

Book I of Josephus' 'Bellum Iudaicum': Sources and Classical Echoes Revisited

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Introduction

The *Bellum Iudaicum* is a truly complex work which, at least on one level, strives to articulate the causes and consequences of the fall of Jerusalem. The lengthy preface to the first book of the *B.J.* sets the tone for a narrative about how such an incredible event and tragedy, namely, the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple, could have ever come about. Josephus' *B.J.* has been called "a work of tragic historiographical information,"¹ written by an apologist for his fellow Jews and his religion. Eusebius called Josephus' work a *τραγικὴ ἅπασα δραματουργία*.²

B.J. 1.9-12 echoes the historian's heartfelt emotions with language that expresses his profound sorrow over the misfortunes that have befallen his country.³

¹ Per Bilde, *Flavius Josephus between Jerusalem and Rome* (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha, 1988), 72.

² *Hist. eccl.* 1.8.4.

³ *B.J.* 1.9. καὶ τοῖς ἔμαντοῦ πάθει διδοῦς ἐπολοφύρεσθαι ταῖς τῆς πατρίδος συμφοραῖς.

It was impossible for Josephus to hold back his grief⁴ and lamentations.⁵ The preface introduces the reader to a priest from Jerusalem living in Rome, about to relate the tragic events that befell his own people. Josephus says that he will write about the decline of the fortunes of the Jews, the civil war that broke out among them;⁶ Titus' invasion and various assaults;⁷ the sufferings and calamities of the people, culminating in their defeat, as attributable respectively to the war, the sedition, and the famine.⁸ Josephus will not blame the Romans for the fall of Jerusalem, but points his finger at οἱ Ἰουδαίων τύραννοι,⁹ the rabble-rousers among his own people. All of this will be done, according to Josephus, for “lovers of the truth — τοῖς γε τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἀγαπῶσιν — and not for the gratification of his readers.”¹⁰

Josephus presents his credentials to his readers in his preface to the *B.J.* by saying that as a participant in and as an eye-witness to the war against the Romans, “the greatest of our wars,”¹¹ *he* is most qualified to narrate the details of the war without misrepresenting the facts and can thus provide a historically accurate account — τὸ δ' ἀκριβὲς τῆς ἱστορίας —¹² of this most important event in Jewish history.¹³ He himself fought in the war in some capacity; his work became known to the Roman authorities. His history is, he says, not the casual collection of the events that others have recorded, nor is it conditioned or burdened by “the flattery of the Romans or from hatred towards the Jews.”¹⁴ Such representations did nothing but result in “encomium or invective.”¹⁵ Josephus' overwhelming concern in the preface to the *B.J.*, namely, to assure the reader of the accuracy of his account, is picked up again in the epilogue of the *B.J.*, at the end of Book VII where he wrote: “Here we close the history, which

⁴ *B.J.* 1.12: ὥστε ἀμήχανον ἦν ὀδυρμῶν ἐπικρατεῖν.

⁵ *B.J.* 1.12: τὰς δ' ὀλοφύρσεις.

⁶ *B.J.* 1.9: καμνόντων Ἰουδαίους τῶν πραγμάτων... ἐστασιάσθη τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων.

⁷ *B.J.* 1.10: Τίτος δευτερον εἰς τὴν ξώραν ἐνέβαλεν... προσβολὰς τε ὅσας ἐποιήσατο.

⁸ *B.J.* 1.11: τὰ πάθη τοῦ δήμου καὶ τὰς συμφορὰς ὅσα τε ὑπὸ τοῦ πολέμου καὶ ὅσα ὑπὸ τῆς στάσεως καὶ ὅσα ὑπὸ τοῦ λιμοῦ κακωθέντες ἐάλωσαν.

⁹ *B.J.* 1.10.

¹⁰ *B.J.* 1.30: τοῖς γε τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἀγαπῶσιν, ἀλλὰ μὴ πρὸς ἡδονὴν ἀνέγραψα.

¹¹ *B.J.* 1.1: πόλεμον συστάντα μέγιστον... τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς This passage echoes Thucydides 1.1: ὅτι ἀκμάζοντές τε ἦσαν ἐς αὐτὸν ἀμφοτέροι... κίνησις γὰρ αὕτη μεγίστη δὴ τοῖς Ἕλλησιν ἐγένετο κτλ.

¹² *B.J.* 1.2.

¹³ *B.J.* 1.1-3.

¹⁴ *B.J.* 1.2: οἱ παραγενόμενοι δὲ ἢ κολακείᾳ τῇ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους ἢ μίσει τῷ πρὸς Ἰουδαίους καταψεύδονται τῶν πραγμάτων.

¹⁵ *B.J.* 1.2: περιέχει δὲ αὐτοῖς ὅπου μὲν κατηγορίαν ὅπου δὲ ἐγκώμιον τὰ συγγράμματα.

we promised to relate with perfect accuracy....; of its style my readers must be left to judge; but, as concerning truth, I would not hesitate boldly to assert that, throughout the entire narrative, this has been my single aim.”¹⁶

Josephus’ claim to historical accuracy is by no means a novelty in the Greco-Roman historiographical tradition. What Josephus asserts in the preface to the *B.J.* is that the war that he himself fought in was such a significant event in the history of his people; that previous attempts to tell its story have been most inadequate; and that he, now a person possessing a certain status in Rome, was in a position to carry out his task with accuracy and truthfulness. In short, Josephus portrays himself in the preface to the *B.J.* as a man proud of his Jewish heritage and priesthood, who has a great love for his people and for the Temple. He also underscores his competence as a historian.

Apart from the above-mentioned reflections that come from the *B.J.*, there are other texts of Josephus that attest to his claim to objectivity and competence.¹⁷ For example, at *Contra Apionem* 1.49 Josephus asserts that during the Romans’ siege of Jerusalem, he was able to record with great precision all that took place on both the Roman and Jewish sides.¹⁸ Our author continues by adding that his history of the war benefited from written documents that he consulted, but his own experience was of utmost importance. He wrote: “Even if, as they [his critics] assert, they have read the *commentarii* of the imperial commanders, they at any rate had no first-hand acquaintance with our position in the opposite camp.”¹⁹

We cannot, of course, ascertain with certainty who Josephus’ primary audience was. Was Josephus addressing chiefly Rome’s elite and intellectual non-

¹⁶ *B.J.* 7.454-455: Ἐνταῦθα τῆς ἱστορίας ἡμῖν τὸ πέρασ ἐστίν, ἢ ἐπηγγελίμεθα μετὰ πάσης ἀκριβείας παραδῶσειν... [455] καὶ πῶς μὲν ἡρμήνευται, τοῖς ἀναγνωσομένοις κρίνειν ἀπολείψω, περὶ τῆς ἀληθείας δὲ οὐκ ἂν ὀκνήσαμει θαρρῶν λέγειν, ὅτι μόνης ταύτης παρὰ πᾶσαν τὴν ἀναγραφὴν ἐστοχασάμην.

¹⁷ *C. Ap.* 1.48-49, 53, 55; *Ant.* 1.4.

¹⁸ *C. Ap.* 1.49: ἐν ᾧ χρόνῳ [πολιορκίαν] γενομένην τῶν πραττομένων οὐκ ἔστιν ὃ τὴν ἐμὴν γνώσιν διέφυγεν· καὶ γὰρ τὰ κατὰ τὸ στρατόπεδον τὸ Ῥωμαίων ὄρων ἐπιμελῶς ἀνέγραφον καὶ τὰ παρὰ τῶν αὐτομόλων ἀπαγγελλόμενα μόνος αὐτὸς συνίειν. [“During that time no incident escaped my knowledge. I kept a careful record of all that went on under my eyes in the Roman camp, and was alone in a position to understand the information brought by deserters.”] (trans. Thackeray)

¹⁹ *C. Ap.* 1.56: πῶς οὖν οὐκ ἂν θαρσαίς τις ἠγήσασαίτο τοὺς ἀνταγωνίζεσθαί μοι περὶ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐπιχειρηκότας, οἳ καὶ τοῖς τῶν αὐτοκρατόρων ὑπομνήμασιν ἐντυχεῖν λέγουσιν, ἀλλ’ οὐ γὰρ καὶ τοῖς ἡμετέροις τῶν ἀντιπολεμούντων πράγμασι παρέτυχον. [“Surely, then, one cannot but regard as audacious the attempt of these critics to challenge my veracity. Even if, as they assert, they have read the *Commentaries* of the imperial commanders, they at any rate had no first-hand acquaintance with our position in the opposite camp.] (trans. Thackeray).

Jewish population? If so, by referring to his Jewishness and in his almost obsessive insistence that he was going to provide his fellow Jews with an objective account of such important events of their history, was there a lack of transparency or a sub-text to be understood? While there is no scholarly consensus on this problem, it is the view of this writer that there are sufficient indications in the *B.J.* that Josephus was targeting Rome's cultural elite, persons adept in both Latin and Greek, and most importantly, people sympathetic to Flavian Rome.

Josephus and Greek Literature

Josephus' Greek can be very stylistically sophisticated and one sees litotes,²⁰ chiasmic structures,²¹ *figurae etymologicae*,²² frequent word-plays,²³ alliteration,²⁴ assonance,²⁵ asyndeton,²⁶ oxymoron,²⁷ antithesis,²⁸ and other rhetorical devices that would please the hearer or reader of his text. Josephus acknowledges in the *Contra Apionem* that he had some help in the composition of his Greek version from some assistants.²⁹ Someone, either Josephus himself or one of his assistants, carefully composed, re-wrote and structured his text. The good rhetorical form and stylistic elegance allowed the reader or listener to hear the spoken language; even the pitch of the words was chosen so as to please and delight the targeted audience. The trained reader feels and even hears the fingerprints and footsteps of the giants of Greek literature throughout Josephus' *opus*. He himself wrote in *Ant.* 20.263 that upon his arrival in Rome, he had studied the great classical writers of the past,³⁰ presumably to learn to imitate their style and possibly to

²⁰ *B.J.* 1.78: οὐκ ὀλίγοι.

²¹ *B.J.* 1.400: ὑπὸ μὲν Καίσαρος ἐφιλείτο μετ' Ἀγρίππαι, ὑπ' Ἀγρίππαι δὲ μετὰ Καίσαρα.

²² *B.J.* 1.511: δωρεῖται ... δώροισι.

²³ *B.J.* 1.377: λοιμοῦ ... λιμοῦ.

²⁴ *B.J.* 1.393: διάδημα δόγματι διεσήμαιεν τὴν δωρεάν.

²⁵ *B.J.* 1.557: τῷ πρεσβυτέρῳ τῶν ἀδελφῶν Ἀλεξάνδρου παίδων.

²⁶ *B.J.* 1.197.199.210.

²⁷ *B.J.* 1.355: καταλείψουσιν αὐτὸν ἐρημίας βασιλέα.

²⁸ *B.J.* 1.58: θάνατον ἀθανασίας.

²⁹ *C. Ap.* 1.50: χρησάμενός τισι πρὸς τὴν Ἑλληνίδα φωνὴν συνεργοῖς οὕτως ἐποιησάμην τῶν πράξεων τὴν παράδοσιν. ["and with the aid of some assistants for the sake of the Greek, at last I committed to writing my narrative of the events."] (trans. Thackeray)

³⁰ *Ant.* 20.263: ἔχω γὰρ ὁμολογούμενον παρὰ τῶν ὁμοεθνῶν πλείστον αὐτῶν κατὰ τὴν ἐπιχώριον παιδείαν διαφέρειν καὶ τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν δὲ γραμμάτων ἐσπούδασα μετασχέιν τὴν γραμματικὴν ἐμπειρίαν ἀναλαβῶν, τὴν δὲ περὶ τὴν προφορὰν ἀκρίβειαν πάτριος ἐκώλυσε συνήθεια. ["For my compatriots admit that in our Jewish learning I far excel them. I have also laboured strenuously to partake of the realm of Greek prose and poetry, after having gained a knowledge of Greek grammar, although the habitual use of my native tongue has prevented my attaining precision in the pronunciation."] (trans. LCL, L. H. Feldman).

pursue his own literary ambitions. Josephus eventually was able to introduce elements of Greek prose and poetry into his text that the educated reader or hearer would have been able to identify.

Recent scholarship has made great strides in going beyond the merely mechanical comparison between Josephus and the giants of Greek literature. However, many of the Greek classical allusions in Josephus listed below have been overlooked by other scholars.³¹ There are numerous echoes of Thucydides,³² Polybius,³³ Strabo,³⁴ Herodotus,³⁵ Xenophon,³⁶ Demosthenes³⁷ and Plato.³⁸

³¹ After the delivery of this paper at the 2004 Josephus Colloquium in Dublin, my colleague Josef Sievers brought to my attention a dissertation by Elchanan Stein entitled *De Wordenkeuze in het Bellum Iudaicum van Flavius Josephus* (Amsterdam: 1937). Stein and I are concur at times but his selection of many passages from classical Greek literature is highly inflated, the product of a questionable methodology.

³² Note that the concept of *στάσις*, which Josephus introduces right at the beginning of his narration (*B.J.* 1.31) is that which Thucydides had identified as one of the reasons for the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War and as the cause of many other human tragedies (1.2.4-6; 1.24.4; 3.82-84). H. Drüner, *Untersuchungen über Josephus* (Marburg: 1896), has made a comparison of the linguistic and stylistic features found in Thucydides and Josephus. Some of the clearest examples of Thucydidean echoes in *B.J.* I are the following: 1) *B.J.* 1.90: Ἐπειτα συμβαλῶν Ὀβαίδα τῷ Ἀράβων βασιλεῖ *πρὸ λοχίσαντι* κατὰ τὴν Γαυλάνην *ἐνέδρας* αὐτῷ γενομένης πᾶσαν ἀποβάλλει τὴν στρατιάν / Thuc. 2.81: *πρὸ λοχίζουσι* δὴ τὰ περὶ τὴν πόλιν *ἐνέδραις* / Thuc. 3.112: ἐσπίπτοντες ἕξ τε χαράδρας καὶ τὰς *προελογοιμένας ἐνέδρας* 2) *B.J.* 1.178: ἐνθεν ὀρηγῆσας Ναβαταίων τε μάχη κρατεῖ καὶ Μιθριδάτην καὶ Ὀρσαάνην φυγόντας ἐκ Πάρθων κρύφα μὲν *ἀπέπεμψεν*, παρὰ δὲ τοῖς στρατιώταις ἔλεγεν *ἀποδρᾶναι* / Thuc. 1.128: τότε τούτους οὓς ἔλαβεν *ἀποπέμπει* βασιλεῖ κρύφα τῶν ἄλλων ξυμμάζων, τῷ δὲ λόγῳ *ἀπέδρασαν* αὐτὸν 3) *B.J.* 1.245: *συγκατασκευάζειν* δὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῖς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ κατασταθείσιν τετράρχαις / Thuc. 1.93: καὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν εὐθὺς *συγκατασκευάζειν* 4) *B.J.* 1.364: Τοῦ δ' Ἀκτιακοῦ πολέμου *συνερωγότες* / Thuc. 1.66: οὐ μόντοι ὄ γε πόλεμος πῶ *συνερωγῶν* 5) *B.J.* 1.370: ἀκμάζοντος δὲ τοῦ Ἀκτίου πολέμου / Thuc. 3.3: τοῦ πολέμου ἄρτι καθισταμένου καὶ ἀκμάζοντος.

³³ Josephus' preface to the *B.J.* has been compared to that of Polybius. See H.W. Attridge, *The Interpretation of Biblical History in the Antiquitates Judaicae of Flavius Josephus* (Missoula, 1976) 44ff. Some echoes of Polybius in the *B.J.* are: 1) *B.J.* 1.99: τὸ μὲν μεταξὺ τῆς ὑπὲρ Ἀντιπατρίδος παρωρείου καὶ τῶν Ἰόπτης αἰγιαλῶν *διαταφρεύει* φάραγγι βαθείᾳ / Pol. 3.105.11: τὸν μὲν μεταξὺ τόπον τοῦ βουνοῦ καὶ τῆς σφετέρας παρεμβολῆς *διετάφρευσαν* 2) *B.J.* 1.138: καὶ *προσεπερρώσεν* τὴν ὀρηγὴν ὁ Μιθριδάτου θάνατος / Pol. 4.80.3: οἱ δὲ Λεπρεᾶται *προσεπερρώσθησαν* ταῖς ὀρηγαῖς 3) *B.J.* 1.287: οὐ μὴν ἐν ἅπασιν *εὐστόχουν*, ἔστιν δ' ὅπου καὶ αὐτοὶ πλαιόντες *ἀνάστρεφον* / Pol. 1.14.7: ἐπειδὴ τοὺς ἐν πράγμασιν *ἀνάστρεφομένους* οὐτ' εὐστοχεῖν αἰεὶ 4) *B.J.* 1.301: ἔχουσαι καὶ *μισθοφόρους μινγάδας* / Pol. 4.75.6: ἐν οἷς ἦσαν καὶ *μισθοφόροι* διακόσιοι *μινγάδες*.

³⁴ Elements of Strabo's lost history, *Historica Hypomnemata*, have been transmitted in the *Antiquitates*. See, for example, the sack of the Temple of Jerusalem by Antiochus Epiphanes (n. 98).

³⁵ The only text from Herodotus that has an echo in *B.J.* I is the following: *B.J.* 1.476: Ἀλεξάνδρου γυνὴ Γλαφύρα *γενεαλογοῦσα* τὴν ἑαυτῆς *εὐγένειαν* / Her. 2.146: ἀπὸ τούτου *γενεηλογέουσι* αὐτῶν τὴν *γένεσιν*.

³⁶ See 1) *B.J.* 1.206: μηδὲν δὲ *ἀπειροκάλως* εἰς τὴν ἐξουσίαν *ἐξυβρίζων* / *Mem.* 3.10.5: τὸ ὑβριστικὸν τε καὶ *ἀπειροκάλον* 2) *B.J.* 1.440: τοῦθ' ὡςπερ *σκηπτὸς ἐμπεσῶν* ἐτάραξεν Ἡρώδην / *Anab.* 3.1.11: ἔδοξεν αὐτῷ βροντῆς γενομένης *σκηπτὸς πεσεῖν* εἰς τὴν πατρῶν οἰκίαν.

³⁷ *B.J.* 1.656: Ἐνθεν αὐτοῦ τὸ *σῶμα* πᾶν ἡ νόσος διαλαβοῦσα ποικίλοις πάθεσιν ἐμερίζετο: *πυρετὸς* μὲν γὰρ ἦν οὐ λάβρος, κνησμός δὲ ἀφόρητος τῆς ἐπιφανείας ὄλης καὶ κόλου *συνεχεῖς ἀλγηδόους* περὶ τε τοὺς πόδας ὡςπερ ἰδρωπιώντος *οἰδήματα* τοῦ τε ἥτρου φλεγμονή / *Dem.* 54.11: μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα τῶν μὲν *οἰδημάτων* τῶν ἐν τῷ προσώπῳ καὶ τῶν ἐλκῶν οὐδὲν ἔφη φοβέσθαι λίαν ὁ ἰατρός, *πυρετοὶ* δὲ παρηκολούθουν μοι *συνεχεῖς* καὶ *ἀλγήματα*, ὅλου μὲν *τοῦ σώματος* πᾶν σφοδρὰ καὶ δεινὰ, μάλιστα δὲ τῶν πλεωρῶν καὶ *τοῦ ἥτρου*.

³⁸ A text that no one seems to have noticed is from Plato's *Minos*. See *B.J.* 1.500: καὶ γὰρ εἰ μὴ *κεκουινώθηκεν* *τοῦ σκέμματος* / *Pl. [Min.]* 315c: *ἐὰν δὲ κοινὸν* τεθῆ *τὸ σκέμμα*.

Echoes of Homer,³⁹ Aeschylus,⁴⁰ Euripides,⁴¹ Sophocles,⁴² Pindar⁴³ and other ancient poets resound throughout Josephus' works.⁴⁴ L. Feldman reminds us that it is most likely that many of Josephus' allusions, echoes, and citations of Greek authors do not come directly from the authors of antiquity, but from other writers of the period, "notably in Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Nicolaus of Damascus, and that consequently such language may have been derived from these authors rather than directly from Sophocles and Thucydides, since it is generally characteristic of first-century Greek."⁴⁵

It is not my purpose in the following pages simply to give an elenchus of the classical allusions from Greek poetry that I have detected in Book I of the *B.J.*. The texts listed below do not appear in any commentary that I have read, not even in Thackeray's list.⁴⁶ (Thackeray never refers to any of the tragic poets from whom Josephus borrowed in the composition of Book I of the *B.J.*.) In light of Feldman's comment about Josephus' indirect familiarity and use of his classical sources, I simply point out that the texts below from *B.J.* I are merely

³⁹ Every cultured person in antiquity was thoroughly versed in Homer's poetry, just as educated English speakers used to be intimately familiar with things Shakespearean. Josephus himself acknowledged the importance of Homer in *C. Ap.* 1.12: ὄλως δὲ παρὰ τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν οὐδὲν ὁμολογούμενον εὐρίσκειται γράμμα τῆς Ὀμήρου ποιήσεως πρεσβύτερον. Stein, *De Wordenkeuze in het Bellum Iudaicum*, 38-45, has found several other verbal allusions to Homer throughout the *B.J.*

⁴⁰ While Stein, 45, was convinced that Josephus had his Homer in hand during the composition of the *B.J.*, Stein simply suggests that Josephus "remembered" his Aeschylus.

⁴¹ It is known that in Rome at the time of Josephus, Euripides was perhaps the most celebrated of the Greek tragic poets. See Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 18.6-7 and Quintilian, *Inst.* 10.1.68-70.

⁴² Although there is occasional allusion in Josephus (*B.J.* 1.353) to Sophocles' *Antigone*, this writer has only found two verbal allusions to Sophocles. See *Phil.* 466-467 and *Aj.* 1334-1335 below.

⁴³ Allusions to Pindar exist elsewhere in the *B.J.*. H.H. Chapman has convincingly argued that *B.J.* 1.67-68 and *Phythian* VII, 13-18 have a common denominator (εὐπραγίας, φθόνος and εὐδαιμονία). See Honora Howell Chapman, "By the Waters of Babylon: Josephus and Greek Poetry" in Joseph Sievers and Gaia Lembi, eds., *Josephus and Jewish History in Flavian Rome and Beyond* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 121-146, here, 134-6.

⁴⁴ For the parallels between Book I of the *B.J.* and the Greek poets, see below. See the list (albeit incomplete), in H. St. J. Thackeray, ed. and tr., *Josephus, The Jewish War, Books I-III*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), xvii-xix. Thackeray mentions one possible parallel between Book I of the *B.J.* (I.371) and Virgil's description of *Fama* at *Aen.* 4.173 ff. See Louis H. Feldman, "The Influence of the Greek Tragedians on Josephus," in *The Howard Gilman International Conferences I: Hellenic and Jewish Arts* (ed. A. Ovadia; Tel Aviv University: RAMOT Publishing House, 1998), 51-80. Feldman concentrates on the *Antiquitates*.

⁴⁵ L. H. Feldman, "Flavius Josephus Revisited: The Man, His Writings, and His Significance," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 21.2 (New York: 1984), 860. My assumption is that this tendency was similar to that of the medieval biblical commentators, who frequently cite Augustine, Jerome, Gregory, Isidore et al. They probably never read the actual works of these authors, but acquired their information from *collectiones* of patristic and biblical sources. Sedulus Scottus and Frigulus are prime examples. Ninth century medieval commentaries on Matthew, for example, do not provide the reader with exhaustive excerpts from the Fathers, yet almost every page is replete with the language and exegesis of Jerome's *Commentarium in Mattheum*. See my study, "Bengt Löfstedt's *Fragmente eines Matthäus-Kommentars*: Reflections and Addenda," in *Sacris erudiri* XLII (2003): 327-368. See also my forthcoming volume on the Frigulus Commentary on Matthew in *Corpus Christianorum: Series latina*. Turnhout, 2006.

⁴⁶ See *Josephus, The Jewish War*, xvii-xix.

echoes or literary allusions rather than direct quotations. It is very possible that the reader or hearer of Josephus made connections to poetic texts that the author himself had not originally intended to echo. Roman society at the time of Josephus was not unacquainted with the theatre and all kinds of *spectacula*. The language of the *B.J.*, highly influenced by tragedy, would have not only delighted his audiences, but Josephus' allusions to Greek tragedy would also have been a powerful reminder of the τραγικὴ δραματολογία⁴⁷ which permeates the *B.J.*. The point that must be emphasized is this: the poetic language, structure, and allusions to classical literature were employed by Josephus for a reason that transcends aesthetic pleasure. Honora Chapman stated this clearly: “[B]eyond the desire for personal glory or for setting the record straight, Josephus went to all this trouble in order to create a text that would *persuade* (italics mine) educated readers with its refined Attic style. He could do this, in part, by tapping into a world of literary allusions available in Greek poetry.”⁴⁸ In other words, Josephus' intention was to *persuade* the readers of the *B.J.* of the tragic events that have transpired and at the same time satisfy their aesthetic desires. It was above all the tragedy of the fall of Jerusalem that Josephus wanted to emphasize. The medium he chose for accomplishing this was a sophisticated and refined Greek text reminiscent of the historians and rhetoricians of ancient Greek. Josephus' text, replete with poetical allusions, especially from the tragedians, did exactly that.⁴⁹ The educated reader would have been able to not only recognize individual verbal allusions but also to see larger, broader, and more thematic allusions. Chapman rightly remarks that “the Greek dramatists were particularly suitable for Josephus' literary purpose given their focus on reversal of fortune, loss and destruction.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Eus. *Hist. eccl.* 1.8.4

⁴⁸ H.H. Chapman, 124.

⁴⁹ During the 2004 Josephus Colloquium in Dublin, Étienne Nodet suggested that any literary allusion to classical authors was surely the redaction of the so-called “Greek assistants” and added that one should read the Slavonic version of the *B.J.* for a less literary and thus “purer” version of Josephus. This author has consulted H. Leeming and K. Leeming, *Josephus' Jewish War and its Slavonic version* (Leiden: Brill, 2003) and has concluded that Nodet's theory does not stand whatsoever. Almost every single classical echo or literary allusion in Book I of the *B.J.* appears also in the Slavonic version. There is no absolute certainty as to Josephus' first-hand familiarity with Greek poetry when he wrote the *B.J.*, but his text provides his readers with an abundance of poetic allusions from the giants of classical literature.

⁵⁰ H.H. Chapman, 128.

HOMER⁵¹

B.J. 1.630-631: ὅτι λαθεῖν οὐδ' ἀνθρώπους ῥάδιον τηλικούτον μύσος ἐνσκευαζόμενον, τὸν δ' ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ δικαστὴν ἀμήχανον, ὃς ἐφορᾷ πάντα καὶ πανταχοῦ πάρεστιν;⁵²

[“... although it was not easy to hide the preparation of such an abominable crime from human beings, it was impossible to (hide it from) the heavenly judge, who sees everything and is everywhere present?”]⁵³

Homer, *Od.* 11.109 and 12.323:

Ἡελίου, ὃς πάντ' ἐφορᾷ καὶ πάντ' ἐπακούει.

[“of Helios, who sees and hears all things.”] (trans. LCL, A.T. Murray/G. Dimock)

AESCHYLUS

B.J. 1.500: ποῦ δὲ τὴν πατροκτόνον ὄψομαι κεφαλὴν, ἣν ταῖς ἐμαντοῦ χερσὶν διασπαράξω; [“When will I see the face of this parricide, that I might tear him to pieces with my own hands?”]

Aesc. *Pers.* 194-195:

ἣ δ' ἐσφάδαζε, καὶ χεροῖν ἔντη δίφρου

διασπαράσσει, [“The other struggled and with her hands rent asunder the harness of the car.”] (trans. LCL, Smyth)

B.J. 1.506: παρακοπὴν δὲ φρενῶν καὶ μανίαν ὀδυρόμενος, [“but he bemoaned his madness and lack of judgment.”]

⁵¹ We have limited our investigation to the Greek poets in Book I of the *B.J.*. Stein's dissertation sought to find parallels in the entire *B.J.* from the main authors of extant Greek literature, in both prose and poetry.

⁵² For a similar expression, see Soph. *El.* 176-177, ἔτι μέγας οὐρανοῦ Ζεὺς, ὃς ἐφορᾷ πάντα καὶ κρατύνει. See Philo, *Ios.* 265 and *Spec.* 4.32 for the reading ἐπακούει.

⁵³ Unless indicated, all of the translations of the *B.J.* are mine.

Aesc. *Eum.* 329-332:

τόδε μέλος, παρακοπά,
παραφορὰ φρενοδαλῆς,
ῦμνος ἐξ Ἑρινύων,
δέσμιος φρενῶν,

[“This is our song, — fraught with madness, fraught with frenzy, crazing the brain, the Furies’ hymn, spell to bind the soul.” (trans. LCL, Smyth)]

B.J. 1.596: ἵνα μὴ καὶ καθ’ ἄδου φέρομι τὸν ἀλάστορα. [“so that I do not bring the demon of vengeance to Hades.”]

Aesc. *Suppl.* 414-416:

ἐκδόντες ὑμᾶς τὸν πανώλεθρον θεὸν
βαρὺν ξύνοικον θησόμεσθ’ ἀλάστορα,
ὃς οὐδ’ ἐν Ἀιδου τὸν θανόντ’ ἐλευθεροῖ.

[“and bring upon ourselves the dire, abiding vengeance of the all-destroying god, who even in the realm of Death, does not set his victim free.”] (trans. LCL, Smyth)

SOPHOCLES

B.J. 1.312: ἐξ ἀπόπτου δὲ Ἡρώδης ἐπιβλέπων τῷ τε πάθει συνείχεται
[“Herod, who was watching from afar, was deeply tormented.”]

Soph. *Phil.* 466-467:

Καιρὸς γὰρ καλεῖ
πλοῦν μὴ ἐξ ἀπόπτου μάλλον ἢ γγύθειν σκοπεῖν.

[“Yes, to seize our opportunity we must watch out for the chance to sail from near at hand, nor from where we cannot see.”] (trans. LCL, H. Lloyd-Jones)

B.J. 1.544: καὶ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἐβόα περιῶν πεπατήσθαι τὸ δίκαιον
[“He began by going around shouting that justice had been trampled upon”]

Soph. Aj. 1334-1335:

μηδ’ ἢ βία σε μηδαμῶς νικησάτω

τοσόνδε μισεῖν ὥστε τὴν δίκην πατεῖν. [“Violence must not so prevail on you that you trample justice under foot!”] (trans. LCL, H. Lloyd-Jones)

EURIPIDES

B.J. 1.373: ὥσθ’ ὑπολαμβάνειν τὸν θεὸν ἼΑραψιν δέλεαρ τοῦτο καθεικέναι τοῦ δοῦναι δίκας ἡμῖν [“that I think God has cast bait to the Arabs so as to deliver them to our vengeance.”]

Eur. Iph. taur. 1181:

καὶ μὴν καθεῖσαν δέλεαρ ἡδύ μοι φρενῶν. [“What is more, they told me a pleasant story to entice my heart.”] (trans. LCL, D. Kovacs)

B.J. 1.430: πολλοὶ γοῦν κὰν ταῖς γυμνασίαις αὐτὸν κατεπλάγησαν ἀκοντιστὴν τε ἰθυβολώτατον καὶ τοξότην εὐστοχώτατον ἰδόντες. [“At any rate, many people were amazed at him even at practice, as they watched him throw the javelin with the greatest precision, and shoot with the bow with the utmost accuracy.”]

Eur. Phoen. 139-140:

σακεσφόροι γὰρ πάντες Αἰτωλοί, τέκνον,

λόγχαις τ’ ἀκοντιστῆρες εὐστοχώτατοι. [“Yes, all the Aetolians, my child, carry light shields and hurl javelins with great accuracy.”] (trans. LCL, D. Kovacs)

B.J. 1.596: ἵνα μὴ καὶ καθ' ἄδου φέροισι τὸν ἀλάστορα.⁵⁴ [so that I do not bring the demon of vengeance to Hades.]

Eur. Med. 1059: μὰ τοὺς παρ' Ἄιδῃ νερέτερος ἀλάστορας [“No! — by the nether fiends that dwell with Hades.”] (trans. LCL, A. Way)

Nicolaus of Damascus

This writer's interest in “revisiting” Josephus' sources in Book I arose not only from an attempt to uncover some classical allusions hitherto previously unknown, but also from the gradual realization that there are certain passages in the text that abound in *hapax legomena*⁵⁵ in the entire Josephan corpus. The hapaxes in Josephus are often attested in Nicolaus. What is remarkable is that these hapaxes often appear in clusters.⁵⁶ There are numerous hapaxes scattered throughout Book I, but their appearance in clusters is most evident in three rather long sections, namely in *B.J.* 1.401-430, *B.J.* 1.467-497, and *B.J.* 1.513-533. Does the presence of so many hapaxes, words uncharacteristic of the military and political world that the *Bellum* describes, indicate that Josephan authorship of these sections should be put into question? A reflection on the possible reasons for the linguistically singular material in these passages is in order. All three passages contain rather distinctive themes.

B.J. 1.401-430 recounts in some detail Herod's numerous architectural projects: the reconstruction of the Temple; the building of Antonia's fortress and the royal palace; the foundation of Sebaste in Samaria; the construction of the temple of Augustus at Paneion; the structures erected to honor Augustus; the description of Caesarea and its harbor; the description of the buildings called the Herodium; the account of Herod's generosity to numerous foreign cities; Herod's endowment of the Olympic games and a *laudatio* of Herod's own athletic abilities. Josephus employs the language of architecture that he had no occasion to use previously. Words for buildings and the materials used for their construction appear only here. Geographical descriptions (almost excursuses) of the harbor at Caesarea and

⁵⁴ See Aesc. *Suppl.* 412-416 above.

⁵⁵ The problem of *dis* and *tris legomena* will be addressed in a separate paper.

⁵⁶ See my “Translating Book I of Josephus' *Bellum Judaicum*: Some Critical Observations” in Joseph Sievers and Gaia Lembi, eds., *Josephus and Jewish History in Flavian Rome and Beyond* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 383-403, here 401-2.

the colossal statues that surround it, for example, account for the frequency of words not employed elsewhere in Josephus. In the same way, his description of Herod's superiority as a hunter includes the mention of wild boards and asses, language elsewhere in Josephus unattested. In all, nineteen *hapax legomena* in the entire Josephan corpus are present in this long section.⁵⁷

B.J. 1.467-497 is the account of the continued discord between Alexander and Aristobulus fostered by Antipater's intrigues; of Glaphyra's arrogance which provokes the ladies of Herod's court; Salome's denunciation of Alexander and Aristobulus, and Herod's rebuke of them; Pheroras' fall out of favor with Herod and Herod's eventual pardon of Salome and Pherora; Alexander's denunciation and imprisonment. Words such as spy, stepmother, or for working at the loom are unique in this section which contains 15 *hapax legomena* in all of Josephus.⁵⁸

B.J. 1.513-533 narrates the dramatic Eurycles story which contains 14 hapaxes in all of Josephus' *opus*.⁵⁹ Grandfather, mocker, and stage-manager are among the unique words in this section that Josephus never employed elsewhere. (We will return to the Eurycles story below). The important point is that some of the hapaxes in the Eurycles story and in the other two passages mentioned above are found in the works of Nicolaus of Damascus, Herod's extremely influential and well-informed historian, who clearly knew the intricacies of Herod's court, and whose works are partially preserved in fragmentary form in Jacoby's edition⁶⁰ and in the compilation of the Byzantine emperor, Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus.⁶¹ Nicolaus was actually a very prolific author, whose works included an encyclopedic history of the world, an autobiography, a life of Augustus and an epitome of Aristotle. According to many scholars, Nicolaus' history constitutes the primary source of the *B.J.* for the period between Antiochus Epiphanes and the accession of Archelaus⁶² and Nicolaus

⁵⁷ πρόσθεσις (404); ὑπανοίγω (405); βαραθρώδης (405); ἀσάλευτος (405); ὑπερεκχέω (407); προδομέω (412); ἐνορμίζω (413); νάγμα (413); κολοσσός (2x : 413, 414); γήλοφον (420); περίστυλον (422); λειμών (422); ἐπετήσιος (423); γυμνασιαρχία (423); φευκτός (425); ἐπεζκουφίζω (428: absolute *hapax* in all of extant Greek literature); συοτρόφος (429); ὄναγρος (429); προτέρημα (430).

⁵⁸ ἐχρημθέω (468); παραδύομαι (468); προσπλάττω (469); φῶρ (470); περιεσκεμμένος (471); δραματουργέω (471); τεχνικός (471); συναποκλίνω (473); μητρυιά (473); ψύγμα (475); τραχύνω (475); ἰστουργόν (479); κατομώζω (480); πιστόω (482); συγκατακλίνω (488).

⁵⁹ εἰσφθείρομαι (513); μισθωτός (517); προσεπιψεύδομαι (519); ἐπαινέτης (519); ἀκονιά (520); σπαθάω (521); πάπῳος (521); ἀσυκοφάντητος (522); μνεία (522); προσακούω (522); εἶρων (522); ἀμείλατος (523); τέχνασμα (529); δραματουργός (530).

⁶⁰ See Felix Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, 2A, (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1926), 324-430.

⁶¹ There is a six volume modern edition of the *Excerpta Historica iussu Imp. Constantini Porphyrogeniti confecta*, published by U. Ph. Boisserain, C. de Boor, and Th. Büttner-Wobst (Berlin: Weidmann, 1903). See N.G. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium*, (London: Duckworth, 1983), 140-145 for a discussion of the merits of Constantine's work.

⁶² Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, I (Jerusalem: 1974), 229.

is frequently mentioned in the *Antiquitates* for having provided material for *B.J.* 1.31-2.116.⁶³ Scholars have argued that the very positive presentation of Herod in the beginning of the *B.J.* is perhaps the most important factor for attributing Josephus' account to Nicolaus,⁶⁴ and that Josephus himself in the *Antiquitates* reiterates his approval of Nicolaus' adulatory account of the king and makes a series of statements that confirms his dependence upon Nicolaus.⁶⁵

This favorable bias is apparent in *B.J.* 1.401-430, where Herod's generosity and prowess are praised, but right at the beginning of the Eurycles story, after Eurycles provided Herod with the λαμπρὰ δῶρα (*B.J.* 1.514), Josephus' account of Herod's character is blatantly unfavorable. The text reads as follows:

"Therefore, he [Eurycles] got around the king by flattery, eloquent discourses, and false words of praise about him. Quickly he understood Herod's character, said and did everything he could to please him, and became one of his most prominent friends." (*B.J.* 1.515).⁶⁶

Could this *prima facie* negative, derogatory image of Herod, rather exceptional from what we should have expected from the hand of Herod's own historian, be attributed to Nicolaus? In the *Antiquitates* Josephus criticized Herod's historian by name for his partiality, for his uncritical description of the king and for his blatant lack of veracity. At *Ant.* 14.1, for example, Josephus attacks Nicolaus for having lied about Antipater's lineage so as to please his son Herod. Nicolaus' justification of Herod's robbing of David's tomb at *Ant.* 16.181 does not escape Josephus' harsh criticism. Josephus' disapproval of Nicolaus' falsification of history is most clearly expressed at *Ant.* 16.183-184.⁶⁷ In light of this, on one level, it would seem that Nicolaus, because of his less than laudatory depiction of Herod, is probably not the source or author of *B.J.* 1.515. On the other hand,

⁶³ *Ant.* 14.9, 68, 104.

⁶⁴ See G. Hölscher, "Josephus", *PWRE* 18 (1916), 1934-2000. The author views Josephus as a mere compiler, an untrustworthy narrator, who depended entirely on his sources.

⁶⁵ See *Ant.* 1.94-95, 108, 159-60; *Ant.* 7.101; *Ant.* 12. 127; *Ant.* 13.250-52, 347; *Ant.* 14.104.

⁶⁶ περιέρχεται γοῦν τὸν βασιλέα κολακεία καὶ δεινότητι λόγων καὶ περὶ αὐτοῦ ψευδέσιν ἐγκωμοίσι. ταχέως δὲ συνιδῶν τὸν Ἡρώδου τρόπον καὶ πάντα λέγων τε καὶ πράττων τὰ πρὸς ἡρώδη αὐτῷ φίλος ἐν τοῖς πρώτοις γίνεται. (*B.J.* 1.515).

⁶⁷ *Ant.* 16.183-184: [183] Νικόλαος ὁ ... ἱστοριογράφος ... διατελεῖ δὲ καὶ τᾶλλα τὸν τρόπον χρώμενος τῇ γραφῇ: [184] ζῶντι γὰρ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ κεχαρισμένως ἐκείνῳ καὶ καθ' ὑπηρεσίαν ἀνέγραψεν, μόνων ἀπτόμενος τῶν εὐκλειαν αὐτῷ φερόντων, πολλὰ δὲ καὶ τῶν ἐμφανῶς ἀδίκων ἀντικατασκευάζων καὶ μετὰ πάσης σπουδῆς ἐπικρυπτό μεις κτλ. ["The historian Nicolas ... continues to write in this manner about other things. For since he lived in Herod's realm and was one of his associates, he wrote to please him and to be of service to him, dwelling only on those things that redounded to his glory, and transforming his obviously unjust acts into the opposite or concealing them with the greatest care."] (trans. LCL, R. Marcus).

however, can one believe Josephus and conclude that Nicolaus the historian was simply the adulatory narrator of the king's character and exploits? After all, Herod was dead when Nicolaus concluded his history and was no longer in need of Herod's sponsorship.⁶⁸ It is more probable that Josephus, like many ancient writers, was more interested in criticizing Nicolaus so as to assert his own superiority as a historian.⁶⁹

Only a study of the stylistic features of Josephus and Nicolaus, however, will allow us to determine whether Herod's historian had a prime role in shaping Josephus' account of Herod. It is the view of this writer that a study of the language and syntactical structure of the Eurycles story (*B.J.* 1.513-533) will allow us to trace this passage to no other than Josephus himself. If the fingerprints of the giants of Greek literature are visible in Josephus' work, it is my view that Josephus' footsteps are evident here. This passage is at every moment and in all its details the craftsmanship of Josephus. The language and style is that of Josephus. For example, Josephus' propensity to repeat phrases is present in the Eurycles story. Archelaus' plotting (Ἀρχελάου στρατηγμάτων) was mentioned in the singular (Ἀρχελάου στρατήγημα) earlier at *B.J.* 1.511; the same expression, λαμπρὰ δῶρα, used to describe the gifts that Eurycles presented to Herod, was employed for the presents given to Archelaus by the court at *B.J.* 1.512; the term "eloquent discourses" (δεινότητι λόγων) at *B.J.* 1.515 is repeated at *B.J.* 2.21, δεινότητα λόγων. The term that Josephus uses for "unrelenting anger" (ἀνήκεστον ὀργήν) at *B.J.* 1.526 is later employed at *Ant.* 18.277 and 18.282.

Some other Josephan features in this passage are the following: Josephus' tendency to repeat the same prefix is seen at *B.J.* 1.519 where ἐπί is repeated four times: προσεπιψεύδται δ' ἐπιβουλήν ὡς ἐνεδρευόντων αὐτὸν τῶν ἀδελφῶν καὶ μόνον οὐκ ἐπιφερόντων ἤδη τὰ ξίφη. λαβὼν δ' ἐπὶ τούτοις χρημάτων πλῆθος ἐπαινέτης. Wordplay is common in Josephus: δυνατώτερος of *B.J.* 1.513 picks up δύνατοι of *B.J.* 1.512. In *B.J.* 1.522, we encounter first εὐγενείας ("noble ancestry") and then later εὐγενής ("noble birth"). We even have a typically Josephan chiasmic structure whereby there is an inversion of proper names: γένος ἦν Λάκων, Εὐρυκλῆς τοῦνομα (*B.J.* 1.513).

⁶⁸ This author is grateful to Mark Toher and the paper he recently presented at Oxford University entitled "Herod, Augustus and Nicolaus of Damascus." For a thorough discussion of Josephus' critical appraisal of Nicolaus as historian, see Toher's "Nicolaus and Herod in the *Antiquitates Judaicae*" *HSCP* 101 (2003), 433-35. See also Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, I, 229; Ben Zion Wacholder, *Nicolaus of Damascus* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962); Wacholder, "Josephus and Nicolaus of Damascus," in *Josephus, the Bible, and History* (ed. L.H. Feldman and G. Hata; Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 147-172.

⁶⁹ For a discussion of the genre of ancient historiography, see Gert Avenarius, *Lukians Schrift zur Geschichtsschreibung*, (Meisenheim: Anton Hain, 1956), 50-52. See also John Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* (Cambridge: University Press, 1997), 114-115 and 160-74.

In recent years there has been an increased interest in stylometric analysis in determining authorship of texts. David Williams' stylometric analysis of Josephus has been of considerable help in assisting this writer in measuring the particularities of Josephus' language. Williams isolated ten key words (γάρ, δέ, ἐπί, καί, κατά, μέν, μή, οὐ, πρός and ὑπό) for testing Josephan authorship⁷⁰ and has concluded that while γάρ, δέ, ἐπί, μή, οὐ, and ὑπό overlap, καί, κατά, μέν, and πρός, differ significantly in the ways that Josephus and Nicolaus employ these last four Greek words. The study of these particles and prepositions has been most helpful to assist this writer in differentiating between a text written by Josephus and one penned by Nicolaus.⁷¹

Without having performed an in-depth scientific stylometric analysis of these three passages mentioned above in which there is a high number of unique words, my study of the use, frequency and position of particles and prepositions in both Josephus and Nicolaus indicates that from beginning to end, the authorship of these passages, and of the Eurycles story in particular, bears the mark of Josephus. Both Nicolaus and Josephus make frequent use of the elusive γάρ that can mean just about anything. What this author has noticed is that Josephus plays with γάρ to express all kinds of emotions and statements. Within the same paragraph γάρ can both confirm and explain. Josephus often uses γάρ in the same way as δέ to indicate a continuation or a connection. Nicolaus' writing patterns demonstrate that the particle γάρ is more monotonous, less nuanced and much less attested.

Josephus uses his particles in a most elegant way, which gives a fine balance to his sentences and paragraphs. Sometimes Josephus uses the particles to tighten up his discourse or even to embellish his text. Nicolaus' Greek is marked by parataxis, the use of long series of clauses and sentences connected by καί. Josephus, on the other hand, is less monotonous and more creative in his employment of particles. Very rarely do we see a string of καί ... καί ... καί, but rather one encounters particles such as τε, καί, μέν and δέ used individually, in various combinations, or within a grammatical arrangement of words in dependent or subordinate relationships, that is in hypotactically linked clauses.

The choice of particles or prepositions might indeed assist us in determining Josephan authorship, but one can perhaps argue more forcibly that the content of a particular story might have required Josephus to use rather strange, if not

⁷⁰ David S. Williams, *Stylometric Authorship Studies in Flavius Josephus and Related Literature* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), 39.

⁷¹ Williams, 55-56.

uncommon words. If we look carefully at the Eurycles story (*B.J.* 1.513-533), apart from the 14 hapaxes already mentioned, the rest of the vocabulary and style of this section is through and through Josephan. Lisa Ullmann and Jonathan Price have argued convincingly that Eurycles story is authentic Josephus. They come to the following conclusion: “Josephus is to be credited with the artistic and creative decision to compose Herod’s domestic troubles as a drama with elements from both tragedy and comedy, not only employing language and other techniques of the theatre, but giving the entire narrative a dramatic structure.”⁷² In addition to the reasons provided by Ullmann and Price, it is this author’s view that the Eurycles episode might have been Nicolaus’ own story in skeletal form, rewritten by Josephus, due to the almost excessive presence of *καί*, *κατά*, *μέν* and *πρός*. Josephus did not copy his source but rewrote and elaborated on the materials that Nicolaus had provided.⁷³

Color Latinus

There are countless descriptions and details in the *Bellum*, such as the archaeological and architectural data, or the military campaigns, that seem to be a re-working of information that Josephus acquired from some lost source or sources. In his *Vita*, Josephus insists upon his unique credentials to write about the Jewish people and their history. He specifically mentions Vespasian’s *hypomnemata*, the Roman imperial commentaries on the Judean campaign, and other written documents as ancillary information that give further credence to his competence and reliability as a historian of the “greatest of [their] wars.” Even though Josephus does not directly acknowledge that he had read Vespasian’s commentaries, the implication is that he actually did so. Josephus wrote: “This is no unsupported assertion of my own. The facts are recorded in the *commentarii* of the Emperor Vespasian.”⁷⁴ In response to Justus’ accusations concerning the accuracy of his data, Josephus responded in the *Vita* as follows: “Neither were you a combatant nor have you perused the commentaries of

⁷² L. Ullmann and J. Price, “Drama and History in Josephus’ *Bellum Judaicum*,” *SCI* 21 (2002): 97-111, here 111.

⁷³ A good example of Josephus’ ability to rewrite or rework his source is his adaptation of the *Letter of Aristaeas*. See André Pelletier, *Flavius Josephus adaptateur de la lettre d’Aristée : une réaction atticisme contre la Koinè* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1962).

⁷⁴ *Vita* 342: ταῦτα δὲ οὐκ ἐγὼ λέγω μόνος, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τοῖς Οὐεσπασιανοῦ τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος ὑπομνήμασιν. [“These things I do not say alone, but they are also written this way in the field notes of the emperor Vespasian.” trans., S. Mason]

Caesar, as is abundantly proved by your contradictory account.”⁷⁵ Again in the *Vita*, he indicates that Titus and Vespasian, as well as other important eye-witnesses of the war, had read his account so as to verify the authenticity of his version.⁷⁶

The *B.J.* abounds in material that Josephus could have acquired from a reading of sections of the *commentarii*. Of course, Josephus wanted to maintain his own authority and status as an eye-witness of the events that took place, and that is why he perhaps does not include any specific references to these *commentarii*. He makes it very clear that his history is the result of his own observations and experiences. The work that he presents to his readers is, so he claims, not that of an editor or compiler of other people’s material on the war. This is articulated clearly in *B.J.* 1.15: “The industrious writer is not one who merely remodels the scheme and arrangement of another’s work, but one who uses fresh materials and makes the framework of the history his own.”⁷⁷

What exactly were these *commentarii*? Why was it important to mention them? The *commentarii* were perhaps field reports written by Roman military commanders about the Judean campaign, that is, unedited or slightly edited draft forms counterpart to Caesar’s *Bellum Gallicum*.⁷⁸ Josephus probably had other *commentarii* at his disposal that were composed after the war and were housed in the imperial archives.

There is no way of ascertaining with absolute certainty whom Josephus had in mind when he refers to other historians of the Jewish-Roman war. Several scholars have suggested that Josephus had at his disposal a Roman account of the war with the Jews that is no longer extant. It has been argued that in light of *Vita* 342, 348 and *C. Ap.* 1.56 quoted above, Josephus’ *B.J.* was indeed partially

⁷⁵ *Vita* 358: ἄλλ’ ἴσως τὰ κατὰ τὴν Ἱεροσόλυμα πραχθέντα μετὰ ἀκριβείας φήσεις συγγεγραφέναι. καὶ πῶς οἶόν τε; οὔτε γὰρ τῷ πολέμῳ παρέτυχες οὔτε τὰ Καίσαρος ἀνένυως ὑπομνήματα. μέγιστον δὲ τεκμήριον· τοῖς γὰρ Καίσαρος ὑπομνήμασιν ἐναντίαν πεποίησαι τὴν γραφήν. [“But nevertheless you claim to have portrayed with precision what happened throughout Jerusalem. Yet how is that possible? For you neither chanced to be involved in the war, nor did you read the field notes of Caesar. I have the greatest certainty of proof, for you have crafted a text opposite to what is in the field notes of Caesar.”] (trans. S. Mason)

⁷⁶ *Vita* 361: οὐ μὴν ἐγὼ σοι τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον περὶ τῆς ἐμαυτοῦ γραφῆς ἔδεισα, ἀλλ’ αὐτοῖς ἐπέδωκα τοῖς αὐτοκράτορσι τὰ βιβλία μόνον οὐ τῶν ἔργων ἐτι βλεπομένων· συνῆδειν γὰρ ἐμαυτῷ τετηρηκῶτι τὴν τῆς ἀληθείας παράδοσιν, ἐφ’ ἣ [362] μαρτυρίας τεύξεσθαι προσδοκῆσας οὐ διήμαρτον. καὶ ἄλλοις δὲ πολλοῖς εὐθύς ἐπέδωκα τὴν ἱστορίαν. [“In the case of my own text, I certainly was not anxious in the same way as you, but I delivered the volumes to the *emperators* themselves when the deeds were barely out of view. They concurred that I had preserved the transmission of the truth. Accordingly, having expected to meet with their endorsement, I was not mistaken. [362] I also immediately delivered the history to many others, some of whom had even chanced to be involved in the war — for example, King Agrippa and certain of his relatives.” trans. S. Mason]

⁷⁷ *B.J.* 1.15: φιλόπονος δὲ οὐχ ὁ μεταποιῶν οἰκονομίαν καὶ τάξιν ἄλλοτριαν, ἀλλ’ ὁ μετὰ τοῦ καινὰ λέγειν καὶ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἱστορίας κατασκευάζων ἴδιον.

⁷⁸ H. St. J. Thackeray, *Josephus: the Man and the Historian* (New York: Jewish Institute of Religion Press, 1929), 38–40. See S. Mason, *Life of Josephus* (Boston: Brill, 2003), 140, note 1402, on the term ὑπομνήματα.

based on the Flavian *commentarii* written in Latin.⁷⁹ Other scholars, on the other hand, have suggested that Antonius Iulianus,⁸⁰ mentioned in the *Octavius* (33.4) of Minucius Felix,⁸¹ might be one of the writers to whom Josephus was referring.⁸²

It is impossible to give a name to Josephus' hypothetical Roman source or sources, but Josephus' text describes the Roman army's activities in such detail at times that it is very unlikely that Josephus invented his numerous reports or could have remembered them with such precision. It would have been impossible for him to have observed all the events that he describes, for many of them occurred simultaneously. There have been numerous studies on the accuracy of the information that might have come from Roman sources, such as Agrippa's speech (*B.J.* 2.345 ff.),⁸³ the description of Titus' march from Alexandria to Caesarea (*B.J.* 4.658-663), and the composition of Cestius' forces in *B.J.* 2.499-503. The most radical proponents of a lost Roman work have argued that despite what Josephus said in his preface to the *B.J.*, Josephus was nothing more than a copyist, compiler and editor.⁸⁴ This is not present scholarly opinion.

In an article by Bernard Frischer et al.⁸⁵ it has been suggested that under the Empire, Greek writers, when writing about Rome or drawing from Latin sources, often retain a subject-object-verb pattern typical of Latin.⁸⁶ The authors reiterate what all classical linguists know, namely, that it is more frequent to find

⁷⁹ W. Weber, *Josephus und Vespasian. Untersuchungen zu dem Jüdischen Krieg des Flavius Josephus* (Berlin, Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1921), 3ff.

⁸⁰ Josephus refers to one Marcus Antonius Iulianus in *B.J.* 6.238, καὶ Μάρκος Ἀντωνίος Ἰουλιανὸς ὁ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐπίτροπος. ["and Marcus Antonius Julianus, procurator of Judaea."]

⁸¹ Scripta eorum relege vel, ut transeamus veteres, Flavi Josephi vel, si Romanis magis gaudes, Antoni Iuliani de Iudaeis require: iam scies nequitia sua hanc eos meruisse fortunam nec quidquam accidisse, quod non sit his, si in contumacia perseverarent, ante praedictum. ["Read their own writings; or omitting the ancients, turn to Flavius Josephus; or, if you prefer Romans, consult Antonius Julianus on the Jews, and you will see that it was their own wickedness which brought them to misfortune, and that nothing happened to them which was not predicted in advance, if they persisted in rebelliousness."] See Stern, 431.

⁸² A. Schlatter, *Kleinere Schriften zu Flavius Josephus* (Darmstadt, 1970), 1ff. See also See Helgo Lindner, *Die Geschichtsauffassung des Flavius Josephus in Bellum Iudaicum. Gleichzeitig ein Beitrag zur Quellenfrage* (Leiden 1972), 1-20.

⁸³ A. von Domaszewski, "Die Dislokation des römischen Heeres im Jahre 66 n. Chr." (*Rheinisches Museum*, 1892), 207-218 (after Thackeray, *Jewish War*, 457).

⁸⁴ Bilde, 128.

⁸⁵ Bernard Frischer, et al., "Word-Order transference between Latin and Greek: the relative position of the accusative direct object and the governing verb in Cassius Dio and other Greek and Roman Prose Authors", in *HSCP* (1999), 357-390.

⁸⁶ The authors, pp. 376-377, quote a very amusing anecdote from Lucian's *Demonax* (40) which gives a glimpse of how the Greeks perceived the subject-object-verb word order as characteristic of Latin: Πολυβίου δέ τινος, κομδῆ ἀπαιδέυτου ἀνθρώπου καὶ σολοῦκου, εἰπόντος, Ὁ βασιλεὺς με τῇ Ῥωμαίων πολιτείᾳ τετίμηκεν· εἶθε σε, ἔφη, Ἑλληνα μᾶλλον ἢ Ῥωμαῖον πεποιήκει. ["A man named Polybius, quite uneducated and ungrammatical, said: 'The emperor has honored me with Roman citizenship. 'Oh, why didn't he make you a Greek instead of a Roman?' said Demonax."] "Polybius' word order is SOV, with the verb placed at the end of the sentence — 'Romanized Greek,' according to Jones, who notes that the word order of Polybius' boast 'seems to be Latin'."

the verb at the end of the clause in Latin than in Greek.⁸⁷ Their conclusions, based upon “cluster analysis,” attempted “to discover natural groupings (or, “clusters”) of the individual or data sets”⁸⁸ whereby they could “test the hypothesis that Greek and Latin texts will naturally and consistently clump together into homogeneous groups if measured by the rate at which they put the direct object before and after the governing verb.”⁸⁹ Their study has shown that many official Latin documents were translated into Greek from the age of Augustus to the 3rd century A.D. and that sometimes word-for-word translations functioned to “ensure that translations of official documents were as close to the original as possible so as to avoid mistakes and misunderstandings.”⁹⁰ Such translations were perhaps a blatant example of “Roman linguistic imperialism in dealings with the Greek world.”⁹¹ The conclusion that Frischer et al. come to is that even in the second century B.C., “the Roman senatorial class, for all its philhellenism and sense of linguistic inferiority vis-à-vis Greek, was uncomfortable about the use of the Greek language for public business.”⁹²

The case of Cassius Dio is not without interest. Of undeniable Greek ethnic background, Latin may have been his preferred language for many years, especially when he wrote his history. By embellishing his text with Latinisms, he could have consciously desired to reinforce the *romanitas* of his history. Secondly, it is very possible that subconsciously, because of the fact that he lived in Italy for so many years, Dio’s Greek fell into a Latin subject-object-verb word order in his account of Roman history.⁹³ In discussing this author, Frischer et al. concluded the following: “The fact is that concerning the location of the accusative direct object there was no correct and incorrect position in either language, just a distributional trend.”⁹⁴ They continue: “One possible explanation of Dio’s Latinate placement of the direct object relative to the verb is that it is very much in keeping with his self-definition as a Roman... Dio’s style would have had the added advantage of giving reinforcement to his goal of Thucydidean objectivity: to his Greek reader (and it was primarily for such a reader that Dio wrote), Dio may have given the impression that his history was in some sense ‘official,’ or at least based closely on Latin sources.”⁹⁵

⁸⁷ Frischer, 357.

⁸⁸ Frischer, 358.

⁸⁹ Frischer, 358.

⁹⁰ Frischer, 375.

⁹¹ Frischer, 375.

⁹² Frischer, 376.

⁹³ Frischer, 377.

⁹⁴ Frischer, 379.

⁹⁵ Frischer, 379-80.

This writer has not been able to apply all of Frischer's complicated criteria and "cluster analysis" so as to come to any definitive conclusions about possible Latinate tendencies in Josephus. Alain Gowing, who produced the section of Cassius Dio for the Frischer article, has lamented the omission of Josephus from their study. Yet Josephus, a writer whose Greek is for the most part linguistically and stylistically sophisticated throughout the *B.J.*, does occasionally display a *color Latinus*. Was this perhaps to emphasize the official nature of his history?

In giving his reader a summary of the *B.J.* in the preface to his work, Josephus' use of the Latin transcription Αὐγουστος, instead of the usual Καίσαρ, is not without significance. A recent paper by Josephus Sievers⁹⁶ treats some of the possible Latin terminology found in Josephus. In his discussion of the transcription of the name of Augustus, Αὐγουστος, and the translation Σεβαστός, which are both found in the *B.J.*, Sievers notes that the transcription Αὐγουστος is rare. He makes reference to the fact that Cassius Dio always used the Latin transcription Αὐγουστος (more than fifty times), "except in one dubious fragmentary passage." Sievers⁹⁷ also quotes the well-known passage from Cassius Dio in which the author mentions the Greek translation of his name, Σεβαστός.⁹⁸

Sievers discusses the only three attestations to Αὐγουστος in *B.J.* 1-2, first at *B.J.* 1.20, "after Herod's death, while Augustus was governing the Romans,"⁹⁹ then in a chronological note at *B.J.* 2.168, and finally at *B.J.* 2.215-216 "in a summary note about conditions at Agrippa I's accession, with a proviso to record the transfer of powers on bronze tablets in the Capitol."¹⁰⁰ What could all of this mean? Could Josephus, when following the Latin *commentarii* so as to provide some kind of official documentation for his history, have maintained the Latin transcription Αὐγουστος? This seems to be the case. In the first two

⁹⁶ "Consuls, Procurators, *liberti* and Other Latin creatures in Greek garb: Probing into Josephus' Rendering of Latin Terminology." As of this writing, Professor Siever's paper has not been published. I thank him for having allowed me to consult it.

⁹⁷ Sievers, 16.

⁹⁸ βουλευθέντων γάρ σφων ἰδίως πως αὐτὸν προσεῖπειν, καὶ τῶν μὲν τὸ τῶν δὲ τὸ καὶ ἐσηγομένῳ καὶ αἰρουμένῳ, ὁ Καίσαρ ἐπεθύμει μὲν ἰσχυρῶς, Ῥωμύλος ὀνομασθῆναι, αἰσθόμενος δὲ ὅτι ὑποπτεύεται ἐκ τούτου τῆς βασιλείας ἐπιθυμῆναι, οὐκέτ' αὐτοῦ ἀντεποιήσατο, ἀλλὰ Αὐγουστος ὡς καὶ πλεῖον τι ἢ κατὰ ἀνθρώπους ὧν ἐπεκλήθη· πάντα γὰρ τὰ ἐντιμώτατα καὶ τὰ ἱερώτατα αὐγουστα προσαγορεύεται. ἔξ οὐπερ καὶ σεβαστὸν αὐτὸν καὶ ἐλληνίζοντές πως, ὥσπερ τινα σεπτόν, ἀπὸ τοῦ σεβάζεσθαι, προσείπον. (*Hist. Rom.* 53.16.7-8). ["For when they wished to call him by some distinctive title, and men were proposing one title and another and urging its selection, Caesar was exceedingly desirous of being called Romulus, but when he perceived that this caused him to be suspected of desiring the kingship, he desisted from his efforts to obtain it, and took the title of 'Augustus,' signifying that he was more than human; for all the most precious and sacred objects are termed *augusta*. Therefore they addressed him also in Greek as *Sebastos*, meaning an *august* personage, from the passive of the verb *sebazō*, 'to revere'." trans. LCL, E. Cary]

⁹⁹ μετὰ τὴν Ἡρώδου τελευταίην κατεστασίασεν Αὐγούστου μὲν Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονεύοντος.

¹⁰⁰ Sievers, 17.

attestations, if one looks at the immediate context of the Greek word order and idiom, the language itself gives a clue that the information comes from a Latin source. In following M. Haslam's guidelines for attempting a back-translation from a Greek text that probably had a Latin original, the rule of thumb is as follows: "Whereas ablative absolutes regularly become genitive or are otherwise Graecized, consular dates are treated as having formulaic status and become dative."¹⁰¹ The text of *B.J.* 1.20 reads as follows: ὅπως τε ὁ λαὸς μετὰ τὴν Ἡρώδου τελευτὴν κατεστασίασεν Αὐγούστου μὲν Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονεύοντος, Κυντιλίου δὲ Οὐάρου κατὰ τὴν χώραν ὄντος, καὶ ὡς ἔτει δωδεκάτῳ τῆς Νέρωνος ἀρχῆς ὁ πόλεμος ἀνερράγη.¹⁰² Would it not have been possible for the two genitive absolutes to have been originally ablative absolutes in a Latin source and for the date to have been rendered from an ablative to a dative according to the above-mentioned convention articulated by Haslam?

The second example of the Latin transcription Αὐγούστος is found at *B.J.* 2.168. The text reads as follows: μεταβάσης δὲ εἰς Τιβέριον τὸν Ἰουλίας υἱὸν τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίας μετὰ τὴν Αὐγούστου τελευτὴν, ἀφηγησαμένῳ τῶν πραγμάτων ἔτεσιν ἑπτὰ καὶ πεντήκοντα πρὸς δὲ μηνῶν ἕξ καὶ ἡμέραις δύο.¹⁰³ Again, we have a series of genitive absolutes and datives of time which could have come directly from a Latin *commentarius*. As Sievers notes: "However, matters are never as simple as they seem at first sight. In the immediate context of the second occurrence at *B.J.* 2.168, we also have a reference to the wife of Augustus (here Σεβαστός) in *B.J.* 2.167."¹⁰⁴ Be that as it may, the presence of Αὐγούστου in the genitive absolute followed by a date in the dative leaps out to grab the reader's attention.

In our third attestation of Αὐγούστος, *B.J.* 2.215-216, καὶ τὸν Ἄγρίππαν εὐθέως ἔδωρεῖτο τῇ πατρῷα βασιλείᾳ πάση προστιθείς ἕξωθεν καὶ τὰς ὑπὲρ Αὐγούστου δοθείσας Ἡρώδη Τραχωνίτιν καὶ Αὐρανήτιν, χωρὶς δὲ τούτων ἑτέραν [216] βασιλείαν τὴν Λυσανίου καλουμένην. καὶ τῷ μὲν δήμῳ διατάγματι τὴν δωρεὰν ἐδήλου, τοῖς ἀρχουσιν δὲ προσέταξεν ἐγχαράξαντας δέλτοις χαλκαῖς τὴν δόσιν εἰς τὸ Καπετώλιον ἀναθεῖναι,¹⁰⁵ the immediate context depicts Claudius

¹⁰¹ Michael W. Haslam, "Augustus' Funeral Oration for Agrippa," *CJ* 75 (1980), 195.

¹⁰² "of the revolt of the people, after Herod's death, when Augustus was Roman Emperor and Quintilius Varus provincial governor; of the outbreak of the war in the twelfth year of Nero's principate . . ." (trans. Thackeray).

¹⁰³ "On the death of Augustus, who had directed the state for fifty-seven years six months and two days, the empire of the Romans passed to Tiberius son of Julia." (trans. Thackeray).

¹⁰⁴ Sievers, 17.

¹⁰⁵ "Upon Agrippa he forthwith conferred the whole of his grandfather's kingdom, annexing to it from over the border not only the districts of Trachonitis and Auranitis of which Augustus had made a present to Herod, but a further principality known as the kingdom of Lysanias. This donation he announced to the people by an edict, and ordered the magistrates to have it engraved on brazen tablets to be deposited in the Capitol." (trans. Thackeray).

repressing the soldier's anger; the senators are admitted to his camp; offerings are made in thanksgiving to God. At *B.J.* 2.215, the Latin transcription Αὔγουστου is no longer part of a genitive absolute and there is no reference to a date. The Roman context, however, is so overwhelming that there must have been some lost Roman source from which Josephus drew this information.

Conclusion

This study began with an interest in revisiting some of the sources and echoes from classical literature that scholars have detected in Book I of the *Bellum Iudaicum*. Josephus' indebtedness to Thucydides and other Greek historians has been studied and debated for centuries. This writer has been able to provide the reader with some echoes from Thucydides and some of the other giants of Greek literature hitherto previously unnoticed, but has been more interested in pursuing the research recently centred on the affinity between Josephus and the tragic poets. Honora Chapman's study of the relationship between the historical narrative of the *B.J.* and scenes reminiscent of Greek tragedy has led this writer to search for even more "tragic" language in Book I of the *B.J.* that seems to have been previously undetected by scholars. The language of the tragic poets served not only to delight Josephus' non-Jewish audience, but it also assisted the Jewish community in understanding the profound tragedy of their history, namely the misfortune of the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple.

Josephus' masterful political-military history is replete with lengthy descriptions and stories constructed with unique language that appears nowhere else in Josephus' work. Nicolaus of Damascus seems to have provided Josephus with the skeletal form of many stories and excursuses, but it was Josephus himself who artfully arranged the materials that Nicolaus provided. The *color latinus* in the *Bellum* is evident in those passages that result from Josephus' contact with Roman military *commentarii* of the imperial commanders. To paraphrase *B.J.* 1.15: Josephus proved to be the industrious writer who did not merely remodel the scheme and arrangement of someone else's work, but he used fresh materials and made the framework of the history his own¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰⁶ *B.J.* 1.15: φιλόπονος δὲ οὐχ ὁ μεταποιῶν οἰκονομίαν καὶ τάξιν ἀλλοτρίαν, ἀλλ' ὁ μετὰ τοῦ καινὰ λέγειν καὶ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἱστορίας κατασκευάζων ἴδιον. ["The industrious writer is not one who merely remodels the scheme and arrangement of another's work, but one who uses fresh materials and makes the framework of the history his own."] (trans. Thackeray).