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## The Historical Concept of Josephus Flavius as the Sample for Christian Historiography

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*Josephus' views on historical process originate in the Bible. It makes Josephus popular among Christian authors. The Bible sets a linear model of history, thus the ancient history of Jews becomes an axis of history of mankind. The Bible narration reflects the movement of social time which God operates. In the end of the history He should send the Messiah for establishment of His rule on the Earth. Josephus has anticipated the idea about the universal history, which became accepted in the Middle Ages.*

*Key words: Josephus Flavius, Bible, historical process*

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### Introduction

Since the II century Christian writers from Marcus Minucius Felix and Saint Irenaeus of Lion have persistently recommended to read Josephus. His compositions promoted distribution of the Old Testament doctrine preparing the soil for occurrence of Christian culture of the Medieval Europe. The value of the historic facts described by Josephus were defined mostly by presence of references to Jesus Christ in texts of "Jewish antiquities", known as *testimonium flavianum* (Schrekenberg, p.97, 104, 135-138 etc.). Justin the Martyr (Justinus Martir, *Dialogus cum Tryphone*, 10), Theophilus of Antioch (Theophilus, III), Clement of Alexandria (Clemens Alecsandinus, *Stromata*, 1), Tertullian (Tertullianus, *Apologeticus*) referred to Josephus as to a recognized authority among Christians and pagans. Julius Africanus uses Josephus' works as a source, and St. Jerome calls him Titus Livius

of Greeks and equates Josephus' value as of the historian to Seneca, placing him on his own scale of values between John the Apostle and Clement of Rome (Hieronymos, *Epist.*, 22). In the VI century Cassiodorus (Cassidous, *Institutiones*, I, 17) selected several "Christian" historians, the acquaintance to who's works he considered necessary for religious education. There were Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea and Paul Orosius among them (Guenee, 2002, p.34). In the V century Hartman Schedel included (Stauber, 1908, S.128-131) the same list of historical works in his collection of works on divinity.

### Point

The fact that medieval authors considered Josephus as the Christian historian has a number of reasons. It is obvious that a principal cause of a recognition of Josephus one of Christian authors was his *Testimonium Flavianum*. The

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Testimonium Flavianum is an authentic text by Josephus. Its authenticity was denied for a long time, i.e. because the language and ideas of the time of origin were misunderstood, and the author's intention was misjudged and the circumstances of the manuscript tradition were not recognized properly (Ulrich, 2010, p. 72-82) However, there is one more not less important reason. Josephus' historical narration is based on the Bible text that has generated tradition of writing of history in Medieval Europe.

### **Examples**

To illustrate the given thesis, we will consider Josephus' representations about history in more details.

#### **Historical model in Josephus' works**

The Bible sets a linear model of history. In Europe incompatibility of the Bible philosophy of history with the dominating in that epoch doctrine of cosmic recurrence has already been expressed by early Fathers of Church. In particular, Origen wrote: "If we accept this doctrine, Adam and Eve should behave in the same way in that world as they have acted in this one, the same flood will repeat, same Moses will lead out the same people from Egypt, Judas will again betray the Lord, and Paul will again keep clothes of men, stoning Stephen" (Origenes, Periarchon lib.II,ch.III, Cf. Augustinus, De Civitate.Dei,XII,13).

Let's compare "Jewish Antiquities" to the Bible text. The sequence of events in Josephus' work is given as it takes place in a Torah. In the same way the Bible historiography becomes a model for of historical narration of Blessed Augustine whose philosophy of history has affected all historical thought of the Middle Ages. Josephus changes the Bible text only in insignificant measure, and it would be possible to call it author's translation. Josephus doesn't try

to be original in transferring of the Bible text. He even justifies himself, why "our book, according to the title devoted to a question on laws and historical acts, so in detail prosecutes natural sciences subjects" (Josephus, Ant.Jud.Praef.4). He means the narration of the Bible about the first days of creation. Josephus, according to the Bible text, begins a world history with world creation.

Unlike the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria Josephus doesn't give any details of creation whereas Philo in the treatise "About world creation" emphasizes that though the Bible tells about creation of the world in 6 days, actually it simply means the number 6, and the creation occurred out of time (Philo, De opificio mundi, 13-15). On the opinion of A. F. Losev (Losev, 1980, p. 126), when Philo of Alexandria opposes God to the world, the latter is understood here as something changeable, and God, on the contrary, appears invariable (Philo, De cherubim, II,12), resting (Philo, Legum allegoriarum, I,266), unborn and unmovable (Philo, De somniis, V,10), one and only, unique, with unmixed and simple nature (Philo, Legum allegoriarum, I,189). God can be known only by ascension from feeling to mind, but even then we know not Deity himself but only find out the fact of his existence (Philo, De praemiis et poenitis, 916 B-917 A). Therefore God doesn't have name, but it is possible to name Him only "I AM THAT I AM" as He opened Himself to Moses (Philo, De posteritate Caini, C.II.342). In religious philosophy of Philo God is transcendental and unknowable.

Philo talks about "creation" from an Aristotelian perspective, but his language is Platonic (Bos, 2009, p. 32-47 ).In his philosophy Philo introduces a number of intermediaries logoses with the help of which God creates the world, without having to it any direct relation Himself (Philo, De vict.offen., 875E-858). Divine powers and Logoses appear in the form of the

One Logos who is an intermediate link between God and the world, and taking up the functions of Deity, becoming thus a kind of an ideal plan of creation (Philo, *De opificio mundi*, I, 14, *De somniis*, V, 132, *De specialibus legibus*, 789E) and the law according to which world exists (Philo, *De plantatione*, III, 90). But, appearing the nature law, the divine word is already understood as destiny and thus makes the nature divine. Hence, the nature in all casual displays is provided with attributes of Deity as it is not born, invariable, ageless and immortal (Philo, *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini*, II, 124-126). Therefore it is the same to live according to the nature and to live according to God, on Philo's opinion. Here, according to A.F.Losev, Philo comes from the Bible monotheism to stoical pantheism (Losev, 1980, p.127-128). The idea of the preliminary plan according to which the world had been created, was alien to Antiquity for which the Universe was represented as eternal. In this sense Josephus' views are closer to the Medieval historical thought, than to Antiquity, and even to the Hellenized Judaism of Philo. We do this conclusion on the basis of the fact that also Blessed Augustine, also basing in the historical concept on the Bible, considers the world as created together with time: "the World and Time had both one beginning, and the one did not anticipate the other. For if eternity and time are rightly distinguished by this, that time does not exist without some movement and transition, while in eternity there is no change, who does not see that there could have been no time had not some creature been made, which by some motion could give birth to change—the various parts of which motion and change, as they cannot be simultaneous, succeed one another—and thus, in these shorter or longer intervals of duration, time would begin? Since then, God, in whose eternity is no change at all, is the Creator and Ordainer of time, I do not see how He can be said to have created the world after spaces of time had elapsed,

unless it be said that prior to the world there was some creature by whose movement time could pass. And if the sacred and infallible Scriptures say that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, in order that it may be understood that He had made nothing previously—for if He had made anything before the rest, this thing would rather be said to have been made "in the beginning," – then assuredly the world was made, not in time, but simultaneously with time" (Augustinus, *De Civitate Dei*, XI, VI).

Having passed to creation of the human being by God, Josephus again refers to the cultural hero Moses: "Moreover, Moses, after the seventh day was over begins to talk philosophically; and concerning the formation of man, says thus: "That God took dust from the ground, and formed man, and inserted in him a spirit and a soul". This man was called Adam, which in the Hebrew tongue signifies one that is red, because he was formed out of red earth, compounded together" (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.I.1*). Josephus' naturalistic approach, when he starts to tell about Adam and Eve's living in the Eden garden, is especially interesting. According to Josephus, this garden is planted by God and occupies a considerable part of all the Earth.

Transition from the naturalistic approach to the world-wide and historical one is expressed by Josephus more distinctly than in Torah: "Moses says further, that God planted a paradise in the east, flourishing with all sorts of trees; and that among them was the tree of life, and another of knowledge, whereby was to be known what was good and evil; and that when he brought Adam and his wife into this garden, he commanded; hem to take care of the plants. Now the garden was watered by one river, which ran round about the whole earth, and was parted into four parts. And Phison, which denotes a multitude, running into India, makes its exit into the sea, and is by the Greeks called Ganges. Euphrates also, as well as

Tigris, goes down into the Red Sea. Now the name Euphrates, or Phrath, denotes either dispersion, or a flower: by Tigris, or Diglath, is signified what is swift, with narrowness; and Geon runs through Egypt, and denotes what arises from the east, which the Greeks call Nile” (Josephus, Ant.Jud.I, 1). Josephus says nothing about the North and the South and about the West, but with the presence of the term “the East” these concepts are implied, as the Lord, having decided to expel Adam and Eve from paradise, “has moved them into another place” (Josephus, Ant.Jud.I, 1, 4). The subsequent mentions of Cain wanderings “all over the Earth” during which Cain has bypassed “the most part of the Earth” testify the same (Josephus, Ant.Jud.I, 2, 1-2). Geographical views testify that from the very beginning of his narration Josephus tries to speak about the world history as a cultural phenomenon.

The image of the Flood just confirms this world-wide and historical (and simultaneously natural-historical) approach. Josephus never calls the Flood a “universal” one, but it is implied, when he says that water “became fifteen cubits higher than the earth” (Josephus, Ant.Jud.I, 3, 5). The universality of this flood should be testified also by mentioning by Josephus of that fact that “all the writers of barbarian histories make mention of this flood and of this ark” (Josephus, Ant.Jud.I, 3, 6). It isn’t surprising, since the legend about the Flood is known from the Babylonian epos about Gilgamesh and poems about Artaharsis where it came from the Sumer literature. For Josephus it is one more evidence of the fact the Bible narration belongs to the whole world.

Josephus’ report of the building of the Babel tower and the subsequent moving of the people on all Earth has universal and historical meaning: “After this they were dispersed abroad, on account of their languages, and went out by colonies every where; and each colony took possession of that land which they light upon, and unto which

God led them; so that the whole continent was filled with them, both the inland and the maritime countries. There were some also who passed over the sea in ships, and inhabited the islands” (Josephus, Ant.Jud.I, 5). Further the historian describes, what kind of people were those nations, where they have settled, thus leaving far for Bible frameworks, using data of antique authors. The populated universe in Josephus’ writings is limited to the North Africa, a part of Asia and a part of Europe, that is coincides basically with those views about populated universe which existed in Hellenistic culture on a boundary of our era. Cultural-linguistic theory of religion concerning that Babel narrative has always said: people belonging to different “language” communities can do no more than babble to one another. There are theological and exegetical reasons to doubt the classical interpretation of the Babel narrative. A renewed hermeneutic of this story actually challenges the cultural-linguistic discourse of the incommensurability of religions (Moyaert, 2009, p.215-234).

The story about all people occupying the earth serves Josephus as transition to history of the Jewish people. Alexander Polyhistor asserts that Abraham’s sons were contemporaries and allies of Hercules, thus Judas and Edom are children of Semiramis, who belonged, according to Antique views, to generation of founders of the Assyrian power (Esebius, Praepratio Evangelica 19, 20-21). The Antique chronography dates times of Hercules by XVI-XIII century BC. A.A. Nemirovsky made a conclusion that in Hellenistic period Abraham’s life was dated by XVI century BC (Nemirovsky, 2001, p.176). Abraham in the writings of Philo and Josephus is considered in view of the transformation of Greek ideas about exempla by Roman authors such as Polybius, Livy, and Valerius Maximus (Reed, 2009, p.185-212). In the story about Abraham and Chedorlaomer the king of Elam (Genesis

14 cp.) Josephus transforms Elamite coalition to the alliance of Assyrian generals (Josephus, Ant.Jud.I, 9). It can be explained by the fact that Assyrian “imperial” tradition having arisen in XVI-XIII centuries BC, with occurrence of Middle-Assyrian power, didn’t interrupt till the end of an Assyrian kingdom. Porphyry connects the times of Moses with Semiramis, dating his life time approximately by the period of Trojan War (Nemirovsky, 2001, p.224). The indistinct chronology of events, characteristic for the Antiquity, was reflected in Josephus’ works.

On pages of “Jewish antiquities” we find many places devoted to a panorama of events in the Middle East in which the Jewish people participated: the Egyptian captivity, Assyrian and Babylon gains, and, at last, Persian and Greek-Macedonian epoch. Of course, it is not that “world history” which can be found in the work of Polybius and Diodorus Siculus, “regularly” stating the events which have happened with “the nations of the world”. However, it has advantages which favorably distinguish the history written according to the Biblical philosophy of history from the Antique “world histories” because thanks to the Bible there had been such a way of interpretation of events which demands to seek sense not in motives of historical figures, but in events themselves.

According to the Biblical phenomenology of history, it is created by the Word of God. The scheme “the prediction – the fulfillment of prediction” is a part of the Bible phenomenology of history. Josephus gives particular attention to predictions. The history of prophecies begins with Joseph’s dream (Josephus, Ant.Jud.II, 2, 2), foretelling to him the great future. It is Joseph who predicts disasters in Egypt (Josephus, Ant. Jud.II, 5, 5-6). The possession of this information had allowed Joseph to become the second person in the state (Josephus, Ant.Jud.II, 7, 7). In a dream the Most High predicts to Moses’ father

he future of his sons (Josephus, Ant.Jud.II, 9, 3), thus forming this future. The hand of the Most High writes Commandments on Tablets of Law (Josephus, Ant.Jud.III, 5, 8), according to which the Jews should live in future. It was according to prophecy of Samuel Saul (Josephus, Ant.Jud. VI,4), and then David (Josephus, Ant.Jud.VI,8,1) ascended the throne over Israel at first, and dynasty of David ruled in Judea until Babylonian captivity, predicted by the prophet Jeremiah (Josephus, Ant.Jud.X,7,2). Therefore it is possible to assert that Josephus’ historical concept is based on the Biblical philosophy of history, and in such degree, that it is absolutely impossible to withdraw prophecies from Josephus’ historical text.

#### **The book of Prophet Daniel in Josephus interpretation**

Daniel 2 offers one option among multiple alternatives of how person might interact with a foreign power. Esther gives a model in which the willingness to defy the imperial power is the most important aspect of resisting empire. Explicit acts that demonstrate reliance on God are either implied or unnecessary. Violence is accepted as a legitimate method for the defense and preservation of one’s group and advocates of 1 Maccabees would readily agree with this stance. In the book of Exodus, the Hebrew midwives Shiphra and Puan exemplify a type of civil disobedience, where lying for the purpose of protesting one’s people from imperial murder is blessed and rewarded by God (Exodus 1:15-21). Jeremiah, in letter (ostensibly) addressed to the same social context as one supposed for the story of Daniel 1-6, advocates active participation with, and on behalf of, the imperial power (Jeremiah 29:7). Even intermarriage appears to be encouraged (Jeremiah 29:6). Such instruction offers a (convenient?) theological defense for Josephus’ tendencies of assimilating. The existence of such

a variety of models for engaging an imperial regime reflects the existence of a lively dialogical process. It is in such kind of dialogue that readers and hearers (then and now) of Daniel 2 are invited to take part (Rindge, 2010, p. 85-104).

Stating of the concept of world history of the book of Daniel, Josephus polemicizes with the doctrine of Epicurus again: “All these things did this man (Daniel. – J. M.) leave in writing, as God had showed them to him, insomuch that such as read his prophecies, and see how they have been fulfilled, would wonder at the honor wherewith God honored Daniel; and may thence discover how the Epicureans are in an error, who cast Providence out of human life, and do not believe that God takes care of the affairs of the world, nor that the universe is governed and continued in being by that blessed and immortal nature, but say that the world is carried along of its own accord, without a ruler and a curator; which, were it destitute of a guide to conduct it, as they imagine, it would be like ships without pilots, which we see drowned by the winds, or like chariots without drivers, which are overturned; so would the world be dashed to pieces by its being carried without a Providence, and so perish, and come to naught” (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.X,11,7*). Providentialism of Josephus is based on eschatological model of history.

Josephus retells the Bible story about interpretation by Daniel of a dream of Nebuchadnezzar about “a colossus on clay feet”. Daniel speaks to the Babylonian king: “The head of gold denotes thee, and the kings of Babylon that have been before thee; but the two hands and arms signify this, that your government shall be dissolved by two kings; but another king that shall come from the west, armed with brass, shall destroy that government; and another government, that shall be like unto iron, shall put an end to the power of the former, and shall have dominion over

all the earth, on account of the nature of iron, which is stronger than that of gold, of silver, and of brass” (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.X,10,4*). The idea that the world history is reduced to consecutive change of four kingdoms, irrespective of Daniel, is known from epitome of Justin to history of Pompeius Trogus. Probably it had come from Antique legends to the Jewish tradition (Croce, 1930), and than to Josephus.

The description by Josephus of Daniel’s vision about a ram and a goat meaning struggle of Persia with Greece is devoted to interpretation of events of world history and culture. Josephus writes that in this vision Daniel “was shown a great ram, with many horns growing out of his head, and that the last was higher than the rest: that after this he looked to the west, and saw a he-goat carried through the air from that quarter; that he rushed upon the ram with violence, and smote him twice with his horns, and overthrew him to the ground, and trampled upon him: that afterward he saw a very great horn growing out of the head of the he-goat, and that when it was broken off, four horns grew up that were exposed to each of the four winds, and he wrote that out of them arose another lesser horn, which, as he said, waxed great; and that God showed to him that it should fight against his nation, and take their city by force, and bring the temple worship to ninety-six days” (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.X,11,7*). Further Joseph writes that God has given to Daniel the following interpretation of this vision: “He said that the ram signified the kingdoms of the Medes and Persians, and the horns those kings that were to reign in them; and that the last horn signified the last king, and that he should exceed all the kings in riches and glory” (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.X, 11, 7*). Joseph ascribes to Cyrus, Darius and Xerxes a covenant with the Jewish God. Cyrus reads prophet Isaiah who prophesies about him as about the anointed one (Josephus, *Ant.Jud. XI, 1, 2*). Only Cambyses, who had temporarily

forbidden to restore the Temple, is named by Joseph the rascal (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.XI*, 2, 1-2). And, in Joseph's narration about the Persian kingdom, the geographical latitude is felt. So, for example, the letter of Esther about the right of Jews to be protected from massacres is addressed "to the nations, on the Jews' behalf, and to his lieutenants and governors, that were over his hundred twenty and seven provinces, from India to Ethiopia" (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.XI*, 6, 12).

Interpreting Daniel's prophecy further, Josephus writes: "the he-goat signified that one should come and reign from the Greeks, who should twice fight with the Persian, and overcome him in battle, and should receive his entire dominion" (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.XI*, 7). Earlier, where Joseph tells about transition of Jews through Red Sea, he gives a similar example with successful transition of army of Alexander through the Panflute Sea, as, according to Joseph, "it was the will of God to destroy the monarchy of the Persians" (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.II*, 16, 5). Alexander worships name of God, written on a headdress of the Judaic high priest, coming to meet him from Jerusalem (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.XI*, 8, 5). In general, there is an impression that the basic actions of an aggressive campaign of Alexander occurred in Judea, since Josephus considers historical events through a prism of the Jewish culture.

"By the great horn which sprang out of the forehead of the he-goat was meant the first king, – Josephus continues to interpret Daniel's vision, – and that the springing up of four horns upon its falling off, and the conversion of every one of them to the four quarters of the earth, signified the successors that should arise after the death of the first king, and the partition of the kingdom among them, and that they should be neither his children, nor of his kindred" (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.XI*, 7). Further, in his historical narration, Josephus specifies: "Now when Alexander, king

of Macedon, had put an end to the dominion of the Persians, and had settled the affairs in Judea after the fore mentioned manner, he ended his life. And as his government fell among many, Antigonus obtained Asia, Seleucus Babylon; and of the other nations which were there, Lysimachus governed the Hellespont, and Cassander possessed Macedonia; as did Ptolemy the son of Lagus seize upon Egypt" (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.XII*, 1). We see that Josephus correlates real historical events to a prophecy from Daniel's book. After Daniel and Josephus the medieval historian Pierre le Beau writes that God changes kingdoms, provinces, principedoms, divides and distributes them as He likes (Guinee, 2002, p. 23-34). So, the Bible became a source of medieval philosophy of history.

If time in the Biblical philosophy of history begins with creation of the world and moves to the ending of human history, the geographical center of the world through which all major events pass, is, certainly, the Temple. "And that from among them there should arise a certain king, – Josephus finishes history of the Greek rule in Judea, – that should overcome our nation and their laws, and should take away their political government, and should spoil the temple, and forbid the sacrifices to be offered for three years' time. And indeed it so came to pass, that our nation suffered these things under Antiochus Epiphanes" (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.X*, 11). It is the Temple destruction which is the beginning of the end of historical process, according to Josephus.

The fact that Daniel predicted destruction of Jerusalem by Rome, is a traditional Rabbinic interpretation (*Shabbat*, 5b), which Josephus used as a substantiation of action of the Providence in life of Israel (Daube, 1977, S.17). Thus, Joseph finishes representation of the Biblical historical model: "In the very same manner Daniel also wrote concerning the Roman government (the last horn from Daniel's prophecy – J.M.), and that

our country should be made desolate by them” (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.X*, 11, 7). One more text from Daniel’s book also tells about the Temple destruction: “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince (it can be red: unto the Messiah the King – J.M.) shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined” (Daniel 9:24-26). Inevitability of “abomination of desolation” on the Temple place was a kind of theodicy. Good God has allowed the destruction of Jerusalem, since it is written in His high plans, forming a world history. Thus the Bible philosophy of history is reflected in Josephus’ interpretation.

#### **Josephus’ views on the Messiah**

D. Boyarin writes, that late ancient rabbinic literature, being read in the context of all contemporary and earlier texts of Judaism (texts defined as rabbinic as well as texts defined as non-, para-, or even anti-rabbinic), gives us a big amount of evidences for and information about a belief in (and perhaps a cult of) a second person within or very close to so-called “orthodox” rabbinic circles long after the advent of Christianity. Part of the evidence for this very cult comes from efforts of its suppression on the part of rabbinic text. A reasonable chain of inference links this late cult

figure back through the late-antique Book of 3 Enoch to Enoch of the first-century Parables of Enoch (also known in the scholarly literature as the *Similitudes of Enoch*), and thus to the Son of Man, and further back to the One Like a Son of Man of Daniel 7 (Boyarin, 2010, p. 323-365).

The Messiah is one of primary factors in the Bible philosophy of history. In ancient Biblical prophecies the Messiah is a king. During the life and rule of the King-Messiah the process of *Geula* (deliverance) – the purification and revival of the whole world will have place. This revival was seen by prophets as an event in an objective reality, obvious and doubtless for all people. Describing messianic times, prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 60:16-22) says: “and you shall know that I, the LORD, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob... I will appoint Peace as your overseer and Righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in your land, devastation or destruction within your borders; you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise”. And Jeremiah the prophet (Jeremiah 23:5, 6) says about the Messiah: “Behold, the days come, said the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely”. Isaiah (Isaiah 2:4) emphasizes that the days of the Messiah’s coming will be the epoch of international and social changes: “And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more”.

The peace and termination of the violence are the most important signs of approach of messianic times in the Bible philosophy of history. *Pax Romana*, with setting peace between insurgent nations, at first sight could seem to Josephus an ideal kingdom of the Messiah, all the more not the person of the Messiah was in focus



of the prophets, but those changes which it brings in the world.

Sacredness of the king's rule is especially emphasized in the Bible in connection with the rule of the dynasty of Davidides. The formula met in the Old Testament: "He said to me, "You are my son; today I have begotten you"" (Psalms 2:7) shows that the idea of king's being God-born is reflected in Old Testament model of the world; however it extends only on David and Solomon. No other king from the dynasty of Davidides ever had been recognized in the Old Testament as the son of God. The idea of king being God-born in other socially-ideological environment became eventually "the Divine adaptation", used for expression of "the more participation" of the founder of a dynasty David and the builder of the Temple Solomon to sacredness. Other carriers of the government rule didn't possess this sacredness or possessed it in small degree. Even for Solomon being God-born in the Bible is conditional; since it expresses more likely being God-chosen (that is seen in the Scripture quite often). Nevertheless, after the Bible kings are the figure of the autocrat both in the Medieval West (Bloch, 1998), and in medieval Russia (Uspensky, 1998, p. 25-27) gain sacral meaning.

Being in captivity Josephus has foretold to military leader Vespasian that he would become the emperor. Justifying his own surrender to the captivity, Joseph writes that he had seen "the dreams which he had dreamed in the night time, whereby God had signified to him beforehand both the future calamities of the Jews, and the events that concerned the Roman emperors" (Josephus, Bell.Jud.III, VIII). Josephus asserts that he is capable to interpret dreams as the priest and the son of the priest. Moreover, at a meeting with Vespasian Josephus welcomes him by words: "Thou, O Vespasian, art Caesar and emperor, thou, and this thy son. Bind me now still faster, and keep me for thyself, for thou, O Caesar, are

not only lord over me, but over the land and the sea, and all mankind" (Josephus, Bell.Jud.III,9,9), In the language of the Jewish traditional culture that means that Josephus considered Vespasian as the Messiah. It testifies that at the moment of the prophecy Joseph trusted in a messianic role of Vespasian. Suetonius also tells about this prediction: "one of notable captives, Josephus, when he had been chained in a chain, declared with firm confidence that soon he would be set free by the same person, but already the emperor" (Suetonius, Divius Vespasianus, 6). This prophecy is mentioned by Cassius Dio (Cassius Dio, Historia Romana, LXVI, 1, 2-4), Suetonius (Suetonius, Divius Titus, 5), Tacitus (Tacitus, Historiae, II, 4), John Zonaras (Zonaras, Epitome Historiarum, XI, 16), Appianus (Temporini, Haase, p.259). Subsequently Vespasian really became the emperor. Then he has remembered Josephus and has given him freedom and a patrimonial name of Flavius (Josephus, Bell.Jud.III, 8, 9; Vita, 75).

Josephus never named Vespasian the Messiah, however certain messianic hopes are actually had been laid on him, just as author of the Book of Isaiah laid messianic hopes on the Persian king Cyrus the Great. However, we have indirect information about Vespasian that in late Josephus' views he "has not held on" the Messiah.

In his late work "Jewish antiquities" Josephus puts in lips of the prophet Samuel rather unflattering opinion about the imperial power: "But when once they are advanced into power and authority, – Josephus writes, – then they put off all such notions, and, as if they were no other than actors upon a theater, they lay aside their disguised parts and manners, and take up boldness, insolence, and a contempt of both human and Divine laws, and this at a time when they especially stand in need of piety and righteousness, because they are then most of all exposed to envy, and all they think, and all they

say, are in the view of all men; then it is that they become so insolent in their actions, as though God saw them no longer, or were afraid of them because of their power: and whatsoever it is that they either are afraid of by the rumors they hear, or they hate by inclination, or they love without reason, these seem to them to be authentic, and firm, and true, and pleasing both to men and to God; but as to what will come hereafter, they have not the least regard to it. They raise those to honor indeed who have been at a great deal of pains for them, and after that honor they envy them; and when they have brought them into high dignity, they do not only deprive them of what they had obtained, but also, on that very account, of their lives also, and that on wicked accusations, and such as on account of their extravagant nature, are incredible. They also punish men for their actions, not such as deserve condemnation, but from calumnies and accusations without examination; and this extends not only to such as deserve to be punished, but to as many as they are able to kill” (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.V,12,7*). Certainly, these words don’t apply to the Roman emperor, but Josephus actually couldn’t apply them to someone of his patrons. Saul, perceived in the Jewish culture as the king-loser, was a perfect example of depravity of the imperial power.

So, the question of the Messiah remains open for Josephus Flavius. In “Jewish antiquities”, telling about Daniel’s prophecy on “colossus” (Josephus, *Ant.Jud.X, 11, 7*), Josephus doesn’t tell about the meaning of the stone which has destroyed the statue because, as he said, he should describe the past, not the future. After Daniel, medieval historian Pierre le Beau writes that God changes kingdoms, provinces, principedoms, divides and distributes them as He wish (Guenee, p.174). Josephus also doesn’t tell that colossus’ feet are made of clay so the power of “iron” Rome is subject to destruction. Catastrophe of destruction of II Temple, in Josephus’ representation, hadn’t

led to Deliverance. The similar tendency of expectation and not-coming of the Messiah is especially brightly shown in Hasidism. In opinion of Rabbi Nahmana from Braslava, once in the history the true Messiah really had come, but people had demanded from him proofs of his Messianism which he couldn’t show. Who exactly was really the Messiah from those claiming for this title, Rabbi Nahman hadn’t told (Schteiselz, 2000, p.133).

Living in the I century B.C., Josephus has anticipated the idea about a world history, become accepted in the Middle Ages in the Jewish and Christian civilizations.

The essence of altruism of Josephus allows us to compare his views to the views of followers of Jesus. According to D.Flusser, being based on the evangelical parable about the incorrect manager (Luke16 cp), it is possible to assert that Jesus polemized with Essenes, saying that “sons of light” behave less wisely, than the children of this world (Luke 16:8). It was the attitude to the external world what had been the polemic subject. D.Flusser states that the translation “Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness” (Luke 16:9) is incorrect, as the term “mammon of unrighteousness”, used here, is known from Manuscripts of the Dead Sea and means the external world. A correct translation, according to D.Flusser, “make to yourselves friends from the mammon of unrighteousness”, that is from an external world. By this people not from sect of the Dead Sea are meant, who are also, probably, are not from sons of Israel. Also if Essenes in their writings demands full separation from all people who are not from their commune, because of ritual uncleanness (IQS (The community charter) 5:16-17), Jesus tells: go and eat and drink and stay for the night in every house which is hospitable (Mathew 10:8-13). According to D.Flusser, it is the sermon of fraternal love to external ones, an appeal to the

missionary work unacceptable for late Essenes (Flusser, 1994, p. 150-168). The similar attitude to the external world is characteristic also for Josephus. His works have educational character, if not a missionary one. His attempt to convince Hellenistic population of Empire that the Jewish people are not such as they are is told about in the Alexandria fables, is the attempt of reconciliation of Jewish and Hellenistic cultures, congenial to the evangelical sermon of love to enemies.

### Resume

Thus, Josephus' ideas of the historical process originate in the Bible. It makes Josephus popular among Christian authors. The Bible sets linear model of history, thus the history of the Jews becomes an axis of history of mankind. The Biblical narration reflects movement of social time which is ruled by God. In the end of history God should send he Messiah for an establishment of his rule on the Earth.

In "Jewish antiquities" Josephus, beginning his narration from the world creation, follows the Bible text which has formed a basis of culture of the Medieval West. Josephus doesn't give any details of creation of the world. According to Josephus, Eden was planted by God and occupied a considerable part of all Earth. The image of the flood just confirms this universal historical (and natural-historical) approach. Josephus' narration about building of the Babel tower and the subsequent moving of the people across all the Earth also has universal historical value. Flavius' views on the populated universe coincide with common views in a classical antiquity. The story about all people occupying the Earth serve Josephus as transition to the Jewish history, and indistinct chronology of events characteristic for antiquity was reflected also in Josephus works, i.e. the Biblical model of linear history in the works of Josephus is filled with the data accepted in an antique science.

Like the authors of the Bible text Josephus sees the sense of certain events in events themselves, therefore it is possible to assert that Josephus' historical concept is based on the philosophical concept of the Biblical phenomenology of history. Providentialism of Josephus is based on Judaic apocalyptic. He retells the story from Daniel's Book about "a colossus on clay feet" in which the World history is schematically presented. Besides, the description by Josephus of Daniel's vision about a ram and a he-goat meaning the fight of Persia with Greece is also devoted to interpretation of events of the World history. Also in Josephus' narration about the Persian kingdom, borders of Persia are stretched 'from India to Ethiopia' that coincides with the borders of the populated universe. However the history of the Jews is the basic subject of his narration, therefore the basic actions of the aggressive campaign of Alexander the Great occurred in Judea. According to eschatological views of the epoch of II Temple Josephus constantly correlates real historical events to the prophecy from Daniel's book that makes his historical concept an eschatological one.

Josephus' works have educational character; they content an attempt of reconciliation of cultures of the Romans and the Jews, congenial to the evangelical sermon of love to enemies. The Roman world at first quite could seem to Josephus an ideal kingdom of the Messiah. All the more the messianic role in the Jewish tradition is more important, than the person of the elect one. Sacredness of the imperial power in the Bible also promoted Josephus' choice. Josephus lays the messianic hopes on Vespasian; also as Book of Isaiah laid messianic hopes on the Persian king Cyrus the Great. However, in late Josephus' views, Vespasian "has not held on" to Messiah, since in the end of life Josephus has reconsidered his views at the imperial power. By the end of his life the question of the Messiah for

Josephus remains opened. However, living in the I century B.C., Josephus had anticipated the view of the World history, which become accepted in the Middle Ages.

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## **Историческая концепция Иосифа Флавия как образец для христианской историографии**

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*Представления Иосифа Флавия об историческом процессе берут свое начало в Библии. Это делает Иосифа Флавия популярным среди христианских авторов. Библия задает линейную модель истории, при этом древняя история евреев становится осью истории человечества. Библейское повествование отражает движение социального времени, которым управляет Бог. В конце истории он должен послать Мессию для установления своего правления на Земле. Иосиф Флавий предвосхитил представление о всемирной истории, ставшее принятым в Средние века.*

*Ключевые слова: Иосиф Флавий, Библия, исторический процесс.*

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