The De Excidio of “Hegesippus” and the Reception of Josephus in the Early Middle Ages

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Abstract: The ancient Jewish historian Flavius Josephus is well known today, and was also very popular in late antiquity and the Middle Ages. Medieval Christians read Josephus’ works in Latin translations made in the fourth to sixth centuries, and Josephus was recommended by none other than Jerome and Cassiodorus. There has, however, been relatively little study of the Latin text of Josephus, or of Josephus’ medieval reception and influence. Previous work has only suggested that the latter was vast, and that Josephus enjoyed a high reputation. This article carefully traces the reception of one Latin adaptation of Josephus’ Jewish War (the so-called “Hegesippus”) in the early Middle Ages. This heavily Christianised reworking of Josephus was read all over Europe, from Italy to England to Iberia. More importantly, because this text was invariably attributed to Josephus up to the ninth century, it becomes clear that some of Josephus’ considerable reputation in the Middle Ages was due – ironically – to a heavily Christianised perversion of his Jewish War.

Keywords: Flavius Josephus, Hegesippus, reception, translation, transmission, Jews, Jewish-Christian relations, Amulo of Lyons, Hrabanus Maurus, Frechulf, Bede, Cassiodorus, Jonas of Orleans, Defensor of Ligugé, Paul Alvaro.

In 846, bishop Amulo of Lyons, following on the anti-Jewish path laid by his predecessor Agobard, wrote a work known as the Liber contra Judaeos.¹ Therein we find a very revealing condemnation of the great Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (c. 37–100 CE), whose works were popular in Amulo’s day:

And since we are speaking of the deceitful and blind scholars of the Jews, about whom the Lord bears witness, saying Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they are blind, and leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the pit (Matt. 15.13–14), we think a brief warning needs be given. [Namely,] that even

the books of Josephus and Philo (who were indeed learned men, but [still] impious Jews) should not be thought worth following very far. This because some of us tend to admire them overmuch, and enjoy reading them even more than the Holy Writ. Now, men estranged from truth are not without error; and as they recount and explain sacred history with what seems greater detail, they make many untrue and gratuitous additions, either perverting or undermining the pure meaning of the words of God to suit their own mendacious beliefs. For this reason, the old doctors of the Church borrowed from them only where their historical (= de rebus gestis) works corresponded harmoniously with our Scriptures. These [places] are few indeed, and rare, and are especially [where] they wrote about things they saw with their own eyes: like the subversion of Jerusalem (= de excidio Hierosolymorum), the Temple and the priesthood of the Jews.

Amulo, probably writing to the Carolingian king Charles the Bald (823–877), was clearly displeased that his contemporaries were reading the works of Jewish historians as a supplement, or even a substitute for Scripture. The condemnation of Josephus came at a time of heightened anti-Jewish feeling in the Carolingian realm, after the courtier Bodo’s scandalous conversion to Judaism in 839. But Amulo’s condemnation was a rare one. Flavius Josephus, in particular, wrote works that were simply too useful for Christian scholars to ignore. The bibliography on Flavius Josephus is immense, as will be noted below. See, for example: Flavius Josephus, eds. J. Pastor, P. Stern, M. Mor (Leiden 2011); Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome, eds. J. Edmondson, S. Mason, J. Rives (Oxford 2005); J. J. Price, “Josephus,” The Oxford History of Historical Writing, vol. 1, ed. A. Feldherr and G. Hardy (Oxford 2011) 219–243; H. Chapman, “Josephus,” The

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3 On the possibility that the letter was intended for a wider audience of bishops, see Heil, “Agobard, Amolo,” 66–67; the manuscript (Paris, BnF, lat. 12128, f. 65r) reveals no addressee.


War, in 7 books, describes the Jewish rebellion of 66–73 (in which Josephus was a participant) that resulted in the destruction of the second Temple and much of Jerusalem. As such, it offers a detailed, eye-witness account of Palestine around the time of Jesus, as well as the fulfillment of the prophesied disaster (e.g. Matt 24.2, Luke 19.42–44) seen as a punishment for the Jews’ role in the crucifixion of Jesus. After completing the Jewish War around 80 CE, Josephus set to work on the Judean Antiquities, which spanned 20 books. These cover a much wider sweep of Jewish history, from Creation to just before the events described in the Jewish War. Since they “recount and explain sacred history with … greater detail,” the Antiquities were obviously of great interest to anyone who wanted to understand the text of the Bible. In particular, they were a vehicle for the famous and much-disputed Testimonium Flavianum, a passage where Josephus, a Jew, seems to offer independent and approving witness of Jesus as “the Messiah” (Ant. 18.63–
Much less well-known in the Middle Ages were two other works of Josephus: an autobiography, and a Jewish apologetic work in 2 books known as the Against Apion. Amulo could only have had a vague impression of Josephus’ popularity in his own day. Sadly, so do we. For there has been surprisingly little study of Josephus’ influence in the medieval period, and especially in the early Middle Ages. We know that it was vast. But much of Josephus’ success and reputation, as I will show, was due to a heavily Christianised Latin version of the Jewish War, now known as the “Hegesippus”, that circulated under Josephus’ name. The Jewish author’s prominence, so galling to Amulo, was founded in large part on a text that Josephus would barely have recognised.

The Latin Josephus and its Reception: Status Quaestionis

Wherever Josephus was read in the Middle Ages, it was usually in Latin, even though Josephus’ original texts were Greek. Medieval scholars like Amulo, along with the vast majority of western European authors in the early Middle Ages, could not read Greek. Instead, Amulo would have had access to Latin translations of (at least) Josephus’ Jewish War and Antiquities. The seven books of the Jewish War seem to have been translated into Latin from the Greek manuscript tradition. The Hebrew manuscripts which were the original manuscript tradition were only discovered in the 20th century. The Latin manuscripts seem to have been translated from the Greek text. The Greek manuscripts which surrounded the Latin translations were uniquely 저와의 네트워크를 통해 전해져 왔습니다. The Latin manuscripts which surrounded the Greek translations were uniquely 저와의 네트워크를 통해 전해져 왔습니다.

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9 Again, the bibliography here is immense, stretching back to Joseph Scaliger; it is summarised and discussed in A. Whealey, Josephus on Jesus: The Testimonium Flavianum Controversy from Late Antiquity to Modern Times (New York 2003); cf. also L. Feldman, “A Selective Critical Bibliography of Josephus,” Josephus, the Bible, and History, eds. L. Feldman and G. Hata (Detroit 1989) 430–434. While it appears in all the Greek manuscripts and in the Latin translation, the most damning argument against its authenticity is that Eusebius of Caesarea is the first to remark on it, even though earlier writers, like Origen, knew Josephus’ Antiquities: M. Hardwick, Josephus as an Historical Source in Patristic Literature through Eusebius, Brown Judaic Studies 128 (Atlanta 1989), esp. 85–86.


something often (but dubiously) ascribed to Rufinus.\textsuperscript{12} This translation seems to have been known to Cassiodorus in the mid-sixth century, but already the attribution was in doubt: “[Josephus] also wrote seven other marvellously clear books on the Jewish Captivity. Some ascribe the translation of this work to Jerome, others to Ambrose, still others to Rufinus. The fact that this translation is ascribed to such men declares the special merits of its composition”.\textsuperscript{13}

In the same place, Cassiodorus notes that he had commissioned a translation of the Antiquities in twenty-two books (sc. 20 books of the Antiquities and 2 of the Against Apion). These two (reasonably literal) translations of Josephus’ works were preceded by an adaptation of the seven-book Jewish War into a five-book Latin version. This was not so much a translation as a thorough, Christianised reworking, also incorporating material from the Antiquities and Christian hagiography. The adaptation, made c. 370, circulated under the name of Josephus until well into the ninth century, whereafter it gradually came to be attributed to a so-called Hegesippus (possibly through confusion with the second-century Christian historian).\textsuperscript{14}


\textsuperscript{13} Cassiodorus, Institutions, I.xvii, trans. J. Halporn, Cassiodorus: Institutions of Divine and Secular Learning. On the Soul, Translated Texts for Historians 42 (Liverpool 2004) 149–150; ed. R. Mynors, Institutiones (Oxford 1961) 55: “Qui etiam et alios septem libros Captivitatis Iudaicae mirabilis nitore conscripsit, quam translationem alii Hieronymo, alii Ambrosio, alii deputant Rufino; quae dum talibus viris ascribitur, omnino dictionis eximia merita declarantur.” Notably, in 398 Jerome denied ever translating the work of Josephus: Epist. 71.5, ed. I. Hilberg, CSEL 56 (Vienna 1912) 6; while Gennadius did not include it amongst Rufinus’ works in the De Viris Illustribus, c. 17, PL 58.1069B–71A. It seems quite clear to me that Cassiodorus was here speaking of the literal translation of the Jewish War (and not the Hegesippus) given that he states the translation was in seven books, not five like the Hegesippus (vs. Mras, Hegesippi qui dicitur, xxv–xxvi); in this I am supported by (amongst many others) Niese (Flavii Josephi opera [editio maior], vol. 6 xx, n. 5: “nam Cassiodorum non de Hegesippo loqui…”). Some still express (overcautious?) doubts about which text Cassiodorus was speaking: e.g. Leoni, “Translations and Adaptations,” 483.

\textsuperscript{14} Hegesippi qui dicitur Historiae libri v, eds. V. Ussani and C. Mras, CSEL 66.1–2 (Vienna 1932–60); Hegesippus qui dicitur sive Egessippe: De Bello Judaico, eds. C. Weber and J. Caesar (Marburg 1864); and ascribed to Ambrose (on which, see n. 64 below) in PL 15.1961–2206 (= A. Galland, Bibliotheca veterum patrum, vol. 7 [Venice 1770] 655–761). The editio princeps was edited by J. L. d’Etaples: Aegesippi historiographi fidelissimi ac disertissimi et inter christianos antiquissimi historia de bello iudaico (Paris 1510). A useful if inelegant English translation is available, by W. Blocker in 2005: http://www.archive.org/details/PseudoHegesippusWadeBlockerTranslation. There is also an old French translation by J. Millet, Les cinq livres de l’histoire d’Egesippe (Paris 1556). On the text, see A. Bell, “Josephus and Pseudo-Hegesippus,” Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity, eds. L. Feldman and G. Hata (Detroit 1987) 349–361; Schreckenberg, Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition 56–58. The “Hegesippus” adaptation has frequently been confused with the Rufinus/Jerome/Ambrose translation, or indeed eclipsed it in modern scholars’ minds. Even the esteemed L. Feldman (e.g. Feldman, “Selective Critical Bibliography,” 334) seems to have confused them: see Leoni, “Translations and Adaptations,” 481 n. 6; H. Schreckenberg,
Nonetheless, it is by the name Hegesippus, or under the later title of the text (the De Excidio Hierosolymitano = DEH) that the work tends to be known today. The De Excidio, and the two other translations mentioned above, were the works that early medieval Europeans like Amulo would have associated with Josephus, and were the only way they could read his histories. Only later would there appear translations in Hebrew (the Josippon) and Slavonic.\

As might be guessed from Amulo’s indignant tone, the Latin translations of Josephus became extremely popular and very influential with Christian scholars. Heinz Schreckenberg ventured that for readers in the Middle Ages, Josephus “often achieves almost the authority of a church father”, while Franz Blatt suggested that “the Latin Josephus was the chosen history book of the Middle Ages”. Blatt’s tallies of the manuscripts of the Latin Josephus bear this out. More than 150 manuscript copies of the Latin Jewish War ascribed to Rufinus survive from the Middle Ages, and it frequently appeared alongside Cassiodorus’ translation of the Antiquities, of which close to 200 copies and fragments survive. None less than James J. O’Donnell wrote that the Latin Antiquities “appears in fact to be the single most often copied historical work of the middle ages”. I have not found a complete listing of all De Excidio manuscripts, but they are probably at least as numerous as either of these two.

These, however, are but the barest initial impressions: like Amulo, we have some idea of the magnitude of Josephus’ medieval reception, but little idea of its shape. And this is particularly so with the so-called De Excidio Hierosolymitano. As noted, this adaptation of Josephus’ Jewish War invariably circulated under his name until well into the ninth century. By-and-large, therefore, early medieval readers felt they were using Josephus when they studied this text, and it is therefore a fundamental part of any study of Josephus’ early medieval reception, influence,


Blatt, The Latin Josephus 22.


20 See the table below, pp. 17–18, for the 21 early medieval manuscripts I have found, and see bibliography at n. 81 for later manuscripts.
and reputation. Unfortunately, there have been relatively few studies of Josephus’ medieval reception at all, and these generally do not consider the De Excidio. There are in fact only two works (both brief and now quite dated) that deal specifically with the medieval reception of the De Excidio. Aside from these, we are left with the few general works that consider the impact of Josephus’ works as a whole. For the early period, there are some reasonably good outlines of Josephus’ Patristic reception from Tertullian to the fifth century, though mention of the De Excidio, written in c. 370, is (unsurprisingly) limited in these surveys. When we cross into the Middle Ages, furthermore, there are fewer (and briefer) studies for a period that is much longer. There are some older, rather superficial examinations, prior to a more extensive attempt made by Heinz Schreckenberg. His 1972 Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition briefly noted the use of Josephus in Greek and Latin authors from the second century CE to the sixteenth. Attendant to trying to cover so many authors (in two languages) over such a large timespan in a short space, Schreckenberg’s discussions of individual authors are comparatively brief and often incomplete. Only rarely does Schreckenberg consider the influence of the De Excidio on authors, preferring to concentrate on the more literal Latin version of the Jewish War (ascribed to Rufinus) and the Antiquities (Cassiodorus). Schreckenberg’s survey is therefore useful mainly as a starting point, a list of authors to investigate further.

To Schreckenberg’s work can be added that of Kletter, whose 2005 doctoral dissertation offered a brief synthesis of previous work on Josephus’ Patristic and early medieval reception, while

25 Schreckenberg’s lists of parallels are often incomplete, by his own admission; see Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition 108 (for Bede): “nicht vollständige […] Liste”; cf. for other authors as well: 117 (for Hrabanus Maurus) “nicht vollständig ermittelt”; 148 (for Peter Comestor) “Liste … nicht vollständig”, etc. He also omits numerous authors: see Feldman, “Selective Critical Bibliography,” 446. Some of these omissions were corrected later by Schreckenberg in his 1977 Rezeptionsgeschichtliche und textkritische Untersuchungen zu Flavius Josephus, notably Amulo of Lyons.
26 Schreckenberg’s later study on the reception of themes from the Jewish War discussed the DEH more fully. See below, n. 97.
making a valuable contribution to our understanding of his impact in twelfth-century England. Kletter traces Josephus’ utility for Christian apologetics, historical and typological Biblical exegesis, as well as geographical information; and later on, in moralistic and political writing, while his account of the siege of Jerusalem (and its perceived significance) was easily applied to the Crusades. But Kletter says relatively little about the early Middle Ages: for example, her treatment of the Carolingian period, when attention to Josephus greatly increased, spans only a few pages. The De Excidio itself is ably discussed as an instance of Josephus’ reception, but only receives rare subsequent mention in her survey of Josephus’ use amongst later authors.

Hence, in regard to the medieval reception of Josephus (and especially the De Excidio), what Louis Feldman wrote in 1989 remains almost as true today: “in view of the influence of Josephus both during the Middle Ages … and modern times, it is surprising that there is no systematic study of this topic.” The modern influence of Josephus is indeed extensive, and this clearly must have its roots in Josephus’ still vaguely studied medieval influence. Peter Burke, for instance, assessed the early-modern printings of Classical historians, and noted that Josephus was the most popular Greek historian in the period 1450–1700. Schreckenberg’s bibliography of Josephus covering the period 1470–1968 lists 2207 works, including dozens of early editions and translations, while Feldman’s (relatively) recent “selective” bibliography on Josephus runs to 118 pages. The vast scope of his influence in the modern period was no


29 For the DEH, see Kletter, “The Uses of Josephus,” 75–78. Aside from Kletter’s work, there have been some important studies of Josephus’ medieval impact in the art historical sphere, where Josephus’ text was (for example) mined for details to illustrate Biblical figures and scenes. Outstanding in this regard is U. Liebl, Die illustrierten Flavius-Josephus-Handschriften des Hochmittelalters (Frankfurt–Berlin 1997), which surveys a large number of manuscripts; see also K. Weitzmann, “The Question of the Influence of Jewish Pictorial Sources on Old Testament Illustration,” No Graven Images: Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination, ed. H. Kessler (Chicago 1971) 76–95; Schreckenberg, “Josephus in Early Christian Literature and Medieval Christian Art,” 87–130; G. Deutsch, Iconographie de l’illustration de Flavius Josèphe au temps de Jean Fouquet (Leiden 1986); idem, “The Illustration of Josephus’ Manuscripts,” Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity 398–410.


doubt one of the motivations for starting Oxford’s AHRC Josephus Project, on his reception 1750 onward.\textsuperscript{33}

It is clear that if Amulo was indignant at Josephus’ use in his own day, he would have been enraged at the modern state of affairs. But it is equally clear that there needs to be a serious attempt to trace Josephus’ popularity in the Middle Ages, one that would bridge the gap between our knowledge of his influence in the ancient/Patristic world and then later on, in the modern. When such an attempt will be undertaken is, alas, unknown.\textsuperscript{34} One of the problems is there is currently no modern, complete edition of the Latin \textit{Antiquities} or of the Latin \textit{Jewish War} ascribed to Rufinus. There has been no new complete edition of the Latin text since 1534 (though this version has occasionally been reprinted), and what is reputed as the “best” edition – now shown by Levenson and Martin to be seriously flawed – dates to 1524, made in Basel by Johannes Frobenius.\textsuperscript{35} While the relatively uninfluential \textit{Contra Apionem} received a good critical edition by Boysen in 1898,\textsuperscript{36} reviewers excoriated the partial edition of the Latin \textit{Antiquities} (books 1–5) by Franz Blatt in 1958.\textsuperscript{37} There are nonetheless some reasons to be optimistic. First, Levenson and Martin’s recent painstaking work on the manuscripts of the Latin Josephus has been able to revise many of Blatt’s textual families, offering the foundations for a new critical edition.\textsuperscript{38} Such an edition is essential, for the Latin manuscripts are generally much earlier than

\textsuperscript{33} Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford. Principal Investigator: Prof. M. Goodman.

http://www.orinst.ox.ac.uk/research/josephus/home: “This research project investigates the reception of Josephus in Jewish culture from the 18th century to the present.”

\textsuperscript{34} It is my intention to submit a grant proposal to fund a new edition of the Latin Josephus and a study of its reception in the near future. I have also learned from Paul Hilliard that he and Karen Kletter are preparing an edited collection on Josephus’ medieval reception, to appear about 2 years hence.


\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Flavii Iosephi opera ex versione Latina antiqua. VI: De Iudaeorum Vetustate sive Contra Apionem Libri II}, ed. C. Boysen, CSEL 37 (Vienna 1898).


the surviving copies of the Greek original, meaning that we need to know the Latin before we can restore Josephus’ Greek.\(^\text{39}\) Second, an online trilingual (Latin-Greek-English) edition of Josephus’ *Antiquities* has begun to appear, which transcribes the Latin text from a Carolingian manuscript now in Bamberg.\(^\text{40}\)

No textual explanation can be given for the lack of attention given to the *De Excidio*’s reception, however. There are two critical editions of the text (1864 and 1932) and it has long been available in the *Patrologia Latina*.\(^\text{41}\) This article, therefore, will explore how, where, and when the so-called *De Excidio* version of Josephus’ *Jewish War* was read and used in the early Middle Ages, offering both synthesis and new research. It will show that when early medieval readers thought of “Josephus”, they were at least as likely to think of the *De Excidio* as they were to think of the works we associate with Josephus now, the *Jewish War* and the *Antiquities*. The below will therefore also provide an important extension and corrective to the existing overviews of Josephus’ medieval reputation provided by Schreckenberg and Kletter.

*Before the De Excidio: Josephus in Late Antiquity*


\(^{40}\) R. Pollard and J. Timmermann “The Latin Josephus Project” [https://sites.google.com/site/latinjosephus/](https://sites.google.com/site/latinjosephus/), so far with books 1–8 of the Latin *Antiquities* from Bamberg Msc. Class. 78 (= Blatt no. 113; mid-ninth century), alongside the Niese Greek text and the William Whiston translation. The Bamberg manuscript was chosen for no particularly good reason, except that it is early, contains a clear, complete text of the *Antiquities*, and is available online.

\(^{41}\) See above, n. 14.
By the time that the *De Excidio* was created out of the Greek *Jewish War* in c. 370, Christians had been reading and using Josephus’ work for at least 200 years. And so, before launching into a discussion of the *De Excidio*, its character, and its reception, it would be helpful to offer a brief overview of Josephus’ influence up to that point. As we will see, the *De Excidio* was the culmination of several trends in the use of Josephus’ text, and through it, these ideas would be spread into the Carolingian era and beyond.

I will leave aside the complicated question of whether the New Testament itself was influenced by Josephus. Josephus nonetheless found readers relatively quickly. Hardwick surveyed authors up to and including Eusebius, and found that Melito of Sardis (second cent.), Theophilus of Antioch (second cent.), Clement of Alexandria (c. 200), Tertullian (d. 220), Julius Africanus (c. 220), Origen (d. 253), Methodius of Olympus (d. 311), and mostly importantly Eusebius of Caesarea knew Josephus directly; while others, like Irenaeus, Minucius Felix, Lactantius, and Hippolytus probably did not. Of these, only Tertullian and Origen were particularly influential in the West. Both Tertullian and Origen, like other early Christian writers, used Josephus’ *Contra Apionem* for apologetic material. Origen, however, used Josephus much more extensively, not just to apologetic ends, but also for exegetical and theological reasons. Origen’s commentaries, for example, contain numerous instances of Josephus being used to supplement his Biblical exegesis.

It was Eusebius, however, who most fully brought Josephus’ works into the Christian canon, and shaped how they would be read afterwards. Like Origen and Tertullian, he deployed the apologetic arguments of the *Contra Apionem* in his *Preparation for the Gospel* and his *Demonstration of the Gospel* (neither of which seem to survive in Latin), and occasionally in the

Historia Ecclesiastica. Eusebius would nonetheless be one of the last writers represented in the Latin tradition who frequently uses the Contra Apionem: by the fourth century, Christian apologetic was becoming obsolete. In a mode that would continue, however, Eusebius makes extensive use of the Antiquities for the purposes of Biblical exegesis (on points of chronology, history, and geography) both in his Chronicle and his Onomasticon, versions of which exist in Jerome’s Latin translation. Both the Jewish War and the Antiquities are used to the same effect in the famous Ecclesiastical History, which was translated into Latin by Rufinus. Much more important is the Ecclesiastical History’s interpretation of the destruction of Jerusalem. While Origen had already briefly moralised about this, Eusebius makes it the centre-piece of the second and third books, and offers two important moral and typological interpretations. First, Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed, and the Jewish people slaughtered and scattered (the last an enduring myth), as a punishment of the Jews for the denial and death of Jesus. Second, these events were a fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecies to this effect, thereby offering additional proof as to the truth of the Gospel. To make clear just how horrible this judgement was, and how well it aligned with Jesus’ predictions, Eusebius included long quotations or paraphrases from Josephus’ Jewish War and its description of the terrors of the siege of Jerusalem, in particular the famous scene of Maria who cooks and eats her child amidst the

52 Origen was one of the first to see the fall of Jerusalem in a Christian moral-theological light: in his commentary on Matthew (10.17), he attributes to Josephus the idea that the destruction of Jerusalem was divine punishment for the murder of James “the Just” (Jesus’ brother) by the Jewish high priest (Ant. 20.200). But this remark does not seem extant amongst the Latin translations, despite a hint to this effect in Hardwick, Josephus as an Historical Source 60–61. There is no such information ascribed to Josephus in the Latin text of Origen, Comm. Ser. 25 (= Origenes Werke 11 / GCS 38, ed. E. Klostermann [Leipzig 1933] 41–44). The Greek text of Origen’s mention of Josephus is found in Origenes Werke 10 / GCS 40, ed. E. Klostermann (Leipzig 1935) 22.4–14. Origen is more expansive in his Contra Celsum, I.xlvii (Origenes Werke I / GCS 2, 96) where he anticipates Eusebius by suggesting that while Josephus saw the fall of Jerusalem as punishment for the death of James, it should perhaps rightly be seen as punishment for the death of Christ. On the extent of Origen’s influence on Eusebius on this question, see Grant, Eusebius as Church Historian 97–103; Schreckenberg, “Christliche Wirkungsgeschichte,” 1125–1126.
famine (JW 6.193–213). Josephus’ work is therefore made to play a starring role in a larger narrative of newly Christian history, where events are guided by a Christian God’s providence, and where Josephus helps to show the truth of the words of the New Testament.

This is both ironic and understandable. Josephus’ own Antiquities expressly set out to show how “those who comply with the will of God … succeed in all things” while those who do not suffer “irremediable misfortunes”. In this it was probably a source of inspiration for Eusebius’ own history. But Josephus himself planted the seeds for the distortion of his work: the destruction of the First Temple (Ant. 10) is the result of the Jews’ falling away from obedience to God, while the long decline away from God in the later books of the Antiquities leads up to the time just before the destruction of the Second Temple. At the end of the Antiquities, Josephus sees the wickedness of some Jews as the reason “God … turned away from our city and … brought the Romans upon us and purification by fire upon the city” (Ant. 20.166), while the Jewish War itself contains similar sentiments (e.g. JW 2.455; 5.19). Hence, Eusebius’ interpretation of Josephus (later built upon by the De Excidio) would not necessarily jar with the facts of the text: it was only a relatively small step from Josephus’ view that divine punishment followed Jewish wickedness, to that wickedness including Jewish denial of God’s Son.

Eusebius also included Josephus’ supposed approving mention of Jesus, the famous Testimonium Flavianum (Ant. 18.63–4). While it is almost certainly an interpolation in Josephus’ text, for Eusebius it was nonetheless another instance of Josephus helping to confirm the truth of the NT. Eusebius’ quotation of it (and its presence in all surviving manuscripts of Josephus’ Antiquities) also lent Josephus a “quasi-Christian” aura that no doubt helped his popularity among Christian readers. This recommendation of Josephus would have had an important impact in the Latin West in particular, where Rufinus’ translation of Eusebius was itself reasonably popular early on: Ciccolini notes at least 27 surviving manuscripts from the eighth and ninth centuries, while Eusebius’ influence on Western historiography (via Rufinus’ translation) is immeasurable.

58 On the contentious history of the Testimonium, see above, n. 9. In regard to its Latin transmission in both Rufinus’ translation of the Historia Ecclesiastica and in the Cassiodorean translation Josephus’ Antiquities, see Levenson and Martin, “The Latin Translations of Josephus on Jesus.”
The egg laid by Eusebius was hatched by the so-called *De Excidio*, now credited to the so-called (or pseudo-) Hegesippus.\(^{60}\) It offers, as mentioned, a very Christianised reworking of Josephus’ *Jewish War*. Not much is known for certain about this work besides its date of c. 370.\(^{61}\) Its attribution to Hegesippus (the second-century Christian historian mentioned by Eusebius) is certainly false, and quite late. This name “Hegesippus” may in fact have been “restored” from a corruption of the phrase *ex Iosippi historia*, by a scribe who remembered that Eusebius had mentioned a Hegesippus who wrote a five-book history.\(^{62}\) As we will see below, up to the ninth century the work was usually ascribed to Josephus. Some of the earliest manuscripts ascribe the adaptation/translation of his work to Ambrose (e.g. *Iosippi liber ... ambrosi episcopi de grego transtulit in latinum*),\(^{63}\) but this attribution has not generally found favour.\(^{64}\) Even its original title is in doubt. Most early manuscripts of the text bear some variation on *historia Iosippi*, or *de bello Judaico*, but by the ninth century at the latest we also see the title *De excidio Hierosolymitano* (or similar): “On the downfall of Jerusalem”.\(^{65}\)

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\(^{60}\) For editions and translations, see n. 14.


\(^{62}\) Destinon and Niese, *Flavii Iosephi opera [editio maior]*, vol. 6, XIX: “re euim uera Hegesippi siue Egesippi nomen corruptela ortum est ex Iosepi aut Iosippi”; cf. Caesar, *De Bello Judaico* 390–391. According to Leoni (“Translations and Adaptations,” 483 n. 16) the idea of this derivation dates back to the eighteenth century at least. Mras, *Hegesippi qui dicitur* (CSEL 66.2) xxiv–xxv, suggests even more cleverly that the name Hegesippus may have been rendered by a scribe, recalling the name of the historian mentioned by Eusebius/Rufinus, upon encountering some corruption of *exiosippi*. On when and why this (possibly deliberate) confusion took place, see below, esp. p. 37.

\(^{63}\) This is the original subscription found at the end of book 1 of the *De Excidio* in Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, C 105 inf (s. V–VI + VIII): Mras, *Hegesippi qui dicitur* (CSEL 66.2) xxiii. On this MS, see below.


\(^{65}\) On the issue of the title, see Mras, *Hegesippi qui dicitur* (CSEL 66.2) xxiii–xxiv; Leoni, “Translations and Adaptations,” 484 n. 20; Ussani, “La Questione e la critica del cosi detto Egesippo,” 248–252.
One thing is certain: this last title fits. The author-translator changed the emphasis of Josephus’ *Jewish War*, compressing the original books 5 to 7 into his fifth and final book.\[^{66}\] Gone was Josephus’ thorough, grieving account that stressed it was Jewish civil strife and disobedience to the Law that brought about an immense calamity.\[^{67}\] Describing the military details of the siege only vaguely (something that Josephus had done with fastidious care), the *De Excidio* adopts and amplifies Eusebius’ portrayal of the ruin (*excidium*) of Jerusalem as divine vengeance for Jewish disbelief and participation in the death of Jesus.\[^{68}\] To emphasise the harshness of this punishment, the translator/adaptor focuses on the most horrible scenes in Josephus’ narrative, for example the famous episode where Maria, starving during the siege of Jerusalem, cooks and eats her own child.\[^{69}\] Unlike the *Jewish War*, the *De Excidio* also includes a version of the *Testimonium Flavianum*, something that originally belonged to the *Antiquities*. For Eusebius, the *Testimonium* was to Josephus’ credit, but here it is used in a negative fashion, as a justification of the *excidium*. One of the Jews own knew the truth, and because they refused to believe, the destruction of the Second Temple and Jerusalem followed, symbolic of God’s favour passing from the Jews to the Christians.\[^{70}\] These changes make it clear that the *De Excidio* was not a mere translation but written by a *historiographus* in his own right, someone who felt he was writing a new history *based on* Josephus. Certain passages make it clear that the author considered himself quite separate from Josephus, whom he occasionally criticises.\[^{71}\]

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\[^{66}\] For a concordance between Josephus’ seven-book *Jewish War* and the *DEH*, see PL 15.2219–2224 and the apparatus to Ussani’s edition in CSEL 66.


Be that as it may, in the earliest manuscripts of the De Excidio (now in Milan, Kassel, and Paris), the work is attributed to Iosippi or Iosephi, as was hinted above and Ussani long ago observed. This continues into the ninth century (and beyond): for example, attributions to Josephus are found in the Cherbourg, Aug. 82, and Besançon manuscripts listed below. Furthermore, no manuscript or medieval library catalogue before the mid-ninth century unambiguously refers to Hegesippus as the author: for example, in the Reichenau catalogue of c. 822, the De Excidio seems to be listed as de bello Judaico libri V excerpti de historia Josephi. It is only in the mid-ninth century that we begin to see the appearance of the Hegesippus name (possibly invented as described above at n. 62) used to describe the De Excidio specifically, for example in the mid-ninth century library catalogue from St. Gall, or in De Excidio manuscripts like Karlsruhe LB. Aug. 101 (s. IX 2/4) and Bern BB. 180 (s. IX 2/4). This means that up to the ninth century, and indeed somewhat beyond, authors who read and cited “Josephus” were in fact often reading the De Excidio instead. They were not necessarily reading the more literal Latin translation of the Jewish War ascribed to Rufinus, nor necessarily the Antiquities, though there were many who read all three as “Josephus”. And so, when Amulo condemned the popularity of Josephus, he was probably lumping the De Excidio in with the other translations (as will become clear below). Those he condemned may have been prompted to read the De Excidio by the generally good reputation of Josephus in late antiquity, hinted at above (see p. 6). Some of the highest Christian authorities had kind words to say about Josephus. Tertullian’s Apologeticum, which enjoyed wide circulation, memorably calls Josephus antiquitatum Judaicarum vernaculis vindex (“the native champion of Jewish lore”). Eusebius-Rufinus’ H.E. would carry to Latin readers all sorts of praise of Josephus, like Ioseppus inlustris Hebraeorum historiografus (I.v.3), or Eusebius’ marvel at Josephus’ consonance with Scripture: cum in ceteris quam plurimis Ioseppum, tum in his tam integre divinae scripturae concordare valde miratus sum (II.x.10). He was included in Jerome’s De Viris Illustribus, who in his letters called Josephus the graecus Livius and, together with Philo, a vir doctissimus Judaeorum. Cassiodorus, in his Institutions (c. 550), recommended Josephus be...
Pollard - The ‘Hegesippus’ and the Reception of Josephus in the EMA

read first amongst Church historians, and echoed Jerome in calling him *paene secundus Livius*. These are the sorts of words that may have sprung to mind when early medieval readers saw the name *Iosippi* at the beginning of their *De Excidio* manuscripts. Josephus’ reputation would have been further increased in medieval readers’ minds when they encountered the profoundly Christian perspective in the *De Excidio*.

**Reception and Influence of the De Excidio: Manuscripts**

No doubt boosted by the general esteem of its supposed author, the *De Excidio Hierosolymitano* of “Josephus” achieved considerable popularity from an early date. There is an abundance of surviving manuscripts (at least 21) from the early Middle Ages, including three from before 700. Since a comprehensive listing of *De Excidio* manuscripts does not seem to be available, I list below the pre-1000 copies I was able to find (with sigla for those used in the Ussani edition):

- **M**: Milan, B.A. C 105 inf (s. V–VI + VIII, N. Italy: CLA 323a-b)
- **C**: Kassel, LB Theol. 65 (s. VI, N. Italy, but in England c. 715, then Fulda: CLA 1139/Lapidge)
- **P**: Paris, BnF Lat. 13367 (an excerpt; s. VII, France [?]: CLA 658)
- **I**: Innsbruck UB Frag. 72 + Vienna Lat. ser. nov. 3643 (s. VIII–IX, Anglo-Saxon centre in Germany: CLA 1443, Bischoff 1548)
- **V**: Rome BAV Pal. Lat. 170 (c. 800, Lorsch: Bischoff)
- **Koblenz Landeshauptarchiv** Best. 701 Nr. 759.22 + Marburg, Hess. StA Hr 4.17 (s. IX, St. Amand: Bischoff 1862)
- **St Gall SB Cod. 626** (s. IX, St Gall: Bischoff 5823)

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81 The manuscripts used by Ussani in his edition are unevenly described in Mras, *Hegesippi qui dicitur* (CSEL 66.2) viii–xx; a few more are listed in V. Ussani, “Un ignoto codice cassinese del cosi detto Egesippo e i suoi affini,” *Casinensia*, vol. 2 (Monte Cassino 1929) 601–614; Ussani, “La Questione e la critica del cosi detto Egesippo,” 248–252. The manuscripts used by Weber are generally much later: Caesar, *De bello Iudaico* 399–403.
Cherbourg, BM Ms. 51 (s. IX¹-²/₃, Verona: Bischoff 900)

A: Karlsruhe, LB Aug. perg. 82 (s. IX²/₄, Reichenau: Bischoff 1618)
Karlsruhe, LB Aug. perg. 101 (s. IX²/₄, N. Italy: Bischoff 1632)

B: Bern BB Ms. 180 (s. IX²/₄, west of Paris, prov. Fleury: Bischoff 549)
Laon BM Ms. 403b (s. IX³/₄, N.E. France: Bischoff 2110)
Paris BnF Lat. 12512 (s. IX³–⁴/₄, N. France (Corbie?): Bischoff 4838)⁸⁶
Leiden UB BPL 21 (s. IX⁴, N.E. France: Bischoff 2134)

H: Leiden UB VLF 17 (s. X, W. France: de Meyier/Mras)⁹⁷
Paris BnF Nouv. Acq. Lat. 1490 (s. X: Delisle)⁸⁸
Paris BnF. Lat. 12513 (s. X: Delisle)⁹⁹

T: Turin BN D.IV.7 (s. X: Mras)⁹⁰

Z: Besançon BM Ms. 833 (s. X–XI, Murbach?: Mras/Castan)⁹¹
Cambrai BM Ms. 678 (s. X–XI: Bischoff)⁹²
Chartres BM Ms. 117 (s. X–XI: Omont et al.)⁹³

From this list of witnesses alone, it is clear that the *De Excidio* achieved considerable popularity in at least Italy, France, and England before the Carolingian period, whereupon interest and copying of the text seems to have exploded. There are Carolingian copies from the Frankish heartlands (St. Amand, Lorsch, Corbie?, etc.), but also from west Francia, Alemannia, and notably two representatives from northern Italy (an active, if less discussed, participant in the Carolingian cultural world⁹⁴). This picture is broadened if we look at surviving early medieval

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⁹⁰ Mras, *Hegesippi qui dicitur* (CSEL 66.2) xi–xiiii.


⁹⁴ For this, see my “Literary Culture in Ninth-Century Northern Italy” (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge 2009); also, with specific focus on Nonantola, see my “Libri di Scuola Spirituale: Manuscripts and Marginalia at the Monastery of Nonantola,” *Libri di scuola e pratiche didattiche. Atti del*
library catalogues: by the ninth century, copies of the work are listed at St Gall, Reichenau, Lorsch, Murbach, and amongst the bequest of books by Wulfad (d. 876), archbishop of Bourges. The 21 surviving manuscripts make clear that the De excidio was even more popular than the more literal versions of Josephus’ works: for the same period, there are only 24 surviving manuscripts that contain either (or both) the Latin Antiquities or seven-book Latin Jewish War. Speaking solely in terms of manuscript copies, then, Amulo of Lyons’ perception of Josephus’ popularity would have owed at least as much to the De Excidio as to the other Latin versions.

Reception and Influence of the De Excidio: Quotations and Allusions

It is much more difficult to go beyond these bare outlines to construct a full study of the reception and influence of the De Excidio as separate from the more literal Latin translations of Josephus. Reception, in my mind, can be measured in many ways: mechanically, by tracing the copies of a text; textually, by looking for quotations or mentions of an author’s name; or in

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96 See the list of manuscripts in Blatt, The Latin Josephus, summarised on 107–113 and the more up-to-date list in D. M. Kibbey, “An Early Fragment of Josephus’ Antiquitates Judaicae from Murbach Abbey,” New Studies on Yale Manuscripts from the Late Antique to the Early Modern Period, ed. R. Babcock, The Yale University Library Gazette Occasional Supplement 7 (New Haven 2005) 23–36, at 27–28, which however provides an erroneous date for Paris, BnF, lat. 5763 (recte s. XI). From Kibbey and Blatt, I counted the following manuscripts up to “s. X–XI” (with Bischoff’s dating for ninth-century manuscripts): Bamberg, SB Msc. Class. 78 (s. IX23); Berlin, SB Lat. fol. 617 (s. X–XI); Bern, BB Ms. 50 (s. IX23); Bern, BB Ms. 118 (s. IX69); Bern, BB Ms. 183 (s. X–XI); Chartres, BV Ms. 29 (s. X; lost?); Cologny, Bodmer 98 (s. IX1–23; olim Phillips 6548); Cologny, Bodmer 99 (s. IX23; olim Phillips 6547); Copenhagen, GKS 157 2v (s. IX1–24); Engleberg, SB Ms. 28, f. 9 (s. VIII–IX); Florence, BL Plut 66.2 (s. X–XI); Leiden, UB VLF 17 (s. X); Milan, BA Cimelio S.P. 11/1 (s. VI–VII); Milan, BA A 220inf (s. IX1–24); Monte Cassino, Casin. 124 (s. X); Monza, BC, b 20/136 (s. IX69); Naples, BN V.F.34 (s. X); New Haven, Yale Beinecke Ms 964 (s. VIII–IX); Paris, BnF Lat. 5052 (IXmed); Rome, BAV Pal. Lat. 814 (s. VIII–IX); Rome, BAV Vat. Lat. 1992 (s. X); St Gall, SB CSG 626 (s. IXmed); Wolfenbüttel, HAB Weiss. 22 (IX69); Würzburg, UB Ms. Theol. f. 5, I (s. IX).
terms of ideas, finding where authors have adopted or been influenced by a distinctive idea put forth by an earlier author, but without any direct quotations of the work in question. In the last case, it becomes very difficult to separate the *De Excidio*, Eusebius, and Eusebius-shaped readings of Josephus after the later fourth century. Both Eusebius and the *De Excidio* offer a moralising, Christian interpretation of the destruction of Jerusalem: that it was divine vengeance for Jewish impiety and their hand in the death of Jesus, the fulfillment of His prophecy, and both include memorable scenes like Maria's cannibalism of her own child (*JW* 6.201–13; *De Excidio*, V.xl). These themes and ideas get picked up again and again by authors in late antiquity and the Middle Ages, and it is often far from clear whether they come from the *De Excidio*, Eusebius, or a direct knowledge of the literal Josephus with Eusebian influences: if an author briefly references the destruction of Jerusalem as divine "vengeance", or alludes to Maria's cannibalism, this could come from any of these three, and indeed, it often becomes a question of indirect influence as time progresses. It would take a very sensitive study indeed to pick these apart: Schreckenberg has made an admirable attempt to trace these and other themes and ideas across Christian literature into the later Middle Ages, but more work is needed.\(^97\)

From the point of view of “negative” reception (i.e. where the *De Excidio* seems deliberately rejected) things are even trickier. For example, when Gregory the Great (*Hom. in Evang.* 39) discusses the spiritual meaning of Jesus’ lament for Jerusalem in Luke 19.41–44 and the later destruction of the city, he does not follow the paradigm of divine vengeance but rather works up an allegorical interpretation that empathises with the besieged inhabitants of Jerusalem. Is this influential explanation a conscious rejection of the *De Excidio*, or of Eusebius-Rufinus, or some other indirect source – or just an idiosyncratic reading of events?\(^98\) There are no textual parallels between Gregory’s homily and the *De Excidio*, nor elsewhere in Gregory’s writings, nor indeed does he seem to know Josephus directly – all of which leads me to doubt that Gregory was responding directly to the *De Excidio* here.\(^99\)

\(^97\) Schreckenberg painstakingly traces a variety of ideas and themes from Josephus, and his interpretation by Eusebius, the *DEH*, and others, through to the end of the Middle Ages; despite its length, his work is (understandably) far from exhaustive: “Josephus und die christliche Wirkungsgeschichte seines Bellum Judaicum,” *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, vol. 2:21.2, ed. W. Haase (Berlin 1984) 1106–1217.

\(^98\) Gregory the Great, *Hom. in Evang.* 39, ed. R. Étaix, CCSL 141 (Turnhout 1999) 379–392 (PL 76.1293C–1301C), where he vaguely refers to a source 379–380 (1294A): “Quod flente Domino illa Ierosolymorum subuersio describatur, quae a Vespasiano et Tito romanis principibus facta est, nullus qui historiam eiusdems legi ignoro…” (the editor does not comment on what this source might be). See S. Wright, *The Vengeance of Our Lord* (Toronto 1989) 24–26, and on the influence of Gregory’s interpretation, the excellent list at 26 n. 63.

\(^99\) In a subsequent publication I will discuss the seeming reason that Gregory does not use Josephus (or at least, never explicitly). In brief, it seems that after about 400 there was a definite tension in the tradition about Josephus’ authority. Jerome had used Josephus very heavily, where Augustine had used him almost never (and never explicitly). Later authors were therefore faced with a situation where two of the loftiest Latin authorities were completely divergent in their use of Josephus: one gave explicit (see above, p. 16) and implicit approval by heavy use, the other implicit disapproval by lack of use. Augustine was one of Gregory’s highest authorities – e.g. R. Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World* (Cambridge 1997) 34–50 – and therefore it is perhaps not surprising that he follows Augustine in not using Josephus.
Jerome and Augustine?

Even if we restrict ourselves to cases where authors use or mention the De Excidio in an unambiguous fashion, the De Excidio’s impact seems reasonably large.\(^{100}\) Two uncertain cases, because of the prominence of the authors and their early date, nonetheless deserve mention first. The De Excidio may have been known to Jerome, whose report of the Testimonium Flavianum in the De Viris Illustribus (c. 393) seems to echo the wording of the De Excidio (c. 370) more than the (later, c. 403) Rufinus translation, which suggests perhaps the parallel is more than mere coincidence.\(^{101}\) It is unclear whether Augustine knew the De Excidio. In Epist. 199 (c. 419) to Hesychius, he mentions that “Josephus, who wrote the history of the Jews, said that such terrible things happened to them [in the fall of Jerusalem], that they can scarcely be credited”.\(^{102}\) Since Augustine read Greek less well than Jerome, this could refer to the De Excidio or the Rufinus-ascribed translation.

The De Excidio as an Exegetical Resource, c. 450–700

We are on firmer (and more substantial) ground when we arrive at Eucherius, bishop of Lyons (d. 450). The authenticity of his De situ Hierosolimitanae urbis has long been doubted, but Gorman has recently argued that these doubts are unfounded.\(^{103}\) The short text is heavily dependent on the De Excidio (esp. III.vi), quoting the De Excidio at length for geographical information, for example about the region of Samaria in Palestine.\(^{104}\) Slightly later on, seemingly

\(^{100}\) One starting point (though very incomplete) is the Index Locorum compiled by Mras, which contains some later authors (e.g. Eucherius, Adamnan, Bede) who used the De Excidio: Mras, Hegesippi qui dicitur (CSEL 66.2) 427–432.

\(^{101}\) Jerome, De Viris Illustribus, c. 13, ed. E. Richardson (Leipzig 1896) 16. Compare the three texts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEH, II.xii.1 (163)</th>
<th>Jerome, De Viris Illustribus, c. 13</th>
<th>Eusebius-Rufinus, HE, I.xi.7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dicente Iosepho historiarum scriptore, quod fuerat illo in tempore uir sapiens, si tamen oportet, inquit, uirum dici, mirabilium creatorem operum...</td>
<td>[Josephus] scripsit autem de Domino in hunc modum: eodem tempore fuit Iesus, sapiens uir, si tamen oportet dicere. Erat enim mirabilium patrator operum...</td>
<td>... Ioseppus ita scribit. Fuit autem isdem temporibus Iesus sapiens uir, si tamen uirum eum nominare fas est, erat enim mirabilium operum effector...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^{102}\) Augustine, Epist. 199, ed. A. Goldacher, CSEL 199 (Vienna 1911) 270: “Iosephus, qui Iudaicam scripsit historiam, talia mala dicit illi populo tunc accidisse, ut uix credibiliuauideantur.”


in fifth- or sixth-century Italy, an excerpt from the *De Excidio* was inserted as a gloss to the anonymous *Tractatus in Lucam*. In this gloss, the *De Excidio*’s detailed description of Lake Gennesaret (offering the length and breadth of the lake and noting the quality of its water) is provided as background to Luke 5.1’s mention of the same lake. This same passage of the *De Excidio*, amongst others, was also taken up and used by Adomnan of Iona’s *De Locis Sanctis*, written in the 680s. Adomnan made even more extensive use of the *De Excidio* than Eucherius (whose work he also knew), quoting and paraphrasing numerous sections that were not included by Eucherius. The entirety of Adomnan’s book 2, chapter 30 (“On the site of Alexandria and the river Nile”), for example, seems to be taken word-for-word from book 4 the *De Excidio*.

Soon afterwards (c. 702–3), Bede adapted Adomnan’s work into his own, shorter *De Locis Sanctis*. While most of the *De Excidio* citations are carried over through Adomnan, in at least one place Bede uses the *De Excidio* independently. Even without this hint, it is still clear that Bede knew the *De Excidio* from several other quotations. For example, he gives an excidio, III.vi.1–2, ed. Ussani 194.17–196.4 and *De Excidio*, III.vi.4–5, ed. Ussani 197.3–198.19. Cf. Vogel, *De Hegesippo* 34–36.

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108 Gorman (“Adomnán’s *De locis sanctis,*” 36) provides a corrected list of passages where Adomnan borrows from the *DEH*: *De locis sanctis*, ed. Bieler (= *DLS*), II.xx, 90.9–20 = *De Excidio Hier.* (= *DEH*), III.xxvi, 233.9–234.1; *DLS* II.xix, 88.25–90.1 = *DEH* III.xxvi, 234.8–17; *DLS* II.xix, 90.1–7 = *DEH* III.xxvi, 235.1–7; *DLS* II.xxvii, 96.10–12 = *DEH* IV.iv, 247.2–3; *DLS* II.xxvii, 88.21–23 = *DEH* IV.xvii, 271.8–10; *DLS* II.x, 80.32–4 = *DEH* IV.xxiii, 277.3–7; *DLS* II.xxx, 102.14–24 = *DEH* IV.xxvii, 284.2–10; *DLS* II.xxx, 100.12–27 = *DEH* IV.xxvii, 284.14–285.11; *DLS* II.xxx, 100.28–33 = *DEH* IV.xxvii, 285.11–18; *DLS* II.xxx, 100.34–102.13 = *DEH* IV.xxvii, 285.19–286.11.


110 See the references in M. Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford 2005) 218. I have also generated my own list of Bede’s citations/quotations of the *DEH*, which is somewhat shorter and doubtless incomplete: *De temporum ratione*, c. 66, ed. Jones, CCSL 123B 496.1014–15 = *DEH* II.iii.4, 136.19–20; *Expositio super Acta Apostolorum*, c. 21 (988C) = *DEH* II.vi.3, 142.16–20 (not used by Adomnan); *ESAA*, c. 26 (991C–D) = *DEH* II.ix.1, 155.11–13 (cf. below, n. 112; not used by Adomnan); *In Lucam*, II.5, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 120, 119.524–29 = *DEH* III.xxvi.1, 233.11–18 (this could be via Adomnan); *Super epistulas catholicas expositio*, 2 Petr. 2 (76C) = *DEH* IV.xviii 272.3–5 (not used by Adomnan but this quotes his *DLS*, c. 11).
excerpt of the speech of King Agrippa II from the *De Excidio* (II.ix.1) in his *Expositio super Acta Apostolorum* (for Acts 26.27). The quotation forms part of Bede’s discussion of St. Paul’s defence of Christianity before Agrippa, and his challenge to the king in saying “Believest thou the prophets … I know that thou believest”. Bede suggests that this means Agrippa knew the prophets and Jewish traditions, but did not know the truth to which these things pointed, namely Christ. To this explication, however, Bede adds the *De Excidio* quotation, where Agrippa marvels at Christianity’s divinely-ordained success, as a way of suggesting that the king may still have had some sense of Christianity’s legitimacy.112

Whether in Bede, Adomnan, Eucherius, or the anonymous *Tractatus in Lucam*, then, we see “Josephus” (i.e. the *De Excidio*) being mined for straightforward historical/geographical facts, explicitly or implicitly to help with Biblical exegesis, and this follows a pattern in the use of Josephus established by Origen, or Eusebius’ *Onomasticon*, which was translated into Latin by Jerome.113 More generally, this also fits with Augustine’s recommendation that Christians should study and elucidate the placenames mentioned in Scripture.114 Of the four, Eucherius and Bede explicitly credit their source as “Josephus” (Eucherius notably as *Iosephus nobilis historian Iudaeorum*), though Bede only does this once.115 Clearly the attribution to Josephus was current already in the fifth century, and was acceptable even to a careful scholar like Bede, who also knew Josephus very well from the more literal Cassiodorean translation of the *Antiquities*.116

The *De Excidio in Iberia*, 600–840

It is clear from Adomnan and Bede’s use, and perhaps the Kassel manuscript (LB Theol. 65, see n. 83), that the *De Excidio* was reasonably well known in the Insular world, c. 700. It is also clear that the work was available in early medieval Spain. Isidore of Seville uses the *De Excidio* very extensively in his *Etymologies*, and with a similar (though wider) purpose to Bede and Adomnan. Though Isidore did not seem to have had direct access to the “Rufinus” or Cassiodorean translations of Josephus,117 books 9 to 20 of the *Etymologies* frequently cite the *De


113 As to the exegetical purposes of Bede’s *De Locis Sanctis*, see Foley, *Bede: a Biblical Miscellany* 3; for Adomnan’s, see T. O’Loughlin, “The Exegetical Purpose of Adomnan’s *De Locis Sanctis*,” *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 24 (1992) 37–53. For Jerome’s translation of Eusebius, see above, n. 50.


Excidio on subjects as diverse as battering rams to the Saxons, but most frequently for geographical information in books 13–14. Isidore, however, does not cite the De Excidio under Josephus’ name, only as the Historia.

Isidore was far from the only Iberian reader of the De Excidio. Julian of Toledo (d. 690), for example, seems to have used the De Excidio in his Historia Wambae Regis, and cites the prologue of the De Excidio in his anti-Jewish tract, the De comprobatione aetatis sextae (I.20). The latter text was an argument to Jews that Christ had already come, and they awaited the Messiah in vain. Julian notes that according to Gen. 49.10 (“The sceptre shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thigh, till he come that is to be sent, and he shall be the expectation of nations”) Christ should have come when the proper succession of Jewish leaders failed. As part of this argument he cribbs from the preface of the De Excidio, but without mentioning a source. In particular, he quotes a key rhetorical question about whether the succession of Jewish leaders ever failed, a question with the implied answer that the line did indeed fail, though Julian omits the end of the question that suggests this leadership passed over to Christ. Julian therefore uses the De Excidio to make his point that the line of Jewish leaders failed, and that Christ “that is to be sent” as consequence must already have come. In quoting this sentence from the De Excidio, which introduces one of the main themes of the De Excidio (Christian succession to the Jewish mantle), Julian may have been one of the first extant medieval readers to appreciate the De Excidio’s deeper theological purpose. Certainly, he was one of the earliest to use the text as part of a theological argument (against Jews), rather than just as a source of information.

Later on, Beatus of Liebana (d. c. 800) and Heterius of Osma included the De Excidio’s version of the famous “Quo vadis” story of Peter and Christ in their Adversus Elipandum, but

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118 See Vogel, De Hegesippo 37, who listed the following passages where the Etymologies borrowed from the DEH: Etym. IX.ii.100 (= DEH 319.29–320.3); IX.iii.7 (= DEH 148.6); XIII.xviii.6 (= DEH 153.6–7); XIII.xix.3–4 (= DEH 270.6–271.10); XIII.xix.6 (= DEH 233.9–13); XIII.xxi.17 (= DEH 193.2–7); XIV.3.16 (= DEH 192.14–15); XIV.iii.20–21 (= DEH 198.8–13); XIV.iii.22 (= DEH 197.3–5); XIV.iii.23 (= DEH 194.14–15, 17 + 196.11); XIV.iii.24–25 (= DEH 271.10–272.5); XIV.iii.27 (= DEH 284.2–3); XIV.iii.28 (= DEH, 284.10 + 286.9–11); XIV.iv.25 (= DEH 151.4–6); XIV.v.19 (= DEH 135.23–26); XIV.v.2 (= DEH 319.26–27); XV.i.34 (283.7–10); XV.i.37/XX.x.10 (= DEH 284.22–285.5); XV.i.13 (= DEH 7.8–15); XVI.i.1 (= DEH 270.24–271.2); XVII.vii.2 (= DEH 139.10–11); XVII.viii.14 (= DEH 269.5–10); XVIII.1.1 (= DEH 203.13–204.4); XIX.21 (= DEH 319.29–320.5). To this, add also the even fuller list in Mras, Hegesippi qui dicitur (CSEL 66.2) 429, and cf. H. Dressel, De Isidori Originum Fontibus (Turin 1874) 37; Caesar, De Bello Judaico 364–365.

119 Isidore, Etymologiae, XIX.i.21, ed. W. Lindsay (Oxford 1911) = DEH 5.15, 320.4–5.

120 Levison found short verbal reminiscences of the DEH in Julian, Historia Wambae Regis, ed. W. Levison, MGH SRM 5 (Hannover–Leipzig 1910), c. 9, 508.2 “incentor seditionis” (cf. DEH V.xvii 333.15 and xliii 384.23); c. 17, 516.10 “incentivum belli” (cf. DEH II.x.2, 158.29; IV.vi.9, 250.19; IV.xxvi.1, 282.2).

121 Julian of Toledo, De comprobatione aetatis sextae (CPL 1260), ed. J. Hillgarth, CCSL 115 (Turnhout 1976). Julian of Toledo, De comprobatione aetatis sextae (CPL 1260), I.20, ed. J. Hillgarth, CCSL 115 (Turnhout 1976) 167.3–5, quotes the bolded parts of the following question in the DEH’s preface (ed. Ussani 4.8–13): “ideo per principes ductum Hebraeorum genus omne consideremus, ut liquido clareat, utrum a femoribus Iudae, nusquam generationis eius successio claudicauerit, an uero offenderit in principum serie, sed manserit in eo, cui reposita manebat omnia et ipse erat spes gentium.” This use of the De Excidio was not noted by the editor of the De Comprobatione, or by J. Madoz, “Fuentes teologico-literarias de San Julian de Toledo,” Gregorianum 33 (1952) 401–417.
Pollard - The ‘Hegesippus’ and the Reception of Josephus in the EMA

again without naming the source. Peter, walking out of Rome, sees Jesus, and asks “Lord, where are you going?” When Jesus replies “I come again to be crucified,” Peter immediately understands that through his own crucifixion, Christ will suffer also. Beatus deploys the De Excidio’s version of this story as part of a rebuttal of the adoptionist Elipandus, to show that Christ suffers through the sufferings of Christians, as part of a long complex argument that the members of the Church (its humanity) are the successor of Christ’s human body: they are part of Him, and through them, He suffers. That is, Christ’s humanity is a fundamental part of His role, especially as a mediator between humanity and the Godhead, and not something merely adopted and inessential. Another Iberian writer therefore put the De Excidio to good use in a serious, theological argument.

This pattern is upheld by Paul Alvaro of Cordoba in the mid-ninth century. In 840, the Christian Paul engaged in a heated debate with Eleazar, who (as noted above) had converted to Judaism, changed his named from Bodo, and fled from Carolingian Francia to Spain. Part of the debate is over the interpretation of Daniel 9, the so-called prophecy of the “seventy weeks”, which predicts the coming of “Christus” and the destruction of Jerusalem. Eleazar held that this was to come about in the future with the arrival of the Jewish Messiah, whereas Paul (like most Christians after Eusebius) held that the prophecy of Daniel had already passed, and referred to the Incarnation and the events of the first century. In Epist. 16 to Eleazar, Paul invokes “Josephus” (i.e. the De Excidio) to prove that even Jews believed the prophecy of Daniel had been fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem. Paul borrows from several of the speeches Josephus is quoted as giving in the De Excidio; most importantly, from De Excidio V.xxxi, where Josephus himself interprets the Roman siege as fulfilment of Daniel, saying “What else did Daniel proclaim? For he prophesied not what had already happened, but what would be. And what is the horrible desolation to be, when the Romans arrive, except that which [Daniel said]

123 Beatus of Liebana and Heterius of Osma, Adversus Elipandum libri II, ed. B. Löfstedt, CCCM 59 (Turnhout 1984); PL 96.893–1030. The earliest Latin version seems to be found in the Martyrium beati Petri apostoli a Lino episcopo conscriptum, ed. R. Lipsius, Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha, vol. 1 (Leipzig 1891) 1–22 (“Quod vadis” at c. 6, 7), but this seems contemporaneous with and possibly dependent on the De Excidio: L. Vouaux, Les Actes de Pierre (Paris 1922) 134–137.
impends?”. Paul goes on to say: “Do you see that your Josephus believed the 70 weeks to be fulfilled in his own time?” Paul continues to mock Eleazar with another quotation of “Josephus”, where the latter implores other Jews to “understand” lest they be destroyed; Eleazar, Paul chides, also cannot “understand”. In the same place, Paul also quotes from book III of the De Excidio, to establish Josephus’ status and credibility as a high-ranking Jew. So once again, an Iberian writer has employed the De Excidio in a serious theological matter (specifically, Christian apologetic or anti-Jewish polemic), in a similar way to Julian. Perhaps even more interesting is the way that Paul Alvaro cites the De Excidio. First of all, he explicitly cites Josephus, who goes completely unnamed by Julian and Beatus. More importantly, Paul introduces the section of his letter with the abovementioned quotations by saying “Know that I offer you nothing of the words of Hegesippus, but of your (= vester) teacher Josephus”. Rather than being an instance of “Verwechselung” of the De Excidio and Josephus, the quotations that Paul offers suggest that he had some sense of the distinction between the two: for the most part he excerpts the speeches of Josephus as reported by Hegesippus (i.e. the De Excidio), and offers “nothing of the words” of Hegesippus himself. Alvaro, then, was not only one of the first (but not the first, as we will see below) to identify the De Excidio by the moniker Hegesippus, but also understood that it was a Christian text, and would therefore only be convincing to a Jew insofar as it quoted Josephus, another Jew. Paul Alvaro, then, not only uses the De Excidio in the sophisticated way in which his Iberian predecessors had, but also points the way to the distinction that was being drawn between Josephus proper and Hegesippus in the rest of Europe around this time.

The De Excidio in Merovingian Gaul

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133 Paul, Epist. 16, c. 10, ed. Gil 214.1–2 (PL 121.489C): “Scito quia nicil tibi ex Egesippi posui uerbis, set ex Iosiphi uestri doctoris…”


135 There is one exception, namely the line quoted by Paul, Epist. 16, c. 10, ed. Gil 241.12–14: “Aristobolus, cui inter fratres etas profectior, mens preruptior, principatum sacerdotij ad regni potestatem sibi convexit et diadema sibi usurpauit superue” [= DEH L.ii, 8.15–18].
Before turning to Paul Alvaro’s Carolingian contemporaries and their use of the *De Excidio*, we need to consider a few witnesses to the impact of the *De Excidio* in Merovingian Gaul. The first is a subscription to the text dating to a hundred years or so after Eucherius of Lyons, preserved in two manuscripts of the *De Excidio*: Karlsruhe Aug. 82 (s. IX\(^1\)) and St. Gall 626 (s. IX\(^2\)). Both these manuscripts contain a short poem appended to the end of the *De Excidio*, where someone named Cyprian addresses a certain Stephen, and notes that he has corrected the forgoing text.\(^{136}\) Holder and others have identified this Cyprian with the bishop of the same name, who held the see of Toulon 524–46.\(^{137}\) This Cyprian was one of the associates of Caesarius of Arles, whose biography he wrote with a number of others, including a deacon named Stephan.\(^{138}\) If he was the author of this subscription, it would seem that the *De Excidio* received a new edition at the hands of a reasonably well-known Gallic bishop in the sixth century, which became the ancestor for two surviving manuscripts. Such an edition reminds us of the revisions of weighty Classical Latin authors (e.g. Vergil, Martianus Capella) by learned late-antique aristocrats, and suggests that the *De Excidio* was considered a valuable text in Gaul at this time.\(^{139}\)

The *De Excidio*’s reputation endured, at least somewhat, into the later seventh century in Gaul. The first example of this may be the *Vindicta Salvatoris*, which seems to have been composed in Aquitaine, possibly around 700 (though this date is very speculative).\(^{140}\) The story describes how Titus *regulus* (sub-king) in Aquitaine is converted upon hearing the story of Jesus, whereupon he joins Vespasian, gathers an army, and sails to Jerusalem to wipe “the

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\(^{137}\) Holder, *Die Reichenauer Handschriften* 224; CPL 1021; Mras, *Hegesippi qui dictur* (CSEL 66.2), xvii.


\(^{140}\) For the date and localisation, most seem to depend on E. von Dobschütz, *Christusbilder: Untersuchungen zur christlichen Legende* (Leipzig 1899) 214–217, who dates the text to the “die vorkarolingische Zeit” rather than the ninth or tenth century because of the “grosen geschichtlichen Unkenntnis” of the author. This is hardly conclusive. The earliest manuscript, Paris, BnF, lat. 5327, dates to the tenth century, and to my mind the story fits well with the late antique fascinations of the *Waltherius*. Nonetheless, the localisation to Aquitaine seems legitimate, given the central place that region (unaccountably) plays in the narrative. On the text, see Schreckenberg, *Rezeptionsgeschichtliche* 53–56 and “Christliche Wirkungsgeschichte,” 1149–1150, 1173–1174, 1183, 1200; S. Wright, *The Vengeance of Our Lord* (Toronto 1989) 28–32; J.K. Elliot (with Montague Rhodes James), *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford 1993) 213–216.
enemies of Jesus” from the earth.\textsuperscript{141} There are many other aspects to the story: for us, the key point is that the theme of the destruction of Jerusalem in vengeance for the death of Christ reminds us very much of the \textit{De Excidio}. It would be surprising if the author were not inspired by the \textit{De Excidio}, but I cannot find a strong specific parallel.\textsuperscript{142} Certainly, however, this story owes something to Josephus more generally, but it is difficult to tell at what remove.

A much more certain case of the \textit{De Excidio}'s influence are the seven short extracts included by Defensor of Ligugé (c. 700) in his \textit{Liber Scintillarum}.\textsuperscript{143} This work is a sort of moral florilegium, a collection of maxims or sayings that reminds one of the \textit{Disticha Catonis} or Isidore’s \textit{Sententiae}. The proverbs are arranged into thematic chapters, where authorities are listed by seeming weight: the Gospels, the NT epistles, the OT, then the Fathers (Augustine, Gregory, Jerome, and Ambrose), then finally lesser sources like the \textit{Vitae Patrum}.\textsuperscript{144} The extracts from the \textit{De Excidio} appear in chapters with titles like “De Pacientia” (II), “De Invidia” (XV), or “De Muneribus” (XLVIII); a representative example (from XV) would be “In prosperity it is difficult to avoid jealousy”.\textsuperscript{145} Of the seven quotations of the \textit{De Excidio}, four are attributed to “Josephus”, while two are anonymous, and one is attributed to Isidore. All these citations from the \textit{De Excidio} are, alas, relegated to the very end of each chapter, meaning their authority did not rate very highly with Defensor, but to be included at all is still significant. What is perhaps more significant is that the text of “Josephus” is used in a novel way here. Eusebius used Josephus as something to demonstrate the truth of the New Testament, or to demonstrate how Jews were punished for denying Jesus, or as an exegetical aid, and in these things he was followed by many others, including the \textit{De Excidio}. In this survey of the use of the \textit{De Excidio}, we have encountered numerous variations on these themes: Eucherius (etc.) using the \textit{De Excidio} for geographical information about the Holy Land, or Julian using the text as part of an argument to show that Christianity has taken over the divine favour that once belonged to Judaism. In the \textit{Liber Scintillarum}, however, Josephus/\textit{De Excidio} becomes a source of moral authority, similar to (if not equal with) the Bible, whence positive lessons can be drawn, rather
than just dark warnings. Nor would this example be forgotten: the Liber Scintillarum was a huge success in the Middle Ages, and it may not be unconnected that a similar use of Josephus is echoed in the early medieval annotations to Josephus’ Antiquities.

The De Excidio in the Carolingian World: from Josephus to “Hegesippus”

For most Classical authors, only a thin thread linked late Antiquity to the Carolingian period: the multiplicity of late antique copies shrank into just a few, or one, that was then multiplied with enthusiasm in the ninth century. Leighton Reynolds aptly described this pattern of transmission as having “the waist of a wasp”. But this is not the case with the De Excidio. The surviving manuscripts, the many citations and borrowings noted above from the sixth and seventh centuries, these prove that the De Excidio (and through it, Josephus) had a far safer journey than Sallust or Tacitus: the De Excidio was known in Italy, Gaul, Iberia and the Insular world. Nonetheless, when we arrive at the Carolingian period, just as the number of surviving manuscripts of the De Excidio increase, so too do the citations and borrowings of the text, both in number and in volume.

The earliest Carolingian use of the De Excidio that I have been able to identify comes in the poem Arve poli conditorem, which survives in a c. 800 manuscript from St Gall, now in Leiden. The poem, an abecedarius (the stanzas have first letters in alphabetical sequence), recounts the vengeance of Titus and Vespasian upon the Jews of Jerusalem for their denial and murder of Christ: every stanza ends with ad delendam sevam gentem [Iudeam] convenerunt principes. In this, it clearly seems similar to the Vindicta Salvatoris and the De Excidio, and to a lesser extent Eusebius. Unsurprisingly, the poem includes the story of Maria eating her child, but in this case it seems clear that the source was the De Excidio, and not Eusebius-Rufinus’ H.E. or the “Rufinus” translation of the Jewish War. The poem also recommends that Zosaphi

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150 On the poem, see Streckenberg, “Christliche Wirkungsgeschichte,” 1143, 1149, 1157, 1200, 1205.
151 The story of Maria occurs in stanza 12 (ed. Streckler, MGH Poetae 4.2–3, 544), and is compared to the three other versions below:
istoriarum relegantur for further information, which seems to be a reference to Josephus, to whom the De Excidio was attributed up to the ninth century.152 The De Excidio was clearly still circulating in the early Carolingian period, and was seemingly giving rise to even more anti-Jewish versions of the fall of Jerusalem, which the De Excidio had ironically already amplified from Eusebius.

The same sort of amplified interpretation of “divine vengeance” also seems to be found in Walafrid Strabo’s De Subversione Hierusalem, written in 824.153 Starting from the same basis as Gregory’s homily (see above, p. 20), namely Luke 19.41–47, Walafrid summarises many of the events covered by the final book of the De Excidio. He also adopts a similar attitude toward the events: more than merely a fulfillment of Jesus’ predictions, the destruction is God’s wrath for the denial and murder of Christ: “there came two Roman princes, Vespasian and Titus, father and son, with a martial host for the destruction of [Jerusalem] ... it is right and proper, that those who had denied God the Father, and the Son, be slaughtered by father and son”.154 Walafrid even names “Josephus” (which could easily refer to the De Excidio) as his source. But it seems that Walafrid did not use Josephus or the De Excidio directly in this work. Instead, Knittel’s exhaustive examination of Walafrid’s sources credits Eusebius-Rufinus’s Historia Ecclesiastica for much of the content (including the references to Josephus), and makes no mention of the De Excidio.156 Walafrid’s work formed the basis for one of the homilies of Haimo

152 Arve poli conditorem, ed. Strecker 545: Zosaphi istoriarum relegantur tituli, / Et nefandum Iudæorum agnoscatur deocus, / Ut nec ultra contra gentes se iactare audeant.


of Auxerre (d. c. 870), which Wright believed was directly dependent on the *De Excidio*.\(^{157}\) Given that most of Haimo’s text seems to be taken almost word-for-word from Walafrid’s *De Subversione*, it seems unlikely that Haimo used the *De Excidio* directly, either.\(^{159}\)

If we discount Walafrid then, there is a considerable gap in the *De Excidio*’s uptake after the colourful *Arve poli conditorem* until the later 820s. This pattern is something also seen with the use of Josephus’ *Jewish War* (in the seven-book translation) and the Cassiodorean *Antiquities*.\(^{160}\) As the manuscript table suggests above, there was no lack of availability in the early ninth century. Frechulf of Lisieux, the first identifiable Carolingian user of the *De Excidio*, makes up for this brief silence by borrowing heavily from the text, certainly more than any other author in late antiquity or the early Middle Ages. His two-part, twelve book *Chronicle*, written in the 820s, covered Creation to the early seventh century.\(^{161}\) It was a monumental undertaking, and its great achievement was weaving together a wide variety of different historical sources, including not just the *De Excidio* but also the more literal translations of Josephus’ works.\(^{162}\) Vast swathes of the *De Excidio* are incorporated, beginning in the first chapter of book six (where much of *De Excidio* I.i, on the priest Mattathias from 1 Macc., is incorporated) and extending to c. 17 of part one, book seven (using much of *De Excidio* Lxxxiv, nowhere that I can find in Knittel’s notes does he suggest the DEH as a source for Walafrid’s works. *Contra* the unsubstantiated remark by Wright, *The Vengeance of Our Lord* 26: “Walafrid Strabo … greatly expanded [Gregory the Great’s] homily by adding illustrative material drawn from Hegesippus,” referring to the *De Subversione*. More substantially, see Schreckenberg, *Rezeptionsgeschichtliche* 35–37, on the question of Walafrid’s use of Josephus; and also his “Christliche Wirkungsgeschichte,” 1138, 1140, 1160, etc.


\(^{159}\) A full list of Haimo’s borrowings from Walafrid’s *De Subversione* would literally fill pages. For one example, compare the phrase of Walafrid’s quoted at n. 154 with Haimo, *Hom.* 122 [= Barré no. 29], PL 118.654B: “Judaeorum populo in malitia perseverante, suscitavit adversus eos Dominus duos Romanorum principes, Vespasianum scilicet et Titum, patrem et filium, justo Dei judicio agente, ut qui patrem et filium negaverant, a patre et filio necarentur.”

\(^{160}\) This I will explore in a future publication. It may be that there was less call for either Josephus or the DEH until the great compilatory exegetes and historians began to work in the 820s.


\(^{162}\) I hope to explore Frechulf’s use of Josephus more generally in a future publication. For the moment, see Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition* 112–15, and the apparatus fontium to Allen’s edition of the *Historiae* in CCCM 169A.
on Caesar, Anthony and Cleopatra). Some of the borrowings are enormous: one whole chapter (I.vii.10, making four pages in Allen’s edition) is composed entirely from excerpts out of the *De Excidio*. For Frechulf, the *De Excidio* seems to have been a work of Josephus, of whom he had a high opinion: after quoting from the *De Excidio* about Antipater the Idumean’s alliance with the king of Arabia, he says *haec de Iosepphi excerpsimus dictis*. This suggests that even by about 830, the Hegesippus vs. Josephus attribution had either not taken place or was not yet universal. Frechulf, however, must have perceived a difference between the *De Excidio* and the more literal translations of Josephus. For he had access to the literal seven-book Latin translation of the *Jewish War* as well as the *Antiquities*, and used these extensively in his *Chronicle* as well, but in different places. The accounts of Maria and her unlucky child, and the ruin of Jerusalem, furthermore, seem to be taken from Eusebius-Rufinus’ *H.E.*, without reference to the *De Excidio*. A future study might examine where, when, and why Frechulf might have preferred the account offered by *De Excidio* to the account of the same event by the “Rufinus” translation of the *JW* or the *Historia Ecclesiastica*.

Closely associated with Frechulf was Hrabanus Maurus (d. 856), abbot of Fulda from 822. Frechulf, posted in isolated Lisieux, requested from Hrabanus a commentary on the Pentateuch, which Hrabanus assiduously sent along in parts in the later 820s, each

163 For a complete and precise list of Frechulf’s many borrowings from the *DEH*, see Allen’s apparatus fontium in CCCM 169A. In general, the largest borrowings seem to be: *DEH* I.i = Frechulf I.vi.1–2, 7; *DEH* I.xxi–xxii = Frechulf I.vii.2; *DEH* I.xxii–xxvi = Frechulf I.vii.10; *DEH* I.xxvii–xxviii = Frechulf I.vii.11; *DEH* I.xxxiv = Frechulf I.vii.17.


166 Frechulf, *Historiae*, I.vii.2, ed. Allen 370.23–27 (PL 106.1080A), quoting from *DEH* I.xxi.1, 34.16–19. At one juncture in Allen’s edition of Frechulf’s text (422.19–21), after a quotation of the “Rufinus” translation of the *Jewish War*, we read “scire uero cupientes ad Iosepphi uel Egesippi libros conuolare studeant”, but since “vel Egesippi” is only present in much later manuscripts (the earliest of which is s. X–XI: Vat. Reg. Lat. 302) and not in the oldest and best (St Gall 622, s. IX24) it seems very much like an interpolation. Frechulf does cite “Egesippus” frequently, of course, but this is in connexion with excerpts from the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, where the “real” Hegesippus (the second-century Christian historian) is cited as a source.


accompanied by a warm dedica
tory letter. Frechulf, Hrabanus seems to have made
extensive use of the more literal translations of Josephus. Hrabanus, however, does not seem
to use the De Excidio in his early commentaries; instead, his only direct quotation seems to come
appropriately) in his exegesis of Maccabees, written in the 830s. There, at the end of the
exposition of the first book of Maccabees, Hrabanus includes a long historical discursus that
continues from the reign of the Maccabean leader John Hyrcanus (d. 104 BCE). Much of this is
taken from Josephus’ Antiquities but upon arriving at Alexander Janneaeus (d. 76 BCE),
Hrabanus includes an extensive quotation from the De Excidio. This is mainly used to establish
Alexander as a cruel and wanton character, whose reign opens the way for the Roman conquest
of Judea, the coming of Christ, and the fulfillment of the prophecy about the failure and
destruction of the Jewish principate in Genesis 49.10. Hrabanus, therefore, uses the De Excidio
as part of a typological discussion about the prophesied destruction of Jerusalem in conjunction
with the coming of Christ, suggesting that he had well absorbed the main message of the text
(though less bitterly than the Arve poli conditorem or Vindicta salvatoris). Whether he saw the De
Excidio as the work of Josephus, however, is questionable. This quotation comes in a section
heavily reliant on other works of Josephus, where Josephus’ name is frequently invoked, and
his text quoted verbatim. But Josephus’ name is not cited in reference to the quotation. This
suggests that Hrabanus may have been hesitant to equate the De Excidio with Josephus’ genuine
works, even if they were clearly akin to him. Other citations of the De Excidio by Hrabanus all
seem to be second-hand, suggesting also that Hrabanus made limited direct use of the work.

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169 For Frechulf’s letter, see Epistola ad Hrabanum Maurum abbatem, ed. M. Allen, CCCM 169A, 5–7; Hrabani (Mauri) abbatis Fuldensis et archiepiscopi Moguntiacensis epistole, ed. E. Dümmler, MGH Epist. 5 / Karolini Aevi 3 (Berlin 1899), no. 7, 391–393. Hrabanus’ replies are found in the same place, nos. 8–12, 393–400.
171 Hrabanus, In Macc., PL 109.1125–1256, with the dedicatory letter to Gerolt, archdeacon of Louis the Pious, also in Hrabani ... epistole, ed. Dümmler, MGH Epist. 5, no. 19, 424–25. On the date, see De Jong, “The empire as ecclesia,” 210 n. 80.
172 Hrabanus, In Macc., I.16, PL 109.1215C–D (“quaerenti ab his ... mors Alexandri foret”; = DEH I.x.3–xi.1, 15.21–16.8. Later on, in his exposition of II Maccabees 5, Hrabanus seems to quote from the DEH the story about Jesus ben Ananias, who, four years before the siege of Jerusalem in 66, wandered its streets
173 E.g. in his In Matt., V.14, PL 107.973B (= DEH 3.26.i, 233.12–18), the quotation seems to come via Bede, In Lucam, II.5, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 120, 119.524–29 (PL 92.381D). Similarly indirect quotations: PL 109.1195D (probably from Isidore); PL 111.353A–B and 391A (Isidore).
Similarly, Angelomus of Luxeuil sometimes seems to quote from the *De Excidio*, but these, too, seem to come at second or third-hand, in the latter case often via Hrabanus or Bede.¹⁷⁴

It seems that it was just as Hrabanus was writing that the *De Excidio* came to be attributed to “Hegesippus” rather than Josephus. As was hinted above (see p. 16), no library catalogue before the mid-ninth century lists the *De Excidio* with an attribution to Hegesippus, but the earliest manuscripts bearing the name “(H)egesippus” are Karlsruhe LB. Aug. 101 (s. IX²⁴) and Bern BB. 180 (s. IX²¹).¹⁷⁵ And while neither Frechulf,¹⁷⁶ nor Hrabanus, both writing in the 820s and 30s, seem to have used this attribution, Paul Alvaro, writing in 840, did know the name. A bit earlier than Paul’s witness is the quotation found in the conciliar letter issued by the 836 council of Aachen.¹⁷⁷ This great council issued numerous canons to reform the lives of bishops, clergy, and indeed the king, as it came during a time of particular tension in the realm after the penance of Louis the Pious in 833.¹⁷⁸ The long conciliar letter seems to have been wholly or mainly composed by Jonas of Orleans (d. 843), and includes a substantial quotation from the *De Excidio*.¹⁷⁹ This comes in the third book of the letter (mainly against usurpation of Church property), where Jonas explicitly borrows from the *De Excidio* (which he calls the *liber Egesyppi*) about Herod *parricida et sceleratissimus rex*, whose killing of priests and coopting of religious donations led to severe divine punishment.¹⁸⁰ Here the *De Excidio* is used not to argue against


¹⁷⁵ Cf. Ussani, “Su le fortune medievali dell’Egesippo,” 112–113. Mras lists I (Innsbruck + Vienna), as having “Egesippi” (xxiii) but this would seem to be a mistake. The manuscript is just a fragment, containing parts of the middle of book 3 (ii–v), meaning it is unlikely there was any original title written on the surviving parts; such a title is not mentioned in Mras’ description (xx–xxi) nor in the more detailed description of A. Zingerle, “Fragmente des sogenannten Hegesippus in der Universitätsbibliothek in Innsbruck,” *Anzeiger der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-Historische Classe* 31.11 (1894) 41–43.


¹⁷⁸ Regarding this, see C. Booker, *Past Convictions: the Penance of Louis the Pious and the Decline of the Carolingians* (Philadelphia 2009) 189–90, etc.

¹⁷⁹ For Jonas’ authorship of the letter, see Werminghoff, MGH Concilia 2.2, 724.

¹⁸⁰ *Epistola concilii Aquisgranensis*, III.91 (XXII), ed. Werminghoff, MGH Conc. 2.2, 765.26–30: “Herodes porro parricida et sceleratissimus rex, de quo et in eisdem actibus apostolorum legitur et plenius in libro Egesyppi inventur, quo regnante natus est Christus, cuius etiam saevissimus ingentem parvulorum catervam pro Christo trucidavit gladius, quia quosdam sacerdotes necavit eorumque ministerium sibi
Jews (Alvaro), or heretics (Beatus), or to suggest the prophesied succession of Christians to the mantle of God’s chosen people (Julian, Hrabanus), or divine vengeance upon the Jews (Arve poli conditorem) or even for geographical information (Eucherius, Adomnan, Bede); rather it is used to make a moral-theological/legal prescription, in a mode not entirely unlike Defensor’s Liber Scintillarum.

Jonas marks the beginning of a period where the De Excidio of “Hegesippus” starts to be distinguished from what are more properly the works of Josephus. The manuscript titles and library catalogues bear witness to this, but so too do Notker “Balbulus” of St. Gall and Hincmar of Rheims, both writing in the later ninth century. Notker’s De interpretibus divinarum scripturarum (c. 885), a plan of study for his protégé Salomo, suggests that Iosephi uero Iudaici historias et Hegesippi nostri legendas. Notker not only makes a clear distinction between the De Excidio and Josephus, but also (like Paul Alvaro) sees the one as Christian, the other as Jewish. More interesting are Hincmar’s explicit notices of “Hegesippus”. In his De praedestinatione Dei et libero arbitrio (c. 859), he discusses the Antichrist’s subjection to divine power; he offers a corollary example of Peter and Paul sending off the demons that were allowing Simon Magus to fly, causing the heresiarch to break his leg (= DEH III.i, pp. 186–7). He credits the story to Egesippus verax historiographus, and in the 870s reuses it (with similar credit) in his De regis persona. In both cases Hincmar uses the De Excidio as part of relatively sophisticated theological arguments (the former citation more than the latter), and it is cited alongside very weighty authorities (e.g. Scripture, Jerome). Even if Hegesippus has been separated from Josephus, he retains despite (or because of) this a certain trustworthiness.

Particularly notable amongst these early attributions to Hegesippus, and a suitable text to end this survey, is the so-called Historiae de excidio Hierosolymitanae urbis Anacephalaeosis. This text – most of which is taken wholecloth from the De Excidio – in fact follows the De Excidio in Patrologia Latina 15, where both texts reside amongst the dubious works of St. Ambrose. The investigations of Amnon Linder have demonstrated that while the earliest manuscript of the Anacephalaeosis dates to the eleventh century (Orleans BM 163), the work is certainly earlier. In fact, it can be dated and localised with reasonable precision: it seems to be based on one

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181 Notker, De interpretibus divinarum scripturarum, PL 131.993–1004, at 1004A.
183 De regis persona et regio ministerio, c. 32, PL 125.856B: “... Simonem Magum, qui crurifragio perit, sicut in Hegesippi historia legitur...”
184 Historiae de Excidio Hierosolymitanae Urbis Anacephalaeosis, PL 15.2205–2215. For earlier editions, see Linder, cited below.
manuscript of the *De Excidio*, Bern BB 180 (Fleury?, s. IX24), and what is more, based on that manuscript before it was corrected later on in the ninth century. Since Bern 180 itself bears an attribution to Hegesippus, there is no reason to doubt that the work originally bore the title found in the manuscripts: *Incipit Recapitulatio desolationis iherosolimae, secundum egesippum Christianisimum apostolorum tempori contiguum, ad honorem resurrectionis dominicae*. Here the moniker of Hegesippus seems to have led to a favourable, if erroneous, confusion with the second-century Christian historian mentioned by Eusebius. It may indeed be that the ultimate success of the Hegesippus title owed not a little to such confusion (deliberate or inadvertent) with this authoritative figure from early Christian history. In any case, it would seem that this abbreviated version of the *De Excidio*, which also includes a snippet from the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, was a sermon, intended to be read at Easter. It was a common theme of medieval Easter sermons to discuss the destruction of Jerusalem foretold by Christ (e.g. Luke 19), and the oldest manuscript of the *Anacephalaesosis* bears the instruction: *in die sancto pasche ad prandium*.186 Most of the content is taken from book 5 of the *De Excidio*, and the sermon begins by setting the scene with the violent civil strife in Jerusalem that immediately preceded Titus’ siege.187 It then includes the whole of *De Excidio*’s huge expansion of Josephus’ lament for his city (*DEH V.ii ≈ JW V.i.3.19–20*), where the *De Excidio* goes beyond the wickedness of the civil strife and exclaims repeatedly that the sedition and ultimate destruction of the city are vengeance for the Jewish denial and murder of Christ.188 Seemingly original content afterwards upholds the justice of the Jews’ fate, since *pene omnes Iudaei in necem Domini nostri Iesu Christi unanimiter consenserunt*.189 This guilt is compounded because one of the Jews – Josephus – gave witness to the greatness of Jesus: here the *Anacephalaesosis* includes the *Testimonium Flavianum* passage from book 2 of the *De Excidio*. The text then quotes the *De Excidio*’s description of the Temple, and the signs that foretold the destruction of the city.190 It ends after reporting a large excerpt of the *De Excidio*’s version of Eleazar’s speech to the doomed Jews at Masada, as illustration of the pitiful fate that


187 With help from Linder’s work (“Ps. Ambrose’s *Anacephalaesosis*,” 149) I have identified the following parallels between the *Anacephalaesosis* and the DEH: col. 2205B = V.i.1, 293.1–2 + V.i.3, 293.16–20 + V.i.5, 295.7–12; col. 2205C–2209B = V.ii, 295.13–301.14; col. 2209B–10A = original content?; col. 2210B–C = II.xii.1, 163.9–22; col. 2210C = original content?; col. 2210C–2211A = *Gospel of Nicodemus*, Pilate’s letter to Claudius, c. 28; col. 2211A–C = II.xii.1, 163.23–164.20; col. 2211C–D = V.xlix.4, 404.21–27; col. 2211D–A = original content?; col. 2212A–13A = V.iii, 309.19–311.25; col. 2213A–2215B = V.xliii, 391.13 – V.xliv, 395.10; col. 2215B = original content?; 2215B–17D = V.xliii, 411.14–415; col. 2215D–A = original content?

188 E.g. *Anacephalaesosis*, PL 15.2206C (addressing Jerusalem’s inhabitants): “Habes, quod petisti. Eripuisti tibi Praeulem pacis, petisti necari uitae tuae arbitrum, concedi tibi Barabbam; qui propter seditionem factam in ciuitate et homicidium missus fuerat in carcerem (Luc. XXIII, 19): ideo salus abs te recessit, pax abiit, quies destitit: data est tibi seditio, datum excidium.” (≈ *DEH V.ii 296.23–297.1*, trans. Blocker: “You have what you sought, you have snatched away from yourself the patron of peace, for the arbiter of life to be killed, for Barabbas to be released to you, who on account of rebellion done in the city and murder had been sent to prison. Thus salvation departed from you, peace went away, calm left off, rebellion was given to you, destruction was given”).

189 *Anacephalaesosis*, PL 15.2209C.

190 *Anacephalaesosis*, PL 15.2212B–2215A (≈ *DEH V.ii and xlv*).
Awaited those who did not recognise Jesus. The story of Maria and her baby is omitted, perhaps as too gruesome for a sermon. As a whole, then, the text concentrates on the theme of divine vengeance, distilling the harsh essence of the De Excidio’s message in a way similar to the Arve poli conditorem. It makes clear that not only were Carolingians reading the De Excidio in what seems like its entirety, nor just that they understood and studied its most important messages (anti-Jewish as they may be) – rather, it also demonstrates clearly that the ipsissima verba of the De Excidio had far more impact than any textual witnesses we can trace. For where there is one sermon, there were probably others, each of which may have had an audience far larger than the De Excidio as a whole could ever realise. From Aramaic to Greek, from Greek into a Christian Latin adaptation, to a Latin sermon epitome credited to some “Hegesippus”: Josephus’ Jewish War underwent some remarkable transformations.

Why Hegesippus?

And this leads to one final question that needs to be addressed. What could have motivated the distinction between Josephus proper and the so-called Hegesippus? It is difficult to say. Perhaps it was the more critical eye that the Carolingians cast on the authenticity of their sources: the works of Augustine came under careful scrutiny in this regard in the mid ninth century. One might also be tempted to ascribe the new name to the tense Jewish-Christian relations in the Carolingian realm after the conversion of deacon Bodo to Judaism in 839. Albert has traced the origin of new anti-Jewish feeling in Carolingian exegetical works by Angelomus, Hrabanus, and Paschasius in the 840s to the aftermath of Bodo’s conversion. Perhaps it was this climate, and the anti-Jewish vitriol of Amulo and the author of the Anacephalaenosis that led to the distinction between Josephus and a so-called Hegesippus: the latter, obviously a Christian (perhaps conveniently confused with the second-century figure, as in the Anacephalaenosis), could be approved of even by anti-Jewish curmudgeons like Amulo of Lyons. But there is the problem of date. We have an unambiguous reference to the De Excidio as the work of “Hegesippus” by Jonas in the conciliar letter of Aachen 836, considerably before Bodo’s conversion. Up to that point, the Carolingian world of Louis the Pious seems to have

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192 Florus of Lyons, for example, refutes Hincmar’s use of Ps. Augustine’s Hypomnesticon by disputing its authenticity: “Nos enim manifeste novimus, quia quando libros Retractationum jam senex et morti vicinus scripsit, in quibus omnes praecedentes libros suos diligenter et fideliter retractavit, nequaquam adhuc istum libellum [Hypomnesticon] scripsen. Quia si scripsisset, utique inter alios etiam ejus mentionem fecisset.” Florus (though ascribed to Remigius in the PL), De Tribus Epistolis Liber, PL 121.1044B–C. On the certain attribution of the De Tribus to Florus, see F. Brunhözl, Histoire de la littérature latine du Moyen Âge, trans. H. Rochais, I.2 (Turnhout 1991) 304. Cf. also a similar argument by Prudentius of Troyes, PL 115.1200a: “repente subiit in mentem recensendum quemdam pseudographum libellum qui falsus Hypomnesticon Augustini inscribitur, quem non esse beatissimi Augustini plurima documenta sunt; videlicet quia nec cum caeteris libris suis ab ipso retractatus est...”
193 See above, n. 4 and pp. 25–26.
194 Albert, “Anti-Jewish Exegesis in the Carolingian Period”; eadem, “Adversus Iudaeos in the Carolingian Empire.”
been notably welcoming to Jews, who received special protections from the emperor. Agobard of Lyons, of course, was disturbed by the close associations between Jews and Christians in his diocese, and wrote furiously – but ineffectively – against the Jews in the 820s. Agobard never mentions Josephus, and even if his fulminations were the impetus to distinguish Hegesippus and Josephus it would seem unlikely that this changeover could have taken place so quickly that Paul Alvaro, in faraway Cordoba, would have changed to the Hegesippus attribution by 840. And if we were to posit that the Hegesippus attribution came from Iberia, a hot-bed of anti-Jewish feeling, and Agobard’s homeland, we run into another problem. Amulo, Agobard’s successor and close associate, himself seems to lump Josephus and the De excidio together. After all, the rant that begins this article concludes by admitting Josephus’ usefulness as a source for learning de excidio Hierosolymorum: the use of this distinctive phrase strongly suggests he knew the work we call De excidio Hierosolymitanum. If so, Amulo was ironically condemning the thoroughly Christian De Excidio in his anti-Jewish rant against Josephus.

Certainly, something seems to have happened in the mid ninth-century that led to the De Excidio being attributed to Hegesippus more and more. Whatever the answer, it would be worthwhile to extend this study beyond the Carolingian period, and to see whether the separation of “Hegesippus” from Josephus led to a gradual divergence in usage and reputation. Some important work has already been done, for example, on the use of Hegesippus by twelfth-century historians.

Conclusion

This survey has attempted to be comprehensive, but it would be folly to suggest that I have exhausted the influence of the De Excidio even up to the Carolingian period. The wide availability of the text, and the variety of uses to which it was put, should prompt others to uncover traces of the De Excidio in other authors and works from this period. After all, the De

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197 See the underlined text at n. 2. The title De Excidio Hierosolymitanum is not found in the earliest manuscripts of the seven-book “Rufinus” translation of the Jewish War, e.g. St Gall SB CSG 627 (s. IXmed) 3: Liber primus iosephi historiographi de bello iudaico; nor in Cologny Bod. 99 (s. IX2/3); nor in Wolfenbüttel Weiss. 23 (s. IXmed); nor in Berne BB 50 (s. IX2/3). Likewise, it is not used to describe the seven-book Jewish War in the early-medieval library catalogues surveyed by Manitius, Handschriften antiker Autoren in mittelalterlichen Bibliothekskatalogen 207–213.
Excidio was known and used in Iberia, west and east Francia, Italy, England and perhaps even Ireland in the early Middle Ages. This text was cited or quoted as an authority in a major Church council, in a moral florilegium, for historical-geographical and typological exegesis, in a major historical work, in debates with heretics and Jews, in theological treatises, an Easter sermon, and even in a vicious anti-Jewish poem. Certainly, the ways the De Excidio was used are akin to, but perhaps even more varied than the ways the more literal translations of Josephus were read and employed during these same centuries. Furthermore, the strong identification between the De Excidio and Josephus in the manuscripts, catalogues, and authors surveyed above makes clear that any consideration of the latter’s influence, authority, and reputation must include the former. Indeed, one might reasonably conclude that Josephus’ largely favourable reputation in the early Middle Ages (pace Amulo) was due to the profoundly Christian message of the De Excidio that was supposedly his work, a work he would have no doubt repudiated had he seen it.