

# Perceptions of Flavius Josephus in the Medieval Greek and Latin Literary Traditions

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εἰ τὰ ἐπίχειρα τῶν ἀλιτηρίων ἰουδαίων, τῶν κατὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐπιλυττησάντων, γνῶναι βούλει, ἔντυχε τῇ Ἰωσήπου, ἀνδρὸς ἰουδαίου, φιλαλήθους δέ, περὶ τῆς ἀλώσεως ἱστορία, ἴν' εἰδήης θεήλατον τιμωρίαν οἶαν οὐδὲ ὁ σύμπας οἶδε χρόνος, ἀφ' οὗ δὴ καὶ ἐφ' ὅσον ἄνθρωποι.

If you wish to know the punishment of the sinning Jews, who raged at Christ, read the history of Josephus—a Jewish man, but one who loved truth—about the sack, so that you will know about such a God-sent punishment that the entire time has not known since when and as long as men [have lived].<sup>1</sup>

This is the vehement reply of the theologian Isidore of Pelousion (A.D. 360/370–d. after 433) to the epistle of a friend who was interested in reading about how Jews had been historically punished for the crucifixion of Christ.<sup>2</sup> Isidore instructed his friend to read an author who, according to him, was committed to writing the truth even though he was a Jew: the historian Flavius Josephus (37–100),<sup>3</sup> a writer highly esteemed and frequently consulted by Christians in the late antique and medieval

<sup>1</sup> Isidore of Pelousion *Ep.* 1692, ed. P. Évieux (Paris 2000).

<sup>2</sup> For an overview of the epistolary corpus of Isidore see L. Larsen, “The Letter Collection of Isidore of Pelusium,” in C. Sogno et al. (eds.), *Late Antique Letter Collections: A Critical Introduction and Reference Guide* (Berkeley 2017) 286–308.

<sup>3</sup> The bibliography on Josephus is rich. Indicative works include H. Howell Chapman et al. (eds.), *A Companion to Josephus* (Chichester 2016); W. den Hollander, *Josephus, the Emperors, and the City of Rome: From Hostage to Historian*

times. Josephus' two chief historical accounts, the *Jewish War* and the *Jewish Antiquities*,<sup>4</sup> transmitted abundant and valuable information on Jewish or (from the Christian perspective) on early Christian history. Hence, they were often treated by Christians as commentaries or exegetical handbooks to the Bible.

Because of the importance of Josephus to the history of Christianity, the translation of his oeuvre (particularly the *Antiquities* and the *War*) into Latin was a desideratum. A Latin *War* was produced in the fourth or fifth century by an unknown translator. In the middle of the sixth century, a translation of the *Antiquities* was commissioned by the well-known scholar Cassiodorus (ca. 485–ca. 585), who had initiated the ambitious project of translating several Greek texts into Latin from his monastery in southern Italy.<sup>5</sup> The Latin translations of Josephus were incredibly popular throughout the Middle Ages; they were widely read and copied.<sup>6</sup> It should be added that medieval Greek and

(Leiden 2014); J. Edmondson et al. (eds.), *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome* (Oxford 2005); J. Sievers et al. (eds.), *Josephus and Jewish History in Flavian Rome and Beyond* (Leiden 2005); T. Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and his Society*<sup>2</sup> (London 2002). See also the older studies: H. Thackeray, *Josephus: The Man and the Historian* (New York 1929); L. Feldman, "Flavius Josephus Revisited: The Man, his Writings, and his Significance," *ANRW* II 21.2 (Berlin 1984) 763–862.

<sup>4</sup> A general study on the *War* is S. Mason, "Josephus's *Judean War*," in *Companion* 13–35; on the *Antiquities*, D. Schwarz, "Many Sources but a Single Author: Josephus's *Jewish Antiquities*," in *Companion* 36–58.

<sup>5</sup> On the translations see D. Levenson and T. Martin, "The Ancient Latin Translations of Josephus," in *Companion* 322–344; "The Latin Translations of Josephus on Jesus, John the Baptist, and James: Critical Texts of the Latin Translation of the *Antiquities* and Rufinus' Translation of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 45 (2014) 1–79; and "Akairos or Eukairos? The Nickname of the Seleucid King Demetrius III in the Transmission of the Texts of Josephus' *War* and *Antiquities*," *JStJ* 40 (2009) 307–341. Particularly for the *Antiquities*, see also G. Lembi, "The Latin Translation of Josephus' *Antiquitates*," in *Josephus and Jewish History* 371–381.

<sup>6</sup> It is extremely unfortunate therefore that the Latin translations of Josephus' works are now largely inaccessible, as there is no modern critical edition of the *War* or of Books 6 to 20 of the *Antiquities*. Scholars interested in the Latin *War* and the Latin *Antiquities* from Book 6 onwards can read them

Latin intellectuals not only gained knowledge of Josephus by reading his works themselves, but also by reading intermediary sources that contained Josephan material. In the East, such sources included the *Church History* of Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 260–339/340);<sup>7</sup> in the West, similar works would have been the Latin translation of Eusebius by Rufinus of Aquileia (344–411) and the Christian adaptation of the Latin *War* known as *De excidio Hierosolymitano* or Pseudo-Hegesippus.<sup>8</sup>

A number of studies have investigated the use of Josephus' writings by several medieval Greek and/or Latin writers, as well as their impact on certain genres in either the Greek or the Latin literary traditions.<sup>9</sup> In this article I use a synthetic approach to

only in very old editions which are seriously flawed. See Levenson and Martin, in *Companion*, esp. 322–323 and 331–335, where helpful comments on the shortcomings of these editions are offered.

<sup>7</sup> Much has been written on Eusebius' use of Josephus. Indicative studies are A. Johnson, *Eusebius* (London 2014) 85–11, and *Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius' Praeparatio Evangelica* (Oxford 2006) 128–130; G. Hata, "The Abuse and Misuse of Josephus in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, Books 2 and 3," in S. Cohen et al. (eds.), *Studies in Josephus and the Varieties of Ancient Judaism* (Leipzig 2006) 91–106 (specifically for Eusebius' treatment of Josephus as a means to express his anti-Jewish stance).

<sup>8</sup> For the Latin translation of Eusebius see 303 and nn.42–43 below. "Pseudo-Hegesippus" is an anonymous reworking of the section of the *War* which focuses specifically on the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70. From internal textual evidence, the work can be dated to the period between 367 and 378. Relatively recent works which discuss Ps.-Hegesippus in different contexts are M. Anderson, "Mistranslations of Josephus and the Expansion of Public Charity in Late Antiquity," *Early Medieval Europe* 25 (2017) 139–161, and R. Pollard, "The *De Excidio* of 'Hegesippus' and the Reception of Josephus in the Early Middle Ages," *Viator* 46 (2015) 65–100. A classic study is that of A. Bell, "Josephus and Pseudo-Hegesippus," in L. Feldman et al. (eds.), *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity* (Detroit 1987) 349–361.

<sup>9</sup> The most notable investigations into the medieval reception of Josephus are those of Heinz Schreckenberg: *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition in Antike und Mittelalter* (Leiden 1972); *Rezeptionsgeschichtliche und textkritische Untersuchungen zu Flavius Josephus* (Leiden 1977); "The Works of Josephus and the Early Christian Church," in *Josephus, Judaism* 315–324; "Josephus in Early Christian Literature and Medieval Christian Art," in H. Schreckenberg et al. (eds.),

examine the range of different ways in which Josephus was perceived by medieval *literati*, examining the views and attributes of the Jewish historian that emerged in the Greek and the Latin literary traditions. I will further explore how the works of the Jewish author, particularly the *Antiquities* and the *War*, served as stylistic and historiographic paradigms for medieval Greek and Latin authors.

*Josephus as part of the common Greek and the Latin intellectual heritage*

A valuable insight into how early-medieval Western intellectuals viewed texts concerning the history of Christianity that were originally written in Greek, such as Josephus' works, is offered by Cassiodorus in his *Institutions of Divine and Secular Learning*.<sup>10</sup> The *Institutions* is an extensive work on the ideal library of a monastery and a guide for the theological education of monks.<sup>11</sup> Chapter 1.17 is dedicated specifically to important church historians who deal with affairs of "ecclesiastical *gravitas*,"

*Jewish Historiography and Iconography in Early and Medieval Christianity* (Assen 1992) 1–138; "Zu Flavius Josephus: Plädoyer für eine neue *Editio maior critica* des griechischen Textes," *JStJ* 38 (2007) 513–529. Other studies that discuss the medieval reception of Josephus: M. Goodman, *Josephus's The Jewish War: A Biography* (Princeton 2019) 35–44; T. Kampianaki, "Preliminary Observations on the Reception of Flavius Josephus in Byzantine Historical Writings: The Accounts of John Zonaras, Niketas Choniates and Michael Kritovoulos," *Byzantina Symmeikta* 28 (2018) 209–228; K. Kletter, "The Christian Reception of Josephus in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages," in *Companion* 368–381, and "Politics, Prophecy and Jews: The Destruction of Jerusalem in Anglo-Norman Historiography," in K. Utterback et al. (eds.), *Jews in Medieval Christendom: Slay Them Not* (Leiden 2013) 91–115; S. Bowman, "Josephus in Byzantium," in *Josephus, Judaism* 362–385; R. Fishman-Duker, "The Second Temple Period in Byzantine Chronicles," *Byzantion* 47 (1977) 126–156.

<sup>10</sup> *Cassiodori Senatoris Institutiones*, ed. R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford 1937).

<sup>11</sup> The work was designed as a two-volume compilation, although in the Middle Ages the two volumes often circulated separately. The first volume is dedicated to Christian writings and the second to secular authors. For an analysis of the models, purposes, and content of the *Institutions* see the extensive introduction by M. Vessey in J. Halporn, transl., *Cassiodorus: Institutions of Divine and Secular Learning and On the Soul* (Liverpool 2004), esp. 24–79.

in Cassiodorus' words (1.17.8). Two points are particularly worthy of note. First, he counts Josephus among church historians, speaking highly of both the *Antiquities* and the *War*, and characterising Josephus as a "subtle and complex" (*subtilis nimis et multiplex*) writer (1.17.20, transl. Halporn). Second, the Cassiodoran corpus contains both Latin and Greek histories that had been translated into Latin, including the historical works of Josephus. Cassiodorus indicates why he himself had commissioned the translations of three Greek church historians who, according to him, recounted the events in the Greek world: "so that eloquent Greece cannot boast that it possesses an indispensable work which has not been available to you" (1.17.9–10, *ne insultet habere se facunda Graecia necessarium, quod vobis iudicet esse subtractum*).<sup>12</sup> The fact that Cassiodorus considers Greek and Latin historians equally prestigious authorities for the Christian past and characterises certain Greek historical texts as "indispensable" to the Latin audience indicates that he regards church histories written in Latin and Greek as products of a unified religious culture. In other words, works such as Josephus' historical accounts, originally written in Greek and related to the beginnings of Christianity, were understood by Cassiodorus as an intellectual product common to both Greek-speaking and Latin-speaking Christians.

The same conclusion can be drawn, for example, from the work *On Illustrious Men* of Jerome (ca. 347–419/20), produced in 393. This is a collection of short biographical notices of prominent men who wrote on theological and ecclesiastical matters. Just as in Cassiodorus' *Institutions*, in this work too Josephus is regarded essentially as a Christian author, with Jerome giving a brief outline of the life and oeuvre of the Jewish historian.<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, he includes biographies of authors who wrote not

<sup>12</sup> The three were the fifth-century authors Sozomen, Socrates, and Theodoret. Cassiodorus compiled the translations of these histories into a single corpus, the *Historia tripartita*.

<sup>13</sup> *Liber de viris illustribus* 13, ed. E. C. Richardson (Leipzig 1896). For a general discussion of the use of Josephus by Jerome see Kletter, in *Companion* 371–372.

only in Latin but also in Greek and Syriac, which indicates that, despite the language barrier, Jerome saw all these works as belonging to a single body of Christian literature.

The examples of Cassiodorus and Jerome serve to illustrate that Josephus' works, although originally written in Greek, were perceived by Latin-speaking scholars as part of their own literary culture. Modern investigations into the medieval Greek and Latin literary traditions sometimes tend to examine them separately. However, when one looks at how the Latin educated elite viewed writers such as Josephus, who transmitted important information about early Christianity and became known to the West through translation, it becomes clear that the Greek and the Latin intellectual traditions were understood to be very much interconnected in certain contexts, particularly in religious/Christian contexts.

*Josephus as a figure symbolising the unification of two cultures*

A paradox in the medieval reception of Josephus is that, although he became fully integrated into the Christian tradition and was treated essentially as a Christian writer, both eastern and western intellectuals openly acknowledged his Jewish origins. In the West, Bede (ca. 673–735), for example, in his treatise *On the Reckoning of Time*, presents Josephus as an authority on the correct interpretation of Mosaic Law.<sup>14</sup> Orderic Vitalis (1075–ca. 1142), who composed an ecclesiastical history focusing on church affairs in England and Normandy, called Josephus “the celebrated historiographer of the Hebrews” (*Hebraeorum nobilis historiographus*),<sup>15</sup> while for the English chronicler Ranulf of Higden (ca. 1280–1364) Josephus was “the famous historian of the Jews” (*Judaeorum historicus insignis*).<sup>16</sup> Likewise, among Greek

<sup>14</sup> *De temporum ratione liber*, in *Beda opera didascalica* II, ed. C. W. Jones (Turnhout 1977) 454.

<sup>15</sup> *Historia Ecclesiastica*, PL 188.111.

<sup>16</sup> *Polychronicon* 1.2: *Polychronicon, together with the English Translation of John Trevisa and of an Unknown Writer of the Fifteenth Century*, ed. C. Babington and J. R. Lumby (London 1865) I 20.

sources, Eusebius of Caesarea exalted Josephus as “the most distinguished historian among the Hebrews” (ὁ τῶν παρ’ Ἑβραίοις ἐπισημώτατος ἱστορικῶν).<sup>17</sup> The chronicler John Malalas (ca. 490–570s) referred to Josephus as “the philosopher of the Hebrews” (ὁ Ἑβραίων φιλόσοφος),<sup>18</sup> while George the Monk, the chronicler of the ninth century, praised both Josephus and Philo as “the wise men of the Hebrews” (οἱ ἐξ Ἑβραίων σοφοί).<sup>19</sup>

Pointing out Josephus’ Jewishness was a subtle means by which Christian writers sought to enhance the reliability of his account. Ideas such as that of Jerusalem falling into Roman hands on account of the sins of its people carried extra weight when expressed by an author who was himself a Jew. Likewise, the details offered by Josephus about the historicity of prominent biblical figures, notably John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth, acquired special importance as transmitted by a non-Christian writer. Although the authenticity of the *Testimonium Flavianum*—the famous passage of the *Antiquities* which discussed the historical Jesus and hailed him as the Messiah—has been questioned since the sixteenth century,<sup>20</sup> it was thought to be genuine by medieval Christian authors. Thus, stressing Josephus’ Jewish origins implicitly helped them present the *Testimonium* as an unbiased (non-Christian) testimony to the existence of Christ. With the passage of time, though, it seems that citing Josephus using phrases indicating his Jewish background—such as “Josephus, the Hebrew” or “Josephus, the Hebrew historian”—became an almost formulaic way of referring to him in both western and eastern literature, suggesting that the employment

<sup>17</sup> *HE* 1.5.3, ed. G. Bardy (Paris 1952).

<sup>18</sup> *Chronographia* 10.26, ed. I. Thurn (Berlin 2000).

<sup>19</sup> *Chronicon*, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig 1904) I 324.

<sup>20</sup> *AJ* 18.63–64. For an overview of the scholarly discussions on its authenticity see A. Whealey, “The *Testimonium Flavianum*,” in *Companion* 345–355; L. Feldman, “On the Authenticity of the *Testimonium Flavianum* attributed to Josephus,” in E. Carlebach et al. (eds.), *New Perspectives on Jewish-Christian Relations* (Leiden 2012) 13–30.

of a Jewish historian as prestigious as Josephus by Christian writers did not strike their audiences as unacceptable.

As important as the fact that Christian authors did not conceal Josephus' Jewish origins is that they emphasised his defection to the Roman side. Latin as well as Greek authors often mentioned information related to Josephus' Roman 'success story': his correctly prophesying that Vespasian would rise to the Roman throne, his attaching himself to the entourage of Vespasian and Titus, and his being granted Roman citizenship.<sup>21</sup> For example, Eusebius and (following him) Jerome record that Josephus' works were deposited in the public library of Rome and that a statue of the historian was erected in the city,<sup>22</sup> information which was probably incorrect but which nonetheless stressed that Josephus' reputation as a prominent Roman citizen was firmly established among medieval men of letters.<sup>23</sup> The Carolingian chronicler Ado of Vienne (ca. 800–ca. 875) noted that Josephus had been deemed worthy of grace and favour by Vespasian because he had predicted Vespasian's rule.<sup>24</sup> In a Greek source, an epistle of the renowned and prolific scholar-patriarch Photius (ca. 810–d. after 893), we read that Josephus was publicly registered as a Roman and as Flavius, and, more importantly, that he was nowhere in Rome looked upon as a foreigner.<sup>25</sup> Another prominent intellectual, Theodore Metochites (1270–1332), writes that the Jewish historian became a Roman citizen towards the end of his life and spent time at the

<sup>21</sup> On the life and career of Josephus see S. Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*<sup>2</sup> (Peabody 2003) 36–54; den Hollander, *Josephus, the Emperors* 1–7.

<sup>22</sup> Eus. *HE* 3.9.2–3; Jerome *De viris illustribus* 13.

<sup>23</sup> As William den Hollander has argued, the claim that Josephus' works could be found in a Roman public library during the historian's own time is probably a hypothesis of Eusebius himself based on Josephus' statement that Titus ordered the *War* "to be made public" (τὰ βιβλία δημοσιῶσαι, *Vita* 363); den Hollander, *Josephus, the Emperors* 135–136.

<sup>24</sup> *Chronicon*, *PL* 123.80.

<sup>25</sup> *Epistulae et Amphilochia*, ep. 247.23 ff., ed. V. Laourdas (Leipzig 1983–1985).

imperial court of Titus and Domitian.<sup>26</sup> In Josephan manuscripts, moreover, one can find miniatures precisely illustrating the author's close connection with Rome and the Flavian dynasty. For instance, a miniature in the *Par.lat.* 5058, a late-eleventh-century codex of the Latin *War*, shows Josephus holding his work and presenting it to Vespasian and Titus, who are depicted enthroned in imperial regalia.<sup>27</sup> Likewise in the twelfth-century Fulda *Lat.* C1 of the Latin *Antiquities*, Josephus is depicted (along with fellow Jews) writing his work before Vespasian, who sits enthroned.<sup>28</sup>

In view of these considerations, one can deduce that medieval scholars were fully aware of and embraced Josephus' dual identity: his Jewish background on the one hand and his Romanisation on the other. The historian was regarded by medieval *literati* as a figure who symbolised the unification of the beginnings of Christianity and Roman identity, much like his works, which brought together and merged the early Christian and the Roman past. More broadly, the emphasis on both Josephus' Jewish origins and his acquired 'Romanness' may also reflect a keen interest in the life of a prominent individual who transcended cultural and ethnic boundaries, a circumstance very familiar to both the western and the Byzantine societies in which populations of diverse ethnic backgrounds were integrated.

In connection with this last point, it is worth mentioning that a person who was inspired by Josephus' historical accounts and, like the ancient historian, had a complex cultural identity, was the anonymous author of the so-called *Josippon*, a historical narrative in Hebrew recounting the period of the Second Temple. This text was written by a Byzantine Jew who was active in the

<sup>26</sup> Περὶ Φίλωνος 16.2.13–15, in *Theodore Metochites on Ancient Authors and Philosophy*, ed. K. Hult (Gothenburg 2002) 154.

<sup>27</sup> D. Robb, *The Art of the Illuminated Manuscript* (London 1973) 173; Schreckenberg, in *Jewish Historiography* 102–103, 105.

<sup>28</sup> R. Hausmann, *Die historischen, philologischen und juristischen Handschriften der Hessischen Landesbibliothek Fulda* (Wiesbaden 2000) 44–45; Schreckenberg, in *Jewish Historiography* 106–107, 109.

mid-tenth century in southern Italy (probably Naples), an area which saw the coexistence of the Greek, Latin, and Jewish traditions.<sup>29</sup> To compose his work, the author, who had no knowledge of Greek, made use of Latin texts: most notably the Latin translation of the *Antiquities* and Ps.-Hegesippus, the Christian reworking of the *War*. The *Josippon*, much like Josephus' historical narratives, mirrors its author's diverse cultural identity; it is no coincidence, for instance, that, in reworking his Latin Josephan sources, this Byzantine-Jewish writer seems to have drawn on ideology that emerged in the discourse of Latin-speaking Christians from the ninth to the eleventh centuries, such as the notion of Christian soldiers sacrificing themselves in battle.<sup>30</sup>

*Josephus as a 'truth-loving' writer*

From an investigation of the body of medieval Greek texts that either directly or indirectly drew on the *Antiquities* and the *War*, it becomes clear that Josephus enjoyed a high reputation in Byzantium as a truthful historian (as I have shown elsewhere).<sup>31</sup> Further research has enabled me to trace how Josephus' reputation as a truth-loving author probably came into being in medieval Greek literature.

The Jewish historian himself tried to make clear to his audience that he sought to record only facts in his works and vehemently criticised earlier authors whose writings distorted the truth. He explained, for instance, that he felt compelled to recount the Roman-Jewish War, because he knew many of the events of that period from personal experience and because some previous historians had "perverted the truth" (*Aḡ* 1.4.1–5, τοὺς ... λυμαιομένους τὴν ἀλήθειαν). He indicated, in other

<sup>29</sup> General information can be found in S. Dönitz, "Sefer Yosippon (*Josippon*)," in *Companion* 382–389, and "Historiography among Byzantine Jews: The Case of *Sefer Yosippon*," in R. Bonfil et al. (eds.), *Jews in Byzantium. Dialectics of Minority and Majority Cultures* (Leiden 2012) 951–968; D. Flusser, "Josippon," in F. Skolnik et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia Judaica*<sup>2</sup> (2007) 461–462.

<sup>30</sup> Dönitz, in *Jews in Byzantium* 959–960.

<sup>31</sup> Kampianaki, *Byzantina Symmeikta* 28 (2018) 224–227.

words, that he envisaged his own account as a work that restored it. He also criticised historians who favoured the Romans or expressed hatred towards the Jews and thus did not give an accurate account of what truly happened (*BJ* 1.2–3). Josephus thus implies that, unlike them, he would be impartial and truthful. He also stressed that he composed his account of the Jewish-Roman War “for those who love the truth” (*BJ* 1.30, τοῖς γε τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἀγαπῶσιν), and explicitly set truth as the sole purpose of his narrative in both the *Antiquities* (20.157) and the *War* (7.455). From claims such as these, one can deduce that Josephus tried to cultivate for himself and convey the image of a historian committed to recording only the absolute truth; he *wished* to be seen by his readers as a truth-loving author.

Interestingly, passages that reveal Josephus’ intention to compose a truthful narrative are repeated in some medieval Greek texts. For instance, the anonymous author of the medieval epitome of the *Antiquities*, a text dated to the twelfth century at the latest,<sup>32</sup> inserts at the beginning of his account Josephus’ statement that he was forced to produce his work “because of the past historians who perverted the truth in their writings” (διὰ τοὺς ἐν τῷ γράφειν λυμαινομένους τὴν ἀλήθειαν).<sup>33</sup> Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos (d. after 1326/7) too, who repeatedly characterised the Jewish historian as a truth-loving writer, inserted an extract into his *Church History* in which Josephus emphatically said that he transmitted the truth in his writings.<sup>34</sup> He derived this extract from one of his sources, the *Church History* of Eusebius, who had picked up on this passage from Josephus and copied it verbatim into his work.<sup>35</sup> From this evidence, it appears

<sup>32</sup> For information on this epitome see Kampianaki, *Byzantina Symmeikta* 28 (2018) 212–216; Schreckenber, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition* 128–130, and *Rezeptionsgeschichtliche* 518–519.

<sup>33</sup> *Flavii Josephi Antiquitatum Iudaicarum epitome*, ed. B. Niese (Berlin 1896) 1.10–12 (which corresponds to *AJ* 1.4).

<sup>34</sup> *Historia ecclesiastica*, PG 145.801.

<sup>35</sup> *HE* 3.10.9. Eusebius mistakenly notes that this Josephan extract is found in the *Antiquities*, whereas in fact it is in the *Life* (361), ed. B. Niese, *Flavii Iosephi Opera* IV (Berlin 1890).

that medieval Greek intellectuals were familiar with and endorsed the profile of the truth-loving historian that Josephus wished to promote for himself.

The *Church History* of Eusebius must have also played a role in establishing the reputation of Josephus as a historian who sought to transmit the truth. For instance, recounting the horrible death of Herod, who, according to Acts, was eaten by worms, Eusebius marvelled that Josephus' account in the *Antiquities* agreed with the biblical narrative, pointing out emphatically that the historian "clearly testifies to the truth" (2.10.2, ἐπιμαρτυρῶν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ δῆλός ἐστιν, transl. K. Lake). A bit later in his text, Eusebius added that the Jewish historian "confirms the truth" (συναληθεύοντα) of the Bible, as he offers the same date and describes the events in the same manner as did Acts (2.10.10). An appreciation of Josephus' truthful account also underlies the statement that he was a "valuable witness" (1.6.9, ἀξιόχρεων ... μάρτυρα) to Jewish affairs. Later writers who read or drew on the *Church History* would be able to see that the Josephan works had received Eusebius' seal of approval as sources of early Christian history and as narratives true to the facts.

In addition, the content of the *Testimonium Flavianum* (the existence of Jesus, his presentation as a wonder-worker, and his acceptance as the Messiah) must have provided a strong incentive for medieval Greek authors to highlight Josephus' truthfulness. This hypothesis can be confirmed if one observes how often mentions of Josephus' attention to truth are related to the *Testimonium*. For instance, introducing the *Testimonium* in one of his epistles, Isidore of Pelousion wrote that Josephus, an "extremely devoted Jew" (Ἰουδαῖος ἄκρος), "truthfully paraphrased the Old Testament" (ep. 1259.4–7, τὴν Παλαιὰν Διαθήκην μετὰ ἀληθείας παραφράσας). The Church father Oikoumenios (6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> cent.) also remarked that Josephus, a Jewish man, was "constrained by the truth" (ὕπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας βιαζόμενος) to write about Christ in the *Antiquities*,<sup>36</sup> while the chroniclers George the

<sup>36</sup> *The Complete Commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse*, ed. H. Hoskier (Ann Arbor 1928) 88.8–10.

Monk and Michael Glykas (12<sup>th</sup> cent.) both noted that “truth-loving” (φιλαλήθης) Josephus discussed John the Baptist and Christ in his writings.<sup>37</sup> By emphasising the historian’s commitment to transmitting the truth, intellectuals aimed at reinforcing his authority as a witness to the historicity of Christ.

Josephus was presented and characterised as an author who loved the truth not only in Greek but also in Latin Christian sources.<sup>38</sup> What I would stress here, however, is that, in comparison, direct references to Josephus’ truthfulness were not as frequent in Latin as in Greek texts. As far as one can tell from the extant editions of the Latin *Antiquities* and the Latin *War*, various passages where Josephus criticised earlier historians who did not record facts or where he emphasised his own commitment to preserving the truth were accurately translated.<sup>39</sup> The Latin terms that usually appeared as equivalent to ἀλήθεια were either *veritas* (truth) or its near synonym *fides* (faith/trust). In other words, truthfulness as a virtue characterising the image that the historian wished to cultivate for himself does emerge from the Latin translations.

A text which underlines that Josephus was truthful and reliable is Ps.-Hegesippus. It stresses that Josephus wrote “on account of faith in his history” (*propter historiae suae fidem*) and that “he did not determine the truth in advance” (*non ... veritati praejudicat*) because

<sup>37</sup> George, *Chronicon* I 324.18–20; Michael Glykas, *Annales*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn 1836) 436.16–20.

<sup>38</sup> Kampionaki, *Byzantina Symmeikta* 28 (2018) 224.

<sup>39</sup> See for instance *The Latin Josephus* I, ed. F. Blatt (Copenhagen 1958) 1.1; *Bellum Judaicum*, ed. E. Cardwell and R. M. Pollard (2017: sites.google.com/site/latinjosephus) 1.prologue (*scriptis autem eorum partim accusatio, partim laudatio continetur: nusquam vero exacta fides reperitur historiae*); 1.2 (*Itaque indignum esse duxi, errantem in tantis rebus dissimulari veritatem*); 1.5 (*Honoratur itaque apud nos historiae veritas, quae a Graecis negligitur*); 1.12 (*studiosis veritatis magis quam voluptatis perscripsi*); 7.11.5 (*de veritate autem confidenter dicere non pigebit, quod eam solam scopum mihi per omnia quae scripsi proposuerim*). These examples from the Latin *War* are taken from *De Bello Judaico*, ed. E. Cardwell (Oxford 1837), an edition based on an earlier one dated to 1534(!). Available online, it is often used by scholars interested in accessing the Latin *War*.

he was not a Christian.<sup>40</sup> An opposite view is expressed by Amulo, archbishop of Lyon from 841 to 852, who believes that the works of Philo and Josephus, Jewish men “estranged from truth” (*alieni a veritate*), “make many untrue and gratuitous additions” (*multa de sua falsa et superflua inserunt*).<sup>41</sup> Amulo’s attempt to disparage Josephus as an author who wrote lies and falsehoods essentially confirms that his works were indeed considered truthful accounts by at least some educated men of his time. These examples indicate that the virtue of the Jewish historian as a truth-loving writer was an established aspect of his image in the Latin branch of his reception; still, it was not as widespread in the Latin literary tradition as in the Greek.

It is probable that truthfulness as a quality attributed to Josephus was less widespread in the Latin literature partly because of the text from which Latin intellectuals often learnt about early Christian history: the translation of Eusebius’ *Church History* by Rufinus.<sup>42</sup> Rufinus essentially produced a paraphrase of Eusebius’ work rather than an accurate translation, removing and adding information with relative freedom.<sup>43</sup> In fact he did not translate faithfully the passages stressing that Josephus’ account was a truthful one. It is worth looking at how two of these were altered by Rufinus:

(1) *HE* 2.10.2:

θαυμάσαι δ’ ἄξιον τῆς περὶ τὴν θεῖαν γραφὴν καὶ ἐν τῷδε τῷ παραδόξῳ συμφωνίας τὴν τοῦ Ἰωσήπου ἱστορίαν, καθ’ ἣν ἐπιμαρτυρῶν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ δηλὸς ἐστίν, ἐν τόμῳ τῆς Ἀρχαιολογίας

<sup>40</sup> *Hegesippi qui dicitur historiae libri V* 2.12.1, ed. V. Ussani I (Vienna 1932) 164.

<sup>41</sup> *Epistola, seu liber contra Judaeos ad Carolum regem*, PL 116.157.

<sup>42</sup> T. Christensen, *Rufinus of Aquileia and the Historia Ecclesiastica, Lib. VIII–IX, of Eusebius* (Copenhagen 1989) 10.

<sup>43</sup> *Eusebius Werke II Die Kirchengeschichte. Die lateinische Übersetzung des Rufinus*, ed. E. Schwarz (Leipzig 1903). For an overview of Rufinus’ methodology as he translated and altered Eusebius’ text see M. Humphries, “Rufinus’s Eusebius: Translation, Continuation, and Edition in the Latin Ecclesiastical History,” *J ECS* 16 (2008) 143–164.

ἐννεακαιδεκάτω, ἔνθα αὐτοῖς γράμμασιν ὧδέ πως τὸ θαῦμα διηγείται·

*miraculo autem dignum est tantam consonantiam divinarum scripturarum cum historiographo gentis illius deprehendi. ipse etenim Iosephus de eisdem commemorans nono decimo libro Antiquitatum his quibus infra scriptum est haec sermonibus refert:*

(2) *HE* 2.10.10:

ταῦτα τὸν Ἰώσηπον μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων ταῖς θείαις συναληθεύοντα γραφαῖς ἀποθανμάζω·

*cum in ceteris quam plurimis Iosephum, tum in his tam integre divinae scripturae concordare valde miratus sum.*

In his translation of the first extract, Rufinus altogether omitted the short phrase καθ' ἣν ἐπιμαρτυρῶν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ δηλὸς ἐστίν, which highlighted that Josephus in the nineteenth book of the *Antiquities* testified to the truth. In translating the second segment, he slightly changed the original text by noting that Josephus was “entirely” or “correctly” (*integre*) in agreement with the biblical narrative,<sup>44</sup> an amendment which downplayed the underlying idea that the Jewish historian, in parallel with the Bible, wrote the truth.<sup>45</sup> Unlike the Greek readers of Eusebius, therefore, the Latin *literati* were not exposed to the image of Josephus as a truth-loving author through the translation of Rufinus.

Evidence of Josephus' reputation as a writer committed to preserving the truth can be found as late as the Renaissance. For example, in the first printed translation of the *Antiquities* into the Italian vernacular, published in 1544, the editor, Pietro Lauro, praised Josephus' account as “true history” (“vera historia”) in his editorial note.<sup>46</sup> Manuel Chartophylax, a Cretan priest who during the 1570s translated the *Antiquities* and the *War* into

<sup>44</sup> Lewis and Short s.v.: “D.1. Lit., wholly, entirely” and “2. Trop. b. Purely, correctly.”

<sup>45</sup> LSJ s.v. συναληθεύω: “A.II. join in seeking or speaking the truth,” which indicates that the subject joins secondarily in speaking the truth.

<sup>46</sup> On Lauro's edition see S. Castelli, “Josephus in Renaissance Italy,” in *Companion* 403–413, at 407, 409. For Lauro's editorial note see n.48 below.

Greek vernacular,<sup>47</sup> relied on Lauro's editorial note to compose his preface; he found it necessary to highlight Josephus' truthfulness to a greater extent, saying that past theologians called him "truth-loving" (φιλαλήθη) and that anyone who wished to know of the Jews' misfortunes after the crucifixion of Christ "with the absolute truth" (με την πάσαν αλήθειαν) should read this historian.<sup>48</sup>

*Josephus as a wise and a philosophic man*

The Jewish historian was sometimes thought of and presented by medieval Greek authors (mainly chroniclers) as "wise" (σοφός). The first chronicler we know to have called him "most wise" (σοφώτατος) was John Malalas (1.5.5). Later chroniclers who characterised Josephus as a wise man included the author of the *Chronicon Paschale*,<sup>49</sup> George the Monk,<sup>50</sup> Michael Glykas (*Annales* 436.16), and Ephraem of Ainos (late 13<sup>th</sup> or early 14<sup>th</sup> cent.).<sup>51</sup> A second attribute ascribed to Josephus by Malalas was "philosopher" (10.26.7–8). In the work of George the Monk, we read that Josephus "practised at the highest degree the philosophy" (ἄκρως ἀσκήσας τὴν φιλοσοφίαν) of the Essenes (I 331.22). The epithet "most philosophic" (φιλοσοφώτατος) was used of Josephus in an anonymous polemic treatise against the Jews.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>47</sup> The translation is preserved in the codices *Barberin.gr.* 228 and 229, ed. M. Chalvatzidaki, *Δημώδης απόδοση της ιουδαϊκής αρχαιολογίας και του ιουδαϊκού πολέμου του Φλάβιου Ιώσηπου (1<sup>ος</sup> αι. μ.Χ.) στη δημώδη ελληνική από τον Μανουήλ Χαρτοφύλακα (16<sup>ος</sup> αι. μ.Χ.)* (diss. Univ. of the Aegean 2013); see esp. 23–37 for information about the writer and the dating of the text. Cf. Schrekenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition* 64.

<sup>48</sup> Chalvatzidaki, *Δημώδης απόδοση* 210, where Manuel's preface and Lauro's editorial note are compared side by side.

<sup>49</sup> *Chronicon paschale* 461.18–19 Dindorf and also 427.14. The *Chronicon Pachale* was "probably written in the 630s": B. Baldwin, "Chronicon Paschale," *ODB I* (New York 1991) 447.

<sup>50</sup> *Chronicon I* 128.10 and 324.18.

<sup>51</sup> *Historia Chronica*, ed. O. Lampsides (Athens 1990), lines 8–9.

<sup>52</sup> *Anonymi auctoris Theognosiae, Dissertatio contra Iudaeos* 2.327, ed. M. Hostens (Turnhout 1986).

Josephus thus enjoyed some reputation as a philosopher among Greek men of letters in medieval times, in addition to his reputation as a historian. This is further evidenced by the fact that he was sometimes believed to be the author of two works with strong philosophical underpinnings. One is *On the Supremacy of Reason* (*Περὶ ἀντοκράτορος λογισμοῦ*) or, as it is better known, 4 Maccabees, which is a kind of homily focusing on the superiority of reason and wisdom to passions.<sup>53</sup> The other is *On the Cause of the Universe* (*Περὶ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς αἰτίας*), which addresses the themes of spirit, afterlife, and resurrection.<sup>54</sup> Both attributions are nowadays deemed spurious.<sup>55</sup> The belief that Josephus penned works of a philosophical character must have been partly based on the Jewish author himself, who claimed that he planned to compose four books on Jewish Law and the Jewish understanding of God and his nature, themes with clear philosophical implications.<sup>56</sup> In sum, that Josephus was dubbed a “wise” and “philosophic” author indicates that, in Byzantium,

<sup>53</sup> So, for example, the attribution of 4 Macc. in Eus. *HE* 3.10.6. It is worth adding that 4 Macc. is often attributed to Josephus also in Syriac contexts. For instance, in most Syriac manuscripts that transmit 4 Macc. the text is preserved under Josephus’ name: see S. Minov, “Syriac,” in A. Kulik et al. (eds.), *A Guide to Early Jewish Texts and Traditions in Christian Transmission* (Oxford 2019) 95–137, at 113. It is also remarkable that the sixth book of the *War* is included in the *Codex Ambrosianus* (7a1), which transmits the Syriac version of the Old Testament, and is presented as the fifth book of the Maccabean corpus. All ‘five’ Maccabean books are connected to Josephus: L. I. Lied, “2 Baruch and the Syriac Codex Ambrosianus (7a1): Studying Old Testament Pseudepigrapha in their Manuscript Context,” *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 26 (2016) 67–107, at 91.

<sup>54</sup> Photius (*Bibl. cod.* 48) notes the common attribution of the text to Josephus, although he himself suggests that the text might in fact have been composed by a third-century Christian writer, Gaius, presbyter of Rome.

<sup>55</sup> See however L. Capponi, “Review of den Hollander, *Josephus, the Emperors, and the City of Rome*,” *Histos* 9 (2015) xii–xviii, at xvi–xvii, suggesting that the possibility of Josephus being indeed the author of 4 Macc. deserves reconsideration.

<sup>56</sup> See primarily *AJ* 20.268. However, despite Josephus’ claims, such work was never published.

there was a clear view of the historian as a writer with strong mental capacities, good sense, and expertise.

A similar perception of Josephus does not seem to have prevailed in the medieval Latin literary tradition. This is despite the fact that, for example, Jerome (*De vir.* 13) followed Eusebius in ascribing the philosophical 4 Macc. to the Jewish historian. Orderic Vitalis (*PL* 188.111) did call both Josephus and Philo *sophistae* (“sophists/philosophers”), but overall such characterisations by Latin authors seem to be scant.

At this point, it is interesting to consider the characterisations as wise author and philosopher that are attributed to Josephus in some manuscripts of the Slavonic translation of the *War*, a work variously dated from the ninth to the fourteenth century.<sup>57</sup> The beginning of the original *War* is omitted from the translation.<sup>58</sup> In its place, a group of manuscripts offer an independent preface. In a fifteenth-century codex, this preface is introduced with the heading: “This is the book of the wise Josephus, great in word and vast of mind, who was of Jewish descent, truly loyal to philosophy.”<sup>59</sup> Here, the historian is commended for his intellect and devotion to philosophical thought.

The characterisation of Josephus as a wise writer is not random. Another historical text, translated from Greek into Slavonic and praised for its wisdom by an early fifteenth-century copyist, is that of John Zonaras (12<sup>th</sup> cent.).<sup>60</sup> This Byzantine historian composed a universal chronicle starting from Genesis,

<sup>57</sup> K. Leeming, “The Slavonic Version of Josephus’s *Jewish War*,” in *Companion* 390–401; H. Leeming and K. Leeming, *Josephus’ Jewish War and its Slavonic Version: A Synoptic Comparison* (Leiden 2003), with a detailed introduction on the Slavonic Josephus.

<sup>58</sup> Leeming, in *Companion* 393.

<sup>59</sup> Leeming and Leeming, *Josephus’ Jewish War* 16–17.

<sup>60</sup> B. Todorov, “Monks and History: Byzantine Chronicles in Church Slavic,” in K. Fresco et al. (eds.), *Translating the Middle Ages* (Farnham 2012) 147–159, at 155.

making heavy use of Josephan material.<sup>61</sup> The copyist of the Slavonic Zonaras explained that the wisdom of the work's content would be beneficial to the reader's "manners and discourse." Another Byzantine chronicler regarded as wise by the same copyist was George the Monk,<sup>62</sup> whose universal chronicle had also been given a Slavonic translation. Notably, the translator of the Slavonic Josephus inserted much material from George's chronicle into his text.<sup>63</sup> On this evidence, it would appear that historical texts that were translated from Greek and dealt with the biblical past (such as Josephus' *War*) were generally held in high regard by Slavonic *literati* and were thought to be full of wisdom. The appreciation of these histories as wise writings may indicate their great importance to Slavonic-speaking Christians as sources of early Christian history, given that there existed no full translation of the Old Testament into Slavonic before the late fifteenth century.<sup>64</sup>

Finally, it is important to note that medieval writers stressed the positive qualities of Josephus, such as his truthfulness, wisdom, and expertise, for apologetic reasons. Such remarkable virtues accounted for and justified the use of his writings by Christian authors, even though he was a Jew. Moreover, the emphasis on Josephus' qualities further reinforced the reliability and validity of the material contained in his works as it related to Old and New Testament history.

*Josephus as a linguistically gifted writer*

Another prominent aspect of Josephus' positive image particularly in the medieval Greek tradition concerns his linguistic

<sup>61</sup> On the chronicle of Zonaras see L. Neville, *Guide to Byzantine Historical Writing* (Cambridge 2018) 191–199. Zonaras did not have direct access to the *Antiquities*, drawing on a Byzantine epitome of the work instead: see Kampianaki, *Byzantina Symmeikta* 28 (2018) 212–218.

<sup>62</sup> Todorov, in *Translating the Middle Ages* 157.

<sup>63</sup> Leeming and Leeming, *Josephus' Jewish War* 11, 16–17, 19–20, 60, 98.

<sup>64</sup> H. Cooper, *Slavic Scriptures: The Formation of the Church Slavonic Version of the Holy Bible* (Madison 2003) 34–35.

and stylistic qualities. As Josephus composed his works “following the Greek excellence of language” (κατὰ τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν τῆς γλώττης εὐγένειαν),<sup>65</sup> Greek men of letters were able to evaluate and appreciate his prose from a stylistic point of view. Understandably, assessing the attributes of the historian’s language was impossible for Latin *literati* who did not know Greek and could not access the original texts. A notable exception was Cassiodorus, who, possessing the linguistic skills to read Josephus in the original, hailed him for his “marvelously clear” (*mirabili nitore*) narrative in the *War* (*Inst.* 1.17.23).

An idea of how much Josephus’ language and style appealed to Greek men of letters is offered by two highly learned and rhetorically accomplished scholars, the patriarch of Constantinople Photius and Theodore Metochites. The former included in his *Bibliotheca* two notices on Josephus, on the *War* and on the *Antiquities*.<sup>66</sup> Likewise, in his *Semeioseis gnomikai*, a collection of essays on a wide range of works and subjects, Metochites dedicated an essay to Josephus, paying attention specifically to the linguistic and stylistic virtues of the historian’s writings.<sup>67</sup> Metochites, who had read the *Bibliotheca*,<sup>68</sup> shared some of Photius’ opinions about the Jewish author. Both scholars, for example, assessed the language of his works as pleasing and charming,<sup>69</sup> with Metochites in particular repeatedly stressing that the author’s beautiful expression was a result of his inherent talent.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Metochites *Περὶ Φίλωνος* 16.1.19–20 (p.152).

<sup>66</sup> *Bibliotheca* cod. 47 and 76. For some observations on Photius’ treatment of Josephus see J. Schamp, “Flavius Josèphe et Photios,” *JÖB* 32 (1982) 185–196.

<sup>67</sup> *Περὶ Ἰωσήπου*, in *Theodore Metochites on Ancient Authors and Philosophy (Semeioseis gnomikai 1–26 and 71)*, ed. K. Hult (Gothenburg 2002) ch. 15.

<sup>68</sup> E. Fryde, *The Early Palaeologan Renaissance* (Leiden 2000) 360.

<sup>69</sup> Photius writes that Josephus’ expression is characterised by “charm” (ἡδονή): cod. 47.25. Metochites notes that Josephus’ language is “charming and sweet” (ἡδὺς δὲ καὶ ἰλαρὸς): *Περὶ Ἰωσήπου* 15.2.13 (p.146).

<sup>70</sup> *Περὶ Ἰωσήπου* 15.2.1, 15.2.14–16, 15.3.15–17, 15.3.19–22, 15.4.23–24, 15.4.29–30.

They also acknowledged that Josephus was particularly adept at composing persuasive speeches,<sup>71</sup> a stylistic feature closely connected to language structure. Both scholars appreciated the abundant clarity of his expression, using the same terms to characterise his speech: “clear” (καθαρός) and “limpid” (εὐκρινής),<sup>72</sup> qualities traditionally viewed by the Byzantines as essential for a worthy historical account. Interestingly, Josephus was praised for precisely the same reason—the clarity of his prose—by the Latin scholar Cassiodorus, as noted above.

The image of Josephus as a writer who was proficient in using language is complemented by that of ‘tragic’ Josephus. As has been shown by previous scholarship, the Jewish historian derived a wide range of vocabulary and scenes from the ancient Greek tragedians, essentially inviting his audience to perceive parts of his works—particularly his presentation of the destruction of Jerusalem—as tragedies.<sup>73</sup> Indeed, several medieval Greek writers read Josephus’ accounts as such. Mentioning the crimes of Herod the Great against his family as recorded by Josephus, Eusebius pointed out very eloquently that “the shadows in their story, which Josephus has narrated at length in the history of Herod, are darker than any in tragic drama” (τραγικὴν ἅπασαν δραματουργίαν ἐπισκιαζούσης τῆς περὶ τούτων ὑποθέσεως, ἦν εἰς πλάτος ἐν ταῖς κατ’ αὐτὸν ἱστορίαις ὁ Ἰώσηπος διελέλυθεν, *HE* 1.8.4). Appalled at the *teknophagia* of Mary—a Jewish woman who, almost starved to death during the siege of Jerusalem, ate her own child—Basil of Caesarea (ca. 329–379) noted that “the *Jewish History* [i.e. *War*] recounted in the form of a tragedy this dramatic act” (καὶ τοῦτο τὸ δράμα Ἰουδαϊκὴ ἐτραγώδησεν ἱστορία).<sup>74</sup> John Chrysostom (340s–407) too said

<sup>71</sup> *Bibliotheca* cod. 47.25–26; *Περὶ Ἰωσήπου* 15.4.24–25.

<sup>72</sup> *Bibliotheca* cod. 47.24–25; *Περὶ Ἰωσήπου* 15.2.13, 15.3.19.

<sup>73</sup> H. Howell Chapman, “‘By the Waters of Babylon’: Josephus and Greek Poetry,” in *Josephus and Jewish History* 121–146; L. Feldman, “The Influence of the Greek Tragedians on Josephus,” in A. Ovadiah (ed.), *The Howard Gilman International Conferences I Hellenic and Jewish Arts* (Tel Aviv 1998) 51–80.

<sup>74</sup> *Homilia dicta tempore famis et siccitatis*, *PG* 31.324.4–5.

that Josephus “recounted in the form of tragedy [the Jews’] misfortunes” (τὸν καὶ τὰς συμφορὰς αὐτῶν τραγωδήσαντα).<sup>75</sup> Another significant Church father, Cyril of Alexandria (378–444), observed that Josephus “recounted in the form of a tragedy, using a thousand mouths, the misfortunes of the Jews” (ὁ μυρίαὶς στόμασι τὰ Ἰουδαίων ἐκτραγωδήσας πάθη).<sup>76</sup>

These observations on the linguistic and stylistic traits of the *War* and the *Antiquities* indicate that in medieval times Josephus’ works were appreciated and read by Greek intellectuals not only for their content but also for their aesthetic approach to the recording of history. His writings were treated as both significant historical accounts and as works which merited to be read as pieces of literature. The author himself was admired for his literary artistry and grace.

*The Antiquities and the War as repositories of stories*

In connection with the observation that Josephus’ writings were perceived as tragedies, one should note that the *Antiquities* and the *War* were generally seen and employed by educated men across East and West as repositories of animated stories, many of which related to human afflictions and weaknesses. A notorious story that made a lasting impression on medieval Greek and Latin writers was, for example, the fierce dispute between Herod the Great and his sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, whom Herod eventually executed.<sup>77</sup> For medieval authors, Herod

<sup>75</sup> *Adversus Judaeos*, PG 48.896.16.

<sup>76</sup> *Commentarius in xii prophetas minores*, ed. P. E. Pusey (Oxford 1868) II 185.4–5.

<sup>77</sup> Herod’s continual conflicts with his sons are recounted towards the end of *AJ* 16. In medieval Greek literature, reminiscences of this account can be found, for example, in John Tzetzes, *Historiae* 6.52, ed. P. Leone (Naples 1968), and Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos, *Synopsis S. Scripturae*, PG 147.628–629. See also the book epigram contained in f. 61<sup>v</sup> of the thirteenth-century *Vat.gr.* 136: Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams (consulted 22/9/2019), <https://www.dbbe.ugent.be/occurrences/17770>. The manuscript contains the twelfth-century chronicle of John Zonaras. The epigram corresponds to the section where Zonaras narrates Herod’s execution of his

came to exemplify an extremely negative father figure. Other graphic accounts that were often mentioned or hinted at by medieval writers illustrated the attachment of the Jews to their wealth, such as the vivid scene of the Jews who swallowed their treasures and gold during the capture of Jerusalem or the scene of the person in the Roman camp seeking the Jews' ingested gold in their excrement.<sup>78</sup>

One of the most resilient and widely-cited episodes was of course the *teknophagia* of Mary.<sup>79</sup> This incident marked a crescendo in the Josephan narrative and was interpreted by Josephus himself as God's punishment on the Jewish people. For

sons, a section which draws heavily on the *Antiquities*. A Latin author who made an interesting reference to this section of the *Antiquities* is, for instance, the chronicler Ralph of Diceto (ca. 1130–1202), who mentions the conflict between Herod and his son Alexander in order to draw a parallel with the civil strife between king Henry II and his sons in the years 1173–1174: *Radulfi de Diceto decani Lundoniensis opera historica. The Historical Works of Master Ralph de Diceto, Dean of London*, ed. W. Stubbs (London 1876) I 359–360. Ralph uses this episode from the *Antiquities* in a didactic manner, as an admonitory historical example of a family feud, advising against similar strifes happening in the future.

<sup>78</sup> B $\bar{J}$  5.421 and 5.550. Greek writers who make mention of either of these scenes are, for instance, John Zonaras, *Annales*, ed. M. Pinder (Bonn 1841) I 549.10–12; Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos, *De Excidio Hierosolymitano*, PG 147.602. In medieval Latin literature, echoes of these accounts emerge most notably in the narrative of the First Crusade by Fulcher of Chartres (ca. 1059–1127), who recounts that, after the sack of Jerusalem in 1099, the Christians burnt the corpses of Muslims to extract the gold they had swallowed: *Historia Hierosolymitana* 1.28, ed. H. Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg 1913) 301 ff. See also William of Newburgh, *Historia Rerum Anglicarum*, ed. R. Howlett, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II., and Richard I* 4.5 (London 1884) I 319–320, and the discussion in N. Vincent, “William of Newburgh, Josephus and the New Titus,” in S. Rees Jones et al. (eds.), *Christians and Jews in Angevin England: the York Massacre of 1190, Narratives and Contexts* (York 2013) 57–90, at 72.

<sup>79</sup> B $\bar{J}$  6.199–219. For discussions on this episode see H. Howell Chapman, “Josephus and the Cannibalism of Mary,” in J. Marincola (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography II* (Maiden 2007) 419–426, and “‘A Myth for the World’: Early Christian Reception of Infanticide and Cannibalism in Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum* 6.199–219,” *SBL Seminar Papers* (2000) 359–378.

medieval authors this act of cannibalism came to exemplify man's most decadent behaviour in times of severe crisis, with Mary presented as an extremely negative mother figure and implicitly juxtaposed with the Virgin Mary. Reminiscences of this episode can be found in the Greek chronicles of George the Monk and John Zonaras,<sup>80</sup> while scholars such as Eusebius, Basil of Caesarea, and Photius presented it as divine retribution for the Jews' crucifixion of Christ or as a sinister omen for the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.<sup>81</sup> In Ps.-Hegesippus' Christian reworking of the Latin *War*, the *teknophagia* episode was considerably expanded. Inspired by a passage in the *War*—the short speech addressed by Mary, full of madness, to her son before killing him—Ps.-Hegesippus offers a longer, more detailed one to emphasise the atrocity of Mary's act (5.40). Likewise, receiving impetus from the brief passage in which Josephus revealed Vespasian's dismay and horror upon learning of this incident, Ps.-Hegesippus attributed a lengthy speech to Vespasian, who is presented lamenting the misfortunes that had befallen Jerusalem (5.41). The *teknophagia* spurred the imagination of medieval artists as well; miniatures related to this episode adorn several Greek and Latin manuscripts, such as the ninth-century *Par.gr.* 923, a copy of John of Damascus' *Sacra Parallela*,<sup>82</sup> and the early eleventh-century *Monac.lat.* 4453, a Gospel book of Otto III.<sup>83</sup>

The interest in such memorable accounts of Josephus shows that medieval *literati* greatly admired the historian's skill in crafting episodes and scenes of heightened drama. In the context of medieval cultures, in which lively story-telling was much

<sup>80</sup> George, *Chronicon* I 385.24–386.14; Zonaras, *Annales* 538.21–539.10.

<sup>81</sup> Eus. *HE* 3.6.21–28; Basil *Homilia*, *PG* 31.324.1–8; Photius *Bibl.* cod. 47.7–12.

<sup>82</sup> Four scenes related to the *teknophagia* are on f. 227r: K. Weitzmann, *The Miniatures of the Sacra Parallela, Parisinus graecus 923* (Princeton 1979) 246–247.

<sup>83</sup> The miniature of Mary slaughtering her child is on f. 188v: E. Klemm, *Die ottonischen und frühromanischen Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek I* (Wiesbaden 2004) 197.

appreciated, the picturesque qualities of Josephus' narrative would have certainly been important.

*The Antiquities and the War as prototypes for literary genres*

In addition to being employed by medieval *literati* as sources of graphic stories, the *Antiquities* and the *War* came to play a critical role in the formation of literary genres that were popular in both the Greek East and the Latin West in medieval times. The *Antiquities* and the *War* were very useful for authors of church histories (i.e. chronological accounts of the development of Christianity) and authors of biblical compendia (texts offering an overview and a paraphrase of the biblical content). Works of these genres drawing on Josephus and written in Greek include the church histories of Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, and Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos. In the Latin literary tradition, the most characteristic texts that belong to these genres and which derive much material from Josephus are the translation of Eusebius by Rufinus and the *Historia Scholastica* of Peter Comestor (d. ca. 1178).<sup>84</sup> The *Antiquities* and the *War* were also particularly influential in the formation of universal chronicles as a genre (i.e. narratives which usually started with the Creation of the world and reached up to recent events). Josephan materials can be found in numerous medieval Greek chronicles, starting already with the third-century chronicle of Julius Africanus (ca. 160–ca. 240) and reaching up to the chronicles of George Kedrenos (11<sup>th</sup> cent.) and John Zonaras. In the Latin West, chronicles containing material from the *Antiquities* and the *War* include those of the Frankish authors who flourished under the Carolingians in the ninth century, such as Ado of Vienne and Frechulf of Lisieux (fl. 820–850), English and French chroniclers, e.g. Ralph of Diceto, Ranulf Higden, and Guillaume de Nangis (d. 1300).

A feature shared by texts in these three genres is that they incorporated abridged versions of Jewish/early Christian history.

<sup>84</sup> PL 198.1053–1722; see *Petri Comestoris Scolastica Historia. Liber Genesis*, ed. A. Sylwan (Turnhout 2005), for the part of Comestor's work which recounts specifically the Creation.

As works with abundant material about the early Christian past, the *Antiquities* and the *War* were, along with the Bible, the most likely sources of information for writers on this subject. Authors even compared pieces of information from Josephus with information from the biblical text, which attests to how reliable and formidable he was thought of as a historian. In addition to being a valuable source, Josephus provided authors of church histories, biblical compendia, and universal chronicles with a concrete scheme for the order and structure of their Jewish material and its integration with the information on the history of the Roman Empire. More than that, the use of Josephus' works satisfied one of the main purposes traditionally adopted by authors composing such works: to achieve an unfragmented presentation of history, whether sacred or profane. Incorporating Josephan materials into their works allowed church historians and authors of biblical compendia to trace the uninterrupted history of Christianity from its early origins up to their own time. For universal chroniclers, it was particularly important that the *Antiquities* and the *War* put the Roman Empire—which was perceived by both the Byzantines and the Westerners to be part of their political, cultural, and intellectual heritage—into a Jewish/Christian time frame. Josephus thus helped eastern and western chroniclers to link Byzantium and the kingdoms of western Europe respectively to the early Christian past through the history of the Roman Empire. In other words, Josephus offered material to chroniclers for tracing the history of their states back to the Creation and the beginning of mankind.

### *Conclusion*

Through this survey of the ways in which the Jewish historian was viewed in medieval times, I hope to have shown that Josephus enjoyed such a remarkable reputation as a truthful historian and a linguistically skilful author that his works, although originally written in Greek, belonged to a well-established and widely-shared intellectual tradition across the Greek-speaking East and the Latin-speaking West. By adopting a comparative approach to how Josephus was perceived across East and West, this article has demonstrated that their emphasis

on the historian's Jewishness, truthfulness, wisdom, and expertise were all means adopted by medieval *literati* to enhance the validity of his works. It therefore suggests that Greek and Latin intellectual men often used the same mechanisms to account for the use, and boost the authority, of an important non-Christian writer.

Josephus' *Antiquities* and *War* became stylistic as well as historiographical paradigms which influenced how eastern and western scholars understood and presented their past in similar ways. They informed much of the writing of history that discussed the beginnings of Christianity and, like the Bible, they became part of the standard body of knowledge that would be used by both Greek and Latin writers to offer an unfragmented treatment of the history of the Church or of contemporary states. Josephan episodes, which had become representative of human tragedy and human sin, inspired medieval writers and artists in their own compositions; this shows that these parts of the Josephan narrative were so powerful and evocative that they still resonated many centuries later.

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