

**HELLENISM, JUDAISM, AND APOLOGETIC:  
JOSEPHUS'S *ANTIQUITIES* ACCORDING TO AN  
UNPUBLISHED COMMENTARY BY ABRAHAM  
SCHALIT**

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Prof. Abraham Schalit of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1898–1979) was known, especially, for two large and very detailed projects that he successfully brought to completion:<sup>1</sup> his massive biography of Herod, which appeared first in Hebrew, all 500 pages of it, and then in German, all 900 pages of it, including 48 *Zusätze* and 15 *Anhänge*; and his three-volume Hebrew translation of Josephus's *Antiquities*, of which the first half, Books 1–10, is accompanied by an introduction that fills 72 pages of small print and by annotations that fill another 163 in even smaller print. And then there is also his 1968 *Namenwörterbuch zu Flavius Josephus*—an exhaustive concordance of personal names and toponyms in Josephus's writings, as well as a good number of smaller works, including, especially, his 1925 Vienna dissertation on Josephus's *Vita*,<sup>2</sup> his 1937 Hebrew monograph on Roman rule in Judaea,<sup>3</sup> and his posthumous German monograph on the *Assumption of Moses*,<sup>4</sup> along with a goodly list of other studies. A nearly full list

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<sup>1</sup> On him see M. Stern, "Abraham Schalit (1898–1979)," in *Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period: Abraham Schalit Memorial Volume* (ed. A. Oppenheimer, U. Rappaport, and M. Stern; Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi and Ministry of Defence, 1980 [in Hebrew]), 3–6 (in Hebrew) and U. Rappaport, "The Historiographical Work of the Late Abraham Schalit," *Cathedra* 17 (October 1980): 183–189 (in Hebrew).

<sup>2</sup> *Die Vita des Flavius Josephus: Eine historisch-kritische Untersuchung* (Diss. Vienna, 1925). For an analysis of it, see my "More on Schalit's Changing Josephus: The Lost First Stage," *Jewish History* 9/2 (Fall 1995): 9–20. As sometimes this dissertation's date is given as 1927, I will add that, as was clarified for me by the staff of the Vienna University Library and the University Archives, the dissertation was submitted in 1925 but the degree was approved only in 1927, after Schalit completed the *Rigorosum* examination.

<sup>3</sup> *Roman Administration in Palestine* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1937) (in Hebrew).

<sup>4</sup> *Untersuchungen zur Assumptio Mosis* (ALGHJ 17; Leiden: Brill, 1989).

of his publications, prepared by his widow, is offered in the memorial volume that appeared a year after his death.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from his works that came to fruition, and which remain very useful, Schalit had, as befits a man of ambition, many other projects and hopes that remained uncompleted. These may be divided into three categories. First, there are those that he planned or hoped to write for which there seems to be no evidence that they began to materialize. These include books on Josephus as a Hellenistic Jew,<sup>6</sup> on Nicolaus of Damascus, and on King Agrippa II; a second volume of his monograph on Roman rule in Judaea; and a comprehensive history of the Second Temple period.<sup>7</sup> Those projected works may have gone no further than dreaming or rudimentary drafts. A second category—manuscripts that remained unfinished but were partially published—is represented by Schalit's massive commentary on the *Assumption of Moses*: when he died he left a 586-page manuscript on the first third of that apocryphal work, and a decade after his death about a half of that manuscript was published by his late friend, Heinz Schreckenberg.<sup>8</sup> The present paper focuses on a third category: works that were prepared, but never published, not even in part, and were thought to be totally lost, namely, his Hebrew and German commentaries to *Antiquities* 11–20. Here I will present a fragment of the latter that survived. In Hebrew, we would say it is a brand plucked from the fire (Zechariah 3:2), but actually it was plucked from a carton of trash. It is, fortunately, quite a substantial fragment.

As mentioned above, Schalit's Hebrew translation of the first ten books of the *Antiquities* was published in 1944 along with detailed annotations. But his Hebrew translation of the latter decade of *Antiquities*, Books 11–20, was published in 1963

<sup>5</sup> *Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period*, 483–488 (in Hebrew).

<sup>6</sup> Already in a note on *Ant.* 4.128 in his 1944 translation, Schalit refers to what “I will discuss in my volume on Josephus as a Hellenistic Jew” (*Joseph ben Mattityahu [Flavius Josephus]: Antiquities of the Jews, Books 1–10* [2 vols.; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1944], 2.80, n. 80 [in the Hebrew pagination]), and in a Hebrew letter of 10 September 1962, to Prof. Joshua Prawer, who was then dean of the Hebrew University's Faculty of Humanities, Schalit stated that “I am now preparing a monograph” on Josephus. The letter, now in Schalit's file in the Hebrew University's archives, was written in support of his request to extend his stay in Germany in order to continue working on his volume (the *Namenwörterbuch*) of *The Complete Concordance to Flavius Josephus*. That project, he wrote, would “for the first time allow a proper assessment of [Josephus's] Hellenistic character” and also help him write the chapter, in that monograph, on Josephus's language—“which will allow me to assess his cultural development and locate him more generally in the Jewish-Hellenistic world.” (Here as elsewhere, all translations are my own, unless stated otherwise.) Experience shows that professors' letters to deans, concerning their progress toward completion of their scholarly projects, are often unduly optimistic.

<sup>7</sup> For these projected volumes, see my “On Abraham Schalit, Herod, Josephus, the Holocaust, Horst R. Moehring, and the Study of Ancient Jewish History,” *Jewish History* 2/2 (Fall 1987): 21–22, n. 2 (citing documents in the Hebrew University archives and also a published interview of Schalit: Y. Tirah, “King Herod—The Man and His Work,” *Ha'Aretz*, 16 March 1956 [in Hebrew]).

<sup>8</sup> See pp. vii–xvii of H. Schreckenberg's “Vorwort” to the volume, cited above in n. 4.

without annotations. Already in an interview published in 1956, Schalit reported that his Hebrew commentary on Books 11 and 12 was complete, and that work was proceeding on the other volumes;<sup>9</sup> and in 1963, in the preface to his Hebrew translation of *Antiquities* 11–20, he reported that the commentary—he emphasizes: “a commentary, not [merely] annotations”—was to fill four volumes. He even detailed, in that preface, the expected breakdown of the work among the four volumes,<sup>10</sup> and as late as 1969, in the German version of his monograph on Herod, he was still referring readers, for discussion of this or that detail, to his forthcoming Hebrew commentary.<sup>11</sup> But nothing of it ever appeared. As Schalit’s colleagues and students recall, he stored the drafts of the commentary in several binders and continued to work on them. After his death, however, some colleagues went over the drafts and concluded that they were too far from readiness to be completed for publication;<sup>12</sup> eventually they were discarded.

I do not know why Schalit failed to complete and publish his Hebrew commentary on *Antiquities* 11–20. But one major factor was certainly his decision to concentrate, instead, on preparing a commentary in German on the same books. The late Louis Feldman wrote, in his 1984 bibliography of Josephan scholarship, that

Schalit, whose commentary in Hebrew on the first ten books of the *Antiquities* is a fine contribution, had been working for many years prior to his recent death on an exhaustive commentary in German on Books 11–20 (the portions which the present author has seen are of very high quality), to be followed by a much expanded version in German of his Hebrew commentary on the first half of the work.<sup>13</sup>

Probably that draft German commentary was based, to some extent, on the Hebrew drafts in his binders.

Schalit’s move from Hebrew to German is a broad phenomenon in his last twenty years, as will be easily noticed by anyone who glances at the chronologically-organized list of his publications (above, n. 5). It may be understood as some combination of an aging man’s natural preference for the language of his youth, on the one hand, and, on the other, an alienation from Hebrew brought on by the general hostility that characterized the Israeli reception of his 1960 Hebrew magnum opus on Herod. Schalit’s work, which characterized Herod’s

<sup>9</sup> See above, n. 7.

<sup>10</sup> A. Schalit (trans.), *Flavii Josephi Antiquitates Judaicae, Libri XI–XX* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1963), viii (in Hebrew).

<sup>11</sup> See *König Herodes*, 191–192, n. 152, and 291, n. 509.

<sup>12</sup> If my memory does not fail me, it was my late teacher, Menahem Stern, who told me that both he and Louis Feldman came to that conclusion.

<sup>13</sup> Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship (1937–1980)* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1984), 34.

path of acceptance of Roman rule as the only reasonable solution and condemned Jewish rebels against Rome, was widely taken to be a betrayal of Zionism, and the criticism it evoked, for that reason, was often quite harsh.<sup>14</sup> Be that as it may, Feldman did not report what happened to Schalit's German drafts, and, as far as I know, they were not heard of for another twenty years.

However, *habent sua fata libelli*, books do have their destiny. Just as Schalit's doctoral dissertation was lost for seventy years due to a cataloging error, only to be discovered in the 1990s, hiding out of alphabetical order in the University of Vienna's library,<sup>15</sup> so too the story of Schalit's lost commentary on *Antiquities* 11–20 turned out to have a somewhat happier ending. Namely, in 2013, I attended a conference in Tübingen where I met Prof. Michael Tilly, who had recently moved there from the University of Mainz. He told me that when he moved into his Mainz office early in 2004, he found, outside the office, a huge carton of papers discarded by his predecessor (or by someone on his behalf), waiting to be hauled off for recycling. Tilly took a few items, including a nice-looking orange manila file which turned out to contain a 233-page German typescript by Schalit, comprising a commentary to the first 108 paragraphs of *Antiquities* 11.<sup>16</sup> Tilly preserved the file, and when, some eight years later, he moved to Tübingen, he took it with him. When I met him at the 2013 conference, he gave me the file and asked me to do with it whatever I saw fit. Now, after it gathered dust on one of my bookshelves for another five years, I am happy to have the opportunity to present it to the scholarly world. In the meantime, I have passed it on to the Manuscript Division of the National Library in Jerusalem, where its catalogue number is V 3640.

The text is a torso: it has no title page and it ends in the midst of a sentence in the commentary on §108. But until that point it is complete, and very thorough, as suggested by the numbers: 233 pages on the first 108 paragraphs of *Antiquities* 11. And the pages are very dense: single-spaced and with next to no margins. While we are of course grateful to Prof. Tilly for rescuing this file, it is somewhat mind-boggling to think what else might have been in that carton of trash. After all, a third of Book 11 is only around a thirtieth of Books 11–20, and given the size of the surviving fragment, Schalit was working on a project that could have filled thousands of pages. For all we know, much more may have been written, and lost. Perhaps other parts will still turn up. We may, however, take some solace in the fact that a notice at the end of the posthumous list of Schalit's publications (see n. 5) states only that a German commentary on part of *Antiquities* 11 would be published by De Gruyter—which suggests that however much more there was in German,

<sup>14</sup> On that theme, see my “On Abraham Schalit,” 12–13.

<sup>15</sup> See my “More on Schalit's Changing Josephus,” 11.

<sup>16</sup> Tilly's predecessor in the Mainz office, Günter Mayer (1936–2004), had been a collaborator in the Josephus project at the University of Münster, at which Schalit spent a good bit of time. That probably explains, one way or another, the fact that Schalit's manuscript ended up among Mayer's papers. For Schalit's links to the Münster project and long visits there in the last two decades of his life, see Schreckenberg, “Vorwort,” xvii.

probably only the material on Book 11, which Tilly salvaged, was close to the finish line.<sup>17</sup>

That Schalit is the author of the typescript is evident from a number of references to what “I” wrote in *König Herodes* (pp. 19, 82, 83, 180) or in other publications by Schalit (pp. 88, 92). That Schalit was working on this commentary in the 1970s, indeed as late as 1976—just three years before his death—is evident from various references to publications of the 1970s (e.g., pp. 18, 75, 84, 88, 167); note especially his several references to the first volume of Elias Bickerman’s *Studies in Jewish and Christian History* (pp. 10, 16, 41), which appeared in 1976.<sup>18</sup> As is stated above, it is impossible to know how much was lost. There is a reference, at one point (p. 18), to the author’s commentary on something in Book 12 of *Antiquities* (“Wir kommen im Kommentar zu Buch XII darauf zurück”), and at p. 119 Schalit refers generally to his commentary on the Hasmonean period, i.e., Books 12–13—but it is not clear that those parts of the German commentary already existed. Perhaps Schalit simply knew what he wanted to address in his commentary on those books, if only because he had already written about them in his Hebrew draft. But it is clear, in any case, from the clearly written proofreading marks and insertions,<sup>19</sup> that Schalit intended it for publication. Accordingly, we may hope that he would not be unhappy about its being made available to posterity. In what follows, I present representative parts of Schalit’s manuscript and use them as a basis to reflect upon aspects of Josephan scholarship in general, especially with regard to the *Antiquities*.

Schalit was a Josephus scholar through and through—from his 1925 dissertation until his last publications in the 1970s. His manuscript reflects much of what was central to Josephan research in his day and, therefore, can serve as a reference point for what had changed in the forty years since he last worked on it. Note, in this connection, that we are fortunate in that we can compare Schalit’s work on *Antiquities* 11 not only to Ralph Marcus’s 1937 volume on *Antiquities* 9–11 in the Loeb series, but also to Paul Spilsbury and Chris Seeman’s 2017 volume on *Antiquities* 11 in the new Brill series edited by Steve Mason.<sup>20</sup> That is, we now have

<sup>17</sup> As Aharon Oppenheimer told me recently, the manuscript (the one Tilly found? more?) was indeed submitted to De Gruyter—which however decided, in the event, against publishing the torso. My correspondents at De Gruyter were unable to locate any relevant documents.

<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Schreckenberg (“Vorwort,” ix) reports that Schalit was still working on his manuscript on the *Assumption of Moses* as late as the summer of his death.

<sup>19</sup> These insertions include cases in which a page was inserted between two extant pages (with page-number+a), indicating that there had been some addition to the preceding page after the original typing of the manuscript. That this is the correct explanation is especially obvious from the fact that, in several cases (e.g., pp. 72–72a, 76–76a, 167–167a), the new page and its addendum are in ink that is bolder than that of the pages before and after them (71 and 73; 75 and 77; 166 and 168)—which means that they were typed up, with the additions, at a later occasion, after the ribbon had been changed.

<sup>20</sup> Ralph Marcus, *Josephus: Jewish Antiquities, Books IX–XI* (Loeb Classical Library; London: Heinemann, and Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1937); Paul Spilsbury and Chris Seeman, *Flavius*

three major works on *Antiquities* 11 written at forty-year intervals—by Marcus, Schalit, and Spilsbury/Seeman. It is an interesting exercise to compare them, especially the latter two, which both, as opposed to Marcus’s small volume, offer substantial commentary. I will break up my observations among three categories: Josephus as Hellenistic author, as Jewish author, and as Jewish apologist.

### **Josephus Was a Hellenistic Author**

Schalit’s manuscript reflects, first of all, a very deep interest in Josephus’s Greek models. For this we need look no further than the very first words of *Antiquities* 11: Josephus opens with τῷ δέ and Schalit (pp. 1–2) devotes a detailed 18-line note to such use of δέ, that is, “and” or “on the other hand,” at the opening of a volume. The note begins by stating that the particle *apparently* is meant to link Book 11 to Book 10, following standard Hellenistic practice,<sup>21</sup> and to illustrate that likelihood, Schalit assembles several examples from Xenophon and Dionysius of Halicarnassus. More generally, he also notes, in this connection, that since Josephus imitates Dionysius in other ways, it is not improbable that he did so in this case as well. This is a theme to which Schalit devoted much space in his 1944 general introduction to *Antiquities*,<sup>22</sup> so it is understandable that, here too, he gave it serious attention.

Thereafter, however, Schalit nonetheless declares that, in fact it is likelier that the conjunction simply reflects the Hebrew construction in Ezra 1:1 and 2 Chronicles 36:22 (ויבשנת אַחַת), and he bolsters that conclusion by pointing to Josephus’s next words, “of Cyrus’s *reign*,” which correspond to the words that follow in the biblical passages (לְכוֹרֵשׁ מֶלֶךְ פָּרַס).

In striking contrast, Spilsbury and Seeman’s note on the opening δέ makes no reference to any other authors at all. Rather, they present a good bit of relevant evidence from Josephus’s work, noting that fourteen of the twenty books of *Antiquities* open this way, as does also his *Life*. Basically, this amounts to a statement that, concerning this detail, there is no question that requires any answer, for Josephus did here what he usually did. More generally, this opening note in Spilsbury and Seeman’s commentary amounts to the assertion that the first and best, and often sufficient, guide to reading Josephus is to read Josephus. That, of course, fits right in with recent fashions in reading Josephus (as others). For two decades, at least, many scholars have been urging us to be readers of Josephus, to take him seriously as an independent author and neither “mine” him for information about other topics, nor banalize him by making him an imitator of the style of others and borrower of their materials.<sup>23</sup> As Steve Mason put it, some fifteen years ago, “the

*Josephus: Judean Antiquities 11: Translation and Commentary* (Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary 6a; Leiden: Brill, 2017).

<sup>21</sup> “Man möchte annehmen, dass Josephus sich hier eines stilistischen Mittels bediene, das wir bei manchen griechischen Schriftstellern antreffen...”

<sup>22</sup> *Jewish Antiquities* (above, n. 6), 1.xxii–xxvi (in Hebrew).

<sup>23</sup> See my *Reading the First Century: On Reading Josephus and Studying Jewish History of the First Century* (WUNT 300; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), vii–x, 2–10.

movement toward reading *Josephus through*, and not merely reading *through Josephus* to external realities, now provides the dominant agenda.”<sup>24</sup> For Schalit, in contrast, it was important for Josephus’s work to be a member in good standing of the ancient Greek bookshelf, and even when in some cases Schalit chose, in the end, to prefer a non-Greek explanation for a Josephan formulation, that was not to be done without a discussion that shows just how possible, and indeed likely, the Greek option was. If a recent article by J. Andrew Cowan, reasserting Josephus’s use of Dionysius as a model, is a guide, it may be that the pendulum is starting to swing back in Schalit’s direction.<sup>25</sup>

Two parts of Schalit’s commentary on §3 will further illustrate how important it was for him to portray Josephus as a Hellenistic writer. First, he focuses on the fact that Josephus wrote that Cyrus sent his proclamation “to all of Asia,” although Josephus’s biblical *Vorlage* (1 Esdras 2:2) refers to “his entire kingdom.” Schalit offers a twenty-nine-line note (p. 11) in which he argues that while Josephus’s use of “all” echoes his biblical source, his use of “Asia” had a different point: “Mit dieser Ausdrucksweise passt sich Josephus der griechischen und hellenistischen Begriffswelt an, für die das Perserreich mit der Herrschaft über Asien zusammenfiel” (p. 11). [*By using this mode of expression Josephus conforms to the Greek and Hellenistic conceptual world, for which the Persian Empire was identical with rule over Asia.*”]

Second, but still in his discussion of §3, Schalit discusses at great length the logic of Josephus’s version of Cyrus’s decree in light of its opening with ἐπεὶ, “whereas,” in imitation of Hellenistic chancellery style (“in Nachahmung des hellenistischen Urkundenstils”):<sup>26</sup>

Diese Textgestaltung ist natürlich auf das Bestreben des Josephus zurückzuführen, in die Fusstapfen der hellenistischen Historiker zu treten, um

<sup>24</sup> “Contradiction or Counterpoint? Josephus and Historical Method,” *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 6 (2003): 146 (original emphasis).

<sup>25</sup> J. A. Cowan, “A Tale of Two *Antiquities*: A Fresh Evaluation of the Relationship between the Ancient Histories of T. Flavius Josephus and Dionysius of Halicarnassus,” *JSJ* 49 (2018): 1–23. Here I would also mention still unpublished work by David Friedman. Cowan and Friedman’s work comes as a new swing of the pendulum in contrast to the view regnant in recent decades, that the theory that Josephus was particularly influenced by Dionysius of Halicarnassus “is untenable,” that “this theory may today be regarded as having been rejected” (Per Bilde, *Flavius Josephus between Jerusalem and Rome: His Life, His Works, and Their Importance* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988], 203).

<sup>26</sup> On ἐπεὶ see, for example, C. Bradford Welles, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period: A Study in Greek Epigraphy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934), nos. 36, l. 17; 65, l. 11; 67, l. 1. More generally, we should recall that Schalit studied at the University of Vienna at a time when, especially due to the influence of Adolf Wilhelm in Vienna and Wilhelm Schubart in Berlin, studies of Hellenistic chancellery style were very popular. See, for example, Wilhelm Schubart, “Bemerkungen zum Stile hellenistischer Königsbriefe,” *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 6 (1920): 324–347.

sein Werk dem literarischen Geschmack der hellenistisch-römischen Leserwelt anzupassen und auf diese Weise die Lektüre zu erleichtern. (p. 12).

*[Josephus's arrangement of the text this way is to be explained, of course, by his striving to follow in the footsteps of the Hellenistic historians, so as to make his work conform to the literary taste of the world of Hellenistic-Roman readers and, thereby, to make it easier for them to read it.]*

In contrast to Schalit's emphasis on the Hellenistic background of Josephus's terminology, and what it indicates about Josephus's striving to be a member of the guild of Hellenistic historians (Josephus's wish "to conform" [*anpassen*] to Hellenistic concepts and literary taste), Spilsbury and Seeman note here only that Josephus uses "Asia" instead of his biblical source's reference to Cyrus's kingdom. Moreover, they give no data about such usage by others, and say nothing about ἐπεὶ. Since Josephus's text is clear enough as is, those who want to read Josephus on his own terms have no need to add anything.

Another interesting comparison, which is more complex but points in the same direction, comes at §61. Here Josephus writes, according to Spilsbury and Seeman's translation, that Darius "forbade his administrators and satraps to impose on the Judeans the royal services," but in their notes they offer nothing about what those royal services might have been or how readers would have understood that allusion to royal services. Nor do they say anything about what Josephus's source was for his statement about royal services, which has no apparent basis in Darius's letter as reported in Josephus's source here (1 Esdras 4:47–57). That is, they are not concerned with what came before Josephus, neither events nor sources; again, they focus exclusively on Josephus. This is an important point, for Spilsbury and Seeman do comment, on the end of the preceding paragraph, §60, that its words—"and he wrote that all of the captives who had departed for Judea were free"—constitute Josephus's summary of 1 Esdras 4:49 ("He wrote on behalf of all the Judeans...in the interest of their freedom, that no officer or satrap or regional governor or treasurer should forcibly enter their doors"). They also refer readers to a nearby verse (53) in which "freedom" is also mentioned. Having noted that, however, they do not ask why Josephus deviates from his source in two obvious ways: in §60 he omits his source's reference to the order forbidding forcible entry, and in §61 he adds a prohibition of imposing royal services.

As for why Spilsbury and Seeman did not ask about those deviations, I would point out that they wrote in a scholarly context in which it is usual to view Josephus as a creative author. From the point of view of that orientation, even when all admit (as in this case) that Josephus was following a source, he was allowed to deal with it sovereignly. Accordingly, if Josephus chose to remain at the general level in §60 ("freedom") and to omit the detail about doors, and then to add on his own an inclusive statement in §61, both moves are just fine and as to be expected. Any insistence that Josephus should instead be expected to follow his source closely, so



his deviations are challenges to us to divine what catalyzed the deviation, often conjures up, today, memories of a bygone age of hair-splitting and speculative German *Quellenkritik*.<sup>27</sup>

Schalit, who indeed wrote in German, and completed his doctorate in the age of Otto, Hölscher, and Laqueur, whom he held in high respect, goes an entirely different way: he seeks to explain both why Josephus omitted his source's reference to "doors" and why he added a reference to "services," and he does so, neatly enough, by using the one to explain the other. Namely, first he devoted a long section (pp. 156–157) to showing that Josephus took 1 Esdras 4:49 to include *two* separate provisions: the Jews should be free, and no one should forcibly enter their doors. Schalit is aware that the verse is usually taken to include only one single provision (as it is by Spilsbury and Seeman), and he quotes translations that indicate, accordingly, that the meaning of being free is that no one was allowed forcibly to enter their houses. Nevertheless, he argues that Josephus takes the verse to refer to two separate provisions, of which one is handled in §60 (the captives were free) and the other in §61—which requires him to argue, that Josephus took the somewhat mysterious reference to "forcibly entering doors" to refer to a type of "royal service." That argument is, evidently, where Schalit wanted to go, for he then proceeds to offer five dense pages (157–161) of evidence concerning "royal services," βασιλικαὶ χρεῖαι, *especially the obligation to quarter soldiers in one's home* (which amounts to "forcibly entering doors"). That evidence is supplied mostly from epigraphical evidence, not from elsewhere in Josephus. Apart from the basic point that we should follow up deviations between Josephus's source and his own account, the obvious subtext here, again, is that Josephus's prose and vocabulary are based on what was common in the Hellenistic world, and to understand them one needs to see how they were used in that world.

### **Josephus Was a Jewish Author**

Having illustrated Schalit's great interest in showing that Josephus was a Hellenistic author, I now turn to the other pole: for Schalit, it was important we realize that Josephus was dependent on *Jewish* tradition, by which he meant—as was still taken for granted in Schalit's formative years—Jewish tradition as reflected by rabbinic literature. From this point of view, Schalit's scholarship is, in this post-Qumran and post-Neusner era, very much out of fashion. But that need not mean that it is wrong; each case must be taken on its merits. For the present context, it is enough to indicate how important this theme was for Schalit.

Take, for a major example, Josephus's statement at 11.5–6a that Isaiah wrote 140 years before the destruction of the First Temple and, accordingly, 210 years prior to Cyrus's proclamation. Spilsbury and Seeman provide a substantial note here (p. 11, n. 31—twenty-four lines) in which, as above concerning the book's opening δέ, they focus only on other Josephan evidence. First they note that, elsewhere too

<sup>27</sup> See *Reading the First Century* (above, n. 23), 11–12.

(12.322), Josephus states how long in advance prophecies were made, and this leads them to comment that “Josephus is fond of stating how far in advance of events the prophets had predicted them.” That is, this passage teaches us something about Josephus’s habits and interests. Then they relate to an inconsistency in Josephus’s statements of Isaiah’s chronology as related to that of the kings of Judah, and explain that it might have resulted from Josephus having forgotten a certain detail.

Schalit, in contrast, offers a twenty-page discussion of Josephus’s chronology (pp. 19–39), taking his point of departure from the fact that both numbers of years that Josephus mentions, 140 and 210, are divisible by seven. As such, they lend themselves to comparison with Jewish chronologies that focus on sabbatical cycles, an issue which Schalit explores in great detail. Those details, are not relevant to the present discussion, but Schalit’s conclusion, twenty pages later (p. 39), after a detailed exposition of *b. Arachin* 11b–12b and related texts, especially in *Seder Olam Rabba*, is:

Wir haben nicht nur die AJ, XI, §6a zugrundeliegende chronologische Rechnung aufgehellert, sondern, darüber hinaus, ihren Platz innerhalb der Geschichte der jüdischen Tradition zeitlich bestimmt. Es hat sich wieder einmal gezeigt, wie tief Josephus in der jüdischen Tradition verwurzelt ist.

[*We have not only clarified the chronological calculation that lies at the bottom of Ant. 11.6a. Rather, beyond that we have also fixed its location in the history of Jewish tradition. Once again it has become apparent that Josephus was deeply enrooted in the Jewish tradition.*]

It may be that renewed interest in sabbatical chronology, prompted by some Qumran texts,<sup>28</sup> will entail new examination of the type of calculations that interested Schalit here.

This point of view goes hand in hand with much in Schalit’s commentary. Note, as another example, Schalit’s treatment of Josephus’s addition to Cyrus’s edict in §11, according to which the latter’s officials were to hold onto the Temple vessels until the Temple was rebuilt, whereupon they were to turn the vessels over to the priests and Levites. The biblical *Vorlage* has no such detail about custody of the vessels prior to the completion of the Temple, a fact that led Spilsbury and Seeman to note, apropos of Josephus’s addition here, that “by paying such close attention to the sacred vessels Josephus emphasizes an important continuity between the original temple and the rebuilt one, which would eventually suffer a similar fate at the hands of Titus” (p. 13, n. 55). That is, they see Josephus’s expansion of Cyrus’s edict as a pedantic measure on his part to eliminate all doubt about continuity from

<sup>28</sup> See James C. VanderKam, “Sabbatical Chronologies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context* (ed. Timothy Lim; Edinburgh: Clark, 2000), 159–178.

the First Temple to the Second, and by mentioning Titus they bring the import of the statement down to Josephus's own lifetime. Schalit would probably agree with that, but his commentary focuses on the very fact that Josephus undertook to expand the biblical story:

Josephus sieht eben den biblischen Text nicht bloss als Quelle an, die man lediglich nachzuerzählen hat, ohne an ihr etwas zu ändern, sondern als Bericht, der exegetisch behandelt sein will. Wie alle seine jüdischen Zeitgenossen war auch Josephus des Glaubens, dass im Bibeltext mehr enthalten sei, als es den Anschein habe. [...] Und so sehen wir denn auch unseren Schriftsteller an vielen Stellen des biblischen Teiles der "Jüdischen Altertümer" in der Rolle eines Schriftgelehrten, der die exegetische Kunst, wie er sie in seiner Kindheit in Jerusalem erworben hatte (vgl. Vita §9), mit agadisch und halachisch geschulten Geist handhabt. Auch AJ XI,§11 scheint mir dafür ein kleines Beispiel zu sein. (p. 51, original emphasis)

*[For Josephus saw the biblical text not merely as a source, which one could only retell without changing anything; rather, it is a report, which is meant to be handled exegetically. Like all of his Jewish contemporaries, Josephus too believed that the Bible contained more than it seems. [...] Thus we see our author too, in many passages in the biblical part of his Jewish Antiquities, in the role of a rabbinic sage,<sup>29</sup> who applies the art of exegesis, which he picked up in his childhood in Jerusalem (cf. Life 9),<sup>30</sup> with a spirit schooled in Aggadah and Halacha. Ant. 11.11 too seems to me to be a small example of this.]*

That is, if for Spilsbury and Seeman Josephus's addition to the text shows him to be a creative author, and lets us learn about his thoughts about his own day, for Schalit it leads him (1) to emphasize that Josephus was an historian, interested in "what really happened" in the past, who therefore viewed the biblical text as a report about events that he, Josephus, was attempting to envisage, and then also (2) to locate Josephus in Jewish tradition and make him a *Schriftgelehrter*—a sage—just like "all of his Jewish contemporaries." Correspondingly, Louis Ginzberg's *Legends of the Jews*, which depends heavily on rabbinic literature, is cited several times in Schalit's manuscript (pp. 16, 40, 41, 47, 148, 211). Spilsbury and Seeman do so only twice

<sup>29</sup> This appears to be what Schalit meant by "*Schriftgelehrter*." For the usage of the term in Schalit's milieu in the 1970s see, for example, J. Schwark, "Matthäus der Schriftgelehrte und Josephus der Priester: Ein Vergleich," *Theokratia—Jahrbuch des Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum* 2 (1970–1972): *Festgabe für Karl Heinrich Rengstorf zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. W. Dietrich; Leiden: Brill, 1973), 137–154.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Schalit's emphatic defense of the truth of Josephus's claim already in his 1944 introduction to the translation of *Antiquities*, l.xxxvi ("There is no justification whatsoever to cast doubt on the truth of Josephus's statement...").

in their commentary on *Antiquities* 11, and of them only one citation appears (at p. 13) in that part covered by Schalit's manuscript (§§1–108). Indeed, their index of rabbinic texts cited in the volume (p. 169) lists no reference in their notes to §§1–108.

In explaining this difference, note that Schalit was writing in a scholarly context in which it was still assumed (1) that statements made by Josephus about events in the past (such as, in this case, his studies as a child) were first to be taken as evidence about what really happened, not examined for their function; (2) that rabbinic literature was useful for the study of the Second Temple period; and (3) that the traditions concerning Scripture that a young priest in Jerusalem would have learned, and the attitudes toward Scripture and its interpretation that he would have imbibed, were the same as those preserved in the Aggadah and Halacha of the *Schriftgelehrte*—the rabbinic sages. All three assumptions went by the board, in large measure, in the 1970s and 1980s, the first under the impact of the general turn to composition criticism, the remaining two under the impact of critical trends in the study of rabbinic literature: evidence of pluralism in Judaism of the late Second Temple period, or even of the plurality of Judaisms in the late Second Temple period, and, evidence, especially from Qumran, of the vitality of priestly Judaism in those generations. Such trends called into question the notion that what Josephus learned in first-century Jerusalem probably can be found in rabbinic literature, and also suggested that, whatever one thinks about the antiquity of rabbinic traditions, a young priest in Jerusalem was probably studying something else altogether.<sup>31</sup> But by the 1970s Schalit was in his 70s.

True, there were, even after Schalit, those who hesitated to marginalize rabbinic literature. Perhaps the most prominent was Louis Feldman whose chapter in his 1998 *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible*, "Josephus and Rabbinic Tradition" argues that Josephus and the rabbis drew on a shared tradition.<sup>32</sup> But since that argument amounts to a defense of the antiquity of rabbinic tradition, it was all too easy to dismiss Feldman's case as a Yeshiva University vindication of Jewish Orthodoxy.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, like Schalit, Feldman grew up and formed his views before the impact of Qumran discoveries and Neusner's work.<sup>34</sup> But now that same thesis

<sup>31</sup> For the application of such doubts, specifically about Josephus's biblical and Jewish education, see Seth Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaeon Politics* (Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition 18; Leiden: Brill, 1990), 24–45, and Michael Tuval, *From Jerusalem Priest to Roman Jew: On Josephus and the Paradigms of Ancient Judaism* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2/357; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 13–14, 115–128, 151–154.

<sup>32</sup> Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible* (Berkeley: Univ. of California, 1998), 65–73.

<sup>33</sup> Similar to the monograph by the longtime president of YU: Samuel Belkin's *Philo and the Oral Law: The Philonic Interpretation of Biblical Law in Relation to the Palestinian Halakhah* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940).

<sup>34</sup> For a good example of Feldman's dependence upon rabbinic tradition as a guide to the meaning, and even to the text, of Josephus's writings, see his notes and commentary on *Ant.* 19.332–333

has been revived as the primary theme of the most recent major Israeli project on Josephus, a two-volume compendium of case-studies produced by scholars who grew up with the revolution of views.<sup>35</sup> It will be interesting to see if this represents the beginning of a revival in which this aspect of work like Schalit's will once again be taken seriously.

One particular aspect of this topic has to do with Schalit's familiarity with rabbinic literature. He was not a great scholar of rabbinics, nor did he claim to be one, but he was familiar with rabbinic diction and ideas and, now and then, he applied this knowledge in his interpretation of Josephus. Note, for example, that neither Marcus nor Spilsbury and Seeman have anything to say about Josephus's repeated use of ἤρξατο λέγειν (§§38, 43) (nor ἤρξατο λέγων, §49) to punctuate, in a demonstrative way, the three guardsmen's statements (about who/what is the strongest) in 1 Esdras 3. The speech of each of them (the advocates of wine, the king, and women) is introduced by that same formula, which these other translators render literally as "began to speak" or the like. Schalit, in contrast, begins, when the phrase first occurs (§38), a four-page discussion (pp. 122–125) in which he surveys Josephus's usage of the phrase in *Antiquities*, along with some New Testament usage of the same phrase (Mark 10:28; Luke 13:26; 20:9), and concludes that often it cannot mean "began to say" because it refers to something quite short. This leads Schalit to conclude, instead, that since ἤρξατο here is "completely meaningless" ("völlig bedeutungslos"), it is therefore to be explained as reflecting semitic impact upon Jewish Greek, namely, as reflecting a Hebrew idiom, פתח ואמר—a formal way of introducing a speech that Schalit proceeds to illustrate with several examples from the midrash.<sup>36</sup> From this point of detail about Josephus's formulation, Schalit draws quite a broad conclusion (p. 125):

Der jüdische Bearbeiter der Pagenerzählung hat zwar griechisch geschrieben, aber seine Denkweise war semitisch, eine Tatsache, die auch auf die Verfasser des griechischen Neuen Testaments zutrifft.

(*Josephus: Jewish Antiquities, Books XVIII–XX* [Loeb Classical Library; London: Heinemann, and Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1965], 370–371).

<sup>35</sup> Tal Ilan and Vered Noam et al., *Josephus and the Rabbis* (2 vols.; Between Bible and Mishnah: The David and Jemima Jeselsohn Library; Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press, 2017 [in Hebrew]).

<sup>36</sup> This mini-study by Schalit is similar to his larger study of *Ant.* 18.343, but there the point of departure, from the Greek text to an Aramaic phrase known from rabbinic literature, was an unintelligible Greek text; see his "Evidence of an Aramaic Source in Josephus' 'Antiquities of the Jews,'" *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute* 4 (1965): 163–188. In the present case, in contrast, Schalit sought the Semitic genesis of a Greek text that, in and of itself, hardly posed a problem.

[Although the Jewish reviser of the story of the story<sup>37</sup> of the pages [i.e., the three guardsmen] wrote in Greek, his manner of thinking was semitic—a fact that is true for the authors of the Greek New Testament as well.]

One might certainly hesitate before accepting Schalit's arguments about the last two points. Concerning the first, about custody of the Temple vessels, note that it is not at all clear that Josephus's addition of the detail concerning their interim custody can bear the burden of such broad conclusions about his view of Scripture and the nature of exegesis. Josephus might, in this case, be doing no more than pedantically filling in an obvious gap in the story. Similarly, with regard to ἤρξατο λέγειν: on the one hand, it is not intolerable to say that someone "began to say something" rather than "said something," even if it is brief. On the other hand, as my friend Paul Mandel points out, פתח ואמר appears only late in midrashic literature, although it is not impossible that that is only a fluke.

But whatever we say about Schalit's *conclusions* about Josephus in the last two cases, they are certainly indicative of Schalit's *expectations* from Josephus. For him it was important that Josephus, however deeply Hellenistic he was, was also deeply enrooted ("tief verwurzelt") in Jewish tradition. And note well, that in the case of ἤρξατο λέγειν, Schalit posits not only that Josephus's Greek depended upon semitic usage, but also that the semitic usage with which Josephus was familiar was, specifically, the kind to be found in rabbinic literature. Moreover, he assumes that such an insight allows us to move to the conclusion that Josephus's *thought*—his *Denkweise*—was semitic. From this point of view, Schalit goes much further than both his older contemporary, Isaak Heinemann, and his younger contemporary, Louis Feldman, who both, although well at home in rabbinic literature, viewed Josephus as a Jewish Hellenist who was basically writing a Greek book for Greeks.<sup>38</sup>

### **Josephus the Apologist**

Apart from Josephus having been a Hellenistic writer but also "enrooted" in Judaism as we know it from rabbinic literature, a third theme that emerges clearly from Schalit's commentary on *Antiquities* 11 is one that posits a relationship between those two poles. Namely, Schalit assumes and argues that Josephus was an apologist for Jews and Judaism, defending the Jewish pole, so to speak, in the eyes of the

<sup>37</sup> This formulation allows Schalit to avoid deciding whether Josephus or, rather, some Jewish predecessor, was responsible for the phrasing. He raised the latter possibility somewhat earlier in his draft commentary (p. 100).

<sup>38</sup> See Heinemann's "Josephus's Method in the Presentation of Jewish Antiquities," *Zion* 5 (1939/40): 180–203 (in Hebrew). Heinemann emphasizes just how much Josephus strove to write according to the expectations of Hellenistic readers and how minor the impact of Jewish tradition was upon him. As for Feldman, see, for example, his long chapter on "The Qualities of Biblical Heroes," which sets down the foundation for all of his other studies on Josephus's portrayal of biblical characters: *Josephus's Interpretation* (n. 32), 74–131.

Hellenistic one.<sup>39</sup> That this was important for him is indicated already early in his commentary (p. 13), when he mobilizes this consideration to explain something that seems trivial (and which invited no comment at all from Marcus or Spilsbury/Seeman): in his commentary to 11.3, where Josephus, as his source at 1 Esdras 2:2, has Cyrus say that God appointed him “ruler of the οἰκουμένη” (rather than ruler “of the kingdoms of the earth,” as in Ezra 1:2 and 2 Chronicles 36:23). Schalit explains that Josephus preserves the language of his source, 1 Esdras (2:3), because “War doch das Anführen von Originalurkunden zugunsten der Juden überhaupt ein Grundsatz der apologetischen Geschichtsschreibung des Josephus” (p. 13) [“After all, the citation of original documents in favor of the Jews was a basic general principle of Josephus’s apologetic historiography”]. That is, Schalit assumed that Josephus was worried that his readers might doubt that Cyrus had made such a gracious declaration concerning the Jews, and therefore was careful to preserve the language of his source in case some skeptic might check it. While one might well doubt that many of Josephus’s readers would have checked such a source, or that, if they did, they would have noticed or condemned any change of the formulation, the point is significant insofar as it shows what was important *for Schalit*. Schalit thought Josephus was writing under the impression that he had to protect the good name of the Jews, and constantly worried that hostile critics would be looking high and low for ways to undermine and discredit his arguments.

Concerning 1 Esdras 2, Schalit remains unconvincing, because his explanation of why Josephus *adhered* to the formulation in his source might well be superfluous. Usually we assume that such explanations are more warranted, and more cogent, when they are offered in order to explain why an author *deviated* from his source. Another, and more convincing, emphasis upon Josephus’s apologetic orientation comes in Schalit’s commentary to 11.87, where Josephus adds, to his paraphrase of 1 Esdras 5:70–71, a statement by the leaders of the Jews who rebuilt the Temple: he has them state that the Samaritans, although excluded from participating in the building of the Temple, were, as all people, allowed to worship at the Temple and revere God (σέβειν τὸν θεόν) within its precincts. Spilsbury and Seeman, in their notes on this text, cite other passages in Josephus that indicate that the Temple is accessible to all, but do not explain the theme’s function. Schalit, by contrast, explains its apologetic function at great length:

Die josephische Paraphrase weist auch einen weiteren charakteristischen Zusatz zur Vorlage auf: In §87 lässt Josephus den Zerobabel sagen, dass den Samaritanern, ebenso wie allen anderen Menschen, die Anbetung Gottes (προσκυβεῖν) im Tempel, falls sie diesen Wunsch haben, nicht verwehrt sei. In dieser Bemerkung, die in der Vorlage nicht vorhanden ist, spricht der Apologet des Judentums zu uns. Offenbar will Josephus mit diesem Zusatz,

<sup>39</sup> For this theme in Schalit’s writings see already his “Hellenistic-Literary and Apologetic Motifs in Josephus’s *Antiquities*,” *Mosnaim* 16 (1942/43): 205–210 (in Hebrew).

der eigentlich gar nicht in den Zusammenhang der Erzählung hineinpasst, dem Vorwurf der Heiden seiner eigenen Zeit entgentreten, dass es ihnen verboten war, den Tempel von Jerusalem zu betreten und dem in ihm wohnenden Gott ihre Verehrung zu erweisen [...] Vermutlich dachte Josephus bei der Niederschrift dieser Bemerkung daran, dass die Heiden seit jeher die Möglichkeit hatten, Opfer im Tempel von Jerusalem darzubringen (siehe die Zusammenstellungen bei Schürer GdJV II<sup>4</sup>, S. 359ff.). Auf Grund dieser allbekannten Tatsache glaubte er in seiner apologetischen Absicht, den Vorwurf des religiösen Intoleranz von den Juden abzuwälzen, so weit gehen zu dürfen, dass er gerade ihre weitgehende Toleranz gegen die Nichtjuden zum Ausgangspunkt der Erbauer des Tempels erhob. (p. 199, original emphasis, my underlining [DRS]).

*[Josephus's paraphrase includes another characteristic addition to his Vorlage: In §87 Josephus has Zerubbabel say that the Samaritans, just as all other people, were not denied the right to worship (προσκυνεῖν) God in the Temple, if they so desire. In this comment, which is not in his Vorlage, it is the apologist for Judaism who is speaking to us. Apparently it was Josephus's desire, in making this comment, which in fact does not at all fit into the context of his story, to counter the accusation made by non-Jews in his own days, that they were not allowed to enter the Temple of Jerusalem and to show their reverence for the God who dwells in it.[...] We may conjecture that, in making this comment, Josephus was thinking of the fact that non-Jews had always been able to offer sacrifices in the Temple of Jerusalem (see the material assembled by Schürer [...] <sup>40</sup>). On the basis of that universally recognized fact, Josephus decided to go even further, in his apologetic desire to exculpate the Jews from the accusation of religious intolerance: it was precisely their far-reaching tolerance vis-à-vis Gentiles that he elevated to the status of being the point of departure for those who built the Temple.]*

Note here, especially, that although Josephus has Zerubbabel say that Gentiles are allowed to worship God in the Temple, Schalit represents him as saying that they are not forbidden to do so. This reformulation eloquently bespeaks Schalit's presumption that Josephus was writing from an apologetic point of view meant, as he goes on to say, to counter a contemporary accusation against the Jews.<sup>41</sup>

But characterizing Josephus as apologetic, for Schalit as for others, went beyond a defensive concern to counter complaints about Judaism. For Schalit's Josephus, it

<sup>40</sup> Schalit refers to the German original of: E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.–A.D. 135)* (English ed. by G. Vermes et al.; Edinburgh: Clark, 1973–1987), 2.309–313.

<sup>41</sup> Schalit cites no evidence for such a complaint in antiquity, and I am not aware of any, apart from 3 Macc 1:9–15. But it is not difficult to imagine that there was such criticism, or that Josephus feared there might be; cf. *War* 2.414 and Ephesians 2:14–22.



was important positively to attract Gentiles to Judaism. Note especially, in the present context, Schalit's comments on Josephus's claim, at *Ant.* 11.5, that it was after reading about himself in the Book of Isaiah that Cyrus decided to publish his edict:

Es ist nur natürlich und folgerichtig, dass Josephus im Rahmen seinen grossen apologetischen Werkes, als welches die Archaeologie anzusprechen ist, an der Schwelle der Geschichte des Zweiten Tempels, ein Heiden das Bekenntnis zur universalistischen religiösen Anschauung des Propheten Jesaja in den Mund legt. Damit gibt nach der Deutung des Josephus der heidnische Zeuge von Jahwes Grosse gewissermassen den Auftakt zu der Bekehrung der heidnischen Welt zum jüdischen Monotheismus, einer Bewegung, die in späteren Jahrhunderten einen gewaltigen Aufschwung in der gesamten Ökumene nehmen sollte. Mit anderen Worten: Die josephische Interpretation des Cyrusediktes stellt den grossen Perserkönig sozusagen als den geistigen Ahnherrn der späteren *σεβόμενοι τὸν θεόν* hin. (p. 15, my underlining)

*[It is only natural and consistent that Josephus, in the framework of his large apologetic work—and that is how the Antiquities should be approached—puts into the mouth of a pagan, at the very opening of the Second Temple period, the recognition of the prophet Isaiah's universal religious conception. In Josephus's view, this Gentile witness to God thereby opens up, to a certain extent, the path to the conversion of the pagan world to Jewish monotheism—a movement that would, in later centuries, grow powerfully throughout the entire oecumene. In other words, Josephus's interpretation of Cyrus's edict portrays the great Persian king as, so to speak, the spiritual ancestor of the later God-fearers.]*

That is, Schalit held that Josephus was apologetic, that his *Antiquities* is a thoroughly apologetic work, and that, for Josephus, apologetics included pride that numerous and respectable non-Jews came to recognize the Jewish God.

Here the comparison with Spilsbury and Seeman is striking. They also comment on Josephus's report about Cyrus reading Isaiah, noting (p. 11, n. 29) that "certainly it suits Josephus to depict a world ruler learning important information from the Jewish scriptures," and pointing to another case in *Antiquities* 11: the report at §337 that Alexander the Great learned about his own future from the Book of Daniel. But Schalit takes this much further, in two ways: he focuses on Cyrus not as a king but as an example of Gentiles in general ("a pagan"), and emphasizes not only that Cyrus learned from the Jews' sacred literature, but that he drew the requisite conclusions and came to revere the Jewish God.

If we ask how this interpretation of Josephus—as apologetic, and concerned to show that respectable Gentiles were attracted to Judaism—fairs in current Josephan scholarship, we find an interestingly mixed assessment. On the one hand, it is

unfashionable to speak of Josephus, especially in the *Antiquities*, as an apologist. Thus, although Sterling published his monograph on Josephus as an apologetic historian in 1994<sup>42</sup> and Feldman's 1998 volume includes a long chapter as "Josephus as Apologist,"<sup>43</sup> by 1998, Steve Mason published a frontal attack on the notion that the *Antiquities* should be considered an apologetic work.<sup>44</sup> Two years later the same point figured prominently in Mason's opening of his introduction to his Brill series;<sup>45</sup> in 2014 Marton Ribary published yet another frontal attack on the same notion;<sup>46</sup> and in 2016 Spilsbury put a question mark alongside Feldman's assumption that Hellenization means apologetics.<sup>47</sup> Correspondingly, there are only four occurrences of the string "apolog" in Spilsbury/Seeman's commentary on *Antiquities* 11, and none appears in connection with the first 108 paragraphs of *Antiquities* 11 or has any relation to the notion that Josephus was concerned to defend Jews and/or Judaism in the eyes of non-Jewish observers.<sup>48</sup>

On the other hand, the alternative posited by many other scholars, beginning with Feldman and Mason, is, interestingly enough, the stress on Josephus's desire to interest Gentiles in Judaism. Feldman, already in the eighties, was insisting on Judaism having been a successful missionary religion<sup>49</sup> and on the "omnipresence" of God-fearers in the Greco-Roman world,<sup>50</sup> and he saw Josephus as having been heavily involved in fostering that; and Mason, building on *Ant.* 1.25, took the desire

<sup>42</sup> Gregory E. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephos, Luke-Acts, and Apologetic Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 1992).

<sup>43</sup> Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation* (above, n. 32), 132–162.

<sup>44</sup> Steve Mason, "Should Any Wish to Enquire Further (*Ant.* 1.25): The Aim and Audience of Josephus's *Judean Antiquities/Life*," in *Understanding Josephus: Seven Perspectives* (ed. Steve Mason; Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series 32; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 64–103.

<sup>45</sup> Steve Mason, "Introduction to the *Judean Antiquities*," in *Judean Antiquities 1–4* (Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary, 3; Leiden: Brill, 2000), xiii.

<sup>46</sup> Marton Ribary, "Josephus' 'Rewritten Bible' as a Non-Apologetic Work," in *Rewritten Bible after Fifty Years: Texts, Terms or Techniques? A Last Dialogue with Geza Vermes* (ed. J. Zsengellér; Supplements to JSJ 166; Leiden: Brill, 2014), 249–266.

<sup>47</sup> "[I]t is not always correct to assume that instances of Hellenization in the *Judean Antiquities* are to be taken as instances of propaganda or apologetics, as Feldman seems to suggest. They are often just as likely to be genuine expressions of Josephus's own (Hellenized) understanding of the biblical narrative" (Paul Spilsbury, "Josephus and the Bible," in *A Companion to Josephus* [ed. H. H. Chapman and Z. Rodgers; Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2016], 130).

<sup>48</sup> See Spilsbury-Seeman, *Judean Antiquities* 11, 4, 92, 93, 94.

<sup>49</sup> See, inter alia, L. H. Feldman, "Was Judaism a Missionary Religion in Ancient Times?," in *Jewish Assimilation, Acculturation, and Accommodation: Past Traditions, Current Issues, and Future Prospects* (ed. Menachem Mor; Studies in Jewish Civilization 2; Omaha: Studies for the Study of Religion and Society, Creighton University, 1992), 24–37; idem, "Proselytism by Jews in the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Centuries," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 24 (1993): 1–58.

<sup>50</sup> L. H. Feldman, "The Omnipresence of the God-Fearers," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 12:5 (Sept./Oct. 1986): 58–69.

to cater to the interests of well-disposed non-Jews, who might have even been considering conversion, to be a major motivation of the *Antiquities*.<sup>51</sup> While these scholars may differ concerning the question of whether Josephus should be thought of as writing to counter criticism or rather to supply information to those who were genuinely interested, their conclusions are in fact quite close to one another: they all insist that Josephus wanted to improve the image of Jews and Judaism in the eyes of non-Jewish observers and attract them to Judaism.

If we ask, then, what underlies the difference between the two approaches, I would suggest, in conclusion, that they reflect a broader distinction between two trends in modern scholarship. Scholars like Schalit assumed that Josephus was writing in and for a hostile world. If already in 1944, at the peak of the Holocaust, Schalit opined that Josephus's hopes for Jewish survival in the Western diaspora were based on an illusion,<sup>52</sup> in the last publication of his lifetime, a 1978 review of J. Sevenster's history of anti-Semitism, Schalit affirmed plainly that "Was wirklich den Haß hervorgerufen hat, war die jüdische Diasporaexistenz als solche" [*What really engendered the hatred [of Jews] was Jewish existence in the Diaspora per se*].<sup>53</sup> That position, which remained of Schalit's Zionism even when idealism about it had disappeared, is diametrically opposed to the view of many scholars today, who assume that the Jews of the Greco-Roman Diaspora did not, as a rule, live continually in insecurity and in fear of what their hostile neighbors and rulers would do to them next. For scholars such as Erich Gruen and John Barclay,<sup>54</sup> that assumption about Diaspora Jews, which might have been especially appropriate for scholars like Schalit, for whom the Holocaust was a pivotal event, and which is a central pillar of the standard popular Israeli narrative today, is simply incorrect. And if it is incorrect, then the whole basis of the presumption, that Josephus was writing apologetically, is undermined. It remains to be seen whether the more optimistic or more pessimistic picture of life in the ancient Greco-Roman Diaspora will achieve the status of consensus.

In summary, apart from calling attention to the existence of a substantial and valuable piece of Josephan scholarship that reflects untold thousands of hours of work and was rescued from oblivion just in the nick of time, the current paper points to three central issues that must be considered by all interpreters of Josephus,

<sup>51</sup> See above, n. 44.

<sup>52</sup> "The *Jewish Antiquities* is the first work written after the Destruction that sees the future of the Jewish people in the West as a positive political program [...] Today, about nineteen hundred years later, we know that Josephus's political program was based on an illusion" (end of Schalit's introduction to his translation of Josephus, 1.lxxxi–lxxxii).

<sup>53</sup> *Gnomon* 50 (1978): 285.

<sup>54</sup> John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1996); Erich Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Hellenistic Culture and Society 30; Berkeley: University of California, 1998); idem, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

especially his *Antiquities*. First: To what extent, and in what ways, was Josephus a Hellenistic writer, and so it is to the Hellenistic or Greco-Roman world that we should turn to understand him? Second: To what extent, and in what ways, was he a Jewish writer, and so it is to the Jewish world that we must turn when trying to understand him? And what texts can best illustrate for us, today, Josephus's Jewish world? And, third, should Josephus's accounts of Jewish history, lore, and law, in his *Antiquities*, be read on the assumption that he was writing to fend off criticism of the Jews and Judaism, or, rather, to inform those who had a sincere interest in learning about such things?

These issues must underpin our basic notions and approaches in interpreting Josephus. Accordingly, apart from all the details to which Schalit's manuscript calls notice, it may be hoped that the opportunity and challenge it provides, to consider the way a great Josephan scholar of an earlier generation dealt with these issues, will enrich our own deliberations concerning them.