριβεῖς βαρέως ἤνεγκαν). This seems to refer to Pharisees because elsewhere Josephus specifically draws a contrast between the harshness of Sadducees and the relative gentleness of Pharisees (*Antiquities* 13.293–4; *War* 2.166) and he also emphasizes how particular Pharisees were about observing laws (*War* 2.162). For further discussion on these passages see below pp. 239–40.

[14] See Hegesippus in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.10. An early Jewish-Christian document, perhaps the *Ascents of James* also describes Pharisees as enemies; see Pseudo-Clement, *Recognitions* 1.59.1, 1.63.1 (James' death is described in 1.70). On the preservation of the *Ascents of James* in the *Recognitions*, see Chapter 3 p. 74).

a traditional death by stoning, but Christian sources instead focus on a failed attempt to hurl James from the temple, then a failed stoning, and then a successful death by clubbing.[15] Finally, Josephus describes 'others' who were executed with James, but Christian tradition says nothing about these people.[16]

Thirdly, the passage calls James the 'brother' of Jesus, even though almost all second- and third-century Christians took pains to insist that James was not the physical brother of Jesus, but only related to him some other way.[17] Insofar as I am aware, the only firmly dated second-/third-century Christian source claiming that James was actually the physical brother of Jesus is Hegesippus, though how to interpret his statement is not certain.[18] The only other candidates are the *Gospel of the Hebrews* and certain instances in the Clementine literature, but these documents may not have been written in the second or third centuries.[19] In any case, the *Gospel of the Hebrews* presents the resurrected Jesus greeting James as his

[15] Josephus emphasizes that James was stoned to death, while Clement and Hegesippus (both in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2.1.4, 2.23.18–19) claim that James was thrown from the pinnacle of the temple and then killed with a club. The *Second Apocalypse of James* 61–2 describes James being thrown from the pinnacle of the temple and surviving, but then it cuts off before his death. The *Ascents of James* does not speak of the execution of James but does describe him being beaten and thrown from the top of the temple stairs where he is presumed dead (*Recognitions of Clement*, 1.70.6–8). However, Hegesippus and the *Second Apocalypse of James* also mention that James was stoned after being thrown from the temple, so the reports are not irreconcilable with Josephus. Still, it is clear that early Christians emphasized other details than Josephus does, suggesting that the account was not interpolated by a Christian.

[16] On this and other of the above arguments, see Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 2–5.

[17] The following early Christian sources deny that James was the physical brother of Jesus: Clement of Alexandria, *Hypotyposeis* fragment 24.2 (from the *Adumbrations* of Cassiodorus; see Stählin, Früchtel, and Ursula, *Clemens Alexandrinus Band 3*, 206–7). Here, Clement strongly implies that James was the son of Joseph, but not Mary. Origen (in *Against Celsus* 1.47; *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17; *Commentary on John* 1.23) states that James was not the son of Mary, but perhaps a son of Joseph from a previous marriage or a kind of spiritual brother. Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History* 2.1.2 claims that James was the son of Joseph from a previous marriage. Hippolytus, *On the Blessing of Moses* §340–2 claims that Jesus' brothers came from the seed of Joseph, implying that they were not related to Jesus biologically. The *First Apocalypse of James* 24–6 specifically states that James was not the physical brother of Jesus. The *Second Apocalypse of James* 44, 50 dwells on the subject of brotherhood at some length and appears to make James a foster brother or cousin of Jesus. The *Infancy Gospel of James* 9.2 describes Joseph as having sons from a previous marriage; the sons presumably include James because he seems to be portrayed in 25.1 as writing portions of the Gospel around the time of Jesus' birth. The *Gospel of Philip* 32 may imply that Jesus had a sister, but the text is corrupt and confused at this point. Similarly in section 17b it may imply that Mary was perpetually a virgin, meaning that Jesus would not have had a biologically related sister. The *Gospel of Peter* and the *Book of James*, according to Origen, both claimed that the siblings of Jesus were by Joseph, not Mary; see Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17. The *Book of Thomas* 138 calls Thomas the twin of Jesus and also his brother, but it is unclear if this is meant allegorically. The book rails against sexual intercourse, so it is difficult to imagine that it would have portrayed Jesus as being a product of fleshly activity, but if so, it would mean Thomas, the twin of Jesus, must have also been born of a virgin—a possible, though strange belief. The *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* 16.1 pointedly calls James the son of Joseph, and does not refer to him as the brother of Jesus. It also calls Jesus a child, but does not name James as such, implying that James was older than Jesus and the son of Joseph from a previous marriage. For further discussion, see Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum', 111–14.

[18] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.4. Hegesippus may not have meant that James was the actual physical brother of Jesus because when discussing Jude, another brother, he says that Jude was only 'said to be his brother according to the flesh' (κατὰ σάρκα λεγομένου αὐτοῦ ἀδελφοῦ; *Ecclesiastical History* 3.20.1 in ed. Schwartz and Mommsen, *Eusebius Werke 2.1–3: Die Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 1 p. 232 line 19).

[19] It is possible that they stem from the first or the fourth century. On the dating of the pseudo-Clementines, see Paget, 'Jewish Christianity', 761–3. For the dating of the Gospel of the Hebrews, see Klijn, *Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition*, 27–30.

'brother' (*frater*), but the uncontextualized fragment documenting this statement does not make it clear if spiritual brotherhood is meant.[20] The Clementine literature does name James as the 'brother' of Jesus, yet as far as I can tell, it always indicates this with the phrase 'brother of the Lord',[21] whereas Josephus more mundanely states that James was the 'brother of Jesus' thus dispensing with the honorific title of 'Lord' (κύριος). Hegesippus (*c.*175 CE) does the same as the Clementine literature and uses the title 'Lord' (κύριος) so as to call James the 'brother of the Lord'.[22]

A remarkable observation about the above documents is that all of them—Hegesippus, the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, and the Clementine literature— were written by Jewish-Christians, or by those who relied heavily upon Jewish tradition.[23] From this, the conclusion is unavoidable that whoever wrote the passage in *Antiquities* 20.200 about James being the 'brother of Jesus' was likely intimately engaged with Judaism and was probably Jewish himself. What is more, the author does not seem to have been a Christian since he uses traditions and language not employed by Christians, as when he provides details about the death of James that contradict Christian tradition, or when he says that Jesus was only 'called' the Christ, or when he states that James was the brother 'of Jesus' not the brother of 'the Lord'. Josephus is consequently the most probable candidate for the source of the passage.[24]

Origen of Alexandria

However, the authenticity of the passage encounters some modest difficulties when the testimony of Origen is considered.[25] Origen first alludes to the passage in his apologetic work *Against Celsus* (248 CE) where he writes that Josephus 'is not far from the truth in saying that these things befell the Jews in vengeance for James the Just, who was the brother of Jesus who was called Christ (ἀδελφὸς Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ), since they had killed him who was most just'.[26] Later on in the same work, Origen makes a similar statement that Titus, the son of the Roman emperor Vespasian, 'captured Jerusalem, as Josephus writes, on account of James the Just, the brother of Jesus who was called Christ (τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ), though truth would express it as on account of Jesus the Christ of God'.[27]

[20] This particular fragment from the *Gospel of the Hebrews* is quoted by Jerome, *Illustrious Men* 2.13 (ed. Richardson, 'Hieronymus liber de viris inlustribus', 8 line 21). Tertullian in *Against Marcion* 4.19 might argue that Jesus had biological brothers, but his overall point seems to be that Jesus had a family from his youth and hence did not, as the Marcionites allegedly believed, suddenly appear full-grown. In any case, Tertullian is a representative of Latin tradition, not the Greek Christian tradition which would have interpolated the *Antiquities*.

[21] *Recognitions of Clement* 4.35.1 (*Iacobi fratris domini*; Rehm, *Die Pseudoklementinen*, vol. 51 p. 164 line 3); *Epistle of Clement to James* 19.2 (*Iacobo fratri domini*; Rehm, vol. 51 p. 386 line 22); *Clementine Homilies* 11.4 (ἀδελφῷ τοῦ κυρίου; Rehm, vol. 42 p. 171 line 15).

[22] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.4, and also 3.20.1 (Schwartz and Monson vol. 1 p. 166 lines 9–10, p. 232 line 18).

[23] For Hegesippus and his relationship with Judaism, see Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 4.22.7. For a general overview of Jewish Christian texts, see Paget, *Jews, Christians and Jewish Christians in Antiquity*; Paget, 'Jewish Christianity'.

[24] Many of the above reasons pertaining to why a Christian would not have interpolated the passage on James and Jesus are articulately presented by scholars cited above in n. 4.

[25] For an overview of Origen and his use of Josephus, see n. 50.

[26] Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.47 (ed. Marcovich, *Origenes*, 47 lines 11–14).

[27] Origen, *Against Celsus* 2.13 (ed. Marcovich, 92 lines 26–8).

Origen may allude to the passage a third time in his *Commentary on Matthew* (248 CE), written slightly after his *Against Celsus*:

> This James was so eminent among the people for his righteousness that Flavius Josephus, when writing the *Antiquities of the Jews* in twenty books, as he wished to present the cause for which the people suffered so many things that even the temple was destroyed, said that these things happened to them according to the vengeance of God as payment for what they had dared to do to James the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ (τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ). It is amazing that although he did not accept Jesus to be the Christ, nevertheless he testified to the great righteousness of James. He says further that the people believed they had suffered these things on account of James.[28]

Origen's citations about James are puzzling because in our manuscripts of the *Antiquities* Josephus does not attribute the fall of Jerusalem to the death of James, nor does he call James 'the Just', nor does he allude to James' righteousness. It would also be odd for Josephus, as a non-Christian, to say these kinds of things. To make matters more puzzling, Origen, three times, portrays Josephus as calling James 'the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ' (τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ) which exactly matches the distinct phrasing of the more modest account of James present in all manuscripts of *Antiquities* 20.200.

Criticisms Related to Origen

These facts led Schürer, with Hölscher following, to reject *Antiquities* 20.200, claiming that Origen cited an already interpolated passage and that therefore the less extravagant passage at *Antiquities* 20.200, while different from Origen's citation and present in all extant manuscripts, must also be interpolated.[29] This, though, does not logically follow. If one ancient author quotes an extravagantly suspicious reading in a text, yet all later manuscripts of that text have a different, more mundane reading, such does not imply that the later manuscripts have also been interpolated. Otherwise, any suspicious misquotation from any ancient author would necessarily cause all later manuscript readings to be rejected, even if they are far less doubtful. This is the case in the example of *Antiquities* 20.200 because Origen's quotations are highly implausible for Josephus to have made, whereas the extant manuscripts offer a far more plausible reading. So why disqualify them?

One could instead take the force of Schürer's argument to mean that because Origen witnesses specifically to Christian interpolation in the *Antiquities*, we must accept that Christians had a tendency to interpolate manuscripts of the *Antiquities* and hence we should not trust the extant passage in *Antiquities* 20.200 even though it is a much more sober account. However, as I explained above, *Antiquities* 20.200 does not seem like anything a second- or third-century Christian would purposefully or accidentally interpolate into a manuscript: it contradicts Christian traditions about the death of James, it says in a rather non-Christian way that Jesus was only 'called the Christ', and it says that James was the 'brother' of Jesus even though the great majority of Christians after Josephus did not believe that James was physically the brother of Jesus. And as far as those few Jewish-Christians who did believe that James was actually the biological half-brother of Jesus, they did not call

[28] Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17 (ed. Klostermann, *Origenes Werke 10: Commentarius in Matthaeum I*, 22 line 6–14).

[29] Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People*, vol. 2 pp. 148–9; Hölscher, 'Josephus', cols 1993–4.

James the 'brother of Jesus' but instead used the more decorous phrase 'brother of the Lord'. So even they are not likely candidates for interpolating the phrase into the *Antiquities*.

In regard to the above, it must be observed that Origen and his probable avenues for obtaining a copy of the *Antiquities* are all unlikely to have interpolated the phrase. Origen's theological teacher, Clement of Alexandria,[30] was no different from the Christian majority and believed James was not actually the brother of Jesus.[31] Clement also seems to have made personal use of the *Antiquities*,[32] which suggests that a likely path for Origen to gain access to the *Antiquities* was via Clement's circle. Adding to this is the fact that Origen also heard Hippolytus of Rome preach and was requested by his patron to emulate Hippolytus' scriptural exegesis.[33] Yet Hippolytus did not believe that James was physically the brother of Jesus either.[34] Hence, Origen's contacts would not have been disposed to interpolate the phrase 'the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ', that is present in all manuscripts of *Antiquities* 20.200 because his theological forebears, Clement and Hippolytus, did not believe that James was the brother of Jesus.

And the same can be said for Origen himself, for he too ardently believed that James was not actually the physical brother of Jesus. He even points out his disagreement with what Josephus said about James two of the three times he discusses Josephus' account,[35] emphasizing that Mary, the mother of Jesus, 'did not know sexual union with a man'.[36] Not only this, but Origen was also known to obtain manuscripts from Jewish sources, and these of course would also have had little reason to interpolate such a phrase.[37] Putting the above together it is singularly unlikely that the extant passage at *Antiquities* 20.200 would have been interpolated by Origen, or by his predecessors Clement and Hippolytus, or by any Jewish sources Origen used to obtain manuscripts.

But aside from Origen's citation of Josephus claiming James was the brother of Jesus, what of Origen's other claims that Josephus called James 'the Just' and that Jerusalem was captured on account of his execution? Schürer maintains that in such things Origen witnesses to Christian interpolation in the *Antiquities*. It is hard to imagine that anyone but a Christian would have interpolated these. Should not these then make us suspicious that Christians have added other material in and around *Antiquities* 20.200? I think the answer to this is clearly no and for the simple fact that there is strong evidence that Schürer is incorrect in his assessment that Origen found such statements in manuscripts of the *Antiquities*.

To begin, no current manuscripts of the *Antiquities* contain such statements, and no ancient or medieval writer ever witnesses that they found such a passage in Josephus' corpus.[38]

[30] Eusebius says that Origen was Clement's pupil. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.6, see also 6.14.7–9 and Jerome, *Letter* 84.8. For further discussion, see Crouzel, *Origen*, 7. Whether Clement and Origen were both lecturers at a formal school is unclear, but that they knew one another is quite likely.

[31] See n. 17.

[32] Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 1.21 [147.2]. On Clement using the *Antiquities*, see Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*, 71; Hardwick, *Josephus as an Historical Source*, 31–2; Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 8–9.

[33] Jerome, *Illustrious Men* 61.2–3.

[34] Hippolytus, *On the Blessing of Moses* §340–2.

[35] Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.47; *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17. For another denial that James was Jesus' brother and a critique of those who disagree, see Origen, *Commentary on John* 1.23.

[36] μὴ . . . γνῷ κοίτην ἀνδρός. Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17 (ed. Klostermann, *Origenes Werke 10: Commentarius in Matthaeum I*, 21 line 32).

[37] On this, see Chapter 1 n. 5.

[38] Olson tries to prove that the *Paschal Chronicle* quotes an interpolated manuscript of Josephus' *War*, because the chronicle claims that Josephus mentions in book 5 of the *War* that James was thrown down from the Temple. But Whealey has cogently shown that here the *Paschal Chronicle* is dependent on Eusebius and has not examined manuscripts of Josephus directly. The chronicle seems have in mind Hegesippus, whom in the fifth book of his work, claimed that James was thrown from the Temple

All this suggests that the Christian sounding assertions were never inserted into the *Antiquities* and that Origen must have obtained them by another means. Secondly, two of the three times Origen discusses these statements he also voices disagreement with the idea that Jerusalem was destroyed because of James' death,[39] making it all the more unlikely that he or his associates introduced the more extravagant statements into the works of Josephus, whether wittingly or unwittingly. It has already been mentioned that Origen was known to obtain manuscripts from Jewish contacts and of course these would also not have interpolated anything pro-Christian into the manuscripts of the *Antiquities* either.[40]

Additional evidence from Eusebius further points to the fact that the exaggerated statements about James, to which Origen refers, were likely not in Origen's manuscripts of the *Antiquities*. This is because Eusebius appears to have followed Origen word for word in reporting the very same statements by Josephus, that is, that James was extremely righteous, was called the 'Just', and that his execution precipitated the destruction of Jerusalem.[41] Notably, though, in this instance Eusebius departs from his standard practice and does not give a book title and book number for the passage in Josephus' corpus. This implies that the passage was not actually in the manuscripts of Josephus that Eusebius had before him (otherwise he would have cited where it could be found as he usually does) and that, therefore, Eusebius' manuscripts of the *Antiquities* had not been interpolated.

It is likely then, as other scholars have argued, that Eusebius instead derived his quotation of Josephus directly from Origen, which is why Eusebius follows him word for word. This is significant because Eusebius inherited portions of Origen's library and even had manuscripts with Origen's own handwriting.[42] This means that the manuscripts of the *Antiquities* to which Eusebius had access were in all likelihood the very same manuscripts Origen used and, as I said, these do not seem to have been interpolated at *Antiquities* 20.200 since Eusebius does not give the title and book number where the suspicious readings were located. By contrast, Eusebius quotes from the shorter and more modest extant passage in *Antiquities* 20.200, and with this he does give the proper title and book number.[43]

When taken together, these observations affirm that the more sober extant passage was present within Eusebius' manuscript of the *Antiquities*, but that the Origen's more extravagant statements were not. By extension it follows that the extravagant statements were also not present in the manuscript of the *Antiquities* to which Origen referred because Eusebius likely used the same manuscripts and did not find the reading in them. Nor do any other Christians provide good evidence that the suspicious statements were interpolated into

(Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.3). Therefore the *Paschal Chronicle* confuses the name Josephus with Hegesippus, see Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum', 108; Olson, 'Eusebius and the Testimonium Flavianum', 317–18. George Syncellus in his *Chronicle* §413 draws from Eusebius (who in turn draws from Origen) to run the passage about James together with *Antiquities* 20.200–3, George Syncellus does not however state where the passage may be found in Josephus' work and seems clearly cribbing off of Eusebius. In his study on the reception of Josephus, Schreckenberg writes 'Syncellus did not read Josephus himself' (*Synkellos hat nicht Josephus selbst gelesen*), and goes on to observe that he may not have even read Eusebius directly, but perhaps was reliant on a source who read Eusebius. See Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*, 110.

[39] Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.47, 2.13.

[40] On this, see Chapter 1 n. 5.

[41] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.20. For a comparison of Origen's words with Eusebius', see Appendix 1 pp. 216–7.

[42] See p. 16.

[43] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.21–4.

manuscripts of Josephus' work.[44] On balance then, one should not view Origen's statements as evidence that Christians were inserting interpolations into the *Antiquities*.

The Reason for Origen's Misquotation

But there still remains the question of what caused Origen to make such a strange characterization of Josephus' passage about James. The most probable answer is that Origen was incorrectly summarizing Josephus or was otherwise misremembering what Josephus wrote. Origen may have been led to do this because shortly after Josephus speaks about the death of James (*Antiquities* 20.200), he then says that 'this was the beginning of greater evils' (*Antiquities* 20.210) and 'from that time our city grew weaker and all things became worse' (*Antiquities* 20.214), something that would eventually lead to the downfall of Jerusalem. Statements like these may have provided reason for Origen to claim that Josephus connected James' death to the destruction of Jerusalem. It is also possible that Origen mixed up Josephus' actual passage on James (*Antiquities* 20.200) with that of John the Baptist, whose death, according to Josephus, caused the destruction of Herod's Army (*Antiquities* 18.116–19). Support for this is that Origen mentions Josephus' passage on John the Baptist in conjunction with his mention of James.[45] It is possible that after doing so Origen may have, via a wayward memory, confusedly recollected that Josephus spoke about the execution of James and the destruction of Jerusalem.[46]

None of these possibilities for Origen's confusion are mutually exclusive, but a third, and I think most likely, reason is that Origen conflated the account of the death of James given by Hegesippus (Ἡγήσιππος) with that given by Josephus (Ἰώσηπος), whose similar-sounding names were often mistaken.[47] Certain manuscripts of Origen even have an alternative spelling for Josephus as Ἰώσηππος which is even more similar to the spelling of Hegesippus (Ἡγήσιππος).[48] Hegesippus is particularly likely to have been a source of confusion for Origen because Hegesippus reports that Jerusalem was destroyed due to the execution of James and he also claims that James was righteous, and that he was called the 'Just'—precisely the things Origen misattributes to Josephus.[49] These points are further sharpened by the character of Origen's citations of Josephus elsewhere, which demonstrate that he routinely recalls the statements of Josephus incorrectly, meaning that we should expect his memory to be faulty where Josephus is concerned.[50]

[44] See Appendix 1 pp. 216–7.

[45] Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.47.

[46] On the last two reasons for Origen's confusion, see Whealey, 'Josephus on Jesus: Evidence from the First Millennium', 290–1; Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 17–18; Baras, 'Testimonium Flavianum', 310–11.

[47] Several scholars have theorized this before, perhaps best by Whealey, 'Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum', 108–9. Paget notes this hypothesis and thinks it has strength, but is not wholly convinced; see Paget, 'Some Observations', 550–2 nn. 43–4. Baras opts for a middle road, whereby Origen was not misremembering what Hegesippus and Josephus said but was making a kind of deductive conclusion from their words and presenting it as the intent of Josephus; see Baras, 'Testimonium Flavianum', 311.

[48] Mizugaki, 'Origen and Josephus', 328.

[49] Baras believes Hegesippus was not the source of confusion, but that the source was a similar-sounding passage in *Antiquities* 11.297–305; see Baras, 'The Testimonium Flavianum and the Martyrdom of James'.

[50] For example, Origen seems to confuse Josephus' statement in *War* 4.335 about a certain Zechariah with Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist as portrayed in the *Infancy Gospel of James* 23.1–3; on this see Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus*, 18. In another example, in his *Against Celsus* 4.11 Origen says that Josephus only wrote two books in his *Antiquities*, though elsewhere he knows that Josephus actually wrote twenty books (*Commentary on Matthew* 10.17). In this instance he is probably confusing

So then, Origen's incorrect statement about Josephus does not seem to be evidence that manuscripts of the *Antiquities* were being interpolated by Christians. Rather, it is likely that Origen simply confused Hegesippus with Josephus and thus fused together their accounts about the death of James in his memory.[51]

Further Criticisms

There are, however, a few scholars who reject *Antiquities* 20.200 for reasons unrelated to alleged interpolations in Origen's manuscripts of Josephus. It will be helpful to respond to their arguments as thoroughly as possible.[52]

Jean Juster argues that Josephus claimed it was the Pharisees who prevented the Sadducees from being cruel (*Antiquities* 20.199), whereas Juster thinks the extant passage (*Antiquities* 20.200–1) portrays the procurator as being the moderating force.[53] In actuality though the passage says in *Antiquities* 20.201 that it was not the procurator who was the moderate party, but rather it was those Jews who 'seemed to be the most moderate of those in the city and strictly observed precise laws'. These more moderate Jews were most probably Pharisees since their strict observance of the laws matches Josephus' description of Pharisees elsewhere.[54]

Juster also attempts to find another contradiction in that the passage implies that the Jews did not have the right to carry out capital punishment whereas Juster believes that Roman law did give them this right.[55] Here Juster is incorrect. The power of capital punishment was, according to Roman sources, reserved for high-ranking Roman magistrates.[56] Jewish sources themselves also state that the power to try criminal cases was removed from them around 30 CE, just as, for example, the Jerusalem Talmud says 'Forty years before the Temple was destroyed, capital jurisdiction was taken away'.[57] The Babylonian Talmud

Josephus' *Antiquities* with his *Against Apion*, which did have two books. For many other errors of Origen in regard to Josephus, see Hardwick, *Josephus as an Historical Source*, 59–64, 107–8. Schreckenberg thought that the quality and accuracy of Origen's citations of Josephus were so poor that he found it most probable that Origen was using Josephus indirectly through an unreliable intermediate source; see Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*, 74. This may be possible, but faulty memory seems the best explanation for the above instance where Origen confuses the *Antiquities* with *Against Apion*, but then in another location gets it right. For another perspective, Mizugaki writes that 'Origen generally makes faithful citations' of Josephus; see Mizugaki, 'Origen and Josephus', 330.

[51] Origen was known for having an extraordinary ability to memorize Scripture, but this likely came from lengthy and daily repetition, not one-off readings as presumably was the case as Origen read Josephus. On Origen's memorization and study of Scripture, see Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.2.7, 6.3.9; Jerome, *Letter* 84.8.

[52] In this I limit myself to arguments advanced by scholars over the past one hundred or so years. In addition to the authors I discuss, Solomon Zeitlin also dismissed the passage on James, but gave no reasons for doing so as far as I can tell; Zeitlin, 'The Hoax of the "Slavonic Josephus"', 172.

[53] *Celui-ci disait que c'étaient les pharisiens qui empéchaient les sadducéens d'etre sévères, et non les procurateurs*. Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire romain*, vol. 2 pp. 140–1.

[54] See discussion on these being Pharisees above p. 232.

[55] Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire romain*, vol. 2 p. 141.

[56] Garnsey, 'The Criminal Jurisdiction of Governors', 55.

[57] (קודם לארבעים שנה עד שלא חרב הבית ניטלו דיני נפשות) Jerusalem Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 1.1.9 [1.1.II.2a ed. Neusner]. Juster cites *War* 6.126 to show that the Jewish people had the authority of capital punishment, but this passage rather shows that the Romans gave an extraordinary privilege of executing any non-Jews who transgressed the temple, so here Josephus has the future emperor Titus plead with Jewish rebels in the temple, 'have we not given you permission to kill all those who transgress [the temple]?' (οὐχ ἡμεῖς δὲ τοὺς ὑπερβάντας ὑμῖν ἀναιρεῖν ἐπετρέψαμεν). This seems to imply that the more general

concurs[58] and Josephus himself all but explicitly says the same when he writes that the Roman governor possessed 'all power over the Jews' (Ἰουδαίων τῇ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἐξουσίᾳ),[59] and that the governor specifically 'received the authority from Caesar to kill' (τοῦ κτείνειν λαβὼν παρὰ Καίσαρος ἐξουσίαν).[60] Early Christian sources agree.[61] This objection to the authenticity of the passage therefore also does not stand.

Tessa Rajak maintains that *Antiquities* 20.200 and surrounding verses should be rejected because of their censure of the High Priest Ananus II and its 'harsh criticism of the Sadducees, and of the Sanhedrin', all of which Rajak believes contradicts Josephus' statements elsewhere.[62] Yet these criticisms match Josephus' assessments quite well. For example, he offers the same theme in *Antiquities* 13.293–4 where a Sadducee urges the death penalty for someone who simply vocalized criticism of another, whereas the Pharisees believed that such was too extreme a penalty. Josephus explains this by emphasizing that unlike Sadducees, 'Pharisees by nature hold to mild punishments' (φύσει πρὸς τὰς κολάσεις ἐπιεικῶς ἔχουσιν οἱ Φαρισαῖοι).[63] In *War* 2.166 Josephus also asserts that the Sadducees were 'more wild' (ἀγριώτερον) with one another than the Pharisees and 'harsh' (ἀπηνεῖς). Josephus could also criticize the Sanhedrin and does so just a few passages after discussing James, the brother of Jesus, where he says that the Sanhedrin did 'things contrary to the ancestral laws' (ἐναντία ταῦτα τοῖς πατρίοις νόμοις).[64] This passage sounds much like *Antiquities* 20.200 where the Sanhedrin also breaks laws in their execution of James. Lastly, regarding Ananus II, it is true that Josephus does praise him in his early work *War* 4.316–21, but later on in his career (when he wrote the *Antiquities*) Josephus criticizes Ananus II severely for taking bribes and betraying Josephus himself (*Life* 193–6, 216, 309). In this regard, the criticisms that *Antiquities* 20.199–201 lodges at Ananus II, the Sadducees, and the Sanhedrin all resonate with Josephus' tendencies elsewhere and actually suggest that the passage is authentic.[65]

Ken Olson has published an article in part devoted to the authenticity of *Antiquities* 20.200. He believes that *Antiquities* 20.199–200 is 'largely Josephan',[66] but that the phrase referring to James as 'the brother of Jesus who was called Christ' was added by a later interpolator. His reasons are as follows. Firstly, he believes the passage has poor manuscript attestation since only three manuscripts of *Antiquities* 20 remain,[67] but in this he ignores the sixth-century Latin translation of the *Antiquities*[68] and several good-quality Greek witnesses

prerogative of capital punishment was not given to them; in the very least the passage is ambiguous on the matter.

[58] Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat* 15a.9.

[59] *Antiquities* 18.2.

[60] *War* 2.117. Mason, *Judaean War 2*, 80–1 n. 722. Later Jewish sources like the Babylonian Talmud do describe the Sanhedrin as executing Jesus, but when read in light of the Gospels and Josephus, it is clear that the Sanhedrin voted to put Jesus to death and then had to persuade the Roman governor to carry the sentence out. In this view the Sanhedrin instigated the execution of Jesus, even if the Roman governor had final approval. For these later Jewish accounts, see Chapter 3 pp. 93–4.

[61] John 18:31. Niese is said by Winter, with Olson following, to have rejected the James passage, but in my reading Niese seems to accept it or at least to not take a position; Niese, *De testimonio*, IX–X.

[62] Rajak, *Josephus, the Historian and His Society*, 131 n. 73.

[63] *Antiquities* 13.294.

[64] *Antiquities* 20.218.

[65] In all of this it must be remembered that Josephus is well known for contradicting himself, for discussion on this topic see Mason, 'The Writings of Josephus', vol. 2 pp. 1681–2.

[66] Olson, 'Eusebius and the Testimonium Flavianum', 316.

[67] Ibid., 315.

[68] Cassiodorus supervised this Latin translation and at *Antiquities* 20.200, he and his team did not consult Rufinus' Latin translation of Eusebius, thus making Cassiodorus an independent witness.

in Eusebius, Photius, and John Zonarus.[69] There are also several as of yet unedited Greek manuscripts that contain this passage of the *Antiquities*, none of which Schreckenberg, who cataloged them, suggests contain a substantially different reading at *Antiquities* 20.200.[70]

Secondly, Olson argues that the word 'Christ' (χριστός) is never used by Josephus and hence the phrase in *Antiquities* 20.200 is likely not by him because it reflects vocabulary he did not use.[71] As I have argued in this book though, evidence shows that the TF is authentic (with only two or three words missing in Greek manuscripts, but which are preserved in other languages) and the word χριστός is deployed there. In addition to this, Josephus certainly uses χριστός in *Antiquities* 8.137 to refer to a building that was anointed or smeared with a substance.[72] This is very similar to the meaning of χριστός when used in reference to Jesus in *Antiquities* 20.200, which can be understood as meaning Jesus 'who was called the anointed one'.[73] But even if the lexeme χριστός was unique, Chapter 4 has demonstrated that Josephus used a unique lexeme just about every eighty-seven words and it so happens that the passage that contains the story about James (*Antiquities* 20.200–1) is exactly eighty-seven words long, meaning that no one should be surprised if the passage contains a unique lexeme.

Thirdly, Olson contends that the phrase 'who was called Christ' (τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ) was in fact used by Christians and therefore cannot have been viewed as being irreverent, distant, skeptical, or what have you.[74] Yet, the point is not that Christians never used the phrase, but that without context the phrase is quite distant and possibly skeptical. This is shown in the very passages that Olson cites to prove his own point. Thus, in Matthew 27:17 and 27:22 the phrase is used, but it comes from the highly skeptical Pontius Pilate. The narrator in John 4:25 also deploys the phrase, but he only does so in a parenthetical note explaining that the Hebrew word 'Messiah' (Μεσσίας) in Greek is 'called Christ', showing that the phrase in this instance is simply a detached way of explaining the definition of a word and not as a way to assert that someone actually was the Christ.

Cassiodorus' translation reads *Et quosdam deducens ad semetipsum inter quos et fratrem Ihesu, qui dicitur Christus, nomine Iacobum, quasi contra legem agentes acusans, tradidit lapidandos*. Whereas, Rufinus' translation (*Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.22) reads *et introducit in medium fratrem lesu, qui dicitur Christus, Iacobum nomine, et alios quam plurimos, quos velut contra legem gerere incusans tradidit lapidandos*. For the text of these, see Levenson and Martin, 'The Latin Translations of Josephus on Jesus', 44, 79.

[69] See nn. 7–9 above for citations.

[70] In Schreckenberg's catalog I count about a half dozen additional Greek manuscript witnesses to *Antiquities* 20.200 that were not considered by the previous editor Niese, but these do not include an additional number of catena manuscripts; see Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*, 13–47. Étienne Nodet had been working on a new critical edition of the *Antiquities*, but recently passed away.

[71] Olson, 'Eusebius and the Testimonium Flavianum', 316. Wells makes the same point; Wells, *Did Jesus Exist?*, 11.

[72] See pp. 83–4.

[73] The use of χριστός at *Antiquities* 8.137 also refutes Olson's (and Wells') argument that Josephus was 'not likely to have dropped the word "Messiah" casually into his text as a means of identifying a minor character'. Olson, 'Eusebius and the Testimonium Flavianum', 315; Wells, *Did Jesus Exist?*, 11. It is also not at all clear why Josephus would have been unwilling to make a simple statement that some minor figure was called 'Christ' by some other people. Wells argues that there were many messianic claimants that Josephus discussed, but never said that the word 'Christ' was applied to them; yet those persons did not have a large group of people called 'Christians' growing in number during the time of Josephus. It is understandable that Josephus would have felt the need to explain where the name of these people came from, as he does in the TF. Logically, this would necessitate mentioning the word 'Christ'.

[74] Olson, 'Eusebius and the Testimonium Flavianum', 316.

Olson also cites Origen, but in this instance Origen uses the phrase only as a way of explaining to his non-Christian interlocutor that it is through the authority of ancient custom that Jesus is 'called Christ'. He writes, 'Jesus, by a certain ancestral custom is in these words said to be the Christ of God'.[75] Again, this suggests that the phrase by itself is detached and distant, and can only become more intimate and affirmative with further context, such as Origen gives by specifying that Jesus is called the Christ, not just by anyone, but by a highly authoritative source: his Christian tradition. Olson's citation of Justin the Martyr is in the same category. He specifies that Jesus 'is called Christ by us',[76] once more providing context for who is giving the name or title of Christ to Jesus, something that *Antiquities* 20.200 does not do.

The best example that Olson can find is the Gospel of Matthew 1:16 which, at the end of its introductory genealogy, says 'and Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, from whom was born Jesus who is called Christ'. Yet immediately afterward, in the very next verse, the narrator specifies that Jesus is in fact the Christ (Matthew 1:17). He does so again in the next verse (Matthew 1:18), and he even began the whole genealogy with the same assertion as well (Matthew 1:1).[77]

What all these passages show is that the phrase 'who was called Christ' (τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ) in *Antiquities* 20.200 is detached and even skeptical when used without context, as its usage by Pilate and the Gospel of John demonstrate. It is hence rare for ancient Christians to have used it to identify or affirm Jesus as the Christ, but on the infrequent occasion in which they do, they always deploy it in a manner specifying that they were the ones who actually call Jesus the Christ.[78] *Antiquities* 20.200 of course does not provide any of this context. This absence makes the passage detached, skeptical, and distant, strongly suggesting that a Christian was not responsible for inserting it.

Fourthly, Olson tries to show that early Christians did call James 'the brother of Jesus' and that therefore a Christian would have been tempted to interpolate the phrase into *Antiquities* 20.200. Olson's argument is weak.[79] It is true that New Testament texts, authored by Jewish-Christians, refer to James as being the brother of Jesus,[80] but the real argument is whether the same was done by non-Jewish Christians after Josephus yet before Eusebius. This is the only time when interpolations could have crept into the *Antiquities* since Eusebius (and likely even Origen before him) quote from *Antiquities* 20.200. But I have shown above that the majority of second-/third-century Christians did not believe that James was the actual brother of Jesus and that they also went to great lengths to clarify this.[81] As a result they do

[75] Ἰησοῦς, πατρίῳ τινὶ τοῖς λόγοις τούτοις συνηθείᾳ καὶ Χριστὸς εἶναι λεγόμενος τοῦ θεοῦ. Origen, *Against Celsus* 4.28 (ed. Marcovich, *Origenes*, 241 lines 24–5).

[76] τὸν παρ' ἡμῖν λεγόμενον Χριστόν. Justin, *First Apology* 1.30 (ed. Marcovich, *Iustini Martyris Apologiae Pro Christianis*, 76 lines 1–2).

[77] See also n. 11 above.

[78] If a passage ever were to come to light showing an ancient Christian deploying the phrase without context, such would only show how rare it was for a Christian to do so, and would thus still suggest that Christians tended to not use it.

[79] For example, Olson incorrectly characterizes Eusebius as using the term 'brother of Jesus' regarding James in *Ecclesiastical History* 7.19, but here Eusebius states that James was simply 'known under the name (χρηματίσαι) of the brother of Jesus' (ed. Schwartz and Mommsen, *Eusebius Werke 2.1–3: Die Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 2 p. 674 line 3) and elsewhere Eusebius had specified that James was not actually the physical brother of Jesus, see *Ecclesiastical History* 2.1.2; Olson, 'Eusebius and the Testimonium Flavianum', 316–17.

[80] Matthew 12:46–7, 13:55–6; Mark 3:31–2, 6:3; Luke 8:19; John 2:12; Galatians 1:19; 1 Corinthians 9:5; Acts 1:14. Of all these, Luke is the only non-Jewish writer, but he of course was embedded within Jewish tradition and culture, unlike practically all Christian writers of the second and third centuries.

[81] See pp. 233–4.

not call James the 'brother of Jesus'. The only Christian writers who say something similar to this were a few Jewish-Christians (or at least those steeped in Jewish tradition). Yet even here they refrain from using the phrase 'brother of Jesus' and instead use the honorific 'brother of the Lord', which Josephus does not use. All this suggests that Josephus is the most likely candidate for the passage.

Fifthly, Olson believes that the difference between the account of James' execution in Hegesippus (*c.*180 CE) and that given about James in *Antiquities* 20.200, suggests that each account refers to a different James. This must mean, according to Olson, that Josephus' account pertains to a different James than the James who was the brother of Jesus.[82] However, disqualifying Josephus' account because it differs from that of Hegesippus would only be valid if Hegesippus' account was accurate, thereby disproving Josephus' different version. Yet, I know of no scholars who find Hegesippus' extravagant and much later version to be reliable. Certainly, it is more logical to believe that Josephus' earlier and far more mundane account about James' execution accurately reflects a mundane historical event that gave rise, over the decades, to the more exaggerated account found in Hegesippus.[83]

Richard Carrier is the most recent scholar to claim that *Antiquities* 20.200 is interpolated. He advances some of the same arguments already addressed in this appendix, so in what follows I limit myself to his novel propositions.[84] To weaken the textual history of *Antiquities* 20.200 Carrier begins by conjecturing that all extant manuscripts and all Greek quotations of the *Antiquities* descend ultimately from Eusebius or at least from the very same manuscript used by Eusebius;[85] this would effectively limit the number of extant witnesses of *Antiquities* 20.200 to only Eusebius.

In this though, Carrier neglects to consider the sixth-century Latin translation of Cassiodorus, which also contains the extant reading. He also does not realize that the three earliest manuscripts of *Antiquities* books 18–20 consistently differ from Eusebius' quotation of the TF in two locations, suggesting that that the extant manuscripts descend from an exemplar different from that used by Eusebius and thus are also separate witnesses to *Antiquities* 20.200. One of the variant readings actually seems to be the authentic variant, giving yet another reason for considering that the three primary and earliest *Antiquities* manuscripts are not dependent upon Eusebius, since if they were copied off of Eusebius—or even if they descended from a similar exemplar used by Eusebius— then they would not have contained the correct variant.[86] Carrier also neglects to consider the fact that Photius does not simply quote *Antiquities* 20.200, but extensively summarizes the contents of the *Antiquities*, demonstrating that he was not cribbing off of Eusebius. Photius, as I argued in Chapter 1, had a keen eye for interpolations and frequently consulted multiple manuscripts of the same work,[87] yet he treated *Antiquities* 20.200 as authentic.

Another argument of Carrier's is that Origen never claimed Josephus mentioned James in the *Antiquities*.[88] Carrier then concludes that Origen is not a witness to *Antiquities* 20.200 and hence the verse must have been inserted into manuscripts of the *Antiquities* after Origen.

[82] Olson, 'Eusebius and the Testimonium Flavianum', 317.

[83] Olson also tries to find evidence that Josephus' work had been interpolated with passages pertaining to James, but does not succeed in doing so. On this, see p. 236 n. 38.

[84] Carrier claims that many of his arguments are not vulnerable to a rebuttal which assumes that *Antiquities* 20.200 was intentionally interpolated, though, as I have stated in this appendix, my rebuttals apply to accidental interpolations too, see pp. 232, 235, and further arguments on 246, and Carrier, 'Origen, Eusebius, and the Accidental Interpolation', 498, 503, 512–14.

[85] Carrier, 'Origen, Eusebius, and the Accidental Interpolation', 494.

[86] See pp. 29–30.

[87] See pp. 29–30.

[88] Carrier, 'Origen, Eusebius, and the Accidental Interpolation', 499–503.

Yet this is an obvious misconstrual of what Origen reports. In his *Commentary on Matthew*, Origen introduces the passage regarding James as follows, 'Flavius Josephus, when writing[89] the Jewish *Antiquities* in twenty books . . . said that these things happened to them according to the vengeance of God as payment for what they had dared to do to James *the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ*'.[90] In the above Origen prefaces his remarks by mentioning the *Antiquities*, and seemingly attributing to the work a statement (italicized above) that matches *Antiquities* 20.200 in six consecutive words which are given by Origen not only in the same order but in exactly the same case as *Antiquities* 20.200: τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ. According to the TLG database, the precise form of this phrase is used nowhere else in all of Greek literature except by Josephus in *Antiquities* 20.200 and in quotations of the same.

Carrier admits that the clause has 'striking similarity' to *Antiquities* 20.200,[91] and he further thinks that Origen likely confused the name of Hegesippus with Josephus in his report of the death of James. Despite this, he insists that it is 'too complicated' to imagine that Origen merged the accounts of Hegesippus and Josephus together in his memory.[92] But surely such a solution is actually the simplest way to explain all of the above evidence, especially compared to Carrier's theory (addressed below) which proposes a series of changes to the *Antiquities*, none of which a Christian scribe would have been likely to accidentally or intentionally make, while also chalking up Origen's 'striking similarity' to *Antiquities* 20.200 to mere coincidence and happenstance.[93]

Carrier also tacitly assumes a particularly weak argument from silence by believing that Origen would have mentioned the passage in *Antiquities* 20.200 if he had known it.[94] But this does not square with Carrier's point that Origen confused Hegesippus with Josephus. If Origen did confuse the two, why would he mention a mundane passage from Josephus when he (mistakenly) thought there was a far more elaborate and useful passage on the same subject which also was from Josephus (but which was, in actuality from Hegesippus)? Either way though, Origen did mention the passage from Josephus' *Antiquities* 20.200, as I explained above.

Carrier also believes that Josephus surely would have given more details about the execution of James given that he belonged to the 'hated and illegal Christian sect'.[95] But by Josephus' day Christianity had not been declared illegal in the Roman Empire, and we have no idea how many people at this time 'hated' Christians let alone whether Josephus and his readership would have been among them—and, if so, why would he be required to talk about it? The emotions of people are quite fickle in any case, for Tacitus shows that, a short time before Josephus wrote, Christians were hated in Rome and persecuted, but immediately thereafter were looked on with much sympathy.[96]

Carrier further argues that the Book of Acts made use of the *Antiquities* and thus it should have mentioned the death of James, yet does not.[97] It is tenuous to assert both that Acts was

[89] Carrier wants this clause to say 'who wrote', but the Greek has no relative pronoun or definite article, suggesting that a relative clause is not the best way to translate the passage.

[90] Φλάβιον Ἰώσηπον ἀναγράψαντα ἐν εἴκοσι βιβλίοις τὴν Ἰουδαϊκὴν ἀρχαιολογίαν . . . εἰρηκέναι κατὰ μῆνιν θεοῦ ταῦτα αὐτοῖς ἀπηντηκέναι διὰ τὰ εἰς Ἰάκωβον τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ ὑπ' αὐτῶν τετολμημένα. Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17 (ed. Klostermann, *Origenes Werke 10: Commentarius in Matthaeum I*, 22 lines 7–8, 10–11).

[91] Carrier, 'Origen, Eusebius, and the Accidental Interpolation', 501.

[92] Ibid., 509–10.

[93] On this, see further discussion below pp. 245–6.

[94] Carrier, 'Origen, Eusebius, and the Accidental Interpolation', 502–3.

[95] Ibid., 497.

[96] Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44.

[97] Carrier, 'Origen, Eusebius, and the Accidental Interpolation', 505–6.

written after the 93/4 CE date of the *Antiquities*[98] and that it also utilized the *Antiquities*.[99] But even if that is the case, Acts seems to close its narrative before the death of James anyway[100] and it also does not mention the deaths of Peter and Paul, individuals with whom the text is quite concerned, especially when compared with its concern for James. Acts also omits many things of interest that are found in the *Antiquities*, like Caligula's attempt to set up a statue in the Jerusalem Temple.[101] This makes any argument from silence regarding Acts and the *Antiquities* especially unpersuasive.

The most novel proposition that Carrier proposes is also his most speculative. He believes that *Antiquities* 20.200 originally read 'the brother of Jesus, the son of Damneus, whose name was James'. He conjectures that a Christian scribe must have left a marginal or interlinear note as a readerly aid indicating that Jesus, son of Damneus was he 'who was called Christ'. This was later mistaken by a copyist as the words of Josephus who then duly incorporated them into the main text of the *Antiquities*. The same scribe, or another, then removed the phrase 'the son of Damneus', resulting in the passage we have today.[102] Carrier believes his proposed original reading is possible because a Jesus son of Damneus, is mentioned shortly afterward in *Antiquities* 20.203. This Jesus became High Priest after Ananus II was deposed by the Roman procurator Albinus on account of Ananus' illegal execution of James. Carrier thus credits his conjectural emendation with the added benefit of providing a rationale for why Jesus son of Damneus was chosen as High Priest (apparently in compensation for the murder of his brother James) and that such a situation provides a good explanation for why James was introduced as the 'brother of Jesus, the son of Damneus, whose name was James' in *Antiquities* 20.200.[103]

Carrier's argument has several points of weakness. Firstly, his proposal contravenes the order of the *Antiquities*. The noted clause in *Antiquities* 20.200 begins by not actually mentioning the name of James, but rather by naming Jesus first, as if Jesus had already been introduced. Only after mentioning Jesus does Josephus provide the name of James, saying 'the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James' (τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ, Ἰάκωβος ὄνομα αὐτῷ). This is suggestive that Josephus had introduced Jesus before this point. Yet preceding *Antiquities* 20.200, Josephus had introduced neither Damneus nor Jesus the son of Damneus, and, if the TF is accurate, the last Jesus whom Josephus had mentioned was indeed Jesus of Nazareth in *Antiquities* 18.63–4. Before him, the next previously mentioned Jesus was the High Priest Jesus the son of Sie (*Antiquities* 17.341). But Josephus cannot be referring to that Jesus because his father was Sie, not Damneus. It makes much more sense therefore that the Jesus of *Antiquities* 20.200

[98] *Antiquities* 20.267; see Mason, *Life of Josephus*, xxxi.

[99] The major scholarly commentaries on Acts bear this out. For example, in Keener's magisterial work he writes that 'the majority view' dates that work between 70 and 90; he goes on to note that a first-century date for *Acts* 'should be regarded as secure'; Keener, *Acts*, vol. 1 pp. 400–1. In his *Hermeneia* commentary Conzelmann writes 'Dating the composition of Acts somewhere between 80–100 CE best fits all of the evidence'. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, xxxiii. Barrett thinks that by the middle of the second century *Acts* was known not 'as a recently produced work', but is not more specific; Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 1 p. 48. Fitzmyer says 'I should be reluctant to date it in the second century'; Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I–IX*, 57. Only Pervo is willing to say that Acts may be confidently dated to the second century, and settles on 115 CE; Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, 5, 12. He further suggests that Luke may have used the *Antiquities*.

[100] Keener writes that Paul's arrival in Rome in the final chapter of the book of Acts 'cannot easily be dated later than 60'; Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4 p. 3746. One of the final verses of the book (Acts 28:30) closes by saying that Paul spent two years in Rome, thus bringing the narrative up to 62 CE.

[101] *Antiquities* 18.261–301.

[102] Carrier, 'Origen, Eusebius, and the Accidental Interpolation', 511–13.

[103] Ibid., 503–5.

refers back to the most recent Jesus already mentioned—not to an as of yet unmentioned Jesus or to his unmentioned father, Damneus—and the only possible candidate is Jesus of Nazareth.

Another chronological issue is that Carrier's emendation would mean that the various clans of High Priests were plotting to murder one another at the time when Ananus II had James executed, yet Josephus implies shortly afterward that this kind of descent into internecine conflict did not occur among the High Priests until several years later when Joshua son of Gamaliel became High Priest. On account of his ascension, Josephus writes that a 'sedition' (στάσις) then arose between the High Priests (*Antiquities* 20.213).[104]

Thirdly, the concatenation of Carrier's proposed series of scribal changes is unlikely every link of the way. That a Christian would have identified Jesus the son of Damneus as Jesus the Christ is highly improbable. That the same Christian would have then added a marginal note into the *Antiquities* with the uncontextualized and therefore distant and possibly skeptical phrase 'who was called Christ' is also very unlikely.[105] Carrier believes that such a phrase follows the format of marginal notes which are often brief and incomplete participial clauses,[106] but if for some reason it was thought that a marginal note was in order, why wouldn't the Christian scribe write the even briefer and less skeptical participial phrase 'who is the Christ' (τοῦ ὄντος Χριστοῦ) or use the even shorter readerly label 'Christ' (τοῦ Χριστοῦ)?

Then, Carrier's theory requires another Christian scribe to once more implausibly identify 'Jesus, the son of Damneus' as Jesus of Nazareth and then to integrate the previous scribe's marginal note into the text of *Antiquities* 20.200, resulting in the unlikely and completely non-Christian reading of 'the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, the son of Damneus, whose name was James'. Subsequently, yet another scribe (or perhaps the same one) must have then improbably chosen to omit the phrase 'the son of Damneus'[107] while simultaneously not omitting the un-Christian sounding 'was called' before 'Christ'—and all with the resulting phrase coincidentally mimicking in case and order the six-word phrase Origen had previously used to characterize the wording of Josephus' *Antiquities* τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ, a phrase occurring nowhere else in all of Greek literature except in Josephus and those quoting from Josephus.[108] Then, this interpolation reached Eusebius where it was propagated throughout all remaining manuscripts of the *Antiquities* even though, as I have shown, Eusebius' manuscript of the *Antiquities* does not seem to have been an ancestor of the extant copies of the *Antiquities*.[109] This is all very unlikely.

Not only this, but Carrier's textual emendation is entirely conjectural and without any support from the manuscript tradition or from later quotations and, further, has much evidence against it. By logical consequence its evidentiary foundation is almost nothing. In

[104] For an overview of this time period, see Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People*, vol. 2 pp. 186–90; Stern, 'The Reign of Herod and the Herodian Dynasty', vol. 1 pp. 370–1.

[105] Carrier tries to claim that Christians used this turn of phrase based on Matthew 1:16, but, as I have shown above, such is to greatly misunderstand the evidence; see Carrier, 'Origen, Eusebius, and the Accidental Interpolation', 496–7, 500, 511.

[106] Ibid., 495.

[107] This omission cannot be due to dittography as Carrier suggests because the parallel phrase is several lines away; ibid., 512.

[108] Carrier speculates that Origen himself or a scribe inspired by Origen interpolated the phrase, but this still relies on a great series of coincidences because, according to Carrier, Origen or the scribe would only have added a marginal note saying 'who was called Christ' and then a later scribe or scribes would have had to have come along and deleted information regarding Damneus and then inserted the marginal note in such a way as to precisely follow Origen's six-word phrase.

[109] See Appendix 1 pp. 229–30.

view of these things, the most reasonable conclusion is that the text of *Antiquities* 20.200 is authentic and was actually written by Josephus.

Conclusion

The grounds for affirming the authenticity of *Antiquities* 20.200 are quite firm. It has unanimous manuscript support and is backed by reliable Greek quotations and a sixth-century Latin translation. It also does not sound like anything an ancient Christian would interpolate whether through purpose or accident. The corollary to this is that, if authentic, *Antiquities* 20.200 suggests that Josephus had introduced Jesus 'who was called Christ' earlier in the *Antiquities* because it seems hardly reasonable that Josephus would identify James by way of a Jesus whom he had said nothing about. The TF in *Antiquities* 18.63–4 fulfills this expectation of a previous discussion quite well. In this way, *Antiquities* 20.200 witnesses that the TF, in at least some form, was originally written by Josephus somewhere before *Antiquities* 20.200. It also suggests that the original wording of the *Antiquities* would not have said that Jesus 'was the Christ' but that he was 'called the Christ' or some sort of synonymous phrasing. As argued in Chapter 2, just such synonymous phrasing can be found in ancient Latin and Syriac translations of the TF, with secondary Arabic and Armenian translations concurring.

APPENDIX 3

The Trial of Jesus and Passover

Chapter 6 has emphasized that Jesus was brought to trial on the evening of Passover, when faithful Jews were to gather in the house of their father to partake of the Passover lamb. This particular timing follows the chronology of the synoptic Gospels which each portray the Passover lamb as being slaughtered on the afternoon of Thursday, Nisan 14.[1] According to the synoptics, Jesus partook of the Passover meal several hours later at nightfall. He was then arrested and put on trial by the Sanhedrin that same night in the house of the High Priest Caiaphas and, Luke may imply, the house of Ananus I too.[2] On the following morning, Friday, Nisan 15, Jesus was brought before the Sanhedrin again, and then also before Pontius Pilate and Herod Antipas the Tetrarch. He was crucified that afternoon.[3] This chronology makes it very likely that some of Josephus' acquaintances would have encountered Jesus at his trial since one or two of them would have been in the house of their family patriarch at the time when Jesus was brought there.[4] Others would have been eating Passover with eminent family members who were called to the trial. Some of these acquaintances could hence have accompanied those family members to it.

In reply to this, the observant reader might make the objection that such a chronology is contradicted by the Gospel of John which in five verses (13:1, 13:29, 18:28, 19:14, 19:36) appears to claim that Jesus was actually interrogated the evening before Passover, not on the evening of Passover. Thus, according to John, Jesus was not crucified on the afternoon of Friday, Nisan 15, but on the afternoon of Friday, Nisan 14, exactly when the Passover lambs were to be slaughtered. In this view, the Last Supper could not have been a Passover meal because Jesus had already been crucified when the Passover meal was celebrated. The result of such a chronology lessens the likelihood (if only slightly) that Josephus' acquaintances were partisans in the trial of Jesus since they would not have been celebrating Passover in the houses of their family patriarchs when Jesus was put on trial. The present appendix will discuss various ways that scholars have dealt with this chronological issue and then propose a solution.

[1] The synoptic Gospels clearly portray the Last Supper as the meal in which the Passover lamb was eaten; see Matthew 26:2, 17–20; Mark 14:1, 12–17; Luke 22:1, 7–14. Jesus was arrested just hours afterward, on that very night.

[2] Only John specifically mentions that Jesus was brought to the residences of both Caiaphas and Ananus I, though it is possible they lived in the same compound and that Jesus was brought to two different places within the same large residence. In the synoptic Gospels, Matthew mentions only the residence of Caiaphas while Luke and Mark mention the residence of a High Priest, but do not state his name. Luke however may have considered the High Priest to have been Ananus I since he had mentioned him earlier in Luke 3:2. See Chapter 6 nn. 158 and 162.

[3] See Chapter 6 pp. 182–4 for further discussion on the trial of Jesus.

[4] This is especially true for the High Priest Ananus II, Josephus' commander. It may also apply to the High Priest Jonathan, whom Josephus may also have known, see Chapter 6.

The Synoptic Gospels Are Correct

First, some scholars have simply argued that the synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are correct and that the Gospel of John is incorrect.[5] John, according to this theory, presents a different chronology because he desired to portray Jesus as the typological Passover lamb whose crucifixion corresponded precisely with when the Passover lambs were slaughtered.[6] The upshot of this is that if the synoptic chronology is historically correct, then Jesus' arrest would have occurred on the evening of Passover, just as Chapter 6 has assumed.

The Gospel of John Is Correct

Other scholars have instead argued that the Gospel of John is correct and the synoptic Gospels incorrect.[7] Were this to be the case however, such a revised timing would still place all of Josephus' acquaintances in Jerusalem when Jesus was interrogated. These acquaintances would, after all, most likely have already arrived in Jerusalem for Passover and most of them lived in Jerusalem anyway. And though these family members would not have been celebrating Passover when Jesus was put on trial, they still would have been celebrating Passover with family members who just hours previously had attended Jesus' trial. Therefore, if John's chronology is correct, it nevertheless places Josephus' acquaintances extremely close to the trial of Jesus, just not quite as close as the synoptic chronology. It is hence still fair to conclude in this theory that some of Josephus' acquaintances probably would have observed portions of the trial given their close proximity to it.

Calendar Disagreement

Other scholars have theorized that the synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John are all correct insofar as they each articulate the perspective of different Jewish groups who celebrated Passover on different days.[8] This is plausible because evidence shows that in ancient Judaism there was frequent disagreement on calendrical matters.[9] Thus, various Jewish groups differed over when a calendar day began,[10] what calendar to use,[11] how Passover was to be celebrated,[12] and what time of day it was allowable to sacrifice the Passover lamb.[13]

[5] For example, Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 79–83.

[6] Ibid., 82–3.

[7] Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, §604–13; Reicke, *The New Testament Era*, 176–84.

[8] Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, 76–90; Humphreys, *The Mystery of the Last Supper*, 167; Strack and Billerbeck, *Commentary on the New Testament*, Vol. 2: *Excursus: The Evidence from the Four Gospels Concerning the Day of Jesus' Death* §H pp. 969–75.

[9] For example, Mishnah, *Pesahim* 4.5 speaks of different Passover practices involving the school of Hillel vs. the school of Shammai and Galileans vs. Judaeans. The Tosefta, *Rosh Hashanah* 1.14 states that when Pentecost (and probably by extension Passover) could be held was disputed by the Boethusians, who are usually identified as Sadducees. The Dead Sea Scrolls show that the Essenes also had their own peculiar Passover calendar; see Beckwith, *Calendar and Chronology*, 291.

[10] Stern, *Calendar and Community*, pp. 99, 112 n. 393; and *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, pp. 85–6.

[11] Certain Jews followed a lunar calendar and others a solar calendar; see Charlesworth, 'The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Historical Jesus', 29.

[12] Hints of this are in Mishnah, *Pesahim* 4.5.

[13] Babylonian Talmud, *Pesahim* 108a.3.

Determining the start of the new moon, and from there the start of Passover, was also a highly charged political decision which could cause great disagreement and even outright fraud.[14] There were even rabbis who considered it lawful to slaughter the Passover lamb a day earlier, on Nisan 13, instead of on the biblically mandated Nisan 14.[15] Those Jews who slaughtered the lamb on Nisan 13 would therefore have partaken of the slaughtered lamb twenty-four hours earlier than others since biblical requirements prescribed that one must partake of the slaughtered lamb immediately after sunset.[16] Hence, certain Jews must have at least occasionally celebrated the Passover meal on Nisan 14 instead of on the standard Nisan 15.[17]

For these reasons, both the synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John may accurately reflect different Jewish practices and perspectives regarding when the Passover meal of 30/33 CE was held. If this is so, some of Josephus' acquaintances would likely have been celebrating the Passover meal immediately before Jesus' trial just as the synoptic Gospels describe. But others would have waited to celebrate the Passover meal until immediately after Jesus' execution, just as the Gospel of John apparently describes. The probability of all this is increased by the fact that Josephus' acquaintances represented several different Jewish schools of thought—from the Pharisaic family of Gamaliel,[18] to the Sadducean family of Ananus I,[19] to the royal family of the Herodians, to various members of the Essenes.[20]

The end result of this theory is that if some of Josephus' acquaintances followed the Passover understanding of the Gospel of John, then they can still be placed quite close to the trial of Jesus, just as described in the section above. But if others of Josephus' acquaintances followed the Passover understanding of the synoptics, they would of course still have been celebrating Passover when Jesus was brought to trial, just as Chapter 6 has articulated.

The Gospel of John Is Being Misunderstood

The above theory has much to commend it, but in my judgment the following theory is the most plausible. This theory argues that the Gospel of John is being misinterpreted and, when properly understood, it assumes a chronology that agrees with the synoptic Gospels. The grounds for this are that, by the first century CE, Passover had come to include the seven-day feast of unleavened bread that occurs immediately after Passover. This

[14] Babylonian Talmud, *Rosh Hashanah* 22b.7; Mishnah, *Rosh Hashanah* 2.1–9; Tosefta, *Rosh Hashanah* 1.15.

[15] For example, Tosefta, *Pesahim* 4.8. For slaughtering the Passover on Nisan 14, see Exodus 12:6; Numbers 9:2.

[16] Exodus 12:10.

[17] It is not clear why certain rabbis deemed Nisan 13 valid for slaughtering the Passover, but it may have been because when the 14th occurred on a Friday then the slaughtering of the lambs (which began in the afternoon) may have risked continuing into the Sabbath at sunset; see Strack and Billerbeck, *Commentary on the New Testament*, Vol. 2: *Excursus: The Evidence from the Four Gospels Concerning the Day of Jesus' Death* §G. 3 pp. 967–8. Hence, in order to avoid violating the Sabbath, the slaughter may have been moved a day early. Another reason for the shift might have been due to the simple practicality of avoiding having so many hundreds of thousands of Jews in Jerusalem needing to slaughter a Passover lamb on the same day, at the same time, in the same Temple. Josephus, for instance, reports that one Passover required 156,500 sacrificial animals; see Josephus, *War* 6.424.

[18] *Life* 190–1; Acts 5:34, see pp. 172–6.

[19] *Antiquities* 20.199; Acts 5:17 (this latter citation must refer to the high priestly family of Ananus I since this family held the high priesthood throughout the 30s CE; see p. 182).

[20] On the Herodians, see pp. 159–72; on the Essenes, see pp. 144, 148–9. On their Passover calendar, see n. 9.

transformed Passover from a one-day feast into a seven-day feast, meaning that one could accurately speak of Passover as occurring over multiple days, not just one day.[21]

This way of speaking about Passover is so common that it can be found in almost constant use. Josephus, for example, repeatedly includes the seven-day feast of unleavened bread as actually encompassing 'the Passover' (τὸ πάσχα).[22] Philo implies the same[23] as does Matthew.[24] The Gospels of Mark[25] and Luke[26] are even more explicit in including 'the Passover' (τὸ πάσχα) as part of the seven-day feast of unleavened bread. The Jewish Mishnah also expressly states that the Passover runs for 'seven' days[27] and so does the Tosefta.[28] This way of speaking of Passover as a seven-day celebration goes back to ancient times. Thus Ezekiel speaks of Passover this way[29] and adds that throughout the seven-day Passover feast the priests were to also partake of special temple sacrifices each and every day.[30] Josephus agrees on this latter point[31] and further describes the people as feasting too throughout seven days.[32] Even Deuteronomy 16:2–3 indicates that the 'Passover' (פסח) was eaten for 'seven' days.[33] Deuteronomy is here not suggesting that the actual Passover lamb was eaten for seven days, but rather that the additional sacrifices of the seven-day feast of unleavened bread were considered part of the general Passover sacrifice and that it was these Passover sacrifices which were to be eaten.

The Five Verses in John

Treating Passover as a seven-day feast is so common and so widespread that it forces one to reinterpret John's five statements about when Passover occurred. To begin, John 13:29 and 18:28 seem at first to indicate that the Passover lamb had not been sacrificed before Jesus was crucified, but given the evidence above it is likely that these two verses are instead referring to one of the seven days of Passover sacrifices and not the specific sacrifice of the lamb on Nisan 14 which initiated the weeklong festival.

Next is John 13:1 which states that 'Before the festival of Passover' (Πρὸ δὲ τῆς ἑορτῆς τοῦ πάσχα) Jesus knew his hour was coming and hence washed his disciple's feet at the Last Supper. In context, this verse is ambiguous and does not necessarily mean that the Last Supper happened before Passover, but either that Jesus knew before the Last Supper that his death was coming, or that at the beginning of the Last Supper (but before the lamb was consumed) Jesus shockingly washed his disciples' feet. If this latter view is correct, Jesus must have washed his disciples' feet before the Passover lamb was eaten, for one would hardly wash another's dirty feet in the middle of a meal, but when people have just entered the

[21] The best articulations of this position can be found in Köstenberger, 'Was the Last Supper a Passover Meal?'; Beckwith, *Calendar and Chronology*, 293–6.
[22] *War* 2.10; *Antiquities* 10.70, 14.21, 18.29, 20.106.
[23] Philo, *De specialibus legibus* 2.150.
[24] Matthew 26:17.
[25] Mark 14:1, 12.
[26] Luke 22:1, 7; Acts 12:1–6.
[27] Mishnah, *Pesahim* 9.5.
[28] Tosefta, *Pesahim* 8.7h.
[29] Ezekiel 45:21.
[30] Ezekiel 45:22–3. See also 2 Chronicles 30:13–15. For sacrifices made during the feast of unleavened bread, see Numbers 28:16–25.
[31] *Antiquities* 3.249.
[32] *Antiquities* 11.110.
[33] See also 2 Chronicles 30:22.

room in order to recline. But whatever the case, neither of the above interpretations indicate that the Last Supper occurred before Passover and therefore neither contradict the synoptic Gospels. On the contrary, both interpretations actually imply that Passover was about to commence with the start of the Last Supper, as the synoptic Gospels state.

Some have also considered that John 19:36 portrays Jesus as the Passover lamb whose bones were not broken per the instructions in Exodus 12:46 and Numbers 9:12. Paul makes a similar maneuver in 1 Corinthians 5:7 where he calls Jesus 'our Passover, who was sacrificed'. These verses are said to indicate that Jesus was crucified on Nisan 14, exactly when the Passover lambs were slaughtered.[34] But to interpret these passages in such a way is too literal a reading of what appears to be typological content. For the same reason, one would scarcely insist that Jesus was actually crucified on the Day of Atonement on account of the fact that early Christians believed his crucifixion was a true fulfillment of the Day of Atonement (Hebrews 9:6–12). Hence, when John portrays Jesus as the Passover lamb, he is merely showing that Jesus fulfilled the Passover spiritually just as one might say that Jesus also fulfilled the Day of Atonement spiritually—not that his death precisely coincided with those specific festivals.

Lastly, John 19:14 is routinely understood to indicate that Jesus was crucified before the Passover lambs had been consumed because John says that Jesus' trial occurred on 'the preparation of Passover' (παρασκευὴ τοῦ πάσχα). However, the Greek term 'preparation' (παρασκευή) is simply shorthand for 'the day of preparation for the Sabbath' or 'Friday', which is how John deploys it twice directly afterward[35] and how it is used elsewhere in Josephus[36] and in the synoptic Gospels.[37] I can find no example where the term is used to refer to the day before Passover or the day before another Jewish festival. The phrase should therefore be simply understood as meaning 'the Friday of Passover'.[38]

But this then provides another clue that John must have been thinking of Passover as occurring over a seven-day period, otherwise the phrase 'the Friday of Passover' makes little sense. One would hardly use such a turn of phrase to refer to a one-day festival or even a multi-day festival—unless the festival was precisely seven days in length with each day of the festival corresponding to its own day of the week. Otherwise, the phrase would be as if today someone puzzlingly spoke of the 'Friday of Christmas'. This is a particularly good example because in some traditions Christmas occurs on a single day and in others over twelve days. But in either tradition, the statement would be confusing. If Christmas occurred on only one day, then it would be far clearer to simply say 'Christmas occurred on a Friday'. But if on twelve days, it would still be far clearer to say 'the first Friday of Christmas' or 'the second Friday of Christmas' depending on how the holiday fell on the calendar. Only if Christmas were actually a seven-day holiday would the phrase 'the Friday of Christmas' make good sense.[39]

[34] Exodus 12:6; Josephus, *Antiquities* 3.248.
[35] John 19:31, 42.
[36] *Antiquities* 16.163.
[37] Matthew 27:62; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54.
[38] Strack and Billerbeck argue strongly against this, but they can find no Greek evidence proving their argument and instead point to the different Talmudic phrase 'the eve of Passover' (*'rb psch*), but this does not translate into 'the preparation of the Passover' (παρασκευὴ τοῦ πάσχα) as the Greek demands; see Strack and Billerbeck, *Commentary on the New Testament*, Vol. 2: *Excursus: The Evidence from the Four Gospels Concerning the Day of Jesus' Death* §D.1 pp. 956–8.
[39] Were Christmas always celebrated on a fixed day or days (perhaps the fourth Monday of December) then it could make good sense to say something like 'the Monday of Christmas', but of course Christmas and Passover are not fixed to a day of the week.

Thus, a clear way of translating the phrase 'the Friday of Passover' in John 19:14 would be 'the Friday of Passover week'. Understood in this way, John is here affirming that, already at the early morning trial of Jesus, the seven-day Passover Festival had begun since it was 'the Friday of Passover week'. The result is that if Friday morning was considered 'the Friday of Passover week', then the night before, when Jesus held the Last Supper, would still have been that very same Friday and hence would still have been the Passover. Such must be the case because by Jewish reckoning calendar days typically began at nightfall.[40] This then means that according to John, the Last Supper could not have occurred before Passover and instead must have occurred on at least some day during Passover week. But evidence already discussed above from John 13:1 shows that John implies that Passover seems to have begun at the commencement of the Last Supper. The synoptic Gospels corroborate this by clearly indicating that the Last Supper was indeed the meal when the Passover lamb was eaten, and hence was the meal that commenced Passover week.

Conclusion

For the purposes of this book then, one can safely conclude that Jesus was arrested on the evening of Passover, Nisan 15, and then brought to the houses of the High Priests Ananus I and Caiaphas for interrogation.

[40] Stern, *Calendar and Community*, 99, 112 n. 393.

APPENDIX 4

Ananus II and the Trial of Jesus

There is one more intriguing piece of evidence regarding Josephus' commander, Ananus II, and his participation in the proceedings against Jesus. Eastern manuscripts of the Jewish biography of Jesus, *Toledot Yeshu*, name a certain 'Anani' (ענני) as one of two 'leading men from the lesser Sanhedrin' (חשובים מסנהדרי קטנה)[1] who were commissioned by the Great Sanhedrin to lure Jesus to Jerusalem for trial and execution.[2] This document should be treated with care by the modern historian for it contains many medieval additions, yet it also possesses very ancient traditions regarding Jesus, some dating back before the year 150 CE.[3] Certain of these traditions have already been noted as corroborating Josephus' account of Jesus.[4] It is notable, therefore, that Anani's position as an important member of the lesser Sanhedrin would be a fitting role for Ananus II to fill at that time, being as he was then, respectively, the junior son and brother-in-law of the High Priests Ananus I and Caiaphas.[5] On account of this, could 'Anani' (ענני) be our 'Ananus' II (Ἄνανος)?

In first-century Palestine the spelling of names was not consistent nor were there hard and fast rules for how one's Semitic name was to correspond with one's Greek name. A strong tendency did exist, however, for a person's Greek name to either be transliterated from their Semitic name or for the Greek to somewhat approximate the audible sound of the Semitic.[6] Such is evident in the closest example in ancient literature of the name 'Anani' (ענני) being translated directly into Greek. This occurs in Nehemiah 3:23, where the almost identical name 'Anania' (ענניה) is translated in the Septuagint as Ανανια.[7] This spelling makes for a very close parallel with Ανανος,[8] which is how Josephus presents Ananus II's name.[9] Given the inconsistent spelling conventions of the ancient world, the Hebrew 'Anani' (ענני) is thus

[1] Toledot Yeshu, Group III: Wagenseil 23v §8 (Meerson and Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, vol. 1 p. 292 (English); vol. 2 p. 222 (Hebrew)). There is a textual variant in Group III: Slavic A1 7v §25 where instead of the name 'Anani' (ענני), there is written 'Anita' (אניתא); see Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 1 p. 344 (English); vol. 2 p. 285 (Hebrew). This is clearly a scribal corruption since there are no other Jewish names of that orthography on record; see Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names*.

[2] This lesser Sanhedrin was likely one of two additional Sanhedrins of twenty-three members located in Jerusalem that were subordinate to the Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, which itself was made up of seventy-one members; see Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 1.6, 11.2; Tosefta, *Sanhedrin* 7.1b-I; Maimonides, *Mishna Torah*, Sefer Shoftim: The Sanhedrin 1.3. The lesser Sanhedrin could try capital cases, but not those involving a false prophet; see Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 1.5; Maimonides, *Mishna Torah*, Sefer Shoftim: The Sanhedrin 5.2.

[3] See Chapter 3 p. 129 n. 42.

[4] See Chapter 3 pp. 74, 80–2, 93–5, 131–2.

[5] Certain scholars have posited that members of the Lesser Sanhedrin in Jerusalem were drawn from the membership of the Great Sanhedrin; see Mantel, *Studies in the History of the Sanhedrin*, 95.

[6] Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, 93. See also Chapter 6 n. 179.

[7] The name is used again in the Hebrew Bible at Nehemiah 11:32, but in this verse the Septuagint does not translate it.

[8] I omit both the breathing mark and the accent since these would not have been found in most ancient manuscripts.

[9] See, for example, *Antiquities* 20.199–200.

a good match for Ananus II's Greek name of Ανανος. It is therefore plausible that the *Toledot Yeshu* preserves a tradition regarding the junior Ananus and his role in the judicial proceedings against Jesus.

However, the above evidence must be held with some circumspection both because the story about 'Anani' (ענני) being commissioned by the Sanhedrin may be a much later Jewish tradition and because one cannot be sure that 'Anani' (ענני) and Ananus II (Ἄνανος) were the same person on the grounds of a similar-sounding name. Moreover, aside from the mention of the name 'Anania' (ענניה) in Nehemiah 3:23, there is no other record of a similar name in the ancient world,[10] and 'Anania' is not exactly the same anyway. Therefore it may be best to view 'Anani' (ענני) as a fictitious retrogression from the medieval time period. Along with this, there are documented cases of the Greek name Ἄνανος corresponding with the Hebrew name 'Ḥanan' (חנן) not 'Anani' (ענני).[11]

These are good cautionary objections, and the only thing I will say by way of reply is that spelling practices in the ancient world could be extremely idiosyncratic and individualized, which the *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity* amply demonstrates.[12] So it is at least feasible, albeit debatable, that the 'Anani' (ענני) of the *Toledot Yeshu* pertains to Ananus II (Ἄνανος) and his role in the trial of Jesus.

[10] One of the closest is 'Anan' (ענן); see Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names*, vol. 4 p. 117.
[11] Ibid., 99.
[12] Ibid., 99–100.

APPENDIX 5

The Great Sanhedrin and Its Records of the Trial of Jesus

The evidence adduced in this book proposes that Josephus learned of Jesus from those who attended his trial or from those who were otherwise directly connected to him. In this appendix I highlight another avenue of information through which Josephus could have been apprised of Jesus: the court documents produced by the Sanhedrin. Before turning to that subject, I should first explain what is known of the Sanhedrin, especially regarding the makeup of its membership in the first century and its judicial practices. This will help inform our understanding of Jesus' trial.

Membership

Jewish tradition dates the formation of the Sanhedrin to the time of Moses,[1] but the earliest historical reference to the existence of such a governing body does not come until 57 BCE when Josephus says that the Romans set up five different 'Sanhedrins' (συνέδρια).[2] It makes sense that such judicial bodies were not constituted until sometime after the Greek conquest in the fourth century BCE since the term συνέδριον is Greek, not Hebrew. It is also obvious that there were more than one Sanhedrin operating at a given time, as Josephus witnesses in the above citation. The Mishnah and the Tosefta corroborate this by affirming the existence of multiple Sanhedrins, with one Sanhedrin in each Jewish city and three Sanhedrins in Jerusalem.[3]

Yet, these same sources also specify that one of these three Jerusalem Sanhedrins was the 'Great Sanhedrin' (סנהדרי גדולה), made up of seventy-one members.[4] When this kind of supreme court was first constituted is not known, but it definitely was active in the first century CE. Its authority was enormous and extended to religious and political matters including interpreting Jewish law,[5] overseeing military

[1] Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 1.6. However, this reference may not describe when the Sanhedrin originated, but instead only justify why the Sanhedrin has seventy-one members.

[2] *Antiquities* 14.91. *War* 1.170 says the same except uses a different term, σύνοδος. Mantel, 'Sanhedrin', 21.

[3] On the lesser Sanhedrins in Jerusalem, see Appendix 4 n. 2.

[4] Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 1.6, 11.2; Tosefta, *Sanhedrin* 7.1b. In the latter citation the number of Sanhedrin members is said to be seventy, not seventy-one. This may be due to whether the leader of the Sanhedrin was counted as a member or not; see Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 1.6.

[5] The Mishnah says that from the Sanhedrin did 'the law go forth to Israel'; see Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 11.2 (trans. Danby p. 399; see also Tosefta, *Sanhedrin* 7.1q). Josephus also mentions that the entire apparatus of state—including the 'care of the law' and the judgment of criminal cases—was entrusted to the priests and the High Priest, see *Apion* 2.185, 187–8. This passage must refer to the Great Sanhedrin given that Josephus refers to the Sanhedrin elsewhere as an enormously powerful political body.

engagements,[6] establishing other lesser Sanhedrins in various cities,[7] and holding trials for the highest of crimes such as false prophecy.[8] In the present book I refer to this 'Great Sanhedrin' whenever I use the term 'Sanhedrin' unless the context indicates otherwise. In this appendix, however, I will be a bit more specific in my language.

The membership of the Great Sanhedrin in first-century Jerusalem is not certainly known, but Josephus explains that after the death of Archelaus (probably around 6 CE)[9] 'the government became an aristocracy and the High Priests were entrusted with the leadership of the people'.[10] So it is probable that when Jesus was ministering most of the Great Sanhedrin members were either aristocratic, or priests, or both. That high-ranking priests were members of the Sanhedrin is corroborated by the Babylonian Talmud which describes priests from the Great Sanhedrin assisting with rituals involving the Day of Atonement.[11] The Gospels and Acts also associate chief priests with the Sanhedrin.[12] Jewish sources and the New Testament further indicate that the Great Sanhedrin included both Pharisees and Sadducees[13] with many of their students often in

[6] Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 2.4. While serving as a general in the Jewish war, Josephus stayed in communication with the Sanhedrin (*Life* 62) and this seems to be the same authoritative body that had appointed him to the rank of general (*War* 2.568).

[7] Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 1.5. Josephus received a military commission by the Sanhedrin (see n. 6 above) and used that authority to establish what appear to be Sanhedrins of seventy members in various cities; *War* 2.570.

[8] On false prophecy, see Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 1.5 and Chapter 6 pp. 189–90. For another unspecified serious crime prosecuted by what appears to have been the Great Sanhedrin, see *Antiquities* 20.200. Scholars are quite divided over what the precise roles of the Great Sanhedrin were, but as the reader can see in the above notes, there is basic agreement in the rabbinic and Hellenistic sources regarding its general purview. For a discussion on various scholarly reconstructions of the Great Sanhedrin, see Mantel, *Studies in the History of the Sanhedrin*, 54–101. Mantel claims that much of what I stipulate as the prerogative of the Great Sanhedrin actually belonged to a separate, political Sanhedrin of twenty-three members. But this does not consider that this supposedly political Sanhedrin seems to be exactly what is described in the Mishnah (n. 5) as having seventy-one members and as having authority over Jewish religious law. Josephus also corroborates this (nn. 5, 11). While an argument can be made that in the first century the Great Sanhedrin played a largely political role; if so the overlap between civil and religious matters could be quite extensive in the ancient world, thus making a distinction between 'political' and 'religious' activity potentially anachronistic. For further plausible, though often speculative, reconstructions of the Great Sanhedrin, see Reicke, *The New Testament Era*, 142–52.

[9] Josephus records that Archelaus was exiled around 5 or 6 CE and implies that he died shortly thereafter; see *Antiquities* 17.342–4; *War* 2.111–13.

[10] *Antiquities* 20.251.

[11] Mishnah, *Yoma* 1.3, 5. Josephus also describes the Great Sanhedrin as having oversight over priestly matters; *Antiquities* 20.216–18. According to the Tosefta, the Great Sanhedrin also validated the genealogy of priests; see Tosefta, *Sanhedrin* 7.1v.

[12] Matthew 26:59, 27:1; Mark 14:53–5, 15:1; Luke 22:66; John 11:47; Acts 4:13–23, 22:30.

[13] In the 60s CE Rabbi Simon was the prince of the Great Sanhedrin, and Josephus tells us that he was a Pharisee. His father Gamaliel also led the Sanhedrin and was also a Pharisee; on these two men see Chapter 6 pp. 172–6. The High Priest Ananus II was a Sadducee and convened the Sanhedrin for a capital case involving James, the brother of Jesus (*Antiquities* 20.198–200). Jewish tradition reports that in a capital case involving the daughter of a priest, the particular Sanhedrin that convicted her was made up of Sadducees; see Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 52b.4. This Sanhedrin was likely the Great Sanhedrin because, though it is nowhere explicitly stated, there is implication in the Mishnah that capital cases involved the Great Sanhedrin, though their quorum was only required to be twenty-three not seventy-one except in major cases as with a false prophet. See, for example, a lengthy description of what seems to be the Great Sanhedrin judging capital cases in Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 4.3–5, 6.1, 6.6, 7.1. (For the quorum of the Great Sanhedrin and its treatment of false prophets, see pp. 189–90.) Lastly, the New Testament repeatedly witnesses to both Pharisees and Sadducees as members of or at least associated with what appears to be the Great Sanhedrin; see John 11:47–49; Acts 5:17–34, 23:7.

attendance.[14] The Gospels also imply that non-priestly members were aristocratic, or at least wealthy.[15]

But, as far as the High Priest himself is concerned, the Mishnah explains that he had the privilege of acting as a 'judge' in Great Sanhedrin trials, apparently referring to some kind of prerogative to lead criminal proceedings.[16] Similarly, the canonical Gospels, Acts, and Josephus portray the High Priest as having immense sway over the Great Sanhedrin with even the ability to convene the authoritative body.[17] It is unclear if the High Priest was counted a member of the Great Sanhedrin or had some other kind of de facto, supervisory role. But whatever the case, the official leader of the Great Sanhedrin was not the High Priest, and instead went by the title *Nasi*, or prince. Evidence suggests he was often a Pharisee in the first century.[18]

Gathering all of this data together, a fair historical reconstruction would assume that in the first century the Great Sanhedrin consisted of aristocrats drawn from Pharisees, Sadducees, and priests with the High Priest possessing a powerful influence over the body—and this is much in line with what the canonical Gospels relate.

Judicial Practices

How did the Great Sanhedrin conduct trials? Our best evidence comes from the provisions laid out in the Sanhedrin tractates of the Mishnah (third–fourth century CE) and the Tosefta (third–fourth century CE). These record that, when interrogating an alleged false prophet,[19] the seventy-one members of the Great Sanhedrin were all to be in attendance[20] and that two or three scribes were to record various statements.[21] Witnesses in the case were carefully prepared[22] and then examined to see if their testimony was consistent.[23] The High Priest, as mentioned above, was allowed to serve as a kind of judge of the proceedings.[24] Elders also seem to have been present whenever the Great Sanhedrin sat for court.[25] Afterward, if a guilty verdict was reached, it was recommended that an announcement be sent throughout the land publicly naming the guilty party, stipulating the incriminating evidence, and

[14] Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 4.4. Acts records that the apostle Paul was a student of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), the leader of the Sanhedrin, and that Paul attended the Sanhedrin execution of Stephen; see Acts 7:58, 8:1.

[15] The Gospels portray Joseph of Arimathea as being both rich and a member of the Sanhedrin; see Matthew 27:57; Mark 15:43. Josephus implies that priestly members were aristocratic because, as quoted above, he says that the government was led by an aristocracy; *Antiquities* 20.251.

[16] Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 2.1. The fact that the High Priest served as a judge cannot mean that the High Priest had the sole prerogative of determining the outcome of court cases since each member of the Great Sanhedrin could vote on the verdict; see Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 5.5. Therefore 'judge' must refer to some other position or act of authority.

[17] Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.200. The Gospels also give the High Priest a leading role in the Sanhedrin; see Matthew 26:59–67; Mark 14:55–65; John 11:47–53; Acts 4:5–15, 5:17–28, 6:12–7:1, 22:30–23:2.

[18] This is due to the fact that the pharisaic family of Hillel often served as *Nasi*; see p. 172.

[19] On the Sanhedrin accusing Jesus of being a false prophet, see Chapter 6 n. 214.

[20] Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 1.5–6. It appears to have been possible for the Great Sanhedrin to convene a session without all members in attendance except at trials of false prophets and other serious crimes; see Tosefta, *Sanhedrin* 7.1i–k.

[21] Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 4.3. All of the injunctions described below applied to trials of false prophets, though some of the injunctions applied to lesser crimes as well.

[22] Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 4.5.

[23] Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 5.1–4.

[24] Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 2.1

[25] Tosefta, *Sanhedrin* 8.1d.

describing the capital sentence.[26] The execution was to take place outside of the camp, that is outside of the city.[27] But in order to make this event as public as possible, there was a preference for it to be carried out during those festivals in which Jews were required to journey to Jerusalem.[28]

In reviewing these particulars, I must say that they match the trial of Jesus in practically every respect. The Gospels describe 'the whole Sanhedrin' as having been in attendance at Jesus' trial[29] along with 'scribes' and 'elders'.[30] The High Priest interrogated Jesus directly, apparently supervising the proceedings.[31] Witnesses were also brought forth against Jesus,[32] and they seem to have been examined since 'their testimony did not agree'.[33] The Gospels further place the execution of Jesus as occurring on Passover when Jews were indeed required to be present in Jerusalem.[34] Evidence also indicates that Jesus was executed immediately outside of Jerusalem.[35]

Really, the only aspect of the trial of Jesus that may contradict Sanhedrin policy is chronological.[36] The Gospels say that the trial of Jesus occurred on the day of Passover whereas the Mishnah and the Tosefta maintain that no trials were to occur on a festival day or on the eve of a Festival day.[37] Capital trials also could not commence and conclude on the same calendar day and were supposed to occur during daylight hours, not at night as with the trial of Jesus.[38] A reasonable solution to this is that the Great Sanhedrin may have considered their earlier meeting several days before Jesus was arrested as constituting the beginning of the trial of Jesus.[39] This would mean that the verdict of Jesus was not given on the same day the trial began. If the nighttime portion of the trial was considered to be a kind of unofficial hearing, then the trial would not have occurred at night either.

There still remains the issue of holding the trial on a Festival day, but the Tosefta clarifies that, while a trial was not allowed on a Festival day, if such a trial occurred, then it was still valid.[40] Another passage gives allowance to bend the rules of capital trials when

[26] Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 11.4; Tosefta, *Sanhedrin* 11.7f; Jerusalem Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 11.4.1 (11.4h–i ed. Neusner).

[27] Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 6.1.

[28] See especially Tosefta, *Sanhedrin* 11.7c–e. But also Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 11.4; Jerusalem Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 11.4d–f. In these passages Rabbi Judah disagrees and believes the perpetrator should be put to death at once. Even so, the trial of Jesus had the unfortunate distinction of fulfilling both the preference of being executed at a public feast and of being executed at once.

[29] Matthew 26:59; Mark 14:55, 15:1. See also Chapter 6 pp. 183, 189–90.

[30] Matthew 26:57; Mark 14:53, 15:1; Luke 22:66.

[31] Matthew 26:59–67; Mark 14:55–65; John 18:19. See also Luke 22:54.

[32] Matthew 26:59–62; Mark 14:55–60. See also Luke 22:71.

[33] Mark 14:59. See also Matthew 26:59–60; Mark 14:56.

[34] See Chapter 6 p. 192 and Appendix 3.

[35] Hebrews 13:12; John 19:20.

[36] For an in-depth discussion on how the trial of Jesus comported with rabbinic law, see Strack and Billerbeck, *Commentary on the New Testament*, Vol. 2: *Excursus: The Evidence from the Four Gospels Concerning the Day of Jesus' Death when Considered in Relation to the Halakah*. For a more skeptical view, see Theobald, *Der Prozess Jesu*, 662.

[37] Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 4.1; Tosefta, *Yom Tob* 4.4j, m. These latter citations indicate that trials could not be held on the Sabbath or on the eve of a Sabbath and that festivals were considered Sabbaths. Therefore, trials could not be held on festivals or on the day immediately before festivals. See Appendix 3 for a discussion about whether the trial of Jesus occurred on the eve of Passover or on the Passover.

[38] Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 4.1. Another objection is that the trial of Jesus did not take place in the Chamber of Hewn Stone, where the Great Sanhedrin was to meet; see Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 11.2, perhaps also *War* 5.144. However, the Gospels do not specify the location of the morning trial of Jesus, so it is possible that the Sanhedrin did meet there at that time.

[39] Matthew 26:3–5; Mark 14:1–2; Luke 22:1–2.

[40] Tosefta, *Yom Tob* 4.4j–p.

extraordinary circumstances demand it.[41] In line with this, the Gospels portray the Jewish leadership as almost panicking when they realized how great the crowds were who followed Jesus throughout the week before his crucifixion.[42] It also could not have helped things that during this last week the Gospels have Jesus attacking the authority of Jewish leadership,[43] clearing the temple,[44] and probably uttering his famous phrase 'Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up'[45]—the very phrase that Matthew and Mark claim was used against Jesus in his trial.[46] All of this plausibly combines to have created a crisis situation for the Jewish leadership, allowing them to skirt those few chronological rules that could be dispensed with in emergencies, as when precisely a capital trial should be conducted.[47]

The Records of Jesus' Trial

But what is important for our purposes is that, aside from chronological technicalities, the Great Sanhedrin appears to have been following their own legal requirements when trying Jesus.[48] And given this, the conclusion should reasonably be made that the Great Sanhedrin would have in all likelihood recorded the proceedings against Jesus and then published the verdict abroad, just as their same legal provisions actually recommended them to do. Corroborating this are the Gospel accounts which depict 'scribes' at the trial.[49]

[41] Jerusalem Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 6.6.5 (ed. Neusner 6.6.2.1hh–ii).

[42] Matthew 21:15, 46; Mark 11:18, 12:12; Luke 19:39, 19:47–8, 20:19; John 12:19.

[43] Matthew 21:45; Mark 12:12; Luke 20:19.

[44] Matthew 21:12–16; Mark 11:15–18; Luke 19:45–8.

[45] John 2:19.

[46] Matthew 26:61, 27:40; Mark 14:58, 15:29. Matthew and Mark give versions of this phrase as being used against Jesus during his trial, and the Gospel of John actually has Jesus say the phrase when he clears the temple, though in John this occurs at the beginning of his ministry not at the end. It is possible that John moved the timing of this phrase for theological reasons or that Jesus spoke the phrase multiple times, as any traveling preacher might do and as Jesus tended to do with other of his teachings.

[47] Another possibility is that the Great Sanhedrin may have felt that the trial of Jesus did not meet the bar of being a capital trial since the Jewish leadership was not actually going to execute Jesus themselves on account of the fact that the Romans had taken away their authority to carry out capital punishment; see pp. 239–40. This would mean that the trial of Jesus could begin and conclude on the same day and that it could take place on the eve of a festival day, which, if certain interpretations of John's chronology are correct, was when the trial Jesus was held; see Appendix 3. In this view, the only chronological contradiction remaining is that the trial was to take place during the day, not at night. But it is possible that the Great Sanhedrin did not consider its nighttime assembly to be official and hence waited to convene the official session until the morning portion of the trial of Jesus. On this portion of the trial see Chapter 6 pp. 183, 192–4.

[48] Some may question if the Sanhedrin trial of Jesus had any 'official' component since Jewish leadership at the time seems to have been beholden to Roman authorities (see Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 792–3; on the Romans depriving Jewish leadership of the right of capital punishment, see pp. 239–40). Others may question whether we can trust later rabbinic documents, like the Mishnah and the Tosefta, to tell us how the first-century Great Sanhedrin would have conducted Jesus' trial since rabbinic documents are often in conflict with Hellenistic sources; see Mantel, *Studies in the History of the Sanhedrin*, 54. These both are perceptive questions, but my reply is to reiterate that what really matters is that the Gospels describe the trial of Jesus in ways that align remarkably well with what the Mishnah and the Tosefta describe as ought to happen to a false prophet when brought before the Great Sanhedrin. This means that whether the trial of Jesus was 'official' or not is beside the point since the Great Sanhedrin seems to have been following their official policies nonetheless. It also means that though the Mishnah and the Tosefta may contain later anachronistic material that has no application to the first-century Great Sanhedrin, in the case of a false prophet these documents seem to preserve authentic first-century material, otherwise why would they so closely parallel what the canonical Gospels relate?

[49] Matthew 26:57; Mark 14:53, 15:1; Luke 22:66.

The Babylonian Talmud also mentions the publicity surrounding Jesus' trial when it says that a crier went forth publicly announcing the accusation against Jesus of Nazareth and soliciting evidence.[50]

The logical inference from the above is that Sanhedrin records of Jesus' trial probably existed. Therefore, as far as concerns Josephus' acquaintances (who were discussed in Chapter 6), it is not too much to say that some of them may well have been privy to these documents regarding Jesus. This is particularly likely for Josephus' fellow Pharisee, Simon son of Gamaliel, who was prince of the Sanhedrin in the 60s CE. At this time Simon could have consulted Sanhedrin documents pertaining to the trial of Jesus, or he may have seen them in the decades previous when he would have been a junior member of the Sanhedrin, or even when his father Gamaliel was prince of the Sanhedrin in the early 30s CE.[51] This is especially likely since both Simon and his father Gamaliel are known for publishing official edicts to Jews throughout the land.[52] So in all likelihood Simon had access to Sanhedrin documents. These would have given Simon an extraordinary knowledge of Jesus' trial.[53] Moreover, Simon would have had great motive to consult these documents in 62 CE when James, the brother of Jesus, was executed by the Sanhedrin right about when Simon was leading the Sanhedrin.[54]

But Simon aside, Josephus also knew as many as five High Priests,[55] each of whom were probably also privy to the Sanhedrin archive, especially since the Sanhedrin gave them permission to preside as judge in trials. Ananus II would be the most likely of these High Priests to access such documents since he was the one who convened the Sanhedrin that executed James the brother of Jesus. And of course, even if none of Josephus' contacts actually read Jesus' court documents directly, they could have learned of their contents through any number of secretaries or intermediaries who undoubtedly were employed by their own religious apparatuses.

Yet this is not all. It is also possible that Josephus' contacts could have had access to Sanhedrin documents concerning Jesus' early followers. This possibility comes by reason of the fact that the book of Acts describes the Great Sanhedrin as holding court over Peter, John, Stephen, Paul, James, and the eleven apostles.[56] If this is so, then at each of these trials it is plausible that documents were produced since Sanhedrin requirements stipulated doing so. As such, Josephus' acquaintances could have read these and passed their information on to Josephus, or Josephus could have learned of their contents through the social circles he and his acquaintances shared.

The possibility should even be considered that Josephus himself read such Sanhedrin documents given that he was, after all, an eminent and well-connected Pharisee who was interested in historical matters. He even requested that Emperor Titus allow him to gather

[50] Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 43a.20.

[51] On Gamaliel probably being leader of the Sanhedrin, see Chapter 6 p. 172.

[52] See Chapter 6 pp. 172, 175.

[53] This is in addition to any knowledge Simon may have gained from his own experience or from his own father; see Chapter 6 p. 193.

[54] *Antiquities* 20.200–1. For discussion of Simon, see Chapter 6 pp. 174–6.

[55] On these, see Chapter 6.

[56] Acts 4:15 (Peter and John), 5:21, 26 (the 11 Apostles), 6:12–15 (Stephen), 22:30, 23:1–6 (Paul); *Antiquities* 20.200 (James).

sacred books from Jerusalem before its destruction.[57] So his interest in consulting documents is evident.

All that to say, it is credible that Sanhedrin documents recording the trial of Jesus existed and that Josephus could have learned of their contents. This is therefore yet another reason why what Josephus says in the *Testimonium Flavianum* should be carefully considered.

[57] *Life* 418. See also *War* 7.150, where a valuable Jewish scroll was preserved by the Romans, which may have been done at the urging of Josephus. For discussion, see Hollander, *Josephus*, 172–4.

APPENDIX 6

Josephus' Silence Regarding Jesus in the *War*

The latter chapters of this book have argued that in the 50s and 60s CE Josephus had ample opportunities to learn of Jesus from those who knew him directly, and from others who were well informed about him. In response, an observant reader might wonder whether Josephus actually knew of Jesus before he completed his *War* in 75 CE,[1] since in this treatise he makes no mention of 'the one called Christ' when he speaks of disturbances under the governorship of Pontius Pilate in *War* 2.169–77. This is puzzling because later on in 93/4 CE, when Josephus was finishing his *Antiquities*, he reworks the above passage from the *War* and chooses to insert some extra stories.[2] This time though, he includes an account of Jesus (the *Testimonium Flavianum*) found in *Antiquities* 18.63–4. One could explain Josephus' earlier omission of Jesus by theorizing that the Jewish historian must have first come across information about Jesus only between 75 and 94 CE, causing him to discuss Jesus in the *Antiquities*, but not in his earlier work, the *War*.[3]

This explanation, however, does not consider that Josephus must have known of Jesus far earlier, no later in fact than 62 CE when the illegal execution of James, the brother of Jesus, was carried out by Josephus' future commander, Ananus II.[4] This caused such outrage that Ananus II was removed from the high priesthood by Josephus' future friend, Agrippa II.[5] There is every reason to think that Josephus would have known of this event when it occurred, for how could an eminent priest like Josephus not know the circumstances behind the public removal of the High Priest, especially when that High Priest would soon become his own commander in the Jewish war?[6]

On this point alone Josephus must have been apprised of Jesus no later than 62 CE and probably much earlier—especially given that Christians were evidently such a burgeoning threat that the High Priest had one of their leaders illegally executed, causing great scandal. Josephus thus would likely have known of Christians at least several years before 62 CE since Christians were of such influence that they attracted the attentions of the High Priest. Moreover, as Chapter 5 shows, further grounds for concluding that Josephus would have had early knowledge of Jesus is his close familiarity with the chief priests, Essenes, and Pharisees throughout the 50s CE. Many of these men would have had good opportunity to know of Jesus and even to have participated in his trial.[7] By extension then, Josephus could not have omitted Jesus from the *War* due to lack of knowledge. There must have been other reasons.[8]

[1] On this date, see Chapter 6 n. 70.
[2] *Antiquities* 18.55–87. See p. 131 n. 51; for the date of *Antiquities*, see Chapter 7 n. 79.
[3] Eisler, *The Messiah Jesus*, 63–74.
[4] *Antiquities* 20.200–1.
[5] For discussion, see Chapter 6 pp. 163, 186.
[6] For Josephus' great status at this time, see Chapter 5 p. 145.
[7] See Chapter 5 pp. 143–7.
[8] For various potential reasons, see Feldman, 'Flavius Josephus Revisited', 825–6.

These reasons become clear when assessing Josephus' motives for writing his works. First is the simple observation that Josephus' earliest work, the *War*, primarily concerns the Jewish war with Rome[9] and hence Jesus may not have seemed a relevant figure to mention, since he hardly had anything to do with the war. The *Antiquities* by contrast, covers Jewish history more broadly,[10] making Jesus much more relevant to discuss.

Secondly, as scholars have long known, Josephus endeavors in the *War* to insulate certain Jewish leaders from criticism,[11] criticism that Josephus freely makes in his later works, his *Antiquities* and his *Life*, both of which were written two decades after the *War*.[12] He, for example, greatly praises Ananus II in the *War*,[13] yet criticizes him in the *Antiquities*.[14] Or, in an example that is even more relevant, Josephus omits mentioning in the *War* that Ananus II and the leader of the Sanhedrin, Simon son of Gamaliel, coordinated to betray him, but he does mention them doing so in his *Life* where he claims he was keenly aware of the betrayal while it was happening.[15] Josephus probably made the choice to omit the betrayal in the *War* because in 75 CE there were many around who would have objected to criticisms of illustrious Jewish leaders like Ananus II and Simon son of Gamaliel. But not many of them would have remained in 93/4 CE, when Josephus completed his *Antiquities* and his *Life*.

And of course, as this book has shown, it was the fathers of Ananus II and Simon who also had Jesus put on trial, a trial which Ananus II and Simon very likely attended. Josephus probably did not want to call attention to such a messy business in his *War* for fear of alienating erstwhile allies of the two Jewish leaders. But years later, when writing the *Antiquities*, he would have been free to mention such a happening.

Thus, when writing the *War*, Josephus' silence regarding Jesus is no evidence that he was unaware of Jesus, just as his silence regarding his betrayal is no evidence that he was unaware of his betrayal. This is especially true since Josephus' initial silence on both matters concerns the questionable activities of the same famous Jewish leaders: Ananus II and Simon son of Gamaliel.

[9] *War* preface 1–3.

[10] *Antiquities* preface 1–9.

[11] For examples, see Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, 236–42; Mason, *Life of Josephus*, 99 nn. 858–9.

[12] The *Life* was written around the time of the *Antiquities*; see Mason, *Life of Josephus*, xv– xviii; on the date of the *Antiquities* see Chapter 7 n. 79.

[13] *War* 4.318–25.

[14] *Antiquities* 20.199–201.

[15] *Life* 190–204. Josephus does not mention this betrayal in the parallel passage in *War* 2.626–9. For further criticism, see *Life* 216, 309.

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Introduction to the Manuscript Images

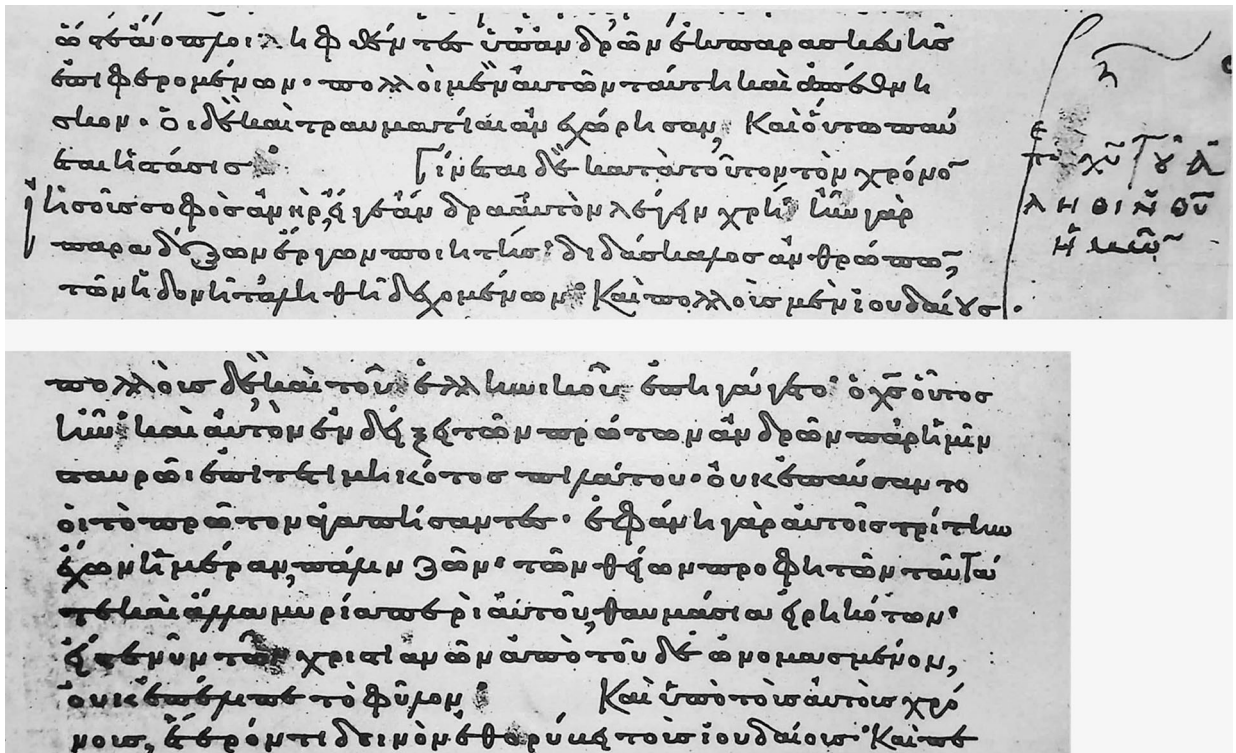
The manuscript images in this volume were selected for their great importance in understanding the textual history of the *Testimonium Flavianum*. They include the following:

- The three earliest manuscripts of book 18 of the *Antiquities*, wherein the TF is found (#1–3). Note that #1 is the earliest manuscript of the *Antiquities* containing book 18.
- The two earliest Greek manuscripts that excerpt the TF (#4–5).
- The earliest Greek manuscript of Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* (#6). Note that this is the only known Greek witness of the TF that contains the variant 'certain' (τις).
- The earliest Latin manuscript of Jerome, *Illustrious Men* (#7). Note that this contains the important TF variant 'was believed to be the Christ' (*credebatur esse Christus*).
- The earliest Syriac manuscripts of the TF (#8–11). Note that manuscripts #8 and 9 contain, respectively, the earliest and second earliest dated colophons in literary manuscripts of any language.
- A Syriac version of the TF (#12). Note that this contains the important TF variant 'was thought to be the Christ' (ܗܘ ܕܐܬܚܫܒ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܗܘܐ).
- An Armenian version of the TF (#13).
- An Arabic version of the TF (#14). Note that this contains the important TF variant 'perhaps he was the Christ' (فلعله هو المسيح).

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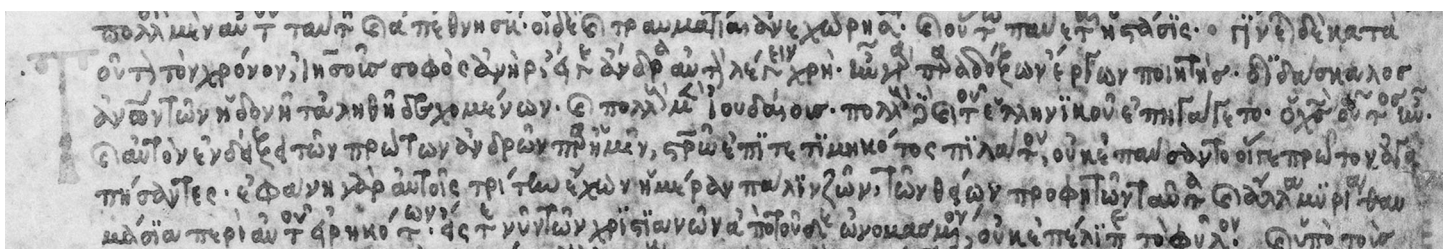
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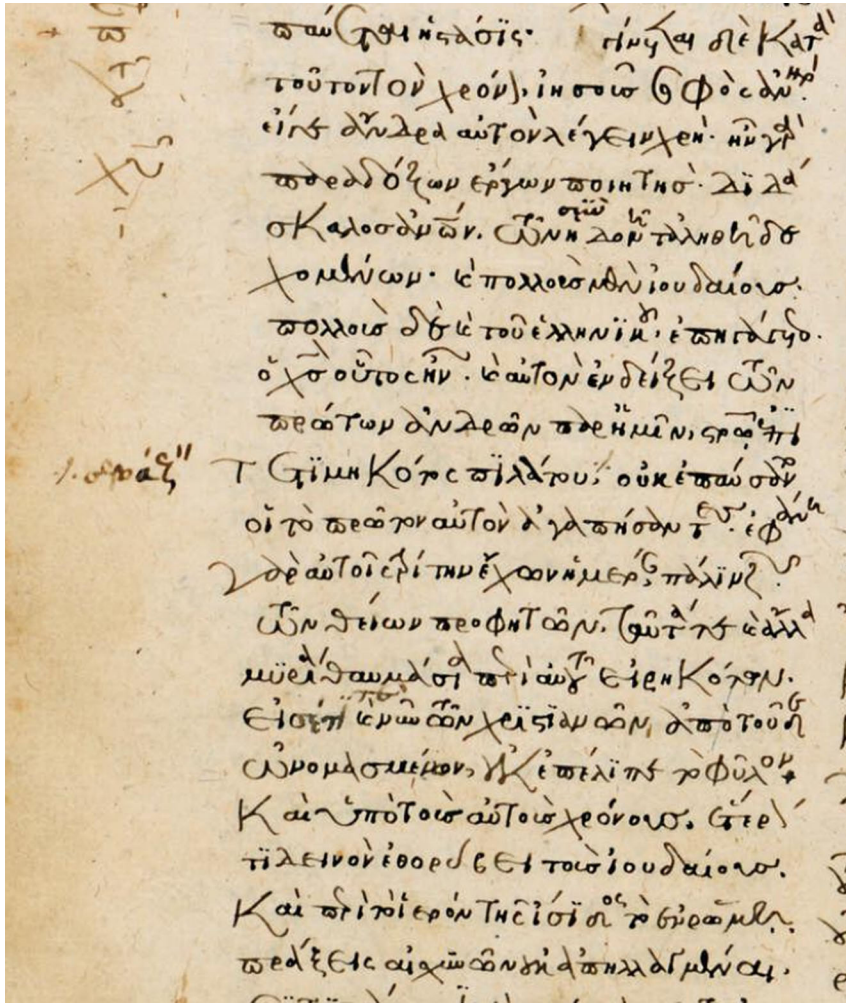
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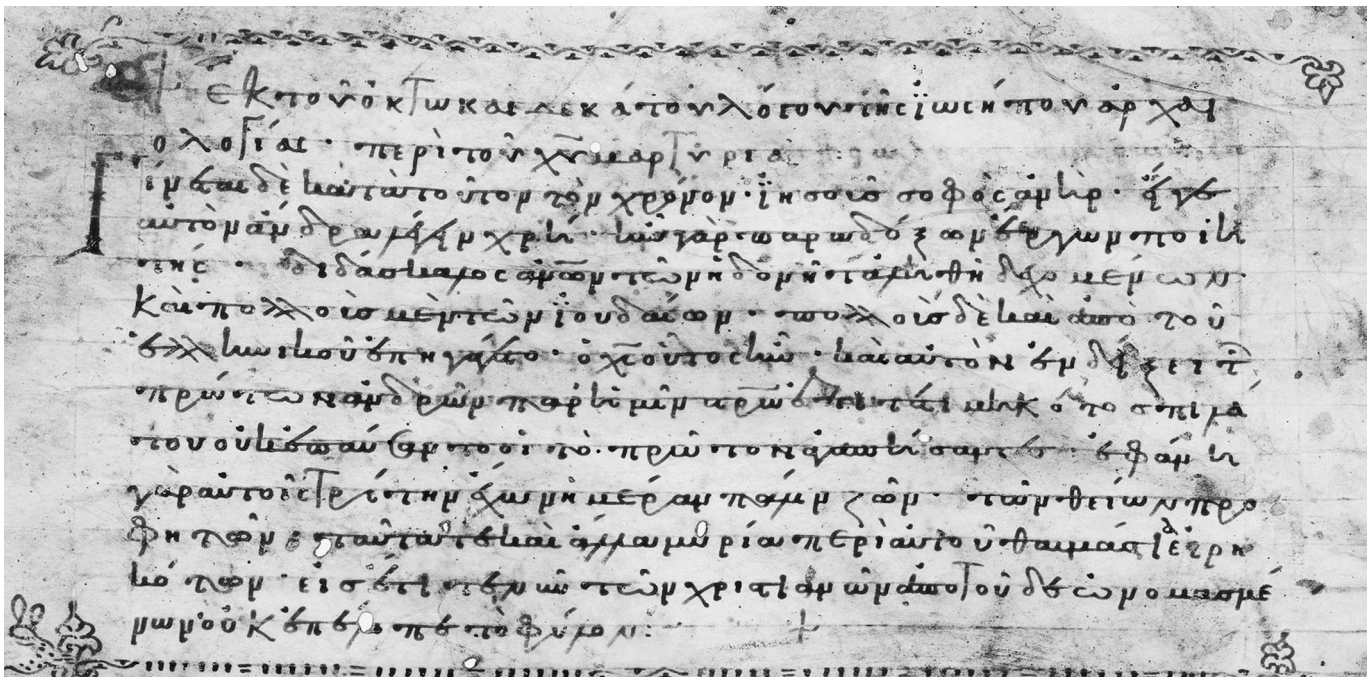
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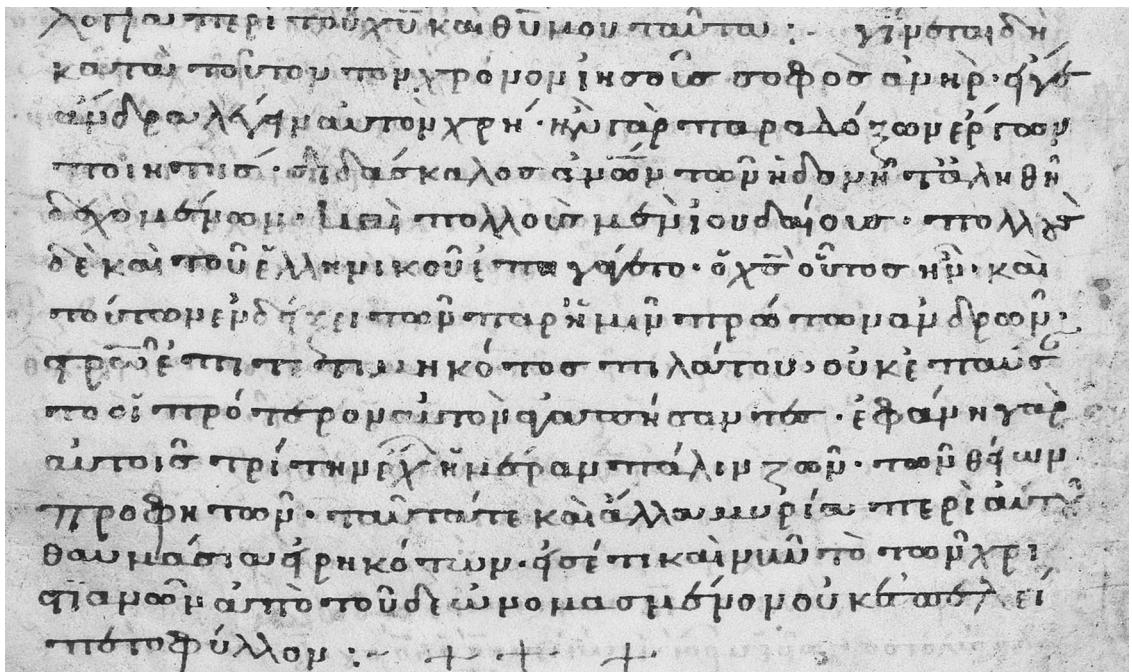
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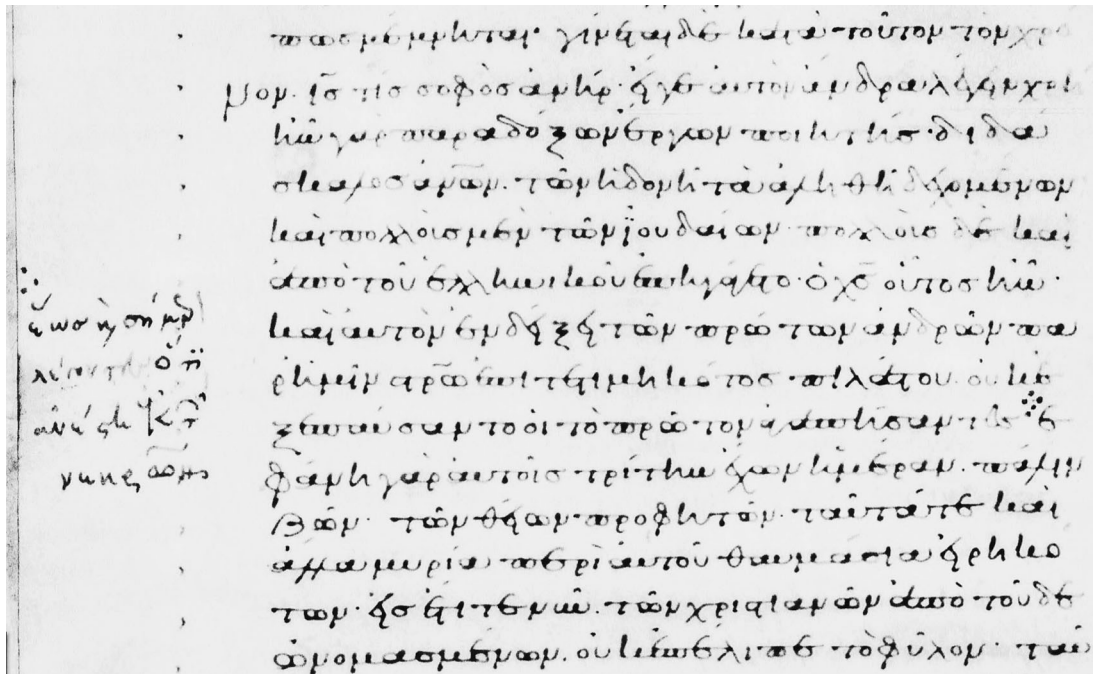
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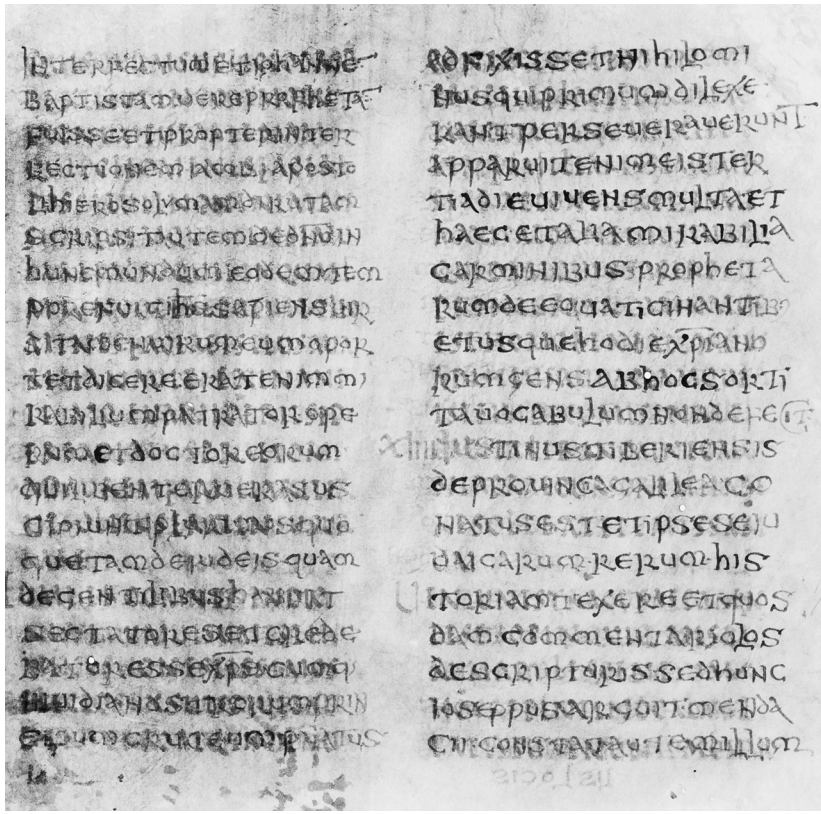
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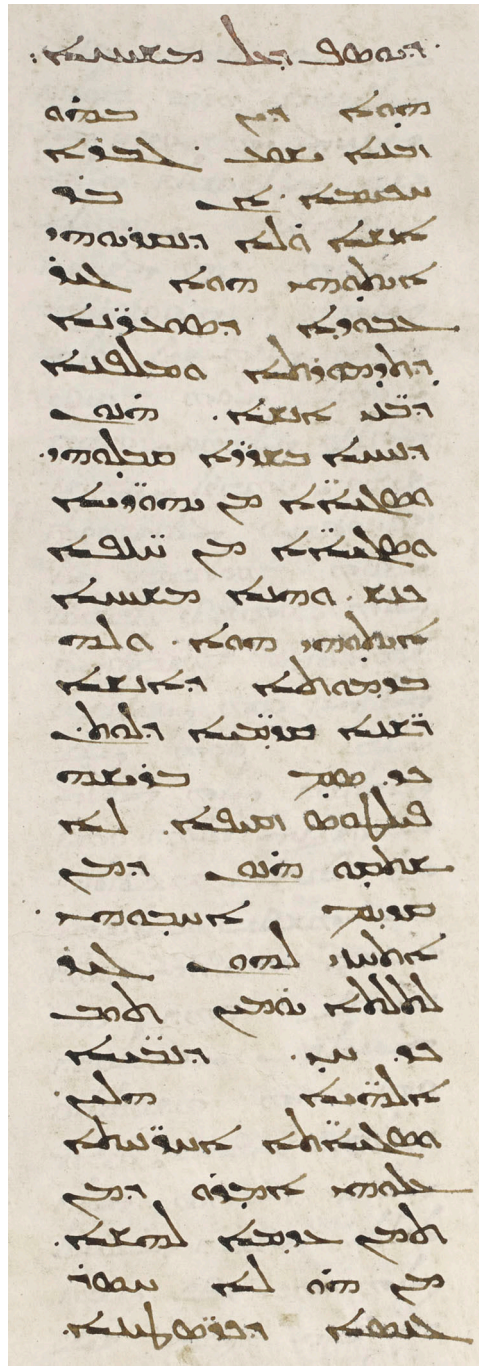
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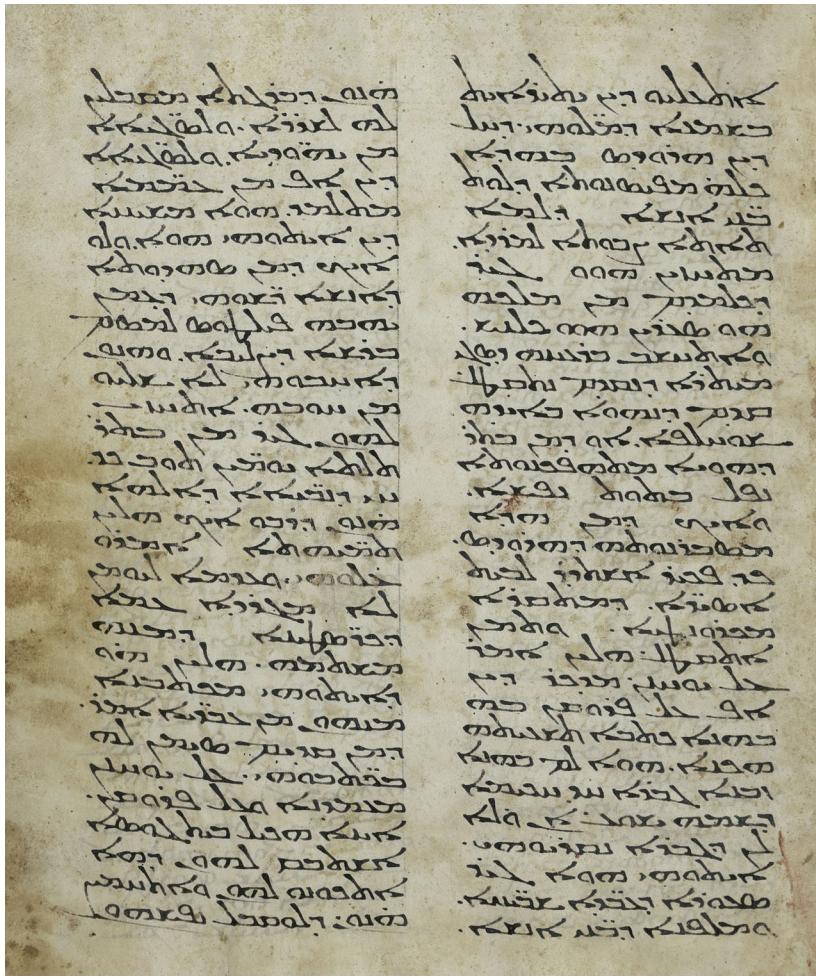
7. Vat.Reg.lat.2077, f. 15r left column line 7–right column line 11, containing a Latin translation of the *Testimonium Flavianum* in Jerome, *Illustrious Men* 13.5–6 (sixth–seventh century).

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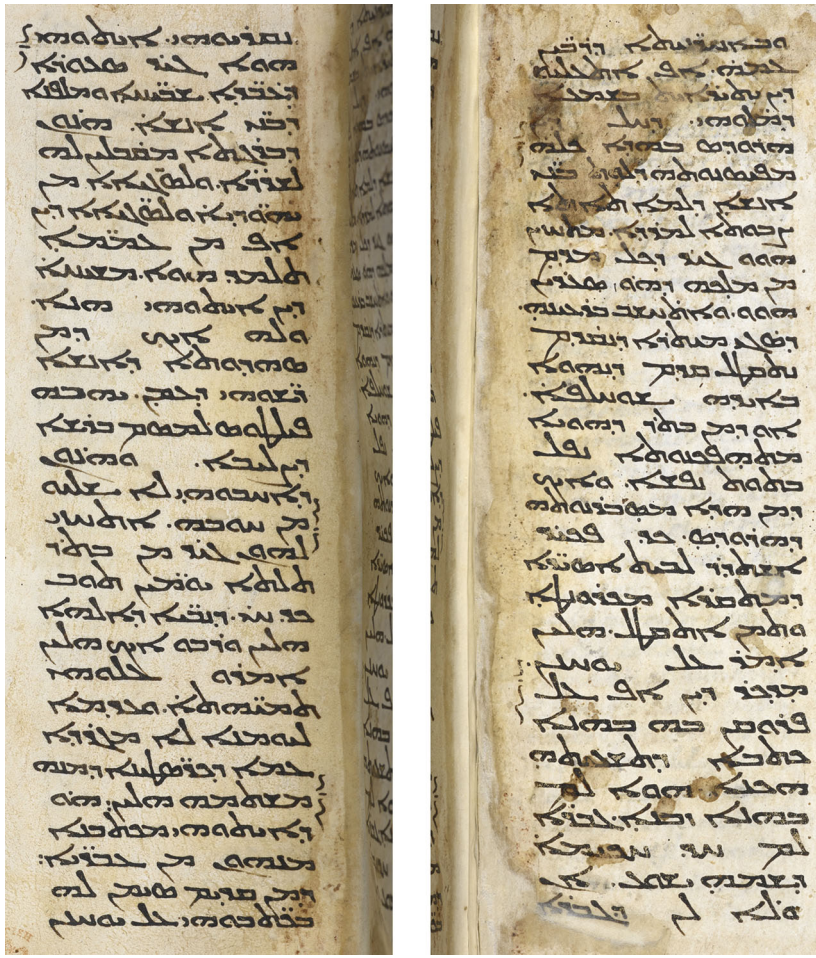
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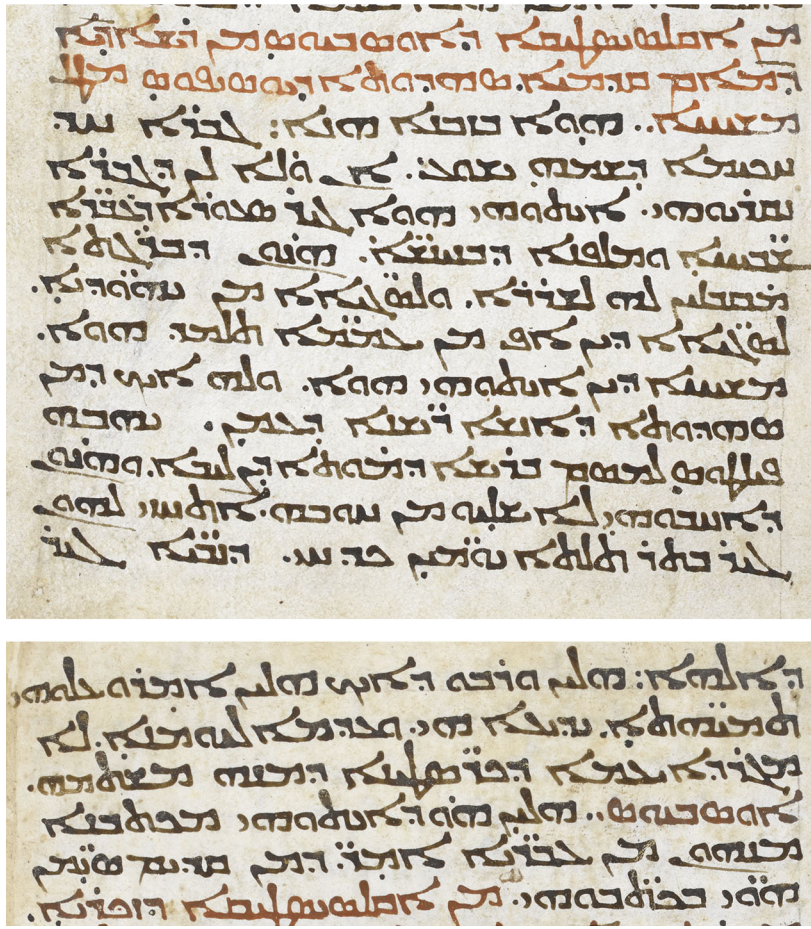
9. NLR Siriyskaya novaya seria 1, f. 16r column 1 line 25–column 2 line 20, containing a quotation of the *Testimonium Flavianum* in the Syriac translation of Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.11.7–8 (462 CE).

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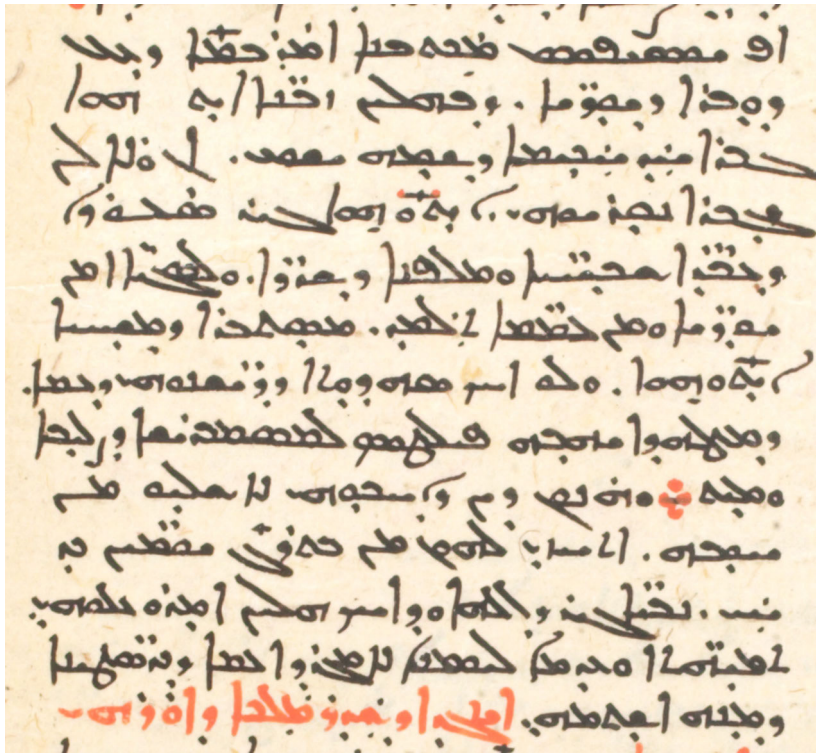
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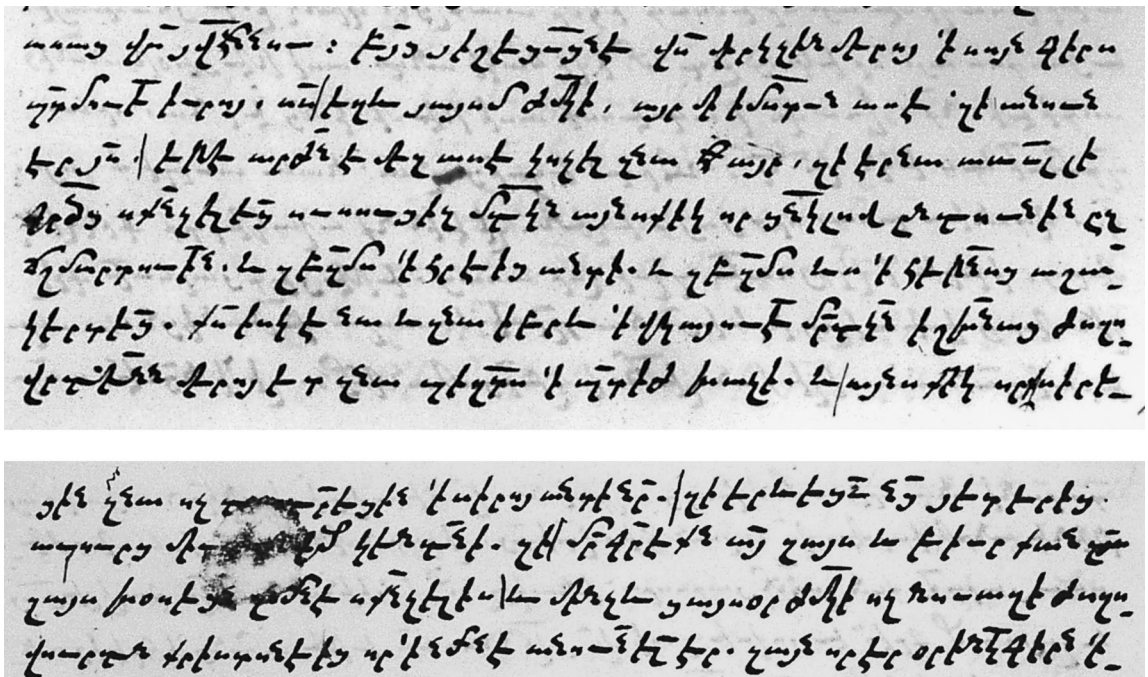
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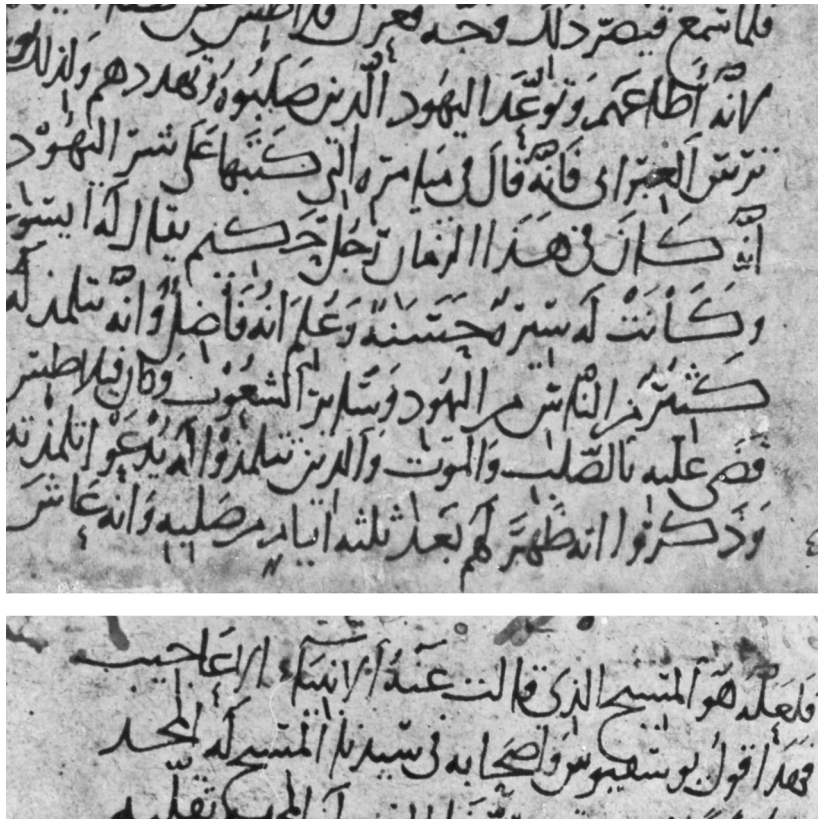
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13. Mechitaristarum Vindobonensis 49 (70 C), f. 15r line 21–15v line 4, containing a quotation of the *Testimonium Flavianum* from the Armenian translation of Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.11.7–8 (1695 CE).

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