

EDITORS' PREFACE

MICHAEL AVIOZ AND MEIR BEN SHAHAR

The study of Flavius Josephus and his works has attracted scholars for generations – both Jewish and Christians from various fields, including biblicists, classicists, historians, and archaeologists. Scholars have investigated Josephus's personality; credibility; use of sources; and his presentation of a variety of topics appearing in the Hebrew Bible and beyond (e.g., biblical characters, women, kingship, Herod, the Hasmoneans, and so on). For generations, scholars have also explored Josephus's relation to rabbinic sources, both halakhic and aggadic. The papers in this special volume of JSIJ represent the most up-to-date work on Josephus, the fruit of an international conference: *Josephus: Between the Bible and the Mishnah* held in Neveh Ilan in April of 2019. The papers reflect the work of a diverse range of scholars with manifold fields of interests and areas of expertise, but they all focus on the interchange between Josephus, the Bible, and rabbinic traditions.

The present volume opens with two papers which elaborate Josephus's treatment of biblical law. Silvia Castelli turns her attention to Josephus's descriptions of the Tabernacle, showing that the terminology of *Antiquities* includes declined names, and a less paratactic style than that of the Septuagint. With these changes, Josephus sought, Castelli argues, an updated improved version of the Greek Bible. Paradoxically, through the strategy of employing the Greek, Josephus provides, Castelli argues, a more faithful interpretation of the original Hebrew.

Jan Willem van Henten's paper similarly focuses on the Bible, analyzing Josephus's representation of Herod's legal interventions in his *Antiquities*, and how they related to Biblical law. Josephus discusses the law concerning burglary as a paradigmatic instance of Herod's style of dealing with administrative issues that concerned the Jews. Van Henten analyzes the structure of Josephus's presentation of this law against burglary, showing how it coheres with other passages in Josephus, including the law of theft in book 4 of the *Antiquities*, providing a consistent picture of Herod. By showing how the content and aim of Herod's law are related to laws about theft in the Bible and Second Temple Judaism, van Henten provides a new perspective on Herod as lawgiver.

Two papers in the volume deal with different aspects of Josephus's representation of the Hasmonean era. Kenneth Atkinson discusses the portrayals of the new Hasmonean territories as sacred space in *Antiquities*, providing insight into the role that space and geography plays in Josephus's accounts of Hasmonean territorial expansion. For Josephus, Atkinson argues, both Roman

historical sources and Scripture are central to the narratives regarding the geographical expansion of the Hasmonean realm. Atkinson further shows the ways in which Josephus was inspired by second temple sources when shaping his narratives of Hasmonean territorial expansion.

Etienne Nodet focuses on Josephus's account of the "festival of lights," specifically the relationship between his account and that present in the books of Maccabees. In inquiring why Josephus calls this eight-day festival "Lights" and not "Dedication," his purpose is twofold – to show first that Josephus's account of the Maccabean crisis does not depend on 1 Maccabees, but upon a precedent Hebrew source. Secondly, Nodet shows that Josephus was prompted to make compromises about the calendrical problems his account raises (without however providing any explanation). Josephus, according to Nodet's account, moves the Dedication from the Babylonian Kislev 25th to the Julian December 25th, the winter solstice, linking the Jewish holiday to a common rite to accompany the seasonal increase of daylight from winter darkness.

The relationship between Josephus and the rabbis is the focus of three of the volume's papers. Yishai Rosen-Zvi examines three terms that Josephus uses to describe non-Jewish people: *ethnē*, *hellēnes*, *allophyloi*. He argues that Josephus does not have an abstract notion of "Gentile" (*goy*) as do the rabbis, avoiding their binary conception, and thus providing a more complex perspective on identity. Meir Ben Shahar analyzes the dates of the destruction of the First Temple in both biblical and post-biblical sources, showing that Josephus's accounts are often vague and contradictory. Placing Josephus's account in dialogue with Talmudic traditions, Ben-Shahar shows how Josephus's commitments are reflected in his historiographical approach, that dating reflects Josephus's particular Jewish perspective.

While Ben Shahar focuses on issues revolving around the calendar, Jonathan Klawans discusses the fear of innovation present in Second Temple sources: including, with Josephus, Qumran, the rabbis, and Christian sources. Klawans finds in Josephus's writings a strong condemnation of the impulse for originality in his remarks about the group of zealots associated with what he names the "Fourth Philosophy." Josephus's denunciation of the "fourth philosophy" provides, Klawans argues, a model for the rejection of heresy that would later flourish in Christian writings.

While the aforementioned papers consider Josephus's primary works, Daniel Schwartz turns his attention to Josephan reception, devoting his paper to a recently discovered German typescript by Professor Abraham Schalit (1898–1979)—with its annotations to the first 108 paragraphs of the eleventh book of *Antiquities*. The typescript, which includes Schalit's handwritten corrections in preparing it for publication, was rescued from a trashcan in Mainz, apparently, the only remnant of a much larger project planned by Schalit. Schwartz shows this major work on Josephus as evidence for Schalit's views of Josephus as both Hellenistic *and* Jewish writer, a perspective which Schwartz suggests may be coming back in vogue.

All of these papers contribute to our knowledge of the relationship between Josephus, the Bible, Second Temple sources and rabbinic literature. They also

provide new perspectives which will, we hope, open up new avenues of research for the interdisciplinary scholarship that surrounds this most compelling and complex figure of Jewish history.

In conclusion, we express our gratitude to the Fund for the Advancement of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Israel for its sponsorship of the conference, as well as to the participants in the conference and all those who subsequently helped to bring this volume into being. We express our special thanks to the anonymous reviewers of these papers who helped us to improve and sharpen the papers. Finally, our gratitude goes to the editors of JSIJ, Prof. Yaakov Kaduri and Prof. Leib Moscovitz, for kindly inviting us to edit this special volume.

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JSIJ Guest Editors