SPECTACLE AND THEATER
IN JOSEPHUS’S BELLUM JUDAICUM

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This dissertation explains how Josephus employs spectacle and theater in his *Bellum Judaicum* to focus and color the events he is portraying and how his elite hellenized audience from both Graeco-Roman and Jewish backgrounds could have understood his history of the war. Previous scholars have identified tragic allusions in the *Bellum*, but I present the first study of Josephus’s use of spectacle and theater as literary devices. These are clearly attested in other literature of his day and, therefore, conform to his audience’s literary tastes and expectations. This dissertation shows how the historian attempts to persuade his readers to accept his account of the “truth” concerning the Jewish War by focusing his audience’s vision upon particular people, places, and events, which are presented in a theatrical framework. The three main chapters concentrate on scenes in the *Bellum* which contain spectacular and dramatic material and which thereby serve as vehicles for promoting Josephus’s message. Chapter 2 examines the beginning of the Roman siege of Jerusalem and how Josephus makes the Temple the most prominent focus of visual attention for both “good” Jews and Romans, especially Titus. Chapter 3 investigates Josephus’s account of a mother’s act of cannibalism against her own baby as a *mythos*. I argue that the theatrical framing and language of this scene set up the tragedy of the destruction of the Temple and the innocence of Titus. Chapter 4 discusses the dramatic mass suicide of the Sicarii at Masada within the larger context of book 7’s treatment of the exercise of Roman military power. In this study I apply a game theory model which has been developed by Paul Plass to describe political opposition at Rome. Through this examination of reactions to Roman power, I conclude that Josephus was not endorsing the methods or message of Eleazar and his group of Jewish rebels.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Spectacle (spectaculum/σπετακλον: something that is seen or watched) and theater were an intrinsic part of Roman life. Carlin Barton has put it succinctly: “The stage and the arena, the ludic and the spectacular, were at the heart of Roman life.” For entertainment, the Romans would attend the circus to see the races, or the arena, such as the magnificent Flavian Amphitheater built in Rome when Josephus was living there after the war, to see gladiatorial matches or mock naval battles. These games, or spectacles, were bloody and fatal, or, as Paul Plass called them, “packages for retailing wholesale violence.” He explains, “By inflicting pain to lessen pain, bloody games, like tragic drama, were effective because the attraction their repellent features exerted also brought relief.” Further, as Shadi Bartsch points out, at these venues the emperor and the people commingled and inspected one another, “read” their current status, and oftentimes reversed roles from spectator to spectacle. Spectacle was not confined to games and other athletic events. It also could be found in the theaters, where old and

1 C. Barton, The Sorrows of the Ancient Romans, The Gladiator and the Monster, Princeton, 1993, p. 187, describes how essential honor was to Roman identity, and the fact that honor had to be contested in a game in order to be established and maintained: “Therefore the ludic, the spectacular, far from being peripheral, was for the Romans a necessary precondition of the sacred, of a person’s most essential being.”
2 See Suetonius, Vespasian 9 and Titus 7-8, on the amphitheater.
3 P. Plass, The Game of Death in Ancient Rome: Arena Sport and Political Suicide, Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1995, p. 138. For Plass, spectacles and political suicide can both be viewed in this light. In chapter 4, I use his application of game theory to political suicide in Rome in my study of the latter portion of B.J. 7, which includes the account of the mass suicide at Masada.
4 Ibid., p. 136.
5 S. Bartsch, Actors in the Audience, Theatricality and Doublespeak from Nero to Hadrian, Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1994. On p. 5, she cites Dio’s description of the crowd during Nero’s Greek tour (63.15.2-3) who become spectacles as they faint in order to escape his wretchedly long productions. Bartsch also cites Josephus once on p. 3, for his description of Caligula silencing the tax-protesting crowd at the circus by having them killed on the spot (Ant. 19.25-6), but she does not incorporate Josephus’s works further.
new dramas were shown, as well as at dance and mime productions. Elite Romans who attended these public spectacles also sought entertainment and edification through literature, which often relied upon visual and theatrical effects to convey information.

Official Roman public life, political and religious, was also based upon visible rituals and meetings of the people, which bound the people together into a res publica. These visible events included sacrifice, assemblies, and (less often) triumphs. Political and religious events involved the meeting of people together who saw and heard each other. As Andrew Bell has argued in an article on Cicero’s use of spectacle to gain and wield power, the political and religious life of Rome was highly visual, and was described as such as early as the second century B.C.E. by Polybius. 

This concentration on vision (opsis) as an explanatory device was a product of philosophical and scientific investigation, based on visual observation, from the time of the Greek Enlightenment, and it underwent much refinement during the Hellenistic era. This, in turn, greatly influenced writers in Greece and later in Rome to describe experiences, whether in histories, dramas, other poetry, or novels, as “seen,” because it was through the visual connection that one both received and transmitted “true” information. Greek historians, such as Thucydides and Polybius, understood and gave accounts of events, such as the Athenian loss at Syracuse, or of institutions, such as the Roman constitution, as things which can be understood through opsis (or be “seen”).

When a Greek or Roman historian describes characters within the narrative as “looking

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6 For an accessible account of the production of different forms of drama in the Roman imperial period, see C.P. Jones, “Greek Drama in the Roman Empire,” in R. Scodel, ed., Theater and Society in the Classical World, Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan, 1993, pp. 39-52.
7 A. Bell, “Cicero and the Spectacle of Power,” JRS 87 (1997), pp. 1-22; on Polybius and “the visualization of the political culture of Rome,” see pp. 3-5.
upon” something or someone, he is also encouraging his reading audience to pay attention to and to grasp the importance of the object envisioned. By the end of the first century C.E., this was a well-established mode of explanation, and one that was expected by readers of history and other literature.

Theater also had a tremendous influence upon Graeco-Roman historians. Charles Fornara has commented that the first Greek historians, notably Herodotus and Thucydides, “visualized episodes as if they formed the scenes of a play.” Fornara argues that “the historian’s visualization of history in terms of dramatic structure necessarily entailed his adoption of dramatic techniques of description as well as personal reticence.” The historians, therefore, often used speeches, as Fornara says of Thucydides, “in ‘paratragic’ fashion,” to convey their own opinions. In the Hellenistic era, Polybius may have castigated Phylarchus for writing “tragic history,” but this did

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9 As Barton (1993), p. 6, observes, “A seemingly casual mention of eye contact in Livy’s story of the meeting of Mucius and Porsena, for instance, may not arrest the reader’s attention, but when juxtaposed with descriptions of eye contact in his story of the disaster at the Caudine Forks, something about Livy’s complex notion of the gaze, never explicated by him in an extended excursus, may begin to emerge.”


11 Ibid., p. 172. At the end of the first century B.C.E. Dionysius of Halicarnassus at de Thuc. 15 approves of Thucydides’ ability to transcend the imputed boundary between history and poetry when depicting dramatic moments in his history: “Πόλεων τε ἄλωσεις καὶ κατασκαφάς καὶ ἀνδραποδίμους καὶ ἄλλας τοιαύτας συμφοράς πολλάκις ἀναγκασθεῖς γράφειν ποτὲ μὲν οὔτως ὡμά καὶ δεινὰ καὶ οίκτων ἀξία φαίνεσθαι ποιεῖ τὰ πάθη, ὡστε μηδεμίαν ὑπερβολὴν μήτε ἱστοριογράφους μήτε ποιητῶν καταλιπεῖν.” “Thucydides often is forced to describe the capture and destruction of cities, the enslavement of their inhabitants and other similar disasters, and sometimes he makes the sufferings appear so cruel and terrible and worthy of pity that he leaves historians and poets no room for improvement,” That Thucydides does the work of both historian and poet does not bother Dionysius; on the contrary, this earns his praise, especially with regard to his treatment of the episodes in Plataea, Mytilene, and Melos.

12 Ibid.
not prevent even this pragmatic historian from framing scenes in a dramatic fashion and placing speeches in his characters’ mouths.\textsuperscript{13}

Other types of theatrical performance besides tragedy would have influenced Graeco-Roman literature, including historiography, by the beginning of the Roman Empire. Elaine Fantham has proposed that “we may reach a better understanding of popular Latin literature by remembering the existence of mime at Rome from the beginning of its literary history.”\textsuperscript{14} She concludes that “there is enough evidence for its themes and techniques scattered elusively in other genres to give clues to the origin of these themes [from mime], especially in Rome’s innovative personal elegy and satire, in this subterranean tradition and its invisible continuity.”\textsuperscript{15} Though Fantham does not discuss historiography, it is highly probable that character types and scenarios from entertainment as widespread and popular as mime would have also had at least an indirect influence upon writers of history in this period.

It was in this cultural and literary climate that Flavius Josephus, born and raised in Jerusalem as Joseph son of Matthias, composed his works\textsuperscript{16} in Greek over a period of three decades or more at Rome,\textsuperscript{17} after being captured as a general at Jotapata during the Jewish War and restored to freedom and Roman citizenship at the hands of the

\textsuperscript{13}I comment on this further, with citations, in chapter 3.
\textsuperscript{15}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17}Josephus reports at \textit{Vita} 13-16 that he had previously visited Rome in the early 60s when he was sent to obtain the release of certain fellow Jewish priests. Before even reaching Rome, at Puteoli he met a Jewish \textit{mimologos} named Aliturus, who arranged a meeting for Josephus with Poppaea, Nero’s wife. She facilitated the priests’ release and gave Josephus “big gifts.” One can only imagine what spectacles and theatrical productions Josephus might have witnessed during this first stay in Italy.
future emperor Vespasian. I shall consider in this dissertation how Josephus employs spectacle and theater as literary devices in his *Bellum Judaicum* to focus and color the events he is portraying and how his elite hellenized audience from both Graeco-Roman and Jewish backgrounds could have understood his history of the war. This use of spectacle and theater, which is clearly attested in other literature of his day, conforms to his audience’s literary tastes and expectations. By focusing his audience’s vision upon particular people, places, and events, which are presented in a theatrical framework, the historian attempts to persuade his readers to accept his account of the “truth”: the Temple in Jerusalem was the greatest and most useful spectacle in the Roman world; its destruction along with the rest of Jerusalem is, indeed, a tragedy; responsibility for this disaster firmly belongs to a minority of murderous rebels, led by a small group of villains, while the majority of the Jewish people are peace-loving and respectful of Roman power and rule; and, finally, that after the destruction of Jerusalem, anyone who submitted to Roman power might enjoy a safe and prosperous life, but that those who continued to oppose Roman rule, including the Sicarii at Masada, were “mad” and deserved punishment, either at the hands of the Romans or of God.

In this introduction I shall provide background information necessary for evaluating my analysis of spectacle and theater in the *Bellum*. I shall briefly examine past scholarship on the historiography of the *Bellum*, Josephus’s intended audience, and two examples of how his audience of elite Romans and Jews would have read and interpreted his use of spectacle and theater in the *Bellum*. In the three main chapters of this dissertation, I shall concentrate on scenes in the *Bellum* which contain spectacular and dramatic material. In chapter 2, I examine the beginning of the Roman siege of Jerusalem and how Josephus makes the Temple the most prominent focus of visual attention for both “good” Jews and Romans, especially Titus. I also discuss the historian’s allusion to Sophocles’ *Antigone* as his attempt to underline the tragic
consequences of Jewish civil strife. Chapter 3 investigates Josephus’s account of a mother’s act of cannibalism against her own baby. I argue that the theatrical framing and language of this scene frame the destruction of the Temple as a tragedy and highlight the innocence of Titus. In chapter 4, I consider the dramatic mass suicide of the Sicarii at Masada within the larger context of book 7’s treatment of the exercise of Roman military power. By examining the various reactions to Roman power both in Judaea and elsewhere, I conclude that Josephus was not endorsing the methods or message of Eleazar and his group of rebels.

This study of spectacle and tragedy in Josephus’s narrative of the Bellum will require a close analysis and incorporation of texts that were studied, produced, and appreciated by his contemporaries, both pagan and Jewish (and early Christian), in order to create a context of interpretation for his intended audience. I shall consider a wide range of Greek and Latin classical authors, both prose and poetry, as well as the Hebrew literature, including the canonical scriptures, apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, early Christian literature, and rabbinic writings. I also shall occasionally draw in

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18 Perhaps in placing Titus within such a theatrical framework, Josephus was responding to the future emperor’s personal taste. After all, we have evidence that Titus himself wrote Greek tragedies. C. P. Jones, in “Greek Drama in the Roman Empire,” in Theater and Society in the Classical World, ed. by Ruth Scodel, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1993, p. 51, n. 29, cites Eutrop. 7.21.1, Suda T 691, Tr GF I2 no. 183, for evidence of Titus as tragedian. Jones, p. 45, comments: “For the hundred years following the death of Augustus, not much is heard about the emperors as patrons of new or revived drama, though it may be surmised that some encouragement came from Nero’s short-lived Neronia and Domitian’s much more successful Capitolia.” Unfortunately, since Titus had such a short and traumatic reign (marked by the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, a three-day fire in Rome, and an outbreak of the plague), he really did not have much of an opportunity to show whether he would have been a great patron of the arts. Suetonius reports these disasters in his Titus, chapter 8; the biographer also attests to Titus’s military prowess and general literary talents: “Armorum et equitandi peritissimus, Latine Graeceque vel in orando vel in figendis poematibus promptus et facilis ad extemporalitatem usque,” “He was very skilled in arms and horsemanship, and he could readily and easily make speeches and compose poems in both Latin and Greek, even extemporaneously,” Titus 3.
archaeological evidence, since it provides a window to the physical context for possible meanings in the text.

Scholarship on the Historiography of the Bellum

The general tendency of scholars to ignore Josephus’s works when discussing early Roman imperial culture, and specific issues such as the role or spectacle and theater in this culture, is perhaps more a reflection of the division of academic disciplines in the modern university than of the value of the attempt. The study of Josephus bridges several fields, just as the author himself crossed cultures in order to survive. The works of Josephus do not normally fall within the interests of Classics Departments because they were not written during the Classical or Hellenistic periods. Ancient historians use the Bellum as their main source for analyzing all aspects of the Jewish War, as well as the larger social, economic, political, and military issues of early imperial Roman rule in the East, but they rarely acknowledge how the actual narrative devices Josephus uses may affect interpretation of the “facts” which they have gleaned from his history. Archaeologists find in Josephus essential descriptions of locations, but they

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often do not investigate the narrative context of these descriptions.\(^\text{21}\) Scholars of ancient religions, especially Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity, rely on all four of Josephus’s works as key sources for analyzing a myriad of questions ranging over ritual, sects, texts, beliefs, etc., but they generally do not appreciate his texts’ Graeco-Roman genres or aims.\(^\text{22}\)

Certain scholars, however, have analyzed Josephus’s texts within the context of Graeco-Roman historiography. Starting with Laqueur,\(^\text{23}\) scholars have compared Josephus’s accounts of history of the same periods in the *Bellum* and the *Antiquities* or *Vita* in hopes of sorting out the discrepancies and arriving at some explanation for various aspects of the war, including the author’s own role in it. Scrupulous studies have been done recently by Cohen and Krieger along these lines.\(^\text{24}\) Rajak\(^\text{25}\) also has elucidated Josephus’s Jewish context as a writer, and Sterling\(^\text{26}\) has provided a masterful examination of Josephus as a historian within eastern and western patterns of historiography.

H. St. J. Thackeray published a series of lectures in which he discusses Josephus’s use of Attic tragedians.\(^\text{27}\) He also edited the Loeb version of the *Bellum* with an eye towards Josephus’s literary borrowings, and states in his introduction:

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More interesting is the familiarity shown with Greek poetry, Homer and the tragedians. The poignant narrative of the domestic troubles of Herod the Great is told in the manner of a Greek drama: we hear of Nemesis at the outset (i.431), of the pollution of the house (mEvos 638, cf. 445), the tempest lowering over it (488), the villain and stage-manager of the plot (tov lumeōva tēs oikias kai dramatiourgōn ólou toû músoû 530), the anxious waiting for “the end of the drama” (543), the avenging deity (kaθ’ ādou fèrēin toû álástora 596), the ghosts (deltaimes) of the murdered sons roaming the palace and dragging secrets to light (599) or sealing the lips of others (607). But there are other more precise allusions. Sophocles was evidently a favorite; the allusions to the tragedian, being mainly confined to the War and to portions of the Antiquities, especially Books xv-xvi, written in the style of the War, are probably attributable rather to the assistant than to the historian.28

Thackeray also notes that his own analysis of the Herod “drama” is inspired by Eusebius’s response to this portion of the Bellum as “τραγικὴ δραματουργία.”29

Thackeray proceeds to offer briefly specific examples of borrowings from Thucydides, Herodotus, Xenophon, Demosthenes, Homer, Sophocles,30 Vergil, and Sallust. Later scholars have discredited Thackeray’s notion of assistants ghostwriting whole books of the Antiquities for Josephus in the manner of particular classical authors, such as Sophocles and Thucydides.31 We should, however, still retain Thackeray’s insight that

31 Thackeray (1929), pp. 100-124, expands upon this “assistant theory” based partially on the many reminiscences of Sophocles he found in Antiquities 15 and 16. He derived this notion from a comment in C.A.1.50 where Josephus admits to getting help with his Greek when composing the Bellum. Josephus later boasts at the end of the Antiquities (20.263) about the depth of his learning in Greek. According to Thackeray, Josephus had different assistants who penned different portions of the Antiquities and who display a penchant for particular authors, such as Sophocles and Thucydides. This theory has
Josephus’s histories in certain places reflect general themes as well as specific phrases from Greek tragedy. Louis Feldman, for instance, has adopted this viewpoint and has argued that Josephus modelled his description of the ‘Aqedah in the Antiquities upon Euripides’ Iphigenia at Aulis.

My examination of theatrical elements in the Bellum contributes new findings to this existing discussion, whereas my observations on the role of spectacle in key scenes in this narrative are a new contribution to the scholarship on Josephus’s works and on Roman culture. This dissertation provides material which will enhance general investigations of the cultural significance of spectacle and theater in the Roman empire and the impact of these forms of entertainment and social communication upon literature of the period. My concentration on spectacle and theater in the Bellum Judaicum also brings fresh perspective to the specific question of Josephus’s aims and methods as a historian of the Jewish War. I maintain that the Temple serves as the center of visual attention in this narrative, and that Josephus deliberately links Titus, the Romans, and good Jews both visually and dramatically to the Temple’s preservation; the rebels, however, refuse to appreciate what they see and cause its destruction. I also argue that Josephus presents wide-ranging material in the last two-thirds of book 7 of the Bellum to show the choices that those opposing Roman power since been discounted by numerous scholars, such as D. J. Ladouceur in Studies in the Language and Historiography of Flavius Josephus (Diss. Providence, 1977). Steve Mason (1991), pp. 48-51, provides a survey of scholars’ opinions about Josephus’s use of literary assistants. I believe Mason is correct in approaching Josephus’s narratives as the author’s own, and not as a patchwork quilt of sources.


can make and the range of possible outcomes. In the Masada episode, which is embedded in this larger narrative of examples, spectacle and theater figure most prominently, since Josephus is offering a paradigmatic case of the futility of resisting Rome.

Josephus’s Intended Audience

In his introduction to the *Bellum*, Josephus claims that the edition we possess in Greek is actually a revision of a previous work in Aramaic, and that his intended audience members live under Roman rule and read Greek. Josephus explains how the Jewish revolt was part of empire-wide confusion, and reminds his readers that the whole eastern portion of the empire was at stake because the Jews in Palestine hoped that their fellow Jews beyond the Euphrates would join in the war (*B.J.* 1.5). He returns to the question of why he wrote the *Bellum* in Greek, explaining that while distant barbarians were “accurately” informed about the war from his Aramaic account, Greeks and Romans who did not serve in the war in Judaea were still misinformed.

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34 Because the Aramaic edition of the *Bellum* has not survived, we, therefore, do not know whether the Greek edition is a close translation or a loose recasting of the text intended solely for an eastern audience. Rajak (1983), p. 176, conjectures plausibly that “there is no reason to think that the first work bore much similarity to the second in scope or literary form,” and postulates that “the Aramaic War was in the nature of a plain report, with perhaps some passages of lamentation.”

35 *B.J.* 1.3: “προσέβεμεν ἐγὼ τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίαν, Ἑλλάδι γλώσσῃ μεταβαλὼν ἀ τοῖς ἄνω βαρβάροις τῇ πατρίῳ συντάξας ἀνέπειψα πρότερον, ἀριθμησοσθαί, ἱσότητος Ματθίου παῖς,’ ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεὺς, αὐτὸς τε Ῥωμαίους πολεμίσας τὰ πρῶτα καὶ τοῖς ὑστερον παρατυχῶν ἔξ ἀνάγκης.”

36 *B.J.* 1.6: “ἀτοπον ἡγισάμενος περιδεύνειν πλαζομένην ἐπὶ τηλικοῦτοις πράγμασι τὴν ἀλήθειαν, καὶ Πάρθους μὲν καὶ Βαβυλωνίους Ἄραβοιν τοὺς πορρωτάτω καὶ τὸ ὑπὲρ Εὐφράτην ὀμόφυλον ἡμῖν Ἀδιαβηνοὺς τε γνώναι διὰ τῆς ἐμῆς ἐπιμελείας ἀκριβῶς, οθὲν τε ἔρξατο καὶ δ’ ὃσων ἐχώρησεν παθῶν ὁ πόλεμος καὶ ὀπως κατέστρεψεν, ἀγνοεῖν δὲ Ἐλλήνας ταῦτα καὶ
Josephus reiterates towards the end of his introduction that the version we have in Greek was meant to educate a Graeco-Roman audience.  

In his later work, the *Contra Apionem*, Josephus again speaks of the audience for whom he claims to have written the Greek *Bellum*, and emphasizes another readership: his fellow Jews. In the *Contra Apionem*, he digresses from a discussion of the superiority of Jewish historiography over that of the Greeks in order to offer an account of his own career as a reputable historiographer who gathered his knowledge of the Jewish war through active participation and investigation. He then relates how he wrote, published, and presented or sold the *Bellum* to a mixed audience including Vespasian, Titus, Roman veterans of the Jewish War, and hellenized Jews, among whom were Julius Archelaus, one of the Herods, and Agrippa II.

Josephus, therefore, intended his Greek text of the *Bellum* to be read and appreciated by Romans and Greeks as well as a Jewish audience who had been exposed to Greek culture. This audience would have embraced both western and eastern Jews.

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'Ρωμαίων τούς μή ἐπιστρατευσαμένους, ἐνυγχάνοντας ἢ κολακείας ἢ πλάσμασιν.’

37 B. J. 1.16: “καγώ μὲν ἀναλώμασι καὶ πόνοις μεγίστοις ἀλλόφυλος ὦν Ὁ Ἑλλῆσ τε καὶ ἩΡωμαίοις τὴν μνήμην τῶν κατορθωμάτων ἀνατίθημι.”

38 See Lucian, *How to Write History* 61, on the author of history presenting a bill for his text so that he may be called an ἐλεύθερος ἀνήρ.”

39 C.A. 1.50-53: “εἰτα σχολῆς ἐν τῇ ἩΡωμή λαβόμενος, πάσης μοι τῆς πραγματείας ἐν παρασκευῇ γεγενημένης χρησάμενος τοις πρὸς τὴν Ἑλληνίδα φωνήν συνεργοῖς, οὕτως ἐποιησάμην τῶν πράξεων τὴν παράδοσιν, τοσοῦτον δὲ μοι περὶ ἡμῶν θάρσος τῆς ἀληθείας ὡστε πρῶτος πάντων τούς αὐτοκράτορας τοῦ πολέμου γενομένους Ὀὐσεπασιανῦν καὶ Τίτων ἡξίωσα λαβεῖν μάρτυρας. πρῶτοι γὰρ ἐδωκα τὰ βιβλία καὶ μετ’ έκείνους πολλοῖς μὲν ἩΡωμαίων τοῖς συμπεπολεμήκοις, πολλοῖς δὲ τῶν ἡμετέρων ἐπίπρασκοι, ἀνδράς καὶ τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς σοφίας μετεσχηκοίς, ὡν ἐστὶν Ἰουλίος Ἀρχέλαος, Ἡρώδης ὁ σεμινότατος, αὐτὸς ὁ βαυμασιώτατος βασιλεὺς Ἀγρίππας. στὶς μὲν οὐν ἀπαντες ἐμαρτύρησαν, ὅτι τῆς ἀληθείας προύστην ἐπιμελώς, οὐκ ἂν ὑποστεῖλαμενοι καὶ σιωπήσαντες, εἴ τι κατ’ ἄγνοιαν ἢ χαριζόμενος μετέθηκα τῶν γεγονότων ἢ παρέλιπον. Φαύλοι δὲ τινες ἄνθρωπος διαβάλλειν μου τὴν ἱστορίαν ἐπικεχειρήκασιν ὡσπερ ἐν σχολῇ μειρακίων γύμνασμα προκεῖσθαι νομίζοντες.”
beyond the aristocrats he mentions. Both audiences would presumably have to be literate, but we cannot rule out the possibility of the text being read aloud to an unlettered audience. Furthermore, Yavetz contends that history books were taken less seriously by the emperors than we imagine, and doubts that Roman senators would have bought copies of Josephus’s *Bellum*. We should not, however, discount Josephus’s claim that he had such an audience or aimed to teach them.

**How to Read Spectacle and Theater in Josephus**

Josephus shows his readers how to read for spectacle and theater as an elite Roman would. Two sample scenes illustrate this well: the demise of the Hasmonean Antigonus in book 1 and the encounters between Josephus and Vespasian after the historian’s capture at Jotapata in book 3. In both of these episodes we are given specific cues about how the Romans themselves and their hellenized subjects participate in, interpret, and react to spectacle and tragedy as it plays out in history.

In the scene in book 1 describing Herod’s capture of Jerusalem in the summer of 37 B.C.E., his Hasmonean opponent, Antigonus, seeks refuge with the Romans, who are backing Herod (*B.J.* 1.353). Josephus has earlier shown Antigonus presenting himself to Caesar after he has appointed Antigonus’s brother, Hyrcanus, to the office of high

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40 Rajak (1983), p. 177, states: “Greek was more versatile than Aramaic, and it was certainly not unsuitable for literature directed to the east.” L. Troiani, in discussing the audience of the *Antiquities*, in “I Lettori delle Antichità Giudaiche di Giuseppe: Prospettive e Problemi, *Athenaeum* 74 (1986), pp. 343-353, offers a list of possible Jewish readers, who I think could also have been part of the targeted audience for the *Bellum*, p. 353: “I suoi interlocutori e destinatari non dovranno tanto essere ricercati fra i lettori delle *Antichità Romane* di Dionisio di Alicarnasso, quanto fra gli innumerevoli arconti, arconti pāšhw tim∞w ed alti ordinis, grammateis, gherusiarchi, prostatai, dottori della Legge, archisinagogoi, sacerdoti, padri e madri <<delle congregazioni>>, così ben messi in luce dalle iscrizioni per la città di Roma ed altrove.”

priest (B.J. 1.194). Antigonus boldly denounces Hyrcanus and the rising star Antipater, the father of Herod the Great. Josephus has just remarked that Antipater was a brave warrior, who “had on almost his entire body the signs of his excellence” in the form of his battle wounds. The scarred Antipater is a living, visible example of allegiance to Rome, and he is rewarded with Roman citizenship, exemption from taxes, and other honors which make him “enviable.” When Antigonus reminds Caesar of Hyrcanus’s and Antipater’s friendships with Pompey, Antipater responds: “he stripped off his clothes and showed his multitude of scars.” It is an impressive show of loyalty, and Caesar, after listening (not just seeing) rules against Antigonus’s claim for the high priesthood.

When Antigonus is being besieged later by Herod, the Hasmonean king leaves the Baris, his stronghold at the Temple Mount, to beg for mercy from the Roman commander, Sossius, who has arrived from Syria with a massive army (B.J. 1.346). Josephus prefaced Antigonus’s prostration before Sossius with the comment that Antigonus “had no regard for his fortune either in the past or now.” This is truly a man who has suffered a tragic reversal of fortune, but pays no heed to it. The Roman Sossius reads the tragedy playing out at his feet:

Since he had no pity on him for his change [of fortune], he broke out into uncontrollable laughter and called him “Antigone.” But he surely did not

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42 B.J. 1.193: “ἔφ’ ὅλου σχεδόν τοῦ σώματός εἶχεν τὰ σημεῖα τῆς ἀρετῆς.”
43 B.J. 1.194: “ζηλωτῶν.” Josephus, too, will reap these rewards, including the envy, after the war.
44 B.J. 1.197: “Πρὸς ταύθ’ ὁ Ἀντίπατρος ἀπορρίφας τὴν ἐσθήτα τὸ πλήθος ἐπεδείκνυεν τῶν τραυμάτων.”
45 Antigonus eventually takes care of this unfavorable judgment, after the Parthians have installed him as king in Jerusalem, by biting his brother Hyrcanus on the ear, so that the visible defect will prevent him ever from serving as high priest: B.J. 1.270.
46 B.J. 1.353: “ἐνθὰ καὶ Ἀντίγονος μήτε τῆς πάλαι μήτε τῆς τότε τύχης ἔννοιαν λαβόων...”
release him like a woman, free of guard, but instead he was put into chains and was guarded.\textsuperscript{47}

Sossius’s recorded quip serves as an excellent example of how Josephus’s elite readers would be expected to respond to cues from the world of visual performance: Sossius is an elite member of the Roman government, serving as commander in Syria; he can draw upon his acquaintance with drama to make a pun on the king’s name; he can use his power to deal with this tragic opponent. His wordplay is clever and à propos, and even reflects the tension of gender in the original Sophoclean tragedy, where Antigone challenges Creon’s power by playing the female and the male at the same time. None of this is lost on the participants in the scene in the narrative, since Sossius himself creates the interpretation. The reader of Josephus’s narrative, too, is expected to understand the allusion. Sossius does not have the “proper” reaction to tragedy, which is pity; instead, he laughs, as if it were a comedy. Josephus, however, has set this reaction up nicely, by presenting Antigonus in a negative light up to this point in his account. Antigonus’s \textit{metabole}, therefore, is not worthy of pity. Soon after, Antigonus suffers a death, according to Josephus, “worthy of his base behavior,” (\textit{\text{"\\text{\varepsilon}\\text{\iota}\\text{o}\\text{\iota}\\text{\varepsilon}\\text{\\nu}\\text{\varepsilon}\\text{n\\text{\nu}\\text{\e}\\text{\i}\\text{\varepsilon}\\text{\i}\\text{\a}\\text{s}\\text{\}}")}: he is beheaded (\textit{B.J.} 1.357).

My second example of how to read spectacle and tragedy in the \textit{Bellum} involves the author himself, acting out his role after he is captured at the siege of Jotapata in book 3. He, like Antigonus, has suffered a reversal of fortune, and now finds himself at the mercy of the Romans. Josephus the historian not only refers to his own narrative persona’s tragic circumstances, but also turns him into a remarkable spectacle when he is brought before the general Vespasian in chains: “All the Romans ran together to the

\textsuperscript{47} \textit{B.J.} 1.353: \textit{\text{"\\k\acute{a}\\k\acute{a}\\k\acute{e}\\i\acute{i}\\n\\o\acute{m}\\n\\d\\e\\\varepsilon\\\e\\\i\acute{r}\\e\\s\\r\\\k\\\o\\\i\\t\\\o\\\s\\\v\\\i\\\o\\\n\\\k\\\r\\\k\\\i\\\o\\\i\\\k\\\a\\\v\\\a\\\k\\\r\\\i\\\o\\\m\\\i\\\o\\\i\\\o\\\i\\n\\\o\\\n\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\\\o\}}}: (My thanks to Maud Gleason for reminding me of this important passage.)
spectacle of him [i.e., Josephus].”

Josephus offers a play-by-play commentary of the crowd’s reaction to him, positive and negative, including that of those who “force their way [through the crowd to get] closer to see [him].”

The viewers’ respective physical distance from the spectacle of Josephus has a great effect on how they “read” him as a tragic figure. Those further away shout for him to be punished. On the other hand, “the memory of his deeds entered the minds of those closer [to him] and amazement at his change of fortune.”

Proximity to the spectacle allows the viewers to receive better transmission of the tragic nature of the spectacle. The “opsis” of the captive Josephus changes the minds of all those Roman officers previously hostile to him.

Most importantly, Josephus records that Titus reacts with “pity” (B.J. 3.396 and 397) to Josephus and is inspired at this moment of viewing to cogitate upon “how great the power of fortune is, how swiftly the scales of war shift, and how insecure are the affairs of men.”

The spectacle of Josephus, indeed, provokes heavy thoughts on the tragic nature of life. It also compels Titus to act on Josephus’s behalf to save his life (B.J. 3.397). Thus, the persona of Josephus here becomes the embodiment of the very narrative tools that the author Josephus employs throughout his text as well as of the message he is trying to convey.

Josephus then recounts the story of his subsequent audience with Vespasian in which he as a Jewish prisoner of war predicts that the Roman general will become emperor, as will his son. He opens his speech, reported in direct discourse, by identifying his role in this tragedy: “You, Vespasian, think that you have taken

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48 B.J. 3.393: “οἱ δὲ Ἡρωμαίοι πάντες ἐπὶ θέαν αὐτοῦ συνέτρεχον.”
49 B.J. 3.393: “τῶν δὲ ἐγγύθεν ιδεῖν Βιαζομένων.”
50 B.J. 3.394: “τοὺς δὲ πλησίον ἀνάμμησις αὐτοῦ τῶν ἔργων εἰσῆ καὶ πρὸς τὴν μεταβολὴν θάμβος.”
51 B.J. 3.395: “τότε πρὸς τὴν ὁφνὶ οὐκ ἐνέδωκεν αὐτοῦ.”
52 B.J. 3.396: “ορῷντι παρῆν [δὲ] νοεῖν, ὅσον δύναται τῦχῃ, καὶ ὡς ὄξεια μὲν πολέμου ῥοπῆ, τῶν δὲ ἀνθρωπίνων οὐδὲν βεβαιον.”
Josephus as only a captive ("αἰχμαλώτον"), but I have come as a messenger ("ἀγγελός") to you of greater things."\(^53\) Josephus elevates himself from the tragic role of "captive" to that of "messenger." In Greek tragedy, the messenger tells the characters and audience in detail what has already happened off stage. Here, however, Josephus becomes a Hebrew angelos, who forecasts what is going to happen according to God's will.\(^54\) He twice identifies himself as a messenger from God (B.J. 3.400 and 402). In his ability to predict the future through the application of knowledge gained through his previous dreams (B.J. 3.351-353), he is playing a latter-day Joseph and Daniel.\(^55\) His Jewish audience was expected to understand the Biblical significance of his self-definition. In the larger scheme, however, through the very act of composing his Bellum, Josephus in a certain sense also plays the traditional role of the messenger in Greek tragedy by recounting the horrors of the war in vivid detail for his audience in order to evoke pity and to stimulate action.

The double-meaning in this role of the angelos from the varying Graeco-Roman and Jewish perspectives provides an example of how to read Josephus’s history. We must always bear in mind that a Jewish author is composing his Bellum in Greek for a mixed

\(^{53}\) B.J. 3.400: “ὡς μέν, ἐπειδή Ὀὔεσπασίαν, νομίζεις αἰχμαλώτον αὐτῷ μόνῳ εἰλήφειν τὸν Ἰῶσπον, ἐγὼ δὲ ἀγγέλος ἴσω σοὶ μεθίκων.”

\(^{54}\) At about the same time that Josephus composed the B.J., Mt. 11.10 has Jesus ask the crowd about whether they had gone out to see a prophet when they followed John the Baptist out into the desert; to describe John, Jesus quotes Exodus 23:20 on the ἀγγέλος of God who will lead the Israelites into Canaan. Both Josephus and Matthew are working within the Jewish mindset, but writing for hellenized audiences.

\(^{55}\) S. Cohen, “Josephus, Jeremiah, and Polybius,” History and Theory 21.3 (1982), p. 369, observes that “although Josephus does not call himself a prophet (prophetes) or ascribe to himself the power of prophetia, these terms being restricted to figures of the Biblical period, he does see himself as the minister (diakonos; cf. JW 4.626) and messenger (angelos) of God who understands and makes known God’s will.” Also see H. Lindner, Die Geschichtsauffassung des Flavius Josephus im Bellum Judaicum, Leiden: Brill, 1972; R. Gray, Prophetic Figures in Late Second Temple Jewish Palestine: The Evidence from Josephus, Oxford, 1993, especially p. 37; R. Gnuse, Dreams and Dream Reports in the Writings of Josephus: A Traditio-Historical Analysis, Leiden: Brill, 1996, especially pp. 139-142. None of these scholars dilates fully on the range of meanings of ἀγγέλος.
The audience of Romans, Greeks, and hellenized Jews. The sector of his audience acquainted with Jewish culture and writings is expected to appreciate the Biblical subtext of his portrayal of the fall of Jerusalem. For instance, Josephus as a character in the text provides in a speech (B.J. 5.362-419) an account of Jewish history which celebrates pious Jewish pacifism in the face of the enemy, while drawing a direct parallel between himself and Jeremiah (B.J. 5.392-393). We shall see in chapter 3 that to understand the significance of the account of the mother’s cannibalism for Josephus’s narrative of the Temple’s demise, we must appreciate both the Jewish and Graeco-Roman literary backgrounds for the story. In the Bellum, the distinctively Graeco-Roman terms and themes of spectacle and tragedy are present, but the stage is mostly set in Judaea by a Jewish composer, and the audience intended to witness the spectacle is dominated by Rome.

56 D. Daube, “Typology in Josephus,” Journal of Jewish Studies 31 (1980), pp. 18-36, has shown that Josephus retrofits a number of Biblical personalities (Jeremiah, Joseph, Daniel) and events (the interview of Esther with Ahasuerus) with aspects of his own life, thereby creating a recognizable typology. Daube disproves the idea that Josephus does not use typology, as advanced by L. Goppelt, Typos, 1966, p. 47 (Daube, p. 26, n. 72): “Josephus, since offering no eschatological discussions, cannot be expected to practise typology.” We, however, can see that Josephus did apply Biblical events to the contemporary siege of Jerusalem in his speech at B.J. 5.376-419. Here he clearly sets up a typology that identifies himself with Jeremiah, the Romans with the Assyrians, and the Jews with their ancestors who were attacked by both the Assyrians and the Babylonians. He later refers to this association between Jeremiah and the destruction of Jerusalem in the first century at Ant. 10.79, when he claims that Jeremiah “left behind him in writing a description of that destruction of our nation which has lately happened in our days and the taking of Babylon.” He also proposes at Ant. 10.276 that Daniel, too, foresaw the calamity caused by the Romans, but discreetly does not mention that Daniel also foresaw the downfall of Rome. Thus the prophecies of the past have a direct relation with the present in Josephus’s eyes. On typology and the recasting of Biblical events and characters in Josephus, also see S. J. D. Cohen, “The Destruction: From Scripture to Midrash,” Prooftexts 2 (1982), pp. 18-39; ibid., From the Macabees to the Mishnah, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987, p. 208; A. Momigliano, “What Josephus Did Not See,” On Pagans, Jews, and Christians, p. 118 (on Josephus as a latter-day Daniel).
Chapter Two: The Roman Siege of Jerusalem and the Temple as Spectacle and Theater

This chapter will trace Josephus’s use of spectacle and tragedy in Bellum Judaicum books 4 through 6, where he presents the Roman siege of Jerusalem. In this portion of his history, Josephus creates a theatrical setting in which the eyes of most Jews and Romans, including Titus, are described as focused upon the spectacle of the Temple. In contrast, the Jewish rebels are portrayed negatively in their refusal to pay attention to the Temple, even when the author himself, playing the role of angelos, begs them to do so. Shaye Cohen and Bruce Chilton have recognized the centrality of the Temple in the Bellum. Neither they nor any other scholar, however, has shown how Josephus employs spectacle and theater to focus the attention of his internal audience and, therefore, the reader upon the Temple. I argue that Josephus, by making the Temple a spectacle worthy of constant attention and admiration, thereby sets the stage for the tragedy of its destruction. He uses the language and idioms of Greek tragedy, including Sophocles’ Antigone, to stress the culpability of the rebels, the innocence of the majority of Jews, and particularly the clemency of Titus.

Josephus dates the beginning of the capture and destruction of Jerusalem to the assassinations of the chief priests Ananus and Jesus, who are represented in the Bellum

57 S. Cohen, “Josephus, Jeremiah, and Polybius,” History and Theory 21 (1982), pp. 366-381. At pp. 377-378, Cohen comments that “one feature of the Jewish War not readily explicable by the Biblical tradition is Josephus’s obsession with the temple and the temple cult.” Cohen questions whether this is “the result of a priestly outlook, or perhaps, a sign of the influence of the Polybian tradition.” Cohen argues that Josephus may have derived the thesis that “the violation of a temple incurs the wrath of the god of the temple” from Polybius, but Cohen then remarks, “This theme is much more central to Josephus than to Polybius or to any other ancient historian known to me.”

as champions of the people against the rebels. According to Josephus, the Idumaeans, who have recently entered the city and slain 8,500 Jewish guards at the Temple during a night attack with the help of the Zealots,\textsuperscript{59} search out and kill Ananus and Jesus in retaliation for their opposition. Josephus relates the death of Ananus specifically as a watershed in the war and as an act which the people see:

I would not be wrong saying that the capture of the city began with the death of Ananus, and the destruction of the city-wall and the ruination of the Jewish government from that day on which \textit{they saw} the high priest and the leader of their own salvation having his throat cut in the middle of the city.\textsuperscript{60}

Normally in Jewish and Roman culture execution is a public spectacle which occurs when the victim is guilty of some crime, yet here, according to the historian, innocent and virtuous men “who clung to and loved [the city and the Temple]”\textsuperscript{61} are seen to perish at the hands of criminals. Josephus emphasizes the spectacle of their deaths by declaring that “they were thrown out naked and \textit{were seen} as food for dogs and wild beasts.”\textsuperscript{62} The corpses of these two leaders, whose lives were dedicated to service at the Temple for the salvation of Israel, therefore, embody and provide visual evidence of the beginning of the end of Jerusalem and her Temple.

Jerusalem and especially the Temple become the main objects of visual attention as the Roman attack begins. When Titus and his legions actually arrive within sight of the city at Scopus (“Look-out Point”\textsuperscript{63}), Josephus carefully focuses the attention of both the

\textsuperscript{59} \textit{B.J.} 4.305-313.
\textsuperscript{60} \textit{B.J.} 4.318: “οὐκ ἂν ἀμάρτωμι δ’ εἰπὼν ἀλώσεως ἀρξαί τῇ πόλει τὸν Ἄνανον θάνατον, καὶ ἀπ’ ἐκεῖνης τῆς ημέρας ἀνατραπήναι τὸ τείχος καὶ διαφαράναι τὰ πράγματα Ἰουδαίως, ἐν Ἰ τὸν ἀρχιερέα καὶ ἱερέων τῆς ἱδίας σωτηρίας αὐτῶν ἐπὶ μέσης τῆς πόλεως εἶδον ἀπεσφαγμένον.”
\textsuperscript{61} \textit{B.J.} 4.323: “τοὺς ἀντεχομένους αὐτῶν καὶ ϕιλοστοργοῦντας.” Josephus rationalizes that these deaths happen according to God’s will because the rebels have polluted the sanctuary, and He now wishes to destroy the city and purify the Temple.
\textsuperscript{62} \textit{B.J.} 4.325: “ἐρριμμένοι γυμνοὶ βορὰ κυνῶν καὶ θηρίων ἐβλέποντο.”
\textsuperscript{63} \textit{B.J.} 5.67. Thackeray’s note, p. 220, n. c, indicates that “the Semitic name was Saphein (cf. Mizpah, “look-out place”) according to A. xi.329.”
internal audience (the Roman army and Titus) and of his own readers upon the main spectacle of the city: “from there now became visible both the city and the magnitude of the Temple gleaming afar.” All eyes, therefore, are upon the Temple before the Romans even reach Jerusalem.

As an illuminating point of comparison, we can look at how the Roman historian Tacitus three decades later writes his version of the Romans encountering Jerusalem in his Histories, book 5:

The Romans now turned to besiege [the city]; for the soldiers thought it was not dignified to wait for the enemy to starve, and so they began to demand danger, part being prompted by bravery, but many were motivated by their savage natures and their desire for booty. Titus himself had before his eyes Rome, its wealth and its pleasures, and he thought that if Jerusalem did not fall at once, his attainment of these would be delayed.

Josephus and Tacitus share the same opinion of the common Roman soldier, but their depictions of Titus could not be more different. Both historians stress spectacle as vital, but the similarity ends there. Josephus, like Tacitus, is tapping into his Roman audience’s appetite for spectacle, but employs it repeatedly in the Bellum in order to highlight the spectacle of the Temple. Tacitus, on the other hand, focuses Titus’s eyes upon Rome as the ultimate prize; Jerusalem is a mere stepping-stone. Both historians write for elite Romans, and they, therefore, use the same narrative device of spectacle

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64 B.J. 5.67: “ἔνθεν ἤ τε πόλις ἡδη κατεφαίνετο καὶ τὸ τοῦ ναοῦ μέγεθος ἐκλάμπον.”
65 Hist. 5.11: “Romani ad obpugnandum versi; neque enim dignum videbatur famem hostium opperiri, poscebantque pericula, pars virtute, multi ferocia et cupidine praemiorum. Ipsī Tito Roma et opes voluptatesque ante oculos; ac ni statim Hierosolyma conciderent, morari videbantur.”
here to appeal to the audience of their day, but the overall effect is quite a contrast, since they are writing with such different scopes and purposes in mind.

After documenting the early successes of the united Jewish forces in skirmishes against the Romans, Josephus prepares for the Roman assault on Jerusalem by conjuring up for his readers a highly detailed mental image of the terrain and fortifications of the city. His description of the city culminates with the marvels of the Temple. With this “digression” Josephus is laying essential groundwork: he is setting the stage for the climax of his tragedy, the destruction of the Temple.

Josephus commences his excursus on Jerusalem by commenting on its two main hills, its three walls, and its magnificent towers. Of the appearance of the towers he proudly states: “The harmony and the beauty of the stones were in no way inferior to a temple.” He literally builds up the magnitude of the structures by providing the measurements of the size of the stones and by calling them “wondrous.” Josephus has delayed his description of Jerusalem and her monuments until book 5 and clearly wishes his audience to be swept away by the grandeur of this city and its defenses. The

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67 Unlike Tacitus, Josephus barely turns his attention to events elsewhere in the empire during the time of the Jewish rebellion. He finally refers to other revolts in Germany, Gaul, and Moesia at B.J. 7. 75-95. Here he is heaping praise upon the Flavians, and specifically Domitian; his attention to Domitian suggests a later date for the composition of this section. See my chapter on Masada, where I discuss the publication dates for B.J. 7.

68 B.J. 5.71 ff.

69 Tacitus, Hist. 5.12, mentions the Temple, but devotes only a few sentences to it. He emphasizes its role as a citadel (“templum in modum arcis”), and then offers the reason why this is so: “Providerant conditores ex diversitate morum crebra bella: inde cuncta quamvis adversus longum obsidiun,” “The founders had foreseen that because of the difference of their customs there would be frequent wars; therefore, everything was built as if against a long siege.” This explanation fits well with Tacitus’s overall assessment of the Jewish people. Unfortunately, book 5 breaks off at paragraph 26, and we do not have the rest of Tacitus’s account of the siege of Jerusalem. Sulpicius Severus’s Chron. provides secondary witness to Tacitus’s missing text.

70 B.J. 5.136-175.

71 B.J. 5.156: “Ἡ γε μὴν ἄμυνα καὶ τὸ κάλλος τῶν λίθων οὐδὲν ἀπέδει ναοῦ.”

72 B.J. 5.174: “θαυμάσιον δὲ καὶ τῶν λίθων ἢν τὸ μέγεθος.”
city’s towers were named after Hippicus (Herod’s friend), Phasael (his brother), and Mariamme (his beloved wife whom he executed). They even take on human aspect when Josephus points out that Herod lavishly appointed the tower Mariamme far beyond the others, “because the king thought it fitting that the one named after a woman should be decorated more than those for men, just as they were stronger than the one [named after] the woman.”

Jerusalem, a bulwark of impressive masonry, comes to life in this detailed narrative, and the city’s towers even assume preconceived gender roles of feminine bodily power derived from acoutrements versus masculine bodily power derived from strength. The in-depth details and the personification only heighten the tragedy of the Jerusalem’s eventual destruction. The audience learns later at the beginning of book 7 that when Titus ordered the captured city to be razed, including the Temple, he singled out these towers and part of the western wall of the city for preservation, since they would show what sort of city and what type of defenses the Roman “ἀνδραγαθία” had overcome.

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73 B.J. 5.171: “τοῦ βασιλέως οἰκείου ὑπολαβόντος τὸν ἀπὸ γυναικὸς ὄνομασθέντα κεκοσμήθαι πλέον ἢ τοὺς ἀπ᾽ ἀνδρῶν, ὡσπερ ἐκείνους τοὺς τῆς γυναικὸς ἵσχυςτέρους.”

74 B.J. 7.2: “...τοὺς πύργους δὲ, ἵνα τοῖς ἐπείτα σημαίνωσιν οίας πόλεως καὶ τίνα τρόπον ὀχυρᾶς ὀμοίως ἐκράτησεν ἤ Ῥωμαίων ἀνδραγαθία.” I think also that Josephus has written these lines to remind his audience of a text celebrating another great city: Thucydides’ rendition of Pericles’ Funeral Oration. At 2.41, Pericles states about Athens’ monuments: “μετὰ μεγάλων δὲ σημείων καὶ οὐ δὴ τοῦ ἁμάρτυρον γε τὴν δύναμιν παρασχόμενοι τοῖς τε νῦν καὶ τοῖς ἐπείτα θαυμασθησόμεθα...” “and with great signs we have surely furnished witness to our (physical) power both to people now and to those in the future, and we shall be admired...” Pericles speaks further on of the death of the Athenian soldiers as proof of “ἀνδρὸς ἀρετῆν” and of their “ὑπὲρ τῆς πατρίδος ἀνδραγαθίαν” (2.42). Both Thucydides and Josephus produced texts which are memorials to great cities that have fallen, and readers in the late first century would be able to appreciate the correspondence. Also, the same attitude about power and masculinity equated with size is found when Titus selects seven hundred of the tallest and most handsome (“μεγέθει τε καὶ κάλλει σωμάτων”) of the Jewish captives to march in his ultimate spectacle, the triumphal parade in Rome, B.J. 7.118.
Josephus next turns to the palace of Herod, hyperbolically claiming that it was “beyond all description.”\textsuperscript{75} The historian pictures for his readers the palace’s interior appointments, which he characterizes as “indescribable.”\textsuperscript{76} After attempting to recount the palace’s marvels, inside and out, in a few sentences, Josephus again mentions the limitations of his account to capture the true magnificence of the royal spread. This narrative aporia may seem once again to be a simple hyperbolic assertion of Jerusalem’s grandeur, but Josephus offers deeper psychological insight here:

But it is not possible to describe fittingly the palace, and the memory of it brings torture, as it brings up the consuming flames of the brigands’ fire.\textsuperscript{77}

Remembering is torture, a torture caused by the rebels’ deeds. Just as the rebels have torn the people of Jerusalem limb from limb,\textsuperscript{78} causing a painful dispersion, these rebels even now “torture” the author himself when he feels compelled to recall the spectacle of his city’s former glory for his audience. This narrative, so imbued with spectacle, becomes a torture to be endured by its own author, just as participation in actual spectacles/games in the Roman world involved an element of masochism.\textsuperscript{79}

The Temple appears as the crowning glory in his explanation of Jerusalem’s topography and monumental defenses. In his description (\textit{B.J.} 5.184-237), Josephus conducts his readers on a tour which leads from the outermost court of the entire complex to the inside of the Temple itself. By leading the reader from outside to inside, this itinerary provides the gentile audience outside Palestine his insider’s perspective.

\textsuperscript{75} \textit{B.J.} 5.176: “παντός λόγου κρείσσων.” In the next sentence he refers to the building’s “ὑπερβολήν.”
\textsuperscript{76} \textit{B.J.} 5.178: “ἀδιήγητος.”
\textsuperscript{77} \textit{B.J.} 5.182: “ἀλλὰ γὰρ οὕθ’ ἐρμηνεύσαι δυνατὸν ἀξίως τὰ βασίλεια, καὶ φέρει βάσανον ἡ μνήμη, τὰς τοῦ λῃστρικοῦ πυρὸς δαπάνας ἀναφέρουσα.” He has explained the fire at 2.430 ff. Here, too, the rebels, not the Romans, are to blame for the fire.
\textsuperscript{78} See \textit{B.J.} 5.27.
\textsuperscript{79} On this, see C. Barton (1993).
After all, he was a priest who would have had access to the sanctuary, except for the Holy of Holies.

Josephus dwells upon the measurements of the Temple's various courts and of the structure itself. He also outlines its contents, some of its purity restrictions, and the garb of its priests, including the high priest. In this expansive digression on the Temple, Josephus clearly determines both to impress his audience and to preserve a detailed memory of a place whose permanent loss is unfathomable for him.

Some scholars have compared these measurements with those in the Mishnah tractate *Middoth*, written in the second century C.E. (I shall not do this here.) Both Josephus and the rabbinic author are striving to preserve a detailed record of a revered sanctuary that no longer exists. On the remembrance of the Temple in the Mishnah, see Jacob Neusner, “Map Without Territory: Mishnah’s System of Sacrifice and Sanctuary,” *History of Religions* 19 (1979), pp. 103-127. Also, compare to Josephus’s description of the Temple in *Ant.* 15.391-425. Lee I. Levine, “Josephus’ Description of the Jerusalem Temple,” in F. Parente and J. Sievers, *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period: Essays in Memory of Morton Smith*, Brill, 1994, 233-246, explains the discrepancies between the historian’s own two accounts of the Temple (p. 238): “It would seem that the simplest and most reasonable explanation for these contradictions is that Josephus was, in fact, describing two different buildings, i.e., the Temple as it existed in two historical contexts. The *Antiquities* account reflects the Temple that Herod built ca. 20 BCE, while the *War* account reflects the Temple as known first-hand by Josephus and as viewed by Titus when he reached Jerusalem. In other words, it is the Temple described in *War* that was destroyed in 70.” One of Levine’s most interesting observations concerns the women’s court becoming more restrictive by the time of the war. I would add that in *Ant.* 15, Josephus does not lead the reader into the Temple, nor does he mention the Holy of Holies.

At *B.J.* 5.19, Josephus steps out of the chronology of his narrative to lament the destruction of Jerusalem. He does, however, hold out the possibility of the city and the Temple being restored: “But you could be better again, if you ever propitiate the God who destroyed you,” “Δύνασαι ὑμῖν ἐν γενέσθαι πάλιν Ἀμείνων, εἴγε ποτὲ τὸν παρθήσαντα θεὸν ἐξιλάσθη.” Chilton (1992), p. 79, comments on this passage: “Josephus openly imagines conditions under which sacrifice might be offered again in Jerusalem.” M. Goodman, in *Mission and Conversion, Proselytizing in the Religious History of the Roman Empire*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994, pp. 44-5, concurs: “I have already noted that the destruction of a great religious sanctuary which had previously enjoyed Roman protection, and Vespasian’s refusal to permit its reconstruction, were quite abnormal in Roman history. In the late 70s Josephus pleaded implicitly in the *Jewish War* for the restoration of the shrine, advancing the implausible claim that, despite all the imperial propaganda which revelled in the act, the destruction had occurred against the wishes of Titus (*BJ* 6.254-66).”
Josephus goes to great effort to emphasize the grandiose nature of the Temple. Josephus mentions the foundation of the Temple by Solomon, but only in regard to the process of the widening of the Temple Mount as a whole. He provides no description of the first Temple (or of the effects of its destruction in the sixth century). Instead, the additions to and enclosure of the hill are the main feat he wishes to underline, and deems that “they completed a deed greater than one could hope for.” He reports that this lengthy _ergon_ was financed by funds from all over the world. Josephus thereby stresses the universal appeal of the Temple, even while it is still under construction.

When Josephus actually enters the structure of the Temple itself, he explains the division of its sixty cubit length into two chambers and their contents. He first details the contents of the outer room, which held “the three most wonderful and universally acclaimed works: a lampstand, a table, and a censer.” He explains very specifically the allegorical significance of each, just as he has expounded on the veil hanging at the entrance. All of these objects in his interpretation represent aspects of the universe. He remarks that the mixture of colors on the veil work together as an “εἰκόνα τῶν ὅλων.” The seven branches of the lampstand represent the seven planets, the twelve loaves on the table stand for the twelve signs of the zodiac, and the spices from everywhere on the earth signify that “του θεου πάντα και το θεω.” God literally embraces all things, and the Temple is the manifestation of this for the

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82 _B.J._ 5.185.
83 _B.J._ 5.187: “μείζον ἐλπίδος ἐκπονήσαντες ἔργον.”
84 _B.J._ 5.187: “οἱ ἱεροὶ δὲ θησαυροὶ πάντες, οὓς ἀνεπιμπλασαν οἱ παρὰ τῆς οἰκουμένης δασμοί πειμόμενοι τῷ θεῷ.”
85 _B.J._ 5.216: “τρία τὰ θαυμασιώτατα καὶ περιβόντα πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ἔργα, λυχνίαν τράπεζαν θυμιατήριον.” Josephus has already mentioned these objects, without allegorization, in connection with Pompey’s capture of Jerusalem and entrance into the Temple at 1.152.
86 _B.J._ 5.212-214.
87 _B.J._ 5.218: “all things are of God and for God.”
historian. His readers are meant to marvel at all of these objects and to be swept up in the widespread positive opinion about them. Josephus has clearly underlined universality on all levels as a key feature of the Temple.

His tour finally arrives at the most sacred space, the inner chamber of the sanctuary. It presents, however, a remarkable contradiction to the rest of the building; it hosts neither theater nor spectacle. Though the exterior of the Temple may be the greatest spectacle in all the world according to Josephus and soon in his narrative will serve as the skene for the greatest tragedy the world has seen, its innermost room is void. He states:

Nothing at all was resting inside it: untrodden, undefiled, unseen to all, it was called the holy of holy.  

First of all, “nothing” is inside the inner sanctum. Secondly, Josephus builds up with a succession of alpha-privative adjectives to the crowning idea that nothing is to be seen there. Finally, he calls the room the “holy of holy” (in the singular). Josephus has carefully designed this entire description with a keen eye to his audience and his apologetic aims.

He stresses the emptiness of the chamber for a reason which he does not express here, but which we can supply from his later tract, the Contra Apionem. There he combats the “lies” and “absurd blasphemies” told by certain pagans about the Jewish Temple. His main opponent, the grammarian Apion, has claimed that the Jews kept the “head of an ass” inside and even a Greek, whom they would sacrifice and eat every

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88 B.J. 5.219: “ἐκεῖτο δέ οὐδὲν ὄλως ἐν αὐτῷ, ἀβατον δὲ καὶ ἀχραντον καὶ ἀθέατον ἦν πάσιν, ἀγίον δὲ ἁγιον ἐκαλεῖτο.”

89 See Mishnah, Middoth 4.5, where the room is too holy to be seen: “And in the upper story were openings into the Holy of Holies by which they used to let the workmen down in boxes, so that they could not feast their eyes on the Holy of Holies,” Danby transl., p. 596.

90 C.A. 2.79. See my next chapter for a more detailed analysis of this section of C.A. and its implications for reading sacrifice and the Temple in the B.J.
year.\textsuperscript{91} Josephus counters this by observing that no pagan conqueror ever found such a thing when he went inside the Temple.\textsuperscript{92}

Josephus has already spoken of the inner chamber in book 1 of the \textit{Bellum}.\textsuperscript{93} Here he describes the Roman army under Pompey capturing Jerusalem’s citadel in 63 B.C.E. Josephus calls Pompey’s entrance into the Temple the worst calamity the Jews suffered at this time. What so bothers the Jews, according to the historian, is that “the hitherto unseen holy place was unveiled by the foreigners.”\textsuperscript{94} Thus the audience is already aware well before the excursus in book 5 that the inner sanctum of the Temple is meant to be an “unseen” place, and, therefore, not a spectacle. Despite what the Romans have done, Josephus also clearly intends his readers to recognize Pompey as a “good general”\textsuperscript{95} who does not pillage the contents, including the treasury, and who orders the Temple cleaned, rites restored on the following day, and Hyrcanus reinstated as high priest.\textsuperscript{96} Josephus clearly envisions this respect for the institution of the Temple as the ideal situation for the Jewish people and their rulers.

After he leads his tour all the way into the inner sanctum of the Temple, he quickly steps outside and attempts to impress his readers with the entire edifice’s visual impact:

The exterior of the building lacked nothing to astonish either the soul or the eyes. For being covered all over with massive plates of gold, as soon as the sun was up, it radiated so fiery a beam of light that it forced those straining to look at its emanations to turn away their eyes, as if from solar rays.\textsuperscript{97}

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\textsuperscript{91} C.A. 2.80 In the true spirit of invective, Josephus eventually remarks that Apion has the mind of an ass at 2.85.
\textsuperscript{92} C.A. 2.82.
\textsuperscript{93} B.J. 1.148-154.
\textsuperscript{94} B.J. 1.152: “τὸ τέως ἀόρατον ἁγίον ἐκκαλυφθὲν ύπὸ τῶν ἁλλοφύλων.”
\textsuperscript{95} B.J. 1.153: “ἀγαθῷ στρατηγῷ.”
\textsuperscript{96} B.J. 1.153.
\textsuperscript{97} B.J. 5.222: “Τὸ δ’ ἔξωθεν αὐτοῦ πρόσωπον οὐδὲν οὔτ’ εἰς ψυχῆς οὔτ’ εἰς ὀμμάτων ἐκπληξίν ἀπέλειπεν· πλαξὶ γὰρ χρυσοῦ στιβαραῖς κεκαλυμμένος
Commentators have noticed a similarity between this representation of the Temple’s brilliant aspect in the morning light and the association of God’s light with the dawn in the Thanksgiving Hymns found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Certainly “light” is a powerful religious and political theme in the Qumran literature, but it is connected in these works with a community of believers and not the Temple as it stood at that time. Perhaps the Jewish (or even Graeco-Roman) reader of the Bellum at the end of the first century would understand the fuller and possibly political implication of Josephus labelling the Temple as a source of light. I would add, however, that beyond this reading within the Jewish context, we also may see here a nod to Greek philosophy.

When encountering this spectacle of the Temple, not only the eyes but also the soul of the viewer is meant to be impressed. Perhaps Josephus’s audience could read this encounter of the eyes and soul with the golden façade of the Temple as a reflection of the philosophical discourse current at his time about sense perception and the physical effect of objects as they are apprehended, especially visually. Josephus seems to invite a deeper reading of the Temple’s façade by mentioning the soul and the sun’s rays. Whether his audience would actually make such an association, or simply read this at face value as a description of a physically stunning building, cannot be proved. He does not, in fact, take it a step further by intimating that the viewer then falls in love with the structure and wants to possess it. Instead, he relates how it appears to be a snowy

πάντοθεν, ὑπὸ τὰς πρῶτας ἀνατολὰς πυρωδεστάτην ἀπέπαλλεν σύγχ. καὶ τῶν βιαζομένων ἱδεῖν τὰς ὀψεις ὡσπερ ἥλιακαὶ ἀκτίοις ἀπέστησεν.”

Michel and Bauernfeind (1963), vol. 2, pt. 1, p. 256, n. 88: 1Q4 (“I thank Thee, O Lord, for Thou hast illumined my face by Thy Covenant,...I seek Thee, and sure as the dawn Thou appearest as [perfect Light] to me,” G. Vermes, transl., The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, 3rd ed., 1987, p. 174). They root this idea in Psalm 50:1-2, where God, perfect in beauty, shines forth from Zion from the rising to the setting of the sun. M. and B. also note B.J. 2.128 and 148, where the Essenes are represented as having peculiar piety towards the sun. Whether the Essenes are the authors of the Scrolls is still a matter of debate today.
mountain from afar, with golden spikes to ward off birds, and constructed from stones that reached forty-five cubits long.\(^9\) In any case, Josephus will later in book 5 return to the Temple’s façade in his speech at the wall.\(^{10}\) There he reminds the reader once again of the Temple’s centrality and importance by asking the rebels to look upon this magnificent structure, whose ruin they are ensuring through their rebellion.

After this excursus on the Temple, the tragic nature of the *Bellum*’s account deepens. When the rebels inflict a momentary setback upon the Romans after they have broken through the second wall of the city, Josephus reports that the rebels’ elation and comments:

> For God was blinding their [the rebels’] minds because of their transgressions; and they perceived neither how the forces still left to the Romans far outnumbered those which had been expelled, nor yet the stealthy approach of the famine. For it was still possible to feed upon the miseries of the people and to drink the blood of the city; but need had long since taken hold of good people, and many were weakening from the lack of necessities.\(^{101}\)

Josephus explains that the famine has now gripped the people,\(^{102}\) and that the rebels have no concern for the majority of the hungry in Jerusalem, viewing all but those

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\(^9\) B.J. 5.224. He scales back the measurement to twenty-five at Ant. 15.392, but as the Loeb editors R. Marcus and A. Wikgren note at p. 191, n. b, “all these figures appear to be exaggerated, judging from the size of the stones still preserved.”

\(^{10}\) B.J. 5.416.

\(^{101}\) B.J. 5.343-344: “ἐπεσκότει γὰρ αὐτῶν ταῖς γνώμαις διὰ τὰς παρανομίας ὁ θεὸς, καὶ οὕτω τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἱσχύν ὡς ἐπίσκεψιν κατελείπετο τῆς ἐξεσασθείσης ἐβλεπον οὕτω τὸν ὕφερποντα λιμόν αὐτοῖς. ἔτι γαρ παρῆν ἐσθίειν ἐκ τῶν δημοσίων κακῶν καὶ τὸ τῆς πόλεως αἷμα πίνειν· ἐνδειε δὲ τοὺς ἁγαθοὺς ἐπείξε χάλαι, καὶ οπάνει τῶν ἐπιτηδείων διελύοντο πολλοί.”

\(^{102}\) Jonathan J. Price (1992) delivers an account of the Jewish War in which he attempts to reconstruct and analyze chronologically the history of the events described by Josephus in the *Bellum*, including the famine at pp. 144-159. In “Appendix Two: Other Sources,” pp. 200-204, he discusses possible rabbinic attestations to the famine, and in “Appendix Eleven: The Famine Notices in BJ,” pp. 271-280, he quotes the passages in the *B.J.* that mention famine, passes judgment upon the accuracy of the details, and tries to recover what might have really happened out of what he perceives to be Josephus’s imaginative description. He argues that the famine did indeed occur, despite concluding that in describing the famine Josephus uses “extreme language, constant
fervently opposed to the Romans as liabilities. Once again, he is setting the rebels apart from innocent Jews who are suffering. The historian also is conjuring up a picture of intellectual blindness that must lead to downfall, as in Attic tragedy, the most obvious example being Oedipus Rex. And he minces no words in labelling the rebels as blood-suckers, akin to Aeschylus’ Furies. Also, this figurative association with drinking blood makes the rebels ritually unclean from the Jewish perspective.

Josephus proceeds to record in indirect and direct speech an oration that he claims to have delivered to the rebels in which he draws their attention to the spectacle of the Temple. This set piece allows him to lay out all his major themes. He explains that he walked around the wall of the city imploring those inside in their native language to spare the people and the Temple, as the Romans have up to this point. He urges the Jewish rebels to put down their arms before the famine can overtake them. In this long exhortation, Josephus draws out his idea that God is now on the side of the reiteration of tendentious themes, severe incriminations of the rebel leaders and repeated assertions concerning the psychology of the besieged.” He does not, however, investigate Josephus’s use of tragedy and spectacle.

103 B.J. 5.345.
104 Otherwise, usually it is the earth that drinks the blood of slain men, e.g.: Aes. Th. 736, Eum. 979; Soph. O.T. 1401. Drinking blood while making an oath is also an accusation lodged against the politically dangerous, such as the Catilinarian conspirators in Sallust, Bellum Catilinae 22: “Fuere ea tempestate qui dicerent Catilinam oratione habita cum ad iusiurandum popularis sceleris sui adigeret, humani corporis sanguinem vino permixtum in pateris circumtulisse; inde cum post exsecrationem omnes degustavissent, sicuti in sollemnibus sacris fieri consuevit, aperuisse consilium suum; atque eo dictitare fecisse, quo inter se fidi magis forent, alius alii tanti facinoris conscii.” Sallust adds that the story may have been exaggerated and, given the lack of evidence, will not weigh in with his own opinion about such a serious matter. We shall see, by contrast, how Josephus treats the Mary episode.
105 On this miasma, see Leviticus 3:17: “This is a perpetual law for all your descendants, wherever you may live: never eat either fat or blood.”
106 B.J. 5.362-419. Sections 376 ff. are in oratio recta, since they present the more dramatic material of historical exempla and his final exhortation.
107 B.J. 5. 362-363.
Romans. He begins the conclusion of his appeal by inviting the rebels to view the endangered city. He implores:

Iron-hearted men! Throw away your weapons, have respect for your country which is already falling into ruins, and turn around and look upon the beauty of what you are betraying: what a city! what a Temple! what numerous nations’ gifts! Against these would anyone guide flames? Is there anyone who wishes that these no longer exist?

Josephus stresses the main spectacle of their city (and his narrative): they should “look upon” what they will lose—the city, their Temple and its treasures—if they persist in their stubborn resistance. Furthermore, Josephus brands the rebels as the traitors, surely as a response to the criticisms of his own actions. In any case, the historian cannot imagine that anyone would want to see the Temple destroyed. As in his long excursus on the Temple earlier in book 5, Josephus here in his speech at the wall reminds the reader once again of the Temple’s centrality and importance by asking the rebels to look upon this magnificent structure, whose ruin they are ensuring through their rebellion.

After his exhortation in this speech to contemplate the Temple, Josephus implores the rebels to look upon their own families. He then heightens and personalizes the tragedy by asking the rebels to kill his own family, including his wife and mother, and even himself. He concludes his speech in dramatic fashion:

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109 B.J. 5.412: “I believe that the deity has fled from the holy places, and has taken his stand with those against whom you are now fighting,” “ὡςτ’ ἐγώ πεφευγέναι μὲν ἐκ τῶν ἀγίων οἶμαι τὸ θεῖον, ἐστάναι δὲ παρ’ οῖς πολεμεῖτε νῦν.”
110 B.J. 5.416-417: “ὡς οἰδῆρειοι, ὅρισαν τὰς πανοπλίας, λάβετε ἢδη κατερειπομένης αἰδώ πατρίδος, ἐπιστράφητε καὶ θεάσασθε τὸ κάλλος ἦς προδίδοτε, ὃν ἂντι, ὃν ἱερόν, ὃσον ἐθνῶν δῶρα. ἐπὶ ταύτα τις ὀδηγεῖ φλόγα; ταύτα τις μηκέτ᾽ εἶναι θέλει;”
111 B.J. 5.418: “...ὀμμασιν βλέπετε...πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν ἐκάστῳ γενέσθω τέκνα καὶ γυνῆ καὶ γονεῖς...”
Slay them, take my blood as the price of your own salvation! I too am ready to die, if after me you will come to your senses.112

Josephus presents his mother and wife113 and the rest of his “illustrious family” as possible sacrificial victims. Thackeray notes on this section: “His father, Matthias, though not mentioned here, was still alive, his imprisonment being referred to below, 533.”114 Josephus seems to concentrate on the female members of his family in order to invite his readers to compare them with the female victims in Attic tragedy whose sacrificial deaths ensure the safety of the community.115 Both the tragedies with human

112 B.J. 5.419, “ἀποκτεῖνατε αὐτούς, λάβετε μισθὸν τῆς ἐαυτῶν σωτηρίας τὸ ἐμὸν αἷμα· κἀγὼ θυήσειν ἔτοιμος, εἰ μετ’ ἐμὲ σωφρονεῖν μέλλετε.” It is possible that Josephus is inspired here by Euripides’ Iphigenia in Tauris 591-4: “οὐ...σώθητι κείσε, μισθὸν οὐκ αἰσχρὸν λαβῶν. Ι κούφων ἐκατί γραμμάτων σωτηρίαν.” In any case, I should think that Josephus read this play since it tells of Iphigenia sacrificing foreigners to Artemis, just as the Jews were accused by Apion of doing with a Greek each year in the Temple (C.A. 2.89-111).

113 In his Vita, Josephus mentions having had three wives. He explains that after Vespasian captured him at Jotapata, the general held him in high honor and ordered him to marry a captive woman from Caesarea. After Josephus’s release, she left him (no explanation is given why), and he accompanied Vespasian to Alexandria. Here he married another woman (414-415). This should be the woman to whom Josephus is referring here in the B.J. He relates further in his Vita (426-428) that after Vespasian gave Josephus a nice piece of land in Judaea as compensation for other land lost after the war, he divorced this wife because her behavior didn’t please him, and then married a Jewish woman from Crete. He praises this last wife for having distinguished parents and for possessing a character far surpassing most women. He never gives the names of any of his wives, but does tell his readers those of his living children. His second wife bore him three children. Of these, his son Hyrcanus was still alive when Josephus wrote his Vita; the last wife had two sons, Justus and Simonides (a.k.a. Agrippa). Josephus, therefore, seems to have had no children in 70 to offer up to the rebels as victims.

114 Thackeray on B.J. 5.419, Loeb, p. 330, n. b. Michel and Bauernfeind (1963), vol. 2.1, p. 267, n. 172, comment in part: “Josephus hat Vater, Mutter und sein erstes Weib in der Stadt (vgl. 533.544); an unserer Stelle wird der Vater nicht ausdrücklich erwähnt, weil die Frauen besonders schutzbedürftig sind.” That Josephus would emphasize the women because of their vulnerability is entirely plausible, but readers familiar with Greek tragedy could interpret the text in light of the literary tradition.

115 For instance, in order to save Athens, Praxithea patriotically offers her own daughters as sacrificial victims in Euripides’ Erectheus. Joan Connelly, in a paper entitled “Parthenon and Parthenoi: A Mythological Interpretation of the Parthenon Frieze,” has
sacrifice and Josephus’s speech share the common theme that love of country inspires extreme action. Josephus then in the ultimate heroic gesture adds himself to the list of victims.\textsuperscript{116} He offers his blood for the rebels’ salvation; he hopes that his death might cause the rebels to think straight\textsuperscript{117} and alleviate the city’s suffering. By ending his speech with the words “σωφρονεῖν μέλλετε,” Josephus is conjuring up one of tragedy’s greatest themes: the acquisition of wisdom through suffering.

The image of blood sacrifice here is so striking because it speaks to all sectors of Josephus’s intended audience. Since blood sacrifice was practiced by both pagans (legally until the late fourth century) and Jews (until 70 C.E.), his audience understood well the idea of performing this ritual for the sake of a city. Josephus, however, pushes the image to the extreme by presenting people, not animals, as sacrificial victims. His hellenized readers, gentile or Jewish, could relate this to the literary precedent in Greek tragedy, where human sacrifice occurs in times of crisis. For his Jewish readers this image recalls the blood sacrifices of animals by the priests at the Temple on behalf of Israel, especially by the high priest who entered the Holy of Holies once a year on the Day of Atonement.\textsuperscript{118}

The power of this sacrifice imagery for Jews, including the substitution of a person for a sacrificial animal, is attested in another work written specifically for a recently proposed that the Parthenon frieze commemorates this sacrifice of the daughters of Erectheus. Also, Makaria in Euripides’ Heracleidae offers herself for sacrifice (502: “σφαγη”), thereby fulfilling the oracle demanding that they appease Persephone with a maiden (489: “οὐ ταύρον οὐδὲ μόσχον, ἀλλὰ παρθένον”) in order to save Athens (402: “πόλει ὑφτηρίας”). On human sacrifice in Euripides, see Helene P. Foley, Ritual Irony: Poetry and Sacrifice in Euripides, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.\textsuperscript{116}

\textsuperscript{116} Perhaps Menoeceus’s extraordinary self-sacrifice in Euripides’ Phoenissae provided a masculine exemplum to Josephus. Menoeceus acts as the “μηχανὴ σωτερίας” (890) for Thebes in this play.\textsuperscript{117}

See, for instance, the extraordinary expression of this in Aeschylus, Agamemnon 176-183, which includes: “καὶ παρ ἄκοντας ἦλθε σωφρονεῖν” (180-181).\textsuperscript{118}

See Leviticus 16 for the description of this, which includes the “scapegoat” ritual.
Jewish-Christian audience, the Letter to the Hebrews in the Christian Scriptures. This letter dates to the late Second Temple period and represents worship at the Temple as still being performed.\(^{119}\) The author of this letter describes the (pre-Temple, prototypical) tent-sanctuary in the desert, its contents, and acts of worship. The author then overrides this earthly institution by presenting Christ as the high priest who enters an idealized sanctuary\(^{120}\) and who, in contrast to the Jewish Temple’s high priest, gains eternal redemption for humanity “not through the blood of goats and bull calves but through his own blood.”\(^{121}\) Later in this same section Christ is referred to as a sacrificial victim\(^{122}\) who expiated sins once and for all and who will appear a second time to bring salvation.\(^{123}\) This letter provides a keen insight into what kind of imagery was believed would strike a Jewish reader most forcefully at the time that Josephus composed his history.\(^{124}\) Though Josephus shares a similar cultural background with the

\(^{119}\) The present tense here, however, may be an anachronism, akin to Josephus’s use of the present tense to describe worship at the Temple in C.A. 2.193-196, a good 25 years after the Temple was destroyed.

\(^{120}\) Note the hellenization in this idealization of the Temple.

\(^{121}\) Hebrews 9.12: “οὐδὲ δὲ ἀἵματος τράγων καὶ μόσχων διὰ δὲ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος εἰσηλθέν ἐφάπαξ εἰς τὰ ἁγία σιωπίαν ὑπὲρωσιν εὑράμενος.” (Think of the later Christian sculptural depictions of Christ bearing a calf on his shoulders, such as the Roman marble from the 3rd century C.E. now in the Vatican, whose iconography is borrowed from Greek sculptures of calf-bearing boys.) See also 10.4 and 13.11 for Christ’s blood as substitution for the animals’. Also, as the author of Hebrews recounts in his list of examples of faith in Jewish history, Moses saved the first-born sons of Israel from the Destroyer by sprinkling the blood at Passover, 11.28.

\(^{122}\) Hebrews 9.26: “διὰ τῆς θυσίας αὐτοῦ.”

\(^{123}\) Hebrews 9.28: “...ἐκ δευτέρου χωρίς ἁμαρτίας ὁφθήσεται τοῖς αὐτῶν ἀπεκδεχομένοις εἰς σωτηρίαν.”

\(^{124}\) Paul, writing in Greek for a predominantly gentile and Hellenized audience, also employed this imagery of Jesus’s sacrifice for sins two decades before Josephus started writing the B.J. Gerard Sloyan offers a fine analysis of this in his recent book The Crucifixion of Jesus: History, Myth, Faith, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995. I quote Sloyan at length here on Paul’s use of Jewish sacrificial imagery because he does not mince words (p. 69): “Anti-Christian polemic has identified the first-century Roman occupation as a time of high-anxiety uncharacteristic of biblical Israel, leading Paul, a neurotic diaspora Jew preoccupied with his own guilt, to interpret Judaism in ways quite unlike those of the healthy Jewish psyche. But the whole rhythm of temple
unknown author of the *Letter to the Hebrews*, in that both are steeped in Jewish tradition, one can hardly imagine any direct influence of this letter upon Josephus. We can, however, use the *Letter* to appreciate the richness of the imagery in Josephus’s speech here in the *Bellum* once we realize the variety of interpretations that converge upon it from the different cultural and religious perspectives of his audience.

After his oration Josephus turns to an extended description of the effects of the famine upon the population as a tragedy and a spectacle.\(^{125}\) This long piece shows first the desperation of the rebels searching all homes and confiscating food. Then Josephus introduces the next level of horror by deliberately playing upon the emotions of his readers, as in a tragedy:

> Pitiful was the food supply and the spectacle was worthy of tears, since the stonger took more than their share while the weak wailed. Famine, indeed, overpowers all the emotions, but nothing does it so obliterate as shame.\(^{126}\)

Josephus, like the tragedian, tries to elicit an emotional response from his audience. He deems this whole scene worthy of pity (“ἐλεεινη...δακρύων ἢξιος”), and even refers to

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sacrifice was geared to restore worshippers who had disturbed a right relation with God by conscious or unconscious sin to a balance of forgiveness. With conformity to the rabbinic interpretation of Torah after 70 C.E. as proper worshipful behavior, the awareness of offending against divine precept, viz., sin, was no less. A careful examination of biblical and postbiblical writing should convince anyone that a consciousness of personal and corporate sin was at the heart of Israel’s religion and not a peculiar Pauline hobgoblin. The whole of temple sacrifice was geared to liberating the people from the effects of sin.

“For that reason it should not surprise us that when an innocent man was viewed as yielding up his life freely he should have been seen as an offering for sin. That Israel repudiated human sacrifice should not have posed a barrier. The whole Jewish culture was familiar with animal victims symbolic of the repentant human spirit. It was a short step from there to seeing in this sinless human victim Jesus an expiatory sin offering.”

\(^{125}\) *B.J.* 5.424–438.

\(^{126}\) *B.J.* 5.429: “Ελεεινη δ’ ἦν ἡ τροφὴ καὶ δακρύων ἢξιος ἡ θέα, τῶν μὲν δυνατωτέρων πλεονεκτοῦσαν τῶν δ’ οσθενῶν ὀδυρομένων. πάντων μὲν δὴ παθῶν ὑπερίσταται λιμός, οὐδὲν δ’ οὔτως ἀπόλλυσιν ὡς αἰδώ τὸ γὰρ ἄλλως ἐντροπη ἢξιον ἐν τούτῳ καταφρονεῖται.”
the event he is describing as “ἡ θεά,” “the spectacle.” Josephus graphically describes the tortures that the rebels inflict upon the poorer people, including stealing food from old men, women, and children, as well as violating people with sharp spears. He calls these sufferings “τὰ φρικτά,” things that should make his audience “shudder.” Josephus reports that the people, under the duress of their sufferings, even invoked “the name of God, which makes one shudder.” Thus, Josephus directs the emotional response of the audience, and with the repetition of the word “shudder” in reference to the unutterable name of God, he perhaps reminds his readers of the more awesome punishment that God will visit upon the rebels for their impiety.

Josephus sums up this stage of the war with a lamentation for Jerusalem and a denunciation of the rebels that encapsulates the rebels’ responsibility for the destruction of the city, and specifically of the Temple, which becomes the prime spectacle:

They overthrew the city, while they forced the unwilling Romans to claim sullen success, and they all but dragged the slow fire to the Temple. And indeed, when they were looking at it burning from the upper city, they neither grieved nor cried, but these emotions were found among the Romans.

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127 B.J. 5.439, “οἱ...ταπεινότεροι,” as opposed to “οἱ...ἀξιώματι.”
128 B.J. 5.435. Shuddering is a typical reaction. Plutarch, Cicero 49, uses a phrase similar to this in his description of the orator’s head and hands being nailed to the rostra: “Τὴν δὲ κεφαλὴν καὶ τὰς χεῖρας ἐκέλευσεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐμβόλων ἐπὶ τοῦ βῆματος θείναι, θέαμα Ῥωμαίοις φρικτόν...” Aristotle, Poetics 53b3-6, relates that shuddering and pity are the desired effects of tragedy: “The plot should be composed in such a way that even without seeing it the person hearing the sequence of events will both shudder and feel pity at the events,” “δεῖ γὰρ καὶ ἄνευ τοῦ ὀράν οὕτω συνεστάναι τὸν μύθον ὡστε τὸν ἀκούοντα τὰ πράγματα γινόμενα καὶ φρίττειν καὶ ἐλεεῖν ἐκ τῶν συμβαίνοντων.” Though Aristotle downplays opsis, it is clear that shuddering and pity are the two main emotional responses sought from an audience witnessing a tragedy.
129 B.J. 5.438: “τὸ φρικτὸν...ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ.”
130 B.J. 5.444-445: “τὴν μὲν γε πόλιν ἀνέτρεψαν αὐτοὶ, Ῥωμαῖοις ἐκοντὰς ἠναγκάσαν ἑπιγραφῆναι σκυθρωτῶ ἐκτορθώματι καὶ μόνον ὦχι ἑλκύσαν ἐπὶ τὸν ναόν βραδύνου τὸ πῦρ. ἀμέλει καιόμενον ἐκ τῆς ἄνω πόλεως ἀφορώντες οὔτ’ ἠλάφασαν οὔτ’ ἐδάκρυσαν, ἀλλὰ ταῦτα τὰ πάθη παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις εὑρέθη.”
Josephus leaps ahead of his narrative in order to drive home his point about the overall responsibility of the rebels for Jerusalem’s downfall. He lists the results of their crimes in ascending order of importance as well as insult to the Jews: the capture of Jerusalem, the Roman recognition of their sad victory, and, finally, the burning of the Temple. The historian dramatically describes the rebels as looking at the spectacle of the burning Temple, and implicitly criticizes them for not being appropriately moved by the sight. On the other hand, Josephus takes care to indicate that the Romans are not happy about the outcome, which he labels “σκυθρωπία” (“sad” or “sullen”). He even credits the Roman soldiers for properly mourning the Temple’s demise. This is certainly the emotional response (“τὰ πάθη”) which he is trying to encourage in his own readers, many of whom presumably were also Romans, by depicting the events leading up to its fall as scenes in a tragedy viewed by the internal audience.

The Temple again serves as a visual center of attention when the historian presents a rhetorical set piece painting a picture of the effects of famine upon the population of Jerusalem. He describes Titus bemoaning the effects of the siege, the mockery of the Roman troops, and the pitiless intransigence of the rebels. He also seems to be deliberately evoking the memory of the Athenian plague in Thucydides in his description of this stage of the famine:

For the Jews, along with the exits, every hope of escape was now cut off; and the famine deepening itself fed upon the people by household and families. The roofs were filled with women and infants completely weakened, the alleys with

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131 This is, in fact, an adjective used in Greek tragedy to describe the demeanor of characters who are in distress. See, for instance, Heracles’ monologue at Euripides, *Alcestis*, 773-802, where he twice criticizes the servant for his “sullen” state (774, 797) after his mistress’s death. Also, Creon attacks Medea because of her sullen look, Euripides, *Medea*, 271. After she has killed Pentheus, Agave berates her father, Cadmus, for his “scowling old age” (“τὸ γῆρας... ἐν τ’ ὑμμασι σκυθρωπόν”), Euripides, *Bacchae* 1251-2.

132 Thucydides 2.47-55. Price (1992), p. 280, n. 11, notes the similarity, but not the difference I discuss below.
the corpses of old people; children and young men, swollen, were thronging together like ghosts in the marketplaces and collapsed wherever their suffering overtook them....but any who begged them [the rebels] to lend them their hand and a sword they treated disdainfully and left to the mercy of the famine, and each of them breathing his last gazing intently toward the Temple looked away from the rebels whom he left behind alive.\textsuperscript{133}

Josephus concentrates on the physical and emotional effect of the famine upon the sufferers as well as the response of the onlookers in good Thucydidean fashion.\textsuperscript{134} The rebels, of course, are depicted as making life as horrible as possible for the populace by desecrating the corpses and refusing to dispatch those begging for a quick death.

The key portion of this scene for appreciating Josephus’s use of spectacle to support his apologetic stance is that in which those dying of the famine breathe their last staring at the Temple while looking away from the rebels left behind. Price dismisses this detail as “gross embellishment,” and adds: “Yet this does not affect the main point, that bodies were left unburied.”\textsuperscript{135} I would argue instead that this vivid detail of the dying people gazing toward the Temple should not be discounted as superfluous. By focusing the eyes of the dying Jews upon the spectacle of the Temple, the author prompts us to

\textsuperscript{133} B.J. 5.512-513 and 517: “\textit{Ἰουδαίοις δὲ μετὰ τῶν ἔξοδων ἀπεκόπη πᾶσα σωτηρίας ἐλπὶς, καὶ βαθύνασι αὐτῶν ὁ λυμὸς κατ’ ὀίκους καὶ γενεὰς τὸν δῆμον ἐπεβόκετο. καὶ τὰ μὲν τέγη πεπλήρωτο γυναικῶν καὶ βρεφῶν λελυμένων, οἱ στενωποὶ δὲ γερόντων νεκρῶν, παῖδες δὲ καὶ νεανίας δισδούντες ὡσπερ ἔδωλα κατὰ τὰς ἀγορὰς ἀνειλοῦτο καὶ κατέπιπτον ὅπῃ τινὰ τὸ πᾶθος καταλαμβάνοι...τοὺς δ’ ἱκετεύοντας χρήσαι σφίδι δεξίαν καὶ ξίφος τῶν λυμὸ κατέλειπον ὑπερφανοῦντες, καὶ τῶν ἐκπεδώντων ἐκαστὸς ἀτενίσας εἰς τὸν ναὸν ἀφεώρα τοὺς στασιαστὰς ξύντας ἀπολιπόν.”

\textsuperscript{134} See Thucydides 2.52.

\textsuperscript{135} Price (1992), p. 280. He explains on pp. 158-159 that Jewish law did not allow a corpse to stay within the walls of Jerusalem for even one night. Josephus attests to this at B.J. 5.317 when he deplors the rebels’ treatment of the corpses of the priests Jesus and Ananus: “They proceeded into such a state of impiety that they threw out the unburied bodies, even though Jews take such care for burial rites that even those who have been sentenced to crucifixion are taken down and buried before sunset,” “προῆλθον δὲ εἰς τοσοῦτον ἁσβείας, ὡστε καὶ ἀτάφους ἰὲναι, καίτοι τοσαύτην Ἰουδαίων περὶ τὰς ταφὰς πρόνοιαν ποιοῦμενων, ὡστε καὶ τοὺς ἐκ καταδίκης ἀνεματωρωμένους πρὸ δύντος ἡλίου καθελεῖν τε καὶ βάπτειν.”
see his main themes in action: the piety of the common people, the importance of the Temple for all Jews (except the rebels), and the rebels as perpetrators of its destruction. In this way Josephus links the fate of the people with that of their Temple in an overtly dramatic fashion. Furthermore, it recalls Josephus’s exhortation in his speech at the wall that the rebels should look upon the Temple and spare the city.

Josephus’s comment also invites his readers to make a comparison with the Athenians during the plague of 430. Unlike Josephus’s Jews who gasp their last with eyes on the Temple, Thucydides’ Athenians allowed corpses to fester in the temples, and the populace as a whole lost faith: “As for the gods, it seemed to be the same thing whether one worshipped them or not, when one saw the good and bad dying indiscriminately.” The spectacle of death undermined religious scruple, according to Thucydides. In contrast, Josephus insistently stresses the piety of the common Jew and ascribes lawlessness only to the rebels.

Josephus’s deliberate link of the Temple with the dead is also possibly supported in the archaeological record. At least one ossuary from a first-century C.E. cave-tomb in Jerusalem seems to depict the front doorless portico of the Temple with a view into the sanctuary with its double doors closed, according to an Israeli scholar Asher Grossberg. This ossuary has the name “Yehosah” (“YHWSH”) inscribed on it. Grossberg believes that other ossuaries found with this one bear the names of members of the priestly family Tarfon. He argues against Levy Rahamani’s claim that the ossuary depicts not the Temple, but the front of a cave-tomb, and asks, “What more appropriate scene for a priestly family, than the facade of the Temple?” Rahamani has also

136 Thucydides 2.52.3.
137 Ibid. 2.53.4: “τὸ μὲν κρίνοντες ἐν ὦμοίῳ καὶ σέβειν καὶ μὴ ἐκ τοῦ πάντας ὡράν ἐν ἵσω ἀπολλυμένους.”
postulated that Jewish law would not have allowed “unclean” bones put in a box with a picture of the Temple on it. As we have seen, however, in this section of Book 5, Josephus purposely describes devout Jews dying with the Temple as their final focus, perhaps in an attempt to be connected perpetually with the sanctuary, and, therefore, God. Josephus depicts this act of devotion in order to emphasize the centrality and importance of the Temple for the Jews and, on another level, for his narrative.

After this detailed description of suffering, Josephus then provides the additional information of Titus’s histrionic reaction to seeing the Jewish corpses that the rebels have ordered to be flung from the ramparts because they smell so awful:139

When Titus doing his rounds looked upon these [ravines] filled with corpses and thick blood flowing underneath the oozing bodies, he groaned and lifting up his hands he bore witness to God that the deed was not his.140

This, of course, is “embellishment,” as Price would call it, but it also shows Josephus drawing upon Greek tragedy to make his apologetic point, here about the innocence of Titus. The historian specifically is using the guard’s speech to Creon in Sophocles’ Antigone about catching Antigone performing a ritual burial of her brother, Polynices.141

Clearly Josephus is taking his audience back to the celebrated mythological civil war when he casts the dead Jews in place of Polynices and Titus in that of Antigone.

139 B.J. 5.518: “τὴν ὀσμὴν οὐ φέρουτας.”
140 B.J. 5.519: “Περιών δὲ ταύτας ὁ Τίτος ὡς έθεάσατο πεπλησμένας τῶν νεκρῶν καὶ βαθὺν ἱχώρα μυδώντων ύπορρέουτα τῶν σωμάτων, ἐστέναξε τε καὶ τὰς χεῖρας ἀνατείνας κατεμαρτύρατο τὸν θεὸν, ὡς οὐκ εἰς τὸ ἔργον αὐτοῦ.”
141 Sophocles, Antigone 407-440. At B.J. 4.332 Josephus already alludes to the Antigone when the survivors of those killed by the rebels “would at night take a little dust in both hands and strewn it on the bodies, though some reckless persons did this by day,” “νυκτωρ δὲ κόινοι αἴροντες χεροῖν ὄλιγην ἐπερρίπτων τοῖς σώμασι, καὶ μεθ’ ἡμέραν εἰ τις παράβολος.” For the scattering of the dust, see Sophocles, Antigone 247 and 429. Also, perhaps Josephus uses the adjective “ἀνοσίων” to describe the dead commoners at 4.326 as an echo of Teiresias’s description of the corpse of Polynices at Antigone 1071: “ἀμοίρων, ἀκτέριστον, ἀνόσιον νέκου.”
Sophocles’ guard reports that the stench (“ ödeµν”) of Polynices’ oozing body (“µνδων...σώµα”) forced all the guards to move their lookout upwind.\(^{142}\) Josephus, as noted above, mentions the stench, and also includes the oozing (“µνδωντων...τῶν σωµάτων”). Antigone shrieks like a mother bird and wails when she sees her brother’s naked corpse, while Titus looks upon the Jewish corpses and groans (perhaps a more manly response than shrieking). Antigone raises a curse against those who did the deed (“τοῖς τοῦργον ἔξειργασµένοις”),\(^{143}\) whereas Titus swears he did not commit the deed (“τὸ ἔργον”). We can see that Josephus’s audience could perceive and appreciate these borrowings from Attic tragedy on an intellectual level, and thereby could feel more deeply the extent of the Jewish suffering and loss.

Josephus concludes book 5 on an ominous, tragic note. As before, the Romans pity the Jews while the rebels do not. He explains about the rebels: “For they were blinded\(^{144}\) by fate (“ὑπὸ τοῦ χρεῶν”), which both for the city and for themselves was already at hand.”\(^{145}\) This use of χρεῶν in the genitive is rare,\(^{146}\) but is found twice in this case in Euripides.\(^{147}\) Josephus, therefore, closes the book by foreshadowing the tragic downfall of his city with his tragic diction.

Book 6 commences with Jerusalem itself as the tragic victim. This is fitting, since this book chronicles its destruction:

\(^{142}\) Antigone 410-412, “µνδων τε σώµα γυµνώσαντες εῦ,/ καθῆµεθ´ ἀκρων ἐκ πάγων ὑπῆνεµοι,/ ödeµὴν ἀπ´ αὐτοῦ µὴ βάλη πεφευγότες,” “and we [the guards] did a good job stripping the oozing body naked and then we sat upwind on the hill to avoid the stench it put off.”

\(^{143}\) Ibid., 427-8: “ἐκ δ´ ἄρας κακάς/ ἑρᾶτο τοῖς τοῦργον ἔξειργασµένοις,” “and she [Antigone] cried an evil curse on those who did the deed.”

\(^{144}\) Thackeray translates it thus. πεπήρωντο can also mean “maimed” or “incapacitated”, so I would not automatically push the tragic blindness metaphor here. Previous God-ordained “blindness” of the rebels occurs at 5.343.

\(^{145}\) B.J. 5.572: “πεπήρωντο γὰρ ύπὸ τοῦ χρεῶν, δ´ τῇ τε πόλει καὶ αὐτοῖς ἐδὴ παρῆν.”

\(^{146}\) LSJ says it is “little used save in nom. and acc.”

\(^{147}\) Euripides, Hippolytus 1256, Hercules Furens 21.
The sufferings of Jerusalem thus daily grew worse, while the rebels were becoming more provoked by their misfortunes and the famine was spreading from the populace to themselves. The multitude of heaped up corpses throughout the city was a horrible [literally: provoked shuddering] sight and put off a pestilential stench...Yet they [the rebels] stepped on them and did not shudder nor pity nor did they perceive the outrage toward the dead as a bad omen for themselves.148

Once again, Josephus emphasizes the effect of the sight of the corpses upon those seeing them ("ὄψει τε φρικώδεσ") , while the rebels are pitiless, do not shudder, and commit "ὕβρις" against the dead. He completes the picture of tragic guilt by describing the rebels as rushing into war against the foreigners with the blood of fellow Jews upon their hands, and encourages the tragic interpretation by claiming that by this the rebels were "reproaching the deity, as it sure seems to me, for his slowness in punishing them."149 Not only the city but also the countryside is a sight provoking pity: "Питiful too was the spectacle of the countryside,"150 since the Romans had turned it into a wasteland by cutting down all the trees for their earthworks. Josephus draws his non-Jewish audience into experiencing the horror by asserting that no gentile who had formerly seen the beauty of the place could look upon it now without lamenting and sighing.151 Here he deliberately employs epic diction with "ὁλοφύρατο"152 to show the severity of the war’s devastation.

148 B.J. 6.1-3: "Τὰ μὲν οὖν τῶν ἱεροσολύμων πάθη προύκκοπτεν καθ’ ἕμεραν ἐπὶ τὸ χείρον, τῶν τε στασιαστῶν μᾶλλον παραχευμένων [ἐν] ταῖς συμφοραῖς καὶ τοῦ λιμοῦ μετὰ τὸν δῆμον ἢδη κάκεινος νεμομένου. τὸ γε μὴν πλήθος τῶν σεσωρευμένων ἀνὰ τὴν πόλιν πτωμάτων ὤψει τε φρικώδες ἦν καὶ λοιμώδη προσέβαλεν ὁμήρην...οἱ δ’ ἐπιβαίνοντες οὔτ’ ἐφριττον οὔτ’ ἠλέουν οὔτε κληδονα κακὴν ὀφῶν αὐτῶν ὑπελάμβανον τὴν εἰς τοὺς κατοιχομένους ὕβριν.”

149 B.J. 6.4: "...οὐείδησόντες ἐμοίγε δοκεῖν τὸ θείον εἰς βραδυτήτα τῆς ἐπ’ αὐτῶν κολάσεως.”

150 B.J. 6.6: “ἂν δ’ ἐλεεινὴ καὶ τῆς γῆς ἢ θέα.”

151 B.J. 6.7: “οὔδείς...ἀλλόφυλος, ἑπείτα τὴν τότε βλέπων ἐρημίαν οὐκ ὁλοφύρατο καὶ κατεστέναξεν τὴν μεταβολήν παρ’ ὅσον γένοιτο.” ἀλλόφυλος is used by Josephus and Philo to describe non-Jews. Also, in Acts 10:28, Peter calls the Roman centurion Cornelius "ἀλλόφυλος," but explains how he can transcend the racial barrier they both perceive: “ὑμεῖς ἐπίστασθε ὡς ἀδέμιτον ἐστιν ἀνδρὶ
Josephus comes forth again as an actor in this drama on the seventeenth of Panemus (August). Titus has ordered his soldiers to raze the foundations of the Antonia, and the Roman camp has found out that the Jews “had ceased to offer the so-called perpetual sacrifice to God because of the lack of lambs, and that the people had become terribly disheartened because of this.” This sacrifice, known as the Tamid in Hebrew, was offered twice a day and required two unblemished lambs, a measurement of flour, and another of oil. Surely by this point in the siege, unblemished lambs had become unavailable for sacrifice since the food supply had disappeared and famine had set in. Titus, therefore, sends Josephus as a messenger to the rebel leader John. The message is not just a cease-and-desist order or a threat of increased force, but instead, as Josephus presents it, an imprecation to spare Jerusalem and the Temple, and to reinstitute the Tamid:

He ordered [Josephus] to repeat to John the same thing as before, that if John had some evil desire to engage in battle, he should come out to fight with as many men as he wished, without destroying the city and the Temple along with himself; yet that he should no longer pollute the Holy Place nor sin against God;

152 LSJ states that "ολοφύρομαι" is an "Epic verb, rare in Tragedy, sometimes in Attic Prose." (Josephus uses the augment, whereas Homer did not.)
153 B.J. 6.94: "...τὸν ἐνδελεχισμὸν καλούμενον ἀνδρῶν ἀπορία διαλεοιπέναι τῷ θεῷ καὶ τὸν δήμον ἐπὶ τούτῳ δεινῶς ἀθυμέν." The standard Greek text reads that there was a lack "of men," "ἀνδρῶν," but I agree with Thackeray, n. 1, p. 402, that the text should probably read "ἀρνών," "lambs." Price (1992) also agrees, and in his analysis of “The End of the Tamid,” Appendix 4, p. 229, he explains that Graetz suggested this emendation at the beginning of this century, but it “has been accepted by surprisingly few scholars.” Price supports this emendation with Josephus’s comment at B.J. 6.100 about God having His food taken away.
154 Numbers 28:3-8. On the Tamid, also see the Mishnah tractate Tamid; the sacrifice of the lambs is described in detail in Tamid 4.
and that he was allowed to carry out the sacrifices that had been left off with
the help of any Jews he might choose.\footnote{B.J. 6.95: “λέγειν τῷ Ἰωάννῃ πάλιν ἐκέλευσεν ἃ καὶ πρότερον, ὡς εἰ καὶ τις αὐτὸν ἔρως κακὸς ἔχοι τοῦ μάχεσθαι, προελθόντι μεθ’ ὅσων βούλεται πολεμεῖν ἐξεῖθε δίχα τοῦ συναπολεσθαί τῇ τε πόλιν καὶ τὸν ωσὸν αὐτῷ. μηκέτι μὲντοι μιαίνειν τὸ ἄγιον μηδὲ εἰς τὸν θεὸν πλημμελεῖν. παρεῖναι δ’ αὐτῷ τὰς ἐπιλειτουρίας θυσίας ἐκτελεῖν δι’ ὃν ἂν ἐπιλέξῃ Ἰουδαῖον.”}

Josephus, therefore, stresses that the Romans, and particularly Titus, are deeply
interested in preserving the Jewish cult and that they even take it upon themselves to
ask a Jew to restore sacrifice at the Temple, since it is so valuable. This emphasis upon
the Roman validation of the Temple cult contributes beautifully to Josephus’s
overarching intent to underline the value of the Temple’s existence for everyone,
including his readers who might be in the position to encourage its rebuilding.

Josephus plays up the scene by repeating this message concerning the Temple
twice more, in another short indirect speech followed by a longer passage in direct
speech. He explains that he delivered his speeches in Hebrew from a vantage point so
that not only John but also the larger Jewish populace could hear.\footnote{B.J. 6.96: “καὶ ὁ Ἰώσηππος, ὡς ἂν εἰη μὴ τῷ Ἰωάννῃ μόνου ἄλλα καὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς ἐν ἐπικόῳ στάς, τᾶ τε τοῦ Καίσαρος διήγγελλεν ἐβραίζων.” Thackeray, p. 403, n. f, comments, “i.e. Aramaic.”} The historian here
consciously presents himself as an actor on stage who seeks to be heard by his
audience, who uses their native tongue in order to be intelligible and to make a greater
impression upon them. The same could be said for Josephus the historian as he crafted
this speech within his narrative in Greek for his hellenized audience.

His first indirect speech contains a blunt message from Titus: “to spare their
country, to disperse the flames which were already licking the Temple, and to restore
to God the perpetual sacrifices.”\footnote{B.J. 6.97: “φείσασθαι τῇς πατρίδος καὶ διασκεδάσαι τοῦ ναοῦ γενόμενον ἡδη τὸ πῦρ, τοὺς τ´ ἐναγισμοῦς ἄποδοταίν τῷ θεῷ.”} Josephus is dramatically foreshadowing complete
destruction, while pragmatically demanding that John reinstitute the \textit{Tamid}. He uses
the verb \textit{gev̄nu}, “taste, eat,” metaphorically to describe the fire’s consumption of the
Temple. This surely ranks as the most perverse act of eating in the Bellum, one which later in Book 6 he will introduce with the cannibalism of Mary. The historian reports that after his speech “the tyrant” responds with verbal abuse and that John claims to have no fear because “the city belongs to God.”

This statement prompts Josephus to launch into an outraged, righteous rebuttal in direct address. (Though Josephus does not say so, perhaps this exchange reflects his disgust at the rebels appropriating the Psalmist’s proclamation of Jerusalem as the “city of God” for their own political aims.) Here again for the third time in this scene he emphasizes the cessation of sacrifice and the Roman desire to see it restored. This speech is definitely more colorful than the two previous indirect ones. Josephus reduces the impieties committed against God to human terms by comparing the loss of the Tamid to the denial of daily food. Again he depicts the Romans as protectors of the Temple cult and, therefore, of Jewish laws. This, indeed, is an “amazing inversion.” Josephus next confronts John with the Biblical example of Jeconiah, the Jewish king who surrendered to the Babylonians so that he would “not hand over to the enemy these holy places and see the house of God burn.” Josephus offers John pardon from the Romans, and backs up the promise with a short but poignant apologia for his own Jewishness meant not just for John in this context but for his readers as well. He concludes this speech by returning to God and the Temple:

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158 B.J. 6.98: “θεοῦ γὰρ ὑπάρχειν τὴν πόλιν.”
159 Luke also uses this phrase “καθ’ ἡμέραν” to describe the bread requested in his version of the Lord’s Prayer, 11:3; Matthew 6:11 uses “οὐρανόν.” See Steve Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, chapter 6, for other points of comparison between Josephus and Luke much more significant than this.
161 B.J. 6.104: “...ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ παραδοθῆναι ταύτα πολεμίως τὰ ἁγία καὶ τὸν οἴκον τοῦ θεοῦ περιπετεύειν φλεγόμενον.”
162 B.J. 6.107: “μέμνησο δ’ ὡς ὁμόφυλος ὄν παραίνω καὶ Ἰουδαῖος ὄν ἐπαγγέλλομαι, καὶ χρή σκοπεῖν τις τὸ συμβουλεύειν καὶ πόθεν. μὴ γὰρ ἔγωγέ ποτε γενοῦμι ζῶν οὕτως αἰχμάλωτος, ἵνα παύσωμαι τοῦ γένους ἡ τῶν πατρίων ἐπιλάθωμαι.”

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And isn’t the city and the entire sanctuary filled with your dead bodies? God, then, God Himself is bringing in with the Romans a fire to purify it [his Temple], and is storming the city which is full of so many pollutions.  

God Himself, according to Josephus, will work with the Romans to cleanse Jerusalem and its Temple by fire. Now the fire is purgative, not consumptive. Josephus tearfully concludes his speech, and, as usual, the Romans are moved to pity by the dramatic display, while the rebels are incensed.

Josephus proudly reports, however, that many Jewish aristocrats, including some chief priests, are convinced by Josephus’s rhetoric and take refuge with the Romans. Titus subsequently orders these refugees to go around the city wall with Josephus “to be seen by the people.” Titus devises this spectacle to convince the rebels “to allow the Romans into the city and to save their fatherland.” The historian notably adds their request that the rebels at least leave the Temple precinct, since, so they explain, the Romans would never dare to set fire to holy places except “under the greatest necessity.” Here we have foreshadowing of the tragic ἀνάγκη which will seal the fate of the Temple in Josephus’s narrative.

In stark contrast to this appeal for preservation, Josephus then paints the gruesome, dramatic picture of the rebels, running armed through the Temple precincts

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163 B.J. 6.110: “τῶν ύμετέρων δὲ πτωμάτων οὐχ ἡ πόλις καὶ τὸ ιερὸν δὲ πᾶν πεπλήρωται; θεὸς ἄρα, θεὸς αὐτὸς ἐπάγει μετὰ Ὁρωμαίων καθάρσιον αὐτῶ πῦρ καὶ τὴν τοσοῦτοι μισθάτων γέμισαν πόλιν ἀναρτάζει.”

164 B.J. 6.113-117. Clearly Josephus is trying to enhance his own credibility with his readers, an elite group who would be impressed (hopefully) by the fact that he was able to sway the opinion of the people who really count, i.e. the elite of Jerusalem.


166 B.J. 6.119: “τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ὥλη τούς Ὁρωμαίους δέξασθαι τῇ πόλει καὶ τὴν πατρίδα σώσαι.”

167 B.J. 6.120: “οὐ γὰρ ἂν τολμῆσαι Ὁρωμαίους μὴ μετὰ μεγίστης ἀνάγκης καταφλέξαι τὰ ἁγία.”
with “hands still warm with the blood of fellow Jews.”  

The historian provides the Roman response to the Temple being turned into “a fortress” by the rebels:

...and they [the rebels] proceeded into such great lawlessness that the anger, which the Jews would probably have felt had the Romans treated them so violently, was now felt by the Romans against the Jews because they were profaning their own holy places. Of the soldiers there truly was not one who was not looking towards the Temple with shuddering and who was not both making obeisance and praying that the brigands would repent before incurable disaster would strike.

As before, Josephus presents the Romans as showing the “right” reaction to the vision of the desecration of the Temple, while the rebels have no conscience. Here he does not immediately highlight the emotional response of Titus, but instead that of the common Roman soldiers who physically look upon the spectacle of the Temple with awe and offer prayer towards it on its own behalf. Clearly Josephus wants to stress the universal concern among all the Romans for the Jewish cult before it is destroyed by directing their gaze upon the building itself. Their reverence inspires them to pray that the rebels desist before the Temple suffers “incurable disaster.” In this account of their prayer, Josephus blames the rebels for the destruction of the Temple, but he is not saying that its loss is permanent. With our understanding of the literary context of his history, we may presume that he is tapping into the image of “incurable evil” which the Greek tragedians explore.

In any case, Josephus’s main point here to his readers is...
that the rebels, not the Romans, are to blame for the destruction of the city and its Temple, and that all the Romans who saw Jerusalem held its Temple in the highest esteem and considered it a worthy place to offer worship and prayer. One can surmise that Josephus intended his readers to agree with the soldiers and, therefore, to consider the Temple a valuable asset and perhaps support its eventual rebuilding as well.

Josephus then reports Titus’s reaction as the crowning Roman opinion on the Temple. The general is quoted in direct speech, where he addresses the rebels with the tragic “μιαρώτατοι” (“most foul men”). He asks them why they once restricted access to the Temple for foreigners and then proceeded to pollute it themselves. He calls upon the gods and even the god, who may have once watched over the Temple and whom he believes to have fled, to witness that he has not induced the pollution. The Roman general concludes his speech with the remarkable statement: “I shall preserve the Temple for you even if you are unwilling.”

Josephus, as narrator/angelos reveals that he was the angelos who transmitted this message to the rebels. Thus, Josephus speaks as messenger for Titus, after Titus has presented his authorial viewpoint in tragic mode in his speech.

The language and idioms of tragedy are operating on all levels in this narrative to support the historian’s contention that the Temple is a spectacle worthy to be saved, not permanently destroyed. Josephus focuses the eyes of both Jews and Romans within his text upon the Temple in order to emphasize the Temple’s importance as the main spectacle.

τρέφειν,” “Lord Phoebus clearly bids us to drive a pollution out of the land, as it has been nourished in this country, and not to nourish it to an incurable state;” Creon then informs Oedipus that he can purify the city either through banishment or blood for blood: “ἀνδρηλατούντας, ἢ φόνῳ φόνον πάλιν/ λύσωντας, ὡς τόδ’ αἷμα χειμάζον πόλιν.” Euripides, Medea 283 and Hippolytus 722 both tell of “ἀνήκεστον κακόν,” “incurable evil.” Their contemporary Thucydides also uses this notion at 5.111 where the Athenians warn the Melians to put aside their false sense of honor or they will fall into “ξυμφοράς ἀνηκέστος,” “incurable misfortunes.”

172 B.J. 6.128: “τηρήσω δὲ τὸν ναὸν ύμίν καὶ μὴ θέλουσι.”

173 B.J. 6.129: “Ταῦτα τοῦ Ἰωσήφου διαγγέλλοντος ἐκ τοῦ Καίσαρος.”
religious monument of Jerusalem (and possibly the world). According to Josephus, who is both actor in and author of the tragic account of the destruction of Jerusalem, only the rebels, who refuse to look upon the Temple with any remorse, are to blame for its demise.
Chapter Three: The Cannibalism of Mary and the Destruction of the Temple in *Bellum Judaicum* 6 as Spectacle and Theater

“Behold,” I thought, although I did not speak, “the face of those who lost Jerusalem when Miriam ripped her son with her own beak.”174

In *La Divina Commedia*, Dante swiftly captures and reflects the tragic spectacle of infanticide and cannibalism, followed by the destruction of Jerusalem, which serves as the climax of Josephus’s narrative of the siege in *Bellum Judaicum* 6. Dante, accompanied by Virgil and Statius, sees Miriam (or Mary) at the sixth cornice of Purgatory with the gluttons. The medieval Christian imagination was especially attracted to this story and clearly accepted the idea that the cannibalism of Mary and the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. were inextricably bound. This notion was derived, both directly and indirectly, from Josephus’s account in the *Bellum*, as it was interpreted and handed down among Christians from the second century.175


175 For the early Christian reception of Josephus’s story of Mary, see Michael E. Hardwick, *Josephus as an Historical Source in Patristic Literature Through Eusebius*, Brown Judaic Studies 128, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989. Hardwick mentions this passage twice in his study. First, Melito, bishop of Sardis in the later second century, in his “On the Passion” proclaims that the world is saved by Christ from a list of evils ending in cannibalism (52), pp. 17-18. Second, he mentions at p. 88 that Eusebius quotes from *B.J.* 6.193 ff. at *H.E.* 3.6.17-28, following up with a citation from *Matthew* 24:19-21. Eusebius explains the suffering of the Jews and the fall of Jerusalem as a consequence of their supposed guilt for the death of Jesus. For another typical Christian interpretation in late antiquity of the fall of Jerusalem, see Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 4.21: “But he [Jesus after his resurrection] also opened to them all things which were about to happen, which Peter and Paul preached at Rome...and also said that it was about to come to pass, that after a short time God would send against them a king who would subdue the Jews, and level their cities to the ground, and besiege the people themselves, worn out with hunger and thirst. Then it should come to pass that they should feed on the bodies of their own children, and consume one another. Lastly that they should be taken captive...because they had exalted over the well-beloved and most approved Son of
The cannibalism of Mary, in fact, was the most popular episode in all of Josephus’s writings, except for the famous “Testimonium Flavianum” in Book 18 of the Antiquities, which attests to the existence of Jesus. One could argue that the Christian reception and interpretation of this story about Mary’s cannibalism has been a key example in support of bigotry and attacks against Jews in the last two millenia. This is one of history’s great ironies, since, as I shall show in this chapter, Josephus seems to have crafted the story of Mary’s cannibalism as a scene in a Greek tragedy with the opposite purpose in mind: to sway his readers to have compassion for the majority of Jews who suffered during the war with the Romans because of the actions of the Jewish rebels.

In delivering this account of cannibalism, Josephus faces a real historiographical challenge: how can he relate the horrible deed without losing the sympathy of his readership for the general Jewish populace, whom he consistently portrays in his history as innocent? He cannot omit it, since, as he informs us, the Roman army learned...
of the cannibalism. In fact, he tells us in his introduction that the readers for his *Bellum* included the Flavian family, Roman veterans of the war, and prominent Hellenized Jews. And how can he deflect blame from the Roman commander, Titus, and his army?

Josephus finds his answer in Greek tragedy. Josephus purposely uses the language of tragedy to encourage his audience to pity Mary. Tragic madness and desperation dominate Josephus’s account of the famine. For the episode of Mary, the historian purposely evokes Euripides’ descriptions of the desperate circumstances of mothers such as Medea and Agave in the *Bacchae* in order to increase the pathos.

In treating the murder of a child, Josephus also weaves in the tragic theme of sacrifice. Mary delivers a short monologue before slaying her baby, and then taunts the brigands by offering them some of the “sacrifice” to eat. It seems all too appropriate that Josephus would present this scene of cannibalistic “sacrifice” as part of his overall tragedy of the destruction of Jerusalem. In the climactic scene of cannibalism, Josephus can decry yet attempt to explain away the desperate act of a well-born Jewish woman by casting her as a tragic heroine, thereby foisting blame on the brigands, who were the historian’s political enemies. Furthermore, this episode provides Josephus the opportunity to explain the majority of Roman soldiers’ “hatred of the nation” of Jews.

Also, this event receives special focus in the narrative because it serves as the last straw that drives Titus to attack the Temple, which was the holdout of the insurgents, while taking the blame (at least partially) off him for the eventual burning of the Temple. By setting this abomination of cannibalism directly before the destruction of the Temple,

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177 B.J. 6.214.
178 See Thackeray (1929), pp. 117-118, on Josephus’s use of Euripides. Feldman “‘Aqedah,’” p. 221, uses Thackeray’s evidence as part of his proof that Josephus knew the works of Euripides when composing his account in the *Antiquities* of Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac along the lines of Iphigenia. I am arguing essentially that Josephus was already aware of these tragedies when composing the *B.J.*
Josephus plainly is creating a disaster of Biblical proportions (especially for his Jewish audience), while tempering it with topoi and pathos gleaned from Greek tragedy.

Josephus’s literary method in his juxtaposition of human sacrifice and the Temple’s desecration, cannibalism and the Temple’s destruction, has received little notice from scholars. Jonathan Price has recently provided an extensive historical survey of the course of the war and the siege-induced famine, but he does not reveal in any depth the literary character of Josephus’s portrayal of the disaster. In another current study of the Bellum, Seth Schwartz relegates the story of Mary to a footnote without any literary commentary. Two articles by Naomi Cohen and Burton Visotsky investigate the Mary tradition in the rabbinic sources, but do not delve into Josephus’s use of classical literary devices.

Harold Attridge briefly discusses the cannibalism of Mary in a chapter on the historiography of Josephus. Attridge runs through a list of “vignettes of Jewish suffering” culminating in the suicide of the Sicarii at Masada. He comments specifically on the episode in Book 6:

> These scenes climax in an act ‘unparalleled in the history whether of Greeks or of barbarians, and as horrible to relate as it is incredible to hear’ (6:199). This act was the cooking and eating by a mother of her own child and Josephus gives a detailed description of the dramatic scene, the physical and emotional agony which prompted the woman to commit such a deed, the anguished words addressed to the baby before its death, the confrontation with the rebels who appear on the stage when they smell roasted meat and the fact that this deed

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180 Seth Schwartz (1990), p. 43, n. 79.
alone seems to have instilled in them horror and stupefaction (6:201-13). This is certainly ‘tragic’ history at its worst. 

Attridge, however, never explains what is really “tragic” about any of the scenes of suffering, besides the fact that they are pathetic. This is understandable since the point of his article is to give a broad overview of Josephus’s historiographical technique. I would like to redress this general scholarly oversight. It is not enough for a scholar to dismiss Josephus’s account with the pejorative label of “‘tragic’ history at its worst” without explaining the specific narrative techniques the historian employs and why.

Perhaps to the modern historian of antiquity the material seems too overwrought and womanish, as Polybius would complain, or irrelevant and disgusting. Most

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183 Ibid., pp. 208-209. Attridge is using the terminology derived from Polybius’s denunciation at 2.56.6-13 of Phylarchus’s depiction of the capture of Mantinea by the Macedonians and Achaeans. In this passage, Polybius criticizes Phylarchus for having crossed the critical line dividing history and tragedy, reality and artifice. Polybius states that Phylarchus, in his eagerness to elicit pity and sympathy from his readers, “brings on” (“εἰσάγει”) pathetic women, men, and children. This verb εἰσάγει at 2.56.7 is a term specifically used to describe the act of bringing characters onto or forward on the tragic stage. Polybius hardly considers tragedy a beneficial influence upon historiography but instead dismisses Phylarchus’s choice of material and arrangement as “low-class and womanish.” Polybius at 2.56.8 further emphasizes Phylarchus’s tragic technique by asserting that he always tries to put the sufferings of his characters before the readers’ eyes: “πειράματος ἐν ἔκκαθοις αἱ πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν τιθέναι τὰ δεινά." Finally, Polybius at 2.56.10 explicitly compares Phylarchus to the tragedians (“κατάπερ οἱ τραγῳδιογράφοι”) for dreaming up speeches and enumerating the possible (not just the actual) consequences of events. F.W. Walbank in “History and Tragedy,” Historia 9 (1960), pp. 233-4, and in Polybius, Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972, p. 38, has argued that scholars should abandon the term “tragic history” to denote a separate type of historiography but instead dismisses Phylarchus’s choice of material and arrangement as “low-class and womanish.” Polybius at 2.56.8 further emphasizes Phylarchus’s tragic technique by asserting that he always tries to put the sufferings of his characters before the readers’ eyes: “πειράματος ἐν ἔκκαθοις αἱ πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν τιθέναι τὰ δεινά.” Finally, Polybius at 2.56.10 explicitly compares Phylarchus to the tragedians (“κατάπερ οἱ τραγῳδιογράφοι”) for dreaming up speeches and enumerating the possible (not just the actual) consequences of events. F.W. Walbank in “History and Tragedy,” Historia 9 (1960), pp. 233-4, and in Polybius, Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972, p. 38, has argued that scholars should abandon the term “tragic history” to denote a separate type of historiography. Robert Doran, “2 Maccabees and ‘Tragic History’,” HUCA 50 (1979), pp. 107-114, follows Walbank in his analysis of 2 Maccabees.

184 Polybius 2.56.9: “τὸ μὲν οὖν ἀγεννέως καὶ γυναικώδες τῆς αἱρέσεως αὐτοῦ παρείθου, τὸ δὲ τῆς ἱστορίας οἰκεῖον ἀμα καὶ χρήσιμον ἐξεταζόθω.” Polybius himself, however, does seem to tread on “womanish” turf at 15.24-33 in his account of the fall of the regent Agathocles in Egypt. In Polybius’s rendition of events, Agathocles’ mother, Oenanthe, takes refuge in a temple devoted to female fertility rites, prays to goddesses, is surrounded by women, and then, in a short speech which the historian quotes at 15.29.8-14, curses these women to become cannibals of their own children. As the women escape, they pray to the goddesses that Oenanthe may suffer her own curse, i.e. eat her own son, Agathocles. Polybius always had the option to ignore this episode
scholars are concerned not with how Josephus tells the story, but with what salient facts can be gleaned in order to reconstruct an “accurate” account of the massive deprivations at the height of the war. I welcome these attempts at historical reconstruction, since I rely on them heavily for my own knowledge, but I would also recommend that we look much more closely at how Josephus builds up his narrative in a crescendo to the tragedy of the destruction of the Temple in book 6.

I would like to pose the following questions: What literary devices and tragic motifs is Josephus employing at this point in the Bellum in order to draw the Graeco-Roman reader in both intellectually and emotionally? Should we consider his “historical” account alongside the fantastic descriptions of human sacrifice and cannibalism which appear in the ancient novels? Furthermore, what Jewish Scriptural tradition is Josephus drawing upon for himself as a Jewish writer and recalling for his Jewish readers? Why does Josephus seek to engage his audience with such lurid material? How and why does Josephus present this act of cannibalism followed by the destruction of the Temple as a spectacle playing out on the tragic stage? After examining these issues, we should have a much clearer grasp of the historiographic and apologetic in his received account, but he clearly chose to keep some of the histrionics, including the threat of cannibalism, for the reading pleasure of his audience and perhaps even for the sake of accuracy.


\[186\] Contra S. Schwartz (1990), p. 43, n. 79.
Tendenz of the Bellum Judaicum book 6 and also a richer understanding of his literary environment in Rome towards the end of the first century.

Josephus sets the scene for Mary in Bellum 6 by painting a picture of the “indescribable sufferings” of those perishing from famine and of the social breakdown within the city as family members wage “war” over scraps of food. The brigands, who are the villains in the Bellum, star in this scene by strip-searching the dying for food. Josephus vividly compares the rebels to “rabid dogs” (“λυσσώντες κύνες”) as they rampage through the streets and homes. Josephus reports that the

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187 For an accessible yet scholarly appraisal of Josephus’s aims in the B.J. and the Ant., see S. Mason, “Will the Real Josephus Please Stand Up?” Biblical Archaeology Review 23.5 (1997), pp. 58-65, 67-68. I agree with his statement: “Whereas the conventional view envisions the Jewish War as Roman propaganda and Antiquities as Jewish apologetic, we should instead conclude that the Jewish War is already a bold effort to defend the Jews [emphasis mine]. Antiquities and Contra Apion more forthrightly advocate Judaism for interested gentiles. Thus we no longer need to drive a sharp wedge between Josephus’s two major works. There is no reason to believe that his motives and perspective changed between the Jewish War and the Antiquities [emphasis mine]. The later work shows no hint of embarrassment over the earlier one; on the contrary, Josephus begins Antiquities by reflecting on his Jewish War with great pride,” p. 65.

188 B.J. 6.193: “ἀδιήγητα...τὰ πάθη.”

189 B.J. 6.193-194. Peter Garnsey, Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, has concluded that famine was rare in antiquity, and when it did occur, it was usually the result of a military siege of a city. Garnsey quotes the rabbinic commentary on 2 Kings 8, at Bavli Taanit 5a, where famine results in cannibalism, but the historian strangely never refers to Josephus’s description of the famine in Jerusalem during the Roman siege, the memory of which surely could have partially inspired the rabbinic interpretation of the event in 2 Kings. Also, on the famine in Judaea 25 years before, see K. S. Gapp, “The Universal Famine Under Claudius,” Harvard Theological Review 28 (1935), pp. 258-265. The relevant Josephan passages are Ant. 3.320-2, 20. 51-3 and 101. This previous famine would have occurred when Josephus was just a boy, about 10 years old, in Jerusalem. Tessa Rajak, in Josephus, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984, p. 125, comments: “In any case, whatever we decide about its date, we cannot fail to notice that the famine made a very strong impression on Josephus, and more specifically that he sees fit, so much later, to exonerate the high priests from charges of greed in connection with it.”

190 B.J. 6.196: “οἱ δὲ ὑπ’ ἐνδείξεις κεχινώσετες ὀπτὲρ λυσσώντες κύνες ἔσφαλλοντο.”

191 Thackeray (1928), p. 432, n. a, associates this with the simile in Psalm 59 comparing pagan enemies of Israel to a dog prowling and scavenging for food. Josephus’s Jewish readers may very well have picked up this Scriptural echo. The dogs in this Psalm are
people of Jerusalem are driven by necessity to eat food that even “the filthiest of irrational animals” would not eat, including leather from belts, sandals, and shields. In commenting on this particular passage in a larger discussion about the rebels eating forbidden food, Price remarks, however, that “the law sanctioned the consumption of any kind of food under stress of severe hunger,” and he cites passages from the Mishnah and Talmud to support his contention. Josephus here is stressing the deprivation and degradation of the Jewish people at the hands of the rebels. This, and his comment that they were eating grass selling at the very inflated price of four Attic drachmas, serves as a prelude to his elaborate and dramatic story of the Jewish woman Mary who partakes of truly impure and illegal food, her own baby.

“snarling” in the Hebrew version and “starving” in the Greek (Hebrew, Ps. 59:15: “блк wmhy,” “they snarl like a dog”; Septuagint, Ps. 58: 15: “λιμώξουσιν ὡς κύων.”), but they are not “rabid” as in Josephus’s simile. Also notice that the gospel of Matthew, another late first century Jewish literary product in Greek, seems to play on this Jewish theme of the enemy/pagans as dogs with Jesus’ injunction during the Sermon on the Mount, 7:6: “Do not give what is holy to the dogs nor throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under foot and turn on you and tear you to pieces,” “Μὴ δῶτε τὸ ἁγιόν τοῖς κύοιν μηδὲ βάλητε τοὺς μαργαρίτας ὑμῶν ἐμπροσθεὶν τῶν χοίρων, μήτοτε καταπατήσωσιν αὐτοῖς ἐν τοῖς ποσίν αὐτῶν καὶ στραφέντες ἥξουσιν ὑμᾶς.” See also the comparison of the Canaanite (i.e. pagan) woman and her daughter to dogs at Mt. 15:26-7; Mark 7:26 calls her “Greek, Syro-Phoenician by race,” ἥ δὲ γυνὴ ἡν Ἐλληνισα, Συροφοινικίσσα τῶ γένει. (Luke does not compare gentiles to dogs, since his gentile audience would hardly appreciate it.) 192 B.J. 6.197: “τὰ μηδὲ τοῖς ῥυπαρωτάτοις τῶν ἁλόγων ζώων πρόσφορα.” For another perspective, which must have been influenced by the destruction of the actual Jerusalem, see the end of the Book of Revelation which plays upon the Jewish themes of cleanliness and eating in relation to the messianic Jerusalem. In this apocalyptic vision, the narrator, John, reports the angel’s message that until the messiah returns, “Let the sinner continue to sin, and the unclean continue to be unclean (“ὀ ῥυπαρός ῥυπανθήτω ἐπὶ”)....Blessed are those who have washed their robes, so that they will have the right to eat of the tree of life and can enter through the gates into the city. Outside must stay the dogs (“ἐξω οἱ κύνες”) and poisoners and fornicators and murderers and idolaters and everyone who loves and carries out falsehood,” Rev. 22: 11, 14-15. It is interesting to see that Josephus and the author of Revelations both draw upon imagery of purity, food, and dogs when reaching their narrative climaxes.

193 Price (1992), p. 154 and n. 120.
194 B.J. 6.198.
Josephus introduces the story of Mary’s cannibalism with a rather lengthy prologue:

But why should I tell about their shamelessness in eating inanimate food because of the famine? For I am about to reveal a deed of such a kind that has never been recorded by Greeks or barbarians,195 awful to tell and unbelievable to hear. For my part, so that I did not seem to my future audience to be telling tales, I would gladly have left out this misfortune, if I had not had countless witnesses among my own contemporaries. Above all, I would be paying cold respect to my country if I lied in my story of the things it has suffered.196

There are several issues to address in this introduction to the Mary episode: its supposed uniqueness in both the Greek and Jewish worlds, its emotional impact, its credibility with respect to his future audience, his insistence upon the use of eye-witnesses, and, finally, his desire not to be considered a traitor to his country but to present accurately through a “λόγος” the sufferings of his own people. I would like to argue that this prologue, in fact, is a reflection of and counterpart to his much broader presentation of his historiographical aims in the introduction to Book I of the Bellum.197 I shall analyze each of these elements in this prologue in relation to Josephus’s overall historiographical agenda before turning to his narrative of the scene itself.

In this prologue to Mary’s cannibalism, Josephus first tantalizes his audience by claiming that he will reveal a deed unparalleled in Greek or Jewish history. The few modern scholars who have examined this passage assume that Josephus has made a

195 Josephus has referred to Jews as “barbarians” previously, for instance B.J. 1.3. Michel and Bauernfeind (1969), vol. 2, pt. 2, p. 169, n. 80, comment: “Die Zusammenstellung: “Ελληνες ...βάρβαροι ist griechisch und hellenistisch (Röm. 1,14).” This example from Paul’s letter is apt.
197 B.J. 1.1-30.
slip, is ignorant, or is lying, but none provides satisfactory explanation for his motives in doing any of the above. Thackeray notes, “Josephus strangely ignores the parallel incident at the siege of Samaria, recorded in 2 Kings vi.28f.” Thackeray seems to assume that Josephus knew the Hebrew story and chose not to include it. I, however, do not think that Josephus’s omission is “strange” but actually essential to his historiographic goals.

Seth Schwartz acknowledges Thackeray’s opinion, but he instead proposes that since Josephus does not mention the mothers’ cannibalism in Samaria, the Jewish historian, therefore, did not even know this story in 2 Kings when he was composing the Bellum. I find this hard to fathom, considering Josephus’s education and status as a Jewish priest. Furthermore, Schwartz does not provide adequate additional evidence to prove his contention of Josephus’ “ignorance of the historical books and Jeremiah.” I think we can assume that Josephus was at least aware of the story in 2 Kings but chose not to allude to it directly. Considering his use of Biblical typology in book 5 in his own reported speech, we should consider him a Jewish priest who was at least acquainted with his own Scriptures.

Jonathan Price presents a different view of Josephus in his assessment that “Josephus’ claim that cannibalism had never happened before is deliberately misleading [emphasis mine].” Price, following Thackeray, recognizes that Josephus chose to omit

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198 Thackeray (1928), vol. 3, p. 434, n. a. 2 Kings 6–7 recounts the Aramaean wars against Israel in the ninth century B.C.E. When Samaria is besieged, there is a famine, and “the head of a donkey sold for eighty shekels of silver, and one quarter-kab of dove’s dung for five shekels of silver” (6:25). This economic information resembles Josephus’ mention of inflation. At 2 Kings 6:26–31, a Samaritan woman in direct speech informs the besieging king of Aram that she and another woman had made a pact to eat each of their sons; she has given up her own child, which they cooked and ate, but now the other is hiding her son. Upon hearing this “the king tore his garments.”

199 Schwartz (1990), p. 43, n. 79. I shall return to his reference to Mary’s cannibalism in his short note.

200 B.J. 5.376 ff.

the Biblical material. Thackeray in his note relates this incident in the *Bellum* to the warnings of God’s retribution for Israel’s violation of the commandments in *Deuteronomy* 28.57 and *Baruch* 2.2f.\textsuperscript{202} Price augments these Biblical citations with others, including rabbinic parallels.\textsuperscript{203} Furthermore, he speculates, “Josephus may also have known of the many incidents [of cannibalism] outside the Jewish tradition,” and he cites examples from several Greek historians and even Petronius’ *Satyricon*.\textsuperscript{204}

None of these modern scholars, however, has drawn a comparison between Josephus’s claim here of the incomparable nature of Mary’s cannibalism and the historian’s larger claim at the beginning of *Bellum* book 1 that this war between the Romans and the Jews was the greatest of all ever waged.\textsuperscript{205} In this, he is hearkening back to Thucydides’ claim of the Peloponnesian War surpassing all previous wars.\textsuperscript{206} Great wars require great climaxes. In his story of Mary Josephus is laying out the extraordinary explanation for why the cataclysmic destruction occurs in Jerusalem. It, therefore, would only have deflated the grandeur and supposed uniqueness of his material at this point to refer to the Samaritan cannibalism in 2 *Kings*.

Josephus next describes the deed committed as “awful to tell and unbelievable to hear” ("φρικτὸν μὲν εἰπὲῖν, ἄπιστον δ’ ἀκούσαι"). By stating it in this way, historian and audience are bound together in a shared emotional and intellectual reaction to the event. On the one hand, Josephus places himself in the audience’s camp by claiming that even telling the tale makes him shudder, which is the usual audience response to learning of terrible deeds while viewing a tragedy on stage; on the other hand, he

\textsuperscript{202} I shall return to this Biblical material below.


\textsuperscript{204} Ibid., 156, n. 124. Price does not credit Scheiber (1965) with the association of this passage to Petronius, though he does mention Scheiber in n. 122.

\textsuperscript{205} *B.J.* 1.1: “Επειδῆ τὸν ἱουδαίων πρὸς Ρωμαίους πόλεμον συστάντα μέγιστον οὐ μόνον τῶν καθ´ ἡμᾶς...,” and 1.4: “μεγίστον τοῦδε τοῦ κινήματος."

\textsuperscript{206} Thucydides 1.1: “κύνησις γὰρ αὕτη μεγίστη δὴ τοῖς Ἐλληνισι ἐγένετο.”
invites the audience to play historian by judging the believability of a deed, which seems “ἀπίστου” upon hearing it. Josephus is blending “tragedy” with “history,” while uniting narrator and audience. Again, I believe this is essential to his apologetic aims, since he must create a pact of sympathy between himself as a Jewish historian and his readers, the most important of whom were gentile and in positions of power, because the material to come is so outrageous and damaging to the Jewish reputation.

In this introduction to the Mary episode Josephus is also insisting upon his own personal integrity as a historian who tells the truth, based on eye-witness account, and who records it for posterity. Here he is aspiring to Thucydidean reliability, trustworthiness, and permanence.\(^\text{207}\) All of these qualities are part of Josephus’s mission statement in the main introduction to his history.\(^\text{208}\) As Josephus explains, there were witnesses to Mary’s deed, and consequently his insistence upon accuracy in his main introduction would be a sham were he not to include the event. Moreover, his personal attachment to the suffering of his people is a posture which he has already assumed in his main introduction to his history of the war.\(^\text{209}\)

Finally, by using the word “λόγος” to describe his account about Mary, Josephus is asserting its truthfulness. He insists that he is telling a logos about his homeland, not a mythos. Yet we shall discover by analyzing this passage closely that he consciously uses the narrative tactics of mythos in order to make his logos a more compelling and convincing apologia to his audience.

\(^{207}\) Thucydides 1.20–22.
\(^{208}\) See especially 1.2: accuracy (“τὸ δ’ ἀκριβὲς τῆς ἱστορίας”) valued over the invective or praise in others’ accounts; 1.6: his efforts to educate all near and far accurately (“διὰ τῆς ἐμῆς ἐπιμελείας ἀκριβῶς”); 1.16: at great expense and effort he presents his memorial of great accomplishments (“τὴν μνήμην τῶν κατορθωμάτων”); 1.18: a war he experienced personally (“τοῦ κατ’ ἐμαυτὸν πολέμου”); 1.30: his history is for lovers of truth (“τοῖς γε τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἀγαπῶσιν”).
\(^{209}\) B.J. 1.11-12.
Josephus, therefore, chooses to have Mary’s cannibalism play out on the tragic stage, endowing it with mythical status in order to become a more palatable reality for the audience. Though it may seem ironic to us, Josephus lays claim to Thucydidean “accuracy” when presenting a myth. This myth, the story of Mary, in turn, introduces his greatest mythos of all in the Bellum: his explanation for the burning of the Temple.

This presentation of myth coupled with the assertion of reality does, however, resonate with the environment in which Josephus wrote in Rome under the Flavians. Shadi Bartsch has portrayed the taste of this period of the later first century in Rome where mythos/fabula and real death co-mingle, especially in the spectacles performed in the amphitheater. She argues that this created a complicity and blurring in the distinction between the doers of deeds and the audience, whatever the venue. Bartsch examines Martial’s De Spectaculis to show how theater and reality overlap in the shows presented in the new Flavian Amphitheater, whose opening is the occasion for the poem. In Martial’s epigram, the criminal playing the part of the mime character “Laureolus” dies a real death hanging on a real cross, torn to pieces by a bear. Martial opens the epigram by comparing his Laureolus to the mythical and tragic figure, Prometheus, bound to a rock and endless food for a bird. In myth and in reality both victims are punished by being fed on alive by animals, but in the amphitheater Martial is celebrating, the fabula concludes with a real poena: actual death. The criminal

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210 Shadi Bartsch (1994).
211 Also see Carlin Barton (1993) for an intriguing and intricate treatment of how the emotional lives of the Romans played out in the amphitheater.
213 De Spec. 7.1-4: “Qualiter in Scythica religatus rupe Prometheus / adsiduam nimio pectore pavit avem, / nuda Caledonio sic viscera praebuit urso / non falsa pendens in cruce Laureolus.”
214 Ibid., 7.11-12: “vicerat antiquae sceleratus crimina famae, / in quo, quae fuerat fabula, poena fuit.” M. Wistrand, in Entertainment and Violence in Ancient Rome, Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1992, p. 88, n. 31, comments on the use of “fabula” here: “In Mart. epigr. 7, 12 fabula can be understood in two ways: either it refers to the myth of Prometheus, or stands for ‘theatrical play’ referring to the Laureolus. Since the matter cannot be settled, I take fabula as bearing on both. The word ‘fiction’ covers the two possibilities.”
participates in a gory fatal charade,\textsuperscript{215} in which his quivering limbs lose all semblance of shape when his body is ripped apart.\textsuperscript{216} He suffers this punishment because of the variety of terrible crimes he has possibly committed: murder, despoiling temples, or even setting fire to Rome.\textsuperscript{217} He has surpassed anything that the criminal deeds of old lore ("\textit{antiquae...crimina famae}") produced, and, therefore, suffers the fatal consequences: "\textit{in quo, quae fuerat fabula, poena fuit.}

Martial’s epigram about “Laureolus” and Josephus’s story of Mary share several common elements.\textsuperscript{218} Both are describing something which is surpassing myth of old. Bodies are torn apart because of heinous crimes committed, including murder, temple desecration, and the burning of a capital city. Death, in the form of tortured consumption, comes as the punishment in both \textit{fabulae}. In Josephus’s account, however, Mary’s baby embodies and suffers torture on account of the crimes of others: the rebels. Josephus, therefore, creates an even more tragic and pathetic climax for his narrative than that for the charade played out in the amphitheater, because the victim

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\item \textsuperscript{215} For an extensive analysis of this type of entertainment, see K. M. Coleman, “Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments,” \textit{JRS} 80 (1990), pp. 44-73.
\item \textsuperscript{216} \textit{De Spec.}, 7.5-6: “\textit{vivebant laceri membris stillantibus artus / inque omni nusquam corpore erat}.”
\item \textsuperscript{217} Ibid., 7.7-10: “\textit{denique supplicium \textless\textit{dignum tulit; ille parentis\textgreater\ supl. Schneidewin\textit{/ vel domini iugulum foderat ense nocens,/ templum vel arcano demens spoliaverat auro, / subdiderat saevas vel tibi, Roma, faces.”}
\item \textsuperscript{218} Josephus, in fact, later at \textit{Ant} 19.94, mentions the mime production upon which this fatal charade was based. During his dramatic and historically important account of the assassination of Gaius, Josephus reports that there were two omens before the emperor’s death: “a mime was presented in which the leader was captured and crucified, and the dancer put on the play Cinyras, in which he and his daughter Myrrha are killed; a lot of artificial blood was shed with both the one about the man being crucified and the one about Cinyras,” “\textit{kai yarp myinos eidosyetai, kath’ ono staurothtaa lathes eisemwn, o de orxhsthis dramma eidosgei Kinuara, en o autos te ekteveno kai h thugatph Murra, aima te hyn texhtovn polu kai to peri tov staurothenta ekekymenov kai to peri tov Kinuara.” See Coleman (1990), p. 64, who discusses this mime of the story of Laureolus, which is also mentioned at Suetonius. \textit{Gaius} 56.2 and \textit{Juvenal} 8.187-188. R. Elaine Fantham (1989) considers the influence of mime upon Roman literature.
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the historian describes is completely innocent, whereas the poet’s actor/victim is a condemned criminal.\textsuperscript{219}

Josephus, writing in the same environment as Martial in Rome from the 70s onward\textsuperscript{220} shares the Latin poet’s awareness of his audience’s desire for spectacle and the theater,\textsuperscript{221} especially when the action becomes violent. He allows his historical text to participate in “this confusion of representation and reality.”\textsuperscript{222} Bartsch asks in reference to the “\textit{Cena Trimalchionis},” “What do we have here but a Trimalchio/Nero,

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\textsuperscript{219} The epigram which precedes the Laureolus piece also provides material for comparison to Josephus’s story of Mary. In this poem, \textit{De Spec.} 6, Martial compares a female gladiator to Hercules performing his labors: “\textit{Prostratum vasta Nemees in valle leonem/ nobile et Herculeum fama canebat opus./ prisca fides taceat: nam post tua munera, Caesar,/ hoc iam femineo <Marte fatemur agi> [suppl. Buecheler].}” We shall discover that Josephus, like Martial, silences the stories of old and then casts his Mary as a tragic figure who kills her own child out of madness.

\textsuperscript{220} It is interesting to remember that Josephus and Martial are both writing under the Flavians and in response to their imperial activities. The two writers were born within a year of one another and both first arrived from their respective provinces at Rome in the early 60’s. \textit{Bellum} 6 was completed in approximately the same year as \textit{De Spec.}, 80 C.E.; on the dating of the publication of the \textit{B.J.}, see Seth Schwartz, “The Composition and Publication of Josephus’s \textit{Bellum Judaicum} Book 7,” \textit{HTR} 79 (1986), pp. 373-386. (And surely, during the time that Josephus was composing the \textit{B.J.} in Rome and living off of his imperial pension and in Vespasian’s old house, he would have seen his fellow Jews as slaves being forced to build the very amphitheater that Martial celebrates. Whether Josephus and Martial ever crossed paths must be left to our imagination.)

\textsuperscript{221} Josephus shows how aware he is of this when he includes a description of the games which Titus held in honor of his brother’s birthday, \textit{B.J.} 7.23-40. The historian does not hesitate to report the violence of his virtual patron, Titus, and the Roman audience.

\textsuperscript{222} Bartsch (1994), p. 190. Here she is discussing Tacitus in particular, but she draws the general conclusion: “As I have argued in this book, this confusion of representations and reality is a perspective paralleled in other writings of the late first century; it too, in its own way, pays tribute to simulation, not fighting it but acknowledging it in the disappearance of all stable makers of the real….It is interesting to speculate, that the author can die only after meaning is toppled from its pedestal, toppled precisely \textit{because} representation is so obviously what a culture is busy producing,” pp. 190-191. Bartsch only includes Josephus once in her main text: at the very beginning (p. 2) she cites an example of the “ruler and ruled” at \textit{Ant.} 19.25-26, where the circus audience grows silent when it sees Caligula ordering the immediate execution of protestors. Bartsch has otherwise overlooked Josephus as a vital source of information about attitudes in late first century Rome.
\end{footnotesize}
manipulator of seeming, blender of the real and the theatrical in the alembic of violence?”

Josephus, too, distills the violence in Jerusalem into the story of Mary, a tragic concoction created to explain the historical reality of the ultimate destruction of the city.

Before examining the story of Mary’s cannibalism in *Bellum* 6, we should, however, first turn to the Biblical background which Josephus chooses not to mention. His silence on previous Biblical acts of cannibalism may have eluded his gentile audience, but it hardly points to his own ignorance or that of his audience acquainted with Jewish Scriptures. Besides the account in 2 Kings of the Samaritan mothers’ cannibalism, the Hebrew literature set dramatically during the Babylonian exile repeatedly foretells/reports cannibalism during the siege of Jerusalem which led to the destruction of its first Temple and the captivity of its people. The destruction of Jerusalem, and particularly of its Temple, is the grim reality which Josephus attempts to explain in his own historical writings. The Israelite forebearers of Josephus and of his contemporary Jewish audience have already experienced destruction and exile, and their Scriptures contain many passages attempting to explain such occurrences.

What is essential to these previous exilic narratives, especially *Jeremiah*, *Lamentations*, and *Ezekiel*, is that Israel interpret its sufferings, including engaging in cannibalism, as punishments from Yahweh for not keeping the Jewish Law, and

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224 Contra Schwartz (1990), as noted above.
225 *Jeremiah* 19:9: “I shall make them [Septuagint: “They will”] eat the flesh of their own sons and daughters”; *Lamentations* 2:20: “Should women eat their offspring, the children they have cared for? [LXX: “Shall women eat the fruit of their womb? The butcher has made a gleaning; will the infants suckling at the breasts be slain?] Should the priest and prophet be killed in the sanctuary of the Lord?”; *Ezekiel* 5:9-10: “And I shall do to you what I have never done before and will never do again because of your abominations [LXX: “βδέλυγματα”]. Therefore fathers will eat their children in your midst, and children will eat their fathers; and I shall make judgements against you and I shall scatter all your survivors to
specifically for profaning the Temple. Parents, both fathers and mothers, will eat their own children. Ezekiel emphasizes that this act is unprecedented.\footnote{Baruch 2:2 also makes this claim.} Perhaps Josephus is also building upon this idea when he claims that the Mary story is unparalleled.

These exile reports of cannibalism, both the Biblical and Josephus’s, would have been conceived by a Jewish author, especially a priest,\footnote{Schwartz (1990), p. 26, casts doubt on Josephus’s knowledge of the Bible when composing the Bellum: “However, with few exceptions, the BJ passages so diverge from, and even contradict, our biblical texts that it is clear that Josephus was working for the most part from memory, not from a text, and that what he remembered may often have been popular or priestly story-telling or practice [emphasis mine]. In fact, there is little evidence that he knew the biblical texts at all.” I agree with Schwartz on the portion I have italicized. Surely we should suppose that Josephus was familiar with the Jewish Scriptures, including through daily recitation of prayers by memory and through stories told to and by him.} and read by a Jewish audience as fulfillments of the original warnings of God’s punishments for sacrilege recorded in Leviticus\footnote{On Josephus’s later interpretive use of Leviticus 19 in Contra Apionem 2.190-216, see Alan Kirk, “Some Compositional Conventions of Hellenistic Wisdom Texts and the Juxtaposition of 4:1-13; 6:20b-49; and 7:1-10 in Q,” Journal of Biblical Literature 116.2 (1997), pp. 235-257, especially p. 251 and n. 56, and Chart 2 on pp. 252-253. Kirk shows that Leviticus 19 provides the structure for elements of Jewish religion and customs which Josephus chooses to include here in C.A. 2. I would emphasize that Josephus never quotes the Scriptures directly because this would not be easily recognizable nor necessarily appeal to his gentile audience, and yet his Jewish readers would understand the context/source for his comments.} and Deuteronomy. As a priest performing the daily whole-offering (or Tamid)

\begin{quote}
"every wind”\end{quote}; also see Baruch 2:3, which was not part of the Hebrew Bible. Compare the “abominations,” “βδελὐγματα” in Ezekiel to the more famous passage in Daniel 9:27 on the “abomination of desolation,” “τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως.” S. Mason, “Josephus, Daniel, and the Flavian House,” in Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period, Essays in Memory of Morton Smith, edd. F. Parente and J. Sievers, Brill, 1994, pp. 161-191, believes that “some central themes of the War probably do derive from Josephus’s ‘Danielic’ outlook. Mason here is agreeing with F. F. Bruce, “Josephus and Daniel,” Svenska Teologiska Institutet 4 (1965), pp. 148-162, but for different reasons than Bruce gives. Specifically, Mason identifies the following themes as indicating the influence of Daniel on the War: “world empires come and go; God currently supports the Romans and uses their power to punish the Jewish nation for their transgression; acceptance of foreign rule is the traditional Jewish position; and rebels are unfaithful to the tradition,” p. 190.
at the Temple in Jerusalem before the war, Josephus would have recited a shorter version of Yahweh’s blessings and curses upon Israel from Deuteronomy 11. This idea of rewards and punishments was intrinsic to the relationship between Yahweh and Israel and was reiterated in daily Temple ritual.

Josephus and his fellow Jews were aware of this basic Scriptural tenet: by living according to the Law, Israel receives blessings, but by violating it, suffers curses. In a crescendo of maledictions, Yahweh warns in Leviticus:

> And if, in spite of this, you do not listen to me but set yourselves against me, I will set myself against you in fury and punish you sevenfold for your sins. You shall eat the flesh of your own sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your own daughters.

Cannibalism committed against one’s own children, therefore, is one of the major calamities that Israel will suffer should it break God’s Law. The Levitical warnings then proceed to the destruction of Israel’s cities and sanctuaries and the dispersion of its people into “the land of their enemies.”

The warnings in Deuteronomy even more explicitly contextualize the accursed cannibalism with the onslaught of the enemy:

> During the siege and in the distress to which your enemies will reduce you, you will eat the fruit of your body, the flesh of the sons and daughters of yours whom the Lord has given you...The tenderest and most fastidious woman among

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229 The Mishnah tract Tamid provides a detailed description of daily sacrifice of a lamb at the Temple. According to Tamid 5.1, after the priests cut up the sacrificial animal, they recited prayers: “The officer said to them, ‘Recite ye a Benediction!’ They recited a Benediction, and recited the Ten Commandments, the Shema’, and the And it shall come to pass if ye hearken [Deut. 11:13-21], and the And the Lord spake unto Moses,” Danby (1933), p. 586. I think it is valid to suppose that Josephus participated in priestly rites at least similar to these at the Temple.

230 Leviticus 26: 27-29 (LXX): “ἐὰν δὲ ἐπὶ τούτοις μὴ ὑπακούσῃτε μου καὶ πορεύησθε πρὸς με πλάγιοι, καὶ αὐτὸς πορεύομαι μεθ’ ὑμῶν ἐν θυμῷ πλαγίῳ καὶ παῖδεύσω ὑμᾶς ἐγώ ἐπτάκις κατὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας ὑμῶν, καὶ φάγεσθε τὰς σάρκας τῶν ὑμῶν ὑμῶν καὶ τὰς σάρκας τῶν θυγατέρων ὑμῶν φάγεσθε.”

231 Lev. 26: 30-41; 36, 38, 39, 41, 44: “ἡ γῆ τῶν ἐχθρῶν.”
you, so tender, so fastidious that she has never ventured to set the sole of her foot to the ground, will give the evil eye to the husband she loves, even to her son and her daughter, and hide from them the afterbirth of her womb and the child she bears to eat them, so utter will be the destitution during the siege and in the distress to which your enemies will subject you in all your cities.\textsuperscript{232}

\textit{Deuteronomy} creates a character who personifies the horror of the God’s punishment: “the tenderest and most fastidious of women.” Once a grand woman, “who has never ventured to set the sole of her foot upon the ground,” she now is a hateful wife and, worse still, a desperate mother reduced by starvation to eating both the afterbirth and her own baby. The subsequent punishments in \textit{Deuteronomy}, however, do not specifically include the destruction of Israel’s cities and shrines, but instead concentrate on terrible reversals, culminating in the exile of the people “back to Egypt.”\textsuperscript{233}

Some rabbinic stories about women in dire straits hinge upon “the tenderest and most fatidious woman among you” in \textit{Deuteronomy} 28. Naomi Cohen and Burton Visotzky have examined the interpretations of the rabbis, and have situated Josephus’s story of Mary within the context of these rabbinic exegeses. Naomi Cohen has argued that, “loyal Jews with a reasonable degree of learning, must, as we have already intimated, also have looked upon the incident described by Josephus [the cannibalism

\textsuperscript{232} \textit{Deuteronomy} 28: 53, 56-57 (LXX): “καὶ φάγῃ τὰ ἐκγόνα τῆς κοιλίας σου, κρέα νιῶν σου καὶ θυγατέρων σου, ὡσα ἔδωκεν σοι κύριος ο θεός σου, ἐν τῇ στενοχωρίᾳ σου καὶ ἐν τῇ θλίψει σου, ἢ θλίψει σε ὁ ἔχθρός σου...καὶ ἢ ἀπαλῆ ἐν υἷν καὶ ἢ τρυφερὰ σφόδρα, ἢς οὐχὶ πεῖραν ἔλαβεν ὁ ποὺς αὐτῆς βαίνειν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς διὰ τὴν τρυφερότητα καὶ διὰ τὴν ἀπαλότητα, βασκανεὶ τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ αὐτῆς τὸν ἄνδρα αὐτῆς τὸν ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ αὐτῆς καὶ τὸν υἱὸν καὶ τὴν θυγατέρα αὐτῆς καὶ τὸ χόριον αὐτῆς τὸ ἐξελθόν διὰ τῶν μηρῶν αὐτῆς καὶ τὸ τέκνον, ὃ ἀν τέκτη καταφάγεται γὰρ αὐτὰ διὰ τὴν ἐνδειαν πάντων κρυφῆ ἐν τῇ στενοχωρίᾳ σου καὶ ἐν τῇ θλίψει σου, ἢ θλίψει σε ὁ ἔχθρός σου ἐν πάσαις ταῖς πόλεισι σου.” Thackeray (1928) notes this passage. Notice also, however, that \textit{Deuteronomy} 28:54-55 describes first the “most tender and fastidious man,” who eats his own children, before mentioning the woman.

\textsuperscript{233} \textit{Deut.} 28: 68 (LXX): “καὶ ἀποστρέψει σε κύριος εἰς Ἀἰγυπτον ἐν πλοίοις καὶ ἐν τῇ ὕδω, ἢ εἶπα Οὗ προσθήσοσθε ἐτὶ ἰδεῖν αὐτήν.” For Israel the worst spectacle imaginable is Egypt.
of Mary] within the frame of reference of the Biblical *Tohaha*, so that this unthinkable deed would appear to them not in the guise of an evil act of brutality so much as a most fearful retribution for previous iniquity, a literal fulfillment of the Divine Chastisement quoted above [in *Deuteronomy* 28].” Cohen, admittedly unoriginally, links Josephus’s Mary with Martha b. Boethus, the “tenderest and most fastidious” aristocratic woman in BT *Gittin* 56a who dies from the famine during the siege of Jerusalem.235

Burton Visotzky236 has considered the development of the Aggada on this passage in *Deuteronomy*, and firmly places Josephus’s account of Mary within an analysis of subsequent rabbinic exegeses of this Biblical warning. Visotzky concentrates on the narrative motemes in each account in the transmission. He recognizes that “Josephus exchanges belts and shoes for the ass’s head and dung of 2Kings,” but he never explains why Josephus does this. Clearly Josephus is avoiding any reference to an ass’s head, which could then be associated with the golden ass’s head, which anti-Jewish pagans

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234 Visotzky (1983), p. 408, provides a translation of this Talmudic passage, along with translations and analyses of later rabbinic parallels. This chapter 56 of BT *Gittin* contains several other interesting tales concerning the war with the Romans, including one of Rabban Johanan b. Zakkai recognizing Vespasian as emperor (also in 56a) and another concerning Titus (in 56b): “Vespasian sent Titus who said, *Where is their God, the rock in whom they trusted?* This was the wicked Titus who blasphemed and insulted Heaven. What did he do? He took a harlot by the hand and entered the Holy of Holies and spread out the scroll of the Law and committed a sin on it,” from *The Babylonian Talmud: Gittin*, vol. 3, pt. 5, transl. M. Simon, London: Sonsino Press, 1977. This account about Titus continues by describing his plundering of the Temple, his return to Rome, his death, his resurrection by magic performed by his nephew, and his pronouncement that Israel is most revered in the next world.

235 N. Cohen (1976), pp. 190-1, n. 9. Neither Cohen nor Visotzky (1983) admits that the Martha account differs from Josephus’s Mary story, because Mary in the B.J. eats her baby, whereas there is no mention of a baby or cannibalism with Martha. Visotzky argues instead that Martha’s stepping on dung and immediately dying “certainly recalls the half-eaten child in Josephus,” p. 413. Perhaps.

claimed the Jews worshipped in their Temple in Jerusalem. Visotzky sees that Josephus is using 2Kings and Deuteronomy, and praises the historian:

Yet, the genius of Josephus’ account is that he goes beyond the terrors of Deuteronomy so that when she is discovered, Mary daughter of Eleazar of Bethzuba offers her child as food to the greedy rebels. Both sets of biblical verses show that Josephus is indebted to Scripture for his broad motif, yet he seems to invent the greater part of the motemes which embellish the story’s outline.

It is impossible for us to determine how many of the details of this story Josephus invented, but it is important to remember with Visotzky that Josephus is shaping a narrative and not only reporting facts. Unfortunately, Visotzky does not address the reasons why Josephus would invent such a narrative, how he does so, and what audience response he could be seeking.

To answer these questions, we should turn to Philo, who provides keen insight into how a Hellenized Jew would consider and shape a narrative of cannibalism for a Hellenized audience in the first century C.E., whether Jewish or gentile. Philo’s treatise entitled On Rewards and Punishments traces how God rewards those who follow the Law handed down to Moses, and how transgressors are punished. After describing the earthly blessings for the just and pious, Philo graphically elaborates on the

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237 C.A. 2.80: “In hoc enim sacrario Apion praesumpsit edicere asini caput collocasse Iudaeos et eum colere ac dignum facere tanta religione, et hoc affirmat fuisse depalatum, dum Antiochus Epiphanes expoliasset templum et illud caput inventum ex auro compositum multis pecuniis dignum;” also 2.112-114, “τὴν χρυσήν ...τοῦ κάνθωνος κεφαλῆν.” On this charge, see most recently Peter Schäfer, Judeophobia, Attitudes Towards the Jews in the Ancient World, Harvard, 1997, especially pp. 55-62. When Schäfer addresses the charge of human sacrifice and cannibalism being performed by Jews at the Temple, pp. 62-65 and 203-204, he never mentions this incident with Mary during the Jewish War.

238 Interestingly, Visotzky is concerned with this with regard to the reception of the story of Martha in the later Tosepta: “The detail of her foraging remains constant: she gathers grain by following the flocks and collecting undigested barleycorns. As theater, it vividly represents the pathos of the once rich woman now reduced to foraging for food. [emphasis mine],” p. 413. Thus, Visotzky does see the theatrics in the rabbinic account.

239 I have not seen any commentary or other scholarship which refers to Philo’s treatise in connection with reading Josephus’s account of Mary’s cannibalism.
punishments found in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. Famine and drought will ensue, causing people to turn to cannibalism:

So great will be the lack of necessities that having been deprived of these things, they will turn to cannibalism, not only of strangers and those who are not relatives, but even of their nearest and dearest. A father will lay hands on the flesh of his son and a mother on the innards of her daughter, brothers on brothers, children on parents, and always the weaker will be evil and accursed food for the stronger. The tales of Thyestes will be child’s play compared with the extreme misfortunes, which the times will produce in great abundance.  

Philo here provides the key to reading such Jewish calamities within a Hellenized context: he asks his readers to think of them in comparison to the myth of Thyestes (“τὰ Θυέστεια”), and warns his readers that they are going to suffer much worse. Thyestes is a natural choice when referring to cannibalism, since in the myth he (albeit unwittingly) ate his own children.

After this first association of Jewish suffering with Greek myth in this tract, Philo departs from Scripture to explain why the sufferers of God’s vengeance will not take themselves out of their own misery through suicide. He dwells on the horrible consequences of not obeying God:

For cold, thirst, and lack of food would be difficult, but would be most sought after at times, if it would only bring on immediate death. But ills that last and waste away both body and soul produce new sufferings more profound than the ones described in tragedies, which seem to be told because of their excesses.  

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240 Philo, de Praemiis et Poenis, 134: “Τοσαύτη δὲ ἐφέξει σπάνις τῶν ἀναγκαίων, ὡστε ἀλλοτριωθέντες τούτων τρέψονται ἐπ’ ἀλληλοφαγίας, οὐ μόνον ὃθενίων καὶ μηδὲν προσηκόντων, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν οἰκειοτάτων καὶ φιλτάτων· ἀγεται γὰρ καὶ πατήρ υἱῶν σαρκῶν καὶ μήτηρ σπλάγχνων θυγατρὸς καὶ ἀδελφῶν ἀδελφοί καὶ γονέων παῖδες· ἀεὶ δὲ οἱ ἀσθενέστεροι τῶν δυνατωτέρων κακαὶ καὶ ἐπάρατοι τροφαὶ· τὰ Θυέστεια παιδία [καὶ] συγκρινόμενα ταῖς ὑπερβολαῖς τῶν συμφορῶν, ἄς μεγαλουργήσουσιν οἱ καιροί.”

241 Ibid., 136: “καὶ γὰρ εἰ χαλεπὰ ἱρίγος, δίψος, ἐνδεία τροφῆς, ἀλλ’ εὐκταῖότατα γένοιτ’ ἄν ἐπὶ καιρῶν, εἰ μόνον ἀνυπέρθετον φθοράν ἐργάσοιτο· χρονίζοντα
Philo indicates that he is expounding upon sufferings that cannot even be matched by ones put on the tragic stage (“τῶν τετραγωδημένων”). Philo, therefore, makes it very plain that tragedy is the natural point of association for his Hellenized audience when discussing extreme human suffering, whether real or hypothetical and regardless of nation or religion.

Josephus himself later in the Contra Apionem attests to this mental leap, made by his Hellenized contemporaries, from stories of horrible deeds to myths told in tragedies. In Contra Apionem Book I, Josephus defends the antiquity of the Jewish people using a variety of pagan sources, and he continues in Book II with a refutation of lies told about Jews in later history. His main opponent here is the grammarian from Alexandria, Apion, whose history of Egypt serves as the source anti-Jewish stories. Josephus responds passionately to these stories, and even assails Apion personally at one point by asking “whether Apion was the biggest numbskull of all to write fiction.” Two of Apion’s gravest charges against Jews, which Josephus feels compelled to address, concern the cult at the Temple in Jerusalem. Josephus combats the first accusation, that Jews worship an ass’s head in their Temple, with a blend of humor (“an ass is no worse than cats, goats, and other animals”) and serious historical proofs that no occupying general found such a thing there.

Josephus then recounts the second story at length, which, like that of the ass’s head, supposedly came about as a result of Antiochus Epiphanes’ foray into the Temple. In

\[\text{δὲ καὶ τῇ κοινῇ ψυχήν τε καὶ σῶμα τῶν τετραγωδημένων, ἀ δι’ ὑπερβολάς μεμυθεόσθαι δοκεῖ, βαρύτερα πέφυκε καίνουργεῖν.} \]

\[\text{C.A. 2.10 refers specifically to the third book of Apion’s work: “ἐν τῇ τρίτῃ τῶν Αἰγυπτίακῶν.”} \]

\[\text{C.A. 2.88: “aut omnium gurdissimus fuit Apion ad componendum verba fallacia.”} \]

\[\text{C.A. 2.81: “cum non sit deterior asinus furonis et hircis et alii.”} \]

\[\text{C.A. 2.82: Antiochus VII (“Pius”), Pompey, Crassus, and Titus.} \]

\[\text{Schäfer (1997), p. 65, refutes Bickerman’s notion that this story comes from Seleucid propaganda; see E. Bickerman, “Ritualmord und Eselskult. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte} \]
this story, Antiochus discovers a young man lying on a couch in the Temple, stupefied by the grandiose banquet laid out for him.\textsuperscript{247} The young man tells his tale of woe within the tale: he is a Greek who was kidnapped, locked up in the Temple, and was now being fattened up for the kill in order to fulfill “the unutterable law of the Jews.”\textsuperscript{248} He reveals that the Jews do this every year:

[He said] that they would do this every year at an established time: they would kidnap a Greek foreigner and fatten him up in a year’s time, and then they would take him to a forest, where they would kill him and sacrifice his body according to their customs, and then they would taste his innards and swear an oath over the immolated Greek that they would be hostile to Greeks, and then would throw the remains of the dead man into a pit.\textsuperscript{249}

The young man concludes his plea in Apion’s story, as Josephus tells it, by begging the king to “have respect for the gods of Greece and defeat this Jewish plot against his life-blood and to free him from these evil circumstances.”\textsuperscript{250} Thus, Apion’s account contains many elements of Graeco-Roman accusations of human sacrifice\textsuperscript{251} lodged

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antiker Publizistik,” in Studies in Jewish and Christian History, vol. 2, Leiden, 1980, pp. 225-255 (publ. in MGWJ 71, 1927). Schäfer instead offers: “It is much more probable that the story derives from those circles which were obsessed with Jewish misoxenia/misanthropia, circles which originated and were concentrated, as we have seen, in Greek Egypt long before the second century B.C.E. Apion is a worthy descendant of this tradition, and it may even be that he himself made up this particular story out of all the components demonstrated so convincingly by Bickerman. He is the spokesman and in a way the climax of an ancient Egyptian anti-Jewish tradition.”

\textsuperscript{247} His feast includes animals from all regions of the known world: air, land, and water. (Is this a perversion of the perceived cosmic symbolism of the Temple and its contents? For such symbolism, see B.J. 5. 213 on the cosmic significance of the veil in the Temple.)

\textsuperscript{248} C.A. 2.92–96, here 94: “\textit{legem ineffabilem Iudaeorum.”}

\textsuperscript{249} C.A. 2.94–95: “\textit{hoc illos facere singulis annis quodam tempore constituto: et compraeendere quidem Graecum peregринum eumque annali tempore saginare, et deductum ad quandam silvam occidere quidem eum hominem eiusque corpus sacrificare secundum suas sollemnitates, et gustare ex eius viscibus, et iusturandum facere in immolatione Graeci, ut inimicitias contra Graecos haberent, et tunc in quandam foaveam reliqua hominis pereuntis abicere.”}

\textsuperscript{250} C.A. 2.96: “\textit{erubescens Graecorum deos et superans in suo sanguine insidias Iudaeorum, de malis eum circumstantibus liberaret.”}

\textsuperscript{251} For the finest recent study of the development and evolution of the Greek and Roman use of the motif of human sacrifice to discredit the enemy without or within,
against foreigners/barbarians or dangerous political opponents within their midst (the Catilinarian conspiracy being the most famous)\textsuperscript{252}: kidnapping, secret rites, flesh-eating, immolation, blood-drinking, and oath-swinging. The tale also plays upon general pagan conceptions of Jewish misanthropy, xenophobia, and impiety.\textsuperscript{253}

Josephus responds to Apion’s account by bitterly resuming his attack upon Apion as a writer of fiction:

Well then, a tale of this kind is not only completely full of everything tragic, but it also overflows with rude impudence.\textsuperscript{254}

As a Jew and a priest, Josephus cannot tolerate the charge of cannibalism lodged against his people and their Temple. He, therefore, picks up his previous thread of criticism against Apion’s mendacity by labelling the grammarian’s story a “fabula,” a myth, which outstrips the bounds of credulity and good taste. But the label of “fabula” is not enough for Josephus; he emphasizes that the story is replete with everything that tragedy can put on stage (“omni tragoedia plenissima est”). Josephus launches his attack on a literary basis and then turns to other hard data to refute Apion’s claim.

Like Philo, Josephus uses tragedy as a generic benchmark in order to help his audience to appreciate the nature of the material under discussion. For Philo, Yahweh’s punishments for impiety will be so real and so wretched, including cannibalism, that the stories in tragedies (i.e., spectacular fiction) cannot match them. For Josephus, on the other hand, Apion’s accusation of Jewish cannibalism targeting Greeks is so outlandish that it belongs in the realm of tragedy, that is, fiction. Tragedy is the

\textsuperscript{252}Sallust, B.C.22 and Plutarch, Cicero 10.


\textsuperscript{254}C.A. 2.97: “Huiusmodi ergo fabula non tantum omni tragoedia plenissima est, sed etiam impudentia crudeli redundat.”
touchstone for both of these hellenized Jews in their attempts to reach their audiences and impress upon them the nature of the matters at hand, whether true or false. Josephus and Philo, therefore, offer a key interpretive strategy to their audiences when facing gruesome stories of cannibalism: they ask their readers to think of them on a literary basis, specifically in terms of tragedy. I would suggest then that we take our cue from Josephus himself and read his rendition of Mary’s cannibalism in the Bellum in this light.

John J. Winkler has already applied this approach to his examination of accounts of cannibalism in the novels of Achilles Tatius and Lollianos and the history of Cassius Dio, dating to the two centuries after Josephus. In fact, Winkler explicitly compares his approach to these accounts to Josephus’s analysis of Apion’s story. In an article, “Lollianos and the Desperadoes,” Winkler argues that A. Henrichs incorrectly interpreted the fragments of Lollianos as reflecting actual rituals of ancient mystery religions and the practices of the Egyptian Boukoloi. Instead, Winkler proposed using “a different approach to the interpretation of the ancient novels...which traces the patterns of narrative, the basic plots and formulae of popular entertainment.” In distilling the essence of scenes involving desperadoes vs. victims in the novels and Cassius Dio, he argues:

...they are generated by the same narrative formula: Innocent Victim vs. Cutthroat Gang, culminating in a scene of gruesome execution. Religious motifs in these scenes are not intended to be informative or descriptive of actual beliefs...

He continues further on:

It is essential that the gang in question be outlaws or a foreign tribe, for it is their anti-social existence (from the perspective of the author and his audience) which provides the inexorability of the heroine’s fate.

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256 Henrichs (1972).
Winkler also notes inconspicuously at one point in his article:

Josephus knew an anti-semitic legend of an annual human sacrifice (contra Apionem ii 8) and Damokritos of a seven-yearly one (περὶ ἱουδαίων, Suda s.v. 'Damokritos'). Josephus' critique of the legend is in many ways parallel to my analysis of Lollianos and Dio lxxi 4.\(^{258}\)

I am suggesting that we now include Josephus's own account of human sacrifice and cannibalism in his Bellum into this larger literary discussion.

Josephus commences his main account of Mary in the following way:

There was a woman among the people who live beyond the Jordan named Mary, daughter of Eleazar, of the village of Bethezuba (this means the "house of hyssop"), distinguished by birth and wealth, who escaped with the rest of the people to Jerusalem and became involved in the siege.\(^ {259} \)

The very first words in this passage, "Γνύη τίς," immediately alert his audience that he is going to be telling an engaging story involving an otherwise minor character.

Throughout the Bellum Josephus uses "τίς" in combination with a noun in order to introduce provocative or exemplary material.\(^ {260} \)

\(^ {258} \) Ibid, p. 170, n. 72.

\(^ {259} \) B.J. 6.201: "Γνύη τίς τῶν ὑπὲρ τὸν Ἰορδάνην κατοικοῦντων, Μαρία τούνομα, πατρὸς Ἔλεαζάρου, κόμης Βηθζουβᾶ, σημαίνει δὲ τοῦτο οἶκος ὑσσώπου, διὰ γένος καὶ πλοῦτον ἔπισιμος, μετὰ τοῦ λοιποῦ πλήθους εἰς τὰ ἱεροσόλυμα καταφυγόσα συνεπολιορκεῖτο."

\(^ {260} \) For instance, in his account early in book 2 of the period shortly after the death of Herod, Josephus introduces three colorful pretenders to the throne with this "τίς" formula. B.J. 2.57 (Simon of Peraea): "Κατὰ δὲ τὴν Περαιαν Σίμων τις τῶν βασιλικών δούλων, εὐμορφίᾳ σώματος καὶ μεγέθει πεποιθώς, περιτίθησιν μὲν ἐαυτῷ διάδημα" [parallel passage in Ant. 17.273: "Ἡν δὲ καὶ Σίμων δουλὸς μὲν Ἡρώδου... ἄλλως δὲ ἀνήρ"; Tacitus, Hist. 5.9 has "Simo quidam"]; B.J. 2.60 (a shepherd called Athrongaeus): "Τότε καὶ ποιμήν τις ἀντιποιηθήναι βασιλείας ἐτολμήσεν" [parallel passage in Ant. 17.278: "Ἐπεὶ καὶ Αθρόγγυς ἀνήρ... ποιμήν δὲ καὶ ἀνεπιφανής τοῖς πάσιν εἰς τὰ πάντα ν"; B.J. 2.101 (a young Jew from Sidon): "Καὶ τοῦτω νεανίας τις ἱουδαῖος μὲν τὸ γένος... δ’ ὁμοίωτα μορφῆς ψευδόμενος ἐαυτὸν Ἀλέξανδρον" [parallel passage in Ant. 17.324: "νεανίας ἱουδαῖος μὲν τὸ γένος"]. Also, at B.J. 2.118, Josephus introduces the founder of the rebellious Zealots:
The most spectacular individual introduced with “τίς” before Mary is the anonymous Roman soldier in Book 2 who incites a disastrous riot in Jerusalem. Josephus delicately reports that when the crowd had gathered in Jerusalem for Passover, with the Roman cohort stationed on the portico of the Temple:

a certain one of the soldiers pulled up his clothing and having bent down shamefully turned around his rear end to the Jews and made a sound in character with his posture.

This soldier’s rude performance provokes a major mêlée in which allegedly more than thirty thousand people perish. The offender remains nameless, but his action is significant enough to merit mention in a list of calamities leading up to the outbreak of

“ἐπὶ τοῦτον τις ἀνήρ Γαλιλαῖος Ἰουδᾶς ὄνομα” [parallel passages in Ant. 18.4: “Ἰουδᾶς δὲ Γαυλανίτης ἀνήρ” and Ant. 18.23: “Τῇ δὲ τετάρτῃ τῶν φιλοσοφίων ὁ Γαλιλαῖος Ἰουδᾶς ἐγεμών κατέστη.” None of the parallel passages in Ant. uses τίς. K.-S. Krieger (1994) has compared this passage in the B.J. to the parallel account in Ant., pp. 111-114 (on B.J. 2.223-227) and 126-129 (on Ant. 20.105-112). He, however, does not examine this use of τίς in the B.J. in contrast to the Ant.

B.J. 2.224: “εἰς τις τῶν στρατιωτῶν ἀνασυράμενος τὴν ἑσθήτα καὶ κατακύψας ἀσχημόνως προσαπέστρεφεν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις τὴν ἔδραν καὶ τῷ σχήματι φωνήν ὁμοίαν ἐπεφθέγξατο.” The parallel passage in Ant. 20.108 is very interesting, because Josephus does use τίς here, unlike the other parallel examples given above, and also changes the details of the soldier’s insult significantly: “τετάρτῃ δὲ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς ἑορτῆς στρατιώτης τῆς ἀνακαλύψας ἐπεδεικνύετο τῷ πλῆθει τὰ αίδοια, καὶ πρὸς τοῦτο ἀπαθομένων ὀργὴ καὶ θυμὸς ἦν οὐκ ἑαυτοὺς ὑβρίσθαι λεγόντων, ἀλλὰ τούς θεὸν ἰοσεβήσατο.” Here the soldier flashes his genitals at the crowd, who interpret this as an act of impiety against God. Josephus has transformed the soldier’s crude posterior presentation into a sexual attack upon the purity of the Temple. This change is in keeping with the general religious tone of the Ant. See Krieger, p. 128, who observes similarly. In a section on “the paradox of the phallus,” Barton (1993), pp. 95-96, comments: “Because of a similar emotional complexity and function, there is among the ancient Romans an insistent connection, and even identification, of the genitalia with the the [sic] aggressive and prophylactic eye, and with the fascinum, the object that caught and deflected the eye.” Perhaps by changing the soldier’s insult to flashing of genitalia, Josephus is playing up the aggressive abuse of Roman power, as well, and how the spectating Jews are “fascinated” by it, to their own destruction.

B.J. 2.227.
Josephus presents him and his audible intestinal discharge as exemplary of the disdainful Roman attitude toward the Jews in the 50’s C.E.

This use of τίς to introduce paradigmatic material is a trait shared by a type of narrative that at first glance appears quite different from that of Josephus’s history: the fable. As the grammarian Theon formulates it, a fable is a “λόγος ψευδῆς εἰκονίζων ἀλήθειαν.” 264 While the fabulist represents “truth” through “a false story,” the historian purports to be presenting a “true story” while using the tools of fiction. Babrius’s Aesopic fables in Greek choliambic verse, which date to the same time as the Bellum and were dedicated, at least in part, to the great, great-grandson of Herod, 265 attest to τίς as a common way of introducing a person or animal whose actions represent some truth about the human condition. 266 Sometimes Babrius attaches an epimythium to explain the point of the story. His well known Fable 22 about the middle-aged man with two mistresses, one young and one old, starts out: “Βίου τις ἡδή τὴν μέσην ἔχων ὀρην.” The women, in order to gratify their individual tastes, end up plucking out all his hair. Babrius concludes the tale with the comment:

264 Theon, Progymnasmata 3.

265 Babrius addresses the second book of his fables, which he claims are a Syrian invention introduced to the Greeks by Aesop, to “παὶ βασιλέως Ἀλεξάνδρου,” beginning of Part 2, between Fables 107 and 108, line 1. In his introduction to the Loeb edition of Babrius and Phaedrus, 1965, p. xlviii, Perry gives the evidence in Josephus, Ant. 18.140, that this is the son of Alexander, who was set up as king in Cilicia by Vespasian. (The child, therefore, is the son of Alexander, who was the son of Tigranes V of Armenia, who was the son of Alexander, the murdered son of Herod the Great. Whether this child is the “Branchus” identified in the preface to Babrius’s first book is difficult to say; Perry, p. lvi, thinks not.) I would add to Perry that at Ant. 18.141, Josephus remarks: “καὶ τὸ μὲν Ἀλεξάνδρου [son of Herod the Great] γένος εὐθὺς ἰμα τῷ φυῆσαι τὴν θεραπείαν ἐξέλιπτε τῶν ἱουδαίων ἐπιχωρίων μετατάξαμενοι πρὸς τὰ Ἑλλησί πάτρια.” King Alexander, one of the descendants of these hellenized Herodians and possible patron to Babrius, may very well have been among the intended audience of Josephus’s Bellum.

Aesop told this fable in order to show how piteous a man is who falls under the influence of women; women are like the sea: they lure you in with smiles and then they drown you.\textsuperscript{267}

This epimythium is meant to be humorous and is clearly misogynous; it also proposes that Aesop crafted a tale meant to move an audience to pity. As we shall see, Josephus, too, crafts a fable, which he explicitly labels a “\textit{mythos}” within his “\textit{logos}” in order to elicit pity for the great majority of Jews involved in the war with the Romans.

Josephus commences his story by giving details of Mary’s father’s name and hometown in Peraea,\textsuperscript{268} adding the explanatory touch of the etymology of her village’s name, Bethezuba, for the non-Hebrew speaking audience. He provides the details about her great wealth and high social position perhaps in order to increase his audience’s respect for her and to prepare for the tragedy of her great fall. Josephus reports that she fled with the rest of the masses to Jerusalem and was caught in the siege there. He has already described back in book 4 the grotesque slaughter of the Peraeans fleeing the advancing Roman army in 68 C.E.\textsuperscript{269} According to Josephus, it was the worst thing that happened to the Jews up to that point in the war, and appeared even worse since Jewish corpses filled the countryside and choked the Jordan River and the Dead Sea.\textsuperscript{270} Mary could very well have been part of this general flight two years before, but the historian does not elaborate upon this. He also omits any mention of a husband, which one assumes she has had, knowing her high social standing and then learning of her

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{267 Babrius, \textit{Fable} 22.13-15: “\textit{Αἵσωπος οὖν τὸν μύθον εἶπε δηλώσας / ἐλεεινὸς
<στὶς εἰς γυναῖκας ἐμπίπτει / ὤσπερ θάλασσα ἀποτυνίγει.”}
\footnote{268 At \textit{B.J.} 2.566-8, Manasseh is sent to Peraea as general for the Jewish rebellion at same time that Josephus is commissioned as general of the two Galilees. Josephus describes the resources and geography of Peraea at \textit{B.J.} 3.44-47. Peraea is mostly desert, but has some good agricultural areas.
\footnote{269 \textit{B.J.} 4.410-439: Vespasian’s troops subdue Peraea on their march from Caesarea to Jerusalem in March/April, 68.
\footnote{270 \textit{B.J.} 4.437.}}
\end{footnotes}
infant.\textsuperscript{271} Without a husband, whether through separation, divorce or widowhood, Mary is a more exposed, vulnerable character.

Josephus emphasizes the property Mary brings with her to Jerusalem and its depletion by the rebels in their daily raids. The rebels’ henchmen seize the remnants of her treasures and whatever food she has on a daily basis.\textsuperscript{272} It is interesting to notice that Josephus does not tell us here how much food costs at the inflated prices that siege induces, while the account in \textit{2 Kings} and the rabbinic story of Martha do dwell on such details.

The historian chooses instead to give insight into Mary’s emotional state. He highlights the terrible vexation that drives her to reproach and curse the looters, who, in turn, are provoked to act against her.\textsuperscript{273} Josephus now must explain how she arrives at the horrible point where she would decide to eat her own baby, who has gone unmentioned up to this point. The historian suspends the narrative, in order to build up to the supposedly unparalleled deed, by crafting a comparatively long sentence and by delaying introduction of the baby until Mary’s dramatic direct address:

But when no one out of either anger or pity killed her, and she was tired of finding any food for others, and it was difficult now to find it from any source, and the famine was advancing through her innards and marrow while her anger was burning stronger than the famine, she, under the influence of her anger,

\textsuperscript{271} For a well documented account of the social status and functions of women in Palestine during this period, see T. Ilan, \textit{Jewish Woman in Greco-Roman Palestine}, Hendrickson, 1996. For specific social categories for women as treated in the Mishnah, see J. R. Wegner, \textit{Chattel or Person? The Status of Women in the Mishnah}, Oxford, 1988. A recent collection of feminist essays also sheds light on women of this period: \textit{“Women Like This”: New Perspectives on Jewish Women in the Greco-Roman World}, ed. A.-J. Levine, Atlanta, 1991. (None of these books refers to Josephus’s Mary.)

\textsuperscript{272} B.J. 6.202: “\textit{ταύτης τὴν μὲν ἄλλην κτήσιν οἱ τύραννοι διῄρπασαν, ὡσπον ἐκ τῆς Περαιάς ἀνασκευασμένη μετήνεγκεν εἰς τὴν πόλιν, τὰ δὲ λείψανα τῶν κειμηλίων καὶ εἰ τὶ τροφῆς ἐπινοηθεὶς καθ’ ἡμέραν εἰσπηδῶντες ἠρπαζόν οἱ δορυφόροι.”

\textsuperscript{273} B.J. 6.203: “\textit{δεινὴ δὲ τὸ γύναιον ἀγανάκτησις εἰσῆλθε, καὶ πολλάκις λοιπόν καὶ καταρωμένη τὸ ἀρπαγας ἐφ’ αὐτὴν ἤρεψεν.” The word order emphasizes how terribly she suffers, with “\textit{δεινή...ἀγανάκτησις}” embracing “\textit{τὸ γύναιον}.”
along with necessity, went against nature and seizing her child, her child who 
was an infant at the breast, said, “Poor baby, in the midst of war and famine and 
civil strife, why should I preserve you? There will be slavery with the Romans, if 
we are alive under them, but the famine is beating out even slavery, and the 
rebels are harsher than both. Be food for me and for the rebels a fury and for the 
world a myth, the only one lacking for the calamities of the Jews.”

This passage is rich with tragic imagery and themes crucial to Josephus’s history as a 
whole. It plays its role as a mythos meant to embody the logos of his apologetics.

Josephus first claims that no one, out of either anger or pity, will take Mary out of 
her misery by killing her, but he never mentions the option of Mary committing 
suicide. This is noteworthy, because at other dramatic highpoints of siege in the Bellum, 
Jotapata and Masada, suicide is considered at least a possibility by the Jews in the 
former case and the chosen solution in the latter (though not readily embraced by all at 
first, necessitating the leader Eleazar’s second speech in Josephus’s account). In fact,

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274 B.J. 6.204-207: “ὡς δ’ οὖτε παροξυνόμενός τις οὖτ’ ἐλεόων αὐτὴν ἄνηρεί, καὶ τὸ 
μὲν εὐρέιν τι σίτιον ἄλλοις ἑκοτία, πανταχόθεν δ’ ἄπορον ἦν ἢδη καὶ τὸ εὔρειν, 
ὁ λιμός δὲ διὰ σπλάγχνων καὶ μυελῶν ἱχώρει καὶ τοῦ λιμοῦ μᾶλλον ἐξέκαιον 
οἱ θυμοί, σύμβουλον λαβοῦσα τὴν ὀργὴν μετὰ τῆς ἀνάγκης ἐπὶ τὴν φύσιν 
ἐχώρει, καὶ τὸ τέκνον, ἦν δ’ αὐτῇ παῖς ὑπομόστιος, ἀρπασαμένη “βρέφος,” 
eἴπεν, “ἀθλιον, ἐν πολέμῳ καὶ λιμῷ καὶ στάσει τίνι σε τηρήσοι; τά μὲν παρὰ 
Ῥωμαίοις δουλεία, κἂν ἥσσωμεν ἐπ’ αὐτοὺς, φθάνει δὲ καὶ δουλείαν ὁ λιμός, οἱ 
στασιασταῖ δ’ ἀμφοτέρων χαλεπῶτεροι. ἤθι, γενοῦ μοι τροφή καὶ τοὺς 
στασιασταῖς ἐρινύς καὶ τῷ βίῳ μύθος ὁ μόνος ἐλλείπετων ταῖς Ἰουδαίων 
συμφοραῖς.”

275 At B.J. 3.356-359, Josephus reports the speech at the fall of Jotapata, in which his 
companions in the cave offer him suicide as a noble choice. He concludes their speech 
with a terse formulation about his reputation hinging on his choice: “σὺ δ’ ἂν μὲν 
ἐκὼν θυρήσεις, Ἰουδαίων στρατηγός, ἂν δ’ ἰκών, προδότης τεθνήξῃ.” Josephus 
replies with a speech in which he strongly (and conveniently) rejects suicide as an act 
of impiety, B.J. 3.362-382.

276 The Jewish leader Eleazar proposes suicide as a noble choice (B.J. 7.337, partial 
audience response: “καλὸν εἶναι τὸν θάνατον νομίζοντες”) in two speeches given at 
B.J. 7.323-336 and 7.341-388. For an excellent treatment of the classical literary setting, 
the political connotations, and the thematic aim of Eleazar’s speeches promoting 
suicide, as well as that of Josephus’s anti-suicide message in Book 3, see David 
when Philo discusses Yahweh’s punishment of cannibalism for breaking the Law in *De Praemiis et Poenis*, in the section I have discussed above, he digresses from the Scriptures in order to comment that saner people would seek to be released from the misery of starvation through death.\(^{277}\) Josephus does not allow Mary to entertain the option of suicide, perhaps since this would detract from her even more tragic choice. Instead, “she grows weary of finding food for others,” and the food is no longer available anyway. This is the first real intimation that Mary is responsible for other people, whether family members, servants, or other Peraeans.

Josephus now increases the narrative heat in this lengthy sentence by describing Mary’s physical and emotional condition. The picture of a passionate female from Greek tragedy strongly emerges. Her anger (“οἱ θυμοί”) against the marauding rebels replaces the famine as her consuming motivation, burning through her “σπλάγχναν καὶ μυελῶν.”\(^{278}\) The image of Mary’s “σπλάγχνα” on fire is especially loaded, since it can, on the physical level, represent not only her “innards” but, more specifically, her womb. Furthermore, “σπλάγχνα” are the organ parts which are eaten by participants at a Greek sacrifice,\(^{279}\) and may be foreshadowing for Mary eating the product of her

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\(^{277}\) Philo, *De Praemiis et Poenis* 135: “τὸν γὰρ ἄρα ἄξιον ἀπαλγήσαντας ἐπιτειμεῖν θανάτῳ τὰς ἀνίας, ὅ τοῖς μὴ λίαν φρενοβλαβέσιν ὡθοῦ ἔραν.” The Loeb editor, F. H. Colson, remarks, in vol. 8 (1939), p. 396, n. a, “There is no authority in Leviticus or Deuteronomy for these two sections. Philo is perhaps so familiar with suicide as a way of escaping misery that he feels that the curse to be complete must include inability to make use of it.”

\(^{278}\) Both “marrow” and “innards” are commonly used as metaphors for the seat of emotions. For μυελόν, see, for instance the Nurse on the lovesickness of Phaedra at *Hippolytus* 255: “καὶ μὴ πρὸς ἀκρον μυελόν ψυχῆς.” Phaedra has already acknowledged at 248 that it has made her crazy: “τὸ δὲ μαυσόμενον κακὸν.”

\(^{279}\) As Jean-Louis Durand observes in his essay, “Greek Animals: Toward a Typology of Edible Bodies,” in edd. M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant, *The Cuisine of Sacrifice among the Greeks [Cuisine du sacrifice en pays grec, 1979]*, trans. P. Wissing, Univ. of Chicago, 1989, p. 92: “The consumption of the *splankhna*, the central moment of the sacrifice as religious act, is in some ways a focal point toward which gestures and actions are directed; it organizes their relationship and sequence within the space and time of the rite.” Here
own womb at her so-called “sacrifice.” Finally, “σπλάγχνα,” in both classical Greek and Jewish literature, can serve metaphorically as the source of human emotions.  

Josephus then further explains Mary’s emotional state in terms very familiar from Greek tragedy: she is overwhelmed by the goads of ὀργή and ἀνάγκη, anger and necessity, to commit a deed “against nature.” The combination of anger, necessity, and an unnatural act committed by a mother are characteristics which Josephus and his audience would have readily identified with the mythological Medea. In Euripides’ rendition, Medea is driven by ὀργή against her former husband, Jason. After killing Jason’s new bride (and his new father-in-law), Medea believes she must kill her own children, an unnatural act, so that they will not be killed by another: “Surely it is necessity for them to die; and since it is necessary, I, the very one who bore them, will kill them.”

Durand is trying to decipher the sacrificial activities shown on the Ricci vase, an Ionian hydria from Caere.  

“σπλάγχνα” in Greek literature figuratively can be the source of anger and love; in the Hebrew tradition, on the other hand, the term (and its related verb, σπλαγχνίζομαι) is used metaphorically for tender affection and mercy. (A reader would hope for Mary to feel compassion for her own child, soon to be mentioned, and spare the child, but in this narrative Josephus has made her a Greek tragic heroine.) I shall return to this idea of mercy later, when comparing Josephus’s mythos of Mary with Luke’s equally engaging mythoi, including “The Good Samaritan” (10:30-35) and “The Prodigal Son” (15:11-32).

See Colin Macleod, Collected Essays, Oxford, 1983, “Thucydides and Tragedy,” pp. 140-158, for a stimulating analysis of themes, such as necessity (p. 154, in Euripides’ Hecuba), in the tragedians and Thucydides, especially his speeches. As Macleod points out at the end, the two main sources for the material of these fifth century composers were life and Homer.

One cannot say that this was Josephus’s sole inspiration for his portrayal of Mary here, but one can say that Euripides’ play was known to Romans of this period, since Seneca responded to it with his own Medea. There may, of course, have been other theatrical and dance representations of Medea current at the time.

Euripides, Medea, on Medea’s anger: lines 121 (Nurse), 176 (Chorus), 447 (Jason), 520 (Chorus), 870 (Medea), 909 (Jason).

Ibid., 1062-3: “πάντως οὗ άνάγκη κατθανείν· ἐπεὶ δὲ χρή, / ἡμεῖς κτενοῦμεν οἶπερ ἔξεφύσαμεν.” (These lines are reiterated at 1240-1241, and could be deleted, as editors have, at either location.) Another tragedy which stresses the role of ἀνάγκη in
The audience of the *Bellum* finally learns the crucial piece of information: Mary has a child ("τὸ τέκνον"). Josephus heightens the suspense and tragic *pathos* by delaying this revelation until the beginning of Mary's tragic monologue. When Mary seizes ("ἀρπασαμένη") her baby, 285 she mirrors the violence of the rebels' guards who have snatched ("ήρπαζον") her property earlier. That the baby is a nursling ("παῖς ύπομάστιος") makes it that much more vulnerable, thereby increasing the *pathos* and inviting the audience's pity.

This component of a mother and child suffering during siege is one shared in the Hebrew and Greek traditions, surely because the literary *topos* is a reflection of the realities of war through which both cultures suffered. Homer's Andromache serves as the archetype in Greek literature of the pathetic woman left alone with a babe in arms after the father has died in war. The tragedians turned to Homer's poetry on the Trojan War as a source of inspiration for describing the pain of war, as did Thucydides. 286 Likewise, Josephus turns to Greek tragedy as inspiration for shaping this moment in his narrative.

Josephus, however, also was exposed to the Hebrew prophetic literature of lamentation, which decries the plight of women in war. 287 The Christian gospels, which

forcing a parent to kill children is Euripides' *Heracles*, which Thackeray claims was a favorite of Josephus. Before the hero appears, his wife, Megara, prepares her children for death at the hands of the tyrant, Lycus. She tells the chorus of Theban elders that their anger against Lycus is just (275-6), but that she cannot struggle against necessity (282) though she loves her children. Much later in the play, after Heracles is driven mad by Λύσσα and kills his family, he tells Theseus that he performed such a heinous crime out of necessity (1281). The compulsions of tyranny and madness likewise play out at the climax of the *Bellum*.

Schwartz (1990), p. 43, n. 79, says in his singular note on this incident that Mary "ate her daughter," however Josephus calls the child "τὸν υἱὸν," her son, in 6.208. 285 See the conclusion of Macleod's article cited above.

286 For instance, Lamentations 2:10-12: children, still nursing (singular: "νήπιον καὶ θηλάζοντα") begging for food and taking consolation at their mothers' breasts; 2:20 (LXX): "φονευθίσονται νήπια θηλάζοντα μαστοῦς;" “Will the infants at the breast be slain?” In response to this type of imagery, the apocalyptic poem of consolation in
were composed in response to the Hebrew tradition as well as current realities at the end of the first century C.E., also attest, through the prophecies of Jesus, to the theme that women and their babes will suffer because of war and the destruction of Jerusalem.288 Josephus is shaping his narrative within both the Greek and Hebrew lines

Isaiah 66 converts this horrible reality of war into an image of joy, where a revived Jerusalem can suckle her people and offer comfort like a mother, 66:11 (LXX): “ívα θηλάσητε καὶ ἐμπλησθήτε ἀπὸ μαστῶν παρακλήσεως αὐτῆς,” “so that you may be suckled and may be filled from her consoling breast.”

288 In these gospel narratives, Jesus’ predictions about the destruction of Jerusalem (in the tradition of the Hebrew Scriptures, including Lamentations and Daniel) and the coming of the Son of Man are in response to his disciples drawing his attention to the Temple; in all three synoptic accounts, the Temple (its stones, buildings, and decorations) is a spectacle which Jesus is invited to view. He then views it, and he finally pronounces judgment on it. For the specific predictions on women and their children, see Mk. 13.17: “οὔτας ἐν γαστρὶ ἐχοῦσας καὶ ταῖς θηλαζοῦσαι ἐν ἑκεῖναις ταῖς ἡμέραις,” “Alas for women who are pregnant and for the ones nursing in those days.” This prediction is found verbatim at Mt. 24.19 and Lk. 21.23. The gospel of Luke, however, changes the spectacle which triggers Jesus’ dire prediction: instead of Jesus warning about seeing in the Temple τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημωσεως (“the abomination of desolation”) from Daniel 9:27, Luke’s Jesus warns about seeing Jerusalem encircled by an army: “’Ὅταν δὲ ἴδητε κυκλομένην ὑπὸ στρατοπέδου Ἴερουσαλήμ” (21:20). [For a close reading of this eschatological discourse and a comparison with the version in Mark, see C. H. Giblin, The Destruction of Jerusalem According to Luke’s Gospel: A Historical-Typological Moral, Analecta Biblica 107, Rome, 1985, pp. 74-92.] Luke, like Josephus, uses material more intelligible to a gentile audience. Both authors, though working within the parameters of Greek historiography, clearly reveal understanding of the Hebrew background in their writings. Luke, unlike the other gospels, returns to this theme of woe for women and children in the description of Jesus walking to Calvary. At Lk. 23:28-29, Jesus responds to the people, including women, who are lamenting his fate by saying: “θυγατέρες Ἴερουσαλήμ, μὴ κλαῖτε ἐπ’ ἑμέν’ πλήν ἐφ’ ἑαυτὰς κλαῖτε καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν, ὅτι ἰδοὺ ἤρχονται ἡμέραι ἐν αἷς ἐρωτόοις· μακάρια ἕατε καὶ δεῖ νησί ἕκαστός ὑμῶν ἐγέννησαν καὶ μαστοὶ ὑμῶν ἐφέρασαν.” (This is a direct contrast to the blessing pronounced by Jesus’ mother, Mary, in the Magnificat, 1:48, and to the blessing of the woman in the crowd upon Jesus’ mother at 11:47.) Luke is reflecting and soon quoting from Hosea 9-10 in this section, but one cannot help wondering if the plight of women in Jerusalem during the war (including the story of Josephus’s infamous Mary) had not somehow come to his attention. On Luke’s possible awareness of Josephus’s writings, see Mason (1992), 185-225.
of thought, including the Hebrew prophetic literature of lamentation, but Greek tragedy seems to dominate his historiography here.

After seizing her infant at the breast, Mary delivers a short tragic monologue. As with other speeches in the Bellum, it reflects Josephus’s own apologetic Tendenz. What makes this speech remarkable, however, is that it is uttered by a woman, Mary. The fact that Josephus allows a woman to speak at all is more in keeping with Greek drama.

Elsewhere in the Bellum, only in book I does the historian give direct speeches to women. These speeches occur during the highly dramatized saga of the destruction of the oikos of Herod and his tragic downfall, when women are being tortured in order to gather information about the poisoning of the king’s brother, Pherorbas. The first woman who speaks, however, is never identified by name but eventually by rank as a free woman. Her speech consists of a pithy curse calling upon God to punish her malefactor, the mother of Herod’s son Antipater. The second female speaker, the widow of Pherorbas, tries to kill herself by jumping off a roof after being called in for

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289 On Josephus’s presentation of himself as a prophet, especially as a latter-day Jeremiah or Daniel, in the B.J., see Rebecca Gray (1993), pp. 35-79.
290 The major ones are Agrippa’s at 2.345-410, Josephus’s at 5.362-419, and Eleazar’s at 7.323-336 and 341-388. For an analysis of these speeches and their role in the history, see H. Lindner (1972), especially pp. 21-48. Lindner does not look at Mary’s speeches.
291 David Aune, The New Testament in Its Literary Environment, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987, pp. 107-108, gives a good short assessment of Josephus’s use of speeches. He states: “Josephus included 109 speeches in Wars (excluding very short statements and conversations). All are uniformly cast in the author’s language and style, all are deliberative or advisory, and all are vehicles for his personal viewpoint...[Aune here provides examples of several important speeches.]...The high percentage of speeches in indirect discourse (55 percent) is significant, for they are used to convey content rather than to display the author’s rhetorical skills.”
292 She is introduced as “τίς” in B.J. 1.584, then is described in 585 as “ἡ γυνή” and finally as “μή...τῶν ἑλευθέρων.”
293 B.J. 1.584: “θεὸς ὁ γῆν καὶ οὐρανὸν διέπων μετέλθοι τὴν τούτων ἡμῶν τῶν κακῶν αἰτίαν, τὴν Ἁντιπάτρου μητέρα.” She is cursing Doris, the first of Herod’s many wives.
interrogation. Herod has her revived, and then threatens to “destroy her body and leave nothing for the grave” if she does not tell the truth about the poison.\textsuperscript{294} Josephus draws out this scene by introducing her speech with a dramatic pause.\textsuperscript{295} The historian then has her quote her husband’s dying words in which he asks for most of the poison to be destroyed, so that he does not “carry an avenging demon into Hades.”\textsuperscript{296} After she speaks, Herod gets to the bottom of his son Antipater’s plot by torturing the mother and brother of Antiphilus, Antipater’s helper. At this point, Josephus declares dramatically:

\textsuperscript{294} B.J. 1.594: “εἰ δ’ ύποπτείλατο, δαπανήσειν αὐτής ἐν βασάνοις τὸ σῶμα καὶ μηδὲ τάφῳ καταλείψειν.” Does this threat against the integrity of her body reflect a possible desire to have a body that can be resurrected from death in the future? Or is Herod simply threatening her with an agonizing death? Herod himself suffers horrible physical maladies as he approaches his own death (B.J. 1.656: “Ἐνθὲν αὐτοῦ τὸ σῶμα πᾶν ἡ νόσος διαλαβόοισα ποικίλοις πάθεσιν ἐμερίζετο”); diviners pronounce that these sufferings are punishment for ordering that the young men who tried to cut down the golden eagle on the Temple, and the rabbis who incited them, be burned to death (1.655). The treatment and disposition of a person’s body before and after death, especially an “unnatural” death, was clearly a topic of interest to Josephus and his audience. Notice that Josephus in his excursus on the main Jewish sects dwells upon the fortitude of the Essenes who during the war cheerfully endure all forms of physical torture without giving in and breaking Jewish law, so that they can regain their souls after death (B.J. 2.151-153). Specifically, the Essenes refuse to “blaspheme the lawgiver or eat something against the law,” “ἥ βλασφημήσωσιν τὸν νομοθέτην ἢ φάγωσιν τι τῶν ἀσύνηθων,” 2.152. Mary will not display this same fortitude, and will turn the torture back upon her tormentors by offering them her unholy food. For Josephus’s own statement on the afterlife of the body and soul, and the effect of suicide on both, see his speech at Jotapata at B.J. 3.372-378. Here he compares the Jewish practice of exposing the body of a suicide until sunset, while even the bodies of the enemy in battle are buried, to the practice of “others” (perhaps he is thinking of the Athenians--see Thackeray’s note) who cut off the right hand of the suicide.

\textsuperscript{295} B.J. 1.595: “Πρὸς ταῦθ’ ἡ γυνὴ μικρὸν διαλιπούσα...”

\textsuperscript{296} B.J. 1.596: “ἳνα μὴ καὶ καθ’ ἄδου φέρομι τὸν ἀλάστορα’.”
And the ghosts of Alexander and Aristobulus were roaming all over the palace and were both spies and informers of unseen things, and they dragged to trial those who were furthest from suspicion.  

Thackeray recognizes this in a note as “in the vein of Greek tragedy.” Herod’s household continues to suffer when even his wife Mariamme, daughter of the high priest, is implicated. (At least she is not executed!) As Thackeray notes, the tragic emphasis reappears when the ghosts of Herod’s murdered sons prevent people in Rome from warning Antipater of his impending doom.

Mary’s speech, therefore, is unusual for the Bellum because it comes directly from the mouth of a woman; it is even more unusual still in that it is addressed to a baby. (Let us remember that Josephus could have had Mary simply direct her words to the rebels, who were the source of her agony.) Babies are hardly the typical addressees of set speeches in Graeco-Roman historiography, especially at the climax of an historical account. Instead, this rings of the role of children in Greek tragedy, which had as its archetype the role of Astyanax as a focus of pathos in Homer’s Iliad.

This is not, however, to say that children do not figure as dramatic foci of attention in Classical and Hellenistic historiography. Mark Golden has recently argued rather convincingly that one cannot assume that “more interest in and different sentiments toward children are defining characteristics of the Hellenistic age.” Golden provides a table showing the frequency of words for “child” (teknon, pais, and paidion) appearing in Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon’s Hellenica, and Polybius 1-5. Herodotus clearly

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297 B.J. 1.599: “περιμόντες δὲ οἱ Ἀλεξάνδρου καὶ Αριστοβοῦλου δαίμονες ἀπαν τὸ βασιλείου ἐρευνητὰ τε καὶ μηνυτὰ τῶν ἀδήλων ἑγίνοντο, τοὺς τε πορρωτάτω τῆς ὑποψίας οὕτως ἔσυρον εἰς τοὺς ἐλέγχους.”


299 B.J. 1.607: “τάχα καὶ τοὺς ἀπαγγέλλειν προς ἱστορικόν οἱ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων δαίμονες ἀδελφῶν ἐφίμουν.”

outstrips the others in referring to children—four times as often as Thucydides. After examining these authors along with fragmentary Hellenistic historians and Plutarch, Golden concludes: “Perhaps, to put the case at its strongest, Polybius was as unwilling to admit children into his work as Thucydides and Xenophon but more prone to use them to arouse pathos (for both of which propositions we have found evidence) and more apt to present them in a variety of ways (for which we haven’t).”

I would like briefly to examine the role of children at the narrative climaxes of the wars described by Herodotus and Thucydides. For all his attention to children, Herodotus does not use children as a focus of pity when the Persians are attacking Athens. He does, however, show that they are an object of concern by mentioning that the Athenians issued a proclamation that anyone there should save both children and household members by evacuating to Troezen, Aegina, and Salamis. Thucydides, the least likely to tug on the heartstrings of his readers by referring to children, does have Gylippus and the generals at the height of the conflict at Syracuse remind their men that had the Athenians taken their city, they “would have applied the most indecent treatment to their children and women.” Thucydides then turns back to Nicias to report his actions as a general in response to the crisis the Athenians are facing. The historian editorializes upon the nature of Nicias’s exhortation of his men and the fact that the general resorts to the stock appeals to soldiers in such a crisis situation at the

301 Ibid., Table 9.1, p. 182. After tabulating the frequencies of the individual words, Golden reports the overall frequencies of words for “child” per thousand words of text: Herodotus, 0.73; Thucydides, 0.18; Xenophon’s Hellenica, 0.24; Polybius 1-5, 0.30.
302 Ibid., p. 190.
303 I shall discuss Polybius below.
304 Herodotus 8.41.1: “μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἀπίειν κήρυγμα ἔποιήσαντο, Ἀθηναῖοι τῆς δύναται οὐδεὶς τέκνα τε καὶ τοὺς οἰκέτας.”
305 Thucydides 7.68.2: “…προσέθεσαν, παισὶ δὲ καὶ γυναιξὶ τὰ ἀπρεπώστατα.”
climax of a war, including concern for “women, children, and the gods of their fathers.”

Women, children, and the gods, therefore, are considered among the main conventional objects of concern before battle. Josephus, however, raises this typical element to a much more dramatic level by allowing a woman to speak to her child in order to explain just what is at stake in the war he is describing. We cannot possibly determine whether this is a new interpretation of the conventional mention of women and children at the climax of a history of a war, since so many histories that we know of from antiquity are now lost. We can assume, however, that Josephus presents the scene with Mary very deliberately in order to further his apologetic aims and to appeal to his audience’s taste.

Let us now examine the speech itself which Mary delivers to her baby. It is rich with the themes Josephus has been developing throughout the *Bellum* as well as the conventional elements of the plight of women and children in war:

“Poor baby, in the midst of war and famine and civil strife, why should I preserve you? There will be slavery with the Romans, if we are alive under them, but the famine is beating out even slavery, and the rebels are harsher than both. Be food for me and for the rebels a fury and for the world a myth, the only one lacking for the calamities of the Jews.”

Mary’s speech resonates with the desperation of mothers in Greek tragedy, who contemplate the fate of their children when on the losing side in war.

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306 Ibid. 7.69.2: “...ἐς τε γυναικας και παιδας και θεους πατρώους.” Before these conventional items, Nicias echoes Pericles’ Funeral Oration by reminding the men of their own reputations, their famous forefathers, and the unmatched freedom of the Athenian way of life. Thucydides presents these elements as particular to Athens and not just the standard talk of desperate generals.

There is more here, however. The fact that Mary is addressing her own son and commanding him to serve a higher purpose through his death belongs to the tradition of the Jewish stories in 2 and 4 Maccabees\(^ {308}\) describing the courageous mother who urges her seven sons to resist the attempts of Antiochus Epiphanes to hellenize the Jews and to endure his punishments.\(^ {309}\) Josephus, too, is telling a story of resistance to political power, but not so much against the foreign Romans, who potentially would enslave the mother and child, but against the rebels, whom the historian has been so careful to blame for the famine and the forthcoming destruction of Jerusalem.

Mary offers an interpretation of what her baby’s death signifies: food, fury, and myth all rolled into one. On the practical level within the story, the baby will serve as

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\(^{308}\) 2 Macc. 7 shows the righteous defence of the *patrioi nomoi* in the face of tyranny; the author of 2 Macc. believes God allowed the tyrant to torment the Jews not in order to destroy them but to discipline them (2 Macc. 6: 12; the preface to the story). 4 Macc. 8-18 is a vast elaboration upon the story, celebrating the mastery of passions and the endurance of tortures. What I find interesting is that 4 Macc., like Josephus, emphasizes the spectacle (of the martyrdom), e.g. 17:7: “If it were possible for us to paint the story of your piety, would not the spectators shudder to see the mother of the seven sons enduring manifold tortures unto death for the sake of piety?” (“Εἰ δὲ ἐξὸν ἡμῖν ἦν, ὁσπέρ τινὸς ζωγραφήσαι τὴν τῆς ἱστορίας σου εὐσέβειαν, οὐκ ἂν ἔφριττον οἱ θεωροῦντες μητέρα ἐπτά τέκνων δι’ εὐσέβειαν ποικίλας βασάνους μέχρι θανάτου ὑπομείνασαι:”). The epitaph in 4 Macc. which follows this comment adds to the impression of the spectacle of the martyrs’ deaths. Clearly, 4 Macc. and the B.J. are written within the same Roman milieu where spectacles of death are commonplace. In fact, Josephus was believed to be the author of 4 Macc. until the middle of the last century; see Carl L. W. Grimm, “Das zweite, dritte, und vierte Buch der Maccabäer,” in Otto F. Fritzsche, ed., Kurzgefaßtes exegetisches Handbuch zu den Apokryphen des Alten Testamentes, vol. 4, Leipzig, 1857, pp. 283-370.

\(^{309}\) G. W. Bowersock remarks on these texts in *Martyrdom and Rome*, Cambridge, 1995, p. 10: “It is often forgotten that the first allusion to the extant books of the Maccabees does not appear until the writings of Clement of Alexandria in the late second century.” He continues on the accounts of resistance: “Inasmuch as they do not make reference to the Temple and seem to be additions to the narrative, they could even be associated with the Roman empire after AD 70.” He further remarks that these stories do not have to have appeared before the middle of the first century, and offers that the story of the mother and her sons may have had a Hebrew or Aramaic original (p. 13). It is impossible to say whether these specific tales in 2 and 4 Macc. were known to Josephus, but it is clear he is working within the approximate time period as the author of 4 Macc.
“food” to alleviate the mother’s hunger. On the thematic level, the baby will play the tragic role of a “fury” after its death (like those in Aeschylus’s *Oresteia*), hounding the rebels for the crimes they have committed. The echo of the *Oresteia* resounds, especially since Josephus is condemning the rebels yet again for their murderous ὀικεία στάσις and ὀμόφυλος φόνος. Finally, the label of “myth” elevates the baby to a heroic role in a tragedy, which is a further clue to the nature of this particular narrative. It also clearly foreshadows Josephus’s own interpretation of Apion’s canard about Jews sacrificing and eating a Greek every year: this is “full of everything to do with tragedy.”

The baby embodies all the suffering of the Jews in this war by suffering murder, dismemberment, and consumption at the hands of his own mother. Josephus states:

And with these words she slew her son, and then having roasted the body, she devoured half of it, while the rest she covered and was safeguarding.

The baby is roasted, and only half is consumed while the rest is held in reserve as leftovers. Scheiber has suggested that Josephus has derived his idea of a mother with a half-eaten baby from the very end of Petronius’s *Satyricon* as we have it. Here Eumolpus justifies his requirement that his inheritors eat him up after he dies by pointing to the historical precedents of cannibalism during the sieges at Saguntum, Petelia, and Numantia, where in the final case “mothers were found who were holding

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310 D. Ladouceur, “Josephus and Masada,” in L. Feldman and G. Hata, edd., *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987, p. 110, comments on these in relation to the episode of Masada in book 7: “In a more general way, the Masada narrative serves to dramatize vividly the historian’s recurrent themes of ὀικεία στάσις and ὀμόφυλος φόνος, which helped to work the destruction of the Jews.”

311 Josephus uses the word *mythos* only once elsewhere in the *B.J.* at 3.420, where he describes the traces of Andromeda’s chains at Joppa.

312 *B.J.* 6.208: “καὶ ταυτὸ ὀμα λέγουσα κτείνει τὸν υἱόν, ἐπειτ’ ὀπτήσασα τὸ μὲν ἥμισυ κατεσθείε, τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν κατακαλύψασα ἐφύλαττεν.”

half-eaten bodies of their children at the breast.”314 One also, however, might wonder whether Josephus could have known of the story from Polybius’s monograph of Scipio’s siege of Numantia.315 Polybius in his Histories glorifies his friend Scipio,316 and it would be no surprise if a laudatory account of his capture of Numantia inspired Josephus to draw a literary and historical parallel between Scipio and Titus both facing cannibal mothers.317

The rebels now appear “immediately” and they threaten to kill her “immediately”318 if she does not produce the source of the “unlawful smell.” This is religious in tone, since here he uses not another word for “smell” (such as Ὄσμή), but κνῖσσα, which can be the smell of a burnt sacrifice. When Mary reveals the other half of her baby, the rebels experience “awe and atonishment,” which would be appropriate reactions if this were a religious moment, and they are frozen by the sight (“παρὰ τὴν ὅψιν”).319 This spectacle is an insane and tragic permutation of a ritual.

Josephus then quotes Mary’s invitation to the rebels to eat part of her sacrifice, which she calls a “θυσία”:

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314 Petr., Sat. 141: “Cum esset Numantia a Scipione capta, inventae sunt matres, quae liberorum suorum tenerent semesa in sinu corpora...”
315 This piece is mentioned by Cicero in Ad Fam. 5.12.2. Also, in de Rep. 6.11 (Somnia Scipionis), Cicero has Scipio Africanus the Elder predict to Scipio the Younger: “bellum maximum conficies, Numantiam excindes.”
316 See, for instance, Polybius Hist. 31.25, on the close relationship between Polybius and Scipio, and Scipio’s fine character. Scipio appears once in the B.J. at 2.380 in Agrippa’s list of historical exempla of nations that defied Rome and fell.
317 S. Cohen, “Josephus, Jeremiah, and Polybius,” History and Theory 21 (1982), p. 367, compares the careers of these two historians. A. Eckstein, “Josephus and Polybius: A Reconsideration, CA 9 (1990), pp. 175-208, draws many apt parallels, both thematic and linguistic, between the two authors, but he does not mention this scene.
318 Their immediate appearance and immediate threat of murder is neatly chiastic in this sentence: “εὐθέως δ’ οἱ στασισταὶ παρῆσαν, καὶ τῆς ἀθεμίτου κυίσης στάσαντες ἑπείλουν, εἰ μὴ δειξεῖν τὸ παρασκευασθέν, ἀποσφάξειν αὐτὴν εὐθέως.”
This is my own child, and this is my deed. Eat, for I, too, have eaten. Don’t be weaker than a woman or more compassionate than a mother. If you are pious and turn away from my sacrifice, then I have eaten for you, and let the leftovers remain for me.  

Josephus clearly has made Mary a woman from Greek tragedy, both in proclaiming this murder-cannibalism her “deed” and by referring explicitly to her status as a woman and a mother as a challenge to the rebels. She is, in fact, a latter-day Medea/Agave hybrid. Medea, before she murders her children, calls their deaths her “sacrificial offerings,” and agonizes over their fate at the hands of enemies should she not dispatch them. Agave does not see her son Pentheus’s brutal death as a “sacrifice,” but she does invite the chorus to “share the banquet.” Mary does not try to put her baby’s body back together again as Agave may have at the end of the Bacchae, but both women and their people suffer the same fate of dispersion.

Josephus then reports, in the tradition of political invective, that the rebels depart having almost eaten the human flesh. The historian has used this image of the rebels as virtual cannibals twice before, and returns to it again when he claims that they

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320 B.J. 6.211: “ἡ δ’ ἐμόν...τούτο τὸ τέκνον γυνήσιον καὶ τὸ ἔργον ἐμόν. φάγετε, καὶ γάρ ἐγὼ βέβρωκα. μὴ γένησθε μῖτε μαλακώτεροι γυναῖκος μῖτε συμπαθέστεροι μητρός. εἰ δ’ ὑμεῖς εὔσεβεῖς καὶ τὴν ἐμὴν ἀποστρέφεσθε θυσίαν, ἐγὼ μὲν ὑμῖν βέβρωκα, καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν δ’ ἐμοὶ μεινάτω.”

321 We have already seen Titus disavow a tragic “deed.”

322 Euripides, Medea 1054: “τοῖς ἐμοίσι θύμασιν.”

323 Euripides, Bacchae 1184: “μέτεχε νυν θοίνας.”

324 Consider possible lines from Dionysus’s speech at his epiphany at the end of the play where the god may have pronounced his sentence upon the Thebans for their blasphemy against him: “I shall not hide the evils which the people must now suffer. They must leave the city, making way for barbarians, and unwillingly go to many cities, the unlucky ones dragging the yoke of slavery,” “ἀ δ’ αὐ παθεῖν δεῖ λαὸν οὐ κρύψω κακά./ λίπη πόλισμα, βαβάροις ἐκων, (ἄκων)/ πόλεις δὲ πολλὰς εἰσαφίκονται, ζυγῶ/ δούλειον (ἀνέλκουτες) οἱ δυσδαίμονες” (reconstructed from Christus Patiens, lines 1668-9 and 1678-9).

325 B.J. 6.212: “...καὶ μόλις ταύτης τῆς τροφῆς τῇ μητρὶ παραχωρήσαντες.”
would have eaten corpses had the Romans not captured them first.\footnote{BJ. 4.541 (on Simon), 5.4 (on Jewish factionalism), 6.373 (on rebels in the underground tunnels).} The rebels are the true villains here, not Mary, as Titus will soon make clear in his reply to this deed.

We now receive the mixed audience response of Jews in the city and of the Roman soldiers just outside of it. Josephus engages in wordplay when the “mythos” of the mother’s deed gets out and is interpreted by the residents of Jerusalem as a “mysos”, an abomination.\footnote{BJ. 6.212: “...ἀνεπλήσθη δ’ εὐθέως ὡλη τοῦ μύσους ἡ πόλις.” In his novel a century later, Achilles Tatius also engages in wordplay in Kleitophon’s tragic monologue over the supposedly dead and cannibalized Leukippe. He bemoans many aspects of her death, listing them off: its foreign location, its violence, the fact that she is a “purifying sacrifice for [the] impure bodies” of the brigands, that she had to see her own evisceration, and worst of all, that her “insides are inside the outlaws, victuals in the vitals of bandits,” (3.16: “


νῦν δὲ ἦ τῶν σπλάγχνων σου ταφὴ λήστῶν γέγονε τροφῆ”). Here Winkler’s clever translation is a reflection of the Greek wordplay of taphe, burial, and trophe, food. In essence, Kleitophon does not dwell upon his own loss, but instead encapsulates the meaning of Leukippe’s death in his short speech, just as Mary has in her short speech to her baby.} Word of the event travels fast, and the historian explains the response of the people within the city, saying that “each person put the horror of it before his eyes and shuddered as if the bold deed had been done by himself.”\footnote{BJ. 6.212: “καὶ πρὸ ὀμμάτων ἕκαστος τὸ πάθος λαμβάνων ὡσπερ αὐτῶ τολιμθὲν ἐφρίττε.”} This emphasis on the spectacle causing shuddering heightens the drama for the audience and plays into their literary expectation. The Jews wish for death, and, in Jewish fashion, they “bless” the already dead for not having “to hear or see such evils.”\footnote{BJ. 6.213: “καὶ μακαρισμὸς τῶν φθασάντων πρίν ἀκούσαι καὶ θεάσασθαι κακὰ τηλικαύτα.”}

Josephus reports the Roman army’s response to hearing the news of the “pathos”: a mixture of incredulity, pity, but mostly deeper “hatred” towards the Jews.\footnote{BJ. 6.214: “τοὺς δὲ πολλοὺς εἰς μίσος τοῦ ἑθνος σφοδρότερον...”} The triple wordplay creates a causal link and explanation for the events to follow: the mythos of
the baby’s mysos inflames Roman misos. This helps to explain the Romans’ ferocity later in the assault upon Jerusalem.

Mary’s tragic act of cannibalism also provides the ultimate justification for the destruction of the Temple, yet the scene underlines Roman protection of the building up to this point. The historian gives Titus a defense speech in which he claims that God knows that he has shown clemency by offering peace, autonomy, and amnesty, and yet the Jews have chosen the opposite. He then blames the Jews for “first setting fire with their own hands to the Temple which is being preserved by us for you.” The use of the first person plural stands out in the middle of indirect discourse, which only emphasizes Josephus’s argument that the Romans and their leader have great concern for the Temple. Titus then declares that such people, who would set their own Temple on fire, “are worthy of such food” as Mary’s cannibal feast. The Roman general pronounces his verdict: he will “bury this abomination of infant-cannibalism (“τὸ τῆς τεκνοφαγιάς μύσος”) in the very destruction of the country” and vows “not to leave in his oikoumene a city standing for the sun to look upon where mothers are fed thus.” Titus finally condemns the men specifically for creating the situation by not submitting to the Romans.

Thus, the historian clearly binds together Mary’s cannibalism with the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem. Josephus first fashions a remarkable tragic mythos about a mother desperately killing her baby for food. Mythos becomes mysos when she eats part of it and offers the rebels the rest. When they find out, the Romans now have adequate

331 B.J. 6.216: “ἰδίας δὲ χερσίν ἀρξαμένους καίειν τὸ συντηρούμενον ὑφ’ ἡμῶν ἱερὸν αὐτοῖς...” At B.J. 6.165 the Jews set fire to the portico attached to the Antonia. Titus returns to this same theme in his speech to Simon and John summing up their crimes (6.346).
332 B.J. 6.216: “...εἶναι καὶ τοιαύτης τροφῆς ἄξιον.”

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reason for feeling misos towards the Jews because of such a crime. Hence, Titus, who is presented as ultra-clement, can now blame the Jews for the destruction of their city and Temple before it even happens in the narrative.

The tragic nature of this scene did not escape Josephus’s ancient readers. The Christian Fathers read Josephus’s description of the destruction of Jerusalem as fulfilment of Jesus’s predictions in the gospels. They also paid attention to the details surrounding the actual destruction of the Temple in his historical narrative. Both Basil and John Chrysostom understood this scene as a piece of drama/tragedy playing out the punishment of the Jews for the crucifixion of Jesus.

Basil, in a homily on hunger and thirst, speaks of how at the time of the fall of Jerusalem:

...a mother, who had given birth to a child from her belly received it back again in evil fashion. And the Jewish history, which the diligent Josephus composed

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334 H. Schreckenburg has extensively probed the reception of Josephus by later Christians; see, for instance, his Flavius-Josephus Tradition in Antike und Mittelalter, Leiden, 1972; Rezeptionsgeschichtliche und textkritische Untersuchungen zu Flavius Josephus, Leiden, 1977; and “Josephus und die christliche Wirkungsgeschichte seines ‘Bellum Judaicum,’” ANRW 2, pt. 21, sec. 2, ed. by W. Haase, Berlin, New York, 1984, pp. 1106-1217. Schreckenburg has detected the historian’s use of tragedy and comments generally on its effect upon Christian readers of the Bellum: “On the whole, Josephus awakened, especially with his Jewish War, the emotions of his Christian readers; indeed, his depiction of the destruction of Jerusalem was in individual scenes composed almost like a tragedy and, especially at certain climaxes of the story, was perceived in just this way by Christian readers. They felt horror and fright in the face of the Jewish catastrophe; they felt, at the same time, on account of the frequently moralizing historical view of Josephus, a certain edification and satisfaction in stationing themselves on the side favored by God,” in “The Works of Josephus and the Early Christian Church,” trans. by H. Regensteiner, in Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity, ed. by Louis H. Feldman and Gohei Hata, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987, p. 320.

335 Schreckenberg (1987), p. 324, n. 25, notes that both Basil and John Chrysostom perceived that the episode of a mother’s act of cannibalism was written as “drama” or “tragedy.” He also includes that “Isidore of Pelusium says (PG 78, 968) that the sorrowful fate of the Jews should serve the world as a tragic spectacle.”
for us, enacts this tragedy, when terrible sufferings took hold of the people of Jerusalem who were paying the just penalty for their impiety against the Lord.336

John Chrysostom uses this scene of Mary when commenting in a homily on Matthew 24 concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. He mentions Josephus as his source and says that the horrors of the war “surpass all tragedy” and specifically mentions the “παιδοφαγίαν.”337 Both Basil and John are justifying the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by employing Josephus’s myth of Mary as their extra-biblical source. They also both read the scene of Mary’s cannibalism as “tragedy,” since as astute ancient readers they understand the literary nature of the presentation, while at the same time insisting upon its “truth” as support for their arguments, just as Josephus did.338 The tragic irony, however, is that Josephus created the mythos to exonerate the majority of his people, yet the Christians use it to support condemnation of the Jews.

After the mythos of Mary, Josephus turns in his narrative to the actual destruction of the Temple. Modern scholars have combed this portion of the Bellum, explicating the themes which Josephus highlights: Titus’s innocence in the Temple’s burning and respect for the building (in contrast to Sulpicius Severus’s much later account, probably based on Tacitus, in which Titus orders it burned)339 as opposed to his soldiers’ impetuosity and rage, the fault of the rebels, God’s warnings through omens and man’s

336 Basil, “Homilia Dicta Tempore Famis et Siccitatis,” PG 31,324: “...μητέρα δὲ παίδα, ὃν ἐκ τῆς γαστρὸς προῆγαγε, πάλιν τῇ γαστρὶ κακῶς ὑποδέξασθαι, καὶ τούτῳ τὸ δράμα Ἰουδαικὴ ἐτραγῳδήθησεν ἱστορία, ἣν Ἰωσῆπος ἤμιν ὁ σπουδαῖος συνεγράψατο, ὃτε τὰ δεινὰ πάθη τοὺς Ἰεροσολυμίτας κατέλαβε, τῆς εἰς τὸν Κύριον δυσσεβείας ἑνδίκους τιμωρίας τινύντας.”
337 John Chrysostom, “Homilia 76, In Matthaeum,” PG 58, 695, “πᾶσαν ἑνίκησε τραγῳδίαν ἑκεῖνα τὰ δεινὰ...τὴν παιδοφαγίαν.”
338 John Chrysostom comments on Mt. 24:21: “Καὶ μή τις νομίσῃ τοῦτο ύπερβολικῶς εἰρήσαται: ἄλλα ἐντυχών τοῖς Ἰωσῆπος γράμμασι, μανθανέτω τῶν εἰρημένων τὴν ἀλήθειαν.”
339 Sulpicius Severus, Chronica 2.30.7: “At contra alii et Titus ipse evertendum in primis templum censebant quo plenius Iudaeorum et Christianorum religio tolleretur.” The lost portion of Tacitus Hist. book 5 is most likely his source; see note below.
responsibility to heed them, the execution of the Jewish priests, and the fate of the rebels.\textsuperscript{340} We can augment their conclusions about Josephus’s apologetic tendencies by examining his use of spectacle and tragedy in the description of the Temple’s destruction. Finally, we can speculate about Josephus’s possible motive for emphasizing the tragic nature of this event.

Titus, as we have seen in the speech following upon Mary’s cannibalism, is a staunch defender of the Temple in this narrative. According to Josephus, he does order his troops to set fire to the Temple gates only when he “was seeing that sparing the foreign temple(s) resulted in injury and slaughter for his soldiers.”\textsuperscript{341} Only the safety of his men takes precedence over the sanctuary.

When the council of Titus’s staff officers is convened, Titus himself opens discussion on the Temple, and three opinions are put forth. “Some” label the Temple a center of rebellion and, therefore, call for its destruction, while “others” offer alternatives: should the Jews remove their arms from the Temple, it should be preserved; should they fight there, it should be destroyed. Josephus does not assign these opinions to any one of the staff officers he has just named. This only draws more attention to Titus when he offers his staunch defense of the building itself, but not the rebels inside it:

But Titus stated that even if they mounted it [the Temple] to fight, he would defend the inanimate objects [i.e., the Temple] as opposed to the men and he would not ever burn down such a work [of art]; for this would harm the Romans, just as it would be an ornament of [Roman] hegemony were it to remain standing.\textsuperscript{342}

\textsuperscript{341} \textit{B.J.} 6.228: “ὁ δὲ Τίτος ὡς ἐώρα τήν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀλλοτρίοις ἱεροῖς φειδῶ πρὸς βλάβης τοῖς στρατιῶταις γινομένην καὶ φόνου, τὰς πύλας προσέταξεν ὑψάτειν.”
\textsuperscript{342} \textit{B.J.} 6.241: “ὁ δὲ Τίτος οὐδ᾿ ἀν ἐπιβάντες ἐπ᾿ αὐτοῦ πολεμῶσιν Ἴουδαίοι φήσας ἀντὶ τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἁμυνεῖσθαι τὰ ἄγυχα οὐδ᾿ καταφλέξειν ποτὲ τηλικοῦτον
Josephus’s emphasis upon the building itself stands out more than anything else. Titus now will be innocent when the structure is burned, which serves the author’s defense of Titus’s clementia. But more importantly, the historian wants to show that the Romans, and especially Titus, recognize the magnificence and function of the Temple as a kosme, an ornamental spectacle, of their hegemony.

In Sulpicius Severus’ fourth-century account of the meeting at the height of the siege, some of the officers are said to have spoken on behalf of the magnificence of the structure: “For some thought that a consecrated shrine which was distinguished beyond all mortal things should not be destroyed, because if it were preserved it would be a testimony to Roman moderation, but if it were destroyed it would forever exhibit [Rome’s] cruelty.” The Temple is recognized as the best in the world, but that is not the point of the argument here. The relative clause at the end seems to preserve a Tacitean antithesis regarding possible impressions of the nature of Roman rule: modestia vs. crudelitas. In Tacitus, the second of the two alternatives usually represents his authorial opinion, and, therefore, this passage fits well with Tacitus’s usual historiographic method. By analyzing Josephus’s and Tacitus’s (transmitted) accounts together, we see that the authors have very different thematic concerns. Tacitus may have hyperbolically recognized the splendor of the Temple, but he has no investment

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343 Sulpicius Severus Chron. 2.30.6: “Etenim nonnullis videbatur aedem sacratam ultra omnia mortalia inlustrem non oportere deleri, quae servata modestiae Romanae testimonium, diruta perennem crudelitas notam praebet.”

344 M. Stern, Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism, Jerusalem, 1980, vol. 2, pp. 64-7, offers excellent bibliography on this passage, and does not agree (rightly so) with Montefiore that Sulpicius Severus was using Antonius Julianus’s account of the siege instead of Tacitus’s. Since we have neither of the latter accounts it is impossible to say with certainty which was the source, but the typical Tacitean use of opposites seems to shine through here. And, of course, Sulpicius Severus has added a layer of Christian interpretation for his own historiographic purposes.
in seeing it stand; he instead is concerned with discussing the character of Roman rule. Josephus, on the other hand, clearly wants the Temple to remain, and the Roman general (who later becomes emperor) to uphold this idea.

The stage has been set for the Temple’s destruction. Titus plans an assault to take hold of the Temple, but according to the historian, God has long since condemned it to fire. Even the date of the event, the 10th of Lous/Ab aligns perfectly with the destruction of the first Temple.\(^{345}\) Josephus again blames the Jews for the Temple’s destruction: “But the flames got their start and their cause from their own countrymen [i.e., the Jews].”\(^{346}\) Yet the historian does record that a Roman soldier, “experiencing some demonic impulse,”\(^{347}\) threw a flaming torch through a door of one of the Temple’s chambers. Josephus shifts back and forth between levels of responsibility, from the Jews to God to the Romans, and now adds “demonic impulse,” which will return as an explanation for the mass suicide at Masada in book 7.\(^{348}\)

The Jewish response to the torching of the Temple is appropriately tragic. Josephus dramatically states: “As the flame rose up, a cry worthy of the pathos. arose from the Jews.”\(^{349}\) The Jews rush to save the building, and “pay no heed to preservation of living

\(^{345}\) B.J. 6.250: “τοῦ δ’ ἀρα κατεψήφιστο μὲν τὸ πῦρ ὁ θεὸς πάλαι, παρῆν δ’ ἡ εἰμαρμένῃ χρόνων περιόδοις ἡμέρα δεκάτη Λώου μηνῶς, καθ’ ἦν καὶ πρότερον ὑπὸ τοῦ τῶν Βαβυλωνίων βασιλέως ἐνεπρήθη.” Here Josephus has deliberately followed the date given in Jeremiah without mentioning the alternatives; see Thackeray’s note, vol. 3, pp. 448-9. Cassius Dio 66.7.2 remarks that “Jerusalem was destroyed on the very day of Saturn, a day which they even still now reverence,” “οὔτω μὲν τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ τοῦ Κρόνου ἡμέρᾳ, ἦν μάλιστα ἐτί καὶ νῦν Ἰουδαίοι σέβοσιν, ἔξωλετο.”

\(^{346}\) B.J. 6.251: “λαμβάνουσι δ’ αἱ φλόγες ἐκ τῶν οἰκείων τὴν ἀρχῆν καὶ τὴν αἰτίαν.”

\(^{347}\) B.J. 6.252: “δαιμονίω όρμη τιν χρώμενος.”

\(^{348}\) B.J. 7.389.

\(^{349}\) B.J. 6.253: “αἱρομένης δὲ τῆς φλογὸς Ἰουδαίων μὲν ἐγείρεται κραυγὴ τοῦ πάθους ἀξία... ”
anymore” since their reason for living is disappearing before their very eyes. This is a tragedy for the Jews in every sense.

Josephus quickly switches “scene” to the Roman side in order to present Titus’s reaction. Titus is most obviously at this point a character in a Greek tragedy. He, literally, is “on stage” when the “messenger” rushes in with the bad news:

And someone running in brings the news to Titus; and he happened to be taking a rest from the battle at his tent, and he leapt up as he was and went to the Temple to confine the fire.

Josephus is clearly describing the stage directions of a drama. The main actor, Titus, is “on stage” (which is the same word as “tent”) when the “messenger,” a stock character in Greek tragedy, rushes in to deliver the bad news, which is the typical function of this character. Titus then exits to witness the disaster and to stop its spread. He is too late, but he does get to “see the inner sanctum of the Temple and its contents.” Though Titus pleads with his soldiers to put out the fire, their hatred for the Jews (the misos we

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350 B.J. 6.253: “...οὔτε τοῦ ζην ἔτι φειδὼ λαμβάνοντες.” Eleazar will play upon this idea of “τὸ ζῆν” in his second speech at Masada, but there the Jewish Sicarii are represented as defending not the Temple but their notion of freedom from Roman rule, of which Josephus hardly approves.

351 Josephus later disparages the brigands’ reaction to the destruction when they escape from the city on the following day at B.J. 6.364: “Looking at the burning city they said with happy faces that they were excited to wait for the end, since as the people had been killed, and the Temple had been burned, and the city was in flames, they were leaving behind nothing for the enemy,” (“καιομένην γοῦν ἀφορώντες τὴν πόλιν ἰλαροῖς τοῖς προσώποις εὐθυμοὶ προσδέχονται τὴν τελευτήν ἔλεγον, πεφονευμένοι μὲν τοῦ δήμου, κεκαυμένου δὲ τοῦ ναοῦ, φλεγομένου δὲ τοῦ ἀστεός μηδὲν καταλείποντες τοῖς πολεμίοις.”). Josephus immediately contrasts this with his own attempts to plead to them on behalf of the remnants of Jerusalem. In dramatic fashion, the rebels’ faces are masks displaying their character.

352 B.J. 6.254: “Δραμοῦν δὲ τις ἀγγέλλει Τίτῳ κάκειν, ἔτυχεν δὲ κατὰ σκηνήν ἀναπαυόμενος ἐκ τῆς μάχης, ὡς εἶχεν ἀναπηδήσας ἐθεῖ πρὸς τὸν ναὸν εἰρέσων τὸ πῦρ.” The anonymity of the messenger is typical. Josephus is conspicuously absent in this scene, as well as in the Roman triumph in book 7.

have just examined), among other factors, overwhelms them. An anonymous Roman soldier throws a torch into the hinges of the Temple’s door, and “the Temple thus burns against Caesar’s will.” The tragedy is unmistakable.

Josephus then pauses from his narrative to comment upon the extraordinary nature of the spectacle and reputation of the Temple and to address his audience with consolation. He explains that “fate cannot be fled by works of art or places any more than by people.” The Temple is just as much a victim of tragic circumstances as any human being is. This may be a hellenized conception, but then he adds the Hebrew layer of interpretation. Fate watched for the very month and day of the destruction of the first Temple. He then dates (by years, months, and days) the destruction of the second Temple during the second year of the reign of Vespasian both from the point of its first foundation by King Solomon and its second by Haggai in the second year that Cyrus ruled as king. Josephus does not offer these calculations of dates lightly, for they reflect a greater truth: the Temple may have been destroyed once before, but in a matter of years it was rebuilt again. He may very well be suggesting here indirectly that the cycle could begin anew. The Temple’s destruction may be a tragic spectacle in his narrative, but the Temple’s very existence in history is not ending with the reign of Vespasian.

355 B.J. 6.266: “ό μέν οὖν ναός οὖτως ἄκοντος Καίσαρος ἐμπίπτραται.”
356 B.J. 6.267: “...ἐργῳ πάντων ὤν ὑμει καὶ ἀκοῆ παρειλήφαμεν θαυμασιωτάτῳ.”
357 B.J. 6.267: “...τὴν εἰμαρμένην, ἀφυκτον οὖσαν ὠσπερ ἐμψύχοις οὖτω καὶ ἐργοίς καὶ τόποίς.”
358 Book 6 closes with a reference to the five captures, two destructions, and calculations of the number of years from the foundation of the city of Jerusalem to its destructions (B.J. 6.435-442). Josephus also will show the same attention to dating at the end of the Masada episode in book 7, where he carefully notes that the event occurred on 15 Xanthicus, which is Jewish Passover (B.J. 7.401). He does not make the point absolutely obvious to his readers; instead, he leaves it to them to make the connection.
The cannibalism of Mary, therefore, appears in book 6 of the *Bellum* as a tragic fabula which sets the stage for Josephus’s ultimate myth of the destruction of the Temple. Josephus’s audience would have been able to appreciate the elements of this narrative drawn from Greek tragedy, as we have seen from Philo as well as the Church Fathers, Basil and John Chrysostom. Furthermore, Josephus himself indicates that a story of this sort must be read within the context of tragedy when he later refutes Apion’s claim that the Jews annually sacrifice a Greek at the Temple. Josephus may have received inspiration for this account also from the Hebrew lamentation literature and especially the warnings of punishments in *Leviticus* and *Deuteronomy*, but he leaves the connection for his audience to make and claims that Mary’s deed is unprecedented. His narrative of the deed itself, including its speeches, uses tragic language and idioms. Through the telling of this fabula, the majority of the Jews and Titus, in his role as tragic actor, are cleared of guilt for the Temple’s demise. As part of his apologetic mission, Josephus squarely places the blame on the shoulders of the rebels with the use of spectacle and tragedy.

Josephus never tells us what happens to Mary after her deed is discovered, since she has served her dramatic purpose. Any account of her punishment would have distracted from the punishment he is concerned with: the destruction of the Temple. Mary is representative of the bulk of the Jews who suffer in Josephus’s narrative for the evil deeds of the rebels. Perhaps we can see a reflection of Mary’s afterlife on the “Judaea Capta” coin which was issued to advertise to the entire empire the Flavian victory and Roman power. On the reverse is a depiction of a Roman legionary, pilum in right hand, standing next to a date palm under which a woman sits, with her head resting in a forlorn way upon her left hand. This one woman on this Roman coin represents the fate of an entire people and land, just as Mary does in the *Bellum*.

Josephus’s narrative of Mary’s cannibalism and the closely related destruction of the Temple was so powerful that it was readily employed by the Church Fathers, and
then later in depictions in the medieval passion plays, as a prime example of how God
punished the Jews for the death of Jesus. This is one of the saddest ironies in history,
since, as we have seen, Josephus was using all the narrative devices he could muster not
to provoke hatred but to invite sympathy from his audience towards his people.
Fiction, indeed, drives history.
Chapter Four: Masada and the End of the Bellum Judaicum as Spectacle and Theater

The destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem, as we have seen, is the linchpin of Josephus’s narrative of the war. The burning of the structure at Jerusalem and the subsequent triumph in Rome, culminating with the parade of the Temple’s holy objects and the Torah directly in front of Vespasian and his sons (B.J. 7.148-152), combine to become the ultimate spectacle. The account of events occurring in 70/71 C.E.—Titus’s final command for Jerusalem’s razing (7.1-4), the awards ceremony for his army (7.5-20), his victory tour in the Middle East while waiting out the winter (7.23-62, 100-120, with special emphasis upon the situation of the Jews in Antioch), other accomplishments of Vespasian and Domitian (7.21-2, 63-99), and the Flavian triumph (7.121-162), comprise only a little more than a third of book 7 of the Bellum Judaicum as we now have it.\(^{359}\) We, therefore, are left asking ourselves as readers what purpose the remainder of book 7 serves for the historian’s overall account of the war.

Dominant among the events recounted in the latter part of book 7 is the Roman siege of Masada, occupying a solid third of the book (7.252-406). Because of the prominence of the Masada episode in book 7, with its two set speeches justifying mass suicide in the face of the Roman onslaught, and also because of the impressive...
archaeological remains at Masada which can be visited today in Israel, scholars have devoted their efforts to exploring the site and explaining the scene in Josephus. Louis Feldman has remarked:

No single event in the history of the Second Jewish Commonwealth has occasioned more discussion in recent years than the fall of Masada, the mausoleum of martyrs, as it has been called. This has given rise to a term ‘Masada complex’, in discussions of the attitude of the government of the present-day State of Israel toward negotiations with the Arabs. Our age, which has seen the sprouting of radicals and terrorists in so many nations, is understandably more interested in the radical terrorists who held out for so long at Masada against the mighty forces of Rome. The spectacular discoveries in the excavations by Yadin in a nation where digging is a veritable form of prayer have made Masada a shrine for the Jewish people.

Thus Josephus’s text, so focused upon the Temple in Jerusalem as the shrine, has provided a very different kind of shrine for the modern Jewish state of Israel. Feldman sees a Masada occupied by terrorists. The Israeli government, however, applies the

360 The standard work on the archaeological finds at Masada for the past thirty years has been Y. Yadin’s, *Masada: Herod’s Fortress and the Zealot’s Last Stand*, New York: Random House, 1966. Now see the recent five volume final report of the excavations conducted under Yadin, *Masada, The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963-1965, Final Reports*, vols. 1-5, Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1991-. It is outside the scope of this dissertation for me to analyze the archaeological findings with Josephus’s narrative of Masada.


362 Feldman used this term “terrorists” ten years before in “Masada: A Critique of Recent Scholarship,” in *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults, Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty*, ed. J. Neusner, Leiden: Brill, 1975, vol. 3, pp. 218-248. He employs this label in a discussion of the debate over whether the Sicarii at Masada were Zealots: “If history is any guide, we may assume that the terrorist groups, while sharing a common enemy,
textual and archaeological symbols differently. The great irony is that the very soldiers who are initiated into the Israeli Defense Forces at Masada to be “freedom-fighters” are perceived by the Arabs to be the oppressors. The juxtaposition and identification of the IDF with the Sicarii is a bizarre one, indeed, especially given the negative tenor of Josephus’s presentation of them at Masada and previously throughout the Bellum.

were sharply divided in leadership and tactics...Perhaps, despite Smith, we may suggest that the strange term “Fourth Philosophy” was used by Josephus precisely because he sought in the Antiquities an expression that would serve to include all the terrorist organizations: hence the term is not found in his detailed listing in the Bellum Judaicum (7.259–274) of the five individual groups,” pp. 229-230. Sadly, this anachronistic use of the term “terrorist” reveals the real threat of terrorism in the modern Middle East and the irresistible urge of modern scholars to see correspondences between the experiences which Josephus describes in Judaea and the plight of modern Israel. Feldman’s very useful survey includes seventy-nine citations of works on Masada from 1943 to the early 70s.

See B. R. Shargel, “The Evolution of the Masada Myth,” Judaism 28 (1979), 357-371, for a study of the development of the myth of Masada, especially in modern Israel. She comments: “In the years following Israel’s independence, the fortress analogy was reinforced by the unwonted experience of isolation in a hostile Arab world. This probably accounts for the selection of Masada as the site of the induction ceremony for soldiers in the armoured units of the IDF. For each individual this service became a veritable rite de passage, marking his initiation into the responsibilities of manhood and citizenship. For the military establishment, the ceremony provided legitimation in historical terms, as indicated by the wording of the formula recited by the recruits: ‘Because of the bravery of the Masada fighters, we stand here today,’ ” p. 363. Also, see in Yadin (1966), pp. 202-3, under the heading “Masada and Israel Today” the photographs of the oath-swearers by the armoured unit of the IDF and of the Israeli stamps and medal commemorating Yadin’s excavations. The medal bears the following inscriptions in Hebrew and English: “We shall remain free men,” and (on reverse) “Masada shall not fall again.” (The view of Masada on the medal does not include, naturally, the Roman ramp on the west side of the rock.)

Feldman (1975), pp. 228-9, discusses the scholarly debate over the identity of the Jews at Masada. As he points out, “Josephus (Bell. Jud. 4.400 and 7.253) clearly identifies them as Sicarii.”

But, as I shall soon explain in more detail, interpretation of this scene is driven by what people want to see in the text. The desire to appropriate the text at all for modern political agendas has affected modern scholarly interpretations and, therefore, is only further testimony to the text’s narrative power.

The rest of book 7, however, as Seth Schwartz said ten years ago, “has been neglected by modern scholarship.” The content does appear disparate and the style inelegant, but I do perceive an overall coherence to its message. In the spirit of the deep appreciation of Josephus’s use of narrative motifs: “We may, however, respond by noting that Josephus’ account makes heroes of the Sicarii, whereas we should never expect Josephus to do so, in view of his deep-seated hostility toward them, unless the account were indeed true.” Feldman (1975), p. 245, also remarks on “the woman who is the source of Josephus’ account” of the suicides at Masada [with regard to the survivor, described at B.J. 7.399 and 404]: “Inasmuch as memories were highly cultivated in antiquity, especially among Jews, she might have retained much of the speeches. Moreover the acoustics in these underground sewers are excellent.” This episode, like no other in the *Bellum*, seems to compel people to determine “wie es ist eigentlich gewesen.”

[^366]: We have already witnessed the appropriation of the story of Mary in *Bellum* 6 by Christians for theological and political reasons.


[^368]: Schwartz (1986), pp. 373-375, comments upon how “Josephus introduces extraneous material into its [the B.J.’s] main account with exceptional crudeness,” and also upon its “incoherence” and “inelegance.” See Schwartz, pp. 373-4, n. 2, for bibliographic background on Josephus’s style in book 7. Robert J. H. Shutt, *Studies in Josephus*, London, 1961, is considered the standard study, but David Ladouceur has pointed out real flaws in Shutt’s approach and findings in “The Language of Josephus,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 14 (1983), pp. 18-38. In this article he also presents a brief history of scholarship on Josephus’s language. To his bibliography of early works, I would add C. Raab, *De Flavii Josephi Elocutione Quaestiones Criticae et Observationes Grammaticae*, Erlange, 1890, and A. Wolff, *De Flavii Josephi Belli Iudaici Scriptoris Studiis Rhetorics*, Halis Saxonum, 1908. The most recent piece to appear on Josephus’s style is David S. Williams, “Thackeray’s Assistant Hypothesis: A Stylometric Evaluation,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 48.2 (1997), 262-275. Williams concludes, based on the statistical evaluation of the appearance of sample words (such as ἐπιτι) in Ant. 15-20, that “the possibility that Josephus did use an assistant in some manner in Ant. 17-19 should be reconsidered,” p. 275. I still am not entirely convinced by Williams on this, since I think it is possible that Josephus picked up new stylistic quirks as time passed and as he read different pieces of literature. (We sat on the same panel at the 1992 Society of Biblical Literature annual meeting, where he presented these findings publicly.) I am also not certain whether Williams has ever considered broadening his investigation to comparing the later books of Ant. not only
literary approach I have employed thus far in examining Josephus’s history, in this chapter I shall be elucidating the author’s use of spectacle and tragedy in his selection and rendition of events which occurred in Judaea and elsewhere after the triumph in 71 C.E. and which he links thematically to his previous narrative of the Jewish rebellion. I shall be building upon and responding especially to the work of David Ladouceur, who has already placed the two set speeches of the Masada episode within their classical literary and early imperial political contexts.369

Furthermore, I shall argue that in the last two-thirds of book 7 Josephus shapes his material, which spans several years, into a study of how the Romans exercise their power and how their weaker opponents make choices in the face of this greater power. Here in particular I shall be taking into consideration the recent work of Brent Shaw on Josephus’s presentation of different types of power.370 Shaw has examined several scenes from the Bellum (especially on Herod the Great), but he does not discuss Masada or the rest of book 7.

In my analysis of Josephus’s narrative of reactions to Roman power in book 7, I shall also be utilizing Paul Plass’s recent application of game theory to Roman “games of


370 B. Shaw, “Tyrants, Bandits and Kings: Personal Power in Josephus,” Journal of Jewish Studies 44 (1993), 176-204. Shaw defines power thus: “On a rather simple level one can understand power as an accumulation of capabilities based on coercion and violence, the control of material or other economic resources, the manipulation of organizational and information systems, and the manoeuvering and exploitation of symbols and ideas,” p. 176. He applies this to an analysis of the activities of the two Jewish brothers, Asinaeus and Anilaus, who interacted with the Parthian king (Ant. 18.310-370) and of Herod the Great’s rise to power in B.J. 1. His Figure 1, p. 203, on “The Vocabulary of Personal Power in Josephus” is especially useful. Also, see “Josephus: Roman Power and Responses to It,” Athenaeum 83 (1995), pp. 357-390.
death,” such as gladiator matches in the arena and suicide carried out by the political opposition in the early imperial period.\(^{371}\) His findings can help us see what Josephus is trying to accomplish through his extended narrative of choices made during encounters between the Romans and their Jewish opposition. Game theory is essentially the study of choices made by players and the effects of these choices upon opposing players. Plass cogently compares the use of “scenarios” in game theory with its mathematical analyses of military, diplomatic, and economic strategies to the art of historical narrative:

Modern game theory favors “scenarios” -- typical situations or theoretical case histories -- to exemplify strategies. So, as a matter of method, did Thucydides, with his set speeches written in an analytical style to bring out permanent, abstract axioms underlying behavior. Narrative of events is the game; speeches are embryonic game theory designed to spell out moves imposed by the game (\textit{ta deonta}; Thuc. 1.22). Greek culture in general was inclined to paradigmatic ways of thinking.\(^{372}\)

Plass looks specifically at the tactics of political suicide, in all their various permutations, as they are exhibited through reports in a wide variety of early imperial Roman sources. Political suicide is a power move, which is self-destructive, yet earns the player a “win” because the emperor has lost status. Plass presents a “payoff matrix” concerning political suicide which charts the various moves that an emperor can make against the opposition and vice versa, earning either side a “win” or “loss,” with the possibility of a draw.\(^ {373}\) When the emperor enforces suicide or grants clemency, he scores a win; the opposition receives the loss, either suffering suicide or accepting clemency. Conversely, the opposition can earn a win through defiant/preemptive suicide or martyrdom; the emperor suffers a loss through defiant opposition or blame.

\(^{373}\) Ibid., p. 123; also see numerical chart on p. 125.
for murder. The draw occurs with either “free choice of forced death” or “one’s own death with rights or safety for others [emphasis his].”

Plass has rightly recognized and charted these forces at play in early imperial Roman society. I shall show that Josephus was entirely aware of the political game being played out in Rome and in Judaea. In his account of the Roman settlement of this area after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70, the Jewish historian carefully delineates the choices available to and made by both the Romans and their opposition. Unlike Plass’s neat arrangement of wins and losses, however, Josephus offers no room for real Roman loss. Josephus’s game as he structures it, therefore, could be considered unreal. In the narrative in book 7 the Romans always capture the fort and always otherwise subdue the opponent. The historian clearly is trying to explain through a series of examples that the Romans simply do not lose in their game of imperialism. Though politically motivated suicide may score points for the opposition in the interpretation of some Romans at his time, Josephus does not allow this for the Sicarii who oppose the Roman authorities at various locations in book 7. Josephus fashions Eleazar’s speeches at Masada so that they sound like the reasoning of the political opposition at Rome, and

374 Ibid.
375 A. Eckstein, “Josephus and Polybius: A Reconsideration,” Classical Antiquity 9 (1990), pp. 175-208, argues that Josephus shares and perhaps has even borrowed this interpretation of Roman power from Polybius: “Scholars are more accustomed to finding a view of Rome from the periphery that stresses the civilizing benefits of Rome’s rule as a justification for that rule, and for one’s acquiescence in it. But in Josephus, and in Polybius before him, we see a different aspect of Rome. The decisive issue for these writers is hardly the benefits of peace and civilization that Rome brings; neither Polybius nor Josephus has much to say on that topic. Rather, what both historians emphasize is the brutal reality of Roman power, and the consequent need, in almost any situation, to make one’s peace with it,” p. 208. Eckstein proposes that Polybius’s Histories provided Josephus with an example of how “to organize the reality of the Jewish Revolt for his audience and to create a narrative of the Revolt comprehensible in Greek terms—in particular the conflict between rational and irrational decision-making, the struggle of rational statesmen to restrain the overemotional mob, the threat to order posed by reckless youth...,” p. 207. Unfortunately, Eckstein does not examine the episodes in book 7 which could bolster his case.
he recounts the mass suicide not to glorify it, but to underline the futility of resisting Rome. The entire episode, furthermore, serves as a tragic and spectacular reversal of the powerfully symbolic Jewish celebration of Passover. Suicide and martyrdom, therefore, do not score as wins for the opposition in Josephus’s narrative world. It is in this light that we should examine his Masada episode.  

No amount of theory, however, can overwhelm the enormous emotional impact of Josephus’s tale of the mass suicide at Masada upon his own internal audience, the Romans, and readers today, who make the pilgrimage to Masada to see where his “tragedy” unfolded. The power of Josephus’s narrative to move audiences almost two thousand years later to care about and to identify with the final moments of a resilient band of rebels and their families and even to argue in scholarly guise whether or not they were heroes is perhaps a feat equal to the power of the Roman legions to

376 E. Luttwak, The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire From the First Century A.D. to the Third, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1976, has internalized Josephus’s message as a reflection of actual Roman policy when he writes, p. 4: “The entire three-year operation, and the very insignificance of its objective, must have made an ominous impression on all those in the East who might have otherwise been tempted to contemplate revolt: the lesson of Masada was that the Romans would pursue rebellion even to the mountain tops in remote deserts to destroy its last vestiges, regardless of cost. And as if to ensure that the message was duly heard, and duly remembered, Josephus was installed in Rome where he wrote a detailed account of the siege, which was published in Greek, the acquired language of Josephus, and that of the Roman East. The suggestion that the Masada operation was a calculated act of psychological warfare is of course conjecture. But the alternative explanation is incredible, for a mere blind obstinacy in pursuing the siege would be utterly inconsistent with all that we know of the protagonists, especially Vespasian--that most practical of men, the emperor whose chief virtue was a shrewd common sense.” My thanks go to Robert Frakes for reminding me of this particular interpretation of the siege of Masada.  

377 For example, consider S. Zeitlin’s assessment of the Sicarii and of Yadin’s opinion of them: “The surrender of Masada to Rome was not heroic to say the least. The Jews cannot be proud of it. Neither can they be proud of the Sicarii. They were idealists, their ideals were instrumental in bringing about the destruction of the Judaean State.” [I am not certain what Judaean State he is referring to, since Judaea was hardly an independent state when the Romans quashed the rebellion beginning in 66.] This quote appears in the conclusion to his article, “The Sicarii and Masada,” Jewish Quarterly
maintain an empire for several centuries. It is not only the facts\(^\text{378}\) that Josephus transmits which compel an audience to read, remember, or even emulate the deeds in his text; it is also how he tells the tale. Had Josephus not created this overblown narrative of Masada with its two set speeches, we would know nothing of a mass suicide involving supposedly over nine hundred men, women, and children.\(^\text{379}\) Instead, we would have the magnificent remains of a Herodian fortress and palace, with smaller structures, high on a rock in the desert overlooking the Dead Sea. We would also have the physical testimony of a Roman siege against it, spanning from the Roman camps below and the gigantic ramp on the rock’s western flank to the tiniest bronze and silver coins dating to the years of the Jewish rebellion found scattered and in hoards among the ashes on top of Masada.\(^\text{380}\)

**Masada Within its Narrative Context**

We should first examine the overall layout of the material found in the last two-thirds of Book 7. (See the beginning of this chapter for the organization of the first third of the book.)

I. *Activities of Roman army in Judaea under Lucilius Bassus:*\(^\text{381}\)

- 7.163) capture of fortress of Herodion
- 164-209) capture of fortress of Machaerus
- 210-215) successful attack on forest of Jardes

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\(^{378}\)M. Broshi, “The Credibility of Josephus,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 33 (1982), pp. 379-384, briefly assesses the reliability of measurements in Josephus, including those at Masada, and believes that Josephus must have gotten these figures from the imperial commentaries, since he seems never to have visited the place himself.

\(^{379}\)There is no other primary source from antiquity for this story.

\(^{380}\)Yadin (1966), p. 108-9, comments on the discovery and the importance of these finds of half-shekels and shekels.

\(^{381}\)B.J. 7.163: “Εἰς δὲ τὴν Ἰουδαίαν πρεσβευτὴς Λουκίλιος Βάσσος ἐκπειράθεις καὶ τὴν στρατηγίαν παρὰ Κερεαλίου Οὐστιλιανοῦ παραλαβῶν...”
216-218) Vespasian orders Bassus and procurator Laberius Maximus to sell all Jewish land and impose tax of two drachmas on all Jews.

II. Seemingly Random Events in the Fourth Year of Vespasian’s Rule (72/3 C.E.):

219-243) story of Antiochus of Commagene
244-251) raids of the Scythian Alani in Media

III. “Meanwhile, back in Judaea...” under Flavius Silva:

252-406) Masada

252-274) background on Sicarii and other major dissident Jewish factions during the war
275-303) Roman preparations for siege; topography, buildings, and stockpiles at Masada
304-319) Roman siege: construction of ramp, tower, successful breech of first wall, burning of second wooden wall
320-336) Eleazar’s reaction: first speech urging death over slavery
337-338) mixed audience response
339-388) Eleazar’s reaction: second speech, philosophical and practical, urging suicide
389-401) the mass suicide, dated to Passover
402-406) the Roman response upon entering the fortress
407-408) all Judaea completely subjugated

IV. The subsequent “Madness of the Sicarii” in Egypt and Libya and the Attack on Josephus’s Reputation in Rome:

409-436) affairs in Egypt under Lupus:
409-419) punishment of Sicarii at Alexandria
420-436) destruction of the Jewish temple at Onias, with explanation of its founding and its final depredation under Lupus’s successor, Paulinus
437-453) affairs in Libya under Catullus and the aftermath in Rome:

382 B.J. 7.219: “Ηδη δ’ ετος τεταρτον Όισεππαζιανω διεποντος την ἤγεμονιαν...”
383 B.J. 7.252: “Επὶ δὲ τῆς ἱουδαίας...”
384 B.J. 7.437: “ὁ τῶν σικαρίων ἀπόνοια...”
385 B.J. 7.409: “Ετι δὲ και περὶ Ἀλεξανδρειαν τὴν ἐν Αἰγύπτω μετὰ ταῦτα συνέβη πολλοὺς ἱουδαίων ἀποθανείν τοῖς γὰρ ἐκ τῆς στάσεως τῶν σικαρίων ἐκεὶ διαφυγεῖν δυνηθεῖσαν οὐκ ἀπέχρη τὸ σώζεσθαι...” Up to this point, Josephus has been fairly specific (despite the problem of Masada) in dating by legates and the year of Vespasian’s reign; “μετὰ ταῦτα” shows that he is shifting into less specific dating of events.
437-442) Romans put down band of “poor folk” led by Jonathan, who after being captured informs on “richest of the Jews” at Alexandria  
443-449) Catullus urges Jonathan, and others, to inform on Jews in Alexandria and Rome, including Josephus  
450) Vespasian has Jonathan tortured and killed  
451-453) God tortures and kills Catullus

V. Conclusion of Bellum Judaicum.386

454) accuracy  
455) style and truth

The latter portion of book 7 presents a series of encounters displaying, from the viewpoint of the historian and perhaps of his intended audience, proper and improper reactions to Roman power.387 Proper reactions are submissive, recognize Roman superiority, and result in people saving their lives and prospering (the Commagene royal family), whereas improper reactions involve resistance, both active and passive, to Roman rule, which leads to the loss of life (of Jews, especially the Sicarii). Most of the events described are a series of power-plays between the Romans and the Jews, executed over an undetermined number of years—perhaps over two decades, according to Schwartz. The material appears chronologically, albeit not always dated very clearly.388 Furthermore, the sphere of activity has broadened considerably beyond Judaea to distant locales such as Alexandria, Rome, and even Media!

386 B.J. 7.454: “Ενταυθα της ιστοριας ημιν το περας εστιν...” He does not date the conclusion of this history as he did the Antiquities at 20.267 to the thirteenth year of Domitian’s reign and his own fifty-sixth year. The Vita appeared as a sequel to the Ant. (see Ant. 20.266), but he does not date it specifically. Contra Apionem also came out after Ant. (C.A. 1.1-3), with no specific date attached.
387 In essence, we have here an exploration of the Vergilian formula for the Roman art of imperialism, “‘pacique imponere morem,/ parcere subiectis et debellare superbos,’” Aeneid 6.852-3.
388 See the footnotes attached to my outline that show the various organizational markers for the arrangement of his narrative.
Masada is clearly Josephus’s centerpiece example of the greater Roman power encountering the weaker Jewish opponent. Starting with Masada, he identifies the Jewish resistance as composed specifically of Sicarii, a splinter group he particularly detests. Here Josephus also displays and concentrates the narrative motifs he has developed throughout the Bellum. To the very end, with the demise of his personal enemy, Catullus, Josephus carries out his “tragic” vision. We should now examine in greater detail how Josephus concludes his history with a study of power, while employing tragedy and spectacle in the process.

Activities of the Roman Army in Judaea under Lucilius Bassus

This portion of Bellum 7 is crucial since it offers several brief examples of different power exchanges between the Romans and the Jews at the end of the war during its “mop-up” phase. These events are the Roman capture of the fortress of Herodion, the capture of the fortress at Machaerus, and the slaughter of the Jews at the forest of Jardes. He concludes this section with Bassus by noting the sale of Jewish land and the establishment of the Fiscus Judaicus on the orders of the emperor Vespasian. These military scenes prepare the reader to evaluate the historian’s major example of Jewish resistance to Rome at Masada.

Josephus’s presentation of the capture of the fortress at Herodium reminds us how the historian can expand or contract his material, depending on his narrative aims. The fall of this fortress appears as a mere statement appended to the historian’s introductory chronological marker that Bassus had assumed command from Cerealis Vetilianus in Judaea:

389 Michel and Bauernfeind (1969), vol. 2, pt. 2, read “Λούκιος”, following the codices and Zonaras, but also see their note 90, p. 251.
Meanwhile, Lucilius Bassus had been sent out to Judaea as legate, and after he took over the command from Cerealis Vetilianus, he took the fortress at Herodium with its garrison.\footnote{B.J. 7.163: “Εἰς δὲ τὴν Ἰουδαίαν πρεσβευτής Λουκίλιος Βάσσος ἐκπεμφθεὶς καὶ τὴν στρατηγίαν παρὰ Κερεαλίου Οὐετιλίανοῦ παραλαβὼν τὸ μὲν ἐν τῷ Ἡπωδείῳ φρούριῳ προσηγάγετο μετὰ τῶν ἔχοντων.”}

Josephus does not identify the particular Jews holding the fortress, nor does he describe any spectacles involving the topography or the siege, nor any emotional reactions on the part of Romans or Jews. The telegraphic nature of this notice emphasizes one stark, possible narrative outcome in a power game involving Roman supremacy: Rome attacks and wins, end of story.

The next example, the capture of the fortress at Machaerus (B.J. 7.164-209), is much deeper in its coverage and vivid description. Josephus dwells upon the topography and the buildings at Machaerus and delivers a dramatic account of the siege and capture of a certain Eleazar, who urges submission to Rome. The historian even offers a digression on a remarkable plant growing at the palace at Machaerus. In this episode, we have both spectacle of place and performance, with a tragedy averted through recognition of Roman power.

Josephus commences his account of Machaerus by stressing its strategic importance, since it could be the source of future rebellion, and its natural strength, owing to its impressive location high on a rock surrounded by ravines. The very nature of the place inspires emotion: “strong hope of safety” on the part of its defenders and “alarm and fear” in those approaching it.\footnote{B.J. 7.165: “καὶ γὰρ τοὺς κατέχοις βεβαιάν ἐπίδια σωτηρίας καὶ τοῖς ἐπιούσιν ὄκνου καὶ δέος ἢ τοῦ χωρίου φύσις ἢν παρασχεῖν ἰκανωτάτη.”} Clearly a dramatic encounter is to follow. The fortress is perched on a rock so high, surrounded by ravines so deep that their depth is “unfathomable to the eye.”\footnote{B.J. 7.167: “ἄσυνοπτον...τὸ βάθος.”} He continues with a detailed description of the natural spectacle which the Romans were facing, and then explains the history of the
fortifications and other buildings found on the site. Herod’s massive and elegant construction project, including its cisterns, is hailed as a contest against nature,\(^393\) given the spectacular strength of the place. Josephus even digresses in Herodotean fashion to present the botanical wonders of the area: a gigantic rue plant (usually a small herb) “worthy to cause amazement”\(^394\) because it was bigger than a fig tree (until the Jewish defenders chopped it down), a poisonous root called “baaras” that cures demonic possession,\(^395\) and amazing springs can be seen flowing from rocks shaped “like two breasts,” one producing extremely hot and the other very cold water, which mix for a “most pleasant bath.”\(^396\) This place is, indeed, spectacular.

None of this, however delightfully distracting, is a match for the power of Roman engineering, military strength, and discipline. Bassus has the eastern ravine filled in preparation for a siege. Josephus reports that the Jews at Machaerus respond by separating themselves off from “the foreigners” there and by taking the fortress for themselves. The historian clearly interprets this as a move in the game against Rome. First of all, he explains that the Jews abandon the foreigners, whom they consider a “mob”,\(^397\) to receive the Roman attack below. Secondly, they choose the fort above for its strength and “with forethought of their own safety, for they realized that they could obtain pardon if they were to hand over the fort to the Romans.”\(^398\) He adds that they do not, however, immediately buckle under, but first put their hopes of breaking the

\(^{393}\) B.J. 7.176: “όσπερ πρὸς τὴν φύσιν ἀμιλληθείς.”
\(^{394}\) B.J. 7.178: “πήγανον ἀξιον τοῦ μεγέθους θαυμάσαςι.”
\(^{395}\) The description (at B.J. 7.184) of a dog being used to extract the plant from the ground and then immediately dropping dead is quite detailed, only adding more supposed credibility to the whole scene.
\(^{396}\) B.J. 7.188-9: “άλλως ἂν καὶ μάλλον τις θαυμάσει...όραται...ὡσανεὶ μαστοὶ δύο...λουτρὸν ἤδιστον.”
\(^{397}\) B.J. 7.191: “όχλον ἀλλως εἶναι νομίζουσι.”
\(^{398}\) B.J. 7.192: “...καὶ προνοία τῆς σωτηρίας αὐτῶν τεύξεσθαι γὰρ ἀφέσεως ὑπελάμβανον, εἰ τὸ χώριον Ῥωμαίως ἐγχειρίσειαν.”
siegel to a “test”399 by attacking the Roman soldiers on the embankment and killing many of the Romans but also themselves.400 Josephus, thus, shows his audience that the Romans do not always win their game of imperialism as easily as his brief notice on the capture of Herodium makes it seem. The episode at Machaerus provides evidence of choices, reactions, and costs incurred on both sides of this game.

The historian now must explain how the Romans succeeded in capturing the fortress. The fact that he describes it as a “deed done by chance and beyond calculation”401 shows that Josephus is thinking in terms of Rome normally winning through concerted military might; Machaerus, therefore, offers an unusual example of how the Romans can win, in this case through individual initiative.

The Roman capture of Machaerus is precipitated by the capture of a single Jewish defender, Eleazar. Josephus describes him as “νεανίας τολμησαί τε θρασούς καὶ κατὰ χεῖρα δραστήριος” (B.J. 7.196). Thackeray translates this as “a youth of daring enterprise and strenuous energy.” It is important, however, to realize, especially in light of the representation of the Sicarii in the Masada account later, that any actions or attributes related to the verb τολμάω carry a negative, not positive, connotation,402 and that θρασούς indicates that the person is rash, not just enterprising. Josephus, therefore, is not portraying Eleazar in a positive light when he fights against Rome. Eleazar acts as a very visible (“ἐπιφανής.” B.J. 7.197)—perhaps a spectacular—defender who successfully harasses the Romans and protects his own men. He does, however,

399 B.J. 7.193: “πείρα.”
400 B.J. 7.193: “...πολλοί μὲν ἔθνησον, πολλοὺς δὲ τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἄνθρωπον.”
401 B.J. 7.195: “ἐργον δὲ τι πραχθέν ἐκ συντυχίας παράλογον.”
402 Shaw (1993), Figure 1, p. 193, lists “τόλμα” under “bad characteristics” of personal power as defined in Josephus. Ladouceur (1980), p. 259, also points this out in connection with the suicides at Masada: “Nor is τόλμημα (7.405) ‘fortitude’ (Thackeray): here as elsewhere in the War, Josephus describes Jewish military action as motivated by ‘audacity’ or ‘boldness’ (τόλμια, τόλμημα) inspired by ἀπόνοια.”
underestimate the Roman desire to fight after a day’s battle, and ends up being captured on the wall of the fort.

The capture of Eleazar is itself a spectacle:

A certain man in the Roman army, Rufus, a native Egyptian, saw the opportunity, and as no one could have expected, he suddenly ran up and and lifted him [Eleazar] up with all his armor, and while amazement seized all those seeing it from the walls, he hastened to transport him to the Roman camp.\(^403\)

Bassus decides to make Eleazar into an even greater spectacle. He orders the Jewish captive to be stripped naked and placed in the spot most visible from the city so that when the residents looked out, they could see Eleazar being scourged.\(^404\) Eleazar is now really visible for all to see, his status diminished, and his life in danger. This move in the Roman power game, using Eleazar’s body to assert authority, produces a tremendous emotional, even tragic response: the onlookers are so stricken by Eleazar’s “πάθος” that the entire city breaks into cries of “οἶμοι” and lamentation.\(^405\) Josephus editorializes here that the reaction is beyond the pale, given that only one man is suffering, and he offers no explanation for why the “foreigners” in the town below would care about Eleazar, especially since he and the other defenders had relegated them, “the mob”, to stay in the town.

Josephus’s account is a true “play-by-play” commentary on the Roman game of imperialism. The historian reports that the Roman general “seeing” this emotional

\(^{403}\) B.J. 7.199: “όρα δὲ τὸν καίρον τοῦ Ῥωμαίοτος τῆς στρατοπέδου Ῥοῦφος γένος Αἰγύπτιος, καὶ μηδενὸς ἀν προσδοκήσαντος ἔξαιρῆς ἐπιδραμὼν σὺν αὐτοῖς ἀράμενος αὐτὸν τοὺς ὁπλίτας, ἔως κατείχε τοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν τειχῶν ἰδόντας ἕκπληξεῖν, φθάνει τὸν ἄνδρα μεταθεὶς πρὸς τὸ Ῥωμαίων στρατόπεδον.”

\(^{404}\) B.J. 7.200: “τοῦ δὲ στρατηγοῦ κελεύσαντος γυμνὸν διαλαβεῖν αὐτὸν καὶ καταστήσαντας εἰς τὸ φανερώτατον τοῦ οἷος ἐκ τῆς πόλεως ἀποβλέπουσι μάστιξιν αἰκίζεσθαι...”

\(^{405}\) B.J. 7.200: “…σφόδρα τοὺς Ἰουδαίους τὸ περὶ τὸν νεανίαν πάθος συνέχεεν, ἀθρόα τε ἡ πόλις ἀνώμωξε, καὶ θρῆνος ἦν μείζων ἢ καθ’ ἕνος ἄνδρος συμφοράν.”
instability decides to put into play a “στρατήγημα”, a “trick,” to force the defenders to hand over the fortress. Bassus orders a spectacle, more dramatic and life-threatening: the erection of a cross. He also shifts the intended spectators from those in the city to those in the fortress. Bassus does not even have to have Eleazar placed upon the cross (a standard form of Roman capital punishment); the threat of such is enough to inflict the viewers with “greater pain, wailing and crying that the suffering was immense and unendurable.”

Eleazar then delivers Josephus’s central message for this episode. The Jewish captive begs the spectators in the fortress:

...not to watch him endure the most pitiful of deaths, and to furnish safety for themselves by yielding to the might and the fortune of the Romans, since everyone else had been subdued.

This advice is striking for several reasons. First of all, Eleazar characterizes his own possible suffering, should he be hung on the cross, as a form of “endurance” and “most pitiful.” The participle “ὑπομείναντα” is vital here. As Brent Shaw has shown, the strategy of passive resistance or endurance (“ὑπομονή”) was gaining currency in the

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406 B.J. 7.202: “...τοῖς δ’ ἀπὸ τοῦ φρουρίου τοῦτο θεασιμένοις ὀδύνη τε πλείων προσέπεσε, καὶ διωλύγιον ἀνώμωξον ύπκ ἀνασχετὸν εἶναι τὸ πάθος βοῶντες.”

407 B.J. 7.203: “...ικέτευεν αὐτοὺς μήτ’ αὐτὸν περιδεῖν ὑπομείναντα θανάτων τὸν οἰκτιστὸν καὶ φίλοι αὐτοῖς τὴν σωτηρίαν παρασχεῖν τῇ Ῥωμαίων εἰξαντας ἱσχύ καὶ τύχῃ μετὰ πάντας ἡδῆ κεχειρωμένους.” This is a variation on the theme of salvation through submission to Rome running throughout the B.J.; see Josephus’s own admission of this as a general in Galilee facing Vespasian, B.J. 3.136: “ἐδόξα μὲν γὰρ ποί ῥεψεὶ τὰ Ἰουδαίων τέλους, καὶ μίαν αὐτῶν ἦδει σωτηρίαν, εἰ μεταβάλοιτο,” “for he saw where the outcome of the Jews was headed, and he knew that their one salvation would be if they would change their minds [i.e. submit].” Josephus quickly and apologetically admits that pardon was an option for himself, but that he could never betray his country or abuse his own appointed command, thus heading off accusations from enemies; see my next section.
later first century among those facing yet defying punishment by the Roman State. Unlike the martyrs in 4 Maccabees, another first century work, or the early Christian martyrs such as Ignatius of Antioch, who so prized hypomone as their weapon against greater imperial powers, Josephus’s character Eleazar denies that hypomone is an effective or desirable strategy and instead begs the people to accept Roman power as a fact and to live with it. He, therefore, is playing by Roman rules. His friends and family support this move, and beseech the defenders in the same vein to submit. Josephus bitingly reports that the remaining defenders, “against their own nature give in to pity” and decide to negotiate a surrender by which they and Eleazar are allowed to go free. Tragedy, therefore, is averted for the defenders. The townsfolk, however, do not fare so well. The bravest of them escape, but the remaining 1,700 men are killed; the women and children are sold into slavery. Josephus delivers no pathetic eulogy over them. He has met the aims of this particular narrative, and there is hardly any gain in bewailing the fate of this “mob” as a tragedy.

408 B. Shaw, “Body/Power/Identity: Passions of the Martyrs,” Journal of Early Christian Studies 4.3 (1996), pp. 269-312, “More significant than all of this is a novel value that is enshrined in Fourth Maccabees as not just any value worth acquiring, but the preeminent excellence that is hypostasized above all others—the one that is vaunted as the operative guide of how to behave under extreme duress. This was the sheer ability of the body to resist, to endure the application of any force to it: “endurance” of hypomone (ὑπομονή). Sheer endurance was now lauded both as a behavioral practice and as a high moral ideal,” p. 278. He observes later, at pp. 284-5, that along with this new type of resistance comes “a new role that could be thought about, could be attributed to the body.” He also traces and connects this with the notion of patientia at Rome at this time. He never, however, looks at Josephus’s writings in this article.


410 B.J. 7.205: “παρὰ τὴν αὐτῶν φύσιν εἰς οἶκτον ἐνέδωκαν.” Josephus has not specifically labelled these Jewish defenders as Sicarii, but this negative description points to this as a possibility.

411 This term “ἀνδρείωσατοι” shows that the vocabulary of active vs. passive resistance is highly gendered; see Shaw (1996) on the shifting value of gender with regard to suffering in the first century. Eleazar, in Josephus’s scheme, is speaking for the old values as opposed to the new.
In Josephus’s account of the capture of Machaerus, therefore, we see the economy of imperialism\(^{412}\) in action: choices are made, prices are paid for these choices, and benefits are reaped for the prices paid.\(^{413}\) An element of chance comes into play, but the Romans capitalize upon it. Bassus the general uses spectacle and the emotions of tragedy as a strategem as much as the author Josephus has shaped his narrative with the same devices in books 1-6. Eleazar, while defending Jewish freedom for a time, nevertheless, presents a proper and effective response (according to Josephus and his elite Roman audience) to impending Roman punishment: submit and save lives. Under Roman rules (to which Josephus adheres), this is as close to a win-win outcome as any group initially opposing Rome could hope to experience. Josephus presents this episode at Machaerus precisely to explore these rules of Roman rule. He will do so again with the several scenes leading up to Masada.

First Excursus: Reading Josephus the “Good” General\(^{414}\)

Before continuing with Josephus’s narrative of Roman successes leading up to Masada, we should first consider how Josephus has presented his own conduct and choices he claims to have made during the war against the Romans in Galilee. Book 7 of the Bellum seems to be written in part as counterpoint to the portions of Book 2 and 3 where Josephus describes his command of Jewish forces and eventual capture by the

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\(^{412}\) Plass (1996), p. 126, refers to the “economy of violence” at Rome, while Shaw (1996), p. 285, to the “economy of the body.” Combining the two, I think we have the economy of Roman imperialism.

\(^{413}\) Economic vocabulary is appropriate here, especially since Josephus uses it himself as the final word on Machaerus when introducing Bassus’s next military move at B.J. 7.210: “Τάυτα δὲ διοικησάμενος ἤπειγετο τὴν στρατιὰν...”

\(^{414}\) H. Lindner (1972), pp. 49-68, investigates in one part “Die Selbstbericht des Josephus in B. 2-4.” He focuses especially upon the various roles Josephus plays, such as prophet and διάκονος θεοῦ.
Romans. I would like now to highlight a few scenes and themes from this section in
order to elucidate how he writes the events in book 7.

Josephus expends great effort to present himself as a man of high moral fiber
throughout the Bellum and later in his Vita. This effort falls on mostly unsympathetic
and disbelieving ears these days, but within his narrative, given the values he presents as
prized within the economy of Roman imperialism, he is a “good” man. He is alive; he is
not enslaved, but in a position of prestige, privilege, and financial security thanks to
the imperial family; he has friends and family. This hardly means that the entire
audience of the Bellum bought his formula for goodness or success, despite surrender. If
anything, the contents of book 7, the Vita, and even Contra Apionem, point to the fact
that Josephus struggled for the rest of his days with enemies’ accusations of cowardice,
mendacity, theft, murder, treason, and impiety—the list of heinous crimes could go
on. He is motivated, therefore, to present himself as a character possessing the
proper social/political position and as one exhibiting the proper mode of action.

How did he arrive at such a position where he would be so vulnerable to personal
attack and otherwise compelled to create such a character for himself? The historian
claims that among the several commands assigned in Jerusalem at the beginning of the
war, he was sent as general to both Galilees and Gamala (B.J. 2.568). He describes how he

415 It is not my concern here to explain how the account in the B.J. conflicts with the
account in his later Vita. The classic study of this is R. Laqueur (1920). Also see S. Cohen,
416 The accusations and even trials continue in the modern era, according to the
fascinating epilogue in M. Hadas-Lebel, Flavius Josephus, Eyewitness to Rome’s First-Century
group of law students in Antwerp reopened the case of Flavius Josephus and, after a
mock trial, found him guilty of treason...Indeed, mock trials of Josephus have today
become rhetorical exercises in many Israeli high schools, and in October 1992 a
program in which Flavius Josephus was tried for treason was broadcast on Israeli
television; the accused was acquitted for lack of evidence,” p. 237. I like her conclusion
to the book, p. 238: “To be a hero, he would have had to perish at Jotapata having
written nothing, but then posterity would have known nothing about it. Should we
regret that he was not a hero?”
fortified the area and then trained his troops directly in response to “the unconquerable strength of the Romans which derived especially from their discipline and military training.”  

The historian explains his training regimen for the Jewish troops, which addressed both the body and the soul in battle (B.J. 2.580). He concludes by saying that he warned them that “if they were bad deep down not only would they deal with personal enemies coming against them but also with God as an enemy in war.”  

In his outlook, therefore, success and failure are a direct result of one’s choice through character to be moral or not. And, in his system, God sides with the winners. Yahweh will finally join forces with Rome, and the results will be tragic and cataclysmic for Jews who have not accepted this **fabula** as fact.

Throughout his account of his activities in Galilee, Josephus repeatedly turns his own body and those of others into a spectacle as a strategem, just as Bassus later uses Eleazar’s body at Machaerus. At Tarichaeae, Josephus acquires tremendous second-hand booty from a raid upon Agrippa and Berenice’s baggage train. The residents are furious that they are not given a cut, and plan to kill Josephus. He avoids being burned alive in his house by rushing out with rent garments, ashes covering his head, hands behind his back, and with his own sword dangling from his neck (B.J. 2.601). This spectacle moves some to pity, but others interpret it as a false sympathy ploy (B.J. 2.602-3). Josephus the budding general, however, describes it for himself as “the advance preparation of a strategem,” thus mirroring the vocabulary later used of Bassus in book 7 with regard to Eleazar. Josephus then has to employ another “trick” to avoid a

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417 *B.J.* 2.577: “ἀάττητην τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἱσχύν γεγενημένην εὐπεθεία μάλιστα καὶ μελέτη τῶν ὀπλῶν.”

418 *B.J.* 2.582: “τοὺς δὲ οἰκοθέν θαύματος οὐ μόνον τοῖς ἐπιούσιν ἑχθροῖς ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ θεῷ χρήσθαι πολεμίω.” Here he has asked his troops to set aside theft, banditry, rapine, etc., for the sake of military preparedness and success. οἰκοθέν points to the tragedy of the internal dissent to come. Tragedy is rooted in the home, as with Herod’s family, and from there has widespread political consequences.

419 *B.J.* 2.604: “τῷ δ’ ἢν ἢ ταπείνωσις προπαρασκευὴ στρατηγήματος.”
lynching, this time by climbing onto a roof, motioning with his right hand that he cannot hear the crowd’s demands over the noise (B.J. 2.611). He asks that they send representatives inside to discuss matters, and they do so. He proceeds to have the group whipped “to the point that that their insides are laid bare.”

Dramatically, he flings open the doors so that the crowd can see the bloodied men; his enemies, in turn, are stunned, drop their arms and flee (B.J. 2.613). Josephus the general and Bassus are clearly cut from the same cloth: ordering whippings and exposing the naked truth of their power and punishment to gain crowd control. In fact, Josephus is saying to his Roman readers already in book 2: “I understand how you use violent spectacle to establish your power, and I can do it as well as you do.”

More Activities of the Roman Army in Judaea under Lucilius Bassus

The final military encounter between the Romans under Bassus and the Jews occurs at a forest called Jardes (B.J. 7.210-215). The Romans have learned that refugees from Jerusalem and Machaerus are gathering in the forest. Bassus, therefore, surrounds the place, and orders his infantry to cut down the trees. The historian speculates that the Jews are driven “to the necessity of doing something noble, to fight out of recklessness so that they might even escape.”

Despite the stricture of necessity and the possibility of nobility, “ἐκ παραβόλου” quickly undermines the reputation of the Jews here as well, a point which Josephus emphasizes by having them rush from the forest as barbarians would: “μετὰ βοῆς.” Josephus conveys the contrasting battle mentalities

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420 B.J. 2.612: “μέχρι πάντων τὰ σπλάγχνα γυμνώσαι.”
421 B.J. 7.212: “πρὸς ἀνάγκην οἱ Ἰουδαίοι τοῦ δράν τι γενναῖον, ὡς ἐκ παραβόλου ἀγωνίσασθαι τάχα ἃν καὶ διαφυγόντες.”
422 B.J. 7.212; there is an alternate reading in P, “ἐκ παραλόγου.”
423 Again, Josephus does not identify these Jews with any specific group, but he does connect them with the rebels at Machaerus, whom he has generally scorned.
424 B.J. 7.212, “with a shout.” Josephus has explained in his important digression on the Roman army at 3.70-109 that the soldiers may respond to their general “with a shout”
of the Romans and the Jews with a neatly balanced genitive absolute: “while they [the Jews] were employing much madness, the others [the Romans] were using a love of competition.”\textsuperscript{425} This attitude results in twelve casualties on the Roman side, while all the Jewish fugitives, numbering over three thousand, die. The latter do at least die fighting, but one cannot but taste the futility of their effort given the Roman war machine which Josephus has been describing. The historian does not praise the Jews’ courage in the face of a hopeless situation; instead, he concludes the scene by mentioning that one of the slain was their general Judas, son of Ari (\textit{B.J. 7.215}). As at Herodion and Machaerus, Rome wins again. Unlike the game at Machaerus, however, \textit{all} the Jews here lose because they do not consider submission to Rome. Josephus does not grant the Jewish fugitives even a moral victory at the forest of Jardes. This is sober and telling preparation for his account of the resistance at Masada.

Josephus closes his account of Bassus’s time as legate in Judaea with a notice concerning Vespasian’s settlement of land in Judaea and the imposition of taxes. The emperor claimed the territory as his private property, but ordered the settlement of some troops at Emmaus. Furthermore, he ordered that Jews pay the amount of two drachmas, which they formerly gave to the Temple in Jerusalem, now to the Capitoline (\textit{B.J. 7.218}). The Jewish historian offers absolutely no editorial remark on this imperial move, which would have seemed a great offense to any Jew. He clearly does not wish to confront his Roman readership on this sensitive issue.\textsuperscript{426} Nor does he choose to mourn (\textit{“τῆς Βοήτίας”}) when asked whether they are ready for battle, but “when they advance, they all march in silence and in order, each [soldier] keeping his own position in the ranks as if in war,” (\textit{“ἐπεὶ ταῖς προϊόντες ὀδεύουσιν ἡσυχῇ καὶ μετὰ κόσμου πάντες, ὥσπερ ἐν πολέμῳ τὴν ἑαυτὸν τὰξιν ἐκαστὸς φυλάσσων”}), 3.92-3. Contrast this with the reaction of the Britons to Calgacus’s speech in Tacitus’s \textit{Agricola} 33.1; the Roman historian labels their reaction barbaric: “\textit{Excepere orationem alacres, ut barbaris moris, fremitu cantuque et clamoribus dissonis.}”\textsuperscript{425} \textit{B.J. 7.213: “πολλῆ τῶν μὲν ἄπονοια τῶν δὲ φιλονεικία χρωμένων.”}

\textsuperscript{426} On the \textit{“fiscus Iudaicus,”} see Suetonius, \textit{Domitian} 12: these are potentially dangerous times for Jews in post-70s Rome. A coin from Nerva’s reign proclaims \textit{“fisci Iudaici}

\textsuperscript{425}
the destruction of the Temple again at this point. He simply signals that he is concluding this section on Jewish affairs.

**Seemingly Random Events in the Fourth Year of Vespasian’s Rule (72/3 C.E.)**

Josephus now presents other events occurring in the fourth year of Vespasian’s reign: the reported insurrection in Commagene and the movements of the Alani beyond the edges of the Roman Empire. Seth Schwartz has commented on this particular section of book 7:

The second part of the book, from 163 to the end, is marred by the introduction of the story of the Commagenic war and the invasion of Media by the Alani (219-51), which are apparently irrelevant to Jewish history, in the middle of what would have been a fairly coherent account of the mopping-up operations in Judaea and the Peraea.427

Since Josephus does, however, offer a fairly coherent and logical narrative throughout the rest of the *Bellum*, one is inclined to search for some reasonable explanation for the inclusion of this material. Schwartz has proposed that this portion of the *Bellum* is a late addition: Josephus is responding to the prominence of the royal family of Commagene, especially Philopappus son of Epiphanes, in the 90’s and early 100’s, and the historian feels the need to defend “the family’s irreproachable loyalty to Rome” and to stress that “deprived of their kingdom through a series of misunderstandings, they...

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nevertheless continued to be honored as kings.” Schwartz concludes that Josephus may have been “a friend of theirs” and may have been especially attracted to Philopappus after his own literary patrons were dead. With Josephus one can never rule out a personal motive for the shaping of his narrative.

The Commagene affair, however, also fits neatly into his overall narrative scheme in the last two-thirds of book 7 of showing how the game of Roman imperialism plays out in different venues, with different reactions and, therefore, different results. If anything, this interlude of events outside Palestine (in Commagene, Media, and Armenia) provides a broader, more “international” perspective for evaluating the manoeuvres of the Romans against the Jews which Josephus has already described. It also encourages the reader to appreciate how great the rewards of submission to Rome can be for those who accommodate. This serves as stark contrast to the fruitless outcome at Masada, which the historian will turn to next.

As Schwartz observes, the Commagene royal family has already appeared in the *Bellum*, back in book 5 during the siege of Jerusalem. Antiochus Epiphanes, son of the king, appears at Jerusalem with troops to support the Roman assault. Josephus observes in an editorial aside:

Of all the kings under the Romans, it happened that the king of Commagene was the most blessed before he tasted reversal; and this one, too, showed in old age how no one should be called happy before his death.429

Josephus here alludes to Herodotus’s story of Solon warning Croesus,430 thus anticipating the troubles to hit the royal household of Commagene, which he narrates

428 Ibid., p. 380.
429 B.J. 5.461: “εὔδαιμονήσαι γάρ δή μάλιστα τῶν ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίων βασιλέων τῶν Κομμαγηνῶν συνέβη πρὶν γεύσασθαι μεταβολής. ἀπέφηνε δὲ κάκεινος ἐπὶ γῆρως ὡς οὔδένα χρὴ λέγειν πρὸ θανάτου μακάριον.”
430 Herodotus 1.32.
in book 7. King Antiochus, however, hardly ends up on a burning pyre in front of Vespasian.

Josephus portrays the Roman invasion of Commagene as a well-considered response to a report of possible rebellion, which would also invite trouble from Parthia. The historian apologetically remarks that Antiochus had no intention of going to war with Rome (B.J. 7.228), and that “the king surely could not be induced by necessity to do anything hostile against the Romans, but lamenting his fortune, he was enduring whatever he might have to suffer.”431 Though ἀνάγχη presses upon him, Antiochus chooses not to act against Rome. This example offers a counterpart to Eleazar’s upcoming arguments at Masada in favor of suicide, predicated upon the goads of necessity. Josephus clearly is showing his audience in advance an alternative, proper response to the approach of Roman troops. Josephus underlines the correctness of Antiochus’s choice by consistently presenting the royal family in a positive light, whether in battle or in flight.432 Antiochus is apprehended in Tarsus, but Vespasian then orders the prisoner on the road to Rome released from his chains, considering their “ancient friendship” stronger than his “inexorable wrath.”433 The emperor exercises his power by extending his clemency to the obviously subdued opponent. Josephus does not present this as a loss for the royal family of Commagene; in fact, it becomes a win-win situation within the narrative.434

431 B.J. 7.231: “οὐ μήν ὁ βασιλεὺς οὐδ’ ὑπὸ τῆς ἀνάγκης προῆχθη πράξαί τι πρὸς Ἡρωμαίους πολεμικοὺς, ἀλλὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ τὔχην ὁδυρόμενος οὐ τι δέοι παθεῖν ὑπέμενε.”
432 Antiochus’s sons display manliness (“τὴν ἀνδρείαν”) and good bodies (“ῥώμη σωμάτων”) in battle: B.J. 7.232-3; they are later treated well by the Parthians: 7.237.
433 B.J. 7.239: “...τῆς παλαιᾶς ἀξίων φιλίας μᾶλλον αἴδω λαβεῖν ἢ διὰ τὴν τοῦ πολέμου πρόφασιν ἀπαραίτητον ὀργῆν διαφυλάττειν.” Shaw’s (1993 and 1995) idea of personal power is well at play here, but he does not discuss this episode.
434 This is not a possible outcome in the “payoff matrix” which Plass (1995), p. 123, presents for political suicide at Rome. On his chart, “clemency granted” is registered as a win for the emperor and “clemency accepted” appears as a loss for the opposition. [I do not find the numerical chart on p. 125 useful. Here Plass quantifies a win as a “1” and
The story has a very happy ending. Antiochus settles in Lacedaemon on a generous stipend; his faithful sons, Epiphanes and Callinicus, learn this, are greatly relieved, and apply for amnesty from Rome through the Parthian king Bologeses. Josephus provides their reason for this move: “for they would not be happy enduring life outside the Roman Empire.”435 Josephus has outdone himself, offering the complete opposite of the typical first-century meaning of hypomone in the face of Roman imperialism! The royal family reunites in Rome under the gracious auspices of the emperor, and presumably they all live happily ever after, “deemed worthy of every honor.”436 What Herodotus once reported as the great tragedy of human blindness resulting in a terrible fall, Josephus repackages as a fabula promoting the benefits of submitting to the will of Rome.

Josephus then introduces a short interlude on the invasions of the Scythian Alani “into Media and beyond.”437 Schwartz does not even attempt to explain Josephus’s a loss as a “0”, in good game theory fashion. He then modifies these numbers with “+” and “-” to indicate coercion without violence and the use of violence, respectively. Labelling “defiant or preemptive suicide” and “martyrdom” as “-1” “wins” for the opposition leaves me cold.] Josephus is trying to show that accepting clemency does not equal a loss of status, as literature supporting the opposition would lead one to believe. Instead, acquiescence translates into the best possible outcome of peace and prosperity, given the reality of Roman power.

435 B.J. 7.242: “οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐνδιαμονούντες ὑπέμενον ἐξω τῆς Ῥωμαίων ζῆν ἡγεμονίας.” Above at 7.239, Vespasian could not endure (“ὑπέμενεν”) the king being dragged to him in chains.

436 B.J. 7.243: “...πάσης ἀξιόμενοι τιμῆς κατέμενον ἐνταῦθα.”

437 B.J. 7.245: “...εἰς τὴν Μηδίαν καὶ προσωτέρῳ ταύτῃς.” Despite his remark, “πρῶτερον ποι δεδηλώκαμεν,” Josephus has never mentioned these Alani before in his text. He has, however, spoken at B.J. 7.89-95, of the Scythian Sarmatians, who crossed the Ister and attacked the Romans in Moesia. (Thackeray, 1928, vol. 3, p. 533, n. b, remarks that “Josephus seems to be the sole authority for the events described in this section.”) The Romans under Rubrius Gallus regain control of the territory by killing many Sarmatians in battle (7.93). Schwartz (1986), pp. 378-9, argues that this entire section (B.J. 7.63-99) covering Vespasion’s return to Italy, the uprising in Germany, and the attack on Moesia is a later addition to the Bellum, “presumably added after Titus’s death and Domitian’s accession, when Josephus could no longer afford to glorify Titus alone. Domitian and Vespasion had to be praised as well.” Josephus introduces the Sarmatians by labelling their invasion “Σκυθικῶν τόλμημα πρὸς Ῥωμαίον.” This earlier Scythian episode, then, ties in well with other encounters.
insertion of the movements of far-away tribes into a history on a Judaean war. Thackeray remarks about this passage: “This is the first mention of them in the War; the allusion to a previous remark has possibly been carelessly taken over by Josephus from the source from which this section, irrelevant to Jewish history, has been derived.” Sidestepping the question of source, perhaps there is an answer to the appearance of this otherwise weird little passage about barbaric tribes far from Judaea. Josephus recounts how Pacorus, king of the Medes, can barely ransom his wife and concubines from these invaders--thus, these are hardly civilized people in the eyes of Josephus’s Roman readers. Furthermore, Josephus describes how these Alani “become more savage” in battle in Armenia and strip the country clean before returning to their homeland.

To explain, then, this infelicitous appearance of Alani in a history on Judaea we might look instead at the overall narrative context and specifically at the royal brothers’ pretext for submission to Rome as formulated in the preceding story on Commagene: life just is not worth living outside of Rome’s protection. Josephus has clearly provided an example with the Alani of what can happen outside the bounds of the Roman Empire, beyond the influence of pax and mores: marauding barbarians can

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439 Thackeray (1928), Loeb vol. 3, p. 574, n. a.
440 Michel and Bauernfeind (1969), vol. 2, pt. 2, p. 263, n. 126, follow Thackeray on this. One might also wonder whether Tacitus mentioned these Alani in the part his Histories now lost which dealt with this era, since Orosius vii. 34.5 reports that Tacitus spoke of the Scythians at some point: “Theodosius... maximas illas Scythicas gentis formidatasque cunctis maioribus, Alexandro quoque illi Magno, sicut Pompeius Corneliusque testati sunt, evitatis..., hoc est Alanos Hunos et Gothos, incunctanter adgressus magnis multisque proeliis victic,” cited from fragments appended to C. Moore’s Loeb edition (1931) of the Histories, p. 222, no. 7. Whatever the source(s), both Josephus and Tacitus seem compelled to mention Alexander the Great (B.J. 7.245 on the “iron gates” which he supposedly put up in the Taurus mountain range) and the Scythians/Alani in the same context.
441 B.J. 7.251: “οἱ δὲ καὶ διὰ τὴν μάχην ἔτι μᾶλλον ἀγριωθέντες...”
descend upon whole countries, threaten the rule of kings, steal everyone and everything in their path, and then return home. After hearing of such happenings on the fringes of civilization, who would not want Rome in charge? Only those who would prefer rebellion and death, as Josephus then attempts to show with his story of the Sicarii at Masada.

Masada (74 C.E.?)

Like the giant rock of Masada which rises abruptly from the desert floor, Josephus’s narrative of Masada looms over the rest of book 7. His engaging account of feats of Roman engineering and siege-warfare, of the Jewish leader Eleazar’s two set speeches urging death as freedom over slavery, and of the desperate mass suicide, has drawn scholars to analyze it from literary, historical, and archaeological perspectives. Scholars have pored over this text just as they have carefully sifted the archaeological remains, but surprisingly they have not treated the Masada account within a detailed study of the larger narrative context of book 7. We should now see how the game of Roman imperialism with its range of possible choices and outcomes, which Josephus has been so carefully building up in his descriptions of previous sieges and far-flung events in book 7, plays out here at Masada. As in the rest of the Bellum, Josephus uses tragedy and spectacle to attract and entertain his readers and also to foster a sense of sympathy in his audience for his own apologetic stance. This does not, however, mean that he is attempting to gain sympathy for the Sicarii.

442 On the date of the siege of Masada, see Feldman (1984), pp. 789-90. Josephus does not tell us the year, and scholars have argued for the years 72, 73, or 74. W. Eck, Senatoren von Vespasian bis Hadrian, München, 1970, pp. 93-11, presents two inscriptions showing that L. Flavius Silva Nonnius Bassus could not have besieged Masada until at least 74, because he did not become legatus of Judaea until spring of 73.
The exercise of Roman power launches and serves as the underlying theme of this entire section on Masada. Josephus reports that Flavius Silva has assumed command from the deceased Bassus in Judaea and that:

...seeing all the rest subdued, except one fortress still in rebellion, he brought together all his forces in the area and marched against it; the fortress is called Masada.

All Judaea, therefore, is a spectacle of conquest except Masada. Just as Silva concentrates his troops against the fortress, so does Josephus focus his narrative upon this last holdout against Roman rule. All attention shifts to Masada, where Josephus will show that another major choice is available to the opposition in the Roman game of imperialism: preemptive suicide.

Josephus immediately presents the Jewish opposition to Rome: the Sicarii and their leader, Eleazar. Eleazar’s geneology is traced back to the Judas of Galilee from book 2 “who led his countrymen into revolt” under the Roman procurator Coponius and who founded his own sect. As Josephus reports later in book 2, Judas’s son, Menahem, goes with friends to Masada in 66 in order to get arms for the revolution from Herod’s stockpile there. Menahem returns to Jerusalem “like a king,” but later is tortured and murdered by other Jewish revolutionaries from a different faction. Josephus styles Menahem a “tyrant” and notes that among the few followers of Menahem who succeed

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443 B.J. 7.252: “καὶ τὴν μὲν ἄλλην ὀρφὴν ἀπασαν τῷ πολέμῳ κεχειρωμένην, ἐν δὲ μόνον ἔτι φρούριον ἀφεστικός, ἐστράτευσεν ἐπὶ τούτο πάσαν τὴν ἐν τοῖς τόποις δύναμιν συναγαγὼν καλεῖταὶ δὲ τὸ φρούριον Μασὰδα.”

444 Plass (1995) charts this on p. 123 as one of the two main ways (the other being martyrdom) for the opposition to score a “win” against the emperor. I shall discuss below how this is not a “win” in Josephus’s narrative.

445 B.J. 2.118: “...εἰς ἀπόστασιν ἐνῆγε τοὺς ἐπιχωρίους.” This notice on Judas leads into Josephus’s digression on the Essenes, Pharisees, and Sadducees.

446 B.J. 2.433. Here and at 118 Josephus calls Judas a “σοφιστής.”

447 B.J. 2.434-448. The followers of another Eleazar, the faction leader in Jerusalem, carry out the attack on Menahem.
in escaping from Jerusalem to Masada is a relative of his, Eleazar, son of Jairus, “who later was tyrant of Masada.”

The family of Judas, therefore, has a history of resistance against Rome. Back in book 2, Judas is described as “reproaching [the Galileans] if they both endure paying tribute to the Romans and if after God they tolerate mortals as masters.” Judas’s son, Menahem, plays the messiah in Jerusalem in direct opposition to Rome, but ends up dead at the hands of other Jewish rebels. Their relative, Eleazar, is introduced in book 2 as a tyrant, which is never a positive term in the Bellum. He then reappears in book 7 as a “δυνατὸς ἀνήρ” over the Sicarii who hold Masada. Josephus explains again that he is a descendant of Judas, whom he clarifies here as having convinced many Jews not to enroll in the census undertaken by Quirinus. Individuals in this family have committed themselves to resistance against Rome for over sixty years.

Josephus turns at the beginning of his account of Masada to the group now under Eleazar, which he claims originated back in the time of Judas: the Sicarii. Just as his notice on Judas “the sophist” in book 2 prompts Josephus to digress into a long discussion of the three major “philosophies” practiced by the Jews, his mention of the

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448 B.J. 2.447: “ὁ ύπατερον ἐτυμάνησεν τῆς Μασάδας”
449 B.J. 2.118: “...κακίζων εἰ φόρον τε Ῥωμαίοις τελεῖν ύπομενοῦσιν καὶ μετὰ τὸν θεόν οἶσουσι θυητοὺς δεσπότας.” Josephus reiterates this at 2.433 in different wording: “...ὁ καὶ ἐπὶ Κυρηνίου ποτὲ ᾿Ιουδαίους ὀνειδίσσας ὅτι Ῥωμαίοις ὑπετάσσοντο μετὰ τὸν θεόν...”
450 Shaw (1993), p. 203, charts this term as reflecting the role of the “big man” in local Judaean politics, as opposed to the Graeco-Roman system of power.
451 See B.J. 2.425 for the explanation of their name.
452 B.J. 2.119-166. Josephus returns to this topic at Ant. 18.11-22, and at 18.23 adds that “Judas the Galilean set himself up as leader of the fourth philosophy,” (“τῇ δὲ τετάρτῃ τῶν φιλοσοφιῶν ὁ Γαλιλαῖος ᾿Ιουδᾶς ἠγεμόν κατέστη”). R. Horsley, with J. Hanson, Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements at the Time of Jesus, San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985, chapter 5, pp. 190-243, does an admirable job differentiating the Fourth Philosophy of Judas from the Sicarii and from the Zealots. The Sicarii at Masada were not the Zealots, as Josephus makes plain, yet some modern scholars such as Yadin mistakenly claim so.
Sicarii led by Eleazar allows the historian to explain the origins of this group, as well as that of the other revolutionary groups. Josephus identifies the raison d’être of the Sicarii:

For at that time [of Judas and Quirinus] the Sicarii banded together against those who wished to submit to the Romans, and in every way they treated them as enemies [in war], seizing their possessions, rounding up their cattle, and setting their houses on fire; for they claimed that they were no different than aliens, since they so ignobly had thrown away the freedom fought for by Jews and had agreed to choose slavery under the Romans.\footnote{B.J. 7.254-5: “τότε γὰρ οἱ σικάριοι συνέστησαν ἐπί τοὺς ύπακούειν Ἱωσαφάτους καὶ πάντα τρόπους ὡς πολεμοῦσι προσεφέροντο, τὰς μὲν κτήσεις ἀρπάζοντες καὶ περιελαύνοντες, ταῖς δ’ οἰκίσεις αὐτῶν πῦρ ἐνέβαλον· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄλλο ποιήσαν αὐτοὺς ἐφασκον διαφέρειν, οὕτως ἀγεννὸς τὴν περιμάχητον ἱουδαίοις ἐλευθερίαν προεμένους καὶ δουλείαν αἱρεῖσθαι τὴν ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίους ἀνωμολογηκότας.”}

The Sicarii, therefore, according to Josephus, set themselves up at the time of Judas as the only true Jews who valued their “freedom” as opposed to the other Jews who were willing to accomodate to Rome and accept “slavery.” By branding their Jewish opposition as non-Jewish enemies in war, they then felt no compunction in raiding and destroying their enemies’ property.

Josephus offers his own opinion of the stated position of the Sicarii: “This, let me tell you, was just a pretext spoken by them as a cover-up for their cruelty and greed, and they made this clear through their actions.”\footnote{B.J. 7.256: “πάντα δὲ ταῦτα πρόφασις εἰς παρακάλυμμα τῆς ὑμότητος καὶ τῆς πλεονεξίας ὑπὸ αὐτῶν λεγόμενον· σαφῆς δὲ διὰ τῶν ἔργων ἐποίησαν.”} This is a blunt, negative assessment of the motives and deeds of the Sicarii. Josephus does not in any way consider them freedom-fighters. Instead, he accuses them of using language (toto...legomenon) to mask their self-serving savagery. Whether this is an accurate or fair picture of the Sicarii is beside the point; what matters is that Josephus clearly loathes this group and does not sympathize with their cause. We must bear this in mind when reading Eleazar’s two
speeches. They are words “spoken” to defend a group whose actions Josephus consistently condemns. The historian has already described their vicious raid upon Engaddi back in 68 C.E. during the feast of the unleavened bread.455 There the Sicarii killed over seven hundred women and children, and then continued to descend upon other villages and carry all their plunder back to Masada. Now, in their final stand, the Sicarii are going to turn against their own women and children. The historian, however, saves this dramatic detail for the moment. Instead, he sums up his attack on the Sicarii by labelling them a source of τολμηματα and by calling their πρόφασις a lie (B.J. 7.257-8). When Josephus accuses them of “abusing those who in pleading were reproaching their baseness,”456 it perhaps foreshadows the troubles the author himself faced in Rome when he had to defend himself against informants such as Jonathan (B.J. 7.448), whom he brands as being part of the general wave of the “madness of the Sicarii” (B.J. 7.437-8).

This excoriation introduces an excursus against all the different Jewish rebel groups which he has mentioned in the course of recounting the war (B.J. 7.259-274). It is not a cheerful picture. Just as Josephus claims that the deed of Mary the cannibal mother in book 6 is unparalleled, so here he argues “that no deed of wickedness was left undone, nor if someone should have wished to invent one, would he have been able to discover something newer.”457 Josephus moralizes: vice has swept the Jews like a disease, stirring

455 B.J. 4.398-409 on the activities of the Sicarii based at Masada. In B.J. 4.402, he seems to expound upon the meaning of this holiday as celebrating soteria from douleia in Egypt not just to inform his Roman readers of Jewish custom but to suggest the irony of freedom-fighters taking the lives of other Jews on a feast of freedom.

456 B.J. 7.258: ἐκακουν τοις την πονηριαν αυτων δια της δικαιολογιας ονειδιζοντας.

457 B.J. 7.259: “...ως μηδεν κακιας έργον άπρακτον καταλιπειν, μηδ’ ει τις επινοια διαπλατειν έθελησειν, έχειν αν τι καινοτερον έξευρειν.”
up class-based self-destruction. Impiety towards God and injustice towards neighbors (which are violations of the most basic tenets of Jewish Law) figure large here. He highlights his favorite villains in the war in an order which differs from book 4: the Sicarii, John of Gischala, Simon ben Giora, the Idumaeans, and the Zealots. He also revels in reporting that God punished all of them, and that they in the end “endured, dying in many and various tortures.” And so will his own history end with the tortured death of his personal nemesis, Catullus. Roman readers, steeped in violence themselves, sought the stimulus of “newer” outrages to break the ennui and to satisfy their incessant craving for novelty. Thus, Josephus attempts to deliver such desired and expected entertainment, albeit with his own particular Jewish moralizing spin.

His narrative now turns to an account of the Roman siege of Masada. As at Machaerus, once again the Romans are facing a lofty spectacle. Masada is a giant rock, so high that the base is “invisible” from the top, with access afforded by only two pathways. The “snake path” on the east side is so narrow that “it is clear destruction” and strikes the climber “with absolute terror.” And as with Machaerus, Josephus provides a history of its use, starting with Jonathan and concentrating on the building projects of Herod the Great, including his fortifications and palace. At Machaerus the


459 B.J. 7.260, 263, 264, 267, on impiety towards God and his priests.

460 S. Mason, in his review of Krieger (1994) in JBL (1997), pp. 129-132, aptly calls this “Josephus’s ‘rogues’ gallery.” Mason, p. 132, is correct in criticizing Krieger for concluding that Josephus wrote the Bellum for an audience of diaspora Jews; this ignores several specific identifications of and explanations given for a gentile audience as well.


462 B.J. 7.272: “...ὑπέμειναν ἐν πολυτρότοις αἰκίας ἀποθανόντες...”

463 Barton (1993) draws this out of the texts from this period, especially Seneca and Petronius.

marvels to behold were a giant herb, a poisonous root, and breast-shaped springs; at Masada what Josephus deems worthy of amazement are things much more critical to a defense: Herod’s huge store of supplies, both food (grain, wine, oil, pulse, and dates) and weapons.

Josephus then describes the spectacular engineering projects which made this siege more grandiose than that at Machaerus (B.J. 7.304-319). First, Silva orders a wall to be built around the entire rock of Masada. Then, choosing a suitable location on the west, he has his troops throw up an embankment two hundred cubits high and an iron-encased tower on top of that to the height of sixty cubits. From there, the Romans can launch missiles and use a battering-ram against the wall of the fortress. When the first wall falls, the Romans have to contend with a cleverly constructed second wall of wood and earth that actually becomes stronger with the blows of the battering-ram. Silva solves this problem by ordering his men to torch it. The fire from this wall, however, almost blows back upon the Romans and threatens to incinerate them and their siege-engines, but the wind suddenly shifts. Josephus attributes this twice in two sentences to the divine will. As with the siege of Jerusalem, God is with the Romans now. This, too, should alert the reader to the author’s apologetic aims at this moment in the text where Eleazar will now make his two speeches.

The spectacle intensifies. Night has fallen, and the Romans have set up watch to prevent escapes. The narrative has been concentrating on the Romans, but now with

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465 B.J. 7.295: “τοῖς δὲ ἐνδοὺ ἀποκειμένοις παρασκευάζων ἔτι μᾶλλον ἕν τις ἐθαύμασε τὴν λαμπρότητα καὶ τὴν διαμονήν.”
466 B.J. 7.296-302. Josephus explains that Herod laid up such stores out of fear of attack from Cleopatra. The historian is reflecting back upon his remarks about Cleopatra in 1.359, including the observation that Antony was enslaved by “ἐρως” to her.
467 B.J. 7.318-319: “καθάπερ ἐκ διαμονίου προνοίας” and “τῇ παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ συμμαχίᾳ.”
468 Cohen (1982), p. 395-6 does not believe that the Romans would have retreated for the night, calling this delay followed by a morning assault “very dramatic but utterly
the dramatic nighttime setting, it switches to the Sicarii. At this point Josephus reintroduces Eleazar as a man who cannot flee and who will not allow others to do so either. Eleazar is inspired to speak when he sees the spectacle of the burning wall;\textsuperscript{469} this spectacle, in turn, causes him to realize that there is “no other means of deliverance or defense.”\textsuperscript{470} He then intellectually sets “before his own eyes what the Romans would do to them, their children, and their wives if they were victorious.”\textsuperscript{471} This mental spectacle leads him to deliberate on “death against all.”\textsuperscript{472}

Josephus is employing step-by-step the visual vocabulary of his day, to which his audience is keenly attuned. We can compare this to another early imperial Roman historian, Tacitus, who in his \textit{Agricola} will have the Briton chief Calgacus promoting freedom over slavery by declaring: “we had never seen the shores of those who are enslaved, and we had eyes that were not violated by the contact of domination.”\textsuperscript{473} Just as Josephus has Eleazar comprehend the inevitability of Roman victory through his eyes,\textsuperscript{474} Tacitus, too, will emphasize the eyes as the “point of contact.” Both Josephus and later Tacitus exploit the visual sensibility, since their Roman audiences expected them to do so. Furthermore, Josephus essentially creates a new slogan of death for the incredible.” He thinks Josephus has done this not only to be dramatic but also to allow time for Eleazar’s speeches.

\textsuperscript{469} \textit{BJ.} 7.321: “\textit{…”δρων δὲ τὸ μὲν τεῖχος ὑπὸ τοῦ πυρὸς ἀναλούμενον…”} I am deliberately breaking up the sentence to emphasize each step in the process.

\textsuperscript{470} \textit{BJ.} 7.321: “…\textit{…ἄλλον δ᾿ οὐδένα σωτηρίας τρόπον οὐδ᾿ ἅλκης ἐπινοῶν…}”

\textsuperscript{471} \textit{BJ.} 7.321: “…\textit{…ἀ δὲ ἐμελλὼν Ἦρωμαιοι δράσειν αὐτοὺς καὶ τέκνα καὶ γυναῖκας αὐτῶν, εἰ κρατήσειαν, ὕπ᾿ ὀρθαλμοὺς αὐτῷ τιθέμενος…}” It is possible that Josephus uses the verb δράω here to recall its frequent appearance in Attic tragedy in connection with large or pivotal deeds.

\textsuperscript{472} \textit{BJ.} 7.321: “…\textit{θάνατον κατὰ πάντων ἐβουλεύσατο.}”

\textsuperscript{473} Tacitus, \textit{Agricola} 30.2: “…\textit{nec ulla servientium litora aspicientes, oculos quoque a contactu dominionis inviolatos habebamus.”}

\textsuperscript{474} Later in his \textit{Vita}, Josephus claims that he tried to dissuade those promoting sedition in Judaea by asking them to “produce before their eyes the ones against whom they were about to fight,” (\textit{Vita} 17: “\textit{ποιησαμένους πρὸ ὀρθαλμῶν πρὸς οὓς πολεμήσουσιν”}).
Sicarii to reverse and replace their own self-presentation as freedom-fighters. Thus, before even allowing Eleazar to speak, Josephus has undermined the defining trademark of the Sicarii, and, therefore, has colored the audience’s perception of the leader’s decision-making.

The historian is careful to describe this decision-making process, since it supports his overall presentation in the latter portion of book 7 that Rome’s enemies have options. An element of surprise and the unexpected may surface during the game of imperialism, as at Machaerus, but this is something which a good leader should take advantage of, as did Bassus, and to which the enemy must react. Here at Masada, the Romans dramatically step back from the siege in Josephus’s account, allowing the Sicarii time to ponder their move. On one level, this pause heightens the suspense for the audience, as they wonder how this scene will end. Death, of course, but how will it happen and how will it be justified? On another level, however, the author is inviting his audience to consider the options available to those facing Rome’s power.

Eleazar chooses death. Josephus puts it succinctly in a mere phrase, with no emotion attached: “when he chose this [death] best of the available [choices].” This choice hardly occurs in a void, but against the entire backdrop of the history which Josephus has recounted. Scholars have been quick to point out that Eleazar’s following speeches act in counterpoint to Josephus’s own speech against suicide in book 3 at Jotapata (B.J. 3.362-382), but they have not considered the trajectory of choices and consequences which Josephus has so carefully been tracing in book 7. Furthermore, no one has commented upon or compared the choice made here at Masada with Mary’s violent reaction to her predicament in book 6, which precipitates the destruction of Jerusalem.

475 B.J. 7.322: “καὶ τοῦτο κρίνας ἐκ τῶν παρόντων ἄριστον...”
Recalcitrance against Rome never leads to safety in Josephus’s narrative world. On the other hand, submission to Rome can provide deliverance. As we see earlier in book 7, the Jews at Machaerus successfully negotiate a surrender, at least preserving their own lives and freedom. The most obvious and immediate case of submission to Rome is that of the author himself, who presents himself as rejecting suicide at Jotapata in book 3, choosing to live, becoming a Roman slave, later being freed, and then working the Roman system on behalf of himself and his friends and family.⁴⁷⁶

Eleazar has ostensibly based his decision upon considerations of how the Romans would treat the Sicarii, their children, and their wives upon capture. This issue has been raised many times throughout the war, with a variety of outcomes depending on how submissive the party in question is toward the authority in charge. In Book 6 at the height of the siege, Mary, in a fit of tragic passion, seizes her baby and addresses him in a short soliloquy bemoaning their joint fate: slavery under the Romans should they survive the famine.⁴⁷⁷ She adds that submitting to the rebels is an even more horrible fate than perishing by hunger or being enslaved to Rome.⁴⁷⁸ Thus, though she becomes a cannibal, Mary expresses the author’s own assessment of the relative evils in this war. In Josephus’s formulation the rebels do not provide freedom from slavery, and can barely even resist the cannibal’s feast. Mary is described as consumed by ὀργή and ἀνάγκη (B.J. 6.205), violates nature, and chooses death for her baby after weighing the

⁴⁷⁶ See Vita 414-429 for what he claims to have accomplished through his personal association with the Flavians. Shaw (1995) argues that Josephus is transplanting a more primitive model of personal power into his interpretation of Roman power, which Shaw characterizes as institutional. I do, however, think that personal power was every bit as crucial in the Roman system.
⁴⁷⁷ B.J. 6.206: “τὰ μὲν παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις δουλεία, κἂν ζῆσωμεν ἐπ᾽ αὐτοὺς, φθάνει δὲ καὶ δουλείαν ὁ λιμός...”
⁴⁷⁸ B.J. 6.206: “...οἱ στασιασταὶ δ᾽ ἁμφότεροι χαλεπώτεροι.”
options; Eleazar, on the other hand, is represented as displaying no passion, and chooses death for the Sicarii and their women and children after deliberation.

Josephus here is largely concerned with displaying the ethics of the Sicarii. Eleazar, “after gathering together the manliest of his comrades, was exhorting [them] to the action in words of this sort,” (“τοὺς ἀνδρωδεστάτους τῶν ἑταίρων συναγαγὼν τοιούτους ἐπὶ τὴν πράξιν λόγοις παρεκάλει,” B.J. 7.322). The juxtaposition of praxis and logoi is Josephus’s way of signalling the ethical dilemma to be played out in the tragedy of the events at Masada. As Aristotle comments in the Poetics, the first indicator of character in a tragedy is whether the “logos or praxis” of a person in a play reveals a choice (proairesis); if the choice is good, then the character is good. Josephus has clearly stated in his own speech at Jotapata in book 3 that suicide is a bad choice because it is contrary to the nature of men and animals and is an act of impiety against the God who created them. Eleazar’s choice of suicide, therefore, is bad. By extension,

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479 Eleazar has received the physical and mental visual data upon which to create decision, but Josephus does not attribute any emotion to him. The difference between Mary and Eleazar’s reactions is not based on gender, because Titus and Josephus himself, who are represented as “good” characters, do display emotion by weeping, groaning, etc.

480 It is natural to view a mass suicide as a “tragedy” and correct to see Josephus’s account as dramatic in general. Yadin (1966), p. 232, introduces chapter 18, “The Dramatic End,” with the following statement: “It was then that the tragic drama was enacted on the summit of Masada. It seems appropriate to include here the detailed description of that dramatic event in the words of Josephus.” He then quotes Josephus verbatim, without comment.

481 Aristotle, Poetics 1454a17-19: “ἔξει δὲ ἡθος μὲν ἐὰν ὡστερ ἐλέξηθη ποιή ἑφανερὸν οὐ λόγος ἢ ἢ πράξεις προαίρεσιν τινα ἢ τις ἢ ἢ, χρηστόν δὲ ἐὰν χρηστήν.” I do not imagine that Josephus read this work, but the theory could easily have been transmitted through a source/handbook which he did read. An article by S. Mason, “An Essay in Character: The Aim and Audience of Josephus’s Life” (soon to be published in Münsteraner jüdisch-studien, Bd. 2, ed. Folker Siegert, Münster, 1998), argues that Josephus uses ethos as the organizing principle underlying the Vita.

482 B.J. 3.369: “ἀλλὰ μὴν ἡ αὐτοχειρία καὶ τῆς κοινῆς ἀπάντων ζώρων φύσεως ἀλλότριον καὶ πρὸς τὸν κτίσαντα θεὸν ἡμᾶς ἐστιν ἁσέβεια.”
since his choice of *praxis* is bad, his *ethos* is bad, which completely supports Josephus’s picture of the Sicarii up to this point.

Though Josephus calls Eleazar’s chosen audience “the manliest,” he is not implying that they are also “good.” Just as Josephus insists in the prologue to the *Bellum* that the Jews are worthy opponents militarily, he is showing here that these Sicarii are capable of mounting a decent defense; otherwise, Silva’s victory would be hollow. This is typical: for instance, Tacitus similarly will emphasize that the Romans under Agricola a few years later faced Britons who were in their prime and distinguished in battle, thus enhancing Agricola’s victory. Tacitus, furthermore, describes the chieftain Calgacus who speaks to the Britons as a man “among the many leaders excelling in virtue and birth,” ("inter plures duces virtute et genere praestans"). As Ogilvie and Richmond note, “the coupling of *virtute* and *genere* is a cliché.” Josephus is well aware of this commonplace: he has given us Eleazar’s *genus*, and now will display that the latter does not have *virtus*.

Eleazar’s two speeches have been carefully dissected by scholars for their structure, arguments, echoes of Greek philosophy, relationship to other speeches and themes in the *Bellum*, and possible political connotations in Rome where Josephus composed them. These speeches have never, however, been analyzed as part of the trajectory of choices in the Roman game of imperialism, which Josephus has been so carefully outlining in the latter half of book 7. Josephus deliberately employs the language of

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483 Josephus makes this ethical concern clear in his own case when he concludes his *Vita*: “These are the things I have done in my whole life; from these let others judge my charcter as they wish,” (*Vita* 430: “Ταύτα μὲν τὰ πεπραγμένα μοι διὰ παντὸς τοῦ βίου ἐστίν, κρινέτωσαν δ’ ἐξ αὐτῶν τὸ ἱθος ὡς ἄν ἐθέλωσιν ἄλλοι.”).  
484 Tacitus, *Agricola* 29.4: “...et adhuc adfluebat omnis iuventus et quibus cruda ac viridis senectus, clari bello et sua quisque decora gestantes.” Josephus is hardly as poetic as Tacitus about the enemy.  
485 *Agr. 29.4.*  
choice in these speeches, while on another level he presents the speeches in antithesis to his own in book 3.\footnote{Cohen (1982), p. 397, puts it succinctly: “Josephus gives us a **logos** and an **antilogos**, a speech in book III condemning suicide and a speech in book VII lauding it.”}

Set speeches, a standard fixture in Graeco-Roman historiography, have already figured prominently in this history. Starting with Agrippa’s in book 2, they predominantly grapple with the issue of Roman rule over the Jews.\footnote{\textit{B.J.} 2.345-401. Thackeray (1928), vol. 3, pp. 600-601, n. a, points out, “This speech [Eleazar’s second one] at the close of the war forms a sort of counterpart to that of Agrippa before its outbreak.”} Agrippa and Josephus both speak to the Jews in the \textit{Bellum} in an effort to convince them to suppress their belated passion for liberty, submit to the Romans who have God on their side, and spare Jerusalem, her people, and her Temple.\footnote{See H. Lindner (1972), who analyzes these speeches together as a thematic unity.} By the time Eleazar speaks, Jerusalem is destroyed, which by Josephus’s logic makes resistance to Rome now even more pointless. Yet Eleazar will speak in the measured tones of a sophist (like his ancestor Judas) who can sway an audience with well-delivered words. From these words will spring a violent, tragic \textit{praxis}.

Set speeches in Graeco-Roman historiography also normally support the author’s opinion about why their characters have acted in a certain way. Josephus must offer a rhetorical formulation to fit the convention, while staying true to his apologetic message. Eleazar’s first speech hinges on the choice of freedom as opposed to slavery. The rebel leader states that they as a group have already rejected “enduring a safe slavery”\footnote{\textit{B.J.} 7.324: “\textit{δουλείαν ἀκίνδυνον ὑπομείνατες.”}} and that they, therefore, cannot submit now. “Endurance”, as we have seen, is redefined in the first century as a rejection of submitting to the Roman authorities (here, in the form of slavery) in favor of embracing a heroic, defiant death. Josephus hardly condones this attitude, but he is an astute enough observer of Roman society to recognize this as a real expression of political opposition. He, therefore, endows his
character Eleazar with an argument which uses the endurance motif in order to alert his audience to what kind of man they are encountering here.

Eleazar presents his opinion of what choice they should make. He couches it as a God-given opportunity. He has opened his speech by acknowledging God as “the only true and right master of men”\(^{491}\) (as opposed to Roman rule), and now he opines: “I think that this favor has been granted from God to have it in our power to die well and in freedom, the very thing which others who have been conquered unexpectedly have not had.”\(^{492}\) Eleazar seeks the position of power, a “win” in the parlance of game theory, and death is the vehicle to achieve it. He adds that “others” have not enjoyed such a choice, and, therefore, they have lost their opportunity to score a win.

To show that this is, indeed, a conscious choice, and part of his long explication of choices in book 7, Josephus has Eleazar articulate this explicitly. The rebel leader presents the options: “capture” (“ἀλωσις”) or “free is the choice of noble death with our loved ones,” (“ἐλευθέρα δ’ ἡ τοῦ γενναίου θανάτου μετὰ τῶν φιλτάτων αἵρεσις,” B.J. 7.326). The hairesis is death, it is noble, and family members will be involved. Eleazar concludes his first speech by stressing that this is, in fact, a conscious choice. They will destroy all their property,\(^{493}\) but they will leave their food supply

\(^{491}\) B.J. 7.323: “μόνος γὰρ ὃς ἀληθῆς ἔστι καὶ δίκαιος ἀνθρώπων δεσπότης.”
\(^{492}\) B.J. 7.325: “νομίζω δὲ καὶ παρὰ θεού ταύτην δεδόσθαι χάριν τοῦ δύνασθαι καλῶς καὶ ἐλευθέρως ἀποθανεῖν, ὀπερ ἄλλοις οὐκ ἐγένετο παρ’ ἐλπίδα κρατιθείσιν.”

\(^{493}\) S. Cohen (1982), pp. 386-392, lists sixteen cases in ancient historical accounts which “closely parallel the Masada incident as a whole” in terms of property destruction and suicide. Ladouceur (1987), pp. 106-109, assails Cohen’s survey approach spanning several centuries and authors, since one cannot establish immediate relevance between these authors and Josephus. He also finds that Cohen has forced the material to fit his overall thesis, which, as he points out, is a variant of Yadin’s, that Josephus “forgot that he wished to heap opprobrium, not approbation, on them [the Sicarii].” Ladouceur is quite right to counter that Josephus “may scarcely be dismissed as a forgetful fool.”
intact as a sign to the Romans that they were not starving, but that they “chose death instead of slavery.”

One cannot, however, reduce this scene simply to a matter of human choice. Josephus as a Jewish historian emphasizes the role of God in history and has Eleazar remark that they should have “guessed at the judgement of God and realized that the race of Jews once beloved to Him had been condemned.” The proof of this is in the destruction of “His holiest city.” Eleazar undercuts any claims of innocence or vain hopes, declaring that God is “bringing in necessity in the terrible [events].” This ἀνάγκη will figure prominently in his second speech. Josephus explains through Eleazar that God has taken away their salvation and then why they suffer: it is God’s “anger for all the wrongs, which we in our madness dared to do to our own race.”

As many scholars have noted, the rebel leader, speaking for Josephus, firmly pins the blame upon his own group for bringing divinely sanctioned destruction upon Jerusalem and the Jewish people. They do not, however, point out that Josephus is using the language of tragedy when he describes them as “raging” and suffering under “necessity.” Agrippa in his speech in book 2 has used the same participle, μανέντες, to characterize the impending rebellion of the Jews, when he asks them, “What prevents you from killing with your own hands your children and wives and from burning up this extraordinarily beautiful country? For by raging in this way, you will at

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494 B.J. 7.336: “θάνατον ἑλόμενοι πρὸ δουλείας.”  
495 B.J. 7.327: “...τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ γνώμης στοχάζεσθαι καὶ γινώσκειν ὅτι τὸ πάλαι φίλον αὐτῷ φύλου Ἰουδαίων κατέγνωστο.”  
496 B.J. 7.328: “τὴν ἱερωτάτην αὐτοῦ πόλιν.”  
497 B.J. 7.330: “τὴν ἐν τοῖς δεινοῖς ἀνάγκην ἑπαγαγών.”  
498 B.J. 7.332: “ἐστὶ ταύτα χόλος πολλῶν ἀδικημάτων, ἃ μανέντες εἰς τοὺς ὀμοφύλους ἐτολμήσαμεν.” Again, note that any activity involving τόλμα is negative with regard to the Sicarii.  
499 A. Eckstein(1990) argues that Josephus has borrowed the terminology logical action vs. mania from Polybius; see especially p. 191.
least gain the lesser shame.” His speech anticipates both the destruction of Jerusalem and the mass suicide at Masada. Titus also touches upon this theme in his speech to the “tyrants” Simon and John, in which he charges them for “having destroyed the people, the city, and the Temple with inconsiderate fury and madness.” Agrippa and Titus both speak for the author when they blame the destruction upon tragic madness.

The tragedy and spectacle are heightened when Eleazar stops speaking and the crowd reacts. Some of these “manly men” respond positively, thinking this death “καλῶν;” others, however, are “softer,” and “pity for the women and children” affects them, an entirely appropriate tragic response. “By gazing steadfastly at one another with tears in their eyes,” Josephus says, these men signalled that they did not want to carry out the idea. Josephus again uses the visual language, here to convey their emotion and their mode of communication. He likewise portrays Eleazar “seeing” them wavering and responding harshly to them while “looking intently upon the men crying.” Josephus has already described himself as using the same visual tactic upon his men at Jotapata after his first speech against suicide in book 3. Though his men surround him like hunters, he wards them off with a variety of devices, including

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500 B.J. 2.395: “τί δὲ κωλύει ταῖς ἐαυτῶν χερσίν διαχρήσασθαι τέκνα καὶ γυναῖκας καὶ τὴν περικαλλεστάτην πατρίδα ταύτην καταφλέξαι: μικρόνες γὰρ οὕτως τὸ γε τῆς ἠττήσεις οὐκ ἐπιθυμεῖς κερδήσετε.”
501 B.J. 6.328: “ὀρμὴ δὲ ἀσκέπτω καὶ μανία τὸν τε δήμου καὶ τὴν πόλιν καὶ τὸν ναὸν ἀπολωλέκοτες.” He concludes that they, too, are “justly doomed.” Josephus uses the same language in the Vita when he explains that he had attempted to warn the Jews (like a prophet) not to revolt; he states: “I did not, however, persuade them; for the madness of the desperadoes was very strong,” (Vita 19: “οὐ μὴν ἔπεισα· πολὺ γὰρ ἢ τῶν ἀπονηπθέντων ἐπεκράτησεν μανία”).
502 B.J. 7.338: “…τοὺς δ᾽ αὐτῶν μαλακωτέρους γυναικῶν καὶ γενεὰς οἴκτος εἰσήγη…”
503 B.J. 7.338: “…εἰς τε ἀλλήλους ἀποβλέπουτες τοῖς δακρύοις τὸ μὴ βουλόμενον τῆς γνώμης ἐσθήμαινον.”
504 B.J. 7.339: “τοῦτοις ἵδον Ἑλεάζαρος ἀποδειλιὼντας…”
505 B.J. 7.341: “…τοῖς δακρύσουσιν ἄτενες ἐμβλέψας.”
“fixing his general’s eye of command” upon one of them. The connection between Eleazar’s speech and that of Josephus is not just thematic, as others have pointed out; Josephus is also deliberately comparing them as characters in a drama who use visual techniques in an attempt to sway an audience. Both Josephus and Eleazar as speaking (and gazing) characters succeed in their deliberative efforts, but Josephus the historian is hoping to convince his audience that the praxeis of these two characters are very different.

The first portion of Eleazar’s second speech addresses his men’s fear of death in philosophical fashion, redolent with allusions to Greek literature. In essence, he argues that death will be freedom for their souls, and nothing to fear, since “living is man’s misfortune, not death.” Morel has found close verbal parallels between Eleazar’s comments about the soul and certain passages in Plato, including the Phaedrus and Phaedo. Luz, however, has argued that Josephus is using stock Platonic themes found “in the general Hellenistic discussions of death, especially in the consolation-literature.” He rightly sees two major themes: suicide is allowable according to God’s will and ἀνάγκη, and the consolation that “death is the greatest good and life is a disaster.”

506 Thackeray’s translation of BJ. 3.385: “...τῷ δὲ στρατηγῶτερον ἐμβλέπων...” His other tactics include: addressing a man by name, grasping one’s right hand, and shaming another.
508 BJ. 7.344 and 343: “συμφορὰ τὸ ζῆν ἐστιν ἀνθρώποις, οὐχὶ θάνατος.”
510 M. Luz, “Eleazar’s Second Speech on Masada and its Literary Precedents,” Rheinisches Museum für Philologie 126 (1983), pp. 25-43, here p. 32. He conjectures that Clearchus may have been a source for this philosophical material.
The second portion of Eleazar’s second speech, 7.358-388, covers historically-based events of Jewish suffering during and after the war. Luz views this section as a “list of the evils of life,” a theme which figures prominently in the literature of consolation. Eleazar first remarks upon killings of Jews by non-Romans, and then adds that those who survived the fighting against the Romans have suffered torture and have been thrown to the wild beasts for the amusement of their conquerors (B.J. 7.373). Eleazar crowns the list by conjuring up a vision of a desolate Jerusalem: “Wretched old men sit by the ashes of the sacred precinct and a few women kept by the enemy for most shameful outrage.” The situation is tragic, as is the language (δύστηνοι, σποδῶ). Eleazar asks whether they wish to stay alive to “see wives taken away to be raped” and to “hear the voice of a child crying out ‘Father!’ when his own hands have been bound.” This reverse ‘Aqedah foreshadows the reverse Passover to come. Eleazar concludes his second speech with a call for haste to the deed, so that the Romans will experience “consternation from our death and astonishment at the daring.”

Eleazar cannot even finish his parakeleusis/consolatio because his audience is so inspired that they tragically “hasten to the praxis.” They have just listened to a logical, philosophical argument, yet, ironically, passion overwhelms them, as they are described as “being possessed.” Even eros is here: “so great an eros for slaughtering...”

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513 B.J. 7.377: “πρεσβύται δὲ δύστηνοι τῇ σποδῶ τοῦ τεμένους παρακάθηνται καὶ γυναίκες ὀλίγαι πρὸς ὑβριν αἰσχίστην ὕπὸ τῶν πολεμίων τετηρημέναι.”
514 On δύστηνος, LSJ states: “poet. Adj. 1. mostly of persons, as always in Hom. and mostly Trag.;” on σποδῶ, it states: “There seems to be no difference between σποδῶς and τέφρα: both occur in Trag., the latter alone in Att. Prose.” The latter is found in 2 Macc. 13.5 ff.
515 B.J. 7.385: “ἀφεταί τις γυναῖκα πρὸς βίαν ἄγομένην, φωνῆς ἐπακούεται τέκνου πατέρα βοῶντος χείρας δεδεμένος;”
516 B.J. 7.388: “...ἐκπλήξιν τοῦ βανάτου καὶ βαύζια τῆς τόλμης.”
their women and children fell upon them.”519 Unlike the episode with Mary in book 6, Josephus offers the details of them embracing and kissing their loved ones for the last time, and labels the killing a pre-mediated praxis (B.J. 7.390), carried out according to the dictates of their logic (B.J. 7.390-392).

This is an act of tremendous audacity (τόλμημα), from which no one flinches.520 Ladouceur has shown convincingly that Thackeray’s translation of this term (“daring deed” here, but “fortitude” at 7.405) and of others in the Masada episode are colored by the editor’s own impression that Josephus is delivering “an unequivocally laudatory presentation of the defenders.”521 As Ladouceur points out, Josephus uses words related to the verb φονεύω (“murder”) to describe the actions of the Sicarii not in order to praise them.522 This does not prevent the historian, however, from offering a tragic aside after the men have killed their loved ones: “wretched victims of necessity, to whom to kill their own wives and children seemed to be the lightest of evils.”523 Josephus injects tragic ἀνάγκη into his account, yet he condemns the act committed.524

519 B.J. 7.389: “τοσούτος αὐτοῖς γυναῖκών καὶ παιδίων καὶ τῆς αὐτῶν σφαγῆς ἔρως ἐνέπεσεν.”
520 B.J. 7.393: “καὶ πέρας οὐδεὶς τηλικοῦτον τολμήματος ἤττων εὐρέθη.”
523 B.J. 7.393: “ἀθλιοί τῆς ἀνάγκης, οἱς αὐτοχειρὶ γυναῖκας τὰς αὐτῶν καὶ τέκνα κτεῖναι κακῶν ἐδοξεν εἶναι τὸ κουφότατον.”
524 As a contrast, one can examine the self-inflicted death of Phasael, Herod’s brother. When under arrest, he dashed his head against a rock in order to kill himself. Josephus opines here: “He showed himself to be a legitimate brother of Herod and that Hyyr anus was least noble, and he died in a most manly way, making a fitting end for life’s deeds,” (B.J. 1.271: “κάκεινος μὲν, Ἡρώδου γνήσιον ἐστιν ἄποδείξας ἄδειλον καὶ Ὄρκανόν ἀγεννεστατόν, ἀνδρείατα θυμήσε, ποιημένους τὴν καταστροφὴν τοῖς κατὰ τὸν βίον ἔργοις πρέπουσαν”). Josephus even explains that there was an alternate story that Phasael survived the blow and that Antigonus sent a doctor to put poison into the wound. The historian then adds: “whichever [story of his death] is true,
Josephus explains in detail how the men carry out their murderous praxis and their final motivations. They draw lots to choose ten men to kill the rest of the men, who, in turn, then draw lots to kill each other, and the last man sets the palace on fire and slays himself. The historian remarks that they gained courage from the knowledge that no one’s action or suffering was different. Solidarity, therefore, and defiance against Rome taking anyone alive are what mark the historian’s final portrayal of their thinking while committing suicide.

The date Josephus gives for this mass suicide, 15 Xanthicus/Nisan, i.e. the Jewish Passover, is as loaded with meaning in this text (for the Jewish author and his Jewish audience) as the date of the destruction of the Temple. Eleazar has been arguing for it [his death] had an illustrious catalyst,” (B.J. 1.272: “Ὅποτερον ἐὰν ἀληθές ἦν, τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐξεὶ λαμπράν”). Killing oneself, therefore, is not automatically ignoble in the author’s presentation, despite Josephus’s speech in book 3; it entirely depends on the circumstances and the players involved.

525 Yadin (1966), pp. 197 and 201, considered the discovery of the eleven ostraca bearing men’s names at “one of the most strategic spots on Masada” their most “spectacular” discovery. One of these clearly has the name “Ben Ya’ir” on it, and Yadin concludes, “The inscription of plain ‘Ben Ya’ir’ on Masada at that particular time could have referred to no other than Eleazar ben Ya’ir.”

526 S. Cohen (1982), p. 397, and n. 39, argues that Josephus has transferred the lottery motif from the scene at Jotapata (B.J. 3.388 ff.) to this episode at Masada, and notes the wide use of lottery in first-century Judaism. Cohen’s article attempts historical reconstruction of the events while recognizing its fictional elements. (The description of the serial nature of the killings has not only served as a model of steadfastness to modern Israeli troops; it also has inspired a Stanford mathematician, Prof. Knuth, to develop an equation to solve the “Flavius Josephus problem.” My thanks to D. S. Wilson for pointing out this modern application.)

527 B.J. 7.396. Ladouceur (1987), p. 105, cogently observes: “The suicide he portrays is retributive, both atonement for and acknowledgement of crimes against the rebels’ own countrymen. In Eleazar’s enumeratio malorum, the suicide becomes a means of escaping brutal Roman punishment. The irony lies in the fact that the defenders display resolution not in fighting the Romans but in murder and suicide.”

528 Passover as a date of killing is thematically significant also in the Graeco-Jewish-Christian writings from this period, especially the Gospel of John.

529 Josephus has mentioned Passover before in the B.J.: 2.10 (a feast of many sacrifices), 2.224 (many Roman soldiers on duty because of Passover, and one offends the crowd, in late 40s/early 50s), 2.244 (the Roman governor of Syria, Quadratus, is happy to see that a peaceful Passover is celebrated), 2.280 (Jews complain vehemently during Passover to
deliverance through death, yet the suicides are intentionally ironic⁵³⁰ in light of the Jewish significance of Passover as a celebration of escape from death in Egypt. Just as Eleazar speaks of the father, who cannot bear to be bound while his son cries out, in a grotesque reversal of the binding of Isaac, so, too, Josephus presents the Sicarii as participating in a tragic yet impious reversal of the Passover. The link between these two events is crucial here. I. Jacobs remarks that:

…the Book of Jubilees—which was known to the defenders of Massada [sic]—preserves a much older tradition that the Akedah occurred on the 15th Nisan. It is an interesting coincidence, therefore, that the day on which Eleazar b. Yair and his companions sacrificed themselves and their families, was, according to Josephus, 15th Xanthikos=15th Nisan.⁵³¹

This, however, is no coincidence, since Josephus certainly indicates the connection. The Roman audience unfamiliar with Jewish festival dates would probably not have understood the significance of this link, but his hellenized Jewish audience easily would have recognized the author ironically undermining Eleazar’s message and the mass suicide of the defenders.⁵³²

⁵³⁰ Cohen (1982), p. 393, n. 23, refutes Ladouceur’s (1980, p. 259) desire to see irony in Josephus’s use of adjectives describing the defenders. Irony is clearly evident with the Passover date, and does seem to pervade the entire episode.
⁵³² Philo would have. See his de Abrahamo 33.180-183, where he promotes the superiority of the sacrifice of Isaac over Greek sacrifices of children and over the self-immolation of the Gymnosophists and their wives.
Josephus now gives us the response of the Romans to this deed. He reports that the Roman soldiers expected a battle the following morning. Instead when they advance, “they see none of the enemy, but terrible desolation everywhere, and fire within, and silence.”\textsuperscript{533} Their senses are confounded; the spectacle is unexpected. They shout out, and the two women whom Josephus has reported as surviving the slaughter along with five children, emerge from the underground aqueducts. One of the two, a relative of Eleazar’s whom he has already praised for being “smarter and better trained than most women,”\textsuperscript{534} “explains clearly both everything said and how they were done.”\textsuperscript{535} If she is to play the role of eyewitness in an “accurate” account, Josephus has to establish her reliability, even though a woman. The historian reflects in the soldiers’ response what perhaps he expected would be his own audience’s response to his account: “they surely could not easily give heed to her because they could not believe the magnitude of the audacious deed.”\textsuperscript{536} Again, as stated before, this “audacity” is not admirable, especially given that it is dispayed by the opposition to Rome and Josephus’s own enemies. Josephus is hardly writing literature promoting the opposition’s cause!

In this narrative, seeing is believing, and the sight is often not pleasant, as is usual in tragedy. When the Romans succeed in putting out the fire in order to enter the palace, “they encounter the mass of the murdered and they do not take pleasure as if

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\item \textsuperscript{533} \textit{B.J.} 7.403: “βλέποντες δ’ οὐδένα τῶν πολεμίων, ἀλλὰ δεινὴν πανταχόθεν ἔρημίαν καὶ πῦρ ἐνδον καὶ σιωπήν...”
\item \textsuperscript{534} \textit{B.J.} 7.399: “φρονήσει καὶ παιδείᾳ πλεῖστων γυναίκων διαφέρουσα.” Josephus uses this same idea of difference from the rest of the female gender when describing his own distinguished (third) wife from Crete: “in character she differed from many women, as her subsequent life showed,” (\textit{Vita} 427: “ἡθεὶ πολλῶν γυναίκων διαφέρουσαν”). His first wife left him (V. 415) and his second wife from Alexandria (V. 415) he divorced because “he was displeased with her character (“τοῖς ἡθεῖοι”).” “Character” is the rubric in the \textit{Vita}.
\item \textsuperscript{535} \textit{B.J.} 7.404: “πάντα τῆς ἐτέρας ὡς ἔλεχθη τε καὶ τίνα τρόπον ἐπράχθη σαφῶς ἐκδιπλομενής.”
\item \textsuperscript{536} \textit{B.J.} 7.405: “...οὐ μήν ῥαδίως αὐτῇ προσεῖσθον τῷ μεγέθει τοῦ τολμήματος ἀπιστούντες...”
\end{itemize}
over enemies.” Josephus again uses the verb for “murder,” which does not glorify the deed. As with Titus and the burning Temple, the Romans here are not pleased with the way this destruction occurred.

Modern scholars cannot agree on how to interpret the reaction which Josephus ascribes to the Romans after stating their lack of triumphant rejoicing. The historian states that “they are astonished at the nobility of their resolution and the unswerving contempt of death among so many in the deeds.” Thackeray translates “ἐθαύμασαν” as “admired.” More recent interpreters also want to see Roman admiration for Jewish resolve in this account, and, therefore, ignore other shades of meaning or even irony in the presentation.

David Ladouceur, however, has written two articles examining not only the rhetorical twists in this Masada episode but also, more importantly, the political context and possible audience response to such a rhetorical text. As observed above, Ladouceur reads Josephus’s Greek and sees “murder” and “audacity,” not the tamer “slay” and “fortitude.” He, too, sees irony: “γενναιότητα τοῦ βουλεύματος, a phrase reminiscent of that used in descriptions of martyrs’ deaths, may well be ironic, therefore, especially when so closely joined with τῶν πεφυγεμένων, ‘the murdered’, not simply ‘the slain’ (Thackeray).” Furthermore, he observes about the phrase

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537 B.J. 7.406: “καὶ τῷ πλήθει τῶν πεφυγεμένων ἐπιτυχόντες ούχ ὡς ἐπὶ πολεμίως ἠρήνησαν...”

538 Ladouceur (1980 and 1987) makes this point, which others seem reluctant to acknowledge. Thackeray (1928) translates it as “of the slain,” thereby taking the teeth out of Josephus’s remark.

539 B.J. 7.406: “...τὴν δὲ γενναιότητα τοῦ βουλεύματος καὶ τὴν ἐν τοσούτοις ἀτρεπτοῖς ἐπὶ τῶν ἔργων ἐθαύμασαν τοῦ θανάτου καταφρόνησιν.”

540 Michel and Bauernfeind (1969), vol. 2, pt. 2, p. 149, also see admiration when they translate it as “bewunderten sie.” Unfortunately neither English nor German has a word which reflects the multiplicity of meanings in θαυμάζω.

541 Yadin (1966), whose book has fallen into a myriad more hands than any academic tome, has had the greatest impact upon modern perceptions of this account.


“ἀτρεπτον...καταφρόνησιν” (B.J. 7.406): “The terms as Feldman has noted, seem to have Stoic coloring, but this does not necessarily imply Roman admiration for the dead.”

Ladouceur offers a political explanation for why Josephus would have gone to the trouble of creating two elegant set speeches for Eleazar as a response to his own in book 3. Drawing on MacMullen’s observation that the political opposition to the Flavians used encoded, allusive language to express their discontent, Ladouceur sees Josephus recognizing this as a feature of the literature and politics of his day, and, therefore, he “seems to invest the figure [of Eleazar] with certain philosophical characteristics, the political significance of which would not be lost on a Graeco-Roman audience of the 70s.” He sums up the significance of Josephus’s presentation of his own speech in book 3 and those of Eleazar in book 7:

In a sense his own speech [at Jotapata] becomes not only a moral rejection of suicide but also an assertion of political allegiance to Vespasian and Titus. Opponents of the regime and perhaps more particularly those who venerated their models of suicide are left with the fanatic spouting the required lines from the Phaedo before enjoining his own and others’ suicide. While political conflict in Flavian Rome concerned power, not suicide, suicide cannot be dismissed as a mere gesture, given its central place in the preoccupations of the Opposition. The value of Eleazar’s speech against the opponents of the regime is obvious. Talk of freedom, slavery, suicide puts one in the same category as Jewish fanatics who killed themselves on a god-forsaken summit in Judaea.

Ladouceur seems bent upon dating this text to the 70s, but this is not necessary. After all, Tacitus, writing in the late 90s, sets his Dialogus in the 70s under Vespasian. The

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548 Tacitus, Dialogus 17.3.
author situates the dialogue in the context of Maternus’s dangerous rendition of his tragedy “Cato,” which Tacitus reports as offending those in power.\textsuperscript{549} Posing as a Cato did not score positive points with the Flavians and their supporters. Josephus is fully aware of this political situation, and, therefore, attributes to the Sicarii the same dangerous qualities of defiance towards Roman rule and choice of death over submission that marked the political opposition in Rome.

Ladouceur admits, “At first sight all this may appear too subtle and purposive.”\textsuperscript{550} Cohen leaps upon this, and throws his words back at him:

Ladouceur interprets the speech within the context of Roman politics of the Flavian era (Josephus makes Eleazar into a member of the philosophic opposition who would rather commit suicide than accept the principate) but this interpretation is much too subtle. It is also inappropriate. Vespasian’s opponents came from the senatorial aristocracy who wrote in Latin and looked back to the glorious days of the Roman Republic. A parvenue from the provinces writing in Greek was not the one to respond to them.\textsuperscript{551}

Rajak independently supports Cohen’s opinion by arguing that Ladouceur’s observation of the \textit{amor mortis} theme in Eleazar’s speech as a reflection of the philosophical opposition is putting it into a “sophisticated Roman context” which “is not that of Josephus.”\textsuperscript{552} One cannot help but wonder how Josephus would have been immune to absorbing this “sophisticated Roman context” when living and composing at Rome, while enjoying ties to the imperial court whom he was at least hoping to impress. Unfortunately, these critics of Ladouceur’s observations seem superficial in their reading of Josephus when they bank on him being an unsophisticated reader of the Romans and their political culture.\textsuperscript{553}

\textsuperscript{549} Ibid. 2.1: “\textit{cum offendisse potentium animos diceretur.”}
\textsuperscript{550} Ladouceur (1980), p. 256.
\textsuperscript{551} S. Cohen (1982), p. 386, n. 2.
\textsuperscript{553} Ladouceur has responded well to these criticisms in another article (1987), which clarifies his points and dismantles some of Cohen’s misapplication of other historical texts to the interpretation of this suicide scene in the \textit{Bellum}. 
The “madness” of resistance to Rome continues to play out on the international stage in the rest of Josephus’s narrative in book 7. With the capture of Masada, Josephus concludes, “not any of the enemy remained throughout the countryside.”

Judaea may be garrisoned and under control, but Josephus does not end his account here in the edition we have, since his narrative is dedicated to showing the “madness” of the Sicarii stamped out by the Romans. Some of the rebels have escaped to Egypt and Libya, and Josephus selects examples which trace them all the way to the banks of the Tiber in order to prove that the Romans punish those who madly oppose them, and ultimately God “punishes the wicked” (B.J. 7.453).

The first episode occurs at Alexandria. Certain Sicarii, according to Josephus, arrive there, stirring up the people with a message: “assume that the Romans are no better than yourselves, and believe that God alone is master.” This produces a reaction from the upper class Jews, whom the revolutionaries then kill. The class divisions among the Jews are pronounced in Josephus’s account at the end of book 7. The leaders of the gerousia, “seeing their madness,” speak of “the madness of the Sicarii” to the assembly of the Jews in order to keep the Sicarii from “infecting” them. The Sicarii are once again a disease, and the Jews of Alexandria respond by seizing six hundred immediately.

Roman justice comes into play now, and Josephus presents it as a spectator event. The rest of the rebels are tracked down and brought back. Josephus offers the reactions of the people who see them submit to torture: “There was no one who was not astounded at their endurance and, one could say, either their madness or their strength

554 B.J. 7.408: “οὐδὲ γὰρ ὑπελείπετο τις τῶν κατὰ τὴν χώραν πολεμίων.”
555 B.J. 7.410: “Ῥωμαίους μὲν μηδὲν κρείττους αὐτῶν ὑπολαμβάνειν, θεόν δὲ μόνον ἤγείσθαι δεσπότην.”
556 B.J. 7.412: “ὁρῶντες δ’ αὐτῶν τὴν ἀπόνοιαν.”
557 B.J. 7.412: “τὴν ἀπόνοιαν τῶν σικαρίων.”
558 B.J. 7.413: “ἀναπιμπλάναι.”
of purpose.” Josephus does not use the term hypomone, but clearly he is describing a perception of endurance which is enshrined in the martyr literature. Furthermore, he injects his oft repeated theme of madness, aponoia, lest we forget his particular interpretation of these matters involving Sicarii. The Sicarii are reported as undergoing “every form of torture and maiming of their bodies.” The historian does not excuse or whitewash the brutality of the Romans; it is simply a fact of life. Instead, he explains that this punishment is devised solely to make the Sicarii “agree that Caesar is master.” We do not have here any elaboration on how many times they are asked to swear it, as we do in Pliny’s letter to Trajan on the trials of the Christians that he conducted as governor in Bithynia. Josephus, however, does emphasize their ability to accept the torture and fire “as if with unfeeling bodies, but with a rejoicing soul.”

He closes this scene with a picture of children being tortured in front of spectators and their reaction. There is no tragic apostrophe directed to these youths, nor is the label “athlioi” applied to them. Josephus simply observes:

But the age of the children struck the spectators the most, for not a single one of them was won over by force to call Caesar master. So greatly, then, did the strength of their boldness overcome the weakness of their bodies.

559 B.J. 7.417: “ἐφ’ ὤν οὐκ ἔστιν ὡς οὐ τὴν καρτερίαν καὶ τὴν εἴτ’ ἀπόνοιαν εἴτε τῆς γνώμης ἱσχύν χρῆ λέγειν οὐ κατεπλάγη.”
560 B.J. 7.418: “πάσης γὰρ ἐπ’ αὐτοῦ βασάνου καὶ λύμης τῶν σωμάτων ”
561 Eckstein (1990), p. 204, argues that neither Polybius nor Josephus speaks at length about the benefits of Roman rule; instead, they share the same outlook that Roman power was a fact, and whether it was oppressive or not, the ruled had to face it.
562 B.J. 7.418: “ὁπως αὐτῶν Καίσαρα δεσπότην ὀμολογήσωσιν.”
563 Pliny Ep. 10.96.
564 B.J. 7.418: “ὡσπερ ἀναισθήτους οὖσας χαιρούση μόνον οὐχὶ τῇ ψυχῇ τᾶς βασάνους καὶ τὸ πῦρ δεχόμενοι.”
565 B.J. 7.419: “μάλιστα δ’ ἢ τῶν παίδων ἡλικία τοῦς θεωμένους ἔξεπληξεν· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐκείνων τις ἐξενικήθη Καίσαρα δεσπότην ἐξονομᾶσαι. τοσοῦτον ἀρα τῆς τῶν σωμάτων ἀσθενείας ἢ τῆς τόλμης ἵσχυς ἐπεκράτει.”
Clearly the crowd is stunned by the spectacle of children who are willing to suffer so horribly for a cause. Thirty-five years later, when Pliny expresses his concern to Trajan about how to carry out his investigations of charges brought against “Christians,” the first issue he raises is that of age: “I have grave doubts whether there should be any distinction of ages, or whether the young, however tender the years, should be in no way differentiated from the stronger.”

The emperor, however, never responds concerning the question of the age of those brought in on accusations. The torture and execution of children was a reality of Roman justice, albeit an uncomfortable one even for someone like Pliny administering it.

Josephus’s Jewish audience may have perceived a link between these children at Alexandria and the seven sons in 2 and 4 Maccabees, but Josephus does not mention a mother or her words encouraging martyrdom. He, therefore, is not writing hagiography of any sort. Instead, we are left with the spectators, who are struck by the strength of the children’s tolme. Even as children they may exhibit audacity and have control over their own ability to feel pain, but ultimately the Romans win. Josephus does not record a moral victory for these Sicarii, even though the spectators are astounded. He does, however, show that defying Roman power means death, even for the very young.

Josephus rounds out his account of affairs in Egypt under Lupus by explaining the closure of the Jewish temple of Onias at Leontopolis. He reports that the emperor ordered this done because he “suspected and was afraid of the incessant revolutionary spirit of the Jews,” “ὁ δὲ τῶν Ἰουδαίων τὴν ἀκατάπαυστον ύφορώμενος νεωτεροποίαν καὶ δείσας” (B.J. 7.421). Josephus is most likely borrowing his terminology from Thucydides, who uses almost the same phrasing to describe the

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566 Pliny Ep. 10.96: “nec mediocriter haesitavi, sitne aliquod discrimen aetatum, an quamlibet teneri nihil a robustiores differant.”

567 Pliny Ep. 10.97.
Spartans’ fears about the Athenians, who have come down into the Peloponnese to help quell the revolt against Sparta in Ithome: “they were afraid of the daring and the revolutionary spirit of the Athenians,” “δείσαντες τῶν Ἀθηναίων τὸ τολμηρὸν καὶ τὴν νεωτεροποίησιν.”⁵⁶⁸ Fear and the desire to foment revolution appear here, as well as the theme of “boldness,” which Josephus attributes in the negative sense constantly to the rebels in the Bellum. Both historians are analysts who see how fear can affect the decision-making of rulers.

Josephus, however, is in no way condemning the emperor’s action. He, in fact, approves of the emperor’s decision to close the temple. He presents a history of the foundation of the temple by the fugitive priest Onias in the second century B.C.E. and a description of the temple and its fixtures. This leads the historian’s explanation of why Onias founded his temple: “Onias surely did not do these things with sound judgement, but he was in rivalry with those Jews in Jerusalem, since he held on to his anger for his exile, and thought that by founding this temple he could divert the masses away from them [in Jerusalem] to it.”⁵⁶⁹ Josephus, as a priest of the (former) Temple in Jerusalem, does not approve of the renegade’s motive for establishing a rival temple at all, and presents it as the fulfilment of a prophecy of Isaiah (B.J. 7.432). Heavy Jewish interpretation completes this section, when, after detailing the method of the Roman closure of the temple, he reports that it was in operation for 343 years (B.J. 7.436). The editor Thackeray reports Eisler’s explanation of this “incorrect” number of years (it should be about 100 less) as the length of seven jubilees, or 7x7x7.⁵⁷⁰ Josephus never explains the significance of the number nor does he call the closure of the temple God’s

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⁵⁶⁸ Thuc. 1.102.3.
⁵⁶⁹ B.J. 7.431: “οὐ μὴν Ὄνιας ἐξ ὑγίους γνώμης ταῦτα ἔπραττεν, ἀλλ’ ἤν αὐτῷ φιλονεικία πρὸς τοὺς ἐν τοῖς ἱεροσολύμοις Ἰουδαίους ὀργήν τῆς φυγῆς ἀπομνημονεύσατο.”
⁵⁷⁰ Thackeray (1928), vol. 3, p. 627, n. c.
punishment. This, like the date of the mass suicide at Masada, is left cryptically for his Jewish audience, at least, to understand.

The fact that Josephus also has detailed the Roman method for closing the temple and then for dealing with the aftermath is also worth noting. He says that Lupus, the governor of Alexandria, received Vespasian’s orders, took some votive offerings out of the sanctuary and closed up the building (B.J. 7.433). His successor, Paulinus, however, has to contend with “priests” and “those wishing to worship at the sacred precinct.”

By closing the building, the Romans have not eradicated priestly or popular piety and their attachment to the location. The governor, therefore, demands the rest of the temple treasury be handed over, and the gates to the sanctuary closed, “so as to leave behind no longer a trace of worship to the god in the place.” The temple of Onias is not burned, but the Romans cannot allow it to operate as a potential center of political dissent. The game of Roman imperialism as it plays out in book 7 demands submission on every front.

The final example of “the madness of the Sicarii” which Josephus describes originates in Cyrene but eventually threatens the author himself in Rome. Again, this madness is “like a disease.” Josephus embodies this madness in a certain Jonathan, “a very base man and a weaver by trade.” According to Josephus, he leads a great number “of the poor folk” out into the desert to see signs and apparitions (B.J. 7.438). Just as the Sicarii have attacked the upper class in Alexandria, Jonathan, a man of simple means and bad character, works with the lower class in Cyrene. For Josephus, class is a convenient explanation of revolutionary phenomena: the upper class stands

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571 B.J. 7.434: “τοῖς ἱερεύσιν...τῷ τεμένει τοὺς θρησκεύειν βουλομένους.”
572 B.J. 7.435: “ὁς μὴ ἵχνος ἐτὶ τῆς εἰς τὸν θεόν θεραπείας ἐν τῷ τόπῳ καταλιπεῖν.”
573 B.J. 7.437: “ἡ τῶν σικάριων ἀπόνοια καθάπερ νόσος.”
574 B.J. 7.438: “Ἰωνάθης, ποιητότατος ἄνθρωπος καὶ τὴν τέχνην ύφάντης.”
for order, while the lower class and men of bad character unite against order. Roman power, however, will always subdue the latter.

Josephus carefully explains how Jonathan is apprehended by the Romans under the governor of the Libyan Pentapolis, Catullus, and then how Catullus abuses the situation to satisfy his own ambition. First of all, Josephus says Catullus used cavalry and infantry against the unarmed crowd of Jonathan’s followers. Afterwards, Jonathan fingers the “richest of the Jews” as the authors of the plot in order to divert punishment from himself. Josephus then delivers his condemnation of the Roman governor: Catullus exaggerates the whole affair “in order that he might seem to have won a Jewish war.” Catullus has Jonathan name the governor’s personal enemy, Alexander, and his wife, which leads to the eventual “murder” of three thousand Jews.

Josephus labels this “injustice,” and finally explains why this episode even appears at the end of his history. It is not simply that a Roman governor has abused his power in killing innocent Jews. It is the fact that he pulls “the author of this history, Josephus” into the fray by having Jonathan denounce Josephus along with others before Vespasian at Rome. Josephus reports that Titus intervenes on their behalf, and Jonathan receives “the punishment he deserved: he was burned alive after first being tortured.” Josephus is not writing sine ira et studio, but that was not his claim anyway. His goal is to show the wicked (i.e. the rebels and his personal enemies) suffer torture and death for their “madness.” Vespasian and Titus make their final

575 B.J. 7.442: “τοὺς πλουσιωτάτους τῶν Ἰουδαίων.”
576 B.J. 7.443: “ἵνα δόξειε καύτος Ἰουδαϊκὸν τινα πόλεμον κατωρθωκέναι.”
578 B.J. 7.447: “τὴν ἁδικίαν.”
579 B.J. 7.448: “Ἰώσηπος ὁ ταύτα συγγραζάμενος.”
580 B.J. 7.450: “δικὴν δ’ ἐπέθηκεν Ἰωνάθη τὴν προσήκουσαν ζωὴν γὰρ κατεκαύθη πρότερον αἰκισθείς.”
appearance in this history as “good rulers” who can distinguish between the good and the bad and who offer clemency when appropriate but punishment when necessary.

The tragedy of this war comes to a fitting end when his history concludes with a final scene: the death of Catullus. Catullus enjoys imperial clemency in the short term, but eventually God takes over and metes out his punishment. Schwartz has argued sensibly that this ending could not have been written until after the death of Catullus sometime in the mid-90s.\(^{581}\) When Josephus reports in his *Vita* Jonathan’s false charges that Josephus had supplied him with “weapons and money,”\(^{582}\) he never mentions Catullus and his intrigues. Perhaps Catullus was not yet dead when he composed the *Vita*. In any case, Josephus fashions a fitting end for his enemy: he is afflicted with a pervasive, incurable disease, and suffers both in his body and soul (*B.J*. 7.451), just as the Sicarii have. Furthermore, “he was crying out that he saw the ghosts of those he had murdered standing by him.”\(^{583}\) He even leaps out of bed, in his dementia, thinking that he is “under torture and put to the fire,”\(^{584}\) again, just as the Sicarii have been punished. Finally, his bowels erode and fall out, and he dies (*B.J*. 7.453). As Schwartz comments, “Catullus’s illness, as described by Josephus, is a topos,” and he adduces several examples from Josephus’s writings to prove this.\(^{585}\) Josephus, however, does expend much more detail upon Herod’s disease and death at the end of book 1,\(^{586}\) with special emphasis on the treatment for his maladies. Catullus’s death, on the other hand, is written to resemble the Roman torture and execution of the Sicarii as a final

\(^{581}\) Schwartz (1986), pp. 375-6, identifies this Catullus as L. Valerius Catullus Messalinus. The dating of Catullus’s death is based on Tacitus *Agricola* 45, which has “Messalinus” alive after the death of Agricola in August of 93, and offering his opinion in a rattling voice to Domitian in his villa at Alba Longa: “*intra Albanam arcem sententia Messalini strepebat.*”

\(^{582}\) *Vita* 424: “όπλα...καὶ χρῆματα.”

\(^{583}\) *B.J*. 7.452: “ἐβόα βλέπειν εἰδώλα τῶν ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ περονευμένων ἑφεστηκότα.”

\(^{584}\) *B.J*. 7.452: “ὡς βασάνων αὐτῷ καὶ πυρὸς προσφερομένων.”


\(^{586}\) *B.J*. 1.656 ff.
indictment of his attack against the author. Josephus makes this truly clear when he states at the end of his historical narrative that “this is proof no less than any other of the providence of God: he punishes the wicked.” In Josephus’s conclusion to his narrative, he provides a final aspect of the game of Roman power which he has been exploring in book 7: should the Roman authorities not exact proper or timely justice, God will.

Josephus tacks a short epilogue onto his history, restating the content and aim of his history. It has been written to show “with all accuracy...how this war was waged by the Romans against the Jews.” This has been a history devoted mostly to the exercise of Roman power and the various responses of the Jews to it. Book 7 offers a concentrated selection of several case studies of Roman imperialism in action. Josephus describes the encounters between Roman commanders with their armies and the Jewish rebels in various locations essentially in order to show how resistance to Rome leads to destruction. The report of the capture of Herodium is a quick example of the Romans overwhelming an opponent. The account of Machaerus displays Bassus’s ingenious use of spectacle and the rebel Eleazar’s wise decision to submit, despite his previous resistance. The Jews there at least save their own lives. When the Jews then try to resist Bassus at the forest of Jardes, their desperation is poor match for Roman discipline. The “digression” on the reverse tragedy of the royal house of Commagene serves Josephus’s aims well: submission can even earn one a comfortable existence and a happy ending (the best outcome one can hope for after resisting Rome). The strange episode concerning the Alani perhaps presents, albeit tangentially, the notion that life outside the perimeter of Roman rule can be chaotic and dangerous. The subsequent

587 B.J. 7.453: “οὐδενός ἦττον ἐτέρου τῆς προνοίας τοῦ θεοῦ τεκμήριον γενόμενος, ὦ τοῖς πονηροῖς δίκην ἐπιτίθησιν.”
588 B.J. 7.454: “πάσης ἀκριβείας...τίνα τρόπον ὁ τοσοῦ ὁ πόλεμος Ῥωμαίος πρὸς Ἰουδαίος ἐπολεμήθη,” echoing Thuc. 1.1.
episode of Masada, which is the centerpiece of the latter half of book 7 (just as the Flavian triumph crowns the first half), draws in the reader further to the conclusion that Rome is superior, starting with its extended description of Roman brilliance at siege warfare. Eleazar’s two set speeches are high-flown rhetoric meant to focus the reader on the futility of any form of resistance, military or intellectual, to Roman rule. The mass suicide in his account is a tragic spectacle, but it also is replete with irony that undercuts any heroism. The Sicarii are shown throughout the rest of the book as driven by “madness” and as the source of civil unrest, false charges, and murder. Josephus writes of their suffering torture and execution, but he does not glorify it as martyrdom. Finally, he closes his entire history with the divine punishment of a personal enemy, Catullus. When Roman power fails to pursue this villain, God takes over and punishes him in the way that the Romans have previously punished the Sicarii. In book 7 Josephus presents a concentrated series of examples explaining the supremacy of Roman power. The Jews may be the opponent in this history, but the lesson is there for others to read and understand.
Chapter Five: Conclusion

Concerning the truth, I would not hesitate to say with good courage that at this alone throughout my entire text I have aimed.589

Josephus may have written these final words to his Bellum in the hope that someone would reply, as did Creon in the Antigone to the Guard, after he has entered to report terrible news: “εὖ γε στοχάζει...”590 Josephus has played his role as angelos, and the tragedy is finally over.

Style was a matter Josephus left to us as readers to appreciate.591 In this dissertation, I have aimed to show how and why Josephus uses the Graeco-Roman literary devices of spectacle and tragedy in his account of the war between the Romans and the Jews, the Bellum Judaicum. In my introduction, I establish that attending and participating in spectacles was a main feature of Roman public life, while at the same time “spectacle” was a common concept for describing the transmission of information. Josephus, therefore, applies this idea to the writing of his history (just as others, such as Polybius, have done before him), because he wishes to communicate his message in the most effective, persuasive, and appealing manner possible to his intended audience of elite Romans, Greeks, and hellenized Jews. Josephus also colors his history heavily with tragic language and themes for the same reason. His overall aim was to convince his readers that the majority of the Jews were tragic victims of a few malicious rebels, that the Temple was the greatest spectacle, and was viewed as valuable by both Jews and Romans (especially Titus), and that opposition to Roman imperialism is wasteful, deadly, and ultimately impious. I establish that previous scholarship on the

589 B.J. 7.455: “...περὶ τῆς ἀληθείας δὲ οὐκ ἂν ὀκνήσαμι θαρρῶν λέγειν, ὅτι μόνης ταῦτης παρὰ πᾶσαν τὴν ἀναγραφὴν ἔστοχασάμην.”
590 Sophocles, Antigone 241. I do not agree with Pearson’s OCT emendation, against the codd., to στιχίζῃ. This allusion may not be as far-fetched as it first appears, since the Guard then replies to Creon: “τὰ δὲινα γὰρ τοι προστίθησεν ὄκνοι πολύν,” line 243.
591 B.J. 7.455.
historiography of Josephus has not adequately recognized or explained the role of spectacle or tragedy in the *Bellum*. This oversight has prevented scholars from fully incorporating Josephus’s works into their discussion of literature and culture in early imperial Rome. I offer examples of how to read for spectacle and tragedy in the *Bellum*. The task of reading Josephus is complex, because one must always take into account the multiplicity of meanings from the Graeco-Roman and Jewish perspectives as they are transmitted in the Greek language.

In my second chapter, I examine how Josephus uses the device of spectacle and the language of Greek tragedy to describe the siege of Jerusalem. I argue that Josephus chooses to use tragic diction in order to impress his readership with his literary skills and to exonerate the majority of Jews of the crime of rebelling against the Romans. Josephus uses Sophocles’ *Antigone* in particular to great effect. Within this section on the siege, I also examine his long description of the Temple at Jerusalem in book 5. I argue that Josephus presents it as the main spectacle both in the city of Jerusalem and within his history. It is at the core of his concern as a Jewish priest and as an apologist for his people.

My third chapter presents a close reading of the height of the siege in book 6 in which an act of cannibalism precipitates the destruction of the Temple. I argue that this scene of cannibalism should be read within the broad context of Hebrew and Graeco-Roman literature, including fable, and should be viewed as an integral part of Josephus’s apologetic scheme. I specifically examine echoes of Greek tragedy in this passage. I conclude that Mary’s act of cannibalism is inextricably bound through wordplay to the eventual destruction of the Temple. Josephus develops such a fable in order to set up his greatest myth: that Titus was not responsible for the destruction. Titus, in fact, becomes a tragic actor in Josephus’s scenario.

In Chapter Four, I examine Josephus’s dramatic account of the fall of Masada towards the end of book 7 within the context of the Roman military attacks upon other
I argue that there is a continuity to the picture of imperialism Josephus presents, with concomitant rewards for those who submit and dreadful punishment for those who resist, including children. In my analysis of the choices which Josephus presents the rebels making in the face of Roman power, I draw in Plass’s application of game theory to political suicide at Rome, since this form of self-destruction is an analogous manifestation of opposition to official Roman power. The episode of Masada provides an in-depth picture of Josephus’s theme of the madness of the Sicarii, even when temporarily disguised in philosophical garb, as in Eleazar’s speeches. I argue, with Ladouceur, that Josephus does not present the Masada defenders in a positive light; instead Masada serves as the ultimate spectacle of the futility of holding on to false ideas of salvation and opposing Rome. The Passover date only underlines the irony of the situation.

Spectacle and tragedy operate as central principles guiding Josephus’s production of history. Josephus uses these literary devices in order to convince his audience of the innocence of the majority of Jews in the rebellion, to emphasize the tragedy of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple, and to invite his readers to identify with Titus’s constant recognition of the value of the Temple. My project contributes a deeper analysis of the complexity of Josephus’s task as a historian and insight into his attempt to communicate as a hellenized Jew to the ruling elite of the Roman Empire at the end of the first century.

592 I would suggest that in his subsequent works Josephus pursues this theme of the value of the Temple, despite its destruction, for the Roman oikoumene. I shall elaborate on this in future scholarship.
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