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Abbreviations

4QpNah Cave 4, Qumran, *pesher* (commentary), Book of Nahum

*Abr.* Philo, *Abraham*

*Abst.* Porphyry, *On Abstinence*

Acts Acts of the Apostles


*Agr.* Tacitus, *Agricola*

*Ann.* Tacitus, *Annals*

*Ant.* Josephus, *Judean Antiquities*

*Ant. rom.* Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*

*Apol.* Lucian, *Apology [for the Dependent Scholar]*

*Att.* Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*

*Aug., De civ. D.* Augustine, *City of God*

b. Baba Batra Babylonian Talmud, Baba Batra (“The Last Gate”)

b. Sanhedrin Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin (“Assembly”)

b. Ta’anit Babylonian Talmud, Ta’anit (“Tractate”)

b. Yoma Babylonian Talmud, Yoma (“Day”)

*Bibl.* Photius, *Bibliotheca (Library)*

BJP Brill Josephus Project

*Brut.* Cicero, *Brutus*

Cassius Dio Cassius Dio, *Roman History*

Cat. Sallust, *War with Catiline*

*C. Cels.* Origen, *Against Celsus*

CCSL Corpus Christianorum Series Latina (Critical Editions of Christian Texts in Latin)

*Cic., Tusc. Disp.* Cicero, *Tusculan Disputation*

Cod. Codex

*Contr.* Seneca the Elder, *Controversiae (Rhetorical Forensic Exercises)*

CSEL Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Works of Church Fathers in Latin)

*De excidio* Pseudo-Hegesippus, *De excidio urbis Hierosolymitanae*

*De fort. Rom.* Plutarch, *On the Fortune of the Romans*

*De orat.* Cicero, *On the Orator*
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<td>Cicero, <em>Letters to Friends</em></td>
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<td>Fr. in Lam.</td>
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<td>Suetonius, <em>Julius Caesar</em></td>
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<td>Legat.</td>
<td>Philo, <em>Embassy (to Gaius)</em></td>
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<td>Part. or.</td>
<td>Cicero, <em>On Oratorical Partitions</em></td>
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Abbreviations

PG       Patrilogia Graeca (Writings of the Church Fathers in Greek)
Phoen.   Euripides, Phoenician Women
PL       Patrilogia Latina (Writings of the Church Fathers in Latin)
Plut.    Plutarch
Plut., Cat. M. Plutarch, Cato the Elder
Plut., Dem. Plutarch, Demosthenes
Poet.    Aristotle, Poetics
praef.   preface
Praep. evan. Eusebius’s Praeparatio evangelica
Pro Rosc. Cicero, For Sextus Roscius of Ameria
Prob.    Philo, [Every] Good Man [is Free]
r       recto (front side of a manuscript)
Rhet. praecl. Lucian, A Professor of Public Speaking
Rom. or.  Aelius Aristides, Roman Oration
Sat.      Juvenal, Satires
Silv.     Statius, Silvae
Spec. Laws Philo, Special Laws
Suas.     Seneca the Elder, Suasoriae (Rhetorical Persuasive Exercises)
Tit.      Suetonius, Titus
Tro.      Euripides, Trojan Women
v       verso (back side of a manuscript)
Vat.      Vatican
Verr.     Cicero, Against Verres
Vesp.     Suetonius, Vespasian
Vir. ill.  Jerome, On Illustrious Men
Virtues   Philo, On the Virtues
VS       Philostratus, Lives of the Sophists
Werd     manuscript: Berlin lat. 226
y. Yoma  Palestinian Talmud, Yoma (“Day”)
Introduction

Honora Howell Chapman
and Zuleika Rodgers

It is surprising that this volume is the first introductory companion, or scholarly guide, to the writings of Flavius Josephus. From antiquity to the present day, his works have served as an incomparable source for the world of Judea in the Roman period. What would we know of the Herodian dynasty or of the Jewish War and the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 C.E. without Josephus's writings? How limited would our knowledge be of the Judean social and political landscape in the Roman period without the details he provides on the priesthood, the “sects,” and other movements and individuals? What would historians and archaeologists make of Masada or Gamla? Would we have such a clear view of the topography of the region and of the architectural achievements of Herod the Great?

Josephus's works provide these important details and more. He is a witness to biblical textual and interpretative traditions, as well as to the development of halacha. Examining the reception of Josephus reveals much about the way in which Christian societies engaged with Jews and Judaism. Later Jewish interest in his writings indicates something of how different generations interacted with their past.

Josephus, writing in Greek and drawing on Greco-Roman intellectual traditions, in the context of Flavian Rome, and as a proud Jewish priest offers an interpretation of his people’s past and a defense of their culture, while providing a unique glimpse into the complexities of identity politics in the worlds he inhabited.

Yet serious critical engagement with Josephus’s works has only emerged since the 1970s. Previously, scholars—of the Bible, Second Temple Judaism, the New Testament and early Christianity, and archaeologists and historians of ancient Judea—used his writings as a source for external realities but gave little consideration to the narratives themselves in terms of audience, aims, and literary form. Critical engagement with Josephus’s narratives or his literary techniques was limited; he was regarded as a simple (and usually careless) compiler of sources whose bias or agenda could be stripped away to reveal an authentic source or facts about the past. Discrete pieces of information could be extracted from the text without any attempt to understand the way in which the author selected or presented
his material. In his review of scholarship in 1988, Per Bilde calls this approach the “classical
conception of Josephus” (Bilde 1988, 126–141).

Pioneering thematic studies of Josephus started to appear in the 1970s with books by Helgo Lindner (1972), Harold Attridge (1976), and Shaye Cohen (1979). Louis H. Feldman’s groundbreaking thematic and literary studies of Josephus’s biblical interpretation contributed to the new approaches and the development of “Josephan studies.” In the
1980s, the field was advanced by Tessa Rajak’s fine monograph (1983) and two specialized
and thematically oriented collections by Louis Feldman and Gohei Hata (1987 and 1989),
which have also served as guides for scholars.

From the 1990s, critical studies have increased exponentially. A number of doctoral
dissertations have appeared on thematic and literary studies of Josephus’s writings, and
international scholars have gathered to share ideas about the Jewish historian, including:
the International Josephus Colloquia (published in several volumes), the York University
conference (published in Edmondson, Mason, and Rives 2005), and the Josephus Seminar/
Group, which has hosted at least two panels annually at the Society of Biblical Literature’s
annual meeting since 1999. New translations that give attention to the original language
and form of Josephus’s writings have appeared in English, French, German, Hebrew, Italian,
and Japanese. Since 2000, seven volumes of the Brill Josephus Project, edited by Steve
Mason, have presented the first comprehensive English translations of, and commentary
on, Josephus’s works (see Further Reading).

Steve Mason has also developed a website called PACE (Project on Ancient Cultural
Engagement), which has links to each of Josephus’s texts in Greek (connected to Perseus’s
word parsing) and English translations, as well as abstracts of dissertations on Josephus.
The digital nature of the commentaries means they can easily be updated. Advances in
the field have been facilitated by the development of such research tools, starting with the
Rengstorf (1973–1983) and Schalit (1968) Complete Concordance to Flavius Josephus, Heinz
Schreckenberg’s text-critical and bibliographical studies (1972 and 1977), and Louis

This paradigmatic shift demands that Josephus’s writings be subject to the type of critical
analysis that takes consideration of the structure of each narrative, its literary form and rhe-
torical devices, as well as the context in which it was written. Recognition of the importance
of both Josephus’s historical method and his immediate context in Flavian Rome is central
to modern scholarship. As Steve Mason, who has been a leading figure in this methodolog-
ical revolution, observes, “[T]he movement towards reading Josephus through, and not
merely reading through Josephus to external realities, now provides the dominant agenda”
(Mason 2003).

In recent years, an appreciation of how Josephus’s works have also shaped the interaction
with the ancient Jewish past has emerged with studies of the history of their transmission
and reception in a wide variety of contexts. The recent research project in the Faculty of
Oriental Studies at Oxford University led by Martin Goodman and Tessa Rajak has brought
together scholars from a number of disciplines to trace the Jewish reception of Josephus
since Late Antiquity.

Given this intense scholarly attention to the Jewish author and his works, it seems to
be the appropriate time to gather together major strands of Josephan scholarship into
a Companion that can serve as an introduction for advanced undergraduates, graduate
students, and scholars to an author whose works inform and cross several disciplinary
boundaries, including Biblical Studies; Second Temple Studies; New Testament/Early
Christianity; Near Eastern and Roman Archaeology; first-century Roman literature, culture,
and history; Jewish Studies; Patristics; and Medieval Studies. To maximize accessibility for readers, all Greek and Hebrew words have been transliterated, and translations are provided, including ones from the Loeb Classical Library (LCL) and the Brill Josephus Project (BJP). Authors have chosen either “Jewish” or “Judean” to translate the Greek term “Ioudaios.”

I.1 Structure of the Book

The organization of this volume falls into four major sections: Part One, Writings, Part Two, Literary Contexts, Part Three, Major Themes, and Part Four, Transmission and Reception History. Each scholar has of necessity focused attention on key elements of a given topic, while reconsidering older interpretations and providing new readings. Since Josephus’s texts cover his reckoning of Jewish history from Creation to the Flavian era, and have been read for two millennia, it would be impossible to touch upon all the riches to be discovered in his thirty volumes. But at the same time, this volume provides the most up-to-date investigation of the Latin manuscripts of Josephus, which is helpful for anyone interested in text criticism or reception. Notably, we are not providing the traditional biographical information about Josephus; almost all of what we seem to know about him comes from his self-presentation in his own works, which as literary constructions replete with rhetorical and historical concerns cannot provide us simply with facts.

Perhaps it is best to leave it here with what Suetonius a generation later says of Josephus in *Vespasian* 5.6, after reporting that the future emperor received good news from the oracle at Carmel in Judea: “one of the noble captives, Josephus, when he was being thrown into chains, very firmly insisted that he would be released by the same man [Vespasian] soon, but by that time as emperor.” This same confidence and sense of his place in the world as an elite Jew mark all of his writings.

Opening the first section on each of Josephus’s four texts, Steve Mason argues in Chapter 1 that we need to explore questions regarding *Judean War*’s date, context, purposes, content, structures, themes, and devices. By examining the length of each of the seven books, the text’s symmetry, four major themes, and seven major speeches, Mason challenges us to see the author in control of his text—and his own self-image in that text. Chapter 2 treats Josephus’s longest work, *Jewish Antiquities*, a twenty-book survey of 5,000 years of Jewish history from Creation to 66 C.E., the outbreak of the Judean revolt. Daniel Schwartz proposes that the chronological order in this *magnum opus* was controlled by the author Josephus, not by the sources he used. Schwartz examines which main sources Josephus employed for which sections of his history, as well as his technique for ordering the material: a filing system that arranged material into chronological sections devoted to major historical periods with dividers labeled according to each of the early Jewish leaders/rulers, then high priests, and finally Roman governors of Judea. The latter half of *Jewish Antiquities* is an essential source for anyone wishing to work on the Second Temple period, while the entire work provides a window into what interested and mattered to Josephus composing his works at Rome for an audience towards the end of the first century. For Josephus’s *Life*, Steve Mason provides in Chapter 3 an analysis that dates the work within its historical context and examines its possible purposes, content, structures, and themes. Mason favors dating the text to 93/94 C.E., and he examines the text within the larger context of Romans writing about the lives of great men in several (overlapping) genres. Mason warns that searching for “history” in *Life* requires first an appreciation of its rhetoric. In Chapter 4, John Barclay analyzes Josephus’s *Against Apion* as a text written to combat
prejudices against the author and his people. Barclay lays out the organization of the entire work, explaining how Josephus responds to the snobbery and slurs directed at Jews with a positive, welcoming picture of them, while utilizing an apologetic (legally defensive) stance that will later be imitated by Christians. After describing Josephus’s direct or indirect sources, Barclay suggests the “declared,” “implied,” “intended,” and “actual” audiences for this text, and concludes with a postcolonial reading of the text that provides an alternative to the scholarly mining for snippets that so often happens with Against Apion.

Josephus’s literary context shapes Part Two of this Companion. Regarding Josephus as a Roman historian, in Chapter 5, Steve Mason considers how Romans authors presented their texts to their audiences and finds Josephus’s texts to have been produced under the normal circumstances at Rome, with a patron and an audience. With respect to the emperors, Mason shows that Josephus struck three poses: (1) flattery and dissimulation; (2) honesty; and (3) ironic flattery; this does not stop him from questioning the explosive issue of hereditary monarchy in Flavian Rome, proposing aristocracy as a better form of government than “tyranny.” In Chapter 6 on Josephus and Greek literature, Eran Almagor presents a case for viewing Josephus as being right in the thick of late first-century cultural activity surrounding the production of literature, especially oratory. He demonstrates that scholars have generally overlooked Josephus’s texts in their surveys of the “Greek Renaissance” of this period. Setting aside the problem of Josephus’s “assistants,” Almagor explains that Josephus refers to two types of Greco-Roman oratory, and proceeds to examine examples of these in light of what Philostratus tells us about the birth of the Second Sophistic. Almagor concludes that Josephus, like others wishing to make their mark on the cultural scene of his day, plays the role of the exiled “outsider” well—so well, in fact, that this may be why his texts are not studied adequately in classics programs.

The second section of this volume also treats Josephus in his Jewish literary context. In Chapter 7, Paul Spilsbury establishes the education in the Hebrew Bible that Josephus might have received, which with his priestly status and belief in the prophetic role of historians in the Bible as well as dream interpretation, informed his identity and self-presentation. Spilsbury illustrates that Josephus’s texts serve a larger purpose of creating a safe space for Jews to live peacefully within the Roman Empire while enjoying self-determination regarding their laws; this constitution, however, seems predicated on a functioning temple, thus Josephus’s concern for genealogies of priests. Spilsbury urges us to read Josephus’s re-casting of Hebrew Scriptures in the light of his pride in his own culture and perhaps his subtle defiance of Roman culture as well. Considering Josephus within the wider context of Jewish intellectuals at Rome, in Chapter 8, Maren Niehoff focuses upon Philo as another figure from the Greek East who paved the way for Josephus as he worked in different genres to discuss Jewish laws, Roman emperors, and philosophical concepts. Philo’s polemics against Greeks (or Greek culture?) will later be found in Josephus as well, allowing both to construct a “Roman” identity. Niehoff concludes that both Philo and Josephus are trying to convince audiences of the superiority of Jewish thought over Greco-Egyptian religious and philosophical options. In Chapter 9 on Josephus and the New Testament, Helen Bond provides an analysis of three main issues regarding the relationship of Josephus’s works to the New Testament writings: how scholars have used Josephus’s historical record of events in the late Second Temple period in order to understand better the world in which Jesus lived and the movement that followed him; how Josephus illustrates what we find in the Gospels, but also two cautionary examples (Pharisees/Sadducees and messianism); and how Josephus presents key figures rhetorically, and thus differently, in Judean War and
Introduction

Judean Antiquities. Josephus’s works, therefore, provide a counterpoint to the New Testament texts, which have their own rhetorical and theological concerns.

The third section focuses on important themes that are of interest to scholars. In Chapter 10, Zeev Weiss’s in-depth examination of Josephus and the archaeology of Galilee examines the interplay between Josephus’s texts and the material culture of Galilee in the first century C.E., observing that Josephus presents the Galilee and the Golan as Jewish regions. Archaeological evidence can provide insight into questions about the local populations, the level of Hellenization, and the background for the lives of Jesus and his early followers. Examining evidence from both rural and urban centers, Weiss shows that Galileans held on to ancestral customs and chose their own wares over gentile ones, while their coinage also asserted their identity. Considering Josephus as a military historian, in Chapter 11, Jonathan Roth invites readers to view Josephus’s texts as providing critical information about ancient military affairs pertaining to the Romans, Jews, and other ancient nations. While scholars may focus on rhetoric in Josephus’s writings, his accounts, including Judean Antiquities, deserve scrutiny for their depictions of different types of combat in his day, the equipment used, and most famously, the Roman army in Judean War 3, in which he emphasizes training and discipline. Roth encourages readers to investigate the Josephan texts for descriptions of insurgency and counterinsurgency, issues that are certainly of interest to modern military and political leaders.

As this third thematic section turns to Josephus’s treatment of Jewish rulers, Tal Ilan notes in Chapter 12 that women generally played subordinate roles in the Jewish society of that time and were not of primary interest to Josephus, but she finds his works a useful source for discussing Jewish women who were politically prominent in Palestine and elsewhere. Ilan provides her own fresh readings of these key female figures in Jewish history from the biblical period to the Hasmonean and Herodian rulers as well as important women of his own day. On the Hasmoneans specifically, Erich Gruen argues in Chapter 13 that regardless of whether or not Josephus was telling the truth about a family tie to the Hasmoneans, the historian did not deliver a “partisan” interpretation of their actions in his accounts. By examining each ruler, especially in light of 1 Maccabees, Gruen shows that Josephus presents a conflicting—and conflicted—account of the history of this ruling family. In Chapter 14, Jan Willem van Henten reminds us that though Herod the Great is easily the most recognizable Jewish king because of the role he plays in the Gospel of Matthew at the time of the birth of Jesus, Herod also looms large in Book 1 of Josephus’s Jewish War as well as in Books 15–17 of Judean Antiquities. Van Henten compares and contrasts the accounts found in both texts, teasing out the details that show the differences between the two, with generally the more negative portrait appearing in the latter. What becomes apparent especially in Jewish Antiquities is Josephus’s negative assessment of Herod’s lack of control over his family and the effect it has on his governing, with him ending up a tyrant. Through a careful comparison of the two accounts of Herod’s greatest building project, the Jerusalem temple, in Judean War 5 and Judean Antiquities 15, David Kaden has shown in Chapter 15 that the details in the latter text are written to complement those in the former.

In Judean Antiquities, Josephus stresses Herod’s concern for security in connection with his building projects, which, Kaden argues, derives from the social pressure of Domitian’s Rome and perhaps serves as a critique of the emperor.

Part Three of this volume also addresses Josephus’s treatment of other essential aspects of Jewish society in the first century C.E. Albert Baumgarten examines in Chapter 16 how Josephus portrays groups—the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes, the Fourth Philosophy, and the Zealots, as well as certain individuals—Bannus, John the Baptist, and
Jesus—associated with Jewish movements of a ‘sectarian’ nature. He opens his examination with a discussion of the terminology Josephus uses: *hairesis*, *philosophia*, *phylon*, and *tagma*. The translation of *hairesis* as “sect” has been the subject of scholarly debate and Baumgarten proposes a re-definition of the term to render it useful for studying these ancient Jewish groups that display very different characteristics. While the nature of Josephus’s association with the Pharisees might be debated, it is clear that the priesthood is central to Josephus’s identity and to his presentation of Jewish culture and history. In Chapter 17, James McLaren investigates Josephus’s self-identification with, and presentation of, the priesthood. It is clear that, for Josephus, the priesthood is essential to the well-being and functioning of Jewish society (providing leadership in the Mosaic aristocratic/theocratic constitution) and in the post-temple period, they are considered to represent both antiquity and continuity. The excursuses on the high priesthood in *Jewish Antiquities* 10 and 20 demonstrate this significance. As for their much-debated role in the Jewish War: McLaren compares the accounts in *Jewish War* and *Jewish Antiquities* 20 and concludes that the later version, which would seem to contradict the presentation of the priests as opposed to war in *Jewish War*, should be assessed within its larger narrative context and is not critical of the priesthood *per se*. Examining Josephus’s halachic material also yields interesting information about his attitudes to different strands within first-century Jewish society, and, in Chapter 18, David Nakman demonstrates that Josephus does not represent one particular tradition of halachic interpretation. Noting Josephus’s importance as a non-rabbinic source for the development of halacha in this period, Nakman considers the halachic material in the biblical summary in Books 3 and 4 of *Jewish Antiquities*, the presentation of laws in the second part of Book 2 of *Against Apion*, and some of the many other references spread throughout his work, while keeping in mind the various apologetic contexts of the narratives. Nakman concludes that, on the whole, Josephus supports Pharisaic-rabbinic traditions but notes that in many cases, these seem to actually reflect the accepted practice of the day. Controversial ‘sectarian’ issues, such as those concerned with purity/impurity, are of no interest to Josephus, whom he sees as belonging to a mainstream “common Judaism.” The final chapter in Part Three is also concerned with links between Josephus and the rabbinic movement. In Chapter 19, Richard Kalmin compares traditions about the Sadducees that are shared by Josephus and the writers of the Babylonian Talmud. It is clear that such traditions are not transmitted to the rabbis of Babylon directly from Josephus but originate with an independent source. As with Josephus, the rabbis of the Babylonian Talmud, in their vilification of this group, focus on the Sadducees’ rejection of the authority of non-biblical traditions. While individual Sadducees are condemned in the Palestinian Talmud, this overwhelmingly negative portrayal of the group, based on their rejection of the traditions of the sages, is added by the compilers of the Babylonian Talmud with the arrival of traditions from the West some time in the mid-fourth century C.E.

One of the most exciting aspects of Josephan studies, the transmission and reception history of his texts, is the focus of the fourth section of this volume. In Chapter 20, Tommaso Leoni provides a very detailed and helpful examination of the manuscript tradition and of the editions one can—and should—use to read each of Josephus’s four works in the original Greek and Latin translations. For anyone in search of a major undertaking in text criticism, Leoni highlights that we need a new critical edition of Josephus’s *Judean War*. The importance of the Latin translations of “the single most copied historical work of the Middle Ages” (O’Donnell 1979, 246) to the reception of Josephus in the West is clear from Levenson and Martin’s pioneering examination of the Latin manuscripts in Chapter 21. They have focused their research on the manuscripts of *Jewish War* and *Jewish Antiquities*. 
6–20 because of the lack of critical editions and inaccessibility. In this chapter, they present their analysis of 103 (of at least 230) Latin manuscripts of these texts with background information on the translations and an overview of important work in modern scholarship. They provide charts for the following: the classification of manuscript groups; an example of one passage with readings from seventy-four manuscripts with a guide to how the textual tradition can be analyzed; and a chart of manuscripts they have studied (forty-five of which are currently available online).

This proliferation of manuscripts of Josephus’s works attests to the intense interest in his writings from antiquity onwards among Christians. One of the reasons for this long, and complex, reception history, is the existence of the Testimonium Flavianum, a passage about Jesus of Nazareth that exists in all the extant manuscripts of Book 18 of the Jewish Antiquities (18.63–64). In Chapter 22, Alice Whealey charts how this passage has been transmitted, interpreted, or ignored by Christians (and the Jewish author of the Sefer Yosippon) and examines the debate surrounding its authenticity that began already in the sixteenth century. This debate continues to the present time, and Whealey outlines scholarly views, based on manuscript traditions and on stylistic and linguistic analyses, about the authenticity, partial at least, of the Testimonium Flavianum. The survival of Josephus’s writings is due to Christian transmission, but as Sabrina Inwolocki shows in Chapter 23— for the period of the second to the fifth century C.E.—they were preserved in the service of Christian anti-Judaism. Her survey of patristic literature illustrates that Josephus’s works were so frequently cited and consulted that they were on one occasion even referred to as a “fifth gospel” (Schreckenberg 1987, 317). The Church Fathers turned to Josephus’s writings in the service of biblical exegesis as they provided extra-biblical material for their study of the Hebrew Bible and for the New Testament (on Jesus, John the Baptist, and James, brother of Jesus). Furthermore, Josephus’s presentation of the antiquity of his people could be reworked into Christian apologetic (against the pagan charge of novelty), while at the same time providing proof texts for the punishment of the Jews—with the destruction of the temple—for not accepting Jesus as the Messiah. She laments the increasing ‘misuse’ of Josephus for anti-Jewish polemics from the fourth century onwards. This subject is taken up by Karen Kletter in Chapter 24, her study of the use of Josephus from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages. She notes the constant interest in Josephus’s works as attested not just in the large number of extant manuscripts and references but also from material in Latin vernacular literature. The almost canonical status of his writings by the medieval period—often in support of supercessionist ideas—was assured, due to their polemical use by Eusebius, Jerome, and the author of On the Destruction of the City of Jerusalem (De excidio urbis Hierosolymitanae). Josephus’s writings remained useful for Christian study of the Bible, and Kletter shows how, from the eighth century, Josephus became central to Christian exegetical practices. This interest in Josephus’s works for the study of the Bible secured him a place in Christian intellectual and educational activity through the work of the Victorines and Peter Comester, and back into the polemical forum of Jewish-Christian disputation. In popular non-clerical circles, his works were heavily drawn upon for the Vindicta Salvatoris traditions, which in turn were combined with his use as an exegetical and topographical source for the crusader accounts.

While Josephus’s works were being used extensively in Christian circles, there is almost complete silence in Jewish circles until the tenth century when a Hebrew paraphrase, the Sefer Yosippon, appeared in Southern Italy, relating the history of the Jews from the time of Daniel and Esther to the destruction of the Second Temple. In Chapter 25, Saskia Dönitz
observes that this text was to become the most influential Hebrew historical work of the medieval period. She provides an introduction to the Sefer Yosippon, outlining issues relating to which sources the author used and the location and time of its writing, and then surveys the history of its reception and translation, while providing a review of scholarship. Another medieval translation, the Slavonic version of Josephus’s Jewish War, is taken up in Chapter 26, with Kate Leeming’s examination of how scholars have tried to explain the origin of this work, which is not based on any extant Greek text. Since Josephus himself notes in the prologue to the Jewish War that he wrote an earlier version in his native language for Jews in the East, scholars have postulated that this Slavonic text preserves that original version. Leeming undertakes a survey of the main issues: the history of the text, divergences between the Greek and Slavonic texts, omissions and additions (many of these are deemed “christological”), other omissions and additions ascribed to translators or copyists, as well as other additions that might be attributable to Josephus. She concludes that because of the complex history of transmission and the Slavonic version’s many discrete textual problems, the origins of this text remain uncertain.

The final chapters in this section provide a glimpse into the reception of Josephus in modern times. In Chapter 27, Silvia Castelli examines the translation and reception of Josephus in the Italian Renaissance. The first translation of Jewish Antiquities into Italian at the end of the fifteenth century surprisingly takes place not within an ecclesiastical context but for a Renaissance duke. Castelli observes that from the second half of the fifteenth to the end of the sixteenth century, we need to see the interest in Josephus’s writings in terms of his value as an ancient historian. She traces a shift during the sixteenth century when the Jewish Antiquities are again used for the study of the Bible, and with the various prohibitions of vernacular versions of the Bible at the end of the sixteenth century, Josephus’s writings start to gain in popularity and often serve as an alternative to the proscribed vernacular biblical translations. In Chapter 28, Gohel Hata presents a brief history of English translations of Josephus.

The final two chapters focus on the twentieth century. In Chapter 29, Daniel R. Schwartz traces the changing attitudes towards Josephus in Hebrew scholarship from the 1920s to the end of the century. Schwartz shows that the process of transformation of Josephus from low-life traitor in the 1930s to the skilled historian and writer of the 1990s was influenced by trends in scholarship: translations, archaeological discoveries at Qumran and Masada, and the appreciation of the literary nature of historiography. But he also links this reassessment to the changing world in which these scholars found themselves, from pre-State Mandatory Palestine, the experience of the Holocaust, to the wars of the 1970s and 1980s. Schwartz reminds us, “Historians are scholars and professionals, but they also live in the real world.” Honora Chapman concludes this volume with Chapter 30, examining how two films, Monty Python’s Life of Brian and History of the World, Part 1, reflect the realities faced by Josephus’s Jews under the Romans, while providing a comic spin that also tweaks modern culture of the late 1970s and early 1980s in the United Kingdom and the United States. Josephus’s ‘afterlife’ on the Internet continues the long tradition of transmission, albeit sometimes deliberately mutilated to make classicists laugh.

It is indisputable that Josephus has shaped so much of how historians have reconstructed the world of ancient Judea, whether for the purpose of investigating ancient Jewish and Near Eastern history and culture, or the origins and development of Christianity. The aim of this Companion is to present the latest approaches to the study of Josephus in his original context as well as the uses of his texts in later ages.
REFERENCES


REFERENCES TO ONLINE PROJECTS

AHRC Josephus Project (Faculty of Oriental Studies at Oxford University), available at: www.orinst.ox.ac.uk/research/josephus/home.


FURTHER READING


PART I

Writings